Original Research Article

Study on variation of non polar metabolites in *Gossypium hirsutum* L. under water stress condition using a gas chromatography-mass spectroscopy technique

Abstract

In the present study, the variation of non-polar metabolites in *Gossypium hirsutum* L. plants under water stressed condition was observed by gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) method. Total 17 non-polar metabolites were detected in control and water stressed *G. hirsutum* leaf. The major metabolites were quinoline derivative (26.37±0.29%), 2-methylhexadecan-1-ol (7.47±0.07%), phytol (7.71±0.02%), myristic acid (5.94±0.04%), hexadecanol (14.30±0.94%), nonadecane (1.67±0.05%) and palmitic acid (3.20±1.39%). Total 14 metabolites were detected in stem and the major metabolites were dodecene (1.67±0.11%), L-lysine (0.65±0.06%), dibutylphthalate (5.06±1.88%), linoleic acid (10.26±0.07%), campesterol (0.87±0.04%) and stigmasterol (1.13±0.55%). Significant variation (P = .05) in some of the metabolites was observed under water stress condition. It includes that these metabolites might have played an important role in water stress tolerance. This study indicates that *G. hirsutum* have distinct mechanisms of metabolite accumulation and regulation under water stress condition, which is valuable for the better understanding of overall water stress tolerance mechanism.

Keywords: *Gossypium hirsutum*, water stress, metabolites, gas chromatography-mass spectrometry.

Introduction

Water stress is one of the most important environmental factor which affects crop productivity and adversely affects fruit production, square and boll shedding and fiber quality in cotton [1]. Moreover, water stress is considered as the single most devastating environmental factor [2]. It severely affects plant development with substantial reductions in crop growth rate and biomass accumulation by reduction in the cell division, root proliferation, plant water and nutrient relations [3, 4].

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Previous studies revealed that 2 to 4 °C increase in temperature and the expected 30% decrease in precipitation may adversely affect crop productivity and water availability by the year 2050 [5]. Thus, screening cotton varieties for resistance to water stress conditions and improving cotton tolerance to this stress conditions will mitigate negative consequences of this adversity. Cotton is normally not classified under water stress tolerant crop as some other plants species like sorghum [6]. Nevertheless, cotton has mechanisms that make it well adapted to semi-arid regions [7]. An understanding of the response of cultivars to water deficits is also important to model cotton growth and estimate irrigation needs [8]. The alteration of metabolites due to water stress was previously reported for other plant species and considered to be responsible for water stress tolerance [9, 10]. Similarly, it was imperative to understand the metabolic changes in *G. hirsutum* under water stress condition, so that the water stress tolerance metabolite can be investigated. Further, the finding of this study will helpful for agriculture researchers in better understanding of metabolic pathways during water stress.

Material and Methods

Cotton seeds were purchased from Central Institute for Cotton research, Regional station, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. Seeds were sown in trays (52 cm x 27 cm) placed in a cultivation chamber. The seedlings were transplanted into pots. After four months, the best plants of approximately the same height and with the same number of leaves were selected for the study. Further, these selected plants were divided into two groups. First group of plants were irrigated in every 12 hour interval and considered as control plant. While second group plants were maintained in the same environment as the control plants but do not add any water to the container for 4 days. This will allow the pots to dry out and plants were considered as water stressed. Finally leaf and stem samples were collected plants from each group for extraction.

Dried samples of 3g each leaves and stems were taken for extraction with hexane (1:10 w/v). The solvent portion was collected by filtration and repeated five times until the hexane layer became almost colourless. The separated solvent layer was concentrated under reduced pressure. The resulting sticky mass was stored at -5 ºC. Volatile trimethylsilyl (TMS) derivatives of the samples were prepared by using 3.6 mg of the sample, 40 µl of methoxylamine hydrochloride in GC grade pyridine (20 mg/ml). The mixture was shaken for 2 h at 37 °C in a temperature controlled vortex, followed by the addition of 70 µl of the N-

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methyl-N-(trimethylsilyl) trifluoroacetamide (MSTFA) and followed by continuous shaking for 30 min. The GC-MS analysis was performed using a GCs-Agilent 7890 A coupled with a 5975 C MS: MS detector and Electron Impact Ionization to generate mass spectra. The scan mass range was 30m/z-600m/z and the total run time in minutes was 54 min.

The resulting GC-MS profile was analyzed using the NIST mass spectral library and by matching the chromatogram with appropriate standards. The estimation of the metabolites was done using the percentage peak area that appeared at the total ion chromatogram in the GC-MS analysis. The molecular weights and fragmentation patterns were ascertained by use of the NIST library and the Duke phytochemical data base.

