



The *Anopheles stephensi* odorant binding protein 1 (*AsteObp1*) gene: A new molecular marker for biological forms diagnosis

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ABSTRACT

Anopheles (Cellia) *stephensi* Liston 1901 is known as an Asian malaria vector. Three biological forms, namely “mysorensis”, “intermediate”, and “type” have been earlier reported in this species. Nevertheless, the present morphological and molecular information is insufficient to diagnose these forms. During this investigation, *An. stephensi* biological forms were morphologically identified and sequenced for odorant-binding protein 1 (*Obp1*) gene. Also, intron I sequences were used to construct phylogenetic trees. Despite nucleotide sequence variation in exon of *AsteObp1*, nearly 100% identity was observed at the amino acid level among the three biological forms. In order to overcome difficulties in using egg morphology characters, intron I sequences of *An. stephensi Obp1* opens new molecular way to the identification of the main Asian malaria vector biological forms. However, multidisciplinary studies are needed to establish the taxonomic status of *An. stephensi*.

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1. Introduction

Anopheles stephensi Liston has been reported from Iran, Iraq, Oman, Saudi Arabia, South China, Myanmar, Thailand and East of Bangladesh (Gakhar et al., 2013). Female mosquitoes of this species are the primary vectors for transmission of *Plasmodium* species in the Middle East, Indian subcontinent, Pakistan and Afghanistan (Manouchehri et al., 1976a,b; Rowland et al., 2002; Djadid et al., 2006; Ghosh et al., 2008). It may show off a major risk to human health in the future (Faulde et al., 2014). Out of 30 *Anopheles* species have been identified in Iran (Gholizadeh et al., 2013a), *An. stephensi* is known as the main malaria vector in the southern part of the country (Djadid et al., 2006; Azari-Hamidian, 2007; Gholizadeh

et al., 2013b). Based on egg morphology, three morphological varieties have been reported with regard to this species: *An. stephensi* type, *An. stephensi* mysorensis, and *An. stephensi* intermediate (Subbarao et al., 1987; Oshaghi et al., 2006b; Vatandoost et al., 2006; Alam et al., 2008; Gholizadeh et al., 2012). The type form is predominantly an urban mosquito, while the variety mysorensis is mainly found in rural regions (Subbarao et al., 1987). In urban areas, *An. stephensi* biological forms mainly breed in wells, cisterns, roof gutters, barrels, buckets, and ornamental tanks. In rural areas, mostly the variety mysorensis breeds in streams and channels, tanks and ponds, water seepages, and irrigation wells (Alam et al., 2008). Comparing the results of previous studies with regard to malaria transmission by *An. stephensi* in Kazerun (Eshghi and Janbakhsh, 1976; Eshghi, 1978) and presence of only intermediate form in Fars province of Iran, it could be concluded that intermediate form also could act as a malaria vector (Oshaghi et al., 2006b). In addition to their differences in ecology, the three biological forms also show variations in cuticular hydrocarbons, reproductive capacity, and vectorial potential (Suleman, 1990; Anyanwu et al., 1997). *An. stephensi* type form is an efficient vector, while the other two forms are weak vectors of human malaria. However, *An. stephensi* mysorensis is susceptible to *Plasmodium vivax* VK210B (Gholizadeh et al., 2013b). In Iran, however, the malaria control

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program is in the elimination phase, the transmission of malaria are still reported from southeastern provinces of the country, including Sistan and Baluchistan, Hormozgan, and Kerman (Raeisi et al., 2013). Despite various studies on this species, *An. stephensi* is not indicated as a complex species and they were just considered as races or subspecies (Sweet and Rao, 1937; Gakhar et al., 2013). Population genetics of *An. stephensi* have been studied in different parts of the world using various molecular markers (Gakhar et al., 2013). The available information is not sufficient to explain the genetic structure of *An. stephensi* population.

Olfaction is one of the most important and complex cue that influence mosquito fitness not only in individual aspects such as host seeking (transmission) and mate finding (reproduction) but also in group communication aspects such as aggregation and avoidance (Rutzler and Zwiebel, 2005; Hoffman et al., 2012). Odorant-binding proteins (OBPs), odorant receptors, and odorant-degrading enzymes are the major proteins involved in the olfactory system in insects (Justice et al., 2003; Hallem et al., 2006). In order to mediate insect behavior, OBPs firstly has to attached them to the odorant molecules (Pelosi et al., 2006; Sengul and Tu, 2010; Xu et al., 2010). The releasing of the genome sequences of several mosquitoes have been helped to the identification of large multi-genic families of OBPs from *Culex quinquefasciatus*, *An. gambiae*, *Aedes aegypti* and *An. stephensi* (Biessmann et al., 2002; Ishida et al., 2002; Xu et al., 2003; Li et al., 2005; Zhou et al., 2008; Pelletier and Leal, 2009; Sengul and Tu, 2010). However, various roles have been described for insect OBPs in different literatures, for instance, deletion of the LUSH gene (a soluble OBP of *Drosophila melanogaster*) suppresses its behavioral response to the male pheromone (Xu et al., 2005). Likewise, knocking down of OBP1 in *Cx. quinquefasciatus* mosquitoes have been reduced antennal response to several oviposition attractants compared to controls (Pelletier et al., 2010). Recently, *Obp1* analysis in *An. gambiae* have shown the significance of OBPs in odor recognition (Biessmann et al., 2010). Therefore, the study on OBPs of *An. stephensi* might help us not only understand the molecular basis of olfaction in this important Asian malaria vector but also develop new control strategies based on repelling *Plasmodium* sp. carrying *Anopheles* mosquitoes (Hoffman et al., 2012; Fan et al., 2013; Manoharan et al., 2013b). Moreover, shed light on new way to specific identification of *An. stephensi* biological forms.

