Title: Host Species is Linked to Pathogen Genotype for the Amphibian Chytrid Fungus

(*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*)

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<u>Abstract</u>

Host-pathogen specificity can arise from certain selective environments mediated by both

the host and pathogen. Therefore, understanding the degree to which host species identity is

correlated with pathogen genotype can help reveal historical host-pathogen dynamics. One

animal disease of particular concern is chytridiomycosis, typically caused by the global

panzootic lineage of the amphibian chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, Bd),

termed the Bd-GPL. This pathogen lineage has caused devastating declines in amphibian

communities around the world. However, the origin of Bd-GPL and the fine-scale transmission

dynamics of this lineage have remained a mystery. This is especially the case in North America

where Bd-GPL is widespread, but disease outbreaks occur sporadically. Herein, we use Bd

genetic data collected throughout the United States from amphibian skin swab and cultured

isolate samples to investigate Bd genetic patterns. We highlight two case studies in Pennsylvania

and Nevada where Bd-GPL genotypes are strongly correlated with host species identity.

Specifically, in some localities bullfrogs (*Rana catesbeiana*) are infected with Bd-GPL lineages

that are distinct from those infecting other sympatric amphibian species. Overall, we reveal a

previously unknown association of Bd genotype with host species and identify the eastern United

States as a *Bd* diversity hotspot and potential ancestral population for Bd-GPL.

Introduction

When host-pathogen specificity exists within a system it can serve to reveal historical disease dynamics and has consequences for the evolution of virulence. Theoretical work predicts host-pathogen specificity will evolve, as a pathogen consistently exposed to a particular host would be subject to stronger selection from that host and therefore evolve faster than a generalist pathogen (1). However, the high frequency of multi-host pathogens in nature implies that interacting factors present in complex natural systems may tip the scales in favor of generalist pathogens (2). When host-specificity is high, it is predicted that host-pathogen feedback is predicted to favor selection towards decreased pathogen virulence because an increase in virulence would be disadvantageous for the preferred host (3). Similarly, low levels of specificity favor pathogens with high virulence and often lead to the competitive exclusion of other less fit pathogen strains (3). Therefore, understanding the degree to which host-pathogen specificity exists in a system can shed light on the underlying evolutionary processes and disease dynamics at play.

Advances in genetic monitoring tools have allowed us to investigate fine scale disease dynamics in natural systems and uncover previously unknown host-pathogen genetic associations. The utility of DNA sequence data in understanding pathogen evolution and genetic diversity has been evidenced by genetic monitoring efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic (e.g., (4). By applying technologies used in human pathogen systems to wildlife diseases we can investigate the epidemiology of diseases that are of conservation concern. Of particular interest is the amphibian chytrid fungus [*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd)] (5) because of its association with amphibian die offs and extinctions in many disparate areas of the world (6–10). For Bd, there are at least five distinct genetic lineages, but the Global Panzootic Lineage (Bd-

GPL) has been associated with almost all disease outbreaks around the world (11–13). Recent

DNA sequencing of Bd samples collected in North America has confirmed previous reports of

two distinct sub-lineages within the Bd-GPL, termed "Bd-GPL1" and "Bd-GPL2" (14–16).

While it has become increasingly clear that there is deep genetic structure within the Bd-GPL,

and that both Bd-GPL1 and Bd-GPL2 often co-occur, what remains unclear is how these patterns

arose and are maintained across fine spatial scales.

