Mycobacterium riyadhense clinical isolates provide insights into ancestry

and adaptive evolution in tuberculosis

Qingtian Guan[1], Musa Garbati[2,&], Sara Mfarrej[1], Talal AlMutairi[2], Alicia Smyth[3&&],

Albel Singh[4&&], Shamsudeen Fagbo[5&&], John A. Browne[3], Muhammad Amin urRahman[2],

Alya Alruwaili[2], Anwar Hoosen[2], Chie Nakajima[6,7], Yasuhiko Suzuki[6,7], Apoorva Bhatt[4],

Stephen V. Gordon[3,6], Faisal AlAsmari[2], A. Pain[1,6*]

[1]Pathogen Genomics Laboratory, BESE Division, King Abdullah University of Science

and Technology (KAUST), Thuwal-Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; [2]King Fahad

Medical City (KFMC), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; [3]UCD School of Veterinary Medicine,

University College Dublin, Dublin, D04 W6F6, Ireland; [4]Institute of Microbiology and

Infection, School of Biosciences, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham,

UK;[5]One Health Unit, Executive Directorate for Surveillance and Response, National

Center for Disease Prevention and Control, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; [6]Global Institution for

Collaborative Research and Education, Hokkaido University, Kita 20 Nishi 10, Kita-ku,

Sapporo, Japan;[7]Research Center for Zoonosis Control, Hokkaido University, Kita 20

Nishi 10, Kita-ku, Sapporo, Japan.

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[&]Current address: Infectious Diseases Unit, Department of Medicine, University of

Maiduguri, Nigeria

[&&]These authors contributed equally to the work

*For correspondence
Arnab Pain (arnab.pain@kaust.edu.sa)

Abstract

Mycobacterium riyadhense is a novel non-tuberculous mycobacterium (NTM) that is increasingly isolated from clinical cases with tuberculosis (TB)-like symptoms in humans in various parts of the world. To elucidate the genomic hallmarks that define the relationship between *M. riyadhense* and other mycobacterial species, including members of the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex (MTBC), eight clinical isolates of *M. riyadhense* were analysed. *M. riyadhense* shares a large number of conserved orthologues with the MTBC and contains linear and circular plasmids carrying type IV and type VII secretion systems. We provide evidence that *M. riyadhense* is likely the 'missing link' in the evolution of *M. tuberculosis*, sharing a common ancestor with members of the MTBC that has evolved through a process of genome reduction, expansion of toxin/antitoxin systems, and ultimately host adaptation. We conclude that *M. riyadhense* is an emerging mycobacterial pathogen that can serve as an experimental model to study the evolution and pathogenesis of tubercle bacilli.

Introduction

Non-tuberculous mycobacteria (NTMs), including *Mycobacterium riyadhense* (MR), are ubiquitous, naturally occurring environmental bacteria commonly found in water and soil (Falkinham, 2013)(J. Van Ingen et al., 2009). A wide range of animal and environmental

sources (aquaria, swimming pools) act as reservoirs for NTMs, and several human

disease outbreaks caused by exposure to environmental NTMs have been described (Ding

et al., 2005)(Panwalker and Fuhse, 1986)(Carbonne et al., 2009)(Singh et al., 2018). With

the ability to cause infections in both immunocompromised (Garbati and Hakawi, 2014)

and immunocompetent (Choi et al., 2012) individuals, *M. riyadhense* has positioned

itself as a clinically important pulmonary pathogen since its discovery in 2009 (van Ingen

et al., 2009) as a cause of pulmonary infection. The clinical and radiologic characteristics

of pulmonary infection caused by *M. riyadhense* are indistinguishable from those caused

by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the most important human pathogen of the *M.*

tuberculosis complex (MTBC), which cause TB in humans and animals (Choi et al.,

2012)(van Ingen et al., 2009).

Similar to *M. tuberculosis*, *M. riyadhense* grows at 37°C and requires 2~3 weeks (van

Ingen et al., 2009) to form visible colonies on agar media. However, unlike *M.*

tuberculosis, which is a common worldwide pathogen transmitted directly from human to

human with no known environmental reservoirs (King et al., 2017), *M. riyadhense*

infections are rare and are transmitted to patients via contact with contaminated water

(King et al., 2017) and soil (Narendrula-Kotha and Nkongolo, 2017), with no evidence of

human-to-human transmission yet reported. Infections with *M. riyadhense* have been

reported in Asia and Europe including, Bahrain, South Korea, France, Italy and Germany

(Godreuil et al., 2012)(Van der Werf et al., 2014), (Van der Werf et al., 2014), (Choi et

al., 2012), although most of the recent cases originated in patients from Saudi Arabia

(Althawadi et al., 2017). Indeed, the very first case of acute *M. riyadhense* infection was

initially misdiagnosed as a case of *M. tuberculosis* infection in a Saudi hospital using

commercially available diagnostic tests (Tortoli et al., 2010).

It is postulated that *M. tuberculosis* evolved from a free-living environmental ancestor

into an obligate pathogen (Murty DS, 2014)(Jang et al., 2008). Our current knowledge

indicates that *Mycobacterium canettii* is the most closely related obligate pathogenic

species to the MTBC (Supply et al., 2013)(Van Soolingen et al., 1997). Infections with *M.*

canettii are rare and found solely in people from the Horn of Africa, with no

environmental reservoir described to date (Blouin et al., 2012).

Previous phylogenetic studies have suggested that *Mycobacterium kansasii* (Wang et al.,

2015), *Mycobacterium marinum* (Stinear et al., 2008), *Mycobacterium lacus* (Tortoli et

al., 2017), *Mycobacterium decipiens* (Brown-Elliott et al., 2018), *Mycobacterium*

shinjukuense (Saito et al., 2011) and *M. riyadhense* (Tortoli et al., 2017)(Fedrizzi et al.,

2017) are closely related to the free-living ancestor of the MTBC based on a single

marker gene (e.g., *hsp65*, 16S). In this evolutionary context, a comprehensive

understanding of the genomic hallmarks that drive the close phylogenomic relationship of

M. riyadhense with the MTBC and NTMs is of particular scientific interest.

In this study, we report the characterization of eight clinical isolates of *M. riyadhense*,
compared their genomes to members of the MTBC, and provided comprehensive insight
into the adaptive changes associated with the evolution of the MTBC from environmental
bacteria. We examined the lipid profiles of both rough and smooth variants of *M.
riyadhense*, compared them to those of other related mycobacteria, and analysed the
transcriptional response of immunity-related host genes in a murine macrophage infection
model with *M. riyadhense*, *M. kansasii* and *M. bovis* BCG.

Using genome information, we developed a simple PCR-based diagnostic test for the
rapid and accurate identification of *M. riyadhense* to minimize the risk of misdiagnosis in
a clinical setting.

Our analyses provide a comprehensive description of the hallmarks of *M. riyadhense* that
make it one of the closest known environmental relatives of the MTBC and that can serve
to illuminate studies into the evolution and pathogenesis in the MTBC.

Methods and Materials

Clinical reports and bacterial strains

Eight *M. riyadhense* strains were collected in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, between June 2011

and March 2016 (Table 1) from patients with a positive culture for *M. riyadhense* isolated

from the microbiology laboratory at the King Fahad Medical City (KFMC) in Riyadh,

Saudi Arabia. The patient and sample data collected included demographic and clinical

characteristics, age, sex, clinical features at presentation, presence of comorbidities,

including HIV co-infection, antimicrobial susceptibility, initial and modified therapy,

where applicable; and treatment outcome. Once an isolate was suspected to be an NTM,

the samples were sent to the reference laboratory for full identification and antimicrobial

susceptibility testing. Radiographic and pathologic data were also collected.

Culturing, DNA isolation and sequencing of bacteria

The *M. riyadhense* strains were grown on Lowenstein Jensen (LJ) slants at 37 °C for two

weeks, DNA was extracted using a phenol-chloroform protocol (Belisle and Sonnenberg,

1998), and the quality was measured by Qubit. Twenty micrograms of

high-molecular-weight (HMW) DNA from the eight *M. riyadhense* strains was

sequenced using a PacBio RSII sequencer (Pacific Biosciences, Menlo Park, USA) with a

10 kb library. An NEBNext Ultra II DNA library preparation kit (New England BioLabs,

Massachusetts USA) was used to prepare libraries according to the manufacturer's

instructions, and sequences from each library were generated for all *M. riyadhense* strains

using the Illumina HiSeq 4000 platform (Illumina, San Diego, United States).

Genome assembly and annotation

The Illumina short reads were trimmed, and low-quality reads were removed by Trimmomatic (Bolger et al., 2014). Eight consensus genomes based on each strain were assembled into contigs with the PacBio long reads using the Canu assembler (Koren et al., 2017). After assembly, the draft genome was then corrected with short Illumina reads using Pilon (Walker et al., 2014) software. The circularity of assemblies was checked by Gepard (Krumsiek et al., 2007), and assemblies were annotated by Prokka (Seemann, 2014). A circular map of the chromosome was compared with that of *M. tuberculosis* H37Rv and visualized with BRIG (Alikhan et al., 2011). The genome of the *M. riyadhense* MR226 strain was used as a high-quality reference in this study.

Comparison of chromosomal and plasmid gene contents of *M. riyadhense* to those of various *Mycobacterium* species

DNA sequences of 152 mycobacterial species and 77 mycobacterial plasmids were obtained from the NCBI genome database and independently annotated by Prokka (Seemann, 2014). The predicted protein sequences from the chromosome and each of the two plasmids (pMRLP01 and pMR01) of the *M. riyadhense* MR226 strain were then compared with the annotated genes from the rest of the mycobacterial species using orthoMCL (Li et al., 2003) with a 50% identity cutoff and an inflation parameter of 1.5. The obtained orthologues were visualized with the heatmap package in R (Ihaka and

Gentleman, 1996). A focused OrthoMCL comparison was performed between (1) *M.*

riyadhense, *M. marinum*, *M. kansasii*, *M. szulgai* and *M. tuberculosis* and (2) *M.*

riyadhense and five species from the MTBC, namely, *M. tuberculosis*, *M. bovis*, *M.*

canettii, M. mungi, and *M. africanum*.

SNP calling and phylogeny based on SNPs

The corrected Illumina reads were mapped using BWA   (Li and Durbin, 2009) on to the

M. riyadhense MR226 genome assembly. Picard tool (Broad Institute, 2016) was used to

clean SAM files, fix mate-pair information and mark duplicates. SNPs were called for

two iterations and filtered (QD<2.0, FS>60.0, SOQ>4.0, ReadPosRankSum<-8.0) with

Genome Analysis Toolkit (GATK) (Alkan et al., 2011). An alignment file was generated

by SVAMP (Naeem et al., 2014), and phylogeny was generated by RaxML (Stamatakis

et al., 2005) with the TVM model.

Phylogeny of *M. riyadhense*

The AMPHORA2 (Wu and Scott, 2012) pipeline was used to identify protein sequences

from 31 conserved genes in the pangenome datasets and the *Mycobacterium* genomes

available at NCBI or JGI as at 1st January 2018. A total of 152 species were selected after

applying a filter of at least 10 marker genes to be detected in each of the assemblies.

Nocardia abscessus was used as the out-group. 12 genes, which have only one copy in

each of the species (i.e., genes *rplA*, *rplB*, *rplF*, *rplM*, *rplN*, *rplP*, *rplS*, *rplT*, *rpmA*, *rpsJ*,

rpsM, and *rpsS*), were concatenated, aligned and trimmed. The phylogenetic tree was

then constructed using RaxML with the Dayhoff model, which is calculated with a script

provided in AMPHORA2 (Wu and Scott, 2012).

A whole-genome phylogenetic tree was constructed with the MTBC species (*M.*

tuberculosis, *M. bovis*, *M. canettii*, *M. mungi*, *Mycobacterium orygis*, *M. africanum*) and

with *M. kansasii*, *M. marinum*, *M. shinjukuense*, *Mycobacterium leprae*,

Mycobacterium smegmatis, *Mycobacterium parmense*, *Mycobacterium avium* and

Mycobacterium abscessus. The one-to-one orthologues of each species were obtained

using OrthoMCL and concatenated, then aligned with Muscle (Edgar, 2004) and trimmed

with TrimAL (Capella-Gutiérrez et al., 2009). The concatenated sequences were

composed of 906 genes encoding 296,124 amino acids and were used to build a

phylogenetic tree with the LG+G+F model, which was selected by ModelGenerator. The

phylogenetic tree was generated by RaxML (Stamatakis et al., 2005).

Toxin/antitoxin systems, *mce*/*mce*-associated genes and ESX systems in *M.*

***riyadhense* and other mycobacteria**

One hundred fifty-eight toxin/antitoxin (T/A) proteins belonging to the VapBC, RelEF,

HigBA, MazEF, ParDE and UCAT families were downloaded from the NCBI protein

database. We identified the *M. tuberculosis* T/A orthologues from all of the 152 species

by OrthoMCL (Li et al., 2003), and the orthologue groups were also examined by Blast+

2.4.0. The same pipeline was also applied for the MCE family, PhoPR, PE/PPE,

PE-PGRS, and ESX1-5.

Infection of the RAW 246.7 cell line with *M. riyadhense*, *M. kansasii* and *M. bovis*

BCG Denmark

The murine macrophage RAW264.7 cell line obtained from the American Type Culture

Collection (ATCC, Manassas, USA) was cultured in Dulbecco's modified Eagle's

medium (DMEM) (ThermoFisher Scientific, Waltham, USA) supplemented with 10%

FCS, streptomycin, and penicillin. *M. riyadhense*, *M. kansasii* (subtype I), and *M. bovis*

BCG Denmark strains were grown in Middlebrook 7H9 liquid medium after

single-colony isolation from LJ slants or 7H10 agar. 7H9 was supplemented with 10%

albumin, dextrose and catalase (ADC), while 7H10 was supplemented with oleic acid,

albumin, dextrose and catalase (OADC) in addition to 0.2% glycerol. Ready to use LJ

slants were provided by Saudi Prepared Media Laboratory (SPML, Riyadh, Saudi

Arabia).

Before the infection, all bacterial cultures were centrifuged at 1,000xg for 10 minutes.

The supernatant was discarded, and 10-15 3 mm glass beads were added to the pellet and

then vortexed for 1 minute to break up clumps. Six ml of DMEM was added to the pellet

and left to rest for 5 minutes. The upper 5 ml of the suspension was then removed to a

fresh 15 ml falcon tube, which was then centrifuged for an additional 3 minutes at 200xg

to remove remaining bacterial clumps. The supernatant was then taken and passaged

using a 26G hypodermal syringe approximately 15 times to further break up any clumps

of bacteria. The optical density of the culture was measured again before the infection

experiment.

RAW264.7 cells were seeded at 2×10^5 cells per well in 24-well flat-bottom tissue

culture plates 24 hours prior, reaching 5×10^5 cells per well. The DMEM over the cells

was removed, and the cells were washed once with phosphate-buffered saline (PBS). The

cells were infected by applying 1 ml of DMEM containing the prepared mycobacteria

from the former steps at an appropriate concentration to reach an MOI of 5:1, with

DMEM alone used for the control wells. The culture plates were then returned to the

incubator at 37°C with 5% CO_2 for 3 hours to allow for bacterial uptake by the

RAW264.7 cells. The supernatant was removed after 3 hours, and the infected cells were

washed with PBS to remove extracellular bacteria. Subsequently, the cells were

incubated in fresh DMEM with 10% FCS for 24 hours and 48 hours. For harvesting, 400

µl of TRIzol (ThermoFisher Scientific, Waltham, USA) was added to the wells at each

time point, and the adherent cells were scraped out and stored at -80°C for RNA

extraction. Each bacterial infection was performed in triplicate, in addition to the

non-infected controls. RNA was isolated from the samples using the Direct-zol™ RNA

Miniprep kit (Zymo Research, Irvine, USA) according to the manufacturer's instructions.

An Agilent RNA 6000 Nano kit was used to check the quality and quantity of the total

RNA. The NanoString murine nCounter Myeloid Innate Immunity Gene Expression

Panel (NanoString Technologies, USA) was used to assess transcript abundance across

infections and timepoints using the nCounter MAX Analysis System (NanoString

Technologies, Seattle, USA). The counts obtained were normalised using the nSolver™

Advanced Analysis plugin (NanoString Technologies, Seattle, USA) using the geNorm

algorithm, and differential gene (DE) expression was analysed using multivariate linear

regression in nSolver™ software, with 0.05 as the p-value cutoff.

Thin layer chromatography (TLC) analysis of lipooligosaccharides (LOSs) in *M.*

riyadhense*, *M. kansasii* and *M. marinum

For TLC analysis, mycobacterial strains were grown at 30°C (*M. marinum*) or 37°C

(*M. smegmatis*, *M. kansasii*, *M. riyadhense*) on LJ slants, and after sufficient incubation,

grown cells were collected and washed once with PBS. Apolar and polar lipids were

extracted from the cell pellets using methods described by Dobson et al. (G. Dobson et al.,

1985). Polar lipids were analysed by 2D-TLC using solvent system E, which is designed

to separate phospholipids and LOSs (G. Dobson et al., 1985). Glycolipids were visualized

by charring following staining with either molybdophophoric acid (MPA) or

alpha-napthol (for glycolipids).

Diagnostic PCR markers for *M. riyadhense*

To develop diagnostic markers for *M. riyadhense* for potential use in clinical diagnosis as

well as environmental and animal studies, unique regions within the *M. riyadhense*

reference genome compared to that of 152 other mycobacterial species were detected

using Shustring (Haubold et al., 2005). These regions were also examined by OrthoMCL

(Li et al., 2003) and Blastn (Camacho et al., 2009). *mr_00036*, *mr_00263*, *mr_00606*, and

mr_01005 were selected as the amplification targets. Two primers for each gene were

designed in this study:

MRDP-MR_00036-F (5'-TTCGTTGTCGGTTTCGTCGC-3') and MRDP-MR_00036-R

(5'-GCGTCAGCTCCACCGAAAAC-3');

MRDP-MR_00263-F (5'-CCACCGCTGTTGGCGA-3') and MRDP-MR_00263-R

(5'-TTCGTCCCGTTGATCCCGTT-3');

MRDP-MR_00606-F (5'-AACCTGCCCGATACGCACTT-3') and

MRDP-MR_00606-R (5'-ACTGTTCCTCCGTGGGGTTG-3');

MRDP-MR_01005-F (5'-GACTGTGGGGTAACGGTGGA-3') and

MRDP-MR_01005-R (5'-CCGGTGATGTCGCCTACTCC-3').

PCR was performed in a 25 µl reaction volume with 12.5 µl of GoTaq ® Green Master

Mix (Promega, USA), 1 µl of 100 ng/µl gDNA, 1 µl with 10 nmol of forward and reverse

primers, 3 µl of dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) and 19 µl of nuclease-free water. The PCR

mixture was denatured for 5 minutes at 94°C; followed by 35 cycles of amplification

involving a denaturation step at 94°C for 30 seconds, a primer annealing step at 59°C for

45 seconds, and a primer extension step at 72°C for 45 seconds; and a final extension step

at 72°C for 7 minutes. The ITS-F/mycom-2 primer set (Park et al., 2000), which is a

Mycobacterium genus-specific primer set, was used as a control, with amplification

conditions as described previously (Park et al., 2000). The products were electrophoresed

in a 2% agarose gel for 60 minutes and visualized.

Results

Clinical manisfestation and culture characteristics of *M. riyadhense* isolates

Between April 2011 and March 2017, eight clinical cases of infection with *M. riyadhense*

were recorded in male patients aged from 8-82 years (Table 1). In addition to HIV/AIDS,

most of the patients had multiple comorbidities, such as pulmonary and/or systemic

hypertension, malignancies, and diabetes mellitus (DM), with the lung being the major

site of disease (Table 1).

Bronchoalveolar lavage, endotracheal, sputum and lymph node biopsy specimens grew *M.*

riyadhense colonies when cultured in solid and liquid media using LJ agar and

Mycobacteria growth indicator tube (MGIT) broth, respectively, albeit with varying

times to positivity. Although no consistent findings existed for chest imaging, three out of

the eight patients presented with upper lobe consolidation, cavitation, ground-glass

opacities, 'tree-in-bud' appearance, hilar lymphadenopathy and pleural effusion (Figure

supplementary 1).

The isolates were subjected to susceptibility testing for antibiotics commonly used to

treat both typical and atypical infections. Isolates showed 100% susceptibility to rifampin

(RIF), rifabutin (RFB), ethambutol (EMB), clarithromycin (CLR), linezolid (LZD),

amikacin (AMK), moxifloxacin (MOXI), and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole

(TMP-SMX). Three out of the eight isolates were resistant to ciprofloxacin (CIP).

Assembly and annotation of the *M. riyadhense* MR226 genome

The comparison of different assemblies of all sequenced *M. riyadhense* strains is listed in

Supplementary Table 1. We obtained chromosomes of all eight isolates in single

contiguous sequences for genome comparison at a high resolution. The *M. riyadhense*

MR226 strain contains a 6,243,587 bp chromosome, a linear plasmid (pMRLP01) of

550,247 bp and a circular plasmid (pMR01) of 94,344 bp. The circular nature of the

chromosome and the pMR01 plasmid were demonstrated through Gepard (Krumsiek et

al., 2007).

As expected of a free-living opportunistic pathogen, the chromosome of *M. riyadhense* is

significantly larger than the chromosomes of the MTBC (Table 2). The number of genes

unique in a species showed that the members of the MTBC have a considerably lower

percentage of unique genes than *M. riyadhense* and other closely related NTMs (Table 2).

The comparison of the annotated protein-coding genes from the *M. riyadhense* MR226

strain to the genome assemblies of 152 *Mycobacterium* species (including 77 known

mycobacterial plasmids) shows that *M. riyadhense* forms a tight cluster with the MTBC

and some NTMs (Figure supplementary 2A, highlighted in box a). A total of 335 genes

were identified as unique from the orthologue group comparison, being present in only all

sequenced *M. riyadhense* isolates, including MR226, and the vast majority of these genes

belong to the PE/PPE family, which are thought to be involved in antigen variation and

are widely spread across the slow-growing species within the *Mycobacterium* genus.

Linear plasmids were first described in 1989 in maize (which has a linear

mitochondrion)(Leon et al., 1989) and have also been found in *Actinomycetales*,

including *Streptomyces* (Kinashi, 2011), *Rhodococcus* (Crespi et al., 1992) and

Mycobacterium species, such as *Mycobacterium xenopi*, *Mycobacterium branderi* and

Mycobacterium celatum. They are often accompanied by a circular plasmid in the same

host (Picardeau and Vincent, 1997). The linear plasmid pMRLP01 in *M. riyadhense*

contains a pair of partitioning genes (*parA*/*parB*) that are involved in active segregation

and thus stabilize the inheritance of the plasmid (Surtees and Funnell, 2003). The latter

are known to contribute to genome evolution by active DNA transfer and exchange

(Zrimec and Lapanje, 2018). As is often the case for both circular and linear large

plasmids, a relatively higher proportion of pMRLP01 genes (51%) have no known

function compared to those of the main chromosome (26%). This reinforces the notion

that plasmids are an important route by which new genes are introduced into the genome

in *Mycobacteria*. Of the 443 predicted protein-coding genes of pMRLP01, 118 have at

least one orthologue on the main chromosome. Furthermore, we observed several

protein-coding genes in pMRLP01 that have orthologues in the genomes of

Mycobacterium tusciae JS617, *Mycobacterium aromaticivorans* JCM 16368,

Mycobacterium llatzerense, *Mycobacterium obuense*, *Mycobacterium novocastrense* and

Mycobacterium holsaticum (Figure supplementary 2B). This finding indicates that

pMRLP01 can be readily exchanged with other environmental mycobacterial species.

It is well known that plasmids are important "vehicles" for the exchange of genetic

material between bacteria or between chromosomes and extra-chromosomal plasmids. In

this study, we further identified a circular plasmid termed pMR01 in *M. riyadhense*

(Figure supplementary 2C, Figure supplementary 3). When compared with the circular

plasmids of other species, such as pRAW in *M. marinum* (Ummels et al., 2014),

pMAH135 (Uchiya et al., 2015) and pMA100 (da Silva Rabello et al., 2012) of *M. avium*,

pMyong1 from *Mycobacterium yongonense* (Kim et al., 2013), pMK12478 (Veyrier et al.,

2009) from *M. kansasii* and several plasmids from *Mycobacterium chimaera* (van Ingen

et al., 2017), a high similarity was observed. These plasmids all harbour both a TS4 and

TS7, which are necessary for conjugation (Ummels et al., 2014)(Morgado et al., 2017),

and facilitate the exchange of genetic material between different species of slow-growing

mycobacteria (Ummels et al., 2014). We therefore speculate that pMR01 is a novel

conjugative plasmid.

In mycobacteria, five type VII secretion systems have been described,   named ESX-1 to

ESX-5 (Houben et al., 2014),(Abdallah et al., 2007). An *esx-5* locus on pMR01, which

shows high similarity to the ESX-5 loci on pMK12478, pRAW and pMAH135, is

markedly different from the ESX-5 system found on the main *M .riyadhense*

chromosome. ESX-5 is involved in the secretion of PE and PPE proteins in

M. tuberculosis and is involved in modulating the host immune responses to maintain a

persistent infection (Weerdenburg et al., 2012). The potential transmissibility of pMR01

and other pMR01-like plasmids may therefore play a role in the evolution of the ESX

systems in mycobacteria.

