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31

32 **Abstract**

33 Background: One explanation for the persistence of schizophrenia despite the reduced
34 fertility of patients is that it is a by-product of recent human evolution. This hypothesis is
35 supported by evidence suggesting that recently-evolved genomic regions in humans are
36 involved in the genetic risk for schizophrenia. Using summary statistics from genome-
37 wide association studies (GWAS) of schizophrenia and 11 other phenotypes, we tested for
38 enrichment of association with GWAS traits in regions that have undergone methylation
39 changes in the human lineage compared to Neanderthals and Denisovans, i.e. human-
40 specific differentially methylated regions (DMRs). We used analytical tools that evaluate
41 polygenic enrichment of a subset of genomic variants against all variants.

42 Results: Schizophrenia was the only trait in which DMR SNPs showed clear enrichment of
43 association that passed the genome-wide significance threshold. The enrichment was not
44 observed for Neanderthal or Denisovan DMRs. The enrichment seen in human DMRs is
45 comparable to that for genomic regions tagged by Neanderthal Selective Sweep markers,
46 and stronger than that for Human Accelerated Regions. The enrichment survives multiple
47 testing performed through permutation ($n=10,000$) and bootstrapping ($n=5,000$) in
48 INRICH ($p<0.01$). Some enrichment of association with height was observed at the gene
49 level.

50 Conclusions: Regions where DNA methylation modifications have changed during recent
51 human evolution show enrichment of association with schizophrenia and possibly with
52 height. Our study further supports the hypothesis that genetic variants conferring risk of
53 schizophrenia co-occur in genomic regions that have changed as the human species
54 evolved. Since methylation is an epigenetic mark, potentially mediated by environmental
55 changes, our results also suggest that interaction with the environment might have
56 contributed to that association.

57

58 **Key Words:** differentially methylated regions; schizophrenia; evolution; epigenetics;
59 height, Neanderthal Selective Sweep score; Human Accelerated Regions.

60

61 **Background**

62 Schizophrenia is a psychiatric disorder that has been reported throughout human history,
63 possibly as far back as 5000 years [1, 2]. Family, twin and adoption studies estimate that
64 schizophrenia has a high heritability of 60-90% [3–6]. Today, schizophrenia is estimated
65 to have a prevalence of 1%. It is associated with reduced fertility and increased mortality
66 [7–11], and its persistence despite this heavy burden is paradoxical. Power et al [11]
67 leveraged Swedish registry data to demonstrate the reduced fecundity of patients with
68 schizophrenia, despite the novel finding that sisters of individuals with schizophrenia had
69 higher fitness than controls. They henceforth suggested hitherto unknown mechanisms for
70 persistence of the disease. One explanation for this persistence is that evolution has
71 indirectly selected the disease instead of eliminating it - the disease may co-segregate with
72 creativity and intellectual prowess, providing selective advantages to the kin of affected
73 individuals [9, 12]. Crow first argued that language and psychosis may have common
74 origins, which could explain the persistence of schizophrenia in human populations [12,

75 13]. This evolutionary hypothesis of the origins of schizophrenia can now be tested, thanks
76 to the identification of genetic factors implicated in schizophrenia [14–16] and the
77 availability of datasets that reflect recent genomic evolution in humans [17–19].

78

79 Large genome-wide association studies (GWAS) have identified thousands of variants that
80 are associated with schizophrenia [14–16] but our mechanistic understanding of the
81 candidate variants is poor. One approach to investigating the function of schizophrenia-
82 associated variants is comparative genomics, which investigates the evolutionarily
83 relevance of certain genomic regions [20]. This field has introduced new datasets to test
84 disease origins in humans, including Human Accelerated Regions (HARs) and
85 Neanderthal Selective Sweep (NSS) scores [18, 19]. HARs are genomic regions that are
86 highly conserved in non-human species, but have undergone rapid sequence change in the
87 human lineage [20–24]. Xu et al [18] showed that genes near HARs are enriched for
88 association with schizophrenia. Neanderthals were hominids that co-existed and even bred
89 with modern humans [25, 26]. Comparison of Neanderthal and human genome sequences
90 [27, 28] has revealed genomic regions that have experienced a selective sweep in modern
91 humans, presumably following a favorable mutation [28]. Negative NSS scores can be
92 used to pinpoint mutations (usually single nucleotide changes) that were positively
93 selected in humans as they diverged from Neanderthals. Srinivasan et al [19] found that
94 genomic regions tagged by negative NSS scores show enrichment of association with
95 schizophrenia.

