A meta-analysis of the association between RGS4 gene polymorphisms and schizophrenia

CURRENT STATUS: POSTED

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DOI:
10.21203/rs.3.rs-15851/v1

SUBJECT AREAS
Psychiatry

KEYWORDS
RGS4; schizophrenia; meta-analysis; pooled analysis.
Abstract
Background: Schizophrenia is a complex brain disorder, the pathogenesis of which remains unclear. Regulator of G-protein signaling 4 (RGS4) is regarded as a candidate gene for schizophrenia risk. The association between the RGS4 gene and the risk of schizophrenia is complicated and controversial, thus, an updated meta-analysis is needed. Methods: A search strategy using Medical Subject Headings was developed in English (PubMed, SZGene) and Chinese (CNKI, Wanfang and Weipu) databases. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to screen for eligible studies. Parameters, such as P-value of Hardy – Weinberg equilibrium (P HWE), odds ratios (ORs), 95% confidence intervals (CIs), P-values of association (P z), heterogeneity (P h), and publication bias (P e), were analyzed by the Stata software using a random effects model. Subgroup analyses were performed to detect heterogeneity. Results: There were 15 articles regarding rs10917670 (8,046 cases and 8,837 controls), 16 regarding rs951436 (8,990 cases and 10,568 controls), 15 regarding rs951439 (7,995 cases and 8,646 controls), 15 regarding rs2661319 (8,320 cases and 9,440 controls), and 4 regarding rs10759 (2,752 cases and 2,866 controls). The frequencies of rs10917670 and rs951439 were not significantly different between the case and control groups (p > 0.05). As shown by the East Asian and hospital-based subgroup analyses, the genotype TT of rs951436 might be related to the risk of schizophrenia. The genotypes CC+CT of rs2661319 and CC+CA of rs10759 were statistically different between the two groups, and the East Asian population contributed to these differences. Conclusion: The genotypes CC+CT of rs2661319 and CC+CA of rs10759 might be associated with the risk of schizophrenia.

1. Introduction
Schizophrenia is a complex brain disorder, the pathogenesis of which remains unclear [1]. It has been shown that schizophrenia is caused by both genetic and environmental factors [2], and genetic factors play an important role to the etiology of schizophrenia [3, 4]. Regulator of G-protein signaling (RGS) proteins control the duration and timing of intracellular signaling of many G-protein coupled receptors (GPCRs). The major mechanism by which RGS proteins negatively regulate G proteins is via their GTPase accelerating activity [5]. RGS4 is known to play a fundamental role in neurotransmission...
and neuronal differentiation, in addition to axonogenesis during embryogenesis [6]. RGS4 regulation of G-protein activity, may inhibit the interaction between neurotransmitters and their receptors, leading to dysfunction of glutamatergic neurotransmission [7], which is classically related to the etiology of psychotic disorders [8]. Schwarz et al. [6] suggested that the RGS4 gene, localized to chromosome 1q23, might be an important part of a larger biological system contributing to schizophrenia risk. Mirnics et al. [9] showed that RGS4 expression was down regulated in schizophrenia [10, 11]. However, the association between RGS4 and the risk of schizophrenia remains controversial [12-15].

Meta-analysis is a useful tool for the detection of disease – gene relationships [16]. In the Chinese Han population, one meta-analysis showed no association between the RGS4 gene and the risk of schizophrenia [15]; however, in another meta-analysis, the SNP, rs951436, was found to be associated with the risk of schizophrenia [17]. Therefore, the association between RGS4 and the risk of schizophrenia remains complicated and controversial [17-19]. Additional articles have since been published; thus, an updated meta-analysis is needed. Here, we conducted an updated meta-analysis to detect the association between RGS4 gene polymorphisms and the risk of schizophrenia.

2. Materials And Methods
2.1. Literature search
The systematic review and meta-analysis were conducted in adherence to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines [20]. A search was performed in English (PubMed, SZGene) and Chinese (CNKI, Wanfang and Weipu) databases with the following keywords: “the regulator of G-protein signaling 4” or “RGS4” and “schizophrenia”. References to related articles were also reviewed for further data.

