

1 Transcriptomic profiling of human orbital fat and differentiating orbital fibroblasts

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3 Running head: RNAseq analyses of human orbital fat & fibroblasts

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29 **Structured Abstract**

30

31 **Purpose**

32 Orbital fat hyperplasia has a central role in the manifestations of thyroid-associated
33 orbitopathy (TAO). To better understand the pathways involved in adipogenesis in TAO,
34 we have used transcriptomic methods to analyze gene expression in control and TAO
35 patients, as well as in differentiating orbital fibroblasts (OFs).

36

37 **Methods**

38 We performed bulk RNA sequencing (RNA-Seq) on intraconal orbital fat to compare
39 gene expression in control and TAO patients. We treated cultured OFs derived from
40 TAO patients with media containing dexamethasone, insulin, rosiglitazone, and
41 isobutylmethylxanthine (IBMX) to induce adipogenesis. We used single nuclear RNA-
42 Seq (snRNA-Seq) profiling of treated OFs to compare gene expression over time in
43 order to identify pathways that are involved in orbital adipogenesis *in vitro* and
44 compared the dynamic patterns of gene expression identify differences in gene
45 expression in control and TAO orbital fat.

46

47 **Results**

48 Orbital fat from TAO and control patients segregate with principal component analysis
49 (PCA). Numerous signaling pathways are enriched in orbital fat isolated from TAO
50 patients. SnRNA-Seq of orbital fibroblasts undergoing adipogenesis reveals differential
51 expression of adipocyte-specific genes over the developmental time course.
52 Furthermore, genes that are enriched in TAO orbital fat are also upregulated in orbital
53 adipocytes that differentiate *in vitro*, while genes that are enriched in control orbital fat
54 are enriched in orbital fibroblasts prior to differentiation.

55

56 **Conclusions**

57 Differentiating orbital fibroblasts serve as a model to study orbital fat hyperplasia seen in
58 TAO. We demonstrate that the insulin-like growth factor-1 receptor (*IGF-1R*) and Wnt
59 signaling pathways are differentially expressed early in orbital adipogenesis.

60

61 **Précis**

62 To understand the pathways involved in adipogenesis in TAO, we used transcriptomic
63 methods to analyze gene expression in control and TAO patients, as well as in
64 differentiating OFs. We demonstrate that the IGF-1R and Wnt signaling pathways are
65 differentially expressed during orbital adipogenesis.

66

67 **Introduction**

68 Thyroid-associated orbitopathy (TAO) is a form of autoimmune thyroid disease in
69 which shared auto-antigens in the thyroid gland and orbit are targets of the immune
70 response.¹⁻³ About 25% of patients with autoimmune thyroid disease will develop the
71 ocular disease, which can be vision-threatening. It is thought that inflammatory signaling
72 causes expansion of the orbital soft tissues due to fibrosis and orbital fat hyperplasia
73 which causes ocular morbidity due to corneal exposure and/or compressive optic
74 neuropathy.⁴⁻⁶

75 The orbital soft tissue expansion that causes vision loss and other ocular
76 morbidity associated with TAO is thought to be the final step of an inflammatory
77 cascade that results in fibrosis and adipogenesis. Details of the mechanisms underlying
78 orbital soft tissue fibrosis and adipogenesis are not well understood. Generally,
79 adipogenesis is initiated by transcription factor cascades involving transient early
80 expression of CCAAT/enhancer-binding protein (C/EBP) β and δ followed by induction
81 of CEBP- α and peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor γ , transcription factors, which
82 in turn induce expression of genes involved in terminal adipocyte differentiation.^{7,8}
83 These pathways contribute to a generic adipocyte differentiation program. However,
84 adipocyte metabolic function, morphology, preadipocyte proliferation and capacity for
85 adipogenesis differ among adipose tissue depots.⁹ These molecular and physiological
86 differences, which have been explored in subcutaneous, visceral, and brown adipose
87 tissue depots, are thought to be intrinsic to adipocytes and may be related to their
88 embryonic origins.⁹ The differences in orbital adipose tissue, and the way in which they
89 may contribute to the TAO phenotype, however, have not yet been explored.

90 To identify molecular mechanisms controlling adipogenesis in TAO, we have
91 conducted bulk RNA-Seq analysis of primary orbital fat from both control and TAO
92 patients and also used snRNA-Seq to profile orbital fibroblasts undergoing adipogenesis
93 *in vitro*.

94

95 **Methods**

96 **Bulk RNA-Seq**

97 Human intraconal orbital fat was obtained from TAO patients undergoing orbital
98 decompression or controls undergoing routine resection of prolapsed orbital fat (Table
99 1), which has been shown to be intraconal fat,¹⁰ or enucleation using a protocol
100 approved by the Johns Hopkins University Institutional Review Board and following the
101 tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki. TAO patients were inactive, defined by a clinical
102 activity score (CAS) less than 4.¹¹ Samples were placed in RNA $later^{\text{TM}}$ (ThermoFisher
103 Scientific) or on ice, depending on their subsequent use. RNA was extracted from each
104 fat depot using Trizol and RNeasy mini kits (Qiagen, Germany). Bioanalyzer (Agilent)
105 analysis was used to perform quality control. cDNA libraries were prepared for samples
106 with RIN > 6. RNA-Sequencing libraries were made using stranded Total RNASeq
107 library prep and libraries were sequenced using Illumina Nextseq500, paired-end read
108 of 75 bp, 50 million reads per library. Illumina adapters of libraries after sequencing
109 were removed using Cutadapt (v1.18)¹² with default parameters. Sequenced libraries
110 were then aligned to GRCh38 using STAR (v2.42a)¹³ with `--twopassMode Basic`. RSEM
111 (v1.3.1)¹⁴ was used for transcript quantification, with `rsem-calculate-expression (--`
112 `forward-prob 0.5)`.

