



Short Communication

Characterization of cytochrome P450 monooxygenases isolated from trichome enriched fraction of *Artemisia annua* L. leaf

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ABSTRACT

CYPs have major role in the biosynthesis and modification of secondary metabolites. Predicting the possible involvement of CYPs in secondary metabolism, 20 partial sequences were amplified from the cDNA of trichome enriched tissue of *Artemisia annua*. Seven CYPs were converted to full length and assigned to different families based on sequence homology. These were co-expressed with CPR in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* and microsomal fractions were assayed for conversion of sesquiterpenes, phenols and fatty acid substrates. *CIM_CYP02(c73)* and *CIM_CYP05(c81)* converted *trans*-cinnamic acid to *p*-coumaric acid; and capric acid, lauric acid to their hydroxylated products, respectively. Higher expression of *CIM_CYP71AV1*, *CIM_CYP03(c72a)*, *CIM_CYP06(c72b)*, *CIM_CYP02(c73)* and *CIM_CYP04(c83)* was observed in the mature leaf, whereas expression of *CIM_CYP05(c81)* was more in the seedling. *CIM_CYP71AV1*, *CIM_CYP02(c73)* and *CIM_CYP04(c83)* expressed more in the flower bud compared to the leaf, with minor expression in stem. All CYPs' expression increased progressively with time after wounding except for *CIM_CYP07(c92)*. These results relate involvement of *CIM_CYP02(c73)* to phenyl-propanoid metabolism in the leaf and *CIM_CYP05(c81)* to fatty acid metabolism in the seedling. Expression of *CIM_CYP71AV1* and *CIM_CYP02(c73)* significantly increased when sprayed with *trans*-cinnamic acid indicating a relationship between phenylpropanoid and artemisinic acid pathways.

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1. Introduction

Cytochrome P450 monooxygenases (CYPs) are multifunctional, heme-iron containing enzymes, catalyzing NADPH and oxygen dependent hydroxylation reactions. CYPs in different organisms are involved in biosynthetic and detoxicating pathways (Nelson, 2011). In plants, these membrane bound enzymes are responsible for biosynthesis of a variety of compounds like phenylpropanoids, terpenoids, fatty acids, hormones, pigments and defense related molecules (Schuler and Werck-Reichhart, 2003). Many CYPs, alone or in combinations are involved in multistep catalysis of substrates. Example of such CYPs are CYP71C1–C4 involved in DIMBOA (2,4-dihydroxy-7-methoxy-1,4-benzoxazin-3-one) biosynthesis and CYP71AV1 in the biosynthesis of artemisinic aldehyde from its precursor amorpha 4, 11-diene (Bailey and Larson, 1991; Frey et al., 1997; Ro et al.,

2006; Liu et al., 2011). *Artemisia annua* produces an anti-malarial sesquiterpene endoperoxide lactone, “artemisinin” which is extensively used in artemisinin-based combined therapy (ACT) to cure chloroquine resistant malaria. Though, the biosynthetic pathway of artemisinin is yet to be deciphered completely, tremendous progress has been taking place in recent years providing a clear picture of the intermediate steps (Teoh et al., 2009; Zhang et al., 2008). It is believed that arteannuin B and artemisinin are the end products of the bifurcated pathway, competing with each other for precursors (Liu et al., 2011). Weathers et al. (1999) showed better artemisinin production in a highly oxygenated environment, compared to a hypoxic one. Wallaart et al. (1999, 2001) suggested DHAA as a reactive oxygen species (ROS) scavenger which is probably converted to artemisinin by more than one non-enzymatic, spontaneous photo-oxidation reactions (Brown and Sy, 2007; Wallaart et al., 2001). In plants, an enormous diversity of CYPs is observed and correlated to the secondary metabolite diversity (Bolwell et al., 1994; Nelson et al., 1996). Though *Arabidopsis* is not very rich in secondary metabolites, still, 272 CYPs belonging to 45 families have been described (Werck-Reichhart et al., 2002). As very few CYPs are reported and analyzed from *A. annua*, in this study we analyzed and reported new CYPs from *A. annua* trichome enriched tissue. These were characterized for their possible role in secondary metabolism under various conditions.

Abbreviations: CPR, Cytochrome P450 reductase; CYP, Cytochrome P450 monooxygenase; DHAA, Di-hydro Artemisinic acid; RACE, Rapid amplification of cDNA ends.
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2. Materials and methods

2.1. Plant material and treatments

Seeds of *Artemisia annua* var. 'CIM-Arogya' (Khanuja et al., 2008, United States Patent No. US 7, 375,260), obtained from National Gene Bank for Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (NGBMAP) maintained at the Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants in India, were grown in the fields during February to August. The plants were also grown in pots and maintained in the glass house. Leaf material was collected from 5 month old plants for RNA isolation. For wound induction plants were pricked at various parts with the help of syringe and forceps. Immediately after the wounding leaf samples were collected at 0 h, 1 h, 2 h and 4 h for RNA extraction. For exogenous treatment of different compounds, plant leaves were sprayed with either 1 mM *trans*-cinnamic, *p*-coumaric, caffeic acid or artemisinin in methanol according to Perradin et al. (1983), Park et al. (2006), Melgar et al. (2009), and Vimala and Suriachandraselvan (2009). Control plants were sprayed with methanol only. After 6 h, leaf tissue was harvested for RNA isolation and RT-PCR.

2.2. Isolation and cloning of partial and full length CYPs

Glandular trichomes were isolated from young leaves of *A. annua* following the protocol described by Teoh et al. (2006) and 100 mg trichome was used for total RNA isolation (Chomczynski and Sacchi, 1987). From this 5 µg RNA was taken for cDNA synthesis using ThermoScript RT-PCR System (Invitrogen, USA). The partial CYPs from trichome enriched tissue were isolated by two step PCR amplifications. The first RT-PCR was performed with a set of 4 primers directed against the conserved EEF(R)PER-motif in combination with oligo dT primer. After amplification (Fischer et al., 2001), PCR-products were diluted by 100 fold and used as template for the second nested RT-PCR. A set of eight primers directed against the PFG-motif was used in combination with oligo dT primer. All primers to isolate the partial CYP sequences and conditions for amplification were the same as described by Fischer et al. (2001). The resulting amplified fragments were cloned in pGEM-T Easy vector (Promega, USA) and sequence characterized. SMART™ RACE cDNA Amplification System (Clontech) was used to clone full length CYPs in pGEM-T Easy vector and identities were confirmed through sequence homology using BLAST N, BLAST X and BLAST P analyses (Altschul et al., 1997). Multiple sequence alignment (MSA) of the amino acid sequences using the ClustalW (<http://www.ebi.ac.uk/Tools/clustalw/>) with the default parameters was performed.

