Molecular Characterization of a Novel Cathepsin B from Striped Murrel Channa striatus: Bioinformatics Analysis, Gene Expression, Synthesis of Peptide and Antimicrobial Property

Jesu Arockiaraj¹-a, Venkatesh Kumaresan², Mukesh Kumar Chaurasia³, Prasanth Bhatt¹, Rajesh Palanisamy¹, Mukesh Pasupuleti², Annie J. Gnanam³, Marimuthu Kasi⁴

¹ SRM University, Faculty of Science and Humanities, Department of Biotechnology, Division of Fisheries Biotechnology and Molecular Biology, Kattankulathur 603 203, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.
² CSIR-Central Drug Research Institute, Lab PCN 206, Microbiology Division, B.S. 10/1, Sector 10, Jankipuram Extension, Sitapur Road, Lucknow-226031, Uttar Pradesh, India
³ The University of Texas at Austin, Institute for Cellular and Molecular Biology, 1 University Station A4800, Austin, Texas, 78712, USA
⁴ AIMST University, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Department of Biotechnology, Semeling, 08100 Bedong, Kedah, Malaysia.

* Corresponding Author: Tel.: +91.44 27452270; Fax: +91.44 27453903; E-mail: jesuaraj@hotmail.com

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Abstract

In this study, we have reported a full length cDNA of cathepsin B identified from the constructed cDNA library of snakehead murrel Channa striatus by genome sequence FLX technology. The identified full length C. striatus cathepsin B (CtCath B) is 1486 base pairs (bp) long which contains 990 bp open reading frame (ORF). The ORF region encodes 330 amino acids with a molecular mass of 36 k Da. This amino acid sequence contains three thiol protease motifs at 101-112, 275-285 and 292-311 with their respective active sites viz., Cys²⁰⁷, His²⁷² and Asp²⁹⁷. CtCath B exhibited the maximum similarity (85%) with Cath B from mangrove red snapper, Lutjanus argentimaculatus. Phyleogenetically, CtCath B is clustered together with the fish groups belonging to perciformes. A predicted 3D model of CtCath B revealed 11 α-helix and 10 β-strands. CtCath B contains higher percentage (10%) of coils due to the presence of many glycine residues (36 residues). The highest gene expression (P<0.05) was noticed in liver. Further, the expression was induced with fungal (Aphanomyces invadans) and bacterial (Aeromonas hydrophila) infections. The predicted antimicrobial region of CtCath B was synthesized to study its antimicrobial property. The peptide exhibited the antimicrobial activity towards Gram negative and Gram positive bacteria. The overall results indicate that CtCath B is a potential molecule for further studies on murrel defense mechanism.

Keywords: Cathepsin B, murrel, fungus, bacteria, antimicrobial peptide.

Introduction

Cathepsins are lysosomal proteases secreted in response to external stimuli (Holt et al., 2006). Cathepsins exist in different forms of isomers that have either unique or overlapping functions. Turk et al. (2001) reported that most of the cathepsins are cysteine proteases (for e.g. B, C, F, H, K and L), whereas cathepsin A and G are serine proteases and cathepsin D and E are aspartic proteases. Cathepsins possess both exopeptidase as well as endopeptidase activity and they cleave their substrates non-specifically (Chwieralski et al., 2006). Cathepsin molecules are associated with cell death regulation and/or apoptosis-like caspases (Turk et al., 2000; Foghsgaard et al., 2001; Guicciardi et al., 2001; Salvesen, 2001). It is involved in class II major histocompatibility complex (MHC) maturation, keratinocyte differentiation, tumor progression as well as metastasis, remodeling of bone, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis (Friedrichs et al., 2003; Vasiljeva et al., 2007).

