Biochemical Characterization of RecBCD Enzyme from An Antarctic *Pseudomonas* Species and Identification of Its Cognate Chi (χ) Sequence

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ABSTRACT

Pseudomonas syringae Lz4W RecBCD enzyme, $RecBCD^{Ps}$, is a trimeric protein complex comprised of RecC, RecB, and RecD subunits. RecBCD enzyme is essential for *P. syringae* growth at low temperature, and it protects cells from low temperature induced replication arrest. In this study, we show that the $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme displays distinct biochemical behaviors. Unlike *E. coli* RecBCD enzyme, the RecD subunit is indispensable for $RecBCD^{Ps}$ function. The RecD motor activity is essential for the Chi-like fragments production in *P. syringae*, highlighting a distinct role for *P. syringae* RecD subunit in DNA repair and recombination process. Further, the ssDNA-dependent endonuclease activity is notably absent in $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme. Here, we demonstrate that the $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme recognizes a unique octameric DNA sequence, 5'-GCTGGCGC-3′ (Chi^{Ps}) that attenuates nuclease activity of the enzyme when it enters dsDNA from the 3′-end. We propose that the reduced translocation activities manifested by motor-defective mutants cause cold sensitivity in *P. syrinage*; emphasizing the importance of DNA processing and recombination functions in rescuing low temperature induced replication fork arrest.

Keywords:

RecBCD enzyme, *Pseudomonas,* Chi sequence, cold adaptation, DNA damage, DNA repair and recombination, DNA helicase and nuclease.

Abbreviations:

ATP, Adenosine triphosphate; DSB, double-strand break; ‘Chi, Crossover hotspot instigator; Ni-NTA, Nitrio tri-acetic acid; TLC, thin layer chromatography; MMC, mitomycin C; UV light, Ultra violet; ABM, Antarctic bacterial medium; LB, Luria-Bertani medium.

51 **INTRODUCTION**

52 The RecBCD enzyme-mediated homologous recombination is a DNA repair pathway that
53 ensures genome integrity by faithful repair of broken DNA in *E. coli* and many Gram-negative
54 bacteria. The heterotrimeric RecBCD enzyme complex, comprised of RecB, RecC, and RecD
55 subunits, is essential for double-strand breaks (DSBs) repair via homologous recombination and
56 protects host cells from foreign DNAs and invading phages [1-4]. DSBs are generated in cells by
57 various exogenous and endogenous factors including the running of replication forks into
58 preexisting lesions [5]. RecBCD enzyme is a highly processive helicase and nuclease, which
59 unwinds and degrades DNA strands asymmetrically from a blunt or nearly blunt dsDNA [2].
60 Initially, RecBCD enzyme degrades 3′-ended DNA preferentially over the 5′-end of the DNA until
61 it encounters a regulatory DNA sequence called 'Chi' (Crossover hotspot instigator; 5′-
62 GCTGGTGG-3′ in *E. coli*) [2,6,7]. Chi (χ) recognition switches RecBCD enzyme's polarity of DNA
63 degradation. It attenuates 3′→5′ nuclease activity but upregulates 5′→3′ nuclease activity resulting
64 in the production of 3'-ended ssDNA tail [8]. The RecBCD enzyme loads RecA onto the 3'-
65 terminal ssDNA [9] facilitating the homologous pairing to form Holliday junction. The RuvAB/C
66 complex further resolve these recombination DNA intermediates to promote DNA repair process
67 via homologous recombination [10]. The behavior of RecBCD enzyme was also studied using
68 single molecule techniques [11]. Single molecule analyses of *E. coli.* RecBCD enzyme revealed
69 that it translocates on DNA at a much higher rate, before Chi and pauses at Chi [12]. The Chi
70 recognition switches lead motor subunit of the RecBCD enzyme, from fast to slow motor (RecD
71 to RecB), resulting in the reduction of translocation rate by one-half after Chi [13].

72 Previously, we have shown that the RecBCD enzyme of Antarctic *Pseudomonas syringae*
73 Lz4W ($RecBCD^{Ps}$) is essential for the growth at low temperature [14]. Growth at low temperature
74 induces frequent replication arrest causing fork reversal mediated DNA damage in *P. syringae*
75 Lz4W [15]. The $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme thus rescues cells from replication-arrest dependent DNA

damage enabling *P. syringae* Lz4W to grow at low temperature [15]. Unlike in *E. coli*, the RecD subunit of *P. syringae* Lz4W is an indispensable subunit of RecBCD complex [16]. The genetic analysis of ATP binding and nuclease defective mutants of $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme indicated that the ATP driven motor activities of both RecD and RecB motor subunits are critical for growth at low temperature, whereas the nuclease activity of holoenzyme is dispensable [14].

In this study, we performed a biochemical analysis of wild-type and mutant $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzymes to understand their biochemical role in protecting *P. syringae* Lz4W cells from low temperature induced DNA damage. Here, we report that the ATP dependent DNA unwinding, not the DNA degradation activity of RecBCD enzyme is critical for growth at low temperature. Besides, inactivation of ATPase activity of RecD and RecB motor subunits has impaired the DNA unwinding activity of RecBCD enzyme leading to cold-sensitive phenotype *in vivo*. Furthermore, we have identified the *P. syringae* Chi sequence (5′-GCTGGCGC-3′), which attenuates the $RecBCD^{Ps}$ nuclease activity *in vitro*.

91 **RESULTS**

92 **Purification of RecBCD complex and its mutant variants from *P. syringae* Lz4W**

93 The *P. syringae recCBD* genes were overexpressed on pGL10 derived plasmids in
94 Δ*recCBD* (LCBD) strain to obtain RecB, RecC (N-terminal His-tagged) and, RecD proteins in an
95 equimolar ratio (13). The wild-type and mutant RecBCD enzymes ($RecB^{K28Q}CD$, $RecBCD^{K229Q}$,
96 and $RecB^{D1118A}CD$) were purified by two-step purification protocol as shown in the flowchart (Fig.
97 1A) using Ni-NTA affinity column chromatography and size exclusion chromatography. The
98 purified fractions of RecBCD and mutants contained all the three protein subunits (RecB, RecC,
99 and RecD) in a stoichiometric ratio (Fig. 1B). Silver nitrate staining of gels further confirmed the
100 purity of protein fractions. However, silver staining of SDS-PAGE separated proteins showed an
101 additional protein band of ~60 kDa size (Fig. 1C). The Mass spectrometric analysis of this protein
102 band indicated that it belongs to HSP-60 family of chaperonin, GroEL. The appearance of GroEL
103 as a contaminant during purification of RecBCD protein is also evidenced in *E. coli [17]*.
104 Nonetheless, the presence of RecB, RecC, and RecD subunits was further confirmed by Western
105 analysis using the polyclonal antibodies specific to these proteins (Fig. S1).

106 **ATP hydrolysis activity of the wild-type and the mutant RecBCD enzymes**

107 ATP hydrolyzing activity of wild-type and mutant RecBCD enzymes was measured by thin
108 layer chromatography (TLC) as described in Materials and methods. The wild-type RecBCD
109 enzyme displayed DNA stimulated ATPase activity in the presence of linear pBR322 double-
110 stranded DNA (dsDNA). At 22ºC, RecBCD hydrolyzed ATP with the maximum velocity (V_{max}) of
111 236.5 μmol ATP per μmol enzyme s^{-1} and a K_m of 57.8 μM for ATP (Fig. 2A and Table 1). The
112 mutant $RecB^{D1118A}CD$ enzyme (nuclease defective mutant) showed ATPase activity similar to the
113 wild-type enzyme. However, the ATP-binding defective mutant enzymes such as $RecB^{K28Q}CD$
114 (mutation in the consensus ATP binding site of RecB) and $RecBCD^{K229Q}$ (mutation in the
115 consensus ATP binding site of RecD) showed a 10-fold decrease in ATP hydrolyzing activities
116 (Table 1).

117 ATP hydrolyzing activities of RecBCD enzymes were measured at three different
118 temperatures (37, 22 and 4°C) (Fig. 2B). Interestingly, The RecBCD enzyme showed the highest
119 ATPase activity at 37°C compared to 22°C and 4°C. At 22°C, the optimum temperature for *P.*
120 *syringae* Lz4W growth, the wild-type RecBCD and the nuclease-deficient $RecB^{D1118A}CD$ enzymes
121 displayed ~40% lower ATPase activity compared to 37°C. At 4°C, the activities were further
122 reduced to ~50% of their respective ATPase activity observed at 22°C. The ATP hydrolyzing
123 defective mutants showed ~10-fold decrease in ATP hydrolyzing activity compared to wild-type
124 RecBCD enzyme, at all the temperatures tested (Table 1 and Fig. 2C). It indicates that the
125 mutations were previously shown to prevent *P. syringae* growth at low temperature severely
126 curtailed ATP hydrolyzing activity.

127 **DNA unwinding and degradation activities of the RecBCD enzyme at different**
128 **concentration of Mg^{++} and ATP**

129 The DNA unwinding and degradation activity of *E. coli* RecBCD enzyme ($RecBCD^{Ec}$) are
130 free [Mg^{2+}] ion dependent. An increase in free [Mg^{2+}] increases nucleolytic cleavage by RecBCD
131 enzyme [18]. To understand the DNA unwinding and degradation behavior of *P. syringae*
132 RecBCD enzyme ($RecBCD^{Ps}$), we performed experiments at various concentrations of
133 magnesium and ATP as described in Materials and methods. In the first set of reactions, the molar
134 concentration of magnesium was kept constant (2 mM) and the ATP concentration was varied (0-
135 10 mM); and in the second set of reactions, the ATP concentration was kept constant (2 mM) and
136 magnesium concentration was varied (0-10 mM). The results indicate that the DNA unwinding
137 and degradation properties of $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme are also modulated by the ratio of Mg^{2+} and
138 ATP. When the molar concentration of Mg^{2+} is lesser than ATP, $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme unwinds the
139 dsDNA substrate, and the degradation of DNA is not much pronounced (Fig. 3A, lane 4-6).
140 However, when the molar concentration of Mg^{++} exceeds the ATP concentration, $RecBCD^{Ps}$
141 degrades unwound DNA more vigorously (Fig. 3B, lane 4-10). The ratio of [Mg^{2+}]: [ATP] thus

142 affects the kinetics of DNA unwinding and degradation properties of RecBCD enzyme. We also
143 observed that an increase in ATP concentration more than three folds over Mg^{++} inhibits the DNA
144 unwinding activity of $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme (Fig. 3A, lane 7-10). The inhibition of DNA unwinding
145 activity is possibly due to sequestration of a Mg^{2+} ion by ATP leading to the depletion of free
146 magnesium in the reaction. Subsequently, the DNA unwinding and degradation experiments were
147 performed under specified reaction conditions. The limiting magnesium reaction condition (5 mM
148 ATP, 2 mM Mg^{++}) was chosen to observe the DNA unwinding activity and, the excess magnesium
149 condition (2 mM ATP, 6 mM Mg^{++}) to observe the DNA unwinding and degradation activities of
150 RecBCD enzyme. Interestingly, under excess magnesium conditions, we observed three shorter
151 discrete DNA fragments (Fig. 3B, Lane 5-10). These DNA fragments production by RecBCD
152 enzyme is possibly due to Chi-like sequence on a DNA substrate and is discussed later in the
153 results section.

154 Calcium has been shown to inhibit the nuclease activity of *E. coli* RecBCD enzyme [19].
155 We also studied the effects of calcium on *P. syringae* RecBCD by increasing the Ca^{++} ion
156 concentration in a reaction mixture that contained fixed amounts of ATP and Mg^{2+} (2 and 6 mM
157 respectively) (Supplementary Fig. S2). We found that similar to $RecBCD^{Ec}$, the high concentration
158 of calcium inhibits both helicase and nuclease activity of $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme.