A growing number of studies have shown that Bd, and specifically the Bd-GPL, has

patterns of genetic diversity that are linked to geography, but none have tested the hypothesis

that there is a link between Bd genetics and host species remains untested (13,15,16). In this

study, we investigated the relationship between host species and Bd genotype in two distinct

amphibian communities within the United States. One community was sampled in northwestern

Pennsylvania near the Pymatuning Lab of Ecology (PA). Sampling in this temperate region took

place at eight sites (including permanent and ephemeral ponds and one forested stream site). The

second amphibian community was sampled in southern Nevada (NV) within the eastern Mojave

Desert in an area characterized by permanent water bodies separated by larger distances. While

most amphibian species encountered in this study were found in only one of these regions, the

American bullfrog [*Rana catesbeiana* (Shaw 1802), hereafter "bullfrogs"] occurred across both

regions in either its native (PA) or introduced (NV) range. By comparing the relationship

between Bd genotype and host species in these two localities we not only reveal more about the

evolutionary history of Bd in the United States (US), but can also begin to understand the

repeatability of these patterns across systems and the role certain amphibian species may have in

shaping Bd genetic diversity.

Materials and Methods

 Sample Collection in Northwestern Pennsylvania and Southern Nevada

We collected Bd samples in PA between 2017–2019 and in NV between 2016–2018. In

both areas, we captured frogs by hand using clean gloves. In PA we also used nets with

recommended field hygiene protocols followed (17). We kept captured amphibians individually

in clean plastic bags during processing. To collect skin cell samples, we swabbed frogs in PA 5

times each on dorsal, ventral, right, and left sides, and feet with a sterile swab. In NV, we

swabbed frogs 10 times on each ventral side and 5 times on each foot (18). We initially stored all

swabs in tubes on ice and promptly transferred them to a freezer at -20 °C until processing. We

extracted DNA from swabs in PA using the Qiagen DNEasy Blood and Tissue kit

(Qiagen,Valencia, USA), and from NV using PrepMan Ultra (19), following both manufacturer's

protocols.

To generate pure cultures of Bd from the relict leopard frog (*Rana onca*) we used a non-

lethal method in the field (20). We excised a small piece of webbing tissue (1 mm^2) that was

cleaned and embedded into TGhL agar plates containing a cocktail of antibiotics (kanamycin,

ciprofloxacin, streptomycin, and penicillin) (21). For the other species in NV from which

cultures were derived, we brought the animals into the laboratory and humanely euthanized them

prior to excising 1 mm^2 pieces of skin tissue from the ventral abdomen, legs, and rear feet. Each

tissue sample was then wiped through and embedded into a TGhL agar plate containing

antibiotics. We established pure cultures by transferring Bd growth to H-broth liquid medium.

We used a modified phenol-chloroform extraction to isolate DNA from the Bd cultures (22).

DNA Sequencing and Preprocessing

We genotyped Bd from PA and NV using a custom genotyping assay (23). For the PA

samples, we initially sequenced 115 skin swabs and for the NV samples, we initially sequenced

28 pure isolates and 36 skin swabs. After downstream filtering for missing data (see below) our

final dataset included 71 samples from PA, and 52 samples from NV. For some of our analyses

we also included previously published Bd sequence data from samples collected from around the

world (13).

We used the Fluidigm Access Array platform to perform microfluidic multiplex PCR on

191 regions of the Bd genome and one diagnostic locus for the closely related *Batrachochytrium*

salamandrivorans (24). Each target locus is 150-200 base pairs long, with the Bd targets

distributed across the Bd nuclear and mitochondrial genomes (23). Extracted DNA from swab

samples was cleaned and concentrated using an isopropanol precipitation. Isolate samples were

diluted to a concentration of 3ng/µl using PCR-grade water. All samples were preamplified in

two separate PCR reactions, each containing 96 primer pairs at a final concentration of 500nM.

For each preamplification PCR reaction we used the FastStart High Fidelity PCR System

(Roche) at the following concentrations: 1x FastStart High Fidelity Reaction Buffer with $MgCl_2$,

4.5mM $MgCl_2$, 5% DMSO, 200µM PCR Grade Nucleotide Mix, 0.1 U/µl FastStart High Fidelity

