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***De novo* mutations involved in post-transcriptional dysregulation contribute to six neuropsychiatric disorders**

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1 **Abstract**

2 While deleterious *de novo* mutations (DNMs) in coding region conferring risk in
3 neuropsychiatric disorders have been revealed by next-generation sequencing, the
4 role of DNMs involved in post-transcriptional regulation in pathogenesis of these
5 disorders remains to be elucidated. By curating 42,871 DNMs from 9,772 core
6 families with six kinds of neuropsychiatric disorders and controls, we identified
7 2,351 post-transcriptionally impaired DNMs (piDNMs) and prioritized 1,923
8 candidate genes in these six disorders by employing workflow RBP-Var2. Our
9 results revealed a higher prevalence of piDNM in the probands than that of controls
10 ($P = 9.52E-17$). Moreover, we identified 214 piDNM-containing genes with
11 enriched co-expression modules and intensive protein-protein interactions ($P =$
12 $7.75E-07$) in at least two of neuropsychiatric disorders. Furthermore, these cross-
13 disorder genes carrying piDNMs could form interaction network centered on RNA
14 binding proteins, suggesting a shared post-transcriptional etiology underlying these
15 disorders. Our findings highlight that piDNMs contribute to the pathogenesis of
16 neuropsychiatric disorders.

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1 **Main**

2 In the past decades, there have been increased efforts to better understand the
3 pathogenesis of psychiatric disorders. Next-generation sequencing, which allows
4 genome-wide detection of rare and *de novo* mutations (DNMs), is transforming the
5 pace of genetics of neuropsychiatric disorder by identifying protein-coding
6 mutations that confer risk. Various computational methods have been developed to
7 predict the effects of amino acid substitutions on protein function and to classify
8 corresponding mutations as deleterious or benign. The majority of these approaches
9 rely on evolutionary conservation or protein structural constraints of amino acid
10 substitutions and focus on direct changes in protein coding genes, especially from
11 nonsynonymous mutations which directly affect the gene product¹. Although
12 previous studies have analyzed the biological and clinical implications of protein
13 truncating mutations identified from next-generation sequencing,^{2,3} genetic
14 mutations may not only impact the protein structure or catalytic activity but may also
15 impact transcriptional processes^{4,5} via direct or indirect effects on DNA-protein
16 binding⁶, histone modifications⁷, enhancer cis-regulation⁸ and gene-enhancer
17 interactions⁹. Meanwhile, genetic mutations could impair post-transcriptional
18 processes^{10,11} such as interactions with RNA binding proteins (RBPs), mRNA
19 splicing, mRNA transport, mRNA stability and mRNA translation.

20 Hitherto, previous studies of neuropsychiatric disorders have focused on
21 genetic mutation in coding region¹², cis-regulation^{13,14}, epigenome¹⁵,
22 transcriptome^{16,17}, and proteome¹⁸, but less is pursued with regard to how these
23 disorders interface with post-transcriptional regulation. Therefore, potential
24 mechanisms of post-transcriptional dysregulation related to pathology and clinical
25 treatment of neuropsychiatric disorders remain largely uninvestigated. Our previous
26 method named RBP-Var¹⁹ and a recent published platform called POSTAR²⁰

1 represents a seminal effort to systematically annotate post-transcriptional regulatory
2 maps and explore the putative roles of RBP-mediated SNVs in human diseases.

3 To explore association between extremely post-transcriptionally impaired
4 DNMs, namely piDNMs, with psychiatric disorders, we collected whole exome and
5 genome sequencing data from 9,772 core family and curated 42,871 *de novo*
6 mutations from six kinds of neuropsychiatric disorders, including autism spectrum
7 disorder (ASD), epileptic encephalopathy (EE), intellectual disability (ID),
8 schizophrenia (SCZ), brain development defect (DD) and neurodevelopmental
9 defect (NDD) as well as unaffected controls including siblings. By employing our
10 newly updated workflow RBP-Var2, we investigated the potential implication of
11 these *de novo* mutations involved in post-transcriptional regulation in these six
12 neuropsychiatric disorders and found that a subset of *de novo* mutations could be
13 classified as piDNMs. We observed a higher prevalence of piDNMs in the probands
14 of each of all six neuropsychiatric disorders versus controls. In addition, gene
15 ontology (GO) enrichment analyses of cross-disorder genes containing piDNMs in
16 at least two of these disorders revealed several shared crucial pathways involved in
17 the biological processes of neurodevelopment. Meanwhile, weighted gene co-
18 expression network analysis (WGCNA) and protein-protein interactions analysis
19 showed enriched co-expression modules and intensive protein-protein interactions
20 between these cross-disorder genes, respectively, implying that there was convergent
21 machinery of post-transcriptional regulation among six psychiatric disorders.
22 Furthermore, we established an interaction network which is centered on several
23 RBP hubs and encompassed with piDNM-containing genes. In short, DNMs which
24 are deleterious to post-transcriptional regulation extensively contribute to the
25 pathogenesis of neuropsychiatric disorders.

26 **Results**

1 Our ultimate goal is to identify all piDNMs from DNMs in six neuropsychiatric
2 disorders by analyzing a variety of aspects related to post-transcriptional regulation
3 process. To do this, we first developed a comprehensive workflow RBP-Var2 with a
4 statistic algorithm that links the potentially functional roles in post-transcriptional
5 regulation to DNMs. We then used this workflow to identify functional variants from
6 9,772 core families (7,453 cases and 2,319 controls) with 42,871 *de novo* mutations
7 (29,544 in cases and 13858 in controls, 531 in common) associated with six
8 neuropsychiatric disorders, including 4,209 families and 25,670 DNMs in autism
9 spectrum disorder (ASD), 383 families and 492 DNMs in epileptic encephalopathy
10 (EE), 261 families and 348 DNMs in intellectual disability (ID), 1,077 families and
11 1,049 DNMs in schizophrenia (SCZ), 1,133 families and 1,531 DNMs in brain
12 development defect (DD), and 390 families and 454 DNMs in neurodevelopmental
13 defect (NDD) (Supplementary Table 1). We further presented an online tool
14 (<http://www.rbp-var.biols.ac.cn/>) that could rapidly annotate and classify piDNMs,
15 and determine their potential roles in neuropsychiatric disorders.

16 **High prevalence of piDNM in six neuropsychiatric disorders**

17 Firstly, we used our updated workflow RBP-Var2 (see methods) to identify
18 functional piDNMs from 9,772 trios with 42,871 *de novo* mutations (29,041 DNMs
19 in probands and 13,830 DNMs in controls) across six kinds of neuropsychiatric
20 disorders as well as their unaffected controls. We determined DNMs with 1/2
21 categories predicted by RBP-Var2 as piDNMs and identified 2,351 piDNMs in
22 probands (Supplementary Table 2), of which 64, 18, 2275, 15, 9 were located in 3'
23 UTRs, 5' UTRs, exons, ncRNA exons and splicing sites, respectively. In detail, RBP-
24 Var2 identified 1,410 piDNMs in ASD, 356 piDNMs in DD, 281 piDNMs in SCZ,
25 103 piDNMs in EE, 129 piDNMs in NDD and 102 piDNMs in ID, whileas only 398
26 piDNMs were identified in controls groups (Supplementary Table 3) of which 20, 4,

1 368, 6 were located in 3' UTRs, 5' UTRs, exons and ncRNA exons, respectively.
2 Interestingly, the overall frequency of piDNMs in patients in any one of the six
3 neuropsychiatric disorders were significantly over-represented compared with those
4 in controls ($P = 1.07E-16$, Figure 1A). With the combined data from 9,772 trios, we
5 also observed that probands groups have much higher odds ratio (OR) of piDNMs
6 compared with controls in all six kinds of neuropsychiatric disorders (Figure 1B;
7 Supplementary Table 4). Dramatically, we found that synonymous piDNMs were
8 significantly enriched in probands in contrast to those in controls ($P = 9.53E-14$).
9 While in the original DNMs data set before being evaluated by RBP-Var2, the
10 prevalence of those synonymous DNMs was opposite ($P = 1.34E-10$). To eliminate
11 the effects of loss-of-function (LoF) mutations derived from protein dysfunction, we
12 filtered out those with LoF through all piDNMs and found the non-LoF piDNMs
13 exhibited more significantly higher frequency in probands ($P = 3.09E-156$)
14 (Supplementary Figure 1), indicating that the significant enrichment of those
15 piDNMs in probands is driven by the contribution of the post-transcriptional effects
16 rather than those LoF DNMs (Figure 1C). In short, piDNMs that are linked to post-
17 transcriptional dysregulation may contribute to the pathogenesis of these six
18 neuropsychiatric disorders.

19 **High sensitivity and specificity of piDNMs identified by RBP-** 20 **Var2**

21 Our platform RBP-Var2 determined the post-transcriptional dysfunction of
22 piDNMs regardless of considering whether the DNMs give rise to protein truncating.
23 To investigate the accuracy and specificity of DNMs in different regulatory
24 processes, we compared our RBP-Var2 prediction tool with other three popular tools,
25 including SIFT²⁵, PolyPhen2 (PPH2)²⁶ and RegulomeDB²¹. RBP-Var2,

1 RegulomeDB and SIFT/PPH2 were designed to evaluate the impact of mutation on
2 post-transcriptional regulation, transcriptional regulation and protein product,
3 respectively. We found that the frequency of both deleterious nonsynonymous and
4 stop gain/loss DNMs is higher in cases than in controls determined by SIFT ($P =$
5 $5.37E-62$ and $P = 4.55E-03$, respectively), but only higher frequency of deleterious
6 nonsynonymous DNMs was identified by PPH2 ($P = 3.68E-102$) (Figure 2A, B).
7 However, RegulomeDB determined significant higher frequency of deleterious
8 nonsynonymous ($P = 1.12E-39$) and synonymous ($P = 3.21E-22$), nonframeshift (P
9 $< 2.20E-16$), splicing ($P = 7.62E-04$), stop gain/loss ($P < 2.20E-16$) DNMs rather
10 than frameshift DNMs ($P = 4.14E-01$) (Figure 2C) in cases compared with controls.
11 In contrast, RBP-Var2 could determine much more deleterious DNMs with the effect
12 of nonsynonymous ($P = 6.31E-60$) and synonymous ($P=8.98E-09$), splicing ($P <$
13 $2.20E-16$) and frameshift ($P = 1.38E-03$) (Figure 2D).

14 Our results indicated that both RegulomeDB and RBP-Var2 better distinguish
15 deleterious DNMs from benign ones compared to SIFT and PPH2 in cases versus
16 controls. However, the number of deleterious DNMs detected by RegulomeDB is
17 much less than that of RBP-Var2, suggesting that RegulomeDB has a higher false-
18 negative rate than RBP-Var2. Therefore, we performed receiver operating
19 characteristic (ROC) analysis to systemically evaluate the sensitivity and specificity
20 of these four prediction methods. We found that area under curve (AUC) value of
21 SIFT, PPH2, RBP-Var2 and RegulomeDB are 78.27 %, 76.57 %, 82.89 % and
22 50.77 %, respectively (Supplementary Figure 2). Moreover, the AUC value of SIFT,
23 PPH2, and RBP-Var2 is significantly more sensitive and specific than that of
24 RegulomeDB with P value $1.63E-10$, $2.40E-08$ and $2.51E-60$, respectively. In
25 addition, while the AUC value of RBP-Var2 is significantly higher than that of SIFT
26 and PPH2 with p value 0.049 and 0.019, respectively. Consequently, we compared

1 the deleterious DNMs detected by these four methods and found that RBP-Var2
2 detected more piDNMs that overlapped with predictions of SIFT and PPH2 than that
3 of RegulomeDB. Intriguingly, RBP-Var2 could detect an additional 1,238 piDNMs
4 that covered 841 genes and were regarded as benign DNMs by other three methods,
5 accounting for 24.85% of total 4,981 deleterious DNMs detected by all four tools
6 (Supplementary Figure 3A, B). The top-enriched gene ontology of these 841 genes
7 were mitotic cell cycle ($P = 2.47E-07$), mitotic cell cycle process ($P = 3.85E-06$),
8 cellular response to stress ($P = 5.63E-06$), positive regulation of cell cycle ($P =$
9 $7.50E-06$) (Supplementary Figure 3D; Supplementary Table 5), suggesting
10 dysregulation involved in cell cycle and the dysfunction of cellular response may
11 contribute to diverse neural damage, thereby trigger neurodevelopmental disorders²².
12 Therefore, the piDNMs detected by RBP-Var2 are distinct and may play significant
13 roles in the post-transcriptional processes of the development of neuropsychiatric
14 disorders.

15 **Shared and distinct features of piDNM across six** 16 **neuropsychiatric disorders**

17 Our previous study using the NPdenovo database demonstrated that *de novo*
18 mutations predicted as harmful in protein level are shared by four neuropsychiatric
19 disorders²³. Therefore, we wondered whether there were common piDNMs among
20 six neuropsychiatric disorders. Firstly, we identified 24 genes harboring recurrent
21 piDNMs among 2,351 piDNMs, including nine genes from ASD trios, 10 genes from
22 DD&NDD trios, six genes from ID trios, and one genes from EE trios (Figure 3A;
23 Supplementary Table 6). Only two genes harbored cross-disorder recurrent piDNMs.
24 One was STXBP1 which occurred in both DD and EE, and another was CTNNB1
25 which occurred in both ASD and DD. However, we identified 312 genes carrying at

1 least two piDNMs in all disorders among each of 1,923 candidate genes (accounting
2 for 16.22%), including 252 genes involved in ASD, 38 genes involved in EE, 40
3 genes involved in ID, 68 involved in SCZ trios and 132 genes involved in DD&NDD
4 (Supplementary Table 7). Among these 312 genes, we identified 35 high risk genes
5 with P value $< 1E-4$ derived from TADA program (Transmission And De novo
6 Association)²⁴ (Figure 3B).

7 Subsequently, by comparing the genes harboring piDNMs across six disorders,
8 we found 214 genes significantly shared by at least two kinds of disorders rather
9 than random overlaps (permutation test, $P < 1.00E-5$ based on random resampling,
10 Figure 3C, D). Furthermore, the genes harboring piDNMs in controls also have
11 significantly fewer overlaps with the 214 shared genes in the six disorders than
12 random overlaps ($P = 0.007$, Supplementary Figure 4A). In addition, the number
13 of shared genes for any pairwise comparison is significantly higher than random
14 overlaps ($P < 0.05$) except for the comparison of EE versus SCZ ($P = 0.17864$)
15 (Supplementary Figure 5). On the contrary, the genes harboring piDNMs in controls
16 have significantly fewer overlaps with disorders than random overlaps: ASD ($P <$
17 $1.00E-5$, Supplementary Figure 4B), ID ($P < 1.00E-5$, Supplementary Figure 4C),
18 EE ($P = 1.20E-4$, Supplementary Figure 4D), SCZ ($P < 1.00E-5$, Supplementary
19 Figure 4E) and DD&NDD ($P < 1.00E-5$, Supplementary Figure 4F). Our
20 observation suggests that there are common genes harboring piDNMs in these six
21 neuropsychiatric disorders.

22 The shared symptoms in the six neuropsychiatric disorders suggest there is
23 common underlying molecular mechanism that may implicate important regulators
24 of pathogenesis. Thus, we performed ClueGO analysis for these shared genes and
25 found they were mainly enriched in biological processes in epigenetic modification
26 and neuronal and synaptic functions (Supplementary Table 8). These epigenetic

1 regulating genes are composed of ARID1B, CTCF, CTNNB1, EP300, MECP2,
2 DNMT3A, KMT2D, MYO1E, CNOT1, TNRC18, JARID2, PHF19, TNRC6A,
3 DOT1L, KMT2B (Supplementary Table 9). Moreover, most of these epigenetic
4 modification genes, especially for genes with $P_{TADA} < 0.05$, have been previously
5 linked with neuropsychiatric disorders²⁵⁻²⁸. Interestingly, shared genes in ClueGO
6 enrichment analyses are intensive linkages among these significant pathways as
7 some of piDNM-containing genes could play roles in more than one of these
8 pathways (Supplementary Figure 7).

9 Next, to investigate the biological pathways involved in each disorder-specific
10 genes containing piDNM, we carried out GO enrichment analysis with terms in
11 biological process (Supplementary Table 10-12). The most significantly enriched
12 category of ASD-specific genes was “organelle organization” ($P = 1.00E-15$) and
13 the second top enriched category in the ASD-specific genes was “cell cycle” ($P =$
14 $2.30E-12$). We also found that “chromosome organization” ($P = 3.30E-08$),
15 “regulation of chromosome organization” ($P = 1.80E-05$) and “regulation of
16 chromatin organization” ($P = 6.60E-05$) are the three most significantly dysregulated
17 biological pathways of genes unique to DD and NDD. With respect to genes specific
18 to SCZ, it is actually no surprise that the top three of the enrichment results are
19 related to autophagy, because autophagy is an essential natural destructive process
20 and have been suggested to play a key role in the pathophysiology of
21 schizophrenia^{29,30}. Due to the insufficient number of genes, GO enrichment analysis
22 for genes unique to ID or EE was not performed. As each disorder-specific genes
23 containing piDNM could be overrepresented into different biological pathway, our
24 observation suggests that piDNMs may also contribute the distinct phenotype of
25 each of the six psychiatric disorders although the explicit mechanism need to be
26 further explored.

1 **Convergent co-expression modules across six** 2 **neuropsychiatric disorders**

3 As co-expression of genes has been used to explore the common and distinct
4 molecular mechanism in neuropsychiatric disorders³¹, we performed weighted gene
5 co-expression network analysis (WGCNA)³² with 214 cross-disorder genes
6 containing piDNMs by using up-to-date BrainSpan developmental transcriptome
7 (n=524): gene expression in 16 human brain structures across 31 developmental
8 stages³³. The results of WGCNA deciphered two gene modules with distinct
9 spatiotemporal expression patterns (Figure 4A, B; Supplementary Figure 8). The
10 turquoise module (n=146 genes) is characterized by high expression during early
11 fetal development (8-37 postconceptional weeks) in most of brain structures (Figure
12 4C). The blue module (n=58 genes) is delineated to low expression in early fetal
13 development (postconceptional week 8) and early childhood (3 year) in most of brain
14 structures (Figure 4D). The turquoise module was enriched for epigenetic regulation
15 of gene expression (q = 3.99E-08), establishment or maintenance of cell polarity (q
16 = 8.24E-04), Notch binding (q = 1.33E-3), Thyroid hormone signaling pathway (q
17 = 1.75E-3), beta-catenin-TCF complex assembly (q = 5.81E-3), chromatin
18 remodeling (q = 1.30E-2), Notch signaling pathway (q = 2.51E-2), motor activity (q
19 = 3.21E-2) and other enriched GO terms (Supplementary Figure 9; Supplementary
20 Table 13). The blue module was enriched visual learning (q = 4.92E-07), regulation
21 of synaptic plasticity (q = 1.91E-06), actin filament-based movement (q = 6.52E-
22 06), adult locomotory behavior (q = 3.86E-04), neuromuscular process (q = 8.61E-
23 04), Long-term depression (q = 1.02E-3), positive regulation of dendrite
24 development (q = 1.35E-3), negative regulation of autophagy (q = 3.74E-3), negative
25 regulation of G-protein coupled receptor protein signaling pathway (q = 5.07E-3)

1 and other neurodevelopment related pathways (Supplementary Figure 10;
2 Supplementary Table 14).

