

合成微生物组: 当“合成生物学”遇见“微生物组学”

朱彤^{1,2}, 吴边^{1*}

1 中国科学院微生物研究所, 中国科学院微生物生理与代谢工程重点实验室, 微生物资源前期开发国家重点实验室, 北京 100101;

2 中国科学院大学生命科学学院, 北京 100049

* 联系人, E-mail: wub@im.ac.cn

2018-12-03 收稿, 2018-12-24 修回, 2018-12-25 接受, 2019-02-21 网络版发表

摘要 合成微生物组是指运用合成生物学方法构建的功能菌群。合成微生物组以代谢通路模块化为核心特征, 每个代谢模块的工作由一个菌株完成, 从而实现多个菌株的分工与合作。与单菌株相比, 合成微生物组具有降低菌株代谢负担与遗传改造难度、提供多样的元件表达平台、实现“即插即用”的模块替换等优势。在合成生物学与微生物组学快速发展、交汇融合的影响下, 合成微生物组已成为近些年微生物领域新的研究热点, 在生物合成平台化合物、复杂大分子以及生产生物燃料等方面具有广阔的应用前景。本文介绍了合成微生物组的设计原理与优势, 总结了近些年的主要研究成果, 阐述其目前面临的挑战与机遇, 最后对其未来的发展作出展望。

关键词 合成微生物组, 模块化, 共培养, 合成生物学, 代谢工程

微生物组学研究一个特定环境或者生态系统中的微生物生态群体, 而合成生物学使用工程学和计算机科学的原理与方法去阐明、模拟和构建生物制造系统, 二者交汇, 形成了合成微生物组学这一新兴交叉学科^[1-4]。在此之前, 合成生物学与基因组学交汇融合形成合成基因组学, 提升了人类在基因层面对生命体的认识水平^[5,6]。而合成微生物组学的研究主要集中在代谢层面和物种层面, 运用合成生物学的方法设计模块化代谢通路, 以此为基础构建的功能菌群便是合成微生物组, 可应用于高效合成平台化合物或复杂大分子。

传统微生物发酵始于食品酿造, 本质是使用自然界的微生物菌群生产发酵制品, 比如酒、酱油和奶酪。现代微生物发酵始于20世纪40年代抗生素的生产, 从那时起, 单菌株的纯培养成为微生物发酵生产的主流模式, 应用于大多数氨基酸、有机酸、药物及酶制剂等产品的生产^[7]。而后共培养模式再度兴起, 20世纪70年代维生素C二步发酵生产工艺诞生, 从L-山梨糖到2-

酮基-L-古龙酸(2-KLG)的反应由酮基古龙酸杆菌(*Ketogulonigenium vulgare*)和巨大芽孢杆菌(*Bacillus megaterium*)的共培养体系催化完成, 前者负责合成2-KLG, 后者为前者提供氨基酸、有机酸等营养物质^[8-10]。进入21世纪, 随着合成生物学与微生物组学的快速发展, 对微生物共培养体系的研究加入了遗传工程、代谢工程等现代生物技术以及工程学的模块化思想, 合成微生物组学应运而生。

1 合成微生物组的设计原理

传统的功能微生物组学主要利用自然界已有的共生菌群, 例如食品领域的酿酒菌群、环境领域的污水处理菌群和农业领域的植物共生菌群等, 这些菌群的物种组成十分复杂, 稳定性与鲁棒性高, 实现的是自然界已有的功能^[11]。与传统的多菌株混养体系不同, 合成微生物组学建立的多菌株共培养体系要求在无菌环境下接种多个确定的菌株, 这些菌株的代谢通路经过模块化设计、改造与优化, 从而实现人类赋予的、工业

引用格式: 朱彤, 吴边. 合成微生物组: 当“合成生物学”遇见“微生物组学”. 科学通报, 2019, 64: 1791-1798

Zhu T, Wu B. Synthetic microbiome: When “synthetic biology” meets “microbiomics” (in Chinese). Chin Sci Bull, 2019, 64: 1791-1798, doi: 10.1360/N972018-01194

生产所需的功能^[12,13]。建立符合需求的合成微生物组需要经过设计建模、菌株构建、实验评估、分析优化等步骤,其中最关键的工作是设计模块化代谢通路,为每个菌株分配不同的任务^[14,15]。合成目标产物的代谢通路被拆分为多个模块,每个模块的任务由一个菌株执行,这要求模块间“承上启下”的中间产物能够轻松穿过细胞膜或通道蛋白,亦或由载体蛋白转运,从而成为连接模块的“桥梁”^[13]。例如在D-山梨醇一步法合成2-KLG的工艺中,L-山梨糖被选为代谢通路中承上启下的中间产物,K. vulgare和Gluconobacter oxydans构成合成微生物组,后者负责将D-山梨醇转化为L-山梨糖并为前者提供生长所需的营养物质,前者再以L-山梨糖为底物合成2-KLG^[16]。

