

Genetic Modifiers of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

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In relation to this presentation, the lead author has no conflict of interest to disclose.



United Dystrophinopathy Project: Prospective Genotype/Phenotype Database Participating Centers



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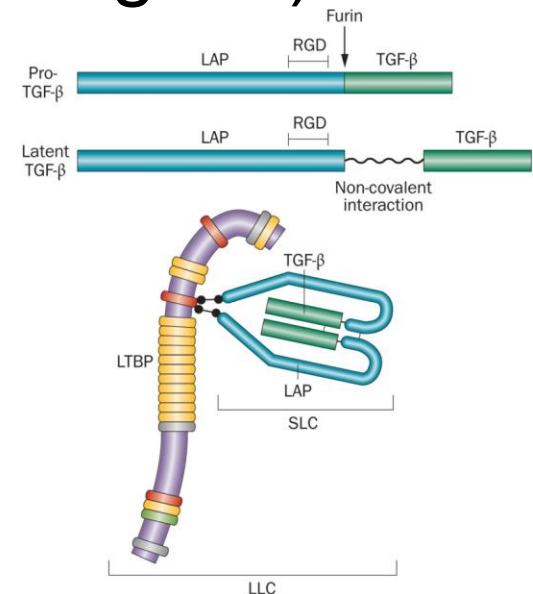


What are modifier genes of DMD and why look for them?

- “Modifiers” = A genetic interaction in which an allele from one gene (= the modifier) masks the phenotype caused by a mutation in another gene (= the dystrophin gene)

- “Validated” modifier of DMD:

Common alleles in *LTBP4*, Latent Transforming Growth Factor- β Binding Protein 4





Outline of the talk:

- “Modifier genes” of inherited muscular dystrophies:
 - Mouse models implicating *Ltbp4* / TGF- β signaling
 - Human *LTBP4* variants in DMD patients
 - Replication studies of additional candidate genes
- Genome-Wide Association Study (GWAS) for Loss of Ambulation: the United Dystrophinopathy Project (UDP)
 - Refining of the *LTBP4* association signal
 - SNP associations exceeding a genome-wide significance threshold (P value $< 5 \times 10^{-8}$) for a DMD phenotype

Mouse *Ltbp4* modifies of muscular dystrophy

Elizabeth M McNally, MD, PhD
Northwestern University



Latent TGF-beta-binding protein 4 modifies muscular dystrophy in mice.
Heydemann A, Ceco E, Lim JE, Hadhazy M, Ryder P, Moran JL, Beier DR, Palmer AA, McNally EM. J Clin Invest. 2009 Dec;119(12):3703-12.

Targeting latent TGF β release in muscular dystrophy.

Ceco E, Bogdanovich S, Gardner B, Miller T, DeJesus A, Earley JU, Hadhazy M, Smith LR, Barton ER, Molkenin JD, McNally EM. Sci Transl Med. 2014 Oct 22;6(259):259..

Sgcg ^{-/-}
DBA/2J (severe) x 129T2 (mild)



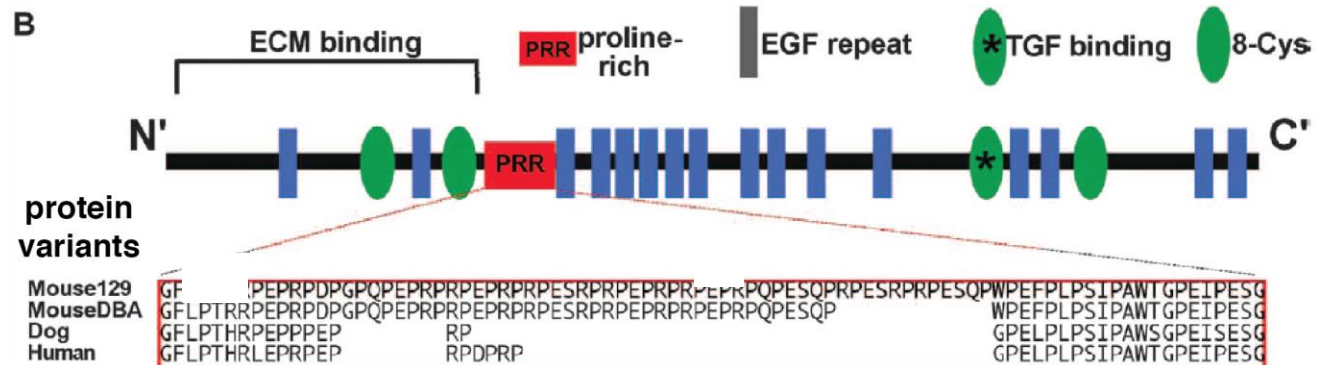
F1



F2

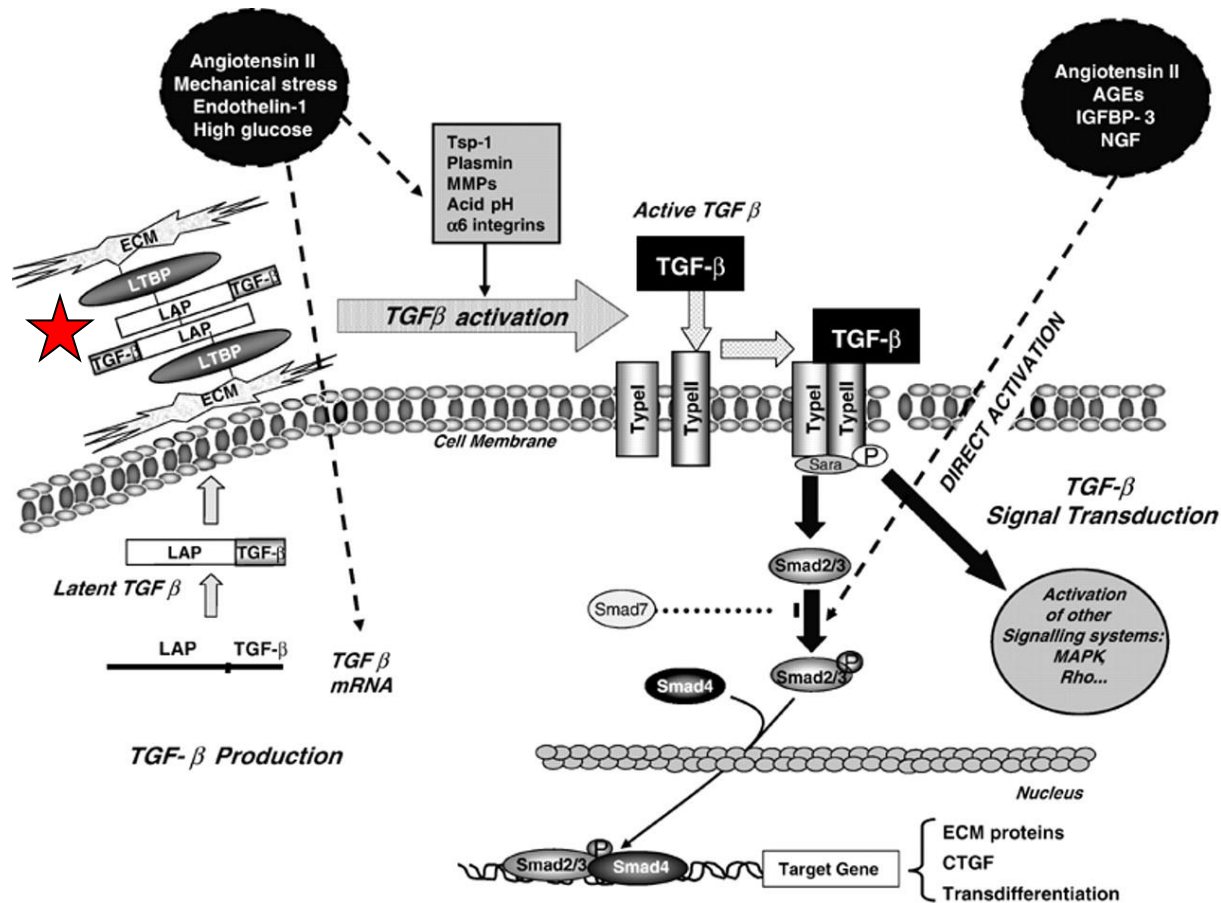
n = 282

mouse *Ltbp4* domain structure

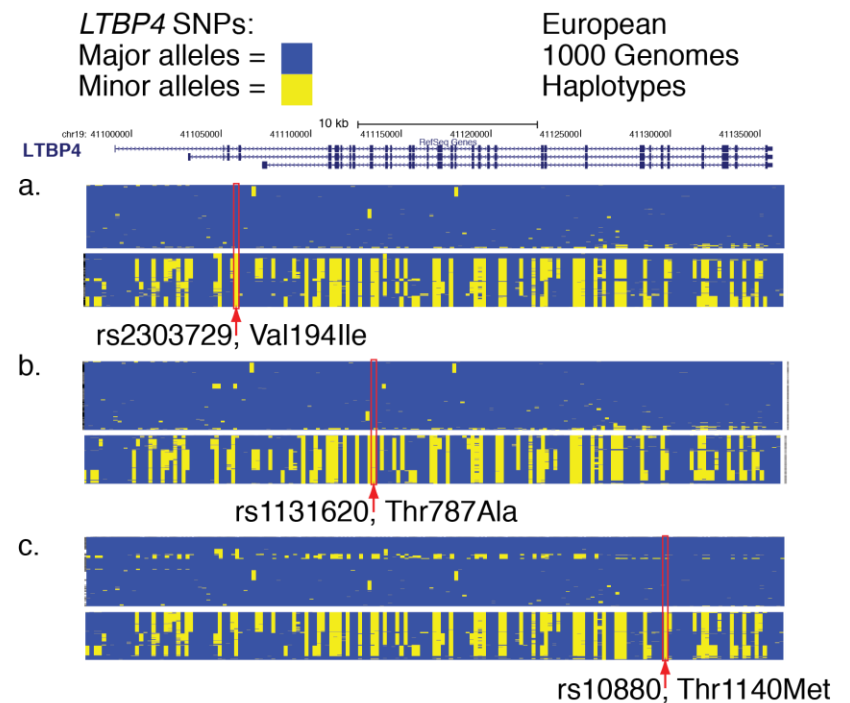
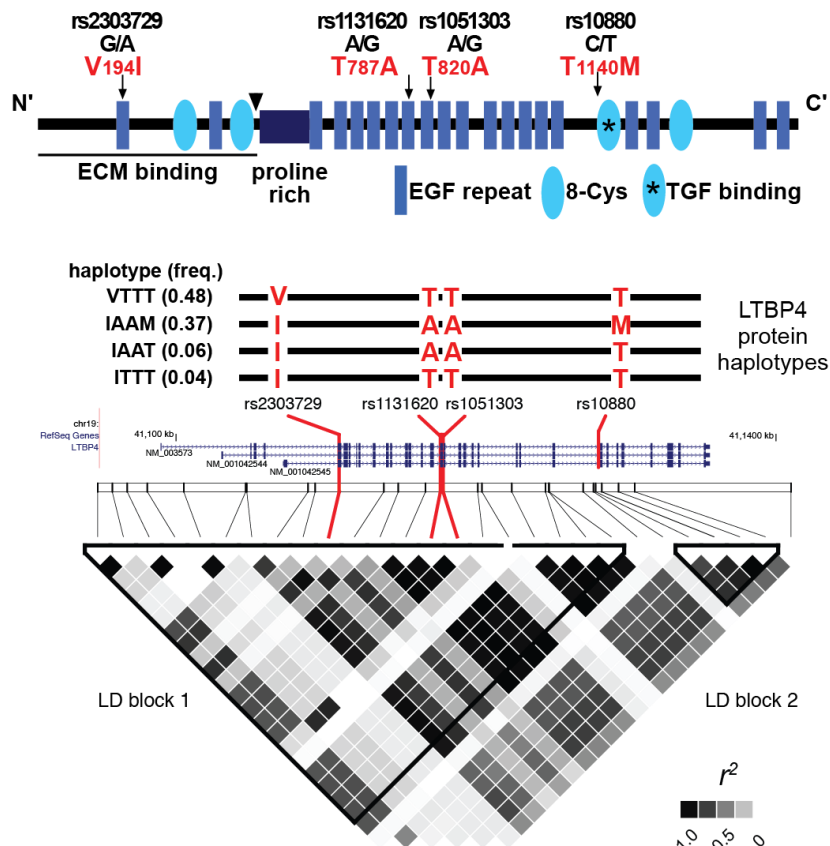


Mouse QTL for limb-based skeletal muscle damage (Evans blue dye uptake) and fibrosis (hydroxyproline content) linked to the chr7 / *Ltbp4* region

DMD modifier genes and TGF- β signaling

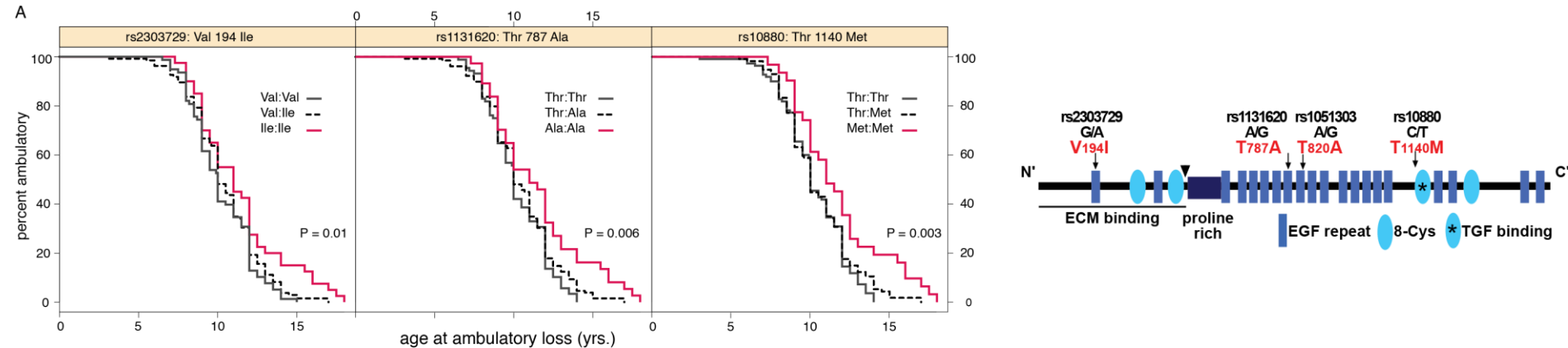


Human *LTBP4* polymorphisms and haplotypes



Human *LTBP4* genotypes are associated with age of ambulatory loss in DMD patients

LTBP4 genotypes are associated with age at loss of ambulation in patients (n = 254) with Duchenne muscular dystrophy



Flanigan et al: *LTBP4* Genotype in DMD

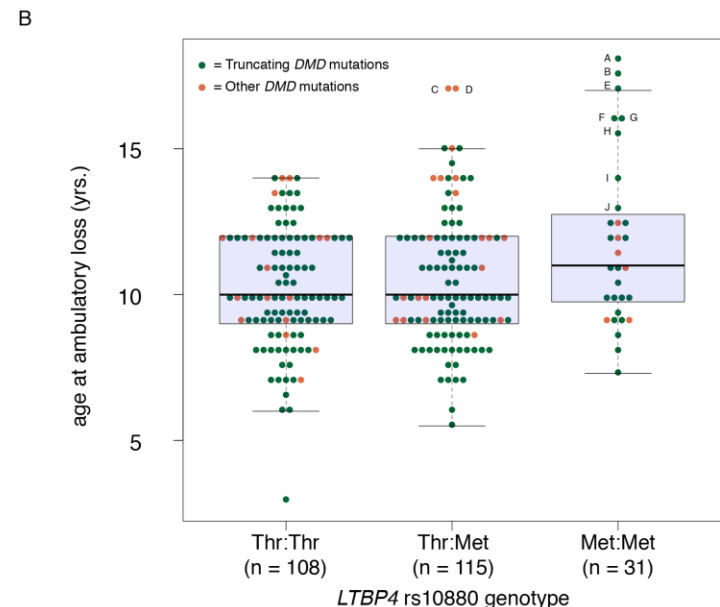


TABLE : Haplotype Analysis of Nonsynonymous *LTBP4* Variants Associated with Age of Ambulatory Loss for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Patients

Haplotype ^a	All, n = 254, Global $p^b = 0.002$			Steroid Treated, n = 137, Global $p^b = 0.013$			Steroid Naive, n = 102, Global $p^b = 0.12$		
	Frequency	Score	p^c	Frequency	Score	p^c	Frequency	Score	p^c
VTTT	0.53	-1.51	0.1	0.52	-1.04	0.3	0.52	-1.12	0.3
IAAM	0.31	3.43	6×10^{-4}	0.32	2.92	0.004	0.29	1.91	0.06

