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FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS IN GENETICS

Linkage disequilibrium — understanding the evolutionary past and mapping the medical future

Montgomery Slatkin

Abstract | Linkage disequilibrium — the nonrandom association of alleles at different loci — is a sensitive indicator of the population genetic forces that structure a genome. Because of the explosive growth of methods for assessing genetic variation at a fine scale, evolutionary biologists and human geneticists are increasingly exploiting linkage disequilibrium in order to understand past evolutionary and demographic events, to map genes that are associated with quantitative characters and inherited diseases, and to understand the joint evolution of linked sets of genes. This article introduces linkage disequilibrium, reviews the population genetic processes that affect it and describes some of its uses. At present, linkage disequilibrium is used much more extensively in the study of humans than in non-humans, but that is changing as technological advances make extensive genomic studies feasible in other species.

Linkage disequilibrium (LD) is one of those unfortunate terms that does not reveal its meaning. As every instructor of population genetics knows, the term is a barrier not an aid to understanding. LD means simply a nonrandom association of alleles at two or more loci, and detecting LD does not ensure either linkage or a lack of equilibrium. The term was first used in 1960 by Lewontin and Kojima¹ and it persists because LD was initially the concern of population geneticists who were not picky about terminology as long as the mathematical definition was clear. At first, there were few data with which to study LD, and its importance to evolutionary biology and human genetics was unrecognized outside of population genetics. However, interest in LD grew rapidly in the 1980s once the usefulness of LD for gene mapping became evident and large-scale surveys of closely linked loci became feasible. By then, the term was too well established to be replaced.

LD is of importance in evolutionary biology and human genetics because so many factors affect it and are affected by it. LD provides information about past events and it constrains the potential response to both natural and artificial selection. LD throughout the genome reflects the population history, the breeding system and the pattern of geographic subdivision, whereas LD in each genomic region reflects the history of natural selection, gene conversion, mutation and other forces

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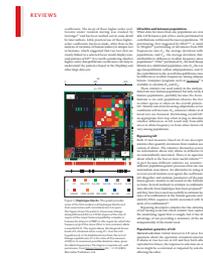
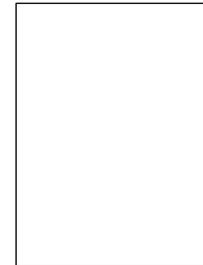
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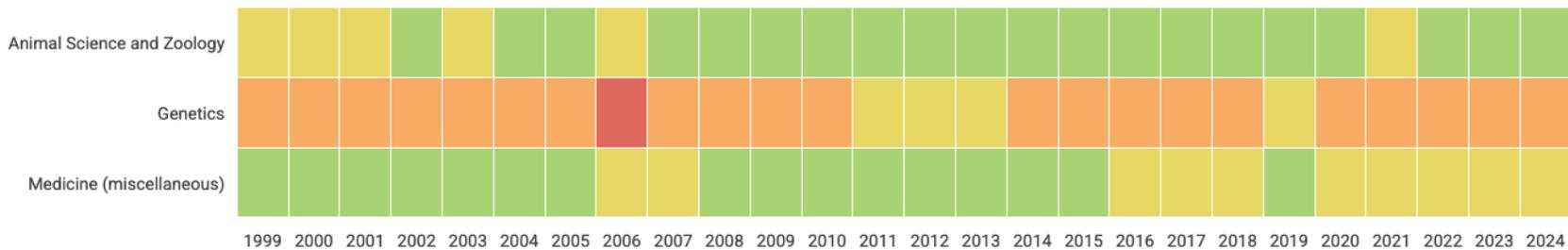
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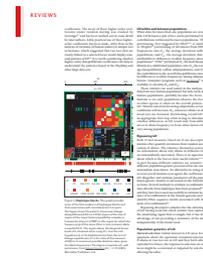
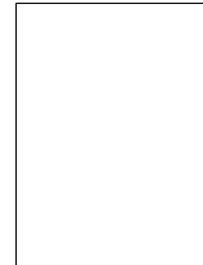
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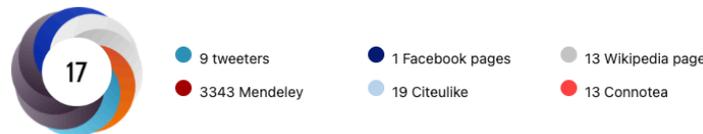
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A *de novo* 2.3 kb structural variant in *MITF* explains a novel splashed white phenotype in a Thoroughbred family

