Optimized detection of somatic allelic imbalances specific for homologous recombination deficiency improves the prediction of clinical outcomes in ovarian cancer

Fernando Perez-Villatoro[1,2], Jaana Oikkonen[1], Julia Casado[1,2], Anastasiya Chernenko[1,2], Doga C. Gulhan (Aff), Manuela Tumiati[1], Sakari Hietanen[3], Johanna Hynninen[3], Ulla-Maija Haltia[4], Hannele Laivuori (Aff), Panagiotis Konstantinopoulos[5], Sampsa Hautaniemi[1], Liisa Kauppi[1], Anniina Färkkilä[1,2,4,5]

[1] *Research Program for Systems Oncology, University of Helsinki and Helsinki University Hospital, Helsinki, Finland*
[2] *iCAN digital precision cancer medicine flagship*
[3] *Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Turku and Turku University Hospital, Turku,Finland.*
[4] *Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Helsinki University Hospital, Helsinki, Finland.*
[5] *Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA*

Correspondence:
Anniina Färkkilä, MD PhD, Docent in Translational Gynecologic Oncology
Principal Investigator, Academy of Finland Clinical Research Fellow
Specialist in Obstetrics and Gynecology

Research Program for Systems Oncology &
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
University of Helsinki and Helsinki University Hospital
00014 University of Helsinki
anniina.farkkila@helsinki.fi
+358505967786

33ABSTRACT

34Specific patterns of genomic allelic imbalances (AIs) have been associated with Homologous

35recombination DNA-repair deficiency (HRD). We performed a systematic pan-cancer

36characterization of AIs across tumor types, revealing unique patterns in ovarian cancer.

37Using machine learning on a multi-omics dataset, we generated an optimized algorithm to

38detect HRD in ovarian cancer (ovaHRDscar). ovaHRDscar improved the prediction of clinical

39outcomes in three independent validation cohorts (PCAWG, HERCULES, TERVA).

40Characterization of 98 spatiotemporally distinct tumor samples indicated ovary/adnex as the

41preferred site to assess HRD. In conclusion, ovaHRDscar improves the detection of HRD in

42ovarian cancer with the premise to improve patient selection for HR-targeted therapies.

60 INTRODUCTION

61 Ovarian cancer is one of the most lethal gynecological malignancies[1], and high-grade serous 62 ovarian, peritoneal or fallopian tube cancer (HGSC) is the most common subtype causing 63 70-80% of all ovarian cancer-related deaths[2]. The majority of the HGSCs are diagnosed at 64 an advanced stage, and the cornerstone of the treatment is first line cytoreductive surgery 65 combined with DNA damaging chemotherapy. However, nearly all patients will develop a 66 progressive disease and the 5-year survival is only 40%.

68 Around half of HGSC tumors are considered to harbor genomic alterations leading to defects 69 in the homologous recombination (HR) DNA repair pathway[3]. HR-deficient (HRD) tumors are 70 markedly sensitive to DNA damaging therapies such as platinum and Poly-ADP Ribose 71 Polymerase (PARP) inhibitors[4]. Recently, large clinical trials have reported significant 72 benefits from PARP inhibitors especially in patients with HRD tumors[5,6]. The HRD test used 73 in the clinical trials is test based on allelic imbalances (AIs); 1) Large scale transitions 74 (LSTs), which are two AIs of at least 10Mbs separated by no more of 3Mbs[7]; 2) Loss of 75 heterozygosity (LOH) regions bigger than 15Mbs[8]; 3) Telomeric allelic imbalances (TAIs), 76 which are AIs that extend to the telomeres[9]. However, the defining criteria for these AIs were 77 originally designed using mostly breast cancer samples, therefore the details of the genomic 78 instability occurring in HRD ovarian cancers have not been clearly defined. Herein, we show 79 that ovarian cancers harbor distinct patterns of AIs as compared to other cancer types 80 including triple negative breast cancer (TNBC). Using an iterative machine learning 81 approach and The Cancer Genome Atlas (OVA-TCGA) multi-omics dataset, we present an 82 optimized algorithm (ovaHRDscar) for HRD-specific AIs in ovarian cancer. We show that 83 ovaHRDscar improves the detection of HRD and prediction of therapy responses and clinical 84 outcomes in three independent clinical datasets as compared to previous algorithms. 85 OvaHRDScar thus shows promise as a fully optimized algorithm that can be used to improve 86 patient selection of for PARP inhibitor therapies in HGSC

89**Systematic PanCancer characterization shows unique features of allelic imbalances in**

90**ovarian cancer**

91To characterize the features of AIs across different cancer types, we analyzed AIs from

92SNP-array data in eighteen most represented cancer types available in the TCGA (**Fig. 1a**).

93We calculated the number of allelic imbalances and their median size per each sample.

94Interestingly, ovarian cancers had the highest number of AIs per sample (**Fig. 1b**), but with

95the lowest median size (**Fig. 1c**). Concordantly, ovarian cancers showed the highest levels

96of LOH events per sample (**Supplementary Fig. 1a**) although with one of the lowest median

97sizes (**Supplementary Fig. 1b**). We next performed hierarchical clustering using the median

98length and number of AIs per sample, and the skewness of the size distribution of the AIs

99per cancer type. The cancer types were clustered in two main clusters, one of those

100conformed by six cancer types (BLCA, STAD, LUSC, BRCA, LUAD, OV) with higher

101amounts of AIs but with a lower median length (upper cluster: **Fig. 1d**) and the second

102cluster conformed by the remaining twelve types of cancers (lower cluster: **Fig. 1d**). The

103same main clusters were generated when using only LOH events (**Supplementary Fig. 1c**).

