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TITLE: Real Time Measurement of Host Bioenergetics During Mycobacterium Tuberculosis Infection

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14. ABSTRACT
The unique ability of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (*Mt*) to persist in humans in a dormant, drug-resistant state, sometimes reactivating to cause tuberculosis (TB) decades after the primary infection, has puzzled scientists for years. This, together with the fact that more than one third of the world’s population is latently infected with *Mt* and the emergence of multi-drug resistant (MDR), extensively drug-resistant (XDR) and super XDR (S-XDR) *Mt* strains constitutes a major challenge to global health. Surprisingly, very little is known about the precise mechanisms that *Mt* uses to subvert host immune responses and there is an urgent need to apply new state-of-the-art tools to determine precisely how *Mt* overcomes host defenses in order to establish a persistent infection. For this purpose, we will apply a novel technology that, to the best of our knowledge, has not yet been used to examine any microbial species. The application of this tool, for the first time, will reveal a wealth of previously unknown, quantitative information about the bacterial oxygen consumption rate (OCR), the extracellular acidification rate (ECAR) and reserve respiratory capacity (RRC). To date, critical information regarding *Mt* bioenergetics is not available and represents a significant gap in our understanding of *Mt* physiology. Secondly, real-time metabolic profiling of human macrophages infected with *Mt* mutants will identify key bacterial factors that target specific components of the host ETC. Lastly, mycobacterial genes and pathways that modulate the bacterial and host bioenergetic state will be identified. These findings are expected to have an important positive impact on our understanding of mycobacterial physiology, which will result in the development of innovative approaches toward the containment and treatment of TB.
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1. **INTRODUCTION:** *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (*Mtb*), the bacterium that causes human tuberculosis (TB) disease, is an extremely successfully pathogen owing to its ability to persist in humans in a dormant, drug-resistant state, sometimes reactivating to cause TB disease decades after the primary infection. *Mtb* dormancy, as well as the known limitations of current anti-TB drugs and their inability to act on dormant bacilli, underscore the need to use innovative tools to examine the bioenergetic mechanisms that allow *Mtb* to enter, maintain and emerge from a persistent state of infection. The purpose our proposed work is to establish a novel technology that can examine the bioenergetic profile of *Mtb*, as well as the bioenergetics of infected host cells in real-time. Once mycobacterial genes and pathways that modulate the bacterial and host bioenergetic state are identified, there is the promise that these components can be used as drug targets that may lead to novel therapeutic strategies to control persistent and drug-resistant *Mtb*.

2. **KEY WORDS:** tuberculosis, metabolism, flux analysis, bioenergetics, persistence, dormancy, immune, glycolysis, respiration, infection

3. **OVERALL PROJECT SUMMARY:** This Project Summary outlines the progress in addressing TASK 1 as outlined in our Statement of Work:

**TASK 1 (Months 1-12), To define the bioenergetic profile of wild type and genetically defined mutants of *Mtb*.** Materials and supply costs for the first year were $10,042.

**Subtask 1a. To define the bioenergetic profile of wild type mycobacterial species *Mtb*, *M. bovis* BCG and *M. smegmatis*.** Briefly, in order to carry out this specific sub aim, actively growing (log-phase) cells of *M. tuberculosis* H37Rv, *M. smegmatis* (Msm) and *M. bovis* BCG were used to prepare single cell suspensions for seeding into special XF96 plates. We generated bioenergetic profiles by measuring cellular respiration, glycolysis rate, ATP turnover and reserve respiratory capacity in response to pharmacological modulators of glycolytic and oxidative energy metabolism provided as part of XF kits (see methods). To minimize experimental variations and ensure reproducibility, standardizations need to be carried out:

1. **Determine the method of choice (centrifugation or chemical coating) to make bacterial cells efficiently adhere to the plate’s surface.** In polyethylenimine mediated conjugation, an appropriate working concentration (the one that does not interfere with cellular metabolism and effect viability of the cells) will be determined. Viability of the cells will be ascertained using standard alamar blue assay.

