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Autosomal Allelic Inactivation: Variable Replication and Dosage Sensitivity

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Abstract

Autosomal monoallelic gene expression and asynchronous replication between alleles are well-established features of imprinted genes and genes regulated by allelic exclusion. Inactivation/Stability Centers (I/SCs) are recently described autosomal loci that exhibit epigenetic regulation of allelic expression and replication timing, with differences that can be comparable to those observed between the active and inactive X chromosomes [1]. Here we characterize hundreds of autosomal loci with allele-specific epigenetic regulation of replication timing and gene expression, defining them as I/SCs. I/SCs are approximately 1 megabase in size and can contain both protein-coding and noncoding genes. In different single cell derived clones, these genes may be expressed from a single allele, the opposite allele, both alleles, or not expressed at all. This stochastic, yet mitotically stable, pattern indicates that the choice of which allele is expressed is independent of parent of origin and independent of the expression status of the other allele. Similarly, alleles within I/SCs show varying replication timing, either earlier or later, that is also independent of the other allele. Additionally, we find corresponding I/SCs in the mouse genome that display conserved synteny with human I/SCs. This allele-restricted regulation creates extensive cellular mosaicism through a stable epigenetic mechanism. This mosaicism impacts numerous dosage-sensitive genes associated with human diseases such as Parkinson, epilepsy, deafness, and impaired intellectual development.

Introduction:

The relationship between monoallelic expression and asynchronous replication between alleles of autosomal genes, exemplified by genes subject to genomic imprinting or allelic exclusion, has been the focus of extensive research for over three decades [2-4]. In recent work, we employed haplotype-phased RNA expression and replication timing assays on multiple single-cell-derived Lymphoblastoid Cell Line (LCL) clones from two unrelated individuals to identify loci exhibiting allele-restricted expression and replication timing [1]. This clonal, allele-specific analysis across autosomes revealed an unexpected genomic feature at approximately 200 loci, exhibiting allele-restricted gene expression (including random monoallelic expression); and variable replication timing (including asynchronous replication between alleles). The magnitude of allelic differences in expression and replication timing observed in some of the clones was comparable to the large differences detected between the active and inactive X chromosomes. We have named these autosomal loci Inactivation/Stability Centers (I/SCs) [1,5-7].

I/SCs can encompass both coding and noncoding genes that may be expressed from a single allele in some clones, expressed from the opposite allele in other clones, biallelically expressed in other clones, or silent on both alleles in yet other clones. This pattern of allele-restricted expression indicates that each allele independently adopts either an expressed or silent state. Importantly, because these expression states are mitotically stable, allele-autonomous, and independent of parental origin, we refer to the choice of the expressed allele as stochastic [1]. To describe this phenomenon, we and others have used the term Allelic Expression Imbalance (AEI) to refer to the stochastic nature of autosomal random monoallelic expression [1,8-11]. Additionally, the replication timing profiles on autosomes are highly variable and clone-specific, exhibiting both

synchronous and asynchronous patterns in different clones. We refer to this as <u>V</u>ariable

<u>E</u>pigenetic <u>R</u>eplication <u>T</u>iming (VERT) [1].

Random monoallelic expression in the olfactory, immune, and central nervous

systems is well established and plays a critical role in generating cell-specific identities

[12-14]. However, increasing evidence indicates that autosomal genes outside these

systems also exhibit allele-specific expression, suggesting that AEI plays a broader role

across diverse cell types [4,13]. The functional diversity of these genes implies that AEI

contributes to a broad array of cellular processes and is not limited to specialized

systems.

In the present study, we aimed to determine whether I/SCs could be detected in

the genomes of clonal populations of human primary cells derived from a tissue distinct

from those previously examined. To this end, we employed <u>a</u>rticular <u>c</u>artilage <u>p</u>rogenitor

(ACP) cells as a second model system [15]. ACP cells are non-transformed yet are

particularly well-suited for clonal analysis due to several advantages: 1) they can be

readily isolated from amputated tissue of patients with polydactyly, 2) they exhibit high

proliferative capacity, and 3) they can be efficiently expanded from single cells [16]. We

identify an additional 163 VERT regions in the human genome, increasing the total

number of potential I/SCs to 363, which collectively cover approximately 12% of the

human genome. In addition, we found that many previously reported "random

monoallelic" genes, including those encoding olfactory and vomeronasal

receptors[3,17], antigen receptors[18], and homophilic cell adhesion proteins[12], are located

within VERT regions. Our findings confirm that these well-established "random

monoallelic" genes reside within genomic loci that exhibit the epigenetic hallmarks,

namely allele-restricted expression and variable replication timing, that define I/SCs.

The relationship between genotype and phenotype is central to understanding

human genetic disease. While most loss-of-function mutations are recessive,

indicating that a single normal allele is sufficient for typical function, dominantly inherited

disorders often result from gain-of-function mutations. However, a significant fraction of

dominant diseases arises through haploinsufficiency (i.e. heterozygous for a loss of

function mutation), where a single functional allele fails to maintain normal physiology.

Although haploinsufficiency may affect up to 40% of human genes [19-21], the underlying

molecular mechanisms remain poorly understood. Current models suggest that

insufficient gene dosage may arise from a lack of redundancy, critical expression

thresholds, stoichiometric imbalances, or toxicity associated with a lack of

overexpression buffering [22-25]. In contrast, insights from X-linked disease inheritance

illustrate how cellular mosaicism and cellular selection can shape phenotypic outcomes:

in XX individuals, differences in the survival or expansion of cells expressing either the

wild-type or mutant alleles can influence whether a disease manifests as recessive or

dominant [21,26,27].

The magnitude of AEI is often quantified using allelic expression ratios, which

represent the proportion of transcripts derived from each allele. Importantly, recent

findings have demonstrated that even modest allelic expression biases can

have functional consequences, particularly in disease contexts. One recent study

directly linked small but stable AEI to variable clinical outcomes among individuals

carrying the same pathogenic mutation, underscoring AEI as a potential modulator of

disease expressivity [28]. These observations highlight the importance of considering AEI

as a disease modifier that may shape phenotypic diversity and influence the penetrance

of genetic disorders.

Here, we demonstrate that numerous genes implicated in autosomal human

genetic diseases, such as Parkinson (DNAJC6, LRRK2 and SNCA), epilepsy (SCN1A,

GABR1, and SAMD12), deafness (ATP11A, EPS8, and MYO6), and

neurodevelopmental disorders (KCNA1, RETREG1, ROBO1, and TIAM1), are located

within VERT regions and display AEI. Furthermore, mapping I/SCs across all

autosomes reveals 87 known dominantly inherited single-gene disorders that map

within VERT regions, where loss of function mutations in most of these genes result in

haploinsufficiency [29]. We propose that epigenetically regulated stochastic AEI can

contribute to pathogenic phenotypes in heterozygous individuals by either reducing the

number of functional cells below a critical disease threshold, akin to X linked dominant

disorders, or by disrupting the normal mosaicism of gene expression within disease-

relevant tissues.

Results

Here we employed articular cartilage progenitor (ACP) cells[15], as a distinct cell type

from those from our previous studies, as a second model system to identify I/SCs. For

this analysis, we isolated ACP cells from amputated digits of patients with polydactyly.

In addition, we sequenced genomic DNA from the parents of the patients with

polydactyly to generate phased genomes of the ACP cells. We analyzed two sets of

ACP clones isolated from two unrelated individuals, one female (ACP7) and one male

(ACP6), for haplotype-phased Repliseq and RNAseq (Fig. 1b). Analysis of the female

ACP7 clones allowed us to establish the statistical parameters for the assignment of

VERT and AEI present in the ACP clones by directly comparing the magnitude of

autosomal allele-specific replication timing and RNA expression to that of the active and

inactive X chromosomes present in each clone (Fig. 1c; and see Supplementary Tables

1, 2 and 3). Taken together the combined VERT and AEI analysis allowed us to

characterize additional I/SCs in the human genome. An illustration of a hypothetical

I/SC, with the region of VERT shaded in gray and the expression of coding and

noncoding genes indicated as stippled or smooth rectangles, respectively, is shown in

Figure 1d.