113 DESeq2(1.24.0)¹⁵ was used to analyze the bulk RNA-Seq dataset using the
114 standard pipeline, filtering low counts (<10) and choosing genes with adjusted p-value <
115 0.05. ClusterProfiler (v3.12.0)¹⁶ *enrichKEGG* function was used to identify pathways that
116 are enriched in the TAO group.

117

118 ***In vitro* differentiation**

119 Orbital fibroblast cell lines were derived from TAO retrobulbar fat as previously
120 described.¹⁷ Briefly, tissue explants were obtained from patients undergoing surgical
121 decompression for TAO. Patients were inactive, with a CAS less than 4, at the time of
122 surgery.¹¹ Explants were placed on the bottom of culture plates and covered with
123 Eagle's medium containing 10% FBS, antibiotics, and glutamine. They were incubated
124 at 37°C, 5% CO₂, in a humidified environment. The resulting fibroblast monolayers were
125 passaged serially by gentle treatment with TrypLE. Strains were stored in liquid N₂ until
126 needed and were used between the 4th and 8th passages.

127 Orbital fibroblasts were induced to undergo adipogenesis as previously
128 described.¹⁷ Briefly, fibroblasts between passages 4 and 8 were seeded on plastic
129 tissue culture plates and allowed to proliferate to near-confluence in DMEM containing
130 10% FBS and antibiotics. The cells were then treated with adipogenic medium
131 consisting of DMEM:F-10 (1:1) supplemented with 3% FBS, 100 nmol/liter insulin, 1
132 $\mu\text{mol/liter}$ dexamethasone, and for the first week only, 1 $\mu\text{mol/liter}$ rosiglitazone and 0.2
133 mmol/liter IBMX. Media was changed every other day for the first week, and then twice
134 weekly for the remaining weeks. Cultures were maintained in this medium for 21 days.

135 Control cultures were treated with DMEM:F-10 (1:1) supplemented with 3% FBS and
136 vehicle. Differentiation was observed using a Nikon microscope. Each time point was
137 analyzed in triplicate.

138

139 **Quantification of adipocytes**

140 On days 0, 5, 9, and 21, cells were washed with PBS and fixed using 4%
141 paraformaldehyde in PBS for 10 minutes at room temperature. Cells were washed with
142 PBS or stored in PBS at 4°C. To stain adipocytes, cells were washed with 60%
143 isopropanol and stained with freshly prepared 0.3% (w/v) Oil red O at room temperature
144 for 15 minutes. Cells were rinsed with isopropanol and stained lightly with hematoxylin,
145 then rinsed with PBS. Cells were imaged by a blinded study team member using a
146 Keyence BZ-X710 microscope (Keyence, Japan). Four high-power field images were
147 obtained per replicate. Cell counts and lipid vacuole measurements were performed
148 using ImageJ.¹⁸

149

150 **Single-nucleus RNA-Seq**

151 Nuclei from the treated groups were isolated at day 0, 5, 9, and 21 using the
152 methods described in the 10x Genomics Sample Preparation Demonstrated Protocol.
153 Briefly, cells were washed with chilled PBS and lysed in chilled lysis buffer consisting of
154 10 mM Tris-HCl, 10 mM NaCl, 3 mM MgCl₂, and 0.1% Nonidet™ P40 Substitute in
155 nuclease-free water at 4°C. Cells were scraped from the plate bottom and centrifuged at
156 500 RCF for 5 min at 4°C. Cells were washed twice in nuclei wash and resuspension
157 buffer consisting of PBS with 0.1% BSA and 0.2 U/ul RNase inhibitor. Cells were
158 passed through a 50 um cell strainer and centrifuged at 500 RCF for 5 min at 4°C prior
159 to resuspension in nuclei wash and resuspension buffer. Isolated nuclei were counted
160 manually via hemocytometer with Trypan Blue staining, and nuclei concentration was
161 adjusted following the 10x Genomics guideline. 10x Genomics Chromium Single Cell
162 system (10x Genomics, CA, United States) using V2 chemistry (Day 0, 5, 9) or V3
163 chemistry (Day 21) per manufacturer's instructions, generating a total of 7 libraries. Day
164 5 and Day 21 were run with technical replicates. Libraries were sequenced on Illumina
165 NextSeq500 mid-output or NovaSeq6000 (150 million reads). Sequencing data were
166 first pre-processed through the Cell Ranger pipeline (10x Genomics, Cellranger v5.0.0)
167 with default parameters, using GRCh38-2020-A genome with *include-introns*.

168 Matrix files generated from the Cellranger run were used for subsequent
169 analysis. Seurat V3¹⁹ was used to perform downstream analysis, only including cells
170 with more than 500 genes, 1000 UMI, to process control and treated samples
171 separately. Seurat SCTransform function was used to normalize the dataset²⁰ and
172 UMAP was used to reduce dimensions derived from the Harmony²¹ output.

173 In order to identify cells that show adipocytes signatures, key adipocytes-
174 enriched genes were first extracted from GTEx dataset from ascot.cs.jhu.edu²², relying

175 on both robustness (NAUC > 20) and specificity (expressed only in both adipocytes
176 dataset or in tissues that are enriched with adipocytes such as mammary tissues).
177 These genes were then used to train the dataset using Garnett²³ and identified
178 differentiated adipocytes.