3 In addition, we constructed the co-expression network by using gene pairs with
4 correlation weight of at least 0.3 (Supplementary Table 15). Out of the 214 cross-
5 disorder genes containing piDNMs, 206 were clustered in the co-expression
6 networks (Supplementary Table 16). Interestingly, we found that majority of the co-
7 expression hubs were histone modifiers, such as KAT6B, KDM5B, SETDB1,
8 TRRAP, EP300, and transcriptional regulators, including CTCF, SMARCA4,
9 ARID1B, ADNP, CHAMP1 (Supplementary Figure 11). Consequently, the link
10 among these six highly heterogeneous neuropsychiatric disorders may be
11 represented by biological processes controlled by these hub genes in co-expression
12 networks. Moreover, by employing our newly developed EpiDenovo database³⁴, we
13 found that most of the genes were highly expressed in the early embryonic
14 development (Supplementary Figure 12), indicating that these genes are crucial in
15 cell differentiation.

16 **Common network of protein-protein interactions across six** 17 **neuropsychiatric disorders**

18 The co-expression results indicated that these 214 piDNM-related cross-
19 disorder proteins may have intensive protein-protein interactions (PPI). To identify
20 common biological processes that potentially contribute to disease pathogenesis, we
21 investigated protein-protein interactions within these 214 cross-disorder genes
22 containing piDNMs by database BioGRID. Our results revealed that 128 out of 214
23 (59.81%) cross-disorder genes represent an interconnected network on the level of
24 available direct/genetic protein-protein interactions (Figure 5A; Supplementary
25 Table 17). Furthermore, we determined several crucial hubs of protein-protein

1 interactions, including CUL3, CTNNB1, HECW2, HNRNPU, EP300, SMARCA4,
2 ARRB2, PTPRF, MYH9 and NOTCH1 (Figure 5A), which may control common
3 biological processes among these six neuropsychiatric disorders. Indeed, these 128
4 cross-disorder proteins are enriched in nervous system phenotypes, including
5 abnormal synaptic transmission, abnormal nervous system development, abnormal
6 neuron morphology and abnormal brain morphology, and behavior/neurological
7 phenotype such as abnormal motor coordination/balance (two sided Fisher's Exact
8 Test, $q < 0.05$, Supplementary Figure 13A). Similarly, these 128 genes in interaction
9 network are enriched in nervous system phenotype including abnormal nervous
10 system development and abnormal brain morphology (two sided Fisher's Exact Test,
11 $q < 0.05$, Supplementary Figure 13B). Dramatically, HNRNPU belongs to the
12 subfamily of ubiquitously expressed heterogeneous nuclear ribonucleoproteins
13 (hnRNPs) which are RNA binding proteins and they form complexes with
14 heterogeneous nuclear RNA (hnRNA). These proteins are associated with pre-
15 mRNAs in the nucleus and appear to influence pre-mRNA processing and other
16 aspects of mRNA metabolism and transport.

17 By investigating the expression of these co-interacting genes in the human
18 cortex of 12 ASD patients (accession number GSE64018) and 13 normal donators
19 (accession number GSE76852) from Gene Expression Omnibus (GEO), we
20 identified 97 significantly differential expression genes (accounting for 75.78% of
21 the 128 PPI genes we mentioned above) between ASD patients and normal controls
22 (Student's t-test, $q < 0.05$, Figure 5B). And 86 of these PPI genes were highly
23 expressed in ASD patients while only 11 genes were down-regulated in ASD patients
24 when compared with normal controls (Supplementary Table 18), implying that most
25 of these PPI genes were abnormally expressed in ASD patients.

26 **Shared networks between piDNM and RBPs**

1 According to previous studies, dysregulation or mutations of RBPs can cause a
2 range of developmental and neurological diseases^{35,36}. Meanwhile, mutations in
3 RNA targets of RBPs, which could disturb the interaction between RBPs and their
4 mRNA targets, would affect mRNA metabolism and protein homeostasis in neurons
5 by impair RNA transport and translation in neuropathological disorders³⁷⁻³⁹. Indeed,
6 mutations that alter sequence context of RBP binding sites on target RNA commonly
7 affect RBP binding and regulation⁴⁰. For instance, regulation depending on FMRP-
8 related activity during fetal brain development might be particularly vulnerable to
9 genetic perturbations, with severe mutations resulting in disruption of
10 developmental canalization⁴¹. Hence, we constructed a regulatory network between
11 piDNMs and RBPs based on predicted binding sites of RBPs to investigate the
12 genetic perturbations of mRNA-RBP interactions in six disorders (Figure 6). We
13 identified several crucial common RBP hubs that contribute to the pathogenesis of
14 the six neuropsychiatric disorders, including EIF4A3, FMR1, PTBP1, AGO1/2,
15 ELAVL1, IGF2BP1/3, WDR33 and FXR2. Genes with piDNMs in different
16 disorders could be regulated by the same RBP hub while one candidate genes may
17 be regulated by different RBP hubs (Figure 6). In addition, all of these RBP hubs
18 were highly expressed in early fetal development stages (8-37 postconceptional
19 weeks) based on BrainSpan developmental transcriptome (Supplementary Figure
20 14), suggesting that these RBP hubs may play important roles in the early stages of
21 brain development.

22 **The available data resource**

23 To make our findings easily accessible to the research community, we have
24 developed RBP-Var2 platform (<http://www.rbp-var.biols.ac.cn/>) for storage and
25 retrieval of piDNMs, candidate genes, for exploring the genetic etiology of
26 neuropsychiatric disorders in post-transcriptional regulation. The expression and

1 epigenetic profile of genes related to regulatory *de novo* mutations and early
2 embryonic development have been deposited in our previously published database
3 EpiDenovo (<http://www.epidenovo.biols.ac.cn/>)³⁴.

4 **Discussion**

5 In this study, we systematically analyzed the damaging effect of *de novo*
6 mutations at the level of post-transcriptional regulation in six neuropsychiatric
7 disorders. We discovered 2,351 piDNMs in the total of 1,923 genes that displayed
8 deleterious effect on both post-transcriptional regulation and protein function, of
9 which 1,034 (43.43%) piDNMs were also determined as extremely deleterious on
10 the structure and function of protein predicted by NPdenovo, thereby resulting in
11 identifying the rest of 1,317 piDNMs to have impact on post-transcriptional
12 regulation only. Among the total 1,923 genes containing piDNMs, 862 (44.83%)
13 genes were predicted to simultaneously alter the structure and function of
14 correspondingly coded proteins predicted by NPdenovo. Our observations indicate
15 that 55.17% of piDNMs are not expected to affect the structure and function of
16 protein but are predicted to affect post-transcriptional regulation. Moreover,
17 probands have higher odds ratio of piDNMs than controls in all kinds of
18 neuropsychiatric disorders. Therefore, piDNMs are one of major contributors to
19 etiology for neuropsychiatry disorders, which is distinct from the mutation effect on
20 protein functions.

21 We applied RBP-Var2 algorithm to annotate and interpret *de novo* variants in
22 subjects with six neuropsychiatric disorders and control subjects. We observed a
23 strong enrichment of pathogenic or likely pathogenic variants in affected subjects.
24 In comparison with accuracy of RBP-Var2 (82.89%), other prediction algorithms
25 such as SIFT or PPH2 have moderate accuracy (76~78%) while RegulomeDB has

1 much lower accuracy (50.77 %) to differentiate affected from the control subjects.
2 This observation suggests that the potential pathogenicity of genetic variants is
3 mainly due to post-transcriptional dysregulation and malfunction of protein, but not
4 disruption of transcription process. Therefore, deciphering multiple biological layers
5 of deleteriousness, particularly post-transcriptional regulation and structure/function
6 of protein, may improve the accuracy to predict disease related genetic variations.

7 To date, it has been a challenge to estimate the deleteriousness of synonymous
8 and UTRs mutations though such mutations have been widely acknowledged to alter
9 protein expression, conformation and function⁴². Nevertheless, our RBP-Var2 tool
10 identified 518 synonymous DNMs and 82 UTR's DNMs, which were extremely
11 deleterious in post-transcriptional regulation. Moreover, synonymous damaging
12 DNMs were significantly prominent in probands compared with that in controls,
13 supported by predictions of both RBP-Var2 and RegulomeDB. Meanwhile, *de novo*
14 insertions and deletions (InDels), especially frameshift patterns are taken for granted
15 to be deleterious. Indeed, *de novo* frameshift InDels are more frequent in
16 neuropsychiatric disorders compared to non-frameshift InDels⁴³, which were
17 demonstrated by predictions of RBP-Var2 but not SIFT or PPH2 (Figure 2).

18 Most interestingly, we discovered that some epigenetic pathways are enriched
19 among these piDNM-containing genes, such as those that regulate gene expression
20 and histone modification. This finding is consistent with a previous report in which
21 more than 68% of ASD cases shared a common acetylome aberrations at >5,000 cis-
22 regulatory regions in prefrontal and temporal cortex⁴⁴. Such common "epimutations"
23 may be induced by either perturbations of epigenetic regulations (including post-
24 transcriptional regulations) due to genetic mutations of substrates or the disruptions
25 of epigenetic modifications due to the genetic mutation of epigenetic genes. Actually,
26 our observations suggest that alterations of "epimutations" were associated with the

1 dysregulation of post-transcription. This hypothesis is consistent with the observation
2 that several recurrent piDNM-containing genes are non-epigenetic genes, including
3 CHD8, CHD2, SYNGAP1, ADNP, POGZ, ANK2 and DYRK1A. Moreover, we also
4 discovered several recurrent epigenetic genes including KMT2A, KMT2B, KMT2C,
5 KAT6B, KDM3B, JARID2, DNMT3A and MECP2, that contain piDNMs which
6 may play important roles in the genome-wide aberrations of epigenetic landscapes
7 through disruption of the post-transcription regulation. Furthermore, WGCNA
8 analysis revealed that major hubs of the co-expression network for these 214
9 piDNM-containing genes were histone modifiers by using BrainSpan developmental
10 transcriptome. These data indicate that piDNM-containing genes are co-expressed
11 with genes frequently involved in epigenetic regulation of common cellular and
12 biological process in neuropsychiatric disorders.

13 Importantly, these 214 piDNM-containing genes harbor intensive protein-
14 protein interactions in physics and shared regulatory networks between piDNMs and
15 RBPs in six neuropsychiatric disorders. We identified several RBP hubs of
16 regulatory networks between piDNM-containing genes and RBP proteins, including
17 EIF4A3, FMRP, PTBP1, AGO1/2, ELAVL1, IGF2BP1/3, WDR33 and FXR2.
18 Taking FMRP for example, it is a well-known pathogenic gene of Fragile X
19 syndrome which co-occurs with autism in many cases and its targets are highly
20 enriched for *de novo* mutations in ASD⁴¹. The mutations of any RBP hubs may result
21 in multiple disorders and mutations of RBP-targeting genes may disrupt interactions
22 with multiple RBPs. Fortunately, we have constructed the regulatory networks
23 among multiple RBPs and their target RNAs with *de novo* mutations that could
24 significantly disturb the regulatory networks in six neuropsychiatric disorders.

25 Alterations in expression or mutations in either RBPs or their binding sites in
26 target transcripts have been reported to be the cause of several human diseases such

1 as muscular atrophies, neurological disorders and cancer⁴⁵. However, it is still a
2 challenge to decipher the effect of genetic mutation on post-transcriptional
3 regulation. In this study, our method sheds light on evaluation of post-transcriptional
4 impact of genetic mutations especially for synonymous mutations. In addition, as
5 small molecules can be rapidly designed to selectively target RNAs and affect RNA-
6 RBP interactions, leading to anti-cancer strategies⁴⁶. Therefore, the discovery of
7 disease-causing mutations in RNAs is yielding a wealth of new potential therapeutic
8 targets, providing new RNA-based tools for developing therapeutics.

1 **Materials and methods**

2 ***Data collection.***

3 For this study, 9,772 trios were recruited from previous WES/WGS studies,
4 comprising 7,453 parent-probands trios associated with six neuropsychiatric
5 disorders and 2,319 control trios. After deduplication, a total of 29,041 DNMs in
6 probands and 13,830 DNMs in controls were identified for subsequent analysis.

7 ***RBP-Var2 algorithm***

8 To better interpret and comprise the catalog of *de novo* mutation, we developed
9 a new heuristic scoring system based on the functional confidence of variants and
10 mathematical algorithms. The scoring system represents with increasing confidence
11 that a variant lies in a functional location and probably results in a functional
12 consequence (i.e. alteration of RBP binding and a gene regulatory effect). For
13 example, we consider variants that are known eQTLs (expression quantitative trait
14 locus) as significant and label them as category 1. Within category 1, subcategories
15 indicate additional annotations ranging from the most informational variants (1a,
16 variant may change the motif for RBP binding) to the least informational variants
17 (1e, variant only has a motif for RBP binding). In mathematical algorithms, we
18 employed LS-GKM^{47,48} to predict the impact of DNMs on the binding of specific
19 RBPs by calculating the delta SVM scores. Moreover, for single-base mutations, we
20 employed the RNAsnp⁴⁹ with default parameters to estimate the mutation effects on
21 local RNA secondary structure in terms of empirical P-values based on global
22 folding in correlation measured by using RNAfold⁵⁰. For insertions and deletions,
23 based on changes of minimal free energy, we evaluated the effects on RNA
24 secondary structure in terms of empirical P-values calculated from cumulative
25 probabilities of the Poisson distribution. Only the functional DNM produces >1

1 change in gkm-SVM scores for the effect of RBP binding or P -value < 0.1 for the
2 effect of RNA secondary structure change were determined to be a piDNM. Only
3 DNMs occurred in exonic or UTR regions were included in our analysis process.

4 ***Identification of deleterious piDNMs and comparison with variants*** 5 ***predicted by other methods.***

6 To determine the likelihood of causing a deleterious mutation in post-
7 transcriptional regulation for all SNVs and InDels, our newly updated program RBP-
8 Var2 was utilized to assign an exclusive rank for each mutation and only those
9 mutations categorized into rank 1 or 2 were considered as piDNMs. In comparison
10 with those mutations involved in the disruption of gene function or transcriptional
11 regulation, several programs such as SIFT, PolyPhen2 and RegulomeDB were used
12 to analyze the same dataset of DNMs as the input for RBP-Var2. We only kept the
13 mutations qualified as “damaging” from the result of SIFT and “possibly damaging”
14 or “probably damaging” from PolyPhen2. In the case of RegulomeDB, mutations
15 labeled as category 1 and 2 were retained. Next, we classified the type of mutation
16 (frameshift, nonframeshift, nonsynonymous, synonymous, splicing and stop) and
17 located regions (UTR3, UTR5, exonic, ncRNA exonic and splicing) in order to
18 determine distribution of piDNMs, genetic variants and other regulatory variants.
19 The number of variants in cases versus controls was illustrated by bar chart (***: P
20 < 0.001 , **: $0.001 < P < 0.01$, *: $0.01 < P < 0.05$, binomial test).

21 ***TADA analysis of DNMs in six disorders***

22 The TADA program (Transmission And De novo Association), which predicts
23 risk genes accurately on the basis of allele frequencies, gene-specific penetrance,
24 and mutation rate, was used to calculate the P -value for the likelihood of each gene
25 contributing to the all six disorders with default parameters.

1 ***ROC curves and specificity/sensitivity estimation***

2 We screened a positive (non-neutral) test set of likely casual mutations in
3 Mendelian disease from the ClinVar database (v20170130). From a total of 237,308
4 mutations in ClinVar database, we picked up 145 exonic mutations presenting in our
5 curated DNMs in probands. Our negative (neutral) set of likely non-casual variants
6 was built from DNMs of unaffected siblings in six neuropsychiatric disorders. In
7 order to avoid rare deleterious DNMs, we selected only DNMs in controls with a
8 minor allele frequency of at least 0.01 in 1000 genome (1000g2014oct), resulting in
9 a set of 921 exonic variants. Then, we employed R package pROC to analyze and
10 compare ROC curves.

11 ***Overlaps of piDNMs between disorders.***

12 In order to elucidate the overlap of genes among any two of the six disorders as
13 well as each disorder and the control, we shuffled the intersections of genes and
14 repeated this procedure 100,000 times. During each permutation, we randomly
15 selected the same number of genes as the actual situation from the entire genome for
16 each disorder and the control, then p values were calculated as the proportion of
17 permutations during which the observed number of genes was above/below the
18 number of genes in simulated situations.

19 ***Functional enrichment analysis***

20 A gene harboring piDNMs would be selected into our candidate gene set to
21 conduct functional enrichment analysis if it occurred in at least two of the six
22 disorders. GO (Gene Ontology) and KEGG (Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and
23 Genomes) pathway enrichments analysis was implemented by Cytoscape (version
24 3.4.0) plugin ClueGO (version 2.3.0) and P values calculated by hypergeometric test
25 was corrected to be q values by Benjamini–Hochberg procedure for reducing the
26 false discovery rate resulted from multiple hypothesis testing.

1 ***Co-expression and spatiotemporal specificity***

2 Normalized gene-expression of 16 human brain regions were determined by
3 RNA sequencing and obtained from BrainSpan (<http://www.brainspan.org>). We
4 extracted expression for 206 out of 214 extreme damaging cross-disorder genes and
5 employed R-package WGCNA (weighted correlation network analysis) with a
6 power of five to cluster the spatiotemporal-expression patterns and prenatal laminar-
7 expression profiles. The expression level for each gene and development stage (only
8 stages with expression data for all 16 structures were selected, $n = 14$) was presented
9 across all brain regions.

10 ***Protein-protein interaction and phenotype enrichment***

11 Cross-disorder genes containing piDNMs were subjected to esyN analysis for
12 generating a network of protein interactions and the network of protein interaction
13 was created by using physical and genetic interactions of *H. sapiens* curated in
14 BioGRID. Cytoscape (version 3.4.0) was used to analyze and visualize protein-
15 protein interaction networks. Overrepresentation of mouse-mutant phenotypes was
16 evaluated using the web tool MamPhea for the genes in the PPI network and for all
17 cross-disorder genes containing piDNMs. Rest of genome was used as background
18 and q values were calculated from P values by Benjamini-Hochberg correction.

19 ***Gene-RBP interaction network***

20 Cytoscape (version 3.4.0) was utilized for visualization of the associations
21 between genes harboring piDNMs in the six neuropsychiatric disorders and the
22 corresponding regulatory RBPs.

23 ***URLs***

1 RBP-Var2, <http://www.rbp-var.biols.ac.cn/> ; NPdenovo,
2 <http://www.wzgenomics.cn/NPdenovo/index.php>;
3 <http://www.epidenovo.biols.ac.cn/>; BioGRID, <https://thebiogrid.org/>;
4 MamPhea , <http://evol.nhri.org.tw/phenome/index.jsp?platform=mmus>; BrainSpan,
5 <http://www.brainspan.org>; ClinVar, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/clinvar/>;
6 1000Genomes, <http://www.internationalgenome.org/>; WGCNA,
7 <https://labs.genetics.ucla.edu/horvath/CoexpressionNetwork/Rpackages/WGCNA/>;
8 esyN, <http://www.esyn.org/>; Cytoscape, <http://www.cytoscape.org/>; TADA,
9 http://wpicr.wpic.pitt.edu/WPICCompGen/TADA/TADA_homepage.htm; ClueGO,
10 <http://apps.cytoscape.org/apps/cluego>; pROC, <http://web.expasy.org/pROC/>; R,
11 <https://www.r-project.org/>; Perl, <https://www.perl.org/>.

