



Phenotypic Characterization of Virulence Factors in Multidrug-Resistant *Salmonella typhi* Serovars Isolated from Clinical Specimens in Bauchi Metropolis

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Typhoid fever is one of the most common infectious diseases in developing countries including Nigeria. Globally, typhoid fever is an important cause of morbidity and mortality in many regions of the world. People most at risk for serious complications due to *Salmonella* infections include older adults, pregnant women, infants, children, and people who have compromised immune systems.

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Design and Duration: The study involves the collection of blood and stool specimens across all ages and gender between ages 0-70 years who present with fever and diarrhoea among other symptoms of typhoid in selected hospitals within Bauchi from January 2019 to August 2020.

Aim: The aim of this research is to phenotypically characterize virulence factors in Multidrug-Resistant *Salmonella typhi* serovars isolated from clinical specimens in selected hospitals within Bauchi.

Materials and Methods: A total of 518 blood and stool specimens were collected from selected health facilities within Bauchi metropolis to determine the presence of *Salmonellae* pathogens. Phenotypic identification of *Salmonella typhi* was performed using standard microbiological procedures, virulence factors were investigated and the Kirby Bauer Disk Diffusion method was used for the determination of the antimicrobial susceptibility and Multidrug Resistant pattern of the isolates.

Results and Discussion: Highest number of specimens collected was among patients with fever. Age groups 31-40 and 0-10 had the highest frequencies of occurrence respectively while age group 61-70 had the least. There was no significant difference between the age group and the number of isolates as $p > 0.05$. Highest frequency of *S. typhi* was found within the Female gender while Males recorded the lowest. The stool had the highest number of positive samples 31(21.6%) and blood had the least 17(4.5%). Flagella was present in 18(37.5%) of 48 virulence isolates and was the most prevalent. Haemolysin was the least prevalent 4(8.3%) in all the isolates in our study. In the present study, 37(77.0%) of *S. typhi* isolates were resistant to 2 or more antimicrobial agents (Multidrug resistance). The highest resistance was observed in Oxacillin 46(95.8%). The isolates were sensitive to Ciprofloxacin 31(64.5%), Colistin Sulphate 29(60.4%), and Ceftriaxone 28(58.3%). All isolates 48(100%) were Multidrug-resistant and sensitive to Ciprofloxacin, Colistin Sulphate, Ceftriaxone, and Amikacin.

Conclusion: This study established that *Salmonella typhi* was more prevalent in the middle age group, female out-patient with most cases of fever, diarrhoea, and sometimes both. Most of the *Salmonella typhi* recovered from this study were more from stool than blood. Of all of the isolates in this study 48(9.2%) produced two or more virulent factors, with flagella as the commonest across all the MDR isolates; which is indicative of a significant relationship between virulence factors and multidrug resistance. The emergence of multidrug-resistant strains of *Salmonella* has added to the urgent need for the development of more effective control measures.

Keywords: *Salmonella typhi* serovars; phenotypic; flagella; virulent factors; multi-drug resistance.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Typhoid fever, also known as enteric fever, is an acute systemic infection caused by *Salmonella typhi*, a Gram-negative bacterium” [1]. “It is largely a disease of developing nations due to their poor standard of hygiene and unavailability of clean water which contributes greatly to its spread. The disease is transmitted faeco-orally through contaminated food and water. The inappropriate and over-use of antibiotics and other antimicrobials to treat infections and consequent antibiotic selection pressure are thought to be the major causative factors contributing to the appearance of strains with reduced susceptibility to antibiotics *Salmonella* species possess a number of specific structural and physiological virulence factors enabling them to cause acute chronic diseases in humans. Such factors that improve their pathogenicity/ antigenicity include polymorphic surface carbohydrates, multiple fimbria adhesion, phase

variable flagella, well-structured mechanisms for invasion and survival in host macrophages and resistance genes profiles” [2]. “*Salmonella*, a primary inhabitant of the gastrointestinal tract, is recognized as one of the most common bacterial causes of diarrhoea infections worldwide, resulting in millions of infections and significant human mortality” [3]. “Symptoms among others are headache, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, gastroenteritis, abdominal cramps, and bloody diarrhoea with mucus and sometimes reactive arthritis” [4].

