

1 **A curated collection of *Klebsiella* metabolic models reveals variable substrate usage**  
2 **and gene essentiality**

3 Jane Hawkey<sup>1</sup>, Ben Vezina<sup>1</sup>, Jonathan M. Monk<sup>2</sup>, Louise M. Judd<sup>1</sup>, Taylor Harshegyi<sup>1</sup>,  
4 Sebastián López-Fernández<sup>3</sup>, Carla Rodrigues<sup>3</sup>, Sylvain Brisse<sup>3</sup>, Kathryn E. Holt<sup>1,4</sup>, Kelly L.  
5 Wyres<sup>1</sup>

6

7 1 Department of Infectious Diseases, Central Clinical School, Monash University,  
8 Melbourne, Victoria 3004, Australia

9 2 Department of Bioengineering, University of California, San Diego, San Diego, California,  
10 United States of America

11 3 Institut Pasteur, Université de Paris, Biodiversity and Epidemiology of Bacterial Pathogens,  
12 Paris, France

13 4 Department of Infection Biology, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London  
14 WC1E 7HT, UK

15

16 **Corresponding authors**

17 jane.hawkey@monash.edu, kelly.wyres@monash.edu

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19 **Running title**

20 Curated collection of *Klebsiella* metabolic models

21

22 **Keywords**

23 *Klebsiella*, genome scale metabolic modelling, metabolism, metabolic network

24

25 **Abstract**

26 The *Klebsiella pneumoniae* species complex (KpSC) is a set of seven *Klebsiella* taxa which  
27 are found in a variety of niches, and are an important cause of opportunistic healthcare-  
28 associated infections in humans. Due to increasing rates of multi-drug resistance within the

29 KpSC, there is a growing interest in better understanding the biology and metabolism of  
30 these organisms to inform novel control strategies. We collated 37 sequenced KpSC isolates  
31 isolated from a variety of niches, representing all seven taxa. We generated strain-specific  
32 genome scale metabolic models (GEMs) for all 37 isolates and simulated growth phenotypes  
33 on 511 distinct carbon, nitrogen, sulphur and phosphorus substrates. Models were curated  
34 and their accuracy assessed using matched phenotypic growth data for 94 substrates  
35 (median accuracy of 96%). We explored species-specific growth capabilities and examined  
36 the impact of all possible single gene deletions using growth simulations in 145 core carbon  
37 substrates. These analyses revealed multiple strain-specific differences, within and between  
38 species and highlight the importance of selecting a diverse range of strains when exploring  
39 KpSC metabolism. This diverse set of highly accurate GEMs could be used to inform novel  
40 drug design, enhance genomic analyses, and identify novel virulence and resistance  
41 determinants. We envisage that these 37 curated strain-specific GEMs, covering all seven  
42 taxa of the KpSC, provide a valuable resource to the *Klebsiella* research community.  
43

## 44 **Introduction**

45 *Klebsiella pneumoniae* is a ubiquitous bacterium that inhabits a variety of host- and non-host  
46 associated environments and is a major cause of human disease. It is an opportunistic  
47 pathogen and a significant contributor to the spread of antimicrobial resistance globally  
48 (Pendleton et al. 2014; Navon-Venezia et al. 2017; Thorpe et al. 2021). Multi-drug resistant  
49 *K. pneumoniae* with resistance to the carbapenems (the ‘drugs of last resort’) cause  
50 infections that are extremely difficult to treat and are considered an urgent public health  
51 threat (Pendleton et al. 2014). Understanding the biology and ecological behaviour of these  
52 organisms is essential to inform novel control strategies.

53

54 The past 6-7 years have seen an explosion of *K. pneumoniae* comparative genomics  
55 studies, revealing numerous insights into its epidemiology, evolution, pathogenicity and  
56 drug-resistance, and informing a genomic framework that facilitates surveillance and  
57 knowledge generation (recently summarised in (Wyres et al. 2020)). It is now clear that  
58 isolates identified as *K. pneumoniae* through standard microbiological identification  
59 techniques actually comprise seven distinct closely related taxa known as the *K.*  
60 *pneumoniae* species complex (KpSC): *K. pneumoniae sensu stricto*, *Klebsiella variicola*  
61 subsp. *variicola*, *K. variicola* subsp. *tropica*, *Klebsiella quasipneumoniae* subsp.  
62 *quasipneumoniae*, *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp. *similipneumoniae*, *Klebsiella quasivariicola*  
63 and *Klebsiella africana* (Gorrie et al. 2017; Long et al. 2017; Rodrigues et al. 2019; Wyres et  
64 al. 2020). *K. pneumoniae sensu stricto* accounts for the majority of human infections and is  
65 therefore the most well-studied of these organisms.

66

67 Each individual *K. pneumoniae* genome encodes between 5000 and 5500 genes; ~2000 are  
68 conserved among all members of the species (core genes) and the remainder vary between  
69 individuals (accessory genes) (Holt et al. 2015). The total sum of all core and accessory  
70 genes is estimated to exceed 100,000 protein coding sequences that can be assigned to  
71 various functional categories, many of which are not well-characterised. For example, the

72 diversity, mechanism and phenotypic impact of antimicrobial resistance genes, accounting  
73 for 1% of the total gene pool, is well understood. In contrast the functional implications of  
74 metabolic genes, which account for the largest single fraction of the gene-pool (37%) (Holt et  
75 al. 2015), are relatively poorly understood. The sheer number of genes in this category  
76 suggests that substantial metabolic variability exists within the KpSC, a hypothesis  
77 supported by two studies that have generated growth phenotypes for multiple isolates  
78 (Brisse et al. 2009; Blin et al. 2017). However, these data are limited by the number and  
79 variety of substrates tested and it is difficult to consolidate the genotype data in the context  
80 of these phenotypes. Moreover, these phenotyping methods are slow, expensive, and non-  
81 scalable across large numbers of isolates.

82

83 Genome-scale metabolic modelling represents a powerful approach to bridge the gap  
84 between genotypes and phenotypes. Drawing on the accumulated biochemical knowledge-  
85 base, it is possible to infer the metabolic network of an individual organism from its genome  
86 sequence and subsequently apply *in silico* modelling approaches to predict its metabolic  
87 capabilities (growth phenotypes) (O'Brien et al. 2015). Such models allow exploration of  
88 metabolic diversity (Monk et al. 2013; Seif et al. 2018; Bosi et al. 2016), prediction the impact  
89 of gene deletions or the response to drug exposure (Tong et al. 2020), identification of novel  
90 virulence factors or drug targets (Ramos et al. 2018; Bartell et al. 2017; Zhu et al. 2018), and  
91 optimisation for the production of industrially-relevant compounds. (Li et al. 2016; Jung et al.  
92 2015).

93

94 To-date, two curated and validated single strain genome-scale metabolic models (GEMs)  
95 have been reported for *K. pneumoniae*. The first was generated for the MGH78578  
96 laboratory strain and published in 2011 (model ID iYL1228) (Liao et al. 2011). It comprised  
97 1228 genes, 1188 enzymes and 1970 reactions, and was validated by comparison of *in*  
98 *silico* growth predictions to true phenotypes generated for 171 substrates using a Biolog  
99 phenotyping array. The estimated accuracy of iYL1228 was 84% when comparing to Biolog

100 growth phenotypes. A second *K. pneumoniae* GEM, for laboratory strain KPPR1, was  
101 published in 2017 (model ID iKp1289) (Henry et al. 2017). This model contained 1289 genes  
102 and 2145 reactions. The KPPR1 model was found to be 79% accurate when compared to  
103 Biolog phenotype data in terms of predicting substrate-growth phenotypes. More recently,  
104 Norsigian and colleagues (Norsigian et al. 2019a) reported non-validated draft GEMs for 22  
105 antimicrobial-resistant *K. pneumoniae* clinical isolates built from the iYL1228 model via a  
106 subtractive approach. Subsequent *in silico* growth predictions indicated variability between  
107 isolates in terms of carbon, nitrogen and sulfur but not phosphorus utilisation. There was  
108 evidence that nitrogen substrate usage could be used to classify strains associated with  
109 distinct drug-resistance phenotypes. However, none of these models were experimentally  
110 validated.

111

112 Here, we present an updated version of the MGH78578 GEM in addition to novel GEMs for  
113 36 KpSC strains, including representatives of all seven taxa in the species complex. We  
114 curate and validate the models using a combination of Biolog growth assays and additional  
115 targeted growth phenotype data, resulting in a median accuracy of 96%. We define the core  
116 reactomes of *K. pneumoniae* and the broader species complex, and identify species-specific  
117 metabolic capabilities. We then explore these models to identify strain-specific gene  
118 essentiality and metabolic pathway redundancy across growth on 145 core carbon  
119 substrates.