12 **Contributions**

13 F.M. and L.W. participated in the design and execution of analyses, produced the
14 figures, participated in the interpretation of results and edited the manuscript. F.M.
15 developed computational code employed in the analyses. L.W. developed the
16 statistical framework and drew the figures. X.Z. participated in the interpretation of
17 results, the oversight of analyses. L.X., X. L. and Q.L. developed and improved the
18 online platform of RBP-Var2. X.H., H.J.T. and R.C.R. provided professional
19 guidance in the writing and refining of the manuscript. J.L. and H.J.T. collected the
20 DNMs from literature and database. Z.S.S. and Y.L.D. conceived the study,
21 participated in the design of analyses, oversaw the study and the interpretation of
22 results, and drafted and edited the manuscript. All authors reviewed and edited the
23 final manuscript.

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5 and Developmental Biology, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

6 **Competing interests**

7 The authors declare no competing financial interests.

8 **Figure legends**

9 **Figure 1.** The abundance of DNMs in different RBP-Var2 categories. (A) The
10 quantities of DNMs in patients with neuropsychiatric disorders are significantly
11 larger than that in normal controls, shown in several categories classified by RBP-
12 Var2. (B) The bar plot corresponds to the odds ratios indicating the enrichment of
13 piDNMs in patients from each of the five neuropsychiatric disorders. (C) The
14 relative amount of LoF and non-LoF piDNMs in five neuropsychiatric disorders.

15 **Figure 2.** Performance comparison of the ability to distinguish severe DNMs
16 between RBP-Var2 and three other tools. (A) Different kinds of DNMs affecting
17 protein function predicted by SIFT. The Y-axis corresponds to the proportion of each
18 kind of mutations within the total number of damaging DNMs predicted by SIFT.
19 (B) Different kinds of DNMs that affect protein function predicted by PolyPhen2.
20 The Y-axis corresponds to the proportion of each kind of mutations within the total
21 number of damaging DNMs predicted by PolyPhen2. (C) The DNMs predicted as
22 functional elements involved in transcriptional regulation by RegulomeDB are
23 categorized into different functional types. The Y-axis corresponds to the proportion
24 of each kind of mutations within the total number of damaging DNMs predicted by

1 RegulomeDB. (D) The DNMs classified as either level 1 or 2 (piDNMs) are
2 categorized into different functional types. The Y-axis corresponds to the proportion
3 of each kind of mutations within the total number of damaging piDNMs. The P
4 values were measured by two-sided binomial test. DNMs predicted in both cases and
5 controls are excluded in the comparison and the DNMs labeled as “unknown” are
6 not demonstrated in the bar plot.

7 **Figure 3.** Candidate genes selected by RBP-Var2 involved in six neuropsychiatric
8 disorders. (A) Scatter plot of 24 genes harboring recurrent piDNMs among 2,351
9 piDNMs. The Y-axis corresponds to the $-\log_{10}(\text{P value})$ calculated by TADA. The
10 X-axis stands for the TADA output of $-\log_{10}(\text{mutation rate})$. (B) Scatter plot of 312
11 recurrent genes among 1,923 candidate genes. The Y-axis corresponds to the $-\log_{10}(\text{P value})$ calculated by TADA. The X-axis stands for the TADA output of $-\log_{10}(\text{mutation rate})$. (C) Venn diagram representing the distribution of candidate genes shared among five neuropsychiatric disorders. (D) Permutation test for the validity of the overlap between the candidate genes involved in the five neuropsychiatric disorders. We shuffled the genes of each disorder and calculated the shared genes between the five disorders, repeating this procedure for 100,000 times to get the null distribution. The vertical dash line stands for the observed value corresponding to a P value of the permutation test.

20 **Figure 4.** Weighted co-expression analysis of 214 shared genes. (A) Heat map
21 visualization of the co-expression network of 214 shared genes. The more saturated
22 color corresponds to the highly expressed genes. (B) Hierarchical clustering
23 dendrogram of the two color-coded gene modules displayed in (A). (C, D) The two
24 spatiotemporal expression patterns (Turquoise module and Blue module) for
25 network genes based on RNA-seq data from BrainSpan, and corresponding to 17
26 developmental stages across 16 subregions. (E, F) Characterization of neocortical

1 expression profiles (Turquoise module and Blue module) for 214 piDNM-related
2 genes. Four subregions of the developing neocortex, delineating nine layers per
3 subregion, were analyzed. A1C, primary auditory cortex; AMY, amygdaloid
4 complex; CPo, outer cortical plate; CPi, inner cortical plate; DFC, dorsolateral
5 prefrontal cortex; HIP, hippocampus; IPC, posteroinferior parietal cortex; ITC,
6 inferolateral temporal cortex; M1C, primary motor cortex; MD, mediodorsal nucleus
7 of thalamus; MFC, anterior cingulate cortex; MZ, marginal zone; OFC, orbital
8 frontal cortex; STC, posterior superior temporal cortex; SG, subpial granular zone;
9 SP, subplate zone; IZ, subplate zone; STR, striatum; SZo, outer subventricular zone;
10 SZi, inner subventricular zone; S1C, primary somatosensory cortex; V1C, primary
11 visual cortex; VFC, ventrolateral prefrontal cortex; VZ, ventricular zone.

12 **Figure 5.** Protein-protein interaction network analysis. (A) The network of
13 interactions between pairs of proteins of 128 out 214 shared genes. (B) Heat map
14 showing significantly differential expression of 97 out of 128 genes involved in the
15 protein-protein interaction network.

16 **Figure 6.** Interaction network of RBPs and genes with piDNMs. Different roles of
17 the nodes are reflected by distinguishable geometric shapes and colors. The magenta
18 vertical arrow stands for the RNA binding proteins. Disks with different colors
19 represent the genes with piDNMs involved in different kinds of disorders.

20 **Supplementary Figure 1.** Excess of piDNMs in probands. The distinction of
21 synonymous mutations and mutations in UTRs were analyzed in DNMs and
22 piDNMs between probands and healthy controls. Overall moderate piDNMs and
23 piDNMs (LoF mutations not included) were also displayed. P values were calculated
24 assuming a binomial distribution.

1 **Supplementary Figure 2.** ROC curve showing the performance of the predictions
2 of SIFT, PPH2, RBP-Var2 and RegulomeDB.

3 **Supplementary Figure 3.** Overlap of DNMs identified by different tools. (A) Venn
4 diagram depicting the overlap between the DNMs predicted by SIFT, PPH2, RBP-
5 Var2 and RegulomeDB. (B) Venn diagram depicting the overlap between the genes
6 predicted by SIFT, PPH2, RBP-Var2 and RegulomeDB. (C) The pie chart shows the
7 distribution of all non-LoF piDNMs. The non-LoF piDNMs detected by RBP-Var2
8 alone account for 52% in this distribution (light red), while the non-LoF piDNMs
9 identified by SIFT and Polyphen2 both take up 27.6% of all (dark moderate blue).
10 (D) Pathway enrichment analysis of the 841 genes unique to the prediction of RBP-
11 Var2.

12 **Supplementary Figure 4.** Test of the significance of the genes shared between each
13 pair of the five disorders. (A-G) Permutation test for the validity of the gene overlap
14 between each pair of the five disorders. We shuffled the genes of each disorder and
15 calculated the shared genes between each pair, repeating this procedure for 100,000
16 times to get the null distribution. The vertical dash line stands for the observed value
17 corresponding to a P value of the permutation test.

18 **Supplementary Figure 5.** Test of the significance of the 214 candidate genes
19 involved in the five neuropsychiatric disorders. (A-E) Permutation test for the
20 validity of the gene overlap between each disorder and the normal control. (F)
21 Permutation test for the validity of the gene overlap between the 214 shared genes
22 and the normal control.

23 **Supplementary Figure 6.** Pie chart of the pathway enrichment analysis for the 214
24 shared genes.

1 **Supplementary Figure 7.** Interaction network of the gene enrichment analysis for
2 the 214 shared genes.

3 **Supplementary Figure 8.** Relationship between Co-expression modules. (A) MDS
4 plot of genes in turquoise module and blue module. (B) Relationship between
5 module eigengenes. (C) Clustering tree based of the module eigengenes. (D)
6 heatmap of adjacency Eigengene.

7 **Supplementary Figure 9.** The two developmental expression patterns (Turquoise
8 module and Blue module) for network genes based on RNA-seq data from
9 EpiDenovo.

10 **Supplementary Figure 10.** The co-expression network of 206 out of the 214 shared
11 genes. Different size of the node is representative of the number of connections
12 between the gene and others.

13 **Supplementary Figure 11.** Pie chart showing the enrichment analysis of the genes
14 clustered in the turquoise module from the weighted co-expression analysis.

15 **Supplementary Figure 12.** Pie chart showing the enrichment analysis of the genes
16 clustered in the blue module from the weighted co-expression analysis.

17 **Supplementary Figure 13.** Mammalian phenotype enrichment analysis of selected
18 genes. (A) Mammalian phenotype enrichment of 214 cross-disorder piDNMs genes.
19 (B) Mammalian phenotype enrichment of 128 genes in interaction network.

20 **Supplementary Figure 14.** Heat map of the expression of the crucial RBP hub genes
21 during the early fetal development stages.

