100 Years of Schizophrenia Genetics
Where Are We Now

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Schizophrenia

- Affects language, thought, perception, sense of self
- Affects ≈ 1.1% of the population at some point in their lives (3 million Americans)
- Life expectancy is shortened 10-25 years (Laursen et al., 2012; McGrath, 2008)

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The speaker has no conflict of interest to report.

Objectives

The participant will describe
- Current findings in genetic research related to schizophrenia susceptibility
- Future trends in genetic research related to schizophrenia susceptibility
- Implications of genetic research for the care of people with schizophrenia

Schizophrenia

- With current treatments > 50% of affected people have poor outcomes
- 80% relapse rate (Robinson et al., 2004)
  – 20-30% of patients are resistant to current medications (Conley & Kelly, 2001)
- 40% of people in the CATI study met criteria for metabolic syndrome (Ellingsrod et al., 2008; Meyer et al., 2005)
- 75-85% of people with SCZ have cognitive dysfunction (Desbonnet et al., 2012)
**Better Patient Outcomes**

- Better diagnosis
  - Current diagnostic criteria
  - Earlier
  - More accurate (Bromet et al., 2011; Wray et al., 2012)
- Better treatment
  - Effective
  - Specific
- Understanding the “disease” process
  - Risk factors
    - Modifiable risk factors

**Heritability**

- Sullivan et al., 2012

**Genetic Variation**

- 20,000 – 25,000 genes
- Genes vary in size
- Genetically, we are more different than previously thought
  - Large chunks of DNA differ among individuals and ethnic groups
- SNPs (single nucleotide polymorphism)
  - Variation in a single nucleotide
- Simple insertion/deletion
  - Insertion/deletion of a single nucleotide
- CNVs (copy number variants)
  - Insertion/deletion of several megabases (1 million nucleotides)

**Evidence for Genetic Factors**

- Parent with SCZ
  - Risk of SCZ raised by affected parent
  - Risk of SCZ adopted away
  - MZ twins 1 affected; 1 not affected
  - Risk of SCZ for offspring of affected
  - Risk of SCZ for offspring of unaffected

**Structural Variation**

- SNP
  - Previously thought to be the most prevalent and most important form of genetic variation
- CNV
  - Comprise at least 3 x the nucleotide content of SNPs
  - Actually the most common form of genetic variation
  - 12% of the human genome
  - There are a lot of CNVs in genes involved in the immune system and brain development
Variation in Gene Expression

- Gene expression
  - Process where the information coded in the gene is “transcribed” into RNA and then may be “translated” into protein
- Penetrance
  - Proportion of people with a specific genetic change who exhibit signs/symptoms of a genetic disorder
- Genetic heterogeneity
  - A genotype (genetic change) can result in a variety of phenotypes (SCZ, ASD, BP)
- Phenotypic heterogeneity
  - A phenotype (SCZ) may be due to a variety of genotypes

Finding Susceptibility Genes

- Linkage analysis
  - A gene of major effect appears more often in affected families
  - Establish chromosomal regions shared by individuals with SCZ but not by unaffected individuals
- Association studies
  - Examine potential associations in a sample of unrelated subjects and healthy controls
- Candidate gene studies
  - Focus on genes which have a plausible biological link to SCZ or be in a region of linkage

Disc1

- David Porteous, 1970
- Classic cytogenetic study (chromosome number and structure)
- Translocation
  - The truncated DISC1 protein produced by this translocation is unable to fully function

Genome-wide Association Studies

- Look for genes that are correlated to SCZ across the entire genome in a case control study instead of looking at a one variant at time
  - Hypothesis free
  - Based on genetic disequilibrium
  - In addition to genes; interrogates regions between genes
- Have been successful in finding susceptibility loci for complex disorders

Schizophrenia Susceptibility Genes

- A gene that increases an individual's susceptibility or predisposition SCZ
- When the gene is present, development of SCZ symptoms is more likely but not certain

Genome-wide Association Studies

- ISC analyzed de novo mutations ≈ 8 times more frequent in sporadic cases of SCZ than controls
- Stefansson et al. identified the same regions as the ISC (1q21.1 and 15q13.3) where copy number variation is associated with SCZ risk
**GWAS 2009**

- *Nature*, August 6, 2009
  - Stefansson et al.
  - International Schizophrenia Consortium
  - Shi et al.
- All three studies implicated the MHC region on chromosome 6 (6p21.3-6p22.1)
- Highly associated SNPs were both genetic and inter-genetic

**GWAS 2009**

- In a meta-analysis, taken together the top half of all positive SNPs explain about 30% of risk
- These findings could eventually lead to multi-gene signatures or biomarkers for severe mental disorders

**MHC Region**

- This is an area of high gene density
- Genes in this region have many biological functions but genes with immune function predominate
- Controls the immune response through recognition of "self" and "non-self"

**GWAS 2011**

- The Psychiatric GWAS Consortium identified 10 independent SNPs in 8 loci, 5 of which were novel (Schizophrenia Psychiatric GWAS Consortium, 2011)
  - 1p21.3, 2q32.2, 8p23.2, 8q21.3, 10q24.3
- The strongest hit was again at the MHC complex
  - This has since been supported in Han Chinese and more modestly in Japanese (Ikeda et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2013)
- Replicated in EA in 2013 (Aberg et al., 2013)

**Best Hits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gene</th>
<th>Function Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIPR2</td>
<td>Vasoactive Peptide Receptor 2 (2q32.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRXN1</td>
<td>Neurexin (1q24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNTNAP2</td>
<td>Contactin-associated protein-like 2 (7q31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRGN</td>
<td>Neurogranin (11q24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZNF804A</td>
<td>Zinc finger protein 804A (2q32.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chromosome 22 (22q deletion syndrome/Velocardiofacial syndrome): Large effect on SCZ, 30% of carriers develop psychosis; Area contains both COMT and PRODH; also implicated in ID, ASD, ADHD; OCL, anxiety, depression

**Best Hits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chromosome</th>
<th>Gene</th>
<th>Function Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1q21.1</td>
<td>Deletion/duplication SCZ, ID, ASD, St.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1q25</td>
<td>Deletion  SCZ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1q29</td>
<td>Deletion  SCZ,ID, ASD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2q36.3 (SCZD16)</td>
<td>Deletion/duplication SCZ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3p4.1.2</td>
<td>Deletion  SCZ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3p11.2</td>
<td>Deletion/duplication SCZ, ID, ASD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3p13.1</td>
<td>Deletion  SCZ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3p13.3</td>
<td>Deletion/duplication SCZ, ID, ASD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3p21.2</td>
<td>Duplication SCZ, ID, ASD, ADHD, BP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3p21.3.1</td>
<td>Deletion/duplication SCZ, ID, ASD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7q42</td>
<td>Deletion  SCZ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25q11.1-13</td>
<td>Duplication SCZ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Doherty et al., 2012; Rapoport et al., 2012
Best Hits - Implications

- Over-represented in SCZ in at least 1 study
- Do not have diagnostic specificity
  - Susceptibility genes do not respect diagnostic criteria
  - They confer risk to a variety of phenotypes
    - Risk for psychosis rather than SCZ
  - Cannot be used for prediction

CDCV

- SCZ (a complex disease) results from a combination of common genetic variants which are frequent in the population, each of which has a small effect on illness susceptibility
  - The majority of people who have them do not develop SCZ
  - When several (or many) susceptibility variants are inherited together, there is an increased disease risk
- Supported by the fact that most people with SCZ have no affected first degree relatives

Where are We?

- Heritability 80-90%
- SCZ is more genetically heterogeneous than previously thought
- The origins are in early neurodevelopment
  - SCZ susceptibility genes are implicated in other developmental/psychiatric disorders
  - Synaptic dysfunction and neural connectivity are probably important in the pathology
  - SCZ is the end state of abnormal neurodevelopmental processes that started years before the illness onset

CDRV

- Rare but potent structural variants (frequency <5%) have a role in a small proportion of cases
  - Most are large
  - None are fully penetrant
    - VCFS (multiple genes at 22q11.2)
      - 25 x increase of SCZ
    - Disc1 (1q42.1)
  - Some may be specific to single cases or families
  - May represent subtypes

Where are We?

