1   TITLE PAGE

2

3 Evolutionary and structural analyses of SARS-CoV-2 D614G
4 spike protein mutation now documented worldwide

5

6 **AUTHORS**

7 Sandra Isabel, MD, PhD[1,*,†], Lucía Graña-Miraglia, PhD[2,3,*], Jahir M. Gutierrez, PhD[4,*], Cedoljub

8 Bundalovic-Torma, PhD[2,3,*], Helen E. Groves, MBBCH, PhD[1,*], Marc R. Isabel, MSc[5], AliReza

9 Eshaghi. Ph.D.[6], Samir N. Patel, PhD[6,7], Jonathan B. Gubbay, MBBS, FRCPC[1,6,7,**], Tomi Poutanen[4,**],

10 David S. Guttman, PhD[2,3,**], Susan M. Poutanen, MD, MPH[7,8,9,**].

11

12 *Affiliations*
13 [1] Department of Paediatrics, The Hospital for Sick Children, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario,
14 Canada.
15 [2] Centre for the Analysis of Genome Evolution & Function, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario,
16 Canada.
17 [3] Department of Cell & Systems Biology, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
18 [4] Layer 6 AI, Ontario, Canada.
19 [5] Département de mathématique, Université Laval, Québec City, Canada.
20 [6] Public Health Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
21 [7] Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
22 [8] Department of Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
23 [9] Department of Microbiology, University Health System/Sinai Health, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
24 *, **These authors contributed equally.
25 †Corresponding author, Sandra Isabel, MD, PhD, Infectious Diseases Fellow, Infectious Diseases
26 Division, The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Ontario, Sandra.Isabel@sickkids.ca

Evolutionary and structural analyses of SARS-CoV-2 D614G spike protein mutation now documented worldwide

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), was declared on March 11, 2020 by the World Health Organization. As of the 31st of May, 2020, there have been more than 6 million COVID-19 cases diagnosed worldwide and over 370,000 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins. Thousands of SARS-CoV-2 strains have been sequenced to date, providing a valuable opportunity to investigate the evolution of the virus on a global scale. We performed a phylogenetic analysis of over 1,225 SARS-CoV-2 genomes spanning from late December 2019 to mid-March 2020. We identified a missense mutation, D614G, in the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2, which has emerged as a predominant clade in Europe (954 of 1,449 (66%) sequences) and is spreading worldwide (1,237 of 2,795 (44%) sequences). Molecular dating analysis estimated the emergence of this clade around mid-to-late January (10 - 25 January) 2020. We also applied structural bioinformatics to assess D614G potential impact on the virulence and epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2. *In silico* analyses on the spike protein structure suggests that the mutation is most likely neutral to protein function as it relates to its interaction with the human ACE2 receptor. The lack of clinical metadata available prevented our investigation of association between viral clade and disease severity phenotype. Future work that can leverage clinical outcome data with both viral and human genomic diversity is needed to monitor the pandemic.

In late December 2019, a cluster of atypical pneumonia cases was reported and epidemiologically linked to a wholesale seafood market in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China[1]. The causative agent was identified as a novel RNA virus of the family *Coronaviridae* and was subsequently designated SARS-CoV-2 owing to its high overall nucleotide similarity to SARS-CoV, which was responsible for previous outbreaks of severe acute respiratory syndrome in humans between 2002-2004[2,3]. Previous studies of SARS-CoV-2 genomes sequenced during the early months of the epidemic (late December 2019 up to early February 2020) estimated the time of its emergence at the end of November (18th and 25th)[4–6], approximately a month before the first confirmed cases. It has been hypothesized that SARS-CoV-2 may have undergone a period of cryptic transmission in asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic individuals, or in unidentified pneumonia cases prior to the cluster reported in Wuhan in late December 2019[3]. Based on the high nucleotide identity of SARS-CoV-2 to a bat coronavirus isolate (96%)[7], a

2

59 possible scenario is that SARS-CoV-2 had undergone a period of adaptation in an as yet identified
60 animal host, facilitating its capacity to jump species boundaries and infect humans[3]. The present rapid
61 spread of the virus worldwide, coupled with its associated mortality, raises an important concern of its
62 further potential to adapt to more highly transmissible or virulent forms.

63

64 The availability of SARS-CoV-2 genomic sequences concurrent with the present outbreak provides a
65 valuable resource for improving our understanding of viral evolution across location and time. We
66 performed an initial phylogenetic analysis of 749 SARS-CoV-2 genome sequences from late-December
67 2019 to March 13, 2020 (based on publicly available genome sequences on GISAID) and noted 152
68 SARS-CoV-2 sequences initially isolated in Europe beginning in February, 2020, which appear to have
69 emerged as a distinct phylogenetic clade. Upon further investigation, we found that these strains are
70 distinguished by a derived missense mutation in the spike protein (S-protein) encoding gene, resulting
71 in an amino acid change from an aspartate to a glycine residue at position 614 (D614G). At the time of
72 our study, the D614G mutation was at particularly high frequency 20/23 (87%) among Italian SARS-
73 CoV-2 sequenced specimens, which was then emerging as the most severely affected country outside of
74 China, with an overall case fatality rate of 7.2%[8].

75

76 During the course of our analysis, the number of available SARS-CoV-2 genomes increased
77 substantially. We subsequently analyzed a total of 2,795 genome sequences of SARS-CoV-2
78 (Supplementary data Table 1). For those sequences with demographics (65% of sequenced specimens),
79 the male to female ratio was 0.56:0.44, with a median age of 49 years old, and a range from less than 1
80 to 99 years old. As of 30 March 2020, the D614G clade includes 954 of 1,449 (66%) of European
81 specimens and 1,237 of 2,795 (44%) worldwide sequenced specimens. A comparison against the
82 previous set of genomes collected for our phylogenetic and molecular dating analysis revealed that for
83 samples submitted during the period from March 17-30, 2020, the D614G clade became increasingly
84 prevalent worldwide, expanding from 22 to 42 countries (Figure 1), as also reported previously[9,10]. The
85 demographic distribution for this mutation, when known, (male to female ratio, 0.56:0.44; median age,
86 48 years old; age range, less than 1 to 99 years old) was not significantly different compared to the
87 reported demographics for all sequenced SARS-CoV-2 specimens.

