Antimicrobial Susceptibility of *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia* Isolates from a Korean Tertiary Care Hospital

Hae-Sun Chung,1 Seong Geun Hong,2 Yangsoon Lee,1 Myungsook Kim,1 Dongeun Yong,1 Seok Hoon Jeong,1 Kyungwon Lee,1 and Yunsop Chong1

1Department of Laboratory Medicine and Research Institute of Bacterial Resistance, Yonsei University College of Medicine, Seoul;
2Department of Laboratory Medicine, CHA Bundang Medical Center, CHA University, Seongnam, Korea.

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Corresponding author: Dr. Kyungwon Lee ,
Department of Laboratory Medicine and Research Institute of Bacterial Resistance, Yonsei University College of Medicine, 50 Yonsei-ro, Seodaemun-gu, Seoul 120-752, Korea.
Tel: 82-2-2228-2446, Fax: 82-2-313-0908
E-mail: leekcp@yuhs.ac

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We determined the antimicrobial susceptibility of 90 clinical isolates of *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia* collected in 2009 at a tertiary care hospital in Korea. Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, minocycline, and levofloxacin were active against most of the isolates tested. Moxifloxacin and tigecycline were also active and hold promise as therapeutic options for *S. maltophilia* infections.

Key Words: *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia*, antimicrobial susceptibility, trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, levofloxacin, minocycline

*Stenotrophomonas maltophilia* is one of several opportunistic pathogens of growing significance and is the third most common nonfermentative Gram-negative bacillus that has been isolated from clinical specimens.1-3 Differentiation between *S. maltophilia* colonization and infection may be difficult. Despite its relatively low virulence, *S. maltophilia* can cause a wide variety of infections including bacteremia and pneumonia, especially in debilitated or immunocompromised patients. Risk factors for colonization and infection include mechanical ventilation, use of central venous catheters, and broad-spectrum antibiotic prophylaxis and treatment.1,4

Antimicrobial susceptibility testing methods of *S. maltophilia* are not clearly standardized, and there is poor correlation between disk diffusion and agar dilution results for some agents.2,5 The British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (BSAC, version 10.2, 2011) recommends disk diffusion and dilution testing for trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole only,6 while the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) recommends dilution testing for trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, ceftazidime, chloramphenicol, levofloxacin, minocycline, and ticarcillin-clavulanate, and disk diffusion testing for only trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, levofloxacin, and minocycline.7

Infections caused by *S. maltophilia* are particularly difficult to manage because they show resistance to many classes of antimicrobial agents. However, few studies have focused on the susceptibility of *S. maltophilia* in Korea.8,9 The aim of this study was to determine the antimicrobial susceptibility of recent clinical *S. malto-
The six drugs recommended by CLSI, the relatively more active agents were trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, levofloxacin and minocycline.

Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole showed the lowest MIC$_{90}$ (1 μg/mL) and the isolates showed a high susceptibility rate of 94% to this agent. All but five isolates were inhibited at ≤2 μg/mL. Resistance rates to trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole have been reported to vary geographically, but were generally less than 20%, as was also seen in this study. However, isolates from cystic fibrosis patients and from some Asian countries, such as Taiwan and Turkey, showed high resistance rates (31.3-100%).

Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole alone, or in combination with other agents, is still considered the treatment of choice for suspected or culture-proven $S. maltophilia$ infections.

The MIC of levofloxacin ranged from 0.25 to 16 μg/mL, and the MIC$_{50}$ and MIC$_{90}$ were 1 and 8 μg/mL, respectively. The resistance rate was 13%, which was slightly higher than the rates of 3 to 11% seen in a previous study. The new fluoroquinolone, moxifloxacin, is more active in vitro than ciprofloxacin and levofloxacin. In this study, the MIC$_{50}$ and MIC$_{90}$ of moxifloxacin were 0.5 and 4 μg/mL, respectively, which were two-fold lower than those of levofloxacin. These results indicated that moxifloxacin could be suggested as an alternative to levofloxacin. Further clinical studies are necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of moxifloxacin in treating $S. maltophilia$ infections, as there is little data published on the clinical efficacy of moxifloxacin.

In this study, all $S. maltophilia$ isolates were inhibited by ≤4 μg/mL of minocycline, and the MIC$_{90}$ was 2 μg/mL,

| Drug                          | MIC (μg/mL) | % Susceptibility |
|-------------------------------|-------------|------------------|
|                               | Range       | 50% | 90% | S | I | R |
| Amikacin                      | 4 - >128    | >128 | >128 | - | - | - |
| Cefepime                      | 2 - 128     | 64 | 64 | - | - | - |
| Ceftazidime                   | 2 - >128    | 64 | >128 | 23 | 8 | 69 |
| Chloramphenicol               | 4 - 64      | 16 | 32 | 43 | 36 | 21 |
| Gentamicin                    | 1 - >128    | 128 | >128 | - | - | - |
| Imipenem                      | 16 - >128   | >128 | >128 | - | - | - |
| Levofloxacin                  | 0.25 - 16   | 1 | 8 | 81 | 6 | 13 |
| Minocycline                   | 0.12 - 4    | 0.5 | 2 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Moxifloxacin                  | ≤0.06 - 16  | 0.5 | 4 | - | - | - |
| Piperacillin-tazobactam       | 16 - >256   | >256 | >256 | - | - | - |
| Tetracycline                  | 8 - >128    | 32 | 32 | 23 | 44 | 32 |
| Ticarcillin-clavulanate       | 2 - >256    | 32 | 256 | 23 | 44 | 32 |
| Tigecycline                   | 0.25 - 8    | 1 | 2 | - | - | - |
| Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole | ≤0.06 - 64  | 0.5 | 1 | 94 | 0 | 6 |

-Not applicable.
which was 16 times lower than that of tetracycline. No isolates were resistant to minocycline. This data was similar to that of Taiwan, Brazil, Spain, and the USA.\textsuperscript{3,15-17} MICs of tigecycline ranged from 0.25 to 8 μg/mL, and MICs were 1 and 2 μg/mL, respectively, which were similar to those in other studies.\textsuperscript{1,11} The tetracycline derivatives minocycline and tigecycline have shown good \textit{in vitro} activity against clinical isolates of \textit{S. maltophilia}; however, there is little clinical data to support this claim.

The isolates showed low rates of susceptibility (23-43\%) to ceftazidime, ticarcillin-clavulanic acid and chloramphenicol, which were slightly higher than those in other studies.\textsuperscript{1} In general, β-lactams and/or β-lactamase inhibitor combinations show little activity against \textit{S. maltophilia}, because the organism has a high intrinsic resistance to most penicillins and cephalosporins, as well as to all carbapenems.

Aminoglycosides show poor activity against \textit{S. maltophilia} because of high intrinsic resistance and, therefore, are not useful in monotherapy.\textsuperscript{1,4} Despite a lack of clinical trials, treatment of \textit{S. maltophilia} infections with a combination of two or three antimicrobials has become current practice where trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole therapy is contraindicated.

In conclusion, trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, minocycline, and levofloxacin showed good \textit{in vitro} activity against \textit{S. maltophilia} isolates from Korea. Moxifloxacin and tigecycline were also active and hold promise as therapeutic options for \textit{S. maltophilia}.

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