

qcCHIP User's Guide

Xiang Liu xiang.liu@moffitt.org
Mingxiang Teng mingxiang.teng@moffitt.org
Department of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics
Moffit Cancer Center, Tampa, FL, USA

2025-09-02

Contents

Introduction	1
Install package	1
Getting Started	2
Preparing Input Files	2
Basic Usage of The <i>qcCHIP</i> Function	8
Basic Usage of The <i>CHIPfilter</i> Function	13

Introduction

Clonal hematopoiesis (CH) is a molecular biomarker associated with various adverse outcomes in healthy and disease individuals. Detecting CHs usually involves genomic sequencing of individual blood samples followed by rigorous bioinformatics data filtering. We report an R package, *qcCHIP*, a bioinformatics pipeline to identify CH from sequencing data by implementing a series of quality control filters and permutation-based parameter optimization.

qcCHIP takes inputs in VCF format and filter CH mutations using technical, functional, individual and populations metrics associated to the mutations. It allows customized parameter settings of those metrics as well as parameter optimization using permutation analysis with cohort-specific characteristics. For more detail, please refer to our manuscript and the help pages of R functions.

Install package

Install *qcCHIP* package via *devtools*.

```
library(devtools)
devtools::install_github("https://github.com/tenglab/qcCHIP.git",force=T)
#> -- R CMD build -----
#> checking for file '/private/var/folders/3s/9r3z6h_n0z3889fx5pn38svw0021h2/T/RtmppHw0th/remotes1
#> - preparing 'qcCHIP':
#> checking DESCRIPTION meta-information ... v checking DESCRIPTION meta-information
#> - checking for LF line-endings in source and make files and shell scripts
#> - checking for empty or unneeded directories
#> - building 'qcCHIP_0.0.0.9000.tar.gz'
#> Warning: invalid uid value replaced by that for user 'nobody'
#>
#>
```

Getting Started

Load the package in R.

```
library(qcCHIP)
library(GenomicRanges)
```

Preparing Input Files

qcCHIP works on mutation calls to optimize parameters and filter CHs. For each blood sample, mutations should be first called with blood sequencing data using tools like MuTect2. Usually, a VCF file will be generated by these tools to document mutations for a given sample. As qcCHIP is built to work on a clinical cohort instead of a single sample, the main functions of qcCHIP take input a merged mutation file from all samples for a given cohort. qcCHIP package provides an internal function *vcf2input* to merge multiple VCF files into an annotated text file, which will serve as the input of main functions. The merged mutation text file contains the following columns. The users can also manually built their merged mutation file.

1. Chr: chromosome of variant. Exp: chr1, chr2,chrX.
2. Start: start position of variant.
3. End: end position of variant.
4. Ref: reference allele.
5. Alt: alternative allele.
6. TLOD: TLOD or Qual Info from vcf file.
7. SOR: SOR Info from vcf file.
8. AD_alt: Allelic depths for the alt alleles from vcf file.
9. AF: AF or VAF from blood sample vcf file.
10. DP: DP from vcf file.
11. SAF: SAF info from vcf file.
12. SAR: SAR info from vcf file.
13. SampleID: sample ID or variant.
14. Func.refGene: function annotation from refGene.
15. ExonicFunc.refGene: exonic function annotation from refGene. (nonsynonymous SNV and synonymous SNV values need to be named as "nonsynonymous SNV" and "synonymous SNV")
16. cosmic70: if the variant is exist in cosmic database. (empty value needs to be ".")
17. tumor_AF: optional, AF or VAF from tumor sample vcf file.
18. non_cancer_AF_popmax: optional, non cancer AF value from gnomad database.

To note: all empty value should be noted as “.” in the merged text file.

3

```

#> 5
#> 6
#>   cosmic70 non_cancer_AF_popmax ALT_dpGAP Ref_dpGAP_PopFreq Alt_dpGAP_PopFreq
#> 1      .           2.03E-05      .           .           .
#> 2      .           .           .           .           .
#> 3      1           0.6222      .           .           .
#> 4      .           .           .           .           .
#> 5      .           .           .           .           .
#> 6      .           .           .           .           .

```

The function *vcf2input* can convert raw or annotated VCF files into an input merged file for the main functions of qcCHIP. For raw VCF files, as they don't contain the required information of *Func.refGene*, *ExonicFunc.refGene*, and *cosmic70*, converting with raw VCF files require users to manually add the corresponding columns to the merged file.

