

# 1 Genomic signatures of experimental adaptation to 2 antimicrobial peptides in *Staphylococcus aureus*

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16 **Running title:** Genomics of AMP resistance in *S. aureus*

17 **Keywords:** *Staphylococcus aureus*, antimicrobial peptide resistance, experimental evolution

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19 **Objectives:** The evolution of resistance against antimicrobial peptides has long been considered  
20 unlikely due to their mechanism of action, yet experimental selection with AMPs results in rapid  
21 evolution of resistance in several species of bacteria. Although numerous studies have utilized  
22 mutant screens to identify loci that determine AMP susceptibility, there is a dearth of data  
23 concerning the genomic changes which accompany experimental evolution of AMP resistance.

24 **Methods:** Using genome re-sequencing we analysed the mutations which arise during experimental  
25 evolution of resistance to the cationic AMPs iseganan, melittin and pexiganan, as well as to a  
26 combination of melittin and pexiganan, or to the aminoglycoside antibiotic streptomycin.

27 **Results:** Analysis of 17 independently replicated *Staphylococcus aureus* selection lines, including  
28 unselected controls, showed that each AMP selected for mutations at distinct loci. We identify  
29 mutations in genes involved in the synthesis and maintenance of the cell envelope. This includes  
30 genes previously identified from mutant screens for AMP resistance, and genes involved in the  
31 response to AMPs and cell-wall-active antibiotics. Furthermore, transposon insertion mutants were  
32 used to verify that a number of the identified genes are directly involved in determining AMP  
33 susceptibility.

34 **Conclusions:** Strains selected for AMP resistance under controlled experimental evolution  
35 displayed consistent AMP-specific mutations in genes which determine AMP susceptibility. This  
36 suggests that different routes to evolve resistance are favored within a controlled genetic  
37 background.

## 38 39 **Introduction**

40 Antimicrobial peptides (AMPs), ubiquitous in multicellular organisms<sup>1</sup>, are considered to be a  
41 promising source of new and potent antibiotics<sup>2</sup>. Current research on AMPs mostly focuses on the  
42 mechanisms of action and on the development of therapeutics whereas only a small number of  
43 studies have addressed the important problem of bacterial resistance evolution. Resistance against  
44 cationic AMPs evolves readily *in vitro* in *Escherichia coli* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*<sup>3</sup>,  
45 *Salmonella enterica*<sup>4</sup>, and *Staphylococcus aureus*<sup>5,6</sup>. Experimentally evolved strains of *S. aureus* that  
46 were selected successfully for resistance against the cationic protegrin-1 analog iseganan<sup>6</sup> survive  
47 better in a model host<sup>7</sup>, which relies heavily on AMPs to deal with long-lasting infections<sup>8</sup>. *S.*  
48 *aureus* populations selected for resistance to pexiganan and mellitin also show a trend towards

49 increased survival in the host<sup>7</sup>. Here we present a genomic analysis of *S. aureus* strains from these  
50 populations<sup>6</sup> together with susceptibility data from transposon insertion mutants that show a number  
51 of the identified genes are directly involved in mediating AMP susceptibility.

