

Identification of Genetic Loci Underlying the Phenotypic Constructs of Autism Spectrum Disorders

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Objective: To investigate the underlying phenotypic constructs in autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and to identify genetic loci that are linked to these empirically derived factors. **Method:** Exploratory factor analysis was applied to two datasets with 28 selected Autism Diagnostic Interview—Revised (ADI-R) algorithm items. The first dataset was from the Autism Genome Project (AGP) phase I (1,236 ASD subjects from 618 families); the second was from the AGP phase II (804 unrelated ASD subjects). Variables derived from the factor analysis were then used as quantitative traits in genome-wide variance components linkage analyses. **Results:** Six factors, namely, joint attention, social interaction and communication, nonverbal communication, repetitive sensory–motor behavior, peer interaction, and compulsion/restricted interests, were retained for both datasets. There was good agreement between the factor loading patterns from the two datasets. All factors showed familial aggregation. Suggestive evidence for linkage was obtained for the joint attention factor on 11q23. Genome-wide significant evidence for linkage was obtained for the repetitive sensory–motor behavior factor on 19q13.3. **Conclusions:** This study demonstrates that the underlying phenotypic constructs based on the ADI-R algorithm items are replicable in independent datasets, and that the empirically derived factors are suitable and informative in genetic studies of ASD. *J. Am. Acad. Child Adolesc. Psychiatry*, 2011;50(7): 687–696. **Key Words:** autism, ADI-R, factor analysis, linkage analysis, quantitative trait

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are a group of neurodevelopmental disorders, including autistic disorder, Asperger syndrome, and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified, that are characterized by different degrees of (1) deficits in social interaction; (2) deficits in verbal and nonverbal communication; and (3) repetitive and stereotyped behaviors and interests.^{1,2} This three-domain conceptualization of ASD is primarily based on clinical acumen rather than empirical evidence.³

To date, many studies have examined the underlying phenotypic dimensions of ASD.^{4–13} However, possibly because of differences in statistical methods, item selection, sample ascertainment, sample sizes, and other aspects, the results appear to be inconsistent

with empirically derived factors ranging from one to six.⁵ Four studies have incorporated such factors in genetic analyses of ASD.^{14–17} Cannon et al.¹⁴ used two variables, insistence on sameness (IS) and repetitive sensory–motor actions (RSMA), in linkage analyses. However, no factor analysis was performed; instead the variables were obtained by dichotomizing the sum of IS or RSMA items from the Autism Diagnostic Interview—Revised (ADI-R) “repetitive behaviors/stereotyped patterns” domain. The other three studies^{15–17} did not use the derived factors as primary traits in their genetic analyses; rather, the ASD diagnosis was the primary trait, and factors were used to define subsets of families to increase genetic homogeneity.

Compared with binary traits (e.g., presence or absence of ASD), well-defined quantitative traits may be more informative for genetic studies because they correspond better to ASD as syn-



Supplemental material cited in this article is available online.

dromes with a spectrum of severities. A number of studies¹⁸⁻²³ have used quantitative phenotypes, especially, the composite domain total scores from ADI-R, for genetic analysis of ASD. Although suggestive evidence of linkage was observed for these total scores, in general, these linkage signals were not as strong as the results from studies using the ASD diagnosis as the primary trait.^{18-20,22} One explanation is that the total scores of the separate ADI-R domains as sums of numerous items do not correspond to the true phenotypic constructs of ASD.

The present study investigated the underlying phenotypic constructs of ASD using two large, independent datasets from the Autism Genome Project. The empirically derived factors were then used as quantitative traits for linkage analysis to identify their genetic loci.

METHOD

Study Samples

The Autism Genome Project (AGP) is a consortium of scientists from North America and Europe.²⁴ Two independent AGP datasets were selected: one included families with two affected relatives (1,236 ASD subjects from 618 families, AGP phase I [AGPI]); the other included one ASD subject from each family (804 ASD subjects AGP phase II [AGPII]). For genetic analysis, the parents of the AGPI subjects were also included. Details of the sample inclusion criteria can be found in Supplement 1 (available online). Informed consent was obtained from all participants in the study, and institutional review boards approved our procedures.

ADI-R Items and Covariates

The ADI-R is a semi-structured interview conducted with the primary caregiver about a child's symptoms both currently and during early development.²⁵ There are 37 "ever/most abnormal" algorithm items. Two items, "Friendship at 10–15 years old" and "Inappropriate facial expressions," were excluded because of high missing rates (because of the age criterion for the former, and for the latter, missing if the item "Range of facial expressions used to communicate" was coded as 3, i.e., little or no indication of emotion). Seven items that were designed only for verbal individuals were also excluded. The remaining 28 items, available for both verbal and nonverbal individuals, were used in the factor analysis. For each item, the original values 0, 1, 2, and 3 were used with the assumption that 3 was sufficiently different from 2 in our data. Individuals with values 7, 8, and 9 on any item were excluded. All ADI-R assessors were research trained.

Five variables were used as potential covariates for the derived factors: gender, AGP site, age at ADI-R assessment (in months), verbal/nonverbal status, and population origin. Population origins, defined as European or non-European ancestry, was estimated using tagSNPs from the Affymetrix 10K array.²² Covariate effects were tested by including all covariates in a mixed linear model for the related ASD subjects in AGPI.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Unweighted least-squares factor analysis (ULSFA) was applied to identify the number of factors and pattern of factor loadings in AGPI and AGPII using the SAS FACTOR procedure (v9.1.3, SAS Institute, Cary, NC).²⁶ Factors were retained if (1) a specific aspect of autistic symptoms could be assigned, (2) there was a minimum of three ADI-R items loading on each factor, and (3) the combined variance of all retained factors accounted for as much of the common variance among the 28 ADI-R items as possible so the subsequent genetic analysis could be performed for all different aspects of ASD. Because the ADI-R items are ordinal, polychoric correlations were calculated instead of Pearson correlations. The polychoric correlation matrix was then used in the factor analysis. Orthogonal transformation (varimax rotation) was chosen to maximize independence among factors. The loading threshold was set to 0.35 for factor interpretation.

Because AGPI contains related ASD subjects, ULSFA was applied to samples that contained one randomly selected affected individual from each family ($n = 618$). This process was repeated 100 times and the factor loading pattern was summarized. After confirming that the loading pattern from the randomly selected samples was very similar to the factor pattern from AGPI with related ASD individuals, the latter was used to further compare with the loading pattern from AGPII ($n = 804$) using coefficients of congruence.²⁷

Genetic Markers

The genotypes for AGPI were obtained using Affymetrix (Santa Clara, CA) 10K SNP arrays at the Translational Genomics Research Institute.²⁴ Quality control has been described.²² A total of 5,371 tagSNPs were selected for linkage analyses so that they were not in strong linkage disequilibrium with each other (maximum $D' = 0.6$).²⁸ Details of the marker information can be found in the Supplement 1 (available online).

Genetic Analysis

The derived factors from AGPI were used as quantitative traits for heritability estimation using SOLAR (v4.1.0)²⁹ and for genome-wide multipoint variance components linkage analysis using Merlin—vc option (v1.1.2).³⁰ Complex ascertainment criteria, as used in

AGPI (families were recruited only if they had two or more individuals with ASD), may have a large impact on heritability estimates.³¹ No ascertainment correction was performed because normative data for the ADI-R items from a general population sample does not exist. Because of non-normality of the nonverbal communication factor, rank transformation was performed to achieve normality. Analyses were performed for all 618 families as well as for the subset of 517 families of European ancestry. In addition, for each set of families, two models (with and without adjustment for covariates, i.e., age at ADI-R assessment, age squared, verbal/nonverbal status, gender) were used. The significance of the top two linkage results were evaluated using a simulation approach in Merlin.³⁰ Details of the simulation method can be found in Supplement 1 (available online).

In addition to linkage analysis using the factors based on the weights (the coefficients in the linear equation relating factors to the original item values) from AGPI, the linkage analysis was also performed using the factors calculated based on the weights from AGPII. These analyses could provide further evaluation of the similarities of factor analysis results between AGPI and AGPII. If the factor results were truly comparable, then their linkage signals should be similar.

RESULTS

Sample Description

Details of the ASD subjects from AGPI and AGPII are provided in Table 1. The major differences between AGPI and AGPII were the AGP site (e.g., some sites in AGPI were not included in AGPII, and vice versa), and family type (all AGPI samples were from multiplex families, whereas only 28% of the AGPII samples were from multiplex families). For four AGP sites—Autism Genetics Resource Exchange (AGRE), Canadian Autism Genetics (CANAGEN), Collaborative Programs of Excellence in Autism (CPEA), and International Molecular Genetic Study of Autism Consortium (IMGSAC)—which had more than 100 samples from either AGPI or AGPII, we compared the samples from each AGP site for diagnosis (autism versus non-autism ASD), gender, verbal/nonverbal status, and age at ADI-R assessment. There were significant differences in diagnosis from two sites: IMGSAC had more samples with a non-autism ASD diagnosis in AGPII than in AGPI ($p = .01$), and CANAGEN had more non-autism ASD subjects in AGPI than in AGPII ($p = .001$). All other comparisons were not statistically significant.