2.2. Identification and eligibility of relevant studies
The inclusion criteria were: 1) studies with a case-control design; 2) involvement of patients with schizophrenia; 3) available allele or genotype frequencies; and 4) published before February 20th, 2019. The authors were emailed if there was no genotype frequency mentioned in the article. The exclusion criteria were: 1) family-based studies; 2) no control group data; 3) no detailed genotype frequency data after emailing the authors; and 4) duplicate samples [21]. Information regarding the
author, year, country, ethnicity, controls source, mean age of the control group, number of samples, diagnostic criteria, gender index the of cases and controls, and genotypes of the cases and controls were collected.

2.3. Statistical analysis
The meta-analysis was conducted using Stata version 10.0 (Stata Corp., College Station, TX). In the control group, the P-value of Hardy – Weinberg equilibrium ($P_{HWE}$) was calculated. Parameters, such as the odds ratios (ORs), 95% confidence intervals (CIs), and P-values of association ($P_z$), were calculated to detect the association in five genetic models [22], using the random effects model [21, 23]. The heterogeneity of the studies ($P_h$) was determined by Cochran's chi-square-based Q-statistic test. To assess the heterogeneity, subgroup analyses by ethnicity and control source were performed [24]. The studies were classified by control source into community-based (participants from the general population) and hospital-based (participants from a hospital) groups [25]. The Egger's test was conducted to detect the publication bias ($P_\text{e}$), which could be visualized using a funnel plot. To assess the impact of each study on the pooled results, sensitivity analysis was performed by removing single studies in turn. The power was calculated using the PS program [26]. The threshold for statistical significance was $P < 0.05$ in all tests.

3. Results  
3.1. Description of studies  
A total of 106 English and 43 Chinese articles were found, with 20 articles being eligible for analysis following exclusion (Fig. 1). The data regarding the genotypes in [11, 14, 27] were unavailable. Table 1 described the detailed characteristics of the 20 eligible studies. There were 15 articles regarding rs10917670 [15, 18, 28–40], 16 regarding rs951436 [12, 13, 15, 18, 28, 30–34, 36–39, 41, 42], 15 regarding rs951439 [15, 18, 28, 30–34, 36–40, 42, 43], 15 regarding rs2661319 [15, 18, 28–39, 42] and 4 regarding rs10759 [13, 36, 38, 40]. There were less than 4 articles regarding other SNPs of the RGS4 gene; therefore, these were not included in the present meta-analysis. The SNPs, rs10917670, rs951436, and rs951439, are located in the 5' regulatory region, rs2661319 is located in the first intron, and rs10759 is located in the 3' untranslated region (3' UTR).
Table 1
Baseline characteristics of eligible studies in the present meta-analysis

