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Combining a transcriptomic approach and a targeted metabolomics approach for deciphering the molecular bases of compatibility phenotype in the snail *Biomphalaria glabrata* toward *Schistosoma mansoni*.

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Bullet points :

- Molecular support of *S. mansoni* / *B. glabrata* compatibility
- Non-clonal snail lines with same genetic background.
- 328 genes differentially regulated in resistant vs susceptible phenotypes.
- Lipid compounds modulated in resistant vs susceptible phenotypes.

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Abstract

Biomphalaria glabrata is a freshwater snail and the obligatory intermediate host of *Schistosoma mansoni* parasite, the etiologic agent of intestinal Schistosomiasis, in South America and Caribbean. Interestingly in such host-parasite interactions, compatibility varies between populations, strains or individuals. This observed compatibility polymorphism is based on a complex molecular-matching-phenotype, the molecular bases of which have been investigated in numerous studies, notably by comparing between different strains or geographical isolates or clonal selected snail lines. Herein we propose to decipher the constitutive molecular support of this interaction in selected non-clonal resistant and susceptible snail strain originating from the same natural population from Brazil and thus having the same genetic background. Thanks to a global RNAseq transcriptomic approach on whole snail, we identified a total of 328 differentially expressed genes between resistant and susceptible phenotypes among which 129 were up-regulated and 199 down-regulated. Metabolomic studies were used to corroborate the RNAseq results. The activation of immune genes and specific metabolic pathways in resistant snails might provide them with the capacity to better respond to parasite infection.

Keywords: *Biomphalaria glabrata*; *Schistosoma mansoni*; resistance/susceptibility; RNAseq lipid metabolism pathway

1 Introduction

Schistosomes are the causative agents of schistosomiasis disease, which is one of the most important human tropical neglected parasitic diseases in the world after malaria. Schistosomes infect over 200 million people worldwide, causing both acute and chronic debilitating diseases (Alwan et al., 2023). There is no effective vaccine against schistosomes, and the treatment of schistosomiasis still relies on a single drug called praziquantel (Doenhoff et al., 2009; Zhu et al., 2023). However, praziquantel has limitations in killing juvenile worms (schistosomula) and their extensive use in mass drug administration has been linked to the emergence of parasite drug resistance (Alonso et al., 2006; Couto et al., 2011; Fallon and Doenhoff, 1994; Gryseels et al., 1994; William et al., 1999). To overcome some of these praziquantel limitations new strategies are urgently needed to control schistosomiasis. To accomplish its life-cycle, schistosome parasites need a fresh water snail as intermediate host. In the snail, the parasite undergoes an intense asexual multiplication to enhance its transmission in the water environment through the shedding of cercariae, the parasite stage known to infect the human definitive host. Only freshwater snails are able to transmit the parasite, thus, breaking parasite transmission through its intermediate snail host, as recommended by the World Health Organization, may represent a truly relevant strategy (Famakinde, 2018).

In South America, the freshwater snail, *Biomphalaria glabrata* (*B. glabrata*) is the main snail susceptible to an infection by the trematode worm *Schistosoma mansoni* (*S. mansoni*). However, within a same snail species, compatibility varies between populations, strains or individuals (Basch, 1975; Mitta et al., 2017; Theron and Combes, 1995). Snail/schistosome compatibility reflects both snail susceptibility and schistosome infectivity and the observed polymorphism of compatibility results from the complex phenotype-by-phenotype interactions occurring between each individual host and each individual parasite (Galinier et al., 2017; Mitta et al., 2017). Therefore, deciphering the complex molecular dialogue occurring between the host and the parasite would help in identifying new potential strategies to fight and control the disease. This observed compatibility polymorphism is based on a complex molecular-matching-phenotype (Mitta et al., 2017). The molecular bases of such compatibility polymorphism have been investigated in the past by (i) comparing different parasite

geographic isolates against the same snail host (Roger et al., 2008), (ii) comparing two strains of snail against the same parasite isolate (Roger et al., 2008), (iii) doing multiple sympatric and allopatric comparisons between different strains or geographic isolates of hosts and parasites (Mitta et al., 2017) or finally (iv) by comparing clonally selected snail lines of segregated phenotypes of resistance and susceptibility (Allan et al., 2018, 2017; Mulvey and Woodruff, 1985; Tennessen et al., 2015b, 2015a). All these approaches have yielded a significant number of important results on the molecular mechanisms involved in snail/schistosome compatibility. Notwithstanding, a few biases exist concerning those studies. In the studies mentioned in (i), (ii) and (iii), the authors compared different genetic backgrounds for different strains or geographical isolates with totally different evolution or co-evolution histories. Second, for point (iv), the authors investigated clonal lines of snails and parasites which exhibit reduced or no genetic diversity that may compromise the identification of the overall complexity of compatibility mechanisms. Herein, we propose a new approach to decipher the constitutive molecular support of snail/schistosome interaction in selected but non-clonal snail strains originated from the same snail species with the same genetic background and evolutionary history. From a *B. glabrata* snail population originating from Brazil, more precisely the locality of Barreiro (BgBAR2), we selected two snail strains, one resistant and the other susceptible to *S. mansoni* Venezuela (SmVEN). Those two phenotypes were segregated over 5 generations, from a original field isolate with a prevalence of 78%, cross breeding at each generation were conducted in order to maintain the genetic diversity of the selected strains. Finally, the constitutive molecular differences between resistant and susceptible phenotypes were investigated using a combination of omics approaches on whole snails. We believe that this novel approach might be helpful to decipher more precisely the molecular processes at play at the core of snail/schistosome interactions.

2 Materials and Methods

2.1 Ethics statement

Our laboratory holds permit #39910-2022121915564694 (APAFIS number) for experiments on animals from the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the DDPP Languedoc-Roussillon (Direction Départementale de Protection des Populations) Montpellier, France

(authorization # 007083) and the Ethic committee CEEA-LR (# C66-136-01). The housing, breeding, and animal care of the utilized animals followed the ethical requirements of our country. The researchers also possess an official certificate for animal experimentation (Decree # 87–848, October 19, 1987). Animal experimentation followed the guidelines of the French CNRS.

2.2 Biological model, phenotype selection and experimental infection procedures

All the experimental approaches conducted in the present study were executed with the freshwater snail *B. glabrata* originating from Barreiro Brazil (named BgBAR2) experimentally infected with the trematode parasite *S. mansoni* recovered from Venezuela (named SmVen) (Theron et al., 2014). During 5 generations, snails were subjected to parasite infection and offspring originating from infected snails were kept to start a susceptible population and offspring from non-infected snails were kept for constituting a resistant population of snails, then, cross breeding were done for each generation and each population to avoid loss of genetic diversity. The susceptible phenotype had 95% prevalence (named BgBAR2S) and the resistant phenotype had 6% prevalence (named BgBAR2R). Since 2019, the phenotypes are perfectly stable in our laboratory conditions without the necessity to maintain the parasite infection pressure. Then, a combination of omics approaches (transcriptomic and metabolomics) has been conducted to investigate constitutive differences between resistant and susceptible phenotypes on whole snails.

2.3 Biological samples, RNA extraction and sequencing

Four pools of 10 resistant snails (R1 to R4) and four pools of 10 susceptible snails (S1 to S4) were prepared. For each pools, the snails were selected from different classes of size to approximate different ages (control for age effect) in the population as follow: 2 snails from 11 to 13 mm (age : 18 to 20 weeks), 2 from 9-11 mm (age : 13 to 15 weeks), 3 from 7 to 9 mm (age : 10 to 13 weeks) and 3 from 5 to 7 mm (age : 8 to 10 weeks). Before sampling, snails were fasting during 48 hours. Then snails were removed from their shell before pooling and were ground in liquid nitrogen. RNA was extracted using Trizol reagents (Invitrogen) according to manufacturer instructions. Samples were quantified using Qubit 2.0 fluorimeter and stored at -80°C until use. For each sample, -1 µg of RNA was used for sequencing using Illumina NextSeq

in single-end reads of 75 pb with polyA+ RNAseq libraries, in order to obtain approximately 25 million reads per sample. Samples were prepared using NEBNext Ultrall Directional RNAseq libraries, followed by quality control using the 2100 Bioanalyzer instrument (Agilent) and sequencing using NextSeq550 Flow Cell high Output SR75.