TABLE 1 Sample Characteristics by Dataset^a

	AGPI (N = 1,236)	AGPII (N = 804)
Diagnosis		
Autism	1,134 (91.7)	760 (94.5)
Non-autism ASD	102 (8.3)	44 (5.5)
Gender		
Male	990 (80.1)	677 (84.2)
Female	246 (19.9)	127 (15.8)
Verbal/nonverbal status		
Verbal	898 (72.6)	553 (68.8)
Nonverbal	338 (27.4)	251 (31.2)
AGP site		
AGRE	420 (34.0)	46 (5.7)
VANDERBILT	16 (1.3)	22 (2.7)
IMGSAC	330 (26.7)	61 (7.6)
DUKE	50 (4.0)	72 (9.0)
CANAGEN	80 (6.5)	190 (23.6)
INSERM	22 (1.8)	78 (9.7)
STANFORD	64 (5.2)	0 (0)
CPEA	182 (14.7)	22 (2.7)
UNC	58 (4.7)	0 (0)
MT. SINAI	14 (1.1)	0 (0)
IRELAND	0 (0)	113 (14.1)
PORTUGAL	0 (0)	200 (24.9)
Family type ^b		
Simplex	0 (0)	436 (54.2)
Multiplex	1,236 (100)	223 (27.8)
Unknown	0 (0)	145 (18.0)
Population origin		
European ancestry	1,036 (83.8)	716 (89.1)
Non-European ancestry	200 (16.2)	88 (10.9)
Age at ADI-R assessment (months)	101 ± 39	96 ± 44

Note: ADI-R = Autism Diagnostic Interview—Revised; AGPI = subjects from AGP phase I; AGPII = subjects from AGP phase II; AGRE = Autism Genetics Resource Exchange; CANAGEN = Canadian Autism Genetics; CPEA = Collaborative Programs of Excellence in Autism; IMGSAC = International Molecular Genetic Study of Autism Consortium; INSERM = Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale; UNC = University of North Carolina.

^aValues are count (percentage) or mean ± standard deviation.

^bFor family type, multiplex Autism Genome Project (AGP) families were defined as having at least two individuals receiving autism spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnoses who were first to third degree relatives (for third degree, only considering cousins); simplex families as having only one known ASD individual with no family history of ASD in first to third (cousin) degree relatives.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

For both AGPI and AGPII, six factors were retained. According to the common characteristics of the items that were correlated with a particular factor (correlation coefficient [r] ≥ 0.35), the

factors represent themes related to joint attention, social interaction and communication, peer interaction, nonverbal communication, repetitive sensory-motor behavior, and compulsion/restricted interests. These six factors accounted for most of the common variance among the 28 ADI-R items, with the first factor accounting for more than 70% of the total common variance and the remaining factors accounting for much lower proportions of the total common variance (3%–11%) before the varimax rotation (Table 2 and Table S1, available online). For comparison to the final factor loading patterns with six factors, Tables S2 and S3 (available online) present the loading patterns when two to five factors were retained for AGPI and AGPII, respectively.

Table S4 (available online) provides a summary of the factor loading patterns for the 100 randomly selected samples from AGPI. The mean loading values from the 100 samples were very similar to the values from AGPI with the coefficients of congruence of greater than 0.999 for all factors. This indicates that the factor analysis results using AGPI with related individuals were very similar to the results from the samples with no related individuals. The factor loading patterns were also quite comparable for AGPI and AGPII with the coefficients of congruence ranging from 0.84 to 0.99 (Table S5, available online). However, the order of factors in AGPII was different from the order in AGPI. This may reflect statistical variation or sample differences between AGPI and AGPII as described above. For statistical variation, in the factor analyses using 100 random samples from AGPI, we found that even though the proportions of common variance explained by the first two factors were very different before the varimax rotation ($70\% \pm 1\%$ versus $11\% \pm 0.6\%$), they were very similar after the rotation ($24.2\% \pm 5\%$ versus $23.9\% \pm 4\%$). As a result, the order of the first two factors could be different in different samples.

Factors and Covariates

All the factors except the nonverbal communication factor from AGPI were normally distributed. The nonverbal communication factor was bimodally distributed with the low-value distribution mainly from the verbal samples and the high-value distribution from both the verbal and nonverbal samples. This factor was rank transformed, and the transformed factor was used in the following analyses.

All six covariates (gender, age at ADI-R assessment, age squared, verbal/nonverbal status, AGP site, and estimated population origin) were associated with at least three of the six factors ($p < .05$) (Table S6, available online). Because of the phenotypic as well as possible genetic differences by population origin (e.g., different allele frequencies in samples from different ancestral backgrounds), the families of European ancestry from AGPI were used after the initial analyses using all the AGPI families. Gender, age at ADI-R assessment, age squared, and verbal/nonverbal status were selected as covariates in genetic analyses. AGP site was not included, because we suspected that the differences in the factor scores across sites might be caused by true differences in severity among individuals rather than by measurement error, as the ADI-R was administered by trained clinicians or assessors who had demonstrated greater than 80% reliability compared with the trainers across all scoring items. In addition, our previous study²² has shown that the effect of the AGP site as a covariate on the linkage results of domain total scores as quantitative traits were relatively small, with genome-wide changes in LOD scores of 0.5 or less.

Genetic Analysis

All the factors showed significant familial aggregation (Table 2 and Table S7, available online). Most of the heritability estimates ranged from 0.46 to 0.70 (depending on whether all or families of European ancestry were used and whether covariates were included), whereas the peer interaction factor had a heritability estimate of 0.27 to 0.33, possibly due to the effect of contextual opportunities to observe and to learn on the items of this factor within a social interaction setting. Compared with twin studies, heritability estimates from siblings cannot separate shared genetic from shared environmental influences; therefore these results should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 1 illustrates the genome-wide linkage analysis results for the factors (chromosome-specific results are in Figure S1, available online). Two chromosomal regions, 11q23.1 to q23.3 for the joint attention factor (LOD score = 4.0) and 19q13.32 to q13.33 for the repetitive sensory-motor behavior factor (LOD score = 4.92), presented strong evidence for linkage when families of European ancestry were used and when covariate effects were adjusted (Figure 2, Table 3).

TABLE 2 Factor Loading Patterns (Correlations Between the Items from the Autism Diagnostic Interview—Revised (ADI-R) and the Derived Factors) for the Subjects from the Autism Genome Project Phase I