2.3. Co-expression of CPR, CYPs, microsome isolation and substrate conversion

Full length isolated CYPs were cloned at *Eco*RI and *Not*I restriction sites in MCS1 of pESC-URA containing a CPR (JN594507) sequence amplified from *A. annua* at *Bam*HI and *Sall* restriction enzyme sites of MCS2 (Ro et al., 2006). List of primers used for full length gene amplification and cloning in yeast expression vector is provided in Table 1. *S. cerevisiae*, YPH501 competent cells were transformed with 1–3 µg of the pESC::CPR and pESC::CPR/CYP plasmids. These were plated separately on URA dropout plates with D-glucose (SD-URA) as carbon source and incubated at 30 °C for 2–3 days. For CYP-protein induction in the YPH501 strain, transformed yeast colonies were streaked on SD-URA dropout plates and incubated at 30 °C overnight. Single colony was sub-cultured in 3 ml of SD-URA dropout medium overnight and 250 ml of the same medium was subsequently inoculated by a 1:100 (v/v) dilution of the culture. This was incubated at 30 °C with shaking at 200 rpm for 12 to 15 h until cultures reached mid-log phase (approximately $3\text{--}5 \times 10^7$ cells/ml). Cells were harvested by centrifuging at 3000 × g for 5 min at 20 °C. Pellet was resuspended in 10 ml sterile distilled water, centrifuged under the same conditions and resuspended in

Table 1

List of primer sequences used for full length gene amplification.

S no	Primer name	Sequence (5' to 3')
1	CIM_CPRF	ATGGATCCTATGCAATCAACAACCTCCGTTAAGTTAT
2	CIM_CPRR	TATGTGCGACCATACATCACGGAGATATCTTCCT
3	CIM_CYP02F	TCCGAATTCATGGATCTCTCTCTTTGGA
4	CIM_CYP02R	ATAGCGGCCGCAAGGATCTTGTTTGA
5	CIM_CYP03F	GCGGAATTCATGACAGCAACATTTAC
6	CIM_CYP03R	ATCGCGGCCGCTATGTTATGTAATAAATTAAG
7	CIM_CYP04F	TACGAATTCATGGACTCTCTCTCAATTCTAC
8	CIM_CYP04R	TACGCGGCCGCTTTGGAGAATTGGAGTTAA
9	CIM_CYP05F	GCAGAATTCATGGAAGTTCCTTATCTATACATC
10	CIM_CYP05R	TAAGCGGCCGCAACTCGGAAAGTAAAGTTT
11	CIM_CYP06F	TGCGAATTCATGGAGTCACCTACATC
12	CIM_CYP06R	ATAGCGGCCGCAACTTTGTGTAATAAATTAAG
13	CIM_CYP07F	TCCGAATTCATGGAACCACTTTCTAATTCTTAC
14	CIM_CYP07R	TTAGCGGCCGCGAGATGGTATATTTCAACT
15	CIM_CYP71AV1F	ATGGCACTCTCACTGACCACCTTC
16	CIM_CYP71AV1R	CTAGAAACTTGGAAACGAGTAACAAC

fresh synthetic galactose-URA dropout medium to initiate CYP-protein induction. Further, the yeast cells were cultured for an additional 20 h at 30 °C. Microsome fraction from yeast was isolated following the protocol described by Pompon et al. (1996). The concentration of protein was determined according to Bradford (1976) with bovine serum albumin (BSA) as the standard. Approximately 5 mg of total microsome protein was added in 1 ml reaction containing 100 mM Tris–HCl buffer pH-7.5, 25 µM substrate (sesquiterpenes, sesquiterpnoids, and fatty acids), 100 µM NADPH and NADPH regeneration system (5 mM glucose-6-phosphate and two units of glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase). Reaction was started by adding microsomal protein and incubated for 2 h at 30 °C with gentle agitation. After incubation the reaction was acidified to pH 2 by 6 M HCl, and the reaction mixture was extracted twice with equal volume of ethyl acetate, followed by evaporation of organic phase in vacuum. Conversion of sesquiterpenes by CYP-CPR combination was checked by GC and HPLC following the method described earlier (Ro et al., 2006; Teoh et al., 2006). Fatty acids were resolved by TLC as described by Cabello-Hurtado et al. (1998). Conversion of *trans*-cinnamic acid to *p*-coumaric acid was monitored by TLC (Ro et al., 2001).

2.4. Quantitative and semi-quantitative RT-PCR analysis of full length CYPs

The expression levels of full length CYPs at various conditions were measured by real time PCR with SYBR green I chemistry (Applied Biosystems, USA). Primers were designed with the Primer Express software (Applied Biosystems, USA) and tested to ensure amplification of single discrete fragment of size ~150 bp with no primer-dimers. Two micrograms of DNase (Promega, USA) treated total RNA was used for first-strand cDNA synthesis with random hexamer primer using ThermoScript™ RT-PCR System (Invitrogen, USA). The reaction was set up with 50 ng cDNA, 5 pmol of each forward and reverse primers, 15 µl of SYBR Green PCR master mix (2×) (Applied Biosystems, USA) and the final volume was adjusted to 30 µl with milliQ water. The reactions were carried out (5 replicates) in 7900HT Fast Real Time PCR System (Applied Biosystems) and the specificity of the reactions was verified by melting curve analysis. The level of gene expression was analyzed with Sequence Detection System (SDS) software version 2.2.1 and normalized with β-actin expression (endogenous control). Threshold cycle (Ct) values obtained after real time PCR were used for calculation of ΔCt value (target-endogenous control). The relative quantification was carried out by calculation of ΔΔCt to determine the fold difference in gene expression [ΔCt target – ΔCt calibrator]. Relative quantity (RQ) was determined by computing $2^{-\Delta\Delta Ct}$. Semi-quantitative RT-PCR was carried out using total RNA (Invitrogen, USA ThermoScript RT-PCR kit), CYP