96

97 Using specific interpretation of genome sequencing in two recently extinct hominids,
98 Neanderthals and Denisovans, Gokhman et al [29] mapped genome-wide methylation
99 levels (i.e. the methylome) and compared them to modern humans. While 99% of the

100 methylation maps were identical in the three hominids, nearly 2000 differentially
101 methylated regions (DMRs) were identified, which give the first clues about the role of
102 epigenomic evolution in generating anthropometric differences between modern humans
103 and their ancient cousins [29]. These DMRs provide a dataset of evolutionary annotations
104 complementary to pre-existing datasets. Unlike HARs and NSS scores, which are based on
105 DNA sequence changes, DMRs provide information on the evolution of epigenomes.
106 Since epigenomes can act as an interface with the environment [30, 31], these datasets
107 provide the opportunity to investigate environmentally driven evolutionary changes.
108 Keeping in mind the evolutionary hypothesis for schizophrenia proposed by Crow, we thus
109 examined if these evolutionary DMRs are enriched for association with schizophrenia. We
110 also examined a range of human traits to compare the possible enrichment in other traits.
111 Using previously published methodologies [19, 32, 33] and publicly available GWAS
112 datasets we systematically analyzed twelve diverse phenotypes to investigate the potential
113 role of regions susceptible to epigenetic variation in the emergence of specific traits in the
114 human lineage.

115

116 **Results**

117 *SNPs in human-specific DMRs are enriched for association with schizophrenia.*

118 The genomic locations of human-specific DMRs were obtained from data published by
119 Gokhman et al [29] (see Methods for full details). GWAS summary statistics for 12
120 common traits were obtained from published datasets: schizophrenia [14], bipolar disorder
121 (BPD) [34], attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) [35], rheumatoid arthritis
122 [36], high density lipoprotein [37], low density lipoprotein [37], triglycerides [37], total
123 cholesterol [37], systolic blood pressure [38], diastolic blood pressure [38], body mass
124 index [39], and height [40]. The GWAS datasets are summarized in Additional File 1,

125 Table S1. For each trait, we generated a list of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs)
126 within DMRs (positional annotation) and a list of SNPs in linkage disequilibrium (LD-
127 based annotation) with markers within DMRs (Additional File 1, Table S1).

128

129 We used quantile-quantile (QQ) plots as described by Schork et al [32] to test whether the
130 DMR SNPs are enriched for association with the GWAS trait compared to the complete
131 set of SNPs (see Methods for additional details). In such plots the baseline is the null line
132 of no difference between expected distribution of p -values and observed p -values.
133 Deviation of the observed data distributions from the expected data distribution indicates
134 the presence of true associations. When the p -values for a set of selected markers show
135 greater leftwards deflection, they are enriched for association compared to the overall
136 GWAS set. For the schizophrenia GWAS, enrichment was observed both for SNPs in LD
137 with markers in DMRs (Figure 1; Additional File 1, Figure S1) and for SNPs located
138 within DMRs (Figure 2). Although there was a slight leftward deflection in the higher p -
139 values (smaller negative \log_{10} of p -values) in some other traits (e.g. height; Figure 1;
140 Additional File 1, Figure S1), the observed enrichment only crosses the genome-wide
141 significance level of 5×10^{-8} for the schizophrenia SNPs. The enrichment of disease-
142 associated markers in DMRs is thus specific to schizophrenia and is independent of LD.

143

144 *Human-specific DMR enrichment in schizophrenia is independent of the MHC region,*
145 *other genomic annotations and total markers genotyped*

146 The Major histocompatibility complex (MHC) region harbors several significant
147 schizophrenia markers and could potentially bias our results because of long-range LD.
148 The QQ plots show that the enrichment remains when the MHC is excluded (Figure 1) or
149 included (Figure 2).

150

151 The schizophrenia GWAS had the highest density of markers genotyped (~9.4 million) and
152 thus had the most SNPs in DMR regions (Additional File 1, Table S1), which could
153 artificially inflate the enrichment. We normalized the total number of DMR SNPs with the
154 total number of SNPs genotyped in each GWAS and found that the proportion of SNPs in
155 DMRs is nearly identical for all traits (Additional File 1, Figure S3). To further eliminate
156 the possibility that the enrichment is due to variation in the number of markers analyzed,
157 we extracted ~2.4 million SNPs that were common across the twelve GWAS. Although
158 not as strong as with the full set, the deflection observed for the schizophrenia GWAS
159 remains higher than any other trait (Additional File 1, Figure S1), indicating the presence
160 of significant disease markers in DMRs. These validations point to a true enrichment of
161 association of the DMR SNPs with schizophrenia that is independent of the number of
162 markers in a GWAS. It should be noted that we cannot rule out enrichment in the ADHD
163 and BPD GWAS, because they are lacking in power (Additional File 1, Figure S1).

164

165 Additionally, we considered the distribution of schizophrenia-associated SNPs based on
166 genomic annotations of 5' untranslated regions (5'UTRs), Exons, Introns and 3'
167 untranslated regions (3'UTRs) [32]. Contrary to previously published findings [32], the
168 enrichment was highest for intronic SNPs and lowest for 5'UTR SNPs (Additional File 1,
169 Figure S4).

170

171 *Only human-specific DMRs are enriched for association with schizophrenia*

172 Next, we used QQ plots to test whether markers located in the Neanderthal- and
173 Denisovan-specific DMRs are enriched for association with schizophrenia. Coordinates for
174 these DMRs were obtained from data published by Gokhman et al, 2014 [29] (see Methods

175 for details). Since we do not know the precise coordinates of the MHC for Neanderthals
176 and Denisovans, the analysis for human DMRs included the MHC region. No enrichment
177 was observed for Neanderthal or Denisovan DMRs (Figure 2). It should be noted that this
178 approach may not be appropriate for testing Neanderthal- and Denisovan-specific DMRs
179 since (a) the schizophrenia GWAS was conducted in humans; (b) SNP and LD information
180 is available only for humans; (c) the three hominids had variable number of DMRs, which
181 affected the number of SNPs captured via positional annotation.