To identify genomic regions with epigenetic variation between alleles, we

calculated the standard deviation (SD) of replication timing across alleles for each 250

kb genomic window. Windows with an SD value ≥ 2.5 standard deviations above the

genome-wide median were classified as outliers. This analysis identified 163 additional

VERT regions (Supplementary Table 1). Figure 1e illustrates this analysis for

both ACP (ACP6 and ACP7) and LCL (EB3-2 and GM12878) clones on Chromosome

1, where windows are indicated as gray circles and outliers indicted in different colors.

To detect coding genes with AEI in ACP clones, we defined AEI as differential

expression between alleles using recently established criteria [1,28]. Genes were

considered AEI-positive if they exhibited ≥80% allelic imbalance (AEI ≥ 0.80 or ≤ 0.20)

with FDR ≤ 0.05 in at least one clone. Additional analyses using more stringent

thresholds (AEI ≥ 0.90 or ≥ 0.95) are provided in Supplementary Table 2. To

exclude imprinted genes and effects due to genetic polymorphisms (i.e. expression

Quantitative Trait Loci, eQTL[30]) we required that each AEI gene also be biallelically

expressed (AEI < 0.70) in at least one clone from the same individual with ≥ 20

informative reads. Using these criteria, we identified 256 (2.4% of expressed genes)

autosomal coding genes exhibiting AEI across the two ACP clone sets (Supplementary

Table 2).

In addition, we also sought to identify AEI of extremely long noncoding RNAs (i.e.

ASAR lincRNAs [1,5,7,31]) expressed in the ACP clones. For this analysis we refer to

regions of the genome with >50 kb of contiguous transcription of noncoding DNA as

Transcribed Loci (TL) [1]. Using the same criteria used for the coding genes described

above, we identified 23 TLs exhibiting AEI across the two ACP clone sets

(Supplementary Table 3).

Allelic Expression Imbalance and Variable Epigenetic Replication Timing define

Inactivation/Stability Centers.

By integrating the location of genes exhibiting AEI with genomic regions

displaying VERT, we identified overlapping loci that define I/SCs. Figures 1f and

1g illustrate a representative I/SC located on chromosome 1 at approximately 240 Mb

(marked by an arrow in Fig. 1e). Notably, VERT was detected at this locus across both

sets of ACP clones (Fig. 1f and 1g). Figure 1h presents the corresponding UCSC

Genome Browser view of this locus, with genes showing AEI marked by asterisks (see

Supplemental Table 2). Additional examples of I/SCs located on chromosomes 18, 6

and 9 are shown in Figure 2.

One of the primary objectives of this study was to determine whether different

tissues utilize distinct sets of I/SCs, as might be expected given that different cell types

express unique gene repertoires that could be subject to AEI.   To explore this, we

performed hierarchical clustering analysis of the VERT regions identified in the two sets

of ACP clones and the two sets of LCL clones.   Figure 1i shows this analysis and

reveals tissue-specific patterns with a relatively small degree of overlap in VERT

regions across

the two tissue types: ACP6 clones share more VERT regions with ACP7 clones than

with either LCL clone sets, and the reverse is true for the LCL clones. These findings

indicate that while some I/SCs are shared across tissues, there is a large component

of tissue-specific epigenetic regulation of allelic replication timing.

At the molecular level, stochastic monoallelic expression contributes to cellular

individuality and introduces functional variability among individual cells within complex

biological systems [12-14]. This mechanism is particularly well characterized in the

olfactory, immune**,** and central nervous systems**,** where the expression of diverse

receptor-type molecules through random monoallelic expression underlies cell-specific

functional identities. To further investigate the functional characteristics of protein-

coding genes located within I/SCs, we annotated the genes residing within the VERT

regions identified across all four clonal datasets (ACP clones: ACP6 and ACP7; and

LCL clones: EB3-2, and GM12878; see Supplementary Table 4). To assess whether

these genes are functionally related, we performed a Gene Ontology (GO) enrichment

analysis. This analysis revealed a significant enrichment for genes involved in plasma

membrane localization, cell-cell adhesion and neurodevelopmental processes, the most

significant hits for each set of clones is presented in Figure 1k (see full details in

Supplementary Table 5). This analysis suggests that I/SC-associated epigenetic

regulation may play a broader role in the establishment of cellular identity and tissue

organization particularly in the nervous system.

Gene clusters with AEI map to VERT regions.

In the olfactory, immune, and central nervous systems, random monoallelic

expression of gene family members, often organized in genomic clusters, plays a key

role in establishing cell-specific identities [12-14]. Consistent with these observations, we

found that VERT regions frequently coincide with gene clusters in the human genome

(Table 1). For example, Figures 3a and 3b highlight a cluster of 11 olfactory receptor

(OR) genes located on human chromosome 19 at approximately 15 Mb. This region

also harbors a cluster of Cytochrome P450 (CYP4F family, n = 6) genes.

The interspersed genomic arrangement of the CYP4F genes among the OR genes,

indicates that both gene families reside within the same I/SC and therefore both may be

subject to AEI.

A second example of a gene cluster is shown in Figures 3c and 3d, where

the major histocompatibility complex (MHC), comprising 16 HLA genes (which are

known to be subject to AEI [28,32]), lies within a VERT region. Notably, this locus also

contains a cluster of Lymphocyte Antigen 6 genes (LY6G family, n = 6), which are

interspersed among the HLA genes. This genome organization indicates that the LY6G

genes, like their neighboring HLA genes, are within the same I/SC and suggests that

they too may be subject to stochastic allelic expression.

Mapping mouse VERTs identifies known AEI gene clusters and syntenic I/SCs.

Much of our current understanding of stochastic autosomal allelic expression is derived

from studies conducted in the mouse [4,9-11,17,18,33-40]. To assess whether VERT

regions could be identified at expected loci in the mouse genome, specifically at sites of

known AEI, we analyzed previously published Repli-seq data from mouse pre-B cell

clones reported by Blumenfeld et al [41]. This analysis revealed 117 loci in the mouse

genome that display VERT (Supplemental Table 6).

Consistent with our findings in the human genome, the VERT regions detected in

the mouse genome frequently overlap with gene clusters, including 5 olfactory receptor

gene clusters located on four different autosomes (Table 1). Figure 4 presents three

examples: two olfactory receptor (Or) gene clusters on mouse chromosome 2 (Figs. 4a–

4c) and the protocadherin (Pcdh) gene cluster, which is known to generate cellular

individuality in the central nervous system through stochastic expression of different

Pcdh family members [12,42], located on mouse chromosome 18 (Figs. 4d–4e). In addition

to the gene clusters with VERT, we also detected immunoglobulin and T cell receptor

gene loci with VERT. As detailed in Supplemental Figure 1, we detected VERT at the T

cell receptor alpha (Tra) locus on mouse chromosome 14 at approximately 54 Mb. One

striking feature of this locus is that it also contains an olfactory receptor cluster,

containing 37 Or genes, and a vomeronasal receptor gene (Vmn2r88). All of these

multigene families are documented sites of AEI [3,12,17,42,43], highlighting the genomic

organization and conservation of I/SC-associated regulation at known AEI genes in the

mouse. Gene Ontology analysis of the mouse genes located within these regions

showed significant enrichment for biological processes related to the plasma

membrane and cell-cell adhesion (Fig. 1k), which is consistent with the human VERT

gene dataset and reinforces the conservation of this regulatory mechanism across

species.

