

# **Neutral pH and cold temperatures stabilize the protective effect of crude pili *S. flexneri* on the ileal mucosa of mice**

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**Background:** Alternative therapies are being sought as a result of the rising concerns with inadequate and untrustworthy medical treatments for *Shigella flexneri*. The current study aimed to assess the preventive and therapeutic effects of *crude pili S. flexneri* on of neutral pH and cold temperature against *Shigella flexneri* infection in immunocompetent mice.

**Methods:** Twenty male Swiss albino mice were randomly assigned to one of two groups: control or experimental groups. Each group was subsequently separated into four equal subgroups. In order to infect the mice, 4 weeks before infection, the experimental subgroups were given *crude pili S. flexneri* orally in every week (three times) until the completion of the research. After following the treatment of *crude pili S. flexneri*, all group infected with *Shigella flexneri*. The small intestines of mice were processed and analyzed for the presence of the pathological lesions. Jejunal portions were measured. The findings revealed that vaccinated mice had a statistically significant increase in the quantity of health mucose as compared to non-infected group in ileal sections. *Crude pili S. flexneri* was administered to the intestinal portions of all subgroups before or after the infection, and the architecture was found to be more or less normal.

**Conclusion:** Our data indicate that *crude pili S. flexneri* in neutral pH and cold temperature is a useful preventative and a potentially effective treatment medication for *S. flexneri* infection.

**Keyword:** pH, temperature, crude Pili *Shigella flexneri*, ileal mucosal damage

## INTRODUCTION

Shigellosis is an acute intestinal infection caused by shigella. It is transmitted through feco-oral route causing severe-bloody diarrhea. Shigellosis is a major health concern in the world especially in developing countries because Shigellosis now become endemic. An epidemic happened in Latin America, Asia, and Africa since 1960s were caused by *S. flexneri* 2a, *S. flexneri* 1, and *S. sonnei*. In Indonesia, morbidity and mortality of this disease is still high (DG PPM & PLP, 2009).

*S. flexneri* is a Gram negative bacteria, grown in anaerobic and facultative anaerobic, with pH 6.4 to 7.8 acidity, and temperature of 37' C. *S. flexneri* was able to cross the colonic mucosa and colonize in the intestinal epithelium causing severe intestinal inflammation and necrosis of the epithelium of the colon. Mechanism of Shigella infection is mediated by pili or fimbriae (Todar, 2012) which has a cellular component that used for adhere to host cells (Jennison & Verma, 2004). The existence of specific adhesion factor on bacterial surface will stimulate the host tissues express certain receptors on their cell surface and make them attached. The bacteria then invade the intestinal mucosal epithelial cells (Tortora, 2010).

*S. flexneri* become resistant to many antibiotics, even the latest antibiotic. *S. flexneri* multidrug resistance is a serious problem in the treatment of shigellosis because it increases the risk of epidemics. Therefore, WHO prioritize the development of an effective and safe vaccine for the control of shigellosis, especially in developing countries (Cakrabarti, 2010).

The pathogenesis of diarrhea by *S. flexneri* is a complex mechanism that causes severe intestinal inflammation and necrosis of the colonic epithelium. Shigella capabilities to across the colonic mucosa, colonize in the intestinal epithelium, and downregulate antimicrobial peptide which act as natural antibiotic is a key factor that cause these bacteria extremely virulent (Sansonetti, 2004; Sperandio et al, 2008), so that the consumption of 10 -100 bacteria can cause individu suffering from severe diarrhea. (Lamps, 2009; Tortora, 2010). Due to the various capabilities of *S. flexneri* to avoid the mechanism of action of antibiotics, multidrug antibiotic resistance by *S. flexneri* has been widely reported. Its increasing the risk of epidemics in various countries including Indonesia. Therefore, the World Health Organization prioritize the development of an effective and safe vaccine to help Shigellosis control.