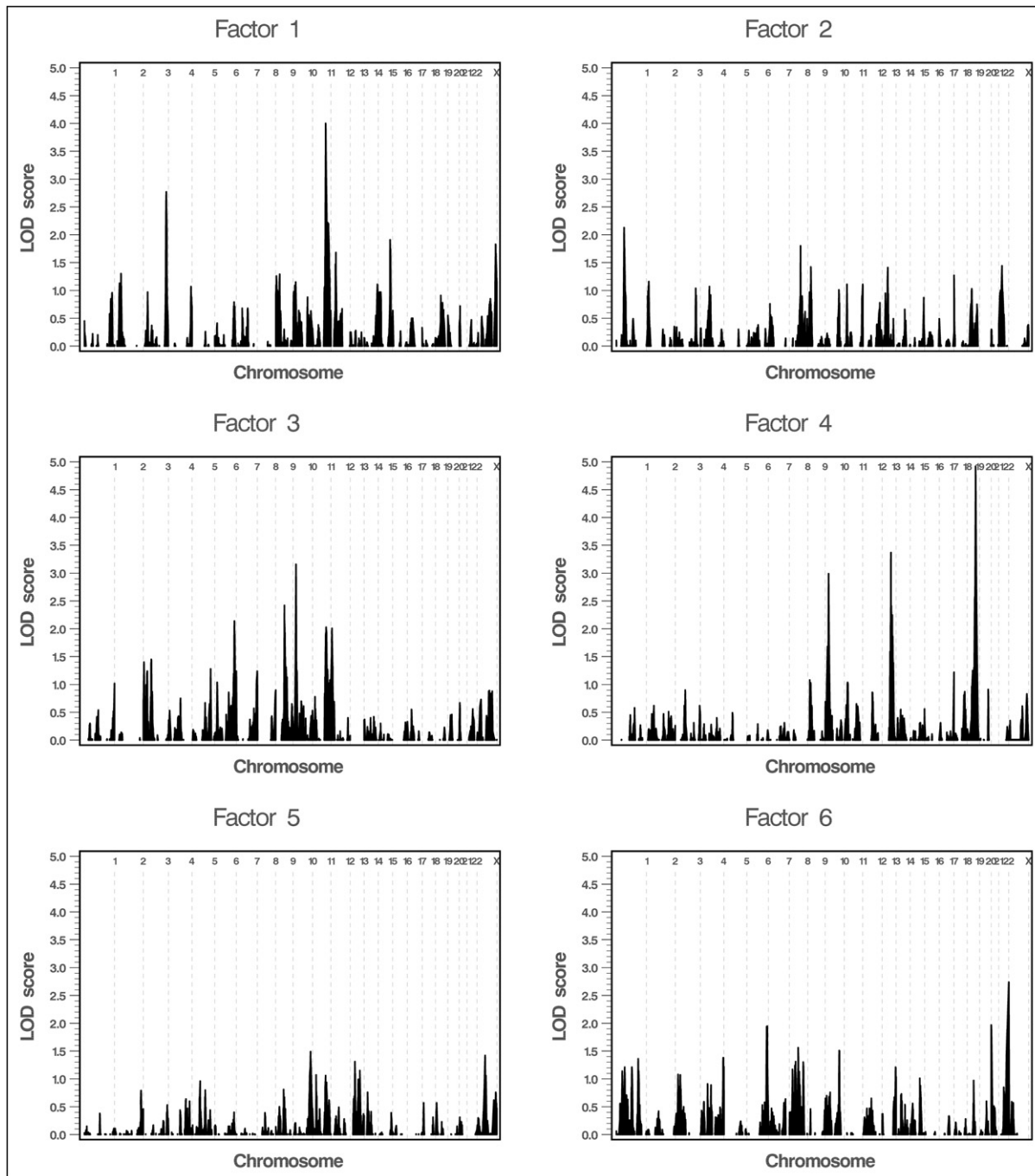
ADI-R Items	Factor 1: Joint Attention	Factor 2: Social Interaction and Communication	Factor 3: Nonverbal Communication	Factor 4: Repetitive Sensory—Motor Behavior	Factor 5: Peer Interaction	Factor 6: Compulsion/ Restricted Interests
Social domain						
Direct gaze	0.55	0.11	0.05	0.20	0.17	0.23
Social smiling	0.65	0.26	0.17	0.10	0.18	0.18
Range of facial expressions used to communicate	0.53	0.22	0.15	0.12	0.13	0.21
Imaginative play with peers	0.24	0.66	0.12	0.15	0.32	−0.09
Interest in children	0.36	0.27	0.09	0.12	0.65	0.08
Response to approaches of other children	0.33	0.23	0.12	0.16	0.65	0.10
Group play with peers	0.23	0.42	0.15	0.03	0.52	0.06
Showing and directing attention	0.45	0.46	0.25	0.20	0.16	−0.06
Offering to share	0.31	0.47	0.23	0.18	0.19	−0.04
Seeking to share enjoyment with others	0.48	0.31	0.26	0.14	0.22	0.01
Use of other's body to communicate	0.12	0.17	0.19	0.44	0.13	−0.14
Offering comfort	0.35	0.47	0.15	0.16	0.15	0.00
Quality of social overtures	0.61	0.30	0.16	0.17	0.18	0.04
Appropriateness of social responses	0.56	0.31	0.06	0.15	0.20	0.02
Communication						
Pointing to express interest	0.35	0.26	0.32	0.27	0.12	−0.02
Nodding	0.19	0.12	0.94	0.24	0.14	0.00
Head shaking	0.22	0.21	0.81	0.15	0.06	0.06
Conventional/instrumental gestures	0.39	0.46	0.40	0.15	0.19	0.06
Spontaneous imitation of actions	0.25	0.59	0.09	0.17	0.06	0.07
Imaginative play	0.20	0.69	0.10	0.23	0.18	0.05
Imitative social play	0.33	0.43	0.03	0.15	0.32	0.10
Behavior						
Unusual preoccupations	0.03	0.10	0.13	0.15	0.04	0.40
Circumscribed interests	0.09	−0.04	−0.10	−0.08	0.03	0.52
Compulsions/rituals	0.09	−0.02	0.02	0.16	0.02	0.40
Hand and finger mannerisms	0.15	0.10	0.09	0.55	0.09	0.10
Other complex mannerisms or stereotyped body movements	0.10	0.11	0.07	0.48	0.04	0.12
Repetitive use of objects or interest in parts of objects	0.07	0.34	0.08	0.56	0.04	0.16
Unusual sensory interests	0.11	0.05	0.08	0.60	0.03	0.07
Common variance explained (%)						
before rotation	74.0	10.9	8.3	7.0	3.8	3.4
after rotation	24.7	24.6	16.6	15.0	12.8	6.3
Heritability estimate^a	0.50	0.49	0.47	0.54	0.29	0.65

Note: Data are boldface if loading is ≥ 0.35 .
^aHeritability estimates from families of European ancestry and after adjustment for four covariates (details in Table S7, available online).

Of the 1,000 simulated genome-wide datasets, 76 had a LOD score of 4.0 or greater for the joint attention factor, indicating that the link-

age result at the 11q23.1 to q23.3 region clearly met the genome-wide suggestive linkage criterion but was just short of "significant." Only

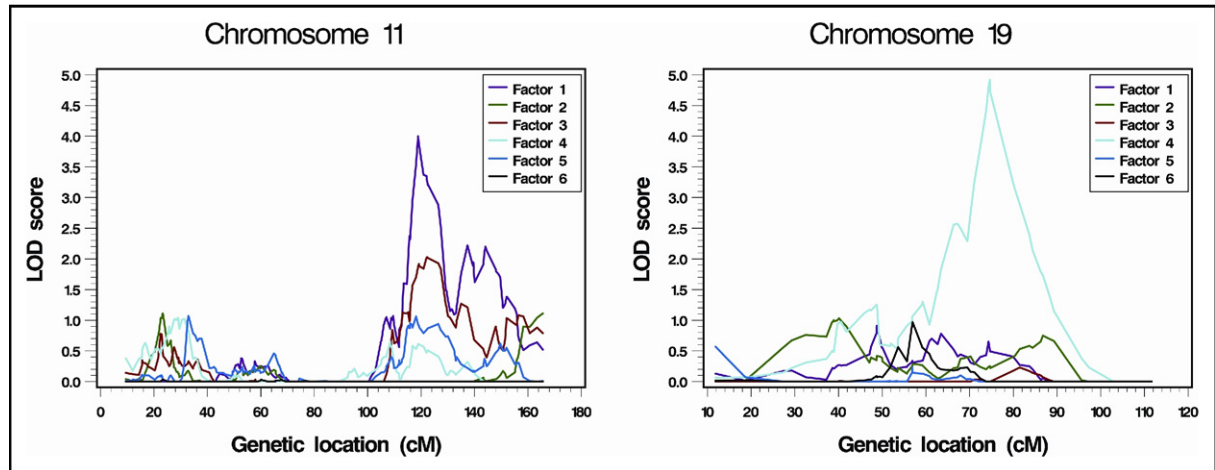
FIGURE 1 Genome-wide linkage analysis results for the derived factors after adjustment for covariates using the families of European ancestry. Note: Factor 1: joint attention; factor 2: social interaction and communication; factor 3: nonverbal communication (rank transformed); factor 4: repetitive sensory–motor behavior; factor 5: peer interaction; and factor 6: compulsion/restricted interests. Vertical dashed lines separate the chromosomes. LOD = logarithm of odds.



seven simulations had a LOD score of 4.92 or greater for the repetitive sensory–motor behavior factor, demonstrating that the linkage result at the 19q13.32 to q13.33 region was of genome-wide significance.

For the linkage analyses using the factors based on the weights from AGPII, the overall linkage results were similar to the results from AGPI. At the two highlighted regions, the peak LOD scores were 3.54 ($p = .00003$) at 19q13.32 to

FIGURE 2 Highlighted linkage analysis results for the derived factors on chromosomes 11 and 19. Note: The factors were adjusted for covariates and the families of European ancestry were used. Factor 1: joint attention; factor 2: social interaction and communication; factor 3: nonverbal communication (rank transformed); factor 4: repetitive sensory–motor behavior; factor 5: peer interaction; and factor 6: compulsion/restricted interests. LOD = logarithm of odds.



q13.33 for the repetitive sensory–motor behavior factor, and 3.27 ($p = .00005$) at 11q23.1 to q23.3 for the joint attention factor. This demonstrates that the linkage results were reasonably consistent when the factors were generated from independent ASD datasets. This also indirectly attests that the factor analysis results from AGPI and AGPII were similar.

DISCUSSION

This is the first study that has applied empirically derived factors as quantitative traits in genome-

wide genetic analysis of ASD. The factor loading patterns of the ADI-R algorithm items were replicated using two independent AGP datasets. In contrast to conventional factor analysis, which retains only the top factors that account for a large proportion of the total common variance, we retained factors that explained as little as 3% of the total common variance. As a result, most of the common variance among the 28 ADI-R algorithm items was accounted for in this study.

