

1 **Cefepime/tazobactam compared with other tazobactam combinations against problem**
2 **Gram-negative bacteria**

3

4 **Shazad MUSHTAQ¹, Paolo GARELLO¹, Anna VICKERS¹, Neil WOODFORD¹ and David M**
5 **LIVERMORE^{1,2*}**

6

7 *¹Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infections Reference Unit, National*
8 *Infection Service, Public Health England, London NW9 5EQ; ²Norwich Medical School,*
9 *University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ*

10

11

12

13 **Running head.** Cefepime/tazobactam versus referred isolates

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21 *Corresponding author: David M Livermore, Norwich Medical School, University of East
22 Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ; tel. +44-(0)1603-597-568; d.livermore@uea.ac.uk

23

24

25

26

27 **Abstract**

28 Piperacillin/tazobactam has long been a broad-spectrum 'workhorse' antibiotic but is
29 compromised by resistance. One response is to re-partner tazobactam with cefepime, which
30 is easier to protect, being less β -lactamase labile and to use a high dose and prolonged
31 infusion. On this basis, Wockhardt are developing cefepime/tazobactam (WCK 4282) as a
32 2+2g q8h combination with 90 min infusion. We assessed the activity of this combination,
33 with other tazobactam combinations as comparators, against 1632 Enterobacterales, 745
34 *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and 450 other non-fermenters, as submitted to the UK national
35 reference laboratory. These were categorised by carbapenemase-gene detection and
36 interpretive reading of phenotypes, with MICs determined by BSAC agar dilution. Although
37 higher values may be justifiable, based on the pharmacodynamics, we reviewed results
38 against current cefepime breakpoints. On this basis, cefepime/tazobactam was broadly active
39 against Enterobacterales with AmpC enzymes and ESBLs, even when these had ertapenem
40 resistance suggesting porin loss. At 8+8 mg/L, activity extended to >90% of Enterobacterales
41 with OXA-48 and KPC carbapenemases, although MICs for KPC producers belonging to the
42 international *Klebsiella pneumoniae* ST258 lineage were higher; MBL producers remained
43 resistant. Cefepime/tazobactam was less active than ceftolozane/tazobactam against
44 *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* with AmpC derepression or high-level efflux but achieved wider
45 antipseudomonal coverage than piperacillin/tazobactam. Activity against other non-
46 fermenters was species-specific. Overall, cefepime/tazobactam has a spectrum exceeding
47 those of piperacillin/tazobactam and ceftolozane/tazobactam and resembling or exceeding
48 that of carbapenems. Used as a 'new-combination of old-agents' it has genuine potential to
49 be 'carbapenem-sparing'.

50

51 1.0 Introduction

52 The antimicrobial spectrum of β -lactamase inhibitor combinations depends not only on the
53 range of β -lactamases inactivated but also, and critically, on the partner β -lactam.[1,2]
54 Weak-substrate β -lactams are easier to protect than those that are tightly bound and rapidly
55 hydrolysed. If the partner β -lactam evades some β -lactamases, then the inhibitor does not
56 need to inactivate these.

57 Unfortunately, the β -lactamase inhibitors developed in the last century were largely
58 combined with very labile, difficult-to-protect, penicillins.[3,4] At the time these were seen
59 as the drugs needing protection, particularly against classical TEM-1 enzyme, whereas
60 oxyimino-cephalosporins were promoted as ' β -lactamase stable'. Within a few years it
61 became apparent that oxyimino-cephalosporins were threatened by both AmpC enzymes and
62 by emerging ESBLs, and that they too therefore might benefit from partnering with β -
63 lactamase inhibitors. By then, however, both the cephalosporins' patent lives and those of
64 the inhibitors were eroding, disincentivising development of new combinations.

65 Only the Indian market defied these generalisations, with numerous
66 cephalosporin/inhibitor combinations commercialised, though often with dosages that are
67 not pharmacodynamically optimised.[5,6] Cefepime/tazobactam illustrates this issue. The
68 combination has considerable merit in principle: cefepime is a rapid permeant of Gram-
69 negative bacteria and is relatively stable to AmpC enzymes,[7] meaning that it needs only to
70 be protected from ESBLs and, ideally, carbapenemases, whilst tazobactam is a non-toxic,
71 easy-to-manufacture inhibitor of most Class A β -lactamases. However, the many
72 cefepime/tazobactam formulations available in India all have an 8:1 ratio, as in
73 piperacillin/tazobactam, delivering only 250-750 mg tazobactam/day, based on a 2-6g daily
74 cefepime regimen. This compares with 1.5-2g tazobactam daily for piperacillin/tazobactam

75 and 1.5-3g for ceftolozane/tazobactam. Such under-dosage must, inevitably, reduce
76 coverage. To address this limitation, Wockhardt are reformulating cefepime/tazobactam
77 (WCK 4282) as a proprietary 2+2g q8h combination, delivering 6g/tazobactam/day, with a 90-
78 minute infusion time to maximise time above MIC.[8] The approach fits well within the
79 concept of 'repurposing' old antibiotics to overcome resistance [9] and the high-dose
80 combination is now entering Phase III trials. We sought to compare its activity in vitro with
81 that of available tazobactam combinations against problem Gram-negative bacteria sent to
82 the UK national reference laboratory.

83

84 **2.0 Materials and Methods**

85 *2.1 Bacteria*

86 The bacteria tested comprised approximately half of those submitted, to the PHE
87 Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infections (AMRHAI) Reference Unit from
88 July 2015 to July-2016, as previously used for assessments of ceftolozane/tazobactam [10]
89 and ceftazidime/avibactam.[11] The original intention was to test all the isolates received
90 during the second half of this period but, because substantial numbers proved non-viable,
91 this was extended to 8 months from November 2015 to early July 2016. The species
92 distribution is shown in Table 1. Almost all the isolates had originally been collected from
93 patient specimens tested at UK clinical diagnostic laboratories and were submitted to
94 AMRHAI, as the UK national reference laboratory for antibiotic resistance, to the basis of
95 unusual resistance. They should be seen as a snapshot of the types of resistance causing
96 concern in the UK and it should be noted that there is a heavy bias to referring isolates
97 suspected of carbapenem resistance.

98 Isolates were identified by MALDI-ToF (Bruker Biotyper, Bremen, Germany);
99 resistance mechanisms were inferred based on a combination of genotype data,
100 predominantly for carbapenemases, and interpretive reading of resistance phenotypes, as
101 determined with agar dilution methodology using broad antibiotic panels, as described in
102 detail previously. [10,11]

103

104 2.2 *Antibiotics and susceptibility testing*

105 Ceftolozane and ertapenem were from Wockhardt (Aurangabad, India); cefepime was
106 purchased from Alpha Aesar (Heysham, UK), ceftazidime, piperacillin and tazobactam from
107 Merck KGaA (Gillingham, UK). MICs were determined by British Society for Antimicrobial
108 Chemotherapy (BSAC) methodology [12] on IsoSensitest agar (Oxoid, Basingstoke, UK).
109 Controls included those specified in the BSAC method and an in-house panel with known
110 resistance mechanisms. Tazobactam was used at 4 mg/L in combination with ceftolozane and
111 piperacillin, in accordance with EUCAST guidance; the concentration for combination with
112 cefepime was increased to 8 mg/L, reflecting the high dosage under trial.