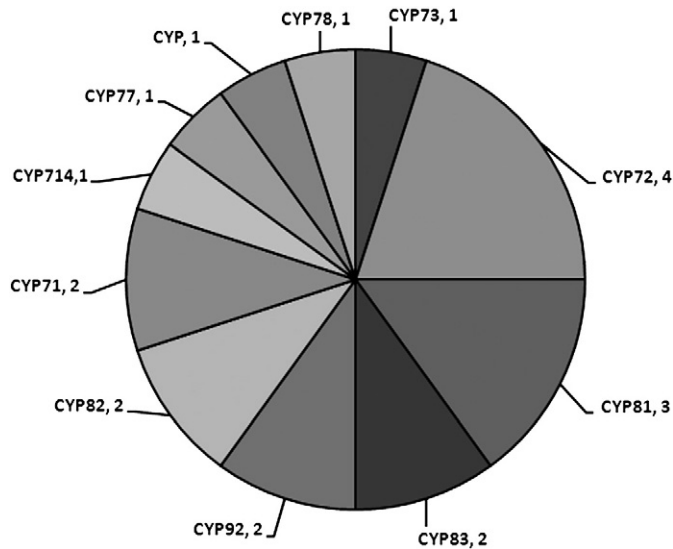


Fig. 1. Partial CYPs isolated from of *A. annua*. These were tentatively named as per their homology to the CYP family genes. Frequency of similar family genes is also indicated.

specific primers and compared with β -actin amplification. Further, to ascertain the expression of CYP-transcripts in yeast after transformation and induction, semi-quantitative RT-PCR was also carried out.

2.5. Artemisinin extraction and analysis

Artemisinin content of plant was estimated by thin layer chromatography. Dry powdered plant material (0.1 g) was extracted in 10 ml of hexane by heating at 60 °C till half the volume and left overnight at room temperature. The next day the volume of the extract

was made up to 10 ml with hexane, filtered and evaporated on water bath at 50 °C. The extract was dissolved in 1 ml hexane and spotted on silica gel 60 F₂₅₄ TLC plates (Merck) at 1 cm apart along with standard artemisinin (1 mg/ml). Spotted TLC plate was dipped in solvent (mobile phase) hexane:diethyl ether (1:1). The plate was dried in air and dipped in developing reagent, anisaldehyde:sulphuric acid (1:2) and heated at 120 °C for 10–15 min. The spots were scanned (540 nm, visible) (Densitometer CAMAG: Switzerland) to quantify the artemisinin content of the individual plant.

3. Results and discussion

As less number of full length CYPs have been reported from *A. annua* it is required to isolate and identify more CYPs to explore their role in secondary metabolism. Since trichomes are described to be highly active in the synthesis and storage of secondary metabolites including the highly desired artemisinin, this tissue was selected for isolating novel CYPs for characterization.

3.1. CYP family and isolation from *A. annua* trichome enriched tissue

NCBI database was searched for available CYP sequences in *A. annua* and CYP71 (DQ667171), CYP71AV1 (DQ872632, EU684540), *taxadiene-5-hydroxylase* (DQ363134), *taxadiene-13-hydroxylase* (DQ363133), *sterol-23-hydroxylase* (DQ363132), *flavonoid-3-hydroxylase* (DQ363131), *amorpho-4,11-diene oxidase* (EF197889) and CYP (DQ370065) sequences were retrieved. These were used for multiple sequence alignment analysis which showed the presence of conserved regions specific for CYPs. Further, when CYPs from Asteraceae family were compared, a total of five regions were found to be almost conserved (Supplementary Table 1). These regions include the heme binding domain, the ERR triad (KETLR motif and PERF motif), T-containing oxygen binding domain and a proline rich region at the 5' end of the sequence.

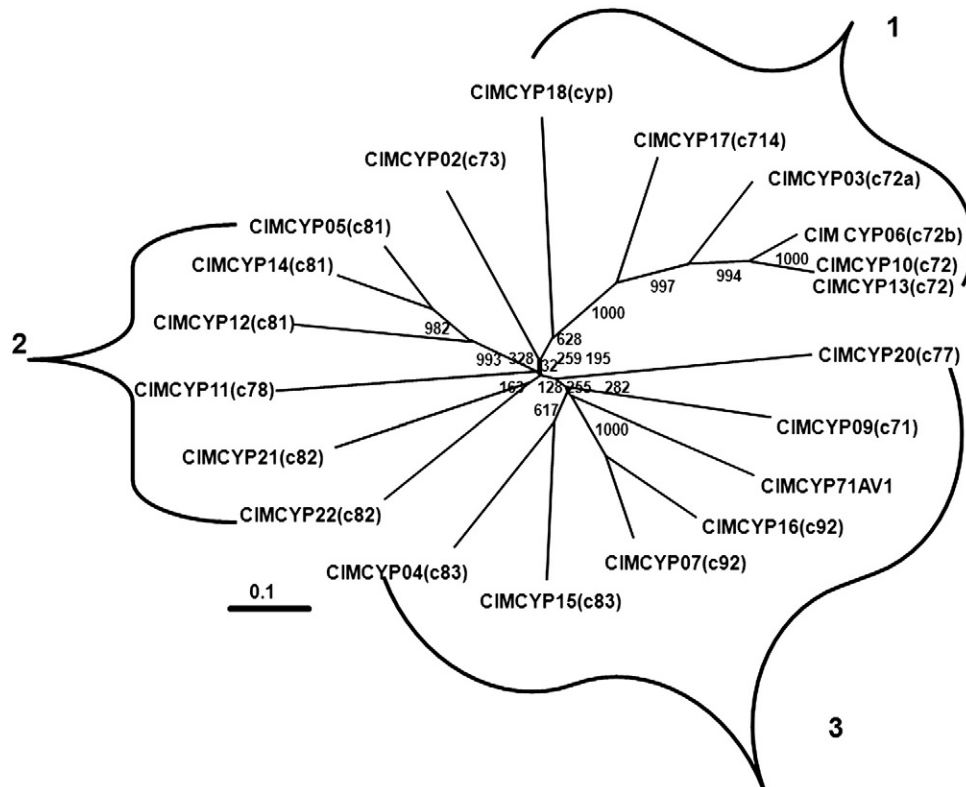


Fig. 2. Unrooted neighbor-joining tree comparing the amino acid sequences of partial CYPs isolated from *A. annua* (homology based family name is within the brackets).

