Genome-wide Identification of Powdery Mildew Resistance in Common Bean

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Abstract

Background

Genome-wide association studies (GWAS) was utilized to detect genetic variations related to the powdery mildew (PM) resistance and several agronomic traits in common bean. However, its application in common bean and the PM interactions to identify genes and their location in the common bean genome has not been fully addressed.

Results

Genome-wide association studies (GWAS) through marker-trait association are useful molecular tools for identification of disease resistance and other agronomic traits. SNP genotyping with a BeadChip containing 5398 SNPs was used to detect genetic variations related to resistance to PM disease in a panel of 206 genotypes grown under field conditions for two consecutive years. Significant SNPs identified on chromosome 4 and 10 were repeatable, confirming the reliability of the phenotypic data scored from the genotypes grown in two locations within two years. A cluster of resistance genes was revealed on the chromosome 4 of common bean genome among which CNL and TNL like resistance genes were identified. Furthermore, two resistance genes *Phavu_010G1320001g* and *Phavu_010G136800g* were also identified on pv10; further sequence analysis showed that these genes were homologs to the *Arabidopsis* disease resistance protein (RLM1A-like) and the putative disease resistance protein (*At4g11170.1*), respectively. Two LRR receptor-like kinases (RLK) were also identified on pv11 in samples collected in 2018 only. Many genes encoding auxin-responsive protein, TIFY10A protein, growth-regulating factor 5-like, ubiquitin-like protein, cell wall protein RBR3-like protein related to PM resistance were identified nearby significant SNPs. These results suggested that the resistance to PM pathogen involves a network of many genes constitutively co-expressed and may generate several layers of defense barriers or inducible reactions.

Conclusion

Our results provide new insights into common bean and PM interactions, and revealed putative resistance genes as well as their location on common bean genome that could be used for marker-assisted selection, functional genomic study approaches to confirm the role of these putative genes; hence, developing common bean resistance lines to the PM disease.

Background

Common bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.) is a significant legume species among the pulse crops that play a major role in addressing global food security, environmental challenges and health diets [1]. Powdery mildew (PM) is one of the most ubiquitous plant diseases and it infects a variety of legumes, including

green, runner, long and Italian beans, and snow pea in tropical and subtropical regions. PM disease in common bean caused by pathogen *Erysiphe polygoni* DC [2] accounts for extensive damage and significant yield losses 69% prior to flowering [3]. Warm temperatures (20–24°C), low humidity and shade. Because it is an airborne disease, accurate identification and immediate taking actions are critical to effectively prevent the spread of PM thereby minimizing significant yield losses and quality of edible parts.

Initial symptoms appear as small and white talcum-like spots, which are most commonly seen on the upper surface of leaves [4]. As the symptoms develop, infected leaves gradually curl downward and change color from pale yellow to brown and ultimately abscise. Under severe conditions, the entire leaves and plants are covered by white cottony mycelia [5], which inhibit photosynthetic process through blocking light absorption by leaves..

Several strategies are used to control PM disease, including application of fungicides, adjusting planting date to synchronize with periods of maximum sunlight exposure, and adoption of good cultural practices. However, these are expensive and not sustainable. For instance, control with fungicide can be difficult to minimize pathogen accumulation [6]. The development of resistant bean varieties is the most economical, efficient and ecological approach for the management of this disease-causing pathogen [7]. Sources of resistance and its inheritance in common bean genotypes were reported [8], even though there is limited information about resistance genes to the PM disease.

