Differentiation Among Garlic Viruses in Mixed Infections Based on RT-PCR Procedures and Direct Tissue Blotting Immunoassays

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ABSTRACT


A total of six viruses belonging to at least three distinct genera, Potyvirus, Carlaviruses, and a novel unclassified genus, were identified from infected garlic plants in Japan based on partial cDNA cloning and sequencing of genomes. We developed procedures that combined reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) with restriction analysis for identification of each of the six viruses. The respective viral coat protein genes were expressed as fusion proteins in Escherichia coli, and the products were used as immunogens for producing antibodies that reacted against viral particles. The antisera obtained specifically recognized each of three types of rod-shaped virus particles according to immuno-electron microscopy and enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay. Furthermore, a convenient serological method based on direct tissue blotting immunoassay (DTBIA) was developed. Survey of virus incidence using both DTBIA and RT-PCR presented direct evidence for mixed infections of garlic plants with several viruses. In addition, DTBIA is suitable for large-scale and routine diagnosis of garlic viruses.

Additional keyword: garlic latent virus, garlic mite-borne mosaic virus, garlic mosaic virus, leek yellow stripe virus.

Viral diseases of garlic (Allium sativum L.) are widespread throughout the world, and losses in crop yields and deterioration of quality due to virus infection are serious problems because garlic plants are propagated vegetatively (12,15,28,29). A number of reports have described the causal viruses of garlic diseases. Identification of the viruses that infect garlic, however, is complicated, and the pertinent literature is confusing (6,24,25,26,30).

In Japan, a potyvirus, designated garlic mosaic virus (GMV), and a carlavirus, designated garlic latent virus (GLV), have been detected in garlic plants (1,2,10). Although a close serological relationship between GLV and shallot latent virus (SLV) is suggested (21,26), a precise assignment has not yet been done. Therefore, we use GLV throughout this manuscript. GMV is suggested as the causative agent of a mosaic disease of garlic, whereas GLV can infect garlic systemically but causes no apparent disease symptoms (10,21). It has been reported that double infection with GMV and GLV results in more severe symptoms than those induced by infection with GMV alone (21). However, GMV and GLV have not been biochemically or physically analyzed, and there is no information about their interspecies relationship. Recently, Yamashita (32) isolated a mite-borne virus from a diseased garlic plant and provisionally designated it as garlic mite-borne mosaic virus (GMBMV). Based on the differences in both host range and serology, Van Dijk (24,25,26) differentiated two potyviruses, leek yellow stripe virus (LYSV) and onion yellow dwarf virus (OYDV); two carlaviruses, SLV and garlic common latent virus; and mite-borne rymovirus(es) among rod-shaped garlic viruses. In any case, most unselected commercial garlic cultivars are infected with a complex of two or more viruses. The relatively restricted host ranges and the lack of sensitive methods for detecting the individual viruses have led to confusion in differentiating among garlic viruses.

Recent advances in molecular biology have provided new tools for classification and identification of viruses. Such molecular characteristics as viral genome sequence and organization have been useful for distinguishing viruses from strains and for determining the relationships between genera of distinct viruses (4,5,23,31). Indeed, we previously detected four independent viral cDNA clones (23), designated GV-A, -B, -C, and -D and indicated that they represent a novel and unclassified group of plant viruses and that they may be similar to shallot virus X (ShVX), which was recently reported by Kanyuka et al. (9). These garlic viruses recently were described as GarV-A, -B, -C, and -D under "unassigned viruses" in the "Sixth Report of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses" (16). Nagakubo et al. (17) recently reported cDNA cloning and nucleotide sequencing of the 3' regions of a garlic potyvirus and of a carlavirus using a cloning strategy similar to ours (23). In addition, isolation and characterization of viruses based on their cDNAs make it possible to prepare virus-specific antisera raised against the bacterially expressed viral coat protein (CP) gene, primers, or probes to help in identifying unknown viruses that are difficult to isolate by traditional methods.