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CYP71A1V1  --MALSLTTSIALATILLFVYKFPATRSKSTK-----KSLPEPWRLPIIGHMHHLI 48
CYP_03      MTATFTKVVIIVVVVVKLGLWLLNWAWLMPPKLEKLLREQGYKGNSYKPTIGDIMELA 60
CYP_06      -MESPTSFALGVASIFIYLIYRIANWLWPKPKKIEKFLRKQGLNGTSYKFMFGDLKELV 59
CYP_04      ---MDSLLQFLLASLPILYLLYQLTPKIKNKSKSNVHGQFRSPPGPHGMPFIIGNLHQID 57
CYP_05      -----MEVPYLYITLIFLLASYLETSYFRKSS-----NLPPPTIFPALPIIGHLY-LV 46
CYP_07      MEPLSNSYTYTVAWLATVALLIISRRTRRQR-----KLNPPPGPKPWPPIIGNLN-LI 52
CYP_02      --MDLLLEKTLGLLVAILGAIFISKLRGR-----FKLPPGPPIPVPIFGNWLVQVG 50
               :                               : *. : .4

CYP71A1V1  GTTPHRRVRDLAR-----KYGSLMHLQLGEVPTIVVSSPKWAKEILTT 91
CYP_03      KMTKEARSKPMSISHDITQHVLPEHHILNKYKGVMMWFGPKPRVLIIRDQLIKDILSR 120
CYP_06      QMSNEAKSKPMSLNHDIANRVLPHYYNALSTHGKTCFTWLGIKPVVHLEPTMIREVLNN 119
CYP_04      KSNFHSLSWLSK-----SYGPPVSLNLGFIPIAVVSSASVAKELKT 100
CYP_05      KPPLYRTLAKLSA-----KYGDILLRLGTRRRVLIVSSPSASEECFTK 89
CYP_07      GTLPHRSIHDLISQ-----KYGDIQQLKFRSFNVLVASSAEAAKILKT 95
CYP_02      DDLNHRNLTDLAK-----KFGEIFLLRMGQRNLVVVSSPDLAKDVLTHT 93
               :. : ..* : : .. : 10

CYP71A1V1  YDITFANRPETLTGEIVLYHNTDVVLAPYGEYWRQLRKICT--LELLSVKKVKSFSQSLRE 149
CYP_03      PNEFQRQPH-EPLRDSIVGG---LVVSEGEKWKHRRHIINPAFHLDISIKSMFSAICLSC 175
CYP_06      YNQYQKPRAGNPLTKLLARG---VADAEADQWVKHRKIINPAFHVLEKLMVPAFYVSC 175
CYP_04      QDLTFCSRPSFHGLQVRVSYNGLDVALSPYKNKWKEMRRIFT--VYLFSPKRLQSSRFIRE 158
CYP_05      NDIIIFANRPRLFGKIIIGNNYTSLAWSPYGDNWRNLRRRIAS--IELSIHRNEFHDIRV 147
CYP_07      QDVSFACRPKTAAGKYSTYNYSNITWSPYGAWRQARKICL--MELFSAKRLESYEYIRV 153
CYP_02      QGVFEGSRTNRNVFDIFTGKGQDMVFTVYGEHWRKMRRIMT--VPFPTNKVVQYQYRFGWE 151
               . : . * : * : . . . : 18

CYP71A1V1  EECWNLVQEI--ASGSGRPVNLSENFKLIATILSRAAFGKGID-----QKELT 198
CYP_03      SEMIKKWELLT--AESVLKSMCGPYIDNLAGDVISRAAFSSSYEE-----AQRI 224
CYP_06      SEMLDKWGETV--TKESSGEVDVWYTLSTFSADVISRTAFGSSSYEE-----GRKIF 224
CYP_04      DEVSAMEKIHG-LALSSKHVNLSEIAHIVSMNVTRIGFKRYEDGYE-----SKEIL 211
CYP_05      DEGKLLVRKLV---SNSSSVNVKSVFYELTLNMMRMISGKRYFGGDIPEVEAEGRFR 204
CYP_07      EETNSLLKKIY---SSVGEEILLKMDLSVSLNIVSRMVLGKKYLDSEDSKVS-PNEFK 209
CYP_02      AEAADVVEDVKKNPASATEGTVLRRLQLMMYNNMFRIMFDRRFESEDDP--LFLKLKAL 209
               * : * . : * . : 21

CYP71A1V1  EIVKEILRQTGGFDVADIFPSK--KFLHHLSGKRARLTSLR-KKIDNLDNLVAEHTVN 254
CYP_03      RIQEQMELMIQLLFIIYLPGGR----FIPTRANKKFQENR-NKLQDLARGIVEKRRKA 278
CYP_06      ELQREQAVLIKASQSQSVYIPGLR----FLPTKSNKRMKEID-REIKASIKNIIDKRVVA 278
CYP_04      RLLHELQATLTNYFISDLWDPFLVGLIDRLGLKFKYRLEKCL-QGLDSFTK-LIDEHDA 269
CYP_05      EILDETFLLAGAANVG DYLPFLR---WFGVTLEKELKVALR-EKREVFQGLIEQLRKP 259
CYP_07      KMLDELLLLNGVFNIGDSIPWI--DPLD-LQGYVKRMKILG-KKFDRLFELVDEHNER 264
CYP_02      NGRSRLAQSFYNYGDFIPILR----PFLRGYKLCKEVKDKRLQLFKDYFVDERKKL 264
               . . * . : . : . : 24

CYP71A1V1  -TSS-KTN--ETLLDVLLRLKD-----SAEFPLTSDNIKAIILDMFGAGTDTSSSTIE 303
CYP_03      -IEMGEPN-TNNDLLGILLLESNKSKEKESG--VGMSIEDVIEECKLFYIAGSETTSLIL 334
CYP_06      -MKAKET--SNDDLLGILLSDNKEIKQHGSKYGLSIEDVIEECKLFYIAGGETTGTMLV 335
CYP_04      -EYS-KPNEEHEDLIDILLQLRNGQL--SDSFELTNDHMKAMLTDLVAGTDSNAATLV 324
CYP_05      -KGAEVGN-NKKTMIIEVLLSLQE-----SDPKYTDDEMIRSFVLVLLIAGTDTAGTME 311
CYP_07      -RKAEGEKFVATDMVDVLLQLAEDP---DLVDKLERHGVKAFIQDMLGGGTETVTIE 319
CYP_02      GSTKSLDNNQKCAIDHILEAKDKG-----EINEDNVLYIVENINVAIETTLWSIE 316
               : : * . : : : : : 32