22

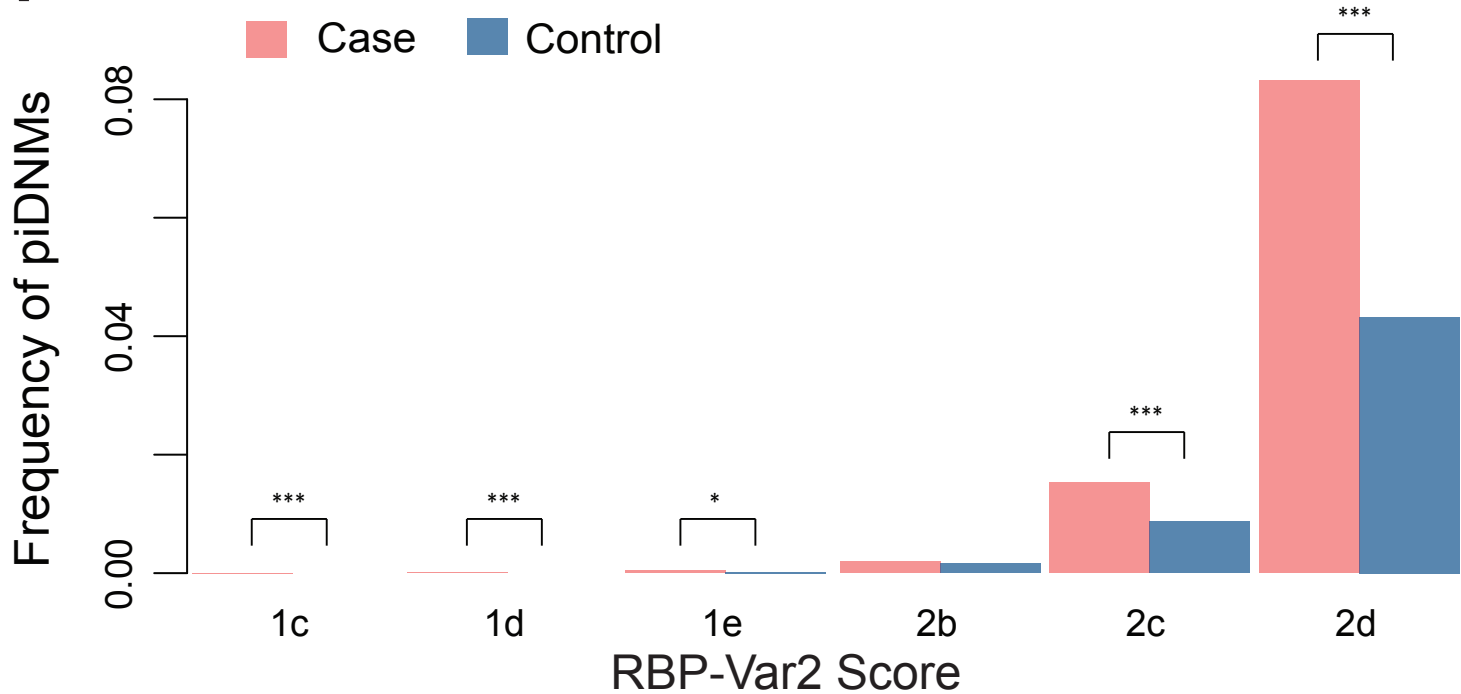
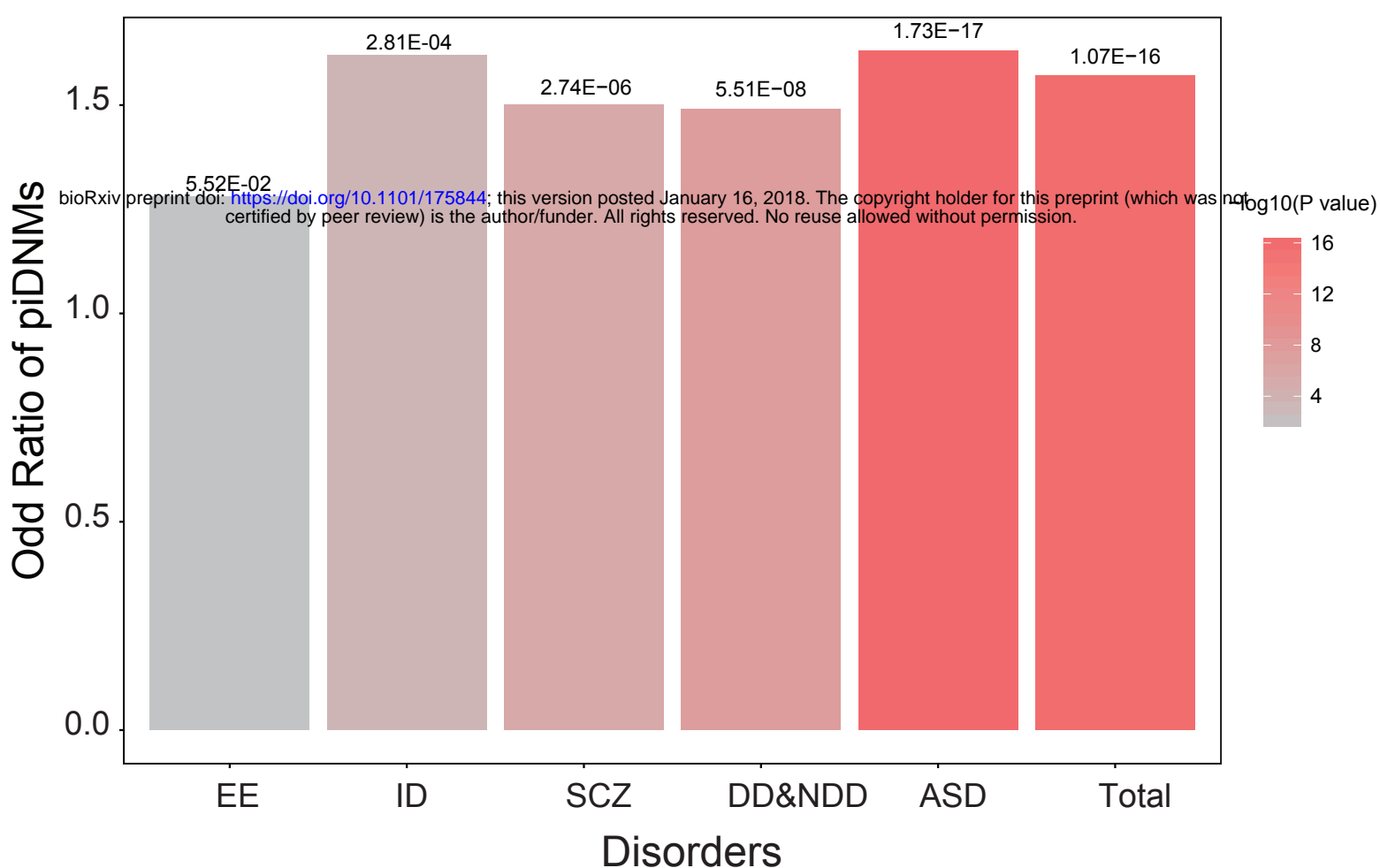
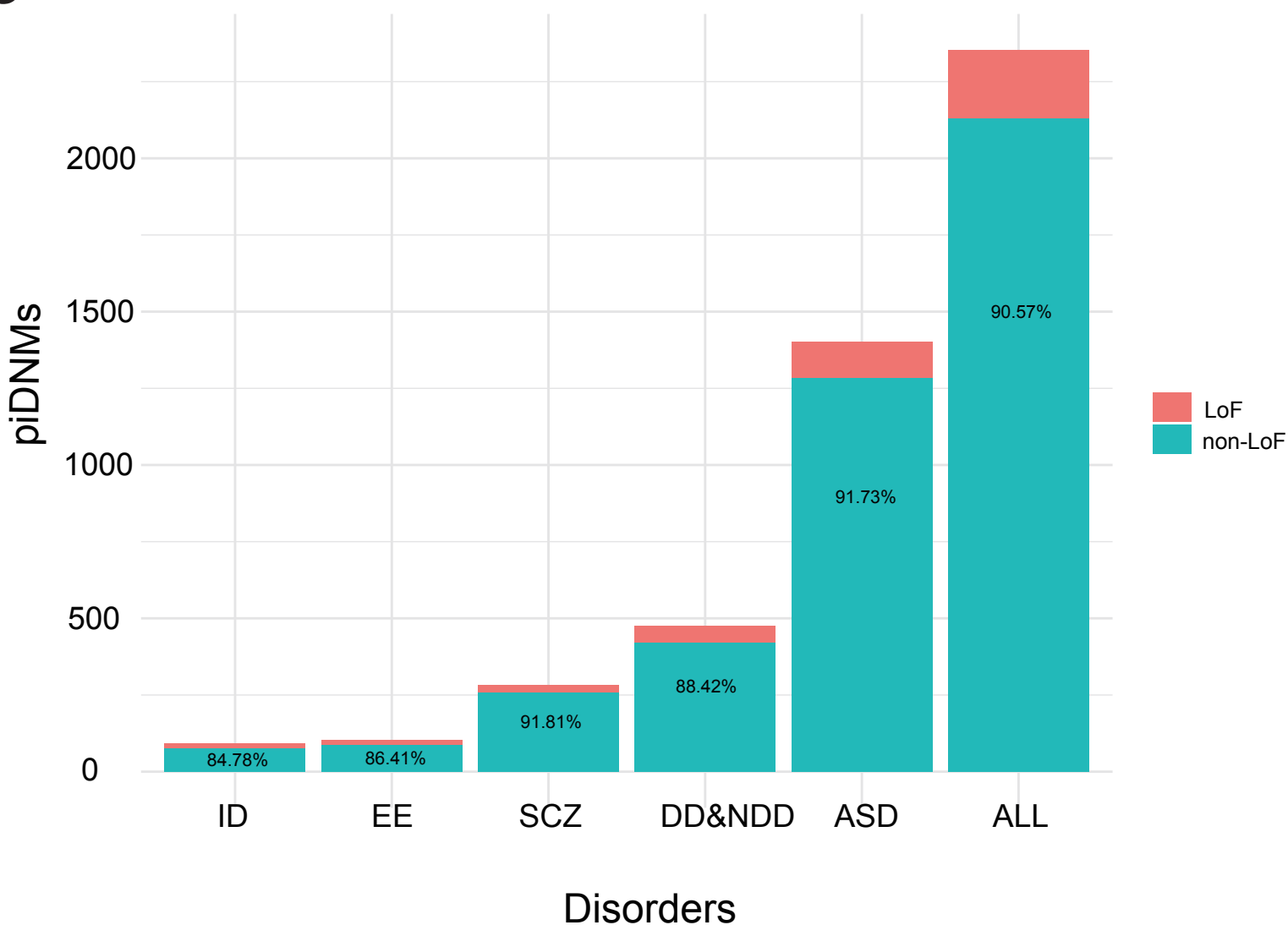
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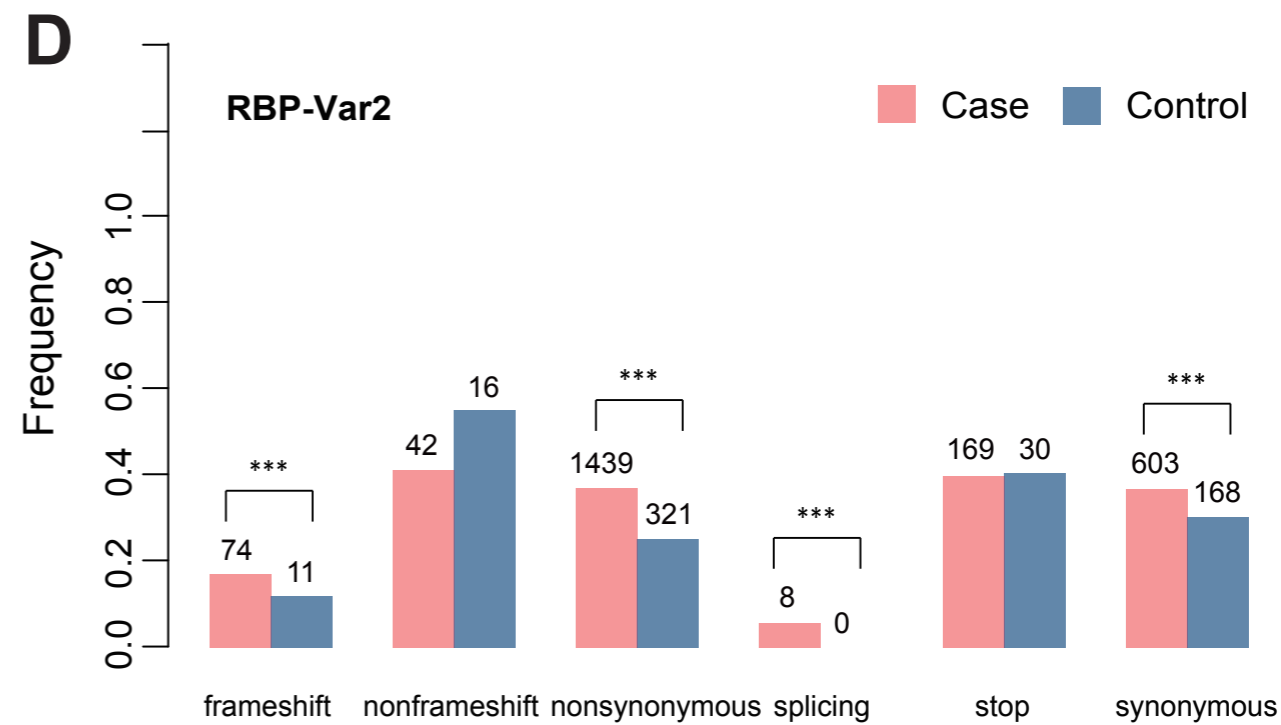
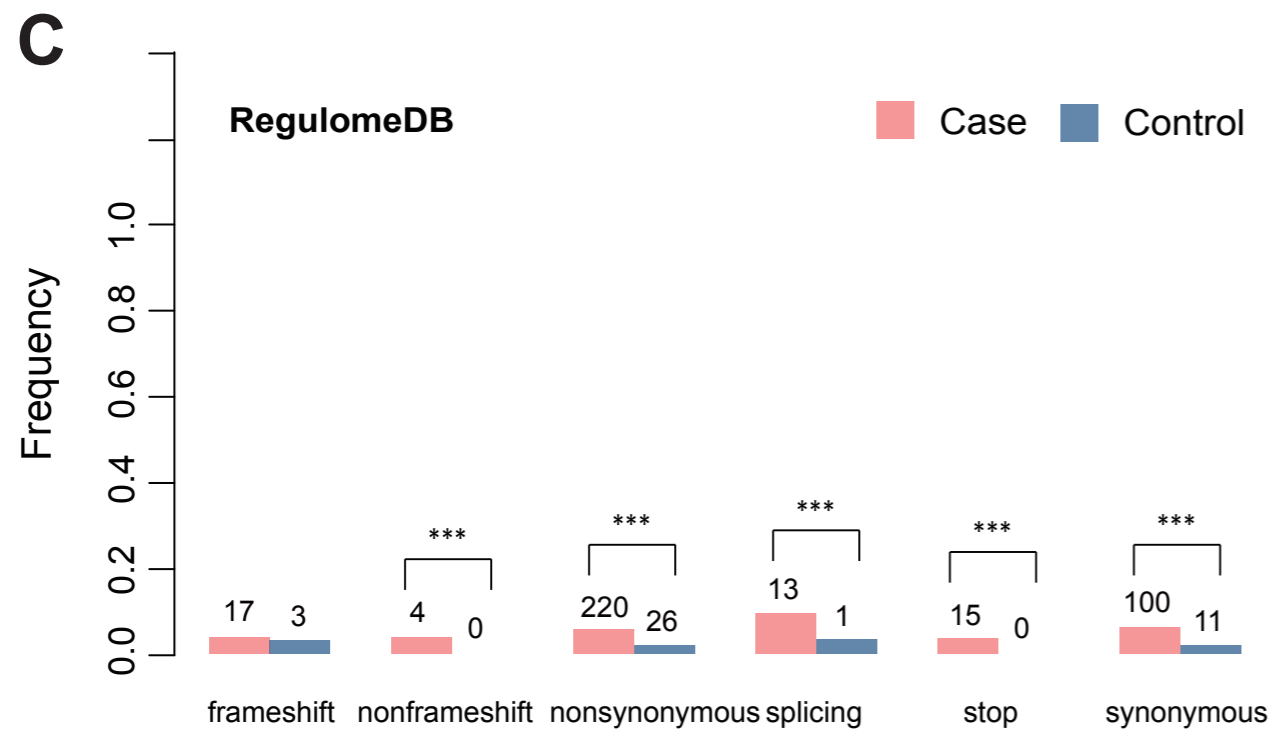
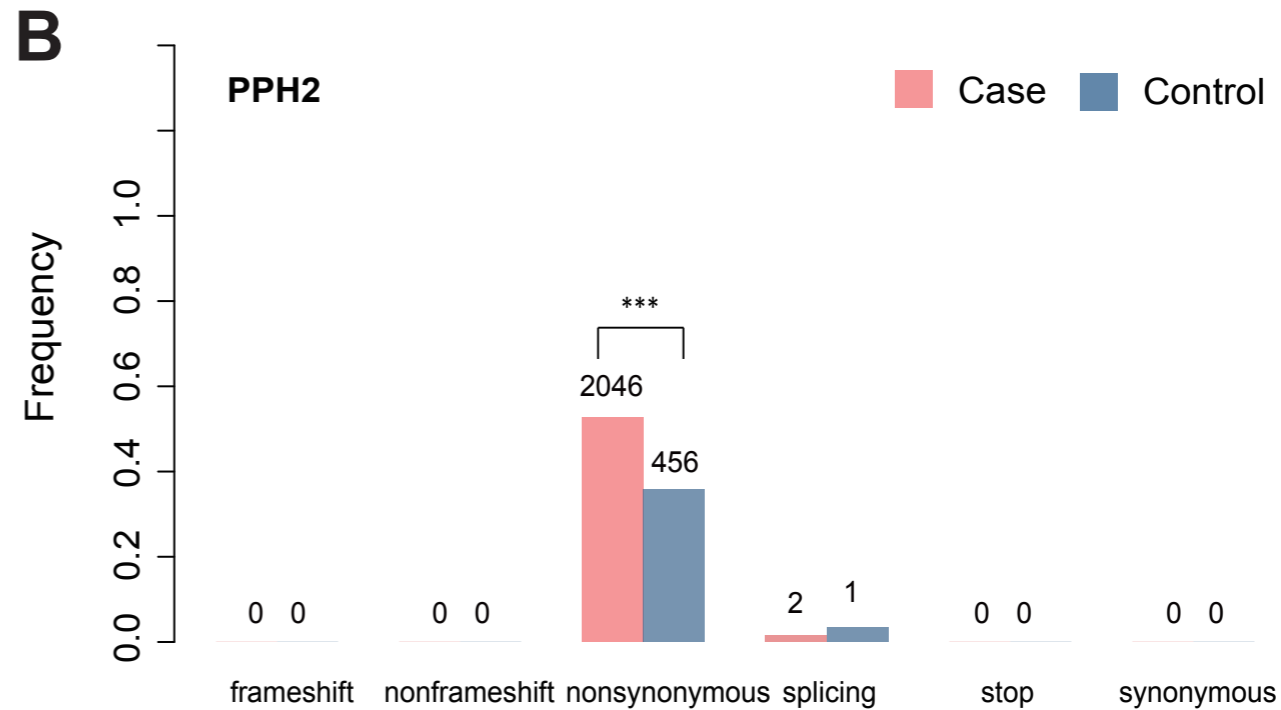
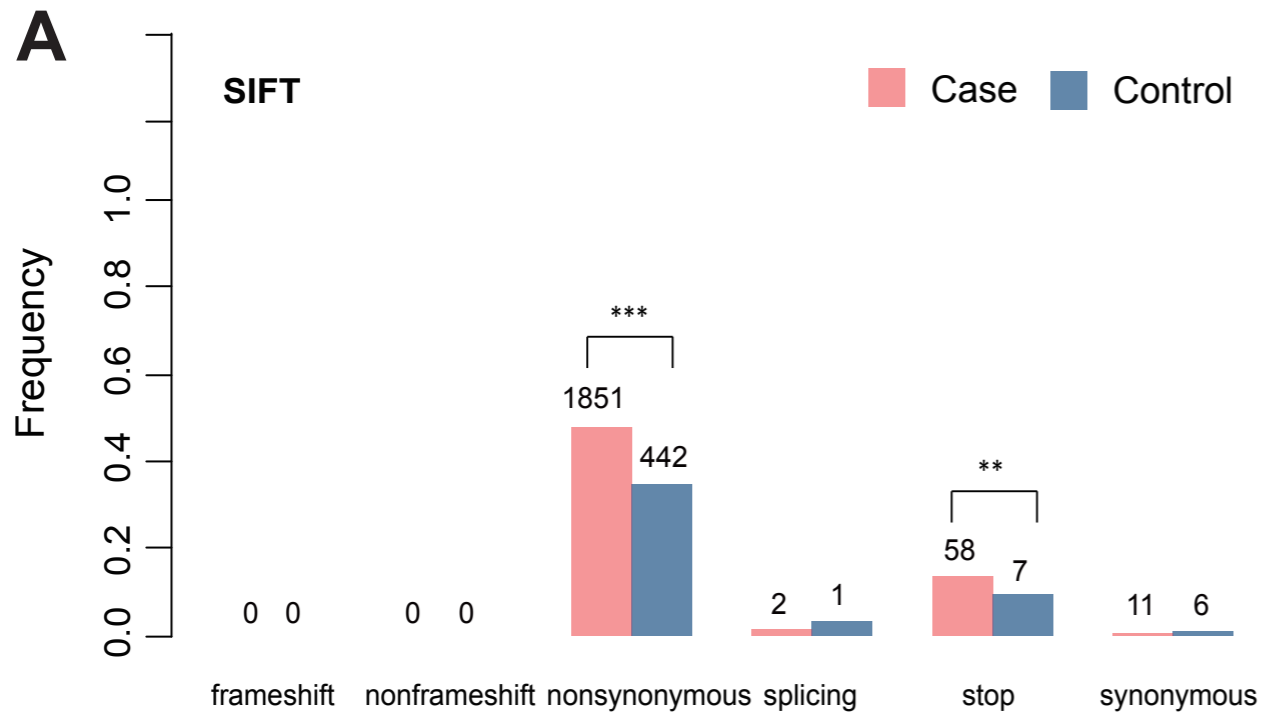
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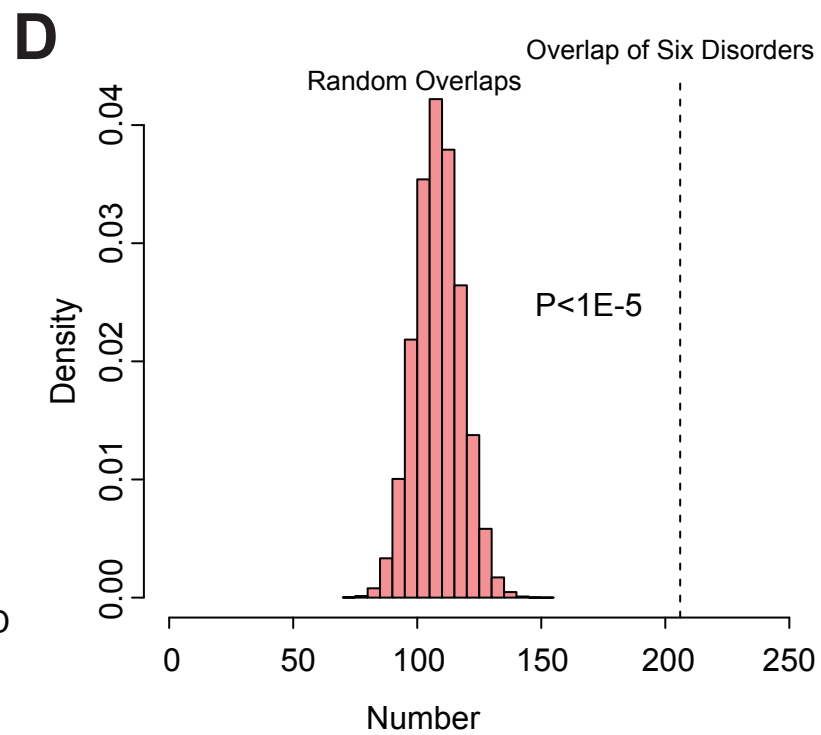
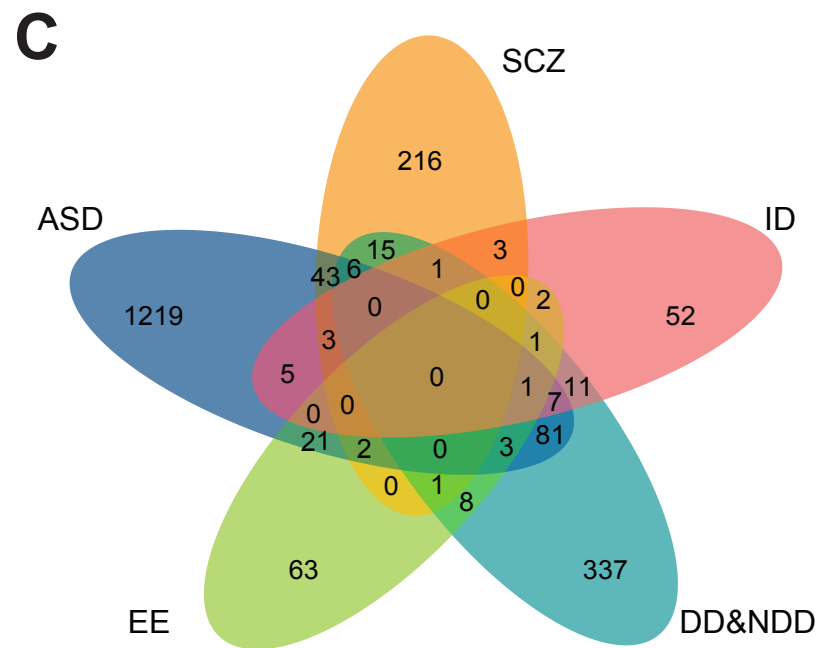
