

vcfdist

**Accurately benchmarking phased small
variant calls in human genomes**

Tim Dunn
University of Michigan

Background: Variant Call Format (VCF) Normalization

Reference AAGGAAATC

Query ATCGAAAATC

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Query ATCGAAAATC

Alignment

```
AAGGAAA-TC
.  . . . . .
ATCGAAAATC
```

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Query ATCGAAAATC

Alignment

```
AAGGAAA-TC
. . . . .
ATCGAAAATC
```

VCF

POS	REF	ALT
2	AG	TC
6	AATC	AAATC

Original

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Query ATCGAAAATC

Alignment

AAGGAAA-TC
· · · · ·
ATCGAAAATC

AAGGAAA-TC
· · · · ·
ATCGAAAATC

VCF

POS	REF	ALT
2	AG	TC
6	AATC	AAATC

POS	REF	ALT
2	A	T
3	G	C
6	AATC	AAATC

Original

Decomposed

Background: Variant Call Format (VCF) Normalization

Reference AAGGAAATC

Query ATCGAAAATC

Alignment

AAGGAAA-TC
· ····· ··
ATCGAAAATC

AAGGAAA-TC
· ····· ··
ATCGAAAATC

AAGGAAA-TC
· ····· ··
ATCGAAAATC

VCF

POS	REF	ALT
2	AG	TC
6	AATC	AAATC

POS	REF	ALT
2	A	T
3	G	C
6	AATC	AAATC

POS	REF	ALT
2	A	T
3	G	C
7	A	AA

Original

Decomposed

Trimmed

Background: Variant Call Format (VCF) Normalization

Reference AAGGAAATC

Query ATCGAAAATC

Alignment

AAGGAAA-TC

 ATCGAAAATC

AAGGAAA-TC

 ATCGAAAATC

AAGGAAA-TC

 ATCGAAAATC

AAGG-AAATC

 ATCGAAAATC

VCF

POS	REF	ALT
2	AG	TC
6	AATC	AAATC

POS	REF	ALT
2	A	T
3	G	C
6	AATC	AAATC

POS	REF	ALT
2	A	T
3	G	C
7	A	AA

POS	REF	ALT
2	A	T
3	G	C
4	G	GA

Original

Decomposed

Trimmed

Left shifted

Background: Variant Call Format (VCF) Normalization

Reference AAGGAAATC

Query ATCGAAAATC

Alignment

```
AAGGAAA-TC
. .... .
ATCGAAAATC
```

```
AAGGAAA-TC
. .... .
ATCGAAAATC
```

```
AAGGAAA-TC
. .... .
ATCGAAAATC
```

```
AAGG-AAATC
. .... .
ATCGAAAATC
```

```
AAGG----AAATC
. .... .
A---TCGAAAATC
```

VCF

POS	REF	ALT
2	AG	TC
6	AATC	AAATC

POS	REF	ALT
2	A	T
3	G	C
6	AATC	AAATC

POS	REF	ALT
2	A	T
3	G	C
7	A	AA

POS	REF	ALT
2	A	T
3	G	C
4	G	GA

POS	REF	ALT
1	AAGG	A
1	A	ATCGA

Original

Decomposed

Trimmed

Left shifted

Alternate

Overview

1. Key Ideas

- A. Standardize complex variant representation
- B. Allow partial credit for variant calls
- C. Distance-based evaluation metrics
- D. Enforce local variant phasing

2. Results

Improved stability of variant calling evaluation

3. Extension

"Can we directly evaluate structural variants?"

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"Can we directly evaluate structural variants?"

A. Standardize complex variant representation

"Best alignment normalization" (Bayat, 2016)

m = match (0)

x = mis-match

o = gap opening

e = gap extension

A. Standardize complex variant representation

"Best alignment normalization" (Bayat, 2016)

m = match (0)

x = mis-match

o = gap opening

e = gap extension

```
AAGG-AAATC
. . . . .
ATCGAAAATC
```

POS	REF	ALT
2	A	T
3	G	C
4	G	GA

$x + x + (o+e)$

```
AAGG----AAATC
. . . . .
A---TCGAAAATC
```

POS	REF	ALT
1	AAGG	A
1	A	ATCGA

$(o+3e) + (o+4e)$

A. Standardize complex variant representation

"Best alignment normalization" (Bayat, 2016)

m = match (0)

x = mis-match (5)

o = gap opening (6)

