

Potential application of bacteriophage therapy as an alternative treatment against *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*



Presented by
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Introduction

Pseudomonas aeruginosa



- Gram-negative bacilli
- Widely found in natural environment
- Major cause of nosocomial infections

Common infections:

- Pneumonia
- Bloodstream infections
- Urinary tract infections
- Surgical site infections

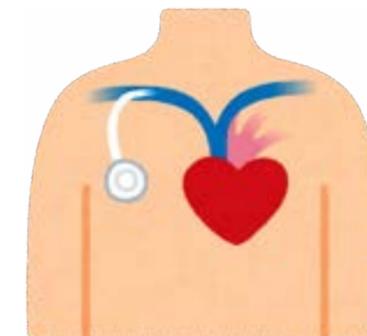
P. aeruginosa



biofilm formation



formed on medical devices used for treatment, such as catheters, vascular lines, and tracheal tubes



Introduction

Antibiotic-resistant

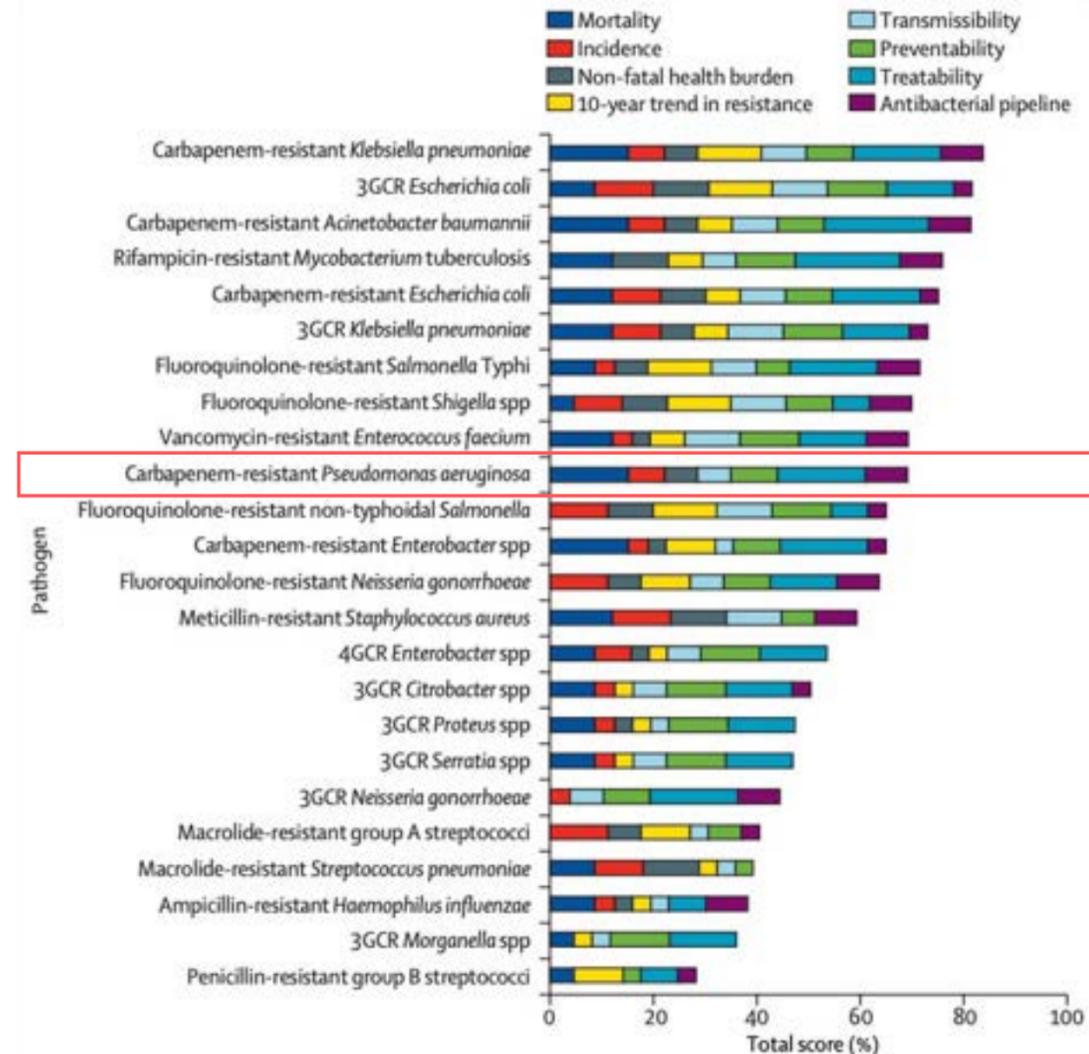


- A major global public health threat
- Resistant bacteria are harder to treat
- Increases healthcare costs & mortality

IMPACT

- Longer and more complicated treatments
- Higher medical costs
- Increased morbidity and mortality

Antibiotic-resistant *P. aeruginosa* is a significant global problem because it can form biofilms, exhibit multiple resistance mechanisms, and cause treatment failure in chronically ill or hospitalized patients.



In the 2024 WHO BPPL ranking:

carbapenem-resistant *P. aeruginosa*

P. aeruginosa remains a **critical pathogen** due to high disease burden, rising long-term antibiotic resistance, and limited new treatment options

Introduction

Bacteriophage



“A type of virus that infects and replicates inside bacteria”



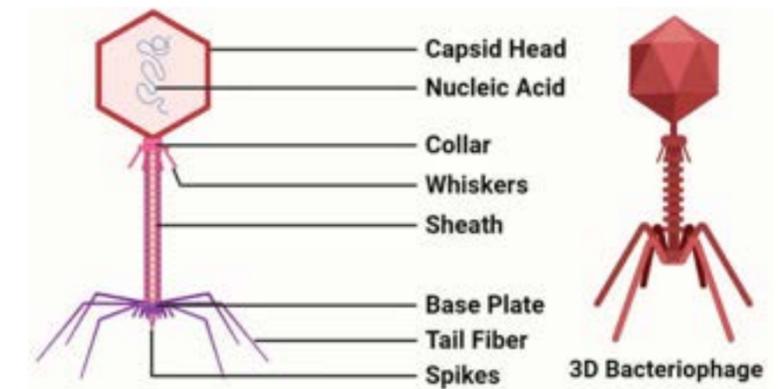
can be found in soil and seawater, oceanic and terrestrial surfaces and extreme environments

- Specific to the target bacteria
- Minor side effect
- Abundance in nature
- Harmless to human

FUNCTION

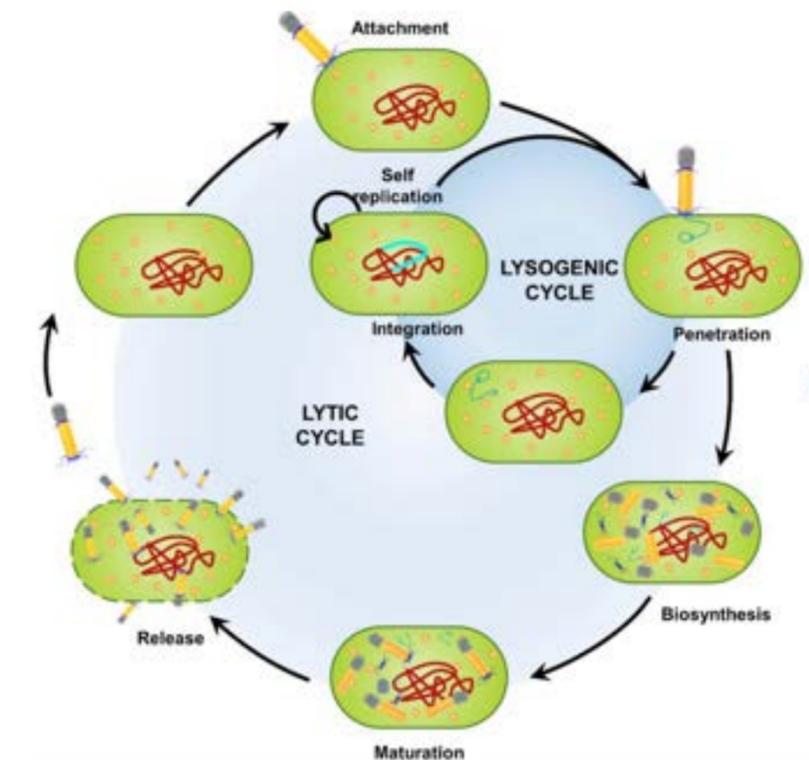
- Control of bacterial populations
- Potential medical applications: Researchers are exploring “**phage therapy**” to treat antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections.

Phage structure:



[Sapkota.A, 2022](#)

Life cycle of bacteriophage:



Monish B., Kusum K., Sakshi M., 2024

Introduction



Phage therapy:

To assess how effective phage therapy can be in treating bacterial infections, In preclinical infection models

Efficacy of phage therapy in preclinical models of bacterial infection: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Sergio Alejandro Gómez-Ochoa, Melissa Pitton, Luca G Valente, Cristian David Sosa Vesga, Jorge Largo, Andrea Carolina Quiroga-Centeno, Juliana Alexandra Hernández Vargas, Silvia Juliana Trujillo-Cáceres, Taulant Muka, David R Cameron*, Yok-Ai Que*

	Country	Animal	Infection setting	Pathogen	Number of phages; phage name(s)	Phage administration route	Outcomes assessed	Overall results	Included in meta-analysis?	Reason for exclusion
Albac et al (2020) ¹⁶	France	Mice	Skin or burn	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	3; 1493, 1815, and 1957	Subcutaneous	Bacterial load	Phages reduce bacterial load	Yes	NA
Alemayehu et al (2012) ¹⁷	Ireland	Mice	Respiratory	<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>	2; PHIMR299-2 and PHINH-4	Respiratory*	Bacterial load	Phages reduce bacterial load	No	Insufficient information
Cha et al (2018) ¹⁸	South Korea	Mice	Respiratory	<i>Acinetobacter baumannii</i>	5; PBAB08, PBAB25, PBAB68, PBAB80, and PBAB93	Respiratory	Mortality and bacterial load	Phages reduce mortality risk and bacterial load	Yes	NA
Chadha et al (2016) ¹⁹	India	Mice	Skin or burn	<i>Klebsiella pneumoniae</i>	5; Kpn1, Kpn2, Kpn3, Kpn4, and Kpn5	Topical or superficial	Bacterial load	Phages reduce bacterial load	No	Model or pathogen <2 studies
Chadha et al (2017) ²⁰	India	Mice	Skin or burn	<i>Klebsiella pneumoniae</i>	5; KØ1, KØ, KØ3, KØ4, and KØ5	Intraperitoneal	Mortality and bacterial load	Phages reduce mortality risk and bacterial load	Yes	NA
Chang et al (2018) ²¹	Australia	Mice	Respiratory	<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>	1; PEV20	Respiratory	Bacterial load	Phages reduce bacterial load	Yes	NA
Chen et al (2021) ²²	China	Mice	Respiratory	<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>	2; MYY9 and HX1	Respiratory	Bacterial load	Phages reduce bacterial load	Yes	NA

- Applicable to multiple infection models and many MDR pathogens
- Very flexible administration route
- Almost all studies report positive outcomes

➤ **strong consistency of efficacy**

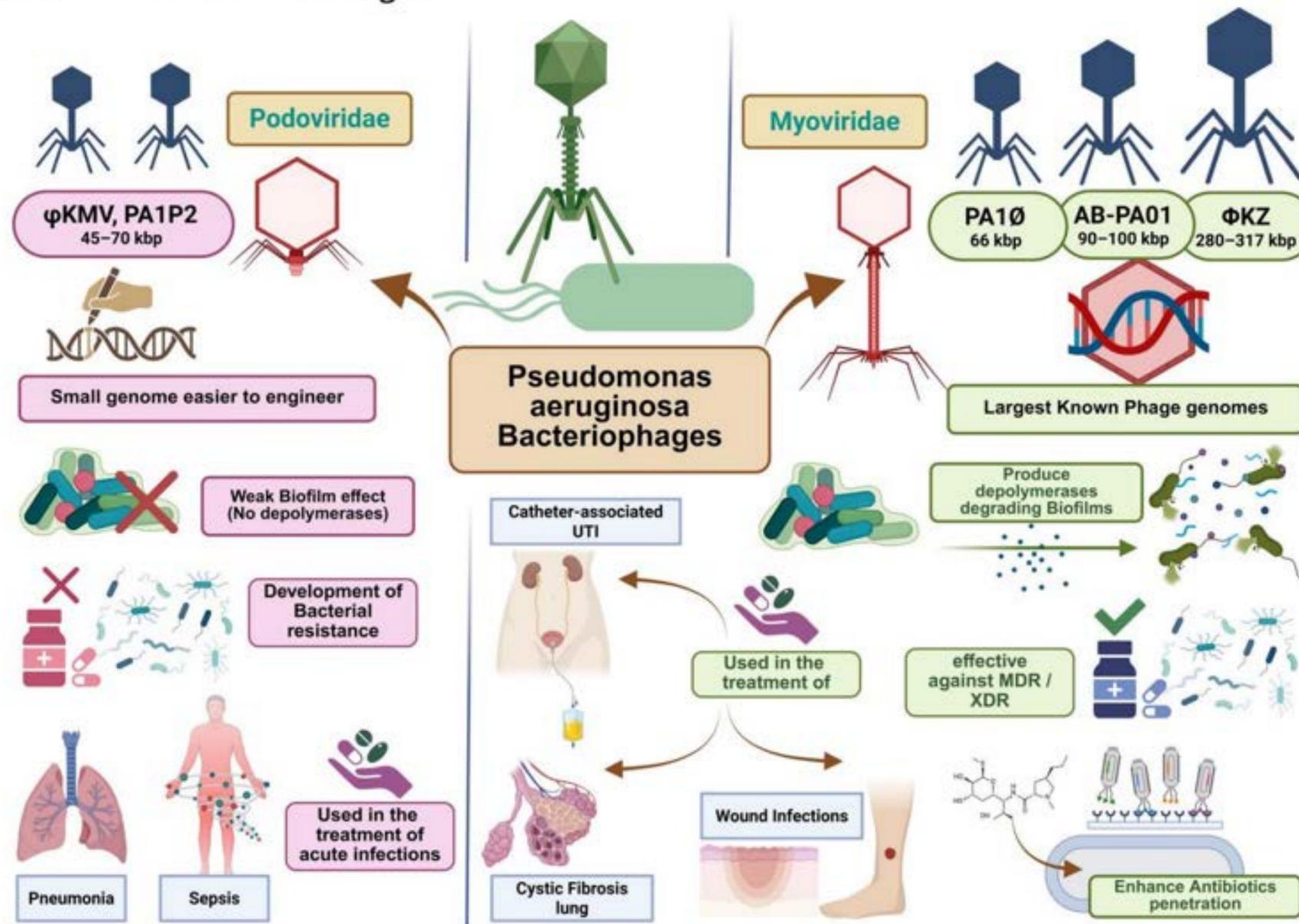
The Lancet Microbe, 2022

Preclinical studies demonstrated that phage therapy effectively reduced bacterial burden and mortality across multiple infection models, pathogens, and administration routes

Introduction

Bacteriophage therapy in clinical practice: case studies of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infections

Ahmed Elfadadny, Rokaia F. Ragab, Osama Aldesoky Abd Alaziz, Habiba Y. Essa, Esraa M. Eltony, Mohamed M. Ammar & Wedad M. Nageeb



Seminar papers

Paper 1:

Characterization of the novel broad-spectrum lytic phage Phage_Pae01 and its antibiofilm efficacy against *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*

Zhixin Shi^{1,2}, Xin Hong¹, Zexuan Li¹, Meijuan Zhang¹, Jun Zhou¹, Zhe Zhao³, Shengfeng Qiu¹, Genyan Liu^{1,2}

Impact factor: 5.2
Quartile: Q1

Paper 2:

Therapeutic effect and anti-biofilm ability assessment of a novel phage, phiPA1-3, against carbapenem-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*

Yu-Chuan Tsai^{a,1}, Yi-Pang Lee^{b,1}, Nien-Tsung Lin^{c,1}, Hsueh-Hui Yang^d, Soon-Hian Teh^{e,**}, Ling-Chun Lin^{a,c,*}

Impact factor: 4.4
Quartile: Q2

Paper 1: Overview

Characterization of the novel broad-spectrum lytic phage Phage_Pae01 and its antibiofilm efficacy against *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*

Zhixin Shi ^{1 2}, Xin Hong ¹, Zexuan Li ¹, Meijuan Zhang ¹, Jun Zhou ¹, Zhe Zhao ³,
Shengfeng Qiu ¹, Genyan Liu ^{1 2}

Rationale:

isolating a broad-spectrum and genomically safe lytic phage may provide an alternative strategy to control antibiotic-resistant *P. aeruginosa* infections

