



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***MOLECULAR CHARACTERIZATION OF MALAYSIAN NEWCASTLE
DISEASE VIRUS (NDV) ISOLATES AND EFFICACY STUDY OF
CARBOXYMETHYL SAGO STARCH-ACID HYDROGEL FORMULATED
NDV VACCINE IN CHICKENS***

SITI NOR AZIZAH BINTI MAHAMUD

IB 2021 14



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By

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**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Science**

February 2021

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in
fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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Newcastle Disease (ND) is one of the most devastating diseases of poultry affecting both financial loss and protein availability worldwide. Different genotypes of Newcastle Disease Virus (NDV) have been identified in various bird species and control strategies have been implemented at the farm level including the use of NDV vaccines derived from genotype I and II developed decades ago. However, studies on the detection of NDV isolated from wild birds in Malaysia are lacking. In this study, 6 NDV isolates were identified from the diagnostic samples of commercial chickens and sampling of wild birds and non-poultry birds and further characterized by sequencing of the F gene. Nucleotide sequence analysis of F gene (535bp) was confirmed all 6 isolates are clustered as NDV genotype VIIi, under the recent classification as genotype VII.2 with velogenic properties of multiple basic amino acid residues ¹¹²RRQKR¹¹⁷. Among them, isolate UPM/NDV/IBS362/2016 was identified as velogenic NDV subgenotype VII.2/VIIi with intracerebral pathogenicity index (ICPI) of 1.7 and mean death time (MDT) of 58.4 hours, to be used as challenge virus for vaccine efficacy study. The efficacy of mIBS025 vaccine formulated in standard and carboxymethyl sago starch acid hydrogel (CMSS-AH) as vaccine stabilizers were compared in SPF chickens vaccinated via the eye drop (ED) and drinking water (DW). Storage of virus formulated in standard and CMSS vaccine stabilizer as a freeze-dried vaccine at 27°C for 10 days did not significantly reduce the respective virus titers, which was retained at $10^{8.56}$ EID₅₀/0.1 mL. Chickens vaccinated with CMSS-AH mIBS025 ED (Group 2) developed the earliest and highest HI NDV antibody titer (8log₂) followed by standard mIBS025 ED (Group 3) (7log₂), both conferred complete protection and drastically reduced virus shedding. On the contrary, chickens vaccinated

with standard mIBS025 DW (Group 5) and CMSS-AH mIBS025 DW (Group 4) developed low HI NDV antibody titers of $4\log_2$ and $3\log_2$, respectively, conferred only 50% and 60% protection and continuously shed the virulent virus via oropharyngeal and cloacal routes until the end of the study at 14 dpc.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**PENCIRIAN MOLEKULAR VIRUS SAMPAR AYAM (NDV) ISOLAT DARI
MALAYSIA DAN KAJIAN KEBERKESANAN VAKSIN NDV FORMULASI
KARBOKSILMETIL KANJI SAGU-ASID HIDROGEL PADA AYAM**

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Penyakit sampar ayam (ND) merupakan salah satu wabak virus ayam yang boleh menyebabkan kerugian besar kepada industri penternakan ayam dan impak kepada kebolehdapatan sumber protin bagi kebanyakan negara di rantau ini. Bergantung kepada lokasi geografi, virus sampar ayam (NDV) daripada genotip yang berbeza telah dikenalpasti menjangkiti pelbagai species unggas dan strategi kawalan telah dilakukan di ladang termasuklah penggunaan vaksin sampar ayam genotip I dan II yang telah dihasilkan sejak serabad yang lalu. Walaubagaimanapun, penyelidikan mengenai NDV dalam kalangan unggas liar dan unggas bukan poltri di Malaysia masih terhad. Dalam penyelidikan ini, sebanyak 6 isolat NDV telah dikenalpasti daripada sampel diagnosis ayam komersial dan persampelan unggas liar telah dikenalpasti melalui analisis jujukan tapak pemisahan gen F sebagai NDV genotype VIII dan di bawah klasifikasi baru sebagai genotip VII.2. Analisis jujukan amino asid gen F menunjukkan kesemua enam isolat sebagai velogenik NDV dengan kehadiran pelbagai residu asid amino asas ¹¹²RRQKRF¹¹⁷. Salah satu isolat, UPM/NDV/IBS362/2016 dipencirikan selanjutnya berdasarkan nilai masa kematian purata (MDT) pada 58.4 jam dan indeks kepatogenan intracerebral (ICPI) pada 1.7 kerana isolat ini merupakan calon virus cabaran bagi kajian efikasi vaksin. Perbandingan efikasi formulasi vaksin mBS025 piawai dan asid hidrogel kanji sagu (CMSS-AH) sebagai penstabil vaksin dalam ayam SPF yang telah divaksin melalui titisan mata (ED) dan air minuman (DW) telah dilaksanakan. Penyimpanan formulasi penstabil vaksin piawai dan CMSS-AH sebagai vaksin kering sejuk beku yang disimpan pada 27°C selama 10 hari tidak mengalami penurunan titer virus pada 10^{8.56}EID₅₀/0.1 mL, masing-masing. Ayam yang telah divaksin dengan CMSS-AH mBS025 ED (Grup 2) menghasilkan titer HI antibodi paling awal dan paling

