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## Monitoring of oil seed viability after 25 years long term storage

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7  
1,134  
(*Sesamum indicum* L.,  
*Helianthus annuus* L., *Arachis hypogaea* L.,  
*Glycine max* (L.) Merr., *Brassica napus* L.,  
*Linum usitatissimum* L. *Papaver*  
*somniferum* L.) 25

(5±2%)

-18°C.

), P50% (

P10% (

10%)

### SUMMARY

A total of 1,134 seed accessions from 7 plant species (*Sesamum indicum* L., *Helianthus annuus* L., *Arachis hypogaea* L., *Glycine max* (L.) Merr., *Brassica napus* L., *Linum usitatissimum* L. and *Papaver somniferum* L.) stored for 25 years in the National Genebank of Bulgaria are evaluated. All seed accessions are maintained as base collection under long-term storage conditions with low moisture contents (5±2%) in hermetically closed containers at -18°C. On the basis of experimental data, the seed storage characters (standard deviation of seed death in storage), P50% (the time for viability to fall to 50%) and P10% (the time for viability reduction of 10%) are determined allowing the prediction of seed storage life and the regeneration needs.

The results showed significant differences in loss of seed viability among species and within the species. Minimal changes between seed germinations at the beginning of storage and after a significant time of storage in both first

control test (with storage time of 10 years) and second control test (with storage time of 25 years) are detected for accessions from *Sesamum indicum* L. and *Papaver somniferum* L. species. More differences in germinative activity after 10 and 25 years of storage are registered between individual genotypes of *Arachis hypogaea* L. and *Glycine max* (L.) Merr. The values varied from 24.39 years (*Arachis hypogaea* L.) to 125 years (for *Sesamum indicum* L. and *Helianthus annuus* L.).

control test (with storage time of 10 years) and second control test (with storage time of 25 years) are detected for accessions from *Sesamum indicum* L. and *Papaver somniferum* L. species. More differences in germinative activity after 10 and 25 years of storage are registered between individual genotypes of *Arachis hypogaea* L. and *Glycine max* (L.) Merr.

The values varied from 24.39 years (*Arachis hypogaea* L.) to 125 years (for *Sesamum indicum* L. and *Helianthus annuus* L.). There are wide variation across species, both in time taken for the viability to fall to 50% and in time taken for the seed viability reduction of 10%. The study illustrates the positive effect of both seed storability early monitoring and prediction of regeneration needs as a tool for limiting undesired losses.

**Key words:** genebank, oilseeds, seed germination, seed longevity, seed viability

## INTRODUCTION

Storage of seeds in genebanks has been the most common technique for *ex situ* conservation of plant genetic resources since the 1920s (Pita et al., 2005; Pérez-García et al., 2009). It is a relatively cheap method of conserving a broad range of germplasm. In most base genebank collections, 3 to 7% seed moisture and -18°C or lower storage temperature theoretically assure seed viability, vigour, and genetic integrity for thousands of years (Ellis and Roberts, 1980).

However, as seeds are living material, they require proper storage conditions and continuous monitoring to ensure that viability is maintained. Seeds that are collected and stored in a seed genebank must be of high quality and at maximum viability. The initial viability of the seeds, seed moisture content and its interaction

*ex-situ* conservation of plant genetic resources since the 1920s (Pita et al., 2005; Pérez-García et al., 2009).

3-7% -18° C (Ellis and Roberts, 1980).

	with relative humidity of the air and the storage temperature have significant influence on seed longevity (Roberts, 1973).
(Roberts, 1973).	Even in seeds stored under optimal conditions suitable for long-term storage, viability may decrease as a result of seed ageing or deterioration processes (Sastry et al., 2008). Seed viability declines slowly at first, and then rapidly as seeds age (Roberts and Ellis, 1982).
(Sastry et al., 2008).	
(Roberts and Ellis, 1982).	Accordingly, it is important to know when this decline occurs so that the accession can be regenerated by replacing the exiting seeds with ones having high-viability (Ho-Sun et al., 2013). Kept under the same storage conditions, seeds of different plant species lose viability to a various degree. Seeds of oil crops are characterized as short-lived (Copeland and McDonald, 2001; Stoyanova, 2001; Walters et al., 2005b; Desheva, 2016; Desheva et al., 2017).
(Ho-Sun et al., 2013).	
(Copeland and McDonald 2001; Stoyanova, 2001; Walters et al., 2005; Desheva, 2016; Desheva et al., 2017). Baleševi -Tubi et al. (2010)	Baleševi -Tubi et al. (2010) reported that the chemical composition of oilseeds causes specific processes to occur during storage. The seeds rich in lipids have limited longevity due to their specific chemical composition.
	Oil seeds are very sensitive to the harsh environmental conditions. It is hypothesized that their oil content readily oxidize, which deteriorate the seed health in storage (Kausar et al., 2009).
(Kausar et al., 2009). Nagel et al., (2011)	Nagel et al. (2011) concluded that there is a genotypic component involved in the determination of seed viability in <i>Brassica napus</i> . Certain chemical and/or physical properties of the seed-coat also affect germination rate after storage, since the seed of both structural and pigmentation mutants tends to deteriorate faster than that of their wild-type progenitor (Debeaujon et al., 2000; Clercx et al., 2004).
<i>Brassica napus</i> .	
(Debeaujon et al., 2000; Clercx et al., 2004).	

(FAO, 1997)

et al., 1999).

(FAO, 1997).

(Walsh et al., 2003).

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The genetic erosion of material maintained in genebanks is considered a relevant problem at the international level, and the continuous monitoring of the factors causing genetic erosion in *ex situ* collections is recommended to minimise the loss of genetic diversity (Ruiz et al., 1999). One of the main factors causing genetic erosion is the failure to detect loss of germination due to a lack of viability monitoring (FAO, 1997).

Thus, viability testing through germination is essential for the maintenance of a seed genebank collection and can be a rapid way of identifying problems with the seed storage conditions (Walsh et al., 2003).

The aim of this study is to assess the changes in the viability of oilseeds stored for 25 years under long term storage condition in the National genebank of Bulgaria.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

1,134

7 (Sesamum indicum L., Helianthus annuus L., Arachis hypogaea L., Glycine max (L.) Merr., Brassica napus L., Linum usitatissimum L. and Papaver somniferum L.)

25

(5±2%)

-18 °C.

10

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ISTA (1985).

et al., 1985a; 1985b; Hanson, 1985).

A total of 1,134 seed accessions from 7 plant species (*Sesamum indicum* L., *Helianthus annuus* L., *Arachis hypogaea* L., *Glycine max* (L.) Merr., *Brassica napus* L., *Linum usitatissimum* L. and *Papaver somniferum* L.) stored in the National Genebank of Bulgaria are evaluated. All seed accessions are maintained as base collection under long-term storage conditions with low moisture contents (5±2%) in hermetically closed containers at -18 °C.

Seed viability is detected on the basis of germination rate of accessions in storage. The seed germination is determined as following: just before the storage, after 10 years of storage and after 25 years of storage. The germination tests are carried out according to ISTA rules (1985). The recommendations for work in the gene banks are also implemented (Ellis et al., 1985a; 1985b; Hanson, 1985). Seeds stored at -18 °C

10 25 -18°  
 :  
 24  
 (Stoyanova, 2001).

ISTA (1985)  
 ( 3 g  
 ).

Roberts (1973).

( )  
 Ki (Ellis and  
 Roberts, 1980).

$= K_i - p/v$   
 : v  
 Probit p

( )  
 P10 Ellis and Roberts (1980),  
 P50% 50%,  
 P10% 10%.

ACCESS.

(ANOVA) Paired-Samples T-  
 test, IBM SPSS Statistics 19.

for 10 and 25 years, respectively, are pre-conditioned before these are set to germinate: equilibration of seed containers at room temperature for 24 hours is followed by re-humidification of seeds, as described earlier from (Stoyanova, 2001).

The moisture content of seed accessions, both before and after the time of storage, is determined using oven methods of ISTA (1985) for reduced working sample (about 3 g per accession).

The Probit analysis for modelling of data from seed storage experiments is used according to the models first described by Roberts (1973). It is based on a straight line relationship between viability and storage period. The slope of this line is the value of  $v$  and the intercept is the (theoretical) initial viability of seeds  $K_i$  (Ellis and Roberts, 1980). The relationship used for calculation is:

$$= K_i - p/v$$

where:  $v$  is the viability in Probit after  $p$  years in storage.

Seed longevity is described by storage constants P50 and P10 according to Ellis and Roberts (1980), where P50% is the time for viability to fall to 50% and P10% is the time for viability reduction of 10%.

The information for seed accessions in storage is maintained as ACCESS-database. The raw data files are used for statistical analysis by analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Paired-Samples T-test test using IBM SPSS Statistics 19.



1.

**Table 1. Changes in the seed viability values of studied species depending on storage period in the National Gene bank of Bulgaria**

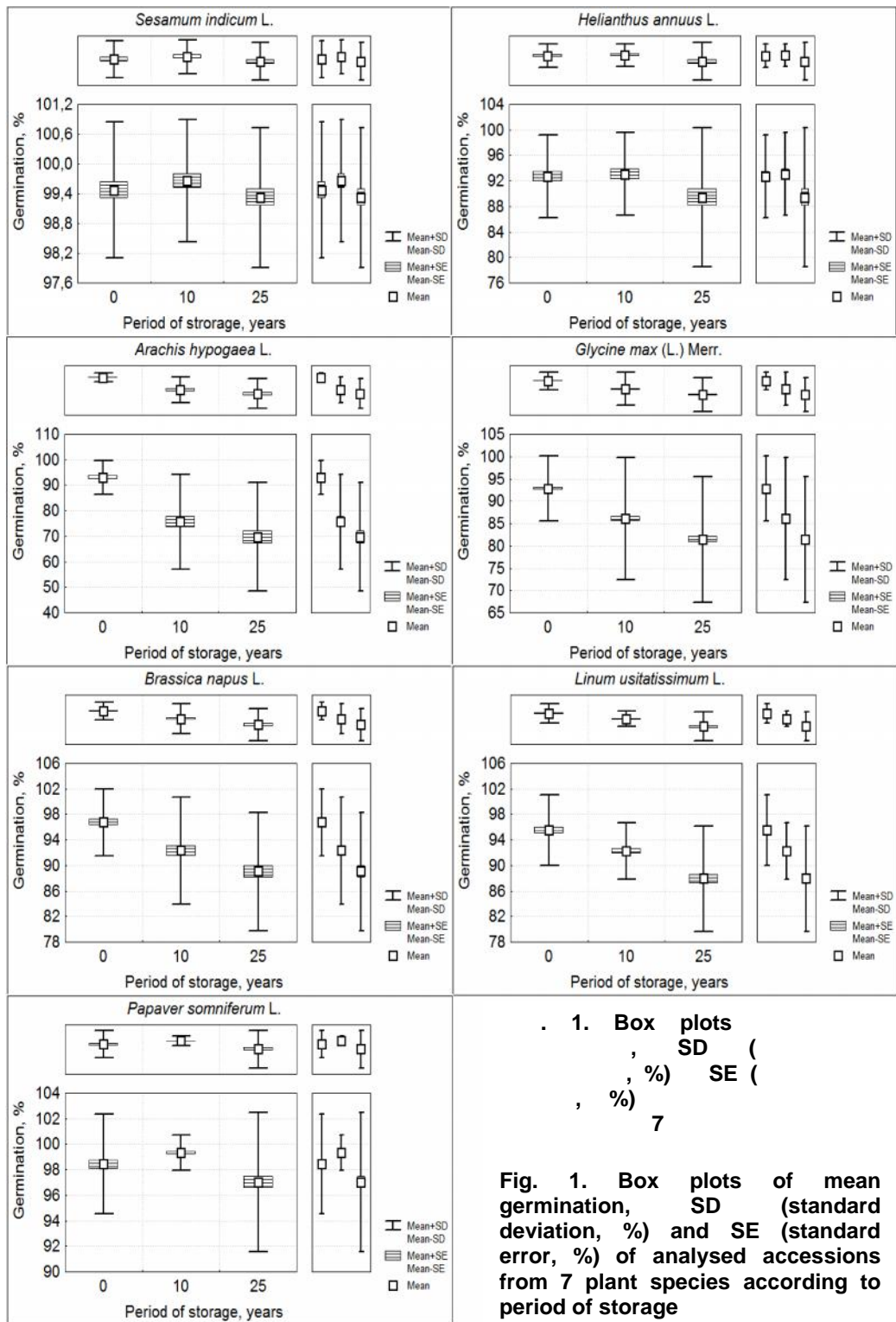
Species	Number of accessions	Mean value of initial germination, % ±SD	10 Mean value of germination after 10 years of storage, % ±SD	25 Mean value of germination after 25 years, % ±SD
<i>Sesamum indicum</i> L.	68	99,47±1,36	99,66±1,23	99,32±1,41
<i>Helianthus annuus</i> L.	67	92,68±6,50	93,05±6,52	89,41±10,92***
<i>Arachis hypogaea</i> L.	68	93,03±6,53	75,66±18,44***	69,74±21,18***
<i>Glycine max</i> (L.) Merr.	578	92,79±7,26	86,08±13,62***	81,45±14,01***
<i>Brassica napus</i> L.	103	96,77±5,20	92,36±8,35***	89,06±9,25***
<i>Linum usitatissimum</i> L.	126	95,49±5,52	92,25±4,38***	87,90±8,20***
<i>Papaver somniferum</i> L.	124	98,43±3,90	99,32±1,38	97,02±5,42

\*\*\*P 0.001; \*\*P 0.01; \*P 0.05; SD-

/standard deviation (%)

1  
(SDs),  
25  
*Arachis hypogaea* L. *Glycine max* (L.) Merr.  
25  
SDs  
± 6,53% ± 21,18%  
7,26% ± 14,01% ( 1)  
(Stoyanova, 2001; Walsh et al., 2003; Pita et al., 2005; Desheva, 2016; Desheva et al., 2017).

In Figure 1 is presented the rate of variation between genotypes within the frame species by differences of standard deviations calculated for the mean values of germination after storage. More differences in germinative activity after 10 and 25 years of storage are registered between individual genotypes of *Arachis hypogaea* L. and *Glycine max* (L.) Merr. As recorded above seed germinability of peanuts and soybean declined rapidly after 25 years of storage and their SDs increased significantly from ±6.53% to ±21.18% and from ±7.26% to ±14.01%, respectively (Table 1 and Figure 1). The largest range in seed germination rate observed in these two species is due to differences in seed survival between genotypes induced both by pre-harvest conditions and by maintenance of seeds before and during storage (Stoyanova, 2001; Walsh et al., 2003; Pita et al., 2005; Desheva, 2016; Desheva et al., 2017).



1. Box plots of mean germination, SD (standard deviation, %) and SE (standard error, %) of analysed accessions from 7 plant species according to period of storage



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**Grouping of accessions within the frame species depending on the change in germination after 25 period of storage under long-term storage in the genebank**

Grouping of accessions within the frame species depending on the change in germination after 25 period of storage under long-term storage in the genebank are presented in Table 2.

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**Table 2. Grouping of accessions within the frame species depending on the change in germination after 25 period of storage under long-term storage in the genebank**

Species	TNA	Minimal increase of germination		Without change of germination		10% Decrease germination below 10%		10 20% Decrease germination from 10 to 20%		20% Decrease germination above 20%	
		NA	F	NA	F	NA	F	NA	F	NA	F
<i>Sesamum indicum</i> L.	68	9	0,132	45	0,662	14	0,206	0	0,000	0	0,000
<i>Helianthus annuus</i> L.	67	21	0,313	10	0,149	24	0,358	9	0,134	3	0,045
<i>Arachis hypogaea</i> L.	68	4	0,059	9	0,132	8	0,118	12	0,176	35	0,515
<i>Glycine max</i> Merr.	578	103	0,178	54	0,093	148	0,256	154	0,266	119	0,206
<i>Brassica napus</i> L.	103	8	0,078	14	0,136	48	0,466	29	0,282	4	0,039
<i>Linum usitatissimum</i> L.	126	13	0,103	12	0,095	54	0,429	40	0,317	7	0,056
<i>Papaver somniferum</i> L.	124	20	0,163	46	0,374	51	0,415	5	0,041	1	0,008

TNA- /total number of accessions, NA- /number of accessions, F- /frequencies

- *Arachis hypogaea* L. (0.059)  
 - *Helianthus annuus* L. (0.313).  
 - 0,093  
 - *Glycine max* Merr. 0,662  
 - *Sesamum indicum* L.

The frequency of genotypes with minimal increase of germination rate is the lowest for *Arachis hypogaea* L. (0.059) and the highest for *Helianthus annuus* L. (0.313). The frequency of seed samples saved without change varied from 0.093 for accessions from *Glycine max* Merr. to 0.662 for accessions from *Sesamum indicum* L. *Brassica napus* L.,

*Brassica napus* L., *Linum usitatissimum* L., *Papaver somniferum* L.  
 % , -  
 10% , 46,6%,  
 42,9% 41,5%.  
 10% 25 , -  
 10% Stoyanova (2010) -  
 " " -  
 " 10% " " -  
 " " " -  
 " 10% " " -  
 " 25 :  
 " -100%  
*Sesamum indicum* L., 95,2%  
*Papaver somniferum* L.,  
*Helianthus annuus*  
*Brassica napus*  
*Linum*  
 82%  
 L., 68%  
 L., 62,7%  
*usitatissimum* L., 52,7%  
*Glycine max* Merr. 30,9%  
*Arachis hypogaea* L. ;  
 " " -  
 " - 69,1% *Arachis*  
*hypogaea* L., 47,3%  
*Glycine max* Merr., 37,3%  
*Linum usitatissimum* L.,  
*Brassica napus* L., 18%  
*Helianthus annuus* L. 4,8%  
*Papaver somniferum* L.  
 " " -  
 " -

*Linum usitatissimum* L. and *Papaver somniferum* L. had high % of accessions that showed dropping in the seed viability not higher than 10% in compare with initial germination, respectively 46.6%, 42.9% and 41.5%. Sesame genotypes with decrease in seed viability above 10 % after 25 years of storage are not recorded, while the frequency of peanuts and soybean accessions with decrease seed germination above 10% are significant.

According to Stoyanova (2010) accessions maintaining the same germination rate or a slightly higher level after period of storage in genebank are classified in the category "conserved with no change". Accessions with seed viability reduction of about 10% are described as showing "minimal change". These two categories are considered as "successfully stored accessions". Accessions with seed viability reduction of above 10% are described as "significant decline". Based on this classification and the results obtained from the monitoring tests after 25 years of storage accessions from investigated species are grouped as following:

- Group of "successfully stored accessions"-100% of accessions from *Sesamum indicum* L., 95.2% of accessions from *Papaver somniferum* L., 82% of accessions from *Helianthus annuus* L., 68% of access. from *Brassica napus* L., 62.7% of access. from *Linum usitatissimum* L., 52.7% of access. from *Glycine max* Merr. and 30.9% of access. from *Arachis hypogaea* L.;

- Group of "significant decline"-69.1% of access. from *Arachis hypogaea* L., 47.3% of access. from *Glycine max* Merr., 37.3% of access. from *Linum usitatissimum* L., 32% of access. from *Brassica napus* L., 18% of accessions from *Helianthus annuus* L. and 4.8% of accessions from *Papaver somniferum* L.

Accessions in the group with significant decline of seed viability should

be regenerated to prevent possible loss of samples in the future.

***Predict of seed longevity after real long-term storage in the National Gene bank of Bulgaria***

Many factors determine the seed longevity during storage as seed structure, seed moisture content, temperature, relative humidity, initial viability, stage of maturity at harvest, and initial moisture content of seed entering into storage (Probert et al., 2009; Singh et al., 2017). Malen i et al., (1996, 2003) and Baleševi -Tubi et al. (2010) suggested that seed longevity is genetically determined and that significant differences exist among cultivars of same crops in their ability to maintain quality during storage.

According to Lu et al. (2004), the genetic characteristics of species and pre-storage environments are the main factors for seed viability decline. Hypotheses relating to chemical constituents of seed have been put forward to explain the variation of longevity among species (Seiler, 2010).

Seed species that possess high oil content do not store well compared to those that contain less oil (Copeland and McDonald, 1995; Santos et al., 2016). The results of Sharma (1977) clearly pointed out to declining trends in total oil content and seed germination during storage of oilseed species.

The measure of seed longevity in this study is based on the value (standard deviation of seed death in storage), defining the period during which the percentage viability is reduced by one *Probit* as described by Hong et al. (1980).

According to Ellis and Roberts (1980), the

(Probert et al. 2009; Singh et al., 2017). Malen i et al., (1996, 2003) and Baleševi -Tubi et al. (2010)

(2004), Lu et al.

(Seiler, 2010).

(Copeland and McDonald, 1995; Nagel and Börner, 2010; Santos et al., 2016). Sharma (1977)

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),  
Probit,  
Hong et al. (1980).  
Ellis and Roberts (1980),

life span of a seed-lot, the time until all the seeds have lost viability, depends on the value of  $v$  and on the proportion of the seeds which are viable at the start of the storage,  $K_i$  (in *Probit*). Results from the assessment of *Probit* longevity for 7 oil plant species are presented in Table 3.

3.

**Table 3. Seed longevity predicted after real long-term storage in National Gene bank of Bulgaria**

SPECIES	NA	SM, %	$v=K_i-1/ \sigma$	$\sigma$ , years	$P_{50\%}$ , years	$P_{10\%}$ , years
<i>Sesamum indicum</i> L.	68	3,46	$v=2,739-0,008*\sigma$	125,00	342,25	184,35
<i>Helianthus annuus</i> L.	67	4,48	$v=1,496-0,008*\sigma$	125,00	186,88	66,40
<i>Arachis hypogaea</i> L.	68	3,46	$v=1,407-0,041*\sigma$	24,39	34,29	11,96
<i>Glycine max</i> (L.) Merr.	578	5,76	$v=1,397-0,019*\sigma$	52,63	73,47	25,59
<i>Brassica napus</i> L.	103	5,45	$v=1,78-0,021*\sigma$	47,62	84,71	32,79
<i>Linum usitatissimum</i> L.	126	4,72	$v=1,67-0,019*\sigma$	52,63	87,84	32,77
<i>Papaver somniferum</i> L.	124	3,90	$v=2,319-0,012*\sigma$	83,33	193,17	91,13

NA- /number of accessions, SM- /seed moisture content, % wet basis  
 $v$ - Probit  $\sigma$  ;  $K_i$  - Probit/Probit value of initial seed viability;  $1/ \sigma$  - /measure of seed deterioration in storage;  $\sigma$  - /standard deviation of seed death in storage;  $P_{10\%}$  - 10% / time in years for seed viability reduction with 10%;  $P_{50\%}$  - 50% /seed half-life or measure of time to 50% seed viability in storage

The highest  $K_i$  value (2.739) is recorded for *Sesamum indicum* L., while the lowest for *Glycine max* (L.) Merr. (1.397), following from *Arachis hypogaea* L. (1.407). The rate of seed deterioration ( $1/ \sigma$ ) varied between -0.008 and -0.041. It is the highest for *Arachis hypogaea* L. (-0.041) and the lowest for *Sesamum indicum* L. and *Helianthus annuus* L. (-0.008), respectively. Sesame and sunflower seeds had values above 100 years ( $\sigma = 125$  years). Peanuts, rape, soybean, flax and poppy seeds had values between 24.39 and 83.33 years (Table 3). The results confirm that seed longevity varied among species. Many authors also indicated for seed longevity

(Walters et al 2005; Nagel et al., 2009; Probert et al., 2009; Nagel and Börner, 2010; Nagel et al., 2010; van Treuren et al., 2013; Ho-Sun et al., 2013).

Species	50%	10% P50%	P10%
<i>Arachis hypogaea</i> L.	34.29	342.25	11.96
<i>Sesamum indicum</i> L.			184.35
<i>Glycine max</i> Merr.)			3
<i>Brassica napus</i> L.			20
<i>Linum usitatissimum</i> L.			32
<i>Helianthus annuus</i> L.			60
<i>Papaver somniferum</i> L.			100
<i>Sesamum indicum</i> L.			180

1,134 7  
10 25

*Arachis*

variation among families, genotypes, seed lots, and even among individual seeds inside the same bag and depend on the storage conditions (Walters et al. 2005; Nagel et al. 2009; Probert et al. 2009; Nagel and Börner 2010; Nagel et al., 2010; van Treuren et al. 2013; Ho-Sun et al. 2013). There are wide variations across species in both the time taken for viability to fall to 50% and the time for seed viability reduction by 10%. P<sub>50%</sub> ranged from 34.29 years to 342.25 years. The calculated safe storage time (P10%) is the shortest for *Arachis hypogaea* L. (11.96 years) and the longest for *Sesamum indicum* L. (184.35 years). According to the results presented in Table 3 plant species described with shortest longevity (*Arachis hypogaea* L. and *Glycine max* Merr.), should not be monitored later than 10 years for peanuts and 20 years for soybean from the beginning of storage, respectively. The safe storage time (P10%) for *Brassica napus* L. and *Linum usitatissimum* L. is prolonged to 32 years, while for *Helianthus annuus* L. is about 60 years or more. The predicted mean safe storage times for *Papaver somniferum* L. are above 100 years, while for plant species described with longest longevity (*Sesamum indicum* L.) is above 180 years.

The results of this study will complement the database for the seed storability and will serve to form enriched patterns for need planning from regeneration.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of monitoring of 1,134 seed accessions from 7 plant species after 10 and 25 years of storage showed significant differences in loss of seed viability among species and within the species. More differences in germinative activity are registered between individual genotypes of *Arachis hypogaea* L. and

*hypogaea* L. *Glycine max* (L.) Merr.  
 5 ( , , )  
 ( <100 ).  
 50%,  
 10%. P50%  
 34.29 342.25  
 (P10%) - *Arachis*  
*hypogaea* L. (11.96 ) -  
*Sesamum indicum* L. (184.35 ).

*Glycine max* (L.) Merr. Generally, 5 of the evaluated crops (peanuts, soybean, rape, flax and poppy) are characterized with short life span after real long-term storage in National Gene bank of Bulgaria ( < 100 years). The longest storability had sunflowers and sesame. There are also wide variations across species in both the time taken for viability to fall to 50% and the time for seed viability reduction by 10%. P50% ranged from 34.29 years to 342.25 years.

The calculated safe storage time (P10%) is the shortest for *Arachis hypogaea* L. (11.96 years) and the longest for *Sesamum indicum* L. (184.35 years). Predicting the frequency of control test for the investigated species and their classification according to the safe storage period under the conditions of the National genebank will be essential in create a monitoring model through forming a "filter for the endangered accessions" to predict the need for regeneration. This will be the guarantee for predictability of storage results in the genbank for an extended period of time.

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## NaCl

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 4122 ,

### The effect of NaCl salinity on germination and seedling growth of sesame seeds

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#### SUMMARY

NaCl

5 , 1 .  
 5 NaCl (25,  
 50, 100, 125 and 150 mM),

(%),  
 (% day<sup>-1</sup>),

(day).

The aim of study is to determine the effect of NaCl salinity stress on germination characteristics and seedling growth of 5 Bulgarian sesame cultivars - Nevena, Aida, Milena, Sadovo 1 and Sofia. Five different concentrations of NaCl (25, 50, 100, 125 and 150 mM) are used as treatments and deionized water is used as control. To determine the salinity tolerance, the following germination characteristics - germination energy (%), germination percentage (%), coefficient of velocity of germination (% day<sup>-1</sup>), germination rate index and mean germination time (day) are studied. The data for the shoot and root length (cm), fresh weight (mg plant<sup>-1</sup>) of shoot and root and dry weight (mg plant<sup>-1</sup>) of shoot and root are measured ten days after germination. Vigour index and salt tolerance index are also calculated. Correlations between investigated

NaCl  
 -  
 0 150  
 mM NaCl  
 -  
 -  
 -  
 -  
 -  
 : (Sesamum  
*indicum* L.),  
 -  
 : GE -  
 (%), G - (%), (CVG) -  
 day<sup>-1</sup>), GRI - (%  
 , MGT -  
 (day), VI -  
 , LSh -  
 (cm), LR - (cm),  
 R/Sh - / (cm),  
 FWSh - (g), FWR -  
 , DWSh -  
 (g), DWR -

Gaballah et al., 2007).  
 (Dalia, 2001;  
 ,  
 ,  
 ( )  
 ,  
 ,  
 (Yahya, 1998).  
 ,  
 (Rhoades  
 et al., 2000, Suassuna, 2013, Dias et al.,  
 2017). Koca et al. (2007)  
 (50  
 100 mM)

characters are determined. The effect of increasing NaCl levels on germination energy and final germination percentages are not recorded. Increasing salinity concentration from 0 to 150 mM NaCl prolonged mean germination time. Increasing salt concentration had an inhibitory effect on the initial seedling growth. Sofia cultivar is the most tolerant at seedling growth stage and Milena is the most sensitive variety.

**Key words:** sesame (*Sesamum indicum* L.), germination, salinity, seedling growth

**Abbreviation:** GE - germination energy (%), G - germination percentage (%), CVG - coefficient of velocity of germination (% day<sup>-1</sup>), GRI - germination rate index, MGT - mean germination time (day), VI - Vigour index, LSh - length of shoot (cm), LR - length of root (cm), R/Sh - root/shoot ratio (cm), FWSh - fresh weight of shoot (g), FWR - fresh weight of root (g), DWSh - dry weight of shoot (g), DWR - dry weight of root (g).

## INTRODUCTION

Sesame is an important oil seed crop. The sesame seed has excellent nutritional value having high and unique protein composition making them a nearly perfect food (Dalia, 2001; Gaballah et al., 2007). Sesame is adaptable to a range of soil types, although it performs well in well-drained, fertile soils of medium texture (typically sandy loam) at neutral pH.

Cultivated sesame encounters a number of stress factors including salinity, drought, waterlogging, and chilling. Sesame cultivars show significant variation in the degree of salt tolerance (Yahya, 1998). Various studies have indicated the sesame crop to be sensitive to salinity (Rhoades et al., 2000; Suassuna, 2013; Dias et al., 2017). Koca et al. (2007) observed the negative effects of salinity (50 and 100 mM) on the biochemical and antioxidant defense

(Matysik et al., 2002).

(Bahrami Razmjoo, 2012). Bazrafshan Ehsanzadeh (2014)

Mahmood et al. (2003),

(Houle et al., 2001, Ashraf and Foolad, 2005, Sanchez et al., 2014, Tabatabaei and Naghibalghora, 2014).

(Bybordi, 2010).

system of sesame, and consequently on growth. They found that some sesame cultivars showed considerable reduction in root and shoot lengths, while lipid peroxidation is increased in response to salinity. Moreover, it is observed that growth parameters, lipid peroxidation, and proline accumulation are positively correlated with the salt tolerance of sesame (Matysik et al., 2002). There is report pointing to it being moderately tolerant to salt stress (Bahrami and Razmjoo, 2012). Bazrafshan and Ehsanzadeh (2014) reported that plants at germination and initial growth stages tolerate higher salinity levels, and variability has been observed between sesame genotypes. According to Mahmood et al. (2003), sesame plants with high tolerance to saline stress in initial phases can also be more tolerant during adult stage.

Seed germination is an essential process in plant development to obtain optimal seedling numbers that result in higher seed yield (Houle et al., 2001; Ashraf and Foolad, 2005; Sanchez et al., 2014; Tabatabaei and Naghibalghora, 2014). Salinity generally delays or prevents seed germination and seedling establishment. Reduction of germination in saline soils mostly is aggravated by movement of saline solution to soil surface due to evaporation. Germination and plantlet growth indices (e.g., percentage and vigour) are two of the most important criteria for selection of tolerant cultivars (Bybordi, 2010).

The aim of study is to determine the effect of salinity stress on germination characteristics and seedling growth of 5 sesame cultivars.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Seeds of five Bulgarian sesame cultivars: Nevena, Aida, Milena, Sadovo 1 and Sofia are used. The seeds are surface sterilized by dipping the seeds in

30%  
3

150 m ),  
25  
(Grade FT 55) 20 ml  
2

(Rehman et al., 1996).

25 ± 1 °C  
10  
1 mm.

6 (G%),  
(CVG, % day<sup>-1</sup>),  
(GRI)  
(MGT, day).  
(CVG,% day<sup>-1</sup>)  
Kader Jutzi (2004).  
(GRI,% day<sup>-1</sup>)  
(MGT,

day)  
Kader (2005).

( m) (LSh LR), (g)  
(FWSh FWR)  
(g) (DWSH DWR)

24 80°

et al. (2007).

30% etanol solution for 3 minutes and rinsed thoroughly with distilled water and air-dried before being used in the germination tests to avoid any fungal attacks.