88

89 We employed molecular dating to estimate the time of emergence of the D614G clade. Based on a
90 curated set of 442 genomes representing the sequence diversity of SARS-CoV-2 samples available at

3

91   the time of analysis (30 March 2020), the mean time to most recent common ancestor (tMRCA) was

92   estimated to be on 18 January 2020 (95% highest posterior density (HPD) interval: 10 January - 25

93   January), indicating its relatively recent emergence (Figure 2). Although the mutation appears to be

94   clade-specific, we noted that D614G also arose another time in a single isolate belonging to a distinct

95   lineage, Wuhan/HBCDC-HB-06/2020 (EPI 412982), collected on 7 February 2020. Given the high

96   degree of nucleotide identity of the D614G clade (~99.6%), we expect that future tMRCA estimates

97   will not differ substantially. The mean tMRCA for the root of the tree was estimated to be 13 November

98   2019 (95% HPD interval: 19 October 2019 to 5 December 2019) which is similar to what has been

99   estimated previously[4]. Multiple factors can influence these estimates as more data become available:

100   increased diversity and number of strains included for analysis, expanded range of sampling dates

101   compared to earlier studies, as well as incomplete/biased sampling of available genomes. Therefore,

102   caution should be used when inferring broad and definite conclusions about the epidemiology of the

103   emerging outbreak in real-time, particularly as the early undocumented stages of SARS-CoV-2

104   transmission is largely unknown[3]. They should be taken as tentative estimates based on limited

105   information, which are subject to change as more information becomes available and compared to other

106   epidemiological information. For instance, as different countries review and test archived specimens

107   from cases of severe pneumonia or influenza-like illness for SARS-CoV-2, it is expected that additional

108   cases may be identified, such as in France where a patient without travel history to China was identified

109   to have COVID-19 in late December concurrent with the initial reported cases from Wuhan[11]. These

110   retrospective analyses will provide crucial insights into the early transmission dynamics and evolution

111   of SARS-CoV-2 and its rapid global spread.

112

113   From our findings of the recent emergence of the D614G clade and the increasing number of specimens

114   harboring the mutation identified worldwide, we sought to investigate the potential significance of the

115   mutation on clinical disease severity phenotypes. Unfortunately, only limited clinical disease severity

116   data was available for patients whose sequenced samples were included in our analysis (asymptomatic

117   64, symptomatic 8, mild symptoms 2, pneumonia 4, hospitalized 163, released 48, recovered 26,

118   nursing home 3, live 24, ICU 2, deceased 1), preventing us from being able to meaningfully correlate

119   disease severity and genotype from these data. However, using country-wide crude case fatality data

120   for countries from which sequencing data was available, there was no significant correlation between

121   proportion of D614G clade sequences and crude case fatality rate as of 30 March 2020 (Spearman's

122   rank correlation coefficient, r 0.22, 95% CI -0.12 to 0.51). In addition, on analysis of crude case fatality

4

123 rate by age-group (available for China, Italy, South Korea, Spain, and Canada) there was no significant

124 correlation with proportion of D614G clades in the sequences analysed for these countries

125 (Supplementary Table 2)[8,12–14] A major limitation of this analysis is that publicly available SARS-CoV-

126 2 genomes are the result of convenience sampling and are not expected to provide an accurate

127 representation of the spatial-demographic distribution of SARS-CoV-2 genotypes. Therefore, one must

128 be cautious about making inferences about severity and transmission of variants[15] from genomic

129 sequence data alone.

130

131 The possibility that the D614G mutation may still have a potential impact on the function of the SARS-

132 CoV-2 spike protein could not be excluded. Previous studies of SARS-CoV have shown that the

133 sequential accumulation of mutations in the spike protein increased its affinity to ACE2 and likely

134 impacted its transmission and disease severity during the course of outbreaks in 2002-2004[16–18].

135 Recently, Phan *et al.* studied 86 complete SARS-CoV-2 genomes, identifying 42 missense mutations,

136 eight of which occurred in the S-protein gene[2]. However, at the time of their study, the mutation

137 D614G was only found in one sequence from Germany (collected on 28 January, 2020). Modifications

138 in the spike protein are of interest as they might indicate the emergence of a novel strain of SARS-CoV-

139 2 with change in transmissibility or pathogenicity. Therefore, we investigated the potential functional

140 and epidemiological consequences of the D614G mutation with structural modeling of the SARS-CoV-

141 2 spike (S) protein and its interaction with the angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2) receptor.

142

143 The structure of the SARS-CoV-2 spike (S) protein is shown in Figure 3. The S protein is a heavily

144 glycosylated trimeric protein that mediates entry to host cells via fusion with ACE2. Recently, Wrapp

145 and colleagues used Cryo-EM to determine the structure of the S protein and analyze its

146 conformational changes during infection[19]. Using their three-dimensional model of the S protein

147 structure, we set out to investigate the effects that a mutation in position 614 might have. First, we

148 analyzed changes in inter-atomic contacts within a radius of 6 Å from position 614 before and after

149 substitution of aspartate by glycine. Notably, four inter-chain destabilizing (i.e., hydrophobic-

150 hydrophilic) contacts are lost with residues of an adjacent chain upon D614G mutation (see Table 1 and

151 Figure 3C). This suggests that a small repelling interaction between adjacent chains is removed upon

152 this aspartate substitution (see Table 1). However, it is unlikely that this would have a significant effect

153 on recognition and binding to ACE2 given the relative distal position of this mutation with respect to

154 the receptor-binding domain (RBD) (see Figure 3B), but further analyses would be required to assess

155   whether the D614G mutation has an effect on the way the S protein changes its conformation after

