



Research article

Genome-wide association study and protein network analysis for understanding candidate genes involved in root development at the rapeseed seedling stage

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ABSTRACT

Root system is essential for plants to absorb water and nutrients. The root related traits are complex quantitative traits and regulated by genetic control. Here, we used two association mapping panels to perform a genome-wide association study (GWAS) on seven root related traits in *Brassica napus* at the seedling stage and obtained 27 SNP loci significantly associated with the phenotypes. We further conducted a genome-wide LD block analysis of the candidate peak regions and obtained 295 candidate genes with high association peaks across seven phenotypes in LD region. In addition, a protein interaction network using the candidate genes identified here was constructed, and 113 genes were associated. Seven genes, BnaA03g47330D, BnaC09g16810D, BnaA06g22840D, BnaA03g28390D, BnaA08g19920D, BnaA03g28930D and BnaA03g11440D were in a large cluster, and may play important roles in interacting with other related genes. Our data may provide resources for molecular breeding and functional analysis of root growth and development in rapeseed.

1. Introduction

Roots are essential for plants. As the main interface between the plants and various biotic and abiotic factors in the soil environment (Smith and De, 2012), they absorb water and nutrient from the soil and supply a variety of growth substances for the shoots. In addition, roots provide anchor and mechanical support to make the plants more firmly in the soil (Smith and De, 2012). Based on their multiple roles in plant development and adaptation, root parameters are considered to be important breeding traits for higher yield in crop plants.

Brassica napus have a complex root system architecture, which is mainly composed of the primary root and the lateral roots (Santosh et al., 2015). In the process of plant growth and development, root morphology traits can be directly evaluated from primary root length, root weight, lateral root number, root volume. Moreover, plant weight, shoot weight and root-shoot ratio can also indirectly reflect the root morphology traits since plant growth is a biological process highly affected by the coordination of above-ground shoots and below-ground roots (Naz et al., 2012, 2014; Robinson et al., 2016).

In the progress of root growth and development, the phytohormone plays an essential role in root growth and development, especially for auxin (Sabatini et al., 1999; [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4455775/)

[articles/PMC4455775/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4455775/), Mockaitis and Estelle, 2008; Hernández-Barrera et al., 2011). In addition to phytohormone, intercellular signaling molecules, such as ion, protein kinases, and phosphatases, and their respective receptors, as well as specific transcription factors (TFs), are essential for root development (Drisch and Stahl, 2015). To date, many genes have been reported that involved in the development of the root system in plants. In *Arabidopsis*, The *PIN* genes mediate polar auxin transport and regulate cell division and cell expansion in the primary root (Blilou et al., 2005). *HDG11* gene was found that can up-regulates cell-wall-loosening protein genes to promote root elongation (Xu et al., 2014). The *PLT1* and *PLT2* genes, which determine root stem cell positioning and differentiation based on their differential expression in the stem cell niche (Aida et al., 2004; Galinha et al., 2007). The *SHR* and *SCR* were found to be required for the maintenance of the stem cell niche and control cell division in the root apical meristem (Sozzani et al., 2010; Cruz-Ramírez et al., 2012; Wachsman et al., 2015). In maize, several genes have been described that affect the development of the root system, such as *Rtcs*, *Rth1* and *Rth3* (Taramino et al., 2007; Hochholdinger et al., 2008). *Rtcs* controls crown root and seminal root formation (Taramino et al., 2007). *Rth1* and *Rth3* control root hair elongation with *Rth3* being shown to affect grain yield in maize (Hochholdinger et al., 2008). In rice, *RRL1*, *RRL2*, *CRL2* and *WOX11*

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genes have been reported that affect the formation of root crown (Inukai et al., 2001a; Inukai et al., 2001b; Zhao et al., 2009). *OsCKH1*, *ARL1* and *PPF1* genes have been reported that affect the formation of adventitious root (Liu et al., 2003; Liu et al., 2005; Xu et al., 2005). *Srt5* and *rrl3* genes have been reported that affect the root length. *Dro1* gene was reported that is negatively regulated by auxin and involved in cell elongation in the root tip that causes asymmetric root growth and control root growth angle in rice (Uga et al., 2013).

Root related traits are complex quantitative traits and believed to be controlled by many genes, each with a small genetic effect. Researches have been undertaken to map root QTL in *Arabidopsis* (Gerald et al., 2006), rice (Xu et al., 2016), wheat (Iannucci et al., 2017), common bean (Ochoa et al., 2006), maize (Pace et al., 2015), soybean (Zhou et al., 2011) and barley (Naz et al., 2012, 2014; Robinson et al., 2016; Sayed et al., 2017a,b). Recently, in *Brassica napus*, Genetic variation and QTLs for root related traits have been studied in a recombinant inbred line population and 23 stable QTL for root related traits were identified (Wang et al., 2017). However, the genetic control of root characteristics is poorly understood among the rapeseed diverse genetic resources.

Genome-wide association studies (GWAS) are an efficient method to detect marker-trait associations and can be applied to mapping and hunting for candidate genes related to certain traits (Huang et al., 2010; Zhao et al., 2011). Instead of previous commonly used SSRs (Zhao et al., 2009, 2013; Li et al., 2014), SNPs have become more popular for GWASs (Huang et al., 2010, 2012). Compared with linkage mapping, association mapping does not require constructing special mapping populations and it uses high recombination in natural populations. In rapeseed, many QTL have been identified for above-ground traits of agronomic importance by GWASs (F. Li et al., 2014; Cai et al., 2014; Luo et al., 2015; He et al., 2017), however, there is less genes or QTLs has been reported on below-ground root related trait.

The objectives of the present study were to: (1) detect SNP markers associated with seven root related traits in two rapeseed association panels by genome-wide association studies, and (2) identify the candidate genes having an effect on root development and investigate a protein interaction network using the candidate genes. Our study may provide resources for molecular breeding and functional analysis of root growth and development in rapeseed.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Plant materials and phenotypic evaluation

Two association mapping panels were used for genome-wide association study in the current study. Panel 1 was composed of 296 diverse inbred lines, including 48 winter ecotype lines, 197 Chinese semi-winter accessions and 51 spring ecotype lines. Panel 2 was composed of 126 diverse inbred lines, including 41 winter ecotype lines, 37 Chinese semi-winter accessions and 48 spring ecotype lines. These lines were grown in the green house under the condition of 70% relative humidity with 16 h of light at 24 °C followed by 8 h of dark at 20 °C, and two replications were planted for each line.

After growth for 35 days, 10 plants from each accession (5 plants per replicate) were sampled to detect the root related traits. Seven root related trait including whole plant weight (PW), root weight (RW), primary root length (RL), total root number (RN), total root volume (RV), shoot weight (SW) and Root-shoot ratio (RSR) were detected. After they had been sampled, the total roots were separated from the shoot and root part and measured respectively. The Root-shoot ratio (RSR) was calculated. The primary root length (RL) was investigated by manually using a ruler and the total root number (RN) was determined by manually counting. The root were scanned by a scanner (EPSON V700, Japan), and then the total root volume (RV) were analyzed by WinRHIZO software.

