

## Comprehensive phylogenetic, similarity and allergenicity analysis of *Boophilus* genus tick Tropomyosin protein

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### ABSTRACT

*Boophilus* genus ticks are responsible for transferring some pathogens and reducing production factors in cattle. Tropomyosin (TPM) protein has actin regulator activity and playing important role in immune and allergic reactions. The main goal is to determine different aspects of phylogenetic, similarity, homology, structure and allergenicity of TPM protein. In prior study, we identified TPM by using Mass-spectrometry in *Boophilus anulatus* larva proteins extraction. Analysis by NCBI and Mascot software showed complete similarity of this protein with *Boophilus microplus*. TPM Blasting, invertebrates TPM sequences retrieval, aligning and analyzing of conserved and variable regions along sequences were next steps. Also, construction the phylogenetic tree, overall mean distances estimation, homology protein secondary structure, allergenicity analysis was achieved. The most similar sequences to *Boophilus* genus TPM are *Haemaphysalis* sp., *Scolopendra* sp. and etc., respectively. The multiple sequence alignment showed that conserved and variable regions stretched in different part of TPM. The close relationships in Phylogenetic tree between Ticks and Mites were seen, although the TPM sequences in ticks are more similar to each other than to mites and assume as the nearest relatives. Insects TPM like worms, located in two separated clades, and *Trichinella spiralis* in worm clades are more related taxa to members of ticks and mites groups. Furthermore, overall mean distances over sequence pairs reflects TPM conservation during speciation. TPM has high homology in different species and has two domain of  $\alpha$ -helix that cannot form disulfide bonds. Finally, allergenicity analysis by separated and hybrid approach showed it undoubtedly is allergen and candidates some peptides as responsible for allergenicity of TPM. The comprehensive analysis of TPM has never been easy, especially when we attempt to make statements from different aspects about this protein. Our study revealed the some unique and valuable aspects of TPM protein of *Boophilus* genus, and will help to further studies on mentioned protein.

**Keywords:** Tropomyosin, *Boophilus* genus, Phylogenetic, Similarity, Allergenicity

### INTRODUCTION

*Boophilus* genus ticks are responsible for transferring some pathogens (such as *Babesia*

*bigemina*, *B.bovis*, *Anaplasma marginale* and some bacteria) and reducing production factors, thus are one of most important tick in cattle [1,2].

Tropomyosin (TPM) protein has actin regulator activity and playing important role in immune and allergic reactions, thus candidates for vaccine in some tick types. This molecule belongs to family of highly conserved proteins with multiple isoforms found in both muscle and non-muscle cells of all species of vertebrate and invertebrate. Its native structure consists of two parallel alpha-helical TPM molecules that are wound around each other forming a coiled-coil dimer [3-5].

Comparative sequence analysis is an important tool for most of scientists that are occupy in different branches of biology. Phylogenetic tree showing the evolutionary relationships, similarities and differences among various species and inter species, based upon similarities and differences in their genetic characteristics. The amount of changes among the sequences reflects the evolutionary relatedness of the organisms. When sequences from two species are very similar, they are thought to be closely related and share a more recent common ancestor, and when sequences from two species are more dissimilar, the species are thought to be more distantly related [6-7]. Some area of phylogenetic method applications are detection of orthology and paralogy, estimating divergence times, reconstructing ancient proteins, finding the residues that are important to natural selection, detecting recombination points and determining the identity of new pathogens and vaccine design[7]. Also, knowledge of relationships is crucial to our understanding of the evolution of DNA and proteins and of development. It will also play an important role in the analysis of the sequence data that is being produced by worldwide genetic projects [8].

The prediction of allergenic proteins is becoming very important in present time due to use of modified proteins in foods (genetically modified foods), evaluation allergenicity protein of extrinsic protein, therapeutics, biopharmaceuticals etc. World Health Organization (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) realize the importance of prediction and proposed guidelines to assess the potential allergenicity of proteins (<http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/food>).