156   interaction with ACE2. Lan and colleagues also showed residues in the RBD act as epitopes for SARS-

157   CoV-2 and mutations can influence antibody binding[20]. Given the important role that glycosylation

158   plays in regulating the function of spike proteins in coronaviruses[21], we decided to search for potential

159   changes in a glycosylated residue (asparagine) in position 616. As shown in Figure 3D, this residue and

160   aspartate 614 are oriented in opposite directions, suggesting that substitution by glycine also has a null

161   effect on this interaction. Finally, neither position 614 nor the inter-atomic contacts at positions 854,

162   859, 860, 861 of the spike protein lie in a polybasic cleavage region which is of importance for SARS-

163   CoV-2 as it has been proposed to activate the protein for membrane fusion[22]. Our results are consistent

164   with the work by Wrapp and colleagues, where they identified nine missense mutations (including

165   D614G) in the spike protein that were thought to be relatively conservative and thus unlikely to affect

166   protein function[19].

167

168   There were important limitations faced in our present analysis which are likely to be a significant

169   hurdle to similar studies in the future. The lack of available clinical metadata prevented our

170   investigation of association between viral clade and disease severity phenotype. Additionally, numbers

171   of sequenced SARS-CoV-2 samples vary greatly between countries and may be subject to potential

172   sampling bias. It is important to note that current country level data on crude case fatality rates and case

173   numbers do not permit robust comparison of clinical phenotype across countries due to significant

174   differences in population demographics, testing protocols, case definitions and implementation of

175   public health measures. Accordingly, it was not possible to draw any conclusions regarding the clinical

176   phenotype of the D614G clade and there is no evidence at this time to suggest this clade is associated

177   with any differences in disease phenotype. As a potential proxy measure for viral load, we reviewed the

178   cycle threshold (Ct) values of the SARS-CoV-2 assay for samples sequenced from Ontario, Canada

179   (total n = 178, with 50 and 128 samples possessing the spike protein 614-D and 614-G mutations,

180   respectively). In this small selection of samples, we found no significant difference in the average Ct

181   for 614-D and 614-G mutations (mean 22.35, SD 5.13 and mean 22.32, SD 5.188 respectively, t-test p-

182   value = 0.978) (Figure 4). We do note, however, that numerous factors affect the measurement and

183   limit the reliability of Ct value measurement, including sample type, quality of swabs, quality of

184   collection method, and time from onset to sample collection[23]. In contrast, another study has found a

185   statistically significant decrease in PCR Ct values associated with the mutated amino acid G variant[10]

186   but its clinical significance remains unclear. In spite of the lack of evidence for phenotypic differences,

187   it is interesting that in a short period of time since its emergence the D614G clade has become
188   widespread all around the world. It is possible that even if the observed mutation does not impact the
189   protein's interaction with ACE2, it may not be completely neutral with respect to viral fitness. For
190   example, given that the molecular weight of glycine is significantly smaller than that of aspartate, the
191   mutation could be advantageous from a cost minimization point of view[24]. It is also possible that the
192   mutation may be in linkage disequilibrium with a selectively advantageous variant impacting another
193   aspect of viral reproduction. For example, most strains of the D614G clade also harbor a mutation
194   (P4715L) in orf1ab and a subclade processes three nucleotide changes in the nucleoprotein (N) gene
195   (GGG to AAC; G204R), which plays diverse roles in virion assembly as well as genome transcription
196   and translation[25,26]. Most recently, it has been suggested that D614G introduces a new elastase cleavage
197   site that may be differentially activated by host genomic mutations thereby facilitating spike
198   processing, and entry into host cells in some host populations but not others[27]. Finally, the global
199   spread of the D614G mutation may have nothing to do with viral biology but may simply be a
200   consequence of the high level of interconnectedness of Europe to the rest of the world. Thus, the
201   emergence of the D614G clade may be explained by a founder event and subsequent clonal expansion
202   in Europe that led to its spreading worldwide.

203

204   Genomic sequencing and phylogenetic analysis are powerful approaches to track viral evolution during
205   the course of a pandemic and help coordinate the global implementation of strategies for decreasing
206   virus transmission and mitigating global mortality. However, our study highlights that caution is
207   warranted in hastily drawing conclusions from limited observational data. Future work that can
208   leverage clinical outcome data with both viral and human genomic diversity, *in vitro* and *in vivo* tests
209   and *in silico* modeling will greatly enhance our ability to understand if specific SARS-CoV-2 clades are
210   evolving with respect to virulence or transmissibility, and identify genetic variants associated with viral
211   adaptation, transmissibility, and mortality. These data will be essential for effective vaccine
212   development and public health responses to this emergent pandemic.

Materials and Methods

Sequence data, demographics, maps and statistics

A total of 2,803 genomes of SARS-CoV-2 (excluding non-human sequences specimens) and demographics when available were obtained from GISAID (http://gisaid.org/) (downloaded on 30 March 2020) to perform the statistical analyses of the D614G mutation (8 sequences were excluded due to ambiguous or unknown nucleotide at this position). The dataset included sequences representing 55 countries. The world geographical maps were built with the geographic information system QGIS (v2.18.21, https://qgis.org). Global CFR was calculated from data according to Johns Hopkins as of 30 March 2020. CFR for age groups of different countries were extracted from country-specific published data [8,12–14]. Spearman's rank correlation analysis was performed using GraphPad prism (v 8.3.1).