2 合成微生物组的优势

如图1所示,与单菌株培养相比,在设计复杂的合成代谢通路并构建表达系统时,合成微生物组具有显著的优势,包括:

(1) 降低菌株代谢负担与遗传改造难度. 异源表达工程菌株中,复杂大分子的合成往往需要多种外源蛋白的参与,这为单个菌株带来了沉重的代谢负担. 模块化设计实现了菌株的分工与合作,单个菌株只需表达一部分外源蛋白,降低了各菌株的代谢负担,同时一定程度上降低了遗传改造的难度^[17,18]。

(2) 提供多样的元件表达平台. 设计合成微生物组时,可以为每个代谢通路模块选择最适合的菌株来表达所需的酶,大肠杆菌(*Escherichia coli*)等原核生物难以表达的酶可以用酿酒酵母(*Saccharomyces cerevisiae*)来表达,从而构成细菌-酵母共培养体系^[19-21]。

(3) “即插即用”的模块替换. 将合成代谢通路模块

化后,每个菌株可完成一个独立模块的工作,更换上游模块的菌株即可改变初始底物,更换下游模块的菌株即可改变最终产物,增加下游模块即可对产物进一步加工^[17,21]。

(4) 平衡各模块的合成能力. 改变各菌株的接种比例,可以调整代谢模块之间的相对强度,平衡各模块的合成能力,提高整体合成效率^[10,22,23]。

(5) 降低副产物的生成量. 在共培养体系中,细胞膜在模块之间形成屏障,这种物理隔离可以减少代谢通路之间的干扰,从而减少副产物的生成^[24]。

(6) 实现对复杂底物的利用. 例如,木质纤维素降解得到的糖类为五碳糖和六碳糖的混合物,单菌株由于具有底物偏好性,对混合底物的利用效率不高,而合成微生物组的各个菌株可改造成利用不同碳源,从而实现对混合单糖的高效利用^[7,25,26]。

3 合成微生物组的研究进展

3.1 同种微生物组成的合成微生物组

相比于单菌株培养,合成微生物组能有效减少中间产物的积累,提高产物合成效率. Zhang等人^[25]建立了以葡萄糖和木糖为碳源,合成顺,顺-己二烯二酸的*E. coli*-*E. coli*共培养体系,将合成途径拆分为两个模块,*E. coli* P6.2以木糖为碳原合成(-)-3-脱氢草酸,*E. coli* BXS/BXC以葡萄糖为碳原,以(-)-3-脱氢草酸为底物合成顺,顺-己二烯二酸. 这样的分工提高了混合单糖的利用效率并减少了中间产物的积累,顺,顺-己二烯二酸的产量从单菌株培养的36 mg/L提升至682 mg/L. 进一步优化反应条件后,1 g葡萄糖木糖混合物可生产0.35 g顺,顺-己二烯二酸,碳源换为甘油后产量可达2 g/L^[25,27]。

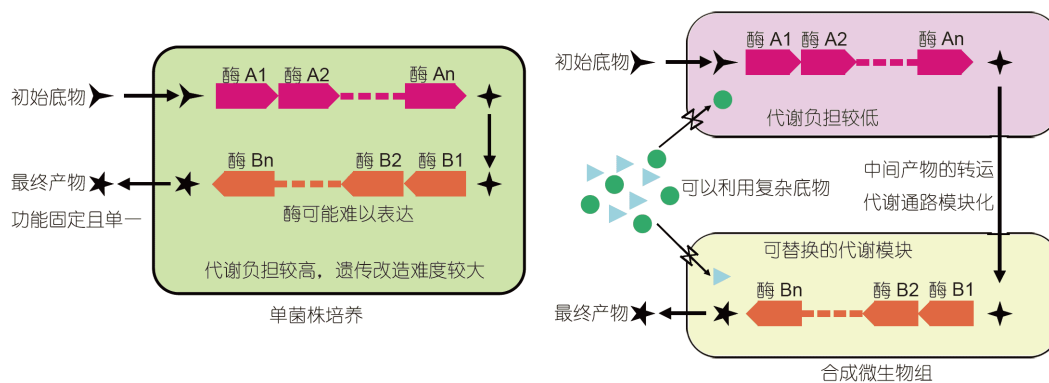


图1 (网络版彩色)合成微生物组与单菌株培养的对比如

Figure 1 (Color online) Comparison between synthetic microbiome and monoculture

在合成木质素单体的单菌株培养体系中, 反应底物酪氨酸除了在酪氨酸解氨酶的催化下形成中间产物香豆酸之外, 还会被合成途径下游的羟化酶HpaBC催化形成副产物左旋多巴并进一步氧化, 导致产率降低. Chen等人^[24]将该合成途径拆分为两个模块, 建立了*E. coli*-*E. coli*共培养体系, 酪氨酸解氨酶和羟化酶HpaBC分别在不同菌株中表达, 细胞膜作为屏障减少了酪氨酸与羟化酶HpaBC接触的机会, 副产物大幅减少, 目标产物的产量与单菌株培养相比提高了12倍.

