

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE**

# KLIGLER IRON AGAR

## Ready-to-use tubes



Kligler Iron Agar  
from left: uninoculated tube, *E. coli*, *S. Typhimurium*.

### 1 - INTENDED USE

*In vitro* diagnostic device. For the differentiation of *Enterobacteriaceae*, based on sugar fermentation and hydrogen sulphide production.

### 2 - COMPOSITION TYPICAL FORMULA\*

Beef extract	3.000 g
Yeast extract	3.000 g
Peptocomplex	20.000 g
Lactose	10.000 g
Glucose	1.000 g
Ferric ammonium citrate	0.500 g
Sodium thiosulphate	0.300 g
Sodium chloride	5.000 g
Phenol red	0.025 g
Agar	11.700 g
Purified water	1000 mL

\*the formula may be adjusted and/or supplemented to meet the required performances criteria.

### 3 - PRINCIPLE OF THE METHOD AND EXPLANATION OF THE PROCEDURE

The formulation of Kligler iron agar medium is based on several microbiologists' attempts to develop a medium to aid in the identification of intestinal gram-negative bacilli. In 1911, Russell<sup>1</sup> developed a double sugar tube medium for the differentiation of typhoid bacilli from urine and faeces. In 1917 Kligler<sup>2</sup> reported the use of lead acetate to detect hydrogen sulphide production. In 1918 Kligler<sup>3</sup> combined the use of lead acetate with Russel's double sugar agar for simultaneous differentiation of typhoid, dysentery and allied bacilli. Bailey and Lacy<sup>4</sup> simplified the formula by using phenol red as the pH indicator instead of Andrade indicator. The current formulation of Kligler Iron Agar combines features of all the differential media described above.

Kligler Iron Agar (KIA) is intended for the differentiation of *Enterobacteriaceae*, grown on primary isolation media, based on the fermentation of glucose and lactose with production of acids and gas and the production of hydrogen sulphide.<sup>5</sup>

The fermentation of the two sugars can take place both on the surface of the slant and in the butt with or without the presence of gas (CO<sub>2</sub> + H<sub>2</sub>). Regarding the fermentation of sugars on KIA, 3 reaction models can be registered:

1-fermentation of glucose; 2-fermentation of glucose and lactose; 3-no fermentation.

In the first case, after 18-24 hours of incubation, an alkaline reaction on the slant and an acid reaction on the butt is observed. The complete consumption of glucose, present at a concentration of 0.1%, on the surface, where aerobic conditions exist, after 18-24 hours induces the oxidative degradation of peptones, with production of ammonia, alkalinity and a red colour change of phenol red (reversal of the acid-alkaline reaction). However, in the anaerobic butt the bacteria metabolize the glucose producing ATP and pyruvate, which is converted into stable acid end-products with a colour change of the indicator to yellow (acid pH).

In the second case, the microorganisms ferment glucose and lactose: after 18-24 hours of incubation an acid reaction is recorded on the slant and in the butt. This is due to the high concentration of lactose: after 18-24 hours their degradation is not exhausted on the surface and therefore there is no utilisation of peptones and no reversal of the reaction.

In the third model an alkaline reaction is recorded both on the slant and in the butt. This behaviour is not typical of *Enterobacteriaceae* but of some non-enteric non-fermenting Gram-negative bacteria that can utilise the peptones for growing (*Alcaligenes faecalis*, *Acinetobacter*, *Pseudomonas*). If the degradation of the peptones is anaerobic the indicator will turn to red (alkaline pH) both on the surface and in the butt; if the degradation is aerobic, there is no colour change of phenol red in the butt.

Ferric ammonium citrate is an indicator of the formation of hydrogen sulphide. Thiosulphate reductase producing organisms causes the release of a sulphide molecule from the sodium thiosulfate. The hydrogen sulphide will react with ferric ions in the medium to produce iron sulphide, a black insoluble precipitate.

