Expression of Mx exon-13 SNPs in Kampong-Laying Type (Kamper) chicken crossbreeds of female Lohmann brown-classic and male Pelung

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Abstract. Afifah D, Lesmana I, Poerwanto SH, Joko T, Mahardhika IWS, Daryono BS. 2020. Expression of Mx exon-13 SNPs in Kampong-Laying Type (Kamper) chicken crossbreeds of female Lohmann brown-classic and male Pelung. Biodiversitas 21: 1483-1487. The Gama Ayam Research Team has implemented marker-assisted selection (MAS) in selective breeding to provide a faster, more accurate, and more reliable selection of chicken. Mx gene expression has a vital role in chicken disease resistance. This research aimed to investigate the expression of Mx exon-13 single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) in the population of female Layer Lohmann Brown-Classical, male Pelung, and its progenies Kampong-Laying Type (Kamper) chicken. The G1892A mutation in Mx exon-13 resulted in a change in the amino acid 631 of Mx. The substitution of serine to asparagine favored the ability of chickens to acquire immunity against viral diseases, including avian influenza. Asparagine (A allele) at position 631 is specific to Mx (resistant), whereas serine (G allele) is specific to Mx (susceptible). DNA was amplified using the forward primer 5'-GCACTGTCCATCTTAAAGA-3' and the reverse primer 5'-GTATTGGTAGGCTTTGTTGA-3' and then sequenced using the Sanger sequencing method. Four SNPs were obtained through Mx sequence alignment. They consisted of four substitutions (A20734T, C20737T, A20766G, and A20893G) with one haplotype. Mx exon-13 SNPs were detected in Pelung and Kamper. Therefore, Kamper chicken inherited the disease resistance gene of Pelung and could be a strong candidate for parental generation in the further selective breeding program.

Keywords: AI, Kamper, Mx gene, resistance, SNPs

INTRODUCTION

Since 2008, the Gama Ayam Research Team has conducted several selective breeding programs with a well-constructed breeding structure and a native chicken breed to produce meat-type and laying-type chicken breeds with disease resistance. Selective breeding between Pelung Bitrik Hitam and Broiler Cobb 500 produced the hybrid chicken F1 Broiler or Kambro (Kampong-Broiler Type; Mahardhika and Daryono 2019). In 2013-2014, this research team successfully bred the F1 Kamper, a chicken breed that inherited the characteristics of female Lohmann Brown-Classic and male Pelung (Habibah et al. 2019, unpublished data). This research team also implemented marker-assisted selection (MAS) on numerous studies by using several genes. Tanjung et al. (2019) investigated the expression of the Myostatin gene in Gama chicken. Selective breeding in chicken is conducted based on egg productivity, meat productivity, and disease resistance. Diseases infecting chickens in tropical regions, such as Indonesia, include avian influenza (AI), Newcastle disease (ND), and chronic respiratory disease. The spread of the avian influenza A (H5N1) virus started when an outbreak occurred in poultry in August 2003 (Pracoyo 2009). Pracoyo (2009) also stated that the first human case was first recorded in July 2005 in Tangerang Municipality and then in eight provinces. In December 2008, the total cases increased by up to 139 people, and 113 of them died (Pracoyo 2009). To overcome the spread of AI in chickens, some researchers investigated the assembly, especially breeding, of chickens; when compared the resistance to AI of 63% of the local chicken population in Indonesia is relatively higher than that of imported broiler and layer chickens (Maeda 2005). Therefore, the native chicken breed can be further improved for selective breeding.