52

## 53 **Materials and methods**

54 Strains were isolated from populations which were created by selecting *S. aureus* JLA513<sup>9</sup> (*hla-*  
55 *lacZ hla+*, derived from SH1000, from Simon Foster, University of Sheffield) for 28 days with  
56 increasing concentrations of AMPs or with the aminoglycoside antibiotic streptomycin<sup>6</sup>.  
57 Streptomycin-selected strains are included here as a positive control since the genetic basis of  
58 streptomycin resistance is well-characterized in *S. aureus*. Briefly, to ensure adaptation to the  
59 culture medium 50  $\mu$ l of *S. aureus* JLA513 culture was passaged serially every 24 h for 10 days in 5  
60 ml Müller-Hinton Broth (MHB). Subsequently, 5 parallel selection lines were established in each  
61 treatment at MIC<sub>50</sub> (as well as unselected controls) by inoculating 5  $\mu$ l of serially-passaged culture  
62 into 500  $\mu$ l of MHB containing the cognate selective agent. 5  $\mu$ l of 24 h cultures were passaged  
63 daily to fresh MHB. The concentrations of the selective agents were doubled each week for a total  
64 of four weeks. See Dobson et al. 2013 Table S1 for full details and precise concentrations<sup>6</sup>. Strains  
65 were isolated from each of three independently selected replicate populations per selective agent  
66 (with the exception of iseganan-selected populations where only 2 frozen population stocks  
67 remained viable), as well as from unselected controls and the ancestral strain JLA513. Minimum  
68 inhibitory concentrations (MIC) were calculated for the selective agents (Table S1) in 96-well plates  
69 as previously described<sup>10</sup> and DNA was isolated from each strain using a Roboklon DNA extraction  
70 kit (Roboklon GmbH, Germany). Genomic DNA from each strain was sequenced for 180 cycles  
71 using a HiSeq2000 by the Beijing Genomics Institute (BGI), resulting in 90-bp paired-end reads.  
72 Sequence data are available from the NCBI SRA under BioProject ID PRJNA291485. Strain  
73 JLA513<sup>9</sup> was constructed using strain SH1000, which is a derivative of strain 8325. The genetic  
74 differences between SH1000 and other members of the 8325 lineage have been described using  
75 both array-based resequencing<sup>11</sup> and subsequently by de novo genome sequencing<sup>12</sup>. The differences  
76 comprise: the excision of three prophages from strain 8325 ( $\Phi$ 11, 12, 13), 13 single-nucleotide  
77 polymorphisms (2 synonymous, 11 non-synonymous), a 63-bp deletion in the *spa-sarS* intergenic  
78 region, and an 11-bp deletion in *rsbU*<sup>12</sup>. Therefore a consensus reference genome was first produced  
79 to account for these differences. Reads from JLA513 were assembled using SPAdes<sup>13</sup> and the  
80 resulting contigs were used to correct for the 3 phage excision sites in the 8325 reference genome.  
81 JLA513 reads were then mapped to the resulting sequence and bcftools consensus<sup>14</sup> was used to  
82 correct the remaining 13 SNPs and 2 indels. To identify mutations in the selection lines, reads were  
83 mapped to this reference genome using BWA<sup>15</sup> and sorted, deduplicated (to account for optical- and  
84 PCR-duplicates) and indexed using SAMtools<sup>14</sup> and Picard (<http://broadinstitute.github.io/picard>).  
85 Average coverage was 134-fold (range 110-144 fold). Variants were called using FreeBayes version  
86 v0.9.14-8-g1618f7e<sup>16</sup> and coverage was calculated across 25-bp windows using IGVtools<sup>17</sup>. All  
87 variants were independently verified using a second computational pipeline, breseq<sup>18</sup>. Insertion  
88 mutants were obtained from the Nebraska Transposon Mutant Library<sup>19</sup> in order to test if the  
89 identified genes were directly involved in AMP resistance. MICs were calculated for each mutant  
90 and the wild type strain USA300\_FPR3757 as described above.

91

## 92 **Results and discussion**

93 Between one and four mutations were identified per strain after accounting for differences between  
94 the JLA513 ancestor and the 8325 reference genome, and for mutations arising over the course of  
95 the experiment across treatments and unselected controls. In total, 28 mutations were identified  
96 across the 17 strains including 24 nonsynonymous mutations affecting 13 genes, a segmental  
97 duplication of 124-kb region containing an entire *rrn* operon (Table 1, Table S2) as well as 1  
98 synonymous mutation and 2 intergenic indels (Table S2).

