

1    **First Indian report on Genome-wide Comparison of Multidrug-Resistant *Escherichia***  
2    ***coli* from Blood Stream Infections**

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26 **Abstract:**

27 **Background**

28 Multidrug-resistant (MDR) *E. coli* with extended-spectrum  $\beta$ -lactamases (ESBLs) is  
29 becoming endemic in health care settings around the world. Baseline data on virulence and  
30 AMR of specific lineages of *E. coli* circulating in developing countries like India is currently  
31 lacking.

32 **Methods**

33 Whole-genome sequencing was performed for 60 MDR *E. coli* isolates. Genome-wide  
34 analysis was performed at single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) level resolution to identify  
35 the relation between the isolates in context of time, virulence and AMR determinants  
36 possessed.

37 **Results**

38 Genome comparison revealed the presence of ST-131 global MDR and ST410 as emerging-  
39 MDR clades of *E. coli*. AMR gene profile for cephalosporin and carbapenem resistance  
40 differed between the clades. Genotypes *bla*<sub>CTX-M-15</sub> and *bla*<sub>NDM-5</sub> were common among  
41 cephalosporinases and carbapenemases, respectively. For aminoglycoside resistance, *rmtB*  
42 was positive for 31.7% of the isolates, of which 30% were co-harboring carbapenemases.  
43 Further, the FimH types and virulence gene profile positively correlated with the SNP based  
44 phylogeny, which also revealed the evolution of MDR clones among the study population  
45 with temporal accumulation of SNPs. The predominant clone was ST167 (*bla*<sub>NDM</sub> lineage)  
46 followed by ST405 (global clone ST131 equivalent) and ST410 (fast spreading high risk  
47 clone).

48 **Conclusions**

49 This is the first report on the whole genome analysis of MDR *E. coli* lineages circulating in  
50 India. Data from this study will provide public health agencies a baseline portfolio of AMR  
51 and virulence in pathogenic *E. coli* in the region.

52

53 **Keywords:** *E. coli*; ST131; ST167; ST410; high risk clone; SNP phylogeny

54

55 **Introduction**

56 *Escherichia coli* is the leading cause of bloodstream infections (BSIs) caused by Gram-  
57 negative bacteria [1] and other common infections including urinary tract infections (UTIs).  
58 As an important commensal component of the biosphere, *E. coli* is colonizes the lower gut of  
59 animals and humans and gets released in the environment as a norm allowing widespread  
60 dissemination.

61

62 Virulence of *E. coli* is driven by multiple factors that involves adhesins, toxins, siderophores,  
63 lipopolysaccharide (LPS), capsule, and invasins [2]. It was reported that a large proportion of  
64 MDR *E. coli* carried by people are acquired via food, especially from farm animals [3].  
65 Although most of the MDR *E. coli* are reported to be community acquired rather than  
66 healthcare [4,5], recently MDR *E. coli*, which produce extended-spectrum  $\beta$ -lactamases  
67 (ESBL) have been endemic in health care settings.

68

69 Among MDR *E. coli*, AMR mediated by ESBL is mainly due to the *bla*CTX-M family,  
70 particularly *bla*CTX-M-15 and 14, compared to the less frequent observation of *bla*SHV and  
71 *bla*OXA families [6-8]. Carbapenem resistance in *E. coli* was mostly reported to be mediated  
72 by *bla*OXA-48 [9], *bla*NDM and *bla*VIM [10]. Also, AMR among *E. coli* is increasingly  
73 reported for fluoroquinolones and third- and fourth-generation cephalosporins. Sequence type  
74 131 (ST131) predominates globally among such MDR *E. coli* strains [11].

75

76 Our study was aimed at identifying the virulence and AMR genetic determinants predominant  
77 in MDR *E. coli*. We constructed core genome phylogeny using high quality SNP information  
78 to infer the genome wide association of virulence and resistance attributes among the  
79 sequenced samples.

80

81 **Materials and Methods**

82 **Isolates and identification**

83 A total of 99257 specimens were screened from BSI during the year 2015 to 2016 from the  
84 patients attending Christian Medical College, Vellore, India. Isolation and identification of the  
85 organism were carried out using a standard protocol [12]. Of the 1100 *E. coli* positives, 10%  
86 were observed resistant to carbapenems, of which 60 MDR isolates were selected in random  
87 for further characterization.

88

89 **Antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST)**

90 *Disc diffusion*

91 AST testing was carried out using the Kirby-Bauer disk diffusion method. The antimicrobial  
92 agents tested were Amikacin (30 µg), netilmicin (30 µg), gentamycin (10 µg), chloramphenicol  
93 (30 µg), ciprofloxacin (5 µg), cefotaxime (30 µg), cefoxitin (30 µg), ceftazidime (30 µg),  
94 cefpodoxime (10 µg), piperacilllin-tazobactam (100/10 µg), cefoperazone-sulbactam (75/30),  
95 imipenem (10 µg) and meropenem (10 µg), tigecycline (15 µg) and tetracycline (30 µg)  
96 according to guidelines suggested by CLSI M100-S27, 2017. Quality control strains (*K.*  
97 *pneumoniae* ATCC 700603, *P. aeruginosa* ATCC 27853 and *E. coli* ATCC 25922) were used  
98 in all batches as recommended by the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute.

99

100 *Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC) for colistin*

101 Colistin MIC for the studied isolates was determined by broth microdilution and interpreted  
102 using CLSI 2017 breakpoint recommendations. *mcr-1* positive *E. coli* with the expected range  
103 4 – 8 µg/ml, *E. coli* ATCC 25922 (0.25 – 2 µg/ml) and *P. aeruginosa* ATCC 27853 (0.5 – 4  
104 µg/ml) were used as quality control (QC) strains for colistin MIC determination.

105

106 **Next generation sequencing and genome assembly**

107 Genomic DNA was extracted using a QIAamp DNA Mini Kit (QIAGEN, Hilden, Germany).

108 Whole genome sequencing (WGS) was performed using an Ion Torrent™ Personal Genome

109 Machine™ (PGM) sequencer (Life Technologies, Carlsbad, CA) with 400-bp read chemistry

110 according to the manufacturer's instructions. Data were assembled with reference *E. coli*

111 strain (NC000913) using Assembler SPAdes v.5.0.0.0 embedded in Torrent Suite Server

112 v.5.0.3.

