



## Distribution Of PPARG Gene Pro12Ala Polymorphism

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Journal Website:

<https://theamericanjournals.com/index.php/tajas>

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### ABSTRACT

The present study reports for the first time the genotypic distribution of PPARG Pro12Ala polymorphism in group of Uzbek athletes. The human peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor gamma (PPAR $\gamma$ ) is involved in lipid storage, glucose homeostasis and adipocyte differentiation. Pro-allele contributes to the development of high physical performance in sports where you need extra physical stamina, and Ala-allele - in sports based on the strength and speed. An analysis of the distribution frequency of genotypes of the PPARG gene, based on the general model of inheritance, in the group of athletes involved in football, was statistically significant compare to control ( $p=0.004$ ). These results suggest that the presence of PPARG Ala allele, which increases the sensitivity of muscle tissue to insulin, and thus enhancing its anabolic effect on skeletal muscle, predisposes the development and display of speed-power qualities. In addition, we are studied frequencies of Pro/Ala genotypes in Uzbek population in comparison with Russian, Ukrainian, Italian, Bosnian and Herzegovinian, and Ethiopian samples. In conclusion, the present data seem to suggest that some selective factors such as climate could have influenced the present distribution of the Ala allele.

### KEYWORDS

Peroxisome Proliferator-Activated Receptor Gamma (PPARG), Polymorphism, Human Genetics, Genetic Predisposition To Sport.

### INTRODUCTION

Physical performance phenotypes are multifactorial because they are influenced by characterized as quantitative and both multiple genes (polygenic) and

environmental factors. Physical activity and specific training are environmental factors that contribute or add to the observed differences in physical performance between individuals. Analyses of the genetic determinants of endurance performance as well as strength abilities provide information concerning the contribution of genes. Interaction effects between genes and the environment (dependence of training response on genes) and the identification of genes or coding variants in relation to athletes' characteristics are particularly interesting [1]. It is also worth noticing that information about the phenotypic modulation by genetic variation important for metabolic regulation could be used to understand the metabolic function of the gene of interest [2]. For these reasons, the number of genetic studies on the role of inheritance in fitness and performance traits and the impact of genetic variation on health and prevention of diseases has been systematically expanding in the last years.

Many genes have been investigated for their potential contributions to human variation in fitness, performance or trainability [3]. Among genetic loci and markers shown to be related to physical performance or health related fitness phenotypes, the Peroxisome Proliferator activated Receptors genes (PPAR) are especially interesting for exercise scientists and physicians due to the multiple physiological roles of Proteins encoded by them. PPAR proteins are lipid-activated nuclear receptors, which belong to the nuclear hormone receptor superfamily [4]. The transcriptional activity of PPARs is mediated by PPAR retinoid X receptor (RXR) heterodimers that bind to specific DNA sequence elements termed PPRES (PPAR response elements) in the regulatory region of their target genes. The

predominant role of PPARs is the transcriptional regulation of enzymes and other proteins involved in energy homeostasis (lipid and carbohydrate metabolism). PPARs also control expression of genes active in vascular biology, tissue repair, cell Proliferation and differentiation, and even sexual dimorphism [5, 6, 7]. Because physical fitness largely depends on the balance between lipid-carbohydrate metabolism and precise substrate usage, the PPAR transcriptional factors and their co-activators constitute an area of interest to sport scientists.

Three PPAR isotypes: PPAR $\alpha$  (alias NR1C1), PPAR $\delta$  (also called PPAR $\beta$  or NR1C2 or NUC-1 or FAAR) and PPAR $\gamma$  (alias NR1C3), have been identified so far in vertebrates and mammals [8]. These receptors exhibit a different tissue distribution and functions and, to some extent, different ligand specificities [6]. In humans, a separate gene encodes each PPAR isoform: PPAR $\alpha$  is encoded by the PPARA gene located on chromosome 22, PPAR $\gamma$  by the PPARG gene on chromosome 3, and PPAR $\delta$  by the PPARD gene on chromosome 6 [9].

