# Introduction to Variant Discovery

Basic concepts, variant types and respective workflows



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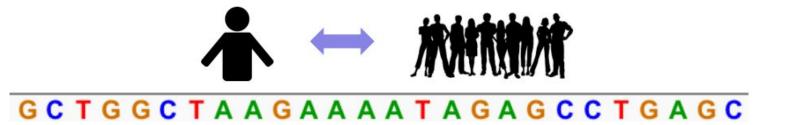
#### Human genomic variation

#### GTGGAGCTGGGAAAGCAGCTGGC AAAATAGAGCCTGAGCTTGATGGC CTCAAGTGACCTCTCACGACGCT

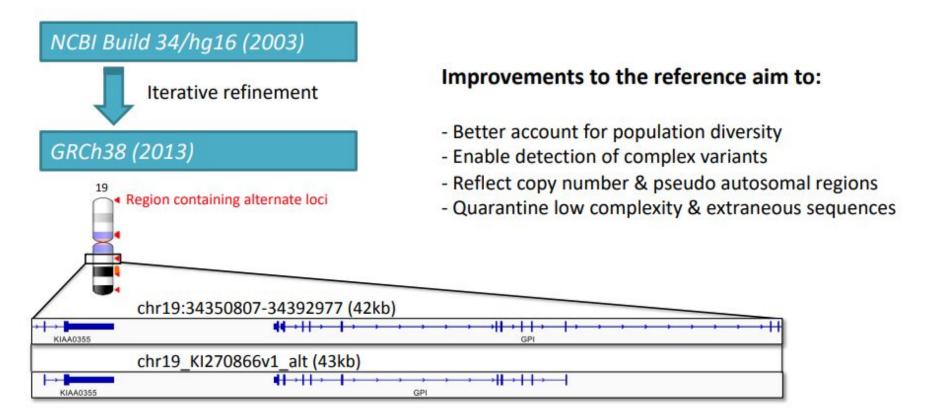
3 billions sites in the human genome

Human shares 99.5% DNA with any other human

Variant sites are commonly shared among human and most of these are biallelic



## Human genome reference build GRCh38



## Jan. 2022 (T2T CHM13v2.0/hs1) (hs1)

Summary	GRCh38p13	CHM13v1.1	±%
Assembled bases (Gbp)	2.92	3.05	+4.5%
Unplaced bases (Mbp)	11.42	O	-100.0%
Gap bases (Mbp)	120.31	О	-100.0%
# Contigs	949	24	-97.5%
Ctg NG50 (Mbp)	56.41	154.26	+173.5%
# Issues	230	46	-80.0%
Issues (Mbp)	230.43	8.18	-96.5%
Gene Annotation			
# Genes	60,090	63,494	+5.7%
protein coding	19,890	19,969	+0.4%
# Exclusive genes	263	3,604	
protein coding	63	140	
# Transcripts	228,597	233,615	+2.2%
protein coding	84,277	86,245	+2.3%
# Exclusive transcripts	1,708	6,693	
protein coding	829	2,780	
Segmental duplications (SD	s)		
% SDs	5.00%	6.61%	
SD bases (Mbp)	151.71	201.93	+33.1%
# SDs	24097	41528	+72.3%
RepeatMasker			
% Repeats	50.03%	53.94%	
Repeat bases (Mbp)	1,516.37	1,647.81	+8.7%
LINE	626.33	631.64	+0.8%
SINE	386.48	390.27	+1.0%
LTR	267.52	269.91	+0.9%
Satellite	76.51	150.42	+96.6%
DNA	108.53	109.35	+0.8%
Simple repeat	36.5	77.69	+112.9%
Low complexity	6.16	6.44	+4.6%
Retroposon	4.51	4.65	+3.3%
rRNA	0.21	1.71	+730.4%

### What is variant calling?

Identification of probable variants in an alignment.

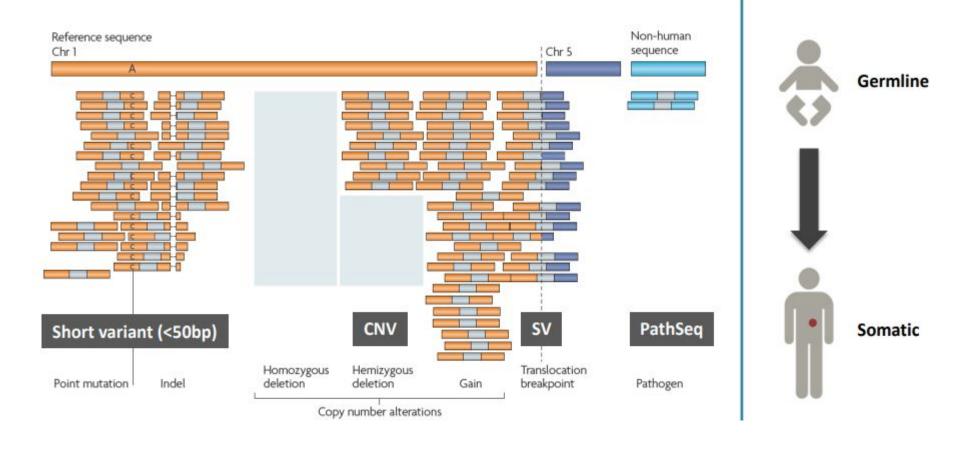
#### Four main types of variants:

- 1. Single nucleotide polymorphisms(SNPs) / Short indels
- 2. Copy number variations
- 3. Structural variants
- 4. Microsatellite Instability

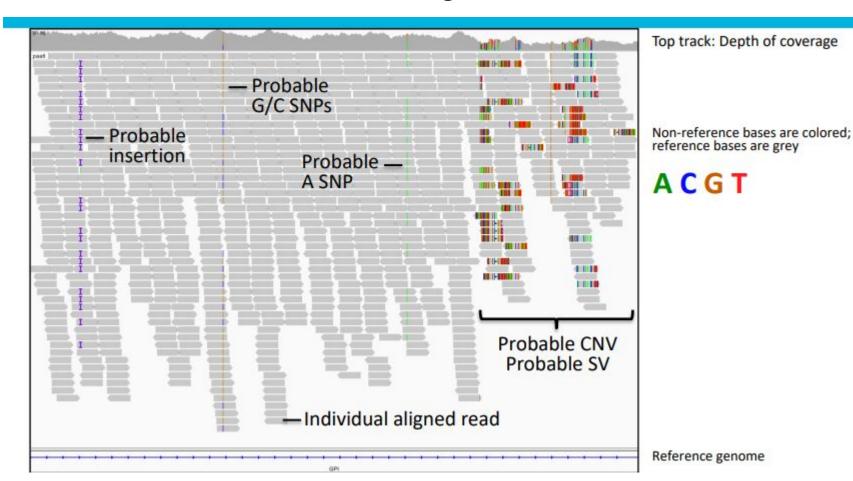
#### 2 main types of variant classifications:

- 1. Germline variants
- 2. Somatic variants

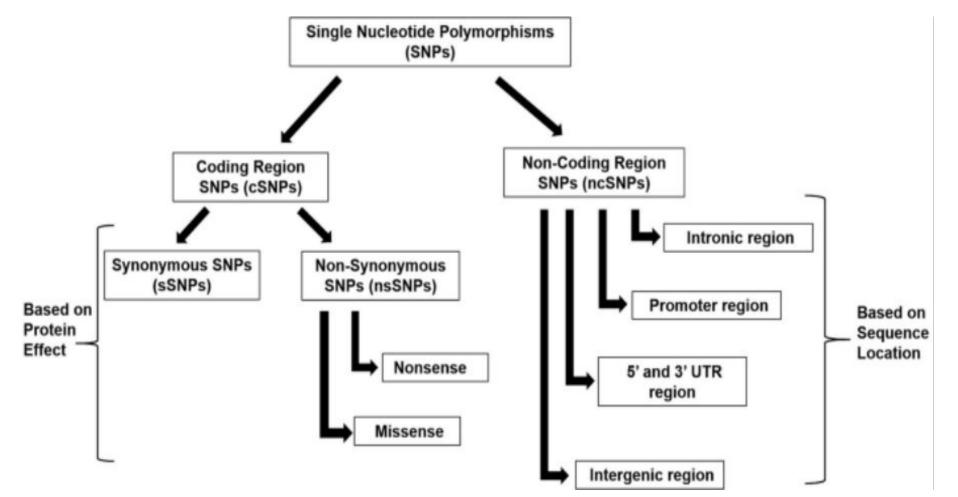
### Different types of genomic variants



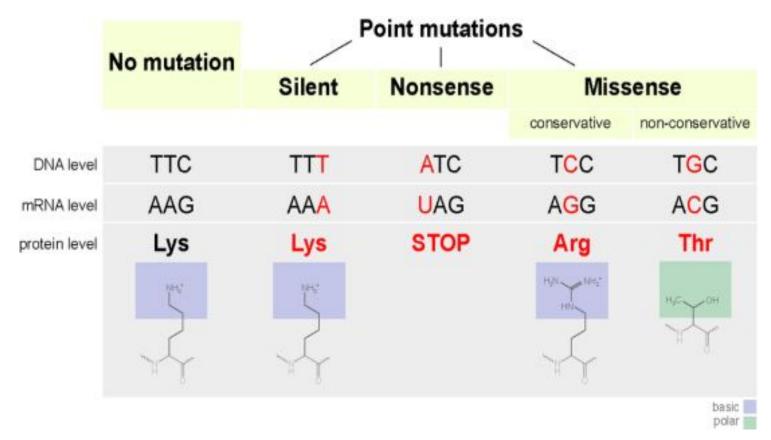
### What variants look like in a genome browser



#### **SNPs classifications**

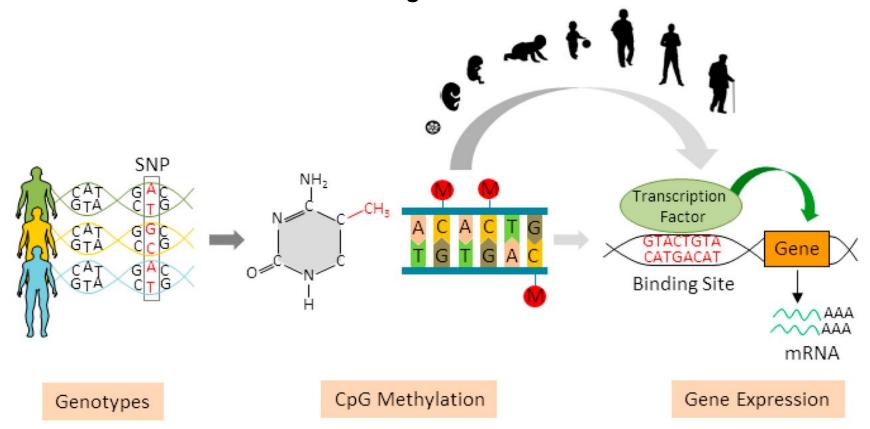


#### **SNP/SNV**



https://www.differencebetween.com/what-is-the-difference-between-point-mutations-and-indels/

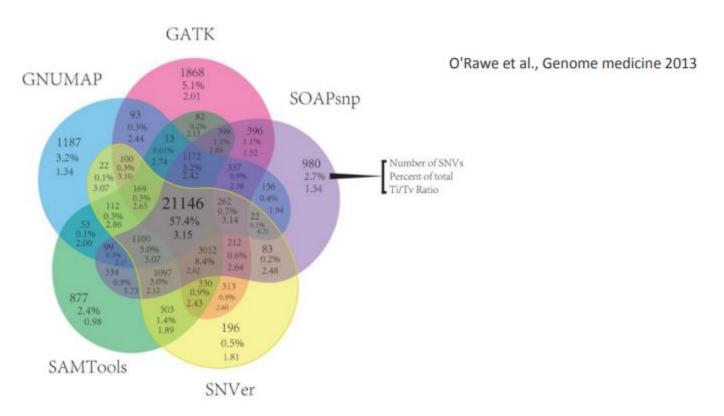
# Associations between SNPs, methylation patterns and gene expression of biological traits



## Variant calling tools

	Germline	Somatic
SNPs/Indels	Haplotypecaller, FreeBayes, Strelka, DeepVariant, mpileup	Mutect2, FreeBayes, Strelka
CNV	CNVKit	ASCAT, CNVKit, Control-FREEC
Structural variants	Manta, TIDDIT	
Microsatellite Instability	NA	MSIsensorpro

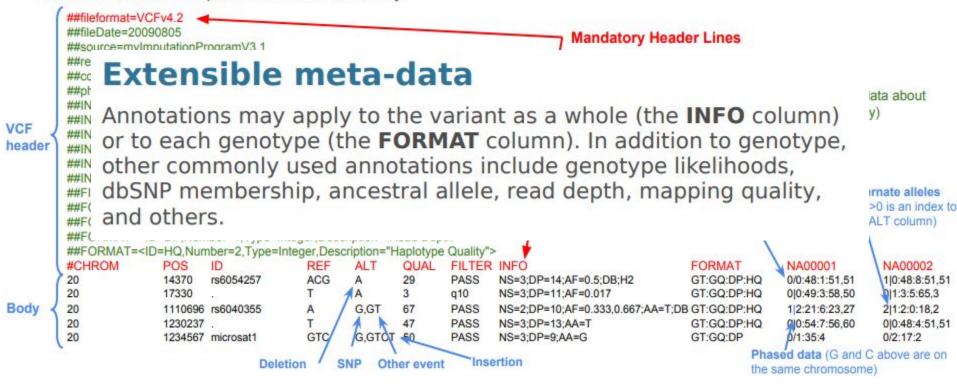
#### Variant callers are **not** concordant



Mean single-nucleotide variants (SNV) concordance over 15 exomes between five alignment and variant-calling pipelines

### Variants are reported in **VCF** (Variant Call Format)

Standardised format for storing the most prevalent types of sequence variations Text file format in 2 parts: header and body.



#### VCF: Variant Call Format (2)

#### **Types of variants**

#### **SNPs**

Alignment VCF representation
ACGT POS REF ALT
ATGT 2 C T

#### **Insertions**

Alignment VCF representation
AC-GT POS REF ALT
ACTGT 2 C CT

#### **Deletions**

Alignment VCF representation
ACGT POS REF ALT
A--T 1 ACG A

#### **Complex events**

Alignment VCF representation
ACGT POS REF ALT
A-TT 1 ACG AT

#### Large structural variants

```
VCF representation
POS REF ALT INFO
100 T <DEL> SVTYPE=DEL; END=300
```

#### VCF format supports CNVs and SVs

```
##INFO=<ID=BKPTID, Number=., Type=String, Description="ID of the assembled alternate allele in the assembly fi
##INFO=<ID=CIEND, Number=2, Type=Integer, Description="Confidence interval around END for imprecise variants">
##INFO=<ID=CIPOS, Number=2, Type=Integer, Description="Confidence interval around POS for imprecise variants">
##INFO=<ID=END, Number=1, Type=Integer, Description="End position of the variant described in this record">
###INFO=<ID=SVTYPE, Number=1, Type=String, Description="Type of structural variant">
##ALT=<ID=DEL,Description="Deletion">
##ALT=<ID=DUP, Description="Duplication">
##ALT=<ID=INS,Description="Insertion of novel sequence">
##ALT=<ID=INV, Description="Inversion">
##ALT=<ID=CNV,Description="Copy number variable region">
##FORMAT=<ID=GT, Number=1, Type=String, Description="Genotype">
##FORMAT=<ID=GO, Number=1, Type=Float, Description="Genotype quality">
##FORMAT=<ID=CN, Number=1, Type=Integer, Description="Copy number genotype for imprecise events">
##FORMAT=<ID=CNQ, Number=1, Type=Float, Description="Copy number genotype quality for imprecise events">
#CHROM POS ID
                REF
                     ALT
                          QUAL
                                       FILTER
                                                  INFO
                                                             FORMAT
                                                                        NA00001
1 2827694 rs2376870 CGTGGATGCGGGGAC
                                             . PASS SVTYPE=DEL; END=2827708; HOMLEN=1; HOMSEQ=G; SVLEN=-14 GT: GQ
2 321682
                                       <DEL> 6 PASS SVTYPE=DEL:END=321887:SVLEN=-205:CIPOS=-56.20:CIEND=-10.
                                       <DUP> 14 PASS SVTYPE=DUP;END=12686200;SVLEN=21100;CIPOS=-500,500;CIEN
3 12665100
```

#### VCF header

- Lines that start with #
- Some mandatory lines : file format, column header.
- Optional header lines contain meta-data about annotations in the vcf body



Meta-data may vary a lot from a variant caller to another one!

