TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1

1.2 Experimental Procedure .................................................................................. 4

1.3 Objectives of this study ..................................................................................... 5

CHAPTER TWO: IRON AND INFECTION - AN OVERVIEW

2.1 The Importance of Iron in Biological Systems ................................................. 7

2.2 Restriction of Free Iron in Biological Fluids ...................................................... 8

2.3 Iron Acquisition Mechanisms of Bacteria ......................................................... 11

2.3.1 Abstinence from using iron ........................................................................... 12

2.3.2 Reduction of Fe³⁺ and Utilization of Fe²⁺ ....................................................... 12

2.3.3 Intracellular Infection ................................................................................... 13

2.3.4 Utilization of Host Iron Compounds .............................................................. 13

2.3.4.1 Heme and Hemoglobin ............................................................................ 14

2.3.4.2 Transferrin and Lactoferrin .................................................................... 16

2.3.5 Siderophore-mediated Iron Acquisition ....................................................... 18

2.4 Regulation of Siderophore Production .............................................................. 20

2.5 Siderophores and Virulence .............................................................................. 21

2.6 Regulation of Toxin Production by Iron and/or Fur ......................................... 24

2.7 Vibrio cholerae .................................................................................................. 29

2.7.1 The Epidemiology of Cholera ...................................................................... 29

2.7.2 The Pathogenicity of Cholera ..................................................................... 31
2.7.3 Siderophores ..................................................... 33
2.7.4 Hemolysins ...................................................... 34
2.7.5 Proteases .......................................................... 35

2.8 Aeromonas hydrophila .............................................. 36
  2.8.1 A. hydrophila Infections in Humans ..................... 36
  2.8.2 Siderophores .................................................. 38
  2.8.3 Hemolysins .................................................. 39
  2.8.4 Proteases ...................................................... 40

2.9 Practical Applications of Iron Acquisition Systems .......... 41

CHAPTER THREE: MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Bacterial Isolates .................................................. 43
3.2 Plasmid Profile .................................................... 47
  3.2.1 Small Scale Plasmid Extraction .......................... 47
  3.2.2 Agarose Gel Electrophoresis ............................. 47
3.3 Curing Experiments .............................................. 48
3.4 Siderophore Detection on Agar Plates ......................... 48
  3.4.1 Growth under iron-limiting conditions and
        siderophore assay ........................................... 48
3.5 Siderophore Assay ............................................... 49
  3.5.1 Growth of culture for assay ............................. 49
  3.5.2 Chrome azurol S assay ................................... 50
3.6 Hemolysin Assay ................................................ 50
  3.6.1 Growth of culture for assay ............................. 50
  3.6.2 Hemolytic microtiter plate assay ....................... 51
  3.6.3 Hemolysin assay using spectrophotometer .............. 51
3.7 Protease Assay .................................................. 53
  3.7.1 Growth of culture for assay ............................. 53
  3.7.2 Azocasein assay .......................................... 53
3.8 Statistical tests .................................................. 54
3.9 Media .............................................................. 55
  3.9.1 Nutrient agar slants ...................................... 55
3.9.2 Brain-heart infusion broth (BHIB).........................55
3.9.3 M9 + EDDA minimal agar................................55
3.9.4 Chrome azurol S (CAS) agar...............................56
3.9.5 MM9 minimal medium........................................58
3.9.6 Tryptone soya broth (TSB).................................58
3.9.7 TSB + Skim milk broth.....................................59
3.9.8 Luria-Bertani (LB) broth...................................59
3.10 Solution for sirilophore assay...............................59
    3.10.1 CAS assay solution.....................................59
3.11 Solutions for protease assay.........................60
    3.11.1 Skim milk.............................................60
    3.11.2 Trichloroacetic acid (TCA)............................60
    3.11.3 Azocasein..............................................60
    3.11.4 1M NaOH...............................................60
    3.11.5 0.1M Sodium phosphate buffer........................60
3.12 Solutions for hemolysin assay......................61
    3.12.1 Phosphate buffer saline (PBS).........................61
    3.12.2 Tris-HCl buffer.......................................61
    3.12.3 2% human red blood cells suspension..................62
    3.12.4 Saponin.................................................62
3.13 Solutions for plasmid curing..........................62
    3.13.1 Acridine orange.....................................62
3.14 Solutions for plasmid DNA extraction............62
    3.14.1 Solution I............................................62
    3.14.2 Solution II...........................................63
    3.14.3 Solution III..........................................63
    3.14.4 TE buffer.............................................63
3.15 Solutions for agarose gel electrophoresis........63
    3.15.1 TBE buffer............................................63
    3.15.2 Bromophenol blue tracking dye......................64
    3.15.3 Ethidium bromide solution............................64
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1 Siderophore Production in *Aeromonas hydrophila* ................................................. 65
  4.1.1 Siderophore assay on CAS plates ................................................................. 65
  4.1.2 Siderophore assay with CAS assay solution .................................................. 67
  4.1.3 Effect of growth temperature on siderophore production ............................... 71
  4.1.4 Characteristics of plasmid profile and curing ............................................... 71
  4.1.5 Effect of plasmid curing on siderophore production ....................................... 79