159 **Temperature-dependent DNA unwinding and nuclease activity of *P. syringae* RecBCD**
160 **enzyme**

161 ATPase RecBCD mutants affect *P. syringae* Lz4W growth in a temperature-dependent
162 manner. Hence, we sought to assess the effects of temperature on the DNA unwinding and
163 degradation properties of $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme. We measured the enzyme activities at 22°C, and
164 4°C, using NdeI linearized [5′-^{32}P] labeled pBR322 plasmid as a substrate. Under the limiting
165 magnesium reaction condition (5 mM ATP, 2 mM Mg^{2+}), the DNA unwinding activity (i.e.,
166 production of full-length ssDNA) of $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme was detected only at 22°C and not at 4°C

167 (Fig. 4A). However, under excess magnesium reaction condition (2 mM ATP, 6 mM Mg^{++}) the
168 DNA degradation activity of $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme was observed at both 22°C and 4°C (Fig. 4B).
169 We calculated the rate of DNA unwinding by measuring the decreased band intensities of
170 5′-[γ-^{32}P]-labeled dsDNA substrates at different temperatures. The wild-type $RecBCD^{Ps}$ unwound
171 the DNA at the rate of 35.1 ± 1.6 bp/sec at 22°C when ATP and Mg^{++} ratio was 5:2 (limiting
172 magnesium condition) (Table 2). However, the enzyme could unwind the DNA even much faster,
173 when the ATP and Mg^{++} ratio was changed to 2:6 (excess magnesium condition). Under the latter
174 condition, wild-type $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme unwound (also degraded) the DNA at the rate of 101.5 ±
175 3.3 bp/sec (Table 2). Notably, under the limiting magnesium reaction condition at low temperature
176 (4°C), the RecBCD enzyme failed to produce detectable unwound DNA products (Fig. 4A).
177 However, under excess magnesium conditions, RecBCD enzyme could unwind and degrade the
178 DNA at the rate of 55.8 ± 6.9 bp/s (Table 2, Fig. 4B), which is about 54% of the activity observed
179 at 22°C. The apparent unwinding rates obtained under excess magnesium conditions, based on
180 the disappearance of ^{32}P-end-labeled DNA substrate could be an over-estimation. It is possible
181 that some enzyme molecules could just nucleolytically remove the end-labeled nucleotide, but
182 couldn't fully unwind the dsDNA substrate.

183 **DNA unwinding and nuclease activities of mutant $RecB^{K28Q}CD$, $RecBCD^{K229Q}$, and**
184 **$RecB^{D1118A}CD$ enzymes**

185 We have shown that *P. syringae* cells carrying *$recB^{K28Q}CD$* or *$recBCD^{K229Q}$* mutants are
186 sensitive to cold temperature, UV irradiation and Mitomycin C (MMC) [14]. These two mutant
187 enzymes also display very weak ATPase activity. To understand the impact of these mutations
188 on the DNA unwinding and degradation properties of RecBCD complex, we analyzed $RecB^{K28Q}CD$
189 and $RecBCD^{K229Q}$ enzymes *in vitro* at 22°C and 4°C. At 22°C, under limiting and excess
190 magnesium conditions, $RecB^{K28Q}CD$ with the ATPase-defective RecB subunit displayed weak
191 helicase activity (Fig. 5A). The rate of DNA unwinding was 1.5 ± 0.7 bp/sec and 12.9 ± 3.4 bp/sec

192 at 22°C, under limiting and excess magnesium conditions respectively (Fig.5A and Table 2). At
193 4°C, on the other hand, RecB^{K28Q}CD showed no detectable DNA unwinding activity under the
194 excess magnesium condition (Fig. 5A and Table 2). These results suggest that RecB^{K28Q}CD is a
195 poor helicase-nuclease enzyme.

196 Compared to the RecB^{K28Q}CD enzyme, RecBCD^{K229Q} enzyme with the ATPase-defective
197 motor RecD subunit displayed higher DNA unwinding and nuclease activities. At 22°C, the
198 RecBCD^{K229Q} enzyme with the ATPase-defective RecD subunit displayed substantial DNA
199 unwinding activity, 27.2 ± 6.1 bp/sec and 92.6 ± 14.1 bp/sec, under limiting and excess
200 magnesium conditions respectively (Fig. 5B and Table 2). However, at 4°C under excess
201 magnesium conditions, the mutant enzyme unwound the DNA at the rate of 17.3 ± 9.6 bp/sec (Fig
202 5B and Table 2). The combined DNA unwinding and degradation activity of the RecBCD^{K229Q}
203 enzyme (under excess magnesium) were ~90% and ~30% of the wild-type RecBCD^{Ps} activity at
204 22°C and 4°C respectively. Interestingly, the mutant RecBCD^{K229Q} enzyme failed to produce
205 discrete DNA fragments (Fig. 5B).

206 We also tested DNA unwinding and degradation by the nuclease defective RecB^{D1118A}CD
207 enzyme. (Fig. 5C). The mutation in the nuclease catalytic site of RecB subunit (RecB^{D1118A}CD)
208 led to a complete loss of *in vivo* nuclease activity in RecBCD^{Ps} complex, without affecting the
209 recombination proficiency and cold adaptation of bacteria [14,15]. At 22°C, under limiting
210 magnesium reaction condition, RecB^{D1118A}CD enzyme produced single-stranded pBR322 DNA at
211 the rate 30.4 ± 1.7 bp/sec, which is 85% of the rate observed with the wild-type enzyme. Under
212 excess magnesium condition, the rate of DNA unwinding increased to 109.7 ± 17.5 bp/sec, which
213 is similar to wild-type. At 4°C, this enzyme could unwind the pBR322 DNA at the rate of 41.0 ±
214 8.1 bp/sec, which is about 75% of wild-type enzyme (Table 2). More importantly, under both
215 limiting and excess magnesium conditions, this enzyme as expected, produced only the full-length
216 ssDNA of pBR322 and did not degrade the DNA (Fig. 5C). From these data, it is clear that

217 RecB^{D1118A}CD enzyme is nuclease deficient *in vitro*, but its DNA unwinding activity is comparable
218 to wild-type enzyme at both 22 and 4°C (Fig. 5C and Table 2).

219 ***P. syringae* RecBCD enzyme does not have endonuclease activity**

220 The ATP-dependent endonuclease activity of wild-type RecBCD enzyme of *P. syringae*
221 was examined using a circular M13 ssDNA as substrate as previously described for RecBCD^{Ec}
222 [20-22]. We tested the endonuclease activity under three different conditions of ATP and
223 magnesium concentrations as described in Supplementary Fig S4. Under all the three conditions,
224 wild-type RecBCD and mutant proteins failed to degrade M13 phage ssDNA (Fig S3). It indicates
225 that unlike RecBCD^{Ec}, the RecBCD^{Ps} does not exhibit endonucleolytic activity under the
226 conditions tested.

227 **A specific DNA sequence on pBR322 plasmid modulates nuclease activity of *P. syringae***
228 **RecBCD.**

229 We noticed that, under the excess magnesium reaction conditions, RecBCD^{Ps} produced
230 a discrete DNA fragments shorter than the full-length unwound DNA substrate (Fig 3B, Lanes 5-
231 10), and the shortest DNA fragment showed a higher intensity than the other ones (Fig 3B). This
232 interesting observation led us to hypothesize that the *P. syringae* RecBCD enzyme recognizes a
233 specific DNA sequence. This specific DNA sequence could potentially be a Chi (χ) like sequence;
234 which alters the nuclease activity of RecBCD^{Ps} complex, allowing 3'-ended ssDNA to escape from
235 DNA degradation as observed earlier [2,8,23,24]. To further confirm that these DNA fragments
236 are indeed single-stranded, we performed degradation assays in the presence of Exonuclease-I
237 (ExoI), which specifically degrades ssDNA by its 3′→5′ exonuclease activity [25]. The RecBCD^{Ps}-
238 generated short DNA fragments disappeared in the presence of ExoI (Fig S4A) suggesting that
239 they are indeed ssDNA, similar to Chi-specific DNA fragments produced by *E. coli* RecBCD
240 enzyme after Chi-recognition [8,23,24,26].

241 Using genetic experiments, we have previously shown that RecBCD^{Ps} enzyme does not
242 recognize *E. coli* Chi sequence (5'-GCTGGTGG-3') [14,16]. We performed biochemical
243 experiments using pBR322$^{\chi+3F3H}$ (a pBR322 derivative, containing three tandem *E. coli* χ
244 sequences) [27] and pBR322 (lacking *E. coli* χ sequence) as a DNA substrate. Interestingly,
245 ssDNA fragments produced by RecBCD^{Ps} enzyme were identical in size with both the substrates,
246 confirming that RecBCD^{Ps} does not recognize *E. coli* Chi sequence but recognizes an unknown
247 DNA sequence of pBR322 plasmid (Fig S4B). To locate putative Chi sequence of RecBCD^{Ps}
248 enzyme, we amplified 3.6 kb segment of pBR322 using primer OROPI and OROPII
249 (Supplementary Table ST2), which excludes rop region of the plasmid (Fig. S5A). Amplified
250 fragments were 5'-labeled, and the assays were performed in the presence of excess magnesium.
251 Apparently, all the three shorter ssDNA fragments were also observed with the 3.6 kb DNA
252 substrate, indicating the presence of putative Chi sequence within 3.6 kb of the plasmid
253 (Supplementary Fig. S5C).

254 **Chi dependent protection of pBR322 DNA fragments are strand specific**

255 *E. coli* RecBCD enzyme recognizes Chi sequence in a specific orientation, 5'-
256 GCTGGTGG-3', when enzyme enters through 3′-end [28] and the 3'-ended ssDNA is being
257 protected from RecBCD nuclease activity after Chi recognition [8,29,30]. Here, we examined
258 which strand of the linearized pBR322 is being protected to produce these discrete DNA bands
259 (Fig. 3B). Hence, we performed DNA degradation assay with RecBCD^{Ps}, in which only one DNA
260 strand was labeled at a time. We individually labeled the OROPI and OROPII primers with γ^{32}P
261 at 5′-end and amplified the 3.6 kbp region of pBR322 plasmid with one unlabeled and another
262 ^{32}P-labeled primer or with both labeled primers. In our assay, we always used sub-saturating
263 concentration of RecBCD^{Ps} enzyme compared to DNA substrate, so that RecBCD^{Ps} enzyme
264 enters through either one or the other end, but not through both the ends. DNA degradation
265 assays using these DNA substrates produced all the three bands when top strand (OROPII end)

266 was alone labeled, or when the both strands were end-labeled (Fig. 6A). We did not observe any
267 ssDNA band when the bottom strand (OROPI end) was labeled (Fig. 6A), suggesting that
268 RecBCD^{Ps} recognizes a Chi-like sequence in a specific orientation and has a polarity for Chi
269 sequence recognition. These results also suggest that all the Chi-like sequences are on the top
270 strand.

271 We then performed DNA degradation assays using two other DNA substrates amplified
272 from the pBR322 plasmid. A PCR amplified 2.8 kbp DNA fragment (using OROPII and pBRS1R
273 primers) and a 2.5 kbp PCR amplified fragment (using OROPII and pBRB1R primers set (Fig.
274 S6A). The DNA band of the lowest size (~2.4 kb) and the highest intensity (the prominent DNA
275 band) was the common ssDNA fragment produced by RecBCD^{Ps} in all the three DNA substrates
276 (Supplementary Fig.S6B). This suggests that one of the Chi-like sequences has the strongest
277 RecBCD-inhibitory activity and this site (we designate it as Chi^{Ps}) is located proximal to the 2.5
278 kbp substrate end (as the protected ssDNA was about ~ 2.4 kb). Two upper DNA bands with less
279 intensity could be due to variants of Chi^{Ps}, which might have a weak inhibitory effect on RecBCD^{Ps}
280 nuclease activity (see below).

281 **Identification of Chi^{Ps} as an 8-mer (5'-GCTGGCGC-3') sequence that modulates *P. syringae***
282 **RecBCD nuclease activity and protects DNA from further degradation**

283 To identify the precise location of Chi^{Ps} site in pBR322 DNA substrate, we generated
284 several internally deleted constructs of pBR322 plasmid by site-directed segment-deletion as
285 described in Materials and methods. The 3.6 kbp DNA region of pBR322 plasmid with deleted
286 region/s were PCR amplified using OROPI and OROPII primers. DNA degradation assays were
287 then performed with RecBCD^{Ps} enzyme using the DNA fragments with internal deletion as
288 substrates (Supplementary Fig. S7).

289 The localization of Chi^{Ps} on the plasmid was first based on two hypotheses: the sequence
290 might be GC rich and should be located close to the right end of 2.5 kbp DNA fragment. From the
291 pBR322 nucleotide sequence analysis, it appeared that a GC-rich region spanning the region

292 between 273-450 nucleotides within *tet*^{R} gene of pBR322 might contain the Chi^{Ps}. Accordingly,
293 3.6 kbp DNA containing two deletions (Δ273-381 and Δ400-450) were initially tested by the Chi-
294 protection assays.