113

114 **Genome annotation**

115 The assembled sequence was annotated using PATRIC, the bacterial bioinformatics database  
116 and analysis resource (<http://www.patricbrc.org>), and NCBI Prokaryotic Genomes Automatic  
117 Annotation Pipeline (PGAAP, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genomes/static/Pipeline.html>).

118 Downstream analysis was performed using the CGE server (<http://www.cbs.dtu.dk/services>)

119 and PATRIC. The resistance gene profile was analysed using ResFinder 2.1 from the CGE

120 server (<https://cge.cbs.dtu.dk//services/ResFinder/>). The sequences were also screened for

121 antimicrobial resistance genes in the Antibiotic Resistance Genes Database (ARDB) and

122 Comprehensive Antibiotic Resistance Database (CARD) through PATRIC. Virulence genes

123 from the genomes were identified using VirulenceFinder 2.0

124 (<https://cge.cbs.dtu.dk/services/VirulenceFinder/>). Serotype of the isolates were identified

125 using SerotypeFinder 1.1 (<https://cge.cbs.dtu.dk/services/SerotypeFinder/>).

126

127 **Genome based MLST analysis**

128 Sequence types (STs) were analysed by MLST 1.8 (MultiLocus Sequence Typing)

129 (<https://cge.cbs.dtu.dk//services/MLST/>). To visualize the possible evolutionary relationships

130 between isolates, STs of the study isolates and the globally reported strains were computed  
131 using PHYLOViZ software v2.0 based on goeBURST algorithm. The study used Warwick  
132 database for all sequence based MLST analysis of *E. coli*.

133

134 **Genome comparison analyses**

135 Gview, interactive genome viewer was used to compare the annotated *E. coli* genome  
136 arrangements with the reference *E. coli* K12 genome (NC\_000913) [13]. Core genome  
137 analysis was performed using Roary: the Pan Genome Pipeline v3.11.2 from Sanger Institute  
138 [14]. Further, the tree file was visualised and analysed in iTOL v4 (<https://itol.embl.de/>).

139

140 This Whole Genome Shotgun project has been deposited at GenBank under the accession  
141 numbers PVPX00000000, PVPW00000000, PVPV00000000, PVPU00000000,  
142 PVPT00000000, PVPS00000000, PVPR00000000, PVPQ00000000, PVPP00000000,  
143 PVPO00000000, PVPN00000000, PVPM00000000, PVPL00000000, PVPK00000000,  
144 PVPJ00000000, PVPI00000000, PVPH00000000, PVOS00000000, PVPG00000000,  
145 PVPF00000000, PVPE00000000, PVPD00000000, PVPC00000000, PVPB00000000,  
146 PVPA00000000, PVOZ00000000, PVOY00000000, PVOX00000000, PVOW00000000,  
147 PVOV00000000, PVOT00000000, RCAC00000000, RCAE00000000, RCAI00000000,  
148 RCAH00000000, RCAJ00000000, RCAD00000000, RCAG00000000, RCAF00000000,  
149 RCAL00000000, RCAN00000000, RCAM00000000, RCAK00000000, SAZJ00000000,  
150 SAZP00000000, SAZU00000000, SAZV00000000, SAZF00000000, SAZG00000000,  
151 SAZH00000000, SAZI00000000, SAZK00000000, SAZL00000000, SAZM00000000,  
152 SAZN00000000, SAZO00000000, SAZQ00000000, SAZR00000000, SAZS00000000,  
153 SAZT00000000. The version described in this manuscript is version 1.

154

155 **Results**

156 **Antimicrobial susceptibility**

157 All 60 *E. coli* isolates were resistant to carbapenems, quinolones, cephalosporins and beta-  
158 lactamase inhibitors (Table S1). Whereas all the isolates were susceptible to colistin except  
159 B7532 and B9021, which exhibited an MIC of 32 µg/ml.

160

161 **Whole genome sequence analysis**

162 ***Phylogeny of MDR E. coli***

163 MLSTFinder revealed the different sequence types of the isolates. The study isolates  
164 belonged to 6 clonal complexes with 14 different sequence types. Few of the sequence types  
165 were observed to share same founder types revealing the evolution of these strains. CC10 and  
166 CC 405 were the two major CCs observed with ST-167, ST-410 and ST-405 as the common  
167 STs. Interestingly, nine isolates belonging to CC/ST-131 were identified, of which, all were  
168 of H-30 clade, except the isolate BA9313 (H-24). goeBURST analysis revealed the relation  
169 between sequence types observed within same clonal complex (Figure 1).

170

171 **Figure 1:** A) goeBURST image of *E. coli* showing clonal complex 10 with STs 44, 167, 410,  
172 448, 617, 1702 and 2851, B) goeBURST image of *E. coli* showing clonal complex/ ST-131  
173 (a), and CC405 (b) with STs 405 and 5954.

174

175 ***E. coli genome comparison***

176 Whole genome composition of 60 MDR *E. coli* was compared with the *E. coli* K-12  
177 reference genome which shows the region of differences between these genomes (Figure S1).  
178 Totally 2518792 SNPs were identified in all analyzed genomes. On minimum 5957 and

179 maximum 74713 SNPs were identified in each of the 60 MDR *E. coli* genomes when  
180 compared to the reference genome.

181

182 **Figure S1:** Circular genome plot comparing 60 MDR *E. coli* thereby showing differences in  
183 genome composition in comparison to the reference genome NC000913 *E. coli*.

184

### 185 **Core vs pan genome**

186 Comparison between the core and pan genomes of 60 MDR *E. coli* isolates revealed 2258  
187 core genes across all 60 isolates among the 17944 total gene clusters. This includes 600 soft  
188 core genes in 57 to 59 isolates, 3984 shell genes in 9 to 57 isolates and 11102 genes in less  
189 than 9 isolates (Figure 4). Further the pan genome matrix of the isolates depict the similarity  
190 between core genes and pan genes. Low similarity was observed across the genomes for the  
191 pan genes with high gene numbers and vice versa for the core genes (Figure 2).