“The disease is systemic, without therapy, the illness may last for three to four weeks. Although the global burden of typhoid fever has reduced, emergence of multidrug-resistant *Salmonella typhi* (MDRST) is still a threat to public health. *Salmonella typhi* infection has been recognized as a major public health problem” [5]. “Generally, fever is the most common cause of consultations in the tropics and sub-Saharan Africa where most

fever are of infectious origin of which typhoid accounts for a majority. Typhoid fever is among the most endemic diseases in the tropics, it is associated with poverty and development with significant morbidity and mortality" [6]. "The emergence of multidrug resistance to the commonly used antibiotics has further complicated the treatment and management of enteric fever and this is recognized as one of the greatest challenges in the management of this disease The disease is an indication of neglect of control of the environment, while it is going extinct in the wider world, the case in Africa remains an alarming one as it is being recorded to constitute a major cause of hospital admissions in Africa" [7]. "The genetic characterization of antimicrobial resistance genes as well as their location and diversity is important in identifying factors involved in resistance, understanding the diversity of MDR strains, identifying genetic linkages among markers, understanding potential transfer mechanisms, and developing efficient detection methods. Investigating the antibiotic susceptibility patterns of pathogens is important toward tailoring treatment to the ever-changing resistance patterns and distribution of pathogenic bacteria *Salmonella typhi* possesses many kinds of virulence factors that play an important role in the process of pathogenesis" [8]. "The ability of *Salmonella typhi* to produce multiple virulence factors contribute to its pathogenicity and also enables it to elicit an infection by overcoming the host defence mechanisms this is further escalating with the combination of resistance genes" [9]. Most of the clinical species of *Salmonella typhi* produced double or multiple virulence factors which increases their chances of overcoming host defence system. of MDR *Salmonella typhi* strains produced. Virulence factors play a key role in conferring resistance to antibiotics. A robust and wide array of virulence factor repertoire may be essential for a pathogen to overcome intact host defences, whereas it may be unnecessary in a compromised host.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Study Area

The study was carried out in selected hospitals across Bauchi metropolis. They include Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Teaching Hospital, State Specialist Hospital, Bauchi, Infectious Disease Hospital Bayara and Comprehensive Health Centre, Tashan Babiye. The study was conducted on both Febrile and

Diarrhoeic patients of all ages and sex attending these hospitals. The specimens were collected from patients diagnosed by clinicians with either fever, gastroenteritis or both. Demographic information and important Biodata was also recorded.

2.2 Specimen Collection

A total of 518 blood and stool samples were collected from both inpatients and outpatients in the selected hospitals of the study area to determine the presence of *Salmonellae* pathogens. "Diarrhoea is defined as the presence of at least three loose stools or one watery stool per day. Fever is defined as a rise in temperature higher than 37°C" [10]. "Fluid Tetrathionate [8ml] broth in McCartney bottles was used to collect 2ml of venous blood" [11].

2.3 Specimen Processing

2.3.1 Isolation of *Salmonella typhi* from stool specimen

"Exactly 1gram of the faecal specimen was dispensed in nine [9ml] of Selenite F Broth [PART I and PART II], [Oxoid Limited, Hampshire, England] and used for pre-enrichment to allow for the multiplication of bacteria and incubated for 24hrs at 37°C. Turbidity was observed for both media, then subcultured onto Salmonella-Shigella Agar, MacConkey agar and Brilliant Green agar and incubated for 24hrs at 37°C. The representative *Salmonella* colonies were characterized morphologically using Gram staining method according to standard protocols" [12].

2.3.2 Isolation of *Salmonella typhi* from blood specimen

"Exactly 2ml of venous blood was drawn aseptically from each patient using a needle and syringe by cleaning the skin using a swab and placed into 8ml of tetrathionate broth (Oxoid Limited, Hampshire, England)" [13]. Blood culture broths were incubated at 37°C and checked for signs of bacterial growth daily for up to ten days. Bottles which showed signs of growth were sub cultured onto Salmonella-Shigella Agar, Brilliant Green agar and MacConkey agar.

