

Updating The SynthDNASim tool to create diverse synthetic DNA datasets

Jenster, Caitlin | Overkleeft, Rick | Queralt Rosinach, Núria

Version: Postprint (Verlagsversion)/Postprint (Publisher Version)

Typ/Type: Kongressschrift/Conference Proceeding

Jahr/year: 2024

Quelle/Source: <https://repository.publisso.de/resource/frl:6473226>

Schlagwörter/Keywords: Huntington's Disease, Synthetic DNA, FAIR

Zitationsvorschlag/ Suggested Citation:

Jenster, Caitlin; Overkleeft, Rick; Queralt Rosinach, Núria (2024): Updating The SynthDNASim tool to create diverse synthetic DNA datasets. International SWAT4HCLS Conference 2024. DOI: 10.4126/FRL01-006473226

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Introduction

In genomic research of rare diseases like Huntington's Disease (HD), it is common to have a lack of genomic data to start and perform research with. One of the reasons for this is the privacy issues surrounding the obtainment and use of genomic data. Thus, a possible solution to this is the development of a tool that can create diverse synthetic DNA data sets so the created synthetic DNA data set can be used for genomic research and make the research a lot more reproducible and faster.¹

However, the synthetic DNA data set needs to be diverse enough to represent different populations. A single disease can have many different genetic characteristics because of differences in and between populations. Thus, factors of genetic evolution and ancestry need to be taken into account while creating a diverse DNA data set.²

The goal of this project is to create a diverse DNA data set including genetic evolution and ancestry factors. With HD as a use case, the data set will contain disease variants from European, African, and Middle Eastern populations. Here, we show the workflow of the diversified synthetic DNA simulator (SynthDNASim). This new tool updates the Synthetic DNA Simulator (see 'Materials and Methods' below) to help researchers create synthetic DNA representative of population diversity. The next steps are to validate the synthetic DNA data set and apply the FAIR principles to make it Findable Accessible Interoperable and Reusable for the community using semantic technologies.

Huntington's disease (HD)

HD is a rare disease that is hereditary and causes degeneration of nerve cells in the brain. Because of this, HD has an impact on the functional abilities of an individual, resulting in movement, cognitive, and mental disorders. HD is caused by an extended CAG repeat within the Huntingtin gene (HTT gene).³ There are many different variants of HD within different populations, these variants are known as haplotypes. A haplotype is a combination of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNP's, variants) in a gene that is found on the same chromosome.⁴