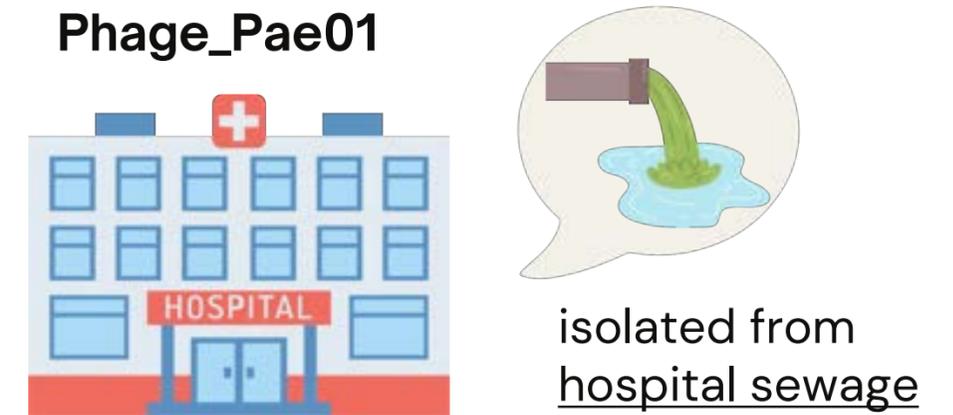
Objectives:

- To isolated and identified **novel lytic phage**, Phage_Pae01
- To characterized and genome sequence of Phage_Pae01
- To observe the ability of the phage alone or in combination with gentamicin to **eliminate biofilm *P. aeruginosa***

Overview:

isolation and characterization of a novel virulent bacteriophage

Phage_Pae01



Morphological & biological characterization

Genome sequencing & functional annotation

Stability assessment (temperature & pH)

Evaluation of antibiofilm activity

Phage-antibiotic combination analysis

Method & Result: Plaque & phage morphology of Phage_Pae01

Bacterial strains and phage isolation

A sample of **the sewage treatment** centre of Jiangsu Women and Children Health Hospital



The host bacterium (*P. aeruginosa* Pa021)

The untreated sewage



Phage

A complete and transparent plaque was randomly selected for further purification and amplification

"Phage_Pae01"



Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) observation:

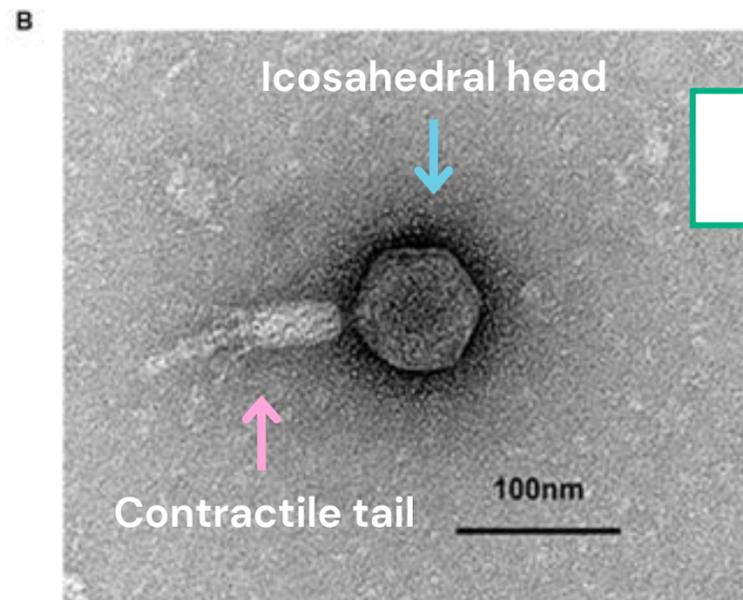
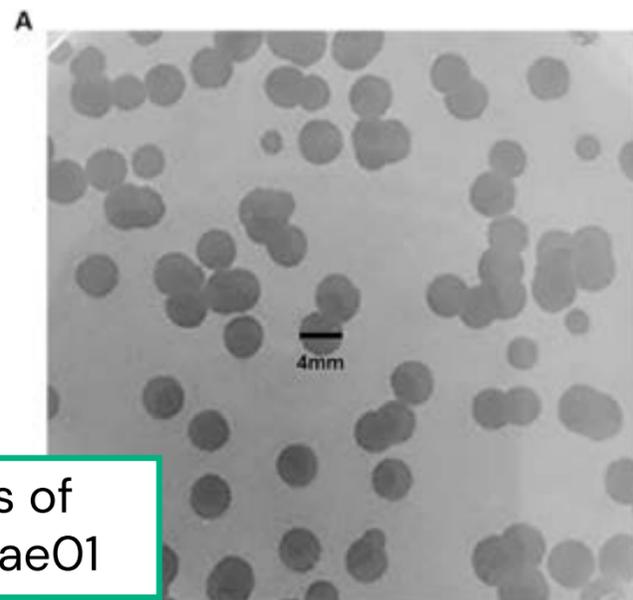
Plaque assay

clear plaques with a diameter of 3 to 4 mm on the plate



Lytic activity

Plaques of Phage_Pae01



Morphology of Phage_Pae01

- Icosahedral head (~80 nm)
- Contractile tail (~110 nm)

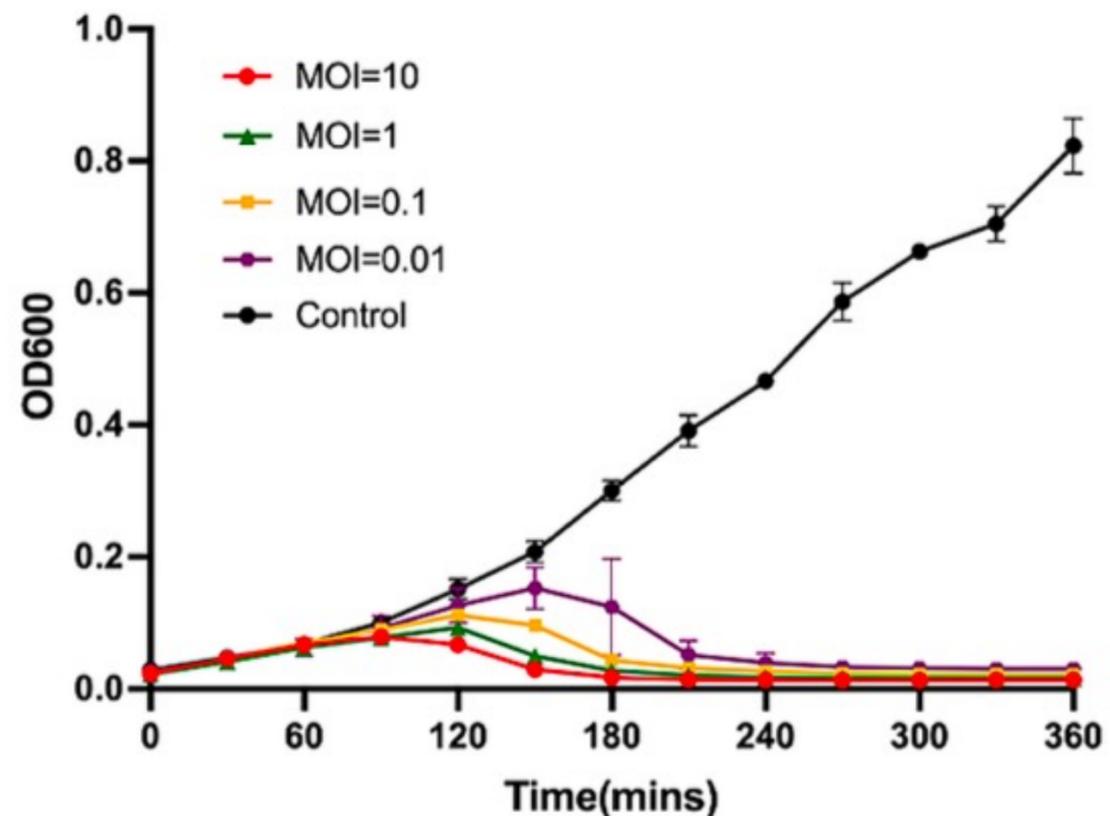
belongs to *Myoviridae*, family of the order *Caudovirales*

Fig. 1: The plaque and phage morphology of Phage_Pae01.

Result: MOI, one-step growth curve and lysis kinetics of Phage_Pae01

Objective: To identify the most efficient infection condition for phage propagation and to evaluate the replication cycle of Phage_Pae01 inside the bacterial host

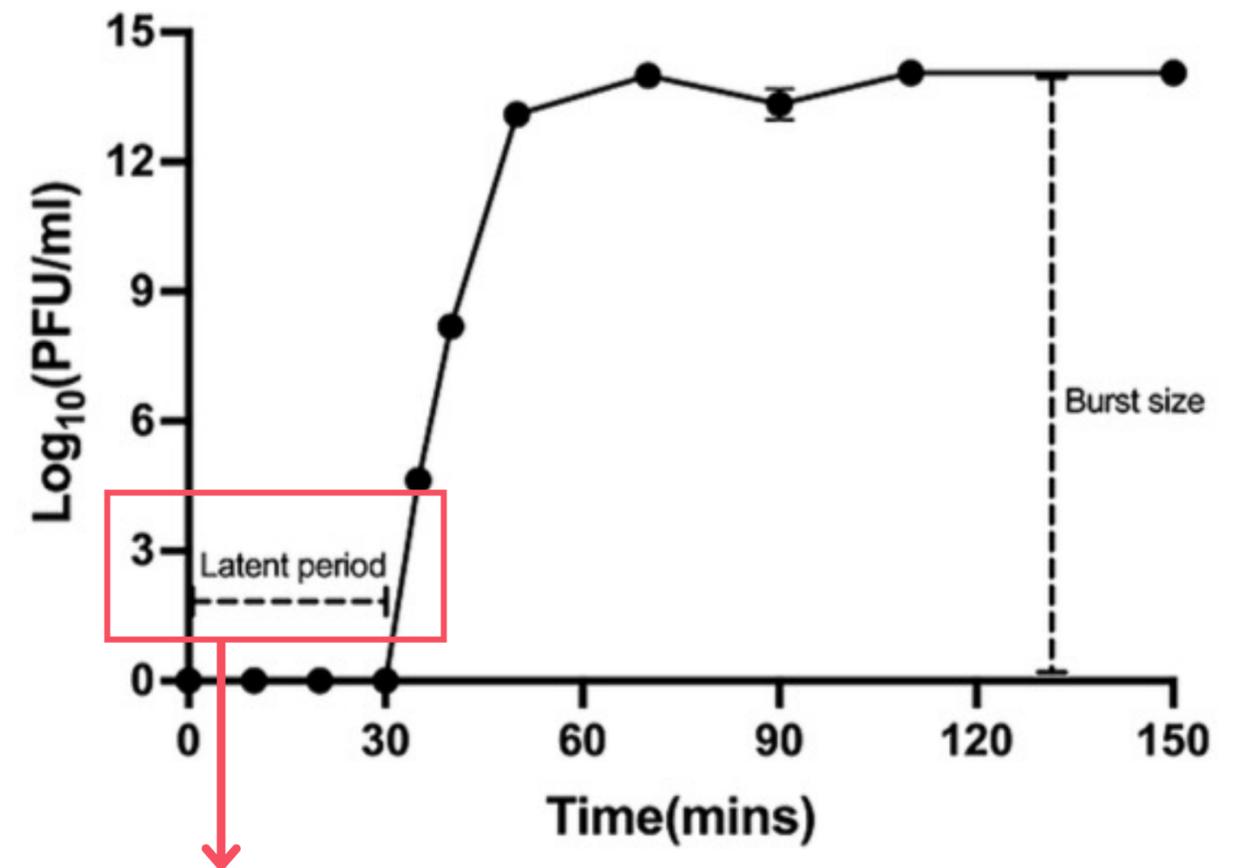
Killing curves of *P. aeruginosa* strain Pa021 by Phage_Pae01 at various MOIs



Optimal MOI for Phage_Pae01: **0.01**

The antibacterial effect of phage can last up to 9 hours

One-step growth curve of Phage_Pae01 on *P. aeruginosa* strain Pa021



Latent period ~30 min

burst size **10⁶** PFU/ml

Result: Host range of Phage_Pae01

Objective: To assess the lytic efficiency based on plaque morphology

The lytic ability of Phage_Pae01

- Spot assay
- Plaque assay

found that Phage_Pae01 could effectively lyse 87 out of the 104 strains of *P. aeruginosa*

(83.6 %)

broad host spectrum



<i>P. aeruginosa</i> subtype	Host range
Sensitive	54/65(83.1%)
CRPA	28/31(90.3%)
MDRPA	33/39 (84.6%)
Total	87/104 (83.6%)

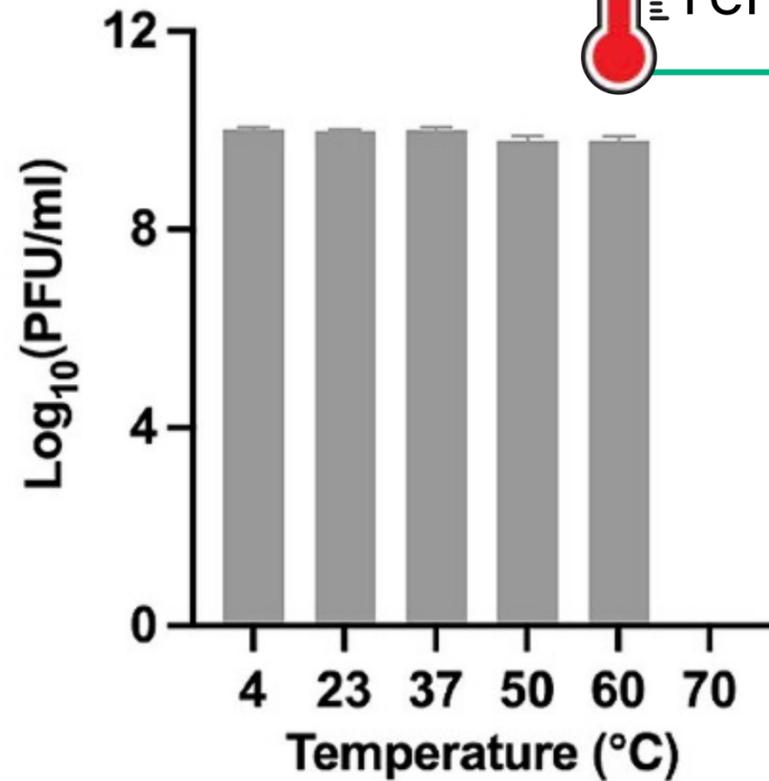
TABLE 1 Host range of Phage_Pae01 against *P. aeruginosa*.

The results showed that phage **Phage_Pae01** showed strong cleavage ability to 82 of the 87 sensitive strains, and the remaining 5 strains showed turbid plaque

Result: Phage_Pae01 temperature and pH stability

Objective: To assess the ability to survive to the environment

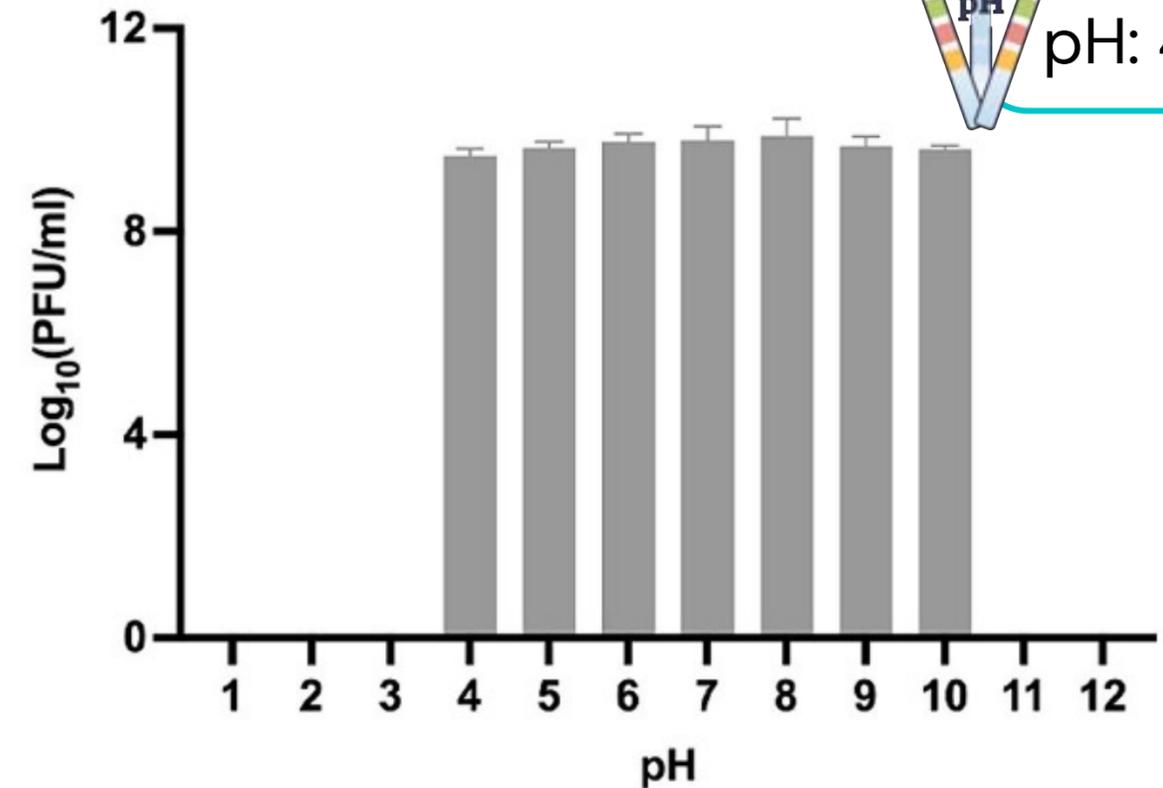
Temperature Stability



Phage_Pae01:

- Remained stable at 4–60 °C
- Highest viability observed at 25–37 °C

pH Stability



Phage_Pae01:

- Showed high stability between pH 5–9
- Optimal lytic activity near neutral pH (pH 7)

stable under wide environmental conditions

Result: Genome analysis of Phage_Pae01 (Cont.)