R. R. Bellone^{1,2} | J. Tanaka¹ | E. Esdaile¹ | R. B. Sutton³ | F. Payette⁴ |
L. Leduc⁴ | B. J. Till¹ | A. K. Abdel-Ghaffar¹ | M. Hammond^{1,2} | K. G. Magdesian⁵

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Funding information

UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Laboratory

Abstract

Splashed white in horses is characterized by extensive white patterning on the legs, face and abdomen and may be accompanied by deafness. To date, seven variants in *microphthalmia-associated transcription factor* (*MITF*) and two variants in *Paired Box 3* (*PAX3*) have been identified to explain this phenotype. A splashed white Thoroughbred stallion, whose sire and dam were not patterned, was hypothesized to have a *de novo* variant leading to his white coat pattern. A whole-genome sequencing candidate gene approach identified two single nucleotide variants (SNVs) in *SOX10*, four SNVs in *MITF* and a 2.3 kb deletion in *MITF* with the alternative allele present in this stallion but absent in the other 18 horses analyzed. All six SNVs were annotated as modifiers and were not further considered. The deletion in *MITF* (NC_009159.3:g.21555811_21558139delinsAAAT) encompasses exon 9 encoding a part of the helix-loop-helix domain required for DNA binding. Sanger sequencing and parentage testing confirmed that this deletion was a *de novo* mutation of maternal origin. Consistent with the published nomenclature, we denote this likely causal variant as SW8. Genotyping three of this stallion's offspring identified SW8 only in the nearly all-white foal that was confirmed deaf by brainstem auditory evoked response testing. This foal was also a compound heterozygote for dominant white variants (W20/W22), but to date, W variants alone have not been connected to deafness. SW8 marks the fourth *de novo MITF* variant in horses reported to cause white patterning. The link between deafness and all *MITF* variants with and without other variants impacting melanocyte development and function needs to be further explored.

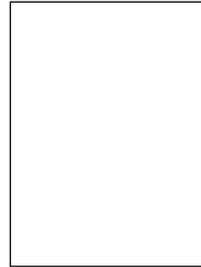
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coat color, deafness, horse, pigmentation, white patterning

INTRODUCTION

Variation in white patterning has long fascinated animal enthusiasts and researchers alike. Moreover, some of these variations have a clinical connection and have similar counterparts in humans or other species. In horses, several different types of white patterning phenotypes

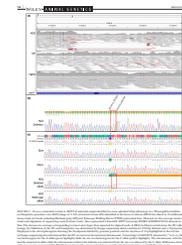
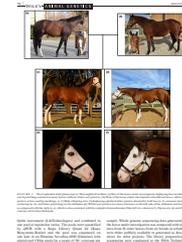
have been described including frame overo, tobiano, roan, leopard complex spotting, dominant white, sabino and splashed white (Sponenberg & Bellone, 2017). The molecular bases of many of these have been determined, with the first to be unraveled being the frame overo pattern in which white patterning is prevalent on the ventral aspects of the horse with the pigment 'framing' the



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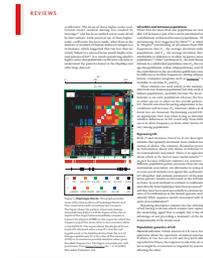
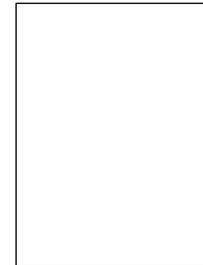
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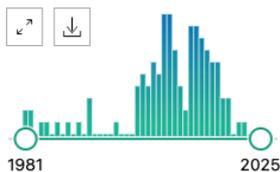
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PMID: 19812666 [Free PMC article](#). [Review](#).

A draft sequence of the Neandertal genome.

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PMID: 20448178 [Free PMC article](#).



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A *de novo* 2.3 kb structural variant in *MITF* explains a novel splashed white phenotype in a Thoroughbred family

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Funding information

UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Laboratory

Abstract

Splashed white in horses is characterized by extensive white patterning on the legs, face and abdomen and may be accompanied by deafness. To date, seven variants in *microphthalmia-associated transcription factor* (*MITF*) and two variants in *Paired Box 3* (*PAX3*) have been identified to explain this phenotype. A splashed white Thoroughbred stallion, whose sire and dam were not patterned, was hypothesized to have a *de novo* variant leading to his white coat pattern. A whole-genome sequencing candidate gene approach identified two single nucleotide variants (SNVs) in *SOX10*, four SNVs in *MITF* and a 2.3 kb deletion in *MITF* with the alternative allele present in this stallion but absent in the other 18 horses analyzed. All six SNVs were annotated as modifiers and were not further considered. The deletion in *MITF* (NC_009159.3:g.21555811_21558139delinsAAAT) encompasses exon 9 encoding a part of the helix-loop-helix domain required for DNA binding. Sanger sequencing and parentage testing confirmed that this deletion was a *de novo* mutation of maternal origin. Consistent with the published nomenclature, we denote this likely causal variant as SW8. Genotyping three of this stallion's offspring identified SW8 only in the nearly all-white foal that was confirmed deaf by brainstem auditory evoked response testing. This foal was also a compound heterozygote for dominant white variants (W20/W22), but to date, W variants alone have not been connected to deafness. SW8 marks the fourth *de novo* *MITF* variant in horses reported to cause white patterning. The link between deafness and all *MITF* variants with and without other variants impacting melanocyte development and function needs to be further explored.

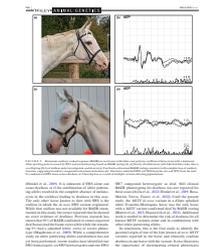
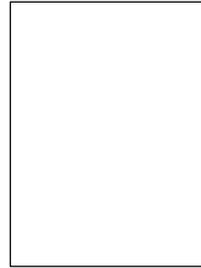
KEYWORDS

coat color, deafness, horse, pigmentation, white patterning

INTRODUCTION

Variation in white patterning has long fascinated animal enthusiasts and researchers alike. Moreover, some of these variations have a clinical connection and have similar counterparts in humans or other species. In horses, several different types of white patterning phenotypes

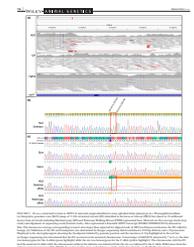
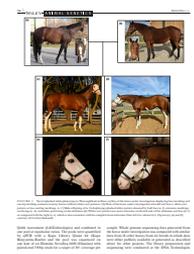
have been described including frame overo, tobiano, roan, leopard complex spotting, dominant white, sabino and splashed white (Sponenberg & Bellone, 2017). The molecular bases of many of these have been determined, with the first to be unraveled being the frame overo pattern in which white patterning is prevalent on the ventral aspects of the horse with the pigment 'framing' the



