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Probing prokaryotic social behaviors with bacterial "lobster traps".

Connell JL, Wessel AK, Parsek MR, Ellington AD, Whiteley M, Shear JB MBio. 2010; 1(4)

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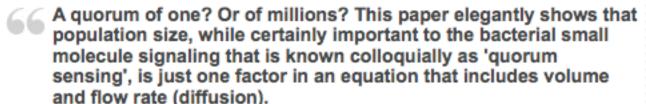


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Evaluations

Evaluated by Robert Palmer



Using picoliter-sized culture chambers, the authors demonstrate that transport of small molecules by flow is critical to the quorum sensing response of a pure culture bacterial population. Thus, in nature, diffusion rates and the spatial constraints in which organisms live dictate the population size required for a quorum. It becomes easy to conceive, for a single organism, of population size trigger thresholds (so-called quorums) that involve a very few cells and of those requiring large numbers of cells. Throw in different signal flux by different organisms and predictions of signaling outcomes within natural bacterial communities become complex indeed. In nature, the population size required for quorum sensing is a moving target.

Competing interests: None declared

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Evaluated by:

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National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. USA

Microbiology

11 Nov 2010

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