120

## 121 **Results**

### 122 *Completed KpSC Genomes*

123 We collated 37 previously described isolates from the KpSC complex, including at least one  
124 representative per taxon (Blin et al. 2017; Rodrigues et al. 2019). The collection spanned a  
125 variety of sequence types (STs) within species with more than one strain, and represented a  
126 wide range of isolation sources (including human host-associated, water and the

127 environment). The strains were geographically and temporally diverse, sampled from five  
128 continents and with isolation dates spanning 1935 - 2010 (**Supplemental Table 1**).

129

130 Eight strains had previously-published complete genome sequences available, and we  
131 generated complete genome sequences for the remaining 29 strains using a combination of  
132 short- and long-read sequencing (see **Methods**). The median genome size was 5.5 Mbp  
133 (range 5.1 - 6.0 Mbp) with a median of 5145 genes (range 4798 - 5704 genes). The majority  
134 of strains carried at least one plasmid (n=29, 78%), with seven strains carrying five or more  
135 plasmids.

136

### 137 *Model generation, curation and validation*

138 Using these completed genomes we created strain-specific GEMs, initially using the curated  
139 MGH78578 GEM (iYL1288) as a reference to identify conserved genes and reactions,  
140 followed by manual curation (see **Methods**). The latter was enabled by the availability of  
141 matched phenotype data (Blin et al. 2017) indicating the ability of each strain to grow in  
142 minimal media supplemented with each of 94 distinct sole carbon substrates for which we  
143 were able to predict growth in silico using the GEMs (**Supplemental Table 2**). Our  
144 phenotypic data included 12 carbon substrates for which growth was demonstrated for at  
145 least one strain and for which the corresponding metabolite transport and/or processing  
146 reactions were not present in the original iYL1288 model. Literature searches were  
147 undertaken to identify the putatively responsible candidate genes and reactions for GEM  
148 inclusion. For example, all strains were able to utilise palatinose as a carbon substrate; the  
149 reaction required to catabolise this compound was added based on the presence of core  
150 genes with  $\geq 99\%$  nucleotide homology to *aglAB* (that encode AglAB), which has been shown  
151 to catabolise palatinose in *K. pneumoniae* (Thompson et al. 2001) (**Supplemental Table 3**).  
152 When the model-based predictions and our phenotypic growth data disagreed, we attempted  
153 to correct the models by identifying alternative pathways from the literature or homologous  
154 genes in other *Klebsiella* or Enterobacteriaceae species with sufficient evidence to allow

155 inclusion in our models (see **Methods, Supplemental Table 3**). Overall, we added 49 genes  
156 and 56 reactions across all models.

157

158 The final curated, validated models were highly accurate for the prediction of growth  
159 phenotypes measured via Biolog (median accuracy 95.7%, range 88.3 - 96.8%,  
160 **Supplemental Table 1**). The majority (87%) of the discrepancies were false positives,  
161 where the model predicted growth on a carbon substrate but we did not observe any  
162 phenotypic growth. False positives usually occur due to gene regulation, where strains carry  
163 the genes encoding the enzymes required to import and metabolise a substrate, however  
164 these genes are not expressed during the phenotypic growth experiments. False positives  
165 can also be related to technical issues with measuring metabolic phenotypes, e.g. the limit of  
166 detection, sensitivity of growth detection, and use of correct standards for measurements  
167 (Ibarra et al. 2002). Every model had at least one false positive (median 4, range 1 – 11,  
168 **Supplemental Table 1**) across 31 different carbon substrates. The most common false  
169 positive calls were predicted growth in 2-oxoglutarate (n=35 strains), ethanolamine (n=29),  
170 L-ascorbate (n=28) and 3-hydroxycinnamic acid (n=20); false positive calls for the remaining  
171 27 carbon substrates were associated with  $\leq 6$  strains each (**Supplemental Table 4**).

172

173 Five carbon substrates had at least one strain with a false negative call, where the model did  
174 not predict growth but we observed a growth phenotype: L-tartaric acid (n=12 strains), L-  
175 lyxose (n=5), L-sorbose (n=2), propionic acid (n=2) and L-galactonic acid-gamma-lactone  
176 (n=1) (**Supplemental Table 4**). In such cases it is assumed that the models are missing  
177 information required to optimise for growth on these substrates (Orth et al. 2012). Despite  
178 thorough literature and database searches, we were unable to identify alternate biological  
179 pathways that could plausibly fill these gaps in the models. This was particularly notable  
180 among the five *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp. *quasipneumoniae* strains, which all had false  
181 negative predictions for L-lyxose utilisation. These genomes were each missing *sgaU*  
182 (KPN\_04590), which was present in all other KpSC genomes and encodes an enzyme that

183 converts L-ribulose-5-phosphate to L-xylulose-5-phosphate. We were unable to detect any  
184 other proteins belonging to this enzyme class or carrying similar domains. As the phenotypic  
185 results indicated that all *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp. *quasipneumoniae* can utilise L-lyxose,  
186 we hypothesise that they must contain unknown functional orthologue/s to *sgaU*, which can  
187 perform isomerase activity on L-ribulose 5-phosphate.

188

189 We performed an independent validation of the models by comparing growth phenotypes  
190 from the VITEK GN card with simulated phenotypes (n=13 substrates, see **Methods**). The  
191 models were highly accurate in this setting (median accuracy 100%, range 92.3% - 100%,  
192 **Supplemental Table 5**). All discrepancies were false positives (n=4) – two for growth in  
193 succinate, one in tagatose and one in 5-keto-D-gluconate (**Supplemental Table 5**).

194

195 *Novel GEMs reveal species- and strain-specific metabolic diversity*

196 Our strain collection provided us with a novel opportunity to compare predicted metabolic  
197 functionality between all seven taxa within the KpSC. Overall there were median 1219 genes  
198 and 2294 reactions in each curated strain-specific GEM (range 1190 - 1243 and 2283 - 2305  
199 respectively), representing median 23.6% of all coding sequences in each genome  
200 (**Supplemental Table 1**). Each species had ~1200 core model genes and ~2200 core  
201 reactions (**Table 1**), with a slight decreasing trend with increasing sample size. Conversely,  
202 the total number of distinct reactions detected among the best represented species, *K.*  
203 *pneumoniae* (2312, n=20 genomes) was higher than those detected among each of the  
204 species represented by fewer genomes (2299 in *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp.  
205 *quasipneumoniae*; 2307 in both *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp. *similipneumoniae* and *K.*  
206 *variicola* subsp. *variicola*). In terms of the reactions themselves, the vast majority were core  
207 across all species (**Fig. 1**), however there was variability in reactions associated with  
208 carbohydrate metabolism, for which 16% (n=37/234) were not conserved across all models  
209 (**Fig. 1**). Among these variable reactions we identified three involved in the N-  
210 acetylneuraminate pathway (ACNAMt2pp, ACNML and AMANK) which were species-



211 specific and were found to be core in all five *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp. *similipneumoniae*  
 212 in our study, while absent from all other genomes. A BLASTN screen of all 307 *K.*  
 213 *quasipneumoniae* subsp. *similipneumoniae* genomes from Lam et al. (Lam et al. 2021)  
 214 revealed that these three genes were present in all 307 genomes, indicating that this  
 215 pathway is likely to be core across all members of the species.

216

217 **Table 1: Summary of genomes and the core elements of the GEMs.**

Species	# genomes	# STs	# model genes (core)	# reactions (core)	# phenotypes (core)
<i>K. pneumoniae</i>	20	18	1202 - 1243 (1183)	2288 - 2305 (2276)	277 - 282 (277)
<i>K. quasipneumoniae</i> subsp. <i>quasipneumoniae</i>	5	5	1197 - 1209 (1190)	2283 - 2289 (2283)	270 - 274 (268)
<i>K. quasipneumoniae</i> subsp. <i>similipneumoniae</i>	5	5	1200 - 1220 (1194)	2283 - 2299 (2287)	273 - 280 (273)
<i>K. variicola</i> subsp. <i>variicola</i>	4	4	1212 - 1227 (1214)	2294 - 2301 (2299)	279 - 282 (279)
<i>K. africana</i>	1	1	1216	2289	279
<i>K. quasivariicola</i>	1	1	1228	2299	279
<i>K. variicola</i> subsp. <i>tropica</i>	1	1	1237	2310	281

218

219 We simulated growth on 511 substrates as the sole sources of either carbon (n=272),  
220 nitrogen (n=155), phosphorus (n=59) or sulfur (n=25) (see **Methods, Supplemental Table**  
221 **2**). A total of 224 (44%) were unable to support growth for any strain (carbon=107,  
222 nitrogen=87, phosphorus=15, sulfur=15). Overall the number of core growth-supporting  
223 phenotypes was very similar across taxa, with a median of 279 (range 268 - 281, **Table 1**).  
224 Of the 287 that were predicted to support growth for at least one strain, 262 were conserved  
225 across all 37 strains (carbon=145, nitrogen=64, phosphorus=43, sulfur=10), with only 25  
226 (5%) substrates variable between strains. Substrates that could be utilised as a carbon  
227 source had the most variation, with 7% of carbon substrates displaying variable predicted  
228 growth phenotypes by strain (**Fig. 2**). This was in stark contrast to substrates used as a  
229 source of sulfur, where no variation was observed (**Fig. 2**).

