



Articles of Significant Interest in This Issue

AbaM Regulates Quorum Sensing, Biofilm Formation, and Virulence in *Acinetobacter baumannii*

Acinetobacter baumannii is a multiantibiotic-resistant human pathogen that possesses a single divergent *luxRI*-type quorum sensing locus (*abaRI*) that contains a third gene (*abaM*). López-Martín et al. (e00635-20) identified AbaM as an RsaM ortholog and show that it negatively regulates surface motility and biofilm formation and is essential for virulence in *Galleria mellonella*. The AbaM and AbaRI regulons partially overlap, and *abaM* expression is shown to be positively regulated by quorum sensing but negatively autoregulated, characteristic of incoherent feed-forward loops. This work reveals that RsaM orthologs known to control virulence in plant pathogens also modulate virulence in a human pathogen.

Pilus Production in *Acinetobacter baumannii* Is Growth Phase Dependent and Essential for Natural Transformation

According to the WHO's priority list of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, *Acinetobacter baumannii* is a species of critical concern. Contributing to the acquisition of resistance genes is the pathogen's ability to undergo horizontal gene transfer. Vesel and Blokesch (e00034-21) describe *A. baumannii*'s natural transformation timing and link it to its growth phase-dependent pilus production. By imaging surface-exposed pili and scoring the bacterium's movement and transformability, they show that both phenotypes depend on regulatory circuits that are homologous to those of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. The work also highlights important differences from *Acinetobacter baylyi*, which served for decades as a model organism for natural transformation.