A Genome wide association study (GWAS) is a molecular tool used to identify specific genomic regions or loci governing simple to complex traits. GWAS can be used to determine if a genomic variant is associated with a trait of interest using either germplasm, segregation population, or a collection of diverse genotypes [9, 10]. Various candidate genes or quantitative trait loci responsible for traits of interest have been identified using GWAS technology in different crops. For instance, in common bean several studies have reported identification of genomic regions and candidate genes associated with different traits for bruchid resistance [11], agronomic traits [12], drought tolerance [13], anthracnose and angular leaf spot diseases [14] and symbiotic nitrogen fixation [15]. However, these studies have been conducted for different traits with different common bean cultivars in different geographical regions. In this research study, the aim is to reveal the association between genomic regions and the PM resistance using the GWAS approach in field grown cultivars. A collection of 206 common bean genotypes obtained from different resources and locations would provide enough recombination frequency for identification of causal loci related to PM resistance.

Results

Phenotyping for powdery mildew disease

Two trial sites were ideal experimental locations for testing PM disease resistant trait because of their higher disease pressure due to consecutively growth bean for more than five years resulting in the accumulation of *E. polygoni* inoculum season after season. The higher rainfall (>1000 mm) and higher

relative humidity (>80%) also created conducive environment for disease development during these two bean growing seasons [16]. The environment was used to fully assess the PM resistance potentials of common bean genotypes in nature. As a result, highly significant ($p<0.001$) differences of resistant trait were observed among the 206 genotypes for powdery mildew in both 2017 and 2018 growing season. However, disease severity was higher in 2018 with maximum disease severity score of 9 compared to 2017 with a maximum disease severity score of 6 (Table 1). Disease severity of PM under natural infection was negatively correlated with yield at $r=-0.24$ (data not shown), indicating that PM had a significant effect on yield of common bean.

Table 1 Means and ranges of scores for disease severity of powdery mildew infection among 206 bean genotypes in two environments of northern Tanzania during 2017 and 2018 years.

Trait	Season	Min.	Max.	Mean of SE	P-value
Resistance to Powdery mildew (PM)	2017	1.00	6.00	1.51±0.02	<0.001
	2018	1.00	9.00	2.87±0.05	<0.001

Population structure

Genetic relationship was revealed in this collection of common bean germplasm using STRUCTURE software. Based on Bayesian model, the genetic population structure was captured by describing the molecular variation in each subpopulation using a separate joint probability distribution over the observed sequence sites or loci. The model was used for association analysis to reduce false association due to unequal distribution of alleles among subpopulation. The model grouped 206 genotypes into three clusters ($K=3$). The first cluster ($K=1$) consisted of 113 genotypes belonging to the Mesoamerican gene pool; the second cluster ($K=2$) consisted 72 genotypes belonging to the Andean gene pool and third cluster ($K=3$) consisted of 21 genotypes belonging to the admixture gene pool (Figure 1). Since this collection included some breeding lines derived from different sources of parents, there was a possibility that offspring shared Mesoamerican and Andean gene pools leading to this heterozygosity in the third cluster. The result suggested these subpopulations were associated with their genetic background.

Marker trait associations for powdery mildew disease

Genome-wide association analysis of the resistance to PM disease showed comparable results of significant SNPs between two the year's data. The most significant markers linked to PM resistance were located on chromosome 4 and 10 for both years, indicating the reliability of data set. A total of eight SNPs was detected as association with common bean powdery mildew resistance on the pv04, pv10, and pv11 (Figure 2; Table 2). The SNP (ss715647913) at pv10 was most significant ($p = 7.22 \times 10^{-07}$) contributing the highest phenotypic variation of 12.28%. While the SNP (ss715650009) had the highest significance ($p = 5.22 \times 10^{-06}$) representing 10.69% of phenotypic variation at pv04. The most significant

SNPs were located in the range of 2.0-4.3 Mb at pv04, while significant SNPs were detected from 41.1-47.9 Mb at pv10. Significant SNPs were observed between 43.67-43.79 Mb at pv11 only in 2018 (Table 2).

Table 2 Marker-trait association showing significant SNPs, chromosome position, and contribution to phenotypic variation for powdery mildew disease.