Converting with raw VCF files

Below are the examples of how to convert raw VCF files into a merged text file. For demo purpose, VCF files generated from 10 cancer patients are documented in the package and used here.

```

# Path to raw vcf files
raw_vcf_path<- system.file("extdata/raw_vcf",package="qcCHIP")

# Create data.frame of samples
sample_df <- data.frame(blood=list.files(raw_vcf_path)[! list.files(raw_vcf_path) %in%
                                                                grep("_tumor\\.vcf\\.gz",list.files(raw_vcf_p
                                                                tumor=grep("_tumor\\.vcf\\.gz",list.files(raw_vcf_path),value=T))

head(sample_df)
#>      blood      tumor
#> 1 sample_1.vcf.gz sample_1_tumor.vcf.gz
#> 2 sample_10.vcf.gz sample_10_tumor.vcf.gz
#> 3 sample_2.vcf.gz sample_2_tumor.vcf.gz
#> 4 sample_3.vcf.gz sample_3_tumor.vcf.gz
#> 5 sample_4.vcf.gz sample_4_tumor.vcf.gz
#> 6 sample_5.vcf.gz sample_5_tumor.vcf.gz

# 1. Converting without paired tumor sample
input_1 <- vcf2input(vcf_path = raw_vcf_path,
                     sample_list=sample_df$blood)

head(input_1)
#>   Chr   Start   End Ref Alt   SampleID   TLOD   SOR AD_alt   AF   DP
#> 1 chr1 1786850 1786850   G   T sample_1_st_g  4.08 0.375    3 0.103 30
#> 2 chr1 1786996 1786996   C   G sample_1_st_g 43.36 0.333   17 0.469 36
#> 3 chr1 36471458 36471458   A   G sample_1_st_g 187.69 0.43   72 0.500 148
#> 4 chr1 64833405 64833405   A   C sample_1_st_g 18.22 0.593    8 0.532 14
#> 5 chr1 64837976 64837976   C   T sample_1_st_g 14.64 1.244    7 0.269 30
#> 6 chr1 64841324 64841324   G   T sample_1_st_g  3.08 1.142    3 0.062 76
#>   SAF SAR
#> 1   2   1
#> 2   9   8
#> 3  36  36
#> 4   3   5
#> 5   5   2

```

```
#> 6 1 2

# 2. Converting with paired tumor sample
input_2 <- vcf2input(vcf_path = raw_vcf_path,
                     sample_list=sample_df$blood,
                     tumor=T,
                     tumor_path=raw_vcf_path,
                     tumor_list=sample_df$tumor)

head(input_2)
#>      Start Ref Alt      SampleID      End Chr  TLOD  SOR AD_alt  AF  DP
#> 1 1786850  G  T sample_1_st_g 1786850 chr1  4.08 0.375    3 0.103 30
#> 2 1786996  C  G sample_1_st_g 1786996 chr1 43.36 0.333   17 0.469 36
#> 3 36471458 A  G sample_1_st_g 36471458 chr1 187.69 0.43   72 0.500 148
#> 4 64833405 A  C sample_1_st_g 64833405 chr1 18.22 0.593    8 0.532 14
#> 5 64837976 C  T sample_1_st_g 64837976 chr1 14.64 1.244    7 0.269 30
#> 6 64841324 G  T sample_1_st_g 64841324 chr1  3.08 1.142    3 0.062 76
#>  SAF SAR      SampleID_t tumor_AF
#> 1  2  1      .      .
#> 2  9  8 sample_1_st_t  0.216
#> 3 36 36 sample_1_st_t  0.16
#> 4  3  5 sample_1_st_t  0.534
#> 5  5  2 sample_1_st_t  0.483
#> 6  1  2      .      .
```

Converting with annotated VCF files

Currently, qcCHIP can take the following annotation information. These annotation can be generated by ANNOVAR tool.

1. Function name, gene name, exonic function, AAchange, and GeneDetail information from refGene database;
2. COSMIC info from COSMIC database (e.g. COSMIC70);
3. Non cancer AF population max from gnomAD database.