2.4 RNA sequencing bioinformatics processing

The read quality of each replicate sample (R1, R2, R3, R4 and S1, S2, S3, S4) fastq file was assessed with the FASTQC tool version 0.11.8 (phred score > 30 for all bases and GC percentage of 50%). Reads were trimmed using Trim-galore tool (version 0.6.3) with the following parameters of each single-end library: -automatic detection of sequence adapters, phred score threshold > 30, overlap with the adaptor sequence set to 1, maximum allowable error rate of 0.1, rejection of reads shorter than 20 base pairs. Reads were mapped with the RNA-STAR tool (version 2.7.8a) (Dobin et al., 2013) on the *Biomphalaria glabrata* reference genome BB02 (version 1.7 available on Vector base: <https://vectorbase.org/vectorbase/app>). Mapping with the STAR tool, for differential expression analysis was focus on protein coding genes, with genome annotation file (version 3 available on vector base), average mapping of 96 % was obtained for susceptible and resistant replicates (Table S1).

Read count was done using htseq-count tool using union mode. The threshold for alignment quality was set at a minimum of 10 base pairs. Differential analysis of gene expression was performed in R using the DESeq2 (package version 1.37.5) (Love et al., 2014). We also normalized our reads in TPM (transcripts per million) in Table S2 (Vera Alvarez et al., 2019; Zhao et al., 2021).

The *B. glabrata* BB02 genome (Genbank GCA_000457365.1, VectorBase rel. 49, 2020-NOV-05) was used as a reference. We conducted a re-annotation of the genome that has been named IHPE lab annotation, to enhance the *B. glabrata* gene annotation of the BB02 genome (see table S2 and S8). Prior to re-annotation, the longest CDS sequences were extracted from the gff3 file. Then, new annotation was performed using the ORSON script (<https://gitlab.ifremer.fr/bioinfo/workflows/orson>). ORSON combines state-of-the-art tools for annotation processes within a Nextflow pipeline. ORSON script performs sequence similarity search with BLAST (Altschul et al., 1990), functional prediction with InterProScan

(Jones et al., 2014) and eggNOG (Huerta-Cepas et al., 2019) orthogroup annotation. Interproscan analysis was performed against Pfam, Prosite, CDD, TIGR, SMART, SuperFamily, PRINTS and Hamap databases. Results were collected and processed using Blast2GO (Götz et al., 2008) for annotation mapping and validation.

2.5 Gene ontology enrichment analysis

Functional enrichment and identification of metabolic pathways were performed on the 328 DEGs using Rank-Based Gene Ontology Analysis with Adaptive Clustering (RBGOA) (https://github.com/z0on/GO_MWU) and String DB VERSION 11.5 (<https://string-db.org/>). In RBGOA (Wright et al., 2015) a corrected p-value of 0.01 was considered for over-expressed and down-regulated genes.

We selected GO terms with a p-value < 0.01 Mann-Whitney U (MWU). The visualization of selected Gene Ontology (GO) terms using RBGOA was conducted with the REVIGO software (<http://revigo.irb.hr/>) (Table S3 and S4).

KEGG pathways were analysed using STRING DB platform (Szklarczyk et al., 2023). The protein sequences of the 328 DEGs and the organism name *Biomphalaria glabrata* were provided as input. STRING database confirmed and predicted connections between proteins, encompassing physical interactions as well as functional associations. STRING basic input parameters were selected (full STRING) network; all interactive sources; medium confidence set to 0.400; and the maximum number of interactors was set to 50. Based on these settings 57 genes over the 328 DEGs were associated to a KEGG pathways (Table S5).

2.6 Lipidomics analysis and bioinformatics

Six replicates for resistant (R1 to R6) and susceptible (S1 to S6) snail-pools were prepared (3 snails/pool/replicate, snail size 7-9 mm). Resistant and susceptible snails were maintained in the same tank, fasted, for 48 hours prior to sampling. Then, for each replicate, 3 snails were removed from their shells and weighed to prepare 100 mg of total snail tissue. Each sample was ground in liquid nitrogen and stored at -80°C until use.

Extraction solvent made of chloroform (cat. No. 438681, Carlo Erba, Emmendingen, Germany) /methanol (cat. No. 0013684102BS, Biosolve, Valkenswaard, The Netherlands) mixture (2:1 v/v) was prepared and pre-cooled to -20°C for 2h prior to use. To each sample, 1 mL of the pre-cooled extraction solvent and 10 µL of the internal standards mix (cat. 330710X-1 EA, Sigma Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA) were added to the 100 mg of snail tissue. The samples were vortexed for 10 s, then placed at 4°C and subjected to continuous rotation for 30 minutes. Following this, 200 µL of ice cold 5% acetic acid were added to the samples. The samples were then vortexed for 10 seconds and incubated at -20 °C for 2 hours. Next, the samples were centrifuged at 15 000 g for 20 minutes at 4 °C. The lower phase of the resulting mixture was carefully transferred to a 1.5 mL Eppendorf tube. The lower phase was subjected to drying using a speedvac system. Finally, the dried samples were reconstituted in 1 mL of a pre-cooled (-20 °C) mixture consisting of isopropanol and methanol (2:1 v/v).

Chromatographic analysis was performed using UHPLC 1290 Infinity II with an ZORBAX Eclipse Plus C18 100 x 2.1 mm, 1.8 µm, column (Agilent, Santa Clara, CA, USA). The mobile phase A consisted of a 5:3:2 mix of 10 mM ammonium formate (cat. No. 70221, Sigma Aldrich), 5 µM Agilent deactivator additive (cat. No. 5191-3940, Agilent) in water (cat. No. 0023214102BS, Biosolve), acetonitrile (cat. No. 0001207802BS, Biosolve) and 2-propanol (cat. No. 33539 Honeywell, Charlotte, NC, USA). Mobile phase B was a 1:9:90 mix of 10 mM ammonium formate in water, acetonitrile, 2-propanol. The gradient used was: 15% B, 0 minute; 50% B, 2.50 minutes; 57% B, 2.60 minutes; 70% B, 9.00 minutes; 93% B, 9.10 minutes; 96% B, 11.00 minutes; 100% B, 11.10 minutes; 100% B, 16.00 minutes; 15% B, 16.20 minutes, 15% B, 20 minutes. The column temperature was set to 45 °C, flow rate 0.4 mL/min, and volume of injection to 0.5 µL for each run. Lipidomic profiling analysis was performed on a 6495 LC/TQ mass system and the Agilent MassHunter workstation with the dynamic MRM scan mode. Source-parameter settings in the positive or negative modes were as follows: i) the capillary voltage was set at 3.5 kV for positive mode and 3 kV for negative mode, ii) gas temperature at 150°C and gas flow at 17 L/min, iii) nebulizer at 20 psi, iv) sheath gas temperature at 200 °C and v) sheath gas flow at 10 L/min. Further details on the selected MRMs were described

Following the data acquisition, the chromatographic data were first imported into Agilent MassHunter Quantitative Analysis (for QQQ) where integration window for all identified compounds was individually defined using the “spectrum summation” integration algorithm

available in the software. Prior to normalization, the area subtraction (sample - blank) for each compound present in the blank was performed. Normalization was calculated by dividing the peak area of the analyte by that of its respective internal standard. Internal standards consist of stable-isotope-labeled and nonphysiological species that are chromatographically close to a given group of lipids (for further details refer to Huynh et al., 2019). The data were then imported in R (4.0.2) (R Core Team, 2021). Outliers among the samples were identified using the Grubbs's test (R package "outliers") and samples S6 and R1 were removed from the analysis as they have been identified as outliers. The data were further analyzed using the MetaboAnalyst package (4.0) (Chong et al., 2019). Following the creation of the MetaboAnalyst object, the data were scaled using the "AutoNorm" argument within the "Normalization" function. Scaled data were then evaluated using partial least squares discriminant analysis (PLS-DA) and correlation analysis with "PLSR.Anal" and "FeatureCorrelation" functions respectively. The code used for the analysis can be found here: <https://github.com/DirtyHarry80/PUFAMetaboR>.