In humans, cathepsin B which has antiamyloidogenic and neuroprotective function plays an important role in removing the amyloid plaques in case of Alzheimer disease, by reducing the levels of amyloid-β peptides via proteolytic cleavage (Mueller-Steiner et al., 2006). Cathepsin B, L (cysteine protease) and cathepsin D (aspartic protease) along with other molecules like plasminogen activator and matrix metalloproteinase (MMP) degrade basement membrane and extracellular matrix (Adeni et al., 1995). Thomssen et al. (1995) revealed that malignant tumors have elevated levels of cathepsin B and cathepsin L when compared to nonmalignant tumors and also determined that their elevated levels lead to relapse, thus giving an insight into the prognosis.

Cathepsins are responsible for apoptosis of inflammatory cells such as eosinophils, neutrophils and basophils, which are further phagocytosed by macrophages. Among the cathepsins reported, cathepsin B is involved in inflammatory disorders, cancer and Alzheimer’s disease (Aoki and Ueno, 1997). Release of cathepsin B into the cytosol induces cleavage of Bid [BH3 interacting domain] which is a member of Bcl-2 family. It activates the caspases and subsequent apoptosis of cells (Blomgran et al., 2007) thus proving that cathepsin B is an important...
molecule for the subsequent innate immune response. Many researchers (Itami et al., 1987; Takahashi et al., 1987; Aranishi, 1999) reported that the cysteine proteinases including cathepsin B and L extracted from fish skin mucus is a potential bacteriolysin which is involved in nonspecific immunity of fish. This phenomenon was already established in a few species (Aranishi, 1999).

Striped murrel Channa striatus is a tropical, freshwater, carnivorous and air breathing fish found in Indian subcontinent, China and Southeast Asian countries. The medicinal properties of this species have been extensively utilized in these countries. Jais et al. (1994) reported that it is used to treat skin diseases due to the presence of docosohexanoic acid (DHA), an essential fatty acid with neurotactical values. The overall wound healing property of this species is attributed to its already existing antimicrobial, antifungal and platelet aggregation properties (Jais et al., 1994). Vitamin A, an important molecule required for wound healing is also present in very high concentrations in C. striatus (Aoki et al., 1997). Extracts of this fish have also been used in aggregation of platelets thus helping in blood clotting during haemorrhagic conditions. Murrel fillet extract has antinociceptive property thus leading to healing, which is due to the presence of hydromethanolic portion in the extract (Jais et al., 1997).

Infectious diseases, especially epizootic ulcerative syndrome (EUS) creates a serious problem for this species resulting in heavy economic losses (Lilley and Roberts, 1997). EUS is one of the most destructive diseases among murrels in the Asian Pacific region. It is very common in both northern and southern India and has spread over rivers, reservoirs and paddy fields to various states, causing substantial loss to farmers (Dhanaraj et al., 2008). Dhanaraj et al. (2008) reported that a fungus Aphanoymces invadans is the primary causative agent of EUS. The secondary infections are caused by various bacterial species especially Aeromonas hydrophila. Therefore, research on snakehead murrel immune system is necessary to establish a disease control method particularly against EUS. Though the information on cathepsin B from fish (Liu et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2008; Whang et al., 2011), crustacean (Stephens et al., 2012) and mollusk (Wang et al., 2008) are available, there has been no such report of C. striatus cathepsin B (designated as CsCath B). To gain insight into the characterization of CsCath B and its role in C. striatus, a full length cDNA of CsCath B was identified from the C. striatus cDNA library constructed by Genome Sequencing FLX (GS FLX) technology. The transcriptional differentiation of CsCath B mRNA has been analyzed after challenging with A. invadans and A. hydrophila. Moreover, we predicted an antimicrobial region from CsCath B based on the earlier studies reported elsewhere and it was synthesized as a short peptide to study its antimicrobial property.