The progressive alignments (Figure supplementary 4A) of the assembled chromosomes

and plasmids (Figure supplementary 4B) of each *M. riyadhense* strain show that the

chromosomes are relatively conserved; however, the linear plasmids present in all eight

sequenced isolates are diverse from both structural and similarity perspectives, while the

pRAW-like plasmids are present in only the MR226, MR193 and MR222 strains.

The SNP-based phylogeny of the sequenced *M. riyadhense* isolates based on 43,136

polymorphic sites (Supplementary Table 2, Figure supplementary 5) indicates the

presence of two different clades of *M. riyadhense* among the clinical isolates sequenced

in this study. The nucleotide diversity between the MR222 clade is greater than the

diversity between *M. tuberculosis* strains (Jia et al., 2017), while it is smaller than that

seen between *M. canettii* strains (Supply et al., 2013), and the variation between the

MR226 clade is comparable to the SNP variation in *M. tuberculosis* strains.

Regions of difference (RDs) in *M. riyadhense*

The RDs were originally described as genomic regions present in virulent *M. bovis* and *M.*

tuberculosis but absent from the *M. bovis* BCG genome (Mahairas et al., 1996). RD loci

were subsequently described across the MTBC (Gordon et al., 1999) and contain

functions believed to contribute to pathogenicity (Jakko Van Ingen et al., 2009)(Kozak et

al., 2011)(Ru et al., 2017) and evolution of MTBC species (Brosch et al., 2002). *M.*

riyadhense was found to harbour most of the RD loci (RD1, RD3-R11, R13-RD16) that

are also intact in *M. tuberculosis,* while 2 of the RDs show unique deletions, RD2^{riyadh}

(Figure supplementary 6A) and RD12^{riyadh} (Figure supplementary 6B).

RD2 was originally described as deleted in BCG vaccine strains.   Subsequently, it was

shown that disruption of RD2 in *M. tuberculosis* leads to decreased proliferation *in vivo*

and impaired modulation of the innate immune response (Kozak et al., 2011). The RD2

locus also has a deletion from the *M. riyadhense* genome. It is a larger deletion than the

originally described RD2^{BCG} as RD2^{riyadh} contains 29 genes (*rv1971~rv2000*, location

2,216,498~2,246,766); eight genes within this locus (*rv1978*, *rv1979c*, *rv1980c*, *rv1981c*,

rv1983, *rv1984*, *rv1987*, *rv1988*) have orthologues elsewhere in the *M. riyadhense*

genome (*mr_05764*, *mr_05852*, *mr_02310*, *mr_02993*, *mr_00486*, *mr_02995*, *mr_02325*,

mr_02349, *mr_01747*), suggesting possible functional redundancy.

The RD12 locus shows deletions across MTBC members, including *M. bovis*,

Mycobacterium caprae and *M. orygis* (Alexander et al., 2010), but it is present in other

MTBC members. *M. canettii* isolates (except group B (M Cristina et al., 2005)) also show

an independent deletion at the RD12 locus named RD12^{can} (3,479,430~3,491,866,

rv3111~rv3126),   which   is   distinct   from   RD12^{bovis} (3,484,740~3,487,515,

rv3117~rv3121). We identified another unique deletion at the RD12 locus in *M.*

riyadhense, designated RD12[riyadh], which encompasses a larger region than RD[can] and

RD12[bovis], encompassing *rv3108-rv3127* (3,477,171~3,492,150) (Figure supplementary

6B). It is intriguing that multiple mycobacteria show independent deletion events at the

RD2 and RD12 loci, suggesting selective forces play a role in this variation.

Comparative phylogeny of *M. riyadhense* with other Mycobacteria

The phylogenetic tree shows that the slow-growers and rapid-growers are separated into

two different clades and that fast-growers evolved from slow-growers (Figure 1, the

detailed figure is shown in Figure supplementary 7). The overall topology of our tree is

remarkably similar to that of previously published phylogenetic trees (Tortoli et al., 2017).

In the tree, *M. riyadhense* is located within the same clade as the obligate and

opportunistic causal organisms of mycobacterial diseases in humans that include the

MTBC, *M. marinum*, *M. kansasii*, *M. leprae* and related host-restricted mycobacteria

with reduced genomes and decreased survivability in the environment. Notably,

M. shinjukuense, *M. lacus* and *M. riyadhense* form a sub-clade that is phylogenetically

close to the MTBC.

The *PE/PPE* family *mce* and *mce*-associated genes are known to be important for host

adaptation (Delogu and Brennan, 2001) and pathogenicity (Isom et al., 2017). The

PE/PPE family genes are enriched in the MTBC members but also in *M. riyadhense*

MR226 (278) and other pathogenic species, such as *M. kansasii* (228) and

Mycobacterium ulcerans (200). The number of *mce-* or *mce*-associated genes has not

significantly changed across mycobacterial genomes, indicating that this group of genes

is under an evolutionary constraint and plays functional roles bridging both

environmental and obligate pathogen lifestyles. Our results agree with previous finding

that during their evolution, the ESX systems were derived from the ancestor ESX-4, as

shown in Figure supplementary 7 at the root node, and then ESX-3, ESX-1, ESX-5 and

ESX-2 evolved by horizontal transfer (Newton-Foot et al., 2016).

A comparative phylogenetic map based on 1,301 conserved proteins (Figure

supplementary 8) reveals this downsizing of the genome and the dynamic changes in

genome components. Certain functional categories of genes are relatively enriched during

the evolution of MTBC, including protein metabolism, regulation and cell signalling, cell

division and cell cycle.

M. riyadhense shares a larger number of orthologues (3,122) with *M. tuberculosis* than

with *M. kansasii* (2,978), *M. marinum* (2,962) and *M. szulgai* (2,724) among the

environmental mycobacteria that are closely related to the MTBC (Figure 2A). A total of

134 orthologues are exclusively shared between *M. riyadhense* and *M. tuberculosis*,

while the number of orthologues exclusively shared between *M. tuberculosis* and *M.*

kansasii (30), *M. marinum* (48) and *M. szulgai* (18) is less (Figure 2A). It is notable that

genes from the phage-derived regions of RD3 and RD11 are shared exclusively between

M. riyadhense and *M. tuberculosis*.

The comparative analysis of the orthologue groups of *M. riyadhense* and the MTBC is

revealing. Firstly, 385 orthologue groups present across all MTBC species are absent

from *M. riyadhense*. Secondly, 221 orthologues uniquely present in *M. riyadhense* are not

found amongst the MTBC (Figure 2B). This latter group of *M. riyadhense* unique

orthologues likely depict the constraints imposed by the free-living biology of *M.*

riyadhense which necessitates maintaining a broad functional repertoire to secure

environmental survival. In contrast, the obligate MTBC species have lost genes involved

in environmental survival but gained a large number of genes required for survival in the

in vivo environment.

A hallmark of *M. tuberculosis* infection is the ability to survive long-term in host

granulomas and develop a latent stage of infection. The molecular mechanisms and

cellular components that are involved in the persistence of *M. tuberculosis* are still poorly

understood, but several T/A systems have been implicated in the pathogenicity of *M.*

tuberculosis (Slayden et al., 2018). T/A systems were first found on plasmids or

plasmid-derived chromosomal loci where they promoted plasmid maintenance in

bacterial populations (Cooper and Heinemann, 2000), but when compared to other

mycobacteria, the MTBC are remarkable for the extensive expansion of T/A systems. We

thus compared the 79 pairs of T/A systems (belonging to the HigAB, MazEF, ParDE,

RelEF, VapBC and UCAT families) in *M. tuberculosis* with the T/A pairs found in other

members of the MTBC and NTMs. Based on the presence of 49 out of the 79 T/A

orthologue pairs (Figure 3), *M. riyadhense* appears more closely related to the MTBC

than to other mycobacteria, including *M. lacus, M. shinjukuense* and *M. decipiens*. It can

be hypothesized that the shared component of T/A pairs play a functional role in the

pathogenicity or persistence of *M. riyadhense* infection in a way similar to that described

for the importance of T/A pairs in *M. tuberculosis in vivo* biology.

***M. riyadhense* strains produce a distinct pattern of LOSs**

The LOSs are an important class of glycolipids that have previously been linked to

diverse mycobacterial phenotypes, such as colony morphology, secretion of PE/PPE

family proteins, and the pathogenicity of *M. marinum* (Van Der Woude et al., 2012).