Peroxisome Proliferator-activated receptor  $\gamma$  (PPAR $\gamma$ ) is a transcriptional regulator involved in energy control and lipid/glucose homeostasis. PPAR $\gamma$  is highly expressed in adipocytes, serves as a critical regulator of fat cell differentiation and promotes the formation of mature triglyceride-rich adipocytes. It also appears to be a key regulator of abiogenesis, fatty acid storage and energy balance [10]. Due to PPAR $\gamma$ 's role in controlling lipid/glucose metabolism, it is regarded as a physiological factor associated with predispositions to hyperlipidemia, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes mellitus, obesity and cardiovascular diseases [11].

Differential PPARG promoter usage and alternative splicing produce different mRNAs, including at least four transcripts (PPAR $\gamma$ 1, PPAR $\gamma$ 2, PPAR $\gamma$ 3 and PPAR $\gamma$ 4) that differ at their 5-prime ends [12]. However, the Protein sequences of PPAR $\gamma$ 1,  $\gamma$ 3 and  $\gamma$ 4 are identical (these Proteins are encoded by exons 1 to 6 of the PPARG gene) while the PPAR $\gamma$ 2 Protein contains 28 additional amino acids at the N-terminus that are encoded by the exon B fragment of the PPARG gene. The shorter PPAR $\gamma$ 1 has a relatively broad expression pattern including the gut, brain, vascular cells, and immune and inflammatory cells, whereas PPAR $\gamma$ 2 is found at high levels mainly in adipose tissues [5].

The C34G substitution (rs1801282) is located within the exon B sequence of the PPARG gene, resulting in the Pro12Ala polymorphism described in the PPAR $\gamma$ 2 Protein [13]. The 12Ala allele shows a decreased binding affinity of the PPAR $\gamma$ 2 Protein to the PPRE sequences in responsive Promoter regions, resulting in low activation of target genes [14, 15]. The functional relevance of the Pro12Ala amino acid change in the PPAR $\gamma$ 2 Protein results from its localization within the PPAR $\gamma$  molecule. This SNP was first identified in 1997 [13] within the AF-1 domain of the amino terminus of the PPAR $\gamma$ 2 Protein, that controls ligand-independent transcriptional activity. Presumably, the Pro12Ala change in the AF-1 domain may indirectly facilitate the chemical modification of some amino acids residues (phosphorylation and/or simulation) responsible for decreasing the PPAR $\gamma$ 2 activity. The association between the Pro12Ala polymorphism and the divergent transcriptional activity of PPAR $\gamma$  was confirmed during in vitro experiments. The estimation of the transcriptional activity of the

12Ala PPAR $\gamma$ 2 variant, compared to the Pro12 variant, indicated that the PPARG 12Ala allele is associated with a less active form of PPAR $\gamma$ 2 Protein characterized by decreased abilities to activate the transcription of prepared constructs containing PPRE [15] or specific genes [14]. These results were confirmed in vivo in association studies demonstrating changes in the expression of PPARG target genes depending on the Pro12Ala genotypes [16, 17, 18].

PPAR $\gamma$ 2 is a transcriptional factor required for the proper expression of hundreds of genes engaged in cellular metabolism. The alterations in the activity of the PPAR $\gamma$ 2 12Ala variant may be responsible for different physiological effects observed not only in adipocytes (where PPAR $\gamma$ 2 is primarily expressed) but also in other tissues of the human body, for example, in muscle cells. At first glance, this may seem surprising because PPAR $\gamma$ 2 is minimally expressed in the skeletal muscles, but there are some physiological explanations for this fact. PPAR $\gamma$ 2 acts as a molecular sensor that controls the metabolism and transport of fatty acids in different tissues and is known as a modulator of insulin-signaling pathways sensitizing skeletal muscle and the liver to the actions of insulin. The positive association between the PPARG 12Ala allele and improved insulin sensitivity was confirmed by a number of studies [14, 19, 20]. Enhanced insulin sensitivity suppresses lipolysis, which in consequence causes a decreased release of FFAs (Free Fatty Acids) [21]. Such an insulin-induced inhibition of lipolysis in adipocytes resulting in reduced plasma FFA availability may favor using glucose in muscle cells. This specific shift of energy balance towards glucose utilization rather than FFA mobilization upon insulin stimulation seems to be more

