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To the Editors of *Molecular Biology and Evolution*

We would like to submit our article titled 'Assessing the effects of date and sequence data in phylodynamics' for consideration as *Article* to *Molecular Biology and Evolution*.

At the core of all phylodynamic application lies the combination of genomic sequences with sampling times to parse evolutionary parameters in absolute time. In our manuscript we introduce a novel method to tease apart the effects of date and sequence data in phylodynamic analyses. The field has lacked a way to answer this question until now, and we expect our method will be of great interest to developers and users of phylodynamic models. Moreover, with the ever-increasing scale of pathogen genome sequencing our method provides a timely inroad to discussing optimal sampling design for phylodynamic studies.

The core results of our manuscript are:

- The first method to tease apart the signals of date and sequence data in phylodynamic analysis.
- Detailed discussion of how to interpret the output of our method with application to simulated and empirical data.
- Consistency with earlier results surrounding the relative impacts of date and sequence data under the birth-death phylodynamic model.

We believe that our report addresses a prescient question that will be of interest to readers of *Molecular Biology and Evolution* alongside other key contributions to the field published in the journal.

Yours sincerely,

Leo Featherstone (corresponding author)