合成微生物组能够降低菌株代谢负担, 减少对菌株正常生理代谢的影响, 从而提高产量. Jones等人^[23]建立了*E. coli*-*E. coli*共培养体系用于生产黄酮类化合物, 将类黄酮代谢通路拆分为两个模块, 使得黄烷-3-醇的产量与单菌株培养相比提高了970倍. 在该体系的基础上, Jones等人^[17]又增加了两个模块, 建立了由4株*E. coli*组成、表达15种外源蛋白的共培养体系, 实现了花青素的异源从头合成. 除了上述研究, 也有文献报道3-氨基苯甲酸^[18]、柚皮素^[28]、洛伐他汀^[29]等产品通过建立同种微生物组成的合成微生物组, 降低菌株代谢负担, 产量与单菌株培养相比分别提高了15, 1.5, 0.7倍.

3.2 异种微生物组成的合成微生物组

异种微生物组成的合成微生物组可以提供多样的元件表达平台. 氧化紫杉烷是抗癌药物紫杉醇的前体, 其合成途径源于植物. 大肠杆菌难以表达复杂的真核生物的酶, 而酿酒酵母合成类异戊二烯的能力较低, 二者均不能单独合成氧化紫杉烷. Zhou等人^[21]建立了*E. coli*-*S. cerevisiae*共培养体系, 将氧化紫杉烷的合成途径拆分为两个模块, *E. coli*负责合成紫杉烯, 之后*S. cerevisiae*以紫杉烯为底物合成氧化紫杉烷, 培养120 h后氧化紫杉烷产量达到33 mg/L.

如果光合细菌参与构成合成微生物组, 那么这个共培养体系可将光能当作能量来源, 不需要额外碳源便可持续合成产品. Weiss等人^[30]建立了细长聚球藻(*Synechococcus elongatus*)和盐单胞菌(*Halomonas boliviensis*)的共培养体系, 以光能为能量来源合成生物材料聚- β -羟丁酸. 在不添加额外碳源的情况下, 细长聚球藻通过光合作用合成蔗糖并分泌至胞外, 盐单胞菌摄入蔗糖后用于生长和合成聚- β -羟丁酸. 该共培养体系可维持5个月, 聚- β -羟丁酸产量达到了28.3 mg/(L d).

合成微生物组也被应用到了生物电化学领域. Liu等人^[31]建立了由*E. coli*、枯草芽孢杆菌(*Bacillus subti-*

lis)和希瓦氏菌(*Shewanella oneidensis*)组成的三菌株共培养体系以输出电能. *E. coli*生产作为电子供体的乳酸, *B. subtilis*生产作为电子穿梭体的核黄素, *S. oneidensis*作为产电菌持续输出电能, 乳酸氧化形成的乙酸还可以作为碳原再次被细菌利用. 这个生物电化学系统最终持续输出电能15 d, 能量转化效率高达55.7%. 除此之外, 也有文献报道利用*B. subtilis*-*S. oneidensis*^[32]和*S. cerevisiae*-*S. oneidensis*^[33]等双菌株共培养体系构建的生物电化学系统.

在生物质综合利用和生物燃料领域, 合成微生物组也受到了研究者的广泛关注, 被应用于各种生物燃料与有机溶剂的生产^[34-36]. 农作物秸秆、玉米芯、甘蔗渣等植物材料富含纤维素和半纤维素, 数量巨大且价格低廉, 是潜在的生产生物燃料和其他化学品的原料^[37,38]. 将纤维素降解途径和生物燃料合成途径拆分为两个代谢模块, 由两个菌株分工完成, 既能减轻单个菌株的代谢负担, 又能降低遗传改造的难度. 据此, 部分研究者设计了同种合成微生物组, 更多的研究者为了充分发挥物种优势, 选择设计异种合成微生物组. 在异种合成微生物组中, 降解纤维素的工程菌一般来自梭菌属或木霉属, 而合成生物燃料或其他化学品的工程菌一般是遗传改造常用的大肠杆菌、酵母菌或梭菌. 近年来合成微生物组在应用方面的其他研究进展如表1所示.