CYP71A1V1  WAISELIKCPKAMEKVQAEALRKALNGKEKIHEEDIQELSYLNMVIEKETLRLHPPLPLVP 363
CYP_03      WTLVCLSLHREWQTKAREEIMQVFG-TGELHFEGLKHLKIVTMILNEVLRLYPAPMAL- 392
CYP_06      WTMILLGHHTDWQRRAREEVLHVFG-DKTPDIDGLSHLKVINIIEHEVLRLYPAPALLR- 393
CYP_04      WAMTTLVKYPKAMKKAQEEVRKMKVQNKDVDEDDLPKLTYLKAUVKEVMRLYPAPALLP 384
CYP_05      WAMSLLLNHQPVLKKAQNEIDRVVGNDRLVDESDDVNLPLYRCIINETLRICPPGPLLVP 371
CYP_07      WAISQLLMKPEIFQKVTEELDRVIGKNRWVQEKDMPNLPYIEAIAKETMRLHPVAPMLVP 379
CYP_02      WGIAELVNHPEIQAKLRHELDTKLGPVQVTEPDIGNLPYLQAVIKETLRLRMAIPLV 376
               * : * . : * : . : . : : : : : 48

CYP71A1V1  RECRQPVNLAGYNIPNKTCLIVNVFAINRDPEYW-KDAEAFIPERFEN--SSATVMGAEB 420
CYP_03      RATHKDTKLGDMTIPSGVNVIIPIILHVQHDHDWGDAREFKPERFSEG VANATKGRGSA 452
CYP_06      RMIHEETKLGNTLPAGTLVQLNILLSHHDKDTWGEDVHEFNPERFSEGVSKATKGR--A 451
CYP_04      RVTTKDAILLDYKIKQNTLVYVNAMAIGRDPESW-ENPEEFSERFLG--SDIGFKGSDF 441
CYP_05      HESSEDCVIGGYNIPRGTMLLVNQWAIHHDPKLW-TDPEMFKPERFEG--LEGTRDG--F 426
CYP_07      GRAREDCKVGSYDITEGTRVLVSVWTIGRDPKLW-DKPEEFCPERFIG--RDIDVEGHDF 436
CYP_02      HMNLHADKLGFDIPAESKILVNAWLANNPQW-KKPEEFRPERFLEESKVEANGDNF 435
               . : . : : : : . : * * * * . 59

CYP71A1V1  EYLPFGAGRRMCPGAALGLANVQLPLANILYHFNWKL PNGVSYDQIDMTE-SSGATMQRK 479
CYP_03      SFLPFGGGPRICIGONFALTEAKVALTKIMQRFSFELS PSYKHSFVVMFS-LSPLYGAHL 511
CYP_06      TYLPFGGGPRICMGONFAMLEAKMALAMILQRFSFEVSPSYTHAPHSIFT-LQPQFGAHL 510
CYP_04      ELIPFGAGRRICPGISMGVNSVELFLANLIYSFDWGLPDGTKIEDIDSGV-LPGLTMTNK 500
CYP_05      KLMPFGSGRRSCPGEGLAVRIGSTLGLLIQCDFDWER--LSEKMVDMSE-APGLTMPKA 482
CYP_07      KFLPFGAGRRMCPGYSLGFKVIEATLANLLHGFTWTLP GKMTKDDLNMEE-IFGLTTPKK 495
CYP_02      RYLPFGVGRRSCPGLILALPILGITIGRLVQNFELLPPPGVSKIDTSEKGGQFSLHLHK 495
               : * * * * : . : : * . : 72

A
CYP71A1V1  TELLVPSF----- 488
CYP_03      ILHNI----- 516
CYP_06      ILHKV----- 515
CYP_04      KGLCLLAHFNSNSPN----- 515
CYP_05      EPLVAKCKPRLEIQTLSEL 502
CYP_07      FPLVTVAQPRLPVEIYHL-- 513
CYP_02      STIVAKPRSF----- 505
               72

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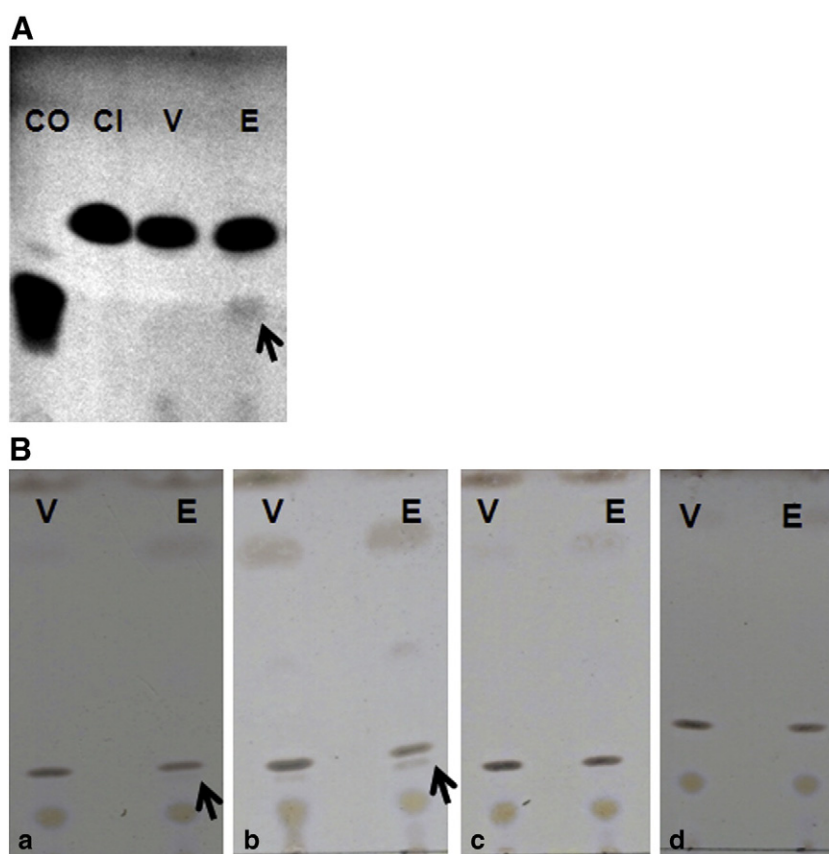



Fig. 4. Substrate conversion by CIM_CYP02(c73) and CIM_CYP05(c81). A. TLC showing conversion of *trans*-cinnamic acid to *p*-coumaric acid by microsomal protein of *S. cerevisiae* expressing CPR and CIM_CYP02(c73). CO: *p*-coumaric acid, CI: *trans*-cinnamic acid, V: control reaction of *trans*-cinnamic acid with microsomal fraction from *S. cerevisiae* transformed with vector pESC::CPR only, E: enzyme reaction of *trans*-cinnamic acid with microsomal fraction from *S. cerevisiae* transformed with the construct and pESC::CPR/CIM_CYP02(c73). Arrow indicates the formation of *p*-coumaric acid. B. TLC showing conversion of fatty acids to their hydroxylated products by microsomal protein of *S. cerevisiae* expressing CPR and CIM_CYP05 (c81). a, b, c and d represents reaction with capric acid, lauric acid, myristic acid and palmitic acid respectively. V: control reaction of fatty acid with microsomal fraction from *S. cerevisiae* transformed with vector pESC::CPR only, E: enzyme reaction of fatty acid with microsomal fraction from *S. cerevisiae* transformed with the construct and pESC::CPR/CIM_CYP05 (c81). Arrow indicates the formation of hydroxylated product of fatty acid.