Materials and Methods

Fish

Healthy C. striatus (average body weight of 50 g) were obtained from Center for Aquaculture Research and Extension (CARE), St. Xavier’s College (Autonomous), Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu, India. Fishes were maintained in flat-bottomed plastic tanks (250 L) with aerated and filtered freshwater (water quality: dissolved oxygen, 5.8 ± 0.2 mg/L; water temperature, 28 ± 1 °C and pH, 7.2 ± 0.2). The fishes were acclimatized for 1 week before being challenged to A. invadans and A. hydrophila. A maximum of 20 fishes per tank were maintained during the experiment.

cDNA Library Construction, Identification and Bioinformatics Analysis of CsCath B

A full length cathepsin B was identified from the constructed C. striatus cDNA library by the genome sequence FLX™ technology. The detailed procedure on C. striatus cDNA library construction was described in our earlier studies (Arockiaraj et al., 2013a; Abirami et al., 2013). From the established cDNA library of C. striatus sequence database, we identified a full length cathepsin B gene, which we designated as CsCath B. The full-length CsCath B sequence was compared with other sequences available in NCBI database (http://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Blast) and the similarities were analyzed (Arockiaraj et al., 2012a). The open reading frame (ORF) and amino acid sequence of CsCath B was obtained by using DNAAssist (ver. 2.2.). Characteristic domains or motifs were identified using the PROSITE profile database (http://prosite.expasy.org/scanprosite/). The N-terminal transmembrane sequence was determined by DAS transmembrane prediction program (http://www.sbc.su.se/~niklos/DAS). Signal peptide analysis was done using the SignalP (http://www.cbs.dtu.dk). Multiple sequence alignment was carried out on ClustalW (ver. 2) (http://www.ebi.ac.uk/Tools/msa/clustalw2/) program to find out the evolutionarily conserved residues among the different organisms. The evolutionary history of CsCath B was inferred using the Neighbor-Joining method on MEGA 5. The evolutionary distances were computed using the Poisson correction method (Unuk-Ool et al., 2003). The 3D structure of the CsCath B protein was predicted by utilizing the I-Tasser server (http://zhanglab.ccmb.med.umich.edu/I-TASSER). The obtained model was validated using Ramachandran plot analysis (http://mordred.bioc.cam.ac.uk/~rapper/rampage.php). The antimicrobial region was predicted using the AMPA web server (Torrent et al., 2012). The window size and the threshold values were set as default.
Immune Challenge Experiment

For fungus induced mRNA expression analysis, the fish were injected with *A. invadans* (10^2 spores). In our earlier report (Bhatt et al., 2013), we have clearly explained the isolation of *A. invadans* from the infected *C. striatus* muscle, culture in the laboratory, identification and injection to the fishes. For bacterial challenge, the fish were injected intraperitoneally with *A. hydrophila* (5 x 10^5 CFU/ml) suspended in 1X phosphate buffer saline (100 µl/fish). *A. hydrophila* was also isolated and identified from the muscle sample of EUS infected *C. striatus* as described by Dhanaraj et al. (2008). Samples were collected before (0 h), and after injection (3, 6, 12, 24 and 48 h) and were immediately snap-frozen in liquid nitrogen and stored at -80°C until total RNA was isolated. Using a sterilized syringe, the blood (0.5-1.0 ml per fish) was collected from the fish caudal fin and immediately centrifuged at 4000 X g for 10 min at 4°C to allow blood cell collection for total RNA extraction. PBS (1X) were prepared and served as control (100 µl/fish). Five fishes were collected from each time schedule in *A. invadans*, *A. hydrophila* and PBS induced groups.

RNA Isolation and cDNA Conversion

Total RNA from the control and infected fish were isolated using Tri Reagent® (Life Technologies), according to the manufacturer’s protocol with slight modifications (Arockiaraj et al., 2011a, 2011b). Using 2.5 µg of RNA, first strand cDNA synthesis was carried out using a SuperScript® VILO™ cDNA Synthesis Kit (Life technologies) as suggested by the manufacturer with slight modifications (Arockiaraj et al., 2013b, 2013c). The resulting cDNA solution was stored at -20°C for further analysis.