Here we report cDNA cloning of RNAs derived from a potyvirus (cDNA clone GV-7) and a carlavirus (cDNA clone GV-H) infecting garlic plants and describe the development of diagnostic methods for each of six viruses. Finally, we present evidence for mixed infections of garlic plants with several viruses.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Plant materials. The garlic cultivars Fukuchi-howaito, Hokkaido-zairai, and Ishu-wase; an unknown Chinese cultivar; and clones of fertilized wild species (7) were used. Fukuchi-howaito plants with virus disease symptoms were collected from the In-
stitute for Biotechnology Research, Wakunaga Pharmaceutical Co., experimental farm in Hokkaido, Japan, and the leaves were used for virion preparation. Hokkaido-zairai and clones of the fertilized wild species also were from the experimental farm. Garlic bulbs of Ito-wase and the unknown Chinese cultivar were purchased in the market and grown in a greenhouse.

**Virus isolates.** Isolates of GLV and GBMV (provisional designation) (32) were provided by Y. Ikeda (Hirosima Prefectural Agriculture Research Center) and K. Yamashita (Aomori Green Bio Center), respectively. GLV was a single local-lesion isolate from *Vicia faba*. GBMV was maintained through several transmissions by a mite (*Eriophyes tulipae*).

**Purification of virions and cDNA cloning.** Virions were partially purified from garlic leaves collected in the field that showed mosaic or yellow streak symptoms according to the procedures of Mohamed and Young (15). cDNA synthesis and cloning were done as described previously (23).

**Construction of expression vectors for CP genes.** The putative CP genes encoded on GV-7, -H, and -C cDNAs were amplified by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) using the viral cDNAs as templates. The primer sets for amplification of the CP genes of GV-7, -H, and -C were 5'-TGAAGCTTCTGCATAGAAGGAT-ACA-3' and 5'-GTAGTCGGAAAGCCTACCCCGTTCAC-3', 5'-GGACGCGCTTCGCTAAGAAGAGACCTC-3' and 5'-GTAGTCGATGGAGAAGGTACCTGAC-3', and 5'-CTCGGGCACAGCCTGTCAC-3' and 5'-GGATCCGGCAGAAGATTTGAAGAAGTGC-3', respectively. The upstream primers for GV-7 and -C had the HindIII recognition sequence, and the primer for GV-H had the MluI site at the 5' end. These were intentionally added for ease in construction of the expression vectors. The Sall site was similarly added to all downstream primers. Twenty-five cycles of PCR were performed using *Taq* DNA polymerase (GIBCO-BRL, Gaithersburg, MD) with denaturation at 94°C for 1 min, annealing at 45°C for 1 min, and extension at 72°C for 2 min. The amplified DNA fragments were purified by agarose gel electrophoresis and extracted by electroelution. The DNA fragments amplified from the cDNAs of GV-7, -H, and -C were ligated to the expression vector pTAA122 (19) or pTGC1 (14) after double digestion with HindIII (or MluI) and Sall. The chimeric expression plasmids that were obtained (designated pTAC-7, pTAC-P, and pTGC-P) were used to transform *Escherichia coli* HB101. The transformants containing pTAC-7, pTAC-P, or pTGC-P were destined to produce the fusion protein composed of the viral CP fused to the signal peptide of *E. coli* alkaline phosphatase (pTAC-7 and pTAC-P) or to the amino terminal 13 amino acids of human growth hormone (pTGC-P).

**Purification of the fusion proteins.** *E. coli* HB101 containing pTAC-7, pTAC-P, or pTGC-P was grown as described by Misoka et al. (14). The cells were collected by centrifugation and suspended in 50 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.0), after which they were disrupted by sonication. The lysates were centrifuged at 12,000 x g for 10 min, washed three times with 50 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.0), and resuspended in a glass homogenizer in buffer containing 5 M urea. After removing any undissolved materials by centrifugation (12,000 x g for 15 min), the supernatants were dialyzed, first against 10 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.0) then against distilled water. The recombiant viral CPs were recovered mainly from the supernatants and were estimated roughly to be more than 70% pure by sodium dodecyl sulfate-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE).