230

231 Amongst the 20 variable carbon substrates, there was some species-specific variation. Six  
232 of these reflect core growth capabilities in all but one of the seven species (3-  
233 hydroxycinnamic acid, 3-(3-hydroxy-phenyl)propionate, D-arabitol, L-ascorbate, L-lyxose,  
234 tricarballylate, **Fig. 3**). In the case of tricarballylate, we identified a new pathway which was  
235 absent from the original *K. pneumoniae* MGH78578 model: all KpSC species except for *K.*  
236 *pneumoniae* carried the *tcuABC* operon, which encodes the enzymes responsible for  
237 oxidising tricarballylate to cis-aconitate (Lewis et al. 2009) via the TCBO reaction (**Fig. 3**). In  
238 contrast, all KpSC were able to utilise L-ascorbate with the exception of *K. quasipneumoniae*  
239 subsp. *quasipneumoniae*, where all five genomes were lacking the *ulaABC* operon encoding  
240 the transport reaction ASCBptspp (**Fig. 3**). This reaction converts L-ascorbate into L-  
241 ascorbate-6-phosphate as it is transported into the cytosol (Zhang et al. 2003). We screened  
242 all 149 *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp. *quasipneumoniae* genomes from Lam et al. (Lam et al.  
243 2021) for *ulaABC* with BLASTN and found that this operon was missing from all members of  
244 the species, suggesting that this is a conserved deletion in *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp.  
245 *quasipneumoniae*.

246

247 The remaining 14 variable carbon substrates were specific to five or fewer strains. For  
248 example, sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine could be utilised by all strains as a carbon and  
249 phosphorus substrate, except for the single *K. africana* and *K. quasivariicola*  
250 representatives, which share a common ancestor in the core-gene phylogenetic tree (**Fig. 3**).  
251 Both of these genomes lacked *glpQ*, encoding the enzyme required to convert sn-glycero-3-  
252 phosphocholine into sn-glycero-3-phosphate and ethanolamine (Brzoska and Boos 1988).  
253 We confirmed that *glpQ* was absent in all 13 *K. quasivariicola* genomes listed in Lam et al.  
254 (Lam et al. 2021) by screening for the gene using BLASTN. To check the result if the *glpQ*  
255 deletion is present in other *K. africana* (as we have only a single genome), we screened six  
256 *K. africana* genomes (all ST4838) for *glpQ* from Vezina et al. (Vezina et al. 2021) and found  
257 that this gene was present in all strains. There was only a single carbon substrate, N-  
258 acetylneuraminate, which supported growth for all *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp.  
259 *similipneumoniae*, due to the presence of the *nan* operon (Vimr and Troy 1985), encoding  
260 the proteins required to catalyse the ACNAMt2pp, ACNML and AMANK reactions, which  
261 were absent in all the other species (**Fig. 3**).

262

### 263 *Single gene knockout simulations reveal variable gene essentiality*

264 Strain-specific GEMs provide an unparalleled opportunity to simulate the impact of single  
265 gene knockout mutations for diverse strains. As carbon substrates were associated with the  
266 greatest amount of variation, we focused on the impact of single gene knockouts in this  
267 group. For each strain we simulated the impact of deletion of each unique gene in its GEM  
268 on growth in each of the core carbon substrates (those predicted to support growth of all  
269 strains, n=145), resulting in 6,544,865 unique simulations (**Supplemental Table 6**). Among  
270 these simulations, 639,365 (9.8%) were predicted to result in a loss of growth phenotype.

271

272 In order to compare the diversity of knock-out phenotypes between strains, we focused on  
273 simulations representing core gene-substrate combinations (n=164,285 gene-substrate

274 combinations; 1133 genes that were present in all GEMs x 145 substrates) and excluded  
275 those representing non-core gene-substrate combinations (n=19,140 combinations),  
276 because the former can be directly compared for all strains whereas the latter cannot (by  
277 definition not all strains harbour all of the genes). A total of 146,385 core gene-substrate  
278 combinations (89.1%) resulted in no loss of growth phenotype in any strain, while 7170  
279 (10.5%) combinations resulted in a loss of growth phenotype in all strains. At the gene level,  
280 807 genes (71.2%) were not predicted to be essential for growth for any substrate in any  
281 strain, and just 57 genes (5.0%) were predicted to be essential for all substrates in all  
282 strains. The latter were associated with 194 distinct reactions (1-32 reactions each,  
283 median=1, **Supplemental Table 7**), encompassing 8 subsystem categories: cell membrane  
284 metabolism (n=76 reactions), lipid metabolism (n=42), amino acid metabolism (n=33),  
285 transport, inner- (n=29) or outer-transport (n=6), nucleotide metabolism (n=5), carbohydrate  
286 metabolism (n=2), and cofactor and prosthetic group biosynthesis (n=1).

287

288 Gene essentiality varied by strain, with reasonable consistency within species. The number  
289 of core gene-substrate combinations predicted to result in a loss of growth phenotype  
290 ranged from 0 to 519 (median=143, **Fig. 4**) and the number of core genes resulting in a  
291 phenotype on at least one growth substrate ranged from 0 to 15 (median=3). The vast  
292 majority of these genes (31 of 36 unique genes, 86.1%) were associated with loss of growth  
293 phenotypes for  $\leq 6$  substrates, with minimal variation in the total number of substrates among  
294 those strains that were impacted. In contrast, a small number of genes were associated with  
295 loss of growth for all or almost all substrates for some strains (4 genes, 11.1%, each  
296 impacting  $\geq 143$  substrates per strain, **Fig. 4**).

297

298 We further investigated the core gene deletions predicted to result in loss of growth  
299 phenotypes for  $\geq 143$  substrates in only a subset of strains, beginning with an apparent *K.*  
300 *quasipneumoniae* subsp. *quasipneumoniae* species-specific phenotype. The associated  
301 gene, KPN\_03428, encodes the enzyme for catalysis of two reactions in the models: CYSDS

302 (cysteine desulfhydrase) and CYSTL (cystathionine b-lyase), the latter of which may also be  
303 encoded by KPN\_01511 (*malY*). *malY* was present in all other models but absent from all *K.*  
304 *quasipneumoniae* subsp. *quasipneumoniae* (closest bi-directional BLASTP hit had 30.07%  
305 identity, well below the threshold required for inclusion as a homolog and considerably lower  
306 than the expected divergence between KpSC species (3-4% nucleotide divergence, Holt et  
307 al. 2015)), and no alternate genes encoding putative cystathionine b-lyases could be  
308 identified by search of the KEGG database, indicating a lack of genetic redundancy for these  
309 reactions. Direct comparison of the *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp. *quasipneumoniae* 01A030T  
310 chromosome to *K. pneumoniae* MGH78578 revealed that the former harboured a ~5 kbp  
311 deletion relative to the latter, spanning the *zntB*, *malY* and *malX* genes as well as part of  
312 *mall*. The lack of *malY* (KPN\_01511) in combination with the KPN\_03428 deletion resulted in  
313 predicted loss of ability to produce three key metabolites (L-homocysteine, ammonium and  
314 pyruvate) and ultimately the predicted loss of biomass production. This deletion was  
315 replicated in all five *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp. *quasipneumoniae* strains. Inspection of an  
316 additional 149 publicly available *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp. *quasipneumoniae* genome  
317 assemblies (see **Methods**) found this region to be present in only 37 genomes (24%),  
318 suggesting that the most recent common ancestor of this species is lacking this region, with  
319 occasional re-acquisition in some lineages.

