

Prevalence patterns, virulence indices, and antibiotics resistance in *Campylobacter*

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ABSTRACT

Infections caused by *Campylobacter* are consistently ranked among the top four leading causes of severe diarrheal enteritis throughout the globe. It is a common type of food poisoning, with symptoms ranging from mild to severe. Campylobacteriosis affects over 550 million people each year and kills approximately 33 million. More than 90% of cases are attributed to *Campylobacter jejuni* (*C. jejuni*), while only around 5% are attributed to *Campylobacter coli* (*C. coli*). Human campylobacteriosis is most usually caused by improper handling of raw chicken carcasses or eating of inadequately prepared poultry. Campylobacteriosis cases frequently resolve on their own with only supportive care. In extreme cases, macrolides and fluoroquinolones are employed. Gentamicin is an aminoglycoside and is the treatment of choice for severe instances of bacteremia as well as other forms of systemic infections with *Campylobacter*. Selection pressure resulting from misuse and abuse of antibiotics in both human and veterinary medicine is a main contributing factor in the evolution and spread of resistance in commensal bacteria as well as in human illnesses. Therefore, this paper aims to highlight the occurrence, pathogenicity, treatment options, and antibiotic resistance of this pathogen.

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization [1], the term “campylobacteriosis” refers to an umbrella term for a group of infectious diseases that are caused by *Campylobacters*. These infections have been zoonotic diseases, meaning that they have been transferred to people via animals or animal products. *Campylobacter* is the most common pathogen that causes gastroenteritis in humans. This pathogen is responsible for an estimated 166 million instances of diarrhea along with 37,600 fatalities every calendar year [2]. The bacteria known as *C. jejuni* and *C. coli* are the most prevalent causes of illness in humans [3,4]. More than 80% of all human cases of campylobacteriosis are caused by eating raw or undercooked poultry meat, most frequently chicken [2]. The

incidence of human campylobacteriosis and the prevalence of bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics both continue to rise worldwide. *Campylobacter* is becoming increasingly difficult to treat with antibiotics, and some strains have even evolved multidrug resistance (MDR) [5]. Major international health repercussions have been connected to the alarming rise of MDR *Campylobacter* strains that are resistant to quinolones and erythromycin [6]. The resistant bacteria were thought to be inherently more robust than their sensitive counterparts [7]. Therefore, to highlight these issues, this article focused on the pathogenicity, pathogenesis, and antimicrobial resistance of *Campylobacter* infections.

INCIDENCE OF *CAMPYLOBACTER* IN HUMAN

Campylobacteriosis is the most often reported zoonosis in the European Union, followed by salmonellosis and yersiniosis. In 2022, it was the most reported zoonosis in the EU, with 137,107 cases and a stable notification rate compared with 2021 [8]. The United States may exhibit one of two distinct campylobacteriosis epidemiology trends. A significant

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proportion of individuals will have clinical symptoms during the first pattern, describing an epidemic, whereas the second pattern reflects an individual case. Most cases of campylobacteriosis are regarded to be isolated incidents [9].

Campylobacter infections tend to be sporadic and more common in the warmer months of summer and autumn in developed nations [10], which may indicate a seasonal pattern related to ambient temperature. Western nations with temperate temperatures tend to have a seasonal rise, often between July and August [11], but Australia, New Zealand, and countries with tropical climates tend to see a less pronounced seasonal peak [11]. *Campylobacter* isolation rates in hens have been shown to be greater in the summer than in the winter, correlating with the seasonal increase in human illnesses [11]. Chickens and humans may not have gotten *Campylobacter* from the same place, although epidemic proportions in humans generally come before the high occurrence of poultry slaughtering waves [3]. *Campylobacter* infections are most frequent in children less than two years old in underdeveloped nations, and asymptomatic infections are also common in both children and adults. There are no clear seasonal trends associated with the disease as seen in developed countries [11]. *Campylobacter* infections seem to be more common among the elderly (>75), young adults (20–40), and small children (<4 years), perhaps because of various risk factors in these age groups [12].

The most prevalent cause of human campylobacteriosis is the ingestion of infected chicken, while there are other ways that *Campylobacter* spp. may spread to people [12]. In addition, cross-contamination has the potential to contaminate both raw and cooked meat [13]. Large campylobacteriosis outbreaks are often linked to polluted drinking water or raw or tainted milk; thus, this is not the sole dietary carrier for *Campylobacter* (Fig. 1) [13,14].

Finland, Norway, and Sweden are examples of countries with low colonization rates of chicken flocks, suggesting that factors other than chickens may have a significant influence, particularly for domestically acquired diseases. *Campylobacter* contagions throughout the globe will be impacted by both the growing popularity of international travel and the shifting international food trade, for instance, the rising popularity of imported chicken [15].

