## **A Novel Stratification Method in Linkage Studies to Address Inter- and Intra-Family Heterogeneity in Autism**

#### **INTRODUCTION-Supplemental information**

#### **Previously Reported Linkage Studies on ASD**

An overview of the linked regions can be found in review articles by Freitag *et al*. [\[1\]](#page-17-0), Abrahams *et al*. [\[2\]](#page-17-1), Weiss *et al*. [\[3\]](#page-17-2) as well as Craddock *et al*. [\[4\]](#page-17-3) which provides a broader review of linkage findings related to psychiatric disorders. A synopsis of the previously reported genome-wide linkage studies clearly shows the need for subject stratification which has been explored in more recent reports. A summary of previously reported linkage studies on ASD is listed in **Table S1.**

Overall, applications of multi-gene models and genome-wide linkage studies have shown several linked loci, but with a wide variance in results. A number of proposed loci harbor promising autism candidate genes; yet subsequent studies have not confirmed their potential role in autism. In several instances, an original suggestive linkage locus even disappeared after sample size expansion. In 1998, the result of a full genome screen from 99 families was reported by the International Molecular Genetic Study of Autism Consortium (IMGSAC) [\[5\]](#page-17-4). Several regions showed suggestive linkage and the most significant susceptibility regions were identified on chromosomes 7q and 16p with an maximum multi-point LOD score (MLS) of 3.55 and 1.97, respectively. In 2001, the IMGSAC added additional families and markers, expanding their earlier linkage study to 152 affected sib-pairs [\[6\]](#page-17-5). Although the scores on chromosomes 7 and 16 showed an increase when a larger population was analyzed, the previously reported linkage scores for other chromosomes were diminished, despite increasing sample size [\[6\]](#page-17-5).

In 2001, Liu *et al*. [\[7\]](#page-17-6) genotyped 335 microsatellite markers in 110 multiplex families with autism from the Autism Genetic Resource Exchange (AGRE), resulting in several new suggestive linkage regions. Yonan *et al*. [\[8\]](#page-17-7) reported a follow-up genome-wide screen using 345 AGRE families, a sample size that was three times greater than the previous study conducted by the same group [\[7\]](#page-17-6). When the sample size was increased to 345 families some scores were improved, while others decreased in comparison to the earlier study. For example, the scores for regions on chromosomes 19 and X were respectively decreased from 3.36 and 2.27 in 110 families to 0.69 and 1.78 in 345 families [\[7](#page-17-6)[,8\]](#page-17-7). Such examples of decreased LOD scores with larger sample sizes illustrate some of the problems associated with replicating linkage data and demonstrate that a larger sample size alone does not necessarily translate into improved statistical outcomes. The key questions for genetic analyses are: (i) how many of these loci represent a true susceptibility region and (ii) given the phenotypic heterogeneity among cases, how can the identified loci be best associated with the respective autistic subjects?