efficient in PPARG 12Ala carriers due to the improved insulin sensitivity observed in such individuals. This assumption was confirmed in a study in which the effect of decreasing the lipid oxidation with an accompanying increase of the rates of muscle glucose uptake and its cellular metabolism after insulin stimulation was mainly observed in lean subjects carrying the 12Ala allele, while the Pro12Pro12 homozygotes revealed significantly lower substrate flexibility [22]. The physiological needs of an athlete's body require very subtle energy substrate regulation and mediation of the balance between fatty acid and glucose metabolism, especially in terms of metabolic stress for prolonged exertion or short-term, very intense exercises. As presented above, PPARG $\gamma$ 2 influences the energy substrate selection. For athletes who perform sports that involve lifting, jumping, throwing and short sprints, the anaerobic system is regarded as a fundamental mechanism of energy production. In anaerobic metabolism, glucose is the most important fuel, as it is needed for glycolysis to provide the amount of energy required for very short (approximately 20-30 s) and very intense physical efforts. Increased glucose utilization in working skeletal muscles promoted by the presence of the PPARG 12Ala allele in individual's genotype may be one of the key elements crucial for athletes performing short-term exercises [23].

The aforementioned flexibility of energy substrate usage is an element that is unquestionably crucial for performing the physical exercises characteristic of athletes. However, body mass and composition can be considered equally important factors in athletic performance. Because PPARG $\gamma$  regulates adipocyte differentiation and controls body fat storage, the relevance of the

PPARG polymorphism in the context of susceptibility to obesity is of major interest. The different consequences of carrying the PPARG 12Ala allele on BMI were observed in overweight/obese and lean subjects [24, 25]. A meta-analysis of 40 datasets from 30 independent studies revealed that the PPARG Pro12Ala polymorphism had an effect on BMI in individuals with marked obesity (12Ala carriers had a higher BMI than Pro12 homozygotes), while this effect was not observed in lean subjects [26]. These findings indicate that the Pro12Ala polymorphism modulates body weight, but its impact is modified by other genetic components and environmental factors such as dietary habits or physical activity levels. A study on non-diabetic subjects indicated that the beneficial additive effects of physical exercise and healthy (i.e., rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids) diet are restricted to PPARG Pro12Pro12 homozygotes. In 12Ala allele carriers, the relationships between diet, activity level and body weight are more complicated: the beneficial effects are only observed when the polyunsaturated to saturated fatty acid ratio and physical activity are simultaneously elevated [27]. These data may suggest that the PPARG 12Ala allele is positively associated with a susceptibility to obesity; however, the observed effects of its presence in an individual's genotype strongly depend on that individual's lifestyle behaviors. Taking these findings into consideration, one main conclusion for athletes seems to be particularly important: to develop a favorable weight-to-strength ratio in professional athletes who are PPARG 12Ala allele carriers, strict dietary discipline should be maintained. This is likely to be especially important for athletes competing in sports that involve lifting, jumping, throwing and short sprints, for whom strength abilities are essential. For

physically active 12Ala allele carriers, strict diet seems to be a crucial environmental factor that favorably modulates the influence of their genetic components, and most likely enables them to achieve a high performance level. It is suggested that the proper combination of genotype, training and diet is most likely responsible for developing the appropriate relations between body mass and strength in athletes [23].

