

The Molecular Mechanisms of Metal Ion Homeostasis in *Streptococcus pneumoniae*

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Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
August, 2016

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Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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Stephanie Louise Begg

August 2016

Thesis Style and Layout

The contents of this thesis have been presented as both published and unpublished works. Chapter 1 ‘Introduction’ presents the current literature and frames the research aims and questions of my doctoral studies. Chapter 2 ‘Materials & Methods’ contains only the methods that have not been explicitly detailed in the individual chapters due to space restrictions imposed by the respective journals. All oligonucleotides generated for this study can be found in their respective chapters. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are published, peer-reviewed, research articles produced during my candidature. These publications have been included as they were published, leading to slight differences in nomenclature and language (i.e. Australian vs American spelling). Each publication is preceded by a statement outlining the purpose of the study and the research aims addressed by the work. Authorship statements denoting the contribution of each of the authors have also been included for each article, and have been verified and signed by all co-authors. Published versions of the articles have been included in Chapter 8 ‘Appendices’ with permission from the copyright holder. Chapter 6 contains currently unpublished data and has therefore been written up as a conventional thesis chapter. Chapter 7 ‘Final Discussion’ discusses the findings presented in this thesis, highlighting the implications of this work for the field of bacterial cellular chemistry, and suggests future directions for this area of study. A complete reference list, including references from both published and unpublished chapters has been included in Chapter 9.

Abstract

All living organisms have an absolute requirement for transition metal ions. In the human pathogen *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, preservation of homeostatic metal ion concentrations is crucial for the viability and virulence of the organism. As a strictly host-adapted pathogen, *S. pneumoniae* is beholden to the prevailing metal abundance of the host environment, and must selectively acquire poorly-abundant essential metals, while also preventing toxicity from metal ions present in excess. This requires an intricate network of transcriptional regulators and transport pathways, which rapidly respond to changes in the extracellular metal ion composition. However, the molecular details underlying aspects of this process, such as how metal binding proteins achieve ligand specificity, remain poorly understood. Furthermore, the consequences of loss or failure of these mechanisms, such as the binding of incorrect metals to proteins (mismetallation), have not been thoroughly investigated.

Here, we have examined the maintenance of metal ion homeostasis, first at the molecular level, with an investigation of PsaA, the only high affinity manganese-acquisition protein in *S. pneumoniae*. Acquisition of manganese is crucial for viability and virulence of the pneumococcus in the host. However, the mechanisms used by PsaA to achieve selectivity for manganese, while excluding more competitive metals such as zinc, were unknown. Through molecular characterisation of PsaA, this study identified a novel mechanism of metal binding and release, providing an explanation for the hitherto unexplained metal-binding behaviour of PsaA seen in previous studies. Additionally, the limit of chemical-selectivity for PsaA was investigated through the use of cadmium, a non-physiological metal, which was able to subvert the selectivity determinants of PsaA, leading to cellular cadmium toxicity.

Investigation of cadmium toxicity revealed that the phenotypic and cellular consequences of toxicity arose primarily from dysregulation of the manganese and zinc homeostatic mechanisms, resulting from cadmium mismetallation of cellular metalloproteins. The extent of cadmium mismetallation was investigated through a combination of transcriptomics, metabolomics, and metalloproteomics, revealing that cadmium could potentially mismetallate numerous metal-dependent proteins, resulting in altered gene expression and metabolomic profiles, due to changes in carbon source utilisation, cellular energy production and fatty acid biosynthesis pathways.

Collectively, these investigations allowed for the proposal of a novel molecular mechanism of cadmium toxicity in *S. pneumoniae* and provided new insights into the intracellular networks that facilitate bacterial metal ion homeostasis. The structural and mechanistic analyses

of PsaA have shown how metal ion discrimination could be achieved *in vivo*, and provided high-resolution data for the rational design of novel antimicrobial therapeutics to selectively target this highly-conserved virulence determinant.

Publications

Peer Reviewed Primary Research Articles

Begg, S.L., Eijkelkamp, B.A., Luo, Z., Couñago, R.M., Morey, J.R., Maher, M.J., Ong, C.Y., McEwan, A.G., Kobe, B., O'Mara, M.L., Paton J.C. and McDevitt, C.A. (2015) Dysregulation of transition metal ion homeostasis is the molecular basis for cadmium toxicity in *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. *Nature Communications*, 6, Article No: 6418

Deplazes, E.*, **Begg, S.L.***, van Wonderen, J.H.*, Campbell, R., Kobe, B., Paton, J.C., MacMillan, F., McDevitt, C.A. and O'Mara, M.L. (2015) Characterizing the conformational dynamics of metal-free PsaA using molecular dynamics simulations and electron paramagnetic resonance spectroscopy. *Biophysical Chemistry*, 207:51-60

