

In silico characterization of putrescine N-methyltransferase in Solanaceae species

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ABSTRACT. The Solanaceae family comprises about 100 genera and 2,500 species, with a cosmopolitan distribution and greatest diversity in the Neotropical region. In Brazil, 36 genera and 506 species have been identified, including 236 endemic species. The family has a high diversity of species of economic importance as a source of food, medicinal extracts, and for ornamental use. The species are sources of bioactive secondary metabolites, with diverse applications. We made a structural and functional characterization and developed three-dimensional models of putrescine N-methyltransferase (PMT) proteins, a key enzyme of secondary metabolism, involved in biosynthesis of nicotine, tropane alkaloids, and calistegines. We examined 48 PMT sequences from Solanaceae species available in public databases. A hydrophilic characteristic of PMT was found for all species, and the isoelectric point demonstrated a somewhat acidic character (5.4 - 6.6). We identified four functional domains in the PMT sequences. Cluster analysis by Neighbor-Joining was consistent with recent taxonomic classifications of the species.

Key words: Bioinformatics; Computational analysis; Homology modeling; Secondary metabolites; Solanaceae

INTRODUCTION

The Solanaceae family has a cosmopolitan distribution, comprising about 100 genera and 2,500 species, with the neotropical region being its most important center of diversity (Olmstead, 2013). According to D'Arcy (1991), South America is considered one of the family's leading centers of taxonomic diversity and endemism, where the widest species variety is found. In Brazil, there are 36 genera and 506 species of the family, 236 of which are endemic to the country (Stehmann et al., 2015). Approximately half of the species in the family belong to only five genera, *Capsicum*, *Cestrum*, *Lycianthes*, *Physalis*, and *Solanum*, the last being the largest and most morphologically diverse (Knapp, 2008; Sampaio et al., 2019).

In view of the great diversity of species belonging to Solanaceae that are present in the Brazilian flora, it is known that many of these have economic importance used as food, pharmacological substances production, and ornamentation. Additionally, plants belonging to this family are also sources of bioactive secondary metabolites of different chemical classes, such as steroidal alkaloids, tropane alkaloids, pyridine alkaloids, vitanolides, glycoalkaloids, flavonoids, among others, which have the most diverse applications (Corrêa, 2015).

Putrescine N-methyltransferase (PMT) is a crucial enzyme of secondary plant metabolism in initiating the specific biosynthesis of nicotine, tropane alkaloids, and calistegines, which are glucosidase inhibitors with nortropane structure. Studies claim that PMT proteins likely evolved from spermidine synthases (SPDSs), ubiquitous polyamine metabolism enzymes (Teuber et al., 2007; Junker et al., 2013; Moallem, 2017).

According to Leite et al. (2012), polyamines are fundamental molecules for the growth and functioning of cells. They interact with many macromolecules in the biological environment, both electrostatically and covalently. Such molecules play an essential role in cell growth and proliferation and the synthesis of proteins and nucleic acids, being also involved in extracellular matrix repair, cell adhesion, and signaling processes.

Methyltransferases have essential biological functions in nucleic acid methylation and protein methylation, which alter the activity of DNA, RNA, or protein, and the methylation of small molecules, such as mammalian and plant hormones or plant secondary metabolites, is of fundamental importance for the organism (Teuber et al., 2007). According to Stenzel et al. (2006), the transfer of N-methyl from the first specific steps catalyzes putrescine N-methyltransferase for the biosynthesis of tropane and nicotine alkaloids. The enzyme uses S-adenosyl-1-methionine as the methyl group donor and putrescine as the substrate, with only one or a few other diamines methylated less efficiently.

Geng et al. (2018) state that although the role of PMT in nicotine biosynthesis is clear, knowledge of PMT in the biosynthesis of tropane alkaloids and the regulation of polyamines remains limited. Biastoff et al. (2009) state that the biological history of PMT is still unclear, given the emergence of a concept for the evolution of this enzyme at the branch point between primary and secondary metabolism. According to Junker et al. (2013), it remains unclear whether putrescine N-methyltransferases (PMTs) occur in more unrelated families of higher plants and whether the hitherto undetected PMTs are similar to current PMT sequences, or whether new groups form.