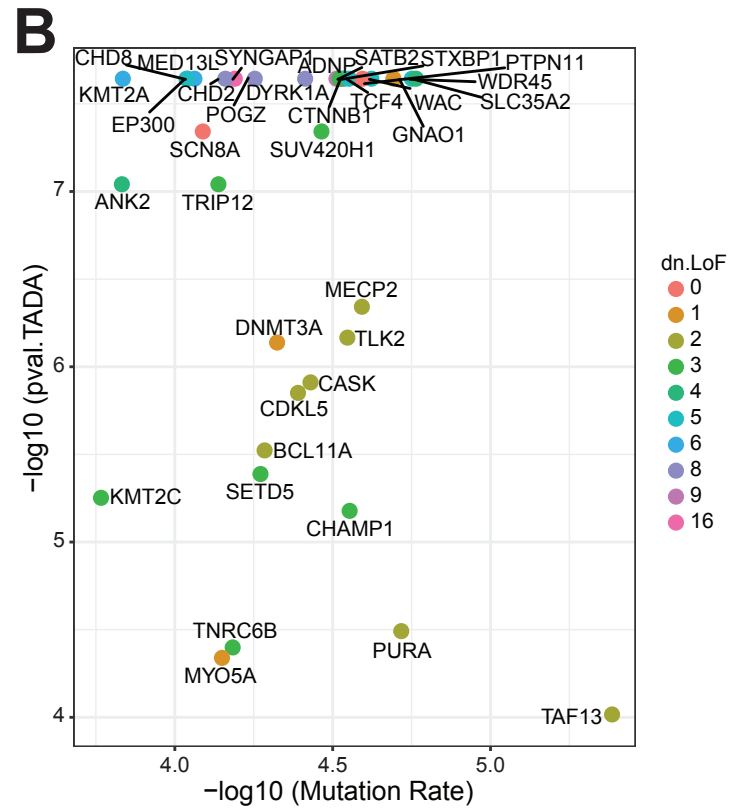
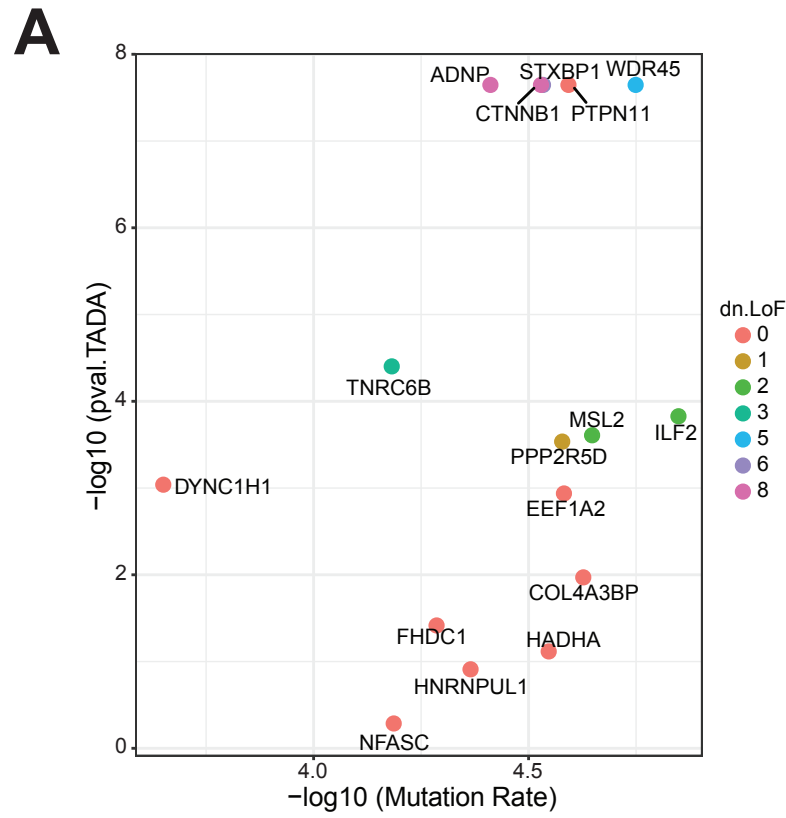
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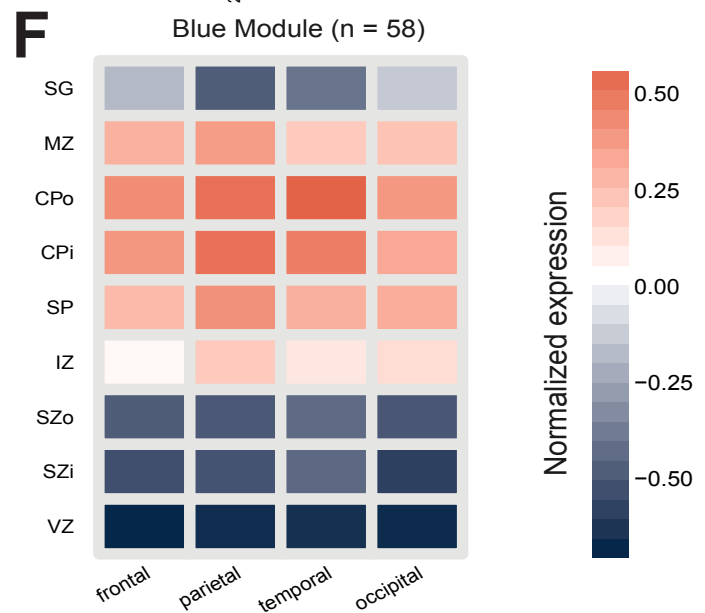
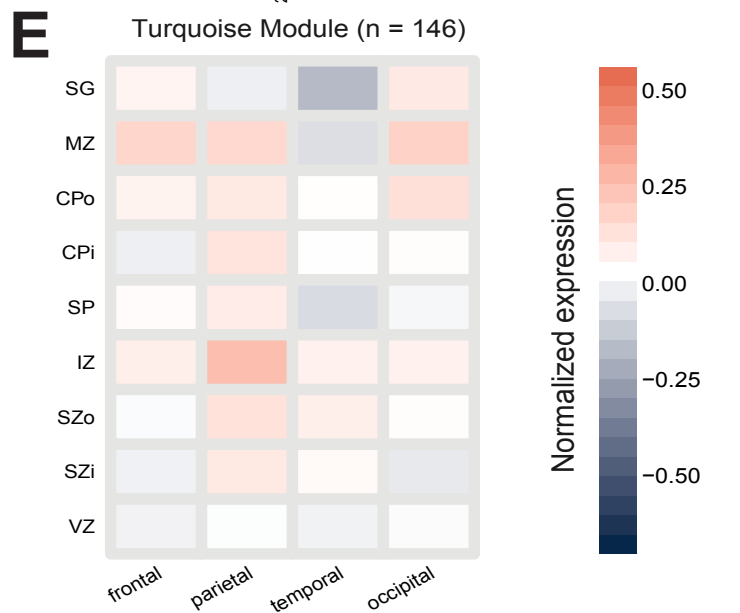
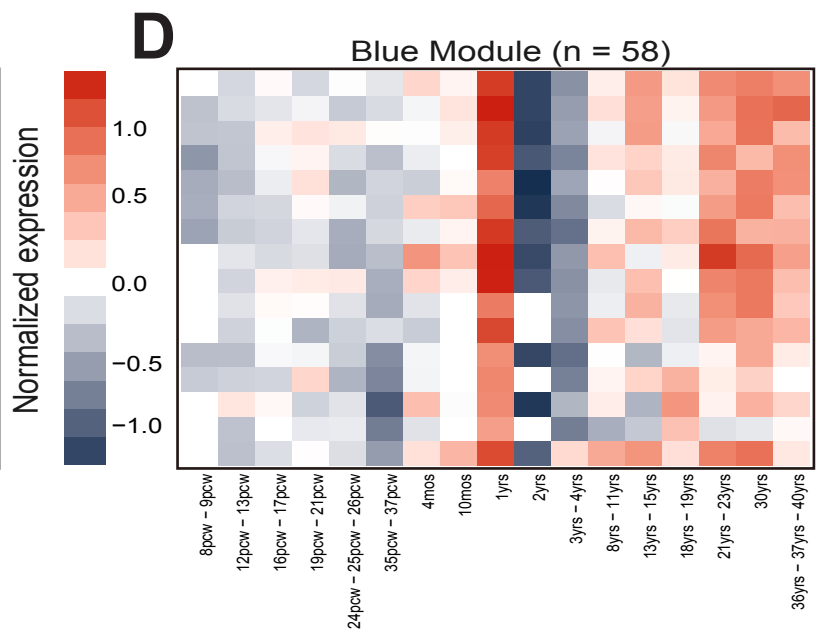
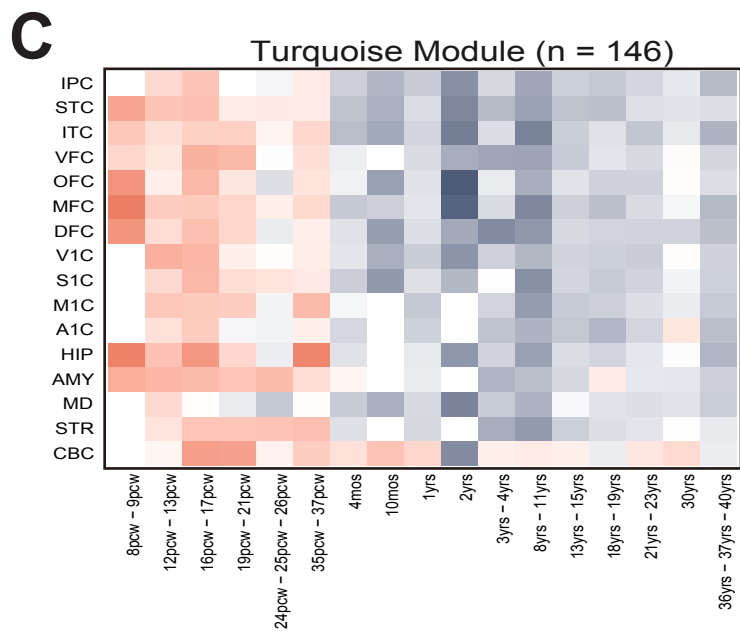
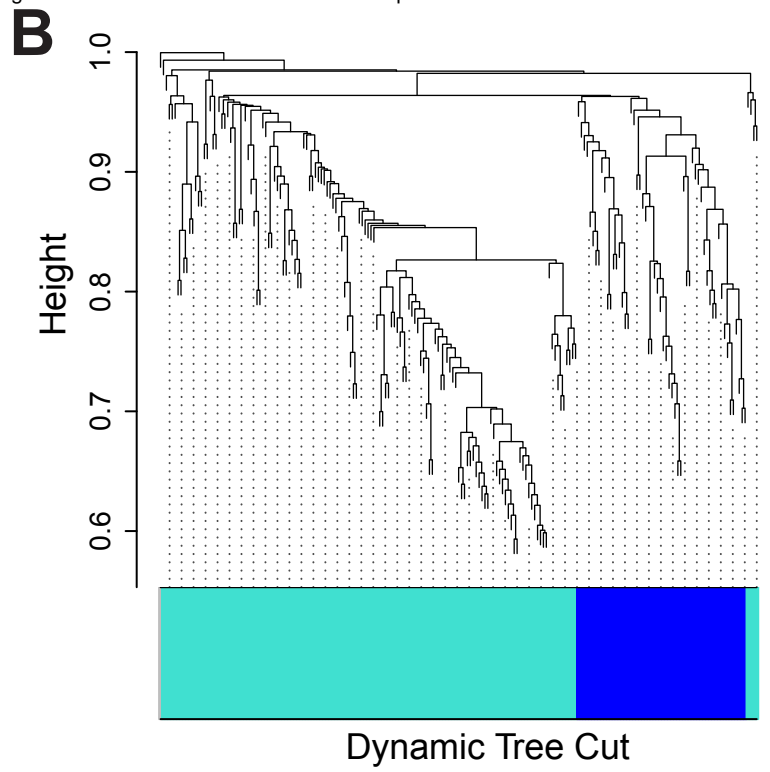
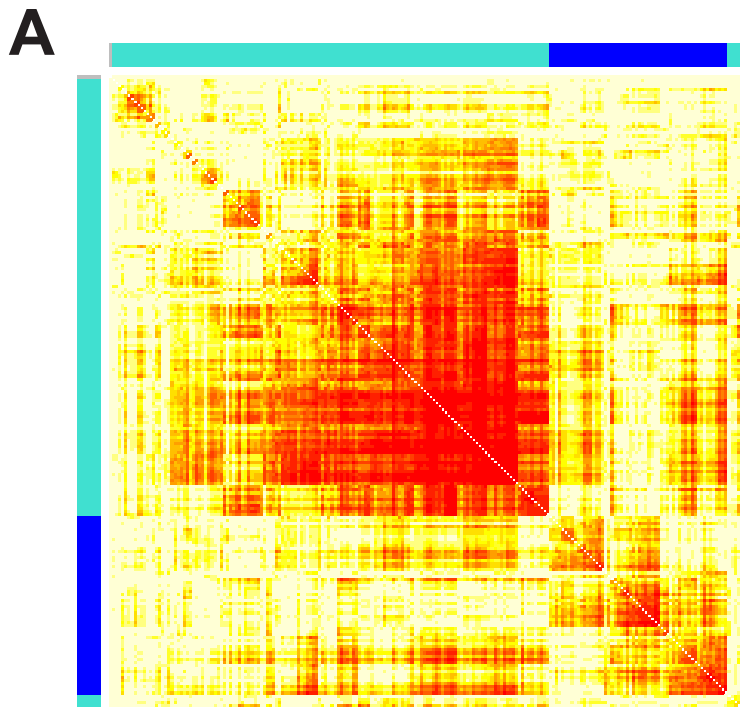
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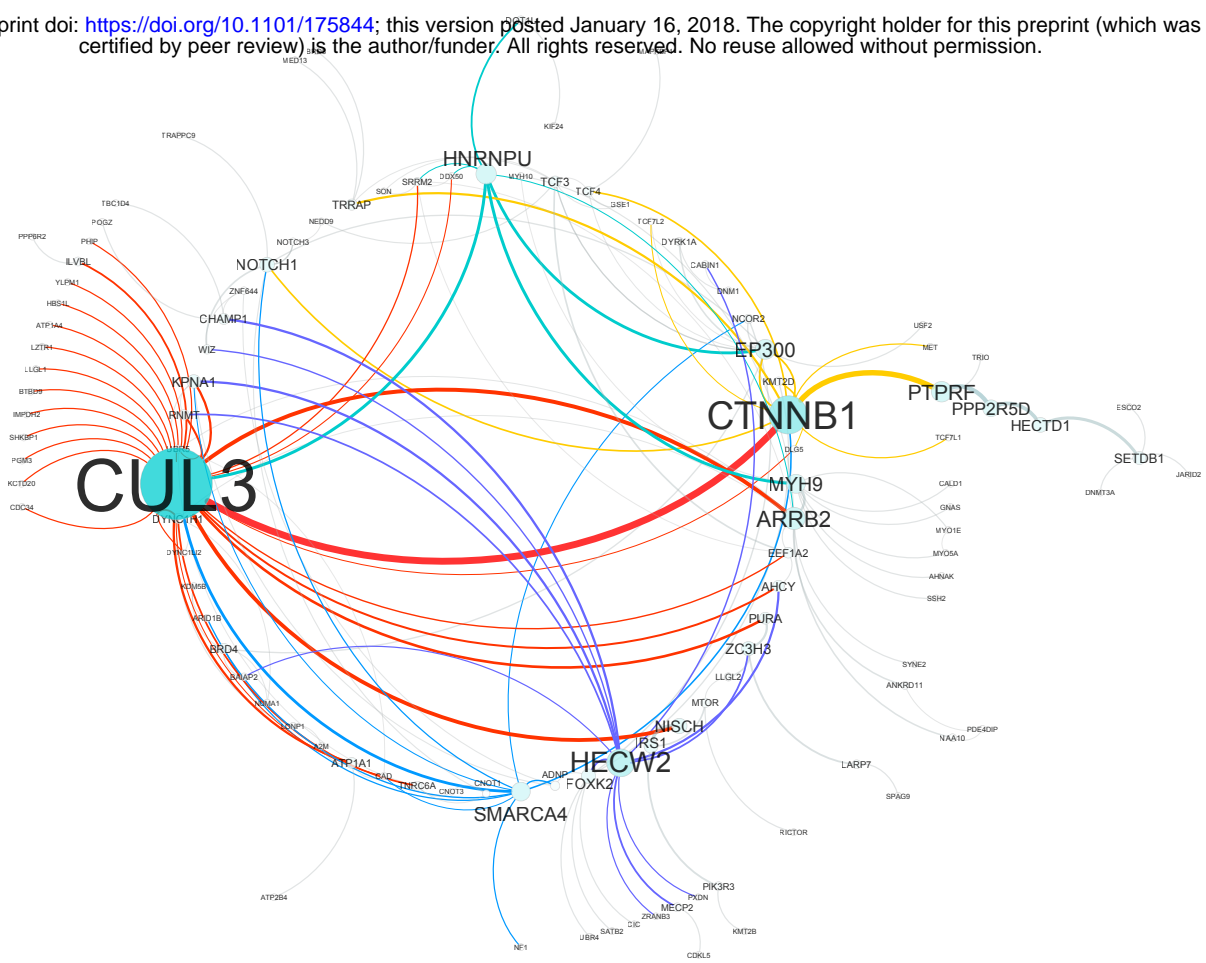
A**B****C**