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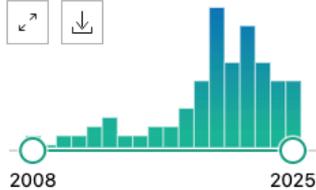
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3 Cappelletti E, Piras FM, Biundo M, **Bellone RR**, Finno CJ, Kalbfleisch TS, Petersen JL, Nergadze SG, Giulotto E.
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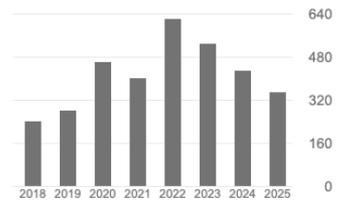
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Genome sequence, comparative analysis, and population genetics of the domestic horse CM Wade, E Giulotto, S Sigurdsson, M Zoli, S Gnerre, F Imsland, TL Lear, ... Science 326 (5954), 865-867	934	2009
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Four loci explain 83% of size variation in the horse S Makvandi-Nejad, GE Hoffman, JJ Allen, E Chu, E Gu, AM Chandler, ... PloS one 7 (7), e39929	271	2012
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Differential gene expression of TRPM1, the potential cause of congenital stationary night blindness and coat spotting patterns (LP) in the Appaloosa horse (Equus caballus) RR Bellone, SA Brooks, L Sandmeyer, BA Murphy, G Forsyth, S Archer, ... Genetics 179 (4), 1861-1870	214	2008

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Scientific Writing & Communication Skills
Fall 2024/2025

Assignment 2: Types of Publications & Analytics

Prof. Suzanne A. Al-Bustan
Student name: Mohammad Al Mutairi
Student ID: 222122341

1. Research Article: The effect of foreign direct investment on economic growth in developing countries.¹

a. Publication

Ezo Emako, Seid Nuru, Mesfin Menza,
The effect of foreign direct investment on economic growth in developing countries,
Transnational Corporations Review,
Volume 14, Issue 4,
2022,

b. Paper metrics²

Citations	Year of publication
1	2022

c. Author metrics

Author	H. index	Number of publications	Number of citations
Emako, Ezo ³	4	7	22
Nuru, Seid ⁴	4	7	22
Menza, Mesfin ⁵	4	8	35

a. Journal metrics^{6 7}

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Elsevier	22	Multidiscipline	Yes

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1925209924003218>

² <https://plu.mx/plum/a/?doi=10.1080/19186444.2022.2146967&theme=plum-sciencedirect-theme&hideUsage=true>

³ <https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=57734529600>

⁴ <https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=57734336800>

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⁶ <https://s100.copyright.com/AppDispatchServlet?publisherName=ELS&contentID=S1925209924003218&orderBeanReset=true>

⁷ https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&view_op=search_venues&vq=Elsevier&btnG=

2. Review Article: Financial development and the growth effect of foreign direct investment: Does one size fit all? ⁸

d. Publication

Michael J. Osei, Jaebeom Kim,
Financial development and the growth effect of foreign direct investment: Does one size fit all?,
International Economics,
Volume 173,
2023,

e. Paper metrics ⁹

Citations	Year of publication
12	2023

f. Author metrics

Author	H. index	Number of publications	Number of citations
Osei, Michael J. ¹⁰	4	5	151
Kim, Jaebeom ¹¹	9	27	452

b. Journal metrics ^{12 13}

Publisher	H. index	Discipline	Open access
Elsevier	22	Multidiscipline	Yes

⁸ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S211070172300001X>

⁹ <https://plu.mx/plum/a/?doi=10.1016/j.inteco.2023.01.001&theme=plum-science&hideUsage=true>

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¹³ https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&view_op=search_venues&vq=Elsevier&btnG=

3. Short communication: FDI and economic growth: New evidence on the role of financial markets ¹⁴

g. Publication

W.N.W. Azman-Saini, Siong Hook Law, Abd Halim Ahmad,
FDI and economic growth: New evidence on the role of financial markets,
Economics Letters,
Volume 107, Issue 2,
2010,

h. Paper metrics ¹⁵

Citations	Year of publication
232	2010

i. Author metrics

Author	H. index	Number of publications	Number of citations
Azman-Saini, W. N.W. ¹⁶	20	86	1,880
Law, Siong Hook ¹⁷	38	159	5,818
Ahmad, Abd Halim ¹⁸	12	30	807

c. Journal metrics ^{19 20}

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¹⁴ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0165176510000285>

¹⁵ <https://plu.mx/plum/a/?doi=10.1016/j.econlet.2010.01.027&theme=plum-sciencedirect-theme&hideUsage=true>

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