#### INFO versus FORMAT:

- INFO = annotations on variant as a whole
- FORMAT = annotations that apply to each genotype

## VCF representation of genotypes

Zygosity	VCF presentation
Heterozygous	0/1, 1/2, 0/2,
Homozygous	
Reference	0/0
Alternate	1/1, 2/2, 3/3,
Missing	./0, ./1, ./.,

#### VCF specification versions

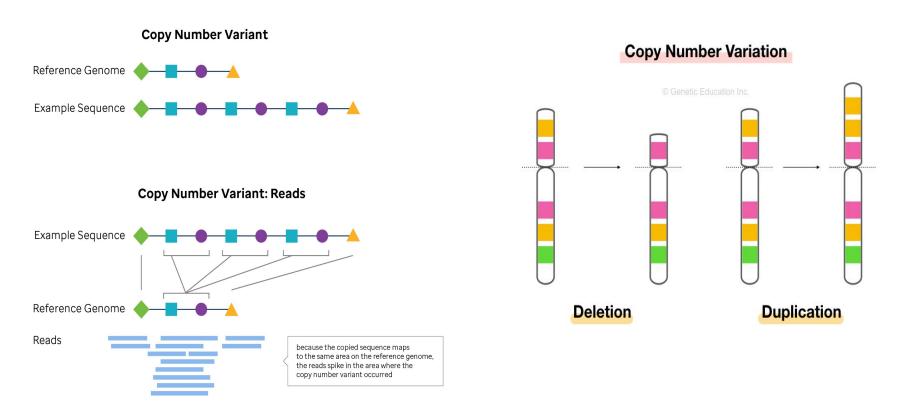
#### Changes between VCFv4.1 and VCFv4.2:

- Information field format: adding source and version as recommended fields.
- INFO field can have one value for each possible allele (code R).
- For all of the ##INFO, ##FORMAT, ##FILTER, and ##ALT metainformation, extra fields can be included after the default fields.
- Alternate base (ALT) can include \*: missing due to a upstream deletion.
- Quality scores, a sentence removed: High QUAL scores indicate high confidence calls. Although traditionally people use integer phred scores, this field is permitted to be a floating point to enable higher resolution for low confidence calls if desired.
- Examples changed a bit.

#### Changes between VCFv4.2 and VCFv4.3:

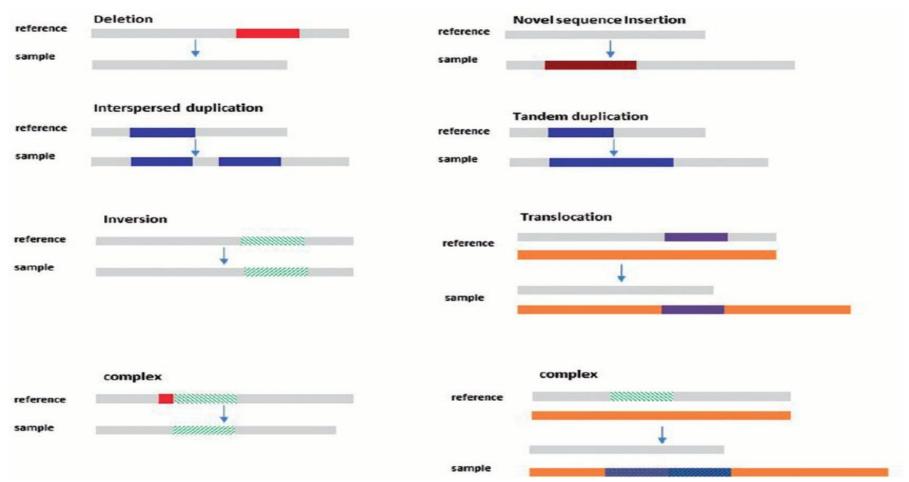
- VCF compliant implementations must support both LF and CR+LF newline conventions
- INFO and FORMAT tag names must match the regular expression ^[A-Za-z][0-9A-Za-z.]\*\$
- Spaces are allowed in INFO field values
- Characters with special meaning (such as ';' in INFO, ':' in FORMAT, and '%' in both) can be encoded using the percent encoding (see Section 1.2) • The character encoding of VCF files is UTF-8. 35
- The SAMPLE field can contain optional DOI URL for the source data file
- Introduced ##META header lines for defining phenotype metadata
- New reserved tag "CNP" analogous to "GP" was added. Both CNP and GP use 0 to 1 encoding, which is a change from previous phred-scaled GP.
- In order for VCF and BCF to have the same expressive power, we state explicitly that Integers and Floats are 32-bit numbers. Integers are signed.
- We state explicitly that zero length strings are not allowed, this includes the CHROM and ID column, INFO IDs, FILTER IDs and FORMAT IDs. Meta-information lines can be in any order, with the exception of ##fileformat which must come first.
- All header lines of the form ##key= must have an ID value that is unique for a given value of "key". All header lines whose value starts with "<" must have an ID field. Therefore, also ##PEDIGREE newly requires a unique ID.
- We state explicitly that duplicate IDs, FILTER, INFO or FORMAT keys are not valid.
- A section about gVCF was added, introduced the <\*> symbolic allele.

## Copy number variations (CNV)



https://learngenomics.dev/docs/genomic-variation/copy-number-variation/

#### Structural variants

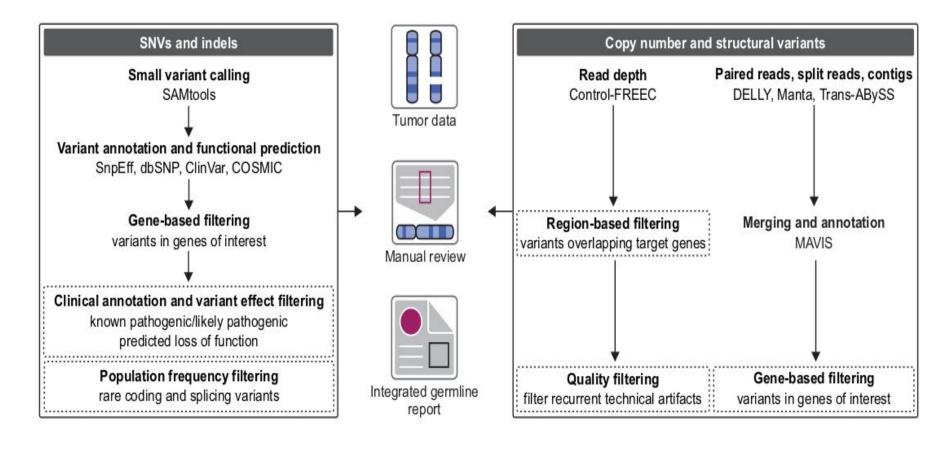


## Workflows for all major variant classes

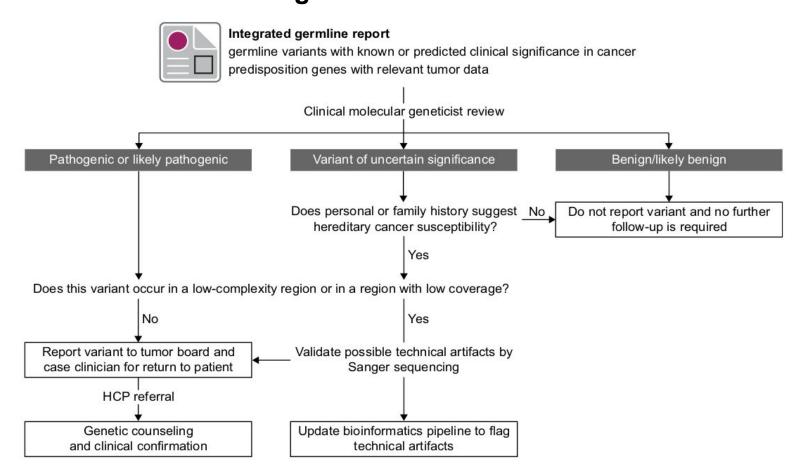


	GERMLINE	SOMATIC
SNPs & INDELs	HaplotypeCaller GVCF	Mutect2
Copy Number	GATK gCNV	GATK CNV + aCNV
Structure Variation	GATK SVDiscovery (beta)	(planned)