Enzyme Blend. We added 1µl of cleaned DNA to each preamplification reaction and used the

following thermocycling profile: 95˚C for 10 min, 15 cycles of 95˚C for 15 sec and 60˚C for 4

min. Preamplified products were treated with 4µl of 1:2 diluted ExoSAP-it (Affymetrix Inc.) and

incubated for 30 min at 30˚C, then 15 min at 80˚C. Treated products were diluted 1:5 in PCR-

grade water. The diluted products from each of the two preamplification reactions were

combined in equal proportions and used for downstream amplification and sequencing. Each

preamplified sample was then loaded onto a Juno™ LP 192.24 IFC (Fluidigm, Inc.) for library

preparation. This flow cell performs microfluidic multiplex PCR to amplify all samples using 24

separate pools each containing 8 primer pairs. Barcoded samples were then pooled and

sequenced on an Illumina MiSeq lane using the 300bp paired-end kits at the University of Idaho

IBEST Genomics Resources Core.

Sequence Data Analysis

We pre-processed all sequencing data as described in (23) and generated consensus

sequences for all variants present for each sample at each locus using IUPAC ambiguity codes

for multiple alleles. We filtered reads by selecting sequence variants that were present in at least

5 reads and represented at least 5% of the total number of reads for that sample/locus using

dbcamplicons (https://github.com/msettles/dbcAmplicons).

We used a gene-tree to species-tree approach to construct phylogenies separately for the

PA and NV sequence datasets. These trees allow us to explore the relationship of the Bd

collected for this study to previously-published Bd samples representing all known Bd lineages

(N=13; 13,25). First, we trimmed our consensus sequence dataset to eliminate loci that had more

than 50% missing data for either the NV or PA datasets, resulting in 174 loci. Next, for each

dataset we individually aligned all loci using the MUSCLE package (26) in R (v.3.4.3), checked

the alignments for errors in Geneious (v.10.2.3) (27), and used the RAxML plugin (28) in

Geneious to search for the best scoring maximum likelihood tree for each locus using rapid

bootstrapping (100 replicates). We then collapsed all branches in all trees with <10 bootstrap

support and used Astral-III to generate a consensus tree (29). Astral generates an unrooted

species tree given a set of unrooted gene trees.

To further explore the genetic variation of Bd collected at our sites, we generated a

dataset of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs). First, we aligned all raw sample reads (PA

and NV) and reads from 26 previously published Bd-GPL reference samples (13,25) using bwa

mem (30) to a reference fasta containing target sequences for each amplicon extracted from

reference genome JEL423 (Broad Institute). We then used Freebayes (v.1.1.0) to call variants

based on haplotypes (31) stipulating that variants only be called on the 174 amplicons that

passed the 50% missing data cutoff described above. Variants were then filtered using vcftools

(v.4.2) (32) to only include variants with a minor allele frequency > 0.01, quality > 30, less than

10% missing data, and minimum depth of 5. The final variant set included 129 binary SNPs with

3.8% missing data across all samples.

We then imported our SNPs into R using the vcfR package (v.1.12.0) (33) and converted

the variants to a genlight object. To determine the optimal number of clusters in our data we used

a Discriminant Analysis of Principal Components (DAPC) (34). First, we ran the find.clusters

function from the R package adegenet (v.2.1.1) with a maximum number of clusters = 10 (35).

This function implemented the clustering procedure used in DAPC by running successive K-

means with clusters from K = 1 to K = 10 after transforming the data using a principal

component analysis (PCA). For each model BIC was computed as a measure of statistical

goodness of fit. The best K was chosen as the value for K after which increasing K no longer

leads to an appreciable improvement of fit (measured as substantial decrease in BIC) (34). We

then ran the DAPC analysis specifying the optimal number of clusters. To determine the optimal

number of PCs to use for this analysis we ran the adegenet function optim.a.score which

calculates the alpha score as (P_t-P_r), where P_t is probability of reassignment to the true cluster

and P_r is the probability of reassignment to randomly permuted clusters. We used a minimum of

2 PCs in the DAPC calculations. Finally, we conducted a PCA using the glPCA function in

adegenet and plotted the PCA using the DAPC clusters to visually group samples together.

Samples with posterior probability of inclusion in one cluster < 0.99 were labeled "unassigned."

