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Diverse Infection Profiles of *Serratia marcescens*: Impact of Capsule Lineages on Pathogenicity and Resistance

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DESCRIPTION

Serratia marcescens, a Gram-negative bacterium, is a well-known opportunistic pathogen associated with a range of infections, particularly in hospital settings. This bacterium exhibits a variety of traits that contribute to its virulence, including the production of a characteristic red pigment known as prodigiosin and the presence of a polysaccharide capsule. The capsule plays a crucial role in the bacterium's ability to evade the host immune system and establish infections. Notably, *S. marcescens* is categorized into different capsule lineages, each exhibiting distinct infection characteristics. Capsular polysaccharides are crucial virulence factors for many bacteria, serving as a major component of the bacterial cell wall that enhances their ability to resist phagocytosis by immune cells. For *S. marcescens*, the diversity in capsule types significantly impacts its pathogenic potential. The capsule helps the bacterium evade immune responses and contributes to its survival in hostile environments, such as those found in clinical settings. There are several capsule lineages of *S. marcescens*, each with unique structural and functional properties. These variations in capsule types are associated with different infection characteristics. For instance, certain capsule types may be more effective at adhering to host tissues or evading detection by the host immune system, thereby influencing the severity and outcome of infections. The capsule can also impact the bacterium's resistance to antibiotics and its ability to form biofilms, which are clusters of bacteria encased in a protective matrix that adhere to surfaces and are often resistant to treatment. One of the key infection characteristics influenced by capsule lineages is the bacterium's ability to cause different types of infections. *S. marcescens* infections range from mild skin infections to severe systemic infections, including sepsis and endocarditis. The capsule lineage can determine the bacterium's propensity to cause specific types of infections. For example, some capsule types might be more associated with urinary tract infections due to their enhanced ability to adhere to the urogenital tract, while others might be more linked to bloodstream infections due to their capacity to evade immune responses and persist in the bloodstream. Additionally, capsule lineages can affect the bacterium's ability to form biofilms on medical devices, such as catheters and prosthetic implants. Biofilm formation is a significant concern in hospital settings, as it contributes to the persistence of infections and complicates treatment. Capsules that promote biofilm formation can lead to chronic infections that are difficult to eradicate with standard antibiotic therapy. Understanding the capsule lineages that are most likely to form biofilms can help in developing targeted strategies to prevent and treat these infections. The interaction between capsule lineages and the host immune system is another critical factor influencing infection characteristics. Different capsule types can modulate the immune response in various ways. Some capsules might effectively inhibit phagocytosis by neutrophils and macrophages, while others may interfere with complement activation or other immune mechanisms. This modulation of the immune response can influence the clinical presentation of *S. marcescens* infections and impact treatment outcomes. Research into the characteristics of different capsule lineages also has implications for vaccine development and infection control measures. Identifying the specific capsule types prevalent in different infections can guide the development of vaccines that target these variants.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares there is no conflict of interest in publishing this article.

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