Two previous factor analysis studies used the ADI-R algorithm items to determine the factor structure of ASD.^{6,7} Of them, the study by Snow

TABLE 3 Highlighted Linkage Analysis Results (Logarithm of Odds [LOD] Scores With Nominal p Values)^a

Factor	Peak SNP	All (618 Families)		European Ancestry (517 Families)	
		No Covariate	4 Covariates ^c	No Covariate	4 Covariates ^c
Factor 1: Joint attention	Chr11q23: rs723599 (112,377,515 bp) ^b	2.93 ($p = .0001$)	3.92 ($p = .00001$)	3.47 ($p = .00003$)	4.00 ($p = .00001$)
Factor 4: Repetitive sensory–motor behavior	Chr19q13: rs895355 (52,822,703 bp) ^b	0.98 ($p = .02$)	1.87 ($p = .002$)	2.66 ($p = .0002$)	4.92 ($p < .00001$)

Note: The highest LOD scores are in boldface. bp = base pair; SNP = single nucleotide polymorphism.

^aFor both regions, the linkage analysis results improved after adjustment for covariates (e.g., from 3.47 to 4.00 for the joint attention factor, and from 2.66 to 4.92 for the repetitive sensory–motor behavior factor using the families of European ancestry). Restricting the analysis to the families of European ancestry resulted in stronger evidence for linkage at 19q13.32 to q13.33 (from 1.87 to 4.92 with the adjustment for covariates), whereas the results at 11q23.1 to q23.3 changed little (from 3.92 to 4.00).

^bNational Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) build 35.

^cAfter adjustment for four covariates: gender, age at Autism Diagnostic Interview—Revised (ADI-R) assessment, age squared, and verbal/nonverbal status.

et al.,⁷ is similar to our study (i.e., it used a relatively large sample size, polychoric correlations, and the unweighted least-squares factor analysis method). In addition, some of the subjects from the Snow et al. study likely overlap with those from our AGRE sample (Table 1: AGRE samples made up 34% of AGPI and 6% of AGPII). The investigators found a two-domain model with a combined social-communication factor, and a restricted and repetitive behavior factor. The major difference between these two studies is the rotation method: the quartimin rotation (a type of oblique rotation) in Snow et al., and the orthogonal rotation in our study. When the oblique rotation was applied to our data, the factor loading pattern was similar to the pattern using the orthogonal rotation (data not shown). However, because the oblique rotation allows factors to be correlated with each other, all factors except the compulsion/restricted interests factor were highly correlated with the correlation coefficients ranging from 0.23 to 0.57 in AGPII. We decided to apply the orthogonal rotation so that the factors would not be highly correlated and unique genetic loci could be identified for each factor. Another disparity between these two studies is that Snow et al. analyzed data for verbal and nonverbal individuals separately, whereas we analyzed them together but adjusted for verbal/nonverbal status as a covariate for all of the factors before linkage analysis. Despite these differences, both studies found that the items from the reciprocal social interaction and communication domains tended to load on the same factor/factors, i.e., the social-communication factor in Snow et al. and the joint attention and social interaction and communication factors in this study.

For the ADI-R items from the restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped behavior domain, many factor analysis studies have consistently found two factors: repetitive sensory-motor actions (RMSA) or lower-order repetitive behaviors, and insistence on sameness (IS) or higher-order repetitive behaviors.^{13,32} There were also two factors for this ADI-R domain in our study (Table 2). Our repetitive sensory-motor behavior factor was similar to the RMSA factor in the previous studies. However, the compulsion/restricted interests factor was different from the IS factor. It was also different from the third factor (circumscribed interests) in Lam et al.³³ This might be due to the fact that non-algorithm items were used in previous studies whereas we included

only the algorithm items for which we had the most complete data. Using AGPII, we found that the compulsion/restricted interests factor was positively correlated with verbal IQ after adjusting for age at ADI-R assessment, verbal/nonverbal status, and gender ($p = .003$). In contrast, the repetitive sensory-motor behavior factor was negatively correlated with verbal ($p = .01$) and performance IQ ($p = .05$). These results demonstrate that these two factors are distinct from each other and correspond to the lower-/higher-order repetitive behaviors defined in previous studies.

All of the empirically derived factors in this study have shown familial aggregation. However, the proportion of the total common variance that a factor could explain was not a reliable predictor of heritability estimates. For example, the compulsion/restricted interests factor accounted for the smallest proportion of the total common variance (3%) but had the highest heritability (65%) (Table 2). In addition, as has been reported before,³⁴ heritability estimates are also not reliable predictors of the results of linkage analysis; for example, the most significant linkage signal in this study was found for the repetitive sensory-motor behavior factor (with a heritability estimate of 0.54) rather than the compulsion/restricted interests factor, which had the highest heritability estimate (0.65).

Two regions with strong evidence of linkage were highlighted in this study: (1) at 11q23.1 to q23.3 for the joint attention factor with the 1-LOD score range (peak LOD score minus 1) of 5.8 Mb (from 110.9 to 116.7 Mb based on NCBI build 35) containing 83 genes including neural cell adhesion molecule 1 gene (NCAM1), dopamine receptor D2 (DRD2), and 5-hydroxytryptamine receptor 3A and 3B (HTR3A and HTR3B); and (2) at 19q13.32 to q13.33 for the repetitive sensory-motor behavior factor with the 1-LOD score range of 3.3Mb (from 51.3 to 54.6 Mb) containing 122 genes including the solute carrier family 8 (sodium-calcium exchanger), member 2 gene (SLC8A2). The candidate genes at these two regions have been associated with ASD and other psychiatric and neurodevelopmental diseases.³⁵⁻⁴⁰ However, neither of these two regions overlaps with the apparent linkage regions in previous AGP linkage studies.^{22,24,41} This is not surprising, as two of these studies used the ASD diagnosis as a primary outcome,^{24,41} and the third study used either subsets of families or ADI-R domain total scores as primary traits.²² These two regions also did not overlap with

the reported linkage regions from other linkage studies of ASD.^{42,43} On the other hand, in a meta-analysis of 20 linkage studies for schizophrenia,⁴⁴ the 11q22.3 to q24.1 region was ranked as the fourth most significant linkage region. The 19q13.32 to q13.33 region (51.3–54.6 Mb) in our study also overlaps with a linkage region for schizophrenia using subjects with positive family history from Aberdeen, Scotland.⁴⁵ Recent studies have reported common genes involved in both ASD and schizophrenia.^{46,47} If our linkage analysis results at these loci are replicated, further study will be needed to determine whether the derived factors and schizophrenia share common variants at these regions.

There are several limitations to this study. First, because of the lack of IQ measures in AGPI, we were not able to use IQ as a covariate in the model. Second, for the factor analysis, only the ADI-R algorithm items were used instead of all the items. Third, the AGPI families were used in several linkage studies before.^{22,24,41} Because the primary traits and analysis methods used in the previous studies were very different from those applied in this study, no multiple testing correction was made. However, the analyses presented here do represent secondary analyses and need to be seen in that context. Finally, the linkage analyses in this study involve six quantitative traits, two sets of families (all families versus those of European ancestry), and two statistical models (with and without covariates). It has been shown that “maximizing” the LOD score over different model parameter values inflates the LOD scores.⁴⁸ When all six factors were considered with a total of 6,000 simulated genome-wide scans, 221 had a LOD score of 4.0 or greater and 37 had a LOD score of 4.92 or greater. Therefore, the *p* value for the linkage locus at 11q23 for the joint attention factor was .04, and was .006 for the repetitive sensory–motor factor at 19q13. Because of the overlap between the two sets of families and the similarity of the two statistical models, the final number of tests was equivalent to 1.53 independent tests.⁴⁹ As a result, the final significance level was 0.06 for the linkage signal at

11q23 for the joint attention factor, and was 0.009 at 19q13 for the repetitive sensory–motor factor, which was genome-wide significant.

In addition to their application in genetic studies of ASD, the empirical factors in this study could also be useful in clinical practice. Of the six factors, peer interaction, nonverbal communication, and compulsion/restricted interests were highly correlated ($r \geq 0.35$) with ADI-R items from “reciprocal social interaction,” “communication,” and “repetitive and stereotyped behavior” domains, respectively, whereas the remaining three factors were highly correlated with the items from more than one of the three domains. More studies are needed to determine whether these factors correspond with the true areas of deficits in the ASD subjects and whether the factor scores can be used as a “proxy” of severity in ASD. ϵ

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SUPPLEMENT 1

METHOD

Study Samples

The following criteria were applied to subject selection: (1) met the “autism” diagnosis by the ADI-R algorithm or “ASD” by the ASD1 or ASD2 criteria according to Risi et al.¹; (2) ≥ 4 and ≤ 20 years old when the ADI-R was administered (because of the instability of verbal/nonverbal status and repetitive behaviours in very young children, and poor recall for the “ever” items for the older ASD subjects); (3) were selected for genotyping so population origin could be estimated using the genotype data; (4) had verbal/nonverbal status recorded; (5) had no missing values for any of the 28 ADI-R algorithm items.

