

1957

Sex Differences in Frequencies of Finger Patterns

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Recommended Citation

Wallis, W. D. (1957). Sex Differences in Frequencies of Finger Patterns. *Journal of the Minnesota Academy of Science*, Vol. 25 No.1, 326-326.

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ANTHROPOLOGY

Sex Differences
in Frequencies of Finger Patterns

There are, it appears, in some populations statistically significant differences in frequencies of respective finger patterns in the two sexes, although in only one series are there sufficient observations to establish beyond doubt the existence of a sex difference in the observed group. In a series of Chili Indians, 61,545 fingers of males and 4,826 of females, females have greater frequency of arches in approximately the ratio 2:1. This greater frequency occurs in varying proportions in each finger of each hand. A radial loop is more frequent in males in all digits except the first one (thumb) of the right hand; but is of less frequency on the left hand in all digits except the second. Ulnar loop is less frequent in males in all digits of the right hand, and more frequent in all digits of the left hand except the fourth. A whorl is more frequent in males than in females on each digit of each hand, with approximately the same frequency on the second digit of the right hand.

In four European groups and a Javanese group there are consistent sex differences in incidence of respective finger patterns. Incidence of arch and of ulnar loop is lower in males in each group, and that of radial loop and of whorl is higher.

An exception is a small sample of Germans, in which incidence of whorl is slightly less in males than in females. In 11,000 Russians radial loop *plus* ulnar loop has lower incidence in males than in females. The index arch/whorl has lower value in males in each of the above groups. The sex difference (M-F) is 2.6 in Javanese, 11.6 in Dutch, 10.5 in a large series of Danes, 11.5 in a large series of Russians, and in Friesians, Flemish, and Walloons (400 of each sex, 24.4 in males and 34.1 in females) is 9.7. Thus in north Europeans there seems to be a characteristic sex difference in the mean value of this index.