182

183 *Comparison of human DMRs with other evolutionary annotations*

184 We compared the enrichment observed for the human DMRs with the enrichment
185 previously reported for NSS markers and HARs [18, 19] (see Methods for details). We
186 first compared the enrichment via QQ plots and find that the enrichment of human DMRs
187 in schizophrenia is comparable to that observed for NSS markers and far greater than that
188 observed for HARs (Figure 3).

189

190 In these analyses, it was important to check the extent of overlap of markers (SNPs)
191 annotated to various genomic regions of DMRs, NSS markers and HARs. Reassuringly,
192 the various evolutionary annotations do not share the same group of markers, indicating
193 that we did not test the same regions or SNPs (Additional File 1, Figure S2). The overlap
194 between NSS markers and DMR markers involved less than 0.5% of all NSS markers and
195 less than 0.2% of all DMR markers (Additional File 1, Figure S2). The SNPs in the DMRs
196 thus represent a different group of markers that have not been annotated or analyzed
197 previously from an evolutionary standpoint (Additional File 2, Additional File 3).

198

199 *Statistically-significant enrichment exists for human DMRs*

200 To determine the statistical significance of the DMR enrichment in schizophrenia, we
201 utilized the INRICH software pipeline. INRICH is a pathway analysis tool for GWAS,
202 designed for detecting enriched association signals of LD-independent genomic regions
203 within biologically relevant gene sets (in our case genes which contain DMRs). It performs
204 permutation and bootstrapping procedures to determine the significance of association of
205 markers in LD intervals while maintaining the SNP density and gene density of the
206 original intervals [33]. INRICH confirmed significant ($p < 0.05$) enrichment of association
207 for human DMRs with schizophrenia after correcting for multiple testing through
208 bootstrapping at most p -value thresholds of LD intervals. Additionally, INRICH
209 independently verified the previously reported enrichment of NSS markers with
210 schizophrenia [19] (Figure 4). Furthermore, INRICH identified gene-level enrichment of
211 association for DMRs with height (Additional File 1, Figure S5), while at the SNP level
212 the enrichment in height was seen only for smaller effects, i.e. the enrichment did not
213 remain below $p < 10^{-8}$.

214

215 *Pathway analysis*

216 We utilized Ingenuity Pathway Analysis (IPA) to analyze DMR SNPs that show
217 enrichment of association with schizophrenia (for details of the genes analyzed, please
218 refer to the ‘Pathway analysis’ section in the Methods). We found ‘CREB signaling in
219 neurons’ and ‘Synaptic long term potentiation’ amongst the top canonical pathways when
220 analyzing pathways overrepresented in nervous system. Additionally, under physiological
221 systems, ‘Nervous system development and function’ is also enriched (Additional File 1,
222 Table S2). We repeated the same analysis for NSS markers as they also show enrichment
223 of association with schizophrenia. ‘CREB signaling in neurons’ was also amongst the top
224 canonical pathways for enriched NSS markers (Additional File 1, Table S4). Additionally,

225 we repeated the analyses with all organ systems and even then, ‘CREB signaling in
226 neurons’ and ‘Synaptic long term potentiation’ emerged amongst the top canonical
227 pathways for both enriched DMRs (Additional File 1, Table S3) and enriched NSS
228 (Additional File 1, Table S5). This is an interesting result since there is very little marker
229 overlap between the DMR and NSS SNPs (Additional File 1, Figure S2). Interestingly,
230 genes containing enriched DMRs are also overrepresented in ‘Hair and skin development’
231 when considering all organ systems (Additional File 1, Table S3). This may suggest
232 potential gene-by-environment interactions, modulated by methylation variation over
233 human evolution (see Discussion below).

234

235 **Discussion**

236 Our results suggest that SNPs in regions of the human genome that have undergone recent
237 changes in DNA methylation status are enriched for association with schizophrenia, and to
238 a lesser extent with height. Amongst all the traits analyzed, the enrichment observed in QQ
239 plots was strongest for schizophrenia and passed the genome-wide significance threshold
240 of 5×10^{-8} when the MHC was both excluded (Figure 1) and included (Figure 2). INRICH
241 analysis confirms significant enrichment ($p < 0.01$) in human DMRs that survived multiple
242 testing through bootstrapping (Figure 4) for association with schizophrenia, and also
243 suggests a possible effect on height (Additional File 1, Figure S5).

