

# Shared genetic basis for migraine and ischemic stroke

## A genome-wide analysis of common variants

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To quantify genetic overlap between migraine and ischemic stroke (IS) with respect to common genetic variation.

**Methods:** We applied 4 different approaches to large-scale meta-analyses of genome-wide data on migraine (23,285 cases and 95,425 controls) and IS (12,389 cases and 62,004 controls). First, we queried known genome-wide significant loci for both disorders, looking for potential overlap of signals. We then analyzed the overall shared genetic load using polygenic scores and estimated the genetic correlation between disease subtypes using data derived from these models. We further interrogated genomic regions of shared risk using analysis of covariance patterns between the 2 phenotypes using cross-phenotype spatial mapping.

**Results:** We found substantial genetic overlap between migraine and IS using all 4 approaches. Migraine without aura (MO) showed much stronger overlap with IS and its subtypes than migraine with aura (MA). The strongest overlap existed between MO and large artery stroke (LAS;  $p = 6.4 \times 10^{-28}$  for the LAS polygenic score in MO) and between MO and cardioembolic stroke (CE;  $p = 2.7 \times 10^{-20}$  for the CE score in MO).

**Conclusions:** Our findings indicate shared genetic susceptibility to migraine and IS, with a particularly strong overlap between MO and both LAS and CE pointing towards shared mechanisms. Our observations on MA are consistent with a limited role of common genetic variants in this subtype. [Neurology® 2015;84:2132-2145](#)

### GLOSSARY

**CE** = cardioembolic stroke; **CPSM** = cross-phenotype spatial mapping; **GWAS** = genome-wide association studies; **IHGC** = International Headache Genetics Consortium; **IS** = ischemic stroke; **LAS** = large artery stroke; **LD** = linkage disequilibrium; **MA** = migraine with aura; **MO** = migraine without aura; **SNP** = single nucleotide polymorphism; **SVD** = small vessel disease.

Migraine is a primary headache disorder characterized by recurrent attacks of severe, often throbbing, headache associated with autonomic dysfunction. Although the majority of patients have migraine without aura (MO), one third have headaches preceded by transient neurologic disturbances (migraine with aura [MA]).<sup>1</sup> Ischemic stroke (IS) is etiologically heterogeneous and a leading cause of premature death and disability.<sup>2</sup>

Results of epidemiologic studies show increased risk of IS in migraine patients.<sup>3</sup> A large meta-analysis of case-control and observational cohort studies reported an increased risk of IS for patients with MO and MA,<sup>4</sup> whereas more recent meta-analyses reported the association to be restricted to MA.<sup>3,5,6</sup> Pathophysiology linking these neurovascular disorders remains poorly understood; suggested mechanisms include cortical spreading depression,<sup>7</sup> endothelial dysfunction,<sup>8</sup> enhanced platelet activation,<sup>9</sup> and vasoconstriction.<sup>10</sup>

Recent genome-wide association studies (GWAS) identified common genetic variants associated with migraine<sup>11</sup> and its subtypes MO<sup>12</sup> and MA.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, GWAS results point to variants associated with IS subtypes such as large artery atherosclerotic<sup>14,15</sup> and cardioembolic.<sup>16</sup> We combined GWAS from the International Headache Genetics Consortium (IHGC)<sup>11</sup> and METASTROKE<sup>15</sup> to assess shared genetic bases for migraine and IS. We first

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examined known genome-wide risk loci in the respective phenotypes. Using 2 methodologies, we then evaluated shared genetic risk for migraine with IS: (1) analysis of shared polygenic risk with subsequent estimation of genetic correlation between phenotypes and (2) detailed investigation of overlapping regions.

**METHODS** Standard protocol approvals, registrations, and patient consents. **Ethics statement.** For all study cohorts, all participants gave informed consent and local research ethics boards approved all protocols.<sup>11,15</sup>

**Cohorts.** Investigators of the IHGC study, a meta-analysis of GWAS data, enrolled 23,285 patients with migraine and 95,425 population-based or headache-free controls from 29 studies.<sup>11</sup> When possible, researchers considered subclassifications of migraine with (MA: 5,118 cases vs 74,239 controls) or without aura (MO: 7,107 cases vs 69,427 controls). The METASTROKE study consists of combined data from 15 GWAS of IS (12,389 cases vs 62,004 controls).<sup>15</sup> We used TOAST criteria<sup>17</sup> to classify IS as large artery stroke (LAS) (2,167 cases/49,159 controls from 11 studies), cardioembolic stroke (CE) (2,365 cases/56,140 controls from 13 studies), and small vessel disease (SVD) (1,894 cases/51,976 controls from 12 studies) (tables e-1 and e-2 on the *Neurology*<sup>®</sup> Web site at Neurology.org).<sup>11,15</sup> We removed overlapping controls between the migraine and stroke samples from deCODE, WTCCC2 (B58C and KORA), and the Rotterdam studies from the stroke datasets for polygenic score analyses, cross-phenotype spatial mapping (CPSM), and correlation analyses to avoid inflation of statistics.

**Genome-wide association studies.** Both the IHGC migraine<sup>11</sup> and METASTROKE<sup>15</sup> studies consisted of independently performed genome-wide single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) genotyping using standard technologies and imputation to HapMap release 21 or 22 CEU phased genotype<sup>18</sup> or 1000 Genome reference panels. Investigators contributed summary statistical data from association analyses using frequentist additive models for meta-analysis after application of appropriate quality control measures (e-Methods). Subtle differences in allele frequencies between migraine and stroke could lead to deviation from the expected test statistic. Thus, as a final quality control step, we meta-analyzed results from the IHGC study and the METASTROKE study and constructed quantile-quantile plots (figure e-1).

**Statistical analysis.** For analysis of previously discovered risk loci for IS or migraine, we extracted relevant loci from the literature and the 2 described consortia.<sup>11,15</sup> We examined all SNPs within a window of  $\pm 50$  kb surrounding the original reported risk SNP (coordinates from human genome build hg18) and reported the most significant  $p$  values of all genotyped or imputed SNPs within this window. We applied Bonferroni correction for association, integrating all tested SNPs for IS risk loci (650 tested SNPs), migraine risk loci (1,175 tested SNPs), and MO risk loci (213 tested SNPs) with resulting  $p$  value thresholds of 7.69E-5, 4.25E-5, and 2.30E-4, respectively.

Polygenic scores reveal combined effects of multiple nonsignificant variants derived from a derivation sample and tested in an independent replication sample. We derived polygenic scores for multiple  $p$  value cutoffs (0.5, 0.25, 0.1, 0.05, 0.01, 0.001, and 0.0001) in derivation samples. Further, we performed testing on summary statistics using the `grs.summary` function of the `gtx` package for  $R$ , a technique previously used in multiple studies, which

estimates the polygenic component with high reliability.<sup>19</sup> We use the term replication to describe analyses across phenotypes.

Use of linkage disequilibrium (LD) pruned data ( $r^2 > 0.25$ ) ensured approximate independence of SNPs. We retained the SNP with the lowest  $p$  value in an independent region and calculated the proportion of variance explained in the testing set by the polygenic scores using Nagelkerke's pseudo  $R^2$ . Outcome measures include the  $p$  value of the association of the polygenic score in the testing dataset and the variance explained.

CPSM identifies genomic windows exhibiting similar association patterns across 2 phenotypes using a signal processing approach. CPSM allows analysis of pleiotropy across multiple diseases. Peak heights serve as an intuitive measure for description of shared risk loci in different phenotypes. This method corrects for background noise in the  $p$  value distribution and is thus superior to comparisons of single  $p$  values. We computed Pearson covariance between  $p$  values from 2 traits across a 60-kb sliding window. In each iteration, the window slides to the next SNP; thus, we obtained a covariance coefficient for each SNP in the analysis. We then detected signal peaks across the genome in the covariance trace and calculated the signal  $s_n$  for a given SNP with index  $n$ , position  $b_n$  (base pairs), and association  $p$  values  $p_{1,n}$ ,  $p_{2,n}$  for 2 phenotypes as follows:

$$x = -\log(10)p_{1,j}, \dots, -\log(10)p_{1,k}$$

$$y = -\log(10)p_{2,j}, \dots, -\log(10)p_{2,k}$$

$$w = \left[1 - \frac{|b_j - b_n|}{b_k - b_j}, \dots, 1 - \frac{|b_k - b_n|}{b_k - b_j}\right]$$

$$w' = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=j}^k w_i}$$

$$s_n = \frac{\sum_{i=j}^k w'_i x_i y_i}{1 - \sum_{i=j}^k w_i^2}$$

where each  $b_i \in b_j, \dots, b_k$  is the position of SNP <sub>$i$</sub>  within the window of SNPs <sub>$j, \dots, k$</sub>  containing SNP <sub>$n$</sub> . For a given window size  $d$  (base pairs), the window of SNPs <sub>$j, \dots, k$</sub>  is defined such that  $j$  is the smallest SNP index where  $b_n - b_j \leq \frac{d}{2}$  and  $k$  is the largest SNP index where  $b_k - b_n \leq \frac{d}{2}$ .