192

193 **Figure 2:** Pan genome vs core genome comparison depicting high number of pan genomes  
194 and low number of conserved genes A), Break-up of core genes, soft core genes and pan  
195 genes B) among the 60 MDR *E. coli* isolates from BSI

196

197 **Figure 3:** Pan genome matrix identified with the core gene sets of 60 MDR *E. coli* isolates  
198 depicting the important antimicrobial resistance (*bla*NDM-5, *bla*CTX-M-15, *bla*OXA-10,  
199 *mcr-1.1*) and virulence genes (invG, fimH, fliC2, intA) respectively.

200

### 201 **Serotype prediction**

202 Based on the whole genome data, serotype of the MDR *E. coli* isolates were detected.  
203 O102:H6 was the commonest serotype (18.75%) followed by O89:H9 (15.6%), O8:H9

204 (12.5%), O89:H5 (9.4%) and other serotypes. Few isolates had partial alignment of O or H  
205 antigen genes with the reference strains which further needs to be confirmed by additional  
206 tests.

207

208 ***Genetic virulence factors of MDR E. coli***

209 Three common virulence gene profiles were observed among the isolates as follows, i) *iss*,  
210 *capU*, *gad*, ii) *ipfA*, and iii) *eila*, *gad*, *air*. The FimH virulence typing revealed the types 5,  
211 24, 27, 28, 30, 35, 54, 191, 54-like in comparison to the database.

212

213 ***Comparison of virulence and clonal traits***

214 The virulence gene profiles of the 60 isolates were then compared to the FimH virulence  
215 types, MLST sequence type and SNP phylogeny. The *E. coli* isolates showed distinct groups  
216 including ST-131; H-30 clade based on the virulence genes identified (Figure 6). The  
217 sequence types were linked to the groups of same virulence gene profile and FimH virulence  
218 types.

219

220 **Figure 4:** SNP phylogeny based comparison of genetic virulence traits observed in MDR *E.*  
221 *coli* strains exhibiting, sequence types, virulence gene profile, O and H antigens and Fim-H  
222 types.

223

224 ***Antimicrobial resistance genetic determinants***

225 ResFinder revealed the presence of multiple AMR genes in each of the MDR *E. coli* (Figure  
226 7). Aminoglycoside and beta lactam resistance genes were seen high compared to other  
227 groups. Among the aminoglycoside resistance genes, *aadA5* and *aac(6')lb-cr* were higher  
228 followed by *aadA2* and *rmtB*. While among beta lactamases, *blaCTX-M-15* was higher

229 followed by *bla*NDM-5, *bla*OXA-1 and *bla*TEM-1B. Similarly, most of the isolates  
230 harboured *mphA*, *catB4*, *sul1*, *tetB*, *dfrA17* and *dfrA12*. Interestingly, two isolates, B7532 and  
231 B9021 carried *mcr-1.1* responsible for plasmid-mediated colistin resistance. The two isolates  
232 also showed phenotypic resistance to colistin with high MIC (>32 µg/ml).

233

234 **Figure 5:** Antimicrobial resistance genes observed in MDR *E. coli* compared to the SNP  
235 based phylogeny. Depicting prevalence of *bla*NDM-5 among carbapenemases and *bla*CTX-  
236 M-15 among cephalosporinases.

237

## 238 **Discussion**

239 The increasing usage of third-generation β-lactams and β-lactam inhibitors was accompanied  
240 with increases in prevalence of the MDR phenotype among *E. coli*. A study from India with  
241 invasive *E. coli* isolates between 2014 and 2016 reported susceptibility to cefoxitin 53%,  
242 ceftazidime 33%, cefotaxime 26%, ceftriaxone 25%, cefepime 29%, piperacillin tazobactam  
243 66%, imipenem and meropenem 89%, aztreonam 36%, ciprofloxacin 19%, levofloxacin  
244 23%, and amikacin 91% [15]. Among these, about 64% of *E. coli* were found to be ESBL  
245 producers.

246

247 The increasing frequency of antimicrobial resistance in clinical *E. coli* isolates was known to  
248 be associated with genetic determinants such as *bla*<sub>CTX-M</sub>, *bla*<sub>NDM</sub>, and *mcr* genes. In this  
249 study, multiple AMR genes for beta lactams, carbapenems, fluoroquinolones, tetracycline,  
250 aminoglycosides and colistin were identified. The presence of genotypic AMR genes  
251 correlated well with phenotypic expression for beta lactams, carbapenems, fluoroquinolones  
252 and tetracycline. Plasmids IncFII majorly carried AMR genes *bla*<sub>CTX-M-15</sub>, *bla*<sub>NDM-5</sub>, *aadA2*,

253 *rmtB*, *sull*, *drfA12*, *erm*(B) and *tetA*, while IncFI plasmids carried mostly *aadA5*, *sul2*,  
254 *dfrA17*, *mph*(A) and *tetB* genes [16].

255

256 The MDR *E. coli* isolates upon SNP based phylogeny grouped to four major clades, ST167,  
257 ST410, ST405 and ST131. Among the isolates, for carbapenem resistance, *bla*<sub>NDM-5</sub> was  
258 common in ST131, ST405 and ST410 clades. While among ST167, *bla*<sub>NDM-4, -5</sub> and *-7* were  
259 seen. Whereas, previous reports identified *bla*<sub>NDM-1</sub> as common among *E. coli* though the  
260 sample size was lesser [17], whereas in China, *bla*<sub>NDM-1</sub> and *bla*<sub>NDM-5</sub> were seen in equal  
261 numbers [18].

262

263 *bla*<sub>OXA-48</sub> type carbapenemases are the most commonly reported in *E. coli* [19] followed by  
264 *bla*<sub>NDM</sub> [20], *bla*<sub>IMP</sub> [21] and *bla*<sub>KPC</sub> [22] type carbapenemases have also been determined.  
265 Studies report occurrence of *bla*<sub>OXA-48</sub> from as low as 3% to 22% [23, 9]. A report from India  
266 has shown, *bla*<sub>NDM</sub> was common among carbapenemases in *E. coli* (70%), followed by  
267 *bla*<sub>OXA-48</sub> (24%) and *bla*<sub>VIM</sub> (17%). *bla*<sub>NDM</sub> alone is 48%, *bla*<sub>OXA-48</sub> alone is 19%,  
268 *bla*<sub>NDM</sub>+*bla*<sub>OXA-48</sub> is 5%, *bla*<sub>NDM</sub>+*bla*<sub>VIM</sub> is 17% [24]. In our study, the combinations observed  
269 are, *bla*<sub>NDM-1</sub> - 1, *bla*<sub>NDM-4</sub> - 1, *bla*<sub>NDM-5</sub> - 6, *bla*<sub>NDM-7</sub> - 1, *bla*<sub>OXA-1</sub> - 21, *bla*<sub>OXA-181</sub> - 2, *bla*<sub>NDM-5</sub>+*bla*<sub>OXA-16</sub> - 16, *bla*<sub>NDM-5</sub>+*bla*<sub>OXA-181</sub> - 1, *bla*<sub>NDM-1</sub>+*bla*<sub>OXA-2</sub> - 2. This revealed that *bla*<sub>OXA-1</sub> was  
270 predominant followed by *bla*<sub>NDM</sub> in carbapenem resistant *E. coli* in our setting, though  
271 *bla*<sub>OXA-181</sub> was rare.

