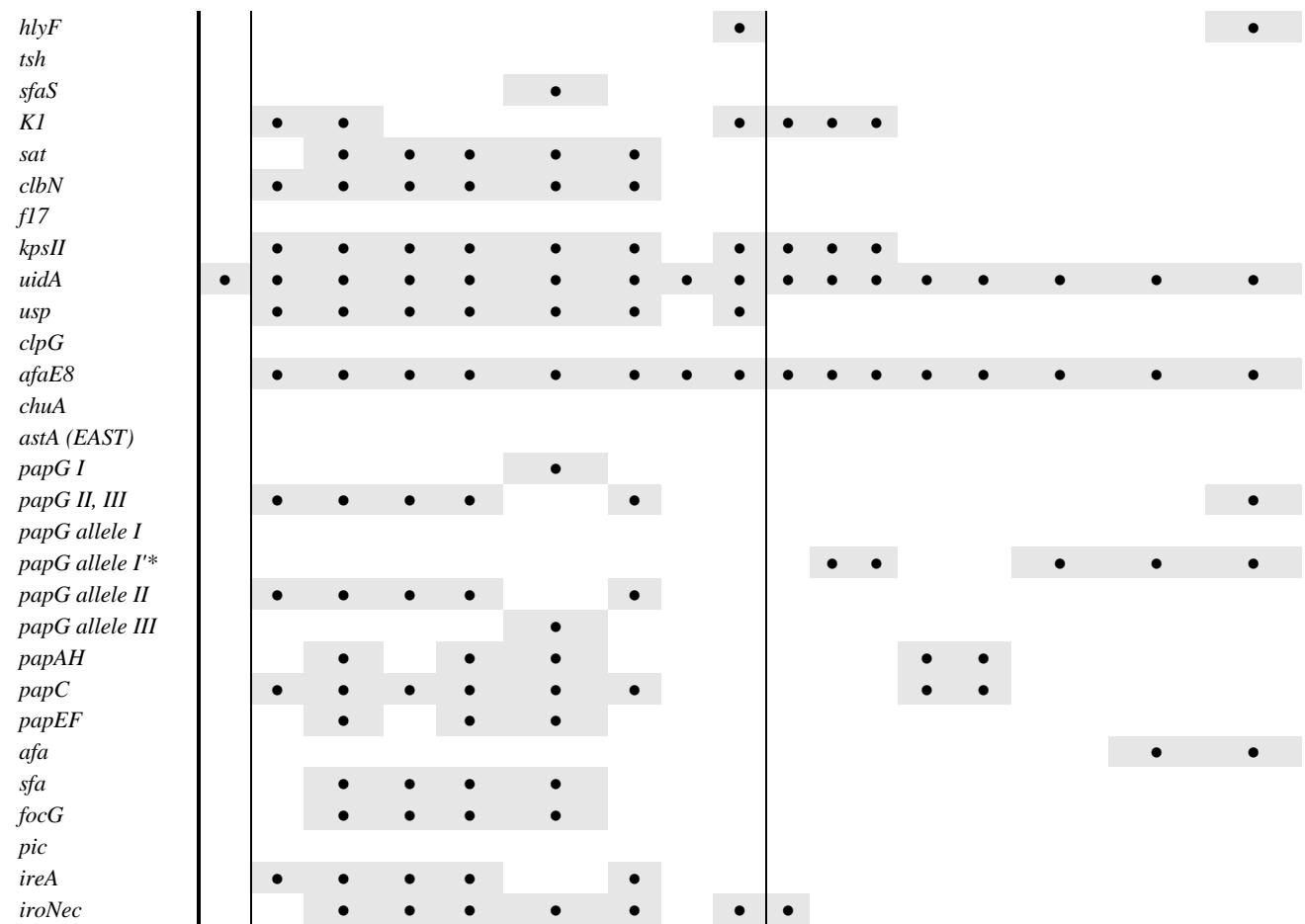


**Table S1.** Summary of the 54 virulence genes, phylogroup affiliation, and capsular groups of the *Escherichia coli* strains isolated from controls, as detected by polymerase chain reaction assay.

