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### **Novel biallelic variants affecting the OTU domain of the gene OTUD6B associate with severe intellectual disability syndrome and molecular dynamics simulations**

**Sultan Cingoz**a,b,\* , **Didem Soydemir**c,1, **Tülay Oncü Oner**a,1, **Ezgi Karaca**d,e, **Burcu Ozden**d,e, Semra Hız Kurul<sup>c,d</sup>, Erhan Bayram<sup>c</sup>, University of Washington Center for Mendelian **Genomics**b, **Bradley P. Coe**b, **Deborah A. Nickerson**b, **Evan E. Eichler**b,f

aDepartment of Medical Biology and Genetics, Faculty of Medicine, Dokuz Eylul University, Izmir, **Turkey** 

bDepartment of Genome Sciences, University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle, WA, USA

<sup>c</sup>Department of Pediatrics, Division of Child Neurology, Faculty of Medicine, Dokuz Eylul University, Izmir, Turkey

dIzmir Biomedicine and Genome Center, Dokuz Eylul Health Campus, Izmir, Turkey

e Izmir International Biomedicine and Genome Institute, Dokuz Eylul University, Izmir, Turkey

<sup>f</sup>Howard Hughes Medical Institute, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA

#### **Abstract**

Intellectual developmental disorder with dysmorphic facies, seizures, and distal limb anomalies (IDDFSDA) is an autosomal recessive multisystem disorder caused by compound heterozygous or homozygous variants in the gene OTUD6B. Herein, we describe novel pathogenic compound heterozygous variants in *OTUD6B* identified via whole-exome sequencing in an index case

Ethical approval and consent to participants

Written informed consent was obtained from the parents of the index case.

Consent for publication

<sup>\*</sup>**Corresponding author.** Department of Medical Biology and Genetics, School of Medicine, Dokuz Eylul University, 35340, Inciralti, Izmir, Turkey. sultan.cingoz@deu.edu.tr (S. Cingoz). 1These authors contributed equally to this work.

Author's contribution

Conceptualization: S.C., E.E.E.; Data curation: S.C., B.P.C, UW-CMG; Formal Analysis: S.C., B.P.C; Funding acquisition: S.C., E.E.E., D.A.N.; Investigation: S.C.; Resources: S.H.K., D.S., E.B.; Methology: S.C., T.O.O., B.O.; Validation; T.O.O., B.O., E.K.; Project administration: S.C., E.E.E; Software: B.P.C, UW-CMG., E.K.; Visualization: D.S., T.O.O.; Supervision: S.C.; Writing – original draft: S.C.; Writing – review & editing: E.E.E., D.A.N.

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Consent for publication was obtained from the parents of the index case.

Availability of data and material

All data generated or analyzed during this study is included in the final published article.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that there are no competing interests.

exhibited the severe IDDFSDA phenotype. The potential pathogenicity of the novel frameshift and missense variants in the index case was investigated using *in silico* tools. The truncating frameshift variant in one allele was predicted to undergo degradation via nonsense-mediated decay of the mRNA molecule. To predict the severity of the damage to the protein caused by the missense variant in the other allele and its effects on phenotypic severity was further investigated together with a previously reported first homozygous missense variant in the same domain in another patient with a less severe IDDFSDA phenotype using structural modeling and molecular dynamics (MD) simulations for the first time. Based on these analyzes, it is anticipated that Tyr216Cys in the earlier reported case with less severe IDDFSDA will lead to localized destabilization, whereas Ile274Arg in the presented index case with the severe IDDFSDA phenotype will lead to significant distortion in the overall fold of OTUD6B. Our findings suggest that compound LOF and ultrarare missense variants may be contribute to the underlying variability expressivity associated with this disorder. In conclusion, our findings support that the clinical severity could be related with the predicted functional severity of the variations in OTUD6B. However, additional functional studies are required.

#### **Keywords**

OTUD6B ; OTU domain; severe IDDFSDA; molecular dynamics simulations; missense variant

#### **1. Introduction**

The gene *OTUD6B* (OTU deubiquitinase 6B) is located on chromosome 8q21.3 and includes seven exons (Online Mendelian Inheritance in Men, OMIM, #612021). OTUD6B encodes a member of the ovarian tumor domain (OTU) containing the subfamily of deubiquitinases (DUBs), which are proteases that specifically cleave ubiquitin linkages (Kayagaki et al., 2007; Komander and Barford, 2008; Komander et al., 2009; Xu et al., 2011; Mevissen et al., 2013). The OTU-type DUBs link the ubiquitin chains using conserved residues (ubiquitin-binding pockets) in their OTU domain. In all, 16 of the 18 OTU-type DUBs genes contain an intact catalytic triad (Xu et al., 2011; Mevissen et al., 2013). The catalytic triad—or core catalytic domain—is important not only for OTU-type DUBs containing the OTU domain, but also for all other cysteine protease genes.

