

## Results

### *Novel markers for identification of C. botulinum strains*

#### *RE -TaqI*

Variability in the fragments observed in the *rrs* sequences with RE TaqI allowed us to segregate the 13 strains into four groups. The first group was composed of strains Alaska E43 and Eklund 17B with an RE pattern of 88-585-198-55; 88-585-199 nts being common to them ([Table S4](#)). The two strains can be distinguished on the basis of RE pattern of 18-70-585-198-55 nts recorded only with Eklund 17B. The second and third groups composed of BKT015925 and ATCC 3502, respectively, had unique RE digestion patterns of 879-582 and 90-782 nts, respectively ([Table S4](#)). The fourth group composed of the rest of 9 strains were indistinguishable and had a single clear cut fragment of 872 nts.

#### *RE-Hpy188III*

RE-HPY188III could provide evidence for clear cut segregation of 13 *C. botulinum* strains into 4 groups. The digestion patterns of Alaska E43 and Eklund 17B were similar to each other, 502-96-88-261-76-274-86 nts, which formed a group independent of the rest of the strains ([Table S5](#)). The second group consisted of only BKT015925, which had a unique RE digestion pattern of 57-65-183-196-97-88-265-82-278 nts. The *C. botulinum* strain ATCC 3502 showed three different RE – Hpy188III digestion patterns. Of the three digestion patterns, two were unique to ATCC 3502: (i) 196-96-88-337-274 and (ii) 249-196-96-88-337-275, whereas the third RE pattern, 57-249-196-96-88-337-274 nts was shared by a large number of strains ([Table S5](#)). The fourth group with unique RE digestion pattern was consisting of ATCC 19397, which had one unique pattern 308-196-96-88-337-274, but shared its second RE digestion pattern with rest of the strains ([Table S5](#)).

#### *RE-Tsp509I*

As in the previous cases detected above, all the *rrs* copies of Alaska E43 (22/22) and Eklund 17B (22/22) showed a RE digestion pattern of similar kind, such that these two strains formed a group independent of the rest of the strains. The *C. botulinum* strain BKT015925 could be distinguished from the rest of strains

on the basis of its unique RE digestion pattern with Tsp509I: 581-67-287-46 nts ([Table S6](#)). It thus formed second group. In the third group, we could place Kyoto with unique RE digestion patterns. It showed high variability in the RE digestion, where the unique RE patterns: (i) 461-244-40 and (ii) 183-461-244-40 accounted for 2 of the 18 copies of *rrs*. *C. botulinum* strains Kyoto share the rest four RE digestion patterns with other *C. botulinum* strains with varying frequencies ([Table S6](#)).

#### *RE-HpyCH4III*

Digestion of *rrs* of *C. botulinum* with RE HpyCH4III, allowed us to segregate them into 4 groups. As observed with RE-TaqI, Alaska E43 and Eklund 17B formed a group independent of the rest of the strains. However, they could be distinguished from each other on the basis of a 370 nts fragment, which was found only in 8/22 *rrs* copies of Eklund 17B ([Table S4](#)). The second group consisted of only HO4402065, with a unique RE pattern of 128–261–518-184 nts. The third clear cut groups was formed by BKT015525, where all of the 10 copies of *rrs* had a unique RE-HpyCH4III digestion pattern – 126-261-151-565 nts ([Table S4](#)). RE-HpyCH4III was not helpful in distinguishing rest of the *C. botulinum* strains, as they shared their digestion pattern.

#### *RE - Hpy188I*

With RE-Hpy188I, unique digestion pattern was recorded with BKT015925: 153-716 (nts). *C. botulinum* strains Eklund 17B, ATCC 3502, ATCC 19397, Hall had two RE- Hpy188I digestion patterns each ([Table S5](#)). However, in each of these cases, they share only one of their RE patterns with each other, which permits their easy segregation. ATCC 3502 appeared to be a link between ATCC 19397 and Eklund 17B, since it shares one of its RE patterns with each one of them. Similarly Eklund 17B appears to be a link between ATCC 3502 and Alaska E43, on similar grounds.

#### *RE - NlaIV*

A unique RE – NlaIV digestion Pattern was recorded with BKT015925. Kyoto had three types of RE patterns, however, they donot match exactly with those recorded with any other strains. The RE digestion

patterns of Kyoto are shared by 230613 on one hand and other strains except Alaska E43 and Eklund 17B, on the other ([Table S6](#)).