tinggi ($8\log_2$) diikuti oleh standard mIBS025 ED (Grup 3) ($7\log_2$), kedua-dua grup dilindungi sepenuhnya dan pengurangan virus ($p > 0.05$) yang dibebaskan melalui orofarinks dan kloakal. Manakala, ayam yang divaksin dengan CMSS-AH mIBS025 DW (Grup 4) dan standard mIBS025 DW (Grup 5) menghasilkan titer HI antibody yang rendah pada $4\log_2$ dan $3\log_2$, masing-masing, menghasilkan 50% dan 60% perindungan dan berterusan merembeskan virus melalui orofarinks dan kloakal sehingga akhir kajian pada 14 dpc.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Aa	Amino acids
AF	Allantoic fluids
AIV	Avian influenza virus
BLAST	Basic Local Alignment Search Tool
CMSS-AH	Carboxymethyl sago starch acid hydrogel
DPI	Day-post infection
DPV	Day-post vaccination
DPC	Day-post challenged
DVS	Department of Veterinary Service
ED	Eye drops
EID ₅₀	50 percent embryo infectious dose
HA	Hemagglutination
HI	Hemagglutination inhibition
IACUC	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
IBS	Institute of Bioscience
ICPI	Intracerebral pathogenicity index
MDT	Mean death time
MPT	Molecular pathotyping
Min	Minutes
mL	Milliliter
MVP	Malaysian Vaccines and Pharmaceuticals
NCBI	National Centre for Biotechnology Information
ND	Newcastle disease
NDV	Newcastle disease virus

Nt	Nucleotides
OIE	World Organization of Animal Health
°C	Degree Celsius
PBS	Phosphate buffer saline
PERHILITAN	Perlindungan Haiwan Liar dan Taman Negara
RMC	Research Management Centre
RT-PCR	Reverse transcriptase polymerase-chain reaction
RNA	Ribonucleic acid
Sec	Second
SPF	Specific-pathogenic-free
ssRNA	Single-stranded ribonucleic acid
TAE	Tris-acetate-EDTA
uL	Microliter
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
VacBio	Laboratory of Vaccines & Biomolecules
x <i>g</i>	Relative centrifugal force

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For decades, the poultry production in Malaysia has expanded steadily, in line with the growth to meet local demand and export trades. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM, 2019), livestock production represented 14.9% of total agriculture contribution (RM103.8 billion) to Malaysia GDP. Currently, the industry has achieved a high self-sufficient level at 98% for poultry meat and 113.8% for chicken/duck eggs: hence, some were export as live birds and processed poultry products to Singapore and the Middle East. At present, there are 10 grandparent stock farms and 106 breeder farms to meet demand from thousands of chicken farms around Malaysia including Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia (DVS, 2015). In addition, Malaysia is the third-highest poultry consumers in the world and first in Asia with per capita consumption of 50 kg chicken and 20 kg of eggs (Hirschmann, 2020; Ferlito, 2020).

The poultry industry in this region is under constant threat by devastating diseases such as Newcastle disease (ND) and highly pathogenic avian influenza virus (HPAI) infection. Newcastle disease (ND) is one of the highly contagious diseases that can cause reduction in egg production, poor weight gain, morbidity, and mortality in infected chicken flocks. Hence, the disease is classified under list A contagious disease of poultry by the Office International des Epizooties (OIE, 2012). Since it was first reported in Java Island, Indonesia (Kraneveld, 1926) and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England in 1926 (Doyle, 1927; Xiao et al., 2012) ND outbreaks continuously reported in the many countries. The first ND outbreak in Malaysia was reported in poultry flocks in Parit Buntar, Perak in 1934 (Anon, 1934). Today, ND is endemic in many countries in Asia including Malaysia (Miller et al., 2013; Shohaimi et al., 2015).

The advancement in molecular research has provided valuable information on Newcastle disease virus (NDV) including the classification, epidemiology, and virulence determinants of the virus as well as the development of improved vaccines. Recently, NDV has been classified as Avian Orthoavulavirus 1 (AOAV-1), previously known as Avian Paramyxovirus type 1 (APMV-1) belongs to the genus *Orthoavulavirus* in the family *Paramyxoviridae* (ICTV, 2019). Although, NDV strains are classified under one serotype, NDVs are further grouped into different genotype namely genotype I to genotype XVIII (Diel et al., 201; Courtney et al., 2013) due to their diverse genetic pool of the virus, continues to evolve resulting in emerging of new strains with unknown virulence (Gogoi et al., 2017). Hence, NDV strains have a wide range of pathogenicity and virulence, from apathogenic to extremely pathogenic (Alexander, 1991).