Table 1

Phenotypic variation of root related traits.

| Population | Traits | MIN | MAX | MEAN _{tst} | CV% |
|------------|--------|-------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| Panel 1 | PW | 0.36 | 10.81 | 2.59 ± 1.18 | 45.68% |
| | RW | 0.02 | 0.98 | 0.11 ± 0.08 | 73.53% |
| | RL | 2.30 | 15.83 | 4.99 ± 1.31 | 26.24% |
| | RN | 12.44 | 104.82 | 44.63 ± 16.66 | 37.33% |
| | RV | 0.01 | 0.35 | 0.11 ± 0.06 | 53.73% |
| | SW | 0.34 | 10.36 | 2.48 ± 1.14 | 46.14% |
| | RSR | 0.01 | 0.57 | 0.05 ± 0.04 | 89.49% |
| Panel 2 | PW | 0.56 | 10.81 | 2.73 ± 1.38 | 50.55% |
| | RW | 0.02 | 0.46 | 0.10 ± 0.06 | 60.33% |
| | RL | 2.79 | 15.83 | 5.15 ± 1.58 | 30.71% |
| | RN | 12.00 | 98.00 | 44.18 ± 17.73 | 40.13% |
| | RV | 0.01 | 0.28 | 0.08 ± 0.05 | 54.60% |
| | SW | 0.53 | 10.36 | 2.63 ± 1.34 | 51.05% |
| | RSR | 0.01 | 0.16 | 0.04 ± 0.02 | 44.75% |

PW, Plant weight; RW, Root weight; RL, Root length; RN, Root number; RV, Root volume; SW, Shoot weight; RSR, Root-shoot ration.

2.2. Genotyping

The panel 1 comprised of 296 inbred lines was genotyped by the *Brassica* 60 K Illumina[®] Infinium SNP array by Emei Tongde Co. (Beijing) in accordance with the manufacturer's protocol (<http://www.illumina.com/technology/beadarray-technology/infinium-hd-assay.html>). We excluded SNPs with either an AA or a BB frequency equal to zero, call frequency < 0.9, or minor frequency < 0.05.

The panel 2 comprised of 126 inbred lines was sequenced using an Illumina HiSeq TM 4000 (Illumina Co, Ltd.) with a 5X sequencing depth and 125-bp paired-end sequencing length. The reads were mapped to the reference genome of *Brassica napus*. annotation_v5 (<http://www.genoscope.cns.fr/brassicaparus/data/>) with BWA software (<http://bio-bwa.sourceforge.net/>). SNPs were detected among accessions by GATK software (<https://www.broadinstitute.org/gatk/guide/best-practices.php>). The missing SNPs with the missing rate below 0.6 were filled using the software beagle v4.1 (<https://faculty.washington.edu/browning/beagle/beagle.html#download>). The SNP loci with heterozygous rate over 25% and minor allele frequency (MAF) less than 0.05 were removed.

2.3. Genome-wide association analysis

The software package STRUCTURE v2.3.4 was employed to analyze the Population structure (Pritchard et al., 2000). The program was run with the following parameters: Five independent runs were performed with a K-value (the putative number of genetic groups) from 1 to 10, with 10,000 MCMC (Markov chain Monte Carlo) replications and 10,000 burn-ins. The optimal K-value was determined by the log probability of data [LnP(D)] and an ad hoc statistic Δk based on the rate of change of LnP(D) between successive K (Evanno et al., 2005). SPAGeDi v1.4 was used to calculate the relative kinship matrix (Hardy and Vekemans, 2002). Negative values between two individuals were set to 0 (Yu et al., 2006). For the mapping panel 1, the genotype data was from 60K SNP array and totally 33186 SNPs were obtained after filtering. We selected 5700 SNPs to analyze population structure. On each chromosome, we select 300 SNPs according to the SNPs distributions distance on the chromosome. We used the whole 33186 SNPs to performed PCA analysis and kinship estimation. For the mapping panel 2, the genotype data was from whole genome resequencing and the total SNP number is 690,953 after filtering. Since the too large data produced by whole genome resequencing and the software limited, we selected 10000 SNPs according to the SNPs distributions distance on the whole genome to analyze population structure, PCA, and estimate kinship.

For mapping panel 1, TASSEL 5.0 (Yu et al., 2006; Yang et al., 2010)

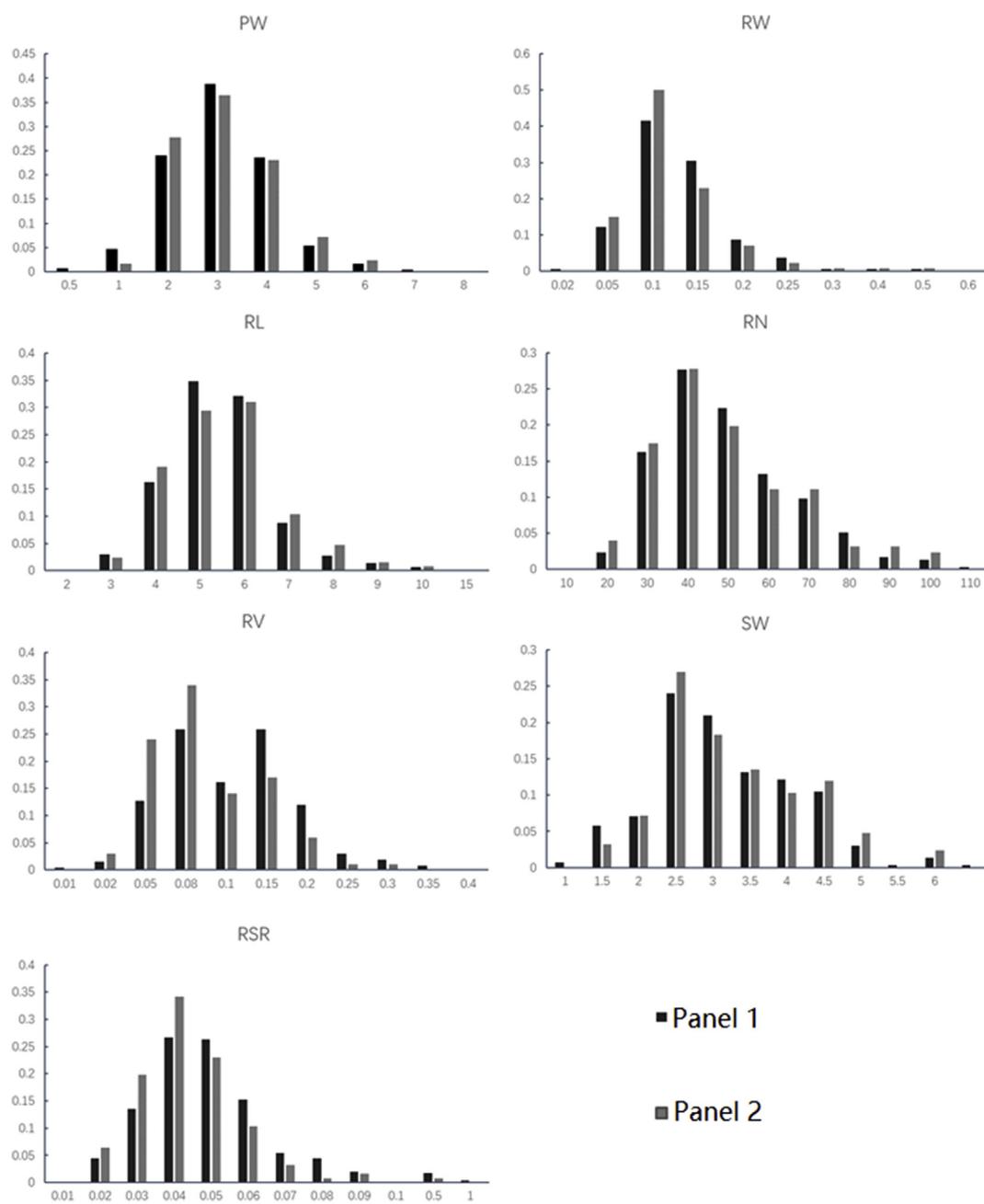


Fig. 1. Phenotype frequency distribution of seven root related traits in the two mapping populations.