e = gap extension (2)

```
AAGG-AAATC
.  .  . . . .
ATCGAAAATC
```

POS	REF	ALT
2	A	T
3	G	C
4	G	GA

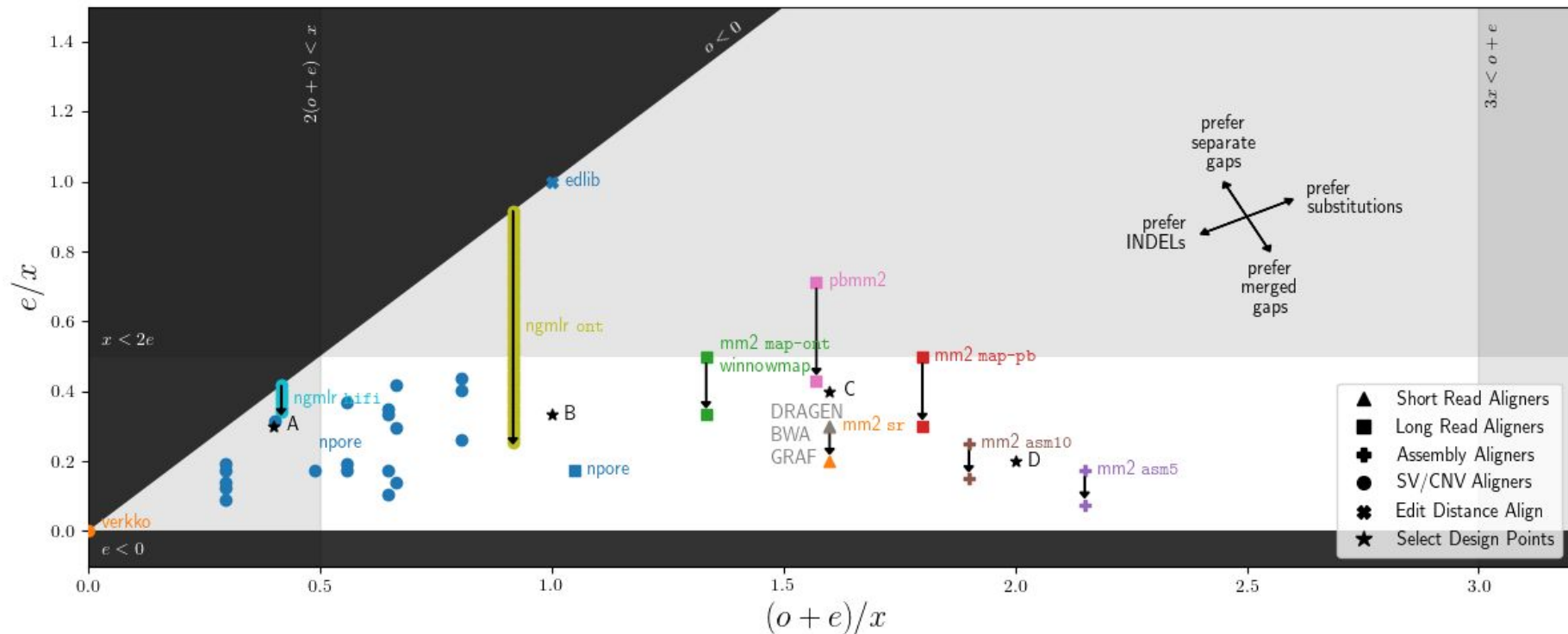
18

```
AAGG----AAATC
.  .  . . . .
A---TCGAAAATC
```

POS	REF	ALT
1	AAGG	A
1	A	ATCGA

26

A. Standardize complex variant representation



A. Standardize complex variant representation

Reference AGGCGACA

Query ATACCGAGCTTA

Point *A*

$m, x, o, e = 0, 10, 1, 3$

Point *B*

$m, x, o, e = 0, 3, 2, 1$

Point *C*

$m, x, o, e = 0, 5, 6, 2$

Point *D*

$m, x, o, e = 0, 5, 9, 1$

Alignment

AGG---CGA-C--A

 A--TACCGAGCTTA

A-GGCGA-C--A

 ATACCGAGCTTA

A-GGCGA---CA

 ATACCGAGCTTA

AGGCGAC-----A

 A---TACCGAGCTTA

VCF

POS	REF	ALT
1	AGG	A
3	G	GTAC
6	A	AG
7	C	CTT

POS	REF	ALT
1	A	AT
2	G	A
3	G	C
6	A	AG
7	C	CTT

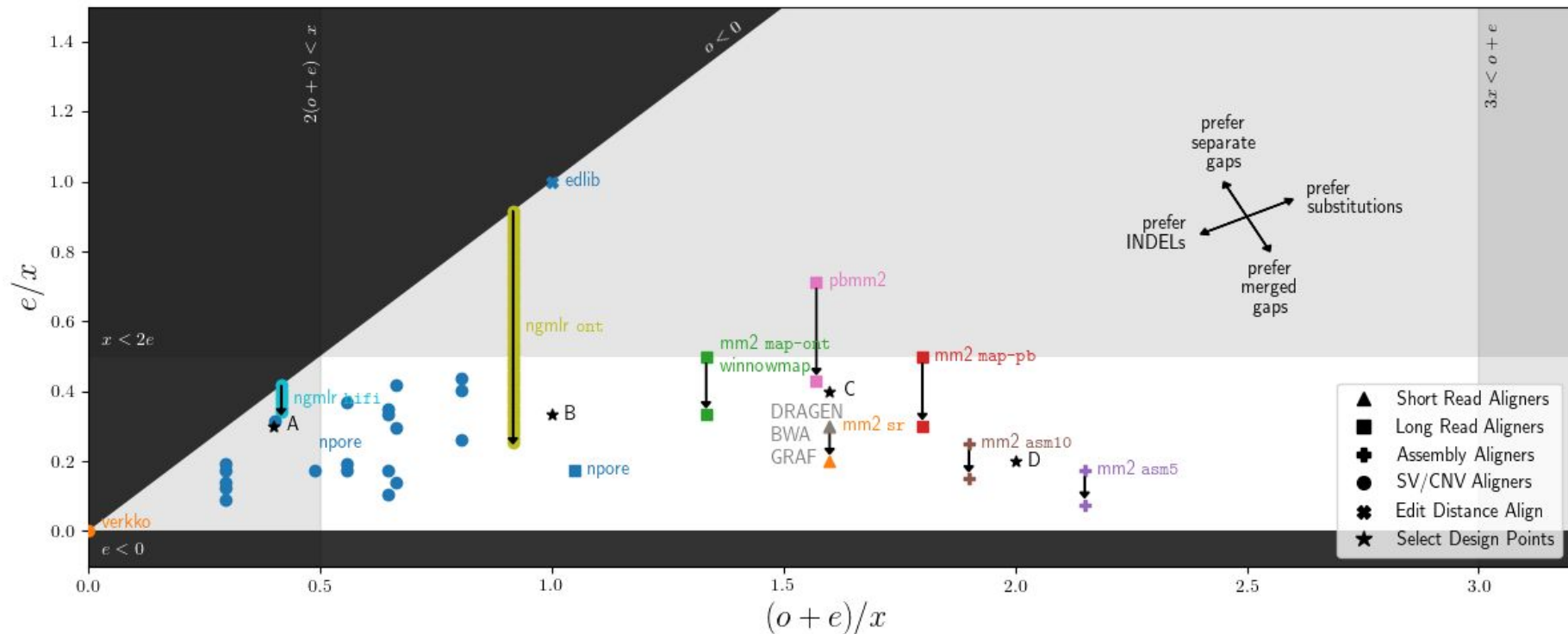
POS	REF	ALT
1	A	AT
2	G	A
3	G	C
6	A	AGCT
7	C	T