MAS can be applied in selective breeding to provide a faster, more accurate, and more reliable selection of chicken. Mx molecular marker can be used to identify the expression and probability of disease resistance in Kamper chicken. Pagala et al. (2017) found that MxHpy 81 is polymorphic in all genotyped chicken strains. MxHpy 81 may be used as a genetic marker of resistance to AI and ND in Indonesian native chickens (Pagala et al. 2017). Permatasari et al. (2015) stated that Mx (GenBank accession number: DQ788615) is located on chromosome 1 having a fragment length of 20,767 base pairs (bp) and consisting of 13 exons. The G/A polymorphism on exon-13 at nucleotide position 1,892 of coding the sequence of Mx results in changes in 631 amino acids of the Mx protein. Fourteen amino acid variants have been identified in the Mx protein from multiple chicken breeds, whose antiviral activity is seemingly linked to one amino acid variant at position 631 (S631N; Fulton et al. 2014). Fulton et al. (2014) also reported Mx polymorphisms in many chicken
breeds, including Australorp, Fayoumi, Japanese native chickens, Indonesian native chickens, White Leghorns, broilers, and inbred laboratory lines. Pagala et al. (2017) found that Kampong and Tolaki chickens are resistant to virus attacks (e.g., AI and ND) because of the flow of the A allele, which causes serine (AGT) to change into asparagine (AAT). The presence of asparagine (A) at exon 13 indicates that chickens are resistant to viral infections; by contrast, chickens are vulnerable to virus attacks when a base mutation occurs in serine (G) (Ko et al. 2002; Watanabe 2003; Ko et al. 2004; Pagala et al. 2017).

The parental generation of the breeding tree of Kamper chicken includes Pelung chicken as the male generation. The Mx gene expression is expected to reside in Indonesian native chicken breeds. The Mx expression and its correlation with growth performance in Kamper chicken have never been explored. In this research, the relation of Mx polymorphism associated with the growth of Kamper chicken was investigated.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The research was conducted in January 2017-June 2018 at Pusat Inovasi Agroteknologi (PIAT) UGM, Berbah, Sleman, Yogyakarta, and at the Laboratory of Genetics and Breeding, Faculty of Biology UGM. Whole blood samples used in this research are female Lohmann Brown-Classic, male Pelung, its progenies generation Kampong-Laying Type (Kamper) chicken and Broiler Cobb 500 chickens. Feeds and equipments used in this research are chicken feeds (BR-I and AD-II), supplements, 1 mL syringe, ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA), TE buffer, collection tube, master mix PCR (MyTaq HS Red Bioline), agarose, 70% alcohol, ddH₂O, FloroSafe DNA stain (BIO-5170, 1st BASE, Malaysia), 100 bp DNA ladder (Bioron), chelex 5% solution, 18 μL of 0.05 M DTT, 10 mg/mL proteinase K, 1× TAE, 10× TAE, PCR thermocycler (Bio-Rad), PCR tube (Biologis), waterbath, centrifuge, pipette tips (blue, yellow, and white), 1.5 mL microtubes, and UV transilluminator (Geldoc). This research was performed under the Animal Welfare Act of Indonesia and all procedures involving the handling of animals were approved by the local office of occupational and technical safety (Ethical Clearance Commission of Laboratory Penelitian dan Pengujian Terpadu, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta No: 00038/04/LPPT/VI/2018).

**Procedures**

**Chicken maintenance, body weight data records, and whole blood sampling**

The chicken population groups were randomly sampled as follows: a) layer Lohmann Brown-Classic (n: 5), b) Pelung (n: 5), c) Broiler Cobb 500 (n: 5), and d) Kampong-Laying Type (Kamper) (n: 5). Each chicken population group was reared starting from day-old-chick (DOC) until 7-weeks-old in a semi-intensive rearing system at PIAT UGM. Ad libitum standard feed diets of BR-I (0-4 weeks old) and AD-II (4-7 weeks old) were supplied by PT. Japfa Comfeed. The body weight in each week was recorded with a semi-analytical scale. Chicken blood samples were obtained using a syringe (1 mL), placed in EDTA + 1.5 mL microtube, and stored in a freezer at the temperature of −20 °C.

