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環境変化と遺伝子の進化
—ヒトが進化の過程で失ったもの—

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Gene Evolution and Environmental Changes
—What Humans Have Lost during Evolution—

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Abstract

The meaning of the word for “evolution” in Japanese is generally considered to be positive with connotations of “progress”, “development” or “advancement”. However, in a strict biological sense, “evolution” is defined as genetic changes over time and their phenotypic consequences. It is known that evolution can also result in degeneration. In this article, we introduce examples of genes which have degenerated over the course of human evolution. Such changes could be advantageous or disadvantageous to individuals, depending on the environment. These examples demonstrate how deeply we humans depend on the environment in which we live.

Key words: pseudogene, human evolution, environment.