According to the above, the present study aimed to: (1) structurally and functionally characterize the putrescine N-methyltransferase sequences of species of the Solanaceae

family by bioinformatics methodologies; (2) develop three-dimensional models of the putrescine N-methyltransferase of representatives of the Solanaceae family, based on the homology modeling methodology, in order to enable a better understanding of their molecular structures and functions.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Sequences retrieval

The putrescine N-methyltransferase sequences were obtained from the NCBI (National Center for Biotechnology Information) platform, using the BLAST (Basic Local Alignment Search Tool) search algorithm, downloading them in FASTA format. BLASTp tool recovered protein sequences in Solanaceae species to search for homologs, where a total of 48 sequences were found.

Sequence Analysis

The ProtParam analyzed physicochemical parameters of PMT present in species of the Solanaceae family (<http://web.expasy.org/protparam>) (Gasteiger et al., 2005). CELLO2GO server predicted subcellular locations (Yu et al., 2014). The identification of the functional domains of the protein using the Prodom server to its classification and ontology, a family database of protein domains of homologous segments (<http://prodom.prabi.fr/prodom/>) (Servant et al., 2002). The estimation of the functional effects caused by mutations of amino acid sequences through the SNAP2 server (<https://roslab.org/services/snap2web/>) (Hecht et al., 2015).

Alignment and Phenetic Analysis

The PMT enzyme sequences were aligned using the ClustalW algorithm. Then, MEGA 7.0.21 software performed the cluster analyses (Kumar et al., 2016) using the neighbor-joining method with a bootstrap test with 1000 replicas.

Tertiary structure prediction, evaluation, and validation of the model

The tertiary structure prediction to find 3-D models of PMTs used the Phyre2 server in multi-template mode (<http://www.sbg.bio.ic.ac.uk/phyre2>) (Kelley et al., 2015). This server uses advanced homology detection methods to build a 3D model. The 3D structure visualization of the protein used the UCSF Chimera package (Pettersen et al., 2004). Model quality assessment using the Molprobit server (<http://molprobit.biochem.duke.edu/>) by Ramachandran analysis (Chen et al., 2010). The ProSA-web interactive server calculated the Z-score (<https://prosa.services.came.sbg.ac.at/prosa.php>) to recognize errors in three-dimensional structures (Wiederstein et al., 2007). The energy minimization and correction of minor errors in the three-dimensional model were performed by the Yasara force Field server (Krieger et al., 2009) and the KiNG software (Chen et al., 2009).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The forty-eight Putrescine N-methyltransferase sequences of Solanaceae species analyzed from protein sequences available in the NCBI database, retrieved in FASTA format, are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Putrescine N-methyltransferase sequence analysis in species of the Solanaceae family.

Species	GB-ID	GenBank definition	Family
<i>Anisodus acutangulus</i>	ACF21005.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 1	Solanaceae
<i>Anisodus acutangulus</i>	ACF21006.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 2	Solanaceae
<i>Anisodus luridus</i>	AGL76988.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Anisodus tanguticus</i>	AAT99576.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Atropa belladonna</i>	BAA82261.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 1	Solanaceae
<i>Atropa belladonna</i>	BAA82262.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 2	Solanaceae
<i>Capsicum annuum</i>	XP_016557670.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 1	Solanaceae
<i>Capsicum annuum</i>	XP_016553600.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 2-like	Solanaceae
<i>Capsicum annuum</i>	KAF3624529.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 3	Solanaceae
<i>Capsicum annuum</i>	PHT78552.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 3	Solanaceae
<i>Capsicum baccatum</i>	PHT30221.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 3	Solanaceae
<i>Capsicum baccatum</i>	PHT45224.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 3	Solanaceae
<i>Capsicum chinense</i>	PHU08967.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 3	Solanaceae
<i>Capsicum chinense</i>	PHU14344.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 3	Solanaceae
<i>Datura innoxia</i>	CAJ46253.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 1	Solanaceae
<i>Datura innoxia</i>	CAJ46254.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 2	Solanaceae
<i>Datura metel</i>	AAQ94738.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Datura stramonium</i>	CAE47481.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Hoscyamus niger</i>	BAA82263.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana attenuata</i>	AAK49870.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 1	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana attenuata</i>	OIT40667.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 1	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana attenuata</i>	XP_019258257.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 2	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana attenuata</i>	XP_019258255.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 3	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana benthamiana</i>	ABY25273.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana sylvestris</i>	BAA74544.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana sylvestris</i>	XP_009771961.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 2	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana sylvestris</i>	XP_009771962.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 3	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana sylvestris</i>	XP_009786665.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 4 isoform X1	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana sylvestris</i>	XP_009786666.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 4 isoform X2	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	XP_016446557.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 1	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	NP_001312037.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 1	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	XP_016478024.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 2	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	XP_016478023.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 3	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	XP_016445029.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 4	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana tomentosiformis</i>	XP_018627768.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 1 isoform X2	Solanaceae
<i>Nicotiana tomentosiformis</i>	XP_009606202.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase isoform X1	Solanaceae
<i>Physalis divaricata</i>	CAJ46255.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	CAQ19733.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>	NP_001233790.2	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>	CAJ46251.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>	XP_004244762.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 2	Solanaceae
<i>Solanum pennellii</i>	XP_015084559.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 2	Solanaceae
<i>Solanum pennellii</i>	XP_015078654.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 3-like	Solanaceae
<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>	CAE53633.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>	XP_006350699.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase 3-like	Solanaceae
<i>Solanum chilense</i> *	TMX00678.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Solanum commersonii</i> *	KAG5589663.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae
<i>Solanum commersonii</i> *	KAG5600829.1	putrescine N-methyltransferase	Solanaceae

GB-ID: Genbank Identification. *: Hypothetical sequence.

Observing parameters such as molecular weight, theoretical isoelectric point (pI), and the average hydrophobicity (GRAVY) of the evaluated protein sequences was possible through the ProtParam program (Table 2). The isoelectric point of the sequences varied between 5.36

(*Datura metel*) and 6.6 (*Solanum pennellii*), indicating their acidic character. These results indicate that the pIs evaluated were hydrophilic. Since the isoelectric point (pI) is the pH at which a given molecule carries no net electrical charge, pI has wide use in currently used proteomic and biochemical techniques, such as during electrophoresis, where the direction of migration of proteins in the gel depends on the charge, so it is possible to separate proteins in a gel-based on their Ip (Kozlowski, 2017).

Table 2. Analysis of the primary structure of putrescine N-methyltransferase sequences from species of the Solanaceae family.

Species	Number of amino acids	MW (kDa)	pI	GRAVY
<i>Anisodus acutangulus</i>	347	38.10	6.51	-0.001
<i>Anisodus acutangulus</i>	338	37.19	5.86	-0.034
<i>Anisodus luridus</i>	338	37.17	5.73	-0.02
<i>Anisodus tanguticus</i>	338	37.17	5.73	-0.009
<i>Atropa belladonna</i>	340	37.46	6.18	-0.032
<i>Atropa belladonna</i>	336	36.97	5.86	-0.032
<i>Capsicum annuum</i>	341	37.33	6.06	-0.023
<i>Capsicum annuum</i>	355	39.04	5.81	-0.134
<i>Capsicum annuum</i>	355	39.07	5.81	-0.141
<i>Capsicum annuum</i>	354	38.97	5.81	-0.139
<i>Capsicum baccatum</i>	341	37.37	6.14	-0.036
<i>Capsicum baccatum</i>	355	39.03	6.12	-0.148
<i>Capsicum chinense</i>	341	37.30	5.68	-0.018
<i>Capsicum chinense</i>	353	38.88	5.93	-0.111
<i>Datura inoxia</i>	340	37.37	5.88	-0.075
<i>Datura inoxia</i>	341	37.47	5.76	-0.071
<i>Datura metel</i>	343	37.46	5.36	-0.043
<i>Datura stramonium</i>	344	37.72	6.00	-0.066
<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>	388	37.20	5.78	-0.051
<i>Nicotiana attenuata</i>	388	42.56	5.95	-0.288
<i>Nicotiana attenuata</i>	371	40.69	5.84	-0.223
<i>Nicotiana attenuata</i>	388	42.62	5.95	-0.279
<i>Nicotiana attenuata</i>	405	44.57	5.73	-0.119
<i>Nicotiana benthamiana</i>	388	42.82	6.34	-0.322
<i>Nicotiana sylvestris</i>	353	38.76	5.62	-0.104
<i>Nicotiana sylvestris</i>	430	47.17	6.20	-0.466
<i>Nicotiana sylvestris</i>	381	41.79	5.95	-0.244
<i>Nicotiana sylvestris</i>	419	45.98	6.22	-0.416
<i>Nicotiana sylvestris</i>	386	42.34	6.1	-0.256
<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	353	38.74	5.74	-0.083
<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	375	41.14	5.74	-0.219
<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	375	41.11	5.74	-0.226
<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	403	44.20	6.21	-0.364
<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	386	42.28	6.10	-0.266
<i>Nicotiana tomentosiformis</i>	364	39.87	5.69	-0.16
<i>Nicotiana tomentosiformis</i>	375	41.15	5.84	-0.218
<i>Physalis divaricata</i>	344	37.58	5.81	-0.066
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	340	37.33	6.05	-0.032
<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>	340	37.56	6.06	-0.079
<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>	340	37.47	6.15	-0.069
<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>	340	37.51	6.15	-0.074
<i>Solanum pennellii</i>	340	37.48	6.60	-0.066
<i>Solanum pennellii</i>	342	37.71	6.15	-0.082
<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>	340	37.35	5.99	-0.019
<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>	339	37.43	6.15	-0.097
<i>Solanum chilense</i> *	340	37.48	6.37	-0.063
<i>Solanum commersonii</i> *	340	37.43	5.88	-0.094
<i>Solanum commersonii</i> *	333	36.76	5.93	-0.062

MW: Molecular Weight. pI: Isoelectric point. GRAVY: Grand Average of Hydrophobicity. *: Hypothetical sequence.

The GRAVY value calculation for a peptide or protein used the sum of the hydrophobicity values of all amino acids divided by the total number of residues in the sequence (Bezerra et al., 2018) which presents a negative average for the hydrophobicity index (GRAVY). The values ranged from -0.001 (*Anisodus acutangulus*) to -0.466 (*Nicotiana sylvestris*), which suggests a hydrophilic character of this protein for all species because, as defined by Kyte and Doolittle (1982), the hydrophobicity index reveals the potential of residues to interact with constituents of membrane regions or for protein stabilization through interactions between its domains.

The PMT sequences ranged in length from 336 (*Atropa belladonna*) to 430 (*Nicotiana sylvestris*) amino acids. The molecular weight (MW) ranged from 36.97 kDa (*Atropa belladonna*) to 47.17 kDa (*Nicotiana sylvestris*) (Table 2). The analysis of the subcellular localization using the CELLO2GO server predicted that the evaluated PMTs are intracellular proteins classified as cytoplasmic.

Four conserved domains were identified based on the results obtained (Figure 1). Only the PD002785 domain occurs in all analyzed sequences and associates with thermospermine synthases and spermidine synthase activity. PMTs show similarities between amino acid sequence and spermidine synthases (SPDSs), which are different from other plant methyltransferases (Junker et al., 2013). Furthermore, spermidine synthase (SPDS) is known to accept the same substrate as PMT, putrescine, despite a slightly different co-substrate, decarboxylated S-adenosyl methionine (dcSAM), which forms spermidine, which is an essential polyamine in all eukaryotic organisms (Teuber et al., 2007).