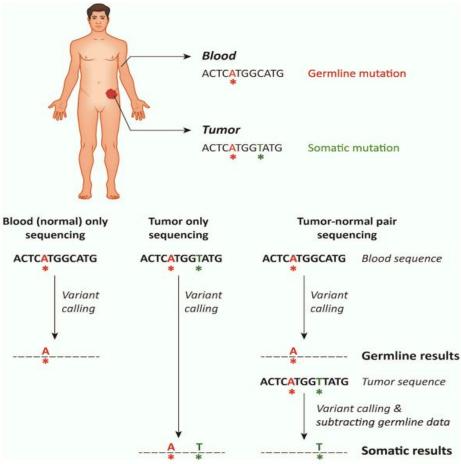
#### Workflow from variant calling to integrated report



# Standard procedure for the review, reporting, and clinical translation of germline variants



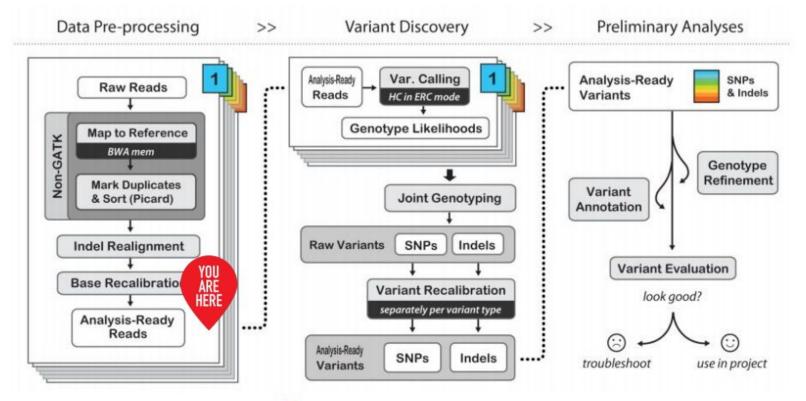
# Normal - Tumor paired variants calling



Trends in Cancer

Figure 1. Mutations Reported in Blood-Only, Tumor-Only, and Paired Tumor-Normal Sequencing.

#### Workflow continues

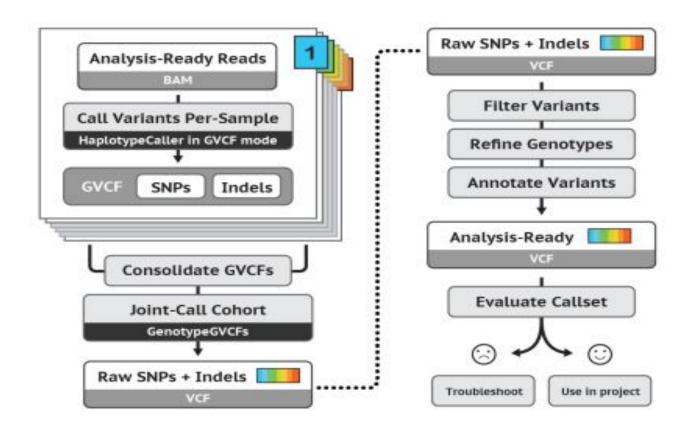


### Ready for variant calling!!

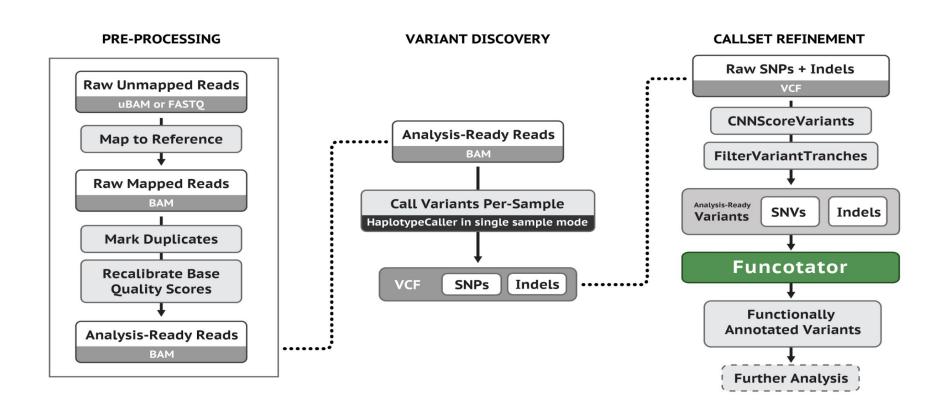
Best Practices for Germline SNPs and Indels in Whole Genomes and Exomes - June 2016

# GERMLINE SNPs & INDELs

#### Main steps for Germline Cohort Data



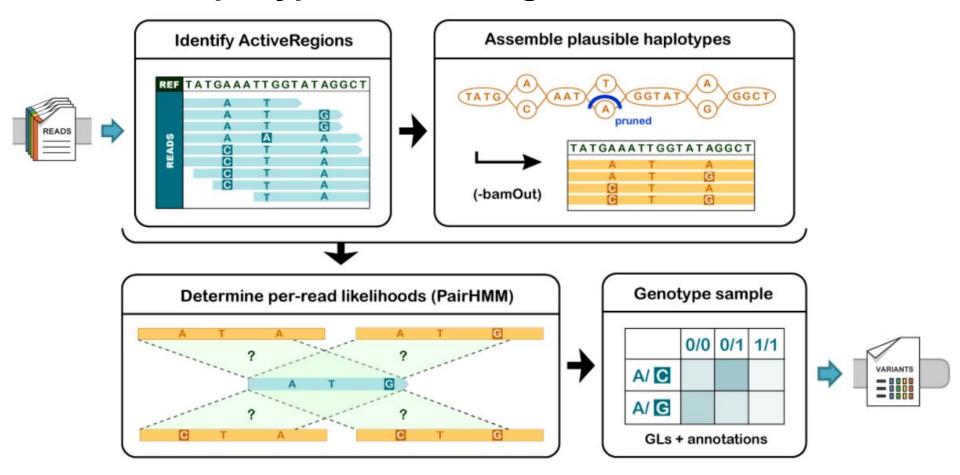
## Main steps for Germline Single-Sample Data



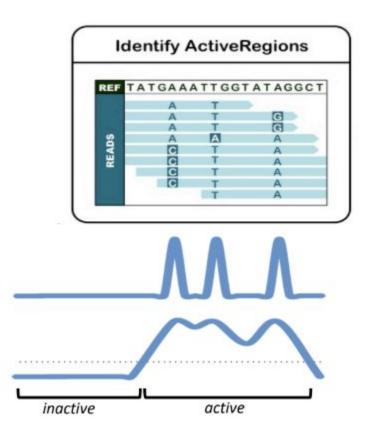
## Variant calling with HaplotypeCaller

Basic operation and algorithm

### **GATK HaplotypeCaller calls germline short variants**



#### 1. Define Active Regions

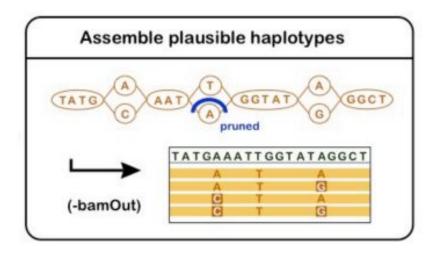


- Sliding window along the reference
- Count mismatches, indels and soft-clips
- Measure of entropy

