

Chapter 2

Gram-Negative Bacteria: The cell Membranes

Abstract This chapter presents a brief outline of our current knowledge of the structures of the bounding membranes (the inner and the outer membranes and the intermediate periplasmic layer) of a Gram-negative bacterial cell. Also the structure and chemical composition of the outer membrane vesicles (OMVs) originating from the surface of these bacteria including their proteomic profile, as obtained mainly by mass spectroscopic and related studies, have been presented in brief.

Keywords Inner membrane · Outer membrane · Peptidoglycan · OMVs · Structure · Chemical composition · Mass spectrometry · Protein profile

2.1 Inner and Outer Membranes

The Gram-negative bacteria are usually bounded by two membranous structures (Fig. 2.1). The inner one (IM), called the plasma membrane, is a trilamellar structure that bounds the bacterial protoplasm and is composed of a phospholipids bilayer. The outer membrane (OM) also presents a trilamellar structure (with two electron dense leaflets, outer and inner) in the electron micrograph and consists of proteins, including porins, receptors, and an asymmetric distribution of lipids. The outer leaflet is composed primarily of lipopolysaccharide (LPS) projecting outside and the inner leaflet containing phospholipids and lipoproteins. The LPS of a Gram-negative bacterium consists of three different sectors: (i) lipid-A, (ii) the core polysaccharide comprising the inner and the outer cores, and (iii) the O-specific polysaccharide chains (Fig. 2.1) projecting outward. The lipid portion of LPS serves as the lipid anchor and is commonly composed of fatty acids, sugars, and phosphate groups. The chemical structures of lipid-A, core polysaccharide, and O-specific polysaccharide chains of *Vibrio cholerae* are shown in Fig. 2.2 a, b,

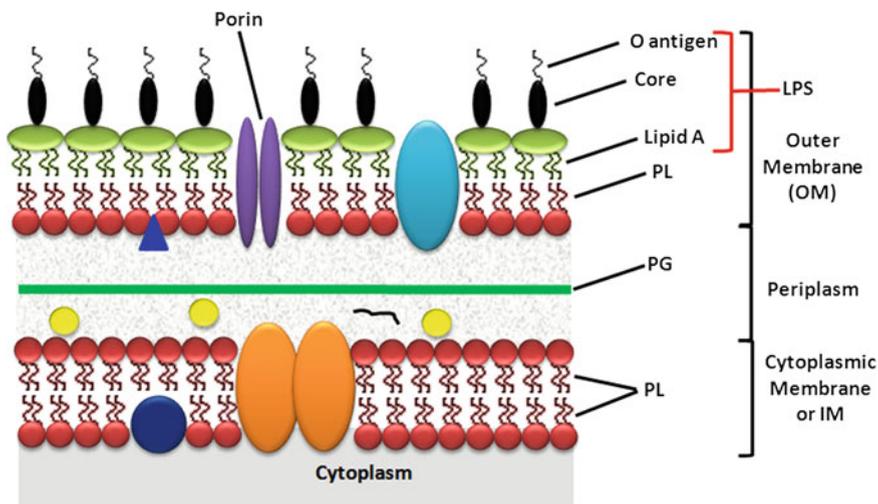


Fig. 2.1 Schematic diagram of the outer membrane (OM), cytoplasmic or IM, and the intermediate periplasmic layer containing the peptidoglycan (PG). The IM consists of the two phospholipid (PL) leaflets and different lipoproteins. The outer membrane consists of two leaflets, the inner leaflet being composed of one phospholipid layer and the outer leaflet of lipid-A, core polysaccharide, and the O-antigen polysaccharide chains projecting outward

and c. These two membranes, IM and OM, are separated by a gel-like layer known as the periplasm. The periplasm contains a thin layer (~ 4 - nm thick) of peptidoglycan (PG) which is connected to the OM and also the inner membrane (IM) through different protein–protein interactions and other proteins including the so-called resident “housekeeping” proteins and enzymes, the resident and transient components of secretory pathways and the like. In *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* there are three lipoproteins, OprI, OprL, and OprF, that connect the OM with the PG layer. In wild- type *Salmonella spp* there are specific domains in the envelope that promote interactions between the outer membrane protein (Omp) and the peptidoglycan layer (PG) and also interactions between the Omp and the inner membrane protein (IMP) involving the PG; (Deatherage et al. 2009). Such protein–protein interactions involving the PG are primarily responsible for giving the required strength and stability to the bacterial envelope or rather the surface structures of bacteria.

A schematic description of the presence and interactions between these different proteins in wild- type *Salmonella spp* is presented in Fig. 2.3. The integral proteins in the OM include OmpC, OmpF, OmpX, and NmpC; those involved in the interactions between the OM and the PG include OmpA, LppA, and LppB, and the peptidoglycan- associated lipoprotein Pal in the OM can interact with TolA in the IM either directly or via the periplasmic protein, TolB. Pal can also interact directly with the PG. The OM contains the unique trimeric proteins known as porins. Porins are channel-forming proteins that allow small

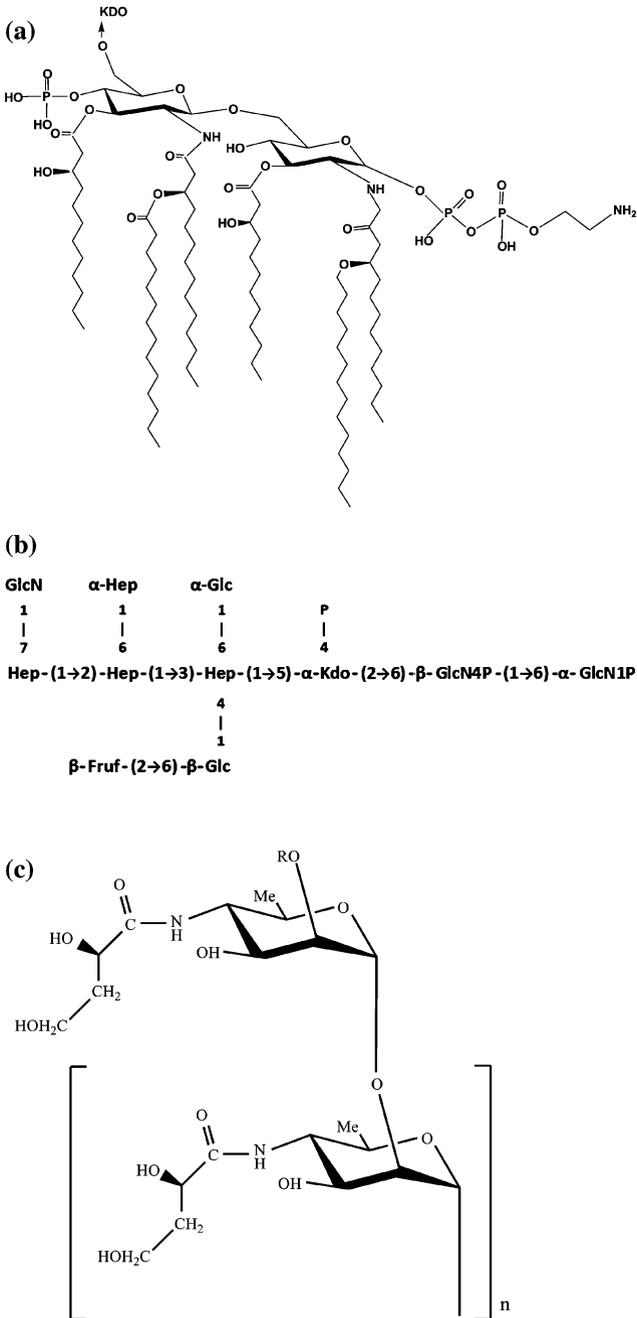


Fig. 2.2 **a** Chemical structure of lipid-A of *V. cholerae* O1. **b** Chemical structure of the core polysaccharide (core-PS) of *V. cholerae* O1 strain 95R. **c** Chemical structure of the O-PS of *V. cholerae* O1. The O-PS structures of the two serotypes, Inaba and Ogawa, are the same except at the position O-2 of the upstream, terminal perosamine group; R = CH₃ in Ogawa strain and R = H only in Inaba strain; *n*, represents the number of repeating units, which may be between 12 and 18 Chatterjee and Chaudhuri (2003); and Chaudhuri and Chatterjee (2009)