 **Table S1.** *Continue*

$[14]$	Broad ASD diagnosis	2q33.1	$MLS = 1.12$	82 families
	ASD and phrase speech delay>36 Mo	2q33.1	$MLS = 2.86$	45 families
	ASD and phrase speech delay>36 Mo	2q33.1	$MLS = 1.58$	45 families
$[15]$	ASD and stereotyped patterns/repetitive behaviors on ADI-R	$15q11-q13$	Dom LOD = $4.71$ , Rec LOD = $3.83$	23 families
	ASD diagnosis	$15q11-q13$	Dom LOD = $1.40$ , Rec LOD = $1.07$	81 families
[8]	Broad ASD diagnosis	5p13-5p14	$MLS = 2.54$ ( $p = 0.00059$ )	345 AGRE families
	Broad ASD diagnosis	17q11.2	$MLS = 2.83 (p = 0.00029)$	345 AGRE families
	Broad ASD diagnosis	11p13-11p11.2	$MLS = 2.24$ (p = 0.0012)	345 AGRE families
$[16]$	ASD diagnosis, male only	17q11	$MLS = 4.3 (P = 0.008)$	257 AGRE families, 148 male only
$[17]$	ASD diagnosis	3q25-27	$NPL = 3.5 (p = 0.0003)$	A large Utah pedigree
$[18]$	ASD diagnosis, no affected females	17q11-17q21	$LOD = 4.1 (p = 0.00008)$	91 AGRE families, 48 male only
$[19]$	Age at first words	9q33-9q34	$Z=3.5$ (P = 0.0002)	222 CPEA families
	Strict Autism diagnosis	7q32.1-32.2	$P = 0.0006$	169 families
	Male only, broad diagnosis	11q13.4	$P = 0.0009$	148 families
	Female containing	4q24	$P = 0.002$	74 families
$[20]$	Social Responsiveness Score	11p12-11p13	$Z$ max = 3.2 (P = 0.0007)	99 AGRE families
$[21]$	ASD diagnosis	11p12	$Z = 3.6$	1181 AGP families
$[22]$	ASD diagnosis	$12q13.13-q15$	$HLOD = 3.02$	26 extended families
	ASD diagnosis, male only affected families	12q13.13-q15	Rec HLOD = $4.51$ (P = 0.001)	17 extended families
$[23]$	ASD diagnosis	1q23	$p = 0.00082$	An extended-Finnish family
		$15q11-q13$	$P = 0.00084$	An extended-Finnish family
		19p13.3	$P = 0.000078$	An extended-Finnish family
$[30]$	ASD diagnosis	20p13	$LOD=3.81$	878 families
		6q27	$LOD=2.94$	878 families
$[24]$	ASD diagnosis, high risk families	Xp22.11-21.2	max LOD=2.01, dom model	86 pedigrees
$[25]$	ASD diagnosis and IQ	10p12	$p=0.001$	287 multiplex families
		16q23	$p=0.015$	287 multiplex families
		2p21	$p=0.03$	287 multiplex families

## **METHODS-Supplemental information**

# **ADI-R Subtyping**

Phenotypic subtyping of the probands was assigned using previously performed ADI-R cluster analyses methods [\[27\]](#page-18-10). Briefly, this involved Kmeans cluster analyses  $(K = 4)$  to divide the initial 1954 AGRE probands into four subgroups based upon severity scores on 123 items probed by the ADI-R assessment measure. Four subgroups were determined to be the optimal number for the ASD population examined based on prior Figure of Merit analysis of the ADI-R dataset as described [\[27\]](#page-18-10). Unsupervised principal components analysis was also used to confirm the phenotypic similarity of individual cases within the four subgroups based on their respective aggregate ADI-R severity profiles across all selected items. All analyses were performed using the Multi-experiment Viewer (MeV) software developed by Quackenbush and colleagues [\[28\]](#page-18-11).

## **Linkage Analysis**

Linkage analysis was performed using the described stratification protocol which resulted in 16 subgroup-specific datasets. Two-point nonparametric linkage (NPL) was performed using MERLIN version 1.1.2, [\[29\]](#page-18-12) and Whittemore and Halpern NPL LOD scores were calculated using the Kong and Cox linear model. Linkage analysis of chromosome X was done using MINX, an X-specific version linkage tool available as part of the MERLIN software. High SNP density can lead to an increased likelihood that the SNPs could be in linkage disequilibrium (LD), and the failure to evaluate for marker-marker LD can cause a false inflation of LOD scores [\[30\]](#page-18-13). To address this concern, we used two independent SNP cohorts and focused on regions that generated suggestive linkage using both of these cohorts. Furthermore, the SNP cohort 2 contains a pruned set of high quality polymorphic markers which have been adjusted for LD by removing nearby correlated markers with  $r^2 > 0.1$ , as previously described [\[31\]](#page-18-14).