Bioenergetic measurements on the XF96 Extracellular Flux Analyser require that the cells being analysed are adhered to the bottom surface for the XF96 cell culture microplate in a monolayer. For non-adherent mycobacteria this limitation can be resolved by using Cell-Tak™ Adhesive, a non-immunogenic polyphenolic protein preparation isolated from the marine mussel, or poly-D-lysine or polyethylenimine to adhere the bacilli in a monolayer. We investigated Cell-Tak™ and poly-D-lysine to adhere the mycobacteria to the XF96 cell culture microplate, and decided to continue with Cell-Tak™ due to more reproducible results. Using Cell-Tak™ we were able to successfully measure the oxygen consumption rate (OCR) and extracellular acidification rate (ECAR) of all the different mycobacterial strains investigated to date, which to the best of our knowledge is an original finding.
(Figure 1). This also shows that Cell-Tak™ does not discriminate between different mycobacterial cell wall compositions.

ii) Optimize seeding density for mycobacterial strains. Different species and cell types have different bioenergetic requirements. Hence for each species, appropriate seeding density needs to be optimized. This will require multiple sets of experiments and comparison of their cellular bioenergetic profiles.

We determined the optimal bacilli seeding densities for Msm, Mtb H37Rv and Mtb mc² 6230 by plotting the number of bacilli seeded against the basal OCR and ECAR levels (Msm seeding optimization shown in Figure 1). The optimal seeding number should be in the linear part of the bacilli number OCR/ECAR relationship. For Msm this was determined to be 0.25x10⁶ bacilli/well, and 2x10⁶ for both Mtb H37Rv and Mtb mc² 6230 (data not shown).

iii) The optimal concentration of the different inhibitors to achieve maximal responses will be determined by titration of each inhibitor with each mycobacterial species. We will use proprietary XF software specifically designed to analyze the data obtained from these experiments. We understand that characterization of these initial parameters holds key to all further experiments. We expect to accomplish the aims of subtask 1a by the end of 8 months.

We determined the bioenergetic profile of Msm generated by careful titration some of the known electron transport chain (ETC) disrupters/inhibitors (Figure 2). Due to the short doubling time of Msm compared to that of Mtb H37Rv the data was continuously plagued by error due to bacilli dividing during the course of the experiment. We therefore proceeded with bioenergetic studies using different Mtb strains and did not continue the bioenergetic characterization of Msm.

For various Mtb strains we investigated effect of different ETC-targeting antimycobacterial drugs on Mtb bioenergetics. We focused on Clofazimine (CFZ, targets Complex I), Bedaquiline (BDQ/TMC207, targets Complex V) and Q203 (targets Complex III). Firstly we investigated the effect of CFZ and BDQ on the OCR profiles of Mtb mc² 6230 (Figure 3). These experiments were done in DMEM media with different concentrations of CFZ and BDQ (as indicated), and a CCCP concentration of 10 µM. With CFZ we obtained an expected result – in all cases the OCR was raised to the same level due to uncoupling with CCCP, after which OCR decreased in a concentration dependent manner by the addition with of CFZ. The decrease in OCR is consistent with ETC complex inhibition. BDQ caused a very surprising concentration-dependent increase in OCR and not the expected decrease in OCR from a Complex V (ATP synthase) inhibitor. This increase in OCR after the addition of the BDQ suggests a more complex mechanism of action. Also, from these experiments we have proven that the XF96 can be optimized to study and/or screen for compounds that target the mycobacterial ETC complexes.
We next investigated whether different carbon sources would change the increase in OCR caused by BDQ, as well as the effect Q203 would have on mycobacterial bioenergetics. We also looked at the effect these drugs have on mycobacterial ECAR in the presence of the different carbon sources. These experiments were done with *Mtb* H37Rv in modified 7H9 media. For this the bacilli were starved for 24 hrs prior to the start of the experiment in 7H9 media containing no carbon source. During the experiment a carbon source (glucose, lactate or palmitate) was added after three basal measurements were taken. After carbon source addition BDQ and Q203 were added respectively, followed by 2 μM CCCP as indicated by the dotted lines in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 3: The initial OCR experiments done using the known anti-mycobacterial drugs CFZ and BDQ (TMC207), and *Mtb* mc’ 6230. The dotted lines indicate the time points at which CFZ, BDQ and CCCP were added.

Figure 4: The OCR profiles of *Mtb* H37Rv. The dotted lines indicate the time points at which the different carbon sources, drug and CCCP were added. BDQ and Q203 have different effect on the OCR of mycobacteria in the presence of the carbon sources tested.
Firstly, Q203 (a Complex III inhibitor) also causes an increase in OCR – also an unexpected result. Also, both BDQ and Q203 cause an increase in ECAR which means that mycobacterial glycolysis is also stimulated upon addition. The stimulation of glycolysis would be to compensate for the lack of ATP production through OXPHOS and thus more ATP would be produced through glycolysis. It is also clear from the data that carbon source (glucose, lactate and palmitate) play a role in the bacilli’s ability to maintain its membrane potential after drug addiction. This has important implications for drug discovery seeing that mycobacterial carbon sources vary greatly from in vitro culturing and screening conditions, to in vivo infection conditions.