179 RNA velocity²⁴ was used to verify *in vitro* adipocyte differentiation trajectory.
180 Kallisto and Bustools²⁵ were used to obtain splicing values, and Scanpy²⁶ and scVelo²⁷
181 were used to obtain velocity trajectory. Pseudotime analysis was performed using
182 Monocle v3²⁸ and genes that are significant (q value < 0.001) along pseudotime
183 trajectory were used to run KEGG analysis as described above. Genes that were
184 involved across KEGG signaling pathways were then used to identify signaling
185 pathways that are specific at different stages of *in vitro* differentiation. SCENIC²⁹ was
186 used to calculate regulons controlling gene expressions across adipocytes
187 differentiation stages as previously described.^{30,31} Enriched genes from control and TAO
188 bulk RNA-Seq datasets were superimposed on *in vitro* dataset using Seurat
189 *AddModuleScore* function.

190

191 **Data availability:** All sequencing data are available on GEO as GSE158464 (bulk RNA-
192 Seq dataset) and GSE174139 (bulk RNA-Seq dataset and snRNA-Seq).

193 Results

194 Bulk transcriptome analysis of retrobulbar fat from TAO and control patients

195 Retrobulbar fat was collected from patients undergoing orbital surgery for TAO or
196 other indications (Table 1). To compare gene expression in orbital fat in TAO patients
197 and controls, bulk RNA-Seq was performed (Figure 1a). Gene expression in TAO and
198 control orbital fat segregated using PCA, with control and TAO replicates appearing
199 more similar (Figure 1b). We observed 902 genes that are enriched in control orbital fat,
200 and 964 genes enriched in TAO orbital fat (Figure 1c). Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes
201 and Genomes (KEGG) pathway analysis of genes enriched in TAO orbital fat revealed
202 numerous signaling pathways that are highly enriched including PI3K-Akt signaling,
203 cAMP signaling, AGE-RAGE signaling, regulation of lipolysis in adipocytes, and thyroid
204 hormone signaling pathway (Figure 1d). Heat map analysis of genes that are
205 differentially expressed (adjusted p-value < 0.05, Table S1) in TAO fat and control fat
206 demonstrated general differences between TAO and control orbital fat, while also
207 identifying differences that correlate with the patient's clinical activity score (CAS) at the
208 time of surgery (Figure 1e, Table 1). Heat map analysis of individual genes within the
209 above-mentioned pathways demonstrated the degree to which genes such as *THRA*
210 and *IGF1* are enriched in TAO orbital fat (Figure 1f).

211

212 **snRNA-Seq of orbital fibroblasts undergoing adipogenesis reveals induction of** 213 **adipocyte-specific markers**

214 Orbital fibroblasts derived from Case #2 were treated to induce adipogenesis
215 using over a 21-day time course to find genes that are induced during adipogenesis
216 which may function critically in orbital fat hyperplasia in TAO. Cells treated with control
217 media did not undergo adipogenesis (Figure 2a,c,e,g). Based on histologic changes
218 noted in cells treated with adipogenic media, we chose to analyze adipogenesis and
219 gene expression at Days 0, 5, 9, and 21 (Figure 2a-h). Adipocyte induction first
220 occurred between day 0-5, which the maximum density of adipocytes noted at day 9
221 (Figure 2i). Adipocyte maturation, as quantified by the lipid vacuole area, increased
222 most between days 9 and 21 (Figure 2j).

223 Based on the observed histologic changes, we collected nuclei at days 0, 5, 9,
224 and 21 treatment for analysis by snRNA-Seq (Figure 2k). We identified unique clusters
225 that are enriched from Day 5 onwards and begin to express unique sets of markers that
226 were absent in the rest of the clusters, such as *IGF1* (Figure S1, Table S2). These
227 clusters led to a cluster that expressed high levels of adipocyte signatures including
228 *ADIPOQ* (Figure S1, Table S2). We identified these clusters as cells that are
229 undergoing adipogenesis.

230 UMAP analysis of differentiating orbital fibroblasts revealed 6 distinct clusters
231 defined by a unique set of genes (Figure 2l). Overall, differentiating cells appeared to
232 progress from cluster 1 (C1) to C6 over time (Figure 2m). Classic adipocyte stem cell
233 markers such as *FABP4*, *APOE*, *FABP5* were enriched in C3-C4, while mature
234 adipocyte markers such as *PPARG* and *ADIPOQ* were enriched in C5, demonstrating
235 that the clusters corresponded to a developmental progression from orbital fibroblast,
236 through adipocyte stem cells, to mature adipocytes (Figure 2n, Table S3). At day 21, a
237 new cell type was present that demonstrated high expression of *APOD*, but had lost
238 expression of other adipogenic markers such as *FABP4/5* but shared expression of
239 many of the other markers expressed in other clusters were represented in cluster C6
240 (Figure 2n). To identify genes that were induced early in the process of adipogenesis,
241 we focused on genes that were specifically expressed in C1 and C2, which differed from
242 both quiescent, control-treated orbital fibroblasts and adipocyte stem cells. This
243 population showed enrichment of *IGF1*, *IGF1R*, *ZEB1*, *FGF7*, and *SFRP2* expression
244 (Figure 2n). Enrichment of *IGF1* expression within differentiating orbital fibroblasts
245 suggests that paracrine signaling may be involved in the process of adipogenesis.
246

247 **Analysis of key pathways involved in orbital adipogenesis *in vitro***

248 We next focused on identifying key signaling pathways and potential regulatory
249 factors that are differentially expressed during orbital adipogenesis *in vitro*. Using KEGG
250 analysis of the snRNA-Seq data, we observed that differentiating adipocytes express
251 genes involved in multiple signaling pathways, including the PI3-AKT pathway, AGE-

252 RAGE signaling pathway, insulin resistance pathway. These pathways were also
253 enriched in TAO orbital fat compared to control orbital fat, as measured by bulk RNA-
254 Seq analysis (Figure 1c, 3a). Other pathways that are specifically involved in
255 adipogenesis, such as the PPAR signaling pathway, fatty acid biosynthesis and fatty
256 acid elongation pathways (Figure 3a) were also enriched in differentiating orbital
257 fibroblasts.

