Metabolite profiling of the cold adaptation of *Pseudomonas putida* KT2440 and coldsensitive mutants

Sarah Dethlefsen, ¹ Christian Jäger, ^{2,3} Jens Klockgether, ¹ Dietmar Schomburg, ² Burkhard Tümmler ^{1,4,5}

¹Clinical Research Group, 'Molecular Pathology of Cystic Fibrosis and Pseudomonas Genomics', Hannover Medical School, 30625 Hannover, Germany.

²Department of Biochemistry and Bioinformatics, Institute for Biochemistry & Biotechnology, Technische Universität Braunschweig, 38106 Braunschweig, Germany.

³Luxembourg Centre for Systems Biomedicine, University of Luxembourg, Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg

⁴Clinic for Pediatric Pneumology, Allergology and Neonatology, Hannover Medical School, 30625 Hannover,

Germany

⁵Biomedical Research in Endstage and ObstructiveLung Disease (BREATH), Member of the GermanCenter for Lung Research, Hannover, Germany

Running title: Metabolite profiling of P. putida KT2440 mutants

For correspondence: Sarah Dethlefsen, 'Molecular Pathology of Cystic Fibrosis and

Pseudomonas Genomics', Hannover Medical School, Carl-Neuberg-Str. 1, D-30625 Hannover,

Germany, phone: +49-176-62538047, email: sarah.dethlefsen@outlook.de

This article has been accepted for publication and undergone full peer review but has not been through the copyediting, typesetting, pagination and proofreading process which may lead to differences between this version and the Version of Record. Please cite this article as doi: 10.1111/1758-2229.12793

Abstract

Free-living bacteria such as *Pseudomonas putida* are frequently exposed to temperature shifts and non-optimal growth conditions. We compared the transcriptome and metabolome of the cold adaptation of *Pseudomonas putida* KT2440 and isogenic cold-sensitive transposon mutants carrying transposons in their *cbrA*, *cbrB*, *pcnB*, *vacB* and *bipA* genes. *P. putida* changes the mRNA expression of about 43% of all annotated ORFs during this initial phase of cold adaptation, but only a small number of six to 93 genes were differentially expressed at 10°C between wild type strain and the individual mutants. The spectrum of metabolites underwent major changes during cold adaptation particularly in the mutants. Both KT2440 strain and the mutants increased the levels of the most abundant sugars and amino acids which were more pronounced in the cold-sensitive mutants. All mutants depleted their pools for core metabolites of aromatic and sugar metabolism, but increased their pool of polar amino acids which should be advantageous to cope with the cold stress.

Introduction

Its metabolic versatility, degradative potential, and ability to colonize bulk soil and the rhizosphere make *Pseudomonas putida* an ideal candidate for genetic engineering and applications in biotechnology, bioremediation, and agriculture (Wu et al., 2011). Strain KT2440 is one of the best characterized pseudomonads (Nelson et al., 2002; Regenhardt et al., 2002) and has been optimized as a 'laboratory workhorse' for biotechnology (Dvořák and de Lorenzo, 2018; Martínez-García and de Lorenzo, 2019) and systems biology (Sudarsan et al., 2014), but it has retained its ability to survive and function in the environment.

Free-living bacteria are frequently exposed to temperature shifts and non-optimal growth conditions. In order to grow at low temperatures, a microorganism must overcome the growth-limiting effects of this stress condition. We previously had screened a transposon library for genes that are essential for the survival of *P. putida* KT2440 at low temperatures (Reva et al., 2006). The CbrAB two component system controlling catabolite repression and co-ordinating carbon metabolism (Valentini et al., 2014; Barroso et al., 2018), PcnB and VacB, which control mRNA stability (Hester et al., 2000), and BipA, which exerts transcript-specific translational control (Yuste et al., 2006), were essential to cope with cold stress. Here we report on the comparison of the transcriptome and metabolome of the cold adaptation of wild-type KT2440 and isogenic cold-sensitive transposon mutants carrying transposons in their *cbrA*, *cbrB*, *pcn*, *vacb* and *bipA* genes, respectively.