PCR and sequencing

SARS-CoV-2 E-gene PCR on respiratory specimens (e.g. nasopharyngeal swabs and bronchoalveolar lavages) submitted to Public Health Ontario Laboratory was performed as previously described[28]. Specimens with Ct values of 32 or less were selected for whole genome sequencing. Briefly, rRNA depleted RNA was reverse transcribed with SuperScript III Reverse Transcriptase (Invitrogen/Life Technologies, Carlsbad, CA) to cDNA using tagged random primer (5'-GTTTCCCAGTCACGATA-(N9)-3') followed by second strand DNA synthesis using Sequenase (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA). Amplification of double stranded cDNA was done with primer 5'-GTTTCCCAGTCACGATA-3' using AccuTaq™ LA DNA Polymerase according to manufacture recommendation. Amplified products were purified using 1.0 X ratio of Agencourt AMPure XP beads (Beckman Coulter) and quantified with Qubit 2.0 Fluorometer by using Qubit dsDNA HS Assay Kit (Thermo Fisher Scientific). Nextera XT DNA Library Preparation kit (Illumina) following manufacturer's instructions was used for Library preparation and indexing. The sequencing library was quantified using Qubit 2.0 (Invitrogen, Waltham, MA, USA) and average size was determined by 4200 TapeStation using the D5000 ScreenTape assay (Agilent Technologies, US). The library was normalized to 4 nMol and sequenced on the Illumina MiSeq platform, using Illumina MiSeq reagent kit v2 (2 × 150 bp), according to the manufacturer's instructions. CLC Genomics Workbench version 8.0.1 (CLC bio, Germantown, MD, USA) was used for both reference assembly and de novo assembly. Additionally, we used protocol published by Artic Network[29]. The method is based on overlapping

8

243 specific primers producing short amplicon covering entire genome. Briefly, cDNA synthesis and
244 amplicon generation using 2 individual pools of primers was done according to the published
245 protocol[29]. The two pools of amplicons were combined together and cleaned by Agencourt AMPure XP
246 beads (Beckman Coulter) prior to library preparation using Nextera XT (Illumina) following the
247 manufacturer protocol except that half volume of the reagent was used throughout the protocol.
248 Agencourt AMPure XP beads (Beckman Coulter) in ratio of 1.0 were used for the final purification step
249 followed by measurement by Qubit 2.0 and average size determination, using 2200 TapeStation
250 (Agilent Technologies, USA). All libraries were manually normalized to 4 nMol. Libraries were
251 combined in equal volumes for denaturation and subsequent dilution according to MiSeq protocol
252 recommended by manufacturer.

253

Molecular evolution

255 A total of 2,803 SARS-CoV-2 genomes were obtained from GISAID (downloaded on March 30th
256 2020). Initial quality filtering was performed by iteratively removing redundant sequences with 100%
257 nucleotide identity, having less than 2,940 informative positions, and lacking informative sampling
258 dates. The resulting 2,017 curated sequences were aligned using mafft[30] (v7.450: --retree 2 –maxiterate
259 2 –auto settings), and unaligned ends and gap positions from the resulting alignment were removed
260 using Geneious (version R10.2.6, https://www.geneious.com). A Maximum-likelihood tree was
261 constructed using IQTree[31] (v1.6.1: -model HKY) and used for identification and removal of highly
262 divergent sequences with Treetime[32] (clock setting). Following previous recommendations (adapted
263 from http://virological.org/t/issues-with-sars-cov-2-sequencing-data/473)[33] to account for regions
264 which might potentially be the result of hypervariability or sequencing artifacts, alignment positions
265 showing significant homoplasy were first identified using Treetime (homoplasy setting). Top-10
266 significant homoplastic positions were merged from three separate analyses, using all sequences from
267 the initial alignment, and sequence subsets generated using Illumina (1,450 samples) or Nanopore (341
268 samples) sequencing technologies. Next, recombinant clusters of mutations were identified with
269 ConalFrameML[34]. Identified positions were masked using a custom-written python script, and further
270 filtered for sequences with 100% nucleotide identity, resulting in an alignment of 1,225 sequences.
271 Finally, to reduce sampling bias only one sample per country was kept for date of sampling, leading to
272 442 sequences. Molecular dating analysis was performed by the Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC)
273 method implemented by Bayesian Evolutionary Analysis on Sampling Trees (BEAST) 1.10.4[35]. A
274 HKY85 nucleotide substitution model was used. Fixed and relaxed molecular clock models were fitted,

9

275 and constant population size was compared with exponential population growth. All models were run
276 using default priors except for the exponential growth rate (Laplace distribution) in which scale was set
277 to 100. The chain length was set to 100 million states and burn-in of 10 million. Convergence was
278 checked with Tracer 1.7.1[36]. Based on ESS values, estimates for tMRCA of the European Clade spike
279 protein mutation and root age are reported under the strict molecular clock and constant population
280 growth (ESSs > 900). The resulting coalescent tree was generated using TreeAnnotator[37] and visualized
281 using ggtree package[38] in R version 3.6.1 (https://www.r-project.org/).
282

Structural analyses

284 Visualization, analysis and *in silico* mutations of protein structures were done in UCSF Chimera[18].
285 First, we downloaded the molecular structure of the spike protein from the Protein Data Bank (PDB).
286 This structure corresponds to that resolved by Wrapp and colleagues[19] and deposited in PDB with
287 identifier number 6vsb. We replaced the aspartate residue in position 614 by glycine using the
288 "Rotamers" function in Chimera with default parameters. Then, inter-atomic contacts of both residues
289 at position 614 were derived with the CSU package[19] freely available at http://oca.weizmann.ac.il/oca-
290 bin/lpccsu.
291

Acknowledgments

299

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

SI, HEG, SMP: study design, data analyses, manuscript redaction

LG-M, CBT, DSG: study design, phylogenetic analyses, manuscript redaction

JBG, TP: study design, protein function analyses, manuscript redaction

MRI: geographic data analysis, manuscript redaction

AE, SNP, JBG: study design, sequencing, manuscript redaction

FUNDING

DISCLOSURE

Financial disclosure. Dr. Gubbay has received research grants from GlaxoSmithKline Inc. and Hoffman-La Roche Ltd to study antiviral resistance in influenza, and from Pfizer Inc. to conduct microbiological surveillance of *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. These activities are not relevant to this study. Dr. Poutanen has received honoraria from Merck related to advisory boards and talks, honoraria from Verity, Cipher, and Paladin Labs related to advisory boards, partial conference travel reimbursement from Copan, and research support from Accelerate Diagnostics and bioMerieux, all outside the submitted work. All other authors declared that they have no competing interests.