We plotted the first two PCs which together explain 68.2% of the variation in our data. We then

computed a PCA separately for each locality to show within locality diversity across species and

sites.

To evaluate the relative contribution of sampling site, host species, and individual

variation, we ran an analysis of molecular variance (AMOVA) (36) using our SNP data. This

analysis was conducted separately for the PA and NV datasets and determined the relative

influence of within individual variation, host species identity, and individual sampling locality on

Bd genetic structure. We ran this analysis using the poppr package in R (37) and only used SNPs

with <5% missing data. This resulted in 40 high quality SNPS for PA and 126 high quality SNPs

for NV. We then tested for statistical significance using the "randtest" function in the package

ade4, randomly permuting our data 999 times.

To evaluate the frequency of mixed infections on individuals, we searched our set of

amplicon sequences for those that had diagnostic alleles that discriminate between the Bd-GPL1

and Bd-GPL2 lineages. First, we searched the amplicon sequences from the set of 26 pure

culture, reference samples. We identified amplicons that had at least 1 SNP that distinguished

GPL1 samples from GPL2 (as defined by both the DAPC and phylogenetic analyses described

above). The GPL1 Bd isolates in this reference set were CJB4, JEL238, JEL267, JEL359,

MexMkt, MLA1, SRS812, TST75. The GPL-2 Bd isolates were Campana, CLB5-2, CJB7,

EV001, JAM81, JEL271, JEL275, JEL310, JEL427, JEL429, JEL433, JEL627, Lb_Aber,

NBRC106979, Pc_CN_JLV, and RioMaria. These samples were all sequenced from pure

cultures grown in the lab, and previously-published whole genome data indicates these are pure

Bd cultures representing a single lineage (25,38). From these samples we identified 24 loci that

occur on five separate Bd chromosomes that have specific Bd-GPL1 or Bd-GPL2 alleles. For

the diagnostic alleles on chromosome 1, heterozygotes (those having both alleles present) are

characteristic of Bd-GPL2 isolates (see Figure S3). We then manually scored each sample from

PA and NV at each as having either the Bd-GPL1, Bd-GPL2, or both alleles present

(heterozygote).

Results

We found a repeated pattern of Bd genetic structure that is most closely associated with

amphibian host species in both PA and NV. The DAPC analysis of the combined PA and NV Bd

genetic data show that two clusters (K=2) was the most likely grouping for our data (as inferred

from ΔBIC, Figure S1B). In the combined PCA, we see a clear division of Bd genotypes into

two clusters, with the presence of intermediate "unassigned" samples (Figure 1C). By evaluating

each site separately, we see that PA harbors much more genetic variability within samples

(accounting for all "unassigned" Bd genotypes, Figure 1). We confirmed that "unassigned"

samples were not simply the product of missing data by showing that each genotype group (Bd-

GPL1, Bd-GPL2, and unassigned) had the same distribution of missing data (Figure S1 A,C).

Figure 1: Map of sampling localities for Bd in southern Nevada (A) and northwestern

Pennsylvania (B). Individual sampling localities are numbered and represented with a pie chart

that shows the proportion of samples belonging to each Bd-GPL sub-lineage as determined using

the DAPC clustering analysis. Unassigned samples (in grey) are those with a posterior

probability of assignment to either group < 0.99. Pie charts are scaled in size according to the

number of samples collected at that site. (C) PCA calculated from 129 SNPS using the combined

dataset of southern Nevada (N=52, squares), northwestern Pennsylvania (N=71, circles), and

global reference samples (N=26, triangles). Symbols and ellipses colored as in maps above.