244

245 Xu et al [18] and Srinivasan et al [19] respectively demonstrated that variants located in
246 HARs and in regions containing NSS markers were enriched for association with
247 schizophrenia. In our study, we compared the evolutionary enrichments of schizophrenia
248 risk variants in DMRs, NSS markers and HARs. We validate the results of Srinivasan et al
249 [19] (Figure 3, Figure 4). HARs do not show enrichment of disease markers by QQ plots

250 and INRICH, unlike NSS markers and DMRs (Figure 3, Figure 4). This difference with the
251 report of Xu et al could be due to a different freeze of the gene database used; it could also
252 be because Xu et al. used a more stringent Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium (HWE) threshold
253 to filter out markers from the schizophrenia GWAS [14], a step we could not replicate as
254 the genotype data are not publicly available. We used the publicly available schizophrenia
255 dataset that has a HWE p -value $> 10^{-6}$ in controls and p -value $> 10^{-10}$ in cases [14].
256 Interestingly, all the evolutionary annotations (DMRs, NSS markers and HARs) cover
257 different sections of the genome with very little overlap between them (Additional File 1,
258 Figure S2). Between the three evolutionary annotations, nearly 70,000 SNPs occur around
259 regions with evolutionary significance (Additional File 1, Figure S2). Our results supply a
260 wealth of information on genomic regions that are important for the evolution of humans
261 and are also enriched for schizophrenia risk variants (NSS markers and DMRs, Additional
262 File 3). In addition, our study provides genetic support from two independent datasets that
263 regions which differ between modern and ancient hominids could be implicated in the
264 development of schizophrenia. An interesting hypothesis to consider is the possibility that
265 methylation patterns are potentially driven by the genomic sequence underneath. This
266 hypothesis is supported by preliminary findings presented at the recently concluded World
267 Psychiatric Genetics Congress[41]. As such it is possible that the human specific DMRs
268 analyzed here represent regions of the human genome where the underlying sequence
269 might have diverged from Neanderthals and Denisovans. This hypothesis may be partially
270 true as Gokhman et al[29] observed that some, but not all of the methylation changes were
271 indeed driven by sequence changes. On the other hand, there also exist metastable
272 epialleles where there are methylation differences in genetically identical individuals[42].
273 As such, this would suggest that not all methylation differences are driven by the

274 underlying genomic sequence alone. We did not test whether the schizophrenia markers
275 are human-specific or not and therefore should be investigated in future research.

276

277

278 Neanderthal- or Denisovan-specific DMRs showed no enrichment of association (Figure
279 2). This suggests that SNPs conferring vulnerability to schizophrenia occur in genomic
280 regions whose methylation levels were altered in the modern human lineage but not in the
281 ancestral lineages. It is possible that the evolutionary changes driving the variation in
282 methylation status could also have made the human lineage more vulnerable to
283 schizophrenia. A caveat to this result is that the LD structure in archaic genomes is
284 unknown, so we cannot test LD-based enrichment in Neanderthal or Denisovan genomes.
285 Our inter-lineage analyses with enrichment plots were thus restricted to SNPs occurring
286 exclusively *within* DMRs. The other limitation to this comparative approach is that the
287 GWAS data is specific to modern humans.

288

289 In previous studies [32], it was reported that 5'UTRs are the functional annotation
290 harboring the most association with a given trait. However, the DMRs enriched for
291 association with schizophrenia tended to localize in intronic regions (Additional File 1,
292 Figure S4), which is in agreement with the expectation that methylation regions should not
293 be localized in exons and UTRs. This shows that using more information to label some
294 genomic regions in greater detail, such as potential regulatory regions in introns, might
295 give a more precise annotation of regions of association.

296

297 Despite the genetic overlap between bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, we do not find
298 evidence of enrichment of association of DMRs with bipolar disorder either at the SNP

299 level (Figure 1; Additional File 1, Figure S1) or the gene level (data available on request).
300 This could possibly be due to lack of sufficient power in the bipolar disorder GWAS [34].
301 Additionally, the gene-level approach utilized by INRICH depicts enrichment of
302 association of human DMRs with height (Additional File 1, Figure S5). This evidence is
303 lacking at the SNP level as depicted by QQ plots (Figure 1; Additional File 1, Figure S1).
304 We speculate that this could be due to the difference in testing DMR-localized SNPs
305 compared to genes flanking human DMRs.

306

307 Although the DMRs utilized here were obtained from bone samples, Gokhman et al [29]
308 assert that the DMRs refer to species-specific methylation differences and not tissue-
309 specific variations[43]. Similarly, Hernando-Herraez et al [44] noted that species-specific
310 DMRs tend to be conserved across tissues and as such should not represent tissue-specific
311 variations. Other studies also showed that neurological systems were enriched for
312 methylation differences even when the tissue samples analyzed were not neurological [45–
313 47]. Therefore, we believe that our results are valid for a ‘brain’ phenotype even though
314 the DMRs were derived from non-brain tissues. The enrichment seen for schizophrenia
315 also corroborates the results of Gokhman et al [29] who reported that DMRs were more
316 enriched around genes implicated in the nervous system amongst all the organ systems
317 tested for evolutionary changes in methylation patterns. Hernando-Herraez et al [44] also
318 found that methylation differences between humans and great apes were located around
319 genes controlling neurological and developmental features. It is therefore possible that the
320 methylation differences were mediated by evolution of genomic regions controlling
321 neurodevelopmental processes. The results of pathway analysis are consistent with this.
322 Both the DMR and NSS regions that are enriched for association with schizophrenia

323 contain genes that are overrepresented in ‘CREB signaling in neurons’ and ‘Synaptic long
324 term potentiation’.

