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CHARACTERIZATION OF *ESCHERICHIA COLI* ISOLATED FROM STOOLS OF PATIENTS SUFFERING FROM DIARRHOEA IN BENIN CITY NIGERIA

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Background: Diarrhoea disease is very common in the tropical regions of the world where high temperatures favour bacterial growth and food are served cold; Moreover, excrement contaminate the environment because low standard of hygiene, *E. coli*, abnormal biotype in the gut of humans and animals, but some strains have been incriminated in both bloody and non-bloody diarrhoea and many of them are toxigenic strains. Thus, the determination of these toxigenic strains cannot be over emphasized.

Methods: Three hundred stool samples were collected from patients attending various hospitals in Benin City, Nigeria and were cultured using routine methods of culture and sensitivity in the Medical microbiology department of University of Benin Teaching Hospital, Benin city, Nigeria.

Results: The enter virulent isolated were identified to species level using the protocol of Cowan and steel. Antibiotics susceptibility pattern of the strains were determined using the agar diffusion and dilution methods of Stokes. None of the strain exhibited high MIC to many antibacterial agents including the fluoroquinolones and were thus subjected to investigation for R-plasmid. R-plasmid analysis using a horizontal appearance plasmid Tus showed three plasmid bands greater than the reference plasmid marker.

Conclusion: This study presents, the isolation of enter virulent *Escherichia coli* that harbour transferable R-plasmid mediated resistance to the fluoroquinone antibacterial agents and other antibiotics in Benin city, Nigeria.

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