Genetic Markers

The genetic markers had a mean intermarker distance of 0.68 cM (standard deviation [SD] = 1.00), and a mean minor allele frequency of 0.31 (SD = 0.12). The Rutgers genetic map² was used as the basis for linear interpolation for the genetic locations of the SNPs using the physical locations from NCBI build 35.³ Because the linkage analysis program Merlin⁴ assumes a no-interference model, the Kosambi map was converted into the Haldane map, and results are reported on the Kosambi scale. The marker allele frequencies were calculated using the founders from all the AGPI families or Caucasian families. Because 84% of the parents were genotyped in AGPI, differences in allele frequency estimates due to ethnic variation should have little effect on the linkage results.

Simulations

Marker data for the whole genome was simulated based on the marker informativeness, spacing, and missing data patterns in the original AGPI dataset assuming no linkage to the factors. One thousand simulations of the genotype data were generated. The original factor scores, covariates, and pedigree structures were preserved. According to Lander and Kruglyak,⁵ genome-wide suggestive evidence for linkage was defined as “statistical evidence that would be expected to occur one time at random in a genome scan” (i.e., 1,000 times in 1,000 simulations, or the 1,000th maximum LOD score with one maximum LOD score selected from each simulation), and genome-wide significant evidence for linkage was “expected to occur 0.05 times in a genome scan” (i.e., 50 times in 1,000 simulations, or the 50th maximum LOD score). The accuracy of the simulation results is conditioned on the assumptions that the map positions are correct and the marker allele frequencies are known.

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TABLE S1 Factor Loading Patterns for the Subjects from the Autism Genome Project Phase II

ADI-R Item	Factor 1 Social Interaction and Communication	Factor 2 Joint Attention	Factor 3 Peer Interaction	Factor 4 Nonverbal Communication	Factor 5 Repetitive Sensory–Motor Behavior	Factor 6 Compulsion/ Restricted Interests
Social domain						
Direct gaze	0.10	0.62	0.24	0.00	0.16	0.05
Social smiling	0.21	0.62	0.16	0.20	0.11	0.26
Range of facial expressions used to communicate	0.28	0.42	0.18	0.21	0.08	0.34
Imaginative play with peers	0.70	0.19	0.39	0.14	0.21	−0.02
Interest in children	0.27	0.26	0.67	0.10	0.10	0.06
Response to approaches of other children	0.19	0.29	0.77	0.06	0.17	−0.03
Group play with peers	0.51	0.17	0.53	0.15	0.09	0.12
Showing and directing attention	0.47	0.49	0.10	0.23	0.22	−0.14
Offering to share	0.43	0.34	0.27	0.18	0.19	−0.07
Seeking to share enjoyment with others	0.27	0.53	0.15	0.16	0.16	−0.09
Use of other's body to communicate	0.07	0.11	0.11	0.21	0.44	−0.24
Offering comfort	0.49	0.34	0.20	0.23	0.12	0.15
Quality of social overtures	0.23	0.62	0.31	0.09	0.21	−0.04
Appropriateness of social responses	0.30	0.49	0.30	0.10	0.24	0.10
Communication						
Pointing to express interest	0.35	0.34	0.12	0.38	0.26	−0.25
Nodding	0.21	0.18	0.09	0.87	0.26	−0.13
Head shaking	0.26	0.14	0.12	0.85	0.12	0.12
Conventional/instrumental gestures	0.49	0.32	0.14	0.41	0.18	0.11
Spontaneous imitation of actions	0.64	0.24	0.12	0.18	0.10	0.12
Imaginative play	0.68	0.20	0.33	0.09	0.25	0.03
Imitative social play	0.25	0.32	0.50	0.08	0.10	−0.09
Behavior						
Unusual preoccupations	0.02	−0.07	−0.02	0.08	0.15	0.40
Circumscribed interests	−0.02	0.01	−0.02	−0.12	−0.01	0.36
Compulsions/rituals	0.07	0.13	0.05	0.05	0.13	0.42
Hand and finger mannerisms	0.11	0.14	0.06	0.07	0.40	0.14
Other complex mannerisms or stereotyped body movements	0.02	0.09	0.10	0.02	0.38	0.05
Repetitive use of objects or interest in parts of objects	0.22	0.10	0.05	0.10	0.47	0.24
Unusual sensory interests	0.16	0.10	0.03	0.09	0.50	0.15
Common variance explained (%)						
before rotation	70.7	10.9	7.9	6.0	4.9	4.1
after rotation	24.5	22.4	17.4	16.4	11.9	7.5

Note: Boldface data indicate loading ≥ 0.35 . ADIR = Autism Diagnostic Interview—Revised.

TABLE S2 Factor Loading Patterns When Two to Five Factors Were Retained for the Subjects from the Autism Genome Project Phase I

ADI-R Item	Two Factors		Three Factors			Four Factors				Five Factors				
	Fac 1	Fac 2	Fac 1	Fac 2	Fac 3	Fac 1	Fac 2	Fac 3	Fac 4	Fac 1	Fac 2	Fac 3	Fac 4	Fac 5
Social domain														
Direct gaze	0.51	0.20	0.49	0.28	-0.01	0.43	0.12	0.16	0.45	0.40	0.11	0.15	0.13	0.46
Social smiling	0.63	0.27	0.65	0.20	0.09	0.59	0.23	0.08	0.39	0.59	0.22	0.06	0.13	0.42
Range of facial expressions used to communicate	0.53	0.25	0.54	0.22	0.08	0.48	0.20	0.11	0.36	0.48	0.19	0.10	0.09	0.39
Imaginative play with peers	0.65	0.26	0.69	0.15	0.09	0.74	0.07	0.21	-0.17	0.69	0.07	0.19	0.28	-0.15
Interest in children	0.69	0.16	0.69	0.13	0.00	0.66	0.09	0.08	0.20	0.46	0.10	0.10	0.62	0.19
Response to approaches of other children	0.65	0.19	0.65	0.16	0.02	0.62	0.11	0.11	0.20	0.42	0.13	0.14	0.62	0.20
Group play with peers	0.62	0.17	0.65	0.06	0.06	0.64	0.10	0.06	0.04	0.50	0.12	0.07	0.48	0.03
Showing and directing attention	0.59	0.41	0.65	0.21	0.23	0.64	0.27	0.21	0.02	0.65	0.25	0.19	0.12	0.04
Offering to share	0.53	0.37	0.58	0.20	0.21	0.58	0.22	0.22	-0.04	0.58	0.21	0.20	0.15	-0.03
Seeking to share enjoyment with others	0.56	0.36	0.62	0.17	0.21	0.58	0.29	0.12	0.15	0.56	0.28	0.11	0.18	0.16
Use of other's body to communicate	0.22	0.42	0.24	0.37	0.21	0.25	0.20	0.41	-0.08	0.23	0.20	0.41	0.11	-0.09
Offering comfort	0.55	0.29	0.58	0.19	0.12	0.58	0.15	0.20	0.02	0.59	0.13	0.18	0.12	0.04
Quality of social overtures	0.62	0.31	0.65	0.21	0.12	0.61	0.22	0.15	0.25	0.61	0.20	0.12	0.13	0.27
Appropriateness of social responses	0.63	0.20	0.63	0.18	0.02	0.61	0.11	0.12	0.21	0.59	0.10	0.11	0.16	0.24
Communication														
Pointing to express interest	0.39	0.49	0.45	0.29	0.31	0.42	0.35	0.27	0.08	0.43	0.34	0.25	0.09	0.09
Nodding	0.17	0.86	0.33	0.26	0.87	0.26	0.92	0.23	-0.01	0.23	0.94	0.24	0.13	-0.02
Head shaking	0.19	0.77	0.35	0.22	0.76	0.29	0.80	0.19	0.01	0.31	0.78	0.18	0.05	0.02
Conventional/instrumental gestures	0.56	0.50	0.64	0.21	0.34	0.62	0.39	0.20	0.06	0.61	0.38	0.18	0.15	0.08
Spontaneous imitation of actions	0.53	0.26	0.54	0.23	0.06	0.56	0.07	0.26	-0.03	0.60	0.05	0.23	0.04	-0.01
Imaginative play	0.61	0.30	0.62	0.28	0.07	0.66	0.06	0.33	-0.09	0.66	0.05	0.31	0.16	-0.08
Imitative social play	0.64	0.16	0.62	0.20	-0.04	0.62	0.02	0.18	0.12	0.55	0.02	0.18	0.28	0.12
Behavior														
Unusual preoccupations	0.13	0.19	0.11	0.26	0.03	0.07	0.10	0.20	0.25	0.06	0.10	0.21	0.05	0.24
Circumscribed interests	0.11	-0.12	0.05	0.08	-0.19	0.00	-0.10	-0.03	0.41	-0.03	-0.10	-0.01	0.03	0.40
Compulsions/rituals	0.12	0.10	0.07	0.27	-0.06	0.02	0.02	0.19	0.36	0.00	0.02	0.20	0.03	0.35
Hand and finger mannerisms	0.23	0.37	0.18	0.56	0.07	0.17	0.10	0.53	0.15	0.16	0.10	0.54	0.08	0.14
Other complex mannerisms or stereotyped body movements	0.18	0.32	0.13	0.51	0.05	0.12	0.08	0.49	0.13	0.12	0.07	0.49	0.04	0.12
Repetitive use of objects or interest in parts of objects	0.31	0.39	0.26	0.59	0.05	0.27	0.06	0.62	0.05	0.29	0.05	0.61	0.03	0.05
Unusual sensory interests	0.15	0.37	0.09	0.59	0.07	0.09	0.10	0.57	0.13	0.09	0.10	0.57	0.03	0.12

Note: Boldface data indicate loading ≥ 0.35 . ADIR = Autism Diagnostic Interview—Revised; Fac = factor.