Currently, function name, exonic function, and COSMIC are required annotation information by qcCHIP.

```
# Path to annotated vcf files
annot_vcf_path<- system.file("extdata/annot_vcf",package="qcCHIP")

# Create data.frame of samples
sample_df <- data.frame(blood=list.files(annot_vcf_path)[! list.files(annot_vcf_path) %in%
                                                                    grep("*_tumor\\.hg38_multianno\\.vcf",list.files(
                                                                    tumor=grep("*_tumor\\.hg38_multianno\\.vcf",list.files(annot_vcf_path),value=T)
                                                                    )
                                                                    )])

head(sample_df)
#>      blood      tumor
#> 1 sample_1.hg38_multianno.vcf sample_1_tumor.hg38_multianno.vcf
#> 2 sample_10.hg38_multianno.vcf sample_10_tumor.hg38_multianno.vcf
#> 3 sample_2.hg38_multianno.vcf sample_2_tumor.hg38_multianno.vcf
#> 4 sample_3.hg38_multianno.vcf sample_3_tumor.hg38_multianno.vcf
#> 5 sample_4.hg38_multianno.vcf sample_4_tumor.hg38_multianno.vcf
#> 6 sample_5.hg38_multianno.vcf sample_5_tumor.hg38_multianno.vcf
```

```

# example of annotated VCF files
library(vcfR)
exp_vcf <- read.vcfR(system.file("extdata/annot_vcf", "sample_1.hg38_multianno.vcf", package="qcCHIP"))
#> Scanning file to determine attributes.
#> File attributes:
#>   meta lines: 3468
#>   header_line: 3469
#>   variant count: 213
#>   column count: 10
#> Meta line 1000 read in.Meta line 2000 read in.Meta line 3000 read in.Meta line 3468 read in.
#> All meta lines processed.
#> gt matrix initialized.
#> Character matrix gt created.
#>   Character matrix gt rows: 213
#>   Character matrix gt cols: 10
#>   skip: 0
#>   nrows: 213
#>   row_num: 0
#> Processed variant: 213
#> All variants processed

# check name of annotation information
strsplit(head(exp_vcf@fix,n=1)[,8],";")
#> $INFO
#> [1] "AS_SB_TABLE=19,8/2,1"
#> [2] "DP=32"
#> [3] "ECNT=1"
#> [4] "FS=0"
#> [5] "MBQ=30,20"
#> [6] "MFRL=182,144"
#> [7] "MMQ=60,60"
#> [8] "MPOS=10"
#> [9] "POPAF=7.3"
#> [10] "SOR=0.375"
#> [11] "TLOD=4.08"
#> [12] "ANNOVAR_DATE=2020-06-08"
#> [13] "Func.refGeneWithVer=UTR3"
#> [14] "Gene.refGeneWithVer=GNB1"
#> [15] "GeneDetail.refGeneWithVer=NM_001282538.1:c.*213C>A\|x3bNM_001282539.1:c.*213C>A\|x3bNM_002074.
#> [16] "ExonicFunc.refGeneWithVer=."
#> [17] "AAChange.refGeneWithVer=."
#> [18] "cosmic70=."
#> [19] "AF=."
#> [20] "AF_popmax=."
#> [21] "AF_male=."
#> [22] "AF_female=."
#> [23] "AF_raw=."
#> [24] "AF_afr=."
#> [25] "AF_sas=."
#> [26] "AF_amr=."
#> [27] "AF_eas=."
#> [28] "AF_nfe=."
#> [29] "AF_fin=."