**DNA isolation and sequencing**

Whole blood DNA was isolated using the Chelex method. In this procedure, 10 μL of the blood sample was added to 1 mL of TE buffer and then centrifuged at 13000 rpm for 13 min. The supernatant was removed, the pellet was extracted, and a 5% chelex solution, 18 μL of 0.05 M DTT, 2 μL of 10 mg/mL proteinase K were added. The solutions were incubated at 56 °C for 2 h, vortexed for homogenization for 15 min, further incubated for 8 min, and centrifuged for 3 min. The supernatant was transferred to a microtubes and stored in a freezer at the temperature of −20 °C. The DNA fragment was amplified with 25 μL of PCR solution consisting of 12.5 μL of Mastermix PCR (MyTaq HS Red Bioline), 1.25 μL of forwarding primer (5’–GCACTGTCACCTCTTAATAGA–3’), and 1.25 μL of reverse primer (5’–GTATTGGTAGGCCCTGGTGTA–3’), 5 μL of DNA samples, and 5 μL of ddH₂O. PCR amplification was performed using a thermal cycler PCR machine with a predenaturation condition at 95 °C for 3 min, denaturation at 95 °C for 15 s, annealing at 60 °C for 15 s, extension at 72 °C for 25 s, and post extension at 72 °C for 5 min (Sironi et al. 2010). The PCR products were detected through electrophoresis on 2% agarose gel in a submarine electrophoresis system (Mupid-EXU) device. Agarose gel was initially prepared by dissolving 0.8 g of agarose powder in 40 mL of 1× TAE. Then, 4 μL of FloroSafe was added to this solution and inserted into a mold equipped with a comb. The solidified gel was placed in an electrophoresis chamber and soaked with 0.5× TAE. Next, 5 μL of the ladder and PCR samples were inserted into gel wells. The electrophoresis system was set at 100 V for 20 min. Lastly, observations were performed under ultraviolet light (λ = 260 nm). All the experimental animals used in this study were cared for and maintained throughout the experiments in strict accordance with the ethics and biosecurity guidelines approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of UGM, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. DNA sequencing was carried out by PT. Genetika Science Indonesia (Ruko Puri Mansion, Blok A, Jalan Lingkar Luar No. 19, Kembanegel Selatan, Kembangan, West Jakarta City, Special Capital Region of Jakarta).

**Data analysis**

The body weights of Pelung, Broiler Cobb 500, and Kampong-Laying Type (Kamper) chickens were then analyzed with ANOVA analysis. DNA was sequenced through the Sanger sequencing method and analyzed with Gene Studio software. The correlation between body weight and Mx expression was analyzed using Pearson’s correlation with IBM© SPSS© version 21.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Crossbreeds between female Lohmann Brown-Classic and male Pelung produced the progenies generation Kampong-Laying Type (Kamper). Ernanto (2017) concluded that the egg productivity of Kamper is higher (HDP: 140 eggs/300 days production) and its growth rate is relatively faster than those of Pelung chicken. Visual observation has shown that Kamper has several distinguishing traits, including white shank, golden and brown-barred feather, and single comb (Figure 1).

Bodyweight
Based on the 7 weeks of bodyweight measurement of each chicken population group under semi-intensive rearing system with standard feed diet the results are as follows, Pelung (289.4 g), Kampong-Laying Type (Kamper) (441.2 g), and Broiler Cobb 500 (2897 g; Figure 2). Fisher’s LSD post hoc analysis revealed that the growth rate of Kamper was significantly faster than that of Pelung (p<0.05).

Mx gene polymorphisms
Mx exon-13 was subjected to image analysis by using Gene Studio software, and the results revealed that the size of the DNA fragment from each sample (n=16) was 300 bp (Fig. 3). Pagala et al. (2017) reported a similar DNA fragment size of the DNA band of Mx in Tolaki chicken (299 bp). Mx exon-13 discovered in White Leghorn and New Hampshire chickens have a similar size of 300 bp (Pagala et al. 2017). Afterimage analysis, Mx amplicons were further analyzed with the Sanger sequencing method. The obtained sequence results were assembled using Gene Studio and then aligned with Clustal Omega to identify the polymorphic site.

