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Enhancement by Auxin of Ribonucleic Acid Synthesis in Excised Soybean Hypocotyl Tissue^{1, 2, 3}

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Many changes in RNA metabolism occur during normal (3, 4, 9, 16, 27, 28) and auxin-modified growth (1, 2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 25) of plant cells. Skoog (18) suggested in 1954 that the action of auxin in regulating growth is concerned with nucleic acid metabolism. Yet, there is no evidence that the influence of auxin on RNA metabolism is more primary than other metabolic responses of auxin.

The experiments reported in this and the following paper (11) were done to gain additional information on the regulation by auxin of growth and development of plant cells as related to RNA metabolism. In general, growth promotive concentrations of auxin stimulated C¹⁴-nucleotide incorporation into RNA of elongating cells whereas inhibitory concentrations decreased incorporation. In fully elongated cells, auxin induced a net synthesis of RNA, the increase occurring primarily in the ribosomal fraction. The data reported provide evidence for the DNA dependence of ribosomal RNA synthesis.

Materials and Methods

Soybean seeds (*Glycine max*, var. Hawkeye) were

planted between layers of Krum moistened with distilled water in 22 × 33 cm Pyrex baking dishes covered with Saran wrap (perforated for aeration). After 48 hours at 27 to 29° in the dark, the Saran cover was removed, and 150 ml of solution containing 1 × 10⁻³ M CaCl₂, 3 × 10⁻⁴ M MgCl₂, and 3 × 10⁻⁸ M KCl were added to each tray. Experimental tissue was harvested after an additional 24 hours of growth.

Tissue sections were incubated in Erlenmeyer flasks in a 30° water-bath shaker. After incubation, the sections were blotted to remove excess moisture, weighed, and homogenized in ice-cold deionized water containing one drop of antifoam, unless otherwise stated. The homogenates were filtered through glass wool, and aliquots removed for RNA determinations. In experiments where C¹⁴-nucleotide was added to the incubation medium, aliquots of the homogenates were removed, dried, and counted for total nucleotide uptake. RNA analyses were made by a modified Smillie and Krotkov procedure (19). The aliquots were made to 0.2 N with respect to HClO₄, thoroughly mixed, and centrifuged at 1100 × *g* for 10 minutes. The pellets were then suspended and twice washed in 0.2 N HClO₄ and once in methanol containing 0.02 M formic acid. All steps including centrifugation were carried out at 2 to 4°. The washed pellets were twice extracted at 37° for 30 minutes in a 2: 2: 1 mixture of ethanol-ether-chloroform to remove lipids. RNA was hydrolyzed in 0.3 N KOH for 18 hours at 37°.

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After chilling, HClO_4 was added to a final concentration of about 0.3 N followed by centrifugation to remove the KClO_4 precipitate, protein, and DNA. Absorbance of samples of RNA was measured at 260 and 290 $m\mu$ with a Zeiss PMQII Spectrophotometer. The absorption difference was referred to a standard conversion factor obtained in the following manner. Samples of RNA treated as above were added to a column of Dowex-1-formate, and the component nucleotides were eluted by a formic acid gradient and collected in a Rinco collector. Each sample was read at 260 $m\mu$, and from the known A_{260} values the quantity of each of the 4 nucleotides in the sample of RNA was determined. These quantities (based on 6 separate determinations) were referred to the initial 260 to 290 $m\mu$ absorption difference and used in calculating the conversion factor of 48: $(A_{260}-A_{290}) (48) = \mu\text{g RNA/ml of sample read}$.

After determining the RNA, each sample was neutralized with KOH to pH 4.5 to 5.5. After chilling, the KClO_4 precipitate was removed by centrifugation, and aliquots were plated, dried, and counted for determination of C^{14} -nucleotide incorporation into RNA. Counting was done with an automatic gas-flow counter equipped with a micromil window.

Table I

Effect of Auxin on Growth and RNA Metabolism in Excised Soybean Hypocotyl Tissue

0.75, 1.25, and 1.5 g of tissue section 1, 2, and 3, respectively, were incubated for 12 hours at 30° in a water bath shaker in a volume of 5 ml of solution containing 5×10^{-3} M KH_2PO_4 (neutralized to pH 6.0 with NH_4OH), 1% sucrose, 20 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ streptomycin, K salt of 2,4-D (pH 6.0), and 0.125 μC ADP-8- C^{14} (9.2 $\mu\text{C/mg}$).

