Mycobacterium marseillense Infection in Human Skin, China, 2018

Bibo Xie, Yanqing Chen, Jian Wang, Wei Gao, Haiqing Jiang, Jiya Sun, Xindong Jin, Xudong Sang, Xiaobing Yu, Hongsheng Wang

Author affiliations: Institute of Dermatology, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and Peking Union Medical College, Nanjing, China (B. Xie, Y. Chen, W. Gao, H. Jiang, H. Wang); Zhejiang Institute of Dermatology, Deqing, China (B. Xie, J. Wang, X. Jin, X. Sang, Y. Xu); Jiangsu Key Laboratory of Molecular Biology for Skin Diseases and STIs, Nanjing (Y. Chen, W. Gao, H. Jiang, H. Wang); Suzhou Institute of Systems Medicine, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, Suzhou, China (J. Sun); Centre for Global Health, Nanjing Medical University, Nanjing (H. Wang)

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We describe a case of facial skin infection and sinusitis caused by Mycobacterium marseillense in an immunocompetent woman in China in 2018. The infection was cleared with clarithromycin, moxifloxacin, and amikacin. Antimicrobial drug treatments could not be predicted by genetic analyses; further genetic characterization would be required to do so.

Mycobacterium marseillense is a member of the M. avium complex (1) that has caused infections with lymphatic or pulmonary involvement sporadically in humans (2–4). We report M. marseillense infection involving facial skin in an immunocompetent woman in eastern China.


Address for Correspondence: Erik A. Karlsson, Institut Pasteur du Cambodge Virology Unit, 5 Monivong Blvd, PO Box 983, Phnom Penh, Cambodia; email: ekarlsson@pasteur-kh.org

In April 2018, a 59-year-old woman was referred to our institute (Institute of Dermatology, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and Peking Union Medical College, Nanjing, China) for a 4-year history of an erythematous plaque with ulceration located on the right cheek. The primary lesion was a small erythematous plaque that gradually developed into an asymptomatic ulcerative plaque (i.e., the plaque had no heat, swelling, pain, or pruritus). She also reported occasional bloody, purulent nasal discharge over the course of 2 years. Two years before visiting our hospital, cutaneous tuberculosis was suspected, so she received treatment for tuberculosis (rifampin, isoniazid, ethambutol, pyrazinamide) for 10 months. No obvious improvement was observed with this treatment. Her medical history was otherwise unremarkable.

On physical examination, an infiltrated erythematous plaque with yellow scales and crusts on the right cheek was visible (Figure, panel A). Routine laboratory tests showed no remarkable findings. The results of autoantibody and HIV tests were negative, and immune subset cell counts were unremarkable. Histologic examination showed infiltration of a large number of lymphocytes, plasma cells, and neutrophils and some tissue cells in the dermis (Appendix Figure 1, https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/EID/article/25/10/19-0695-App1.pdf). Computed tomography scan of the paranasal sinuses showed bilateral maxillary, right ethmoid, and frontal sinusitis (Figure, panel C). Culture and PCR for mycobacteria in nasal discharge yielded negative findings.

After 3 weeks of skin tissue culture at 32°C in Löwenstein–Jensen medium, we observed smooth, yolk-yellow bacterial colonies (Appendix Figure 2). Ziehl-Neelsen staining confirmed the cultured organism was acid-fast bacilli. Sequence analysis indicated that the complete genetic sequence of 16S RNA was 99.0%, hsp65 100%, and rpoB 99.8% homologous with M. marseillense strain FLAC0026. Phylogenetic analysis of the 16S rRNA sequence showed the isolate clustered with M. chimaera and M. intracellulare (Figure, panel D). Although the 16S rRNA gene sequence of the isolate was 100% similar to M. intracellulare subsp. yongonense 05-1390, the sequence similarities to hsp65 and rpoB were relatively low. Sequence analyses suggested M. marseillense infection.