2.4 Biochemical Screening

2.4.1 Sugar fermentation tests

"Nutrient broth cultures were prepared and used in Bijou bottles containing the basal medium.

Carbohydrate [mannitol, maltose, dulcitol, sucrose and glucose] was inoculated with drop of the nutrient broth suspension of the test isolate and loosely capped and incubated at 37°C overnight. They were observed for change in colour from amber to red and for gas production (in the medium filled inverted Durham tube)" [14].

2.4.2 Urease test

"The test organisms were inoculated heavily on the entire slope surface of the urea agar slants prepared in capped tubes. The tubes were placed in racks and incubated at 37°C for up to 48 hours. Tubes were thereafter examined for change of colour from plain to pink" [15].

2.5 Serotyping of Identified *Salmonella* Species

"Colonies considered to be of *Salmonella* Spp. Were further tested for Somatic [O] and Flagella [H] antigens with polyvalent antisera (Oxoid, UK)", [16]. Colonies of *Salmonella typhi* pure culture were picked using a sterile wire loop and placed on polyvalent antisera on a tile. This was then agitated for about 3 minutes until an agglutination reaction is seen. The agglutination antibody levels against O and H antigens of *S. typhi* were then noted.

2.6 Phenotypic Detection of *Salmonella typhi* Virulence Factors

All the *Salmonella typhi* isolates were screened for flagella, fimbriae, hydrogen sulphide gas production, haemolysin and biofilm formation.

2.6.1 Motility test [flagella test]

"Motility agar was prepared and inoculated with a straight inoculating needle making a single stab about 1-2cm down into the medium. The motility was examined after 24 hrs for 37°C. Motility was indicated by the presence of diffuse growth [appearing as colouring of the medium] away from the line of inoculation" [17].

2.6.2 Detection of fimbriae

This was done using Mannose Sensitive Agglutination (MSA) of Bakers' yeast (*Saccharomyces cerevisiae*) as described by Schembri et al. [18]. The *S. typhi* cells were mixed with a drop of 5% yeast cells suspension on glass slide and observed for agglutination.

2.6.3 Haemolysin production test

A plate haemolysis test was performed for the detection of haemolysin produced by *S. typhi* as described by Su and Liu [19]. The isolates were inoculated onto 5% sheep blood agar and incubated overnight at 37°C. haemolysin production was detected by the presence of a zone of complete lysis of the erythrocytes around the colony and clearing of the medium.

2.6.4 Hydrogen sulphide production

"Test organisms were inoculated into the Triple Sugar Iron agar slants contained in test tubes. These were incubated at 35° – 37°C for up to 48 hrs After incubation, the TSI agar media was checked for blackening and change in colour from amber to red at the bottom (butt) of the tube" [20].

2.6.5 Biofilm production

Bacterial biofilm production was tested by a qualitative tube method as described by Hassan et al. [21]. A loopful of test organism was inoculated in 10ml of trypticase soy broth with 1% glucose in test tubes. The tubes were incubated at 35° – 37°C for up to 24 hrs . After incubation, tubes were decanted and washed with phosphate buffer saline (pH 7.3) and dried. Tubes were then stained with crystal violet (0.1%). Excess stain was washed with deionized water. Tubes were dried in an inverted position. Biofilm formation was considered positive when a visible film lined the wall and the bottom of the tube.