325

326 Our results hint that epigenomic evolution has taken place in genomic regions implicated
327 in the aetiology of schizophrenia. Furthermore, these regions harbor markers that are
328 involved in the regulation of various neurodevelopmental pathways. The fact that
329 methylation changes also took place in these very same regions suggests a complex gene-
330 by-environment interaction in the evolution of humans, especially for pathways that led to
331 the development of our brain. While it is known that various factors from the environment
332 can make long-lasting changes in DNA methylation patterns that can be subsequently
333 inherited at a population level [30, 31, 48], the true significance of our findings from an
334 evolutionary standpoint suggests that the superior mental abilities of our species may in
335 part have been driven by environmental factors during the past 300,000 years [49, 50].

336 It is difficult to put an exact date on the emergence of the superior mental abilities that
337 define the modern *Homo sapiens*. Anthropologists often date the onset of the advanced
338 intellectual abilities of *Homo sapiens* from about 70,000 years onwards [51], a period
339 which saw the emergence of art, religion [52, 53] and possibly spoken language [54]. From
340 an evolutionary perspective, it suggests a massive leap in the animal kingdom because
341 *Homo sapiens* became the first species not only to develop the capacity to think and
342 imagine things that do not exist [52, 53], but also to communicate these ideas to other
343 members of the species [54]. This ability would have been critical for effective
344 coordination and cooperation within large groups and may even have been needed to keep
345 a group together [55, 56]. The genomic approach to analyze mental disorders used in the
346 present study and other studies can interrogate the effect of changes which appeared in the
347 last 300,000 years [49, 50], but it will clearly be interesting to trace mores recent changes.

348 If a similar method used in the reconstruction of Neanderthal and Denisovan genomes [29,
349 57] could be implemented on samples of ancient *Homo sapiens* from different time periods
350 [58–65], then theoretically it should be possible to reconstruct the methylomes and regions
351 of recent evolution from ancient humans [66]. Subsequently, more detailed ‘time-course’
352 analyses of changes in methylation patterns and in other regions of recent evolution and
353 their implications in schizophrenia will surely result in more detailed elucidation of the
354 evolutionary hypothesis of schizophrenia. This is the promise of the novel field of
355 paleoepigenetics that seeks to infer past environmental cues that affected the epigenomes
356 of ancient individuals[42, 43].

357

358 **Conclusions**

359 In summary, we have demonstrated that human genomic regions whose methylation status
360 was altered during evolution are enriched in markers that show association with
361 schizophrenia. Our results concur with previous genomic studies demonstrating that
362 methylation changes in *Homo sapiens* have had the greatest impact on the nervous system.
363 and provide evidence that epigenomic evolution plays a role in conferring a high risk of
364 schizophrenia on humans. Future research should attempt to perform a finer temporal
365 resolution of the origins of psychosis through the prism of evolutionary epigenomics. To
366 explore the period of evolution before the *Homo* lineage, it would also be interesting to
367 determine whether methylation signatures from primates are enriched for schizophrenia
368 markers. Future research should also investigate the influence of human-specific DMRs on
369 height.

370

371 **Methods**

372 *Differentially Methylated Region data*

373 Coordinates for DMRs were obtained from data publicly available in Supplementary Table
374 S2 of Gokhman et al, 2014 [29]. This file contained DMRs inferred by comparing genome
375 sequence of fossilized Neanderthal and Denisovan limb samples with methylation data
376 from osteoblasts of modern humans. From the genomes of the Neanderthal and Denisovan
377 samples, Gokhman et al inferred methylation by utilizing the natural degradation of
378 methylated cytosine (C) to thymine (T) to create a C→T ratio [29]. The methylation
379 information, in the form of C→T ratio, was then compared with each of the three species
380 and classified according to the hominid in which the methylation change occurred, i.e.
381 human-specific, Neanderthal-specific and Denisovan-specific DMRs. These DMRs do not
382 represent tissue-specific methylation but species-specific methylation [29]. The human-
383 specific DMRs comprise regions that have both gained and lost methylation in comparison
384 to Neanderthal- and Denisovan-specific DMRs. DMRs that could not be classified reliably
385 in any of the three species (unclassified DMRs) [29] were not used. Full methodological
386 details for assigning DMRs are in the Supplementary File of the original paper [29].

387

388 *HAR data*

389 Genomic coordinates were obtained from publicly available data (docpollard.com/2x) for
390 three classes of human accelerated region: HARs, in which regions conserved in mammals
391 are accelerated in humans; PARs, in which regions conserved in mammals are accelerated
392 in primates; and pHARs, in which regions conserved in primates (but not other mammals)
393 are accelerated in humans. Conversion to hg19 assembly was performed using the liftOver
394 tool from the UCSC Genome Browser.

395

396 *NSS data*

397 NSS data was obtained as a list of markers with corresponding NSS values from
398 Srinivasan et al [19]. Markers with negative values, indicating positive selection in
399 humans, were filtered out and used for analysis.