320

321 Unlike the KPN\_03428 deletion, deletion of KPN\_04246 resulted in predicted loss of growth  
322 phenotypes for all 145 substrates for the single *K. africana* strain plus 13 of 20 *K.*  
323 *pneumoniae* strains (comprising multiple distantly related lineages including representatives  
324 of the well-known globally distributed ST14, ST23, ST86 and ST258). KPN\_04246 encodes  
325 a protein that catalyses two reactions, ACODA, acetylornithine deacetylase, and NACODA,  
326 N-acetylornithine deacetylase, both of which may also be encoded by the product of  
327 KPN\_01464 (homologs of this gene were identified in only those genomes that were not  
328 associated with loss of growth phenotype). Comparison of the *K. pneumoniae* strain CG43  
329 (ST86) chromosome lacking KPN\_01464 to *K. pneumoniae* MGH78578 harbouring

330 KPN\_01464 showed that CG43 contained a ~10 kbp deletion resulting in the loss of  
331 KPN\_01464. This deletion was replicated in the *K. africana* 200023T genome and the  
332 remaining 12 *K. pneumoniae* genomes that lacked KPN\_01464 ( $\leq 33.24\%$  identity for the  
333 best bi-directional BLASTP hit, no alternate genes encoding putative acetylornithine  
334 deacetylases/N-acetylornithine deacetylases were identified in KEGG).

335

336 Finally, we investigated the two gene deletions (KPN\_02238 and KPN\_00456) resulting in  
337 predicted loss of growth on all substrates in only *K. pneumoniae* NJST258-1. KPN\_02238  
338 encodes the protein responsible for catalysing PRPPS (phosphoribosylpyrophosphate  
339 synthetase), for which no redundant genes were included in any of our KpSC models. This  
340 reaction converts alpha-D-ribose 5-phosphate to 5-phospho-alpha-D-ribose 1-diphosphate, a  
341 key substrate utilised as input for 14 downstream reactions. While the *K. pneumoniae*  
342 MGH78578 reference model contains a redundant pathway to support this conversion, one  
343 of the required reactions (R15BPK, catalysed by a ribose-1,5-bisphosphokinase) was  
344 missing from the NJST258-1 model because the associated genome lacked a homolog of  
345 KPN\_04492 (best bi-direction BLASTP hit 26.19% identity), whereas all other genomes  
346 contained a homolog of this gene. Further investigation showed that the NJST258-1  
347 chromosome was missing a ~17 kbp region compared to MGH78578. In the NJST258-1  
348 chromosome, this region, which included KPN\_04492, was replaced by the insertion  
349 sequence IS 1294 (99% nucleotide identity). We were not able to identify a similar deficiency  
350 to explain the strain-specific loss of growth phenotype associated with KPN\_00456, which  
351 encodes a protein implicated in 14 distinct reactions.

352

353

## 354 **Discussion**

355 Here we present an updated GEM for *K. pneumoniae* MGH78578 plus novel GEMs for 36  
356 members of the KpSC, capturing all seven taxa and representing the first reported GEMs for  
357 the *K. variicola* (subsp. *variicola* and *tropica*), *K. quasipneumoniae* (subsp. *quasipneumoniae*

358 and *similipneumoniae*), *K. quasivariicola* and *K. africana* species. All models were validated  
359 and curated by comparison of predicted and true growth phenotypes, and had a median  
360 accuracy of 95.7% (range 88.3 - 96.8%), higher than estimated for the previously published  
361 *K. pneumoniae* MGH78578 (84%) and KPPR1 (79%) models.

362

363 Our *in silico* growth phenotype predictions for a diverse set of substrates highlighted  
364 variability among strains within the *K. pneumoniae* species, as has been indicated by  
365 previous smaller scale GEM comparisons and phenotypic comparisons (Norsigian et al.  
366 2019a; Blin et al. 2017; Brisse et al. 2009; Henry et al. 2017). Similar variability was also  
367 indicated within and between the other species in the KpSC (**Fig. 3**). Carbon substrates  
368 were associated with the greatest diversity; a total of 145 substrates (53%) predicted to  
369 support growth of all 37 strains and 20 (7%) predicted to support growth of 1-36 strains each  
370 (**Fig. 2**). These predictions were consistent with the observed reaction variability, where the  
371 highest proportion of accessory reactions was identified among those associated with  
372 carbohydrate metabolism (16%, **Fig. 1**). This is consistent with a previous pan-genome  
373 analysis of 328 *K. pneumoniae* which indicated that ~50% of the total gene-pool predicted to  
374 encode proteins with metabolic functions were specifically associated with carbohydrate  
375 metabolism (Holt et al. 2015). This trend is also consistent with previous studies of the  
376 closely related species, *Escherichia coli*, which demonstrated carbohydrate metabolism as  
377 the most diverse category for this organism (Fang et al. 2018; Monk et al. 2013).

378

379 The extent of diversity reported for *E. coli* and *Salmonella* spp. (Seif et al. 2018) was much  
380 higher than reported here for KpSC. We propose two likely explanations for these  
381 differences: i) the current analysis for KpSC comprises just 37 strains, compared to 55 and  
382 110 strains included in the *E. coli* studies (Fang et al. 2018; Monk et al. 2013), and 410 in  
383 the *Salmonella* study (Seif et al. 2018). With greater sample size we expect to capture  
384 greater gene content diversity (Tettelin et al. 2008), including genes associated with  
385 metabolic functions that drive metabolic diversity (as was shown to be the case for

386 *Salmonella* spp. (Seif et al. 2018)); ii) our draft KpSC strain-specific models were generated  
387 using the reference-based protocol (Norsigian et al. 2019b), where homology search is used  
388 to identify genes in the reference model that are absent from the strain of interest and are  
389 therefore removed from the strain-specific model. We added novel genes/reactions to the  
390 models based on comparison of predicted vs observed growth phenotypes and manual  
391 sequence/literature search, but we did not conduct an automated screen to identify  
392 additional genes that are present in the novel strain collection. The latter approach is  
393 expected to reveal further diversity, but it requires significant manual curation and validation  
394 to ensure the high-quality status of the models is maintained, and is therefore should be  
395 addressed in future studies.

396

397 In addition to growth capabilities, our analyses revealed considerable variation in terms of  
398 predicted gene essentiality, as has been implicated for other bacterial species (Breton et al.  
399 2015; Poulsen et al. 2019; Rousset et al. 2021; Tong et al. 2020). Specifically, our data  
400 indicate that i) deletion of a single core gene in a given strain may result in loss of growth on  
401 all, none or only a subset of growth substrates; and ii) the impact of such deletions may vary  
402 between strains (**Fig. 4**). Amongst genes where deletion was predicted to have variable  
403 impact, most were associated with the loss of growth for only a small number of substrates  
404 in the impacted strains. However, four genes were associated with predicted loss of growth  
405 on  $\geq 143$  of 145 substrates for between one and 14 strains each. In two cases (genes  
406 KPN\_03428 and KPN\_04246), the impacted strains were missing redundant genes that  
407 were present in the MGH78578 reference model, i.e., those encoding proteins with the same  
408 functional annotation as the deleted gene. Comparisons of the chromosomes of these  
409 strains suggested that the genes were lost via large scale chromosomal deletions (5-10  
410 kbp). One of these deletions was uniquely conserved among strains belonging to *K.*  
411 *quasipneumoniae* subsp. *quasipneumoniae*, suggesting that it may have occurred in the  
412 most recent common ancestor of this subspecies and has been inherited via vertical  
413 descent, with evidence from additional public genome data pointing towards recent re-



414 acquisition of this region in some lineages. The other chromosomal deletion was found  
415 among a distantly related subset of *K. pneumoniae* as well as the single *K. africana* isolate,  
416 and therefore its distribution cannot be explained by simple vertical ancestry. Rather, we  
417 speculate that this deletion has been disseminated horizontally via chromosomal  
418 recombination, as is known to occur frequently among *K. pneumoniae* (Wyres et al. 2019;  
419 Bowers et al. 2015) and has been reported between KpSC species (Holt et al. 2015).