Statistical analysis of GC-MS data was carried out by Mann-Whitney U test without normal distribution using statistical software SYSTAT version 12.0 (Microsoft Corp. SYSTAT Software, Inc., USA).

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Results and Discussion

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Different class of non-polar metabolites were identified from non-polar extracts of leaf and stem of *G. hirsutum* (Table 1).

Table1: Mass data of GC-MS identified metabolites from control and water-stressed *G. hirsutum* leaf and stem**.**

Serial Number	tR (min)	Compound Name	Molecular Formula	Molecular Weight	Mass Data *(m/z)*
1.	11.66	Dodecene	$C_{12}H_{24}$	168	*m/z* 168 (M^+) (6%), 97 (24%), 84 (28%), 83 (30%), 70 (48%), 56 (62%), 55 (72%), 43 (100%)
2.	17.12	Tetradecene	$C_{14}H_{28}$	196	*m/z* 196 (M^+) (2%), 125 (8%), 111 (34%), 97 (70%), 70 (82%), 69 (100%), 55 (78%),
3.	17.45	Nonanoic acid	$C_{12}H_{26}O_2Si$	230	*m/z* 230 (M^+) (2%), 215 (70%), 129 (22%), 117 (52%), 97 (62%), 73 (100%), 75 (80%)
4.	19.75	L-Lysine	$C_{18}H_{46}N_2O_3Si_4$	450	*m/z* 450 (M^+) (2%), 360 (4%), 258 (12%), 232 (34%), 172 (30%),102 (88%), 77 (48%), 73 (100%)
5.	19.87	Caryophyllene	$C_{15}H_{24}$	204	*m/z* 204 (M^+) (2%), 189 (24%), 147 (34%), 133 (84%), 105 (58%), 93 (74%), 69 (100%)
6.	22.36	Quinoline derivative	$C_{18}H_{18}N_2O$	278	*m/z* 278 (M^+) (16%), 264 (20%), 263 (100%), 73 (26%)
7.	24.23	2-Keto-d-gluconic acid	$C_{21}H_{50}O_7Si_5$	554	*m/z* 554 (M^+) (2%), 437 (22%), 292 (10%), 217 (30%), 204 (72%), 73 (100%) (Me_3Si)
8.	24.56	Cinnamic acid	$C_{12}H_6O_2Si$	220	*m/z* 220 (M^+), (98%), 215 (72%), 132 (26%), 75 (94%), 73 (100%)
9.	25.86	Maleic acid dibutylester	$C_{12}H_{20}O_4$	228	*m/z* 228 (M^+) (2%), 173 (10%), 155 (16%), 117 (42%), 57 (48%), 41 (38%), 99 (100%)