$\mu\text{g/ml}$ 2,4-D	% increase fr wt	mg RNA/ g fr wt*	cpm/g fr wt in RNA	cpm/mg RNA
Tissue Section 1**				
0	45	2.84	5,330	1,875
5	71	2.98	7,155	2,405
25	67	2.95	7,020	2,380
100	57	2.87	5,200	1,810
500	24	2.87	2,660	925
Tissue Section 2**				
0	32	1.07	2,300	2,145
5	102	1.21	3,950	3,260
25	95	1.22	3,680	3,020
100	73	1.14	3,175	2,780
500	20	1.01	1,310	1,095
Tissue Section 3**				
0	9	0.58	2,270	3,915
5	26	0.76	4,925	6,480
25	25	0.75	5,600	6,800
100	20	0.72	4,815	6,700
500	7	0.63	1,355	2,150

* The RNA values compare to an initial RNA content of 3.02, 1.27, and 0.59 mg per g initial fresh weight of tissue sections 1, 2, and 3, respectively. All data are based on initial fresh weight. Data are averages of 3 closely duplicating experiments.

** Tissue section 1, 2, and 3 refer to distance from cotyledon where hypocotyl was sectioned and represent tissue of increasing mean cell age. Section 1, 0.0 to 0.5 cm below cotyledon; Section 2, 0.5 to 1.5 cm below cotyledon; Section 3, 1.5 to 3.5 cm below cotyledon.

ADP-8- C^{14} and ATP-8- C^{14} were purchased from Schwarz Bio-Research with a specific activity of 9.2 and 3.9 $\mu\text{C/mg}$, respectively. These compounds were used interchangeably based on their availability. The chemical form in which the C^{14} entered the tissue is not known.

Results

The incorporation of C^{14} -nucleotide into RNA of excised soybean hypocotyl tissue was enhanced by concentrations of auxin, 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D), which promoted expansive growth of these cells (table I). Inhibition of C^{14} -nucleotide incorporation occurred at growth inhibitory levels of auxin. [During this investigation we discovered that previous results (8, table III) were complicated by bacterial contamination and are corrected by data in table I]. The magnitude of the auxin-induced changes in RNA synthesis depended upon the physiological age of the tissue as well as the auxin concentration (table I). No net increase in RNA occurred in meristematic and rapidly expanding cells (sections 1, 2) following auxin treatment even though incorporation of C^{14} -nucleotide was enhanced. In fully elongated cells (section 3), auxin induced a net increase in RNA (25 to 30% in most 12-hour experiments). Although higher concentrations are re-

Table II

Comparison of Effects of 2,4-D and IAA on RNA Synthesis in Mature Soybean Hypocotyl Tissue

1.5 g of tissue (section 3) were incubated in 5 ml solution containing 0.25 μC ATP-8- C^{14} (3.9 $\mu\text{C/mg}$) as described in table I.

Treatment	Mg RNA/g fr wt	cpm/g fr wt in RNA	cpm/mg RNA
None	0.49	3,620	7,400
25 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ 2,4-D	0.66	8,770	13,280
25 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ IAA	0.56	5,870	10,490
100 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ IAA	0.63	8,900	14,100
Initial	0.49

Table III

Time Study on Auxin-induced Synthesis of RNA in Mature Soybean Hypocotyl Tissue

Incubation conditions same as in table I except that 0.25 μC of ADP-8- C^{14} (9.2 $\mu\text{C/mg}$) was used in a volume of 5 ml with 1.5 g of tissue. Initial RNA content was 0.61 mg/g initial fr wt. Tissue section 3 was used.

