Cassava brown streak virus has a rapidly evolving genome: implications for virus speciation, variability, diagnosis and host resistance

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Keywords: cassava, Uganda, *Manihot esculenta,* smallholder farmer, *Cassava brown streak virus*, species tree estimation, SVD Quartets, nonsynonymous mutations

Abstract

Cassava is a major staple food for about 800 million people in the tropics and sub-tropical regions of the world. Production of cassava is significantly hampered by cassava brown streak disease (CBSD), which is caused by *Cassava brown streak virus* (CBSV) and *Ugandan cassava brown streak virus* (UCBSV). The disease is suppressing cassava yields in eastern Africa at an alarming rate. Previous studies have documented that CBSV is more devastating than UCBSV because it more readily infects both susceptible and tolerant cassava cultivars, resulting in greater yield losses. Using whole genome sequences from NGS data, we produced the first coalescent-based species tree estimate for CBSV and UCBSV. This species framework led to the finding that CBSV has a faster rate of evolution when compared with UCBSV. Furthermore, we have discovered that in CBSV, nonsynonymous substitutions are more predominant than synonymous substitution and occur across the entire genome. All comparative analyses between CBSV and UCBSV presented here suggest that CBSV may be outsmarting the cassava immune system, thus making it more devastating and harder to control.

Introduction

Cassava (*Manihot esculenta* Crantz) is a major staple food crop for over 800 million people in over 100 tropical and sub-tropical countries[1]. In sub-Saharan Africa, it is the main source of dietary calories for approximately 300 million people[2]. The tuberous storage roots of cassava are rich in carbohydrates and can be cooked or processed for human food, animal feeds and a wide range of industrial products. The crop is relatively drought tolerant and can yield well even in less fertile soils, hence, its importance to poor families farming marginal lands[3]. Cultivation of cassava is most adversely affected by two viral diseases: cassava mosaic disease (CMD) and cassava brown streak disease (CBSD)[4], which together were reported to cause production losses of more than US$1 billion every year[5] in Africa.

Serious yield losses due to CMD were first observed on mainland East Africa in the 1920s[6]. Recorded epidemics of CMD later occurred in the 1930s, 1940s and from 1990s to date[7,8]. By contrast, for about 70 years since it was first described[9], CBSD was confined to low altitudes (below 1000 meters above sea level) along coastal eastern Africa in Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Malawi. However, in the early 2000s, outbreaks of CBSD were reported over 1000 km inland at mid-altitude locations (above 1000m) in multiple countries all around Lake Victoria in Uganda[10], western Kenya[11] and northern Tanzania[4]. Where it is already established in eastern Africa, the current CBSD epidemic prevails as the main cause of losses in cassava production. Over the last 10 years, the CBSD epidemic has expanded to other countries in East and Central Africa such as Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, DR Congo and South Sudan[12-14]. This has significantly increased the risk to countries in central and west Africa which are among the world's leading cassava producers, and where CBSD does not occur.

73 CBSD is caused by *Cassava brown streak virus* (CBSV) and *Ugandan cassava brown streak virus*
74 (UCBSV). Both viruses are (+) ssRNA viruses in the genus *Ipomovirus* and family *Potyviridae*[15-18],
75 and are often together referred to as cassava brown streak viruses (CBSVs). The CBSVs have
76 genomic organization of 10 segments, total size approximately 8.9 to 10.8 kb, and coding for a
77 polypeptide with about 2,900 amino acid residues[15,17,18]. The complete genome of a CBSD causal
78 virus was first sequenced in 2009[18], and to date there are only 26 publicly available[19]. Currently
79 there are two species recognized by the ICTV, but Ndunguru et al.[19] have suggested further
80 speciation in the UCBSV clade. Both viruses are transmitted in a semi-persistent manner by the
81 whitefly *Bemisia tabaci*[20] and mechanically[21]. Symptoms of CBSD on cassava vary with cultivar,
82 virus or plant age, but typically include leaf veinal choloris, brown stem lesions, as well as
83 constrictions, fissures and necrosis of the tuberous storage roots[22,23]. Overall, both CBSV and
84 UCBSV cause similar symptom types, however, infection with CBSV tend to result in more severe
85 sumptoms.
86
87 Although CBSD has become established in eastern Africa, there is limited knowledge on the
88 diversity of causal viruses, their distribution and evolutionary potential. Therefore, it is necessary
89 to obtain several full genome sequences of CBSD viral isolates, better understand the causal
90 viruses and design long-term control approaches for the disease.
91
92 In contrast to the growing knowledge on the causal agents of CBSD, host-pathogen interactions
93 are less clear. As such, little is known about specific responses of different cassava varieties to
94 prevailing species or strains of CBSD viral pathogens. Development and dissemination of CBSD-
95 tolerant varieties has been the main means adopted for CBSD control in eastern Africa. With
96 significant efforts geared at breeding for CBSD-resistant varieties, it is of great interest to know

97 if such resistance protects cassava against one or both CBSVs. The resistance may be expressed
98 as several related features including restricted infection, systemic spread or recovery of infected
99 plants from disease and the possibility that stem cuttings taken from these may give rise to
100 progeny that are virus-free (reversion). Recent studies have shown CBSV to be the more
101 aggressive virus, infecting both tolerant and susceptible cultivars as single or mixed infections
102 with UCBSV[15,24,25]. In contrast, tolerant varieties were infected with only CBSV, but free of UCBSV,
103 suggesting their resistance to the latter. Compared with UCBSV, CBSV isolates have been
104 reported to be more detectable, having higher infection rates by graft inoculation and inducing
105 more severe symptoms[26]. It has also been shown that plants of CBSD tolerant or resistant
106 cultivars graft-inoculated with UCBSV developed milder symptoms and a significantly higher
107 proportion of the progenies were virus-free (reverted) compared to those infected with CBSV[27].
108 To date, the underlying reasons for this more aggressive nature of CBSV compared with UCBSV
109 are not known.
110
111 In this study, CBSV and UCBSV molecular diversity was investigated by using next generation
112 sequencing to understand new complete genomes of three isolates from Uganda. The sequences
113 obtained were analyzed to determine species composition, CBSV and UCBSV evolutionary rates,
114 potential role of such changes in virus-host interactions, resulting into cassava cultivar
115 susceptibility or resistance. We set out to answer the following questions:
116 1) How do the three new complete genomes from Uganda compare to those already
117 published[19]?
118 2) Are CBSV and UCBSV distinct species and is there further speciation?
119 3) Why is CBSV more aggressive and harder to breed resistance for than UCBSV?
120

121 **Results**

122 **CBSD Field Symptoms Associated with CBSV and UCBSV Isolates**

123 Categorisation of CBSD foliar symptom distribution on symptomatic plants assessed revealed
124 that the most frequently encountered type was LL - symptoms only on lower leaves (68.4%),
125 followed by SW - systemic and on the whole plant (26.3%), and SL – systemic but localized (5.3%)
126 (table 1). Based on CBSVs detected and CBSD leaf symptom severity scores for 57 sampled plants,
127 whereas the majority of plants infected by UCBSV alone as determined by RT-PCR had mild
128 chlorosis (severity score 2), CBSV infections (single or mixture with UCBSV) tended to have
129 moderate to severe symptoms (scores 3-4) in same proportion to those exhibiting score 2 (Fig. 1,
130 Table 1). Regarding the three isolates used here for whole genome sequencing, U8 (UCBSV) was
131 from a plant with CBSD score 3 and LL symptom type. Both CBSV isolates (U1 and U4) were from
132 plants with severity scores 2 and 3, symptom types LL and SL, respectively.