| Author   | Year | Country | Ethnicity | controls source | Mean age of control group | Diagnostic criteria | Gender index (case) | Gender index (control) |
|----------|------|---------|-----------|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Réthelyi | 2010 | Hungarian | Caucasian | community-based | 39.9 ± 15.0 | DSM-IV | 1.174 | 1.381 |
| Jönsson  | 2012 | Scandinavi an | Caucasian | community-based | 44.1 ± 11.8 | DSM-III | 0.712 | 0.736 |
| So       | 2008 | China | East Asia | hospital-based | 41.9 ± 9.79 | DSM-IV | 0.404 | 0.691 |
| Guo      | 2006 | China | East Asia | community-based | 25.87 ± 7.58 | DSM-IV | 0.767 | 0.811 |
| Kampman  | 2006 | Finland | Caucasian | community-based | 44.5 ± 11.1 | DSM-IV | 0.711 | 0.852 |
| Rizig    | 2006 | UK | Caucasian | community-based | | ICD10 | | |
| Zhang    | 2005 | UK | Caucasian | community-based | | DSM-IV | 0.389 | 0.754 |
| Sobell   | 2005 | USA | Caucasian | hospital-based | 66.2 ± 10.6 | DSM-III-R | | |
| Cordeiro | 2005 | Brazil | Caucasian | community-based | | DSM-IV | | |
| Prasad   | 2005 | USA | Caucasian | community-based | 24.74 ± 7.23 | DSM-IV | 0.429 | 0.929 |
| Morris   | 2004 | Irish | Caucasian | community-based | 44.93 ± 12.04 | DSM-III-R | 0.468 | 0.488 |
| Williams | 2004 | UK | Caucasian | community-based | | DSM-IV | 1.041 | 0.923 |
| Bakker   | 2007 | Dutch | Caucasian | community-based | | DSM-IV | | |
| Betcheva | 2009 | Bulgaria | Caucasian | community-based | 50.5 ± 16.0 | DSM-IV | 0.441 | | |
| Chowdari | 2002 | USA | Caucasian | community-based | | DSM-IV | | |
| Sanders  | 2008 | USA, Australia | Caucasian | community-based | | DSM-IV | | |
| Wood     | 2007 | US | Caucasian | community-based | | DSM-IV | | |
| Ishiguro | 2006 | Japan | East Asia | community-based | 49.0 ± 14.3 | DSM-IV | 0.818 | 0.882 |
| Yue      | 2007 | China | East Asia | community-based | 30 ± 8 | ICD-10 | 0.92 | 0.857 |
| Qian     | 2005 | China | East Asia | community-based | 30.8 ± 15.78 | DSM-III-R | 0.936 | 0.79 |

3.2. Results of data analysis
3.2.1. There is no association between rs10917670 and the risk of schizophrenia

Genotype frequency of 8,046 cases and 8,837 controls was used to perform pooled and subgroup analyses using the random effects model (Table 2). Results of the pooled and subgroup analyses were summarized in Tables 3 and 4. Using the recessive model (Fig. 2), no association was found between rs10917670 and the risk of schizophrenia in the pooled analysis (\(P_z = 0.946, OR = 0.997, 95\%CI = 0.926 – 1.074\)). No association was detected in the subgroup analyses by ethnicity or control source. Moreover, no significant heterogeneity was observed in the pooled or subgroup analyses.
### Table 2
Genotype distribution and allele frequency of rs10917670

| Author    | Year | Genotype distribution | Allele frequency |
|-----------|------|-----------------------|------------------|
|           |      | Case, n | Control, n |          | Case, n | Control, n |
|           |      | AA      | AG | GG | AA | AG | GG | P_HWE | A | G | A | G |
| Réthelyi  | 2010 | 60      | 139 | 81 | 42 | 113 | 75 | 0.961 | 259 | 301 | 197 | 263 |
| So        | 2008 | 94      | 216 | 132 | 107 | 249 | 145 | 0.996 | 404 | 480 | 461 | 541 |
| Guo       | 2006 | 49      | 146 | 91 | 55 | 140 | 89 | 0.997 | 244 | 328 | 250 | 318 |
| Zhang     | 2005 | 107     | 284 | 189 | 94 | 295 | 231 | 0.991 | 498 | 662 | 483 | 757 |
| Sobell    | 2005 | 90      | 273 | 205 | 129 | 335 | 253 | 0.827 | 453 | 683 | 593 | 785 |
| Cordeiro  | 2005 | 45      | 140 | 85 | 101 | 293 | 179 | 0.315 | 230 | 310 | 495 | 651 |
| Prasad    | 2005 | 9       | 13  | 6 | 7 | 7 | 13 | 0.018 | 31 | 25 | 21 | 33 |
| Morris    | 2004 | 40      | 119 | 90 | 50 | 115 | 66 | 0.994 | 199 | 299 | 215 | 247 |
| Williams  | 2004 | 116     | 338 | 231 | 114 | 330 | 247 | 0.831 | 570 | 800 | 558 | 824 |
| Bakker    | 2007 | 82      | 135 | 40 | 205 | 214 | 82 | 0.042 | 299 | 215 | 624 | 378 |
| Betcheva  | 2009 | 37      | 92  | 56 | 28 | 88 | 68 | 0.957 | 166 | 204 | 144 | 224 |
| Chodard   | 2002 | 31      | 69  | 46 | 21 | 45 | 32 | 0.489 | 131 | 161 | 87 | 109 |
| Sanders   | 2008 | 317     | 906 | 647 | 357 | 977 | 669 | 0.993 | 1540 | 2200 | 1691 | 2315 |
| Ishiguro  | 2006 | 392     | 866 | 556 | 367 | 895 | 553 | 0.888 | 1650 | 1978 | 1629 | 2001 |
| Yue       | 2007 | 49      | 196 | 141 | 68 | 185 | 137 | 0.684 | 294 | 478 | 324 | 459 |