2.7 Adenosine Tri-Phosphate (ATP) quantification in susceptible and resistant snails

Seven biological replicates for susceptible and resistant snails were used (126 snails, 7-9 mm size). Snails were removed from their shell and for each replicate, 9 snails were weighed to prepare. 300 mg of tissue, which were grounded in liquid nitrogen. 1 mL of ice-cold homogenisation buffer (HEPES-NaOH) was homogenized with 100 μ L of 0.1 mm diameter glass beads in a MagNA Lyser (Roche) apparatus and perform 3 runs of 15 seconds at 7000 rpm. Samples were then centrifuged at 1000 g for 10 minutes at 4°C. 300 μ L of supernatant were recovered and complemented with 300 μ L of ice-cold 10% TCA (V/V) and finally centrifuged at 10 000 g for 10 minutes at 4°C, 400 μ L of the supernatant were mixed with 200 μ L of neutralization buffer (Chida et al., 2012). ATP determination was conducted according to the instructions of the ATP Determination kit from Invitrogen. Briefly, the concentration of ATP in each sample is determined using a standard curve of ATP obtained with firefly luciferase from 1 nM to 1 μ M. Bioluminescence was measured using a luminometer at a wavelength of 560 nm. Statistical analyses were done using a Mann-Whitney U test (p-value considered significant at $p < 0.05$).

3 Results

3.1 Differentially expressed genes (DEGs) comparing resistant to susceptible snails

The present RNAseq approach conducted on whole snails, allow us to identify differentially expressed genes between resistant and susceptible phenotypes (Figures S1 to S3). The output file from DEseq2, comprising 21 296 genes, was filtered to select relevant DEGs with p-adjusted values < 0.01, and log2FoldChange > 1 or <-1. Applying these cut-off values resulted in 328 differentially expressed genes (DEGs), of which 129 were over-expressed and 199 down-regulated in the resistant snails compared to susceptible snails (Figure 1, Figure S4 and Table S2).

The first analysis was focused on a gene-by-gene approach on DEG functions and a particular attention was paid to the 50 genes over or down-regulated with the higher Log2fold change ratio (Figure 2, Table S2, Figure S4). Interestingly a large number of genes belonging to multigenic families are both over- and down-regulated. These genes belong mainly to the ankyrin (3 genes up/3 genes down), GTP IMAP-AIG (2 genes up/2 genes down), C-type lectin (1 gene up/1 gene down) and E3 ubiquitin ligase-XIAP-like (1 gene up/4 genes down) families (Table S2).

3.1.1 Over expressed genes in resistant snails

For the top 50 over-expressed genes (Table S2), most of the genes identified were involved in functions that include cell–cell signaling, cytoskeleton integrity, transcription and cell–cycle regulation, cell development, and various transport phenomena. More precisely, genes were identified that are involved in protein-protein interaction (Kelch protein), cell development and immunity (CUB and sushi domain-containing protein), cell-cell binding (floculin), cell signaling (ankyrin), apoptosis regulation (E3 ubiquitin ligase-XIAP-like, apoptosis inhibitor), modulation of chromatin structure, transcription, replication, recombination, and DNA repair (Poly (ADP-ribose) polymerases (PARPs) and ADP-ribosyltransferase diphtheria toxin-like : ARTD enzymes). Finally, numerous enzymes and proteases were also differentially expressed in resistant snails compared to susceptible as for example, endoglucanase involved in the degradation of complex natural carbohydrate substrates; Group XVI phospholipase A2 a thiol hydrolase that regulates lipolysis (Zhou et al., 2019); Acidic mammalian chitinase and Endo-chitosanase C major digestive enzymes that constitutively degrades chitin; serine proteases

with vast functions such as protein metabolism, digestion, blood coagulation, apoptosis, immunity regulation or fertilization (Patel, 2017).

Finally, few gene functions appeared to be related to lipid metabolism with sphingolipid activator protein (SAPs or saposins) essential cofactors for the lysosomal degradation of membrane-anchored sphingolipids and the low-density lipoprotein receptor-related protein a protein forming a receptor found in cell plasma membrane involved in signal transduction and receptor-mediated endocytosis.

3.1.2 Under expressed genes in resistant snails

Concerning the top 50 down-regulated genes (Table S2), interestingly most of the functions were shared with over-expressed genes, except specific down regulated genes as for example, HSP70 heat shock proteins performing chaperoning functions for protein folding, and protect cells from the adverse effects of physiological stresses; Chitin synthase 1 and chitin synthase chs-2-like isoform X2 involved in chitin synthesis associated with periostracum and radula biosynthesis in gastropods; BTB/POZ domain-containing protein a versatile protein-protein interaction motif that participates in a wide range of cellular functions, including transcriptional regulation, cytoskeleton dynamics, ion channel assembly and gating, and targeting proteins for ubiquitination; cell death abnormality protein 1 involved in apoptosis; and finally genes that could be related to immune functions like Techlectin-5B a lectin with a FRED domain and the activated leukocyte cell adhesion molecule CD-antigen (CD166) that regulates cellular signaling and cell dynamic responses.

3.1.3 Immune related functions of differentially expressed genes

It is interesting to note that some of the genes already described can have dual roles and are known in addition to their more overall functions to be also involved in inflammatory and immune response. Other genes are known for their well described functions in innate immunity. This lead us to consider that 30% of the 50 most over-expressed genes and 22% of the down-regulated genes belong to immune functions or to the internal defense system of *B. glabrata* (Table S2). In particular, we can specify that the CUB and sushi domain-containing proteins over expressed in resistant snails are part of a regulatory network of proteins known as "regulators of complement activation (RCA)". A subset of this family of proteins, complement control proteins (CCP), are characterized by the "Sushi" domain that prevent activation of the complement system on the surface of host cells and protect host tissues against damage caused by autoimmunity (Escudero-Esparza et al., 2013). Ankyrins are known

to be involved in inflammatory response. AIG1-like protein or GTPases of immunity-associated protein (GIMAP) are a distinctive family of GTPases, which control apoptosis in lymphocytes and play a central role in lymphocyte maturation and lymphocyte-associated diseases in infection context, linked to self-defense and development of T cells in vertebrates (Schwefel et al., 2010). Interleukin 17d is part of a family of cytokines, which was identified relatively recently in vertebrates as involved in host defense by controlling T cell activity by suppressing the function of dendritic cells (Lee et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2020). Then we identify some genes as up or down regulated, that functioned as pattern recognition receptors (PRRs) of the innate immune response belonging to C-type lectin (calcium dependent lectins), Techlectin-5B (FRED domain lectins) and fucolectin ("F-type" fold lectin) a newly identified family of fucose binding lectins (Wang et al., 2018). Finally, antimicrobial peptides (AMPs) mytimacin or neuromacin have been also identified.

3.2 Ranked-Based Gene Ontology Analysis (RBGOA) enrichment: A Gene Ontology approach

To go further in the identification of biological functions differentially represented in resistant snails versus susceptible ones, we conducted a functional enrichment analysis using the RBGOA and STRING packages. A total of 124 Gene Ontology (GO) over-represented terms were identified from the 129 over-expressed genes, while 225 over-represented GO terms were derived from the 199 down-regulated genes in the "Biological Process" category (Table S3). A total of 65 over-represented "Molecular Functions" were identified for both the over-expressed and down-regulated genes (Table S4). Then, the identified GO terms were aggregated into broader representative categories to provide a more synthesized understanding of the functional landscape.