TABLE S3 Factor Loading Patterns When Two to Five Factors Were Retained for the Subjects from the Autism Genome Project Phase II

ADI-R Item	Two Factors		Three Factors			Four Factors				Five Factors				
	Fac 1	Fac 2	Fac 1	Fac 2	Fac 3	Fac 1	Fac 2	Fac 3	Fac 4	Fac 1	Fac 2	Fac 3	Fac 4	Fac 5
Social domain														
Direct gaze	0.57	0.07	0.55	0.08	0.17	0.24	0.06	0.64	0.12	0.25	0.03	0.63	0.16	0.04
Social smiling	0.57	0.25	0.50	0.23	0.36	0.26	0.22	0.52	0.33	0.25	0.26	0.60	0.10	0.27
Range of facial expressions used to communicate	0.51	0.25	0.43	0.20	0.40	0.32	0.19	0.33	0.38	0.31	0.26	0.39	0.07	0.35
Imaginative play with peers	0.71	0.31	0.68	0.34	0.15	0.76	0.30	0.16	0.13	0.77	0.27	0.14	0.21	0.03
Interest in children	0.69	0.07	0.69	0.11	0.07	0.63	0.08	0.32	0.05	0.63	0.06	0.31	0.11	0.00
Response to approaches of other children	0.72	0.04	0.74	0.08	0.01	0.63	0.06	0.40	-0.01	0.63	0.00	0.36	0.17	-0.09
Group play with peers	0.68	0.19	0.66	0.21	0.17	0.74	0.17	0.15	0.16	0.73	0.18	0.16	0.09	0.12
Showing and directing attention	0.58	0.42	0.55	0.44	0.11	0.40	0.43	0.42	0.07	0.41	0.38	0.41	0.22	-0.06
Offering to share	0.58	0.30	0.56	0.33	0.10	0.49	0.31	0.31	0.07	0.49	0.27	0.30	0.18	-0.03
Seeking to share enjoyment with others	0.52	0.28	0.51	0.30	0.09	0.29	0.30	0.50	0.04	0.29	0.25	0.49	0.16	-0.05
Use of other's body to communicate	0.20	0.33	0.20	0.35	-0.01	0.12	0.35	0.20	-0.03	0.12	0.22	0.11	0.44	-0.25
Offering comfort	0.57	0.34	0.51	0.33	0.28	0.47	0.31	0.25	0.26	0.47	0.34	0.29	0.11	0.19
Quality of social overtures	0.67	0.18	0.66	0.21	0.13	0.37	0.20	0.64	0.07	0.38	0.14	0.62	0.21	-0.04
Appropriateness of social responses	0.66	0.20	0.61	0.20	0.26	0.42	0.19	0.49	0.22	0.42	0.16	0.47	0.23	0.11
Communication														
Pointing to express interest	0.42	0.52	0.42	0.58	-0.02	0.32	0.57	0.32	-0.05	0.32	0.48	0.29	0.25	-0.21
Nodding	0.21	0.89	0.17	0.92	0.09	0.17	0.91	0.12	0.07	0.16	0.86	0.15	0.25	-0.13
Head shaking	0.25	0.79	0.18	0.76	0.23	0.23	0.75	0.05	0.22	0.22	0.80	0.11	0.13	0.09
Conventional/instrumental gestures	0.51	0.54	0.44	0.53	0.29	0.43	0.51	0.22	0.27	0.43	0.53	0.25	0.17	0.16
Spontaneous imitation of actions	0.53	0.35	0.48	0.34	0.26	0.52	0.31	0.13	0.25	0.52	0.35	0.16	0.10	0.19
Imaginative play	0.69	0.28	0.65	0.29	0.21	0.70	0.26	0.19	0.20	0.71	0.22	0.15	0.24	0.09
Imitative social play	0.62	0.09	0.64	0.14	-0.03	0.53	0.12	0.37	-0.06	0.53	0.07	0.35	0.10	-0.12
Behavior														
Unusual preoccupations	0.03	0.09	-0.07	0.01	0.42	-0.01	0.02	-0.08	0.43	-0.01	0.07	-0.07	0.15	0.39
Circumscribed interests	0.03	-0.13	-0.03	-0.20	0.31	-0.02	-0.20	-0.01	0.32	-0.03	-0.13	0.02	-0.01	0.36
Compulsions/rituals	0.20	0.07	0.11	-0.01	0.46	0.08	-0.01	0.11	0.45	0.08	0.05	0.13	0.12	0.41
Hand and finger mannerisms	0.25	0.20	0.19	0.16	0.30	0.11	0.16	0.20	0.28	0.11	0.09	0.13	0.40	0.15
Other complex mannerisms or stereotyped body movements	0.20	0.12	0.15	0.10	0.18	0.08	0.11	0.18	0.16	0.08	0.01	0.10	0.38	0.04
Repetitive use of objects or interest in parts of objects	0.30	0.26	0.20	0.21	0.42	0.17	0.21	0.15	0.40	0.18	0.15	0.08	0.46	0.26
Unusual sensory interests	0.26	0.26	0.18	0.22	0.34	0.12	0.22	0.17	0.32	0.12	0.14	0.08	0.50	0.17

Note: Boldface data indicate loading ≥ 0.35 . ADIR = Autism Diagnostic Interview—Revised; Fac = factor.

TABLE S4 Factor Loading Patterns for 100 Random Samples from the Subjects of the Autism Genome Project Phase I

ADI-R Item	Factor 1 Social Interaction and Communication		Factor 2 Joint Attention		Factor 3 Nonverbal Communication		Factor 4 Repetitive Sensory-Motor Behavior		Factor 5 Peer Interaction		Factor 6 Compulsion/Restricted Interests	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Social domain												
Direct gaze	0.11	0.05	0.55	0.04	0.06	0.03	0.19	0.04	0.18	0.04	0.22	0.06
Social domain	0.26	0.06	0.64	0.04	0.17	0.03	0.10	0.03	0.19	0.04	0.18	0.05
Range of facial expressions used to communicate	0.22	0.06	0.52	0.05	0.16	0.03	0.12	0.04	0.15	0.05	0.20	0.05
Imaginative play with peers	0.64	0.06	0.23	0.07	0.12	0.03	0.15	0.03	0.33	0.07	-0.09	0.04
Interest in children	0.26	0.07	0.35	0.05	0.09	0.03	0.12	0.03	0.65	0.05	0.07	0.04
Response to approaches of other children	0.23	0.07	0.32	0.05	0.12	0.03	0.16	0.03	0.65	0.04	0.09	0.04
Group play with peers	0.40	0.07	0.22	0.06	0.15	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.53	0.06	0.05	0.04
Showing and directing attention	0.45	0.08	0.44	0.08	0.25	0.03	0.19	0.04	0.17	0.06	-0.06	0.05
Offering to share	0.47	0.07	0.30	0.07	0.24	0.04	0.18	0.04	0.19	0.06	-0.04	0.05
Seeking to share enjoyment with others	0.31	0.08	0.47	0.07	0.27	0.04	0.13	0.04	0.23	0.06	0.01	0.05
Use of other's body to communicate	0.17	0.05	0.11	0.04	0.20	0.04	0.43	0.04	0.13	0.04	-0.13	0.05
Offering comfort	0.46	0.06	0.34	0.07	0.15	0.03	0.16	0.03	0.16	0.05	0.00	0.05
Quality of social overtures	0.31	0.07	0.59	0.05	0.17	0.03	0.16	0.03	0.19	0.05	0.04	0.04
Appropriateness of social responses	0.31	0.07	0.55	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.14	0.03	0.21	0.05	0.02	0.05
Communication												
Pointing to express interest	0.26	0.06	0.34	0.06	0.33	0.04	0.27	0.04	0.13	0.05	-0.02	0.05
Nodding	0.13	0.04	0.19	0.04	0.93	0.02	0.23	0.03	0.14	0.03	0.00	0.03
Head shaking	0.21	0.04	0.21	0.04	0.81	0.02	0.15	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.05	0.03
Conventional/instrumental gestures	0.46	0.06	0.38	0.06	0.40	0.03	0.15	0.03	0.20	0.05	0.06	0.04
Spontaneous imitation of actions	0.59	0.05	0.25	0.06	0.09	0.03	0.17	0.04	0.07	0.05	0.07	0.05
Imaginative play	0.69	0.04	0.20	0.06	0.11	0.03	0.23	0.04	0.19	0.06	0.04	0.04
Imitative social play	0.42	0.07	0.32	0.06	0.04	0.03	0.16	0.03	0.33	0.06	0.09	0.04
Behavior												
Unusual preoccupations	0.10	0.05	0.02	0.04	0.13	0.04	0.15	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.40	0.07
Circumscribed interests	-0.04	0.03	0.09	0.04	-0.10	0.03	-0.07	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.52	0.07
Compulsions/rituals	-0.02	0.04	0.09	0.05	0.02	0.03	0.16	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.41	0.06
Hand and finger mannerisms	0.10	0.03	0.15	0.04	0.09	0.03	0.56	0.04	0.10	0.04	0.08	0.05