400

401 *GWAS data*

402 Summary statistics from GWAS of 12 common traits were obtained from published
403 datasets: schizophrenia (SCZ) [14], bipolar disorder (BPD) [34], attention deficit
404 hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) [35], rheumatoid arthritis (RA) [36], blood lipid markers
405 (high density lipoprotein (HDL), low density lipoprotein (LDL), triglycerides (TG), total
406 cholesterol (TC)) [37], blood pressure (systolic blood pressure (SBP), diastolic blood
407 pressure (DBP)) [38], body mass index (BMI) [39], and height [40]. For studies published
408 with hg18 coordinates (BPD, SBP, DBP, HDL, LDL, TG, TC, ADHD, RA), conversion to
409 hg19 was performed using the command line version of the liftOver tool from the UCSC
410 Genome Browser (<http://hgdownload.cse.ucsc.edu/downloads.html> #utilities_downloads).
411 For BMI and height SNPs, the genomic coordinates were obtained by mapping them to the
412 assembly of 1000 Genomes Project Phase 1 reference panel SNPs [67].

413

414 *SNP assignment to DMRs*

415 SNPs were assigned to DMRs with LDsnpr [68] using positional binning and LD (linkage
416 disequilibrium)-based binning in R [69]. We used both methods because DMR-localized
417 SNPs that were not genotyped in a specific GWAS would be missed if we used positional
418 binning alone [68] (Additional File 1, Table S1). The LD file utilized in HDF5 format was
419 constructed on the European reference population of 1000 Genomes Project and can be
420 publicly downloaded at: <http://services.cbu.uib.no/software/ldsnpr/Download>.

421

422 *Enrichment analyses with stratified Quantile-Quantile (QQ) Plots*

423 QQ plots are an effective tool to visualize the spread of data and any deviations from the
424 expected null distributions. They are frequently utilized in GWAS to depict enrichment of
425 true signals. When the observed distribution of data matches the expected distribution,
426 there is a lack of enrichment and a line of equality is obtained that depicts the null
427 hypothesis. A distribution such as this reflects no enrichment of observed over expected
428 data distribution. However, if the observed and expected distributions differ, there will be
429 deviation from this null line. As described in detail by Schork et al [32], leftwards
430 deflections from this null line represent enrichment. The higher the leftward deflection, the
431 greater is the enrichment of true signals. In GWASs, due to the extremely low p -values of
432 SNPs, it is common to depict p -values by converting them to negative \log_{10} values so that
433 smaller p -values give higher negative logarithmic values. We plotted the negative \log_{10} of
434 the observed p -values of SNPs against the expected negative \log_{10} of a normal distribution.
435 The distributions were corrected for genomic inflation by λ_{GC} . This method of enrichment
436 was used to show for example [32] that specific genomic regions are enriched for trait-
437 associated SNPs and are much more likely to associate with a given trait than SNPs
438 distributed across a genome. In other words, when SNPs are stratified according to specific
439 genomic regions, there is a greater enrichment of true signals than what is observed in the
440 GWAS. Using a similar approach, we binned SNPs that fall in DMR regions and plotted
441 the stratified p -value distribution.

442

443 *Enrichment analyses with INRICH*

444 The stratified QQ plots are a useful visual tool for observing the presence or absence of
445 enrichment of true signals in a given set of SNPs. However, to quantify the enrichment
446 visually observed, we used the INterval ENRICHment Analysis (INRICH) tool. It is a

447 robust bioinformatics pipeline to determine enrichment of genomic intervals implicated by
448 LD with predefined or custom gene sets [33]. It takes into account several potential biases
449 that can otherwise lead to false positives. It is well suited for testing GWAS-implicated
450 SNPs for association with gene sets as it controls for variable gene size, SNP density, LD
451 within and between genes, and overlapping genes with similar annotations. We followed
452 the procedure described by Xu et al [18], with the extended MHC region (chr6:25-35Mb)
453 masked and SNPs with minor allele frequency (MAF) <0.05 excluded. Full details may be
454 found in Additional File 1.

455

456 *Pathway analysis*

457 Pathway analysis was performed using Ingenuity Pathway Analysis (IPA) from QIAGEN
458 (www.qiagen.com/ingenuity, last accessed 26th August 2016). The reference set was
459 Ingenuity Knowledge Base (Genes). Both direct and indirect relationships were analyzed.
460 All data sources were included with the confidence parameter set to experimentally
461 observed and highly predicted pathways for Human. Under ‘Tissues & Cell Lines’, we
462 performed the analysis once with all organ systems and once with only the nervous system.
463 5338 enriched DMR SNPs in 329 enriched DMRs (Additional File 3) were mapped to 349
464 unique RefSeq genes and 446 RefSeq genes in LD using the method of Schork et al [32].
465 Genes in LD blocks containing enriched NSS markers were determined in a similar
466 manner. 4276 enriched NSS markers mapped to 648 overlapping RefSeq genes and 1363
467 RefSeq genes in LD. IPA was performed on these gene lists.