Results and Discussion

Growth characteristics during cold stress

Screening of the *P. putida* KT2440 plasposon library had revealed that mutants carrying the plasposon in eight genes, namely *cysM*, *nuoL*, *PP4646*, *cbrA*, *cbrB*, *pcnB*, *vacB* and *bipA* (Suppl. Table1

– strain characteristics) were not growing at 4 °C when cultured in microtiter plates in M9 medium with 15 mM benzoate as sole carbon source (Reva et al., 2006). When we re-tested these mutants in cultures of 20 mL under shaking at 4 °C, the mutants in PP4646, *cysM* or *nuoL* were only slightly compromised in growth. Hence these three targets were not examined further. On the other hand, consistent with the initial screen no growth was detectable with the *cbrA*, *cbrB*, *pcnB*, *vacB* and *bipA* mutants.

These five genes encode central functions in the P. putida cell and our experiments added the

information that they are essential to cope with cold stress. BipA is a master regulator of translation (Yuste et al., 2006), the 3',5' exoribonuclease VacB cleaves poly(A), poly(U) and rRNAs (Hester et al., 2000) and the operon cbrA – cbrB – crcZ – pcnB controls the utilization of carbon sources and modulates mRNA stability by polyadenylation (Amador et al., 2016; Barroso et al., 2018; Fonseca et al., 2013; García-Mauriño et al., 2013; Hernández-Arranz et al., 2016; La Rosa et al., 2015; Moreno et al., 2012; Sánchez-Hevia et al., 2018; Tsipa et al., Valentini et al., 2014) . The central role of these genes for P. putida suggests that their inactivation affects numerous features of lifestyle and metabolism. Hence we next searched for the temperature that still keeps these mutants growing but is most informative to resolve the adaptation of these mutants to lower temperatures. Prior to testing different temperatures, we switched from benzoate as sole carbon source to succinate which had been chosen as the reference compound in studies on the systems biology of P. putida (Nogales et al., 2008; Park et al., 2009; Daniels et al., 2010; Nikel et al., 2014; La Rosa et al., 2015; Hintermayer and Weuster-Botz, 2017; Tsipa et al., 2017). Wild type and mutants were cultured in M9 medium with 3, 10, 15 or 20 mM succinate. No or poor growth were observed with 3 and 10 mM succinate, whereas the typical behavior of lag phase, exponential growth and smooth transition to stationary phase was seen with both 15 mM and 20 mM succinate. Next, the cells were cultured

with succinate as carbon source at 5, 10, 23 and 30 °C. Growth rates were indistinguishable at 23°C and 30°C. Minimal or no growth was seen for the mutants at 5°C and growth was retarded at 10°C. Thus the experimental conditions for cold adaptation were set to growth with 15 mM succinate at 10°C.

Transcriptome and metabolome of cold adaptation

The KT2440 wild type strains and the five plasposon mutants were grown in a 1.5 L batch cultures using the BioFlo 110 fermenter at 30°C from OD₆₀₀ 0.05 until 0.8. After taking samples, the fermenter was cooled within 45 minutes to 10°C and then maintained at 10°C for 2 hours until final sampling. We previously reported that *P. putida* changes the mRNA expression of about 43% of all annotated ORFs during this initial phase of cold adaptation (Frank et al., 2011). In contrast to this vast number of changes in the global transcriptome only a comparably small number of six to 93 genes were differentially expressed at 10°C between wild type strain and the individual mutants (Suppl. Table S2). Interestingly, all five mutants showed a consistent down-regulation of *ped* genes (operon PP2663 – PP2682) involved in the degradation of 2-phenylethanol and aliphatic alcohols (C5 – C10) (Arias et al., 2008). The PedS2/PedR2 two-component system (PP2671/2672) within the operon that is crucial for the rare earth element switch in *P. putida* KT2440 (Wehrmann et al., 2018) was not differentially regulated.

In contrast to the comparably small changes in the transcriptome the spectrum of metabolites underwent major changes during cold adaptation particularly in the mutants (see Supplementary information 1 for experimental detail). Principal component analysis (Figure 1, Suppl. Table S3) revealed that the wild type strain maintained its metabolic profile, whereas peculiarly the *cbrA* and *pcnB* transposon mutants showed strong individual changes in their metabolic profiles. Even more remarkably, wild type strain and each mutant exhibited a strain specific signature of its metabolome

at both temperatures (Figure 2, Suppl Figure 1 and Table S4). In other words, the metabolic profiles of the strain at two temperatures were more similar to each other than the metabolomes of the strain panel at either 30°C or 10°C.

