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opaR 基因缺失对 AHPND 致病菌生物学特性及毒力质粒接合转移的影响*

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摘要 急性肝胰腺坏死病(acute hepatopancreatic necrosis disease, AHPND)严重影响了我国乃至全球对虾养殖业的发展。近期研究发现,致病菌毒力质粒携带 *trb* 型 IV 型分泌系统(type IV secretion system, T4SS)可在高菌体密度下介导毒力质粒发生接合转移,从而导致 AHPND 致病菌多样性。为探究群体感应与 T4SS 表达以及毒力质粒接合转移的关系,本研究以副溶血弧菌(*Vibrio parahaemolyticus*)群体感应系统的高密度调控子 *OpaR* 为研究对象,在致 AHPND 副溶血弧菌 20130629002S01::cat(*Vp2S01::cat*)菌株基础上,利用同源重组技术构建 *opaR* 基因缺失株 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR*。比较了出发菌株和缺失株在生长性能、运动性和生物被膜形成能力等方面的差异,分析了 *opaR* 基因对 T4SS 基因表达量以及质粒接合转移效率的影响。结果显示,*opaR* 基因缺失不影响细菌的生长特性和群集运动,但泳动能力显著增加,生物被膜形成能力显著下降;接合转移实验显示,*opaR* 基因缺失显著提高 T4SS 表达水平和接合转移效率。本研究为解析群体感应系统调控 AHPND 致病菌 T4SS 表达以及毒力质粒接合转移机制提供了基础数据,可为控制 AHPND 致病菌毒力质粒传播提供技术支撑。

关键词 副溶血弧菌; *opaR* 基因; 生物学特性; IV 型分泌系统; 水平转移

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急性肝胰腺坏死病(acute hepatopancreatic necrosis disease, AHPND)是影响我国乃至全球对虾养殖业的细菌性疾病,临床病症为肝胰腺发白、萎缩和空肠空胃等(Lightner *et al*, 2012)。AHPND 自 2010 年暴发以来,

每年给全球多国的对虾养殖业造成超过约 70 亿美元的经济损失(张宝存等, 2012; Tran *et al*, 2013; Gomez-Gil *et al*, 2014; de la Peña *et al*, 2015; Dabu *et al*, 2017; Tang *et al*, 2020; FAO, 2013)。研究表明,

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AHPND 病原菌的毒力源于其携带的约 70 kb 的可编码二元毒力蛋白 PirAB 的毒力质粒(pVA1 型毒力质粒)(Lee *et al*, 2015; Tinwongger *et al*, 2016; Han *et al*, 2017)。AHPND 的致病菌存在多样性, 包括副溶血弧菌(*Vibrio parahaemolyticus*) (张宝存等, 2012)、欧文氏弧菌(*V. owensii*) (Liu *et al*, 2015)、坎贝氏弧菌(*V. campbellii*) (Dong *et al*, 2017)、普纳弧菌(*V. punensis*) (Restrepo *et al*, 2018)、哈维氏弧菌(*V. harveyi*) (Muthukrishnan *et al*, 2019)和鳗弧菌(*V. anguillarum*) (Shen *et al*, 2021)等, 这些病原菌中均含有 pVA1 型毒力质粒。

已有研究发现, pVA1 型毒力质粒可通过接合转移引起 AHPND 致病菌多样性(Dong *et al*, 2019a、b)。与 pVA1 型毒力质粒接合转移有关的功能基因簇被注释为 *trb* 型 IV 型分泌系统(type IV secretion system, T4SS) (Dong *et al*, 2019b; Wang *et al*, 2022)。革兰氏阴性菌中的 T4SS 重要组分包括通道复合物(Darbari *et al*, 2015; Low *et al*, 2014; Costa *et al*, 2021)、IV 型偶联蛋白及松弛酶复合体(Grohmann *et al*, 2018)等。供受体菌通过碰撞接触形成接合通道(Costa *et al*, 2021), 松弛酶复合体被激活后识别质粒 *oriT* 序列上的 *nic* 位点, 将质粒一条链切割为线性单链 DNA (T 链), 单链 DNA 与松弛酶形成蛋白质-DNA 复合体, 在 T4 偶联蛋白作用下将单链 DNA 通过接合转移通道转移至受体菌中。受体菌中 T 链滚环复制合成第 2 条 DNA 链形成完整质粒, 至此完成质粒水平转移(Llosa *et al*, 2002; Draper *et al*, 2005; Garcillán-Barcia *et al*, 2007)。副溶血弧菌 20130629002S01 (*Vp2S01*)菌株已被证明携带新的 *trb* 型 T4SS, 且仅在高细菌密度(10^{12} CFU/mL)条件下检测到接合转移发生(Wang *et al*, 2022)。细菌高细胞密度可增加供受体菌间相互接触的概率, 同时也能激活细菌群体感应(quorum sensing, QS)的高密度调控因子 OpaR, 因此, 推测接合转移可能与群体感应系统的高密度调控子相关。