SNP*	Chr.	Position	P-value	R ² (%)
ss715647913	10	40,571,646	7.22 x 10 ⁻⁰⁷	12.28
ss715647918	10	40,624,302	9.36 x 10 ⁻⁰⁷	12.07
ss715645507	10	40,937,977	3.73 x 10 ⁻⁰⁶	10.93
ss715650009	4	2,013,385	5.22 x 10 ⁻⁰⁶	10.69
ss715648114	4	4,303,144	9.54 x 10 ⁻⁰⁵	8.29
ss715648250	11	43,773,598	7.23 x 10 ⁻⁰⁶	11.01
ss715648263	11	43,673,759	2.29 x 10 ⁻⁰⁵	9.87
ss715648249	11	43,792,293	5.35 x 10 ⁻⁰⁵	10.81

SNP*=Single Nucleotide Polymorphism code; Chr.=Chromosome; R²=phenotypic variation.

Identification of candidate genes linked to powdery mildew resistance

There were 181 coding genes observed within the interval of significant SNPs on chromosome 4, 46 on chromosome 10, and 24 on chromosome 11. Using the BLAST analysis of these coding genes nearby the significant SNPs against protein database in GenBank, seven coding genes were considered as candidate resistance genes for the PM disease (Table 3). Three of them at pv4 were homologous to resistance genes *RPP13*, *TMV-N*, and *LRR receptor-like RPK2*. Two coding genes at pv10 hit *RLM1A-like* and *At4g11170* putative resistance genes. Additional two coding genes at pv11 were similar with LRR receptor-like serine/threonine protein kinase. The sequences of these candidate resistance genes were listed in Additional file 1.

Table 3 Identified positional candidate genes linked to powdery mildew diseases resistance in dry bean.

Candidate gene	Position in <i>Pv</i> genome	Similarity	Gene accession	Gene Annotation
<i>Phavu_004G036200g</i>	<i>pv04</i> :4014080-4016937	95%	XM_017584784.1	<i>RPP13-like</i>
<i>Phavu_004G028900g</i>	<i>Pv04</i> :3126300-3130090	99%	XM_017584233.1	<i>TMV N-like</i>
<i>Phavu_004G037500g</i>	<i>Pv04</i> :4141435-4145345	99%	XM_014658246.2	<i>LRR receptor-like RPK2</i>
<i>Phavu_010G1320001g</i>	<i>pv10</i> :40237562-40238278	95%	XM_022786275.1	<i>RLM1A-like</i>
<i>Phavu_010G136800g</i>	<i>pv10</i> :40920056-40929831	95%	XM_014660831.2	<i>At4g11170.1</i>
<i>Phavu_011G167800g</i>	<i>pv11</i> :4379752-43809211	98%	XM_028053325.1	<i>LRR receptor-like</i>
<i>Phavu_011G169300g</i>	<i>pv11</i> :4398238-43999989	97%	XM_028054653.1	<i>LRR receptor-like</i>

Discussion

Most disease resistance in plant is a complex trait controlled by quantitative trait loci and influenced by environmental factors. The development of resistant varieties requires the identification of resistance genes as a prerequisite in plant breeding. Moreover, understanding the genetic basis of complex traits is needed for molecular breeding. GWAS is such a powerful approach for dissecting these complex traits and has been applied in many plant species including; *Arabidopsis*, *Vigna unguiculata* and *V. radiata*. In this study, we used a nature population collected from different resources of common bean that possessed a large number of cross-over events. The BeadChip with 5398 SNPs provided enough required marker coverage on a diverse set of 206 accessions. The phenotype-genotype association was repeatable between the two years using GWAS approach, suggesting candidate gene identification pinned by significant associated SNPs was reliable.

Genome-wide association analysis of genes governing PM resistance resulted in the identification of seven candidate genes located on chromosome 4, 10 and 11 in the common bean genome that contains a total number of 28,134 coding genes.

(https://plants.ensembl.org/Phaseolus_vulgaris/Location/Genome?r=11:1-1000).

