

Transmembrane transport of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons by bacteria and functional regulation of membrane proteins

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Explain the adsorption, uptake and transmembrane transport of PAHs by bacteria.
- Analyze functional regulation of membrane proteins in the transmembrane transport.
- Proteomics technology such as iTRAQ labeling was used to access expressed proteins.
- Single cell analysis technology were used to study the morphological structure.

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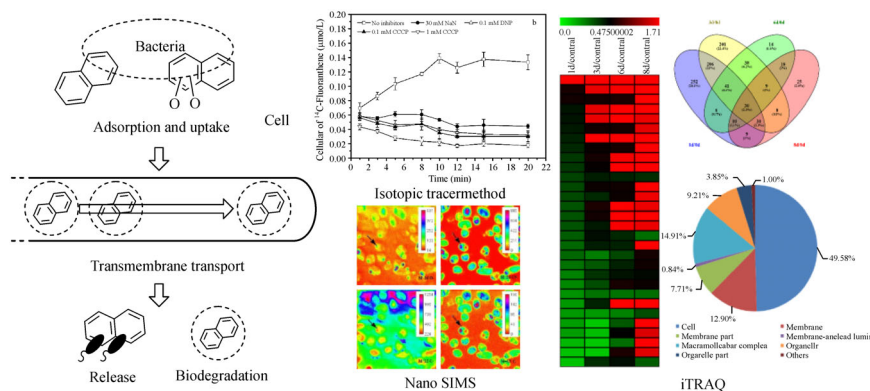
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GRAPHIC ABSTRACT



ABSTRACT

In recent years, increasing research has been conducted on transmembrane transport processes and the mechanisms behind the microbial breakdown of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), including the role of membrane proteins in transmembrane transport and the mode of transmission. This article explains the adsorption, uptake and transmembrane transport of PAHs by bacteria, the regulation of membrane protein function during the transmembrane transport. There are three different regulation mechanisms for uptake, depending on the state and size of the oil droplets relative to the size of the microbial cells, which are (i) direct adhesion, (ii) emulsification and pseudosolubilization, and (iii) interfacial uptake. Furthermore, two main transmembrane transport modes are introduced, which are (i) active transport and (ii) passive uptake and active efflux mechanism. Meanwhile, introduce the proteomics and single cell analysis technology used to address these areas of research, such as Isobaric tags for relative and absolute quantitation (iTRAQ) technology and Nano Secondary ion mass spectrometry (Nano-SIMS). Additionally, analyze the changes in morphology and structure and the characteristics of microbial cell membranes in the process of transmembrane transport. Finally, recognize the microscopic mechanism of PAHs biodegradation in terms of cell and membrane proteins are of great theoretical and practical significance for understanding the factors that influence the efficient degradation of PAHs contaminants in soil and for remediating the PAHs contamination in this area with biotechnology.

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1 Introduction

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are compounds consisting of two or more benzene rings arranged according to certain rules; they usually contain only

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carbon (C) and hydrogen (H), but heterocyclic aromatic hydrocarbons have oxygen (O), nitrogen (N) and/or sulfur (S) atoms (Gan et al., 2009). PAHs constitute a range of potential environmental pollutants, which are often carcinogenic, teratogenic, mutagenic, and highly toxic. In addition, Fluoranthene are considered as the typical persistent organic pollutants because they are difficult to degrade in the environment (Bautista et al., 2009; Hua and Wang, 2012). PAHs in the environment are mainly derived from incomplete combustion of coal, oil, gasoline, wood and other fuels used by humans in industrial and agricultural production, transportation and daily life. Because of their high hydrophobicity, PAHs are stable in soil, water, sediment and the atmosphere, and the magnitude of their toxic effects increases with increases in their molecular weight. PAHs are harmful to the human body, which they can enter through inhalation, ingestion and skin contact, and long-term exposure to PAHs contamination can cause respiratory diseases and cancer (Gao et al., 2016). At present, there are more than 100 known PAHs, and of these, 28 PAHs were among the contaminants that the US Environmental Protection Agency listed in its 2008 call for “priority monitoring of pollutants” (Bansal and Kim, 2015).

Microbial degradation is the main mechanism of PAHs degradation in nature. Because it is economical, safe, and capable of treating various forms of pollutants without creating secondary pollution, microbial remediation technology has been rapidly developed in recent years. For decades, most studies have focused on the physical or chemical factors affecting the biodegradation of PAHs in the aerated zone of soil (Stapleton et al., 1994; Volkerling et al., 1995). However, in recent years, increasing research has been conducted on the transmembrane transport process and the mechanism of microbial breakdown of PAHs, specifically, the role of membrane proteins and the transmission mode in transmembrane transport. Analyzing changes in morphology, structure and characteristics of microbial cell membranes during transmembrane transport and recognizing the microscopic mechanism of PAHs biodegradation in terms of cell and membrane proteins are of great theoretical and practical significance for understanding the factors that improve the degradation efficiency of PAHs contaminants in the aerated soil zone and for remediating PAHs contamination in this area with biotechnology. Degradation of petroleum pollutants by microorganisms can be divided into two ways: intracellular degradation and extracellular degradation. The whole process of degradation can be divided into three steps. The first is the adsorption and uptake of compounds by microorganisms, which is a dynamic equilibrium process. The second is the process by which compounds adsorbed on the surface of the cell membrane enter the cell membrane, which is called transmembrane transport. Finally, the compounds enter the cell membrane of microorganisms and combine with degradation enzymes

for enzymatic reactions (Hua and Wang, 2014). This article explains the adsorption, uptake and transmembrane transport of hydrocarbons by bacteria; the functional regulation of membrane proteins during the transmembrane transport process; and the proteomics and single cell analysis technology used to address these areas of research.

2 Adsorption and uptake of hydrocarbons by bacteria

Adsorption and degradation are two important processes in microbial repair of damage caused by PAHs (Chen et al., 2010; Chen and Ding, 2012). However, at present, more research has been conducted on the microbial degradation of PAHs, and less attention has been paid to the adsorption of PAHs by microorganisms. Some studies have shown that the adsorption of PAHs by microorganisms greatly affects the contamination levels of PAHs in the environment. Microorganisms have abundant adsorption sites, and the mechanism by which pollutants are adsorbed differs. At present, the mechanism of by which microorganisms adsorb water-soluble particles such as heavy metals, dyes and pesticides has been studied in depth for some time. However, the adsorption and mechanism of microorganisms for nonpolar organic pollutants, such as PAHs, have been developed in only recent years (Stringfellow and Alvarez-Cohen, 1999; Xiao et al., 2007; Ke et al., 2010).

Research on the adsorption of PAHs by different bacteria was conducted for the first time in 1999 and revealed that the ability of different species and different strains of bacteria to adsorb phenanthrene differed; for example, the adsorption ability of *Nocardia* bacteria was the strongest, as it was related to cell hydrophobicity, but other parameters (such as the specific surface area, gram characteristics, polymerization characteristics, surface protein, and carbohydrate content) were not related. In addition, naphthalene could be added to reduce the adsorption of phenanthrene, indicating that phenanthrene undergoes surface-specific adsorption. Some special effects also play an important role in the adsorption process of PAHs onto bacteria (Stringfellow and Alvarez-Cohen, 1999). Researchers studied the adsorption of phenanthrene to gram-negative *Escherichia coli* and found that complex cations could neutralize the negative charges on the surface of bacteria and thus eliminate hydrophilic groups such as organic acids, proteins and polysaccharides, thus reducing the hydrophilicity and increasing the hydrophobicity on the surface of bacteria and thereby increasing the capacity of bacteria to adsorb phenanthrene by 1.5–4 times (Xiao et al., 2007).

The adsorption of microorganisms can promote the degradation of pollutants. Although the adsorption of PAHs by microorganisms decreases the rate of microbial degradation in the short-term, the PAHs adsorbed by microorganisms are eventually degraded with the prolon-

gation of incubation time. In addition, some microorganisms secrete extracellular polymers or surfactants, which contain a large number of water molecules, and through the combination of hydrophobic forces and hydrophobic organic pollutants, thus promote the release of pollutants into soil and other substances where the microorganism can readily adsorb them, thereby shortening the distance between pollutants and microorganisms and ultimately increasing the degradation and utilization of pollutants by microorganisms (Lai et al., 2009; Jia et al., 2011). Furuno et al. (2010) proved by agar block simulation experiments that the mycelia of growing fungi adsorbed PAHs and stored them in lipid vesicles, which transported them by protoplasmic flow in mycelia, from which they were released; this finding can be used to explain bacterial degradation at release sites. Scheme of the proposed steps involved in mycelial PAHs transport. The hypha (light dotted) contains lipid-rich vesicles (circles) which are transported inside the hypha via cytoplasmic streaming (indicated by the arrow inside the hypha). The steps are (i) PAHs uptake from the source, (ii) transport inside the hyphae, and (iii) release from the hyphae in the presence of a contaminant sink (e.g., bacteria) (Fig. 1). This process is important for the remediation of contaminants in soil environments where bacterial mobility is usually poor (Furuno et al., 2010; Schamfuss et al., 2013; Yin et al., 2015).