According to Dortmans et al. (2011), virulence determinants of NDV are determined by multiple genetic factors that determine tissue tropism, the ability to evade the host's immune responses and efficacy of replications. However, it has been well documented that the amino acid sequences of F protein, especially at the cleavage site is the primary determinant for the virus virulence and pathotyping, while genotyping of the virus is based on the full or partial sequence of the F gene (Farkas et al., 2009; Diel et al., 2012; Triosanti et al., 2018). Highly virulence NDV strains have multi basic amino acid motif at position 112 to 117 while, low virulence NDV strains have monobasic amino acid motif at position 112 to 117 of F cleavage site.

Despite the implementation of disease control and prevention measures including good flock health program and biosecurity, ND outbreaks in commercial and backyard poultry farms were continuedly reported (Ansori & Kharisma, 2020). ND outbreaks are still a threat to poultry farms that practice intensive vaccination indicating various factors influence vaccine induced immunity in a commercial (field) situation. Among the factors are poor vaccination program and leading to the development of inadequate antibody level causing the birds susceptible to NDV infection especially in areas where ND are endemic (Butcher & Yegani, 2009). Environmental stress such as temperature, relative humidity, inadequate nutrition, and immunosuppressive agents presence impaired the host immune system to induce robust vaccine induced immunity (Cazaban, 2015). Besides, the emergence of antigenically distinct NDV strains that are significantly different from the vaccine antigen also complicated the current vaccine and vaccination program (Brown & Bevins, 2017).

NDV has a wide host range where the virus can be detected in more than 200 bird species, including domestic poultry and wild birds (Alexander, 2011; Kaleta & Baldauf, 1998). Wild birds, particularly waterfowl, including migratory waterfowl and seafoal are considered as the natural reservoir for NDV (Snoeck et al., 2013) where they harbor primarily lentogenic strains (Czegledi et al., 2006; Jindal et al., 2010). However, there are evidences suggestive of epidemiological links between virulent field isolates recovered from wild birds and those obtained from poultry (Kim et al., 2007). Furthermore, a review paper by Alexander (2011), has reiterated the evidence of spillover of both lentogenic and velogenic viruses from poultry into wild birds. However, the potential role of wild birds in the epidemiology of virulent NDV in Malaysia is not well documented although continuous sporadic outbreaks of virulent NDV are recorded in commercial chickens.

Both live attenuated and inactivated vaccines are used in NDV vaccination of commercial poultry farms in many countries. The majority of the live attenuated vaccines used, are derived from genotype II strains such as LaSota and B1 and genotype I strain such as I2 and V4 (Dimitrov et al., 2017). These vaccines induce high antibody levels and prevent clinical signs following infection with virulent NDV but do not prevent viral replication and shedding (Susta et al., 2015). Since ND outbreaks caused by virulent genotype VII are still occurring in

many parts of the world, there is a need to the develop vaccines that match with the circulating velogenic NDV strains in the field. Indeed, several studies have evaluated the efficacy of genotype matched ND vaccines against challenged with velogenic NDV (Cho et al., 2008; Hu et al., 2011; Dortmans et al., 2012; Dimitrov et al., 2017; Ji et al., 2018). Recently, we have developed genotype matched mIBS025 vaccine using a reverse genetic method that was proved able to give full protection against velogenic genotype VII NDV challenged after given once via eye drop to 3 days old SPF chicks (Bello et al., 2020).

According to Office International des Epizooties (OIE, 2018), in Chapter 1.1.8 Principle of Veterinary Vaccine Production, general vaccine formulation involves mixing of various ingredients including antigens (live or inactivated), stabilizers, adjuvants, antibiotics, preservatives and diluents. Among the different types of vaccine stabilizers that have been used are bovine serum albumin, skim milk, lactose, HemaGel, and hydrogel (Olayan et al., 2019; WHO, 2020). Stabilizers keep the active ingredients in vaccines from degrading due to shift in temperature and pH that can cause loss of antigenicity and decreased infectivity of live attenuated vaccine.

Previously we found that Carboxymethyl Sago Starch-acid Hydrogel (CMSS-AH) a polysaccharide hydrogel developed from sago starch that undergone several chemical modification processes, exhibit virus stabilizing property based on in vitro study (Mohamood et al., 2018). CMSS-AH was able to protect NDV LaSota strain at 27°C for a maximum of 30 days while maintained the infectivity of the virus. However, the potential application of CMSS-AH as ND vaccine stabilizer in chickens has not been tested.

The hypotheses of this study are commercial chickens and non-poultry birds harbour virulent NDV such as genotype VII, and genotype-matched ND vaccine stabilized with CMSS-AH is an improved vaccine when delivered via eye drop and drinking water. Hence, the objectives of this study are:

1. To Isolate and characterize NDVs isolates from commercial chickens and wild birds from Malaysia.
2. To determine the efficacy of carboxymethyl sago starch-acid hydrogel stabilized NDV genotype match mIBS025 vaccine in SPF chickens following challenged with genotype VII NDV.

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