### **Permutation for Linkage Analysis**

To assess how often a similar significant linkage result (i.e., max LOD scores) might arise by chance, we used the simulation function in MERLIN. A total of 100 simulated genotype data for autosomal SNPs (i.e., 16,303 markers in the SNP dataset-2) were generated for ALL, the original non-stratified group (referring to this simulated dataset as Sim100.ALL). The pedigree structures and affected status were preserved in the simulated data. The same ADI-R related stratification was then applied on the Sim100.ALL pedigree files to generate 100 simulated datasets for each of the 16 subsets. Genome-wide linkage was performed on Sim100.ALL and the generated subsets (e.g., Sim100.G1, Sim100.G1s, etc). The highest LOD score was recorded from Sim100.ALL and subset-simulated analyses. The maximum LOD for each simulated dataset (across Sim100.ALL and resultant simulated subsets) were ranked to calculate study-wide significant levels (using p<0.05 as threshold) for the observed LOD scores in the actual datasets. See **Figure S2** and **Tables S9A**-**B (**in **Files S3** and **S4)** for detail on the applied workflow for permutation analysis and the generated data, respectively. Throughout this paper, we refer to LOD scores >3.0 as "suggestive" linked regions if they did not pass the permutation test.

### **Association Analysis**

The transmission disequilibrium test (TDT) [\[32\]](#page-18-15) was used for association analysis because the TDT is not biased by population stratification. SNPs passing quality control from the Weiss *et al*. [\[31\]](#page-18-14) paper were used for the TDT association analysis. Only one affected subject per family was included in the TDT analysis to reduce finding associations as a reflection of linkage profile in the pedigrees showing significant linkage peaks. Detailed description of data cleaning and filtering has been discussed elsewhere [\[31\]](#page-18-14). Association analysis was performed using PLINK [\[33\]](#page-19-0).

# **Visualization of LOD Scores and Cluster Analyses of Linkage Data across Subtypes**

MeV software [\[28\]](#page-18-11) was used to permit visual comparison of suggestive linkage regions (using the LOD scores) across the 16 subgroups in comparison to that of the undivided ALL group. Unsupervised hierarchical clustering and principal components analysis of linked loci with LOD  $scores \geq 2$  in at least one of the subgroups were also conducted using MeV to demonstrate the subgroup-dependent linkage "hotspots" in a more unbiased manner.

# **RESULTS-Supplemental information**



**Table S2.** The number of multiplex families, in each subgroup, without (n1) and with (n2) BroadSpectrum subjects.

\*The number of families did not change in the Fc subsets, after including BroadSpectrum subjects; Fc=female-containing family

<sup>a</sup>The original unstratified cohort

The respective sizes of the resulting 16 subgroups are shown. Due to the existing intra-family heterogeneity, some families were included in more than one phenotypic subgroup. Therefore, the sum of family numbers in subgroups exceeds the numbers listed for the original cohort (ALL).

 $w\%$  = The prevalence of the common race (i.e., white) in each subgroups

	Affected subjects per ADI-R related subgroups $(\% )$					
<b>ADI-R</b> subtyping	G1	G2	G3	G4		
g1 subject	59%	17%	14%	10%		
g2 subject	22%	52%	14%	12%		
g3 subject	20%	14%	54%	10%		
g4 subject	19%	17%	14%	50%		

**Table S3.** Overlap between the subgroups at the G level.

As expected, in each G level subgroup the highest % of the included autistic subjects ( $\geq$ 50%) belong to the initial subgroup with the respective ADI-R determined sub-phenotype, shown in gray-shaded cells with bold font. To distinguish resultant subsets from the ADI-R clusters, the four ADI-R subtypes are labeled as g1, g2, g3, and g4.

