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The Y-STR Genetic Diversity of an Idaho Basque Population, with Comparison to European Basques and US Caucasians

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Abstract Fifty unrelated Basque males from southwest Idaho were typed for the 17 Y-STR loci in the Yfiler multiplex kit (DYS19, DYS389I, DYS389II, DYS390, DYS391, DYS392, DYS393, DYS437, DYS438, DYS439, DYS448, DYS456, DYS458, DYS635, YGATA H4.1 and DYS385a/b). In total, 42 haplotypes were identified, with no more than two individuals sharing a single haplotype. The haplotype diversity (HD) was 0.9935, and gene diversity (D) over loci was 0.457 ± 0.137. The Idaho Basque population was compared to the source population from the Basque autonomous region of Northern Spain and Southern France, as well as a United States Caucasian population. The haplotype diversity for the immigrant Basque sample is within 0.4% of the haplotype diversity of the European Basques (0.9903); thus the power of discrimination is similar for each population. The Idaho Basque population has less diversity in 9 out of 16 loci (considering DYS385a/b together) and 3% less diversity across all loci, compared to the European Basque population. A multidimensional scaling analysis (MDS) was created using pairwise R_{ST} values to compare the Idaho Basques to other populations. Based upon R_{ST} and F_{ST} measures, no significant differentiation was found between the Idaho and source European Basque population.

The individuals typed for this study are from the community of immigrant Basques, descendants of the Basque migrants who settled in the region of the Intermountain West starting in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Basques of Northern Spain and Southern France are characterized as genetically distinct from other European populations, and this is the case for certain markers such as blood types (Mourant 1947). However, studies using the type of DNA analysis common in forensic applications (STRs and mitochondrial DNA) show that Basque genetic variation is within the range reported for other European populations, and that the common alleles or haplotypes in Europe are also found in Basque populations (Alfonso-Sánchez et al. 2008; Bertranpetit et al. 1995; Davis et al. 2011; Zlojutro et al. 2006). The Basques can be considered

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Human Biology, December 2011, v. 83, no. 6, pp. 685–694.
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KEY WORDS: Y-STR, YFILER, BASQUES, IDAHO, IMMIGRANT.

outliers only in the context of the European gene pool, and are more related to neighboring Europeans than to other world populations (Rosenberg, Pritchard et al. 2002; Li, Absher et al. 2008; Laayouni, Calafell et al. 2010). Since the 19th century, Idaho has been the destination for a substantial number of Basque immigrants (Douglass and Bilbao 1975). Many young Basque males during the late 1800s and early 1900s came to Idaho in search of work, and found it in the ranching and sheepherding industry (Bieter and Bieter 2000). With one of the largest Basque populations outside of the native Basque region, Idaho is estimated to be the home to approximately 20,000 residents claiming Basque heritage (Zubiri 2006). A recent study by Davis et al. (2011) was the first to compare mitochondrial DNA profiles between native European Basques and those of the immigrant Basque population of SW Idaho and SE Oregon. The data presented here compare the Y-STR profiles of an immigrant Basque population with Basque males in the Basque Country, and include a comparison with a United States Caucasian population.

Table 1. Allele Frequencies and Allelic Diversity for 17 Y-STR Loci in Idaho Basque, DYS385a/b Considered as One Locus

Allele	*DYS19*	*DYS389I*	*DYS389II*	*DYS390*	*DYS391*	*DYS392*	*DYS393*	*DYS438*
8								
9					0.04			0.02
10					0.26			0.08
11					0.66	0.12		0.02
12		0.06			0.04		0.08	0.86
13	0.04	0.66				0.86	0.74	0.02
14	0.88	0.28				0.02	0.16	
15	0.04						0.02	
16	0.04							
17								
18								
19								
20								
21				0.02				
22				0.06				
23				0.18				
24				0.64				
25				0.10				
26								
27								
28			0.02					
29			0.70					
30			0.26					
31								
32								
33			0.02					
D	0.221	0.482	0.442	0.544	0.494	0.246	0.42	0.253

Materials and Methods

Sampling. Samples were collected at various Basque cultural events held in Boise, Idaho (Lat: 43.6° N, Lon: 116.3 ° W). Individuals recruited were self-described as having paternal Basque heritage. Questionnaires and cotton buccal swabs were collected from 50 unrelated males. An informed consent approval by the Institutional Review Board of Boise State University was obtained prior to data collection. The European Basque population data $n = 168$ was taken from Garcia et al. (2006), and the US Caucasian data set is from a study published on the NIST STRBase website of 260 males, typed for Yfiler and additional loci (http://www.cstl.nist.gov/strbase/NISTpop.htm). Only data from the Yfiler loci were used for the purposes of this study.