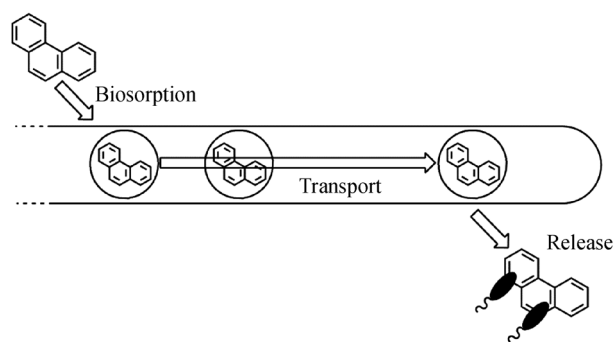


Fig. 1 Scheme of mycelia fluoranthene biosorption, transport and release (Schamfuss et al., 2013).

Despite the high hydrophobicity and the low bioavailability of PAHs, the hydrophobic nature of the bacterial surface has been cited as a factor in the growth of cells on water-insoluble hydrophobic substrates (Rosenberg, 1993). Typically, there are three different regulation mechanisms, depending on the state and size of the oil droplets relative to the size of the microbial cells (**Table 1**): (i) direct adhesion, where which microorganisms attach to the soluble hydrocarbon drops, which are much smaller than cells, and substrate uptake presumably takes place through diffusion or active transport at the point of contact

(Miyata et al., 2004); (ii) emulsification and pseudosolubilization, which are mediated by cell biosurfactant contact with emulsified small hydrocarbon droplets (Bouchez-Naitali et al., 1999; García-Junco et al., 2001); and (iii) interfacial uptake, in which highly specific uptake systems have affinity for pollutants and the pollution-attached microorganisms grow as a confluent biofilm (Westgate et al., 1995).

2.1 Direct adhesion

Bacterial uptake of dissolved PAHs in the aqueous phase is generally only applicable to water-soluble PAHs and is also known as the “single diffusion-dissolution uptake” model. When microorganisms directly absorb hydrocarbons dissolved in water, they use dissolved PAHs as carbon and energy sources to grow. At this time, the efficiency of microorganism adsorption and uptake of hydrocarbons is closely related to the solubility of hydrocarbons in water. If the growth rate of microorganisms is slow and the solubility of hydrocarbons is high, microorganisms will have enough carbon and energy to use (Rosenberg et al., 1980). When the bacteria continue to grow, the PAHs dissolved in the water phase can no longer supply sufficient carbon and energy needed for the growth of bacteria. When the solubility of PAHs in water droplets become undetectable, the growth rate of microorganisms due to adsorbing and absorbing hydrocarbons also drops sharply (Thomas et al., 1986). Stucki et al. indicated that the solubility of hydrocarbons in water limits the degradation efficiency of hydrocarbons by microorganisms (Stucki and Alexander, 1987). In addition, the extracellular and organic substances (EPS) play an important role in direct adsorption. EPS produced by bacteria is a key factor mediating the formation of biofilm of bacteria attached to other surfaces (Pan et al. 2012). So as to improve the bioavailability of insoluble PAHs and promote biodegradation. EPS isolated from *Zoogloea* sp. and *Aspergillus Niger* (*a. Niger*) were used to study the degradation of pyrene in contaminated soil. The results showed that any kind of EPS could degrade pyrene, and the reduction amount of pyrene increased with the increase of the initial concentration of EPS, indicating that EPS plays a very important role in the direct adsorption of PAHs by bacteria (Chunyun et al., 2011). In addition, Compared to inoculation of EPS-extracted bacteria, the inoculation of bacteria without EPS-extraction improved biodegradation of both PHE and PYR. EPS forms a microenvironment on the surface of bacterial cells, helping them avoid direct contact between PHE and PYR molecules on the surface of bacterial cells, thus protecting the cells from hydrophobic damage. Meanwhile, EPS is conducive to the formation of bacteria attaching to the surface of humus and biofilm, which may allow higher bacterial growth rate (Zhang et al., 2015).

Table 1 Three different regulation mechanisms in the adsorption and uptake of hydrocarbons by bacteria

Adsorption type	Microbial species	Hydrocarbons species	Parameters and results	References
Direct adhesion	<i>Pseudomonas</i> sp. M1	<i>n</i> -Hexadecane	The degradation was not significantly affected by 4 mM EDTA.	Goswami and Singh (1991)
	<i>Acinetobacter</i> sp. CR	<i>n</i> -Heneicosane	Higher impeller speed resulted in both lower microbial growth and lower <i>n</i> -alkane degradation rate of the bacterium, although it increased the specific surface area of the oil, which was measured by a previously developed device. This result was due to the decreased number of cells adhering to the oil surface, i.e., intense agitation inhibited the adhesion of cells to the oil surface.	Hori et al. (2002)
	<i>Rhodococcus equi</i> OU2	Hexadecane	The surfactant is unnecessary for hexadecane to be degraded by OU2	Bouchez-Naitali and Vandecasteele (2008)
Emulsification and pseudosolubilization	<i>Rhodococcus batkomurensis</i> EN3	Diesel oil	Tergitol 15 S, APG, LAE 9 and Tween 80 were effective only to a small extent in the enhancement of the biodegradation of diesel oil, and SDS inhibited rather than stimulated the degradation of diesel oil.	Lee et al. (2006)
	<i>Pseudomonas</i> sp. N1	<i>n</i> -Hexadecane	The degradation was strongly inhibited by the 4 mM EDTA.	Goswami and Singh (1991)
	<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> GL1	Hexadecane	The surfactant is necessary for hexadecane to be degraded by GL1.	Bouchez-Naitali and Vandecasteele (2008)
	<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> AT10	Total petroleum hydrocarbons, the group of isoprenoids from the aliphatic fraction and the alkylated PAHs from the aromatic fraction	The rhamnolipid MAT10 reduced the surface tension (cST) up to 26.8 mN/m and the interfacial tension (cIT) against hexadecane to 1 mN/m. The CMC of MAT10 was 150 mg/L.	Geddes et al. (2008)
	Mixed consortia of <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> strain PG201, <i>Rhodococcus</i> sp. H131A, and a <i>Pseudomonas</i> strain which produced the rhamnolipid Dyna270	Hexadecane, dodecane, benzene, toluene, <i>iso</i> -octane, pristane (2,6,10,14-tetramethyl pentadecane), naphthalene, and phenanthrene	The rhamnolipid biosurfactants enhanced the rate of linear alkane biodegradation more than the biodegradation rate of the monoaromatics.	Inakollu et al. (2004)

(Continued)				
Adsorption type	Microbial species	Hydrocarbons species	Parameters and results	References
	<i>Rhodococcus baikonurensis</i> EN3	Diesel oil	These hydrocarbon solubilization studies for pure hydrocarbons and mixed hydrocarbon systems have indicated that the biosurfactant shows hydrocarbon specificity, with hydrocarbon substrate packed within the micelle core and is influenced by the size and shape of the hydrocarbon substrate in the mixed waste systems.	Lee et al. (2006)
	<i>Rhodococcus</i> sp.	Pyrene	The experimental kinetic data were fitted well with a mathematical model showing PAHs uptake both from the interface and from the aqueous medium by a population consisting of adsorbed cells in dynamic equilibrium with cells in the aqueous medium; interfacial uptake was predominant in these experiments.	Bouchez et al. (1997)
	<i>Mycobacterium</i> PYR-1	PAHs	Results showed that the agitation rate affected cell growth and PAH degradation rates, while the substrate concentration did not; these are two characteristics of systems that exhibit an interfacial uptake mechanism. Moreover, detailed examination using fluorescence microscopy revealed that, in addition to associating with the aqueous-organic interface, this bacterium exists exclusively on the organic side of the interface.	MacLeod and Daugulis (2005)
	<i>Candida lipolytica</i>	Hexadecane	Interfacial tension between oil and water and Sauter mean drop size decreased as cultivation proceeded.	Nakahara et al. (1977)
	<i>Candida lipolytica</i> NRRL Y-6795 <i>Candida intermedia</i> IF0 0761 <i>Candida tropicalis</i> ATCC 20336 <i>Saccharomyces cerevisiae</i> HANSEN IF0 0305	<i>n</i> -Decane	<i>C. intermedia</i> and <i>C. tropicalis</i> , which can utilize hydrocarbon, adhere well to hydrocarbon, but <i>S. cerevisiae</i> , which cannot utilize hydrocarbon, did not adhere.	Miura et al. (1977)

2.2 Emulsification and pseudosolubilization

In the process of bacterial degradation of PAHs, surfactants often improve the bioavailability of PAHs and accelerate the mass transfer rate of microorganisms such that PAHs can be degraded by microorganisms more quickly. These surfactants, including fatty acids, proteins, lipids and extracellular polymers, are secreted by the microorganisms themselves. For some reaction processes, surfactants can also be artificially added to improve the degradation rate. The surface activity of the surfactant is due to the polarity and nonpolarity of the molecule itself. Hydrophobic groups prevent the surfactant from dissolving in water and migrate away from the water, while hydrophilic groups force the molecule to enter the water (Bramwell and Laha, 2000).