10.	26.15	Butanal	$C_{18}H_{45}NO_5Si_4$	467	*m/z* 467 (M^+) (2%), 307 (28%), 217(20%), 160(10%), 147 (18%), 103 (64%), 73 (100%),
11.	26.39	2-Methylhexadecan-1-ol	$C_{17}H_{36}O$	256	*m/z* 256 (M^+) (2%), 125 (10%), 111 (22%), 97 (38%), 71 (52%), 69 (58%), 57 (100%)
12.	26.72	Octadecene	$C_{18}H_{36}$	252	*m/z* 252 (M^+) (2%), 139 (10%), 111 (44%), 97 (89%), 83 (92%), 69 (76%), 57 (100%),
13.	27.78	Phytol	$C_{20}H_{40}O$	296	*m/z* 296 (M^+) (2%), 123 (28%), 95(32%), 82 (38%), 81 (46%), 71 (100%), 57 (64%)
14.	28.53	Myristic acid	$C_{14}H_{28}O_2$	300	*m/z* 300 (M^+) (4%), 285 (86%), 145 (3 132 (18%), 75 (100%), 73 (80%)
15.	29.61	Tridecanedial	$C_{13}H_{24}O_2$	212	*m/z* 212 (M^+) (2%), 150 (18%), 109 (42%), 95 (96%), 81 (78%), 67 (84%), 55 (100%)
16.	29.94	Hexadecanol	$C_{19}H_{42}OSi$	314	*m/z* 314 (M^+) (2%), 300 (22%), 299 (100%), 103 (18%), 75 (50%), 73 (22%)
17.	31.12	Nonadecane	$C_{18}H_{38}$	266	*m/z* 266 (M^+) (2%), 111 (32%), 97 (62%) 83 (64%), 57 (80%), 55 (92%), 43 (98%), 41 (100%)
18.	32.16	QuinolineAcetamide derivative	$C_{20}H_{18}N_2O_5$	366	*m/z* 366 (M^+) (28%), 351 (26%), 235 (68%), 219 (58%), 75 (38%), 73 (100%)
19.	32.22	Palmitic acid	$C_{19}H_{40}O_2Si$	328	*m/z* 328 (M^+) (4%), 314 (6%), 313 (34%), 201 (2%), 145 (26%), 132 (38%), 117 (72%), 75 (82%)
20.	35.87	Dibutylphthalate	$C_{16}H_{22}O_4$	278	*m/z* 278 (M^+) (2%), 149 (100%), 150 (10%), 104 (6%), 41 (8%)
21.	36.05	Linoleic acid	$C_{21}H_{40}O_2Si$	352	*m/z* 352 (M^+) (6%), 337 (70%), 129 (44%), 95 (40%), 73 (100%), 54 (52%)
22.	36.14	Stearic acid	$C_{18}H_{36}O_4$	284	*m/z* 284 (M^+) (4%), 145 (24%), 132 (38%), 129 (64%), 117 (72%), 75 (72%), 73 (100%)
23.	38.32	Docosene	$C_{22}H_{44}$	308	*m/z* 308 (M^+) (2%), 139 (6%), 125 (12%), 111 (28%), 97 (62%) ,69 (68%), 55 (100%)
24.	41.50	n-Eicosanol	$C_{20}H_{42}O$	298	*m/z* 298 (M^+) (2%), 153 (4%), 139 (6%), 125 (12%), 111 (30%), 97 (52%) 53 (60%)
25.	44.60	Dioctylphthalate	$C_{24}H_{38}O_4$	390	*m/z* 390 (M^+) (2%), 280 (4%), 279 (20%), 167 (40%), 149 (100%), 113 (14%), 71 (26%), 57 (38%)
26.	47.25	Nonacosanol	$C_{29}H_{60}O$	424	*m/z* 424 (M^+) (2%), 139 (10%), 125 (22%), 111 (38%), 97 (90%) ,69 (68%), 57 (100%)
27.	48.22	Octacosanol	$C_{31}H_{66}OSi$	482	*m/z* 482 (M^+) (2%), 468 (12%), 467 (76%), 111 (18%), 103 (44%), 83 (34%), 75 (100%), 57 (58%)
28.	52.56	Campesterol	$C_{31}H_{56}OSi$	472	*m/z* 472 (M^+) (4%), 343 (28%), 257 (20%), 147 (24%), 137 (44%), 69 (74%), 73 (100%), 57 (72%)
29.	53.77	Stigmasterol	$C_{32}H_{58}OSi$	486	*m/z* 486 (M^+) (38%), 398 (6%), 255 ((34%), 147 (36%), 129 (18%), 95 (34%), 73 (

Major metabolites in leaf

Total 17 non-polar metabolites were detected from leaves of water stressed *G. hirsutum*. The higher amount of quinoline derivative (26.37%), 2- methylhexadecan-1-ol (7.47%), phytol (7.71%), myristic acid (5.94%), hexadecanol (14.30%), nonadecane(1.67%) and palmitic acid (3.20%) were detected in water stressed leaves in compare to control. Moreover two metabolites i.e. caryophyllene and phytol were detected only in stressed leaves.

The higher amount of metabolites cinnamic acid (23.93%), octadecene (6.74%), quninoline acetamide derivative (1.03%) and stearic acid (2.06%) were present in control leaf in compare to stressed leaf. While the higher amount of quinoline derivative (26.37%), myristic acid (5.94%), hexadecanol (14.30%), nonadecane(1.67%) and palmitic acid (3.20%) were detected in stressed leaf in compare to control leaf.

The other non-polar metabolites such as 2-keto-d-gluconic acid (7.13%), maleic acid dibutylester (1.16%), butanal (2.92%) and tridecanedial (1.63%) were detected only in control leaf. While the caryophyllene (0.58%) and phytol (7.71%) were present only in stressed leaf (Table 2).

Table 2: Variation of non-polar metabolites in control and water stressed *G. hirsutum* leaf.