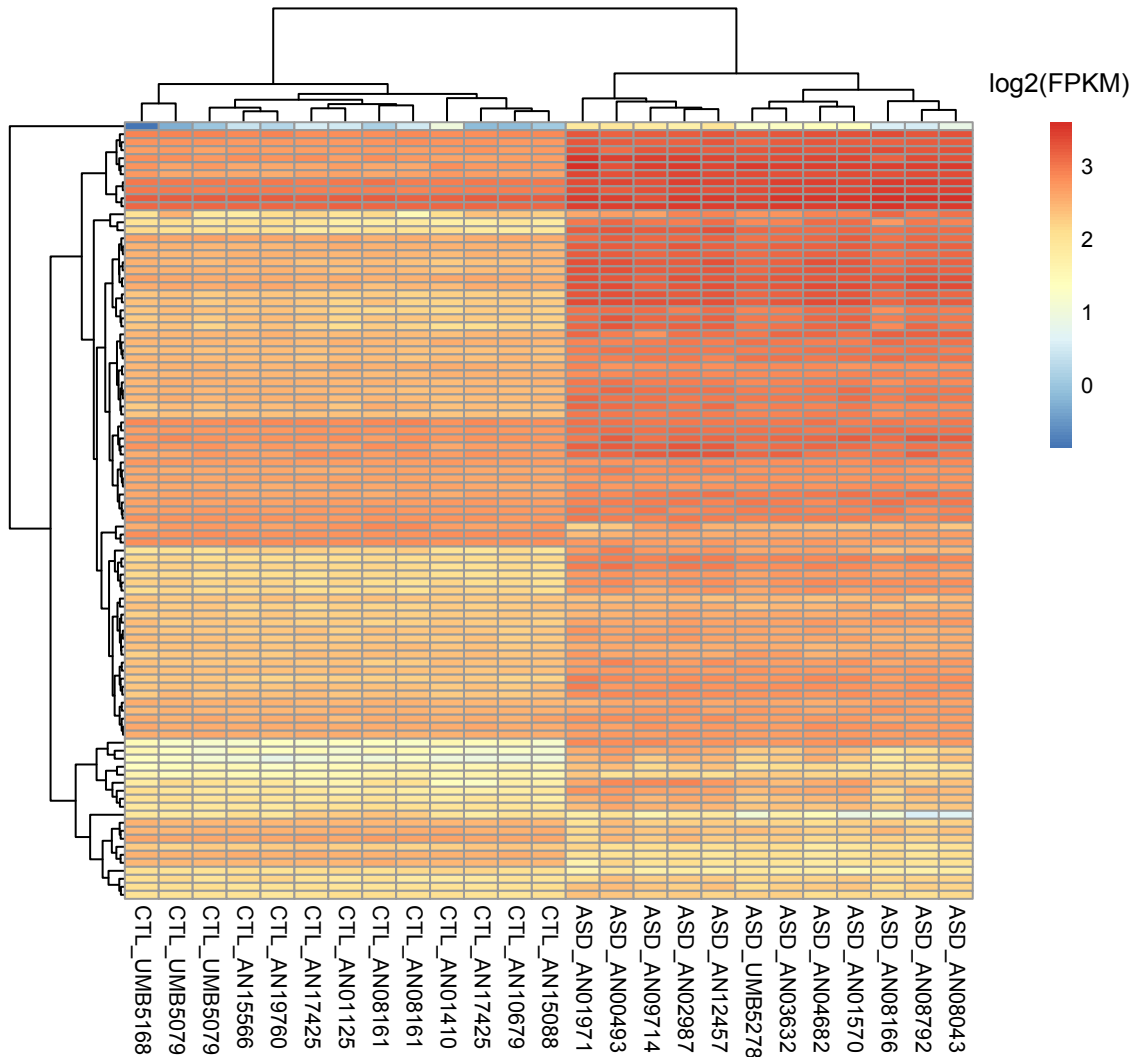


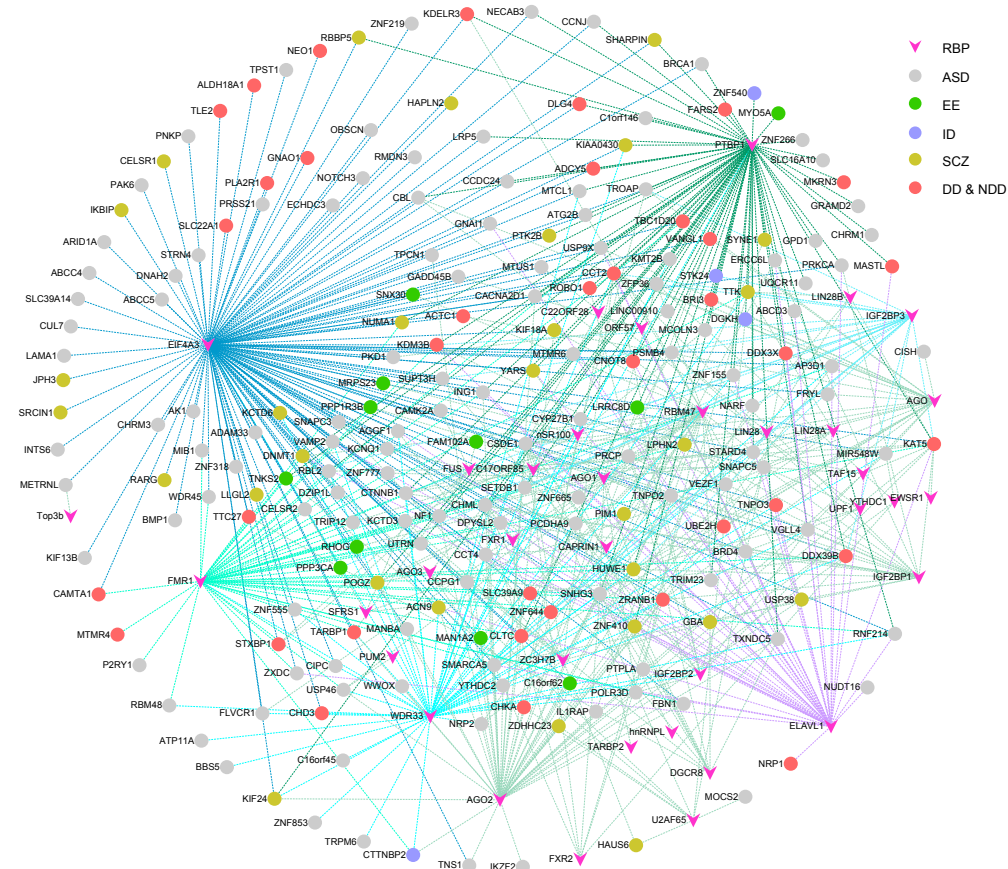


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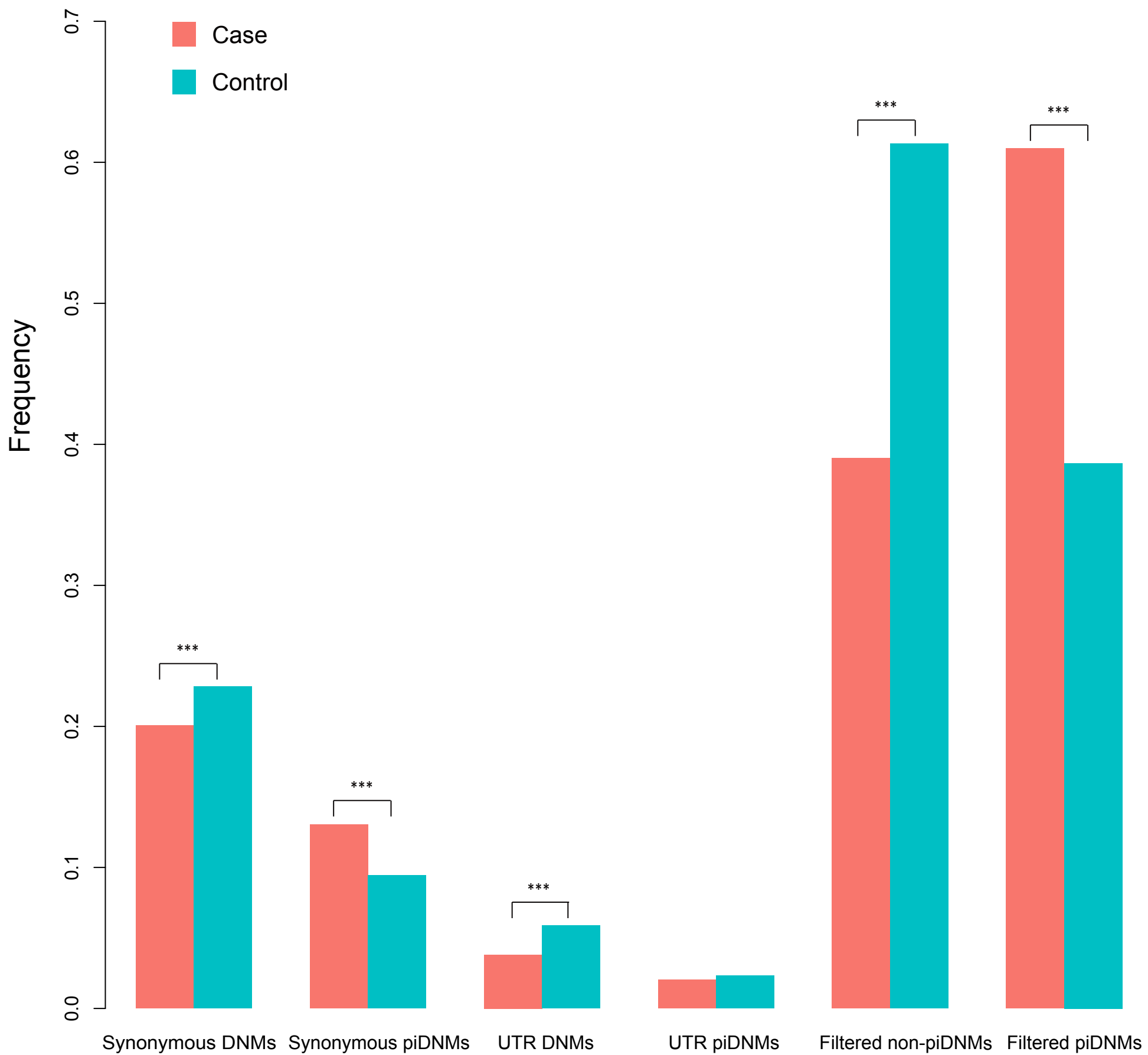


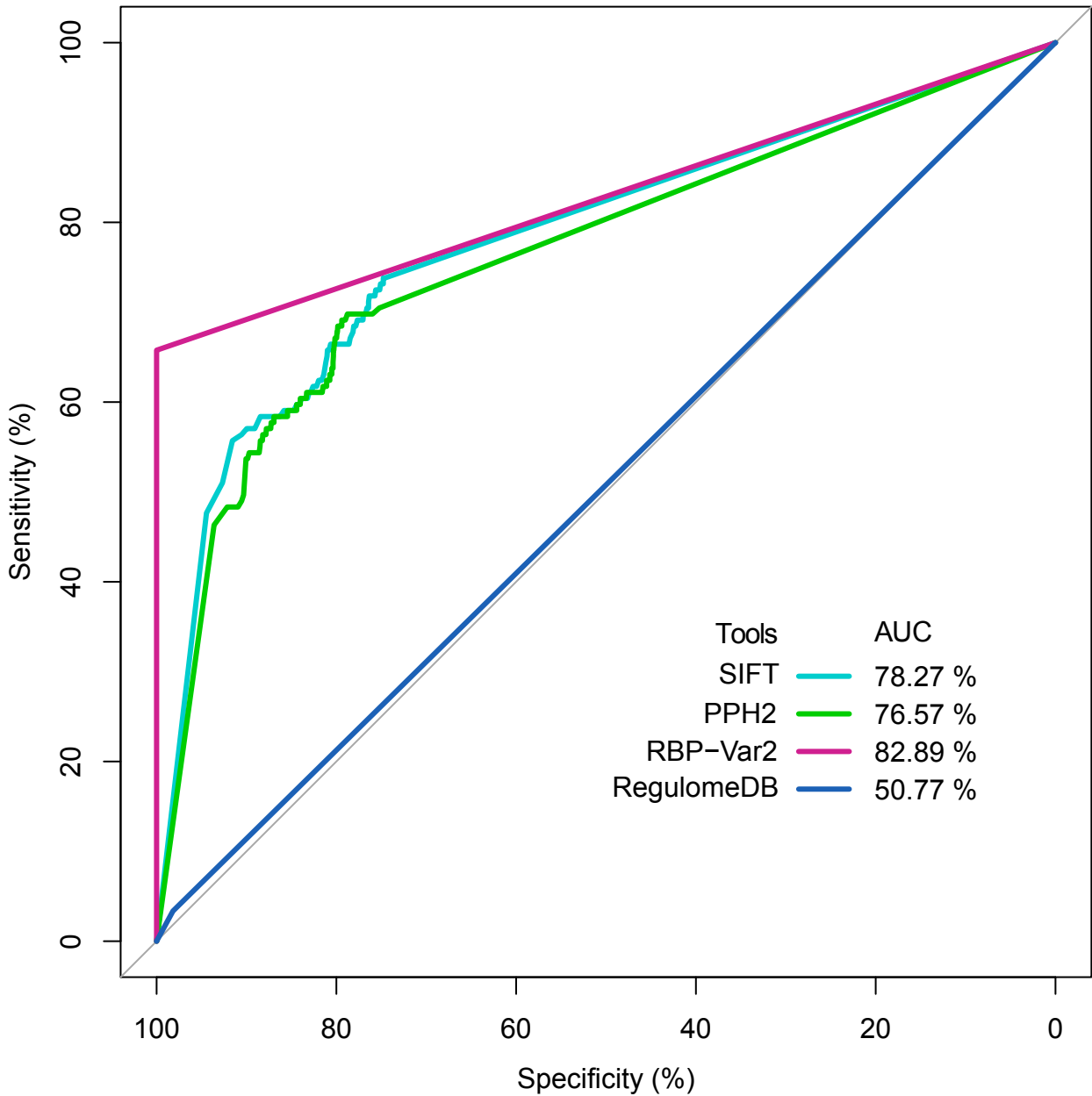
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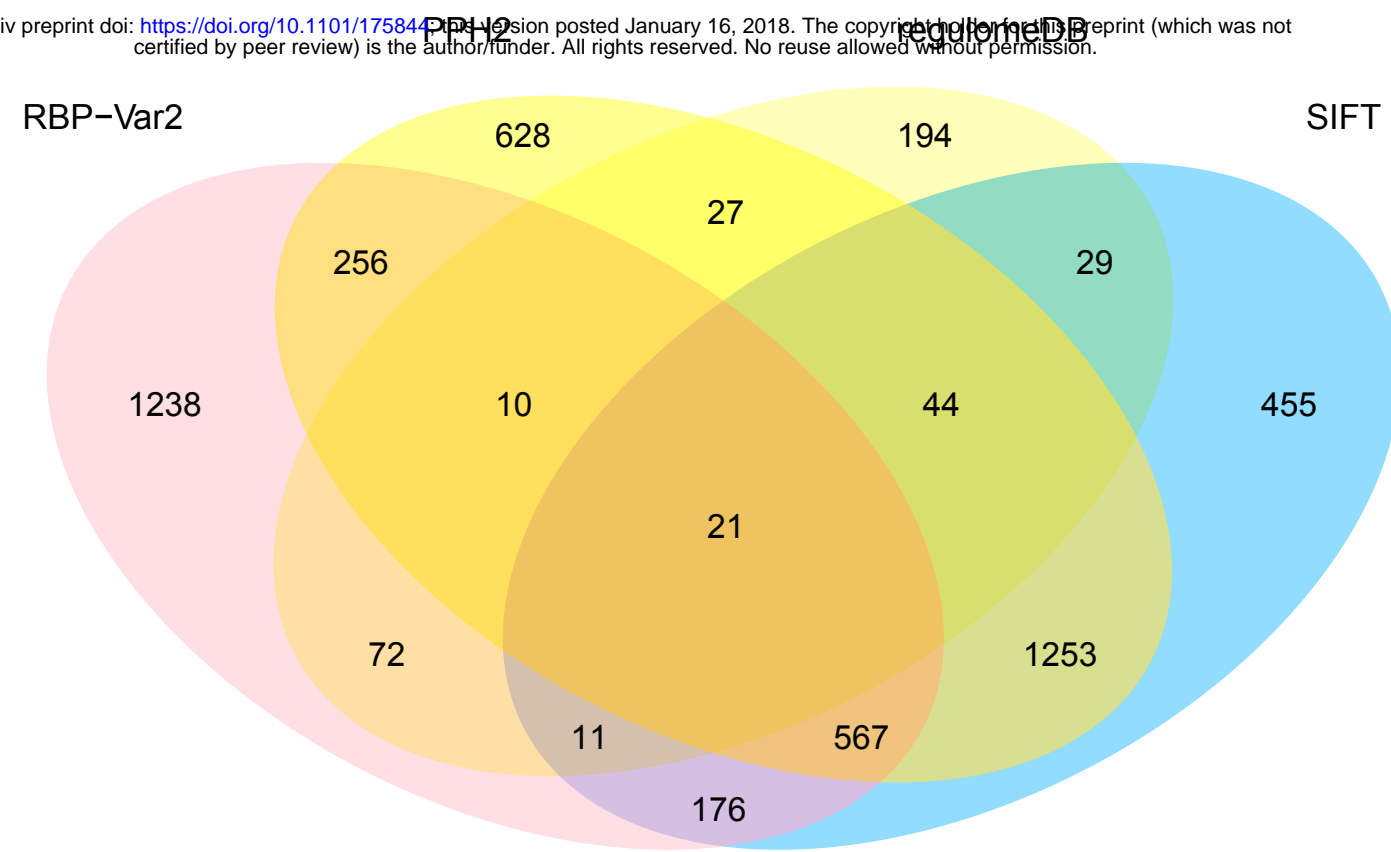
- ▼ RBP
- ASD
- EE
- ID
- SCZ
- DD & NDD



