



Evaluation of Lactic Acid Bacteria Isolated from the Honey Bee *Apis mellifera* L. for the Control of the American Foulbrood Disease

A Thesis

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate a new applicable, reliable, promising and highly effective treatment for American Foulbrood (AFB) disease in honey bee colonies. Some of the honey bee gut microbial diversity in worker bees using 560 amplicon assays of the 16S rRNA gene were investigated. The presence of nine novel anaerobic lactic acid bacterial (LAB) flora were reported within honey bee gut. Four of the LABs are carefully related to four different strains of *Lactobacillus plantarum* species. Two are closely identical to two different strains of *Lactobacillus kunkeei* species. One is closely related to a strain of *Lactobacillus pentosus* species. The last two are matching two different strains of *Lactobacillus* sp.. A strong inhibitory effect of the honey bee stomach LAB flora on AFB bacterial pathogen, *Paenibacillus larvae larvae* (*P. l. larvae*) growth *in vitro* were demonstrated. The individual LAB phylotypes showed different inhibition zones ranges from 0.4 to 1.8 cm. Artificial infection was accompanied by the administration of a mixture of five of the most effective endogenous LABs, previously tested for their inhibitory effect on agar plates *in vitro*. It was observed that the honey bee endogenous LAB inhibited *P. l. larvae* in an *in vivo* system. LAB mixture added to the larval food in honey bee colonies significantly reduced the number of infected larvae when pooled data from all experiments were analyzed ($P \approx 0.000$, $P < 0.001$). Confidence intervals analysis on the effect of the time LAB was added to the colony didn't show significant different from adding LAB to the food on first or second day post infection and throughout the feeding period. Both *in vitro* and *in vivo* studies demonstrated that the LAB microbiota in *Apis mellifera* inhibit one important honey bee pathogen, the bacterial brood pathogen

P. l. larvae that is cause of the brood disease AFB. The results point to new avenues for the prophylactic or therapeutic treatment of honey bee diseases.

Keywords:

Honey bee, *Apis mellifera*, American Foulbrood, Lactic Acid Bacteria, LAB identification, Probiotic treatment and AFB control.

Contents

Contents	Pages
ACKNOLEDGMENT	I
Abstract	II
List of Tables	IV
List of Figures	V
List of Abbreviation	XVI
I. Introduction	1
II. Literature Review	6
1. Biology of Honey bees	6
2. American Foulbrood (AFB) disease; Diagnosis and treatment	8
3. Lactic Acid Bacteria (LAB); A symbiotic micro- flora in the gut of honey bees	17
4. Lactic Acid Bacteria (LAB); as a control agent of American Foulbrood disease	24
III. Materials and Methods	30
1. Maintenance of the honey bee, <i>Apis mellifera</i> , colonies	30
2. American Foulbrood (AFB) bacterial pathogen, <i>Paenibacillus larvae larvae</i> ; Isolation and preparation	31
2.1. Source of the bacterial pathogen	31

2.2. Isolation and Cultivation of the bacterial pathogen <i>P. l. larvae</i>	31
2.3. Identification and characterization of the bacterial pathogen	32
2.3.1. Morphological tests	33
2.3.2. Microscopical tests	33
2.3.3. Biochemical tests	33
3. The probiotic lactic acid bacteria (LAB); Isolation and identification	34
3.1. Isolation of LAB	34
3.2. Identification of Lactic acid bacteria; DNA preparation and manipulation	35
3.2.1. DNA isolation from LAB cultured colonies	35
3.2.2. PCR amplification of 16S-rRNA gene	36
3.2.3. Agarose gel electrophoresis	38
3.2.4. Sequence analysis	39
4. Lactic acid bacteria (LAB) inhibition bioassays against <i>P. l. larvae</i> bacterial spores	40
5. Field experiment	40
5.1. Colonies and treatments	41
5.2. Monitoring larval mortality.....	42
5.3. Data analysis	43

5.4. Checking colonies and Culturing of the probiotic LAB and the pathogen <i>P. l. larvae</i> from honey bees	44
5.5. Field efficacy.....	45
IV. Results	46
1. Isolates of the American foulbrood (AFB) bacterial pathogen; <i>Paenibacillus larvae larvae</i>	46
1.1. Identification and characterization of <i>P. l. larvae</i> , AFB bacterial pathogen	46
1.1.1. Morphology of <i>P. l. larvae</i> bacterial colony	46
1.1.2. Microscopic identification of <i>P. l. larvae</i> bacterium	47
1.1.3. Biochemical identification of <i>P. l. larvae</i> bacterium	48
2. Isolates of the probiotic lactic acid bacteria (LAB)	49
2.1. Identification of Lactic acid bacteria; PCR amplification and sequencing results	52
2.1.1. PCR amplification of 16S-rRNA gene	52
2.1.2. Sequencing results	53
3. Lactic Acid Bacteria (LAB) inhibition bioassay results	76

