

# Prevalence and characterization of enterohaemorrhagic Escherichia coli isolated from healthy cattle and pigs slaughtered in Santiago, Chile

## Prevalencia y caracterización de Escherichia coli enterohemorrágica aisladas de bovinos y cerdos sanos faenados en

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As a contribution to the epidemiology of SHU in Chile, this work was focused on cattle and pigs as a possible reservoir of EHEC. This was achieved by analyzing E. coli isolates from faecal samples of healthy animals slaughtered in two abattoirs in Santiago. EHEC strains were identified by DNA hybridization with specific gene probes for Shiga-like toxin I (SLTI) and II (SLTII). Positive strains were hybridized with specific gene probes for fimbrial adhesin and eae factor, serogrouped and examined for sorbitol fermentability. Among the 136 steers and 120 pigs studied, 39 (28.7%) and 82 (68.3%) were found to carry EHEC strains, respectively. Of the 40 bovine strains that hybridized with two SLT DNA probes, 29 (72.5%) hybridized with only SLTI probe, 6 (15%) hybridized with only SLTII probe and 5 (12.5%) hybridized with both SLTI and SLTII probes. Only 6 (15%) of the 40 EHEC hybridized with fimbrial adhesin probe and 14 (35%) hybridized with eae probe. An important number of strains (14/40