DNA Extraction. DNA was extracted from cotton buccal swab samples using the QiaAMP DNA Mini kit (Qiagen). The genomic DNA for individual samples was quantified using the Quantifiler Duo RT-PCR kit (Applied Biosystems), and the DNA levels were adjusted to reach optimal values (0.5–1.0 ng) for microsatellite PCR.

Table 1. (*continued*)

DYS439	*DYS437*	*DYS448*	*DYS456*	*DYS458*	*DYS635*	*GATAH4*	*Allele*	*DYS385*
							11,11	0.08
							11,13	0.02
						0.02	11,14	0.62
0.22						0.28	11,15	0.04
0.62						0.58	12,12	0.02
0.12			0.02			0.12	12,14	0.06
0.04	0.38		0.02	0.04			13,15	0.02
	0.60		0.44	0.12			13,16	0.02
	0.02		0.46	0.10			14,14	0.08
			0.06	0.44			16,18	0.02
		0.26		0.28			17,18	0.02
		0.62		0.02				
		0.04						
		0.06			0.04			
		0.02			0.08			
					0.86			
					0.02			
0.551	0.495	0.542	0.59	0.702	0.252	0.57		0.59

PCR Amplification. PCR amplification of 17 Y-STR loci was performed using the AMPFlSTR Yfiler kit (Applied Biosystems) according to the manufacturer′s protocol.

Electrophoresis and Typing. The samples were genotyped using a 3130 Genetic Analyzer (Applied Biosystems). Alleles were typed according to published guidelines for STR analysis (Gusmão et al. 2006; Mulero et al. 2006).

Data Analysis. Haplotype diversity (HD), Allelic (Gene) diversity (D) were calculated according to the formulas in Nei (1987), using ARLEQUIN version 3.5 (Excoffier and Lischer 2010). The power of discrimination (PD) was calculated as the number of different haplotypes divided by the sample size (García et al. 2006). An analysis of molecular variance (AMOVA) with 10,000 permutations using ARLEQUIN was performed to generate R_{ST} and F_{ST} values and their associated probabilities. From the pairwise R_{ST} values, an MDS plot was generated using SAS software, version 9 for Windows (copyright 2009; SAS Institute Inc., Cary, NC, USA). SAS and all other SAS Institute Inc. product or service names are registered trademarks or trademarks of SAS Institute Inc. The following populations were used for comparison in the AMOVA and MDS plot: Idaho Basque (this study), European Basque (García et al. 2006), Andalusia (Gaibar et al. 2010), Barcelona (Sánchez et al. 2007), N. Portugal (Pontes et al. 2007), Italy (Turrina et al. 2006), N. Greece (Leda et al. 2009), Serbia (Veselinovic et al. 2008), Romania (Stanciu et al. 2010), and Algeria (Robino et al. 2008).

Quality Control. A proficiency testing quality control check was performed in conjunction with submission to the Y-hrd.org database (Gusmão et al. 2006; Willuweit and Roewer 2007).

Results

The Idaho Basque population allele frequency and diversity statistics for 17 loci are listed in Table 1. The Idaho Basque samples have less allelic diversity over all loci than the source Basque (0.462 vs. 0.477, Table 2). Both Basque populations show less diversity than the United States Caucasian samples (0.622). This is consistent with previous reports showing that Basques have lower diversity values than other European populations for both autosomal and Y-chromosome markers (Alonso et al. 2005; Zlojutro et al. 2006). Table 3 summarizes genetic diversity indices for all three populations.

The haplotype diversity for the Idaho Basque sample was 0.9935. This value is within 0.4% of the haplotype diversity of the European Basques (0.9903). No significant difference exists in average gene diversity over all loci between the Idaho and Source Basques (t test, $P < 0.05$).

In our sample of 50 Idaho Basque males, we found 42 haplotypes. In Table 4 we show the frequency of each of our 42 haplotypes in the YHRD

Table 2. Allelic Diversity within and across Loci for the Populations in the Present Study

Y-STR	*Idaho Basque*	*Source Basque*	*U.S. Caucasian*
DYS19	0.221	0.307	0.509
DYS389I	0.482	0.617	0.528
DYS389II	0.442	0.674	0.679
DYS390	0.544	0.425	0.703
DYS391	0.494	0.457	0.557
DYS392	0.246	0.253	0.592
DYS393	0.420	0.238	0.366
DYS438	0.253	0.233	0.607
DYS439	0.551	0.586	0.633
DYS437	0.495	0.495	0.579
DYS448	0.542	0.557	0.600
DYS456	0.590	0.616	0.735
DYS458	0.702	0.654	0.753
DYS635	0.252	0.327	0.683
YGATA H4	0.570	0.575	0.574
DYS385a/b	0.590	0.617	0.855
Mean	0.462	0.477	0.622