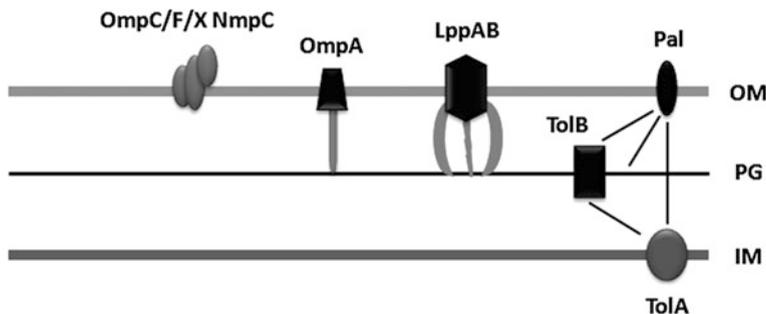


Fig. 2.3 Proteins interconnecting different layers of the cell envelope. Integral OM proteins OmpC, OmpF, OmpX, and NmpC normally do not connect to other layers of the envelope. Lpp and OmpA form an interconnection between PG and OM, whereas Pal of the OM, Tol B of the PG, and Tol A of the IM form interconnections between the different components of the envelope. The thinner straight line represents covalent interaction; the thicker straight line or the curved lines represent noncovalent interactions

molecules (<600 daltons) to pass through and enter the periplasmic space. Once in the periplasm, proteins within the plasma membrane allow transport of molecules into the cytoplasm. In *P. aeruginosa*, a specific porin, OprF, not only allows passage of small molecules, but is also associated with the underlying PG within the periplasm. Lipoproteins are also present in the periplasm. The structure of the OM of Gram-negative bacteria plays a dynamic role in the formation of outer membrane vesicles (OMVs).

2.2 Structure of OMVs

The OMVs originate by a process of bulging out and pinching off of a portion of the bacterial OM (Chatterjee and Das 1966, 1967) thereby entrapping much of the materials of the underlying periplasm. However, inclusion of periplasmic materials into the OMVs is dependent on some specific sorting mechanism. They are spherical in shape (Chatterjee and Chaudhuri 2011) with sizes varying between 50 and 250 nm as reported by most researchers (Fig. 2.4;) (Beveridge 1999; Mashburn-Warren and Whiteley 2006). In our experience, OMVs of sizes significantly smaller than 50 nm have been found and these are often lost during the procedures for isolation of OMVs. The OMVs are bounded by a trilamellar structure similar to that of the bacterial OM (Figs. 1.7 and 2.5). The bounding membrane of the OMVs also has a similar chemical structure to that of the bacterial OM and accordingly contains the antigenic LPS projecting outside.