Table 2
Correlation coefficients among root related traits in the two mapping Panels.

| | PW | RW | RL | RN | RV | SW | RSR |
|-----|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| PW | | | | | | | |
| RW | 0.50285** | | | | | | |
| RL | 0.38631** | 0.72671** | | | | | |
| RN | 0.40934** | 0.38347** | 0.39243** | | | | |
| RV | 0.04381* | 0.50341** | 0.48812** | 0.34045** | | | |
| SW | 0.99816** | 0.44953** | 0.30348** | 0.39330** | 0.49699** | | |
| RSR | -0.10789 | 0.69726** | 0.22028** | -0.05923 | 0.41711** | 0.99954** | -0.14812** |
| | | | | | 0.56849** | 0.70565** | 0.52205** |
| | | | | | 0.48547** | 0.38335** | 0.21431** |
| | | | | | 0.39431** | 0.33389** | 0.06521 |
| | | | | | 0.25861** | 0.48792** | 0.13844 |
| | | | | | 0.40585** | | -0.17570* |
| | | | | | 0.13806* | -0.16039** | |

Below diagonal: Panel 1; Above diagonal: Panel 2.

**Significantly correlated at $P < 0.001$ level.

*Significantly correlated at $P < 0.05$ level.

Abbreviations are the same as those given in Table 1.

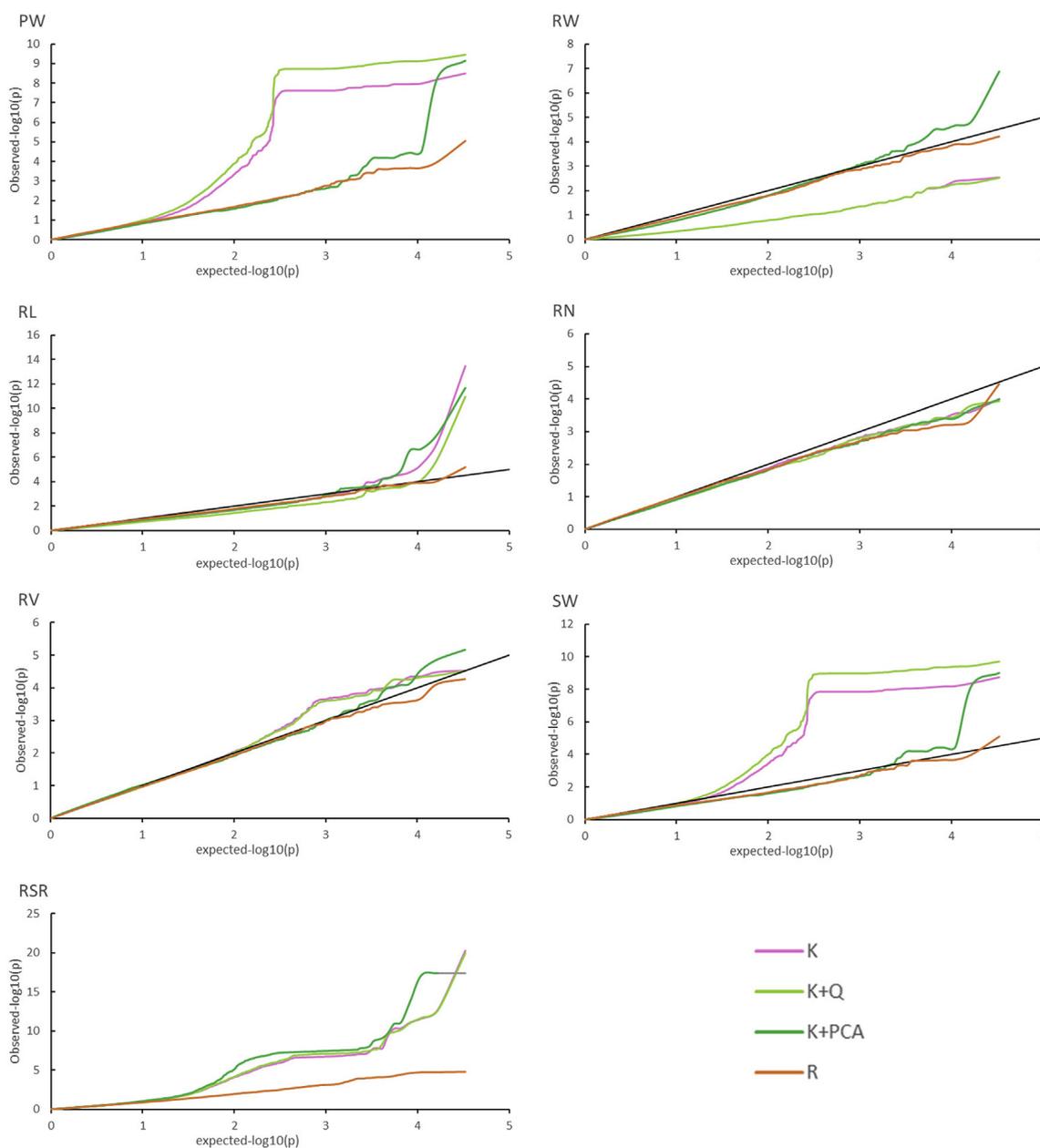


Fig. 2. Quantile-quantile plots of R, K model, Q + K model and PCA + K model. The black line is the expected line under the null distribution.

and R package (Team, 2014) were both employed to perform the genome-wide analysis. By TASSEL 5.0, three mixed models controlling relative kinship, K model, Q + K model, and PCA + K model were chosen to determine the statistical associations between phenotypes and genotypes to evaluate the effects of population structure (Q, PC) and relative kinship (K) on root related traits. These three models were performed with optimum compression and population parameters previously determined (P3D) by variance component estimation in TASSEL 5.0. For the mapping panel 2, because of the too large data produced by whole genome resequencing, only the R package (Team, 2014) was employed to perform the genome-wide analysis. The genome-wide threshold was set at $p = 1/\text{number of total SNPs}$ (Luo et al., 2015).

2.4. Candidate gene identification and protein network interaction analysis

Gene loci containing the SNPs in highly associated peaks were considered as candidate genes related to root related traits. All the

identified candidate genes associated with root related traits at seedling stage were used for network analysis. Based on integrating with the Biological General Repository for Interaction Datasets (BioGRID, <http://thebiogrid.org/>) that provides genetic and protein interaction data from model organisms (Chatr-Aryamontri et al., 2015), Network analysis was performed for the candidate genes related to root related trait. Cytoscape v3.6.0 was employed to visualize the protein–protein interaction network (Shannon et al., 2003).