群体感应系统也称密度感应系统, 是指细菌细胞间的信息交流过程, 可调控多种基因的表达, 以响应周围环境中自诱导剂(autoinducer, AI)信号分子的浓度变化(Ng *et al*, 2009)。副溶血弧菌的群体感应的 2 个中心调控子为 AphA 和 OpaR, 分别在低细胞密度(low cell density, LCD)和高细胞密度(high cell density, HCD)下发挥作用。在 LCD 时, 胞外信号分子启动受体蛋白 LuxN 和 LuxU 的级联磷酸化通路, 促进 AphA 的表达, 同时抑制 OpaR 表达(Ball *et al*, 2017); 在 HCD 时, 高浓度群体感应信号分子抑制受体

蛋白 LuxN 和 LuxU 的级联磷酸化通路, 从而解除对 OpaR 的抑制, OpaR 得以正常表达(Lenz *et al*, 2004)。研究表明, OpaR 参与副溶血弧菌中的多种生物学过程, 如 OpaR 可参与激活副溶血弧菌荚膜多糖产生和 T6SS2 系统的表达(王丽, 2014), 促进生物被膜的形成(Zhang *et al*, 2021), 抑制泳动运动(Lu *et al*, 2021)和群集运动(Lu *et al*, 2019), 抑制 T3SS (Henke *et al*, 2004)和 T6SS1 (Ma *et al*, 2012; 董新波, 2015)的表达。但 OpaR 对 AHPND 致病菌中 T4SS 的调控研究目前尚未见报道。

本研究以高密度调控子 *opaR* 基因作为研究对象, 构建副溶血弧菌 *Vp2S01::cat* 株 *opaR* 基因敲除株(*Vp2S01::catΔopaR*), 通过生长性能、生物被膜形成及接合转移等结果, 探究高密度调控子 OpaR 对副溶血弧菌生物学特性以及 T4SS 的影响。

1 材料与方法

1.1 菌株和质粒

副溶血弧菌 *Vp2S01* 分离自中国广西 AHPND 患病对虾, *Vp2S01::cat* 是由同源重组技术在 pVPGX1 质粒上插入氯霉素抗性基因所得(Dong *et al*, 2019b)。坎贝氏弧菌 *VcLMB29* 分离自深圳美国红鱼(*Sciaenops ocellatus*)皮肤溃疡样品, 由河海大学海洋学院赵哲教授惠赠。菌株现均保存于中国水产科学研究院黄海水产研究所养殖生物疾病控制与分子病理学研究室; 质粒 pMAD、自杀质粒 pCVD442 和自杀质粒中间宿主大肠杆菌(*Escherichia coli*) β 2155 均为实验室质粒和菌株(表 1)。

1.2 主要试剂和仪器

超保真 DNA 聚合酶 PrimeSTAR Max Premix (2 $\times$) 和 T4 DNA 连接酶购自 TaKaRa 公司, 细菌质粒小量提取试剂盒、细菌总 RNA 提取试剂盒均购自天根生化科技(北京)有限公司, 胶回收试剂盒购自莫纳生物科技有限公司, 氯霉素(chloramphenicol, Chl)和利福平(rifampicin, Rif)购自北京索莱宝科技有限公司, 红霉素(erythromycin, Em)购自上海阿拉丁生化科技股份有限公司, 第 1 链合成试剂盒和 2 $\times$ SYBR Green qPCR Mix 试剂盒购自山东思科捷生物技术有限公司, 8%红色 SDS-PAGE 凝胶制备试剂盒购自 Genscript (中国)金斯瑞生物科技有限公司, 脱氧核糖核酸酶 DNase I (无 RNase)购自 New England Biolabs。

表 1 本研究所使用的菌株和质粒
Tab.1 Strains and plasmids used in this study

菌株/质粒 Strains/plasmids	特征 Characteristics	识别号 Identification
<i>Vp2S01</i>	携带 pVPGX1 质粒的野生菌株	PMID: 29051747
<i>Vp2S01::cat</i>	<i>Vp2S01</i> 的 pVPGX1 质粒上插入氯霉素抗性基因	PMID: 31231618
<i>Vp2S01::catΔopaR</i>	用红霉素抗性基因(<i>ermB</i>)替换 <i>Vp2S01::cat</i> 株的 <i>opaR</i> 基因	本研究构建 This study
<i>E. coli</i> β2155	二氨基亚胺营养缺陷型菌株	实验室菌株 Laboratory strain
pCVD442	携带氨苄西林耐药基因的自杀质粒	实验室质粒 Laboratory plasmid
pMAD	携带红霉素抗性基因的表达载体	实验室质粒 Laboratory plasmid
<i>VcLMB29</i>	具有利福平(Rif)抗性的坎贝氏弧菌	PMID: 29109705