Objective: To confirm the lytic nature of the phage by identifying genes related to DNA replication, structural proteins, and lysis systems

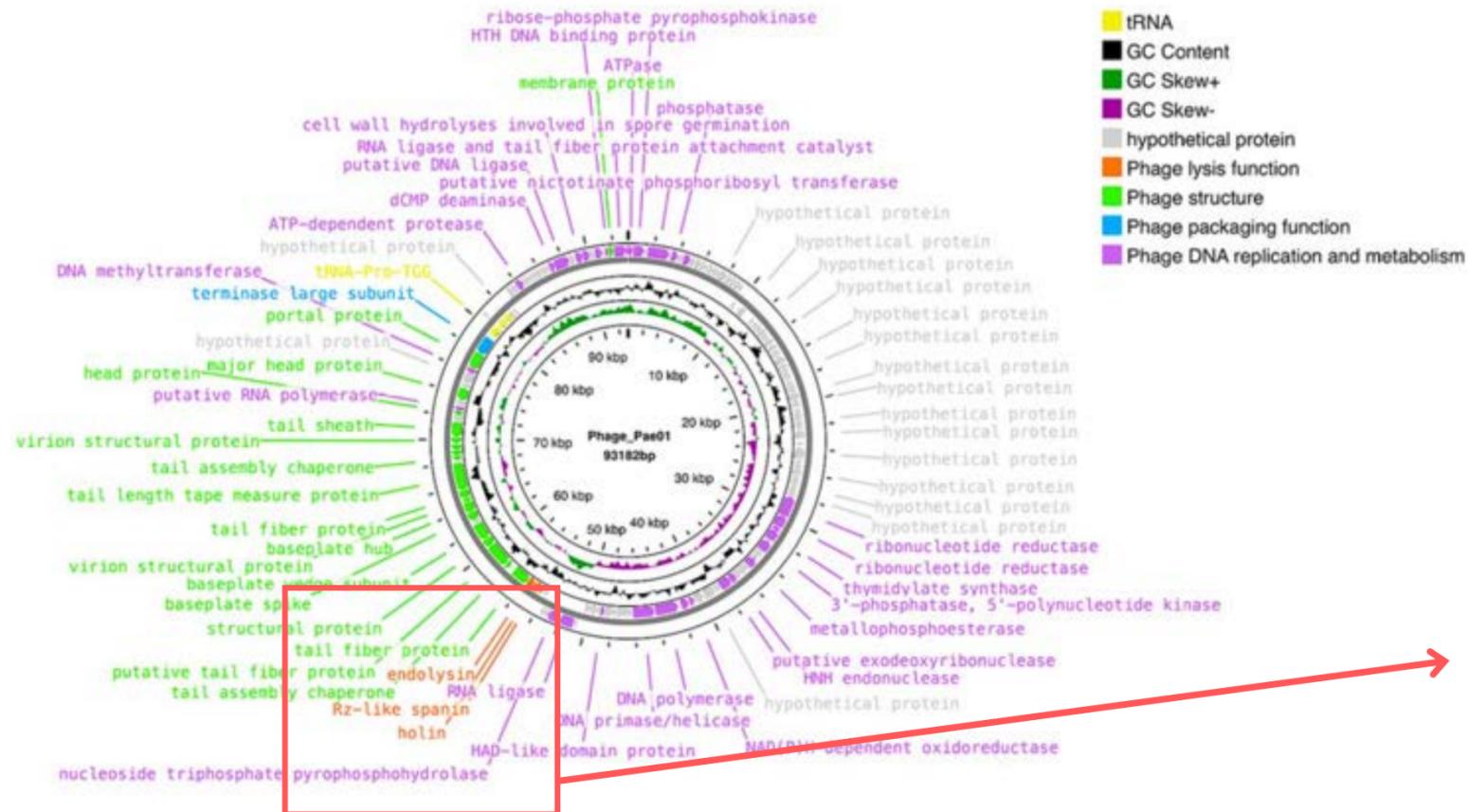


Fig. 4: Whole-genome map of Phage_Pae01.

The ORFs found are proteins involved in phage DNA replication and metabolism, such as:

1. DNA Replication

- ORF166 – DNA ligase

2. Adsorption Module

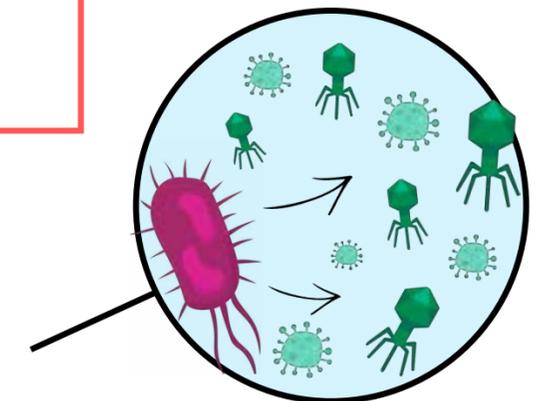
- ORF122 and 132 – Tail fiber proteins
 - To infection and the adsorption of host

3. Lysis System of Phage_Pae01

- ORF120 – Holin
- ORF121 – Endolysin
- ORF118 and ORF119 – Spanin



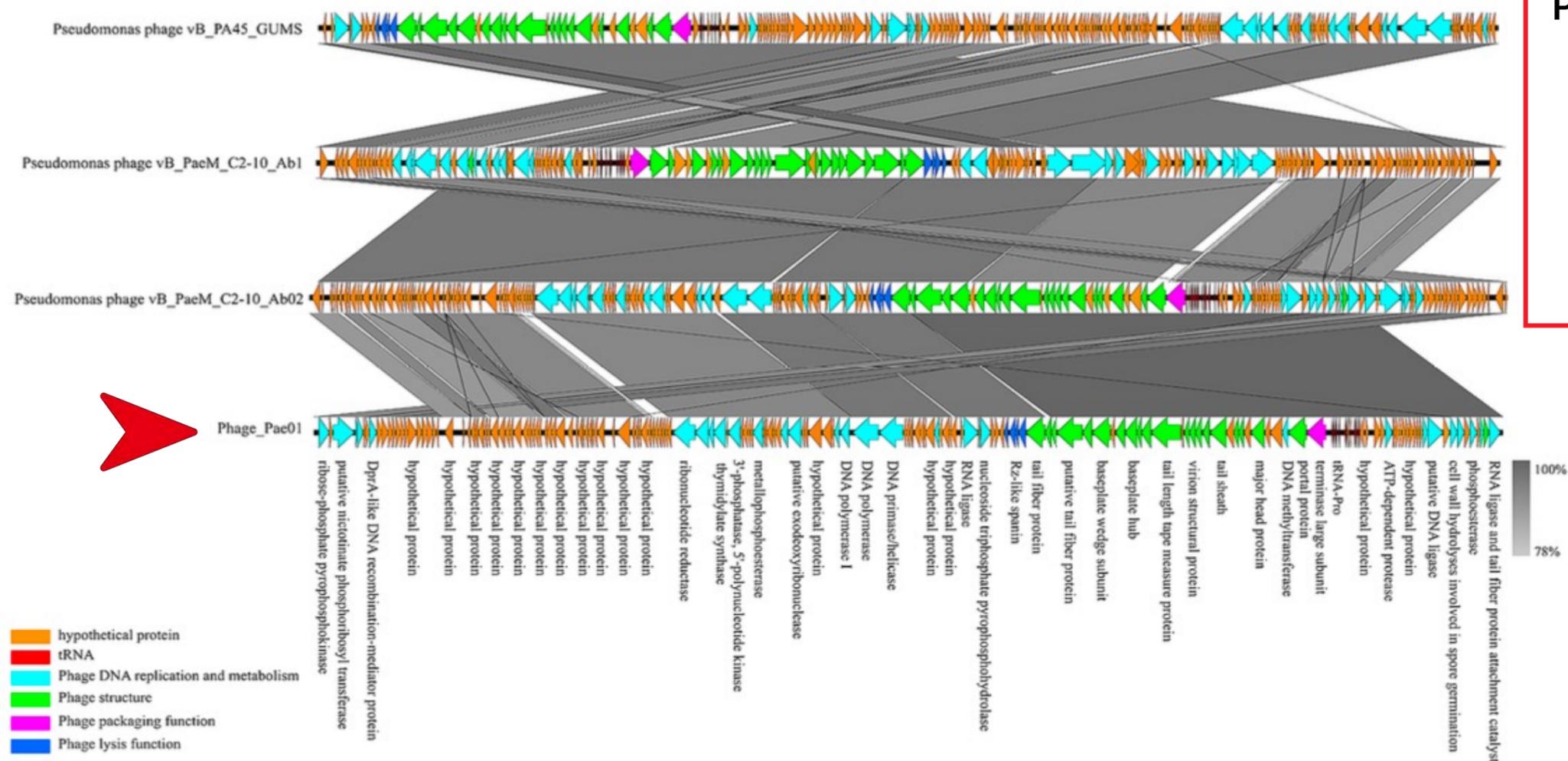
RELEASE OF PROGENY PHAGES



Result: Genome analysis of Phage_Pae01 (Cont.)

Objective: To compare the genome organization of Phage_Pae01 with closely related *Pseudomonas* bacteriophages.

Potential as a therapeutic agent against drug-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*



Phage_Pae01 was relatively similar to

- vB_PaeM_C2-10_Ab02 (96% coverage, 97.47% identity)
- vB_PaeM_C2-10_Ab1 (95% coverage, 97.19% identity)
- vB_PA45_GUMS (94% coverage, 97.2% identity)

- High Synteny & Homology
- Modular Genome
- Confirmation of Safety



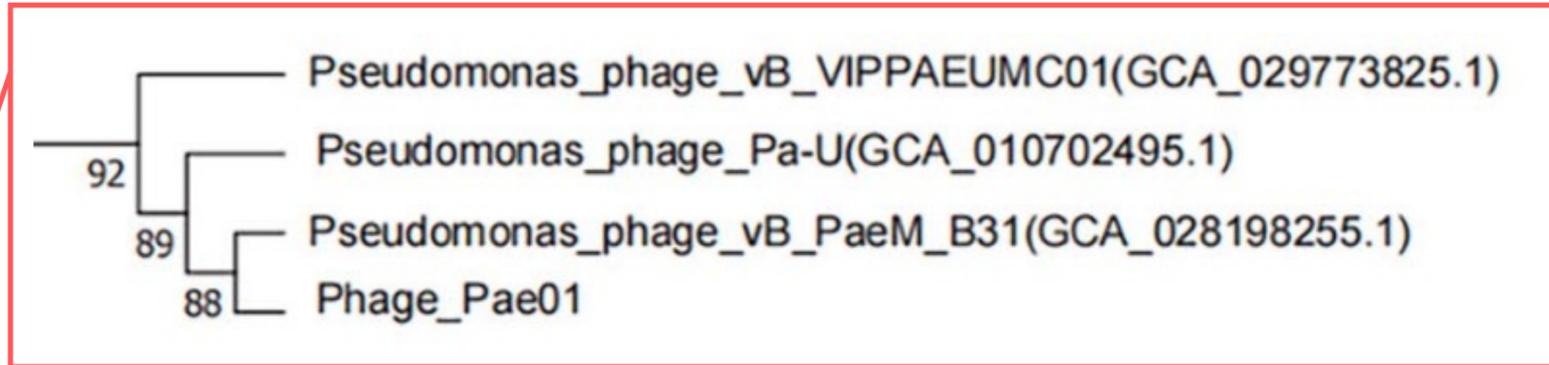
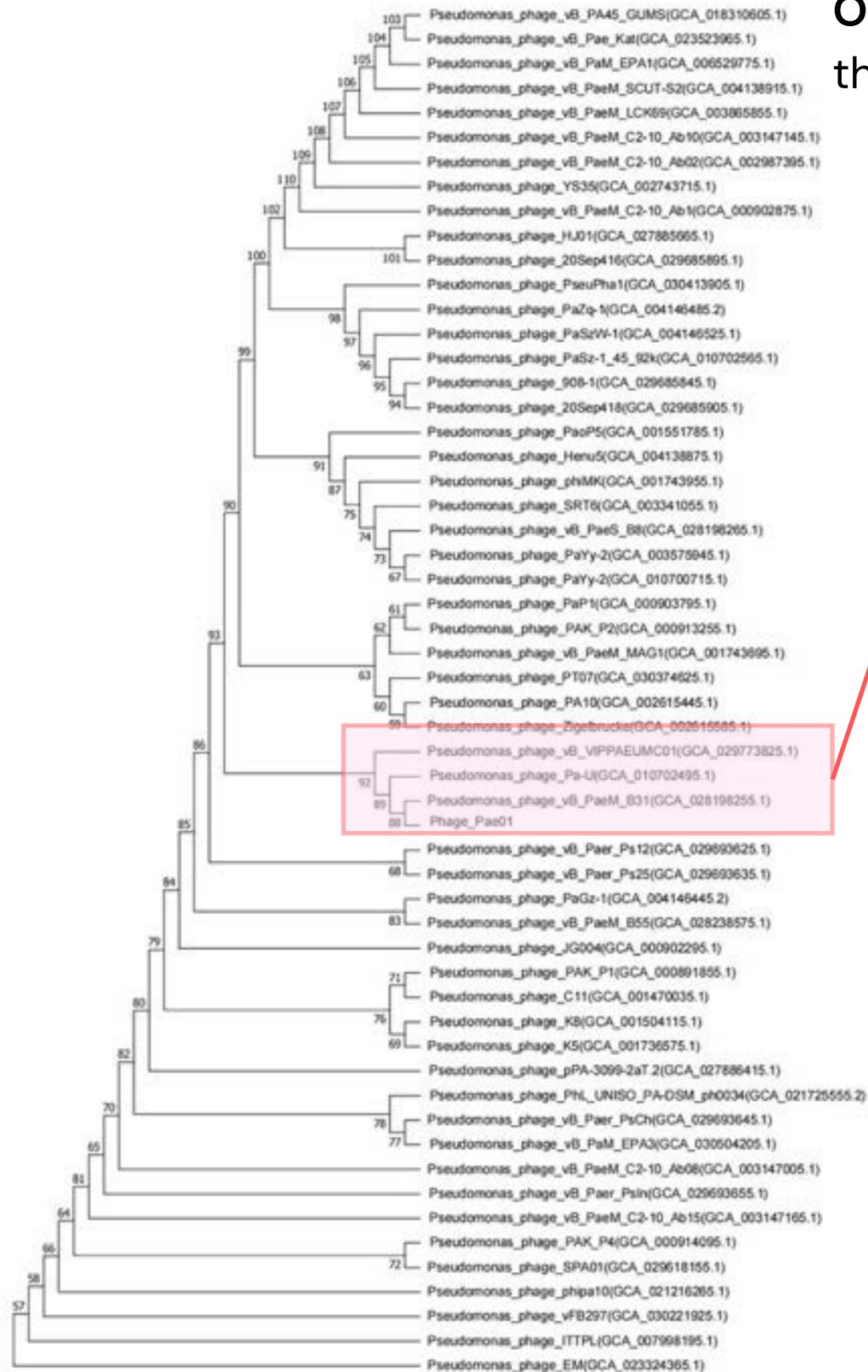
Phage_Pae01 genome against three other closely related phage strains

Fig. 5: Comparative genome analysis of the *P. aeruginosa* phages Phage_Pae01

Phage_Pae01 possesses a conserved lytic phage genome architecture with high similarity to known *Pseudomonas* phages, supporting its potential application as a therapeutic phage

Result: Genome analysis of Phage_Pae01 (Cont.)

