

## RESEARCH REPORT

**Molecular characterization of the dual oxidase (LvDuox) gene from the pacific white shrimp *Litopenaeus vannamei***Y Chen<sup>1,2,3</sup>, BJ Wang<sup>1,2</sup>, MQ Wang<sup>1,2</sup>, M Liu<sup>1,2</sup>, KY Jiang<sup>1,2</sup>, L Wang<sup>1,2\*</sup><sup>1</sup>CAS Key Laboratory of Experimental Marine Biology, Institute of Oceanology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Qingdao 266071, China<sup>2</sup>Laboratory for Marine Biology and Biotechnology, Qingdao National Laboratory for Marine Science and Technology, Qingdao 266237, China<sup>3</sup>University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100049, China

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**Abstract**

The reactive oxygen species (ROS) generated by dual oxidases (Duox) play a role in innate immunity in many organisms. In this study, a 4,735 bp full-length cDNA of the Pacific white shrimp dual oxidase (LvDuox) gene was cloned; the sequence included an open reading frame of 4,497 bp, encoding a protein of 1,498 aa with a calculated mass of 173 kDa. Structural analysis revealed that LvDuox contains several domains. Homology analysis revealed that LvDuox exhibits 96.1%, 67.3% and 67.3% sequence identity with *Marsupenaeus japonicas*, *Drosophila melanogaster* and *Acyrtosiphon pisum* Duox, respectively. The mRNA transcripts of LvDuox were detected in all tested tissues. The mRNA expression of LvDuox was significantly induced in the midgut after *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* E1 (VPE1) stimulation. After the level of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in the midgut increased, expression of the superoxide dismutase and catalase genes in the midgut increased significantly. These results suggested that the LvDuox gene was upregulated in the midgut after the challenge by VPE1, and antioxidant genes were involved in the regulation of ROS in the shrimp midgut. LvDuox may therefore be a new target for intestinal disease research in the Pacific white shrimp.

**Key Words:** *Litopenaeus vannamei*; Duox; antioxidant gene; innate immunity**Introduction**

In recent years, owing to water pollution and overuse of antibiotics, the intestines of aquatic animals have been exposed to substantial threats and challenges. In the Pacific white shrimp *Litopenaeus vannamei*, the gut is surrounded by various types of bacteria because of its open anatomical structure. Some pathogens and viruses induce inflammation in the mucosa (Qi *et al.*, 2017), thus resulting in damage to the guts of shrimps. *Vibrio Harveyi*, *Vibrio alginolyticus* and *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* E1 (VPE1) are common pathogenic bacteria affecting the production of farmed prawns (Martin *et al.*, 2004; Qi *et al.*, 2017), and they pose a great threat to shrimp health. After the balance of intestinal flora is altered, the immune and digestive systems of shrimp may be affected

(Artis, 2008; Miyake *et al.*, 2014; You *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, it is crucial to maintain gut-microbiota homeostasis (van Baarlen *et al.*, 2013; Meng *et al.*, 2018) and determine the mechanism of defense against invading pathogens.

The reactive oxygen species (ROS), which are produced by dual oxidase (Duox), have been suggested to be involved in inhibiting pathogenic bacterial infection in the gut (Ha *et al.*, 2005; Yang *et al.*, 2016). ROS include oxygen radicals and some oxidizing agents formed by the partial reduction of oxygen, such as superoxide (O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>), hydroxyl (OH<sup>·</sup>), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and superoxide-derived hydrogen peroxide (H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>) (Juven *et al.*, 1996; Skulachev, 1998). They can damage the structure of DNA and the membrane system in eukaryotic cells, and induce lipid peroxidation (Wang *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, ROS are considered to be a major cause of damage in organisms. Five homologs of nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate (NADPH) oxidase (Nox1, Nox2, Nox3, Nox4 and Nox5) and two homologs of dual oxidase (Duox1 and Duox2) can produce ROS (Morand *et al.*, 2009). Duox, a transmembrane protein in host cells, is the

*Corresponding author:*

Lei Wang

Key Laboratory of Experimental Marine Biology

Institute of Oceanology

Chinese Academy of Sciences

Qingdao 266071, China

E-mail: wanglei@qdio.ac.cn

main enzyme that generates ROS in epithelial cells of many organs (Flores *et al.*, 2010; Kim *et al.*, 2014). The structural organization of Duox is highly conserved in all studied organisms (Kim *et al.*, 2014). Duox comprises a transmembrane domain, a calcium-modulated EF hand domain, a NADPH oxidase domain producing H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and an extracellular peroxidase homology domain that converts H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> into HOCl (Sumimoto, 2008). H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and chloride are important components of host gut immunity. In a study of Duox knockdown in flies, Duox has been found to be responsible for host resistance to gut infection in the gut epithelia (Biteau *et al.*, 2008; Buchon *et al.*, 2009; Kim *et al.*, 2014). In *Drosophila*, H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> participates in the regulation of intestinal epithelial cell renewal by activating intestinal stem cell proliferation (Abid *et al.*, 2000). In *Anopheles gambiae*, Duox-dependent H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is involved in gut permeability by forming a dityrosine network at the peritrophic membrane (Kumar *et al.*, 2010). In zebrafish, Duox-produced H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> facilitates wound healing and has an antimicrobial function (Niethammer *et al.*, 2009; Flores *et al.*, 2010). In addition, in Pacific white shrimp, H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is produced and has a role in anti-microbial activity after pathogens enter the hemolymph (Munoz *et al.*, 2000; Gomez-Anduro *et al.*, 2006). Because the Pacific white shrimp is a crustacean that relies on its innate immune system, cloning the Duox gene has important implications for studies investigating resistance to pathogen invasion. However, the existence of Duox gene in the Pacific white shrimp had not been verified, and the mechanism of Duox gene expression in the Pacific white shrimp was unclear.

In the present study, we cloned the full-length cDNA encoding the Duox gene from *L. vannamei*, which we designated LvDuox. Additionally, we investigated the expression of the Duox gene and two antioxidant enzymes (superoxide dismutase and catalase) genes in the gut of *L. vannamei* after infection by VPE1. Moreover, we detected H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> levels at different times after VPE1 challenge to determine the role of LvDuox in the natural immune defense mechanisms in the gut of *L. vannamei*. The results may provide a new therapeutic target for intestinal diseases of *L. vannamei*.

## Materials and methods

### *Animals and Vibrio parahaemolyticus E1 challenge*

Adult *Litopenaeus vannamei* (average weight 11±0.12 g) was obtained from Ruizi Seafood Development Co. Ltd. (Qingdao, China). Before the experiment, the shrimp were randomly allocated to six tanks (each containing 50 L seawater), including three control tanks (C1, C2 and C3) for the gene cloning, and three treatment tanks (V1, V2 and V3) for VPE1 challenge, with forty prawns in each tank, and the shrimps were acclimatized at 28±1 °C in aerated and filtered seawater (salinity 30‰) for a week and fed commercial pellets (supplied by Da Le Co. Ltd, Yantai, China). During challenge, VPE1 was added into each treatment tank at a final concentration of 5×10<sup>6</sup> cfu/mL. The VPE1 strain was donated by Dr. Zhaolan Mo from Yellow Sea Fisheries Research Institute Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences.

