

Chromosome Count and Complexity



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www.answersincreation.org/hovind_chromosome.htm

In one article on Kent Hovind's website, Creation Science Evangelism, he argues that chromosomes are an indicator of the complexity of an organism. ¹

Such an argument does not stem from the science itself, but from simplistic thinking on the part of Hovind. Chromosome counts have little to do with complexity, neither is there any part of evolutionary theory that claims that increased chromosome count equals increased complexity. Hovind is misleading his followers concerning evolution.

It is obvious when you compare the fern, which he says has 480 chromosomes, to humans, with 46. It is obvious that the human body is much more complex than the fern. We don't need a scientific study to determine this. Thus, complexity cannot be based upon chromosome count (Hovind could even discern this with his own eyes).

Furthermore, chromosomes can vary greatly within a single genus or species. For example, the plant genus *Clarkia* has species with chromosome counts of $n=5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 17, 18,$ and 26 .² This even occurs within mammals, in the house mouse species (*Mus domesticus*), which ranges from $2n=22$ to 40 .³

Chromosomes can split or join, with little or no effect on the genes themselves. For example, a human chromosome is very similar to two chimpanzee chromosomes, and if they joined, would be nearly identical. Because the genes could still align, the change in chromosome number would not preclude reproduction.⁴ Chromosome count can also change via polyploidy, which is a common mechanism of speciation in plants.

The simplistic thinking Hovind uses with his followers would lead them to believe his words. If they are careful, and look past the baloney, they can see the truth.

- ¹ Hovind, Kent, Opossums, Redwood Trees, and Kidney Beans, CSE website
(www.drdino.com/articles.php?spec=60) (copy link into your browser's address bar to view)
- ² Lewis, Harlan, "Clarkia", *The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California*, J. C. Hickman, ed., Univ. of California Press, 1993. pp. 786-793.
- ³ Nachman, M.W., S.N. Boyer, J.B. Searle, C.F. Aquadro, Mitochondrial DNA variation and the evolution of Robertsonian chromosomal races of house mice, *Mus domesticus*. *Genetics* 136(3): pp.1105-1120. 1994.
- ⁴ Yunis, Jorge, and Om Prakash, The origin of man: A chromosomal pictorial legacy. *Science* 215: 1525-1530. 1982.