References

1. Zhu, N. *et al.* A novel coronavirus from patients with pneumonia in China, 2019. *N. Engl. J. Med.* **382**, 727–733 (2020).

2. Phan, T. Genetic diversity and evolution of SARS-CoV-2. *Infect. Genet. Evol.* **81**, 104260 (2020).

3. Zhang, Y.-Z. & Holmes, E. C. A Genomic Perspective on the Origin and Emergence of SARS-CoV-2. *Cell* 1–5 (2020). doi:10.1016/j.cell.2020.03.035

4. Andersen, K. G., Rambaut, A., Lipkin, W. I., Holmes, E. C. & Garry, R. F. The proximal origin of SARS-CoV-2. *Nat. Med.* 2–4 (2020). doi:10.1038/s41591-020-0820-9

5. Benvenuto, D. *et al.* The global spread of 2019-nCoV: a molecular evolutionary analysis. *Pathog. Glob. Health* **114**, 64–67 (2020).

6. Lai, A., Bergna, A., Acciarri, C., Galli, M. & Zehender, G. Early phylogenetic estimate of the effective reproduction number of SARS-CoV-2. *J. Med. Virol.* 14–18 (2020). doi:10.1002/jmv.25723

7. Zhou, P. *et al.* A pneumonia outbreak associated with a new coronavirus of probable bat origin. *Nature* **579**, 270–273 (2020).

8. Onder, G., Rezza, G. & Brusaferro, S. Case-Fatality Rate and Characteristics of Patients Dying in Relation to COVID-19 in Italy. *JAMA - J. Am. Med. Assoc.* **2019**, 2019–2020 (2020).

9. Kiyotani, K., Toyoshima, Y., Nemoto, K. & Nakamura, Y. Bioinformatic prediction of potential T cell epitopes for SARS-Cov-2. *J. Hum. Genet.* (2020). doi:10.1038/s10038-020-0771-5

10. Korber, B. *et al.* Spike mutation pipeline reveals the emergence of a more transmissible form of SARS-CoV-2. PREPRINT. *bioRxiv* 2020.04.29.069054 (2020). doi:10.1101/2020.04.29.069054

11. Deslandes, A. *et al.* SARS-CoV-2 was already spreading in France in late December 2019. *Int. J. Antimicrob. Agents* 106006 (2020). doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijantimicag.2020.106006

12. COVID-19 National Emergency Response Center Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, E. and C. M. T. Coronavirus Disease-19: The First 7,755 Cases in the Republic of Korea. *Osong public Heal. Res. Perspect.* **11**, 85–90 (2020).

13. Centro de Coordinación de Alertas y Emergencias Sanitarias. *Actualización nº 71. Enfermedad por el coronavirus (COVID-19)*. (2020).

14. Government of Canada. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Daily epidemiology update*. **2019**, (2020).

15. MacLean OA, Orton R, Singer JB, R. D. Response to "On the origin and continuing evolution of SARS-CoV-2". (2020). Available at: http://virological.org/t/response-to-on-the-origin-and-continuing-evolution-of-sars-cov-2/418/4.

16. Li, W. *et al.* Receptor and viral determinants of SARS-coronavirus adaptation to human ACE2. *EMBO J.* **24**, 1634–1643 (2005).

17. He, J. F. *et al.* Molecular Evolution of the SARS Coronavirus, during the Course of the SARS Epidemic in China. *Science (80-.).* **303**, 1666–1669 (2004).

18. Song, H. D. *et al.* Cross-host evolution of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus in palm civet and human. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U. S. A.* **102**, 2430–2435 (2005).

19. Wrapp, D. *et al.* Cryo-EM structure of the 2019-nCoV spike in the prefusion conformation. *Science (80-.).* **367**, 1260–1263 (2020).

20. Lan, J. *et al.* Structure of the SARS-CoV-2 spike receptor-binding domain bound to the ACE2 receptor. *Nature* **581**, 215–220 (2020).

21. Shen, S., Tan, T. H. P. & Tan, Y.-J. Expression, glycosylation, and modification of the spike (S) glycoprotein of SARS CoV. *Methods Mol. Biol.* **379**, 127–135 (2007).