Since *An. stephensi* biological forms have shown variation in habitat and vectorial capacities, our supposition is that these differences may be appear in genome level and in OBP1 in particular. We are focused on sequence analysis of OBP1 among *An. stephensi* biological forms and a possible application of this gene in molecular identification of Asian important malaria vector biological forms. In the current study, *Obp1* gene exons and introns sequences in *An. stephensi* biological forms were analyzed and *AsteObp1* intron I was introduced as a new molecular marker for the identification of mysorensis, intermediate and type forms of *An. stephensi*.

2. Experimental procedures

2.1. *An. stephensi* mosquitoes

An. stephensi biological forms, mysorensis [strains of Iranshahr (27°12'08"N 60°41'05"E) and Bandar Abbas (27°11'11"N 56°16'50"E)] and intermediate, [strain of Kazerun (29°37'10"N 51°39'14"E)] (Fig. 1) were reared (generation 200) in the Insectary of Urmia University of Medical Sciences, Urmia (UMSU, Iran) at 29 ± 1 °C with relative humidity of 80 ± 5% under 12 h lightness/12 h darkness. Type form (another Bandar Abbas strain, generation 24) was obtained from Malaria and Vector Research Group (MVRG) from Pasteur Institute of Iran (PII). The stock culture



Fig. 1. Map indicating the geographical distance among Kazerun, Bandarabbas and Iranshahr where the strains were obtained (Source: Google maps, <https://maps.google.com>).

Table 1

Specific primers used for amplification of *Obp1* gene in *An. stephensi* biological forms.

Primers	Sequences	Number of bp	GC%
OBP1F1	CGTAGGTGGAATATAGGTGG	20	50
OBP1R1	TCGGCGTAACCATAATTTC	19	47.4
OBP1F2	TGAAGAGAACCACCACACAG	20	50
OBP1R2	TCGGCGTAACCATAATTTC	19	50

of adult *An. stephensi* was fed twice a week with artificial feeding on sheep blood (in the UMSU Insectary) and Guinea pig (in the national insectary of PII). The criteria for characterization of biological forms was based on previous description (10–15, 15–17 and 17–22 egg ridges for mysorensis, intermediate and type forms, respectively) (Sweet and Rao, 1937; Subbarao et al., 1987). The architecture of 100 eggs from each *An. stephensi* biological form was counted by using an optic microscope. Briefly, eggs were placed on a water drop on a microscope slide, and the number of ridges on one side of the egg float was counted using bright field illumination at magnification ~40×.

2.2. DNA extraction and PCR amplification

DNA was isolated from 150 *An. stephensi* specimens (50 specimens from each form) by Collin's method with a slight modification (Djadid et al., 2006, 2007, 2009; Gholizadeh et al., 2012, 2013a,b). In brief, mosquitoes were homogenized in a 50 µl lysis buffer, containing 0.08 M NaCl, 0.16 M Tris-HCl, 0.5% sodium dodecyl sulfate, and 0.06 M EDTA (pH 8). They were then grinded with a heat-sealed tip on a 1.5-ml Eppendorf tube and incubated at 65 °C for 30 min. After incubation, 17 µl 3 M NaAc (sodium acetate) was added to the mixture at 4 °C. The tube was placed on ice for 30 min and centrifuged at 12,000 rpm for 10 min. DNA was pelleted by -20 °C alcohol and centrifuged for 15 min. The dried pellet was rehydrated in 20-µl ddH₂O and stored at 4 °C until use.

The *Obp1* gene was amplified using OBP1F1 and OBP1R2 as forward and reverse primers, respectively (Table 1). The two other primers (OBP1F2 and OBP1R1) were used in sequencing of fragment in an ABI377 automatic sequencer. These specific primers were designed based on *Obp1* sequences of *An. stephensi* obtained from the GenBank (ID: GQ250942) (Sengul and Tu, 2010) by using Gene Runner (version 3.05, 1994, Hastings Software Inc.) and BLAST (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/blast>) softwares.