1.3 *opaR* 基因缺失株的构建

基因缺失株的构建参考王小鹿等(2021)的实验方法。通过同源重组技术在 *Vp2S01::cat* 基础上,以红霉素抗性基因(*ermB*)替代 *opaR* 基因构建缺失株 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR*。以副溶血弧菌 *Vp2S01* 基因组和 pMAD 质粒为模板,使用引物 *opaR*-5F/5R、*opaR*-3F/3R、*opaR-ermBF/ermBR* (表 2)分别进行扩增得到 *opaR* 基因上、下游同源臂及红霉素抗性基因,并通过融合 PCR 技术将 3 个片段按照上游同源臂-红霉素抗性基因-下游同源臂的顺序连接并克隆入自杀质粒 pCVD442,获得打靶质粒 pCVD442-*ΔopaR::ermB*。将重组质粒电转化至 *E. coli* β2155,获得供体菌 β2155/pCVD442-*ΔopaR::ermB*。以 *Vp2S01::cat* 为受体菌进行接合实验,在红霉素抗性平板上筛选获得抗性的阳性克隆,称为 *Vp/pCVD442-ΔopaR::ermB*。取数个 *Vp/pCVD442-ΔopaR::ermB* 克隆菌液铺在含 10%蔗糖的 LB 平板上,培养至单克隆形成。通过 PCR 技术筛选获得 *opaR* 基因被 *ermB* 基因取代的克隆,将其命名为 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR*。

1.4 生长曲线测定

将 *Vp2S01::cat* 和 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 单菌落转接至 2216E 液体培养基中,28℃、180 r/min 震荡培养至对数生长期,以 1%接种量转接至 200 mL 新鲜的 2216E 液体培养基,每隔 2 h 取样后使用全波长酶标仪测定在 600 nm 处的吸光值(OD₆₀₀),绘制各菌株的生长曲线并进行差异性分析。

1.5 生物被膜形成能力测定

参考杨金龙等(2021)报道的方法检测菌株的生物被膜形成能力。将 *Vp2S01::cat* 和 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 培养至 OD₆₀₀ 为 0.5 左右后分别稀释 100 倍。以 96 孔酶标板为实验容器,每个孔内加入 180 μL 2216E 液及

表 2 *opaR* 缺失突变株构建所使用的引物

Tab.2 Primers used in the construction of *opaR* mutation

引物 Primer	序列 Sequence (5'~3')
<i>opaR</i> -5F	GTTCTAGTTGCTATCGGTCGTGTACCA
<i>opaR</i> -5R	AATCGCGAACACTAAAGCTCCAATTTGA ATAC
<i>opaR</i> -3F	AGTTCTAGGTCTCTTTGCAATTGAGTCC ATATC
<i>opaR</i> -3R	GATCTCGAAACCAATCCAATCAACTGGC
<i>opaR-ermBF</i>	GTATTCAAATTGGAGCTTTAGTGTTTCGC GATTTTACTTATTAAATAATTTATAGCTAT TGAAAAGAG
<i>opaR-ermBR</i>	GATATGGACTCAATTGCAAAGAGACCTA GAACTTAACCAAATTAAGAGGGGTTATA ATGA
<i>opaR-outF</i>	CACCAAGCGTATCAAAGACAAGTTCAAG
<i>opaR-outR</i>	CACCAAGCGTATCAAAGACAAGTTCAAG
<i>opaR-inF</i>	GTGTTCTGAATCGTGTTGATCACACAC
<i>opaR-inR</i>	CAACTCGCGAAGATTTGGTTGATGAAG

20 μL 稀释菌液,放置于 28℃培养箱中静置培养 24 h,无菌 2216E 培养液作为阴性对照,每个菌株平行对照 9 组。培养完成后,将酶标板从培养箱中取出,吸出每个孔中的菌液后,加入 200 μL 的 1×PBS 缓冲液洗涤 3 次,晾干约 20 min,加入 1%的结晶紫(crystal violet, CV)染液 200 μL,染色 15 min。将酶标孔中的结晶紫染液吸净,再加入 200 μL 的 1×PBS 轻轻洗涤 3 次。吸净 PBS,每孔中加入 200 μL 无水乙醇后常温静置 10 min 以洗脱生物被膜,待结晶紫完全溶解后,检测 595 nm 处的吸光值(OD₅₉₅)。