### Table 3
Pooled association of RGS4 polymorphisms with schizophrenia

| Loci      | Genetic model | Studies (n) | Statistical | OR      | 95% CI     | P_z | i² | P_h | P_e |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------|------------|-----|----|-----|-----|
| rs109176  | allele contrast | 15        | Random      | 1.011   | 0.929-1.052 | 0.72 | 39.40 | 0.058 | 0.553 |
| 70        | Homozygous codominant | 15  | Random      | 1.022   | 0.906-1.153 | 0.725 | 33 | 0.104 | 0.663 |
|           | Heterozygous codominant | 15 | Random      | 1.048   | 0.954-1.150 | 0.332 | 13.3 | 0.304 | 0.514 |
|           | Dominant      | 15        | Random      | 1.045   | 0.944-1.157 | 0.393 | 29.4 | 0.136 | 0.932 |
|           | Recessive     | 15        | Random      | 0.997   | 0.926-1.074 | 0.946 | 13 | 0.308 | 0.198 |
| rs951436  | allele contrast | 16 | Random      | 1.039   | 0.967-1.116 | 0.298 | 61.5 | 0.001 | 0.413 |
|           | Homozygous codominant | 16 | Random      | 0.971   | 0.852-1.107 | 0.664 | 53.2 | 0.006 | 0.795 |
|           | Heterozygous codominant | 16 | Random      | 1.012   | 0.943-1.086 | 0.741 | 0 | 0.601 | 0.86 |
|           | Dominant      | 16        | Random      | 0.998   | 0.918-1.085 | 0.964 | 26.4 | 0.158 | 0.931 |
|           | Recessive     | 16        | Random      | 0.965   | 0.870-1.072 | 0.51 | 52.5 | 0.007 | 0.619 |
| rs951439  | allele contrast | 15 | Random      | 1.031   | 0.890-1.054 | 0.461 | 69.6 | 0 | 0.276 |
|           | Homozygous codominant | 14 | Random      | 1.018   | 0.886-1.170 | 0.803 | 47.7 | 0.024 | 0.229 |
|           | Heterozygous codominant | 14 | Random      | 1.036   | 0.952- | 0.416 | 0 | 0.944 | 0.674 |
| Loci       | Subgroup analysis | Studies (n) | OR          | 95% CI       | P_z | I²    | P_h |
|------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-----|-------|-----|
| rs10917670 | Caucasians        | 11          | 0.971       | 0.865-1.090  | 0.618 | 36.5  | 0.107 |
|            | East Asia         | 4           | 1.023       | 0.916-1.142  | 0.685 | 0     | 0.988 |
|            | population-based  | 13          | 0.978       | 0.900-1.062  | 0.59 | 15.5  | 0.288 |
|            | hospital-based    | 2           | 1.114       | 0.931-1.334  | 0.238 | 0     | 0.562 |
| rs951436   | Caucasians        | 13          | 1.017       | 0.905-1.144  | 0.772 | 48.2  | 0.026 |
|            | East Asia         | 3           | 0.811       | 0.666-0.987  | 0.036 | 40    | 0.189 |
|            | population-based  | 14          | 0.997       | 0.892-1.114  | 0.955 | 52.1  | 0.012 |
|            | hospital-based    | 2           | 0.789       | 0.643-0.968  | 0.023 | 0     | 0.547 |
| rs951439   | Caucasians        | 10          | 1           | 0.875-1.142  | 0.999 | 28.3  | 0.184 |
|            | East Asia         | 4           | 1.084       | 0.954-1.233  | 0.216 | 0     | 0.898 |
|            | population-based  | 12          | 1.013       | 0.919-1.116  | 0.796 | 11.2  | 0.335 |
|            | hospital-based    | 2           | 1.164       | 0.937-1.445  | 0.17 | 0     | 0.625 |
| rs2661319  | Caucasians        | 12          | 1.059       | 0.965-1.162  | 0.229 | 10.4  | 0.343 |
|            | East Asia         | 3           | 1.13        | 1.009-1.266  | 0.035 | 0     | 0.906 |
|            | population-based  | 13          | 1.073       | 0.997-1.155  | 0.061 | 1.9   | 0.427 |
|            | hospital-based    | 2           | 1.192       | 0.974-1.458  | 0.089 | 0     | 0.838 |
| rs10759    | Caucasians        | 3           | 1.132       | 0.928-1.380  | 0.221 | 0     | 0.917 |
|            | East Asia         | 1           | 1.482       | 1.092-2.011  | 0.012 | -     | -    |