420

421 Deletion of two genes (KPN\_02238 and KPN\_00456) resulted in the loss of growth on all  
422 substrates for only a single strain (*K. pneumoniae* NJST258-1). This strain is of particular  
423 interest because it was associated with the highest number of deletion phenotypes (**Fig. 4**),  
424 and it belongs to ST258, a globally distributed cause of carbapenem-resistant *K.*  
425 *pneumoniae* infections (Wyres et al. 2020; Bowers et al. 2015). We were unable to identify  
426 the cause of this rare knockout phenotype (lacking adenylate kinase, encoded by  
427 KPN\_00456), which converts D-ribose 1,5-bisphosphate to 5-phospho-alpha-D-ribose 1-  
428 diphosphate at the cost of 1 ATP. Comparison of the metabolic networks of NJST258-1 and  
429 MGH78578 indicated that NJST258-1 was lacking an additional reaction pathway  
430 (phosphoribosylpyrophosphate synthetase) present in MGH78578, allowing an alternative  
431 means of 5-phospho-alpha-D-ribose 1-diphosphate production in the absence of ribose-1,5-  
432 bisphosphokinase. Further investigation showed that the NJST258-1 chromosome was  
433 missing a ~17 kbp region containing one of the genes required to express this redundant  
434 pathway, which had been replaced by an insertion sequence (IS). IS are frequently identified  
435 among *Klebsiella* and other Enterobacteriaceae where they are particularly associated with  
436 large plasmids and the dissemination of antimicrobial resistance (Che et al. 2021; Adams et  
437 al. 2016). The carbapenem-resistant *K. pneumoniae* lineage, ST258, has been associated  
438 with particularly high IS burden (Adams et al. 2016), and we hypothesise that such insertions  
439 contribute to the increased number of gene deletion phenotypes predicted for NJST258-1  
440 compared to other *K. pneumoniae* strains. We screened an additional 1,021 non-redundant  
441 ST258 genomes from Lam et al. for the presence of KPN\_02388 (the gene which encodes

442 for phosphoribosylpyrophosphate synthetase) and found that this gene was present in all  
443 1,021 ST258 genomes, suggesting that the deletion of this pathway is unique to NJST258-1.  
444 This highlights the importance of assessing multiple strains when attempting to draw  
445 conclusions regarding observed phenotypes.

446

447 These findings indicate that KpSC can differ substantially in terms of metabolic redundancy.  
448 While we cannot exclude the possibility that the predicted knockout phenotypes might be  
449 rescued by products of non-orthologous genes that are not currently captured in our models,  
450 we note that at least for the examples described above, search of the KEGG database did  
451 not indicate any additional known redundant metabolic pathways. Additionally, our findings  
452 are consistent with a recent experimental exploration of gene essentiality in *E. coli* (Rousset  
453 et al. 2021), which showed that 7-9% of ~3,400 conserved genes were variably essential  
454 among 18 *E. coli* strains grown in three different conditions. Genomic comparisons of these  
455 *E. coli* implicated a key role for horizontal gene transfer in driving strain-specific essentiality  
456 patterns and redundancies through the mobilisation of homologous or analogous genes  
457 and/or those driving epistatic interactions (Rousset et al. 2021).

458

459 Taken together our findings highlight the importance of strain-specific genomic variation in  
460 determining strain-specific metabolic traits and redundancy. More broadly, these analyses  
461 demonstrate the value of an organism investing in redundant systems, either through i)  
462 encoding multiple genes capable of performing the same reaction, or through ii) encoding  
463 multiple, alternative pathways for producing key metabolites from different substrates. Given  
464 what is known about the extent of genomic diversity among *K. pneumoniae* and the broader  
465 KpSC (Holt et al. 2015; Wyres et al. 2019; Thorpe et al. 2021), it is clear that studies seeking  
466 to understand the metabolism of these species – e.g., for novel drug design, or to identify  
467 novel virulence and drug resistance determinants – should include a diverse set of strains. In  
468 this regard, we anticipate that the GEMs, growth predictions and single gene deletion  
469 predictions presented here will provide a valuable resource to the *Klebsiella* research

470 community, that can be used to understand the fundamental biology of these organisms and  
471 to derive clinically relevant insights e.g. to understand how substrate usage patterns  
472 influence pathogenicity and virulence, or to identify universal or clone-specific metabolic  
473 choke points wherein the associated essential genes/proteins could be targeted by novel  
474 therapeutics. As exemplified for the *E. coli* K-12 reference strain, such resources can be  
475 continually improved and expanded to maximise their utility and facilitate biological discovery  
476 for years to come (Schilling et al. 1999; Monk et al. 2017).

477

## 478 **Methods**

### 479 *Genome collection*

480 The 37 strains used in this study were sourced from two previous studies (Blin et al. 2017;  
481 Rodrigues et al. 2019). Eight strains had completed genome sequences already publicly  
482 available, generated using various sequencing and assembly methods (see **Supplemental**  
483 **Table 1** for details). For the remaining 29 strains, short- and long-read sequencing was  
484 conducted as follows. Genomic DNA was extracted from overnight cultures, using GenFind  
485 v3 reagents (Beckman Coulter, California, USA). The same DNA extraction was used for  
486 both Illumina and MinION libraries. Illumina sequencing libraries were made with Illumina  
487 DNA Prep reagents (catalogue no. 20018705) and the Illumina Nextera DNA UD Indexes  
488 (catalogue no. 20027217) as per manufacturer's instructions with one major deviation from  
489 described protocol; reactions were scaled down to 25% of recommended usage. Illumina  
490 libraries were sequenced on the NovaSeq platform using the 6000 SP Reagent Kit (300  
491 cycles; catalogue no 20027465), generating 250 bp paired-end reads. A total of 21 strains  
492 were sequenced across multiple long-read sequencing libraries, prepared using the ligation  
493 library kit (LSK-109, Oxford Nanopore Technologies (ONT), Oxford, UK) with native  
494 barcoding expansion pack (EXP-NBD104 and NBD114, ONT, Oxford, UK). The libraries  
495 were run on a R9.4.1 MinION flow cell, and was base called with Guppy v3.3.3 using the  
496 dna\_r9.4.1\_450bps\_hac (high-accuracy) basecalling model. The remaining seven strains

497 had their DNA extracted using Qiagen Genomic DNA kits (Qiagen Genomic-tip 100/G,  
498 Hilden, Germany) and sequenced using Pacific Biosciences RS II (California, USA).  
499  
500 The Illumina and MinION read data were combined to generate completed genomes for  
501 n=28/29 strains with Unicycler v0.4.8 (Wick et al. 2017) using default parameters. SB610  
502 could not be assembled into a completed genome using this approach, so we used Tricycler  
503 v0.3.3 (Wick et al. 2021) to combine 12 independent long-read only assemblies into a single  
504 consensus assembly. The 12 assemblies were generated from 12 independent subsets of  
505 the long reads (randomly selected) at 50x depth, which were assembled with one of three  
506 assemblers (n=4 assemblies each): Flye v2.7 (Kolmogorov et al. 2019), Raven v1.1.10  
507 (Vaser and Šikić 2021) and Miniasm v0.3 (Li 2016). The final consensus assembly was then  
508 polished with the long reads using Medaka v1.1.3 (<https://github.com/nanoporetech/medaka>)  
509 followed by three rounds of polishing using the Illumina reads with Pilon v1.23 (Walker et al.  
510 2014). The PacBio reads were assembled with HGAP, and overlaps between contigs  
511 extremities were manually circularized. All 37 completed genomes were annotated with  
512 Prokka v1.13.3 (Seemann 2014), using a trained annotation model (created using 10  
513 genomes with Prodigal v2.6.3 (Hyatt et al. 2010)). All genomes were analysed with  
514 Kleborate v2.0.3 (Lam et al. 2021) to obtain ST and other genomic information (see  
515 **Supplemental Table 1**).

516

### 517 *Phenotypic testing*

518 We utilised the Biolog (California, USA) growth phenotypes for 190 carbon substrates  
519 generated previously (Blin et al. 2017; Rodrigues et al. 2019). As determined in Blin et al., a  
520 maximum value in the respiration curve of  $\geq 150$  was used to indicate growth, whilst a value  
521 of  $< 150$  indicated no growth.