105Then, we compared specifically differences in AIs between ovarian cancer and TNBC, as

106both cancers were used to define the HRD test used in clinical assays[10] and are enriched in

107*BRCA* gene mutations[11]. We observed that ovarian cancer samples had a higher number of

108AIs as compared to TNBC (U test, p = 0.01, **Fig. 1e**). The difference in abundance of AIs

109between ovarian cancer and TNBC was evident specifically in *BRCA*wt tumors (U test, p =

1103.2e-04, **Fig. 1f**), but not in *BRCA*mut tumors (**Fig. 1g**). Interestingly, ovarian cancers had

111lower levels of LOH events than TNBCs (U test, p = 0.01, **Supplementary Fig. 1d**), also

112among the *BRCA*mut samples (U test, p = 0.02, **Supplementary Fig. 1e**) but not in the

113*BRCA*wt samples (**Supplementary Fig. 1f**). We then compared the numbers of AIs of

114different sizes between ovarian cancer and TNBC. When compared in all samples, ovarian

115cancers showed higher levels of AIs of different sizes while TNBC had higher level of LOH

116events (**Fig. 1h**). Interestingly, LOH events longer than 30Mb were in higher proportion in

117TNBC in *BRCA*wt samples and *BRCA*mut samples. These results thus highlight the different

118characteristics of AI events in ovarian cancer, especially in the *BRCA*wt tumors, as

119compared to other cancer types.

121**Machine-learning optimized ovaHRDscar improves the detection of HRD in ovarian**

122**cancer**

123The specific AIs that are quantified in the HRD test (HRD-AIs) were defined using mostly

124breast cancer samples or in a mixture with ovarian cancer samples[10]. To optimize the size

125selection criteria (cutoffs) of the HRD-AIs in ovarian cancer, we utilized ovarian cancer

126samples from the TCGA (OVA-TCGA) and its associated genomic and methylomics data.

127Importantly, in contrast to previous studies that focused on distinguishing specific AIs

128associated with *BRCA1/2* mutation status, we aimed to identify AIs overrepresented in

129samples carrying associated HRD alterations (mutations, gene deletions, promoter

130hypermethylation) compared to the HR proficient (HRP) samples (**Fig. 2a**). Via a systematic

131approach utilizing prior knowledge and deep multi-omics data, we identified 93 HRD

132samples harboring a somatic or germline mutation, gene deletion or promoter

133hypermethylation in the *BRCA1/2* or *RAD51* paralog genes (**Fig. 2a**). In contrast, we

134identified 34 HRP samples that do not harbor any of the alterations used to select HRD

135samples, nor deletion in any other HR gene. A detailed description of the genomic

136alterations in the samples is reported in **Supplementary Table 1**. Overall, the HRD samples

137had a higher amount of all AIs than the HRP samples quantified using SNP array data

138(**Supplementary Fig. 2a**). Importantly, the HRD samples had a notably higher proportion of

139AIs with specific sizes that span from 1Mbs to 30Mbs (**Supplementary Figs. 2b, c**), while

140the HRP samples contained a higher proportion of AIs and LOH events smaller than 1Mbs.

142We next applied a decision-tree[12] machine learning classifier in an iterative approach to
143identify the specific sizes of LOH, LST and TAI events overrepresented in the HRD samples
144(**Fig. 2b**). This approach quantified the AIs of a given size, then evaluates independently 1)
145the difference in abundance of the selected AIs between the HRD versus the HRP samples
146and 2) the classification accuracy of HRD from the HRP samples by machine learning
147decision trees that took abundance of AIs as the splitting criteria. Optimization of LOH, LST
148and TAI events identified distinct AIs in ovarian cancer as compared to the HRD score used
149previously in clinical trials (hereafter called Telli2016). Importantly, the iterative approach
150increased the accuracy of classification of the HRD/HRP samples from 84.9% with the
151previous cutoffs to 89.4% with the optimized cutoffs for LOH events (**Fig. 2c**). For LSTs, the
152accuracy increased from 87.0% to 90.6% when using the optimized cutoffs (**Supplementary**
153**Fig. 2d**). We also assessed the classification accuracy of LST conformed by three
154consecutive AIs, however this produced a lower accuracy (**Supplementary Fig. 2e**).
155Similarly, for TAI events, the accuracy increased from 72.2% to 80.6% (**Supplementary Fig.**
156**2f**). As the largest improvement in accuracy of TAI occurred after including TAIs larger than
1571MBs, and inclusion of bigger sizes did not increase considerably the accuracy, we decided
158to ignore TAIs smaller than 1Mb rather than selecting TAIs with a specific size.

160Via systematic optimization, we observed the following AIs to be characteristic of HRD in
161ovarian cancer: 1) LOH > 15Mb and <50Mb, 2) for LSTs AI > 12Mb with a space between
162them <1Mb and 3) TAI >1Mb. The sum of these events is hereafter called the ovaHRDscar
163levels. Then, we used the distribution of ovaHRDscar levels to determine the optimal cutoff
164value to separate HRD and HRP samples. The value that best separated the two
165distributions was 54 (**Fig. 2d**), meaning that values higher than 54 correspond to HRD, with
166a higher accuracy for HR status classification (BA=0.89) as compared to the Telli2016 cutoff
167of 42 (BA=0.79).