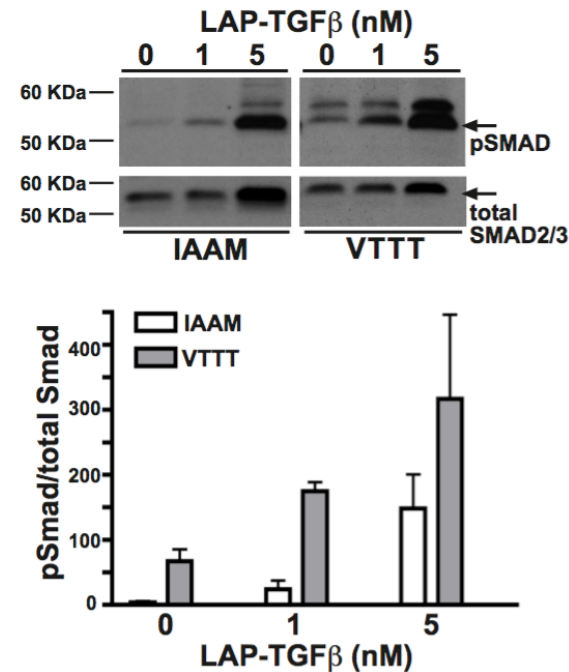
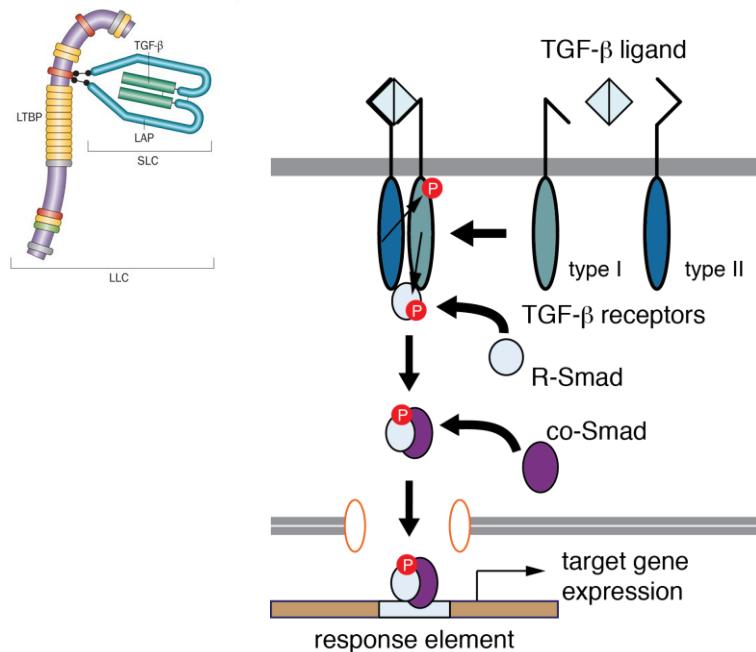
^aThese haplotypes consist of single nucleotide polymorphisms rs2303729, rs1131620, and rs10880, respectively.

^bThe haplo.stats package was used to test for association between haplotypes and age of ambulatory loss as a quantitative trait using a recessive model.

^cProbability value from the chi-square, $df = 1$, distribution of the haplotype-specific score.

from Flanigan et al., *LTBP4* genotype predicts age of ambulatory loss in Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, *Ann Neurol.* 73(4):481-488 (2013).

Human *LTBP4* polymorphisms and activity in fibroblasts

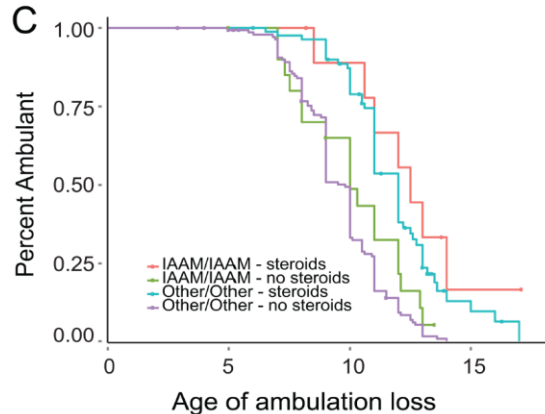


Fibroblasts homozygous for the IAAM or VTTT *LTBP4* haplotypes were cultured, and latent TGFβ was added (LAP = latency associated peptide). *LTBP4* protein binds and sequesters latent TGFβ, and it is predicted that IAAM binds more latent TGFβ in the matrix, leading to reduced TGFβ signaling, seen as less phosphorylated SMAD (pSMAD). IAAM fibroblasts had less pSMAD/total SMAD at baseline and at 2 different doses of latent TGFβ ($p = 0.02$, analysis of variance with repeated measures).

from Flanigan et al., *LTBP4* genotype predicts age of ambulatory loss in Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, *Ann Neurol.* 73(4):481-488 (2013).

LTBP4 IAAM Replication Studies

Figure 2C (from den Bergen JC, et al.) Survival plots showing the effect of the IAAM haplotype (LTBP4) in 265 patients with DMD.



European cohort (London, Ferrera, Montpellier, Leiden, Newcastle), 270 patients, P value = 0.01 (recessive): van den Bergen JC, Hiller M, Bohringer S, Vijfhuizen L, Ginjaar HB, Chaouch A, et al. Validation of genetic modifiers for Duchenne muscular dystrophy: a multicentre study assessing SPP1 and LTBP4 variants. J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry. 2015; 86(10):1060–5.

Figure 3B (from Flanigan et al., 2012), Survival plots showing the effect of the IAAM haplotype 238 patients from the UDP

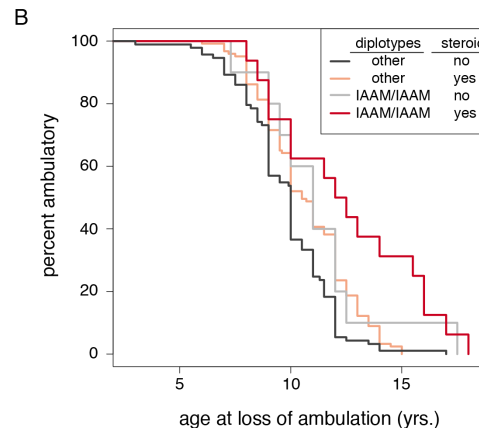
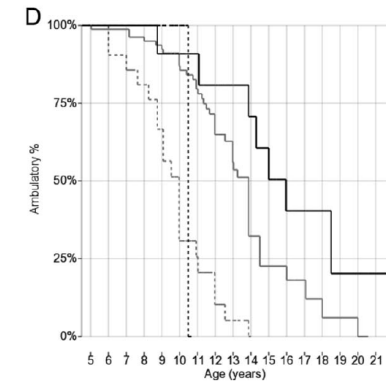


Figure 3D Caucasian CINRG cohort genotyped for LTBP4 rs10880 (n = 115), (black line = TT; gray line = CC/CT) and GC treatment (continuous lines = at least 1 year while ambulatory; dashed lines = <1 year or untreated).



CINRG cohort, 118 patients, P value = 0.02 (KM log-rank): Bello L, , et al. Genetic modifiers of ambulation in the Cooperative International Neuromuscular Research Group Duchenne Natural History Study. Ann Neurol. 2015; 77(4):684–96.

* Non-replication: Italian cohort of 178 patients: neither SPP1 or LTBP4 associated with LoA. Barp A, Bello L et al. (2015) Genetic Modifiers of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and Dilated Cardiomyopathy. PLoS ONE 10(10): e0141240.

Cooperative International Research Group Duchenne Natural History Study (CINRG-DNHS): Exome-wide association study of age at LoA in a sub-cohort of (European ancestry, n = 109)

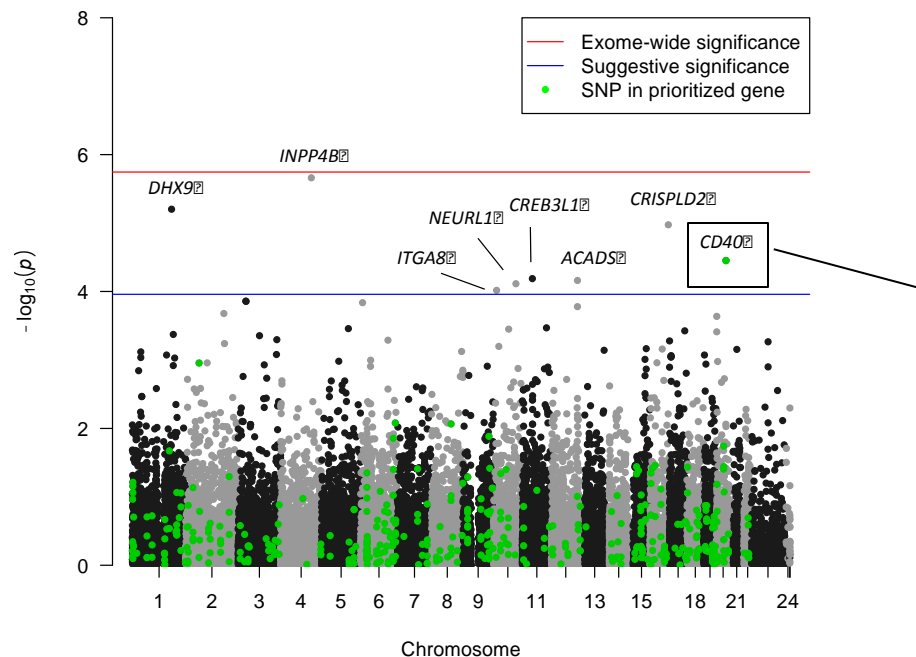
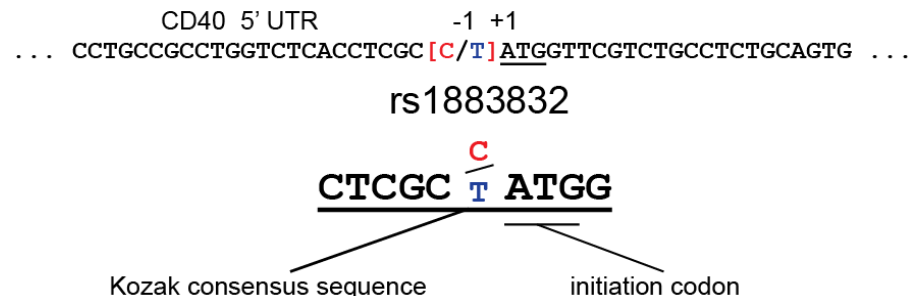


Figure 1 (from L. Bello et al. 2016) Additive genotype P -values of the Cox proportional hazards model with glucocorticoid treatment as a covariate are shown for 27,025 Exome Chip SNPs with MAF > 0.05. SNPs within, or < 10,000 kb upstream/downstream of prioritized genes in the NF- κ B and TGF β pathways are highlighted in green.

In press, AJHG: "Association study of exon variants in the NF- κ B and TGF β pathways identifies CD40 as a modifier of Duchenne muscular dystrophy", Luca Bello, Kevin M. Flanigan, Robert B. Weiss, United Dystrophinopathy Project, Pietro Spitali, Annemieke Aartsma-Rus, Francesco Muntoni, Irina Zaharieva, Alessandra Ferlini, Eugenio Mercuri, Sylvie Tuffery-Giraud, Mireille Claustres, Volker Straub, Hanns Lochmüller, Andrea Barp, Sara Vianello, Elena Pegoraro, Jaya Punetha, Heather Gordish-Dressman, Mamta Giri, Craig M. McDonald, Eric P. Hoffman, Cooperative International Neuromuscular Research Group.

CD40 is a cell surface protein and a member of the tumor necrosis factor receptor superfamily

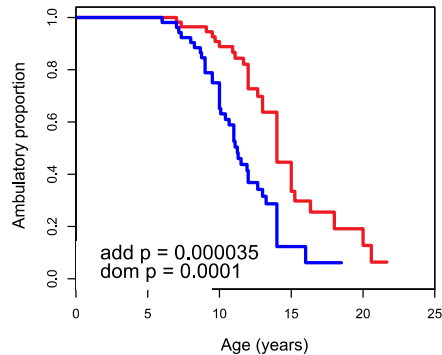


The major allele at *CD40* rs1883832 (C) is associated with increased risk for Graves' disease and rheumatoid arthritis and results in increased CD40 expression, predicted to enhance a pro-inflammatory environment/response. While, the rs1883832 minor allele (T) is a risk allele for multiple sclerosis and is associated with reduced CD40 expression.

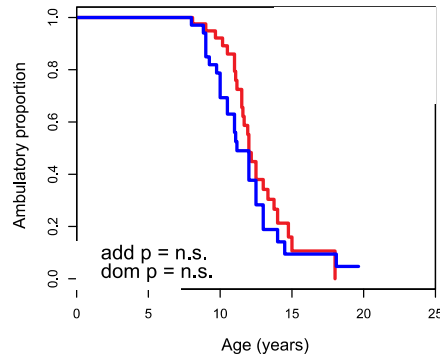
CD40 rs1883832 replication

rs188382
— CC
— CT-TT (dominant)

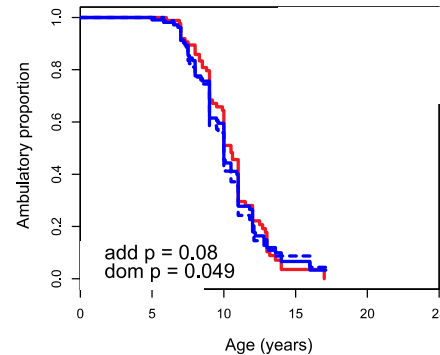
(A) CINRG Exome Chip (n = 109)



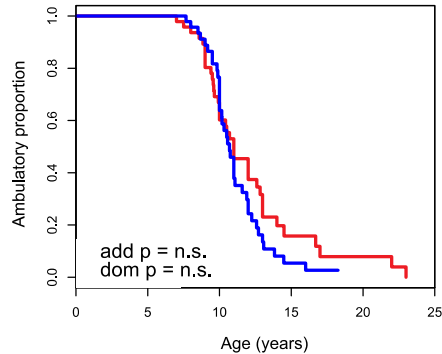
(B) CINRG validation (n = 76)



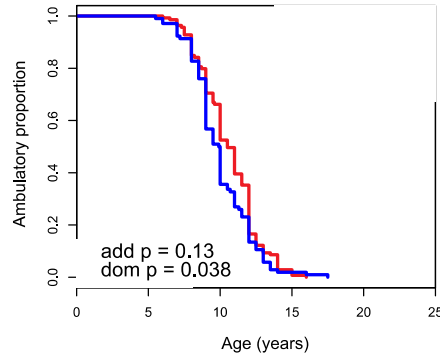
(C) Bio-NMD validation (n = 246)



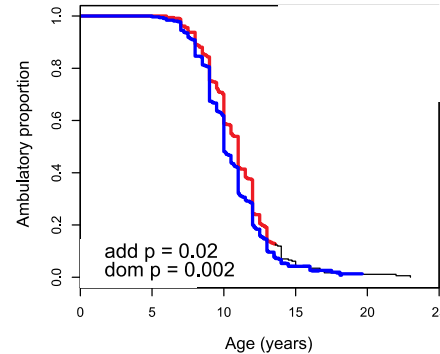
(D) Padova validation (n = 95)



(E) UDP validation (n = 243)



(F) Overall validation (n = 660)

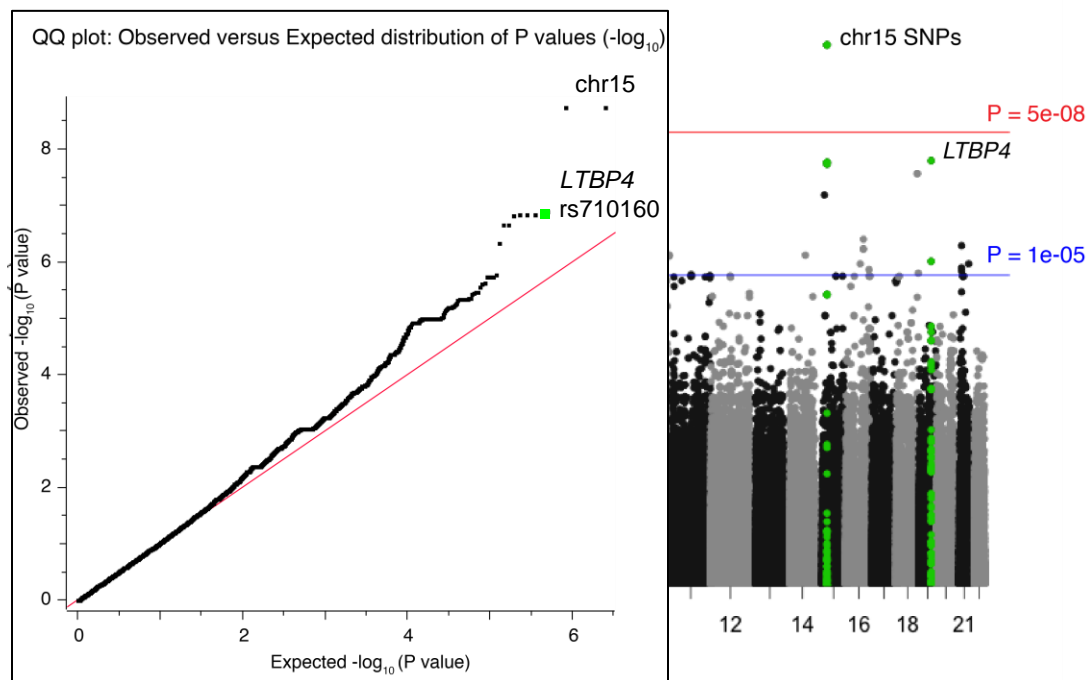


CD40 is a TNFR superfamily member and stimulation of CD40 by CD40L results in activation of MAPKs and NF- κ B signaling.