Table 1 lists the concentrations of the 20 metabolites most abundant in KT2440 wild type and mutant strains at 10°C and 30°C. During cold adaptation KT2440 and the mutants consistently increased the levels of lactate and of the sugars fructose-6-phosphate, glucose-6-phosphate and of the amino acids valine and glutamic acid the latter also the major driver of intermediary metabolism in pseudomonads (Frimmersdorf et al., 2010). *P. putida* accumulated its most prevalent sugar and amino acids to cope with the metabolic demands at lower temperature. The mutants behaved like wild type implying that this adaptation of the most abundant metabolites did not require the key sensors of cold stress.

Principal component analysis segregated wt and mutants primarily by strain and not by temperature indicating that mutant-associated shifts should already be partly visible at the indifferent temperature of 30°C. Compared to the wild type KT2440 strain, all cold-stress sensitive mutants had depleted pools for core metabolites of aromatic (benzoate) and sugar metabolism (pyruvate, glucose-6-phosphate, fructose-6-phosphate, mannose-6-phosphate) and the direct conversion products of the most abundant metabolite glutamic acid, i.e. oxoproline and oxoglutarate. Moreover pools were low for peripheral mono- or disaccharides such as galactose, xylulose-5-phosphate and N-acetylglucosamine. Instead, the mutants kept higher levels of the membrane-disorganizing fatty acid dodecanoic acid utilized for lipid A biosynthesis and increased the pool of amino acids, i.e. homoserine, tartaric acid, isoleucine and proline. After cold adaptation to 10°C wild type and mutant had increased the levels of glutamate and lactate, but in addition the cold-stress sensitive mutants had accumulated glutamine, aspartate and the hydroxyproline derivative 1-pyrroline-3-hydroxy-5-

carboxylate (Koo and Adams, 1974) in their cells as highly abundant compounds (Table 1). With the exception of the *cbrB*::Tn5, the pool of glutamate was more than twofold larger in the mutants than in wild type indicating that the mutants had to keep higher levels to cope with the challenges of cold stress

The strain *P. putida* S12 had been cultured under similar conditions at 30°C in a fermenter with succinate as sole carbon source, however, the substrate concentration of 165.4 mM was 11-fold higher (van der Werf et al., 2008) than in our experiments. The concentrations of intermediates of the central carbon metabolism, namely pyruvate, glucose, glucose-6-phosphate and fructose-6-phosphate were in the same range, but AMP, mannitol and trehalose were several orders of magnitude more abundant in the S12 strain (Suppl. Table S5). We hypothesize that the larger supply of succinate enabled the S12 cell to store the osmolytes mannitol and trehalose conferring tolerance to desiccation and organic solvents.

In summary, the disruption of key genes of the adaptation to cold stress led to mutant-specific metabolic changes consistently observed at both 30°C and 10°C (Suppl. Figure S1). During cold adaptation to 10°C similar shifts were seen in wild type strains and isogenic mutants for numerous metabolites, but in contrast to wild type the cold-sensitive mutants accumulated higher levels of polar amino acids including 1-pyrroline-3-hydroxy-5-carboxylate, aspartate, glutamine and glutamate, one of the key compounds in pseudomonads. Thus a larger pool of polar amino acid metabolites emerged when the core genetic elements of adaptation to cold stress had been inactivated. However, in addition to this trend consistently observed in all mutants, each mutant exhibited an individual metabolome profile. This finding was somewhat unexpected for the *cbrAB* two-component system because the histidine kinase CbrA and its response regulator CbrB synergize in carbon metabolism and the uptake of amino acids (Li and Lu, 2007; Monteagudo-Cascales E et al.,

2019). However, CbrB also indirectly regulates the 'Carbon Repression Control' (García-Mauriño SM et al., 2013; Barroso et al., 2018). In other words, features and targets not shared by CbrA and CbrB and the transposon-mediated loss of CbrAB regulation by phosphorylation may explain the different composition of the mutant CbrA and CbrB metabolomes.