169**ovaHRDscar algorithm shows concordance in WGS data and correlates with**

170**mutational signature 3**

171In order to illustrate the relationships of ovaHRDscar with other known signatures associated

172with HRD, we annotated OVA-TCGA samples according to mutations, gene deletions and

173promoter hypermethylation patterns previously reported associated with HRD[3] (**Fig. 2e**). On

174average, samples with somatic mutations in *BRCA1*, *BRCA2*, *PTEN*, or somatic mutations or

175gene deletions in any gene belonging to the Fanconi Anemia (FA), or the HR pathways

176showed high ovaHRDscar levels. Likewise, samples that contained hypermethylation in the

177promoter regions of the genes *BRCA1* or *RAD51C*, or germline mutations in *BRCA1* or

178*BRCA2* had on average high ovaHRDscar levels. As predicted, samples harboring an

179amplification in *CCNE1* (**Supplementary Fig. 2g**) had significantly lower levels of

180ovaHRDscar. Remarkably, samples with *EMSY* amplification and *CDK12* somatic mutation

181also presented with low levels. Thus, in addition to the *BRCA1/2* or *RAD51* paralogs, all the

182groups of samples with any disruption in genes related to HRD, except those positive for

183*EMSY* amplification and *CDK12* somatic mutation, contained on average significantly higher

184levels of ovaHRDscar as compared to samples with *CCNE1* amplification (**Supplementary**

185**Fig. 2g**).

187Next, we quantified the ovaHRDscar levels on whole genome sequencing (WGS) data of

188HGSC samples from the Pan-Cancer Analysis of Whole Genomes project (PCAWG)[13]. First,

189we evaluated the level of agreement of the ovaHRDscar levels between WGS and SNP-

190array data. For this we selected 41 OVA-TCGA samples that were also included in the

191PCAWG project. The ovaHRDscar levels were highly concordant between WGS and SNP-

192arrays (Lin's concordance correlation coefficient, ccc = 0.915; **Supplementary Fig. 2h**), this

193is consistent with a previous report in breast cancer samples that quantified AIs in the two

194platforms[14]. Next, we tested the correlation of ovaHRDscar with the single base substitution

195signature 3 (SBS3), which has been associated with HRD in human cancers samples[15]. We

196found that the ovaHRDscar levels detected in WGS positively correlated with the proportion

197of SBS3 in WGS (Pearson, r'=0.37, p= 8.4e-05; **Fig. 2f**). In addition, we observed a

198significant correlation of ovaHRDscar from SNP arrays with SBS3 inferred from whole

199exome sequencing (WES) data using SigMA, a likelihood-based approach to identify

200samples enriched in SBS3[16] in OVA-TCGA (Pearson r'=0.5, p<2.2e-16; **Supplementary Fig.**

201**2i**). The SBS3 proportions also correlated with the number of HRD-AIs using the Telli2016

202algorithm in PCAWG (**Supplementary Fig. 2j**) and in OVA-TCGA (**Supplementary Fig. 2k**).

203The ovaHRDscar algorithm detected a total 149 samples as HRD (55%) and the SigMA tool

204classified 151 samples (56%) as SBS3+; in comparison, the Telli2016 algorithm identified

205220 samples (81%) (**Fig. 2g**). Importantly, ovaHRDscar showed an improved agreement

206with SigMA (agreement 77% and cohen's kappa = 0.53) as compared to the Telli2016

207algorithm (agreement 69.3% and cohen's kappa = 0.34; **Fig. 2g**).

209**ovaHRDscar improves the prediction of PFS and OS compared to previous algorithms**

210Next, we measured the association of HR-status classification by ovaHRDscar with

211progression free survival (PFS, see methods) in HGSC patients treated with platinum-based

212chemotherapy from the TCGA and from an independent validation dataset (HERCULES).

213We compared the performance of ovaHRDscar versus *BRCA1/2* deficiency status, the

214Telli2016 algorithm, and to a HRD/HRP cutoff value of 63 HRD-AIs as proposed by Tacaya

215et al[17]. As *BRCA1/2* mutations can affect patient outcomes, we assessed the performances

216of ovaHRDscar in the TCGA also after excluding the samples used in the training set, even

217though clinical outcomes were not utilized for the optimization. *BRCA1/2* mutation or

218deletion status (*BRCA*mut/del) was not significantly associated with PFS (log-rank p=0.72;

219**Fig. 3a**). For OVA-TCGA (**Fig. 3a to 2c**), we found that ovaHRDscar positivity was

220associated with prolonged PFS (log-rank p=6.2e-05; **Fig. 3c**) with smaller 95% confidence

221intervals and a lower p-value as compared to the Telli2016 algorithm (log-rank p=0.0024;

222**Fig. 3b**); the median PFS was 19.3 months for the ovaHRDscar positive patients and 17.8

223months for the Telli2016 positive patients. Consistently, the ovaHRDscar positive patients

224had a longer PFS (log-rank p=0.0085; **Supplementary Fig. 3c**), while the Telli2016

225algorithm was not statistically significant in predicting PFS in the HERCULES cohort (log-
226rank p=0.051; **Supplementary Fig. 3b**).