133

134 **Next Generation Sequencing**

135 The three samples from Uganda produced raw reads ranging from 21,844,716 to 23,648,990.
136 After trimming for quality using CLCGW, these numbers were reduced to 21,582,374 to
137 23,373,606 (table 2). Following *de novo* assembly of the trimmed reads using CLCGW, the
138 numbers of contigs produced were 621-1,008. The contigs of interest from *de novo* assembly
139 were of lengths 2,214 to 8,954nt, with average coverage 24 to 366. After mapping to a reference
140 genome in Geneious, the lengths of the consensus sequences were 8,893 to 9,563 with average
141 coverages of 25 to 393. The final sequences consisted of a consensus between the *de novo* and
142 the mapped consensus with lengths of 8,700 to 8,748.

143

144 **Genomic Variability and Positive Selection**

145 The CBSV genomes included in this study were more variable when compared with those of
146 UCBSV (supplementary figs. S1 and S2). Characterizing amino acid usage at each position in the
147 whole genome revealed that CBSV genomes have non-synonymous substitutions present across
148 their entire genome (Fig. 2), and predominating when compared to synonymous substitutions.
149 In contrast, UCBSV had near equal non-synonymous and synonymous substitution rates across
150 the entire genome. Genes in the UCBSV genomes with non-synonymous substitutions at a higher
151 frequency were: P1, NIb and HAM1 (Fig. 2).
152
153 CBSV had 68 positively selected sites and 66 negatively selected sites, while UCBSV had zero
154 positively selected sites and 558 negatively selected sites (Table 3). Analyzed together there are
155 3 positively selected sites and 1383 negatively selected sites. The coat protein (CP) of CBSV had
156 the highest number of positively selected sites (16) while 6K2 had zero.
157
158 **Rates of Evolution**
159 CBSV and UCBSV have different rates of evolution (Table 4). We tested two hypothesis using
160 CODEML. The null hypothesis tested was that CBSV and UCBSV have equal rates of evolution
161 while the alternative hypothesis was that CBSV and UCBSV have different rates of evolution (two
162 omegas; model = 2). The Likelihood Ratio Test was used to test for significance. If the difference
163 in likelihood was greater than 3.84 (based on the Chi-squared distribution and one degree of
164 freedom) we rejected the null hypothesis that the rates between CBSV and UCBSV are equal.
165
166 CBSV whole genome sequences showed it is evolving 5 times faster than UCBSV overall. The
167 genes contributing to this accelerated rate of evolution for CBSV are NIa (D=29.95), followed by
168 6K2 (D=6.74), NIb (D=5.18) and P1 (4.61) (Table 4). The transition/transversion ratios were also

169 estimated using CODEML, and show that the 6K1 (19.6) and CP (13.2) genes have the highest
170 estimates while the remaining 8 genes ranged from 5.05 – 9.93.
171
172 **Species Tree Estimation - SVDQ**
173 The species phylogeny (Fig. 3) shows strong support for a split into two primary viral clades, one
174 consisting of CBSV (Fig. 3 clades A and B) and the other consisting of UCBSV (Fig. 3 clades E-G),
175 with 100% bootstrap support separating the two clades. Figure 3 shows clades labeled A–G which
176 correspond to; 1) labels A-F from Ndunguru et al [19], and 2) a new clade G defined in this study.
177 Within the CBSV clade, there are several additional clades with 100% bootstrap support,
178 including the two new CBSV whole genomes from Uganda (U1 and U4). These are the first CBSV
179 whole genomes sequences from Uganda. The other CBSV grouping with 100% bootstrap support
180 labeled B in Figure 3 contains 4 Tanzania samples KoR6, Tan 79, Tan 19 1 and Nal 07. In the
181 UCBSV clade there are 6 nodes supported with a 100% bootstrap, including the new UCBSV whole
182 genome added from this study (U8) which is sister to Kab 07 from Uganda. In addition, the CBSV
183 clade had all samples from a given country grouping together while the UCBSV clade had
184 monophyletic clades from different countries (the multi-colored lines in Fig. 3).
185
186 **Comparison of Gene Trees to Species Tree**
187 Clades A and B, which partition the CBSV isolates into two groups, are consistently present with
188 high support in all genes except HAM1 and CP (Table 5). Clades D and G, which each consist of a
189 pair of UCBSV isolates, have high support across all genes, while clades C and E have relatively
190 high support across a majority of genes. Clade F is strongly supported by the CI gene, which is
191 relatively long, but is not found in the phylogenetic tree estimated for any of the other genes.
192

193 The whole genome concatenated analysis using MrBayes shows strong support (posterior
194 probability 1.0) for all clades (Table 5). However, this analysis does not take into account the
195 possibility of variation in the evolutionary processes across the individual genes. The SVDQ
196 analysis, on the other hand, uses a coalescent-based method to estimate the overall species tree,
197 and properly accounts for variation in the evolutionary history for each gene. In viewing the
198 bootstrap support values for each of the clades from the SVDQ analysis, we see that the level of
199 support for each clade across the genome is more accurately represented by the corresponding
200 bootstrap proportion. For example, clade F, which was found only in the phylogeny of the CI
201 gene, shows a bootstrap proportion of 0.44 for the SVDQ analysis (as compared to 1.0 for the
202 MrBayes concatenated analysis) (Table 5). Similarly, the SVDQ analysis gives a bootstrap
203 proportion of 0.87 for clade E, which showed posterior probabilities below 0.8 for 3 of the 10
204 genes, as compared to a posterior probability of 1.0 for the concatenated analysis with MrBayes.
205 All other clades are supported with bootstrap values of 1.0, consistent with the MrBayes analysis.
206

207 **Sliding Window SVD Score**

208 The SVD Score Sliding Window analysis (Fig. 4) shows several interesting patterns. First, note that
209 the gene boundaries track well with shifts in the magnitude of the SVD Score, indicating that
210 individual genes are subject to specific evolutionary processes that vary from gene to gene. In
211 particular, several genes show strong support for the primary CBSV/UCBSV split, as indicated by
212 their low scores, while other genes show variation from this basic process, as indicated by
213 increases in the scores. In addition, Fig. 4 shows the test statistic associated with the hypothesis
214 test for a shift in the rate of evolution between the two groups, with `*' indicating that the rate
215 difference between the two groups is statistically significant. It is readily apparent from the graph
216 that genes that show strong support (low SVD Score) for the primary CBSV/UCBSV split also show

217 strong evidence for statistically significant differences in evolutionary rate. These results support
218 the overall hypothesis that certain genes in CBSV have accelerated rates of evolution that may
219 be contributing to the higher aggressiveness of the virus.
220
221 **Discussion**
222

223 In this study, we analyzed new and all publicly available CBSVs whole genomes to elucidate
224 molecular mechanisms underlying the field and laboratory observations that CBSV more readily
225 infects cassava plants and tends to display severe symptoms when compared with UCBSV. Our
226 analyses included characterizing three new complete CBSV (2) and UCBSV (1) genomes, which
227 were combined with the 26 previously published. Our major findings show further speciation of
228 CBSV and UCBSV, a larger genetic landscape for CBSV, including many nonsynonymous sites, and
229 reveal that CBSV has a faster rate of evolution compared with UCBSV (Table 4 and Fig. 4). These
230 observations and their biological significance are discussed.
231

232 **Genes with Accelerated Rates of Evolution in CBSV**

233 We have identified P1, 6K2, NIb and NIa as the genes with accelerated rates of evolution in CBSV.
234 The function of P1 is as an RNA silencing suppressor (RSS), and there is also the suggestion that
235 it may be involved in virion binding to the whitefly stylet via a "bridge" formation by a virus-
236 encoded P1 protein for both CBSV and UCBSV. 6K2 is associated with cellular membrane and
237 responsible for systemic infection and viral long distance movement[28]. The NIb encodes for a
238 nuclear inclusion polymerase and the NIA for a nuclear inclusion protease[18,29].
239

240 In Potyviruses generally, when NIa and VPg are associated together they are located in the
241 cytoplasm and nucleus of infected cells. When 6K2-VPg-NIa forms a larger product, the VPg plays