#### *Other REs*

HPYCH4V was useful for distinguishing Kyoto in a clear cut manner ([Table S5](#)). Tsp45I proved helpful in segregating Alaska E43 and Eklund 17B strains ([Table S4](#)). Since it could digest *rrs* sequences of only these two strains. BstUI did not prove very helpful in distinguishing *C. botulinum* strains ([Table S5](#)).

#### *Nucleotide changes*

##### *Loss of RE sites*

A few cases of loss of RE sites due to NCs were observed due to transitions in *rrs* at different positions: 40, 67, 68, 74, 95, 122, 129, 211, 218, 223, 246, 250, 254, 257, 261, 408, 435, 440, 442, 974, 981, 983, 989, 993, 997, 1000, 1004, 1006, 1420 and 1427 ([Table S8](#) and [Fig. 2](#)). It reflects on the susceptibility of different regions of *rrs* to spontaneous mutations. Here, transitions led to the loss of RE sites: (i) G>A led to the loss of RE sites for (1) *AciI*-(C'CGC), (2) *AluI*-(AG'CT), (3) *BspMI*-(ACCTGCnnnn'nnnn), (4) *CviJI*-(rG'Cy), (5) *HindIII*-(A'AGCTT), and (6) *MaeIII*-(GTnAC); (ii) A>G resulted in the loss of RE sites for (1) *AleI*-(CACnn'nnGTG), (2) *BfaI*-(C'TAG), (3) *MaeIII*-(GTnAC), (4) *MslII*-(CAynn'nnrTG) and (5) *Tsp45I*-(GTsAC); (iii) T>C transition resulted in the loss of (1) *AleI*-(CACnn'nnGTG), (2) *MaeIII*-(GTnAC), (3) *MslII*-(CAynn'nnrTG), and (4) *Tsp45I*-(GTsAC); and (iv) C>T transition lead to the loss of (1) *MaeIII*-(GTnAC) and (2) *XmnI*-(GAAnn'nnTTC). A perusal of all the transitions reveals that (i) all of them led to the loss of *MaeIII*-(GTnAC) site, (ii) A>G and/or T>C resulted in loss of sites for 3 REs (1) *AleI*, (2) *MslII* and (3) *Tsp45I* and (iii) G>A transitions resulted in loss of sites for multiple REs. Among these cases there was two transversion of C>A at position 983/989 in one *rrs* copy each of Alaska E43 and Eklund 17B, which led to the loss of *TaqI*-(T'CGA) site.

The affect of these losses in RE sites were most evident among 5-10 *rrs* copies of *C. botulinum* strains ATCC 3502, ATCC 19397 and Eklund 17B, followed by those in 2-4 *rrs* copies each of the rest of the strains ([Table S8](#)). Loch Maree was the only strain where no loss of RE sites was recorded.

#### *Cladistic analysis and RE digestion pattern*

A perusal of [Table S10](#) reveals that it is possible to establish a close relationship among the 13 *C. botulinum* strains, on the basis of systematic absence or presence of certain HKGs in them. On the basis of those 11 genes which are not present in all the *C. botulinum* strains, it can be concluded that (i) ATCC3502 is unique, since it is the only strain which contains all these 11 genes, (ii) Kyoto, Loch Maree, Okra, and 657 form a second group with similarity to each other, with respect to the presence of *abrB*, *cphB*, *dltD*, *sfsA*, and *spmB* and absence of *arcA1*, *ccpA*, *dltB*, *mdeA*, *psd1*, and *psd2*, (iii) Langeland could be separated from group (ii) by the absence of gene *spmB*, (iv) ATCC19397 and Hall could be separated from group (ii) by the absence of gene *dltD* and from group (iii) due to the absence of *dltD* and presence of *spmB*, (v) Alaska E43 and Eklund 17B formed a very distinct group as they (a) don't contain genes *abrB* which were present in the rest of the 8 strains except H04402 065, BKT015925 and 230613 (b) but do contain gene *dltB* which was absent in rest of the strains except ATCC3502, Alaska E43 and Eklund 17B. These 2 strains can be distinguished from each other on the basis of presence of gene *sfsA* only in Alaska E43.