All PCR reactions were performed in a total volume of 25 µl. The reaction mixture contained 1 µl each of the specific *Obp1* primers, 0.2 µl Taq polymerase, 0.1 mM each of dNTP, 0.001% gelatin, 2.5 µl 10× reaction buffer, and 2 mM MgCl₂. The amplification profile

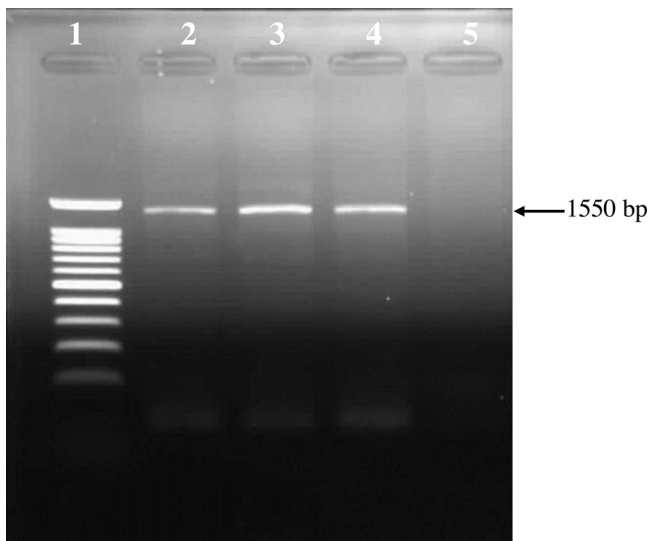


Fig. 2. PCR amplification of 1550-bp fragment in *An. stephensi* mysorensis (lane 2), intermediate (lane 3) and type (lane 4) forms. Lane 1 and lane 5 are 100-bp DNA marker (Roche) and negative control, respectively.

was as follows: hot start at 95 °C for 5 min, followed by 30 cycles of denaturation at 95 °C for 1 min, annealing at 60 °C for 1.20 min, extension at 72 °C for 1.20 min with an additional 10-min extension time in the last cycle.

2.3. Sequence analysis

The sequences were double checked with Chromas software version 2.31 (www.technelysium.com.au/chromas.html). The sequences related to different forms of *An. stephensi* were aligned and compared using ClustalW (Larkin et al., 2007). GC counts and amino acid sequences were obtained by Gene Runner (version 3.05, 1994, Hastings Software Inc.). The final sequences were aligned with the single sequence available in the GenBank. The phylogenetic tree was constructed based on intron I sequences using distance Neighbor-joining and maximum likelihood Methods based on the Tamura–Nei model's model in MEGA5 (Tamura et al., 2011). Nucleotide sequences are available in the GenBank, European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), and DNA Data Bank of Japan (DDBJ) databases [GenBank: KJ557449 to KJ557468].

3. Results

At the first phase *An. stephensi* biological forms were identified based on Sweet and Rao (1937) and Subbarao et al. (1987). The number of egg ridges in Iranshahr and Kazerun strains were 13.15 and 15.04, respectively, but in Bandar Abbas strains it was 14.43 (in the colony reared at Urmia) and 19.25 (in PII colony). The comparison of these ridge numbers with criteria presented by Sweet and Rao (1937) and Subbarao et al. (1987) were categorized Iranshahr and Bandar Abbas colonies reared at Urmia as mysorensis, Kazerun strain as intermediate and Bandar Abbas colony reared at PII as type forms.

Genomic DNA from 150 specimens of *An. stephensi* biological forms was extracted and amplified by specific *AsteObp1* primers (OBP1F1 and OBP1R2). The primers were amplified a 1550-bp fragment (Fig. 2). Twenty PCR products were selected randomly for sequencing. The length of sequenced region for mysorensis and type forms was 1548-bp and 1542-bp for intermediate form (Fig. 3). The comparison of the sequences in the current study and those in the GenBank (GenBank ID: GQ250942) showed the existence of

two introns, three open reading frames and one untranslated region (UTR).

Intron I region consisted of a 116-bp nucleotide in intermediate and a 121-bp nucleotide in type and mysorensis forms. Multiple sequence alignment showed 85–96% similarity of intron I sequences among *An. stephensi* three forms. The 4–15% variation among them was due to 5 deletions in intermediate form and 19 mismatches (transition/transversion) in intermediate and type forms in comparison with mysorensis form (Fig. 3). The intron II region contained a 461-bp nucleotide in type and mysorensis and a 463-bp nucleotide in intermediate forms. There were also 17 mismatches, including 2 deletions/insertion, and 15 transition/transversion (Fig. 3). The sequence similarity of this region within the forms was 97.61–100% (mysorensis), 99.57–100% (intermediate), and 100% (type).

Exon I region of *An. stephensi* biological forms contained a 161-bp nucleotide. Multiple sequence alignment showed 3 mismatches (3-bp) that caused the substitution of Alanine to Threonine [Ala (GCA) to Thr (ACA)] in type form (Figs. 3 and 4). The sequence similarity among three forms was 98–99% and 98–100% in nucleotide and amino acid levels, respectively. In addition, there were 2 mismatches in exon II without amino acid substitution. Exon III of *AsteObp1* was short and contained an 18-bp nucleotide without any sequence variation (Fig. 3). UTR sequence (484–494-bp at the 3' end of *Obp1*) identity within the forms of *An. stephensi* was 99.60–100% in mysorensis and 100% on intermediate and type forms. The similarities of UTR sequences among the forms were 97.81–98.62, 98.80–100%, and 98.62% in mysorensis–intermediate, mysorensis–type, and intermediate–type forms, respectively. The differences were because of 14 deletions and 10 mismatches, 1 insertion, and 9 transition/transversion (Fig. 3).

