

REVIEW

GENETIC PREDICTORS OF HUMAN CHRONIC PAIN CONDITIONS

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Abstract—Chronic pain conditions are multifactorial disorders with a high frequency in the population. Their pathophysiology is often unclear, and treatment is inefficient. During the last 20 years, genetic linkage analysis and association studies have made considerable strides toward identifying key molecular contributors to the onset and maintenance of chronic pain. Here, we review the genetic variants that have been implicated in chronic pain conditions, divided into the following etiologically-grouped categories: migraine, musculoskeletal pain disorders, neuropathic pain disorders, and visceral pain disorders. In rare familial monogenic pain conditions several strong-effect mutations have been identified. In contrast, the genetic landscape of common chronic pain conditions suggests minor contributions from a large number of single nucleotide polymorphisms representing different functional pathways. A comprehensive survey of up-to-date genetic association results reveals migraine and musculoskeletal pain to be the most investigated chronic pain disorders, in which nearly half of identified genetic variability alters neurotransmission pathways.

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Key words: chronic pain conditions, genetic association studies, GWAS, pain genetics, single nucleotide polymorphisms.

	Contents	
Introduction		36
Genetic variability		37
Human genetic studies		42
Animal models		42
Methods		42
Results		43

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Abbreviations: CWP, chronic widespread pain; FHM, familial hemiplegic migraine; GWAS, genome-wide association studies; OA, osteoarthritis; SNPs, single nucleotide polymorphisms; TMD, temporomandibular disorder; TMJ, temporomandibular joint; VNTR, variable number of tandem repeats.

Migraine	43
Familial hemiplegic migraine (FHM)	43
Migraine: vascular origins	43
Migraine: inflammatory markers	44
Migraine: neuronal origins	44
Migraine genetics: summary	47
Musculoskeletal conditions	47
TMD	47
Low back pain	48
Fibromyalgia and CWP	49
Stress-induced chronic pain	49
Musculoskeletal condition genetics: summary	49
Neuropathic pain disorders	49
Rare neuropathic pain disorders	50
Cancer pain	50
Diabetic neuropathy	50
Postoperative pain	50
Trigeminal neuralgia	51
Other painful peripheral neuropathic conditions	51
Neuropathic condition genetics: summary	51
Visceral pain disorders	51
Visceral condition genetics: summary	52
Conclusion	52
Acknowledgments	52
References	52

INTRODUCTION

Chronic pain is a persistent maladaptive condition, estimated to affect up to 30% of the world’s population (Elzahaf et al., 2012). Given the reported heritability of 16–50% (Hocking et al., 2012; Nielsen et al., 2012), a substantial proportion of the risk of developing a chronic pain condition is driven by genetic background. To date the search for contributing genetic variants has yielded an outline of a centralized pain-processing system, spearheaded by neurotransmitters and their receptors and modulated by myriad other factors, ranging from inflammatory cytokines to growth factors. Although a gestalt understanding is important for conceptualizing chronic pain, genetic studies have shown a cosegregation of distinct pathologies with their putative causal factors at the gene/protein level. Therefore, it will be helpful to present an overview of the current knowledge about genetics of chronic pain separated by etiology, known or hypothesized.

Numerous genetic risk factors have been identified for musculoskeletal, neuropathic, and visceral conditions, as well as migraine. Among these, migraine and musculoskeletal pain disorders have undergone the most extensive investigation in association studies and

have accumulated the highest number of implicated genetic variants (Fig. 1), although many of them await replication (Fig. 2). The list of chronic pain genes (Table 1) is a snapshot of the incredible complexity of the suspected network of molecular interactions. This list includes genes from catecholaminergic, serotonergic, estrogenic, glutamatergic, GABAergic, purinergic and orexinergic pathways; cytokines; growth factors; and proteinases.

The purpose of this review is threefold: (1) provide an overview of the current state of knowledge in human chronic pain genetics, (2) highlight relevant genetic studies and their outcomes for each pathology category, and (3) summarize the genomically-derived mechanisms of molecular pathophysiology for each category.

Genetic variability

The human genome is replete with genetic variants. The majority are germline mutations, passed from parents to offspring. Less common *de novo* mutations are not inherited from parents and occur in offspring only. Examples of *de novo* mutations in sodium channels, Nav1.7, SCN9A, and Nav1.9, SCN11A, have been described in post-trauma pain perception, congenital insensitivity to pain, and primary erythromelalgia (Klein et al., 2012; Leipold et al., 2013). Somatic mutations acquired during one's lifetime are not passed on to offspring. These mutations have been implicated in cancer but so far have not been associated with chronic pain conditions.

Rare but drastic mutations have been identified as causal in several monogenic familial disorders, in which mutations in a single gene locus result in the onset of the condition. For example, a frameshift mutation, which severely compromises the function of the encoded protein, has been discovered in the TWIK-related spinal cord potassium channel (TRESK) gene, KCNK18, and is responsible for familial migraine with aura (Lafrenière et al., 2010). A more common type of causal mutation in rare familial disorders is a nonsynonymous mutation in one nucleotide that leads to an amino acid change of substantial functional effect in the resulting protein. Sodium channels are the best-known example, extensively studied for their role in monogenic conditions such as erythromelalgia, caused by mutations in SCN9A (Yang et al., 2004).

Unlike the rare, high-impact mutations described above, common single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs), found in > 1% of the population, comprise the vast majority of human genetic association studies. These mutations usually have a very minor phenotypic effect and often exert their effect in concert with specific environmental pressures. Rather than directly causing a chronic pain disease, these SNPs modulate susceptibility to it. The minor allele contributes either risk or protection by increasing (conferring gain-of-function on) or decreasing (conferring loss-of-function on) the activity of the resultant protein. Approximately 90% of SNPs are found in introns or intergenic regions, outside of the protein-coding segments of the gene, outlining their regulatory role. SNPs that fall in the exonic, or protein-coding, region may be either non-synonymous, resulting in a different amino acid, or synonymous, not

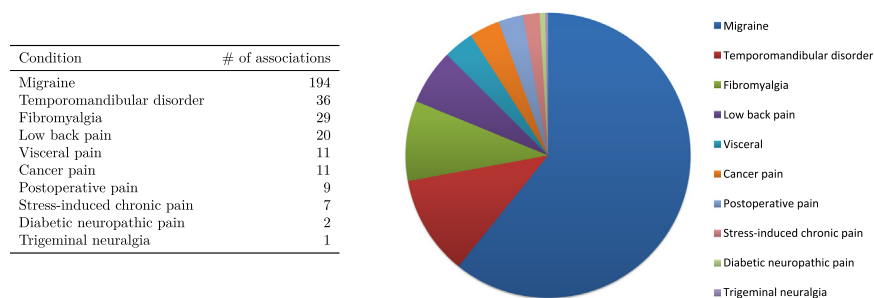


Fig. 1. Chronic pain conditions quantified by the number of genetic association studies. For each condition, the number of published genetic associations is given, including both positive and negative results. Rare Mendelian disorder variants from linkage studies are not included.

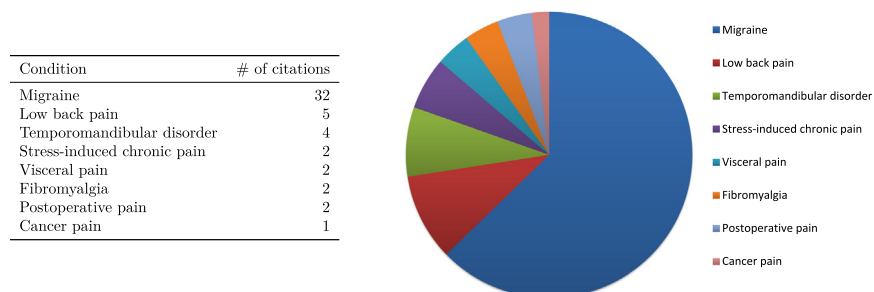


Fig. 2. Chronic pain conditions quantified by the number of genetic loci. Only genes with positive association in a given disorder or group of disorders reported in at least two studies are included, and rare Mendelian disorder variants from linkage studies are not included.

Table 1. Genes reported in genetic association studies of chronic pain conditions

Gene	Function/Pathway	Condition(s)	Citation
<i>ACAN</i>	Structural protein	Low back pain	Solovieva et al. (2007)
<i>ACE</i>	Other	Migraine	Paterna et al. (2000), Kowa et al. (2005), Lea et al. (2005), Lin et al. (2005), Kara et al. (2007), Joshi et al. (2009), Alicakmak et al. (2003), Tronvik et al. (2008), Schürks et al. (2009), Tietjen et al. (2009)
<i>ADAMTSL4</i>	Protein degradation	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>ADARB2</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Cox et al. (2012)
<i>ADRA1D</i>	Neurotransmission	TMD	Smith et al. (2011)
<i>ADRA2C</i>	Neurotransmission	TMD	Smith et al. (2011)
<i>ADRB2</i>	Neurotransmission	TMD	Diatchenko et al. (2006)
		Low back pain	Skouen et al. (2012)
		Fibromyalgia	Vargas-Alarcón et al. (2009)
<i>AJAP1</i>	Other	Migraine	Anttila et al. (2013), Esserlind et al. (2015), Lin et al. (2015), Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>ANKK1</i>	Other	Migraine	Ghosh et al. (2013)
<i>APOA1BP</i>	Metabolism	Migraine	Anttila et al. (2013)
<i>APOE</i>	Metabolism	Fibromyalgia	Reeser et al. (2011)
<i>AR</i>	Other	Visceral	Pontari (2013)
<i>ARMS2</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>ASTN2</i>	Other	Migraine	Freilinger et al. (2012), Esserlind et al. (2015), Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>ATP1A2</i>	Neurotransmission	FHM2	Moskowitz et al. (2004)
<i>ATP5B</i>	Other	Migraine	Anttila et al. (2013)
<i>BDNF</i>	Cellular growth	Migraine	Lemos et al. (2010), Sutherland et al. (2014), Marziniak et al. (2008)
<i>C7orf10</i>	Metabolism	Migraine	Anttila et al. (2013), Esserlind et al. (2015), Lin et al. (2015), Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>CACNA1A</i>	Neurotransmission	FHM1	Ophoff et al. (1996)
<i>CAMK4</i>	Other	TMD	Smith et al. (2011)
<i>CARF</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>CASP9</i>	Apoptosis	Low back pain	Guo et al. (2011), Mu et al. (2013)
<i>CCM2L</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>CCR2</i>	Immune response	Migraine	Schürks et al. (2009)
<i>CCT5</i>	Structural protein	Fibromyalgia	Peters et al. (2013)
<i>CFDP1</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>CFTR</i>	Immune response	Visceral	Sharer et al. (1998), Cohn et al. (1997), Noone et al. (2001)
<i>CGRP</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Lemos et al. (2010)
<i>CHRM2</i>	Neurotransmission	TMD	Smith et al. (2011)
<i>COMT</i>	Neurotransmission	Fibromyalgia	Vargas-Alarcón et al. (2007), Fernández-de-las Peñas et al. (2012), Martínez-Jauand et al. (2013), Barbosa et al. (2012), Cohen et al. (2009), Finan et al. (2011), Matsuda et al. (2010)
		Low back pain	Rut et al. (2014), Jacobsen et al. (2012), Omair et al. (2012, 2015)
		Postoperative pain	Rut et al. (2014)
		Migraine	Cargnin et al. (2013)
		Stress-induced chronic pain	McLean et al. (2011), Bortsov et al. (2014)
		TMD	Erdal et al. (2003), Diatchenko et al. (2005), Smith et al. (2011), Michelotti et al. (2014), Meloto et al. (2015)
<i>CPQ</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	I.H.G. Consortium et al. (2010)
<i>CRHBP</i>	Neurotransmission	Stress-induced chronic pain	Linnstaedt et al. (2016)
		Fibromyalgia	Holliday et al. (2010)
<i>CXCL8</i>	Immune response	TMD	Slade et al. (2011)
		Cancer pain	Reyes-Gibby et al. (2007)
<i>DAO</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	García-Martín et al. (2015)
<i>DBH</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Lea et al. (2000), Fernandez et al. (2006, 2009), Ghosh et al. (2013)
<i>DOCK4</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>DRD2</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Peroutka et al. (1998), Del Zompo et al. (1998), Ghosh et al. (2013)
<i>DRD4</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Del Zompo et al. (1998), Mochi et al. (2003), de Sousa et al. (2007)
		TMD	Aneiros-Guerrero et al. (2011)
		Fibromyalgia	Buskila et al. (2004)
<i>EDNRA</i>	Other	Migraine	Tzourio et al. (2001), Tikka-Kleemola et al. (2009)
<i>ESR1</i>	Other	TMD	Kang et al. (2007), Ribeiro-Dasilva et al. (2009), Kim et al. (2010), Stemig et al. (2015)
		Migraine	Colson et al. (2004), Oterino et al. (2006), Kaunisto et al. (2006), Oterino et al.

