PURIFIED BREWERS' YEAST (*Saccharomyces cerevisiae*) ADDITIVES MODULATE THE MUCOSAL HEALTH OF ATLANTIC SALMON PARR

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1 INTRODUCTION

Restrictions on the use of antibiotic growth promoters in animal feed have necessitated a shift towards functional feed additives. Cell wall components of ***Saccharomyces cerevisiae*** (rich in **β-1,3 and -1,6-glucans and mannan oligosaccharides**) in isolated or whole forms have been demonstrated to confer immunomodulatory effects in fish (Rawling *et al.,* 2021). These benefits are at least partially induced by improvements of intestinal health. Despite the reported benefits, many knowledge gaps exist with regards to the optimal form and dosage.

2 AIMS

- The overall aim of this study was to investigate the effect of brewer's yeast derived **β-glucans and mannan oligosaccharides** on the mucosal health of Atlantic salmon. Specific aims were to investigate the impacts on skin and intestine:
  - Gross and ultrastructural morphology
  - Goblet cell abundance
  - Transcriptional response of targeted immunological and barrier regulating genes

3 METHODOLOGY

Table 1: Ingredient and nutrient composition in % of diet

Ingredient	Control	PβG	WYCW
Soy protein concentrate 62	30.00	30.00	30.00
LT Fishmeal	15.00	15.00	15.00
Soybean meal 48*	13.00	13.00	13.00
Wheat Gluten meal	13.85	13.85	13.85
Fish Oil	8.00	8.00	8.00
Sunflower oil	8.72	8.72	8.72
Sunflower meal	8.70	8.68	8.50
Fish Premix	0.50	0.50	0.50
Purified B-glucans (PβG)**	-	0.02	-
Whole Yeast Cell Wall (WYCW) **	-	-	0.2
Proximate composition (%)			
Dry Matter	96.5 ± 0.1	96.3 ± 0.1	97.2 ± 0.1
Crude Protein	49.2 ± 0.3	49.1 ± 0.8	48.9 ± 1.1
Fat	20.1 ± 0.4	18.6 ± 1.8	19.3 ± 1.3
Ash	5.8 ± 0.1	5.8 ± 0.0	5.8 ± 0.0

All ingredients except otherwise stated were sourced from BioMar Ltd, Scotland, UK
** Skretting Ltd*
*** Leiber GmbH, Germany*

Fish Source: Landcatch Natural Selection Ltd, Scotland, UK

N_{fish} = 120 Atlantic salmon parr

N_{tank} = 20 fish/tank

Av. Initial weight = 21 ± 0.4 g

Feeding rate: 1.5% BW/day

Duration: 4 weeks

Sampling: intestinal tissues at week 4 (Table 3)

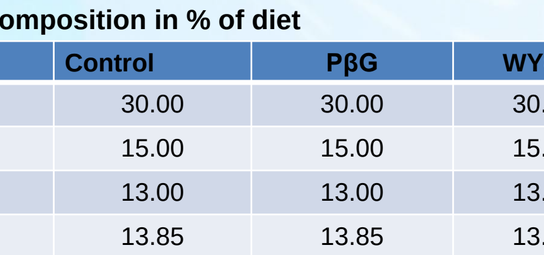

Table 2: Average water quality parameters

DO (mg L^{-1})	pH	Temperature (°C)	NH_3 (mg L^{-1})	NO_2^- (mg L^{-1})	NO_3^- (mg L^{-1})
9.6 ± 0.1	6.96 ± 0.11	16.6 ± 0.2	0.02 ± 0.01	<0.001	6.4 ± 1.6

Table 3: Samples and methods

Technique	Data	Protocols	References
Histology	Gross morphology, goblet cell abundance, microvilli length and density	Light microscopy, electron microscopy	Leclercq *et. al*. (2020)
Gene expression	Transcriptional response of target immunomodulatory and genes	RNA extraction, Real-time PCR	Rawling *et. al.* (2021)