295 The 3.6 kbp DNA deleted for 273-381 region produced the Chi-specific high-intensity
296 fragment (Supplementary Fig. S7), while 400-450 nucleotides deletion failed to produce it (Fig.
297 6B). This indicated that the Chi^{Ps} sequence is located within 400-450 nucleotide region of the
298 pBR322 plasmid. The three additional deletions within the 400-450 region of the plasmid segment
299 were made; Δ401-419, Δ421-439, and Δ441-449 (Fig. 6C, D). DNA degradation assays with the
300 fragments in which these sequences were deleted revealed that Chi is located within the 421-439
301 nucleotides segment, as these deletions did not produce a protected prominent DNA fragment
302 (Fig. 6C). we further made two more deletion constructs (Δ421-429 and Δ431-439) within the 421-
303 439 nucleotides region, and tested for Chi-specific fragment production. Interestingly, deletion of
304 base-pair from 431-439 bp abolished the prominent DNA band (Fig. 6D) indicating that the deleted
305 region between 431-439 bp, 5′-GCTGGCGCC-3′ contains the putative Chi sequence of *P.*
306 *syringae*. The schematic representation of all the constructs with deleted nucleotide regions and,
307 the presence or absence of protected prominent DNA band (putative Chi sequence) are also
308 shown in Fig. 6E.

309 The identification of putative Chi^{Ps} sequence further prompted us to investigate the reason
310 for producing an apparent three distinct DNA fragments by RecBCD^{Ps} enzyme (Fig. 3B). We
311 speculated that pBR322 DNA substrate might have sequences that are similar but not identical
312 to Chi^{Ps} sequence, and might act like Chi^{Ps} sequence with weaker recognition property under the
313 *in vitro* assay conditions. The 9-mer (5′-GCTGGCGCC-3′) sequence appears only at one place
314 on the pBR322 substrate. Considering the *E. coli* Chi sequence is an octamer, we first looked in
315 to 5′-GCTGGCGC -3′ (first 8 nucleotides of the 9-mer from the 5′-end), and 5′-CTGGCGCC-3′
316 (eliminating first G of the 5′-end) as possible Chi-like sequences. These two octamer sequences

317 appear at a single location on the pBR322 substrate. However, among the 7-mer combinations
318 we looked into, the first 7 nucleotide sequence, 5′-GCTGGGC -3′, was located in three reasonable
319 positions on pBR322 substrate which could potentially produce discrete DNA bands as observed
320 in DNA degradation assays. Hence, we further focused on 5′-GCTGGCGC -3′ sequence as a
321 putative Chi^{Ps} sequence. We found that the putative Chi^{Ps} sequence (5′-GCTGGCGC -3′) is
322 located at 431-438 bp position of pBR322 and, the similar 7-mer sequences at three different
323 locations. The first one at 964-971 position (5′-GCTGGCG**T**-3′); the second one at 1493-1500
324 position (5′-GCTGGCG**G**-3′) and the third one at 2525-2532 position (5′-GCTGGCG**T**-3′) (Fig S8).
325 All the three-bands show 7 bases identical to the 8 bp Chi^{Ps} sequence (5′-GCTGGCGC**-**3′), and
326 occur in the same orientation (5′→3′) as the Chi^{Ps}. The $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme might recognize 8 mer
327 sequences (5′-GCTGGCGC-3′) as well as the 7+1 mer sequences (5′-GCTGGCG+**T/G**-3′)
328 resulting in multiple DNA bands. Although it is expected to observe four discrete DNA bands, we
329 observed only three DNA bands. The fourth-expected DNA band with a size of ~230 bp (when
330 $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme enters from 3'-side of the NdeI linearized pBR322 substrate as depicted in
331 Fig. S8) was not apparent in in-vitro experiments performed on agarose gels. Possibly, it is the
332 last Chi-like sequence to recognize by RecBCD enzyme and also being the shortest one with ~
333 230 bp (Fig. S8).

334 To better define the Chi^{Ps} sequence, we mutated the **T** to **C** at the 971st position of pBR322,
335 which creates a sequence identical to the putative 8-mer Chi^{Ps} sequence and performed the Chi-
336 protection assay with $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme. Interestingly, the intensity of the Chi-protected second
337 DNA fragment (after T to C mutation) appeared stronger, and the intensity was similar to the
338 prominent DNA band (Fig. 7A), which establish the strong recognition of octamer sequence (5′-
339 GCTGGCGC-3′) as Chi^{Ps}.

340 **Cloning of Chi^{Ps} in pBKS plasmid and confirmation of ectopic Chi^{Ps} activity**

341 To further confirm that the octamer sequence (5′-GCTGGCGC-3′) is indeed the Chi
342 sequence in *P. syringae* and can function as an ectopic Chi^{Ps} sequence, we cloned the
343 octanucleotide sequence into pBKS which is devoid of Chi^{Ps} sequence (Table ST1). $RecBCD^{Ps}$
344 reactions under excess magnesium were performed with XbaI digested linear pBKS (Chi^{0})
345 plasmid and the Chi^{Ps} containing pBKS (pBKS-Chi^{Ps}) plasmid. As expected, no Chi-protected DNA
346 bands were observed using the linear pBKS (Chi^{0}) DNA as substrate. In contrast, the expected
347 Chi specific DNA fragment was observed in the case of XbaI digested pBKS-Chi plasmid (Fig.
348 7B). These experiments confirm that $RecBCD^{Ps}$ recognizes an 8-mer sequence (5′-GCTGGCGC-
349 3′) as Chi^{Ps} sequence during resection of double-stranded DNA ends, and thus Chi^{Ps} attenuates
350 the nuclease activity of RecBCD enzyme and promotes DNA recombination and repair.
351
352

353 **DISCUSSION**

354 We have earlier shown that RecBCD protein complex is essential for cold adaptation in
355 Antarctic *P. syringae* Lz4W [14-16]. In this study, we have analyzed the biochemical properties of
356 the wild-type ($RecBCD^{Ps}$) and three mutant enzymes ($RecB^{K28Q}CD$, $RecBCD^{K229Q}$, and
357 $RecB^{D1118A}CD$) to analyze the role of RecBCD during growth at low temperature. We also report
358 for the first time, *Pseudomonas* octameric Chi-sequence (Chi^{Ps}), (5′-GCTGGCGC-3′), and its
359 ability to attenuate the nuclease activity of *P. syringae* RecBCD enzyme *in vitro*.

360 **Role of ATPase activity of RecB and RecD subunits**

361 The analyses of wild-type and mutant enzymes of *P. syringae* have revealed that mutation
362 in the critical ATP binding sites of RecB ($RecB^{K28Q}$) and RecD ($RecD^{K229Q}$) motor subunit reduces
363 the ATPase activity of trimeric RecBCD complex by ~10 fold. The mutation in the nuclease active-
364 site does not affect the ATPase activity. *P. syringae* cells carrying the alleles of $RecB^{K28Q}$ or
365 $RecD^{K229Q}$ are sensitive to cold temperature, UV irradiation and MMC [14]. The ~ 10-fold reduction
366 of ATPase activity observed *in-vitro* supports the idea that ATP hydrolysis by RecB and RecD
367 subunits in $RecBCD^{Ps}$ holoenzyme is essential for *P. syringae* survival at low temperature.

368 **DNA unwinding and degradation activities of RecBCD and mutant enzymes**

369 Our data suggest that the DNA unwinding and degradation properties of RecBCD enzyme
370 depend on ATP and Mg^{++} concentrations, and on the temperature *in vitro*. Under limiting
371 magnesium reaction condition, at 22°C, the $RecB^{K28Q}CD$, $RecBCD^{K229Q}$ and $RecB^{D1118A}CD$
372 enzymes have retained about 4%, 77% and 85% of the wild-type DNA unwinding activity
373 respectively, while at 4°C, we could not detect the DNA unwinding activity of both wild-type and
374 mutant $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzymes under the limiting magnesium reaction condition. In contrast, when
375 magnesium was in excess over ATP, the DNA unwinding and degradation activity of the RecBCD
376 enzymes could be measured 22°C and 4°C). These results suggest that the excess of magnesium
377 over ATP is favorable for the helicase and nuclease activities of $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme.

378 The RecB^{K28Q}CD enzyme is a poor helicase and with no detectable nuclease activity *in*
379 *vitro* even at 22°C. However, at 4°C, RecB^{K28Q}CD enzyme failed to unwind and degrade the DNA
380 under both limiting and excess magnesium reaction conditions. Hence, low-temperature growth
381 sensitivity of the *P. syringae recB^{K28Q}CD* mutant can be attributed to the lack of RecBCD
382 unwinding and/degradation activities at 4°C.

383 The RecBCD^{K229Q} enzyme with defective RecD ATPase unwinds and degrades the
384 dsDNA, albeit at the reduced rate. The DNA unwinding/degradation rate of RecBCD^{K229Q} mutant
385 enzyme is reduced to one-third of the wild-type enzyme at 4°C. Therefore, we propose that its
386 inability to support the DNA repair process and growth at low temperature is possibly due to its
387 decreased DNA unwinding/degradation activity, particularly at low temperature. Interestingly, the
388 RecBCD^{K229Q} enzyme shows lack of discrete DNA fragments (putative Chi-specific fragments)
389 production. However, the *E. coli* RecD ATPase defective RecBCD enzyme produces the Chi-
390 specific fragments *in vitro* and confers DNA repair proficiency *in vivo* [31]. This converse
391 observation suggests that the RecD subunit of RecBCD^{Ps} enzyme has a distinct role in DNA repair
392 and recombination function in *P. syringae*. Despite both RecBCD^{K229Q} and RecB^{K28Q}CD mutant
393 enzymes being similarly defective in ATP hydrolyzing activity, their DNA unwinding activity was
394 largely varied. This possibly be due to the selective motor dependency of the enzyme complex,
395 similar to observation made in *E. coli* RecBCD enzyme [31], in which, the RecB motor is the
396 absolute requirement for Chi recognition and the motor activity of RecBCD complex.

397 The RecB^{D1118A}CD enzyme is a processive helicase with no detectable nuclease activity
398 *in vitro*, at both 22°C and 4°C. Interestingly, *P. syringae* cells carrying *recB^{D1118A}* allele are capable
399 of growing at low temperature, suggesting nuclease activity is not essential for its growth at low
400 temperature [14].

401 **RecF pathway role in RecBCD nuclease defective strain and its importance in *P.***
402 ***syringae* growth at low temperature**

403 In *E. coli*, the RecF pathway along with RecJ (5'→3' ssDNA specific nuclease) is known
404 to work with nuclease-defective, RecA loading-deficient RecBCD [32]. The role of RecBCD
405 nuclease defective - RecF hybrid pathway in *P. syringae* is also evidenced. Deletion of *recF* gene
406 alone (in WT cells) is cold resistant [15]. However, deletion of the *recF* gene in $recB^{D1118A}$ mutant
407 renders cold sensitivity (unpublished observation, Apuratha T Pandiyan and Malay K Ray). The
408 over-expression of RecJ in $pRecB^{\Delta nuc}CD$ (RecB nuclease domain deleted) expressing *P. syringae*
409 *recBCD* null strain alleviated the slow growth phenotype of *P. syringae* cells at low temperature
410 [14], suggesting RecJ role in nuclease-defective RecBCD cells. These observations indicate
411 RecFOR-RecJ role in RecB nuclease-defective *P. syringae* strain.

412 *recA* deleted *P. syringae* cells grow slowly at low temperature [15]. This suggests that
413 RecBCD enzyme alone, in the absence of RecA, can rescue low temperature-induced replication
414 fork arrest possibly by suppressing chromosomal lesions via DNA degradation of reversed
415 replication fork [33]. Interestingly, the combination of a *recA* deletion and a nuclease defective
416 RecBCD mutation ($recB^{D1118A}CD$) causes cold sensitivity [15], suggesting a direct role of RecA in
417 rescuing low temperature induced replication fork arrest in a RecB nuclease defective strain.
418 Therefore, we propose that, in RecB nuclease defective strain, the RecF pathway enables RecA
419 mediated DNA repair and thus, protects cells from low temperature induced DNA damage.

420 **Identification and characterization of Novel octameric Chi^{Ps} sequence**

421 One of the novel findings in this study is the identification of *P. syringae* Lz4W Chi-
422 sequence (Chi^{Ps}), 5′-GCTGGCGC-3′. This sequence has not been identified so far in any
423 *Pseudomonas* species. Most of the identified bacterial Chi (χ) sequences are GC rich sequences
424 (Table 3) and the number of nucleotides in χ sites vary from 5-mer (in *Bacillus subtilis*) to 8-mer
425 (in *E. coli*, *L. lactis* and *H. influenza*) [34]. A study using cell lysate from Pseudomonads indicated
426 that *Pseudomonas* species do not recognize *E. coli* χ sequence [24]. We have confirmed this
427 observation earlier by genetic experiments [14], and in the present study, we have biochemically

428 identified the Chi^{Ps} (5′-GCTGGCGC-3′) sequence; which is identical up to 5 bases from the 5′-
429 end to the *E. coli* Chi (Chi^{Ec}) (5′-GCTGGTGG-3′) sequence. 7-mer (5′-GCTGGCG-3′) sequence,
430 with change in the last 8th nucleotide, are partially recognized. The mutation of 7-mer sequence
431 to make a perfect 8-mer Chi^{Ps} sequence enables it to be strongly recognized by $RecBCD^{Ps}$.
432 Interestingly, appearance of three ssDNA fragments indicates that $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme can
433 sometimes bypass Chi^{Ps} and recognize the next putative Chi-like sequence. Similar observations
434 were made in *E. coli,* where the probability of Chi recognition by *E. coli* RecBCD enzyme and
435 nicking the DNA is about 30-40% [28,35].