Notably, the presence or absence of LOS from *M. canettii* causes a transition from

smooth to rough colony variants, respectively, with rough variants showing increased

virulence; MTBC strains lack LOS, and it has been suggested that the removal of LOS

was a key event in the evolution of the MTBC species towards their current obligate

pathogen status (Boritsch et al., 2016). It is noteworthy that we observed both smooth

(MR210, MR22, MR226, MR244, MR246, and MR1023) (Figure 4A) and rough

(MR193 and MR206) (Figure 4B) morphologies in *M. riyadhense* strains. We therefore

sought to first examine whether the genetic machinery for the production of LOS is

present in the *M. riyadhense* genome and then to follow up on the genome-level

predictions with lipid analyses of rough and smooth variants using TLC.

We observed that the *wecE* and *galE6* LOS genes are absent from the *M. riyadhense*

genome (Table 3, Supplementary Table 3). These genes are linked with the removal of

LOS II* and the production of LOS IV (Van Der Woude et al., 2012). Thus, their absence

is likely to cause an accumulation of LOS II* and the lack of fully formed LOS IV, which

have previously been shown to increase the pathogenicity of *M. marinum* (Van Der

Woude et al., 2012). Furthermore, both the *pks5* and *pap* genes in the LOS locus are

intact in *M. riyadhense*, as is the case in *M. canettii*, but not in *M. tuberculosis,* where the

former is truncated and the latter deleted (Boritsch et al., 2016). This finding indicates

that *pks5* recombination and *pap* deletion occurred in a common ancestor of the MTBC

after its differentiation from both *M. riyadhense* and *M. canettii.* Remarkably, the *M.*

riyadhense LOS gene locus layout is dissimilar to that in *M. canettii*, *M. tuberculosis*, *M.*

kansasii and *M. marinum*: indeed, exclusive rearrangements of this locus in *M.*

riyadhense were observed (Figure 4C).

To correlate rough vs. smooth colony morphology with LOS production, we extracted

polar lipids from the strains and analysed them by 2D-TLC using solvent system E (G.

Dobson et al., 1985), which is designed to separate phospholipids and LOSs. Charring of

the TLC plates with alpha-napthol revealed glycolipids, including the accumulation of a

species that migrated at a position similar to that of LOS III. This lipid was seen in only

smooth strains; species with migration patterns similar to LOS I and LOS II were

observed, while LOS IV was absent. This result was not unexpected because all *M.*

riyadhense strains lack a functional *wecA* gene, which is required for the extension of

LOS II to LOS IV (Figure 4). Additionally, the relative levels of the predominant LOS

species in *M. riyadhense* seem to be quite high when compared to those seen in other

LOS-producing mycobacteria (Figure 4 (D)(E)). Conversely, the rough strains did not

produce any glycolipids that migrated in the positions corresponding to LOSs (Figure 4

(F)(H)). Overall, *M. riyadhense* exhibits a LOS production phenotype distinct from that

of other LOS-producing mycobacteria.

PE-PGRS33 locus and type VII secretion system of M. riyadhense

The *pe-pgrs33* (*rv1818c*) locus encodes the exported protein PE_PGRS33 and plays an

important role in the pathogenesis of *M. tuberculosis* (Cohen et al., 2014). A previous

study (Boritsch et al., 2014) showed that *pe-pgrs33* is present in all MTBC members but

not in *M. canettii*, which implies a specific *pe_pgrs33* insertion event in the ancestor of

MTBC strains. Genome comparison of *M. riyadhense* with *M. tuberculosis*, *M. kansasii*,

M. marinum and *M. canettii* provides additional evidence that *M. riyadhense* is the

missing link of the *pe-pgrs33* deletion/insertion event. Our phylogeny strongly suggests

that the deletion of *pe-pgrs33* from *M. kansasii* and *M. marinum* occurred before the

divergence of environmental mycobacteria and the smooth tubercle bacilli (STB)/MTBC

clade (Figure supplementary 9).

All 5 ESX systems (ESX1-ESX5) were found in the *M. riyadhense* genome (Figure

supplementary 10) but with minor modifications. Hence, the *eccA* and *eccB* genes are

absent from the ESX-2 system, while the *espACD* operon, which is essential for secretion

of virulence factors via ESX1, is also missing in *M. riyadhense*. The overall gene

arrangement of the ESX1-ESX5 loci is very similar in both *M. riyadhense* and

M. tuberculosis (Houben et al., 2014). This conserved synteny reinforces the previous

results that phylogenetically *M. riyadhense* may represent an ancestral state to MTBC. As

noted before, the pMR01 plasmid also contains an extra ESX-5 locus, which could

indicate a role for this plasmid in mediating pathogenicity (Figure supplementary 4).

Transcriptional response of murine macrophage cells upon *M. riyadhense* infection

Our genomic analysis of *M. riyadhense* revealed a range of genes and potential systems

that could play a role in host-pathogen interactions. We therefore sought to assess the

initial interaction of *M. riyadhense* with macrophages, using the RAW264.7 cell line of

murine origin as our experimental model. As comparator strains in our analysis, we

performed parallel infections with *M. kansasii*, an opportunistic pathogen that also

contains an orthologous ESX-1 system (Figure 1, Figure supplementary 10), and *M. bovis*

BCG, the live TB vaccine that is attenuated through deletion of the ESX-1 system. These

comparisons allowed us to explore whether *M. riyadhense* triggered innate immune

responses were more similar to those triggered by *M. kansasii* or BCG or were

intermediate between the two.

To analyse the innate immune responses of the macrophages in the intracellular presence

or absence of these mycobacterial isolates, the transcriptional response was analysed

using a 754 probe NanoString Murine Myeloid Innate Immunity panel V2 (Geiss et al.,

2008) at 3, 24 and 48 hours post infection. These analyses revealed an expected

commonality in the responses to infection with all mycobacteria, such as induction of

proinflammatory genes through TLR signalling (e.g., upregulation of *IL1B*, *TNFA*, *CCL4*,

PTGS2 and *CXCL2*, albeit to different absolute levels, Figure 5, Figure supplementary

11A and 11B). Distinct responses triggered by BCG infection compared to *M. riyadhense*

and *M. kansasii* included, for example, upregulation of *MARCO* by BCG infection

(Figure supplementary 11B); *MARCO* is involved in pathogen uptake via trehalose

dimycolate, a lipid that is known to show variation in structure between the MTBC and *M.*

kansasii (Bowdish et al., 2009)(Fujita et al., 2005). *CCL24* and *CXCL14*, which are

involved in the attraction of immune cells to the site of infection (Stavrum et al., 2011),

were upregulated to higher levels with *M. riyadhense* and *M. kansasii* than with BCG at

24 and 48 hours.

Overall, our analysis of the macrophage transcriptional profiles showed that the response

to infection with *M. riyadhense* and *M. kansasii* triggered more similar macrophage

transcriptional responses in comparison to the response produced by BCG infection

(Figure supplementary 11).

Developing a rapid PCR-based diagnostic marker for *M. riyadhense*

Due to the issues previously encountered in diagnosing *M. riyadhense* infections (Choi et

al., 2012)(van Ingen et al., 2009), correct and prompt identification of cases upon

presentation at healthcare units is of paramount importance. We therefore sought to

translate our knowledge on the genome sequences into a PCR diagnostic test that could

be used in a clinical microbiology setting to distinguish *M. riyadhense* from other

mycobacteria, including the members of the MTBC.

By identifying unique K-mers ranging in size from 11 bp to 4,209 bp (Figure

supplementary 12) in the assembled genome compared to the genomes of 152 other

mycobacterial species, a primer set was developed targeting the *mr_00036*, *mr_00263*,

mr_00606 and *mr_01005* genes. The MRDP primer pair MRDP-F/MRDP-R amplified a

single product of 372 bp from each of the eight isolates of *M. riyadhense* (Figure 6) but

not from other mycobacterial species, including *M. tuberculosis*, *M. bovis*, *M. kansasii*, *M.*

marinum, *M. szulgai*, *M. avium* and *Mycobacterium angelicum*. This result shows that the

MRDP-F/MRDP-R primers are highly specific to *M. riyadhense* and form the basis for a

simple diagnostic PCR that can inform appropriate treatment protocols.

Discussion

M. riyadhense has become a clinically relevant NTM species globally (Choi et al.,

2012)(Katoch, 2004). Contrary to prior publications on *M. riyadhense* have been based

primarily on clinical case reports, here we present the largest and most comprehensive

genomic study undertaken to date on clinical *M. riyadhense* isolates. Our comparative

analysis of *M. riyadhense* genomes with the MTBC and a large collection of NTMs

provide unequivocal evidence that *M. riyadhense* is one of the closest known

environmental mycobacteria species to the MTBC and forms a phyloclade with *M. lacus*,

M. decipiens and *M. shinjukuense*.

Our analyses of *M. riyadhense* reveal that expansion of T/A pairs, modification of

secretion systems, alterations in cell wall lipids, and plasmid-mediated horizontal

acquisition of new functionality all played key roles in the evolution of the MTBC. Our

work adds new insight into the evolution of the MTBC from free-living environmental

bacteria to their obligate pathogen biology.

The eight new *M. riyadhense* strains sequenced in this study originated from pulmonary

infections (with some having additional extra-pulmonary involvement), which fulfilled

the American Thoracic Society/ Infectious Diseases Society of America (ATS/IDSA)

criteria for NTM infection (Griffith et al., 2007).

Our study shows that *M. riyadhense* shares a larger number of orthologues with *M.*

tuberculosis than *M. kansasii* and *M. marinum*, notably in the T/A gene family (Figure

supplementary 6). Forty-nine pairs of T/A gene orthologues were found in *M. riyadhense*,

far greater than the number of orthologues observed in any of the other NTMs. The

expansion of T/A genes among the MTBC offers additional proof   that gene acquisition

through lateral gene transfer played a key role in the development of pathogenicity; this

agrees with previous findings (Stinear et al., 2008)(Becq et al., 2007).

M. riyadhense strains appeared as both smooth and rough colony forms when grown on

solid LJ media. We observed the presence of LOS I and LOS II and the absence of LOS

IV. These biochemical observations agree with the genomic prediction that *M.*

riyadhense strains lack a functional *wecA* gene, which is required for the extension of

LOS II to LOS IV. *In silico* RD analysis *M. riyadhense* revealed independent RD2[riaydh]

and RD12[riyadh] deletions when compared to *M. canettii* and other members of the MTBC.

Frequent and independent deletion events in these specific genomic regions across these

groups of closely related mycobacteria suggest a role for natural selection that might be

important for pathogenicity.

All the 5 ESX type VII secretion systems present in *M. tuberculosis*, and known to be

involved in virulence and pathogenicity, were found in *M. riyadhense* with very similar

gene arrangement. An additional ESX-5 system was also found on the circular plasmid

pMR01. pMR01-like plasmids have been shown in many different NTMs, including *M.*

kansasii, *M. marinum*, *M. chimaera* and *M. avium*, indicating that these groups of

plasmids containing both TS4 and TS7 are conjugative plasmids. The extensive presence

of these plasmids may also explain the origin of the type VII secretion system (Ummels

et al., 2014). ESAT-6 and CFP-10, which are secreted through ESX-1, are critical to

phagosome perturbation and manipulation of host macrophages induced by *M.*

tuberculosis (Jamwal et al., 2016). Linked to this, our transcriptome analysis revealed

that *M. riyadhense* and *M. kansasii* trigger similar overall macrophage responses after

infection when compared to *M. bovis* BCG (as a representative of the MTBC). These data

reinforce the phylogenetic relationship of *M. riyadhense* with the MTBC species and its

transitional status between an opportunistic and an obligate pathogen.

The clinical presentation of our cases was mainly indistinguishable from disease caused

by *M. tuberculosis*, as reported earlier (Garbati and Hakawi, 2014)(Choi et al., 2012), but

with a negative *M. tuberculosis* PCR. Due to the relatively recent emergence of *M.*

riyadhense as an important clinical pathogen, and coupled with its misdiagnosis as *M.*

tuberculosis by commercially available kits, we developed an accurate set of diagnostic

markers based on the genomic datasets generated in this study. The primer sets accurately

detect *M. riyadhense* in a mixed cocktail of closely related mycobacteria: it   can serve as

part of an accurate and fast diagnostic protocol in clinical settings thus reducing the need

for strict isolation, laborious contact tracing as well as the inappropriate use of TB

antimicrobials. . These primers can be used in a global epidemiological survey of cases of

M. riyadhense infections in humans, animals and the environment. This may thus provide

a more complete picture of the epidemiology of *M. riyadhense* following a broad One

Health approach. It would, for example, be of clinical interest to see if *M. riyadhense*

infections occur in Africa and South America, for which no reports are available, or if *M.*

riyadhense is uniquely endemic in the Arabian Peninsula. Indeed, a limitation of this and

previous similar studies is that all isolates available for genomic studies are clinical. *M.*

riyadhense is an environmental pathogen that is most likely be found in animals sharing

the same niche with humans that were infected from the environment. As the natural

environmental reservoir of *M. riyadhense* remains unknown, we believe that systematic

screening of relevant environmental samples with the MRDP established in this study

may help to establish the natural habitat of this bacterium.

In conclusion, our study provides unprecedented insights into the ancestry and adaptive

evolution of the MTBC relative to extant NTM species and places *M. riyadhense* as one

of the closest environmental relatives to the MTBC. Our work provides compelling data

supporting the use of *M. riyadhense* as a novel mycobacterium model for the study of

virulence evolution and pathogenesis in MTBC.

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Data Availability

1011   The *M. riyadhense* dataset is available at European Nucleotide Archive (ENA) under the

1012   study accession no. PRJEB32162. The assemblies are available with DOI

1013   10.5281/zenodo.2873972.

1014

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1018

Conflicts of Interest

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Author Contributions Statement

AP conceived the comparative genomics part of the study, obtained the funding and

supervised the work; MG and AH conceived the clinical part of the study; MG and FA

wrote the clinical part of the text; FA, MG, TA, SF, AH, MAR, AR, and TS collected the

microbiological and clinical information; and AP, QG, SG, AB, and FA designed the

experiments. QG performed the data analysis and prepared the initial draft of the

manuscript, followed by edits from AP, SG, MG, SF and AB. QG, SM, ASm and JB

performed the transcriptome experiment. ASi and AB performed the TLC analysis. CN

and YS provided materials for the diagnostic markers and intellectual advice. All authors

1039   have commented on various sections of the manuscript, which were finally curated and

1040   incorporated in the final version by QG and AP.

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Figure.1

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1057   Figure.2

Figure.3

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Figure.4

Figure.5

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Figure.6

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Captions for the figures:

Figure.1: A hypothesis for relationships of *M. riyadhense* and MTBC among

Mycobacterium genus. 12 marker genes from the chromosome used for

generating the phylogeny are selected by Amphora2, Dayhoff model

selected by Modelgenerator are applied to generated this phylogeny using

RaxML. The circle on each branch represent the bootstrap values. Part of the

phylogenetic tree was highlighted for illustration purpose.

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1103 Figure.2: Genome content comparison. Venn diagrams represents the

1104 overlap of gene orthologs between the (A) *M. riyadhense*, *M. tuberculosis*

1105 H37Rv, *M. marinum* M, *M. kansasii* 12478 and *M. szulgai* and (B) *M.*

1106 *riyadhense* and five species within MTBC.

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Figure.3: The presence (black) and absence(while) of *M. tuberculosis*

H37Rv toxin/antitoxin orthologs in *M. riyadhense*, *M. marinum*, *M. kansasii*,

M. shinjukuense, *M. lacus*, *M. decipiens* and MTBC species. The orange

color represent only toxin or antitoxin protein ortholog has been found in

that pair of toxin/antitoxin system. T/A systems within *M. riyadhense* are

highlighted in the red box.

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Figure.4: LOS systems in *M. riyadhense* and other related mycobacteria and

2D-TLC analysis of polar lipids extracted from selected *M. riyadhense*

strains. (A) Genetic locus map of the LOS biosynthesis gene cluster from *M.*

riyadhense, *M. canettii* A and *M. tuberculosis* H37Rv (drawn to scale). The

arrows showing the direction of transcription and the genes are colored

according to the orthologous relationships. (B) Rough-dry colony

morphology (MR193) and (C) smooth morphology (MR226) of *M.*

riyadhense. Polar lipids from two known LOS producers, *M. marinum* (D)

and *M. kansasii* (E) are included to show the migration pattern of LOS

species in System E. (F) 2D-TLC analysis of polar lipids extracted from

select *M. riyadhense* rough strain or smooth (G) strain. A separate staining

with alpha-napthol also confirmed that this was a glycolipid species from the

same (H) rough and (I) smooth strain. (D), (E), (F) and (G) were charred

after staining with MPA, while (H) and (I) were charred after staining with

alpha napthol. LOS III from *M. riyadhense* is indicated by a solid arrow.