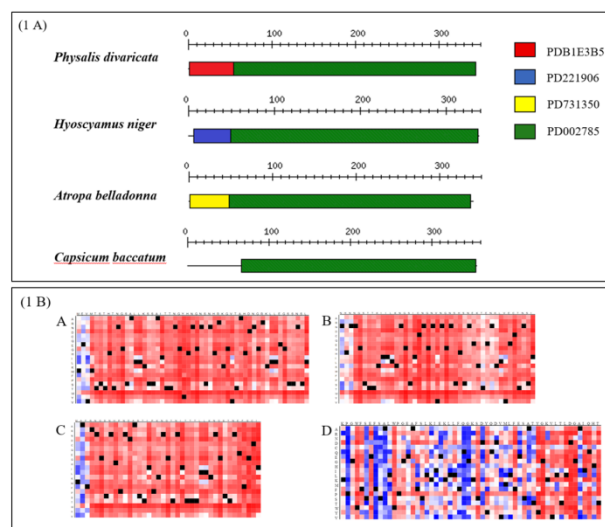


Figure 1. (1A) Functional domains observation through the ProDom server. (1B) Prediction of functional effects of amino acid mutations by SNAP2 server for domains PDB1E385 (A) *Physalis divaricata*, PD221906 (B) *Hyoscyamus niger*, PD731350 (C) *Atropa belladonna*, and PD002785 (D) *Capsicum baccatum*.

The PDB1E385 domain is present in 28 of the 49 sequences analyzed, transferring a methyl group to diamine putrescine from S-adenosyl-1-methionine (SAM) as a coenzyme. The PD221906 domain was found in six sequences, while the PD731350 domain is present

only in *Atropa belladonna*, in the sequence BAA82262.1, and both do not yet have a characterized function.

The SNAP2 server analyzed that the functional domains PDB1E385, PD221906, and PD731350 are the protein regions most sensitive to mutations. This server provided a map with the presence of different shades with possible substitution at each position of these proteins. The red color indicates strong mutation signals, the white color indicates weak signals, and the blue indicates neutrality. A smaller number of mutation-sensitive sites in the PD002785 domain explains its conservation and occurrence in all analyzed sequences (Figure 1).

The creation of the phenetic tree aimed to characterize the PMT sequences more efficiently and better understand the phylogenetic relationship between the different species belonging to the Solanaceae family under study through the MEGA 7 server. The species have the PD002785 domain, allowing the first group formation observation by sequences with the PDB1E385 domain present in the genera *Capsium*, *Datura*, *Nicotiana*, *Physalis*, and *Solanum*. This domain is involved in transferring a methyl group to the diamine putrescine from S-adenosyl-1-methionine (SAM) as a coenzyme. However, the second group formed included proteins with domains that remain uncharacterized by function.

The formation of a group with 100% support was observed, which groups the species of *Nicotiana*, belonging to the subfamily Nicotianoideae. The other genera under study comprise the subfamily Solanoideae. Such results are similar to the results obtained by Olmstead et al. (2008), who proposed a phylogeny of Solanaceae based on the *ndhF* and *trnLF* chloroplast DNA regions, comprising 89 genera and 190 species. Having the formation of the clade “x = 12” with all species joined by a base chromosome number 12, with the referred clade being one of the most strongly supported branches in the tree (99% BS), composed of two strongly supported sister groups, which would be Nicotianoideae (*Nicotiana* plus Anthocercideae 99%) and Solanoideae (95%). Subsequently, Särkinen et al. (2013), through molecular and fossil data, analyzed 40% of the total species of Solanaceae, with 34% of the sampling referring to species within the genus *Solanum*, “x = 12” is established with solid support, with Nicotianoideae resolved as sister to the clade formed by Solanoideae.

Regarding the Solanoideae subfamily, Olmstead et al. (2008) defined four clades, all with bootstrap support $\geq 78\%$, namely (1) Atropina (*Hyoscyameae*, *Lycieae*, *Jaborosa*, *Latua*, *Nolana*, and *Sclerophylax*), (2) Juanulloaeae, (3) Solaneae, Capsiceae, Physaleae and Datureae, and (4) Salpichroina (*Salpichroa* and *Nectouxia*), these data later corroborated by Särkinen et al. (2013). Such placements are similar to the results obtained in the present study. One can observe the formation of a cluster between *Hyoscyamus*, *Atropa*, and *Anisodus*, which comprise the Atropina clade. Other groups formed by the genus *Solanum*, *Capsicum*, *Datura*, and *Physalis* comprise the clade, as mentioned earlier, composed of Solaneae, Capsiceae, Datureae, and Physaleae.

