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Evaluating the Impact of Long Read Genomes in Rare Disease: A Systematic Analysis of 1000 HiFi Genomes

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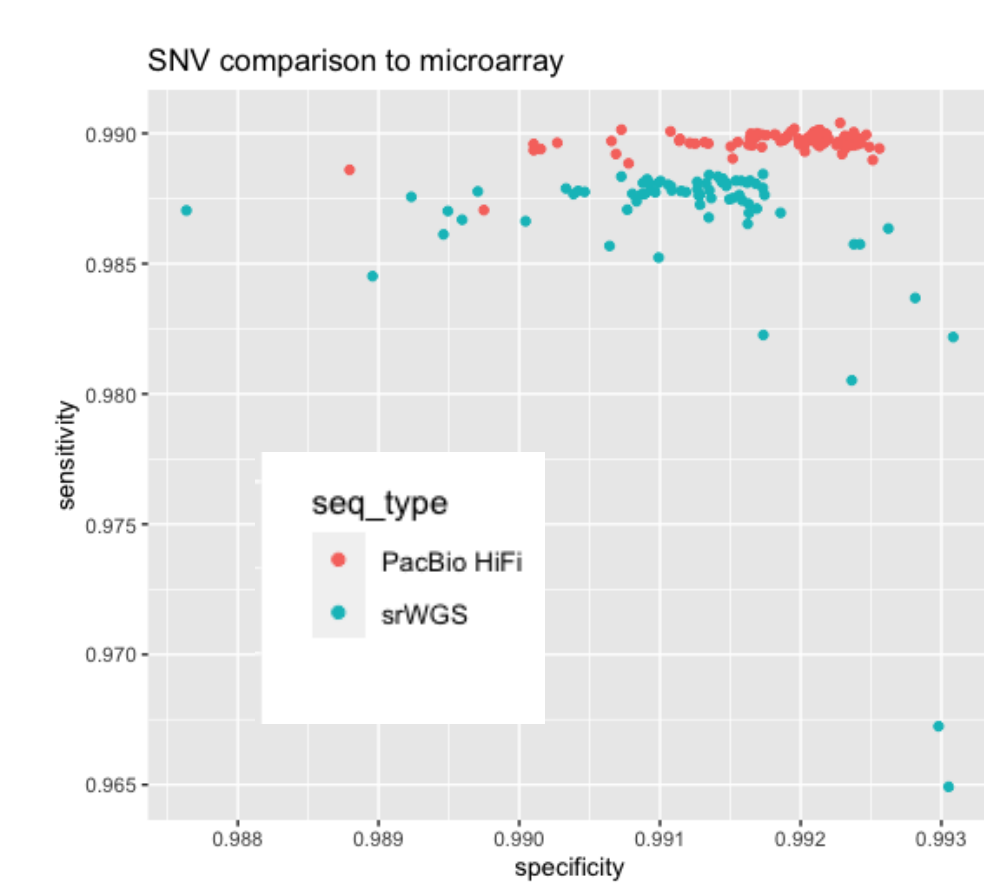
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Introduction and Methods

Genomic technologies continue to advance at a rapid rate, leading to continued novel gene-disease discoveries. However, despite the exponential increase in new gene discoveries, diagnostic rates in rare disease continue to range from 30-50%. To evaluate the impact of long read HiFi genome sequencing (IrGS) in a rare disease cohort, IrGS was implemented systematically in an institution-wide research program, Genomic Answers for Kids (GA4K). Individuals enrolled in GA4K, with a suspected genetic disorder, that remained undiagnosed after exome or genome sequencing, were submitted for HiFi sequencing. Probands were sequenced to a target depth of 30X coverage. Analyses included copy number, structural variation, single nucleotide variation, repeat expansion, and for a subset of genomes 5-methyl C detection. Clinical variants previously reported were used to assess IrGS variant detection algorithms. Additionally, sensitivity and specificity for IrGS were calculated by comparison to an Infinium Global Screening microarray.