4 挑战与机遇

近年来, 合成微生物组的研究成果逐年快速增长, 但大多数还停留在实验室研究阶段, 距离实际生产应用还有一定距离, 并且绝大多数合成微生物组由两个菌株组成, 多菌株合成微生物组为数寥寥^[51]. 无论是应用于实际生产, 还是增加共培养菌株数量, 合成微生物组都面临着一系列挑战, 首先便是维持共培养体系的稳定. 调整各菌株的初始接种比例是控制各模块代谢强度的一种方法, 但各菌株生长速率存在差异, 生长速度快的菌株若不加以控制, 便会出现“一家独大”的情形, 导致模块代谢强度失衡, 产率降低. 对生长快速的菌株加以限制, 最常用的策略是建立群体感应(quorum sensing)系统, 实现菌株对生长的自主限制^[52]. 群体感应系统由三部分组成, 其功能分别是分泌作为诱导物的信号分子、检测环境中信号分子的浓度以及调控生长相关基因的表达^[53]. 信号分子在环境中扩散, 当细胞密度较大、信号分子浓度达到阈值时, 启动生长相关

表1 合成微生物组在应用方面的其他研究进展

Table 1 Other application examples of synthetic microbiome

共培养的物种	底物	成果	文献
<i>Clostridium cellulovorans-Clostridium beijerinckii</i>	玉米芯(碱处理)	108 h生产丙酮4.25 g/L, 丁醇11.5 g/L, 乙醇6.37 g/L	[39]
<i>C. cellulovorans-C. beijerinckii</i>	小麦秸秆(天然发酵处理)	5 d生产丙酮5.4 g/L, 丁醇14.2 g/L, 乙醇3.7 g/L	[40]
<i>Clostridium thermocellum-C. saccharoperbutylacetonicum</i>	微晶纤维素	9 d生产正丁醇7.9 g/L	[41]
<i>E. coli-E. coli</i>	纤维素水解物	16 h生产正丁醇5.8 g/L	[42]
<i>E. coli-E. coli</i>	葡萄糖	24 h生产正丁醇5.5 g/L	[43]
<i>Trichoderma reesei-E. coli</i>	玉米秸秆(氨纤维爆破法处理)	300 h生产异丁醇1.88 g/L	[44]
<i>Clostridium phytofermentans-S. cerevisiae</i>	α -纤维素	400 h生产乙醇22 g/L	[19]
<i>E. coli-E. coli</i>	木聚糖	24 h生产乙醇3.7 g/L	[45]
<i>Actinotalea fermentans-S. cerevisiae</i>	甘蔗渣	36 h生产碘甲烷5 g/L	[20]
<i>E. coli-E. coli</i>	干酒糟及可溶物	52 h生产杂醇油10.3 g/L	[46]
<i>E. coli-E. coli</i>	葡萄糖	3 h生产乙酸紫苏醇酯21.7 mg/L	[47]
<i>E. coli-E. coli</i>	葡萄糖	22 h生产双脱甲氧基姜黄素6.28 mg/L	[48]
<i>E. coli-S. cerevisiae</i>	多巴胺	72 h生产木兰花碱7.2 mg/L	[49]
<i>E. coli-Corynebacterium ammoniagenes</i>	半乳糖、乳糖与乳清酸	36 h生产 α -二半乳糖葡萄糖三糖188 g/L	[50]

基因的调控^[54]。Scott等人^[55]将群体感应系统运用于两株鼠伤寒沙门氏杆菌(*Salmonella typhimurium*)的共培养体系,当单个菌株的细胞密度达到设定阈值时,该菌株细胞裂解相关基因的表达便被启动,80%的实验组在培养48 h时仍能保证两菌株共存,而不具有群体感应系统的共培养体系无法维持超过12 h。另一种限制菌株生长速度的策略是建立菌株互养(cross-feeding)的共培养体系,即各菌株均为营养缺陷型,需要共培养的其他菌株提供其自身无法合成的营养物质^[56]。Mee等人^[57]为发展微生物共培养体系建立了一个平台,构建了14株营养缺陷型*E. coli*,每株菌株缺失一种氨基酸合成能力,这些菌株可以组成两菌株或三菌株共培养体系,从而在M9-葡萄糖培养基中生长。但目前同时做到生长偶联与设计代谢途径偶联的工作尚无报道。

随着培养时间的增加,共培养体系可能遇到诸如培养环境改变、外来菌株竞争、基因突变、水平基因转移等问题。如何在发酵生产期间保持共培养体系的功能不受过多影响,即如何提高合成微生物组的鲁棒性,是合成微生物组面临的另一挑战^[58]。首先是遗传稳定性问题,合成微生物组包含多个菌株,与单菌株培养相比更容易受基因突变影响,若一个菌株因遗传物质改变而失去设定的代谢功能,整个共培养体系便无法