TABLE S4 Continued

ADI-R Item	Factor 1 Social Interaction and Communication		Factor 2 Joint Attention		Factor 3 Nonverbal Communication		Factor 4 Repetitive Sensory-Motor Behavior		Factor 5 Peer Interaction		Factor 6 Compulsion/Restricted Interests	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Other complex mannerisms or stereotyped body movements	0.11	0.03	0.10	0.04	0.07	0.03	0.48	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.12	0.04
Repetitive use of objects or interest in parts of objects	0.34	0.04	0.07	0.04	0.08	0.03	0.56	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.15	0.05
Unusual sensory interests	0.05	0.04	0.11	0.04	0.08	0.03	0.60	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.05
Common variance explained (%)												
before rotation	70	1	11	0.6	8	0.5	7	0.4	4	0.3	3	0.3
after rotation	24.2	5	23.9	4	16.7	0.8	15	0.7	13.7	2	6.5	0.6

Note: Boldface data indicate loading ≥ 0.35 . ADIR = Autism Diagnostic Interview—Revised.

TABLE S5 Comparison of the Factor Loading Patterns for the Subjects from the Autism Genome Project (AGP) Phases I and II (Coefficients of Congruence)

	AGPII_1	AGPII_2	AGPII_3	AGPII_4	AGPII_5	AGPII_6
AGPI_1	0.77	0.99	0.75	0.58	0.64	0.24
AGPI_2	0.98	0.77	0.76	0.58	0.68	0.16
AGPI_3	0.59	0.55	0.41	0.99	0.57	0.02
AGPI_4	0.58	0.57	0.47	0.52	0.98	0.23
AGPI_5	0.71	0.70	0.97	0.43	0.53	0.12
AGPI_6	0.19	0.32	0.25	0.12	0.31	0.84

Note: Boldface data indicate the highest coefficients, by row and column. AGPI = subjects from AGP phase I; AGPII = subjects from AGP phase II.

TABLE S6 Covariate Effects for the Derived Factors Using the Subjects from the Autism Genome Project (AGP) Phase I (Regression Coefficient [p Value])^a

Covariate	Categorical Level ²	Sample Size	Factor 1 Joint Attention	Factor 2 Social Interaction and Communication	Transformed Factor 3 Nonverbal Communication	Factor 4 Repetitive Sensory-Motor Behavior	Factor 5 Peer Interaction	Factor 6 Compulsion/Restricted Interests
Age at ADI-R (months)		1,236	0.02 (1E-16)	0.01 (3E-07)	-0.01 (0.009)	0.002 (0.5)	0.006 (0.07)	0.01 (3E-07)
(Age at ADI-R) ²		1,236	-0.00008 (2E-11)	-0.00005 (3E-05)	-0.00004 (0.02)	-0.00001 (0.2)	-0.00002 (0.1)	0.00004 (8E-05)
Gender	Female	246	0.2 (0.0003)	-0.1 (0.02)	0.06 (0.4)	-0.08 (0.1)	-0.06 (0.3)	-0.2 (1E-04)
Verbal/nonverbal status	Nonverbal	338	0.3 (2E-07)	0.5 (4E-18)	0.2 (0.005)	0.6 (1E-32)	0.2 (9E-06)	-0.3 (1E-10)
Population origin	Non-European ancestry	202	0.08 (0.3)	0.1 (0.03)	-0.2 (0.006)	0.08 (0.2)	0.1 (0.1)	-0.1 (0.02)
AGP site	CANAGEN	80	0.3 (0.001)	-0.2 (0.04)	-0.1 (0.3)	0.01 (0.9)	0.2 (0.1)	0.3 (0.003)
	CPEA	182	0.02 (0.8)	-0.7 (5E-20)	0.2 (0.02)	-0.1 (0.1)	-0.1 (0.2)	0.2 (0.01)
	DUKE	50	-0.4 (0.003)	-0.3 (0.03)	0.06 (0.7)	-0.02 (0.9)	-0.1 (0.4)	-0.1 (0.2)
	IMGSAC	330	0.2 (0.01)	-0.07 (0.3)	-0.03 (0.7)	-0.2 (1E-04)	0.1 (0.07)	0.2 (0.0009)
	INSERM	22	-0.4 (0.04)	-0.4 (0.04)	-0.3 (0.3)	-0.5 (0.003)	0.2 (0.4)	-0.3 (0.1)
	Mt. Sinai	14	0.3 (0.2)	-0.4 (0.09)	0.5 (0.08)	-0.05 (0.8)	-0.07 (0.8)	-0.2 (0.4)
	Stanford	64	0.5 (8E-06)	0.1 (0.2)	-0.03 (0.8)	0.3 (0.006)	0.4 (0.0004)	0.6 (3E-09)
	UNC	58	0.3 (0.007)	-0.5 (8E-05)	0.1 (0.4)	-0.2 (0.1)	0.2 (0.1)	0.02 (0.8)
	Vanderbilt	16	0.2 (0.3)	-0.2 (0.3)	-0.03 (0.9)	-0.4 (0.06)	-0.2 (0.4)	-0.2 (0.3)

Note: ADI-R = Autism Diagnostic Interview—Revised; CANAGEN = Canadian Autism Genetics; CPEA = Collaborative Programs of Excellence in Autism; IMGSAC = International Molecular Genetic Study of Autism Consortium; INSERM = Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale; UNC = University of North Carolina.

^aBoldface data indicate $p \leq .0001$. For the categorical covariates, the group that has the largest sample size, i.e., male for gender, verbal for verbal/nonverbal status, European ancestry for population origin, and Autism Genetics Resource Exchange (AGRE) for AGP site, was used as a reference.

TABLE S7 Heritability Estimates for the Derived Factors Using the Families from the Autism Genome Project Phase I (Heritability Estimate \pm Standard Error [p Value])^a

	All (618 Families)		European Ancestry (517 Families)	
	No Covariate	Four Covariates ^b	No Covariate	Four Covariates ^b
Factor 1				
Joint attention	0.61 \pm 0.08 (8×10^{-14})	0.52 \pm 0.08 (2×10^{-10})	0.56 \pm 0.09 (3×10^{-10})	0.50 \pm 0.09 (1×10^{-8})
Factor 2				
Social interaction and communication	0.63 \pm 0.07 (3×10^{-15})	0.58 \pm 0.08 (5×10^{-13})	0.57 \pm 0.08 (1×10^{-10})	0.49 \pm 0.09 (2×10^{-8})
Factor 3				
Nonverbal communication	0.50 \pm 0.08 (4×10^{-10})	0.49 \pm 0.08 (8×10^{-10})	0.48 \pm 0.08 (2×10^{-8})	0.47 \pm 0.08 (5×10^{-8})
Factor 4				
Repetitive sensory–motor behavior	0.46 \pm 0.08 (6×10^{-9})	0.51 \pm 0.08 (2×10^{-10})	0.46 \pm 0.09 (1×10^{-7})	0.54 \pm 0.08 (6×10^{-10})
Factor 5				
Peer interaction	0.32 \pm 0.08 (0.00005)	0.33 \pm 0.08 (0.00003)	0.27 \pm 0.09 (0.001)	0.29 \pm 0.09 (0.0006)
Factor 6				
Compulsion/restricted interests	0.69 \pm 0.07 (9×10^{-18})	0.64 \pm 0.07 (2×10^{-15})	0.70 \pm 0.08 (9×10^{-16})	0.65 \pm 0.08 (1×10^{-13})

Note: ^aThe degree of statistical significance for all the heritability estimates decreased when only families of European ancestry (n = 517) were used compared with when all families (n = 618) were used, possibly because of the decrease in sample size. The effect of covariates on heritability estimates varied for different factors. For example, for analyses using the families of European ancestry, after adjusting for covariates, the heritability estimates decreased for the joint attention, social interaction and communication, and compulsion/restricted interests factors, increased for the repetitive sensory–motor behavior factor, but remained the same for the nonverbal communication and peer interaction factors.