522

523 We performed additional phenotypic tests on six carbon substrates; two which were not  
524 available on Biolog, 3-(3-hydroxy-phenyl)propionate (Sigma-Aldrich Cat Number PH011597)

525 and 3-hydroxycinnamic acid (CAS Number 14755-02-3); and four Biolog substrates for  
526 which we required further evidence, gamma-amino butyric acid (CAS Number 56-12-2), L-  
527 sorbose (CAS Number 87-79-6), D-galactarate (CAS Number 526-99-8), and tricarballylate  
528 (CAS Number 99-14-9). Overnight cultures of all 37 isolates were grown in M9 minimal  
529 media (2x M9, Minimal Salts (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, USA), 2 mM MgSO<sub>4</sub> and 0.1 mM  
530 CaCl<sub>2</sub>) plus 20 mM D-glucose, at 37°C, shaking at 200 RPM. Each carbon source substrate  
531 solution was prepared to a final concentration of 20 mM in M9 minimal media, pH 7.0. Then,  
532 200 µL of each substrate solution was added to separate 96-well cell culture plates (Corning,  
533 St. Louis, USA) and 5 µL of overnight cultures added to the wells, diluted to McFarland  
534 standard of 0.4 – 0.55. Negative controls were included on every independent plate and  
535 included i) no substrate solution controls (20 mM M9 minimal media) and ii) no isolate  
536 controls but 20 mM substrate solution. For positive controls, each isolate was also grown  
537 independently in M9 minimal media containing 20 mM D-glucose. Every growth condition  
538 was performed in technical triplicate. Plates were then sealed with AeraSeal film (Sigma-  
539 Aldrich, St Louis, USA), then grown aerobically for 18 hours at 37°C, shaking at 200 RPM.  
540 Plates were then read using the FLUOstar Omega plate reader (BMG Labtech, Ortenberg,  
541 Germany) using Read Control version 5.50 R4, firmware version 1.50, using 595 nm  
542 absorbance after 30 seconds of shaking at 200 RPM. No isolate controls were used as  
543 blanks for to generate the OD value for each technical replicate, then mean calculated to  
544 obtain the OD value. To determine growth/no growth using the OD method, we calculated  
545 the mean OD for growth on a particular substrate for each strain at 24h, and subtracted from  
546 this the OD value of M9 media alone. Subsequently, for each carbon substrate we divided  
547 the mean OD value for a strain by the mean OD for that strain in M9 media alone to get an  
548 OD fold change. OD fold changes  $\geq 2$  were considered sufficient evidence of growth  
549 (**Supplemental Figure 1**).

550

551 We performed additional growth tests for independent validation of the models using Vitek 2  
552 GN ID cards (bioMérieux, Marcy l'Étoile, France). All 37 strains were assayed on the card to

553 evaluate growth on 13 carbon sources (Vitek codes for those 13 sources can be found in  
554 **Supplemental Table 5**). Cards were read on the Vitek 2 Compact (bioMérieux, Marcy  
555 l'Étoile, France) as per manufacturers' instructions using Vitek 2 software version 8.0.

556

#### 557 *Creating and curating strain-specific GEMs*

558 Using the method outlined by Norsigian et al (Norsigian et al. 2019b), we extracted and  
559 translated all CDS from each genome and used bi-directional BLASTP hits (BBH) to  
560 determine orthologous genes compared to the reference *K. pneumoniae* MGH78578 GEM  
561 (iYL1288) (Liao et al. 2011). Genes with at least 75% amino acid identity were considered  
562 orthologous. Genes and their reactions that did not meet this threshold were removed from  
563 their respective models.

564

565 During GEM creation, we discovered that the original biomass function (BIOMASS\_) in  
566 iYL1288 required the production of both rhamnose, which is a component of the capsule in  
567 *K. pneumoniae* MGH 78578, as well as UDP-galacturonate and UDP-galactose, which are  
568 components of the variable O antigen. As both the capsule and O antigens are known to  
569 differ greatly between strains (Wyres et al. 2016; Follador et al. 2016), we created a new  
570 biomass function (BIOMASS\_Core\_Oct2019) that no longer required the associated  
571 metabolites dtdprmn\_c, udpgalur\_c and udpgal\_c.

572

573 To validate each GEM against its respective phenotypic growth results, we used flux based  
574 analysis (FBA) implemented in the COBRApy framework (Ebrahim et al. 2013) to simulate  
575 growth of each GEM in M9 media with all possible sole carbon, nitrogen, phosphorous or  
576 sulfur substrates. The updated BIOMASS function, BIOMASS\_Core\_Oct2019, was used as  
577 the objective to be optimised. M9 media was defined by setting the lower bound of the  
578 cob(l)alamin exchange reaction to -0.01, and the lower bound of the following exchange  
579 reactions to -1000: Ca<sup>2+</sup>, Cl<sup>-</sup>, CO<sub>2</sub>, Co<sup>2+</sup>, Cu<sup>2+</sup>, Fe<sup>2+</sup>, Fe<sup>3+</sup>, H<sup>+</sup>, H<sub>2</sub>O, K<sup>+</sup>, Mg<sup>2+</sup>, Mn<sup>2+</sup>, MoO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>,  
580 Na<sup>+</sup>, Ni<sup>2+</sup>, Zn<sup>2+</sup>. To predict growth on alternate carbon substrates, we set the lower bound of

581 glucose to zero (to prevent the model utilising this as a carbon source), and then set the  
582 lower bound of all potential carbon substrates to -1000 in turn. The carbon substrate was  
583 considered growth supporting if the predicted growth rate was  $\geq 0.001$ . The code used to  
584 simulate growth on each substrate can be found in **Supplemental Code**  
585 (simulate\_growth\_single.py).

586

587 While identifying carbon substrates, the default nitrogen, phosphorous and sulfur substrates  
588 were ammonium (NH<sub>4</sub>), inorganic phosphate (HPO<sub>4</sub>) and inorganic sulfate (SO<sub>4</sub>). Prediction  
589 of nitrogen, phosphorus and sulfur supporting substrates was performed in the same way as  
590 carbon, but setting glucose as the default carbon substrate.

591

592 We matched predictions and phenotypic growth data for all strains for 94 distinct carbon  
593 substrates. These data were used to i) curate and update the models; and ii) estimate model  
594 accuracy. Where we had evidence of phenotypic growth but a lack of simulated growth, we  
595 attempted to identify the missing reactions using gene homology searches and literature  
596 searches in related bacteria (see **Supplemental Table 3** for a full list of reactions added and  
597 the evidence for each). During this process it became apparent that the directionality of the  
598 following transport reactions in the original iYL1288 GEM were set to export the compound  
599 from the cell, rather than allow uptake (TARTRtex, SUCCtex, FORTtex, FUMtex, THRTex,  
600 ACMANAtex, MALDtex, ABUTtex, AKGtex). Each of these reactions were updated to be  
601 reversible (bound range -1000 to 1000), restoring the ability for the model to utilise the  
602 associated compounds.

603

604 Strain model accuracy was determined by calculating the percentage of true positive and  
605 negative compounds, as well as calculating Matthew's correlation coefficient using the  
606 following formula (TP = true positive; TN = true negative; FP = false positive; FN = false  
607 negative):

$$\frac{TP \times TN - FP \times FN}{\sqrt{(TP + FP)(TP + FN)(TN + FP)(TN + FN)}}$$

608

609 We assessed accuracy against the Vitek growth data using the same method as described  
610 above. However, these data were used only to estimate model accuracy, and were not used  
611 to curate or update the models.

612

613 All strain metabolic models generated in this study have been deposited in json format,  
614 along with the gene annotations used for the models, in figshare doi:10.26180/16702840.  
615 MEMOTE reports for all models can be found in figshare at doi: 10.26180/19180274.

616

#### 617 *Gene essentiality for growth on core carbon substrates*

618 To determine which genes were essential for growth in each core carbon substrate (n=145)  
619 for each strain, we used the *single\_gene\_deletion* functions in COBRAPy (Ebrahim et al.  
620 2013). For each GEM, on every core carbon substrate we simulated growth in M9 media  
621 with that substrate as the sole carbon source using FBA (as described above), but with one  
622 gene knocked out using the *single\_gene\_deletion* function. Each gene was knocked out in  
623 turn, and optimised biomass values  $\geq 0.001$  were considered positive for growth. The code  
624 used to perform the knockouts and growth simulations on each substrate can be found in  
625 **Supplemental Code** (*single\_gene\_knockouts.py*).

626

627 Four gene-substrate combinations were selected for further investigation by interrogation of  
628 the model gene-protein-reaction rules and search of the KEGG database (Kanehisa et al.  
629 2002) using KofamKOALA (Aramaki et al. 2019) for redundant genes/pathways. Where  
630 relevant, pairwise chromosomal comparisons were performed using BLASTN (Camacho et  
631 al. 2009) and visualised using the Artemis Comparison Tool (Carver et al. 2005). The  
632 putative insertion sequence was identified by BLASTN search of the ISFinder database  
633 (Siguier et al. 2006).



634

635 *Core genome phylogeny*

636 The core genome for the set of 37 genomes was determined using panaroo v1.1.2 (Tonkin-  
637 Hill et al. 2020) in strict mode with a gene homology cutoff of 90% identity, which generated  
638 a core gene alignment consisting of 3717 genes with 75,899 variable sites. We generated a  
639 phylogeny using this core gene alignment with CalQ-Tree v2 (Minh et al. 2020), which  
640 selected GTR+F+I+G4 as the best-fit substitution model. The resulting phylogeny was  
641 visualised using *ggtree* (Yu et al. 2017) in R.