Biallelic pathogenic variants described in OTUD6B in 20 individuals from 11 unrelated families have been associated with intellectual developmental disorder with dysmorphic facies, seizures, and distal limb anomalies (IDDFSDA) (Table 1) (Online Mendelian Inheritance in Men, OMIM, #617452). According to reports, it exhibits an autosomal recessive transmission pattern disorder (Santiago-Sim et al., 2017; Straniero et al., 2018; Alkuraya et al., 2020; Phetthong et al., 2021; Abdel-Salam et al., 2022). The disorder covers a wide clinical phenotypic spectrum of different severity. A limited number of recent studies show that the most severe form of IDDFSDA have severe intellectual disability syndrome, epilepsy, and multiple congenital anomalies consisting of dysmorphic facial appearance, structural brain abnormalities, including corpus callosum hypoplasia, white matter volume loss, and dilatation of the lateral ventricles (Santiago-Sim et al., 2017; Abdel-Salam et al., 2022). On the other hand, the patients with less severe clinical phenotype have mild to

moderate intellectual disability with normal speech and motor development (Santiago-Sim et al., 2017; Straniero et al., 2018; Abdel-Salam et al., 2022).

Herein, we report novel compound heterozygous variants associated with IDDFSDA; a frameshift (p.Val206fs) and a missense (p.Ile274Arg) in the deubiquitinating enzyme gene OTUD6B that were identified via whole-exome sequencing in the index case and nonconsanguineous parents, and confirmed via Sanger sequencing. The truncating frameshift variant (NP\_057107.4:p.Val206fs) in one allele was predicted to undergo degradation via nonsense-mediated decay of the mRNA molecule. To predict the severity of the damage to the protein caused by the missense variants in *OTUD6B*, structural modeling and molecular dynamics simulations were performed for the first time. The effect of amino acid substitutions both previously published (p.Tyr216Cys) and in the present study (p.Ile274Arg), on the structure of the OTUD6B protein were evaluated together to compare the effect of the missense variants on OTUD6B protein structure and function, and to predict the relationship between genotype and phenotypic severity.

#### **2. Materials (subjects) and methods**

#### **2.1. Editorial policies, ethical considerations, and DNA extraction**

This study protocol was approved by the Dokuz Eylul University Ethics Committee and written informed consent was obtained from the parents of the index case. Genomic DNA was extracted from peripheral blood using a NucleoSpin® Blood L Kit (Macherey-Nagel, Duren, Germany), according to the manufacturer's instructions.

#### **2.2. Clinical report**

The index case (a 17-year-old male) presented to our pediatric neurology department at age 12 years due to developmental delay, intractable seizures, and multiple congenital anomalies, including congenital heart disease, renal malformation, and severe scoliosis. Anamnesis showed that he was the second child of nonconsanguineous parents. He was born at 32 weeks of gestation via emergency caesarian section due to fetal distress and intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR). He had a low APGAR score and was transferred to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) with respiratory insufficiency. He did not require assisted ventilation; however, additional investigations were performed following observation of dysmorphic features, including hypotelorism, midfacial hypoplasia, and a high-arched palate, and microcephaly.

Multisystemic diagnostic work up while hospitalized showed multiple congenital anomalies, encapsulating horseshoe kidneys, tetralogy of Fallot, and inguinal hernia. In terms of neurodevelopment milestones, he was able to sit up without support and walk at the age of 15 months and 3 years, respectively. Additionally, scoliosis was observed as a new neurologic sign when he was 3 years old.

The patient also had epilepsy based on his positive family history. The patient initially had generalized tonic clonic seizures at age 8 months. Phenobarbital 5 mg·kg<sup>-1</sup>·d<sup>-1</sup> was initiated as the antiepileptic drug. EEG showed bilateral sharp waves were predominantly in the right centro-temporo-parietal regions, but seizure control with monotherapy was not successful.

Valproic acid 20 mg·kg<sup>-1</sup>·d<sup>-1</sup> was added to his treatment regimen and gradually increased to 40 mg⋅kg<sup>-1</sup>⋅d<sup>-1</sup>. For the clusters of seizure with similar semiology phenobarbital therapy was replaced by levetiracetam (from 15 mg·kg<sup>-1</sup>·d<sup>-1</sup> to 35 mg·kg<sup>-1</sup>·d<sup>-1</sup>). The seizures continued, though less frequently, and were stabilized by dual therapy until he was 8 years old. Laboratory tests, neuroradiological and neurophysiological studies were performed to determine the etiology of the patient's seizures and multiple congenital anomalies. Cranial MRI indicated right thalamic focal encephalomalacia and partial agenesis of the corpus callosum.