特异性生物膜形成(SBF)指数=

$$(\text{CV adherence} - \text{CV control})/G$$

式中, *G* 为细胞在 600 nm 处的吸光值。

1.6 运动性测定

运动性实验参考邓益琴等(2019)和李洋洋等

(2021)的实验方法。

泳动运动(swimming motility): 将 *Vp2S01::cat* (Chl 20 $\mu\text{g/mL}$)和 *Vp2S01::cat Δ opaR* (Chl 20 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ 、Em 100 $\mu\text{g/mL}$)转接至含对应抗生素的 2216E 液体培养基中, 28 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ 、180 r/min 振荡培养至对数生长期, 调整各菌液浓度为 $\text{OD}_{600}=0.3$ 左右, 吸取 2 μL 菌液垂直点样于 0.3%的 LB 半固体泳动平板中。将其置于 28 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ 培养箱中静置培养约 8 h, 测量细菌泳动圈直径, 并对菌株泳动能力进行分析。

群集运动(swarming motility): 菌株培养条件同泳动运动实验, 吸取 2 μL 菌液垂直点样于 1.5%的 LB 固体群集平板中, 将其放置于 28 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ 培养箱中培养约 12 h, 测量细菌圆形运动直径并进行拍照记录, 实验平行 3 次。

1.7 *opaR* 基因缺失对毒力质粒接合转移的影响

参考 Dong 等(2019b)的接合转移实验方法, 分别检测 *Vp2S01::cat* 和 *Vp2S01::cat Δ opaR* 的接合转移效率。将 *Vp2S01::cat*、*Vp2S01::cat Δ opaR* 和 *VcLMB29* (Rif 20 $\mu\text{g/mL}$)在 28 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ 、180 r/min 分别培养至 OD_{600} 为 0.5 时, 收集菌体。将 *Vp2S01*、*Vp2S01::cat Δ opaR* 分别与 *VcLMB29* 混合, 4 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ 、6 000 r/min 离心 10 min 后弃上清液, 5 mL 无抗 2216E 液体相同条件洗涤 1 次, 100 mL 混合菌体加入 5 mL 2216E 液体(含 DNase I: 20 U/mL), 相同条件洗涤后, 用 100 μL 2216E (含 DNase I: 200 U/mL)液体重悬于铺有 0.22 μm 滤膜的 2216E 平板上, 28 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ 进行接合, 培养时间为 12、24 和 48 h, 每个时间点 3 组平行。将滤膜上的菌体洗脱后进行梯度稀释至 10^{-9} , 吸取 100 μL 高浓度菌液(10^{-1} 、 10^{-2} 和 10^{-3})涂布于双抗平板, 低浓度(10^{-7} 、 10^{-8} 和 10^{-9})涂布于单抗平板, 28 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ 培养至单克隆形成, 并进行计数和检测。

1.8 实时荧光定量 PCR (RT-qPCR)鉴定

将 *Vp2S01::cat* 和 *Vp2S01::cat Δ opaR* 培养至 OD_{600} 为 0.5 左右, 使用细菌总 RNA 试剂盒提取细菌总 RNA, 利用第 1 链合成试剂盒将其逆转录为 cDNA。以 *gyrB* 为内参引物, 利用 *aphA*-qRT (张义全, 2014)、*opaR*-qRT 以及 T4SS-qRT 引物(表 3), 按照 2 $\times$ SYBR Green qPCR Mix 试剂盒在罗氏 LC96 荧光定量 PCR 仪中进行 RT-qPCR, 每个反应重复 3 次。使用 $2^{-\Delta\Delta C_t}$ 法计算 *opaR*、*aphA* 和 T4SS 基因的相对表达量(王旭江等, 2022)。