```

```

#> [30] "AF_asj="
#> [31] "AF_oth="
#> [32] "non_topmed_AF_popmax="
#> [33] "non_neuro_AF_popmax="
#> [34] "non_cancer_AF_popmax="
#> [35] "controls_AF_popmax="
#> [36] "ALLELE_END"

# Converting annotated VCFs with paired tumor samples. Annotated with refGene, cosmic, and gnomAD.
input_3 <- vcf2input(vcf_path = annot_vcf_path,
                    sample_list=sample_df$blood,
                    tumor=T,
                    tumor_path=annot_vcf_path,
                    tumor_list=sample_df$tumor,
                    refGene=T,
                    refGene_func_name="Func.refGeneWithVer",
                    refGene_gene_name="Gene.refGeneWithVer",
                    refGene_Exonicfunc_name="ExonicFunc.refGeneWithVer",
                    refGene_AAchange_name=NA,
                    refGene_GeneDetail_name=NA,
                    cosmic=T,
                    cosmic_name="cosmic70",
                    gnomad=T,
                    gnomad_name="non_cancer_AF_popmax")

head(input_3)
#>      Start Ref Alt      SampleID      End Chr  TLOD  SOR AD_alt  AF  DP
#> 1  1786850  G   T sample_1_st_g  1786850 chr1  4.08 0.375    3 0.103  30
#> 2  1786996  C   G sample_1_st_g  1786996 chr1  43.36 0.333   17 0.469  36
#> 3  36471458 A   G sample_1_st_g  36471458 chr1 187.69 0.43   72 0.500 148
#> 4  64833405 A   C sample_1_st_g  64833405 chr1  18.22 0.593    8 0.532  14
#> 5  64837976 C   T sample_1_st_g  64837976 chr1  14.64 1.244    7 0.269  30
#> 6  64841324 G   T sample_1_st_g  64841324 chr1   3.08 1.142    3 0.062  76
#>   SAF SAR      SampleID_t tumor_AF Func.refGene Gene.refGene ExonicFunc.refGene
#> 1   2   1                .          UTR3          GNB1                .
#> 2   9   8 sample_1_st_t    0.216        UTR3          GNB1                .
#> 3  36  36 sample_1_st_t    0.16         exonic        CSF3R      synonymous_SNV
#> 4   3   5 sample_1_st_t    0.534        UTR3          JAK1                .
#> 5   5   2 sample_1_st_t    0.483         exonic        JAK1      synonymous_SNV
#> 6   1   2                .          exonic        JAK1                stopgain
#>   cosmic70 non_cancer_AF_popmax Alt_dpGAP_PopFreq
#> 1          .                .
#> 2          .                .
#> 3          .            0.7273                .
#> 4          .                .
#> 5          .            0.1083                .
#> 6          .                .

```

The output file can be directly adopted by the main filtering and permutation functions.

```

# find CH with default metrics
ch_candidate <- CHIPfilter(input_3,tumor_sample=T)
#> [1] "Perform population metrics"
#> [1] "Perform technique metrics"

```

```

#> [1] "Perform individual metrics with paired tumor sample"
#> [1] "Perform functional metrics"
#> [1] "No not nonsunonymous metrics find, skip"
#> [1] "Perform gnomad metrics only"
#> [1] "No blacklist region bed file find, skip"
head(ch_candidate)
#>      Start Ref Alt      SampleID      End Chr  TLOD  SOR AD_alt  AF
#> 347 150068243 AGC - sample_10_st_g 150068245 chr5 18.15 1.508 8 0.036
#> 391 48792153 G C sample_10_st_g 48792153 chrX 205.62 0.716 85 0.296
#> 2170 102255385 - AA sample_9_st_g 102255385 chr7 31.03 0.284 49 0.187
#> 2176 102257898 - T sample_9_st_g 102257898 chr7 14.91 0.565 19 0.233
#>      DP SAF SAR      SampleID_t tumor_AF Func.refGene Gene.refGene
#> 347 291 6 2 sample_10_st_t 0.013 exoni SETBP1
#> 391 299 40 45 sample_10_st_t 0.026 exoni BCORL1
#> 2170 240 125 85 sample_9_st_t 0.113 exoni SRSF2
#> 2176 79 4 33 sample_9_st_t 0.142 exoni JAK3
#>      ExonicFunc.refGene      cosmic70
#> 347 nonsynonymous_SNV
#> 391 synonymous_SNV
#> 2170 synonymous_SNV ID\|x3dCOSM4130674\|x3bOCCURENCE\|x3d1(thyroid)
#> 2176 synonymous_SNV
#>      non_cancer_AF_popmax Alt_dpGAP_PopFreq      v_name      loci
#> 347 0.2566 . chr5:150068243:AGC:- chr5:150068243
#> 391 . . chrX:48792153:G:C chrX:48792153
#> 2170 1 . chr7:102255385:-:AA chr7:102255385
#> 2176 . . chr7:102257898:-:T chr7:102257898
#>      mut_sample
#> 347 chr5:150068243:AGC:-/sample_10_st_g
#> 391 chrX:48792153:G:C/sample_10_st_g
#> 2170 chr7:102255385:-:AA/sample_9_st_g
#> 2176 chr7:102257898:-:T/sample_9_st_g

```

Basic Usage of The *qcCHIP* Function

In this section, we use *qcCHIP* function to perform permutation and evaluate the effects of parameter cutoff values. Currently, *qcCHIP* function supports optimization for five metrics: VAF, DP, SOR, SAF/SAR and cohort mutation prevalence. As demonstrated in our manuscript, permutation consistency usually increases with higher parameter values with the exception that larger SOR decreases consistency. This is because that larger SOR means higher strand bias and lower reliability of mutation calls. In our manuscript, we demonstrated that the infection points of permutation consistency curves indicate the best parameter cut-offs. In practice, users should determine the infection points of permutation consistency curves: 1) with the increase of consistency stratified by VAF, DP, SAF/SAR and cohort mutation prevalence; 2) with the decrease of consistency stratified by SOR. In addition, users are suggested to take full consideration across consistency, precision and recall curves to determine the best parameter cutoffs.