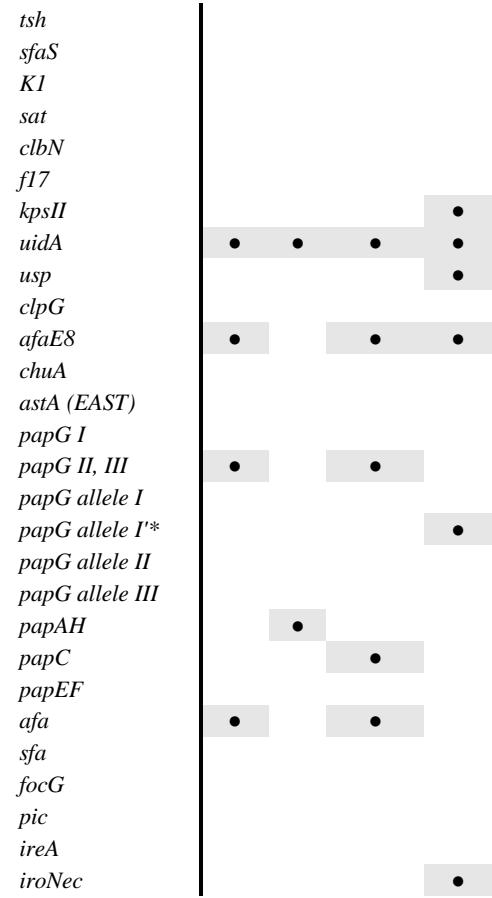
Strain ID	311	608	C277	606	C276	C469	561	623	306	C7	C8	C9	C79	C80	C196	C206	C233
Phylogroup	A	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
Capsular group	NA	K1	K1/K5	K5	K5	K2/K100	NA	NA	NA	K1	K1	K1	K15	K15	Group 3	Group 3	Group 3
<i>maIX</i> (PAI)																	
<i>K15</i>																	
<i>fimH</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<i>kpslll</i>																	
<i>yfcV</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●								
<i>ibeA</i>										●							
<i>concnf</i>																	
<i>fyuA</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●						●	●	●
<i>clbB</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●						●	●	●
<i>bmaE</i>																	
<i>iutA</i>										●	●	●	●	●			
<i>hra</i>																	
<i>hlyD</i>										●							
<i>rfc</i>																	
<i>ompT</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●				●	
<i>iss</i>																	
<i>kii</i>	●	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●				
<i>vat</i>																	
<i>gafD</i>																	
<i>K5</i>										●							
<i>cvaC</i>																	
<i>H7</i>																	
<i>cdtB/cdtB'</i>																	
<i>traT</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			
<i>ihA</i>															●	●	●



•: positive results. NA: unidentified.

**Table S2.** Summary of the 54 virulence genes, phylogroup affiliation, and capsular groups of the *Escherichia coli* strains isolated from NEC cases, as detected by polymerase chain reaction assay.

Strain ID	C439	C74	C345	C325
Phylogroup	B2	D	D	E
Capsular group	NA	K15	Group 3	K1
<i>maIX (PAI)</i>	●			
<i>K15</i>		●		
<i>fimH</i>	●	●	●	●
<i>kpsIII</i>			●	
<i>yfcV</i>	●			
<i>ibeA</i>				
<i>concnf</i>				
<i>fyuA</i>		●	●	
<i>clbB</i>	●			
<i>bmaE</i>				
<i>iutA</i>			●	
<i>hra</i>				
<i>hlyD</i>				
<i>rfc</i>				
<i>ompT</i>			●	
<i>iss</i>				●
<i>kiI</i>			●	
<i>vat</i>				
<i>gafD</i>				
<i>K5</i>				
<i>cvaC</i>			●	
<i>H7</i>				
<i>cdtB/cdtB'</i>				●
<i>traT</i>			●	●
<i>iha</i>	●	●		
<i>hlyF</i>			●	



●: positive results. NA: unidentified.