### *RNA extraction and cDNA preparation*

Total RNA was extracted using a MiniBEST Universal RNA Extraction kit (TaKaRa, Dalian, China) according to the manufacturer's instructions. RNA degradation and contamination were monitored on 1% agarose gels. The RNA purity and concentration of each sample were checked using a NanoPhotometer® spectrophotometer (Implen, Munich, Germany). The cDNA synthesis was carried out by TransScript II One-Step gDNA Removal and cDNA Synthesis SuperMix (TransGen Biotech, China) in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, then stored at -20 °C and used as the template for cloning and PCR analysis.

### *Cloning and sequencing*

The template of cloning was the cDNA of gut from the healthy shrimp. The partial sequence of LvDuox cDNA was obtained from the transcriptome database of our laboratory. The primers were designed based on this partial sequence by Primer Premier5.0 (Table 1). Two pairs of gene-specific primers, D501/502R and D301/302F, were used to clone the 5' end and 3' end of cDNA of LvDuox by the rapid amplification of cDNA ends (RACE) technique according to the standard procedures. The other primers for cloning were designed based on the results of 5' end and 3' end, and were used by cloning the full-length cDNA of the LvDuox by PCR with the PrimeSTAR® GXL Premix (Takara Bio, Inc., Japan). The PCR products were cloned into the pEASY®-T1 Simple Cloning Vector (TransGen Biotech, China) and transformed into the Trans5α Chemically Competent Cell (TransGen Biotech, China), the positive recombinants were identified via anti-ampicillin selection. A sequence analysis was performed using a CEQ 8000 Automated Sequencer (Beckman Coulter, Inc., USA).

The sequence similarity of cDNA was analyzed using FASTA and the basic local alignment search tool (BLAST) at the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI). The theoretical isoelectric point and molecular mass were calculated using the ExPASy Proteomics Server ([http://web.expasy.org/compute\\_pi](http://web.expasy.org/compute_pi)). The structural domains of the white shrimp LvDuox were predicted using the simple Modular Architecture Research Tool (SMART; Version 7.0) (<http://smart.emblheidelberg.de/>). Using the MEGA 7.0 software package, a Neighbor-Joining (NJ) phylogenetic tree was constructed using the full-length amino acid sequences of some published Duox proteins downloaded from NCBI, and multiple sequence alignments of some Duox proteins from NCBI using the BioEdit software package.

### *Detecting the level of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>*

To detect the level of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in the midgut of shrimp at different hours after the VPE1 challenge, three midguts were obtained from shrimps at 0 h, 3 h, 6 h, 12 h, 24 h and 36 h during the VPE1 stimulation. Then, the samples were measured with a Hydrogen Peroxide assay kit (Nanjing Jiancheng Bioengineering Institute, Nanjing, China) according to the manufacturer's instructions.

**Table 1** Primers used for the Pacific white shrimp *LvDuox* analysis in the paper

Primers	Sequence(5'-3')
<b>Primers for 5'RACE</b>	
D501R	GTTGTTGTACCAGCCATCGT
D502R	GCCGAGCACAAATCCATCTG
<b>Primers for 3'RACE</b>	
D301F	CATCTTCATCTTCGCGCACC
D302F	ATCTGGTCTTCGGAACGTCG
<b>Universal primers for RACE</b>	
NUP	AAGCAGTGGTATCAACGCAGAGT
UPML	CTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGCAAGCAGTGGTATCAACGCAGAGT
UPMS	CTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGC
3'CDS	AAGCAGTGGTATCAACGCAGAGTAC(T)30V N
5-AP-DG	AAGCAGTGGTATCAACGCAGAGTGGGGGGGGGGHN
<b>Primers of cloning vector</b>	
M13F	TGTAACGACGGCCAGT
M13R	CAGGAAACAGCTATGACC
<b>Primers for cloning the rest of sequence</b>	
D503F	TCAGATGGATTGTGCTCGGC
D504F	CAGATGGATTGTGCTCGG
D505F	TTATTTCCAGGGCTCTGAAGTGACG
D506F	AGAACTTCCGCAGGAGGCATT
D303R	CACTTCAGAGCCCTGGAATAATCA
D304R	AAGAGCCAGTAGCCACGGT
D305R	AGATTTCTGCGTCAGACACCT
<b>Primers for qRT-PCR analysis</b>	
LvD1F	ATCAGATGGATTGTGCTCGGC
LvD1R	GACTCAACGGAGCCCCAAGA
SOD1F	TGACGAGAGCTTTGGATCATTCC
SOD1R	TGATTTGCAAGGGATCCTGGTT
CAT1F	GGCTATGGTTCTCGTACTTCCAAGC
CAT1R	GCATTGTATAGGTCCCTTGTTGCA
$\beta$ -actin1F	GCCCATCTACGAGGGATA
$\beta$ -actin1R	GGTGGTTCGTGAAGGTGTAA

**Gene expression by qRT-PCR**

To analyze the expression of *LvDuox* in various tissues of the white shrimp, including heart, hepatopancreas, intestine, eyestalk, gills and proventriculus, these tissues were obtained from three healthy white shrimps. To analyze the expression of *LvDuox*, SOD and CAT of the midgut after it affected the VPE1, the midguts of shrimp (six shrimp per group) were extracted at 0 h, 3 h, 6 h, 12 h, 24 h and 36 h after the VPE1 challenge. The genetic expression of all the tissues from these tissues was determined by quantitative real-time

**PCR (qRT-PCR).**

All the templates were carried out in triplicate with a total volume of 20  $\mu$ L containing 10  $\mu$ L 2 $\times$ TransStart<sup>®</sup> Top Green qPCR SuperMix, 2  $\mu$ L of cDNA, 0.4  $\mu$ L each of the forward and reverse primers (final concentration 0.2  $\mu$ M) and 7.2  $\mu$ L of ddH<sub>2</sub>O. The qRT-PCR using SYBR green I dye (TransGen Biotech, China) was performed using the following cycling conditions: denaturation for 30 s at 94  $^{\circ}$ C, followed by 40 cycles of 5 s at 94  $^{\circ}$ C, and 30 s at 60  $^{\circ}$ C. The gene expression analysis primers of *LvDuox*, CAT and SOD are listed in Table 1.