**Preparation of antisera.** Approximately 1 mg of the partially purified fusion protein was mixed with an equal volume of complete Freund's adjuvant and injected subcutaneously twice into Japanese white rabbits at weekly intervals. The animals were reimmunized twice more at weekly intervals with about 1 mg of the fusion protein mixed with an equal volume of incomplete Freund's adjuvant. Serum was collected 2 weeks after the last immunization.

**Immunoelectron microscopy.** The trap decoration method (13) was used for immunoelectron microscopy observations of virus particles. Approximately 5-mg amounts of each antisera diluted 1/50 were placed on a grid. After standing for 5 min, about 10 µl of the partially purified virion preparation from infected garlic plants was added to the grid, and the mixture was incubated for 15 min. After washing with phosphate buffer (pH 7), the virus particles trapped on the grid were treated with antisera as described above. The virosomes were stained with 2% uranyl acetate and were observed with a Hitachi H-300 (Hitachi Ltd., Ibaragi, Japan) electron microscope.

**Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA).** Serially diluted purified GLV or GBMV particles in 100 mM sodium carbonate buffer (pH 9.2) were added to individual microtiter wells (Costar Corp., Cambridge, MA), after which the plate was incubated at 4°C overnight to immobilize the viral particles. After blocking with phosphate buffered saline (PBS) containing 1% bovine serum albumin (BSA) at room temperature for 2 h, antisera diluted 1/1,000 with PBS containing 0.2% BSA was added to the wells, and the plate was incubated at 37°C for 1 h. Horseradish peroxidase-conjugated porcine anti-rabbit immunoglobulin (lg) G (DAKO Japan Co., Ltd., Kyoto) was diluted 1/4,000 with PBS containing 0.2% BSA, after which 100 µl of the conjugate was added to each well, and the plate was incubated at 37°C for 1 h. After three washes with PBS containing 0.05% Tween 20 (PBST), 100 µl of 1,2-phenylenediamine dihydrochloride in 0.2 M sodium

**Fig. 1.** Genomic organization of the 3' regions of the garlic viral cDNAs GV-H, -7 and -A, a representative of the novel-type viral cDNAs (GV-A to -D). The open reading frames are shown by boxes with molecular mass (kilodaltons) according to the putative translation products. The genomic organization of potato virus M (PVM) (20) and tobacco etch virus (TEV) (3) are shown as representatives of the genera *Carlavirus* and *Potyvirus*. Arrowheads indicate the predicted autoprocessing sites for the production of coat protein (CP) and RNA polymerase from a putative polyprotein encoded in GV-7 cDNA.
phosphate/0.1 M citric acid buffer (pH 5.0) containing 0.01% 
H_{2}O_{2} was added as substrate, the plate was incubated at room 
temperature for 20 min, and absorbance at 490 nm was measured. 
Before the colorimetric measurement, 100 μl of 2 N H_{2}SO_{4} was 
added to stop the reaction.

Direct tissue blotting immunoassay (DTBIA). Detection of vi-
ruses by DTBIA was carried out according to Lin et al. (11) with 
some modifications. Sections were cut from leaf tissues with a 
razor blade for each garlic sample. Tissue blots were obtained by 
pressing the cut surface onto 0.45-μm pore, mixed ester-supported 
nitrocellulose membrane (Micron Separation, Westboro, MA). The 
membrane was immersed in 4% Block Ace solution (Dainippon 
Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., Osaka, Japan) containing 1% of BSA 
and Triton X-100 for 60 min at room temperature. After washing 
twice with PBST, the nitrocellulose membrane was incubated with 
the antisera to bacterially expressed viral CPs diluted 1/4,000 with 
0.4% Block Ace solution at room temperature for 1 h. After three 
sequential washings in PBST solution, the membrane was incubated 
with alkaline phosphatase-labeled goat anti-rabbit IgG (Zymed 
Laboratories, San Francisco, CA) diluted 1/2,000 with 0.4% Block 
Ace solution for 1 h at room temperature. After washing three 
times with PBST, the membrane was incubated in Western Blue 
(Promega, Madison, WI) as a substrate solution for alkaline phos-
phatase for 5 to 10 min at room temperature. A positive result was 
indicated by the development of purple on the tissue blot.