A total of 20 partial CYPs were isolated and sequence characterized from *A. annua*. Based on their homology (Nelson et al., 1993, 1996) these partial sequences ranging between 200 and 700 bp were assigned to different families (Fig. 1) and submitted to the NCBI database with accession numbers GU318231 to GU318243. In all the partial sequences heme binding domain (PF(G/S)XG(R/P)(R/F)XC) was observed. Cysteine residue which acts as 5th ligand for heme iron along with a phenylalanine (F) at +30 after heme binding domain was also detected. The tree generated after MSA and neighbor-joining analysis grouped these partial CYPs in three major clusters (Fig. 2). In the first cluster CIM_CYP13, CIM_CYP10, CIM_CYP06, CIM_CYP03, CIM_CYP17 and CIM_CYP18 grouped together. CIM_CYP02 also originated from this cluster as an out-group. The second cluster included CIM_CYP14, CIM_CYP05, CIM_CYP12, CIM_CYP11, CIM_CYP21 and CIM_CYP22. In the third cluster, CIM_CYP71AV1 grouped with CIM_CYP16, CIM_CYP07, CIM_CYP15, CIM_CYP04, CIM_CYP09 and CIM_CYP20. Of 20, seven full length genes CIM_CYP02, CIM_CYP03, CIM_CYP04, CIM_CYP05, CIM_CYP06, CIM_CYP07 and CIM_CYP71AV1 were amplified through RACE and the sequence characterized. The Genbank accession number assigned to these genes are GU318229, GU318227, JN594506, JN594505, GU318230, GU318226 and JN594504 respectively. All the

conserved regions for CYPs were observed in the multiple sequence alignment carried out for the isolated full length CYPs (Fig. 3). The size of these genes ranged between 488 and 516 amino acids and predicted substrate recognition sites (SRS) were identified according to Gotoh (1992) (Supplementary Fig. 1).

3.2. Substrate utilization

Predotar v. 1.03 software (Small et al., 2004) predicted expression of all CYPs in endoplasmic reticulum except CIM_CYP07. As CIM_CYP07 was predicted to be a member of CYP92 family and some members of this family are reported to be expressing in the microsome (Petkova-andonova et al., 2002), the microsome fraction along with the cytosolic fraction was taken for the assay. For all other CYPs only the microsome fraction was taken for analysis to determine their role in secondary metabolism. CYP71AV1 of *A. annua* catalyzes three step oxidation of the amorphous 4, 11-diene to artemisinin acid (Ro et al., 2006). Other isolated CYPs [CIM_CYP02, CIM_CYP03, CIM_CYP04, CIM_CYP05, CIM_CYP06, and CIM_CYP07] of this investigation were found to be novel and hence assayed for enzyme activity. CIM_CYP02 showed more than 90% similarity with CYP73A subfamily, which are predicted

Fig. 3. Multiple sequence alignment for the deduced amino acid sequences of isolated CYPs by ClustalW. Conserved domains for CYPs are shown as boxed (A: Heme binding domain, B: PERF motif, C: KETLR motif, D: Oxygen binding pocket).

Table 2Substrate utilization by microsome fraction from *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* expressed CPR and CYPs.

		CIM_CYP02 (c73)	CIM_CYP 03 (c72a)	CIM_CYP04 (c83)	CIM_CYP05 (c81)	CIM_CYP06 (c72b)	CIM_CYP07(c92)
1	Valencene	No	No	No	No	No	No
2	β -caryophyllene	No	No	No	No	No	No
3	Ledene	No	No	No	No	No	No
4	Gurjunene	No	No	No	No	No	No
5	Farnesene	No	No	No	No	No	No
6	Epicedrol	No	No	No	No	No	No
7	Artemisinic acid	No	No	No	No	No	No
8	Arteannuin B	No	No	No	No	No	No
9	Artemisinin	No	No	No	No	No	No
10	Dihydroartemisinic acid	No	No	No	No	No	No
11	Norannuic acid	No	No	No	No	No	No
12	Cinnamic acid	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
13	Capric acid	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
14	Lauric acid	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
15	Myristic acid	No	No	No	No	No	No
16	Palmitic acid	No	No	No	No	No	No

to be catalyzing 4-hydroxylation of *trans*-cinnamic acid to *p*-coumaric acid (Russell, 1971; Teutsch et al., 1993). CIM_CYP02 was also observed to be converting *trans*-cinnamic acid to *p*-coumaric acid in this analysis (Fig 4a). CIM_CYP03 and CIM_CYP06 showed ~50% and ~60% similarity, respectively with CYP72A subfamily members involved in terpene indole alkaloid biosynthesis and other stress related responses. The CYP72 family is however quite diverse, with 155 named sequences in grape and majority of these have unknown functions. But, the first member of the family, CYP72A1 is characterized to be secologanin synthase, active in *Catharanthus roseus* indole alkaloid biosynthesis (Irmeler et al., 2000). CIM_CYP04 showing ~50% homology with CYP83 family members is predicted to be involved in the biosynthesis of the glucosinolates and most members of these families are involved in glucosinolate biosynthesis in plants (Bak and Feyereisen, 2001). CYP83A1, CYP83B1, CYP71E1 have also been reported to be involved in oxime metabolism (Jorgensen et al., 2011; Naur et al., 2003). CIM_CYP05 showed ~80% homology with the CYP81B subfamily and the function of the members of this family is yet to be worked out in detail. *Helianthus tuberosus* CYP81B1 is involved in in-chain hydroxylation of C:10, C:12, and C:14 fatty acids in higher plants (Cabello-Hurtado et al., 1998). As shown in Table 2 and Fig. 4b, the conversion of capric acid and lauric acid to their hydroxylated products was observed for CIM_CYP05. Some conversion of lauric acid in microsome fraction of *S. cerevisiae* transformed with pESC::CPR may be due to the endogenous enzyme of yeast but, the conversion was higher in the case of pESC::CPR/ CIM_CYP05(c81) transformed microsome fraction. The hydroxylation is better for lauric acid compared to capric acid. CIM_CYP07 showed more than 70% similarity with other CYP92 family members. CYP92 of *Actinidia chinensis* is described to be a putative flavonoid 3'-hydroxylase (Montefiori et al., 2011) and that of *Petunia* is involved in in-chain hydroxylation of fatty acids (Petkova-andonova et al., 2002). Thus, all the CYPs of *A. annua* were tentatively named as CIM_CYP02(c73), CIM_CYP03(c72a), CIM_CYP04(c83), CIM_CYP05(c81), CIM_CYP06(c72b) and CIM_CYP07(c92). These were also assayed for their involvement in secondary metabolism with different sesquiterpenes, phenolics, fatty acids and sesquiterpenoids. No conversion was detected in Gas chromatography (GC) analysis with sesquiterpenes valencene, β -caryophyllene, ledene, gurjunene, farnesene and epicedrol having similar type of structure as that of amorpho 4, 11-diene. Sesquiterpenoids like artemisinic acid, dihydroartemisinic acid, norannuic acid, arteannuin B and artemisinin were also not utilized as substrate by these CYPs as analyzed through HPLC (Table 2). The cytosolic protein from yeast transformed with pESC::CPR/CIM_CYP07 also did not show any activity with the substrates used in this investigation. Though, these CYPs did not react with the sesquiterpenes used in this

