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# Cigarette smoking increases copy number alterations in nonsmall-cell lung cancer

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Cigarette smoking has been a well-established risk factor of lung cancer for decades. How smoking contributes to tumorigenesis in the lung remains not fully understood. Here we report the results of a genome-wide study of DNA copy number and smoking pack-years in a large collection of nonsmall-cell lung cancer (NSCLC) tumors. Genome-wide analyses of DNA copy number and pack-years of cigarette smoking were performed on 264 NSCLC tumors, which were divided into discovery and validation sets. The copy number-smoking associations were investigated in three scales: whole-genome, chromosome/arm, and focal regions. We found that heavy cigarette smokers (>60 pack-years) have significantly more copy number gains than non- or light smokers ( $\leq 60$  pack-years) ( $P = 2.46 \times 10^{-4}$ ), especially in 8q and 12q. Copy number losses tend to occur away from genes in non/light smokers ( $P = 5.15 \times 10^{-5}$ ) but not in heavy smokers ( $P = 0.52$ ). Focal copy number analyses showed that there are strong associations of copy number and cigarette smoking pack-years in 12q23 ( $P = 9.69 \times 10^{-10}$ ) where *IGF1* (insulin-like growth factor 1) is located. All of the above analyses were tested in the discovery set and confirmed in the validation set. DNA double-strand break assays using human bronchial epithelial cell lines treated with cigarette smoke condensate were also performed, and indicated that cigarette smoke condensate leads to genome instability in human bronchial epithelial cells. We conclude that cigarette smoking leads to more copy number alterations, which may be mediated by the genome instability.

tumor genome | multimer analyses

Lung cancer, of which 85% is nonsmall-cell lung carcinoma (NSCLC), is the second most common cancer and the leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States (1). The epidemiologic evidence supporting that cigarette smoking is an important factor in causing lung cancer was reported almost six decades ago (2–4). Moreover, lung cancer mortality mirrors trends in tobacco use (5). Carcinogens derived from cigarette smoking damage lung epithelium by oxidative stress and direct DNA damage (6). Although there has been progress in our understanding of lung carcinogenesis over the past few decades, the knowledge of mechanisms by which cigarette smoking causes lung cancer remains incomplete.

Profiles of copy number alterations (CNAs) in NSCLC have been studied (7, 8). However, the cause of copy number (CN) changes remains unknown. Several mechanisms of CN changes have been proposed, including homologous recombinations and nonhomologous mechanisms (9, 10). Bacteria, yeast, and human seem to share similar mechanisms (10). In bacteria, CNAs can be induced by environmental stress to enable swifter evolution in response to such stress. In the cell population within a tumor or precancerous lesion, similar stress, such as hypoxia, may induce CN changes. Thus, it is plausible to hypothesize that cigarette smoking serves as an environmental stress on the cells that leads to tumorigenesis by means of CNAs.

Using the tumor cells separated from malignant pleural effusions, it was found that gains of 11p were more frequent in smoking men than nonsmoking men (11). Furthermore, another study identified a CN-based genomic signature in resected lung tumors for current smokers compared with never smokers (12). However, these studies had significant limitations. First, discrete smoking status (smokers vs. nonsmokers) may not be an optimal indicator to capture the dose-response relationship between cigarette smoking and CN changes. Second, smoking may have different implications on CN, depending on whether it induces gains or losses. Third, the conclusions in the previous studies were drawn based on modest sample sizes. Finally, none of previous studies provided a biological explanation on how cigarette smoking causes CNAs. To better investigate the relationship between cigarette smoking and CNAs, we conducted a genome-wide study of CNs and smoking pack-years in a large collection of resected NSCLC tumors. Our analyses cover the association of cigarette smoking with CNs on three different scales: whole-genome, chromosome/arm, and focal CNs. The causal mechanism behind such smoking-CNA association was further explored in a human nontumorigenic bronchial cell line.

## Results

A total of 264 subjects were randomly divided into two datasets: discovery and validation sets. The characteristics of the populations are similar (Table 1), indicating the balance of the two sets. Two alternative data splittings were pursued to prevent the possibility that the results presented here are simply because of chance or multiple comparisons. (SI Appendix, Tables S1–S3) To account for batch effects, we also performed batch-adjusted analyses by normalization and explicitly adjusting for the batch identity as a covariate in the regression. The batch effect-adjusted analyses showed similar patterns to those without adjustment. (SI Appendix, Fig. S1 and Tables S4 and S5) The analyses of smoking vs. CN associations are outlined as three parts: on the genome-wide scale, on the chromosome/arm-specific scale, and on the focal-region scale.

