

**EXPRESSION OF LEPTOSPIRAL RECOMBINANT PROTEIN FOR SERODIAGNOSIS**

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Currently, the diagnosis of leptospirosis is entirely dependent on laboratory assay. The microscopic agglutination test (MAT) is still the standard reference test, although it requires the maintenance of a leptospiral culture panel, which is not generally available in the routine diagnostic laboratory. Outer membrane lipoproteins are important antigens, based on their surface exposure and their accessibility to infection-related immune recognition. LipL32, LipL41, and Loa22 were selected for cloning and expression as antigen. PCR fragments derived from genes encoded LipL32, LipL41, and Loa22 were cloned into a pRSET-B vector having the six histidine fusion tag at the N-terminal, and expressed in the *E. coli* expression system. The recombinant proteins were purified via Nikle affinity column. The molecular weights of the purified rLipL32, rLipL41, and rLoa 22 proteins, were 35, 27, and 27 kDa, respectively. These three purified recombinant proteins were preliminarily reacted with MAT-positive sera in Western blot; only rLipL32 could react with leptospirosis sera, while rLipL41 and Loa22 could not. Mice were immunized with each recombinant protein, to induce antibody production. The mouse antiserum of each purified recombinant protein reacted with the whole-cell lysate of some selected leptospiral serovars at the expected molecular weight, determined in the available leptospiral genome. This implied the presence of a common epitope between natural and recombinant antigens. The recombinant proteins were investigated for their application in ELISA-based serodiagnosis, compared with the reference MAT assay, by detection of IgM and IgG in the sera of MAT-positive leptospirosis patients, in addition to MAT-negative suspected leptospirosis cases and a control group of normal individuals, patients with other febrile illnesses (e.g. scrub typhus, dengue fever, melioidosis). Recombinant LipL32 yielded the highest specificity (89%), compared with rLipL41 and rLoa22. It was able to differentiate MAT-positive cases from melioidosis patients, and a low percentage of positive cases were recognized in normal individuals. In suspected, MAT-negative leptospirosis cases, rLipL32 could detect serological positive, up to 43%.

**KEY WORDS: LEPTOSPIROSIS/ RECOMBINANT OUTER MEMBRANE  
PROTEIN/ ELISA/ IgG/ IgM**

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