

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TWO ATTACHMENT

VARIANTS OF BUTYRIVIBRIO FIBRISOLVENS

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## Contents

	Page
Title	i
Contents	ii
Summary	ix
Statement	xiii
Acknowledgements	xiv
List of Figures	xv
List of Tables	xx
List of Abbreviations	xxi
Chapter 1 Introduction and literature review	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Literature review	2
1.2.1 The rumen function and fibre digestion	3
1.2.1.1 The rumen and its microbial ecosystem	3
1.2.1.2 Digestion, fermentation and metabolism of plant carbohydrates	6
1.2.1.3 The importance of microbial attachment to fibre digestion	11
1.2.2 The species concept of <i>Butyrivibrio fibrisolvens</i>	15
1.2.3 <i>Butyrivibrio fibrisolvens</i> strain used in this project	18
1.2.4 Mechanisms and factors affecting bacterial attachment to surfaces	19
1.2.5 Bacterial attachment within the rumen	23
1.2.6 Attachment of <i>Butyrivibrio fibrisolvens</i>	30

1.2.7 Possible extracellular structures of <i>Butyrivibrio fibrisolvens</i> that may be involved in the attachment mechanism	31
1.2.8 Teichoic acids	32
1.2.9 Extracellular polysaccharides	38
1.2.10 Extracellular polymer biosynthesis	41
1.2.10.1 Biosynthesis of teichoic acids	42
1.2.10.1.1 Biosynthesis of wall teichoic acids	42
1.2.10.1.2 Biosynthesis of lipoteichoic acids	44
1.2.10.2 Extracellular polysaccharides biosynthesis	45
1.2.11 Extracellular polymer-biosynthetic genes	49
1.2.12 Genetic manipulation in <i>Butyrivibrio fibrisolvens</i>	50
1.2.13 Aims	53
 Chapter 2 Materials and methods	 55
2.1 General materials	55
2.1.1 Strains	55
2.1.2 Plasmids	55
2.1.3 Chemicals	56
2.2 Methods	57
2.2.1 Working cultures	57
2.2.2 Culture preparations	57
2.2.3 Medium	59
2.2.4 Carbon sources	59
2.2.5 Preparation of anaerobic media	59
2.2.6 Protein determination	60

2.2.7	Estimation of DNA concentration	60
2.2.8	Phenol-chloroform extraction	60
2.2.9	Ethanol precipitation	61
2.2.10	Plasmid isolation from <i>E. coli</i>	61
2.2.11	Plasmid isolation from <i>B. fibrisolvens</i>	62
2.2.12	Chromosomal DNA isolation from <i>B. fibrisolvens</i>	63
2.2.13	Agarose gel electrophoresis	64
2.2.14	Purification of DNA from agarose gel	64
2.2.15	Restriction digestion	64
2.2.16	Southern transfer	65
2.2.17	Prehybridisation and hybridisation	65
2.2.18	Oligo-labelling of a DNA probe	66
2.2.19	Autoradiography	66
2.2.20	Stripping of membranes	67
2.2.21	Amplification of 16S rDNA	67
2.2.22	Determination of dry cell weights	68
2.2.23	Growth characteristics of variants grown on plates	68
2.2.24	Variant stability	69
2.2.25	Cell to cell communication	69
2.2.26	Comparison of extracellular protein profiles	70
2.2.27	Comparison of plasmid profiles	72
2.2.28	Estimation of cellulose degradation in culture	72
2.2.29	Xylanase plate assay	73
2.2.30	CMCase plate assay	73
2.2.31	Quantitative CMCase assay	73

2.2.32 Xylanase activity assay	74
2.2.33 Growth comparison in casein	75
2.2.34 Semiquantitative bacterial proteolytic assay	75
2.2.35 Quantitative enzymatic proteolytic assay	75
2.2.36 Determination of possible step of attachment using SEM	76
2.2.37 Isolation of extracellular polymer using a gradient centrifugation method	77
2.2.38 Measurements of extracellular polymer production	78
2.2.39 Analysis of extracellular polymer production by the cell free medium method	79
2.2.40 Monosaccharide composition of extracellular polymer	80
2.2.41 Fatty acid composition of extracellular polymer	82
2.2.42 Dephosphorylation of linearized plasmid DNA	83
2.2.43 Ligation	84
2.2.44 Preparation of competent <i>E. coli</i> cells for electroporation	84
2.2.45 Preparation of competent <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> cells for electroporation	85
2.2.46 Electroporation of <i>E. coli</i>	86
2.2.47 Electroporation of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i>	86
Chapter 3 Preliminary comparison of the variants	87
3.1 Introduction	87
3.2 Results	88
3.2.1 Growth characteristics of variants on plate and liquid media	88
3.2.2 Stability of variants	95
3.2.3 Cell to cell communication	96