After constructing the CPSM signal for all SNPs, we corrected for strong associations identified in only one phenotype by permuting the association  $p$  values for one phenotype 1,000 times while holding the other phenotype constant, and then recalculating CPSM signals. From the total set of 2,000 permutation signals (1,000 per phenotype), we subtracted the upper 0.95 quantile at each SNP as the background signal threshold from the observed covariance as a correction. We then identified regions of shared association as peaks above the 99.95 (approximately corresponding to a height of 1.5) percentile of the covariance signal. We highlighted regions with a height  $> 2.5$  (corresponding to approximately 99.985 percentile) and with a height  $> 5$  (corresponding to approximately 99.998 percentile). CPSM only provides a signal when the effect in 2 traits is the same, implying shared causality in the discovered regions.

Utilizing a recently developed framework for polygenic analyses and based on the number of SNPs, the dataset sample sizes, and estimates of disease prevalence and pseudo-heritability, we estimated the power to detect an association indexing on a given degree of genetic correlation between the 2 phenotypes. We used the same framework, including  $p$  values from polygenic analysis, to estimate the overall degree of genetic correlation between each of the IS and migraine phenotypes, a posteriori to the polygenic

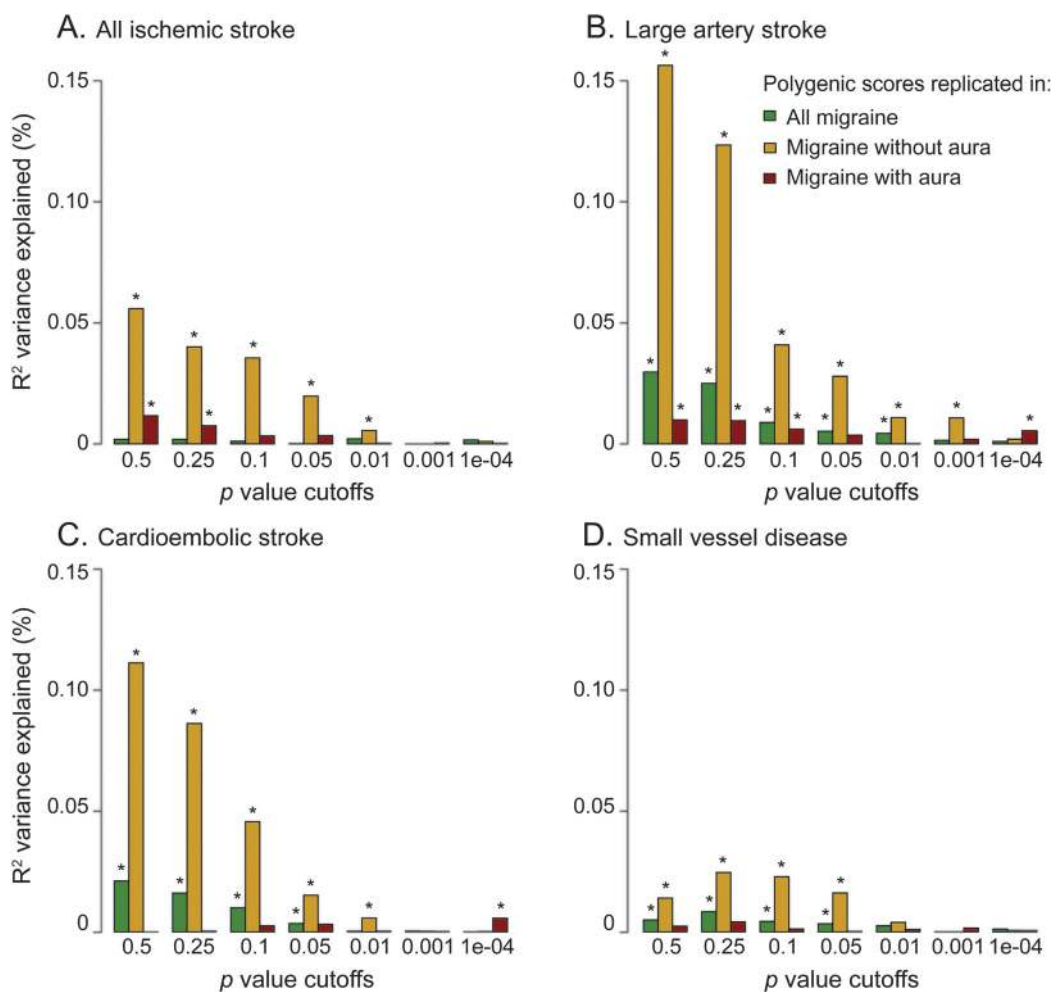
analysis. We estimated genetic correlation in both the forward direction (using results from polygenic analysis of IS and subtypes as a discovery sample and migraine and subtypes as a replication sample) and the reverse direction (using results from the polygenic analysis from migraine and subtypes as a discovery sample and stroke and subtypes as a replication sample) to evaluate consistency of results using the estimateCorrFromP method. An implementation of the procedure was downloaded from <http://sites.google.com/site/fdudbridge>. This method approximates SNP correlation from cross-disorder applications of polygenic scores and can be compared to GREML-SNP genetic correlation. All analyses used *R* statistical software (<http://www.R-project.org>). Using stroke prevalence data from the British Heart Foundation for IS<sup>20</sup> (1.7% in the United Kingdom) and the proportional incidence of IS events from all stroke events in the OXVASC study<sup>21</sup> (59%), we estimated the prevalence of IS (~1%). We then used the proportion of IS subtypes (CE, LAS, or SVD) from a meta-analysis of population-based incidence studies<sup>22</sup> to estimate the prevalence of each subtype. We estimated stroke heritability on a liability scale.<sup>23</sup> Although we acknowledge that migraine prevalence may vary across countries, we estimated migraine prevalence to be 17% for all

migraine, 11% for MO, and 5% for MA based on published data.<sup>1,24</sup> Migraine heritability estimates vary in the literature, with MA being highest. We chose heritability measures of 0.65 for MA<sup>25</sup> and 0.61 for MO<sup>26</sup> and a more conservative measure of 0.57 for all migraine.

**RESULTS** Information on clinical subtypes was available for 12,225 (52.5%) of the migraine and for 6,426 (51.9%) of the IS patients (tables e-1 and e-2). We identified 38,338 potentially overlapping controls and excluded them from analyses where necessary. QQ plots revealed no inflation of test statistics (lambda inflation factors below 1.05 in all analyses of migraine subtypes vs all IS; figure e-1 and e-Methods).

**All migraine.** We first evaluated risk loci identified in previous GWAS on IS or its subtypes,<sup>15</sup> in all migraine<sup>11</sup> and vice versa. Although we identified several variants reaching nominal association ( $p < 0.05$ ), when controlling for all tested SNPs, none of the

**Figure 1** Results from polygenic score analysis using ischemic stroke as a discovery phenotype



(A) All ischemic stroke. (B) Large artery stroke. (C) Cardioembolic stroke. (D) Small vessel disease. Migraine was used as a replication phenotype. The x-axis describes the *p* value cutoffs used in the polygenic score; the y-axis describes the pseudo-*R*<sup>2</sup> variance explained by the score. Asterisks on top of a bar designate *p* values < 0.05. Raw values can be found in table e-5.

tested variants surpassed Bonferroni-corrected *p* value thresholds (tables e-3 and e-4).