Trim and continue with ActiveRegions over threshold

#### 2. Assemble plausible haplotypes

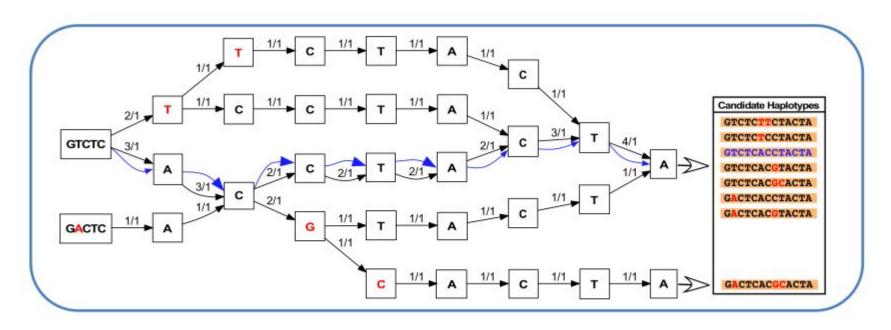
- Local realignment via graph assembly
- Traverse graph to collect most likely haplotypes
- Align haplotypes to reference using Smith-Waterman





Likely haplotypes + candidate variant sites

## Example HaplotypeCaller assembly graph



- Ignore previous alignments
- Graph consists of every possible sequence combination based on reads
- Count reads that support paths

### Graph assembly recovers indels and removes artifacts

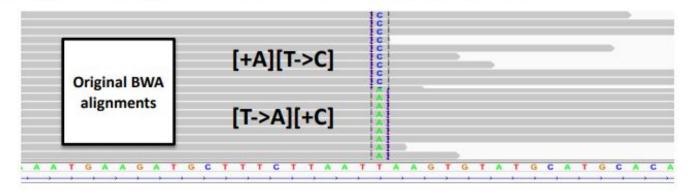


Showing 100bp region starting at 10:96,825,862 for NA12878

#### Resolves complexity caused by mapper limitations



Mapper can represent two different ways, at random:

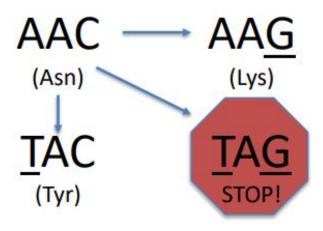


HaplotypeCaller will settle on one representation -> cleaner output call

### Functional implications of variant phasing

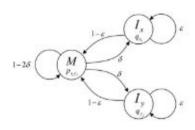
## Two SNPs in the same codon: A > T and C > G

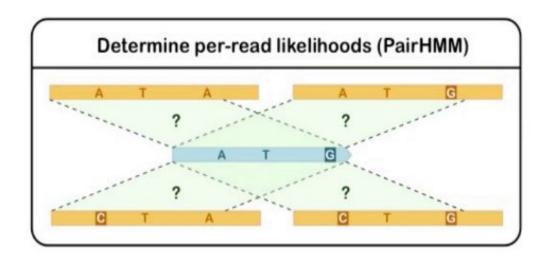
In trans – two copies, each with a missense mutation In cis – one functional copy and one loss of function!



## 3. Score haplotypes using PairHMM

- PairHMM\* aligns each read to each haplotype
- Uses base qualities as the estimate of error

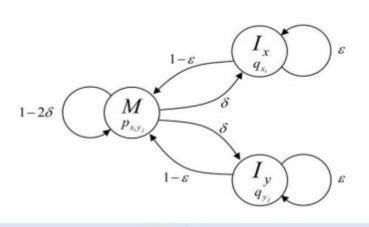






Likelihoods of the haplotypes given reads

### PairHMM uses base qualities to score alignments



### State

- (M) Match
- $(I_x)$  Insertion
- $(I_{\nu})$  Deletion

### Transition probabilities

- $(\varepsilon)$  = Gap continuation
- $(\delta)$  = Gap open penalty
- $(1 \varepsilon)$  = Base precedes an insertion or a deletion
- $(1 2\delta)$  = Base matches
- and continues

### **Haplotypes**

Reads

$$\begin{bmatrix} A_{11} & A_{12} & \cdots & A_{1n} \\ A_{21} & & & A_{2n} \\ \vdots & & & \vdots \\ A_{n1} & A_{n2} & \cdots & A_{nn} \end{bmatrix}$$

A<sub>ij</sub> = probability of haplotype-read pair

Matrix contains likelihoods of the haplotypes given the reads

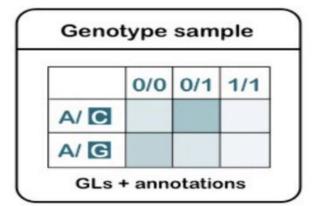
### 4. Genotype each sample at each potential variant site

- Determine most likely combination of allele(s) for each site
- Based on allele likelihoods (from PairHMM)
- Apply Bayes' theorem with ploidy assumption\*

$$P(G_i \mid R) = \frac{P(R \mid G_i)P(G_i)}{\sum_k P(R \mid G_k)P(G_k)} \propto L(R \mid G_i)P(G_i)$$

$$L(R \mid G_i) = \prod_j \left(\frac{L(R_j \mid H_1)}{2} + \frac{L(R_j \mid H_2)}{2}\right) \qquad G_i = H_1H_2 \text{ for diploids}$$

$$L(R_i \mid H_i) \qquad \text{Read-haplotype likelihoods}$$

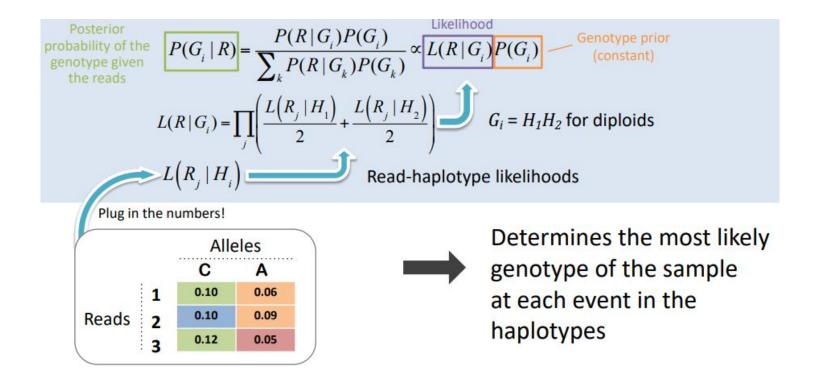




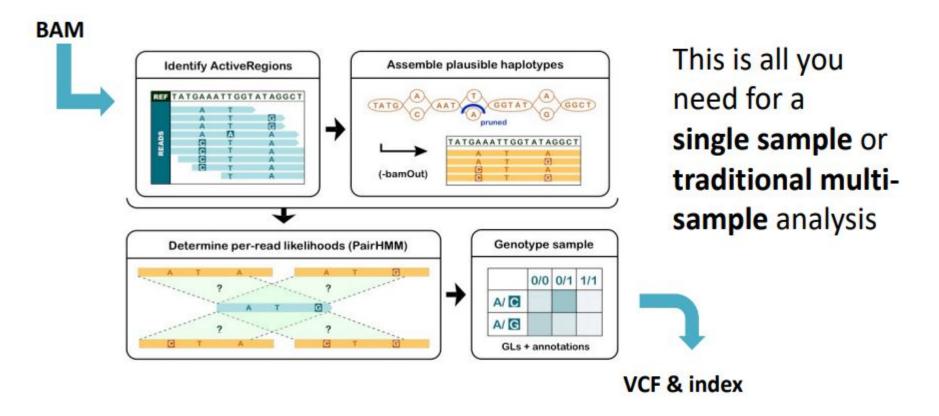
Genotype calls

<sup>\*</sup> Default is diploid; can set desired ploidy in command line

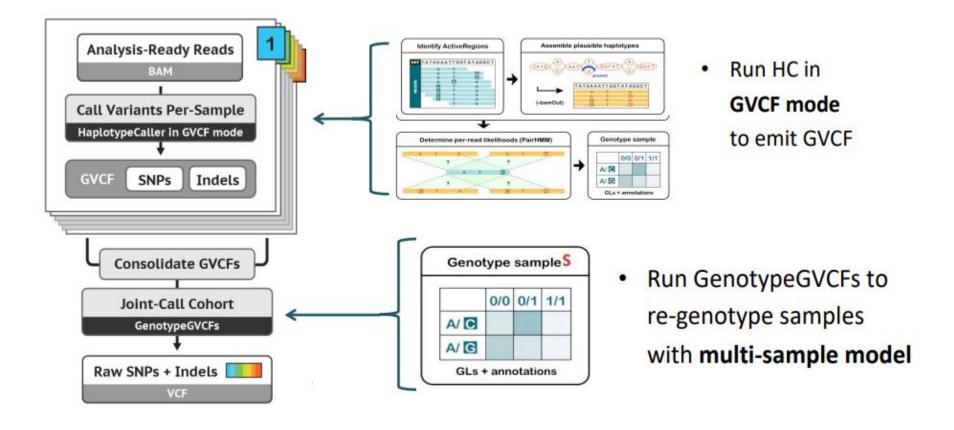
## Finally, Bayesian math for genotype probability