99

100 Pexiganan resistance was characterized by distinct nonsense mutations in the gene encoding the  
101 XRE-family transcriptional regulator XdrA in strains PG2.2 and PG4.2 (Table 1, Table S2). XdrA  
102 was recently shown to activate transcription of *spa*<sup>20</sup>, which encodes the protein A virulence factor,  
103 and deletion mutants show increased  $\beta$ -lactam resistance<sup>21</sup>. Here, a transposon mutant with an  
104 insertion in *xdrA* showed decreased pexiganan susceptibility (Table 1, Table S3) indicating that  
105 XdrA is directly involved in pexiganan resistance. In addition to a mutation in *xdrA*, strain PG4.2  
106 also carried a nonsynonymous substitution in *wcaG*, which encodes a putative UDP-glucose-4  
107 epimerase (Table 1). Only a single mutation was observed in strain PG1.1, introducing a frameshift  
108 into *mgt* (*sgtB*), which encodes a monofunctional peptidoglycan glycosyltransferase (Table 1). A  
109 distinct nonsense in *mgt* was also identified in one pexiganan-melittin-selected strain (see below).  
110 An *mgt* transposon mutant was also found to be less susceptible to pexiganan (Table 1, Table S3). As  
111 part of the cell wall stimulon<sup>22</sup>, *mgt* is positively regulated by cell wall stress and participates in the  
112 polymerization of lipid II into nascent peptidoglycan<sup>23</sup>. Recent work has shown that *mgt* mutations  
113 cause peptidoglycan chain length reduction as well as alterations in cellular morphology and  
114 division site placement<sup>24</sup>.

115

116 All 3 melittin-resistant strains were found to carry missense mutations resulting in either A35T or  
117 A35D substitutions in a gene encoding a putative RluD-like pseudouridylate synthase with no  
118 known role in antimicrobial susceptibility. A transposon mutant from the Nebraska Transposon  
119 Mutant Library with an insertion in this gene showed no change in melittin susceptibility (Table 1,  
120 Table S3). One melittin-resistant strain carried a L93I missense mutation in a region encoding an  
121 alpha helix immediately adjacent to the conserved active site quintet in the response regulator WalR  
122 (Table 1). WalR regulates cell wall metabolism and is ubiquitous in the *Firmicutes* where it is the  
123 only known essential two-component system<sup>25</sup>. *walKR* mutations, including those affecting the  
124 WalR active site, arise during persistent clinical *S. aureus* infections and are known to confer  
125 resistance to vancomycin and the lipopeptide antibiotic daptomycin by increasing the thickness of  
126 the cell wall<sup>26</sup>. Identical nonsense mutations were identified in two melittin-resistant strains at the  
127 extreme 5' end of the *ytrA* open reading frame, which encodes a winged helix-turn-helix GntR-  
128 family repressor (Table 1). Similar to its *B. subtilis* ortholog, *ytrA* is the first gene of an operon  
129 which encodes two putative ABC transporters. In *B. subtilis*, YtrA binds specifically to an inverted  
130 repeat in the *ytrA* and *ywoB* promoters, and transcription of the *ytr* and *ywo* operons is induced by  
131 cell-wall-active antibiotics including the peptide antibiotics bacitracin, vancomycin and  
132 ramnoplanin, with *ytrA* null mutations causing constitutive expression of both operons<sup>27</sup>. Notably,  
133 the entire *ytrA* operon has been shown to be induced by cationic AMPs in *S. aureus*, where it is  
134 under negative regulation by the AMP sensing system *aps*<sup>28</sup> and has also been implicated in nisin  
135 susceptibility in *S. aureus* SH1000<sup>29</sup>. Although *ytrA* insertions are not present in the Nebraska  
136 Transposon Mutant Library we were able to obtain 2 independent *ytr* operon transposon mutants  
137 with insertions downstream of *ytrA* which did not show any detectable difference in AMP  
138 susceptibility relative to the wild type (Table S3). This raises the possibility that the *ytrA*-null  
139 mutations observed here may mediate AMP susceptibility via derepression of the *S. aureus* *ywo*  
140 ortholog.

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142 Iseganan resistance was associated with an identical 5-bp deletion in the extreme 3' end of the *yjbH*  
143 gene in each of two strains from independent iseganan-selected lines (Table 1). YjbH controls the  
144 disulfide stress response by binding to the oxidative burst-specific transcriptional regulator Spx, and  
145 thereby controlling its degradation by the ClpXP protease<sup>30</sup>, a role which is conserved in *Bacillus*  
146 *subtilis*<sup>31</sup>. YjbH also modulates  $\beta$ -lactam susceptibility, with deletion mutants showing moderate  
147 resistance to various  $\beta$ -lactams but not to the glycopeptide antibiotic vancomycin<sup>30</sup>. The precise  
148 mechanism by which YjbH modulates susceptibility is unknown but is proposed to be a

149 consequence of upregulation of PBP4 which results in increased peptidoglycan cross-linking<sup>30</sup>.