2.7 Antibiotics Susceptibility Testing and Multidrug Resistant Screening

Antibiotic susceptibility testing was carried out by disc diffusion method using Mueller-Hinton agar against the following antibiotics (Oxoid Ltd, UK), Ampicillin (AMP, 10mg), Amoxicillin (AMC, 30mg), Augmentin (AUG, 30mg), Amikacin (AMK, 10mg), Ceftriaxone (CFX, 30mg), Cefotaxime (CTX, 30mg), Ciprofloxacin (CIP, 10mg), Neomycin (NEO, 30mg), Erythromycin (ERY, 25mg), Chloramphenicol (CHL, 5mg), Nalidixic acid (NAL, 5mg), Cefuroxime (CXM, 30mg), Cephalothin (CEF, 5mg), Cotrimoxazole (COT, 25mg), Fusidic acid (FA, 5mg), Colistin sulphate (CST, 25mg), Gentamycin (GEN, 10mg), Novobiocin (NOV, 5mg), Oxacillin (OXA, 5mg) Methicillin (MET,5mg), Tetracycline (TET, 30mg) and Imipenem (IPM, 10mg) using.

Prepared broth of colony suspension matching the turbidity standard (0.5 McFarland) of the isolate was evenly streaked onto freshly prepared Muller-Hinton agar. Inoculated plates were allowed to stay for 5mins, and subsequently incubated at 37°C for 18 hrs. Determinative antibiotics susceptibility chart was used to interpret the zone sizes of inhibition. *Salmonella typhi* that are resistant to up to three (3) recommended antibiotics of choice were regarded as Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR) isolates.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Salmonella typhi is more prevalent in developing countries than in developed regions. Threlfall et al. [22] reported a decrease in cases of typhoid fever in developed countries (due largely to adequate sanitary measures as compared to developing countries). The differences in the pattern of typhoid fever in developed and developing countries is multifactorial. "In recent years, the emergence of an ever-increasing number of antibiotic resistant microbial strains has become a severe health threat to human-kind and one of the biggest challenges to global drug discovery programs" [23]. "Multidrug Resistant (MDR) strains of *Salmonella* aided by the presence of multiple virulence factors are now encountered frequently worldwide and the incidence of Multi-Drug Resistance has increased considerably in recent years" [24].

Studies on the distribution of *S. typhi* among patients in selected Hospitals from the study area according to clinical diagnosis (Table 1), indicated a total of 518 specimens were collected with 48 of the specimens positive for *S. typhi*. Specimens collected from patients who presented with Fever was 308 out of which 18(5.8%) were positive for *S. typhi*. Patients with diarrhoea were 189 with 26(13.7%) positive. Patients with symptoms of Fever and diarrhoea were 21 with 4 (19.0%) of positive specimens. Patients with typhoid fever typically present with fever characterized by high-temperature rise, diarrhoea and sometimes both.

The present study observed the frequency distribution of *S. typhi* isolates and MDR according to the patient's demographic information and background (Table 2), where a total of 48 positive isolates with 37 MDR were recovered from 518 specimens collected from different age group (0 to above 70years), Age group 31-40 and 0-10 had the highest frequencies of occurrence (17) and (11) while

age group 61-70 had the least (1). There was no significant difference between the age group and the number of isolates as $p>0.05$. Parry et al. [25] showed that the prevalence of typhoid fever in endemic areas is considered high in young adults and school-aged children. Older adults are presumably relatively resistant due to the frequent boosting of immunity.

The study according to gender showed that 317 specimens were collected for males and 201 for females, the highest frequency of *S. typhi* was found within the Female gender [26] while Males recorded the lowest [22]. Females are more vulnerable to such diseases due to the physiological status, hormonal imbalance and changes as well as environmental factors associated to these women. Both Out-patients (31) and In-patients (17) were recorded in the present study. It also indicated that outpatients had the most percentage of *Salmonella typhi* isolated than the in patients. The high rates among the out-patient were attributed to self-medication and indiscriminate use of antibiotics before coming to the hospital thereby engaging in irrational treatment that may not be effective. The report agrees with previous reports of [27] who reported sampling of typhoid fever from outpatients as 63.2% and 36.8% inpatients.