273

274 In addition, aminoglycoside resistance had been an important concern among Gram-  
275 negatives. Acquired 16S-RMTases were known to confer extremely high level of  
276 aminoglycoside resistance, due to which key aminoglycosides including gentamicin,  
277 tobramycin, and amikacin are ineffective against carbapenem resistant strains [25].

278 Accordingly, plazomicin, a new aminoglycoside agent identified to combat against  
279 carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae, was found inactive if the isolates co-produced 16S-  
280 RMTases [26]. In this study, about 90% of the RMTase positive *E. coli* co-harbored  
281 carbapenemases, which further adds to the burden of carbapenem resistance. Similarly,  
282 Taylor et al. [27] and Poirel et al. [28] had reported 83.1% and 45.4% co-occurrence of  
283 carbapenemases in 16S RMTase producing Enterobacteriaceae, respectively.

284

285 For cephalosporin resistance, the isolates of ST131 and ST405 clades carried *bla*<sub>CTX-M-15</sub>,  
286 whereas ST167 and ST410 carried *bla*<sub>CTX-M-15</sub> and *bla*<sub>CMY</sub> genes. Previously 54.34%  
287 *bla*<sub>CTX-M</sub> was reported in ESBL positive isolates from India [29]. Recently, plasmid-mediated  
288 colistin resistance is increasingly reported from *E. coli* [30-32]. This study observed two  
289 isolates (B7532, B9021) with *mcr-1.1* expressing high MIC of >32 µg/ml to colistin. Though  
290 the isolates were from 2007, no records of *mcr* in *E. coli* were observed after 2007.

291

292 The antimicrobial susceptibility of *E. coli* has been shown to vary geographically [33].  
293 Among the different clonal groups observed, *E. coli* ST131 was most commonly associated  
294 with community acquired infection, which recently were highly associated with healthcare  
295 settings. ST131 was reported as the predominant lineage carrying *bla*<sub>CTX-M-15</sub> and other  
296 ESBLs. Most of the MDR *E. coli* carrying *bla*<sub>CTX-M-15</sub> from different countries in Europe and  
297 North America were homogenously grouped into the *E. coli* O25:H4-ST131 [6,35-36]. In this  
298 study, 87% of the isolates carried *bla*<sub>CTX-M-15</sub>, among various STs, where only nine isolates  
299 belong to ST131. Among the observed STs in this study, *bla*<sub>CTX-M-15</sub> was previously reported  
300 for its strong association among ST167, ST617, ST405, ST410, ST131 and ST361 [36].

301

302 Though ST131 clones were predominantly reported worldwide, the STs observed in this  
303 study were known for its distinct lineages. ST167 was previously reported for its ability to  
304 carry *bla*<sub>NDM</sub> genes in China [37-39]. ST405 had been known as another global clonal group  
305 similar to ST131 [40]. ST405 lineage was reported to carry *bla*<sub>NDM</sub> genes in hospital settings  
306 [41] and also reported to carry *bla*KPC-2 [42]. In addition, ST405 was reported as a lineage  
307 carrying fluoroquinolone resistance in Japan [40]. Recently, ST410 was reported as a possible  
308 international high risk clone with B2/H24R, B3/H24Rx, and B4/H24RxC AMR clades.  
309 B3/H24Rx was reported to be evolved by acquisition of the *bla*<sub>CTX-M-15</sub> and an IncFII  
310 plasmid. B4/H24RxC emerged by acquiring IncX3 plasmid with *bla*<sub>OXA-181</sub> known for  
311 carbapenem resistance, which further acquired *bla*<sub>NDM-5</sub>, on a conserved IncFII plasmid [43].  
312 In this study, all ST410 isolates (*n* = 7) harboured *bla*<sub>CTX-M-15</sub> gene, while only B25762,  
313 BV643, B12243 and B32605 had IncFII plasmids and *bla*<sub>NDM-5</sub> (B3/H24RxC). B12243, in  
314 addition harboured IncX3 with *bla*<sub>OXA-181</sub> (B4/H24RxC), while BA22372 and BA9615 had  
315 only *bla*<sub>OXA-181</sub> in IncX3 plasmid (B4/H24RxC).

316  
317 Virulence genes observed among the *E. coli* isolates varied according to the different clades  
318 observed. The comparison of the virulence gene type with SNP based phylogeny revealed the  
319 acquaintance and deletion of virulence genes. Genes *iss*, *capU* and *gad* were observed in  
320 ST167 clade. ST131 possessed *ih*<sub>A</sub>, *sat*, *cnf1* and *senB* in addition to *iss* and *gad*. ST131 had  
321 lost the *capU* genes. Further, ST405 clade also lost *iss* and gained *eilA* and *air* genes with  
322 FimH type 29. Few isolates of ST405 retained *ih*<sub>A</sub> and *sat* genes belonging to FimH 27 type  
323 within ST405. This was followed by ST410 (FimH 24) that predominantly had *ipfA* gene and  
324 lost all other genes, except few. Overall, *gad* gene served as backbone for ST167, 131 and  
325 ST405 clades, while *ipfA* for ST410. Similar studies comparing the evolution of virulence  
326 pattern with phylogeny is still lacking.

327

328 FimH had been reported as a major candidate for the development of a vaccine against  
329 pathogenic *E. coli* [44] which was responsible for mannose-sensitive bacterial adhesion [45].  
330 Though high nucleotide conservation of >98% was observed in *fimH* alleles, minor sequence  
331 differences were reported to correlate with differential binding and adhesion phenotypes [45].

