Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus Variants with High Pathogenicity, China

To the Editor: Porcine epidemic diarrhea (PED), a serious and highly contagious swine disease, is characterized by severe diarrhea and dehydration in suckling piglets. The etiologic agent, porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDV), is an enveloped, single-stranded RNA virus (family Coronaviridae, order Nidovirales). The viral disease was discovered in the United Kingdom in 1971 and subsequently reported in many swine-producing countries in Europe and Asia (1,2). Although most sow herds previously had received CV777-based inactivated vaccine, a large-scale outbreak of PED has been associated with high rates of illness and death in suckling piglets in China since late 2010, resulting in substantial economic losses.

We collected 217 piglets (126 alive, 91 dead) with diarrhea from 42 farms in Shandong Province, China, during November 2010–April 2012. To determine the etiologic agent of the outbreak, we analyzed samples of intestine and its contents. A total of 175 (80.6%) samples were PEDV positive, indicating that PEDV was the dominant pathogen for this diarrheal outbreak. Other pathogens also were identified: porcine transmissible gastroenteritis virus (8.3%), rotavirus (3.7%), and Escherichia coli (3.2%). Furthermore, 8.1% of pigs with diarrhea were co-infected by 2 pathogens.

Three PEDV field strains (ZB, CH1, CH8, and CHGD-01 isolates similar to those in CH/FJND-3/2011, CH1, CH8, and CHGD-01 isolates recently reported in China (6). To determine the virulence of the PEDV isolates, we experimentally infected fifteen 4-day-old Duroc crossbred piglets with the YS and ZB isolates. The piglets were randomly allotted to 3 groups, each group consisting of 5 pigs. These piglets were shown by serologic analysis to be negative for antibodies against PEDV, porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus, porcine transmissible gastroenteritis virus, and pseudorabies virus.

In the piglets inoculated orally with 1.5 mL of YS isolate (10^{3.0} 50% tissue culture infectious doses/mL), diarrhea was observed at 3–6 days postinfection (dpi). One piglet died at 5 dpi, and 4 piglets died at 6 dpi. The dead piglets showed hemorrhage and shedding in the gastric mucosa, swelling and congestion in the mesenteric lymph nodes, and hemorrhage in the intestinal wall (Figure, panel A). Histopathologic changes included epithelial cell shedding; intrinsic layer hemorrhage and excessive infiltration of lymphocytes in the stomach; and congestion, edema, and epithelial cell shedding in the intestinal mucosa (Figure, panel B). PEDV was recovered from the dead piglets, and the full-length S gene was amplified by reverse transcription PCR and sequenced. In the S genes of YS and ZB isolates, 3 and 2 single nucleotides were replaced, respectively, but no mutated amino acid was introduced between the inoculated and recovered viruses.

For the piglets orally infected with 1.5 mL of ZB isolate (10^{3.1} 50% tissue culture infectious doses/mL), diarrhea was observed at 3–5 dpi, and all 5 piglets...
died at 5 dpi. The dead piglets showed similar lesions to those of the piglets infected with YS isolate in the stomach, intestines, and mesenteric lymph nodes. Piglets in the control group orally inoculated with Dulbecco minimal essential medium remained healthy during the experiment, and no obvious pathologic changes were observed.

Our investigation indicated that the recent diarrhea outbreaks were mainly caused by PEDV variants with novel genetic markers that distinguish them from classical strains. The YS and ZB isolates were highly virulent in piglets. Unlike CV777, the PEDV variants remained almost unchanged in the epitope at positions 499–638; however, a 2-aa deletion, a 1-aa insertion, and 18 separate substitutions were identified in the epitope at positions 83–276 (7,8). These variations of amino acid sequences probably changed the immunogenicity of S protein and led to immunization failure of current commercial vaccines made from classical PEDV strains. However, how PEDV has evolved and varies in pig herds are not clear. Further studies, including extensive genomic sequence analyses and serologic cross-neutralization tests, should be conducted.

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Jinbao Wang,1 Pengwei Zhao,1 Lihui Guo, Yueyue Liu, Yijun Du, Sufang Ren, Jun Li, Luyu Zhang, Yufeng Fan, Baohua Huang, Sidang Liu, and Jiaqiang Wu

Author affiliations: Shandong Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Jinan, China (J. Wang, L. Guo, Y. Du, S. Ren, J. Li, Y. Zhang, Y. Fan, B. Huang, J. Wu); Shandong Key Laboratory of Animal Disease Control and Breeding, Shandong Academy of Agricultural Sciences, No.8, Sangyuan Rd, Jinan 250100, China; email: wujiaqiang2000@sina.com.cn

Key Laboratory of Animal Disease Control and Breeding, Jinan (J. Wang, P. Zhao, L. Guo, Y. Du, S. Ren, J. Li, Y. Zhang, B. Huang, J. Wu); and Shandong Agricultural University, Tai-an, China (J. Wang, Y. Liu, S. Liu)

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Address for correspondence: Jiaqiang Wu, Shandong Key Laboratory of Animal Disease Control and Breeding, Shandong Academy of Agricultural Sciences, No.8, Sangyuan Rd, Jinan 250100, China; email: wujiaqiang2000@sina.com.cn

New Delhi Metallo-β-Lactamase-1 in Carbapenem-Resistant Salmonella Strain, China

To the Editor: Carbapenem resistance in Enterobacteriaceae can occur through the production of carbapenem-hydrolyzing enzymes such as New Delhi metallo-β-lactamase-1 (NDM-1) (1). In recent years, plasmid-mediated NDM-1 has spread rapidly worldwide and into multiple Enterobacteriaceae species, such as Klebsiella pneumoniae and Escherichia coli (2).

NDM-1 has been reported in 2 strains of Salmonella spp., which were isolated from feces and urine specimens during screening for multidrug-resistant bacteria in patients from India (3,4). We report the isolation of 1 community-acquired NDM-1–bearing Salmonella strain isolated from a child with acute diarrhea.

The Salmonella strain was isolated from the feces of an 11-month-old girl at Lishui Central Hospital, Zhejiang Province, China, on July 25, 2012. Six days before admission, a fever <40°C, accompanied by a cough, developed in the patient. Four days before admission, physical examination showed fine rales in both lungs. The leukocyte count was 8,900 cells/µL, with 80% neutrophils. No obvious abnormalities were found on a chest radiograph.

The patient was given a diagnosis of acute bronchitis, and the condition was treated with parenteral cefotaxin for 3 days and parenteral pipercillin/tazobactam for 1 day, but fever persisted. Two days before admission, diarrhea (4–5 times/day with loose feces containing mucus and blood) developed. On admission day, fecal analysis showed 3–4 leukocytes and 1–3 erythrocytes per high-power field.