

the 24-well plate, and transferred to a 50 ml tube containing phosphate-buffered saline (PBS). The bacteria were suspended in the PBS by vortexing the tube. Prior to qPCR analysis, the bacteria were resuspended in a smaller volume, followed by the exposure to propidium monoazide (PMA) and light. Then the gDNA of the viable bacteria was isolated and analysed by qPCR using 16S- or strain-specific primers.