- Support polygenic inheritance
  - First proposed 40 years ago
  - Common disease – common variant (CDCV) and common disease – rare variant (CVRV) models are both relevant

CDRV

- People with SCZ carry more of these rare structural variants than healthy controls
- Rare deletions and duplications found in 5% of healthy controls
  - 15% of people with SCZ onset > age 18
  - 20% of people with SCZ onset < age 18

Doherty et al., 2012

Collier et al., 2009

Sebat et al., 2009
Where Are We Headed

Mega Analysis
- Large collaborations are working together
  - International Schizophrenia Consortium
  - Molecular Genetics of Schizophrenia Collaboration
  - SGENE
  - Psychiatric Genomics Consortium
- Instead of combining results in a meta-analysis mega-analysis is combining data

Human Interactome
- A network based approach
- Incorporates the interactions of
  - Gene families
  - Protein-protein interactions
  - Metabolic pathways
  - Regulatory networks
  - Micro-RNA networks
  - Gene-environment interaction
  - Corvin et al., 2013

Cross-Ethnic Replication
- Different SNPS show up with different frequencies in different ethnic groups
- In progress
  - East Asians
  - African Americans

Schizophrenia Networks

Deep Phenotyping
- Large scale genomic studies are working to establish genotype-phenotype associations
- Data suggests that genes confer risk for symptoms that do not respect our current diagnostic classifications
  - Bergen & Petryshen, 2012; DeRoose et al., 2012
Next Generation Sequencing

- NGS (platforms and biotechnologies that read the sequence of nucleotides within a DNA molecule) expected to re-define the genomic field
- New technology allows sequencing at unprecedented speed and reduced cost

Polygenic Risk Scores

- Common risk variants have limited predictive diagnostic value
- Many variants can be combined
  - The International Schizophrenia Consortium used a polygenic model to search for the combined effect of thousands of alleles of small effect (International Schizophrenia Consortium, 2009)
  - To be useful for prediction requires large sample sizes (Corvin 2013; Dudbridge 2013)

Statistical Packages

- Algorithms
  - Genetic variations are mapped to a phenotype and assigned a score
  - Strongly interrelated clusters can be identified
  - Cluster scores can then related to the likelihood that all the cluster genes share the same phenotype

Gene Expression Studies

- Gene expression profiles generated to look for expression abnormalities in schizophrenia
- Found differential expression of extended MHC region histones (HIST1H2BD, HIST1H2BC, HIST1H2BH, HIST1H2BG, and HIST1H4K) converges with the genetic evidence from GWAS
- Identified novel candidate genes for further study

Animal Models

DISC1 knockout rat

Gene x Environment Studies

- Gene expression depends to some extent on the context
- Focus on the possibility that genes influence risk of SCZ only in the presence of a particular environmental factor and vice versa (Stilo & Murray, 2010)
- Epigenetics
  - Heritable changes in gene function without DNA changes
  - May account for the “missing link” in heritability
Gene x Environment Studies

How do Environmental Risk Factors Effect Genetic Expression?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obstetric complications</td>
<td>Pregnancy/delivery complications, abnormal fetal growth and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban birth/residence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family in urban</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prenatal infections</td>
<td>A wide variety of infections implicated. Prenatal exposure to rubella increased risk x 30-201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prenatal stress</td>
<td>War, father’s death in prenatal period May overlap with other environmental factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood trauma</td>
<td>Tumoral abuse but not neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced paternal age</td>
<td>Increased relative risk (Malaspina, 2003); has a strong effect were there is a negative family history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilepsy</td>
<td>People with epilepsy have 2.5 x risk of developing SCZ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clarke et al., 2009, Clarke et al., 2012; Silén & Murray, 2010

