REVIEW

REVISED Rice (*Oryza*) hemoglobins [version 2; peer review: 2 approved]

Raúl Arredondo-Peter¹, Jose F. Moran², Gautam Sarath³

¹Laboratorio de Biofísica y Biología Molecular, Departamento de Bioquímica y Biología Molecular, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos, Cuernavaca, Morelos, 62210, Mexico

²Instituto de Agrobiotecnología, IdAB-CSIC-Universidad Pública de Navarra-Gobierno de Navarra, Navarre, E-31192, Spain

³Grain, Forage and Bioenergy Research Unit, USDA-ARS, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE, 68583-0937, USA

V2 First published: 27 Oct 2014, 3:253
<https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.5530.1>
 Latest published: 11 Dec 2014, 3:253
<https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.5530.2>

Abstract

Hemoglobins (Hbs) corresponding to non-symbiotic (nsHb) and truncated (tHb) Hbs have been identified in rice (*Oryza*). This review discusses the major findings from the current studies on rice Hbs. At the molecular level, a family of the *nshb* genes, consisting of *hb1*, *hb2*, *hb3*, *hb4* and *hb5*, and a single copy of the *thb* gene exist in *Oryza sativa* var. indica and *O. sativa* var. japonica, Hb transcripts coexist in rice organs and Hb polypeptides exist in rice embryonic and vegetative organs and in the cytoplasm of differentiating cells. At the structural level, the crystal structure of rice Hb1 has been elucidated, and the structures of the other rice Hbs have been modeled. Kinetic analysis indicated that rice Hb1 and 2, and possibly rice Hb3 and 4, exhibit a very high affinity for O₂, whereas rice Hb5 and tHb possibly exhibit a low to moderate affinity for O₂. Based on the accumulated information on the properties of rice Hbs and data from the analysis of other plant and non-plant Hbs, it is likely that Hbs play a variety of roles in rice organs, including O₂-transport, O₂-sensing, NO-scavenging and redox-signaling. From an evolutionary perspective, an outline for the evolution of rice Hbs is available. Rice *nshb* and *thb* genes vertically evolved through different lineages, rice nsHbs evolved into clade I and clade II lineages and rice *nshbs* and *thbs* evolved under the effect of neutral selection. This review also reveals lacunae in our ability to completely understand rice Hbs. Primary lacunae are the absence of experimental information about the precise functions of rice Hbs, the properties of modeled rice Hbs and the *cis*-elements and *trans*-acting factors that regulate the expression of rice *hb* genes, and the partial understanding of the evolution of rice Hbs.

Keywords

Evolution , function , gene expression , non-symbiotic , structure , symbiotic , truncated

Open Peer Review

Approval Status

	1	2
version 2 (revision) 11 Dec 2014		view
version 1 27 Oct 2014	view	view

1. **Martino Bolognesi**, University of Milan, Milan, Italy

2. **Juliette T. J. Lecomte**, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA

Eric Johnson, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA

Any reports and responses or comments on the article can be found at the end of the article.

This article is included in the **Oxygen-binding and sensing proteins** collection.

Corresponding author: Raúl Arredondo-Peter (ra@uaem.mx)

Competing interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Grant information: The author(s) declared that no grants were involved in supporting this work.

Copyright: © 2014 Arredondo-Peter R *et al.* This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the **Creative Commons Attribution License**, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. Data associated with the article are available under the terms of the **Creative Commons Zero "No rights reserved" data waiver** (CC0 1.0 Public domain dedication).

How to cite this article: Arredondo-Peter R, Moran JF and Sarath G. **Rice (*Oryza*) hemoglobins [version 2; peer review: 2 approved]** F1000Research 2014, **3**:253 <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.5530.2>

First published: 27 Oct 2014, **3**:253 <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.5530.1>

REVISED Amendments from Version 1

Major differences between the revised and the published version of this review are: (1) a figure (Figure 3) for rice non-symbiotic Hb1-5 and rice and Arabidopsis tHbs sequence alignments was included, (2) a table (Table 2) for the rate and equilibrium constants for the reaction of oxygen from rice Hb1 and 2 and selected plant and non-plant Hbs was included, (3) structural and biophysical properties for rice tHb are discussed in a separate subsection within section "Structure and biophysical properties of rice hemoglobins", (4) in all cases we indicated that NO binds to oxyHb, (5) care was taken when properties for predicted structures of rice Hb2-5 and tHb were postulated/hypothesized by preceding postulates/hypothesis with "possible", "probable", "suggest", etc., (6) a statement on the biological relevance of the folding pathways for rice Hb1-5 was included, (7) similarity values for rice Hb1-5 and tHb between *O. sativa* var. japonica and *O. sativa* var. indica were included, and (8) the number of references was reduced.

See referee reports

Abbreviations

2,4-D, 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid; ARR1, Arabidopsis response regulator 1; BCIP, 5-bromo-4-chloro-3'-indolylphosphate; Hb, hemoglobin; Lb, leghemoglobin; MIP1, macrophage inflammatory protein 1; mya, million of years ago; NBT, nitro-blue tetrazolium; nsHb, non-symbiotic hemoglobin; nsHb-I, non-symbiotic hemoglobin type 1; nsHb-2, non-symbiotic hemoglobin type 2; nsHb-I, clade I non-symbiotic hemoglobin; nsHb-II, clade II non-symbiotic hemoglobin; RT-PCR, reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction; SNP, sodium nitroprusside; tHb, truncated (2/2) hemoglobin.

Introduction

Two decades ago Taylor and co-workers reported the cloning and sequencing of a hemoglobin (Hb) cDNA from barley¹. This was the first report about the existence of Hbs in monocotyledonous plants. Since then Hbs have been identified in a number of monocots, including rice², maize³ and wheat⁴. Rice Hbs and genes coding for these proteins are rather well characterized, thus in some aspects rice Hbs are a model to understand monocot and other land plant Hbs. However, the accumulated information on rice Hbs over the last seventeen years is scattered. This review discusses major findings from the study of rice Hbs including a historical perspective, and proposes biochemical and physiological mechanisms for rice Hbs based on information available about rice Hbs and other monocot and land plant Hbs. For general aspects and the biochemistry, physiology and evolution of plant Hbs, we recommend to the reader reviews published elsewhere⁵⁻¹⁵.

Generalities on hemoglobins

Hb is known to the reader because this protein is responsible for the red color of vertebrates' blood¹⁶. However, Hbs are widely distributed in living organisms, ranging from bacteria to mammals^{17,18}. The tertiary structure of Hbs consists of a specific arrangement of 6 to 8 α -helices (designated with letters A to H) known as the globin-fold. This protein folding forms a hydrophobic pocket where a heme prosthetic group is located^{16,19}. Two structural types of the

globin-fold have been identified in Hbs: the 2/2- and 3/3-folding. In the 2/2-Hbs, helices B and E overlap to helices G and H and in the 3/3-Hbs helices A, E and F overlap to helices B, G and H. Likewise, three evolutionary families have been identified in Hbs: the M, S and T Hb families. The M Hbs, which exist in bacteria and eukaryotes, include flavoHbs and single domain globins, the S Hbs, which exist in bacteria and some fungi, include globin-coupled sensors, protoglobins and single domain globin sensors, and the T Hbs, which exist in bacteria, unicellular eukaryotes and plants, include truncated Hbs (tHbs). Canonical T Hbs from bacteria and unicellular eukaryotes are ~100 to 120 amino acids in length, however plant T Hbs are longer than canonical T Hbs because of the existence of extra amino acids at the N- and C-terminal. The M and S Hbs fold into the 3/3-folding whereas the T Hbs fold into the 2/2-folding^{18,20-25}.

A variety of ligands bind to the heme iron of Hbs, including O₂ and NO. Reversible binding of O₂ is closely associated to the major function of Hbs in organisms, which is the transport of O₂¹⁶. Binding of NO by oxygenated Hbs is essential to NO-detoxification via a NO-dioxygenase activity²⁶. Several additional functions have been reported for Hbs, including dehaloperoxidase activity and reaction with free radicals, binding and transport of sulfide and lipids, and O₂-sensing²⁷⁻³². This indicates that *in vivo* Hbs might be multifunctional proteins.

Land plant hemoglobins

Land plant Hbs were first identified by Kubo in soybean root nodules³³. Few years after Kubo's discovery these proteins were named as leghemoglobins (Lbs) by Virtanen and Lane³⁴ because they were only found in the symbiotic (N₂-fixing-) nodules of the leguminous plants. Lbs are the most abundant soluble proteins in nodules (e.g. in soybean nodules their concentration is as high as 3 mM)^{14,35}. The x-ray analysis of lupin Lb revealed that the tertiary structure of Lbs was remarkably similar to that of the sperm whale myoglobin³⁶. This evidence demonstrated that Lbs are plant Hbs and indicated that plant and animal Hbs evolved from a common ancestor more than 600 mya⁶. Subsequent work led to the identification of Lb-like (or symbiotic) Hbs in nodules of actinorhizal plants³⁷⁻⁴¹, purification of an Hb from the root nodules of the dicotyledonous non-legume *Parasponia andersonii*⁴², cloning and sequencing of an *hb* gene from the non-nodulating dicot *Trema tomentosa*^{43,44} and detection of Hbs in non-symbiotic organs from several land plants, including primitive bryophytes and evolved angiosperms^{9,15,45-47}. Until now three types of Hbs have been identified in land plants: the symbiotic Hbs, which include Lbs, that are specifically located within nodules of the N₂-fixing land plants, and the non-symbiotic (nsHbs) and truncated (tHbs) Hbs, that are located within non-symbiotic and symbiotic organs of primitive and evolved land plants^{9,15}. Based on sequence similarity the nsHbs are further classified into type 1 and type 2 nsHbs (nsHbs-1 and nsHbs-2, respectively)^{9,48,49}.