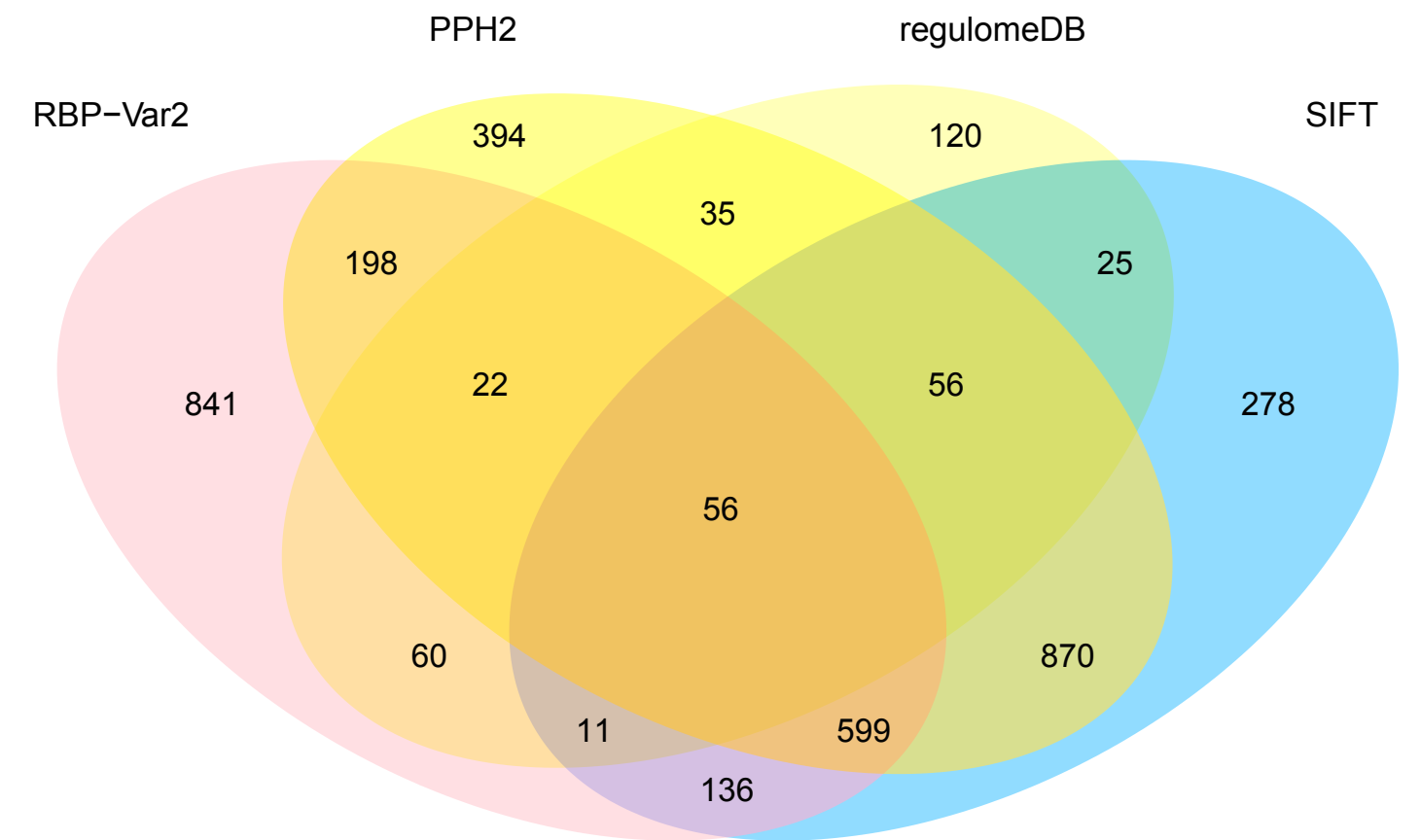


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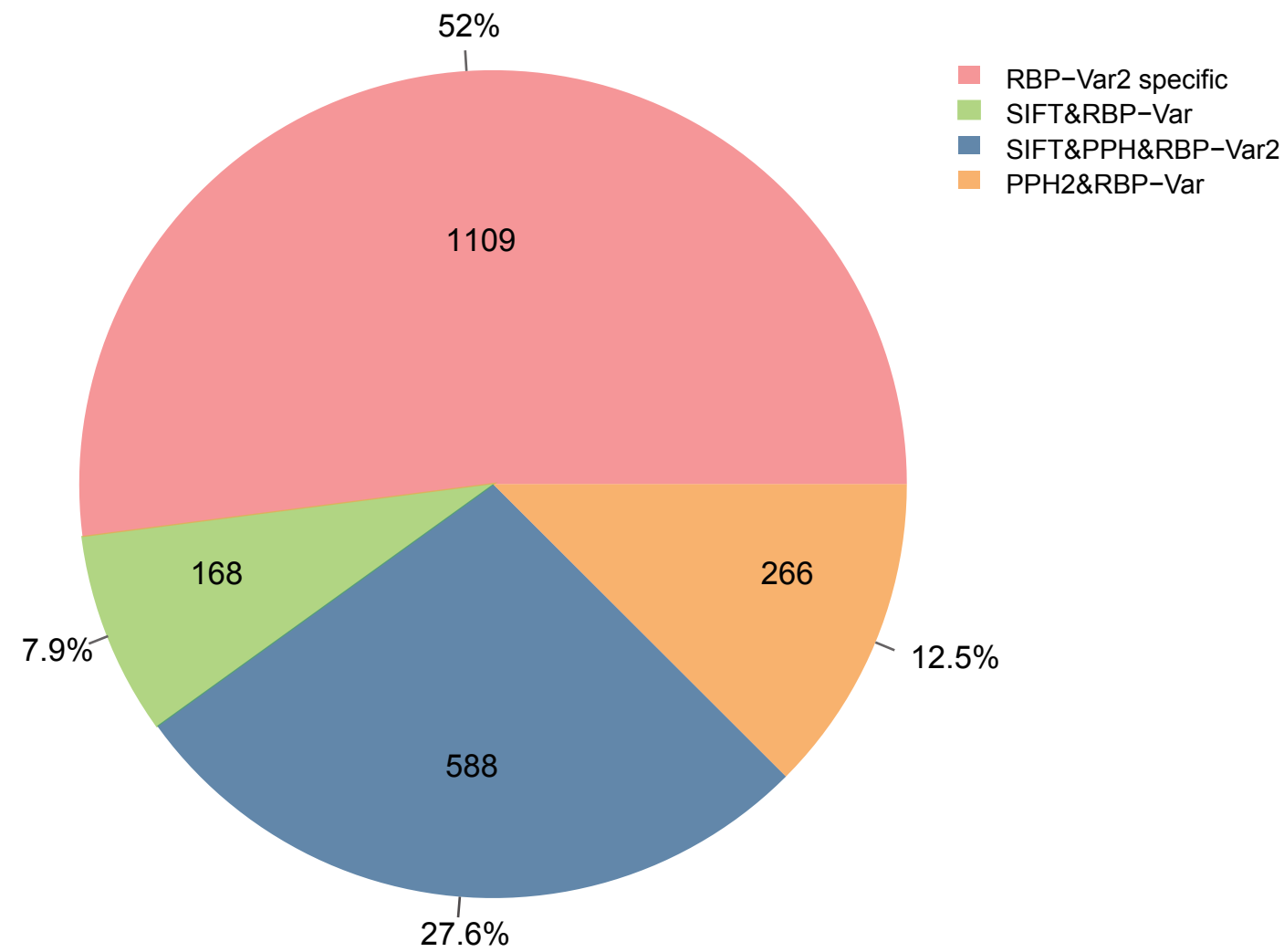
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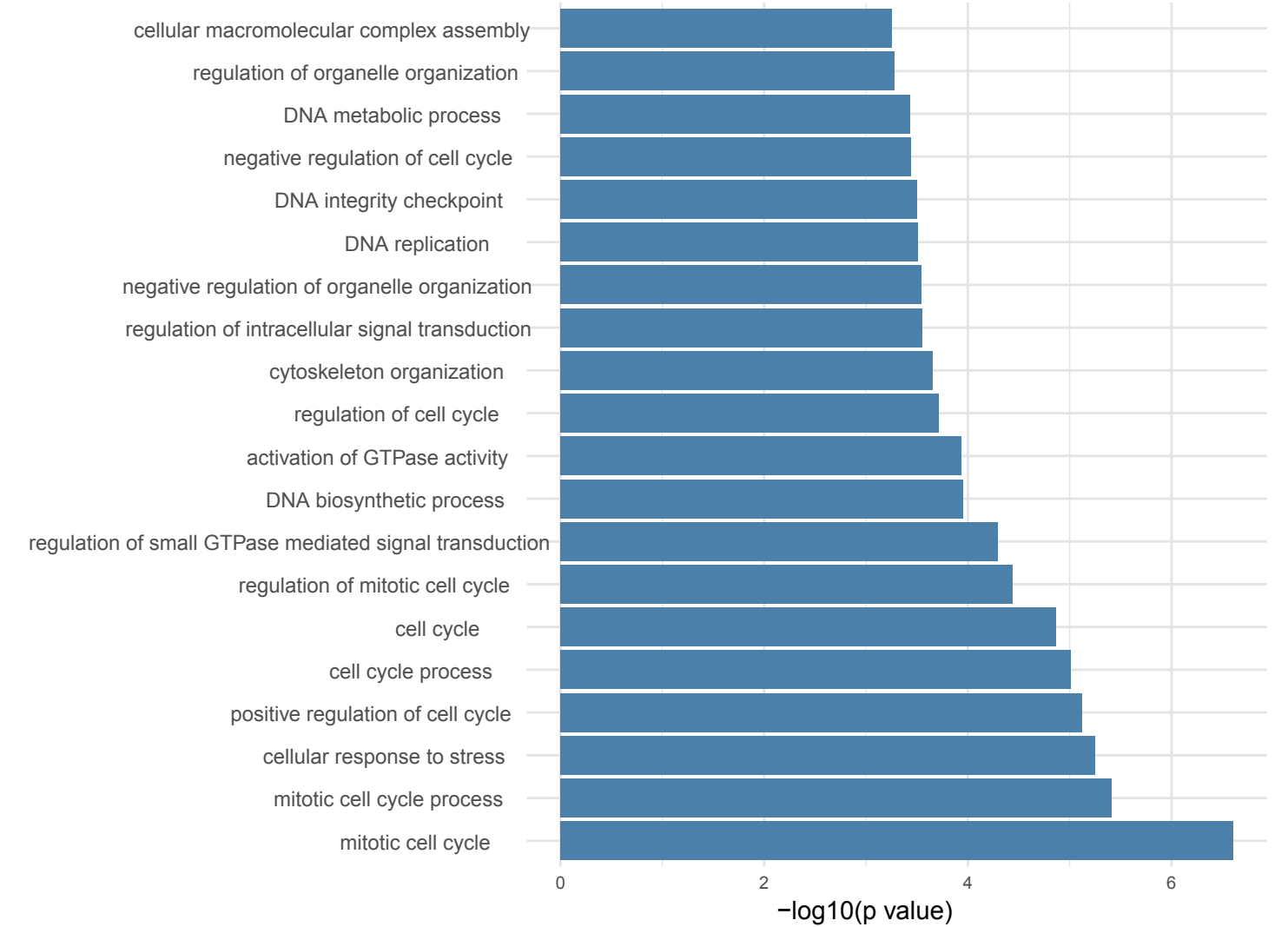
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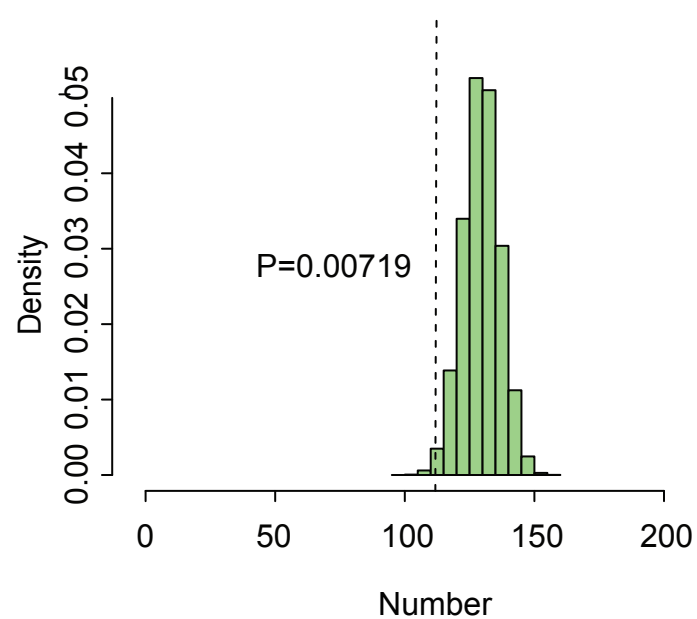
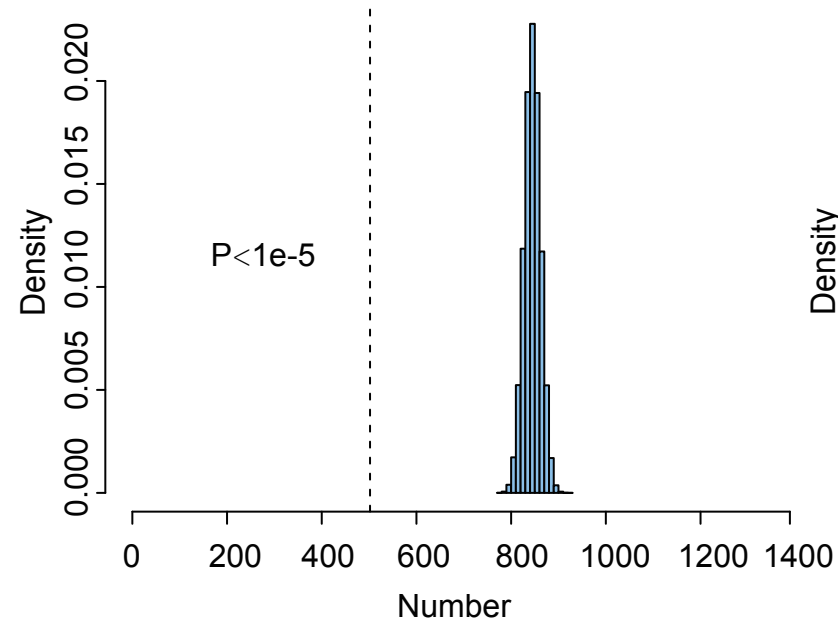
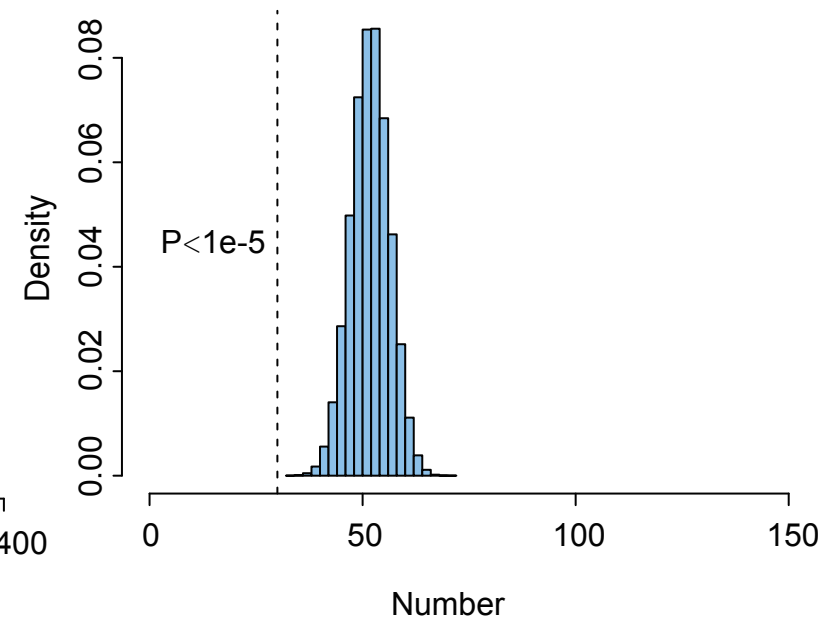
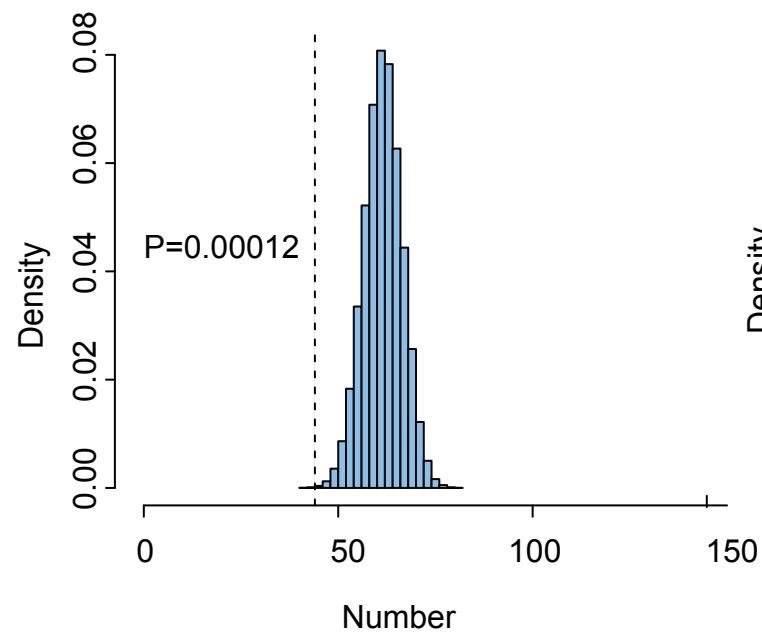
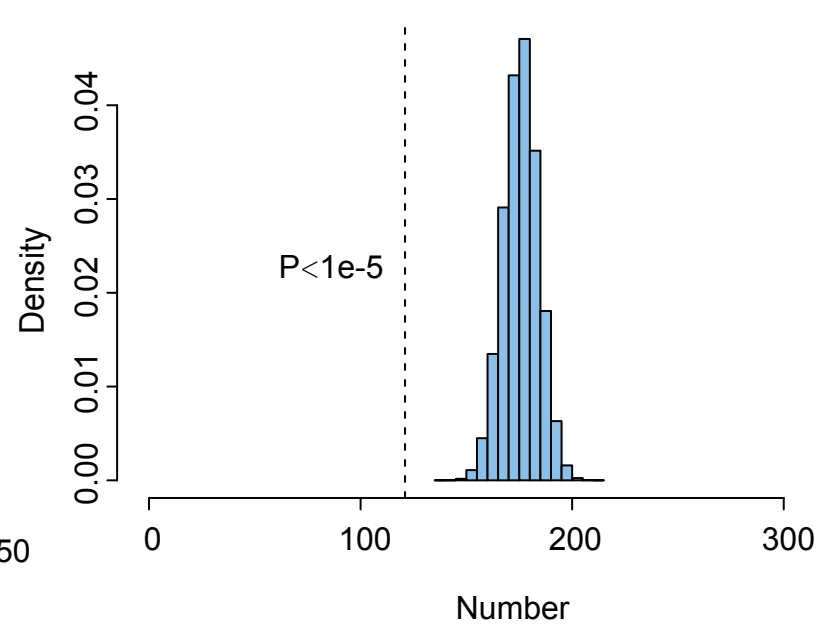
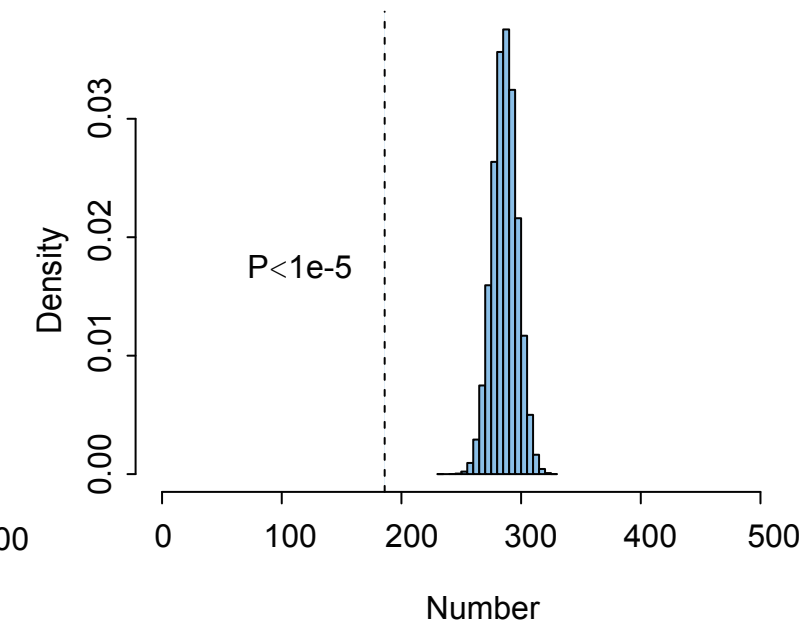


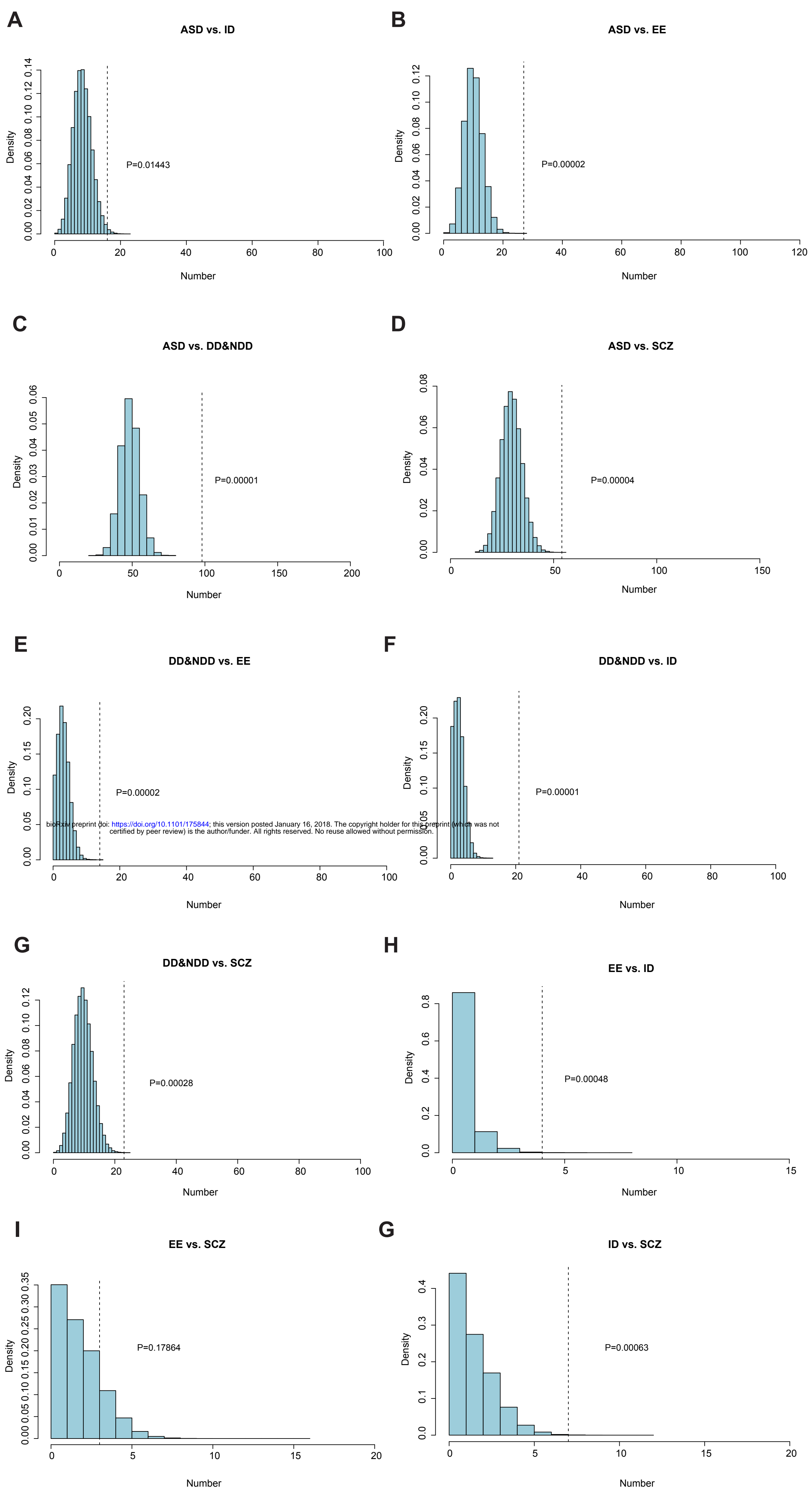
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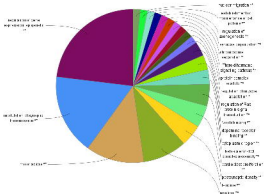