Previous studies analyzed a relatively small number of mouse AEI genes to

model their human counterparts with respect to autosomal-dominant disorders [38,44]. To

further investigate the conservation of I/SC regulation between the human and mouse

genomes, we identified VERT regions that map to syntenic loci across the two species.

This analysis revealed 21 loci where VERT is detected in both genomes, as detailed in

Table 2. Figure 5 presents three representative examples of syntenic VERT regions:

two loci on the short

arm of human chromosome 5 with corresponding regions on mouse chromosome 15

(Figs. 5a–5g), and a third locus on human chromosome 16 with its syntenic region on

mouse chromosome 16 (Figs. 5h–5k). Additional examples of syntenic loci showing AEI

and/or VERT, including mouse App (see Gimelbrant et al. [45] for AEI of human APP),

Mocos and Fhod3 (See Fig. 2A for VERT and AEI of human MOCOS and FHOD3), and

a cluster of 5 sodium channel genes, Scn1a, Scn2a, Scn3a, Scn7a and Scn9a (see Fig.

6a-c below for VERT and AEI of the syntenic human SCN gene cluster) are shown in

Supplemental Figure 2.

We point out that many of the mouse genes that are located within VERT regions

are associated with various human genetic diseases (Supplemental Table 7). One of

the loci highlighted in Figure 5a-5d labeled "hi", exhibits both VERT and AEI (Fig. 5c

and [1]), affecting the protein-coding gene SEMA5A, a gene implicated in autism and

neurodevelopmental disorders [46-48]. Notably, this locus also contains a syntenic pair of

taste receptor genes: TAS2R1 in humans and Tas2r119 in mice. These genes are part

of the taste receptor family, which are known to harbor chromatin marks characteristic

of AEI-regulated loci [49]. Consistent with this observation, we also detected VERT at a

taste receptor gene cluster (Tas2r) on mouse chromosome 6 (Table 1).

A second example of synteny is shown in Figure 5f-5g, where human RETREG1

and mouse Retreg1 are located within VERT regions. Human RETREG1 is a known

AEI gene [45], and mutations in RETREG1 cause sensory and autonomic neuropathy [29].

A third example is shown in Figure 5h-5k, where both human GRIN2A and mouse

Grin2a are located within VERT regions, and loss of function mutations in GRIN2A are

known to cause autosomal dominant (i.e. haploinsufficiency) epilepsy [29,50]. These

findings indicate that I/SC-associated epigenetic regulation is conserved across

species, affects functionally related gene families, and may influence human genetic

disease inheritance patterns (see below).

Neurodevelopmental disease genes map to I/SCs.

To further investigate the relationship between I/SC regulation and human disease

genes, we annotated the human protein-coding genes located within VERT regions (see

Supplemental Table 4). This analysis identified 979 genes overlapping VERT regions, of

which 272 are associated with single-gene disorders according to the OMIM database

[29]. Among these genes, 155 are linked to autosomal recessive

diseases, 87 to autosomal dominant diseases, and 30 exhibit both dominant and

recessive inheritance patterns (Supplemental Table 8). Consistent with our GO

analysis, which revealed an enrichment for neurodevelopmental processes (see Fig.

1k), we found that various neurodevelopmental disease genes were prominently

represented among the disease-associated genes (Table 3). Moreover, it was not

unexpected to observe gene clusters associated with neurodevelopmental disorders

residing within VERT regions. For example, Figures 6a–6c depict the location, I/SC

profile, and genomic organization of a cluster of sodium channel genes (SCN family, n =

5). Mutations in SCN1A, SCN2A, SCN3A, and SCN9A genes are known to

cause autosomal dominant developmental and epileptic encephalopathies, with

haploinsufficiency as a primary mechanism (Table 3 and [29,51,52]). We also note that the

syntenic locus in the mouse displays VERT, with the 5 syntenic mouse Scn genes

residing within a VERT region on mouse chromosome 2 (Supplementary Fig. 2e-2f).

A second example of a cluster of epilepsy disease genes is shown in Figures 6d–

6e, where four members of the gamma-aminobutyric acid type A receptor gene family

(GABR family, n = 4) reside adjacent to a VERT region; notably, GABRA1 displays AEI

(Fig. 6e, and Supplementary Table 2), and mutations in GABRA1, GABRB2, and

GABRG2 cause autosomal dominant developmental and epileptic encephalopathies

[29,53,54]. We also note that a second GABR gene cluster (n = 4), where GABRA2 and

GABRB1 are also associated with autosomal dominant developmental and epileptic

encephalopathies, is adjacent to a VERT region on chromosome 4 (see Table 1). Two

additional examples are shown in Figures 6g–6j, where OXR1 and SAMD12 are

located in different VERT regions on chromosome 8, and mutations in each result in

autosomal dominant epilepsy [29].

Another prominent group of human disease genes located within I/SCs are those

associated with Parkinson disease (Table 3). As shown in Figure 7, four well-

characterized Parkinson disease genes, SNCA, LRRK2, DNAJC6, and PARKN, are

situated within or adjacent to VERT regions. Importantly, both SNCA and LRRK2 were

among the first genes identified as displaying AEI in the study by Gimelbrant et al. in

2007 [45]. In our own dataset, we found that DNAJC6 exhibits AEI in LCL clones [1]. We

also highlight that JAK1, a gene involved in immune signaling, lies within the same I/SC

as DNAJC6 (Fig. 7f). JAK1 is a known AEI gene [55,56], and mutations in

JAK1 cause autosomal dominant autoinflammation, immune dysregulation, and

eosinophilia (AIIDE). A recent study indicated that AEI of wild-type and mutant JAK1

alleles correlates with variable disease penetrance [28].

Taken together, these findings underscore the role of I/SCs in regulating disease-

relevant gene clusters and emphasize their conservation, synteny, and functional

relevance in both neurological and immune-related disorders. These examples highlight

how stochastic epigenetic regulation within I/SCs contributes to phenotypic variability

and disease risk.

Discussion:

The co-occurrence of random monoallelic expression and asynchronous replication

between alleles of autosomal genes is well documented [2-4], yet its developmental

potential and contribution to human disease have not been systematically investigated.

In this study, we expand on the discovery and characterization of Inactivation/Stability

Centers (I/SCs), autosomal loci marked by AEI and VERT, by identifying an

additional 163 VERT regions using clonal lines of primary ACP cells. This brings the

total number of I/SCs to 363, covering approximately 12% of the human genome.

To assess the evolutionary conservation of I/SC regulation, we analyzed

replication timing data from mouse pre-B cell clones, identifying 117 mouse VERT loci.

Many of these regions overlap with known mouse AEI genes and gene clusters

including olfactory, vomeronasal, and antigen receptors as well as protocadherin gene

families. Notably, we identified 21 syntenic VERT regions shared between human and

mouse genomes. These findings reinforce and extend previous observations indicating

a high degree of conservation of AEI genes [4] and suggest that I/SCs are a fundamental

and widespread feature of autosomal epigenetic regulation in mammals.

I/SC regulation imparts cell-type specific and tissue-relevant variation

Our clonal analysis of ACP and LCL cells, combined with haplotype-phased replication

timing and expression profiling, enabled us to identify tissue-specific I/SCs, while also

confirming a subset of I/SCs that are shared across tissues and conserved between

species. These findings support a dual regulatory model in which certain I/SCs may

serve ubiquitous functions and are utilized broadly across cell types, whereas others

are selectively engaged based on the gene expression program and functional

requirements of a given tissue. This model is supported by hierarchical clustering

analysis of VERT regions, which showed greater overlap within tissue type (ACP6 vs.

