In Silico Characterization of a Cyclin Dependent Kinase -A (CDKA) and its Coding Gene in some Oryza Species

Ahmed S. Fouad1* Sanad M. AlSobeai2

1Botany and Microbiology Department, Faculty of Science, Cairo University, 12613 Cairo, Egypt.
2Sajir College of Arts and Science, Shaqra University, 11961 Sajir, Saudi Arabia.

Correspondence: ahmedsfouad@yahoo.com, salsobeai@su.edu.sa

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Abstract:

Rice (Oryza sativa) is a fundamental food for the majority of world population. Cyclin Dependent Kinase -A (CDKA) accelerates transition through different stages of cell cycle and contributes in gametes formation. In the present investigation, a CDKA encoding gene along with the corresponding protein were characterized in O. sativa Indica Group, O. glaberrima, O. barthii, O. brachyantha, O. glumipatula, O. longistaminata, O. meridionalis, O. nivara, O. punctata and O. rufipogon using in silico analyses. The results reflected little variation in most species except O. longistaminata and O. brachyantha. Compared with the remaining species, O. longistaminata lacked a negative regulatory binding site and had a modified cyclin binding site (PSTAICE instead of PSTAIRE) that may lead to future characterization of a new distinct subclass of CDKAs. O. brachyantha had a modified SUC/CKS (suppressor of CDC2/cyclin dependent-kinase regulatory subunit)-binding motif. The observed variations can be exploited through traditional breeding or molecular approaches to manipulate cell division and growth of cultivated Oryza species.

Key words: CDKA, Genomes, Rice, Wild relatives.

Introduction:

Rice is an important strategic world crop stands second among the cultivated cereal crops with annual yield of 770 million ton from about 2.38 million acre (1). Possessing balanced contents of carbohydrates, lipids and proteins put rice as the predominant food for more than two thirds of the world population (2, 3). The global climate change in addition to the growing world population necessitates breeding for new cultivars with better quantitative and qualitative traits (3, 4).

Rice breeding suffers from the limited genetic variations of cultivated Oryza species (O. glaberrima and O. sativa) that do not exceed 20% of those recorded in wild Oryza species (5, 6). Thus efforts should be continued to demonstrate inter- and intraspecific genetic variations in wild Oryza species to compensate shortage in variations observed in cultivated rice (5). Fortunately, the full sequence genomes of many wild Oryza species are now available and ready to be used for mining of valuable genetic information.

The in silico analyses provide precious genetic information for rice breeding including identification of important sequences in wild Oryza species such as regulatory elements for pathogenesis-related proteins (7), cyclin dependent kinase-B coding gene (5) and a gene encoding a Pathogenesis-Related Protein-10 (6).

Growth and development are regulated through strict control of cell cycle (8, 9). All eukaryotic cells possess a group of Ser/Thr protein kinases known as cyclin dependent protein kinases (CDKs); that form complexes with cyclin then phosphorylate proteins crucial for cell cycle progression (10). All eukaryotes have a class of Ser/Thr protein kinases, known as CDKs that control progression through cell cycle checkpoints (7). CDKs contain a cyclin-binding domain, one or more phospho-regulatory sites in addition to an ATP binding site (11). Based on cyclin-binding domains, CDKs are clustered into seven classes (CDKA to CDKG) in addition to CDK-like kinases (CKLs) (8).

CDKAs constitute the biggest group of plant CDKs, distinguished with conserved PSTAIRE motif devoted for binding to cyclins (12). Through the constitutive expression of their coding genes (13), CDKAs are produced in plant cells to

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control plant growth through accelerating transition through different stages of cell cycle (14), phosphorylation of phosphatidic acid phosphohydrolase1 (15) and development of cytoskeleton and cell walls (16). Also, CDKAs contribute in gametes formation through a meiotic role recognized through preventing premature meiotic exit (17) and controlling chromosome axis assembly (18).

CDKA and its gene were characterized in rice (O. sativa Japonica group) for the first time by Hashimoto et al. (19). Thus, the present study aims at in silico characterizing of CDKA and its coding gene in cultivated and some wild Oryza species.

**Material and Methods**

NCBI (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) database was employed to download the amino acid sequence of CDKA (CAA42923.1) identified in O. sativa Japonica Group. The sequence was targeted in cultivated (O. glaberrima, O. sativa Indica Group and O. sativa Japonica Group) and eight wild (O. barthii, O. brachyantha, O. glumipatula, O. longistaminata, O. meridionalis, O. nivara, O. punctata and O. rufipogon) Oryza species genomes published in EnsemblPlants database (http://www. http://plants.ensembl.org) utilizing BLASTP search tool to demonstrate candidate genes and coding sequences.

