Ijuhya vitellina sp. nov., a novel source for chaetoglobosin A, is a destructive parasite of the cereal cyst nematode Heterodera filipjevi

Samad Ashrafi, Soleiman Helaly, Hans-Josef Schroers, Marc Stadler, Katja R. Richert-Poeggeler, Abdelfattah A. Dababat, Wolfgang Maier

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Abstract

Cyst nematodes are globally important pathogens in agriculture. Their sedentary lifestyle and long-term association with the roots of host plants render cyst nematodes especially good targets for attack by parasitic fungi. In this context fungi were specifically isolated from nematode eggs of the cereal cyst nematode Heterodera filipjevi. Here, Ijuhya vitellina (Ascomycota, Hypocreales, Bionectriaceae), encountered in wheat fields in Turkey, is newly described on the basis of phylogenetic analyses, morphological characters and life-style related inferences. The species destructively parasitises eggs inside cysts of H. filipjevi. The parasitism was reproduced in in vitro studies. Infected eggs were found to harbour microsclerotia produced by I. vitellina that resemble long-term survival structures also known from other ascomycetes. Microsclerotia were also formed by this species in pure cultures obtained from both, solitarily isolated infected eggs obtained from fields and artificially infected eggs. Hyphae penetrating the eggshell colonised the interior of eggs and became transformed into multicellular, chlamydoспорe-like structures that developed into microsclerotia. When isolated on artificial media, microsclerotia germinated to produce multiple emerging hyphae. The specific nature of morphological structures produced by I. vitellina in side nematode eggs is interpreted as a unique mode of interaction allowing long-term survival of the fungus inside nematode cysts that are known to survive periods of drought or other harsh environmental conditions. Generic classification of the new species is based on molecular phylogenetic inferences using five different gene regions. I. vitellina is the only species of the genus known to parasitise nematodes and produce microsclerotia. Metabolomic analyses revealed that within the Ijuhya species studied here, only I. vitellina produces chaetoglobosin A and its derivate 19-O-acetylchaetoglobosin A. Nematicidal and nematode-inhibiting activities of these compounds have been demonstrated suggesting that the production of these compounds may represent an adaptation to nematode parasitism.


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Introduction

Cyst nematodes are attacked by several fungal species. The first report on cyst-parasitic fungi dates back to 1877, when Julius Kühn described a Tarichium species, today known as Catenaria auxiliaris (Kuehn) Tribe, as a parasite of the sugar beet nematode Heterodera schachtii Schmidt [1]. A diverse group of fungi has since then been described as associates of cyst nematodes [2]. Examples include Ilyonectria destructans (Zinssm.) Rossman, L. Lombard & Crous [3], Pochonia chlamydosporia (Goddard) Zare & W. Gams (both Ascomycota, Hypocreales) and Nemataphthora gymphila Kerry & D.H. Crump (Stramenopiles) [4, 5] that were described as parasites of Heterodera avenae Wollenweber. Kerry [6] also demonstrated that all these species contribute to the natural suppression of nematode populations of H. avenae. Similar nematode suppressive effects were also reported from different geographical regions [7–10]. These observations have increased further attention to investigate the association of fungi with cyst nematodes and their biocontrol potential.

The destructive parasitism on nematodes is in some cases linked with the production of biologically active fungal secondary metabolites [11–13] including nematicidal compounds that display various anthelmintic effects [14]. Chaetoglobosins of the cytochalasan family can have cytotoxic and inhibitory activities [15, 16] and affect insects and nematodes [17–21]. In the past