

Gene network analysis of *Aeromonas hydrophila* for novel drug target discovery

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Abstract Increasing the multi-drug resistance *Aeromonas hydrophila* creates a health problem regularly thus, an urgent needs to develop and screen potent antibiotics for controlling of the infections. There are many studies have focused on interactions between specific drugs, little is known about the system properties of a full drug interaction in gene network. Thus, an attractive approach for developing novel antibiotics against DNA gyrase, an enzyme essential for DNA replication, transcription, repair and recombination mechanisms which is important for bacterial growth and cell division. Homology modeling method was used to generate the 3-D structure of B subunit of DNA gyrase (gyrB) using known crystal structure. The active amino acids in 3-D structure of gyrB were targeted for structure based virtual screening of potent drugs by molecular docking. Number of drugs and analogs were selected and used for docking against gryB. The drugs Cinodine I, Cyclothialidine and Novobiocin were found to

be more binding affinity with gyrB-drug interaction. The homology of gyrB protein sequence of *A. hydrophila* resembles with other species of *Aeromonas* closely showed relationship in phylogenetic tree. We have also demonstrated the gene network interactions of gyrB with other cellular proteins which are playing the key role in gene regulation. These findings provide new insight to understand the 3-D structure of gyrB which can be used in structure-based drug discovery; and development of novel, potent and specific drug against B subunit of DNA gyrase.

Keywords *Aeromonas hydrophila* · gyrB · Docking · Phylogenetic tree · Gene network · Drug

Introduction

Aeromonas hydrophila is a ubiquitous pathogen involved in gastroenteritis, meningitis, skin and soft tissue infections with a variety of clinical syndromes in immunocompromised patients globally (Holmes et al. 1996; Janda and Abbott 1998). It is associated with hemorrhagic septicemia in cold blooded animals including fish, reptiles and amphibians (Janda 1991; Austin and Austin 1999). Hemorrhagic septicemia in fish fin and tail rot due to *A. hydrophila* infection resulted in high rate of mortality in aquaculture systems (Chakraborty et al. 1987; Hickman-Brenner et al. 1987; Barghouthi et al. 1989; Janda et al. 1994). *A. hydrophila* is an emergent human pathogen which caused serious health problem regularly around the globe (Janda and Abbott 1998; Abbott et al. 1998; Joseph and Carnahan 2000).

The most widely used method for controlling *A. hydrophila* infections in aquaculture is using antimicrobial drugs. Extensive use of antibiotic has resulted in rapid spread of multi-drug resistant pathogens (Rathore et al.

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2006). There is an essential for controlling *A. hydrophila* infection using different antibiotics which is targeted the specific protein/enzyme of *A. hydrophila*. The unique ability of gyrase B to introduce negative supercoiling into DNA and itself controls DNA supercoiling. Gyrase catalyzes the conversion of relaxed, closed circular duplex DNA to negatively superhelical form, which is more favorable for recombination. The mechanism of supercoiling involves in wrapping of gyrase around a region of DNA, double strand breaks in that region, passing a second region of DNA through the breaking and rejoining of broken strands. The *gyrB* encodes B-subunit of DNA gyrase, a type-II DNA topoisomerase which have been reported as a suitable phylogenetic marker for bacterial identification (Yamamoto and Harayama 1996, 1998; Venkateswaran et al. 1998; Yamamoto et al. 1999, 2000).

There are several reports available on generation of three dimensional (3-D) structure of unknown protein using homology modeling. However, the 3-D structure of *gyrB* from *A. hydrophila* is not yet determined. Homology modeling has been used for generation of 3-D structures of 3-oxoacyl-acyl carrier protein synthase II of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (Singh and Somvanshi 2009a) and aerolysin as well as hemolysin proteins in *A. hydrophila* (Singh and Somvanshi 2009b; Singh et al. 2009). Therefore, several antibiotics and its derivative have been used against DNA gyrase for controlling the cell viability. Cyclothialidine is a potent drug against DNA gyrase which has been isolated from *Streptomyces filipinensis* (Goetschi et al. 1993). The amino substituted coumarins have synthesised and evaluated in vitro as inhibitors of DNA gyrase which is also showed antibacterials activity. Novobiocin like coumarins, 4-(dialkylamino)-methylcoumarins and 4-((2-alkylamino)ethoxy)coumarins have been discovered as gyrase B inhibitors with promising antibacterial activity (Laurin et al. 1999). However, single drug against particular protein is not very effective to control multidrug resistance *A. hydrophila*. Therefore, we need to understand the complete gene network involves in cellular activity.

The gene networks are a complex interaction of biological parts such as DNA, RNA and proteins contributed in biological process. In depth knowledge of biological process seems that we need to explore the relationship between network structure and the dynamics of genes, proteins and other biomolecules. There are number of reports available on gene and protein interaction and other gene networks which lead to target site for drug discovery (Samal and Jain 2008). It can also be helpful to repress and activate the gene networks for control of cellular activity. Some proteins serve to activate and repress other genes which are also known as transcription factors are playing key role in gene regulation. It binds with operator site on promoter region which is initiated the turn off and on

process. The aim of present study is to develop homology based model of DNA gyrase B subunit in *A. hydrophila* and structure based potent drugs screening; and demonstrated the gene network of B subunit of DNA gyrase.

Materials and methods

Collection of sequences

The complete protein sequence of DNA gyrase B subunit of *A. hydrophila* and other species of *Aeromonas* were retrieved from NCBI (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>). The relatedness of sequence deposited in databases was evaluated by BLAST (Altschul et al. 1997) which is implemented in NCBI (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/blast>). We performed BLASTP for searching of protein structural similarity with protein databank (PDB). The alignment was also done for query protein sequence with Protein Data Bank (PDB: 1EI1) template using CLUSTAL X.

Homology modeling for generation of 3-D structure

The crystal structure of DNA gyrase B of *Escherichia coli* was available at 2.30 Å resolution in PDB (PDB: 1EI1) and used as a template from protein data bank (<http://www.rcsb.org/pdb/>) to generate 3-D models. The homology modeling was used to generate the 3-D structure of *gyrB* using Modeller9v6 (Sali and Blundell 1993) and was visualized in PYMOL (Delano 2002). Evaluation of generated 3-D structure of *gyrB* was considered minimum model score and dope score. The 3-D structure of *gyrB* was validated with PROCHECK (Laskowski et al. 1993) which generates Ramachandran plot (RP); where the amino acid residues present in allowed, disallowed region and overall G-factor were considered.

Virtual screening of drugs by molecular docking

All drugs were taken from NCBI Pubchem compounds in SDF which is converted into 3-D structure using Open Babel 2.0.2 software. The generated 3-D structure of *gyrB* and drugs were used for molecular docking with AutoDock3.0.5 (Morris et al. 1998). The docking parameters were as follows: 100 docking trials, population size 150, random starting position and conformational translation step ranges of 1.5 Å, rotation step ranges 35, elitism of 1, mutation rate 0.02, cross over rate of 0.8, local search rate of 0.06 and 25 million energy evaluations. Distance-dependent function of the dielectric constant was used for the calculation of the energetic maps and all other parameters were used by default value. We selected the drugs bind to 3-D of *gyrB* with highest binding affinity.

Construction and analysis of phylogenetic tree

The protein sequence of *gyrB* of *A. hydrophila* was used to search for homologous sequences by using BLASTP and homologous sequences were retrieved from NCBI-GenBank. The retrieved sequences were aligned in CLUSTALX (Thompson et al. 1997) and using the partition correction which is implemented in MEGA4.0 (Tamura et al. 2007) software for construction of phylogenetic tree by neighbor-joining (NJ) method. Total 100 bootstrapped values were sampled to determine a measure of the support for each node on the consensus tree.

Protein–protein interaction

We used STRING database of known and predicted protein interaction (<http://string-db.org/>). The interactions include direct (physical) and indirect (functional) associations; they are derived from four sources: (1) genomic context, (2) High-throughput experiments, (3) conserved coexpression and (4) literature knowledge. In the STRING quantitatively integrates interaction data from these sources for a large number of organisms and transfers information between organisms. It is currently covers 5,214,234 proteins from 1,133 organisms during protein–protein interaction.

Protein structure accession number

The homology model of 3-D structure of DNA gyrase B subunit of *A. hydrophila* subsp. *hydrophila* ATCC 7966 was submitted to Protein Model Database (<http://mi.caspur.it/PMDB/>) and assigned under PM0075580.

Results and discussion

DNA gyrase B subunit (NCBI accession number: ABK37959) of *A. hydrophila* was used for generation of molecular model using known 3-D crystal structure. The N-terminal region of *gyrB* of *A. hydrophila* contains ATP binding site which was confirmed from NCBI conserved domain database. It was resembled with DNA gyrase B subunit of *E. coli*. There are few drugs earlier reported against the inhibition of gyrase activity. Sometimes due to mutations in the active amino acid residues, bacteria showed the resistance to antibiotics. There is an important requirement to develop; screen and potent target based specific antibiotics for controlling of *A. hydrophila* infection. Total 25 isolates of *A. hydrophila* have been selected for antibiotic sensitivity assay. All these isolates were resistant to Cephalothin, Ampicillin, Novobiocin and Nitrofurazone while sensitive to Gentamicin (80 %), Co-trimaxazole (92 %), Chloramphenicol and Ciprofloxacin (Rathore et al. 2006).

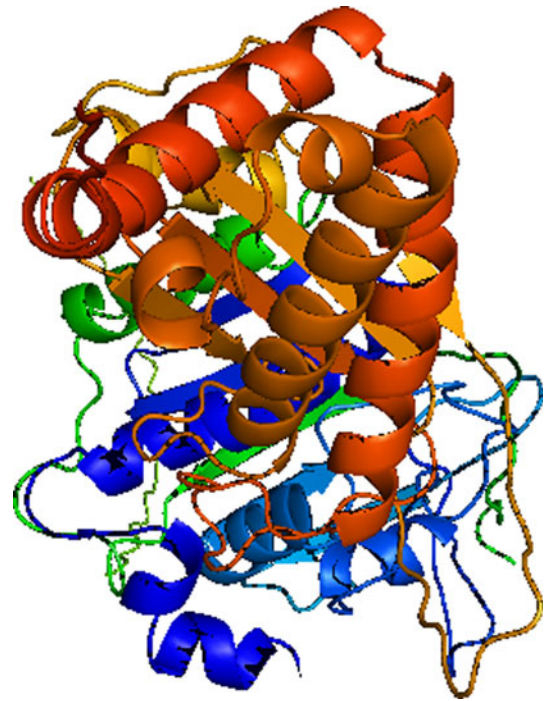


Fig. 1 The 3-D structure of DNA gyrase B subunit of *Aeromonas hydrophila* showing $\alpha + \beta$ sheets

However, there is major difficulty for selection of suitable antibiotics for controlling of infection. Here, we were performed the homology modeling for generation of conserved protein DNA gyrase B subunit which showed 36 % identity with crystal structure of DNA gyrase B of *E. coli*. Both the protein sequences of *gyrB* of *A. hydrophila* and *E. coli* (PDB: 1E11) were aligned. Total 5 models were generated by Modeller9v6 and the Gibbs free energy of *gyrB* of *A. hydrophila* was almost similar with template. The 3-D structure of *gyrB* of *A. hydrophila* was shown (Fig. 1) and it restrains alpha helix rich in the structure. Ramachandran plot (RP) for *gyrB* of *A. hydrophila* was shown (Supplementary Fig. S1) in the allowed and disallowed regions the amino acid residues were 80.9 and 1.6 % respectively. All these above properties of *gyrB* showed the good quality of 3-D structure.

There is recent report on the homology modeling has been used to fabricate the 3-D structure of aerolysin and hemolysin of *A. hydrophila* using known protein crystal structure (Singh and Somvanshi 2009b; Singh et al. 2009). The 3-D structure of *gyrB* of *A. hydrophila* was taken for screening of suitable antibacterial drugs based on highest binding affinity. The *gyrB* specific antibacterial drugs such as common name, IUPAC name, molecular formula, molecular weight and 2-D structure of each drugs used in this study were given (Supplementary Table 1). Eight suitable drugs were selected for molecular docking against whole 3-D structure of *gyrB* and three drugs Cinodine I,

Table 1 The interaction energy (kcal/mol) of DNA gyrase B and drugs obtained from the molecular docking