PAHs in soils mostly exist in the form of Non-Aqueous Phase Liquids (NAPLs), such that they degrade like hydrocarbons in the aqueous phase. PAHs in unsaturated soils are trapped and degraded through the reduction of interfacial tension during contact with bacteria. Goswami et al. indicated that bacteria can ingest hydrocarbons in soil by direct contact. However, bacteria cannot directly adhere to solid substrates. Therefore, hydrocarbons in soil need to be dissolved before contact with bacteria so that they can adsorbed and degraded (Goswami et al., 1983). The kinetic relationship between the dissolution rate of solid substrates in soil and the growth rate of microorganisms was studied by Mulder et al. The results showed that the degradation rate of naphthalene by *Pseudomonas* sp. was limited by the

dissolution rate of naphthalene. However, the products secreted by bacteria did not play a substantial role in improving the solubility (Mulder et al., 1998). Adsorption of surfactant molecules to soil depends on the properties of the soil and the surfactant (Edwards et al., 1992, Edwards et al., 1994). Although surfactant adsorption is an adverse process for micellar solubilization (West and Harwell, 1992), it may play an important role in promoting transport of adsorbed substrates. A schematic overview of the interactions between bacteria, soil, pollutants, and surfactants by Volkerling et al. (1997). is presented in Fig. 2: I. sorption of pollutant, II. sorption of surfactant molecules by soil, III. solubilization of pollutant, IV. uptake of pollutant from the water phase by bacteria, V. partitioning of pollutant between the water phase and the micelles; VI. sorption of micelles by bacteria; VII. direct uptake of pollutant from the solid phase by bacteria; and VIII. sorption of bacteria by soil. However, due to the specificity of the soil itself, the interaction between soil, microorganisms, PAHs and biological surfactants is more complex in the actual remediation process.

2.3 Interfacial uptake

Bacteria are hydrophilic, while PAHs are highly hydrophobic. Therefore, bacteria overcome their own hydrophilic characteristics to absorb hydrophobic PAHs for degradation in a process shown feasible in current studies. Westgate et al. indicated that microorganisms contact hydrocarbon substrates at the liquid-liquid interface for

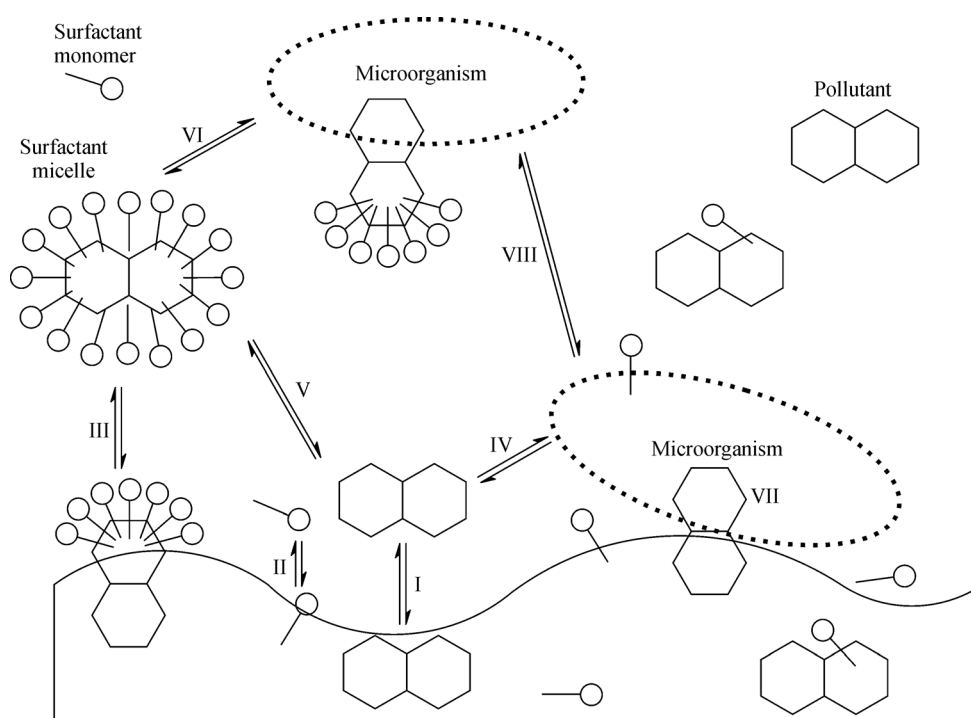


Fig. 2 Schematic overview of the interactions between bacteria, soil, pollutants, and surfactants (Volkerling et al., 1997).

adsorption and uptake. During interfacial contact, the degradation rate depends on the concentration of the solvent phase. Therefore, a high affinity between the microorganisms and solvent phase (substrate) is required (Westgate et al., 1995). A series of kinetic studies on pyrene degradation by *Rhodococcus* sp. showed that the solubility of microorganisms in the aqueous phase could be neglected when the cell density at the interface was high and the transfer rate of substrates to the aqueous phase was low. In this case, the uptake mode of PAHs by microorganisms was mainly demonstrated by the interface uptake mode (Bouchez et al., 1997). The degradation of PAHs by *Mycobacterium* PYR-1 was studied by MacLeod et al. As shown by fluorescence microscopy, bacteria are mainly located at the organic phase interface when they take up PAHs (Fig. 3) (MacLeod and Daugulis, 2005).

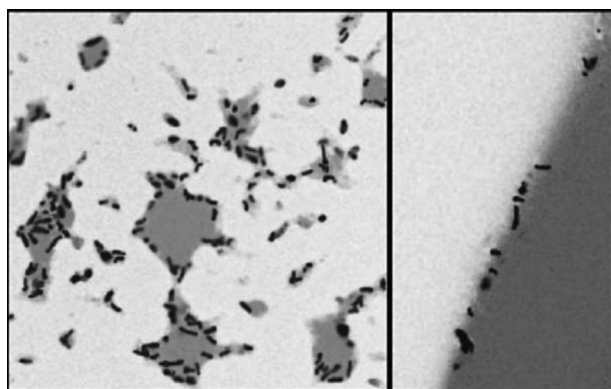


Fig. 3 Uptake of PAHs by *Mycobacterium* PYR-1 examined using fluorescence microscopy (MacLeod and Daugulis, 2005).

3 Transmembrane transport and biodegradation of hydrocarbons by bacteria

3.1 Transmembrane transport of hydrocarbons by bacteria

Passive transport and active are two kinds of transmembrane transport by which hydrocarbons are taken up by bacteria (Table 2). In passive transport, matter is transferred from areas of high concentration to areas of low concentration by the concentration gradient and includes the processes of simple diffusion and alienation diffusion. Simple diffusion, also known as free diffusion, is characterized by pollutants that are spread along the concentration gradient, no requirement for added during transport and no assistance from membrane proteins (Borbás et al., 2016; Foster and Miklavcic, 2016). The differentiating characteristic of alienation diffusion is that the rate of transfer is high such that, within a certain range, it is proportional to the concentration of the substance being transported. In contrast, active transport has the following four characteristics: it can be transported against the concentration gradient, it requires energy or is coupled

with a process for releasing energy, it relies on transport proteins in the membrane, and it is selective and specific (Vedovato and Gadsby, 2014).