Distribution of hemoglobins in monocotyledonous plants

Monocots are a large family of flowering plants⁵⁰ that includes cereals. Cereals, such as rice, maize and wheat, are the main source of food for humans. Because of this, during that last decade the genomes of a number of cereals have been sequenced. This allowed the identification of novel cereal Hbs. The search of *hb* genes in databases by G. Rodríguez-Alonso and R. Arredondo-Peter^{51,52}

revealed that nsHb and tHb sequences exist in the *Brachypodium distachyon*, *Hordeum vulgare* (barley), *Oryza glaberrima* (rice), *O. rufipogon* (rice), *O. sativa* (rice) var. indica, *O. sativa* (rice) var. japonica, *Panicum virgatum* (switchgrass), *Setaria italica* (foxtail millet), *Sorghum bicolor* (sorghum), *Triticum aestivum* (wheat) and *Zea mays* ssp. *mays* (maize) genomes. The highest number of nsHbs (5) exists in *O. sativa* var. indica and *O. sativa* var. japonica, whereas one to three nsHbs exist in barley, *Brachypodium*, foxtail millet, maize, *O. glaberrima*, *O. rufipogon*, sorghum, switchgrass and wheat. Also, with the exception of wheat, which contains two copies of the *thb* gene, a single copy of *thb* was identified in the genome of *Brachypodium*, barley, *O. sativa* var. indica, *O. sativa* var. japonica, switchgrass, foxtail millet, sorghum and maize. Little is known about Hbs from non-cultivated monocots. The only Hb reported from a non-cultivated monocot is that of teosinte (*Z. mays* ssp. *parviglumis*)³, which is postulated as the ancestor of maize^{53,54}. Analysis by Southern blot using the teosinte *hb* gene as probe showed that apparently a single copy of *hb* exists in teosinte (J. Sáenz-Rivera and R. Arredondo-Peter, unpublished results). Sequence comparison revealed that maize and teosinte Hb polypeptides are identical³.

Early search and identification of rice hemoglobins

Monocots were a target for searching Hbs after these proteins were detected in non-symbiotic organs of dicotyledonous plants (see subsection above). At that time, monocot genomes had not been sequenced. Searching approaches consisted in detecting Hb polypeptides and *hb* genes by spectroscopy and molecular biology methods, respectively. Attempts to detect absorption maxima in the Soret (~410 nm) and Q (~500 to 550 nm) regions, which are characteristic of ferric (Fe³⁺), ferrous (Fe²⁺) and liganded Hbs^{55,56},

were unsuccessful (R. V. Klucas and C. A. Appleby, unpublished results) mostly due to the very low Hb concentration (~50 to 100 nM) in plant non-symbiotic organs^{5,57}. At the molecular level a consensus probe designed from legume and non-legume (*T. tomentosa*, *P. andersonii* and *Casuarina glauca*) Hb sequences⁵⁸ hybridized with *hb*-like sequences from rice and other monocot total DNAs (Figure 1). This observation suggested that *hb* sequences exist in monocots, however hybridizing fragments were not subsequently cloned and sequenced in order to verify if they actually corresponded to *hb* genes.

Rice Expressed Sequence Tags (ESTs) were first deposited in databases early in the 1990's. The first rice Hb (Hb1 and Hb2) sequences were detected from ESTs deposited in the DNA Data Bank of Japan (DDBJ) database⁵⁹. Rice Hb1 and Hb2 corresponded to clones C741 and C2576 with DDBJ accession number D15507 and D38931, respectively. Rice *hb1* and *hb2* genes were subsequently amplified by PCR, cloned and sequenced. Sequence analysis revealed that rice *hb1* codes for non-symbiotic Hb1 and that rice *hb2* codes for non-symbiotic Hb2². Afterwards, sequencing of the rice (*O. sativa* L. ssp. *indica*) genome more than a decade ago⁶⁰ allowed the identification of a family of rice *nshb* genes and a single copy of the rice *thb* gene (see subsection below).

Molecular biology of rice hemoglobins

Rice hemoglobin genes

The *O. sativa* var. indica and *O. sativa* var. japonica genomes are fully sequenced, and the *O. glaberrima* and *O. rufipogon* genomes are partially sequenced. Rice genome sequences are mainly available from the GenBank (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) and Phytozome (<http://www.phytozome.org/>) databases. Search of Hb sequences in the

Figure 1. Early (1991) detection of rice, maize, sorghum and wheat *hb*-like sequences by dot-blot hybridization (R. Arredondo-Peter, unpublished results). Approximately 20 µg of undigested total DNA was used as template and a consensus oligonucleotide for legume and non-legume plant Hbs⁵⁸ was used as probe. Sequence of the consensus probe was 5'-GTA GCC TAT GAT GAA TTG GCA GCT GCA ATT AAG-3'. The probe was labeled by nick translation with Biotin-dATP using a Bionick labeling system (Gibco BRL). The membrane was prehybridized with SSC 2× for 4h at 42°C, hybridized overnight at the same temperature, washed at high stringency (SSC 2×/SDS 0.1% for 3 min at room temperature, SSC 0.2×/SDS 0.1% for 15 min at room temperature and SSC 0.16×/SDS 0.1% for 15 min at 65°C) and incubated with the streptavidin-alkaline phosphatase conjugate and the BCIP/NBT mix to develop color. Animal (salmon sperm and calf thymus) and legume DNAs were included as negative and positive controls, respectively.

above databases showed that a family of the *nshb* genes, consisting of *hb1*, *hb2*, *hb3*, *hb4* and *hb5*, and a single copy of the *thb* gene exist in the *O. sativa* var. indica and *O. sativa* var. japonica genomes. A single copy of the *nshb* gene was detected in the *O. glaberrima* and *O. rufipogon* genomes, however *thb* genes have not yet been detected in these plants⁵². Given that the sequencing of the *O. glaberrima* and *O. rufipogon* genomes is in progress the identification of *hb* genes in these genomes is incomplete. Thus, the following discussion will focus on the *O. sativa* var. indica and *O. sativa* var. japonica *hbs*. However, we must clarify to the reader that the sequence of Hb1, Hb2, Hb3, Hb4 and tHb and Hb5 polypeptides are 100% and 97% identical between *O. sativa* var. indica and *O. sativa* var. japonica, respectively. Therefore, the subsequent discussion on the *O. sativa* Hbs will indistinctively correspond to either *O. sativa* var. indica or *O. sativa* var. japonica.

The structure of known rice *hb* genes corresponds to four exons and three introns, with introns located at similar position as all of the known plant *hb* genes⁶¹. Canonical TATA boxes and a variety of potential promoters exist upstream of the rice *hb* genes which suggests that rice *hbs* are functional and that the regulation of the *hb* genes in this plant is complex^{62–64}. Figure 2 shows the localization of *hbs* in the *O. sativa* chromosomes and mapping of *hbs* in the *O. sativa* genome. Rice *hb1*, *hb3* and *hb4* cluster forming the *hb1-hb4* cluster⁶³ which is localized in chromosome 3. Rice *hb2* is also localized in chromosome 3 but 467 kb upstream of the *hb1-hb4* cluster. In contrast, rice *hb5* and *thb* genes are localized in chromosomes 5 and 6, respectively (Figure 2A). Rice *hbs* are flanked by a variety of genes with known and unidentified functions (Figure 2B). However, with the exception of genes coding for a ternary complex factor macrophage inflammatory protein MIP1 and an ubiquitin fusion protein which are located 239 and 411 nucleotides up- and downstream of the *hb1-hb4* cluster, respectively, distance of flanking genes to *hbs* is >1 kb. This suggests that co-expression of *hb* and flanking genes is unlikely.

Gene expression and localization of hemoglobins in rice organs

The expression of *hb* genes and localization of Hb polypeptides have been analyzed in rice growing under normal and stressed conditions. Under normal conditions the expression level of rice *nshb* was low^{2,62}. However, analysis by RT-PCR revealed that *hb1*, *hb2* and *hb5* genes were expressed in embryonic and vegetative organs obtained from rice plants grown under a normal environment^{2,62,65}. Specifically, transcripts for rice Hb1 were detected in embryos, seminal roots, leaves and roots, transcripts for rice Hb2 were detected in embryos, coleoptiles, seminal roots and leaves, and transcripts for rice Hb5 were detected in embryos, coleoptiles, seminal roots, leaves and roots. Likewise, evaluation of the β -glucuronidase (GUS) activity from a construct containing the rice *nshb2* gene promoter that is responsive to the cytokinin-regulated ARR1 *trans*-acting factor showed that this promoter is activated in roots, the vasculature of young leaves, flowers and the pedicel/stem junction of transgenic *Arabidopsis*⁶⁴. In addition, a variety of potential promoters was identified upstream of the rice *nshb* genes, such as those involved in the ethylene synthesis, photoregulation, heat shock response and plant defense signaling^{57,62–64}. However the activities of these promoters have not been determined.

Transcriptomic analyses revealed that nsHb and tHb transcripts coexist in rice embryonic and vegetative organs (Table 1). This evidence suggests that nsHb (i.e. Hb1, Hb2, Hb3, Hb4 and Hb5) and tHb polypeptides coexist and probably function in rice organs. Immunoanalysis by Western blot and confocal microscopy using a polyclonal anti-rice Hb1 antibody revealed that Hb polypeptides exist in rice seeds and in rice leaves and roots from 2 to 14 weeks after seed germination. These analyses also revealed that Hb polypeptides exist in the cytoplasm of differentiating cells of the root cap, schlerenchyma, aleurone, and in the vasculature, principally in the differentiating xylem^{14,57,66}. However, the anti-rice Hb1 antibodies cross-react with different rice Hbs (G. Sarath and E. J. H. Ross, unpublished results) and thus it is not known which Hb polypeptides were detected in the above analyses by the anti-rice Hb1 antibodies.

It is well documented that land plant *hb* genes are either up- or down-regulated by stress conditions^{1,45,66–69}. Table 1 shows that Hb transcripts coexist in rice growing under cold, drought and salt stress conditions. Also, Ohwaki and co-workers⁷⁰ reported that

Table 1. Detection of Hb transcripts in organs from rice growing under normal and (cold, drought and salt) stressed conditions. Rice Hb transcripts were detected in plant organs using The Rice Genome Annotation Project database (<http://rice.plantbiology.msu.edu/>) and hemoglobin as keyword (S. Castro-Bustos and R. Arredondo-Peter, unpublished).