Table 1 (continued)

Gene	Function/Pathway	Condition(s)	Citation
			(2008), Corominas et al. (2009), Ghosh et al. (2012), Rodriguez-Acevedo et al. (2013)
		Low back pain	Roh et al. (2013)
<i>ESR2</i>	Other	Migraine	Oterino et al. (2008), Ghosh et al. (2012)
<i>FAM183B</i>	Other	Fibromyalgia	Peters et al. (2013)
<i>FGF6</i>	Immune response	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>FHL5</i>	Other	Migraine	Anttila et al. (2013), Esserlind et al. (2015), Lin et al. (2015), Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>FKBP5</i>	Immune response	Stress-induced chronic pain	Bortsov et al. (2013)
<i>FSHR</i>	Other	Migraine	Oterino et al. (2008)
<i>FUT9</i>	Metabolism	Migraine	Anttila et al. (2013)
<i>GABRB3</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Russo et al. (2005), Netzer et al. (2008)
		Fibromyalgia	Oswell et al. (2008), Smith et al. (2012)
<i>GBP1</i>	Immune response	Fibromyalgia	Smith et al. (2012)
<i>GCH1</i>	Metabolism	Fibromyalgia	Kim et al. (2013)
		Peripheral neuropathy	Hendry et al. (2013)
		Postoperative pain	Tegeder et al. (2006), Kim et al. (2010)
<i>GDF5</i>	Cellular growth	Low back pain	Mu et al. (2013)
		TMD	Xiao et al. (2015)
<i>GJA1</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>GPR149</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>GRIA1</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Formicola et al. (2010), Maher et al. (2013), Cargnin et al. (2014)
<i>GRIA3</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Formicola et al. (2010), Maher et al. (2013)
<i>GRK5</i>	Other	TMD	Smith et al. (2011)
<i>GSTM1</i>	Metabolism	TMD	Aneiros-Guerrero et al. (2011)
<i>HCRTR1</i>	Other	Migraine	Rainero et al. (2011)
<i>HEY2</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>HLA-DRB1</i>	Immune response	Migraine	Rainero et al. (2005)
<i>HPSE2</i>	Metabolism	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>HTR2A</i>	Neurotransmission	TMD	Mutlu et al. (2004), Ojima et al. (2007), Smith et al. (2011), de Freitas et al. (2013), Slade et al. (2013)
		Fibromyalgia	Mergener et al. (2011), Holliday et al. (2010), Gürsoy et al. (2001), Bondy et al. (1999)
<i>HTR7</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Cox et al. (2012)
<i>IFRD1</i>	Immune response	TMD	Smith et al. (2011)
<i>IGSF9B</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>IL10</i>	Immune response	Postoperative pain	Stephens et al. (2014)
		TMD	Smith et al. (2011)
		Visceral	Shoskes et al. (2002)
<i>IL10RB</i>	Immune response	Cancer pain	Reyes-Gibby et al. (2013)
<i>IL13</i>	Immune response	Cancer pain	McCann et al. (2012)
<i>IL18R1</i>	Immune response	Low back pain	Omair et al. (2013)
<i>IL18RAP</i>	Immune response	Low back pain	Omair et al. (2013)
<i>IL1A</i>	Immune response	Low back pain	Schistad et al. (2014), Omair et al. (2013)
<i>IL1B</i>	Immune response	Migraine	Yimaz et al. (2010)
		Cancer pain	Reyes-Gibby et al. (2013)
<i>IL1R1</i>	Immune response	Cancer pain	McCann et al. (2012)
<i>IL1R2</i>	Immune response	Postoperative pain	Stephens et al. (2014)
<i>IL1RN</i>	Immune response	Low back pain	Lončar et al. (2013)
<i>IL9</i>	Immune response	Migraine	Schürks et al. (2009)
<i>INSR</i>	Metabolism	Migraine	McCarthy et al. (2001)
<i>ITPK1</i>	Metabolism	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>JAG1</i>	Metabolism	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>KCNAB3</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Lafrenière and Rouleau (2012)
<i>KCNK4</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Lafrenière and Rouleau (2012)
<i>KCNK18</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Lafrenière et al. (2010), Lafrenière and Rouleau (2011)
<i>KCNS1</i>	Neurotransmission	Sensory neuropathy	Hendry et al. (2013)
		Postoperative pain	Costigan et al. (2010), Hendry et al. (2013)
<i>LDLR</i>	Metabolism	Migraine	Mochi et al. (2003), Curtain et al. (2004)
<i>LRP1</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Chasman et al. (2011), Esserlind et al. (2015), Gormley et al. (2015), Ghosh et al. (2013)

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Table 1 (continued)

Gene	Function/Pathway	Condition(s)	Citation
<i>LRRIQ3</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>LTA</i>	Immune response	Migraine	Trabace et al. (2002), Asuni et al. (2009), Ghosh et al. (2010), Ishii et al. (2012)
<i>MAOA</i>	Neurotransmission	Fibromyalgia TMD	Gürsoy et al. (2008) Mutlu et al. (2005)
<i>MC2R</i>	Neurotransmission	Fibromyalgia	Holliday et al. (2010)
<i>MED14</i>	Metabolism	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>MEF2D</i>	Apoptosis	Migraine	Freilinger et al. (2012), Esserlind et al. (2015), Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>MMP1</i>	Protein degradation	Low back pain	Song et al. (2008), Jacobsen et al. (2013)
<i>MMP2</i>	Protein degradation	Low back pain	Dong et al. (2007)
<i>MMP3</i>	Protein degradation	Low back pain	Takahashi et al. (2001)
<i>MMP16</i>	Protein degradation	Migraine	Anttila et al. (2013), Esserlind et al. (2015), Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>MNSOD</i>	Other	Visceral	Arisan et al. (2006)
<i>MPPED2</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>MRV11</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>MTDH</i>	Other	Migraine	I.H.G. Consortium et al. (2010), Freilinger et al. (2012), Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>MTHFD1</i>	Other	TMD	Aneiros-Guerrero et al. (2011)
<i>MTHFR</i>	Metabolism	Migraine	Kowa et al. (2000), Bassi et al. (2003), Kara et al. (2003), Lea et al. (2004), Lea et al. (2005), Oterino et al. (2005), Bottini et al. (2006), Kaunisto et al. (2006), Scher et al. (2006), Todt et al. (2006), Pezzini et al. (2007), Ferro et al. (2008), Schürks et al. (2008), Joshi et al. (2009), Schürks et al. (2009), Tietjen et al. (2009), Liu et al. (2010), An et al. (2013), Azimova et al. (2013)
<i>MTRR</i>	Other	TMD	Aneiros-Guerrero et al. (2011)
<i>MYT1L</i>	Other	Fibromyalgia	Docampo et al. (2014)
<i>NFKBIA</i>	Immune response	Cancer pain	Reyes-Gibby et al. (2009)
<i>NGFR</i>	Cellular growth	Migraine	Lighthart et al. (2011)
<i>NOS3</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine Cancer pain	Borroni et al. (2006), Schürks et al. (2009) Reyes-Gibby et al. (2013)
<i>NOTCH3</i>	Other	Migraine	Iso et al. (2003), Alva and Iruela-Arispe (2004)
<i>NOTCH4</i>	Other	Migraine	Rubino et al. (2013), Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>NR3C1</i>	Immune response	TMD	Smith et al. (2011)
<i>NRP1</i>	Apoptosis	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>NRXN3</i>	Neurotransmission	Fibromyalgia	Docampo et al. (2014)
<i>NTRK1</i>	Other	Congenital insensitivity to pain	Shatzky et al. (2000), Miura et al. (2000), Indo (2001), Indo et al. (2001), Bodzioch et al. (2001), Bonkowsky et al. (2003), Huehne et al. (2008), Li et al. (2012), Gao et al. (2013), Liu et al. (2014), Yis et al. (2015), Tang et al. (2014), Wang et al. (2015)
<i>OPRM1</i>	Neurotransmission	Stress-induced chronic pain Low back pain Postoperative pain Diabetic neuropathic pain	Ballina et al. (2013), Linnstaedt et al. (2015) Hasvik et al. (2014), Omair et al. (2015) Kolesnikov et al. (2013), Olsen et al. (2012) Cheng et al. (2010)
<i>P2RX7</i>	Neurotransmission	Postoperative pain Diabetic neuropathic pain	Sorge et al. (2012) Ursu et al. (2014)
<i>PGK1</i>	Metabolism	Visceral	Riley and Krieger (2002)
<i>PGR</i>	Other	Migraine	Colson et al. (2005)
<i>PHACTR1</i>	Metabolism	Migraine	Freilinger et al. (2012), Esserlind et al. (2015), Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>PLCE1</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>POMC</i>	Neurotransmission	Fibromyalgia	Holliday et al. (2010)
<i>PRDM16</i>	Other	Migraine	Chasman et al. (2011), An et al. (2013), Fan et al. (2014), Esserlind et al. (2015), Gormley et al. (2015), Ghosh et al. (2013)
<i>PRRT2</i>	Other	FHM	Riant et al. (2012), Dale et al. (2012)
<i>PRSS1</i>	Protein degradation	Visceral	Whitcomb et al. (1996), Gorry et al. (1997), Noone et al. (2001), Simon et al. (2002), Le Marechal et al. (2004), Le Maréchal et al. (2006)
<i>PTGS2</i>	Immune response	Migraine Cancer pain	Dasdemir et al. (2013), Mozaffari et al. (2015) Reyes-Gibby et al. (2009), Reyes-Gibby et al. (2013)
<i>RAMP1</i>	Other	Migraine	Sutherland et al. (2013), Cargnin et al. (2015)
<i>REST</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)