367   22.   Walls, A. C. *et al.* Structure, Function, and Antigenicity of the SARS-CoV-2 Spike Glycoprotein.
368   *Cell* **181**, 281-292.e6 (2020).
369   23.   Chan, J. F.-W. *et al.* Improved Molecular Diagnosis of COVID-19 by the Novel, Highly
370   Sensitive and Specific COVID-19-RdRp/Hel Real-Time Reverse Transcription-PCR Assay
371   Validated In Vitro and with Clinical Specimens. *J. Clin. Microbiol.* **58**, (2020).
372   24.   Seligmann, H. Cost-minimization of amino acid usage. *J. Mol. Evol.* **56**, 151–161 (2003).
373   25.   Chang, C.-K. *et al.* Multiple nucleic acid binding sites and intrinsic disorder of severe acute
374   respiratory syndrome coronavirus nucleocapsid protein: implications for ribonucleocapsid
375   protein packaging. *J. Virol.* **83**, 2255–2264 (2009).
376   26.   Pachetti, M. *et al.* Emerging SARS-CoV-2 mutation hot spots include a novel RNA-dependent-
377   RNA polymerase variant. *J. Transl. Med.* **18**, 179 (2020).
378   27.   Bhattacharyya, C. *et al.* Global Spread of SARS-CoV-2 Subtype with Spike Protein Mutation
379   D614G is Shaped by Human Genomic Variations that Regulate Expression of TMPRSS2 and
380   MX1 Genes. PREPRINT. *bioRxiv* 2020.05.04.075911 (2020). doi:10.1101/2020.05.04.075911
381   28.   Marchand-Senécal, X. *et al.* Diagnosis and Management of First Case of COVID-19 in Canada:
382   Lessons applied from SARS. *Clin. Infect. Dis.* (2020). doi:10.1093/cid/ciaa227
383   29.   Quick, J. nCoV-2019 sequencing protocol. *protocols.io* 1–24 (2020).
384   doi:10.17504/protocols.io.bbmuik6w
385   30.   Katoh, K. & Standley, D. M. MAFFT multiple sequence alignment software version 7:
386   Improvements in performance and usability. *Mol. Biol. Evol.* **30**, 772–780 (2013).
387   31.   Nguyen, L.-T., Schmidt, H. A., von Haeseler, A. & Minh, B. Q. IQ-TREE: a fast and effective
388   stochastic algorithm for estimating maximum-likelihood phylogenies. *Mol. Biol. Evol.* **32**, 268–
389   274 (2015).
390   32.   Miura, S. *et al.* A new method for inferring timetrees from temporally sampled molecular
391   sequences. *PLoS Comput. Biol.* **16**, e1007046 (2020).
392   33.   De Maio, N. *et al.* Issues with SARS-CoV-2 sequencing data. (2019). Available at:
393   http://virological.org/t/issues-with-sars-cov-2-sequencing-data/473.
394   34.   Didelot, X. & Wilson, D. J. ClonalFrameML: efficient inference of recombination in whole
395   bacterial genomes. *PLoS Comput. Biol.* **11**, e1004041 (2015).
396   35.   Bouckaert, R. *et al.* BEAST 2: a software platform for Bayesian evolutionary analysis. *PLoS
397   Comput. Biol.* **10**, e1003537 (2014).
398   36.   Rambaut, A., Drummond, A. J., Xie, D., Baele, G. & Suchard, M. A. Posterior summarization in
399   Bayesian phylogenetics using Tracer 1.7. *Syst. Biol.* **67**, 901–904 (2018).
400   37.   Bouckaert, R. *et al.* BEAST 2.5: An advanced software platform for Bayesian evolutionary
401   analysis. *PLoS Comput. Biol.* **15**, e1006650 (2019).
402   38.   Yu, G., Smith, D. K., Zhu, H., Guan, Y. & Lam, T. T. Y. Ggtree: an R Package for Visualization
403   and Annotation of Phylogenetic Trees With Their Covariates and Other Associated Data.
404   *Methods Ecol. Evol.* **8**, 28–36 (2017).
405   39.   Sobolev, V., Sorokine, A., Prilusky, J., Abola, E. E. & Edelman, M. Automated analysis of
406   interatomic contacts in proteins. *Bioinformatics* **15**, 327–332 (1999).
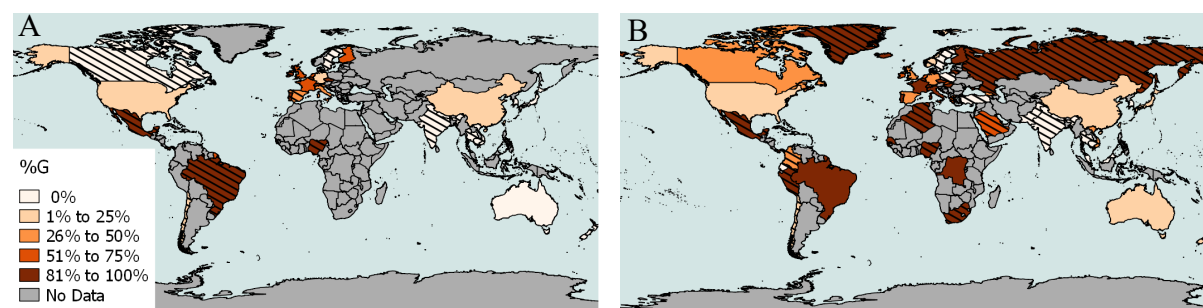407