436 Interestingly, the difference between *E. coli* and *P. syringae* RecBCD enzymes are
437 confined to the last three nucleotides (5′- GCTGG<u>TGG</u> -3′ vs 5′- GCTGG<u>CGC</u> -3′). The recent
438 study on the molecular determinants responsible for the Chi recognition by RecBCD enzyme has
439 revealed the importance of RecC channel in Chi recognition. Among the 35 amino acid residues
440 of RecC channel examined, the Q38, T40, Q44, L64 W70 D133, L134, D136, D137, R142, R186
441 and D705 residues of *E. coli* RecC subunit have shown to affect the Chi recognition property of
442 $RecBCD^{Ec}$ enzyme [36]. Surprisingly, all these residues are well conserved in the *P. syringae*
443 RecC subunit. Therefore, the RecC amino acids responsible for recognition of the last three
444 nucleotides of are still elusive. Further analysis of *E. coli* and *P. syringae* RecC subunits could
445 shed more insight on the molecular determinants responsible for the recognition of last three
446 nucleotides of Chi sequence in *E. coli*.

447 *E. coli* contains 1,008 Chi sequences [37]. They are four- to eightfold more frequent than
448 expected by chance and appear on average once every 4.5 kbp. 75% of Chi sites are skewed
449 towards the replicative leading strand in *E. coli* [37] keeping with their function in stimulating
450 double-strand break repair upon replication fork collapse. These observations suggest a role for
451 the RecBCD enzyme as a repair factor functioning towards re-establishment of DNA replication
452 fork in case of collapse. However, this skewed nature is not applicable for *B. subtilis*, *S. aureus*
453 and *H. influenzae*, where the skew is statistically insignificant, and the Chi sequence (of the

454 respective species) is distributed all over the genome [34]. The search for Chi^{Ps} sequence (5′-
455 GCTGGCGC-3′) in the draft genome sequence of *P. syringae* Lz4W (4.98 Mb in 42 contigs,
456 **Accession no**. **AOGS01000000**) revealed that it contains 1541 Chi^{Ps} sequences (5′-
457 GCTGGCGC-3′) and 4564 of 7-mer Chi^{Ps} sequences (5′-GCTGGCG-3′). The Chi^{Ps} sequence
458 appears once in every ~3 kb and is overrepresented compared to other random octamer
459 sequences. No skewed Chi^{Ps} sequence distribution was observed in *P. syringae* Lz4W genome
460 (A. Pandiyan and M. K. Ray, unpublished observation). Analysis of the closely related *P.*
461 *fluorescens* Pf0-1 genome (**Accession no. NC_007492.2**) [38] revealed that it contains 2241
462 Chi^{Ps} sequences and the Chi^{Ps} sequence appears once in every 3 kb and, is almost equally
463 distributed on both strands (1119 Chi-Ps vs. 1122 complementary Chi-Ps sequences). Thus the
464 pattern of Chi-distribution is not universal, and although Chi^{Ps} is over-represented in
465 *Pseudomonas* genome, the orientation bias is not observed.

466 **Biochemical properties of RecBCD enzyme and its role in *P. syringae* growth at low**
467 **temperature**

468 This study has revealed the biochemical properties of *Pseudomonas* RecBCD enzyme.
469 The biochemical properties of $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme, compared to the $RecBCD^{Ec}$, are particularly
470 associated with the RecD subunit. In *E. coli,* RecD is dispensable for DNA repair process. The
471 *recD* null *E. coli* strain is hyper-recombinogenic [39] and $RecBC^{Ec}$ enzyme (without RecD)
472 unwinds dsDNA and loads RecA constitutively in a Chi-independent manner [30]. Also, the *E. coli*
473 RecBCD enzyme with a mutation in the ATP binding site of RecD subunit produces Chi-specific
474 fragments and cells expressing the mutant enzyme are UV resistant [31]. In contrast, *P. syringae*,
475 RecD is essential for the RecBCD's function [14] and ATP hydrolyzing activity of RecD motor is
476 an absolute requirement for Chi^{Ps} fragments production. Also, cells expressing RecD ATPase
477 mutant enzyme are cold sensitive, UV and MMC sensitive (13). Importantly, Chi-like octameric
478 sequence (5′-GCTGGCGC-3′) attenuates nuclease activity of $RecBCD^{Ps}$ enzyme producing Chi^{Ps}

479 containing ssDNA fragments and thus, can act as a Chi sequence for RecBCD enzyme of
480 *Pseudomonas* species.

481 Based on our results we propose a model (Figure 8) which explains the role of RecBCD
482 and collaborative DNA repair pathways in rescuing the replication fork arrests in *P. syringae* Lz4W
483 at low temperature. In this model, RecBCD enzyme can rescue replication fork from the arrest by
484 linear chromosomal DNA degradation in a *recA*-independent manner. When nuclease activity is
485 compromised, the nuclease-defective RecBCD enzyme acts with the *recF* pathway to ensure
486 DNA repair by homologous recombination. In this model, we also propose that motor activity of
487 RecBCD enzyme is essential for rescuing *P. syringae* cells from low temperature induced
488 replication fork arrest.

489

490

491 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**
492
493 **Bacterial strains, plasmids and growth conditions**

494 The bacterial strains and plasmids used in this study are listed in Tables ST1. The
495 psychrophilic *P. syringae* Lz4W was isolated from a soil sample of Schirmacher Oasis, Antarctica
496 [40] and routinely grown at 22 or 4°C (for high and low temperatures respectively) in Antarctic
497 bacterial medium (ABM) composed of 5 g peptone and 2.0 g yeast extract per liter, as described
498 earlier [16]. *E. coli* strains were cultured at 37°C in Luria–Bertani (LB) medium, which contained
499 10 g tryptone, 5 g yeast extract and 10 g NaCl per liter. For solid media, 15 g bacto-agar (Hi-
500 Media) per liter was added to ABM or LB. When necessary, LB medium was supplemented with
501 ampicillin (100 μg ml^{-1}), kanamycin (50 μg ml^{-1}), gentamicin (15 μg ml^{-1}) or tetracycline (20 μg
502 ml^{-1}) for *E. coli*. For *P. syringae*, the ABM was supplemented with tetracycline (20 μg ml^{-1}),
503 kanamycin (50 μg ml^{-1}) as needed.

504 pBR322 plasmid DNA (4.3 Kb) and χ+-3F3H dsDNA (a pBR322 derivative, containing two
505 sets of three tandem repeats of χ sequences [27]) were purified using a Qiagen midi kit. Plasmids
506 were linearized with NdeI restriction endonuclease, dephosphorylated with SAP. The
507 dephosphorylated linear dsDNA was 5′- labeled with T4-PNK and [γ-^{32}P] ATP as per the
508 manufacturer guidelines. DNA concentrations were determined by absorbance at 260 nm using
509 molar extinction co-efficient of 6500 M^{-1} cm^{-1} (in nucleotides). All restriction enzymes, DNA ligase
510 T4 Polynucleotide Kinase (T4 PNK), Shrimp alkaline phosphatase (SAP) and *E. coli* SSB were
511 purchased from New England Biolabs (MA, USA). Accuprime Pfx DNA polymerase was
512 purchased from Novagen (WI, USA).

513 **Antibodies and Western analysis**

514 Production of anti-RecB, anti-RecC and anti-RecD antibodies has been described [14].
515 For Western analysis, proteins were separated by SDS-PAGE, transferred onto Hybond C
516 membrane (Amersham Biosciences), and probed with appropriate antibodies. The

517 immunoreactive protein bands were detected by alkaline phosphatase-conjugated anti-rabbit goat
518 antibodies (Bangalore Genie, India). For quantification, the blots were scanned with a HP scanjet
519 and band intensities were measured using Image J software (rsbweb.nih.gov/ij/).

520 **Over expression and purification of recombinant proteins**

521 The LCBD (Δ*recBCD*) strain harboring pGHCBD, pGHCB^{K28Q}D pGHCBD^{K229Q}
522 pGHCB^{D1118A}D plasmids [14] were initially grown in 10 ml ABM broth containing kanamycin (50
523 μg/ml) for 24 hrs at 22°C. 1% of above culture was inoculated into a 2-liter conical flask containing
524 500 ml ABM broth with kanamycin (50 μg/ml). The culture was then incubated at 22°C with
525 aeration for 24 hrs. Later, the bacterial cells were harvested by centrifugation at 4°C, 6000 rpm
526 for 10 min. The bacterial cell pellets were stored at -80°C. The cells pellet was removed as and
527 when required for the purification of proteins.

528 All the recombinant proteins in this study were expressed with His-tag on N-terminus of
529 RecC and purified by nickel-nitrilotriacetic acid (Ni-NTA) affinity chromatography as described in
530 the manufacturer's protocol (Qiagen, New Delhi, India). In brief, cell lysate of overexpressed
531 strains containing His-tagged proteins were prepared by dissolving the cell pellet in 10 ml lysis
532 buffer (50 mM NaH_2PO_4 (pH 7.4), 300 mM NaCl, 10 mM imidazole and 10% glycerol) and lysed
533 by mild sonication. The sonicated cell lysate was then centrifuged with 14,000 rpm at 4°C, for 30
534 min to remove insoluble cellular debris. The supernatant was passed through a pre-equilibrated
535 column containing 1 ml slurry of Ni-NTA agarose beads and column was allowed to bind Ni-NTA
536 agarose beads with His-tagged proteins. Further, column was washed with 4-5 volumes of wash
537 buffer (50 mM NaH_2PO_4 (pH 7.4), 300 mM NaCl, 20 mM imidazole, and 10% glycerol). Finally,
538 the bound proteins were eluted with 1-2 ml elution buffer (50 mM NaH_2PO_4 (pH 7.4), / 300 mM
539 NaCl / 300 mM imidazole / 10% glycerol).

540 Gel filtration technique (size-exclusion column chromatography) was employed for the
541 purification of His-tagged RecBCD complex and the mutant protein complexes. For this,

542 Superose-12 gel filtration column (Pharmacia Fine Chemicals) was used in the fast protein liquid
543 chromatography (FPLC) (Pharmacia Fine Chemicals). Initially, the column was pre-equilibrated
544 with buffer contained 20 mM Tris HCl (pH 7.5), 0.1 mM EDTA, 150 mM NaCl, 0.1 mM PMSF and
545 10% glycerol. Later, 0.5 ml of Ni-NTA purified protein solution was injected to the column and
546 allowed to pass through the column at a flow rate of 0.4 ml/min. Optical density at 280 nm was
547 recorded for the eluted protein fractions and the fractions were collected in separate
548 microcentifuge tubes. The protein fractions were then analyzed on SDS-PAGE stained with
549 coomassie brilliant blue or silver nitrate. The gel filtration protein fractions of interest were further
550 membrane dialyzed in 50% glycerol containing gel filtration buffer. RecBCD enzyme
551 concentrations were determined by measuring OD_{280} and using molar extinction co-efficient 4.7 X
552 10^5 M^{-1} cm^{-1} as determined by ExPASy – ProtParam tool (https://web.expasy.org/protparam).

553 **Thin-layer chromatography based assay**

554 ATPase activity of RecBCD and mutant proteins was assayed at different temperatures
555 by thin layer chromatography (TLC) on polyethylene-imine (PEI)-cellulose plates (E-Merck,
556 Germany). The assay was performed as described earlier [41,42]. Assays were carried out at
557 indicated temperatures in a reaction volume of 20 μl containing 25 mM Tris acetate (pH 7.5), 1
558 mM Mg acetate, 1 mM DTT, 100mM NdeI linearized pBR322-dsDNA and 200 μM ATP as a
559 substrate with 2 nM RecBCD and mutant enzymes. One μl of 100 times diluted 10 mCi ml^{-1} stock
560 of [γ-^{32}P] ATP (specific activity 3000 Ci $mmol^{-1}$) was used as a tracer in each reaction to measure
561 the rate of ATP hydrolysis. Following 0, 1, 2, 3, 5 10 minutes of reaction, 0.5 μl aliquots of the
562 samples were spotted on TLC plate, air-dried and were allowed to develop in a mobile phase
563 containing 0.5 M formic acid and 0.5 M lithium chloride for 15 minutes. The TLC plate was dried
564 and exposed to the Phosphor imaging plate for 4-6 hrs. The Imaging plates were scanned in a
565 Phosphor Imager, and the amounts of ^{32}Pi and [γ-^{32}P] ATP were quantified using Image gauge
566 software (Fuji-3000). Further, data were analyzed using GraphPad Prism 4.0 software.