Recent EEG showed multiple epileptic abnormalities, including sharp slow wave discharges in the right frontotemporal and left parietooccipital regions that were observed 2-3 times during a 20-s period (marked by black arrows in Fig. 1A, B). At the time of the patient's most recent evaluation at age 17 years his anthropometric measurements were as follows: weight: 29 kg (−6 SDS); height: 140 cm (−5.15 SDS); head circumference 51 cm (−4.4 SDS). In addition, he could not sit unsupported or walk independently. Although he knew a few words when he was 7 years old, he was getting worse and had no speech in the end. In addition, neurological examination showed notable axial hypotonia, with decreased muscle strength. He had prominent spasticity and increased deep tendon reflexes in the upper and lower extremities. He also had dysmorphic features (detailed in Table 1) with skeletal deformities (Fig. 2A, B). At the time this manuscript was prepared he was aged 17 years and had been seizure free with a dual antiepileptic treatment regimen (valproic acid and levetiracetam) for 6 months.

#### **2.3. Genomic analysis**

The standard genetic diagnosis approach in cases of intellectual disability (ID) was applied. After conventional cytogenetic analysis by G- banding in index case, genome-wide analysis of the copy number variants (CNVs) using array comparative genomic hybridization (aCGH) and a custom NimbleGen oligonucleotide array including 135,000 probes (53,068 for hotspots region and 81,932 for the genome) was initially performed. CNVs were called using a Hidden Markov model (HMM). CNVs were filtered according to American College of Medical Genetics (ACMG) criteria for molecular diagnosis (Matthijs et al., 2016).

#### **2.4. Exome sequencing and analysis**

Exome sequencing was performed in the index case and his parents, who had normal karyotype and array CGH results. The NimbleGen SeqCap EZ Human Exome Kit v2.0 was used for exome capture. Samples were sequenced with paired-end 50-bp reads using an Illumina HiSeq2000 sequencing platform and exome variants were called by the UWG-CMG GATK (Genome Analyzer Toolkit) pipeline (version date Dec 2015) and annotated via VEP v.83 (Variant Effect Predictor). Then, data were analyzed using GEMINI v.0.19.1 and suspected variants were screened in the following databases: dbSNP [\(https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/snp](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/snp)); ESP6500 (v2) [\(http://evs.gs.washington.edu/EVS/](http://evs.gs.washington.edu/EVS/)); 1000 Genomes (phase 3) ([http://](http://www.1000genomes.org/) [www.1000genomes.org/](http://www.1000genomes.org/)); ExAC (r0.3) ([http://exac.broadinstitute.org/about\)](http://exac.broadinstitute.org/about); UK10K (Feb, 2016) [\(https://www.uk10k.org](https://www.uk10k.org)).

Variants with a frequency  $>0.005$  in any single population within the ESP 6500 (v2), 1000 Genomes (phase 3), ExAC (r0.3) or UK10K (Feb, 2016) databases were excluded; this is referred to as maxAAF throughout this manuscript. Calls with genotype quality  $\langle 20 \, (\text{GQ} \langle 20) \rangle$  and calls with read depth  $\langle 6 \, (\text{DP} \langle 6) \rangle$  were excluded. After the variants in the family had been filtered, the disease candidate variants were selected using possible standard Mendelian models (homozygous recessive, compound heterozygous, Xlinked recessive, X-linked de novo, and autosomal de novo). Rare variants (low minor allele frequency in the gnomAD variome) (<http://gnomad.broadinstitute.org>) were the focus of investigation. Potentially damaging variants were prioritized according to the American College of Medical Genetics Organization (Matthijs et al., 2016; Richards et al., 2015). OTUD6B (GenBank: NM\_016023.3, GRCH37/hg19), including two heterozygous nonsynonymous variants, was prioritized as a likely pathogenic according to variant allele frequencies, genotype frequencies, inheritance models, family history, index case phenotype, gene functions, protein expression, and assessment using in silico prediction tools. After reviewing information available in the literature and databases, including OMIM, Monarch Initiative, and GeneCards, we identified what was considered to be the best candidate gene in the study family. There were no other candidate genes in this family.

As a result of the analyses, variants in *OTUD6B* were identified and further investigated. Variants in OTUD6B were not detected in control DNA samples. Variants and inheritance was validated via Sanger sequencing. The oligonucleotide primers used for PCR amplification and Sanger sequencing were as follows: OTUD6B-F, 5' AAT ATT GGC AGC TAG ACA G 3' and OTUD6B-R, 5' ATC TGG GTT CTT CTT ACG 3' for the frameshift variant, and OTUD6B-F, 5' GCC AAG ACT GCC GTG TTT 3' and OTUD6B-F, 5' CTC CCA GGG TGA CTG TCA TT 3' for the missense variant.