Figures and Tables

Figure 1. Global Distribution of SARS-CoV-2 Genome Sequences Possessing the Spike Protein D614G Mutation. G mutation as percentage of total sequences (% G) is represented with color shades as detailed in legend including data available as of A) 17 March and B) 30 March 2020. Hatched lines were added when less than 10 sequences were available for one country.
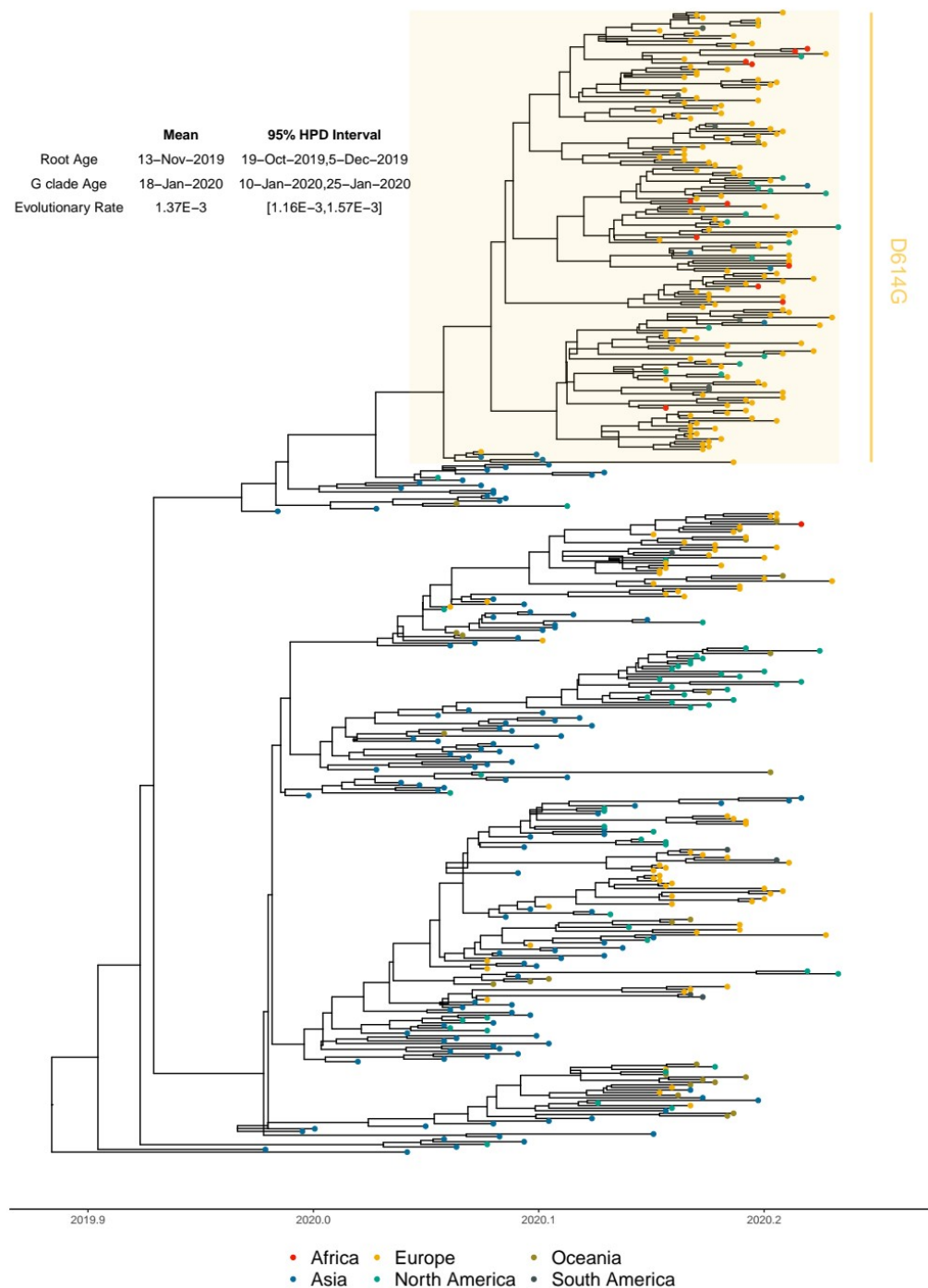
Figure 2. Estimated Molecular Dating of Evolutionary history of 442 Representative Global SARS-CoV-2 Sequences (Late-December 2019 – Mid-March 2020) and the Emergence of the D614G Clade. Maximum clade credibility (MCC) tree with dated branches estimated by Bayesian Evolutionary Analysis Sampling Trees (BEAST). Node colors indicate continents of isolation; x-axis indicating dates by year and days in decimal notation; D614G clade sequences are highlighted in a yellow box.

15

428
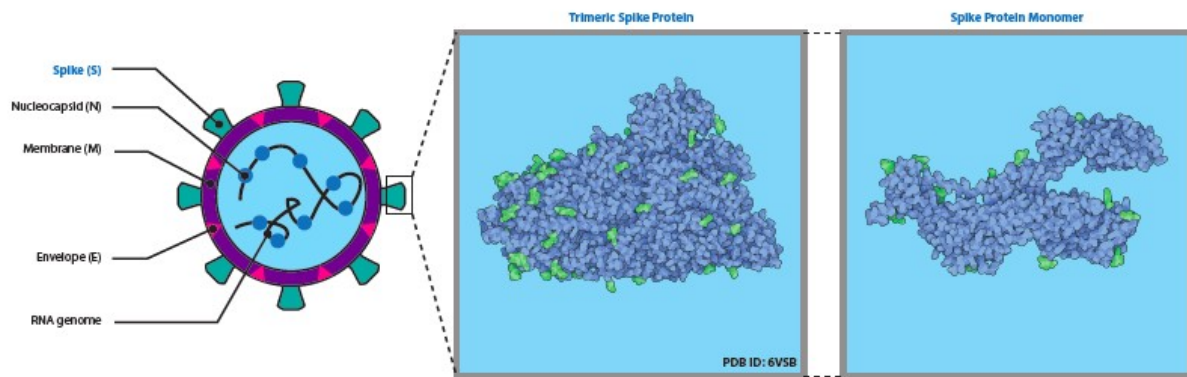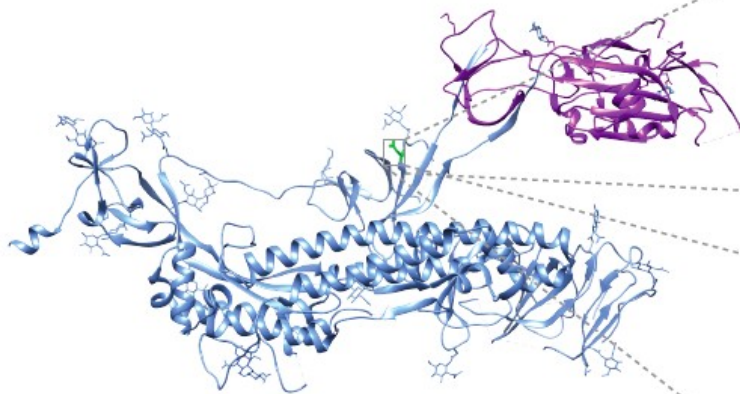
429
430
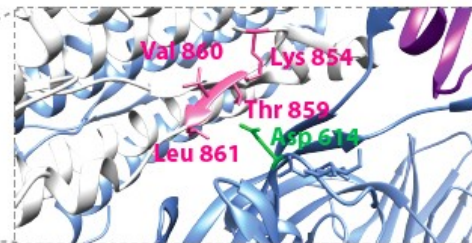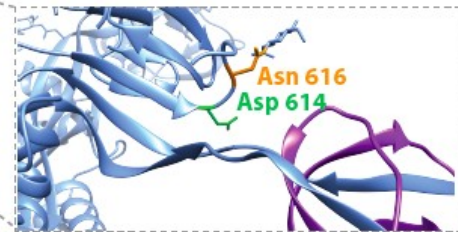431 **Figure 3. Structural analysis of SARS-CoV-2 spike protein around position 614.** (A) Location and
432 distribution of SARS-CoV-2 viral proteins. The full trimeric form of the spike protein results from a
433 complex of three identical spike monomers (right panel). (B) Three-dimensional depiction of a spike
434 protein monomer. The receptor-binding domain is colored purple and the location of the aspartate
435 residue in position 614 is highlighted in green. (C) Inter-atomic contacts between aspartate 614 (green)
436 in a reference spike monomer (blue) and four residues (pink) in its adjacent spike protein monomer
437 chain (white). These four contacts are destabilizing and create a hydrophilic-hydrophobic repelling
438 effect that is lost upon replacement of aspartate by glycine in the D614G mutation (see Table 1). (D)
439 Spatial distribution of aspartate 614 residue (green) and an adjacent glycosylated asparagine residue in
440 position 616 (orange). The two residues point in opposite directions and thus it is unlikely they share a
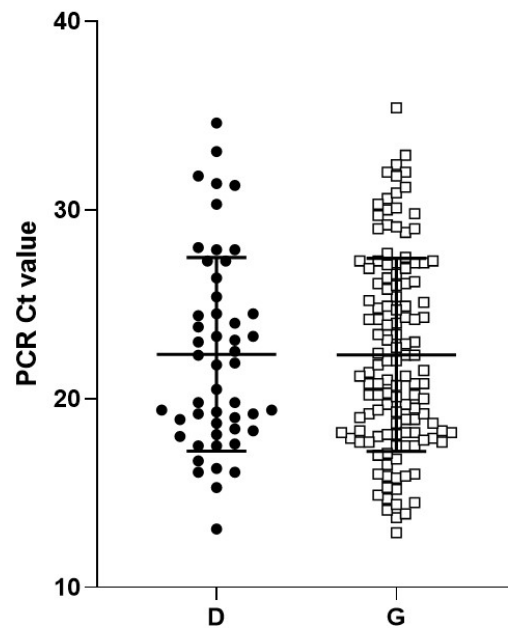441 meaningful interaction.