ACP7; EB3-2 vs. GM12878) than between tissues, suggesting that I/SC activity is tightly

linked to cellular identity.

Importantly, we identified 68 VERT regions shared across two or more clonal

sets, representing high-confidence I/SCs that likely reflect core regulatory regions active

across individuals and cell types (Fig. 1i). As detailed in Supplemental Table 1, we also

identified VERT regions detected exclusively in single clone sets. These private VERT

regions may reflect inter-individual variability in epigenetic regulation, context-dependent

I/SC usage, but more likely reflect a limitation of sampling—i.e., regions that would be

detected in additional clones if a larger number were analyzed. Thus, while our findings

provide strong support for both shared and tissue specific I/SCs, they also underscore

the importance of clone number and diversity in defining the full landscape of autosomal

epigenetic regulation.

In the context of development, AEI introduces stochastic variability in gene

dosage across clonal populations, contributing to cellular heterogeneity during lineage

specification and tissue formation. Such heterogeneity could serve as a substrate

for cellular selection, enabling the developing tissue to fine-tune function or respond

adaptively to environmental cues. This model aligns with observations that AEI often

affects genes involved in cell adhesion, signal transduction, and neurodevelopment,

where even small variations in expression levels could significantly impact cell fate and

connectivity.

At the molecular level, I/SCs contribute to cellular individuality by

enabling stochastic monoallelic expression of specific genes. This mechanism is

particularly critical in biological systems that require diversity at the single-cell level,

such as the olfactory, vomeronasal, immune, and nervous systems. Consistent with

this, many I/SCs coincide with gene clusters, including olfactory, vomeronasal, and

antigen receptor genes, as well as HLA and protocadherin genes, all of which are

known to undergo stochastic monoallelic expression. We identified numerous additional

gene clusters residing within I/SCs, suggesting that these other gene families may also

participate in tissue mosaicism and/or cellular individuality. Our current model proposes

that I/SC regulation is integral to tissue development, where stochastic, epigenetically

driven allelic regulation introduces phenotypic variability among cells. This variability

may promote functional diversity and selective advantage during development. Under

this model, each tissue would engage a distinct but partially overlapping set of I/SC-

regulated genes, aligned with its unique transcriptional and functional requirements.

This framework positions I/SCs as key players in promoting cellular individuality, tissue

mosaicism, and developmental plasticity.

Many of the genes that reside within I/SCs are regulated by allelic exclusion.

Allelic exclusion is a regulatory mechanism by which only one allele of a gene is

expressed while the other is actively silenced, ensuring monoallelic expression in each

cell. This process is well characterized in the immune system, where it plays a critical

role in B-cell and T-cell receptor gene rearrangements, ensuring that each lymphocyte

produces a single antigen receptor [18]. Furthermore, functional monoallelic expression is

achieved via a secondary mechanism that involves product inhibition. For example, in

developing B cells, expression of a productive immunoglobulin heavy chain allele

suppresses rearrangement and expression of the second allele, maintaining clonal

specificity [18]. Allelic exclusion has also been observed in olfactory receptors, where

product feedback ensures expression of a single allele of only one member of a large

gene family, ensuring that each olfactory receptor neuron responds to a single odorant

[2,33,57-60].

I/SC regulation acts through mechanisms distinct from X inactivation.

Numerous studies in both human and mouse cells support the notion that allele-specific

epigenetic   regulation   of   autosomal   protein-coding   genes   is   widespread

[4,11,13,37,38,40,57,61,62]. Although stochastic monoallelic expression on autosomes may

appear similar to X chromosome inactivation (XCI), the mechanisms behind them are

distinct: First, XCI is initiated in preimplantation embryos, as early as the 4-8 cell stage

in the mouse and 8-16 cell stage in humans [63-67], and later becomes established during

differentiation of the inner cell mass of the blastocyst in both species [67,68]. In contrast,

autosomal stochastic monoallelic expression appears later in development, with allelic

biases that can be erased and reestablished during differentiation [10,38]. For example, a

recent study found that allele-specific autosomal inactivation is absent during early

blood lineage specification but detectable in hematopoietic stem cells and their

differentiated progeny [9]. Second, in XCI, there is strong coordination along the

chromosomes: genes on the active X chromosome share both expression and early

replication profiles, whereas genes on the inactive X show silencing and late replication.

In contrast, autosomal inactivation lacks such coordination: allelic expression and

replication timing are unlinked within a chromosome and independent across the

genome [1,7,69]. Taken together, these observations indicate that autosomal allelic

inactivation operates via a mechanism distinct from XCI [1,9].

An alternative model for haploinsufficiency

The relationship between genotype and phenotype is fundamental to understanding

human genetic disease. At the scale of the whole genome, loss of function alleles are

generally not deleterious when heterozygous and are therefore haplosufficient [21,24]. Not

surprisingly, most of the loss of function mutations in single genes in humans are

recessive [21,29]. Therefore, for most human disease genes a single normal allele is

sufficient to achieve the typical phenotype. Dominantly inherited disorders comprise a

diverse group of conditions that are often severe and poorly understood, except in

cases of gain-of-function mutations, where dominant negative or interfering activities

induce the abnormal phenotype. In addition, many dominantly inherited diseases result

from copy number changes, either gain or loss of wild-type alleles [29,70].

Haploinsufficiency, predicted to apply to as much as 40% of the human genome [19,20],

refers to a heterozygous deletion or complete loss-of-function mutation that results in an

altered phenotype, indicating that a single normal allele is insufficient. The

underlying molecular mechanisms responsible for most haploinsufficient human disease

genes remain largely unknown.

The existence of two distinct populations of cells in XX individuals, one

expressing genes from the maternally derived X chromosome and the other from the

paternally derived X, has profound implications for both development and

the manifestation of X-linked diseases, where both dominant and recessive inheritance

patterns are observed in females [29]. A key factor influencing these inheritance patterns

is the presence or absence of cellular selection during development. In certain X-linked

disorders, strong selection favors the survival or expansion of cells in which the mutant

allele is on the inactive X chromosome, resulting in a predominance of wild-type cells

and a clinical presentation consistent with X-linked recessive inheritance [21,26]. In

contrast, when cellular selection is absent, heterozygous females typically retain

a ~50:50 mosaic of wild-type and mutant-expressing cells. The presence of mutant-

expressing cells, essentially null cells, is thought to underlie X-linked dominant

phenotypes [27,71]. In such cases, heterozygous loss of function mutations leads to a

condition of haploinsufficiency, in which the presence of a single normal allele is

insufficient to maintain normal function. Interestingly, although single X-linked alleles are

sufficient in males, the mosaic expression pattern in females unmasks phenotypic

consequences that are otherwise hidden. This highlights an underappreciated

mechanism of haploinsufficiency: the cellular mosaicism inherent to X inactivation can

reduce effective gene dosage below functional thresholds in individuals with

heterozygous mutations, particularly in tissues where cells expressing the mutant (null)

allele persist.

One of the most striking implications of I/SC regulation is its relevance to human

genetic disease, particularly those involving haploinsufficiency. Among the 979

genes mapped within human VERT regions, 272 are associated with monogenic

diseases, including 87 with autosomal dominant inheritance, many of which are

classified as haploinsufficient [29]. Our findings offer a new mechanistic

model for autosomal haploinsufficiency: in the absence of compensatory upregulation

and/or cellular selection mechanisms, stochastic allelic inactivation results in or expands

a functionally null cell population, even when one allele is wild type. This mirrors the

situation observed in X-linked dominant disorders with loss of function mutations, where

the absence of cellular selection results in the persistence of null cells. This model

expands upon prior theories of haploinsufficiency that assume strict biallelic expression,

which attribute dominant phenotypes to factors such as threshold-dependent

expression, stoichiometric imbalance in multiprotein complexes, or inability to buffer

expression noise [22-25]. In addition, our model fits nicely with a previous study that

modeled stochastic gene expression of disease genes and proposed "haploinsufficiency

syndromes might result from an increased susceptibility to stochastic delays of gene

initiation or interruptions of gene expression" [72]. Our data suggest that epigenetically

regulated stochastic AEI can contribute to pathogenic phenotypes in heterozygous

individuals by either reducing the number of functional cells below a critical disease

threshold or by disrupting the normal mosaicism of gene expression within disease-

relevant tissues. This expands the conceptual framework of haploinsufficiency to

include epigenetic, rather than purely genetic, sources of dosage reduction.