In the resistant phenotype within the over expressed genes, several "Biological Processes" were found to be over-represented. The most represented functions were associated with general cell processes and particularly cell signalling pathways, cell development and communication, cell death, and O-glycan processing. Less represented functions were also enriched including phospholipase D activity, positive regulation of protein mono-ubiquitination, entry of bacterium into host cell, t-RNA-end processing, cell-cell adhesion mediated by cadherin, and prostaglandin catabolic process as shown in the Treemap

representation of over-represented “Biological Process” from over-expressed genes obtained from Revigo software (Figure 3, Table S3).

We identified also several over-represented “Biological Process” for genes down-regulated in resistant snails (Figure 4, Table S3). The main represented functions were: cell communication, development and sensory system and amino sugar metabolic process. Other functions were also enriched but associated with fewer GO terms, as for example peptidyl-arginine methylation, methylation, protein refolding, folic acid biosynthesis process, ubiquitin-dependent endocytosis, positive regulation of mitochondrial calcium ion concentration, or response to sulfur dioxide (Figure 4, Table S3). It is interesting to note that within the category “cell development and communication” for over-represented functions or over-expressed genes, specific GO terms were related to immunity, such as “organ or tissue specific immune response” and “mucosal immune response” (Table S3). However, most of the genes identified as differentially expressed have dual or pleiotropic functions and this may explain why there aren't more immunity-related terms appearing in our overall analyses.

In the case of the over-represented “Molecular Function” category within the over-expressed genes from resistant phenotype, we observed several enriched functions including tumor necrosis factor receptor activity, apolipoprotein receptor activity, sphingolipid activator protein activity, fucosyltransferase activity, prostaglandin-reductase activity, FBXO family protein binding, and catalytic activity on a glycoprotein (Figure S4, Table S4). All these GO terms can be related to protein-protein interactions, signal transduction, cell activation, cell death pathways or apoptosis and lipid metabolism.

In examining the over-represented “Molecular Functions” of down-regulated genes for the resistant phenotype, we identified several activities including chitin synthase activity, hydrolase activity, adenosine receptor binding, protein-glycine ligase activity, linoleic acid epoxygenase activity, transcription regulator activator activity, ATP-dependent protein disaggregase activity, and osmolarity-sensing monoatomic cation channel activity (Figure S5, Table S4). All these activities belong mainly to various enzymatic processes involved in cell activity and metabolism.

3.3 STRING-DB analysis: KEGG pathway enrichment

Subsequently, we conducted a functional enrichment analysis based on KEGG (Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes) to elucidate the metabolic pathways that are mainly

associated with either over-expressed or down-regulated genes in the resistant phenotype. From the 328 differentially expressed genes, 57 genes were identified in metabolic pathways listed in the KEGG database. However, it is important to note that invertebrate models are generally not referenced in these databases, resulting in limited gene annotations. However, these 57 genes provide a valuable basis for further exploration of the molecular basis associated with resistant snail phenotype.

Results of the KEGG analysis revealed several pathways represented by the higher number of genes that are involved in folding, sorting and degradation that govern protein maturation and turnover, in addition to carbohydrate metabolism, transport and catabolism pathways (Figure 5). Interestingly, most of the pathways identified were supported by over-expressed and down-regulated genes indicating that the regulation of the pathway necessitates a balanced-gene expression, which requires potentially the repression of certain sub-pathways within the metabolic pathway considered to allow the expression of other sub-pathways. Thus, we decided to pay a particular attention to the pathways that are mainly represented by over-expressed genes (Figure 5). We do not consider the “immune system” pathway because it is represented by only 1 gene. The 2 other pathways to be considered were the “Lipid metabolism pathways” and “Signalling molecules and interaction pathway” (Figure 5 and Table S5). The convergence of these pathways highlights a biochemical framework essential to the resistant phenotype. Among the array of pathways identified, lipid metabolism distinctly stands out within the resistance phenotype. Remarkably, except sphingolipid metabolism that is associated with an down-regulated gene (BGLB011932) all the other lipid pathways belong to over-expressed genes (BGLB037124; BGLB028216; BGLB031390), suggesting a potential up-regulation and consequent activation of lipid-related metabolic processes (Table S5). Given this unique pattern of expression, and the pathway's exclusive association with the resistance phenotype, we have elected to narrow our focus to the lipid expression profiles by conducting a functional exploration of these results thanks through a targeted metabolomic approach centred on lipids.

3.4 Targeted lipidomic analyses

Five biological replicates out of 6 were used in the present lipidomic approach (R2, R3, R4, R5, R6 for resistant and S1, S2, S3, S4, S5 for susceptible snails ; Figure S6). To identify differentially expressed lipid metabolites between resistant and susceptible snails, a Bonferroni correction

was applied to all quantitative metabolite data, and lipid metabolites with a p-adjusted < 0.05 were selected (Figure 6, Table S6).

The comprehensive lipidomic analysis was conducted on a total of 419 metabolites. Among these, 24 metabolites were identified as being significantly and differentially modulated between susceptible and resistant snail replicates (Table S6). In the lipid analysis of the resistant samples, we identified several lipid families as being over-represented. These include phosphatidylethanolamine, acylcarnitine, dihydroceramide, alkenylphosphatidylcholine (plasmalogen), and alkenylphosphatidylethanolamine (Figure 6, Table S6). The lipid families identified as under-represented in the resistant phenotype include ceramide, deoxyceramide, alkylphosphatidylethanolamine, sphingomyelin, lysoalkenylphosphatidylethanolamine (plasmalogen), fatty acid, ubiquinone, lysophosphatidylethanolamine, and methyl-cholesteryl ester (Figure 6, Table S6).

This analysis reveals a notable change in lipid composition in resistant snails with a decrease in represented sphingolipids, such as ceramide and sphingomyelin, in favour of glycerophospholipids such as phosphatidylethanolamine. The sphingolipids, phosphatidylethanolamine and phosphatidylcholine are major components of biological membranes and thus may hint at a differential membrane asymmetry between resistant and susceptible snails. Moreover, acylcarnitine enable fatty acids to cross mitochondrial membranes and be degraded by β -oxidation. The β -oxidation is the main metabolic pathway for energy production through the respiratory chain and oxidative phosphorylation to form ATP molecules. The observation that acylcarnitine is over-represented and fatty acid are under-represented in resistant snails could be an argument to hypothesize that energy production is greater in resistant than in susceptible snails. Even if ubiquinone that acts as electron carrier in the respiratory chain is under-represented in resistant snails. Thus, to verify this hypothesis we conducted an ATP titration in whole snails from resistant and susceptible phenotypes.

3.5 Adenosine Tri-Phosphate quantification in resistant and susceptible snails:

By comparing ATP levels between resistant and susceptible samples, we aimed to unveil any significant differences in energy metabolism that might contribute to the difference in phenotype observed. However, no significant difference was observed in ATP concentrations (Mann-Whitney U-test =12 ; pvalue = 0.06) (Table S7). Thus, the present analysis did not reveal

any discernible variations in energy metabolism between the resistant and susceptible snail samples.

4 Discussion

The question of snail/schistosome compatibility has particularly attracted the attention of the scientific community in the past 20 years and numerous studies have been conducted to elucidate the molecular basis of such interaction (Coustau et al., 2015; Li et al., 2020; Mitta et al., 2017; Portet et al., 2019). The developments of comparative genomics, transcriptomics, and proteomics or targeted approaches have enabled research groups to investigate the underlying molecular determinants using different laboratory strains or selected lines of snails and schistosomes. Genetic studies of crosses between snail consanguineous lines displaying compatible and incompatible phenotypes have revealed some candidate loci, including a gene cluster containing a super-oxide dismutase (SOD)-encoding gene (Allan et al., 2017; Blouin et al., 2013; Bonner et al., 2012; Goodall et al., 2006) and differential allelic expressions of the SOD gene in different individuals of the predominantly resistant 13-16-R1 strain of *B. glabrata* have been demonstrated (Abou-El-Naga et al., 2015; Goodall et al., 2006). RAD-seq and GWAS approaches developed on the *Biomphalaria glabrata* Guadeloupe strain or used to compare resistant strain BS90 and the susceptible strain M-line showed correlation between compatibility phenotype and multi-genic regions GRC (Guadeloupean resistance complex), PTC1 (Polymorphic transmembrane 1) (Tennessen et al., 2015b) or PTC2 (Tennessen et al., 2020) that contains 11 genes, 9 of which code for transmembrane proteins (Blouin et al., 2022). Gene functions in these clusters were not clearly defined, but they have been putatively associated with parasite recognition (Tennessen et al., 2015b). Various transcriptomic comparisons have also been performed on other compatible and incompatible strains of snails and schistosomes isolated from different geographic localities (Adema et al., 2010; Duval et al., 2020; Hanington et al., 2010; Ittiprasert et al., 2010; Pila et al., 2016; Pinaud et al., 2021; Portet et al., 2019, 2019).