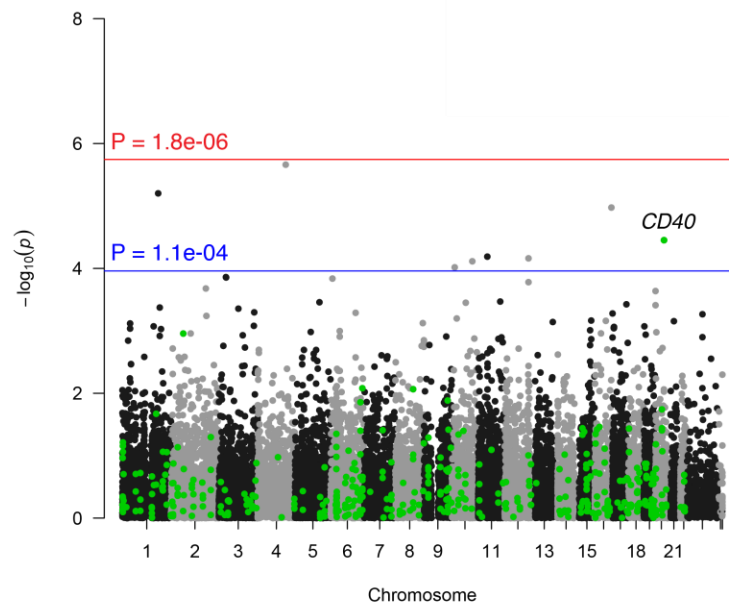
Reduced CD40-mediated cell-cell signaling in carriers of the minor rs1883832 allele might precipitate failed regeneration and fibrosis in DMD skeletal muscle.

Genome-wide Association Study of LoA in the United Dystrophinopathy Project cohort

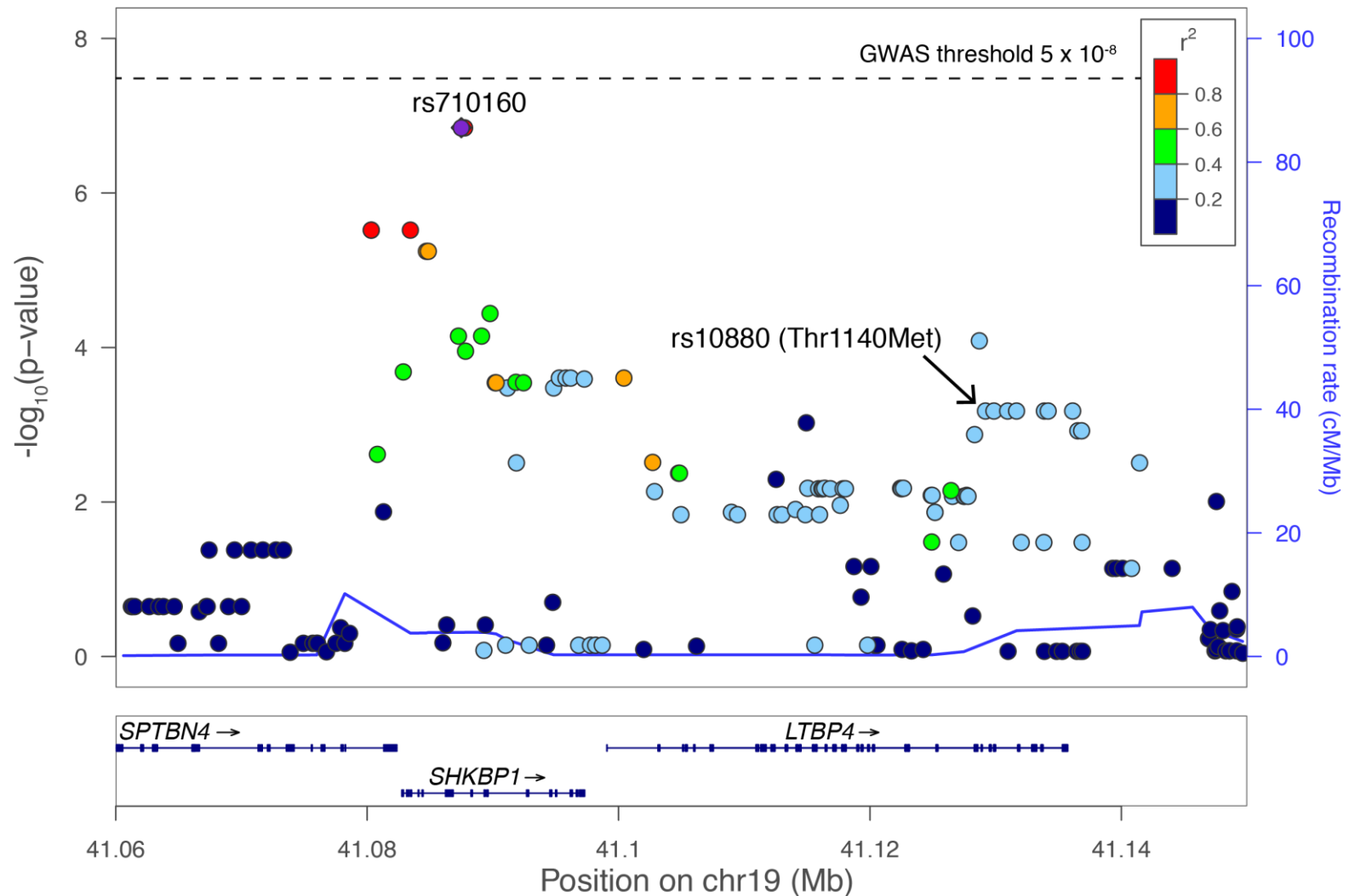
UDP cohort (n = 253), recessive genotype P -values of linear regression for age at loss of ambulation with **1,180,493 Illumina Omni2.5M SNPs** (MAF > 0.05)



CINRG Exome-Chip cohort (n=109), additive genotype P -values for age at loss of ambulation, **27,025 SNPs** (MAF > 0.05)



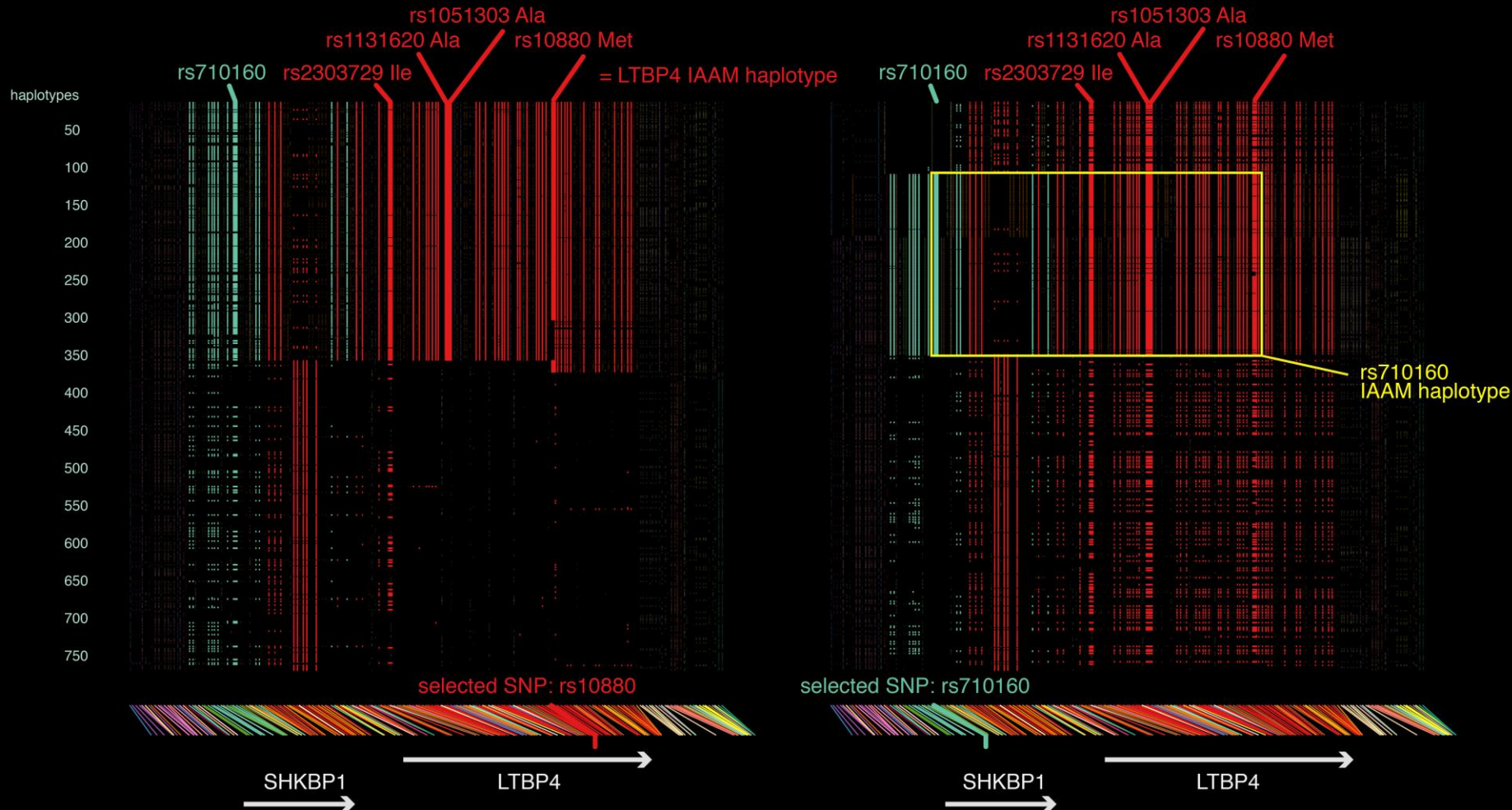
LTBP4 region single SNP associations



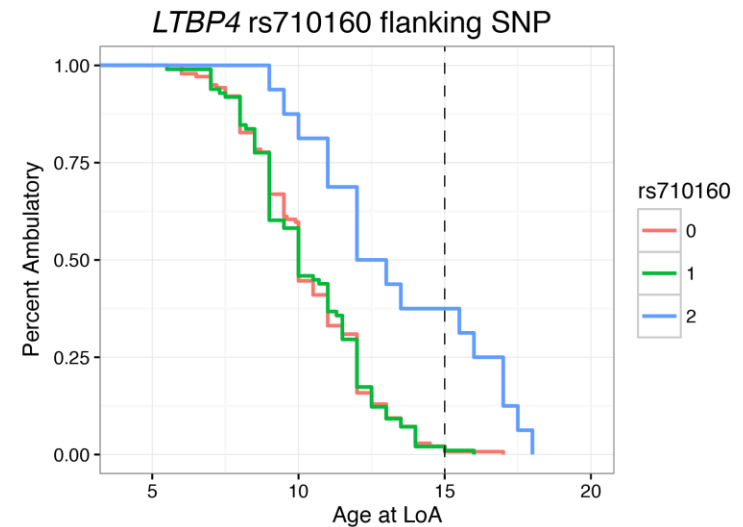
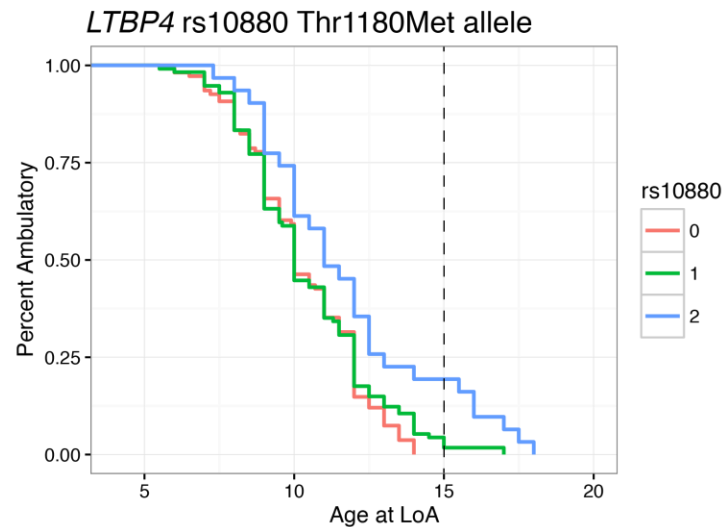
LTBP4 haplotype structure:

758 European reference chromosomes

SNPs colored by
LD bin ($r^2 > 0.64$)



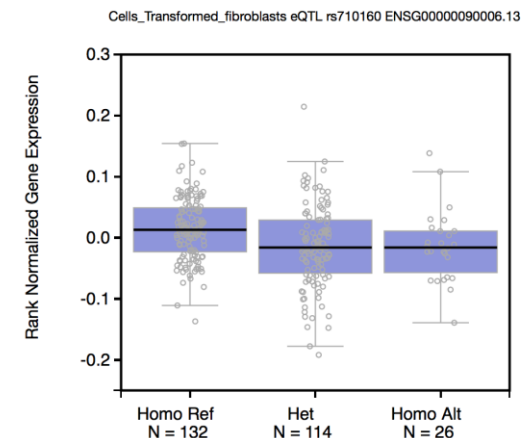
rs710160 is an expression QTL for *LTBP4* in fibroblasts



Genotype and RNA-Seq data (eQTL) in 43 tissues from
The Genotype-Tissue Expression (GTEx) Project

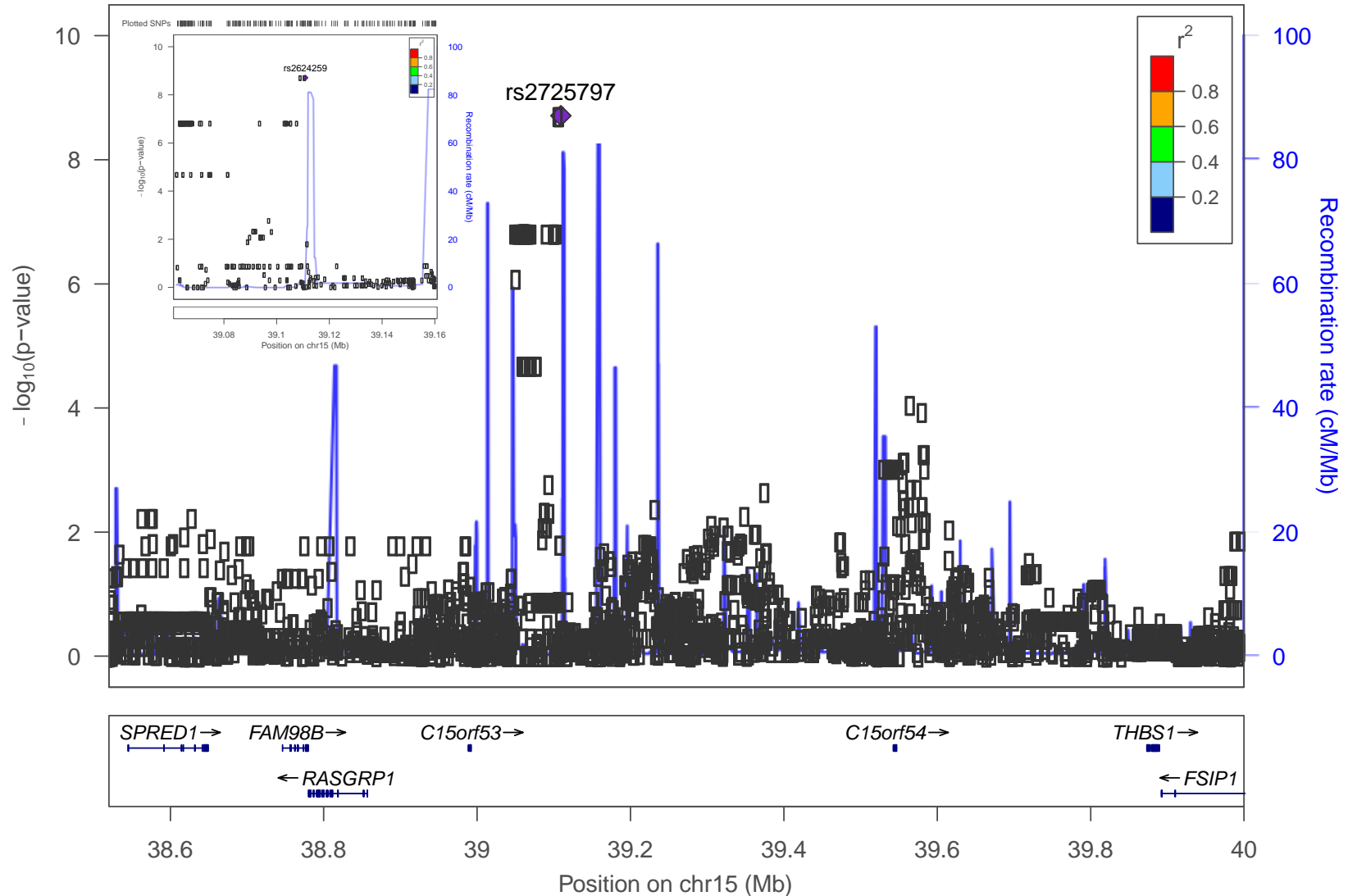
Gene	SNP	P-Value	Effect Size	Tissue
LTBP4	rs710160	0.00039	-0.13	Cells - Transformed fibroblasts
LTBP4	rs710160	0.04	0.33	Brain - Cerebellar Hemisphere