150

151 There were no common mutations identified in the genomes of three strains which were selected  
152 with a 1:1 wt/wt combination of pexiganan and melittin (Table 1). However there were  
153 commonalities with strains that were selected with either melittin or pexiganan. A single missense  
154 mutation was identified in strain PGML3.2 which substitutes a conserved threonine residue in the  
155 winged helix-turn-helix DNA binding domain of YtrA (note that *ytrA* nonsense mutations were  
156 identified in 2 melittin-resistant strains described above). Similarly, a single nonsense mutation was  
157 identified in strain PGML5.1 in *mgt* (also mutated in 1 pexiganan-resistant strain described above).  
158 In contrast, three missense mutations were identified in the genome of a second pexiganan-melittin-  
159 selected strain. Interestingly this included *dak2* which encodes a dihydroxyacetone kinase  
160 responsible for incorporation of diphosphatidylglycerol into the cell membrane<sup>32</sup>. *dak2* was  
161 previously identified in a high throughput mutant screen for loci affecting susceptibility to the  
162 anionic human AMP dermcidin in *S. aureus*<sup>32</sup>. Mutations affecting the non-essential C-terminal  
163 DegV superfamily domain of Dak2 result in altered membrane phospholipid composition and  
164 decreased binding and activity of dermcidin but not of the cationic human AMPs LL-37 or human  
165  $\beta$ -defensin-3<sup>32</sup>. Given this lack of cross-resistance to cationic AMPs in *dak2* mutants, Dak2-  
166 mediated susceptibility was thought to be specific to anionic AMPs such as dermcidin<sup>32</sup>. It is  
167 therefore surprising to find *dak2* mutation in response to selection with a combination of the  
168 cationic AMPs melittin and pexiganan. Further evidence of the role of Dak2 in susceptibility to  
169 pexiganan and melittin was shown by increased susceptibility to both AMPs by a *dak2* transposon  
170 mutant (Table 1, Table S3).

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172 Mutations identified in streptomycin-selected strains mostly occurred in genes with known roles in  
173 streptomycin susceptibility (Table 1). Frameshift mutations in *gidB*, which encodes a 16S rRNA-  
174 specific 7-methylguanosine methyltransferase, were identified in all three streptomycin-selected  
175 strains (Table 1). In each case, the frameshift occurs within the region encoding the GidB  
176 methyltransferase domain. Mutations in *gidB* (*rsmG*) are associated with low-level streptomycin  
177 resistance in several species of bacteria including *S. aureus*<sup>33-36</sup> and it is speculated that loss of 16S  
178 methylation lowers the binding affinity of streptomycin thus conferring the resistance phenotype<sup>35</sup>.  
179 Here, a *gidB* transposon mutant was found to be 4-fold less susceptible to streptomycin (Table 1,  
180 Table S3). Two further mutations were identified which potentially affect ribosomal RNA. A 124-kb  
181 region containing an entire *rrn* operon appears to have been duplicated in a strain STR3.2 whereas  
182 strain STR1.1 carries a non-synonymous substitution in the essential gene encoding NusA, which  
183 acts as an antiterminator for 16S rRNA transcription, as well as a chaperone for 16S rRNA folding<sup>37</sup>  
184 (Table S2). Mutations were also identified in the glycerol kinase gene *glpK* in two strains (Table 1)  
185 however a transposon insertion did not detectably alter streptomycin susceptibility (Table 1, Table  
186 S3).