Table 1 shows four SNPs of Mx were detected in Kamper and Pelung chickens and identified as a substitution mutation specified in several gene sites, namely, A20734T, C20737T, A20766G, and A20893G. They formed one haplotype in Kamper chicken. Three Kampong-Laying Type (Kamper) chickens formed one haplotype, and one Kamper chicken had the same nucleotide composition as the reference in GenBank (Mx accession number: DQ788616.1). Table 2 indicates that Mx polymorphisms were not significantly correlated with body weight but were positively and weakly correlated in the four SNPs sites of A20734T, C20737T, A20766G, and A20893G. Mx SNPs had no significant effect on the growth and bodyweight performance of Kamper chicken.

![Figure 1. Phenotypic traits of Kamper chicken (Gama Ayam Research Team 2019)](image1)

![Figure 2. Bodyweight comparison of Pelung chicken, Kamper chicken, and Broiler Cobb 500 in 7 weeks. The averages with different superscripts differ significantly (p<0.05) as indicated by Fisher’s LSD post hoc analysis.](image2)

![Figure 3. Mx gene visualization. M: 100 bp DNA ladder; 1-5: Kampong-Laying Type (Kamper); 6-10: Pelung; 11-16: Broiler Cobb 500.](image3)
Table 1. Single nucleotide polymorphisms of Mx in Kamper and Pelung chickens

| Sample codes   | Substitution Mx polymorphism Exon-13 | Substitution Mx polymorphism Exon-13 | Substitution Mx polymorphism Exon-13 | Substitution Mx polymorphism Exon-13 | 7-week-old chicken body weight (gram) |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| DQ788616.1     | A                                  | A                                  | A                                  | Reference*                          | -                                   |
| 2              | T                                  | A                                  | G                                  | G                                   | 1                                   | 297                                 |
| 3              | T                                  | G                                  | G                                  | G                                   | 1                                   | 488                                 |
| 4              | T                                  | G                                  | G                                  | G                                   | 1                                   | 452                                 |
| 5              | A                                  | A                                  | Reference*                         | Reference*                          | 397                                 |
| 6              | A                                  | A                                  | Reference*                         | Reference*                          | 336                                 |
| 7              | A                                  | A                                  | Reference*                         | Reference*                          | 321                                 |
| 10             | A                                  | A                                  | Reference*                         | Reference*                          | 231                                 |

Note: *Reference refers to the DQ788616.1 Mx GenBank accession number.

Table 2. Correlation of Mx polymorphism with the bodyweight of Kamper chicken in 7 weeks

| Single nucleotide polymorphisms | Substitution A20734T | Substitution C20737T | Substitution A20766G | Substitution A20893G |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Genotype                        | AA                   | AT                   | TT                   | AA                   |
| Genotype frequency              | 0.25                 | 0.75                 | 0.25                 | 0.75                 |
| Average body weight for 7 weeks | 397                  | 412.3                | 397                  | 412.3                |
| Correlation coefficient (r)     | 0.092               | 0.092                | 0.092                | 0.092                |
| Significance                    | 0.908**              | 0.908**              | 0.908**              | 0.908**              |

Note: **: nonsignificant (p>0.05); *: positively weak correlation (Pearson’s correlation)

Discussion

The image analysis of Mx exon-13 via Gene Studio revealed that the size of the DNA fragment from each sample (n=16) was 300 bp (Fig. 3). Pagala et al. (2017) reported a quite similar DNA fragment size of the DNA band of Mx in Tolaki chicken (299 bp). Mx exon-13 discovered in White Leghorn and New Hampshire chicken has a similar size of 300 bp (Pagala et al. 2017). Permatasari et al. (2015) stated that Mx is a specific genetic marker of disease resistance in avian species, including chicken (Gallus gallus). Mx is located in chromosome 1 (GenBank accession number: DQ788615) having a fragment length of 20,767 bp and consisting of 13 exons, 1115 bp coding regions, and 705 remaining amino acids (Permatasari et al. 2015). Mx has been linked to chicken immunity levels against viral diseases, such as AI and ND (Ko et al. 2002; Ko et al. 2004; Pagala et al. 2013; Pagala et al. 2017). Mx and the large GTPase protein it encodes are among the most studied interferon-stimulated antiviral effector molecules (Verhelst et al. 2013; Fulton et al. 2014). Their identity and names are based on their ability to inhibit the replication of viruses, specifically influenza virus (Verhelst et al. 2013; Fulton et al. 2014).