investigation on one hand, their involvement in other pathways involving new sesquiterpenes cannot be ruled out.

3.3. Expression analysis of the CYPs

The quantitative expression analysis of CYPs along with artemisinin was carried out at the seedling (20 days after sowing) and mature leaf (150 days after sowing) stages of the plant. The formation of artemisinin in the seedling was not detected by HPTLC analysis while in the mature leaf it was approximately 1%. Increased expression of CIM_CYP71AV1 was observed in the mature leaf. Similar trend was observed for CIM_CYP02(c73), CIM_CYP03(c72a), CIM_CYP04(c83) and CIM_CYP06(c72b) with no significant change in CIM_CYP07(c92) expression. Expression of CIM_CYP05(c81) was more in the seedling compared to the mature leaf (Fig. 5a). When the tissue specific expression was compared in mature plants, none of the CYPs showed expression in the root (Fig. 5b). Higher expression of CIM_CYP71AV1 was detected in the flower bud compared to the leaf and minor expression in the stem. Similar trend was observed for CIM_CYP02(c73) and CIM_CYP04(c83). Higher leaf expression compared to flower bud was detected for CIM_CYP03(c72a) and CIM_CYP07(c92) with very low expression in the stem. CIM_CYP05(c81) expressed in low amount in the leaf and flower bud with no expression in the stem and root. High expression was obtained for CIM_CYP07(c92) in the flower bud, leaf and stem. The genes responsible for the synthesis of artemisinin are supposed to be upregulated as the artemisinin content of the leaf is increased. The transcript abundance studies for the artemisinin biosynthetic pathway genes was carried out by Teoh et al. (2006) in different tissues of the plant and maximum abundance was observed in the trichomes (present in the leaf, flower bud and stem) where the synthesis and storage of the genes are described (Duke et al., 1994). Since negligible amount of artemisinin is detected in the root compared to the leaf, the gene expression in the leaf with the artemisinin content was correlated by Teoh et al. (2006). Though some of the CYPs showed similar correlation, their involvement in artemisinin biosynthetic pathway is not conclusive because activity against the available substrates was not observed. Hence, CYPs showing similar expression pattern with CIM_CYP71AV1 may be predicted to be taking part in the biosynthesis of similar kind of metabolites/or leaf/trichome development by metabolizing other compounds. Expression patterns of CIM_CYP02(c73) and CIM_CYP04(c83) are very much similar to that of CIM_CYP71AV1 as upregulated in the floral bud and mature leaf. CIM_CYP02(c73) showed more than 90% similarity with CYP73A subfamily, members of which are described to be *trans*-cinnamic 4 hydroxylase (C4H), catalyzing 4-hydroxylation of *trans*-cinnamic acid to *p*-coumaric acid (Russell,