Extraction of total RNA from garlic leaves. Thirty milligrams 
of garlic leaves was extracted in a microhomogenizer in 300 μl of 
0.5 M borate buffer (pH 8.1) containing 0.1% thioglycollic acid. 
After centrifugation, total RNA was extracted from 178 μl of the 
supernatant with hot phenol/SDS (8) and precipitated with etha-
nol. Approximately 20 to 50 μg of RNA was obtained.

Oligonucleotide primers. Oligonucleotide primers were synthe-
sized in an Applied Biosystems (Foster City, CA) DNA synthes-
izer. Several sets of primers for the different viral cDNAs were 
designed with the aid of the PCRPLANT program and the micro-
computer software PC/GENE (IntelliGenetics, Mountain View, CA). 
The primer sequences are N-RT1/N-RT2 (common primer set to 
the novel-type viruses): 5'-CTCTGCTAAGATCCTATGCTGA-3' and 
5'-CTAACACATGTTCAAC-3'; R-RT1/R-RT2 (for the garlic 
carviavirus, based on GV-H sequence): 5'-AGACCTGAAATGAT- 
GATG-3' and 5'-GGTTCACATGGTAC-3'; and P-RT4 (for the garlic potyvirus, based on GV-7 sequence): 5'- 
AAGAGGTAACACTTGTGGGT-3' and 5'-GTTCTCAATCTGTA-
CTGAC-3'.

Reverse transcription (RT) and PCR. RT was performed with 
approximately 1 to 2 μg of garlic total RNA in a 15-μl reaction 
volume using a First-Strand cDNA synthesis kit (Pharmacia, 
Uppsala, Sweden). For PCR, 1 μl of the RT mix was added to 
a 100-μl polymerase reaction mixture containing 20 mM Tris-HCl 
(pH 8.4), 50 mM KCl, 1.5 mM MgCl_{2}, 200 μM each dNTP, 2.5 
units of Taq polymerase (Gibco-BRL), and 100 ng of each of the 
upstream and downstream primers. Thirty reaction cycles were 
used, with periods of annealing at 50°C for 30 s, synthesis at 
72°C for 45 s, and melting at 94°C for 45 s. After PCR, 10-μl 
portions of the reaction mixtures were analyzed on 1.5 or 4.0% agarose gels.

RESULTS

Sequencing of the 3' region of the viral cDNAs. To identify 
garlic viruses that are different from those identified in a previous 
study (corresponding to cDNAs GV-A to -H (23)), we rescreened 
the cDNA libraries prepared from RNA extracted from partially 
purified virions from infected plants and selected the cDNA 
clones that failed to hybridize to the previously reported cDNAs. 
We obtained eight cDNA clones and studied them by means of 
cross-hybridization and restriction digestion. Finally, two inde-
pendent cDNA clones, designated GV-7 and -H, were obtained. 
The nucleotide sequences of the 3' terminal regions of the 
respectively, 3,305 and 3,549 bases (excluding the poly(A) tail) 
of GV-7 and -H were determined. The data were deposited in the 
DDBB (DNA Data Bank of Japan) database under the accession 
numbers D11118 and D11161, respectively.