### 4 - PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Medium appearance	red, limpid
Final pH at 20-25°C	7.4 ± 0.2

### 5 - MATERIALS PROVIDED – PACKAGING

Product	Type	REF	Pack
Kligler Iron Agar	Ready-to-use tubes	551560	20 glass tubes with slanted medium, 17x125 mm, flat bottom, aluminium screw-cap. Packaging: cardboard box

### 6 - MATERIALS REQUIRED BUT NOT PROVIDED

Sterile needles, incubator and laboratory equipment as required, ancillary culture media and reagents for complete identification of the culture.

### 7- SPECIMENS

Kligler Iron Agar Medium is not intended for primary isolation from clinical specimens; it is inoculated with pure colonies from a culture on solid media, isolated from clinical specimens or other materials.





## 8 - TEST PROCEDURE

With an inoculating needle, pick the centre of a single pure colony, inoculate the slant by first stabbing the butt to the bottom; withdraw the needle, and then streak the surface of the slant. Loosen the closure of the tube before incubating. Incubate aerobically at 35-37°C for 18 to 24 hours.

## 9 - READING AND INTERPRETATION

Three kinds of data may be obtained from the reactions.<sup>6</sup>

### Sugar fermentation

Acid (yellow) butt, alkaline (red) slant: glucose fermented, lactose not fermented.

Acid (yellow) butt, acid (yellow) slant: glucose and lactose fermented.

Alkaline (red) butt, alkaline (red) slant: neither glucose nor lactose fermented.

### Gas production

Presence of bubbles in the butt. With large amounts of gas, the agar may be cracked and displaced

### Hydrogen sulphide production

Hydrogen sulphide production from thiosulfate is indicated by the blackening of the butt as a result of the reaction of H<sub>2</sub>S with the ferric ions to form black ferrous sulphide. Formation of H<sub>2</sub>S requires an acidic environment; sometimes the butt will be entirely black; in such a case, it is assumed that the butt portion of the tube is acid (the yellow colour is masked by H<sub>2</sub>S production).

All combinations of the reactions described above can be observed on Triple Sugar Iron Agar, therefore it is important to record the results of all the reactions (sugar fermentations, gas production, H<sub>2</sub>S production). The following table, taken from MacFaddin<sup>7</sup> shows the reaction patterns of some *Enterobacteriaceae*.

Microorganism	Lac	Glu	Gas	H <sub>2</sub> S
<i>Edwardsiella</i>	-	A	+	+
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	A <sup>1</sup>	A	V <sup>+</sup>	-
<i>Shigella</i>	V <sup>-3</sup>	A	V <sup>-2</sup>	-
<i>Klebsiella</i>	A	A	+	-
<i>Enterobacter</i>	V	A	V <sup>-6</sup>	-
<i>Hafnia</i>	V <sup>-</sup>	A	V <sup>+</sup>	-
<i>Serratia</i>	V <sup>-</sup>	A	V <sup>-</sup>	-
<i>Morganella</i>	-	A	V <sup>+</sup>	-
<i>Proteus mirabilis</i>	-	A	+	+
<i>Proteus vulgaris</i>	-	A	V <sup>7</sup>	+
<i>Salmonella</i>	- <sup>4</sup>	A	V <sup>+</sup>	+ <sup>5</sup>
<i>Salmonella arizonae</i>	V <sup>+1</sup>	A	+	+
<i>Citrobacter amalonaticus</i>	V	A	+	-
<i>Citrobacter diversus</i>	V	A	+	-
<i>Citrobacter freundii</i>	A <sup>1</sup>	A	+	+
<i>Yersinia</i>	-	A	V	-

#### Notes

Lac: lactose fermentation; Glu: glucose fermentation; A: acid reaction; V: variable; V<sup>+</sup>: variable, usually positive; V<sup>-</sup>: variable, usually negative. 1: the reaction may be delayed; 2: *S.flexneri* ser.6 gas production positive (slight amount); 3: usually negative except *S.sonnei* (acid reaction may be delayed); 4: although rare, lactose positive variants of *S.Typhi* exist; 5: *S.Typhi* may have a ring of H<sub>2</sub>S but its presence is not diagnostic. *S.Paratyphi A* if positive may be weak.; 6: *E.agglomerans* gas production variable; 7: if gas produced, a slight amount.