Table 1 (continued)

Gene	Function/Pathway	Condition(s)	Citation
<i>RNF213</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>RUNX2</i>	Other	TMD	Xiao et al. (2015)
<i>SCN1A</i>	Neurotransmission	FHM3	Dichgans et al. (2005), Persico et al. (2015)
<i>SCN9A</i>	Neurotransmission	Erythromelalgia	Yang et al. (2004), Cummins et al. (2004), Dib-Hajj et al. (2005), Drenth et al. (2005), Li et al. (2005), Michiels et al. (2005), Han et al. (2006), Zhang et al. (2006), Lee et al. (2007), Drenth et al. (2008), Lin et al. (2008), Samuels et al. (2008), Estacion et al. (2009), Han et al. (2009)
		Paroxysmal extreme pain disorder	Fertleman et al. (2006), Dib-Hajj et al. (2008), Estacion et al. (2008)
		Congenital insensitivity to pain	Cox et al. (2006, 2010), Kurban et al. (2010), Klein et al. (2012), Peddareddygari et al. (2014), Mansouri et al. (2014), Shorer et al. (2014)
		Peripheral neuropathy	Dabby et al. (2011), Faber et al. (2012a), Han et al. (2012)
		Fibromyalgia	Vargas-Alarcon et al. (2012)
		Visceral	Reeder et al. (2013)
<i>SCN10A</i>	Neurotransmission	Peripheral neuropathy	Faber et al. (2012b), Huang et al. (2013), Dabby et al. (2016)
<i>SCN11A</i>	Neurotransmission	Congenital insensitivity to pain	Leipold et al. (2013), Phatarakijjirund et al. (2015)
		Peripheral neuropathy	Huang et al. (2014), Han et al. (2015)
<i>SERPINA6</i>	Immune response	Fibromyalgia	Holliday et al. (2010)
<i>SHMT1</i>	Metabolism	TMD	Aneiros-Guerrero et al. (2011)
<i>SLC24A3</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>SLC6A4</i>	Neurotransmission	Fibromyalgia	Offenbaecher et al. (1999)
		Migraine	Yilmaz et al. (2001), Kotani et al. (2002), Gonda et al. (2007), Todt et al. (2006)
		TMD	Herken et al. (2001), Ojima et al. (2007)
		Trigeminal neuralgia	Cui et al. (2014)
<i>SMAD3</i>	Other	TMD	Xiao et al. (2015)
<i>SPINK1</i>	Protein degradation	Visceral	Witt et al. (2000), Pfuetzer et al. (2001), Király et al. (2007)
<i>STAT6</i>	Other	Migraine	Anttila et al. (2013)
<i>TAAR1</i>	Neurotransmission	Fibromyalgia	Smith et al. (2012)
<i>TBC1D7</i>	Cellular growth	Migraine	Anttila et al. (2013)
<i>TGFB1</i>	Cellular growth	TMD	Slade et al. (2011)
		Migraine	Schürks et al. (2009)
<i>TGFB2</i>	Cellular growth	Migraine	Freilinger et al. (2012), Esserlind et al. (2015), Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>TNF</i>	Immune response	Migraine	Mazaheri et al. (2006), Ghosh et al. (2010), Yilmaz et al. (2010), Ates et al. (2011), Gu et al. (2012), Schürks et al. (2009), Trabace et al. (2002), Asuni et al. (2009)
		Cancer pain	Reyes-Gibby et al. (2009)
<i>TNFRSF1B</i>	Immune response	Migraine	Dong et al. (2012)
		Cancer pain	Reyes-Gibby et al. (2013)
<i>TRPA1</i>	Neurotransmission	Sensory neuropathy	Binder et al. (2012)
<i>TRPM8</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Chasman et al. (2011), Freilinger et al. (2012), Esserlind et al. (2015), Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>TRPV1</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine sensory neuropathy	Carreño et al. (2012) Binder et al. (2012)
<i>TRPV3</i>	Neurotransmission	Migraine	Carreño et al. (2012)
<i>TSPAN2</i>	Other	Migraine	Anttila et al. (2013), Esserlind et al. (2015), Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>WSCD1</i>	Metabolism	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>YAP1</i>	Apoptosis	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)
<i>ZCCHC14</i>	Other	Migraine	Gormley et al. (2015)

Abbreviations: FHM, familial hemiplegic migraine; TMD, temporomandibular disorder.

changing the amino acid. Whether intronic or exonic, synonymous or non-synonymous, most common SNPs are silent and have no clearly observable or discernible phenotypic effect.

Several databases, such as NCBI dbSNP (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/snp>), the 1000genomes project (<http://www.1000genomes.org>), and Ensembl (<http://www.ensembl.org>), inventory known SNPs and annotate

them with genomic location, population distribution, expression, and functional effect, adding disease association information where available. The recently launched Human Pain Genetics Database (<http://diatchenko.lab.mcgill.ca/hpgdb>) is a manually-curated repository for SNPs in human genes reported to be associated with pain conditions or intermediate phenotypes.

Human genetic studies

With few exceptions, chronic pain does not follow the Mendelian transmission model. Rather, chronic pain pathologies are typically aggregates of endophenotypes, each of which may be governed by Mendelian law. A construct developed for the study of complex diseases in neuropsychiatry, endophenotypes must (1) be heritable, (2) be associated with the disease of interest, (3) be manifest in subjects independently of active pathology, and (4) cosegregate with disease in pedigree studies (Gottesman and Gould, 2003). In this case, endophenotypes are symptoms of chronic pain conditions. They include sleep disturbance, fatigue, depression, cognitive decline, and hypersensitivity to external stimuli.

The two predominant ways geneticists screen human subjects for mutations associated with chronic pain are linkage analysis and association studies. For linkage analysis available family members are phenotyped and genotyped to see which genetic locus or loci will segregate with the disease. This method has been used to identify a rare mutation in *KCNK18*, encoding the above-mentioned potassium channel TRESK (Lafrenière et al., 2010). Naturally, this type of study depends on access to several generations of a pedigree. Linkage analysis is efficient for the identification of rare familial mutations.

Association studies, used to identify common functional SNPs, require large populations of unrelated subjects with the pathology of interest to be matched against a population of healthy controls. Their DNA is genotyped using either a targeted selection or a genome-wide high-density panel of SNPs. Given the high number of subjects needed in order to provide sufficient statistical power, genome-wide association studies (GWAS) are usually done through collaboration of many research institutions. Results from association studies can be further combined in meta-analysis to get reliable association metrics for tested SNPs. The implementation and maturation of large consortia during the past decade have led to valuable online resources, such as NHGRI (<https://www.genome.gov>) and NCBI dbGaP (<http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/gap>), which offer comprehensive catalogs of GWAS results. However, to date the number of GWAS on chronic pain conditions is very limited. Study design is complicated by lack of standardized chronic pain phenotype definitions, heterogeneity in clinical reporting, and comorbidities (Holliday and McBeth, 2011). Migraine is the exception: four GWAS (I.H.G. Consortium et al., 2010; Chasman et al., 2011; Freilinger et al., 2012; Cox et al., 2012) and three GWAS meta-analyses (Ligthart et al., 2011; Anttila

et al., 2013; Gormley et al., 2015) have been reported for this condition. A fibromyalgia GWAS (Docampo et al., 2014) and a GWAS meta-analysis for chronic widespread pain (CWP) (Peters et al., 2013) have been recently published as well.

Animal models

While human studies are limited by accessibility to subjects with the genotypes of interest, in animal models, target genotypes can be engineered and screened. The mouse is the most common model organism in pain genetics. Back-crossing and selective inbreeding are done to isolate a particular locus on a wild-type background. A gene of interest is knocked out, knocked down, or a human clone is knocked in to observe its effect on a particular pathology. Transgenic mouse models have been reviewed in Mogil and Grisel (1998). Certainly, phenotype characterization is more difficult given non-verbal subjects, and genomic and physiological differences between the two species necessarily result in phenotypic discrepancies. Mouse model developers must demonstrate that their models are sufficiently similar to the human condition under study to be informative. Despite these difficulties, a number of models (Mogil, 2009) have been very instrumental in either identifying genes involved in chronic pain conditions or confirming their relevance after identification in a human study. Neuropathic pain models include spared nerve injury (SNI), chronic constriction injury (CCI), diabetic, and cancer pain (Wang and Wang, 2003). Inflammatory pain models use injections of immune system stimulants, such as Freund's adjuvant and carrageenan, as well as nociceptor sensitizer bradykinin, and pro-inflammatory cytokines. Orofacial and visceral chronic pain states are modeled using site-specific injections of inflammatory agents (Kryzhanowska and Avendaño, 2012). Several migraine mouse models have been likewise described. While earlier studies focused on brain structural-anatomical singularities and electrophysiology experiments in transgenic animals with alterations in causal genes (van den Maagdenberg et al., 2004), more recent models have endeavored to find a behavioral proxy for migraine symptoms in mice (Langford et al., 2010).

METHODS

The list of studies reporting genes associated with chronic pain disorders was drawn from the Human Pain Genetics Database (<http://diatchenko.lab.mcgill.ca/hpgdb>). This list was supplemented with a literature search in Google Scholar for studies reporting suggested association or negative results. For each disorder, the search terms included the name of the disorder and the gene as well as one of the following terms: “genetic association”, “variant”, or “polymorphism”. Studies of disorders in which pain is not the primary symptom, such as diabetes and cancer, were only included if the finding specifically stated association with pain. Publications were screened by title and abstract; in cases where these presented insufficient information, the text of the publication and relevant tables was read. Reviews and

publications reporting duplicate results from the same cohort were excluded.

With the exception of several large population studies, which are specified below, the majority of the studies conducted to date have been done on small population samples (fewer than 1000 individuals). Additionally, excepting four migraine GWAS (I.H.G. Consortium et al., 2010; Chasman et al., 2011; Cox et al., 2012; Freilinger et al., 2012), three migraine GWAS meta-analyses (Ligthart et al., 2011; Anttila et al., 2013; Gormley et al., 2015), one fibromyalgia GWAS (Docampo et al., 2014), and one CWP GWAS meta-analysis (Peters et al., 2013), all studies were candidate-gene studies or gene panel studies. While the number of GWAS and sequencing studies continues to rise, candidate gene association studies have played an important role in our understanding of the genotypic structure of human pain phenotypes. Although these hypothesis-driven studies risk oversight of untested causal genetic variants and augment the chances of false positive associations (Rivadeneira et al., 2009; Rajasekaran et al., 2013), when replicated in multiple cohorts, they point to functional variants and the direction of their effects.