The genomic organization and putative amino acid sequence of 
each possible open reading frame of the sequenced regions of 
these clones were distinct from those of previously identified 
new-type viral cDNAs (Fig. 1) but similar to that of potyviruses 
and carviaviruses, respectively. In addition, the nucleotide 
sequences of these cDNAs were very close to those of the garlic carviavirus 
GV-1 and potyvirus GV-2 recently reported by Nagakubo et al. 
(17). The 1,377-bp nucleotide sequence of the GV-2 coding se-
quence, encoding viral CP and a truncated RNA-dependent RNA
polymerase, showed 98.8% identity with the corresponding 3’ proximal GV-7 sequence. The 1,217-bp nucleotide sequence of the GV-1 coding sequence, encoding a zinc-finger protein and viral CP, showed 99.0% identity with the corresponding 3’ proximal GV-H sequence. These results indicate that our cDNA clone GV-7 and clone GV-2 described by Nagakubo et al. (17) are probably derived from isolates of the same potyvirus and do not represent independent viruses or strains. Likewise, cDNA clones GV-H and GV-A are representative of isolates of the same carlavirus.

**RT-PCR for virus identification.** So far, we have characterized six independent cDNA clones that possibly represent three distinct genera of garlic RNA viruses. We used RT-PCR to differentiate among these garlic viruses identified by their respective cDNA clones. In the case of the garlic carlavirus represented by cDNA clone GV-H and the potyvirus represented by cDNA clone GV-7, we selected several conserved sequences to design primers specific to a potyvirus and a carlavirus. In the case of RNA of the novel-type viruses represented by the cDNA clones GV-A, to-D, a highly conserved region in the 3’ noncoding sequence was selected as the target of amplification. This region is also conserved in a mite-borne ShiX (9). As shown in Figure 2, the unique recognition sites of the restriction enzymes Rsal, Aval, HincII, and MseI make it possible to identify individual viruses by restriction analysis of the amplified DNA fragments. All the primer sets were designed to amplify DNA fragments of approximately 180 bp (Fig. 3).

Several primer sets were tested using the viral cDNAs as templates for amplification by PCR, and the sets judged best with regard to specificity and PCR product yield were selected. We designated the specific sets of primers N-RT1/N-RT2 for the novel-type viral cDNAs, C-RT2/C-RT3 for GV-H, and P-RT3/P-RT4 for GV-7. Figure 3 shows results of the analyses of the amplified DNA fragments in 1.5% agarose gels after PCR with the selected sets of primers. Results of RT-PCR (Fig. 3B) done with the viral RNAs extracted from the GLV isolate or from partially purified viroids from infected garlic plants suggest that our RT-PCR system effectively detects the individual viruses of the three types of garlic viruses.

**Immunoelectron microscopy and ELISA with antisera against bacterially expressed viral CPs.** To confirm the existence of the viruses indicated by the cDNAs and to characterize each virus as to viral particle morphology, we did the decoration test with antisera raised against the bacterially expressed viral CPs (Fig. 4). The rod-shaped virus particles decorated with antisera to the bacterially expressed CP derived from the novel virus cDNA GV-C were flexuous and clearly distinguishable from the others. Virus decorated with antisera to the bacterially expressed CPs from the garlic potyvirus cDNA GV-7 and the carlavirus cDNA GV-H were less flexuous and difficult to distinguish from each other. These findings point to the existence of at least three serologically distinct rod-shaped viruses (corresponding to cDNA clones GV-A, to-D, -7, and -H) that infect garlic plants in Japan. We have tentatively designated these viruses garlic potyvirus (GPV-7) and garlic carlavirus (GCV-H) in addition to garlic viruses A to D (GarV-A to -D [16]).

ELISA results with purified viral particles of GLV and GMbMV (Fig. 5) showed that the antisera raised against bacterially expressed CPs from GV-H and -C cDNA recognized GLV and GMbMV exclusively, respectively, and that the antisera against bacterially expressed CP from GV-7 cDNA showed no cross-reactivity with the viral particles. These findings indicated that GCV-H and GarV-C are serologically closely related to GLV and GMbMV, respectively.