Hearn et al. (2008) proposed that bacterial biodegradation of hydrocarbons requires the passage of hydrophobic substrate across the cell membrane, which means transmembrane transport of hydrocarbons is the first step in biodegradation. Batman et al. found that naphthalene crosses the membrane of *Pseudomonas putida* PpG1064 by simple diffusion because ATP was not essential for association with or movement of the compound into the cell (Bateman et al., 1986). However, Bugg et al. (2000) found two conflicting transport mechanisms for PAHs uptake by *Pseudomonas fluorescens* LP6a: passive diffusion and excretion by an active efflux mechanism. The isotopic tracer method was used by Hua and Wang (2014) and Li et al. (2014) to analyze the transmembrane transport process of hydrocarbons. Hua and Wang (2014) investigated the transmembrane transport process of ^{14}C -octadecane by *Pseudomonas* sp. DG17 and found that addition of the energy inhibitor NaN_3 inhibited the uptake of ^{14}C -octadecane by *Pseudomonas* sp. DG17, suggesting that the transmembrane transport of ^{14}C -octadecane into *Pseudomonas* sp. DG17 is based on an active transport process that requires energy. Li et al. (2014) investigated the transmembrane transport process of ^{14}C -fluoranthene by *Rhodococcus* sp. BAP-1 and demonstrated that the mechanism for fluoranthene travel across the cell membrane of *Rhodococcus* sp. BAP-1 requires energy. In this study, Figure 4 showed that when the ATP inhibitors were absence, after incubation for 10 min, the cellular ^{14}C -fluoranthene level was 0.1384 ± 0.016 mol/L, and then at 12 min declined to 0.1255 ± 0.076 mol/L, after that the cellular ^{14}C -fluoranthene level was maintained at 0.1330 ± 0.010 mol/L at 20 min. This finding suggests that the fluoranthene concentration between cells is kept below the equilibrium level by the efflux pump. But in the presence of inhibitors, the uptake and efflux processes were strongly prevented. These finding demonstrated that the mechanism for fluoranthene travel across the cell membrane in *Rhodococcus* sp. BAP-1 requires energy, which was an energy-dependent active transport process (Fig. 4).

3.2 Biodegradation of hydrocarbons by bacteria

Changes in the environment include changes in temperature, salinity, nutrient elements, etc., which are the basic factors affecting the biodegradation process of PAHs by microorganisms.

As the temperature has a direct impact on microbial enzymatic reactions, Suszek-Łopatka et al. (2016) investigated the degradation of microorganisms at different temperatures, specifically, as the temperature increased from 15°C to 30°C , and found that, when the soil organic matter content was high, the degradation rate of micro-

Table 2 Passive and active transmembrane transport of hydrocarbons by bacteria

Type of transport	Microbial species	Hydrocarbon species	Features and conclusions	References
Active transport	<i>Pseudomonas putida</i>	Toluene	The results show that the efflux system in <i>P. putida</i> S12 is specific for organic solvents and does not export antibiotics or other known substrates of multidrug-resistant pumps.	Isken and De Bont (2000)
	<i>Pseudomonas putida</i> KT2442	Toluene	Solute molecules are transported across the cell membrane by consuming energy of an inverse concentration gradient with the participation of pump proteins.	Fukumori et al. (1998)
	<i>Pseudomonas putida</i> DOT-T1E	1,2,4-[C-14] Trichlorobenzene, toluene, xylenes, benzene	The concentration of organic molecules at the cell membrane increased with the addition of energy inhibitors.	Ramos et al. (1998)
	<i>Pseudomonas</i> sp. DG17	Octadecane	Addition of the energy inhibitor NaN_3 inhibited the uptake of ^{14}C -octadecane by <i>Pseudomonas</i> sp. DG17.	Hua and Wang (2014)
	<i>Rhodococcus</i> sp. BAP-1	Fluoranthene	Demonstrated that the mechanism for fluoranthene travel across the cell membrane of <i>Rhodococcus</i> sp. BAP-1 requires energy	Li et al. (2014)
Passive uptake and active efflux mechanism	Mixed microbial consortium <i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i> , <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> , <i>Serratia liquefaciens</i> , <i>Pseudomonas fluorescens</i>	Phenol	This study was carried out to understand the effect of varying sublethal concentrations of phenol on isolated individual bacterial cultures.	Sharma et al. (2002)
Assisted diffusion of ingestible material and an active efflux mechanism	<i>Pseudomonas fluorescens</i> LP6a	Phenanthrene	The mechanism of transport of PAHs by <i>Pseudomonas fluorescens</i> LP6a, a PAM-degrading bacterium, was studied by inhibiting membrane transport and measuring the resulting change in cellular uptake. The data were consistent with the presence of two conflicting transport mechanisms: uptake by passive diffusion and an energy-driven efflux system to transport PAHs out of the cell.	Bugg et al. (2000)

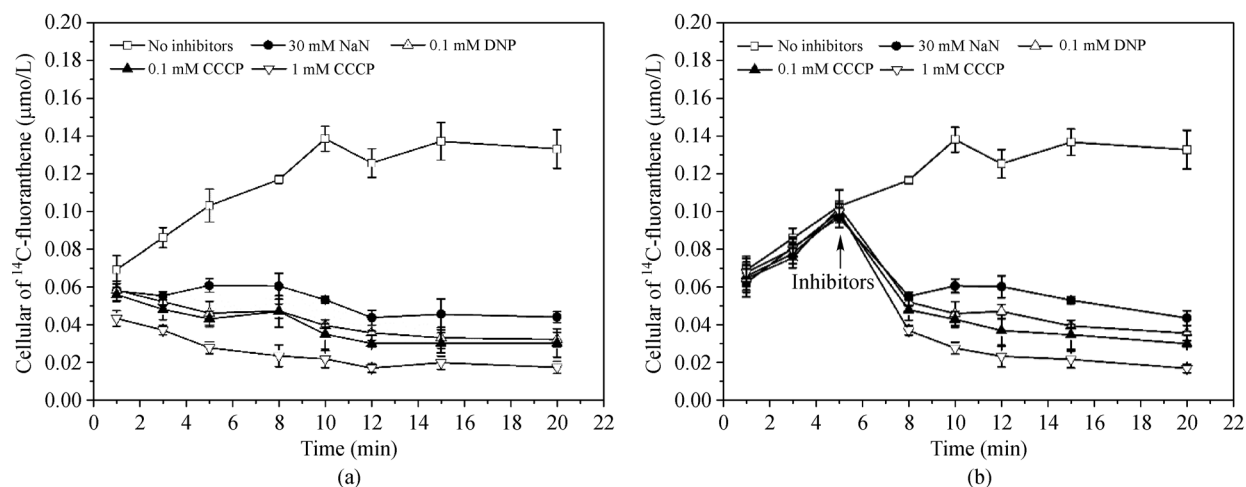


Fig. 4 Effect of different inhibitors on the trans-membrane transport of ¹⁴C-fluoranthene by *Rhodococcus* sp. BAP-1 was added as an inhibitors at 0 min (a) and 5 min (b) (Li et al., 2014).

organisms for phenanthrene is significantly improved. Salt is an indispensable factor in the process of microbial growth and metabolism, and the effects of salinity change on the emulsification and the solubility of naphthalene were studied by Abouseoud et al. (2010); the results showed that the solubility rate of naphthalene decreased significantly under high-salinity conditions.

The biodegradation of PAHs requires suitable redox conditions, and the content of oxygen in soil is affected to a large extent by moisture, ventilation and other conditions. Milton et al. (2015) found that under permanent hypoxia, very little PAHs is degraded within 60 days, and in permanently oxygen-rich soil, bacteria degraded most of the PAHs within 15 days. Nutritional elements are important limiting factors for microbial growth and metabolism and thus the maintenance of microbial populations, and the types of nutrients required by different microorganisms differ. Appropriate addition of carbon sources or nitrogen sources can improve the activity of microorganisms in the soil, thus improving the degradation efficiency of the target pollutants. Studies by Jonsson and Östberg (2011) have shown that adding additional carbon sources, especially lactic acid and vitamins, during the degradation of phenanthrene can effectively promote the degradation of this compound. The content of organic matter is the determining factor for microbial type and quantity in the aerated soil zone, especially organic matter that contributes to a high concentration of carbon, which will have a great influence on the bioavailability of PAHs. Tian et al. (2017) found that a certain amount of amino acids in the soil can promote the growth of microorganisms, thus improving the removal efficiency of pyrene in the soil.