Rice organs	Hb transcripts					
	Hb1	Hb2	Hb3	Hb4	Hb5	tHb
Normal conditions						
Seed						
Endosperm	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Embryo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vegetative rice						
Leaves	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Stems	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Roots	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Reproductive rice						
Inflorescence		✓		✓	✓	✓
Leaves	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Stems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Roots	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Reproductive organs						
Lemma					✓	
Anther	✓	✓			✓	✓
Palea			✓		✓	
Ovary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Pistil	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Stress conditions						
Reported as part of the plant response to stress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Figure 2. Localization of *hbs* in the *O. sativa* chromosomes (A) and mapping of *hb* genes into the *O. sativa* genome (B). The *hb* genes were localized in the rice chromosomes by BlastN analysis using the rice (*O. sativa*) genome resource from the GenBank database as template and the sequence for the rice *hb1*, *hb3* and *hb4* (GenBank accession number AF335504), *hb2* and *hb5* (GenBank accession numbers AF335503 and EF061459, respectively) and *thb* (GenBank accession number NM_001064507) genes as probes. The *hb* (black boxes) and flanking (gray boxes) genes were mapped into 50 kb fragments of the *O. sativa* genome by BlastN2.2.26+ analysis using the Phytozome V9.1 server (www.phytozome.org) and the above *hb* sequences as probes. Arrows indicate the transcription orientation. Information for each gene corresponds to predicted protein (following the Phytozome nomenclature), locus name in the *O. sativa* genome and position at the *O. sativa* chromosome. Gene sizes and distance between genes are not shown at scale. Pltd, chloroplast chromosome; MT, mitochondrial chromosome.

nshb1 and *nshb2* are induced by nitrate, nitrite and NO in cultured rice cells. These observations indicate that rice *hb* genes response to a variety of stress conditions. However, the detection of Hb polypeptides by Western blot using the anti-rice Hb1 antibodies showed that level of Hbs increased in rice etiolated leaves and flooded roots, but not in rice plants subjected to oxidative (H₂O₂), nitrosative (SNP) and hormonal (2,4-D) stresses. These observations suggest that rice Hbs do not appear to be part of a generalized stress response, but may be functional in plant organs subjected to specific stress conditions⁶⁶.

Structure and biophysical properties of rice hemoglobins

Structure of rice non-symbiotic hemoglobins

Rice *hb* genes are functional and code for Hb polypeptides with a predicted molecular mass of ~16 to 19 kDa. Also, sequences among rice nsHb polypeptides are highly similar: Hb1 and Hb2 are 93% similar to each other, Hb3 and Hb4 are 87.1% similar to each other, and 85.5% and 84.7%, and 79.2% and 82.2% similar to Hb1 and Hb2, respectively, and rice Hb1 and Hb5 are 67% similar to each other^{2,62,63} (Figure 3A).

Figure 3. Sequence alignment of rice Hbs. (A) Sequence alignment of rice nsHbs. Note the 11 amino acids deletion in rice Hb5 at position 75–85. Modified from Garrocho-Villegas *et al.*⁶². **(B)** Sequence alignment of rice and *Arabidopsis* (GenBank accession number AAK55409) tHbs. Distal and proximal His in rice nsHbs (H79 and H114, respectively) and proximal His (H100) and proposed distal Tyr/Tre (Y46/W113) in *Arabidopsis*⁹⁶ and rice tHbs and conserved amino acids are shown with black and gray background, respectively. Helices are indicated with letters A to H based on the crystal structure of rice Hb¹⁷¹ in rice nsHbs and on the crystal structure of *Arabidopsis* tHb⁹⁶ in rice tHb. Left- and right-oriented arrows within a black circle in the rice and *Arabidopsis* tHbs sequence alignment delimit the globin domain.

Rice Hb1 was the first monocot nsHb whose crystal structure was elucidated⁷¹. This protein crystalizes as a dimer when its concentration is ≥ 1 mM⁷². After the elucidation of the rice Hb1 structure the tertiary structure of rice Hb2⁷³, Hb3, Hb4 and Hb5⁶² (CASPUR PMDB ID PM0075009, PM0075873, PM0076005 and PM0075011, respectively) was predicted using computational methods and rice Hb1 (PDB ID 1D8U) as the structural homolog. The crystal structure of rice Hb1 and that of predicted rice Hb2, Hb3 and Hb4 is highly similar. The tertiary structure of these proteins consists of six helices that fold into the 3/3-folding (see subsection on *Generalities on hemoglobins*). However, the structure of rice Hb1 to 4 is characterized by the existence of a short pre-helix A located at the N-terminal and an extended and poorly ordered CD-loop. The heme pocket in these proteins differs from that in “traditional” Hbs because the proximal and distal His side chains coordinate the heme iron forming a hemichrome (Figure 4), resulting in that heme iron from rice Hb1 to 4 is hexacoordinate. Also, the amino acid residues (V50, S53, E125, V126, F129 and A130 from Figure 3A) located at the monomer-monomer interface of dimeric rice Hb1⁷¹ are highly conserved in rice Hb2 to 4⁶³. This suggests that rice Hb1 to 4 can potentially form homo- or hetero-dimers if the *hb1* to 4 genes coexpress in rice organs. The tertiary structure of rice Hb5 also consists of six helices that fold into the 3/3-folding. However, rice Hb5 differs from rice Hb1 to 4 in missing 11 amino acids in helix E (Figure 3A) which results in that the length of the CD-loop and helix E in the predicted Hb5 structure are unusually long and short, respectively. An apparent consequence from this characteristic is that distal His is located far away (13.92 Å, compared to 2.11 Å in rice Hb1) from the heme iron within the predicted Hb5 structure, resulting in that heme iron from rice Hb5 could be pentacoordinate⁶². The amino acid residues located at the monomer-monomer interface of dimeric rice Hb1⁷¹ are poorly conserved in rice Hb5⁶² (Figure 3A) which suggests that rice Hb5 exists *in vivo* as a monomer.

The folding pathway and kinetics of rice nsHbs were predicted using the Average Distance Map (ADM) method^{74–76}. This analysis indicated that rice Hb1 and Hb2 could fold in the C $\rightarrow$ N direction at a moderate rate, that rice Hb3 could fold in the N $\rightarrow$ C direction at a fast rate, and that rice Hb4 and Hb5 could fold in the N $\rightarrow$ C direction at a moderate rate. Thus, it appears that the predicted folding pathway and kinetics among rice nsHbs are diverse. Also, the ADM analysis showed that pre-helix A and CD-loop apparently do not play a role during the folding of rice nsHbs⁷⁷. The physiological relevance of the folding pathways for rice nsHbs, including the polypeptide association with the heme, is still not known.

Spectroscopic characteristics of rice non-symbiotic hemoglobins

Visible spectroscopy (see subsection *Early search and identification of rice hemoglobins*) is a tool to analyze the redox state of and ligand-binding to the heme iron of Hbs^{56,78,79}. Rice Hb1 is the only rice nsHb that has been spectroscopically characterized². This protein exhibits spectral characteristics that are similar to other Hbs. However, rice Hb1 exhibits distinctive absorption maxima in the deoxyferrous form: the unligated ferrous state exhibits maxima at 526 and 556 nm² which are characteristic of hexacoordinate heme iron⁸⁰. This is in contrast to pentacoordinate Hbs which display a broad peak centered at 556 nm in their deoxyferrous form^{7,81,82}. The distal ligand that coordinates the heme iron in rice Hb1 was identified as His74 by site directed mutagenesis. Absorbance spectra of the ferric and deoxyferrous forms of an H74L mutant of rice Hb1 showed no evidence of His coordination. Also, the addition of exogenous imidazole to ferric and deoxyferrous H74L mutant resulted in a spectrum identical to that of the wild-type rice Hb1². This evidence indicated that in rice Hb1 the distal ligand to heme iron is His74. A similar case can be predicted for rice Hb2 to 4. In contrast, distal His appears to be located far away from the heme iron in the predicted structure of

Figure 4. Crystal structure of rice Hb1 (PDB ID 1D8U) and predicted structure of rice tHb. The tertiary structure of rice tHb was modeled using the automated mode of the I-Tasser server (<http://zhanglab.cmb.med.umich.edu/I-TASSER/>)^{131–133} and the crystal structure of the *Thermobifida fusca* tHb (PDB ID 2BMM) as the structural homologue. Model for the rice tHb is deposited in the Caspur Protein Model Database (<http://bioinformatics.cineca.it/PMDB/main.php>) under the ID number PM0079484. Helices are indicated with letters A to H. Note the overlapping of helices A, E and F to helices B, G and H in (3/3-folding) rice Hb1, and overlapping of helices B and E to helices G and H in (2/2-folding) rice tHb. Heme prosthetic group is shown in dark green color and proximal and distal His are shown in light brown color.

deoxyferrous rice Hb5, resulting in that heme iron in rice Hb5 could be pentacoordinate⁶².

Rate and equilibrium constants for the reaction of oxygen from rice non-symbiotic hemoglobins

Analysis of ligand-association and -dissociation rate constants of penta- and hexacoordinate Hbs using stopped-flow methods indicated that these proteins exhibit low to moderate and high affinity for O₂, respectively. Rice Hb1 is hexacoordinate and apparently rice Hb2 to 4 are hexacoordinate and rice Hb5 is pentacoordinate. The O₂-association rate constants for rice Hb1 and 2, and possibly for rice Hb3 and 4, are rather similar to those of other O₂-transport and -storage proteins, such as the sperm whale myoglobin and soybean Lba (Table 2). However, in rice Hb1² and 2¹⁴, and possibly in rice Hb3 and 4, the bound O₂ is stabilized by distal His after binding to the heme iron, which results in very low O₂-dissociation rate constants. The O₂-association and -dissociation rate constants of hexacoordinate rice Hb1 and 2, and possibly of rice Hb3 and 4, result in that the affinity of these proteins for O₂ is very high (Table 2). In the absence of biochemical data it becomes difficult to evaluate the O₂-binding characteristics of rice Hb5, however, its predicted pentacoordinate structure would suggest a low to moderate affinity for O₂.

Table 2. Rate and equilibrium constants for the reaction of O₂ from rice Hb1 and 2. Constants for arbitrarily selected plant and non-plant Hbs are included for comparison.

Protein	$k'O_2$ ($\mu\text{M}^{-1}\text{s}^{-1}$)	kO_2 (s^{-1})	KO_2 (μM^{-1})	Reference
Plant Hbs				
<u>nsHbs</u>				
Rice Hb1	68	0.038	1800	2
Rice Hb2	50	0.038	1316	14
Barley Hb	2.4	0.028	86	134
<i>Arabidopsis</i> AtGLB1	74	0.12	617	49
<i>Arabidopsis</i> AtGLB2	1	0.17	7	49
<i>Lotus</i> Glb1-1	81	0.004	20,250	111
<i>Lotus</i> Glb1-2	300	0.27	1111	111
<u>tHbs</u>				
<i>Arabidopsis</i> AtGLB3	0.2	0.3	0.66	69
<u>Symbiotic Hbs</u>				
Soybean Lba	130	5.6	23	135
Non-plant Hbs				
Sperm whale myoglobin	14	11	1.3	136
<i>Ascaris</i> Hb	1.5	0.004	375	137
<i>Paramphistomum</i> Hb	108	0.033	3270	137
<i>Synechocystis</i> tHb	240	0.011	21,818	138

$k'O_2$ is the O₂-association rate constant; kO_2 is the O₂-dissociation rate constant; KO_2 ($k'O_2/kO_2$) is the O₂-affinity constant.