In such studies, the main differentially expressed immune relevant transcripts were involved in immune cellular responses, cell adhesion, extra cellular matrix composition, cell migration, cell differentiation and cell proliferation and belong to (i) immune recognition molecules (fibrinogen-related proteins (FREPs) 2, 3, 4, 6 and 11, 12, CREPs, GREPS, C-type lectins, Toll-like

receptor, galectins, or PGRP, GGBP) (ii) immune signalling molecules (Thioester-containing proteins (TEP), alpha-2 macroglobulin receptor, cytokines, macrophage migration inhibitory factor (MIF), macrophage mannose receptor, dermatopontin, C1q-like lectins involved in the complement pathway, heat shock proteins (HSP)) or (iii) immune effectors (oxidative stress superoxide dismutases (Cu-Zn SOD, SOD chaperone and SOD Mn), dual oxidase, antimicrobial molecules (antimicrobial peptides (AMPs), lipopolysaccharide (LPS) binding proteins, LBP-BPI, lysozyme) and biomphalysin). Moreover, the association of some of these molecules into protein complex dedicated to parasite killing have been demonstrated.

Indeed, association between humoral immune molecules; *BgFREP2*, *BgFREP3*, *BgTEP1*, and Biomphalysin for targeting parasite antigens (Galinier et al., 2017; Li et al., 2020; Moné et al., 2010) seems to initiate haemocyte-mediated destruction of *S. mansoni* sporocysts and partly explains the resistance to *S. mansoni* in this model.

In the present study, our investigation unveiled molecules and functions bearing semblance to those previously identified. Indeed, we identified lectins (C-type lectin, fucolectin or CREPs) acting as immune recognition molecules. We also identified molecules involved in cellular adhesion, differentiation, or immune effectors like AMPs (Table S2). But intriguingly, we notice the absence of classically observed immune candidates like FREPs, TEPs (Duval et al., 2020) or Biomphalysins (Pinaud et al., 2021) in favour of molecules more related to more general cell functions or metabolism. Genes involved in protein-protein interaction, cell development / binding / signalling / apoptosis or DNA transcription / replication / recombination / repair were identified (Table S2). Finally, numerous enzymes and proteases were also differentially expressed and gene functions related to lipid / fatty acid metabolism were highly represented in resistant snails compared to susceptible.

To explain this inconsistency with anterior results it is important to consider that herein we analyse the molecular basis of *Schistosoma/Biomphalaria* compatibility. But rather than comparing totally different geographic isolates with different co-evolutive histories and genetic backgrounds or clonal selected lines of snails as done before, we conduct a molecular comparative analysis on snail strains with the same genetic background, without loss of genetic diversity due to cross breeding. We could hypothesis that this new selection approach may explain this discrepancy.

Notably we identify some differences on two pathways that were particularly over-represented in resistant snails which correspond to the “Lipid metabolism pathways” and the “Signalling molecules and interaction pathway” (Figure 5 and Table S5). Lipid metabolism distinctly stands out within sphingolipid metabolism that is associated with an down-regulated gene (BGLB011932) and other lipid pathways were associated with over-expressed genes (BGLB037124; BGLB028216; BGLB031390). Interestingly, those RNAseq results were confirmed by the lipidomic approach that demonstrated a notable change in lipid composition in resistant snails with a decrease in represented sphingolipids, such as ceramide, deoxyceramide and sphingomyelin, in favour of glycerophospholipids such as alkenyl-phosphatidylcholine, alkenyl-phosphatidylethanolamine and phosphatidylethanolamine. Moreover, the accumulation of dihydroceramide belonging to sphingolipid pathway (Figure 6), is a hallmark of the reduced ceramide production, as it acts as precursor of ceramide (Rahmaniyan et al., 2011). Phospholipids and sphingolipids are not simply passive constituents of cell plasma membranes but have important roles in numerous cellular functions like protein biogenesis and activity, energy production by oxidative phosphorylation, mitochondrial stability, autophagy, apoptosis, reactive oxygen species defence, cell behaviour (adherence, cell shape, motility, membrane fusion, vacuolation, phagocytosis) and cell signalling (membrane microdomains/lipid rafts) (Breslow and Weissman, 2010; Calzada et al., 2016; Tang et al., 2022).

Herein, the differential regulation of acylcarnitine, fatty acid and ubiquinone (Figure 6) involved in the mitochondrial respiratory chain led us to hypothesize a difference in energy metabolism between susceptible and resistant individuals. However, the ATP concentration is similar when comparing resistant and susceptible phenotypes (Table S7). Thus, the change in lipid content observed in the present study does not appear to be related to energy metabolism. As lipids play important roles in many biological functions, it is clear that other alternative hypotheses need to be considered.

Membrane lipid asymmetry is another important aspect of cell functions (van Meer, 1989), for the mechanical stability of the membrane (fluidity or stiffness), vesicular transport, cell cycle progression or apoptosis (Hissa et al., 2012). The major lipid components of the eukaryotic plasma membrane include glycerophospholipids, sphingolipids, and cholesterol that are irregularly distributed between the two leaflet: phosphatidylserine (PS) (not differentially regulated in resistant snails) and phosphatidylethanolamine (PE) (over represented in

resistant) are concentrated in the inner leaflet, whereas phosphatidylcholine (PC) (over represented in resistant) and sphingomyelin (SM) (under-represented in resistant) are concentrated in the outer leaflet. The cholesterol (CE), an essential structural component of animal cell membranes, known to regulate partly the membrane fluidity, is also significantly under-represented in resistant snails (Figure 6). The potential increase of PE in the inner leaflet, reduction of SM in favour of PC in the outer leaflet and reduction of CE within the two leaflets may hint for a modification of membrane asymmetry and structure between resistant and susceptible snails. Moreover, decrease of SM content and CE depletion have been also associated with a significant decrease in membrane stiffness (Horváth et al., 2022; Weber et al., 2010). All these changes in membrane lipid content in resistant snails may lead to different cellular shape, adhesion, motility, resulting in an overall modification of their cellular behavior (Ramprasad et al., 2007). Understanding how this overall differences in membrane dynamic between resistant and susceptible snails affect their phenotypes will necessitate further researches for answering this intriguing question.

Another important aspect linked to membrane lipids is cell signalling. Sphingomyelin and cholesterol-enriched localized domains in the outer-leaflet form lipid microdomains known as lipid rafts (Simons and Ikonen, 1997) that play several roles in cell signalling, signal transduction and membrane trafficking (Hanzal-Bayer and Hancock, 2007; Ohanian and Ohanian, 2001). The low level of SM and CE in resistant snails would thus potentially results in a modification of signalling and signal transduction related to lipid rafts in resistant phenotypes potentially in favour of other cell signalling pathways. Thus we can hypothesis that cell signalling in resistant snails may therefore be different, but better adapted to respond effectively to the presence of the parasite.