3.2.2 There was an association between rs951436 and the risk of schizophrenia in the East Asian and hospital-based subgroup analyses.

Pooled and subgroup analyses of 8,990 cases and 10,568 controls were performed (Table 5). No
association was found between rs951436 and the risk of schizophrenia ($P_Z = 0.51$, OR $= 0.965$, 95%CI $= 0.870 – 1.072$) using the recessive model (Fig. 3). An association was detected in the East Asian ($P_Z = 0.036$, OR $= 0.811$, 95%CI $= 0.666 – 0.987$) and hospital-based ($P_Z = 0.023$, OR $= 0.789$, 95%CI $= 0.643 – 0.968$) subgroup analyses. Significant heterogeneity was observed in the pooled analysis ($P_H = 0.007$, $I^2 = 52.5\%$).

### Table 5

| Author       | Year | Genotype distribution | Allele frequency |
|--------------|------|-----------------------|------------------|
|              |      | Cases, n | Controls, n | TT | TG | GG | Cases, % | Controls, % | T | G | T | G |
| Jönssoon     | 2012 | 223       | 416         | 197 | 349 | 711 | 352 | 0.790 | 862 | 810 | 1409 | 1415 |
| So           | 2008 | 88        | 201         | 85  | 106 | 178 | 73  | 0.913 | 377 | 371 | 390 | 324 |
| Guo          | 2006 | 65        | 141         | 71  | 88  | 125 | 67  | 0.088 | 283 | 271 | 259 | 301 |
| Kampa        | 2006 | 47        | 114         | 58  | 90  | 190 | 109 | 0.682 | 155 | 169 | 370 | 408 |
| Riziq        | 2006 | 92        | 202         | 112 | 99  | 214 | 116 | 0.987 | 386 | 426 | 412 | 446 |
| Zhang        | 2005 | 151       | 290         | 139 | 137 | 309 | 174 | 0.993 | 592 | 568 | 583 | 657 |
| Sobell       | 2005 | 128       | 300         | 140 | 179 | 340 | 170 | 0.735 | 556 | 580 | 698 | 680 |
| Cordeiro     | 2005 | 86        | 142         | 40  | 188 | 299 | 83  | 0.040 | 314 | 222 | 675 | 465 |
| Prasad       | 2005 | 15        | 11          | 4   | 9   | 11  | 7   | 0.348 | 41  | 19  | 29  | 25  |
| Morris       | 2004 | 54        | 124         | 71  | 64  | 115 | 52  | 0.980 | 232 | 266 | 243 | 219 |
| Williams     | 2004 | 180       | 342         | 161 | 146 | 340 | 189 | 0.765 | 702 | 664 | 632 | 718 |
| Betcheva     | 2009 | 55        | 113         | 87  | 136 | 277 | 139 | 0.932 | 388 | 287 | 549 | 555 |
| Chowdari     | 2002 | 39        | 75          | 35  | 38  | 59  | 30  | 0.449 | 153 | 145 | 135 | 119 |
| SANDERS      | 2008 | 458       | 935         | 477 | 527 | 1000| 475 | 0.988 | 1851 | 1889 | 2054 | 1950 |
| Wood         | 2007 | 101       | 137         | 72  | 68  | 148 | 74  | 0.719 | 339 | 281 | 284 | 296 |
| Ishiguro     | 2006 | 529       | 978         | 409 | 566 | 932 | 420 | 0.325 | 2036 | 1796 | 2064 | 1772 |