567 **DNA unwinding assay**

568 Plasmid DNAs were linearized with appropriate restriction enzymes in the presence of
569 shrimp alkaline phosphatase and 5`-end-labeled by T4 polynucleotide kinase and [γ-^{32}P] ATP.
570 Subsequent purification of labeled DNA was accomplished by passage through a MicroSpin S-
571 200 HR column (Amersham biosciences-GE healthcare, Buckinghamshire, UK). The reaction
572 mixtures contained 25 mM Tris acetate (pH 7.5), 2 mM magnesium acetate (as indicated), 1 mM
573 DTT, 10 μM (nucleotides) linear pBR322 dsDNA P^{32}-labeled at 5′- end, 5 mM ATP, 2 μM *E. coli*
574 SSB protein and 0.5 nM $RecBCD^{Ps}$ or mutant enzymes. DNA unwinding reactions were started
575 with the addition of either enzyme or ATP, after pre-incubation of all other components at 22 or
576 4°C for 5 min. Assays were stopped at the indicated times by addition of proteinase K to a final
577 concentration of 0.5 mg/ml, which was dissolved in sample loading buffer (125 mM EDTA, 40%
578 glycerol, 2.5% SDS, 0.25% bromophenol blue, and 0.25% xylene cyanol). After 5-min incubation
579 with proteinase K at room temperature, the reaction products were run on a 1% (w/v) agarose gel
580 in a 1X TBE (45 mM Tris borate (pH 8.3) and 1 mM EDTA) buffer at 25-30 constant volts for 15
581 hrs. Agarose gels were dried, exposed to phosphor imaging plates and quantified using Phosphor
582 Imager (Fuji-3000). Further, data were analyzed using image gauge software.

583 The DNA unwinding rates of were measured by using the following formula

584 $$\text{nM bp s}^{-1}(\text{nM helicase})^{-1} = \text{slope X (C/ [100\%]) X } t_s \text{ X (1/E)}$$

585 Where C is the concentration of linear dsDNA substrate in base-pairs in nM (i.e., 5000 nM), t_s is
586 the time in seconds, and E is the enzyme concentration in nM.

587 **DNA degradation assay**

588 The assays were performed as described above in DNA unwinding assay, except that the
589 reaction mixtures contained 6 mM magnesium acetate and 2 mM ATP.

590 **Single-stranded DNA endonuclease assay**

591 The endonuclease activity of RecBCD enzyme on ssDNA was examined using a circular
592 M13 ssDNA substrate as described previously [20,22]. In brief, endonuclease activity was tested
593 in 3 different buffer conditions. The first reaction mixture contained 50 mM MOPS (pH=7.5), 1 mM
594 ATP, 10 mM $MgCl_2$, 4.16 nM circular M13 ssDNA with 0.5 nM RecBCD. The second reaction
595 mixture contained 25 mM Tris-acetate, 1 mM ATP, 8 mM Mg-acetate,1 mM DTT, 4.16 nM M13
596 ssDNA with 0.5 nM RecBCD. The third reaction mixture contained 25 mM Tris-acetate, 2 mM
597 ATP, 6 mM Mg-acetate, 1 mM DTT, 4.16 nM M13 ssDNA with 0.5 nM RecBCD. After the reaction,
598 samples were removed at the indicated times; quenched with 120 mM EDTA, 40% (v/v) glycerol,
599 and 0.125% bromphenol blue; and loaded on a 0.8% agarose gel in 1X TBE (90 mM Tris borate,
600 2 mM EDTA). The gel was run at 4 V/cm for 3 h and stained with ethidium bromide (0.5 mg/ml).
601 The bands were visualized by exposure to UV light.

602 **Site directed deletion of regions from plasmid pBR322**

603 Different internal regions of plasmid pBR322 were deleted using site directed deletion. In short,
604 primers were designed consists of sequences flanking the region to be deleted. PCR was
605 performed to amplify whole Plasmid DNA using Accuprime Pfx DNA polymerase (Invitrogen).
606 After PCR, reaction mixture was subjected for the overnight DpnI digestion. 5 µl of reaction
607 mixture was then transformed into DH5α ultra-competent cells. All selected regions, which had to
608 be deleted was in tetracycline resistance gene of the plasmid. Therefore, for primary screening
609 only those colonies were selected which were Amp^R and Tet^S. Deletion was further confirmed by
610 PCR and sequencing. All primer list and corresponding deleted regions are shown in Table ST2.

611

612 **ACCESSION NUMBERS**

613 **Accession no. AOGS01000000**, the draft genome sequence of *P. syringae* Lz4W and,
614 **Accession no. NC_007492.2**, the genome sequence *Pseudomonas fluorescens* Pf0-1.

615

616 **SUPPLIMENTARY MATERIALS**

Supplementary material related to this manuscript is attached.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest with the contents of this article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Theetha L. Pavankumar & Anurag Kumar Sinha both have contributed equally to this work.

T.L.P., A.K.S. and M.K.R designed the experiments. T.L.P. and A.K.S. conducted the experiment. T.L.P., A.K.S. and M.K.R analyzed the results and wrote the manuscript.

633 **FIGURE LEGENDS**

634 **FIGURE 1. Purification of His-tagged RecBCD complex and mutant enzymes by Ni-NTA**
635 **agarose column chromatography. (A)** Steps involved in purification of wild-type RecBCD and
636 mutant proteins. **(B)** SDS-PAGE analysis of purified RecBCD protein fractions of wild-type and
637 mutants. Purified protein fractions were stained either with coomassie brilliant blue (B) or with
638 silver nitrate (C). Three protein bands of expected size corresponding to RecB, RecC and RecD
639 are visible on the gel. A low molecular protein (~60 kDa) observed on silver nitrate strained gel
640 was identified as GroEL, a HSP-60 family chaperonin.

641

642 **FIGURE 2. ATP hydrolysis of wild-type and mutant RecBCD enzymes at different**
643 **temperatures.** The assays were carried out by TLC method as described in Methods. **(A)** A graph
644 showing the concentration dependent ATP hydrolysis by RecBCD (WT) and mutant enzymes at
645 22°C. The inset in B shows a blow-up of the same data of mutant enzymes using an expanded y-
646 scale. **(B)** Representative of TLC plates showing the ATP hydrolysis by wild-type and mutant
647 RecBCD enzymes at 37°, 22° and 4°C. **(C)** ATPase activities at 37°, 22° and 4°C are shown in
648 histogram with error bars. The ATP hydrolysis data presented in the histogram represents the
649 results obtained from three independent experiments.

650

651 **FIGURE 3. Effects of magnesium and ATP on the unwinding and degradation by wild-type**
652 **RecBCD enzyme of *P. syringae*.** The DNA unwinding and degradation assays were performed
653 with [5'-^{32}P] labeled *Nde*I linearized pBR322 plasmid DNA in the presence of different
654 concentrations of magnesium and ATP, as described in Methods; **(A)** the reaction mixture
655 contained fixed amount of Mg-acetate (2 mM) and the amount ATP was varied (0 to 10 mM) as
656 indicated. **(B)** The reaction mixture contained the fixed amount of ATP (2 mM) and concentration
657 of Mg-acetate was varied (0 to 10 mM) as indicated. The reactions were performed for 5 min and

658 analyzed on a 1% agarose gel containing 1X TBE buffer at a 25-30 Volts for 15 hrs. Agarose gels
659 were dried, exposed to phosphor imaging plates and quantified using Phosphor Imager (Fuji-
660 3000). The data were analyzed using image gauge software. The lanes C_1 and C_2 contain [5'-^{32}P]
661 labeled dsDNA and the heat denatured 5'-^{32}P labeled dsDNA respectively as a control. A [5'-^{32}P]
662 labeled discrete DNA bands of smaller than full-length ssDNA of pBR322 were also noticed in the
663 lanes 5-10 of panel B.
664
665 **FIGURE 4. DNA unwinding and degradation of *Nde*I digested linear dsDNA of pBR322 by**
666 **RecBCD^{Ps} (WT) enzyme at 22° and 4°C.** The DNA unwinding and degradation at 22° and 4°C
667 were carried out as described in Methods. **(A)** The DNA unwinding reactions contained 5 mM
668 ATP and 2 mM Mg^{++} (limiting magnesium condition) **(B)** The DNA degradation reactions contained
669 2 mM ATP and 6 mM Mg^{++} (excess magnesium condition). The reactions were initiated by adding
670 ATP, and stopped at the indicated times by adding stop-buffer. The lanes C_1 and C_2 contain [5'-
671 ^{32}P] labeled *Nde*I linearised double-stranded and the heat-denatured ssDNA of pBR322 as
672 control. The discrete ssDNA fragments of pBR322 produced by the nuclease activity of RecBCD
673 enzyme are also indicated.
674
675 **FIGURE 5. DNA unwinding and degradation of *Nde*I linearized dsDNA of pBR322 by mutant**
676 **RecBCD^{Ps} enzymes at 22° and 4°C. (A) DNA unwinding and degradation by RecB^{K28Q}CD**
677 **enzyme.** The DNA unwinding and degradation at 22° and 4°C were carried out as described in
678 Methods. Note that this enzyme shows DNA unwinding (ssDNA production), but no detectable
679 DNA degradation at 22°C, and none were detectable at 4°C. **(B) DNA unwinding and**
680 **degradation by RecBCD^{K229Q} enzyme.** The RecBCD^{K229Q} enzyme has apparently retained both
681 the DNA unwinding and degradation properties. But, interestingly, the discrete DNA bands are
682 absent **(C) DNA unwinding by nuclease-deficient RecB^{D1118A}CD enzyme under limiting and**

683 **excess magnesium conditions at 22 and 4°C.** $RecB^{D1118A}CD$ enzyme is unable to degrade
684 DNA at both 22 and 4°C and notably, the DNA unwinding seems to be faster in excess-
685 magnesium reaction condition (2 mM ATP:6 mM Mg^{++}) compared to limiting magnesium reaction
686 condition (5 mM ATP:2 mM Mg^{++}). Each reaction mixtures contained 0.5 nM of enzyme and 10
687 μM (nucleotides) linear [5'-^{32}P] labeled pBR322 dsDNA. The lanes C_1 and C_2 contain [5'-^{32}P]
688 labeled *Nde*I linearized double-stranded and the heat-denatured ssDNA of pBR322 respectively.
689
690 **FIGURE 6. Identification of Chi sequence using PCR amplified pBR322 fragment (3.6 kb)**
691 **containing internal deletions as a DNA substrate. (A)** Top panel**;** Schematic representation of
692 NdeI linearized pBR322 plasmid DNA. The locations of OROPI and OPROPII primers used in
693 PCR amplification of 3.6 kb fragments are indicated. Bottom panel; DNA degradation reactions
694 performed using the PCR amplified 3.6 kb DNA as substrate, having either bottom strand labeled
695 (left panel) or top strand labeled (middle panel) or both strand labeled (right panel). The lane C
696 contains [5'-^{32}P] labeled heat-denatured ssDNA as a control. Notably, the top strand labeling of
697 DNA substrate resulted in appearance of discrete DNA fragments. **(B)** Deletion of 400-450 bp of
698 pBR322 ($pBR322_{(\Delta 400\text{-}450)}$) resulted in disappearance of DNA fragments. But, it is clearly visible
699 when intact 3.6 kb pBR322 was used as a substrate, suggesting the presence of putative Chi^{Ps}
700 sequence in this region. (**C)** Further deletion of 401-419; 421-439 bo regions; and, (**D)** 421-429;
701 431-439; 441-449 bp regions of pBR322 shows that the DNA fragments are indeed from the 431-
702 439 bp region of the pBR322 DNA sequence. **(E)** A schematic representation of 3.6 kb region of
703 pBR322 and deleted regions within, are shown in the left panel. Right panel shows the presence
704 (**+**) or absence (**-**) of intense protected band (Chi-like fragments), when these constructs are used
705 as assay substrates.
706