In addition, Deckert *et al.* [16] found that the likelihood of contracting campylobacteriosis varies between rural and urban areas. Although ruminant-associated genotypes have been detected more often in urban areas, many studies showed that chicken may play a larger role than previously assumed in transmitting *Campylobacter* to humans [17].

Abattoir workers may be at a higher risk of contracting *Campylobacter* due to their jobs, making them an appealing research population [18]. De Perio *et al.* [19] found in their study that laboratory-confirmed *Campylobacter* infections were most common among workers who had been in the slaughterhouse for less than a month (83%). The dangers to humans change with each type of animal and with each country, as well as with each person's habits of food preparation and consumption [11].

PATHOGENICITY AND PATHOGENESIS OF *CAMPYLOBACTER* SPECIES

The term “pathogenicity” refers to a pathogen’s invasive potential or virulence, and its production, or both (the relative ability of a pathogen to overcome the body’s defenses and cause disease), while the term “pathogenesis” refers to the interaction between a pathogen and its host, with the outcome being either disease or carrier status depending on a wide range of factors including factors related to the invading strain (type, dose, and virulence of strain), others related to the host (age, sex, and host defense mechanisms), and environmental factors

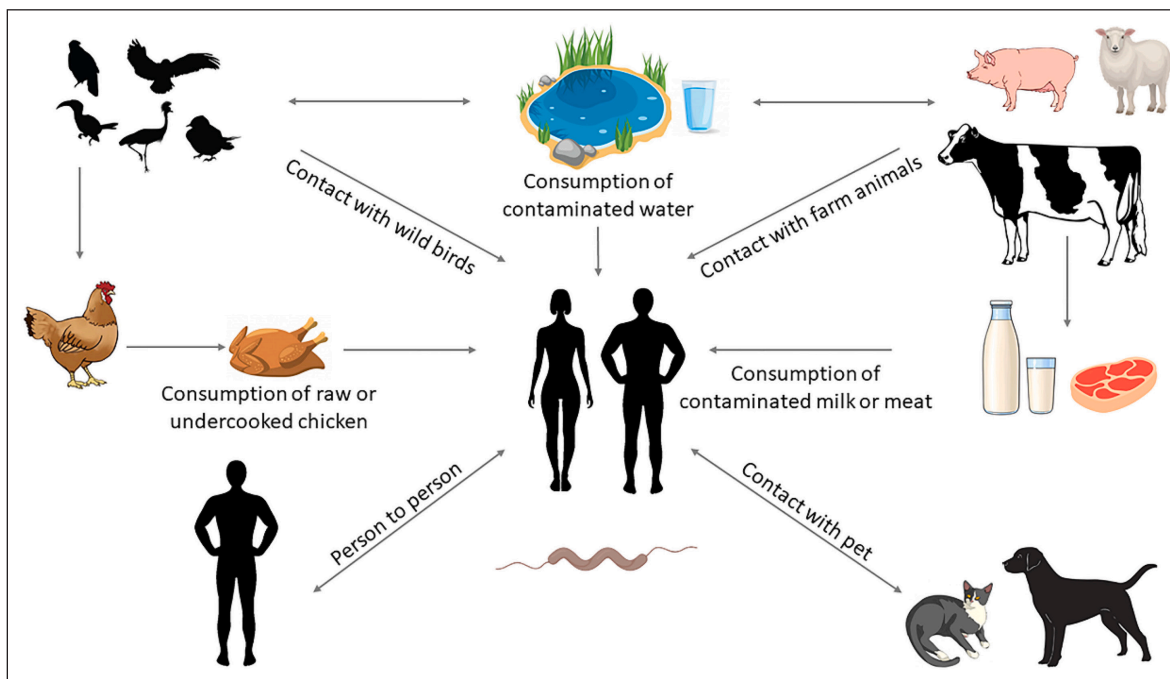


Figure 1. Reservoirs and transmission pathways linked to *Campylobacter* species (Lopes *et al.* [14]).

such as route of the entrance, and epidemiology of the region (distribution and frequency of a strain) [20].