3.2.3 There was no association between rs951439 and the risk of schizophrenia
To evaluate the relationship between rs951439 and the risk of schizophrenia, 7,995 cases and 8,646 controls were included in the pooled and subgroup analyses (Table 6). Detailed genotype frequencies were not available in [43]; thus, these data were only included in the allele contrast. No relationship between rs951439 and the risk of schizophrenia was detected in the pooled analysis ($P_Z = 0.414$, OR $= 1.036$, 95%CI $= 0.952 – 1.128$) using the dominant model (Fig. 4) or in the subgroup analyses by ethnicity and control source. No significant heterogeneity was observed in the pooled or subgroup analyses.
Table 6
Genotype distribution and allele frequency of rs951439

| Author | Year | Genotype distribution | Allele frequency |
|--------|------|------------------------|------------------|
|        |      | Cases, n | Controls, n | Cases, % | Controls, % |
|        |      | AA  | AG  | GG  | AA  | AG  | GG  | P<sub>HWE</sub> | A  | G  | A  | G  |
| So     | 2008 | 84  | 206 | 125 | 112 | 254 | 148 | 0.877         | 374 | 456 | 478 | 550 |
| Guo    | 2006 | 49  | 145 | 92  | 56  | 143 | 83  | 0.692         | 243 | 329 | 255 | 309 |
| Rizig  | 2006 | 66  | 196 | 147 | 70  | 206 | 153 | 0.962         | 328 | 490 | 346 | 512 |
| Zhang  | 2005 | 112 | 286 | 182 | 90  | 292 | 238 | 0.977         | 510 | 650 | 472 | 768 |
| Sobell | 2005 | 90  | 273 | 205 | 129 | 335 | 153 | 0.977         | 510 | 650 | 472 | 768 |
| Cordeiro | 2005 | 44  | 136 | 205 | 129 | 335 | 153 | 0.977 | 510 | 650 | 472 | 768 |
| Prasad | 2005 | 10  | 13  | 7   | 7   | 13  | 3   | 0.018         | 33  | 27  | 21  | 33  |
| Morris | 2004 | 38  | 119 | 92  | 49  | 115 | 67  | 0.976         | 195 | 200 | 146 | 220 |
| Williams | 2004 | 111 | 344 | 231 | 104 | 333 | 250 | 0.689         | 566 | 806 | 541 | 833 |
| Betchova | 2009 | 39  | 92  | 54  | 29  | 88  | 66  | 0.970         | 170 | 200 | 146 | 220 |
| Chowdari | 2002 | 29  | 74  | 46  | 26  | 62  | 39  | 0.881         | 132 | 166 | 114 | 140 |
| Sundares | 2008 | 313 | 904 | 653 | 355 | 976 | 671 | 0.998         | 1530| 2210| 1686| 2318|
| Ishiguro | 2006 | 342 | 956 | 621 | 364 | 967 | 573 | 0.219         | 1640| 2198| 1695| 2113|
| Yue    | 2007 | 76  | 195 | 115 | 75  | 183 | 132 | 0.418         | 347 | 425 | 333 | 447 |
| Qian   | 2005 | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   | -            | -   | -   | -   | -   |