707 **FIGURE 7. (A) DNA degradation of modified fragment of pBR322 by RecBCD^{Ps} enzyme.**
708 Apart from one 8-mer Chi^{Ps} sequence at 431th position of pBR322, there are two 7-mer similar
709 sequences present in the plasmid pBR322. One such similar sequence at 964th position (5′
710 GCTGGCG**T** 3′) was mutated to make it an 8-mer sequence (5′ GCTGGCG**C** 3′). This substrate
711 (pBR322^{T971C}) that has two Chi sequences in the same orientation when used as a substrate,
712 yielded two DNA fragments with high intensity. **(B) The DNA degradation pattern of *Xba*I**
713 **digested linear dsDNA of pBKS plasmid by RecBCD^{Ps} enzyme.** Chi^{Ps} are inserted into
714 pBluescript vector (pBKS) by site directed insertion. *Xba*I linearized pBKS vector or pBKS with
715 Chi^{Ps} was 5'-end labeled with ^{32}P has been used for assays. The discrete ssDNA of expected size
716 was produced when pBKS (Chi^{Ps}) was used as a substrate, whereas it is absent, when native
717 pBKS was used.
718
719 **FIGURE 8. Role of RecBCD dependent DNA repair pathway in rescue of low temperature**
720 **induced replication forks arrest.** (i) A chromosome replicating bi-directionally, (ii) encounters
721 low temperature-induced chromosomal lesion or blockage, (iii), causing replication fork arrest
722 and fork reversal (RFR). RFR is suppressed by linearized chromosomal DNA degradation by
723 RecBCD enzyme and resetting of replication fork. (iv) RFR is stabilized further by RuvAB
724 complex and, (v) further, resolved by RuvC leading to chromosomal linearization. Linearized
725 chromosome is processed by either RecBCD alone or in conjunction (when RecBCD is
726 nuclease defective) with recFOR-recJ hybrid pathway. The defective motors activity of RecBCD
727 enzyme leads to chromosomal fragmentation and cell death at the low temperature.
728

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855

856 **TABLE 1. ATPase activity of wild type and mutant RecBCD enzymes**

Enzyme	37˚C	22˚C	4˚C	[a]K_m	[a]k_{cat}
RecBCD (WT)	366.7 ± 30.9	236.5 ± 9.4	119.0 ± 19.6	57.8 ± 10.1	61.3
$RecB^{D1118A}CD$	346.0 ± 33.8	209.8 ± 13.9	112.4 ± 23.3	59.5 ± 8.5	55.3
$RecB^{K28Q}CD$	33.3 ± 0.9	16.2 ± 3.0	9.7 ± 1.5	58.3 ± 11.0	6.6
$RecBCD^{K229Q}$	30.5 ± 1.4	26.9 ± 2.2	9.7 ± 1.7	49.4 ± 5.8	6.1

857 ATPase activities are expressed here in units of μmol ATP hydrolyzed per second per μmol
858 RecBCD enzymes. [a] K_m and k_{cat} values are calculated from ATPase activity at 22 °C.
859
860 **TABLE 2. DNA unwinding and degradation activities of the wild type and mutant RecBCD**
861 **enzymes at 22 and 4˚C**

Enzyme	Rate of DNA unwinding at 22°C (bp s^{-1})	Rate of DNA unwinding at 4°C (bp s^{-1})	Rate of DNA unwinding [a] or degradation at 22°C (bp s^{-1})	Rate of DNA unwinding [a] or degradation at 4°C (bp s^{-1})
	ATP > Mg^{++} (5:2 mM)	ATP > Mg^{++} (5:2 mM)	ATP < Mg^{++} (2:6 mM)	ATP < Mg^{++} (2:6 mM)
$RecBCD^{Ps}$	35.1 ± 1.6	ND [b]	101.5 ± 3.3	55.8 ± 6.9
$RecB^{D1118A}CD$	30.4 ± 1.7	ND	109.7 ± 17.5	41.0 ± 8.1
$RecB^{K28Q}CD$	1.5 ± 0.76	ND	12.9 ± 3.4	ND
$RecBCD^{K229Q}$	27.2 ± 6.1	ND	92.6 ± 14.1	17.3 ± 9.6

862 The values shown for the DNA unwinding/degradation rates with mean ± S.E. from two
863 independent experiments. [a] Rate of DNA unwinding under excess magnesium reaction condition.
864 [b] ND - not determined
865

866 **TABLE 3. Chi sequences identified in different bacteria.**

Bacteria	Chi sequence	Recombination machinery
Escherichia coli	5′ GCTGGTGG 3′	RecBCD [43]
Bacillus subtilis	5′ AGCGG 3′	AddAB [44]
Lactococcus lactis	5′ GCGCGTG 3′	RexAB [34]
Streptococcus pneumoniae	5′ GCGCGTG 3′	RexAB [45]
Staphylococcus aureus	5′ GAAGCGG 3′	- [45]
Streptococcus agalactiae	5′ GCGCGTG 3′	- [45]
Streptococcus thermophilus	5′ GCGCGTG 3′	- [45]
***Pseudomonas syringae* Lz4W**	**5′ GCTGGCGC 3′**	RecBCD [14]

867
868

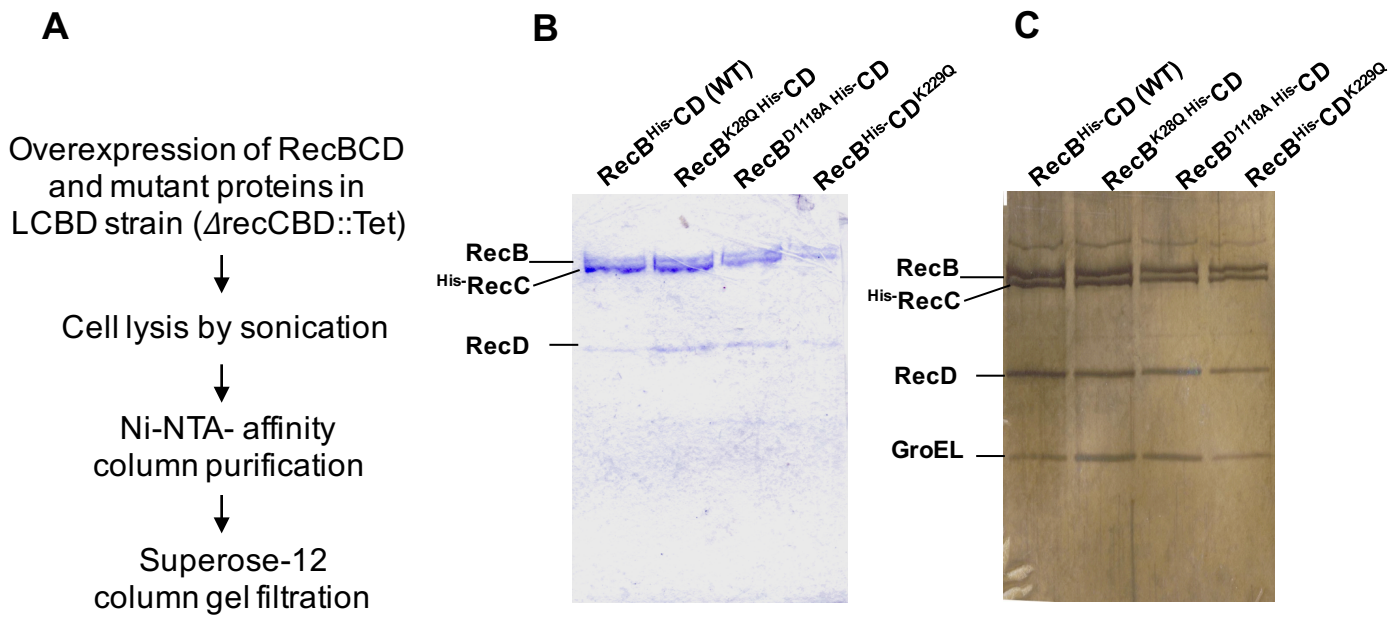

A
Overexpression of RecBCD and mutant proteins in LCBD strain (ΔrecCBD::Tet)
Cell lysis by sonication
Ni-NTA- affinity column purification
Superose-12 column gel filtration
B
RecB His-CD (WT)
RecB K28Q His-CD
RecB D1118A His-CD
RecB His-CD K229Q
RecB
His-RecC
RecD
C
RecB His-CD (WT)
RecB K28Q His-CD
RecB D1118A His-CD
RecB His-CD K229Q
RecB
His-RecC
RecD
GroEL

Figure 1

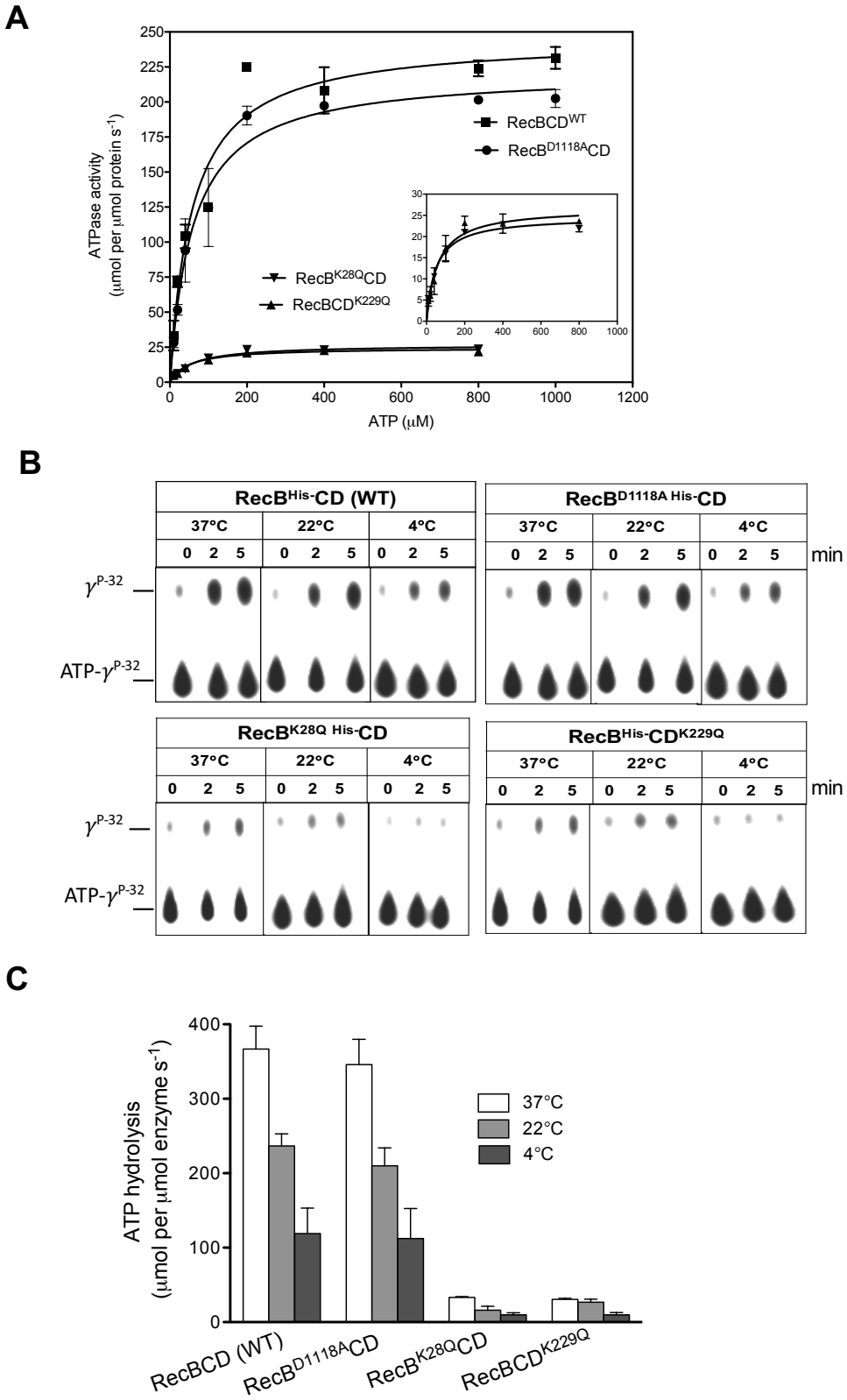
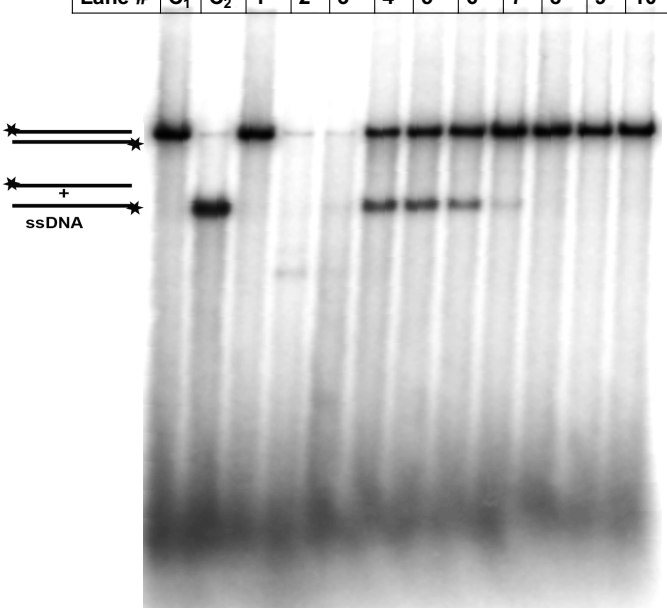