258 RNA velocity analysis demonstrated that components of the Rap1 signaling
259 pathway are active early in orbital fibroblasts in C1 (Figure 3b). Components of the
260 insulin signaling pathway were expressed throughout the course of adipocyte
261 differentiation in C1-C5 (Figure 3b), while peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor
262 (PPAR) signaling, which is known to be active late in adipogenesis, was active in C4-C5
263 (Figure 3b). Pseudotime analysis showed the progression of gene expression through
264 C1-C5 for all differentially-expressed genes (Figure 3c). Genes with particularly strong
265 differential expressions are highlighted, such as *IGF1*, *SFRP2*, and *WNT5A* (Figure 3c,
266 Table S4). Regulon analysis identified transcription factors that are differentially
267 expressed in each cluster (Figure 3d).

268

269 **The TAO orbital fat transcriptome resembles that of *in vitro* differentiated** 270 **adipocytes**

271 In order to determine the similarity between *in vitro* derived orbital adipocytes and
272 orbital fat *in vivo*, we compared gene expression from control and TAO orbital fat,
273 analyzed by bulk RNA-Seq, to gene expression during orbital adipogenesis as
274 assessed by snRNA-Seq (Figure 4a). Control gene modules were found to be
275 expressed most highly in C1 and C6. These modules were most strongly expressed in
276 day 0 cells (C1) and a subset of day 21 cells that do not express mature adipocyte
277 markers (C6) (Figure 4b-d). TAO gene modules were expressed most highly in C5, and
278 at days 9 and 21 (Figure 4e,f). Interestingly, although the orbital fibroblast cell line was
279 derived from a TAO patient, the gene expression pattern resembled control gene
280 modules prior to treatment with adipogenic media (Figure 4c,d), and changes to
281 resemble TAO genes modules following treatment with adipogenic media (Figure 4 f,g).

282

283 **Discussion**

284 In this study, we demonstrate that orbital fibroblasts derived from TAO patients
285 can be used as a model to study adipogenesis *in vitro*. Histologic studies and
286 transcriptome profiling clearly show that, although they are derived from TAO patients,
287 the gene expression profile of undifferentiated orbital fibroblasts closely resembles that
288 of control orbital fat cells, while those treated to undergo adipogenesis display a gene
289 expression profile more similar to that of TAO orbital fat.

290 We have identified signaling pathways and transcription factors that are
291 upregulated early in orbital adipogenesis, including the IGF-1 signaling pathway, which

292 has previously shown to contribute to TAO pathophysiology by increasing auto-antigen
293 display, cytokine synthesis, and hyaluronan production by orbital fibroblasts.^{32,33} The
294 novel TAO therapy teprotumumab targets the IGF-1 receptor (IGF1-R) to improve
295 proptosis, diplopia, CAS, and quality of life in TAO patients.^{34,35} Though it is thought to
296 exert its effects via modulation of the immune response, our data raise the possibility
297 that inhibition of the IGF-1R pathway may also impact TAO by reducing adipogenesis in
298 the orbit.

299 Prior transcriptome profiling of cultured orbital fibroblasts derived from control
300 and TAO patients has demonstrated significantly increased expression of homeobox
301 transcription factors and decreased expression of Wnt signaling pathway components
302 in TAO orbital fibroblasts.³⁶ In profiling TAO orbital fibroblasts undergoing adipogenesis,
303 we find that *WNT5A* expression is high early in the course of adipogenesis, but
304 decreases as differentiation occurs, whereas homeobox gene expression increases later
305 (Figure 3c,d).

306 The model that we have used to study gene expression changes during orbital
307 adipogenesis depends on the treatment of orbital fibroblasts with drugs including insulin
308 and rosiglitazone. For example, while cells are treated with insulin throughout the
309 experiment, and the insulin pathway is active throughout the differentiation process,
310 cells are also treated with the PPAR gamma agonist rosiglitazone early (during the first
311 week) in the experiment, but PPAR signaling is active only later in the differentiation
312 process (Figure 3b).

313 Microarray comparisons of orbital fat from TAO and control patients have
314 demonstrated increased expression in Wnt signaling pathway genes such as SFRPs,
315 IGF-1 pathway genes, and adipogenic genes, consistent with our bulk RNA-Seq
316 results.^{37,38} In our heat map analysis of TAO-enriched genes, we note differences in the
317 level of gene expression that correlate with CAS. Case 1, with a CAS of 0, has lower
318 levels of TAO-enriched genes than Case 2, with a CAS of 1, which in turn has lower
319 levels of TAO-enriched genes than Case 3, with CAS of 3 (Figure 1e). However, even in
320 the least severely affected patient, TAO-enriched genes are more highly expressed than
321 in controls (Figure 1e).