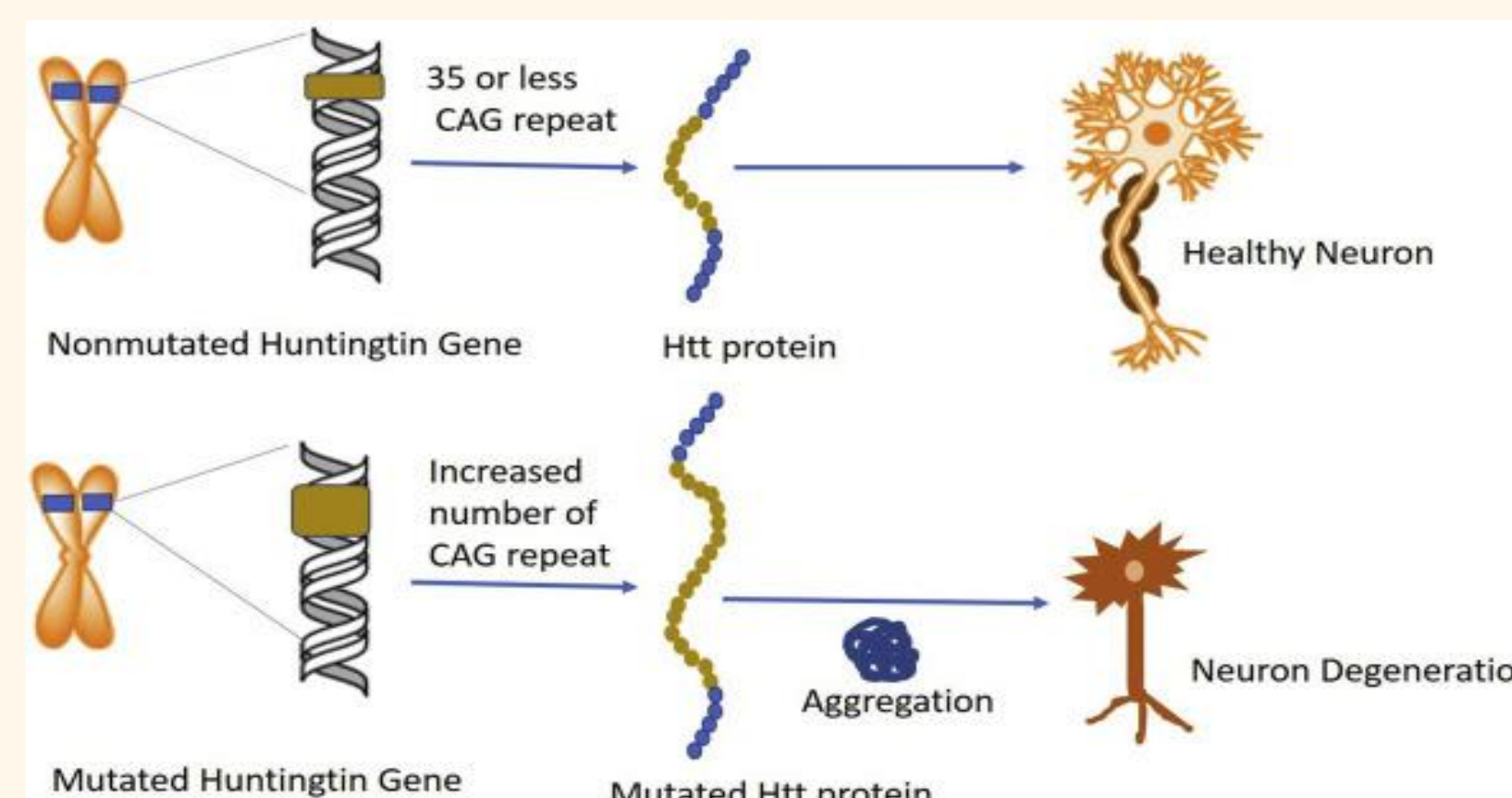
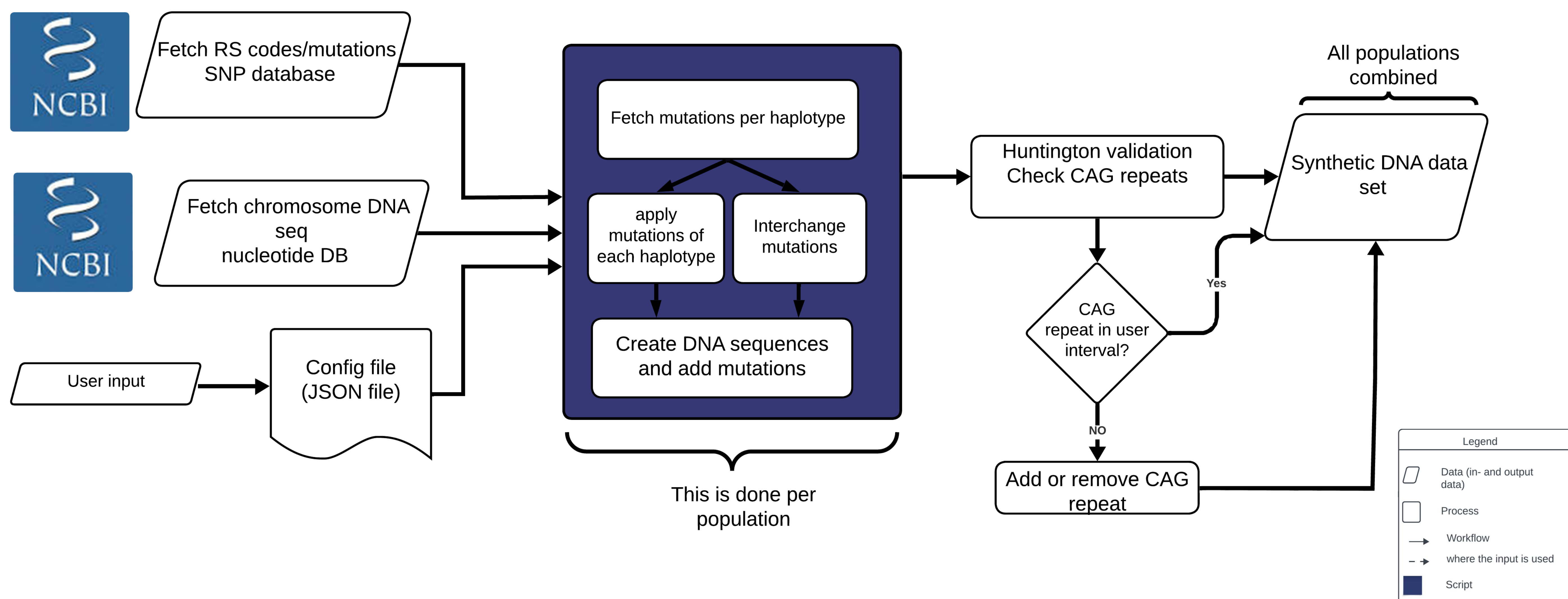


Figure 1. Visual display of non-mutated and mutated HTT gene. This figure also displays the protein and the effect of the protein on neurons (source: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33659724/>).

Creating diverse DNA sequences



Materials and Methods:

- Python scripts
- Original Synthetic DNA Simulator (scan QR code)
- NCBI SNP database and nucleotide database
- The FAIR principles will be a guiding factor within this project
- Each sequence has its metadata including haplotype, genetic variants, CAG repeats, gene, chromosome, etc. ic variants, CAG repeats, gene, chromosome, etc.

Future work:

The remaining work of this project:

- Validation of the generated synthetic DNA
- Use semantic methods and tools to make the project more FAIR. Create metadata using Data Catalog Vocabulary (DCAT) and share the tool and metadata using WorkflowHub and Common Workflow Language (CWL).⁵⁻⁷

For future research:

- Determine a standard protocol to validate the created synthetic DNA data set.
- Add synthetic clinical data.



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Acknowledgments

We want to thank Alex Stikkelman and the 4MedBox team for all their support and help. We also want to thank Ivo Fokkema and the Biosemantics group at the LUMC for their input and help in this project. This project received funding from 4MedBox. N. Queralt-Rosinach is supported by funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the EJP RD COFUND-EJP N° 825575 and by a grant from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 847826 (Brain Involvement in Dystrophinopathies (BIND)). We would like to thank the EJP RD and BIND for supporting research on generating synthetic health data for rare disease research.