113 AMRHAI is part of the Public Health England Bacteriology Department, which is UKAS
114 ISO accredited; it participates in the National External Quality Assurance Scheme, including in
115 respect of antimicrobial susceptibility testing.

116

117 **3.0 Results**

118 3.1 *MIC distributions of tazobactam combinations*

119 MIC distributions for cefepime/tazobactam, ceftolozane/tazobactam and piperacillin/
120 tazobactam are shown in Table 1 whilst Table 2 shows the fold-reductions in cefepime MIC
121 achieved by tazobactam for the various resistance groups of Enterobacterales. Tables 3-5

122 then illustrate how the MIC distributions for different tazobactam combinations relate to one
123 another and to those of carbapenems. Current EUCAST breakpoints for unprotected
124 cefepime are S \leq 1, R >4 mg/L for Enterobacterales and S \leq 0.001, R >8 mg/L for *P. aeruginosa*
125 (meaning that high dosage is always advocated for *P. aeruginosa* infections); EUCAST has no
126 breakpoints for *Acinetobacter*. CLSI breakpoints are \leq 2, >8 mg/L for Enterobacterales, with
127 MICs of 4 and 8 mg/L defined as 'Dose-dependent susceptible, along with breakpoints of \leq 8,
128 >16 mg/L for *P. aeruginosa* and other non-fermenters. These were taken as reference points
129 for analysis of cefepime/tazobactam results, although the extended infusion may justify a
130 higher breakpoint (Discussion).

131

132 3.2 *Enterobacterales*

133 Against Enterobacterales 'wild-types', meaning isolates susceptible to oxyimino-
134 cephalosporins and primarily referred for confirmation of resistance to non- β -lactams,
135 cefepime/tazobactam was the most active combination, with a modal MIC of 0.03 mg/L,
136 compared with 0.25 mg/L for ceftolozane/tazobactam and 2 mg/L for
137 piperacillin/tazobactam. As would be expected, MICs of cefepime/tazobactam for these
138 broadly susceptible wildtypes were only minimally below those of cefepime alone (Table 2).

139 The modal MIC of cefepime/tazobactam rose to 0.5 mg/L for AmpC producers, with
140 408/418 values \leq 4+8 mg/L and 416/418 \leq 8+8 mg/L; by contrast only 186/418 AmpC isolates
141 were susceptible to ceftolozane/tazobactam at its \leq 2+4 mg/L EUCAST breakpoint and
142 120/418 to piperacillin/tazobactam at \leq 8+4 mg/L. Two points should be underscored here.
143 First, the advantage of cefepime/tazobactam versus AmpC producers was largely due to the
144 inherent stability of cefepime to these enzymes, not to tazobactam acting as an inhibitor;
145 thus, the geometric mean reduction in cefepime MIC engendered by tazobactam was just 1.8-

146 fold. Secondly, many of these isolates were sent to AMRHAI because they had some degree
147 of reduced susceptibility to carbapenems and were suspected (incorrectly) of being
148 carbapenemase-producers; thus, for 192 of the 418 isolates the meropenem MIC exceeded
149 the EUCAST 'screening concentration' of 0.12 mg/L and 267, including 176 *Enterobacter* spp.
150 were resistant to ertapenem at its 0.5 mg/L EUCAST breakpoint.

151 Among ESBL producers, 273/306 were susceptible to cefepime/tazobactam at $\leq 4+8$
152 mg/L and 283/306 at $\leq 8+8$ mg/L (Table 1). The proportion susceptible to
153 ceftolozane/tazobactam $\leq 2+4$ mg/L was 198/306; whilst 126/306 were susceptible to
154 piperacillin/tazobactam at $\leq 8+4$ mg/L. Strong potentiation of cefepime by tazobactam was
155 widespread (Table 2). As for the AmpC hyperproducers, ESBL producers referred to AMRHAI
156 are mostly those (wrongly) suspected of carbapenemase production: 131 were resistant to
157 ertapenem at 0.5 mg/L and 93 were resistant to meropenem at the 0.12 mg/L screening
158 concentration. These are much higher proportions than among ESBL producers in general,
159 and previous analysis indicates that such isolates have porin loss, leading to relative
160 impermeability.[13]

161 MICs of cefepime/tazobactam, ceftolozane/tazobactam and meropenem for the ESBL
162 producers correlated with those of ertapenem, which were taken as a proxy for the degree
163 of this impermeability⁹ (Table 3). Cefepime/tazobactam 4+8 mg/L remained active against
164 90% of these ESBL producers up to an ertapenem MIC of 0.5 mg/L; at 8+8 mg/L it remained
165 active against 90% up to an ertapenem MIC of 2 mg/L. By contrast, ceftolozane/tazobactam
166 2+4 mg/L only remained active against 90% of ESBL producers up to an ertapenem MIC of
167 0.12 mg/L. Cefepime/tazobactam and ceftolozane/tazobactam MICs for ESBL producers
168 correlated closely across the MIC spectrum, but with the cefepime values lower in 277/306

169 cases. Piperacillin/tazobactam was not included in these comparisons because its MICs
170 additionally reflect other factors, notably the co-carriage or not of OXA-1 penicillinases.[14]

171 Turning to carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales, we saw three types of
172 behaviour (i) generalisable resistance, (ii) widespread susceptibility to both cephalosporin
173 combinations and (iii) carbapenemase where cefepime/tazobactam and
174 ceftolozane/tazobactam were differentiated. Generalisable resistance included the
175 behaviours (i) that almost all carbapenemase producers, irrespective of enzyme type, were
176 resistant to piperacillin/tazobactam 8+4 mg/L, which is therefore omitted from the detailed
177 comparisons that follow and (ii) that almost all of the isolates with MBLs were resistant to all
178 three tazobactam combination at any reasonable breakpoint. Widespread susceptibility to
179 both cephalosporin combinations was seen for isolates with OXA-48 enzymes and ceftazidime
180 MICs ≤ 4 mg/L, implying the lack of substantial ESBL co-production: among these 113/114
181 were inhibited by cefepime/tazobactam at $\leq 4+8$ or $\leq 8+8$ mg/L whilst 103/114 were inhibited
182 by ceftolozane/tazobactam at 2+4 mg/L. The few Enterobacterales with non-KPC/GES Class A
183 carbapenemases, comprising SME, IMI and FRI types also were widely susceptible to both
184 cefepime/tazobactam and ceftolozane/tazobactam at these concentrations; in all these
185 cases cefepime was not significantly potentiated by tazobactam (Table 2). This behaviour
186 reflects the fact that cefepime approaches stability to OXA-48 and non-GES/KPC Class A
187 carbapenemases.[15]

188 Cefepime/tazobactam and ceftolozane/tazobactam were substantially differentiated
189 against carbapenemase producers with KPC or GES carbapenemases and ceftazidime-
190 resistant isolates with OXA-48 carbapenemases, always with cefepime/tazobactam as the
191 more active combination. Specifically, 88 of the 116 isolates with KPC carbapenemases were
192 inhibited by cefepime/tazobactam at 4+8 mg/L and 105/116 at 8+8 mg/L, compared with