A
ATPase activity
(μmol per μmol protein s-1)
ATP (μM)
RecBCDWT
RecBD1118ACD
RecBK28QCD
RecBCDK229Q
B
RecBHis-CD (WT)
RecBD1118A His-CD
RecBK28Q His-CD
RecBHis-CDK229Q
37°C
22°C
4°C
0 2 5
min
γP-32
ATP-γP-32
C
ATP hydrolysis
(μmol per μmol enzyme s-1)
37°C
22°C
4°C
RecBCD (WT)
RecBD1118ACD
RecBK28QCD
RecBCDK229Q

Figure 2

A

ATP	-	-	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10 mM
Mg^{2+}	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2 mM
Lane #	C_1	C_2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



B

Mg^{2+}	-	-	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10 mM
ATP	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2 mM
Lane #	C_1	C_2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

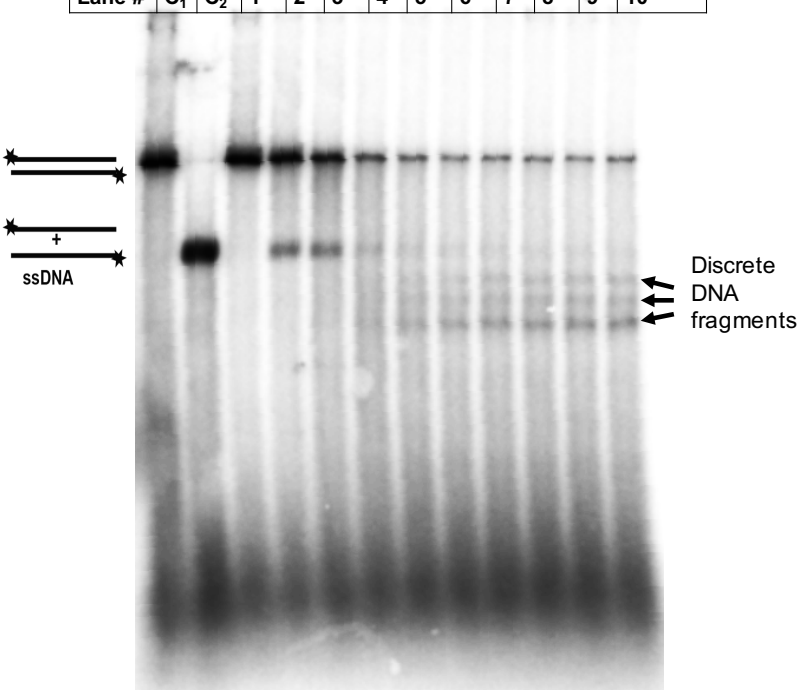
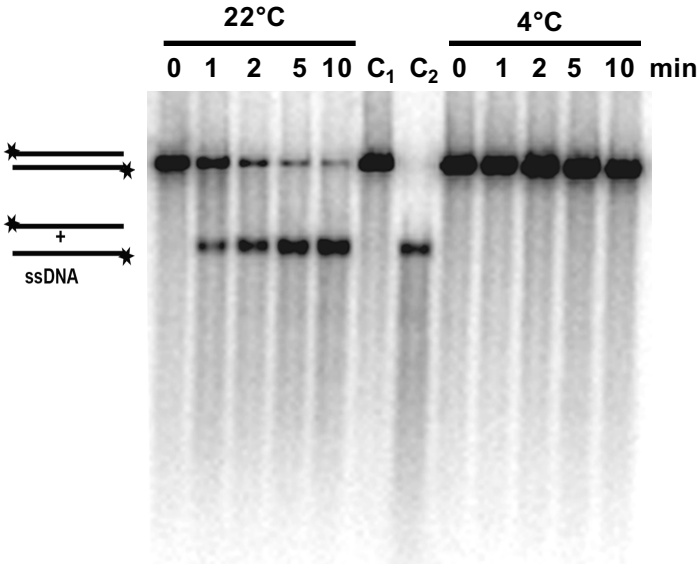


Figure 3

A

Limiting magnesium condition
ATP (5 mM) : Mg^{++} (2 mM)



B

Excess magnesium condition
ATP (2 mM) : Mg^{++} (6 mM)

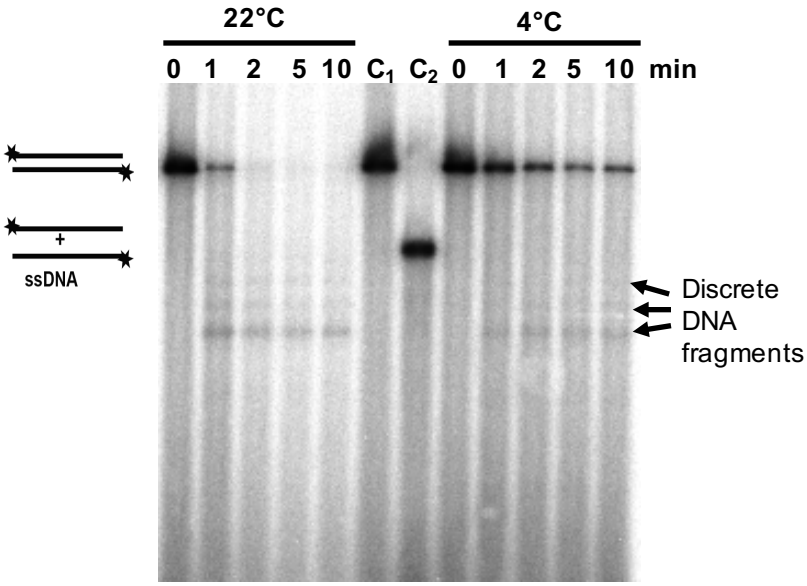


Figure 4

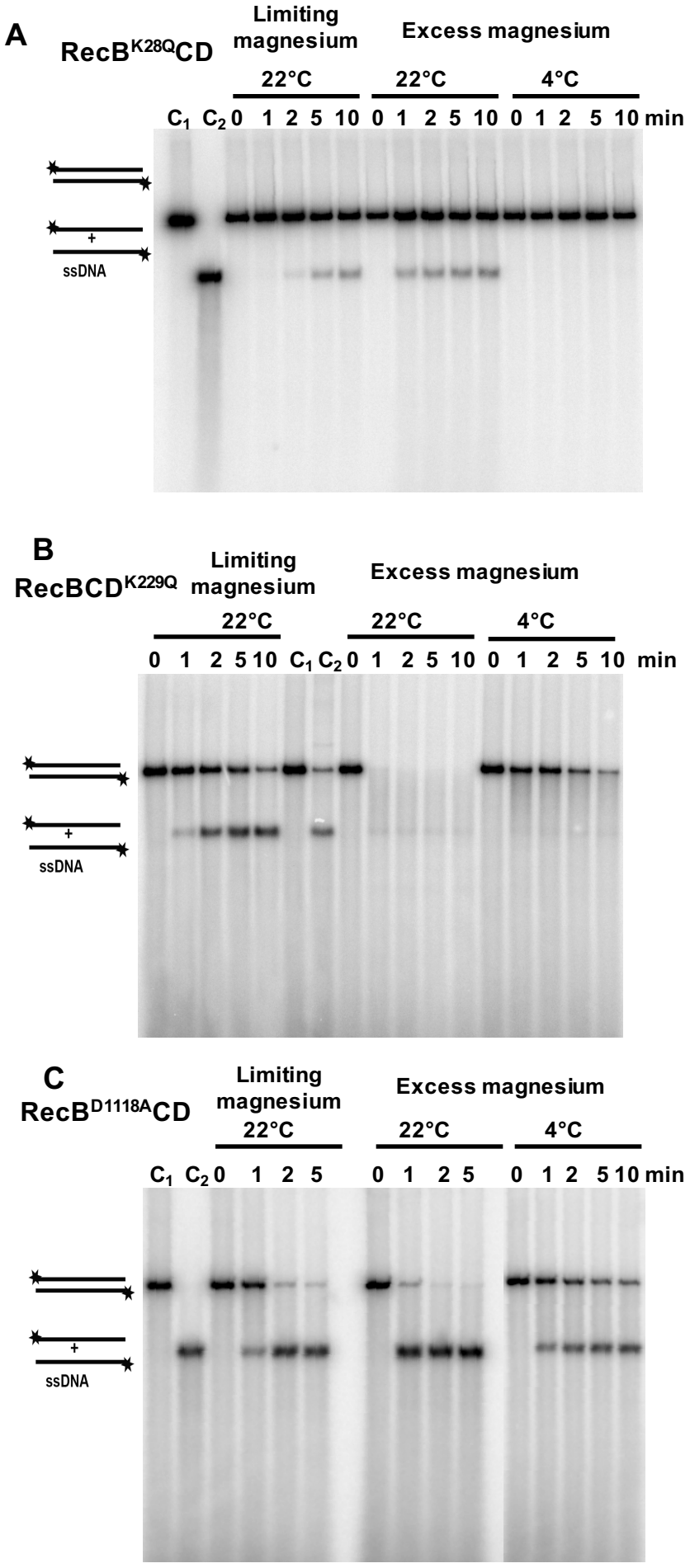
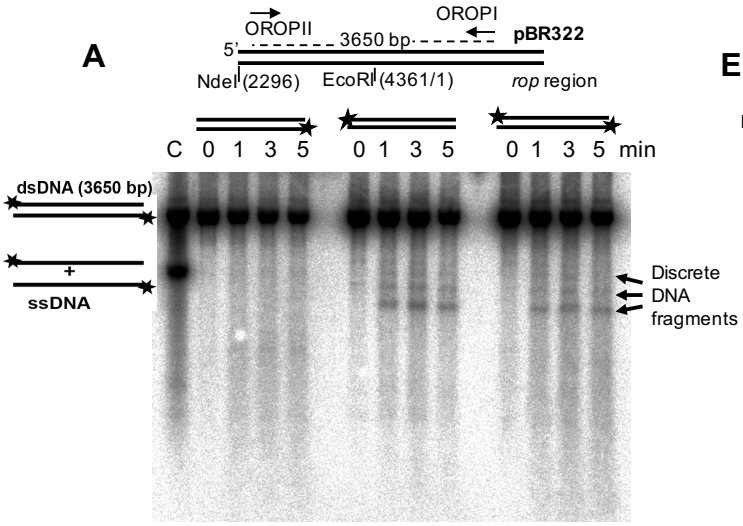
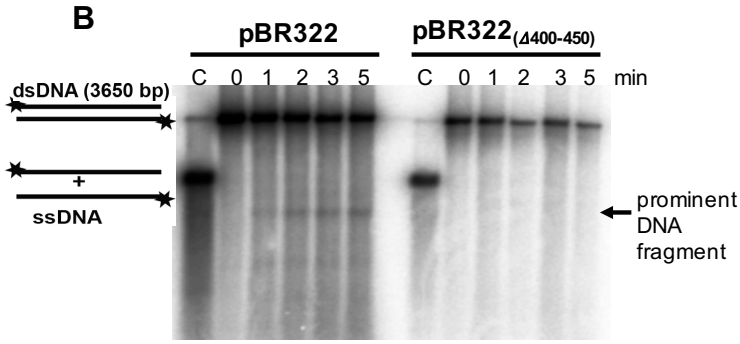
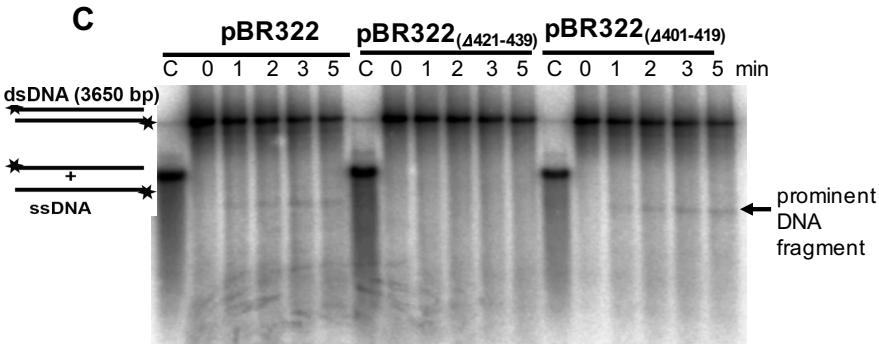
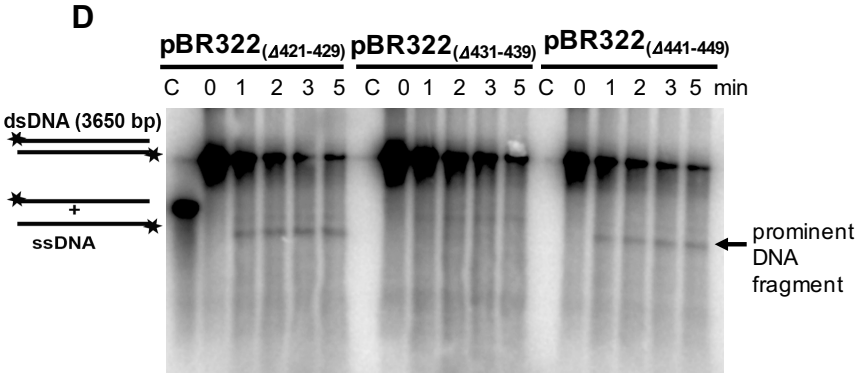