RESULTS

Migraine

Migraine, a complex and debilitating pain disorder, is estimated to affect up to 25% of women and 8% of men (Launer et al., 1999). Similar to musculoskeletal conditions, up to 50% of migraine etiology has been attributed to genetic factors (Honkasalo et al., 1995). Numerous migraine genetics reviews have been published in the last decade (de Vries et al., 2009; Schürks, 2012; Rudkjobing et al., 2012; Kurth, 2013; Persico et al., 2015), and the number of genes with reported statistically significant association exceeds that of all other chronic pain conditions (Fig. 1). Notably, some of these genes were identified in GWAS. Partly as a testament to its clearly defined diagnostic criteria – lacking for most other pathologies discussed here – migraine is one of the few chronic pain conditions to have undergone GWAS, of which there are four to date (I.H.G. Consortium et al., 2010; Chasman et al., 2011; Cox et al., 2012; Freilinger et al., 2012). The last of these was done in a genetically-isolated Norfolk Island population (Cox et al., 2012). In addition, there have been three meta-analyses (Ligthart et al., 2011; Anttila et al., 2013; Gormley et al., 2015), the last of which is the most comprehensive reported migraine genetic study of individuals with European ancestry, having analyzed a total of 375,000 individuals and having identified 38 loci of susceptibility, replicating 10 previously published associations.

The paradigm of migraine causality continues to shift between vascular dysregulation and neuronal hyperexcitability, as compelling evidence continues to accumulate for both theories. Genetic studies have contributed significantly to the current understanding of its molecular pathophysiology.

Familial hemiplegic migraine (FHM). Rare mutations in three genes have been reported as causal in FHM: *CACNA1A* in FHM1 (Ophoff et al., 1996); *ATP1A2* in FHM2 (Moskowitz et al., 2004); and *SCN1A* in FHM3 (Dichgans et al., 2005). The *CACNA1A*-encoded alpha-1 subunit of a P/Q voltage-gated calcium channel, also reported to be involved in cortical spreading depression, has gain-of-function mutations that lead to channel responsiveness at lower voltages and contribute to a state of neuronal hyperexcitability. *ATP1A1*-encoded alpha-1 subunit of the sodium–potassium ATPase pump affects its ability to pump sodium ions against the concentration gradient, necessary for glutamate and calcium flow (Moskowitz et al., 2004). *SCN1A* encodes the alpha-1 subunit of a voltage-gated neuronal sodium channel, and its minor allele hastens the channel's recovery from fast inactivation, increasing cortical neuron firing frequency (Dichgans et al., 2005). Proline-rich transmembrane protein 2, *PRRT2*, is a recent addition to the list. Mutations in this gene have also been implicated in hemiplegic migraine (Dale et al., 2012; Riant et al., 2012). Not an ion channel like the other three FHM variants, *PRRT2* may be involved in neuronal exocytosis and release of neurotransmitters by affecting localization and kinetics of channels such as *CACNA1A* (Riant et al., 2012). FHM1-3 causal variants and *PRRT2*, discovered through pedigree linkage mapping, are responsible for rare migraine disorders.

Migraine: vascular origins. Genetic association studies have also identified variants with higher frequency and lower effect, thought to be involved in the much more prevalent nonhemiplegic migraine. Unlike the FHM disorders, the hypothesized causality of the more common migraine may or may not be limited to hyper-neuroexcitation. Evidence continues to accumulate for the involvement of the originally-suspected vascular system dysregulation. According to the vascular hypothesis, cogently summarized in Tietjen (2009), a combination of inadequate response to oxidative stress, lower levels of vasodilators, and increased numbers of vasoconstrictors brings about endothelial dysfunction, which may lead to an elevated level of proinflammatory cytokines circulating in the extracellular matrix. Genetic variants supporting vascular dysregulation in migraine include *EDNRA*, encoding endothelin type A receptor (Tzourio et al., 2001; Tikka-Kleemola et al., 2009); *MTHFR*, encoding methylenetetrahydrofolate reductase (Kowa et al., 2000; Bassi et al., 2003; Kara et al., 2003; Lea et al., 2004; Lea et al., 2005; Oterino et al., 2005; Bottini et al., 2006; Scher et al., 2006; Pezzini et al., 2007; Schürks et al., 2008; Schürks et al., 2009; Tietjen et al., 2009; An et al., 2013; Azimova et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2010); *NOS3*, encoding endothelial nitric oxide synthase (Borroni et al., 2006; Schürks et al., 2009); *ACE*, encoding angiotensin-1 converting enzyme (Paterna et al., 2000; Kowa et al., 2005; Lea et al., 2005; Lin et al., 2005; Kara et al., 2007; Joshi et al., 2009); *NOTCH3*, encoding a receptor involved in vascular development and integrity (Iso et al., 2003; Alva and Iruela-Arispe, 2004); *TGFB1*, encoding beta-2 transform-

ing growth factor (Schürks et al., 2009); and *TGFBR2*, encoding beta-2 transforming growth factor receptor (Freilinger et al., 2012; Esserlind et al., 2015; Gormley et al., 2015) (which has not shown an association in a North Indian population (Ghosh et al., 2013)). As further evidence for the involvement of the vascular system in migraine pathophysiology, Winsvold et al. have recently reported a large overlap between associated loci in a multi-study migraine GWAS meta-analysis and coronary artery disease GWAS (Winsvold et al., 2015). Specifically, migraine without aura and coronary artery disease share significantly associated SNPs but in opposite directions.

Migraine: inflammatory markers. A vast number of genetic association studies have implicated a modified inflammatory state in migraine directly by showing a correlation between alleles of cytokines TNF-alpha, *TNF* (Mazaheri et al., 2006; Schürks et al., 2009; Ghosh et al., 2010; Yilmaz et al., 2010; Ates et al., 2011; Gu et al., 2012) (not replicated in Trabace et al. (2002) and Asuni et al. (2009)), and TNF-beta, *LTA*, with migraine (Trabace et al., 2002; Asuni et al., 2009; Ghosh et al., 2010; Ishii et al., 2012). A tumor necrosis factor receptor superfamily member, *TNFRSF1B*, has also been implicated as a risk factor in migraine susceptibility in a Han Chinese population (Dong et al., 2012); as have interleukin 1-beta, *IL1B* (Yilmaz et al., 2010); interleukin 9, *IL9*; chemokine receptor, *CCR2* (Schürks et al., 2009); and prostaglandin endoperoxide synthase 2, *PTGS2* (Dasdemir et al., 2013; Mozaffari et al., 2015).

Migraine: neuronal origins. Current evidence is arguably strongest for susceptibility to migraine lying at the intersection of increased ascending nociceptive signaling and reduced descending inhibition (Akerman et al., 2011). Implicated signaling systems involve glutamatergic, serotonergic, dopaminergic, GABAergic, orexinergic and purinergic transmission.

In the glutamatergic system, whose involvement in migraine has been recently reviewed in Gasparini and Griffiths (2013), AMPA receptors, *GRIA1* (Formicola et al., 2010) (not found to be associated in Cargnin et al. (2014) and Maher et al. (2013)) and *GRIA3* (Formicola et al., 2010; Maher et al., 2013); glutamate receptor *GRM7* (Cox et al., 2012); as well as glutamate-regulating metahedrin, *MTDH* (I.H.G. Consortium et al., 2010; Freilinger et al., 2012; Gormley et al., 2015); lipoprotein receptor, *LRP1* (Chasman et al., 2011; Ghosh et al., 2013; Esserlind et al., 2015; Gormley et al., 2015); myocyte enhancer factor, *MEF2D* (Freilinger et al., 2012; Esserlind et al., 2015; Gormley et al., 2015); and a variant near plasma glutamate carboxypeptidase, *CPQ* (I.H.G. Consortium et al., 2010) have been reported as associated with migraine. Except for the two AMPA receptors, all these genes were top hits in migraine GWAS, replicated in a later GWAS or in subsequent targeted SNP genotyping projects (Freilinger et al., 2012; Esserlind et al., 2015).

The role of serotonergic transmission in migraine has been comprehensively reviewed in Hamel (2007). Serotonin receptor, *HTR7*, has been shown to be associated in a Norfolk Island population GWAS (Cox et al., 2012).

Likewise, an association with migraine has been reported for serotonin transporter, *SLC6A4*, in a Turkish population (Yilmaz et al., 2001) and a Japanese population (Kotani et al., 2002). Furthermore, Gonda et al. have reported an association between this locus and migraine comorbid with anxiety (Gonda et al., 2007). However, *SLC6A4* has not been found to be significantly associated in a German cohort (Todt et al., 2006), which may indicate that the effect is race-specific.

Dopaminergic involvement, recently reviewed in Barbanti et al. (2013), is of particular interest given its reported association not only with migraine but also with anxiety and depression (both well-established comorbidities with migraine (Pesa and Lage, 2004; Ligthart et al., 2013)). Peroutka et al. and Del Zompo et al. have discussed dopaminergic pathway-mediated changes in cerebral blood flow (observed during cortical spreading depression) and somatosensory hyperactivity (Del Zompo et al., 1998; Peroutka et al., 1998), which would explain prodromal symptoms such as moodiness, drowsiness, and nausea (Fanciullacci et al., 1999; D'Andrea et al., 2006). Dopamine beta-hydroxylase, *DBH* (Lea et al., 2000; Fernandez et al., 2006, 2009; Ghosh et al., 2013); dopamine D2 receptor, *DRD2* (Del Zompo et al., 1998; Peroutka et al., 1998; Ghosh et al., 2013); and dopamine D4 receptor, *DRD4* (Mochi et al., 2003; de Sousa et al., 2007) (which has been reported not associated in Del Zompo et al. (1998)) have all been implicated in migraine and some of the associated non-headache symptoms. *DRD2* has also been reported to be associated with aura, anxiety and depression (Del Zompo et al., 1998; Peroutka et al., 1998), as well as aortic stenosis, another vascular disorder (Guaque-Olarte et al., 2015). Cargnin et al. have reported on the role of dopamine-degrading catechol-O-methyl transferase *COMT* in the response to triptans for migraine (Cargnin et al., 2013).

GABAergic involvement has been demonstrated through association with a GABA-A receptor, *GABRB3* (Russo et al., 2005; Netzer et al., 2008) (not replicated in Oswell et al. (2008)). Additionally, a sodium channel, *SCN1A*, hypoactive variant has been shown to suppress the activity of GABAergic inhibitory interneurons (Persico et al., 2015).

The orexinergic system, whose suspected role in migraine has been recently reviewed in Hoffmann et al. (2015), is implicated through an association between migraine and hypocretin receptor 1, *HCRTR1* (Rainero et al., 2011). Hypocretin is a neuropeptide that regulates arousal, wakefulness, and appetite.

The purinergic system may be involved as well, as evidenced by association for adenosine deaminase, *ADARB2* (Cox et al., 2012) and mitochondrial ATP synthase, *ATP5B* (Anttila et al., 2013), both GWAS results, and purinergic receptor 7, *P2RX7*, which has so far been linked to migraine in a mouse model (Gölnöcsér and Sperlágh, 2014).