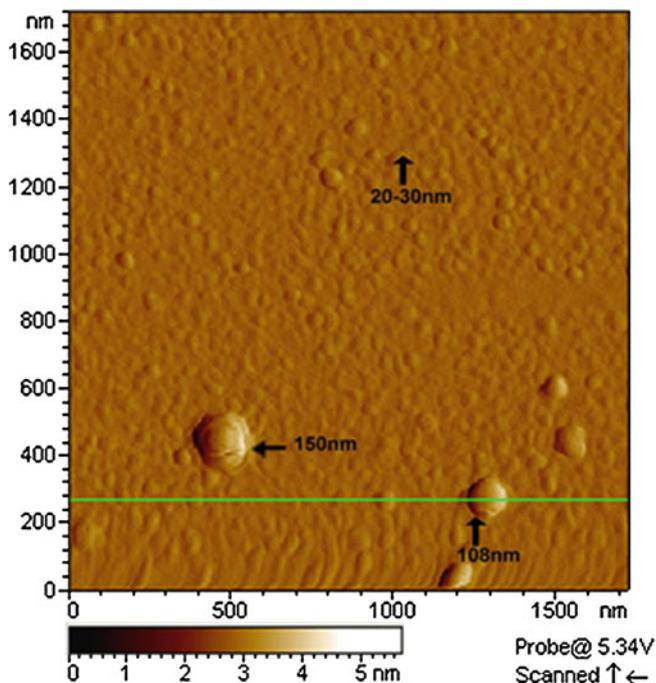
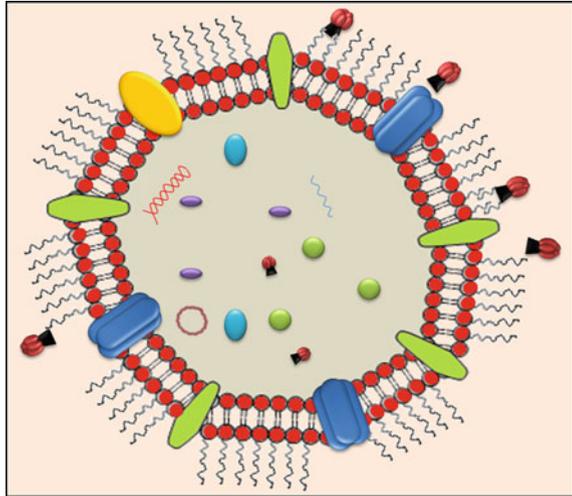


Fig. 2.4 Atomic force microscopy image of air-dried *V. cholerae* OMVs in amplitude mode (Bar = 200 nm). [From (Chatterjee and Chaudhuri 2011)]

2.3 Chemical Composition of OMVs

The OMVs originate from the bacterial surface and are, generally, known to contain OMPs, many of the periplasmic proteins, phospholipids, and LPS and other factors associated with virulence (Horstman and Kuehn 2000; Kuehn and Kesty 2005; Wai et al. 2003). By using the two-dimensional SDS-PAGE and MALDI-TOF mass spectrometric techniques, the major OMV proteins identified in *Salmonella sp.* were OmpC, OmpF, NmpC, OmpX, OmpA, LppA, LppB, Pal, and Tol B (Deatherage et al. 2009). During their formation and release from the bacterial surface, the OMVs entrap some of the underlying periplasmic constituents which may vary with bacterial growth conditions and for different bacteria. The OMVs from different bacteria can entrap toxins, enzymes, DNA, adhesins, and other virulence factors (Ellis and Kuehn 2010). Table 2.1 presents the names of different virulence factors carried by the OMVs in their lumens and the corresponding bacterial species from which they originated. The overall chemical composition of OMVs thus depends on various factors controlling growth and the species from which they originate. Recent evaluations showed that almost all OMV preparations were enriched in envelope components (Kuehn and Kesty 2005). Some of the preparations, however, were also found to contain a small

Fig. 2.5 Schematic diagram of an OMV showing the different possible luminal components (proteins, double-stranded DNA, RNA, plasmid, etc.), and the trilamellar structure of the vesicle membrane including the outwardly projecting O-PS chains, the proteins spanning the two leaflets of the membrane, and some toxin particles either bound to the LPS chains or near the outer surface of the membrane or within the lumen



amount of cytosolic and IM proteins, the basis of which remains unclear or rather controversial (Berlanda Scorza et al. 2008; Ellis and Kuehn 2010; Galka et al. 2008; Kwon et al. 2009; Lee et al. 2007; Lee et al. 2008; Sidhu et al. 2008; Xia et al. 2008). In fact, biochemical analysis of OMVs purified by density gradient centrifugation revealed that they consisted only of the proteins and lipids of the OM and periplasm and did not contain any IM and cytoplasmic components (McBroom and Kuehn 2005). Pathogenic bacteria were shown to release OMVs containing adhesins, toxins, and immunomodulatory compounds. Because of their lipid contents, such vesicles were found to fractionate into lighter density fractions than solubly secreted proteins (Allan and Beveridge 2003; Allan et al. 2003; Dorward and Garon 1989; Dorward et al. 1989; Horstman and Kuehn 2000).