Postulated migration routes for gaseous ligands to the heme iron in rice Hb1

The bis-histidyl hexacoordinated form of rice Hb1 displays a hydrophobic distal cavity which appears to be connected with the external solvent through the position of Phe44 (also known as FB10 because it occupies the tenth position in helix B). It was suggested that this amino acid regulates the migration of small ligands in rice Hb1, for example in ligand binding to the heme iron, ligand migration through internal docking sites and ligand release into the external solvent^{83,84}. Kinetic analysis after laser flash photolysis of rice Hb1 encapsulated in silica gel combined with computational analysis revealed the existence of two channels in the rice Hb1 CO-bound species. The first channel is located in the distal region of the heme pocket and is connected with a secondary channel that is directly connected with the external solvent. Apparently, the position of FB10 in hexacoordinated rice Hb1 leaves the distal heme pocket accessible to the external solvent, however after the ligand entrance the phenyl ring rotates closing the cavity and thus hindering the exit of the bound ligand⁸⁵. Thus, together with distal His (see subsection *Spectroscopic characteristics of rice non-symbiotic hemoglobins*) and aromatic amino acids that are located in the distal region of the heme pocket, FB10 appears to regulate hexacoordination and functioning of rice Hb1.

Rice truncated hemoglobin, predicted structure and properties

Rice (*O. sativa*) tHb (GenBank accession number NP_001057972) is 172 amino acids in length, which corresponds to a globin domain (position 26 to 147) flanked by N- and C-terminal extensions (Figure 3B). No monocot tHb has been analyzed by x-ray crystallography, however the tertiary structure of a rice tHb was predicted using computational methods (Figure 4). The predicted structure of rice tHb is highly similar to the crystal structure of an *Arabidopsis thaliana* tHb⁸⁶. The globin domain from rice and *A. thaliana* tHbs folds into the 2/2-folding (see subsection on *Generalities on hemoglobins*). Similarly to the *A. thaliana* tHb structure, flanking regions to the globin domain of predicted rice tHb correspond to an N-terminal helical extension and a C-terminal unfolded extension (Figure 4). The high similarity between the crystal structure of *A. thaliana* tHb and the predicted structure of rice tHb suggests that the biochemical properties and function of dicot and monocot tHbs are similar.

Rice tHb has not been subjected to spectral analysis, however the predicted structure of this protein (Figure 4) is highly similar to the crystal structure of an *A. thaliana* tHb⁸⁶ (see above). The absorption spectra of an *A. thaliana* tHb showed that heme iron from this protein is pentacoordinate^{69,86}. Thus, it is likely that heme iron in rice tHb is pentacoordinate and that the rate and equilibrium constants for the reaction of O₂ of rice tHb are similar to those of the *Arabidopsis* tHb (Table 2), i.e. the O₂-association and -dissociation rate constants are low to moderate.

Postulated functions for rice hemoglobins

While data on the localization, kinetics, regulation and structure of rice Hbs have accumulated, little work has been performed to fully understand the function of these proteins in rice organs. However,

previous work from other plant and non-plant Hbs provides data that enable us to propose potential functions for rice Hbs. Rice Hbs could potentially function within cells through O_2 -transport and -signaling, binding to small molecules (most notably NO) and other as yet undetermined mechanisms. Here we evaluate the evidence for and against these modes of action.

Oxygen transport is a major function of many Hbs. This process requires that the kinetics of O_2 -binding do not limit the O_2 -diffusion process^{87–90}. Based on the concentration of Hb polypeptides in rice organs (~50 to 100 nM)⁵⁷, the O_2 -association rate constant of rice Hb1 and 2 (Table 2) and possibly that of rice Hb3 to 5 and tHb (see subsections *Rate and equilibrium constants for the reaction of oxygen from rice non-symbiotic hemoglobins* and *Rice truncated hemoglobin, predicted structure and properties*), and the free O_2 concentration in aerated rice roots (<1.4 μM)⁹¹, it is likely that Hbs would be substantially oxygenated in rice organs. However, the O_2 -dissociation rate constants of rice Hb1 and 2 (Table 2), and possibly that of rice Hb3 and 4, are extremely low. These data do not support the O_2 -transport function for rice Hb1 to 4 because these proteins would not release O_2 after oxygenation.

It was reported that hexacoordinate Hbs interact with either organic molecules or protein partners^{27,92} and thus a possibility is that such interactions could impact the kinetic constants, particularly the O_2 -dissociation rate constants, of hexacoordinate nsHbs⁹³. There have been no direct biochemical evaluations of this hypothesis in rice or in other plants, precluding definitive answers. However, their unique structural features could result in as yet undiscovered interactions.

Rice Hbs may function in O_2 -signaling if they easily bind and release O_2 . Appleby and co-workers⁵ proposed that under normal conditions Hbs would be oxygenated and under O_2 -limiting conditions the concentration of deoxyHb would increase triggering an anaerobic response. It was reported that levels of Hbs increase in rice roots from flooded plants indicating that the synthesis of rice Hbs increases under O_2 -limiting conditions⁶⁶. Rice is a flooding resistant crop, thus under flooding (*i.e.* hypoxia) conditions rice Hbs could sense low O_2 -concentrations and trigger an anaerobic metabolism for rice growth. To act as a signaling molecule, rice Hbs will need to bind directly to the DNA, to additional proteins, such as transcription factors, or catalyze some unique reactions that can influence key downstream events. To date there are no reports of immunoprecipitation experiments specially targeting rice Hbs coupled to further proteomic analysis. It is thus uncertain if rice Hbs bind to other partners. There is also no structural evidence that indicates that rice Hbs can bind directly to DNA. *In planta*, they appear to be soluble and essentially contained within the cytoplasm⁵⁷. There are reports of nuclear-localized Hbs⁹⁴, but no direct evidence for a function arising from translocation of Hbs from the cytoplasm to the nucleus currently exist.

The NO dioxygenase activity exhibited by oxygenated Hbs is well documented^{95–97}. NO is a hormone-like radical that modulates several aspects of the plant physiology, including plant immunity, seed germination, de-etiolation, apoptosis, stomata guard cells opening/closure and the rhizobia-legume symbiosis^{98–100}. Scavenging of NO is considered a function of plant Hbs^{10,101–104}. During this process,

oxygenated plant Hbs react with NO producing nitrate and ferric Hb. Ferric plant Hbs are subsequently reduced to ferrous Hb by enzymatic^{105,106} and non-enzymatic^{107–111} mechanisms. This process regenerates (oxy) ferrous Hb which is able to bind NO in a cyclic pathway referred to as the Hb/NO cycle^{104,112}. The operation of this cycle appears to be involved in maintaining an active metabolism in the plant cells¹⁰. Rice Hb1 exhibits NO dioxygenase activity ($k_{obs, NO} = 90 s^{-1}$)¹¹³ thus a possible function of Hbs into the rice physiology is modulating levels of NO by scavenging NO. However, the inability of rice Hb1 to substitute the NO scavenger activity in a flavoHb knockout *Escherichia coli*¹¹³ and the observation that levels of Hbs did not change in rice seeds germinated under nitrosative stress⁶⁶ suggest that the NO dioxygenase activity of rice Hbs is limited *in vivo*.

A consequence of the operation of the Hb/NO cycle could be the maintenance of cell respiration and energy status. Based on the studies on over- and under-expressing barley nsHb in maize cells, it was proposed that under hypoxic conditions barley nsHb is involved in the ATP metabolism, particularly in maintaining the energy status under O_2 -limiting conditions¹¹⁴. Immunolocalization data showed that rice Hbs are localized in differentiating cells (see subsection on *Gene expression and localization of hemoglobins in rice organs*)⁵⁷. The metabolism of these cells is redirected in response to differentiation signals, such as a change in the cell redox state. Rice Hbs could be involved in redox signaling if the redox state of the heme is functional⁷¹. Thus, under these conditions rice Hbs may function by sensing or maintaining redox environments that promote specific cell metabolisms¹⁴.

It was proposed that one of the functions of plant Hbs could be related to the peroxidase activity^{8,93}. This is of interest because peroxidase activity modulates the levels of reactive oxygen species and a variety of cellular processes^{115–121}. In plants, evaluation of the peroxidase activities of *Arabidopsis* Hbs (AtGLB1, AtGLB2 and AtGLB3) revealed that these proteins oxidize Amplex Red, DHR123 and guaiacol substrates¹²² and overexpression of AtGLB1 increased tolerance of *Arabidopsis* to H_2O_2 stress¹²³. These observations suggested that *Arabidopsis* Hbs function as antioxidants. However, levels of Hb polypeptides did not change in rice seeds germinated under H_2O_2 stress⁶⁶. Also, the analysis of the peroxidase activity of rice Hb1 compared to that from horseradish peroxidase (HRP) showed that the catalytic efficiency of rice Hb1 for the oxidation of guaiacol using H_2O_2 as electron donor is several orders of magnitude lower than that of HRP ($k_{cat}/K_m = 15.8$ and 44,833 $mM^{-1}min^{-1}$, respectively). Additionally, it was observed that recombinant rice Hb1 poorly protects *E. coli* from H_2O_2 stress¹²⁴. This evidence indicates that it is unlikely that rice Hbs function *in vivo* as peroxidases.

Based on gene expression (Table 1), protein localization and structural and kinetic properties of rice Hbs and data from the analysis of other plant and non-plant Hbs it is likely that Hbs play a variety of roles in rice plants growing under normal and stressed conditions. These functions may include O_2 -transport, O_2 -sensing, NO-scavenging and redox-signaling. Future work on rice Hbs should focus on testing the above potential functions as well as newly proposed functions that emerge from novel observations.

Evolution of rice hemoglobins

Hbs are widely distributed in land plants, ranging from primitive bryophytes to evolved angiosperms⁹. The outline of plant Hb evolution subsequent to land colonization was clarified¹⁵. Briefly, a phylogenetic analysis showed that plant and animal *hb* genes diverged 900–1400 mya, that land plant *nshb* and *thb* genes vertically evolved through different lineages from algal ancestors, that nsHbs-1 and nsHbs-2 are monophyletic and evolved via a gene duplication event prior to the divergence of monocots and dicots at ca. 140 mya, and that symbiotic *hbs* originated from *nshb* genes at ca. 94 mya. Likewise, the structural analysis of primitive nsHbs and Lbs revealed that changes during the evolution of nsHbs to Lbs were a hexacoordinate to pentacoordinate transition at the heme prosthetic group, a length decrease at the CD-loop and N- and C-terminal regions, and a compaction of the protein into a globular structure^{47,125}.