POS	REF	ALT
1	AGGC	A
5	G	T
7	C	CCGAGCTT

A. Standardize complex variant representation

Representation	SNPs	INDELs
Original	3,367,320	548,602
<i>A</i>	0	7,185,103
<i>B</i>	3,366,095	547,654
<i>C</i>	3,369,257	545,077
<i>D</i>	3,369,279	544,664

A. Standardize complex variant representation



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B. Allow partial credit for variant calls

Ref. ACCCTTTTTG Query ACCTTTG Truth ACCCTTTG

B. Allow partial credit for variant calls

Ref. ACCCTTTTTTG

Query ACCTTTG

Truth ACCCTTTG

Query VCF
Representation 1

POS	REF	ALT
3	CCTTT	C

Query VCF
Representation 2

POS	REF	ALT
1	AC	A
4	CTTT	C

Truth VCF

POS	REF	ALT
4	CTTT	C

B. Allow partial credit for variant calls

Ref.	ACCCTTTTTTG	Query	ACCTTTG	Truth	ACCCTTTG
Query VCF Representation 1			Query VCF Representation 2		Truth VCF
POS	REF	ALT	POS	REF	ALT
3	CCTT	C	1	AC	A
			4	CTT	C

vcfeval Summary Statistics

	TP	FP	FN	PP	Prec.	Recall	F1	F1 Q-score
Query Repr. 1	0	1	1	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Query Repr. 2	1	1	0	0	0.50	1.00	0.67	4.77

B. Allow partial credit for variant calls

Ref.	ACCCTTTTTTG	Query	ACCTTTG	Truth	ACCCTTTG
Query VCF Representation 1		Query VCF Representation 2		Truth VCF	
POS	REF	ALT	POS	REF	ALT
3	CCTT	C	1	AC	A
			4	CTT	C

vcfeval Summary Statistics

	TP	FP	FN	PP	Prec.	Recall	F1	F1 Q-score
Query Repr. 1	0	1	1	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Query Repr. 2	1	1	0	0	0.50	1.00	0.67	4.77

vcfdist Summary Statistics

	TP	FP	FN	PP	Prec.	Recall	F1	F1 Q-score
Query Repr. 1	0	0	0	1	0.67	0.67	0.67	4.77
Query Repr. 2	1	1	0	0	0.50	1.00	0.67	4.77

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C. Distance based evaluation metrics

Ref.	ACCCTTTTTTG		Query	ACCTTTG		Truth	ACCCTTTG	
Query VCF Representation 1			Query VCF Representation 2			Truth VCF		
POS	REF	ALT	POS	REF	ALT	POS	REF	ALT
3	CCTT	C	1	AC	A	4	CTT	C
			4	CTT	C			

vcfeval Summary Statistics

	TP	FP	FN	PP	Prec.	Recall	F1	F1 Q-score
Query Repr. 1	0	1	1	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Query Repr. 2	1	1	0	0	0.50	1.00	0.67	4.77

vcfdist Summary Statistics

	TP	FP	FN	PP	Prec.	Recall	F1	F1 Q-score
Query Repr. 1	0	0	0	1	0.67	0.67	0.67	4.77
Query Repr. 2	1	1	0	0	0.50	1.00	0.67	4.77

vcfdist Distance Summary

	ED	DE	DE Q-score	ED Q-score	ALN Q-Score
Reference	3	1			
Query Repr. 1	1	1	4.77	0.00	3.01
Query Repr. 2	1	1	4.77	0.00	3.01

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D. Enforce local variant phasing

Truth	VCF			
CHROM	POS	REF	ALT	GT
chr1	19672401	TTCC	T	1 1
chr1	19672413	A	AGAG	1 1

D. Enforce local variant phasing

Original Query VCF

CHROM	POS	REF	ALT	GT
chr1	19672401	TTCC	T	0 1
chr1	19672410	C	A	0 1
chr1	19672411	T	G	0 1
chr1	19672412	C	A	0 1
chr1	19672413	A	AGAG,G	1 2

Truth VCF

CHROM	POS	REF	ALT	GT
chr1	19672401	TTCC	T	1 1
chr1	19672413	A	AGAG	1 1

D. Enforce local variant phasing

Original Query VCF

CHROM	POS	REF	ALT	GT
chr1	19672401	TTCC	T	0 1
chr1	19672410	C	A	0 1
chr1	19672411	T	G	0 1
chr1	19672412	C	A	0 1
chr1	19672413	A	AGAG,G	1 2

Truth VCF

CHROM	POS	REF	ALT	GT
chr1	19672401	TTCC	T	1 1
chr1	19672413	A	AGAG	1 1

Query VCF, standardized at C

CHROM	POS	REF	ALT	GT
chr1	19672401	TTCCTCC	T	0 1
chr1	19672413	A	AGAG	1 1

D. Enforce local variant phasing

Original Query VCF

CHROM	POS	REF	ALT	GT
chr1	19672401	TTCC	T	0 1
chr1	19672410	C	A	0 1
chr1	19672411	T	G	0 1
chr1	19672412	C	A	0 1
chr1	19672413	A	AGAG,G	1 2