1.9 数据分析

所有实验均设置 3 个生物学重复。所有实验数

表 3 实时荧光定量 PCR 引物

Tab.3 Real-time quantitative PCR primers

引物 Primer	序列 Sequence (5'~3')
<i>gyrB</i> -qRT-F	CGGCACTAACACGTACGCTA
<i>gyrB</i> -qRT-R	GTCAAACCTTCACGCGCATC
<i>aphA</i> -qRT-F	AGCATCGGTTACTTCTGGAAAG
<i>aphA</i> -qRT-R	GTTGAACAGCACAAGCCATAAG
<i>opaR</i> -qRT-F	TCATCACGAGTTGATGCGCT
<i>opaR</i> -qRT-R	CACGCTCGAGAAAACATCGC
<i>trbB</i> ₁ -qRT-F	CGCATCATGGTGGGAGAAAGT
<i>trbB</i> ₁ -qRT-R	GAATCGGCATGAATGGTGGC
<i>trbB</i> ₂ -qRT-F	GGCCGTTTAGTGGTGTATGGA
<i>trbB</i> ₂ -qRT-R	TGCGCGATTTACAGTGGTCT
<i>trbC</i> -qRT-F	CCCTTAGAGCGCATTGTGGA
<i>trbC</i> -qRT-R	CATCTCGCCACCGAAGATCA
<i>trbD</i> -qRT-F	CTTTTTAGTCATGGGCGCGG
<i>trbD</i> -qRT-R	TAACTGCGCGTCGTTTTTGG
<i>trbE</i> -qRT-F	GCCCAGCGACTCGTTATACA
<i>trbE</i> -qRT-R	TACACATCATCATCGGCGGG
<i>trbF</i> -qRT-F	CGCAAATCTCACAGGCGTTC
<i>trbF</i> -qRT-R	TCGACCCATTCCATTGCCA
<i>trbG</i> -qRT-F	CGGTCGCGTCTACAACAAC
<i>trbG</i> -qRT-R	ACCACAAATTTCCCCTTGCG
<i>trbH</i> -qRT-F	CAGCTACGAGCCCGATCAAT
<i>trbH</i> -qRT-R	ATCGGACTGGCGAAGGAATG
<i>trbI</i> -qRT-F	CTCTTCGGTCAAGCCACCTT
<i>trbI</i> -qRT-R	ATCAGCAACGGACTCACCTG
<i>trbJ</i> -qRT-F	AAGCCTATCAGGGCCAATCG
<i>trbJ</i> -qRT-R	GCCAGTGCCAGTGAACTTTG
<i>trbL</i> -qRT-F	AGCAACAGTCGCTCTGTACC
<i>trbL</i> -qRT-R	ATGTTTTGCGTGGCTTGCTT
<i>trbN</i> -qRT-F	CTTTTGGGGTCAGCATTGCC
<i>trbN</i> -qRT-R	AGCGCAATGCTTGGTTTTGA
<i>traF</i> -qRT-F	CGCCTCCTAGTGC GGTTATT
<i>traF</i> -qRT-R	AAAAGAGAGATGGTCGCCCCG
<i>traG</i> -qRT-F	AGGTGCAGTGGTGGAAACA
<i>traG</i> -qRT-R	TCATCCACCAAGATGGTGCC

据使用 SPSS 28.0 统计软件和 Excel 软件中的独立样本 *T* 检验进行统计学差异分析, 数据用平均值 $\pm$ 标准差(Mean $\pm$ SD)表示, $P<0.05$ 表示具有显著性差异, $P<0.01$ 表示具有极显著性差异。使用 Origin 2022 软件绘图。

2 结果与分析

2.1 副溶血弧菌 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 基因缺失突变株的鉴定结果

通过特异性引物设计、重组载体构建及细菌的转化与筛选,成功构建了副溶血弧菌基因缺失突变株 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR*。在 *opaR* 基因序列的内侧设计引物 *opaR*-in-F/R, 突变株的 PCR 检测电泳结果见图 1。

出发菌株 *Vp2S01::cat* 的检测片段大小为 311 bp (图 1A, 泳道 22), 阴性对照株无条带(图 1A, 泳道 23), 成功突变株 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 无条带(图 1A, 泳道 1~21)。选取 21 号菌株, 利用 *opaR* 的外侧引物 *opaR*-out-F/R 进行 PCR 扩增验证, 突变株 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 扩增片段大小为 2 535 bp (图 1B, 泳道 1)。将外侧引物扩增条带送测序, 测序结果表明, 基因突变株 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 成功构建。

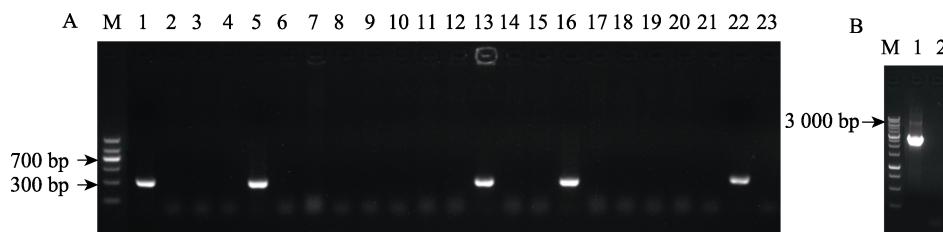


图 1 *opaR* 基因缺失株 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 的 PCR 鉴定结果
Fig.1 PCR identification results of mutant strain *Vp2S01::catΔopaR*

A: *opaR* 基因内部引物 *opaR*-in-F/R 扩增结果; M: DNA Marker DL1 200; 1~21: 第 1~21 号菌落; 22: *Vp2S01::cat* 菌株, 产物长度: 311 bp; 23: 阴性对照。B: *opaR* 基因外部引物 *opaR*-out-F/R 鉴定; M: DNA Marker DL10 000; 1: 第 21 号菌落; 2: 阴性对照。
A: Amplification results of the internal primer *opaR*-in-F/R of *opaR* gene; M: DNA Marker DL1 200; 1~21: The colony of No.1~21; 22: *Vp2S01::cat*, and the product length is 311 bp; 23: Negative control. B: Amplification results of the external primer *opaR*-out-F/R of *opaR* gene; M: DNA Marker DL10 000; 1: The colony of No.21; 2: Negative control.