1 GGGGGGGGAGTGTTCGTCTGACAGGTGTAGTGAGAACTAGCGCCCGCTTCCCTTCCGTTTAACTTTTTTTTAACTTTGAGACAGTCGG

91 CCCGAGGAGCCATAGGGCTGTACACACAAAATGCGCCATATCAGATGGATTGTCTGGGCTGCATCTCTGAAACGGCTGGACTGTGAG  
M G H I R W I V L G L H L L N A W T V S

181 CTGCAAGGAAGATATCCCGGAGAGCTACATCGAGAAACAGCCCTACGATGGCTGGTACAACAACCTCGCGACCCCTTCTTGGGGCTCCGCT  
K E D I P E S Y I E K Q R Y D G W Y N N L A H P S W G S V

271 TGAGTCCCGGCTGACCGGAAAGCCCGCCAGCTACGCGCGGGGTACATGCTGGCGGGCAGGACCGCCGCTCGCCCGCACCCCT  
E S R L T R K T P A S Y A D G V Y M L A G Q D R P S F R T L

361 GTCGAGGCGCTGCTGAAGGGCGGGAGGGATGGCTCCGAGCGCAACAGGACCGCCATGCTCGCCTTCTTCGGCAAGTGGTGTCTCT  
S Q A L L K G R D G M A S E R N R T A M L A F F G Q D R P S F R T L

451 GGAGATCTCGAGGCGTGGAGGCGGGCTGTCCATCGAGATGCACAAGATCAACATTGAGCGCTGGACGAGATGTACGACAGGACTG  
E I L Q A S E A G C P I E M H K I N I E R C D E M Y D K D C

541 CACCGGAGAAATTCATGCCCTTCCACCGCGCGCTACGACTACGCCACCGCCAGAGCCCAACAGCCCGGGAGCAGCTGAAC  
T G E K F M P F H R A G Y D Y A T G Q S P N S P R E Q L N Y

631 CGTGACCTCGTGGCTGGACGGCAACTTCGCTACAGCACCAGCGGGCGAGGCTCAACATGCTCGCTCTTCAGCAACGGCCTTCCG  
V T S V Y T S T S E A R L N M L R S F S N G T F R

721 CACGGACCCGACGACCCAGCCTCCCGCGGAGAACTCGAGCGGATCCCCATGGAGAACACCCGACCGCCAGCTGCTCAAGATCTT  
T D P D D P S L P P R N V E R I P M E N N P T P H V L K I L

811 CAGCCCGAGAGAATGTTTCTGCTGGCGACGAGGACCAACAGAACCCGGCTTCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCTTCTTCCGCTGGCA  
S P E R M F L L G D R T N Q N P A L L A F G I L F V R W H

901 CAACGAGCAGGCGCGAGGATCCAGGAGCAGCACCAGCTGGAAGGACGAGGAGGCTTCCAGAAAGCGCGGAGGATCTGCTCGCCCA  
N E Q A R R I Q E Q H R F D W K D E E V F Q K A R R I V V A H

991 TCTGACAGACATCATGTACGAGTTCGCTCCCGGCTTATCGACGAGGAGGCTCCCGCCCTACGACCGCTACCGCCCGACATCCACCC  
L Q N I I M Y E F V P A F I D E E V P P Y D R Y D I H P

1081 CGGCATCTCGACGCTTCCAGAGCGCCGCTTACGTTTCCGCGCACGCTGGTCCCGGGGTTGTACCGACGCGGAGCGGAGCTCA  
G I S H V F Q S A A F R F G H T L V P P G L Y D G G A H

1171 CTGCCCCTTCATCCGATCCAGACCGGCTTCCCGCCCTCCGACTTCTGCTCCACGTGGTGGGATGCTGACGACGTGATGCCAACAGCAC  
C P F I R S Q T G F S A L R L C S T W W D A D P R D G S T

1261 GGTGGAGCAGCTTCCCGGCTTGGCCTCGAGCTGGCCGAGAGGAGGACCGTCTGCTGCTCCGACGTCGCGAACAGCTTTTCCG  
V E L L R G L A S Q L A E K E D H V L C S D V R N K I L F G

1351 GCGCTCGAGTTCCTCCAGGAGGATCGGGGGCGTGAACATCATCGGGGGCGCGACAACGGGCTGCCGACTACACACGGTGGCGAA  
P L E F S R R D L G A L N I M R G R D N G L P D R K

1441 GTGCTTCCACTGGAGCTCGTGGAGGCTGGGAGGACATCAACCGGACCTGTACCGCAGCATCCCGACCTCTCCGAGAGCCTCCGCGA  
C F H L D V V E R W D I N P D L Y A D H P D L L E S R R D

1531 CCTTACCGGGCGACCTCATGAATGTGACCTGTACGTCGGCGGGATGCTGGAGTCCGAGGACGGGCGGGGAGCTTCTTAAGGCCAT  
L Y R G D L M N V D L Y V G G M L E S Q D G P F V S S

1621 CATCAAGGACGATCTCCAGACTCCGCGACCGCAGGTTCTGGTTCGAGAACGAGGAGAACGGCTTCTGACGCCGAGGAGATAGC  
I K E Q F L R L R D A D R F W F E N E E N G L F D I A

1711 CGCCATCCGCTCGCTTGGGACATCTGTGAACCGGCTGGCGGCTGCTCCGACGAGGTCAGGAGCGCTGTTCTTCCACT  
A I R S V R L W D I I V N A S G V A P D E V Q E S V F H L

1801 CGCCGACGACCCCTGCCCGACCGCCAGCTAACACCGAGGATGGAACCTGCGTCTACTCGAGGATGACTATTTCCAGGG  
A D D F C P Q P A Q L N T S E M E P C V Y L Q G Y D F Q G

1891 CTCTGAAGTGACATCATCTACTGTCATCTTCCGCGCTTCTGCGCAGGCGCGGCTACCGGACCTCGAGTTCGA  
S E V T Y I Y S C I L L A A V P L I C A G A G Y A T V E F Q

1981 GACTCCCGCAGGAGCATTCCGACCGCTGACGAGGAGAACAAATGCCCGCAGCGTCGACAAGATGATGGTGAAGGATGGCTGCA  
N S R R R H F R T L Q E E N H N G R S V D K M M V K E W L H

2071 CCAGAACATAAGCCATCGTGAAGTGAAGTTCGGTCCGACCCAGGATCTGCAGGTAACCCGAGGCGAGAGCTGGCGGCGT  
L S E R R K R I V K V K F G P H Q E I C T V N R K G E K L R R V

2161 GAACGTGGCCCGTGGACAGCTGGTGGTGGAGATCACGAGGACCGCGGAGGAGCCATGGTGTGCGCCCGCGCTCGACCA  
N V A H V D T L V V E T T Q D Q R R K K F M V L L R F P L D H

2251 CGACTCGTCTGGAGTTCGACAGCGGAGCGCGCAACAACTTCTGAAACAGCTCGAGCAGTTCGATGATGAGGAGGACCT  
D L V L E F D T E A A R N K F L N K L E Q F L M S L K K C S L

2341 GGCAGGCTCGACCAACAGGAGCAGATGCTGGCCAACCGAGACGAGGAGGCGCCGACGAGGCGCTCGAGCAGCTTCTTCCGCGA  
D R V Q T N K E Q M L A N A E T K E R R T K R L E H F R F E

2431 GGCTADGACTCACTTCCGCTCAAGCCCGGAGAGGAGCAAGTTCGAGGACCGCCGACGAGCAGCTGATGGTGTGCGGAGCTC  
A Y E L T F G L K F G E K R K L E D A A S D V V M V M R T S

2521 GCTTCCAAAGAGGATTCGCGCGCGCTCGGCTGAAGCCGAGACGATCTTCTGCGCCGATGTTCAACATCTCGACAAAGGATGG  
L S K K E F A G A L G M K P D D I F V R R M F N I V D K D G

2611 CGACGAGCAGTCTTCCAGGAATTCGAGACCGTGGTCTTTCAGCAAGGGCTCCACCGCAGCAGCAGCTGATGGTGTGCGGAGCT  
D G R I S F Q E F L D T V V L F S K G S T D D K L R I I F D