One effort to develop an effective vaccine is use crude protein. Pili *S. flexneri* is *crude* protein that containing adhesin molecules. It contains haemagglutinin protein (Anam, 2012). So, it is highly relevant to induce immune response memory for shigellosis by vaccination with crude Pili *S. flexneri*. Giving oral adhesion protein is expected to activate dendritic cells to secrete IL-22 and IL-23, which then stimulates some T cell subsets, including Th17 cells. Th17 cells then secrete IL-17 and IL-22 which induces intestinal epithelial cells to secrete antimicrobial peptides Defensins to fight off the invasion of *S. flexneri* (Blachitz & Raffatelu, 2010). The result is expected to support the discovery of a reliable vaccine to cope with shigellosis.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Research design

We apply an experimental research design using 20 mice with 8-12 weeks old. The sample were randomly divided into 4 groups: (K1) control without a particular treatment, (K2) CTB (7  $\mu$ g/0.3 ml PBS), (K3) adhesin protein *Crude pili S. flexneri* (250  $\mu$ g/0.3 ml PBS), (K4) adhesin protein *Crude pili S. flexneri* (250  $\mu$ g/0.3 ml PBS) + CTB (7  $\mu$ g/0.3 ml PBS). All protein provided in neutral PH dan cold temperature. The *Crude pili* immunization treatment was given for 3 weeks orally.

### Culture of *Shigella* spp.

The bacteria used in this research was *S. flexneri* from Research of Laboratory Health East Java Indonesia. The Medium used was Thiaproline Carbonate Glutamate (TCG) in order to enrich the growth of pili. This medium contains 0.02% thiaproline; 0.3% NaHCO<sub>3</sub>, 0.1% mono sodium 1-glutamate, 1% bactotryptone; 0.2% yeast extract, 0.5% NaCl, 2% bacto agar and 1 mM  $\beta$  amino-ethyl ether-N, N 'n'-tetra acid (EGTA) Ehara.

#### **Isolation of *Shigella flexneri* pili**

Isolation of *Shigella flexneri* pili was refers to the research carried out by Sumarno with modification. Bacteria pili cutting used pili bacterial cutter and was carried out for 30 seconds at a speed 5000 rpm, while the second to four cuttings used same speed. The isolation of pili fraction by centrifugation of cutting product as carried out at 12,000 rpm by using a temperature 4° C. Shave repeated and stopped after the supernatant looks clear. Then, supernatants containing the bacterial pili are stored at a temperature of 40 C.

#### **Isolation of *Shigella flexneri* protein hemeagglutinin pili crude protein Pili *Shigella flexneri***

Research method referred to Sumarno (2011). The results of pili collection was carried out electrophoretically by SDS-PAGE method. The product of electrophoresis in the form of gel was cut straight at the desired molecular weight. Then the pieces were cut perpendicularly so each piece will contain three protein bands. The resulted pieces of band above were collected and then inserted into the tube of dialysis membrane by using electrophoresis running buffer fluid. Electroellusion used a horizontal electrophoresis apparatus at 125 mV power for 25 minutes. The dialysis was performed on the product of electroellusion with PBS pH 7.4 buffer fluid as much as 2 liters during 2 X 24 hours. Dialysis fluid was replaced three times. Dialysis fluid in membrane dialysis as a result of electroellusion of SDS-PAGE band was ready for hemagglutination test.

#### **Stabilization protein on neutral Ph and cold temperature**

The technique of the present invention entails adding a sufficient amount of a stabilizer to a protein preparation to decrease protein aggregation while the preparation is kept at a low pH. In one embodiment, the method includes adding a sufficient amount of one or more amino acids to achieve a final concentration of between about 1 mM and about 3 M, preferably between about 1 mM and 1 M, and then subjecting the solution to a low pH, preferably a pH of about 4.0 or less, more preferably between about pH 2.8 and about pH 4.0. Furthermore, stabilizers for the procedures of the present invention can be chosen from a sugar or sugar derivative such as sucrose, mannitol, and glycerol, or from inorganic salt stabilizers such as sodium EDTA, NaCl, or CaCl<sub>2</sub>. To decrease protein aggregation at low pH, one or more sugar or salt stabilizers can be coupled with one or more amino acid stabilizers in one embodiment. All protein were placed on 4° celcius temperature.