Review on literature shows that there is not any comprehensive study on different aspects of phylogenetic, similarity, homology and allergenicity of TPM protein. Thus,

The aims of study are: 1) analysis of sequence and genetic characteristics of TPM protein in *Boophilus* tick; 2) to contribute to the understanding of genetic similarity and differentiation of *Boophilus* TPM protein in contrary with ticks, mites, worms and insects populations and vertebrates; 3) to further analyze the phylogenetic relationships, based on the TPM protein, between populations of ticks and mites and some other species; 4) to elucidate homology of this protein and prediction of its structure; 5) and at least, preparing suitable background for production wide range effective vaccines for parasites and allergenicity researches.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Identification of TPM by using Mass-spectrometry:

In 2012, our group by using of one and two dimensional electrophoresis and then Mass-spectrometry identified presents of immunogenic protein of TPM with 37 Kd weight in *B. anulatus* larva proteins extraction [9]. Analysis sequences of this protein by National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) and Mascot software showed complete similarity (100%) of this protein with *B. microplus*. As there was not any sequences of *B. anulatus* in Databases, Thus sequence of *B. microplus* (nearest genus) retrieved and used as subjected sequence for next steps.

### Sequence analysis:

Protein sequence statistics for TPM protein of *B. microplus* including length, the molecular weight (Mw), isoelectric point (pI) and amino acid distribution was calculated and arranged in Table 1 by using of ExPASy tools ([http://us.expasy.org/tools/pi\\_tool.html](http://us.expasy.org/tools/pi_tool.html)).

### Retrieving, blasting, alignment and conserved and variable regions of sequences:

complete protein sequences of TPM of *B. microplus* and TPM sequences of other tick, mite, worms, Insects and some vertebrates were retrieved from GenBank (<http://>

[ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/)) and UniprotKB (<http://www.expasy.org/uniprot> ) databases. Also, *Boophilus* TPM directed to protein similarity blast search (<http://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Blast.cgi>) for evaluation of similarity with sequences report in different species and we selected the closest hits and summarized in informative tables. Obtained sequences were aligned by using ClustalX and analyzed in Bioedit software version 7.7.9 [10].

At last step, very short sequences and areas with ambiguous alignment or containing poly-N stretches were excluded from the analyses. The most highly conserved and variable region were evaluated by T-coffee software and showed in Figure 1.

#### **Construct the phylogenetic tree and overall mean distances:**

Selected, aligned and edited sequences of TPM protein directed to phylogenetic tree by using MEGA5.3 software package [11]. The phylogenetic analysis was conducted based on the different sets of aligned sequences of the ticks, mites, worms, Insects and mammals and chicken. To each of datasets, added sequences which were used as the out-group. Trees were constructed using the neighbor-joining (NJ) algorithm under the global gap removal option and Kimura's two-parameter substitution model [12]. Robustness of phylogenetic analysis was measured by bootstrap analysis with 10,000 replications. The percentage of replicate trees in which the associated taxa clustered together in bootstrap test is shown next to the branches [13]. The number of amino acid substitutions per site from averaging over all sequence pairs is shown. Standard error estimate(s) are shown above the diagonal. Analyses were conducted using the Poisson correction model [14]. The analysis involved 29 (for parasites) and 13 amino acid sequences. All positions containing gaps and missing data were eliminated. There were a total of 256 (for parasites) and 238 (for vertebrates) positions in the final dataset. Evolutionary analyses were conducted in MEGA5 [11].

#### **Homology, orthologous and paralogous of sequences:**

TPM protein sequences of some mammals, chicken and parasites selected for homology

study. TPM directed to phylogenetic tree by using MEGA5.3 software package. Also, parasites group assumed as the out-group. Trees were constructed using the neighbor-joining (NJ) algorithm and robustness of phylogenetic analysis was measured by bootstrap analysis with 10,000 replications.

#### **Protein secondary structure prediction for TPM of *Boophilus* genus:**

Prediction of secondary structure achieved by using of PSIPRED (<http://bioinf.cs.ucl.ac.uk/psipred>) and Scrach (<http://scratch.proteomics.ics.uci.edu/>) online servers. Then, results of these tools compare to each other to better and accurate understanding of structure TPM protein in *B.* genus.

#### ***In-silico* evaluation of allergenicity**

AlgPred (allergenicity prediction) server (<http://www.imtech.res.in/raghava/algpred/>) cause of its features in this study was used [15]. AlgPred allows prediction of allergens based on similarity of known epitope with any region of protein. The mapping of IgE epitope(s) feature of server allows user to locate the position of epitope in their protein and also, allows predicting allergens based on SVM (support vector machines) modules using amino acid or dipeptide composition. It facilitates BLAST search against 2890 allergen-representative peptides (ARPs) and assign a protein allergen if it have a BLAST hit. Finally, Hybrid option of server allows predicting allergen using combined approach (SVMc + IgE epitope + ARPs(allergen representative peptides) BLAST).