<b>Chromosomal</b> Subgroup (# families) location (LOD)		Genes associated with SNPs with $LOD \geq 2$		
<b>ALL</b> (392)	17p11.2 $(2.06-2.95)$	ALDH3A1, C17ORF108, C17ORF63, EVPLL, FLCN, KCNJ12, KSR1, LGALS9, MYO1D, NF1, NOS2, PIPOX, PRPSAP2, SLC47A1, SPACA3, TBC1D29, TMEM97, ULK2		
G1(232)	13q14.1-q14.3 $(2.04 - 3.39)$	CAB39L, CPB2, DHRS12, DLEU7, FAM10A4, FAM124A, FLJ3707, GUCY1B2, HTR2A, LCP1, LRCH1, PHF11, VPS36		
G1	13q21.2-q21.33 $(3.4 - 4.37)$	ATXN8OS, DACH1, DIAPH3, KLHL1, PCDH9		
G1	13q22.1-q22.2 $(2-2.53)$	KLF12, LMO7, LOC647288, PIBF1, TBC1D4, UCHL3		
GIs(63)	22q11.1-q11.23 $(2.15-4.43)$	BCR, BID, CABIN1, CECR1, CECR2, CRYBB3, CYTSA, DGCR14, FLJ41941, GSTTP2, IL17RA, IGLL1, KIAA1671, LOC91316, MAPK1, MED15, MICAL3, MIF, P2RX6, PI4KA, RAB36, SCARF2, SGSM1, SLC2A11, SMARCB1, TBX1, TXNRD2, UFD1L, USP18		
G1Fc (15)	22q11.1-q11.23 $(2.09 - 2.54)$	BCR, DGCR14, MAPK1, MED15, MICAL3, P2RX6, PI4KA, RAB36, SCARF2, TXNRD2, UFD1L, USP18		
G1M (39)	$3q28(2.02-2.1)$	<b>IL1RAP</b>		
G1M	15q25.1-q25.3 $(2.03 - 2.52)$	ACSBG1, ADAMTSL3, C15ORF37, CPEB1, DNAJA4, FAM154B, HOMER2, IDH3A, KLHL25, NCRNA00052, NMB, NTRK3, PDE8A, RASGRF1, SH3GL3, TBC1D2B, WDR61		
G2(185)	4q13.1-q13.2 $(2.02 - 2.47)$	EPHA5, STAP1, TECRL		
G2	4q22.3 (2.02-2.13) UNC5C			
G2	$4q23(2-2.17)$	ADH1B, C4ORF37, EIF4E, RAP1GDS1, TSPAN5		
G2	10q26.3 $(2.01-2.05)$	LRRC27, STK32C		
G2	11q12.3 (2.03)	<b>AHNAK</b>		

**Table S5.** Chromosomal locations of the positive linked loci (LOD≥ 2) and their associated genes per subgroups. The number of families examined to identify suggestive linked loci are listed.

# **Table S5.** *Continue*



<b>Table S6.</b> TDT result for two previously associated SNPs at chromosome 5p <sup>*</sup> .							
dataset (no of pedigrees)	<b>SNP</b>	A1	${\bf A2}$	т		OR	
G1.2Fc(23)	$rs10513025^a$	G	A	0	$\overline{4}$	$\theta$	0.0455
G1.2Fc(23)	rs4307059 <sup>b</sup>	G	A	4	14	0.2857	0.01842
All.Fc $(166)$	$rs10513025^a$	G	A	7	10	0.7	0.4669
All.Fc $(166)$	rs4307059 <sup>b</sup>	G	A	56	67	0.8358	0.3213

**Table S6.** TDT result for two previously associated SNPs at chromosome 5p\*.

Transmitted (T) and untransmitted (U) counts and odds ratios (OR) for the minor allele (A1) are shown for each SNP

<sup>a</sup> the most significant SNP reported by Weiss *et al*. (31)

 $<sup>b</sup>$  the most significant SNP reported by Wang *et al.* (26)</sup>

\*Our study found <sup>a</sup> suggestive linkage a t the 5p locus for the combined G1.2Fc group (23 pedigrees). To assess associations with the previously reported SNPs for this chromosomal region, TDT association analyses were performed on this ADI-R stratified group compared with All.Fc (166 pedigrees), which includes all female-containing pedigrees. Only one affected sibling per each pedigree was included for the TDT analysis to avoid detecting associations because of linked SNPs.