There was no sequence variation in *AnsteObp1* intron I region within forms, but it was significant (4–15%) between *An. stephensi* biological forms. Therefore, Neighbor-joining and maximum likelihood phylogenetic trees, which were constructed based on *AnsteObp1* intron I sequences, demonstrated a similar topology with different bootstrap values (Fig. 5). The trees also had close proximity with egg morphology results. Mysorensis form was separated in a different cluster, whereas both intermediate and type forms constituted a single cluster with two separate branches (Fig. 5).

4. Discussion

An. stephensi biological forms are the main malaria vector in Asia and especially in Iran (Subbarao et al., 1987; Djajid et al., 2006; Alam et al., 2008; Gakhar et al., 2013; Gholizadeh et al., 2013b). Study of the geographical distribution of three biological forms of *An. stephensi* in the malarious regions of Iran revealed the presence of all three forms in Hormozgan, Mysorensis in Sistan-Baluchistan, and intermediate in Fars (Kazerun) provinces (Oshaghi et al., 2006b). However, the authors' recommendation on the reconsideration of the geographical distribution and role of *An. stephensi* biological forms in malaria transmission should be taken into account (Oshaghi et al., 2006b). In the first phase of the current study, *An. stephensi* laboratory reared strains from Iranshahr, Bandar Abbas and Kazerun were identified as mysorensis, mysorensis and type, and intermediated forms, respectively.

Although, OBP sequences are highly divergent among insect species (Sengul and Tu, 2008; Benton, 2009), coding sequences of OBP7 showed 60 to 90% identity among *Anopheles* and *Aedes/Culex* mosquitoes (Sengul and Tu, 2008). In addition, OBP1 from *An. fuenstus* and *An. gambiae* showed high identity, and six cysteine residues are completely conserved between both species (Xu et al., 2010). Moreover, the high level of conservation have been shown among

B1	KJ557449	CGT AGG TGG AAT ATA GGT GGA TTA TAG CGT ATA CAA AAT GAA GTA TTT GGC AGT CGT TTG	[60]
I1	KJ557450	...	[60]
K1	KJ557451	...	[60]
K5	KJ557453	...	[60]
K3	KJ557454	...	[60]
I5	KJ557455	...	[60]
B5	KJ557457	...	[60]
B7	KJ557458	...	[60]
B8	KJ557459	...	[60]
I6	KJ557460	...	[60]
I7	KJ557461	...	[60]
K31	KJ557466	... T ... G ...	[60]
K33	KJ557467	...	[60]
K8	KJ557452	...	[60]
B3	KJ557456	...	[60]
T10	KJ557468	...	[60]
T2	KJ557462	... A ... A ...	[60]
T5	KJ557463	... A ... A ...	[60]
K22	KJ557464	... A ... A ...	[60]
T6	KJ557465	... A ... A ...	[60]
B1	KJ557449	TGT CGG GTT GAT GTG TTG CAT GAT GGC GTT GGC TCA GAG TAC ACC TCG CCG TGA TGC CGA	[120]
I1	KJ557450	...	[120]
K1	KJ557451	...	[120]
K5	KJ557453	...	[120]
K3	KJ557454	...	[120]
I5	KJ557455	...	[120]
B5	KJ557457	...	[120]
B7	KJ557458	...	[120]
B8	KJ557459	...	[120]
I6	KJ557460	...	[120]
I7	KJ557461	...	[120]
K31	KJ557466	...	[120]
K33	KJ557467	...	[120]
K8	KJ557452	... A ...	[120]
B3	KJ557456	... A ...	[120]
T10	KJ557468	... A ...	[120]
T2	KJ557462	...	[120]
T5	KJ557463	...	[120]
K22	KJ557464	... A ...	[120]
T6	KJ557465	...	[120]
B1	KJ557449	ATA TCC ACC GCC GGA GTT GCT GGA GGC GAT GAA ACC GCT GCA CGA TAT TTG CGT TGG CAA	[180]
I1	KJ557450	...	[180]
K1	KJ557451	...	[180]
K5	KJ557453	...	[180]
K3	KJ557454	...	[180]
I5	KJ557455	...	[180]
B5	KJ557457	...	[180]
B7	KJ557458	...	[180]
B8	KJ557459	...	[180]
I6	KJ557460	...	[180]
I7	KJ557461	...	[180]
K31	KJ557466	...	[180]
K33	KJ557467	...	[180]
K8	KJ557452	...	[180]
B3	KJ557456	...	[180]
T10	KJ557468	...	[180]
T2	KJ557462	...	[180]
T5	KJ557463	...	[180]
K22	KJ557464	...	[180]
T6	KJ557465	...	[180]
B1	KJ557449	AAC TGG TGT TAC TGA GGG TGA GCT TGG GTG TCT TCT GGA TAT TGC TCT AAT GTG TTT TTA	[240]
I1	KJ557450	...	[240]
K1	KJ557451	...	[240]
K5	KJ557453	...	[240]
K3	KJ557454	...	[240]
I5	KJ557455	...	[240]
B5	KJ557457	...	[240]
B7	KJ557458	...	[240]
B8	KJ557459	...	[240]
I6	KJ557460	...	[240]
I7	KJ557461	...	[240]
K31	KJ557466	...	[240]