**DTBIA for detection of viruses.** DTBIA (11) was employed as a convenient and practical detection technique of garlic viruses. Using antisera against bacterially expressed cloned CP genes, antigens of GPV-7, GCV-H, and GarV-A to -D were readily detected in infected leaf-tissue blots on nitrocellulose membranes, as shown in Figure 6. On the other hand, no signal appeared on the blots from virus-free garlic samples produced by shoot-tip cul-

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**Fig. 3.** Amplification of DNA fragments using specific primers to each of three types of garlic viruses: garlic novel-type virus (GarV), garlic potyvirus (GPV)-7, and garlic carlavirus (GCV)-H. A, Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) for 1 ng of each type of the cloned viral cDNAs. GV-A cDNA was the representative GarV-type virus used. B, RT-PCR for viral RNAs extracted from garlic latent virus (GLV) isolates and partially purified virions (GV-F) from infected garlic plants. An aliquot (10 µl) of the 100-µl PCR mixture was analyzed in a 1.5% agarose gel. N, C, and P above each lane indicate the set of primers for the GarV-type virus, the carlavirus, and the potyvirus cDNA sequences, respectively. Lane M shows the size marker HaeIII digests of pUC19.

**Fig. 4.** Immunoelectron microscopy of garlic viruses treated with antisera raised against bacterially expressed viral coat proteins (CPs). A, B, and C represent antisera used in trap decoration that were raised against the bacterially expressed CPs of the novel-type garlic virus (GarV)-C, the garlic potyvirus (GPV)-7, and the garlic carlavirus (GCV)-H, respectively. Undecorated particles with antisera were virions nonspecifically trapped on the grid. Bar = 1 µm.
tured with any antisera (Fig. 6). These results agreed with those obtained by RT-PCR (data not shown). The sensitivity of this method for detection was estimated to be comparable to that of ELISA by comparing the result of DTBIA with that obtained in ELISA of isolated GLV and GMbMV particles (data not shown). From these results, we concluded DTBIA was applicable as a practical technique for detecting viruses infecting garlic plants.

Survey of virus infection in garlic. We surveyed the incidence of virus infection in several garlic cultivars using DTBIA and RT-PCR with total RNA extracted from small pieces of leaf tissue. Two to three clones of the Japanese cultivars Fukuchi-bowatlo, Ishi-wase, and Hokkaido-zarari; a novel fertilized wild species (7); and a commercially available Chinese cultivar were analyzed. Results are shown in Table 1. In the RT-PCR of total RNAs from almost all the garlic plants tested (with one exception, W8-1), two or more sets of the primers used for detecting GPV-7, GCV-H, and GarV-A to -D were able to prime the amplification of a specific DNA fragment with the expected size, indicating there was a mixed infection by a GarV-type virus, carlaviruses, or potyviruses. In contrast, no RT-PCR product was found in virus-free garlic (Table 1, F-3).

Next, we made restriction analyses of some of the amplified DNA fragments using the primer set N-RT1/N-RT2 to identify the individual GarV-type viruses. All the amplified fragments analyzed were partially or completely (Fig. 7, lane R of W8-1) digested by Rsal, and two DNA fragments of approximately 80 and 110 bp appeared on agarose gel (Fig. 7, lanes R). The sizes of these fragments agreed with predicted values (76 and 109 bp) estimated from the sequence in the corresponding region of GVA-cDNA, indicating infection with GarV-A. AaI digestion also produced two DNA fragments with the expected sizes from the sequence of GVB-cDNA, but the amounts of these fragments varied with the RT-PCR product (Fig. 7, lanes A). This indicates infection with GarV-B. HinfI digestion showed infection of the fertilized garlic wild species with GVC-V (Fig. 7, lane H of N1-1, N4-1, and N6-1). In addition, the relatively weak intensity of the bands, very weak especially in N1-1 and N4-1, on the agarose gel compared with those produced by the other enzymes suggests the concentration of the GarV-C compared to other GarV type infections was low in the affected garlic plants. Msel digestion of the amplified fragments of N1-1, N4-1, and N6-1 produced an apparently single band of approximately 100 bp (Fig. 7, lane Ms). From the GVD cDNA sequence, two fragments of nearly the same size (89 and 94 bp) should be produced by Msel, which could not be separated on the 4% agarose gel. Therefore, we concluded that these garlic plants were infected with GarV-D.

