

# Vitamin D3 in plants

effect of UVB exposure

**Jäpelt, Rie Bak; Silvestro, Daniele; Smedsgaard, Jørn; Jensen, Poul-Erik; Jakobsen, Jette**

*Publication date:*
2012

*Document Version*
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

**Poster: Vitamin $D_3$ in plants – effect of UVB exposure**

**Name: Rie Bak Jäpelt**

**Address: Technical University of Denmark, National Food Institute, Mørkhøj Bygade 19, 2860 Søborg, Denmark**

**Co-authors: Daniele Silvestro (b), Jørn Smedsgaard (a), Poul Erik Jensen (b), Jette Jakobsen (a). (a) Technical University of Denmark, National Food Institute, Mørkhøj Bygade 19, 2860 Søborg, Denmark, (b) VKR research centre "Pro-Active Plants", Section for Molecular Plant Biology, Department of Plant Biology and Biotechnology, University of Copenhagen, Thorvaldsensvej 40, 1871 Frederiksberg, Denmark.**

**Introduction**: As a surprise for many not only vitamin $D_2$, but also vitamin $D_3$ can be found in plants. Vitamin $D_3$ is formed in the skin of vertebrates by exposure to UVB light (Fig. 1). The synthesis of vitamin $D_3$ in plants is on the other hand unresolved and contradicting results regarding the dependence of UVB-light has been presented (1,2,3). The aim of this study was, therefore, to investigate vitamin $D_3$ synthesis and metabolism in plants and how it changes upon UVB-exposure. Most work on vitamin $D_3$ in plants has been done with non-selective methods such as bioassays, but this study utilizes LC-MS/MS with derivatization to improve sensitivity and selectivity.

**Material**: Plants were grown in growth chambers with or without UVB light. Three *Solanaceous* species were used: *Solanum glaucophyllum* Desf. (waxy leaf nightshade), *Solanum lycopersicum* L. (tomato) and *Capsicum annuum* L. (pepper).

**Method:** The leaves were harvested, freeze-dried and saponified over-night. The vitamin $D_3$ metabolites were extracted from the non-saponified matter followed by solid phase clean-up. Further clean-up was performed with semi-preparative HPLC. Fractions of vitamin $D_3$, 25-hydroxy vitamin $D_3$ and 1,25-dihydroxy vitamin $D_3$ were collected separately and derivatized with 4-Phenyl-1,2,4-triazoline-3,5-dione (PTAD) to increase sensitivity (Fig. 2). The derivatized extracts were subsequently analyzed by LC-ESI-MS/MS. The vitamin $D_3$ metabolites were quantified using their deuterated form as internal standard.

**Results**: Vitamin $D_3$ was identified in *S. glaucophyllum*, *S. lycopersicum* and *C. annuum* (1.7-200 ng/g dry wt.). The vitamin $D_3$ content in the UVB-exposed plants was 18-64 times higher than for the not UVB-exposed plants. 25-hydroxy vitamin $D_3$ was only identified in the UVB-exposed plants (0.5-31 ng/g dry wt.), whereas 1,25-dihydroxy vitamin $D_3$ only was found in UVB-exposed *S. glaucophyllum* (32 ng/g dry wt.).

**Conclusion:** It is remarkable that the leaves of the *Solanaceous* family contain high amounts of vitamin $D_3$ bearing in mind that the fruits from, e.g. tomato is an important food for humans. Thus, the potential of plants as a vitamin $D_3$ source exists. This study demonstrates that both UVB-dependent and independent pathways for biosynthesis of vitamin $D_3$ exist in plants.

**Acknowledgement:** We acknowledge The Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agri Business (3304-FVFP-07-774-02) and Technical University of Denmark for financial support. We would also like to thank Astrid Kvindebjerg for technical assistance.

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