Chromosomes 4 and 10 have the lesser coding genes (< 2,000) compared to the rest of the chromosomes.

In this study, a coding gene (*Phavu_004G036200g*) was identified at the beginning of chromosome 4 (between 4.014–4.016 Mb). BLAST analysis revealed that this gene is a homolog of the disease resistance gene RPP13. The RPP13 resistance gene encodes a coiled coil-nucleotide-binding site–leucine-rich repeat (CC-NBS-LRR, CNL) type of resistance protein and has been known to confer resistance to fungal diseases in plants, including, resistance to downy mildew disease in *Arabidopsis* [17, 18], resistance to powdery mildew in barley [19] and in wheat [20]. This RPP13-like gene located in chromosome 4 could play an important role in PM resistance in common bean. Recently, [4] have identified three loci related to PM resistance at the top arm of chromosome 4 in common bean based on the linkage mapping of three bi-parental segregation populations. Physically, these three loci were located between 0 to 1.09 Mb speculated from the cM of flanking DNA markers, suggesting a cluster of resistance genes in this region of chromosome 4 in common bean. Indeed, in this study, BLAST analysis of coding genes around RPP13-like gene, detected several genes related to the PM resistance within 2 Mb interval between the two most significant SNPs, including *Phavu_004G020000g* (senescence-associated carboxyesterase 101), *Phavu_004G028900g* (TMV resistance protein N-like), and *Phavu_004G026000g* (receptor-like serine/threonine protein kinase RPK2). Both TNL and CNL are involved in pathogen recognition but differ in signaling pathways. The TMV resistance protein N is encoded by Toll/interleukin-1 receptor-nucleotide-binding site–leucine-rich repeat type (TIR-NBS-LRR, TNL) gene [21]; activation of resistance response involving TNL requires several known general cofactors of disease resistance, including protein kinases [22]. It is probable that upon pathogen infection, the constitutive expression of this set of genes located on chromosome 4 could show the characterization of quantitative resistance

trait to the PM disease in common bean. Further investigation is needed to elucidate the molecular mechanism of the cooperation between TNL and CNL pathways: whether TMV-like gene mediating the resistance to PM disease requires the protein kinase RPK2 to induce the effector triggered immunity (ETI), or requires alternative spliced transcripts to promote resistance proteins that can specifically recognize the pathogen molecular elicitors [23].

Based on the two years' data, two other candidate resistance genes, *Phavu_010G1320001g* and *Phavu_010G136800g*, were identified at the bottom arm of chromosome 10 with 0.6 Mb apart nearby the significant SNPs. The former candidate gene was homologous with the disease resistance protein RLM1A-like, while the latter hit the putative disease resistance protein (*At4g11170.1*). The *RLM1A* gene confers resistance in *Arabidopsis* against *Leptosphaeria maculans*, a fungus pathogen, and is involved in the first layer of defense through the callose deposition acting as a temporary cell wall in response to pathogen attack [24–26]. The gene *At4g11170* refers to disease resistance gene *RMG1* (Resistance Methylated Gene 1) [27]. Expression of this gene is controlled by DNA methylation on its promoter region. The *RMG1* promoter region is constitutively demethylated by active DNA demethylation mediated by the DNA glycosylase ROS1 [27]. Both identified candidate genes encoded TNL resistance protein and their physically closely located on chromosome 10. However, they did not show significant similarity in either DNA or amino acid sequences, suggesting they were not derived from the duplication event. These two clustered resistance genes may meet the digenic requirement for functional resistance as observed in the *RPP2* that consists of a complex of TIR-NB-LRR genes for defense response [28].