Five different concentrations of NaCl (25, 50, 100, 125 and 150 mM) are used as treatments and deionized water is used as the control. For each variant of the experiment, two replicates of 25 seeds are germinated between rolled filter paper (Grade FT 55) with 20 ml of respective test solutions. The papers are replaced every 2 days to prevent accumulation of salts (Rehman et al., 1996).

The rolled paper with seeds is put into sealed plastic bags to avoid moisture loss. Seeds are allowed to germinate at 25±1 °C in the dark for 10 days. Seeds are considered germinated when radicle had extended at least 1 mm. The number of germinated seeds is recorded daily until a constant count is achieved. From the germination counts several germination characteristics are studied including germination energy (%) as first count after 3 days (GE), germination percentage (%) as final count after 6 days (G, %), coefficient of velocity of germination (CVG, % day<sup>-1</sup>), germination rate index (GRI), and mean germination time (MGT, day). Coefficient of velocity of germination (CVG, % day<sup>-1</sup>) is calculated according to Kader and Jutzi (2004). Germination rate index (GRI, % day<sup>-1</sup>) and mean germination time (MGT, day) are calculated according to the formula of Kader (2005).

The data for the shoot and root length (cm) (LSh and LR), fresh weigh (g) of shoot and root (FWSh and FWR) and dry weight (g) of shoot and root (DWSH and DWR) are measured ten days after germination. Dry weights are measured after drying at 80°C for 24 h into an oven.

In order to determine the seed vigour index (VI), equation from Florez et al. (2007) is used. Salt tolerance is

Mujeeb-ur-Rahman et al. (2008).  
 (ANOVA) Duncan's  
 multiple test (Duncan, 1955).  
 NaCl (  
 )  
 Plochinskii (1970).  
 (Lidansky,  
 1988).  
 SPSS 19.0.

calculated by the formula given from  
 Mujeeb-ur-Rahman et al. (2008).

Data are analyzed by analysis of  
 variance (ANOVA) and Duncan's multiple  
 range test (Duncan, 1955). The analysis  
 of variance is calculated according to  
 randomized complete block design with  
 two factors: genotype and treatment  
 (salinity). To estimate the degree of  
 genotype and treatment (salinity)  
 influence on different germination and  
 seedling characteristics is applied method  
 described by Plochinskii (1970).

Phenotypic correlations are  
 calculated by using of phenotypic  
 variances and covariance (Lidansky,  
 1988). Statistical analyses are performed  
 using the statistical program SPSS 19.0.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Germination characteristics*

(CVG, % day<sup>-1</sup>),  
 (GRI, % day<sup>-1</sup>)  
 (MGT, day)  
 -  
 44,33% 37,29%,  
 -  
 NaCl, 2.94% 5.72%  
 ( 1).  
 NaCl  
 ( 2).  
 -  
 (CVG, % day<sup>-1</sup>),  
 (GRI, % day<sup>-1</sup>)  
 (MGT,  
 day), 64.85%, 55.83%  
 62.27% ( 1).

The results of two-way analysis of  
 variance showed that the effect of  
 genotype, salinity and genotype x salinity  
 interaction are significant for the  
 germination characteristics - coefficient of  
 velocity of germination (CVG, % day<sup>-1</sup>),  
 germination rate index (GRI, % day<sup>-1</sup>), and  
 mean germination time (MGT, day). The  
 strongest individual influence for  
 germination energy and final germination  
 had genotype, respectively 44.33%, and  
 37.29% (Table 1), while the lowest  
 influence had treatment with NaCl,  
 respectively 2.94% and 5.72%. The effect  
 of increasing NaCl levels on germination  
 energy and final germination percentages  
 are not recorded (Table 2). The  
 treatments with NaCl had the strongest  
 influence on the coefficient of velocity of  
 germination (CVG, % day<sup>-1</sup>), germination  
 rate index (GRI, % day<sup>-1</sup>), and mean  
 germination time (MGT, day), respectively  
 64.85%, 55.83% and 62.27% (Table 1).

1. (G, %), (GE, %), (% day<sup>-1</sup>), GRI - ( ) , MGT - ( )

**Table 1. Analysis of variance for the characteristics germination energy (GE, %), germination percentage (G, %), coefficient of velocity of germination (CVG, % day<sup>-1</sup>), germination rate index (GRI, % day<sup>-1</sup>), and mean germination time (MGT, day).**

Source of Variation	df	/Mean square				
		GE	G	CVG	GRI	MGT
/Genotype	4	203,43***	50,63***	65,41**	15,38***	0,03*
/Salinity	6	8,99ns	5,18ns	692,85***	49,68***	0,41***
/Interaction	24	10,90ns	5,56ns	60,97***	4,75**	0,04***
/Degree of influence, %						
/Genotype	4	44,39	37,29	4,08	11,52	3,50
/Salinity	6	2,94	5,72	64,85	55,83	62,27
/Interaction	24	14,26	24,58	22,83	21,34	25,16

\*\* 0.01%, F-test / Significant at the 0.01 probability level

according to F-test,

\*\*\* 0.001%, F-test / Significant at the 0.001 probability level

according to F-test,

ns F-test / Not significant according to F-test

CVG  
(Kader and Jutzi, 2004).  
GRI  
(Kader, 2005).  
MGT,  
(Kader, 2005).  
(CVG,% day<sup>-1</sup>)  
(GRI,% day<sup>-1</sup>) (2).  
CVG GRI  
50 mM  
NaCl CVG GRI. CVG  
Sofia - Milena (2).

The CVG gives an indication of the rapidity of germination. It increases when the number of germinated seeds increases and the time required for germination decreases (Kader and Jutzi, 2004). The GRI reflects the percentage of germination on each day of the germination period. Higher GRI values indicate higher and faster germination (Kader, 2005). The lower MGT, the faster a population of seeds has germinated (Kader, 2005). In our study the application of increasing salt stress had substantial negative effects on the coefficient of velocity of germination (CVG, % day<sup>-1</sup>) and germination rate index (GRI, % day<sup>-1</sup>) (Table 2). The highest CVG and GRI are noted in control variants and with increasing of salinity levels these characteristics are reduced. Significant differences are found among cultivars at 50mM NaCl for CVG and GRI. CVG is the highest for Sofia and the lowest for Milena (Table 2).

2.

5

**Table 2. Effects of different salinity levels on germination characteristics of five sesame varieties**

Cultivars	/Salinity levels						
	0 mM NaCl	25 mM NaCl	50 mM NaCl	75 mM NaCl	100 mM NaCl	125 mM NaCl	150 mM NaCl
<b>/Germination energy, %</b>							
Nevena	92a	96a	94ab	100b	92a	96a	92a
Aida	92a	86a	92a	90a	88a	90a	86a
Milena	94ab	98a	98c	96b	98a	98a	100a
Sadovo 1	100c	98a	98c	98b	96a	98a	94a
Sofia	96b	100a	96ab	100b	98a	100a	100a
Means	94,80	95,60	95,60	96,80	94,40	96,40	94,40
<b>/Germination, %</b>							
Nevena	94ab	96ab	94a	100b	94a	96a	94a
Aida	92a	94a	94a	94a	96a	94a	94a
Milena	96b	98ab	98a	96ab	98a	98a	100b
Sadovo 1	100c	98ab	98a	98ab	96a	98a	96ab
Sofia	96b	100b	96a	100b	98a	100a	100b
Means	95,60	97,20	96,00	97,60	96,40	97,20	96,80
<b>/Coefficient of velocity of germination, % day<sup>-1</sup></b>							
Nevena	78,94b	58,23a	70,76bc	66,67a	57,50a	50,06a	51,82a
Aida	63,54a	58,69a	63,02b	56,45a	56,74a	52,33a	53,05a
Milena	85,51b	64,40a	49,48a	65,86a	58,51a	59,82c	52,08a
Sadovo 1	80,72b	65,78a	60,51b	62,89a	53,12a	52,27a	50,55a
Sofia	77,41b	64,88a	73,86c	58,40a	60,31a	56,24bc	52,17a
Means	77,23	62,40	63,53	62,06	57,24	54,15	51,94
<b>/Germination rate index</b>							
Nevena	19,50b	15,58a	18,50bc	18,75a	14,83ab	13,33a	12,75a
Aida	15,91a	14,16a	16,41b	14,91a	13,50a	12,91a	12,25a
Milena	21,50bc	17,16a	13,66a	17,75a	15,50ab	16,58b	13,83a
Sadovo 1	22,33c	18,16a	16,50b	17,25a	14,91ab	14,08ab	12,33a
Sofia	20,66bc	17,58a	19,91c	14,75a	16,75b	15,25ab	13,83a
Means	19,98	16,53	17,00	16,68	15,10	14,43	13,00
<b>/Mean germination time, day</b>							
Nevena	1,26a	1,71a	1,42ab	1,50a	1,74a	1,99b	1,93a
Aida	1,58b	1,70a	1,58bc	1,78a	1,76a	1,91b	1,88a
Milena	1,17a	1,55a	2,02d	1,52a	1,70a	1,68a	1,92a
Sadovo 1	1,24a	1,52a	1,65c	1,59a	1,88a	1,91b	1,97a
Sofia	1,29a	1,55a	1,35a	1,72a	1,66a	1,78ab	1,92a
Means	1,31	1,61	1,61	1,62	1,75	1,86	1,92

(p &lt;0,05)

Duncan's test.