Figure 4. SARS-CoV-2 PCR Cycle threshold (Ct) values of different clinical samples plotted according to variant D (black dots) and G (white squares) at the position 614 in the spike protein. Dots represent individual Ct values; horizontal lines represent the mean and standard deviation.

Table 1. Inter-chain contacts lost upon D614G mutation between adjacent chains in the SARS-CoV-2 Spike protein.

Residue in non-reference adjacent chain	Distance (Å)	Contact surface area (Å^2)
Lys 854	5.2	10.0
Thr 859	2.7	28.8
Val 860	4.5	5.6
Leu 861	5.6	1.0

Supplementary data Table 1. Country Distribution of SARS-CoV-2 Genome Sequences Possessing the Spike Protein D614G Mutation.

Country	n = D	n = G	Total n	% G
Algeria	0	2	2	100%
Australia	56	8	64	13%
Belgium	9	81	90	90%
Brazil	6	29	35	83%
Cambodia	1	0	1	0%
Canada	46	34	80	43%
Chile	6	1	7	14%
China	310	4	314	1%
Colombia	1	1	2	50%
Congo (Kinshasa)	2	17	19	89%
Czechia	0	3	3	100%
Denmark	0	9	9	100%
Ecuador	1	0	1	0%
Finland	8	32	40	80%
France	16	103	119	87%
Georgia	5	5	10	50%
Germany	15	11	26	42%
Greece	1	2	3	67%
Hungary	0	3	3	100%
Iceland	71	271	342	79%
India	2	0	2	0%
Ireland	4	9	13	69%
Italy	3	20	23	87%

18

Japan	82	2	84	2%
Korea, South	13	0	13	0%
Kuwait	4	0	4	0%
Lithuania	0	1	1	100%
Luxembourg	1	9	10	90%
Malaysia	10	0	10	0%
Mexico	0	1	1	100%
Nepal	1	0	1	0%
Netherlands	84	106	190	56%
New Zealand	6	2	8	25%
Nigeria	0	1	1	100%
Norway	7	1	8	13%
Pakistan	1	0	1	0%
Panama	0	1	1	100%
Peru	0	1	1	100%
Poland	1	0	1	0%
Portugal	6	38	44	86%
Russia	0	1	1	100%
Saudi Arabia	1	2	3	67%
Senegal	1	11	12	92%
Singapore	14	0	14	0%
Slovakia	1	3	4	75%
South Africa	0	1	1	100%
Spain	22	18	40	45%
Sweden	1	0	1	0%
Switzerland	2	50	52	96%
Taiwan*	16	2	18	11%
Thailand	2	0	2	0%
Turkey	1	0	1	0%
United Kingdom	242	183	425	43%
US	471	155	626	25%
Vietnam	5	3	8	38%
Total	**1558**	**1237**	**2795**	**44%**

453
454
455

456 **Supplementary data Table 2. Crude Fatality Rate by age and percent of D614G mutation for**
457 **China, Italy, South Korea, Spain and Canada.**
458

Age group (yrs)	Case Fatality Rate by country (%)					Spearman's rank correlation r	P-value
	China as of 11 Feb 2020	Italy as of 17 March 2020	South Korea as of 12 March 2020	Spain as 10 April 2020	Canada as of 9 April 2020*		
≥ 80	14.8	20.2	8.5	21.5	12.3	0.80	0.33
70-79	8	12.8	5.0	10.7	2.8	1.00	0.08
60-69	3.6	3.5	1.5	3.4		0.40	0.75
50-59	1.3	1	0.4	1.0	0.3	0.32	>0.99
40-49	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.4		0.77	0.50
30-39	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.95	0.17
20-29	0.2	0	0	0.2		0	>0.99
10 to 19	0.2	0	0	0.2	0	0	>0.99
0-9	0	0	0	0.3		0.26	>0.99
All ages	2.3	7.2	0.9	6.5	2.3	1.00	0.08
	Percent of G (%)						
All ages	1.2	86.9	0	45.0	42.5	-	-

459 *Canadian data presented in 20 years ranges were excluded from Pearson correlation analysis.
460