322 Other studies have compared RNA-Seq data of orbital fat from patients with
323 active TAO compared to blepharoplasty fat and observed stronger upregulation of
324 inflammatory signaling pathways, which is consistent with the higher CAS in their
325 patients compared to those profiled in our study.³⁹ Conversely in our patients, pathways
326 including insulin and thyroid signaling, as well as adipogenic pathways, were more
327 prominent, likely reflective of the patients being in earlier stages of the disease. In
328 addition, we used retrobulbar fat as our control orbital adipose sample, rather than
329 blepharoplasty fat, which may account for some of the other observed differences in
330 gene expression. A potential confounding factor in comparing these data sets may be
331 that in our analysis, we have excluded all genes with low counts due to low expression

332 levels. Nonetheless, we also found large changes in Wnt signaling such as (*DKK2*,
333 *NKD1*) and other pathways (*HOX3D*) in TAO orbital fat compared to control orbital fat in
334 post-hoc analysis (Table S1), although these genes were expressed at low levels.

335 We further have identified factors that have not been previously implicated in the
336 biology of orbital fibroblasts, including cell-autonomous pathways such as Rap1
337 signaling, which have been shown to drive adipogenesis in human bone mesenchymal
338 stem cells.^{40,41} In addition, transcription factors that drive adipogenesis are of
339 particular interest in understanding the regulation of orbital adipogenesis. ZEB1 has
340 been identified as a critical mediator of adipogenesis in mouse pre-adipocytes and is
341 induced by IGF-1R activation in prostate cancer cell lines.^{42,43} Finally, the use of *in vitro*
342 analysis of differentiating cultured orbital fibroblasts to identify pathways that regulate
343 orbital adipogenesis, and that are enriched in TAO orbital fat, opens the possibility of
344 using high-throughput screening to identify drug and gene-based approaches to
345 modulating pathological adipogenesis that may ultimately be useful in treating TAO-
346 related disorders.

347
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366 **Figure legends:**

367 **Table 1. Characteristics of TAO and control patients undergoing orbital surgery.**

368 Caucasian (C). African American (AA). Uveal Melanoma (UM).

369

370 **Figure 1. Bulk RNA-Seq analysis comparing retrobulbar fat of control and TAO**

371 **patients.** (a) Schematic diagram showing the overall experiment pipeline. (b) PCA plot
372 showing the distribution of control and TAO replicates. (c) Volcano plot of genes that are
373 higher in control or TAO orbital fat. (d) KEGG pathway analysis showing pathways that
374 are enriched in the TAO group. (e) Heatmap demonstrating gene expression differences
375 between the control and TAO. (f) Top KEGG pathways in 1d and genes that are
376 expressed at a higher level in TAO than in the control group (Fold change). CAS =
377 Clinical activity score.

378

379 **Figure 2. snRNA-Seq shows adipogenesis trajectory *in vitro*.** (a-h) Oil Red O

380 staining (arrows) of orbital fibroblasts treated with control (a,c,e,g) and adipogenic
381 (b,d,f,h) medium orbital at day 0 (a,b), day 5 (c,d); day 9 (e,f), and day 21 (g,h). (i) Bar
382 plot showing the percentage of adipocytes seen after treatment with control or
383 adipogenic medium on days 0, 5, 9, and 21. (j) Bar plot showing lipid vacuole area / the
384 number of adipocytes between orbital fibroblasts treated with control or adipogenic
385 medium on days 0, 5, 9, and 21. (k) Schematic diagram showing snRNA-Seq pipeline.
386 (l) UMAP plot showing key 6 clusters of cells undergoing adipogenesis from snRNA-
387 Seq. (m) Bar plot showing the percentage of clusters that are occupied across treatment
388 days. (n) Violin plot showing key cluster markers. Scale bar = 100 μ M.

389

390 **Figure 3. snRNA-Seq reveals adipogenesis signaling pathway.** (a) KEGG plot

391 based on pseudotime analysis from snRNA-Seq data in Figure 2. (b) UMAP plot with
392 RNA velocity showing adipocyte differentiation trajectory, and 3 pathways that are
393 specific across differentiation stages. (c) Pseudotime trajectory of adipogenesis and key
394 genes. (d) Regulon analysis demonstrates key transcription factors that might be
395 involved in each step of adipogenesis differentiation.

396

397 **Figure 4. *In vitro* differentiated adipocytes express high levels of TAO tissue-**

398 **enriched markers.** (a) Schematic showing that genes that are higher in control or TAO
399 orbital fat were projected into snRNA-Seq dataset to obtain gene module score. (b-d)
400 Control retrobulbar fat-enriched genes demarcate Cluster 6 in snRNA-Seq dataset (b,d),
401 expressed higher at day 0 (c). (e-g) TAO retrobulbar fat-enriched genes demarcate
402 Cluster 5 adipocytes in snRNA-Seq dataset (e,f), expressed higher at day 0 (g).

403

404

405 **Figure S1. snRNA-Seq of the overall dataset.** (a,b) UMAP plot showing the
406 distribution of clusters across the entire dataset (a) and distribution across each
407 treatment age or replicates (Day 9 and Day 21) (b). Red lines in panels a and b indicate
408 cells are undergoing adipogenesis. (c) Gene expression showing unique genes that are
409 enriched in cells that are undergoing adipogenesis.

410

411 **Table S1.** Significant genes from bulk RNA-Seq of control and TAO retrobulbar orbital
412 fat in Figure 1.

413 **Table S2.** Cluster markers of Figure S1a.

414 **Table S3.** Cluster markers of Figure 2l.

415 **Table S4.** Pseudotime genes of Figure 3c.