2701 CATGTGGACACGACGCAAGCGGCTCATCGACAAGCCAGCTTCCGAGATGCTCCGCTCGTGGTGGAGTCCGCAAGCAACAC  
M C D N D R N G V I D K T E L S E M L R S L V E I A K T N T

2791 GGCAGCAGCAGGAGGCTGAGGAGTGTACAGGCTGTTCAAGTTCGAGGACCGCCGACGAGCAGCTGATGAGGATGCTACCTACGAGCACT  
V S N E E V E E L I N G M F S S S G I N H K E S L T Y D D F

2881 CAAGCTGATGATCGGAGTACAGGAGACTTTCAGCCATCGGCTTCAACTGCAAGGGCGCCAAACAGAACTTCTCGACAGCTCCAC  
K L M M R E Y K G D F F I A I G L N C K G A K Q N F L D T S T

2971 CAAGTCCGAGGATGGCAGCTTCCACATCTCCGAGGATCAAGCAGGACGAGCAGCTGGATGATGAGGATGCAAGGATGCAACTTCCGCGAC  
N V A R M A S F H I S E V M N R N Q H W M M K K C N S L A T

3061 CTTCCTGAAAGAGACAGCAGAGCTTTTCTACCTTTTCTGCTTACGTTGATCACCATTGCTTGTCTGCGAGGCGTCCATACACTA  
F L E E N R Q N V F Y L F V F Y V I T I A L F C E R F I H Y

3151 CTCCTTCCGCGGAGCAGCAGCTCCGACATCATGCGGCTGGGATCGGCTTCCAGCAGGAGGCGCGCGCTTCCCTGCTTCTGCTG  
S F T A E H T D L R H I M G V G I A I T R G A A A S L S F C

3241 CTACTCGCTGCTTCTGCTACGATGTCAGGACCTTACCAAGCTCAAGGATTCAGTTTCCAGCAGTACATCTTCCAGCAGTACATCTT  
Y S L L L L L T M S R N L I T K L K D F S F Q Q Y I P L D S H

3331 CATCTGCTTCCAAAGATGCTGCGTGCACGGCGTGTCTTCAAGTATCTTACAGCTCGCGCCACTTGGTCAACTTACCAGGTTTC  
I Q F V E N L R C L T Q T E I S F A S D Q K P T V G Y W L F Q

3421 GACGACCGGCTGGAGAACCTCAGGTGCTGACGAGGAACTTCTTCCGCTCCGACGAGGAGCAGGCTGGCTTGGCTTCTTCCA  
T Q P V E N L R C L T Q T E I S F A S D Q K P T V G Y W L F Q

3511 GACCATCAGGCTGACTGGCGTAATGCTGTTTATCATGTCATCTTCCATCTTCCGCGACCCGATCAAGGAGGAGGCGTA  
T I T G L T G V M L F I I M C I I F I F A H P I I R R K A Y

3601 CAAGTCTTCCGCTGACATCAGCTTACATCTGTTTACATCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCT  
K F F W A A H Q L Y I L L Y I L S L L H G L A R L T G A P R

3691 GTTCTGGATCTTCTTCCGCGCGGCGCATATTTACAGCTGGACAAGATCATGCTTCCGACAGCTTATAGGAAATGGATATCAT  
F W I F F V G P G I I Y T L D K I I S L R T R Y M E L D I I

3781 TGAGACGAAATTCCTCCGCTCGAGCTGGTCAAGTTCAGGCTTCCCAACTTCAAGTACCTGAGCGGAGCAGTGGGCTTCCGCT  
E T E L L P S D V V K V K F Y R P P N F K Y L S G Q W V R L

3871 CAACTGCAAGCTTCCGCGCAGTACAGTACCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCT  
N C T A F R Q S E Y H S F T L T S A P H E N F L S C H I K A

3961 CCAAGGACCGTGGAGCTGGAAGCTCAGGAAGTCTTTCGATCTCATAAATATGTTACGATGAGGAGAACTCCGCAAGGAGTCCGCTTGA  
Q G P W T W K L R K F P D P H N Y V H D E E N P P K I R L E

4051 AGGTCCCTTCCGCGCGGCAACCAAGACTTGGTACAAGTTCAGGCTCGGCTGATGGTCCGCGGAGGACCTGGAGTCCAGGCTTCCGCTTCCGCT  
G P F G G G N Q D W Y K F E V A V M V G G G I G V T P Y A S

4141 CATCTTCAAGATCTGCTTCCGAACTGACGACAGCCTTCCGCGGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCT  
I L N D L V F G T S T N R Y S G V S C K K V Y F L W I C P T

4231 GCACGCTCAGTTCGAATGGTTCATGATGCTGCTGATGTTGGAGCGGAAGGATGTCACCAAGCTTCCGAAATGCACATCTTCACTAC  
H R Q F E W F I D V L R D V E R E K D V T N V L E M H I F I T

4321 CCACTTCTTCCAAAGTTGATTGAGAACGACGATGCTGTATATTTCGAGAACCACTTCCAGCAGCTGACCAACCGGAGCATGTTAC  
Q F F H K F D L R T T M L Y I C E N H F Q R L S K R S M F T

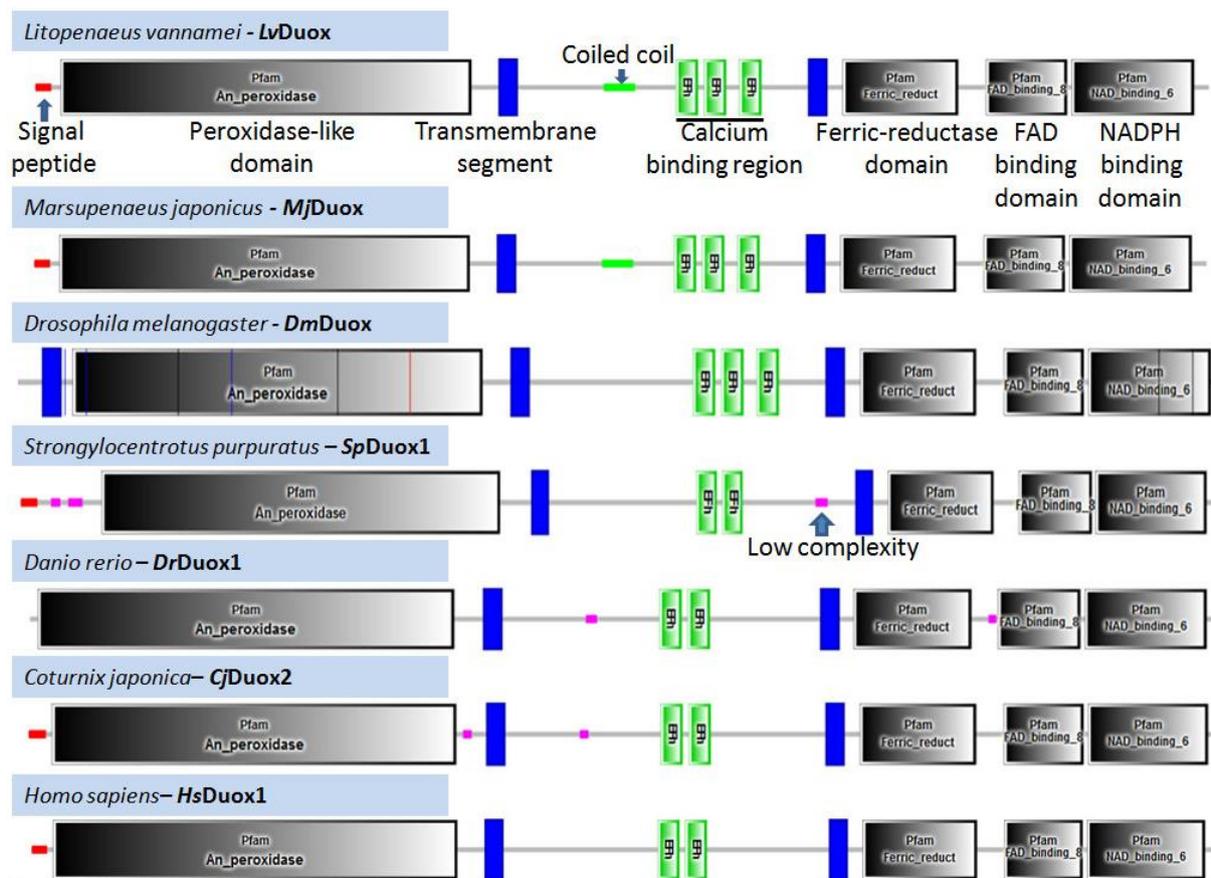
4411 TGGACTGAAAGCCATCAATCCTTCCGCGCGCTGATGACGCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCTTCCCT  
G L K A I N H F G R P D M T S F L K F V Q K T H N Y V S K I