Exon-intron structures of the retrieved genes were built up using coding and genomic sequences with the aid of Gene Structure Display Server website (http://gsds.cbi.pku.edu.cn/). The mined CDKA genes and the corresponding ones in the closest Gramineae species available in Gene Bank were aligned using Clustal W. The aligned sequences were employed to establish a phylogenetic tree based on Maximum Likelihood (ML) method in MEGA v. 6 (20) according to Hasegawa-Kishino-Yano model (21) with gamma distribution. 1000 replica-Bootstrap was utilized to judge significance of grouping patterns support (22).

The predicted amino acid sequences were aligned employing (multalin) (23, http://multalin.toulouse.inra.fr/multalin) to highlight the functionally important domains. The important physico-chemical characteristics of the mined proteins including molecular mass and isoelectric points were resolved utilizing Expasy Prot parm server (24, http://us.expasy.org/tools/protparam.html).

Subcellular distribution of the mined proteins was anticipated with the aid of the CELLO2GO server (25).

Docking was implemented between the predicted proteins and cyclin D that binds to CDKA in many CDKA-related functions (7) using Frodock server (28, 29, http://frodock.chaconlab.org).

**Results and Discussion:**

The mined data of this investigation reflected open reading frames (ORFs) of 819 bp in O. longistaminata, 873 bp in O. sativa Indica gp, O. glumipatula, O. rufipogon, and O. glaberrima while other species exhibited an ORF of 876 bp for CDKA coding gene. However, all mined genes shared the same general exon-intron structure of 7 exons spaced with 6 introns (Fig. 1). The same exon-intron structure for CDKA coding gene was observed in walnut hybrid (30) and Physcomitrella patens (31). On the other hand, Gao et al. (32) recorded 8 exons spaced with 7 introns studying the same gene in Arabidopsis thaliana and Gossypium hirsutum. Such species-dependent exon-intron arrangement for CDKA coding gene was also recorded upon studying a gene encoding class B of these kinases (5).

![Figure 1. Exon-intron arrangement of a CDKA coding gene in some Oryza species.](image-url)
Phylogenetic tree (Fig. 2) declared gathering of all examined Oryza species in a large clade greatly backed with maximum bootstrap value without any of the taxonomically close Gramineae taxa suggesting CDKA encoding gene as a powerful taxonomic tool. The tree showed that O. nivara and O. rufipogon are the closest wild Oryza species to the Asian cultivated one (O. sativa), while O. barthii is the closest wild taxon to the African cultivated species (O. glaberrima). Compared with cultivated species, genetic variation in CDKA encoding gene reached its maximum in O. brachyantha and O. punctata that appeared as outgroup for all the studied Oryza species. Similar general phylogenetic relationships appeared among wild and cultivated

Figure 2. Phylogenetic tree for CDKA coding gene predicted in some Oryza species along with some of the taxonomically closest monocot Graminae taxa (Lolium temulentum, Zea mays, Hordeum vulgare and Triticum aestivum) based on Maximum Likelihood method using the Hasegawa-Kishino-Yano model. Based on 1000 replicates, Bootstrap values are presented as percentages at branching points.

Oryza species upon employing different sequences including a supermatrix of more than 4600 nuclear gene (33), sequences of centromeres in addition to centromere-linked genes (34), CDKB1 coding gene (5) and PR-10 coding gene (6).

Supported with instability index value lower than 40 (Table 1), all the retrieved CDKAs exhibited in vitro stability (35). Subcellular location analysis reflected cytoplasmic and nuclear distribution of the predicted CDKA protein (Table 1) which is suitable for roles recorded to be played by such protein. In nucleus, CDKA is involved in DNA replication (36) and formation of synaptonemal complex at the beginning of meiosis (18). In cytoplasm, CDKA is associated with spindle (37, 38) and phragmoplast formation (39).
Table 1. Subcellular localization and physiochemical characters of the predicted CDKA in some *Oryza* species.

