

Re: Underestimating 'r'

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- *From:* an588@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (Catherine Woodgold)
 - *Date:* Sun, 16 Oct 2005 15:14:09 -0400 (EDT)
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"Perplexed in Peoria" (jimmenegay@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx) writes:

> "Catherine Woodgold" <an588@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
[news:diq3mu\\$1irv\\$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:diq3mu$1irv$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)
>> ... It turns out that if the rate of A
>> in the population is high, then the best strategy
>> for the Aa organism if it wants to promote the
>> rate of A may be to commit suicide (or to
>> stay alive only if by doing so it can cause
>> a lot of harm to its relatives!)
>
> But there is no reason why an Aa organism would
> 'want' to promote the rate of A. It has an
> equal 'interest' in promoting the rate of a.
....
> However, even people like me who LIKE teleological
> language become somewhat nervous about the use of
> 'want' and 'interests' in a case like this.

Maybe some people "want" to use teleological language at certain times, and other people "want" to use it at other times. I happened to feel like using it right then, even though I figured somebody would probably object to it. How about just translating what I said into non-teleological language and assuming that's what I meant?

> In fact, if the frequency of A in the population
> is high, the organism will be more interested in
> promoting the success of the rarer allele a than
> in promoting the success of the common allele A.

I disagree with this statement. Can we make it more clearly stated and testable and then test it?

Do you mean this: If A is common and a is rare, then (averaged over many possible genes A and a) an organism with Aa is more likely to behave in a way that promotes the prevalence of a than it is to behave in a way that

promote the prevalence of A.

I hereby argue that it's the other way around: if a is rare, it's more likely to be a recent mutation and to just behave in some random way. Since A is common, it must have gotten common somehow so it's more likely to behave in a way that promotes its own success. A is more likely to have been tested in pairs with other genes — that is, it's probably been paired with a lot of other genes in the past, yet it's still common. So A may tend to cause some behaviour in Aa that promotes A, while a might behave in a way that promotes either A or a.

—

Cathy Woodgold

http://www.ncf.ca/~an588/par_home.html

We are all Iraqis now.

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• **References:**

◆ **Underestimating 'r'**

◇ *From:* Tim Tyler

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