**Polygenic scores.** Scores derived from LAS, CE, and SVD each showed significant associations with all migraine (figure 1, tables 1 and e-5) with replication *p* values ranging from 2.7E-9 for LAS to 0.017 for SVD. Explained variance ranged from 0.005% to 0.03% (figure 1, table 1). Conversely, polygenic scores derived from all migraine significantly associated with LAS, CE, and SVD (figure 2, tables 1 and e-5) with replication *p* values between 8E-9 (replication in LAS) and 0.03 (replication in SVD) and an explained variance between 0.008% and 0.065% (figure 2, tables 1 and e-5). Calculated estimates of genetic correlation between all migraine and IS ranged from approximately 3% for correlation with all IS to 38% for correlation with LAS (table 2).

**CPSM analysis.** The most significant loci reaching an arbitrary peak height cutoff of 2.5 for CPSM are summarized in table 3 (full results, table e-6). Using this height cutoff, there were 5 shared loci for all IS and all migraine with the strongest signal at chromosome 12q24 (height = 7.2). For LAS and all migraine, we found 3 shared loci, with the *LMOD2-WASL* region on chromosome 7q31 showing the strongest signal (height = 7.2). CE and SVD showed 8 and 3 shared loci with all migraine, respectively (maximum height, 4.94 for CE and all migraine; 3.99 SVD and all migraine).

**Migraine without aura (MO).** A single variant in the 9p21 region, previously associated with LAS,<sup>14</sup> surpassed the Bonferroni-corrected threshold for association with MO (*p* = 4.0E-5). Focusing on 2

**Table 1 Polygenic score results**

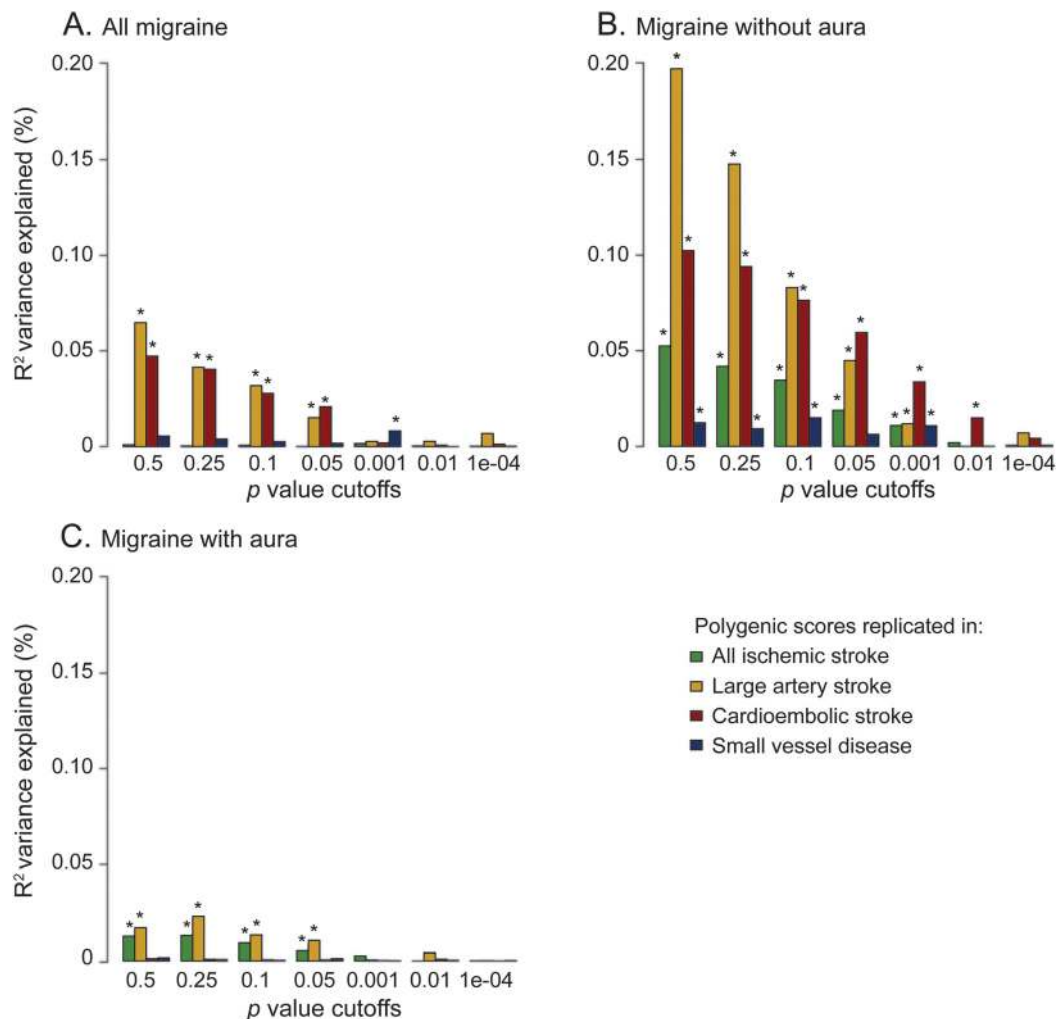
Discovery set	Replication set	<i>p</i> Value cutoff	No. SNPs	<i>p</i> Value replication set	R <sup>2</sup> variance explained, %	OR replication set (95% CI)
All migraine	All IS	0.5	88,479	0.384178	0.0010	1.003 (0.996-1.009)
All migraine	LAS	0.5	88,479	7.99E-9	0.0650	1.041 (1.027-1.055)
All migraine	CE	0.5	88,479	1.46E-7	0.0473	1.035 (1.022-1.049)
All migraine	SVD	0.5	88,479	0.082929	0.0056	1.013 (0.998-1.028)
MO	All IS	0.5	87,163	3.89E-10	0.0526	1.011 (1.008-1.015)
MO	LAS	0.5	87,163	6.59E-24	0.1978	1.039 (1.031-1.046)
MO	CE	0.5	87,163	9.10E-15	0.1026	1.028 (1.021-1.035)
MO	SVD	0.5	87,163	0.00970	0.0124	1.010 (1.003-1.018)
MA	All IS	0.5	87,674	0.001920	0.0129	0.995 (0.992-0.998)
MA	LAS	0.5	87,674	0.002842	0.0174	1.010 (1.003-1.017)
MA	CE	0.5	87,674	0.4001	0.0012	1.003 (0.996-1.009)
MA	SVD	0.5	87,674	0.3432	0.0017	1.003 (0.996-1.010)
All IS	All migraine	0.5	84,947	0.13043	0.0019	1.003 (0.999-1.006)
All IS	MO	0.5	84,947	6.02E-11	0.0559	1.021 (1.015-1.028)
All IS	MA	0.5	84,947	0.00227	0.0117	0.989 (0.982-0.996)
LAS	All migraine	0.5	84,258	2.67E-9	0.0298	1.005 (1.003-1.007)
LAS	MO	0.5	84,258	6.43E-28	0.1566	1.017 (1.014-1.020)
LAS	MA	0.5	84,258	0.00489	0.0010	1.005 (1.001-1.008)
CE	All migraine	0.5	82,187	5.94E-7	0.0209	1.005 (1.003-1.006)
CE	MO	0.5	82,187	2.74E-20	0.1112	1.016 (1.012-1.019)
CE	MA	0.5	82,187	0.92492	1.12E-5	1.000 (0.996-1.004)
SVD	All migraine	0.5	81,946	0.01640	0.0049	1.002 (1.000-1.004)
SVD	MO	0.5	81,946	0.001091	0.0139	1.005 (1.002-1.008)
SVD	MA	0.5	81,946	0.17365	0.0023	1.002 (0.999-1.006)

Abbreviations: CE = cardioembolic; CI = confidence interval; IS = ischemic stroke; LAS = large artery stroke; MA = migraine with aura; MO = migraine without aura; OR = odds ratio; SNP = single nucleotide polymorphism; SVD = small vessel disease.

The results for a *p* value cutoff of 0.5 are shown. For full results, see table e-5. *p* Value is the *p* value of the 1 *df* test of the risk score in the replication set. R<sup>2</sup> variance explained is the pseudovariance explained by the risk score model in the replication dataset (×100 to display percentage). Odds ratios were calculated from the estimated coefficient for regressing the response onto the risk score and are given as an increase of 1 standard deviation of the polygenic score.