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556

	Control S1	Control S2	Control S3	TAO S1	TAO S2	TAO S3
Age (years)	>70	58	>70	37	51	51
Gender	M	M	F	F	F	M
Race	Asian	C	C	C	AA	AA
Duration of thyroid disease prior to surgery (approx. mo)	-	-	-	48	13	13
Duration of TED prior to surgery (approx. mo)	-	-	-	18	13	10
Previous treatment for Graves disease	-	-	-	Armor thyroid	Methimazole	Carbimazole
Previous treatment for TED	-	-	-	-	-	Prednisone, Methylprednisolone, Azathioprine
Smoking history	>10 years ago	No	No	Former	No	No
Exophthalmometry, Hertel (mm)	N/A	N/A	N/A	21	27.5	30
Presence of compressive optic neuropathy	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	Yes
Surgery	Excision of orbital fat prolapse	Excision of orbital fat prolapse	Enucleation (UM)	Orbital decompression	Orbital decompression	Orbital decompression
Clinical Activity Score (0-7)	-	-	-	0	1	3

Table 1

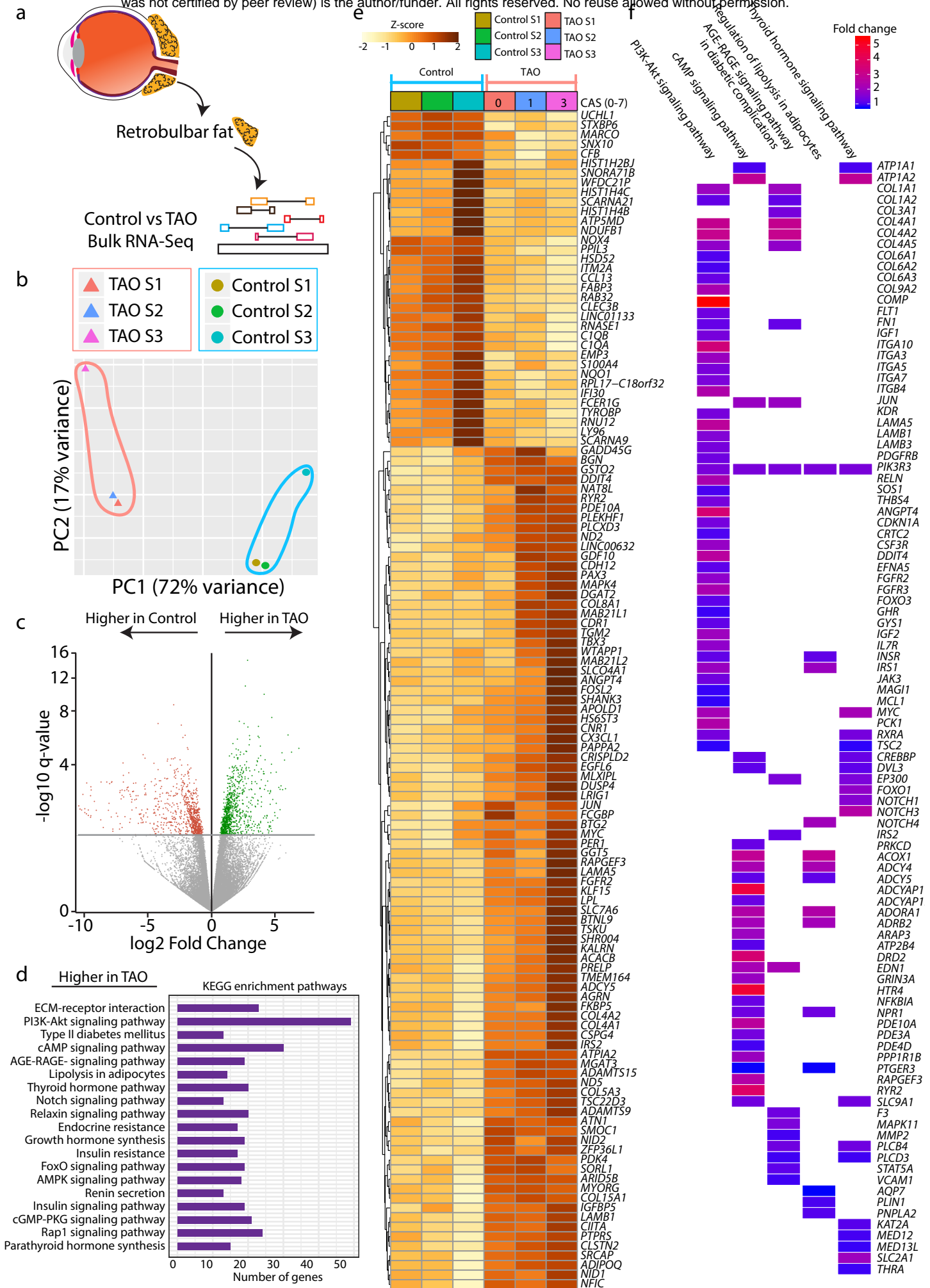
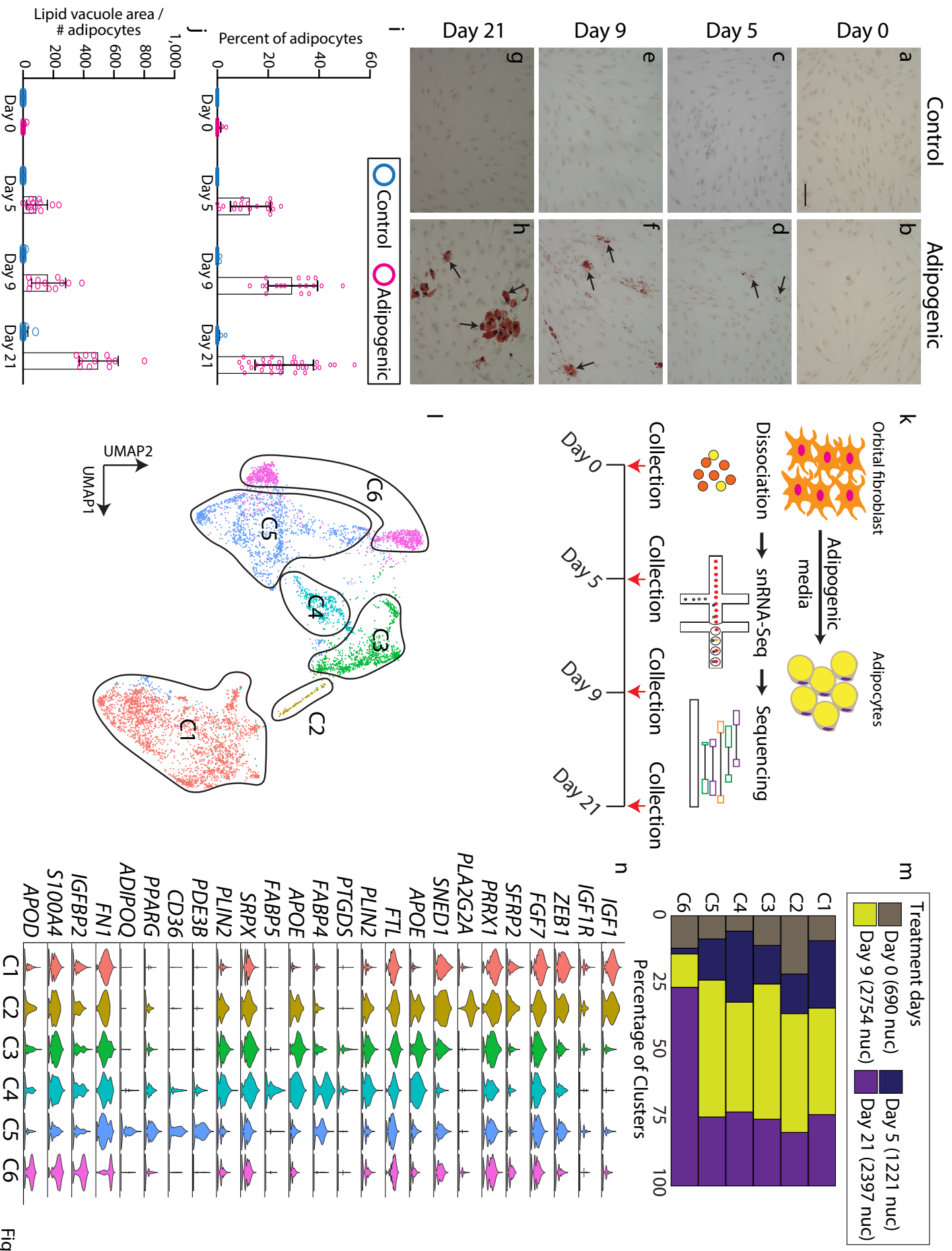