By altering the lipid composition of their cell membrane, living organisms may adapt to environmental stress, this strategy of membrane adaptation is termed homeoviscous adaptation (Ernst et al., 2016; Herrera et al., 2021; Oger, 2015). In the present host-parasite context, we can hypothesis that changes in lipid composition of cell membrane for resistant snails may affect the function of biomolecules residing within or associated with the membrane, impacting membrane-dependent functions and cell signalling. Consequently, the molecular dialogue between the parasite and the host may be impaired resulting in an unsuitability between the host and the parasite. The parasite would be in the incapacity to immunomodulate or circumvent the host immune system whereas this physiological suitability

with the host is absolutely necessary for the successful development of parasite (Wiedenmann and Smith, 1997). It has been demonstrated that the parasite needs to exploit the host's lipids for its own development and growth (Gonçalves-Silva et al., 2022; von Bülow et al., 2023), this being pivotal for parasite survival and propagation within the host (Allan et al., 1987). Homeoviscous adaptation of resistant hosts may reduce or impair the ability of parasites to exploit the host and thus their ability to survive in resistant host environment, making resistant snails better adapted to respond effectively to the presence of the parasite.

The aim of this comprehensive lipidomic analysis was to provide a detailed profile of the lipid categories present in each of the phenotypes. By integrating the lipidomic data with our transcriptomic results, we sought to obtain a better understanding of lipid dynamics and their potential role in the acquisition of resistance. This multi-dimensional approach, which encompasses transcriptomic and lipidomic analyses, enables a more nuanced exploration of the molecular mechanisms underlying resistance and may offer new insights into the metabolic changes associated with the resistant phenotype.

The insights gained from identifying and understanding these key metabolic pathways may pave the way for uncovering potential metabolic targets for modulating resistance and may also provide a foundational framework for further mechanistic studies investigating the interplay between metabolic regulation and resistance. The RNAseq and metabolic data amassed herein presents a compelling database for elucidating the phenotypic dichotomy of resistance and susceptibility against *Schistosoma mansoni* in *Biomphalaria glabrata* and may uncover novel molecular pathways or mechanisms contributing to the observed phenotypes. These data may serve as valuable resources for the broader scientific community engaged in fighting schistosomiasis, thereby contributing to reveal new avenues for targeting resistance at the molecular level and delineating novel therapeutic targets.

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Legends to figures

Figure 1: Volcano plot analysis of 328 selected differentially expressed genes (DEGs)

This volcano plot represents the differential expression analysis of 328 selected DEGs between resistant and susceptible phenotypes. Each point represents a gene, with the log₂ fold change on the x-axis indicating the magnitude of differential expression and the -log₁₀ p-value on the y-axis representing statistical significance. Genes with a corrected p-value of less than 0.01 are highlighted, distinguishing over-expressed genes (positive log₂ fold change) from under-expressed genes (negative log₂ fold change). The plot visually segregates genes significantly upregulated (in red on the right side) and downregulated (in blue on the left side) in the resistant phenotype compared to the susceptible phenotype.

Figure 2: TPM heatmap of the top 50 over-expressed and under-expressed genes among DEGs

This heatmap visualizes the expression levels of the top 50 over-expressed and top 50 under-expressed genes among the differentially expressed genes (DEGs) in resistant and susceptible snails. The expression levels are measured in TPM (Transcripts Per Million). Over-expressed genes are marked in red, while under-expressed genes are shown in blue. Each column represents one of the four biological replicates for either the resistant or susceptible phenotype. The Gene_Id labels correspond to genes identified from the *Biomphalaria glabrata* genome (BB02 version 1.7) available on VectorBase website. This figure provides a clear comparative view of gene expression patterns between the two phenotypes.

Figure 3: Treemap of GO terms for over-represented in over-expressed genes from biological process category

This treemap depicts the Gene Ontology (GO) terms for the biological process category, specifically for genes over-expressed in the resistance phenotype. The visualization is based on data processed through REVIGO. Each GO term, represented by rectangles, has a p-value of less than 0.01, indicating significant over-representation. The GO terms are grouped and color-coded according to larger biological process categories to enhance clarity and understanding of the data. This treemap provides an intuitive overview of the predominant biological processes associated with genes over-expressed in the resistance phenotype. See table S3 for details of the names in each square.

Figure 4: Treemap of gene ontology (GO) terms for over-represented in under-expressed genes from biological process category

This treemap visualizes Gene Ontology (GO) terms within the biological process category, corresponding to genes that are under-expressed in the resistance phenotype. This visual representation, derived from REVIGO, highlights GO terms that have a p-value of less than

0.01, signifying significant over-representation. The treemap organizes these terms into major groups, each distinguished by different colors representing various biological processes. This categorization and color-coding enhance the readability and interpretation of the data, allowing for an immediate grasp of the predominant biological processes associated with the under-expressed genes in the resistance phenotype. See table S3 for details of the names in each square.

Figure 5: Distribution of over and under-expressed genes across KEGG pathways

This bar chart provides a distribution analysis of unique genes across various KEGG (Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes) pathways, differentiating genes based on their expression status in the comparison of resistant (R) versus susceptible (S) phenotypes. Each bar represents a distinct KEGG pathway, with the height indicating the number of unique genes associated with that pathway. Over-expressed genes are indicated in red, while under-expressed genes are shown in blue. This visualization offers a clear depiction of the differential engagement of genes in specific pathways, highlighting the pathways that are most prominently affected in the resistant phenotype compared to the susceptible one.

Figure 6: Bar-plot of statistically significant lipid families based on log₂FoldChange

This bar plot represents the sum log₂ fold change in the abundance of various lipid families, derived from a targeted lipidomic analysis. Each bar corresponds to a different family of lipids, with the length of the bar indicating the magnitude of change (log₂ fold change) in their abundance. Only those lipid families showing statistically significant changes are included. This graph provides a succinct overview of the lipidomic alterations, highlighting the families of lipids that are most significantly affected, thereby offering insights into the lipid metabolic changes associated with the studied conditions.

Supplementary files:

Figure S1: Principal Component Analysis (PCA) of RNAseq data from resistant and susceptible whole snail samples

This figure illustrates a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) performed on RNAseq data obtained from whole snail samples, categorized as resistant and susceptible. The PCA plot displays the distribution of samples along the two principal components: PC1 (Principal Component 1), which accounts for 53% of the variance, and PC2 (Principal Component 2), accounting for 15% of the variance. Samples from the susceptible condition are marked in red, while those from the resistant condition are in blue. The replicates are labelled as R1, R2, R3, R4 for resistant and S1, S2, S3, S4 for susceptible. This PCA plot provides a visual representation

of the overall variation in the transcriptomic data and the clustering patterns of the samples based on their phenotypic resistance or susceptibility.

Figure S2: Distance matrix and hierarchical clustering of resistant vs. susceptible

This figure presents a hierarchical clustering analysis based on a distance matrix derived from RNAseq data, comparing resistant and susceptible phenotypes. The distance matrix quantifies the dissimilarities between each pair of samples, reflecting the degree of difference in their gene expression profiles. The hierarchical clustering, depicted as a dendrogram, illustrates the relationships and relative distances between all samples, visually segregating them into clusters that correspond to the resistant and susceptible phenotypes.

Figure S3: Heatmap of 328 Differentially Expressed Genes (DEGs) in resistant vs. susceptible snails

Displayed in this heatmap is the expression profiling of 328 differentially expressed genes (DEGs) between resistant and susceptible snail phenotypes. Expression levels, measured in TPM (Transcripts Per Million), are visually represented for each gene across four replicates for both resistant and susceptible groups. Over-expressed genes are indicated in red, while under-expressed genes are shown in blue.

Figure S4: Treemap of Gene Ontology (GO) terms over-represented in over-expressed genes from molecular function category

This treemap illustrates the Gene Ontology (GO) terms in the molecular function category associated with genes that are over-represented in over-expressed genes in the resistance phenotype. The visualization, derived from REVIGO, highlights GO terms with a p-value of less than 0.01, indicating significant over-representation in this category. The GO terms are organized into major functional groups, each distinguished by a unique color to enhance the clarity of the displayed information. This graphical representation provides an intuitive understanding of the predominant molecular functions carried out by the over-expressed genes in the resistance phenotype, underscoring the specific functional roles these genes play. See table S4 for details of the names in each square.

