

Study of haemolytic activity of some *Campylobacter* spp. on blood agar plates

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Abstract:

A total of 152 strains of *Campylobacter jejuni*, *C. coli*, *C. laridis* and *C. fetus* subsp. *fetus* were tested for haemolysis on blood agar plates. Distinct haemolysis was detected in 92.% (96/104) of strains of *C. jejuni* and 21.7% (5/23) of strains of *C. coli* on sheep blood heart infusion agar after incubation for 4 d microaerobically at 42°C. Haemolysis was also detected on horse blood heart infusion agar. Haemolysis was not detected at 37°C except with one of 50 strains of *C. jejuni* tested at this temperature, which was weakly positive. *Campylobacter laridis* was not haemolytic; *C. fetus* subsp. *fetus*, which does not grow at 42°C, showed no haemolysis at 37°C. Blood agar (Oxoid, BA Base No. 2) was not suitable for testing for haemolysis by these organisms. A microaerobic gas mixture containing hydrogen is better than that containing nitrogen because the medium has a brighter colour, making haemolysis easier to detect. There was no synergistic haemolysis with *Staphylococcus aureus* or *Streptococcus agalactiae*. The plate haemolysis test as described here may aid differentiation within the thermophilic campylobacters.