Epidemiology

The etiology of animal diseases caused by *Campylobacters* has been known since 1909, but that of human diseases caused by *Campylobacters* has only been well acknowledged since around 1980 [21]. Due in large part to the difficulties of culturing and isolating these bacteria from fecal samples, the function of *Campylobacter* as an intestinal pathogen was not established until the 1970s. *Campylobacter* enteritis caused by *C. jejuni* or *C. coli* is the only type of campylobacteriosis of substantial public health relevance around the world. More than 90% of illnesses are caused by *C. jejuni*, while 5%–10% are caused by *C. coli* [22]. Sporadic illnesses and outbreaks have been linked to *Campylobacter lari* and *Campylobacter upsaliensis*. Most cases of campylobacteriosis in the European Union are linked to *C. jejuni*, followed by *C. coli* [23]. Because these thermophilic species invade the intestinal mucosa of many different birds and mammals, including those used for food production, they are often encountered as zoonotic food-borne illnesses [24]. At the consumer level, inadvertent intake of 1 drop of raw chicken juice can easily form an infectious dosage, which is as little as 500 organisms [11]. Infections caused by *Campylobacter* are usually not serious, but they can be fatal for infants, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems [1]. *Campylobacter* infections occur more frequently annually than those caused by *Salmonella* species, *Shigella* species, or *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 [22]. Attachment to intestinal cells, colonization of the digestive system, invasion of specific cells, and toxin synthesis are the four basic steps in *Campylobacter*'s pathogenic process [25].

Virulence factors

Likely because of the dissimilarity in pathogenesis among *Campylobacters* along with other infections, specific virulence strategies of this pathogen have not yet been completely characterized [26]. Despite its widespread prevalence, little is understood about *Campylobacter*'s virulence factors or the mechanisms that allow such a weak organism to persist in the food chain, where it often acquires a more potent pathogenicity. *Campylobacter*'s motility, chemotaxis, adherence, and invasion mechanisms are all highly complicated multifactorial systems. *Campylobacter* has a number of mechanisms for responding to environmental stresses, such as antioxidant defense, heat shock, and the ability to transition into the viable but nonculturable (VBNC) state. Because of their genetic makeup, *Campylobacter* can endure food preparation, often emerging more virulent as a result [27]. *Campylobacter* spp. are adapted to survive in, colonize, and spread disease within this narrow ecological niche [28]. The high concentration of oxygen in the mucosa is likely responsible for their microaerophilic character [29]. Comparable to the avian gut in terms of optimal development temperature (42°C), the lining of the intestines in animals with temperatures below 37°C is also a suitable environment for these pathogens to thrive [30]. Virulence factors include flagella-mediated motility, adhesion to intestinal mucosa, invasive ability, and toxin production [11]. Although little is known about the pathogen's

mode of operation, it is known that colonization of the small intestine is a necessary step before the infection can reach its target organ, the colon [31]. Loss of colonization potential occurs when flagellin's structural genes are inactivated, causing a disruption in motility [30]. In addition, Lipopolysaccharide (LPS) has been discovered in cell membranes, and its sticky properties are essential for mucosal cell penetration but not colonization [9]. Cellular inflammation, caused by invasion, is likely due to the creation of cytotoxins, which leads to decreased intestinal absorption [32]. There can be speculation that the acid resistance of this bacterium in the stomach and the salts in the bile plays a role in its capacity to invade the intestines [32]. *Campylobacter jejuni* and *C. coli* both produce a cytotoxic toxin that, immunologically, is comparable to cholera toxin [2]. The sub mucosal edema and diarrhea seen in 3- and 4-day-old hens infected with *C. jejuni* isolated from patients with diarrhea are likely due to this toxin [11]. Dose-dependent and resistant to neutralization by Shiga-toxin immune serum, the cytotoxin generated by toxigenic strains of *C. jejuni* can be fatal. Aside from killing HeLa and Chinese hamster ovary (CHO) cells and chicken embryos, the toxin is widely recognized as a novel chemical [11]. *Campylobacter jejuni* isolates from surface water are less harmful than strains isolated from diarrheal patients, according to in vitro experiments including adhesion and cytotoxicity [33]. Some researchers believe that pathogenic isolates acquire the potential to colonize and produce toxins after being exposed to a susceptible host. Despite the fact that the severity of an illness may be affected by both the virulence of the strain and the host's immunological status [34].

Flagella

The colonization of the small intestine relies on motility, which increases in very viscous circumstances. In addition, the function of flagella under a variety of chemotactic settings plays a crucial role in bacteria's ability to adapt to their environment that may be found in the gastrointestinal tract [11]. Their ability to "corkscrew" through the mucosa is due to their peculiar motility, spiral form, and particularly length polar flagella. These anatomical features similarly aid in their ability to colonize while remaining mobile and stationary against the mucosal flow [11]. The attachment of *C. jejuni* to fibronectin on epithelial cells is thought to be the first step in the establishment of the bacterium after it has reached the gastrointestinal system. The outer membrane protein CadF on the bacterium is responsible for attachment promotion [29]. There are two flagellins that make up the *C. coli* flagellum, and they are quite similar to one another; FlaA is the chief flagellin, along FlaB is the slight flagellin [2]. The genes encoding these flagellin proteins are in tandem. Fla A is controlled by a promoter, and fla B by a dependent promoter [26]. Expression of adhesion, colonization of the gastrointestinal tract, and penetration of the host cells are all regulated by the flaA gene, which is located in the bacterium [2], thereby stopping the immune response.