Objective: To evaluate the evolutionary relationship, an analysis is performed by comparing the amino acid sequences of the phage terminase large subunit

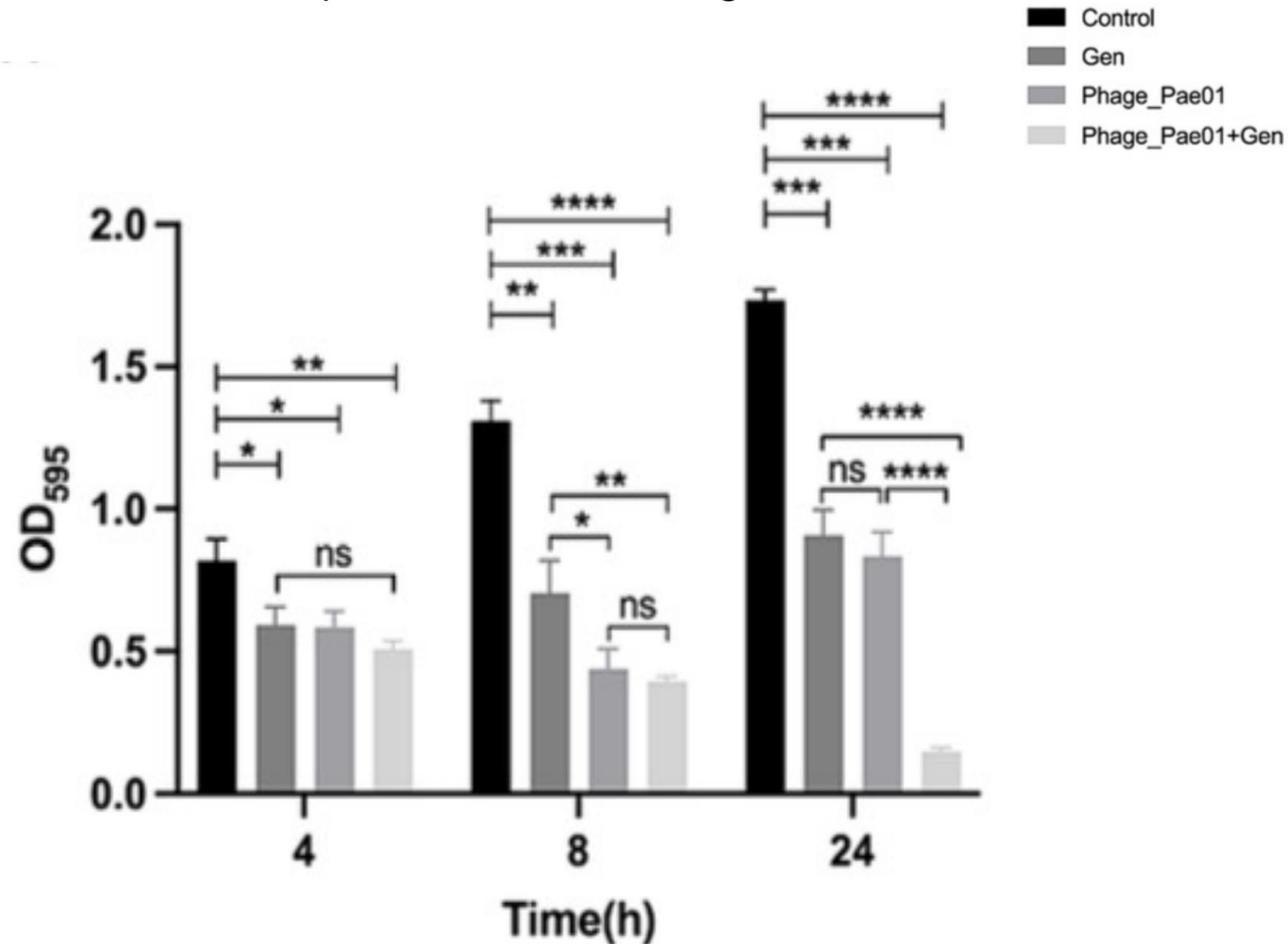


- Sequence alignment → ClustalW
- The phylogenetic tree
→ The neighbor-joining method with 1,000 bootstrap replications

“These genomic characteristics, together with the observed morphology consisting of an icosahedral head and a contractile long tail, support the classification of **Phage_Pae01** within the family *Myoviridae* of the order *Caudovirales*.”

Result: Effect of Phage_Pae01 and/or antibiotics on the biofilm formed

Objective: To evaluate the antibiofilm activity of Phage_Pae01, antibiotics, and their combined treatment against biofilm formed by *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*



Tested on mature biofilms

4 Time 4 h: Gentamicin
Phage_Pae01
Phage + Gen → Best reduction

8 Time 8 h:
Phages break down biofilm structures more effectively over time

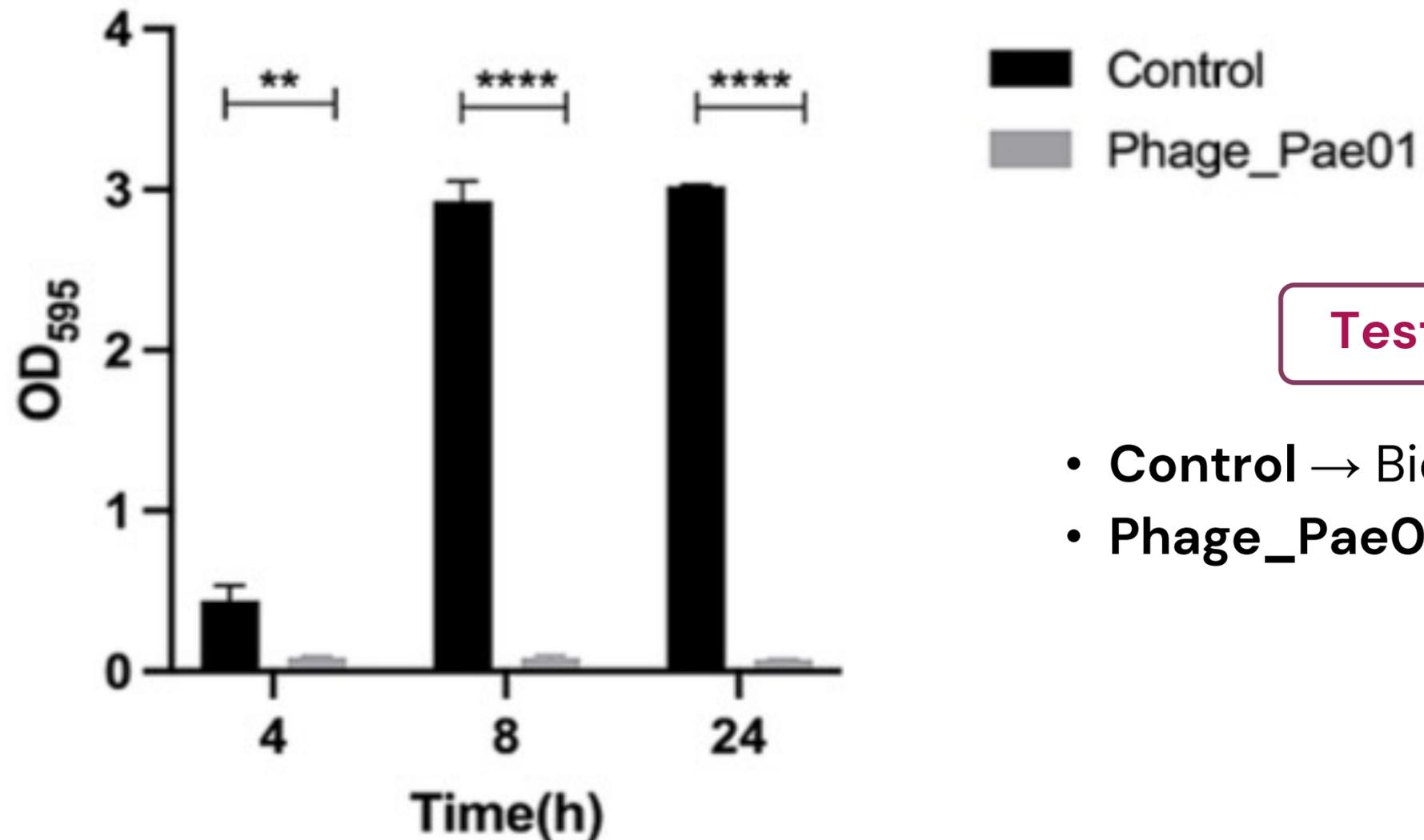
24 HRS Time 24 h:
Phage + Gen → almost completely reduced biofilm

STRONG SYNERGISTIC ANTIBIOFILM ACTIVITY

Phage_Pae01 can **destroy existing biofilm**

Result: Effect of Phage_Pae01 and/or antibiotics on the biofilm formed

Objective: To evaluate the antibiofilm activity of Phage_Pae01, antibiotics, and their combined treatment against biofilm formed by *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*



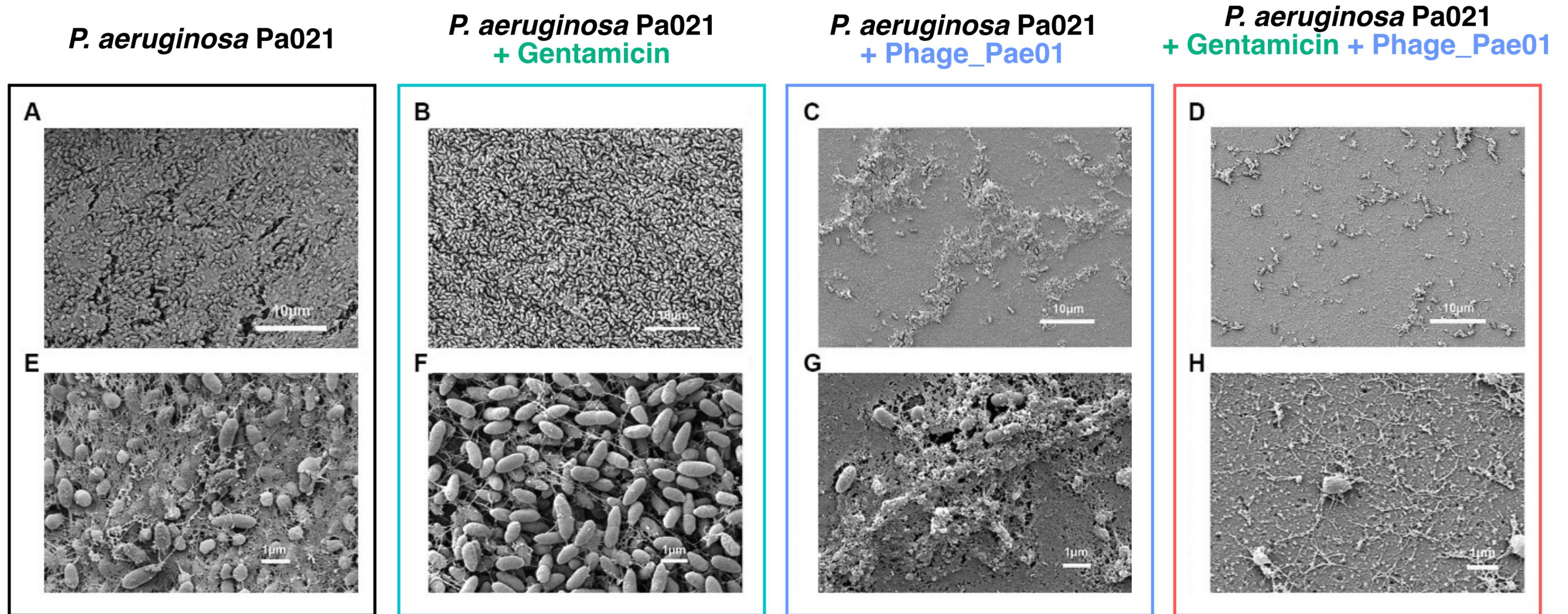
Tested on biofilms formation

- **Control** → Biofilm continuously increasing (4 → 24 h)
- **Phage_Pae01** → OD value very low at all times

Phage_Pae01 can **prevent biofilm formation** from the early stages

Result: Effect of Phage_Pae01 and/or antibiotics on the biofilm formed

Fig. 8: Scanning electron microscopy images of *P. aeruginosa* Pa021 treated with Phage_Pae01 and/or antibiotic



P. aeruginosa Pa021 + Gentamicin + Phage_Pae01: Biofilm completely destroyed, bacteria greatly reduced

Result: Effect of Phage_Pae01 and/or antibiotics on the biofilm formed

Fig. 8: Scanning electron microscopy images of *P. aeruginosa* Pa021 treated with Phage_Pae01 and/or antibiotic



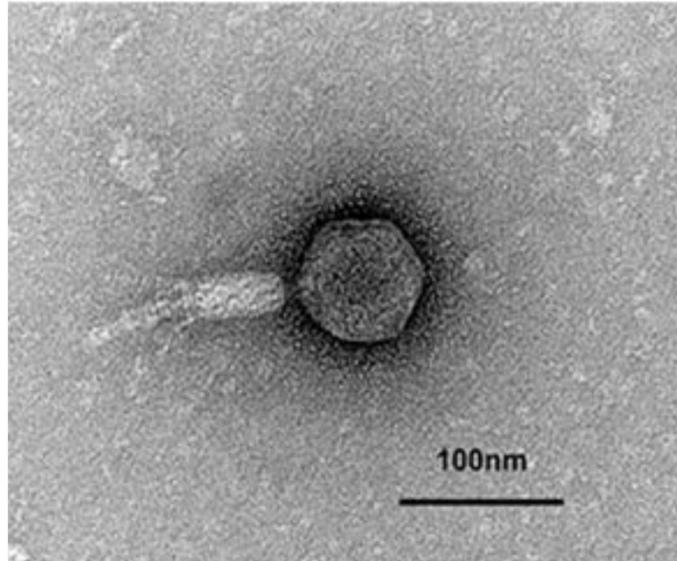
Phage_Pae01 is more effective than **Gentamicin** alone in destroying biofilm

The combination (**Phage_Pae01 + Gentamicin**) has a **synergistic effect**, resulting in complete biofilm destruction



P. aeruginosa Pa021 + **Gentamicin + Phage_Pae01**: Biofilm completely destroyed, bacteria greatly reduced

Conclusions: Paper 1



Phage_Pae01

is a **novel broad-spectrum lytic phage** with strong antibacterial activity

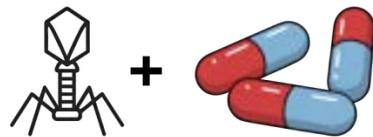
- prevent biofilm formation
- eradicate mature biofilm

Genome & Morphology

confirm **efficient infection** and **bacterial lysis mechanisms**

Phage_Pae01 alone

& in combination with antibiotics



effectively controls *P. aeruginosa* biofilms, highlighting its therapeutic potential and safety for clinical use

Paper 2: Overview

Therapeutic effect and anti-biofilm ability assessment of a novel phage, phiPA1-3, against carbapenem-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*

Yu-Chuan Tsai^{a,1}, Yi-Pang Lee^{b,1}, Nien-Tsung Lin^{c,1}, Hsueh-Hui Yang^d, Soon-Hian Teh^{e,*},
Ling-Chun Lin^{a,c,*}

Rationale:

Identifying a safe and effective anti-biofilm bacteriophage is crucial for developing alternative therapies against drug-resistant *P. aeruginosa*

Objectives:

- Characterize **biological** and **genomic properties** of phage phiPA1-3
- Evaluate **antibacterial activity** against CRPA
- Assess **biofilm prevention** and **eradication ability**
- Determine **therapeutic** effectiveness using an ***in vivo* infection model**

Overview:



Phage Isolation



Biological Characterization



Genomic Analysis

- Whole-genome sequencing
~73 kb dsDNA

Confirmed:

- Lytic lifestyle
- No virulence genes
- No antibiotic resistance genes

→ **Suitable for phage therapy**



Effective antibiofilm activity



***In vivo* therapeutic efficacy**



- Reduced bacterial burden
- Improved survival after phage treatment

Method & Result: Plaque and Phage Morphology of phiPA1-3

Objective: To find phages that kill CRPA

Bacterial strains

P. aeruginosa strain PA001

↓ Isolated from

Pateint's sputum



Phage host → Clinical isolates

45 *P. aeruginosa* → 71% were CRPA

3 *Klebsiella pneumoniae*

3 *Enterobacter cloacae*

2 *Escherichia coli*

- High antibiotic resistance
- High genetic diversity (RAPD-PCR)
- No correlation between genotype and phage susceptibility



Phage Isolation via spot assay

"phiPA1-3"