## **RESULTS**

#### **Protein sequence statistics for TPM protein of *B. microplus***

Some general sequence analysis of TPM protein of *B. microplus* are shown in Table 1.

#### **Blasting and sequence alignment results**

TPM of *B. microplus* (AC: O97162) used as entry data to BLAST search for finding sequences with similarity to our sequence. BLAST result revealed that most similar sequences to TPM protein are; *Haemaphysalis longicornis*, *Haemaphysalis qinghaiensis*, *Scolopendra sp.* and etc., respectively. Details of similarity are

summarizing in Table 2. The multiple sequence alignment (MSA) for ticks, mites, worms and insects produced by T-coffee [16]. Results showed that conserved and variable regions

stretched in different part of protein (Fig.1). Column of sequences start with *Boophilus* sequences and other ticks, then mites, worms and insect from ascending to descending, respectively.

**Table 1.** Sequence information and amino acid distribution by using ExPASy online tools servers. The molecular weight of protein was calculated using Compute pI/Mw ([http://us.expasy.org/tools/pi\\_tool.html](http://us.expasy.org/tools/pi_tool.html)).

Organism (name & descriptions)	Sequence type	Length	Weight (double-stranded)	Isoelectric point (PI) & Aliphatic index (AI)	Amino acid distribution		
					aa name*	aa count	Frequency
Tick (TPM protein of <i>B. microplus</i> ) AC: KC253896	Protein	284aa	33.001 kDa	PI= 4.9 AI= 76.056	A,C,D,E,F G,H,I,K,L M,N,P,Q,R S,T,V,W,Y	34,0,16,59,2,5 .2,9,26,28,10, 7,0,23,23,13, 10,13,0,4	0.120,0, 0.056,0.208 0.007,0.018, 0.007,0.032, 0,92,0.099, 0.035,0.025, 0,0.081, 0.081,0.046, 0.035,0.046, 0.000,0.014

**Table 2.** NCBI protein BLAST results for TPM in *Boophilus* genus. Ranking of sequences is based on their Max score, Identity and E.value and arranged ascending to descending, respectively.

Number of protein sequence	Name (Description)	Max score	Max identity	E.value	Accession number
1	<i>Haemaphysalis longicornis</i>	529	99%	0.0	Q8IT89.1
2	<i>Haemaphysalis qinghaiensis</i>	528	99%	0.0	ABQ96858.1
3	<i>Scolopendra sp.</i>	459	86%	1e-160	AAR87377.1
4	<i>Neoscona nautica</i>	459	86%	2e-160	AAR87381.1
5	<i>Dermanyssus gallinae</i>	455	89%	6e-159	CAJ44440.1
6	<i>Metaseiulus occidentalis</i>	454	89%	8e-159	XP_003745223.1
7	<i>Dermatophagoides farinae</i>	452	89%	2e-157	BAA04557.1
8	<i>Blomia tropicalis</i>	451	88%	3e-157	ABU97466.1
9	<i>Aleuroglyphus ovatus</i>	449	88%	2e-156	AAX37287.1
10	<i>Psoroptes ovis</i>	449	88%	2e-156	CAJ38272.1
11	<i>Dermatophagoides pteronyssinus</i>	448	88%	3e-156	AAB69424.1
12	<i>Chortoglyphus arcuatus</i>	447	88%	5e-156	AEX31649.1
13	<i>Sarcoptes scabiei</i>	446	88%	3e-155	AFH08744.1
14	<i>Tyrophagus putrescentiae</i>	438	86%	2e-152	AAT40866.1



**Figure 1.** Comparison of *Boophilus* genus TPM with the TPM amino acid sequences of other ticks, mites, insects and worms. This figure just showed part of the multiple sequence alignment result as produced by T-coffee and edited in Bioedit7.9 software (Genebank accession numbers not shown). Conserved, semi-conserved and variable regions along TPM sequence in parasites could be seen in this figure. All residues that are identical to the top sequence in an alignment as a dot ('.') used and (-) character denotes gaps.