生产最终产物。为了提高遗传稳定性,在设计合成微生物组的阶段应特别关注遗传改造方案,注意优先使用诱导型启动子、避免过多的基因重复序列等^[59,60]。其次是外来菌株竞争的问题,当存在未被占据的代谢生态位时,外来菌株便有可能入侵并繁殖,因此设计合成微生物组时应注意使底物被充分利用,例如让各菌株分别利用不同碳原以提高混合底物的利用率^[25,58]。

增加组成合成微生物组的菌株数量,不仅要考虑到共培养体系的稳定性与鲁棒性,还需要考虑到体系是否容易调控。调控含有更多菌株的合成微生物组需要更加复杂的调控机制,目前研究者寄希望于合成生物学进一步发展,获得正交性、控制性更好的合成生物学工具,例如上文所说的群体感应系统和营养缺陷型菌株互养系统^[51,55,57,61]。合成生物学中使用的“逻辑门”等设计思想也可延伸到物种层面,通过初级代谢偶联和次级代谢产物抑制等方法,在共培养体系中模拟出自然界的竞争、共栖和互利共生等种间关系,从而实现合成微生物组的自我调控^[14,35,62]。

建立含有更多菌株的共培养体系,除了设计合成微生物组时使用的“自下至上”(bottom-up)的设计方式,还有一种“自上至下”(top-down)的设计方式,即向自然学习,从自然界已有的共生菌群出发,删去功能冗余和

不重要的菌株, 仅保留能够实现共生菌群功能的关键菌株, 得到“最小必要菌群”(minimal microbial communities)^[62-64]. 以这种方式得到的共培养体系具有较好的稳定性与鲁棒性, 基本保留了原菌群的功能, 主要的应用集中在降解木质纤维素等自然界已有的功能^[37,38,65]. 虽然最小必要菌群目前可应用的范围不大, 但对其研究有助于我们了解共培养体系中菌株之间的相互作用, 进而指导建立含有更多菌株, 稳定性和鲁棒性更高的合成微生物组.

5 展望

继基因组、蛋白质组之后, 微生物组成为了生物学研究的又一个焦点领域, 美国于2016年5月公布了国

家微生物组计划, 中国科学院也于2017年12月启动了中国科学院微生物组计划. 合成微生物组学的出现, 为工业生物技术的升级改造带来了新的可能性. 受益于合成生物学与微生物组学的快速发展, 合成微生物组的研究在近几年取得了突飞猛进的发展, 相关研究成果的数量逐年快速增长. 虽然大多数研究成果还没有在生产中取得正式应用, 但伴随更多合成生物学工具的创新与优化, 以及对天然微生物组更加深入的理解, 合成微生物组的稳定性、鲁棒性将会得到改善, 逐渐缩小与生产应用的距离, 形成对当前单菌株微生物工业生产模式的互补. 随着更多的理论研究创新与应用案例出现, 合成微生物组学的技术很有可能成为未来生物产业新突破的动力源泉.