2.4 Proteomic Profile of OMVs

2.4.1 Isolation and Purification

In order to have a dependable proteomic profile of OMVs of any Gram-negative bacteria, the OMVs are first required to be isolated and highly purified so that no trace of materials released from bacterial lysis or any nonvesicular component contaminates the preparation. For this, no single method of isolation and purification can serve the purpose and a combination of differential centrifugation to remove cell debris and whole cells and ultracentrifugation to pellet the OMVs is the minimum requirement (Wai et al. 2003). Furthermore, filtration of the cell culture supernatant through membrane filters (0.22–0.45 μm) before ultracentrifugation may ensure better elimination of any contamination (Berlanda Scorza et al. 2008;

Table 2.1 Virulence factors associated with OMVs derived from various bacterial species

Bacterial spp.	Associated disease	Virulence factors	Activity	Reference
<i>Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae</i>	Porcine contagious pleuropneumonia	Apx toxin	Hemolytic activity, cytotoxicity	Negrete-Abascal et al. (2000)
		Proteases	Proteolytic activity, host damage	
<i>Actinobacillus actinomycetemcomitans</i>	Periodontal disease	Leukotoxin	Pore-forming and membranolytic activity	Goulhen et al. (1998), Karched et al. (2008), Kato et al. (2002)
		Lipopolysaccharide (LPS)	Endotoxic activity	
		GroEL	Cytotoxicity	
		Peptidoglycan associated lipoprotein (PAL)	Proinflammatory activity on human whole blood	
		Hemagglutinin	Hemagglutination	
		Alkaline phosphatase Esterase lipase Acid phosphatase Phosphohydrolase α - and β - galactosidases α -glucosidase Glucosaminidase β -glucuronidase Cellulase	Enzymatic activities causing host damage	
<i>Bacteroides fragilis</i>	Colon inflammation/ Colon tumor			Patrick et al. (1996)
<i>Bacteroides succinogenes</i>	Abscesses, bacteremias		Aryl- β -glucosidase, endoglucanase	Forsberg et al. (1981)
		Xylanase	Aryl- β -xylosidase, xylanase activities	

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

Bacterial spp.	Associated disease	Virulence factors	Activity	Reference
<i>Bordetella pertussis</i>	Whooping cough	Adenylate cyclase hemolysin Filamentous hemagglutinin (FHA) Pertussis toxin (Ptx)	Cytotoxicity Adhesion, agglutinates erythrocytes Inhibition of eukaryotic adenylate cyclase, increases cAMP	Hozbor et al. (1999)
<i>Borrelia burgdorferi</i>	Lyme disease	Outer surface proteins A and B (OspA, OspB) OspD Decorin-binding protein A (DbpA)	Adherence to host cells and tissue	Dorward et al. (1991), Shoberg and Thomas (1993)
<i>Brucella melitensis</i>	Brucellosis	Outer membrane proteins Omp25, Omp31	ND	Gamazo and Moriyo (1987)
<i>Burkholderia cepacia</i>	Respiratory tract infection especially in cystic fibrosis patients	Nonhemolytic phospholipase C (PLC-N) Lipase Pseudomonas cepacia protease (PSCP) 40-kDa protease	Lipolytic activity Protease activity	Allan et al. (2003)
<i>Campylobacter jejuni</i>	Gastroenteritis	Cytolethal descending toxin (CDT)	Genotoxicity	Lindmark et al. (2009)
Enterohemorrhagic <i>E. coli</i> (EHEC)	Bloody diarrhea, hemolytic-colitis	Cytolysin (ClyA) Shiga toxin	Pore formation, membranolytic activity Cytotoxic, inhibit protein synthesis	Kolling and Matthews (1999), Wai et al. (2003)