Gene Expression Studies

The relative expression of CsCath B in blood, gills, liver, heart, spleen, intestine, head, kidney, skin, muscle and brain were measured by quantitative real time polymerase chain reaction (qRT-PCR) (Arockiaraj et al., 2012b and 2012c). qRT-PCR was carried out using a BIO-RAD CFX384 Touch Real-Time PCR Detection System in 20µl reaction volume containing 4µl of cDNA from each tissue, 10µl of Fast SYBR® Green Master Mix, 0.5µl of each primer (20 pmol/µl) and 5µl dH2O. The qRT-PCR cycle profile was 1 cycle of 95°C for 10s, followed by 35 cycle of 95°C for 5s, 58°C for 10s and 72°C for 20s and finally 1 cycle of 95°C for 15s, 60°C for 30s and 95°C for 15s. The same qRT-PCR cycle profile was used for the internal control gene, β-actin. The internal control primers were designed from the β-actin of *C. striatus* (GenBank Accession Number EU570219). The primer details of gene specific primer (CsCath B) and internal control (β-actin) are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gene</th>
<th>Primer details</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CsCath B</td>
<td>F1: CACACCCAAATGGCGTCTATAAA and CsCath B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2: GAAATCTCCTCCTCGGTGGAAG: β-actin F3: TCTTCCAGCTTCTCCTGTGTA and β-actin R4: GACGT CGCACC TTATGGCTGCTGTT.</td>
<td></td>
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The 1.5% broth agar containing bacteria (OD600 = 0.1) was poured onto petriplates. The peptide at different concentrations (0, 25, 50 and 100 µg), positive control and negative control were added into the individual wells in the agar plates and incubated at 35 °C for 20 h. The diameter of the inhibition zone (millimeter) was determined. The assays were conducted in three duplications and the values are presented here as average ± standard deviation.
Statistical Analysis

All the statistical analysis was performed in SPSS (ver. 11.5). The data were subjected to one-way ANOVA and the mean comparisons were performed by Tukey’s Multiple Range Test and the significance was determined at P<0.05 level.

Results

Bioinformatics Characterization of CsCath B

CsCath B cDNA was obtained from the constructed cDNA library of C. striatus using Genome Sequencing FLX technology. This sequence was submitted to NCBI database under the accession number JX469845. CsCath B was subjected to analysis for determining the physico-chemical properties using DNAAssist software. The data revealed that, CsCath B is 1486 base pairs (bp) long, with 124 bp 5’ untranslated region (UTR), 990 bp open reading frame (ORF) and 372 bp 3’ UTR. The ORF region encodes 330 amino acids with a theoretical molecular weight of 36 kDa and isoelectric point 6. This amino acid contains three thiol protease motifs at $^{101}$QGSCGCSWAFGA$^{112}$ (thiol cysteine protease), $^{275}$GGHAIKVLGWG$^{285}$ (thiol histidine protease) and $^{292}$YWLCANSWTDWGDNGFFKE$^{311}$ (thiol asparagine protease) with their respective active sites viz., Cys$^{107}$, His$^{277}$ and Asp$^{297}$ (Figure 1). An occluding loop is present in the amino acid region of CsCath B at $^{179}$PYTIAPCEHVNGSRPPCTGE$^{199}$. Other than these gene specific hits, another 23 high probability hits were also observed from CsCath B and is presented in Table 1.