Query VCF, standardized at C

CHROM	POS	REF	ALT	GT
chr1	19672401	TTCCTCC	T	0 1
chr1	19672413	A	AGAG	1 1

Truth VCF

CHROM	POS	REF	ALT	GT
chr1	19672401	TTCC	T	1 1
chr1	19672413	A	AGAG	1 1

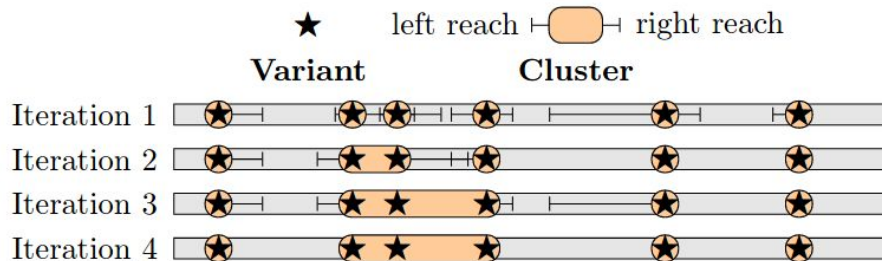
Original Query VCF Summary

4 SNP TP, 2 INDEL TP

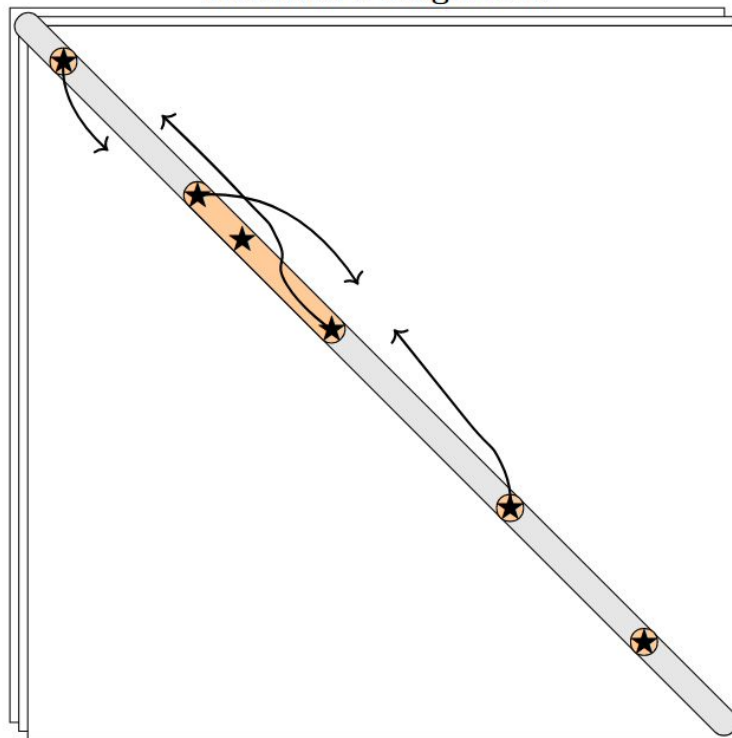