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

Bacterial spp.	Associated disease	Virulence factors	Activity	Reference
Enterotoxigenic <i>E. coli</i> (ETEC)	Diarrhea	Heat labile enterotoxin (LT)	Increases adenylate cyclase and cAMP, loss of fluid and electrolyte in host	Horstman and Kuehn (2000)
Extraintestinal pathogenic <i>E. coli</i> (ExPEC)	Extraintestinal infections such as urinary tract infections, neonatal meningitis, septicemia	Alpha-hemolysin Cytolthal descending toxin (CDT)	Hemolytic, causing detachment of cells from monolayer Genotoxicity	Balsalobre et al. (2006)
Shiga toxin producing <i>E. coli</i> (STEC)	Hemorrhagic colitis,	Iron and hemin binding OMPs Shiga toxin	Iron acquisition Inhibition of protein synthesis and death of host cells	Kolling and Matthews (1999), Yokoyama et al. (2000)
Uropathogenic <i>E. coli</i> (UPEC)	Urinary tract infection	Cytotoxic necrotizing factor type 1 (CNF1)	Cytotoxicity	Kouokam et al. (2006)
<i>Helicobacter pylori</i>	Gastritis and peptic ulcer, promotes gastric cancer	Vacuolating cytotoxin (VacA) Urease Helicobacter cysteine-rich proteins (Hcp) Lewis antigen LPS	Vacuolating activity Hydrolyzes urea Interferes with host cell functions Cytotoxic, stimulating proliferation, IL-8 secretion	Hynes et al. (2005), Keenan et al. (2000)

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

Bacterial spp.	Associated disease	Virulence factors	Activity	Reference
<i>Legionella pneumophila</i>	Legionnaires' disease	Mip (Ipg0791), Macrophage infectivity potentiator Flagellin LaiE/LaiF	Inhibition of autophagy in macrophages Evasion and spreading in host Adhesion to and invasion of human lung epithelial cell	Fernandez-Moreira et al. (2006), Galka et al. (2008)
		Intracellular multiplication protein K and X (IcmK/ IcmX) Phospholipase C Acid phosphatases Diphosphohydrolase Chitinase	Involved in secretion and intracellular replication of Legionella in macrophages	
		Proteases	Glycosylase, promotes persistence in the lung	
		Hsp60	Interfere with immune function	
		Ubiquitous surface protein A1 and A2 (UspA1/ UspA2)	Involved in adherence and invasion	Tan et al. (2007)
<i>Moraxella catarrhalis</i>	Otitis media and sinusitis, occasional cause of laryngitis		Binds C3 complement in serum	
<i>Myxococcus xanthus</i>	Nonpathogenic	TonB transporters	Predatory behavior and multicellularity	Kahnt et al. (2010)

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

Bacterial spp.	Associated disease	Virulence factors	Activity	Reference
<i>Neisseria gonorrhoeae</i>	Sexually transmitted disease gonorrhea	Porin B	Serum resistance, B-cell activation	Zhu et al. (2005)
<i>Neisseria meningitidis</i>	Meningococcal disease	PorA, PorB NlpB NarE	Adherence to host cells, serum complement resistance Lipoprotein, maintains membrane integrity Potent toxin, ADP-ribosyltransferase activity	Bjerre et al. (2000), Masignani et al. (2003), Schlichting et al. (1993), Vipond et al. (2006)
<i>Photobacterium luminescens</i>	Insect pathogen	Toxin AB GroEL	Insecticidal activity Cytotoxicity	Guo et al. (1999), Khandelwal and Banerjee-Bhatnagar (2003)
<i>Porphyromonas gingivalis</i>	Periodontal disease, gingivitis	Arg- and Lys-gingipain cysteine proteinases	Hemoglobinase activity	Duncan et al. (2004), Grenier (1992), Grenier and Mayrand (1987), Kamaguchi et al. (2003)
		Fimbriae	Interfere with immune response	