S no.	Drugs	Binding energy (kcal/mol)	Docked energy (kcal/mol)	Inter molecular energy (kcal/mol)	Torsional energy (kcal/mol)	Internal energy (kcal/mol)	RMSD
1.	Albamyacin	-04.45	-02.26	-06.94	2.49	04.68	133.15
2.	Coumermycin	-07.13	19.55	-10.87	3.74	30.42	149.55
3.	Cyclothialidine	-16.24	-16.20	-18.53	2.49	02.53	123.77
4.	Cinodine I	-11.51	-09.14	-17.11	5.60	07.97	145.20
5.	Novobiocin	-08.46	-05.79	-10.64	2.18	04.85	125.65
6.	Clerocidin	-08.67	07.95	-13.96	5.29	21.91	131.25
7.	Nalidixic acid	-00.59	-00.81	-01.22	0.62	00.41	138.00
8.	Cathomycin	-03.02	-03.94	-04.57	1.56	00.63	136.03

Cyclothialidine and Novobiocin were found highest binding affinity. On the basis of docking, the interaction of drugs with gyrB shown several energy such as docking energy, inter molecular energy, torsional energy, RMSD and internal energy were given (Table 1).

In the present study, total 10 docking experiment were performed with the entire 3-D structural protein of gyrB which is considered lowest free energy of docked complex with hydrogen bonds. The docking energy of the Cinodine I, Cyclothialidine and Novobiocin were -09.14, -16.20 and -05.79 kcal/mol, respectively. The design and synthesis of a series of novel 2, 3-dihydroisoindol-1-ones structurally related to cyclothialidine 2 with DNA gyrase showed inhibition activity (Lübbbers et al. 2007). The fragment-based design of potent DNA gyrase inhibitors has been reported. Using the virtual screening and NMR spectroscopy analysis identified the binding of two low-molecular weight fragments (2-aminobenzimidazole and indolin-2-one) to the 24 kDa N-terminal fragment of DNA gyrase B. In silico optimization of indolin-2-one led to the discovery of potent DNA gyrase inhibitors (Oblak et al. 2005).

In the present study, several amino acids residue in 3-D structure of gyrB during the interaction with drug were given in Table 2. Amino acid residues such as Asn75, Arg137, Arg77, Asn138, Ser303, Val141, Glu143 and Tyr302 in 3-D structure of gyrB of *A. hydrophila* were observed with interaction of Cinodine I. The drug was bound with these amino acids of gyrB and three hydrogen bond (HB) were generated between UNK1:O-Ser303:OG, UNK1:O-Tyr302 UNK1:H-Arg77:O atoms with distance these 2.163, 2.163 and 2.163 Å respectively (Fig. 2a). In second interaction, amino acid residues viz. Phe105, Arg672, Asp106, Asp107, Thr595, Lys111 and Val670 in gyrB of *A. hydrophila* were observed with interaction of Cyclothialidine. The drug was bound with these amino acids of gyrB and three HB were formed between drug and amino acids UNK0:H—Phe105:O, UNK0:H—Val670:O, UNK0:H-Arg672:O atoms with distance 2.175, 2.175 and