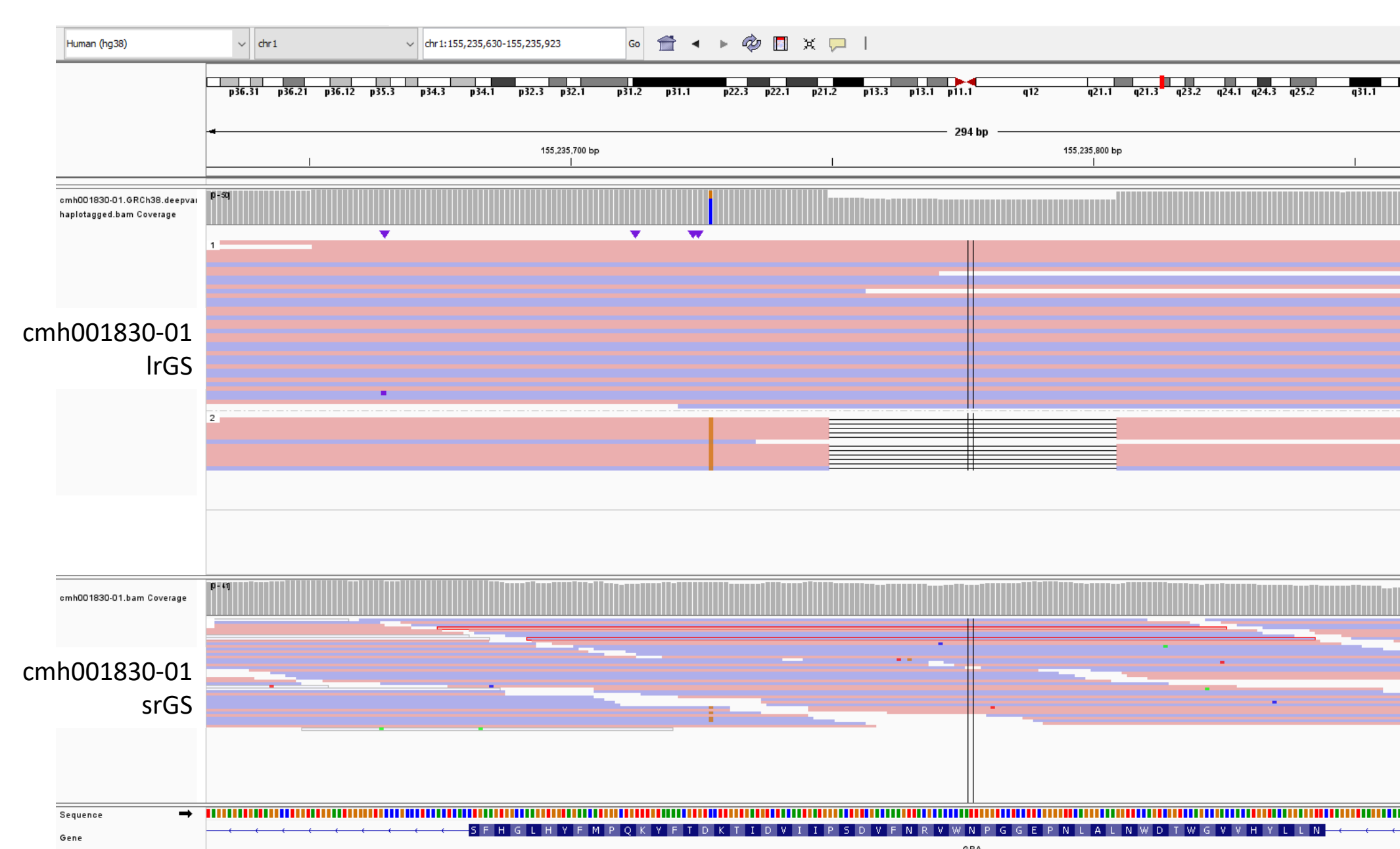
Sequencing Metrics

	TOT	DUP	DEL	INV	BND	INS
srGS	11529	488	4374	N/A	1823	4844
HiFi reads	51020	2789	22626	79	481	25045