Further phylogenetic analyses incorporating previously published Bd isolates shows that

that all Bd samples sequenced for this study belong to the Bd-GPL lineage (Figures 2,3) and that

the two clusters identified in our dataset correspond to the previously published Bd-GPL

subclades Bd-GPL1 and Bd-GPL2 (14,39). The difference between Bd-GPL1 and Bd-GPL2

samples is shown clearly in the combined PCA (Figure 1C), where PC1 (which explains 58.4%

of the variation in our genetic data) separates samples into each of these subclades. In NV, 20

samples were assigned to Bd-GPL1 and 32 samples were assigned to Bd-GPL2 (Figure 2). In

PA, 27 samples were assigned to Bd-GPL1, 23 samples were assigned to GPL-2, and 21 samples

we unassigned (Figure 3).

Figure 2: (A) Phylogenetic tree and (B) PCA for 52 Bd samples collected in southern Nevada.

Colors represent the locality where the Bd was sampled (numbered as in Figure 2) and symbols

represent host species (as in Figure 2). Tree is calculated using Astral-III and includes and

additional 13 reference samples representing all known clades of Bd. Nodes are labeled with

posterior probability and those with posterior < 0.7 have been collapsed.

Figure 3: (A) Phylogenetic tree and (B) PCA for 71 Bd samples collected in northwestern

Pennsylvania. Colors represent the locality where the Bd was sampled (numbered as in Figure 2)

and symbols represent host species (as in Figure 2). Tree is calculated using Astral-III and

includes and additional 13 reference samples representing all known clades of Bd. Nodes are

labeled with posterior probability and those with posterior < 0.7 have been collapsed.

The factors that may explain Bd genetic structure at each site were determined using an

AMOVA. We found that most of the variation in Bd genotypes (64.3% in PA, 58.4% in NV) can

be explained by variation between host species, rather than within an individual (34.7% in PA,

8.8% in NV) or between sampling sites (1.0% in PA, 32.8% in NV). Comparisons of variation

within individuals and variation between host species were statistically significant using

permutation tests to randomly permute samples between groups (999 times, p < 0.001 for each

test, Figure S2).

We can evaluate each individual sample for signatures of coinfections or the presence of

a hybrid lineage (i.e., the presence of both Bd-GPL1 and Bd-GPL2) by looking at Bd-GPL1/2

diagnostic alleles. The allelic patterns show that the "unassigned" samples in PA appear to either

be from a mixed infection or infection with a hybrid lineage – that is, they show a high frequency

of heterozygosity and/or the presence of alleles from different Bd-GPL subclades at genomically

proximate loci. In PA, one site (PA Site 1) accounts for most of the unassigned samples (67%,

14/21); additionally, 71% (15/21) of unassigned Bd samples were collected from green frogs

(*Rana clamitans*). Furthermore, all 18 samples collected from bullfrogs in PA were assigned to

GPL-1, despite being collected at five different localities, each with multiple Bd-GPL genotypes

present (Figure 3, Figure 4).

Figure 4: Alleles for PA Site 1 (left top), PA Site 3 (left middle), PA Site 4 (left bottom), NV

Site 1 (right top), and NV Site 4 (right bottom). Each row represents an individual sample, and

each numbered column represents a nuclear locus that has an informative GPL1/GPL2 allele

(N=24). Loci are organized according to position along the Bd genome, with the yellow dashed

indicating a change to a new chromosome and the chromosome number labeled along the top.

Samples are grouped by host species ("species" column) and labeled with the DAPC assigned

lineage ("lineage" column). A red box indicates a Bd-GPL2 allele for that sample at that locus, a

blue box represented the Bd-GPL1 allele, a gray box indicates both alleles are present, and a

white box indicates missing data. Representative sequences for each allele are included in the

supplemental materials.

In NV we see very little Bd-GPL1/Bd-GPL2 mixing within samples and a strong

association of the Bd-GPL1 lineage with bullfrogs at one site (NV Site 4), and *R. onca* at another

(NV Site 3). While *R. onca* was the only species caught at NV Site 3, bullfrogs were caught

alongside Pacific tree frogs (*Pseudacris regilla*) at NV Site 4 and these two species were host to

distinct Bd-GPL genotypes with virtually no allele mixing (Figure 4). At another site (NV Site

1), however, bullfrogs were host to Bd-GPL2 as were all other amphibian hosts at that locality.

