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## Genomic duplication

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The role of [ancient gene duplication](#) in vertebrate evolution is controversial. Two Advanced Early Publications in [Nature Genetics](#) explore the nature of human genomic duplications. McLysaght *et al.* report a systematic analysis of the human genome sequence to find and characterize paralogous chromosomal regions (called [paralogons](#); *Nature Genetics*, 18 May 2002, DOI:10.1038/ng884). They found many examples of paralogons in the human genome. Comparison with orthologs in *Drosophila* and nematodes suggested that duplication events occurred around 350-650 million years ago. The authors propose that their results are compatible with at least one round of polyploidy early in chordate evolution. Gu *et al.* analysed 749 gene families across a number of vertebrate species (*Nature Genetics*, 18 May 2002, DOI:10.1038/ng902). They propose a model involving two waves of duplication during evolution. The exact nature and importance of large-scale duplication events is likely to remain hotly debated.

## References

1. Vertebrate evolution by interspecific hybridisation - are we polyploid?
2. *Nature Genetics*, [<http://www.nature.com/ng/>]
3. Coparalogy: physical and functional clusterings in the human genome.