Fig. 3. Multiple sequence alignment of 1553-bp *Obp1* of 20 specimens of *An. stephensi* biological forms. Sequences with accession numbers KJ557466 (K31), KJ557467 (K33), KJ557461 (I7), KJ557460 (I6), KJ557459 (B8), KJ557458 (B7), KJ557457 (B5), KJ557449 (B1), KJ557450 (I1), KJ557451 (K1), KJ557453 (K5), KJ557454 (K3), KJ557455 (I5) are related to *An. stephensi* mysorensis, KJ557452 (K8), KJ557456 (B3), KJ557464 (K22), KJ557468 (T10) to *An. stephensi* intermediate, and KJ557462 (T2), KJ557463 (T5), KJ557465 (T6) to *An. stephensi* type forms. Nucleotides 52–197 bp including exon I region, 198–317 bp intron I (highlighted), 318–575 bp exon II, 578–1036 bp intron II, 1037–1054 exon III and the next sequences belongs to UTR region. A dot indicates identity with the reference sequence and a dash indicates a deletion.

I5 KJ557455	.....	[ 480]
B5 KJ557457	.....	[ 480]
B7 KJ557458	.....	[ 480]
B8 KJ557459	.....	[ 480]
I6 KJ557460	.....	[ 480]
I7 KJ557461	.....	[ 480]
K31 KJ557466	.....	[ 480]
K33 KJ557467	.....	[ 480]
K8 KJ557452	.....	[ 480]
B3 KJ557456	.....	[ 480]
T10 KJ557468	.....	[ 480]
T2 KJ557462	.....T	[480]
T5 KJ557463	.....T	[480]
K22 KJ557464	.....	[ 480]
T6 KJ557465	.....T	[480]
B1 KJ557449	TGC ACA TGG GCA AAC GAT GCC TCT ATC CGG AGG GTG AAA ATC TTT GCG ACA AAG CCT TCT	[540]
I1 KJ557450	.....	[ 540]
K1 KJ557451	.....	[ 540]
K5 KJ557453	.....	[ 540]
K3 KJ557454	.....	[ 540]
I5 KJ557455	.....	[ 540]
B5 KJ557457	.....	[ 540]
B7 KJ557458	.....	[ 540]
B8 KJ557459	.....	[ 540]
I6 KJ557460	.....	[ 540]
I7 KJ557461	.....	[ 540]
K31 KJ557466	.....	[ 540]
K33 KJ557467	.....	[ 540]
K8 KJ557452	.....T	[540]
B3 KJ557456	.....T	[540]
T10 KJ557468	.....T	[540]
T2 KJ557462	.....	[ 540]
T5 KJ557463	.....	[ 540]
K22 KJ557464	.....T	[540]
T6 KJ557465	.....	[ 540]
B1 KJ557449	GGC TCC ACA AAT GCT GGA AGC AGT CTG ACC CGA AGG TAA GAT TCT C-- CAC CAC TTC CAC	[600]
I1 KJ557450	.....	[ 600]
K1 KJ557451	.....	[ 600]
K5 KJ557453	.....	[ 600]
K3 KJ557454	.....	[ 600]
I5 KJ557455	.....	[ 600]
B5 KJ557457	.....	[ 600]
B7 KJ557458	.....	[ 600]
B8 KJ557459	.....	[ 600]
I6 KJ557460	.....	[ 600]
I7 KJ557461	.....	[ 600]
K31 KJ557466	.....G	[600]
K33 KJ557467	.....	[ 600]
K8 KJ557452	.....G	[600]
B3 KJ557456	.....G	[600]
T10 KJ557468	.....G	[600]
T2 KJ557462	.....G	[600]
T5 KJ557463	.....G	[600]
K22 KJ557464	.....G	[600]
T6 KJ557465	.....G	[600]
B1 KJ557449	GAA CAG CAG AAC ACA GTG ACC TTT CTT TGC GTA CGC TCT TTC CTG GTT GAG CAT TAT TTT	[660]
I1 KJ557450	.....	[ 660]
K1 KJ557451	.....A	[660]
K5 KJ557453	.....	[ 660]
K3 KJ557454	.....A	[660]
I5 KJ557455	.....	[ 660]
B5 KJ557457	.....	[ 660]
B7 KJ557458	.....	[ 660]
B8 KJ557459	.....	[ 660]
I6 KJ557460	.....	[ 660]
I7 KJ557461	.....	[ 660]
K31 KJ557466	.....A	[660]
K33 KJ557467	.....	[ 660]
K8 KJ557452	..G .. A ..	[660]
B3 KJ557456	..G .. A ..	[660]
T10 KJ557468	..G .. A ..	[660]
T2 KJ557462	..G .. A ..	[660]
T5 KJ557463	..G .. A ..	[660]
K22 KJ557464	..G .. A ..	[660]