In contrast, the evolution of rice Hbs is partially understood owing to the limited availability of Hb sequences from a wide variety of wild and cultivated rice. However, the outline of monocot Hb evolution is rather well understood. Thus, in this section we will discuss the evolution of rice Hbs within the context of major events that occurred during the evolution of monocot Hbs. A major event during the evolution of land plant nsHbs was the duplication of an ancestral *nshb* into *nshb-1* and *nshb-2* prior to the monocot-dicot divergence^{15,126}. Sequence analysis revealed that *nshb-1* and *nshb-2* genes exist in dicots and that apparently only *nshb-1* genes exist in monocots^{9,80,127}. Earlier Garrocho-Villegas and co-workers⁶² reported the existence of a nsHb (Hb5) divergent from rice (Hb1 to 4) nsHbs-1 and suggested that nsHbs divergent from nsHbs-1 evolved within monocots. Subsequent phylogenetic analysis of monocot nsHb sequences revealed that apparently only *nshb-1* evolved within monocots, that *nshb-1* duplicated early in the evolution of monocots originating clade I and clade II *nshbs* (*nshbs-I* and *nshbs-II*, respectively), that nsHbs-I correspond to dicot nsHbs-1, and that nsHbs-II diversified into regular nsHbs-II, post-helix H-containing nsHbs-II and 11 amino acids deletion-containing nsHbs-II⁵¹. This analysis also showed that *O. sativa* var. indica and *O. sativa* var. japonica Hb1 to 4 and Hb5 cluster within clade I and clade II, respectively, and that *O. glaberrima* and *O. rufipogon* (whose all *nshb* copies remain unidentified because their genome sequencing is in progress) nsHbs cluster within clade I. Thus, apparently clade I and clade II lineages remain conserved during the evolution of rice nsHbs⁵¹.

Evaluation of the rate of divergence of selected land plant Hbs revealed that evolutionary rates slowed down previous to the origin of magnoliophyta and that the rate of divergence was slower in rice Hb1 than in rice tHb¹²⁸. This observation suggested that rice Hb1 (and conceivably other rice nsHbs) evolved under the effect of the stabilizing selection. However, the estimation of the variability of the *O. sativa* var. indica, *O. sativa* var. japonica, *O. glaberrima* and *O. rufipogon* *nshb* and *thb* genes revealed that in these plants variability is higher in *nshbs* than in *thbs* and that these genes evolved under the effect of neutral selection⁵². Currently the effect of rates of divergence and gene variability on the Hbs function during the rice evolution is not known.

Concluding remarks and future directions

In the preceding sections of this review we summarized major findings from the study of rice Hbs. This review also reveals some major lacunae in our ability to completely understand rice Hbs, more specifically the lack of information about the precise functions of Hbs in rice organs. The proposed functions for rice Hbs are mostly based on the analysis of other plant and non-plant Hbs. Thus, future work should evaluate the Hb activities (*e.g.* the NO-binding and -detoxifying activities) in either rice organs or rice cell cultures under a variety of growing conditions. Elucidating the functions of rice Hbs also requires the identification of organic molecules and protein partners that interact with rice Hbs. Other lacunae are the absence of biochemical, biophysical and cellular data on the properties of rice Hb2 to 5 and tHb. Generating recombinant rice Hb2 to 5 and tHb should provide Hb polypeptides for a variety of analyses that reveal the biochemical and biophysical properties of these proteins.

With the exception of rice *hb2*, a lacuna is the absence of experimental information about the *cis*-elements and *trans*-acting factors that regulate the expression of rice *hbs*. This information may help to integrate the *hb* gene expression into the rice metabolisms, including those that are modulated by plant hormones.

A final lacuna is the incomplete understanding of the evolution of rice Hbs. Sequencing of the *O. glaberrima* and *O. rufipogon* genomes will be completed soon and most likely a number of rice genomes (including that of *O. barthii*, which is postulated as the ancestor of *O. glaberrima*^{129,130}) will be sequenced within the near future. This will provide new Hb sequences for phylogenetic analysis and the understanding of the evolution of rice Hbs, including the identification of ancestral rice Hbs and the evaluation of the effect of rice domestication and breeding during the evolution of rice Hbs.

Author contributions

RAP conceived this review and prepared the first draft of the manuscript. RAP, JFM and GS were involved in the revision of the draft manuscript and prepared the revised version from the Reviewers' evaluation.

Competing interests

No competing interests were disclosed.

Grant information

The author(s) declared that no grants were involved in supporting this work.

Acknowledgements

Authors wish to express their gratitude to the Referees (Drs. Juliette T. J. Lecomte, Eric Johnson and Martino Bolognesi) of this review for helpful and constructive comments and suggestions.

References

1. Taylor ER, Nie XZ, MacGregor AW, *et al.*: **A cereal haemoglobin gene is expressed in seed and root tissues under anaerobic conditions.** *Plant Mol Biol.* 1994; **24**(6): 853–862.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
2. Arredondo-Peter R, Hargrove MS, Sarath G, *et al.*: **Rice hemoglobins. Gene cloning, analysis, and O₂-binding kinetics of a recombinant protein synthesized in *Escherichia coli*.** *Plant Physiol.* 1997; **115**(3): 1259–1266.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
3. Aréchaga-Ocampo E, Sáenz-Rivera J, Sarath G, *et al.*: **Cloning and expression analysis of hemoglobin genes from maize (*Zea mays ssp. mays*) and teosinte (*Zea mays ssp. parviglumis*).** *Biochim Biophys Acta.* 2001; **1522**(1): 1–8.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
4. Larsen K: **Molecular cloning and characterization of cDNAs encoding hemoglobin from wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) and potato (*Solanum tuberosum*).** *Biochim Biophys Acta.* 2003; **1621**(3): 299–305.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
5. Appleby CA, Bogusz V, Dennis ES, *et al.*: **A role for hemoglobin in all plant roots?** *Plant Cell Environ.* 1988; **11**(5): 359–367.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
6. Appleby CA, Dennis ES, Peacock WJ: **A primaevial origin for plant and animal hemoglobins?** *Aust Syst Bot.* 1990; **3**(1): 81–89.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
7. Appleby CA: **The origin and functions of haemoglobin in plants.** *Sci Progress.* 1992; **76**: 365–398.
[Reference Source](#)
8. Arredondo-Peter R, Hargrove MS, Moran JF, *et al.*: **Plant hemoglobins.** *Plant Physiol.* 1998; **118**(4): 1121–1125.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
9. Garrocho-Villegas V, Gopalasubramaniam SK, Arredondo-Peter R: **Plant hemoglobins: what we know six decades after their discovery.** *Gene.* 2007; **398**(1–2): 78–85.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
10. Hill RD: **Non-symbiotic haemoglobins-What's happening beyond nitric oxide scavenging?** *AoB Plants.* 2012; **2012**: Pls004.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
11. Hill RD, Huang S, Stasolla C: **Hemoglobins, programmed cell death and somatic embryogenesis.** *Plant Sci.* 2013; **211**: 35–41.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
12. Hoy JA, Hargrove MS: **The structure and function of plant hemoglobins.** *Plant Physiol Biochem.* 2008; **46**(3): 371–379.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
13. Matilla AJ, Rodríguez-Gacio MC: **Non-symbiotic hemoglobins in the life of seeds.** *Phytochemistry.* 2013; **87**: 7–15.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
14. Ross EJH, Lira-Ruan V, Arredondo-Peter R, *et al.*: **Recent insights into plant hemoglobins.** *Rev Plant Biochem Biotechnol.* 2002; **1**: 173–189.
15. Vázquez-Limón C, Hoogewijs D, Vinogradov SN, *et al.*: **The evolution of land plant hemoglobins.** *Plant Sci.* 2012; **191**–192: 71–81.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
16. Dickerson RE, Geis I: **Hemoglobin: structure, function, evolution, and pathology.** Menlo Park, California: The Benjamin/Cummings Pub. Co., Inc. 1983. 176.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
17. Hardison RC: **A brief history of hemoglobins: plant, animal, protist, and bacteria.** *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A.* 1996; **93**(12): 5675–5679.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
18. Vinogradov SN, Hoogewijs D, Bailly X, *et al.*: **A phylogenomic profile of globins.** *BMC Evol Biol.* 2006; **6**: 31–47.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
19. Hardison R: **The evolution of hemoglobin.** *Am Sci.* 1999; **87**(2): 126–137.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
20. Nardini M, Pesce A, Milani M, *et al.*: **Protein fold and structure in the truncated (2/2) globin family.** *Gene.* 2007; **398**(1–2): 2–11.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
21. Pesce A, Bolognesi M, Nardini M: **The diversity of 2/2 (truncated) globins.** *Adv Microb Physiol.* 2013; **63**: 49–78.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
22. Vinogradov SN, Hoogewijs D, Bailly X, *et al.*: **Three globin lineages belonging to two structural classes in genomes from the three kingdoms of life.** *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A.* 2005; **102**(32): 11385–11389.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
23. Vinogradov SN, Bailly X, Smith DR, *et al.*: **Microbial eukaryote globins.** *Adv Microb Physiol.* 2013; **63**: 391–446.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
24. Vinogradov SN, Tinajero-Trejo N, Poole RK, *et al.*: **Bacterial and archaeal globins - a revised perspective.** *Biochim Biophys Acta.* 2013; **1834**(9): 1789–800.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
25. Wittenberg JB, Bolognesi M, Wittenberg BA, *et al.*: **Truncated hemoglobins: a new family of hemoglobins widely distributed in bacteria, unicellular eukaryotes, and plants.** *J Biol Chem.* 2002; **277**(2): 871–874.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
26. Gardner PR: **Nitric oxide dioxygenase function and mechanism of flavohemoglobin, hemoglobin, myoglobin and their associated reductases.** *J Inorg Biochem.* 2005; **99**(1): 247–266.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
27. Di Giulio A, Bonamore A: **Globin interactions with lipids and membranes.** *Meth Enzymol.* 2008; **436**: 239–253.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
28. Giardina B, Messana I, Scatena R, *et al.*: **The multiple functions of hemoglobin.** *Crit Rev Biochem Mol Biol.* 1995; **30**(3): 165–196.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
29. Lebioda L, LaCount MW, Zhang E, *et al.*: **An enzymatic globin from a marine worm.** *Nature.* 1999; **401**(6752): 445.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
30. Reeder BJ, Svistunenko DA, Wilson MT: **Lipid binding to cytoglobin leads to a change in haem co-ordination: a role for cytoglobin in lipid signalling of oxidative stress.** *Biochem J.* 2011; **434**(3): 483–492.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
31. Vinogradov SN, Moens L: **Diversity of globin function: enzymatic, transport, storage, and sensing.** *J Biol Chem.* 2008; **283**: 8773–8777.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
32. Zal F, Leize E, Lallier FH, *et al.*: **S-Sulfohemoglobin and disulfide exchange: the mechanisms of sulfide binding of *Riftia pachyptila* hemoglobins.** *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A.* 1998; **95**(15): 8997–9002.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
33. Kubo H: **Über hamoprotein aus den wurzelknöllchen von leguminosen.** *Acta Phytochim (Tokyo).* 1939; **11**: 195–200.
[Reference Source](#)
34. Virtanen AI, Laine T: **Red, brown and green pigments in leguminous root nodules.** *Nature.* 1946; **157**: 25–26.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
35. Appleby CA: **Leghemoglobin and *Rhizobium* respiration.** *Annu Rev Plant Physiol.* 1984; **35**: 443–478.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
36. Vainshtein BK, Harutyunyan EH, Kuranova IP, *et al.*: **Structure of leghaemoglobin from lupin root nodules at 5 angstrom resolution.** *Nature.* 1975; **254**(5496): 163–164.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
37. Fleming AI, Wittenberg JB, Wittenberg BA, *et al.*: **The purification, characterization and ligand-binding kinetics of hemoglobin from root nodules of the non-leguminous *Casuarina glauca*-*Frankia* symbiosis.** *Biochim Biophys Acta.* 1987; **911**: 209–220.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
38. Pathirana SM, Tjepkema JD: **Purification of hemoglobin from the actinorhizal root nodules of *Myrica gale* L.** *Plant Physiol.* 1995; **107**(3): 827–831.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
39. Suharjo UKJ, Tjepkema JD: **Occurrence of hemoglobin in the nitrogen-fixing root nodules of *Alnus glutinosa*.** *Physiol Plant.* 1995; **95**: 247–252.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
40. Tjepkema JD: **Hemoglobins in the nitrogen-fixing root nodules of actinorhizal plants.** *Can J Bot.* 1983; **61**(11): 2924–2929.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
41. Tjepkema JD, Asa DJ: **Total and CO-reactive heme content of actinorhizal nodules and the roots of some non-nodulated plants.** *Plant and Soil.* 1987; **100**(1): 225–236.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
42. Appleby CA, Tjepkema JD, Trinick MJ: **Hemoglobin in a nonleguminous plant, *Parasponia*: possible genetic origin and function in nitrogen fixation.** *Science.* 1983; **220**(4600): 951–953.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
43. Bogusz D, Appleby CA, Landsmann J, *et al.*: **Functioning haemoglobin genes in a non-nodulating plant.** *Nature.* 1988; **331**(6152): 178–180.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
44. Landsman J, Dennis ES, Higgins TJV, *et al.*: **Common evolutionary origin of legume and non-legume plant haemoglobins.** *Nature.* 1986; **324**: 166–168.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
45. Andersson CR, Jensen EO, Llewellyn DJ, *et al.*: **A new hemoglobin gene from soybean: a role for hemoglobin in all plants.** *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A.* 1996; **93**(12): 5682–5687.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
46. Arredondo-Peter R, Ramirez M, Sarath G, *et al.*: **Sequence analysis of an ancient hemoglobin cDNA isolated from the moss *Physcomitrella patens* (Accession No. AF218049).** *Plant Physiol.* 2000; **122**(4): 1458.
[Reference Source](#)
47. Garrocho-Villegas V, Arredondo-Peter R: **Molecular cloning and characterization of a moss (*Ceratodon purpureus*) nonsymbiotic hemoglobin provides insight**