468

469 **Additional Files**

470 Additional File 1: Additional Method, Figures and Tables

471 Additional File 2: Annotation of all DMRs with schizophrenia-associated SNPs. This file
472 contains annotation of all the human-lineage specific DMRs that are associated with
473 schizophrenia markers. Details of the various markers present within each DMR is
474 provided, along with the marker with most significant *p*-value .

475 Additional File 3: Annotation of enriched DMRs with genes, promoters, CpG islands and
476 enhancers. This file contains detailed annotation of those human-lineage specific DMRs
477 that are enriched for association with schizophrenia markers(except those in the MHC
478 region). Compared to Additional File 2, these DMRs represent those that are enriched and
479 whether they are present in any genes, promoters, enhancers or CpG islands.

480

481

482 **Abbreviations**

483 (3'UTR): 3' untranslated region, (5'UTR): 5' untranslated region, (ADHD): attention
484 deficit hyperactivity disorder, (BMI): body mass index, (BPD): bipolar disorder, (CpG): 5'
485 Cytosine-phosphate-Guanine 3', (CREB): cyclic adenosine monophosphate responsive
486 element binding protein, (DBP): diastolic blood pressure, (DMR): differentially
487 methylated region, (DNA): deoxyribonucleic acid, (GWAS):genome-wide association
488 studies, (HARs): Human Accelerated Regions, (HDL): high density lipoprotein, (HWE):
489 Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium, (INRICH): Interval enRICHment analysis tool , (IPA):
490 Ingenuity Pathway Analysis, (LD): linkage disequilibrium, (LDL): low density
491 lipoprotein, (MAF): minor allele frequency, (MHC): Major histocompatibility complex,
492 (NSS): Neanderthal Selective Sweep, (QQ): quantile-quantile, (RA): rheumatoid arthritis,
493 (SBP): systolic blood pressure, (SCZ): schizophrenia, (SNP): single nucleotide
494 polymorphism, (TC): total cholesterol, (TG): triglycerides.

495

496

497 **Declarations**

498 *Ethics Approval and consent to participate*

499 Not applicable

500

501 *Consent for publication*

502 Not applicable

503

504 *Availability of Data and Materials*

505 The code supporting the results of this article is available in the Zenodo repository at

506 <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.198451>. GWAS datasets, DMR data and HAR data are

507 publicly available as described in the Methods section.

508

509 *Competing interests*

510 The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

511

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517

518 *Authors' contributions*

519 NB carried out the bioinformatics analyses, contributed to the design of the study and

520 drafted the manuscript. TP, SG, FB contributed to statistical and LD analyses. OAA and

521 VMS critically revised the manuscript. SLH conceived of the study, participated in its

522 design and coordination, and helped to draft the manuscript. All authors read and approved
523 the final manuscript.

524

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536

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812
813

814 **Figure legends**

815 **Figure 1: Enrichment of DMR SNPs across SCZ, BPD, BMI and Height**

816 Quantile-Quantile (QQ) plots of GWAS SNPs for Schizophrenia (SCZ) with the extended
817 MHC region masked (chr6: 25-35Mb), Bipolar Disorder (BPD), Body Mass Index (BMI)
818 and Height. The X-axis shows expected $-\log_{10}p$ -values under the null hypothesis. The Y-
819 axis shows actual observed $-\log_{10}p$ -values. The values for all GWAS SNPs are plotted in
820 pink while the values for SNPs in linkage disequilibrium (LD) with DMRs are plotted in
821 blue. Leftwards deflections from the null line (grey diagonal line) indicate enrichment of
822 true signals - the greater the leftward deflection, the stronger the enrichment. Genomic
823 correction was performed on all SNPs with global lambda.

824

825 **Figure 2: Comparison of enrichment of association with schizophrenia for SNPs**

826 **within Human, Neanderthal and Denisovan DMRs**

827 The figure shows QQ plots for all schizophrenia (SCZ) GWAS SNPs in green while SNPs
828 within the species-specific DMRs are plotted in red. The location of the MHC is unknown
829 in Neanderthal and Denisovan genomes, so the MHC region was not masked in the human
830 genome.

831

832 **Figure 3: Comparison of enrichment of association with schizophrenia for SNPs in**
833 **LD with various evolutionary annotations**

834 QQ plots for association with schizophrenia (SCZ) of SNPs in different evolutionary
835 datasets (DMRs - red, NSS - orange, Primate HARs (pHARs) - blue, HARs - magenta,
836 PARs - dark green) versus schizophrenia GWAS with all SNPs (light green). SNPs are
837 corrected for genomic inflation using global lambda.

838

839 **Figure 4: INRICH test for enrichment of association of DMR, NSS and Accelerated**
840 **Region gene sets**

841 Corrected p -values based on performing multiple testing with bootstrapping 5000 times,
842 with $p = 0.1$ as threshold. The various evolutionary annotations compared are: DMR,
843 human-specific DMRs; NSS, Neanderthal Selective Sweep; HAR, mammalian conserved
844 regions that are accelerated in humans; PAR, mammalian conserved regions that are
845 accelerated in primates; and PrimateHAR (pHAR), primate-conserved regions that are
846 accelerated in humans.