**Figure S1. Hierarchical clustering and principal components analyses. S1A** (left) shows the results of unsupervised hierarchical clustering of subgroups and loci with  $LOD \ge 2$  in at least one ASD subgroup. Each column represents a subgroup and each row represents a SNP. The length of the branches along both axes is inversely related to the correlation between the subgroups (columns) and loci (rows) as determined by the Pearson coefficient (scales along both axes). **S1B** (right) shows the results of principal components analyses of the loci, wherein the color corresponds to the major branches along the SNP axis in **Figure S1A**. Magenta is used for stratified subgroups G1s, G1M, and G1Fc, while red is used for the G1 group.



**Figure S2. Workflow describing the applied permutation analysis.** Simulation analysis involved the following steps. **Step 1:** performed 100 simulations on the main group (i.e., ALL); **Step 2:** utilized the same stratification method as what was applied on the actual dataset (see **Figure 1**) to generate the same 16 subgroups, resulting in 1,700 simulated files for genome-wide scans; **Step 3:** performed genome-wide scan on 1,700 simulated files; and **Step 4:** evaluated LOD scores for calculating empirical p values [see **Table S9A** (**File S3**) for data]. Furthermore, similarly 100 simulated files were generated for the three combined groups that we have tested (e.g., G1.2Fc, etc), resulting in 300 more simulated files. Therefore, overall a total of 2000 genome-wide scans were generated and analyzed for permutation analysis [see **Table S9B** (**File S4**)].

## **DISCUSSIONS-Supplemental information**

#### **Additional Potential Candidate Genes in the Linked Regions**

Supplementary **Tables S7 and S8** list the genes associated with the SNPs with the highest LOD scores in 13q21 and 22q11 regions, respectively. One of the genes in the 13q21 linked region is *PCDH9*, a neuronal protocadherin that is a component of synaptic complexes. *PCDH9* was previously found to be associated with ASD by CNV analyses [\[34\]](#page-19-1). Another potentially relevant gene in this region is *KLHL1*, which is associated with gait disturbance [\[35\]](#page-19-2), a motor phenotype affecting some individuals with ASD [\[36\]](#page-19-3). An antisense transcript to *KLHL1* (*ATXN8OS* or *KLHL1AS*) is also within the linked region. Expansion of unstable trinucleotide repeat tracts in *ATXN8OS* has been associated with spinocerebellar ataxia type 8, a late-onset progressive neurodegenerative disorder also featuring severe gait, speech and sensory loss. Long repeat tracts of this transcript have been also reported in subjects with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder [\[37\]](#page-19-4). Down regulating *KLHL1* expression through an antisense mechanism has been shown as a potential way that repeat expansions in this non protein-coding RNA may lead to neuropathogenesis [\[38\]](#page-19-5).

With respect to candidate genes on 22q11, *MAPK1*, *MICAL3*, and *USP18* fall in the linkage interval (see **Table S8**). While *MAPK1* is a critical component of many signaling pathways, including MTOR signaling which is strongly implicated in ASD and related disorders, *MICAL3* is specifically involved in semaphorin-Plexin A signaling in motor neurons [\[39\]](#page-19-6). *USP18*, on the other hand, is a ubiquitin-specific protease that plays a role in interferon response to viral infection of brain cells [\[40\]](#page-19-7) and in innate immunity [\[41\]](#page-19-8), which has been suggested to contribute to the neuropathology of ASD [\[42](#page-19-9)[,43\]](#page-19-10).