**Cigarette Smoking and Whole-Genome CN Pattern.** There is a significant increase in total events of CN gains among heavy smokers (>60 pack-years) ( $P = 0.0080, 0.0095, \text{ and } 2.5 \times 10^{-4}$  for

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**Table 1. Characteristics of study populations**

	Discovery set	Validation set	<i>P</i> value*
Sample size	134	130	
Male (%)	65.67	56.92	0.18
Age			
Mean $\pm$ SD	67.27 $\pm$ 8.17	67.59 $\pm$ 8.39	0.75
Cigarette smoking			
pack-years			
Median $\pm$ interquartile range	34.25 $\pm$ 39.64	38 $\pm$ 35.93	0.28
Clinical stage			0.43
Stage 1 (%)	77.27	70.00	
Stage 2 (%)	15.15	19.23	
Stage 3 or 4 (%)	7.58	10.77	
Cigarette smoking status			0.23
Never smokers (%)	7.46	6.15	
Ex-smokers (%)	43.28	53.85	
Current smokers (%)	49.25	40.00	
Adenocarcinoma (%)	67.91	64.62	0.66

\**P* values were calculated with  $\chi^2$  test for percentage of male (1 degree of freedom, d.f.), adenocarcinoma, patients from MGH (1 d.f.), clinical stage (2 d.f.), and cigarette smoking status (2 d.f.); with *t* test for age, and with Wilcoxon test for cigarette smoking pack-years.

discovery, validation, and both sets, respectively), but no difference in CN losses (Fig. 1*A* and *B*). No significant difference was observed in age, clinical stage, histology, and sex between heavy and light or nonsmokers.

For CN losses, G/T ratios in light/nonsmokers ( $\leq 60$  pack-years) are significantly lower than the null ratio (i.e., the ratio when CNAs occur at random with respect to the gene location) ( $P = 0.011$ ,  $9.80 \times 10^{-4}$ , and  $5.15 \times 10^{-5}$  for discovery, validation, and both sets, respectively) but heavy smokers ( $>60$  pack-years) show no difference ( $P = 0.78$ ,  $0.31$ , and  $0.52$ , respectively) (Fig. 1*C* and *D*). These results suggest that CN losses tend to occur away from genes, but such tendency disappears in heavy smokers. In contrast, there is no consistent pattern for CN gains. Heavy smokers seem to have more genes with CN changes, especially in gains. (SI Appendix, Fig. S2).

**Cigarette Smoking and CN Pattern by Chromosome/Arm.** The chromosome/arm-specific analyses suggest the majority responsible for the genome-wide difference comes from chromosomes 8q ( $P = 1.19 \times 10^{-5}$  for total events of CN gains between light and heavy smokers) and 12q ( $P = 2.1 \times 10^{-4}$ ) (SI Appendix, Fig. S3*A*), as well as many others (chromosomes 1, 3, 7, 10, 11, 16, and 17) (SI Appendix, Fig. S4). Similar results were observed when genomic location was taken into account, especially in 8q and 12q. (SI Appendix, Fig. S5) The dose-response relationships between continuous CNs and smoking pack-years are also significant in 8q ( $P = 0.015$ ) and 12q ( $P = 0.0025$ ). (SI Appendix, Fig. S3*B*) These two regions also found the most signals in focal CN analyses, as will be shown in the following section.

**Cigarette Smoking and Focal CNs.** As stated in *Materials and Methods*, we performed single- and multiple-marker analyses to investigate the association of cigarette smoking and focal CNs. In the moving-window 10-marker analyses, we selected the top 50 sets with smallest *P* values in the discovery set and tested the 50 sets using the validation set ( $P < 0.05$ ). Using such criteria, we identified one 10-marker set in 12q23 with *P* values of  $9.69 \times 10^{-10}$ , which reached the genome-wide significance (Fig. 2*A*). The region harbors a gene, *IGF1* (insulin-like growth factor 1), that plays an important role in tumorigenesis (Fig. 2*B*). In the single-marker analyses, the most significant signals are also in the same region of 12q23: two loci are in the intron between the last two exons of

*IGF1* and two loci are located downstream of *IGF1*. (SI Appendix, Fig. S6*A* and *B*, and Table S6) The *P* value of the 10-marker set and the corresponding *P* values and  $R^2$  from the single-marker analyses are shown in Table 2. Compared with the single-marker analyses, statistical power was gained from the 10-marker analyses by borrowing information in the neighboring markers, accounting for correlation among the CN variation in the marker set, reducing degrees-of-freedom of the test, and reducing the total number of tests across the genome.