Fig. 3. (Continued)

T6	KJ557465	..G ... A.. ... .. .A. ... .. .C. .A. ..A A..	[660]
B1	KJ557449	ATT CGA ATA CTC TGA AGA GAA CCA CCA CAC AGG AGT AGC AAA AAA CGA TAT TCA AAA CGC	[720]
I1	KJ557450	...	[720]
K1	KJ557451	...	[720]
K5	KJ557453	...	[720]
K3	KJ557454	...	[720]
I5	KJ557455	...	[720]
B5	KJ557457	...	[720]
B7	KJ557458	...	[720]
B8	KJ557459	...	[720]
I6	KJ557460	...	[720]
I7	KJ557461	...	[720]
K31	KJ557466	... ..C. .AG	[720]
K33	KJ557467	...	[720]
K8	KJ557452	...	[720]
B3	KJ557456	...	[720]
T10	KJ557468	...	[720]
T2	KJ557462	...	[720]
T5	KJ557463	...	[720]
K22	KJ557464	...	[720]
T6	KJ557465	...	[720]
B1	KJ557449	CGC GAT TCG TCG AAA CCG GAA ATC GGA ATA ATT TCT TCT CGG TGG CAA GTT TTA AAT TGA	[780]
I1	KJ557450	...	[780]
K1	KJ557451	... ..T	[780]
K5	KJ557453	...	[780]
K3	KJ557454	... ..T	[780]
I5	KJ557455	...	[780]
B5	KJ557457	...	[780]
B7	KJ557458	...	[780]
B8	KJ557459	...	[780]
I6	KJ557460	...	[780]
I7	KJ557461	...	[780]
K31	KJ557466	... ..T	[780]
K33	KJ557467	...	[780]
K8	KJ557452	... ..T	[780]
B3	KJ557456	... ..T	[780]
T10	KJ557468	... ..T	[780]
T2	KJ557462	... ..T	[780]
T5	KJ557463	... ..T	[780]
K22	KJ557464	... ..T	[780]
T6	KJ557465	... ..T	[780]
B1	KJ557449	AAA AGT TTA ACT TTT AAT TGC TTC CCG CTA GTG TGA CGC CAT CGT GCG GCA AAT ATG GTT	[840]
I1	KJ557450	...	[840]
K1	KJ557451	...	[840]
K5	KJ557453	...	[840]
K3	KJ557454	...	[840]
I5	KJ557455	...	[840]
B5	KJ557457	...	[840]
B7	KJ557458	...	[840]
B8	KJ557459	...	[840]
I6	KJ557460	...	[840]
I7	KJ557461	...	[840]
K31	KJ557466	...	[840]
K33	KJ557467	...	[840]
K8	KJ557452	... ..C	[840]
B3	KJ557456	... ..C	[840]
T10	KJ557468	... ..C	[840]
T2	KJ557462	...	[840]
T5	KJ557463	...	[840]
K22	KJ557464	... ..C	[840]
T6	KJ557465	...	[840]
B1	KJ557449	ACG CCG AAC GCG CCG TTC CTG ATT CCG GTC GTA GTT TAA AGG GGA CAA GCG AGA TAG GGG	[900]
I1	KJ557450	...	[900]
K1	KJ557451	...	[900]
K5	KJ557453	...	[900]
K3	KJ557454	... ..A	[900]
I5	KJ557455	...	[900]
B5	KJ557457	...	[900]
B7	KJ557458	...	[900]
B8	KJ557459	...	[900]
I6	KJ557460	...	[900]
I7	KJ557461	...	[900]
K31	KJ557466	... T..	[900]

Fig. 3. (Continued)