Figure S5: Treemap of gene ontology (GO) terms over-represented in under-expressed genes from molecular function category

This figure showcases a treemap of Gene Ontology (GO) terms within the molecular function category, specifically for genes that are over-represented in under-expressed gene in the resistance phenotype. Created using REVIGO visualization, the treemap features GO terms that are significantly over-represented, as indicated by a p-value of less than 0.01. The terms are organized into large groups, differentiated by various colors corresponding to distinct

molecular functions. This color-coding and grouping strategy aids in clearly presenting the molecular functions predominantly associated with the under-expressed genes, thereby offering insights into the molecular mechanisms potentially involved in the resistance phenotype. See table S4 for details of the names in each square.

Figure S6: PLS-DA (Partial Least Squares-Discriminant Analysis) score plot for lipidomic analysis

This score plot represents the results of a Partial Least Squares-Discriminant Analysis (PLS-DA) applied to lipidomic data from resistant and susceptible snail samples. The x-axis depicts Component 1, which accounts for 23.6% of the variance, while the y-axis represents Component 2, accounting for 11.1% of the variance. In the plot, resistant replicates are denoted by red triangles, and susceptible replicates by green cross. The red and green circles indicate the respective clustering of the resistant and susceptible replicates. This visual representation provides a clear separation between the lipidomic profiles of resistant and susceptible phenotypes.