The percentage of *Salmonella typhi* isolated from blood and stool shows that there was no significant difference ($p>0.05$) between blood and stool samples [3]. The stool had the highest number of positive samples 31(21.6%) and blood had the least 17(4.5%). Stool and blood can be collected from acute patients and they are especially useful for the diagnosis of typhoid carriers. The isolation of *S. typhi* from stools and blood is suggestive of typhoid fever. However, the clinical condition of the patient should be considered. A failure to isolate the organism from blood may be caused by several factors such as inadequate laboratory media, prior use of antibiotics, the inadequate volume of blood, the time of blood collection and incubation conditions. The widal test which is a serological test is the most widely requested by clinicians. The test has only moderate sensitivity and specificity. It can be negative in up to 30% of culture-proven cases of typhoid fever. This may be because of prior antibiotic therapy that has blunted the antibody response. On the other hand, *S. typhi* shares O and H antigens with other *Salmonella* serotypes and has cross-reacting epitopes with other Enterobacteriaceae, and this can lead to false-positive results. Such

results may also occur in other clinical conditions, such as malaria, typhus, bacteraemia caused by other organisms, and cirrhosis. In areas of endemicity, there is often a low background level of antibodies in the normal population. Determining an appropriate cut-off for a positive result can be difficult since it varies between areas and between times in given

areas. Hence, the gold standard for *Salmonella typhi* identification is in blood and stool cultures. The health facilities where the samples were collected do not determine the number of positive isolates. Health facilities have differences in the availability of standard laboratories and test facilities which also play a major role in the diagnosis and control of diseases.

Table 1. Distribution of *Salmonella typhi* among patients in the study area according to clinical diagnosis

Cases	No. (%) of specimens collected	No. (%) of isolates positive	No. (%) of isolates negative
Fever	308	18 (5.8)	290 (94.1)
Diarrhoea	189	26 (13.7)	163 (86.2)
Fever and Diarrhoea	21	04 (19.0)	17 (80.9)
Total	518	48 (9.27)	470 (90.7)

Table 2. Distribution of *Salmonella typhi* isolates and MDR according to patients' demographic information

Patients' information	No. of Samples collected (n = 518)	No. (%) of <i>S. typhi</i> isolates (n = 48)	No. (%) of MDR <i>S. typhi</i> isolates (n =37)
Age (years)			
0-10	152	11(22.9)	09(24.3)
11-20	73	05(10.4)	03(8.1)
21-30	78	09(18.8)	06(16.2)
31-40	89	17(35.4)	14(37.8)
41-50	63	03(6.2)	03(8.1)
51-60	38	01(2.0)	01(2.7)
>70	25	02(4.1)	01(2.7)
Gender			
Female	317	26(54.1)	21(56.8)
Male	201	22(45.9)	16(43.2)
Group			
Out-patient	396	31(64.6)	24(64.9)
In-patient	122	17(35.4)	13(35.1)

Table 3. Distribution of specimens according to type and frequency of *Salmonella typhi* isolated from different health centres in the study area

Health facility	No. /type of specimen		No. (%) of <i>S. typhi</i> isolated	
	Blood	Stool	Blood	Stool
ATBUTH	58	31	04(6.9)	06(19.3)
IDHB	82	37	02(2.4)	05(13.5)
SHB	103	23	05(4.8)	09(39.1)
CHCTB	132	52	06(4.5)	11(21.1)
Total	375	143	17(4.5)	31(21.6)

Key: ATBUTH – Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Teaching Hospital; IDHB – Infectious Disease Hospital Bayara; SHB – Specialist Hospital Bauchi; CHCTB – Comprehensive Health Centre Tashan Babiye

Distribution of *S typhi* isolates based on virulence phenotype in this study (Table 4) shows that all 48 isolates had one or more virulence factors. Flagella was present in 18(37.5%) of 48 virulence isolates and was the most prevalent. This is followed by Hydrogen Sulphide (H₂S) gas production 16(33.3%) of 48 virulence isolates. Biofilm production and Fimbriae both showed virulence factors in 5(10.4%) each of the isolates. Haemolysin was the least prevalent 4(8.3%) in all the isolates in our study. The difference in virulence factors production among MDR isolates from the entire sample source is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Although haemolysin is not too essential for the establishment of acute pyelonephritis, it may contribute to tissue injuries, to the survival of the microorganism and entry into the blood stream including sepsis. Haemolysin is known to confer selective advantage to the pathogen by releasing iron from lysed erythrocytes and enhances pathogenicity by destroying phagocytic cells and epithelial cells. Haemolysin production has also been shown previously to influence pathogenicity.