242 a role in viral RNA replication[30]. Even though VPg is not one of the genes with a higher evolution
243 rate, both 6K2 and NIa are a part of the complex which affects replication, and this may go some
244 way to explaining their apparent accelerated evolution rate. Is it possible that the accelerated
245 rates of evolution for genes involved in replication could even be a response to the relatively
246 recent interaction of the viruses and cassava? The CBSVs are not present in South America where
247 cassava originates, so the viruses must be native to Africa. It would appear that the adaptation is
248 still occurring and the cassava immune system does not know how to effectively fight these
249 infections. Cassava was introduced to East Africa in the 18th century through oceanic movement.
250 The first report of cassava brown streak disease was in 1936[9,13]. There has been little opportunity
251 for the co-evolution of the viruses and the host, therefore natural resistance would be a hard
252 prospect. This raises the possibility of the original host of these viruses, a non-cassava host which
253 may be harboring the CBSVs or the most recent common ancestor of these viruses. This in turn
254 leads us to wonder just how old these viruses and their ancestors are, if any of the CBSVs is the
255 ancestral species, and the best way to answer such questions is to sequence more virus genomes
256 from both cassava and non-cassava hosts wherever they are found.
257
258 **How Can CBSV Still Function with Such a Large Genetic Landscape?**
259 CBSV and UCBSV have different evolutionary patterns as observed by characterizing the whole
260 genome sequences of CBSV and UCBSV separately. CBSV is genetically more diverse when
261 compared with UCBSV, as evident by the greater amino acid usage (supplementary Fig. 1), the
262 faster rates of evolution across the entire genome (table 4), and greater number of
263 nonsynonymous sites across the entire genome (Fig. 2). How can CBSV still function with such a
264 large genetic landscape? RNA viruses walk a very fine line of having the genetic arsenal to
265 overcome the host immune system and diverging to a point that key functions of genes are lost

266 [31]. Recent studies[32,33] have shown that viruses with a large genetic landscape adapt to host
267 changes much quicker and can overcome the host immune system faster. Viruses that occupy a
268 large portion of the possible sequence space might be less fit but they outcompete the fitter
269 strain when the host immune system shifts and hence these viruses have been described as
270 adapted to "survival of the flattest"[34,35]. This means that a virus that covers the most sequence
271 space will be able to adapt to host immune system faster than those with smaller spaces. Viruses
272 that are adapted in this category ("survival of the flattest") are going to be harder to breed
273 resistance for because the virus has a larger ability to adapt to changes. It is clear that in our
274 case, CBSV is the virus that has a larger sequence space (Supplemental Fig. 1) when compared to
275 that of UCBSV, which is clearly smaller (Supplemental Fig. 2). CBSV is one of the RNA viruses that
276 can be described as adapted to "survival of the flattest", while UCBSV is not. Therefore, CBSV is
277 more devastating because it has a larger genetic arsenal which it uses overcome the changes
278 breeders are introducing into cassava.
279
280 Not only are the CBSV genomes more genetically diverse, but are also characterized by a large
281 number of nonsynonymous changes in the genome (Fig. 2). An excess of nonsynonymous over
282 synonymous substitutions at individual amino acid sites signifies that positive selection has
283 affected the evolution of a protein between the extant sequences under study and their most
284 recent common ancestor[36]. Positive selection is the process by which new advantageous genetic
285 variants sweep a population and is the mechanism Darwin described to drive evolution. This is
286 further evidence that might suggest that CBSV has a greater capacity to evade the cassava
287 immune system as compared with UCBSV. CBSV had 66 sites under positive selection (Table 4)
288 while UCBSV had none. The CBSV sites under positive selection are found not only in the regions
289 that have gained the most attention, CP and HAM1-like[13], but are also found in all other genes

290 except 6K2. This is further support for CBSV's potential ability to outsmart the cassava immune
291 system. Every gene in the CBSV genome (except 6K2) has sites under positive selection indicating
292 effective RNA silencing of the virus will need to encompass many loci.
293
294 Using computational methods combined with field observations we have concluded that CBSV is
295 more devastating than UCBSV. This assertion is also supported by two recent biological studies.
296 The first was a test of reversion in three different cassava varieties (Albert, Kaleso and Kiroba)
297 infected with CBSV and UCBSV. Reversion is a type of resistance mechanism whereby virus-
298 infected plants will naturally recover from infection over time, and a proportion of their progeny
299 from stem cuttings are virus-free. A reversion event infers the host immune system was able to
300 clear or restrict the virus from systemic movement. It was shown that UCBSV-infected cassava
301 had a higher rate of reversion when compared to plants infected with CBSV[27] indicating that
302 plants infected with UCBSV recovered more often than those infected with CBSV. This is another
303 line of evidence supporting the more devastating nature of CBSV, and the possibility that cassava
304 immune systems of the three varieties tested are struggling to resist the virus.
305
306 The second study supporting the hypothesis that CBSV is more aggressive than UCBSV analyzed
307 virus-derived small RNAs within three cassava varieties (NASE 3, TME204 and 60444). Plants
308 infected with viruses are known to trigger RNAi antiviral defense that can be measured by
309 quantifying the abundance of 21-24 nucleotide (nt) segments produced by the dicer enzyme[37].
310 Cassava varieties were infected with either CBSV or UCBSV, NGS was used to detect virus-derived
311 small RNAs[24], and the 21-24 nt dicer fragments were mapped to either CBSV or UCBSV depending
312 on which virus was used to infect the plant. The results showed that CBSV infection triggered a
313 stronger immune response as measured by greater abundance of virus derived small RNA

314 fragments across the entire CBSV genome compared with UCBSV. In addition, across all three
315 genotypes they observed that cassava grafted with CBSV-infected buds showed more severe
316 symptoms compared to UCBSV-infected plants[24]. This is further evidence that CBSV is a more
317 aggressive virus and breeding for resistance to CBSV and UCBSV will require different
318 experimental approaches.
319
320 **Implications of the Species Tree for CBSV and UCBSV**
321 We have produced the first species tree estimate of the CBSD causal virus species using whole
322 genome sequences and the coalescent-based SVD Quartets species tree estimation algorithm.
323 Differences in the evolutionary history of the two viruses are seen in the branching patterns in
324 Figure 3. CBSV has diverged into two main clades A and B, while UCBSV has several well-
325 supported clades but the backbone is still unresolved, indicating more sampling is needed to fully
326 understand the diversity and evolutionary history of UCBSV. The species tree (Fig. 3) is similar to
327 the concatenated whole gene tree reported in Ndunguru et al.[19], except addition of the clade
328 labeled "G", and lack of support for clades E and F in the UCBSV species. It is well-documented
329 that concatenating genes without using the coalescent-based models can produce misleading
330 results [38,39]. In our case, only CI supports clade F, and it is also the longest gene (1,883 bp), and
331 therefore may swamp the signal of the other genes. The whole genome concatenation analysis
332 recovers clade F with a posterior probability of 1.00 (Table 4). With regard to clade E, the SVDQ
333 tree was more reflective of the individual gene tree signal by producing a bootstrap value of 0.87
334 versus 1.00 for the whole genome concatenated tree (Table 4). These results suggest that the
335 estimated topology in the UCBSV species may be further refined as more samples are added.
336