#### **2.5. In silico prediction methods**

**2.5.1. In silico bioinformatics approaches using DNA sequence, protein sequence, and structural information—**First, we investigated the evolutionary conservation of the amino acid sequence of OTUD6B. We searched all homologs of OTUD6B sharing >35% sequence identity and then aligned them to disclose all possible amino acid changes in the sequence using the ConSurf server (Landau et al., 2005). A comparative analysis in 10 species of OTUD6B amino acid sequences was performed using ClustalW software [\(http://www.clustal.org/](http://www.clustal.org/)) (Fig. 3C).

The potential pathogenicity of the present (p.Ile274Arg) and a previously reported missense variants (p.Tyr216Cys) were assessed via 5 in silico approaches: Mutation Taster [\(http://www.mutationtaster.org/\)](http://www.mutationtaster.org/), SIFT [\(https://sift.bii.a-star.edu.sg/](https://sift.bii.a-star.edu.sg/)), PROVEAN [\(http://provean.jcvi.org/index.php\)](http://provean.jcvi.org/index.php), SNAP2 [\(http://www.rostlab.org/services/SNAP\)](http://www.rostlab.org/services/SNAP), and I-Mutant (<http://folding.biofold.org/i-mutant/i-mutant2.0.html>) (Supplementary Table 1).

The effect of the frameshift variant (p.Val206Glyfs\*9) was evaluated via the Mutation Taster [\(http://www.mutationtaster.org/\)](http://www.mutationtaster.org/) and NMDEscPredictor ([https://nmdprediction.shinyapps.io/](https://nmdprediction.shinyapps.io/nmdescpredictor/) [nmdescpredictor/](https://nmdprediction.shinyapps.io/nmdescpredictor/)) databases.

**2.5.2. Structural modeling and molecular dynamics (MD) simulations—**The molecular dynamics simulations were performed with Gromacs 2020 (Abraham et al., 2015) under the effect of an AMBER99SB-ILDN force field. Water was modelled using TIP3P parameters and ionization was performed using NaCl at 0.15 M. The simulation box was set as a dodecahedron and the temperature was maintained at 310K during the 200-ns simulation.

#### **3. Results**

#### **3.1. Exome sequencing and analysis**

We identified novel compound heterozygous variants in the deubiquitinating enzyme gene OTUD6B via exome sequencing in the index case and non-consanguineous parents who had normal karyotype and array CGH results, and confirmed via Sanger sequencing.

According to the Mendelian models used, each parent for novel variants in OTUD6B were denoted as heterozygous (one alternate allele), and affected cases were denoted as compound heterozygous where the alleles are located at two different loci within the same gene (Fig. 3A). The index case carried two novel variants (NM\_016023.3)—a paternally inherited frameshift variant [(NM\_016023.3:c.617\_618del) (NP\_057107.4:p.Val206Glyfs\*9)] (ClinVar accession number: SCV002061910) and a maternally inherited missense variant [(NM\_016023.3:c.821 T>G) (NP\_057107.4:p.Ile274Arg)] (ClinVar accession number: SCV002064127) located in exon 4 and exon 6 of OTUD6B, respectively (Figure 3A, B) ([http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/clinvar) [clinvar](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/clinvar)). The missense variant c.821T>G was not reported in gnomAD. The frameshift variant c.617\_618del is annotated in dbSNP 153 (rs1472577530) and the maximum subpopulation allele frequency (maxAAF) was 0.000008314 (2/240562 alleles, GnomAD\_exome). A homozygous state was not detected in gnomAD. The CADD score was not available because it is an indel. The heterozygous private missense variant with a CADD score of 24.3 was private; this variant has not been previously reported in any population. Allele frequencies were obtained from the gnomAD database ([https://](https://gnomad.broadinstitute.org/) [gnomad.broadinstitute.org/](https://gnomad.broadinstitute.org/)) (Table 1).

#### **3.2. In silico bioinformatics approaches using DNA sequence, protein sequence, and structural information**

To understand the severity of the damage to the protein caused by the missense variant in the other allele and its effects on phenotypic severity using structural modeling and molecular dynamics (MD) simulations, the variant [NP\_057107.4:p.Ile274Arg] was further investigated together with a previously reported first missense variant (p.Tyr216Cys) in the same domain in another patient with a less severe IDDFSDA phenotype.

In the evolutionary conservation analysis of the amino acid sequence of OTUD6B, it was noted that the Tyr216 position in the previously reported case can only be changed to the His, Ile, Phe, Arg, Ser, and Ile274 position, whereas in the presented case it can only be changed to Val and Lys evolutionarily. This implies that Tyr216Cys and Ile274Arg might not be evolutionary tolerated.

