the polypeptide 20 kD, synthesized by CMS mitochondria, 
and its effect on microsporogenesis. Nevertheless, it can be 
inferrd that the additional 20 kD mitochondrial protein may 
inhibit 20 kD protein in anther, leading to pollen 
abortion. This observation is consistent with the report on 
the involvement of mitochondrial gene in anther development in 
Nicotiana20 and structural abnormalities of mitochondria during pollen abortion in maize CMS-T21, 
wheat22, sugarbeet23, rice24 and Brassica25. It has been 
shown that the protein 13 kD of CMS-T maize is present in 
the mitochondria of tapetal cells even after the 
mitochondria have begun to degenerate26. Similarly, the 
expression of Pcf gene is greatest in the anthers of CMS 
Petunia27.

All the studies, including the present one, describe the 
mitochondrial translation products from the vegetative 
tissue. However, it has been documented that mitochondria 
from different organs synthesize different proteins28, 
apparently in response to altered cellular milieu or 
environmental stimuli. Hence, for a better understanding of 
cyttoplasmic male sterility, mitochondrial translation 
studies should be carried out in anthers where pollen 
abortion takes place at different developmental stages.

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Homorepeats of amino acids in proteins – A database search

K. Veluraja* and S. Priyadarshini

Bioinformatics Centre, Department of Biotechnology, Madurai Kamaraj 
University, Madurai 625 021, India

*Present address: Physics Department, Manonmaniam Sundaranar 
University, Tirunelveli 627 009, India.

Occurrence of individual amino acids and their 
homorepeats has been computed from the available 
protein sequence database. Significant numbers of 
homorepeats, up to a maximum of hexamers, were 
found for most amino acids. Preliminary results 
indicate that the patterns of percentage occurrence 
of individual amino acids are similar to those of their 
homodimers. Higher orders, however, show deviations 
in the predominance profile. In the case of valine and 
isovaline, the frequency of occurrence of homorepeats 
(beyond trimers) goes down considerably, in sharp 
contrast to their predominance as individual entities. 
Tryptophan was not found beyond homotrimetric 
repeats and tyrosine and cysteine were not found in 
tandems beyond pentamers. Interspecies distribution 
profiles reveal some interesting deviations. The cysteine 
content in E. coli proteins was about 50% lower 
compared to human proteins. Very few E. coli proteins 
have higher-order repeats and the functional 
importance of these higher-order repeats has been 
analysed. Plant proteins have very high glutamine 
tandems in contrast to intermediate frequency of single 
glutamine occurrences. This suggests a preferential 
selection of some amino acids and their tandems in 
the course of evolution to suit diverse functional and 
structural requirements.

PROTEIN STRUCTURE is primarily a reflection of its amino acid 
sequence. Automated protein-sequencing methods have 
generated a vast repertoire of protein sequences. These 
data are made available in various computerized 
protein sequence databases. The number of proteins sequenced 
exceed manyfold those with defined three-dimensional 
structures solved by X-ray crystallography and NMR.
methods. Exploitation of these databases for information regarding aspects of protein structure is an essential part of biological research\(^6\)\(^-\)\(^11\). In this area one aspect is the study of repetitive amino acid sequences in proteins. Highly repetitive sequences are believed to be of great importance in protein structure and function\(^12\)\(^,\)\(^13\).

Here we have investigated the percentage occurrence of individual amino acids as well as their homorepeats of the proteins available in the SWISSPROT database\(^14\). Three sub-databases containing proteins of human, plant and \(E.\) \textit{coli} origins were constructed and analysed for an interspecies comparison of the distribution of amino acids and their tandem repeats.

The database used was the SWISSPROT protein sequence database; Release 22 (May 1992). From this database a total of 21,856 proteins comprising 7,294,047 amino acids were selected as the parent database. The total number of proteins of human origin were 1807 (726,335 amino acids), of \(E.\) \textit{coli} were 1727 (538,073 amino acids) and of plant origin were 2589 (710,407 amino acids).

Software was developed to compute the relative percentage of occurrence of amino acids as individuals and as their homorepeats, and evaluated as described below.

**Percentage occurrence of individual amino acid**

\[
\text{Percentage occurrence of individual amino acid} = \frac{\text{Total number of individual amino acid entries}}{\text{Total number of amino acid entries}} \times 100\%
\]

**Percentage occurrence of amino acids in homorepeats**

\[
\text{Percentage occurrence of amino acids in homorepeats} = \frac{\text{Total number of amino acids in repeats}}{\text{Total number of amino acid entries}} \times 100\%.
\]

One trimer includes two dimers and three single amino acids. Similarly, one tetramer includes three dimers and two trimers and four amino acids and so on. The multiple entries of a few proteins in the database will not bias the results as the number of sequences subject to analysis is quite large. A CPU time of 8 h was taken for each computation of the parent database on microvax II.