$n = 30{,}300$ and ABI Y-STR $n = 11{,}393$ databases. Of the 42 haplotypes in our study, 22 did not have a match in YHRD, and 33 did not have a match in the ABI Y-STR database. Nine haplotypes were shared between Idaho and Source Basque populations. Five haplotypes were found in both Idaho Basque and United States Caucasian populations, and 4 haplotypes were found in both Source Basque and United States Caucasian populations.

Considering only the minimal haplotype (DYS19, DYS385a/b, DYS389I, DYS389II, DYS390, DYS391, DYS392, and DYS393), our data set of 50 individuals was reduced to 31 haplotypes, and the haplotype diversity is 0.9445 ± 0.0234, with an average allelic diversity of 0.4155 ± 0.2366. The most common Idaho Basque haplotype considering just the minimal haplotype loci was 14, 13, 29, 24, 11, 13, 13, 11, 14. That minimal haplotype was shared by 11 of the 50 males in our study. This minimal haplotype is also the most common in YHRD, found in 1,637 individuals $n = 30{,}300$, or roughly 2% of all individuals in the database.

Table 3. Summary Statistics for Y-STR Diversity in the Three Populations Compared

Population	*N*	*Haplotypes*	*HD*	*DC*	*D*
Idaho Basque	50	42	0.9935	0.840	0.462
Source Basque	168	138	0.9903	0.821	0.477
U.S. Caucasian	260	254	0.9998	0.977	0.622

Table 4. Hits of Idaho Basque Haplotypes in the YHRD and ABI Databases

	YHRD		*ABI*	
Haplotype ID	*Hits*	*Freq*	*Hits*	*Freq*
H1	3	9.90E-05	2	2.00E-04
H2	4	1.32E-04	6	5.00E-04
H3	—	—	—	—
H4	—	—	—	—
H5	—	—	—	—
H6	2	6.60E-05		
H7	—	—	—	—
H8	—	—	—	—
H9	2	6.60E-05	—	—
H10	1	3.30E-05	—	—
H11	—	—	—	—
H12	—	—	—	—
H13	1	3.30E-05	1	1.00E-04
H14	—	—	—	—
H15	2	6.60E-05	—	
H16	—	—	—	—
H17	1	3.30E-05	—	—
H18	—	—	—	—
H19	—	—	—	—
H20	3	9.90E-05	3	3.00E-04
H21	—	—	—	—
H22	—	—	—	—
H23	—	—	—	—
H24	—	—	—	—
H25	9	2.97E-04	4	4.00E-04
H26	3	9.90E-05	—	—
H27	—	—	—	—
H28	—	—	—	—
H29	15	4.95E-05	16	1.40E-03
H30	—	—	—	
H31	5	1.65E-04	1	1.00E-04
H32	—	—	—	—
H33	—	—	1	1.00E-04
H34	—	—	—	—
H35	2	6.60E-05	—	—
H36	29	9.57E-04	11	1.00E-03
H37	1	3.30E-05	—	—
H38	1	3.30E-05	—	—
H39	2	6.60E-05	—	—
H40	—	—	—	—
H41	—	—	—	—
H42	1	3.30E-05	—	—

Discussion

The relative genetic distance between selected populations is shown by a multidimensional scaling plot (MDS) created using R_{ST} values calculated from Arlequin 3.5 (Figure 1). There was no significant difference between the Idaho and