Further evidence for dysregulated neuronal excitability comes from associations between migraine

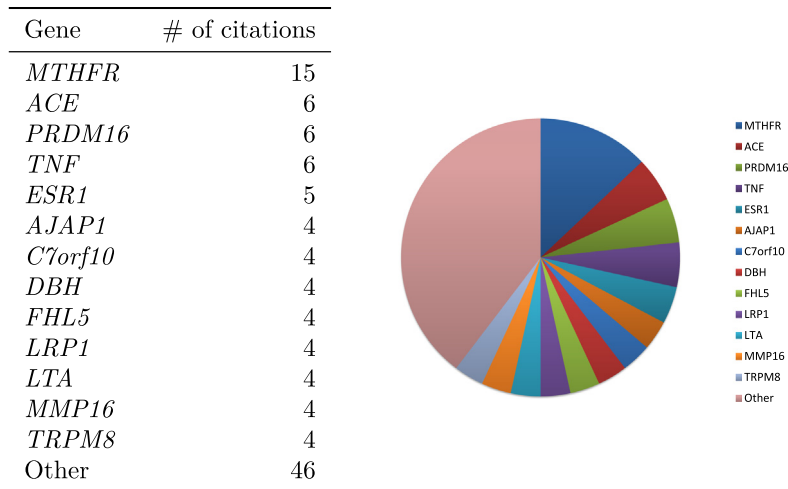


Fig. 3. Genetic loci associated with migraine, quantified by the number of genetic association studies. Only genes with association reported in at least two studies are included in the analysis, and only genes with association reported in at least four studies are listed individually. Genes with fewer reported associations are grouped under “Other.” *Abbreviations:* *MTHFR*, methylenetetrahydrofolate reductase; *ACE*, angiotensin I converting enzyme; *PRDM16*, PR domain-containing 16; *TNF*, tumor necrosis factor; *ESR1*, estrogen receptor 1; *AJAP1*, adherens junction-associated protein 1; *C7orf10*, succinyl-CoA:glutarate-CoA transferase; *DBH*, dopamine beta-hydroxylase; *FHL5*, four-and-a-half LIM domains 5; *LRP1*, low density lipoprotein receptor related protein 1; *LTA*, lymphotoxin alpha; *MMP16*, matrix metalloproteinase 16; *TRPM8*, transient receptor potential cation channel, subfamily M, member 8 (menthol and cold receptor). Rare Mendelian disorder variants from linkage studies are not included.

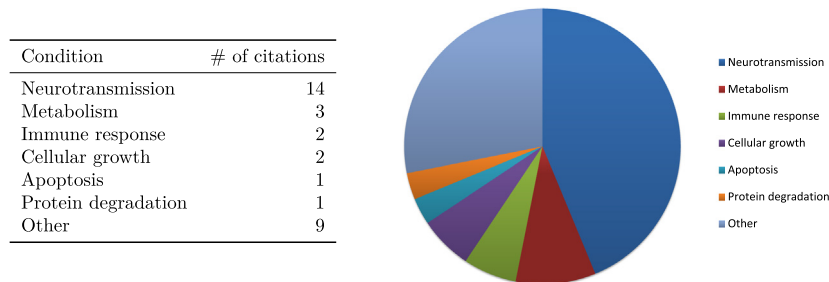


Fig. 4. Functional pathways of genetic loci associated with migraine quantified by the number of loci. Only genes with at least one replicated association are included. Rare Mendelian disorder variants from linkage studies are not included. For genes reported to be involved in multiple pathways, the pathway of the translated gene’s most direct involvement was chosen.

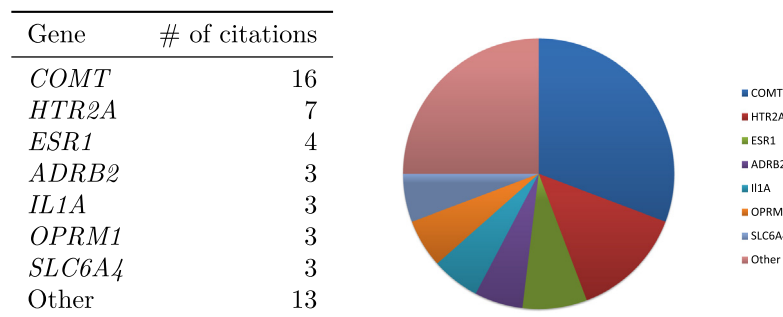


Fig. 5. Genetic loci associated with musculoskeletal pain disorders, quantified by the number of genetic association studies. Only genes reported to be associated with a musculoskeletal pain disorder in at least two studies are included, and only genes with association reported in at least three studies are listed individually. Genes with fewer reported associations are grouped under “Other.” *Abbreviations:* *COMT*, catechol-O-methyl transferase; *HTR2A*, 5-hydroxytryptamine (serotonin) receptor 2A; *ESR1*, estrogen receptor 1; *ADRB2*, beta-2 adrenergic receptor; *GCH1*, GTP cyclohydrolase; *OPRM1*, mu-1 opioid receptor; *SLC6A4*, solute carrier family 6 (serotonin transporter).

and four synaptic plasticity mediators in GWAS: neuronal cation exchanger, *SLC24A3* (Gormley et al., 2015); phosphatase and actin regulator, *PHACTR1*; astrotactin,

ASTN2 (Freilinger et al., 2012; Esserlind et al., 2015; Gormley et al., 2015); and transcription enhancer, *FHL5* (Anttila et al., 2013; Esserlind et al., 2015; Gormley

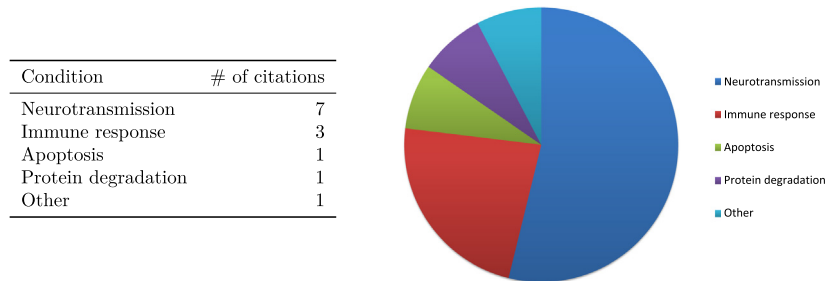


Fig. 6. Functional pathways of genetic loci associated with musculoskeletal disorders quantified by the number of loci. Only genes with at least one replicated association are included. For genes reported to be involved in multiple pathways, the pathway of the translated gene's most direct involvement was chosen.

et al., 2015; Lin et al., 2015). Two recent publications have announced key rare variants in the first gene to be implicated through a linkage mapping pedigree study in nonhemiplegic migraine: *KCNK18*, encoding the potassium channel TRESK (Lafrenière et al., 2010; Lafrenière and Rouleau, 2011). Considering the likelihood of neuroexcitability as the main culprit, the same research group has targeted a panel of ion channels, transporters, exchangers and accessory subunits and found two more potassium channels, *KCNQ4* and *KCNAB3*, to be associated with migraine (Lafrenière and Rouleau, 2012). Likewise, Cox et al. (2011) have reported a calcium-activated potassium ion channel, *KCNN3*, variant to be protective against migraine. Lemos et al. have shown a significant interaction between brain-derived neurotrophic factor, *BDNF* (also reported to be associated in Sutherland et al. (2014) but not in Marziniak et al. (2008)), and calcitonin gene-related peptide, *CGRP*, with migraine (Lemos et al., 2010). Histamine-degrading enzyme, diamine decarboxylase, *DAO*, has likewise been reported associated in a Caucasian Spanish population (Garcia-Martín et al., 2015). A mild association has been reported for a variant in *RAMP1* – a CGRP receptor subunit – with migraine in Sutherland et al. (2013) and with migraine changing into medication-overuse headache (Cargnin et al., 2015) (although another group has reported no significant association with medication overuse headache in migraineurs (Ishii et al., 2015)).

Other genes that have been identified in genetic association studies include estrogen receptors, *ESR1* (Colson et al., 2004; Oterino et al., 2006, 2008; Ghosh et al., 2012; Rodriguez-Acevedo et al., 2013) (not replicated in Corominas et al. (2009)) and *ESR2* (Oterino et al., 2008) (not replicated in Ghosh et al. (2012)); follicle stimulating hormone receptors *FSHR* (Oterino et al., 2008); progesterone receptor, *PGR* (Colson et al., 2005) (not replicated in Corominas et al. (2009)); low-density lipoprotein, *LDLR* (Mochi et al., 2003) (not replicated in Curtain et al. (2004)); and human leukocyte antigen, *HLA-DRB1* (Rainero et al., 2005); insulin receptor, *INSR* (McCarthy et al., 2001); and ankyrin repeat and kinase domain containing 1, *ANKK1* (Ghosh et al., 2013). Another is *PRDM16*, whose minor allele was one of three significantly associated risk variants coming from the second migraine GWAS (the other two being *TRPM8*, discussed below, and *LRP1*, discussed above) (Chasman et al., 2011). As a transcription factor involved in brown

fat development, *PRDM16* is a dubious suspect in terms of migraine pathology. This association has, however, been replicated in two Chinese population studies (An et al., 2013; Fan et al., 2014) and two large-population European studies (Esserlind et al., 2015; Gormley et al., 2015). Another replication attempt has reported association in the opposite direction (as a protective variant) (Ghosh et al., 2013), and the same study has also reported positive replication for *LRP1*. In addition, Christensen et al. have reported a role for *PRDM16* in modulating migraineurs' response to treatment with triptans (Christensen et al., 2015). Rubino et al. have reported an association for neurogenic locus notch homolog protein *NOTCH4* with migraine (Rubino et al., 2013), replicated in the largest GWAS meta-analysis to date (Gormley et al., 2015).

Another high-powered meta-analysis of 23,285 individuals with migraine and 95,425 controls demonstrated significant associations with adherens junction-associated protein 1, *AJAP1*; tetraspanin, *TSPAN2*; succinyl-CoA:glutarate-CoA transferase, *C7orf10*; matrix metalloproteinase 16, *MMP16*; apolipoprotein A-I binding protein, *APOA1BP*; fucosyltransferase 9, *FUT9*; interleukin 4-induced activator of transcription 6, *STAT6*; and TBC1 domain family member, *TBC1D7* (Anttila et al., 2013). *AJAP1*, *MMP16* and *C7orf10* have been replicated in a Chinese population (Lin et al., 2015) and two other GWAS (Esserlind et al., 2015; Gormley et al., 2015), which have also replicated the association for *TSPAN2*. Nerve growth factor receptor-encoding *NGFR* has also been found associated in a six-center GWAS meta-analysis in Dutch and Icelandic populations (Ligthart et al., 2011). There has likewise been an association reported for a locus in the mitochondrial DNA with migraine, both with and without aura (Guo et al., 2015).