Below we demo the permutation analysis and generate figures and summary for three parameters: VAF, DP, and cohort mutation prevalence. The figures and summary are used for determination of optimal parameter cutoffs used in the next section.

Run *qcCHIP* with different VAF cutoffs

The hypothesis is that a CH should hold a reliable VAF to be considered as true somatic mutation. This section demonstrates how different settings of minimum VAF affect the permutation consistency. Please refer to our manuscript for more detail. For computing efficiency, we only demo with 10 samples here, which is less-powered compared to the results presented in our manuscript.

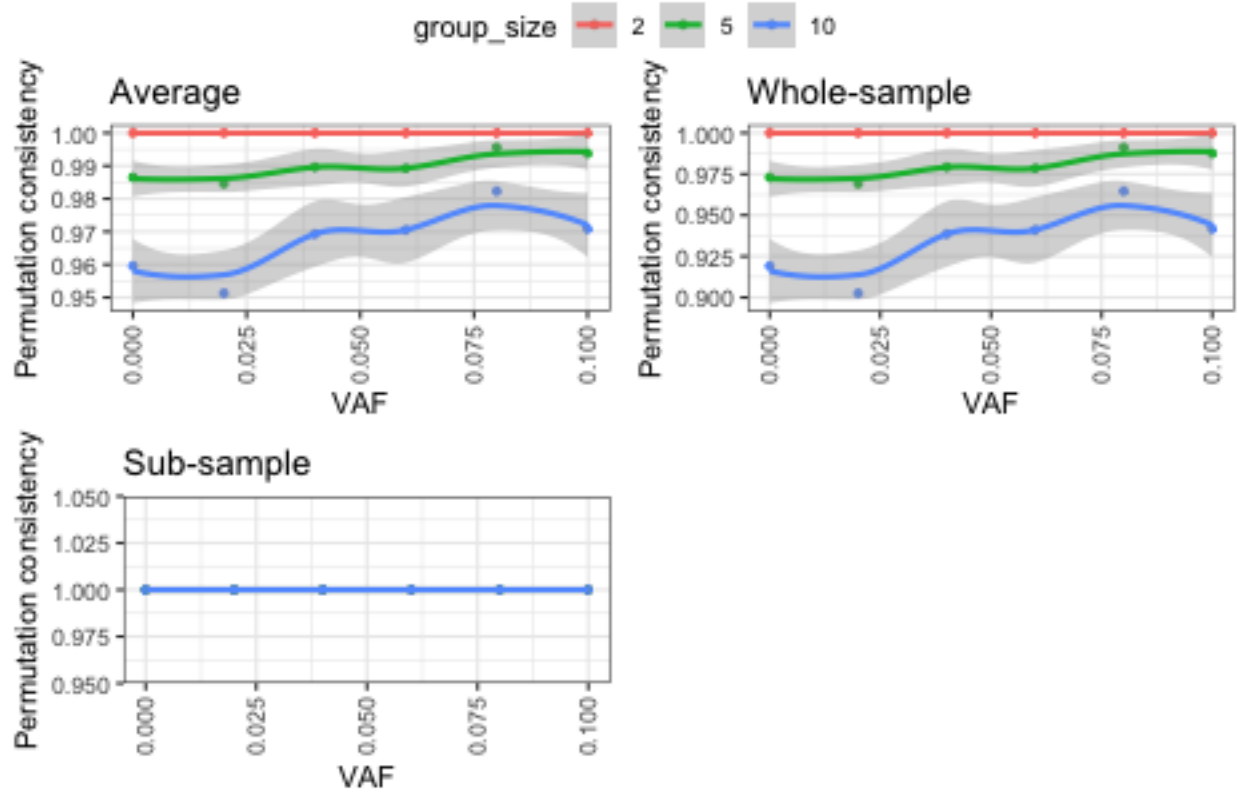
```
# input file
input_path<- system.file("extdata","demo_input.txt",package="qcCHIP")
in_f <- read.table(input_path,sep="\t",header=T)

# create test directory
out_dir <- paste0(getwd(),"/vaf_test")
vaf_permut <- qcCHIP(in_f,out_path = out_dir
                     ,metric_min = 0,
                     metric_step = 0.02,
                     metric_max = 0.1,
                     core=1,
                     show_info = F)

# example of comparison summary output
head(vaf_permut$summary_df)
#>   metric_name metric_setting group_size permut_index var_n_whole var_n_sub
#> 1      VAF           0           2           1         255         255
#> 2      VAF           0           2           2         255         255
#> 3      VAF           0           2           3         255         255
#> 4      VAF           0           2           4         255         255
#> 5      VAF           0           2           5         255         255
#> 6      VAF           0           2           6         255         255
#>   union_n common_n whole_only sub_only common_whole common_sub
#> 1     255     255         0         0           1           1
#> 2     255     255         0         0           1           1
#> 3     255     255         0         0           1           1
#> 4     255     255         0         0           1           1
#> 5     255     255         0         0           1           1
#> 6     255     255         0         0           1           1

# permutation consistency plot
vaf_permut$figs
```