Acknowledgments. We thank Robert Geffers, Helmholtz Institut für Infektionsforschung,

Brauschweig, for the processing of the microarrays. Instructive discussions with Kerstin Schreiber and

Lutz Wiehlmann are gratefully acknowledged. Partial financial support was provided by BMBF within

the framework of the SysMO consortium, part PSYSMO 'Towards a quantum increase in the

performance of *P. putida* as the cell factory of choice for white biotechnology,' project 3: Key

determinants of abiotic stress response of *P. putida* KT2440'.

The authors declare no potential sources of conflict of interest.

References

Amador CI, López-Sánchez A, Govantes F, Santero E, Canosa I. (2016) A *Pseudomonas putida cbrB* transposon insertion mutant displays a biofilm hyperproducing phenotype that is resistant to dispersal. Environ Microbiol Rep 8: 622-629.

Arias S, Olivera ER, Arcos M, Naharro G, Luengo JM. (2008) Genetic analyses and molecular characterization of the pathways involved in the conversion of 2-phenylethylamine and 2-phenylethanol into phenylacetic acid in *Pseudomonas putida* U. Environ Microbiol 10(2): 413-32. Barroso R, García-Mauriño SM, Tomás-Gallardo L, Andújar E, Pérez-Alegre M, Santero E, Canosa I. (2018) The CbrB Regulon: Promoter dissection reveals novel insights into the CbrAB expression network in *Pseudomonas putida*. PLoS One 13(12):e0209191.

Daniels C, Godoy P, Duque E, Molina-Henares MA, de la Torre J, Del Arco JM, Herrera C, Segura A, Guazzaroni ME, Ferrer M, Ramos JL. (2010) Global regulation of food supply by *Pseudomonas putida* DOT-T1E. J Bacteriol 192(8): 2169-81.

Dvořák P and de Lorenzo V. (2018) Refactoring the upper sugar metabolism of *Pseudomonas putida* for co-utilization of cellobiose, xylose, and glucose. Metab Eng 48: 94-108.

Fonseca P, Moreno R, Rojo F. (2013) *Pseudomonas putida* growing at low temperature shows increased levels of CrcZ and CrcY sRNAs, leading to reduced Crc-dependent catabolite repression. Environ Microbiol 15: 24-35.

Frank S, Schmidt F, Klockgether J, Davenport CF, Gesell Salazar M, Völker U, Tümmler B. (2011)

Functional genomics of the initial phase of cold adaptation of *Pseudomonas putida* KT2440. FEMS

Microbiol Lett 318(1):47-54.

Frimmersdorf E, Horatzek S, Pelnikevich A, Wiehlmann L, Schomburg D. (2010) How *Pseudomonas* aeruginosa adapts to various environments: a metabolomic approach. Environ Microbiol 12(6):1734-47.

García-Mauriño SM, Pérez-Martínez I, Amador CI, Canosa I, Santero E. (2013) Transcriptional activation of the CrcZ and CrcY regulatory RNAs by the CbrB response regulator in *Pseudomonas putida*. Mol Microbiol 89: 189-205.

Hernández-Arranz S, Sánchez-Hevia D, Rojo F, Moreno R. (2016) Effect of Crc and Hfq proteins on the transcription, processing, and stability of the *Pseudomonas putida* CrcZ sRNA. RNA 22: 1902-1917.

Hester KL, Lehman J, Najar F, Song L, Roe BA, MacGregor CH, Hager PW, Phibbs PV Jr, Sokatch JR.

(2000) Crc is involved in catabolite repression control of the bkd operons of *Pseudomonas putida* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. J Bacteriol 182(4): 1144-9.

Hintermayer SB, Weuster-Botz D. (2017) Experimental validation of in silico estimated biomass yields of *Pseudomonas putida* KT2440. Biotechnol J 12(6).

Koo PH, Adams E. (1974) Alpha-ketoglutaric semialdehyde dehydrogenase of Pseudomonas.

Properties of the separately induced isoenzymes. J Biol Chem 249: 1704-16.