The dose-response relationship of CN and smoking pack-years for the four loci in 12q23.2 is shown in SI Appendix, Fig. S6*C–F*, indicating a J-shaped curve. That is, beyond a certain threshold, the higher the smoking pack-years, the more departure from the neutral CN. Notably, the threshold, about 60 pack-years, is consistent with the cut-off used in the above analyses of the whole-genome CNA pattern.

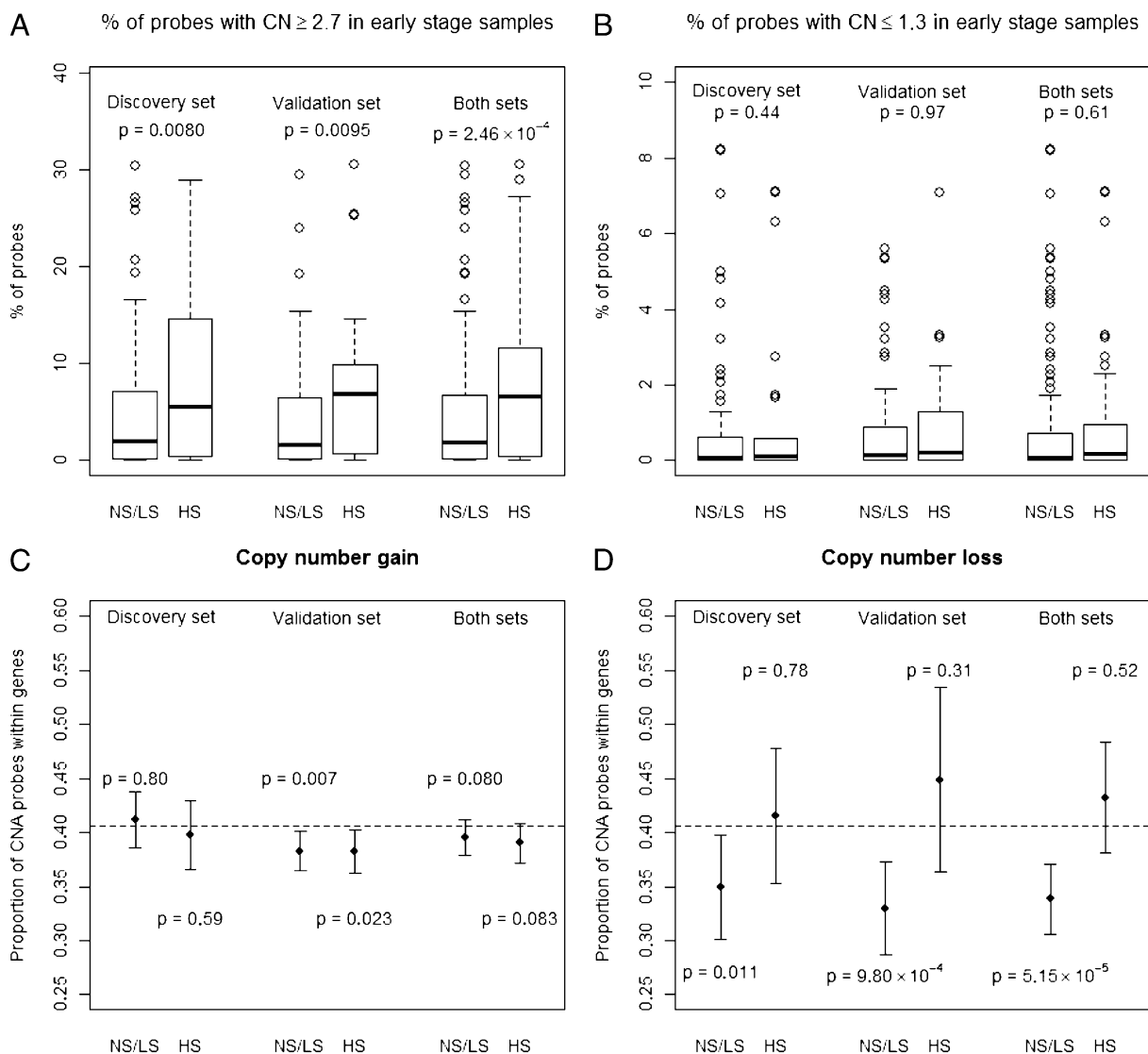
In addition to 12q23, 3q24 and 8q24 are two additional regions that are potentially associated with the pack-years of cigarette smoking from single-marker analyses (SI Appendix, Figs. S7 and S8). We also performed the analyses in the dichotomous version, detail of which can be found in SI Appendix, Fig. S9 and Table S7.