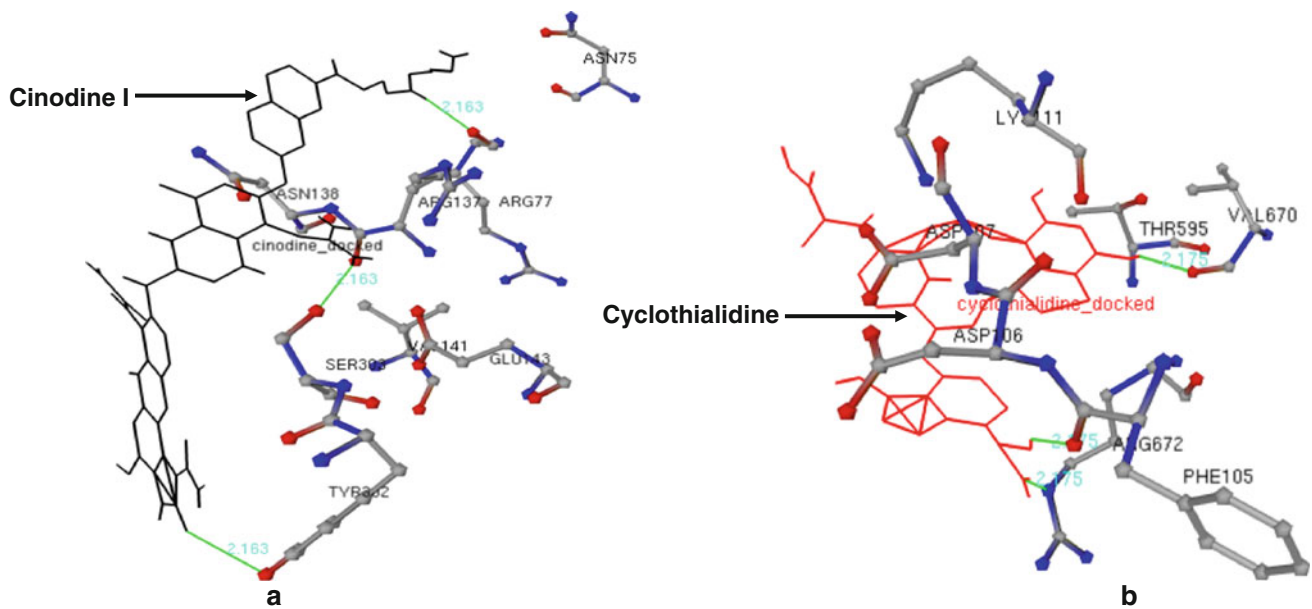
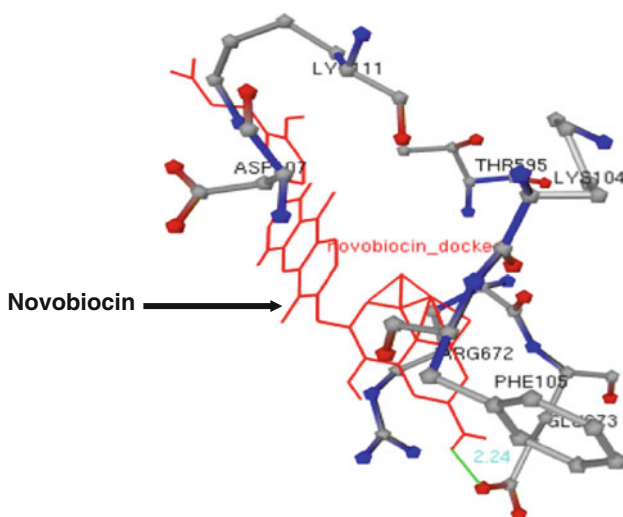
2.175 Å respectively (Fig. 2b). The amino acid residues viz. Lys111, Thr595, Lys104, Phe105, Glu673, Asp107, Arg672 in gyrB of *A. hydrophila* were observed in the interaction with Novobiocin which was bound with these amino acids of gyrB and single hydrogen bond (HB) was formed in between UNK1:H—Glu673:OE1 atom with 2.24 Å distance (Fig. 3). The amino acids of the 3-D structure of aerolysin of *A. hydrophila* have been targeted by saponin drug which could be useful for prevention of oligomerization on the surface of RBCs. Molecular docking has been performed against the aerolysin with the saponin and its analogs which showed to be potent for inhibition of oligomerization (Singh and Somvanshi 2009b).

The 3-oxoacyl-acyl carrier protein synthase II of *M. tuberculosis* catalyses the initiation of fatty acid synthesis pathway by condensation of acyl CoA and mycolic acid during the elongation phase. The homology modeling has been used to generate and validate 3-D protein structure of 3-oxoacyl-acyl carrier protein synthase II. Thio-lactomycin, Thiophenone and multidrug Cerulenin Isoniazid have been found potent for inhibition against *M. tuberculosis* docking experiment (Singh and Somvanshi 2009a). As we know that the evolutionary relationship of *A. hydrophila* based on DNA gyrase protein which is also present in other bacterial pathogen.

