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Developments in the Identification and Engineering of Gene Targets for Carotenoid Biosynthesis in Recombinant Strains

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Introduction

Carotenoids are vital pigments found in plants, algae, and certain microorganisms, serving essential roles in photosynthesis and providing colors to various fruits and vegetables. Beyond their aesthetic value, carotenoids exhibit antioxidant properties, promoting health benefits such as improved immune function and reduced risk of chronic diseases. As the demand for natural compounds with health-promoting properties rises, there's a growing interest in engineering carotenoid biosynthesis in microbial hosts *via* genetic modification. This article explores the recent developments in identifying and manipulating gene targets for carotenoid biosynthesis in recombinant strains. The biosynthesis of carotenoids involves a series of enzymatic reactions catalyzed by multiple genes within a metabolic pathway. Key intermediates include phytoene, lycopene, β-carotene, and other derivatives, each synthesized by specific enzymes encoded by distinct genes. Advances in genomics and transcriptomics have facilitated the identification and characterization of these genes and enzymes involved in carotenoid biosynthesis across different organisms. Genome sequencing and bioinformatic analyses have been pivotal in identifying potential gene targets for enhancing carotenoid production in recombinant strains.

Description

Comparative genomics studies among various organisms have unveiled conserved genes involved in carotenoid biosynthesis, providing a foundation for targeted genetic engineering. CRISPR-Cas9 technology has revolutionized gene editing, allowing precise modifications in the genome of microorganisms. This includes enhancing the supply of precursor molecules, such as Isopentenyl Pyrophosphate (IPP) and Dimethylallyl Pyrophosphate (DMAPP), which are essential for carotenoid synthesis. Moreover, fine-tuning the expression levels of transcription factors that regulate carotenoid biosynthesis genes has shown promise in modulating carotenoid accumulation. Synthetic biology approaches, like the construction of synthetic gene circuits or pathways, have enabled precise control over carotenoid production in engineered strains. Despite significant advancements, several challenges persist in the quest to engineer efficient carotenoid-producing strains. Balancing metabolic pathways to avoid cellular toxicity, improving precursor availability, and optimizing fermentation conditions for maximal carotenoid accumulation remain areas of intense research. The future of engineering carotenoid biosynthesis in recombinant strains lies in interdisciplinary efforts, encompassing genomics, synthetic biology, metabolic engineering, and bioprocess optimization. Integration of omics technologies, such as metabolomics and proteomics, will provide comprehensive insights into cellular dynamics and aid in fine-tuning metabolic pathways for improved carotenoid production.

Conclusion

The identification and engineering of gene targets for carotenoid biosynthesis in recombinant strains represent a promising avenue for producing these valuable compounds sustainably. Recent advancements in genetic manipulation techniques, coupled with a deeper understanding of metabolic pathways, have accelerated progress in enhancing carotenoid yields. With continued research and innovation, engineered microbial hosts have the potential to serve as efficient platforms for cost-effective and scalable production of carotenoids, contributing to various industrial and health applications. Researchers have employed this tool to manipulate carotenoid biosynthesis pathways, either by upregulating the expression of key genes or by knocking out competitive pathways, thereby redirecting metabolic flux towards increased carotenoid production. To bolster carotenoid yields in recombinant strains, several engineering strategies have been implemented. One such approach involves the overexpression of rate-limiting enzymes within the carotenoid biosynthesis pathway. By amplifying the expression of

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genes encoding these enzymes, researchers have achieved significant improvements in carotenoid production. Metabolic engineering, another promising strategy, involves manipulating the cellular metabolic network to optimize precursor availability for carotenoid biosynthesis.

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Conflict of Interest

None

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