Migraine has been aptly styled “a cycle of painful signaling and interpretation of nonpainful stimuli as painful” (Karsan and Goadsby, 2015). In line with the latter part of this statement, the reported contribution of primary afferent nociceptor-expressed transient receptor potential receptors adds a central sensitization component to the pathophysiological agglomerate that leads to the migraine disorder. Light, heat, and mechanical sensors – vanilloid receptors, *TRPV1* and *TRPV3* (Carreño et al., 2012), – and a cold temperature and menthol receptor, *TRPM8*, found to be associated with migraine

in a number of GWAS (Chasman et al., 2011; Freilinger et al., 2012; Esserlind et al., 2015; Gormley et al., 2015), suggest that migraineurs' pain is engendered by nociceptive response to physiologically-innocuous stimuli.

Migraine genetics: summary. Among chronic pain conditions, genetic studies of migraine are the most abundant (Fig. 2) and have output at least 30 different genes with replicated association (Fig. 3). The most highly cited gene is *MTHFR*, (Fig. 3) encoding a metabolic mediator that participates in the conversion of homocysteine to methionine. Given that homocysteine derivatives can activate NMDA receptors, there is a connection between *MTHFR* and glutamatergic signaling. Neurotransmission is furthermore the best represented pathway in migraine (Fig. 4). Nevertheless, migraine etiology, which continues to mystify basic and clinical researchers alike, is well represented by the proportional distribution of the other functional pathways in Fig. 4. The large variety of genetic mediators of migraine is consistent with the observed heterogeneous nature of this disorder.

Musculoskeletal conditions

Musculoskeletal pain conditions include temporomandibular disorder (TMD), low back pain, fibromyalgia, and CWP. These disorders, whose heritability estimate is up to 50%, have been recently characterized in terms of their phenotypic and genetic markers in Diatchenko et al. (2013). Additionally, a number of publications have reported a possible role for genetic variants in susceptibility to chronic musculoskeletal pain following a psychologically-traumatizing event, or stress-induced chronic pain.

TMD. TMD is the most frequently occurring class of orofacial pain conditions, with an estimated prevalence between 3% and 12% worldwide (Lavigne and Sessle, 2015). This heterogeneous set of conditions exhibits great interindividual variability in manifestation and response to treatment as well as high comorbidity with other pain conditions. Their etiology, however, is still unclear. There is lack of understanding of orofacial pain mechanisms and their modifying factors (Sessle, 2014), which leads to lack of accurate diagnoses and effective treatment. Given a reported heritability of 27% (Plesh et al., 2011), TMD genetics, reviewed recently in Visscher and Lobbezoo (2015), has emerged as a powerful tool to aid in research and help clinicians deepen their comprehension of causal factors with the ultimate goal of providing effective and suitable treatment to patients.

While most studies to date have been done on small populations, the OPPERA (Orofacial Pain: Prospective Evaluation and Risk Assessment) project represents a multi-center, high-powered effort to identify genetic markers contributing to TMD (Dworkin, 2011). Although the OPPERA GWAS is underway (Munzenmaier et al., 2014), to date only targeted genotyping studies have been published by this group on a subset of this cohort and by others. These studies have nevertheless identified a number of genetic variants that implicate catecholamin-

ergic, estrogenic, and serotonergic systems. Evidence also exists for the involvement of cytokines and other molecules in causal pain pathways, but their role is still poorly understood.

Involvement of the catecholaminergic system in TMD is exemplified by *COMT*, the most studied and cited gene in human pain genetics (Mogil, 2012). This gene encodes the catechol-O-methyltransferase enzyme, which regulates the levels of catechol neurotransmitters. Its hypoactivity leads to a higher level of epinephrine, which potentiates beta adrenergic receptor-mediated pain signaling (Nackley et al., 2007). *COMT* is a highly polymorphic gene with multiple functional SNPs. The most studied SNP is the non-synonymous *val158met* variation implicated in multiple pain conditions, mood disorders and cognitive function in a number of studies (Goldberg et al., 2003; Zubieta et al., 2003; Tunbridge et al., 2006; McLean et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2011; Michelotti et al., 2014). Furthermore, three major functional haplotypes in the coding region of the gene have shown strong association with response to noxious stimuli and risk of myogenous TMD in humans (Diatchenko et al., 2005). A recently identified regulatory SNP in the 3'-untranslated region of *COMT* has led to the discovery of a functional alternate isoform of the *COMT* enzyme, shown *in vitro* to have preferred enzymatic activity toward dopamine, which may contribute to pain by lowering the level of dopamine rather than increasing the level of epinephrine (Meloto et al., 2015). On the other hand, variants in *COMT* have been reported not to be significantly associated with TMD in a Turkish population (Erdal et al., 2003).

Adrenergic receptor involvement has also been reported. Both hyperactive and hypoactive variants of beta adrenergic receptor *ADRB2* have been shown as possible modulators of TMD risk (Diatchenko et al., 2006). Two alpha adrenergic receptors, *ADRA2C* and *ADRA1D*, have been reported as possibly significant TMD risk modulators (Smith et al., 2011).

Two common genetic variants in the human estrogen receptor *ESR1* have been implicated in painful temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disk displacement in a Brazilian female population (Ribeiro-Dasilva et al., 2009). One of the associations has been replicated in Korean patients with TMJ osteoarthritis (TMJ-OA) (Kang et al., 2007), although another Korean cohort with TMD has shown a trend but no statistically significant association for the same SNP (Kim et al., 2010). Recently, another study has shown these variants as associated with the TMJ degenerative process, possibly via modulation of *ESR1* activity in the bone (Stemig et al., 2015). Given that TMJ is a well-documented target tissue for estrogen (Abubaker et al., 1993; Yamada et al., 2003; Galal et al., 2008), it is not surprising to find estrogen receptor genetic variants involved in the pathophysiology of its disorders.

The serotonergic system has been implicated in TMD pathophysiology via polymorphisms in serotonin receptor, *HTR2A*, (Mutlu et al., 2004; Smith et al., 2011; de Freitas et al., 2013; Slade et al., 2013) (not replicated in Ojima et al. (2007)), and serotonin transporter, *SLC6A4*, which have shown association in different populations (Herken

et al., 2001; Ojima et al., 2007). *SLC6A4* has a 44bp insertion/deletion polymorphism within the promoter region, presenting two allelic forms, long (*l*) and short (*s*). It also has a polymorphic region of a 17bp-variable number of tandem repeats (VNTR) in its second intron. Both polymorphic regions have shown association with TMD: the promoter region in a Japanese population (Ojima et al., 2007) and VNTR in a Turkish population (which has not shown an association for the promoter region) (Herken et al., 2001).

Numerous studies have shown that levels of proinflammatory cytokines are heightened in the TMJ fluid of TMD patients (Kubota et al., 1998; Alstergren, 2000) and that these levels correlate with greater pain sensitivity (Ferreira et al., 1988; Salemi et al., 2003; Sommer and Kress, 2004; Alexander et al., 2005), perceived stress (Maes et al., 1998) and depression (Raison et al., 2006), all of which are phenotypes associated with TMD (Maixner et al., 1998; Yap et al., 2002; Slade et al., 2007; Fillingim et al., 2013). In addition, elevated levels of proinflammatory cytokines have been consistently reported in circulating blood of patients with widespread pain (Wallace et al., 2001; Salemi et al., 2003). Genetic evidence for the involvement of cytokines in TMD has been therefore explored and reported (Slade et al., 2011). While no individual SNPs have shown association with TMD, two SNPs within the interleukin 8 gene, *CXCL8*, interacted similarly and significantly with a transforming growth factor *TGFB1* SNP, producing the greatest effect on TMD with widespread pain. A variant in interleukin 10, *IL10*, has also shown suggestive association (Smith et al., 2011).

Several loci have shown association as part of the OPPERA case-control study. DNA from chronic TMD patients was screened using a SNP panel of 358 genes implicated in pain through modulation of nociception, psychological state or inflammatory response. Of the top nine SNPs showing nominal statistically significant association, three are in the glucocorticoid receptor, *NR3C1*; one in serotonin receptor 2A, *HTR2A* (discussed above); one in muscarinic cholinergic receptor 2, *CHRM2*; two in calcium/calmodulin-dependent protein kinase 4, *CAMK4*; one in the interferon-related developmental regulator 1, *IFRD1*; and one in G protein-coupled receptor kinase 5, *GRK5* (Smith et al., 2011). Another study, designed under the hypothesis that TMD is a multifactorial syndrome related to a critical period of human life with a genetic and epigenetic basis, has investigated the possible involvement of 14 genes related to the folate cycle in TMD (Aneiros-Guerrero et al., 2011). Three genes encoding enzymes in the folate metabolizing pathway – serine hydroxymethyltransferase 1, *SHMT1*; methylenetetrahydrofolate dehydrogenase, *MTHFD1*; and methionine synthase reductase, *MTRR* – have shown significant associations with TMD. Their risk alleles were associated with odds ratios of having TMD that ranged from 2.35 to 3.99. In addition, the authors have reported that a gene-deletion polymorphism in *GSTM1*, encoding mu glutathione-S-transferase (which is associated with inflammatory oxidative stress), and the dopamine D4 receptor, *DRD4*, long

allele of 48bp-repeat were associated with increased risk of TMD.

A recent study has investigated the association of SNPs occurring in five genes known to be important regulators of the TGF-beta signaling pathway, which plays a well-established role in the control of chondrocyte differentiation, matrix synthesis and homeostasis, and TMJ-OA. Of these, growth differentiation factor 5, *GDF5*; SMAD family member 3, *SMAD3*; and runt-related transcription factor 2, *RUNX2* were associated with the pathogenesis of TMJ-OA (Xiao et al., 2015). *GDF5* is known to play a key role in bone and cartilage morphogenesis as well as joint formation, and the same genetic variant has been previously associated with knee osteoarthritis (OA) in Europeans and Asians (Miyamoto et al., 2007; Chapman et al., 2008). *SMAD3* is a transcriptional modulator activated by TGF-beta that is crucial to the integrity of articular cartilage, and genetic variants in this gene have been implicated in pathogenesis of knee OA in European and northeastern Chinese populations (Valdes et al., 2010; Liying et al., 2013). Lastly, *RUNX2* is essential for osteoblast differentiation and skeletal morphogenesis. Its contribution to OA has been suggested in a large GWAS in Europeans (arcOGEN Consortium, 2012).

In light of all the reported genetic associations, the suggested pathophysiology of TMD pain is modulated by pain regulators, inflammation-mediating cytokines, and relevant tissue morphogenesis proteins.

