

INVITED SPEAKER PRESENTATION

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Between a chicken and a grape: estimating the number of human genes

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Ever since the discovery of the genetic code, scientists have been trying to catalog all the genes in the human genome. Over the years, the best estimate of the number of human genes has grown steadily smaller, but we still do not have an accurate count. Many expected this question to be resolved with the publication of the human genome sequence in 2001, but estimates have continued to fluctuate since then, moving both up and down. Comparisons with other species show that nothing about the human gene count is exceptional, and it is not particularly different from other mammalian species. In this talk, I will review the history of efforts to establish the human gene count and explain the evidence behind the current best estimate of 22,333 genes.

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