#### **Sodium dodecyl sulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE)**

Monitoring the molecular weight (MW) by SDS-PAGE was done by applying Laemmli methode. Protein sample was heated in 1000 C for 5 min in buffer solution containing 5 mM Tris pH 6.8, 5% 2-mercapto ethanol; 2.5% w / v sodium dodecyl sulfate, 10% v / v glycerol with bromophenol blue tracer colour. 12.5% of a mini slab gel with 4% tracking gel was selected. Electric voltage used was 120 mV. The color material used was a coomassie brilliant blue and protein markers using *sigma low range marker*.

#### **Adhesion protein conjugation prochedur (49,8 kDa + Cholera Toxin Crude B )**

Imunization of Pili protein of *Shigella flexneri* 49,8 kDa 100 $\mu$ g/100 $\mu$ l conjugated with CTB 12 $\mu$ g/25 $\mu$ l as adjuvant.

#### **Immunization**

We use male mice of the species *mus musculus* outbred Balb/C were aged 6-8 weeks, as many as 20 tails mice of the Laboratory of Pharmacology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Brawijaya. The mice

outbred Balb/C is divided into four treatment groups, each group as much as 5 mice. The experimental research had agreement about ethical clearance from The Ethical Committee Medical Research Faculty of Medicine, University of Brawijaya. Immunizations were given to Group I: Control infection, Group II: obtained CTB only, Group III: obtained immunization with adhesion protein *crude pili* 100 µg/100 µl, Group IV: obtained immunization with adhesion protein *crude pili* 100 µg/100 µl +CTB 12 µg/25 µl (under the guidance of Sigma). Immunizations were given every three days orally. On the day 35, the mice were killed and taken along the 10 cm piece of ileum to in challenge with *S. Flexneri*, then examined the strength of protectivity using histo PA.

#### **Preparation of Mucosa**

Preparation of mucus was carried out as follows: intestinal pieces were washed with cold PBS. Then the intestine was opened so that the visible part of the small intestine mucosa exposed. Layer of mucus was collected by scraping longitudinally with spatel and placed in tubes containing sterile PBS and protease inhibitors.

#### **Protectivity test (Histopathological Examination)**

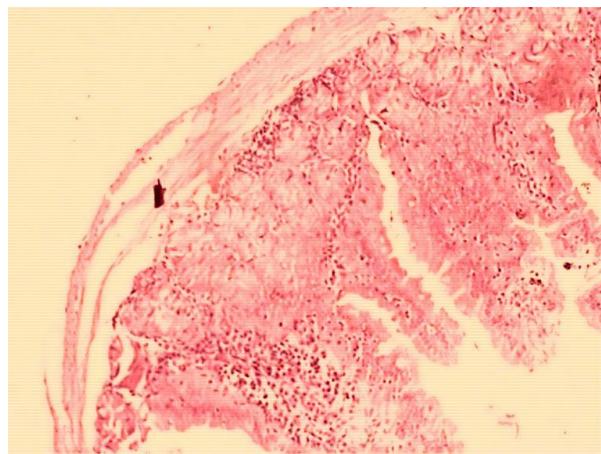
To test the strength of protectivity, we used Mice Ligated Ileal Loop (MLIL). Protectivity were tested by using histopathological examination of small intestine of mice treated group and the control group that carried out in the pathology anatomy laboratory medical faculty of Brawijaya University. Animals were euthanized by CO<sub>2</sub> inhalation. After had been exposed with *S. flexneri* for 4 hour, the mice ileum were removed and perfused with 10% buffered formalin phosphate (Fisher, Pittsburgh, Pa.), dehydrated, and processed in paraffin. Sections were cut at 3 mm and stained with hematoxylin and eoxin.