228We next used Cox proportional hazard models to assess the performance of the HRD

229classification status algorithms for predicting PFS outcomes. We adjusted for the presence

230of residual tumor after the primary debulking surgery, as that has been shown to be a strong

231independent prognostic factor for PFS[18]. We found that ovaHRDcar positivity was associated

232most significantly with a prolonged PFS in OVA-TCGA when adjusting for residual tumor

233(Wald test p=9.2e−08, **Fig. 3d**) outperforming the Telli2016 algorithm (Wald test p=2.9e−07)

234and the Tacaya algorithm (Wald test p=5.2e−06), also after excluding the samples used in

235the optimization (middle panel, **Fig. 3d**) and when not adjusting for the residual tumor

236(**Supplementary Fig. 3d**). In contrast to the previous algorithms, ovaHRDscar positivity was

237associated with longer PFS also in the independent HERCULES cohort (HR 0.359, Wald

238test p=0.0061).The results were similar in the most challenging patient population after

239excluding the *BRCA*mut/del samples from the cohorts (Lower panel, **Fig. 3d**). We inspected

240the performance of the HRD-classification algorithms in a second independent prospective

241cohort (TERVA) with tumor-only SNP array profiling performed with a panel of normals (see

242methods). Importantly, ovaHRDscar positivity most significantly predicted longer PFS using

243log-rank test and cox proportional hazard model (**Supplementary Fig. 3e to 3g**). For most

244of the comparisons these results were consistent in the non-adjusted Cox regression models

245(**Supplementary Fig. 3e**).

247Subsequently, we next explored the association of ovaHRDscar with overall survival (OS) in

248HGSC patients in the OVA-TCGA cohort, and in an independent AU-OVA cohort in PCAWG.

249The clinical data in the prospective cohorts (HERCULES, TERVA) were not mature enough

250for OS evaluation. We found that both in the OVA-TCGA and PCAWG datasets,

251ovaHRDscar was superior to BRCA1/2 deficiency status, or to Tell2016 or Tacaya2020

252algorithms (**Fig. 3g, Supplementary Fig. 3j**). In Cox regression analysis for OS using the

253patient age at diagnosis as a covariable, ovaHRDscar had improved significance for 254predicting OS (**Fig. 3h**). Of note, the hazard-ratio values were lower in OVA-TCGA using the 255Telli2016 algorithm however the corresponding HR was not significant in the PCAWG 256cohort. Consistent with the PFS analysis, the ovaHRDscar hazard-ratios and significance 257were superior to the Tacaya2020 algorithm in all comparisons. These results were 258concordant also using a non-adjusted Cox regression analysis (**Supplementary Fig. 3k**). 259Additionally, we compared the performance of ovaHRDscar to the CHROD algorithm that 260uses structural variations and a random forest implementation to classify the HR status[19]. 261We found that ovaHRDscar showed an improved prediction of OS as compared to the 262CHORD algorithm using log-rank test (**Supplementary Fig. 3l, m**) and using cox 263proportional hazard models (**Supplementary Fig. 3n**) in the PCAWG cohort.

265**Low intra-patient variation of ovaHRDscar in spatiotemporal tumor profiling**

266We next explored whether the anatomical site or timing of sample retrieval causes a 267potential bias in the HR status classification in ovarian cancer. For this, we explored the 268concordance of ovaHRDscar levels in the HERCULES prospective cohort, which includes 89 269tumor samples of different anatomical sites and different treatment phases (treatment naive, 270after neoadjuvant chemotherapy, or at relapse) from 33 HGSC patients (**Fig. 4a**). Consistent 271with the TCGA dataset, the ovaHRDscar levels corresponded with the known genomic 272predictors of HR status (**Fig. 4b**). Importantly, we found that the levels were similar in paired, 273anatomically matched samples obtained before and after neoadjuvant chemotherapy, and 274also in primary (treatment naive) as compared to relapsed tumors (**Fig. 4c**). Further, the 275intra-patient levels variability was not explained by the differences in tumor purity (minimum 27630%, see methods) (**Supplementary Fig. 4b** and **Supplementary Fig. 4c**). We observed 277some intra-patient variation between the anatomical sites (**Fig. 4a**), however it was lower 278than the inter-patient variation (**U test p=1.95e-38; Supplementary Fig. 4a**). To determine 279the optimal anatomical sampling site, we next assessed the HR-status per patient in 280treatment-naive primary samples and compared ovaHRDscar calculated from specific

281anatomical sites (or average if many samples per site) including 1) all samples (All) 2)

282ovarian (OVA) 3) ovarian or adnexal (OVA/ADN) 4) omentum, and OVA/ADN if omentum

283sample not available (OME-OVA/ADN) 5) OVA/ADN, and then omentum if OVA/ADN not

284available (OVA/ADN-OME). Overall, the level of agreement for the HR-status classification

285between the prioritization of anatomical sites ranged from 94% and 97% respectively

286(**Supplementary Fig. 4d**). Importantly, ovaHRDscar status calculated primarily from ovarian

287or adnexal tumor was the strongest predictor of PFS improvement (**Fig. 4d**, **Supplementary**

288**Fig. 4e**). Consistently, prioritizing ovarian tumors (OVA) classified all tumors harboring

289*CCNE1* amplification as HRP (**Supplementary Fig. 4d**).

291DISCUSSION

292HRD tumors exhibit a distinct clinical phenotype with superior responses to platinum-based

293chemotherapies and sensitivity to PARP inhibitors. Herein, we established ovaHRDscar, a

294systematically optimized biomarker for HRD to improve patient selection and clinical

295outcomes in ovarian cancer.