Figure 1

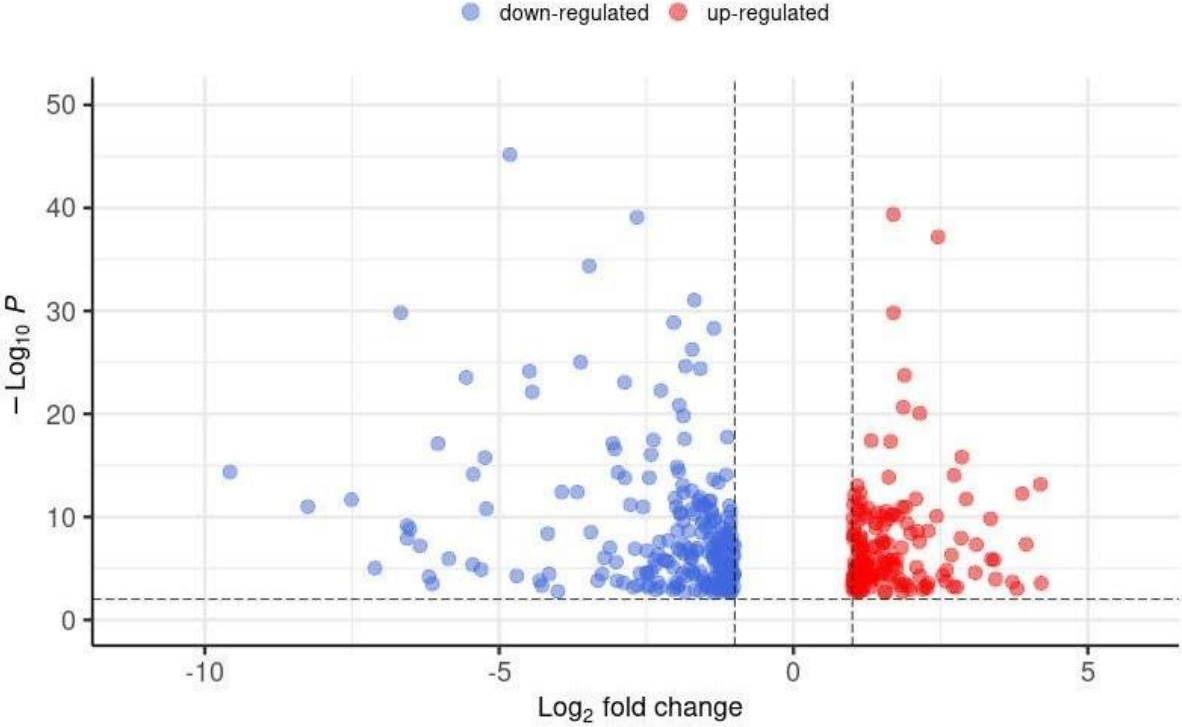


Figure 2

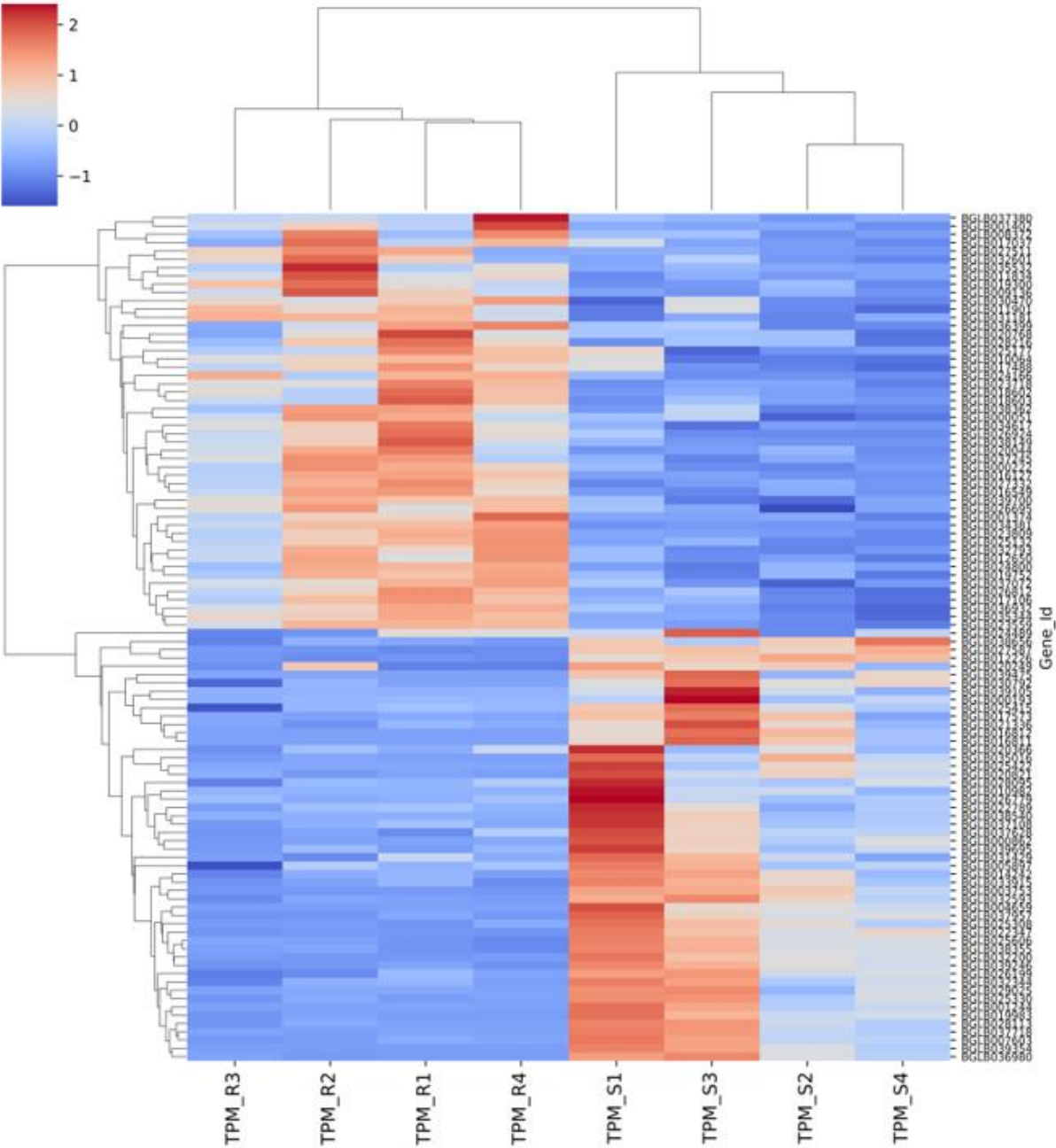


Figure 3

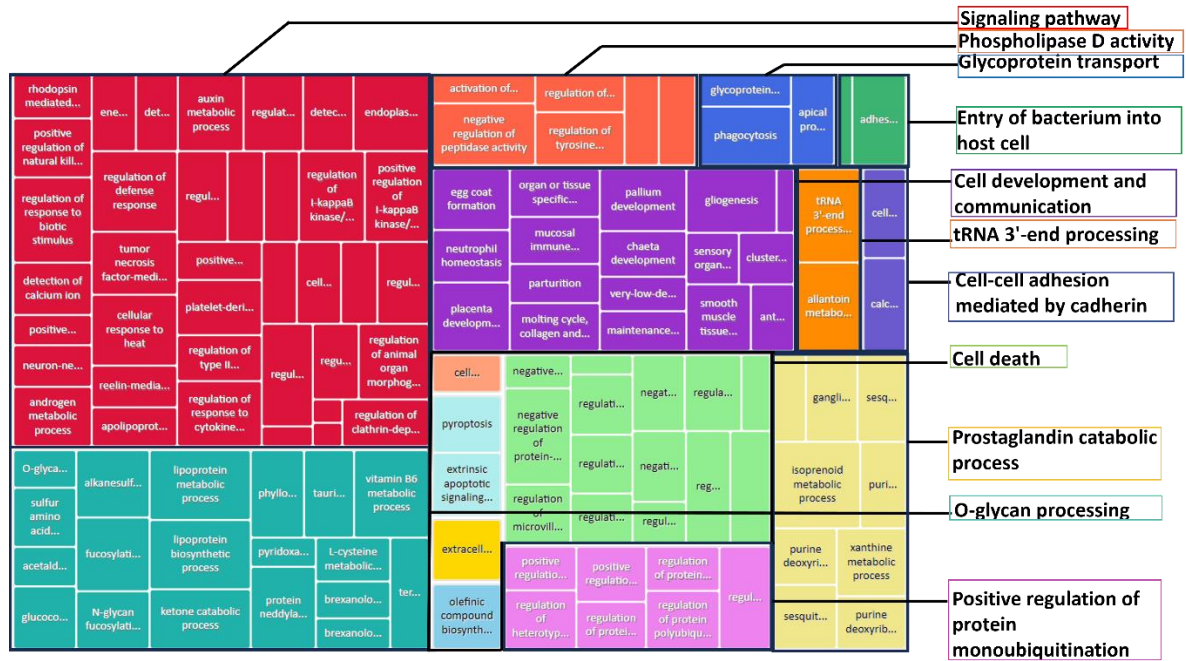


Figure 4

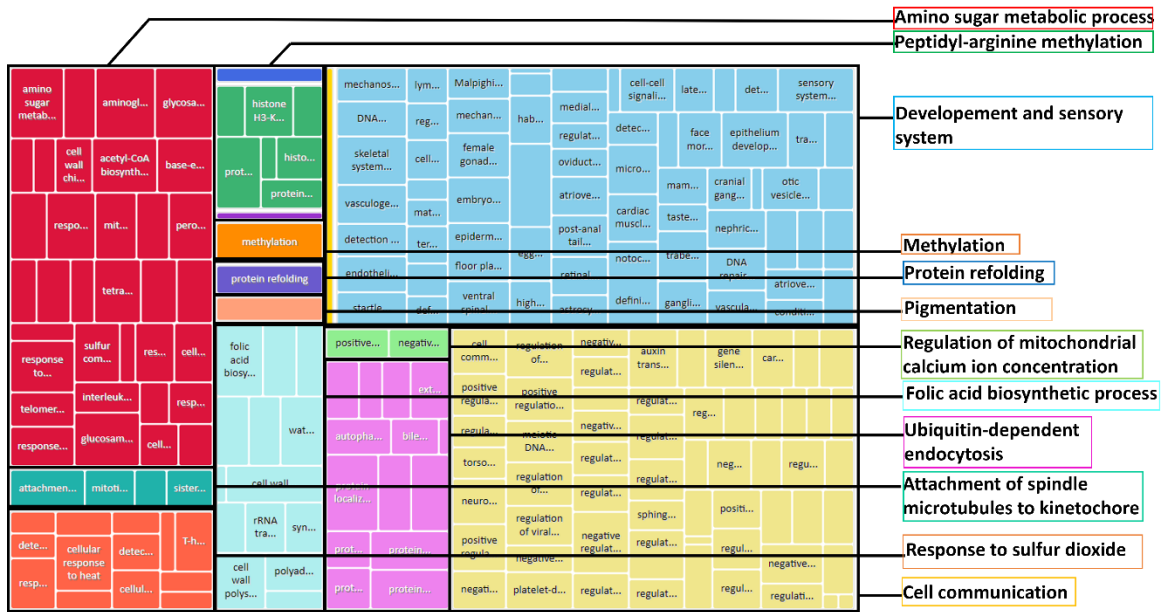


Figure 5

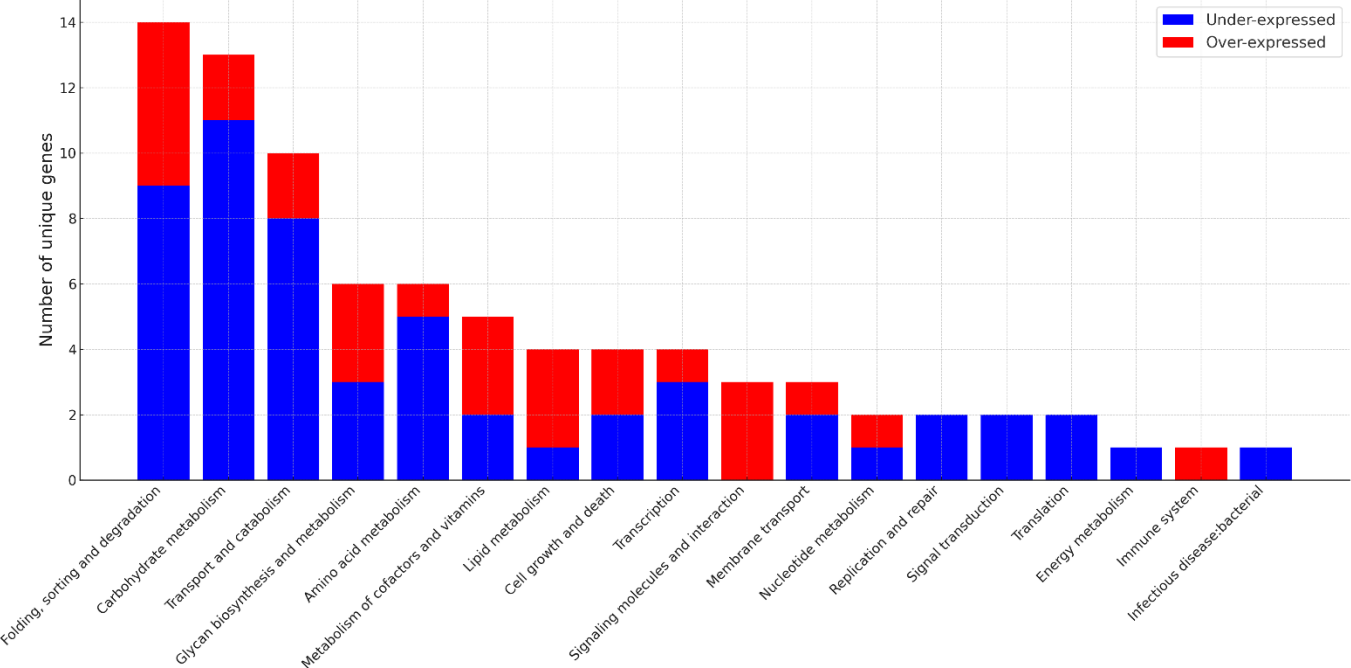


Figure 6