4501 CGCGCTGTTCCAGTGTGTTCCGAACTCCGCGGCTGAGCAGGCTGAGCAGGCTGAGCAGGCTGAGCAGGCTGAGCAGGCTGAGCAGGCTGAGCAGGCT  
G V F S C G P N P L P L T K S V S T A C E N V N R G R R L F Y F

4591 TATACATCACTTCCGAACTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCTTCCGCT  
I H H F E N F G T

4681 AAAGAAAGATAGAAGGTTGGGGACAAAAAATAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

**Fig. 1** The nucleotide and deduced amino acid sequences of the *L.vannemei* dual oxidase (*LvDuox*) cDNA. The sequence has been deposited in the GenBank (accession number MG734366). The cDNA (4735 bp) contains a complete ORF encoding a protein of 1,498 amino acid residues (residue number indicated on the left). The start codon ATG and the stop codon TAA are indicated by the rectangle. The Primer sequences for the qRT-PCR analysis are indicated by the solid lines



**Fig. 2** Comparison of the predicted domain structures of dual oxidases from different organisms. The names of the different domains are marked. The full name, abbreviation and accession number of different Duoxs are listed in the Table 3

### Statistical analysis

The expression of  $\beta$ -actin gene was used as the reference gene of all the samples, and the comparative CT method ( $2^{-\Delta\Delta Ct}$ ) was used to analyze the expression level of LvDuox and the other genes. The results are expressed as means  $\pm$  standard deviation (SD). To compare the differences between the data of different groups in different hours, the statistical analysis of these data was performed by one-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) using SPSS Statistics 24.0 software. The  $P < 0.05$  was considered statistically significant.

## Results

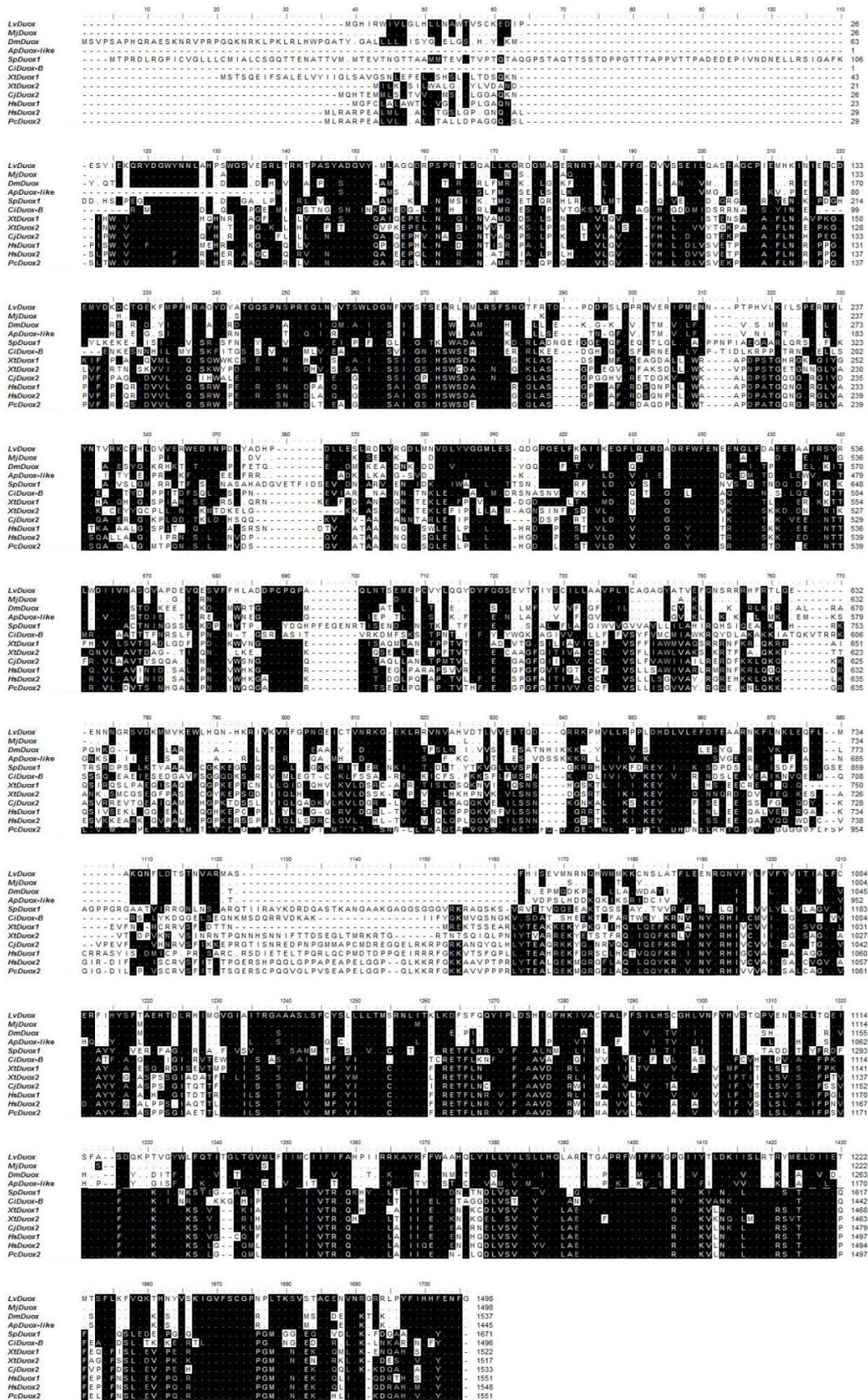
### Sequence and domain structures of LvDuox

A 4,735 bp nucleotide sequence of LvDuox was assembled and included an open reading frame (ORF) of 4,497 bp, encoding a protein of 1,498 aa with a calculated molecular mass of approximately 173 kDa and a theoretical isoelectric point of 6.98 (Fig. 1). The cDNA sequence of LvDuox has been deposited in GenBank under accession number MG734366.