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

Bacterial spp.	Associated disease	Virulence factors	Activity	Reference
<i>Vibrio anguillarum</i>	Fish pathogen	Metalloprotease Hemolysin Phospholipase RTX toxin	Protease, metalloprotease Hemolytic activities Lipolytic activity Cell rounding, depolymerizing actin	Hong et al. (2009)
<i>Vibrio cholerae</i>	Diarrhea	Cholera Toxin (CT)	cAMP activation, fluid accumulation	Boardman et al. (2007), Chatterjee and Chaudhuri (2011)
<i>Xanthomonas campestris</i>	Plant pathogen	Cellulase β -glucosidase Type 3 secretion system proteins xylosidase avirulence proteins	ND	Sidhu et al. (2008)
<i>Xenorhabdus nematophilus</i>	Insect pathogen	Bacteriocin Fimbrial adhesin Pore-forming toxin Chitinase	Insecticidal Adherence to host Cytotoxicity Chitinase activity	Khandelwal and Banerjee-Bhatnagar (2003)

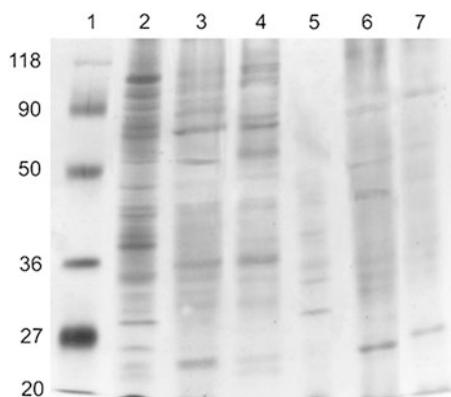
Ferrari et al. 2006; Horstman and Kuehn 2000). Better still, density gradient centrifugation is used for ensuring removal of contaminants such as pili, flagella, other protein aggregates, and so on from the OMV preparation (Bauman and Kuehn 2006; Lee et al. 2007). On the other hand, gel filtration chromatography may be the method of choice for getting a highly purified OMV preparation. A Sephacryl S500 column was used for purification of OMVs from *Neisseria meningitidis* (Post et al. 2005). Lee et al. (2007) used a slightly modified method using two sequential steps to get a highly purified preparation of OMVs from *Escherichia coli* DH5 α cells. In the first step, bacterial cells and cell debris were removed from the culture supernatant by using differential centrifugation followed by filtration through a membrane filter (0.45 μ m), precentrifugation at 20,000 and 40,000 g to remove any large vesicle or vesicle aggregates or cell debris; and then ultracentrifugation at 150,000 g. The enriched OMVs, in the second step, were further purified using density gradients to remove any remaining contaminants. Subsequent electron microscopy showed the purity of OMV preparation, the OMVs having a size between 20 – 40 nm (Lee et al. 2007).

2.4.2 Protein Separation

Different methods have been tried and used for separation of proteins for their subsequent analysis by mass spectrometry to get the protein profile or proteome of the OMVs. These methods include two-dimensional gel electrophoresis (2-DE) and a combination of one dimensional (1-D) SDS-PAGE (Fig. 2.6) and liquid chromatography (LC). The purified OMVs are subjected to either 2-DE or (1-DE) SDS-PAGE followed by enzymatic digestion and LC to separate the peptides. Although 2-DE is a powerful tool for protein separation, it has its limitations, particularly in the case of membrane proteins. These proteins have very poor solubility in the nondetergent isoelectric focusing buffer that causes precipitation of the proteins at their isoelectric points. In addition, the high molecular weight, basic, or hydrophobic proteins are not properly resolved by 2-DE (Post et al. 2005; Wu and Yates 2003). The other method (1-D) SDS-PAGE can separate proteins more efficiently; its limitation, particularly in high-throughput mass analysis, is greater complexity of the proteins in each gel fraction. However, this problem can be overcome by subsequent use of LC to separate the extracted peptides based on their hydrophobicity (Nevot et al. 2006; Post et al. 2005). Lee et al. (2007) argued that because the molecular weights of vesicular proteins are quite different and the OMVs also contain less abundant proteins, they used (1-D) SDS-PAGE and then cut the gel into five slices of equal size, and subjected them to trypsin digestion to extract the peptides and got better results.