337 Our integrative approach of species tree estimation coupled with analyzing rates of evolution has
338 lead to a new framework for CBSV and UCBSV, which includes analyzing and treating these two
339 groups of viruses as separate species. Multiple putative species of both CBSV and UCBV have
340 been identified which means cassava needs to be resistant to the virus species that are prevalent
341 in farmers' fields. We argue that this genomic diversity and faster rate of evolution for CBSV is
342 what is causing the breeders to struggle with breeding resistant varieties and also why the
343 diagnostic primers are not working consistently. CBSV also has more positively selected sites than
344 UCBSV. It was first thought that CBSD was restricted to the coastal areas and below 1000 m [23]
345 but as more genetic data is gathered CBSV and UCBSV are found at all elevations in many
346 ecozones throughout eastern Africa[4,10,13,15,19,40]. We are still in the discovery phase with CBSV and
347 UCBSV species as there are only 29 (now with the three new included here) whole genome
348 sequences and other new species of both viruses are likely to be discovered. As we move forward
349 it is important to include all known samples and use appropriate species tree estimation methods
350 such as SVDQ.
351
352 Finally, the traditional gene regions (CP and HAM1-like) that are used to delimit species and serve
353 as the targets for diagnostic primers do not recover the species tree (Table 4). We recommend
354 designing new diagnostic regions for other genes that recover the species tree and also do not
355 have an accelerated rate of molecular evolution (Figure 4), such as CI or P3 for species-level
356 diagnoses. It is possible that the spread of CBSV and UCBSV could have been exacerbated
357 through dissemination of infected cuttings, as virus indexing with primers targeting CP may have
358 misleadingly returned negative results.
359
360 **Implications of the Results for Cassava Breeding**

361 During the last three decades worldwide, agricultural production has been compromised by a
362 series of epidemics caused by new variants of classic viruses that show new pathogenic and
363 epidemiological properties. An important determinant of the fitness of a virus in a given host is
364 its ability to overcome the defenses of the host. Overcoming plant resistance by changes in the
365 pathogenicity of viral populations represents a specific and important case of emergence, with
366 tremendous economic consequences since it jeopardizes the success and durability of resistance
367 factors in crops as an anti-viral control strategy. In this study, we found CBSV to be more variable,
368 to have more positively selected sites, and to evolve five times faster than UCBSV. These findings
369 have huge implications for cassava improvement efforts in Africa where CBSV is widely present.
370 Field and laboratory results have proven CBSV to be more virulent and more devastating than
371 UCBSV. Knowledge of specific virus species an improved cassava variety is resistant to will
372 determine where to screen, multiply and deploy such varieties. Cassava breeders have to take
373 into consideration the evolutionary and biological differences between CBSV and UCBSV in the
374 breeding programs. For example, cassava breeders can breed varieties that are resistant to CBSV
375 that can be strategically deployed in areas where CBSV is more prevalent, and similarly for
376 UCBSV. Furthermore, it becomes more appropriate to always screen cassava materials against
377 CBSV as a minimum, even if UCBSV is the more prevalent virus. Such a strategy will in effect
378 ensure durable resistance as opposed to the indiscriminate screening and distribution of the
379 improved CBSD resistant cassava varieties, without knowledge of the virus species in the area.
380
381 **Methods**

382 **Field Plant Sample Collection**

383 Farmers' fields in Uganda with cassava plants 3-6 months old were surveyed for CBSD in 20
384 districts. In each field, cassava plants were visually assessed to confirm typical CBSD symptoms

385 on leaves and stems. CBSD leaf symptom severity was scored on a 1-5 scale[41,42]; 1 = no visible
386 symptoms, 2 = mild vein yellowing or chlorotic blotches on some leaves, 3 =
387 pronounced/extensive vein yellowing or chlorotic blotches on leaves, but no lesions or streaks
388 on stems, 4 = pronounced/extensive vein yellowing or chlorotic blotches on leaves and mild
389 lesions or streaks on stems, 5 = pronounced/extensive vein yellowing or chlorotic blotches on
390 leaves and severe lesions or streaks on stems, defoliation and dieback. CBSD symptoms were also
391 categorized based on distribution of leaf chlorosis and stem lesions on the plant; systemic and
392 on the whole plant (SW), systemic on leaf or stem parts but localized (SL), only on lower leaves
393 (LL). On selected symptomatic plants, portions of the third fully expanded leaf on a shoot were
394 picked as samples, air-dried by pressing between sheets of newsprint and stored pending RNA
395 extraction.
396
397 **RNA Extraction**
398 About 0.25 g cassava leaf samples were frozen in liquid nitrogen, then ground using a mortar and
399 pestle. 2 ml CTAB lysis buffer (2% CTAB; 100 mM Tris–HCl, pH 8.0; 20 mM EDTA; 1.4 M 134 NaCl;
400 1% sodium sulphite; 2% PVP) was added and samples homogenized. The 1 ml of the homogenate
401 was incubated at 65°C for 15 min, an equal volume of chloroform: isoamyl alcohol (24:1) was
402 added, and the sample was centrifuged for 10 min at approximately 14,500rpm. 800µl of the
403 aqueous layer was transferred to a new tube with an equal volume of 4 M LiCl and incubated at
404 -20°C for 2 hrs. The samples were centrifuged for 25 min at 14,500 rpm and the supernatant was
405 poured off. The pelleted RNA was re-suspended in 200 µl TE buffer containing 1% SDS, 100 µl of
406 5M NaCl. 300 µl of ice-cold isopropanol were added and incubated at -20°C for 30 min. The
407 sample was centrifuged at 13,000 rpm for 10 min and the aqueous layer was decanted and RNA
408 pellets washed in 500 µl of 70% ethanol by centrifuging at 13,000 rpm for 5 min. The ethanol was

409 decanted off and RNA pellet dried to remove residual ethanol. The RNA was re-suspended in 50
410 µl nuclease-free water and stored at −80°C prior to testing.
411
412 **CBSV and UCBSV Detection by RT-PCR**
413 All samples were tested for presence of CBSV and UCBSV by a two-step RT-PCR assay [43]. The PCR
414 mixture consisted of 16.0 µl nuclease free water, 2.5 µl PCR buffer, 2.5 µl $MgCl_2$ (2.5 mM), 0.5µl
415 dNTPs (10 mM), 1.0 µl of each primer (10mM) [forward CBSDDF2 5'-
416 GCTMGAAATGCYGGRTAYACAA-3' and reverse CBSDDR 5'-GGATATGGAGAAAGRKCTCC-3'], 0.5 µl
417 Taq DNA polymerase and 1.0 µl of cDNA. The PCR thermo profile consisted of: 94°C for 2 min
418 followed by 35cycles of 94°C (30 s), 51°C (30 s) and 72°C (30 s) for denaturation, annealing and
419 extension, respectively. PCR products were analysed by electrophoresis in a x1 TAE buffer on a
420 1.2% agarose gel, stained with ethidium bromide, visualized under UV light and photographed
421 using a digital camera.
422
423 **Sample Selection for Sequencing**
424 From the data obtained in the diagnostic tests, samples for sequencing were selected to
425 represent different geographical regions, symptom types and severities. Three samples that
426 tested positive for either CBSV (2) or UCBSV (1) were selected for this study. The two samples for
427 which presence of CBSV was confirmed (U1 and U4) had been collected from different farmers'
428 fields in Mukono district, central Uganda. The sample with UCBSV (U8) selected for further
429 analysis originated from a field in Mayuge district, eastern Uganda.
430
431 **Generation of the Transcriptomes**