3. Results

3.1. Phenotypic variation of root related traits

Seven root related traits were investigated in both of the two association mapping populations. Minimum, maximum, mean values and coefficient of variations (CVs) for all the investigated traits in each population were presented in Table 1. The CVs ranging from 26.24 to 89.49% within the population suggested the investigated root related

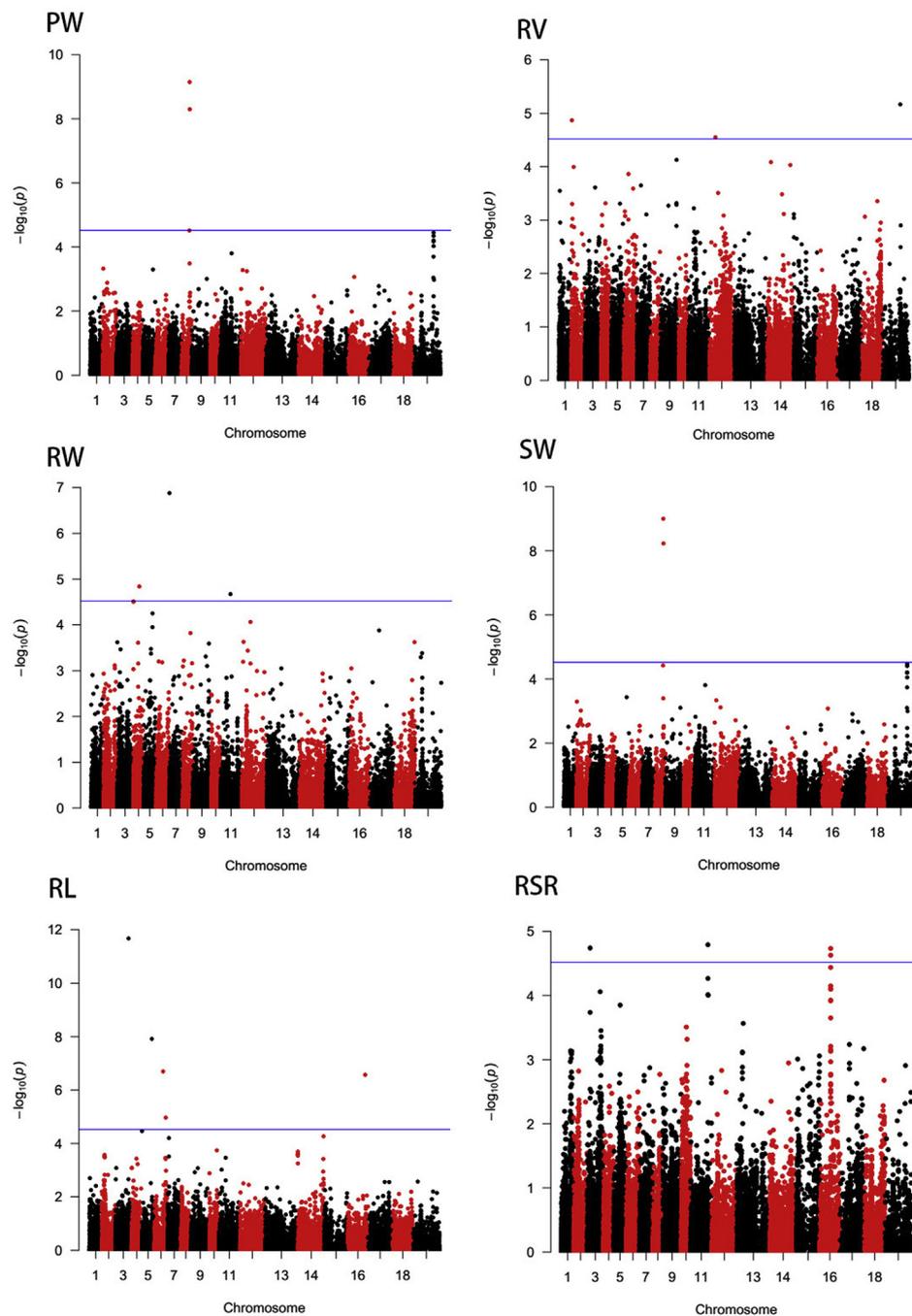


Fig. 3. Manhattanplots of association analysis for root related traits in panel 1. Each dot represents a SNP. The significance threshold $-\log_{10}(p) = 4.52$.

traits had extensive phenotypic variations (Table 1). The distribution of the seven traits were approximately normal in both of the two populations (Fig. 1) indicating that these traits were quantitative inheritance pattern and suitable for GWAS analysis. Except for RSR trait, significant pairwise correlations were detected among these traits in both populations (Table 2). RSR was positively correlated with RW and RL and negatively correlated with SW in both populations. However, RSR was positively correlated with RV only in Panel 1 and negatively correlated with PW only in Panel 2.

3.2. Genome-wide association analysis

For panel 1, According to the Q-Q plots of the R and three models in tassel 5.0, the observed P values of the PCA + K model were closer to

the expected P values than other models for the six traits including the PW, RW, RL, RN, RV and SW (Fig. 2), this indicated that PCA + K model could effectively control false positive associations and avoid false negative associations for these six traits. Thus, we choose PCA + K model to perform the association analysis for these six traits. For the RSR trait, the observed P values of the R were closer to the expected P values, thus, we choose R to perform the association analysis for Root shoot ration (Fig. 2). For panel 2, only R package were used to genome wide association analysis because of the large genotyped data produced by whole genome resequencing.

In panel 1, totally 22 SNP loci were identified significantly associated with the seven root related traits at $-\lg(P) > 4.52$, including 3 SNPs associated with PW on chromosome A08 and C09, 3 SNPs associated with RW on A04, A07 and C01, 6 SNPs associated with RL on

Table 3
Genome-wide significant association signals detected in the two mapping populaions