参考文献

- Liu S J, Shi W Y, Zhao G P. China microbiome initiative: Opportunity and challenges (in Chinese). *Bull Chin Acad Sci*, 2017, 32: 241–250 [刘双江, 施文元, 赵国屏. 中国微生物组计划: 机遇与挑战. *中国科学院院刊*, 2017, 32: 241–250]
- Purnick P E M, Weiss R. The second wave of synthetic biology: From modules to systems. *Nat Rev Mol Cell Biol*, 2009, 10: 410–422
- Ortiz-Marquez J C F, Do Nascimento M, Zehr J P, et al. Genetic engineering of multispecies microbial cell factories as an alternative for bioenergy production. *Trends Biotech*, 2013, 31: 521–529
- Jia X, Liu C, Song H, et al. Design, analysis and application of synthetic microbial consortia. *Synth Syst Biotech*, 2016, 1: 109–117
- Schindler D, Dai J, Cai Y. Synthetic genomics: A new venture to dissect genome fundamentals and engineer new functions. *Curr Opin Chem Biol*, 2018, 46: 56–62
- Wang L, Jiang S, Chen C, et al. Synthetic genomics: From DNA synthesis to genome design. *Angew Chem Int Ed*, 2018, 57: 1748–1756
- Sabra W, Dietz D, Tjahjajari D, et al. Biosystems analysis and engineering of microbial consortia for industrial biotechnology. *Eng Life Sci*, 2010, 10: 407–421
- Zou W, Liu L, Chen J. Structure, mechanism and regulation of an artificial microbial ecosystem for vitamin C production. *Critical Rev MicroBiol*, 2012, 39: 247–255
- Du J, Zhou J, Xue J, et al. Metabolomic profiling elucidates community dynamics of the *Ketogulonicigenium vulgare*–*Bacillus megaterium* consortium. *Metabolomics*, 2012, 8: 960–973
- Ye C, Zou W, Xu N, et al. Metabolic model reconstruction and analysis of an artificial microbial ecosystem for vitamin C production. *J Biotechnol*, 2014, 182: 61–67
- Lakshmanan V, Selvaraj G, Bais H P. Functional soil microbiome: Belowground solutions to an aboveground problem. *Plant Physiol*, 2014, 166: 689–700
- Bader J, Mast-Gerlach E, Popović M K, et al. Relevance of microbial coculture fermentations in biotechnology. *J Appl MicroBiol*, 2010, 109: 371–387
- Zhang H, Wang X. Modular co-culture engineering, a new approach for metabolic engineering. *Metabolic Eng*, 2016, 37: 114–121
- Ding M Z, Song H, Wang E X, et al. Design and construction of synthetic microbial consortia in China. *Synth Syst Biotech*, 2016, 1: 230–235
- Pandhal J, Noirel J. Synthetic microbial ecosystems for biotechnology. *Biotechnol Lett*, 2014, 36: 1141–1151
- Wang E X, Ding M Z, Ma Q, et al. Reorganization of a synthetic microbial consortium for one-step vitamin C fermentation. *Microb Cell Fact*, 2016, 15: 21
- Jones J A, Vernacchio V R, Collins S M, et al. Complete biosynthesis of anthocyanins using *E. coli* polycultures. *mBio*, 2017, 8: e00621-17
- Zhang H, Stephanopoulos G. Co-culture engineering for microbial biosynthesis of 3-amino-benzoic acid in *Escherichia coli*. *Biotech J*, 2016, 11: 981–987
- Zuroff T R, Barri Xiques S, Curtis W R. Consortia-mediated bioprocessing of cellulose to ethanol with a symbiotic *Clostridium phytofermentans*/yeast co-culture. *Biotechnol Biofuels*, 2013, 6: 59
- Bayer T S, Widmaier D M, Temme K, et al. Synthesis of methyl halides from biomass using engineered microbes. *J Am Chem Soc*, 2009, 131:

6508–6515

- 21 Zhou K, Qiao K, Edgar S, et al. Distributing a metabolic pathway among a microbial consortium enhances production of natural products. *Nat Biotechnol*, 2015, 33: 377–383
- 22 Ahmadi M K, Fang L, Moscatello N, et al. *E. coli* Metabolic Engineering for gram scale production of a plant-based anti-inflammatory agent. *Metabolic Eng*, 2016, 38: 382–388
- 23 Jones J A, Vernacchio V R, Sinkoe A L, et al. Experimental and computational optimization of an *Escherichia coli* co-culture for the efficient production of flavonoids. *Metabolic Eng*, 2016, 35: 55–63
- 24 Chen Z, Sun X, Li Y, et al. Metabolic Engineering of *Escherichia coli* for microbial synthesis of monolignols. *Metabolic Eng*, 2017, 39: 102–109
- 25 Zhang H, Pereira B, Li Z, et al. Engineering *Escherichia coli* coculture systems for the production of biochemical products. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*, 2015, 112: 8266–8271
- 26 Brenner K, You L, Arnold F H. Engineering microbial consortia: A new frontier in synthetic biology. *Trends Biotech*, 2008, 26: 483–489
- 27 Zhang H, Li Z, Pereira B, et al. Engineering *E. coli*-*E. coli* cocultures for production of muconic acid from glycerol. *Microb Cell Fact*, 2015, 14: 134
- 28 Ganesan V, Li Z, Wang X, et al. Heterologous biosynthesis of natural product naringenin by co-culture engineering. *Synth Syst Biotech*, 2017, 2: 236–242
- 29 Liu Y, Tu X, Xu Q, et al. Engineered monoculture and co-culture of methylotrophic yeast for de novo production of monacolin J and lovastatin from methanol. *Metabolic Eng*, 2018, 45: 189–199
- 30 Weiss T L, Young E J, Ducat D C. A synthetic, light-driven consortium of cyanobacteria and heterotrophic bacteria enables stable polyhydroxybutyrate production. *Metabolic Eng*, 2017, 44: 236–245
- 31 Liu Y, Ding M, Ling W, et al. A three-species microbial consortium for power generation. *Energy Environ Sci*, 2017, 10: 1600–1609
- 32 Liu T, Yu Y Y, Chen T, et al. A synthetic microbial consortium of *Shewanella* and *Bacillus* for enhanced generation of bioelectricity. *Biotechnol Bioeng*, 2017, 114: 526–532
- 33 Lin T, Bai X, Hu Y, et al. Synthetic *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*-*Shewanella oneidensis* consortium enables glucose-fed high-performance microbial fuel cell. *AIChE J*, 2017, 63: 1830–1838
- 34 Chen Y. Development and application of co-culture for ethanol production by co-fermentation of glucose and xylose: A systematic review. *J Ind Microbiol Biotechnol*, 2011, 38: 581–597
- 35 Jagmann N, Philipp B. Design of synthetic microbial communities for biotechnological production processes. *J Biotech*, 2014, 184: 209–218
- 36 Kleerebezem R, van Loosdrecht M C M. Mixed culture biotechnology for bioenergy production. *Curr Opin Biotech*, 2007, 18: 207–212
- 37 Puentes-Téllez P E, Falcao Salles J. Construction of effective minimal active microbial consortia for lignocellulose degradation. *Microb Ecol*, 2018, 76: 419–429
- 38 Jiménez D J, Chaib De Mares M, Salles J F. Temporal expression dynamics of plant biomass-degrading enzymes by a synthetic bacterial consortium growing on Sugarcane Bagasse. *Front Microbiol*, 2018, 9: 299
- 39 Wen Z, Minton N P, Zhang Y, et al. Enhanced solvent production by Metabolic Engineering of a twin-clostridial consortium. *Metabolic Eng*, 2017, 39: 38–48
- 40 Valdez-Vazquez I, Pérez-Rangel M, Tapia A, et al. Hydrogen and butanol production from native wheat straw by synthetic microbial consortia integrated by species of *Enterococcus* and *Clostridium*. *Fuel*, 2015, 159: 214–222
- 41 Nakayama S, Kiyoshi K, Kadokura T, et al. Butanol production from crystalline cellulose by cocultured *Clostridium thermocellum* and *Clostridium saccharoperbutylacetonicum* N1-4. *Appl Environ Microbiol*, 2011, 77: 6470–6475
- 42 Saini M, Chiang C J, Li S Y, et al. Production of biobutanol from cellulose hydrolysate by the *Escherichia coli* co-culture system. *FEMS Microbiol Lett*, 2016, 363: fnw008
- 43 Saini M, Hong Chen M, Chiang C J, et al. Potential production platform of *n*-butanol in *Escherichia coli*. *Metabolic Eng*, 2015, 27: 76–82
- 44 Minty J J, Singer M E, Scholz S A, et al. Design and characterization of synthetic fungal-bacterial consortia for direct production of isobutanol from cellulosic biomass. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*, 2013, 110: 14592–14597
- 45 Shin H D, McClendon S, Vo T, et al. *Escherichia coli* binary culture engineered for direct fermentation of hemicellulose to a biofuel. *Appl Environ Microbiol*, 2010, 76: 8150–8159
- 46 Liu F, Wu W, Tran-Gyamfi M B, et al. Bioconversion of distillers' grains hydrolysates to advanced biofuels by an *Escherichia coli* co-culture. *Microb Cell Fact*, 2017, 16: 192
- 47 Willrodt C, Hoschek A, Bühler B, et al. Coupling limonene formation and oxyfunctionalization by mixed-culture resting cell fermentation. *Biotechnol Bioeng*, 2015, 112: 1738–1750
- 48 Fang Z, Jones J A, Zhou J, et al. Engineering *Escherichia coli* co-cultures for production of curcuminoids from glucose. *Biotechnol J*, 2018, 13: 1700576

