

The Bushmen tell us a lot about human evolution and genetics

When it comes to the human genetics of the Khoe-San there's a little that's stale and unoriginal for me in terms of presentation. The elements are always composed the same. The Bushmen are the "most ancient" humans, who can tell us something about "our past," about "our evolution." Tried & tested banalities just bubble forth unbidden. I have no idea why. There's a new paper in *Science* on the genetics of the Khoe-San, which includes Bushmen, which brought to mind this issue for me because of the outrageous nature of the press releases.

The title of the paper itself is a testament to vanilla, [Genomic Variation in Seven Khoe-San Groups Reveals Adaptation and Complex African History](#). This is absolutely not surprising. Are you shocked that the Khoe-San have adaptations? Or that African history is complex? The wonder of it all! This paper actually revisits much of the same ground as Pickrell et al.'s originally titled [The genetic prehistory of southern Africa](#). Before [Dr. Pickrell](#) executes throw-down on me on [Twitter](#) let me concede that I have no creative ideas to offer in terms of an alternative title. Rather, I have an idea: **perhaps in the future scientists could explore the evolutionary genetic basis for [steatopygia](#)**? The trait is not limited just to Khoe-San, my [distant cousins](#) the [Andaman Islanders](#) also exhibit it. Perhaps this is the ancestral state of the human lineage? This is a situation where the titles just write themselves!

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