Table 1 shows the individual amino acid distribution in overall protein entries tabulated on a scale of 0–100%. The profiles of distribution of each amino acid and their respective homorepeats are shown in Figure 1a–f. This

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amino acids</th>
<th>Percentage range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leucine</td>
<td>9.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alanine, glycine, serine, valine</td>
<td>6–7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isoleucine, glutamate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lysine, threonine, aspartate, arginine, proline</td>
<td>5–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asparagine, glutamine, phenylalanine, tyrosine</td>
<td>3–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Histidine, methionine</td>
<td>2–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cystine, tryptophan</td>
<td>1–2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.** Distribution of amino acids and their homorepeats in overall, human, \(E.\) \textit{coli} and plant proteins. a, Individual amino acids; b, Homodimers, c, Homotrimers; d, Homotetramers; e, Homopentamers; f, Homohexamers.
includes a species-wise comparison as well. There are 20 amino acids that contribute to protein structure. Hence, the probability of selection of each amino acid by nature should be 5% (1/20 x 100). However, observations reveal that the hydrophobic amino acids leucine, alanine, glycine, valine and isoleucine predominate, accounting together for 36.02%. This value is significantly higher than the probability of chance selection, which should be 25% for the five amino acids. Table 2 gives the total distribution of higher-order homorepeats in various species. An interesting feature is that E. coli proteins have very few higher-order homorepeats (see also Figure 1e, f).

A comparison of the interspecies individual amino acid distribution profiles reveals some interesting deviations. E. coli proteins show much lower cysteine content compared to human proteins (1.13% in E. coli and 2.29% in human). This nearly 50% drop in occurrence can be due to reduced redox potentials in bacterial systems which do not allow extensive disulphide bond formation as in mammalian cells15. Hence, the need for cysteine would be less in E. coli as disulphide bonds are not the major protein-stabilizing forces here. The relative percentage of serine is also significantly less in E. coli (5.8% E. coli, 7.03% overall, 7.47% in human and 6.96% in plant). E. coli lack the necessary post-translational modification machinery needed for protein glycosylation, hence, the lower frequency of serine, which is one of the potential candidates for glycosylation, could be accounted for.

Figures 1a and b show that profiles of dimeric repeats have minor perturbations compared to profiles of single entities. For example, glutamine dimers occur at higher frequencies than asparagine (glutamine dimer 0.51%, asparagine dimer 0.47%) though as individual entities the percentage occurrence of asparagine is higher than glutamine (4.0% for glutamine monomers and 4.4% for asparagine monomers). Homotrimeric repeat patterns show higher percentage of alanine triplets compared to leucine in all proteins with the exception of human proteins (Figure 1c). The percentages are: in overall proteins, alanine = 0.29, leucine = 0.28; in E. coli proteins, alanine = 0.29, leucine = 0.14; in plant proteins, alanine = 0.34, leucine = 0.25; in human proteins, alanine = 0.23, leucine = 0.43. Predominant leucine triplets in human proteins could have a structural role. The percentage occurrence of valine and isoleucine shows a marked drop as one moves to higher-order repeats, unlike other amino acids which predominated as individual entities. Thus, the higher-order homorepeats of valine and isoleucine may not have essential functional or structural roles in proteins.

Plant protein profiles distinctly show a high percentage of higher-order glutamine homorepeats. The side chain of glutamine acts as a nitrogen donor in a variety of biochemical reactions16. We further found that stretches of glutamine tandems predominate in plant seed storage proteins (unpublished observations by authors). We envisage that in addition to being a reserve of nitrogen in plant seed proteins these poly-glutamine domains could also be potential recognition sites for the enzymes of nitrogen metabolism. Another striking feature is the amino acid histidine, which is present as a monomer at a frequency of only 2.3% in overall proteins. However, a significant number of histidine homorepeats up to hexamers are found in all species (overall proteins: 0.0002%, human proteins: 0.002%, E. coli proteins: 0.001% and plant proteins: 0.0002%). So histidine homorepeats must have an essential structural role in the proteins of most organisms. Some amino acids do not appear as higher-order homorepeats. In the database scanned, tryptophan repeats beyond trimers were not found. Tyrosine and cysteine were not found beyond pentameric repeats.

A detailed analysis of the E. coli proteins with higher-order homorepeats (higher than trimers) reveals some interesting features. The higher-order repeats of histidine, glutamine, glutamate occur as multimeric repeats in only one protein each. A histidine septamer is found in the His operon leader peptide (attenuator). A stretch of penta-glutamine is found in the sbbc protein, which is involved in recombinogetic activity, and a hexamer of glutamate is present in the 3OS ribosomal protein at the C-terminal end. The analysis of multiplets of leucine reveals that only nine proteins have pentamers or higher orders of leucine in a tandem array. Of these nine proteins, seven are membrane proteins revealing the contribution of leucine repeats to membrane anchorage. Three proteins were found to have valine higher-order repeats, two of these being membrane proteins and one a regulator of valine and other branched chain amino acid biosynthetic pathways. Though glycine, alanine, arginine and threonine homorepeats are found as higher orders in less than ten proteins each, their distribution with respect to function of proteins is random. It is not possible to correlate the lower-order repeats to functions assumed by proteins due to their abundant occurrence.