The frequency of A/G alleles in chickens can be a genetic indicator of the level of chicken resistance to virus attacks (Ko et al. 2002). Sulandari et al. (2007) stated that the A/G allele distribution in the native chicken population (Pelung, Sentul, Kedu, Kedu Hitam, Kedu Putih, Cemani, Wareng, Merawang, Gaok, Kate, Kapas, Arab Gold, and Arab Silver) in Indonesia can be identified with an Mx genetic marker. The results of this research showed that nucleotide polymorphisms in Mx exon-13 were as follows: 1) G allele (GG genotype) is susceptible to AI virus; 2) A allele (AA genotype) is resistant to AI virus; 3) AG genotype can be resistant or susceptible to AI virus (Sulandari et al. 2007). Four Mx exon-13 SNPs were identified as follows: A20734T, C20737T, A20766G, and A20893G (Table 1). Pagala and Ulupi (2014) found a similar SNP A20766G substitution. Mx polymorphism at 20766 of the nucleotide site was identified as Single-Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) with the substitution of GT to AT (A20766G). Substitution mutation alters the translation of serine (AGT) into asparagine (AAT). Asparagine (A) in Mx exon-13 indicated chicken viral resistance known as Mx*, whereas serine (G) translation indicated chicken susceptibility to viral infections known as Mx (Maeda 2005). Three Kamper chickens had the AGT genotype (Mx*), whereas one Kamper chicken had the AAT genotype (Mx†). This finding demonstrated that Kamper chicken had an acquired immunity against viral infection through selective breeding by using Pelung, which has been known as one of the native chicken breeds expressing Mx in Indonesia.

Table 2 indicates the correlation of Mx polymorphisms with bodyweight was not significant, and a positive weak correlation was observed in four SNPs sites of A20734T, C20737T, A20766G, and A20893G. Mx SNPs had a nonsignificant effect on the growth and bodyweight performance of Kamper chicken. Fulton et al. (2014) reported the correlation between Mx SNP and several performance traits, including the egg productivity (MxCDS122) and rate of lay (MxCD531, MxCD5694, and MxCD562), but Mx SNPs were not correlated with the bodyweight of chickens. Livant et al.
(2007) found that Mx1 exon-13 SNPs are significantly associated with the mortality rate and leg defects in broiler breeder chickens.

High body weight selection in broiler chickens and turkeys has resulted in a negative correlation in immune performance. The broilers selected for a high growth rate show lower antibody responses when they are challenged with sheep erythrocytes than those of a low BW line and a randomly bred control line (Knap and Bishop 2008). Kamper chicken has an inherited disease resistance allele of Pelung and grouped as a slow-growth broiler. The body weight gain and feed conversion of local chickens with AA and AG types are significantly higher than those of chickens with the GG type. This finding was consistent with several previous studies, which showed that genotypes containing A alleles are positively associated with the weight of 40-day-old chickens in a poorly hygienic environment. These results supported earlier assumptions that a strong link exists between the character of disease resistance and the ability of livestock to produce.

Chicken productivity depends on environmental conditions and disease resistance adaptation. Livestock that has a good fitness level and can resist infections tends to display a better production performance (Knap and Bishop 2008). However, Pearson’s correlation revealed that the polymorphism point (A20766G) related to the weight of 7-week-old chickens was not significant and positively very weak. A decisive conclusion on the correlation between MxA20766G SNP and chicken body weight must be validated using a large population size. Genotyping results indicated that three Kamper chickens were susceptible to AI virus with AG genotype (Mx*), and one Kamper chicken was resistant because of the AA genotype expression (Mx`). MAS could be used as a precise and highly efficient tool in selective breeding. Kamper chicken generation could be selected based on these results to further improve this breed through continuous selective breeding.

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