Serial Number	Compound Name	Control Leaf (Area %)	Stress Leaf (Area %)
1.	Caryophyllene	ND	0.58 ± 0.02[a]
2.	Quinoline derivative	7.70±0.11[a]	26.37±0.29[a]
3.	2-Keto-d-gluconic acid	7.13± 0.17[a]	ND
4.	Cinnamic acid	23.93± 0.49[a]	9.18 ± 0.11[a]
5.	Maleic acid dibutylester	1.16± 0.07[a]	ND
6.	Butanal	2.92± 0.24[a]	ND
7.	2- Methylhexadecan-1-ol	1.05± 0.01[a]	7.47 ±0.07[a]
8.	Octadecene	6.74± 0.38[a]	1.64 ± 0.17[a]
9.	Phytol	ND	7.71 ± 0.02[a]
10.	Myristic acid	0.63± 0.01[a]	5.94 ±0.04[a]
11.	Tridecanedial	1.63± 0.03[a]	ND
12.	Hexadecanol	6.14± 0.24[a]	14.30±0.94[a]
13.	Nonadecane	0.49± 0.05[a]	1.67 ± 0.05[a]
14.	QuinolineAcetamide derivative	1.03± 0.06[a]	0.79 ± 0.12[a]
15.	Palmitic acid	0.81± 0.21[a]	3.20 ± 1.39[a]
16.	Dibutylphthalate	1.43± 1.05	0.88 ± 0.57
17.	Stearic acid	2.06± 0.03[a]	0.43 ± 0.21[a]

Mean values ± SD (standard deviation) values of mg/gm of fresh weight. ND = Not Detected;
a denotes statistical significance $P = .05$ between groups (control vs stress).

Major metabolites in stem

Total 14 non-polar metabolites were detected from water stressed *G. hirsutum* stem (Table 3). The higher amount of L-lysine (0.65%), linoleic acid (10.26%) and campesterol (0.87%) were detected in water stressed stem in compare to control. While the other metabolites were slightly decreased than control in compare to stress stem.

The higher average amount of maleic acid dibutylester (0.72%) and dioctylphthalate (4.56%) were detected in control stem compare to stress stem. The higher average amount of dodecene (1.67%), L-lysine (0.65%), linoleic acid (10.26%) and campesterol (0.87%) were found in stress stem compare to control. 2- Methylhexadecan-1-ol (0.73%) was present only in control stem. Statistically significant variation (P = .05) in few metabolites content was found between control and water stressed *G. hirsutum* stem (Table 3).

Table 3: Variation of non-polar metabolites in control and water stressed *G. hirsutum* stem.

Serial Number	Compound Name	Control Stem (Area %)	Stress Stem (Area %)
1.	Dodecene	1.04 ± 0.04[a]	1.67 ± 0.11[a]
2.	Nonanoic acid	5.36 ± 0.24	5.24 ± 0.05
3.	L-Lysine	0.43± 0.11[a]	0.65 ± 0.06[a]
4.	Quinoline derivative	28.01 ±0.17	25.87± 1.16
5.	Maleic acid dibutylester	0.72± 0.11[a]	0.51 ± 0.03[sa]
6.	2- Methylhexadecan-1-ol	0.73± 0.03[a]	ND
7.	Dibutylphthalate	4.85± 0.21	5.06 ± 1.88
8.	Linoleic acid	3.63± 0.49[a]	10.26±0.07[a]
9.	Docosene	3.47± 0.23	3.05 ± 0.28
10.	n-Eicosanol	2.20± 0.08	2.06 ± 0.25
11.	Dioctylphthalate	4.56± 0.07[a]	3.77 ± 0.09[a]
12.	Nonacosanol	0.50± 0.06	0.46 ± 0.05
13.	Campesterol	0.31± 0.04[a]	0.87 ± 0.04[a]
14.	Stigmasterol	0.44± 0.26	1.13 ± 0.55

Mean values ± SD (standard deviation) values of mg/gm of fresh weight. ND= Not Detected;
a denotes statistical significance P = .05 between groups (control vs stress).

Mainly 2- methylhexadecan-1-ol, hexadecanol and palmitic acid in leaf while linoleic acid in stem was found to be accumulating under water stress condition. The accumulation of these metabolites was previously reported for other plant species. These metabolites were observed to be responsible for water stress tolerance [9, 10]. Moreover, plant sterol i.e. campesterol was found in high amount in stress stem. Plant sterols regulate fluidity and permeability of phospholipid bilayer [11], cell division and plant growth [12]. Sterols are also essential for synthesis of prostaglandins and leukotrienes, important component for immune system [13].

Conclusion

Metabolic analysis of *Gossypium hirsutum* leaves and stem revealed a variation in metabolites in response to water stress. This study provides information on different class of metabolites that include major fatty acids, aldehydes, phytosterols etc. In general, it was observed that the amount of major metabolites such as 2- methylhexadecan-1-ol, phytol, myristic acid, hexadecanol, palmitic acid, linoleic acid and campesterol increases, while the amount of cinnamic acid, octadecene and stearic acid decreases under the water stress. These metabolites might have played an important role in water stress tolerance. Moreover, this finding can be used for the better understanding of various metabolic pathways during water stress in *G. hirsutum*.

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References

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