187

188 Numerous studies have utilized mutant screens to identify loci that determine AMP susceptibility<sup>32,38</sup>  
189 but with the exception of a single study<sup>4</sup>, there is a dearth of data concerning the genomic changes  
190 which accompany experimental evolution of AMP resistance. Here, genome sequencing of strains  
191 isolated from independently replicated AMP selection lines identified mutations associated with  
192 AMP resistance evolution and showed that each AMP selected for mutations at distinct loci. These  
193 mutations affected genes with known roles in susceptibility to AMPs and/or cell-wall-active  
194 antibiotics, as well as cell wall stress stimulon genes. All cationic AMPs used here form toroidal  
195 pores, yet there was little evidence of cross resistance or for mutations that were common across all  
196 AMP-selected strains. There is limited evidence of AMP-specific responses. For example, the  
197 staphylococcal virulence factor MprF determines susceptibility towards protegrins (e.g. iseganan)  
198 but has little effect on magainin (pexiganan analog) or melittin susceptibility<sup>39</sup>. Also, little is known

199 about AMP interactions with other constituents of the cell membrane and whether these may  
200 contribute to the specificity observed here. A small number of mutations occurred in genes with no  
201 known role in antimicrobial susceptibility, such as the gene encoding the RluD-like pseudouridylate  
202 synthase, and may represent compensatory adaptations that warrant further study. Furthermore,  
203 mutations in the *walR* gene such as that described here are known to increase multidrug resistance  
204 and to arise during clinical *S. aureus* infections<sup>26</sup>. This is consistent with the notion that the  
205 evolution of resistance to AMPs may compromise host defences against infection<sup>5,40</sup>.

206

### 207 **Acknowledgements**

208 We are grateful to Christine Bergmann, Sabine Kretschmer, and Uta Müller for technical assistance  
209 as well as to Simon Foster, Joshua Hooker, Alex O'Neill, and Christopher Randall for providing  
210 materials.

211

### 212 **Funding**

213 This research was supported by European Research Council grant 260986 to J.R..

214

### 215 **Transparency declarations**

216 None to declare.

217

### 218 **Supplementary data**

219 Table S1. MICs for various antimicrobials against 18 strains of *S. aureus*.

220 Table S2. Summary of all mutations.

221 Table S3. MICs for various antimicrobials against transposon insertion mutants of *S. aureus* strain

222 USA300\_FPR3757 from the Nebraska Transposon Mutant Library.

223 Table S4. Details of antimicrobial peptides used.

224

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349 **Table 1.** Mutations identified in strains selected for resistance to different antimicrobials.  
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Selection	No. of strains <sup>a</sup>	Gene	Function	Locus tag <sup>b</sup>	Susceptibility of Tn mutant <sup>c</sup>
IG	2	<i>yjbH</i>	Disulfide stress response	SAOUHSC_00938	not tested
ML	1	<i>walR (yycG)</i>	Cell envelope biogenesis	SAOUHSC_00020	not tested
ML	3	<i>rluA</i>	Pseudouridine synthase	SAOUHSC_00944	unchanged
ML/PGML	3(2ML/1PGL)	<i>ytrA</i> ortholog	Cell wall stimulon	SAOUHSC_02155	not tested
PG	1	<i>wcaG</i>	Nucleoside-diphosphate-sugar epimerase	SAOUHSC_00664	unchanged
PG	2	<i>xdrA</i>	Xenobiotic response element	SAOUHSC_01979	decreased
PG	2(1PG/1PGL)	<i>mgt (sgtB)</i>	Cell wall stimulon	SAOUHSC_02012	decreased
PGML	1	<i>hpr</i>	Carbohydrate transport	SAOUHSC_01028	not tested
PGML	1	<i>dak2</i>	Cell envelope biogenesis	SAOUHSC_01193	increased
PGML	1	<i>putA (fadM)</i>	Amino acid metabolism	SAOUHSC_01884	unchanged
STR	1	<i>nusA</i>	Transcription antitermination	SAOUHSC_01243	not tested
STR	2	<i>glpK</i>	Glycerol kinase	SAOUHSC_01276	unchanged
STR	1	<i>rrn</i> operons	Ribosome biogenesis	124-kb <i>rrn</i> region	not tested
STR	3	<i>gidB (rsmG)</i>	Ribosome biogenesis	SAOUHSC_03051	decreased

351 <sup>a</sup> Number of strains with a mutation in a given gene.

352 <sup>b</sup> Identifier in *Staphylococcus aureus* NCTC 8325 reference genome.