Query VCF at C Summary

1 INDEL TP, 1 INDEL FP, 1 INDEL FN

Clustering



Iteration 3 Alignment



Superclustering

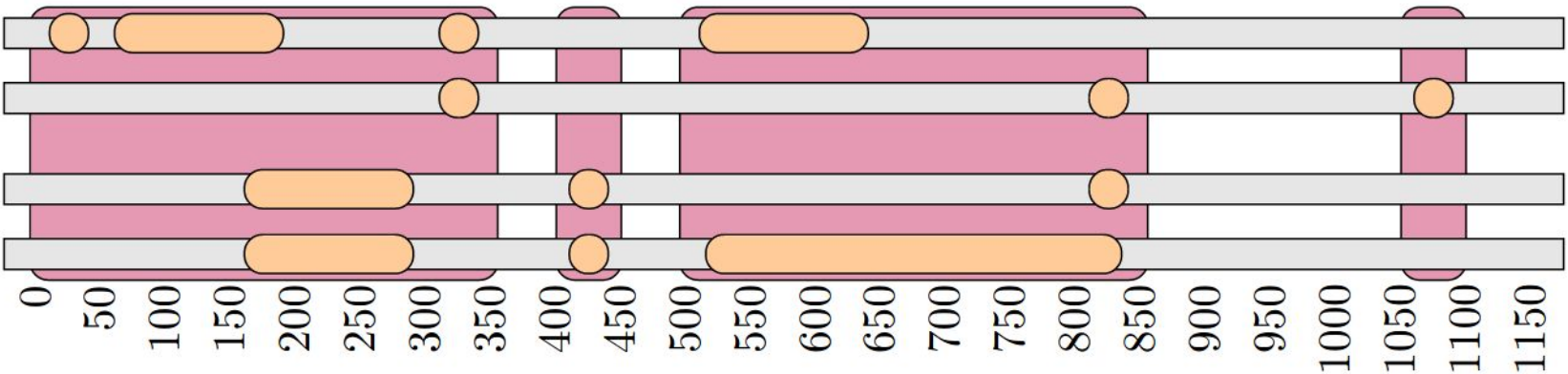
Supercluster Cluster

Query 1

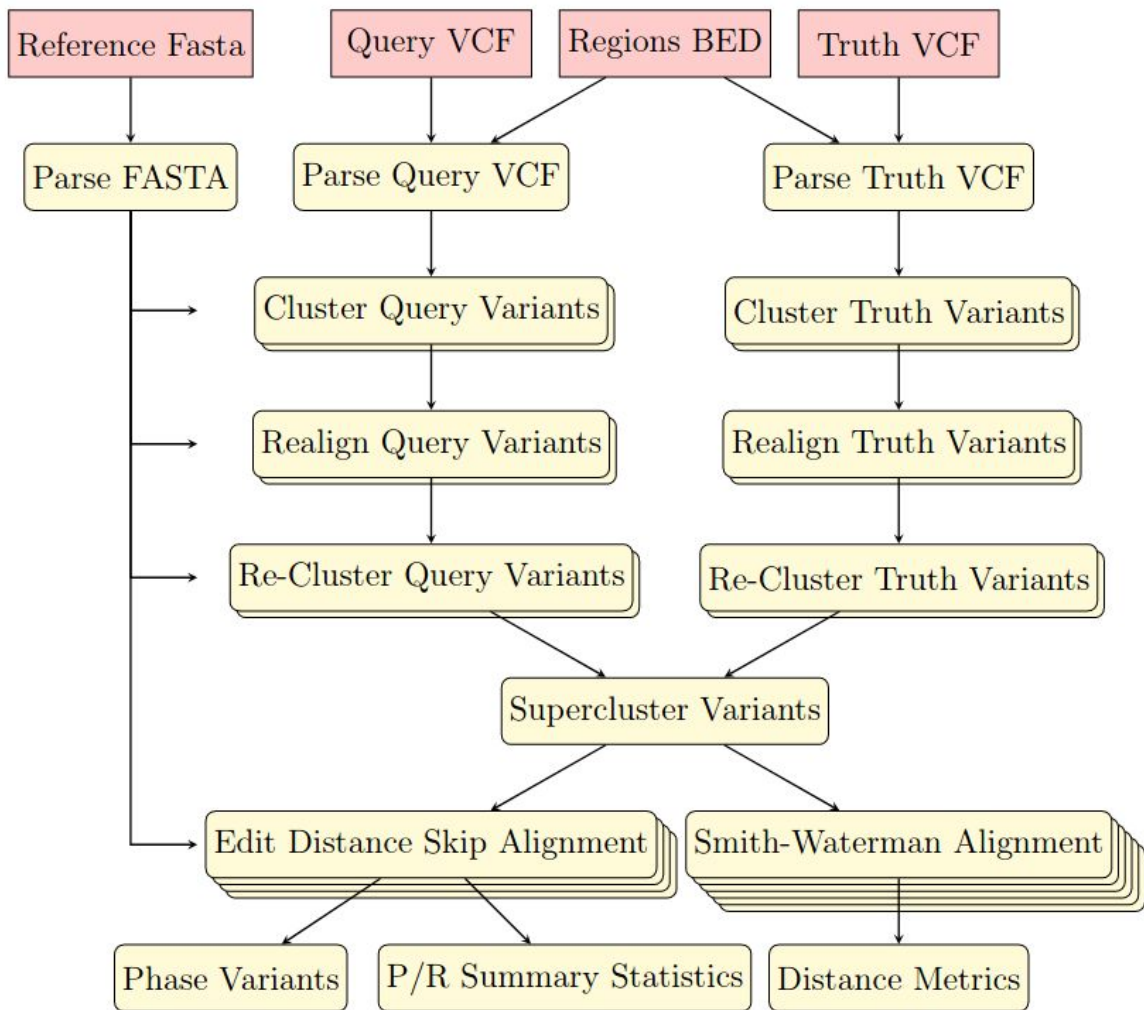
Query 2

Truth 1

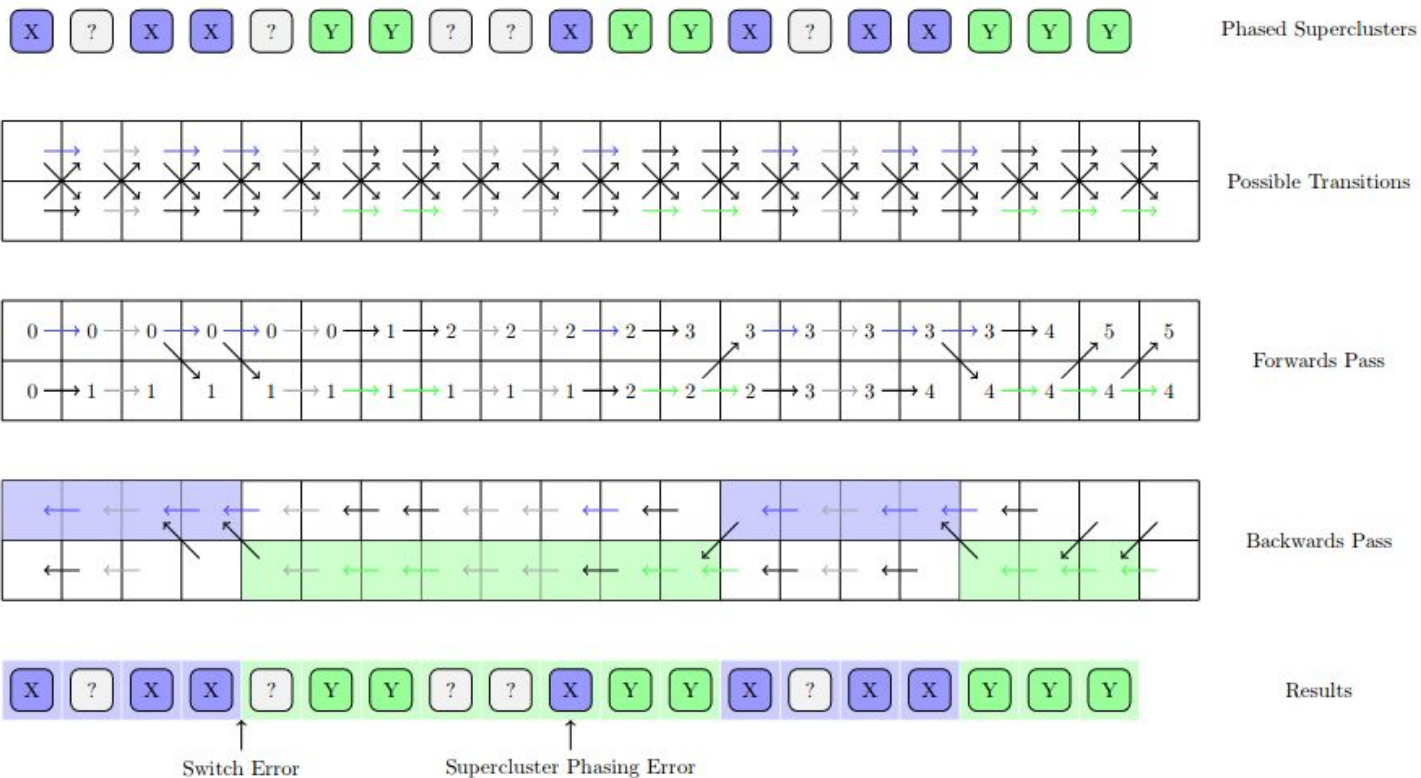
Truth 2



Overview



Phasing



