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Malaria's dangerous neighborhood

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The *var* genes of the malaria parasite *Plasmodium falciparum* encode the major variable parasite protein and are expressed in a mutually exclusive manner at the surface of an infected red blood cell. In the 26 October *Nature*, Freitas-Junior *et al.* report that *Plasmodium* uses nuclear architecture in a pathogen survival strategy (*Nature* 2000, **407**:1018-1022). The sub-telomeric regions that contain the *var* genes are clustered together at the nuclear periphery, apparently allowing recombination at frequencies much higher than those expected from homologous crossover events alone.

References

1. *Nature*, [<http://www.nature.com/nature/>]
2. A genetic map and recombination parameters of the human malaria parasite *Plasmodium falciparum*.