### HaplotypeCaller recap: reads in / variants out



### For scalable analysis: emit GVCF + add joint calling step



## Running HaplotypeCaller

### Basic mode (no GVCF):

```
gatk HaplotypeCaller \
  -R reference.fasta \
  -I preprocessed_reads.bam \
  -0 germline_variants.vcf
```

### To produce a block-compressed GVCF, substitute output filename and add:

```
-O germline_variants.g.vcf \
-ERC GVCF
```

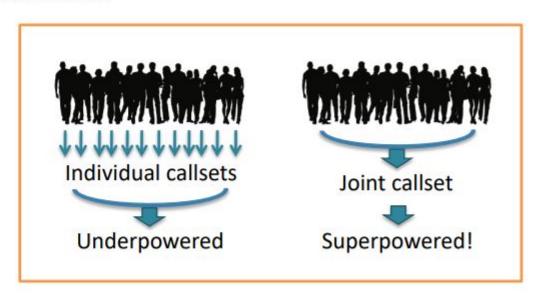
## Joint variant calling

**GVCF-based workflow** 

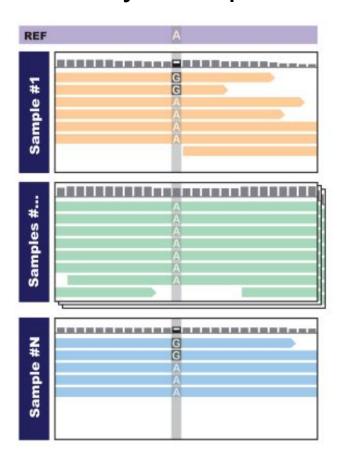
## Joint analysis empowers discovery

- Single genome in isolation: almost never useful
- Family or population data add valuable information
  - rarity of variants
  - de novo mutations
  - ethnic background





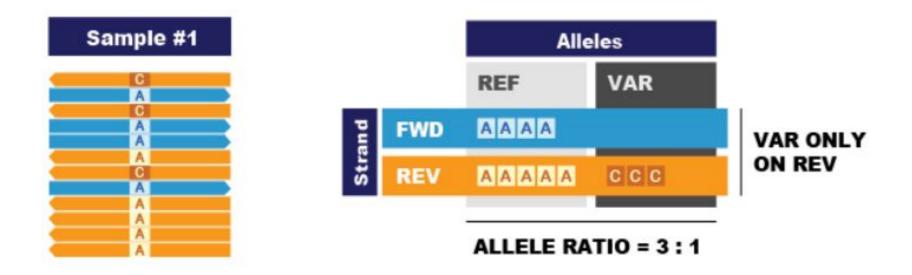
### Discovery is empowered at difficult sites



- Sample #1 or Sample #N alone:
  - weak evidence for variant
  - · may miss calling the variant

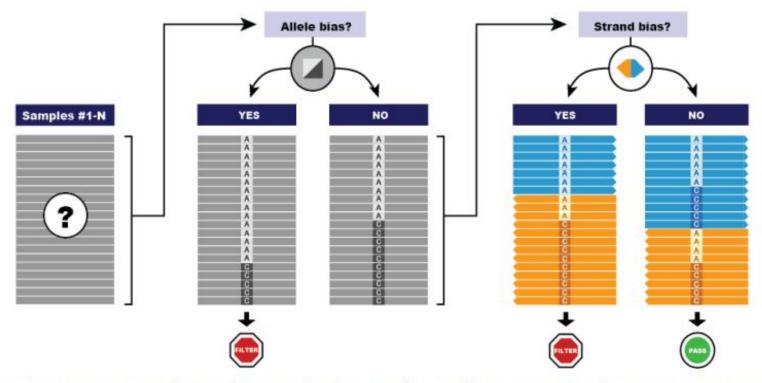
- Both samples seen together:
  - unlikely to be artifact
  - call the variant more confidently

## Joint analysis helps resolve bias issues (1)



Single sample showing strand and allelic biases – would you call it?

## Joint analysis helps resolve bias issues (2)

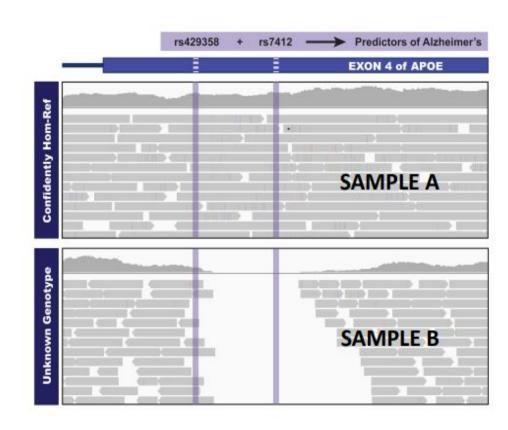


Decision process using evidence from multiple samples to filter out sites showing systematic biases

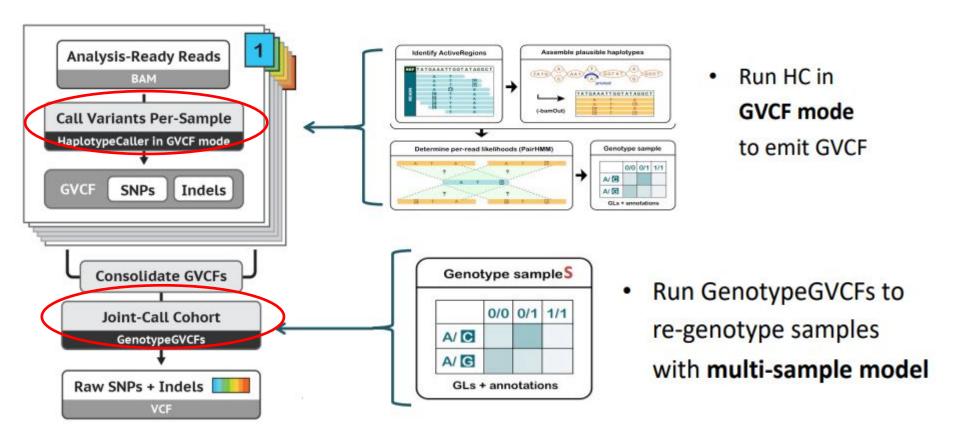
### Gather full information at all sites of interest

### Analyzed individually:

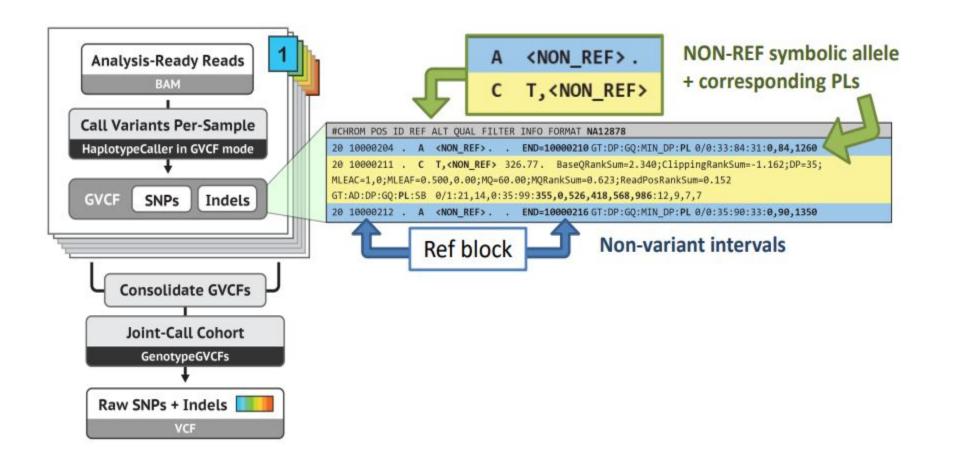
- No call for either sample
- Very different reasons!
- In joint analysis with other samples:
  - Hom-ref call and no-call genotypes emitted