A critical analysis of cladistic tree drawn on the basis of concatenated 7 HKGs of 13 strains, revealed the following relationships: (i) Alaska E43 with Eklund 17B, (ii) ATCC19397, Hall, ATCC 3502 and H0442065 (iii) Okra with Kyoto (iv) 230613 with Langeland ([Fig. 1](#)). In addition, strain Loch Maree and 657 is intermediate to groups (i) (iii) and (iv), where as BKT015925 is independent. A comparison of cladistic analysis with RE digestion patterns of the *rrs* gene reveals that (i) Alaska E43 and Eklund 17B and (ii) BKT015925 formed two distinct groups ([Tables S4-S6](#)).



|                         |                                |      |      |   |                  |      |               |    |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|---|------------------|------|---------------|----|
|                         |                                |      |      | S002290229, S000891587, S002289359,<br>S000891584, S002290093, S000891580,<br>S002288115,                                       |                  |      |               |    |
| BKT015925,<br>CP002410  | Sweden <sup>l</sup>            | 3.21 | 28.2 | S002441238, S002441241, S002441243,<br>S002441245, S002441247, S002441249,<br>S002441251, S002441253, S002441255,<br>S002441257 | 52.12 -<br>52.45 | 0.59 | 0.06-<br>0.39 | 10 |
| H04402 065,<br>FR773526 | United<br>Kingdom <sup>m</sup> | 3.92 | 28.2 | S002408083, S002408085, S002408087,<br>S002408089, S002408091, S002408093,<br>S002408095, S002408098, S002408100                | 52.26 -<br>52.53 | 0.93 | 0.06-<br>0.39 | 9  |
| 230613,<br>CP002011     | China <sup>a</sup>             | 4.01 | 28.3 | S002165509, S002165511, S002165507,<br>S002165513, S002165517, S002165519,<br>S002165515, S002165522, S002165524                | 52.33 -<br>52.53 | 0.26 | 0.06-<br>0.26 | 9  |

Total 212

<sup>a</sup>[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genomes/MICROBES/microbial\\_taxtree.html](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genomes/MICROBES/microbial_taxtree.html)

<sup>b</sup><http://rdp.cme.msu.edu/genome/>

<sup>c</sup><http://tools.neb.com/~vincze/genomes/>

<sup>d</sup>Percent variation range calculated on the basis of pair-wise comparison of *rrs* of a genome

<sup>e</sup><http://ribosome.mmg.msu.edu/rndb/search.php>

<sup>f</sup>Isolated from an infant botulism case in Texas (**9**).

<sup>g</sup>Associated with an infant botulism case in Japan (**9**).

<sup>h</sup>Isolated from a food poisoning incident in Scotland (**9**).

<sup>i</sup>Most likely originated from food borne botulism incident in the US (**9**).

<sup>j</sup>Reference *rrs* used for detecting nucleotide changes in the rest of the *rrs* sequences.

<sup>k</sup>Most likely originated from food borne botulism cases in the western US (**9**).

<sup>l</sup>Isolated from an poultry broilers case in Sweden (**34**)

<sup>m</sup>Isolated from an infant botulism case in United Kingdom. (**10**)







Table S4

*In silico* Restriction Enzyme activity in *rrs* gene of *Clostridium botulinum* strains: HpyCH4III, TaqI and Tsp45I

| <i>Clostridium botulinum</i> strains <sup>a</sup>   | Restriction Enzyme digestion fragments (nucleotides, nts) |       |       |       |       |       |
|---|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>HpyCH4III</b>  |   |       |       |       |       |       |
| Alaska E43 (22/22), Eklund 17B (14/22)  | ■   | 261   | ■     | 149   | ■     |       |
| Eklund 17B (8/22)   | ■   | 261   | ■     | 149   | ■     | 370 ■ |
| ATCC3502 (18/18), ATCC19397/Hall<br>(16/16), Kyoto (18/18), Langeland<br>(18/18), Loch Maree (18/18), Okra<br>(18/18), 657 (18/18), 230613 (9/9),<br>H04402 065 (8/9)                   | ■ 128   | ■ 261 | ■ 150 | ■ 368 | ■ 184 | ■     |
| H04402 065 (1/9)  | ■ 128   | ■ 261 | ■ 518 | ■ 184 | ■     |       |
| BKT015925 (10/10)   | ■ 128   | ■ 261 | ■ 151 | ■ 565 | ■     |       |
| <b>TaqI</b>   |   |       |       |       |       |       |
| Alaska E43 (20/22), Eklund 17B (16/22)  | ■ 88  | ■ 585 | ■ 198 | ■ 55  | ■     |       |
| Alaska E43 (2/22), Eklund 17B (2/22)  | ■ 88  | ■ 585 | ■ 199 | ■     |       |       |
| Eklund (4/22)   | ■ 18  | ■ 70  | ■ 585 | ■ 198 | ■ 55  | ■     |
| ATCC3502 (16/18), ATCC19397/Hall<br>(16/16), Kyoto (18/18), Langeland (18/18),<br>Loch Maree (18/18), Okra (18/18), 657<br>(18/18), 230613 (9/9), H04402 065 (9/9)                      | ■   | 872   | ■     |       |       |       |
| BKT015925 (10/10)   | ■   | 879   | ■ 522 | ■     |       |       |
| ATCC3502 (2/18)   | ■ 90  | ■ 782 | ■     |       |       |       |
| <b>Tsp45I</b>   |   |       |       |       |       |       |
| Alaska E43 (10/22)  | ■ 9   | ■ 371 | ■     |       |       |       |
| Eklund 17B (20/22)  | 9   | 370   | 1     |       |       |       |
| Alaska E43 (12/22), Eklund 17B (2/22)   | ■ 371   | ■     |       |       |       |       |
| ATCC3502 (18/18), ATCC19397/Hall<br>(16/16), H04402 065 (9/9) Kyoto (18/18),<br>Langeland (18/18), Loch Maree (18/18),<br>Okra (18/18), 657 (18/18), 230613 (9/9),<br>BKT015925 (10/10) | NA  |       |       |       |       |       |





















