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## 🌐 Sanger sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 Spike protein V.3

📖 PLOS One ✓ Peer-reviewed method

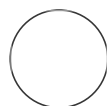
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Low-cost, high-quality ...

Spotlight series



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### ABSTRACT

The SARS-CoV-2 responsible for the ongoing COVID pandemic reveals particular evolutionary dynamics and an extensive polymorphism, mainly in Spike protein. Monitoring the S protein mutations is crucial for successful controlling measures and detect variants that can evade vaccine immunity. Even after the costs reduction imposed by the pandemic, the new generation sequencing methodologies remain unavailable to many scientific groups. Therefore, to support the urgent surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 S protein, this work describes a protocol for complete nucleotide sequencing of the S protein using the Sanger technique. Thus, any laboratory with experience in sequencing can adopt this protocol.

(The last step in this version contains a supplemental video with extra context and tips, as part of the protocols.io Spotlight series, featuring conversations with protocol authors.)

### GUIDELINES

This protocol works well with recent extracted RNA samples, ideally with ct values lower than 20.

**MANUSCRIPT CITATION:**

Salles TS, Cavalcanti AC, da Costa FB, Dias VZ, de Souza LM, et al. (2022) Genomic surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 Spike gene by sanger sequencing. PLOS ONE 17(1): e0262170.

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**Protocol status:** Working

We use this protocol and it's working

**Created:** Sep 05, 2023

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**PROTOCOL integer ID:**  
87401

**Keywords:** Sanger sequencing, SARS-CoV-2, Spike protein

**MATERIALS**

- Thermal cycler
- PCR tubes 0.2mL
- Filter pipette tips: 1-10µL+ 10-100µL
- Micropipettes: 1-10µL+ 10-100µL
- Superscript III one-step RT-PCR kit (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA, USA)
- Primers
- Nuclease free water
- Extracted RNA from SARS-CoV-2 positive samples with low ct values
- Agarose
- TAE buffer (Tris-acetate-EDTA)
- LGC biotecnologia - Blue Green loading Dye I
- Horizontal Electrophoresis cube
- UV Transilluminator
- Nanodrop spectrophotometer

**1 RT-PCR**

- Program the thermal cycler before setting up the reaction. The thermal cycler should be preheated to 45–60°C.
- Keep all components, reaction mixes, and samples on ice. After preparation of the samples, transfer them to the preheated thermal cycler and immediately start the RT–PCR program.
- Reaction mix should be prepared according to table 1.

A	B	C
Component	Volume	Final concentration
2X Reaction Mix	12.5 µL	1x
Sense primer (10 µM)	1.75 µL	0.7 µM

A	B	C
Anti-sense primer (10 $\mu$ M)	1.75 $\mu$ L	0.7 $\mu$ M
SuperScript <sup>™</sup> III RT/Platinum <sup>™</sup> Taq High Fidelity Enzyme Mix[1]	0.5 $\mu$ L	
Template RNA	5 $\mu$ L	
Nuclease free water	to 25 $\mu$ L	

Table 1 - RT-PCR master mix

■ RT-PCR cycle is described below:

60°C 1 min |  
 50°C 45 min | Reverse Transcription | 1 cycle  
 94°C 2 min |

95 °C 15 s Denaturation |  
 53 °C 30 s Annealing | 40 cycles  
 68 °C 60 s Extension |

68 °C 7 min Final extension | 1 cycle  
 4 °C  $\infty$

■ Primers used:

		Position	Melting temperature	Size
P1 forward	GTTTGTTTTCTTGTTTTATT	(21551-21574)	43.5 °C	
923bp				
P1 reverse	ACAGTGAAGGATTTCAACGTACAC	(22450-22474)	55.3 °C	
P2 forward	CGTGATCTCCCTCAGGGTTTT	(22190-22211)	56.8 °C	
620bp				
P2 reverse	TCAGCAATCTTCCAGTTTGCC	(22810-22832)	56.1 °C	
P3 forward	GTAATTAGAGGTGATGAAGTCAGA	(22751-22775)	51.8 °C	
892bp				
P3 reverse	ACATAGTGTAGGCAATGATGGA	(23621-23643)	53.6 °C	

P4 forward	CTTGGCGTGTTTATTCTACAG	(23445-23466)	51.4 °C
979bp			
P4 reverse	GCTTGTGCATTTTGGTTGACC	(24403-24424)	55.6 °C
P5 forward	AGACTCACTTTCTTCCACAGCA	(24355-24377)	56.1 °C
342bp			
P5 reverse	AGATGATAGCCCTTTCCACA	(24699-24719)	53.3 °C
P6 forward	TTCTGCTAATCTTGCTGCTACT	(24610-24632)	54.0 °C
766bp			
P6 reverse	GTTTATGTGTAATGTAATTTGACTCC	(25348-25372)	50.7 °C
P7 forward	TAGAGAAAACAACAGAGTT	(21492-21511)	45.6 °C
712bp			
P7 reverse	TGAGGGAGATCACGCACTAA	(22184-22204)	55.4 °C
P8 forward	TTCTGCTAATCTTGCTGCTACT	(24610-24632)	54.0 °C
825bp			
P8 reverse	CCTTGCTTCAAAGTTACAGTTCCA	(25409-25433)	55.6 °C

## 2 Agarose gel Electrophoresis

- Dissolve agarose in 1.X TAE Buffer (40 mM Tris-acetate, 1 mM EDTA) to a final concentration of 1.5% agarose.
- Heat the solution in a microwave and let it cool at room temperature.
- Apply the agarose gel to the casting tray with the appropriate well comb and let it solidify.
- Mix 5 µL of PCR product with 5µL of loading buffer and 1µL Blue Green Loading dye I (LGC Biotechnologia), apply it to the gel, and run the electrophoresis at 120V.
- Visualize the gel with UV Transilluminator

## 3 Preparing Samples for sequencing

- Sequencing procedures are performed according to BigDye™ Terminator v3.1 Cycle Sequencing Kit (Applied Biosystems) guidelines.
- Measure DNA Concentration with a nanodrop spectrophotometer
- Dilute template to 100 ng/µl with nuclease-free water
- Dilute primers to 1 µM with nuclease-free water. Only one primer is used for each sequencing reaction, leading to two reactions per sample. Each reaction will need 3.2 µl of diluted primer.
- Label and ship the samples and primers according to the sequencing service provider guidelines.

**sequencing reaction:**

- BigDye™ Terminator 3.1 Ready Reaction Mix - 8 µL
- primer (1 µM) - 3.2 µL
- Template (200ng) - 2 µL
- Deionized water (RNase/DNase-free) to - 20 µL

**sequencing cycle:**

96°C 1 min Incubation | 1 cycle

96 °C 10 s Denaturation |

50 °C 05 s Annealing | 25 cycles

60 °C 4 min Extension |

4 °C ∞ | 1 cycle

## 4 Sequence analysis

- Upon receiving the electropherograms, edit them with proper programs like chromas or Bioedit.
- For better editing accuracy, align the forward sequence with the reverse complement of the reverse sequence.
- Use BLAST search to confirm if the sequenced product corresponds to the desired target.
- Create contigs by aligning the planned overlaps between each target fragment and form one consensus sequence covering the full ORF of SARS-CoV-2 Spike protein
- Edited sequences can now be analyzed with the CoVsurver mutations app, provided by GISAID, to trace the mutation patterns of each sample and study their effects on protein structure.
- Sequences can also be deposited in the GISAID database of SARS-CoV-2.

## Spotlight video

- 5 (The following video contains extra context and tips, as part of the protocols.io Spotlight series, featuring conversations with protocol authors.)

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