193 8/116 susceptible to ceftolozane tazobactam 2+4 mg/L and 3/116 to piperacillin/tazobactam.
194 Apparent activity against isolates with KPC carbapenemases was almost entirely due to
195 cefepime itself; there was no significant potentiation by tazobactam (Table 2). These isolates
196 with KPC carbapenemases were mostly collected around Manchester where the 'KPC
197 problem' largely reflects the diffusion of pKpQIL-type plasmids;[16] few belonged to the
198 global *Klebsiella pneumoniae* ST258/512 lineages, which is generally more resistant to
199 β -lactams.[17,18] We have variable tandem-number repeat typing data for 37 of the 71 KPC
200 enzyme-producing *K. pneumoniae* included, and just four of these had the 3,2,2,13,2,1,3,3,1
201 profile typical of ST258: MICs of cefepime/tazobactam for these were 8, 8, 16 and 64 mg/L,
202 thus falling at the high end of the present range; corresponding meropenem MICs were 16,
203 32, 16 and 128 mg/L, respectively. MICs of cefepime/tazobactam (or cefepime itself)
204 correlated with those of meropenem for isolates with KPC carbapenemases across the MIC
205 range (Table 4). In respect of the isolates with GES carbapenemases 6/10 were susceptible
206 to cefepime/tazobactam at \leq 4+8 mg/L and all were inhibited at 8+8 mg/L; by contrast all were
207 resistant to ceftolozane/tazobactam, with MICs 8+4 to 64+4 mg/L. The extent of potentiation
208 of cefepime by tazobactam was very variable; it is unclear whether this reflected variation in
209 the GES enzyme type, or in respect of ESBL coproduction. It should be added that the GES
210 family is diverse, including both carbapenemases and ESBLs and that there is a need for
211 studies with larger collections. Among the 136 ceftazidime-resistant (i.e. putatively ESBL co-
212 producing) isolates with OXA-48 carbapenemase, 77 were inhibited by cefepime/tazobactam
213 at 4+8 mg/L and 90 at 8+8 mg/L, compared with just 9/136 by ceftolozane/tazobactam at 2+4
214 mg/L. Potentiation of cefepime by tazobactam was widely apparent for these ceftazidime-
215 resistant isolates with OXA-48 carbapenemases (Table 2), whereas it was largely absent

216 (above) for ceftazidime non-resistant isolates with OXA-48 enzymes, again supporting the
217 view that they have secondary tazobactam-inhibited β -lactamases.

218 Among minor groups, *Klebsiella oxytoca* with high-level K1 enzyme activity and
219 Enterobacterales inferred to have impermeability-associated resistance were almost all
220 inhibited by both cefepime/tazobactam 8+8 mg/L and ceftolozane/tazobactam 2+4 mg/L);
221 tazobactam had minimal effects on the cefepime MICs for these groups.

222 MICs of all tazobactam combinations rose with those of ceftazidime for
223 Enterobacterales with uncertain - and doubtless diverse - mechanisms, but
224 cefepime/tazobactam was consistently the most active of the three combinations;
225 potentiation of cefepime by tazobactam was seen for around half of the most ceftazidime
226 resistant (MIC >64 mg/L) isolates, not other groups. Synergy between cefepime and
227 tazobactam was not seen for a small further group of *K. pneumoniae* isolates, described
228 previously, that are notable for a profile that includes raised MICs for ceftazidime and
229 cefepime, but much less so for cefotaxime. Although no relevant β -lactamase has been
230 demonstrated, these organisms do show strong ceftazidime/avibactam synergy.[11]

231

232 3.3 *P. aeruginosa*

233 In contrast to Enterobacterales, where cefepime/tazobactam was consistently the most
234 active tazobactam combination, ceftolozane/tazobactam was the most active against *P.*
235 *aeruginosa* on a gravimetric basis. Based on the EUCAST breakpoint of 4+4 mg/L,
236 ceftolozane/tazobactam was active against 69/71 *P. aeruginosa* isolates inferred to have
237 derepressed AmpC compared with 47/71 inhibited by cefepime/tazobactam at 8+8 mg/L.
238 Corresponding proportions among isolates with raised efflux were 182/188 versus 154/188
239 and among those with highly raised efflux, 68/85 versus 27/85. Table 5 provides a cross plot

240 of cefepime/tazobactam and ceftolozane/tazobactam MICs for *P. aeruginosa* isolates
241 deemed to have low, normal, raised and highly raised efflux, showing broad correlation across
242 the spectrum, always with ceftolozane/tazobactam consistently the more active
243 combination. Cefepime/tazobactam 8+8 mg/L remained more widely active than
244 piperacillin/tazobactam 8+4 mg/L against all AmpC and efflux groups (Table 1).

245 *P. aeruginosa* isolates with MBLs and ESBLs (mostly VEB enzymes) were almost all
246 resistant to all the tazobactam combinations whereas isolates with GES enzymes, specifically
247 GES-5 carbapenemase, mostly were inhibited by cefepime/tazobactam at $\leq 8+8$ mg/L whilst
248 being resistant to ceftolozane/tazobactam at its 4+4 mg/L breakpoint. Finally, MICs of
249 cefepime/tazobactam and ceftolozane/tazobactam rose with those of ceftazidime for *P.*
250 *aeruginosa* isolates with unassigned mechanisms, mostly from cystic fibrosis patients, with
251 ceftolozane/tazobactam again the most active combination on a gravimetric basis, followed
252 by cefepime/tazobactam.

253 It should be added that tazobactam plays little useful role in the case of *P. aeruginosa*,
254 regardless of the partner β -lactam: just 21/745 isolates showed ≥ 4 -fold reductions in
255 cefepime MIC in the presence of tazobactam; 15 of these were ESBL producers, 13 of which
256 remained resistant to cefepime/tazobactam 8+8 mg/L.

257

258 3.4 Other non-fermenters

259 The other non-fermenters were a diverse group. The largest subgroup comprised 216 *A.*
260 *baumannii*, of which at least 183 had OXA-23, -24 or 58 carbapenemases and a further 19 had
261 metallo carbapenemases alone or together with OXA carbapenemases, giving a total of
262 202/216 carbapenemase positive. Only 26 of these 216 were susceptible to
263 cefepime/tazobactam at 8+8 mg/L and eight of these owed their susceptibility to being

264 inhibited by tazobactam alone at 8 mg/L. Just 10/216 were inhibited by
265 piperacillin/tazobactam 8+4 mg/L, again largely owing to susceptibility to tazobactam itself.
266 Ceftolozane/tazobactam has no breakpoints for *Acinetobacter* spp.; its MICs were similar to
267 those of cefepime/tazobactam.

