

Abstract

Natural Diversity of Telomeric DNA Sequences in Bryophytes [†]

Anastasia Sannikova ^{1,*}, Margarita Sharipova ^{1,*}, Eugene Shakirov ^{1,2,*} and Lia Valeeva ^{1,*}

¹ Kazan Federal University;

² Department of Biological Sciences, College of Science, Marshall University

* Correspondence: aya.sann.bio@gmail.com (A.S.); marsharipova@gmail.com (M.S.); shakirov@marshall.edu (E.S.); lia2107@yandex.ru (L.V.)

[†] Presented at the 2nd International Electronic Conference on Biomolecules: Biomacromolecules and the Modern World Challenges, 1–15 Nov 2022; Available online: <https://iecbm2022.sciforum.net/>

Abstract: Telomeres - the most important specialized nucleoprotein structures at the ends of linear eukaryotic chromosomes involved in protecting of DNA from damage. The functional characteristic of telomeres is the length. Changes in telomere structure is of enormous evolutionary importance as they can affect whole-genome stability. However, plants remain a poorly studied group in the light of telomere biology. Bryophytes are the prospective plant group for the understanding of the protection and evolution mechanisms of plant telomeres. The aim of the work was to determine natural variability of telomere lengths in different bryophyte species and ecotypes. We used axenic cultures of moss *Physcomitrium patens ecotypes* (Gransden, Reute, Villersexel, Kaskaskia), moss *Ceratodon purpureus* (male R40 and female GG1), as well as natural isolates *Sphagnum fallax*, *S. girgensohnii* and *Sphagnum sp.* The analysis of the telomeres was carried out by the TRF method. It was found that different ecotypes of *P. patens* plants have different telomere lengths in the range from 1000 to 1500 bp. The mean telomere length in a female plant *C. purpureus* was 480-500 bp, in a male plant 900-1000 bp. The telomere lengths of *S. fallax* MW and *S. girgensohnii* were about mean ~2000 bp. However, telomeres were slightly shorter in isolate of *S. sp.*, whose telomere length ranged from 1100 to 1500 bp. In addition, it was found that all studied Bryophytes had differences in the location of specific telomeric sequences. Thus, we have shown that the telomere lengths of bryophytes can vary both between species and within one species. Also, interstitial telomeric DNA is a distinguishing characteristic of bryophyte genomes.

Citation: Lastname, F.; Lastname, F.; Lastname, F. Title. *Biol. Life Sci. Forum* **2022**, *2*, x. <https://doi.org/10.3390/xxxxx>

Academic Editor: Firstname Lastname

Published: date

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Keywords: telomeres; bryophytes; moss; *Physcomitrium patens*; *Ceratodon purpureus*; *Sphagnum*

Author Contributions:

Funding: This work was conducted as a part of Kazan Federal University Strategic Academic Leadership Program (PRIORITY-2030) and funded by grant No.21-14-00147.

Institutional Review Board Statement:

Informed Consent Statement:

Data Availability Statement:

Conflicts of Interest: