

Characterization of an Iridovirus Detected from Turbot

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Juvenile turbot, *Scophthalmus maximus*, that became sick during an outbreak of disease at mariculture facilities at Go-Chang, Korea, in 2003 were examined to identify the cause of the disease. The fish had pale body color, an enlarged abdomen, protruding eyes, an enlarged spleen and kidney, and pale gills and/or liver. Histopathological examination revealed basophilic enlarged cells in the kidney, spleen, gills, heart, stomach, intestine, liver, pancreas and skin. The viral particles were hexagonal and approximately 136–159 nm in diameter. A specific 1299-bp fragment of the major capsid protein (MCP) gene of the turbot iridovirus (TBIV) was amplified by PCR. Sequence homology was greater than 93.76% between the MCP gene in TBIV and the same gene in five viruses in the tentatively proposed genus Tropivirus (Family Iridoviridae): red sea bream iridovirus, sea bass iridovirus, grouper sleepy disease iridovirus, African lampeye iridovirus and dwarf gourami iridovirus. These results suggest that the virus detected from turbot is similar to the tentatively proposed genus Tropivirus.