### Construct the phylogenetic tree and overall mean distances

For the phylogenetic analysis of TPM proteins sequences of ticks (4 sequences) and mites (12 sequences), worms (8 sequences), Insects (4 sequences) and mammals and chicken (13 sequences) along with TPM protein sequence of *b. microplus* (AC: O97162), obtained from GenBank and UniprotKB. The sequences were aligned, compared and edited using Bioedit software version 7.7.9. MEGA 5.3 software packages used for construction of phylogenetic tree and calculation overall mean distances (Figure 2 and table 3). Phylogenetic tree in Figure 2 shows the close relationships between ticks and mites in TPM protein sequence, although the TPM sequences in ticks (like *Boophilus* genus, *Haemaphysalis* genus, *Ixodes scapularis* and *amblyomma maculatum*) are more similar to each other than to mites and assume as sister group (the nearest relatives).

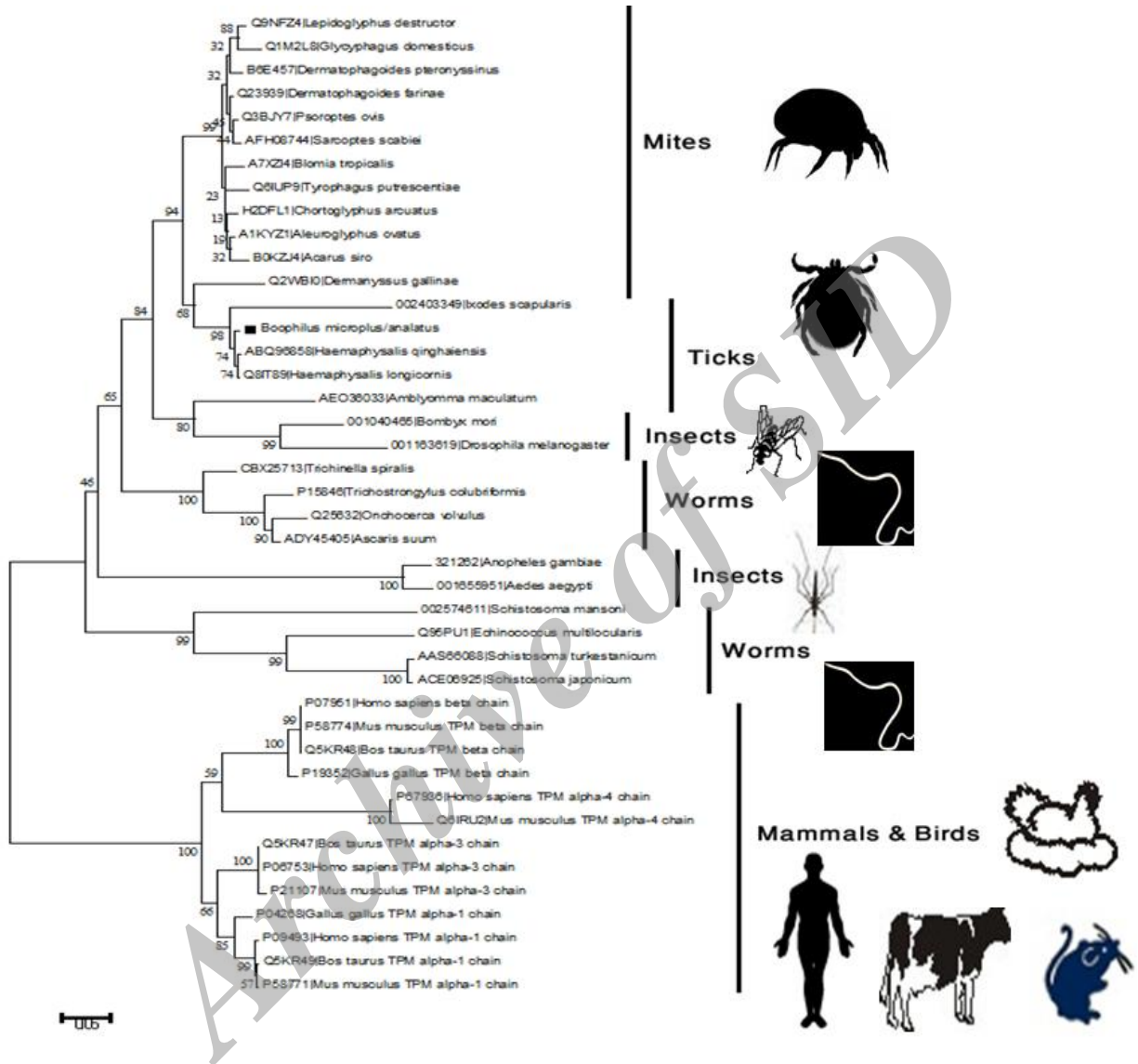
*Amblyomma maculatum* (AC: AEO36033) has more distances relationship to other tick and neither mites, located in different branches near insects. *B.s* genus and *haemaphysalis* genus are in sister branches. In out-group branches, as it shown, TPM in mammals and chicken has three or four different chains (alpha 1, 2 (in human and mouse 4) and beta) and seems to alpha chains are more related to each other than to beta chains.