4 RESULTS

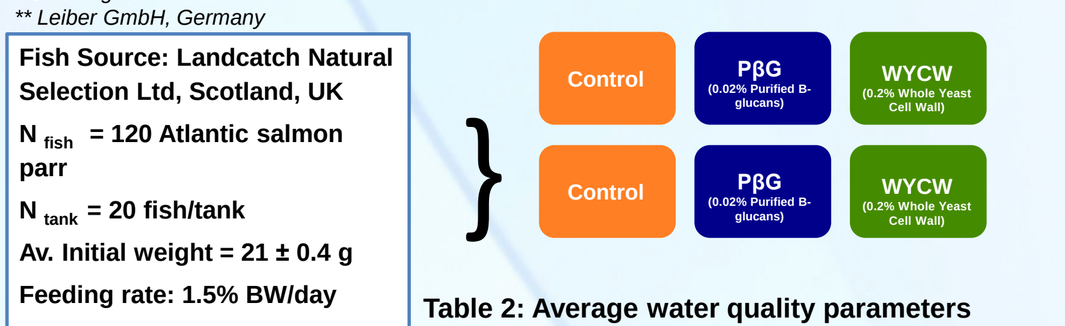

Plate 1: Representative scanning electron micrographs of the microvilli from the distal intestine of Atlantic salmon parr subjected to (A) Control (B) PβG and (C) WYCW treatments.

Table 4: Histological appraisal of intestine and skin of fish at week 4

	Control	PβG	WYCW	P-Value
Distal Intestine				
Goblet cell counts	10.5 ± 0.1[a]	10.8 ± 1.4[a]	14.6 ± 1.3[b]	0.0422
Lamina Propria width (μm)	28.1 ± 1.5	30.4 ± 1.2	27.6 ± 2.5	0.4940
Microvilli length (μm)	1.58 ± 0.04[a]	1.86 ± 0.03[b]	1.46 ± 0.03[c]	<0.0001
Microvilli density (per μm^2)	142.7 ± 4.7[a]	191.5 ± 5.6[b]	178.4 ± 10.4[b]	0.0001
Skin				
Goblet cell counts	22.7 ± 2.7[a]	33.8 ± 3.3[b]	27.0 ± 2.6[ab]	0.0459