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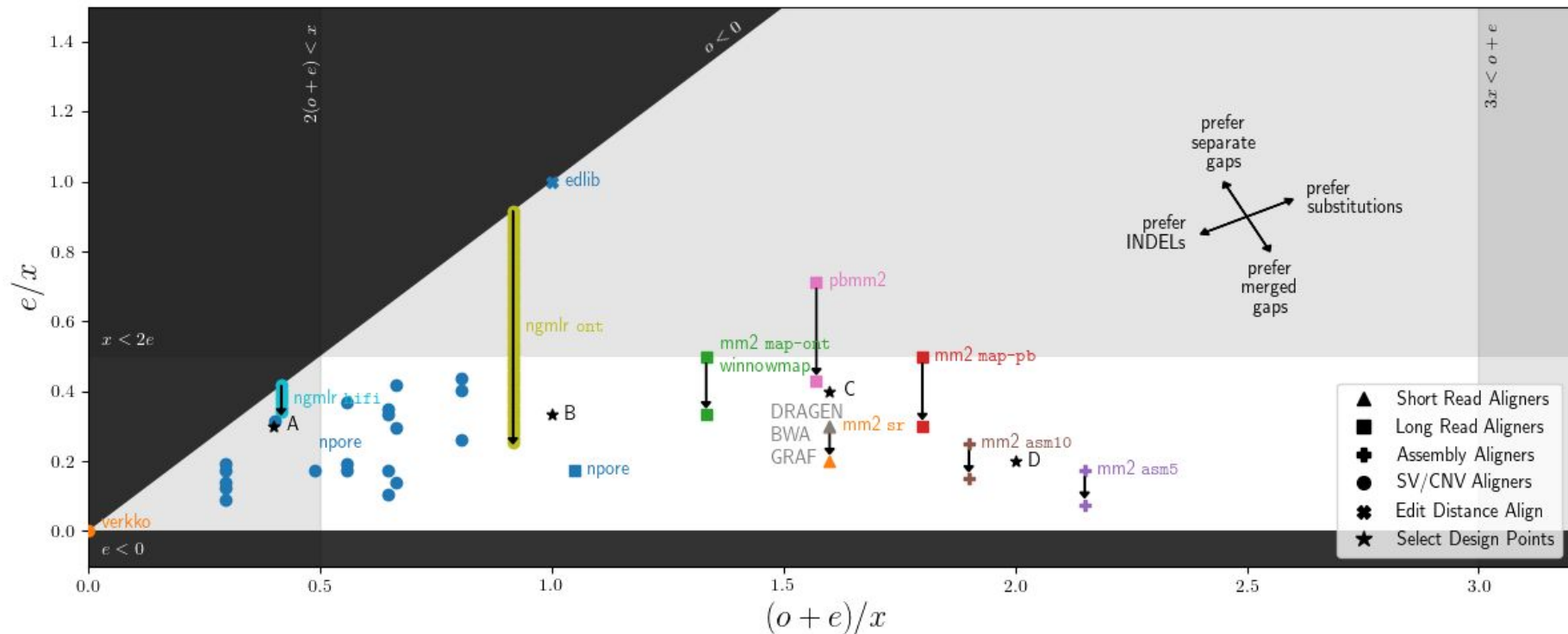
2. Results

Improved stability of variant calling evaluation

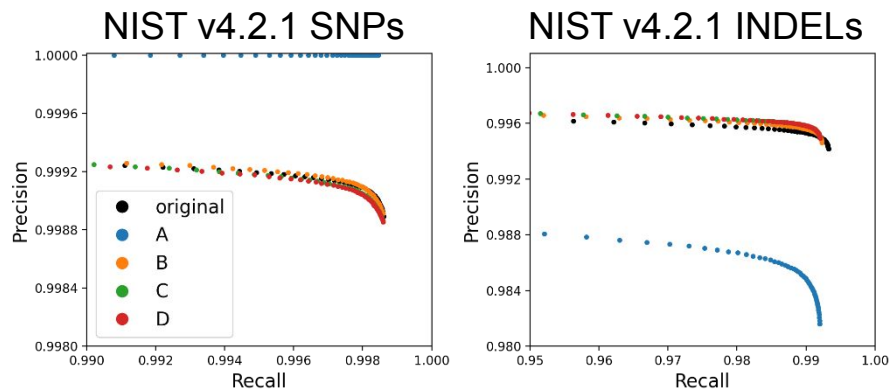
3. Extension

"Can we directly evaluate structural variants?"

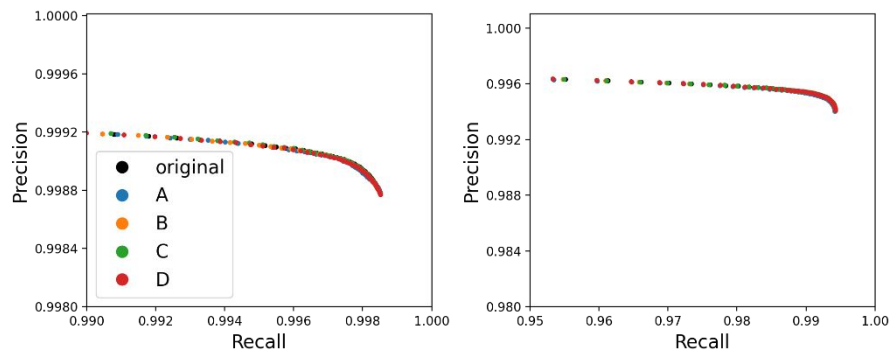
Stable performance across representations