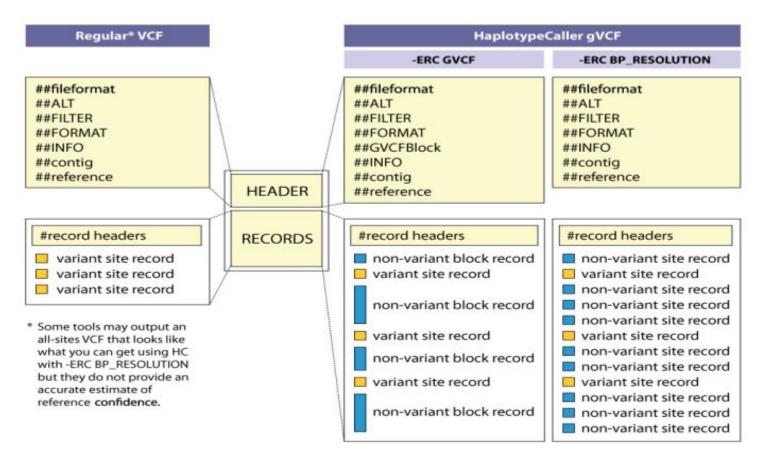
### Joint calling implemented as a two-step process for scalability



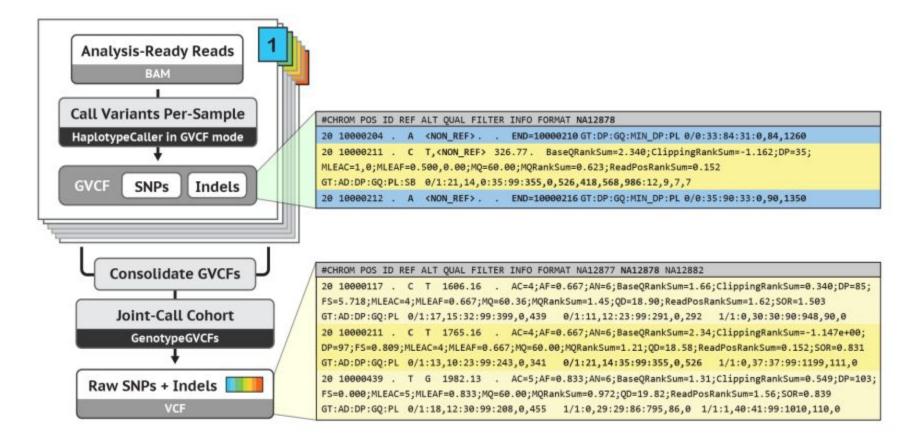
### GVCF intermediate contains reference confidence estimate



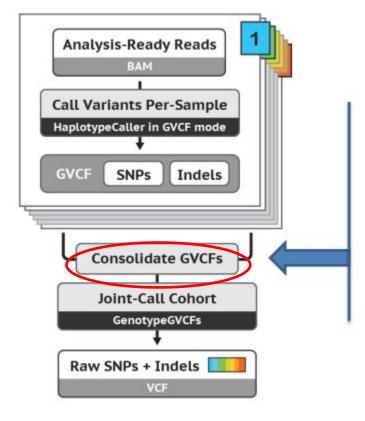
### GVCFs are valid VCFs with extra information



### Joint calling produces final multi-sample VCF



### Consolidate GVCFs before joint calling!



### Necessary for efficient scaling

- In GATK 3.x : CombineGVCFs
   Hierarchical merge on batches of 200 samples max;
   outputs GVCF
- In GATK 4.x : GenomicsDBImport
   All samples processed in a single command; outputs datastore

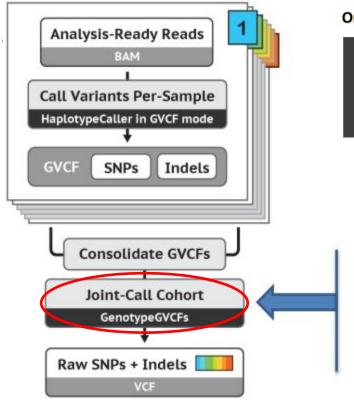
#### With CombineGVCFs:

```
gatk CombineGVCFs \
  -R reference.fasta \
  -V sample1.g.vcf \
  -V sample2.g.vcf \
  -0 combined.g.vcf
```

#### With GenomicsDBImport:

```
gatk GenomicsDBImport \
   -R reference.fasta \
   -V sample1.g.vcf \
   -V sample2.g.vcf \
   -L chr20,chr21 \
   --genomicsdb-workspace-path gvcfs_db
```

## Joint calling with GenotypeGVCFs



### On a single- or multi-sample GVCF:

```
gatk GenotypeGVCFs \
  -R reference.fasta \
  -V variants.g.vcf \
  -O final_variants.vcf
```

### On a GenomicsDB workspace:

```
gatk GenotypeGVCFs \
  -R reference.fasta \
  -V gendb://gvcfs_db \
  -O final_variants.vcf
```

GenotypeGVCFs cannot take multiple inputs (unlike the GATK3 version)

- GenotypeGVCFs can take either a single GVCF file (can be a merged multi-sample GVCF from CombineGVCFs) or a GenomicsDB datastore
- No more multiple inputs! (unlike GATK3)

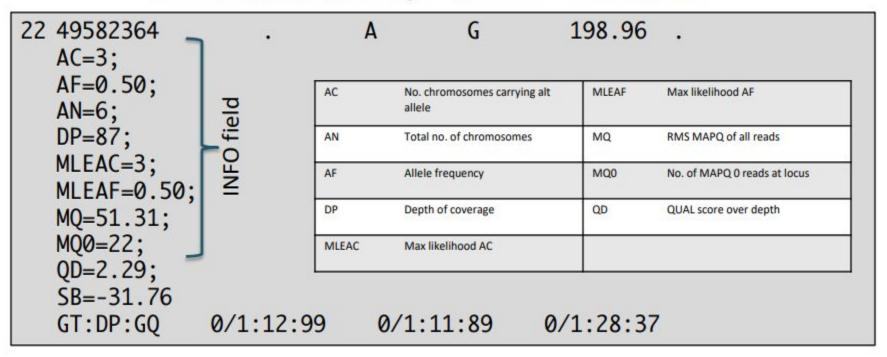
## Variant Filtering

# Assigning accurate confidence scores to each putative mutation call

### Variant Context Annotations Describe the Observed Data

Each variant has a diverse set of statistics associated with it:

### VCF record for an A/G SNP at 22:49582364



### GATK: Filtering variants

- Calling algorithms are very permissive
- Calling sets contain many false positives
- Two filtering approaches :
  - Hard filtering : using thresholds on annotations
  - Variant recalibration using machine learning
- Sensitivity vs Specificity

### GATK: Hard filtering

- Suitable for all experiments (targeted gene, WES, small sample size, etc.)
- Goal: define annotations and thresholds to filter bad variants
- Pros:
  - Easy to perform
- Cons:
  - Hard to define annotations to use
  - Hard to define threshold
  - May filter good variants, may keep bad variants

## QualByDepth

- The QUAL field of the VCF file is defined as a <u>Phred score</u> that reflects the <u>variant quality.</u>
- The QualByDepth (QD) score is the QUAL score divided by the allele depth of the variant (i.e., the ALT allele depth).
- There is <u>no</u> "normal" range for this value, but a QD under 2 is considered poor quality.

### **FisherStrand**

- This parameter is an estimate of <u>strand bias</u>, a kind of sequencing bias in which one strand is favored over the other.
- The higher the value for FS, the more likely there is to be bias or false-positive calls.
- Values of FS over 60 are taken to be strong evidence for strand bias.