The potential pathogenicity of the present (p.Ile274Arg) and a previously reported missense variants (p.Tyr216Cys) were assessed via 5 in silico approaches. Mutation Taster, SIFT, PROVEAN, and SNAP2 suggested that the missense variant has a damaging/disease-causing effect on OTUD6B. The in silico prediction of the maternally inherited missense was that it was harmful [Mutation Taster "Disease causing" (probability: 0.9999); PROVEAN "Deleterious" (score: −5.360 [cutoff: −2.5]); SIFT "Damaging" (score: 0); SNAP2 "Effect" (score: 81; accuracy: 91%)] (Supplementary Table 1). Additionally, I-Mutant further indicated that this missense variant can decrease protein stability. On the other hand, the Mutation Taster database prediction for the frameshift variant was that it is disease-causing (probability: 1). According to the NMDEscPredictor database, p.Val206Glyfs\*9 is predicted to undergo degradation via nonsense-mediated decay (NMD+). The novel variants in the index case with a severe IDDFSDA phenotype and previously reported missense variant in the same domain in another patient with a less severe IDDFSDA phenotype were predicted to be rare and pathogenic via 5 in silico approaches.

#### **3.3. Thorough investigation of the effect of missense variants on the structure and function of the OTUD6B protein based on molecular dynamics and structural modeling**

In the presented case the aim was to dissect the effect of Tyr216Cys and Ile274Arg substitutions on protein activity. In order to understand the effect of these variations, the 3D structure of OTUD6B was modeled (as its structure is not yet resolved). For modeling OTUD6B, we searched for structurally resolved OTUD6B homologs. The closest homolog shares ~10% sequence identity with OTUD6B [\(https://www.rcsb.org/structure/5LRW\)](https://www.rcsb.org/structure/5LRW). Despite this low sequence similarity, we proceeded with the available template and obtained the wild type, Tyr216Cys variant, and Ile274Arg variant OTU domain models of OTUD6B by using the HHpred (Zimmermann et al., 2018) and Modeller (Webb and Sali, 2016) servers. The obtained structures and variation locations in the catalytic triad are depicted in Figure 4. Figure 4C shows that in the wild-type form, Tyr216, is surrounded by aromatic amino acids, leading to an aromatic packing, which is lost in the case of Tyr216Cys. Figure 4D represents that Ile274 is surrounded by hydrophobic amino acids that will be strongly destabilized upon Ile274Arg variation. So, expanding on the obtained models, it is expected that the variations cause stability problems in the protein, supported also by the protein stability prediction servers, MaestroWeb (Laimer et al., 2015) and DUET (Pires et al., 2014). According to the MaestroWeb Server, the stability changes for Tyr216Cys and Ile274Arg are predicted to be 0.792 kcal moL<sup>-1</sup> and 2.564 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>, respectively. This indicates that both substitutions cause instability in the OTU domain, although Ile274Arg substitution leads to a more drastic change. DUET server results also validate this result, with more significant change in Ile274Arg substitution. These observations were also validated by running a more sophisticated simulation tool, i.e., molecular dynamics simulations. The Ile274Arg variant protein unfolded through simulation and a stable structure was never obtained, which implies that the change introduced by arginine is structurally incompatible with the hydrophobic core of the protein. As such, it was hypothesized that Tyr216Cys will lead to localized destabilization, whereas Ile274Arg will lead to significant distortion in the overall fold of OTUD6B.