3.2.4	Comparison of extracellular protein profiles	98
3.2.5	Comparison of chromosomal DNA profiles	99
3.2.6	Comparison of plasmid profiles	99
3.2.7	Comparison of 16S rDNA profiles	102
3.3	Discussion	104
Chapter 4 Nutrient utilization		113
4.1	Introduction	113
4.2	Results	115
4.2.1	Growth in soluble carbon sources	115
4.2.2	Growth in insoluble carbon sources	121
4.2.3	Comparison of nitrogen utilisation between <i>B. Fibrisolvens</i> S and L	127
4.3	Discussion	132
Chapter 5 Morphological examination		139
5.1	Introduction	139
5.2	Results	140
5.2.1	Morphological examinations	140
5.2.2	Effect of carbon sources on morphology	147
5.3	Discussion	156
Chapter 6 Characterisation of extracellular polymer		165
6.1	Introduction	165
6.2	Results	168

6.2.1	Extracellular polymer production	168
6.2.2	Monosaccharide composition of extracellular polymer	172
6.2.3	Fatty acid composition of extracellular polymer	177
6.3	Discussion	182
Chapter 7	Genetic complementation	196
7.1	Introduction	196
7.2	Results	199
7.2.1	Plasmid maintenance	199
7.2.2	Plasmid compatibility	200
7.2.3	Transformation of <i>E. coli</i> with <i>B. fibrisovens</i>	
	S chromosomal DNA	200
7.2.4	Complementation of <i>B. fibrisovens</i> S with L DNA	204
7.2.5	Transformation of S with L chromosomal DNA	207
7.2.6	Stability of sticky-like transformants	209
7.2.7	Growth ability of transformants under various conditions	209
7.2.8	Reversion of transformants	209
7.2.9	Recombinant plasmid	214
7.2.10	Total DNA profiles of transformants	214
7.2.11	Hybridisation analysis of transformants	216
7.2.12	Phylogenetic analysis of transformants	218
7.3	Discussion	219
Chapter 8	General discussion and future studies	227
8.1	General discussions	227

8.2 Future studies	243
Appendices:	
A. GC chromatograms and proportions of monosaccharide analysis	244
B. GC chromatograms and proportions of fatty acid analysis	254
C. Medium, buffers and reagents	264
Bibliography	281



## Summary

The attachment of *Butyrivibrio fibrisolvens* to surfaces was studied. *B. fibrisolvens* strain E14, sticky (S) and loose (L) that had been reported previously (Nili and Brooker 1995) were used as models. In preliminary studies, the two cell types were compared; studies included physical and growth characteristics in defined, solid or liquid medium containing various carbon sources, the presence of compounds that may induce or inhibit attachment, and their phenotypic stability. Extracellular protein, chromosomal DNA, plasmid and 16S rDNA profiles of the two variants were examined. Compared to the non-adhering L cells, the adhering S cells were shinier, spherical, more intensely pigmented (yellow), more firmly attached to the agar surface and could only be removed with scraping. After longer incubation, the cells were released from the agar but the colonies tended to stick together, and only became separable when further incubated. In contrast, the L cells were non spherical, loosely attached to the agar and separable at all stages of growth. In liquid medium, the S cells tended to clump during the early stages of growth, and be dispersed at later stages. The L cells were dispersed throughout the medium at all stages of growth. The phenotypes of the 2 variants were stable; both variants maintained their characteristics through multiple passages on solid and in liquid medium. The presence of molecules that induced attachment of S or inhibited attachment of L cells were not detected, but it was noted that S cells produced more extensive extracellular polymer than did L cells. The extracellular proteins, chromosomal DNA, endogenous plasmid, and 16S rDNA profiles of the two variants were identical, indicating that they were of the same species.

The effect of attachment on nutrient utilisation was studied by comparing the growth of the two variants in various carbon or nitrogen sources, as well as their xylanase, CMCase and proteolytic activities. Although not significant, the attachment of S cells seemed to have a slight effect on nutrient utilisation, compared to L cells.

The morphology of the variants were compared and examined by scanning electron microscopy (SEM). Extracellular polymer (EP) biosynthesis and attachment was studied using S and L samples prepared at various stages of growth. The effect of carbon source on morphology was studied using S and L samples prepared from cells grown in the presence of various carbon sources. The L cells seemed unable to spread EP to surfaces or to neighbouring cells, forming globular EP. Compared to other soluble carbon sources, cellobiose seemed to induce more globular (condensed) EP and less polymer spreading. It was also observed that EP might be secreted to the medium at stationary phase.