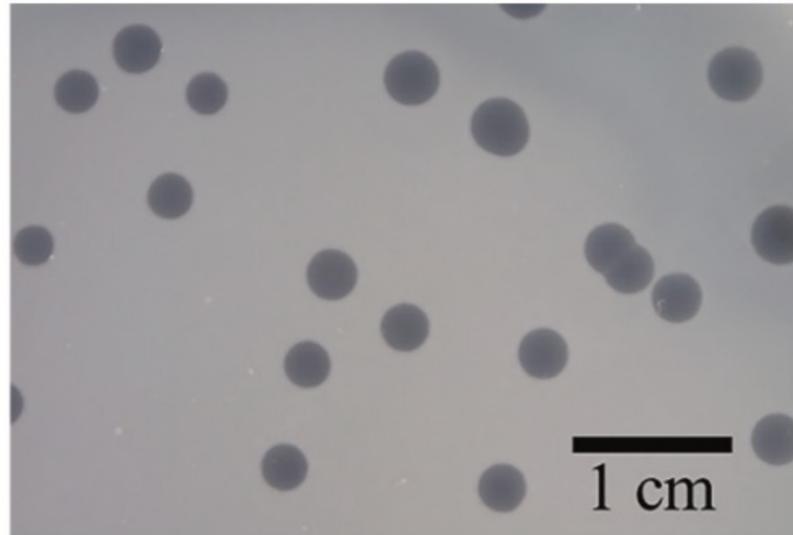
collected wastewater sample taken from a sewer at Tzu Chi Hospital, Hualien, Taiwan



Result: Plaque and Phage Morphology of phiPA1-3

Objective: To find phages that kill CRPA

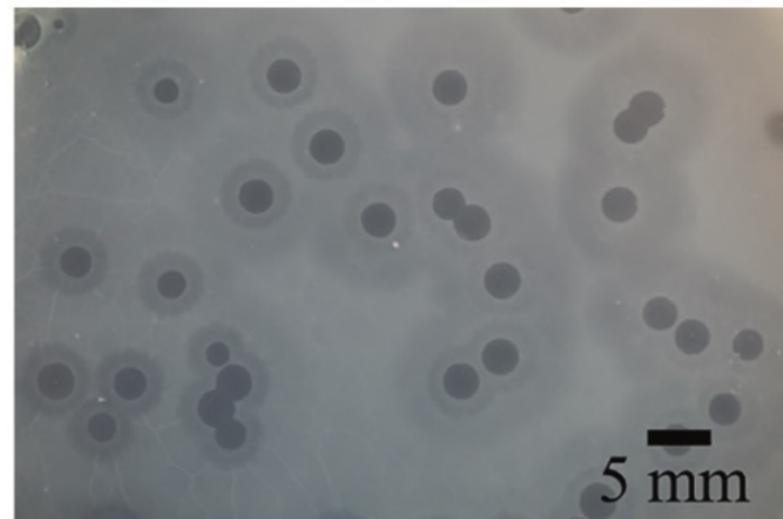
Plaque morphology



Phage phiPA1-3 is infected with *P. aeruginosa* PA001, it is found that:

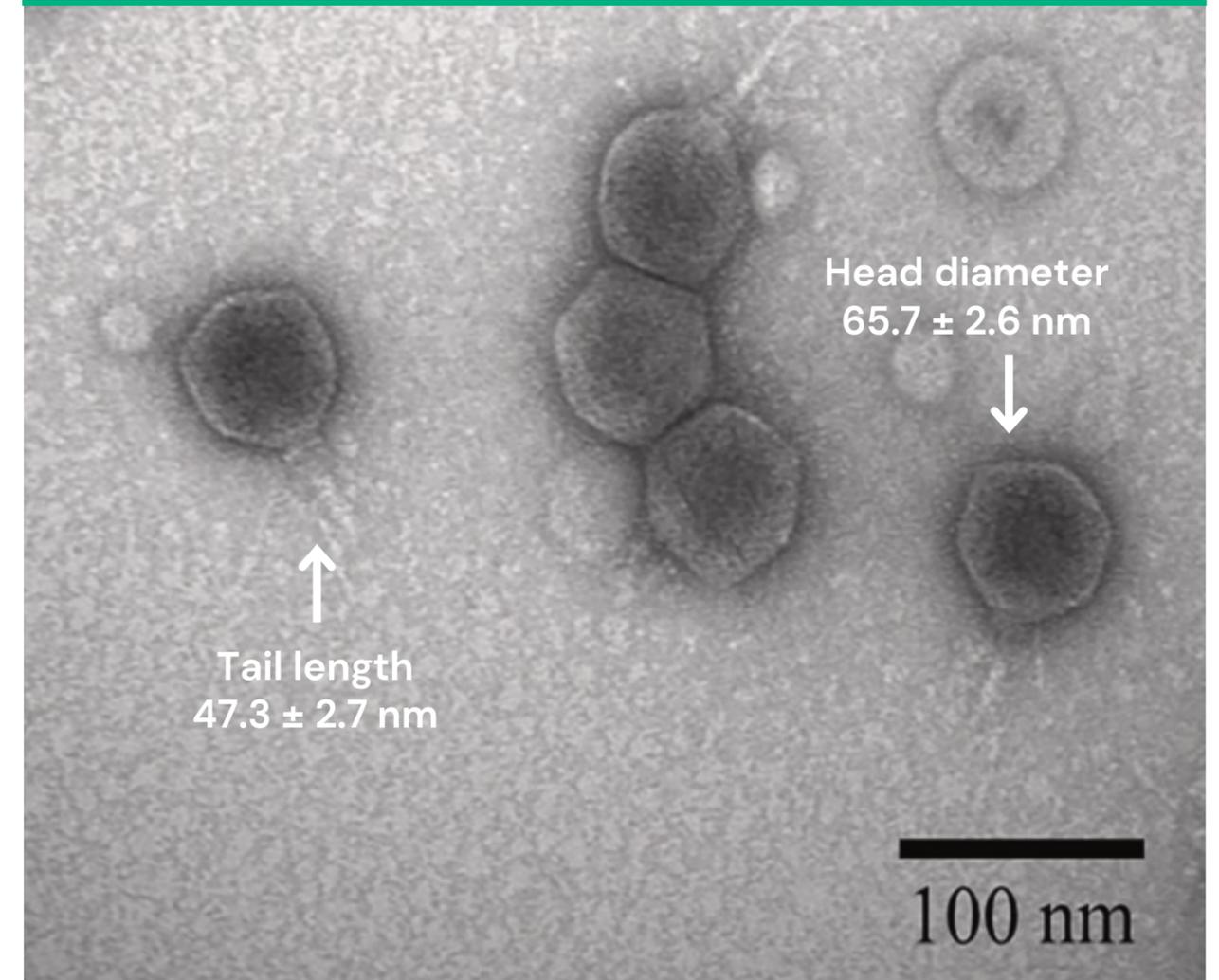
- Clear plaques form
→ **lytic phage**

Halo expansion over time



The halo surrounding the plaque enlarges over time
→ **phage-encoded depolymerase enzyme**

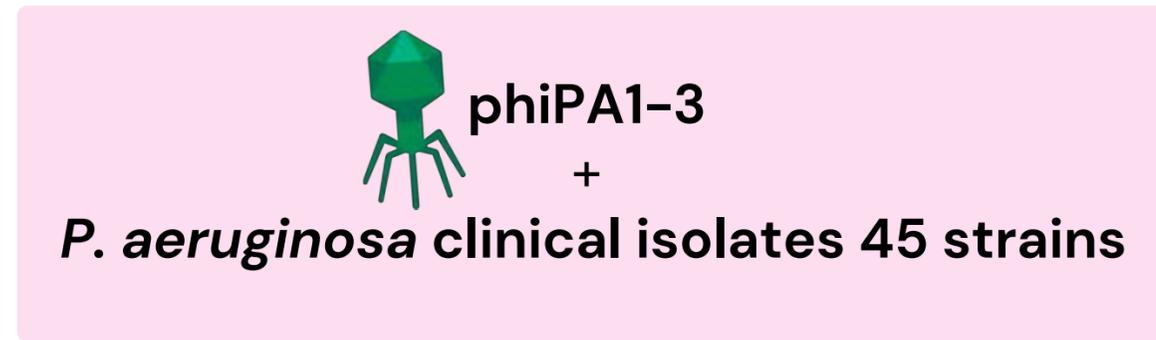
Transmission Electron Microscopy; TEM



Result: Host spectrum determination and EOP analysis

Objective: To determine the Host Range and evaluate Lytic Efficiency via Efficiency of Plating

Host Range



Moderate host range

9 strains are susceptible to infection,
including the primary host PA001,
representing 20% of the host range (9/45)

Efficiency of Plating; EOP

Some strains have **higher** EOP than PA001



Phages can kill certain clinical strains of bacteria
more effectively than the primary host

Table 1

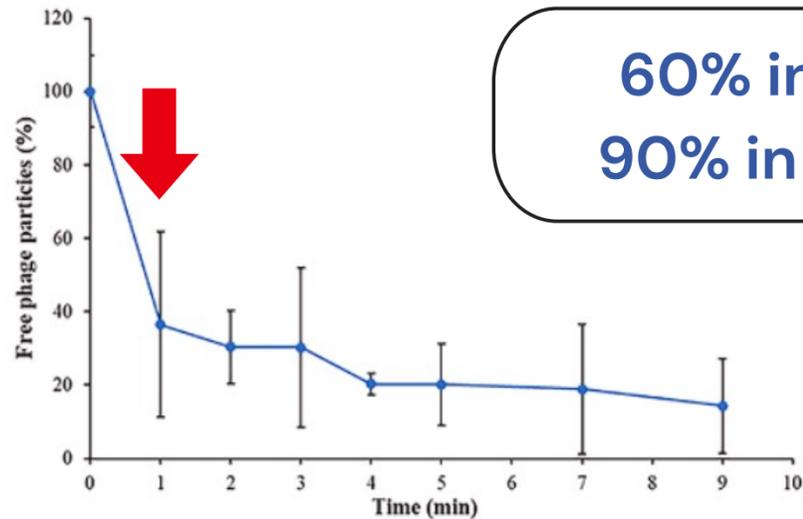
Host range of phiPA1-3 against *P. aeruginosa* and other species.

Bacterial Strains	Antibiotic Resistance Profile ^a	EOP (% ± SD) ^b
<i>P. aeruginosa</i>		
PA001	CRPA	100±2.16
LCL12	CRPA	-
LCL13	CRPA	-
LCL14	CRPA	-
PS-1	CRPA	-
PS-2	CRPA	-
PS-3	CRPA	-
PS-4	CRPA	-
PS-5	CRPA	-
PS-6	CRPA	-
PS-7	CRPA	-
PA10	CRPA	-
PA13	CRPA	-
PA18	CRPA	-
PA20	CRPA	0.67±6.84
PA22	CRPA	-
PA25	CRPA	-
PA75	CRPA	0.001±0.47
PA76	CRPA	-
PA77	CRPA	-
PA78	CRPA	-
PA79	CRPA	-
PA80	CSPA	-
PA81	CRPA	-
PA82	CSPA	-
PA83	CSPA	-
PA84	CRPA	-
PA85	CRPA	-
PA86	CRPA	-
PA87	CSPA	-
PA88	CRPA	-
PA89	CSPA	-
PA90	CSPA	-
PA91	CRPA	-
PA92	CSPA	-
PA002	CSPA	35.41±1.88
PA005	CRPA	-
PA006	CSPA	-
PA009	CSPA	16.56±5.35
PA010	CRPA	-
PA011	CRPA	-
PA022	CSPA	0.01±2.16
PA023	CSPA	0.008±3.29
PA024	CRPA	0.0008±5.43
PA025	CSPA	178.12±9.20
<i>K. pneumoniae</i>		
98,035	ND	-
95,509	ND	-
96,111	ND	-
<i>E. coli</i>		
78,030	MDR	-
70,751	MDR	-
<i>E. cloacae</i>		
57,546	CRE	-
48,742	CRE	-
55,269	CRE	-

Result: Analysis of the biological properties and stability of phiPA1-3

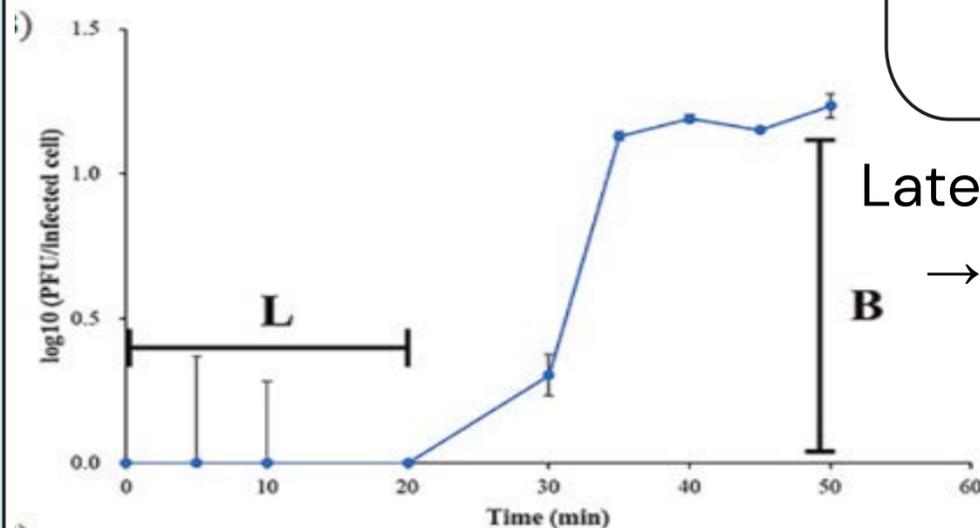
Objective: To assess reproductive capabilities

Adsorption assays of phiPA1-3 with host PA001



phiPA1-3 has rapid adsorption efficiency

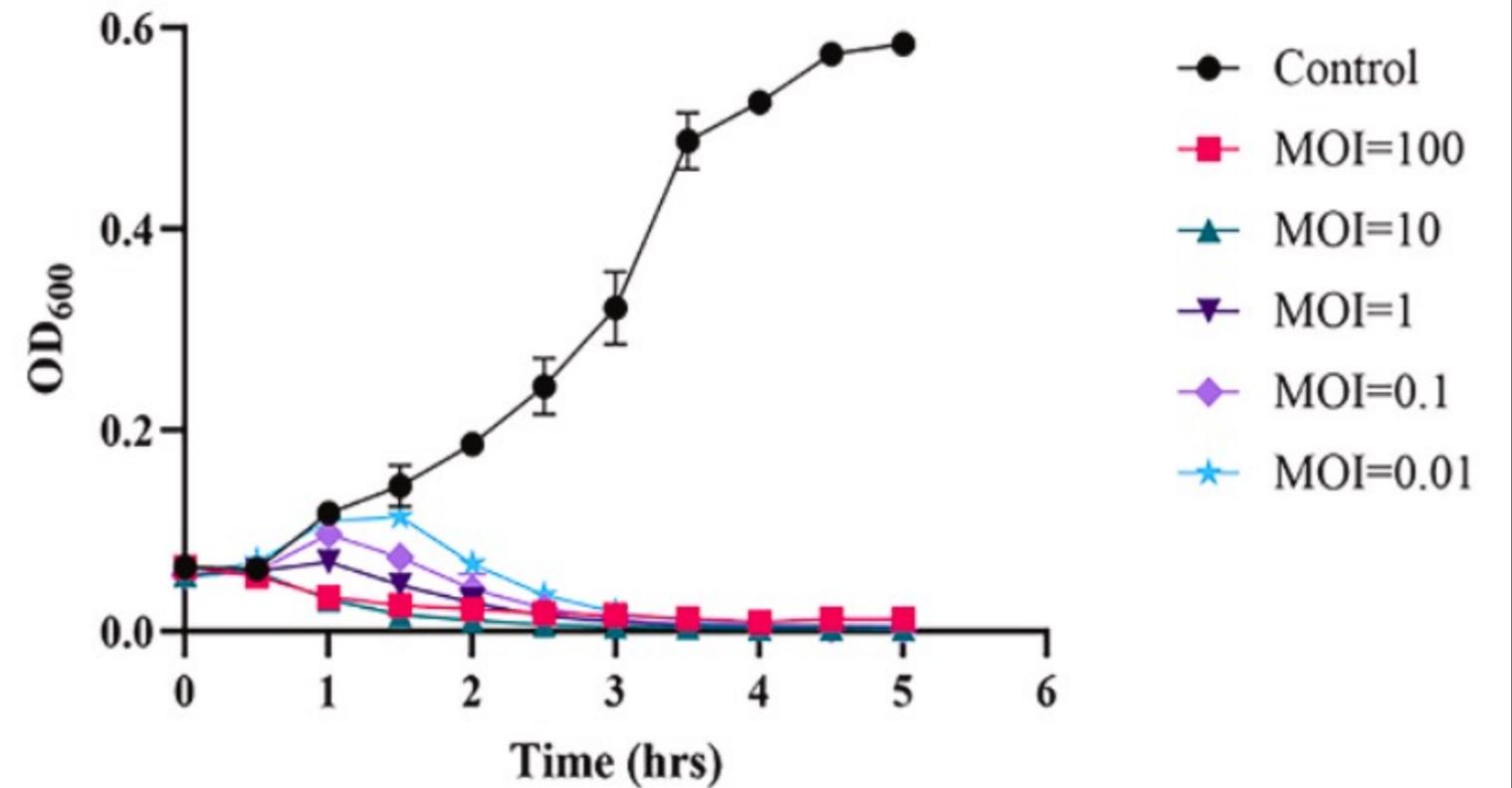
One-step growth curve



burst size
619 PFU/ml

Latent period \approx 20 min
→ strong lytic phage

Bacterial killing assay (MOI test)