268 On a simple gravimetric basis, cefepime/tazobactam was more active than
269 ceftolozane/tazobactam against *Elizabethkingia* spp. and *Chryseobacterium* spp. and similarly
270 active against *Burkholderia cepacia* complex, non-aeruginosa *Pseudomonas* and *S.*
271 *maltophilia*. *Achromobacter* spp., and *Pandorea* spp. were largely resistant to both
272 cephalosporin combinations at any reasonable potential breakpoint but were more often
273 susceptible to piperacillin/tazobactam. For all these species, the effect of tazobactam on the
274 activity of cefepime was slight, with MICs rarely reduced more than two-fold (not shown).

275 Wide activity of tazobactam combinations against non-*baumannii* *Acinetobacter* spp.
276 reflected susceptibility to tazobactam itself: 20/38 isolates were inhibited by tazobactam at 4
277 mg/L and 26/38 at 8 mg/L, as in the cefepime combination.

278

279 **4.0 Discussion**

280 Piperacillin/tazobactam has been a mainstay broad-spectrum antibiotic since the 1990s, used
281 empirically and effectively in many types of infection. Nonetheless it has limitations, and
282 these have grown with time. Its spectrum always excluded most AmpC-hyperproducing
283 Enterobacterales,[19] and most recent surveys find that $\geq 30\%$ of ESBL producers are
284 resistant.[20] Given that extracted ESBLs are inhibited by tazobactam in the assay cuvette,
285 this behaviour may reflect the strong expression of ESBLs by currently-circulating
286 Enterobacterales,[21] the impermeability of producer strains and/or the frequent co-
287 production of OXA-1, an inhibitor-resistant penicillinase.[14] Even where ESBL producers

288 appeared susceptible to piperacillin/ tazobactam *in vitro*, outcomes were worse than with a
289 carbapenem, at least in bacteraemia.[22] Underlying these observations is the fact that
290 piperacillin is highly labile to many β -lactamases, making it a difficult drug to protect.
291 Moreover, piperacillin/tazobactam MICs are notoriously difficult to measure accurately[23]
292 and the zone diameter : MIC correlation has a shallow gradient, increasing the hazard that
293 isolates are miscategorised.[24]

294 Cefepime is an attractive replacement partner for tazobactam, being both a rapid
295 permeant of Gram-negative bacteria and near-stable to AmpC and OXA-48
296 β -lactamases,[3,25] both of which attack piperacillin. It is also a weaker substrate for some
297 ESBLs, though these are diverse in relative activity, making generalisation difficult. Moreover,
298 although cefepime is not completely stable to OXA-1 enzyme it is less vulnerable than
299 piperacillin, meaning that this enzyme is less likely to present a problem.[26] The principle of
300 combining tazobactam with a cephalosporin has been well-illustrated with
301 ceftolozane/tazobactam, which showed efficacy against ESBL-producing Enterobacterales in
302 Phase III/IV cUTI, cIAI and VAP trials.[27,28] Moreover, whereas ceftolozane/tazobactam was
303 developed for 1+0.5g and, latterly, 2+1g q8h regimens, cefepime/tazobactam is being
304 developed as a 2+2g regimen with a 90-min infusion time to maximise coverage.
305 Pharmacodynamic modelling suggests that this, coupled with q8h regimen, may justify a 16+8
306 mg/L breakpoint, exceeding the current EUCAST and CLSI values for unprotected cefepime,
307 which were used as reference points here.[29]

308 Even, however, when reviewed against the current cefepime breakpoints,
309 cefepime/tazobactam was widely active against AmpC- and ESBL- producing
310 Enterobacterales, including those with ertapenem resistance and reduced meropenem
311 susceptibility, which imply porin loss. Its likely spectrum in context exceeds that of

312 ceftolozane/tazobactam, which is constrained by: (i) a lack of activity against AmpC-
313 hyperproducers, (ii) weaker inherent activity, as reflected in higher MICs for 'wildtype'
314 Enterobacterales (Table 1), (iii) greater compromise against ESBL producers with raised
315 carbapenem MICs (Table 3) and (iv) a low assigned breakpoints (2+4 mg/L).

316 Harder to assess is the apparent activity of cefepime/tazobactam at 4+8 or 8+8 mg/L
317 against large proportions of Enterobacterales with KPC carbapenemases. These results are in
318 keeping with earlier data using panels of selected isolates,[4,30] particularly in media
319 supplemented with human serum. They reflect the activity of cefepime itself, with no
320 significant potentiation by tazobactam (Table 2), which is inactivated by KPC enzymes,[31]
321 and we are unaware of any evidence that cefepime is effective in infections due to pathogens
322 with KPC carbapenemases. Most of the isolates were clonally diverse organisms referred
323 from hospitals around Manchester, which has a long-standing 'plasmid outbreak'. [16]
324 Isolates from this region of the UK typically are less resistant to carbapenems and
325 cephalosporins, including cefepime, than are representatives of the international ST258 KPC-
326 carbapenemase-producing *K. pneumoniae* clone, which dominates in many countries.[18]
327 Accordingly, we are cautious of claiming any widespread activity against isolates with KPC
328 enzymes, though the aspect does need to be explored further.

329 Activity was also seen, at cefepime breakpoints, against the great majority of isolates
330 with OXA-48 carbapenemases. For ceftazidime-non-resistant isolates this is unsurprising:
331 OXA-48-like enzymes lack substantial activity against oxyimino-cephalosporins, including
332 cefepime, which remains effective against producers in animal models.[32] What was more
333 striking was the activity against *bla*_{OXA-48}-positive isolates that were resistant to ceftazidime,
334 putatively owing to co-production of ESBLs or other secondary β -lactamases. Encouragingly,
335 tazobactam potentiated cefepime against these isolates. In many respects, the surprise is not

336 that it did so, but rather that – as found here and previously[10] – tazobactam fails to similarly
337 protect ceftolozane. The reasons for this difference remain uncertain but the present
338 potentiation of cefepime refutes an earlier hypothesis that OXA-48-like enzymes might
339 inactivate tazobactam.[10]

340 Whereas cefepime/tazobactam was the most active combination against important
341 Enterobacterales groups, the position reversed for *P. aeruginosa*. Here,
342 ceftolozane/tazobactam consistently was the more active combination for isolates with the
343 two prevalent modes of cephalosporin resistance - upregulated efflux and derepressed
344 AmpC, despite the handicap of a lower (4+4 mg/L) breakpoint. Nonetheless, cefepime
345 remains one of only two ‘old’ cephalosporins with broad anti-*P. aeruginosa* activity, the other
346 being ceftazidime. Based on EUCAST cefepime breakpoints, cefepime/tazobactam was more
347 widely active than piperacillin/tazobactam against the raised efflux group in particular. Except
348 against the most difficult strains, it should achieve good coverage against *P. aeruginosa*.

349 Carbapenemase-producing *A. baumannii* isolates were widely resistant to all
350 tazobactam combinations whereas other *Acinetobacter* spp. were often inhibited by
351 tazobactam itself irrespective of its partner β -lactam. MICs for other non-fermenters largely
352 mirrored the activity of cefepime, with tazobactam giving little potentiation,, for the *B.*
353 *cepacia* complex, neither EUCAST nor CLSI attaches confidence to β -lactam MICs as a guide
354 for treatment.