Cytotoxic distending toxin

Campylobacter spp. produce the most well-studied toxins include the Gram-negative bacteria-wide cytolethal distending toxin (CDT). It is been called a major contributor to the pathogen's lethality [35]. It is related to the *C. jejuni*-induced

local acute inflammation that causes enterocolitis [36]. CDT results from many different types of Gram-negative bacteria because of their genetic variety, but it acts quite similarly to other known genotoxins [37]. Cholesterol was discovered to be involved in *C. jejuni* CDT (Cj-CDT) poisoning of host cells through its interactions with membrane cholesterol-rich microdomains [38]. Eukaryotic cells are killed when they become stuck in the G2/M phase of the cell cycle due to CDT holotoxin, in which the genes *cdtA*, *CdtB*, along *CdtC* code for the three subunits [11]. Although *CdtB*'s function is well understood, *CdtA* and *CdtC*'s are not, and they need to be studied more thoroughly [2]. It has been hypothesized that this happens when the proteins in question combine with the outer membrane of the bacterium, resulting in contamination. *CdtB* transport into the host cell; however, is thought to need the presence of *CdtA* along with *CdtC* [2]. The CDT holotoxin is bound to the cell membrane by two proteins. In addition, host Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is damaged because of the DNaseI-like activity of the *CdtB* active subunit [35]. Instead of attaching to the cell membrane, the DNase I activity of Cj-*CdtB* causes DNA double-strand breaks (DSBs), which ultimately lead to senescence or target-cell death through cell-cycle arrest during the G2/M phase, cell distention, and cell bloating [11]. The enzymatic subunit Aa-*CdtB* possesses DNase I activity and also has phosphatidylinositol 3-4-5 trisphosphate (PIP3) phosphatase activity, which triggers death in T cells [2]. Aa-*CdtB* was found to have homology with inositol polyphosphate 5-phosphatase based on structural and sequence analyses [2]. Cj-phosphatase *CdtB*'s activity, however, has not been documented as of yet [37]. Following lymphocyte poisoning with Aa-CDT, PIP3 levels drop, phosphatidylinositol-3-kinase (PI-3K)/PIP3/Akt gesturing is disrupted, and phosphorylation of glycogen synthase kinase 3 (GSK3) is reduced. In addition, blocking PI-3K signaling with Aa-CDT causes macrophages to generate more pro-inflammatory cytokines such as IL-1, TNF-, and IL-6. Based on these findings, CDT may function as an immune system modulator. Related research also found that Cj-CDT causes inflammation in the host intestines by stimulating IL-8 production and promoting chemotaxis by leukocytes [11].

Biofilm formation in *Campylobacter*

Biofilms are defined as communities of microorganisms that have formed an adhering film or matrix on a surface or interface [39]. Bacteria in biofilms are more resistant to being killed off because they are shielded from environmental stressors like drying out and being exposed to disinfectants and antibacterials. Food contamination and foodborne diseases may result from the formation of biofilms on surfaces used in food preparation, which protect bacteria from washing and sanitation efforts. Biofilm production is thought to be one of the processes that allows *C. jejuni* to persist in the environment [40]. *Campylobacter jejuni* (*C. jejuni*), a significant GI pathogen, has been found to live as three distinct monospecies biofilms in liquid culture. It agglomerates on glass, creating a floc, and produces a pellicle at the liquid–gas boundary. At room temperature and humidity, the microaerobic bacteria in flocs may persist for up to 24 days, whereas the survival rate for planktonic bacteria is just 12 days. Thus, it is possible that several biofilm formation mechanisms regulate biofilm types. It has been hypothesized that