Insects TPM like worms, located in two separated clades, *Bombyx mori* and *Drosophila melanogaster* are in sister branches and are more related taxa to members of family of ticks and mites, respectively. Also, *Trichinella spiralis* in worm clades is more related taxa to ticks and mite groups. Furthermore, estimation of average evolutionary divergence over parasite Sequence pairs demonstrated in Table 3. Results show overall mean distances over sequence pairs in parasites and vertebrate (mammals and chicken) in not high and it reflects conservation of this protein



during speciation in these two groups. Also, overall mean distances over sequence pairs in vertebrates

significantly, is lower than parasites.



**Figure 2.** Phylogenetic tree constructed based on protein sequences with MEGA 5.3, illustrating the relationships in TPM protein from *B. microplis* among other parasite and mammals and chicken. TPM protein from *B. microplis* marked by ■ and also, mammal's TPM (alpha and beta chains) assumed as out group in tree. Tree was constructed by using the neighbor-joining (NJ) algorithm based on differences in TPM protein sequences of different species. Units at the bottom of the tree indicate the number of substitution events. The length of each pair of branches represents the distance between sequence pairs. The dataset was resampled 10,000 times using the bootstrap method. The sequence information at the tips of the branches includes an accession numbers of the sequences and tick or mite name for each sequence. Some very short and incomplete sequences or sequences with ambiguous alignment or containing poly-N stretches removed after alignment and tree not showing them.

**Table 3.** Comparison of estimation of average evolutionary divergence over sequence pairs between parasites and vertebrates.

Protein name	Organisms	Overall mean distances	Standard error estimates (S. E.)	Selected variance estimation method	Selected substitution mode for amino acid
TPM	Tick, mites , worms and insects	d = 0.341	0.023	Bootstrap method	Poisson model
"	Some mammals and chicken	d = 0.151	0.016	Bootstrap method	Poisson model