432 The three samples were transported to the laboratory and extracted as detailed above. Total
433 RNA was blotted on to FTA cards and later extracted using methods previously described[44]. Total
434 RNA from each sample was sent to the Australian Genome Research Facility (AGRF) for library
435 preparation and barcoding before 100 bp paired-end sequencing on an Illumina HiSeq2000.
436
437 **De novo Sequence Assembly and Mapping**
438 For each sample, reads were first trimmed using CLC Genomics Workbench 6.5 (CLCGW) with the
439 quality scores limit set to 0.01, maximum number of ambiguities to two and removing any reads
440 with <30 nucleotides (nt). Contigs were assembled using the *de novo* assembly function of
441 CLCGW with automatic word size, automatic bubble size, minimum contig length 500, mismatch
442 cost two, insertion cost three, deletion cost three, length fraction 0.5 and similarity fraction 0.9.
443 Contigs were sorted by length and the longest subjected to a BLAST search (blastn and blastx)[45].
444 In addition, reads were also imported into Geneious 6.1.6[46] and provided with reference
445 sequences obtained from Genbank (KR108828 for CBSV and KR108836 for UCBSV). Mapping was
446 performed with minimum overlap 10%, minimum overlap identity 80%, allow gaps 10% and fine
447 tuning set to iterate up to 10 times. A consensus between the contig of interest from CLCGW and
448 the consensus from mapping in Geneious was created in Geneious by alignment with MAFFT[47].
449 Open reading frames (ORFs) were predicted and annotations made using Geneious. Finalized
450 sequences were designated as "complete" based on comparison with the reference sequences
451 used in the mapping process, and "coding complete" if some of the 5' or 3' UTR was missing but
452 the coding region was intact[48,49], and entered into the European Nucleotide Archive (WEBIN ID
453 number Hx2000053576).
454
455 **Genome Alignment and Annotation**

456 Twenty-six whole genomes (12 CBSV and 14 UCBSV) were downloaded from GenBank and
457 imported into Geneious[46], and the MAFFT plugin[47]was used to align them with the 3 new whole
458 genome sequences obtained in this study. Nucleotide alignments were translated into protein
459 using the translate align option in Geneious and then visually inspected for quality. Annotations
460 were transferred to the 3 new genomes from the 26 previously published genomes using the live
461 annotation option in Geneious.
462

463 **Characterizing the Genetic Diversity in CBSV and UCBSV Genomes**

464 CBSV and UCBSV are distinct species (Fig. 2) therefore the genomes were treated separately in
465 the analyses in characterizing the genomes. Characterizing the genetic diversity of CBSV and
466 UCBSV was done using the Synonymous Non-synonymous Analysis Program (SNAP v2.1.1)
467 implemented in the Los Alamos National Laboratory HIV-sequence database
468 (http://www.hiv.lanl.gov)[50]. SNAP calculates synonymous and non-synonymous substitution
469 rates based on a set of codon-aligned nucleotide sequences. This program is based on the simple
470 methods for estimating the numbers of synonymous and nonsynonymous nucleotide
471 substitutions of[51], and incorporating a statistic developed for computing variances and
472 covariances of dS's and dN's[52]. An application of the SNAP package in HIV-1 research has also
473 been developed[53].
474

475 **Estimating Rates of Evolution**

476 To further characterize the CBSV and UCBSV genomes, we estimated the rates of molecular
477 evolution using CODEML implemented in PAML (Phylogenetic Analysis by Maximum
478 Likelihood)[54]. PAML is a package of programs for analysis of DNA or protein sequences by using
479 maximum likelihood methods in a phylogenetic framework. The null hypothesis tested was that

480 CBSV and UCBSV have equal rates of evolution (one omega; model = 0) while the alternative
481 hypothesis was that CBSV and UCBSV have different rates of evolution (two omegas; model = 2).
482 The Likelihood Ratio Test was used to test for significance. If the test statistic was greater than
483 3.84 (based on the Chi-squared distribution and one degree of freedom) we then rejected the
484 null hypothesis that the rates between CBSV and UCBSV are equal. Initial analyses were carried
485 out for the entire genome and showed that CBSV has a higher rate of evolution (Table 4). To
486 identify which gene or genes were contributing to the faster rate of evolution we repeated the
487 analysis separately for each individual gene.
488
489 **Testing for Positive Selection**
490 Sites under positive selection were identified using SLAC[55] implemented on the
491 http://www.datamonkey.org web server[56]. The settings used to run SLAC were as follows: the
492 best fitting model (GTR) was specified global dN/dS value was estimated and the significance
493 level was set to 0.01.
494
495 **Gene Tree Estimation**
496 Individual gene trees were estimated using MrBayes 3.2.1[57] run in parallel on Magnus (Pawsey
497 Supercomputing Centre, Perth, Western Australia) utilizing the BEAGLE library [58]. MrBayes 3.2.1
498 was run utilizing 4 chains for 30 million generations and trees were sampled every 1000
499 generations. All runs reached a plateau in likelihood score, which was indicated by the standard
500 deviation of split frequencies (0.0015), and the potential scale reduction factor (PSRF) was close
501 to one, indicating that the MCMC had converged.
502
503 **Species Tree Estimation**

504 The SVDQ method[59] implemented in PAUP*[60] was used to analyze the whole-genome data. This
505 method enables analysis of multi-locus data in a coalescent framework that allows for variation
506 in the phylogenetic histories of individual genes. The method was run with all possible quartets
507 (23,751) sampled in each of 100 bootstrap replicates, and the consensus across all bootstrap
508 replicates was used as the estimate of the species tree. Bootstrap support values for each node
509 were used to quantify uncertainty in the species tree estimate. The entire analysis took
510 approximately 2.5 minutes on a MacBook Pro running OSX 10.11.2 with a 2.2 GHz Intel Core i7
511 processor.
512
513 **Comparison of Gene Trees to Species Tree**
514 We compared the single-gene phylogenies constructed using MrBayes with the overall species
515 tree phylogeny estimated using SVDQ and the concatenated phylogeny estimated by MrBayes.
516 For each tree, we evaluated presence or absence of the clades identified by Ndunguru et al.[19]
517 labeled A-F in Figure 3. We identified an additional clade (clade G, Fig. 3) that we noticed to be
518 consistently present across genes and methods. For each of these clades present in a particular
519 tree, we recorded the posterior probability (for trees constructed by MrBayes) or the bootstrap
520 proportion (for the tree estimated by SVDQ) in Table 5.
521
522 **Sliding Window SVD Score**
523 The SVD Score[61] was used to quantify support for two viral clades for portions of the genome in
524 a sliding window analysis. Briefly, the SVD Score measures the extent to which the data support
525 a phylogenetic "split" – a division of the taxa into two groups with specified group membership.
526 Low values of the SVD Score indicate strong support for the split of interest, while larger values
527 indicate *either* a lack of support for the split or a shift in the underlying evolutionary process (see

528 Allman et al. (2016) for details and examples). We computed the SVD Score with the split defined
529 by CBSV vs. UCBSV across the genome in windows of 500 bp, sliding in increments of 100 bp, and
530 plotted the resulting SVD Scores across the genome, with boundaries between genes marked
531 with vertical lines. The computations took less than one minute on a MacBook Pro running OSX
532 10.11.2 with a 2.2 GHz Intel Core i7 processor.
533
534

535 **Acknowledgments**

536 This work was supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grant no. 51466 "Regional
537 Cassava Virus Diseases Diagnostic Project" awarded to Mikocheni Agricultural Research Institute,
538 Tanzania, and a sub-grant to National Agricultural Research Organisation (Uganda).
539 Computational resources provided by the Pawsey Supercomputing Centre with funding from the
540 Australian Government and the Government of Western Australia supported this work.

541

542 **Author contributions**

543 Sample collection was carried out by T.A., G.O., R.N., L.Kiiza. Laboratory work was carried out
544 by G.O, R.N., L.Kiiza. J.N. P.S. M.K. Computational analyses were conducted by T.A., L.B.,
545 L.Kubatko., M.K, and all authors contributed to the writing of the manuscript.