Figures with different superscripts are significantly different at P < 0.05

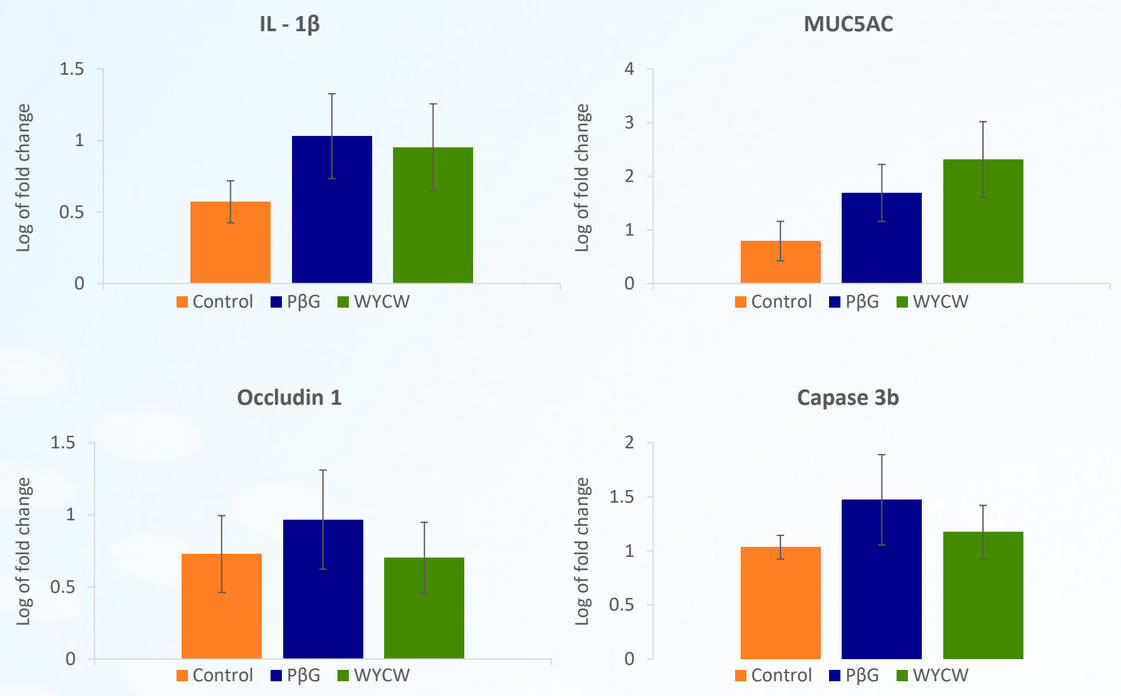

Figure 1: Expression of key cytokines and functional proteins associated with inflammatory response, tight junction integrity and cell turnover among the different treatment groups.

5 DISCUSSION

At the end of the four-week experiment, although all treatments showed positive growth trends (average FCR = 0.8 ± 0.1), there was no significant difference in growth parameters among all treatments (P > 0.05). However, histological appraisal revealed goblet cell abundance was significantly increased (+39%) in the distal intestine of fish fed the WYCW and in the skin (+49%) of fish fed the PβG treatment when compared to the control group. Goblet cells are mucin-producing cells found on epithelial surfaces including the skin and intestine of fish. Their major function is the secretion of mucus, which forms a protective gel-like physical barrier against luminal threats. Our results supports the existing literature that suggests that yeast cell wall extracts may increase the proliferation of goblet cells in both skin and intestine of fish – an essential precursor for robust barrier defences (Merrifield *et. al.,* 2011; Micallef *et. al.,* 2017; Rawling *et. al.,* 2019).

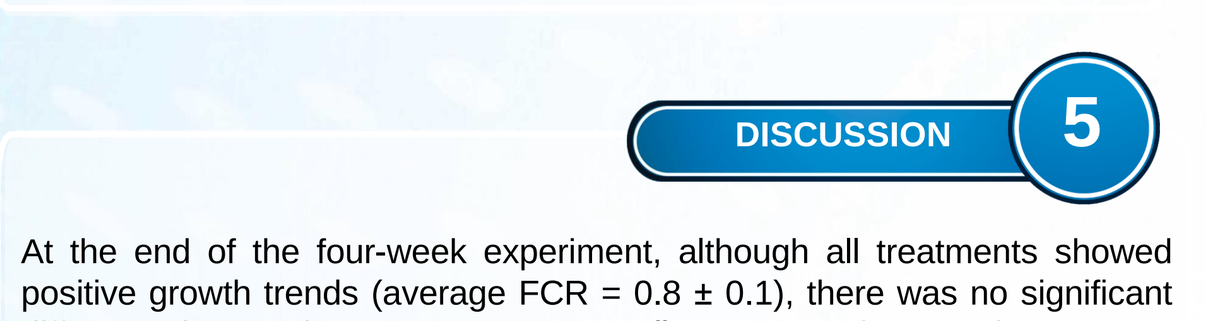

Plate 2: Representative transmission electron micrographs of the microvilli from the distal intestine of Atlantic salmon parr subjected to (A) Control (B) PβG and (C) WYCW treatments. Scale bars = 1 μm.

In addition, transmission electron microscopy (TEM) analysis of the distal intestine revealed significantly different microvilli morphometrics. Fish fed the PβG treatment had significantly longer (+20%) and more densely packed (+34%) microvilli than the other treatment groups. Fish fed the WYCW treatment had significantly denser (+25%) microvilli arrangement than the control group.

In terms of gene expression, although there was no significant difference among the treatments, there is a trend of the yeast additives promoting the expression of the genes of interest. *IL-1β,* a proinflammatory cytokine associated with activating innate immune response; *muc5ac,* a glycoprotein involved in the production of mucus; *Occludin 1*, a tight junction protein; and *caspase 3b,* involved in the regulation of cellular turnover were all numerically higher in the yeast-treated samples than the control.

In conclusion, both dietary products demonstrated the potential to enhance the epithelial barriers of Atlantic salmon parr.

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Acknowledgements:

The authors would like to acknowledge the contributions of Mathew Emery, Dr Joceline Triner, Glenn Harper, Andrew Atfield, Victoria Cammack and Natalie Sweet for their tireless contributions to different stages of this research.