## RMSMappingQuality

- The root mean square of the mapping quality provides an estimation of the overall mapping quality of reads supporting a variant call.
- The RMS is based on the mapping qualities of the n reads that support variant call.
- The threshold suggested by GATK for MQ is 40

## MappingQualityRankSumTest

- The rank sum test for <u>mapping qualities of REF reads versus ALT reads</u>.
- Compares the mapping qualities of the reads supporting the reference allele with those supporting the alternate allele.
- For variant calling, we are interested in whether there is evidence that the quality of the data supporting the alternate allele is comparatively low.
- GATK suggests filtering if MQRankSum is less than -12.5.

### ReadPosRankSumTest

- The rank sum test for <u>relative positioning of REF versus ALT alleles</u> within reads.
- Tests whether there is evidence of bias in the genomic position of reference and alternate alleles within the reads that support them.
- If a variant is called only near the ends of reads, can be an indication of error.
- GATK suggests filtering if ReadPosRankSum is less than -8.

## Strand Odds Ratio (SOR)

- The strand odds ratio measures the ratio of the odds of the variant being observed on the <u>forward strand versus the reverse strand</u>.
- A high SOR value suggests that the variant is more likely to be real, since it is observed on both strands and is less likely to be a sequencing artifact.
- A low SOR value suggests that the variant may be an artifact or that there
  may be a bias in the sequencing or genotyping process.

### Inbreeding Coefficient (InbreedingCoeff)

- A filter option applied to <u>indel(insertion/deletion)</u> variants.
- It is calculated based on the <u>observed and expected number of homozygous</u> genotypes in a population.
- A <u>positive</u> inbreeding coefficient suggests an <u>excess</u> of homozygotes, indicating potential inbreeding or relatedness, while a <u>negative</u> coefficient suggests a <u>deficit</u> of homozygotes.
- Variants with <u>extreme positive or negative</u> inbreeding coefficients may be more likely to be artifacts or sequencing errors and can be <u>filtered out</u>.

## GATK: Hard filtering recommendations

- Filtering SNPs where any:
  - **QD** < 2.0
  - **MQ** < 40.0
  - **FS** > 60.0
  - ∘ **SOR** > 3.0
  - MQRankSum < -12.5
  - ∘ ReadPosRankSum < -8.0

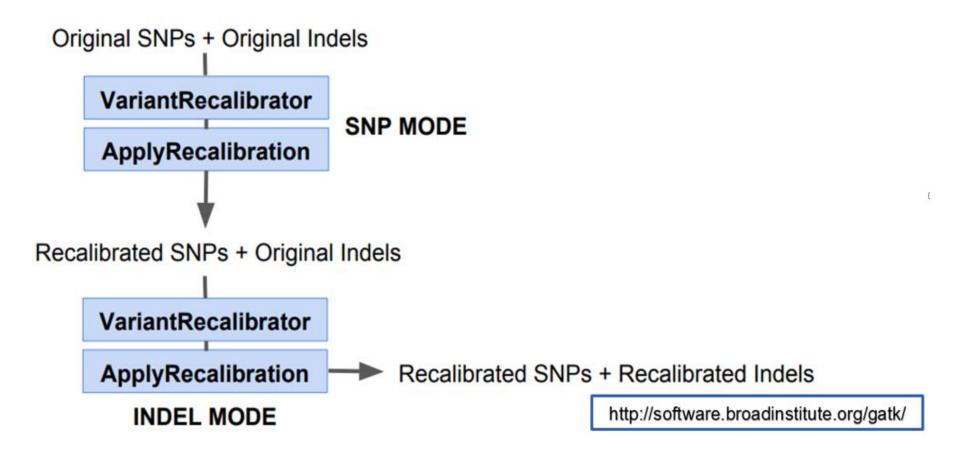
- Filtering Indels where any:
  - **QD** < 2.0
  - ∘ ReadPosRankSum < -20.0
  - o InbreedingCoeff¹ < -0.8
  - **FS** > 200.0
  - ∘ **SOR** > 10.0
- <sup>1</sup> When sample size > <u>10</u>

Warning: Threshold on maximum depth should not be used for WES data

### GATK: Variant Quality Score Recalibration (VQSR)

- Preferred method
- Requires:
  - DNA-seq data ( not working on RNA-seq data)
  - Well curated training/truth resources (usually not available for non human organisms)
  - Large amount of variants (no targeted gene panels, etc.)
  - > 30 samples for WES data ( 1000G WES samples can be added if needed but not optimal)
- Based on machine learning

### **GATK**: VQSR workflow



### GATK: VQSR SNP human resources

### Hapmap

- Training
- Truth
- Prior = 15

### Omni

- o Training
- Truth
- o Prior = 12

### 1000G SNPs High confidence

- Training
- o Prior = 10

### dbSNP

- Known
- Prior = 2

**Annotations**: QD, MD, MQRankSum, ReadPosRankSum, FS, SOR, DP<sup>1</sup>, InbreedingCoeff

### GATK: VQSR Indel human resources

- Mills Indels
  - Training
  - Truth
  - Prior = 12

- dbSNP
  - Known
  - ∘ Prior = 2

Annotations: QD, MD, MQRankSum, ReadPosRankSum, FS, SOR, DP1, InbreedingCoeff

### Convolutional Neural Net (CNN)

- Annotate a VCF with scores from a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN).
- The default model should not be used on VCFs with annotations from joint call-sets.
- Two ways to score variants
  - o 1D Model
    - Variant annotations
    - Reference
  - 2D Model
    - Variant annotations
    - Reference
    - Read information

```
gatk CNNScoreVariants \
  -V vcf_to_annotate.vcf.gz \
  -R reference.fasta \
  -0 annotated.vcf
```

```
gatk CNNScoreVariants \
   -I aligned_reads.bam \
   -V vcf_to_annotate.vcf.gz \
   -R reference.fasta \
   -O annotated.vcf \
   -tensor-type read-tensor
```

### Filter Variants with Filter Variant Tranches

- Apply tranche filtering to VCF based on scores from an annotation in the INFO field.
- Tranches are specified in percent sensitivity to the variants in the resource files.
- <u>Higher</u> tranches = More sensitive, less precise (
   lower variant scores)
- <u>Lower</u> tranches = Less sensitive, higher precision
- The default tranche filtering threshold for SNPs is
   99.95 and for INDELs it is 99.4.

```
gatk FilterVariantTranches \
   -V input.vcf.gz \
   --resource hapmap.vcf \
   --resource mills.vcf \
   --info-key CNN_1D \
   --snp-tranche 99.95 \
   --indel-tranche 99.4 \
   -0 filtered.vcf
```

```
gatk FilterVariantTranches \
-V input.vcf.gz \
--resource hapmap.vcf \
--resource mills.vcf \
--info-key CNN_2D \
--snp-tranche 99.95 \
--indel-tranche 99.4 \
--invalidate-previous-filters \
-0 filtered.vcf
```

### References

- Robinson, P.N., Piro, R.M., & Jager, M. (2017). Computational Exome and Genome Analysis (1st ed.). Chapman and Hall/CRC. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1201/9781315154770">https://doi.org/10.1201/9781315154770</a>
- https://gatk.broadinstitute.org/hc/en-us
- Official Github of GATK : <a href="https://github.com/broadinstitute/gatk">https://github.com/broadinstitute/gatk</a>
- Germline short variant discovery:
   <a href="https://gatk.broadinstitute.org/hc/en-us/articles/360035535932-Germline-short-variant-discovery-S">https://gatk.broadinstitute.org/hc/en-us/articles/360035535932-Germline-short-variant-discovery-S</a>
   <a href="https://gatk.broadinstitute.org/hc/en-us/articles/360035535932-Germline-short-variant-discovery-S">NPs-Indels-</a>
- Somatic short variant discovery:
   <a href="https://gatk.broadinstitute.org/hc/en-us/articles/360035894731-Somatic-short-variant-discovery-S">https://gatk.broadinstitute.org/hc/en-us/articles/360035894731-Somatic-short-variant-discovery-S</a>

### NVs-Indels-