Comparison of whole-sample and sub-sample



Run *qcCHIP* with different DP cutoffs

The hypothesis is that a CH should hold a reliable DP to be considered as true somatic mutation. This section demonstrates how different settings of minimum DP affect the permutation consistency. Please refer to our manuscript for more detail.

```
# input file
input_path<- system.file("extdata","demo_input.txt",package="qcCHIP")
in_f <- read.table(input_path,sep="\t",header=T)

# create test directory
out_dir <- paste0(getwd(),"/DP_test")
DP_permut <- qcCHIP(in_f,out_path = out_dir,permut_metrics = "DP",
                    metric_min = 0,
                    metric_step = 10,
                    metric_max = 50,
                    core=1,
                    show_info = F)

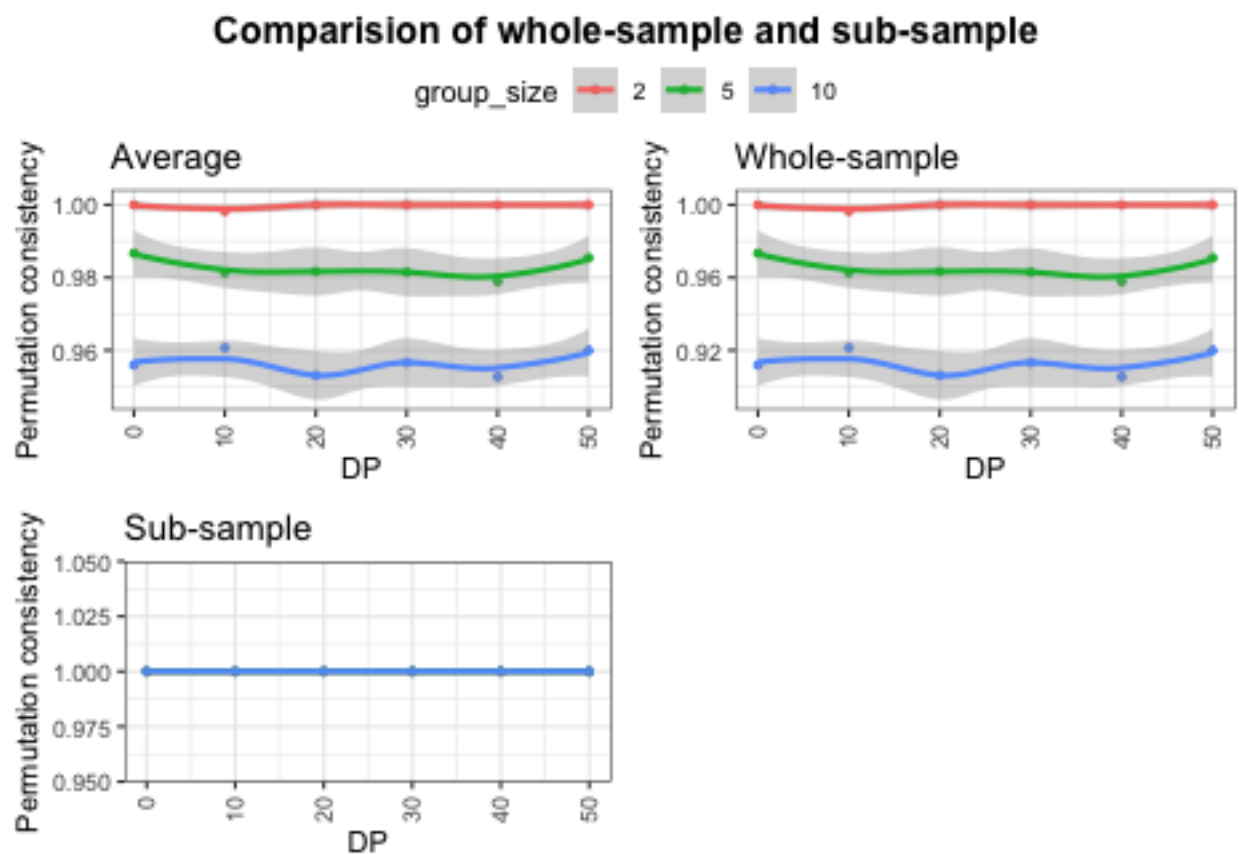
# example of comparison summary output
head(DP_permut$summary_df)
#>   metric_name metric_setting group_size permut_index var_n_whole var_n_sub
#> 1         DP              0           2           1         184         184
#> 2         DP              0           2           2         184         184
#> 3         DP              0           2           3         184         184
```

```

#> 4      DP      0      2      4      184      184
#> 5      DP      0      2      5      184      184
#> 6      DP      0      2      6      184      184
#>   union_n common_n whole_only sub_only common_whole common_sub
#> 1     184     184         0         0           1           1
#> 2     184     184         0         0           1           1
#> 3     184     184         0         0           1           1
#> 4     184     184         0         0           1           1
#> 5     184     184         0         0           1           1
#> 6     184     184         0         0           1           1

# permutation consistency plot
DP_permut$figs