## 10 - USER QUALITY CONTROL

All manufactured lots of the product are released for sale after the Quality Control has been performed to check the compliance with the specifications. However, the end user can perform its own Quality Control in accordance with the local applicable regulations, in compliance with accreditation requirements and the experience of the Laboratory. Here below are listed some test strains useful for the quality control.

*E.coli* ATCC 25922 growth, yellow slant, yellow butt, gas +, H<sub>2</sub>S -

*S.Typhimurium* ATCC 14028 growth, red slant, yellow butt, gas +, H<sub>2</sub>S +

Aerobic incubation at 35-37°C for 18-24 h.

ATCC is a trademark of American Type Culture Collection

## 11 - PERFORMANCES CHARACTERISTICS

Prior to release for sale a representative sample of all lots of ready-to-use tubes of Kligler Iron Agar and of the raw material used for the production of prepared medium, (dehydrated Kligler Iron Agar REF 401560) is tested for performances characteristics comparing the results with a previously approved Reference Batch.

Pure colonies cultivated on Tryptic Soy Agar of 8 *Enterobacteriaceae* strains are inoculated into the tubes: *E.coli* ATCC 25922, *E.aerogenes* ATCC 13048, *M.morganii* CB 118, *C.freundii* ATCC 8090, *S.Enteritidis* NCTC 5188, *S.Typhimurium* ATCC 14028, *S.flexneri* ATCC 12022. After aerobic incubation at 35-37°C for 18-24 hours, the colour changes on the slant and in the butt, the gas and H<sub>2</sub>S production are observed and recorded. All strains show reactivity according to the specifications for both batches tested.

## 12 - LIMITATIONS OF THE METHOD

- It is necessary to inoculate the medium with a microbiological needle without breaking the agar (do not use loops).
- Perform the reading between 18 and 24 hours of incubation; early readings can induce false acidity results of the A/A type or there is not enough time for the sugar fermentation with consequent colour change of the indicator; delayed readings can give false K/K results due to the use of peptones and alkaline change of the medium.<sup>7</sup>
- H<sub>2</sub>S production can mask the acid reaction in the butt, however the production of H<sub>2</sub>S requires acidic conditions therefore the butt must be considered acid when there is blackening.
- The medium does not contain inhibitors therefore a large variety of microorganisms can grow on it; for this reason, before inoculation, make sure that the organisms are catalase positive, Gram-negative bacilli.<sup>7</sup>
- A pure culture is essential when inoculating the medium. If the culture is not pure, irregular results may be obtained.<sup>7</sup>





- Some organisms such as the *Klebsiella-Enterobacter* group produce such an abundance of gas that the medium may be completely displaced by gas resulting in the medium being blown up into the cap. If this occurs, handle the culture with caution when sub-culturing to avoid contaminations.
- Make sure that the caps are loosened during incubation since for a correct medium performance a free exchange of air is necessary. If the caps are too closed, an acid reaction occurs on the slant even in the presence of only glucose fermentation.<sup>7</sup>
- If no reaction is observed on the slant and in the butt, check the tube carefully to see if there is growth. If there is no growth, possibly the tube has not been correctly inoculated. If growth is present, proceed with other identification systems for Gram-negative bacilli.<sup>7</sup>
- Occasionally a KIA tube exhibits a yellow slant and no colour change in the butt. This could be the result of the inoculation of a Gram-positive strain or of the failure to stab the butt.<sup>7</sup>
- It is recommended that biochemical, immunological, molecular or mass spectrometry testing be performed on isolates from pure culture for complete identification. If relevant, perform antimicrobial susceptibility testing.
- This culture medium is intended as an aid in the diagnosis of infectious diseases; the interpretation of the results must be made considering the patient's clinical history, the origin of the sample and the results of other diagnostic tests.