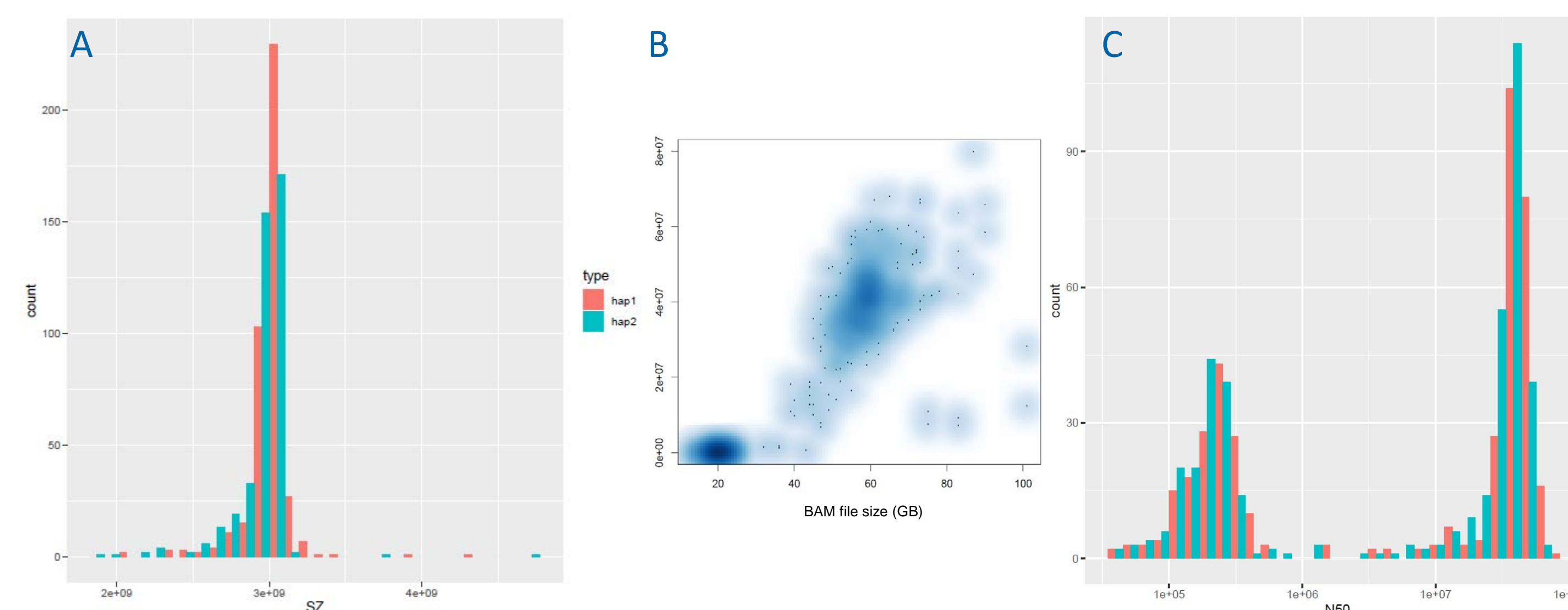
HiFi sequencing detected additional variation, both SNV and SV/CNV compared to srGS. When limited by a MAF <0.01%, the average number of variants per sample is 150.

Pseudogene Resolution



IrGS is able to resolve known pseudogene regions, such as *GBA*, with high clinical importance. HiFi genome detects a recurrent pathogenic deletion *GBA*:c.1265_1320del (p.Leu422fs) (top) that was not detected in the srGS (bottom)