Additionally, the Bd-GPL2 lineage found at NV Site 1 shows a pattern of high heterozygosity at

diagnostic alleles found on Bd Chromosome 1, a pattern similar to the reference Bd-GPL2

isolates JEL627, JEL271, Lb_Aber, CJB7, and JAM81 (Figure S3).

Discussion

Herein, we show a clear, repeated pattern of Bd genetic diversity associated with host

species at single geographic sites. While previous studies have shown some broad geographic

patterning in Bd genetic structure (15,16), this is the first study to link fine-scale Bd genetic

variation to host species identity. Furthermore, this pattern is repeated across individual sites in

PA, and in two separate regions of the US. Remarkably, the same association of Bd-GPL1 with

bullfrog hosts was seen in both PA and NV. Below, we explore how this pattern may have arisen

in each region, discuss what this may mean for the origin of the Bd-GPL, and explore the

potential importance of genetically diverse Bd infections.

How did host-pathogen specificity arise in each region?

Processes occurring at different timescales could produce the patterns of Bd genotype and

host species association observed in each region. One possibility is that long-term coevolutionary

relationships between Bd and its host species likely triggered *in situ* evolution and subsequent

pathogen divergence over time in the ancestral Bd-GPL population. This process could have

been mediated by many factors including host immune systems, skin microbial communities, and

the environment. Furthermore, mutational changes in the pathogen that have consequences for

infectiousness across different hosts could contribute to evolution towards host specificity (40).

Bd can suppress host immune responses and some susceptible species show an over-activation of

the immune system that may worsen disease outcomes (41). At the same time, immunization

against Bd has been successful in some species, indicating the relationship between adaptive

immunity and Bd varies between hosts (42). Amphibian species identity is often the strongest

predictor of skin microbial community composition (43,44) and these microbes can be associated

with Bd disease outcomes (7,45,46), providing another possible mechanism for facilitating the

evolution of host-pathogen specificity. Finally, Bd isolates in the lab can show rapid

evolutionary change over short time periods (47,48). Therefore, differences between Bd

genotypes in the way they interact with amphibian skin microbes or immune systems, in

combination with Bd's evolutionary lability, could allow for the formation of the host-pathogen

genetic correlations that we detected.

In PA, we observed a ubiquitous pattern of association between Bd-GPL1 and bullfrogs

in all individual sites. Moreover, not a single bullfrog sample (N=18) in the PA region was

infected with Bd-GPL2, or included in the "unassigned" group. The finding that host species was

more important than geography in explaining Bd genetic patterns in PA has not been

documented in other regions and may indicate that Bd-GPL has been present for a long time in

this region and has coevolved with native amphibians, including bullfrogs. We can see additional

evidence for this hypothesis at individual sites; at PA Site 4 bullfrogs and the closely related

green frog (*Rana clamitans*) were both preferentially infected with Bd-GPL1, while the more

distantly related northern leopard frog (*Rana pipiens*) was infected with Bd-GPL2 (49). This

pattern follows other studies showing that specialized pathogens are more likely to infect closely

related host species (50). Overall, when comparing patterns of Bd genotypes and host species in

PA to those documented in other areas of the world, we see evidence for a coevolutionary

mechanism shaping Bd-GPL genetic diversity.

An alternative possibility that could produce patterns of host species-Bd genotype

correlations is a recent introduction of a novel Bd-GPL lineage into an amphibian community.

Existing differences in the ability of the novel Bd-GPL lineage to infect different hosts could

maintain the stratification of Bd genotypes along species boundaries. In NV the association

between Bd genotypes and host species is not as consistent as in PA, indicating the coexistence

of different Bd genotypes in the NV region may be a more recent phenomenon. For example, at

NV Site 4 Bd genotypes were strictly partitioned by species, with Bd-GPL1 only present on

bullfrogs; however, at NV Site 1 all individuals sampled across species were infected with the

same Bd-GPL2 genotype, including bullfrogs. Bullfrogs are not native to Nevada and have been

present since at least 1933, likely introduced during fish stocking or from the food trade (51).