3.2.4. Rs2661319 might be a risk factor for schizophrenia

Pooled and subgroup analyses of 8,320 cases and 9,440 controls were performed (Table 7). Of the five genetic models, significant differences were detected when using allele contrast (C vs T, \(P_Z = 0.023\)), homozygous codominant (CC vs TT, \(P_Z = 0.034\)), dominant (CC + CT vs TT, \(P_Z = 0.016\)), and recessive (CC vs CT + TT, \(P_Z = 0.046\)). According to the dominant model (Fig. 5), the genotype CC + CT might be a risk factor for schizophrenia (\(P_Z = 0.016, OR = 1.087, 95\%CI = 1.016 – 1.164\)). An association was detected in the East Asian subgroup analysis (\(P_Z = 0.035, OR = 1.13, 95\%CI = 1.009 – 1.266\)), with a power of 0.694. No significant heterogeneity was observed in the pooled or subgroup analyses.
3.2.5. Genotype CC + CA of rs10759 might be a risk factor for schizophrenia

A total of 2,752 cases and 2,866 controls were analyzed in pooled and subgroup analyses (Table 8).

Significant differences were observed in two of the genetic models, allele contrast (C vs A, \( P_z = 0.046 \)) and dominant (CC + CA vs AA, \( P_z = 0.016 \)). Using the random effects model, the dominant model was selected (Fig. 6). The genotype CC + CA of rs10759 was a risk factor for schizophrenia (\( P_z = 0.016, \) OR = 1.226, 95%CI = 1.038 – 1.448), with a power of 0.694. An association was found in the East Asian population (\( P_z = 0.012, \) OR = 1.482, 95%CI = 1.092 – 2.011). No significant heterogeneity was observed in the pooled or subgroup analyses.
Table 8
Genotype distribution and allele frequency of rs10759

| Author   | Year | Genotype distribution | Allele frequency |
|----------|------|------------------------|------------------|
|          |      | Cases, n | Controls, n | Cases, % | Controls, % |
|          |      | AA | AC | CC | AA | AC | CC | p<sub>HWE</sub> | A | C | A | C |
| Betcheva | 2009 | 13 | 71 | 101 | 13 | 73 | 98 | 0.906 | 97 | 273 | 99 | 269 |
| Sande   | 2008 | 165 | 781 | 924 | 197 | 862 | 942 | 0.992 | 1111 | 2629 | 1256 | 2746 |
| Wood    | 2007 | 21 | 135 | 155 | 24 | 133 | 134 | 0.257 | 177 | 445 | 181 | 401 |
| Yue     | 2007 | 105 | 190 | 91 | 139 | 199 | 52 | 0.144 | 400 | 372 | 477 | 303 |

Figure 1. Article selection process in the present meta-analysis.

Figure 2. Forest plot of the association between rs10917670 and schizophrenia using a recessive model (GG vs GA + AA).

Figure 3. Forest plot of the association between rs951436 and schizophrenia using a recessive model (TT vs TG + GG).

Figure 4. Forest plot of the association between rs951439 and schizophrenia using a dominant model (GG + GA vs AA).

Figure 5. Forest plot of the association between rs2661319 and schizophrenia using a dominant model (CC + CT vs TT).

Figure 6. Forest plot of the association between rs10759 and schizophrenia using a dominant model (CC + CA vs AA).

3.2.6. Sensitivity analysis

Sensitivity analysis was conducted by omitting each study in turn. The results showed that pooled ORs did not change significantly; thus, the results were considered stable and reasonable.

3.2.7. Publication bias

Publication bias could be visualized using funnel plots. No evidence of publication bias was found in the pooled analysis (Figures S1–S5).

5. Discussion

No association between rs10917670 and rs951439 and the risk of schizophrenia was detected in the present study, which was consistent with previous meta-analyses [17–19]. In the East Asian and hospital-based subgroup analyses, an association between the genotype TT of rs951436 and the risk of schizophrenia was found; however, this relationship was not detected in the pooled analysis.