The protein sequence of CsCath B was compared with five other homologous sequences of cathepsin B from different species including Lutjanus argentimaculatus, Oplegnathus fasciatus, Xenopus laevis, Gallus gallus and Homo sapiens using Figure 1. Multiple sequence alignment of CsCath B. This analysis was performed on ClustalW (ver. 2.0) using sequences of cathepsin B belonging to different phyla [Lutjanus argentimaculatus (ACO82382), Oplegnathus fasciatus (AEA48884), Xenopus laevis (NP_001079570), Gallus gallus (NP_990702) and Homo sapiens (NP_001899)]. The Signal sequence is underlined. The gene specific motifs thiol (cysteine, histidine and asparagine) protease is boxed in red color. The occluding loop is marked in green arrow. The identical residues are shaded in black color. The numbers represent the position of the amino acid residue. The dashes (-) represent the gap.
ClustalW. The results of multiple sequence alignment reveals that CsCath B showed 87%, 86%, 71%, 69% and 72% similarity with L. argentimaculatus, O. fasciatus, X. laevis, G. gallus and H. sapiens respectively (data not shown). Moreover, this result shows that CsCath B possesses mature form light chain between 80 and 125 and this light chain carries a thiol cysteine protease motif which is conserved in all the sequence that has been taken for multiple sequence analysis (Figure 1). Another mature form heavy chain is present between 126 and 327 with this heavy chain carrying a thiol histidine protease motif, thiol asparagine protease and a putative occluding loop, which were all conserved in the sequences taken for multiple sequence analysis (Figure 1). CsCath B shares a structural similarity with human cathepsin B, both containing a pre-region (1-19 residues) and a pro-region (20-77) before the mature form light chain.

The phylogenetic tree showed five different clades which includes higher vertebrates (mammals and birds), lower vertebrates (amphibians and fishes) and invertebrates (arthropods). CsCath B clustered together with the fish groups (O. fasciatus and L. argentimaculatus) belonging to perciformes (Figure 2). CsCath B has 81% bootstraps identity with its fish groups. Cathepsin B from an insect Triatoma sordid was set as an out group.

We predicted five different 3D models of CsCath B protein and the quality of the models were evaluated using Ramachandran Plot analysis. The analysis indicated that among the 330 amino acids residues of CsCath B, model-1 shares 290 amino acid residues in favored region (88.40%), 20 residues in allowed region (6.01%) and 17 residues in outlier (or disallowed) region (5.50%) (data not shown). Hence, model-1 was selected as the best model for further analysis and is given in Figure 3. The predicted 3D model of CsCath B (Figure 3) shows 11 α-helix (23%) at 3-16, 27-36, 51-57, 85-88, 94-96, 107-123, 135-139, 153-161, 218-221, 235-244 and 257-259, 10

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Table 1. Details of high probability hits from CsCath B amino acid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hits (Nos.)</th>
<th>Position of amino acid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N-glycosylation site (2)</td>
<td>37-40 &amp; 190-193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein kinase C phosphorylation site (5)</td>
<td>39-41, 94-96, 117-119, 203-205 &amp; 217-219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casein kinase II phosphorylation site (6)</td>
<td>94-97, 133-136, 139-142, 233-236, 234-237 &amp; 253-256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Figure 2. Phylogenetic analysis of CsCath B with other homologous constructed on MEGA (ver. 5.1) using Neighbour-Joining Method. The numbers mentioned at nodes indicate bootstraps in percentage after 1000 replications. For GenBank accession number and complete species details please refer Table 2.
β-strands (12%) at 41-43, 131-133, 166-168, 229-231, 248-254, 260-262, 275-282, 291-297, 307-313 and 324-326 and 65% random coils. Higher percentage of coils is present in CsCath B, which is due to the presence of enormous amount of glycine (36 residues = 10%) in the sequence. This polypeptide has small side chains, hence, it is unable to contribute the formation of α-helix and β-sheet.

**Gene Expression of CsCath B**

To study the tissue distribution of CsCath B transcripts, total RNA was isolated from various tissues including blood, heart, liver, spleen, intestine, kidney, head kidney, gills, skin, muscle and brain. The isolated RNA were converted into cDNA and subjected to gene expression analysis using quantitative real time PCR. The tissue distribution result shows that the CsCath B transcript was expressed in all the examined tissues. Significantly (P<0.05) highest gene expression was noticed in liver and lowest expression in brain (Figure 4A). Based on the results of tissue distribution, gene expression in liver tissue was studied after being infected with A. invadans and A. hydrophila. In A. invadans infected C. striatus, Cath B mRNA expression almost remains in the basal level until 3 h post injection (p.i.) and then the expression started increasing and finally it reached significantly (P<0.05) higher expression at 48 h p.i. (Figure 4B). In A. hydrophila infected CsCath B, mRNA expression was significantly (P<0.05) higher at 24 h p.i. compared to PBS injected control (14 fold) (Figure 4C) and then the expression level started decreasing.