The level of EP production as well as its monosaccharide and fatty acid composition between S and L cells was compared. The cell associated, secreted or total EP was isolated using gradient centrifugation, cell free medium (Stack 1988) or plate (Berri and Rollings 1995) methods, respectively. The effect of carbon source on the level of EP as well as the monosaccharide and fatty acid composition was also studied. The S cells tended to produce more EP than the L cells; the maximum ratio of EP production between S and L cells was approximately 2:1. There were no differences in the monosaccharide and fatty acid compositions between S and L EP, but the proportions of components did

differ. This was most pronounced in lipid, especially C16:0 content, which was much higher in S than in L EP. Compared to other soluble carbon sources, less EP and reduced C16:0 was produced in cells grown on cellobiose. It was observed that the S and L EP behaved differently during phenol or water/methanol-chloroform extraction, which suggested property differences between their EP. The C16:0 may reflect the presence of lipoteichoic acid (LTA), and there were indications that there may be an association between LTA and extracellular polysaccharide (EPS) in S but not in L EP.

An attempt was made to isolate attachment gene(s). S chromosomal DNA was electroporated into competent *E. coli* or *B. fibrisolvens* E14 L cells using pBHerm plasmid as a vector. No sticky *E. coli* transformants were observed, but sticky-like transformants were observed from L cells that were transformed with S DNA. These transformants were stable through 5 passages under selection pressure (10 g/ml of erythromycin), although some revertants were observed after the 3rd passage when the passage was carried out without selection. Total chromosomal DNA and 16 S rDNA profiles of the transformants were identical to the original variants, and together with hybridisation analysis suggested that the transformants and the variants were related. There were indications that chromosomal integration occurred within the sticky-like transformants, probably due to homology between the donor and the host DNA.

These studies have shown that *B. fibrisolvens* strain E14 S and L cells are closely related and that attachment of S cells is associated with characteristics and lipid

content of their EP. Genetic complementation studies suggest that a change in attachment phenotype can be brought about by chromosomal integration.

## Statement

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Djarot Sasongko Hami Seno 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.

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## List of figures

Figure	page
1.1 General anatomy of ruminant digestive system	3
1.2. Pathways of carbohydrate metabolism in the rumen	8
1.3 Location and classification of teichoic acids	32
1.4 Structures, location and biosynthesis of LTA	34
1.5 Structures of various wall teichoic acids	35
1.6 Extracellular polymers extended from cell surfaces	36
1.7 Possible mechanisms of EPS biosynthesis and assembly	46
1.8 Map of pBHerm plasmid	52
2.1 General procedures for culture preparations	58
3.1 Colonies of S and L variants on agar plate	89
3.2 Colony shapes of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 variant S or L	90
3.3 Broth culture of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 variants S or L.	91
3.4 Broth cultures of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> variant S or L in xylan	92
3.5 Growth of S and L variants in crystalline cellulose	93
3.6 Diagrammatic representation of stability experiment	96
3.7 Diagrammatic representation of cell to cell communication analysis	97
3.8 Extracellular protein profiles of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> variants S and L	98
3.9 Chromosomal DNA profiles of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 variants S and L	100
3.10 Plasmid profiles of S and L variants	101
3.11 Probes used for Southern analysis	102
3.12 Phylogenetic analysis of S and L variants	103

4.1	Growth of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 variants S and L in glucose as a sole carbon source	116
4.2	Growth of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 variants S and L in cellobiose as a sole carbon source	117
4.3	Growth of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 variants in sucrose as a sole carbon source	118
4.4	Growth of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 variants in maltose as a sole carbon source	119
4.5	Growth of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 variants in starch as a sole carbon source	120
4.6	Growth of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 variants S as monitored by optical density and total protein estimation	122
4.7	Growth of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 variants in xylan as a sole carbon source	123
4.8	Growth of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 variants in cellulose as a sole carbon source	124
4.9	Xylanase plate assay of S and L variants	126
4.10	CMCase plate assay of S and L variants	126
4.11	Proteolytic plate assay of S and L variants	128
4.12	Growth of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L in casein as a sole nitrogen source	129
4.13	Growth of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L in casein and ammonium chloride as nitrogen sources	130
4.14	Isolation of extracellular proteins by gradient centrifugation	131
4.15	Proteolytic plate assay	132



5.1	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S at early log phase	142
5.2	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S at log phase	142
5.3	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S at early stationary phase	143
5.4	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S at early stationary phase	143
5.5	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 L at early log phase	144
5.6	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 L at log phase	144
5.7	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 L at early stationary phase	145
5.8	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 L at early stationary phase	145
5.9	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S at stationary phase	146
5.10	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 L at stationary phase	146
5.11	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L grown in glucose	148
5.12	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L grown in cellobiose	149
5.13	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L grown in xylan	150
5.14	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L grown in cellulose	151
5.15	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L grown in sucrose	152
5.16	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L grown in maltose	153
5.17	SEM of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L grown in starch	154
5.18	Secreted extracellular polymer (EP)	155
5.19	Possible steps in EP biosynthesis and attachment of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L	157
5.20	Extracellular polymer of attached and un-attached cells	158
5.21	Cell-cell association of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> C3	159
6.1	Diagrammatic procedures for isolating various EP fractions	167
6.2	Total EP productions of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L cells grown on solid medium plus various carbon sources	169

