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Bivalve immunity and response to infections: Are we looking at the right place?

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13 Abstract

Significant progress has been made in the understanding of cellular and molecular mediators of 14 immunity in invertebrates in general and bivalve mollusks in particular. Despite this information, 15 there is a lack of understanding of factors affecting animal resistance and specific responses to 16 17 infections. This in part results from limited consideration of the spatial (and to some extent temporal) heterogeneity of immune responses and very limited information on host-pathogen 18 19 (and microbes in general) interactions at initial encounter/colonization sites. Of great concern is the fact that most studies on molluscan immunity focus on the circulating hemocytes and the 20 humoral defense factors in the plasma while most relevant host-microbe interactions occur at 21 22 mucosal interfaces. This paper summarizes information available on the contrasting value of information available on focal and systemic immune responses in infected bivalves, and 23 highlights the role of mucosal immune factors in host-pathogen interactions. Available 24 information underlines the diversity of immune effectors at molluscan mucosal interfaces and 25 highlights the tailored immune response to pathogen stimuli. This context raises fascinating basic 26 research questions around host-microbe crosstalk and feedback controls of these interactions and 27 may lead to novel disease mitigation strategies and improve the assessment of resistant crops or 28 the screening of probiotic candidates. 29

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31 Key words: Immune response, Resistance, Focal, Systemic, Mucosal immunity

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