#### **Statistical analysis.**

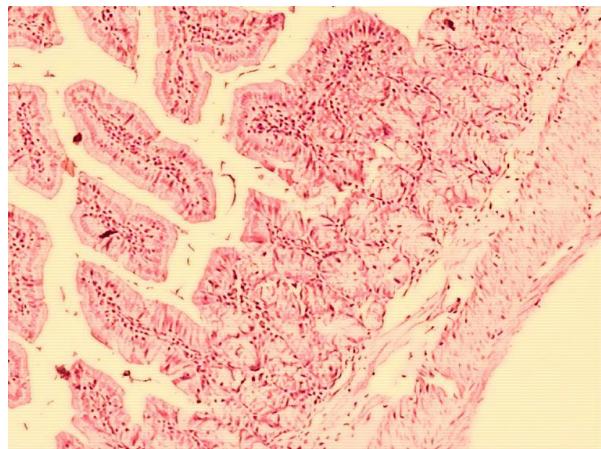
For comparative analysis of immunogenicity, data were tested by one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). This research is significant if  $p < 0.05$ . When significant differences were found, differences between means were determined by Tukey's multiple comparison tests. If the data does not meet the requirements of normality and homogeneity then using Kruskal Wallis test then tested further by Mann Whitney U test. All statistical analyses were carried out in GraphPad Prism (version 5.03; GraphPad Software Inc., La Jolla, CA).

## **RESULT**

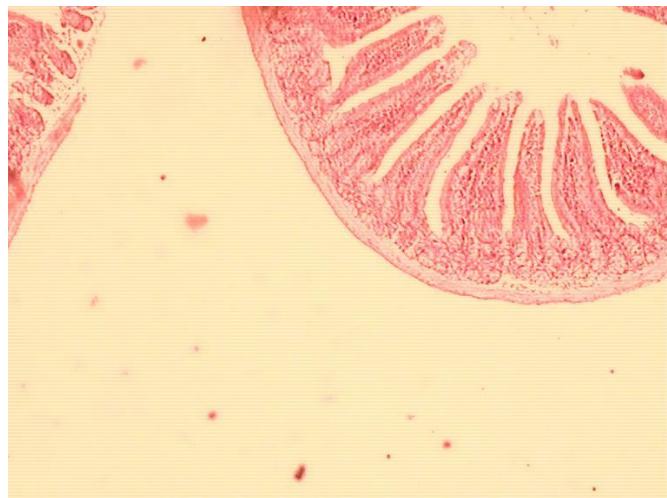
The loops were opened longitudinally to examine the mucosa of the intestine. The loops treated with *S. flexneri* strain were significantly diluted and filled with haemorrhagic thick fluid, whereas the loops treated with the *crude pili* *S. flexneri* showed minimal fluid accumulation, similar to the control loops treated with phosphate-buffered saline. Section of tissue infected with *S. flexneri* revealed a total loss of villous architecture as well adenudation of surface epithelium in some areas. Massive bleeding with neutrophilic infiltration in the lamina propria extending up to the submucosa was observed, as well as congested and dilated crypts. These observations indicate that the intake crude protein pili *S. flexneri* in neutral pH and cold temperature provide protection against the effects of ileal mucosa is characterized by villi in good condition and there is no edema



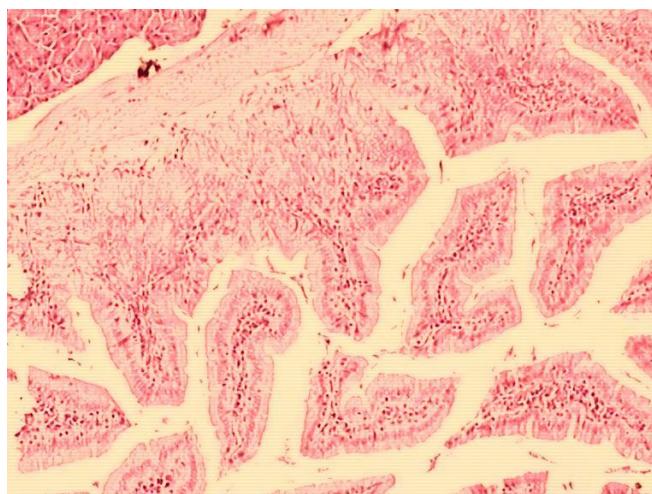
**Figure 1. The result of ileum Histopathological Examination from Control group without pH and temperature setting nor particular treatment.** Histopathological appearance of mice intestinal mucosa infected by the wild-type invasive *S. flexneri* strain. The strain destroyed the architecture of the intestinal mucosa of mice by necrosis.