<sup>b</sup>In *C. botulinum* Alaska E43 (CP001078), there were no RE sites at positions 993 and 1000. However, due to nucleotide substitutions at (i) 993G>A, 4 RE sites were generated: 2 at 990 for MaeIII and Tsp45I and 2 novel sites at 993 for AleI and MsII, and (ii) 1000C>T, 3 RE sites were generated: 1 at 998 for MaeIII, 1 at 999 for Tsp45I and 1 at 1000 for HphI. The impact of these changes were evident as follows: (i) number of MaeIII and Tsp45I sites increased by 2 each, (ii) number of HphI site increased by 1, and (iii) novel sites were created for AleI and MsII.



|            |                                    |          |              |
|------------|------------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| Langeland  | S000891606, S000891614, S000891616 | 1420G>A  |              |
| Okra       | S001014394, S001014407             | 1420G>A  |              |
| H04402 065 | S002408095                         | 1420G>A  |              |
| Okra       | S001014394, S001014407             | 1420G>A  | CviJI- rG'Cy |
|            | S002287425, S002288411             | 1427 G>A |              |
| Langeland  | S002290804, S002290679, S002289298 | 1427G>A  |              |

<sup>a</sup>Designated by a “>”-character, 40G>A denotes that at nucleotide 40 a G is changed to a A.

<sup>b</sup>y = C or T, r = G or A, s = G or C.

<sup>c</sup>Intragenomic sequences (see Table S2) with changes at similar position.

<sup>d</sup>Intergenomic sequences (see Table S2) with changes at similar position.