### Homology

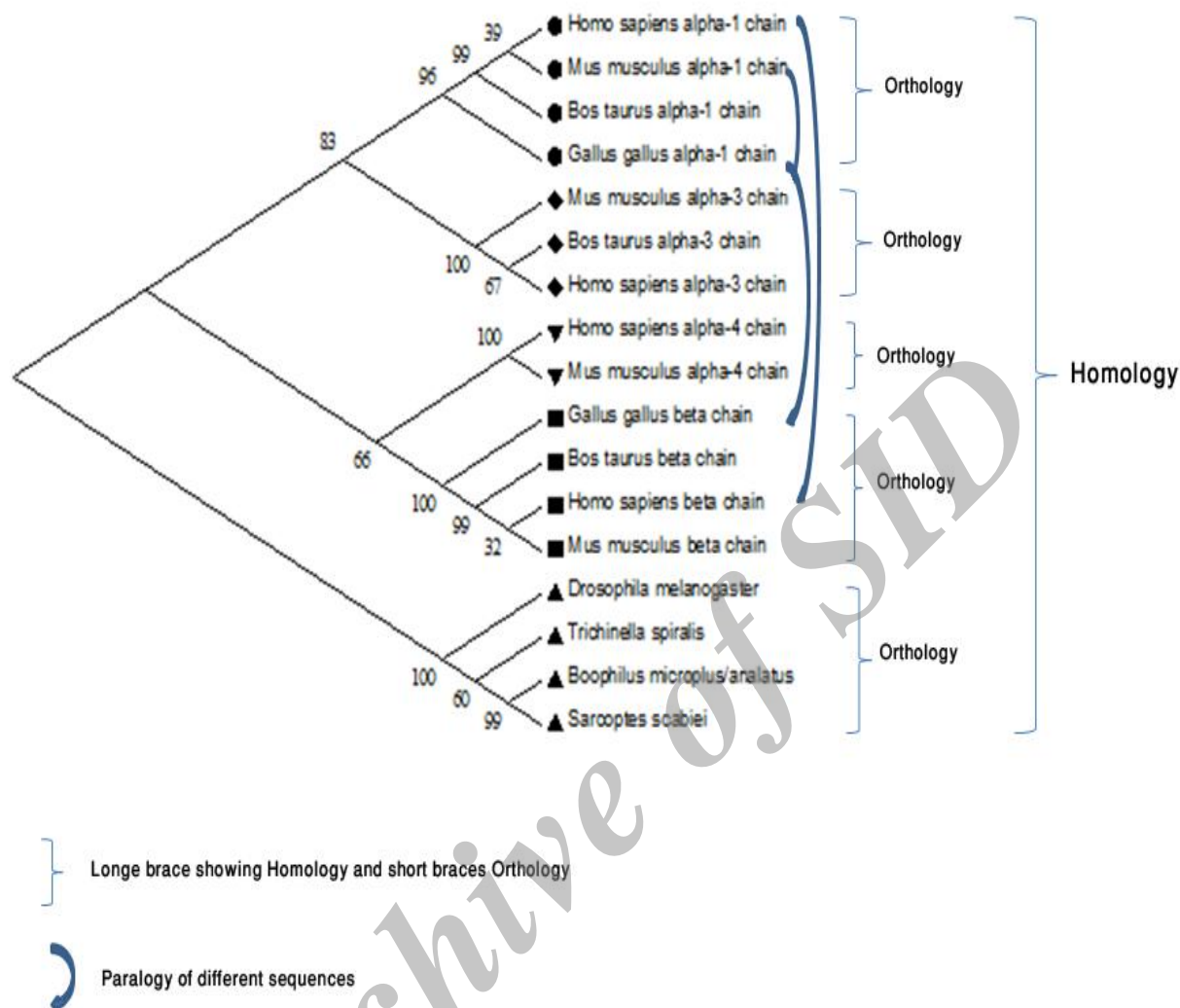
Homologous sequences are the term that uses for orthologous and paralogous sequences. These sequences are result of horizontal transfer between 2 species, and not common ancestor. Homologous sequences as result of convergence. Two genes are orthologous if they diverged after a speciation event and two genes are paralogous if they diverged after a duplication event. It is likely that two orthologs have similar function, these functions not necessarily identical.

Paralogous usually have different function [17, 18]. Figure 3, depicts homology (and also, orthology and paralogy) of TPM protein in mammals and chicken in comparison with some selected parasites and they classified in tree separated groups. A result notices that TPM

protein has high homology in different species and include alpha and beta chains in higher animal species (especially vertebrates).

Alpha (1, 3 or 4 (only in human and mouse) and beta chains are more related to each other and are in separated clades (groups), thus they are orthologous. Besides, alpha to beta chain have paralogous relationship but in lower animal species (non-vertebrates, such as *Boophilus* genus) TPM is just a single sequence and so, relationship between sequence is only orthologous.

Among alpha chains sequences, alpha 4 chains are nearest branches to beta chains and so located in same group. *Boophilus* genus (tick) and *S. scabiei* (mite) are located in sister branches.



**Figure 3.** Homology relationships of TPM protein in some parasites and vertebrates. Mega5.3 software package used for construction tree for homology analysis of TPM protein. Tree was constructed by using the neighbor-joining (NJ) algorithm, and the length of each pair of branches represents the distance between sequence pairs. Straight branch style selected for showing homology-orthology and paralogy of TPM chains among taxa. The dataset was resampled 10,000 times using the bootstrap method. The sequence information at the tips of the branches includes a name for each sequence and symbols that; ● represents alpha 1 chains, ◆ alpha 3 chains, ▼ alpha 4 chains, ■ beta chains and ▲ parasites (also this group assumed as out-group).

#### Prediction frequency of secondary structure:

Results of Scratch server showed, this protein has two domain of  $\alpha$ -helix that domain 1 stretch at amino acid 1-193 and second domain from amino acid 194- 284. Also, a TPM sequence has less than two cysteine and therefore cannot form disulfide bonds. Prediction secondary

structure of protein revealed that this protein has two conformations helix and coil ( $\beta$ -Turn) in its structure. For right and confident interpretation, results of both PSIPRED V3.0 and Scratch were evaluated and compared with each other in table 4.