To determine the similarity of the complete

domain structure of LvDuox to those of other Duoxs, we predicted the structural domains of the Duoxs from different animals by using the Simple Modular Architecture Research Tool (Fig. 2). The deduced amino acid sequence of LvDuox contains a signal peptide (1–21 aa), a peroxidase-like domain (33–557 aa), two transmembrane regions (593–615 aa and 988–1,010 aa), a coiled coil (726–766 aa), three EF-hand motifs (calcium binding region: 818–846 aa, 854–882 aa and 899–927 aa), a ferric reduction region (1,031–1,178 aa), a FAD binding domain (1,214–1,317 aa) and a NADPH binding domain (1,323–1,479 aa).

The structural domains of LvDuox were nearly the same as those of MjDuox, and the peroxidase-like domain, transmembrane segment, ferric-reductase domain, FAD binding domain and NADPH binding domain were conserved among LvDuox and the other Duox proteins. A coiled coil was found only in LvDuox and MjDuox. Moreover, the signal peptide was not present in DmDuox and DrDuox1. As for the calcium binding region, three arthropod Duoxs (LvDuox, MjDuox and DmDuox) were predicted to have three EF-hand motifs, and the others were predicted to have two EF-hand motifs.



**Fig. 3** Comparison of the amino acid sequence of dual oxidases from the Pacific white shrimp and the others organisms using the ClustalW program of BioEdit software. The full name, abbreviation and accession number are listed in the Table 3

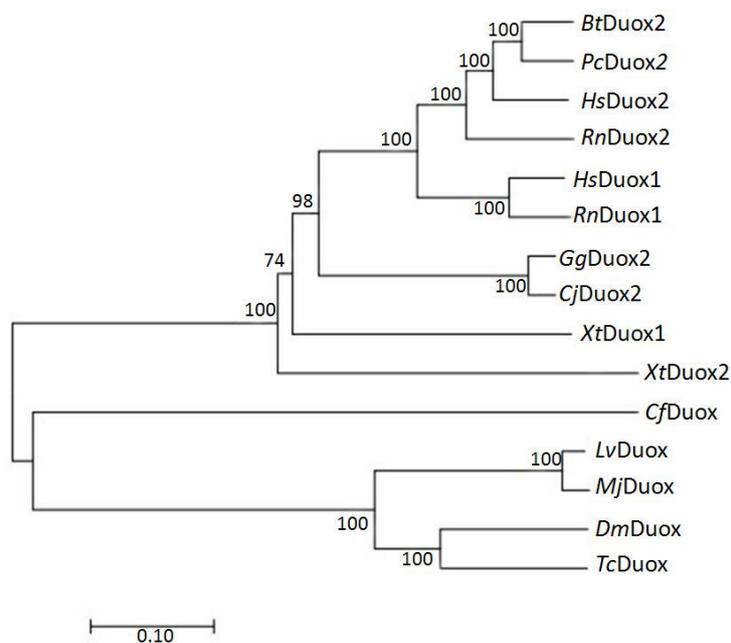
**Table 2** Amino acid identity of the Pacific white shrimp *LvDuox* gene compared to the others known Duoxes sequences

Entire Duox	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. <i>LvDuox</i>												
2. <i>MjDuox</i>	96.1%											
3. <i>DmDuox</i>	67.3%	67.0%										
4. <i>ApDuox</i> -like	67.3%	66.9%	68.8%									
5. <i>SpDuox</i> 1	37.2%	37.3%	36.6%	35.6%								
6. <i>CfDuox</i> -B	35.0%	35.1%	33.4%	34.5%	37.2%							
7. <i>XtDuox</i> 1	37.0%	36.6%	36.9%	35.5%	38.3%	43.5%						
8. <i>XtDuox</i> 2	36.2%	35.8%	35.1%	35.7%	35.6%	40.6%	56.6%					
9. <i>CjDuox</i> 2	38.1%	37.9%	37.5%	36.3%	39.4%	43.6%	61.5%	57.9%				
10. <i>HsDuox</i> 1	39.2%	39.3%	37.3%	36.0%	39.0%	42.2%	60.5%	56.2%	64.7%			
11. <i>HsDuox</i> 2	37.9%	37.8%	36.1%	35.0%	39.2%	41.8%	59.7%	56.4%	65.8%	77.2%		
12. <i>PcDuox</i> 2	37.6%	37.8%	36.4%	34.3%	38.7%	42.5%	60.0%	56.0%	65.9%	74.8%	87.4%	

*Sequence homology and phylogenetic analysis*

Sequence alignment was performed to determine the sequence identity of *LvDuox* compared with the other Duox proteins (Fig. 3). *LvDuox* shares 96.1% sequence similarity with *MjDuox*, 67.3% with the insect Duox (*DmDuox* and *ApDuox*-like), 35% with the chordate Duox (*CfDuox*-B) and 36.2–39.2% with the other Duoxs (Table 2).

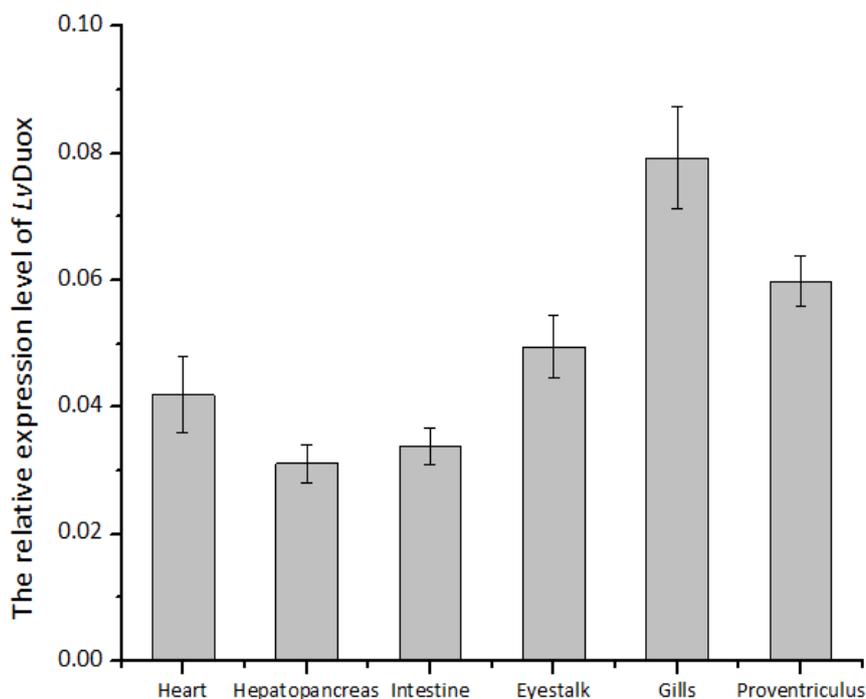
To elucidate the evolutionary relationships between *LvDuox* and other Duoxs, a neighbor-joining phylogenetic tree was constructed by using sequence alignments in MEGA software (Fig. 4). In this phylogenetic tree, *LvDuox* formed a cluster with arthropod Duoxs, including *MjDuox*, *DmDuox*, *TcDuox* and *CfDuox*. The *XtDuox*2, *BtDuox*2 and the other Duoxs formed another cluster.