Figure 2 illustrates the cluster analysis of Solanaceae with the inclusion of species of the subfamily Nicotianoideae, with representatives of the tribe Nicotianeae, and of the subfamily Solanoideae, with representatives of the tribes Hyoscyameae, Solaneae, Capsiceae, Datureae, and Physaleae.

The modeling of the tertiary structure of proteins uses different methodologies, one of them being homology modeling, which uses software as tools that allow the obtaining of models through information on similarity between the sequence of the protein of interest

and deposited structures. In databases experimentally determined to extract later information on common ancestry between them (Rego, 2012). Model validation occurs through tools such as the Ramachandran chart and Z-score (Santos, 2021).

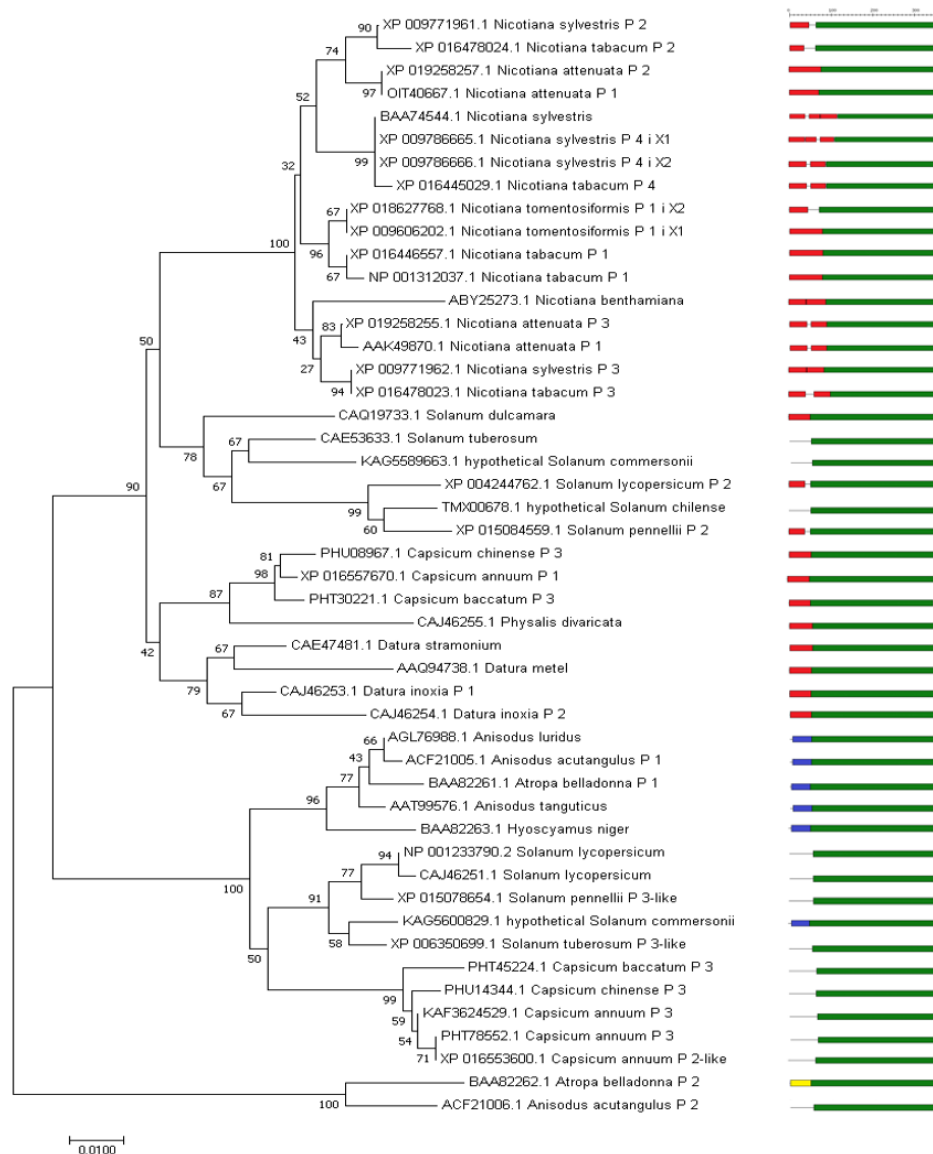


Figure 2. Cluster analysis obtained by the Neighbor-Joining method of Solanaceae species, based on putrescine N-methyltransferase sequences. The four functional domains (PD002785; PDB1E385; PD221906 and PD731350) are represented for each species.