Means in the same column followed by the same letters are not significantly different (p<0.05) according to Duncan's test.

0	150 mM NaCl	-	Increasing salinity concentration from 0 to 150 mM NaCl increased mean germination time. At the highest salt concentration (150mM NaCl), the MGT varied within close ranges, respectively from 1.88 days (for Aida) to 1.97 days (for
-	-	-	
(150 mM NaCl), MGT	1.88	-	

( Aida) 1.97 ( Sadovo 1)  
( 2).

NaCl MGT  
(Demir  
et al., 2003; Khajeh-Hosseini et al., 2003;  
Atak et al., 2006; Panuccio et al., 2014).

Sadovo 1) (Table 2). Similar results about  
positive influence of different NaCl  
concentrations on MGT are noted in  
several crops (Demir et al., 2003; Khajeh-  
Hosseini et al., 2003; Atak et al., 2006;  
Panuccio et al., 2014).

### Seedling characteristics

al., 2014).

NaCl VI.  
VI

NaCl ( 3

4).

(Khajeh-Hosseini et al., 2003; Al-Mutawa,  
2003; Rahman et al., 2008; Basalah, 2010;  
Cokkizgin, 2012; Saddam Hussain et al.,  
2013).

- V  
Milena (922.56),  
150

mM NaCl (173.90)

Aida. VI  
NaCl

,  
NaCl  
( 4).

Vigour index represents the  
germination capacity and growing  
tendency of seedling (Deng et al., 2014).  
In our study significant differences are  
observed between NaCl treatments and  
VI. Considerable decrease in VI is  
observed, depending on the increase in  
the concentration of NaCl (Table 3 and  
Table 4). Similar trend is observed by  
other authors on different plants (Khajeh-  
Hosseini et al., 2003; Al-Mutawa, 2003;  
Rahman et al., 2008; Basalah, 2010;  
Cokkizgin, 2012; Saddam Hussain et al.,  
2013). The highest VI is observed in the  
control variant for Milena variety (922.56),  
while the lowest is noted at 150mM NaCl  
(173.90) for Aida. The VI increased when  
the NaCl concentration decreased, which  
shows that increased NaCl concentration  
caused a harmful effect in the seed  
(Table 4).

3.  
(LSH)

(LR)

(VI),

**Table 3. Analysis of variance for vigour index (VI), length of shoot (LSH) and length of root (LR)**

Source of Variation	/Mean square			
	df	VI	LSH	LR
/Genotype	4	51135,79***	0,98***	17,68***
/Salinity	6	385525,14***	54,29***	68,28***
/Interaction	24	20188,02***	1,25***	6,99***
/Degree of influence, %				
/Genotype	4	6,80	0,83	6,80
/Salinity	6	76,94	69,32	39,37
/Interaction	24	16,12	6,39	16,11

\*\*\* 0.001%, F-test / Significant at the 0.001 probability level  
according to F-test



## 4.

**Table 4. Effects of different salinity levels on seedling characteristics of five sesame varieties**

Cultivars	/Salinity							Means
	0 mM NaCl	25 mM NaCl	50 mM NaCl	75 mM NaCl	100 mM NaCl	125 mM NaCl	150 mM NaCl	
<i>/Vigour index</i>								
Nevena	680,56b	717,12b	648,60c	670,00c	417,36a	197,76a	186,12b	502,50
Aida	590,64a	594,08a	348,74a	453,08a	356,16a	196,46a	173,90a	387,58
Milena	922,56e	642,88a	451,78b	768,96d	547,82c	378,28c	213,00c	560,75
Sadovo 1	785,00d	731,08bc	651,7c	645,82c	428,16a	346,92b	172,80a	505,07
Sofia	753,60c	763,00c	802,56d	500,00b	488,04b	382,00c	318,00d	572,46
Means	746,47	679,27	580,68	607,57	447,51	300,28	212,76	
<i>/Length of shoot, cm</i>								
Nevena	3,80a	3,58a	3,00ab	3,00b	2,44a	0,90a	0,85a	2,51
Aida	3,64a	3,57a	2,58a	2,28a	2,08a	1,11a	1,04a	2,33
Milena	3,97a	3,28a	2,98ab	2,34ab	1,94a	1,42b	0,97a	2,41
Sadovo 1	3,95a	3,29a	3,08ab	3,02b	2,28a	1,52b	1,00a	2,59
Sofia	3,76a	3,18a	3,38b	2,65ab	2,18a	1,64b	1,44b	2,60
Means	3,82	3,38	3,00	2,66	2,18	1,32	1,06	
<i>/Length of root, cm</i>								
Nevena	3,90ab	3,89b	3,70ab	3,44c	2,00ab	1,21a	1,08ab	2,75
Aida	2,78a	2,75a	2,74a	2,54ab	1,63a	0,98a	0,81a	2,03
Milena	5,64c	4,73b	3,58ab	3,25bc	2,67ab	2,44b	1,16b	3,35
Sadovo 1	5,49c	4,17b	3,57ab	3,57c	2,18ab	2,02b	0,80a	3,11
Sofia	4,98b	4,45b	4,09b	2,35a	2,80b	2,18b	1,74c	3,23
Means	4,56	4,00	3,54	3,03	2,26	1,77	1,12	
<i>/ Root/shoot ratio, cm</i>								
Nevena	1,03ab	1,09b	1,23a	1,15b	0,82a	1,34b	1,27b	1,13
Aida	0,76a	0,77a	1,06a	1,11ab	0,78a	0,88a	0,78a	0,88
Milena	1,42c	1,44c	1,20a	1,39b	1,38c	1,72ab	1,20b	1,39
Sadovo 1	1,39c	1,27bc	1,16a	1,18ab	0,96b	1,33ab	0,80a	1,15
Sofia	1,32b	1,40c	1,21a	1,14a	1,28c	1,33ab	1,21b	1,23
Means	1,19	1,19	1,17	1,14	1,04	1,32	1,05	
<i>/Fresh weight of shoot (mg plant<sup>-1</sup>)</i>								
Nevena	49,1a	49,0b	44,0b	39,6c	28,6b	18,0a	15,1b	34,77
Aida	49,5ab	43,6a	34,8a	34,2b	30,3c	16,7a	15,3b	32,06
Milena	49,0a	45,3a	43,3b	36,3b	30,5c	24,0b	17,5c	35,13
Sadovo 1	51,0b	50,5b	42,4b	40,5c	34,5d	26,3b	14,5a	37,10
Sofia	49,7ab	49,4b	44,0b	31,3a	28,1a	25,2b	21,2d	35,56
Means	49,66	47,56	41,7	36,38	30,4	22,04	16,72	
<i>/Fresh weight of root (mg plant<sup>-1</sup>)</i>								
Nevena	16,4bc	12,0c	11,5a	8,4b	6,8a	5,3a	5,1bc	9,36
Aida	15,2bc	12,3d	12,0a	6,6a	6,5a	5,1a	4,1a	8,83
Milena	11,5a	10,6a	10,4a	10,0bc	8,2ab	7,9b	5,4c	9,14
Sadovo 1	13,2ab	12,4d	11,6a	11,1c	9,8b	9,1b	4,9b	10,30
Sofia	18,2c	11,1b	9,90a	9,0b	7,0a	6,0a	5,8d	9,57
Means	14,90	11,68	11,08	9,02	7,66	6,68	5,06	
<i>/Dry weight of shoot (mg plant<sup>-1</sup>)</i>								
Nevena	2,7a	2,4a	2,2a	2,2a	1,9a	1,8a	1,8a	2,14
Aida	2,6a	2,3a	2,3ab	2,0a	2,0a	2,0a	1,9a	2,16
Milena	2,6a	2,6a	2,5ab	2,5a	2,4a	2,3a	1,8b	2,39
Sadovo 1	2,9a	2,7a	2,6b	2,6a	2,5a	2,2a	2,0c	2,50
Sofia	2,4a	2,4a	2,3ab	2,3a	2,2a	2,0a	1,7b	2,19
Means	2,64	2,48	2,38	2,32	2,2	2,06	1,84	
<i>/Dry weight of root (mg plant<sup>-1</sup>)</i>								
Nevena	1,1a	0,9ab	0,6a	0,6a	0,4a	0,2a	0,2a	0,57
Aida	0,8a	0,7a	0,6a	0,5a	0,3a	0,25a	0,2a	0,48
Milena	1,15a	1,0ab	0,9ab	0,9a	0,7a	0,4a	0,15a	0,74
Sadovo 1	1,6a	1,3b	1,2b	0,9a	0,5a	0,5a	0,4a	0,91
Sofia	1,5a	0,9ab	0,9ab	0,5a	0,5a	0,4a	0,4a	0,73
Means	1,23	0,96	0,84	0,68	0,48a	0,35	0,27	