Therefore, in this region, bullfrog colonization may have provided for a more recent introduction

of Bd-GPL1. At NV Site 1 the Bd-GPL2 present may have outcompeted other Bd lineages that

could have been present when bullfrogs were first introduced. Supporting this hypothesis, one

study found that bullfrogs farmed in Idaho and used for an infection experiment initially

harbored cryptic, low intensity infections of Bd-GPL1 that were eventually outcompeted by an

inoculation with a high dose of a Bd-GPL2 isolate (52). What host and environmental factors

allow for the replacement of one Bd lineage by another is not altogether clear but is a key

question going forward to better understand the role of potential disease vectors such the

bullfrog.

What does our data tell us about the origin of Bd-GPL?

The implied coexistence of Bd and amphibians at evolutionary time scales in PA could

indicate that the ancestral population of Bd-GPL existed in this part of the world. This possibility

has been previously proposed, following reports of higher diversity in Bd samples collected from

bullfrog populations (53,54), and evidence that bullfrogs may have facilitated Bd spread from

east to west in the US (55). Adding to evidence that North America may be the ancestral source

of Bd-GPL, a recent study found as much genetic variation in the Bd-GPL collected from the

Sierra Nevada as was present in a large global sample of Bd-GPL genotypes (15). In other

regions, such as Panama and Mexico, genetic diversity of Bd-GPL is either spatially structured

across the region (Mexico) or genetically homogenous (Panama), the latter indicating a more

recent introduction and spread (15,16). Studies using swabs collected from museum specimens

have found Bd in Illinois as early as 1888 (56) and in bullfrogs collected in California in 1928

(57). Altogether, a growing body of evidence suggests North America, and perhaps the eastern

US (within the native range of the bullfrog) may have been the ancestral population for Bd-GPL.

What can the "unassigned" samples tell us about Bd dynamics?

One key question raised from our data concerns the Bd genotypes that were "unassigned"

and lie in between the Bd-GPL1 and Bd-GPL2 genotypes in our PCA. These samples, all of

which were from swabs collected in PA, show high levels of heterozygosity across the entire

panel of diagnostic alleles. There are two possible explanations for the occurrence of a highly

heterozygous, intermediate Bd genotype. The first is that these individuals were coinfected with

both Bd-GPL1 and Bd-GPL2. The second is that they were infected with a hybrid lineage

resulting from recombination between Bd-GPL1 and Bd-GPL2. Indeed, if we look at the

reference Bd isolates in Figure S3 we see that some Bd-GPL2 pure isolates are heterozygous at

certain alleles, indicating that high heterozygosity could result from a single infection. Herein,

we are unable to confidently say whether these ambiguous samples represent a mixed infection

or an infection with a single hybrid lineage.

Our data show not only the coexistence of multiple Bd-GPL lineages at a single site, but

also highlights areas where Bd lineage mixing on individuals is rare (in NV, and PA Sites 3 and

4), or common (PA Site 1). The most common frog species caught at PA Site 1 was the green

frog (*R. clamitans*), in fact this species accounts for 71% of all unassigned samples in this study.

At this point it is unclear whether there is something unique about PA Site 1, or *R. clamitans*,

that may allow for such consistent lineage mixing or the potential presence of hybrid lineages.

To our knowledge no chytridiomycosis outbreaks have been reported in *R. clamitans*, and

individuals from the same site in PA showed no increase in stress hormones when

experimentally infected with Bd (58). Probably, this species is a tolerant carrier of Bd, like the

closely related bullfrog. This host-pathogen relationship is worth further exploration as the

potential for Bd hybridization could lead to novel pathogen phenotypes.