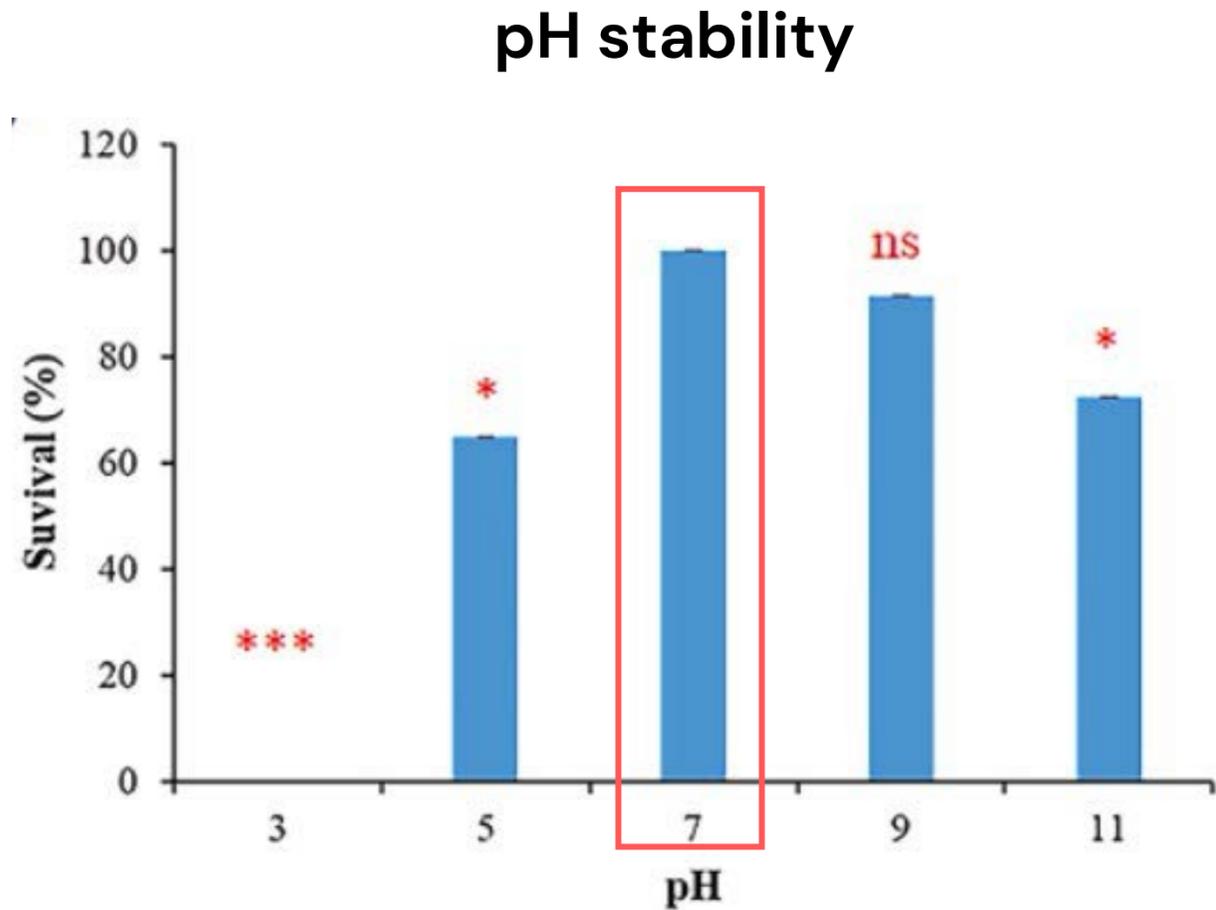


phiPA1-3 exhibits **strong and rapid lytic activity** even at low doses of phage

Optimal MOI of phiPA1-3 is **0.01**

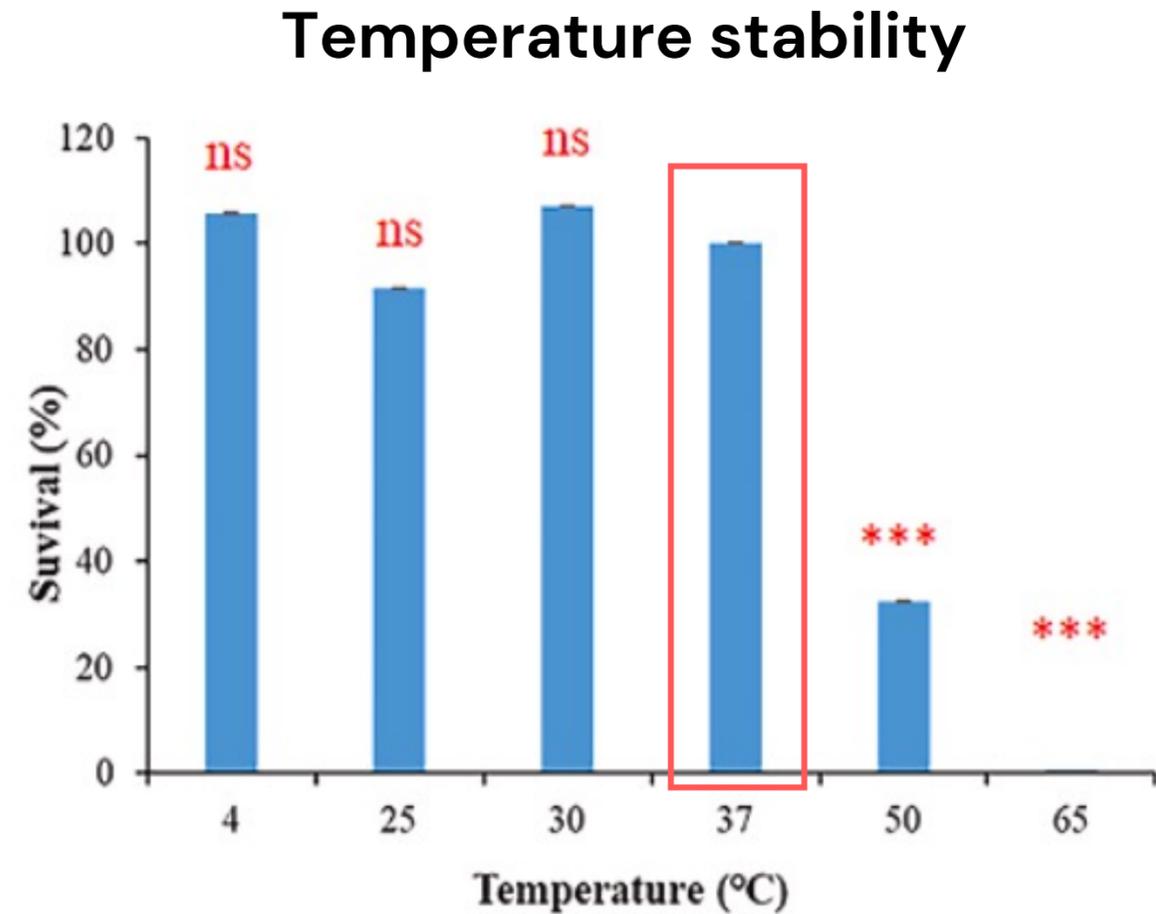
Result: Analysis of the biological properties and stability of phiPA1-3

Objective: To determine phage stability



High stability at pH **7-9**

Significant viability loss in acidic environment (< pH 5)



Optimal activity at physiological temperature (**37°C**)



Stable for 1h at elevated temp.

Result: Anti-biofilm activity of phiPA1-3

Objective: To evaluate whether phage phiPA1-3 can prevent biofilm formation and eliminate already mature biofilms

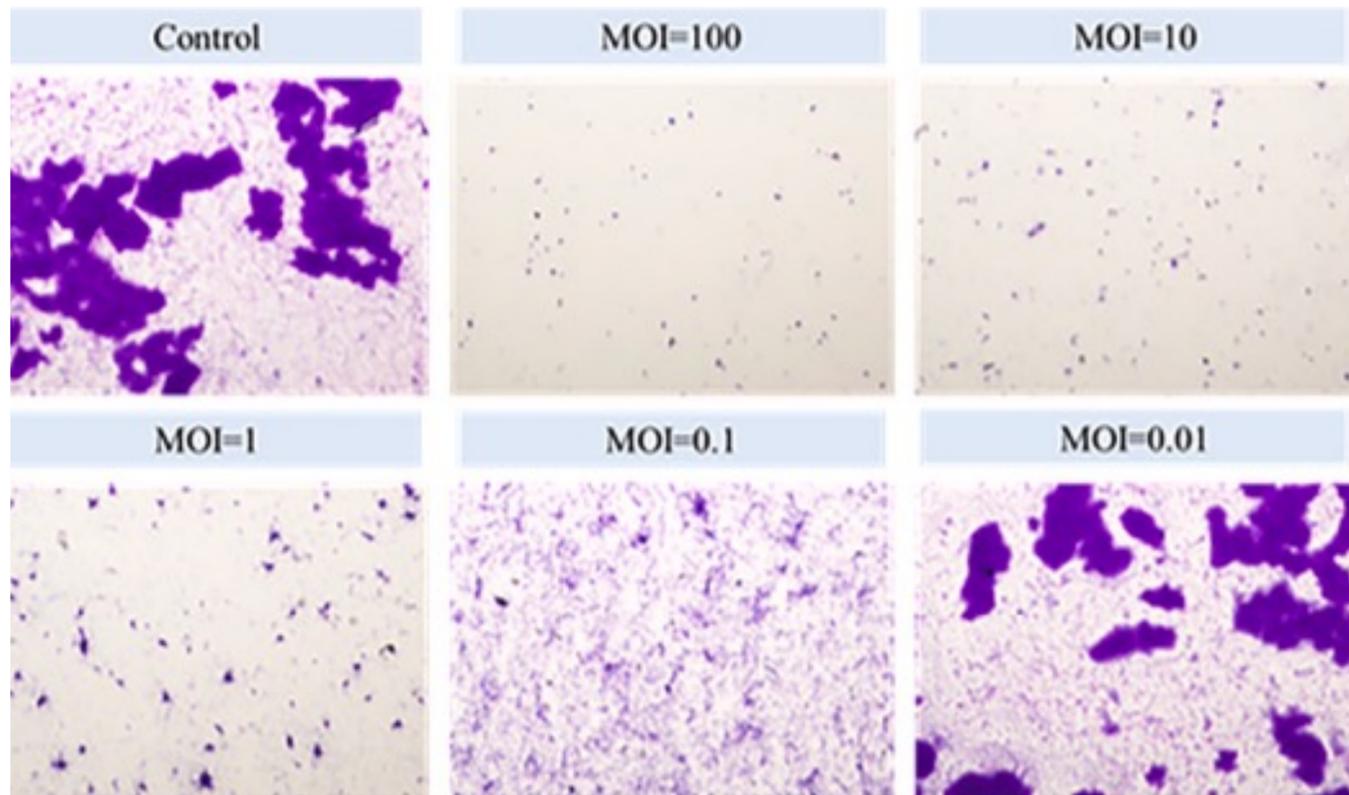
Co-culturing of phage and bacteria for biofilm-formation inhibition assay

Mature biofilm of *P. aeruginosa* PA001 formed

after 6 h incubation

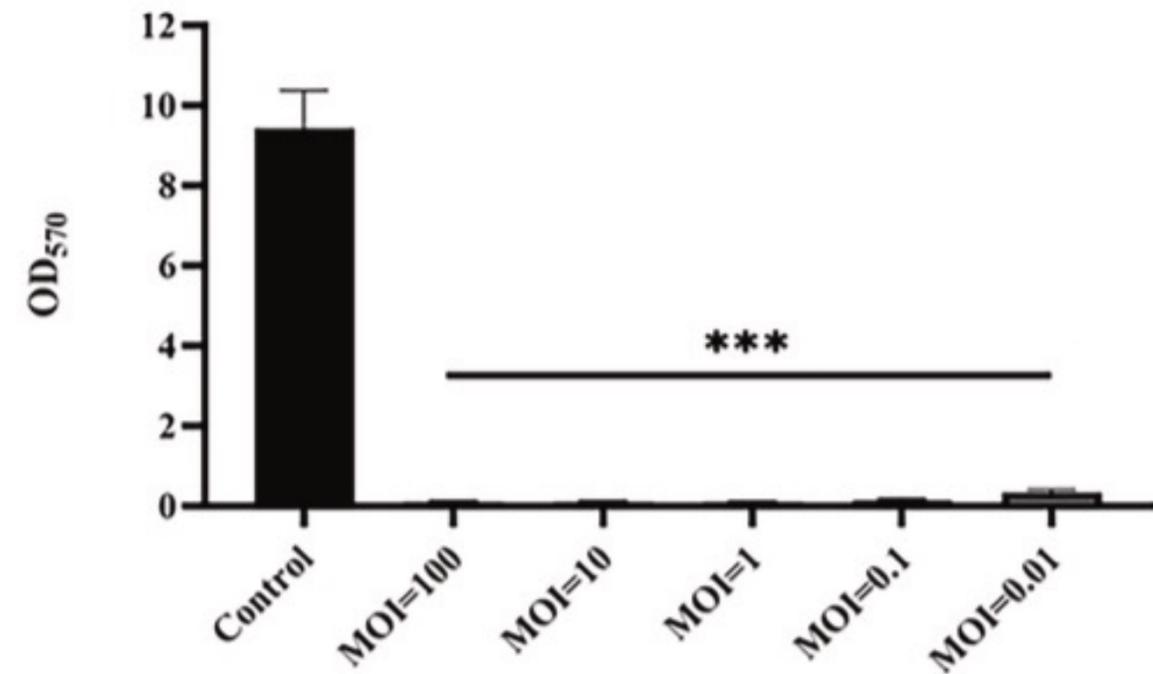
Biofilm Prevention Assay (Co-culture)

Phage + bacteria at different MOIs:



phiPA1-3 dose-dependent inhibition

Quantification of the results for Co-culturing of phage and bacteria for biofilm-formation inhibition assay



All MOI values significantly inhibited biofilm formation compared to the control group

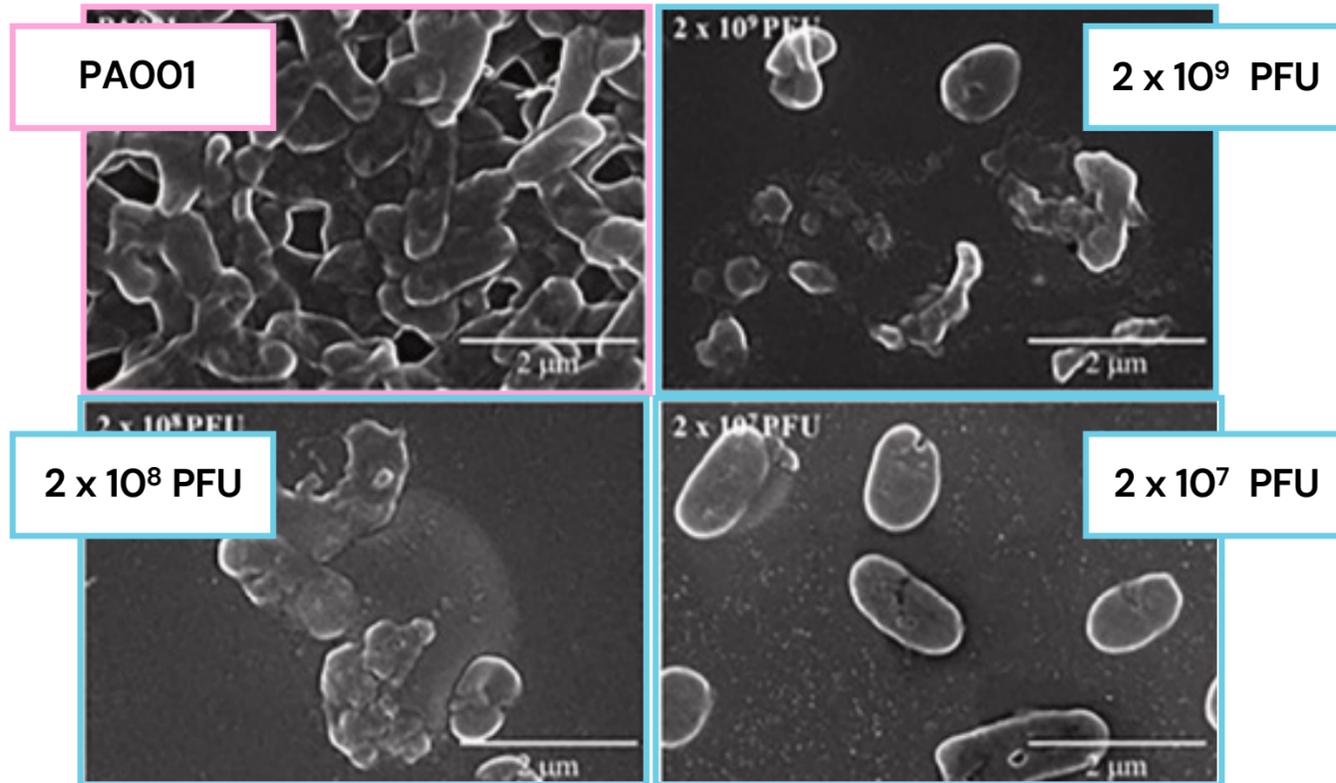
Phages can prevent biofilm formation



Result: Anti-biofilm activity of phiPA1-3

Objective: To evaluate whether phage phiPA1-3 can prevent biofilm formation and eliminate already mature biofilms