The Genotype-Tissue Expression (GTEx) pilot analysis: Multi-tissue gene regulation in humans. The GTEx Consortium. Science May 2015: 348, 6235, pp. 648-660



Top GWAS signal in the chr15 region

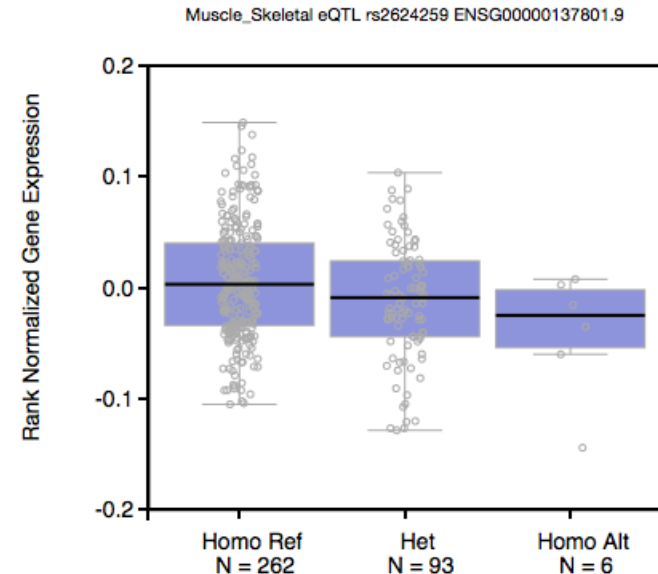
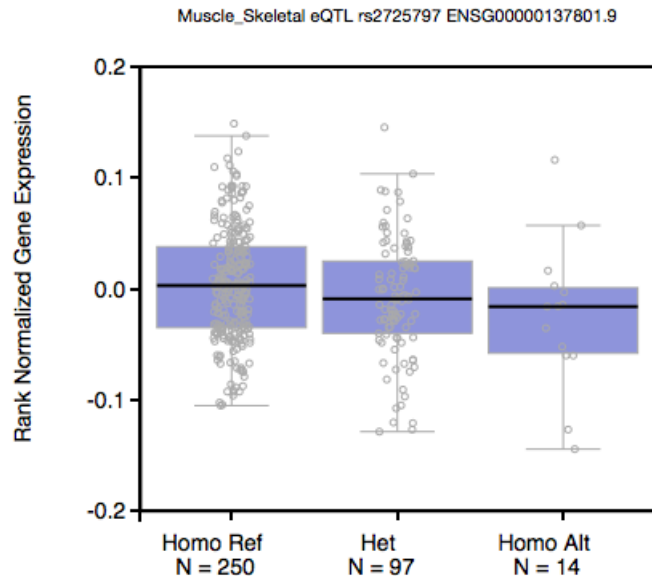
Plotted SNPs



Chr15 regulatory SNPs are associated with decreased THBS1 mRNA in skeletal muscle

Genotype and tissue-specific gene expression from the GTEx Project

Tissue Rank (out of 41)	Gene Symbol	SNP	P-Value	Effect Size	Tissue (41 examined)
1	THBS1	rs2624259	0.00054	-0.24	Muscle - Skeletal
2	THBS1	rs2624259	0.036	-0.17	Esophagus - Mucosa
3	THBS1	rs2624259	0.074	-0.23	Spleen
4	THBS1	rs2624259	0.2	0.33	Brain - Anterior cingulate cortex (BA24)
5	THBS1	rs2624259	0.22	0.18	Artery - Coronary



Expression data from The Genotype-Tissue Expression (GTEx) Project

THBS1 'super-enhancer' region

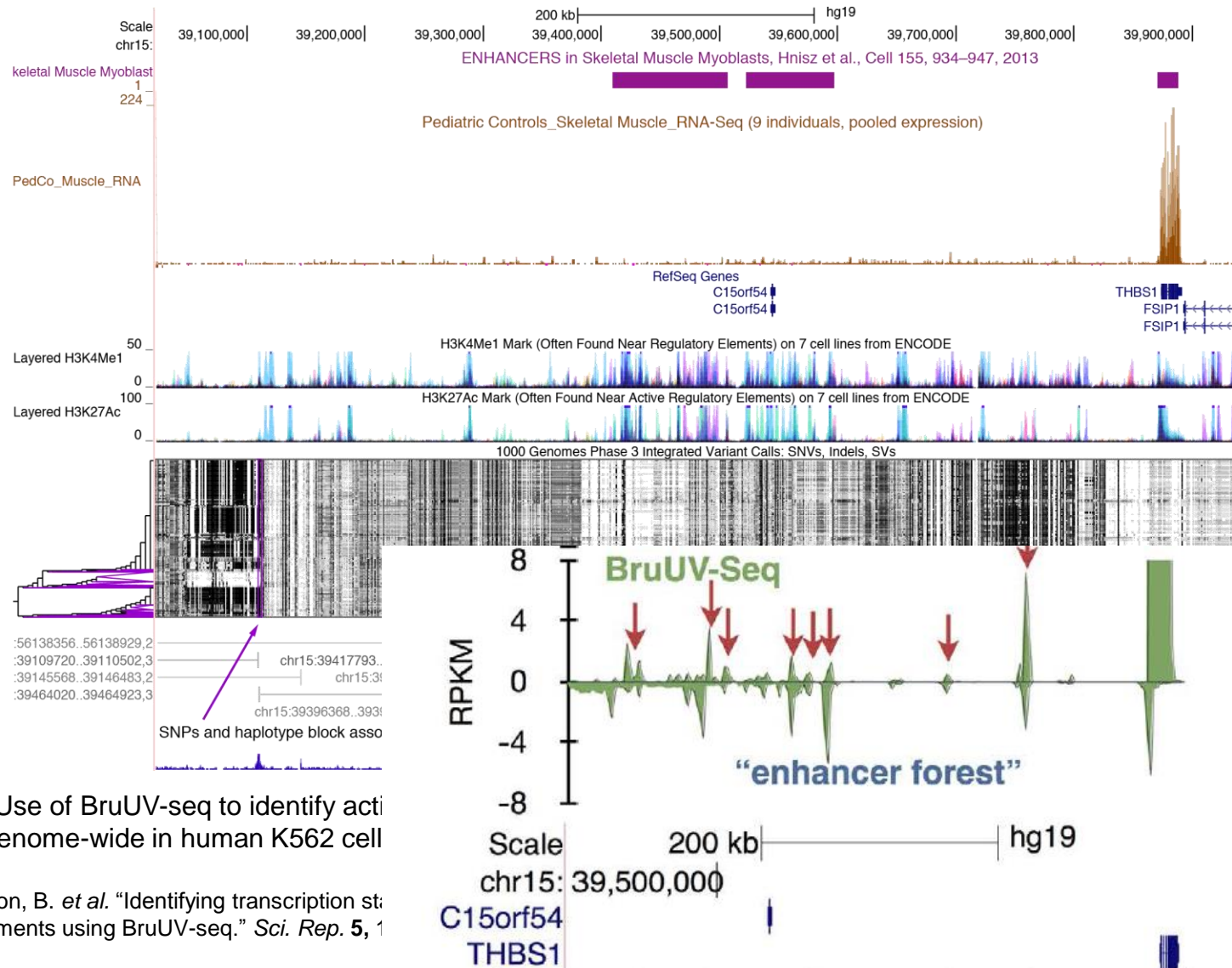
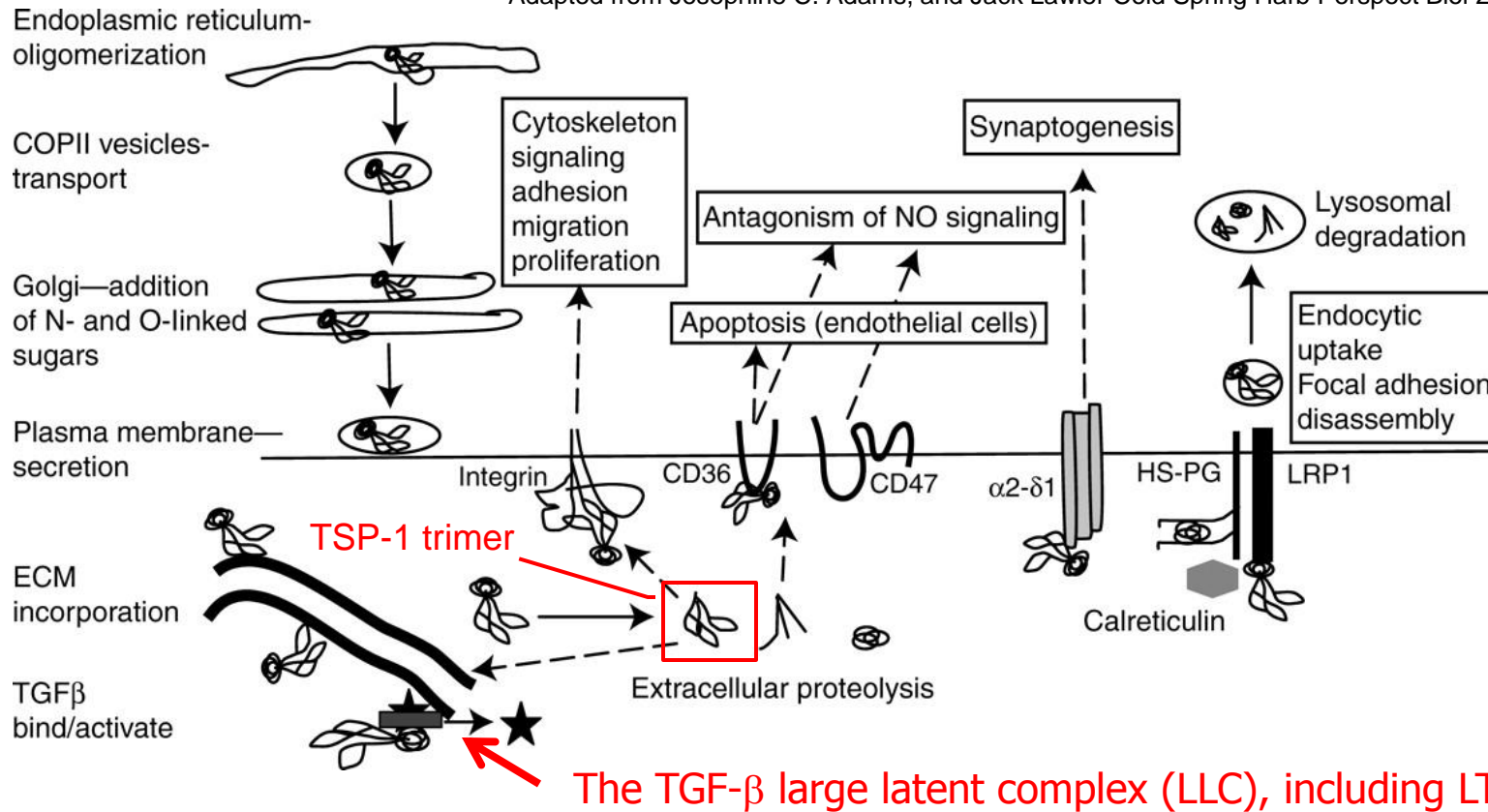


Figure 3b. Use of BruUV-seq to identify active elements genome-wide in human K562 cell

from Magnuson, B. *et al.* “Identifying transcription start enhancer elements using BruUV-seq.” *Sci. Rep.* 5, 1

Overview of cellular pathways and activities of mammalian TSP-1

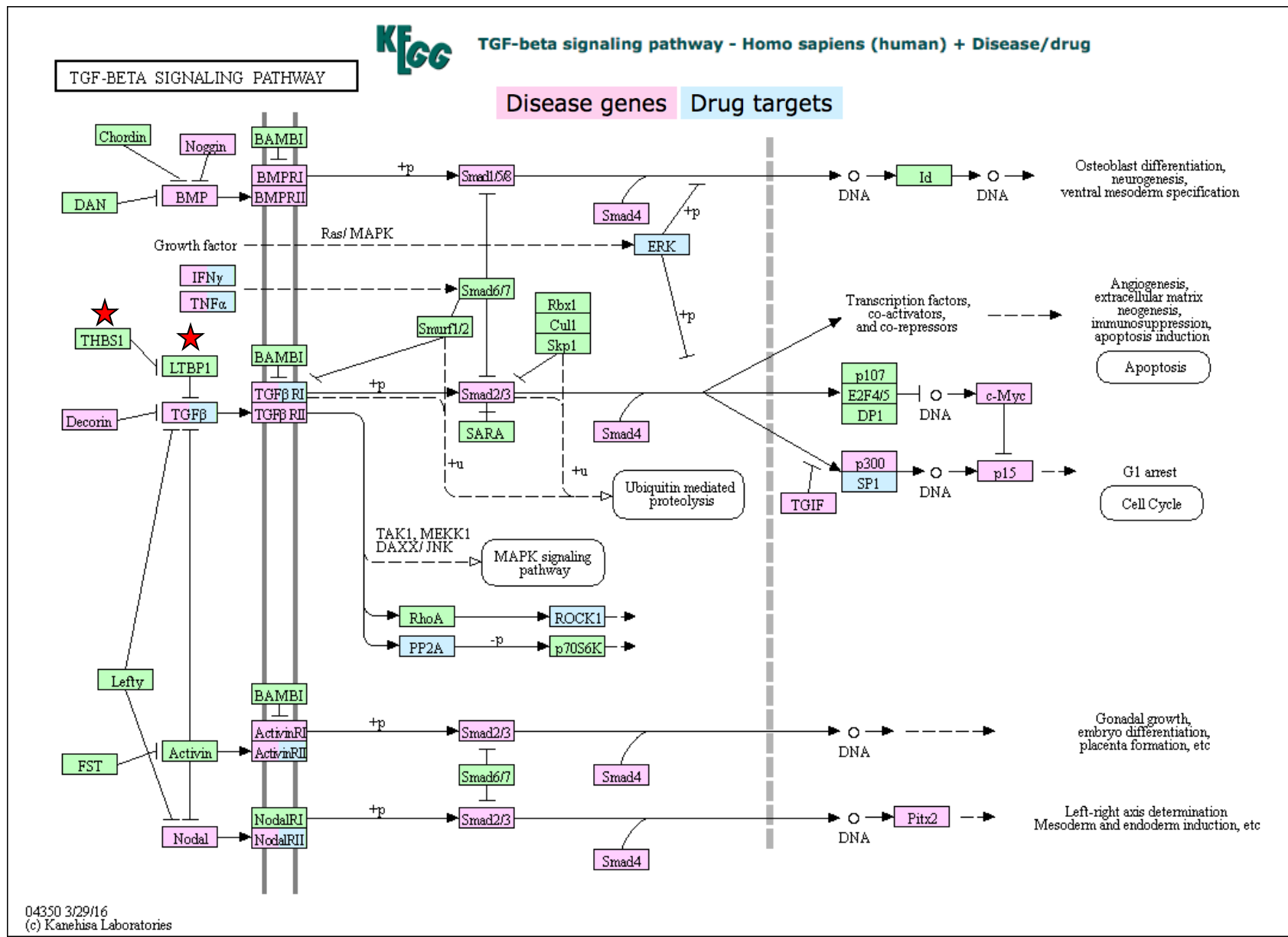
Adapted from Josephine C. Adams, and Jack Lawler Cold Spring Harb Perspect Biol 2011;3:a009712



Schultz-Cherry, S. & Murphy-Ullrich, J. E. Thrombospondin causes activation of latent transforming growth factor-beta secreted by endothelial cells by a novel mechanism. *J Cell Biol* **122**, 923–932 (1993).

Zhou, Y. *et al.* Latent transforming growth factor-beta-binding protein-4 regulates transforming growth factor-beta1 bioavailability for activation by fibrogenic lung fibroblasts in response to bleomycin. *Am. J. Pathol.* **174**, 21–33 (2009).