Limitations of our study.

While our findings provide substantial evidence for the existence and functional

relevance of I/SCs, several important limitations remain to be addressed. First,

the number of clones analyzed in our studies, while sufficient to identify robust patterns

of AEI and VERT, limits our ability to fully capture the full spectrum of stochastic

epigenetic states across the genome. For example, we frequently observe AEI of genes

located adjacent to VERT regions, indicating that the boundaries of the epigenetic

mechanisms functioning at I/SCs remain undefined. This raises important questions

about how far the influence of I/SC-associated regulation extends beyond the VERT

region. In addition, the specific epigenetic marks, including DNA methylation, histone

modifications, and chromatin accessibility, at key regulatory elements such

as replication origins, enhancers, and promoters within I/SCs have yet to be mapped.

Furthermore, the higher-order chromatin organization of I/SCs, including their

relationship to topologically associating domains (TADs) and A/B compartments [49,73],

remains largely unexplored and may hold critical insights into their regulatory

architecture and functional constraints. Second, our analysis was conducted in

a restricted number of cell types, namely LCLs and ACPs, and therefore does not

represent the full diversity of I/SC usage across human tissues. Third, our study was

limited to a small number of individuals, which may constrain the identification of inter-

individual variability in I/SC regulation. Fourth, the developmental timing of I/SC

establishment remains unresolved; it is unclear when during lineage commitment or

differentiation these regions acquire their allele-specific states. A related and equally

important question is whether I/SCs can be reset during reprogramming into induced

pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) and subsequently reestablished upon differentiation. This

issue is particularly relevant given the widespread use of iPSCs in human disease

modeling and regenerative medicine [74-76]. Understanding how I/SCs behave during

cellular reprogramming and lineage specification will be critical for interpreting AEI-

related phenotypes in iPSC-derived systems.

An additional open question is how the magnitude of stochastic

AEI influences disease states, particularly in the context of variable

penetrance and expressivity. For example, a recent study employed allelic expression

ratios to identify functionally relevant AEI in genes associated with inborn errors of

immunity, showing that individuals with the same pathogenic mutation can

exhibit divergent clinical outcomes depending on the degree of allelic imbalance [28].

These findings suggest that AEI can modulate disease severity, acting as an epigenetic

layer of regulation that determines whether a given mutation manifests clinically. We

anticipate that the biological significance of AEI will vary depending on the function of

the gene, its dosage sensitivity, and the cellular context in which it is expressed.

Addressing these questions will be essential for achieving a comprehensive

understanding of the formation, function, and disease relevance of I/SCs in human

biology.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our work extends the catalog of I/SCs in the human genome and

supports a model in which stochastic, allele-specific epigenetic regulation at autosomal

loci contributes to cellular diversity and disease susceptibility. Moreover, by

identifying syntenic I/SCs in the mouse genome, our findings greatly enhance the

potential utility of mouse models for mechanistic studies of disease-causing mutations

at conserved loci. Our findings present a potential mechanism for incomplete

penetrance, variable expressivity, and tissue-specific vulnerability, particularly in

disorders caused by haploinsufficiency. In such cases, stochastic silencing of the wild-

type allele in a subset of cells may lead to functional null states, even in heterozygous

individuals, reducing the effective number of functional cells below a critical threshold.

This may be especially relevant in the nervous system, where precise gene dosage is

often essential for maintaining neuronal function. Moreover, I/SC regulation at disease

genes raises the possibility that stochastic epigenetic regulation could act as

an epigenetic modifier of disease risk, helping to explain why some individuals carrying

pathogenic mutations remain asymptomatic. Understanding the full scope of I/SC

regulation in both normal development and disease pathogenesis will be essential for

identifying novel regulatory mechanisms and potential therapeutic targets. As tools for

single-cell and allele-resolved epigenomics continue to advance, I/SCs may emerge as

key elements in both basic biology and precision medicine.

RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

Further information and requests for resources and reagents should be directed to and will be fulfilled by the lead contact, Mathew Thayer (thayerm@ohsu.edu)

Materials availability statement

All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in the manuscript and supporting files.

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Author Contribution Statement

MBH, MJT, and DMG conceived of the experimental design for the RNA expression and replication timing assays. KF performed the surgeries to obtain the amputed digits. BJ and PAY performed the ACP cultures and clone generation. MBH and AEV carried out the RNA-seq assays, including data analysis. MBH and AEV carried out the Repli-seq assays, including data analysis. PFC and PTS provided advice during preparation of the manuscript. MBH, DMG and MJT wrote the manuscript.

Declaration of interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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Methods

Cell culture

All human tissue samples were obtained in accordance with protocols approved by the Oregon Health & Science University Institutional Review Board (OHSU IRB# 00019018) and the Western Institutional Review Board (WIRB# 20193303). Informed consent was obtained from all donors or their legal guardians. ACP cells were grown in Dulbecco's Modified Eagle's Medium low glucose (Life Technologies) supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum (Hyclone). Single cell clones were isolated by plating individual cells in 6 well dishes, and were expanded for >20 population doublings [77]. All cells were grown in a humidified incubator at 37°C in a 5% carbon dioxide atmosphere.

Haplotype Phasing of ACP cells

Short-read whole genome sequencing was obtained from two parent/child trios with a range of ~7-14x genome coverage. BWA [78] was used for alignment, and FreeBayes [79] used to call putative germline variants jointly for each trio. Variants were filtered to remove sites with Genotype Quality score of less than 30, and sites with missing genotypes for any member of the trio were removed. WhatsHap [80] was then used to phase variants in the child utilizing mendelian inheritance patterns and reads containing multiple variants. 1,679,207 high-confidence sites were phased in ACP7, and 837,323 sites were phased in ACP6.

Allele-specific Repli-Seq

Short read sequence data was aligned with BWA with standard parameters. BAM files were then deduplicated and sorted with SAMtools [81]. BCFtools mpileup [81] was then used to produce allele-specific read counts at phased heterozygous loci. Library size

normalization was performed to produce counts per million informative reads. Read

counts were then grouped into 250kb sliding genomic windows with no overlap. E/L

Repli-Seq values were generated by taking the Log base 2 of early versus late values

[82]. Quantile normalization was performed on each group of subclones within each

individual sample to allow for comparison among subclones. For each sample,

variability of allele-specific RT among subclones was defined as the Standard Deviation

(degrees of freedom = 1) of repli-seq at each 250kb window. Genome-wide std. dev.

values generated a log-normal distribution, and we set a threshold of Z>=2.25 on the

log-normal to identify regions with highly variable allele-specific RT among subclones.

