

Where did we come from, and how did we get to where we live today?

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In the first scientific publication from The Genographic Project, a five-year effort to understand the human journey, we see the first attempts to answer these age-old questions.

Reporting their experience of genotyping human mitochondrial DNA from the first 18 months of the project in the open-access journal *PLoS Genetics*, Doron Behar and colleagues describe the procedures used to generate, manage and analyze the genetic data from 78,590 public participants. They also provide the first anthropological insights in this unprecedented effort to map humanity's genetic journey through the ages.

An ongoing debate in the field of human population genetics concerns the accurate classification of genetic lineages into distinct branches on the human family tree, known as haplogroups. The rigorous genotyping and quality assurance strategies of the work done through The Genographic Project allow classification of mitochondrial lineages with unprecedented accuracy.

This methodology is now being made publicly available along with the anonymous genetic data itself. As well as making available a periodically-updated database comprising all data donated by participants, the researchers make available the Nearest Neighbor haplogroup prediction tool.

Citation: Behar DM, Rosset S, Blue-Smith J, Balanovsky O, Tzur S, et

al. (2007) The Genographic Project public participation mitochondrial DNA database. *PLoS Genet* 3(6): e104.

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