**13 - PRECAUTIONS AND WARNINGS**

- This product is a qualitative *in vitro* diagnostic, for professional use only; it is to be used by adequately trained and qualified laboratory personnel, observing approved biohazard precautions and aseptic techniques.
- This product is not classified as dangerous according to current European legislation.
- This culture medium contains raw materials of animal origin. The *ante* and *post mortem* controls of the animals and those during the production and distribution cycle of the raw materials, cannot completely guarantee that these products do not contain any transmissible pathogen. Therefore, it is recommended that the ready-to-use tubes be treated as potentially infectious, and handled observing the usual specific precautions: do not ingest, inhale, or allow to come into contact with skin, eyes, mucous membranes. Download the TSE Statement from the website [www.biolifeitaliana.it](http://www.biolifeitaliana.it), describing the measures implemented by Biolife Italiana for the risk reduction linked to infectious animal diseases.
- All laboratory specimens should be considered infectious.
- The laboratory area must be controlled to avoid contaminants such as culture medium or microbial agents.
- Each tube is for single use only.
- Be careful when opening screw cap tubes to prevent injury due to breakage of glass.
- Ready-to-use tubes are subject to terminal sterilization by autoclaving.
- Sterilize all biohazard waste before disposal. Dispose the unused medium and the tubes inoculated with samples or microbial strains in accordance with current local legislation.
- The Certificates of Analysis and the Safety Data Sheet are available on the website [www.biolifeitaliana.it](http://www.biolifeitaliana.it).
- Notify Biolife Italiana Srl ([complaint@biolifeitaliana.it](mailto:complaint@biolifeitaliana.it)) and the relevant Authorities of any serious incident occurring in connection with the use of the *in vitro* diagnostics.
- The information provided in this document has been defined to the best of our knowledge and ability and represents a guideline for the proper use of the product but without obligation or liability. In all cases existing local laws, regulations and standard procedures must be observed for the examination of samples collected from human and animal organic districts, for environmental samples and for products intended for human or animal consumption. Our information does not relieve our customers from their responsibility for checking the suitability of our product for the intended purpose.

**14 - STORAGE CONDITIONS AND SHELF LIFE**

Upon receipt, store tubes in their original pack at 2-8°C away from direct light. If properly stored, the tubes may be used up to the expiration date. Do not use the tubes beyond this date. After opening the box, the tubes can be used up to the expiration date. Opened tubes must be used immediately. Before use, check the integrity of the screw cap. Do not use tubes with signs of deterioration (e.g. microbial contamination, atypical colour).

**15 - REFERENCES**

1. Russell FF. The isolation of typhoid bacilli from urine and feces with the description of a new double sugar tube medium. J Med Res 1911; 25:21
2. Kligler IJ. A simple medium for the differentiation of members of the typhoid-paratyphoid group. Am J Public Health 1917; 7:1042-1044
3. Kligler IJ. Modification of culture media used in the isolation and differentiation of typhoid, dysentery, and allied bacilli. J Med Res 1917; 37:225.
4. Bailey Sadie F, Lacey GR. J. Bact. 1927; 13:82-189.
5. Atlas R. Parks LC. Handbook of Microbiological Media. 2nd edition CRC Press, 1997
6. Lehman D. Triple sugar iron agar protocols. American Society for Microbiology 2015.
7. MacFaddin JF. Media for Isolation-Cultivation-Identification-Maintenance of Medical Bacteria. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins; 1985.

**TABLE OF APPLICABLE SYMBOLS**

or Catalogue number	Batch code	<i>In vitro</i> Diagnostic Medical Device	Manufacturer	Do not reuse	Recyclable pack This side up
Temperature limitation	Content sufficient for <n> tests	Consult Instructions for Use	Use by	Keep away from direct light	Fragile

**REVISION HISTORY**

Version	Description of changes	Date
Instructions for Use (IFU) - Revision 1	Updated layout and content in compliance with IVDR 2017/746	2021/02
Revision 2	Removal of obsolete classification	2023/04

Note: minor typographical, grammatical, and formatting changes are not included in the revision history.