2.2 *opaR* 基因缺失对副溶血弧菌生长能力的影响

对 *Vp2S01::cat* 和 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 的生长曲线进行分析, 结果表明, 出发菌株 *Vp2S01::cat* 与缺失株 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 的生长情况无显著差异(图 2), 表明 *opaR* 基因缺失不影响副溶血弧菌的生长。

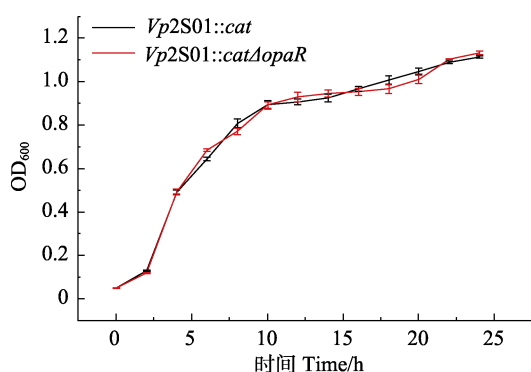


图 2 菌株 *Vp2S01::cat* 和 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 的生长曲线
Fig.2 The growth curves of the *Vp2S01::cat* and *Vp2S01::catΔopaR*

图中各取样时间点中 2 菌株生长曲线
均无显著性差异($P>0.05$)。

There was no significant difference in the growth curves of the two strains at each sampling time ($P>0.05$).

2.3 *opaR* 基因缺失对副溶血弧菌生物被膜形成能力和运动能力的影响

以 96 孔酶标板为实验容器, 采用结晶紫染色法比较 *Vp2S01::cat* 和缺失株 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 的生物被膜形成能力的差异。结果显示, 基因缺失株 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* (0.04 ± 0.03) 的生物被膜形成指数极显著降低, 仅为 *Vp2S01::cat* (0.95 ± 0.16) 的 3.90% (图 3A), 表明 *opaR* 基因可参与调控副溶血弧菌生物被膜的形成。

为探究 *opaR* 基因是否影响细菌运动性, 通过 LB 半固体培养基和固体培养基对菌株运动能力进行测定。泳动实验结果显示, 培养约 8 h 左右, 缺失株 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 的泳动圈直径[(9.17 ± 0.09) cm]大于 *Vp2S01::cat* 的泳动圈直径[(3.43 ± 0.08) cm], 泳动能力显著增加了约 2.67 倍(图 3B)。群集运动实验结果表明, 培养约 12 h 左右, *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 的生长圈直径(1.10 cm)与 *Vp2S01::cat* [(1.03 ± 0.02) cm]相比无显著性差异, 但 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 的生长圈边缘多缺刻(图 3C、D)。综上所述, *opaR* 基因缺失不影响副溶血弧菌 *Vp2S01::cat* 的群集运动能力, 但可显著提高其泳动运动能力。