## DISCUSSION

Ticks have numerous compounds with diverse biological function [17-21], but certain tick proteins such as TPM of *Boophilus* genus, have immunogenicity and allergenicity nature and study them from different aspects of *in-vivo* (experimental infection), *in-vitro* (identification and characterization) and *in-silico* (similarity, phylogeny, homology, structure, allergenicity) could help to understanding diverse functions, preparing suitable anti-tick vaccines, and insight to cure allergenic diseases caused by parasites [22-27].

In this study, after experimental infection of cattle by *B. analatus* and identification and characterization of TPM protein in *B. analatus* larva proteins extraction by Mass-spectrometry, complete similarity (100%) of this protein with *B. microplus* by NCBI blast and Mascot software obtained [9]. So, *B. microplus* TPM sequence used as representative of *Boophilus* genus sequence.

Results of sequence analysis, Blasting, alignment, evaluation of conserved/variable regions of sequences, phylogenetic tree construction and homology analysis revealed that at first, there is high conservation between species in this protein and it is accordance with Previous study identified TPM as a conserved and cross-reactive allergen between mites and other invertebrates [28]. In addition, the TPM is present in ticks, mites and insects, so, it may serve as a wide range vaccine candidate antigen in several species of parasites along with myosin and paramyosin [29-30].

Blast search, phylogenetic and conservation/variability analysis showed that if vaccine designs based on *Boophilus* genus (*B. analatus* or *microplus*) TPM it also, will coverage the *Haemaphysalis* genus, *Ixodes* genus and also cross-react with some other mites such as *Dermanyssus gallinae*, *Psoroptes ovis* and/or *S. scabiei*, although they might have another hosts [31-33]. Besides, understanding sequence conservation is important for the study of sequence evolution and for the identification of functional regions of the protein [34]. Also, according to literatures, a numerous proteins interspecies or between some species in parasite,

mammals, bacteria and etc. identified that have high conservation like TPM. [29, 35, 36]. Our phylogenetic analysis and comparison of the TPM amino acid sequences among parasites are in agree with evaluation of this protein in *S. scabiei* and some parts analysis of barnacle TPM [33, 37]. For a variety of reasons, many of the proteins identified as TPM for different species and registered in NCBI and UniproKB were not included in our data set of TPM. In several cases, no complete sequence (very short sequences) and Areas with ambiguous alignment or containing poly-N stretches were excluded from the datasets. Also, the results of phylogenetic TPM analysis in this study is in agree with current taxonomy of arthropod phylogeny [38-40].

Nearly all proteins have structural similarities with other proteins and, in some of these cases, share a common evolutionary origin. Knowledge of these relationships is crucial to our understanding of the evolution and development of proteins [8].

Structural analysis of TPM protein in *Boophilus* genus revealed that it has two domain of  $\alpha$ -helix, no disulfide bonds and two conformations helix and coil ( $\beta$ -Turn) in its structure. Other study invertebrate reported that a microfilament protein with a  $\alpha$ -helical Coiled-coil structure is found in all their cell types [41].

There is some proteins like TPM, that have alpha and beta chains and orthology and paralogy concept defines for them, such as albumin and hemoglobin [42-43]. Estimation of average evolutionary divergence over parasite sequence pairs is just window to understanding of evolutionary relationships and not fully representative of all the patterns of evolution, and calculation of this parameter in study showed conservation of TPM among parasite sequence pairs and vertebrate [11].

In past, number of approaches and methods has been developed to predict allergens. In AlgPred a systematic attempt has been made to integrate various approaches in order to predict allergenic proteins with high accuracy [15].

Results of allergenicity evaluation is similar to other reports on allergenicity evaluation of TPM in other parasites and non-vertebrates, and it

cause of its conservation that lead to cross-reactivity with other parasite such as house dust mite [26,28,33].

In modern biology, scientists in different field of biology agree that a comparison of relationships of species, their genes or proteins sequences in a phylogenetic context and evaluation of similarities, sequence characteristics and structures is important part of research, and provide deep insights into organism nature. In general, the output tree of a phylogenetic analysis is an estimate of the character's phylogeny (i.e. a protein tree) and not the phylogeny of the taxa (i.e. species tree) from which these characters

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