297Several genomic approaches have been utilized to detect HRD, including 1) identification of

298single genetic mutations leading to predicted HRD[21], 2) profiles of DNA repair deficiency

299gene expression[22,23], 3) specific mutational patterns accumulated due to HRD[8,9,24] or 4)

300structural genomic imbalances[7,25]. These genomic features have been implemented either

301alone, or in combinations in the search for optimal HRD detection which has profound

302therapeutic implications[26]. It is now becoming accepted that benefit from HR-directed

303therapeutic such as PARP inhibitors extend beyond the identification of HRD via individual

304genetic mutations[27]. This is due to the facts that and genes such as *BRCA1/2* and *RAD51*,

305can be altered beyond mutations e.g. via hypermethylation or gene deletions[3,28], and not all

306genomic events leading to HRD have yet been defined[29]. Allelic imbalances are indicative of

307the genetic consequences of HRD and, although not dynamically reflective of tumors

308functional HRD status, have shown promise as a biomarker predictive for the magnitude of

309benefit from PARP inhibitors, especially in the front-line setting[30,31]. The HRD test used in the

310ovarian cancer clinical trials was, however, optimized using breast cancer samples or a

311mixture of breast cancer and ovarian cancer samples using *BRCA1/2* mutation as the sole

312denominator of HRD, and *BRCA*wt status as HRP[8,9,10]. Importantly, also European Society of

313Medical Oncology indicated an urgent need to optimize the HRD test in ovarian cancer to

314improve the identification of especially the HRP tumors[23]. Via a pan-cancer characterization

315of AIs, we observed marked differences in the AI patterns of ovarian cancer as compared to

316other cancer types including TNBC, especially among the *BRCA*wt tumors. This prompted

317us to systematically identify the genomic footprints of HRD-AIs in ovarian cancer using

318carefully annotated multi-omics data from the TCGA and an iterative machine learning and

319statistical approach.

321ovaHRDscar levels were concordant with tumor genetic mutations and copy number events

322predictive of HRD status both in the TCGA dataset, and in an external validation cohort

323(HERCULES). We found significantly lower levels of ovaHRDscar in tumors with *CCNE1*

324amplification, proposed as mutually exclusive with HRD and associated with poor clinical

325outcomes[32]. In line with a previous report[17], tumors with *CDK12* mutation showed overall low

326levels of ovaHRDscar. Further, ovaHRDscar showed a higher concordance with mutational

327signature 3 as compared to the Telli2016 algorithm. Importantly, ovaHRDscar can be applied

328to detect HRD in HGSC samples using WGS or SNP-arrays, making it an attractive

329biomarker for the clinical setting.

331A dichotomous thresholding of a predictive HRD biomarker is needed for therapeutic

332decision making. In Telli2016, the cutoff for the total number of events was derived from a

333mixture of breast and ovarian cancer samples[10]. More recently, Tacaya et al set out to

334improve the HRD test by adjusting the cutoff value in ovarian cancer[17], however only

335*BRCA*mut status was used for separating the HRD from HRP samples and the same

336genomic features of HRD-AIs were used as in Telli et al. In ovaHRDscar, after optimization

337of both the genomic footprints of HRD-AIs, and the cutoff, we identified more samples as

338being HRP, and reliably separated HRD from HRP with improved accuracy as compared to

339the previous algorithms. In survival analyses, our fully optimized ovaHRDscar outperformed

340the two previous algorithms, indicating that both the identification of the genomic footprints of

341HRD-AIs, and the selection of the optimal cutoff are needed to improve HRD detection in

342ovarian cancer.

344HRD tumors are known to have superior responses to platinum-based chemotherapy and

345prolonged overall survival[33]. Consistently, ovaHRDscar improved the prediction of PFS and

346OS for platinum-based chemotherapy in the OVA-TCGA, also after excluding the patients

347used in the training set, even though clinical outcomes were not used in the optimization.

348ovaHRDscar significantly predicted PFS and OS also among only the *BRCA*wt tumors.

349Importantly, ovaHRDscar improved the prediction of clinical outcomes in two independent

350patient cohorts, and in multivariable models after adjusting for clinical covariables, indicating

351that ovaHRDscar reliably captures the phenotypic clinical behavior of HRD ovarian cancers.

352ovaHRDscar levels correlated with genomic features and responses to platinum-based

353chemotherapy, however none of the clinical cohorts included patients treated with PARP

354inhibitors, and thus the potential predictive biomarker role of ovaHRDscar would require

355prospective validation in larger patient series.

357Finally, as HGSC is characterized by marked intratumor heterogeneity, we to aimed to

358assess whether the anatomical site of tumor sampling or the exposure to chemotherapy

359affect HRD assessment. Our analysis of 98 samples collected from different anatomical sites

360and treatment phases indicated that ovaHRDscar levels remain similar in spatiotemporally

361distinct samples from each patient, including anatomically site-matched samples collected

362before and after neoadjuvant chemotherapy. ovaHRDscar can thus be reliably assessed

363during routine clinical practice also after neoadjuvant chemotherapy, given that the tumor

364purity remains higher than 30%. Interestingly, the ovaHRDscar levels were also similar
365between treatment naïve and relapsed tumors, reflecting the nature of HRD-AIs as historical
366consequences rather than dynamic readouts of functional HRD. Overall, the interpatient
367variation was higher than the intrapatient variation, however in four out of 21 (19%) of
368patients the HRD category was dependent on the sampling site/time. The survival and
369genetic analyses indicated that ovarian or adnexal sites followed by omentum could be the
370preferred sites for HRD testing, warranting future validation in larger cohorts.

372In conclusion, ovaHRDscar shows promise as a fully optimized, robust, clinically feasible
373assay for both outcome prediction and selection of patients to HR-directed therapies. With
374the fully documented, publicly available algorithms and optimization pipeline our method can
375be implemented clinically and applied to other tumor types for optimized patient selection
376and to improve outcomes in cancer.