| Species                  | Subcellular location | Molecular mass (KDa) | Formula:                  | No. of amino acids | No. of negatively charged residues | No. of positively charged residues | Instability index | PI* |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----|
| *O. sativa* Japonica gp  | Cytoplasm / Nucleus  | 33692.90             | C₁₅₂₂H₂₃₉₈N₄₁₀O₄₃₁S₁₀   | 292                | 40                                 | 39                                | 6.87              | 30.87|
| *O. rufipogon*           |                      | 33561.71             | C₁₅₂₂H₂₃₉₈N₄₁₀O₄₃₁S₁₀   | 291                | 40                                 | 39                                | 6.97              | 30.94|
| *O. nivara*              |                      | 33692.90             | C₁₅₂₂H₂₃₉₈N₄₁₀O₄₃₁S₁₀   | 292                | 40                                 | 39                                | 6.87              | 30.87|
| *O. sativa* Indica gp    |                      | 33561.71             | C₁₅₂₂H₂₃₉₈N₄₁₀O₄₃₁S₁₀   | 291                | 40                                 | 39                                | 6.97              | 30.94|
| *O. meridionalis*        |                      | 33664.89             | C₁₅₂₂H₂₃₉₈N₄₁₀O₄₃₁S₁₀   | 292                | 40                                 | 39                                | 6.87              | 30.21|
| *O. longistaminata*      |                      | 31288.10             | C₁₄₁₁H₂₂₂₃N₃₇₈O₄₀₃S₁₀   | 273                | 37                                 | 33                                | 6.22              | 34.04|
| *O. glumipatula*         |                      | 33561.71             | C₁₅₂₂H₂₃₉₈N₄₁₀O₄₃₁S₁₀   | 291                | 40                                 | 39                                | 6.97              | 30.94|
| *O. glaberrima*          |                      | 33533.66             | C₁₅₁₁H₂₃₉₈N₄₁₀O₄₃₁S₁₀   | 291                | 40                                 | 39                                | 6.97              | 30.94|
| *O. barthii*             |                      | 33664.85             | C₁₅₂₂H₂₃₉₈N₄₁₀O₄₃₁S₁₀   | 292                | 40                                 | 39                                | 6.87              | 30.87|
| *O. punctata*            |                      | 33603.72             | C₁₅₁₁H₂₃₉₈N₄₁₀O₄₃₁S₁₀   | 292                | 41                                 | 38                                | 6.38              | 31.24|
| *O. brachyantha*         |                      | 33658.84             | C₁₅₂₂H₂₃₉₈N₄₁₀O₄₃₁S₁₀   | 292                | 41                                 | 39                                | 6.56              | 28.21|

*Isoelectronic point

Analyses of the amino acid sequences of CDKA mined from the studied *Oryza* genomes showed 291–292 amino acid length in all species except *O. longistaminata* that appeared as a shorter amino acid chain of 273 residues (Fig. 3). Working on *O. sativa*, Hashimoto *et al.* (19) recorded a 292 amino acid long CDKA. Generally, protein kinases share a similar feature of having a 250–300 amino acid residue domain for the phospho-transfer reaction (40).
Figure 3. Multalin-based amino acid sequence alignment of a CDKA in some *Oryza* species showing: 1. threonine (T) and tyrosine (Y) residues, 2. PSTAIRE motif, 3. T-loop preceded with asparagine (D) and 4. SUC/CKS -binding motif

Regarding the functionally important binding sites, the retrieved CDKAs showed the same sites appeared in CDKA characterized in *O. sativa* Japonica Group by Hashimoto et al. (19) with few but important exceptions (Fig. 3). Except *O. longistaminata*, all CDKAs showed threonine (T) and tyrosine (Y) residues whose phosphorylation blocks enzymatic activity. Absence of this binding site in *O. longistaminata* indicates a new mechanism for negative regulation that may be beneficial for breeding of cultivated *Oryza*. A second interesting variation in functionally important sites was also demonstrated in *O. longistaminata* where PSTAIRE motif, specialized for cyclin binding, was modified to PSTAICE. Docking with cyclin D reflected absolute energy score of 3276 to 3479 kcal/mol in species having PSTAIRE motif (Table 2). Within this range, *O. longistaminata* having PSTAICE motif showed 3342 kcal/mol absolute energy score for the same docking process strongly highlighting insignificant effect for difference between the two motifs on binding to cyclin.

Though PSTAIRE was known to be evolutionarily conserved signature for CDKA, it was modified to PSTALRE in diatoms (41) and sea lettuce (42) that adds to the importance of our finding in *O. longistaminata* and necessitates wet lab-based future investigations to characterize this CDKA that may lead to a distinct subclass of these important kinases.

The third functionally important area was identical in all *Oryza* species of the present study; it consists of asparagine (D) and adjacent T-loop (Fig. 3). Asparagine is required for positioning of the bound ATP essential for kinase activity. The T-loop consists of 27 residue centered around threonine (T) whose phosphorylation stabilizes the cyclin-binding (43).