(p &lt; 0,05)

Duncan's

test.

Means in the same column followed by the same letters are not significantly different (p&lt;0.05) according to Duncan's test.

(Saddam Hussain et al., 2013).

(Table 3).

1.06 cm 3.82 cm  
NaCl.

Milena Sadovo 1,  
3.97 cm 3.95 cm,  
0.85 cm 150 mM NaCl  
Nevena ( 4).  
Milena  
( 1).

Shoot and root length are most important parameter for salt stress because roots are in direct contact with soil and absorbs water and nutrient from soil and shoot supply it to rest of the plant (Saddam Hussain et al., 2013). The analysis of variance showed that the effect of genotype, NaCl levels and genotype x NaCl levels interaction are significant at  $p = 0.001$  for both length of shoot and root (Table 3). The salinity had the strongest influence on the variance for the shoot and root length. Generally, increasing salinity levels inhibited the shoot and root length. Mean of shoot length varied between 1.06 and 3.82 cm at various NaCl concentrations. The longest shoot length is observed in the control variant of Milena and Sadovo 1 varieties, respectively 3.97 and 3.95 but they are not statistically proven. The shortest shoot length is 0.85 cm at 150mM NaCl concentration for Nevena cultivar, respectively (Table 4). The rate of reduction in shoot length in comparison with the control for Nevena and Milena varieties are recorded as the largest at the highest salinity level (Figure 1).

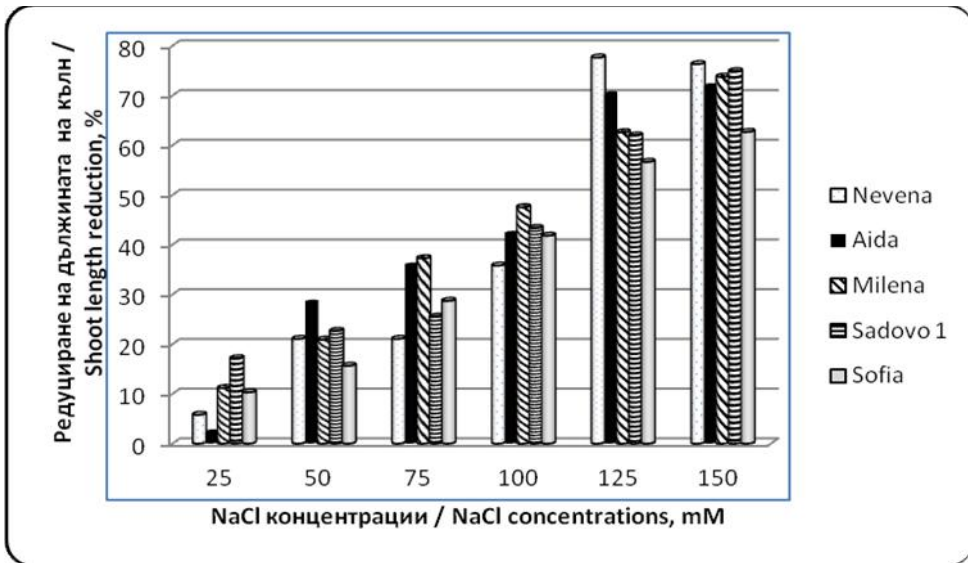


Fig. 1. Shoot length reduction of 5 sesame varieties at 5 different salinity levels

2,03 cm 3,35 cm  
1,12 cm 4,56 cm

NaCl

3,35 cm  
Milena Sofia

150 mM  
Sofia.

3,20 cm,  
( 4).

NaCl

( 2).

Mean root length varied between 2.03 cm and 3.35 cm in the varieties and 1.12 cm and 4.56 cm for salinity levels.

As is expected, the control and the highest NaCl concentration had the longest and the shortest root length, respectively. The largest mean root lengths were 3.35 cm and 3.20 cm for Milena and Sofia, respectively (Table 4).

The lowest reduction in shoot and root length at 150 mM NaCl is recorded for Sofia variety. Therefore Sofia is more tolerant to high salinity in the early development stages in terms of both shoot and root lengths (Figure 2).

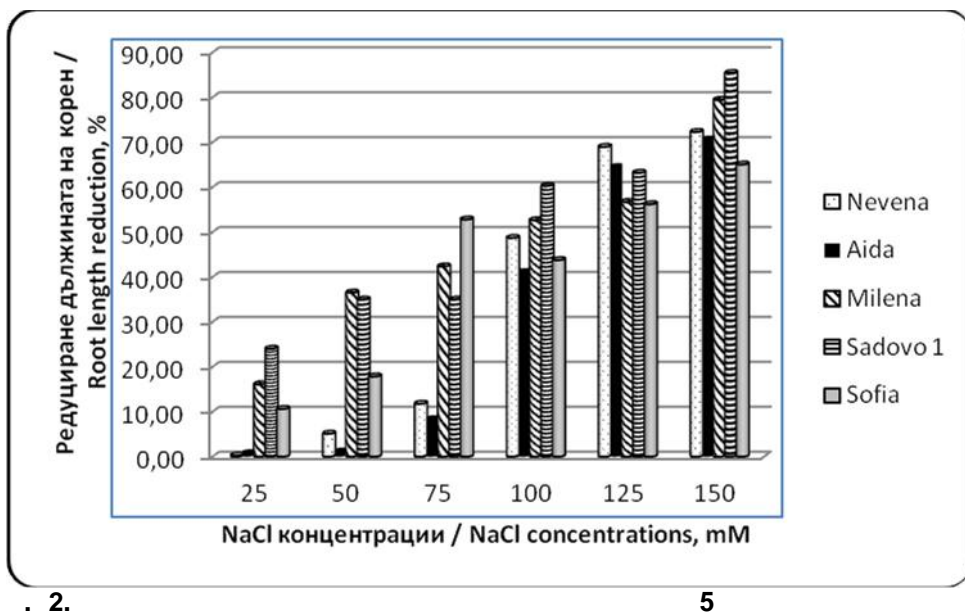


Fig. 2. Root length reduction of 5 sesame varieties at 5 different salinity levels

(P 0.001) ( 5).

( 4).

Salinity had significant effect on shoot and root fresh weight (P 0.001) (Table 5). Increase in salt concentration reduced these characters (Table 4). Differences in fresh shoot and root weight are significant in different cultivars under most of salinity levels (P 0.05) (Table 4).

(P 0.05) ( 4). Sadovo 1 - Sadovo 1 had the highest value of fresh shoot weight under control variant (0.0 mM NaCl), while Sofia showed the highest values of both shoot and root fresh weight under 150 mM NaCl treatment (Table 4).