377MATERIAL AND METHODS

378**Data set collection and classification**

379For PanCan samples, Allele-specific copy number segments were obtained from the
380Genomics Data Commons (GDC) portal (https://portal.gdc.cancer.gov/). TNBC were defined
381as those breast cancers marked as negative by *er_status_by_ihc*, *pr_status_by_ihc* and
382*her2_status_by_ihc* in the clinical file "*nationwidechildrens.org_clinical_patient_brca.txt*"
383available in the GDC. For TNBC, samples were considered with *BRCA*mut if reported in
384Knijnenburg et al 2018[34] with gene deletion, gene mutation or gene silencing in *BRCA*1 or
385*BRCA*2 genes; while *BRCA*wt those reported with information of no alterations.

387For OVA-TCGA analysis: Allele-specific copy number segments, DNA methylation, gene-
388level CNV profiles and clinical information data was obtained from the GDC data portal.
389Genes were considered with a "strong signal of deletion" if those were reported (labeled by -
3902) by Taylor et al 2018[35] and with signal of deletion those reported in the GDC portal. Gene

391promoter hypermethylation was considered when the probes upto 1500bp downstream the

392transcription start site had an average beta value ≥0.75. The catalog of mc3 somatic

393mutations was obtained from the PanCanAtlas-GDC data portal

394(https://gdc.cancer.gov/about-data/publications/pancanatlas). Somatic mutations were

395classified according to the recommendations of the American College of Medical Genetics

396and Genomics[36] using the web-tool VarSome[37] only pathogenic somatic mutations were

397considered in the analysis. For germline mutations we selected those labeled as pathogenic

398and prioritized by Huang et al 2018[38]. Genes were considered part of the HR pathway, or

399other associated pathways according to the Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes

400database[39]. Complementary clinical information was obtained from the PanCanAtlas-GDC

401data portal. For PCAWG: Allele-specific copy number segments, mutational drivers and

402clinical information was obtained from the International Cancer Genome Consortium data

403portal (https://dcc.icgc.org/pcawg).

405**HRD-AI optimization**

406The identification of HRD-AIs[10] was performed using an R package based on a script

407previously reported[40]. Samples were classified as HRD and HRP according to Fig. 1A. LOH

408events of different minimum sizes i and maximum sizes L, Large scale transitions (LSTS:

409two allelic imbalances of a size S separated by a genomic distance no longer than M) of

410different S and M values and telomeric allelic imbalances (TAI) of minimum size t were

411selected by an R script. The mean difference in abundance of the selected AIs between

412HRD and HRP samples, was calculated using Mann Whitney U test. Decision trees were

413used to classify samples as HRD and HRP with the R package 'rpart' according to the

414abundance of the selected AIs (Figure 1B). Accuracy of the classifier was assessed using

415balanced accuracy. The values i, L, S, M, t, with the lower U test p-value and best accuracy

416for classification were selected for ovaHRDscar.

418**Survival analysis**

419Survival plots, log-rank test and cox regression models were performed with an R script

420using the package 'survminer' and 'survival'. Data from patients treated by cisplatin or

421carboplatin was selected. For PCAWG, data from all patients was used (no treatment

422information available). Only data from primary samples (treatment naive) were used.

423*BRCA*mut/del status included pathogenic mutations, germline mutations and gene deletions

424with a "strong signal of deletion" as described above. Residual tumor after surgery was

425categorized as present or absent. For indicated cox regressions, the residual tumor status or

426patient age at diagnosis was used as a covariable. Progression free survival (PFS) and

427overall survival (OS) was defined as in Liu et al 2018[41]. The CHROD signature HR status

428classification for PCAWG samples was adopted from Nguyen et al 2020[19].

430**Prospective HERCULES and TERVA data analysis**

431The tumor samples were prospectively collected in the HERCULES (http://www.project-

432hercules.eu) and TERVA projects (https://www.healthcampusturku.fi/innovation-new/terva-

433project/). The Ethics Committee of the Hospital District of Southwest Finland, approved both

434studies ETMK Dnro: 145 /1801/2015. All patients gave their informed consent. For

435HERCULES, paired fresh tumor samples and blood normal samples were sequenced using

436Illumina-Hiseq WGS. Alignment to the human genome GRCh38 was done using the burrows

437wheeler aligner BWA-MEM[42]. Mutations were detected using GATK4-Mutect2 approach[43].

438Mutect2 was used for detection of allele specific copy numbers. Calculation of tumor purity

439was estimated in two ways: 1) Based in somatic copy-number profiles using the software

440Ascat[44] 2) Based in *TP53* variant allele frequency (*TP53*-VAF), purity was estimated using

441the formula: *2 / ((CN / TP53-VAF) - (CN - 2)),* where CN corresponds to the copy-number

442value in the corresponding somatic mutations in *TP53*; subsequently the higher purity value

443was selected. For the TERVA samples tumor-only profiling, the tumor samples were

444genotyped using the Infinium™ Global Screening Array-24 v2.0. B allele frequency and

445LogR ratios per sample probe was calculated using Illumina-GenomeStudio. Ascat software

446was used for the detection of allele specific copy numbers, *ascat.predictGermlineGenotypes*

447module was performed adjusting parameters according to a panel of 200 normal germline

448blood samples.