**Figure 2. The ileum Histopathological result of group CTB (7 µg/0.3 ml PBS) without pH and temperature setting.** Group treated with the CTB only, revealed such alterations and retained destroyed of villous shape. Figure 2 depicts the intestinal mucosa of an infected mice.



**Figure 3. The result of ileum Histopathological Examination of group protein Crude pili *S. flexneri* (250  $\mu$ g/0.3 ml PBS) in neutral pH and cold temperature (4°celcius).** The result revealed no such alterations and retained normal villous shape. Mice intestinal mucosa infected by the *S. flexneri* did not show lesions and the villi were conserved. Photographs were taken under low power objectives with an MPS 60 camera.



**Figure 4. The result of ileum Histopathological Examination of group protein Crude pili *S. flexneri* (250  $\mu$ g/0.3 ml PBS) + CTB (7  $\mu$ g/0.3 ml PBS) without pH and temperature setting.** The result revealed destroyed villous shape. Mice intestinal mucosa infected by the *S. flexneri* show many lesions and the villi were destroyed.

## DISCUSSION

Knowledge of the process involved in the invasion of *S. flexneri* into the gastrointestinal tract is the major theme to understand the pathogenesis of infections. The key steps in the invasion of *S. flexneri* are epithelium proliferation, invasion and movement to the tissues. The pili molecule is a major antigenic constituent of the *Shigella* cell surface. The best prophylactic measure would be to prevent the *Shigellae* from invading the mucosal lining of the intestine to limit their intracellular multiplication and spread in the tissues. A live attenuated *Shigella* strain, expressing pili and has been

suggested for vaccine formulation and should be preferred. The effect of pH and temperature toward the effectiveness *Crude* protein pili *S. flexneri* as a vaccine candidate never been yet understood. *Crude* protein pili *S. flexneri* used in the study was a *Crude* pili that has been cutted from the outer surface of the *S. flexneri* bacteria. This kind of protein is an adhesion protein that has local side effect and mild systemic reaction compared to a whole cell attenuated vaccine (*centers for Disease and Prevention, 2006*). Some studies have been revealed that a *Crude* vaccination could induce Th1 strongly with long term memory and immune system protection level similar to a wild type microorganism induction (Aagaard *et al*, 2011; Agger *et al*, 2008; Lindenstream *et al*, 2012).

In this study, the adhesion protein *S. flexneri* was given per oral as *S. flexneri* pathogenesis indicate that it could invade the host through feco-oral route. Beside its effectiveness, the benefits of this method include easy to administer, atraumatic and no need aseptic method. The adjuvant used in the study was *Cholera Toxin Crude-B* (CTB), a protein carrier, since it could stimulate mucosa antibody response and induce systemic cell-T in binding with antigen. The ileum tissue was examine using Hematoksilin Eosin examination after challenged by viable *S. flexneri*. It could be seen that the ileum histologi result in the protein pili only group described good condition characterized by long and complete mucosal villi cells. Based on the histopathology finding, it was only the protein pili group showing the presence of protective effect.

## CONCLUSION

It could be concluded that *crude* pili *S. flexneri* immunization in neutral pH and cold temperature providing a protection against ileal mucosal damage caused by *S. flexneri*. The adhesion protein used in the study has a great potentiality to be a vaccine candidate for shigellosis. For further investigation, it is necessary to explore specifically the sub unit pili *S. flexneri*. It also essential to investigate cytokines level for complementing the effect of *crude* pili *S. flexneri* toward patahogenesis pathway of *S. flexneri* infection.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The study applied the ethical principles for animal model as the reseach subject including the implementation of replacement, reduction, and refinement principles. The study gained an ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee Faculty of medicine, University of Brawijaya, Malang.

## Acknowledgement

The research project was supported by Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang (LPPM, Ministry of Religious Affair - Republic of Indonesia) through BOPTN Scheme 2019.

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