SEM — Biofilm eradication



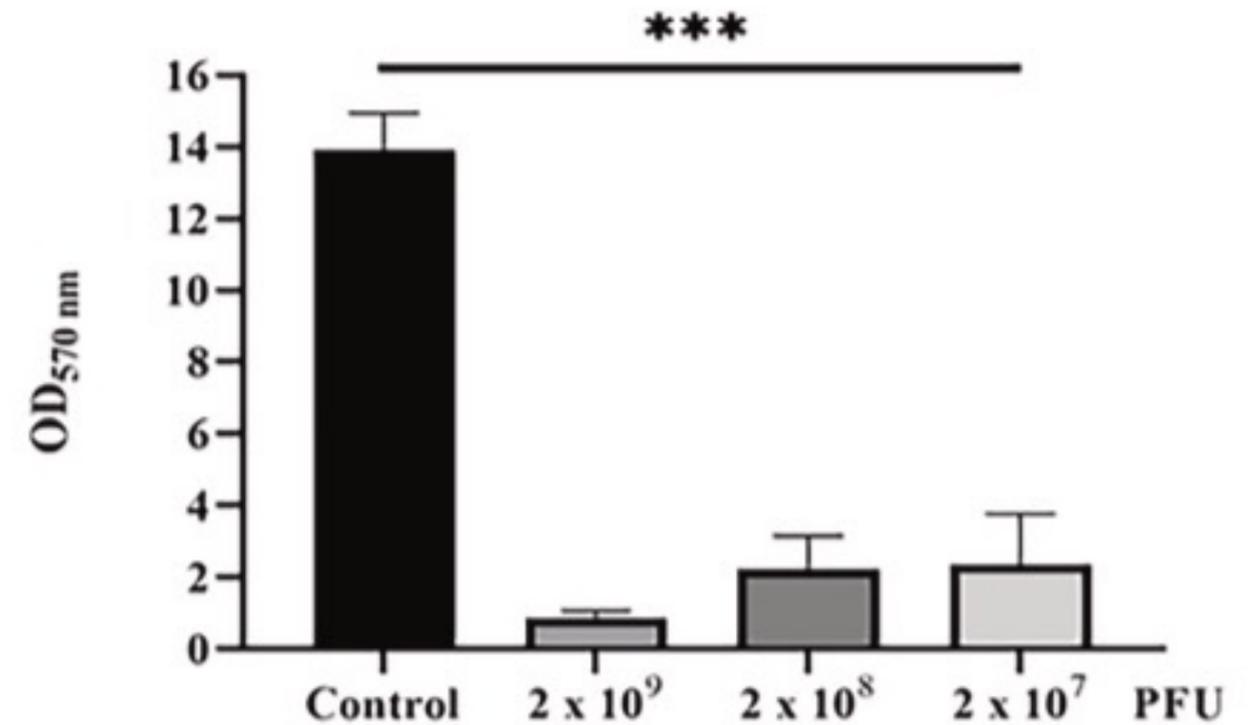
After added phage:

***Phage-treated

- Cell lysis
- Surface structure damaged
- Biofilm network destroyed

phiPA1-3 destroys mature biofilm structure

Quantification of biofilm-eradication

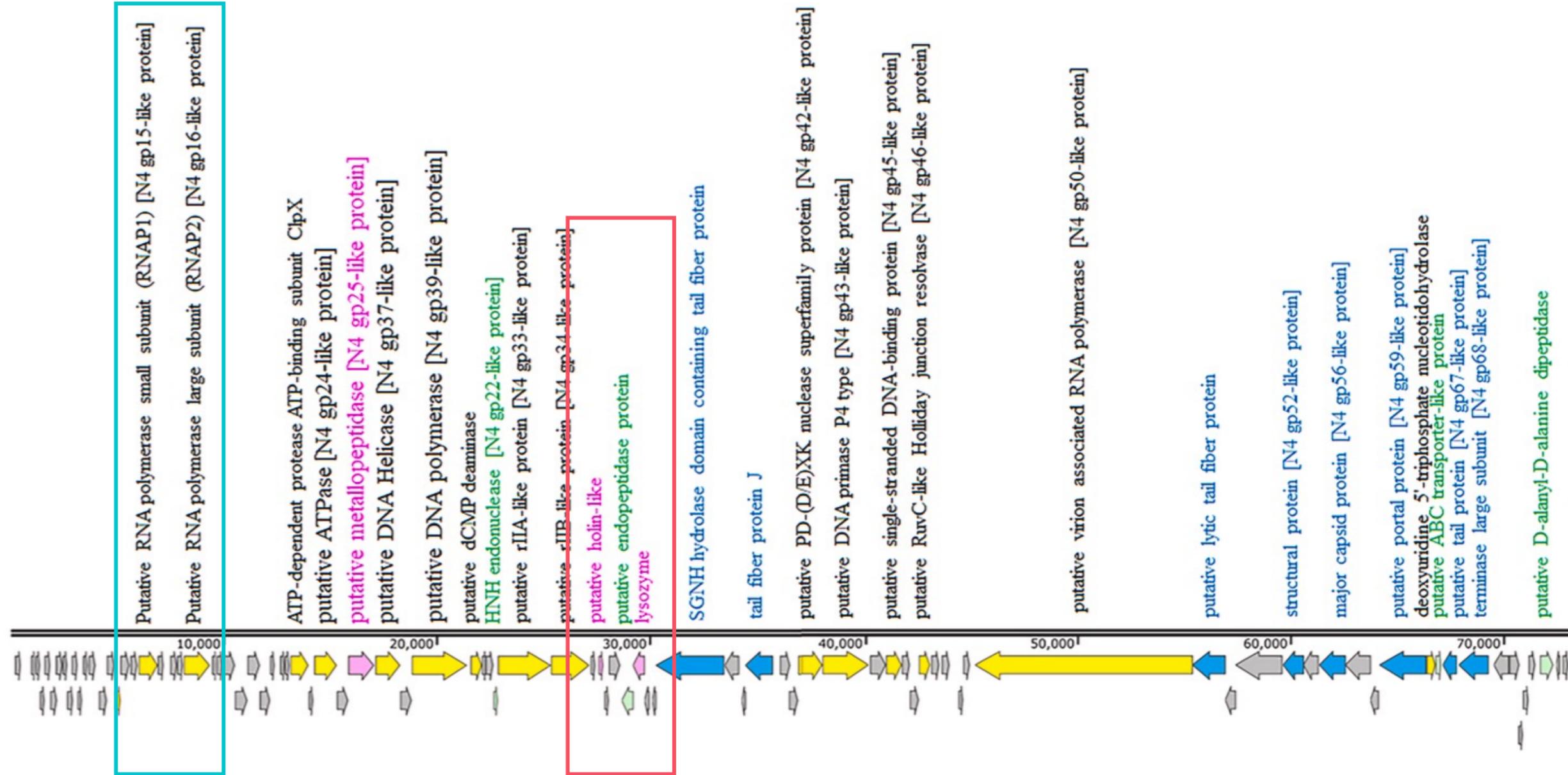


phiPA1-3:

- Inhibit biofilm formation
- Eradicate mature biofilm



Result: Genome map & functional annotation of phage phiPA1-3

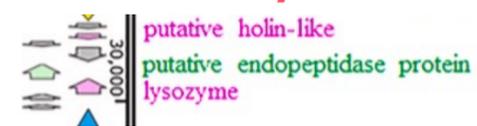


Objective: To analyze the genomic organization and predict functional genes of phage phiPA1-3 in order to determine its biological functions and therapeutic safety

Transcription machinery (N4 hallmark)

- RNA polymerase small & large subunits
- Virion-associated RNA polymerase

Host Lysis

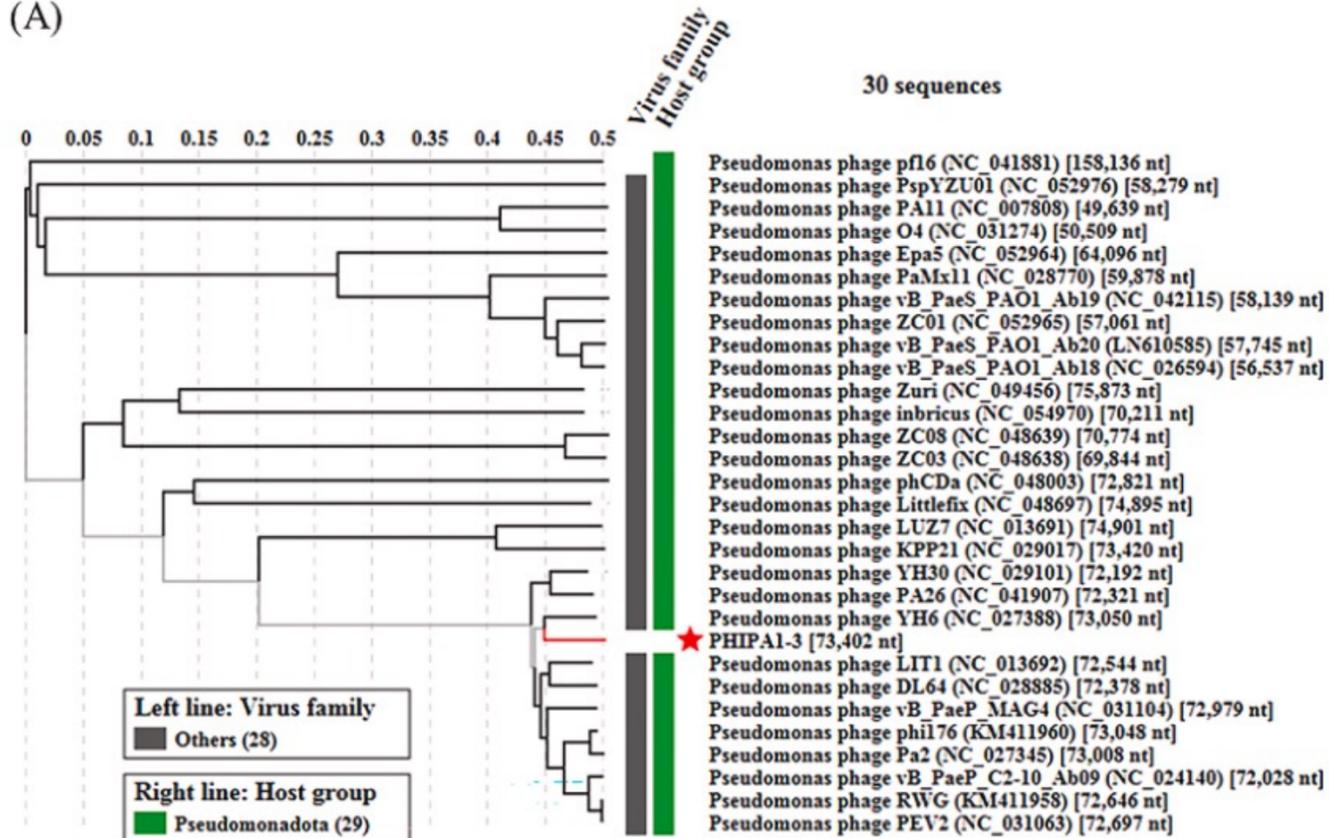


confirms the lytic mechanism used to lyse bacterial cells and release progeny phages

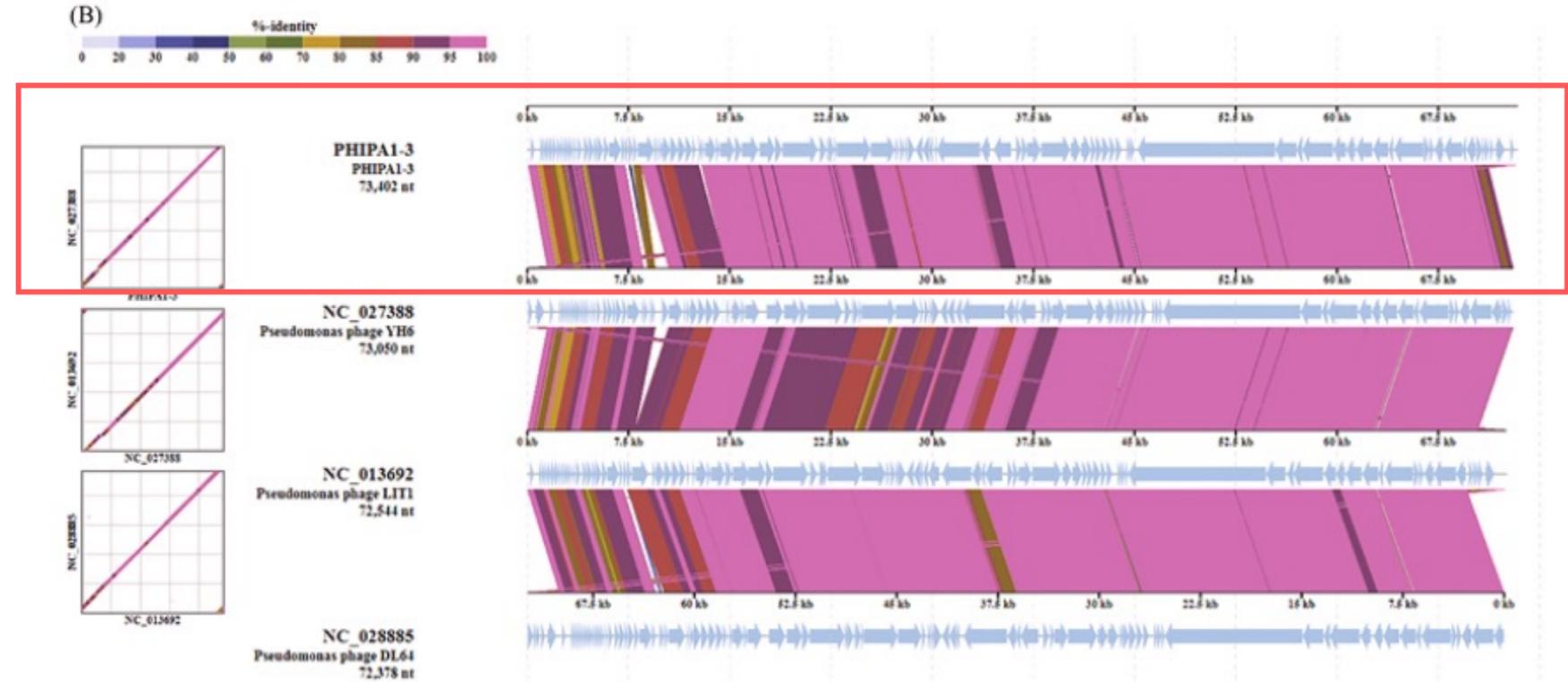
Result: Comparative genomics and phylogenetic analysis

Objective: To determine the evolutionary relationship, taxonomic classification, and genomic relatedness of phage phiPA1-3 with previously reported *Pseudomonas* bacteriophages

(A)



(B)