450**Statistics**

451The statistics analysis was performed in R. Difference in mean abundances was calculated

452using Mann Whitney U test. The distribution Skewness of AI sizes in different types of

453cancers was performed using the package DescTools. Agreement was calculated using the

454Cohen kappa test. Concordance was measured using Lin's concordance correlation

455coefficient. Level of correlations was assessed using Pearson correlations. P value less than

4560.05 was considered statistically significant.

458**Code Availability**

459The code used to perform the AI optimization is available on Github:

460(https://github.com/farkkilab/findHRDsignatures), ovaHRDscar implementation is available

461as and R package on Github (https://github.com/farkkilab/ovaHRDscar).

463**Data availability**

464Data available... ?

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473AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

475COMPETING INTEREST

476The authors declare no competing interests

478Supplementary Information is available for this paper

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FIGURE LEGENDS

Figure 1. Pan-cancer characterization of AIs reveal unique patterns in ovarian cancer.

a Types of cancer with more than 200 samples selected from TCGA, their corresponding

number of samples are shown in the bars. **b** Number of AIs bigger than 3Mb and smaller

608than 50Mb per sample, ovarian cancer shows the highest abundance of AIs. **c** Median

609length of AIs (bigger than 3Mb and smaller than 50Mb) per sample, ovarian cancer shows

610the lowest median size per sample. **d** Hierarchical clustering for the types of cancer using

611as variables the median length, median number of AIs per sample and the skewness of the

612distribution of AIs sizes. **e** Ovarian cancer samples show a higher amount of AIs than TNBC

613(U test, p=0.01). **f** Comparison of *BRCA*mut samples (somatic deletion, promoter

614hypermethylation and gene deletions of *BRCA*1/2 genes), shows not significantly higher

615amounts (U test) of AIs in ovarian cancer than in TNBC. **g** Comparison of *BRCA*wt samples,

616shows higher amounts of AIs in ovarian cancer than in TNBC (U test, p=1.1e-04). **h**

617Difference in abundance for AIs of specific sizes between ovarian cancer and TNBC, dot

618sizes correspond to U test p values and dot colors to the fold change (ratio of ovarian-TNBC

619median abundance of AIs minus one), only dots for corresponding significantly differences

620are shown (U test, p < 0.05).

623**Figure 2. Optimization of size selection for AIs associated with HRD in ovarian cancer**

624**and relationship with HRD biomarkers. a** Selection criteria for HRD, HRP and Undefined

625samples in OVA-TCGA. **b** A schematic of the approach used to optimize the size selection

626criteria (cutoff) of HRD-AIs in ovarian cancer samples. Iteratively, AIs of different sizes were

627taken, in each iteration it was evaluated: 1) the difference of abundance (U test) of the

628selected AIs between HRD versus HRP samples, 2) the accuracy of a decision tree classifier

629for HR status taking as splitting criteria the abundance of the selected AIs; all results were

630stored and the best cutoffs were selected for the ovaHRDscar. **c** For LOH events, the size of

631dots represent the decision tree balanced accuracy (BA) when using the corresponding AIs

632sizes, colors correspond to the statistical (U test, p value) difference in abundance of AIs

633between HRD versus HRP samples; black box correspond to the selection criteria proposed

634by Telli2016, blue box correspond to the best BA value. **d** Density distribution of HRD-AIs

635according to Telli2016 and ovaHRDscar algorithms. The red dashed line represents the

636cutoff established to define HRD or HRP samples for Telli2016 (>= 42) and for ovaHRDscar

637(>= 54), the blue dashed line in the left panel represents the cutoff proposed in Tacaya et al.

6382020 (>= 63). The balanced accuracy (BA) for classifying the HR status is shown for

639Telli2016 and ovaHRDscar. **e** Levels of ovaHRDscar in OVA-TCGA samples harboring

640different genetic or epigenetic alterations associated with HRD in ovarian cancer[3]. In the

641outer ring of the pie chart every line represents a sample; in the center of the pie chart the

642colors correspond to the average number of HRD-AIs per genetic or epigenetic alteration.

643Somatic mutations included gene deletions. **f** The proportion of single base substitution

644signature 3 (SBS3) is correlated (Pearson r'=0.37) with the number of ovaHRDscar in

645PCAWG samples. **g** The SBS3 status inferred by SigMA has a higher agreement with

646ovaHRDscar (agrement=77%, cohen's kappa = 0.53) than with the Telli2016 algorithm

647(agrement=69.3%, cohen's kappa = 0.34), in the pie charts and table + and - correspond

648respectively to the number of HRD positive and HRD negative samples identified under each

649criteria. In the button is shown the number of samples selected under the corresponding

650criteria and the level of agreement.

652**Figure 3. HRD detected by ovaHRDscar is associated with higher PFS and OS in**

653**HGSC patients treated with platinum. a to c** Kaplan-Meier plots of PFS in OVA-TCGA

654patients stratified with different criteria, in **a** patients were stratified according to

655*BRCA*mut/del status with no significant difference in their PFS probability over time (log-

656rank, p=0.72); in **b** patients were stratified according to Telli2016 (log-rank, p=0.0024); in **c**

657patients were stratified using the ovaHRDscar algorithm, HRD patients had a improvement

658in PFS time over HRP (log-rank, p=6.2e-05). **d** Cox regression results for the association of

659PFS with several genomic HR status classification criteria (*BRCA*mut/del, Telli2016,

660Tacaya2020, ovaHRDscar) in two independent cohorts, for every regression it was used as

661covariable the residual tumor status (yes or no) after surgery. Three panels are shown: at left

662the OVA-TCGA cohort, at the middle OVA-TCGA cohort excluding the HRD and HRP

663samples used for the AIs optimization, at the right the Hercules WGS prospective cohort.