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Figure. 5 This circular heatmap demonstrates the expression values from

RAW264.7 infections with *M. riyadhense* (MR), *M. kansasii* (MK) and *M.*

bovis BCG Denmark (Denm) over 3, 24 and 48 hrs. The gene sets of each

clusters are: A: Angiogenesis; B: Antigen Presentation; C: Cell Cycle and

Apoptosis; D: Cell Migration and Adhesion; E: Chemokine signaling; F:

Complement Activation; G: Cytokine Signaling; H: Differentiation and

Maintenance of Myeloid Cells; I: ECM remodeling; J: Fc Receptor

Signaling; K: Growth Factor Signaling; L: Interferon Signaling; M:

Lymphocyte activation; N: Metabolism; O: Pathogen Response; P: T-cell

Activation and Checkpoint Signaling; Q: TH1 Activation; R: TH2

Activation; S: TLR signaling. The cycles 1-9 represent RAW264.7

transcriptome response upon infections of 1: Denm-3h; 2: Denm-24h; 3:

Denm-48h; 4: MR-3h; 5: MK-3h; 6: MR-24h; 7: MK-24h; 8: MR-48h; 9:

MK-48h.

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Figure.6: Agarose gel (2%) electrophoresis analysis of a PCR diagnostic test

for *M. riyadhense*.

Lane M: DNA Marker, Lane 1-8: Varies *M. riyadhense* strains (From left to

right: MR193, MR206, MR210, MR222, MR226, MR244, MR246,

MR1023), Lane 9-16: Varies *Mycobacterium* species (From left to right: *M.*

tuberculosis, *M. bovis*, *M. africanum*, *M. microti*, *M. oryis*, *M. kansasii*, *M.*

szulgai and *M. angelicum*) template, Template cocktail, mycobacterium

species (*M. tuberculosis*, *M. bovis*, *M. kansasii*, *M. marinum*, *M. szulgai*, *M.*

avium and *M. angelicum*) with (Lane 17, +) and without (Lane 18,-) *M.*

riyadhense MR226 gDNA template. Lane 19: Non-template control (NTC).

Upper Panel: MRDP (*M. riyadhense* diagnostic marker) set. Lower Panel B:

Mycobacterium genus specific primer ITS-T and mycom-R amplified with

mycobacterial gDNA.

1178   Tables:

Table.1 Clinical characteristics of the studied population

	Age (Years)	Gender	HIV status	Other co-morbid conditions	Site(s) of the infection	Smooth/Rough	Auramine-rhodamine stain	Ziehl-Neelsen stain	Therapy Initial medication/duration	Continuous medication/duration	Radiographic Location of lesion (Chest CT)	Baseline CD4 count (X10^6/L)	Viral load (Copies/mL)	Treatment Outcome
MR193	82	M	Unknown	Smoking; DM; HTN; heart disease	Pulmonary	R	4+	2+	NA	NA	Left upper lobe consolidation	NA	N/A	Died
MR206	32	M	Negative	Eisenmenger's syndrome; pulmonary HTN	Pulmonary	R	NA	1+	IMP/2M CLR/2M EMB/2M INH/1M PYZ/1M RIF/1M	CLR/4M EMB/4M	Bilateral air spice consolidation and nodular opacity	NA	N/A	Survived
MR210	66	M	Positive	PCP co-infection	Pulmonary	S	NA	Negtive	EMB/18M CLR/18M	NA	Bilateral ground glass opacities	0.7	415,927	Survived
MR222	37	M	Positive	Lymphoblastic lymphoma	Pulmonary; LN, Abdominal	S	NA	Negtive	CLR/1M EMB/1M IMP/1M	EMB/2M IMP/2M	Multiple lung lesions with central cavitation	0	838	Died
MR226	8	M	Negative	Free	Pulmonary; LA	S	NA	Negtive	NA	NA	Multiple bilateral nodular infiltrates, more in the left upper lobe	NA	N/A	Survived
MR244	28	M	Positive	Pulmonary disease; hematologic disease	Pulmonary; LN, Abdominal; Peritoneal;	S	NA	2+	CLR/1M RIF+INH/1M EMB/1M	MXF/4M	Multiple bilateral lung nodules; cavitation left lower lobe	0.02	399,652	Survived
MR246	17	M	Negative	Pulmonary disease; chronic diarrhea	Pulmonary; Mediastinal LN	S	NA	Negtive	RIF/7M CLR/21M EMB/17M	NA	Left upper lobe consolidation	NA	N/A	Survived
MR1023	47	M	Negative	DM; subclinical hypothyroidism	Pulmonary	S	NA	Negtive	NA	NA	Bilateral nodular infiltrate; cavity,left upper lobe	NA	N/A	Survived

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Table.2 Comparison of general features of genome in Mycobacteria

Features	M. tuberculosis	M. africanum	M. bovis	M. canettii	M. riyadhense	M. kansasii	M. marinum
Genome Size (M)	4.41	4.39	4.26	4.48	Chromosome: 6.25 Plasmid pMRLP01: 0.55 Plasmid pMR01: 0.09	Chromosome: 6.43 Plasmid pMK12478: 0.14	Chromosome: 6.34 Plasmid pRAW: 0.11
GC content (%)	65.6	65.6	65.6	65.6	Chromosome: 65.35 Plasmid pMRLP01: 67.36 Plasmid pMR01: 65.69	Chromosome: 66.2 Plasmid pMK12478: 65.8	Chromosome: 65.8 Plasmid pRAW: 64.1
CDS	3,906	4,045	4,042	4,064	Chromosome: 5,490 Plasmid pMRLP01: 443 Plasmid pMR01: 88	Chromosome: 5,631 Plasmid pMK12478: 152	Chromosome: 5,149 Plasmid pRAW: 94
Gene Density(bp)	1101	1085	1032	1044	Chromosome: 1126 Plasmid pMRLP01: 1239 Plasmid pMR01: 1072	Chromosome 1142 Plasmid pMK12478: 954	Chromosome 1176 Plasmid pRAW: 1166
Conserved protein with assigned function	2855 (73%)	3078 (76%)	3072 (76%)	3125 (77%)	Chromosome: 4079 (74%) Plasmid pMRLP01: 217 (49%) Plasmid pMR01: 22 (25%)	Chromosome: 4468 (79%) Plasmid pMK12478:74 (49%)	Chromosome: 4091 (79%) Plasmid pRAW: 38 (40%)
Unique CDS	62 (1.59%)	25 (0.62%)	40 (0.99%)	83 (2.04%)	Chromosome:1059(19.29%) Plasmid pMRLP01:293 (66.14%) Plasmid pMR01:32 (36.36%)	Chromosome: 1,080 (19.18%) Plasmid pMK12478: 61 (40.13%)	Chromosome: 993 (19.29%) Plasmid pMK12478: 42 (44.68%)
tRNA	45	45	47	45	Chromosome: 51 Plasmid pMRLP01:1	Chromosome: 46 Plasmid: NA	Chromosome: 47 Plasmid: NA
rRNA	3	3	3	3	Chromosome: 3 Plasmid: NA	Chromosome: 3 Plasmid: NA	Chromosome: 3 Plasmid: NA
Transposase /integrase	53	68	56	98	Chromosome:110 Plasmid pMR01:1 Plasmid pMRLP01: 72	Chromosome:79 Plasmid pMK12478:3	Chromosome:41 Plasmid pRAW:4
Reference	1	2	3	4	MR226 This Study	5	6

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Table.3 Presence and absence of the *M. marinum* orthologs related to LOS synthesis in *M. riyadhense* and other species.

