

عنوان مقاله:

Integrative taxonomy of *Meriones persicus* (Rodentia, Gerbillinae) in Iran

محل انتشار:

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خلاصه مقاله:

Five subspecies of the Persian Jird, *Meriones persicus*, were reported from Iran. These subspecies were described based on morphological characters and coat colors of few specimens. The question of the validity of these subspecies and their geographic distribution is raised. In this study, we combined genetic markers (Cox1, Cytb and IRBP genes), morphometric (external and skull measurements), morphologic (coloration), and karyotypic data to study intraspecific variation in *M. persicus* in the Iranian Plateau. Three distinct genetic lineages can be recognized in Iran (I, IIA, IIB), and these genetic lineages are separated by natural geographic barriers (Abarkooh, Central and Lut deserts). Our morphometric results also show significant differences between these three lineages, and emphasized morphometric variability within clade IIA, where two subgroups could be recognized. However one of these subgroup was represented by only two individuals in our analyses, and additional morphometric data are needed to confirm this result. Fur coloration vary greatly among Iranian specimens and does not seem to be a reliable taxonomic character. Variation in FNa and morphology of the sex chromosomes was observed between populations, but the determinants of this variation and its significance for taxonomy needs to be investigated. To conclude, this study suggest that three to four subspecies should probably be recognized in Iran, but additional data with more specimens are needed to confirm this result.

کلمات کلیدی:

Morphology, Morphometry, Karyology, Molecular, *Meriones persicus*, Iranian Plateau

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