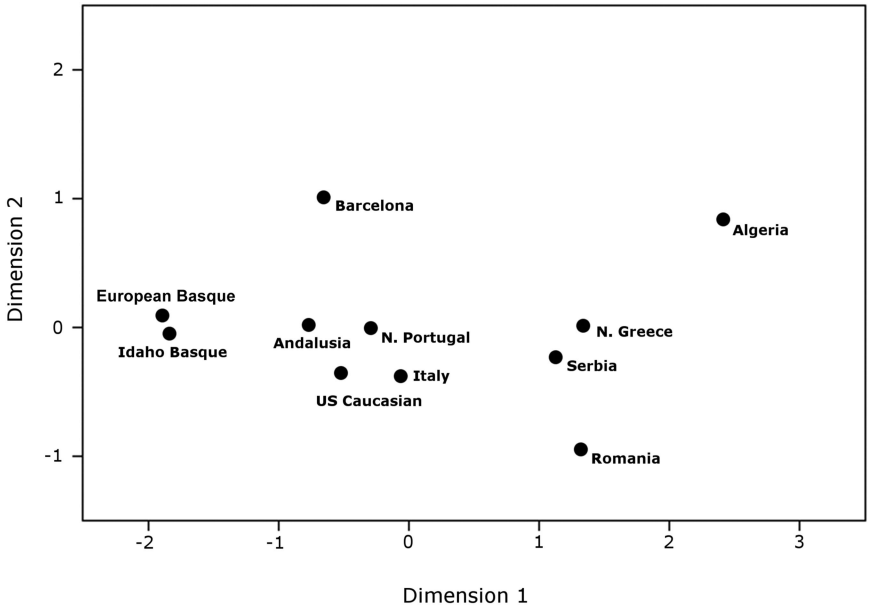

Figure 1. MDS plot based on pairwise R_{ST} values for various populations.

European Basque populations, based on the R_{ST} genetic distance ($P < 0.01$). F_{ST} calculations based on haplotype frequencies also showed no significant differentiation (data not shown) between Idaho and European Basque. F_{ST} values are considered more relevant in forensic analyses since exact haplotype matches are considered for the calculations (Budowle et al. 2009). Both Basque populations were significantly differentiated from all other populations we compared.

Small sample sizes can result in underestimates of the genetic diversity found within a population, and for haplotypic markers such as Y-STRs or mitochondrial DNA; even sample sizes in the hundreds can underestimate the number of unique haplotypes (Pereira et al. 2004). Our sample size is relatively small, and thus our results may underestimate the diversity found in the immigrant Basque population of Idaho. We detected relatively modest genetic differentiation between immigrant and native populations (i.e., we found no evidence for significant founder effects). Notably, we found no significant difference in average gene diversity over all loci between the Idaho and Source Basques (t test, $P < 0.05$), nor did we find significant differentiation (structure) between them, based on the F_{st} value ($F_{st} = 0.004$, $P < 0.05$). Our sampling strategy may have helped in this regard, since we purposefully avoided sampling first-degree relatives.

In terms of interpopulation comparisons, the expedient procedure was to use a forensic typing kit which contains loci that have been commonly used in previous population studies. The forensic application of Y-STR loci data requires enough polymorphic loci to produce rare or singleton haplotypes. Increasing the number of

Y-STR loci would provide more information about both the number of shared lineages, and how closely related the lineages are between populations. If additional loci are to be typed in future studies of Basque populations, one should choose loci that are highly polymorphic for the population(s) being studied. For example, in a report of Finnish paternal lineages using 16 Y-STR loci, the 10 most polymorphic loci were discovered to be sufficient to capture most of the diversity (Hedman et al. 2004). A follow-up study (Hedman et al. 2011) revealed that the addition of seven other highly polymorphic loci was able to give unique haplotypes for a set of 53 males who had appeared identical when typed with the 9 locus "minimal haplotype." The Yfiler results as used in this study would have divided these 53 males into 16 haplotypes.

Future studies of the Basques of Idaho (and neighboring states) would be of interest from both an anthropological and population genetics point of view. Additional Y-STR markers should be incorporated (e.g., the seven used in Hedman et al. 2011), as well as phylogenetically informative SNPs, which would allow the immigrant lineages to be placed into the broader phylogeographic history of Y-chromosomes in Europe, and could shed light on both the recent and ancient origins of such lineages.

Many Basque cultural centers (Euskaldunak) exist in the Western United States (Bieter and Bieter 2000; Douglass and Bilbao 1975), and such centers are useful for contacting local communities of descendants of Basque immigrants for genetic studies (Davis et al. 2011). In addition, because many Basque retain their native language and heritage, and because Basque surnames are easily recognizable (because of their unique language), tracing Basque paternal heritage several generations is relatively straightforward.

Studies of immigrant populations like the one presented here are vital to the accurate estimation of haplotype frequencies, which are used for studies of human migration, as well as for determining the power of discrimination and probability of matches used in forensic, missing persons, and paternity cases. The Y-STR haplotypes reported here are available via the Y-HRD website for other researchers.

Acknowledgments We thank the Basque volunteers of Idaho for participating in this study, the Basque Center Incorporated (Euskaldunak), and the Basque Museum and Cultural Center (Boise, Idaho) for allowing us to collect samples on their sites. This project was supported in part by the United States Department of Defense contract W81XWH-07-1-000.

Received 5 August 2011; revision accepted for publication 22 September 2011.

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