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Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci of *vanB* Genotype May Pose Problems for Screening with Highly Selective Media[▽]

In a recently published article, Peltroche-Llacsahuanga and colleagues (2) compared the performance of two chromogenic media, i.e., chromID VRE (bioMérieux, Marcy l'Etoile, France) and CHROMagar VRE (Chromagar, Paris, France). Screening 259 stool samples for vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE), they detected a total of 55 vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus faecium* isolates, 54 of them harboring a *vanA* resistance gene and only 1 harboring *vanB*. Comparing these two highly selective media, they concluded that the sensitivity of the test was 98.2%. We agree that the chromID VRE is highly specific for VRE. However, our own evaluation indicates a lower sensitivity of this medium.

While evaluating different methods for VRE screening, we inoculated a set of 51 well-characterized enterococcal isolates (26 *E. faecium* and 25 *E. faecalis*) onto the chromID VRE and Enterococcosel agar containing 8 mg/liter vancomycin (Becton Dickinson Diagnostic Systems, Sparks, MD). Twenty-four isolates were vancomycin susceptible, and 27 were vancomycin resistant (12 *vanA*, 14 *vanB*, 1 both *vanA* and *vanB*). Vancomycin MICs for isolates harboring *vanA* were >256 mg/liter, and MICs for isolates with *vanB* were 4 to >256 mg/liter. The chromID VRE agar inhibited the growth of all enterococci that did not harbor *vanA* or *vanB*. Growth was detected in 23 of 27 isolates harboring *vanA* or *vanB*. While all isolates that grew on chromID VRE had vancomycin MICs of >8 mg/liter, the 4 isolates that failed to grow had vancomycin MICs between 4 and 8 mg/liter and harbored *vanB*. The sensitivity of the medium was thus 85.2%. In contrast, on Enterococcosel agar all isolates harboring *vanA* and 13 of 14 isolates harboring *vanB* were detected. We conclude that VRE of the *vanB* genotype which may have vancomycin MICs as low as 4 mg/liter (1) may go undetected with the chromID VRE. Comparing the chromID VRE with another highly selective medium, as done by Peltroche-Llacsahuanga et al., may miss this fact and overestimate the sensitivity of the medium.

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