**Figure 2** Results from polygenic score analysis using migraine as a discovery phenotype



(A) All migraine. (B) Migraine without aura. (C) Migraine with aura. Stroke was used as a replication phenotype. The x-axis describes the  $p$  value cutoffs used in the polygenic score; the y-axis describes the pseudo- $R^2$  variance explained by the score. Asterisks on top of a bar designate  $p$  values  $< 0.05$ . Raw values can be found in table e-5.

loci previously known to be associated with MO but not MA,<sup>11</sup> we identified no variants surpassing the Bonferroni-corrected  $p$  value threshold (table e-4).

**Polygenic scores.** Scores derived from all IS, LAS, CE, and SVD each showed significant associations with MO (figure 1, tables 1 and e-5); replication  $p$  values ranged from 6.43E-28 for LAS polygenic score to 1.47E-5 for SVD polygenic score. The highest percentage of explained variance occurred for scores derived from LAS and CE (0.157% and 0.111%, respectively), and was higher in MO than in all migraine across all  $p$  value cutoffs (figure 1, B and C). Conversely, polygenic scores derived from MO significantly associated with all IS, LAS, CE, and SVD (figure 2, tables 1 and e-5) with replication  $p$  values between 6E-24 (replication in LAS) and 0.004 (replication in SVD) and an explained variance between 0.015% and 0.198% (figure 2, tables 1 and e-5). Estimates of genetic correlation

with IS were markedly higher than observed for all migraine (estimates ranged from 25% for correlation with all IS to 83% for correlation with LAS; table 2).

**CPSM analysis.** Using a cutoff of 2.5, we detected 4 shared loci between MO and all IS. MO and LAS shared 3 loci, with the strongest signal at chromosome 9p21 (signal height, 7.7). CE and MO shared 6 loci (maximum height = 3.87), and MO and SVD shared 4 loci (2 loci reaching maximum heights of 6.7 and 6.3). The former was near the *CISD2* gene on chromosome 4q24, the latter in a gene-rich region on chromosome 17q21 including the *Tau* locus (tables 3 and e-6).

**Migraine with aura (MA).** None of the variants previously associated with IS surpassed the Bonferroni-corrected  $p$  value threshold of 7.69E-5 when tested for association with MA. There were no genome-wide significant loci<sup>11</sup> for MA.

**Table 2** Estimation of genetic correlation with the Dudbridge Method

Stroke subtype	Migraine subtype	Forward estimated genetic correlation, % (95% CI)	Reverse estimated genetic correlation, % (95% CI)
All IS	All migraine	4.47 (0.007-10.26)	2.96 (0.007-9.63)
All IS	MO	25.83 (18.09-33.56)	25.68 (17.64-33.72)
All IS	MA	14.39 (5.15-23.64)	15.28 (5.45-24.18)
LAS	All migraine	33.98 (22.79-45.17)	38.47 (25.41-51.53)
LAS	MO	83.55 (68.61-98.47)	81.06 (65.33-96.78)
LAS	MA	25.64 (7.79-43.53)	28.80 (9.88-47.71)
CE	All migraine	29.32 (17.81-40.83)	36.19 (22.71-49.68)
CE	MO	72.40 (57.04-87.76)	64.26 (48.02-80.49)
CE	MA	8.83 (0.007-19.26)	8.37 (0.007-27.85)
SVD	All migraine	20.82 (3.81-37.82)	17.17 (0.007-37.7)
SVD	MO	37.86 (15.14-60.58)	31.77 (7.69-55.84)
SVD	MA	18.84 (0.007-45.92)	13.95 (0.007-42.85)

Abbreviations: CE = cardioembolic; CI = confidence interval; IS = ischemic stroke; LAS = large artery stroke; MA = migraine with aura; MO = migraine without aura; SVD = small vessel disease.

Genetic correlation is estimated using results from polygenic score analysis, taking into account the number of single nucleotide polymorphisms used, number of subjects in the analysis, and prevalences and heritability estimates of the 2 phenotypes. The forward experiment uses the stroke subtype as the discovery set and the migraine subtype as the testing set. The reverse experiment uses the migraine subtype as the discovery set and the stroke subtype as the testing set.

**Polygenic scores.** Scores derived from IS, LAS, and CE all showed significant associations with MA (figure 1, tables 1 and e-5) with replication  $p$  values ranging from 0.002 for the all IS polygenic score to 0.04 for the CE polygenic score. Explained variance ranged from 0.010% (LAS) to 0.012% (IS). Polygenic scores derived from MA significantly associated with all IS and LAS (figure 2, tables 1 and e-5) with replication  $p$  values of 0.0017 and 0.0005, and an explained variance of 0.013% and 0.023%, respectively. Estimates of genetic correlation ranged from 8% for correlation with CE to 28% for correlation with LAS (table 2).

**CPSM analysis.** We found several shared regions between MA and stroke subtypes. Using a cutoff of 2.5, we found 2 shared loci between all IS and MA with a maximum height of 3.15 and 2 loci shared between LAS and MA with a maximum height of 3.53 in the *LMOD2/WASL* gene region. CE and MA shared no loci using this cutoff and SVD and MA shared 1 locus with a maximum height of 2.83 (tables 3 and e-6).

**DISCUSSION** We demonstrated that the combined contributions of common genetic variants at a number of loci influence risk for both migraine and IS. This is supported by results from 4 investigative approaches: (1) analysis of common variants at loci reaching genome-wide significance for potential signal overlap; (2) investigation of shared genetic

load using polygenic score models; (3) estimation of genetic correlation between disease subtypes using data derived from these models; and (4) highlighting regions of shared risk by analysis of covariance patterns between phenotypes using CPSM. We found stronger signal overlap between MO and IS than between MA and IS; overlap is stronger for LA and CE stroke than for SVD. Finally, we identified several individual loci with a strong signal for association with both phenotypes.

Polygenic scores, estimates of genetic correlation, and CPSM results all demonstrated a stronger genetic overlap of IS with MO compared to MA. Polygenic scores from MO replicated in overall IS and IS subtypes across a wide range of  $p$  value cutoffs, while scores derived from IS behaved similarly when tested in MO. Scores derived from MA demonstrated weaker association with IS. The variance explained by polygenic scores of each IS subtype was consistently higher for MO (figures 1 and 2). Also, estimates of genetic correlation with IS and its subtypes were consistently higher for MO than for MA (table 2).

Unexpectedly, CPSM revealed that the number of loci reaching a peak height  $>2.5$  was larger for MO and IS than for MA and IS (table 3). Recent epidemiologic studies suggest an association between IS risk and MA but not MO,<sup>3,6</sup> but other data suggest that patients with MO are at increased risk of IS.<sup>4</sup> One potential explanation is that genetic risk for MA may be more restricted to rare variants not captured by GWAS strategies as suggested by the larger number of genome-wide significant loci for MO compared to MA despite comparable sample sizes.<sup>11</sup> However, estimated heritability for MA is as high as for MO.<sup>25,26</sup> Larger samples together with sequencing efforts or rare variant assays might help to determine whether rare variants indeed influence MA risk and whether the same variants also contribute to IS risk. The same might be true for SVD, for which there are no existing identified genome-wide loci. Hence, we might have underestimated genetic overlap between migraine subtypes and SVD.

We found particularly strong genetic overlap for migraine with LAS and CE. Polygenic scores analyses showed the strongest overlap with LAS for all forms of migraine regardless of whether polygenic scores were derived from LAS and tested in migraine or vice versa. In a recent small population-based study of 360 migraineurs and 617 controls, researchers reported no association between migraine and intima media thickness,<sup>27</sup> but more advanced stages of atherosclerosis were not assessed. Most previous studies examining the relationship between migraine and IS did not distinguish among stroke subtypes. Migraineurs display enhanced platelet aggregation,<sup>9</sup> which together with other factors might contribute to overlap with LAS.