#### **4. Discussion**

Exome sequencing is a powerful method for identifying genetic causes of neurodevelopmental disorders (Rump et al., 2015). Herein we reported novel compound heterozygous pathogenic variants in *OTUD6B* using trio-based exome sequencing in a patient with a severe neurodevelopmental disorder. Recently, biallelic variants in OTUD6B have been reported to cause IDDFSDA, characterized by a wide clinical spectrum (Santiago-Sim et al., 2017). To date, only 11 *OTUD6B* variants have been described in 20 cases from 11 families, with the exception of the variants described herein (Table 1 and Fig. 3B, C, D). Among the gene variants, 4 were discovered by Santiago-Sim et al. (2017); 1 homozygous nonsense variant (NM\_016023.3:c.433 C>T) in exon 4 resulting in an Arg145-to-ter (p.Arg145\*) substitution, 1 homozygous frameshift variant (NM\_016023.3:c.469\_473delTTAAC) (p.Leu157Argfs\*8) in exon 4, 1 splice-site homozygous variant (NM\_016023.3:c.173–2A>G) in intron 1 in which OTUD6B deletion leads to A to G transition in intron 1 of *OTUD6B* deletion, and 1 homozygous missense variant (NM\_016023.3:c.647A>G) in exon 4 resulting in Tyr216 to Cys216 substitution (p.Tyr216Cys). Other homozygous nonsense variant (NM\_016023.5:c.631G>T) (p.Glu211\*), also referred to as (NM\_016023.3:c.721G>T) (p.Glu241\*), in exon 5 was discovered by Alkuraya et al. (2020). Straniero et al. (2018) described another patient with a milder phenotype and first compound heterozygous splice site variants (C.324+1G  $>C$ ) and (C.405+1G $>$ A) in *OTUD6B*. They also showed that both variants lead to the production of aberrant transcripts affecting OTUD6B splicing with experimentally validated findings that c.324+1G >C causes the complete skipping of exon 2 that leads to a frameshift (p.Ala58Aspfs\_6). Among the variants described by Santiago-Sim et al. (2017) all affect both protein isoforms including the OTU domain, except for 1 splicing variation (c.173–2A>G) in family 5 that could lead to the production of an intact OTUD6B-2 protein with the skipping of exon 2. They did not, however, report experimental validation findings for the c.173–2A>G variation on splicing in patients with the mild or moderate phenotype (Santiago-Sim et al., 2017). These findings may explain the phenotypic differences in the clinical severity of the cases with splice site variants. An additional 4 variants have been described in the two most recent publications. Two of them were discovered in two unrelated families by Abdel-Salam et al. (2022); 1 homozygous nonsense variant (NM\_016023.3:c.271C>T) (p.Gln91\*) in exon 2 and homozygous missense variant (NM\_016023.3:c.767G>T) (p.Gly256Val) in exon 5. Phetthong et al. (2021) described compound heterozygous frameshift variant and 0.118 Mb deletion of 8q21.3, chr8:92084087-92202189, with OTUD6B involved.

In all, four of the previously described variants and one of the novel variants in the presented case are located in exon 4, and the 3 previously described variants are located in the intron (1, 2, and 3) splice site of OTUD6B (Table 1). The OTUD6B protein includes 3 coiled-coil domains (CC) and an OTU-like cysteine protease domain [18]. Specially, cases carrying the variants that changed the OTU-domain had the severe clinical phenotype, except for those with p.Tyr216Cys and p.Gly256Val. In addition, it is remarkable that the variants are clustered in exon 4 and truncated. In the present study, when the approximate location of the amino acid changes in the OTUD6B protein was examined both variants seemed to have

a potential effect on the amino acid sequence of the only OTU domain of the OTUD6B protein that is a key functional domain. The novel likely gene-disruptive (LGD) variant  $[(NM_016023.3:c.617_018d)]$  (NP\_057107.4:p.Val206Glyfs<sup>\*9</sup>)] in exon 4 of *OTUD6B* in the presented case was predicted to undergo degradation via nonsense-mediated decay (NMD+) of the mRNA molecule. This frameshift variant was performed by an indel of nucleotides between the highly conserved residue cysteine loop (C-loop) and variable loop into the OTU domain of OTUD6B (Fig. 3B, D). The shift site in the OTU domain did not include the cysteine loop, but did include the H-loop and variable loop from the locations of the conserved predicted ubiquitin binding sites within the OTU domain (Fig. 3B).

The present study also described an additional novel missense variant [(NM\_016023.3:c.821 T>G) (NP\_057107.4:p.Ile274Arg)] located in exon 6 that leads to an amino acid change (isoleucine to arginine) between the highly conserved residue histidine loop (H-loop) and variable loop into the OTU domain of OTUD6B (Fig. 3B, D). In silico analysis of the novel p.Ile274Arg variant suggested that this variant was rare and predicted to be pathogenic (Supplementary Table 1).

The severe clinical phenotype of the intellectual developmental syndrome in the presented case might be indicative of the functional importance of the region in the OTU domain, including the variants. In particular, the region affected by the missense variants may be important for defining specific additional residues with protease activity and cleavage specificity. At the same time, the first missense variant (p.Tyr216Cys) that is between the C-loop and variable loop into the OTU domain of OTUD6B first described by Santiago-Sim et al. (2017) was hypomorphic and associated with a less severe phenotype, suggesting it may not be important (suitable) to evaluate its regional functionality in the OTU domain, whereas the presented patient with the novel missense variant had the severe phenotype.

The two novel variants in *OTUD6B* reported herein will most likely prove to be important for understanding the relationship of protein deubiquitination to intellectual developmental syndromes. DUBs have an essential role in regulating DNA repair, protein degradation, apoptosis and immune response. The importance of proper regulation of protein deubiquitination is indicated by the identification of variants in DUB genes in such diseases as cancer and neurodegeneration (Clague et al., 2013); therefore, rare pathogenic variants are important for understanding the function and regulation of the genes. When the previously reported patients and the presented patient carrying the variants in OTUD6B were evaluated according to the genetic and clinical features, the severity of the phenotype of the patients with *OTUD6B* gene variant differed.