In this study, the phylogenetic tree was constructed using gyrB sequence of *A. hydrophila* and other bacteria. Total 3 major clades like *Enterobacteriaceae*, *Vibrio* and *Aeromonas* species were observed in phylogeny of gyrB protein sequences. *A. hydrophila* and *A. salmonicida* were observed in same clades; it indicates the similar antibacterial drugs such as Cinodine I, Cyclothialidine and Novobiocin can be used to inhibit the gyrase activity (Supplementary Fig. S2). *Vibrio* species were also closed with *Aeromonas* species; the same drugs might be helpful for inhibition of gyrase activity. The phylogeny indicates the gyrB is a stable and potential drug target for *Aeromonas* species especially *A. hydrophila* and *A. salmonicida*. The phylogenetic relationships of *Aeromonas* species have been

Table 2 The summary of the active amino acid residues and hydrogen bond formed between the drugs and DNA gyrase B obtained through molecular docking

S. No.	Protein designation	Active amino acids in gyrB	Drugs	Interaction of gyrB and drugs	Distance of hydrogen bonds (Å)
1.	gyrB	Asn75, Arg137, Arg77, Asn138, Ser303, Val141, Glu143, Tyr302	Cinodine I	UNK1:O—Ser303:OG UNK1:H—Arg77:O UNK1:O—Tyr302	2.163 2.163 2.163
2.	gyrB	Phe105, Arg672, Asp106, Asp107, Thr595, Lys111, Val670	Cyclothialidine	UNK0:H—Phe105:O UNK0:H—Val670:O UNK0:H—Arg672:O	2.175 2.175 2.175
3.	gyrB	Lys111, Thr595, Lys104, Phe105, Glu673, Asp107, Arg672	Novobiocin	UNK1:H—Glu673:OE1	2.240

**Fig. 2** The interaction of high affinity potent antibacterial drugs with gyrB of *A. hydrophila* showing the hydrogen bonds. **a** Cinodine I and **b**: Cyclothialidine**Fig. 3** The interaction of high affinity potent Novobiocin antibacterial drugs with gyrB of *A. hydrophila* showing the hydrogen bonds

reported using the sequences of *gyrB*. The nucleotide sequences of *gyrB* has been determined from 53 *Aeromonas* strains including some new strains, which were also characterized using 16S rDNA regions (Yanez et al. 2003). *A. bestiarum* and *A. salmonicida* have been reported for phylogenetic relationships on the basis of 70 strains using *rpoD* sequence. Whereas, the sequences of *gyrB* has already been proven for determining the phylogenetic relationship. Nucleotide sequences of *rpoD* and *gyrB* showed that both genes are similar substitution rates and a similar number of variable positions (Soler et al. 2004). The phylogenetic tree has been constructed using the aerolysin and hemomysin protein sequences of *A. hydrophila* and showed the homology with *Aeromonas* and other pathogenic bacteria (Singh and Somvanshi 2009b; Singh et al. 2009). In the above point, we have observed one protein targeted by single drug; sometime there is problem of drug activity because of high rate of mutation in *gyrB*.

Therefore, we further move forward to understand the gene regulation.

In the present study, we have shown role of DNA gyrase B in cellular system and also how to interact with other proteins/enzymes. B subunit; DNA gyrase negatively supercoils closed circular double-stranded DNA in an ATP-dependent manner and also catalyzes the inter conversion of other topological isomers of double-stranded DNA rings including catenanes and knotted rings. In the *gyrB* gene network, we found closely related proteins such as *gyrA*, *dnaN*, *parC*, *recF* and *dnaA* with >0.9 score (Table 3). We showed herein combinatorial influence of these newly

Table 3 Protein–protein interaction in gene network

Functional proteins	Score	Potential functions
<i>gyrA</i>	0.999	DNA gyrase, A subunit
<i>dnaN</i>	0.995	DNA polymerase III, beta subunit; DNA polymerase III is a complex, multichain enzyme responsible for most of the replicative synthesis in bacteria
<i>parC</i>	0.990	DNA topoisomerase IV
<i>recF</i>	0.987	DNA replication and repair protein RecF; The <i>recF</i> protein is involved in DNA metabolism; it is required for DNA replication and normal SOS inducibility
<i>dnaA</i>	0.977	Chromosomal replication initiation protein; Plays an important role in the initiation and regulation of chromosomal replication. Binds to the origin of replication
<i>rpoD</i>	0.875	RNA polymerase sigma factor RpoD; Sigma factors are initiation factors that promote the attachment of RNA polymerase to specific initiation sites and are then released
<i>rpoB</i>	0.741	DNA-directed RNA polymerase subunit beta; DNA-dependent RNA polymerase catalyzes the transcription of DNA into RNA using the four ribonucleoside triphosphates as substrates
<i>dnaJ</i>	0.738	Chaperone protein DnaJ; Participates actively in the response to hyperosmotic and heat shock by preventing the aggregation of stress-denatured proteins and by disaggregating proteins, also in an autonomous, <i>dnaK</i> -independent fashion
<i>mmnE</i>	0.726	tRNA modification GTPase TrmE; Exhibits a very high intrinsic GTPase hydrolysis rate. Involved in the addition of a carboxymethylaminomethyl (cmm) group at the wobble position (U34) of certain tRNAs, forming tRNA-cmm(5)s(2)U34
<i>rpmH</i>	0.706	50S ribosomal protein L34