355 All these data, for difficult isolates, support the view that cefepime/tazobactam has
356 potential as a ‘workhorse’ replacement for piperacillin/tazobactam, with scope to be
357 ‘carbapenem-sparing’. This term is much abused, often being tagged to innovative antibiotics
358 better suited to directed therapy against bacteria with critical resistances. Nonetheless, the
359 concept is intellectually defensible in three situations. The first is for narrow-spectrum drugs

360 (e.g. temocillin) used as directed therapy against key resistance types where a carbapenem
361 otherwise would be prescribed. The second is if an agent with unlinked resistance were to be
362 used empirically to mitigate selection pressure. A plausible, if hypothetical, example would
363 be routinely to use tigecycline in intra-abdominal sepsis, relieving pressure on β -lactams,
364 albeit by using an agent with a more chequered side-effect profile. The third case, pertinent
365 here, is where established agents are repurposed or combined in a manner to achieve
366 coverage equalling a carbapenem, giving scope to spare empirical and directed carbapenem
367 use. Although clinical experience is needed, its in-vitro coverage, based on likely breakpoints,
368 includes difficult AmpC and ESBL producers with ertapenem resistance, as well as most
369 Enterobacterales with OXA-48 carbapenemases. Some less-meropenem-resistant isolates
370 with KPC carbapenemases may be within spectrum, but this needs further investigation.
371 Although ceftolozane/tazobactam is more active against difficult *P. aeruginosa* resistance
372 phenotypes, cefepime/tazobactam should achieve wider antipseudomonal coverage than
373 piperacillin/tazobactam.

374 Only a few bacteria, not studied here, are widely susceptible to carbapenems and
375 piperacillin/tazobactam, but would be expected to be resistant to cefepime/tazobactam,
376 Notable examples are *Enterococcus faecalis* and *Bacteroides* spp. Coverage of these, if
377 thought prudent for a particular setting, could easily be achieved by adding amoxicillin or
378 metronidazole, respectively.

379

380 **Acknowledgements**

381 We are grateful to all AMRHAI staff who contributed to the original reference testing and
382 categorisation of these isolates, and in particular to Drs Doumith, Hill, Hopkins, Meunier, Pike
383 and Staves.

384

385 **Declarations**

386 **Funding.**

387 This study was supported by Wockhardt.

388 **Competing interests.**

389 DML has undertaken Advisory Boards or ad-hoc consultancy for Accelerate, Allecra, Antabio,
390 Centauri, Entasis, GlaxoSmithKline, J&J, Meiji, Melinta, Menarini, Mutabilis, Nordic,
391 ParaPharm, Pfizer, QPEX, Roche, Shionogi, T.A.Z., Tetrphase, VenatoRx, Wockhardt,
392 Zambon. He has present paid lectures for Astellas, bioMérieux, Beckman Coulter, Cardiome,
393 Cepheid, Merck/MSD, Menarini, Nordic, Pfizer and Shionogi. He has direct relevant
394 shareholdings or options in Dechra, GSK, Merck, Perkin Elmer, Pfizer, and T.A.Z, amounting to
395 <10% of portfolio value. He also has nominated holdings in Avacta, Byotrol, Destiny,
396 Diaceutics, Evgen, Fusion Antibodies, Genedrive, Hardide, Renalytics, Scancell and Synairgen
397 (all of which have research/products pertinent to COVID-19) through Enterprise Investment
398 Schemes, but has no authority to trade these shares directly. **SM, PG, AV** and **NW** are
399 members of PHE's Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infections Reference
400 Unit, which has received financial support for conference attendance, lectures, research
401 projects, or contracted evaluations from numerous sources, including Accelerate Diagnostics,
402 Achaogen Inc., Allecra Therapeutics, Amplex, AstraZeneca UK Ltd, AusDiagnostics, Basilea
403 Pharmaceutica, Becton Dickinson Diagnostics, bioMérieux, Bio-Rad Laboratories, BSAC,
404 Cepheid, Check-Points B.V., Cubist Pharmaceuticals, Department of Health, Enigma
405 Diagnostics, Food Standards Agency, GlaxoSmithKline Services Ltd, Helperby Therapeutics,
406 Henry Stewart Talks, IHMA Ltd, Innovate UK, Kalidex Pharmaceuticals, Melinta Therapeutics,
407 Merck Sharpe & Dohme Corp, Meiji Seika Pharma Co. Ltd, Mobidiag, Momentum Biosciences

408 Ltd, Neem Biotech, Nordic Pharma Ltd, Norgine Pharmaceuticals, Rempex Pharmaceuticals
409 Ltd, Roche, Rokitan Ltd, Smith & Nephew UK Ltd, Shionogi & Co. Ltd, Trius Therapeutics,
410 T.A.Z., VenatoRx Pharmaceuticals and Wockhardt Ltd.

411
412 **References**

- 413
414 1. Livermore DM. Determinants of the activity of β -lactamase inhibitor combinations. J
415 Antimicrob Chemother 1993; 31 Suppl A: 9-21.
416
417 2. Ambrose PG, Lomovskaya O, Griffith DC *et al.* β -Lactamase inhibitors: what you
418 really need to know. Curr Opin Pharmacol 2017; 36: 86-93.
419
420 3. Livermore DM, Hope R, Mushtaq S *et al.* Orthodox and unorthodox clavulanate
421 combinations against extended-spectrum β -lactamase producers Clin Microbiol
422 Infect 2008;14 Suppl 1: 189-93
423
424 4. Livermore DM, Mushtaq S, Warner M *et al.* Potential of high-dose
425 cefepime/tazobactam against multiresistant Gram-negative pathogens. J Antimicrob
426 Chemother 2018; 73: 126-33.
427
428 5. Veeraraghavan B. Newer β -lactam and β -lactamase inhibitor combinations available
429 in India: consensus and controversies. Indian J Med Microbiol 2011; 29: 315-6.
430
431 6. Palwe S, Veeraraghavan B, Periasamy H *et al.* Unorthodox parenteral β -lactam and β -
432 lactamase inhibitor combinations: flouting antimicrobial stewardship and
433 compromising patient care. Antimicrob Agents Chemother 2020; 64: e00168-20.
434
435 7. Nikaido H, Liu W, Rosenberg EY. Outer membrane permeability and β -lactamase
436 stability of dipolar ionic cephalosporins containing methoxyimino
437 substituents. Antimicrob Agents Chemother 1990; 34: 337-42.
438
439 8. Preston RA, Mamikonyan G, Mastim M *et al.* Single-center investigation of the
440 pharmacokinetics of WCK 4282 (cefepime-tazobactam combination) in renal
441 impairment. Antimicrob Agents Chemother 2019; 63: e00873-19.
442
443 9. Cassir N, Rolain JM, Brouqui P. A new strategy to fight antimicrobial resistance: the
444 revival of old antibiotics. Front Microbiol. 2014; 5: 551.
445
446 10. Livermore DM, Mushtaq S, Meunier D *et al.* Activity of ceftolozane/tazobactam
447 against surveillance and 'problem' Enterobacteriaceae, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*
448 and non-fermenters from the British Isles. J Antimicrob Chemother 2017; 72: 2278-
449 89.
450