La Rosa R, Nogales J, Rojo F. (2015) The Crc/CrcZ-CrcY global regulatory system helps the integration of gluconeogenic and glycolytic metabolism in *Pseudomonas putida*. Environ Microbiol 17: 3362-78. Li W, Lu CD. (2007) Regulation of carbon and nitrogen utilization by CbrAB and NtrBC two-component systems in Pseudomonas aeruginosa. J Bacteriol 189(15):5413-20.

Martínez-García E, de Lorenzo V. (2019) *Pseudomonas putida* in the quest of programmable chemistry. Curr Opin Biotechnol 59: 111-121.

Moreno R, Fonseca P, Rojo F. (2012) Two small RNAs, CrcY and CrcZ, act in concert to sequester the Crc global regulator in *Pseudomonas putida*, modulating catabolite repression. Mol Microbiol 83: 24-40.

Nelson KE, Weinel C, Paulsen IT, Dodson RJ, Hilbert H, Martins dos Santos VA, et al. (2002) Complete genome sequence and comparative analysis of the metabolically versatile *Pseudomonas putida* KT2440. Environ Microbiol 4(12): 799-808.

Nikel PI, Kim J, de Lorenzo V. (2014) Metabolic and regulatory rearrangements underlying glycerol metabolism in *Pseudomonas putida* KT2440. Environ Microbiol 16(1): 239-54.

Nogales J, Palsson BØ, Thiele I. (2008) A genome-scale metabolic reconstruction of *Pseudomonas* putida KT2440: iJN746 as a cell factory. BMC Syst Biol 2: 79.

Park SJ, Choi JS, Kim BC, Jho SW, Ryu JW, Park D, et al. (2009) PutidaNET: interactome database service and network analysis of *Pseudomonas putida* KT2440. BMC Genomics 10 Suppl 3:S18.

Regenhardt D, Heuer H, Heim S, Fernandez DU, Strömpl C, Moore ER, Timmis KN. (2002) Pedigree and taxonomic credentials of *Pseudomonas putida* strain KT2440. Environ Microbiol 4(12): 912-5. Reva ON, Weinel C, Weinel M, Böhm K, Stjepandic D, Hoheisel JD, Tümmler B. (2006) Functional genomics of stress response in *Pseudomonas putida* KT2440. J Bacteriol 188: 4079-92.

Sánchez-Hevia DL, Yuste L, Moreno R, Rojo F. (2018) Influence of the Hfq and Crc global regulators on the control of iron homeostasis in *Pseudomonas putida*. Environ Microbiol 20(10): 3484-3503.

Sudarsan S, Dethlefsen S, Blank LM, Siemann-Herzberg M, Schmid A. (2014) The functional structure of central carbon metabolism in *Pseudomonas putida* KT2440. Appl Environ Microbiol 80(17): 5292-303.

Tsipa A, Koutinas M, Vernardis SI, Mantalaris A. (2017) The impact of succinate trace on pWW0 and ortho-cleavage pathway transcription in *Pseudomonas putida* mt-2 during toluene biodegradation. Bioresour Technol 234: 397-405.

Valentini M, García-Mauriño SM, Pérez-Martínez I, Santero E, Canosa I, Lapouge K. (2014) Hierarchical management of carbon sources is regulated similarly by the CbrA/B systems in *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Pseudomonas putida*. Microbiology 160: 2243-52.

van der Werf MJ, Overkamp KM, Muilwijk B, Koek MM, van der Vat BJ, Jellema RH, et al. (2008)

Comprehensive analysis of the metabolome of *Pseudomonas putida* S12 grown on different carbon sources. Mol Biosyst 4: 315-27.

Wehrmann M, Berthelot C, Billard P, Klebensberger J. (2018) The PedS2/PedR2 Two-Component System Is Crucial for the Rare Earth Element Switch in *Pseudomonas putida* KT2440. mSphere 3(4). Wu X, Monchy S, Taghavi S, Zhu W, Ramos J, van der Lelie D. (2011) Comparative genomics and functional analysis of niche-specific adaptation *in Pseudomonas putida*. FEMS Microbiol Rev 35(2): 299-323.

Yuste L, Hervás AB, Canosa I, Tobes R, Jiménez JI, Nogales J, et al. (2006) Growth phase-dependent expression of the *Pseudomonas putida* KT2440 transcriptional machinery analysed with a genomewide DNA microarray. Environ Microbiol 8(1): 165-77.