Additional candidate resistance genes were detected on chromosome 11 based on the significant SNPs from the association analysis in 2018. Both genes were annotated as LRR receptor-like serine/threonine protein kinase (*At1g5430* and *At1g56130*). LRR receptor-like kinases (RLK) represent one of the largest protein families in plant [29]. The LRR-RLK proteins in plant are involved in the plant signaling pathway regulating pathogenic defense responses [30]. LRR domain of RLK has undergone an accelerated evolution that generated numerous cell surfaces and cytoplasmic receptors to interact with a diverse group of proteins for the specificity of pathogen recognition [30]. LRR receptor-like serine/threonine protein kinase were identified as candidate gene conferring the resistance to apple scab as demonstrated by [31]. In this study, LRR-RLKs were identified on chromosome 11 as associated with PM resistance based on one-year data. Although resistance loci were detected on chromosome 11 using different genotype materials of common bean [4, 32], further study of the interaction between LRR-RLK and PM pathogen will help with understanding the mode of action of these resistance genes. Nevertheless, many genes encoding auxin-responsive protein, TIFY10A protein, growth-regulating factor 5-like, ubiquitin-like protein, cell wall protein RBR3-like protein were linked to significant SNPs, suggesting that the resistance to PM pathogen involves a network of many genes constitutively co-expressed and generates several layers of defense barriers or inducible reactions. The function of the candidate genes identified in this study needs to be elucidated by performing loss of function study.

Conclusions

Common bean is affected by PM disease causing significant yield losses. In this study, we used the GWAS technology to identify SNPs associated with the resistance to the PM disease. Significant SNPs were identified on chromosome 4 and 10. Further sequence analysis showed the presence of a clustered of resistance genes of the chromosome 4 of common bean among which several genes have been shown to be associated with the PM disease resistance. Moreover, two resistance genes were also identified on chromosome 10. Our results revealed putative resistance genes as well as their locations on the common bean genome that could be utilized for marker-assisted selection, functional genomic study approaches to confirm the role of these putative genes; therefore, provide the benefit in breeding program for common bean improvement.

Methods

Plant materials and field experiment

A total of 206 common bean genotypes seeds were originally sourced from different germplasm centers. Among them, 179 genotypes seeds were originally acquired from the common bean germplasm repository at International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) (www.ciat.cgiar.org) and the remaining 27 were derived from Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) Selian center where they were originally collected from Ethiopia (12), Kenya (10), Tanzania (3), and Rwanda (2) (www.tari.go.tz) [16]. These genotypes represented two gene pools, Mesoamerican and Andean. The experimental materials were planted in northern Tanzania at medium altitudes of 1407 m above sea level (a.s.l) of S03°21.690' and E36°37.879' (Selian Agricultural Research Institute abbreviated SARI) and at low altitudes of 992 m a.s.l of S03°19.905' and E037°14.067' (Tanzania Coffee Research Institute commonly called Lyamungo) in 2017 and 2018. In both seasons and agro-ecologies, experiments were laid-down in Incomplete Block Design with two replications for 206 genotypes. The plot size was 3.2 m long and 1.5 m wide with 4 rows per plot, spaced 0.5 m and 0.2 m under rainfed conditions. Data were collected from the middle two rows.

Phenotypic data analysis

The PM disease severity scores were evaluated using 1-9 scale [33] where 1 being non-pathogenic and 9 pathogenic. PM disease data were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for single and multiple treatment interactions. Protected Least Significant Differences (LSD) of ($p=0.05$) were used for treatment comparison [34, 35].

Genotyping data analysis

Total of 15 seeds per genotype were shipped from Tanzania to Tuskegee University through USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) with permit number P587-180801-005 and phytosanitary certificate number 00310248 as per import/export plant material regulations. Four seeds of each genotype were planted in a pot with diameter of 15 cm in the greenhouse at the George Washington Carver Agricultural Experiment Station (GWCAES) of Tuskegee University Research Center, Alabama. Total genomic deoxyribonucleic acid (gDNA) of 206 genotypes were extracted from trifoliolate leaves using

Wizard® Genomic DNA Purification Kit from Promega Corporation (Madison, WI). The concentration of each DNA sample was determined using NanoDrop Spectrophotometer (NanoDrop 2000) and the quality of DNA samples was also assessed on 0.8% agarose gel. DNA samples were genotyped at Heflin Center Genomic Core Lab at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, AL, using the Next generation Sequencing (NGS) Method of Illumina BARCBean6K_3 BeadChip with 5398 SNP markers [36]. All markers were distributed across 11 pairs of common bean chromosomes (2n=22) and the Illumina BeadStation 500G was used to scan the BeadChips. The SNP calling was conducted with the genotyping modules of GenomeStudio v2.0.4 of 2018 available as a free download software.