**Prediction of Antimicrobial Region in CsCath B**

The antimicrobial region of CsCath B (QKLCGTKLNGPK66) was predicted through AMPA web server program. The sequences contain proline hinge and lysine rich regions. The results clearly indicate the antimicrobial property of the peptide. Proparam analysis showed the instability index of the CsCath B antimicrobial peptide to be -24.58 which makes the peptide highly stable. The hydrophobic index of the CsCath B peptide is 25% and its total net charge was determined to be +2, thereby confirming the antimicrobial nature of the peptide. BLAST alignment showed that the peptide has 42% identity with gramicidin S from Bacillus brevis, an antimicrobial peptide in which the lysine and proline residues remained conserved.

**Synthesis of CsCath B Peptide and its Antimicrobial Activity**

The predicted antimicrobial region of CsCath B peptide was synthesized and its integrity was measured to be 87.5%. The CsCath B derived peptide was used to examine its antimicrobial capacity. The antimicrobial activity of the CsCath B peptide at various concentrations against different Gram negative and Gram positive bacteria was tested using agar well diffusion method. The peptide exhibited...
antimicrobial property against both Gram negative and Gram positive bacteria. Significantly (P < 0.05) highest inhibition zone was noticed in Gram negative bacteria *A. hydrophila* followed by *E. coli*, *V. harveyi*, *E. tarda*, *V. alginolyticus* and *V. parahaemolyticus* and Gram positive bacteria *S. iniae*, *S. aureus*, *L. lactis*, *E. faecium* and *B. subtilis*. The positive control yielded the highest activity and the negative control showed no activity (Figure 5). The results indicated that the antimicrobial activity of the synthesized peptide is concentration dependent.

**Discussion**

The identified CsCath B gene encodes a protein having structural features that are distinct to vertebrate cathepsin family due to the presence of thiol protease with conserved cysteine, histidine and asparagine active sites at Cys107, His277 and Asn297, thus maintaining the functional aspects of cathepsin B (Whang et al., 2011). Lacaille et al. (2002) reported that these active sites play crucial roles in the formation and stabilization of the catalytic
site of the activated enzyme. Bioinformatics analysis suggested that CsCath B the CsCath B is a typical cathespin B cysteine protease with a typical signal peptide sequence between Met$^1$ and Ala$^{19}$, a pro-domain between Arg$^{26}$ and ASP$^{77}$ and a mature domain between Leu$^{86}$ and Val$^{127}$ (Stephens et al., 2012). Illy et al. (1997) reported that cathespin B has a unique carboxy-peptidyl activity, which is attributed to the presence of occluding loop. In CsCath B, we also noticed a putative occluding loop at 179-199. Illy et al. (1997) reported that occluding loop is interrupts in binding of extended peptides as well as binding of protein protease inhibitors. Moreover, Illy et al. (1997) stated that this occluding loop with two histidine residues at His$^{187}$ and His$^{188}$ has the ability to accept negatively charged carboxylate ion and this ion provides basis for peptidase activity of cathepsin B. Musil et al. (1991) reported that all the cathepsin B carries His$^{187}$, His$^{188}$, Glu$^{299}$ and Glu$^{323}$ as conserved residues, which are responsible for exopeptidase and endopeptidase activity. The same pattern was noticed in CsCath B also. Moreover, the sequence analysis showed that CsCath B contains twelve conserved cysteine residues at 59, 93, 105, 108, 122, 141, 142, 146, 150, 179, 187 and 198, which suggest the potential formation of six disulfide bridges. However, two additional conserved cysteines (208 and 212) were noticed in CsCath B at the C-terminal region similar to cath B from *Liopeneus vannamei*. Two potential N-glycosylation sites were identified in CsCath B at 37-40 and 190-193, which are necessary for the intracellular transport mechanism as reported by Ma et al. (2010).