6.3	Secreted EP from <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L grown in liquid medium containing various carbon sources	170
6.4	Differences between S and L fraction M-EP samples during phenol extraction	171
6.5	Monosaccharide composition of fraction N	173
6.6	Monosaccharide composition of fraction I	174
6.7	Monosaccharide composition of fraction PD	175
6.8	Monosaccharide composition of fraction M	175
6.9	Monosaccharide composition of fraction M EP isolated xylan grown cultures	177
6.10	Fatty acid composition of fraction N	179
6.11	Fatty acid composition of fraction I	179
6.12	Fatty acid composition of fraction M	181
6.13	Fatty acid composition of fraction PD	181
6.14	Differences between water/methanol-chloroform extracted S and L EP samples	183
6.15	Phenol extraction effect on monosaccharide and fatty acids contents of S and L fraction M EP	191
7.1	Restriction analysis of pBHerm plasmid isolated from <i>E. coli</i>	201
7.2	Restriction analysis of pBHerm plasmid isolated from <i>B. fibrisolvens</i>	202
7.3	The presence of host plasmid in <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> transformed by pBHerm	202
7.4	Effect of pBHerm on <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> indigenous plasmid	203
7.5	SEM of <i>E. coli</i> transformed by S DNA	203
7.6	Example of sticky-like transformants	206
7.7	Diagrammatic procedures of transformants stability experiments	210

7.8	Outline of procedures to examine reversion of transformants	211
7.9	Growth of transformants in media with and without erythromycin	212
7.10	Reversion of transformants	213
7.11	Comparison of DNA profiles between variants and transformants	215
7.12	Hybridisation analysis of variants and transformants	217
7.13	Comparison 16S rDNA profiles between S, L and transformants	218
8.1	Possible location for attachment proteins	229
8.2	Possible linkage between LTA and EPS	235
8.3	Possible difference in the extracellular polymer network of S and L cells	236
8.4	Possible effect of fatty acid on extracellular polymer spreading	238

List of tables

Table	page
1.1 Various rumen bacteria	4
1.2 Distribution of major bacterial genera in rumen contents	5
1.3 Characteristic differences between <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> and <i>B. crossotus</i>	17
3.1 Growth ability of S and L variants using various carbon sources	94
4.1 Xylanase and CMCase activities of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L	127
5.1 Differences in morphology between <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 variants S and L	161
5.2 Effect of carbon sources on the morphology of <i>B. fibrisolvens</i> E14 S and L	162
6.1 Galactose and glucose content of fractions M and PD	176
6.2 C16:0 content of fractions N, M and PD	180
7.1 Effect of voltage on transformation efficiency (from S to L)	205
7.2 Effect of resistance on transformation efficiency (from S to L)	205
7.3 Effect of DNA concentrations on transformation efficiency (from S to L)	205
7.4 Effect of plasmid source on transformation efficiency (from S to L)	207
7.5 Effect of competent cell preparation on transformation efficiency (from L to S)	208
7.6 Effect of DNA concentrations on transformation efficiency (from L to S)	208
7.7 Effect of resistance on transformation efficiency (from L to S)	208

## List of abbreviations

S = *B. fibrisolvens* E14 variant S

L = *B. fibrisolvens* E14 variant L

g = glucose

cb = cellobiose

x = xylan

xc = crystalline cellulose

suc = sucrose

m = maltose

st = starch

DF = defined medium

CMC = carboxymethyl cellulose

DFg, DFcb, DFx, DFxc, DFsuc, DFm, DFst indicate defined medium containing glucose, cellobiose, xylan, crystalline cellulose, sucrose, maltose or starch, respectively

DfgE = defined medium containing glucose and erythromycin 10 µg/ml

Sg, Scb, Sx, Sxc, Ssuc, Sm, Sst indicate sample or culture of S variant grown in DFg, DFcb, DFx, DFxc, DFsuc, DFm, or DFst, respectively. Similarly for Lg, Lcb, Lx, Lxc, Lsuc, Lm, Lst.

LB = Luria Bertani

BHI = Brain Heart Infusion

LTA = lipoteichoic acid

WTA = wall teichoic acid

EPS = extracellular polysaccharide

EP = extracellular polymer

DTT = Dithiothreitol

PMSF = Phenyl methyl sulfonyl fluoride