Allele-specific RNA-seq

Nuclei were isolated by centrifugation for 0.5 minutes from ACP clones following lysis in

0.5% NP40, 140 mM NaCl, 10 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.4), and 1.5 mM $MgCl_2$. Nuclear RNA

was isolated using Trizol reagent using the manufacturer's instructions, followed by

DNase treatment to remove possible genomic DNA contamination. Briefly, ribosomal

RNAs were removed using the Ribo-Zero kit (Illumina), RNA was fragmented into 250-

300bp fragments, and cDNA libraries were prepared using the Directional RNA Library

Prep Kit (NEB). Paired end sequencing was done on a NovaSeq 6000 at the OHSU

MPSSR core facility. Strand specific short read sequence data was aligned with STAR

[83]. SAMtools [81] was used to remove duplicates and sort BAM files. Strand-specific,

allele-specific reads at heterozygous phased SNPs were counted using BCFtools

mpileup [81] and grouped together for all SNPs within each gene. Allelic expression

imbalance was calculated as the fraction of reads derived from the maternal vs the

paternal allele. For example, completely balanced allelic expression is 50% AEI, and

completely imbalanced AEI is 100%. A threshold of AEI>= 70%, and FDR corrected

binomial p-value<=0.05 was used to classify AEI in each individual subclone. Standard

deviation (degrees of freedom=1) was used for each gene to generate a metric of AEI

variability among subclones. A genome-wide distribution of std. dev. was generated

across all genes, and the top 2.5% of variable genes were classified as highly variable

among subclones.

Figure Legends:

Figure 1: Genome wide variable replication-timing and expression. a) Single cell derived ACP clones (color coded) are isolated, expanded and processed for Repliseq and RNAseq. The maternal and paternal haplotypes were used to analyze allele-specific replication timing and expression. b) The top panel illustrates the expected replication timing profile in multiple clones across an autosomal region. The regions that display VERT are highlighted by shading. The bottom panel illustrates the expected expression variability in different clones from the same individual. c) We define AEI as an allelic bias that is ≥80% allelic imbalance (AEI ≥ 0.80 or ≤ 0.20). d) Illustration of an Inactivation/Stability Center showing the clonal and allele-restricted variability in replication timing and expression of both protein coding and noncoding genes. e) The standard deviation (Std. Dev.) in 250 kb windows (circles) across human chromosome 1. Outlier windows from all four sets of clones (ACP6, ACP7, EB3-2, and GM12878) are highlighted in different colors as shown. The top panel illustrates the G-banding (blue shading) pattern for human chromosome 1, with 23 VERT regions highlighted in red. The arrow marks the VERT region shown in panels f-h below. f-h) I/SC located between 239 and 242 mb of chromosome 1 (see panel e). f) VERT (shaded region) and AEI of genes (rectangles) detected in the ACP6 clones, each clone was color coded as shown. For replication, the solid lines represent the maternal (Mat.) allele and the dotted line represents the paternal (Pat.) allele. g) VERT (shaded region) and AEI of genes (rectangles) detected in the ACP7 clones, each clone was color coded as shown. h) UCSC Genome Browser view of the genomic region in panels f and g. The shaded area highlights the VERT region. i) Hierarchical clustering of the VERT regions that are shared between 2 or more clone sets showing both ACP and LCL clones. j) Gene Ontology (GO) enrichment analysis of the genes located within the VERT regions, the most significant hits for each set of clones, organized by cell type, are shown. GO analysis of the mouse genes located within the pre-B cell clone VERT regions are also shown.

Figure 2. Examples of I/SCs. a, d and g) VERT regions on human chromosomes 18, 6 and 9, respectively. The top panels illustrate the G-banding (blue shading) pattern for each human chromosome, with VERT regions highlighted in red. The standard deviation (Std. Dev.) in 250 kb windows (circles) across each human chromosome is shown. Outlier windows from all four sets of clones (ACP6, ACP7, EB3-2, and GM12878) are highlighted in different colors as shown. The arrows and red boxes mark the VERT regions shown in panels b, e, and h. b, e and h) I/SCs highlighted in panels a, d, and g. For replication, the solid lines represent the maternal (Mat.) allele and the dotted line represents the paternal (Pat.) allele. The regions with VERT are shaded and the AEI is shown for each clone in a different color. c, f and i) UCSC Genome Browser views of the genomic regions in panels b, e and h. The shaded areas highlight the VERT regions. Genes with AEI are marked with +, *, or #. b and c) The + marks MOCOS, which shows AEI in ACP cells (Supplemental Table 2) and ++ marks FHOD3, which shows AEI in LCLs [1]. e and f) The * marks from DNAH8, ** marks transcripts from KCNK5, and *** marks non-coding transcripts from ENSG00000293066 (also named: TL:6-39.9_1 [1]). All three of these genes show AEI in LCL clones [1]. h and i) The # marks

970 transcripts from DAPK1, ## marks transcripts from SPIN1. Both genes show AEI in LCL
971 clones [1].
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Figure 3. Human gene clusters with AEI map to VERT regions. a and c) VERT
regions on human chromosome 9 and 6. The top panels illustrate the G-banding (blue
shading) pattern for each human chromosome, with VERT regions highlighted in red.
The standard deviation (Std. Dev.) in 250 kb windows (circles) across each human
chromosome is shown. Outlier windows from all four sets of clones (ACP6, ACP7, EB3-
2, and GM12878) are highlighted in different colors as shown. The arrows and red
boxes mark the VERT regions shown in panels b, e, and h. The red box and arrow
identify the I/SC in panel b. b) UCSC genome browser view illustrating the genomic
location highlighted in panel a. The shaded area highlights the VERT region. The red
lines mark 11 olfactory receptor genes, and the green lines mark 6 cytochrome P450
family (CYP4F) genes. d) UCSC Genome Browser view illustrating the genomic location
highlighted in panel c. The shaded area highlights the VERT region. The red lines mark
16 HLA genes, and the green lines mark 6 Lymphocyte antigen 6 family (LY6G) genes.
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Figure 4. Mouse gene clusters with AEI map to VERT regions. a and d) VERT
regions on mouse chromosome 2 and 18. The standard deviation (Std. Dev.) in 50 kb
windows (circles) across each mouse chromosome are shown. Outlier windows from
pre-B cell clones are highlighted in orange. The red boxes and arrows identify the VERT
regions in panels b (i) and c (ii). b and c) UCSC genome browser views illustrating the
genomic locations represented by i and ii in panel a. b) Genome Browser view of the
VERT region showing the location of 29 olfactory receptor genes (Or genes). The
shaded area represents the VERT region. c) Genome Browser view of the VERT region
in ii above, showing the location of 242 olfactory receptor genes (Or genes). The
shaded area represents the VERT region. e) Genome Browser view of the VERT region
in d above, showing the location of clustered Protocaderhin genes (15 Pcdha, 23
Pcdhb, and 22 Pcdhg genes). The shaded area represents the VERT region.
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Figure 5. Human and Mouse syntenic regions display VERT. a and b) The short arm
of human chromosome 5, with 11 VERT regions (panel a) and the centromeric region of
mouse chromosome 15, with 4 VERT regions (panel b) are shown. a) Two human
VERT regions are highlighted, hi and hii, and are syntenic with locations on mouse
chromosome 15, mi and mii, that also show VERT (panel b). Note that the gene order in
both syntenic regions are inverted with respect to the telomeres when comparing the
human and mouse loci. c) Illustration of the I/SC on human chromosome 5 between
7.75 and 10.5 mb (hi). The shaded area marks the VERT region, and AEI of the coding
gene SEMA5A in different clones is highlighted. For replication, the maternal (Mat.) and
paternal (Pat.) alleles are indicated. d) UCSC Genome Browser view of the human
VERT region (shaded) in hi, showing the location of SEMA5A and a taste receptor gene
(TAS2R1). e) UCSC Genome Browser view of the mouse VERT region (shaded) in mi,
showing the location of Sema5a and a taste receptor gene (Tas2r119). f) UCSC
Genome Browser view of the human VERT region (shaded) in hii above, highlighting
the location of the AEI gene RETREG1 [45]. g) UCSC Genome Browser view of the
mouse VERT region (shaded) in mii, showing the synteny between human and mouse
for the protein coding genes in panel f, including Retreg1. h) VERT regions on human

chromosome 16. The standard deviation (Std. Dev.) in 250 kb windows (circles) across
human chromosome 16 is shown. Outlier windows are highlighted in different colors as
shown. The red box and arrow mark the genomic location in panel i. i) UCSC Genome
Browser view illustrating the genomic location represented in panel h, showing the
location of GRIN2A (red box). j) VERT regions on mouse chromosome 16. The
standard deviation in 50 kb windows (circles) is shown. Outlier windows from pre-B cell
clones are highlighted in orange. k) UCSC Genome Browser view illustrating the
genomic location of the VERT region (shaded area) represented in panel j above, with
the location of Grin2a highlighted with a red box.

