

ADDENDUM

Inverse correlation between *SMN1* and *SMN2* copy numbers: evidence for gene conversion from *SMN2* to *SMN1*

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In addition to our hypothesis of gene conversion from *SMN2* to *SMN1*, our data are consistent with an alternative hypothesis for the presence of chromosome 5s with two copies of *SMN1*. Rochette *et al* (*Hum Genet* 2001; **108**: 255–266) have provided evidence that the *SMN1* gene duplicated before the separation of human and chimpanzee

lineages, and that *SMN2* appeared for the first time in *Homo sapiens*. The presence of chromosome 5s with two *SMN1* copies could represent a remnant of the original duplication. If this were true, however, the much higher prevalence of chromosome 5s with one copy each of *SMN1* and *SMN2* would suggest a selective advantage relative to chromosome 5s with two copies of *SMN1*. Evidence for such a selective advantage is currently lacking.