Low back pain. Low back pain, whose heritability is estimated to be up to 46% (Battié et al., 2007) is mainly caused by disk disease (Sambrook et al., 1999) and characterized by the desiccation of the spinal disk matrix (Guo et al., 2011). Perhaps unsurprisingly, it has been associated with variants of genes encoding apoptosis-mediating caspase, *CASP9* (Guo et al., 2011; Mu et al., 2013), and extracellular protein digestion enzyme, matrix metalloproteinase, *MMP1* (Song et al., 2008; Jacobsen et al., 2013). Upstream of pathological proteoglycan degradation is the overactive mixture of proinflammatory cytokines, namely associated interleukins: interleukin 1A, *IL1A* (Solovieva et al., 2004; Omair et al., 2013; Schistad et al., 2014) (which is also associated with treatment response (Omair et al., 2013)); interleukin 1 receptor antagonist, *IL1RN* (Solovieva et al., 2004; Lončar et al., 2013); and interleukin 18 receptor subunits encoded by *IL18R1* and *IL18RAP*, both of which modulate response to low back pain treatment (Omair et al., 2013). Other associated genes include growth differentiation factor 5, *GDF5*, which participates in skeletal tissue differentiation (Mu et al., 2013); beta-2 adrenergic receptor, *ADRB2*, which is associated with low back pain comorbid with neck pain (Skouen et al., 2012); catechol-O-methyltransferase, *COMT* (Rut et al., 2014; Jacobsen et al., 2012; Omair et al., 2012, 2015); estrogen receptor 1, *ESR1* (Roh et al., 2013); guanosine triphosphate cyclohydrolase, *GCH1* (Tegeger et al., 2006); and mu opioid receptor, *OPRM1* (Hasvik et al., 2014) (although association of this gene with low back pain has not been replicated in Omair et al. (2015)). The results of genetic

association studies outline a pathophysiology centered on disrupted tissue remodeling, with pain possibly resulting from an overabundance of proinflammatory signaling.

Fibromyalgia and CWP. Fibromyalgia is diagnosed based on the presence of chronic widespread musculoskeletal pain with tenderness in at least 11 of 18 sites on the body, fatigue, and sleep disturbance, and it is frequently comorbid with mood disorders and other chronic pain disorders (Mease, 2005; Lee et al., 2012). Given its heritability of approximately 50% (Markkula et al., 2009), genetic studies may provide valuable insight into the pathophysiology of fibromyalgia. Implicated genes show an over-representation of monoaminergic pathway members: dopamine D4 receptor, *DRD4* (Buskila et al., 2004); catechol-O-methyltransferase, *COMT* (Vargas-Alarcón et al., 2007; Fernández-de-las Peñas et al., 2012; Martínez-Jauand et al., 2013; Barbosa et al., 2012; Cohen et al., 2009; Finan et al., 2011; Matsuda et al., 2010); monoamine oxidase, *MAOA* (Gürsoy et al., 2008); beta-2 adrenergic receptor, *ADRB2* (Vargas-Alarcón et al., 2009); serotonin transporter, *SLC6A4* (Offenbaecher et al., 1999); serotonin receptor 2A, *HTR2A* (Bondy et al., 1999; Gürsoy et al., 2001; Holliday et al., 2010; Mergener et al., 2011); GTP cyclohydrolase, *GCH1*, an enzyme critical to dopamine, serotonin, and nitric oxide production (Kim et al., 2013); and trace amine associated receptor, *TAAR1* (Smith et al., 2012), a G protein-coupled receptor with a regulatory role in dopaminergic neurotransmission (Miller, 2011). Other associations include genes encoding proteins more or less directly involved in neuronal inhibition and excitation, namely gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) A receptor, *GABRB3*, Smith et al. (2012); sodium channel NaV1.7, *SCN9A* (Vargas-Alarcon et al., 2012); and two genes identified in a fibromyalgia GWAS and awaiting replication: myelin transcription factor 1-like, *MYT1L*, which has a role in neuronal differentiation, and neurexin, *NRXN3*, a synaptic scaffolding stabilizer involved in glutamatergic and GABAergic neurotransmission (Docampo et al., 2014). Additionally, associations for fibromyalgia have been reported for apolipoprotein, *APOE* (Reeser et al., 2011), and guanylate binding protein, *GBP1* (Smith et al., 2012), a possible contributor to inflammatory disease (de Buhr et al., 2006).

CWP, which substantially correlates with fibromyalgia, is defined as pain present in the axial skeleton and in two contralateral bodily quadrants for at least three months (Gupta et al., 2007). A study targeting genes of the HPA axis in CWP has found an association for glucocorticoid binding globulin, *SERPINA6*; corticotropin-releasing hormone-binding protein, *CRHBP*; pro-opiomelanocortin, *POMC*; and adrenocorticotrophic hormone receptor, *MC2R* (Holliday et al., 2010). A subsequent GWAS meta-analysis conducted by the same group has found a locus of susceptibility to CWP in a non-coding region between the chaperonin-containing T-complex polypeptide 1 (TCP1)-complex-5 gene, *CCT5*, and FAMily with sequence similarity 183 member B gene, *FAM183B* (Peters et al., 2013). While the function of the latter protein is not known, *CCT5* is a structural scaffolding subunit

that interacts with protein phosphatase PP4C and may be involved in central sensitization (Peters et al., 2013). Together, the genetic landscapes of fibromyalgia and CWP implicate a rewired nociceptive signaling system, possibly disrupted by excessive stress response.

Stress-induced chronic pain. Recently, a number of studies have shown an overlap of symptoms between post-traumatic stress disorder and musculoskeletal pain conditions (Cohen et al., 2002; Afari et al., 2008). Associations with glucocorticoid receptor co-chaperone, *FKBP5* (Bortsov et al., 2013), and corticotropin releasing hormone-binding protein, *CRHBP* (Linnstaedt et al., 2016), two HPA axis-related genes, as well as mu opioid receptor, *OPRM1*, and chronic musculoskeletal pain following a motor vehicle collision have been reported in a cohort of 950 Caucasian Americans (Linnstaedt et al., 2015) with replication in a sexual assault survivors' cohort for *FKBP5* (Bortsov et al., 2013). The same study has also shown that catechol-O-methyltransferase, *COMT*, is associated with musculoskeletal pain several weeks following motor vehicle collision (McLean et al., 2011; Bortsov et al., 2014). Ballina et al. have furthermore reported a correlation between the same *OPRM1* variant, A118G, and muscle pain after sexual assault (Ballina et al., 2013). They have also shown that widespread pain after a motor vehicle collision is associated with pre-accident depression, suggesting that pain was a factor of the patient's psychological characteristics (presumably a proxy for genetic predisposition) rather than tissue injury (Bortsov et al., 2013). In sum, these findings suggest that genetic variability in the endogenous stress-management and analgesia systems modulate susceptibility to musculoskeletal pain conditions triggered by stress and psychological trauma.

Musculoskeletal condition genetics: summary. The above overview of genes associated with musculoskeletal chronic pain conditions highlights a possible underlying pathophysiology. By the number of reports, the contribution from the catecholaminergic system, represented by *COMT* and *ADRB2* associations, is seconded by the involvement of the serotonergic system, exemplified by associations with *HTR2A* and *SLC6A4* (Fig. 5). In terms of functional pathways, neurotransmission is the most common contributor (Fig. 6), followed by immune response mediators. While neurotransmitters and inflammatory cytokines are directly involved in pain signaling, the other three functional groups may contribute to musculoskeletal conditions by increasing susceptibility to the underlying tissue damage.

Neuropathic pain disorders

Neuropathic pain disorders result from nerve dysfunction. The effect of genetic contributors differs according to the origin of this dysfunction. In rare monogenic disorders, somatosensory function is maligned by causal mutations in a single gene. The more common disorders with a chronic neuropathic component are cancer, diabetes, postoperative pain, and trigeminal neuralgia. For this

class of conditions, genetic variants have been shown to modify an individual's susceptibility to neuropathic pain on the background of a different underlying cause.

Rare neuropathic pain disorders. Rare neuropathic pain conditions fall into two categories: painless disorders and painful disorders. Congenital insensitivity to pain with anhidrosis, or inability to sense and respond to noxious stimuli and to sweat, was the first monogenic neuropathic disorder to be reported. The causal mutations were identified in the *NTRK1* gene, which encodes neurotrophic tyrosine kinase receptor (Indo et al., 1996), an extensively replicated finding (Shatzky et al., 2000; Miura et al., 2000; Bodzioch et al., 2001; Indo, 2001; Indo et al., 2001; Bonkowsky et al., 2003; Huehne et al., 2008; Li et al., 2012; Gao et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2014; Yis et al., 2015; Tang et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2015). A related disorder, congenital insensitivity to pain, has been reported to be caused by loss-of-function mutations in sodium channel Nav1.7-encoding *SCN9A* (Cox et al., 2006, 2010; Kurban et al., 2010; Klein et al., 2012; Peddareddygarri et al., 2014; Mansouri et al., 2014; Shorer et al., 2014). Interestingly, gain-of-function mutations in another sodium channel, Nav1.9, *SCN11A*, have also been implicated in this condition (Leipold et al., 2013; Phatarakijjirund et al., 2015). Hyperactivity in Nav1.9 prolongs cell membrane depolarization thereby inactivating Nav1.7 and Nav1.8 – the drivers of the action potential in nociceptive neurons – and blocking pain signal transmission.

Painful rare neuropathic pain disorders include erythromelalgia, characterized by painful swelling and severe redness in feet and hands, and paroxysmal extreme pain disorder, characterized by rectal, periocular and perimandibular pain. Causal *SCN9A* mutations in erythromelalgia, discovered (Yang et al., 2004) and replicated in a number of Chinese Asian families (Li et al., 2005; Han et al., 2006; Zhang et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2007; Lin et al., 2008) and Caucasian families (Dib-Hajj et al., 2005; Drenth et al., 2005; Michiels et al., 2005; Drenth et al., 2008; Samuels et al., 2008) have been shown to change the electrophysiological properties of dorsal root ganglion (DRG) neurons, believed to affect pain sensitivity (Cummins et al., 2004; Dib-Hajj et al., 2005; Estacion et al., 2009). The effects of paroxysmal extreme pain disorder causal mutations (Fertleman et al., 2006; Dib-Hajj et al., 2008; Estacion et al., 2008) have been postulated to lie on a physiological continuum with erythromelalgia. Estacion et al. have demonstrated that alleles responsible for the former condition contribute to impaired fast inactivation in pain-transmitting neurons, while those responsible for the latter condition contribute to a lower firing threshold, slow deactivation and enhanced ramp currents (Estacion et al., 2008).

Cancer pain. Unlike the rare conditions discussed above, in which chronic pain is caused by genetic mutations of large effect in one gene locus, genetic variants contributing to cancer pain are found in several loci and their effect on pain is much more moderate. The cause of cancer pain is usually a growing tumor

directly stimulating nociceptors, nerve damage during chemotherapy (Costigan et al., 2009), and/or inflammatory cytokines released by cancerous cells (Reyes-Gibby et al., 2007). Interleukin-8, *CXCL8* (Reyes-Gibby et al., 2007); interleukin 1 receptor, *IL1R1*; and interleukin 13, *IL13* (McCann et al., 2012), have been reported to be associated with cancer pain severity. Reyes-Gibby et al. have reported on the effect of inflammation-related gene polymorphisms on lung cancer pain severity, with associations for prostaglandin-endoperoxide synthase 2, *PTGS2*; tumor necrosis factor, *TNF*; and NF-kappa B inhibitor alpha, *NFKBIA*, with severe pain (Reyes-Gibby et al., 2009). The additive effect of variants in *NOS3*, *IL1B*, *TNFRSF1B*, *PTGS2*, and *IL10RB* has been reported to be implicated in the severe symptom cluster in cancer patients, characterized by high pain intensity, depression, and fatigue (Reyes-Gibby et al., 2013). As with diabetes, while it may not be directly involved in the pathophysiology of the underlying condition, hypersensitivity of the body's defense system appears to be conducive to more pain accompanying cancer.