	M. smegmatis	*M. kansasii*	*M. canettii*	*M. riyadhense*	*M. tuberculoisis* H37Rv
MMAR_1008	P	P	P	P	P
MMAR_2307	A	P	A	P	A
MMAR_2313	A	P	P	P	P
MMAR_2319	A	A	A	A	A
MMAR_2320 (*wecE*)	A	P	P	A	A
MMAR_2327	A	P	P	P	P
MMAR_2332	A	A	A	A	A
MMAR_2336 (*galE*)	A	P	A	A	A
MMAR_2340 (*pks*)	P	P	P	P	T
MMAR_2341	P	P	P	P	P
MMAR_2343(*pap*)	P	P	P	P	A

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1196   Supplementary Files:

1213   Figure supplementary 1

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1221 Figure supplementary 2A

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<div align="center">Figure supplementary 2B</div>

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1227 Figure supplementary 2C

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1257   Figure supplementary 4A

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1267   Figure supplementary 4B

Tree scale: 0.01

MR206 (2014, Jan)
MR246 (2016, Feb)
MR1023 (2017, Oct)
MR244 (2015, Sept)
MR226 (2015, Mar)
MR222 (2014, Nov)
MR210 (2014, Nov)
MR193 (2013, Jul)

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1277   Figure supplementary 5

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Figure supplementary 12

Supplementary Table 1. Comparison of *M. riyadhense* strains' assemblies

	MR1023	MR193	MR206	MR210	MR222	MR226	MR244	MR246	Type strain assembly GCA_002101845.1
Assembly Size (bp)	6,906,827	6,695,517	6,835,855	6,528,955	6,533,138	6,888,178	6,775,970	6,916,580	6,269,850
Chromosome size (bp)	6,306,178	6,129,600	6,288,531	6,034,715	5,960,707	6,243,587	6,258,360	6,289,824	6,269,850
Contigs	9	7	6	2	7	3	9	4	263
Gaps in chromosome	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	262
pMRLP01	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A
pMR01	P	A	A	A	P	P	P	P	A
Transposase number in pMRL01	91	43	81	56	42	67	87	87	73
CDS	6185	5901	6124	5800	5852	6077	6030	6060	5,168
Chromosomal CDS	5630	5392	5634	5420	5353	5545	5637	5546	5,168

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Supplementary Table 2. The SNPs analysis of different samples using MR226 as the reference

	MR193	MR206	MR210	MR222	MR244	MR246	MR1023
Non-coding SNPS	2,550	160	2,478	2,727	160	192	165
Synonymous SNPs	16,574	1,107	15,757	16,959	1,250	1,138	1,120
Non-synonymous SNPs	3,446	227	3,161	3,287	266	250	232

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Supplementary Table 3 *M. marinum* LOS locus genes orthologs shared with *M. riasthense* strains

	MR1023	MR193	MR206	MR210	MR222	MR226	MR244	MR246
MMAR_1008	MR1023_04688	MR193_04455	MR206_04685	MR210_04486	MR222_04444	MR_04617	MR244_04622	MR246_04625
MMAR_2302	MR1023_03305	MR193_03158	MR206_03308	MR210_03179	MR222_03113	MR_03260	MR244_03260	MR246_03263
MMAR_2303	MR1023_03304	MR193_03157	MR206_03307	MR210_03178	MR222_03112	MR_03259	MR244_03259	MR246_03262
MMAR_2304	MR1023_03303	MR193_03156	MR206_03306	MR210_03177	MR222_03111	MR_03258	MR244_03258	MR246_03261
MMAR_2305	MR1023_03302	MR193_03155	MR206_03305	MR210_03176	MR222_03110	MR_03257	MR244_03257	MR246_03260
MMAR_2306	MR1023_03301	MR193_03154	MR206_03304	MR210_03175	MR222_03109	MR_03256	MR244_03256	MR246_03259
MMAR_2307	MR1023_03295	MR193_03148	MR206_03298	MR210_03167	MR222_03103	MR_03250	MR244_03250	MR246_03253
MMAR_2308								
MMAR_2309	MR1023_03299	MR193_03152	MR206_03302	MR210_03173	MR222_03107	MR_03254	MR244_03254	MR246_03257
MMAR_2310	MR1023_03298	MR193_03151	MR206_03301	MR210_03172	MR222_03106	MR_03253	MR244_03253	MR246_03256
MMAR_2311	MR1023_03297	MR193_03150	MR206_03300	MR210_03171	MR222_03105	MR_03252	MR244_03252	MR246_03255
MMAR_2312				MR210_03166				
MMAR_2313 (*losA*)		MR193_03128						
MMAR_2314	MR1023_00361	MR193_03129	MR206_00366	MR210_00381	MR222_00356	MR_00367	MR244_00362	MR246_00362
MMAR_2315								
MMAR_2316	MR1023_03023	MR193_02856	MR206_03023	MR210_01388,MR210_02888	MR222_02834	MR_02982	MR244_02976	MR246_02979
MMAR_2317	MR1023_05374	MR193_05138	MR206_05362	MR210_05150	MR222_05107	MR_05289	MR244_05292	MR246_05296
MMAR_2318		MR193_05130						
MMAR_2319								
MMAR_2320 (*wecE*)								
MMAR_2321		MR193_03145						
MMAR_2322		MR193_03146						
MMAR_2323								
MMAR_2324								
MMAR_2325		MR193_03147						
MMAR_2326								
MMAR_2327	MR1023_03300	MR193_03153	MR206_03303	MR210_03174	MR222_03108	MR_03255	MR244_03255	MR246_03258
MMAR_2328								
MMAR_2329	MR1023_03443	MR193_03296	MR206_03447	MR210_03317	MR222_03253	MR_03400	MR244_03395	MR246_03398
MMAR_2330	MR1023_00875,MR1023_02733	MR193_00837	MR206_00875,MR206_02735	MR210_00864,MR210_02597	MR222_00847	MR_00870,MR_02697	MR244_00866,MR244_	MR246_00867,MR246_02692
MMAR_2331								
MMAR_2332	MR1023_03970	MR193_03792	MR206_03973	MR210_03161	MR222_03768	MR_03910	MR244_03914	MR246_03918
MMAR_2333	MR1023_03293	MR193_03123	MR206_03296	MR210_03160	MR222_03101	MR_03248	MR244_03248	MR246_03251
MMAR_2334				MR210_03159				
MMAR_2335		MR193_04282		MR210_03158				
MMAR_2336 (*galE6*)								
MMAR_2337	MR1023_03292	MR193_03122	MR206_03295	MR210_03156	MR222_03100	MR_03247	MR244_03247	MR246_03250
MMAR_2338				MR210_03153				
MMAR_2339	MR1023_04010	MR193_03832	MR206_04012	MR210_03873	MR222_03809	MR_03949	MR244_03953	MR246_03957
MMAR_2340 (*pks5*)	MR1023_03273	MR193_03102	MR206_03274	MR210_03130	MR222_03081	MR_03228	MR244_03228	MR246_03231
MMAR_2341 (*fadD25*)	MR1023_03277	MR193_03106	MR206_03912	MR210_03134	MR222_03085	MR_03232	MR244_03232	MR246_03235
MMAR_2342	MR1023_03276	MR193_03105	MR206_03277	MR210_03133	MR222_03084	MR_03231	MR244_03231	MR246_03234
MMAR_2343	MR1023_03271	MR193_03100	MR206_03272	MR210_03128	MR222_03079	MR_03226	MR244_03226	MR246_03229
MMAR_2344	MR1023_03270	MR193_03099	MR206_03271	MR210_03127	MR222_03078	MR_03225	MR244_03225	MR246_03228
MMAR_2345	MR1023_03268	MR193_03097	MR206_03269	MR210_03125	MR222_03076	MR_03223	MR244_03223	MR246_03226
MMAR_2346	MR1023_03266	MR193_03095	MR206_03267	MR210_03123	MR222_03073	MR_03221	MR244_03221	MR246_03224
MMAR_2347								
MMAR_2348	MR1023_03264	MR193_03093	MR206_03265	MR210_03121	MR222_03071	MR_03219	MR244_03219	MR246_03222
MMAR_2349	MR1023_03278,MR1023_03285	MR193_03107,MR193_07	MR206_03281,MR206_03288	MR210_03135,MR210_03142	MR222_03086,MR22_03233,MR_03240		MR244_03233,MR244_	MR246_03236,MR246_03243
MMAR_2350	MR1023_02109	MR193_02040	MR206_02111	MR210_02028		MR_02086	MR244_02076	MR246_02077
MMAR_2351								
MMAR_2352	MR1023_01970	MR193_01915	MR206_01970	MR210_01904	MR222_01910	MR_01948	MR244_01936	MR246_01937
MMAR_2353	MR1023_03275,MR1023_03279	MR193_03104,MR193_07	MR206_03276,MR206_03282	MR210_03132,MR210_03136	MR222_03083,MR22_03230,MR_03234		MR244_03230,MR244_	MR246_03233,MR246_03237
MMAR_2354	MR1023_02623	MR193_02508	MR206_02626	MR210_02487	MR222_02487	MR_02589	MR244_02580	MR246_02583
MMAR_2403								
MMAR_2404								
MMAR_2405 (*cphB*)								
MMAR_2406								
MMAR_2355 (*pap43*)								
MMAR_4419								
MMAR_5170	MR1023_00312	MR193_00322	MR206_00317	MR210_00331	MR222_00307	MR_00318	MR244_00313	MR246_00313

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