Incubation Interval (hr)	Mg RNA/ g fr wt	ADP-8- C^{14} in RNA cpm/g fr wt	cpm in RNA/ 3 hr interval	cpm/mg total RNA
0 2,4-D				
0-3	0.60	1,105	1,105	1,840
0-6	0.61	2,473	1,368	4,050
0-9	0.60	3,612	1,139	6,020
0-12	0.59	4,332	920	7,650
25 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ 2,4-D				
0-3	0.61	1,290	1,290	2,115
0-6	0.66	4,406	3,116	6,680
0-9	0.70	7,535	3,129	10,750
0-12	0.75	10,698	3,163	14,250

Table IV

Cytoplasmic Distribution of RNA in Homogenates of Excised Soybean Hypocotyl Tissue

4 g of tissue (section 3) were incubated in 10 ml of solution containing 2 μ C ADP-8-C¹⁴ (9.2 μ C/mg) as described in table I.

Sub-cellular* Fraction	Medium 1**		Medium 2**	
	mg RNA/ g fr wt	cpm/mg RNA	mg RNA/ g fr wt	cpm/mg RNA
	0 2,4-D			
Nuclei rich	0.065	15,200	0.027	20,600
Mitochondria rich	0.060	8,390	0.024	6,350
Ribosome rich	0.284	6,650	0.302	6,350
Soluble	0.058	7,160	0.097	7,670
	25 μ g/ml 2,4-D			
Nuclei rich	0.070	21,570	0.028	24,250
Mitochondria rich	0.077	15,940	0.026	15,400
Ribosome rich	0.389	13,320	0.419	13,020
Soluble	0.078	14,720	0.128	14,870

* Sub-cellular fraction: 1, 0-6,000 \times g for 15 min (nuclei rich); 2, 6-20,000 \times g for 20 min (mitochondria rich); 3, 20-100,000 \times g for 120 min (ribosome rich); 4, 100,000 \times g supernatant (soluble).

** Medium 1,-tissue homogenized in 0.5 M sucrose containing 0.01 M Tris Cl buffer (pH 7.5). Medium 2,-tissue homogenized in 0.5 M sucrose containing 0.01 M Tris Cl buffer (pH 7.5), 0.001 M MgCl₂, and 0.5 % deoxycholate.

quired, IAA elicited the same general enhancement of RNA synthesis as 2,4-D (table II). The increase in fresh weight was associated primarily with cell elongation in sections 1 and 2 and with radial enlargement in section 3.

After an initial lag, the synthesis of RNA as measured by either C¹⁴-nucleotide incorporation or by RNA determination proceeded at a linear rate for at least 9 hours in auxin-treated tissue (table III). However, the rate of RNA synthesis in untreated tissue as measured by C¹⁴-nucleotide incorporation, sharply declined after 6 hours of incubation. A similar decline in the rate of C¹⁴-nucleotide incorporation into RNA of expanding cells occurred concomitant with a decreased growth rate. At optimum concentration, auxin maintained higher rates of both growth and RNA synthesis.

The increase in RNA following auxin treatment occurred primarily in the microsome fraction of the cell (table IV). The same result was obtained when deoxycholate was included in the homogenization medium. Since the increase in RNA was primarily in fraction 3 in the presence of the detergent, it is assumed that there was a net synthesis of ribosomes.

Time-course studies during the linear phase of RNA synthesis showed that at early times a major portion of the C¹⁴-RNA was associated with the nuclei-rich fraction (table V). The relative amount of

C¹⁴-RNA in this fraction progressively declined, although the total amount of C¹⁴-RNA increased. The relative decrease in C¹⁴-RNA in the nuclear fraction was similar to the increase in the proportion of C¹⁴-RNA associated with the ribosomal fraction. The relative amount of C¹⁴-RNA in fractions 2 and 4 thus remained essentially constant.

Actinomycin D, which effectively inhibits DNA-dependent RNA synthesis in bacteria (6), inhibited

Table V

Time Study on Cytoplasmic Distribution of C¹⁴-RNA in Auxin-treated Soybean Hypocotyl Tissue

4 g of tissue (section 3) were incubated in 10 ml of solution containing 2 μ C ADP-8-C¹⁴ (9.2 μ C/mg) and 25 μ g/ml 2,4-D. ADP-8-C¹⁴ was added at appropriate time after 3 hours of preincubation in 2,4-D with all tissue being harvested 12 hours after start of incubation. Homogenates were made in medium 1 and differentially centrifuged as described in table IV.