- into the early evolution of plant non-symbiotic hemoglobins. *Mol Biol Evol.* 2008; **25**(7): 1482–1487.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
48. Smaghe BJ, Hoy JA, Percifield R, *et al.*: **Review: correlations between oxygen affinity and sequence classifications of plant hemoglobins.** *Biopolymers.* 2009; **91**: 1083–1096.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 49. Trevasakis B, Watts RA, Andersson SR, *et al.*: **Two hemoglobin genes in *Arabidopsis thaliana*: the evolutionary origins of leghemoglobins.** *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A.* 1997; **94**(22): 12230–12234.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
 50. Radford AE: **Fundamentals of plant systematics.** New York, NY: Harper & Row, Inc. 1986; 498.
[Reference Source](#)
 51. Rodríguez-Alonso G, Arredondo-Peter R: **Phylogenetic analysis reveals an apparent duplication of the non-symbiotic hemoglobin 1 gene early in the evolution of monocotyledonous plants.** *ScienceJet.* 2012; **1**: 27.
[Reference Source](#)
 52. Rodríguez-Alonso G, Arredondo-Peter R: **Variability of non-symbiotic and truncated hemoglobin genes from the genome of cultivated monocots.** *Comm Integr Biol.* 2013; **6**(6): e27496.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
 53. Doebley J, Stec A, Gustus C: ***teosinte branched 1* and the origin of maize: evidence for epistasis and the evolution of dominance.** *Genetics.* 1995; **141**(1): 333–346.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
 54. Hancock JF: **Plant evolution and the origin of crop species.** Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall. 1992; 185–216.
[Reference Source](#)
 55. Antonini E, Brunori M: editors. **Hemoglobin and myoglobin in their reactions with ligands.** Amsterdam, London: North-Holland Pub. Co. 1971; 21: 457.
[Reference Source](#)
 56. Antonini E, Rossi-Bernardi L, Chiancone E: editors. **Hemoglobins.** Methods in Enzymology. New York: Academic Press. 1981; 76.
[Reference Source](#)
 57. Ross EJ, Shearman L, Mathiesen M, *et al.*: **Nonsymbiotic hemoglobins in rice are synthesized during germination and in differentiating cell types.** *Protoplasma.* 2001; **218**(3–4): 125–133.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 58. Arredondo-Peter R, Escamilla E: **A consensus sequence of plant hemoglobins.** *Plant Mol Biol Rep.* 1991; **9**(3): 195–207.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
 59. Sasaki T, Song J, Koga-Ban Y, *et al.*: **Toward cataloguing all rice genes: large-scale sequencing of randomly chosen rice cDNAs from a callus cDNA library.** *Plant J.* 1994; **6**(4): 615–624.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 60. Yu J, Hu S, Wang J, *et al.*: **A draft sequence of the rice genome (*Oryza sativa* L. ssp. *indica*).** *Science.* 2002; **296**(5565): 79–92.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 61. Vinogradov SN, Fernández I, Hoogewijs D, *et al.*: **Phylogenetic relationships of 3/3 and 2/2 hemoglobins in Archaeplastida genomes to bacterial and other eukaryote hemoglobins.** *Mol Plant.* 2011; **4**(1): 42–58.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 62. Garrocho-Villegas V, Bustos-Rivera G, Gough J, *et al.*: **Expression and *in silico* structural analysis of a rice (*Oryza sativa*) hemoglobin 5.** *Plant Physiol Biochem.* 2008; **46**(10): 855–859.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 63. Lira-Ruan V, Ross E, Sarath G, *et al.*: **Mapping and analysis of a hemoglobin gene family from rice (*Oryza sativa*).** *Plant Physiol Biochem.* 2002; **40**: 199–202.
[Reference Source](#)
 64. Ross EJ, Stone JM, Elowsky CG, *et al.*: **Activation of the *Oryza sativa* non-symbiotic haemoglobin-2 promoter by the cytokinin-regulated transcription factor, ARR1.** *J Exp Bot.* 2004; **55**(403): 1721–1731.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 65. Lira-Ruan V, Ruiz-Kubli M, Arredondo-Peter R: **Expression of non-symbiotic hemoglobin 1 and 2 genes in rice (*Oryza sativa*) embryonic organs.** *Comm Integr Biol.* 2011; **4**(4): 457–458.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
 66. Lira-Ruan V, Sarath G, Klucas RV, *et al.*: **Synthesis of hemoglobins in rice (*Oryza sativa* var. Jackson) plants growing in normal and stress conditions.** *Plant Sci.* 2001; **161**(2): 279–287.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 67. Hunt PW, Watts RA, Trevasakis B, *et al.*: **Expression and evolution of functionally distinct haemoglobin genes in plants.** *Plant Mol Biol.* 2001; **47**(5): 677–692.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 68. Ioanitecu AI, Dewilde S, Kiger L, *et al.*: **Characterization of nonsymbiotic tomato hemoglobin.** *Biophys J.* 2005; **89**(4): 2628–2639.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
 69. Watts RA, Hunt PW, Hvitved AN, *et al.*: **A hemoglobin from plants homologous to truncated hemoglobins of microorganisms.** *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A.* 2001; **98**(18): 10119–10124.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
 70. Ohwaki Y, Kawagishi-Kobayashi M, Wakasa K, *et al.*: **Induction of class-1 non-symbiotic hemoglobin genes by nitrate, nitrite and nitric oxide in cultured rice cells.** *Plant Cell Physiol.* 2005; **46**(2): 324–331.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 71. Hargrove M, Brucker EA, Stec B, *et al.*: **Crystal structure of a nonsymbiotic plant hemoglobin.** *Structure.* 2000; **8**(9): 1005–1014.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 72. Goodman MD, Hargrove MS: **Quaternary structure of rice nonsymbiotic hemoglobin.** *J Biol Chem.* 2001; **276**(9): 6834–6839.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 73. Gopalasubramaniam SK, Garrocho-Villegas V, Bustos GB, *et al.*: **Use of *in silico* (computer) methods to predict and analyze the tertiary structure of plant hemoglobins.** *Meth Enzymol.* 2008; **436**: 393–410.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 74. Ichimaru T, Kikuchi T: **Analysis of the differences in the folding kinetics of structurally homologous proteins based on predictions of the gross features of residue contacts.** *Proteins: Struct Funct Bioinf.* 2003; **51**(4): 515–530.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 75. Kikuchi T: **Application to the prediction of structures and active sites of proteins and peptides.** In: Pandalai SG, editor. Recent research developments in protein engineering. Kerala: Research Signpost. 2002; 1–48.
 76. Kikuchi T, Némethy G, Scheraga HA: **Prediction of the location of structural domains in globular proteins.** *J Prot Chem.* 1988; **7**(4): 427–471.
[PubMed Abstract](#)
 77. Nakajima S, Alvarez-Salgado E, Kikuchi T, *et al.*: **Prediction of folding pathway and kinetics among plant hemoglobins using an average distance map method.** *Proteins: Struct Funct Bioinf.* 2005; **61**(3): 500–506.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 78. Appleby CA, Bergersen FJ: **Preparation and experimental use of leghemoglobin.** In: Bergersen FJ, editor. Methods for Evaluating Biological Nitrogen Fixation. Chichester: Wiley; 1980; 315–335.
 79. Olson JS: **Stopped-flow, rapid mixing measurements of ligand binding to hemoglobin and red cells.** *Meth Enzymol.* 1981; **76**: 631–652.
[PubMed Abstract](#)
 80. Kakar S, Hoffman FG, Storz JF, *et al.*: **Structure and reactivity of hexacoordinate hemoglobins.** *Biophys Chem.* 2010; **152**(1–3): 1–14.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 81. Appleby CA: **Leghemoglobin.** In: Quispel A, editor. **The Biology of Nitrogen Fixation.** New York: American Elsevier Publishing Co. 1974; 521–554.
 82. Arredondo-Peter R, Moran JF, Sarath G, *et al.*: **Molecular cloning of the cowpea leghemoglobin II gene and expression of its cDNA in *Escherichia coli*. Purification and characterization of the recombinant protein.** *Plant Physiol.* 1997; **114**(2): 493–500.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
 83. Smaghe BJ, Kundu S, Hoy JA, *et al.*: **Role of phenylalanine B10 in plant nonsymbiotic hemoglobins.** *Biochemistry.* 2006; **45**(32): 9735–9745.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 84. Spyraakis F, Luque FJ, Viappiani C: **Structural analysis in nonsymbiotic hemoglobins: what can we learn from inner cavities?** *Plant Sci.* 2011; **181**(1): 8–13.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 85. Bisht NK, Abbruzzetti S, Uppal S, *et al.*: **Ligand migration and hexacoordination in type 1 non-symbiotic rice hemoglobin.** *Biochim Biophys Acta.* 2011; **1814**(8): 1042–1053.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 86. Reeder BJ, Hough MA: **The structure of a class 3 nonsymbiotic plant haemoglobin from *Arabidopsis thaliana* reveals a novel N-terminal helical extension.** *Acta Crystallogr D Biol Crystallogr.* 2014; **70**(Pt 5): 1411–1418.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 87. Wittenberg JB: **Myoglobin-facilitated oxygen diffusion: role of myoglobin in oxygen entry into muscle.** *Physiol Rev.* 1970; **50**(4): 559–636.
[PubMed Abstract](#)
 88. Wittenberg JB, Wittenberg BA: **Mechanism of cytoplasmic hemoglobin and myoglobin function.** *Annu Rev Biophys Chem.* 1990; **19**: 217–241.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 89. Wittenberg JB: **Facilitated oxygen diffusion. The role of leghemoglobin in nitrogen fixation by bacteroids isolated from soybean root nodules.** *J Biol Chem.* 1974; **249**(13): 4057–4066.
[PubMed Abstract](#)
 90. Wittenberg JB: **On optima: the case of myoglobin-facilitated oxygen diffusion.** *Gene.* 2007; **398**(1–2): 156–161.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 91. Armstrong W, Gaynard TJ: **The critical oxygen pressure for respiration in intact plants.** *Plant Physiol.* 1976; **37**(3): 200–206.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
 92. Wakasugi K, Nakano T, Kitatsuji C, *et al.*: **Human neuroglobin interacts with flotillin-1, a lipid raft microdomain-associated protein.** *Biochem Biophys Res Comm.* 2004; **318**(2): 453–460.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 93. Sáenz-Rivera J, Sarath G, Arredondo-Peter R: **Modeling the tertiary structure of a maize (*Zea mays* ssp. *mays*) non-symbiotic hemoglobin.** *Plant Physiol Biochem.* 2004; **42**(11): 891–897.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
 94. Seregélyes C, Mustárdy L, Ayaydin F, *et al.*: **Nuclear localization of a hypoxia-inducible novel non-symbiotic hemoglobin in cultured alfalfa cells.** *FEBS Lett.*