The multiple sequence alignment results indicate that CsCath B amino acid sequence was homologous to other known cathespin B due to the presence of pre-region, pro-region, mature form light chain and heavy chain. The phylogenetic analysis of CsCathB also provide evidence to prove that the identified sequence from *C. striatus* shares homology with cathepsin B of most of the known species due to the gene specific domains which are necessary for their function.

The 3D model analysis of CsCath B revealed that the gene specific motifs, thiol cysteine protease is present in the α-helical region between 101 and 112 and thiol histidine protease and thiol asparagine protease are present in the β-strands at 275-285 and 292-311 respectively. The thiol protease motifs with active sites at Cys$^{107}$, His$^{277}$ and Asn$^{297}$ are conserved, thus maintaining functional aspects of cathepsin B (Whang et al., 2011).

CsCath B was detected in all the tissues taken for analysis and the highest expression was observed at liver. Zhang et al. (2008), Whang et al. (2011), Akoi et al. (2003) and Feng et al. (2011) also observed the gene expression of cathepsin B in many tissues and the highest at the haemopoietic organs like liver, heart and kidney in various fishes. Moreover, the fungal and bacterial infection induced significant induction of CsCath B expression in liver. This observation indicates an involvement of CsCath B in host immune response against fungal and bacterial infection. These pathogen induced gene expression is related to inflammation, cytokine activity, antigen presentation and binding activity as reported by Trent et al. (2006). The variation in the gene expression of CsCath B in different time point is due to varied pathogenicity levels during the infection. As reported in the literature (Darawiroj et al., 2008), it has been explained that the feasibility of difference in gene expression is due to immune induction in fish tissues.

Cathepsin B has been reported as antimicrobial protein in many organisms including Japanese eel (Aranishi, 1999). The antimicrobial prediction

**Figure 5.** Antimicrobial capacity of recombinant CsCath B protein against the Gram negative and Gram positive bacteria. The diameters of the inhibition zone showing the expression of the recombinant CsCath B protein at various concentrations along with its positive and negative controls.
program of CsCath B peptide showed that the proline hinge region and lysine rich region increases the antimicrobial capacity in CsCath B peptide. Hiromi and Jimmy (2008) reported that the lysine rich antimicrobial peptides are highly bioactive. Moreover, Markossian et al. (2004) and Sitaram (2006) stated that the proline hinge in antimicrobial peptide plays a major role in peptide’s membrane translocation, membrane permeabilization and antimicrobial activity. Otvos (2002) also reported that the proline hinge region is predominant in many antimicrobial peptides (AMPs), for example proline-rich antimicrobial peptides. In addition, Thennarasu and Nagaraj (1996) and Suh et al. (1999) observed that mutating proline residues generate remarkable changes in the properties. Nguyen et al. (1990) found that the protease enzymes especially cathepsin B and L extracted from the fish mucus are involved in degrading the proteoglycans which are the major components of bacterial cell walls. Similarly, Aranishi (1999) also observed the antimicrobial nature of cysteine proteases in Japanese eel. Therefore, we studied the antimicrobial nature of CsCath B derived peptide. Hence, we predicted an antimicrobial region through AMPA web server program, which determines IC50 (half maximal inhibitory concentration) of AMP. The results showed that the peptide have the ability to inhibit the activity of both Gram negative and Gram positive bacteria. Itami et al. (1987) and Takahashi et al. (1987) also reported the bacteriolyis nature of cysteine protease. Overall, the observation indicated that cathepsin B may be a novel bacteriolysin which is involved in the nonspecific defense system of murrel, thus showing its antimicrobial property.

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