4.2 Siderophore production in *Vibrio cholerae* ......................................................... 89
  4.2.1 Siderophore production under iron-limiting conditions .................................. 89
  4.2.2 Effect of growth temperature on siderophore production ............................... 89

4.3 Hemolysin Production in *Aeromonas hydrophila* .................................................. 94
  4.3.1 Hemolysin assay with microtiter plate method ............................................. 94
  4.3.2 Hemolysin production under iron-limited conditions .................................... 94
  4.3.3 Effect of growth temperature on hemolysin production ................................ 99
  4.3.4 Comparison between hemolysin production of clinical and environmental isolates .................................................. 99
  4.3.5 Hemolytic activity of *A. hydrophila* isolates measured at 540nm (A_{540})........ 109

4.4 Hemolysin Production in *V. cholerae* .............................................................. 109
  4.4.1 Hemolysin assay with microtiter plate method ............................................. 109

4.5 Protease Production in *A. hydrophila* ............................................................. 111
  4.5.1 Protease assay with azocasein method ....................................................... 111
  4.5.2 Protease production under iron-limiting conditions ..................................... 114
  4.5.3 Effect of temperature on protease production .............................................. 114
  4.5.4 Comparison between the protease production of clinical and environmental isolates .................................................. 117

4.6 Protease Production in *V. cholerae* .............................................................. 117
  4.6.1 Protease assay with the azocasein method .................................................. 120
  4.6.2 Protease production under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions ................. 120
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1 Siderophore production in *A. hydrophila* .......................................................... 122
5.2 Siderophore production in *V. cholerae* .............................................................. 125
5.3 Comparison between the siderophore production in
    *A. hydrophila* and *V. cholerae* ................................................................. 126
5.4 Hemolysin production in *A. hydrophila* .......................................................... 127
5.5 Hemolysin production in *V. cholerae* ............................................................ 131
5.6 Comparison between the hemolysin production in
    *A. hydrophila* and *V. cholerae* ................................................................. 133
5.7 Protease production in *A. hydrophila* ............................................................ 134
5.8 Protease production in *V. cholerae* .............................................................. 135
5.9 Comparison between the protease production in
    *A. hydrophila* and *V. cholerae* ................................................................. 136
5.10 Siderophore, hemolysin and protease production in
    *A. hydrophila* .................................................................................................. 137
5.11 Siderophore, hemolysin and protease production in
    *V. cholerae* .................................................................................................. 140
5.12 Comparison between the production of virulence-associated
    factors in *A. hydrophila* and *V. cholerae* .................................................. 142

APPENDICES

Appendix A ................................................................. 144
Appendix B ................................................................. 145
Appendix C ................................................................. 146
Appendix D ................................................................. 147
Appendix E ................................................................. 148
Appendix F ................................................................. 149
Appendix G ................................................................. 150

REFERENCES .......................................................... 156
### LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figures</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Hemolysis pattern on V-bottomed microtiter plates.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 A 0.7% agarose gel showing the plasmid profile of <em>A. hydrophila</em> isolates SL2, SL3, SL4, SL6, SL8, SL9 and SL10.</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 A 0.7% agarose gel showing the plasmid profile of <em>A. hydrophila</em> isolates SL11, SL12, SL13, SL14, SL15, SL16 and SL17.</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 A 0.7% agarose gel showing the plasmid profile of <em>A. hydrophila</em> isolates SL18, SL19, SL20, SL21, X2, X38 and X8.</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 A 0.7% agarose gel showing the plasmid profile of <em>A. hydrophila</em> isolates X13, X14, X36, X52, X53, X54 and E29.</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 A 0.7% agarose gel showing the plasmid profile of <em>A. hydrophila</em> isolates H10, SL2(cured), SL3(cured), SL4(cured) and SL6(cured).</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 A 0.7% agarose gel showing the plasmid profile of <em>A. hydrophila</em> isolates SL8, SL9, SL10, SL11, SL12, SL13 and SL14 after treatment with acridine orange.</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 A 0.7% agarose gel showing the plasmid profile of <em>A. hydrophila</em> isolates SL15, SL16, SL17, SL18, SL19, SL20 and SL21 after treatment with acridine orange.</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8 A 0.7% agarose gel showing the plasmid profile of <em>A. hydrophila</em> isolates SL22, X2, X8, X14, X52, X53, and X54 after treatment with acridine orange.</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9 A 0.7% agarose gel showing the plasmid profile of <em>A. hydrophila</em> isolates E29, H10, SL2 and SL4 after treatment with acridine orange.</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10a <em>V. cholerae</em> O1 El Tor isolate V57 exhibiting siderophore production (indicated by orange halo around the colonies) on CAS agar plates.</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.10b *V. cholerae* O1 El Tor isolate V138 exhibiting siderophore production (indicated by orange halo around the colonies) on CAS agar plates.