**DNA Double-Strand Break Assay.** To investigate further the results of our statistical analyses, we determined whether cigarette smoke could induce DNA double-strand breaks in cultured cells. To mimic longer and heavier cigarette smoking conditions, we treated human nontumorigenic bronchial epithelial cell HBEC 3KT with 0.04 and 0.4  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  cigarette smoke condensate (CSC) for 24 h. Under these conditions, the survival rates are 96.9% and 95.7%, respectively, indicating the dose of CSC and the length of treatment used in this study are not toxic to the cells (Fig. 3*A*). To minimize background DNA double-strand breakage, we treated cells with CSC right after the growth had reached confluence. Under these conditions,  $\sim 5\%$  of non-CSC-treated cells still display double-strand breaks (Fig. 3*C*). When treated with 0.04  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  CSC for 24 h, the percentage of cells with double-strand breaks increased to 15%. This percentage doubled with the application of more concentrated 0.4  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  CSC (Fig. 3*C*). We also treated the cells with 0.4  $\mu\text{g/mL}$  CSC for 2 h, and observed a similar DNA double-strand break ratio as that of the non-CSC-treated control cells, suggesting a DNA double-strand break occurring after a longer time of CSC treatment.

To determine the effects of CSC on induction of cellular apoptosis, which indirectly contributes to DNA double-strand breaks, the same set of cells (as used in Fig. 3*B* and *C*) were lysed for apoptotic-specific Caspase-3/7 activity. As shown in Fig. 3*D*, there is a basal level of Caspase-3/7 activity in non-CSC-treatment cells. Upon CSC treatment, the value of relative fluorescence unit (RFU) increased in a dose-dependent matter. However, the extent to which the RFU value increased in response to CSC treatment was much less than the corresponding increase in DNA double-strand breaks in Fig. 3*C*. Collectively, these results indicate that higher CSC leads to genome instability in bronchial epithelial cells. As such, these data provide biological evidence to bridge the associations between CNAs and smoking observed in the above human data.

## Discussion

We show that heavy smokers ( $>60$  pack-years) have more CN gains than light/nonsmokers but not CN losses, and that light/nonsmokers ( $\leq 60$  pack-years) have CN losses away from the gene location, in contrast to heavy smokers. The discrepancy between gains and losses suggests that different mechanisms may exist for the genome impact of cigarette smoking. For gains, smoking executes its oncogenic effect by increasing the event of CN changes. In contrast, for losses smoking does not increase CNA events but increases the proportion of genes being affected. Because losing a fragment of DNA is less favorable than gaining one



**Fig. 1.** Association of cigarette smoking and whole-genome CNs. (A and B) Among the 256,554 total probes, the proportion (%) with CNA (A, gains; B, losses) events by pack-years of cigarette smoking (NS/LS, non/light smokers; HS, heavy smokers). (C and D) Mean and its 95% confidence interval of G/T ratios in the HS and NS/LS for CN gains (C) and losses (D); the dashed lines represent the null G/T ratio on the chip (104,256/256,554 = 40.64%). *P* values were used to test the indicated indices between HS and NS/LS with methods described in *Materials and Methods* and *SI Appendix*.

(13), two separate mechanisms may be developed to hit the genes responsible for tumorigenesis. The phenomenon can be a consequence of selection during cancer development and cell proliferation. Because different cells possess different CNAs, selection by a nutrient-limited environment makes those clones that can grow without regulatory control become dominant.

For heavy smokers, there were more CN gains compared with non- or light smokers and no tendency for CN losses to occur away from the gene location. We have also found that genes with gains are more likely to be oncogenes or to be involved in pathways that are associated with tumor growth, which suggests that lung cancer cells in heavy smokers tend to acquire the growth advantage via CN gains (14). As a result, CN losses within genes have less unfavorable impact on such cells because it is compensated by the fact that they can grow without regulation. This finding explains our observation that the proportion of losses within gene among heavy smokers is not different from that at random.

Previous studies have shown that CNAs are more frequent in smokers than in nonsmokers (11, 12), consistent with our findings based on pack-years. CN-based genomic signature has also

been identified to discriminate current smokers and never smokers (12), which, however, does not include *IGF1*. Smoking status may not necessarily reflect the same oncogenic feature as pack-years of smoking, a measure of cumulative exposure. Furthermore, the large sample size and discovery-validation process in this study increases the robustness of the findings.