I5	KJ557455	.....	[1140]
B5	KJ557457	.....	[1140]
B7	KJ557458	.....	[1140]
B8	KJ557459	.....	[1140]
I6	KJ557460	.....	[1140]
I7	KJ557461	.....	[1140]
K31	KJ557466	.....	[1140]
K33	KJ557467	.....	[1140]
K8	KJ557452	.....	[1140]
B3	KJ557456	.....	[1140]
T10	KJ557468	.....	[1140]
T2	KJ557462	.....	[1140]
T5	KJ557463	.....	[1140]
K22	KJ557464	.....	[1140]
T6	KJ557465	.....	[1140]
B1	KJ557449	GTC GGT GCG ATT GAG TGA TCC TTG CTC GCT ACC GGC TAA TCC TGC TCC GGT GCT CCG GTA	[1200]
I1	KJ557450	.....	[1200]
K1	KJ557451	.....	[1200]
K5	KJ557453	.....	[1200]
K3	KJ557454	.....	[1200]
I5	KJ557455	.....	[1200]
B5	KJ557457	.....	[1200]
B7	KJ557458	.....	[1200]
B8	KJ557459	.....	[1200]
I6	KJ557460	.....	[1200]
I7	KJ557461	.....	[1200]
K31	KJ557466	..... --- --- --- ---	[1200]
K33	KJ557467	.....	[1200]
K8	KJ557452	..... .C	[1200]
B3	KJ557456	..... .C	[1200]
T10	KJ557468	..... .C	[1200]
T2	KJ557462	.....	[1200]
T5	KJ557463	.....	[1200]
K22	KJ557464	..... .C	[1200]
T6	KJ557465	.....	[1200]
B1	KJ557449	CGG TTT TTT GGC ATC CCG GTT CCG TGT CGG TGG TAC GGA ATT AGT AAT TAA CCT ATT TTT	[1260]
I1	KJ557450	.....	[1260]
K1	KJ557451	..... .G	[1260]
K5	KJ557453	.....	[1260]
K3	KJ557454	.....	[1260]
I5	KJ557455	.....	[1260]
B5	KJ557457	.....	[1260]
B7	KJ557458	.....	[1260]
B8	KJ557459	.....	[1260]
I6	KJ557460	.....	[1260]
I7	KJ557461	.....	[1260]
K31	KJ557466	..... .G	[1260]
K33	KJ557467	.....	[1260]
K8	KJ557452	..... .G	[1260]
B3	KJ557456	..... .G	[1260]
T10	KJ557468	..... .G	[1260]
T2	KJ557462	..... .G	[1260]
T5	KJ557463	..... .G	[1260]
K22	KJ557464	..... .G	[1260]
T6	KJ557465	..... .G	[1260]
B1	KJ557449	CCT GCT TTC CGC ATT GCA CTG CAC GTA GTG ACG TTT CAA CCG ACC TGT GAC TAA CCA ACT	[1320]
I1	KJ557450	.....	[1320]
K1	KJ557451	.....	[1320]
K5	KJ557453	.....	[1320]
K3	KJ557454	.....	[1320]
I5	KJ557455	.....	[1320]
B5	KJ557457	.....	[1320]
B7	KJ557458	.....	[1320]
B8	KJ557459	.....	[1320]
I6	KJ557460	.....	[1320]
I7	KJ557461	.....	[1320]
K31	KJ557466	.....	[1320]
K33	KJ557467	.....	[1320]
K8	KJ557452	.....	[1320]
B3	KJ557456	.....	[1320]
T10	KJ557468	.....	[1320]
T2	KJ557462	.....	[1320]
T5	KJ557463	.....	[1320]
K22	KJ557464	.....	[1320]

Fig. 3. (Continued)

K33	KJ557467	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	[1553]
K8	KJ557452	...	...	..G	--	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	[1553]
B3	KJ557456	...	...	..G	--	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	[1553]
T10	KJ557468	...	...	..G	--	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	[1553]
T2	KJ557462	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	[1553]
T5	KJ557463	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	[1553]
K22	KJ557464	...	...	..G	--	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	[1553]
T6	KJ557465	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	[1553]