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Bajaj, M., Mamidyala, S.K., Zuegg, J., **Begg, S.L.**, Ween, M.P., Huang, J.X., Kobe, B., Paton, J.C., McDevitt, C.A. and Cooper, M. (2015) Discovery of Novel Pneumococcal Surface Antigen A (PsaA) Inhibitors Using a Fragment-based Drug Design Approach. *ACS Chemical Biology*, 10 (6): 1511-1520

Pederick, V.G., Eijkelkamp, B.A., **Begg, S.L.**, Ween, M.P., McAllister, L.J., Paton, J.C. and McDevitt, C.A. (2015) ZnuA and zinc homeostasis in *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. *Scientific Reports*, 5, Article No: 13139

Couñago, R.M.* , Ween, M.P.* , **Begg, S.L.**, Bajaj, M., Zuegg, J., O'Mara, M.L., Cooper, M.A., McEwan, A.G., Paton, J.C., Kobe, B. and McDevitt, C. A. (2014) Imperfect coordination chemistry facilitates metal ion release in the Psa permease. *Nature Chemical Biology*, 10 (1): 35-41

*Equally contributing first authors

Pederick, V.G., Eijkelkamp, B.A., Ween, M.P., **Begg, S.L.**, Paton, J.C. and McDevitt, C.A. (2014) Acquisition and Role of Molybdate in *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*, 80 (21): 6843-6852

Book Chapters

McDevitt, C.A., **Begg, S.L.** and Paton, J.C. (2015) Metal ion toxicity and oxidative stress in *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. In “Stress and Environmental Control of Gene Expression in Bacteria” 1184-1193 Editor F.J. de Bruijn, Publisher John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Abbreviations

A	Absorbance
ABC	ATP binding cassette
ACN	Acetonitrile
AEX	Anion exchange chromatography
AGRF	Australian genome research facility
Ala	Alanine
Asp	Aspartate
ATP	Adenosine triphosphate
BA	Blood agar
bp	Base pairs
Ca	Calcium
Cd	Cadmium
CDF	Cation diffusion facilitator
CDM	Cation defined media
CFU	Colony forming units
Co	Cobalt
CPS	Capsular polysaccharide
c.p.s	Counts per second
CSP	Competence stimulating peptide
Cu	Copper
cw	Continuous wave
Cys	Cysteine
DMSO	Dimethyl sulfoxide
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
DTT	Dithiothreitol
EDTA	Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
EPR	Electron paramagnetic resonance
Ery	Erythromycin
Ery ^R	Erythromycin resistance cassette
FA	Fatty acid
Fe	Iron
fL	femtolitre
g	Relative centrifugal force
gDNA	Genomic DNA
Glu	Glutamate
GROMACS	Groningen Machine for Chemical Simulation
GSH	Glutathione
h	Hours
His	Histidine
HPLC	High pressure liquid chromatography
ICP-MS	Inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry
ID	Identification
Ile	Isoleucine
IPD	Invasive pneumococcal disease

K	Degree Kelvin
Kan	Kanamycin
Kan ^R	Kanamycin resistance cassette
K _D	Dissociation constant
kDa	Kilodalton
kJ	Kilojoule
kPSI	Knots per square inch
L	Litre
LC-ICP-MS	Liquid chromatography inductively coupled plasms mass spectrometry
LB	Luria Bertani (lennox) broth
Leu	Leucine
LIC	Ligation independent cloning
LPS	Lipopolysaccharide
Lys	Lysine
M	Molar
MD	Molecular dynamics
MES	2-(<i>N</i> -morpholino)ethanesulfonic acid
Mg	Magnesium
mg	Milligrams
min	Minutes
mL	Millilitres
mM	Millimolar
Mo	Molybdenum
Mn	Manganese
MOPS	3-(<i>N</i> -morpholino)propanesulfonic acid
MS	Mass spectrometry
MTSL	<i>S</i> -(1-oxyl-2,2,5,5-tetramethyl-2,5-dihydro-1H-pyrrol-3-yl)methyl methanesulfonothioate
n	Number of replicates
NBD	Nucleotide binding domain
NCBI	National Centre for Biotechnology Information
n.d.	Not detected
ng	Nanogram
Ni	Nickel
nM	Nanomolar
nm	Nanometers
NRAMP	Natural resistance-associated macrophage protein
n.s.	Not significant
ns	Nanosecond
OD	Optical density
P	Phosphorous
PBP	Penicillin binding protein
PBS	Phosphate buffered saline
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
PCV	Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine
PDB	Protein data bank