Putrescine N-methyltransferase sequences from *Atropa belladonna*, *Capsicum baccatum*, *Hyoscyamus niger*, and *Physalis divaricata* used the Phyre2 server to predict the tertiary protein structures (Figure 3). After refinement of the 3D structures by KiNG and

Yasara Force Field software, the evaluation of models by the MOLPROBITY server for error recognition in tertiary structures. The PD221906 and PD731350 domains have one alpha-helix formation, while the PDB1E3B5 domain formed two alpha-helices. The PD002785 domain has a conserved conformation explained by the fact that it occurs in all species analyzed.

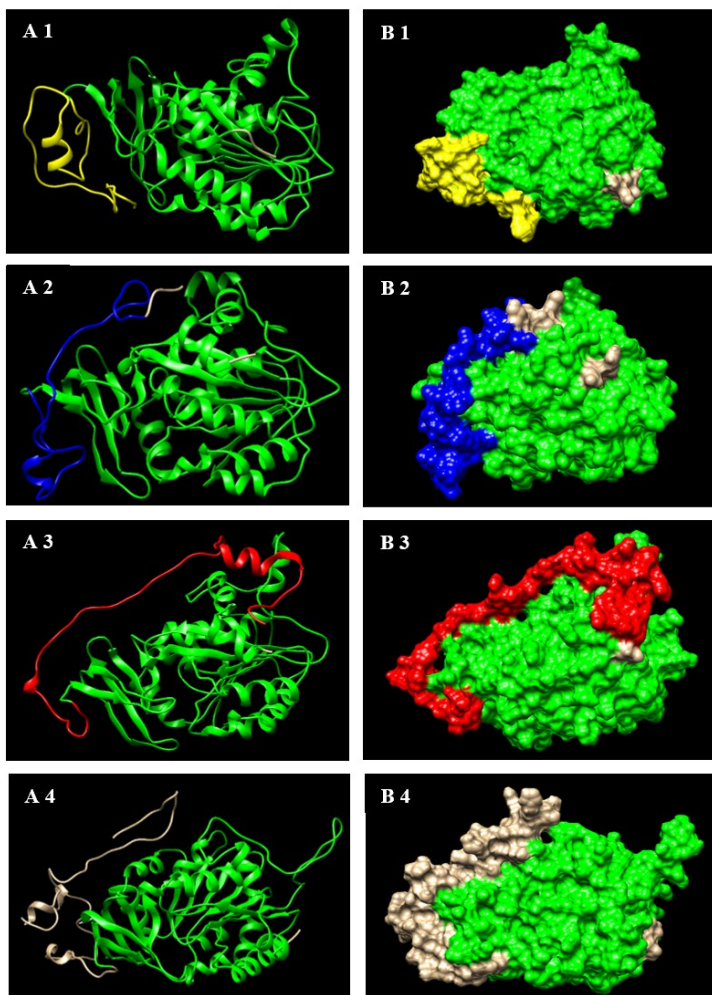


Figure 3. Three-dimensional structure of putrescine N-methyltransferase generated by Phyre2 server for *Atropa belladonna* (A1 and B1); *Hyoscyamus niger* (A2 and B2); *Physalis divaricata* (A3 and B3) and *Capsicum baccatum* (A4 and B4).

