

January-April 2003

Mobile Genetic Elements as VFARs

Jeff Griffiths, Graciela Ramirez-Toro, Colin Stine, and the Illustrious, Hard-Working VFAR Activity Group

Plenary Session May 13, 2003



VFAR Conference Call

April 23, 2003

- Continue nucleic acid and protein sequence searches of plasmids and pathogenicity islands
- Pilot: MSU database to contain genetic sequences, outbreak data, and organism data
- Pilot: Dr. Wassanaar's project is beginning with whole DNA sequence comparisons of viruses
- Potency/prevalence data how to use:
 - ✓ ID, MID, ID₅₀ or MLD?
 - Normal hosts, sensitive subpopulations?



- Regions of DNA copy themselves and can be shared between bacteria
- Pathogenicity islands (PAIs) and plasmids mediate virulence mechanisms
- PAIs may be responsible for the emergence of new virulent organisms
- Search underway for PAI genes that are shared among virulent organisms



> Plasmids

- ✓ low sensitivity
- conserved regions found in genes not directly related to virulence

Pathogenicity Islands

- ✓ single genes and proteins offer promise
- results are supported by the literature
- ✓ single genes not likely to define virulence



Bottom Line...

- Several pilot projects are in progress and we should have data from them soon.
- Have looked at two possibilities for VFARs: "islands" of genes looks promising as a VFAR candidate.



Next steps

- White paper on VFAR potential, potential of using genomics
- Universe Definition coming along; attributes discussion in detail
- How to incorporate VFARS in attributes
- ➤ 1 pm May 23, 1 pm June 16; maybe June