332

333 Fim-H types correlated with the STs observed in the study isolates. FimH 27 and 29 type  
334 grouped with ST405 clade. The ST405 clade with 27 and 29 *fimH* types would have possibly  
335 emerged from the ST131 clade with Fim-H type 24 and 30. However, another clade with  
336 FimH 24 belonged to ST410 with CC10. Similar study comparing the MLST and fim-H types  
337 were previously reported by Dreux et al. [46] in Adherent-Invasive *E. coli*.

338

339 Moreover, concatenated SNPs based phylogeny revealed higher discrimination between the  
340 clinical MDR *E. coli* isolates and disclosed the evolutionary pattern with accumulated SNPs.  
341 Among the study isolates, even within the clones, evidence of evolution is seen with the  
342 difference in root to tip. This suggests continuous evolution leading to diversified MDR *E.*  
343 *coli* strains in India.

344

345 **Conclusions:**

346 To the best of our knowledge, this is the first report on SNP phylogeny in comparison with  
347 AMR and virulence traits in *E. coli* in India. The study revealed the prevalence of *bla*<sub>NDM-5</sub>  
348 among the clades ST131, ST405 and ST410 clades. *bla*<sub>CTX-M-15</sub> was responsible for  
349 cephalosporin resistance in ST131 and ST405 clades whereas, ST167 and ST410 carried both  
350 *bla*<sub>CTX-M-15</sub> and *bla*<sub>CMY</sub> genes. For aminoglycoside resistance, *rmtB* was positive for 31.7% of  
351 the isolates, of which 30% were co-harboring carbapenemases. The FimH types and virulence

352 gene profile positively correlated with the SNP based phylogeny. However the predominant  
353 ST131 epidemic clone was smaller the study population while ST167 and ST405 clones with  
354 multiple AMR genes were predominant. Isolates with *iss*, *capU* and *gad* virulence genes were  
355 the major type. Moreover, SNP based phylogeny revealed the evolution of the MDR clones  
356 among the study population with the accumulation of SNPs, which suggests continuous  
357 molecular surveillance to understand the spread of MDR clones in India.

358

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A)



B)