The results obtained by RT-PCR with the specific set of primers to each novel-type viral cDNA coincided with those of restriction analysis of PCR products (data not shown). These findings reveal mixed infection of garlic plants by GarV-type viruses. Furthermore, it is notable that in N4-1, two additional bands (indicated by arrowheads) of about 80 and 110 bp are present. This may sig-

**Fig. 5.** Characterization of antisera raised against bacterially expressed garlic viral coat proteins by enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay: garlic novel-type virus (GarV)-C, garlic carlaviruses (GCV)-H, and garlic potyvirus (GPV)-7. Serially diluted (0.2 to 50 mg/ml) A, garlic latent virus (GLV) and B, garlic mottle virus (GMbMV) isolates were coated on microtiter wells, and each antisera, diluted 1/1,000, was added and reacted at 37°C for 1 h. Antisera binding to virus particles were colorimetrically detected by absorbance at 490 nm produced by horseradish peroxidase-conjugated porcine anti-rabbit immunoglobulin G.

**Fig. 6.** Immunochromical detection of three types of garlic viruses: novel-type garlic virus (GarV)-C, garlic potyvirus (GPV)-7, and garlic carlaviruses (GCV)-H, by direct tissue blotting immunosassay. Three sets of duplicate blots on nitrocellulose membrane were prepared for each garlic sample by briefly pressing the cut surface of a leaf onto the membrane. For every blotting, a newly cut surface was made by cutting just above the location of the previous cut surface with a razor blade. The blots were reacted with each rabbit antiserum raised against bacterially expressed viral coat proteins of GarV-C, GPV-7, and GCV-H, and the resultant immunocomplex was detected with alkaline phosphatase-labeled goat anti-rabbit immunoglobulin antibodies. F-1 and F-2 are from virus-free garlic produced by shoot-tip culture as a negative control. G-1 to G-8 are from cultivated garlic plants collected from our company's experimental farm.
nify the presence of yet another virus that is different from GarV-A to -D or ShVX.

Sero logical detection by DTBIA gave the same results as those obtained in RT-PCR. In addition, antisera against bacterially expressed GarV-C CP detected virus antigens in garlic plants that were infected with GarV-A, -B, or -D but not with GarV-C, including W3-1 and W8-1 in Figure 7 (data not shown). These results suggest that the antiserum to GarV-C CP can recognize all the novel-type viruses detected in garlic plants.

DISCUSSION

We detected three types of viral cDNAs, represented by GV-7, -H, and GV-A to -D in Japanese garlic plants (this study; [23]). Recently, nucleotide sequences of several viral cDNAs from Allium plants, including garlic, have been published [9, 17] and deposited in a DNA database. A homology search of six viral cDNAs cloned by us with the GenBank database showed that the 3' proximal coding sequence between GV-7 and -2 [17], GV-H and -1 (17), GV-C and GMBMV (deposited by Yamashita et al. 1995, accession number D49443), and GV-D and JGFRV (deposited by Raab et al. 1995, accession number L38892) have a very high sequence similarity, and more than 96% of the nucleotides in the respective region of 1.1 to 1.3 kb was identical between each pair. Shukla and Ward (22) showed that distinct members of the potyviruses group exhibit sequence identities of 38 to 71%, and strains of individual viruses have identities of 90 to 99%, judging from computer analysis of CP sequence data from 20 strains of nine distinct potyviruses.