| Traits | SNP ID | Chr. | Position | P value | R ² | -log ₁₀ (P) | Population |
|--------|-----------|------|----------|----------|----------------|------------------------|------------|
| PW | 39852* | C09 | 13737563 | 8.97E-06 | 0.1078 | 5.0470 | Panel 1 |
| PW | 18225* | A08 | 14842805 | 7.09E-10 | 0.2286 | 9.1496 | Panel 1 |
| PW | 18282* | A08 | 15148135 | 5.02E-09 | 0.2497 | 8.2994 | Panel 1 |
| PW | 14149995* | A03 | 14149995 | 5.24E-07 | 0.3128 | 6.2808 | Panel 2 |
| RW | 16449 | A07 | 243867 | 1.32E-07 | 0.1546 | 6.8784 | Panel 1 |
| RW | 8306 | A04 | 11231342 | 1.45E-05 | 0.0937 | 4.8386 | Panel 1 |
| RW | 52132 | C01 | 18269465 | 2.13E-05 | 0.1093 | 4.6711 | Panel 1 |
| RL | 42482 | C04 | 47289490 | 6.53E-06 | 0.1235 | 5.1851 | Panel 1 |
| RL | 6832 | A03 | 24364511 | 2.11E-12 | 0.2380 | 11.6750 | Panel 1 |
| RL | 11422 | A05 | 18326481 | 1.21E-08 | 7.9169 | 0.1569 | Panel 1 |
| RL | 13047 | A06 | 16000043 | 2.00E-07 | 6.6994 | 0.1348 | Panel 1 |
| RL | 35372 | C06 | 32036971 | 2.68E-07 | 6.5716 | 0.1243 | Panel 1 |
| RL | 13726 | A06 | 20842625 | 1.08E-05 | 4.9672 | 0.0932 | Panel 1 |
| RV | 37132 | C09 | 32713842 | 6.81E-06 | 5.1671 | 0.1359 | Panel 1 |
| RV | 4318 | A02 | 1242248 | 1.35E-05 | 4.8690 | 0.1404 | Panel 1 |
| RV | 42321 | C02 | 11293971 | 2.81E-05 | 4.5518 | 0.1283 | Panel 1 |
| SW | 39852* | C09 | 13737563 | 8.05E-06 | 0.1132 | 5.0943 | Panel 1 |
| SW | 18225* | A08 | 14842805 | 9.96E-10 | 0.2248 | 9.0018 | Panel 1 |
| SW | 18282* | A08 | 15148135 | 5.89E-09 | 0.2493 | 8.2300 | Panel 1 |
| SW | 14149995* | A03 | 14149995 | 5.14E-07 | 0.3178 | 6.2895 | Panel 2 |
| RSR | 1123 | C01 | 31588804 | 1.61E-05 | 0.1062 | 4.7944 | Panel 1 |
| RSR | 40599 | A03 | 5245888 | 1.81E-05 | 0.1054 | 4.7416 | Panel 1 |
| RSR | 25799 | C06 | 20178116 | 1.84E-05 | 0.1052 | 4.7346 | Panel 1 |
| RSR | 25808 | C06 | 20189683 | 2.35E-05 | 0.1036 | 4.6296 | Panel 1 |
| RSR | 13924962 | A03 | 13924962 | 3.17E-07 | 0.4237 | 6.4991 | Panel 2 |
| RSR | 13924995 | A03 | 13924995 | 3.17E-07 | 0.4239 | 6.4991 | Panel 2 |
| RSR | 13924969 | A03 | 13924969 | 3.44E-07 | 0.4224 | 6.4630 | Panel 2 |

* Common SNP loci detected from different traits.
Abbreviations are the same as those given in Table 1.

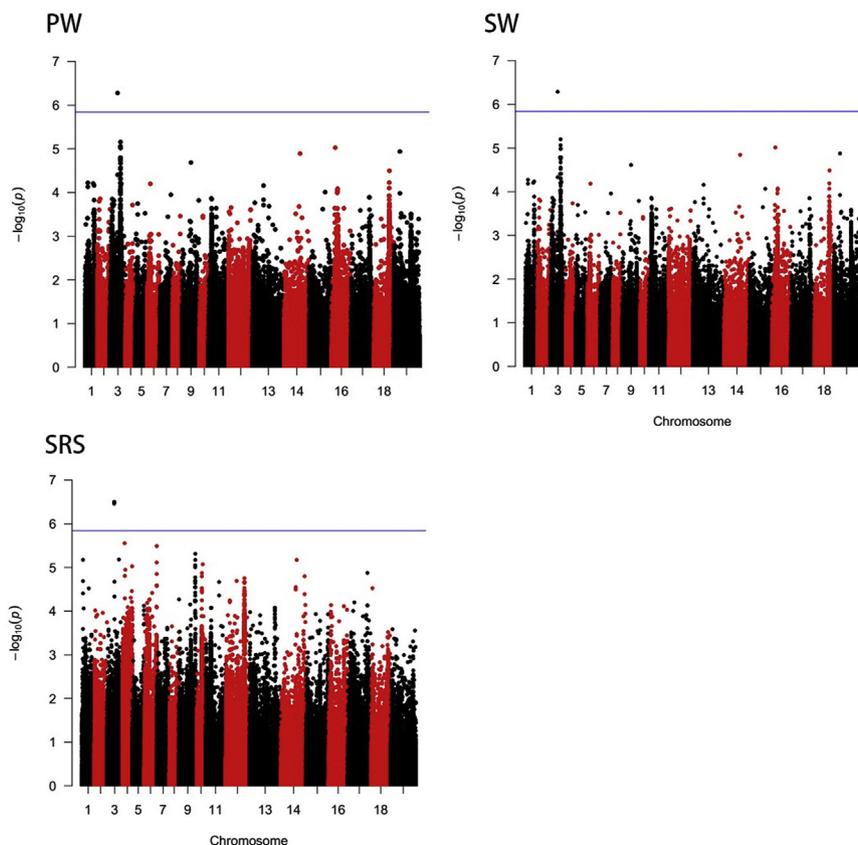


Fig. 4. Manhattanplots of association analysis for root related traits in panel 2. Each dot represents a SNP. The significance threshold $-\log_{10}(p) = 5.84$.