the prevalence of *Campylobacter*-associated food-borne diseases can be partially attributed to the importance of these poorly described modes of growth in the perseverance of *C. jejuni* in the surroundings [41]. Numerous human infections, including *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Staphylococcus epidermidis*, *Salmonella enteritidis*, *Vibrio cholerae*, *Streptococcus gordonii*, and *Burkholderia cepacia*, form monospecies biofilms [11]. Auto agglutination of *C. jejuni* has been seen in a variety of media, including phosphate-buffered saline (PBS), minimal essential medium, and Mueller-Hinton broth [2]. However, it is unclear whether auto agglutination contributes to biofilm development in this species. *Campylobacter jejuni* was shown to be thriving in bacterial biofilms, *C. jejuni* presents serious threats to human health, so understanding how it may thrive in the wild and spread through the food web is essential. Bacteria that live in biofilms are resistant to treatments such as antibiotics and immune reactions from the host. That *C. jejuni* cells construct a biofilm to facilitate their transition across animal hosts is an intriguing concept. It has been shown that *C. jejuni* is capable of inhabiting spontaneous biofilms in bacteria; however, it has not yet been demonstrated that *C. jejuni* is capable of producing mono species biofilms. Although biofilms are commonly composed of polysaccharide, other than the gene cluster for the *kps* capsular polysaccharide, *C. jejuni* does not have any possibilities for a biofilm polysaccharide that is readily apparent. For this reason, the biofilm might be made up of anything from extracellular DNA to modified capsular polysaccharides to poly-amino acids [11].

SEQUELAE IN HUMANS

Human campylobacteriosis is usually mild and goes away on its own, but it can have severe consequences in rare cases [42]. Extraintestinal survival and growth are also possible in humans, especially individuals with impaired immune systems [30]. Hemorrhagic colitis, acute pancreatitis, peritonitis, and cholecystitis are all serious gastrointestinal conditions that possibly emerge as a consequence of *Campylobacter* infection that originate in the gut [22]. Meningitis, endocarditis, septic arthritis, reactive arthritis (ReA), and osteomyelitis are a few examples of the unique extraintestinal indications of infection. Other examples include neonatal sepsis. Less than 1% of campylobacteriosis patients have bacteremia; those at most risk include the immunocompromised, the very young, and the very old [9]. Guillain-Barré syndrome, ReA, and irritable bowel syndrome are the most well-known complications of campylobacteriosis. Preceding *Campylobacter* infection is also linked to the Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) variant Miller-Fisher syndrome. Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) has been linked to gastroenteritis (not just *Campylobacter*), and there is mounting evidence that other functional gastrointestinal disorders (FGDs) are associated with the illness as well [43].

TREATMENT

Treatment of *Campylobacter* infections

Campylobacteriosis is a common bacterial infection that often resolves on its own with only supportive care. Enteritis that is particularly severe may benefit from antibiotic treatment. Campylobacteriosis treatment may vary according to the antibiotic class used to treat the infection and the location

where it was contracted [44]. Considering a patient's travel history is important if empiric antibiotic therapy is required due to observed variations in *Campylobacter* susceptibility around the world [44]. In severe or persistent cases, antibiotics may be used, but their effectiveness for minor intestinal infections is still debatable [45]. Antibiotic treatment is warranted in those who are immune weakened, including those with human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Antibiotic therapy can minimize the shedding of infectious organisms [46]. Instances of *C. jejuni* and *C. coli* that were isolated from retail meats, slaughterhouses, and processing factories that were examined by the federal government, as well as human clinical cases are regularly compiled by the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS) in the United States due to the threat to human health posed by these bacteria [47]. Macrolides (often erythromycin) and fluoroquinolones (mostly ciprofloxacin) are the typical antibiotics used to treat campylobacteriosis [44]. The prevalence of erythromycin-resistant organisms is still quite low [11]. Among the fluoroquinolones, ciprofloxacin (CIP) is among the most widely prescribed preventative medications for international travelers [48]. Human infections caused by strains of *Campylobacter* that are resistant to macrolides and fluoroquinolones have been on the rise in a number of nations [49]. Although tetracyclines are not commonly used, they are an option for adults with resistant infections [50]. Aminoglycosides like gentamicin, when given intravenously, are the standard of care for treating severe bacteremia and other systemic infections [50]. Azithromycin (macrolide), clindamycin (lincosamide), and chloramphenicol are examples of antibiotics that are widely used to treat campylobacteriosis, but strains of *Campylobacter* that are resistant to these drugs have been described [51]. When compared to patients with infections caused by drug-susceptible isolates, those who have campylobacteriosis caused by antibiotic-resistant strains may be at a larger risk of experiencing unfavorable consequences, such as the development of an invasive disease or death [52]. Whether for therapeutic or recreational use, numerous resistant clones may be selected and maintained with relative ease [52]. The development in addition to the spread of infectious diseases that are resistant to treatment, commensal bacteria, and infections affecting humans in animals used for food production, is all made possible by selective pressure. Due to this stress, these diseases are now found in animals that are used for human consumption [53–67]. Growing data suggests that people may be exposed to resistant *Campylobacter* via ingestion of animal products. Scientists have proven that they can separate sick humans and livestock into distinct serotypes and genotypes [68,69]. Treatment of human *Campylobacter* infections is complicated by antibiotic resistance, which occurs in the same multidrug-resistant fashion as it does in animals. Resistance to fluoroquinolones (like ciprofloxacin) and tetracycline is the most frequent form of antimicrobial resistance in the world. There are also reports of a rise in resistance to macrolides [70].

ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE IN CAMPYLOBACTER

To prevent disease, cure existing illnesses, and promote animal growth, antibiotics have been used carelessly

in the animal production industry for decades [53–67,71]. Antibiotic resistance has become more common and widespread among enteric bacteria as a result of the widespread use of these drugs, which has also boosted the survival and spread of antibiotic-resistance genes in the genomes of microorganisms [56]. Pathogens' rising antibiotic resistance and potential for MDR are cause for concern. Antibiotic-resistant emerged as a result of extensive and unrestricted use of antimicrobial drugs in food animal production, *Campylobacter* species have evolved and spread across the world. After fluoroquinolones were approved for use in poultry in Europe and the United States, strains of *Campylobacter* spp. identified from animals and human patients showed rising levels of resistance to the drugs [72]. The use of antimicrobials in animals can lead to the development of drug-resistant bacteria, which poses a risk to humans in the case of zoonotic pathogens like *Campylobacters*. Clinical difficulty in controlling a disease is not caused by gene transfer or the development of drug resistance if the organism has already acquired antibiotic resistance [57]. Antibiotic resistance can be spread through the consumption of contaminated food. Antibiotic residues in food may play a role in this phenomenon, in addition to the transmission of drug-resistant food-borne pathogens and the ingestion of resistant strains of the original food microflora, which may subsequently transmit their resistance to pathogenic bacteria [73]. The existence of antibiotic-resistant strains of *Campylobacter* in the food chain has raised concerns about the efficacy of the limited treatment options available for human infections [50], since contaminated food is a major source of *Campylobacter* infection in people. While certain types of resistance are built into a person from the moment they are born, other forms of resistance may be learned. Numerous bacterial species share the quality of having resistance mechanisms ingrained in their DNA from the beginning of their existence. Bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics can withstand treatment because they either do not share a target with the antibiotic, their cell walls effectively block antibiotic molecules from entering the cell, or the microorganisms generate enzymes that degrade the antibiotic. Other types of antibiotic-resistant bacteria include those that have cell walls that prevent antibiotic molecules from entering the cell [53]. Acquired resistance occurs when a resistant bacterial strain changes over time or gets its resistance genes from another strain through horizontal gene transfer [53]. Several processes work together to facilitate horizontal gene transfer. Transmissible resistance genes often originate from one of three basic sources. Conjugation permits the transfer of large plasmids (non-chromosomal DNA molecules that may replicate independently from the chromosome DNA) from one bacteria to another, which can facilitate the transmission of several resistance genes [9]. Transposons are DNA sequences that may transfer between plasmids or between the chromosome and plasmids, and they can transport several resistance genes. Some resistance elements are possibly encoded by intergens, which are genetic units discovered in genomes, plasmids, and transposons that contain proteins that capture, remove, transfer, and splice additional genes or cassettes of genes onto chromosomes [49]. Co-selection of antibiotic resistance and infectiousness could take place amongst bacterial strains of the

same or separate species via the passing on of mobile genetic traits through conjugation, transformation, and transduction. Extra-chromosomal components called plasmids may help bacteria adapt to new habitats and environments by bestowing traits such as resistance, pathogenicity, and persistence [74]. Indirectly and eventually, environmental variables affect the regulation of both virulence-encoding genes and genes responsible for antimicrobial resistance [75]. Regulation of virulence and antibiotic resistance genes: mechanisms and determinants are shown in detail in Figure 2. Antibiotics are divided into several groups based on their shared structural properties, bacterial cell targets, and modes of action [49]. According to Taylor [9], resistance to one class of antibiotics may lead to resistance to all of those drugs. When the target is shared (as with macrolides and lincosamides), or when the resistance mechanism is not very specific (as with efflux pumps), there may be cross-resistance between seemingly unrelated classes [49]. Macrolide-resistant *Campylobacter* isolates may be more harmful than non-resistant bacteria, according to the results of many investigations done in the United States, Thailand, and Denmark. Possible mechanisms include up-regulation of virulence, enhanced fitness in resistant isolates, and co-selection for virulence [66]. Several genes in *Campylobacter* (including several efflux pumps) confer antibiotic resistance, and several of these genes also contribute to the bacterium's pathogenicity [2]. MDR is characterized as resistance to three or more antibiotic classes