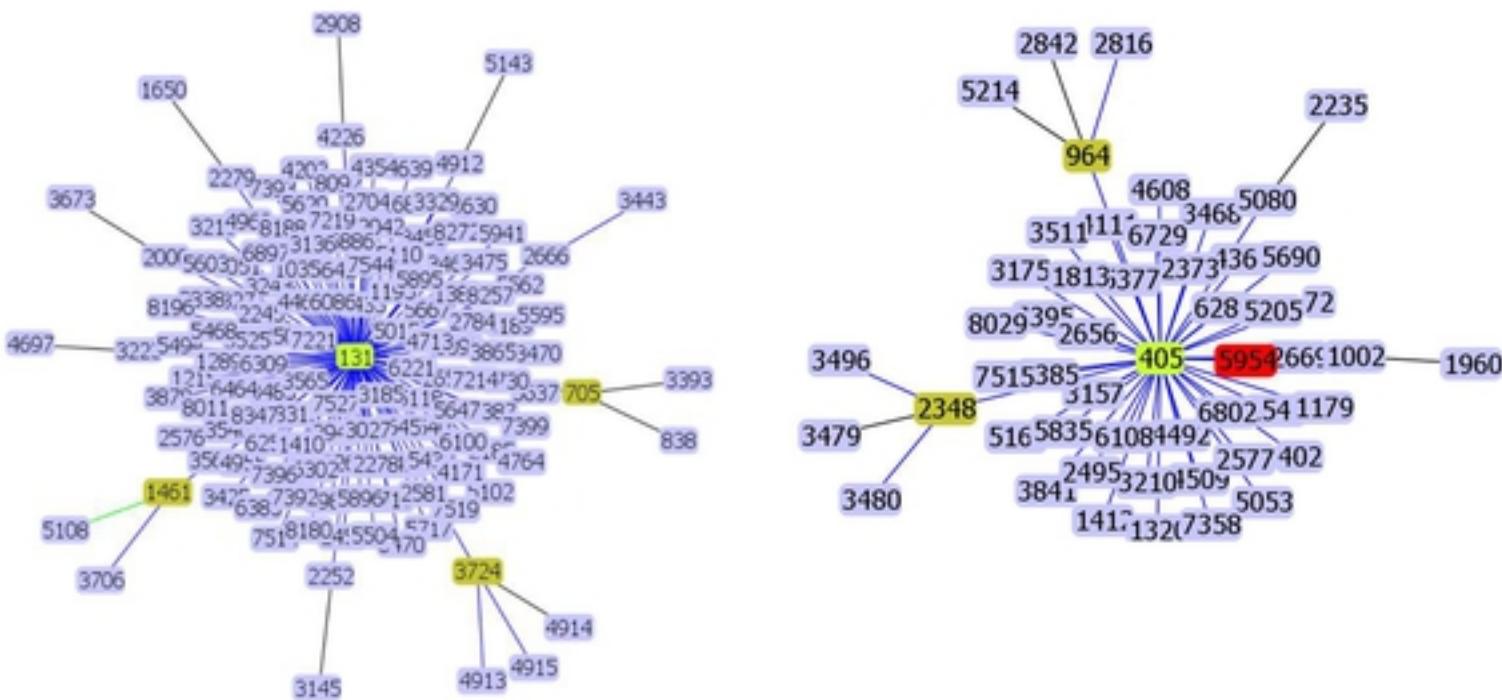


Figure 1

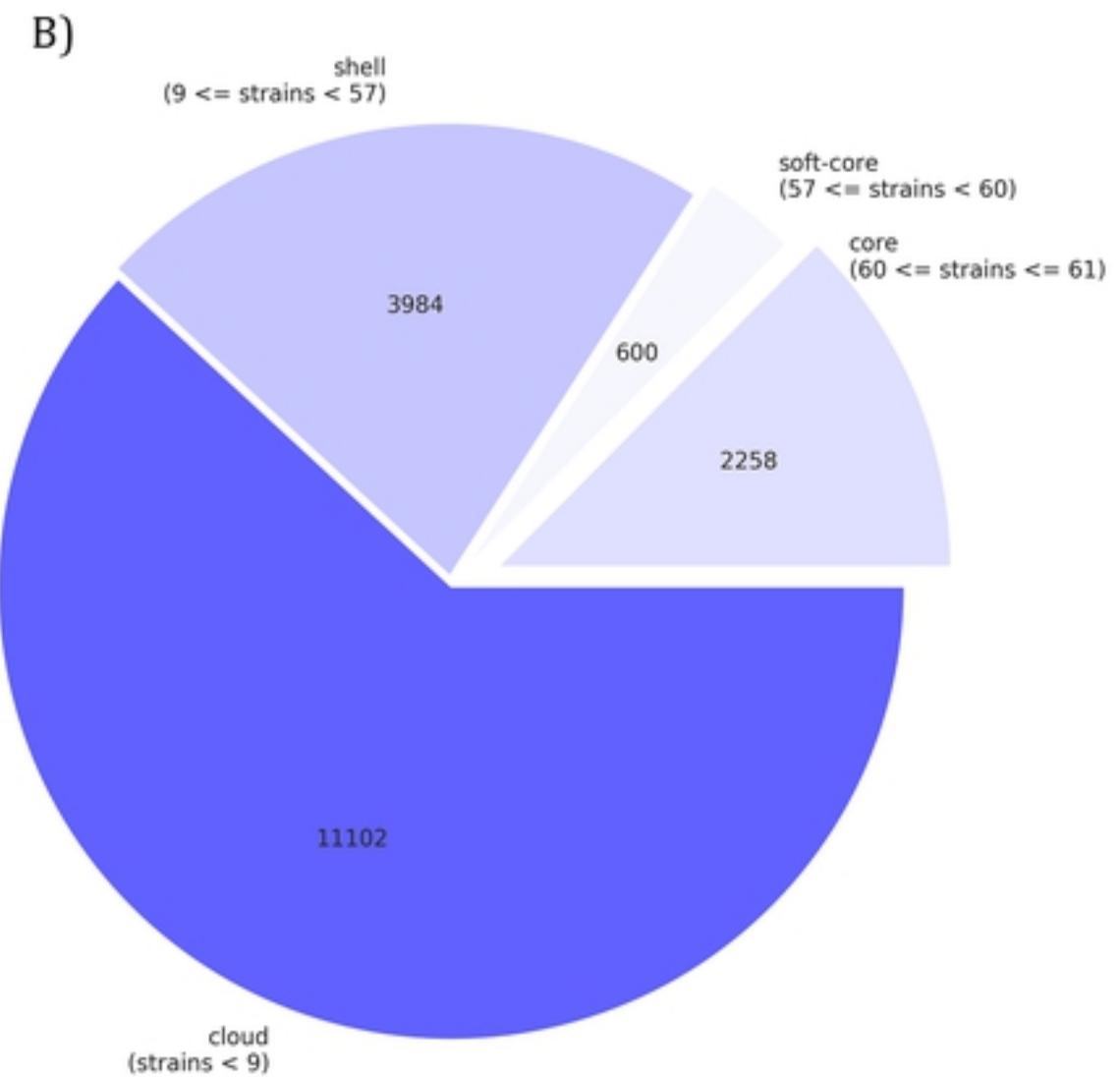
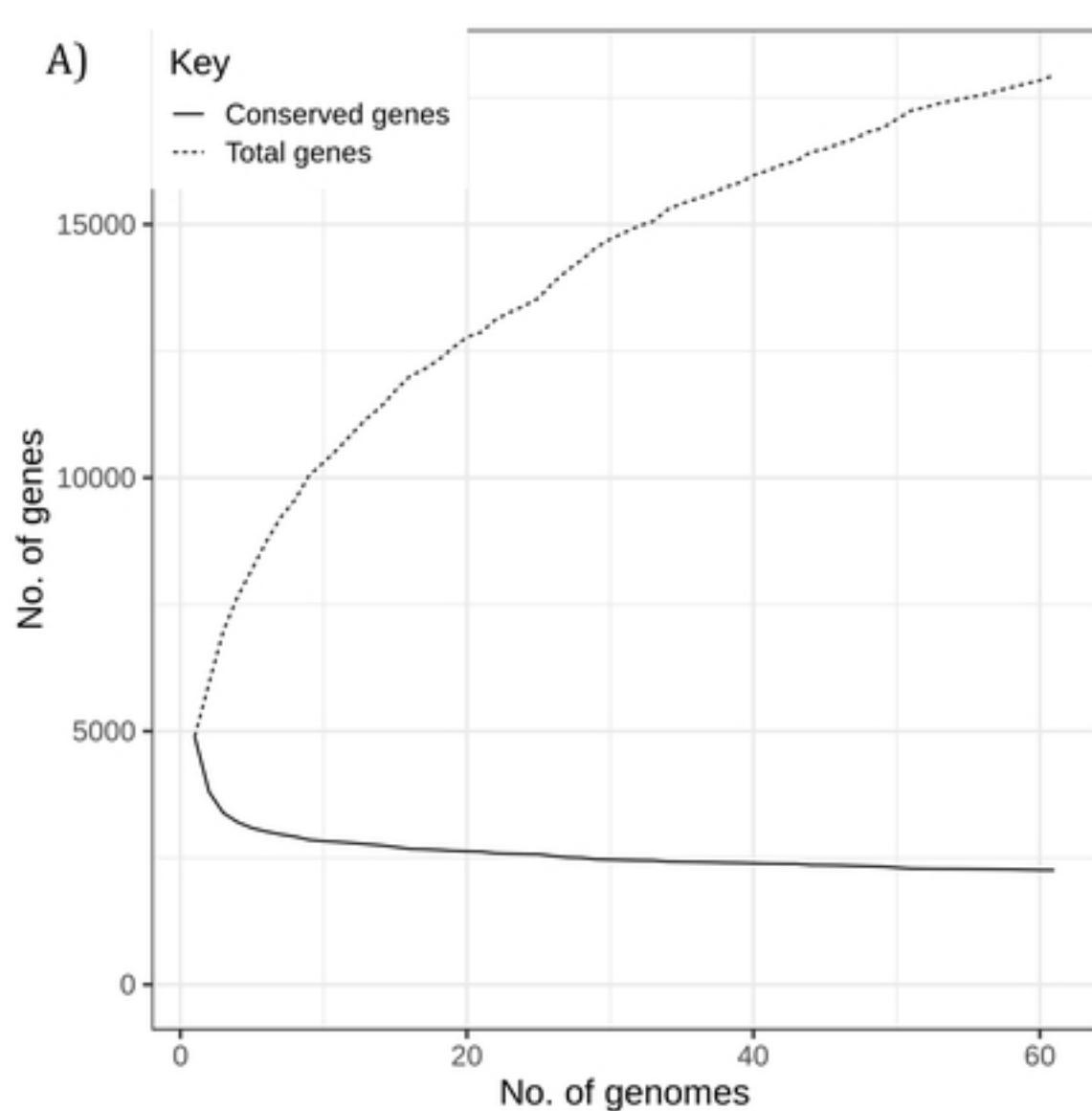