Mass spectrometric analysis of the extracted peptides from the native OMVs of *E. coli* initially identified 2,606 and 2,816 proteins with high- confidence peptide sequences. In order to eliminate the peptides shared by multiple proteins, the authors used the protein hit score (PHS) method for reliable protein identification

Fig. 2.6 Protein profile of the *OMV*, *OM*, and *IM* of *V. cholerae*. Proteins were separated by 12 % SDS-PAGE and visualized by silver staining; Lane 1: Molecular weight (kDa) markers, Lane 2: *OMV*, Lane 3: *OM*, Lane 4: *IM*. [From (Chatterjee and Chaudhuri 2011)]



(Lee et al. 2008; Park et al. 2006). The analyses showed that proteins with PHS > 1 were identified by multiple peptides that are unique and shared with only a few proteins. Furthermore, rigorous screening of proteins of PHS > 1 identified a total of 141 proteins, including 127 previously unknown vesicular proteins, with high confidence and reproducibility (Lee et al. 2007).

Proteomic analysis of several Gram-negative bacterial OMVs defined more than 200 vesicular proteins (Bauman and Kuehn 2006; Berlanda Scorza et al. 2008; Lee et al. 2008; Post et al. 2005). When these proteins were classified into protein families based on their sequence homology and function, several families were found to be common in OMVs derived from several species of Gram-negative bacteria: (1) the abundant OMPs, Porins (Omps, PorA, PorB and OprF), which were found in most OMVs; (2) the murein hydrolases (Met and SLT), which are responsible for the hydrolysis of certain cell wall glycopeptides, peptidoglycans in particular; (3) the multidrug efflux pumps (Mtr, Mex, and TolC), which are known to release toxic compounds (Kobayashi et al. 2000); (4) the ABC transporters (LamB and FadL); (5) the protease/chaperone proteins (DegQ/SurA) and (6) the motility proteins related to fimbriae/pili (FliC/PilQ) were found in OMVs from different strains. On the other hand, the virulence factors including hemolysin, IgA protease, and macrophage infectivity potentiator were also identified in OMVs from pathogenic strains.

Proteomic analyses of OMVs have brought out some findings that may give rise to controversy. Protein profiles of OMVs and detergent-treated OMVs (DOMVs) revealed the presence of cytoplasmic proteins as well (Ferrari et al. 2006; Henry et al. 2004; Lee et al. 2007; Molloy et al. 2000; Wei et al. 2006; Xu et al. 2006). Among the cytoplasmic proteins found in the protein profiles of OMVs of different bacteria, the proteins EF-Tu, DnaK, GroEL, and two ribosomal proteins, S1 and L7/12 (which are generally highly abundant proteins), have also been detected from cell supernatants or OM fractions (Ferrari et al. 2006). It has been suggested that the transcriptional and ribosomal proteins may be sorted into the OMVs during the informational process (Dorward and Garon 1989; Dorward et al. 1989;

Ferrari et al. 2006; Kadurugamuwa and Beveridge 1995; Yaron et al. 2000). Contrary to these findings of the proteomic analyses of OMVs, many researchers believe that the cytoplasmic proteins are excluded from the OMVs (Horstman and Kuehn 2000) and that the presence of the cytoplasmic proteins, if any, in the OMVs indicates the lysis of bacteria from which they originated (Kulp and Kuehn 2010). Kulp and Kuehn (2010) further observed that in order to use the power of proteomic analyses by Mass Spectrometry to deduce the origins or biogenesis of OMVs from their protein profiles, only very carefully purified native OMVs should be studied. In fact, Berlanda Scorza et al. (2008) did not find the cytoplasmic proteins or IMPs in the OMVs derived from a log phase culture and avoided contamination from lysed cells. The authors took great care to examine highly purified OMVs. On the other hand, Lee et al. (2007) analyzed OMV proteins from a stationary phase wild-type culture of *E. coli* cells and found the presence of cytoplasmic materials, which also could be interpreted as resulting from lysis of a fraction of the bacterial cells in the resting phase. Could it be that under certain growth conditions (not yet known) the regulation of protein synthesis in the bacterial cells loses its control, leading to excess production of some cytoplasmic proteins, which the bacteria try to get rid of by secretion through OMVs? Additional studies taking great care to eliminate bacterial lysis and adopting a very stringent method of purification of OMVs might resolve the issue.

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