5. (FWSH and FWR) (DWSH and DWR)

**Table 5. Analysis of variance for fresh weigh of shoot and root (FWSH and FWR) and dry weight of shoot and root (DWSH and DWR)**

Source of Variation	/Mean square				
	df	FWSH	FWR	DWSH	DWR
/Genotype	4	47,44***	14,48***	0,47*	0,31**
/Salinity	6	1565,04***	61,01***	1,34***	1,10***
/Interaction	24	16,77***	1,82**	0,22ns	0,04ns
/Degree of influence, %					
/Genotype	4	1,89	11,87	9,22	11,25
/Salinity	6	93,71	74,97	39,61	60,75
/Interaction	24	4,02	8,94	25,84	9,60

\*\* 0.01%, F-test / Significant at the 0.01 probability level according to F-test,  
 \*\*\* 0.001%, F-test / Significant at the 0.001 probability level according to F-test,  
 ns F-test / Not significant according to F-test

NaCl

The increase in NaCl concentrations decreased also the shoot and root dry weight of all the sesame cultivars. The shoot and root dry weight values changed by increasing salt concentration. The highest shoot and root dry weights are obtained from control treatments. On the other hand a decrease is observed on shoot and root dry weight values in accordance with increasement on salt concentration. The highest shoot and root dry weight (2.9 mg plant<sup>-1</sup> and 1.6 mg plant<sup>-1</sup>) are obtained from control treatment in Sadovo 1. The lowest value of shoot dry weight (1.17 mg plant<sup>-1</sup>) is obtained from 150 mM NaCl in Sofia, while the lowest root dry weight is recorded for Milena variety (Table 4).

Milena ( 4).

Effects of salinity on salt tolerance index of investigated sesame cultivars at

6. (150 mM NaCl):  
Milena < Sadovo 1 < Nevena < Aida < Sofia.  
Sofia - Milena  
(6).

6.

seedling growth stage are presented in table 6. The cultivars had the following order at the highest salinity level (150 mM NaCl):

*Milena < Sadovo 1 < Nevena < Aida < Sofia.*

The cultivar Sofia is the most tolerant to salinity, while Milena variety is the most sensitive at early seedling growth stage (Table 6)

**Table 6: Effects of salinity levels on salt tolerance index of sesame (*Sesamum indicum* L.) cultivars at seedling growth stage**

Salinity levels	/Cultivars				
	Nevena	Aida	Milena	Sadovo 1	Sofia
25 mM NaCl	103,18	98,44	83,35	95,03	106,50
50 mM NaCl	95,30	82,87	68,26	84,71	97,20
75 mM NaCl	92,54	75,08	58,17	83,95	63,69
100 mM NaCl	61,33	57,79	47,97	56,82	63,44
125 mM NaCl	28,45	32,55	40,17	45,10	48,66
150 mM NaCl	27,35	28,82	22,16	22,93	40,51
/Means	68,02	62,59	53,35	64,76	70,00

Kandil et al. (2017)  
(Munns, 2002).  
(Kurum et al., 2013).

All results obtained indicated that different seedling characteristics are significantly affected by salinity stress. Kandil et al. (2017) reported that the undesirable effect of high concentration of salinity root and shoot length might be due to the toxic effect of salinity, which decreases root and shoot length as well as inhibition of cytokinesis and cell expansion (Munns, 2002).

Additionally, the decrease in hormones that stimulate the growth and increase in hormones that hinder growth can cause shorter root and shoot lengths (Kurum et al., 2013).

**Correlation between investigated characteristics**

Correlation coefficients between all possible combinations are estimated and are shown in Table 7a and Table 7b. GE showed significant positive correlation with G (0.435\*) and R/Sh (0.432\*). G

7a  
7b. GE  
G (0.435 \*)

R/Sh (0.432 \*). G  
R/Sh (0.448 \*). CVG GRI -  
MGT (-0.994 \*\* -0.935 \*\*)  
0.01 VI (0.825 \*\*)  
0.854 \*\*, LSh (0.697 \*\* 0.690 \*\*), LW  
(0.667 \*\* 0.835 \*\*), FWSh (0.694 \*\*  
0.724 \*\*), FWR (0.620 \* 0.650 \*\*), DWSh  
(0.533 \*\* 0.613 \*\*) DWR (0.605 \*\*  
0.670 \*\*). CVG GRI  
(0.940 \*\*).  
GRI R/SH  
p 0.01 (0.471 \*\*).  
(p 0.01)  
MGT, VI, LSh, LR,  
FWSh, FWR, DWSh DWR. VI  
LSh, LR, FWSh, FWR,  
DWSh DWR. LSh  
LR, FWSh,  
FWR, DWSh DWR.  
LR, R/Sh, FWSh, FWR DWR  
p 0.05 p 0.01. FWSh  
FWR (0.908 \*\*), DWSh (0.794 \*\*)  
DWR (0.874 \*\*).  
FWR DWSh (0.849 \*) FWR DWR  
(0.841 \*\*)  
p 0.01 . DWSh  
DWR  
(0.878 \*\*) ( 7a 7b).

correlated positively with R/Sh (0.448\*). CVG and GRI are in negative relationship with MGT (-0.994\*\* and -0.935\*\*) at p 0.01 and in positive with VI (0.825\*\* and 0.854\*\*), LSh (0.697\*\* and 0.690\*\*), LR (0.767\*\* and 0.835\*\*), FWSh (0.694\*\* and 0.724\*\*), FWR (0.620\* and 0.650\*\*), DWSh (0.533\*\* and 0.613\*\*) and DWR (0.605\*\* and 0.670\*\*). Correlation between CVG and GRI is high and positive (0.940\*\*). The relationship between GRI and R/SH is significant at p 0.01 (0.471\*\*). Negative highly significant correlations (p 0.01) are found between MGT, VI, LSh, LR, FWSh, FWR, DWSh and DWR. VI correlated positively with LSh, LR, FWSh, FWR, DWSh and DWR. LSh showed significant positive correlation with LR, FWSh, FWR, DWSh and DWR. The correlations between LR, R/Sh, FWSh, FWR and DWR are positive and significant at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels. FWSh is in positive relation with FWR (0.908\*\*), DWSh (0.794\*\*) and DWR (0.874\*\*). Relationships between FWR and DWSh (0.849\*) and FWR and DWR (0.841\*\*) are also positive and significant at 0.01 levels. DWSh correlated highly and positively with DWR (0.878\*\*) (Table 7a and Table 7b).

## 7 .

**Table 7 . Phenotypic correlation coefficients of investigated characteristics in sesame under salinity stress**

	GE	G	CVG	GRI	MGT	VI
GE	1					
G	0.435*	1				
CVG	0.040	0.050	1			
GRI	0.210	0.241	0.940**	1		
MGT	-0.021	-0.060	-0.994**	-0.935**	1	
VI	-0.016	0.220	0.825**	0.854**	-0.831**	1
LSh	-0.205	0.074	0.697**	0.690**	-0.708**	0.888**
LR	0.082	0.262	0.767**	0.835**	-0.769**	0.925**
R/Sh	0.432*	0.448*	0.278	0.471**	-0.271	0.282
FWSh	-0.107	0.124	0.694**	0.724**	-0.699**	0.911**
FWR	-0.182	0.063	0.620**	0.650**	-0.631**	0.800**
DWSh	0.027	0.193	0.533**	0.613**	-0.554**	0.755**
DWR	0.029	0.214	0.605**	0.670**	-0.612**	0.854**

\*\*.

0.01/Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

.\*

0.05/Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## 7b.

**Table 7b. Phenotypic correlation coefficients of investigated characteristics in sesame under salinity stress**

	LSh	LR	R/Sh	FWSH	FWR	DWSh	DWR
LSh	1						
LR	0.895**	1					
R/Sh	0.001	0.410*	1				
FWSH	0.967**	0.942**	0.161	1			
FWR	0.878**	0.843**	0.175	0.908**	1		
DWSh	0.743**	0.799**	0.261	0.794**	0.849**	1	
DWR	0.825**	0.888**	0.269	0.874**	0.841**	0.878**	1

\*\* 0.01/Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* 0.05/Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## CONCLUSIONS

- The strongest individual influence  
 - for germination energy and final  
 - germination had genotype, while  
 - treatment with NaCl had the strongest  
 - influence on the germination  
 - characteristics as coefficient of velocity of  
 - germination, germination rate index, and  
 - mean germination time as well as on the  
 - seedling characteristics- length of shoot  
 - and root, fresh and dry shoot and root  
 - weight. The cultivar Sofia is the most  
 - tolerant to the investigated levels of  
 - salinity, while Milena variety is the most  
 - sensitive at early seedling growth stage.  
 - Mean germination time correlated  
 - significantly and negatively with all  
 - investigated characteristics, except  
 - germination energy and germination.  
 - Additional investigations are needed to  
 - evaluate germination and early seedling  
 - growth under field conditions.

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