Changes in the enzyme environment of the bacterial envelope will also affect the biodegradation process of PAHs as they can be developed plant roots in the aerated

zone of soil, which provide enough growth surface area for microorganisms but also create a good degradation environment. A large number of root secretions and cells from shedding root crowns promote biochemical reactions in the soil, and plant root secretion of some special chemicals, such as low molecular weight organic acids, can regulate the pH of the soil (Polak et al., 2019). For different species of plants, the root surface area, root secretions, enzymes and other types and quantities of biomaterial will be significantly different, resulting in rhizosphere soil for which PAHs degradation differences are very large (Xiao et al., 2015). Soil enzymes are an important in soil metabolism, and the enzymes mainly involved in PAHs degradation in soil are oxygenase, dehydrogenase, phosphatase and lignin enzymes. Lu and Lu (2015) found that the common interaction between plants, fungi and indigenous microorganisms stimulated microbial growth, increased the activity of polyphenol oxidase in soil, and increased the removal rate of PAHs.

The activity of catalase, as an index of soil fertility and ecological toxicity, plays an important role in converting aromatic compounds into quinone compounds (Xu et al., 2014). Wang et al. (2014) detected 6 low molecular weight organic acids, noting the activity of succinic acid and lactic acid in rhizosphere sediments, in an experiment in which mangrove forests were planted to remediate PAHs-contaminated soil, and the removal rate of mixed PAHs in sediments was improved. Changes in the microbial community structure of the aerated soil zone also have an impact on the bioavailability of PAHs. Ling et al. (2015) studied the response of endogenous bacteria and rhizosphere bacteria to PAHs pollution in salt marsh plants and found that endogenous bacterial communities played an important role in the remediation of contaminated soil by plants. Tejeda-Agredano et al. (2013) found that with the increase in the number of degradable bacteria, the soil

bacterial community structure undergoes great changes and PAHs degradation capacity enhances the direction of development.

4 Functional regulation of membrane proteins in the transmembrane transport process

Membrane protein is an important part of the cell membrane, and it is also the main component of cell membrane function (Wang et al. 2016). According to the different binding mechanisms used by membrane proteins and lipid molecules, membrane proteins can be divided into two kinds of membrane integration: peripheral and lipid anchor proteins (Miyata et al., 2004). Because of the difficulty of separating proteins and their localized distribution in cell membranes, membrane proteins can be further categorized as external membrane and intrinsic membrane proteins (Bouchez-Naïtali et al., 1999).

External membrane proteins are mainly distributed on the inner surface of the cell membrane, with noncovalent bonds either formed at the distal end of the intrinsic protein or in combination with the hydrophilic end of the phospholipid molecule; for instance, water-soluble proteins, which constitute 20%~30% of total membrane protein content, bind through hydrogen bonds or ionic bonds and are associated with membrane lipid molecules, but these proteins can also bind indirectly to cell membranes through the interaction with intrinsic proteins (Westgate et al., 1995). Intrinsic proteins, also known as integrated proteins, account for 70%~80% of the total amount of membrane protein, are embedded in the phospholipid double molecular layer to varying degrees and are both parent and molecule bearing. The binding of the inner membrane protein to the cell membrane is very tight; the inner membrane protein exposed outside the cell membrane is hydrophilic, contains more polar amino acids, and is close to the phospholipid molecules, while the membrane protein embedded in the phospholipid double layer is composed of nonpolar amino acids that interact with the hydrophobic ends of the lipid molecules (Volkering et al., 1997).

Transmembrane proteins are intrinsic and span the double-layer lipid-protein membrane, with one end internally positioned in cytoplasm and the other end exposed to the external surface of the cell membrane; in theory, transmembrane proteins can float horizontally and can exchange cellular and environmental matter, energy and information (Rosenberg et al., 1980). The two main types of transporter proteins present on cell membranes are carrier and channel proteins (Goswami et al., 1983). Carrier proteins transfer solutes to the opposite side of the cell membrane by changing their own structure, for which some, such as ATP-driven carriers, require energy, while

others do not need energy because they directly assist in diffusion (Thomas et al., 1986). Channel proteins form a hydrophilic channel through which specific solutes pass, and all channel proteins transport the solute in a way that assists diffusion (Stucki and Alexander, 1987).

There are two basic types of transmembrane proteins: (i). The alpha-helix protein is found in the endometrium of bacterial cells, in the membranes in eukaryotic cells, and in the outer membranes of some eukaryotic cells (Almén et al., 2009), and (ii) the beta-cylindrical protein is found only in the outer membranes of gram-negative bacteria, the cell walls of gram-positive bacteria, the outer membrane of mitochondria and the membrane around chromatin. Studies such as that of Lepore et al. (2011) show that most microorganisms take up nutrients with the help of a membrane pore protein, which has an outer membrane protein of multiple beta-cylindrical orifice structures, and the beta-cylindrical structure has universally conserved extracellular membrane proteins. At present, two main transmembrane transporter proteins in microorganisms are *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) FadL and OmpW proteins, which feature two distinct actions.

4.1 FadL family protein

The *E. coli* FadL protein is a kind of extracellular membrane protein that can play a role in the ingestion of hydrophobic components and cross-membrane transport. The FadL transmembrane protein is an integral part of cell ingestion of long-chain fatty acids and has a cell cavity region associated with the TonB transporter protein, which can close its beta-cylindrical structure (van den Berg et al., 2004). Call et al. (2016) found that the absence of FadL family membrane protein can lead to the inability of *E. coli* to ingest octane, and after the introduction of a plasmid that encodes FADL into *E. coli*, the ability to ingest octane was restored; Zhou et al. (2015), when studying the tolerance of *E. coli* BL21 to benzene and its ability to transport membrane proteins associated with benzene, found 16 types of membrane protein, including the outer membrane protein FadL.

Current studies have found four species of transmembrane proteins associated with BTEX transport, such as the TodX membrane protein in *Pseudomonas putida* F1 (Wang et al., 1995), Tbx membrane protein in *Ralstonia pickettii* PKO1 (Kahng et al., 2000), XylN protein in *P. putida* (Kasai et al., 2001) and Tmox membrane protein in *Pseudomonas mendocina* (Ramos-González et al., 2002), as shown in Fig. 5. These four kinds of outer membrane protein have approximately 60% structural similarity and approximately 20% gene similarity. An important feature of the FADL crystal structure is the torsion of the inward side of the third beta chain (S3), which forms the beta-cylindrical orifice structure that may be related to its function (Hearn et al., 2008).

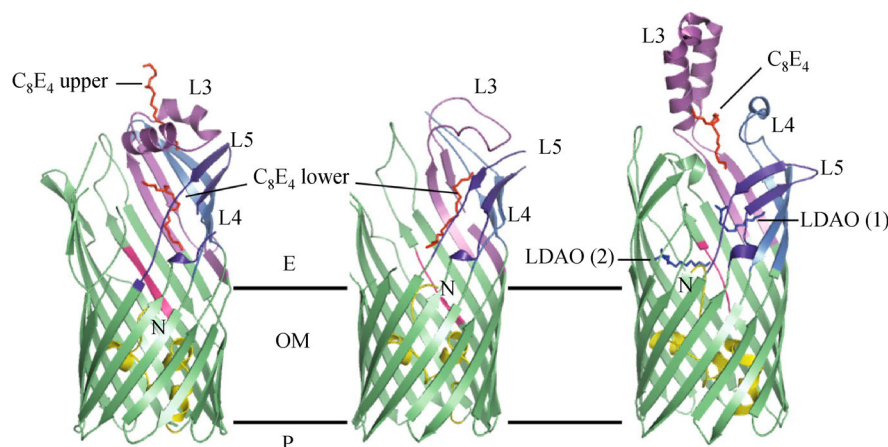


Fig. 5 Structural features of TodX, TbuX, and FadL [TodX (left), TbuX (center), FadL (right)] (Ramos-González et al., 2002).

4.2 OmpW family protein

The *E. coli* OmpW protein is a common transmembrane protein in gram-negative bacteria. A study shows that the OmpW protein is composed of 200–230 amino acids that forms 8 beta chain strands of the beta-cylindrical orifice (2.7 Å resolution), forming a channel that has a certain hydrophobicity, as indicated by a multitude of *n*-dodecyl-N,N-dimethylamine-N-oxide hydrophobic molecules in the hydrophobic channel (Hong et al., 2006), as shown in Fig. 6.

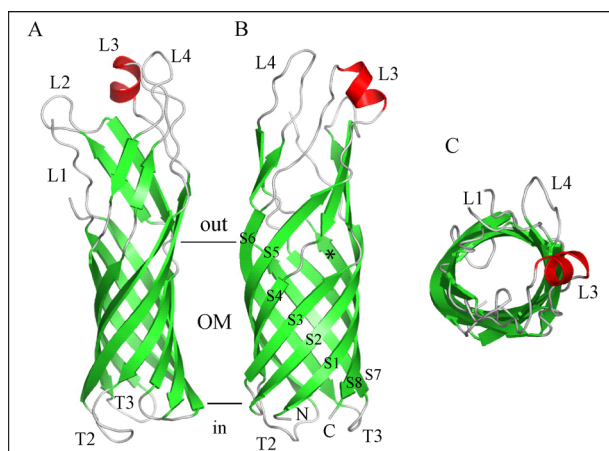


Fig. 6 Structural features of OmpW (Hong et al., 2006).

Studies have shown that OmpW protein makes bacteria resistant to complement systems mediated by bypass pathways, as explained by Li et al. (2016): The study found binding of OmpW to a complement regulating protein, H factor, which is a major bypass pathway inhibitor; the results showed that the combination of OmpW and H factor is an important means for bacteria to avoid the attack of the complement system. In addition, OmpW family proteins

can assume the role of carriers in the transmembrane transport of hydrophobic molecules, such as medium-chain alkanes and naphthalene (Vanbeilen et al., 1992; Eaton, 1994), and participate in the regulation of osmotic pressure in a high-salinity environment (10%, w/v) such that microorganisms maintain the ability to exert a good biodegradation effect (Wu et al., 2006).

In addition, by adding the surfactant Tween 80, the expression of some ion transporter proteins in cell membranes (such as those for H^+) increases (Liu et al., 2017). A plasmid has been used to show that H^+ -ATPase is a universal electrical H^+ pump that uses energy from ATP to pump H^+ into the extracellular membrane. Its key function is to produce an H^+ electrochemical gradient at the plasma membrane, which provides the driving force for the active transport of ions and metabolites. The transmembrane transport of PAHs cannot be separated from the driving force of the H^+ pump. Similarly, the H^+ -ATPase in cytoplasmic membrane of soybean has shown consistency in its ability to take in phenanthrene (Yin et al., 2015).

5 Proteomics and single cell analysis technology

5.1 Proteomics technology

In recent years, proteomics technology and the recently emerging single cell analysis technology have been used to analyze the localization, catalytic properties and structural changes of proteins in cells from the perspective of molecular biology and are used for studying the morphology of cells at the single cell and subcellular levels (Martorana et al., 2016, Taha et al., 2015). Knowledge of the structural and functional characteristics help to better understand the function of microbial cell membrane proteins from a microscopic perspective and advances

comprehensive understanding about the changes in the ability of microbial cell membrane proteins to regulate the functions of transmembrane transport and the metabolism of PAHs (Wang et al., 2019). Proteomics technology is based on the proteome and is used to study the composition and regulation of proteins based on the overall activity level, and it includes two-dimensional electrophoresis (2-DE), biological mass spectrometry, bioinformatics and differential proteomics technologies (Murthy et al., 2015) (Table 3).

Isobaric tags for relative and absolute quantitation (iTRAQ) is a differential protein quantification technique that uses a variety of isotopic reagents to label N-terminal or lysine side chains of protein peptides. This peptide group was compared with the results from high-throughput mass spectrometry for simultaneous analysis of protein expression among eight samples. The high-throughput screening technique has commonly been used in quantitative proteomics in recent years (Ross et al., 2004). Clusters of orthologous groups of proteins (COGs), gene ontology (GO) (Table 4) and Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes (KEGG) have been utilized to represent major phylogenetic lineages and unify the representations of gene and gene product attributes across all species.

Wang et al. (2019) studied the regulation mechanism of

proteins in bacteria *Rhodococcus* sp. BAP-1 that are the highly efficient in degrading fluoranthene and used iTRAQ technology combined with LC-MS/MS, used to cluster proteins based on differential spectral patterns, and bioinformatics analysis. Through COG (Fig. 7), GO and KEGG (Fig. 8) pathway enrichment analysis, it was found that fluoranthene significantly changed protein expression during metabolism and biosynthesis and most of the differentially expressed proteins involved in metabolism and energy production. In addition, *Rhodococcus* sp. BAP-1 upregulated aldehyde dehydrogenase, cytochrome c oxidase and oligopeptide transport ATP binding proteins, and downregulated several proteins that regulate fluorescein exposure.

Zhao et al. (2015) identified 79 differentially expressed proteins, including some surface proteins and some proteins involved in quorum sensing, using iTRAQ technology during their study of the minimally inhibitory concentration of *S. suis* to induce erythromycin inhibition of biofilm formation.

5.2 Single cell analysis technology

In the field of cell biology, various novel imaging analysis techniques are used to study the morphological structure and functional properties of cells at the single cell,

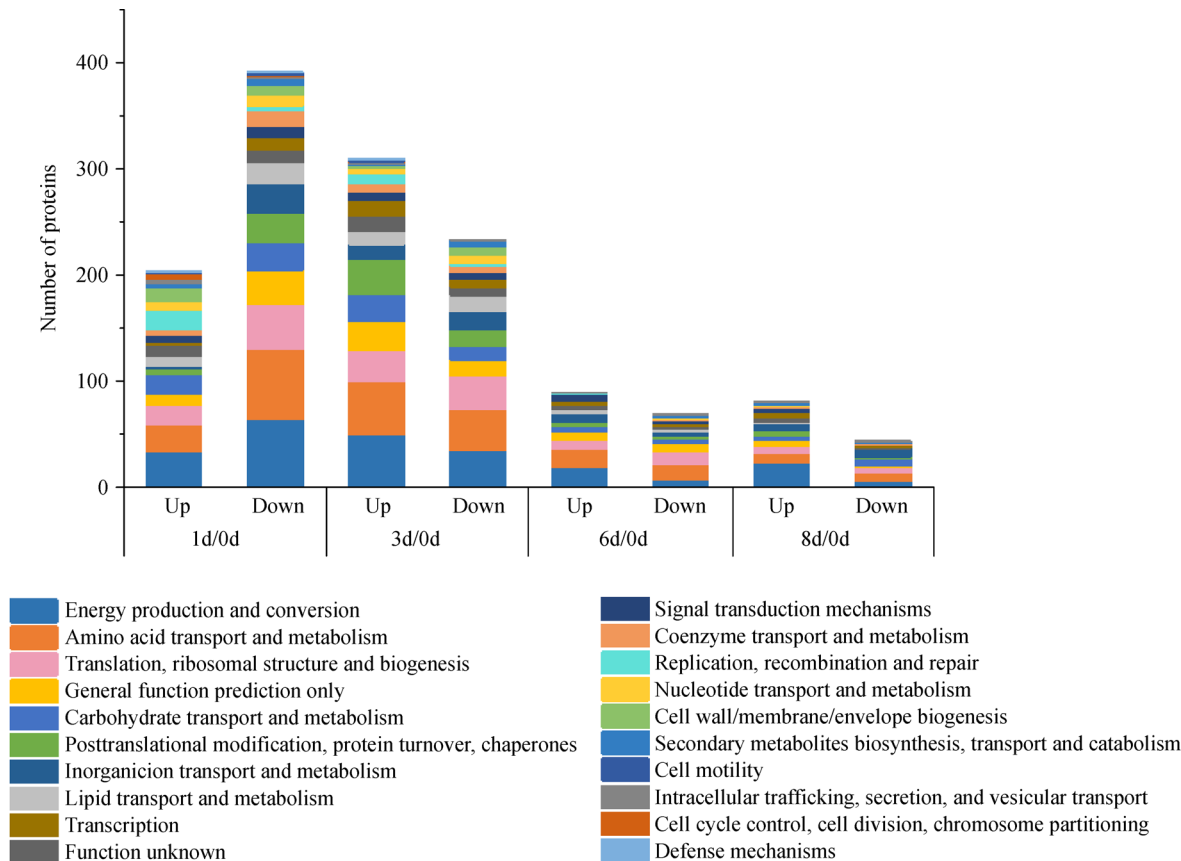


Fig. 7 Functional analysis of differentially expressed proteins in every cluster (Wang et al., 2019).