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Figure 6. Epilepsy genes map to I/SCs. a, d, and g) VERT regions on human
chromosomes 2, 5, and 21. The top panels illustrate the G-banding (blue shading) pattern
for each human chromosome, with VERT regions highlighted in red. The standard deviation
(Std. Dev.) in 250 kb windows (circles) across each human chromosome is shown. Outlier
windows from all four sets of clones (ACP6, ACP7, EB3-2, and GM12878) are highlighted
in different colors as shown. The arrows and red boxes mark the VERT regions shown in
panels b, c, e, f, h, i, j and k. b, e, h, j) Illustrations of I/SCs on chromosomes 2, 5, and 8.
The shaded areas mark the VERT regions. Each clone was color coded to illustrate the
VERT and AEI in different clones. The maternal (Mat.) and paternal (Pat.) alleles are
indicated for replication and expression. c) UCSC Genome Browser view illustrating the
genomic location of the VERT region (shaded area) represented in panels a and b, with the
location of 5 sodium channel genes (SCN3A, SCN2A, SCN1A, SCN9A, and SCN7A)
highlighted with a red line. e) Illustration of an I/SC on chromosome 5. The shaded area
marks the VERT region. AEI of GABRA1 is shown. f) UCSC Genome Browser view
illustrating the genomic location of the VERT region (shaded area) represented in panels d
and e above, with the location of 4 GABA receptor genes (GABRB2, GABRBA6, GABRA1,
and GABRG2) highlighted with a red line. h) Illustration of a I/SCs (A) on chromosome 8.
Each ACP6 clone was color coded to illustrate the VERT and AEI in different clones. The
maternal (Mat.) and paternal (Pat.) alleles are indicated for replication and expression. The
shaded area marks the VERT region. The location and expression of OXR1 is indicated. i)
UCSC Genome Browser view illustrating the genomic location of the VERT region (shaded
area) represented in panels g (A) and h above, with the location of the OXR1 gene
highlighted with a red line. We note that ANGPT1 (marked with *), located within this I/SC
displays AEI (see Supplementary Table 2). j) Illustration of an I/SC (B) on chromosome 8.
AEI of SAMD12 is indicated. k) UCSC Genome Browser view illustrating the genomic
location of the VERT region (shaded area) represented in panels g (B) and j above, with
the location of the SAMD12 highlighted with a red line.

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Figure 7. Parkinson disease genes map to I/SCs. a, c, e, and g) VERT regions on
human chromosomes 4, 12, 19, and 20, respectively. The top panels illustrate the G-
banding (blue shading) pattern for each human chromosome, with VERT regions
highlighted in red. The standard deviation (Std. Dev.) in 250 kb windows (circles) across
each human chromosome is shown. Outlier windows from all four sets of clones (ACP6,
ACP7, EB3-2, and GM12878) are highlighted in different colors as shown. The arrows and
red boxes mark the VERT regions shown in panels b, d, f, and h, respectively. b) UCSC
Genome Browser view illustrating the genomic location of the VERT region (shaded area)
represented in panel a, with the location of the SNCA gene highlighted with a red line. d)
UCSC Genome Browser view illustrating the genomic location of the VERT region (shaded

area) highlighted in panel c, with the location of the LRRK2 gene highlighted with a red line.
f) UCSC Genome Browser view illustrating the genomic location of the VERT region
(shaded area) represented in panel e, with the location of the DNAJC6 gene highlighted
with a red line; also highlighted with a green line is the JAK1 gene. h) UCSC Genome
Browser view illustrating the genomic location of the VERT region (shaded area)
represented in panel g, with the location of the PRKN gene highlighted with a red line.
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RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

Source data are provided with this paper. Further information and requests for resources
and reagents should be directed to and will be fulfilled by the lead contact, Mathew
Thayer (thayerm@ohsu.edu).

Materials availability statement

All reagents generated in this study will be made freely available upon request.

Human VERT Region			Gene Cluster			
Chr	Start	stop	Genes	# of Genes	Start	stop
1	13,250,000	15,000,000	PRAMEF	23	12,768,939	13,422,488
2	101,633,538	102,383,540	IL1R	5	101,987,899	102,401,443
2	165,250,000	166,000,000	SCN	5	165,081,204	166,499,088
2	176,250,000	176,500,000	HOXD	9	176,091,062	176,191,493
4	46,750,000	47,500,000	GABR	4	46,035,583	47,431,569
4	68,384,282	68,634,282	UGT	9	68,525,283	69,660,413
5	651,700	750,000	SLC	5	468,888	1,448,927
5	148,000,000	148,250,000	SPINK	7	147,822,992	148,343,066
5	162,250,000	162,750,000	GABR	4	161,282,809	162,159,566
6	31,250,000	32,750,000	HLA	15	30,489,509	33,093,613
6	31,250,000	32,750,000	LY6	6	31,669,259	31,722,476
8	11,250,000	12,392,491	DEFB	6	11,970,747	12,320,078
8	80,587,765	83,000,000	FABP	4	81,277,942	81,536,065
8	142,500,000	142,750,000	LY6	8	142,695,707	143,162,219
11	104,750,000	105,000,000	CASP	5	104,883,181	105,141,441
15	23,357,400	23,500,000	GOLGA	5	22,451,995	23,451,545
15	28,750,000	29,000,000	GOLGA	6	28,344,604	28,855,059
17	9,750,000	10,500,000	MYH	6	10,297,552	10,658,865
19	15,000,000	15,250,000	OR	11	14,792,476	15,952,060
19	15,000,000	15,250,000	CYP	6	15,507,105	15,936,041
19	20,750,000	21,000,000	ZNF	37	19,667,773	24,119,420
19	36,313,700	36,500,000	ZNF	29	36,171,632	37,791,237
19	43,000,000	43,250,000	PSG	10	42,713,521	43,272,861
20	24,250,000	24,750,000	CST	11	23,429,902	24,957,423
21	30,627,681	30,877,681	KRTAP	33	30,276,201	31,041,124

Mouse VERT Region			Gene Cluster			
Chr	Start	stop	Genes	# of Genes	Start	stop
2	36,322,857	36,622,857	Or	28	36,225,624	37,193,679
2	64,622,866	66,522,868	Scn	5	65,287,042	66,637,709
2	88,950,000	89,950,000	Or	239	85,160,859	90,147,389
4	59,850,000	59,950,000	Mup	22	59,950,000	61,824,646
5	91,150,000	91,350,000	Cxcl	5	91,186,938	91,335,955
5	95,950,000	96,250,000	Pramel	23	93,891,822	96,243,866
6	40,650,000	41,150,000	Tas2r	8	40,386,430	43,196,843
6	40,650,000	41,150,000	Or	24	40,386,430	43,196,843
6	66,650,000	66,850,000	Vmn1	8	66,498,911	66,758,688
7	113,809,945	113,909,945	Or	24	113,790,926	114,306,041
11	73,450,000	74,050,000	Or	31	73,160,403	74,180,092
18	37,350,000	37,750,000	Pcdh	23	37,298,052	37,684,088