Summary: modifier genes and TGF- β signaling





UPIN UTAH PROGRAM
FOR INHERITED
NEUROMUSCULAR
DISORDERS

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Elizabeth McNally

CINRG-DNHS

Luca Bello, Eric Hoffman

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Summary

- Genetic variants that modulate TGF- β signaling delay disease progression in DMD
- *LTBP4* and *CD40* variants have replicated effects across multiple cohorts
- Initial GWAS results confirm the strength of the *LTBP4* effect and suggest that other large effect variants exist.



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University of Utah - UPIN:

Diane Dunn
Brett Duval
Maha Mahmoud
Cindy Hamil
Caitlin Polansky
Nicholas Johnson
Russ Butterfield
Missy Dixon
Brith Otterud
and many more

Nationwide Children's Hospital:

Kevin Flanigan
Veronica Vieland

UCLA:

Stan Nelson
Richard Wang

Northwestern University:

Elizabeth McNally

The United Dystrophinopathy Project

Washington Univ., St. Louis

Alan Pestronk, Anne Connolly

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

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University of Iowa, Iowa City

Kathy Mathews

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

John Day

University of California, Davis

Craig McDonald

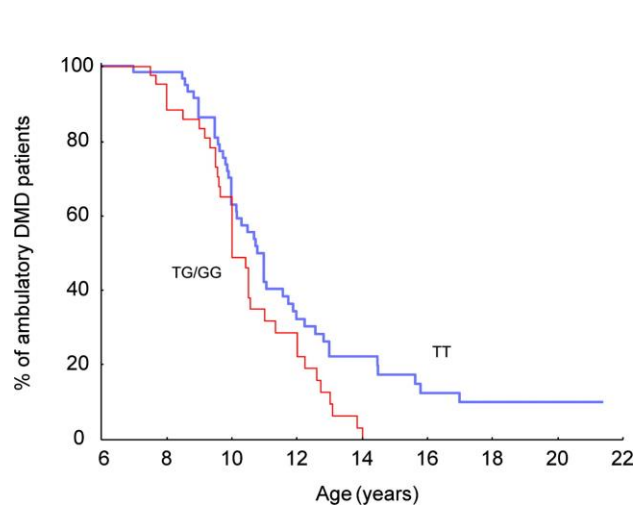
CINRG-DNHS

Luca Bello, Eric Hoffman

Children's National Medical Center, Wash.,
University of Padova, Italy

Osteopontin (*SPP1*) Replication Studies

Figure 3 (Pegoraro *et al.*) *SPP1* genotype is associated with greater severity of progression in Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD). The proportion of patients with DMD in the Padova cohort remaining ambulatory at the specific age noted is shown (n = 106).



Pegoraro, E., E. P. Hoffman, L. Piva, B. F. Gavassini, S. Cagnin, M. Ermani, L. Bello, et al. 2011. “*SPP1* Genotype Is a Determinant of Disease Severity in Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy.” *Neurology* 76 (3): 219–26.

rs28357094 is in the promoter of *SPP1* (osteopontin) and the G allele (dominant model) was associated with more rapid progression (Padova cohort log rank p = 0.003), and 12%–19% less grip strength (CINRG cohort p = 0.0003).

Supplementary Table S9. *SPP1* rs28357094 -66 T/G promoter SNP is not associated with age at ambulatory loss with steroid treatment and *DMD* mutation class as covariates in 239 patients. from Flanigan et al., *Ann Neurol.* 73(4):481-488 (2013).

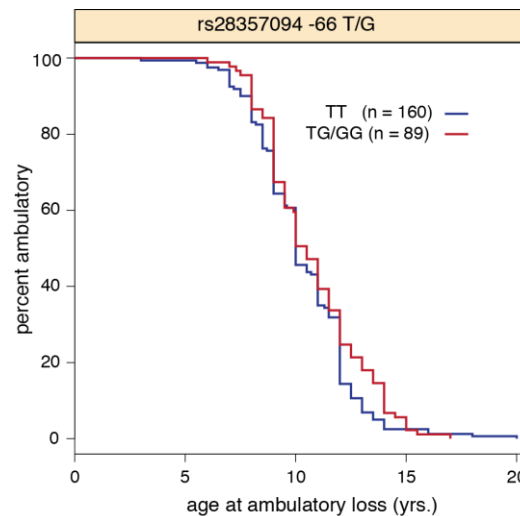
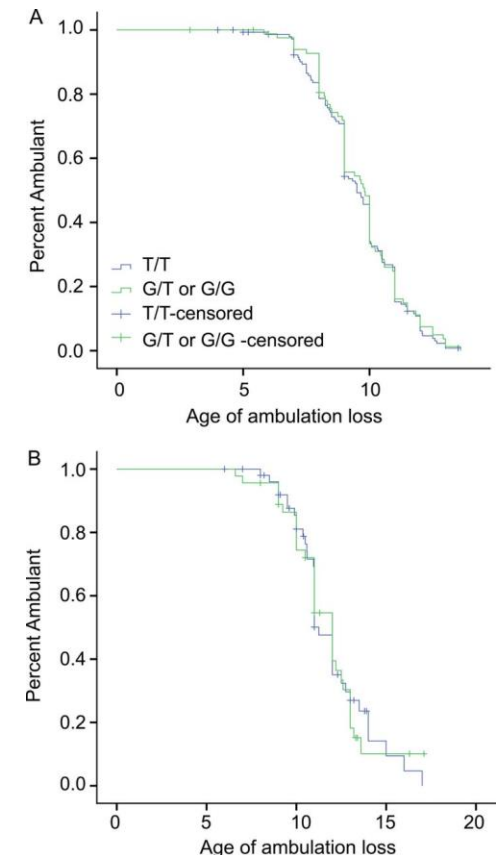
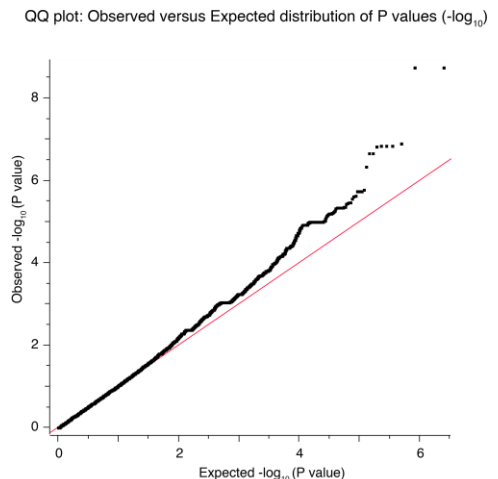
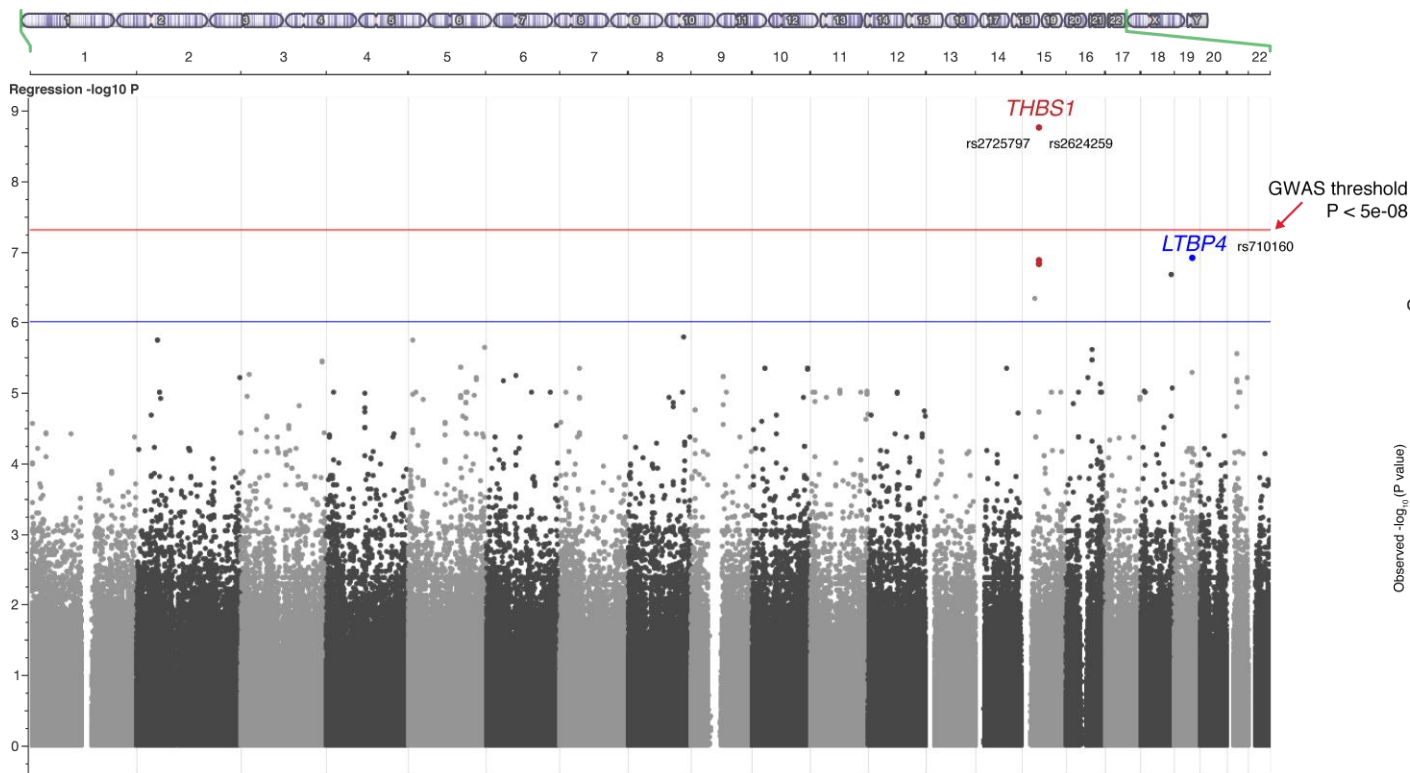


Figure 1: Survival plots showing the effect of single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) rs28357094 (*SPP1*) for 336 patients with Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD). From JC van den Bergen et al. “Validation of genetic modifiers for Duchenne muscular dystrophy: a multicentre study assessing *SPP1* and *LTBP4* variants” *J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry* 2015;86:1060-1065



Genome-Wide Association Study (GWAS) of Age at Ambulatory Loss: 252 patients

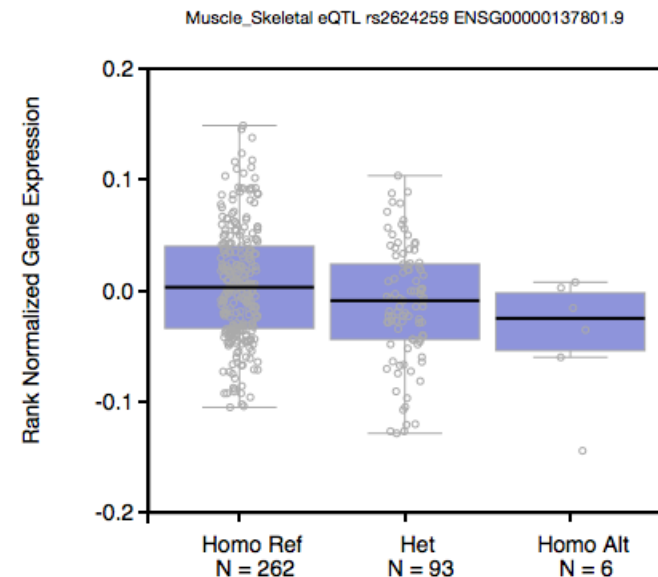
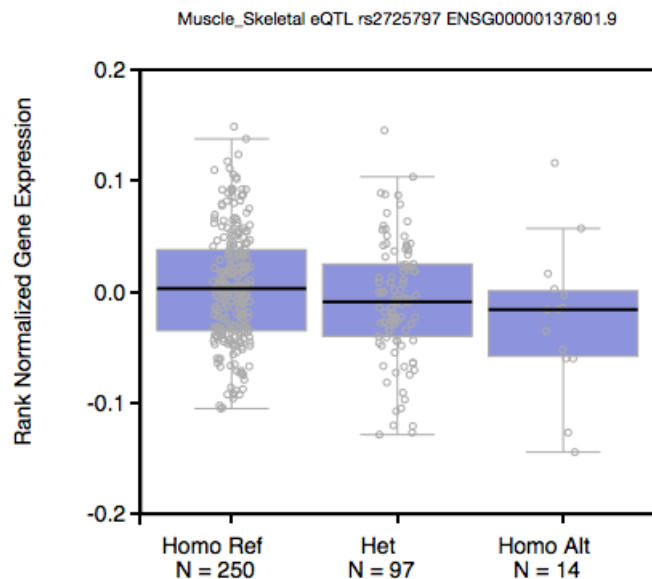


Regression P values: 1,289,642 SNPs, maf > 0.05, recessive model
Top SNPs = rs2725797 and rs2624259, $P = 1.8e-09$

Genotyping Platform = Illumina Omni2.5-Exome array

rs2725797 & rs2624259 genotype effects : minor allele associated with decreased THBS1 mRNA expression in skeletal muscle

Gene Symbol	SNP	P-Value	Effect Size	Tissue
THBS1	rs2624259	0.00054	-0.24	Muscle - Skeletal
THBS1	rs2624259	0.036	-0.17	Esophagus - Mucosa
THBS1	rs2624259	0.074	-0.23	Spleen
THBS1	rs2624259	0.2	0.33	Brain - Anterior cingulate cortex (BA24)
THBS1	rs2624259	0.22	0.18	Artery - Coronary



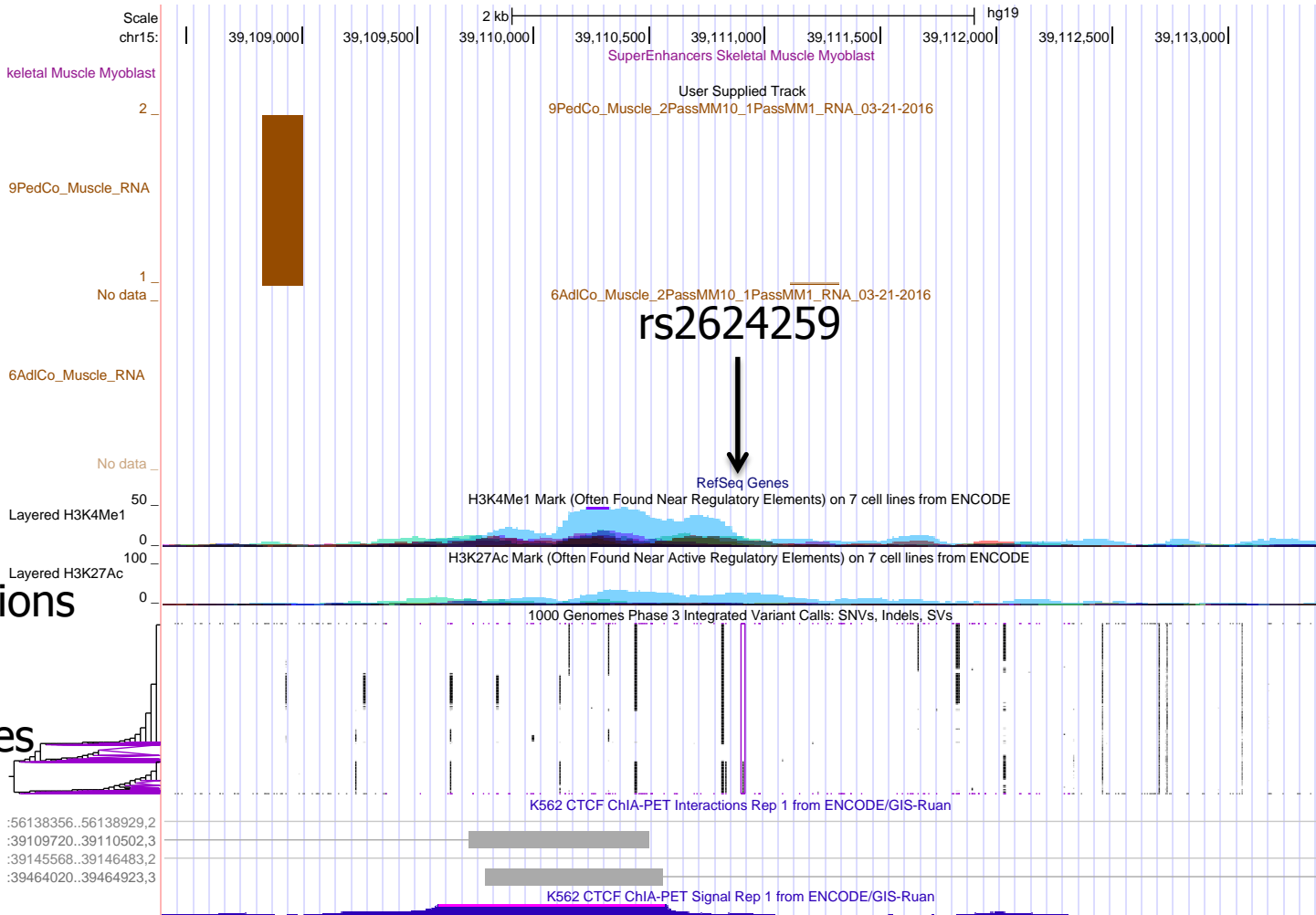
Expression data from The Genotype-Tissue Expression (GTEx) Project