Therefore, the geographical environment, culture, lifestyle, and genetic background might affect polymorphisms [30, 34, 42]. It was studied that rs951436 was associated with magnetic resonance imaging measurements of functional activation and connectivity related to working memory, an intermediate phenotype of schizophrenia [44]. Moreover, Prasad et al. reported that rs951436 was related the volume of dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC) [32]. But the mechanism remained unclear.
Rs2661319 and rs10759 were found to be associated with the risk of schizophrenia in the present study, which was inconsistent with previous meta-analyses. It was detected by subgroup analyses that the East Asian population contributed to this association. It was previously reported that rs2661319 was related to RGS4-1 mRNA level, which was decreased in the postmortem DLPFC of schizophrenic patients [11]. Moreover, rs2661319 was demonstrated to be associated with a more severe baseline total PANSS score and the treatment effect of perphenazine [45]. The rs10759 polymorphism was suggested to increase the risk of schizophrenia by altering the binding of miRNA-124 to its target [46]. MiRNA-124 might bind to the 3’UTR of mRNAs containing target sites, resulting in miRNA-mediated gene silencing, translational inhibition, and induction of mRNA de-adenylation or decay [47]. The level of RGS4 might be decreased, leading to dysfunction of neurotransmission.

More relevant data were included in our meta-analysis than those in previous meta-analyses, for instance, an increased number of more SNPs (5), and databases ((PubMed and SZGene, CNKI, Wanfang and Weipu). However, the results described herein should be interpreted with caution. First, in the present study, the East Asian population contributed to the association between the RGS4 gene and the risk of schizophrenia; however, the sample size was relatively small, and the power was low. Further articles are needed to form a representative and comprehensive conclusion. Second, family-based and functional studies were not included in the present meta-analysis. In addition, it was reported that there was an association between DLPFC volume and RGS4 genotype interacting with COMT rs4818[48]; thus, this association warrants further gene–gene interaction [49, 50] and functional studies.

6. Conclusion
No association between rs10917670 and rs951439 and the risk of schizophrenia was found. In the East Asian and hospital-based subgroup analyses, an association between rs951436 and the risk of schizophrenia was demonstrated. The genotypes CC + CT of rs2661319 and CC + CA of rs10759 might be risk factors for schizophrenia, and the East Asian population contributed to this association. Further updated gene–gene interaction and functional studies are needed.

7. Declarations
Ethics approval and consent to participate

Not applicable.

Consent for publication

Not applicable.

Availability of data and materials

This was an evidence synthesis study; all data were available from the primary research studies or could be provided by the corresponding author.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Funding

The present study was supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China [No. 81671872]. The funding organization was not involved in the design of the study, collection, analysis, and interpretation of data, or writing of the manuscript.

Authors’ contributions

BW designed the study and wrote the protocol. FX and LL managed the literature search, which was checked by XW, YL, and XX. FX performed analyses. The manuscript was written by FX, and corrected by JY. All authors have read and approved the manuscript.

Acknowledgements

All authors were worthy of acknowledgements.

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Abbreviations

DSM-IV: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual–Fourth Edition; RGS4: Regulator of G-protein signaling 4;
RGS: Regulators of G-protein signaling; GPCRs: G-protein coupled receptors; DLPFC: decreased dorsolateral prefrontal cortex; OR: odds ratios; CIs: confidence intervals; 3’ UTR: 3’ untranslated region.

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Figures

Figure 1

Article selection process in this meta-analysis.
Figure 2

Forest plot of the association between rs10917670 and schizophrenia in recessive model (GG vs GA+AA).
Figure 3
Forest plot of the association between of rs951436 and schizophrenia in recessive model (TT vs TG+GG).
Figure 4

Forest plot of the association between of rs951439 and schizophrenia in dominant model (GG+GA vs AA).
Figure 5

Forest plot of the association between rs2661319 and schizophrenia in dominant model (CC+CT vs TT).
Figure 6

Forest plot of the association between of rs10759 and schizophrenia in dominant model (CC+CA vs AA).

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