With one exception observed in *O. brachyantha*, SUC/CKS (suppressor of CDC2/cyclin dependent-kinase regulatory subunit)-binding motif showed complete matching in all studied species. Three substitutions were recorded in where serine, isoleucine and threonine in the consensus sequence where replaced with arginine,
Table 2. Characteristic features of the predicted secondary structures and 3-D models of CDKA in some Oryza species.

| Species                | Secondary Structure | Dimensions (Å) | Z-Score | Absolute Energy Score for Docking with Cyclin D (kcal/mol) |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| O. sativa Indica gp    | 41 18               | 55.728 50.854 51.340 | -6.58  | 3388                                                     |
| O. rafipogon           | 41 18               | 55.728 50.854 51.340 | -6.58  | 3283                                                     |
| O. nivara              | 40 17               | 55.728 51.490 51.340 | -6.54  | 3388                                                     |
| O. sativa Japonica gp  | 40 17               | 55.728 51.490 51.340 | -6.54  | 3283                                                     |
| O. meridionalis        | 41 17               | 55.728 51.490 51.340 | -6.61  | 3480                                                     |
| O. longistaminata      | 45 13               | 56.321 59.238 42.077 | -4.98  | 3342                                                     |
| O. glumipatula         | 41 18               | 55.728 50.854 51.340 | -6.58  | 3283                                                     |
| O. glaberrima          | 41 18               | 55.728 50.854 51.340 | -6.64  | 3314                                                     |
| O. barthii             | 41 18               | 55.728 51.490 51.340 | -6.55  | 3382                                                     |
| O. punctate            | 41 18               | 55.560 50.854 51.340 | -6.54  | 3356                                                     |
| O. brachyantha         | 41 18               | 55.728 51.564 51.201 | -6.69  | 3277                                                     |

Lysine and alanine. The same substitutions were also recorded in Jerusalem artichoke (44), coconut palm (45), Dendrobium candidum (46) and Lolium temulentum (47).

Except for O. longistaminata with molecular weight of 31.29 KDa and isoelectric point of 6.22 (Table 1), physiochemical characteristics of the mined CDKAs in other taxa showed narrow ranges of molecular weights (33.56 - 33.69 KDa) and isoelectric points (6.38 - 6.97). CDKAs having similar characteristics were identified in Physcomitrella patens (31), Dendrobium candidum (46), maize endosperm (48) and Arabidopsis thaliana (49).

Secondary structures (Fig. 4 and Table 2) of the retrieved CDKAs showed PSTAIRE motif in the first α-helix as described by Sorrell et al. (50). 3-D models (Fig. 5 and Table 4) supported with negative Z-score also showed the pattern described for such kinases consisting of joined couple of α-helices and β-strands (46).
Figure 4. Secondary structures of the retrieved CDKAs in some *Oryza* species showing PSTAIRE motif in the first α-helix.
In conclusion, in silico analyses provided a time and cost effective tool to highlight valuable genetic variations in wild relatives of rice. The unique CDKA predicted in *O. longistaminata* lacking the negative regulatory binding site observed in other species may be exploited to accelerate growth in cultivated species through traditional breeding or molecular approaches.

Similarly, polymorphism in SUC/CKS - binding motif recorded in *O. brachyantha*, can be employed in cultivated species to make benefit of such variation in manipulating cell division.

**Authors' declaration:**
- Conflicts of Interest: None.
- We hereby confirm that all the Figures and Tables in the manuscript are mine ours. Besides,

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توصيف أحد بروتينات الفسفرة المعتمدة على السيكلين من المجموعة A و الجين الخاص به في بعض أنواع جنس Oryza باستخدام التقنيات الحاسوبية

أحمد سيد فؤاد

قسم النبات والبيولوجيا التطورية، كلية العلوم، جامعة القاهرة، القاهرة، مصر العربية (1261)
كلية العلوم، جامعة سراج، جامعة شقراء، المملكة العربية السعودية (1196)

الخلاصة:

يعتبر الأرز طعاماً أساسيًا لأغلب سكان العالم. تساهم بروتينات الفسفرة المعتمدة على السيكلين من المجموعة (CDKA) A في الانتقال عبر المراحل المختلفة لدورة الخلية و كذلك تساهم في تصنيع الأحماض الأمينية. وقد هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى توصيف أحد هذه البروتينات و الأحماض الأمينية المعنية بها في الأنواع المختلفة من جنس Oryza. كشفت النتائج اختلافات في بعض تتابعات الأحماض الأمينية التي تنظم عمل البروتين محل الدراسة في كل من O. nivara , O. glumipatula , O. barthii , O. glaberrima , O. sativa Indica Group , O. nivara , O. brachyantha , O. punctata , O. longistaminata , O. meridionalis brachyantha. الأحماض الأمينية المسئولة عن تثبيط عمل البروتين كما لوحظ إختلاف في تتابع الأحماض الأمينية المسئولة عن الارتباط بالسيكلين (PSTAICE) و UTASICL من PSTAIPE الساقية. تم تسجيل اختلاف في تتابع الأحماض الأمينية بالموضع المسئول عن النشاط المرتبط بالسيكلين. توصى الدراسة بالأستفادة من الاختلافات السابقة للتحكم في الانقسام الخلوي و النمو في الأنواع المزروعة من جنس Oryza باستخدام طرق التربية التقليدية أو الطريقة الجزيئية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: CDKA، الجينومات، الأرز، الأقارب البرية.