Dissemination of Panton-Valentine leukocidin-positive methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in Okinawa, Japan.
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**Abstract**  Panton-Valentine leukocidin (PVL) is a pore-forming cytotoxin that is produced by *Staphylococcus aureus* closely associated with skin and soft-tissue infections (SSTI). PVL-positive *S. aureus* strains have been identified worldwide, including in the USA; however, few studies have reported the presence of these strains in Japan. In this study, we prospectively investigated the prevalence of PVL in *S. aureus* strains from outpatients presenting with SSTI in Okinawa and characterized the PVL-positive *S. aureus* strains by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and multilocus sequence typing (MLST). From 2008-2010, 499 clinical samples were obtained from 497 people. *S. aureus* was identified in 274 samples, and 36% (99 of 274) were methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* (MRSA). Seventeen (6.2%) PVL-positive *S. aureus* strains were detected by PCR, and 12 of the 17 PVL-positive strains were MRSA. Most PVL-positive *S. aureus* caused furuncles or carbuncles. Nine of the 17 PVL-positive isolates had an ST8 MRSA genotype and most harbored SCCmec type IVa and the arcA gene of the arginine catabolic mobile element, which is identical to the USA300 clone prevalent in the USA. PVL-positive *S. aureus* strains were more likely to be resistant to erythromycin (65%) and levofloxacin (53%). PVL-positive *S. aureus* strains have emerged and are spreading as a causative pathogen for SSTI in Okinawa.