Stable performance across representations



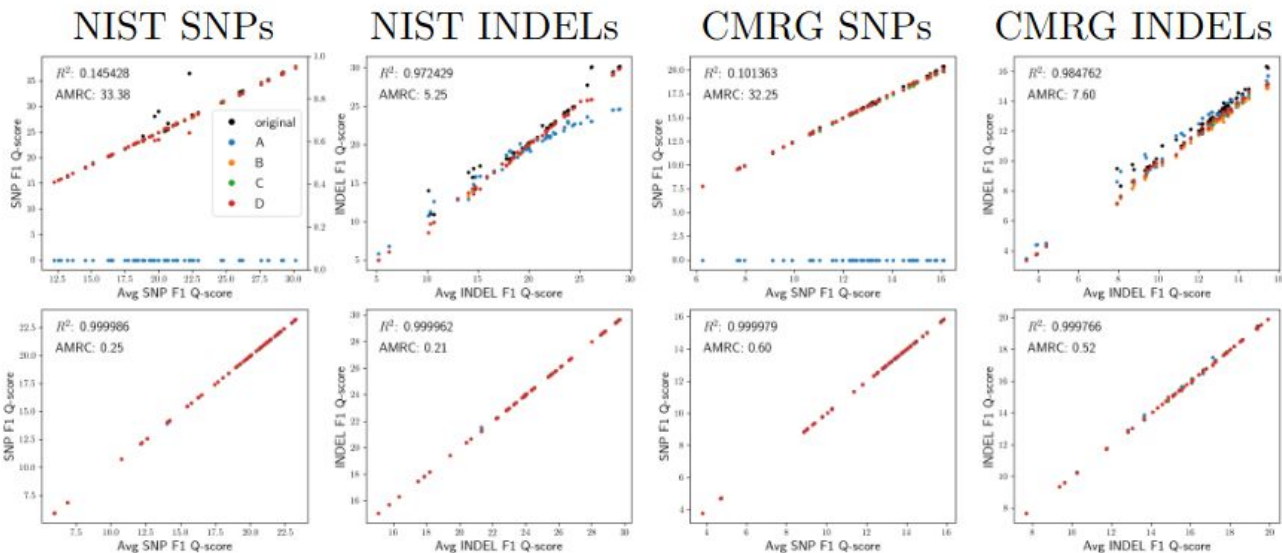
vcfdist, **without** normalization or partial credit



vcfdist, **with** normalization and partial credit

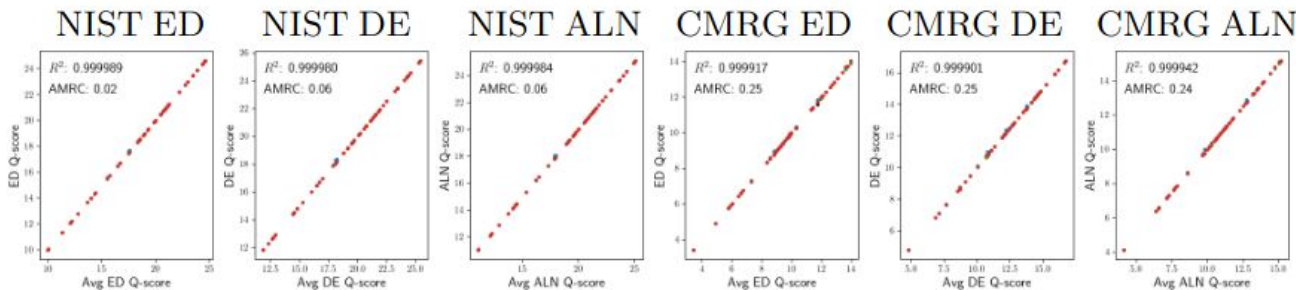
Stable performance across representations

vcfeval
precision/recall
metrics

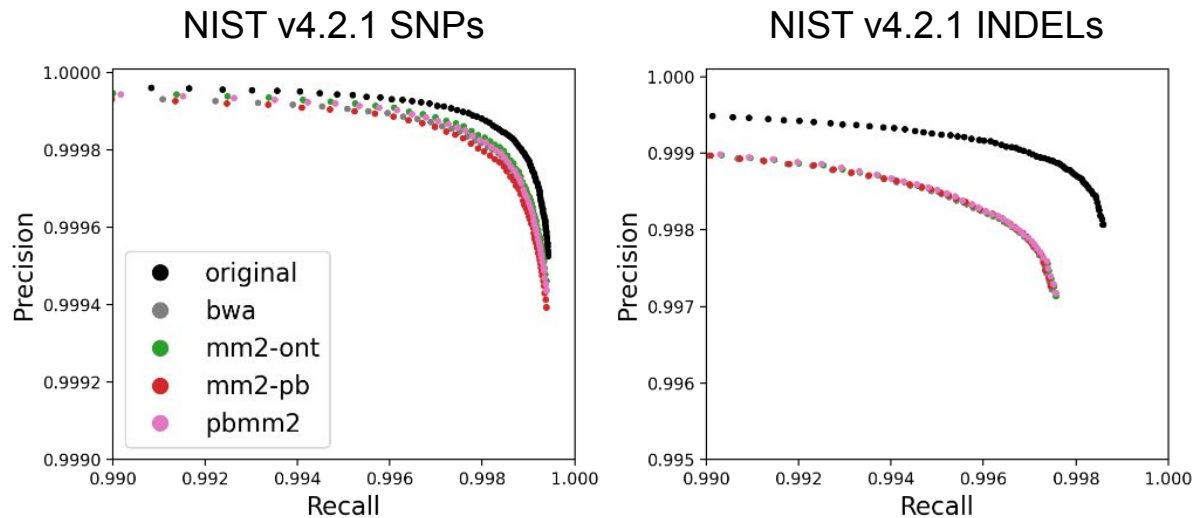


vcfdist
precision/recall
metrics

vcfdist
distance
metrics



Bias towards fragmented variants



vcfeval

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Motivation

A. **Single tool** to handle all genomic variation: SNPs, INDELS, SVs, TRs...

B. **Alignment-based**

- Variant representation has little/no impact
- Results don't depend on threshold heuristics