Based on the data obtained from the Prosa server, the quality of the models proved to be satisfactory, as they presented Z-score results of -8.12 for *Atropa belladonna*; -7.34 for *Capsicum baccatum*; -8.41 for *Hyoscyamus niger*; -8.05 for *Physalis divaricata*, respectively (Figure 4). According to Abreu (2015), Z-score values can be considered important from a thermodynamic and structural quality point of view. Furthermore, they can

present values very close or even higher concerning experimentally elucidated proteins, thus showing the reliability of the models.

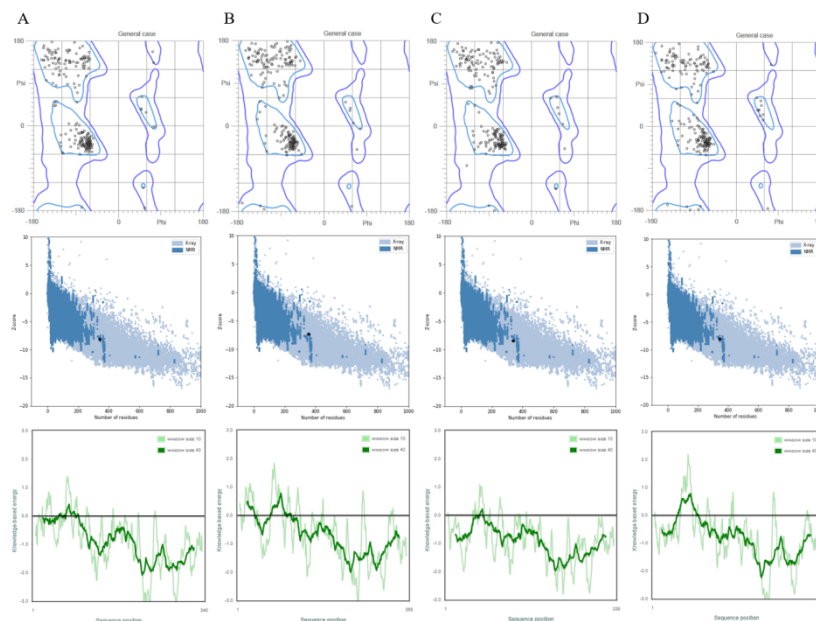


Figure 4. Analysis of the Ramachandran graph generated by the MolProbity server from the three-dimensional model built by the Phyre2 server for *Atropa belladonna* (A1); *Capsicum baccatum* (B1); *Hyoscyamus niger* (C1), and *Physalis divaricata* (D1). Z-score value by ProSA-web for *Atropa belladonna* (A2); *Capsicum baccatum* (B2); *Hyoscyamus niger* (C2) and *Physalis divaricata* (D2). Use of ProSA-web for putrescine N-methyltransferase showing residue energy scatter plot of native protein structure for *Atropa belladonna* (A3); *Capsicum baccatum* (B3); *Hyoscyamus niger* (C3) and *Physalis divaricata* (D3).

The data generated from the refined models showed 98.5, 98.9, 99.1, and 98.5% of residues in regions of propitious shape by the analysis of the Ramachandran graph for the species *Atropa belladonna*, *Capsicum baccatum*, *Hyoscyamus niger*, and *Physalis divaricata*, respectively (Figure 4).

Coding sequences generate three-dimensional structures; therefore, biological effects can be studied and evaluated more precisely. Predicting three-dimensional structures of proteins usually results in practical applications of significant therapeutic and biotechnological impact (Capriles et al., 2014; Abreu, 2015). Computational methods have become increasingly used for protein prediction, bringing a more significant basis for the experimental part, aiming at a previously determined result. Homology or comparative modeling is the most used because it effectively generates good results and the quality of the predicted models, which have a reasonable evolutionary relationship and present a greater precision than those produced with different techniques (Abreu, 2015).

CONCLUSIONS

The developed study allowed a better understanding of the functions of putrescine N-methyltransferase in the regulation of alkaloid synthesis. Allied to this, the grouping

obtained through the PMT sequences corroborates the phylogeny of species currently accepted for the Solanaceae family.

The *in silico* methodology proved to be valid and reliable in the generation of 3D models, building models within the standards, which can be considered a very close representation of the protein's actual structure.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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