847

Figure 1

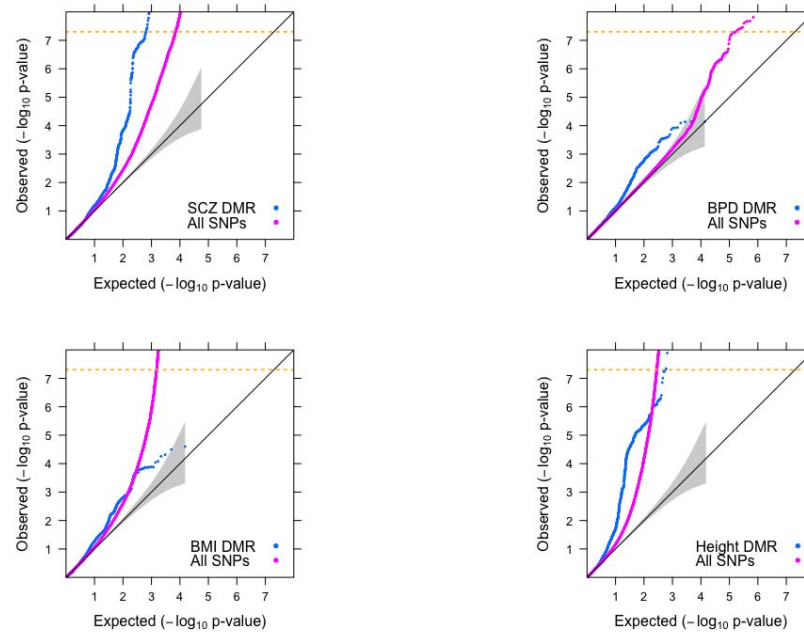


Figure 2

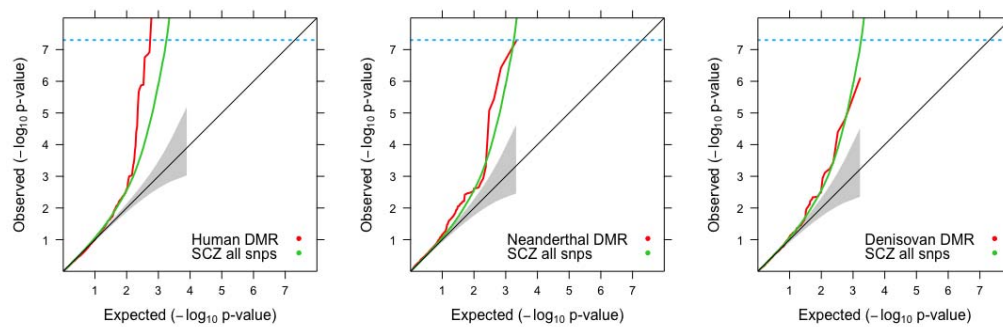


Figure 3

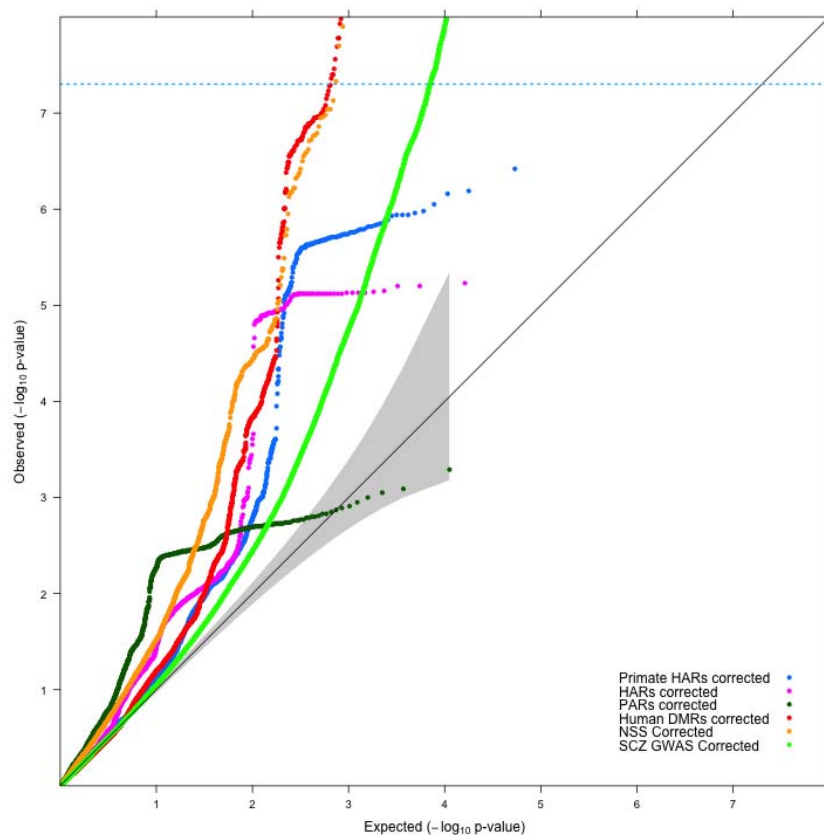


Figure 4

