参考译文

Neandertal DNA May Be COVID Risk

尼安德特人的DNA可能有患COVID的风险

The risk factors for COVID-19 are many: old age, obesity, heart conditions. But early genetic studies have identified another trait that some people who develop severe COVID-19 seem to share: a cluster of genetic variations on their third chromosome.

COVID-19的危险因素有很多:老年、肥胖、心脏病。但是，早期的遗传学研究发现了一些严重的COVID-19患者似乎具有的另一个特征:他们第三条染色体上的一组遗传变异。

And that DNA sequence likely derives from Neandertals, says Hugo Zeberg of the Max Planck Institute.

马克斯·普朗克研究所的雨果·泽伯格说，那种DNA序列可能来自尼安德特人。

“It’s quite striking this variant has lingered on for 50,000 years.”

“令人吃惊的是，这种变异已经存在了5万年。”

Fifty thousand years ago is the approximate time humans and Neandertals interbred. And over the millennia, these Neandertal variants have become more common in some Homo sapiens populations than others.

大约5万年前是人类和尼安德特人杂交的时期。几千年来，这些尼安德特人的变种在一些智人群体中比其他群体更常见。

For example, 16 percent of people of European descent carry at least one copy of the Neandertal stretch. Half of South Asians do—and nearly two thirds of Bangladeshis.

例如，16%的欧洲后裔携带至少一个尼安德特人的基因副本。有一半的南亚人有，近三分之二的孟加拉人有。

“And it’s fascinating it is so high—points to the fact that it must have been beneficial in the past. It’s much higher than we expect. And then it’s totally expunged in East Asia and China. So something has happened, driving the frequency up in certain places and removing it totally in other places.”

“这很有趣，它是对过去肯定有益这一事实的有力证明。”比我们预期的要高得多。然后它在东亚和中国完全消失了。所以发生了一些事情，在某些地方导致频率上升，而在其他地方则完全消失。”

The details are in the journal Nature.

研究详情发表在《自然》杂志上。

Zeberg and his colleague write that perhaps the Neandertal DNA happens to boost the risk of developing severe COVID-19—and they point to the fact that in the U.K., people of Bangladeshi descent have twice the risk of dying of COVID-19 than the general population.

泽伯格和同事写道，也许尼安德特人的DNA恰好增加了患严重COVID-19的风险——他们指出，在英国，孟加拉人后裔死于COVID-19的风险是普通人口的两倍。

But as epidemiologist Keith Neal of the University of Nottingham pointed out via e-mail, people of African descent in the U.K. are also being hurt more by the virus—despite having hardly any Neandertal genes.

但正如诺丁汉大学的流行病学家基思·尼尔通过电子邮件指出的那样，在英国的非洲人后裔也受到这种病毒的伤害更大——尽管他们几乎没有任何尼安德特人的基因。

Instead it’s social factors—like crowded, multigenerational households or working frontline jobs—that are more likely to be driving the trends seen in the U.K. That’s according to Andrew Hayward, director of the Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care at University College London.

伦敦大学学院流行病学和卫生保健研究所主任安德鲁•海沃德表示，在英国出现的这种趋势更有可能是由社会因素推动的，比如拥挤的多代同堂家庭或从事一线工作。

And as both epidemiologists pointed out, it’s worth remembering that you can only develop severe COVID-19 if you’re exposed to the virus in the first place.

正如两位流行病学家所指出的那样，只有当一开始就接触到这种病毒时，你才会患上严重的COVID-19。

听力原文

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—Christopher