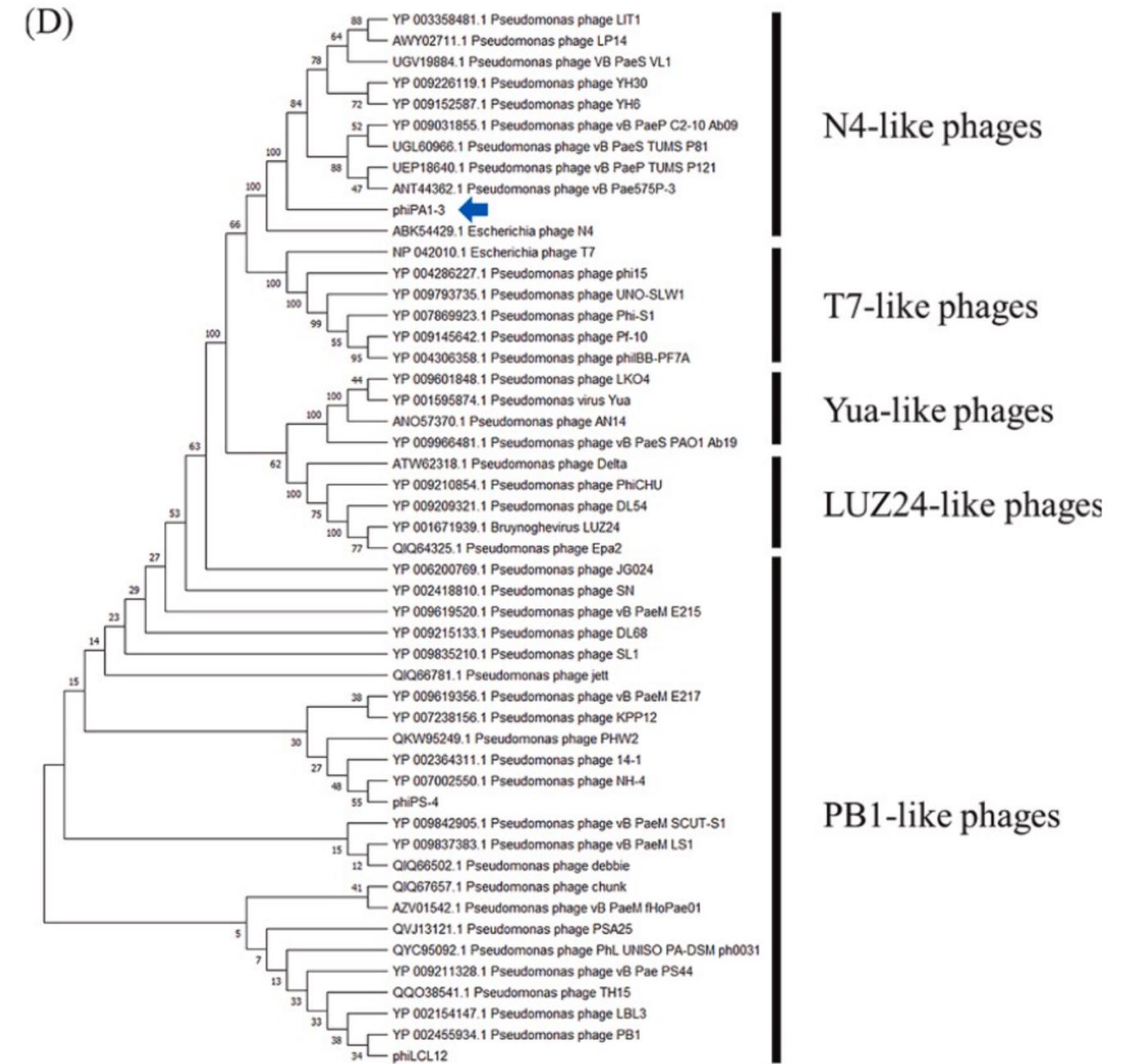
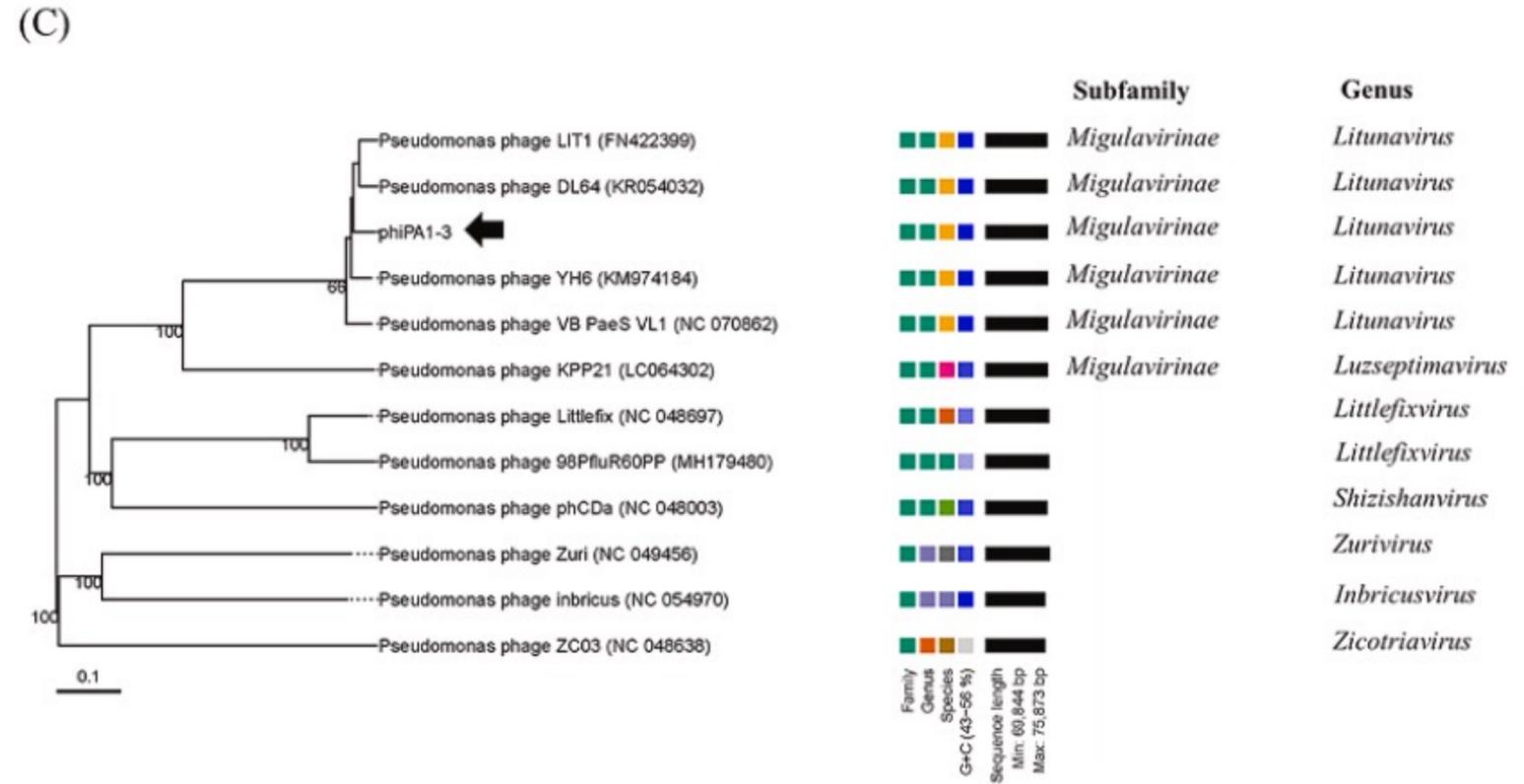
phiPA1-3 showed highest similarity to *Pseudomonas* phage YH6

- 96.3% genome identity
- 98% genome coverage

→ close relationship but still genetically distinct

Result: Comparative genomics and phylogenetic analysis

Objective: To determine the evolutionary relationship, taxonomic classification, and genomic relatedness of phage phiPA1-3 with previously reported *Pseudomonas* bacteriophages



The phylogenetic tree was generated using VICTOR, and sequence comparison was performed using MEGA11

phiPA1-3 grouped within N4-like phages

Family: *Schitoviridae*

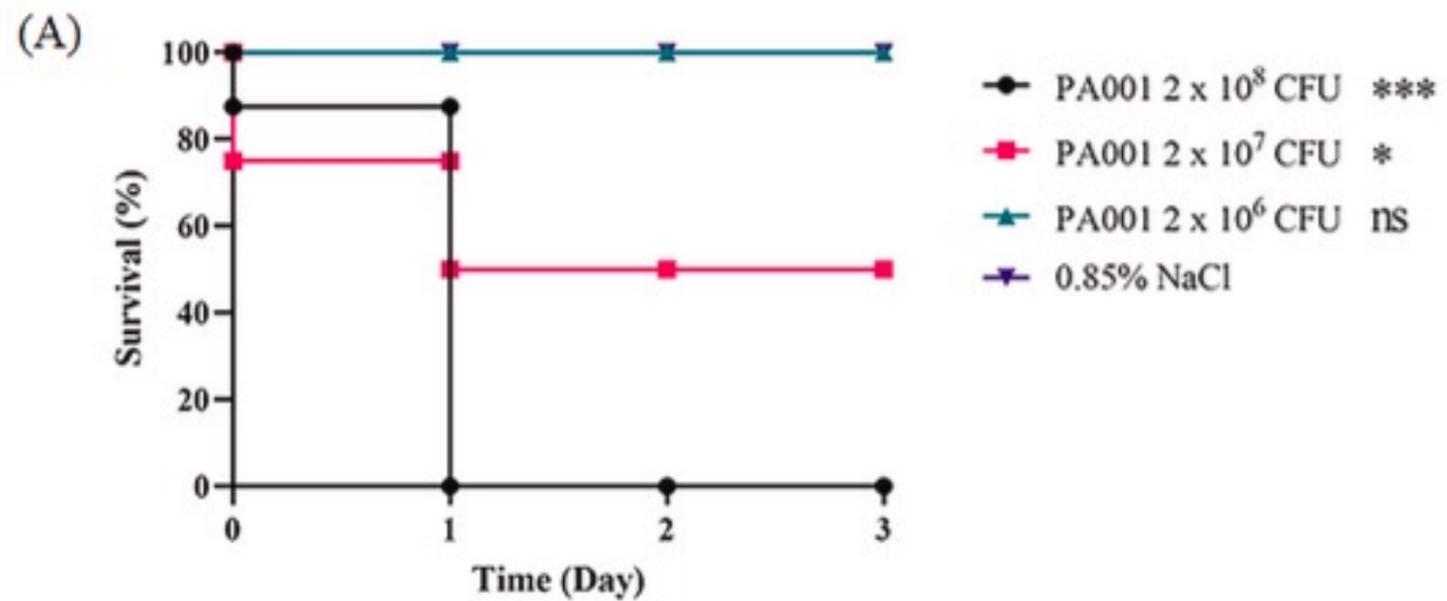
Subfamily: *Migulavirinae*

Genus: *Litunavirus*

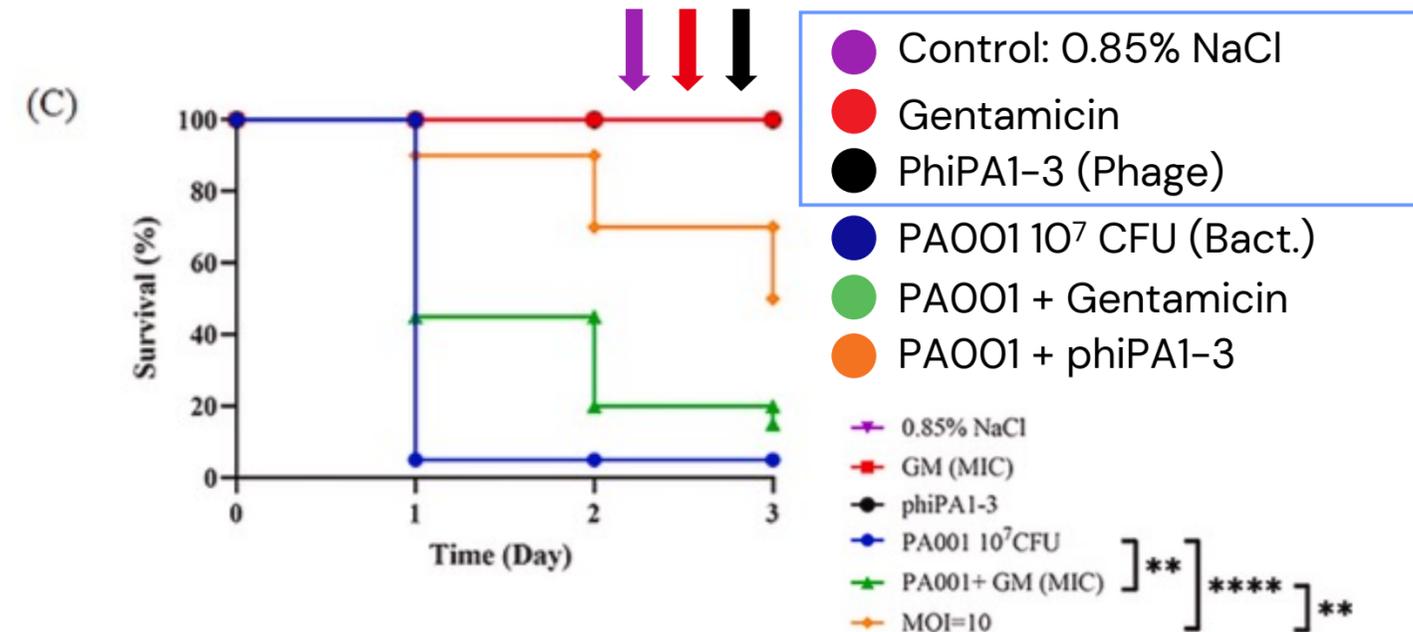
Result: *In vivo* Therapeutic Assessment

Objective: To evaluate the therapeutic efficacy and safety of phage phiPA1-3 in treating *P. aeruginosa* infection using an *in vivo* zebrafish model

Determination of lethal infection dose



Therapeutic rescue experiment



Demonstrates pathological symptoms observed in infected zebrafish

(B)

P. aeruginosa PA001

* MOI=10

Control



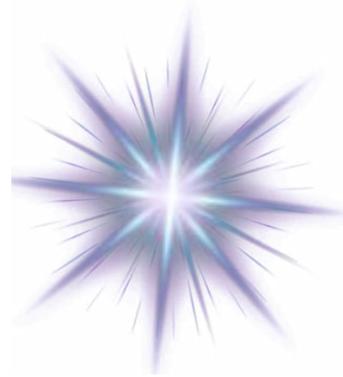
P. aeruginosa PA001 infection

- sepsis-like symptoms

Infection + phiPA1-3 (MOI=10)

- phage reduces pathological damage

Conclusions: Paper 2



phiPA1-3:

→ lytic phage

Burst Size: **619** PFU/cell



Specificity

target CRPA

moderate host range (20%)



biofilm eradication

&

prevent biofilm formation



Non-Toxic *In Vivo*

Phage treatment was more effective than gentamicin

(Zebrafish model)

Criticisms

STRONG POINTS

WEAK POINTS

1st Paper

- **Broad host range** lytic phage
- Genomically safe therapeutic candidate
- Strong antibiofilm efficacy
- **Synergistic activity** with antibiotics

The experiments were conducted at the *in vitro* level, The evaluation of phage efficacy and biofilm removal was carried out under laboratory conditions only

2nd Paper

- Targets carbapenem-resistant strains (CRPA)
- Genomic safety confirmation
- *In vivo* therapeutic efficacy

- Moderate host range
- Single-phage therapy tested without combination with antibiotics
- Resistance development not deeply investigated

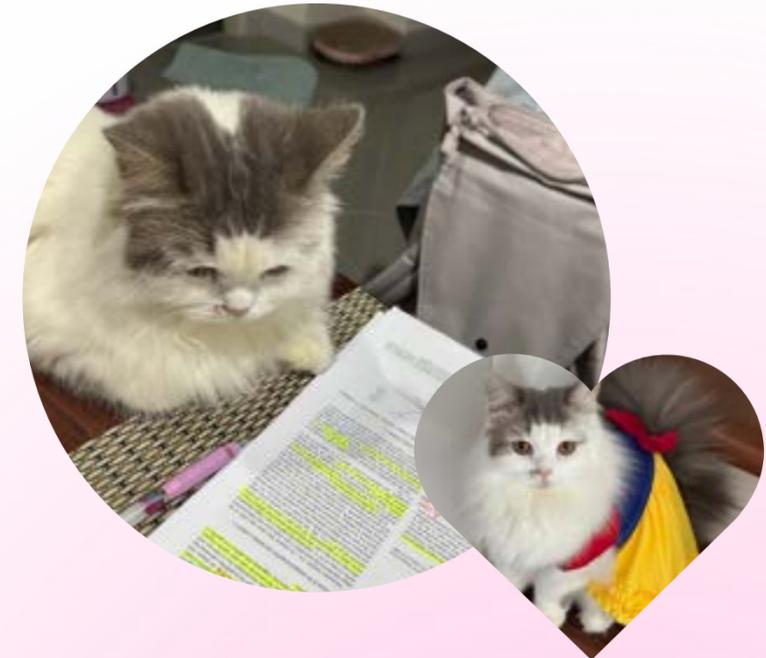
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Nong Miso-Chan
Emotional support



Thank you for your
kind attention

Q&A or Suggestion