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Gene	<b>LOD</b>	<b>SNP</b>	<b>Chromosomal location</b>	<b>SNP's position in gene</b>
PCDH <sub>9</sub>	4.37	rs4142274	13q21.32	Intron
PCDH <sub>9</sub>	4.36	rs4883796	13q21.32	Intron
PCDH9	4.35	rs9317631	13q21.32	Intron
PCDH <sub>9</sub>	4.26	rs913493	13q21.32	Intron
PCDH <sub>9</sub>	4.24	rs2324967	13q21.32	Intron
PCDH <sub>9</sub>	4.22	rs7324330	13q21.32	Intron
KLHL1	3.98	rs7986686	13q21.33	Intron
PCDH <sub>9</sub>	3.86	rs11148709	13q21.32	Intron
PCDH <sub>9</sub>	3.71	rs166500	13q21.32	Intron
KLHL1	3.69	rs4884871	13q21.33	Intron
ATXN8OS	3.66	rs9564649	13q21.33	Promoter
KLHL1	3.66	rs683300	13q21.33	Intron
ATXN8OS	3.65	rs9599553	13q21.33	Intron
PCDH <sub>9</sub>	3.64	rs9540711	13q21.32	Intron
ATXN8OS	3.64	rs9529683	13q21.33	Downstream
DIAPH3	3.11	rs1337645	13q21.2	Intron
DIAPH3	3.11	rs342594	13q21.2	Intron
DACH1	2.75	rs966168	13q21.33	Intron

**Table S7.** List of the genes associated with the SNPs with the highest LOD scores in 13q21 (G1 group).

# *Talebizadeh et al. File S1*

**Table S8.** List of the genes associated with the SNPs with the highest LOD scores in 22q11 (G1s group).

Gene	<b>LOD</b>	<b>SNP</b>	<b>Chromosomal</b> location	SNP's position in gene
MAPK1	4.43	rs2283792	22q11.21	Intron
FLJ41941	4.41	rs462904	22q11.21	Downstream
MICAL3	4.4	rs452579	22q11.21	Intron
MICAL3	4.38	rs424765	22q11.21	Intron
MICAL3	4.36	rs9604803	22q11.21	Intron
<b>USP18</b>	4.28	rs2252257	22q11.21	Intron (boundary)
<b>BID</b>	3.99	rs181408	22q11.21	Intron
P <sub>2R</sub> X <sub>6</sub>	3.86	rs8141816	22q11.21	Intron
CECR2	3.72	rs1296795	22q11.21	Intron (boundary)
PI4KA	3.59	rs165924	22q11.21	Intron (boundary)
RAB36	3.59	rs5751592	22q11.22	Intron
DGCR14	3.58	rs16983371	22q11.21	Intron
<b>BCR</b>	3.58	rs2071436	22q11.23	Intron
<b>BCR</b>	3.53	rs7288846	22q11.23	Intron
CECR2	3.45	rs2518768	22q11.21	Intron
<b>UFD1L</b>	3.44	rs756658	22q11.21	Intron
TBX1	2.96	rs5748427	22q11.21	Downstream
TXNRD2	2.93	rs2073750	22q11.21	Intron
TXNRD2	2.89	rs5993875	22q11.21	Intron
IL17RA	2.78	rs2241049	22q11.1	Intron
MED15	2.77	rs7292126	22q11.21	Intron
SCARF <sub>2</sub>	2.76	rs882745	22q11.21	Intron (boundary)
CECR1	2.73	rs1076106	22q11.1	Intron
IGLL1	2.73	rs7287616	22q11.23	Promoter
LOC91316	2.7	rs738785	22q11.23	Intron
SMARCB1	2.57	rs2267032	22q11.23	Intron
SGSM1	2.38	rs6004307	22q11.23	Intron
SLC2A11	2.31	rs738803	22q11.23	Promoter
<b>MIF</b>	2.25	rs738806	22q11.23	Promoter
GSTTP2	2.18	rs738809	22q11.23	Promoter
<b>KIAA1671</b>	2.18	rs984814	22q11.23	Intron
SGSM1	2.18	rs7287595	22q11.23	Intron
CABIN1	2.17	rs2267064	22q11.23	Intron
<b>CYTSA</b>	2.17	rs2082733	22q11.23	Intron
CRYBB3	2.15	rs1054476	22q11.23	Downstream

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