- 49 Minami H, Kim J S, Ikezawa N, et al. Microbial production of plant benzylisoquinoline alkaloids. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*, 2008, 105: 7393–7398
- 50 Koizumi S, Endo T, Tabata K, et al. Large-scale production of UDP-galactose and globotriose by coupling metabolically engineered bacteria. *Nat Biotechnol*, 1998, 16: 847–850
- 51 Goers L, Freemont P, Polizzi K M. Co-culture systems and technologies: Taking synthetic biology to the next level. *J R Soc Interface*, 2014, 11: 20140065
- 52 Song H, Ding M Z, Jia X Q, et al. Synthetic microbial consortia: From systematic analysis to construction and applications. *Chem Soc Rev*, 2014, 43: 6954–6981
- 53 Pan J, Ren D. Quorum sensing inhibitors: A patent overview. *Expert Opin Therapeutic Patents*, 2009, 19: 1581–1601
- 54 Bassler B L. How bacteria talk to each other: Regulation of gene expression by quorum sensing. *Curr Opin MicroBiol*, 1999, 2: 582–587
- 55 Scott S R, Din M O, Bittihn P, et al. A stabilized microbial ecosystem of self-limiting bacteria using synthetic quorum-regulated lysis. *Nat Microbiol*, 2017, 2: 17083
- 56 Chan S H J, Simons M N, Maranas C D. SteadyCom: Predicting microbial abundances while ensuring community stability. *PLoS Comput Biol*, 2017, 13: e1005539
- 57 Mee M T, Collins J J, Church G M, et al. Syntrophic exchange in synthetic microbial communities. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*, 2014, 111: E2149–E2156
- 58 Johns N I, Blazejewski T, Gomes A L, et al. Principles for designing synthetic microbial communities. *Curr Opin MicroBiol*, 2016, 31: 146–153
- 59 Sleight S C, Bartley B A, Lieviant J A, et al. Designing and engineering evolutionary robust genetic circuits. *J Biol Eng*, 2010, 4: 12
- 60 Renda B A, Hammerling M J, Barrick J E. Engineering reduced evolutionary potential for synthetic biology. *Mol BioSyst*, 2014, 10: 1668–1678
- 61 Villarreal F, Contreras-Llano L E, Chavez M, et al. Synthetic microbial consortia enable rapid assembly of pure translation machinery. *Nat Chem Biol*, 2018, 14: 29–35
- 62 Grosskopf T, Soyer O S. Synthetic microbial communities. *Curr Opin MicroBiol*, 2014, 18: 72–77
- 63 Peng X, Gilmore S P, O'Malley M A. Microbial communities for bioprocessing: Lessons learned from nature. *Curr Opin Chem Eng*, 2016, 14: 103–109
- 64 Eng A, Borenstein E. An algorithm for designing minimal microbial communities with desired metabolic capacities. *Bioinformatics*, 2016, 32: 2008–2016
- 65 Cortes-Tolalpa L, Salles J F, van Elsas J D. Bacterial synergism in lignocellulose biomass degradation—Complementary roles of degraders as influenced by complexity of the carbon source. *Front Microbiol*, 2017, 8: 1628

Summary for “合成微生物组: 当‘合成生物学’遇见‘微生物组学’”

Synthetic microbiome: When “synthetic biology” meets “microbiomics”

Tong Zhu^{1,2} & Bian Wu^{1*}

¹ CAS Key Laboratory of Microbial Physiological and Metabolic Engineering, State Key Laboratory of Microbial Resources, Institute of Microbiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100101, China;

² College of Life Sciences, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100049, China

* Corresponding author, E-mail: wub@im.ac.cn

Microbiomics focuses on the composition and function of microbial communities in a specific environment, while synthetic biology is an emerging discipline that uses engineering principles to elucidate, simulate and construct biological systems. The interdisciplinary branch of these disciplines has developed into an emerging subject called synthetic microbiomics, which has become a topic of interest in the field of microbiology. Distinct from the traditional functional microbiome, the synthetic microbiome refers to the functional microbiota constructed under the guidance of synthetic biology instead of the natural microbiota. The construction of a synthetic microbiome involves several steps, including model design, strain engineering, evaluation and optimization.

Characterized by the modularization of metabolic pathways, the synthetic microbiome actualizes the cooperation of multiple strains with different functions. The synthetic microbiome has several advantages over monoculture in the case of synthesizing complex macromolecules and other platform chemicals. First, the metabolic burden of each strain is reduced as well as the difficulty of plasmid construction. Second, varied expression platforms are provided for multiple modules to increase the expression level of heterologous proteins. Third, modules could be easily added or substituted to obtain diverse products, and the relative metabolic intensity of each module is controlled through the inoculation ratio of co-cultured strains. Meanwhile, different parts of metabolic pathways are insulated by cell membrane, reducing the yield of by-products. Finally, mixed substrates, such as lignocellulose hydrolysates, can be efficiently utilized by multiple strains, which cannot be used by a single strain due to substrate preference.

Research on the synthetic microbiome has increased in recent years, yet most of these findings have not been applied in industry. The applications of the synthetic microbiome are normally concentrated on the production of three categories of products: platform compounds, complex macromolecules and biofuels. Other applications, such as bioelectrochemical systems and light-driven consortia, offer new energy resources and have significance in fundamental research on the symbiotic relationship of co-cultured strains. In many cases, the yield has remarkably improved thanks to the decrease of metabolic burdens caused by the division of labour. However, the stability and robustness of synthetic microbiomes remain as challenges. To improve stability, two design strategies could be taken into consideration: The quorum sensing system and the cross-feeding system. Improvements in genetic engineering and substrate utilization will enhance robustness. With the development of synthetic biology, more genetic editing and regulation tools will come into use, providing the possibility to construct stable and robust synthetic microbiomes comprising more strains. Once stability and robustness are attained, synthetic microbiome applications will likely spread throughout industry.

synthetic microbiome, modularization, co-culture, synthetic biology, metabolic engineering

doi: [10.1360/N972018-01194](https://doi.org/10.1360/N972018-01194)