ELISA for GLV and GMBMV virions with antisera raised against bacterially expressed viral CPs (Fig. 5) indicated a close serological relationship between GCV-H and GLV and GarV-C and GMBMV, respectively. In addition, Yamashita et al. (3) recently reported that the nucleotide sequence of the 3' proximal 816 bp of the cloned cDNA from a rod-shaped viral virus, which was identified as LYSV based on biological and immunochemical characterization including host specificity, immunoelectron microscopy, and transmission electron microscopy, showed 90 or 97% identity with that of GV-7 or -2 cDNA, respectively, and concluded they all were derived from LYSV. Taking all of these findings into consideration, it is suggested that cDNAs GV-7 and -2 are derived from the same potyvirus, LYSV, and GV-H and -1 are derived from carlaviruses GLV, respectively; cDNAs GV-C and GMBMV, as well as GV-D and cDNA of a bite-mark filamentous virus isolated from garlic plants in England by E. Raab, E. Generozov, A. Krukov, H. Vetten, and S. Zavriev (unpublished), respectively, are from the same virus infecting garlic plants.

We have developed methods for detecting viruses infecting garlic plants based on RT-PCR and DTBIA by preparing specific primers and antisera raised against bacterially expressed viral CPs. RT-PCR can identify the six viruses isolated as cDNA clones but is unsuitable for large-scale indexing or for studies of plant virus epidemiology because it is laborious and time-consuming. On the other hand, DTBIA is convenient, simple, and as sensitive as ELISA. DTBIA, however, does not distinguish among the novel-type viruses GarV-A to -D. The results from surveying virus incidence by DTBIA in approximately 100 garlic samples randomly collected in fields were consistent with those obtained by RT-PCR (data not shown). In addition, antisera prepared with bacterially expressed viral CP as an antigen developed little background color on nitrocellulose membrane without the need for pretreatments, such as cross-absorption with healthy plant extract and fractionation of viral CP on SDS-PAGE (18). All these results indicate the usefulness of molecular biology methods obtaining viral CP antigens.

DTBIA and RT-PCR combined with restriction analysis showed that some garlic plants were infected concomitantly with all six of the identified viruses: potyvirus GPV-7, carlaviruses GCV-H, and four GarV-type viruses—GarV-A, -B, -C, and -D (Table 1; Fig. 7). ShVX, closely related to GarV-type viruses in molecular biology parameters, such as genomic organization, nucleotide sequence, and CP sequence, is isolated from shallot plants resistant to the Mongolian isolate of OYDV (27). This fact, along with the observation that a mixed infection of garlic by carlaviruses GLV and potyvirus GMV enhances apparent disease symptoms (21), may suggest some interaction among the viruses in development of disease symptoms. We are now investigating a possible correlation between mixed infections with various combinations of the six garlic viruses and development and severity of symptoms.

In addition, GarV-type viruses have been detected in garlic plants cultivated in China, the United States, and Argentina, as well as in the United Kingdom (from the sequence data deposited by Raab et al. 1995, in GenBank). This is in contrast to the fact that an Allium-infesting potyvirus, OYDV, is widespread in garlic in Europe and the Philippines but rarely has been detected in Japanese garlic (17).

Our strategy for cloning cDNA of cDNAs differs from previous strategies in that we cloned cDNA of cDNAs directly from diseased garlic plants, which probably were infected with a complex of viruses, without isolating the individual viruses in the appropriate host plants. The isolation and characterization of viruses as their cDNAs makes it possible to prepare virus-specific antisera, primers, or probes to aid in identifying unknown viruses that are difficult to
isolate by traditional methods. Furthermore, there is also a high probability of detecting variants difficult to distinguish by serology. In fact, we detected variants of both GV-H and -7 cDNAs whose nucleotide sequences at the 3’ terminal region differed by as much as 14.4%.

LITERATURE CITED