To establish the duration of increased OCR (from basal levels), we treated different Mtb H37Rv cultures with BDQ and Q203, at 30x and 300x their MIC concentrations. On specific days (0, 1, 3, 6 and 9) an aliquot was taken from these drug treated cultures and the basal respiration of the bacilli measured. The results (Figure 6) show that BDQ (at both concentrations) increases the basal respiration (as seen previously) when compared to an untreated control, after which basal respiration drops to almost zero at day 1 and zero at day 6 after drug treatment in the case of 300x MIC. The basal respiration of the bacilli treated with 30x MIC BDQ stays elevated for longer and does not reach zero for the 9 days the experiment continued. Both concentrations of Q203 show a slightly elevated basal OCR at day 0 and after that does not stray far from the basal respiration of the untreated media control. This shows that the inhibition of Complex V (ATP synthase) is more detrimental to mycobacterial OCR than the inhibition of Complex III (the cytochrome bc1 complex), which can be explained by the expression of the cytochrome bd1 complex compensating for the inhibition of Complex III.
Finally, we used the XF96 in very unconventional way, the experiment was setup to allow for the probes of the XF96 sensor cartridge settle down and maintain the transient micro-chamber for four hours at a time. This allowed us to see how the OCR (here in mmHg/min) changes as a function of oxygen concentration (Figure 7). It is immediately clear from the data that in the presence of BDQ and Q203 the bacilli still have relatively high OCR’s even in the presence of very low oxygen concentrations. The untreated bacilli’s OCR reaches a near zero plateau at an oxygen concentration of ~100 mmHg, the same concentration found in the alveoli of the human lung. In contrast, the drug treated bacilli still have relatively high OCR at 100 mmHg and especially in the case of 300x MIC BDQ the bacilli still have a higher OCR at <25 mmHg (borderline hypoxic) than the untreated bacilli had at 100 mmHg. Thus it seems that BDQ more so than Q203 have the ability to mess with the mycobacterial oxygen sensing mechanisms and force the bacilli to maintain high OCRs in near hypoxic oxygen concentrations. The ability to screen for compounds that force mycobacterial to consume oxygen will become very important in the development of compounds that target persistent/dormant mycobacteria and understanding the biology of latency.
Subtask 1b. (Months 9-12) To determine the bioenergetic profile of various mycobacterial genetic mutants (ΔwhiB3, ΔwhiB4, ΔsenX, ΔregX, ΔsigH, ΔmshA and ΔdosR) used in this study. To characterize the bioenergetic profile of above mentioned mycobacterial mutants, we will follow the approach mentioned in subtask 1a and the cell density for each mutant will be determined. We will be guided by the data obtained from the results of experiments performed in subtask 1a and should be able to characterize the mutants by the end of 12 months.

We first accessed whether there is bioenergetic difference between *Mtb* H37Rv and *Mtb* H37Rv ΔwhiB3. In the first set of experiments both wild type and mutant bacilli were starved in 7H9 media containing no carbon source for 24 hrs prior to the start of the experiment. During the experiment three basal measurements were taken before the addition of the different carbon source combinations as indicated on Figure 8, after which CCCP was added (2 µM). The increase in OCR after the addition of the different carbon source combinations is distinctly different in the wild type and mutant bacilli. Also, after uncoupling the wild type bacilli are able to maintain their membrane potential independent of carbon source whereas maintaining ΔwhiB3 membrane potential seems more carbon source dependant. This shows that *Mtb* H37Rv and *Mtb* H37Rv ΔwhiB3 utilize carbon sources differently and that WhiB3 may play a role in controlling carbon source utilization.

In a second set of experiments *Mtb* H37Rv and *Mtb* H37Rv ΔwhiB3 bacilli were starved in PBS containing no carbon source for 2 and 4 weeks prior to the start of the experiment (Figure 9). Control bacilli were cultured in 7H9 containing OADC and glycerol. The experiment was done as described above. Firstly, after two and four weeks of starvation both wild type and mutant bacilli were still able to respond fairly quickly to the addition of carbon sources and CCCP. This again shows to the potential of using the XF96 to study mycobacterial metabolism and latency biology. Secondly, it seems that wild type bacilli have a more controlled and greater response to the addition of the carbon sources before and after the addition of CCCP when compared to the ΔwhiB3 bacilli, which shows to WhiB3 playing some role in controlling carbon source sensing and utilization.