The patients shown in Table 1 presented with dysmorphic features, epilepsy, spasticity, and extremity abnormalities. Case 3-18 and the presented case have very severe clinical features, including severe intellectual disability, structural brain malformation, microcephaly, absence of speech, inability to walk, hypotonia, feeding problems, congenital heart defect, and generalized tonic-clonic seizures, whereas case 2, 19, 20, 21 have a less severe clinical phenotype, with mild to moderate intellectual disability, but normal speech and motor development (Table 1). The presented patient had a similar phenotype as the previously reported patients with OTUD6B variants in family 1-5 described by Santiago-Sim et al.

(2017) and case 15, 16, 17 (Alkuraya et al., 2020; Abdel-Salam et al., 2022) (Table 1). The presented case has also similar common phenotypic features including characteristic facial dysmorphology and hand pattern including clubbed fingers with broad thumbs in Patient II.2 (Figure1/O; Figure 2/G, H) reported by Abdel-Salam et al. (2022).

Interestingly, cranial MRI in the index case showed partial agenesis of the corpus callosum (pACC) characterized by the absence of some its parts. ACC might occur together with other malformations that lead to the syndrome and are present in 1-3% of cases with the impaired neurodevelopment (Hofman et al., 2020). A single MRI image showing partial or short corpus callosum agenesis was also noted in individual II-4 from family 3, including the LGD variant (p.Arg145\*) reported by Santiago-Sim et al. (2017) (Supplementary Figure 1). To show the similarity in corpus callosum abnormalities, the present study compared MRI sagittal images of the brain indicating partial agenesis of the corpus callosum in the present and previously reported cases (II-4 from family 3) with OTUD6B variants (Supplementary Figure 1). Although the findings suggest that pACC might be a specific feature of the severe IDDFSDA phenotype associated with OTUD6B variants; however, additional functional studies are required and other novel variants need to be detected, so as to more fully delineate the phenotypic spectrum of the variants in OTUD6B and to more clearly understand the mechanism of normal ACC development. Although the missense variant (p.Tyr216Cys) in exon 4 and maps to the same OTU domain in family 6 (Fig. 3B, D) that was predicted to be deleterious via *in silico* tools (Supplementary Table 1), the phenotype of the patient was less severe, as compared to the patients (including the presented patient) with truncating OTUD6B variants.

The phenotypic severity depends on the residual protein function of the sum of two alleles in an autosomal recessive disorder. To predict the relationship between genotype and phenotypic severity, the effects of the missense variants [(NM\_016023.3:c.821 T>G) (NP\_057107.4:p.Ile274Arg)] on the other allele and on the structure and function of the OTUD6B protein was further investigated together with a previously reported first homozygous missense variant (p.Tyr216Cys) in the same domain in a patient with a less severe IDDFSDA phenotype.

In the further investigations, the 3D structure of OTUD6B was modeled; the obtained structures and variants locations within the catalytic triad are given in Figure 4. The stability changes for Tyr216Cys and Ile274Arg are predicted, indicating that both substitutions cause instability in the OTU domain, although Ile274Arg substitution leads to a more significant drastic change in stability. When we simulated the Ile274-Arg variant protein, we could never obtain a stable structure. As such, it was hypothesized that Tyr216Cys will lead to localized destabilization, whereas Ile274Arg will lead to significant distortion in the overall fold of OTUD6B. These results explained why cases from family 6 reported by Santiago-Sim et al. (2017) had a less severe disease phenotype than the presented patient (Table 1).

In conclusion, our findings support that the clinical severity could be related with the predicted functional severity of the variations in OTUD6B. The findings confirm that IDDFSD—with its wide phenotypic spectrum —can be classified as 2 types: severe and less

severe. Moreover, the severe clinical phenotype of the intellectual developmental syndrome in the presented case might be indicative of the functional importance of the region in the OTU domain, including the variants. The clinical phenotype severity predicting by genomic variations could simplify diagnosis and therapy. However, additional functional studies are required.

#### **Supplementary Material**

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

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B



#### **Figure 1.**

EEG shows asynchronous multifocal epileptic discharges originating from both hemispheres. [2- 4 Hz centrotemporal spikes (T3-C3) and right frontal sharp-slow wave discharges (F2-F4) in Figure 1A, left parietooccipital sharp waves in Figure 1B marked by black arrows, predominantly seen on bipolar montage EEG].



#### **Figure 2.**

**A.** Dysmorphological facial features of the presented patient including hypotelorism, longarched and sparse eyebrows, prominent and beaked nose, high arched palate and midfacial hypoplasia large ears with hypo plastic helical crimp, long philtrum, and thin upper lip, and severe scoliosis (including left thorasic hump and pelvic obliquity with chest deformity called pectus carinatum) **B.** Bilateral planovalgus deformity with overlapping toes.