Referring to the guidelines for pulmonary M. avium complex disease, we treated the patient with the antimicrobial drugs clarithromycin, rifampin, and ethambutol (5). Afterward, in vitro drug susceptibility testing showed the isolate was sensitive to clarithromycin, azithromycin, and amikacin; moderately sensitive to moxifloxacin; and resistant to ethambutol and rifampin. Therefore, 3 months after initiating treatment, we changed the regimen to clarithromycin, moxifloxacin, and amikacin, which she received for 2 months. The patient’s skin lesions healed gradually, and nasal symptoms disappeared, but a scar and erythema...
remained (Figure, panel B). Computed tomography scans of the paranasal sinuses showed the reduction of sinusitis (Figure, panel C). No recurrence was observed during 4 months of monitoring.

We characterized this isolate’s genome (GenBank accession no. VAS10000000) further to help determine the cause of its virulence and resistance (Appendix Figure 3). Genetic analyses indicated the genome (≈5,706,022 bp) contained 5,343 predicted genes, 3 rRNAs, and 48 tRNAs and had a GC content of 67.73%. We annotated the genes functionally through multiple databases (Appendix Table 1, Figure 4). Using the Virulence Factors of Pathogenic Bacteria database, we identified 137 potential virulence genes (identity >95.0%, E value <1 × 10^{-5}; Appendix Table 2); mtrA modulates antimicrobial drug efflux, murA encodes the fosfomycin resistance protein, and gyrA encodes the fluoroquinolone resistance protein.

*M. marseillense* infections are rare in humans. Our case demonstrates that *M. marseillense* can cause infections in immunocompetent persons. For facial skin infection with *M. marseillense*, this and similar (7) reports indicate the need for vigilance of paranasal sinus infection. Although many potential virulence factors could be detected by genomic analysis, cases of infection and transmission with this bacterium are rarely reported, suggesting the presence of other influencing factors.

The drug resistance mechanisms of *M. marseillense* have not been completely elucidated. The drug susceptibility test results and treatment response we observed were generally consistent with those previously reported for
cases of pulmonary infection, although sensitivity to rifampin and quinolones yielded various results (2–4). Drug susceptibility testing indicated that the isolate we obtained was resistant to ethambutol and rifampin. However, in genetic analyses, mutations associated with ethambutol and rifampin resistance were not detected. According to the Comprehensive Antibiotic Resistance Database, our isolate was resistant to fluoroquinolone, but drug susceptibility test results were inconsistent. Our results indicate that drug susceptibility testing should be performed for *M. marseillense* to guide antimicrobial drug treatment. If drug susceptibility results are absent, treatments including macrolides and amikacin appear to be reasonable.

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About the Author
Dr. Xie is a physician in the Department of Dermatology, Zhejiang Institute of Dermatology, Deqing, China, and formerly studied at the Institute of Dermatology, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and Peking Union Medical College, Nanjing, China. His major research interest is infectious diseases of the skin.

References

Address for correspondence: Hongsheng Wang, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and Peking Union Medical College, Institute of Dermatology, St 12 Jiangwangmiao, Nanjing, Jiangsu, 210042, China; email: whs33@vip.sina.com

Geospatial Variation in Rotavirus Vaccination in Infants, United States, 2010–2017

Mary A.M. Rogers, Catherine Kim, Annika M. Hofstetter

Author affiliations: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA (M.A.M. Rogers, C. Kim); University of Washington and Seattle Children’s Research Institute, Seattle, Washington, USA (A.M. Hofstetter)

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We evaluated rotavirus vaccination rates in the United States by using records from a nationwide health database. From data on 519,697 infants, we found 68.6% received the entire rotavirus vaccine series. We noted pockets of under-vaccination in many states, particularly in the Northeast and in some western states.

Vaccination coverage in the United States frequently is evaluated with telephone and mailed surveys (1). However, telephone response rates have declined over the past 2 decades (2) and parents who choose not to vaccinate their children might be less likely to participate in surveys (3).