**Table S3.** Distribution of virulence genes according to the phylogroup B2 and D (p-values are calculated using the two-sided Fisher's exact test; significance: p<0.05).

Virulence genes	Phylogroup B2			Phylogroup D		
	Control (n = 8)	NEC (n = 1)	p	Control (n = 8)	NEC (n = 2)	p
	% (n)	% (n)		% (n)	% (n)	
<i>malX (PAI)</i>	37,5 (3)	100 (1)	0.44	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>K15</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	25 (2)	50 (1)	1.00
<i>fimH</i>	100 (8)	100 (1)	1.00	100 (8)	100 (2)	1.00
<i>kpsIII</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	37,5 (3)	50 (1)	1.00
<i>yfcV</i>	87,5 (7)	100 (1)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>ibeA</i>	12,5 (1)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>concnf</i>	37,5 (3)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>fvuA</i>	87,5 (7)	0 (0)	0.22	50 (4)	100 (2)	0.47
<i>clbB</i>	75 (6)	100 (1)	1.00	62,5 (5)	0 (0)	0.44
<i>bmaE</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>iutA</i>	75 (6)	0 (0)	0.33	25 (2)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>hra</i>	12,5 (1)	0 (0)	1.00	12,5 (1)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>hlyD</i>	25 (2)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>rfc</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>ompt</i>	100 (8)	0 (0)	0.11	37,5 (3)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>iss</i>	12,5 (1)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>kii</i>	75 (6)	0 (0)	0.33	37,5 (3)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>vat</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>gafD</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>K5</i>	25 (2)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>cvaC</i>	12,5 (1)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>H7</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>cdtB/cdtB'</i>	25 (2)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>traT</i>	75 (6)	0 (0)	0.33	75 (6)	50 (1)	1.00
<i>iha</i>	62,5 (5)	100 (1)	1.00	25 (2)	50 (1)	1.00
<i>hlyF</i>	12,5 (1)	0 (0)	1.00	12,5 (1)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>tsh</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>sfaS</i>	12,5 (1)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>K1</i>	37,5 (3)	0 (0)	1.00	37,5 (3)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>sat</i>	62,5 (5)	0 (0)	0.44	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>clbN</i>	75 (6)	0 (0)	0.33	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>f17</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>kipsII</i>	87,5 (7)	0 (0)	0.22	37,5 (3)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>uidA</i>	100 (8)	100 (1)	1.00	100 (8)	100 (2)	1.00
<i>usp</i>	87,5 (7)	0 (0)	0.22	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>clpG</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>afaE8</i>	100 (8)	100 (1)	1.00	100 (8)	50 (1)	0.20
<i>chuA</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00

<i>astA (EAST)</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>papG I</i>	12,5 (1)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>papG II, III</i>	62,5 (5)	100 (1)	1.00	12,5 (1)	50 (1)	0.38
<i>papG allele I</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>papG allele I*</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	62,5 (5)	0 (0)	0.44
<i>papG allele II</i>	62,5 (5)	0 (0)	0.44	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>papG allele III</i>	12,5 (1)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>papAH</i>	37,5 (3)	0 (0)	1.00	25 (2)	50 (1)	1.00
<i>papC</i>	75 (6)	0 (0)	0.33	25 (2)	50 (1)	1.00
<i>papEF</i>	37,5 (3)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>afa</i>	0 (0)	100 (1)	0.11	25 (2)	50 (1)	1.00
<i>sfa</i>	50 (4)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>focG</i>	50 (4)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>pic</i>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>ireA</i>	62,5 (5)	0 (0)	0.44	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.00
<i>iroNec</i>	75 (6)	0 (0)	0.33	12,5 (1)	0 (0)	1.00

**Table S4.** Antimicrobial susceptibility phenotype of the *Escherichia coli* strains isolated from the controls and the NEC cases.