Figure 2

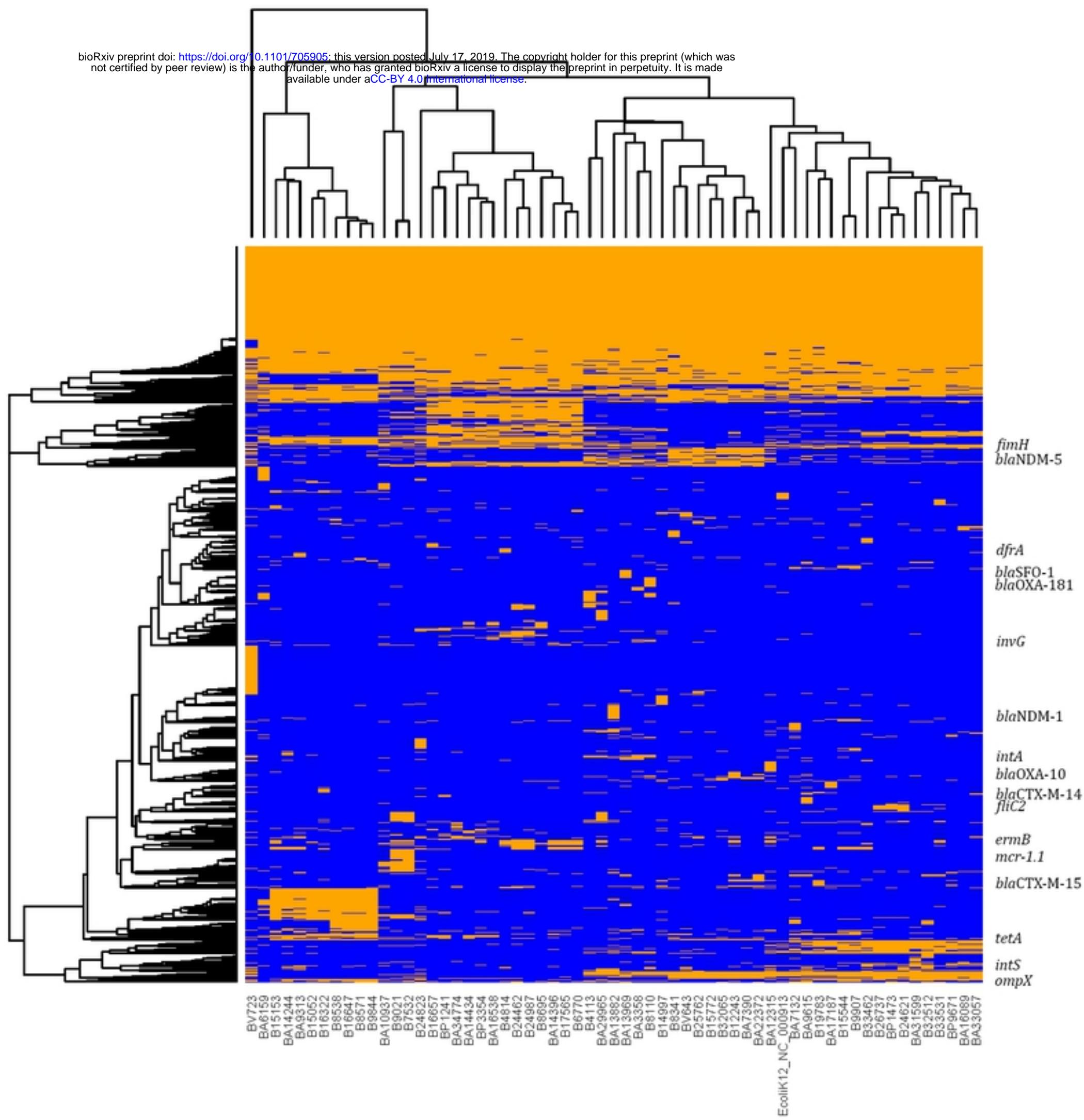


Figure 3

Tree scale: 0.1

Sequence Type	
ST131	
ST410	
ST624, mcr-1.1	

FimH Type	
54	
24	
30	