The role of PPARG in athletic performance is multifarious because PPAR $\gamma$  also regulates bone mass, which is a phenotype trait that creates a structural scaffold crucial for effective load transfer in athletes. There is evidence for an antiosteogenic action of PPAR $\gamma$ . The study of PPARG-deficient mice as well as in vitro experiments revealed that PPAR $\gamma$  haplo insufficiency promotes osteoblast genesis [28] and enhances bone development. The reduced transcriptional activity of PPAR $\gamma$  results in a decreased expression of PPAR $\gamma$  target genes coding for antiosteogenic-signalling factors [29]. Based on data obtained in mouse models, the reduction of PPARG activity associated with the Pro12Ala polymorphism could enhance osteoblastogenesis, resulting in increased bone mass in humans. Thus, athletes carrying the PPARG 12Ala allele might benefit from having stronger bones that are better adjusted to withstand extreme forces and transfer loads that are over the normal loading conditions. This aspect is especially important for athletes performing strength sports such as powerlifting or weightlifting, for which tremendous weight loads are transferred throughout the whole training program and during competition [23]. Taking into account the physiological role of the PPAR $\gamma$  protein, it was suggested that the PPARG Pro12Ala

polymorphism can be a genetic factor that contributes to the polygenic profile of athletic performance. The hypothesis that the PPARG 12Ala allele is associated with strength athlete status was verified in Polish athletes and, after analysis of the genotyping results, it was demonstrated that a significantly higher frequency of the PPARG 12Ala allele in the subgroup of the Polish athletes designated “strength athletes” compared to the frequency observed in the control group [23]. These results are in accordance with a previous study [30] showing that the 12Ala allele was more prevalent in the similar group of strength athletes (sprinters, throwers and weightlifters). Ahmetov et al. [30] also detected a hypertrophic effect of the PPARG 12Ala allele on muscle fibers, suggesting that the 12Ala allele is associated with the development and manifestation of the speed and force qualities. Moreover, the PPARG 12Ala allele was also overrepresented in a large cohort of Russian rowers [31], indicating the importance of the strength component in the overall performance of this strength-endurance discipline.

Considering all facts presented above, the PPARG 12Ala allele may be recognized as a relevant genetic factor favoring strength abilities in professional athletes, especially in terms of insulin-dependent metabolism, a shift of the energy balance towards glucose utilization and the development of a favorable weight-to-strength ratio.

It is well known that the genetic association may vary depending on the population that is why it so important to carry out these studies in different populations. Until now, the studies of polymorphisms of PPARG gene not carried out for Uzbek athletes.

The aim of our study was to determine the frequency of genotypes PPARG gene Pro12Ala polymorphism in Uzbek athletes and frequencies of Pro/Ala genotypes in Uzbek population in comparison with Russian, Ukrainian, Italian, Bosnian and Herzegovinian, and Ethiopian samples.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Blood samples for molecular genetic analysis of PPARG gene polymorphism were taken from 100 Uzbek athletes involved in different sports and 101 nonathletic individuals for control group. Genomic DNA was extracted from the whole blood using Miller’s protocol [32]. Genotyping PPARG gene polymorphism by using Polymerase chain reaction -restriction fragment length polymorphism protocol (PCR-RFLP) with TaqI enzyme. Pro12Ala was genotyped using forward primer: forward 5'-TCTCTCCGTAATGGAAGACC-3', and a mismatch reverse primer R: 5'-GCATTATGAGACATCCCCAC-3', generating a fragment of 154 bp digested by TaqI to 133 bp. The amplified PCR product containing Pro12Ala SNPs was digested with HpaI restriction enzymes, respectively, at 37 °C overnight.

Restriction fragments was analyzed by 3% agarose gel electrophoresis. Genotyping was repeated for fifty percent of all samples (including all mutant homozygous and al heterozygous samples for Pro12Ala SNPs and randomly selected other samples) with 100% reproducibility. Statistical analyses were

performed using on-line open program “Gen-expert” (<http://gen-expert.ru>). Statistical significance was set as  $p < 0.05$ . The differences in genotype frequencies between cases and controls were assessed by chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

PPARG gene encodes peroxisome proliferator activated receptor gamma, gamma-nuclear receptor, which involved in cell differentiation, muscle tissue, fat and carbohydrate metabolism. Ala allele carriers are more likely to preserve physical activity, as far as their muscles are capable to utilize glucose in greater extent. It was found that the PPARG Pro12 Ala polymorphism has association with the susceptibility to sports. Pro-allele contributes to the development of high physical performance in sports where you need extra physical stamina, and Ala-allele - in sports based on the strength and speed.