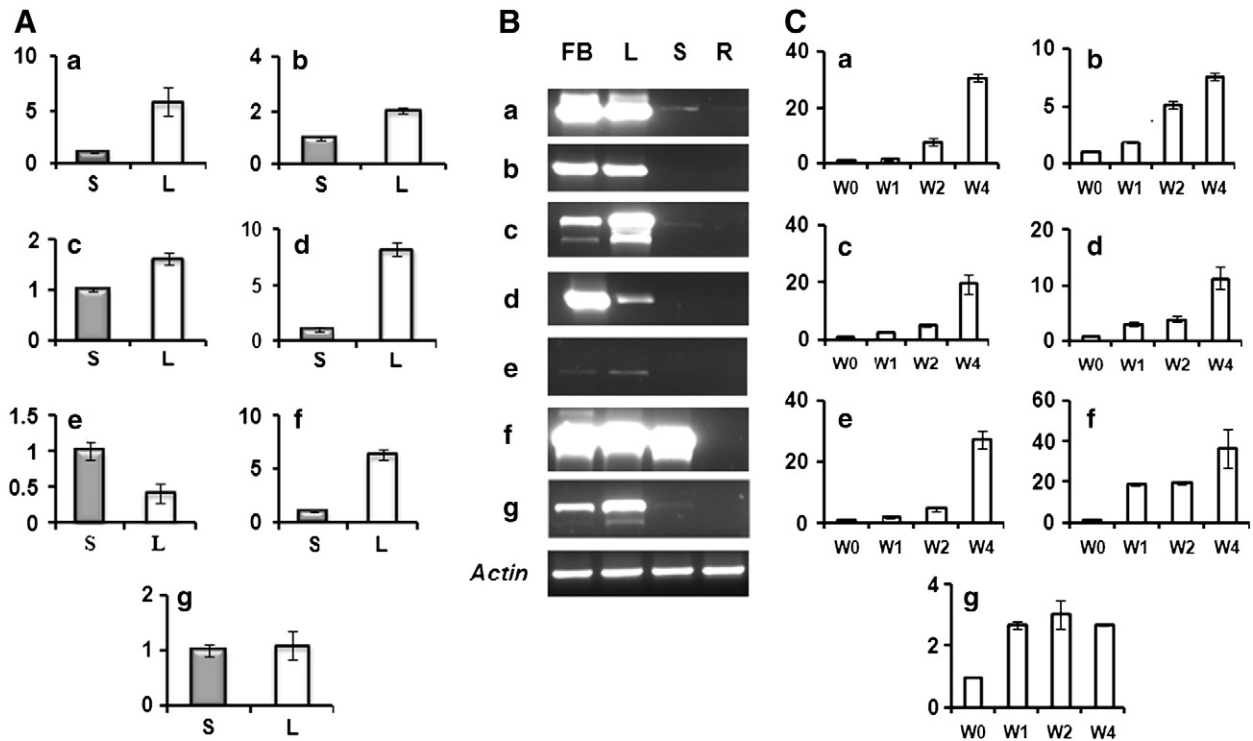


Fig. 5. Expression pattern of full length CYPs [a: *CIM_CYP71AV1*, b: *CIM_CYP02(c73)*, c: *CIM_CYP03(c72a)*, d: *CIM_CYP04(c83)*, e: *CIM_CYP05(c81)*, f: *CIM_CYP06(c72b)* and g: *CIM_CYP07(c92)*]. A. Comparison of quantitative expression levels at seedling and mature leaf stage of *A. annua* (S: 20 days old seedling and L: mature leaf from 150 days old plant). Y-axis represents relative quantity (RQ) equilibrating the expression in seedling as 1RQ value. Data represent mean \pm standard error of 3–5 biological replicates. B. Comparison of semi-quantitative expression levels in different tissues of *A. annua* (FB: flower bud, L: leaf, S: stem, R: Root). C. Comparison of quantitative expression levels after wound induction in mature leaf of *A. annua* (W1, W2, W3, and W4 indicate 0, 1, 2 and 4 h after wound induction). Y-axis represents relative quantity (RQ) equilibrating the expression in seedling as 1RQ value. Data represent mean \pm standard error of 3–5 biological replicates.

1971; Teutsch et al., 1993). Higher expression of this gene in mature leaf and flower bud, instead of seedling, stem and root indicates biosynthesis of phenyl-propanoids and benzoid compounds in the leaves. Similarly, *CIM_CYP04(c83)* may be implicated for hydroxylation of unknown compounds in the leaf trichome.

All CYPs expressed more after wounding and the expression was increased with the time except for *CIM_CYP07(c92)* showing no significant change after initial increase (Fig. 5c). Most of the CYPs involved in secondary metabolite biosynthesis are reported to be upregulated after wounding (Frank et al., 1996; Howe et al., 2000; Major and Constabel, 2006). The expression level of *CIM_CYP07(c92)* was increased slightly after wounding and remained almost constant till 4 h. Members of CYP72A subfamily were induced by wounding in plants (Imaishi and Matumoto, 2007; Mujer and Smigocki, 2001).

They also catalyze the metabolism of herbicides and predicted to be having possible role in plant defense (Mujer and Smigocki, 2001). *CIM_CYP06(c72b)* and *CIM_CYP03(c72a)* belonging to CYP72A subfamily are also induced by wound treatment. CYP81B1 of *Helianthus tuberosus* catalyzing the in-chain hydroxylation of fatty acids has been reported to be induced by wound and other metal ions (Cabello-Hurtado et al., 1998).

The observation of similar expression patterns for *CIM_CYP02(c73)* and *CIM_CYP71AV1* and the fact that both were isolated from trichome enriched tissue, prompted analysis of the effect of phenolics and artemisinin on the expression of both the genes. Both *CIM_CYP71AV1* and *CIM_CYP02(c73)*, were found to be overexpressed when treated with cinnamic acid (Figs. 6a, b). Higher expression of *CIM_CYP02(c73)* may be due to higher availability of substrate. Treatment with

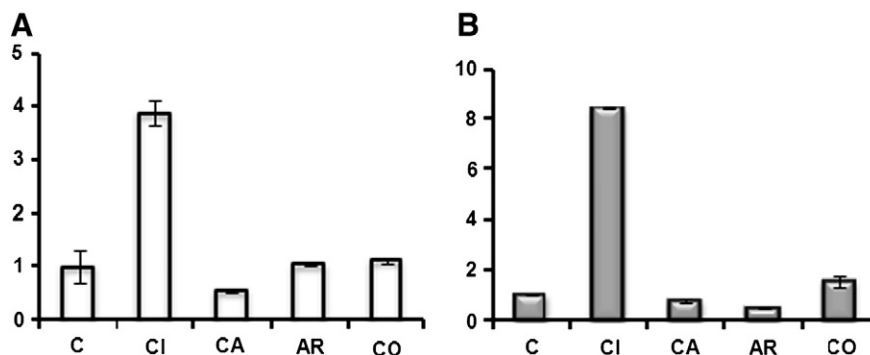


Fig. 6. Quantitative expression pattern of a. *CIM_CYP02(c73)* and b. *CIM_CYP71AV1* when twigs were sprayed with C: methanol (control), CI: *trans*-cinnamic acid, CA: caffeic acid, AR: artemisinin, CO: *p*-coumaric acid.

artemisinin led to the decrease in the expression of *CIM_CYP71AV1* and is in agreement with the finding reported by [Arsenault et al. \(2010\)](#). Expression of *CIM_CYP71AV1* and *CIM_CYP02(c73)* decreased in the plants treated with caffeic acid. Though *p*-coumaric acid induced the expression of *CIM_CYP71AV1* to a lesser extent compared to cinnamic acid, it had no significant effect on *CIM_CYP02(c73)* expression at the same concentration (1 mM). This is in agreement with the finding that coumarate does not inhibit the cinnamate 4-hydroxylation reaction at a concentration as high as 2 mM ([Urban et al., 1994](#)). This indicates the modulation of artemisinin acid biosynthesis by the intermediates of phenyl-propanoids and a probable relationship between these two pathways.

4. Conclusion

This study characterizes the expression pattern and function of 7 full length CYPs isolated from the trichome enriched tissue fraction of *A. annua* leaf. None of the CYPs utilized sesquiterpene as substrates used in this study except *CIM_CYP71AV1* which was earlier reported to be utilizing amorpha 4, 11-diene. *CIM_CYP02(c73)* was confirmed to be a cinnamate 4-hydroxylase converting *trans*-cinnamic acid to *p*-coumaric acid with flower and leaf tissue specific expression. The conversion of capric acid and lauric acid to their hydroxylated products was observed for *CIM_CYP05(c81)*. Also this hydroxylase expressed more in the seedling compared to the leaf tissue. *Trans*-cinnamic acid was found to be inducing the expression of both *CIM_CYP71AV1* and *CIM_CYP02(c73)* whereas artemisinin inhibited the expression of *CIM_CYP71AV1* indicating a relationship between the two pathways.

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