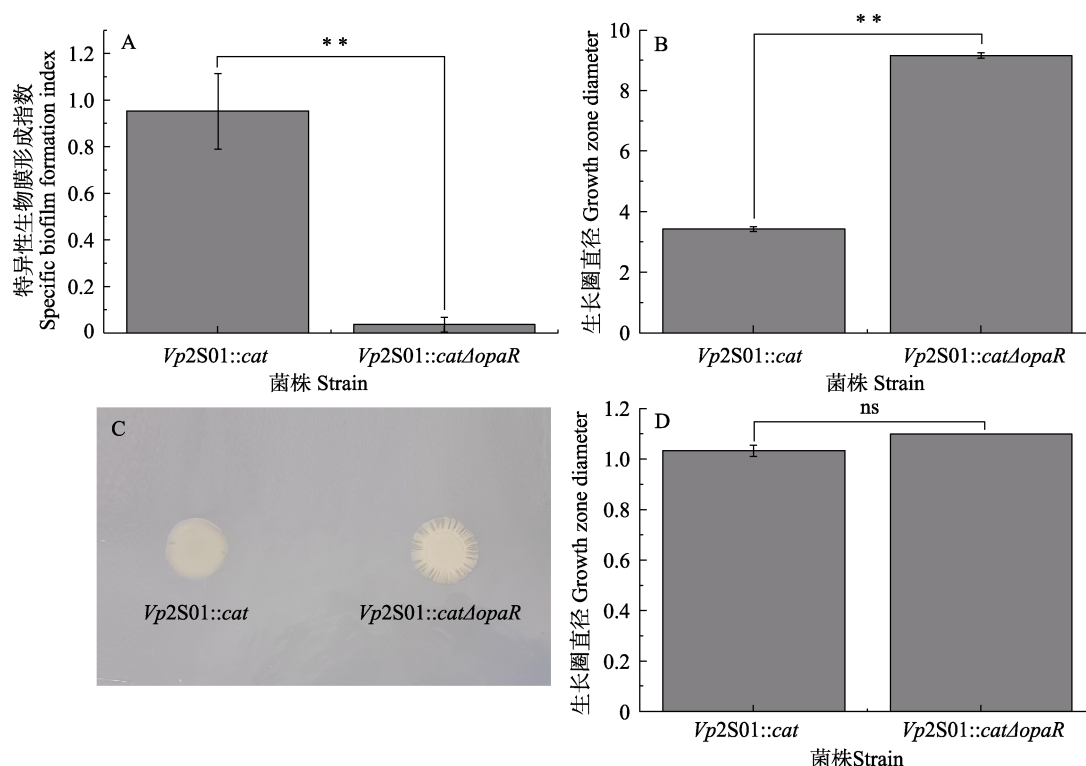


图3 菌株 *Vp2S01::cat* 和 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 的生物被膜形成能力和运动能力的差异分析
Fig.3 Analysis of differences in biofilm formation and motility of *Vp2S01::cat* and *Vp2S01::catΔopaR*

A: 菌株的生物被膜形成能力差异; B: 菌株的泳动直径差异; C: 群集平板菌落;

D: 菌株的群集直径差异。*: $P < 0.05$; **: $P < 0.01$; ns: 无显著差异。下同。

A: The difference in biofilm-forming ability; B: The difference in growth zone diameter of swimming;
C: The colony of strains in the 1.5% LB plate; D: The difference in growth zone diameter of swarming.

*: $P < 0.05$; **: $P < 0.01$; ns: No significant difference. The same below.

2.4 *opaR* 基因缺失对毒力质粒接合转移和IV型分泌系统基因表达的影响

使用接合转移模型对不同时间点的接合转移效率进行测定。实验结果显示, 在 12 h 时, *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 转移效率 $[(8.77 \pm 3.82) \times 10^{-8}]$ 较 *Vp2S01::cat* $[(1.55 \pm 0.42) \times 10^{-8}]$ 增加约 5.66 倍。在 24 h 时, *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 的转移效率 $[(1.01 \pm 0.40) \times 10^{-7}]$ 较 *Vp2S01::cat* $[(1.10 \pm 0.48) \times 10^{-9}]$ 增加约 96.20 倍。但在 48 h 时, 未检测到 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 实验组存在接合子(图 4A)。

使用相对定量法检测接合转移 24 h 后菌体的 T4SS 基因的转录水平(图 4B)。在基因缺失株 *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* 中, *opaR* 基因无表达, T4SS 基因的相对表达水平比菌株 *Vp2S01::cat* 增加了约 1.13~3.21 倍。其中, 接合转移关键基因 *traF*、*trbE* 和 *traG* 的相对表达水平分别显著提高 1.96、1.92 和 3.21 倍。综上所述, *opaR* 基因可通过调控 T4SS 基因的表达进而调控接合转移效率。

3 讨论与结论

AHPND 致病菌的 pVA1 型毒力质粒上携带新型 *trb* 型 T4SS, 可介导毒力质粒的接合转移引起 AHPND 致病菌多样性(Dong *et al*, 2019a、b; Wang *et al*, 2022)。本团队前期研究发现, 接合转移效率与细菌密度密切相关(Wang *et al*, 2022)。*opaR* 基因编码的高细胞密度调控子 OpaR 可参与调控多种基因表达, 在副溶血弧菌致病过程中发挥重要作用(Zhong *et al*, 2013; Wu *et al*, 2019; Lu *et al*, 2021)。本研究以 *opaR* 基因为研究对象构建了缺失株, 并探索其对副溶血弧菌 *Vp2S01::cat* 生物学功能和 pVA1 型毒力质粒接合转移效率的影响。

副溶血弧菌的生物被膜能够保护细菌细胞免受环境变化及降低对抗生素的敏感度, 促进其在宿主中的定殖和生存(Yildiz *et al*, 2009; Li *et al*, 2020)。成熟生物被膜的形成受鞭毛、菌毛和荚膜多糖(capsular polysaccharide, CPS)等多因素的影响。群体感应高密

T4SS 表达以及毒力质粒接合转移机制提供了基础数据, 可为控制 AHPND 致病细菌毒力质粒传播提供技术支撑。

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Effects of *opaR* Mutation on the Biological Characteristics and Conjugative Transfer of the Virulence Plasmid of Acute Hepatopancreatic Necrosis Disease-Causing *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*