![Figure 8](image-url): The OCR profiles of *Mtb* H37Rv and *Mtb* H37Rv ΔwhiB3 in the presence of different carbon source combinations. The dotted lines indicate the time points at which the different carbon sources and CCCP were added.
To determine the influence of WhiB3 on mycobacterial bioenergetics, metabolic flux of wt Mtb, MtbΔwhiB3 and the complemented strain was examined by measuring their oxygen consumption rate (OCR, a measurement of oxidative phosphorylation) and extracellular acidification rate (ECAR, a measurement of glycolysis) using a XF96 Extracellular Flux Analyzer (Seahorse Biosciences, MA, USA) (Figure 10E, 10G). After basal metabolic flux was measured, an electron transport chain (ETC) uncoupler, carbonyl cyanide m-chlorophenyl hydrazone (CCCP), was added and we observed an increase in the OCR and ECAR in all three strains. Normalized basal OCR and ECAR measurements in Figure 10F and 10H indicate that after CCCP addition, OCR and ECAR of MtbΔwhiB3 was significantly greater than that for wt Mtb and the complemented strain, respectively. This could be due to the depolarized membrane potential observed in MtbΔwhiB3 (data not shown here), where MtbΔwhiB3 attempts to increase the efflux of protons to a greater degree than the other two strains to prevent complete collapse of the already depolarized membrane potential. Figure 10I shows the oxidative:glycolytic ratio (OCR/ECAR) for the normalized data of the three strains prior to and after the addition of CCCP indicated by 1, 2 and 3 on Figures 10F and10H. The OCR/ECAR value is an indication of the overall bioenergetic state of a cell, where OCR/ECAR < 1 indicates more glycolytic-dependent bioenergetics and OCR/ECAR > 1 indicates more OXPHOS-dependent bioenergetics. Four minutes after the addition of CCCP (2 on Figures 10F, 10H), metabolism shifted towards glycolysis (OCR/ECAR < 1) in all three strains, with MtbΔwhiB3 being significantly more glycolytic than wt Mtb and the complemented strain. There were no significant differences in OCR/ECAR between wt and complemented strains. Thirty minutes after CCCP injection (3 on Figures 10F, 10H), wt Mtb and the complemented strains were able to shift their energy metabolism back to equilibrium, OCR/ECAR ≈ 1, whereas MtbΔwhiB3 was only able to reach OCR/ECAR of ≈0.7.
The phenogram in Figure 10J of the fourth measurement 30 minutes after CCCP addition also demonstrates that \textit{Mtb}\textDelta{}\textit{whiB3} is more glycolytic than wt \textit{Mtb} and complemented strains. Taken together, metabolic flux analyses conclusively demonstrate the inability of the \textit{Mtb}\textDelta{}\textit{whiB3} to control and maintain bioenergetic homeostasis.

Respiration implicates energy metabolism in the synchronization of lipid metabolism. This is supported by our bioenergetic data, which point to a critical role for energy balance in polyketide and lipid synthesis under \textit{WhiB3} control. We adapted a novel technology termed metabolic flux analysis and demonstrated that \textit{Mtb}\textDelta{}\textit{whiB3}, unlike wt \textit{Mtb} and the complemented strain, was unable to re-establish bioenergetic homeostasis between glycolysis and OXPHOS after uncoupling the energized membrane (Figures 10E-J).

We have also recently started to investigate the link between mycobacterial metabolism and redox homeostasis using the XF96. For these experiments we are going to use bacilli deficient in either one of the two small molecule thiols associated with redox homeostasis in mycobacteria, mycothiol (MSH) and ergothionine (ERG). The ERG deficient mutants are \textit{Mtb} CDC1551 \textDelta{}\textit{egtA} and \textit{Mtb} CDC1551 \textDelta{}\textit{egtD}, and the MSH deficient mutant is \textit{Mtb} CDC1551 \textDelta{}\textit{mshA}. The OCR profiles of the \textDelta{}\textit{egtA} strain, along with its wild type and complimentary strains, and four different carbon sources are shown in Figure 11. The data shows that there is no difference in the ability of \textDelta{}\textit{egtA} to maintain its membrane potential in the no carbon source (media) control, as well as when cholesterol is used as a carbon source. In the presence of the other carbon sources (glucose, acetate and palmitate) tested there are varying degrees of difference between \textDelta{}\textit{egtA} and the wild type strain to maintain their membrane potential. This shows towards a link between ERG mediated redox homeostasis and the catabolism of carbon sources that directly feed into the TCA cycle, although further evidence is needed to prove this conclusively.
Figure 11: The OCR profiles of Mtb CDC1551 and Mtb CDC1551 ΔegtA (and its’ complimented strain) in the presence of different carbon source combinations. The dotted lines indicate the time points at which the different carbon sources and CCCP were added. This data establishes a link between ergothioneine mediated redox homeostasis and metabolism.