[76]. *Campylobacter* species that are resistant to various medicines are becoming more common, limiting available treatment choices [50]. It has been shown that the emergence of *Campylobacter* strains resistant to these medications in the food supply is largely attributable to the extensive use of antibiotics as growth promoters, treatments, and prophylaxis in food animals, particularly fluoroquinolones [77]. Compared to human isolates, those from animals and livestock are more likely to have (multi-)resistant strains [77]. The spread and introduction of antibiotic-resistant genes (ARGs) may pose a greater threat than the antibiotics themselves, and ARGs can be found in a wide variety of organisms including humans (Fig. 3). The widespread emergence of antibiotic-resistant strains of both pathogenic and commensal bacteria can be directly attributed to the widespread use and abuse of these drugs. Selection for antibiotic resistance is influenced by both the quantity and method with which antibiotics are used. It is important to note that the frequency with which resistance arises is not directly proportional to the amount of use; other social, ecological, and genetic factors also play a role. Emerging and adapting in the presence of antibiotics, resistant bacteria appear to take on a “life of their own.” They spread and keep the resistance characteristics alive even when antibiotics are not present, putting at risk efforts to reverse bacterial resistance through reduced antibiotic use alone. To overcome resistance, it is necessary to bring back the previously vulnerable flora in both humans and their natural environments [58].

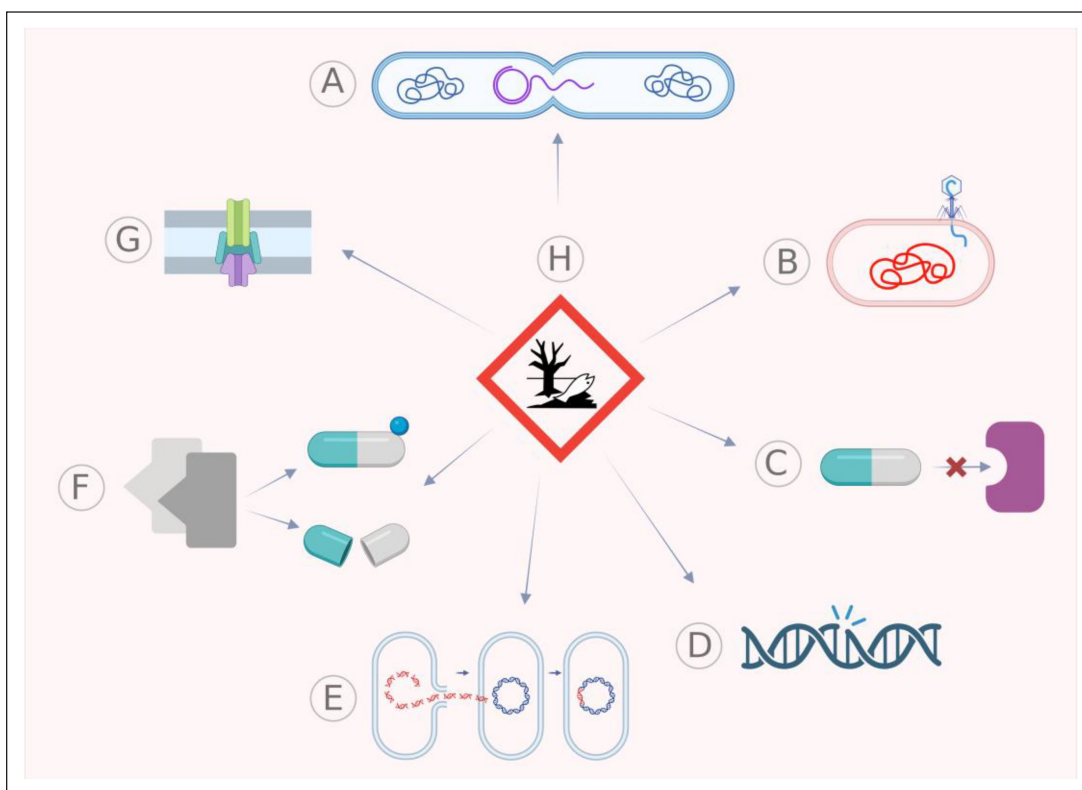


Figure 2. Several processes and variables influence the regulation of genes expressing virulence and antibiotic resistance. (A) Conjugation. (B) Transfection. (C) Modification of the antibiotic target. (D) Increased mutation rates. (E) Transformation. (F) Antibiotic inactivation. (G) Efflux pump; with (H) environmental variables having a secondary and ultimate influence on all the others (Bundurus *et al.* [40]).