**Table 3** Most significant loci detected by the cross-phenotype spatial mapping method

Migraine phenotype	Stroke phenotype	Chr band	Position, Mb	Locus size	Peak SNP	Same directional effect <sup>a</sup>	Peak height	Genes within locus
All migraine	All IS	5p14.1	29.0-29.1	126 kB	rs1692345	Y	4.18	—
		6q16.1	96.9-97.2	206 kB	rs12213426	N	2.82	KIAA0776, FHL5
		12q24.11 <sup>b</sup>	110.2-111.5 <sup>b</sup>	1.26 MB <sup>b</sup>	rs7962138 <sup>b</sup>	Y <sup>b</sup>	7.20 <sup>b</sup>	CUX2, SH2B3, ATXN2, BRAP, ACAD10, ALDH2, MAPKAPK5, TMEM116, ERP29, nap1, TRAFD1, RPL6, PTPN11 <sup>b</sup>
		14q13.2	35.2-35.4	190 kB	rs10141289	N	3.17	GARNL1, BRMS1L
		21q21.2	23.0-23.1	107 kB	rs7280779	Y	2.80	—
	LAS	7q31.32 <sup>b</sup>	123.0-123.2 <sup>b</sup>	203 kB <sup>b</sup>	rs1008539 <sup>b</sup>	N <sup>b</sup>	7.18 <sup>b</sup>	ASB15, LMOD2, WASL <sup>b</sup>
		10q24.1	99.1-99.2	85 kB	rs2297668	Y	3.06	RRP12, PGAM1, EXOSC1
		10q24.33	104.9-105.1	237 kB	rs1063461	N	3.94	INA, PCGF6, TAF5, USMG5, PDCD11
	CE	2q32.2	190.2-190.4	169 kB	rs7571089	Y	2.54	ANKAR, OSGEPL1, ORMDL1, PMS1
		6q16.1	97.0-97.1	67 kB	rs12207471	Y	3.16	KIAA0776
		10q22.1	73.8-74.0	218 kB	rs7918099	Y	3.03	DNAJB12, CBARA1
		12q13.12	48.2-48.5	257 kB	rs4641552	Y	3.07	SPATS2, KCNH3, MCRS1, FAM186B, PRPF40B, FMNL3, TMBIM6
		14q13.2	35.1-35.4	377 kB	rs4981309	N	4.83	GARNL1, BRMS1L
		14q23.2	62.9-63.0	108 kB	rs7140274	Y	4.12	PPP2R5E
		17p13.1	7.3-7.4	129 kB	rs9890920	N	4.94	TMEM102, FGF11, CHRN1, ZBTB4, POLR2A, TNFSF12
		20p11.21	25.8-24.9	112 kB	rs6050070	Y	2.62	—
	SVD	1q22	154.7-154.8	113 kB	rs1171561	Y	3.99	MEF2D, IQGAP3
		4q24	103.9-104.2	322 kB	rs11722779	Y	3.78	MANBA, UBE2D3, CISD2, SLC9B1, SLC9B2
		12q24.12	110.5-110.9	411 kB	rs11066090	N	2.81	ATXN2, BRAP, ACAD10, ALDH2, MAPKAPK5, TMEM116
	MO	All IS	5p14.1	29.0-29.1	125 kB	rs606408	Y	4.47
6q16.1			96.9-97.2	226 kB	rs12210146	N	4.07	KIAA0776, FHL5
12q24.11			109.8-110.0	192 kB	rs4378452	N	4.02	MYL2, CUX2
12q24.12			110.2-111.5	1.26 MB	rs6490294	N	3.78	CUX2, SH2B3, ATXN2, BRAP, ACAD10, ALDH2, MAPKAPK5, TMEM116, ERP29, nap1, TRAFD1, RPL6, PTPN11
LAS		9p21.3 <sup>b</sup>	21.9-22.1 <sup>b</sup>	179 kB <sup>b</sup>	rs9632884 <sup>b</sup>	Y <sup>b</sup>	7.67 <sup>b</sup>	CDKN2A/B <sup>b</sup>
		9q33.2	122.4-122.6	169 kB	rs1886337	N	2.99	MEGF9
		10q22.1	72.6-72.6	78 kB	rs10999709	Y	3.00	UNC5B
CE		2q13	112.5-112.6	104 kB	rs7583755	Y	2.67	TMEM87B, FBLN7
		2q32.2	190.2-190.5	297 kB	rs920427	Y	3.87	ANKAR, OSGEPL1, ORMDL1, PMS1
		6q16.1	97.0-97.1	48 kB	rs12207471	Y	2.55	KIAA0776
		9q33.2	122.4-122.6	162 kB	rs10491784	N	2.95	MEGF9
		10q22.1	73.8-74.0	190 kB	rs10823921	Y	2.60	CBARA1
20p11.21		24.7-24.9	227 kB	rs6083652	Y	3.19	—	
SVD		1q22	154.7-154.8	97 kB	rs3790455	Y	2.64	MEF2D, IQGAP3
		4q24 <sup>b</sup>	103.8-104.2 <sup>b</sup>	455 kB <sup>b</sup>	rs223308 <sup>b</sup>	Y <sup>b</sup>	6.65 <sup>b</sup>	MANBA, UBE2D3, CISD2, SLC9B1, SLC9B2 <sup>b</sup>
	5q31.1	132.4-132.5	85 kB	rs4321746	Y	2.85	HSPA4	
	17q21.31 <sup>b</sup>	40.9-42.3 <sup>b</sup>	1.4 MB <sup>b</sup>	rs2463519 <sup>b</sup>	Y <sup>b</sup>	6.33 <sup>b</sup>	ARHGAP27, PLEKHM1, CRHR1, MAPT, KIAA1267, LRRC37A, ARL17P1, ARL17, NSF <sup>b</sup>	
MA	All IS	3q11.2	96.6-96.8	228 kB	rs4498047	Y	2.50	—
		9q22.32	98.2-98.4	182 kB	rs7857261	Y	3.15	SLC35D2, ZNF367, HABP4, CDC14B

Continued

**Table 3** Continued

Migraine phenotype	Stroke phenotype	Chr band	Position, Mb	Locus size	Peak SNP	Same directional effect <sup>a</sup>	Peak height	Genes within locus
	LAS	7q31.32	123.0-123.2	174 kB	rs3815458	N	3.53	<i>ASB15, LMOD2, WASL</i>
		8p21.2	24.0-24.1	138 kB	rs6996722	Y	3.07	—
	SVD	4q24	103.9-104.2	323 kB	rs3974608	Y	2.83	<i>MANBA, UBE2D3, CISD2, SLC9B1, SLC9B2</i>

Abbreviations: CE = cardioembolic; LAS = large artery stroke; IS = ischemic stroke; MA = migraine with aura; MO = migraine without aura; SNP = single nucleotide polymorphism; SVD = small vessel disease.

All loci with a height >2.5 are shown. For full results, refer to table e-6. Note that coordinates are mapped to NCBI36/hg18. The IS and migraine subtype where the calculation was performed as well as chromosomal band, chromosomal location, peak SNP, and peak height are displayed. Genes in the region denote all genes found within the specified region.

<sup>a</sup>Direction of effect is given for the peak SNP.

<sup>b</sup>All loci with height >5.

Analysis of loci previously shown to reach genome-wide significance for association with migraine showed several variants nominally associated with IS or its subtypes and vice versa. In fact, single variants reached a high threshold of statistical significance, e.g., variants on 9p21, a major risk locus for LAS<sup>14,15</sup> reaching very low *p* values in MO (table e-3). However, in all instances index SNPs for the tested phenotype were in poor LD ( $r^2 < 0.4$ ) with published risk SNPs making it unlikely that the same variants confer risk to both stroke and migraine.

CPSM analysis revealed several chromosomal regions with strong evidence for genetic overlap between migraine and IS pointing to shared biological mechanisms, including loci already shown to be associated with either migraine or stroke such as a chromosome 12 locus previously implicated in IS, coronary artery disease, hypertension, diabetes, and blood cell traits including platelet count.<sup>19,28–30</sup> Interestingly, *MRVII* on chr11, another locus previously associated with platelet aggregation,<sup>31</sup> showed genetic overlap between migraine and IS, adding to previous data suggesting a shared role of platelet dysfunction in migraine and IS.<sup>9</sup> Mendelian randomization studies and interventional studies are needed to determine the exact role of platelets in mediating such genetic risk. We also demonstrated genetic overlap between migraine and IS at chromosome 9p21 especially for LAS.