KEY RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- We have successfully adapted metabolic flux analysis using a Seahorse XF96 metabolic flux analyzer to study *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* energy metabolism in an unparalleled way. Using this novel method, for the first time, we non-invasively measured the metabolic activity of intact bacilli, thereby providing novel data on basal $\text{O}_2$ consumption rates (OCR), glycolysis rates (extracellular acidification rates; ECAR), ATP turnover and reserve respiratory capacity in a single experiment.

- We have examined a range of Mtb mutants and have characterized the role of several genes in Mtb energy and redox homeostasis.

- Using flux analysis, we made several novel discoveries, including, but not limited to determining that the new antimycobacterial drug Bedaquiline (BDQ), and Q203 (a new phase I drug) dramatically increases Mtb respiration in a concentration dependent manner. This suggests that the accepted modes of action of these anti-TB drugs are far more complex than previously thought.

- Contrary to the mode of action of BDQ and Q203, CFZ’s mode of action was distinctly different.

- Metabolic flux analyses conclusively demonstrate that Mtb WhiB3 is required for control and maintenance of bioenergetic and metabolic homeostasis.
• Metabolic flux analyses of the *Mtb egt* mutants established a clear link between intracellular redox balance and energy metabolism.

• Our findings establishes a new paradigm of microbial energy metabolism in microbial pathogenesis and is anticipated to have broad impact.

5. CONCLUSION: *Mtb* persistence, as well as the known limitations of current anti-TB drugs and their inability to act on dormant bacilli, underscore the need to use innovative tools to examine the bioenergetic mechanisms that allow *Mtb* to enter, maintain and emerge from a persistent state of infection. We have successfully adapted a cutting-edge technology toward yielding a detailed understanding of *Mtb* bioenergetics, and its role in the mode of action of antimycobacterial drugs. Characterization of a genetically intractable and global pathogen such as *Mtb* is significant because it is the first step toward identifying bioenergetic pathways and components that modulate these pathways and could lead to strategies that will allow persistent and drug-resistant *Mtb* to be pharmacologically controlled. In addition, our findings will not only be applicable to the prevention/treatment of other human pathogens, but will also contribute to a broader understanding of how microbial and infected host bioenergetics can be modulated as an approach to therapy.

6. PUBLICATIONS, ABSTRACTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

a. manuscripts and abstracts

*Book Chapters:*


*Accepted:*

1. *S100A8/A9 proteins mediate neutrophilic inflammation and lung pathology during tuberculosis*. Gopal, R; Monin, L; Torres, D; Slight, S; Mehra, S; McKenna, K; Junecko, B; Reinhart, T; Kolls, J; Baez-Saldana, R; Cruz-Lagunas, A; Rodriguez-Reyna, T; Kumar, N; Tessier, P; Roth, J; Selman, M; Becerril-Villanueva, E; Baquera-Heredia, J; Cumming, B; Kasprowicz, V; Steyn, AJC; Babu, S; Kaushal, D; Zuniga, J; Vogl, T; Rangel-Moreno, Jr; Khader, S. *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, 2013. 188(9):1137-46.


**In preparation**


**b. presentations during reporting period**

**Poster Presentation**


Oral Presentations


7. **INVENTIONS, PATENTS AND LICENSES:** Nothing to report.

8. **REPORTABLE OUTCOMES:** We report the use of a fully integrated, multi-well instrument (Seahorse XF96 metabolic flux analyzer; Seahorse Biosciences, MA) located in our BSL3 facility that non-invasively performs real-time measurements of OCR and ECAR every 2 to 5 minutes. To date, this technology has not yet been applied to study the bioenergetics of microorganisms. We have successfully adapted this technology for studying bioenergetic changes in *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

9. **OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS:** Nothing to report

10. **REFERENCES:** None required