

Keywords: Multidrug-resistant *M. tuberculosis*; Extensively drug-resistant *M. tuberculosis*; In vitro synergy; Fractional inhibitory concentration index; Broth microdilution checkerboard

Introduction

Drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) is a major threat worldwide today. The main source of drug-resistant pulmonary tuberculosis is retreatment patients [1]. According to the survey in 72 countries and territories around the world, the rate of DR-TB in retreatment pulmonary tuberculosis patients with sputum smear positive was 0.0%-85.9% and the rate of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) was 0.0%-62.5%. In China, the rate of DR-TB in retreatment pulmonary tuberculosis patients with sputum smear positive was 55.17% and the rate of MDR-TB was 25.64% [2]. While DR-TB is a formidable obstacle to effective TB care and prevention globally, the more effective therapeutic regimen for retreatment pulmonary tuberculosis is urgently needed. However, the synergistic effect is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of the anti-tuberculosis chemotherapy [3-5]. Moxifloxacin (Mfx), Pasiniazid (Pa), Rifabutin (R) and Rifapentine (R) were core drugs of the national key project for infectious diseases (the retreatment research tuberculosis). These drugs have been carried out in the clinical application and have appeared as promising new anti-TB therapies in patients with resistance to classical drugs. But there has not been report on the synergism of these drugs. To address this need, we conducted this study of in vitro synergism of these drugs on twenty DR-MTB clinical isolates including ten MDR-TB and ten XDR-TB by a three-dimensional checkerboard in Middlebrook 7H9 broth microdilutions. We calculated the fractional inhibitory concentration index (FICI) of

anti-tuberculosis drug combinations (MfxPa, MfxPaR and MfxPaR) for these isolates and judge the synergism of these drugs.

Materials and Methods

Test isolates

A total of twenty clinical isolates of *M. tuberculosis* including ten multidrug-resistant strains (isolate Nos.1-10) and ten extensively drug-resistant strains (isolate Nos.11-20) were included in this study from

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Received December 17, 2014; Accepted January 06, 2015; Published January 15, 2015

Copyright: Yan L, Zhang L, Yang H, Xiao H (2015) In Vitro Synergism Testing of the Antimicrobial Agents against Multidrug-Resistant and Extensively Drug-Resistant Mycobacterium Tuberculosis by Checkerboard Method. J Mol Pharm Org Process Res 3: 123. doi: [10.4172/2329-9053.1000123](https://doi.org/10.4172/2329-9053.1000123)

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Antimicrobial agents

The antimicrobial agents Pa, R, R were purchased from Sigma Chemical Company (St Louis, MO). Mfx was purchased from Bayer Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. Initial stock solutions of these antimicrobial agents were prepared according to manufacturers' instructions and stored at -70°C until use [6].

Liquid culture medium

Liquid culture medium was Middlebrook 7H9 liquid culture containing 10% OADC enrichment ([Becton Dickinson Co., U.S.A.], the mixture of antimicrobial agents and growth indicator). Middlebrook 7H9 liquid culture was prepared according to the literature [7,8].

Inoculum preparation

M. tuberculosis suspensions in log-phase growth were adjusted to an optical density of 1.0 McFarland standard in sterile saline, corresponding to a cell density of approximately 10^8 colony forming units (cfu/ml). The cell suspensions were then subjected to ten-fold serial dilutions to give a final concentration of 10^6 cfu/ml at the time of inoculation.

Antimycobacterial susceptibility testing

Minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) of R and R as single agent was examined using the microwell plate method. Before use, aliquot of 20ul liquid culture medium contained R or R dilutions was prepared and added to the sterile 96-well polystyrene U-bottom microdilution tray. The concentration range of R or R was from 0.15 µg/ml to 320 µg/ml. When 200 µl suspension of *M. tuberculosis* was inoculated, the final concentration range was from 0.015 µg/ml to 32 µg/ml. Three drug-free controls were inoculated with the same suspensions diluted 1:1, 1:10 and 1:100 respectively. The MIC of R or R is the lowest concentration causing visible white bacterial precipitation in the bottom of the well less than that of the 1:10 drug-

as being indifferent, with FICI ranging from 0.5 to 1.0. Only two isolates revealed synergy with FICI <0.5, as shown in (Table 2).

Checkerboard assay of PaMfxR and PaMfxR combination

As shown in Table 2, the combination of PaMfxR and PaMfxR was interpreted as being synergy to most of the tested MDR-TB and XDR-TB isolates, especially PaMfxR combination. PaMfxR combination showed synergism against two MDR 0 10 42.5197 692.9248 Tm [(r)8 (etidrug-Resistant and)24.8 ()]TJ 0.164 Tw -15.4irg

is necessary to do more research on this method to investigate the application value.

Funding: is study was funded by the National Key Project for Infectious Disease (No. 2013ZX10003009)

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