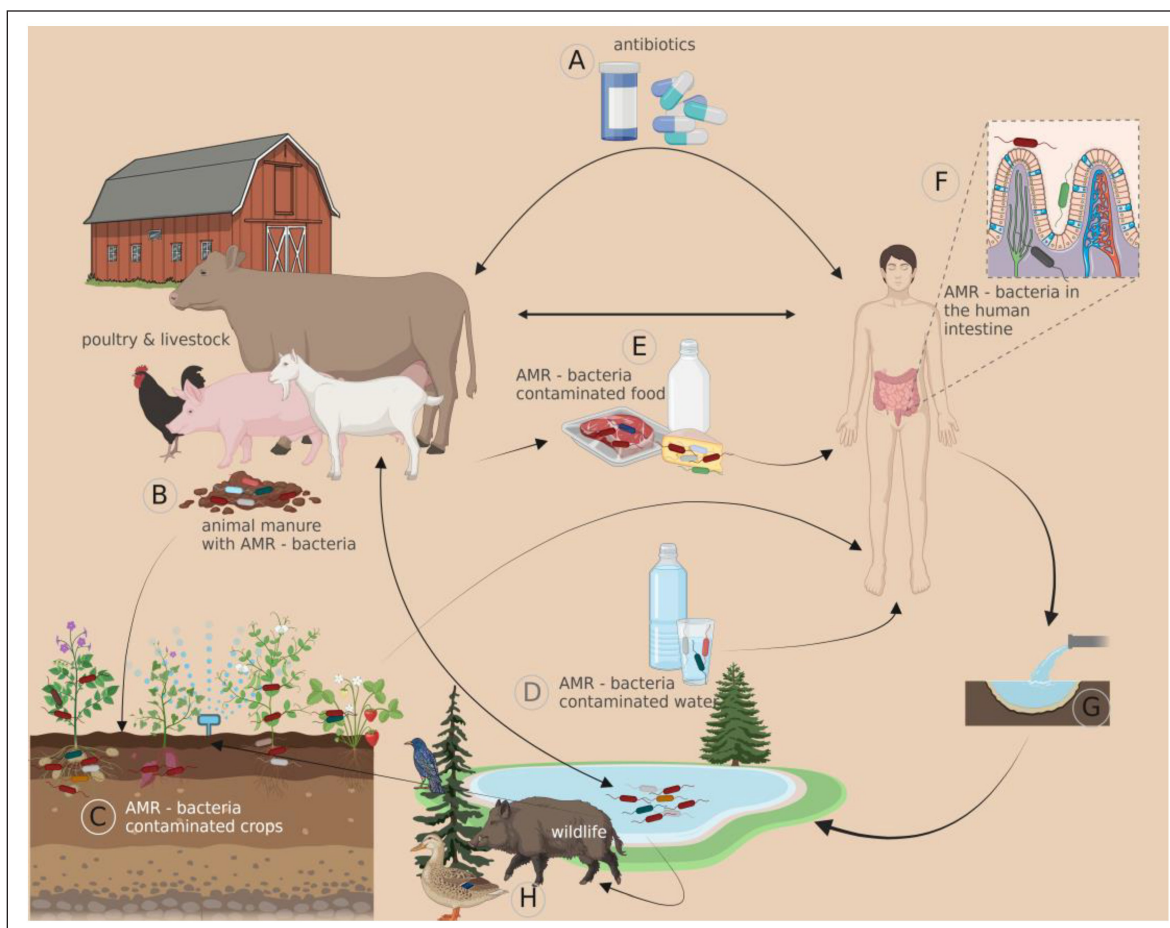


Figure 3. The significance of animals in antibiotic resistance propagation in the environment (Bunduruş *et al.* [40]).

CONCLUSION

Campylobacter would be a severe threat to public health. This review provided risk managers with knowledge regarding thermotolerant *Campylobacter* spp. for them to develop ways to limit the risk of human campylobacteriosis through a vigilant approach at all levels. As a result, appropriate control and intervention methods are critical to limiting the risk of this pathogen and the establishment of resistance issues.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MHGK, FAM, and SSA: Conceptualized and designed the study. MHGK: Drafted the manuscript. FAM and SSA: Data collection. FAM: Edited the manuscript. All authors have read, reviewed, and approved the final manuscript.

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The authors report no financial or any other conflicts of interest in this work.

ETHICAL APPROVALS

This study does not involve experiments on animals or human subjects.

DATA AVAILABILITY

All data generated and analyzed are included in this research article.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

The authors declares that they have not used artificial intelligence (AI)-tools for writing and editing of the manuscript, and no images were manipulated using AI.

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