C. **Partial credit**

- Can treat SVs with same methods as SNPs and small INDELS
- Most SV calls aren't exactly correct

Tools for variant calling evaluation

About

Variant Types

Phasing

Credit

Aln Invariance

<u>Tool</u>	<u>Lang</u>	<u>Release</u>	<u>Stars</u>	<u>SNPs / INDELS</u>	<u>small SVs</u>	<u>large SVs</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>local</u>	<u>global</u>	<u>near match</u>	<u>exact seq</u>	<u>near seq</u>
vcfdist	C++	2023	18	✓	?	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
rtg vcfeval	Java	2015	232	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
xcmp hap.py	C++	2019	343	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
VarMatch	C++	2016	9	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
TruVari	Python	2018	222	✗	✓	✓	✗	?	✓	✓	✓	✗
hap-eval	Python	2022	11	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
TT-Mars	Python	2021	16	✗	✓	✓	✗	?	✓	✓	✗	✗
SVanalyzer	Perl	2017	65	✗	✓	✓	?	?	✓	✓	✗	✗

A simple example

Query: Verkko Assembly (Zook)

CHROM	POS	REF	ALT	CALL	CREDIT
chr1	893791	AAAAAAAAAAAAATATATATATATATATATATATATAT	A	DEL PP	0.972222

Truth: GIAB TR Benchmark (English)

CHROM	POS	REF	ALT	CALL	CREDIT
chr1	893789	AAAAAAAAAAAAAATATATATATATATATATATATATAT	A	DEL PP	0.972222

A more complex example

Query: 94 base insertion

CHROM	POS	REF	ALT	CALL	CREDIT
chr1	976722	C	CAGGAACCGCCTCCCACTCCCCCA	INS PP	0.979167
			CAACCCCGGGGAACCGCCTCCCACTCCCCCGCAACCC	INS PP	0.979167
chr1	976745	G	A	SNP PP	0.979167

Truth: Three ~31 base insertions

CHROM	POS	REF	ALT	CALL	CREDIT
chr1	976715	A	CAACCCAGGAACCGCCTCCCACTCCCCCA	INS PP	0.979167
chr1	976747	C	CAACCCCGGGGAACCGCCTCCCACTCCCCCG	INS PP	0.979167
chr1	976777	G	A	SNP PP	0.979167
chr1	976811	C	CAACCCCGGGGAACCGCCTCCCACTCCCCCG	INS PP	0.979167
chr1	976840	C	G	SNP PP	0.979167
chr1	976841	G	A	SNP PP	0.979167

GIAB TR equivalent representations

Original

```
chr20 278985 A C
chr20 278986 C G
chr20 278990 G C
chr20 278993 C A
chr20 278994 G GGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGA
GGGAGGGAGGGACGGAGGGCGGGACGGCGGGAGGGCGGGACG
GAGGGACGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGCGGGAGGGCGGGA
CGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGG
GCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGACGGAGGGCGGGACGGC
GGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGACGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGG
GCGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGA
CGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACG
GAGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGA
GGGACGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGACGGAGGGAGG
GAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGCGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGA
CGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGG
GAGGGAGGGACGGAGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGA
CGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGAGGGAGGGAGG
CGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGACGGAGGGCGGGACGGAG
GGAGGGAGGGC
chr20 278998 C G
chr20 279001 C A
chr20 279022 C G
chr20 279029 A C
chr20 279033 C A
chr20 279038 C T
chr20 279045 C A
chr20 279069 A C
```

12 SNPs

1 INS (622bp)

Normalized (C)

```
chr20 278984 G GCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCG
GGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGACGGAGGGCGGGACGGCG
GGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGACGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAG
GGCGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCG
GGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAG
GG
chr20 279069 A AGGGCGGGACGGAGGGACGGAGG
GAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGG
GACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGG
GACGGAGGGCGGGACGGCGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGACG
GAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGCGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGG
GACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGG
GAGGGAGGGAGGGACGGAGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGG
GAGGGACGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGAGGG
AGGGAGGGCGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGACGGAGGG
CGGGACGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGA
CGGAGGGAGGGAGGGCGGGAGGGATGGAGGGAGGGAGGGC
GGGACGGAGGGAGGGC
```

2 INS (438bp, 184bp)

Total true positive tandem repeat variants

whole genome	Original	Normalized	Difference
TR Bench SNP TP	980,432	610,522	-37.7%
TR Bench INDEL TP	519,114	564,916	+8.8%
Verkko SNP TP	552,776	564,982	+2.2%
Verkko INDEL TP	412,113	418,818	+1.6%

Distance-based metrics vs precision and recall

chr20:1-3,000,000	Original	Normalized
SNP Precision	97.42%	96.23%
SNP Recall	93.88%	98.38%
F1 SNP Qscore	13.58	15.68
INDEL Precision	79.09%	80.11%
INDEL Recall	98.03%	97.43%
F1 INDEL Qscore	9.05	9.18
Edit Distance	750	750
Distinct Edits	34	34
Alignment Qscore	12.83	12.83

Comparison with TruVari (<1000bp)

whole genome	TruVari v3	vcfdist	Difference
TR Bench TP	1,187,250	1,499,546	+26.3%
Verkko TP	778,520	964,889	+23.9%

Summary

- **There are still challenges regarding complex variant representations**
- vcfdist makes progress on these challenges, and works with SVs
- vcfdist is currently too inefficient for large SV evaluations
- Lots of room for improving vcfdist's evaluation speed
- **Need for discussion on metrics and best practices**

Questions?



`github.com/timdl/vcfdist`