Population structure analysis

The Bayesian model-based clustering method was applied using STRUCTURE 2.3.4 software [37] to determine population in this collection. The admixture model with independent allele frequencies without prior population information was used for simulation. The STRUCTURE software was set at burn-in period length of 50,000 and after burn-in 50,000 Markov chain Monte Carlo (MMC) repetition were set five times. For joint inference of population substructure, the kinship (K) set at the range of 1 to 10 with five number of iterations runs for each kinship. The ideal number of sub-populations was determined using K method [38] implemented in the HARVESTER software [39].

Marker-trait association analysis

Filtering the SNP markers with monomorphic was set at <2% of minor allele frequency (MAF), and 5052 SNP markers were retained for population structure analysis. The obtained SNPs markers in respective distribution of chromosomes employed in the association analyses were performed with the support of TASSEL 5.0 software. The following mixed linear model (MLM) was used:

$$Y = \gamma\alpha + \rho\beta + k\mu + \varepsilon$$

where Y = Phenotype of genotype; γ = the fixed effects of the SNP; ρ = the fixed effect of population structure from principle component analysis results; k = random effect of kinship relative ε = the term error under normally distribution with mean =0 and variance δ^2 . The statistical model was used to test for trait-marker associations [40].

BLAST analysis

Significant SNPs were identified using the manhattan plots for two bean growing season and the cut-off value of 5 ($\log_{10}$ p-value) was used for the significance. The coding genes nearby significant SNPs (a sequence range between significant SNPs) were used as queries to search for putative homologous proteins in the EnsemblPlants release 46 version [41] and *Phaseolus vulgaris* v2.1 at Phytozome v13 [42] with nucleotide identity >86%. The location of coding genes hitting the putative proteins was used as the position of candidate resistance genes on the corresponding chromosomes.

Abbreviations

CC-NBS-LRR: coiled coil-nucleotide-binding site–leucine-rich repeat; TIR-NB-LRR: Toll/interleukin-1 receptor-nucleotide-binding site–leucine-rich repeat; ANOVA: Analysis of Variance; MLM: mixed linear model; ETI: effector triggered immunity; GWAS: genome-wide association studies; MAF: minor allele frequency; NGS: next generation sequence; PM: Powdery mildew; RLK: receptor like kinases; RMG: resistance methylated gene; RPP: resistance to *Peronospora parasitica*; SNP: single nucleotide polymorphism; TMV: tobacco mosaic virus;

Declarations

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Author' contributions

PHB, GH and CKB designed the research study and developed the manuscript. SMT and KK analyzed data, ME, GCB, IR and DM commented and corrected the manuscript. All authors proofread and approved the final version.

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Availability of data and materials

Additional file 1: List of sequences of candidate resistance genes to PM in common bean.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Not applicable

Consent for publication

Not applicable

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interest

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Figures

Figure 1

Population structure of 206 common bean genotypes with 5052 SNP markers, whereby red represent Mesoamerican gene pool ($K=1$), blue represent Andean gene pool ($K=2$) and green represent admixture of the two pools ($K=3$).

Figure 2

Manhattan plots of two seasons for PM disease in 206 collection of bean genotypes using 5052 SNP markers with a mixed linear model, a kinship matrix and population structure matrix with principal component analysis. The horizontal line is the cut-off for significance and small green round indicated the significant markers.

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