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Abstract Acute hepatopancreatic necrosis (AHPND) is a bacterial disease caused by *Vibrio* bacteria that severely affects the Pacific white shrimp farming industry. Since AHPND was first identified in China and Vietnam in 2010, it was subsequently identified in Malaysia (2011), Thailand (2012), Mexico (2013), the Philippines (2014), South Korea (2016), Bangladesh (2017), the United States (US) (2017), and Japan (2020). AHPND causes significant economic losses of more than 7 billion US\$ annually to the global shrimp farming industry. It has severely restricted the development of the global shrimp farming industry. Many studies have shown that the pathogens of AHPND are *Vibrio* spp., including *V. parahaemolyticus*, *V. owensii*, *V. campbellii*, *V. harveyi*, *V. punensis*, and *V. anguillarum*. The virulence of these pathogenic strains was derived from a 70 kb virulent plasmid (pVA1-type plasmid). The pVA1-type plasmid carries *pirAB* genes encoding the binary toxin *pirAB* homologous to the insecticidal protein of *Photobacterium phosphoreum*. The pVA1-type plasmid has been confirmed to carry a novel *trb* type IV secretion system (T4SS). *Trb*-T4SS can mediate the conjugative transfer of the pVA1-type plasmid at high cell density for interspecific horizontal transfer.

The quorum sensing (QS) system is also known as the density-sensing system. In the

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surrounding environment, the QS system allows bacteria to regulate the expression of multiple genes by sensing changes in the concentration of autoinducer signaling molecules. At high cell density, high concentrations of autoinducer signaling molecules bind to receptor proteins to inhibit phosphorylation cascades and high cell density master regulator OpaR is normally expressed. OpaR is involved in the regulation of various biological processes, such as biofilm-forming ability, motility, and the expression of the type III and type IV secretion systems. Reportedly, high concentrations of signaling molecules in the QS system regulate the expression of key genes of the T4SS to increase the conjugative transfer efficiency of drug-resistant plasmids. However, the regulation of the T4SS by *opaR* in AHPND is not yet reported.

In this study, OpaR, the high cell density master regulator of the QS system in *V. parahaemolyticus*, was selected to explore the relationship between the QS system and T4SS expression, as well as the conjugative transfer of the pVA1-type plasmid. The *V. parahaemolyticus* 20130629002S01::cat (*Vp2S01::cat*) strain, a pathogenic strain of AHPND, was used as the starting strain. The *opaR* gene was replaced with the erythromycin resistance gene (*ermB*) by homologous recombination and electroporation. The *opaR* mutant strain (*Vp2S01::catΔopaR*) was successfully constructed. The effects of OpaR on *Vp2S01::cat* were explored by performing growth curve and motility assays.

Vp2S01::cat and *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* were cultured continuously for approximately 24 h in a shaking bed at 28 °C and 180 r/min. OD₆₀₀ was measured every 2 h to compare the difference in growth. The results showed that there were no significant differences in the growth curves for *Vp2S01::cat* and *Vp2S01::catΔopaR*. Biofilm-forming ability was detected using a crystal violet staining assay. The results showed that the biofilm-forming ability of *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* was significantly reduced. Growth zone diameter was recorded in 0.3% (swimming) LB agar plates at 28 °C for 8 h to analyze the difference in swimming ability. We found that the swimming ability of *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* increased significantly by 2.67 times compared with that of *Vp2S01::cat*. Growth zone diameter was recorded in 1.5% (swarming) LB agar plates at 28 °C for 12 h to analyze the difference in swarming ability. The results showed that there was no significant difference in swarming ability between *Vp2S01::cat* and *Vp2S01::catΔopaR*. However, *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* had more missing colonies. Using *VcLMB29* as the receptor strain, the conjugative transfer efficiency of *Vp2S01::cat* and *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* was compared at different time points. We found that the conjugative transfer efficiency of *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* increased after 12 and 24 h. The conjugative transfer efficiency after 24 h was increased by a factor of 265.43. RNA of *Vp2S01::cat* and *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* was extracted after 24 h of conjugative transfer and reverse-transcribed into cDNA for real-time quantitative fluorescence PCR (RT-qPCR). *GyrB* was used as the reference gene. *AphA*-qRT, *opaR*-qRT, and T4SS-qRT primers were used for RT-qPCR. The relative expression levels of genes were calculated using the $2^{-\Delta\Delta C_t}$ method. The results showed that the relative expression levels of T4SS in the *Vp2S01::catΔopaR* experimental group were significantly increased by 1.13–3.21 times and that the relative expression levels of the key conjugative transfer genes *traF*, *trbE*, and *traG* were significantly increased by 1.96, 1.92, and 3.21 times, respectively.

In conclusion, the *opaR* gene does not affect the growth and swarming motility but does affect the biofilm-forming and swimming ability of *Vp2S01::cat*. The high cell density master regulator OpaR may affect the conjugative transfer efficiency of the virulent plasmid by regulating the expression levels of T4SS. This study provides fundamental data for analyzing the mechanism by which the QS system regulates the expression of T4SS and the conjugative transfer of the pVA1-type plasmid in AHPND pathogenic bacteria, offering technical support for the control of the horizontal transfer of the virulent plasmid in AHPND-causing bacteria.

Key words *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*; *opaR* gene; Biological characteristics; Type IV secretion system; Horizontal transfer