A
RecB^{K28Q}CD
Limiting magnesium
Excess magnesium
22°C
22°C
4°C
C1 C2 0 1 2 5 10 0 1 2 5 10 0 1 2 5 10 min
+
ssDNA
B
RecBCD^{K229Q}
Limiting magnesium
Excess magnesium
22°C
22°C
4°C
0 1 2 5 10 C1 C2 0 1 2 5 10 0 1 2 5 10 min
+
ssDNA
C
RecB^{D1118A}CD
Limiting magnesium
Excess magnesium
22°C
22°C
4°C
C1 C2 0 1 2 5 0 1 2 5 0 1 2 5 10 min
+
ssDNA

Figure 5


A
OROPII
OROPI
3650 bp
pBR322
5'
NdeI (2296)
EcoRI (4361/1)
rop region
C 0 1 3 5 0 1 3 5 0 1 3 5 min
dsDNA (3650 bp)
+
ssDNA
Discrete DNA fragments


B
pBR322
pBR322(Δ400-450)
C 0 1 2 3 5 C 0 1 2 3 5 min
dsDNA (3650 bp)
+
ssDNA
prominent DNA fragment


C
pBR322
pBR322(Δ421-439)
pBR322(Δ401-419)
C 0 1 2 3 5 C 0 1 2 3 5 C 0 1 2 3 5 min
dsDNA (3650 bp)
+
ssDNA
prominent DNA fragment


D
pBR322(Δ421-429)
pBR322(Δ431-439)
pBR322(Δ441-449)
C 0 1 2 3 5 C 0 1 2 3 5 C 0 1 2 3 5 min
dsDNA (3650 bp)
+
ssDNA
prominent DNA fragment

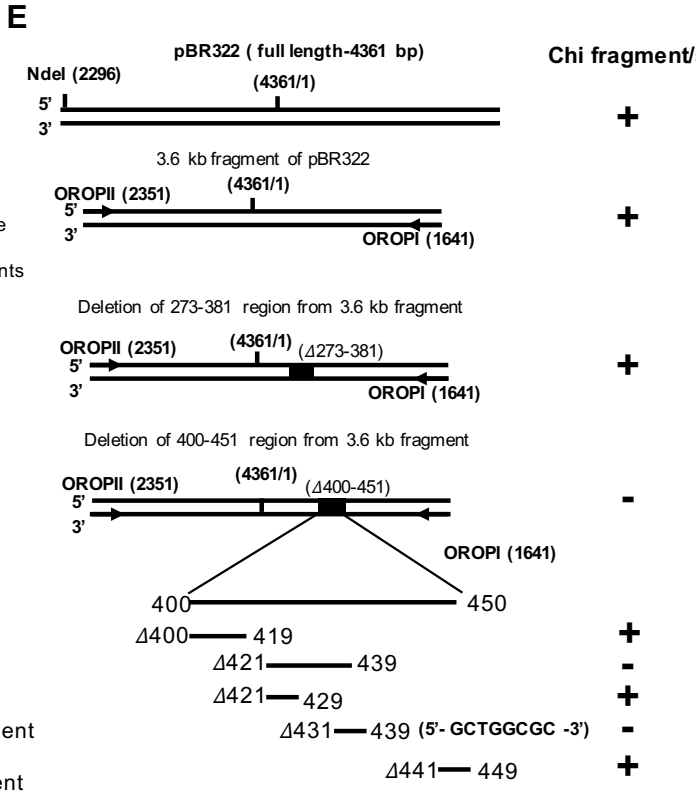

E
pBR322 (full length-4361 bp)
Chi fragment/
NdeI (2296)
(4361/1)
5'
3'
+
3.6 kb fragment of pBR322
OROPII (2351)
(4361/1)
OROPI (1641)
+
Deletion of 273-381 region from 3.6 kb fragment
OROPII (2351)
(4361/1)
(Δ273-381)
OROPI (1641)
+
Deletion of 400-451 region from 3.6 kb fragment
OROPII (2351)
(4361/1)
(Δ400-451)
-
OROPI (1641)
400
450
Δ400 419 +
Δ421 439 -
Δ421 429 +
Δ431 439 (5'- GCTGGCGC -3') -
Δ441 449 +

Figure 6

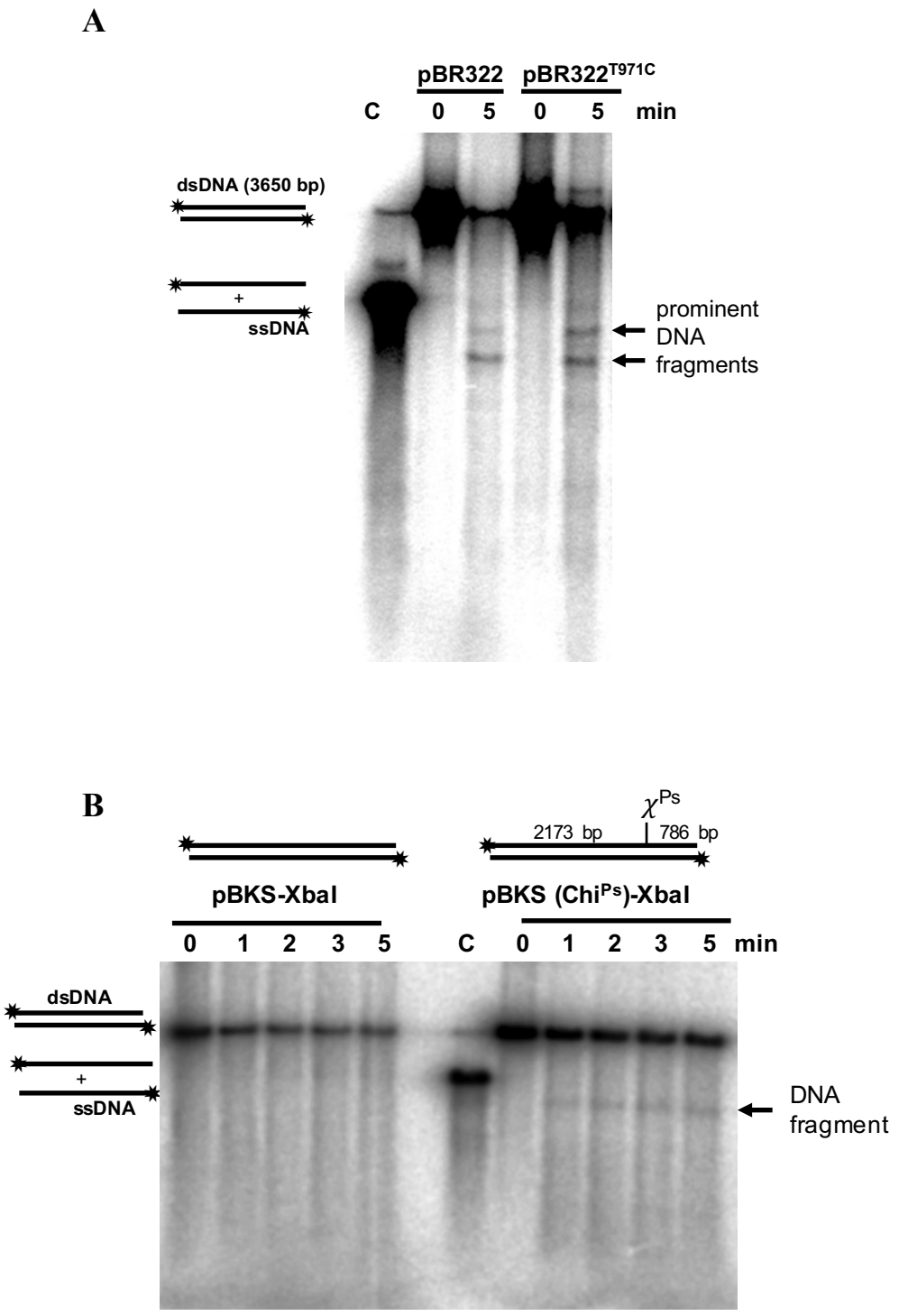

A
pBR322
pBR322T971C
C
0
5
0
5
min
dsDNA (3650 bp)
+
ssDNA
prominent
DNA
fragments
B
χPs
2173 bp
786 bp
pBKS-XbaI
pBKS (ChiPs)-XbaI
0
1
2
3
5
C
0
1
2
3
5
min
dsDNA
+
ssDNA
DNA
fragment

Figure 7

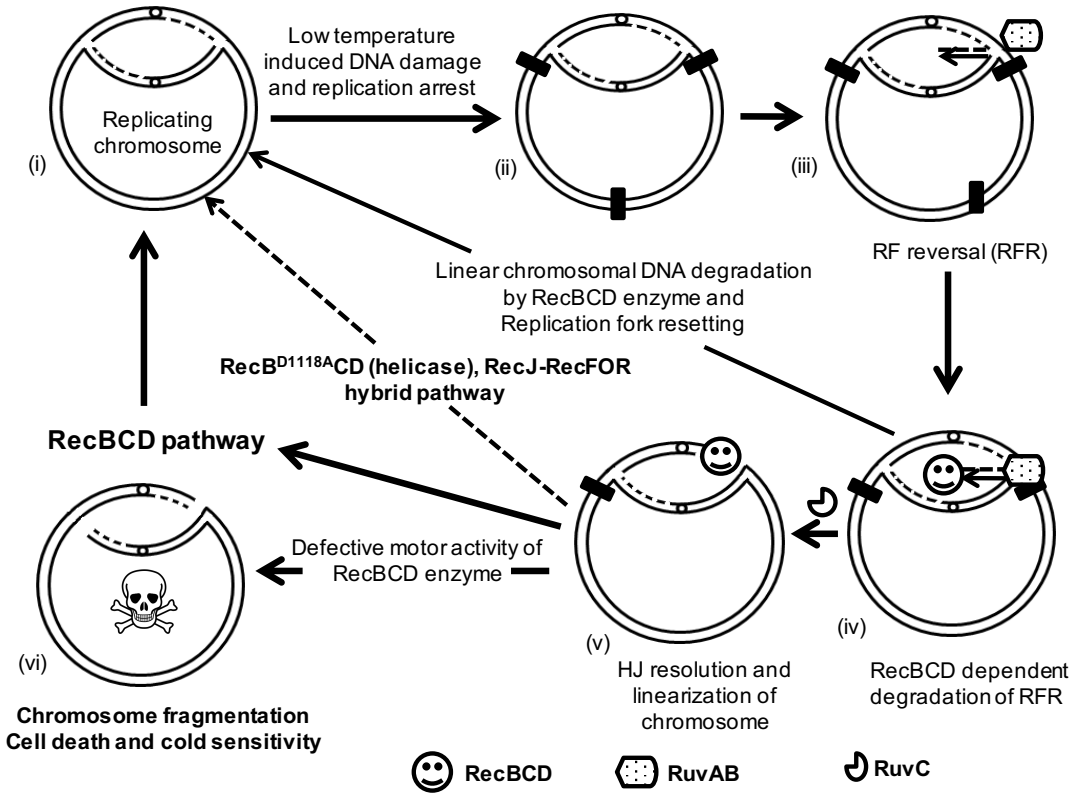

Low temperature
induced DNA damage
and replication arrest
Replicating
chromosome
(i)
(ii)
(iii)
RF reversal (RFR)
Linear chromosomal DNA degradation
by RecBCD enzyme and
Replication fork resetting
RecB^{D1118A}CD (helicase), RecJ-RecFOR
hybrid pathway
RecBCD pathway
Defective motor activity of
RecBCD enzyme
(v)
(iv)
(vi)
HJ resolution and
linearization of
chromosome
RecBCD dependent
degradation of RFR
Chromosome fragmentation
Cell death and cold sensitivity
RecBCD
RuvAB
RuvC

Figure 8