546

547 **Conflict of Interest**

548 The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest with the contents of this article.

549

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712 Table 1: CBSD leaf symptom severities and types on plants infected by *Cassava brown streak virus*
713 and *Ugandan cassava brown streak virus*
714

Virus species	Number of plants with CBSD foliar symptom severity score[1]				Number of plants with CBSD foliar symptom type[2]		
	2	3	4	5	SW	LL	SL
CBSV	5	7	1	0	3	8	2
UCBSV	24	5	0	0	7	21	1
CBSV + UCBSV	9	6	0	0	5	10	0
Total	38	18	1	0	15	39	3
Percentage	66.7	31.6	1.7	0.0	26.3	68.4	5.3

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717 [1]Foliar CBSD symptom severity score based on 1-5 scale; 1 = no visible symptoms, 2 = mild vein
718 yellowing or chlorotic blotches on some leaves, 3 = pronounced/extensive vein yellowing
719 or chlorotic blotches on leaves, but no lesions or streaks on stems, 4 = pronounced/extensive
720 vein yellowing or chlorotic blotches on leaves and mild lesions or streaks on stems, 5 =
721 pronounced/extensive vein yellowing or chlorotic blotches on leaves and severe lesions or
722 streaks on stems, defoliation and dieback.
723 [2]Types of foliar CBSD symptoms based on distribution of leaf chlorosis and stem lesions on the
724 plant; systemic and on the whole plant (SW), systemic on leaf or stem parts but localized (SL),
725 only on lower leaves (LL).
726

7 Table 2. Next generation sequencing data for samples from cassava brown streak disease symptomatic plants collected in Uganda.
8

Sample ID	Accession number	Virus	No. of reads obtained	No. of reads after trimming	Number of contigs produced (CLC)	Contig length (CLCGW, nt)	Average coverage (CLCGW)	Number of reads mapped to contig of interest	Ref seq. used for mapping	Length of consensus sequence from mapping (Geneious)	No. reads mapped to ref. sequence	Average coverage (Geneious)	Final sequence length (Coding region only
U1		*CBSV*	23,335,344	23,053,082	726	3919, 2214	31, 24	1264, 549	KR108828	8,893	2,233	25	8,748
U4		*CBSV*	21,844,716	21,582,374	621	8,949	255	23,658	KR108828	8,949	22,987	256	8,748
U8		*UCBSV*	23,648,990	23,373,606	1,008	8,954	366	33,778	KR108836	9,563	178,117	393	8,700

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731 Table 3. *Cassava brown streak virus* (CBSV) amino acid (AA) sites under positive selection
732 (analyses method: SLAC Hy-Phy). There were no sites under positive selection for
733 *Ugandan cassava brown streak virus* (UCBSV).
734
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Gene	CBSV AA site under positive selection
P1	44, 46, 50, 174, 224, 230, 250, 283, 288, 349, 358
P3	415, 455, 467, 472, 499, 525, 618
6K1	658, 678
CI	735, 761, 820, 827, 848, 852, 894, 935, 1218
VPg	1465
NIa	1620, 1645, 1704, 1754, 1785
Nib	1879, 1880, 1890, 1907, 1929, 2109, 2145, 2156, 2161, 2285
HAM1	2320, 2345, 2404, 2432, 2453, 2475, 2519
CP	2550, 2555, 2588, 2611, 2631, 2635, 2640, 2659, 2728, 2745, 2783, 2818, 2843, 2860, 2877, 2884

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751 Table 4. Rates of evolution tested using CODEML implemented in PAML. H_O was CBSV and UCBSV
752 have equal rates of evolution (one omega; model = 0), while H_1 was that CBSV and
753 UCBSV have different rates of evolution (two omegas; model = 2).
754

Gene	Assumptions	K (ts/tv rate ratio)	w (omega Dn/Ds) 0	w (omega Dn/Ds)1	Likelihood Ratio Test Statistic (if greater than 3.84 reject H_0) H_0=equal rates
WGS	UCBSV and CBSV equal rates	5.90944	0.06358		
	UCBSV and CBSV different rates	5.9598	0.05518	**0.07622**	26.29*
P1	UCBSV and CBSV equal rates	5.07336	0.10394		
	UCBSV and CBSV different rates	5.05456	0.09047	**0.12203**	4.61*
P3	UCBSV and CBSV equal rates	5.17197	0.08635		
	UCBSV and CBSV different rates	5.20559	0.0764	**0.10198**	2.22
6K1	UCBSV and CBSV equal rates	19.54143	0.00969		
	UCBSV and CBSV different rates	19.69676	**0.01527**	0.00316	3.01
CI	UCBSV and CBSV equal rates	9.9388	0.01722		
	UCBSV and CBSV different rates	8.06276	0.0155	**0.01977**	0.73
6K2	UCBSV and CBSV equal rates	8.40649	0.04684		
	UCBSV and CBSV different rates	8.82738	0.02354	**0.11057**	6.74*
VPg	UCBSV and CBSV equal rates	5.852	0.05759		
	UCBSV and CBSV different rates	5.87009	0.054	**0.06323**	0.29
NIa	UCBSV and CBSV equal rates	8.01105	0.02932		
	UCBSV and CBSV different rates	8.68283	0.01408	**0.06719**	29.95*
NIb	UCBSV and CBSV equal rates	6.07872	0.05329		
	UCBSV and CBSV different rates	6.14047	0.0452	**0.06508**	5.18*
HAM1	UCBSV and CBSV equal rates	7.25177	0.16144		
	UCBSV and CBSV different rates	7.2343	**0.17929**	0.14007	2.23
CP	UCBSV and CBSV equal rates	13.09297	0.06075		
	UCBSV and CBSV different rates	13.26752	0.05606	**0.07155**	1.29
			faster rate UCBSV	**faster rate CBSV**	* Rates are different