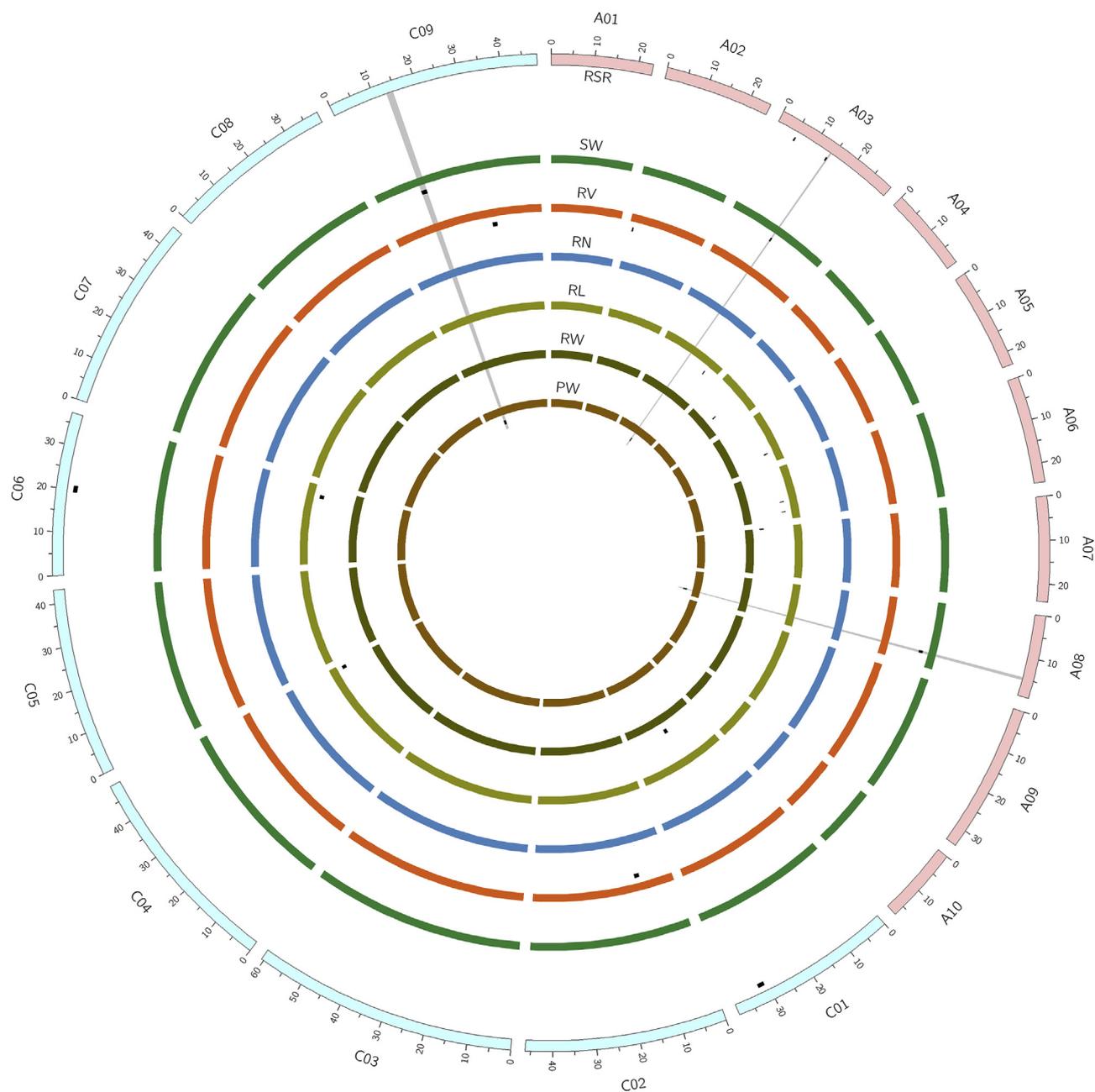


Fig. 5. GWAS result for seven root related traits in the two mapping populations.

A03, A05, A06, C04 and C05, 3 SNPs associated with RV on A02, C02 and C09, 3 SNPs associated with SW on A08 and C09, and 4 SNPs associated with RSR on A03, C01 and C06 (Fig. 3, Table 3).

In panel 2, totally 5 SNP loci were identified significantly associated with the root related trait at $-\lg(P) > 5.84$, including one SNP associated with PW on A03, one SNP associated with SW on A03, and 3 SNPs associated with RSR on A03 (Fig. 4, Table 3).

In all these significant SNPs, 4 common SNPs on A03, A08 and C09 were found associated with the trait of PW and SW. (Fig. 5, Table 3).

3.3. Candidate gene identification and protein network interaction analysis

We further conducted a genome-wide LD (linkage disequilibrium) block analysis of the candidate peak regions and only significant SNPs that were harbored by LD blocks were supposed to be the regions containing putative candidate genes. According to our previous studies, the extent of LD is about 150 kb in A subgenome and 750 kb in C

subgenome in *Brassica napus* (Wei et al., 2017). Thus, we selected 150 kb upstream and downstream of the highest point of SNP in A subgenome and 750 kb in C subgenome, respectively. Gene loci containing the SNPs in highly associated peaks were considered as candidate genes related to root development. We successfully identified 295 candidate genes in the peak SNP sites (or adjacent to those sites) of associated loci for seedling root development (Supplementary Table 1). Among the 295 genes, 12, 113, 4, 10, 17, 7, 28, 22, 16, 11, 37 and 18 genes were in A02, A03, A04, A05, A06, A07, A08, C01, C02, C04, C06 and C09, respectively. Among all the genes, 96, 21, 68, 35, 96, and 95 genes were identified to be associated with the traits of PW, RW, RL, RV, SW and RSR, respectively. Twenty common genes were found associated with the traits of PW, SW and RSR.

To further explore the gene's functional interactions, we constructed a protein interaction network using the GWAS candidate genes (Supplementary Table 1) as nodes and protein-protein interaction data from BioGRID as edges (<http://thebiogrid.org/>). The network contains

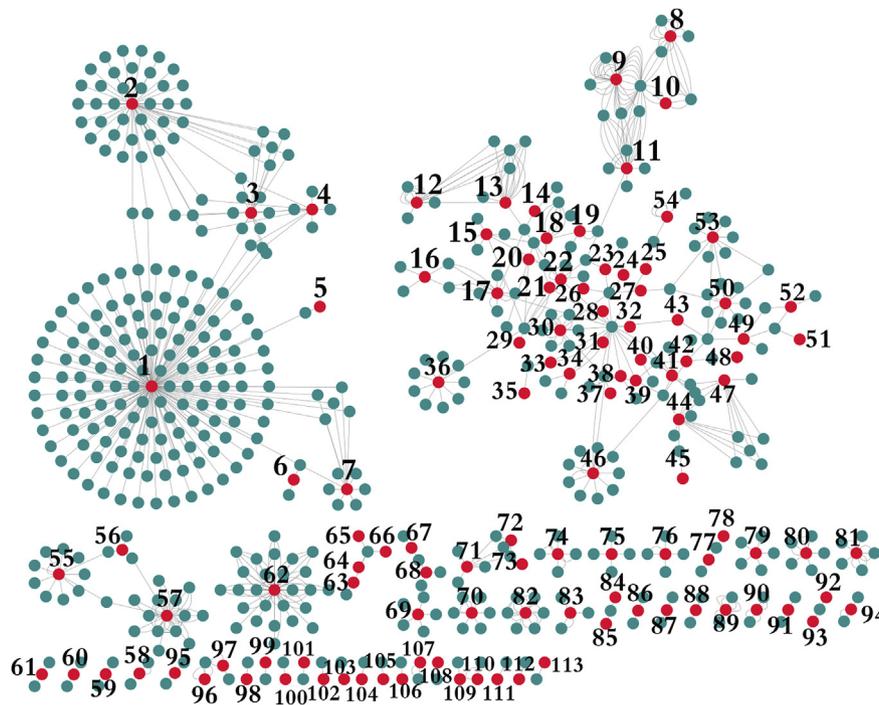


Fig. 6. Protein interaction Cytoscape network. The network suggested the interactions between the genes. Red node is the candidate genes which $-\log_{10}(p) > 5$ with $FDR < 0.05$. (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the Web version of this article.)

599 nodes and 821 edges, as visualized by Cytoscape in Fig. 6. A total of 113 GWAS candidate genes with $FDR < 0.05$ were marked in the network with a red node (Fig. 6, Table 4). As shown in the network, the gene numbers 1 (*BnaA03g47330D*), 2 (*BnaC09g16810D*), 3 (*BnaA06g22840D*), 4 (*BnaA03g28390D*) 5 (*BnaA08g19920D*), 6 (*BnaA03g28930D*) and 7 (*BnaA03g11440D*) were in a large cluster, and may play important roles by interacting with other related genes.

4. Discussion

As below-ground part of plants, root is very important for plant and has numerous functions in plant development including water and nutrient uptake (MacMillan et al., 2006), so root highly affected the plant productivity by the coordination of above-ground part and below-ground part. However, fewer researchers focus on the below-ground plant parts than above-ground plant parts since it is more difficult to observe and measure the root related trait (Shen et al., 2001). In the present study, we measured seven root related traits in two rapeseed association panels and performed a genome-wide association study (GWAS). Moreover, the possible candidate genes involved in root development are predicted and a protein interaction network was constructed using the candidate genes.

In this study, we totally identified 27 SNP loci that significantly associated with the root related traits. These SNPs could possibly be regarded as candidate loci for root development and be used for development of molecular markers for rapeseed breeding.