Gene x Environment Studies

- **Prenatal immune activation** (Desbonnet et al., 2012)
  - x DISC1 mutation
    - Anxiety and depression like responses
  - x NRG1 mutation
    - Changes in spatial working memory and sociability
- **Gene x birth complications** (Nicolaidou et al., 2008)
  - 4 genes (AKT1, BDNF, DNTB1P1, GRM3) interacted with serious obstetric complications to influence risk for SCZ

Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells

Fibroblasts from 4 people with SCZ reprogrammed to hiPSCs

Differentiated into neurons

5 antipsychotics (Clozapine, Loxapine, Olanzapine, Risperidone, Thioridazine) administered for the final 3 weeks of neuronal differentiation

Loxapine significantly increased the neuronal connectivity in hiPSC neurons in all patients

Brennand et al., 2011

Pharmacogenomics

- There had not been a mechanistically novel drug marketed in 30 years
- A major obstacle has been that diagnosis has been based on clinical symptoms rather than pathology
- While FGA and SGA may differ somewhat in effectiveness and EPS
  - Minimal improvement in cognition (Desbonnet et al. 2012)

Gene x cannabis (Caspi, 2006)

- Carriers of val/val were more likely to have psychotic symptoms and develop schizophreniform disorder cannabis used in adolescence - more marked effect when use was earlier
- Individuals who were val/met were also at increased risk, but the risk was less marked
- Cannabis use did not have this effect for individuals with met/met alleles

Gene x cannabis (Forti, 2012)

- Odds ratio is >7 for first episode psychosis for daily cannabis users who are homozygous for the C/C AKT1 allele
Pharmacogenomics

- Data points to neurodevelopmental or synaptic genes (Insel, 2012)
- SCZ is heterogeneous and subgroups may respond to different treatment
  - Growing evidence that risk genes are associated with specific features
  - Potential to provide a profile which will serve as a guide to specific pharmacologic targets (O’Connell et al., 2010)

Pharmacogenomics

- Increasing evidence that immune dysfunction in SCZ is not an unrelated association but related to underlying pathology
- New focus on using meds with primary anti-inflammatory properties
- Double blind, randomized, placebo controlled studies with antipsychotic +
  - Celecoxib (Ahkondzadeh et al., 2007; Müller et al., 2010)
  - ASA (Luan et al., 2010)
  - Pregnenolone (Mars et al., 2009; Ritzen et al., 2010)
  - Minocycline (Levkovitz et al., 2010)

Pharmacogenomics

- The CATI Study evaluated the impact of over 6000 SNPS on treatment response to antipsychotics (olanzapine, perphenazine, quetiapine, risperidone, ziprasidone) in Caucasian patients
- Identified 20 SNPs possibly influencing response to antipsychotic drugs
- No single SNP was strongly associated with response to more than one drug (Liu et al., 2012)

Pharmacogenomics

- TAAR1 agonists (Revel et al., 2013)
  - Rodents and non-human primates
  - Antipsychotic and antidepressant like activity
  - Improve cognition
  - Control body weight
- DMXBA
  - Activation of nicotinic receptors (NCT00100165)
- DAAO inhibitor
  - NCT00960219 (Completed)
  - NCT01390376 (Recruiting)

Pharmacogenomics

- Commercially available for the identification of predictors for susceptibility to ADRs in antipsychotic pharmacotherapies (De Leon, 2009)
- Genetic differences (MTHFR) in patients with SCZ that put them at four times greater risk for metabolic syndrome (Ellingrod et al., 2008)
- Polymorphism in HTR2C gene associated with antipsychotic induced weight-gain (Wallace et al., 2011)
- 50 genes expected to have association with haloperidol induced TD (Crowley et al., 2012)

Commitment to Research

- Priorities
- Determine which polymorphisms are causative and which are just along for the ride
- Translate genetic associations into pathophysiologic understanding
  - Complex behaviors do not map one to one to specific genes or neurobiologic systems
  - Different genes are responsible for similar diseases in different families
  - The same genetic lesion can result in different outcomes depending on the genetic background
Commitment to Research