- 2000; **482**(1–2): 125–130.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
95. Angelo M, Hausladen A, Singel DJ, *et al.*: **Interactions of NO with hemoglobin: from microbes to man.** *Meth Enzymol.* 2008; **436**: 131–168.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
96. Gardner PR: **Assay and characterization of the NO dioxygenase activity of flavohemoglobins.** *Meth Enzymol.* 2008; **436**: 217–237.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
97. Lama A, Pawaria S, Dikshit KL: **Oxygen binding and NO scavenging properties of truncated hemoglobin, HbN of *Mycobacterium smegmatis*.** *FEBS Lett.* 2006; **580**(17): 4031–4041.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
98. Besson-Bard A, Pugin A, Wendehenne D: **New insights into nitric oxide signaling in plants.** *Annu Rev Plant Biol.* 2008; **59**: 21–39.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
99. Wilson ID, Neill SJ, Hancock JT: **Nitric oxide synthesis and signaling in plants.** *Plant Cell Environ.* 2008; **31**(5): 622–31.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
100. del-Giudice J, Cam Y, Damiani I, *et al.*: **Nitric oxide is required for an optimal establishment of the *Medicago truncatula*-*Sinorhizobium meliloti* symbiosis.** *New Phytol.* 2011; **191**(2): 405–417.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
101. Dordas C, Hasinoff BB, Igamberdiev AU, *et al.*: **Expression of a stress-induced hemoglobin affects NO levels produced by alfalfa root cultures under hypoxic stress.** *Plant J.* 2003; **35**(6): 763–770.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
102. Dordas C, Hasinoff BB, Rivoal J, *et al.*: **Class-1 hemoglobins, nitrate and NO levels in anoxic maize cell-suspension cultures.** *Planta.* 2004; **219**(1): 66–72.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
103. Seregélyes C, Igamberdiev AU, Maassen A, *et al.*: **NO-degradation by alfalfa class 1 hemoglobin (Mhb1): a possible link to *PR-1a* gene expression in Mhb1-overproducing tobacco plants.** *FEBS Lett.* 2004; **571**(1–3): 61–66.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
104. Igamberdiev AU, Baron K, Manac'h-Little N, *et al.*: **The haemoglobin/nitric oxide cycle: involvement in flooding stress and effects on hormone signaling.** *Ann Bot.* 2005; **96**(4): 557–564.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
105. Gopalasubramaniam SK, Kondapalli KC, Millán-Pacheco C, *et al.*: **Soybean dihydroliipoamide dehydrogenase (ferric leghemoglobin reductase 2) interacts with and reduces ferric non-symbiotic hemoglobin 1.** *ScienceJet.* 2013; **2**: 33.
[Reference Source](#)
106. Igamberdiev AU, Bykova NV, Hill RD: **Nitric oxide scavenging by barley hemoglobin is facilitated by a monodehydroascorbate reductase-mediated ascorbate reduction of methemoglobin.** *Planta.* 2005; **223**(5): 1033–1040.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
107. Saari LL, Klucas RV: **Nonenzymatic reduction of ferric leghemoglobin.** *Biochim Biophys Acta.* 1987; **912**(2): 198–202.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
108. Becana M, Salin ML, Ji L, *et al.*: **Flavin-mediated reduction of ferric leghemoglobin from soybean nodules.** *Planta.* 1991; **183**(4): 575–583.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
109. Becana M, Klucas RV: **Enzymatic and nonenzymatic mechanisms for ferric leghemoglobin reduction in legume root nodules.** *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A.* 1990; **87**(18): 7295–7299.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
110. Davies MJ, Mathieu C, Puppo A: **Leghemoglobin: properties and reactions.** *Adv Inorg Chem.* 1999; **46**: 495–542.
111. Sainz M, Pérez-Rontomé C, Ramos J, *et al.*: **Plant hemoglobins may be maintained in functional form by reduced flavins in the nuclei, and confer differential tolerance to nitro-oxidative stress.** *Plant J.* 2013; **76**(5): 875–87.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
112. Perazzolli M, Romero-Puertas MC, Delledonne M: **Modulation of nitric oxide bioactivity by plant haemoglobins.** *J Exp Bot.* 2006; **57**(3): 479–488.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
113. Smagghe BJ, Trent JT 3rd, Hargrove MS: **NO dioxygenase activity in hemoglobins is ubiquitous *in vitro*, but limited by reduction *in vivo*.** *PLoS One.* 2008; **3**(4): e2039.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
114. Sowa AW, Duff SMG, Guy PA, *et al.*: **Altering hemoglobin levels changes energy status in maize cells under hypoxia.** *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A.* 1998; **95**(17): 10317–10321.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
115. Apel K, Hirt H: **Reactive oxygen species: metabolism, oxidative stress, and signal transduction.** *Annu Rev Plant Biol.* 2004; **55**: 373–399.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
116. Bolwell GP: **Role of active oxygen species and NO in plant defence responses.** *Curr Op Plant Biol.* 1999; **2**(4): 287–294.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
117. Finkel T: **Signal transduction by reactive oxygen species in non-phagocytic cells.** *J Leukoc Biol.* 1999; **65**(3): 337–340.
[PubMed Abstract](#)
118. Gapper C, Dolan L: **Control of plant development by reactive oxygen species.** *Plant Physiol.* 2006; **141**(2): 341–345.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
119. Joo JH, Bae YS, Lee JS: **Role of auxin-induced reactive oxygen species in root gravitropism.** *Plant Physiol.* 2001; **126**(3): 1055–1060.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
120. Kwak JM, Nguyen V, Schroeder JI: **The role of reactive oxygen species in hormonal responses.** *Plant Physiol.* 2006; **141**(2): 323–329.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
121. Rodriguez AA, Grunberg KA, Taleisnik EL: **Reactive oxygen species in the elongation zone of maize leaves are necessary for leaf extension.** *Plant Physiol.* 2002; **129**(4): 1627–1632.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
122. Sakamoto A, Sakurao SH, Fukunaga K, *et al.*: **Three distinct *Arabidopsis* hemoglobins exhibit peroxidase-like activity and differentially mediate nitrite-dependent protein nitration.** *FEBS Lett.* 2004; **572**(1–3): 27–32.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
123. Yang LX, Wang RY, Ren F, *et al.*: **AtGLB1 enhances the tolerance of *Arabidopsis* to hydrogen peroxide stress.** *Plant Cell Physiol.* 2005; **46**(8): 1309–1316.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
124. Violante-Mota F, Tellechea E, Moran JF, *et al.*: **Analysis of peroxidase activity of rice (*Oryza sativa*) recombinant hemoglobin 1: implications for *in vivo* function of hexacoordinate non-symbiotic hemoglobins in plants.** *Phytochemistry.* 2010; **71**(1): 21–26.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
125. Gopalasubramaniam SK, Kovacs F, Violante-Mota F, *et al.*: **Cloning and characterization of a caesalpinoid (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*) hemoglobin: the structural transition from a nonsymbiotic hemoglobin to a leghemoglobin.** *Proteins: Struct Funct Bioinf.* 2008; **72**(1): 252–260.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
126. Guldner E, Desmarais E, Galtier N, *et al.*: **Molecular evolution of plant haemoglobin: two haemoglobin genes in Nymphaeaceae *Euryale ferox*.** *J Evol Biol.* 2004; **17**(1): 48–54.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
127. Vinogradov SN, Hoogewijs D, Arredondo-Peter R: **What are the origins and phylogeny of plant hemoglobins?** *Comm Integr Biol.* 2011; **4**(4): 443–445.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
128. Arredondo-Peter R: **Evolutionary rates of land plant hemoglobins at the protein level.** *Global J Biochem.* 2011; **2**(2): 81–95.
[Reference Source](#)
129. Kellogg EA: **Evolutionary history of the grasses.** *Plant Physiol.* 2001; **125**(3): 1198–1205.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
130. Vaughan DA, Lu BR, Tomooka N: **The evolving story of rice evolution.** *Plant Sci.* 2008; **174**(4): 394–408.
[Publisher Full Text](#)
131. Roy A, Kucukural A, Zhang Y: **I-TASSER: a unified platform for automated protein structure and function prediction.** *Nature Protoc.* 2010; **5**(4): 725–738.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
132. Roy A, Xu D, Poisson J, *et al.*: **A protocol for computer-based protein structure and function prediction.** *J Visual Exp.* 2011; **57**(57): e3259.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
133. Zhang Y: **I-TASSER server for protein 3D structure prediction.** *BMC Bioinformatics.* 2008; **9**: 40.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
134. Duff SM, Wittenberg JB, Hill RD: **Expression, purification and properties of recombinant barley (*Hordeum* sp.) hemoglobin. Optical spectra and reactions with gaseous ligands.** *J Biol Chem.* 1997; **272**(27): 16746–52.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
135. Hargrove MS, Barry JK, Brucker EA: **Characterization of recombinant soybean leghemoglobin a and apolar distal histidine mutants.** *J Mol Biol.* 1997; **266**(5): 1032–1042.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)
136. Springer BA, Sligar SG: **High-level expression of sperm whale myoglobin in *Escherichia coli*.** *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA.* 1987; **84**(24): 8961–8965.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
137. Weber RE, Vinogradov SN: **Nonvertebrate hemoglobins: functions and molecular adaptations.** *Physiol Rev.* 2001; **81**(2): 569–628.
[PubMed Abstract](#)
138. Hvited AN, Trendl JT, Premer SA, *et al.*: **Ligand binding and hexacoordination in *Synechocystis* hemoglobin.** *J Biol Chem.* 2001; **276**(37): 34714–34721.
[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#)