Among the 295 candidate genes identified in the current study, 8 of them have been reported that their homologous genes in *Arabidopsis* were associated with root growth and development (Table 5) (Lee et al., 2010; Prasad et al., 2010; Jin et al., 2012; Sundaravelpandian et al., 2013; Zhou et al., 2013; Velasquez et al., 2015; Li et al., 2017; Crawford et al., 2015). *Cand2* gene is a G-protein-coupled-receptor candidate, which involved in the regulation of *Arabidopsis* root growth (Lee et al., 2010). *Lrs1* gene was reported that regulated the lateral root development in *Arabidopsis* seedlings (Prasad et al., 2010). *P4H2* gene was reported that impact on root hair growth in *Arabidopsis* (Jin et al., 2012). *PFT1* is critical for multiple stages of root hair development in

Arabidopsis by controlling the ROS balance (Sundaravelpandian et al., 2013). *AHL4* was reported that regulated the vascular tissue boundaries in roots of *Arabidopsis* (Zhou et al., 2013). *ACS4* is an ethylene biosynthesis enzyme, which interacts with *XBAT32*, an *Arabidopsis* RING E3 Ligase, regulates the lateral root production through its role in ethylene biosynthesis (Velasquez et al., 2015). *HDT1* gene regulates the GIBBERELLIN 2-OXIDASE2 expression to control *Arabidopsis* root meristem cell number (Li et al., 2017). *WIP4* was identified to be required for the initiation of the *Arabidopsis* root meristem (Crawford et al., 2015).

According to the protein–protein interaction analysis, 113 candidate genes were associated in the interaction networks. Seven genes, the gene numbers 1 (*BnaA03g47330D*), 2 (*BnaC09g16810D*), 3 (*BnaA06g22840D*), 4 (*BnaA03g28390D*) 5 (*BnaA08g19920D*), 6 (*BnaA03g28930D*) and 7 (*BnaA03g11440D*) were in a large cluster, and may play important roles by interacting with other related genes. Especially for the gene number 1, *BnaA03g47330D*, it may play a key role in the networks. Besides the largest cluster, we found that gene number 62 (*BnaA08g19480D*) was also in a key position in the networks. As mentioned above, *PFT1*, the homologous gene of *BnaA08g19480D* in *Arabidopsis* was reported that is critical for root hair development (Sundaravelpandian et al., 2013). This result suggests that the key genes can be investigated to explore its possible role in the network. These key candidate genes generated here may provide additional resources for molecular breeding and functional analysis of root growth and development in rapeseed seedlings.

Author contributions

Yajun He and Dingxue Hu wrote the manuscript. Wei Qian designed the study. Yajun He, Dingxue Hu, Jingcan You, Daoming Wu and Hongli Dong conducted the experiment. Yajun He, Dingxue Hu and Yixin Cui analyzed the data. Wei Qian and Jiana Li provided resources. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Table 4
Protein interaction cytoscape network of Candidate genes for root related traits.

| Number | Gene ID | Annotation |
|--------|---------------|--|
| 1 | BnaA03g47330D | TRICHOME BIREFRINGENCE-LIKE 18 |
| 2 | BnaC09g16810D | Calcineurin-like metallo-phosphoesterase superfamily protein |
| 3 | BnaA06g22840D | Leucine-rich repeat protein kinase family protein |
| 4 | BnaA03g28390D | Leucine-rich repeat protein kinase family protein |
| 5 | BnaA08g19920D | RING/U-box superfamily protein |
| 6 | BnaA03g28930D | CONTAINS InterPro DOMAIN/s: mRNA splicing factor, Cwf18 (InterPro:IPR013169) |
| 7 | BnaA03g11440D | MBOAT (membrane bound O-acyl transferase) family protein |
| 8 | BnaA03g47510D | myb domain protein 18 (MYB18) |
| 9 | BnaA06g22980D | UVB-RESISTANCE 8 (UVR8) |
| 10 | BnaC06g31050D | SHORT HYPOCOTYL IN WHITE LIGHT1 (SHW1) |
| 11 | BnaA05g24250D | SPA1-related 3 (SPA3) |
| 12 | BnaA03g28730D | CLP-similar protein 3 (CLP3) |
| 13 | BnaC02g15600D | cleavage and polyadenylation specificity factor 160 (CPSF160) |
| 14 | BnaA05g24330D | unknown protein |
| 15 | BnaA08g19740D | general regulatory factor 12 (GRF12) |
| 16 | BnaA06g22810D | transducin family protein/WD-40 repeat family protein |
| 17 | BnaC09g29790D | ARM repeat superfamily protein |
| 18 | BnaA03g28550D | SUVR4 |
| 19 | BnaC06g18000D | BECLIN1 (BECLIN1) |
| 20 | BnaA03g11400D | SHV3-like 1 (SVL1) |
| 21 | BnaA05g24610D | phosphoenolpyruvate carboxylase 3 (PPC3) |
| 22 | BnaA03g47480D | FLOWERING WAGENINGEN (FWA) |
| 23 | BnaC06g31060D | BED zinc finger |
| 24 | BnaA03g29350D | Protein phosphatase 2C family protein |
| 25 | BnaA03g29320D | long-chain acyl-CoA synthetase 6 (LACS6) |
| 26 | BnaA03g29220D | neurofilament protein-related |
| 27 | BnaA03g28400D | methionine synthase 2 (MS2) |
| 28 | BnaA03g28630D | UV-B LIGHT INSENSITIVE 3 (ULI3) |
| 29 | BnaA03g28280D | RING/U-box superfamily protein |
| 30 | BnaA03g28480D | glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase C subunit 1 (GAPC1) |
| 31 | BnaC01g32800D | ubiquitin-conjugating enzyme19 (UBC19) |
| 32 | BnaA02g02850D | prenylcysteine methyltransferase (PCME) |
| 33 | BnaA06g22720D | glutamate-1-semialdehyde-2,1-aminomutase (GSA1) |
| 34 | BnaC01g32880D | RING/U-box superfamily protein |
| 35 | BnaA03g28760D | pathogenesis-related 4 (PR4) |
| 36 | BnaC01g24030D | putative mitochondrial RNA helicase 1 (PMH1) |
| 37 | BnaC04g48640D | polyamine oxidase 2 (PAO2) |
| 38 | BnaA02g02620D | casein lytic proteinase B3 (CLPB3) |
| 39 | BnaA08g19980D | Ribosomal protein L34e superfamily protein |
| 40 | BnaA03g29070D | Ribosomal L22e protein family |
| 41 | BnaA03g28820D | Ribosomal protein S3Ae |
| 42 | BnaA03g29090D | ribosomal protein L18 (RPL18) |
| 43 | BnaC09g16990D | Sugar isomerase (SIS) family protein |
| 44 | BnaA03g28860D | Ribosomal protein S24e family protein |
| 45 | BnaA08g19090D | unknown protein |
| 46 | BnaA03g29050D | regulatory particle triple-A ATPase 5A (RPT5A) |
| 47 | BnaA08g19260D | Ribosomal protein L10 family protein |
| 48 | BnaA03g11520D | O-Glycosyl hydrolases family 17 protein |
| 49 | BnaA03g29120D | RING/U-box protein |
| 50 | BnaA03g29270D | TCP-1/cpn60 chaperonin family protein |
| 51 | BnaA03g47600D | FtsJ-like methyltransferase family protein |
| 52 | BnaC06g30880D | alpha-amylase-like 3 (AMY3) |
| 53 | BnaA03g28450D | TCP-1/cpn60 chaperonin family protein |
| 54 | BnaA03g28270D | peroxin 19-1 (PEX19-1) |
| 55 | BnaC01g32210D | ZIM-like 1 (ZML1) |
| 56 | BnaA03g29110D | Tetratricopeptide repeat (TPR)-like superfamily protein |
| 57 | BnaA05g24550D | cobalt ion binding |
| 58 | BnaA04g13310D | 1-aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylate synthase 4 (ACS4) |
| 59 | BnaA03g28960D | ROP binding protein kinases 2 (RBK2) |
| 60 | BnaA02g02590D | U-box domain-containing protein |
| 61 | BnaC09g29480D | SPEECHLESS (SPCH) |
| 62 | BnaA08g19480D | PHYTOCHROME AND FLOWERING TIME 1 (PFT1) |
| 63 | BnaA08g19200D | THO2 |
| 64 | BnaC04g48330D | TRAF-like family protein |
| 65 | BnaC01g23930D | histone deacetylase 3 (HDA3) |