Most of the isolates in our study produced double or multiple virulence factors. These results are consistent with other findings [28], where majority (82.5%) of MDR *Salmonella typhi* strains produced. This supports the hypothesis that virulence factors play a key role in conferring resistance to antibiotics. A robust and wide array of virulence factor repertoire may be essential for a pathogen to overcome intact host defences, whereas it may be unnecessary in a compromised host.

Biofilms are a group of microbes which are encased in an exopolysaccharide matrix on both biotic and abiotic surfaces. This causes a number of persistent infections which respond poorly to conventional antibiotics therapy. Biofilm production was high in this study. The ability to form biofilms has been related to persistence of bacteria in the blood and high rate of fever associated with typhoid. In our study Hydrogen Sulphide (H₂S) gas production was present in

16(33.3%) of 48 virulence isolates. *Salmonella* strains are high Hydrogen Sulphide gas producers, this enhances pathogenicity, antibiotics resistance and host defence tolerance. A few species have been reported to show low Hydrogen Sulphide (H₂S) gas production. Fimbriae and Flagella are virulence factors that aid the organism in the process of pathogenesis and binding to specific receptor structures thereby able to colonise specific surfaces. They promote adhesion to surfaces in the host cell. Flagella is essential for chemotaxis and motility in microorganisms and also enhances movements to preferred sites of infection.

Enteropathogens are among the leading causes of diarrhoea and fever which is still the most common illness among children and young adults causing the highest number of morbidity and mortality and hospitalization in developing countries including Bauchi, Nigeria.

Diarrhoea and fever is more prevalent in developing world due in part, to lack of safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as poorer overall health and nutritional status [29]. This study revealed that other organisms isolated from the specimens collected are *Escherichia coli* with the highest prevalence rate of 26.6%, *Klebsiella* species 14.1%, *Shigella* species 8.1%, *Salmonella* species 9.2%, *Pseudomonas* species 14.8%, and *Proteus* species 16.0%. *Enterobacter* species had the least percentage of 13.3%.

Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR) strains of *Salmonella* are now encountered frequently worldwide and the rates of Multi-Drug Resistance have increased considerably in recent years. Drug resistance is highly linked to virulence of microorganisms. Some variants of *Salmonella* have developed Multi-Drug Resistance and virulence genes as an integral part of the genetic material of the organism, and are therefore likely to retain their drug-resistant and virulent genes even when antimicrobial drugs are no longer used [30].

Table 4. Virulence phenotypes of *S. typhi* isolate according to MDR pattern

Virulence factor	No. (%) of virulent isolates (n = 48)	No. (%) of MDR isolates (n = 37)
Biofilm formation	05 (10.4)	5(13.5)
H ₂ S gas production	16 (33.3)	12 (32.4)
Haemolysin	04 (8.3)	02 (5.4)
Fimbriae	05 (10.4)	04 (10.8)
Flagella	18 (37.5)	14 (37.8)

MDR – Multi-Drug Resistant

Table 5. Frequency of occurrence of enterobacteriaceae isolates from the specimens collected from patients in the study area

Isolates	Number of occurrences (n = 518)	Percentage (%)
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	138	26.6
<i>Klebsiella</i> sp.	61	11.7
<i>Shigella</i> sp.	42	8.1
<i>Salmonella typhi</i>	48	9.2
<i>Pseudomonas</i> sp.	77	14.8
<i>Proteus</i> sp.	83	16.0
<i>Enterobacter</i> sp.	69	13.3

Table 6. Distribution of isolates according to antimicrobial susceptibility pattern