Open Peer Review

Current Peer Review Status:

Version 2

Reviewer Report 19 December 2014

<https://doi.org/10.5256/f1000research.6325.r7011>

© 2014 Lecomte J et al. This is an open access peer review report distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Juliette T. J. Lecomte

T. C. Jenkins Department of Biophysics, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA

Eric Johnson

T. C. Jenkins Department of Biophysics, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA

We appreciate the authors consideration of our comments and we agree with the revisions to this paper. This review effectively highlights the current state of knowledge for this field and points out additional research that would make valuable contributions.

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

We confirm that we have read this submission and believe that we have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Version 1

Reviewer Report 20 November 2014

<https://doi.org/10.5256/f1000research.5905.r6522>

© 2014 Lecomte J et al. This is an open access peer review report distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Juliette T. J. Lecomte

T. C. Jenkins Department of Biophysics, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA

Eric Johnson

T. C. Jenkins Department of Biophysics, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA

The manuscript "Rice (*Oryza*) hemoglobins" by Arredondo-Peter, Moran and Sarath reviews the current status of research on the group of proteins found within rice plants belonging to the hemoglobin (Hb) superfamily. There is growing interest in Hbs, particularly non-mammalian Hbs, owing to their potential role as mediators of reactive nitrogen molecules, such as nitric oxide. Such a review is welcome, as rice is an important cultivar and adaptation to stress during growth plays an important role in the survival of the plant. The review covers a wide range of relevant topics, such as phylogenetic aspects, cellular localization, and chemical properties.

Within this review, the literature on rice Hbs is covered thoroughly, as witnessed by the extensive bibliography that accompanies the manuscript. However, closer inspection of that bibliography reveals an underlying issue with this manuscript. Although over 150 citations are given, a minority of those papers reference research performed specifically on rice plant or rice Hbs. This is not meant as a slight against the authors, rather as an observation that current research on rice Hbs is still in its infancy and extensive literature on the topic simply does not exist. With that in mind we would suggest altering this manuscript to acknowledge this shortage of experimental evidence in the following ways.

- By far the majority of experimental evidence exists of Hb1, yet throughout the manuscript Hb1 is treated more-or-less equally to Hb2-Hb5. The authors should focus on Hb1 in presenting the available evidence, then in a separate section (perhaps "correlations to other Hb genes") the authors could examine homology models and hypothetical behavior without the danger of having conjecture misinterpreted by the reader as published fact.
- tHb belongs to a separate class of Hbs than the other Hbs in rice (Hb1 through Hb5), and throughout the manuscript it is often treated as an afterthought. As an addendum to the above comment we would also suggest a separate section be reserved for tHb. Though little experiment information may be available for this protein, a short stand-alone section would be more informative than a series of trailing paragraphs.
- Great care must be taken by the authors when postulating biophysical characteristics of rice Hbs using only homology models based upon a single crystal structure. Simple variations in structure can carry significant changes in heme iron coordination, reactivity and binding affinity. If such conjecture is used in this manuscript it must be plainly stated with the caveat that this is not published fact, or experimental evidence.

Additional specific comments

1. To orient the reader it would be helpful to include a two-panel figure containing (a) the amino acid sequence alignment of Hbs 1 through 5 using Hb1 as the anchor, and (b) the alignment of tHb using *Arabidopsis thaliana* GLB3 as the anchor. In both panels, the differences between each Hb and Hb1 (a) or tHb and GLB3 (b) could be emphasized (e.g., with color). The secondary structure of Hb1 (a) and GLB3 (b) could be indicated as well. In the text the % sequence identity for the relevant pairs should be mentioned. In addition, are the japonica and indica sequences identical? Whether one or the other cultivar is used should be clearly indicated throughout the review (for example, in Figure 2).
2. Apoprotein folding pathways are discussed on page 7. An additional statement as to the biological relevance of the folding pathway and information about association with the heme (when, where) would be interesting.

3. In general, it is not possible to predict the thermodynamic or chemical properties of a heme protein based on its primary structure. The case of *Parasponia andersonii* and *Trema tomentosa* hemoglobins provides one illustration of the difficulty within the plant world. Predictions can be inaccurate even when a three-dimensional structure is available. This shortcoming of sequence analyses and modeling could be emphasized with a discussion of specific examples and used to advocate the need for additional hemoglobin research.
4. Reaction with nitric oxide is a likely function of many hemoglobins. According to the work of Gardner and colleagues, the NO dioxygenase reaction begins with the binding of dioxygen followed by combination with NO to produce nitrate. In this mechanism, binding of NO to the iron is not necessary. In this regard, the statement on page 3 (bottom left) should be clarified. Likewise, the Hb/NO cycle as proposed by Igamberdiev and Hill involves oxyHb. In contrast, the description on page 9 suggests that one turnover occurs with oxyHb, followed by formation of Hb-NO.
5. Speculations regarding the formation of homodimeric or heterodimeric structures should also be qualified, since the concentration of the hemoglobins (sub micromolar) appears to be much lower than the projected K_d (mM).
6. In the "Postulated functions" section, a proposal is made that Hb5 and tHb are O₂ transporters. Could the authors elaborate on this function? (Transport to what and for what purpose, and is it consistent with the cellular concentrations?)
7. Ligand binding is central to the function of hemoglobins. The "kinetic" section provides little such information while the second paragraph of the "Postulated functions" section offers numbers. It would be useful to consolidate the kinetic data with a table containing the measured equilibrium and rate constants for Hb1 and Hb2 (CO, NO, O₂), as published in various primary references (for example, reference 97), and for Hb relatives mentioned in the text.

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

We confirm that we have read this submission and believe that we have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however we have significant reservations, as outlined above.

Author Response 29 Nov 2014

Raul Arredondo-Peter, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos, Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico

We thank Drs. Lecomte and Johnson for evaluating the first version of this review and for providing useful comments and suggestions. We agree with them and incorporated the suggested changes into the revised version of the review.

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Report 13 November 2014

<https://doi.org/10.5256/f1000research.5905.r6520>

© 2014 Bolognesi M. This is an open access peer review report distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Martino Bolognesi

Department of Biosciences, University of Milan, Milan, Italy

The Review by Arredondo-Peter *et al.* presents our current knowledge on the fascinating field of plant non-symbiotic (nsHb) and truncated hemoglobins (tHb), for which substantial, but scattered, information has accumulated over the past twenty years. The Review deals specifically with rice Hbs. Work from several distinct worldwide groups has so far provided information on the gene families for five nsHbs, and for a single tHb in rice; moreover, expressed proteins have been located to various plant organs and developmental stages. Crystal structures and kinetic analyses have helped delineating the potential roles of rice Hbs in plant physiology, highlighting different O₂ binding affinities that differentiate the various Hbs. A main question that remains unanswered concerns the *in vivo* functions carried over by the five distinct rice nsHbs and tHb; hints reviewed from the literature include O₂ sensing, signaling, O₂ transport, NO scavenging, and NO dioxygenase pseudo-enzymatic activities (others may also be plausible). The Review includes evolutionary considerations (and the effects of rice selection through domestication) that will be reinforced by the forthcoming completion of rice genomes.

Overall, the Review provides a useful compendium over a subject whose reunification into a coherent presentation will indeed support deeper exploration of the functional aspects, whose scientific and practical relevance cannot be underestimated.

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Author Response 16 Nov 2014

Raul Arredondo-Peter, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos, Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico

We thank Dr. Bolognesi for evaluating this review and his comments.

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

The benefits of publishing with F1000Research:

- Your article is published within days, with no editorial bias
- You can publish traditional articles, null/negative results, case reports, data notes and more
- The peer review process is transparent and collaborative
- Your article is indexed in PubMed after passing peer review
- Dedicated customer support at every stage

For pre-submission enquiries, contact research@f1000.com

F1000Research