Table 4 (continued)

| Number | Gene ID | Annotation |
|--------|---------------|--|
| 66 | BnaA03g28620D | Nucleotidylyl transferase superfamily protein |
| 67 | BnaA03g28750D | ankyrin repeat family protein |
| 68 | BnaA04g13210D | basic helix-loop-helix (bHLH) DNA-binding superfamily protein |
| 69 | BnaC01g32850D | translocase of the outer mitochondrial membrane 40 (TOM40) |
| 70 | BnaA08g19220D | microtubule-associated proteins 70–2 (MAP70-2) |
| 71 | BnaC06g17120D | F-box/RNI-like superfamily protein |
| 72 | BnaC06g17160D | F-box/RNI-like superfamily protein |
| 73 | BnaC04g49450D | Ankyrin repeat family protein |
| 74 | BnaA03g29360D | SAC3/GANP/Nin1/mts3/eIF-3 p25 family |
| 75 | BnaC02g15530D | unknown protein |
| 76 | BnaA03g29000D | acyl-CoA binding protein 4 (ACBP4) |
| 77 | BnaA06g22890D | shoot apical meristem arrest 1 (SHA1) |
| 78 | BnaA03g11650D | Uncharacterised protein family (UPF0497) |
| 79 | BnaA08g19490D | TEMPRANILLO 1 (TEM1) |
| 80 | BnaA03g29200D | anaphase-promoting complex/cyclosome 11 (APC11) |
| 81 | BnaA04g13390D | methyltransferase 1 (MET1) |
| 82 | BnaC02g15550D | PPHB SUSCEPTIBLE 2 (PBS2) |
| 83 | BnaA03g29080D | Calcineurin-like metallo-phosphoesterase superfamily protein |
| 84 | BnaA08g19760D | FKBP-like peptidyl-prolyl cis-trans isomerase family protein |
| 85 | BnaA02g02740D | ARM repeat superfamily protein |
| 86 | BnaA03g28870D | cysteine synthase D1 (CYSD1) |
| 87 | BnaA05g24640D | phosphoesterase |
| 88 | BnaA02g02690D | SPIRAL1-like4 (SP1L4) |
| 89 | BnaA03g28850D | with no lysine (K) kinase 1 (WNK1) |
| 90 | BnaA03g28670D | flowering locus KH domain (FLK) |
| 91 | BnaA03g28570D | peroxin-12 (PEX12) |
| 92 | BnaA08g19690D | Phosphatidylinositol 3- and 4-kinase family protein |
| 93 | BnaA03g15200D | INVOLVED IN: biological_process unknown |
| 94 | BnaA02g03100D | ROP-interactive CRIB motif-containing protein 4 (RIC4) |
| 95 | BnaA03g28320D | ribosomal protein S2 (RPS2) |
| 96 | BnaC02g15620D | AT hook motif DNA-binding family protein |
| 97 | BnaA03g11360D | beta-1,2-xylosyltransferase (XYLT) |
| 98 | BnaA03g47280D | Expressed protein |
| 99 | BnaA08g19060D | Acid phosphatase/vanadium-dependent haloperoxidase-related protein |
| 100 | BnaC04g49820D | DROUGHT TOLERANCE REPRESSOR (DOR) |
| 101 | BnaC04g49070D | FKBP-like peptidyl-prolyl cis-trans isomerase family protein |
| 102 | BnaC01g32410D | NIMA-related kinase 5 (NEK5) |
| 103 | BnaA06g22750D | flavonol synthase 3 (FLS3) |
| 104 | BnaA06g30770D | methyl esterase 11 (MES11) |
| 105 | BnaC02g16510D | mitochondrial acyl carrier protein 2 (mtACP2) |
| 106 | BnaC06g17240D | Pentatricopeptide repeat (PPR) superfamily protein |
| 107 | BnaA03g11640D | PIP2 |
| 108 | BnaA03g47490D | homolog of DNA mismatch repair protein MSH3 (MSH3) |
| 109 | BnaA03g47680D | vacuolar ATP synthase G3 (VATG3) |
| 110 | BnaA03g29180D | ATSK12 |
| 111 | BnaA03g28720D | WRKY DNA-binding protein 39 (WRKY39) |
| 112 | BnaA03g28950D | S-adenosyl-L-methionine-dependent methyltransferases superfamily protein |
| 113 | BnaA02g02750D | DNA/RNA polymerases superfamily protein |

Notes

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Table 5
The reported candidate genes for root growth and development.

| Trait | SNP position | -lg(P) | Bna. genes | ATH. genes | Distance(kb) | Gene function | Reference |
|-------|--------------|--------|----------------|------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| PW | A03:14149995 | 6.28 | BnaA03g28920D* | AT3G05010 | 89.01 | Cand2 | Jin et al., (2012) |
| PW | A03:14149995 | 6.28 | BnaA03g28940D* | AT3G05090 | 83.14 | LRS1 | Lee et al., (2010) |
| PW | A03:14149995 | 6.28 | BnaA03g29370D* | AT3G06300 | 139.18 | P4H2 | Velasquez et al., (2015) |
| PW | A08:14842805 | 9.15 | BnaA08g19480D* | AT1G25540 | 132.74 | PFT1 | Sundaravelpandian et al., (2013) |
| RV | C02:11293971 | 4.55 | BnaC02g15620D | AT5G51590 | 65.80 | AHL4 | Zhou et al., (2013) |
| RW | A04:11231342 | 4.84 | BnaA04g13310D | AT2G22810 | 16.66 | ACS4 | Prasad et al., (2010) |
| RW | C01:18269465 | 4.67 | BnaC01g23930D | AT3G44750 | 136.01 | HDT1 | Li et al., (2017) |
| RSR | A03:13924962 | 6.5 | BnaA03g28940D* | AT3G05090 | 141.89 | LRS1 | Lee et al., (2010) |
| RSR | C01:31588804 | 4.79 | BnaC01g32390D | AT3G20880 | 6.56 | WIP4 | Crawford et al., (2015) |
| SW | A03:14149995 | 6.29 | BnaA03g28920D* | AT3G05010 | 89.01 | Cand2 | Jin et al., (2012) |
| SW | A03:14149995 | 6.29 | BnaA03g28940D* | AT3G05090 | 83.14 | LRS1 | Lee et al., 2010 |
| SW | A03:14149995 | 6.29 | BnaA03g29370D* | AT3G06300 | 139.18 | P4H2 | Velasquez et al., (2015) |
| SW | A08:14842805 | 9.00 | BnaA08g19480D* | AT1G25540 | 132.74 | PFT1 | Sundaravelpandian et al., (2013) |

* Common candidate genes screened from different traits.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plaphy.2019.01.028>.

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