```



Run *qcCHIP* with different mutation prevalence cutoffs

The hypothesis is that a true CH shouldn't be over prevalent in a given cohort as CHs are relatively rare events. This section demonstrates how different settings of maximum mutation prevalence affect the permutation consistency. Please refer to our manuscript for more detail.

```

# input file
input_path<- system.file("extdata","demo_input.txt",package="qcCHIP")
in_f <- read.table(input_path,sep="\t",header=T)

```

```

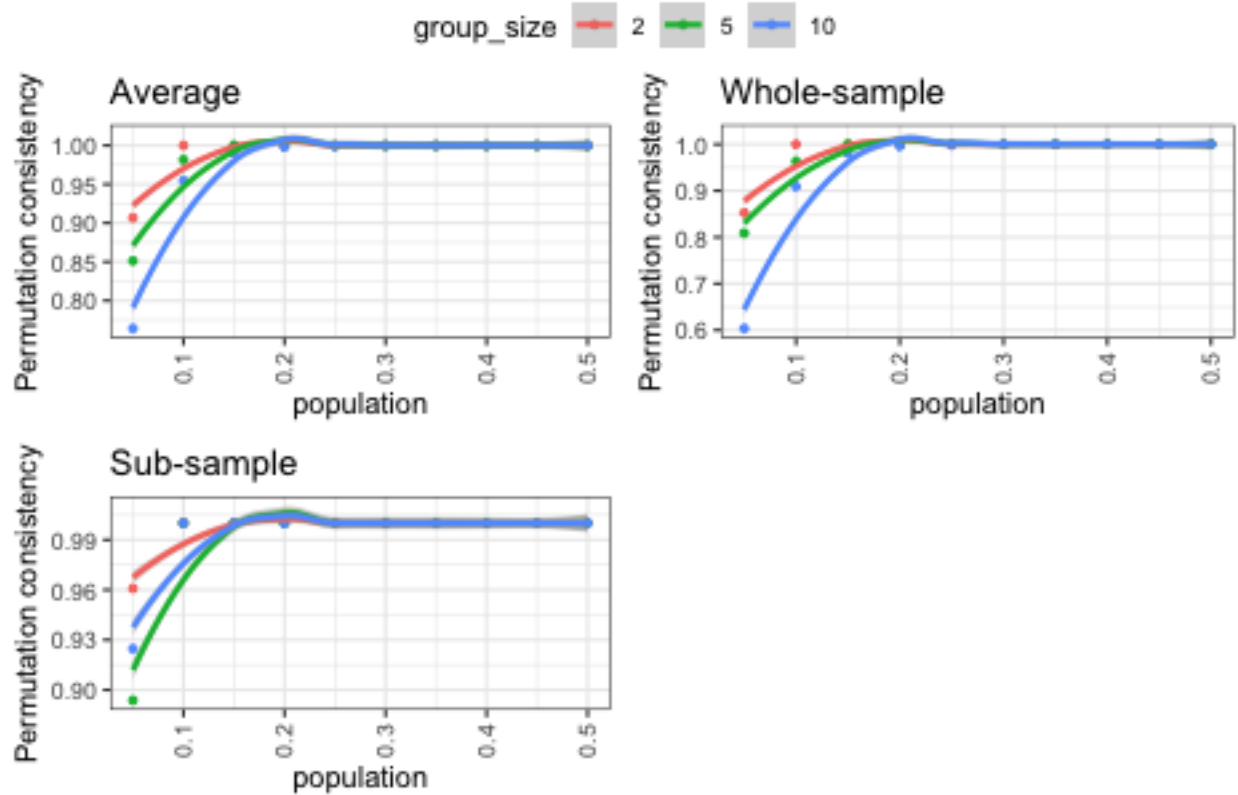
# create test directory
out_dir <- paste0(getwd(), "/population_test")
pop_permut <- qcCHIP(in_f, out_path = out_dir, permut_metrics = "population",
                    metric_min = 0.05,
                    metric_step = 0.05,
                    metric_max = 0.5,
                    core=1,
                    show_info = F)

# example of comparison summary output
head(pop_permut$summary_df)
#>   metric_name metric_setting group_size permut_index var_n_whole var_n_sub
#> 1 population      0.05           2           1      137      121
#> 2 population      0.05           2           2      137      126
#> 3 population      0.05           2           3      137      125
#> 4 population      0.05           2           4      137      124
#> 5 population      0.05           2           5      137      123
#> 6 population      0.05           2           6      137      103
#>   union_n common_n whole_only sub_only common_whole common_sub
#> 1    141    117      20      4      0.854      0.967
#> 2    147    116      21     10      0.847      0.921
#> 3    146    116      21      9      0.847      0.928
#> 4    142    119      18      5      0.869      0.960
#> 5    139    121      16      2      0.883      0.984
#> 6    137    103      34      0      0.752      1.000

# permutation consistency plot
pop_permut$figs