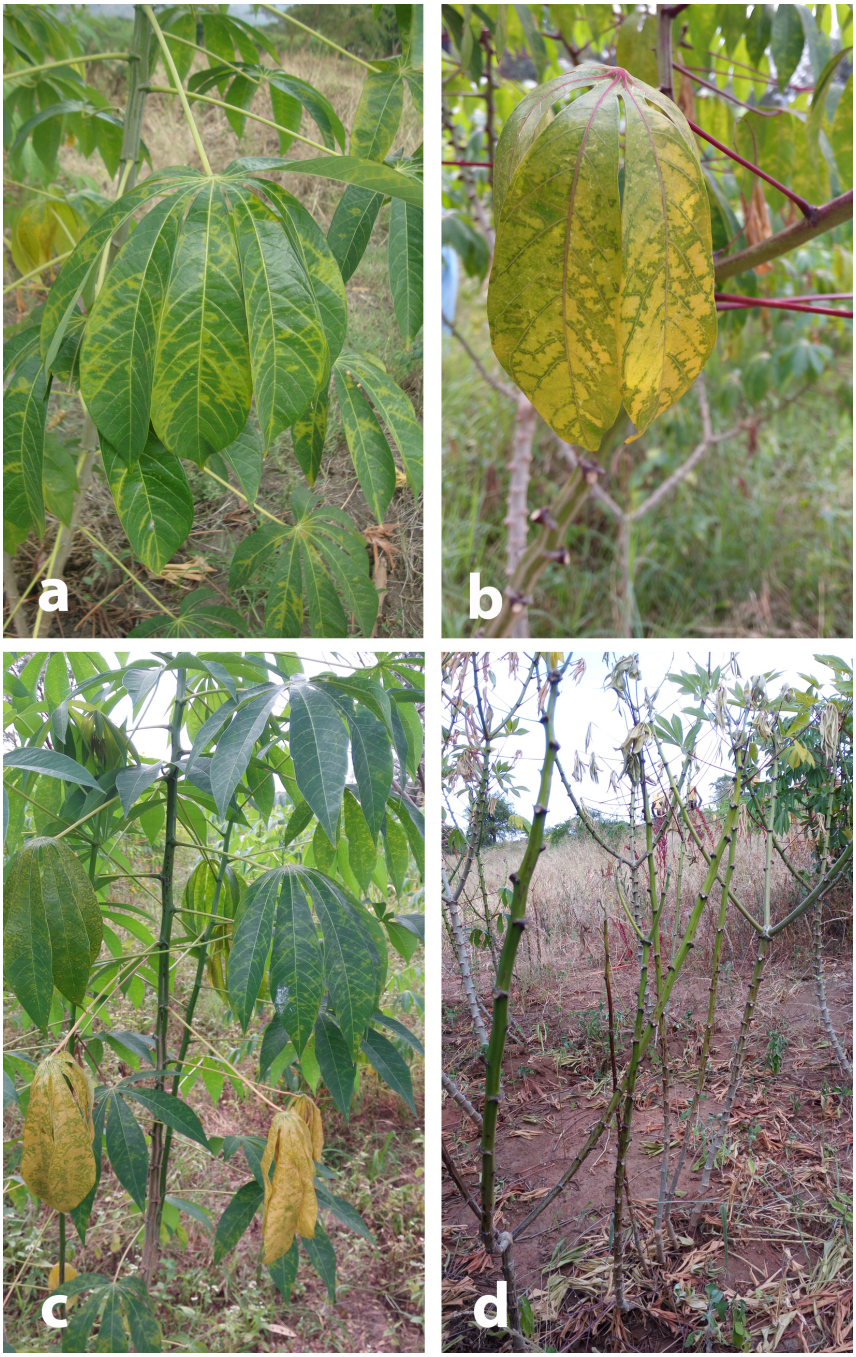
755

Table 5. Support for Clades A – G (Figure 3) in individual gene trees and whole genome analyses. Table entries represent posterior probabilities from analysis with MrBayes, except values reported for SVDQ, which are bootstrap proportions. Support values below 95% are indicated in bold, and '--' indicates that the clade was not present.

Genomic region	Clade A	Clade B	Clade C	Clade D	Clade E	Clade F	Clade G
P1	99.98	99.98	96.98	99.72	99.54	--	99.98
P3	99.98	99.98	98.57	99.98	99.98	--	99.98
6K1	**94.66**	99.85	98.87	99.95	--	--	98.42
CI	99.98	99.96	99.76	99.98	99.98	99.99	99.99
6K2	97.65	99.98	**71.52**	**91.70**	**66.46**	--	98.75
Vpg	99.98	99.99	--	99.18	**64.55**	--	99.99
Nla	99.96	99.99	99.98	99.41	**76.31**	--	**89.34**
Nlb	99.99	99.98	99.98	99.99	99.98	--	99.98
HAM	--	--	--	99.89	99.83	--	98.55
CP	--	--	--	99.59	99.50	--	99.89
Whole genome	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
SVDQ	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	**87.00**	**44.00**	1.00

763
764 Figure Legend
765
766 Figure 1: Cassava brown streak disease symptoms on leaves and stems of sampled plants; **(a)**
767 Chlorosis along secondary and tertiary leaf veins of CBSV-infected plant of cultivar TME
768 204 (severity score 3), **(b)** Cultivar TME 14 plant with dual CBSV+UCBSV infection showing
769 chlorosis on secondary or tertiary veins, reverse chlorosis (general chlorosis and green
770 area along veins) (severity score 3), **(c)** UCBSV-infected plant of cultivar TME 204
771 exhibiting chlorosis on secondary veins, reverse chlorosis, chlorotic spots and mild stem
772 lesions (severity score 3), **(d)** Very severely diseased plant (severity score 5) of cultivar
773 TME 14 infected with both CBSV and UCBSV, and having chlorosis on leaves, severe stem
774 lesions/brown streaks, defoliation, stem dieback.
775
776 Figure 2. Genetic diversity of CBSV and UCBSV using the Synonymous Non-synonymous Analysis
777 Program (SNAP v2.1.1) implemented in the Los Alamos National Laboratory HIV-
778 sequence database (http://www.hiv.lanl.gov) [50]. UCBSV is on the top panel, CBSV at
779 the bottom. The 10 gene segments are labeled from P1-CP.
780
781 Figure 3. Species tree generated from SVD Quartets using the whole genome sequences. Colors
782 at the tips are based on country of origin. Branches with mixed colors indicate a clade
783 that contains samples with mixed country of origin. For example, the ancestral branch
784 of UCBSV TZ Tan 23 KR108839 and UCBSV UG MI B3 FJ039520 is colored red and orange
785 to indicate a clade with sampled with mixed country of origin.
786
787 Figure 4. Computed SVD Score with the split defined by CBSV vs. UCBSV across the genome in
788 windows of 500 bp, sliding in increments of 100 bp, and resulting SVD Scores plotted
789 across the genome. Boundaries between genes are marked with vertical lines to further
790 characterize the CBSV and UCBSV genomes. Rates of molecular evolution were
791 estimated using CODEML implemented in PAML (Phylogenetic Analysis by Maximum
792 Likelihood)[54]. The results are shown for each gene and D represents the difference in
793 likelihoods from the null hypothesis (CBSV and UCBSV have equal rates) and the
794 alternative hypothesis (CBSV and UCBSV have different rates).
795

Figure 1: Cassava brown streak disease symptoms on leaves and stems of sampled plants; **(a)** Chlorosis along secondary and tertiary leaf veins of CBSV-infected plant of cultivar TME 204 (severity score 3), **(b)** Cultivar TME 14 plant with dual CBSV+UCBSV infection showing chlorosis on secondary or tertiary veins, reverse chlorosis (general chlorosis and green area along veins) (severity score 3), **(c)** UCBSV-infected plant of cultivar TME 204 exhibiting chlorosis on secondary veins, reverse chlorosis, chlorotic spots and mild stem lesions (severity score 3), **(d)** Very severely diseased plant (severity score 5) of cultivar TME 14 infected with both CBSV and UCBSV, and having chlorosis on leaves, severe stem lesions/brown streaks, defoliation, stem dieback.



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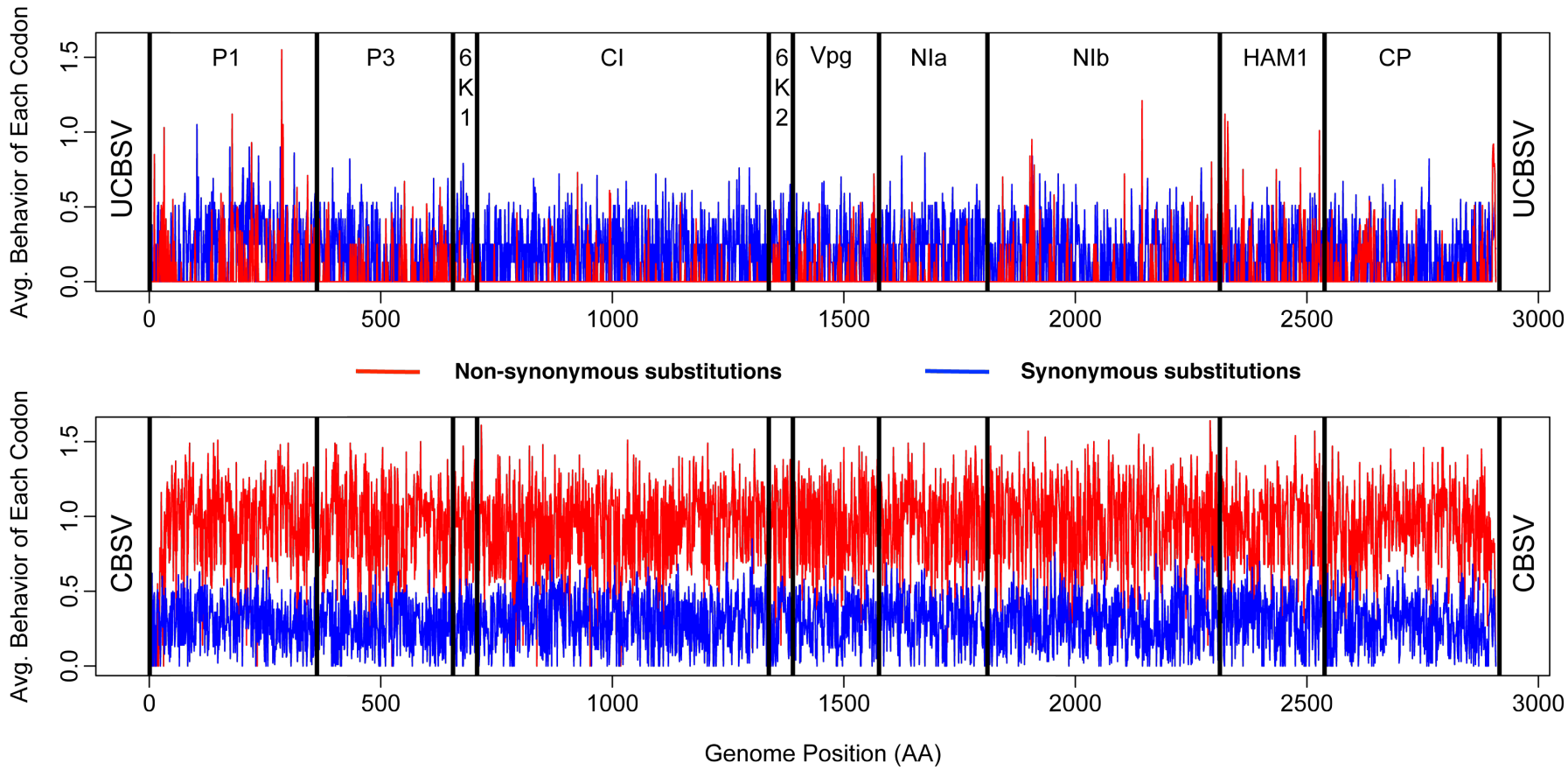
808 bottom. The 10 gene segments are labeled from P1-CP.
809