Table S9

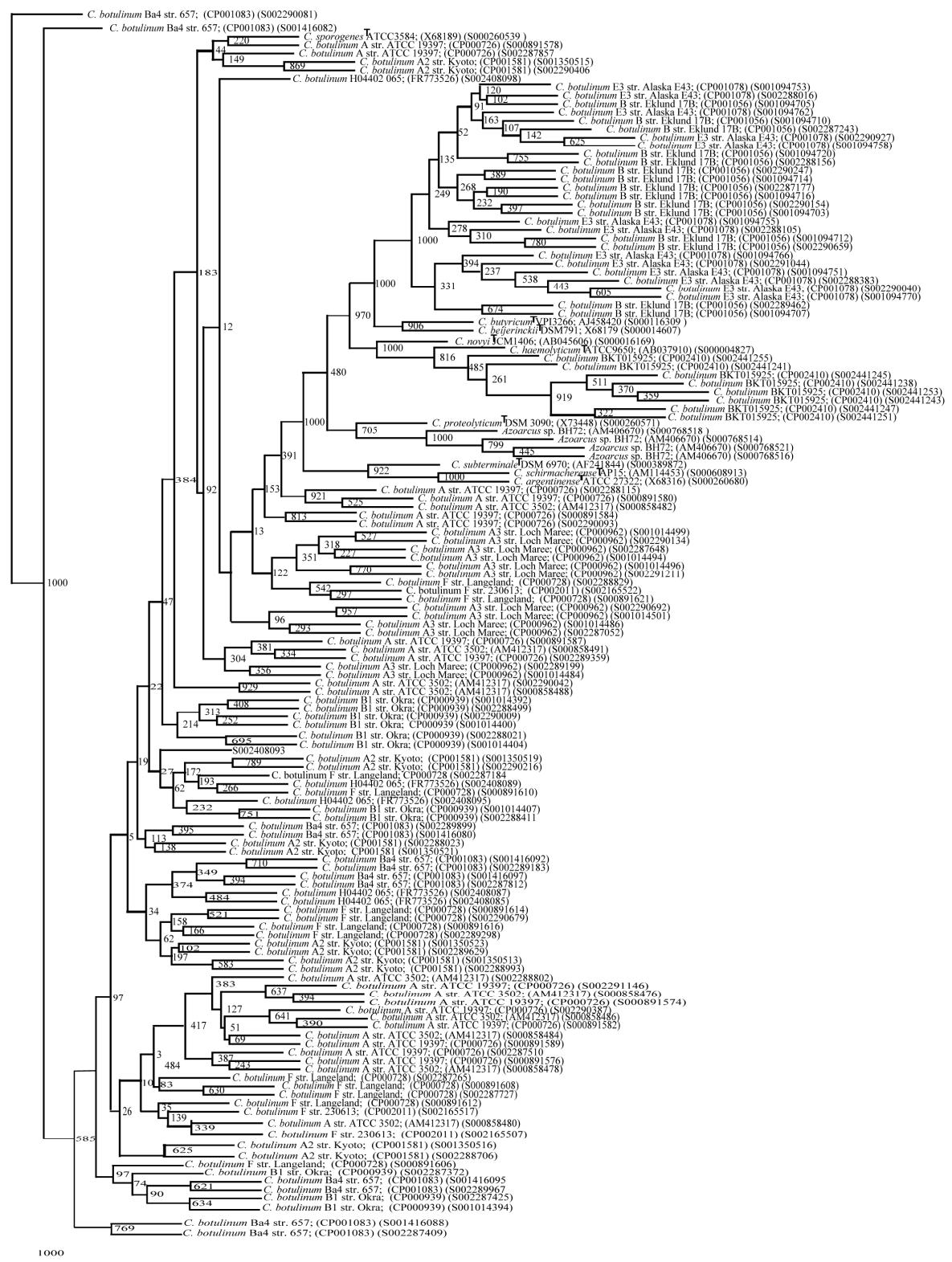
Affected Restriction enzyme (RE) sites in *rrs* of sequenced genomes of different *Clostridium botulinum*

| <i>C. botulinum</i> strains | <i>rrs</i> |          | Changes in RE sites <sup>a</sup> |          |      |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------|----------------------------------|----------|------|
|                             | Total      | Affected | Novel                            | Addition | Loss |
| ATCC 19397/HALL             | 16         | 12       | 21                               | 44       | 44   |
| Alaska E43                  | 22         | 10       | 20                               | 45       | 2    |
| Langeland                   | 18         | 13       | 12                               | 6        | 36   |
| Kyoto                       | 18         | 4        | 6                                | 4        | 6    |
| 230613                      | 9          | 3        | 6                                | 2        | 16   |
| Loch Maree                  | 18         | 10       | 4                                | 28       | 8    |
| ATCC 3502                   | 18         | 12       | 4                                | 13       | 41   |
| H04402065                   | 9          | 6        | 3                                | 8        | 5    |
| 657                         | 18         | 12       | 0                                | 30       | 8    |
| BKT015925                   | 10         | 4        | 0                                | 0        | 12   |
| Okra                        | 18         | 7        | 0                                | 7        | 20   |
| Eklund 17B                  | 22         | 15       | 0                                | 14       | 65   |

a: Details are presented in Additional Table S7.







**Fig S1. Phylogenetic tree of 130 rrs of thirteen completely sequenced genomes of *Clostridium botulinum* strains and their associates.** File contains *rrs* sequences of *Clostridium* species: *C. argentinense* and *C. butyricum* (as neurotoxin producers) and *C. beijerinckii*, *C. haemolyticum*, *C. novyi*, *C. proteolyticum*, *C. chirmacherense*, *C. sporogenes* and *C. subterminalis* (as non-producers of neurotoxin). *C. botulinum* strains ATCC 19397 and Hall had exactly similar nucleotide sequences in all the copies of *rrs* (Table S2), hence the figure carries the sequences of ATCC 19397 only. The tree was rooted using *Azoarcus* sp. BH72.