De Novo Assembly Metrics



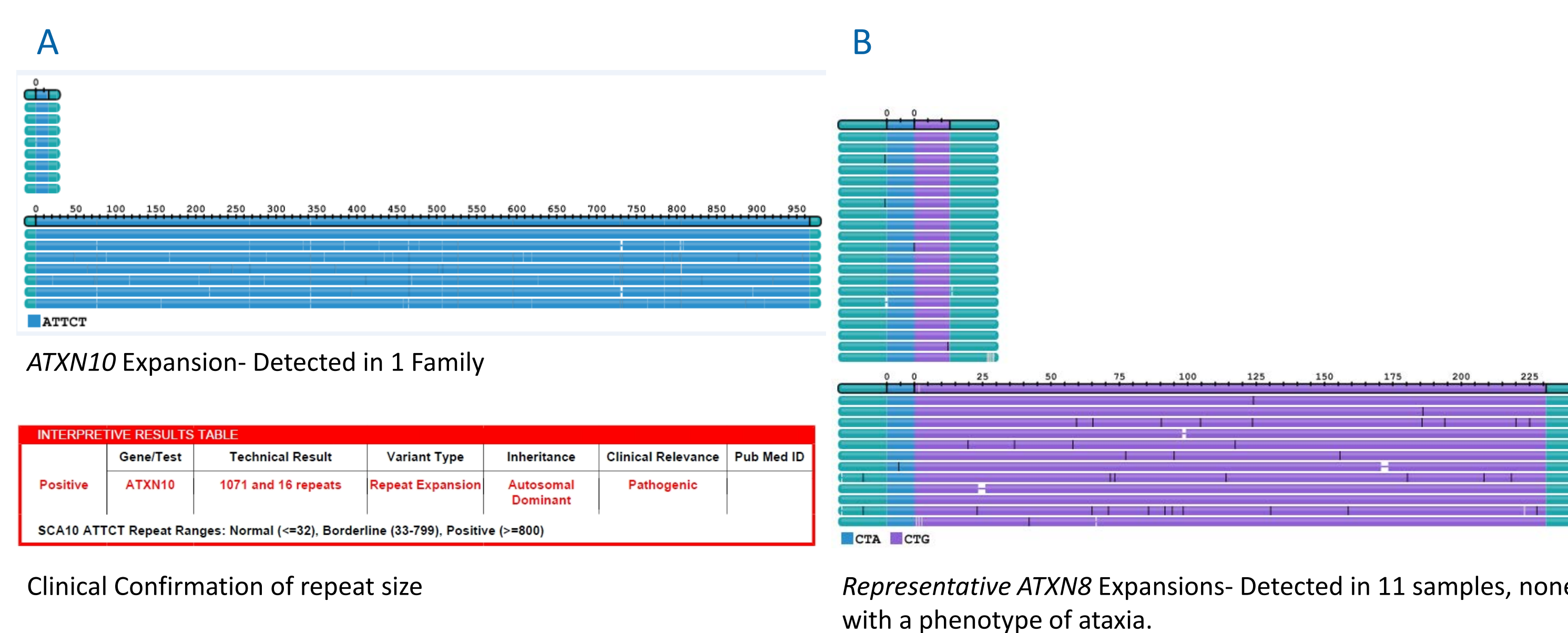
De novo assembly metrics were evaluated for the HiFi cohort, leveraging IrGS to resolve haplotypes. A) The assembled size (SZ) of the HiFi genomes was 3.02×10^9 . B) The N50 was dependent on overall coverage, with increasing coverage resulting in a larger N50. C) Overall, the mean N50 in the HiFi cohort was 2.3×10^7 .

Methylation



Direct 5-methyl-C detection (5mC-HiFi-GS) results in functional validation of detected expansions, such as in *DMPK* (Hap 1>1600 repeats, Hap 2=5). Additionally, novel hypermethylation events identify candidate disease loci.

Expansion Detection



The tandem repeat genotyper (TGR) was used to interrogate 59 genes associated with repeat expansion disorders. The tool analyzes repeat length and motif. Initially 384 samples were flagged as having an expansion in the pathological range. Upon inspection, 16 were considered pathologic (diagnostic or pre-mutation). A previously undetected full expansion in *ATXN10* a proband with congenital ataxia was detected. Clinical TP-PCR confirmed the expansion. B) *ATXN8* pathological expansions were identified in 11 patients. However, the patients were either unaffected parents or were not reported to have an ataxia/neurological phenotype, highlighting the importance of larger screens for expansions disorders to better establish population variation, as previous data may be biased due to sample size/selection.

Conclusion

The implementation of HiFi GS in an ES/GS negative cohort resulted in an approximate 10% increase in diagnostic yield. Importantly, previously reported variants were recapitulated, indicating that HiFi GS could be utilized as a first-tier genome test, simplifying genetic testing algorithms and increasing efficiency. Our developing catalog of rare SVs and methylation variants are now giving new handles for unsolved disease in known and novel disease genes. Anticipated improvements in throughput and cost will enable the widespread integration of long read sequencing into clinical care.

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