Chromatin Features

RNA-Seq

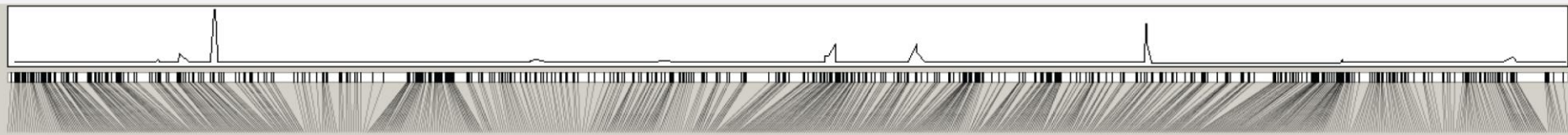
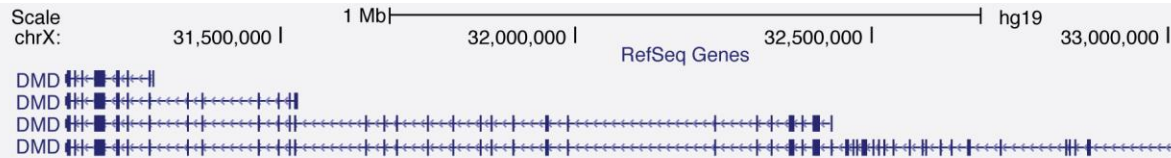
Histone
modifications

Haplotypes

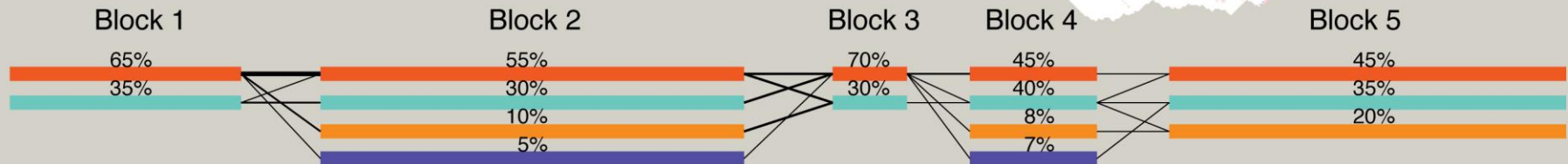


chromatin interaction analysis by paired-end tag sequencing (ChIA-PET)

Haplotypes and LD structure

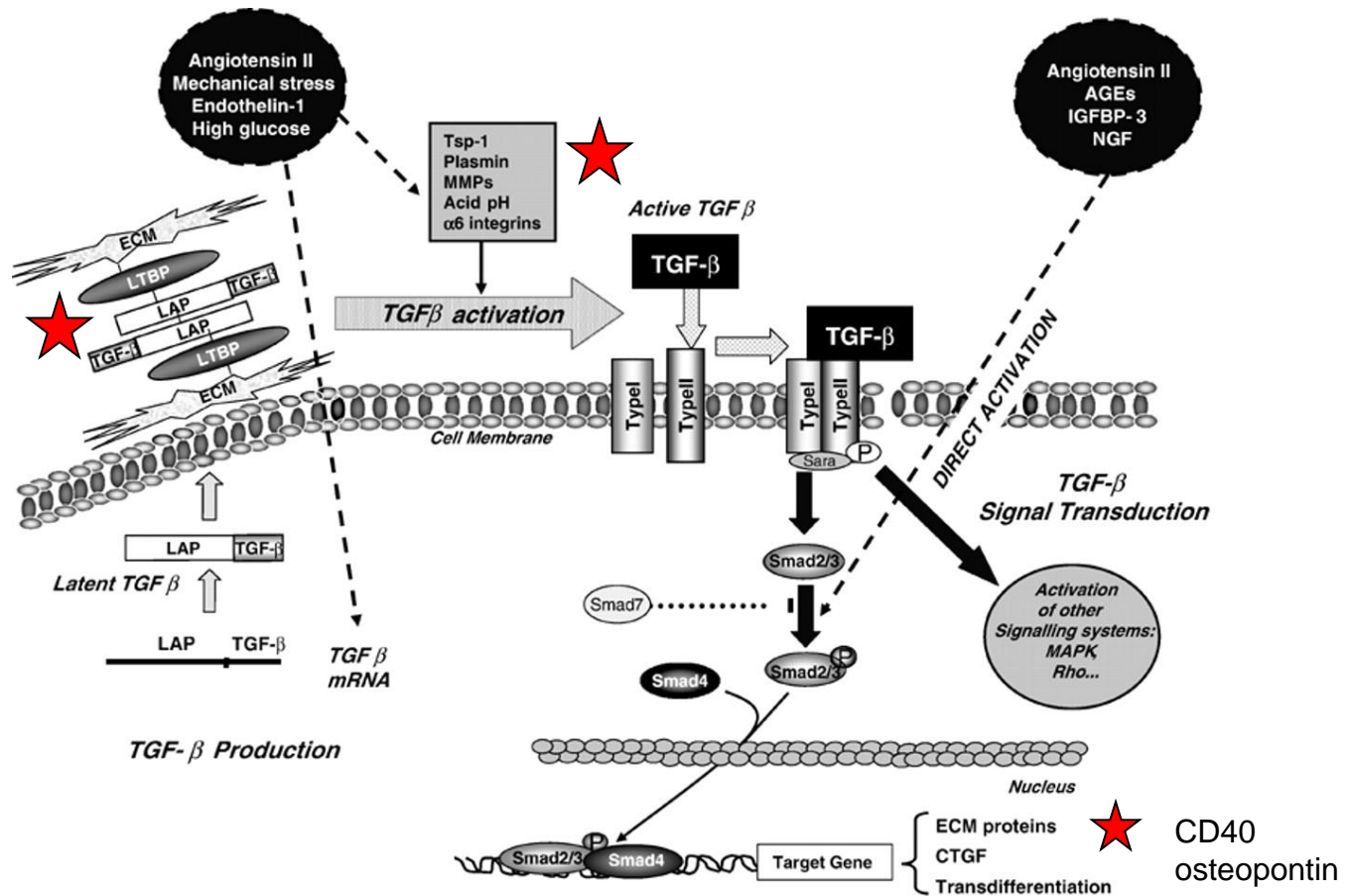


pairwise SNP LD (r^2)



Haplotype Blocks

DMD modifier genes and TGF- β signaling



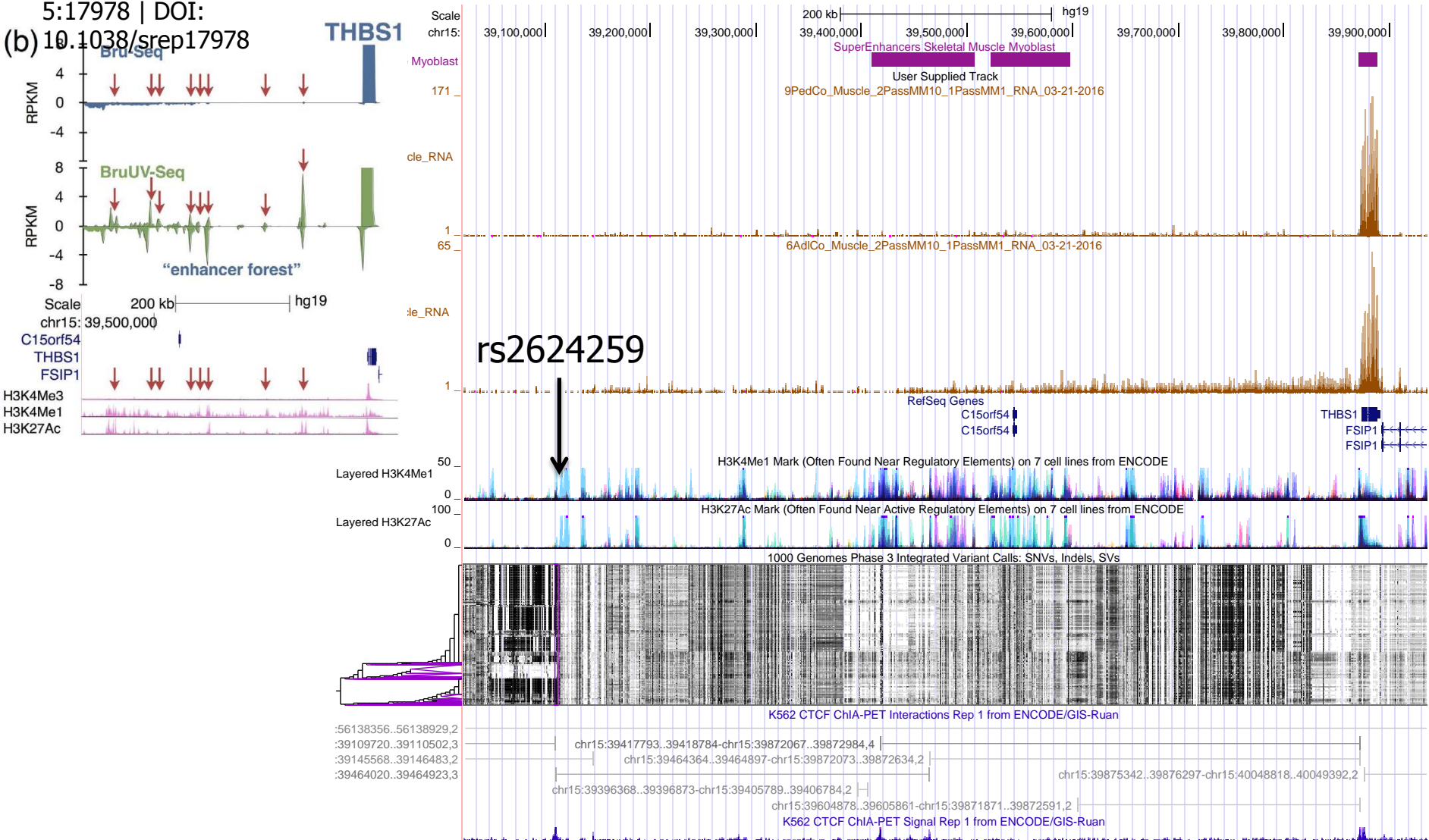
Identifying transcription start sites
and active enhancer elements
using

BruUV-seq. Scientific Reports |

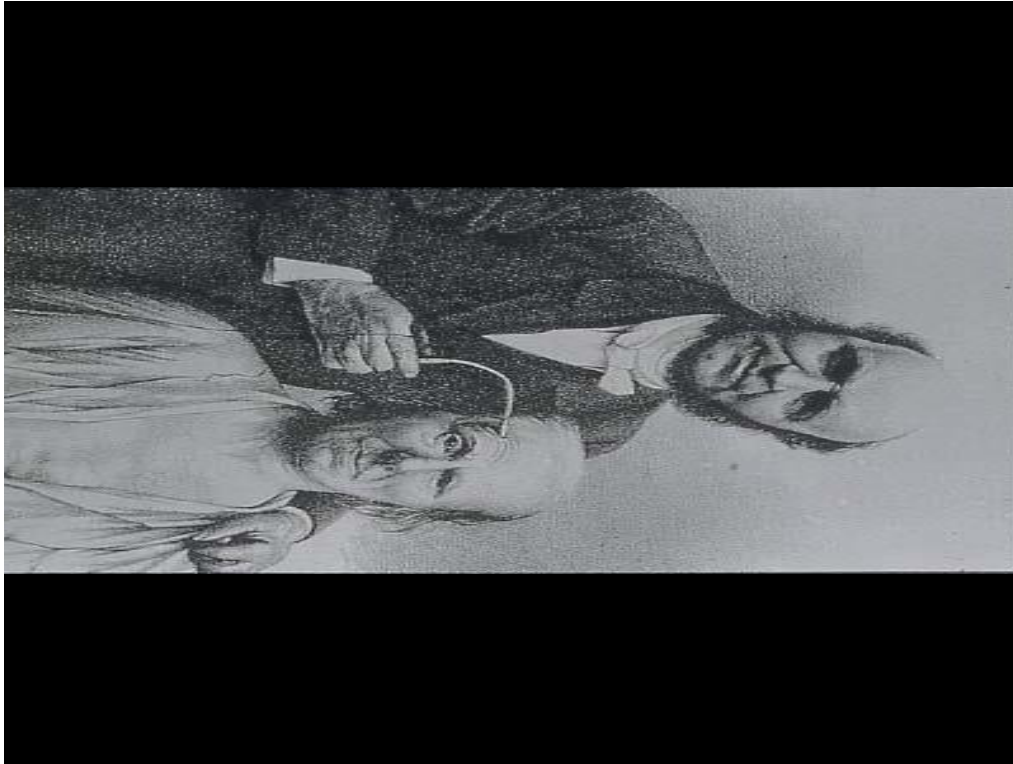
5:17978 | DOI:

(b) 10.1038/srep17978

THBS1 'Super Enhancer'



Guillaume Benjamin Duchenne, pioneer in neurology, 1806-1875



In his publications of 1861 and 1868, the French physician Duchenne described in considerable detail the muscle disease that would bear his name. However, an English physician, Edward Meryon described the disorder some 10 years early and published the details in English.



Mutational Spectrum of DMD Mutations in Dystrophinopathy Patients: Application of Modern Diagnostic Techniques to a Large Cohort

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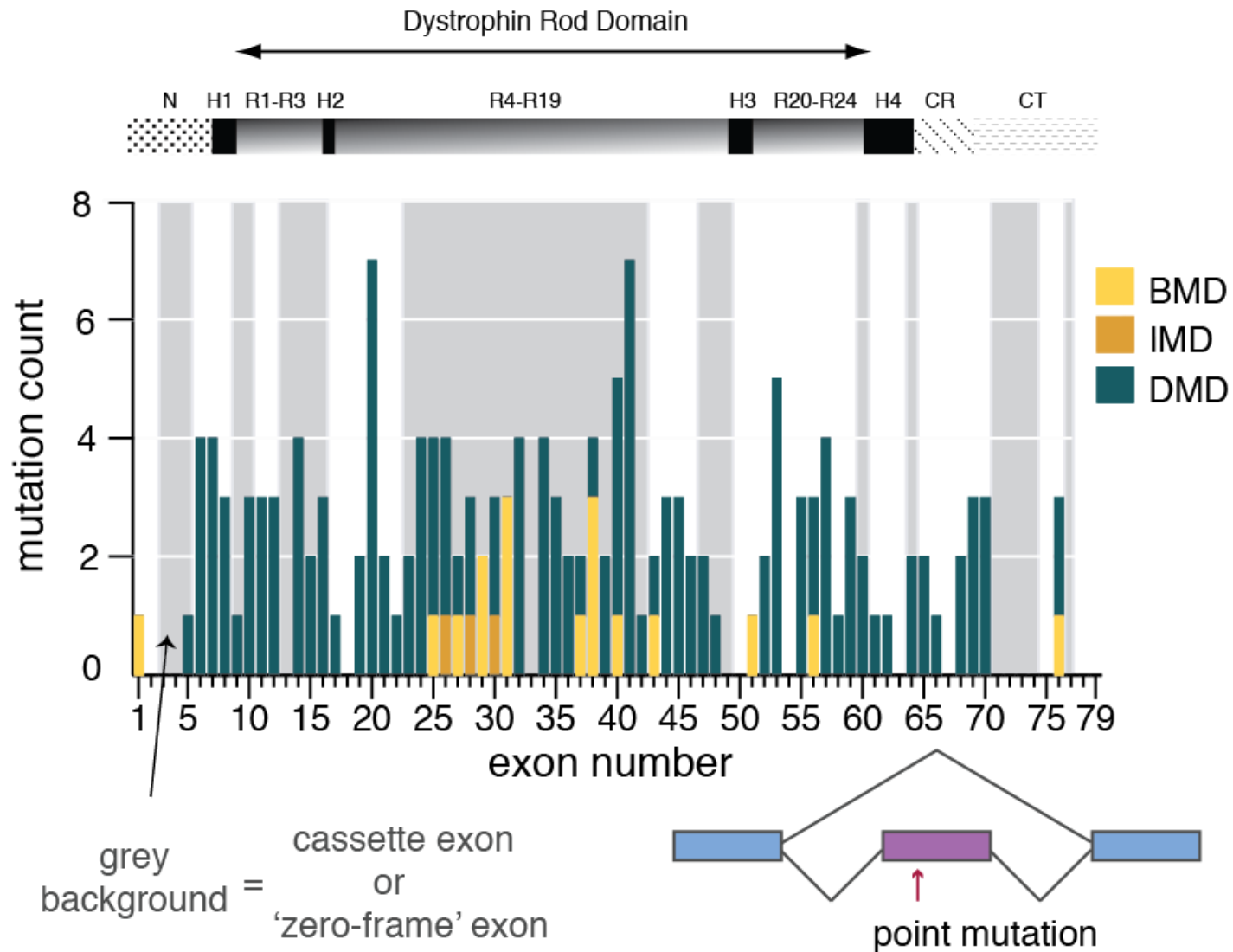
Communicated by Christophe Bérout

Received 24 February 2009; accepted revised manuscript 5 August 2009.