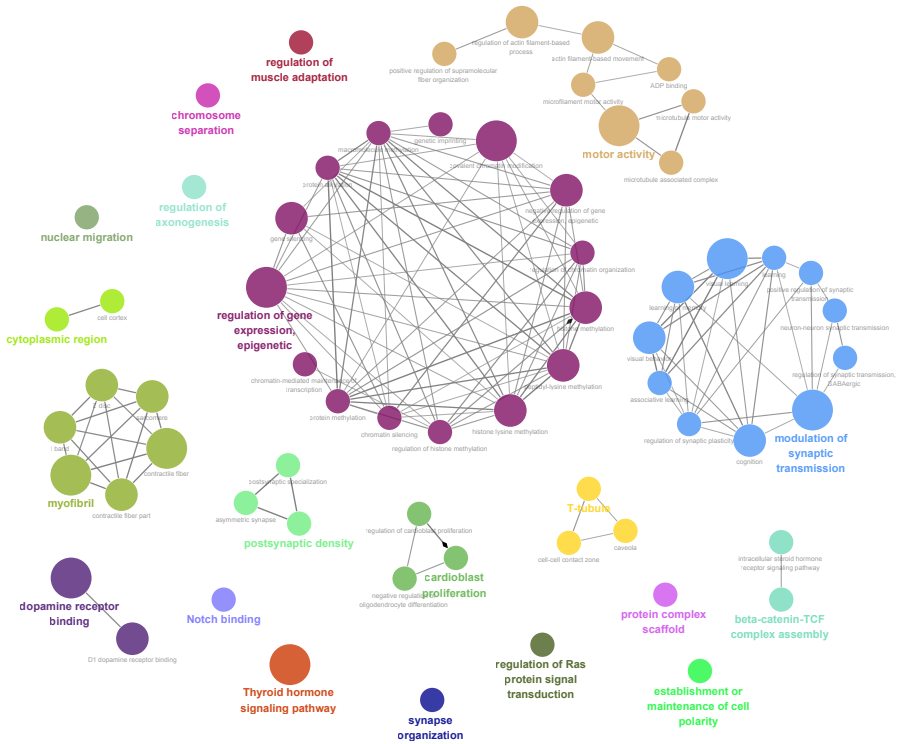
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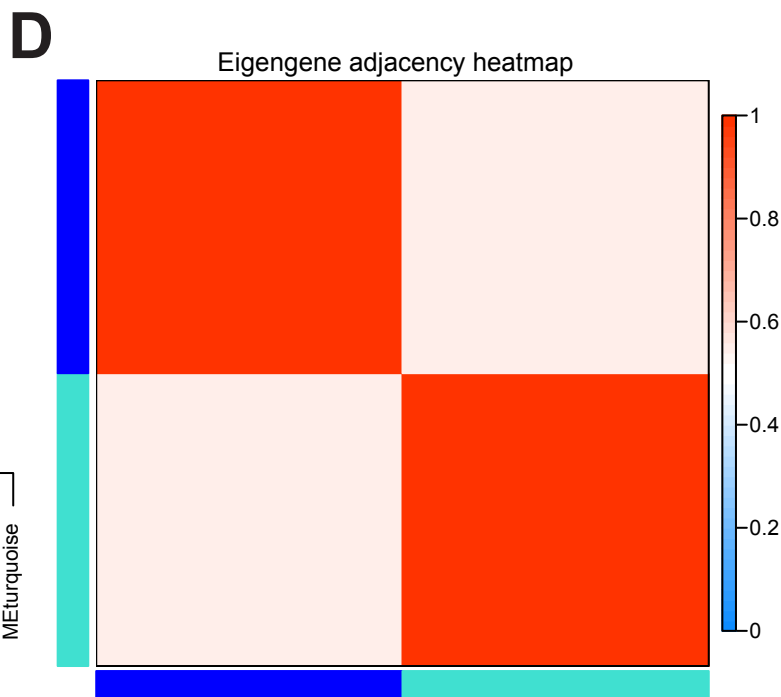
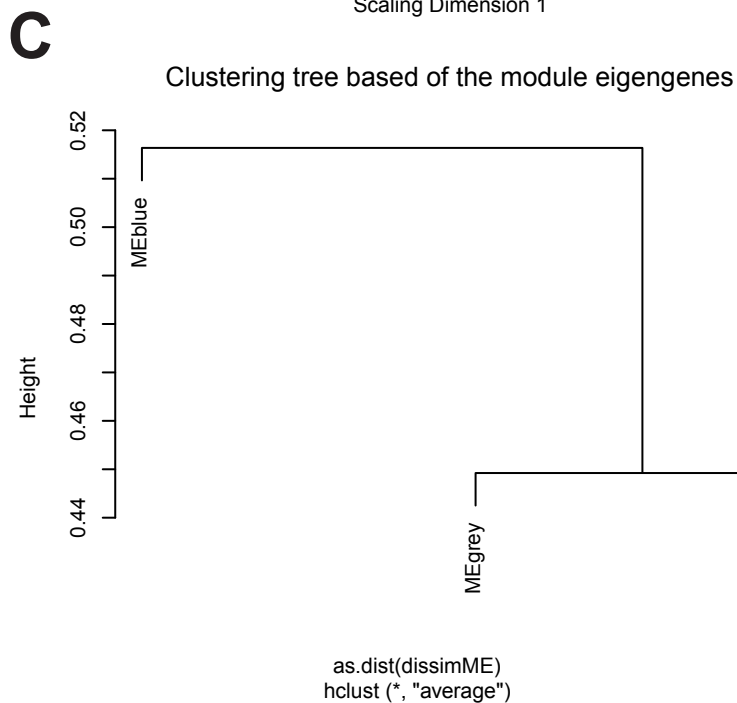
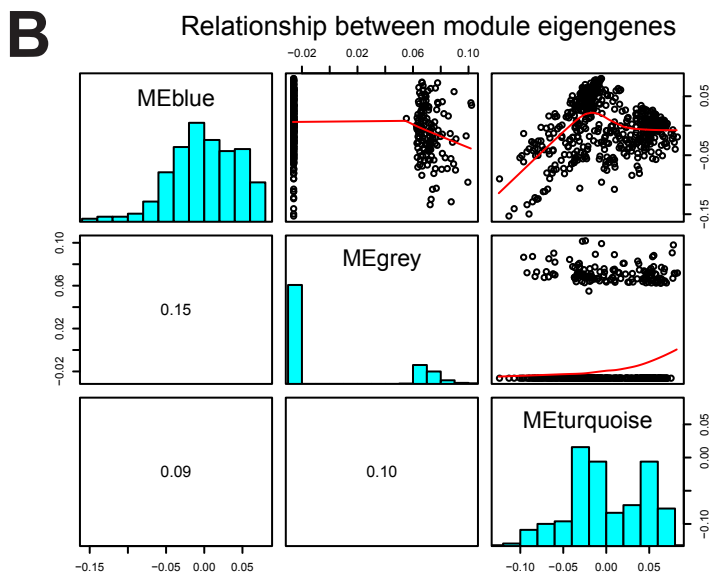
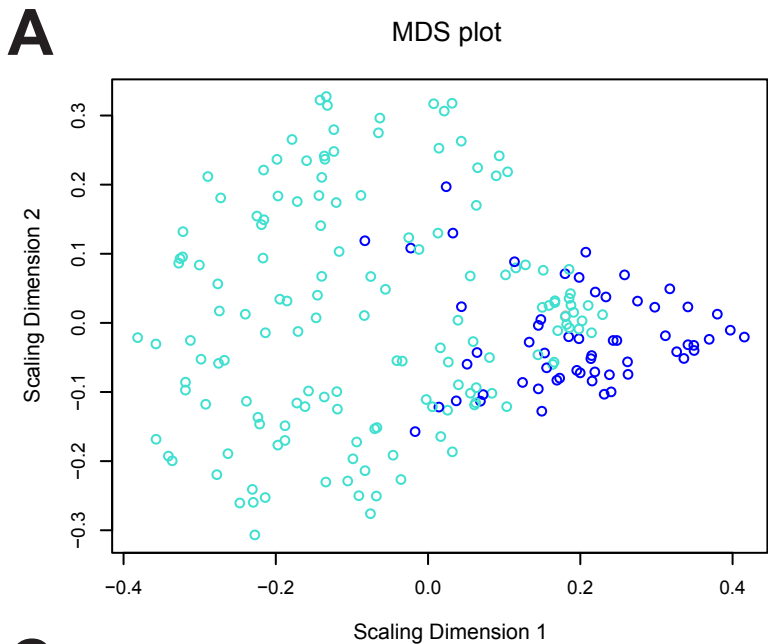


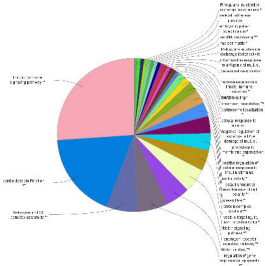
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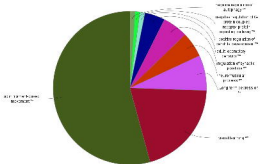


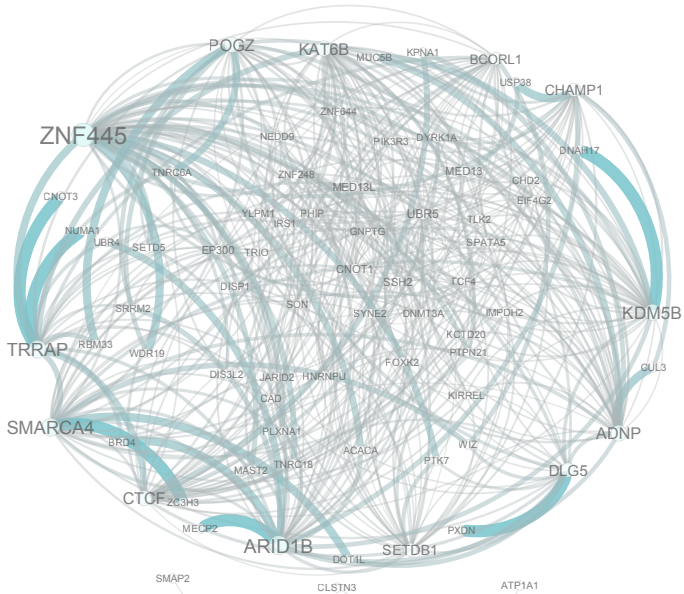




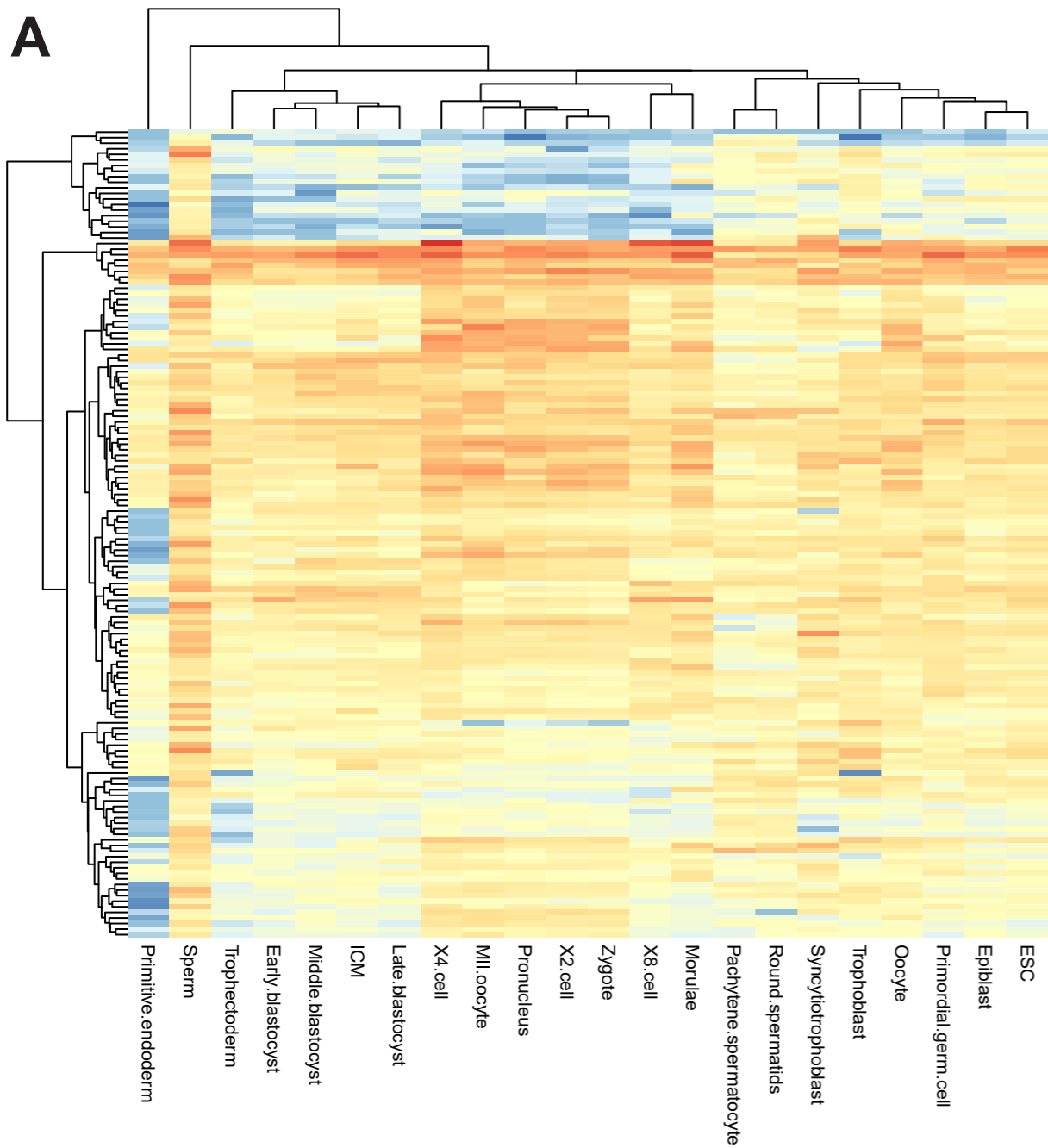
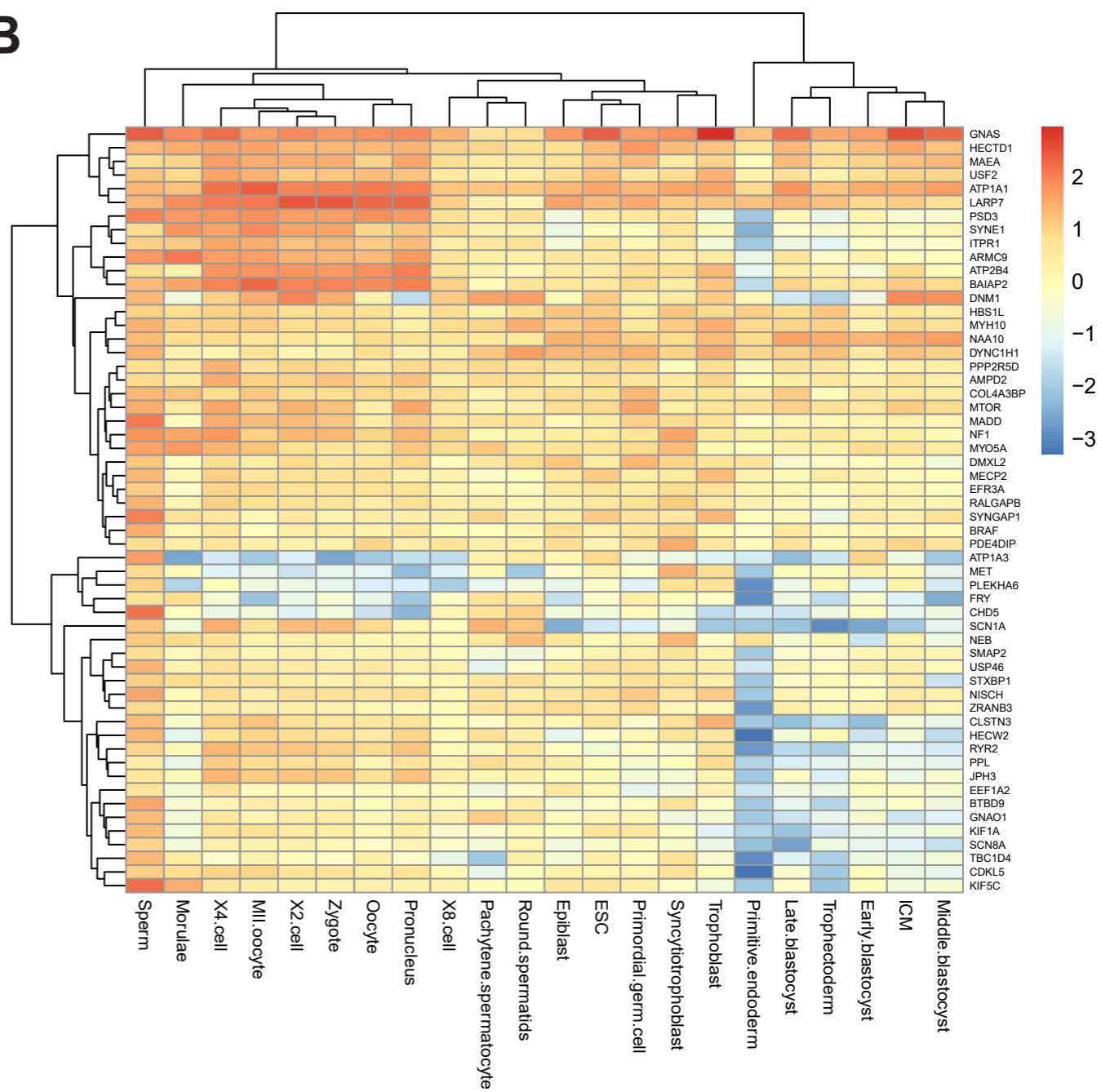


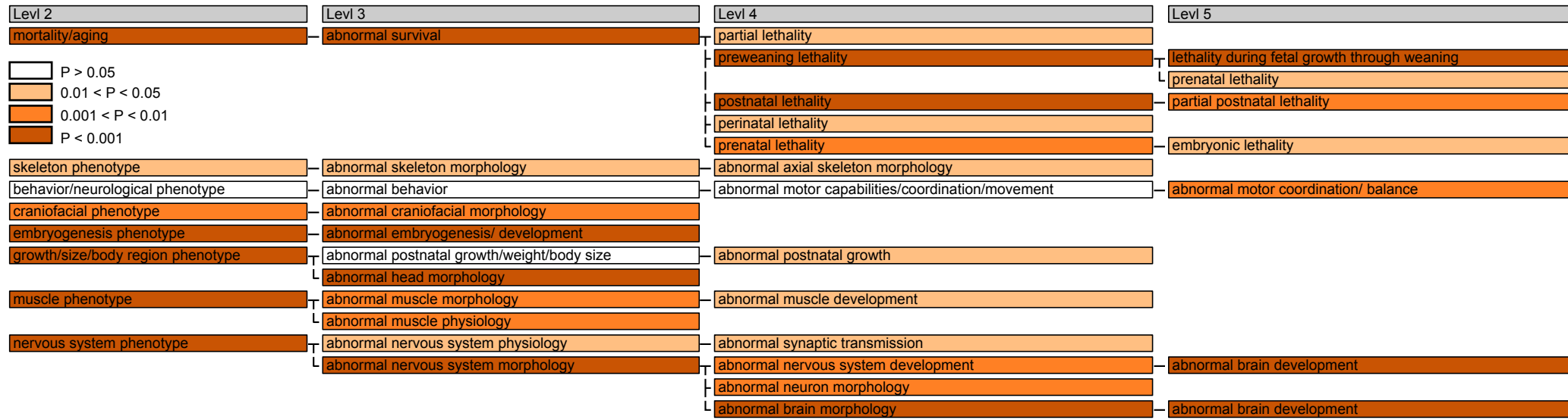






STXB1

A**B**

A**B**