

# [Gram-positive phage-host interactions](https://assignbuster.com/gram-positive-phage-host-interactions/)

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Bacteriophage research has seen many peaks and troughs over the past century ascending with phage therapy and application in the early 1900's; a research peak which was largely overshadowed by the dawning of the antibiotic era, and which has now deservedly regained attention as an approach against the problematic rise in antibiotic-resistant pathogenic bacteria. Following this initial scientific highlight, the advent of molecular biology and biotechnology sparked a renewed interest in phages and their encoded enzymes and promoters, which are still employed as research tools today. Much of this research was conducted using phages of Gram-negative bacteria, particularly *Escherichia coli* , due to the reliability of the host and the ease of protein (over) production, in particular many enzymes, in a compatible host background. Consequently, coliphages such as T4 and lambda served as model phages in the development of molecular tools and the fundamental understanding of phage-host interactions. The advent of new generation sequencing technologies has in recent years provided a vast array of sequence data relating to Gram-positive phages and their hosts, which in turn has permitted the development of analogies between Gram-negative and Gram-positive phages. For example, sequence analysis of *Bacillus subtilis* and *Lactococcus lactis* phages SPP1 and Tuc2009, respectively, revealed genomes with a conserved gene and/or functional order relative to lambda, the main model for *Siphoviridae* phages. While the Gram-negative models have been extremely useful platforms, many questions have remained unanswered owing to the fundamental structural and compositional differences between the cell walls of Gram-negative and positive cells. In response to this knowledge gap, there has been a significant upsurge in research in the area of phages infecting Gram-positive bacteria and in particular, lactococcal phage-host interactions, which have now become one of the leading model systems along with the above-mentioned *Bacillus subtilis* phage SPP1 and the mycobacteriophage L5.

In the ensuing 11 articles, many key advances that now define our understanding of phage-host interactions of Gram-positive bacteria and their infecting phages are described. We collate these advances and define the current knowledge of cell wall structures that present the target molecule of phage attachment ( [Munsch-Alatossava and Alatossava, 2013](#B10) ; [Chapot-Chartier, 2014](#B3) ) and the phage-encoded adhesion complexes that phage employ to attach to their host in lactococci ( [Spinelli et al., 2014](#B11) ). Additionally, we explore the role of genomics in advancing knowledge on phages infecting previously underrepresented bacterial species that are of practical relevance to the food industry including the *Leuconostoc, Oenococcus* and *Weissella* ( [Kot et al., 2014](#B7) ; [Mahony and van Sinderen, 2014](#B9) ), and phage therapy including *Listeria* and *Clostridium* spp. ( [Hagens and Loessner, 2014](#B5) ; [Hargreaves and Clokie, 2014](#B6) ; [Ly-Chatain, 2014](#B8) ). Furthermore, the research articles reinforce the continuing need for isolation and characterisation of phage isolates to retain a current perspective on the ever-changing phage genomics landscape ( [Cavanagh et al., 2014](#B2) ) and the possibility of deriving and understanding anti-phage measures that may be harnessed in various biotechnology sectors, in particular the dairy industry ( [Ali et al., 2014](#B1) ; [Chirico et al., 2014](#B4) ).

## Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

## Acknowledgments

Jennifer Mahony is in receipt of a Technology Innovation Development Award (TIDA) (Ref. No. 14/TIDA/2287) funded by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI). Douwe van Sinderen is supported by a Principal Investigator award (Ref. No. 13/IA/1953) through SFI.

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