29	
27	
58	
876	
others	

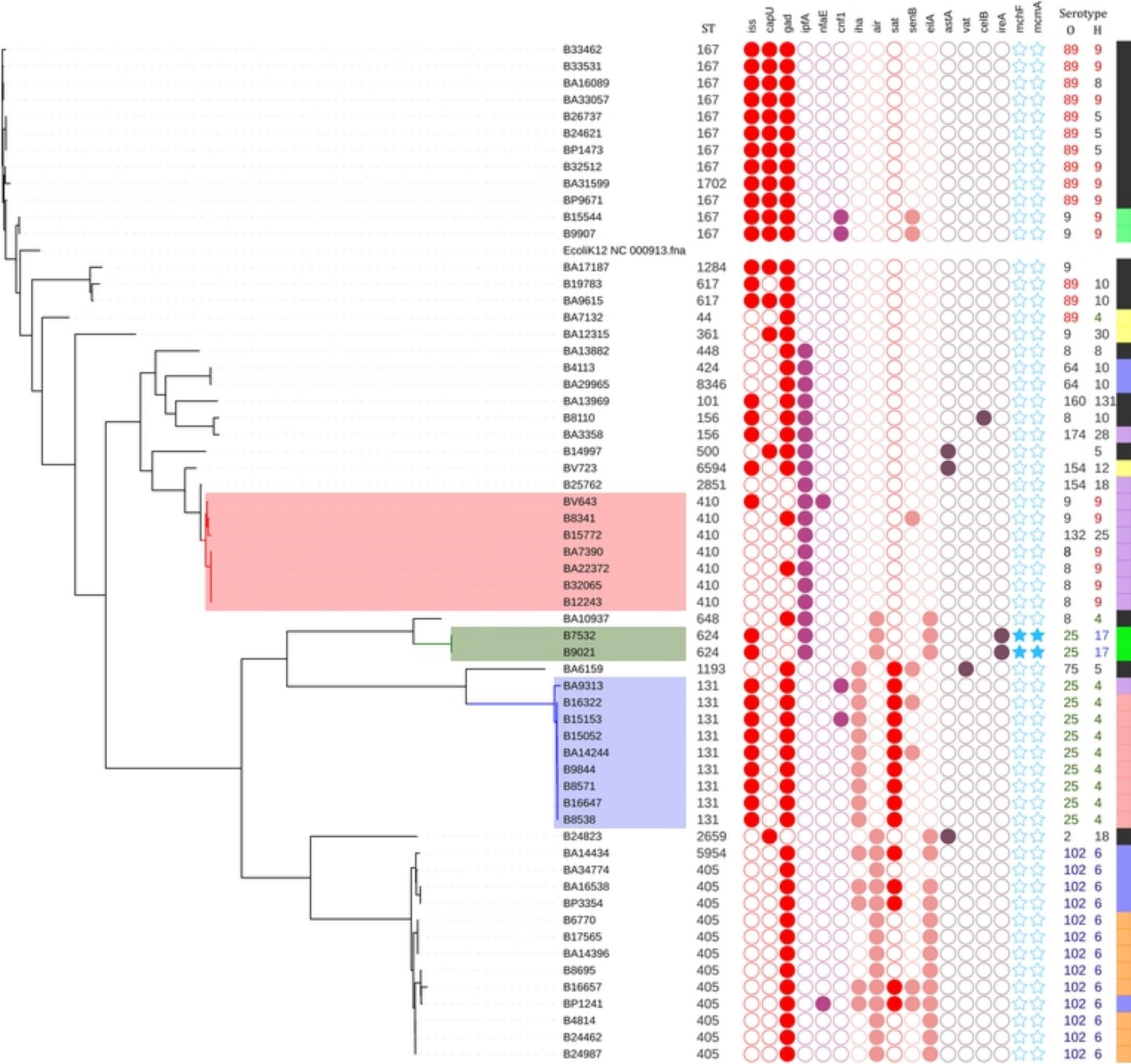


Figure 4

Tree scale: 0.1

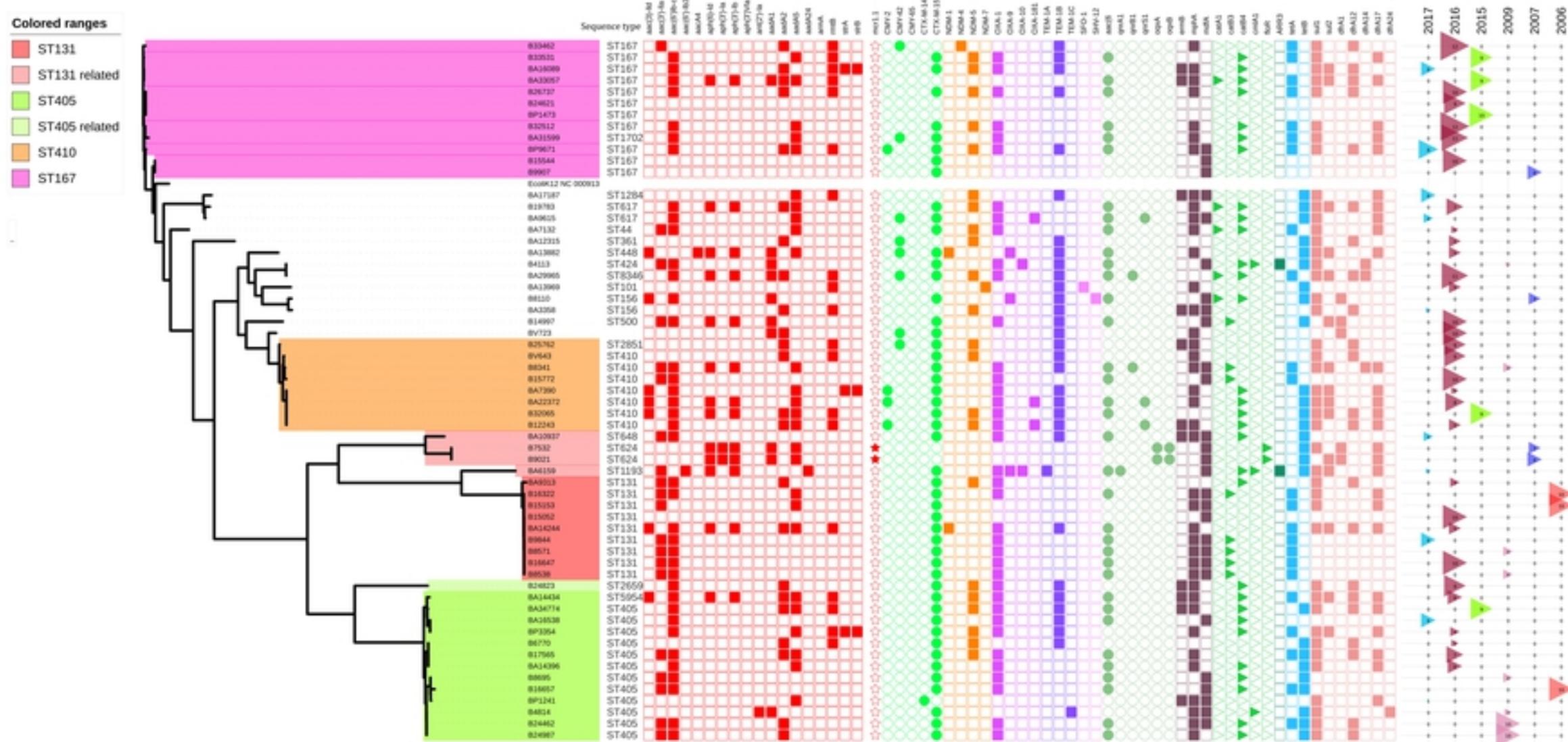


Figure 5