810

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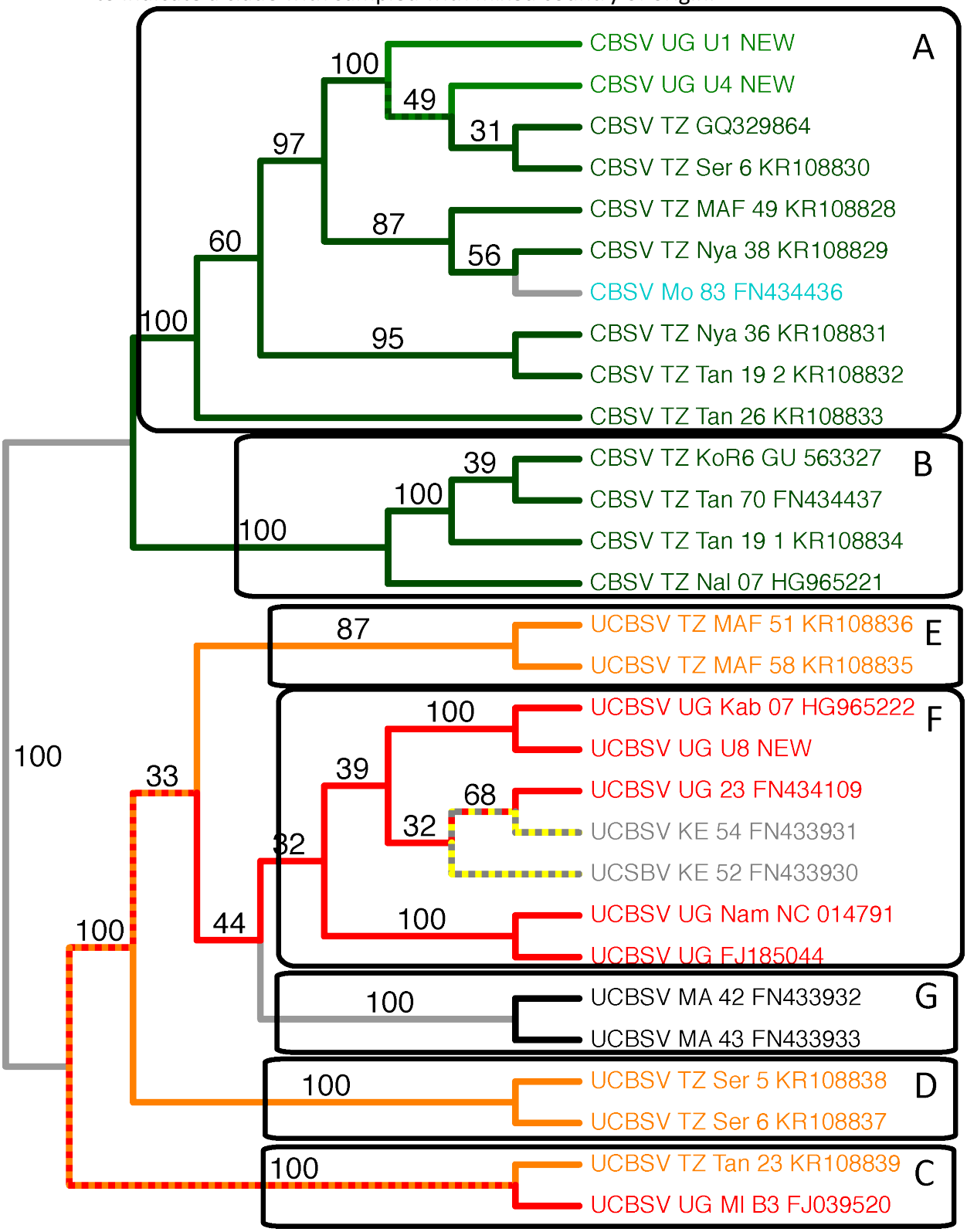
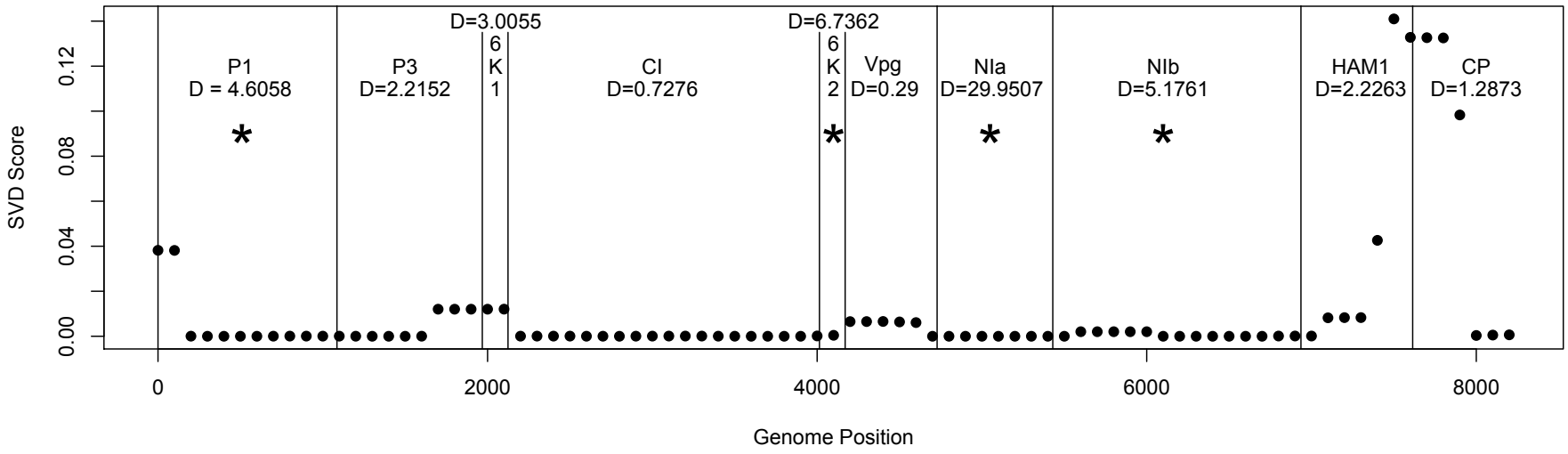
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