642

643 *Gene screening in public genomes*

644 To determine whether specific gene deletions or acquisitions are likely to be conserved in all  
645 members of a species or clone, we utilised the curated set of 13,156 *Klebsiella* genome  
646 assemblies from Lam et al. (Lam et al. 2021). We used BLASTN to screen for; i) the *nan*  
647 operon in 307 *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp. *similipneumoniae* genomes; ii) the *ulaABC*  
648 operon in 149 *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp. *quasipneumoniae* genomes; and iii) *glpQ* in 13 *K.*  
649 *quasivariicola* genomes and six *K. africana* genomes (Vezina et al. 2021); iv) KPN\_02388 in  
650 1,021 non-redundant ST258 genomes. Hits with  $\geq 90\%$  coverage and  $\geq 90\%$  identity were  
651 considered to be present.

652

653 **Data Access**

654 All completed genomes and raw sequence data generated in this study have been submitted  
655 to the NCBI BioProject database (BioProject; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/bioproject/>) under  
656 accession number PRJNA768294.

657

658 **Competing Interest Statement**

659 The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

660

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675

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677 SB, CR, SLF and JSFL provided bacterial isolates and Biolog phenotype data. BV, LMJ, TH  
678 and CR generated novel sequence and/or phenotype data. JH, BV and K LW performed data  
679 analyses. JH, JMM, SB, KEH and K LW obtained funding. JH and K LW wrote the manuscript.  
680 All authors read, commented on and approved the manuscript.

681

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## 857 **Figure Legends**

858 **Figure 1: Number of model reactions by category.** Bars are coloured to indicate core  
859 reactions (black, conserved in all strains) and accessory reactions (grey, variably present).  
860

861 **Figure 2: Predicted substrate utilisation by type.** Bar height indicates number of  
862 substrates for each type, with segments coloured to indicate those associated with no  
863 growth for any strain (grey), variable growth (red) and conserved growth (blue).  
864 Percentages are indicated within each segment.

865

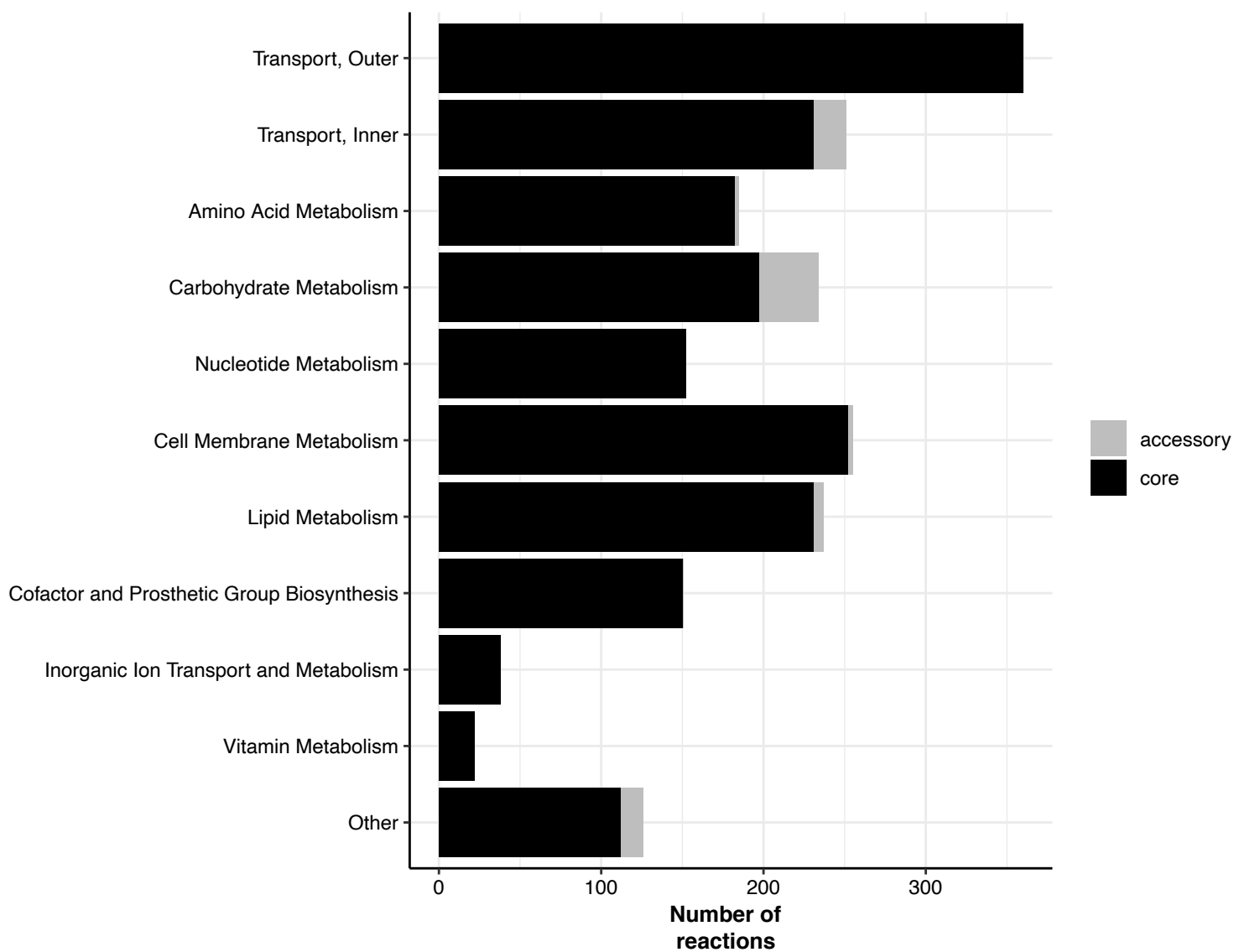
866 **Figure 3: Variable growth phenotypes across all seven taxa in KpSC.** Left, core gene  
867 phylogeny for all 37 strains, with tips coloured by species as per legend. Middle, heatmap of  
868 variable substrates for which both phenotypic growth results and model predicted results  
869 were available. White indicates no growth, colour indicates growth. False positive calls are  
870 shown in yellow, and false negative calls in grey (as per legend). Right, heatmap of variable  
871 substrates for which only model predictions were available. White indicates no growth,  
872 colour indicates growth, with substrate type indicated as per legend.