Diabetic neuropathy. Diabetic neuropathy, characterized by pain at one extreme and insensitivity at the other is observed in up to 50% of diabetic patients (Tesfaye and Selvarajah, 2012). Exacerbated by prolonged diabetic condition, glycemic mismanagement (Tesfaye et al., 1996), and disruption of nerve microvasculature (Tesfaye and Selvarajah, 2012) this neuropathy presents as a multifactorial pathology that is likely to be substantially driven by genetic factors. Unfortunately, diabetic pain genetic association studies are scarce, and existing results have to date painted a far-from-complete picture of its pathophysiology. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that a hypofunctional polymorphism in mu opioid receptor, *OPRM1*, is associated with foot ulcer pain in diabetic patients (Cheng et al., 2010), while hyperfunctional variants in purinergic receptor 7, *P2RX7*, are reported to be associated with higher pain sensitivity in diabetic neuropathic women (Ursu et al., 2014). Insufficient endogenous pain regulation (*OPRM1*) and excess high alert signaling (*P2RX7*) appear to contribute to baseline nociceptive hypersensitivity, which exacerbates diabetes-related pain.

Postoperative pain. Postoperative pain is usually considered persistent, or chronic, when it is reported at least three months after surgery. The complementary nociceptive and inhibitory systems are implicated in several examples from postoperative pain studies: Kim et al. have reported an association between a variant in GTP hydrolase, *GCH1*, and postoperative pain (Kim et al., 2010); Tegeder et al. have identified an association between postoperative pain and a haplotype of the same gene (Tegeder et al., 2006) (not replicated either at the SNP or haplotype level in Hendry et al. (2013)); and two groups have reported that mu opioid receptor, *OPRM1*, genotypes predict the extent of chronic postoperative pain (Kolesnikov et al., 2013; Olsen et al., 2012). The latter group has shown that the effect of the *OPRM1* variant is sex-specific, such that allele G118 confers risk of pain in

women but correlates with less pain in men. Similarly, a variant in voltage-gated potassium channel subunit, *KCNS1*, has been reported as correlated with postoperative chronic pain intensity in two limb amputation cohorts and one post-mastectomy cohort (Costigan et al., 2010). Another post-mastectomy cohort study (Sorge et al., 2012) has reported an association for a purinergic receptor 7, *P2RX7*, variant. Additionally, a *COMT* polymorphism has been reported to be associated with pain one year after lumbar discectomy (Rut et al., 2014).

Genetic variants of inflammatory cytokines have also been demonstrated to play a role in the risk of neuropathic pain following surgery. Stephens et al. have reported an association between a SNP of interleukin 1 receptor, *IL1R2*, and a haplotype within interleukin 10, *IL10*, with persistent breast pain after surgery for breast cancer (Stephens et al., 2014).

Trigeminal neuralgia. Trigeminal neuralgia is the most common type of neuralgia in adults with an estimated annual incidence of 4–13 per 100,000 people (Katusic et al., 1991; MacDonald et al., 2000). Trigeminal neuralgia is characterized by sudden, usually unilateral, severe, brief, stabbing recurrent episodes of pain within the distribution of one or more branches of the trigeminal nerve, triggered by innocuous stimuli (Krafft, 2008). To date, the precise mechanisms of trigeminal neuralgia remain unclear, and only a few studies have been conducted on the genetics of this condition.

The role of the serotonin transporter, *SLC6A4*, 44bp insertion/deletion polymorphism in susceptibility to trigeminal neuralgia and its clinical features, especially the pain severity and treatment response to analgesics, has been recently investigated (Cui et al., 2014). The s variant carriers had a significantly higher risk of trigeminal neuralgia pain severity and of carbamazepine treatment failure. These findings are contrary to those reported for TMD (Ojima et al., 2007); however, chronic pain conditions of musculoskeletal and neuropathic origins have substantially different components, and this apparent contradiction is not surprising.

Other painful peripheral neuropathic conditions. Several other peripheral neuropathic pain conditions have been reported. Haplotypes in voltage-gated potassium channel subunit, *KCNS1*, have shown association with pain intensity in HIV-associated sensory neuropathy among black South Africans (Hendry et al., 2013). Channels, *TRPA1* and *TRPV1*, have been reported to affect somatosensory sensitivity in neuropathic pain patients who suffered from a variety of neuropathic conditions (Binder et al., 2012). *SCN9A* has likewise been reported to be associated with unexplained chronic neuropathic pain (Dabby et al., 2011).

Three sodium channels have also been reported to be associated with a more common neuropathic pain condition, painful small-fiber neuropathy. Affecting small-diameter A-delta and C fibers and characterized by sudden bouts of pain originating in the extremities, this condition has been reported to be associated with Nav1.7, *SCN9A* (Faber et al., 2012a; Han et al., 2012);

Nav1.8, *SCN10A* (Faber et al., 2012b; Huang et al., 2013; Dabby et al., 2016); and Nav1.9, *SCN11A* (Huang et al., 2014; Han et al., 2015). The relevant mutations in these channels have been functionally characterized and found to contribute to sensory neuron hyperexcitability (Faber et al., 2012a,b; Han et al., 2012, 2015; Huang et al., 2013, 2014).

Neuropathic condition genetics: summary. Unlike in migraine and musculoskeletal pain conditions, our understanding of genetic contributors to neuropathic pain is largely derived from rare familial mutations and is dominated by sodium channels. While Nav1.7, and to a lesser extent Nav1.8 and Nav1.9, have been repeatedly reported as causal in rare neuropathic pain conditions, the direction and extent of functional effect on the disease phenotype is tied to the specific mutation or mutations within each locus. Moreover, extensive pedigree segregation analysis and electrophysiological characterization have occasionally shown previously reported causal mutations as benign or conferring a mild risk (Klein et al., 2012; Waxman et al., 2014).

Genetic variants underlying common neuropathic pain conditions also point to modulation of neurotransmission and related pathways. Three of the four genes whose association has been replicated at least once – *GCH1*, a regulator in the dopamine, serotonin, and nitric oxide biosynthesis pathway; *KCNS1*, a voltage-gated potassium channel subunit; and *OPRM1*, one of the body's endogenous pain regulators – implicate dysregulation in pain processing. The other gene, twice reported to be associated with cancer pain, is *PTGS2*, which indicates involvement of the immune system.

Visceral pain disorders

Visceral pain disorders, reviewed in Dabby et al. (2011) and Cervero and Laird (1999), are characterized by pain stemming from visceral organs. At least in part due to lack of consensus on diagnostic criteria for these conditions, genetic studies have been few and have provided but a glimpse into their pathophysiology, with tenuous connections between implicated genes. Possible involvement of genetic polymorphisms has been reported for chronic pelvic pain, chronic pancreatitis and interstitial cystitis.

Chronic pelvic pain is a pathology believed to result from certain bacterial infections and sexually-transmitted disease sequelae (Pontari, 2013). Evidence for inflammatory dysregulation comes from a study showing that chronic pelvic pain patients were more likely to express the genotype associated with reduced production of the regulatory cytokine interleukin 10, *IL10* (Shoskes et al., 2002). An early study by Riley et al. has implicated a short tandem repeat region of the X chromosome near the phosphoglycerate kinase gene, *PGK1*, in chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain (Riley and Krieger, 2002). Two other genes possibly implicated in chronic pelvic pain are manganese superoxide dismutase, *MNSOD* (Arisan et al., 2006), and androgen receptor, *AR* (Pontari, 2013).

Several genes have been reported to be associated with chronic pancreatitis with pain. Variants of cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator, *CFTR*

(Cohn et al., 1997; Sharer et al., 1998; Noone et al., 2001) (a chloride channel whose more damaging mutations lead to cystic fibrosis); serine protease inhibitor, *SPINK1* (Witt et al., 2000; Pfuetzer et al., 2001), which regulates trypsinogen; cationic trypsinogen, *PRSS1* (Gorry et al., 1997), which in its hyperactive form essentially autodigests the pancreas; and trypsin inhibitor, *PSTI* (Noone et al., 2001), have all been reported to be associated with chronic pancreatitis with pain. *PRSS1* also carries mutations that cause hereditary pancreatitis (Whitcomb et al., 1996; Noone et al., 2001; Simon et al., 2002; Le Marechal et al., 2004; Le Maréchal et al., 2006), as does *SPINK1* (Király et al., 2007).

Interstitial cystitis, characterized by bladder pain, has been found associated with a potentiating variant of sodium channel NaV1.7, *SCN9A* (Reeder et al., 2013).

Visceral condition genetics: summary. Genetic studies of visceral conditions have thus far not painted a clear picture of the biological pathways involved in their pathophysiology. *SCN9A*, whose involvement in visceral chronic pain has been reported four times, appears to be the most frequent contributor to chronic pain accompanying visceral disorders. Given this gene's well-established role in a number of rare monogenic pain conditions, its possible role in visceral pain may be yet another manifestation of disrupted pain signaling. Furthermore, the four genes whose associations with visceral disorders have been replicated at least once represent three different functional pathways: *SCN9A* – neurotransmission, *PRSS1* and *SPINK1* – protein degradation, and *CFTR* – immune response. This evidence from genetic studies to date suggests that visceral pain disorders may not have a common pathophysiology and are rather grouped together primarily based on the anatomical proximity of the affected organs.

CONCLUSION

Genetic studies conducted in the last two decades have been invaluable in elucidating the molecular pathophysiology mechanisms of chronic pain conditions. While these studies have occasionally suffered from contradictory results or insufficient statistical power to confirm the involvement of specific genes, the network of causal mechanisms is nevertheless gradually coming into focus. Genetic variants contributing to chronic pain conditions characterize these conditions as multifactorial pathologies with overlapping etiologies. All chronic pain condition categories show an enrichment for genes involved in neurotransmission, underscoring the importance of neuronal signaling – specifically ascending nociceptive and descending inhibitory signaling – in pain chronicity. Nevertheless, secondary functional pathways differ between the etiologically grouped categories and shed light on possible pathophysiological differences between them. This suggests that distinct combinations of genetic variants, presumably interacting with environmental factors, determine the specific pathology that develops. Thus identification of genetic contributors of chronic pain

conditions builds our understanding not only of the genotypic structure of these diseases but also of their molecular pathophysiology.

Furthermore, currently available chronic pain treatments are fraught with significant obstacles, including unmanageable side effects (Furlan et al., 2006; Chou et al., 2015) and variable effectiveness at the population level (Turk, 2002; Ballantyne and Shin, 2008; Finnerup et al., 2010), which are attributable to interindividual variability in pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic properties of analgesics. Perhaps even more importantly, given that chronic pain conditions are a heterogeneous class of disorders, driven by different pathways of vulnerability that include differential molecular genetic contribution, genetic studies promise to identify key molecular markers of susceptibility and targets for personalized treatment of chronic pain. Therefore the results of genetic studies should be exploited for drug development targeting of molecular pathways unique – or as close to unique as possible – to each pathology.

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