Antimicrobial Agent (µg)	Number (%) of isolates (n = 48) and susceptibility pattern (%)	
	Sensitive	Resistant
Ampicillin (10)	09 (18.7)	39 (81.2)
Augmentin (30)	18 (37.5)	30 (62.5)
Amikacin (30)	10 (20.8)	28 (79.1)
Ceftriaxone (30)	28 (58.3)	20 (41.6)
Cefuroxime (30)	15 (31.2)	33 (68.7)
Cefotaxime (30)	11 (22.9)	37 (77.0)
Cephalothin (5)	18 (37.5)	30 (62.5)
Chloramphenicol (5)	23 (47.9)	25 (52.1)
Ciprofloxacin (5)	31 (64.5)	17 (35.4)
Cotrimoxazole (25)	22 (45.8)	26 (54.1)
Colistin Sulphate (25)	29 (60.4)	19 (39.5)
Erythromycin (25)	08 (16.6)	40 (83.3)
Fusidic acid (5)	08 (16.6)	40 (83.3)
Gentamycin (10)	13 (27.0)	35 (72.9)
Imipenem (10)	04 (8.3)	44 (91.6)
Novobiocin (5)	07 (14.5)	41 (85.4)
Oxacillin (5)	02 (4.1)	46 (95.8)
Methicillin (5)	18 (37.5)	30 (62.5)
Tetracycline (30)	11 (22.9)	37 (77.0)

“Resistance to ampicillin, chloramphenicol, cotrimoxazole, and ciprofloxacin was observed in this study, the resistance could be as a result of indiscriminate use of antibiotics. The inclusion of preventive doses of antimicrobial agents in poultry feed as growth promoters is often associated with the development of resistance in enteric bacteria. These resistant bacteria contribute to the reservoir of resistant bacteria found in the human intestinal tract including resistant *Salmonella typhi*” [31].

In the present study, 37(77.0%) of *S. typhi* isolates were resistant to 2 or more antimicrobial agents (Multidrug resistance). Highest resistance was observed in Oxacillin 46(95.8%), Imipenem 44(91.6%), Novobiocin 41(85.4%), Erythromycin 40(83.3%), and Ampicillin 39(81.2%). The isolates were sensitive to Ciprofloxacin

31(64.5%), Colistin Sulphate 29(60.4%), and Ceftriaxone 28(58.3%). The use of antimicrobials for growth-promotion, prophylaxis and treatment of animal of animal's food increases the prevalence of resistance in human pathogens. High susceptibility of *Salmonella typhi* was observed against Fluoroquinolones (Ciprofloxacin). This finding is similar to a report by Akinyemi et al. [32] in Lagos, Nigeria, which reported an 18% reduced susceptibility of *Salmonella sp* to Ofloxacin and Ciprofloxacin. The high susceptibility of enteric bacteria to the Fluoroquinolones recorded in this study may be connected to the relatively high cost of Ciprofloxacin. Therefore, fluoroquinolones are not used indiscriminately because not many could afford them. The selection for resistance almost certainly comes from the availability of cheaper generic drugs for the treatment of this

invasive bacterial infection. The relatively low cost of generic medicine is partly the major reason for antibiotics abuse [33].

“With the emergence of resistance towards traditional antibiotics, fluoroquinolones and extended-spectrum cephalosporins have been introduced as the antimicrobial agents of choice in treating MDR *S. In* countries with a higher incidence of MDR isolates, *S. paratyphi* displays a higher level of resistance towards fluoroquinolone compared to *S. typhi*” [34]. “Nalidixic acid resistance, which is used as an indicator of reduced susceptibility of ciprofloxacin and other fluoroquinolones is displayed by isolates from Pakistan, India and Vietnam, with a high incidence rate of 59%,57% and 44%, respectively” [35].

4. CONCLUSION

This study revealed a high occurrence of multidrug-resistant and virulent *Salmonella typhi* isolated from blood and stool specimens of both active adults and young ages and sex, which reaffirm the importance of proper diagnosis and drug administration in the treatment of typhoid fever.

CONSENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

Ethical approval was obtained from the Government of Bauchi State, Ministry of Health research and ethics committee, with written informed consent also sought from all patients prior to specimen and data collection.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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