Smoking causes lung cancer through numerous carcinogens derived from cigarette combustion. There are two parts of the carcinogenic effect: early damage of oxidative stress by reactive oxygen species and late damage by DNA adduct and DNA mutation (6). Both kinds of damage can serve as initiators of CN changes, especially oxidative stress. It has recently been proposed that cellular stress coming from environmental agents can induce CN changes (10).

The most significant region on 12q23 is at the junction of the last two exons and the downstream of *IGF1*. The two loci within *IGF1* are located in the intron between the last two exons of *IGF1*. The protein product of the aberrant genomic DNA can exert its undue influence on the cellular physiology. On the other hand, if the key player is the downstream rather than the coding region of *IGF1*, it







**Table 2. Summary of the 10 candidate loci at 12q23 from both 10-marker and single-marker analyses**

Affy ID	dbSNP	Cyto-band	Position (Mb)	Gene	Focal CN-smoking association					
					10-Marker analyses			Single-marker analyses		
					P value, discovery set	P value, validation set	P value, pooled	P value, pooled	R <sup>2</sup>	P value, adjusted*
SNP_A-2002985	rs5011687	12q23	101.157	—				0.0152	0.065	0.0168
SNP_A-2125858	rs17439974	12q23	101.171	—				0.0239	0.060	0.0285
SNP_A-4222341	rs17032384	12q23	101.179	—				0.000110	0.126	0.000263
SNP_A-1899321	rs1520223	12q23	101.229	—				2.92 × 10 <sup>-6</sup>	0.175	8.07 × 10 <sup>-6</sup>
SNP_A-4222344	rs4764695	12q23	101.260	—	3.17 × 10 <sup>-8</sup>	0.0291	9.69 × 10 <sup>-10</sup>	4.55 × 10 <sup>-6</sup>	0.167	1.33 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>
SNP_A-4228436	rs10860860	12q23	101.283	—				1.79 × 10 <sup>-8</sup>	0.223	9.78 × 10 <sup>-8</sup>
SNP_A-2106083	rs2946831	12q23	101.289	—				1.29 × 10 <sup>-8</sup>	0.235	2.63 × 10 <sup>-8</sup>
SNP_A-2255731	rs10745940	12q23	101.300	<i>IGF1</i>				3.26 × 10 <sup>-6</sup>	0.163	8.20 × 10 <sup>-6</sup>
SNP_A-2092658	rs9308315	12q23	101.306	<i>IGF1</i>				2.10 × 10 <sup>-7</sup>	0.202	7.74 × 10 <sup>-7</sup>
SNP_A-2271065	rs2072592	12q23	101.316	<i>IGF1</i>				6.17 × 10 <sup>-7</sup>	0.200	4.42 × 10 <sup>-6</sup>

\*P values of smoking pack-years were calculated from linear models, with up to quadratic term of square root-transformed smoking pack-years, adjusting for age, sex, clinical stage, and cell type.

a dependent variable and square root of smoking pack-years, and its quadratic term as independent covariates. For the validated candidates ( $P < 0.05$  in the validation set), pooled results were generated with linear regressions (with up to the quadratic term of the square root of smoking pack-years), spline regressions (with spline of the square root of smoking pack-years), and locally weighted scatter plot smoothing (LOWESS). Adjusted linear and spline regressions were performed with adjustment of age at diagnosis, sex, two cohorts, clinical stage, and histology.

**DNA Double-Strand Break Assay.** For the cytotoxicity analysis of cigarette smoke condensate, a human nontumorigenic bronchial epithelial cell line HBEC 3KT was cultured in 12-well plates to confluence and then treated with the indicated concentration of CSC for 24 h. Viable cells were monitored by MTT assay using the CellTiter 96 Aqueous One Solution Cell Proliferation Assay kit (Promega). All assays were performed in triplicate. For the neutral comet assay, HBEC 3KT was cultured in 100-mm plates to confluence and then treated with indicated concentration of CSC for 24 h. Cells having DNA double-strand break were analyzed by Neutral comet assay using CometAssay kit (Trevigen). About

600 to ~800 cells were viewed per treatment. For the apoptosis analysis, HBEC 3KT was cultured in 100-mm plates to confluence and then treated with indicated concentration of CSC for 24 h. The status of cellular apoptosis was determined using Sendolyte™ Homogeneous Rh110 Caspase-3/7 Assay kit (Anaspec). All apoptosis assays were performed in triplicate.

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