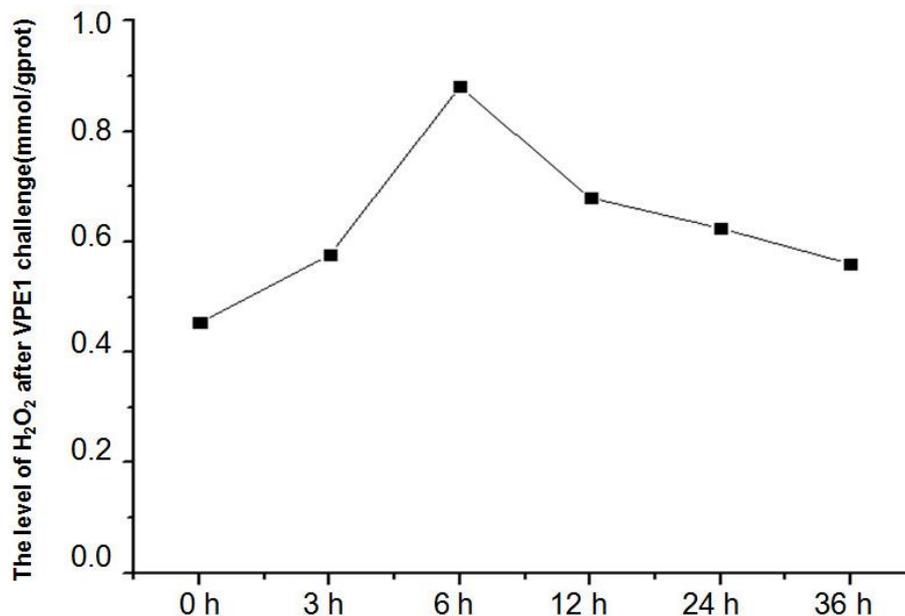
**Fig. 4** The Neighbor-Joining (NJ) phylogenetic tree constructed using MEGA 7.0 software package based on the amino acid sequences of Duoxs from different organisms. The numbers at the forks indicated the bootstrap value. The scale bar represents the proportion of amino acid differences between sequences based on nucleotide substitutions per site. The species and protein sequences ID are listed in Table 3

**Table 3** Amino acid sequence numbers, symbols, GenBank accession numbers and nomenclatures used in the paper

Symbol	Accession number	Nomenclature
1. <i>LvDuox</i>	MG734366	<i>Litopenaeus vannamei</i>
2. <i>MjDuox</i>	AB744213	<i>Marsupenaeus japonicus</i>
3. <i>DmDuox</i>	NP_608715	<i>Drosophila melanogaster</i>
4. <i>SpDuox1</i>	NP_001118237	<i>Strongylocentrotus purpuratus</i>
5. <i>DrDuox1</i>	BAF33370	<i>Danio rerio</i>
6. <i>CjDuox2</i>	XP_015727798	<i>Coturnix japonica</i>
7. <i>HsDuox1</i>	AAI14939	<i>Homo sapiens</i>
8. <i>HsDuox2</i>	EAW77288	<i>Homo sapiens</i>
9. <i>BtDuox2</i>	DAA25263	<i>Bos taurus</i>
10. <i>RnDuox1</i>	AAN33120	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>
11. <i>RnDuox2</i>	NP_077055	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>
12. <i>GgDuox2</i>	XP_425053	<i>Gallus gallus</i>
13. <i>XtDuox1</i>	XP_002937936	<i>Xenopus (Silurana) tropicalis</i>
14. <i>XtDuox2</i>	XP_002937935	<i>Xenopus (Silurana) tropicalis</i>
15. <i>CfDuox</i>	EFN70161	<i>Camponotus floridanus</i>
16. <i>TcDuox</i>	XP_970848	<i>Tribolium castaneum</i>
17. <i>ApDuox-like</i>	XP_001951113	<i>Acyrtosiphon pisum</i>
18. <i>CiDuox-B</i>	FAA00329	<i>Ciona intestinalis</i>
19. <i>BmDuox</i>	JQ768349	<i>Bombyx mori</i>
20. <i>PcDuox2</i>	XP_007121449	<i>Physeter catodon</i>



**Fig. 5** Pacific white shrimp *LvDuox* expression in various tissues of healthy shrimps (n=3). Tissue distribution of cDNA of *LvDuox* was detected using quantitative real-time PCR.  $\beta$ -actin gene was used as the reference gene, and vertical bars represented mean  $\pm$  SD



**Fig. 6** The levels of the H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in the midgut of the Pacific white shrimp following affected the *V. parahaemolyticus* E1 (VPE1). The level of the H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> was detected at different hours (0-36 h) using a hydrogen peroxide assay kit according to the manufacturer's instructions

#### Analysis of LvDuox expression in various tissues

The qRT-PCR was used to detect the tissue distribution of LvDuox gene expression, by using the  $\beta$ -actin gene as a reference. The expression levels of the LvDuox gene were observed in different tissues, such as the heart, hepatopancreas, intestine, eyestalk, gills and proventriculus. The results showed that the expression of LvDuox was higher in the gills than in the other tissues (Fig. 5).

#### H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> levels in the midgut after VPE1 challenge

Before VPE1 challenge, H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> was present at a low level in the shrimp midgut (0.45 mmol/g prot). After VPE1 stimulation, it increased at 3 h and peaked at 6 h (0.88 mmol/g prot), then declined gradually afterward (Fig. 6); the results were consistent with the expression of the LvDuox gene (Fig. 7).