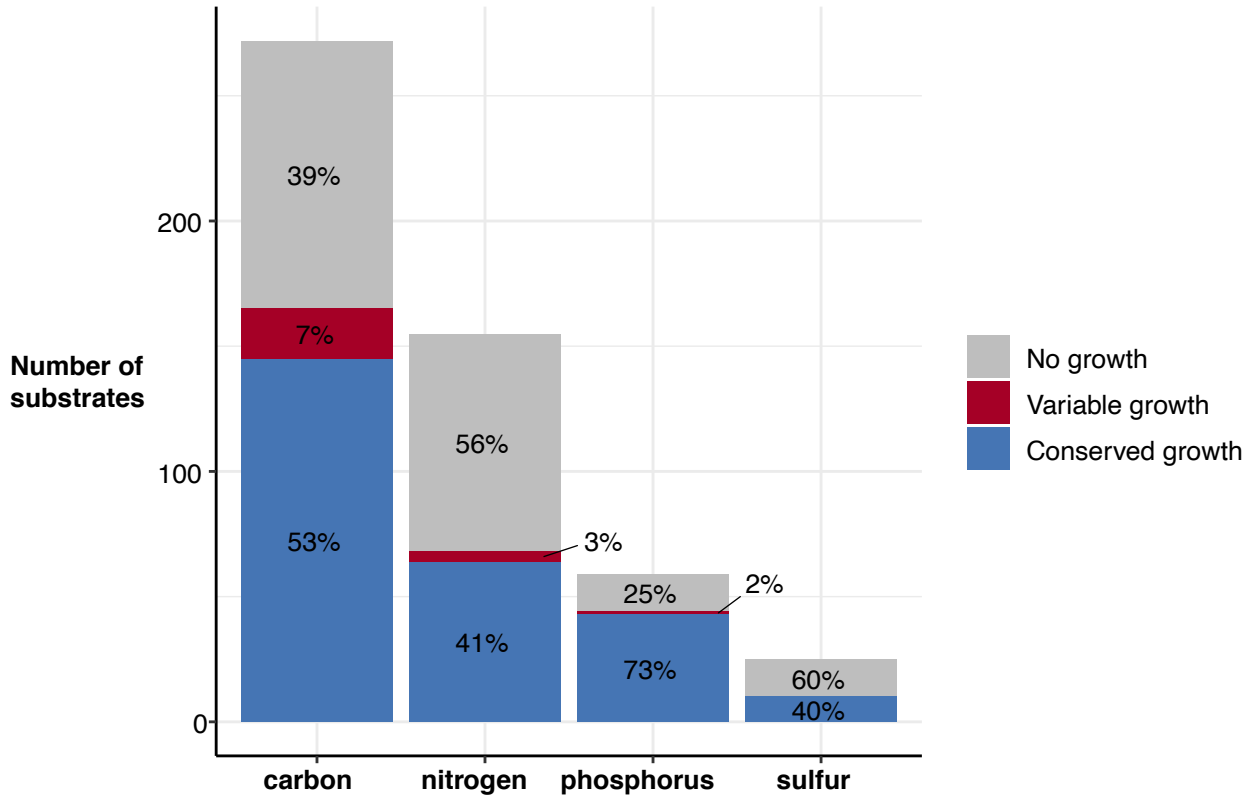
873

874 **Figure 4: Variable loss of growth phenotypes.** Left, core gene phylogeny as per **Fig 3**,  
875 with tips coloured by species as indicated in legend: Ka, *K. africana*; Kp, *K. pneumoniae*;

876 Kqq, *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp. *quasipneumoniae*; Kqs, *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp.  
877 *similipneumoniae*; Kqv, *K. quasivariicola*; Kvt, *K. variicola* subsp. *tropica*; Kvv, *K. variicola*  
878 subsp. *variicola*. Middle, heatmap showing core genes for which variable loss of growth  
879 phenotypes were predicted (columns). Shading indicates the number of substrates where  
880 loss of growth was predicted for each strain (rows) as per the scale legend. Right, bars show  
881 the total number of loss of growth phenotypes predicted for each strain.

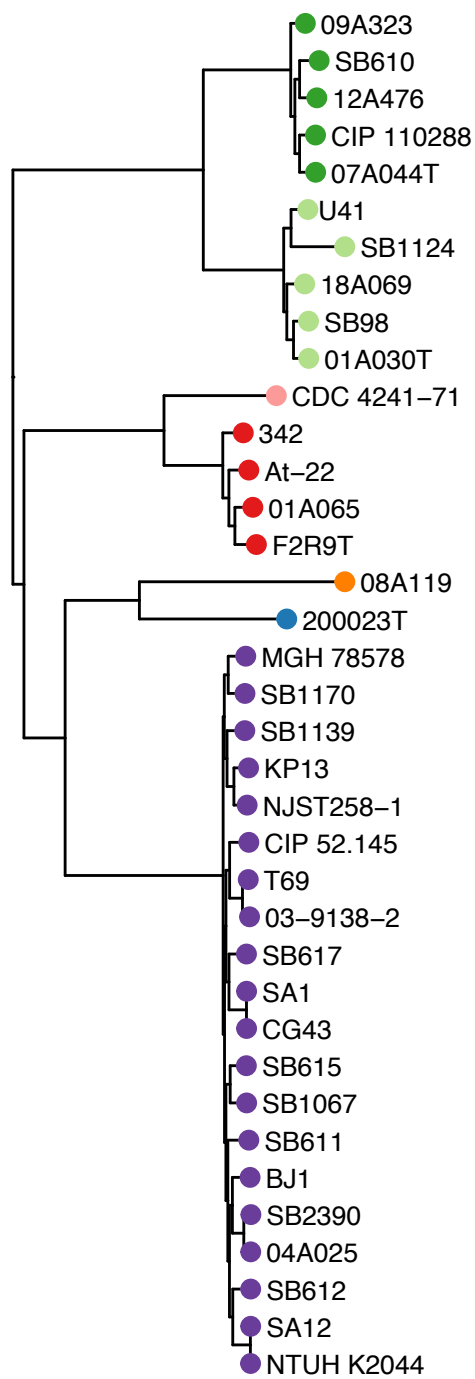
882





Model + Phenotype

Model Only

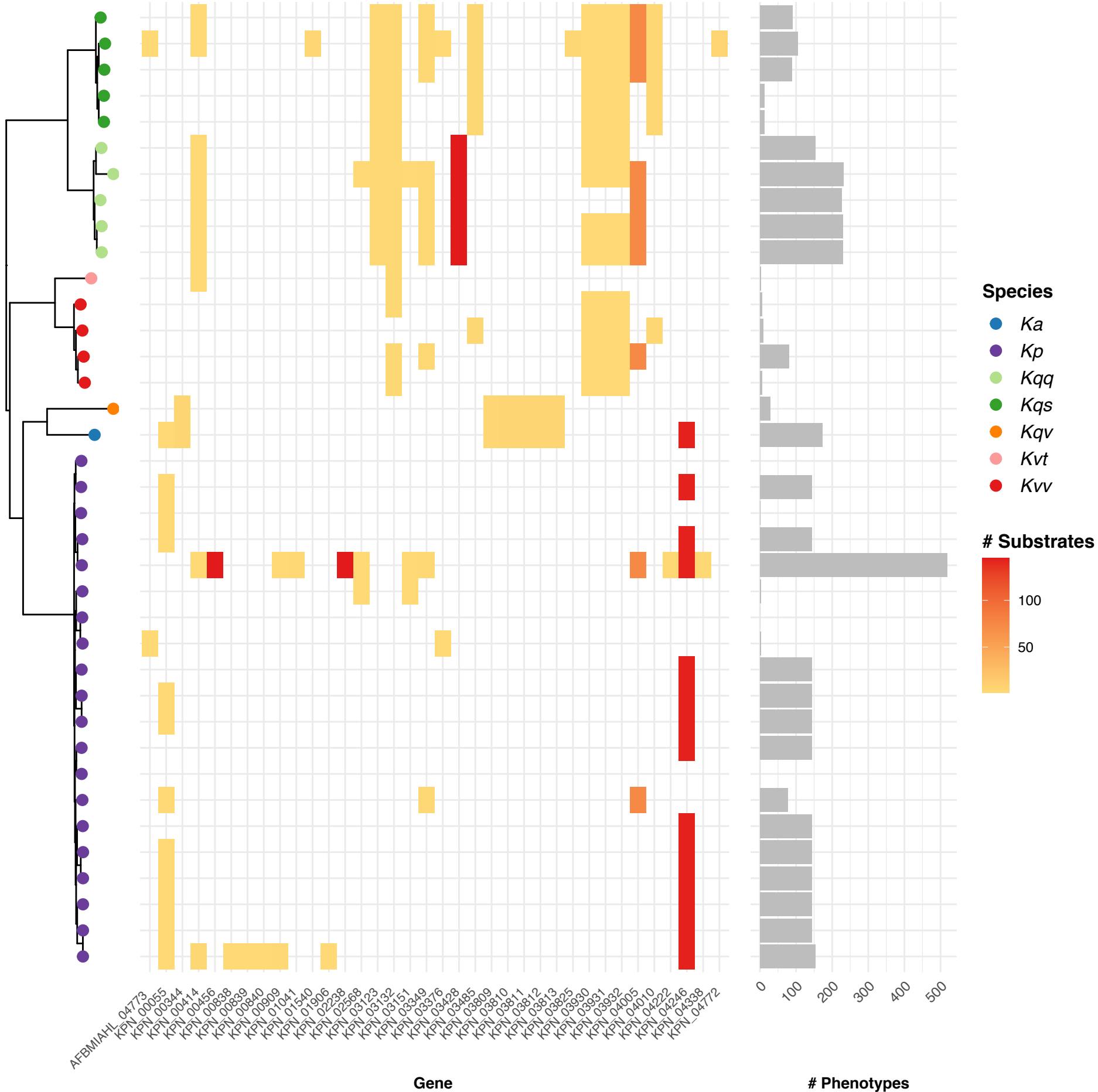


**Species**

- *K. africana*
- *K. pneumoniae*
- *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp *quasipneumoniae*
- *K. quasipneumoniae* subsp *similipneumoniae*
- *K. quasivariicola*
- *K. variicola* subsp *tropica*
- *K. variicola* subsp *variicola*

**Substrate Type**

- carbon
- nitrogen
- carbon & nitrogen
- carbon & phosphorus
- false positive
- false negative





## A curated collection of *Klebsiella* metabolic models reveals variable substrate usage and gene essentiality

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