```

Comparison of whole-sample and sub-sample



Basic Usage of The *CHIPfilter* Function

Finally, we use *CHIPfilter* to filter CH candidates based on a variety of quality metrics (detailed in the main page of *CHIPfilter*). The output will be a subset of input file which pass the QC filtering. It is recommended that users first run *qcCHIP* function to determine optimal metric values. Nevertheless, users can pick their customized metric values and directly apply this function for CH filtering. Some features of *CHIPfilter* are described below.

```
# input file
input_path<- system.file("extdata","demo_input.txt",package="qcCHIP")
in_f <- read.table(input_path,sep="\t",header=T)

# exclude blacklist region
bf_path<- system.file("extdata","demo_blacklist.bed",package="qcCHIP")

bl_f <- read.table(bf_path,sep = "\t",header=F)

# run default setting
out_1 <- CHIPfilter(in_f)
#> [1] "Perform population metrics"
#> [1] "Perform technique metrics"
#> [1] "No paired tumor sample, skip"
#> [1] "Perform functional metrics"
#> [1] "No not nonsunonymous metrics find, skip"
```

```

#> [1] "Perform gnomad metrics only"
#> [1] "No blacklist region bed file find, skip"

# use different metric values
out_2 <- CHIPfilter(in_f,max_percent=0.02,DP_min = 40,VAF_min=0.002,info=F)

# filter with paired tumor sample
out_3 <- CHIPfilter(in_f,tumor_sample = T,tumor_VAF_min = 0.02,info=F)

# filter with gnomAD or dpGAP reference file
out_4 <- CHIPfilter(in_f,gnomad = F,dpGAP = F,info=F)

# filter with blacklist region
out_5 <- CHIPfilter(in_f,blacklist_f = bl_f,info=F)

# check the number of CHIP
length(unique(out_1$mut_sample))
#> [1] 182
length(unique(out_2$mut_sample))
#> [1] 101
length(unique(out_3$mut_sample))
#> [1] 136
length(unique(out_4$mut_sample))
#> [1] 201
length(unique(out_5$mut_sample))
#> [1] 178

```