4.11 Effect of iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions on the hemolysin production of the *A. hydrophila* clinical isolate SL2.

4.12 Effect of iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions on the hemolysin production of the *A. hydrophila* clinical isolate SL4.

4.13 Effect of iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions on the hemolysin production of the *A. hydrophila* clinical isolate SL17.

4.14 Effect of iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions on the hemolysin production of the *A. hydrophila* environmental isolate X13.

4.15 Effect of iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions on the hemolysin production of the *A. hydrophila* environmental isolate X52.

4.16 Effect of iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions on the hemolysin production of the *A. hydrophila* environmental isolate X54.

4.17 Effect of iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions on the hemolysin production of the *A. hydrophila* environmental isolate H10.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tables</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 List of <em>Aeromonas hydrophila</em> isolates</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 List of <em>Vibrio cholerae</em> isolates</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 The number of clinical and environmental isolates of <em>Aeromonas hydrophila</em> isolates exhibiting siderophore production on CAS plates.</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 The clinical and environmental isolates of <em>Aeromonas hydrophila</em> grouped into different categories of siderophore producers under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Comparison between the siderophore production of the <em>Aeromonas hydrophila</em> isolates under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Comparison between the siderophore production of clinical and environmental isolates of <em>Aeromonas hydrophila</em> at 28°C and 37°C under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Comparison between the siderophore production of the <em>Aeromonas hydrophila</em> isolates at 28°C and 37°C.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Plasmid profile of the <em>Aeromonas hydrophila</em> isolates compared to the siderophore production before and after curing.</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Comparison between the siderophore production of the acridine orange treated/plasmid cured <em>Aeromonas hydrophila</em> isolates under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8 Comparison between the siderophore production of the <em>Aeromonas hydrophila</em> isolates before and after curing/treatment with acridine orange under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9 Comparison between the siderophore production of the acridine orange treated/plasmid cured <em>Aeromonas hydrophila</em> isolates at 28°C and 37°C.</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.10 Comparison between the siderophore production of the plasmid cured/acridine orange treated clinical and environmental isolates of *Aeromonas hydrophila* under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.

4.11 The *Vibrio cholerae* isolates grouped into different categories of siderophore production under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.

4.12 Comparison between the siderophore production of the *Vibrio cholerae* isolates under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.

4.13 Comparison between the siderophore production of the *Vibrio cholerae* isolates at 28°C and 37°C.

4.14 The grouping of hemolytic activity.

4.15 The clinical and environmental isolates of *Aeromonas hydrophila* grouped into different categories of hemolysin production under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.

4.16 Comparison between the hemolysin production of the *Aeromonas hydrophila* isolates under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.

4.17 Comparison between the hemolysin production of the *Aeromonas hydrophila* isolates at 28°C and 37°C.

4.18 Comparison between the hemolysin production of clinical and environmental isolates of *Aeromonas hydrophila*.

4.19 Hemolytic activity (at 28°C) of selected *Aeromonas hydrophila* isolates measured at 540nm (A<sub>540</sub>).

4.20 The *Vibrio cholerae* isolates grouped into different categories of hemolysin production under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.

4.21 The clinical and environmental isolates of *Aeromonas hydrophila* grouped into different categories of protease producers under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.

4.22 Comparison between the protease production of the *Aeromonas hydrophila* isolates under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.
4.23 Comparison between the protease production of the *Aeromonas hydrophila* isolates at 28°C and 37°C.

4.24 Comparison between the protease production of the clinical and environmental isolates of *Aeromonas hydrophila*.

4.25 The *Vibrio cholerae* isolates grouped into different categories of protease producers under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.

4.26 Comparison between the protease production of *Vibrio cholerae* isolates under iron-limiting and iron-rich conditions.

4.27 Comparison between the protease production of the *Vibrio cholerae* isolates at 28°C and 37°C.