Fig. 3. (Continued)

```

KJ557455 MKYLAVVVCVGLMCCMMALAQSTPRRDAEYPPPELLEAMKPLHDICVGKTGVTE 53
KJ557463 MKYLAVVVCVGLMCCMMALAQSTPRRDAEYPPPELLEAMKPLHDICVGKTGVTE 53
KJ557452 MKYLTVVVCVGLMCCMMALAQSTPRRDAEYPPPELLEAMKPLHDICVGKTGVTE 53
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Fig. 4. *An. stephensi* biological forms Exon I OBP1 amino acid sequence alignment.

AsteObp1, *AgamObp1*, and other mosquito orthologous sequences (Sengul and Tu, 2010). A very recent study on odorant binding protein in *An. gambiae*, *A. aegypti*, and *Cx. quinquefasciatus* showed the *Obp* gene family acquired functional diversity (Manoharan et al., 2013a). In the current study, an alignment of OBP amino acid sequences among three biological forms of *An. stephensi* which differ in ecological and biological properties, highlights 99–100% similarity, indicating a single non-synonymous substitution (A to T) in type form in the initial sequences (Fig. 4). Indeed, it is in accordance with the results of Sengul and Tu (2010) who identified and characterized *AsteObp1* for the first time. Although, it is unclear the specified sequences of them are related to which form of *An. stephensi*.

When phylogenetic tree was constructed by using the neighbor-joining and maximum likelihood algorithms, their *AsteObp1* intron I sequence (GQ250942) were placed in mysorensis cluster with high bootstrap values (Fig. 5).

Over the past few years, several molecular studies using different markers have been performed for the identification of *An.*

stephensi. For examples, Djadid et al. (2006) found different sizes of ITS2 fragments (466, 467, and 568 bp) in *An. stephensi* populations from Iran, without any specific size to distinguish biological forms (Djadid et al., 2006; Alam et al., 2008). Alam et al. (2008) and Oshaghi et al. (2006) also obtained the same results by using COI, COII, and D3 sequences (Oshaghi et al., 2006a; Alam et al., 2008), insufficient again to explain the population genetic structure of this species. On the other hand, polymorphism in intron regions of mosquitoes was used to identify malaria vector within the *Anopheles albitarsis* complex (Merritt et al., 2005). Also, the analysis of intron length polymorphism has been presented as a useful tool for studying the population structure of *Anopheles pseudopunctipennis* (a major human malaria vector in South America) (Lardeux et al., 2012). Multiple sequence alignment of *AsteObp1* intron I region among different biological forms of *An. stephensi* showed one deletion event spanning 5-bp founded in the fragments of 116 bp in intermediate form. In addition, significant substitution mutations (transition/transversion) observed across the intron I region in each biological form (Fig. 3). Therefore, form specific mutations

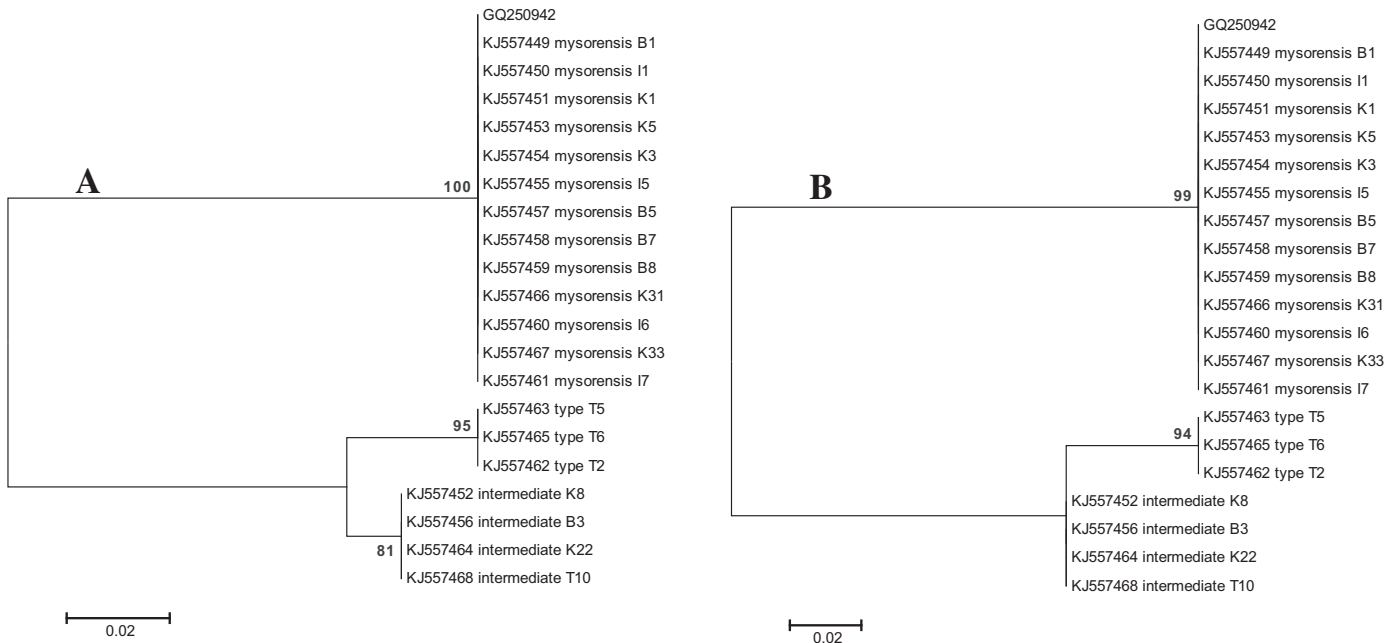


Fig. 5. Neighbor-joining (A) and maximum likelihood (B) trees based on *AnsteObp1* intron I fragments for *An. stephensi* biological forms. The bootstrap consensus tree inferred from 1000 replicates is taken to represent the evolutionary history of the taxa analyzed. Bootstrap values >50% has been shown above each node. All positions containing gaps and missing data were eliminated from the dataset (complete deletion option). GenBank ID: GQ250942 is the only one sequences of *Obp1* presence in GenBank.

in *AsteObp1* intron I region has potentially confirmed the existence of three forms of *An. stephensi*. More detailed studies are needed regarding possible divergences among populations of this malaria vector using field-collected specimens.

In summary, this investigation reports, for the first time, *Obp1* sequencing of *An. stephensi* biological forms. Regardless of mysorensis, intermediate, and type forms of this species showed 85–96.52% identical in *AsteObp1* intron I sequences, the three forms having different vectorial capacity, *AsteObp1* intron I sequence would be helpful in distinguishing vector from non-vector forms of *An. stephensi*.

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