Exposure time to ADP-8- C ¹⁴ (hr)	Subcellular Fraction				Total cpm in RNA
	Nuclei rich	Mito- chondria rich	Ribo- some rich	Solu- ble	
1.5	44	16	25	15	882
3	27	16	40	18	1,880
6	13	16	51	20	5,403
9	9	17	56	19	8,135

Table VI

Inhibition by Actinomycin D of RNA Synthesis in Excised Soybean Hypocotyl Tissue

1.5 g of tissue (section 3) were incubated in 5 ml of solution containing 0.25 μ C ADP-8-C¹⁴ (9.2 μ C/mg) and 25 μ g/ml 2,4-D as described in table II. Initial RNA content was 0.56 mg/g fresh weight.

Actinomycin (μ g/ml)	mg RNA/ g fr wt	ADP-8-C ¹⁴ in tissue cpm/g fr wt	ADP-8-C ¹⁴ in RNA cpm/g fr wt	% Inhibition by actinomycin of ADP-8-C ¹⁴ incorporation into RNA
0.0	0.70	37,300	13,870	...
0.5	0.60	32,500	7,410	46.6
1.0	0.57	31,300	4,160	70.0
10.0	0.54	30,300	1,070	92.4

Table VII

Cellular Distribution of RNA and C¹⁴-RNA in Soybean Hypocotyl Tissue as Affected by Actinomycin D

4.0 g of soybean hypocotyl tissue (section 3) incubated for 12 hours in 10 ml of solution containing 1 μ C ATP-8-C¹⁴ (3.9 μ C/mg), 25 μ g/ml 2,4-D, and 10 μ g/ml actinomycin D as described in table I. Tissue was homogenized in medium 2 and differentially centrifuged as described in table IV.

Cellular fraction	mg RNA/g fr wt		cpm/g fr wt in RNA		cpm/mg RNA		Ratio total C ¹⁴ in RNA — Act. D + Act. D
	— Actinomycin	+ Actinomycin	— Actinomycin	+ Actinomycin	— Actinomycin	+ Actinomycin	
Nuclei rich	0.029	0.030	694	93	23,900	3,100	7.5
Mitochondria rich	0.026	0.020	414	36	15,900	1,800	11.5
Ribosome rich	0.414	0.309	5,540	742	13,400	2,400	7.5
Soluble	0.137	0.123	1,970	531	14,400	4,310	3.7
Total	0.606	0.482	8,618	1,402	14,200	2,910	6.1

C¹⁴-nucleotide incorporation into RNA by 85 to 90 % at a concentration of 10 μ g/ml (table VI). At a concentration of 0.5 μ g/ml, actinomycin D inhibited RNA synthesis by 50 %. In the presence of actinomycin D, at a concentration which inhibited C¹⁴-nucleotide incorporation by about 85 %, ribosomal RNA was the only cellular fraction of RNA which was significantly affected by the chemical (table VII). Also, the incorporation of C¹⁴-nucleotide into supernatant RNA, although inhibited by actinomycin D, was relatively less affected than incorporation into RNA of other cellular fractions.

Discussion

Auxin (2,4-D) at growth-promoting concentrations enhanced C¹⁴-nucleotide incorporation into RNA of the elongating zones of excised soybean hypocotyl tissue, whereas inhibitory concentrations decreased incorporation. The increase in incorporation was associated with a slightly higher RNA content than in comparable untreated tissue although somewhat lower than the initial RNA content.

In regions of the hypocotyl of fully elongated cells, auxin, at concentrations of 5 to 100 μ g/ml, induced a 25 to 30 % net increase in RNA during 12 hours of excised incubation. IAA at higher concentrations caused a similar enhancement of RNA synthesis. After an initial lag, the synthesis of RNA in auxin-treated tissue proceeded at a linear rate for at least 9 hours. Differential centrifugation experiments showed that the major increase in RNA occurred in the ribosomal fraction. However, all RNA fractions showed about a twofold increase in specific activity relative to RNA from untreated tissue.