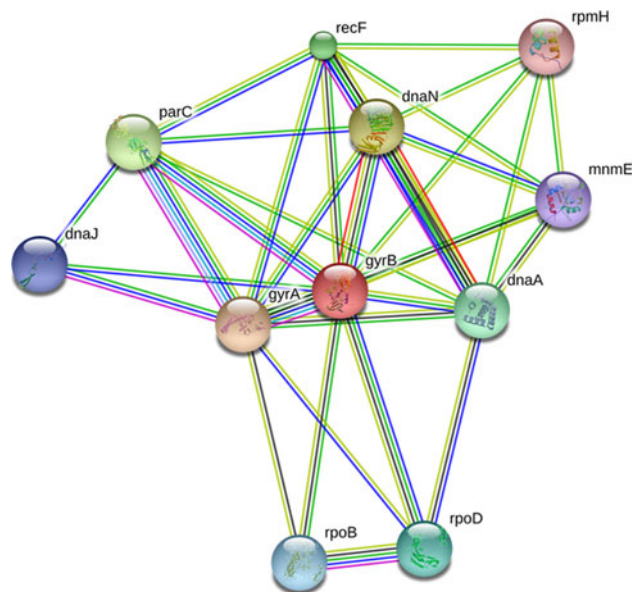


Fig. 4 Protein–protein Interaction of DNA gyrase B subunit (*gyrB*) of *A. hydrophila* with other proteins cellular activity in gene network

constructed gene network of *A. hydrophila* that can use for regulation of *gyrB* gene for controlling cell physiology. Moreover we have shown protein–protein interaction in *gyrB* gene network (Fig. 4). In the Protein–protein interactions (PPI) occur when the two or several proteins/enzymes bind to each other often to carry out their biological function. Many of the molecular processes in cell such as DNA replication are carried out by large molecular machines that are built from a large number of protein components organised by their protein–protein interactions. There is a global analysis of 2,709 interactions between proteins of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been performed and facilitated the establishment of a single large network of 2,358 interactions among 1,548 proteins (Schwikowski et al. 2000). The first step is needed to specifically define PPI which is commonly involved as physical interactions with molecular docking between proteins within a cellular systems. In several PPI repositories, it is a straightforward process to obtain all the proteins that interact with a given query protein which builds a corresponding network of molecular interactions (De Las Rivas and Montanillo 2010). To illuminate the architecture and dynamics of large scale genetic regulatory networks of cells is an important goal in systems and synthetic biology. The system level dynamical properties of the gene network of *Escherichia coli* that regulates metabolism and show how its design leads to biologically useful cellular properties (Samal and Jain 2008). It is a new approach for targeting any gene regulation for the cellular mechanism by knowing the expected proteins involve in gene network.

Conclusions

The present work was carried out to develop the 3-D structure of B subunit of DNA gyrase of *A. hydrophila*. The 3-D structure based screening for appropriate drugs was performed using docking and three antibacterial drugs such as Cinodine I, Cyclothialidine and Novobiocin could be found highest binding affinity with gyrB. The phylogeny of gyrB of *A. hydrophila* indicates that homologous gyrB protein may serve as a better target for the same drug which can also inhibit the growth of other bacteria. This study provides a new insight to control superfluous use of drugs in vitro trials. Construction of novel gyrB gene network of *A. hydrophila* plays a key role in gene regulation which provides a new conceptual framework for understanding the functional mechanisms of drugs and their cellular targets.

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Conflict of interest There is no competing interest.

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