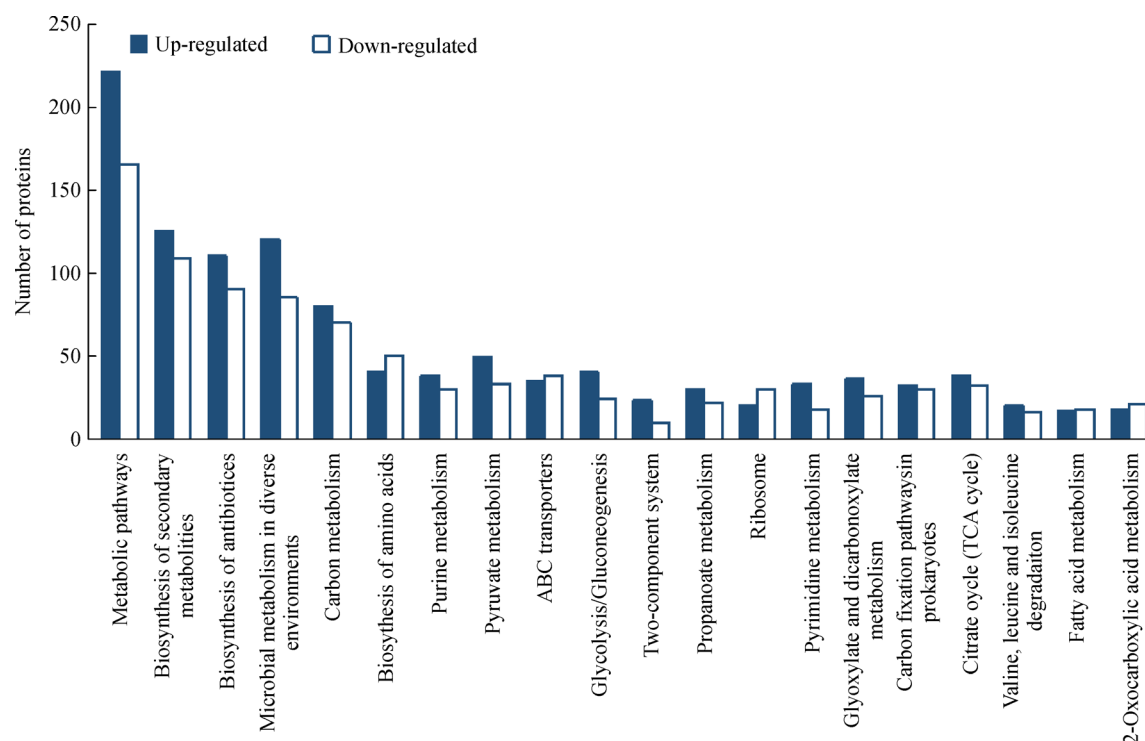


Fig. 8 The number of upregulated and downregulated proteins in different KEGG-identified pathways (Wang et al., 2019).

subcellular, single molecule or even the single atom level. Single cell imaging analysis techniques include infrared and Raman microscopy, magnetic resonance imaging, scanning probe microscopy, fluorescence microscopy, and nanosecond ion mass spectrometry (Azevedo et al., 2015; Kanbayashi and Miyafuji, 2016; Kumar et al., 2016; Peng et al., 2016) (Table 5).

Fluorescence microscopy imaging is by far the most mature single cell imaging technique. It is mainly used to study biological components in cells that have fluorescence activity or can be bound by fluorescent probes. Fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH) is used to label microorganisms, and then, laser scanning is used. Confocal microscopy can be used to observe the morphological structure of microorganisms (Azevedo et al., 2015). Aspridou et al. (2019) stained cells to view with a confocal scanning laser microscope for direct assessment of *Salmonella Agona* individual cell inactivation in small two-dimensional colonies exposed to osmotic stress. The effect of colony size on microbial inactivation was confirmed by experiments, and the population consisting of single cells or small colonies had a higher rate of inactivation than cells in larger colonies.

Nano Secondary ion mass spectrometry (Nano-SIMS) has high sensitivity and ion transport efficiency, high mass resolution and spatial resolution, representing the highest level of ion probe imaging technology today (Peng et al., 2016). Through Nano-SIMS imaging analysis, the physiologic and ecological characteristics of microorganisms

be observed at the single cell level as can the metabolically active microbial cells, and system classification information can be accurately identified from the sample (Gao et al., 2015). In 2001, Orphan first used secondary ion mass spectrometry in combination with fluorescence in situ hybridization to link the phylogenetic properties of microbial cells with metabolic activity (Orphan et al., 2001). Su et al. (2016) used stable isotope labeling combined with Nano-SIMS technology and transmission electron microscopy to study bacterial morphology and individual bacteria from samples of pure microorganisms. The utilization of ^{13}C -glucose by the degrading bacteria BDG-3 was analyzed (Fig. 9).

6 Summary and outlook

At present, most of the research focuses on the effects of physical or chemical factors on the microbial degradation of PAHs in the aerated zone of soil, the core metabolic links in the process of microbial transmembrane transport and degradation of PAHs in the aerated zone, and the key rapid control steps carried out by microorganisms. The functional regulation of cell membrane proteins during transmembrane transport is unclear. To scientifically guide polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon-microbial system remediation and treatment efforts and effectively improve the degradation efficiency of PAHs in the aerated zone, it is necessary to fully study the microscopic mechanisms and

Table 3 Proteomics technology

Specific technology	Microbial species	Substances that interact with cells	Features and conclusions	References
iTRAQ	<i>Streptococcus suis</i>	Erythromycin	Seventy-nine differentially expressed proteins were identified in sub-MIC erythromycin inhibiting planktonic cell. Several cell surface proteins, as well as those involved in quorum-sensing, were found to be implicated in biofilm formation.	Zhao et al. (2015)
	Rice suspension cells	Pathogenic bacteria of bacterial blight (<i>Xanthomonas oryzae</i> pv. <i>oryzae</i>).	Proteomics analysis of rice PM can be applied to identify potential PM components involved in the rice defense response to microbes.	Chen et al. (2007)
	Resistance to fusarium	Pathogenic bacteria of head blight (FHB)	The first report of the application of proteomic techniques in studying the interaction between a series of barley genotypes representing various levels of resistance to FHB and the <i>F. graminearum</i> pathogen. The induced plant defense responses following fungal infection were diverse among resistant, intermediate and susceptible barley genotypes.	Geddes et al. (2008)
	Madam Vinous' sweet orange plants	Pathogenic bacteria of citrus Huanglongbing (HLB)	iTRAQ technology has been used to identify 20 proteins and 10 differentially expressed proteins. These proteins may be good candidates for biomarkers to identify HLB-diseased plants prior to the expression of typical symptoms. However, similar changes in protein expression may be caused by other abiotic stresses, such as wounding and pathogen infections other than those induced by CLAs.	Fan et al. (2011)
	Abomasal mucosa	Nematode, Hemonchus contorts	The study identified and quantified more than 4400 unique proteins, of which 158 proteins showed >1.5-fold difference between resistant and susceptible sheep. Trefoil factor 2, a member of RAS oncogene family (RAP1A) and ring finger protein 126 were among the proteins found to be highly abundant in the abomasal surface of resistant sheep, whereas adenosine deaminase and the gastrophilic-3-like precursor were found at higher levels in susceptible sheep.	Nagaraj et al. (2012)
	<i>E. chaffeensis</i>	Tick-borne rickettsial pathogen, <i>Ehrlichia chaffeensis</i>	The study documents the impact of mutations on the global expression of pathogen protein and the influence of protein abundance on attenuation of mutations and protection of vertebrate host against infection.	Kondethimmanahalli et al. (2019)
	<i>Rubrivivax benzoatilyticus</i> JA2	Glucose	The present study deciphered the molecular/metabolic events associated with glucose-grown cells of strain JA2 and unraveled how a carbon source modulates metabolic phenotypes. Proteomic profiling revealed extensive metabolic remodeling in the glucose-grown cells wherein signal transduction, selective transcription, DNA repair, protein transport and quality control processes were upregulated to cope with the changing milieu. Proteins involved in DNA replication, translation, electron transport, photosynthetic machinery were downregulated, possibly to conserve energy.	Gupta et al. (2019)
	<i>Clostridium difficile</i>	Metronidazole	This study provided an in-depth proteomic analysis of a stable, metronidazole-resistant <i>C. difficile</i> isolate. The results suggested that a multifactorial response may be associated with high level metronidazole resistance in <i>C. difficile</i> , including the possible roles in altered iron metabolism and/or DNA repair.	Chong et al. (2014)
1-DE/LC-MS/MS	<i>Novosphingobium pentaromativorans</i> US6-1	PAHs	1-DE/LC-MS/MS analysis of <i>N. pentaromativorans</i> US6-1 cultured in the presence of different PAHs and monocyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (MAHs) identified approximately 1,000 and 1,400 proteins, respectively.	Yun et al. (2014)
2-DE	<i>Cyanobacterium Anabaena</i> PD-1	Polychlorobiphenyl	Twenty-five upregulated proteins were identified using 2-DE coupled with matrix-assisted laser desorption/ionization time of flight mass spectrometry (MALDI-TOF MS). These proteins were involved in (i) PCB degradation, (ii) transport processes, (iii) energetic metabolism, (iv) electron transport, (v) general stress response, (vi) carbon metabolism, and (vii) nitrogen reductase.	Zhang et al. (2014)

Table 4 Functional classification of the combination of differentially expressed proteins based on GO