Figure Legend

Figure 1. Principal component analysis of the profiles of 147 metabolites of *P. putida* KT2440 and isogenic transposon mutants grown in M9 mineral medium supplemented with 15 mM succinate at 10°C and 30°C. The evaluation was based on normalized logarithmically transformed mean peak areas of two biological replicates independently processed at least in triplicate (see Supplementary Information for experimental details).

Figure 2. Heatmap presentation of the metabolic profiles of *P. putida* KT2440 and isogenic transposon mutants. The figure depicts hierarchical clustering of the normalized logarithmically transformed mean peak areas of the 147 commonly detected metabolites.

Table 1. Concentrations [μg/g dry weight] of the 20 most abundant metabolites in KT2440 wild type and mutant strains at 10°C and 30°C. Data are normalized to 100% ribitol as internal standard.

Metabolite	KT2440 wt		cbrA::Tn5		cbrB::Tn5		pcnB::Tn5		vacB::Tn5		bipA::Tn5	
	30°C	10°C										
glutamic acid	105.5	151.9	108.0	346.8	93.6	160.7	126.0	389.0	165.2	347.8	155.7	347.2
ribitol	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
putrescine	12.1	7.5	9.5	14.4	10.7	9.4	21.7	26.6	31.9	30.5	18.1	22.7
palmitic acid	11.3	7.8	17.2	17.2	11.3	16.8	34.2	30.5	37.4	35.7	43.8	51.3
pyruvic acid	11.1	10.8	0.3	1.5	0.5	0.7	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0
glucose 6-phosphate	9.8	33.3	5.6	70.7	1.1	7.8	2.6	57.9	8.3	97.9	7.3	94.5
lactic acid	9.5	17.3	10.2	19.1	3.2	7.0	7.9	20.0	3.1	12.5	2.4	16.8
valine	9.1	73.1	13.5	100.4	6.4	4.7	31.4	241.6	47.9	186.7	26.4	190.7
beta-alanine	8.6	2.1	9.0	3.8	5.6	1.7	6.9	5.5	11.2	7.6	9.0	5.0
aspartic acid	7.5	10.9	7.1	31.8	3.6	11.9	15.9	51.4	19.7	24.9	16.9	65.0
benzoic acid	5.5	1.1	3.0	0.7	0.1	0.3	0.7	1.3	1.5	1.8	2.0	0.9
alanine	5.4	13.2	17.2	29.3	10.8	8.1	25.5	69.6	23.0	60.0	18.0	66.3
1-pyrroline-3-hydroxy-5- carboxylate	5.1	6.9	3.7	16.1	3.1	4.6	9.7	33.1	7.8	17.7	9.0	24.9
oxalic acid	4.4	3.2	6.7	8.0	3.0	6.1	4.4	4.6	20.5	19.9	10.3	13.1
fructose 6-phosphate	4.2	21.7	1.5	26.3	0.2	2.1	0.5	12.9	2.4	45.2	2.1	47.6
glycine	4.0	3.7	1.9	4.2	1.1	3.1	44.0	7.3	6.2	9.4	4.6	10.9
phosphoric acid	3.7	5.2	55.6	93.5	26.8	51.9	135.9	82.5	83.0	100.9	103.2	84.6
N-acetylglutamic acid	3.7	4.4	1.2	7.1	0.3	1.9	4.6	8.8	8.6	5.3	4.1	10.0
threonine	3.0	4.1	3.4	7.4	2.6	2.1	4.7	14.8	6.2	13.0	7.3	16.1
glycerol 3-phosphate	2.9	3.2	1.5	3.0	0.8	1.5	3.0	5.2	2.5	4.5	1.7	4.5
lysine	2.8	1.5	3.4	3.0	2.0	1.7	7.1	11.4	6.7	15.5	6.3	11.3
succinic acid	2.5	3.7	1.3	2.8	0.5	1.0	2.2	4.9	3.1	4.3	2.0	4.9
glutamine	2.5	3.3	1.3	10.5	0.5	1.9	2.4	18.2	4.1	18.7	1.4	20.3
mannose 6-phosphate	2.4	6.2	1.0	11.8	0.1	1.1	0.2	4.7	1.5	21.1	1.3	15.3