#### Analysis of expression of LvDuox and antioxidant genes after VPE1 challenge

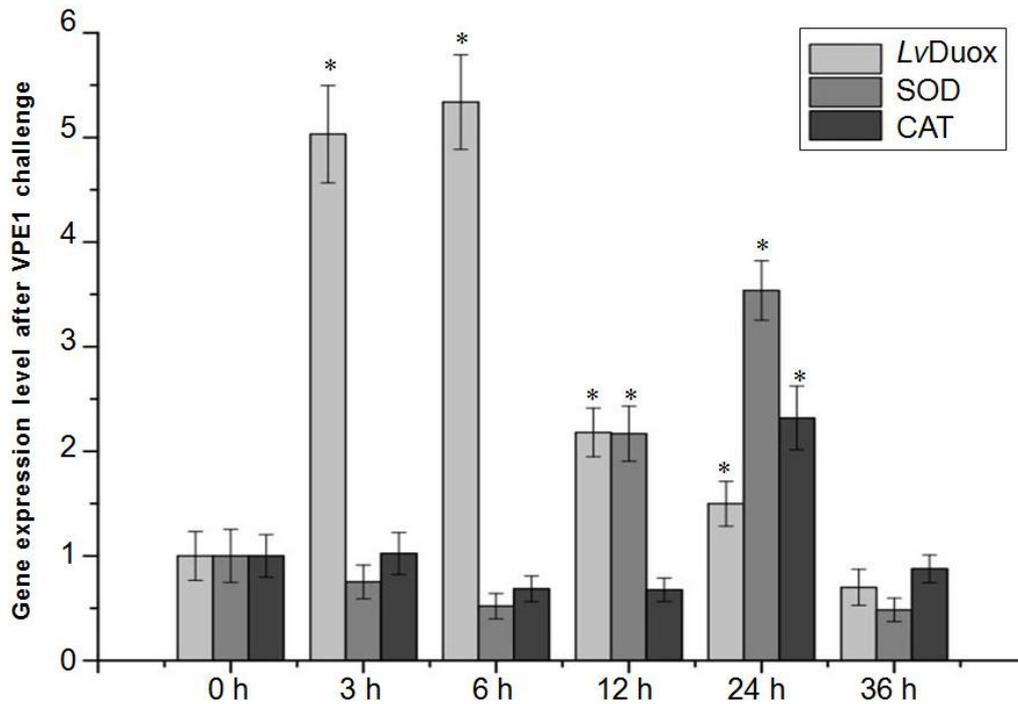
During VPE1 challenge, the midguts of Pacific white shrimps were obtained at 0 h, 3 h, 6 h, 12 h, 24 h and 36 h. The expression levels of the LvDuox gene, superoxide dismutase (SOD) gene and catalase (CAT) gene in the shrimp midgut were determined using quantitative real-time PCR (Fig. 7). The relative gene expression level of LvDuox in the midgut increased significantly at 3 h (5.03±0.41) and 6 h (5.33±0.4) ( $P < 0.05$ ), then decreased gradually at 12–36 h. The expression of the SOD gene decreased 3–6 h after the VPE1 challenge, then began to increase at 12 h (2.16±0.21), peaked at 24 h (3.53±0.22) ( $P < 0.05$ ) and then decreased significantly at 36 h. The expression level of the CAT gene at 6–12 h was lower than that at 0–3 h, but

significantly increased at 24 h (2.32±0.28) ( $P < 0.05$ ), then decreased to normal levels.

#### Discussion

Duox has been studied extensively in many model species, but there have been few reports in commercial aquatic animals. The role of Duox in the innate immunity of the Pacific white shrimp remains unknown. In this study, the full-length sequence of the Duox gene of the Pacific white shrimp was cloned and named LvDuox, and was deposited in GenBank under accession number MG734366 (not released). The ORF was 4,497 bp and encoded a 1,498 amino acid protein with a theoretical mass of 173 kDa, results similar to those for *Marsupenaeus japonicus* (~173 kDa), *Bombyx mori* (~172 kDa), *Danio rerio* (~172 kDa) and *Drosophila melanogaster* (~178 kDa). The amino acid sequence of LvDuox has a higher identity to Duox from arthropods than from other species. Both structural domain comparison and sequence alignment indicated that LvDuox was more similar to crustacean MjDuox than to other Duoxs (Inada *et al.*, 2013). Thus, the Duox gene appears to be highly conserved in different kinds of shrimp.

The analysis of structural domains of LvDuox revealed that a peroxidase domain, the transmembrane segment, the calcium binding region, a ferric reduction region, a FAD binding domain and a NADPH binding domain were conserved, and the signal peptide also was present in many Duoxs expected for BmDuox and DrDuox1. There was a coiled coil in LvDuox and MjDuox. The coiled coil is a structural motif in proteins, in which 2-7 alpha-helices coil together like the strands of a rope,



**Fig. 7** The expression of the genes (*LvDuox*, *SOD* and *CAT*) in the midgut of the Pacific white shrimp following affected the *V. parahaemolyticus* E1 (VPE1). The expression levels of the genes were detected at different hours (0-36 h) using quantitative real-time PCR, and  $\beta$ -actin gene was used as the reference gene, and differences were considered significant at \* $P < 0.05$

and dimers are common. The coiled coil plays a major role in cell recognition and signal transduction. Therefore, the coiled coil may be a special domain distinguishing the Duoxs of shrimps from those of other organisms.

The NADPH oxidase domain can produce  $H_2O_2$ , whereas the peroxidase domain can convert  $H_2O_2$  into HOCl.  $H_2O_2$  and HOCl aid in resistance to the intrusion of pathogens and provide an important immune defense mechanism in organisms that is necessary for the adaptive immune response. The calcium binding region formed by three EF-hand motifs was predicted in three arthropod Duoxs (*LvDuox*, *MjDuox* and *BmDuox*), whereas the others contained two EF-hand motifs (Fig. 2). Intracellular concentrations of  $Ca^{2+}$  modulate *BmDuox* enzymatic activity via the EF-hand motifs (Hu *et al.*, 2013). Thus, we believe that the EF-hand motifs of *LvDuox* may be involved in the response to  $Ca^{2+}$  in a manner similar to the mechanism in the fruit fly.

The mRNA transcripts of *LvDuox* gene were observed in all the detected tissues. *LvDuox* had high expression in the gills, a respiratory organ that, like the intestine, directly contacts water and bacteria. In the midgut of shrimp infected by VPE1, the expression of *LvDuox* increased significantly at 3 h after infection ( $P < 0.05$ ), peaked at 6 h ( $P < 0.05$ ), then began to decline and returned to its original level at 36 h. The trends in  $H_2O_2$  levels in the midgut were consistent with the expression level of the *LvDuox* gene. VPE1 stimulated the expression of *LvDuox*, and  $H_2O_2$  from *LvDuox* participated in resisting the invasion of VPE1. As the *SOD* and *CAT* gene

expression increased significantly between 12 and 24 h ( $P < 0.05$ ), the level of  $H_2O_2$  declined gradually. We concluded that the high concentration of ROS in the midgut induced the response of the antioxidant system to protect the organism from oxidative damage.

Initial research has revealed that the production of  $O_2^-$  in the hemocytes of Pacific white shrimps is dependent on the concentration of bacteria (*Escherichia coli*) (Munoz *et al.*, 2000). In addition, the expression of kuruma shrimp *MjDuox* increases after white spot syndrome virus injection (Inada *et al.*, 2013). Thus, our results suggested that foreign pathogens stimulate the expression of *LvDuox* to participate in innate immunity, and the antioxidant genes regulate  $H_2O_2$  levels, thus protecting the shrimp against oxidative damage induced by ROS.

In conclusion, we cloned the full-length cDNA encoding *LvDuox*. On the basis of sequence alignment and phylogenetic analysis, the *LvDuox* was found to be highly conserved and to be more similar to arthropod Duoxs than to vertebrate and echinoderm Duoxs. The *LvDuox* gene was expressed in all the main organs of the white shrimp and responds to invading pathogenic bacteria in the midgut. Two antioxidant genes were involved in the regulation of  $H_2O_2$  levels generated by *LvDuox*. Therefore, *LvDuox* may be a new target for intestinal disease research. More studies are needed to clarify the regulatory mechanism of *LvDuox* in the innate immunity system and to determine how to accurately control the expression of Duox in shrimp to protect cells from ROS damage.

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## Competing financial interests

The authors declare no competing financial interests.

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