• Psychiatric Genomic Consortium
  – Data sharing
  – Some have estimated 100,000 cases and an equal number of controls needed
  – A cross-disorders group has been added to examine the overlap between SCZ, BP, and ASD
    • ASD, ADHD, BP, MDD, and SCZ share common genetic risk factors (Cross-Disorder Group of the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium, 2013a)
    • Genetic correlation of common SNPs is high for SCZ/BPD, moderate for SCZ/MDD, BPD/MDD, low between SCZ/ASD
      [Cross-Disorder Group of the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium, 2013b in press]

Genetic Testing

• Potential uses
  – Differential diagnosis
  – Prediction of treatment outcomes
  – Identification of high risk individuals

Commitment to Research

• NIMH has launched the Research Domain Criteria (RDoC) Initiative
  – Integrate genetics, imaging, and other data into a new classification system – a framework for collecting data
• National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS – NIH)
  – Support the development of new methods and technologies to enhance diagnosis and therapeutics

Genetic Testing

• Relevant issues
  – Is the marker reliably genotyped and how valid is the association
    • Is the variation functional or does it reflect something nearby
  – Does the test have clinical utility
    • How large is the effect of the variation
    • Does it give us any unique information – does it tell us anything we don’t already know
    • Do alternative treatments/diagnoses exist

Commitment to Research

• Public-private partnerships
• GAIN – Genetic Association Information Network
  – NIH and the private sector
• Astra Zeneca and the Medical Research Council in the UK have a public-private partnership to make compounds available for academic research

Schizophrenia

An Early Insult
A Latent Period
Emergence of Psychosis

De Leon, 2009

McMahon, 2013, unpublished
 schizophrenia

**RISK**
- Prenatal or perinatal
- Genetic
- Environmental

**PRODROME**
- Before psychosis
  - Changes in thoughts, social isolation, impaired functioning
  - Biomarkers - MRI, neuropsychological tests of reaction time or verbal memory

- Psychosis
  - Hallucinations, delusions, disorganized thought and behavior
  - Negative symptoms, cognitive deficits

**LATE STAGE**
- Chronicity
- Disability
- Not all progress to this stage

**DISABILITY**

Insel, 2010

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**Primary Prevention**

- Challenging due to latency between insult and symptoms
- Personalized genetic risk – not just family history
- Identification of an ultra high risk group (Cannon et al., 2008; Costain & Basset, 2012)
  - Genetic vulnerability
  - Environmental risk
  - Prodromal syndrome
- Opportunity to limit harmful gene-environment interaction

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**Secondary Prevention**

- Interventions to delay onset or attenuate course
- Still unclear if intervention in prodrome will prevent or delay psychosis – although early work is promising
- Diagnosis at first onset of psychosis
  - Genetic markers
  - Psychophysiological/neuroimaging markers
  - Neurocognitive markers

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**Tertiary Prevention**

- Reduce the burden by optimizing treatment
- Coordinated management for other symptoms caused by the genetic variant (non-psychiatric)
  - Treatment
    - Earlier and more aggressive
    - Tailored treatment – not just meds – tailored dosing
    - Less confusion of symptoms and side effects
    - Novel targets

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**Tertiary Prevention**

- Genetic counseling
  - Facilitate informed decision making
  - Alleviate misconceptions
    - Genetic does not mean inherited
  - Reduce stigma
    - Improved understanding
  - Risk factors
- A partial answer to the question “why me”
- Hope

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**Reframe**

Gray matter loss in adolescents with SCZ; severe loss is observed (red and pink; up to 5% annually) in parietal, motor, and temporal cortices (Brennand & Gage, 2011).

Image adapted from Dr. P. M. Thompson’s work by Fred H. Gage, Laboratory of Genetics LG-9 The Salk Institute for Biological Studies, Courtesy of F. Gage
Reframe

Chemical imbalance → Dysfunction of brain circuits

Reframe

Neurodegenerative → Neurodevelopmental

Full reference citations and additional resources are on the Reference/Resources handout

Additional slides available at nbucco@lsuhsc.edu