Occurrence of significant numbers of homorepeats in proteins indicates that they should have important roles in protein structure and function. The frequency of higher-order homorepeats in E. coli proteins is markedly lower

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Table 2. Distribution of homorepeats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Human</th>
<th>Plant</th>
<th>E. coli</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimers</td>
<td>13 610</td>
<td>13 730</td>
<td>14 089</td>
<td>12 690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trimers</td>
<td>2.075</td>
<td>2.280</td>
<td>2.314</td>
<td>1.384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetramers</td>
<td>0.514</td>
<td>0.580</td>
<td>0.597</td>
<td>0.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentamers</td>
<td>0.253</td>
<td>0.312</td>
<td>0.283</td>
<td>0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hexamers</td>
<td>0.173</td>
<td>0.190</td>
<td>0.181</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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compared to the other higher evolved species. The preferential selection of homoepeptids of certain amino acids in proteins of different species is a reflection of the mechanisms to achieve functional and structural versatility by proteins in the course of evolution. As the database analysed is large, we believe that the percentage frequency results will not be biased by multiple entries of single proteins. A similar trend of homoepeptid frequency can be expected of more exhaustive forthcoming data as the number of sampling points analysed is quite large.


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γ-Rays- and EMS-induced leaf mutants in mung bean (Vigna radiata (L) Wilczek)

V. P. Singh and Rashmi Sharma

Department of Plant Sciences, Rehilkhand University, Bareilly 243 005, India

A few pentafoilate and tetrafoilate mutants were isolated from the γ-rays and EMS-treated M2 population. These mutants showed a significant increase in dry matter production, total chlorophyll contents and yield compared to their parents in M2 and M3 generations.

The role of mutation breeding in the induction of leaf mutants of agronomic interest is well established1. Being easily discernible and stable phenotypes, the leaf mutants offer interesting experimental material. In a short-duration crop such as mung bean, it is important that the leaf area should expand and reach its optimal level as rapidly as possible for maximum interception of the incident light. Earlier studies indicate that the number of pods per plant, reduction in leaf number per plant and leaf area, and insufficient dry-matter production are the principal factors limiting the yield1,2. The present report describes an attempt to study the morphological and physiological components of yield in the tetrafoilate and pentafoilate mutants induced in mung bean cv. PDM-116 and PDM-11.

Dry seeds of mung bean (Vigna radiata (L) Wilczek) cv. PDM-116 and PDM-11 obtained from Pulse Directorate, Kalayanpur, Kanpur, were irradiated with different doses of γ-rays (15, 30 and 45 kR) at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, delivered from a source of 60Co and sown in the field. In another experiment pre-soaked seeds (12 h in distilled water) were treated with an aqueous solution of chemical mutagen (0.1%, 0.2%, 0.3% ethylmethanesulphonate) for 6 h with intermittent shaking of the mutagenic solution. After the termination of chemical treatments, the seeds were washed in running water and directly sown in the field. Seeds from each M1 plant were collected and sown in the field in randomized-block single-row design to raise M2 generation. The mutants isolated from M2 generation were carried over to M3 generation to study their breeding behaviour and productivity. The protein content was estimated following the modified Kjeldhal's method3 and the chlorophyll contents were estimated following Arnon's method4.

In M2 generation, 1.66% and 2.50% tetrafoilate mutants in variety PDM-116 and PDM-11, respectively, and 0.83% pentafoilate mutants in both these varieties were isolated from the mutagen-treated population. The highest frequency of induced mutants was reported in γ-rays-treated population of both the varieties. It was interesting to note that the tetrafoilate mutants were recorded from γ-rays-treated population and pentafoilate mutants were recorded from EMS-treated population only.

The leaf characteristics of the mutants and their productivity are given in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. In M2 and M3 generation, the leaf area increases significantly in both the mutants along with the dry-matter production and total chlorophyll contents per plant. The total yield in the induced mutants was significantly higher, the high-yield contributing factor being the number of pods per plant. The protein contents remain unaltered in tetrafoilate and pentafoilate mutants except in the pentafoilate mutant isolated from variety PDM-116, where a significant increase was observed in the protein content and the yield. A similar result of the induction of desirable leaf mutants by the use of various physical/chemical mutagen in pulses has been reported earlier2,5-7. The M3 segregation population of the mutants showed a 3:1 segregating ratio, confirming that the mutant character is controlled by a single recessive gene (Table 3).

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