

## ABSTRAK

**Latar belakang:** Virus Zika (ZIKV) adalah *arthropod-borne virus* (arbovirus) yang menimbulkan ancaman kesehatan global, terutama terkait dengan kejadian mikrosefali pada neonatus dan Sindrom Guillain-Barré (SGB) pada dewasa. Pengembangan uji serologi spesifik untuk mendeteksi dan membedakan ZIKV dari flavivirus lain yang bersirkulasi bersamaan masih menjadi tantangan. Protein non-struktural 1 (NS1) diakui sebagai *biomarker* yang berharga untuk deteksi infeksi flavivirus, termasuk ZIKV. Fragmen *wing domain* NS1 ZIKV memiliki karakteristik yang unik yang membedakannya dengan flavivirus lain. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan memproduksi protein rekombinan NS1 *full-length* (NS1<sub>FL</sub>) dan protein NS1 fragmen *wing domain* (NS1<sub>WD</sub>) serta mengevaluasi antigenisitas, imunogenisitas, dan reaksi silangnya dengan antibodi monoklonal NS1 virus dengue (DENV).

**Metode:** Analisis *in silico* dilakukan untuk memprediksi struktur tiga dimensi (3D) dan mengidentifikasi epitop sel B protein NS1 ZIKV. Fragmen cDNA yang mengkode protein NS1<sub>FL</sub> dan NS1<sub>WD</sub> disintesis dan dikloning ke dalam plasmid pET28a lalu ditransformasikan ke bakteri *E. coli* BL21(DE3) dan diinduksi dengan IPTG. Protein rekombinan rNS1<sub>FL</sub> dan rNS1<sub>WD</sub> dipurifikasi menggunakan kromatografi afinitas. Sebanyak 24 ekor mencit betina BALB/c dibagi menjadi 6 kelompok yang diinjeksi secara intraperitoneal dengan PBS, rNS1<sub>FL</sub> (5 µg dan 20 µg), rNS1<sub>WD</sub> (5 µg dan 20 µg), serta protein rNS1 ZIKV komersial (20 µg). Darah diambil pada hari ke-7, ke-21, dan ke-35. Antigenisitas, imunogenisitas, dan reaksi silang kedua protein rekombinan tersebut dievaluasi dengan ELISA dan dianalisis menggunakan uji T tidak berpasangan dan *one way* ANOVA.

**Hasil:** Pemodelan komputasi menunjukkan bahwa protein NS1 ZIKV memiliki struktur 3D yang mirip dengan NS1 DENV, namun terdapat variasi *loop region* pada bagian tertentu. Prediksi epitop sel B mengidentifikasi 11 epitop sekuensial/linier dan 7 epitop konformasional pada protein NS1 ZIKV. Protein rNS1<sub>FL</sub> dan rNS1<sub>WD</sub> berhasil diekspresikan dan dimurnikan dalam bentuk badan inklusi. Hasil ELISA menunjukkan bahwa protein rNS1<sub>FL</sub> dan rNS1<sub>WD</sub> dikenali oleh antibodi IgG dari serum mencit yang diinjeksi dengan protein NS1 komersial dengan reaktivitas yang lebih tinggi secara signifikan daripada kelompok serum kontrol negatif (PBS) ( $p < 0,05$ ). Kelompok mencit yang diinjeksi dengan protein rNS1<sub>FL</sub> dan rNS1<sub>WD</sub> menginduksi produksi IgG yang lebih tinggi secara signifikan daripada kelompok PBS pada setiap waktu pengambilan sampel ( $p < 0,05$ ). Reaktivitas antibodi monoklonal NS1 DENV (DENV<sub>mAb</sub>) terhadap protein rNS1<sub>FL</sub> dan rNS1<sub>WD</sub> lebih rendah secara signifikan daripada reaktivitas serum kontrol negatif dan antibodi antirNS1<sub>FL</sub> atau antirNS1<sub>WD</sub> ( $p < 0,05$ ).

**Kesimpulan:** Protein rNS1<sub>FL</sub> dan rNS1<sub>WD</sub> ZIKV yang diekspresikan sebagai badan inklusi memiliki sifat antigenik dan imunogenik serta menunjukkan reaksi silang minimal dengan antibodi monoklonal NS1 DENV.

**Kata kunci:** antigenisitas, imunogenisitas, NS1, protein rekombinan, reaksi silang, ZIKV

## **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** *The Zika virus (ZIKV) is an arthropod-borne virus (arbovirus) that has emerged as a global health threat, mainly due to its association with microcephaly in neonates and Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) in adults. Developing of specific serological assays to detect and differentiate ZIKV from other co-circulating flaviviruses remains a significant challenge. Non-structural protein 1 (NS1) is recognized as a valuable biomarker for flavivirus infection detection, including ZIKV. Notably, the wing domain fragment of ZIKV NS1 exhibits unique characteristics that distinguish it from other flaviviruses. Therefore, this study aims to produce the full-length recombinant NS1 protein (NS1<sub>FL</sub>) and the NS1 wing domain fragment (NS1<sub>WD</sub>), as well as to evaluate their antigenicity, immunogenicity, and cross-reactivity with dengue virus (DENV) NS1 monoclonal antibodies.*

**Methods:** *In silico analysis was performed to predict the three-dimensional (3D) structure and identify B-cell epitopes of the ZIKV NS1 protein. The cDNA fragments encoding NS1<sub>FL</sub> and NS1<sub>WD</sub> were synthesized and cloned into the pET28a plasmid, then transformed into E. coli BL21(DE3) and induced with IPTG. The recombinant proteins, rNS1<sub>FL</sub> and rNS1<sub>WD</sub>, were purified using affinity chromatography. A total of 24 female BALB/c mice were divided into six groups and injected intraperitoneally with PBS, rNS1<sub>FL</sub> (5 µg and 20 µg), rNS1<sub>WD</sub> (5 µg and 20 µg), and 20 µg commercial rNS1 ZIKV. Mouse blood were collected on days 7, 21, and 35. Antigenicity, immunogenicity, and cross-reactivity of the recombinant proteins were evaluated by ELISA and analyzed using unpaired t-test and one-way ANOVA.*

**Results:** *Computational modeling revealed that the ZIKV NS1 protein shares a similar 3D structure with DENV NS1; however, variations in the loop regions are observed in specific areas. B-cell epitope prediction identified 11 sequential and 7 conformational epitopes within the ZIKV NS1 protein. The rNS1<sub>FL</sub> and rNS1<sub>WD</sub> proteins were successfully expressed and purified as inclusion bodies. ELISA results demonstrated that rNS1<sub>FL</sub> and rNS1<sub>WD</sub> were recognized by IgG antibodies from the serum of mice injected with commercial NS1 protein, exhibiting significantly higher reactivity compared to the negative control group (PBS) ( $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, mice injected with rNS1<sub>FL</sub> and rNS1<sub>WD</sub> exhibited significantly higher IgG levels than the PBS group at all sample collection times ( $p < 0.05$ ). Reactivity of DENV NS1 monoclonal antibodies (DENVmAb) against rNS1<sub>FL</sub> and rNS1<sub>WD</sub> was significantly lower compared to both the negative control serum and anti-rNS1<sub>FL</sub> or anti-rNS1<sub>WD</sub> antibodies ( $p < 0.05$ ).*

**Conclusion:** *The rNS1<sub>FL</sub> and rNS1<sub>WD</sub> proteins exhibit antigenic and immunogenic properties while demonstrating minimal cross-reactivity with DENV NS1 monoclonal antibodies.*

**Keywords:** *antigenicity, cross-reactivity, immunogenicity, NS1, recombinant protein, ZIKV.*