GO	Protein sources	Interference factors	Protein functions	References
Cellular components	<i>Synechocystis</i> sp. PCC 6803	Butanol	Cytoplasm, cytoplasmic part, protein transport, establishment of protein localization and protein localization.	Tian et al., (2013)
	Fillets treated by microwave thawing (MT)	Magnetic nanoparticles plus microwave exposure	Membrane, membrane par, cell, cell part, organelle, organelle part.	Cao et al. (2019)
	<i>Vibrio parahaemolyticus</i> ATCC 17802	Food preservative and low temperature	Cell outer membrane.	Zhong et al. (2018)
	Cotton Roots and Leaves	Salt stress	Cell, cell part, intracellular part, intracellular organelle, organelle-related components.	Chen et al. (2016)
	<i>Aspergillus flavus</i>	Water activity	Cell, cell part, extracellular region, extracellular region part.	Zhang et al. (2015)
Molecular functions	<i>Rhodococcus</i> sp. BAP-1	Fluoranthene	Cell, macromolecular complex, membrane.	Wang et al. (2019)
	<i>Synechocystis</i> sp. PCC 6803	Butanol	Ribonucleoprotein complex, macromolecular complex, structural molecule activity, RNA binding.	Tian et al. (2013)
	Fillets treated by microwave thawing (MT)	Magnetic nanoparticles plus microwave	nucleic acid binding, gene expression and macromolecule metabolic processes.	Cao et al. (2019)
	<i>Vibrio parahaemolyticus</i> ATCC 17802	Food preservative and low temperature	Binding, catalytic activity, transporter activity.	Zhong et al. (2018)
	Rice (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) Embryogenesis	—	Siderophore transmembrane transporter activity, receptor activity, iron ion binding, receptor activity.	Zi et al. (2013)
Biological processes	<i>Aspergillus flavus</i>	Water activity	Metabolic enzymes, binding (protein binding and nucleotide binding), transporters.	Zhang et al. (2015)
	<i>Rhodococcus</i> sp. BAP-1	Fluoranthene	Catalytic activity, binding followed by transporter activity.	Wang et al. (2019)
	<i>Synechocystis</i> sp. PCC 6803	Butanol	Inorganic cation transmembrane transporter activity, hydrogen ion transmembrane transporter activity, monovalent inorganic cation transmembrane transporter activity, intracellular protein transport.	Tian et al. (2013)
	Fillets treated by microwave thawing (MT)	Magnetic nanoparticles plus microwave	Biological regulation, cellular processes, regulation biological processes, response to stimuli and signaling, metabolic processes, developmental processes.	Cao et al. (2019)
	<i>Vibrio parahaemolyticus</i> ATCC 17802	Food preservative and low temperature	Choline transport, iron ion transport and homeostasis.	Zhong et al. (2018)
	Rice (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) Embryogenesis	—	Proteins that participate in metabolism and respond to stimuli.	Zi et al. (2013)
	The resurrection plant <i>Xerophyta viscosa</i>	Dehydration stress	Cellular processes, binding.	Abdalla and Rafudeen (2012)
	Cotton Roots and Leaves	Salt stress	Metabolic processes, organic substance metabolic processes, primary metabolic processes, cellular metabolic processes.	Chen et al. (2016)
	<i>Aspergillus flavus</i>	Water activity	Metabolic processes, cellular processes, single-organism processes.	Zhang et al. (2015)
	<i>Rhodococcus</i> sp. BAP-1	Fluoranthene	Metabolic processes, cellular processes, single-organism processes.	Wang et al. (2019)

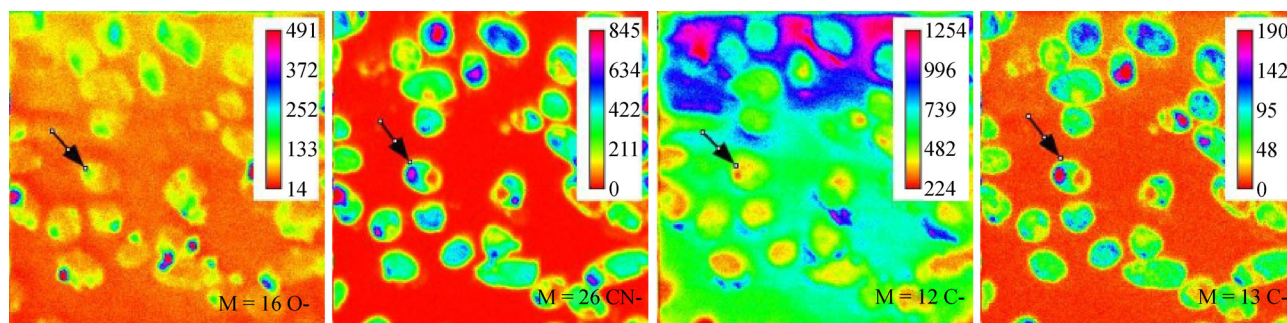


Fig. 9 High resolution Nano-SIMS images of cultured BDG-3 (Su et al., 2016).

Table 5 Single cell analysis technology—FISH and Nano-SIMS

Specific technology	Microbial species	Features and conclusions	References
FISH	–	FISH not only enables the detection of culturable microorganisms but also yet-to-be cultured (so-called unculturable) organisms and can therefore help in understanding complex microbial communities. In this review, methodological aspects, as well as problems and pitfalls of FISH, are discussed in an examination of past, present and future applications.	Moter and Göbel (2000)
	Marine bacteria	FISH with horseradish peroxidase (HRP)-labeled oligonucleotide probes and tyramide signal amplification, also known as catalyzed reporter deposition (CARD), is currently not generally applicable to heterotrophic bacteria in marine samples. The enhanced fluorescence intensities and signal-to-background ratios make CARD-FISH superior to FISH with directly labeled oligonucleotides for the staining of bacteria with low rRNA content in the marine environment.”	(Pernthaler et al. (2002)
	Bacterial populations in human feces	FISH with group-specific 16S rRNA-targeted oligonucleotide probes. The combination of the two Bacteroides-specific probes detected a mean of 5.4×10^{10} cells·g ⁻¹ (dry weight) in feces; the <i>Clostridium coccooides-Eubacterium rectale</i> group-specific probe detected a mean of 7.2×10^{10} cells·g ⁻¹ (dry weight) in feces. The <i>Clostridium histolyticum</i> , <i>Clostridium litusebureuse</i> , and <i>Streptococcus-Lactococcus</i> group-specific probes detected only numbers ranging from 1×10^7 to 7×10^8 cells·g ⁻¹ (dry weight) in feces.	Franks et al. (1998)
Nano-SIMS	<i>E. coli</i>	<i>E. coli</i> exposed to food-grade TiO ₂ showed some internalization of TiO ₂ (7% of cells), as observed with high-resolution nano secondary ion mass spectrometry (nano-SIMS) chemical imaging.	Radziwill-Bienkowska et al. (2018)
	Spleen cells	Nano-SIMS makes it possible to both capture images of and quantify molecules labeled with stable or radioactive isotopes within subcellular compartments.	Lechene et al. (2006)
	Individual bacteria within eukaryotic host cells	In this study, with multi-isotope imaging mass spectrometry we directly captured images and measured nitrogen fixation by individual bacteria within eukaryotic host cells and demonstrated that fixed nitrogen is used for host metabolism.	Lechene et al. (2007)
	<i>E. coli</i>	<i>E. coli</i> in water were treated with OD radicals, and D atom incorporation into cells was visualized using time-of-flight SIMS and nano-SIMS. The results show that D atoms from NTPJ reach the cytoplasm of <i>E. coli</i> in H ₂ O, indicating the usefulness of this OD-tracking method for the study of radical interactions within living cells.	Lee et al. (2014)
	<i>Paracoccus</i> sp. strain HPD-2	Nano-SIMS results provided a direct evidence for the contribution of hematite to the formation of iron ions inside of HPD-2 cell, which resulted in the prominent generation of ROS (including EPFRs) that has been demonstrated to be able to affect cells.	Gan et al. (2018)

regulatory functions of microorganisms in the process of degrading PAHs. Therefore, it is necessary to study the dynamic processes of the microbial transmembrane transport of PAHs and to analyze the changes in the functional regulation ability of microbial cell membrane proteins to transport and degrade PAHs, such that the bioavailability of PAHs can be improved by regulating the

microbial living environment. This article re-identifies the core links and key points in controlling the speed of microbial transport and metabolic processes of PAHs from the level of cells and membrane proteins and provides an important theoretical basis and practical guidance for the establishment of an efficient microbial-PAHs remediation system.

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