PEG	Polyethylene glycol
PIPES	Piperazine-N,N'-bis(2-ethanesulfonic acid)
pm	picometres
ppb	Parts per billion
ps	picoseconds
qRT-PCR	Quantitative reverse transcription PCR
ROS	Reactive oxygen species
RMSD	Root mean square deviation
RMSF	Root mean square fluctuation
RNA	Ribonucleic acid
RND	Resistance nodulation division
RNS	Reactive nitrogen species
rRNA	Ribosomal RNA
s.e.m.	Standard error of the mean
s.d.	Standard deviation
SDM	Site-directed mutagenesis
SDS	Sodium dodecyl sulfate
SDS-PAGE	Sodium dodecyl sulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
sec	Seconds
SEC	Size exclusion chromatography
SEM	Scanning electron microscopy
SBP	Substrate binding protein
Str	Streptomycin
Str ^R	Streptomycin resistance cassette
TAE	Tris-HCl, acetic acid and EDTA buffer
TB	Terrific broth media
TC	Two component
TCEP	Tris(2-carboxyethyl)phosphine
TFA	Trifluoroacetic acid
THY	Todd-Hewitt media + yeast extract
<i>T_m</i>	Melting temperature
TSA	Thermal shift assay
Tyr	Tyrosine
V	Vanadium
Val	Valine
W	Tungsten
WT	Wild-type
Zn	Zinc
°	Degree
°C	Degree Celsius
µg	Microgram
µL	Microlitre
µM	Micromolar
µm	Micrometre
Å	Angstrom

Contributions

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Dr Blaine Roberts and Ms. Amber Lothian for their expertise and assistance with the technique of LC-ICP-MS conducted in this study.

I would also like to thank Ms. Aoife McFadden (Adelaide Microscopy) for her support and ICP-MS expertise, which greatly contributed to the many metal determination analyses that were conducted throughout this work.

Finally, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the Australian Federation of Graduate Women (AFGW) for the receipt of the Barbara Hale Fellowship, which provided much appreciated financial support.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Christopher McDevitt. Thank you for your constant support and encouragement throughout my PhD, you have made this a truly enlightening and rewarding experience. I sincerely appreciate all of your patience, guidance, and advice; your mentorship has profoundly shaped me as a scientist. I am incredibly grateful for all of the (sometimes reluctantly embraced) opportunities, the last minute drafts, and the unwavering optimism. Thank you for the long chats and the constant supply of coffee and TimTams. You have given me an absolute passion for molecular microbiology and metallobiology that will be the foundation of my career as a researcher. I am incredibly appreciative for everything that you have contributed to this experience.

To my co-supervisor Professor James Paton, thank you for all of your guidance and wisdom. I am truly grateful for all the opportunities and support you have provided during my PhD. I am also a great advocate of your philosophy of daily ‘lab meetings’ over morning coffee, it’s inspired.

To the McDevitt Lab, Bart, Victoria, Jacqui, and Erin, thank you for all being the beautiful people that you are. You have truly enriched this experience for me. Thank you for the laughs, the advice, and for putting up with my (sometimes misunderstood) humour. You have all made coming to work every day such a pleasure, thank you! Bart, thank you for taking the time to teach and guide me, I have learned so much from you and I am incredibly grateful.

To the Moronians and the Paton Lab (past and present), I’m very grateful that I’ve had the opportunity to work with you all. Alistair and Liz, it’s been a real pleasure bumping into both of you in the corridors for the last four years. Doyle, thank you for your friendship. I have been so incredibly lucky to have shared the experience of undergraduate, and now postgraduate, studies with you. You have, and always will, give me something to aspire to, both professionally and personally.

To the friends who got me to where I am today, thank you. Nathan, you have had such a profound impact on shaping my education, even back as far as high school. I appreciate your friendship and motivation more than you know. Thank you for showing me that mediocrity is unsuitably boring. Zoe, what can I say? I’m pretty sure you kicked me through half of undergrad. Thank you for the late nights studying at uni, the copious amounts of tea, and for accepting that sometimes, I just really want to get my washing done. You are a truly beautiful person.

To Mama, Ol’Dad and the rest of the Neville Clan, thank you for your constant love and support. Your family is a veritable smorgasbord of good food, good company and oh so loud conversation. You are my home away from home.

To my family who have loved and supported me throughout my whole life, I owe you everything. To my brother, Matt, thank you for helping me to recognise the virtues of a PhD. Even when I felt like I was living in the lab, hearing about your 90-hour work weeks always gave me perspective. To my step-dad, Mick, thank you for being such an amazing person. You have the most remarkable ability to make everyone around you happy. I could not have got through the last few years without your ever-entertaining stories (and your red wine collection). To my parents, how do I even begin to thank you for everything you have given and sacrificed over the years. Your love, support, patience and guidance has been absolutely pivotal in helping me follow my passion for science and learning. For all that you have done, thank you. I would not be the person I am without you both.

Finally, to the person who has borne the weight of this PhD right alongside me, my other half, Heath. Thank you for your constant love and support over the 4 years of my PhD ...and the 4 years before that during my undergrad (I promise I’ll stop being a student eventually). Thank you for genuinely taking an interest in my research and being so willing to discuss all things science with me. Conversely, thank you for helping me recognise when the science had become all-consuming. You are my everything.