- 451 11. Livermore DM, Meunier D, Hopkins KL *et al.* Activity of ceftazidime/avibactam
452 against problem Enterobacteriaceae and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in the UK, 2015-
453 16. *J Antimicrob Chemother* 2018; 73: 648-657.
- 454 12. Anon. A guide to sensitivity testing. Report of the Working Party on Antibiotic
455 Sensitivity Testing of the British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy. *J*
456 *Antimicrob Chemother.* 1991;27 Suppl D:1-50.
457
- 458 13. Doumith M, Ellington MJ, Livermore DM *et al.* Molecular mechanisms disrupting
459 porin expression in ertapenem-resistant *Klebsiella* and *Enterobacter* spp. clinical
460 isolates from the UK. *J Antimicrob Chemother* 2009; 63: 659-67.
461
- 462 14. Livermore DM, Day M, Cleary P *et al.* OXA-1 β -lactamase and non-susceptibility to
463 penicillin/ β -lactamase inhibitor combinations among ESBL-producing *Escherichia*
464 *coli*. *J Antimicrob Chemother* 2019; 74: 326-33.
465
- 466 15. Walther-Rasmussen J, Høiby N. Class A carbapenemases. *J Antimicrob Chemother*
467 2007; 60: 470-82.
468
- 469 16. Doumith M, Findlay J, Hirani H *et al.* Major role of pKpQIL-like plasmids in the early
470 dissemination of KPC-type carbapenemases in the UK. *J Antimicrob Chemother* 2017;
471 72: 2241-8.
472
- 473 17. Pitout JD, Nordmann P, Poirel L. Carbapenemase-producing *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, a
474 key pathogen set for global nosocomial dominance. *Antimicrob Agents Chemother*
475 2015; 59: 5873-84.
476
- 477 18. Munoz-Price LS, Poirel L, Bonomo RA *et al.* Clinical epidemiology of the global
478 expansion of *Klebsiella pneumoniae* carbapenemases. *Lancet Infect Dis* 2013; 13:
479 785-96.
480
- 481 19. Chen HY, Bonfiglio G, Allen M *et al.* Multicentre survey of the comparative in-vitro
482 activity of piperacillin/tazobactam against bacteria from hospitalized patients in the
483 British Isles. *J Antimicrob Chemother* 1993; 32: 247-66.
484
- 485 20. Karlowsky JA, Kazmierczak KM, Young K, *et al.* In vitro activity of
486 ceftolozane/tazobactam against phenotypically defined extended-spectrum β -
487 lactamase (ESBL)-positive isolates of *Escherichia coli* and *Klebsiella pneumoniae*
488 isolated from hospitalized patients (SMART 2016). *Diagn Microbiol Infect Dis* 2020;
489 96: 114925.
490
- 491 21. Babini GS, Yuan M, Hall LM, Livermore DM. Variable susceptibility to
492 piperacillin/tazobactam amongst *Klebsiella* spp. with extended-spectrum β -
493 lactamases. *J Antimicrob Chemother* 2003; 51: 605-12.
494
- 495 22. Harris PNA, Tambyah PA, Lye DC *et al.* Effect of piperacillin-tazobactam vs
496 meropenem on 30-day mortality for patients with *E coli* or *Klebsiella pneumoniae*

- 497 bloodstream infection and ceftriaxone resistance: a randomized clinical trial. *JAMA*.
498 2018; 320: 984-94.
499
- 500 23. Henderson A, Humphries R. 2020. Building a better test for piperacillin- tazobactam
501 susceptibility testing: would that it were so simple (it's complicated). *J Clin Microbiol*
502 58: e01649-1.
503
- 504 24. Livermore DM, Mushtaq S, James D *et al*. In vitro activity of piperacillin/tazobactam
505 and other broad-spectrum antibiotics against bacteria from hospitalised patients in
506 the British Isles. *Int J Antimicrob Agents* 2003; 22: 14-27.
507
- 508 25. Stewart A, Harris P, Henderson A *et al*. Treatment of infections by OXA-48-producing
509 Enterobacteriaceae. *Antimicrob Agents Chemother* 2018; 62: e01195-18.
510
- 511 26. Torres E, López-Cerero L, Rodríguez-Martínez JM *et al*. Reduced susceptibility to
512 cefepime in clinical isolates of Enterobacteriaceae producing OXA-1 β -
513 lactamase. *Microb Drug Resist* 2016; 22: 141-6.
514
- 515 27. Popejoy MW, Paterson DL, Cloutier D *et al*. Efficacy of ceftolozane/tazobactam
516 against urinary tract and intra-abdominal infections caused by ESBL-producing
517 *Escherichia coli* and *Klebsiella pneumoniae*: a pooled analysis of Phase 3 clinical
518 trials. *J Antimicrob Chemother*. 2017; 72: 268-72.
519
- 520 28. Kollef MH, Nováček M, Kivistik Ü *et al*. Ceftolozane-tazobactam versus meropenem
521 for treatment of nosocomial pneumonia (ASPECT-NP): a randomised, controlled,
522 double-blind, phase 3, non-inferiority trial. *Lancet Infect Dis* 2019; 19: 1299-311.
523
- 524 29. Lasko M, Abdelraouf K, Nicolau DP In vivo efficacy of WCK 4282 (high dose cefepime
525 [FEP] – tazobactam [TZB]) against b-lactamase-producing (BLP) Gram-negative
526 bacteria in a neutropenic murine pneumonia model. ID Week 2020, Abstract 1245.
527
- 528 30. Castanheira M, Duncan LR, Rhomberg PR *et al*. Enhanced activity of cefepime-
529 tazobactam (WCK 4282) against KPC-producing Enterobacteriaceae when tested in
530 media supplemented with human serum or sodium chloride. *Diagn Microbiol Infect*
531 *Dis* 2017; 89: 305-9.
532
- 533 31. Papp-Wallace KM, Bethel CR, Distler AM *et al*. Inhibitor resistance in the KPC-2 β -
534 lactamase, a preeminent property of this class A β -lactamase. *Antimicrob Agents*
535 *Chemother* 2010; 54: 890-7.
536
- 537 32. Wiskirchen DE, Nordmann P, Crandon JL *et al*. Efficacy of humanized carbapenem
538 and ceftazidime regimens against Enterobacteriaceae producing OXA-48
539 carbapenemase in a murine infection model. *Antimicrob Agents Chemother* 2014;
540 58: 1678-83.
541

542 **Table 1.** MIC distribution of tazobactam combinations

543

Row Labels	Number of isolates with indicated MIC (mg/L)													
	0.03	0.06	0.12	0.25	0.5	1	2	4	8	16	32	64	128	>128
Enterobacterales: Wild-types (n=71)^a														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	33	20	10	2	3	1		1	1					
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L			8	29	18	13	1			1		1		
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L				4	7	9	28	10	8	2			2	1
Enterobacterales: AmpC (n=418)^b														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	32	45	42	70	78	70	43	28	8	2				
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L		1	5	24	51	48	57	49	72	56	32	18	4	1
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L		1		2	3	5	18	53	38	54	56	70	64	54
Enterobacterales: ESBL (n=306)^c														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	43	42	44	33	29	40	24	18	10	14	6			3
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L			10	29	55	48	56	25	20	20	19	8	7	9
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L					2	5	34	39	46	37	30	30	21	62
Enterobacterales: AmpC + ESBL (n=27)^d														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	1	2	1	2	3	4	7	5	1	1				
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L				1	1	1	2	4	4	2	6	2	1	3
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L							1	1	2	1	4	3	5	10
Enterobacterales: impermeable (n=31)^e														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	1		3	6	4	9	4	4						
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L			1	3	9	10	5	2				1		

Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L					1		2	4	8	9	2	2	1	2
Enterobacterales: <i>K. oxytoca</i>, K1 (n=4)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L			1		1		1				1			
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L						2	1		1					
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L													1	3
Enterobacterales: KPC carbapenemases (n=116)^f														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	1	2			3	11	36	35	17	3	4	4		
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L				1	2	1	4	23	31	27	17	4	5	1
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L							1	2			1	5	21	86
Enterobacterales: GES carbapenemases (n=10)^g														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L			1	2	3		1		3					
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L									2		6	2		
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L										1	2	1	3	3
Enterobacterales: Other class A carbapenemases (n=9)^h														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	2	4	1	2										
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L				3	3	1	2							
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L						1	1	5	1				1	
Enterobacterales: OXA-48 carbapenemases CAZ \leq4 mg/L (n=114)ⁱ														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	1	13	34	25	20	14	4	2					1	
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L				10	44	33	16	10						1
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L								1		4	1	26	41	41

Enterobacterales: OXA-48 carbapenemases CAZ >4 mg/L (n=136)ⁱ														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L			3	5	20	13	17	19	13	12	11	14	5	4
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L						2	7	10	15	15	13	25	16	33
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L											1	7	12	116
Enterobacterales: MBL carbapenemases (n=210)^k														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	1	1		1	3	4	3	3	12	35	48	23	11	65
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L			1	1		1						3	1	203
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L							1	2	3	4	6	14	21	159
Enterobacterales: MBL + OXA-48 carbapenemases (n=24)^l														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L										1	1		1	21
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L											1			23
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L														24
Enterobacterales: unassigned, CAZ MIC ≤4 mg/L (n=58)^m														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	13	9	3	6	7	8	4	2	3	3				
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L			6	14	16	12	6	3			1			
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L						3	9	11	5	8	2	1	4	15
Enterobacterales: unassigned, CAZ MIC 8-32 mg/L (n=20)ⁿ														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L			1	3	4		4	2	2	2		1	1	
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L					3		7	5	2	2	1			
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L							3		3	1	1		1	11

Enterobacterales: unassigned, CAZ MIC ≥64 mg/L (n=64)^o														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	2	3	4	4	3	7	7	1	1	11	4		4	13
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L			1	1	6	2	6	7	1	4	3	6	5	22
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L				1			1	5	3	6	1	5	2	40
Enterobacterales: unassigned, type I unknowns (n=14)^p														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L			2			2	6	2		1	1			
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L				1	1	2	4	3	2	1				
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L									2			1	1	10
<i>P. aeruginosa</i>: normal efflux/wild-type (carbenicillin MIC 32-128 mg/L) (n=96)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L					1	9	37	23	22	2	1			1
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L			2	3	57	26	5	1	1					1
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L					1	1	2	22	32	21	11	3		3
<i>P. aeruginosa</i>: raised efflux (carbenicillin MIC 256-512 mg/L) (n=188)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	1		1	1		1	6	37	107	22	9	2	1	
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L		1		2	41	97	35	6	5	1				
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L		1		2			2	7	10	46	83	14	15	8
<i>P. aeruginosa</i>: highly raised (carbenicillin MIC 32-128 mg/L)(n=85)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L							1	5	21	29	14	9	5	1
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L				1	6	27	25	9	11	1	3		1	1

Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L						1		2	3	17	23	22	9	8
<i>P. aeruginosa</i>: low efflux (carbenicillin ≤16 mg/L) (n=44)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L			2	1	2	5	6	12	10	4	1		1	
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L			5	6	13	17	1	1	1					
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L			1	3	5	12	10	6	2	4		1		
<i>P. aeruginosa</i>: derepressed AmpC (n=71)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L							4	16	27	15	7	1	1	
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L					11	25	23	10		1	1			
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L					1		2	2	1	6	8	16	18	17
<i>P. aeruginosa</i>: ESBL (n=22)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L								1	2		15	4		
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L											2	1	1	18
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L										1	2	8	7	4
<i>P. aeruginosa</i>: GES carbapenemase (n=15)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L							5	4	6					
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L								3	9	2			1	
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L									1	2	10	1	1	
<i>P. aeruginosa</i>: MBL carbapenemase (n=81)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L						1		1	3	18	16	23	8	11
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L							1	1				5	15	59
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L									1	1	19	16	19	25

<i>P. aeruginosa</i>: unassigned, CAZ MIC \leq8 mg/L (n=87)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L					2	20	30	22	12	1				
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L				2	41	32	8	3	1					
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L						1	2	35	20	10	11	6	1	1
<i>P. aeruginosa</i>: unassigned, CAZ MIC 16-128 mg/L (n=39)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L						1	3	2	11	10	7	1	4	
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L					2	5	15	10	3		3		1	
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L							1	1	7	6	2	7	4	11
<i>P. aeruginosa</i>: unassigned, CAZ MIC \geq256 mg/L (n=17)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L									1	2	2	4	2	6
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L							1	1	3	4	1	2	1	4
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L									1	1		4	2	9
<i>A. baumannii</i>: 92.6% with carbapenemases (n=216)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	8	2		1		1		3	11	28	60	72	18	12
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L		4	1	2	1	1	7	12	27	20	66	32	7	36
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L		3	1		3			2	1	2	1	4	5	194
Non-<i>baumannii</i> <i>Acinetobacter</i> spp. (n=38)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	27	1		1		3	2			3	1			
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L		20	1	1	3	2	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L		20						4	5	3	1	1	2	2

<i>Burkholderia cepacia</i> complex. (n=48)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	3			2	3	17	7	3	2	5	2	1	1	2
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L		3		1	7	10	13	7	3	1	1	1		1
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L		3		4	13	11	6	2			5		2	2
Non-aeruginosa <i>Pseudomonas</i> (n=36)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L			2	2	4	11	7	2	5	1	1		1	
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L		3	4	2	11	6	2	2		1	2			3
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L		1		1	3		7	4	11	5	2	2		
<i>Achromobacter</i> spp. (n=33)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L								2	6	5	6	7	5	2
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L									2	1	9	4	8	9
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L				1	12	4	4	5	3		1	2	1	
<i>S. maltophilia</i> (n=32)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L				1	4	4	4	10	4	1	2	1	1	
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L			1	1	4	4	5	3	5	3		3	1	2
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L						1		1	7	1	7	5	4	6
<i>Pandoraea</i> spp. (n=20)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	3					1		2	1	4		1	6	2
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L								1			1	3	3	12
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L				1		2	3	3	3	3	1		4	
<i>Elizabethkingia</i> spp. (n=8)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	2			2	1	3								
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L								3	2	3				

Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L								3	2	1		2		
<i>Chryseobacterium</i> spp. (n=4)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L		1	2				1							
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L				1				1		1		1		
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L			1						1	1			1	
Rare non-fermenters (n=15)														
Cefepime/tazobactam 8 mg/L	2	1		1		3		2	3	1				2
Ceftolozane/tazobactam 4 mg/L		1		1		1	2		2	2	1	1	1	3
Piperacillin/tazobactam 4 mg/L		1			4	1	2	1		1		1	1	3

544

- 545 ^a *E. coli* (n=15), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=15), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=17), Others (n=24)
546 ^b *E. coli* (n=47), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=98), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=230), Others (n=43)
547 ^c *E. coli* (n=145), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=140), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=20), Others (n=1)
548 ^d *E. coli* (n=11), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=3), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=12), Others (n=1)
549 ^e *E. coli* (n=12), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=16), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=3), Others (n=0)
550 ^f *E. coli* (n=20), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=74), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=19), Others (n=3)
551 ^g *E. coli* (n=4), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=4), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=0), Others (n=2)
552 ^h *E. coli* (n=0), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=0), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=6), Others (n=3)
553 ⁱ *E. coli* (n=60), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=34), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=14), Others (n=6)
554 ^j *E. coli* (n=36), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=77), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=15), Others (n=8)
555 ^k *E. coli* (n=68), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=108), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=22), Others (n=12)
556 ^l *E. coli* (n=1), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=23), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=0), Others (n=0)
557 ^m *E. coli* (n=29), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=21), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=3), Others (n=5)
558 ⁿ *E. coli* (n=2), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=16), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=2), Others (n=0)
559 ^o *E. coli* (n=11), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=53), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=0), Others (n=0)
560 ^p *E. coli* (n=0), *Klebsiella* spp. (n=14), *Enterobacter* spp. (n=0), Others (n=0)

561

562

563
564

Table 2. Distribution of fold reductions in cefepime MIC in the presence of 8 mg/L tazobactam for Enterobacterales groups.

Row Labels	0.25	0.5	1	2	4	8	16	32	64	128	256	512	1024	2048	4192	Total
Wild-type for β -lactamase		3	29	35	1	2	1									71
AmpC	2	19	144	164	68	17	2		1	1						418
ESBL + AmpC		1	1	2	2	5	2	4	5	3	2					27
ESBL		3	25	18	13	13	21	23	41	39	41	39	19	8	3	306
K1 hyperproducer			2		2											4
Impermeability	1	2	17	10	1											31
KPC		2	35	61	12	3		1	1				1			116
GES			2			4			2	2						10
Other class A carbapenemase			4	5												9
MBL		4	120	55	21	3	5		1	1						210
MBL (NDM) + OXA-48			22	1		1										24
OXA-48 CAZ-S/I		4	53	37	3	7	6	2	1	1						114
OXA-48-CAZ-R		3	22	22	19	18	18	17	14	2	1					136
Unassigned ceftazidime MIC ≤ 4			19	30	7	2										58
Unassigned ceftazidime MIC 8-32		1	9	7	2					1						20
Unassigned ceftazidime MIC >64			20	7	4	9	1		8	7	3	4	1			64
<i>K. pneumoniae</i> CAZ/CPM-R CTX-S/I			10	3		1										14
Grand Total	3	42	534	457	155	85	56	47	74	57	47	43	21	8	3	1632

565

566 **Table 3.** Cefepime/tazobactam and ceftolozane/tazobactam MICs for ESBL producers in relation to those of ertapenem, taken as a
 567 proxy for impermeability.

Ertapenem MIC (mg/L)	Distribution of MICs of cefepime/tazobactam ESBL producers with the ertapenem MIC indicated in the left-hand column (mg/L)														Total
	0.03	0.06	0.125	0.25	0.5	1	2	4	8	16	32	64	128	>128	
≤0.016	12	3	1												16
0.03	10	15	4	1	2	1									33
0.06	9	4	11	3		2	1								30
0.125	7	9	5	1	1	1	3								27
0.25	1	5	6	5	4	1				1					23
0.5	3	4	7	10	4	2	6	6	3	1					46
1	1	1	6	5	4	7	2	6	3	1					36
2		1	2	6	7	10	4	2	2		1				35
4			1	1	4	5	2	1		4	1				19
8			1	1	2	4	1	2	1	5	1			2	20
16					1	3	4				2				10

32						4	1	1	1	2	1				10
64														1	1
Total	43	42	44	33	29	40	24	18	10	14	6	0	0	3	306
			Distribution of MICs of ceftolozane/tazobactam for ESBL producers with the ertapenem												
			MIC indicated in the left-hand column (mg/L)												
≤0.016			8	6	1	1									16
0.03			2	11	14	4	2								33
0.06				7	14	7	2								30
0.125				1	10	9	5			2					27
0.25					4	5	9	2		2	1				23
0.5				1	6	5	15	6	4	5	4				46
1				1	2	6	8	4	4	4	3	3	1		36
2				2	2	7	9	3	3	1	4	1	2	1	35
4						2	2	3	5	3	1	1	1	1	19
8					2	1	3	2	1	1	3	2	1	4	20
16							1	3	2		1			3	10

16						3	3	3	1						10
32						1	1	7	1						10
64										1					1
Grand Total	101	67	45	31	18	21	10	10	2	1					306

568

569

570
571

Table 4. Cross relation of cefepime/tazobactam and meropenem MICs for Enterobacterales with KPC carbapenemases

MIC meropenem (mg/L)	No. isolates with indicated combination of MIC values												
	Cefepime/tazobactam MIC (mg/L)												Total
	0.03	0.06	0.125	0.25	0.5	1	2	4	8	16	32	64	
0.03	1	1											2
0.06		1											1
0.12													
0.25													
0.5					1	2	1	1					5
1							1						1
2						4	5	3					12
4					1	3	4	6	1				15
8					1	1	18	12	2				34
16						1	6	10	6	2			25
32							1	3	4		2	1	11
64									3	1	1		5
128									1		1	3	5
Grand Total	1	2	0	0	3	11	36	35	17	3	4	4	116

572

573 **Table 5.** Cross relation of cefepime/tazobactam and ceftolozane/tazobactam MICs for *P. aeruginosa* with low, normal, raise or highly
 574 raised efflux function

Cefepime/tazobactam MIC (mg/L)	No. isolates with indicated combination of MIC values													
	Ceftolozane/tazobactam MIC (mg/L)													Total
	0.06	0.125	0.25	0.5	1	2	4	8	16	32	64	128	>128	
0.03	1													1
0.06														
0.125		1	1		1									3
0.25		1	1											2
0.5		2	1											3
1		2	4	8	1									15
2		1	5	35	9									50
4				40	33	2	1	1						77
8				29	101	27	2	1						160
16				4	19	26	7	1						57
32					2	7	6	8	1				1	25
64				1	1	4		4		1				11
128							1	2	1	2		1		7
>128								1					1	2
Grand Total	1	7	12	117	167	66	17	18	2	3		1	2	413