Published online 30 August 2009 in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com). DOI 10.1002/humu.21114

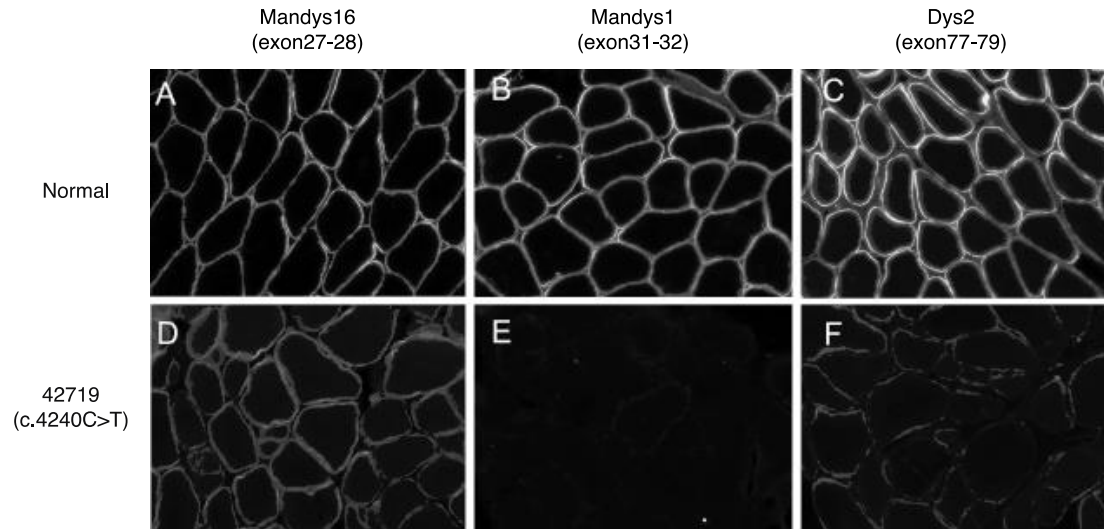
1,111 mutation-positive patients

Nonsense mutations: location versus phenotype

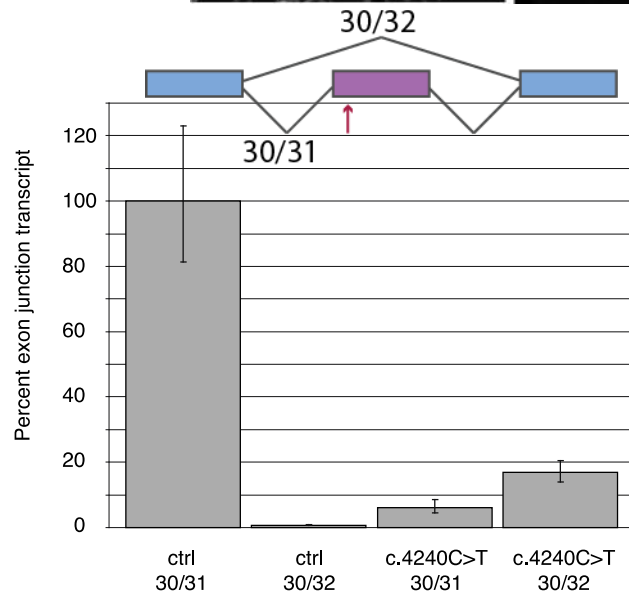


Becker Patient: Exon 31 c.4240C>T, p.Gln1414X

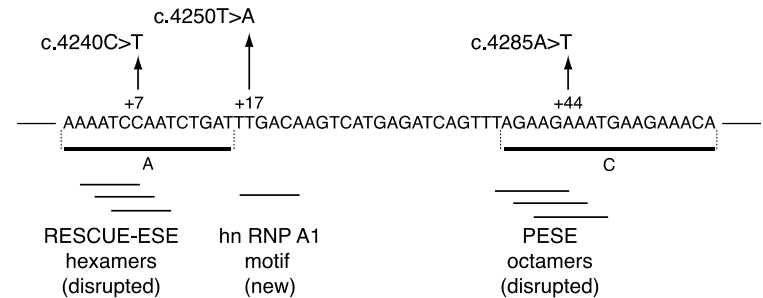
A

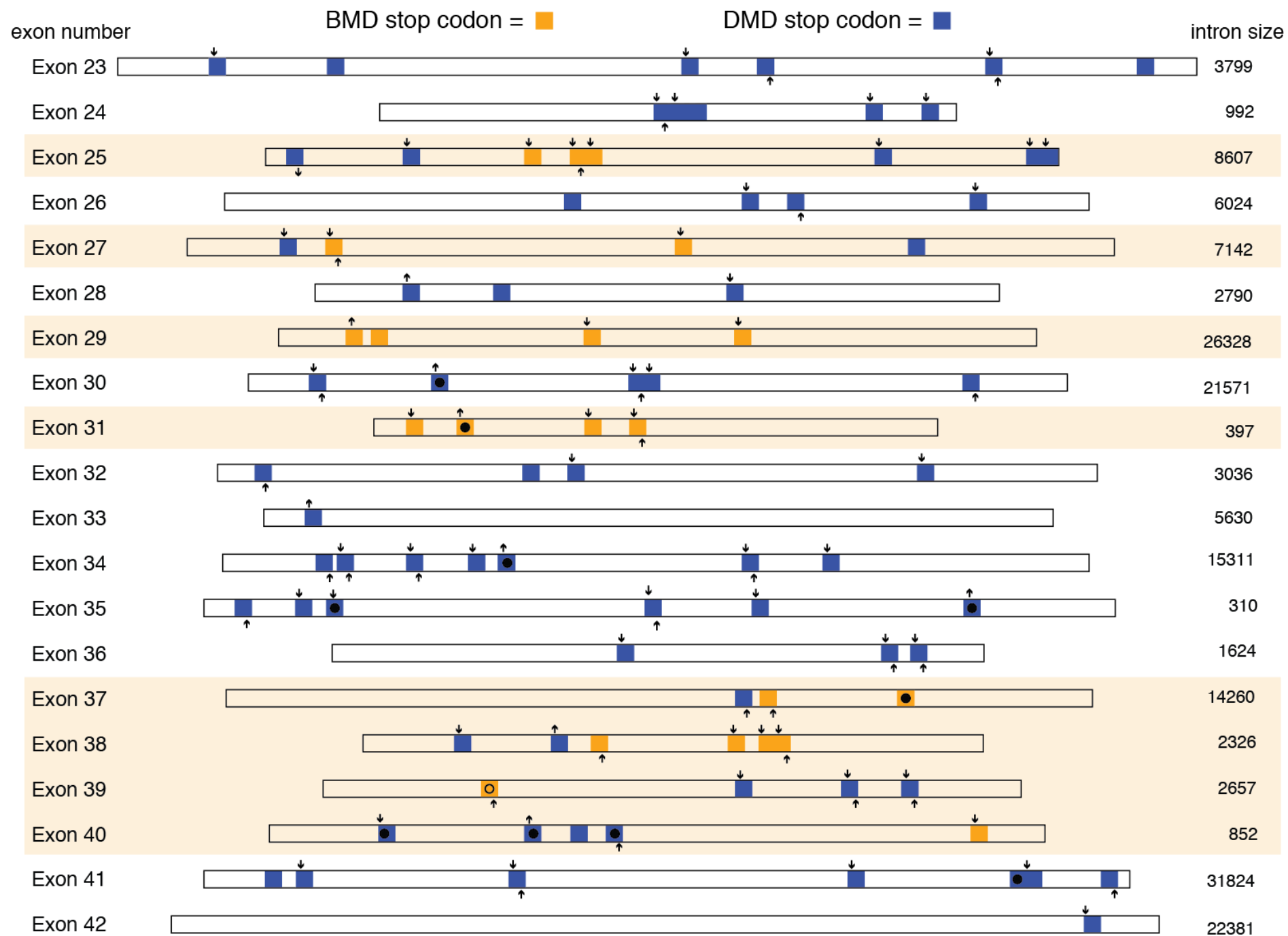


B



C







Genetic Association Studies in Humans

- Many genes

- ~25,000 genes, many can be candidates

- Many SNPs

- ~6,000,000 SNPs ($MAF > 1\%$), ability to predict functional SNPs is limited

- Methods to select SNPs:

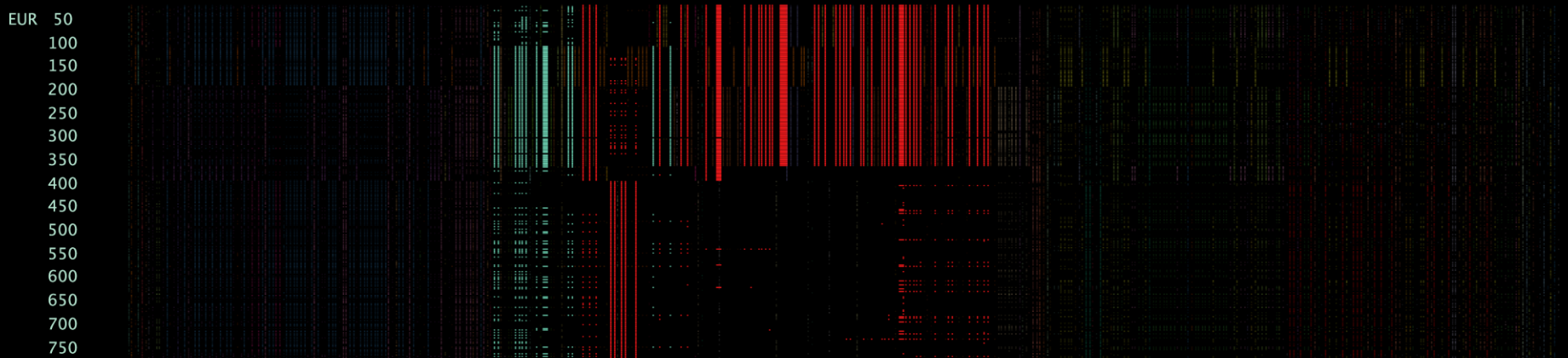
- Only functional SNPs in a candidate gene
 - Systematic screen of SNPs in a candidate gene
 - Systematic screen of SNPs in an entire pathway
 - Genome-wide screen

LTBP4 haplotype structure: 758 European reference chromosomes

chr19:41031623 SPTBN4 SHKBP1 *LTBP4* NUMBL chr19:41199777



rs1131620



rs710160

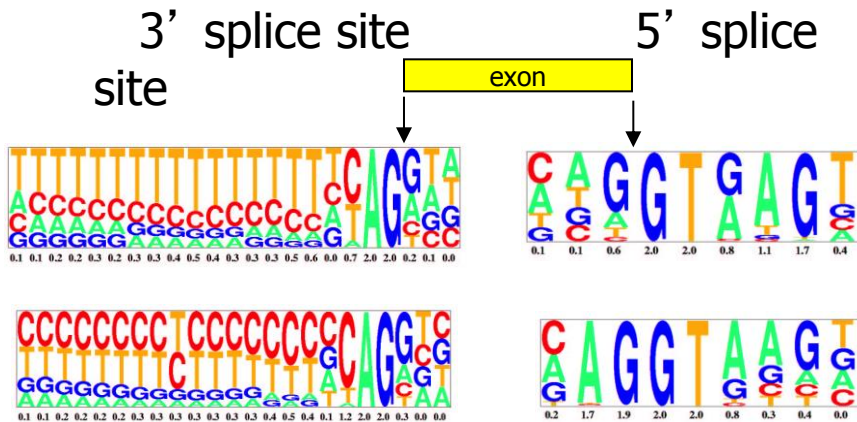
rs2303729 Ile
rs1131620 Ala

rs1051303 Ala

rs10880 Met

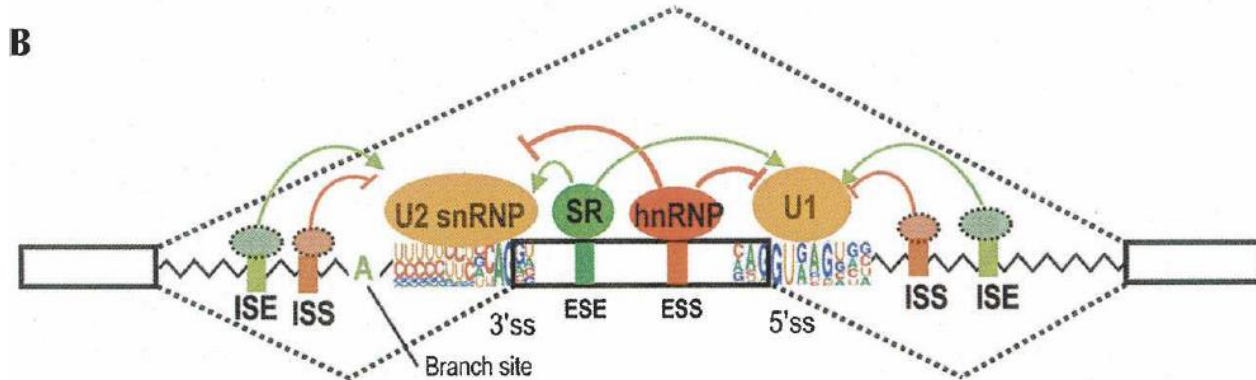
= *LTBP4* IAAM haplotype

3' (acceptor) and 5' (donor) splice sites



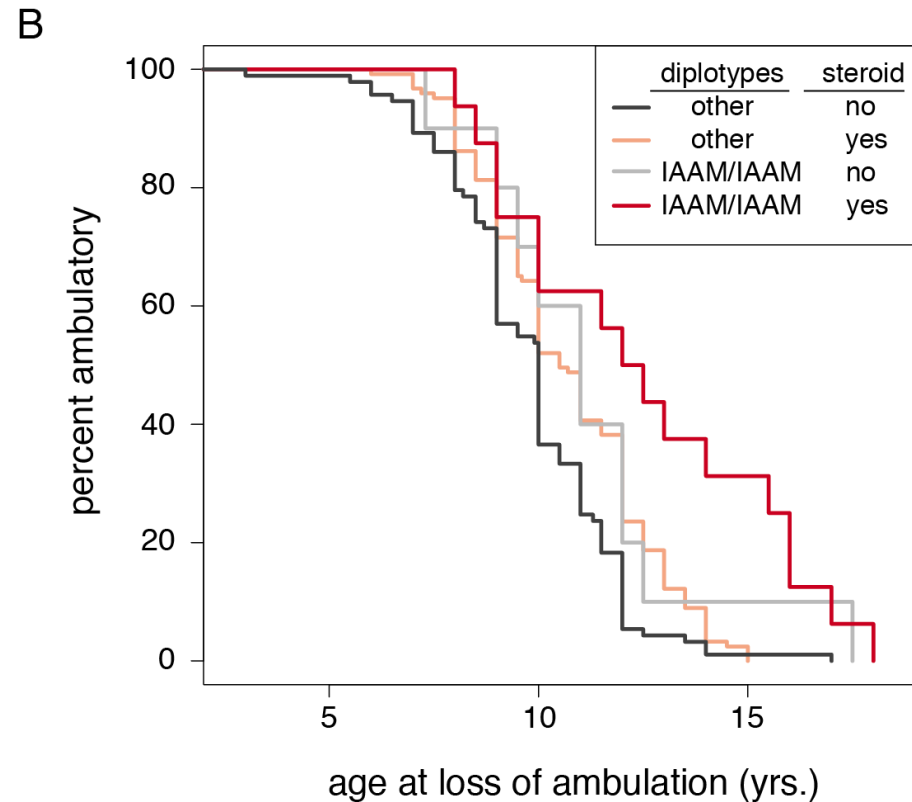
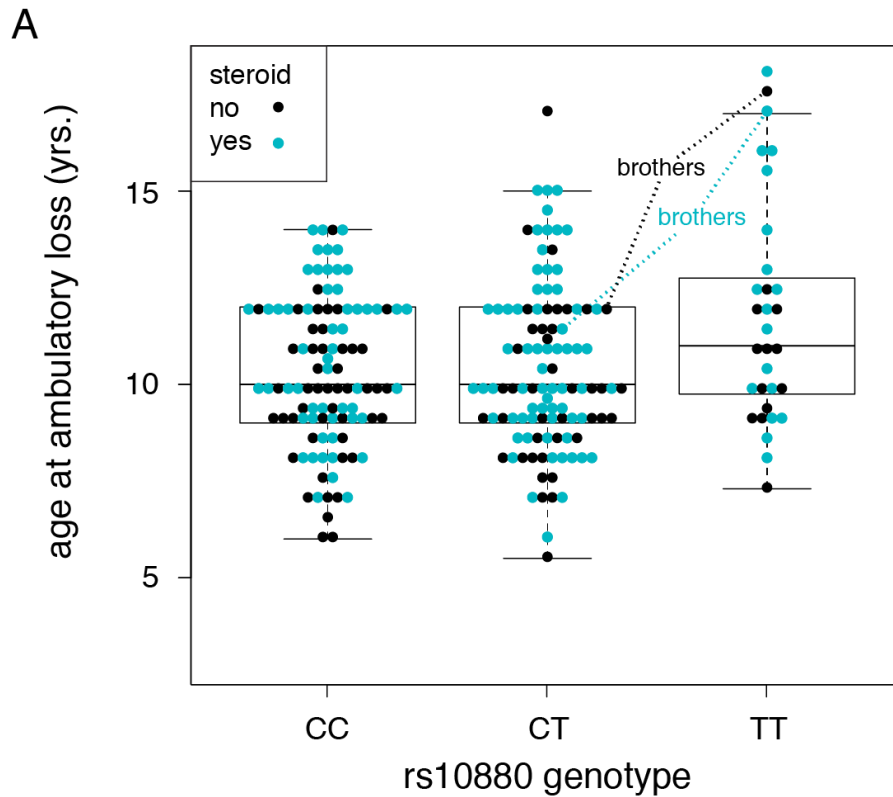
Scoring of splice site sequence motifs:

1. Weight Matrix Model (WMM)
2. First-order Markov Model (MM)
3. Maximum Dependence Decomposition Model (MDD)
4. Maximum Entropy Model (MaxENT)

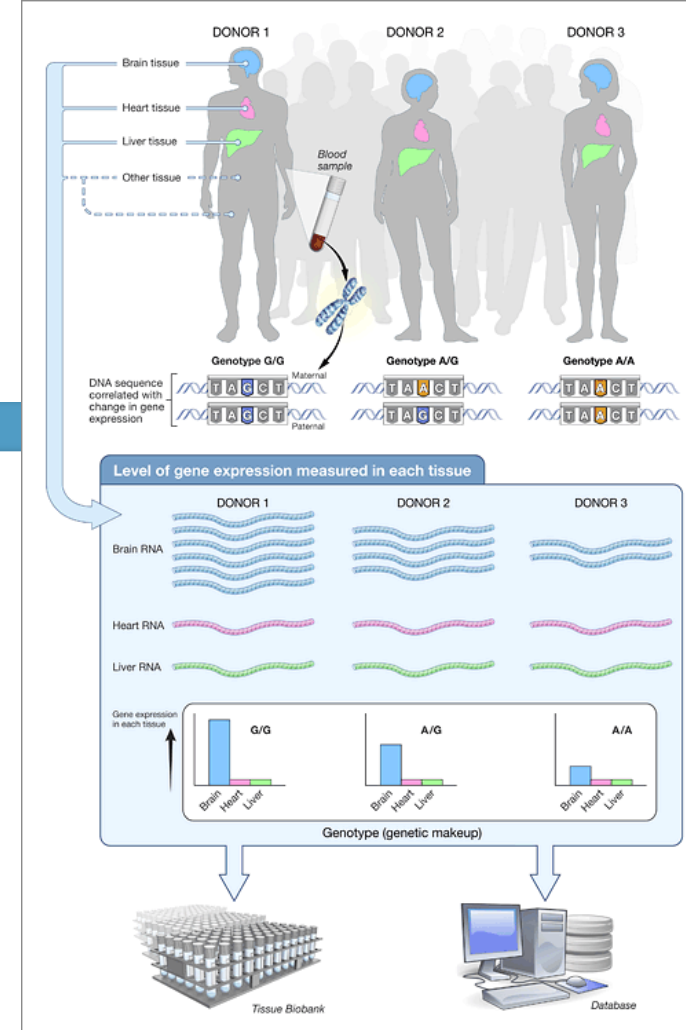


From Z. Wang & C. Burge, Splicing regulation: From a parts list of regulatory elements to an integrated splicing code. RNA (2008), 14:802–813

IAAM/IAAM diplototype is associated with extended ambulation in glucocorticoid-treated DMD patients



Genotype and tissue-specific gene expression from the GTEx Project



Dataset Summary of Analysis Samples of the V6p Release

Data source: Release V6p (dbGaP Accession phs000424.v6.p1)

V6p Sample Info

Sample Counts by Tissues

eGenes vs Sample Size

V6p Donor Info

Gender, Ethnicity & Age

Cause of Death

Tissue Counts Per Donor

Age By Tissues

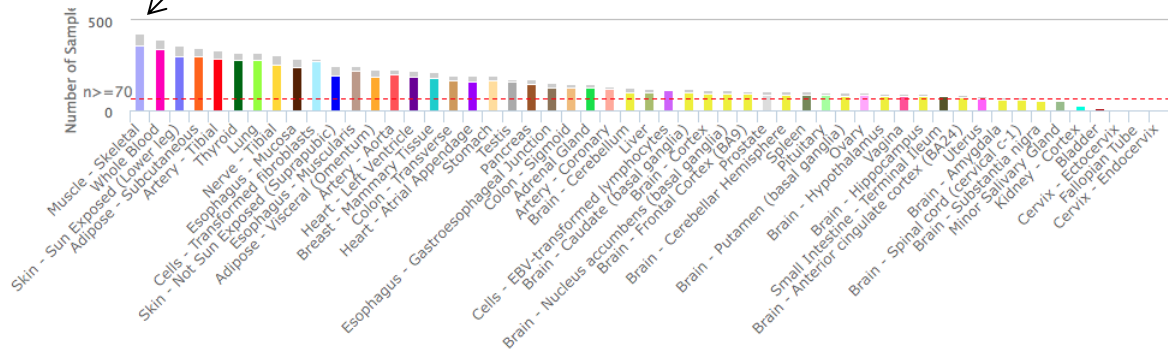
V6p Release	# Tissues	# Donors	# Samples
Total	53	544	8555
With Genotype	53	449	7333
Has eQTL Analysis*	44	449	7051

* Number of samples with genotype ≥ 70

* Number of samples with genotype ≥ 70

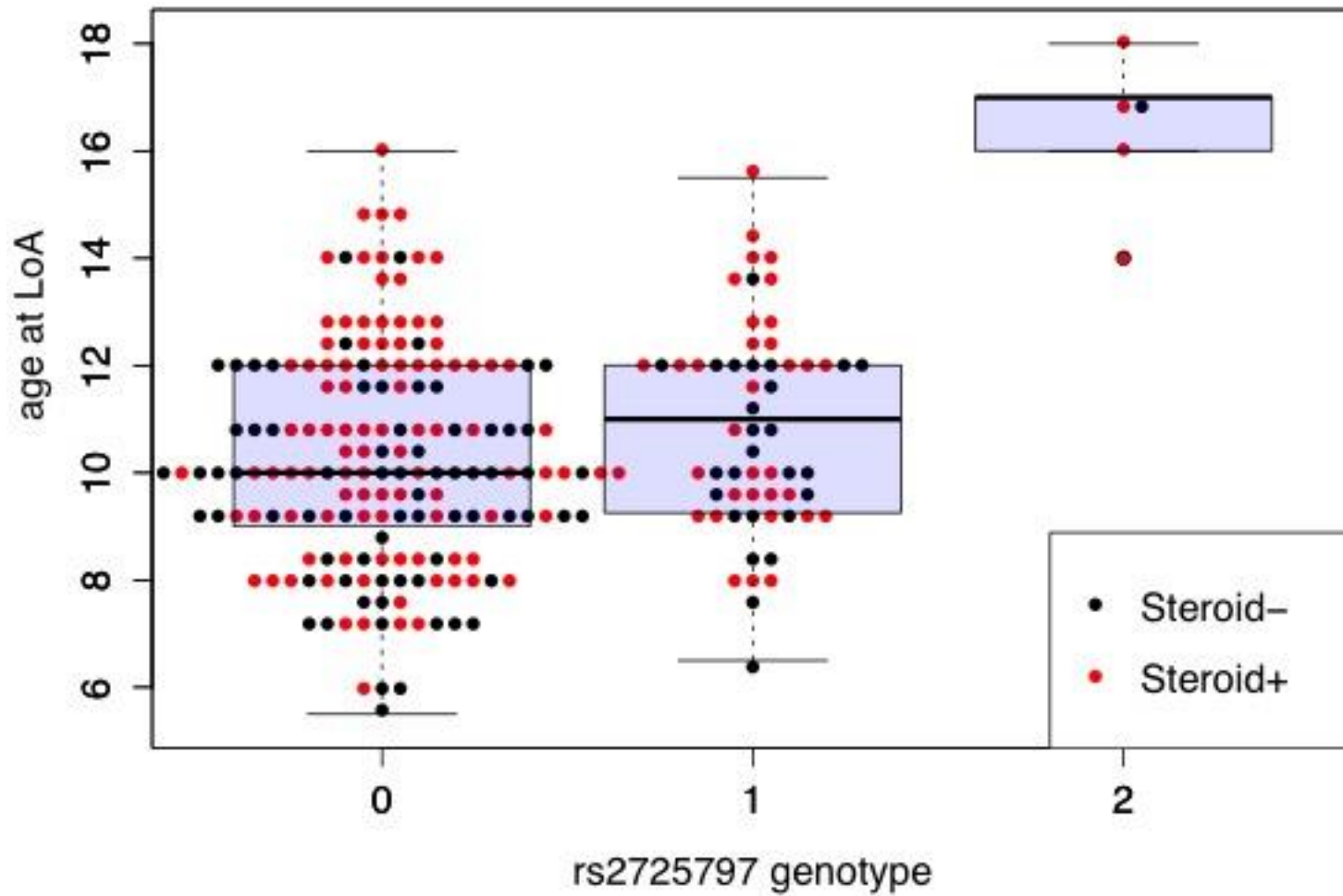
Skeletal muscle,
361 subjects with
genotype + RNA-Seq

V6p Sample Counts by Tissues

Sort tissues by: 

The Genotype-Tissue Expression (GTEx) pilot analysis: Multitissue gene regulation in humans
The GTEx Consortium. Science May 2015:
Vol. 348, Issue 6235, pp. 648-660

Subject Level Data



LTBP4 Genotype Predicts Age of Ambulatory Loss in Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

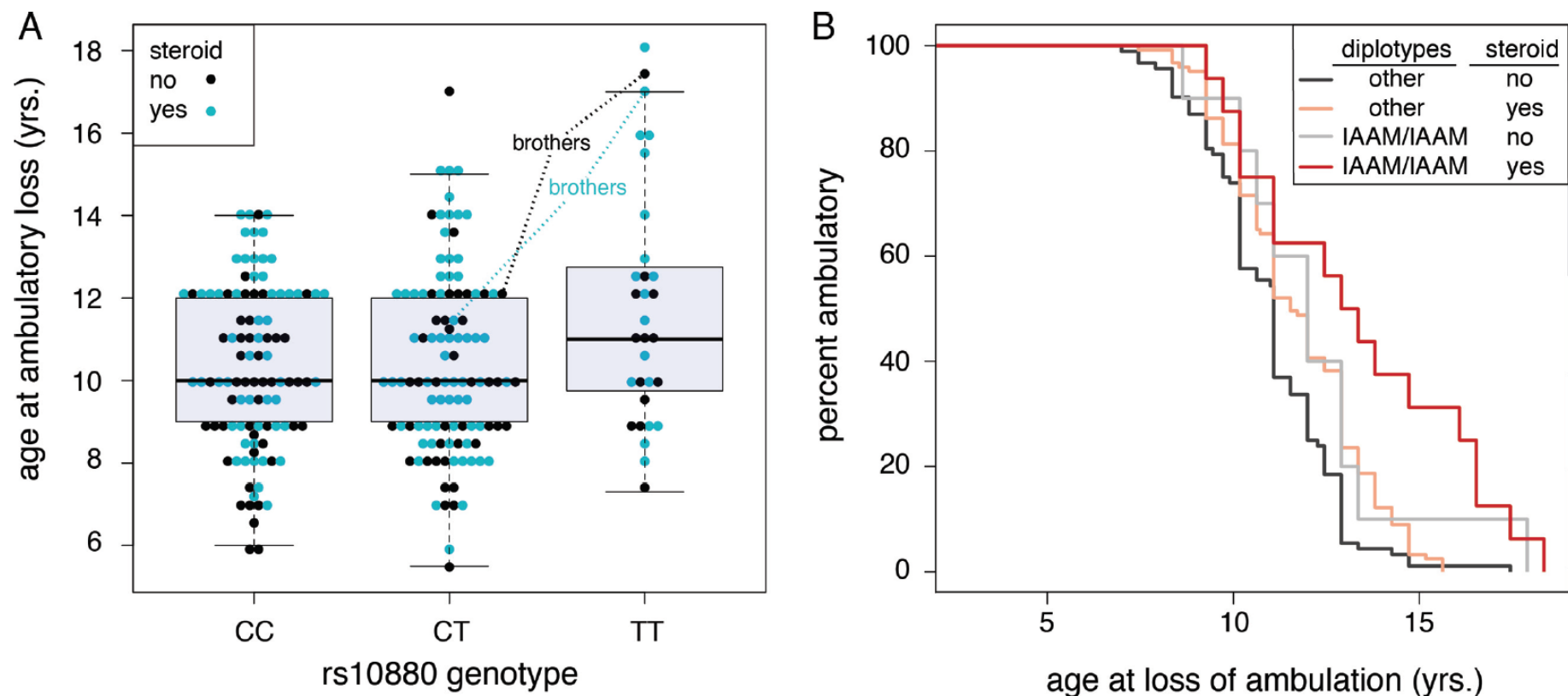


FIGURE 3: The *LTBP4* *rs10880* minor homozygote (TT = Met:Met) and IAAM/IAAM diplotype is associated with extended ambulation in glucocorticoid-treated Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) patients. (A) Age of ambulatory loss classified by *rs10880* genotype and color-coded for patients by their steroid treatment. Two pairs of brothers discordant for their *rs10880* genotypes are shown connected by the dotted lines. (B) Survival curves for DMD patients with the *LTBP4* IAAM/IAAM versus other haplotype pairs, with steroid-treated versus naive individuals plotted separately. The IAAM haplotype consists of single nucleotide polymorphisms *rs2303729* (I = Ile), *rs1131620* (A = Ala), *rs1051303* (A = Ala), and *rs10880* (M = Met) respectively. There were 16 IAAM homozygotes in the steroid treated group and 10 IAAM homozygotes in the naive group. [Color figure can be viewed in the online issue, which is available at www.annalsofneurology.org.]

DMD: loss of ambulation at less than age 12
 IMD: loss of ambulation between ages 12 - 20
 BMD: loss of ambulation at after age 20

Table 1. Summary of All Mutations Detected, by Class and Phenotype

Mutation class	DMD	IMD	BMD	Unknown (B/DMD)	Manifesting carrier	Carrier (all phenotypes)	Total	%
Deletion	284	15	55	106	3	14	477	42.9%
in	30	2	36	17	0	2	87	
out	244	13	18	88	2	12	376	
other	10	0	1	2	1	0	14	
Stop	176	4	30	46	4	34	294	26.5%
UGA	60	1	13	20	3	15	112	
UAG	71	0	11	13	0	4	99	
UAA	45	3	6	13	1	15	83	
Subexonic	69	0	10	33	1	14	127	11.4%
FS Ins	22	0	1	7	1	6	37	
FS Del	46	0	4	23	0	8	81	
FS Ins/Del	1	0	2	2	0	0	5	
in-frame deletion	0	0	3	1	0	0	4	
Exonic duplication	87	7	10	8	5	5	122	11.0%
Splice	22	3	7	18	2	12	64	5.8%
Missense	2	1	6	6	0	0	15	1.4%
Pseudoexon	0	2	2	0	0	2	6	0.5%
Potential	2	0	0	3	0	1	6	0.5%
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Total mutations	642	32	120	220	15	82	1,111	100.0%

“Carrier” are obligate or asymptomatic carriers, whereas “Manifesting Carriers” display symptoms of significant myalgia and/or weakness. (Further characterization of carrier phenotypic class is found in Supp. Table S2, listing specific mutations detected.)

DMD, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy; IMD, intermediate muscular dystrophy; BMD, Becker Muscular Dystrophy; FS Ins, frameshift insertion; FD Del, frameshift deletion; FS Ins/Del, frameshift insertion/deletion.



TSP-1 is a major activator of latent TGF- β 1

- Thrombospondin-1 (TSP-1, THBS1) binds small latent TGF- β and large latent TGF- β , and this binding interaction is sufficient to generate biologically active TGF- β .