The frequency and circumstances under which recombination occurs in Bd is still

unclear. There is, however, plenty of genetic evidence that recombination has occurred between

divergent Bd lineages (11,14,59). A likely mechanism for genomic recombination in Bd is

parasexual reproduction – where diploid spores fuse to form tetraploid progeny, after which

chromosomes are lost as the organism returns back to a diploid state (60). This process has been

documented in the human fungal pathogen *Candida albicans*, although the use of this

reproductive mode seems to be restricted in nature, possibly to preserve complex gene sets

needed to exploit hosts (61). Parasexual reproduction often results in aneuploidy, which is a

common phenomenon in Bd (25,62). Furthermore, elevated chromosomal copy number has been

linked to increased virulence in Bd (62), and hybrids of Bd have been more deadly than parent

lineages when paired with certain host species (63). Indeed, it was originally proposed that Bd-

GPL could have originated from recombination between closely related Bd lineages (12), but this

hypothesis has been a topic of much debate (64). Most researchers on the subject, however,

would agree that precautions should be taken to reduce unintended spread of Bd to limit the

possibility of recombination that could produce more deadly lineages.

Conclusions

Herein we document an association between Bd-GPL genotypes and host species in two

regions of the US. We believe the patterns seen in PA may be the result of a long-term

coevolutionary relationship between Bd-GPL1 and bullfrogs (and perhaps other closely related

species such as the green frog). We observed that the association of Bd-GPL1 with bullfrogs is

consistent in NV where bullfrogs have been more recently introduced, and that the patterns in

this region are consistent with more recent introductions of novel Bd lineages. We also found

evidence of either mixed Bd infections or a potential hybrid lineage that was common at a single

site in PA and on green frogs across all PA sites. Given the high genetic diversity and evidence

of evolutionary relationships between Bd-GPL lineages and particular host species, we posit that

North America may be the ancestral origin of Bd-GPL. Overall, this study presents evidence that

Bd-GPL has a long history of coexistence with amphibians in the US, reveals more about the

relationship of the bullfrog to Bd, and points to a possible cradle of Bd-GPL genetic diversity in

the eastern US.

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Reproducibility Statement

All data used for this study and R code used for the analyses are available on github:

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640   x

<u>Supplementary Figure Legends</u>

Figure S1: (A) PCA as shown in Figure 1C colored by proportion missing data. (B) BIC chart for

DAPC analysis showing K = 2 clusters as the optimal number of clusters (or "elbow" in the

chart). (C) Density plot showing that unassigned, Bd-GPL1, and Bd-GPL2 samples all have the

same distribution as samples with missing data.

Figure S2: Results from AMOVA testing the relative importance of variation within samples

(top), variation between host species (middle), and variation between sites (bottom) in explaining

Bd genetic variance for northwestern Pennsylvania (left) and southern Nevada (right).

Percentage after each category reflects the relative proportion of variation explained by each

category calculated from the components of covariance. Each histogram shows the results from

randomly permuting the sample matrices 999 times using the rand.test function in the R package

ade4. The black dot indicates the value obtained in this study with a red asterisk indicating

statistical significance.

Figure S3: (A) Astral phylogenetic tree and (B) allele plot for 26 pure-isolate Bd-GPL reference

samples used to identify the 24 Bd-GPL1 and Bd-GPL2 diagnostic alleles shown in Figures 6

and 7. Tree displayed as in Figures 3 and 4, allele plot displayed as in Figures 6 and 7. A frog

icon indicates that isolate was collected from a bullfrog.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Species
- □ Anaxyrus americanus
- △ Desmognathus fuscus
- ⊕ Hyla versicolor
- ● Rana catesbeiana
- + Rana clamitans
- ✕ Rana pipiens
- ▽ Rana sylvatica
- ⊠ Notophthalmus viridescens
- ✳ Pseudacris crucifer
- ⬦ Pseudotriton ruber

Site
- 1 (red)
- 2 (blue)
- 3 (green)
- 4 (purple)
- 5 (orange)
- 6 (yellow)
- 7 (brown)
- 8 (pink)

Figure 4

Figure S1

Figure S2

Figure S3