Many lines of evidence support the view that most cellular RNA is synthesized within the nucleus (15, 30), but there are reports that anucleated *Acetabularia crenulata* synthesize ribosomal RNA (20, 24). Ts'o and Sato (22) reported data from time course experiments suggestive of a transfer of labeled (P³²) RNA from the nucleus to the ribosomal fraction of the cell (however, no net increase in ribosomal RNA was realized). Results from time course experiments with our system (under conditions where there was a 30 to 40 % increase in ribosomal RNA) indicate a net transfer of C¹⁴-RNA from the nuclear fraction into the ribosomal fraction. This net transfer occurred under such conditions that the other fractions of RNA maintained a constant proportion of C¹⁴-RNA over the

period. Thus, the proportion of C¹⁴-RNA associated with the nuclear and ribosomal fractions showed a reciprocal relationship.

Actinomycin D, at concentrations as low as 10 μ g/ml, inhibited the incorporation of C¹⁴-nucleotide into RNA by 85 to 90 %. The actinomycin treatment also completely eliminated the net increase in ribosomal RNA following auxin treatment. There appears to be preferential labeling of supernatant RNA in the presence of actinomycin, presumably because of the end group addition of C¹⁴-adenylate to s-RNA (21). Inasmuch as actinomycin D specifically blocks DNA-dependent RNA synthesis (6), most, if not all of the RNA synthesis in excised soybean hypocotyl tissue must occur on a DNA template, perhaps within the nucleus. A chromatin system as described for pea embryo nuclei (5) probably carries out the synthesis of RNA. Yankofsky and Spiegelman (29) recently presented evidence, based on specific hybridizations, for participation of DNA in ribosomal RNA formation.

Although it is clear that auxin has some pronounced effects on RNA metabolism, the significance of these responses are presently not fully understood. It is apparent, however, from data presented in the following paper (11), that functional RNA (and in turn protein) synthesis is essential for expansive growth of cells to proceed. The possibility that auxin enhances the growth rate by stimulating RNA synthesis seems reasonable, although more direct evidence is needed. The actual response to auxin varies somewhat with different tissues. In rapidly elongating sections of soybean hypocotyl there is only a slight decrease in RNA content during excised growth (table I) whereas in corn mesocotyl there is considerable RNA breakdown (10). Growth-promoting concentrations of auxin enhance RNA breakdown in corn mesocotyl (10) while causing the maintenance of a slightly higher level of RNA in soybean hypocotyl (table I). The net effect of auxin on C¹⁴-nucleotide incorporation into RNA of these tissues is also quantitatively different. Again these differences are not fully understood, but they may well be related to differences in ribonuclease activity. Shannon and Hanson (17) have shown the ribonuclease content to increase about twofold during excised growth of corn mesocotyl tissue; with auxin the increase is about threefold. There is little or no change in ribonuclease activity in soybean hypocotyl tissue following excised

growth either in the presence or absence of auxin (unpublished). Also under the assay conditions used the specific activity of ribonuclease is initially much lower in soybean than in corn tissue (26). Thus these differences in the effects of auxin on RNA metabolism in excised corn and soybean tissues may be related to the differential responses obtained with ribonuclease, presumably the enzyme responsible for the degradation of RNA in these tissues.

Summary

Indoleacetic acid and 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid, at concentrations which promoted cell elongation, enhanced C^{14} -nucleotide incorporation into RNA of excised soybean hypocotyl tissue, whereas inhibitory levels decreased incorporation. In fully elongated cells, auxin induced a 25 to 30 % net increase in RNA, primarily ribosomal. Although different concentrations are required, 2,4-D and IAA produced similar effects on RNA metabolism. Results from time course studies on C^{14} -nucleotide incorporation into RNA, in conjunction with differential centrifugation of tissue homogenates, indicate that a net transfer of C^{14} -RNA from the nucleus to the ribosomes occurred. Moreover, the synthesis of RNA was inhibited by 85 to 90 % by actinomycin D. No increase in ribosomal RNA occurred in auxin treated tissue in the presence of the antibiotic. From the known action of actinomycin D, most of the RNA in soybean hypocotyl cells must be synthesized on a DNA template.

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