353 <sup>c</sup> Susceptibility of transposon insertion mutants from the Nebraska Transposon Mutant Library to  
354 the cognate selective agent. Not tested, transposon mutant not available. See Table S3 for full  
355 details.

356 IG, iseganan; ML, melittin; PG, pexiganan; PGML, 1:1 wt/wt combination of melittin and  
357 pexiganan; STR, streptomycin. See Table S4 for further details on AMPs used.



**TABLE S1.** MICs for various antimicrobials against 18 strains of *S. aureus*.

Strain	MIC(ug/ml) <sup>a</sup>				
	Melittin	Pexiganan	Pex-Mel <sup>b</sup>	Streptomycin	Vancomycin
JLA513	8	8	8	4	2
IG1.2	4	8	8	4	2
IG2.1	4	8	8	4	2
ML1.1	32	8	32	8	4
ML4.2	32	8	16	4	2
ML5.2	32	16	16	4	2
PG1.1	8	16	8	4	2
PG2.2	4	16	8	4	2
PG4.2	4	16	8	8	2
PGML3.2	16	16	16	2	2
PGML4.4	8	32	16	4	2
PGML5.1	8	16	16	2	2
STR1.1	8	8	8	32	2
STR2.2	8	8	8	>64	2
STR3.2	8	16	8	>64	2
Uns1.1	4	4	4	4	2
Uns3.4	4	4	4	4	2
Uns4.2	8	8	8	8	2

<sup>a</sup>MIC, minimum antimicrobial concentration necessary to inhibit the growth of *S. aureus*.

<sup>b</sup>Equal quantities of pexiganan and melittin.

ML, melittin; PG, pexiganan; PGML, 1:1 wt/wt combination of melittin and pexiganan; STR, streptomycin; Uns, unselected control strain.

**TABLE S2.** Summary of all mutations.

Strain	Mutation	Locus tag <sup>a</sup>	Annotation	Function
IG1.2	p.S266IfsX45	SAOUHSC_00938	<i>yjbH</i>	Disulfide stress response
IG2.1	p.S266IfsX45	SAOUHSC_00938	<i>yjbH</i>	Disulfide stress response
ML1.1	p.L93I	SAOUHSC_00020	<i>walR/yycG</i>	Cell envelope biogenesis; response regulator
ML1.1	p.A35T	SAOUHSC_00944	<i>rluD</i> -like	Pseudouridylate synthase
ML1.1	g.2101984_2101985insT	SAOUHSC_02270	intergenic	-
ML4.2	p.A35D	SAOUHSC_00944	<i>rluD</i> -like	Pseudouridylate synthase
ML4.2	p.L5X	SAOUHSC_02155	<i>ytrA</i>	Cell wall stimulon; repressor
ML5.2	p.A35D	SAOUHSC_00944	<i>rluD</i> -like	Pseudouridylate synthase
ML5.2	p.L5X	SAOUHSC_02155	<i>ytrA</i>	Cell wall stimulon; repressor
PG1.1	p.P39XfsX3	SAOUHSC_02012	<i>mgt/sgtB</i>	Cell wall stimulon; peptidoglycan glycosyltransferase
PG2.2	p.Q40RfsX24	SAOUHSC_01979	<i>xdrA</i>	Xenobiotic response element
PG4.2	p.M280V	SAOUHSC_00664	<i>wcaG</i>	Nucleoside-diphosphate-sugar epimerase; oxidoreductase
PG4.2	p.Q30X	SAOUHSC_01979	<i>xdrA</i>	Xenobiotic response element
PGML3.2	p.T74A	SAOUHSC_02155	<i>ytrA</i>	Cell wall stimulon; repressor
PGML4.4	p.A16D	SAOUHSC_01028	<i>hpr</i>	Carbohydrate transport
PGML4.4	p.G341D	SAOUHSC_01193	<i>dak2</i>	Cell envelope biogenesis; dihydroxyacetone kinase
PGML4.4	p.S138I	SAOUHSC_01884	<i>putA/fadM</i>	Amino acid metabolism; proline dehydrogenase
PGML5.1	p.Q251X	SAOUHSC_02012	<i>mgt/sgtB</i>	Cell wall stimulon; peptidoglycan glycosyltransferase
STR1.1	p.A227E	SAOUHSC_01243	<i>nusA</i>	Transcription antitermination; antiterminator
STR1.1	p.H87L	SAOUHSC_02727	NC_007795.1	Hypothetical protein; peptidase
STR1.1	p.R218DfsX75	SAOUHSC_03051	<i>gidB/rsmG</i>	Ribosome biogenesis; 16S rRNA methyltransferase
STR2.2	c.63A>G <sup>b</sup>	SAOUHSC_00489	<i>folP</i>	Dihydropteroate synthase
STR2.2	g.1090526_1090533del	intergenic	-	-
STR2.2	p.A332E	SAOUHSC_01276	<i>glpK</i>	Glycerolipid metabolism; glycerol kinase
STR2.2	p.S115EfsX12	SAOUHSC_03051	<i>gidB/rsmG</i>	Ribosome biogenesis; 16S rRNA methyltransferase
STR3.2	p.G251X	SAOUHSC_01276	<i>glpK</i>	Glycerolipid metabolism; glycerol kinase
STR3.2	g.2122437_2246248dup	segmental duplication	-	Encodes rRNA and ribosomal protein genes
STR3.2	p.S115EfsX12	SAOUHSC_03051	<i>gidB/rsmG</i>	Ribosome biogenesis; 16S rRNA methyltransferase