Controls	Antibiotics	% (n)		
		S*	I	R
Amoxicillin	47 (8)		53 (9)	
Amoxicillin + Clavulanic acid	59 (10)		41 (7)	
Ticarcillin	47 (8)		53 (9)	
Ticarcillin + Clavulanic acid	52 (9)	24 (4)	24 (4)	
Piperacillin + Tazobactam	41 (7)		59 (10)	
Cefepim	52 (9)	24 (4)	24 (4)	
Cefotaxim	65 (11)		35 (6)	
Cefoxitin	100 (17)			
Imipenem	100 (17)			
Nalidixic acid	88 (15)		12 (2)	
Ciprofloxacin	71 (12)		29 (5)	
Ofloxacin	47 (8)	18 (3)	35 (6)	
Amikacin	65 (11)		35 (6)	
Gentamicin	65 (11)		35 (6)	
Tigecycline	100 (17)			
Trimethoprim + Sulfamethoxazole	76 (13)		24 (4)	

NEC cases	Antibiotics	% (n)		
		S*	I	R
Amoxicillin	25 (1)		75 (3)	
Amoxicillin + Clavulanic acid	25 (1)		75 (3)	
Ticarcillin	25 (1)		75 (3)	
Ticarcillin + Clavulanic acid	25 (1)		75 (3)	
Piperacillin + Tazobactam	25 (1)		75 (3)	
Cefepim	25 (1)	50 (2)	25 (1)	
Cefotaxim	50 (2)		50 (2)	

Cefoxitin	100 (4)		
Imipenem	100 (4)		
Nalidixic acid	75 (3)		25 (1)
Ciprofloxacin	100 (4)		
Ofloxacin	25 (1)	50 (2)	25 (1)
Amikacin	50 (2)		50 (2)
Gentamicin	75 (3)		25 (1)
Tigecycline	100 (4)		
Trimethoprim + Sulfamethoxazol	75 (3)		25 (1)

\* S, susceptible; I, intermediate; R, resistant [39].

**Table S5.** Antimicrobial susceptibility phenotype of the *Clostridium butyricum* strains.

Antibiotics	% (n)		
	S*	I	R
Amoxicillin	85 (28)	3 (1)	11 (4)
Amoxicillin/clavulanic acid	100 (33)		
Piperacillin	82 (27)		18 (6)
Piperacillin/tazobactam	88 (29)	12 (4)	
Cefoxitin	100 (33)		
Ertapenem	100 (33)		
Imipenem	100 (33)		
Chloramphenicol	100 (33)		
Linezolide	100 (33)		
Metronidazol	100 (33)		
Moxifloxacin	67 (22)	33 (11)	
Tigecycline	61 (20)		39 (13)
Vancomycine	100 (33)		

\* S, susceptible; I, intermediate; R, resistant [39].

**Table S6.** Minimal inhibitory concentrations (MICs) of *Clostridium butyricum* and *Clostridium neonatale* strains to tetracycline, clindamycin, and cefotaxime.

	no. of strains for which the antimicrobial agent MIC (mg/L) was:													MIC (mg/L)		
	≤0.19	0.25	0.38	0.5	1	1.5	2	3	4	6	8	12	16	32	>32	MIC 50%
<i>Clostridium butyricum</i>																
Tetracycline	17						2	5	2	2	1	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	0.19	12
Clindamycin	28		2	1			1		1						0.125	0.38
Cefotaxime	2	4	3		1						1		10	<b>12</b>	32	>32
<i>Clostridium neonatale</i>																
Tetracycline	8				2	7	11	2	2	2					1.5	4
Clindamycin	1					4	2	6	9	5	5	<b>2</b>			6	12
Cefotaxime									1		7	22	<b>4</b>	32	>32	

Resistance definition: clindamycin MICs > 4 mg/L; cefotaxime MICs > 32 mg/L; tetracycline MICs > 8 mg/L [39].

**Figure S1.** Proportions of bacterial genera significantly different between C-section (CS) and vaginal delivery (VB) preterm neonates. \*  $p$ -value <0.05.

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