There was genetic overlap at loci not reaching genome-wide significance in migraine or stroke GWAS. A shared locus for all migraine and LAS on 7q31.32 includes the *LMOD2-WASL* gene region. *LMOD2* encodes leiomodin2 that antagonizes tropomodulin, an actin-capping protein.<sup>32</sup> *WASL* is implicated in stabilizing endothelial adherens junctions,<sup>33</sup> and is important for synapse development.<sup>34</sup> We also found overlapping regions for SVD with MO including a locus on 4q24 that encompasses *MANBA*, which encodes  $\beta$ -mannosidase. Mutations in *MANBA* are associated with epileptic encephalopathy<sup>35</sup> and leukoencephalopathy.<sup>36</sup> This region also contains *SLC9B2*,

previously associated with essential hypertension,<sup>37</sup> a major risk factor for SVD. A second shared risk locus between MO and SVD points to *MAPT*, the gene encoding tau protein on chromosome 17.

We used the largest collections of GWAS data currently available for migraine<sup>11</sup> and IS,<sup>15</sup> with 4 different but complementary approaches for analysis of genetic overlap including novel methodology (CPSM).<sup>38</sup> Polygenic scores reflect multiple variants with very small effect sizes distributed across the whole genome whereas our analysis of known loci and CPSM analysis focus on specific broader regions with highly correlated *p* values. Overall, results were remarkably consistent. Estimates of genetic correlation between phenotypes were similar in forward and reverse direction as were results of polygenic scores.

Our study also has limitations. First, some patients with MA might have been misdiagnosed with IS and vice versa. However, this should have shifted the results towards a stronger overlap between IS and MA, whereas we found stronger overlap for MO. Thus, diagnostic misclassification is unlikely to contribute substantially to our results. Second, some patients may have had both conditions. We can largely exclude ascertainment bias favoring the selection of patients with comorbidity substantiated by differences in age structure between migraineurs and stroke patients. Third, lacking individual level data, we cannot exclude some overlap in controls. We carefully checked for any potential overlap in controls and excluded samples where appropriate. Bias resulting from overlapping controls would not explain the differences observed between clinical subphenotypes. Finally, we are missing information on clinical subtypes for a substantial proportion of patients, reducing power in subgroup analyses, but this should not result in systematic bias to explain observed differences. Future studies on larger samples should further explore genetic overlap with rare causes of IS such as dissections, which were not considered separately in this study.



Our data provide genetic insights from GWAS meta-analyses into shared mechanisms of migraine and IS and may in part explain the relationship between these 2 common neurovascular disorders.

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## STUDY FUNDING

The Australian Stroke Genetics Collaboration (ASGC) Australian population control data were derived from the Hunter Community Study. The authors thank the University of Newcastle for funding and the men and women of the Hunter region who participated in this study. This research was funded by grants from the Australian National and Medical Health Research Council (NHMRC Project Grant ID: 569257), the Australian National Heart Foundation (NHF Project Grant ID: G 04S 1623), the University of Newcastle, the Gladys M Brawn Fellowship scheme, and the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation in Australia. The Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities Study (ARIC) is carried out as a collaborative study supported by National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute contracts (HHSN268201100005C, HHSN268201100006C, HHSN268201100007C,

HHSN268201100008C, HHSN268201100009C, HHSN268201100010C, HHSN268201100011C, and HHSN268201100012C), R01HL087641, R01HL59367, and R01HL086694; National Human Genome Research Institute contract U01HG004402; NIH contract HHSN268200625226C and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute contracts N01-HC-55015, N01-HC-55016, N01-HC-55018, N01-HC-55019, N01-HC-55020, N01-HC-55021, and N01-HC-55022; and grants R01-HL087641, U01 HL096917 (Mosley), and R01-HL093029 (Fornage). Infrastructure was partly supported by Grant UL1RR025005, a component of the NIH and NIH Roadmap for Medical Research. ARIC analyses performed as part of the METASTROKE project were supported by grant HL-093029 to M. Fornage. Bio-Repository of DNA in Stroke (BRAINS) is partly funded by a Senior Fellowship from the Dept. of Health (UK) to Dr. Pankaj Sharma, the Henry Smith Charity and the UK-India Education Research Institute (UKIERI) from the British Council. Cardiovascular Health Study (CHS) research was supported by National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute contracts N01-HC-85079, N01-HC-85080, N01-HC-85081, N01-HC-85082, N01-HC-85083, N01-HC-85084, N01-HC-85085, N01-HC-85086; N01-HC-35129, N01 HC-15103, N01 HC-55222, N01-HC-75150, N01-HC-45133, and N01-HC-85239, and by HHSN268201200036C and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute grants HL080295, HL087652, and HL105756, with additional contribution from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Additional support was provided through AG-023629, AG-15928, AG-20098, and AG-027058 from the National Institute on Aging. See also <http://www.chs-nhlbi.org/pi.htm>. DNA handling and genotyping at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center was supported in part by the National Center for Research Resources, grant UL1RR033176, and is now at the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, Clinical and Translational Science Institute grant UL1TR000124, in addition to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease grant DK063491 to the Southern California Diabetes Endocrinology Research Center. deCODE Genetics Work performed at deCODE was funded in part through a grant from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013), the ENGAGE project grant agreement HEALTH-F4-2007-201413. Framingham Heart Study (FHS): this work was supported by the dedication of the Framingham Heart Study participants, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's Framingham Heart Study (Contract Nos. N01-HC-25195 and N02-HL-6-4278), and by grants from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NS17950), the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Association (HL93029), and the National Institute of Aging (AG033193). The Genetics of Early Onset Stroke (GEOS) Study, Baltimore, was supported by the NIH Genes, Environment and Health Initiative (GEI) Grant U01 HG004436, as part of the GENEVA consortium under the NIH Genes, Environment and Health Initiative, with additional support provided by the Mid-Atlantic Nutrition and Obesity Research Center (P30 DK072488); and the Office of Research and Development, Medical Research Service, and the Baltimore Geriatrics Research, Education, and Clinical Center of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Genotyping services were provided by The Johns Hopkins University Center for Inherited Disease Research (CIDR), which is fully funded through a federal contract from the NIH to The Johns Hopkins University (contract HHSN268200782096C). Assistance with data cleaning was provided by the GENEVA Coordinating Center (U01 HG 004446; PI Bruce S. Weir). Study recruitment and assembly of datasets were supported by a Cooperative Agreement with the Division of Adult and Community Health, Centers for Disease Control, and by grants from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke and the NIH Office of Research on Women's Health (R01 NS45012, U01 NS069208-01). Heart Protection Study (HPS) (ISRCTN48489393) was supported by the UK Medical Research Council, British Heart Foundation, Merck & Co. (manufacturers of simvastatin), and Roche Vitamins Ltd. (manufacturers of vitamins). Genotyping was supported by a grant to Oxford University and CNG from Merck & Co. Jemma C. Hopewell acknowledges support from the British Heart Foundation Centre of Research Excellence, Oxford (RE/08/004). The Heart and Vascular Health Study (HVH) research reported in this article was funded by National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute grants R01 HL085251 and R01 HL073410. The Ischemic Stroke Genetics Study (ISGS)/Siblings