^bAfter adjustment for four covariates: gender, age at Autism Diagnostic Interview—Revised (ADI-R) assessment, age squared, and verbal/nonverbal status.

FIGURE S1 Linkage analysis results for the derived factors by chromosome. Note: The factors were adjusted for covariates and the families of European ancestry were used. Factor 1 (purple): joint attention; factor 2 (green): social interaction and communication; factor 3 (red): non-verbal communication (rank transformed); factor 4 (cyan): repetitive sensory-motor behaviour; factor 5 (blue): peer interaction; and factor 6 (gold): compulsion/restricted interests. The left-hand side y-axis shows logarithm of the odds (LOD) scores, the right-hand side y-axis shows information contents (black dot). Of note, the information contents for the two highlighted regions with strong evidence of linkage on chromosomes 11 and 19 were reasonably high (mean=0.83, standard deviation=0.03).

FIGURE S1 Continued

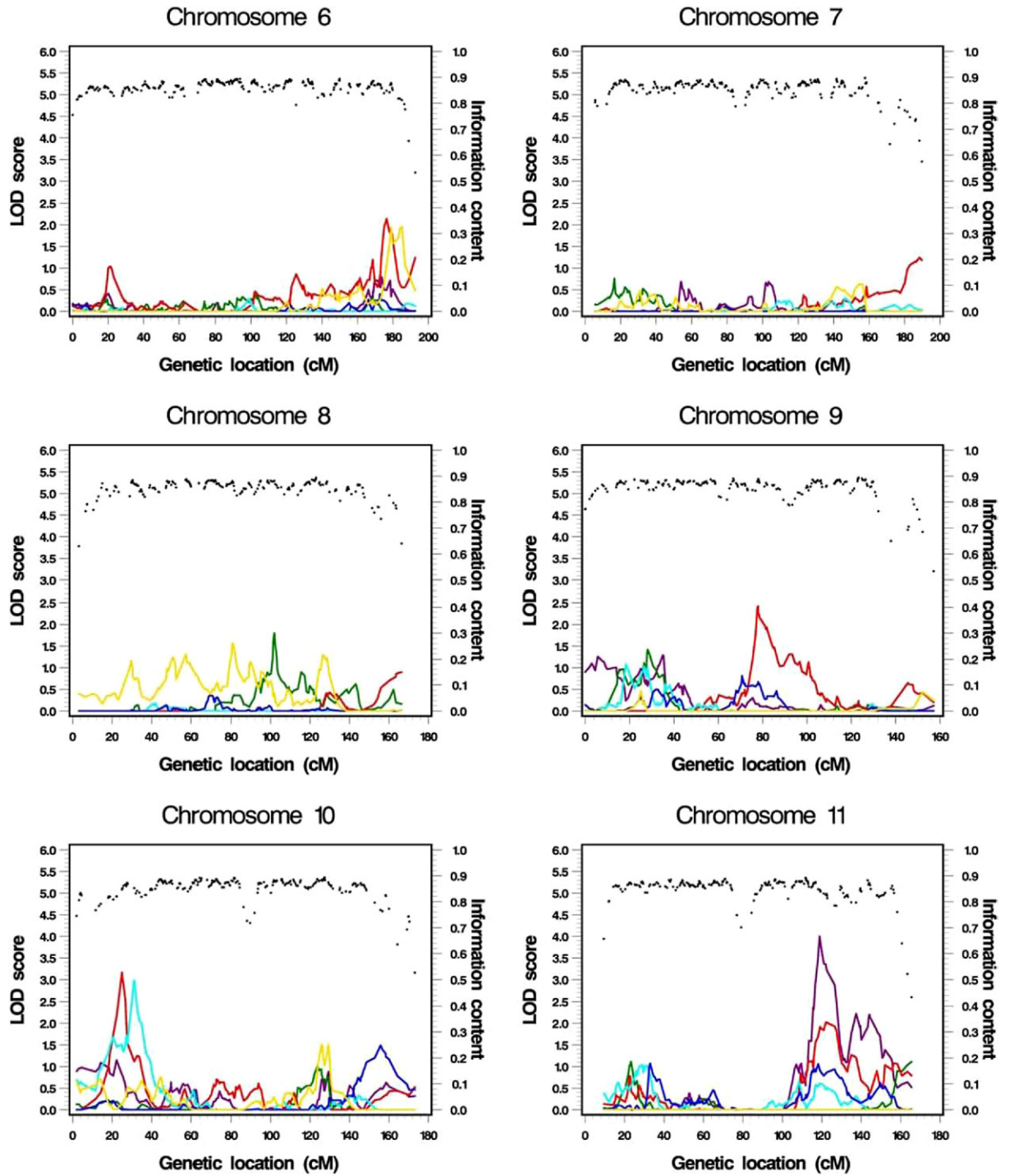


FIGURE S1 Continued

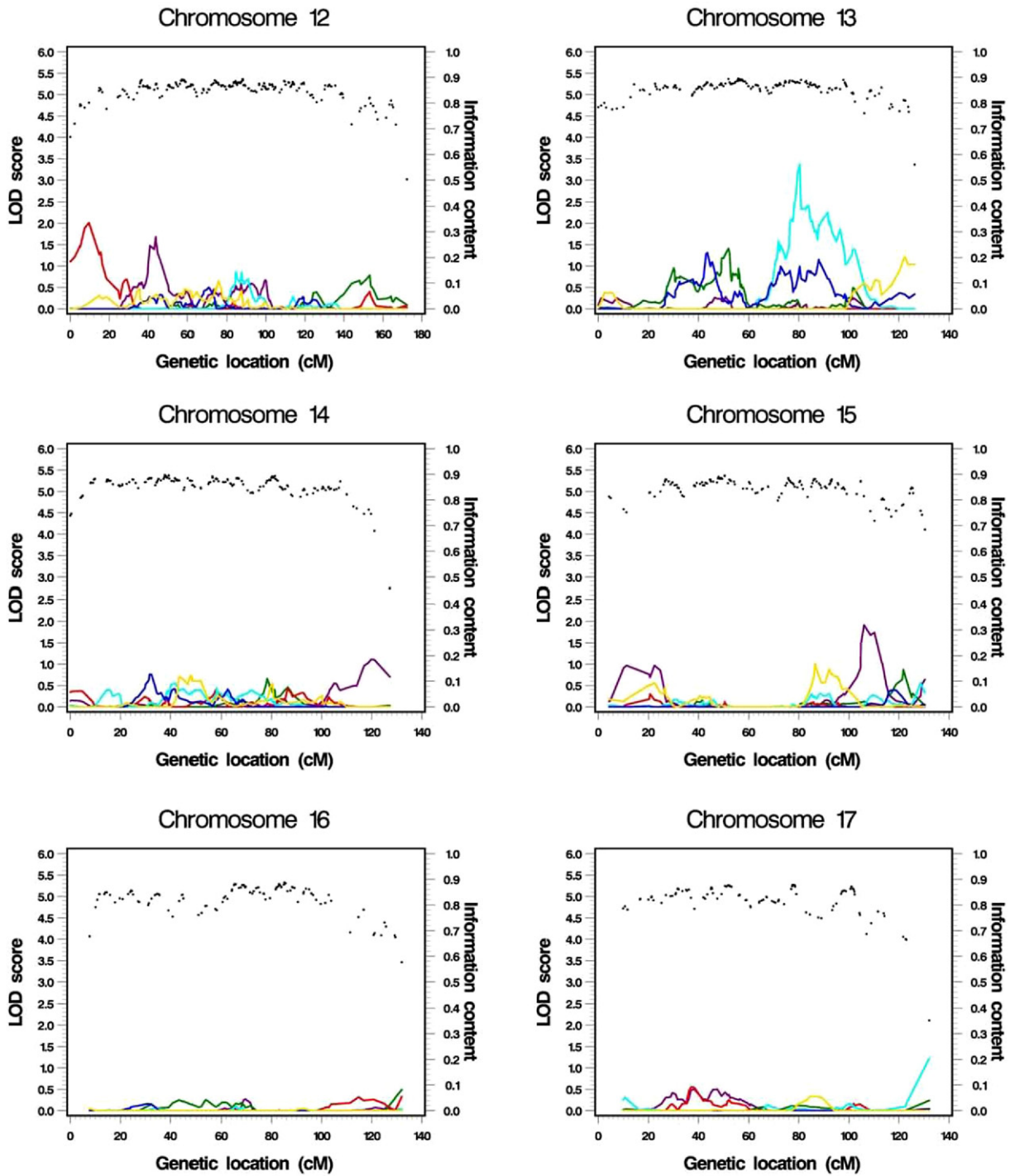


FIGURE S1 Continued

