

Cavefish DNA reveals evolutionary detail

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A multi-institutional study has offered more insight into the evolutionary process by examining how albinism evolves in cavefish.

New York University biology professor Richard Borowsky and colleagues examined two populations of Mexican cavefish and found albinism in both populations was linked to *Oca2* -- a pigmentation gene also responsible for the most common form of albinism in humans.

They observed different deletions in the gene in each population and found both deletions cause a loss of *Oca2*'s functionality, demonstrating the albinism in the two groups evolved independently.

The study also included researchers from the Harvard Medical School, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute at the Children's Hospital of Boston, the University of Hamburg, and the University of Maryland.

The findings are reported in the latest issue of the journal *Nature Genetics*.

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