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#### **Figure 3.**

**A.** Pedigree for the reported family. Black symbol, squares, and circles represent the index case, males, and females, respectively. **B.** Schematic representation of the protein encoded by the gene OTUD6B (NM\_016023.3; GRCh37/hg19). The variants reported herein are shown in framed. **c.** Conservation analysis illustrates a high level of conservation of Ile274. d. Genomic locations of the variants reported within OTUD6B. The variants reported herein are shown in framed. The missense variant [(NM\_016023.3:c.821T>G) (NP\_057107.4:p.Ile274Arg)] was not reported in gnomAD. The maximum subpopulation allele frequency (maxAAF) of the frameshift variant [(NM\_016023.3:c.617\_618del) (NP\_057107.4:p.Val206Glyfs\*9)] was 0.000008314 (2/240562 alleles) in gnomAD. A homozygous state was not detected in gnomAD.

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#### **Figure 4.**

**A.** The crystal structure of Cezanne/OTUD7B in complex with the di-Ub chain. OTUD7B is depicted in pale green cartoon/surface, bound to a di-ubiquitin chain (blue and gray) (PDB ID: 5LRV). The catalytic triad of the OTU domain is shown with pink spheres. **B.**  The model of human OTUD6B's OTU domain. The two-point variant locations, Tyr216Cys and Ile274Arg, are noted with orange circles and the catalytic triad is noted with a pink circle. The distance between the catalytic triad and the 216th position is  $>$ 20 Å and the distance between the catalytic triad and the 274th position is ~8 Å. **C.** The wild-type model of OTUD6B; Tyr216's (orange sticks) important surrounding amino acids (gray sticks) are highlighted. In the wild-type form, TYR216 is surrounded by aromatic amino acids, leading to an aromatic packing that will be lost in the case of Tyr216Cys (right encircled panel). **D.**  The wild-type model of OTUD6B; I274's (orange sticks) important surrounding amino acids (gray sticks) are highlighted. In the wild-type form, ILE 274 is surrounded by hydrophobic amino acids, leading to a hydrophobic core that will be highly destabilized upon Ile274Arg variant, as depicted by the circled panel.



# **Table 1.**

of patients carrying OTUD6B variants. of patients carrying OTUD6B variants.







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NICU:neonatal intensive care unit, (I)VSD:(intra)ventricular septal defect, RVH:right ventricular hypertrophy, LGS:Lennox Gastaut syndrome, NA:not available, PEG:percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy, NICU:neonatal intensive care unit, (I)VSD:(intra)ventricular septal defect, RVH:right ventricular hypertrophy, LGS:Lennox Gastaut syndrome, NA:not available, PEG:percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy, Variants were named according to HGVS nomenclature and reference sequence NM\_016023.3 (GRCh37/hg19). Abbreviations: ASM:anti-seizure medication, CBZ:carbamezapine, CZP:clonazepam, Variants were named according to HGVS nomenclature and reference sequence NM\_016023.3 (GRCh37/hg19). Abbreviations: ASM:anti-seizure medication, CBZ:carbamezapine, CZP:clonazepam, LEV:levetiracetam, PB:phenobarbital, TPM:topiramate, VPA:walproate, VNS:wagal nerve stimulation, ASD:atrial septal defect, ASDs:autism spectrum diseases, CCH:corpus callosum hypoplasia, LEV:levetiracetam, PB:phenobarbital, TPM:topiramate, VPA:valproate, VNS:vagal nerve stimulation, ASD:atrial septal defect, ASDs:autism spectrum diseases, CCH:corpus callosum hypoplasia, ERG:electroretinography, GERD:gastroesophageal reflux disease, GH:growth hormone, GTC:generalised tonic clonic, HGG:hypogammaglobulinemia, IUGR:intrauterine growth retardation, ERG:electroretinography, GERD:gastroesophageal reflux disease, GH:growth hormone, GTC:generalised tonic clonic, HGG:hypogammaglobulinemia, IUGR:intrauterine growth retardation, PS:pulmonart stenosis, RTA:renal tubular acidosis, SGA:small gestational age, TEF:tracheoesophageal fistüle, TOF:tetrology of fallot, VSD:ventricular septal defect PS:pulmonart stenosis, RTA:renal tubular acidosis, SGA:small gestational age, TEF:tracheoesophageal fistüle, TOF:tetrology of fallot, VSD:ventricular septal defect

scizure types are not available for each case; however seizures denoted in the literature are frequently characterized with generalized tonic clonic. DEL:chr8: 92,084,087-92,202,186 (GRCh37). \*: seizure types are not available for each case; however seizures denoted in the literature are frequently characterized with generalized tonic clonic. DEL:chr8: 92,084,087-92,202,186 (GRCh37).