Figure 1



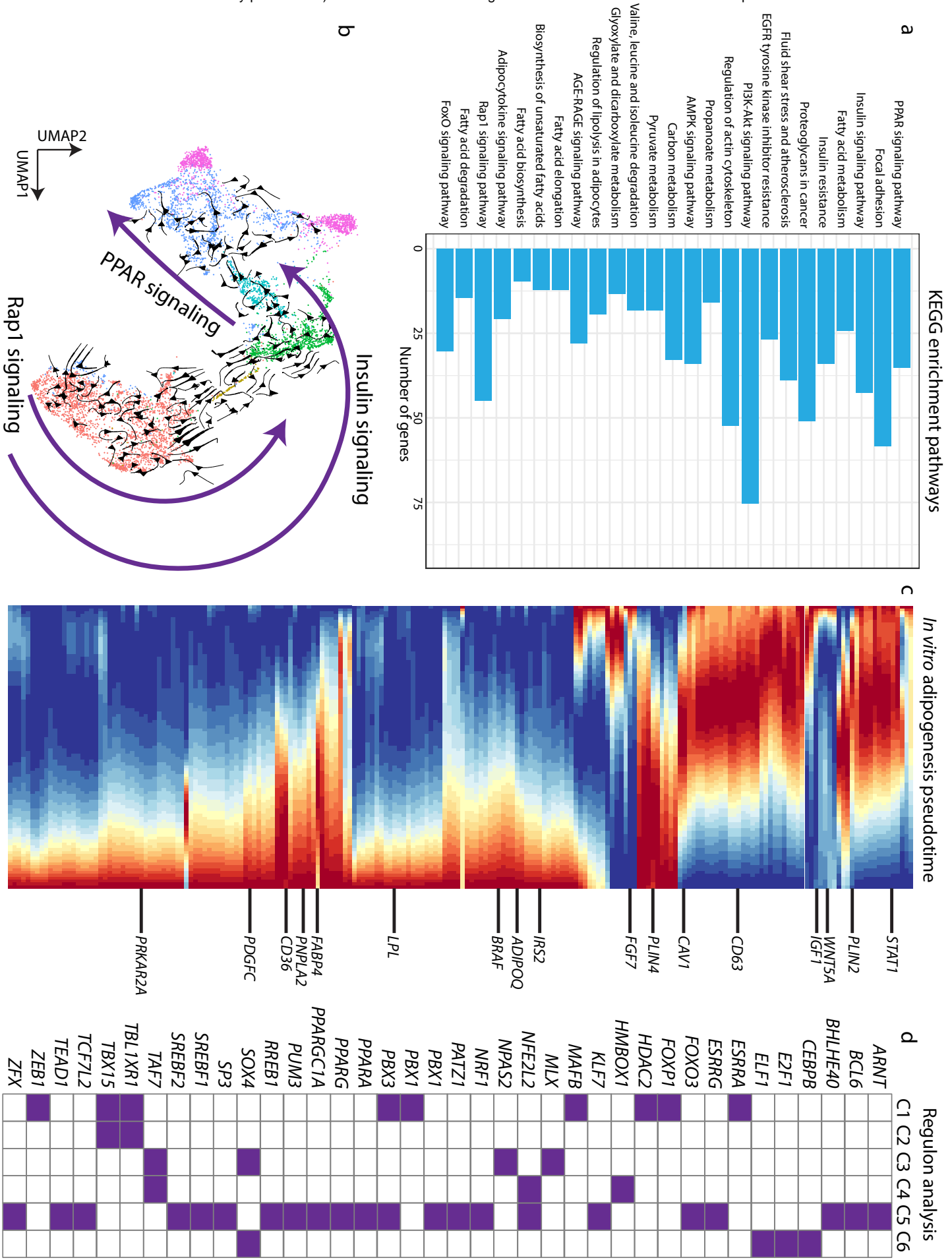


Figure 3

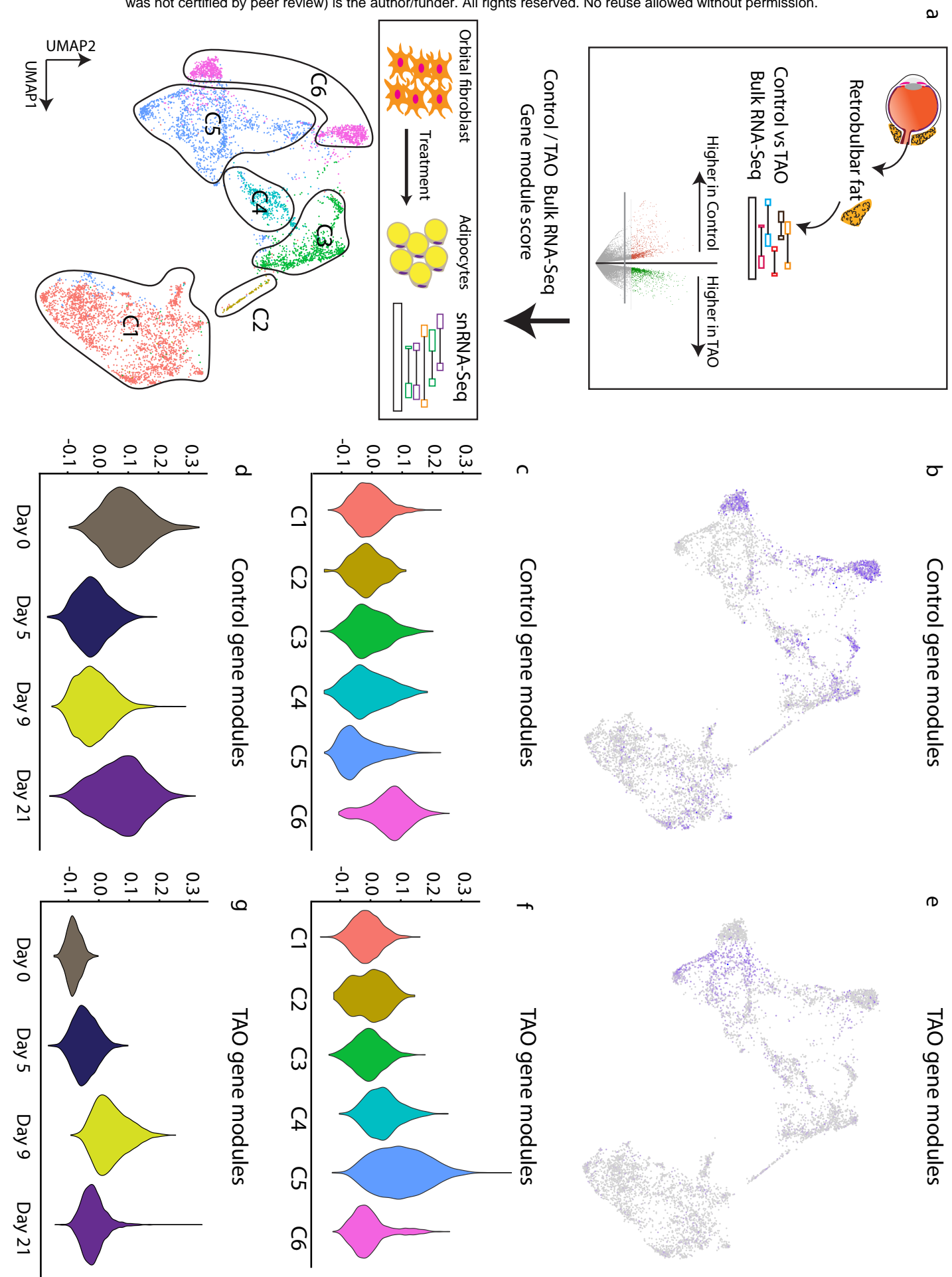


Figure 4