<sup>a</sup>Identifier in *Staphylococcus aureus* NCTC 8325 reference genome.

<sup>b</sup>Synonymous.

IG, iseganan; ML, melittin; PG, pexiganan; PGML, 1:1 wt/wt combination of melittin and pexiganan; STR, streptomycin.

**TABLE S3.** MICs for various antimicrobials against transposon insertion mutants of *Staphylococcus aureus* strain USA300\_FPR3757 from the Nebraska Transposon Mutant Library.

Strain	Locus tag <sup>b</sup>	Annotation	MIC(ug/ml) <sup>a</sup>			
			Melittin	Pexiganan	Pex-Mel <sup>c</sup>	Streptomycin
USA300	-	-	8	16	16	4
NE229	SAUSA300_1119	<i>dak2</i>	8	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	4
NE239	SAUSA300_1711	<i>putA (fadM)</i>	8	16	16	4
NE249	SAUSA300_2644	<i>gidB (rsmG)</i>	8	16	16	<b>16</b>
NE467	SAUSA300_0644	<i>wcaG</i>	8	16	16	4
NE596	SAUSA300_1855	<i>mgt (sgtB)</i>	8	<b>32</b>	16	4
NE822	SAUSA300_0909	<i>rluD</i> -like	8	16	16	4
NE896	SAUSA300_0903	<i>yjbH</i>	8	16	16	4
NE1023	SAUSA300_0984	<i>ptsI</i>	8	16	16	4
NE1445	SAUSA300_1797	<i>xdrA</i>	8	<b>32</b>	<b>8</b>	4
NE1587	SAUSA300_1192	<i>glpK</i>	8	16	16	4
NE1908 <sup>d</sup>	SAUSA300_1911	ABC transporter	8	16	16	4
NE1188 <sup>d</sup>	SAUSA300_1912	ABC transporter	8	16	16	4

<sup>a</sup>MIC(minimum inhibitory concentration), minimum antimicrobial concentration necessary to inhibit the growth of *S. aureus*.

<sup>b</sup>Identifier in *S. aureus* USA300\_FPR3757 reference genome.

<sup>c</sup>Equal quantities of pexiganan and melittin.

<sup>d</sup>Insertions in the *ytr* operon downstream of *ytrA*. Insertions in *ytrA* are not present in the Nebraska Transposon Mutant Library.

ML, melittin; PG, pexiganan; PGML, 1:1 wt/wt combination of melittin and pexiganan; STR, streptomycin.

**TABLE S4.** Details of antimicrobial peptides used.

AMP	Length (aa)	Net charge	Origin	Reference
Iseganan	17	+	Pig	Mosca et al. (2000)
Melittin	26	+	Honey bee	Raghuraman and Chattopadhyay (2007)
Pexiganan	22	+	Frog	Ge et al. (1999)

## References

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