With Ischemic Stroke Study (SWISS): The ISGS/SWISS study was supported in part by the Intramural Research Program of the National Institute on Aging, NIH project Z01 AG-000954-06. ISGS/SWISS used samples and clinical data from the NIH-National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke Human Genetics Resource Center DNA and Cell Line Repository (<http://ccr.coriell.org/ninds>), human subjects protocol numbers 2003-081 and 2004-147. ISGS/SWISS used stroke-free participants from the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging (BLSA) as controls. The inclusion of BLSA samples was supported in part by the Intramural Research Program of the National Institute on Aging, NIH project Z01 AG-00015-50, human subjects protocol number 2003-078. The ISGS study was funded by NIH-National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke Grant R01 NS-42733 (J.F. Meschia, PI). The SWISS study was funded by NIH-National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke Grant R01 NS-39987 (J.F. Meschia, PI). This study utilized the high-performance computational capabilities of the Biowulf Linux cluster at the NIH (<http://biowulf.nih.gov>). The MGH Genes Affecting Stroke Risk and Outcome Study (MGH-GASROS): GASROS was supported by The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (U01 NS069208), the American Heart Association/Bugher Foundation Centers for Stroke Prevention Research 0775010N, the NIH and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's STAMPEED genomics research program (R01 HL087676), and a grant from the National Center for Research Resources. The Broad Institute Center for Genotyping and Analysis is supported by grant U54 RR020278 from the National Center for Research resources. Milano-Besta Stroke Register Collection and genotyping of the Milan cases within CEDIR were supported by Annual Research Funding of the Italian Ministry of Health (grant numbers RC 2007/LR6, RC 2008/LR6; RC 2009/LR8; RC 2010/LR8). PROCARDIS control samples were supported by FP6 LSHM-CT-2007-037273. The Rotterdam Study was supported by the Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research (175.010.2005.011), the Netherlands Genomics Initiative (NGI)/Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), Netherlands Consortium for Healthy Ageing (050-060-810), the Erasmus Medical Center and Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands Organization for Health Research and Development, the Research Institute for Diseases in the Elderly, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, the Ministry for Health, Welfare, and Sports, the European Commission, and the Municipality of Rotterdam to the Rotterdam Study. Further funding was obtained from the Netherlands Heart Foundation (Nederlandse Hartstichting) 2009B102. The Wellcome Trust Case-Control Consortium 2 (WTCCC2): The principal funding for the WTCCC2 stroke study was provided by the Wellcome Trust, as part of the Wellcome Trust Case Control Consortium 2 project (085475/B/08/Z and 085475/Z/08/Z and WT084724MA). The Stroke Association provided additional support for collection of some of the St George's, London cases. The Oxford cases were collected as part of the Oxford Vascular Study, which is funded by the Medical Research Council, Stroke Association, Dunhill Medical Trust, National Institute of Health Research (NIHR), and the NIHR Biomedical Research Centre, Oxford. The Edinburgh Stroke Study was supported by the Wellcome Trust (clinician scientist award to Dr. Sudlow) and the Binks Trust. Sample processing occurred in the Genetics Core Laboratory of the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility, Western General Hospital, Edinburgh. Much of the neuroimaging occurred in the Scottish Funding Council Brain Imaging Research Centre ([www.sbirc.ed.ac.uk](http://www.sbirc.ed.ac.uk)), Division of Clinical Neurosciences, University of Edinburgh, a core area of the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility and part of the SINAPSE (Scottish Imaging Network—A Platform for Scientific Excellence) collaboration ([www.sinapse.ac.uk](http://www.sinapse.ac.uk)), funded by the Scottish Funding Council and the Chief Scientist Office. Collection of the Munich cases and data analysis was supported by the Vascular Dementia Research Foundation. Martin Farrall acknowledges support from the BHF Center of Research Excellence in Oxford and the Wellcome Trust core award (090532/Z/09/Z). Hugh Markus is supported by an NIHR Senior Investigator award. ALSPAC: The authors thank the families who took part in this study, the midwives for their help in recruiting them, and the whole ALSPAC team, which includes interviewers, computer and laboratory technicians, clerical workers, research scientists, volunteers, managers, receptionists, and nurses. The UK Medical Research Council and Wellcome Trust (092731), together with the University of

Bristol, provide core support for the ALSPAC study. A grant from the Wellcome Trust funded collection of GWAS data in ALSPAC mothers (WT088806) and a grant from 23andMe, together with support from the Sanger Centre and Centre National de Genotypage funded GWAS data in the offspring. Australian Twin Migraine: The Australian cohort was supported by NIH grants AA07535, AA07728, AA13320, AA13321, AA14041, AA11998, AA17688, DA012854, and DA019951; by grants from the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (241944, 339462, 389927, 389875, 389891, 389892, 389938, 442915, 442981, 496739, 552485, and 552498); by grants from the Australian Research Council (A7960034, A79906588, A79801419, DP0770096, DP0212016, and DP0343921); and by the EU-funded GenomEUtwin (FP5-QLG2-CT-2002-01254) and ENGAGE (FP7-HEALTH-201413) projects. D.R.N. (FT0991022, 613674). The authors thank P. Visscher, D. Duffy, A. Henders, B. Usher, E. Souzeau, A. Kuot, A. McMellon, P.A.F. Madden, M.J. Wright, M.J. Campbell, A. Caracella, L. Bowdler, S. Smith, S. Gordon, B. Haddon, D. Smyth, H. Beeby, O. Zheng, and B. Chapman for their input into project management, databases, phenotype collection, and sample collection, processing, and genotyping. British 58 Birth Cohort: The authors acknowledge use of phenotype and genotype data from the British 1958 Birth Cohort DNA collection, funded by the Medical Research Council grant G0000934 and the Wellcome Trust grant 068545/Z/02 (<http://www.b58cgenegene.sgu.ac.uk/>). Genotyping for the B58C-WTCCC subset was funded by the Wellcome Trust grant 076113/B/04/Z. The B58C-T1DGC genotyping utilized resources provided by the Type 1 Diabetes Genetics Consortium, a collaborative clinical study sponsored by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International (JDRF) and supported by U01 DK062418. B58C-T1DGC. GWAS data were deposited by the Diabetes and Inflammation Laboratory, Cambridge Institute for Medical Research (CIMR), University of Cambridge, which is funded by JDRF, the Wellcome Trust and the National Institute for Health Research Cambridge Biomedical Research Centre; the CIMR is in receipt of a Wellcome Trust Strategic Award (079895). The B58C-GABRIEL genotyping was supported by a contract from the European Commission Framework Programme 6 (018996) and grants from the French Ministry of Research. Erasmus Rucphen Family: The Erasmus Rucphen Family was supported by grants from The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), Erasmus MC, and the Netherlands Genomics Initiative (NGI)—sponsored Center of Medical Systems Biology (CMSB). The genotyping for the ERF study was supported by European Special Populations Research Network (EUROSPAN) through the European Commission FP6 STRP grant (018947; LSHG-CT-2006-01947). The ERF study was further supported by grants from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), Erasmus MC, the Centre for Medical Systems Biology (CMSB1 and CMSB2), and the Netherlands Genomics Initiative (NGI). The authors thank all the patients and their relatives, general practitioners, and neurologists for their contributions and P. Veraart for her help in genealogy, Jeannette Vergeer for the supervision of the laboratory work, and P. Snijders for his help in data collection. FinnTwin: Academy of Finland Center of Excellence in Complex Disease Genetics (grant numbers 213506, 129680), the Academy of Finland (grants 205585 and 141054 to J.K.), ENGAGE—European Network for Genetic and Genomic Epidemiology, FP7-HEALTH-F4-2007, grant agreement number 201413, and U.S.-P.H.S. NIH grants AA-12502, AA-00145, AA-09203, AA15416, and K02AA018755. HUNT: The Nord-Trøndelag Health Study (The HUNT Study) is a collaboration between HUNT Research Centre (Faculty of Medicine, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NTNU), Nord-Trøndelag County Council, Central Norway Health Authority, and the Norwegian Institute of Public Institute of Public Health. The current study was supported by the South-Eastern Norway Regional Health Authority (2010075 and 2011083 to B.S.W. and J.A.Z.), Unger-Vetlesen Medical Fund (to B.S.W.), and the Ullevaal fund (to B.S.W.). Genotyping was performed by Avazeh Tashakkori-Ghanbarian, Simon Potter, and Sarah Hunt (calling and quality control) and Douglas Simpkin (production) at Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute. Northern Finland



Birth Cohort 1966 (NFBC1966): NFBC1966 received financial support from the Academy of Finland (project grants 104781, 120315, 129269, 1114194, 139900/24300796, Center of Excellence in Complex Disease Genetics and SALVE), University Hospital Oulu, Biocenter, University of Oulu, Finland (75617), the European Commission (EUROBLCS, Framework 5 award QL.G1-CT-2000-01643), NHLBI grant 5R01HL087679-02 through the STAMPEED program (1RL1MH083268-01), NIH/NIMH (5R01MH63706:02), ENGAGE project and grant agreement HEALTH-F4-2007-201413, the Medical Research Council, UK (G0500539, G0600705, G0600331, PrevMet-Syn/SALVE, PS0476), and the Wellcome Trust (project grant GR069224, WT089549), UK. The DNA extractions, sample quality controls, biobank upkeeping, and aliquotting was performed in the National Public Health Institute, Biomedicum Helsinki, Finland, and supported financially by the Academy of Finland and Biocentrum Helsinki. The authors acknowledge the contribution of the late Academician of Science Leena Peltonen. NTR/NESDA: Funding was obtained from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO: MagW/ ZonMW grants 904-61-090, 985-10-002, 904-61-193, 480-04-004, 400-05-717, Addiction-31160008 Middelgroot-911-09-032, Spinozapremie 56-464-14192), Center for Medical Systems Biology (CSMB, NWO Genomics), NBIC/BioAssist/RK (2008.024), Biobanking and

Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure (BBMRI-NL, 184.021.007), the VU University's Institute for Health and Care Research (EMGO+) and Neuroscience Campus Amsterdam (NCA), the European Science Foundation (ESF, EU/QLRT-2001-01254), the European Community's Seventh Framework Program (FP7/2007-2013), ENGAGE (HEALTHF4-2007-201413), the European Science Council (ERC Advanced, 230374), and the NIH (NIH, R01D0042157-01A). Part of the genotyping and analyses were funded by the Genetic Association Information Network (GAIN) of the Foundation for the US NIH (NIMH, MH081802). The infrastructure for the NESDA study ([www.nesda.nl](http://www.nesda.nl)) is funded through the Geestkracht program of the Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (Zon-Mw, grant number 10-000-1002) and is supported by participating universities and mental health care organizations (VU University Medical Center, GGZ inGeest, Arkin, Leiden University Medical Center, GGZ Rivierduinen, University Medical Center Groningen, Lentis, GGZ Friesland, GGZ Drenthe, Scientific Institute for Quality of Healthcare [IQ healthcare], Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research [NIVEL], and Netherlands Institute of Mental Health and Addiction [Trimbos Institute]). Rotterdam studies: The generation and management of GWAS genotype data for the Rotterdam Study is supported by the Netherlands Organisation of Scientific Research NWO Investments (175.010.2005.011, 911-03-012). This study is funded by the Research Institute for Diseases in the Elderly (014-93-015; RIDE2), the Netherlands Genomics Initiative (NGI)/Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) project 050-060-810. The Rotterdam Study is funded by Erasmus Medical Center and Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands Organization for the Health Research and Development (ZonMw), the Research Institute for Diseases in the Elderly (RIDE), the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry for Health, Welfare and Sports, the European Commission (DG XII), and the Municipality of Rotterdam. The Rotterdam Scan Study is supported by the Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research (NWO) project 918-46-615, 904-61-096, 904-61-133, and 948-00-010. TwinsUK: The study was funded by the Wellcome Trust, European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013), ENGAGE project grant agreement (HEALTH-F4-2007-201413). The study also receives support from the Dept. of Health via the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) comprehensive Biomedical Research Centre award to Guy's & St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust in partnership with King's College London. Genotyping was performed by The Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, support of the National Eye Institute via an NIH/CIDR genotyping project. This project was partly funded by the Chronic Disease Research Foundation with money raised by the walking twins, Hazel Green and Christine Dafer. WGHS: Genetic analysis of migraine in the WGHS is supported by a grant from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NS-061836). The Women's Health Study and the Women's Genome Health Study are supported by grants from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (HL-043851, HL-080467, and HL-099355) and the National Cancer Institute (CA-47988). Genome-wide genotyping and collaborative scientific support was provided by Amgen. Young Finns: The Young Finns Study has been financially supported by the Academy of Finland: grants 134309 (Eye), 126925, 121584, 124282, 129378 (Salve), 117787 (Gendi), and 41071 (Skidi), the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, Kuopio, Tampere, and Turku University Hospital Medical Funds (grant 9M048 and 9N035 for TeLeht), Juho Vainio Foundation, Paavo Nurmi Foundation, Finnish Foundation of Cardiovascular Research and Finnish Cultural Foundation, Tampere Tuberculosis Foundation, and Emil Aaltonen Foundation (T.L). Technical assistance in the statistical analyses by Ville Aalto and Irina Lisinen is acknowledged. Cologne/Kiel/Ulm clinic-based studies (part of German MA and MO studies): This research was funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) within the framework of the National Genome Research Network (NGFN-Plus; grants 01GS08120 and 01GS1103 to C.K.; the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and by the State of Bavaria and supported within the Munich Center of Health Sciences [MC Health] as part of LMUinnovativ) for the KORA research platform, which was initiated by the Helmholtz Center Munich, German Research Center for Environmental Health, the Center for Molecular Medicine Cologne (to C.K.), and the Heinz Nixdorf Foundation for the Heinz

### Comment: Tackling shared genetic underpinnings of migraine and ischemic stroke

In this large collaborative effort, Malik et al.<sup>1</sup> explore shared genetic variation underlying 2 common conditions: migraine and ischemic stroke (IS). Numerous studies have shown an increased risk of stroke in patients with migraine, but the contribution of genetic factors to this relationship is unclear.<sup>2</sup> The authors used the 2 largest existing meta-analyses of genome-wide association studies (GWAS) for both phenotypes.

First, they tested whether genetic variants showing genome-wide significant association with migraine also influence the risk of IS and vice versa. Second, they constructed a polygenic risk score, combining genetic variants associated with one disease at lower significance levels, and tested whether it predicts an increased risk of the other disease. Third, they used cross-phenotype spatial mapping (CPSM) to identify genomic regions exhibiting similar association patterns across phenotypes.

Although only one genome-wide significant locus for IS (in the chromosome 9p21 region) was associated with migraine, the CPSM approach showed various genomic regions affecting both the risk of IS and migraine. An important result emerging from the polygenic and CPSM approaches is that more shared genetic variation was observed between IS and migraine without aura (MO) than between IS and migraine with aura (MA). This is surprising, as phenotypic associations between migraine and IS were shown to be stronger for, or even restricted to, MA.<sup>2</sup> One potential explanation is that rare variants that are not captured by genome-wide chips may be influencing the risk of MA and its genetic correlation with IS. This is consistent with the fact that GWAS failed to reveal a large number of risk loci for MA, while numerous loci were discovered for MO.<sup>3</sup> Nongenetic factors may also contribute to the association between IS and MA.

While more data are needed to unravel the specific biological pathways underlying the association between IS and migraine, this study sheds new light on the pattern by which common variants jointly contribute to both diseases and their subtypes.

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Study funding: No targeted funding reported.

Disclosure: The author reports no disclosures relevant to the manuscript. Go to [Neurology.org](http://Neurology.org) for full disclosures.

Nixdorf Recall study, and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG; to C.K.). Finnish clinic-based study: This work was supported by the Wellcome Trust (grant WT089062) and, among others, by the Academy of Finland (200923 to A.P., 00213 to M.W.); the Academy of Finland Center of Excellence for Complex Disease Genetics; the EuroHead project (LSM-CT-2004-504837); the Finnish Cultural Foundation (to V.A.); the Finnish Neurology Foundation, Biomedicum Helsinki Foundation (to V.A.); the Orion Farnos Research Foundation (to V.A.); the Wellcome Trust (grant number 098051 to A.P.); the Academy of Finland (grant number 251704 to A.P., and 139795 to M.W.); the Academy of Finland, Center of Excellence in Complex Disease Genetics, (grant numbers 213506 and 129680 to A.P. and J.K.); the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013), ENGAGE Consortium (grant agreement HEALTH-F4-2007-201413); EU/SYNSYS-Synaptic Systems (grant number 242167 to A.P.); the Sigrid Juselius Foundation, Finland (to A.P.); the Folkhälsan Research Foundation, Finland (to M.W.); Medicinska Understödsföreningen Liv & Hälsa (to M.W.), and the Helsinki University Central Hospital (to M.K., V.A.). LUMINA clinic-based studies: Supported by the Netherlands Organization for Health Research and Development (ZonMw) no. 90700217 and VIDU (ZonMw) no. 91711319 (to G. M.T.); the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) VICI (918.56.602) and Spinoza (2009) grants (to M.D.F.); the EU-funded EuroHead project (LSM-CT-2004-504837) and EUROHEADPAIN (no. 602633); and the Center for Medical Systems Biology (CMSB) established in the Netherlands Genomics Initiative/Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NGI/NWO), project 050-060-409 (to M.D.F. and A.M. J.M.v.d.M.). Munich clinic-based studies (part of German MA and MO studies): Supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) (grant 01GS08121 to M.D. along with support in the context of the German National Genome Research Network, NGFN-2 and NGFN-plus, for the Heinz Nixdorf Recall Study) and an unrestricted grant of the Vascular Dementia Research Foundation (to M.D.).

## DISCLOSURE

The authors report no disclosures relevant to the manuscript. Go to [Neurology.org](http://Neurology.org) for full disclosures.

Received August 5, 2014. Accepted in final form January 21, 2015.

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