Table 1. VERT regions at gene clusters in the human and mouse genomes

Mouse VERT			Synteny (%)	Human Syntenic Region			Human VERT		
Chr	Start	stop		Chr	start	Stop	Chr	start	Stop
1	73,042,585	73,542,585	54.0	2	216,836,864	217,400,721	2	217,000,000	217,250,000
1	88,681,147	89,081,147	33.0	2	234,565,154	235,053,857	2	234,000,000	235,000,000
1	189558318	189,758,318	49.8	1	214,144,079	214,410,956	1	214,326,657	216,000,000
2	64,842,287	66,742,287	46.5	2	164,610,983	166,685,353	2	165,250,000	166,000,000
3	18,204,164	18,404,164	33.7	8	64,684,742	64,876,026	8	64,337,443	65,087,765
3	57,253,499	58,553,499	32.6	3	149,407,811	150,704,641	3	149,282,213	150,032,213
3	78,253,385	78,653,385	26.1	4	159,655,594	159,952,325	4	159,328,848	159,828,848
3	82,453,385	82,853,385	32.6	4	154,688,934	155,210,940	4	154,500,000	154,750,000
4	105034592	105,234,592	62.8	1	56,331,724	56,556,339	1	55,500,000	56,750,000
4	142286667	142,686,667	40.6	1	14,022,915	14,523,879	1	13,250,000	15,000,000
8	10,500,000	11,200,000	43.2	13	108,978,718	110,065,357	13	109,250,000	109,500,000
8	24,029,544	24,929,544	37.3	8	40,152,844	41,090,451	8	40,250,000	40,750,000
8	39,817,687	40,717,687	28.6	8	15,936,545	16,964,053	8	15,750,000	17,000,000
9	116969950	117,469,950	42.3	3	28,837,647	29,402,683	3	29,000,000	29,500,000
11	46,927,325	48,127,325	35.2	5	155,465,678	156,698,430	5	155,500,000	156,250,000
12	33,715,134	33,815,134	36.1	7	19,330,767	19,416,599	7	19,250,000	19,500,000
12	105278049	105,578,049	41.6	14	95,853,630	96,269,387	14	96,000,000	96,250,000
13	11,095,964	11,672,619	29.9	1	237,711,340	238,470,922	1	237,604,200	238,750,000
15	25,120,331	25,920,331	42.9	5	16,534,412	17,724,462	5	16,250,000	17,000,000
15	32,220,391	32,420,391	60.7	5	9,377,059	9,575,503	5	8,749,888	9,499,888
16	9,067,771	9,667,771	41.6	16	9,476,924	10,028,307	16	9,750,000	10,000,000

Table 2. VERT regions showing synteny between human and mouse genomes.

VERT Gene	Epilepsy Disease Genes (Inheritance: Autosomal Recessive-AR; Autosomal Dominant-AD; Loss of Function-LoF; Gain of Function-GoF)	Ref.
ALG14	Myasthenic syndrome (AR); Intellectual developmental disorder with epilepsy (AR); Myopathy, epilepsy, and progressive cerebral atrophy (AR)	29
CACNA2D1	Developmental and epileptic encephalopathy (AR)	29
GABRB1	Developmental and epileptic encephalopathy (AD, LoF & GoF)	53
GRIN2A	Epilepsy (AD, LoF)	50
NTRK2	Developmental and epileptic encephalopathy (AD); Obesity (AD)	54
OXR1	Cerebellar hypoplasia/atrophy, epilepsy, and global developmental delay (AR)	29
RAPGEF2	Epilepsy, familial adult myoclonic (AD, TTTCA repeat expansion)	55
RNF13	Developmental and epileptic encephalopathy (AD, GoF)	56
SAMD12	Epilepsy (AD, TTTCA repeat expansion)	55
SCN1A	Developmental and epileptic encephalopathy (AD, LoF); Dravet syndrome (AD, LoF); Generalized epilepsy with febrile seizures (AD, LoF)	51
SCN2A	Developmental and epileptic encephalopathy (AD, LoF & GoF)	52

VERT Gene	Intellectual Developmental Genes (Inheritance: Autosomal Recessive-AR; Autosomal Dominant-AD; Loss of Function-LoF; Gain of Function-GoF)	Ref.
ALG14	Intellectual developmental disorder with epilepsy (AR); Myasthenic syndrome (AR); Myopathy, epilepsy, and progressive cerebral atrophy (AR)	29
CEP104	Intellectual developmental disorder (AR); Joubert syndrome (AR)	29
CNOT2	Intellectual developmental disorder (AD, LoF)	53
DPP6	Intellectual developmental disorder (AD, LoF)	54
ELP2	Intellectual developmental disorder (AR)	29
FMN2	Intellectual developmental disorder (AR)	29
GRIA1	Intellectual developmental disorder (AD, GoF; AR, LoF)	55
IMPA1	Intellectual developmental disorder (AR)	29
IQSEC1	Intellectual developmental disorder (AR)	29
MYT1L	Intellectual developmental disorder (AD, LoF)	56
PDZD8	Intellectual developmental disorder (AR)	29
RSRC1	Intellectual developmental disorder (AR)	29
TAF4	Intellectual developmental disorder (AD, LoF)	57
TNIK	Intellectual developmental disorder (AR)	29
TUSC3	Intellectual developmental disorder (AR)	29
ZBTB18	Intellectual developmental disorder (AD, LoF)	58

VERT Gene	Neurodevelopment Disease Genes (Inheritance: Autosomal Recessive-AR; Autosomal Dominant-AD; Loss of Function-LoF; Gain of Function-GoF)	Ref.
ATP8A2	Cerebellar ataxia (AR)	29
CSNK2B	Poirier-Bienvenu neurodevelopmental syndrome (AD, LoF)	53
DPH5	Neurodevelopmental disorder (AR)	29
KCNA1	Episodic ataxia/myokymia syndrome (AD, LoF & GoF)	54,55
LMBRD2	Developmental delay with variable neurologic and brain abnormalities (AD)	29
NBEA	Neurodevelopmental disorder (AD, LoF)	56
RETREG1	Neuropathy (AR)	29
ROBO1	Nystagmus (AR); Neurooculorenal syndrome (AR); Pituitary hormone deficiency (AD)	29
TIAM1	Neurodevelopmental disorder (AR)	29
TRPM3	Neurodevelopmental disorder (AD, GoF)	57
VARS1	Neurodevelopmental disorder with microcephaly (AR)	29
ZSWIM6	Acromelic frontonasal dysostosis, (AD); Neurodevelopmental disorder (AD, GoF)	58,59

VERT Gene	Parkinson Disease Gene (Inheritance: Autosomal Recessive-AR; Autosomal Dominant-AD; Loss of Function-LoF; Gain of Function-GoF)	Ref.
DNAJC6	Parkinson disease 19 (AR)	29
LRRK2	Parkinson disease (AD, GoF)	60,61
PRKN	Parkinson disease (AR)	29
SLC18A2	Parkinsonism-dystonia (AR)	29
SNCA	Parkinson disease 1 & 4 (AD, LoF/GoF)	62-64

Table 3. Neurodevelopmental genes within VERT regions.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

a Mouse Chr2: 9 VERT Regions

b i. Chr2: 36.2-37.25 mb. Olfactory Receptors (29 Or genes)

c ii. Chr2: 85-90 mb: Olfactory Receptors (243 Or genes)

d Mouse Chr18: 8 VERT Regions

e Chr18: 37-38 mb: Protocadherins (15 Pcdha, 23 Pcdhb, and 22 Pcdhg genes)

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7