The genotyping results of the control group allowed us to determine the frequency of allelic variants of PPARG Pro12Ala polymorphism, which was as follows: 75.4% Pro/Pro, 24.8% Pro/Ala and 0% Ala/Ala. PPARG genotype distribution amongst athletes and controls were consistent with Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium ( $p > 0.05$ ). In the control group, the frequency of rare Ala allele was 12.4 %. This parameter was higher on 3.2 % for cyclists, on 5.6 % for academic rowing and on 14.9 % for football players (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Allele distribution for PPARG in cases and controls

Sports	Frequency distribution of alleles, %		$\chi^2$	p
	Pro	Ala		

	Cases	Controls	OR (95% CI)	Cases	Controls	OR (95% CI)		
Cycle racing (N=16)	84.4	87.6	0.76(0.27-2.16)	15.6	12.4	1.31(0.46-3.72)	0.26	0.61
Boxing (N=12)	100	87.6	7.04(0.42-119.36)	0	12.4	0.14(0.01-2.41)	3.34	0.07
Rugby (N=14)	89.3	87.6	1.18(0.33-4.19)	10.7	12.4	0.85(0.24-3.02)	0.06	0.8
Football (N=33)	72.7	87.6	0.38(0.19-0.75)	27.3	12.4	2.66(1.34-5.27)	8.19	0.004
Academic roving (N=25)	82.0	87.6	0.64(0.28-1.48)	18.0	12.4	1.55(0.67-3.58)	1.09	0.3

**Table 2.** Genotype frequencies of the PPARG Pro12Ala polymorphism comparing with Uzbek population

№	Population	N	Genotypes, %			p
			Pro/Pro	Pro/Ala	Ala/Ala	
1	Uzbek	101	75.2	24.8	0	0.16
2	Russian	100	68.7	28.1	3.2	0.13
3	Ukrainian	82	70.7	28	1.2	0.46
4	Italian	111	81.5	18.5	0	0.44
5	Bosnian and Herzegovinian	43	72.1	20.9	7	0.03
6	Ethiopian (Africa)	79	91.1	8.9	0	0.02

An analysis of the distribution frequency of genotypes of the PPARG gene, based on the general model of inheritance, in the group of athletes involved in football, was statistically significant compare to control (p =0.004).

These results suggest that the presence of PPARG Ala allele, which increases the sensitivity of muscle tissue to insulin, and thus enhancing its anabolic effect on skeletal muscle, predisposes the development and display of speed-power qualities. Thus, it seems reasonable to include genotyping of

PPARG Pro12Ala polymorphism in the complex of genetic testing of athletes, and young people who are planning to engage with football sport activities.

The frequencies of the PPARG Pro/Ala genotypes Uzbek population observed in comparison with literature dates Russian, Ukrainian, Italian, Bosnian and Herzegovinian and Ethiopian samples. In each group the genotype frequencies were consistent with Hardy - Weinberg equilibrium ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 2). No significant differences in Uzbek population with Russian ( $p = 0.13$ ), Ukrainian ( $p = 0.46$ ) and Italian ( $p = 0.44$ ) populations were found. In comparison with Bosnian and Herzegovinian significantly different by high level Ala/Ala genotype 7% ( $p = 0.03$ ), reliable difference was discovered, while comparing with Ethiopian population (Africa) due to dominating Pro/Pro genotype and rather low frequency of Pro/Ala genotype in this population ( $p = 0.02$ ) [33, 34, 35, 36].

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present data seem to suggest that some selective factors such as climate could have influenced the present distribution of the Ala allele. There is an increasing need to study the genetic structure of peoples now living in pre-industrial societies where future changes in environmental factors, mainly dietary habits, could interfere with their genes and endanger their health.

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