4.	Field experiment	79
4.1.	Monitoring larval mortality	79
4.2.	Data analysis	80
4.3.	Checking colonies and Culturing of the probiotic LAB and the pathogen <i>P. l. larvae</i> from honey bees	85
4.4.	Field efficacy	92
V.	Discussion	93
1.	Lactic Acid Bacteria (LAB); A symbiotic micro- flora in the gut of honey bees	93
2.	Lactic Acid Bacteria (LAB); as a control agent of American Foulbrood disease	103
VI.	Conclusion	117
VII.	Recommendation	119
VIII.	Summary	121
IX.	References	125
X.	Arabic summary	160

List of Tables

Tables	Pages
Table 1: Inhibition zones formed by the nine-lactic acid bacteria (LAB) probiotics against <i>P. l. larvae</i> bacterial spores	79
Table 2: Numbers of survived and dead honey bee larvae and capped cells in the four groups of the experiment at zero time (before infection) and seventh day post infection and treatment with LAB probiotics (G1: -ve control, G2: +ve control, G3: treatment on the first day post infection and G4: treatment on second day post infection)	80
Table 3: Survive * Treatment Crosstabulation of expected count of dead and survived brood larvae on seventh day post experiment (G2: +ve control, G3(P): treatment on the first day post infection and G4(PA): treatment on second day post infection	81
Table 4: Survive * Treatment Crosstabulation of percent within treatment of dead and survived brood larvae on seventh day post experiment (G2: +ve control, G3(P): treatment on the first day post infection and G4(PA): treatment on second day post infection)	82
Table 5: Person's Chi-Squared Test	82

List of Figures

Figures	Pages
Figure (1): Colonies of hybrid Carniolian honey bees; <i>Apis mellifera carnica</i> , in the apiary yard of the Apiculture Research Department, Plant Protection Research Institute	30
Figure (2): <i>P. l. larvae</i> streaking growth on J-agar plate.	46
Figure (3): Morphological characters of <i>P. l. larvae</i> Colony	47
Figure (4): <i>Paenibacillus larvae larvae</i> vegetative cells stained with crystal violet stain	47
Figure (5): <i>Paenibacillus larvae larvae</i> spore cells stained with crystal violet stain	47
Figure (6): Holst milk test (a) <i>P. l. larvae</i> spores cleared skimmed milk. (b) control	48
Figure (7): Catalase test: bubbly foam is not indicated...	49

Figure (8): Nine cultured MRS agar plates with the selected twelve white, small and rounded colonies of Lactic Acid Bacteria (Lab 1 to 12)	50
Figure (9): Twelve Anaerobic subcultures of Lactic Acid Bacteria (Lab 1 to 12) isolated on MRS agar media	51
Figure (10): 16S rRNA amplified region (560 bp) from the twelve LAB subcultured colonies (Lanes named from L1 to L12 respectively)	52
Figure (11): Forward nucleotide sequences of the 513 bp lactic acid bacteria (Lab 1) PCR amplicon, of the 16S ribosomal RNA gene	55
Figure (12): BLAST server results of the lactic acid bacteria (Lab 1) forward PCR sequence and its alignment statistics with its first match, <i>Lactobacillus plantarum</i> strain LB11 16S ribosomal RNA gene, partial sequence	56

Figure (13): Forward nucleotide sequences of the 539 bp lactic acid bacteria (Lab 2) PCR amplicon, of the 16S ribosomal RNA gene	57
Figure (14): BLAST server results of the lactic acid bacteria (Lab 2) forward PCR sequence and its alignment statistics with its first match, <i>Lactobacillus</i> <i>sp.</i> strain 86056 16S ribosomal RNA gene, partial sequence	58
Figure (15): Forward nucleotide sequences of the 528 bp lactic acid bacteria (Lab 5) PCR amplicon, of the 16S ribosomal RNA gene	59
Figure (16): BLAST server results of the lactic acid bacteria (Lab 5) forward PCR sequence and its alignment statistics with its first match, <i>Lactobacillus</i> <i>plantarum</i> strain CAG18b 16S ribosomal RNA gene, partial sequence	60