664Inside each panel is shown for classification criteria: the number of patients (N) selected as

665positive or HRD and their corresponding proportion (Prop), the hazard-ratio (HR) for the cox

666regression and the p-value (Pval) of the regression. ovaHRDscars show higher significance

667(lower p values) in every cohort even after excluding patients with tumors harboring

668*BRCA*mut/del (bottom section). **e to g,** Kaplan-Meier plots of OS for OVA-TCGA patients

669selected using different criteria, ovaHRDscar show the higher significance (lower long-rank

670test p-values). **h** Cox regression results for the association of OS with several genomic HR

671status classification criteria (*BRCA*mut/del, Telli2016, Tacaya2020, ovaHRDscar) in two

672independent cohorts. Panel at the right corresponds to the AU-PCAWG samples, the left

673and center panels and their corresponding columns correspond to those described in Fig.

6743d. ovaHRDscars show higher significance (lower p values) in every cohort even after

675excluding patients with tumors harboring *BRCA*mut/del (bottom section).

677**Figure 4. Low intra-patient anatomical variation of ovaHRDscar. a** An overview of the

678samples and their corresponding ovaHRDscar levels per patient inside a prospective cohort

679analyzed by WGS (HERCULES). Per patient tumor samples were taken in three different

680treatment times and from different anatomical sites as described; in parentheses are

681displayed the corresponding number of samples. **b** Levels of ovaHRDscar in samples

682harburing different genetic or epigenetic alterations associated with HRD, in the outer ring of

683the pie chart every bar represents a sample carrying the corresponding alteration; in the

684center of the pie chart the colors correspond to the average levels of ovaHRDscar per

685alteration. **c** ovaHRDscar values between paired samples for each patient (connected dots)

686does not vary significantly (paired U test) over treatment phase. **d** Cox regression results for

687the association of PFS with HR status classification by Telli2016 and ovaHRDscar, the HR

688status per patient was assessed using three anatomical sample prioritization approaches: 1)

689average HRD-AIs per all samples 2) omentum, and OVA/ADN if omentum sample not

690available (OME-OVA/ADN) 3) OVA/ADN, and then omentum if OVA/ADN not available

691(OVA/ADN-OME). Last prioritization approach has a higher association with PFS.

695**Supplementary Figure 1. Pan-cancer characterization of LOH and unique patterns in** 696**ovarian cancer. a.** Boxplot for the number of LOH bigger than 3Mb and smaller than 50Mb 697per sample, ovarian cancer shows the higher abundance of LOH. **b** Median length of LOH 698(bigger than 3Mb and smaller than 50Mb) per sample. **c** Hierarchical clustering of the types 699of cancer using as variables the median length, median number of LOH per sample and the 700skewness of the distribution of LOH sizes. **d** Ovarian cancer samples show a lower amount 701of LOH than TNBC (U test, p=0.005). **e** Comparison of *BRCA*mut samples (somatic deletion, 702promoter hypermethylation and gene deletions of *BRCA*1/2 genes), ovarian cancer shows 703higher amounts of LOH than TNBC (U test, p=0.044). **f** Comparison of *BRCA*wt samples, not 704significant abundance difference of LOH (U test, NS) between ovarian cancer and TNBC.

706**Supplementary Figure 2. Descriptive statistics of HRD and HRP ovarian samples,** 707**optimization of HRD selection. a** Number of allelic imbalances in HRD and HRP samples 708in OVA-TCGA, in average HRD samples contain a higher number of allelic imbalances (U 709test, p value=1.99e-05). **b** The average proportion of segments (AI or normal) equal or 710greater than the given size in HRD (red) and HRP (blue) samples, the blue and red lines 711correspond to smoothing using cubic splines. **c** Density distribution of LOH events in HRD 712(red) and HRP (blue) samples. **d** LSTs specific AIs size cutoffs (blue boxes) uperform the 713reported by Telli et al 2016 (black box); the size of dots represent the decision tree balanced 714accuracy (BA) when using the corresponding cutoff, colors correspond to the statistical (U 715test p value) difference in abundance of AIs between HRD versus HRP samples. **e** Statistical 716significance for identifying HRD samples using three tandem allelic imbalances LSTs of a 717given minimum size (x axis) and distance between them smaller than 1 to 4 Mb (y axis). Dot 718sizes and colors resemble those in Supplementary Figure 1e. **f** The selection of TAIs >1Mb

719differentiate HRD from HRP samples better than using all size TAIs, the upper panel shows

720statistical (U test, p values) difference in abundance of AIs between HRD versus HRP

721samples when selecting the corresponding TAIs, dot sizes and colors in the lower panel

722correspond to the description in panel d and e. **g** ovaHRDscar levels per genomic alteration

723in OVA-TCGA, U test p values are shown for the comparison of levels between the

724corresponding alterations versus CCNE1 amplification. **h** Bland-Altman plot that shows the

725concordance (Concordance correlation coefficient, *CCC* = 0.915) between the number of

726ovaHRDscars detected by SNP-arrays and WGS in the intersecting samples from OVA-

727TCGA and PCAWG. **i** Correlation (Pearson, r=0.5) between the SBS3 exposure in WES

728data from OVA-TCGA inferred using SigMA versus the number of ovaHRDscars in SNP

729arrays. **j** Correlation (Pearson, r=0.38) between the SBS3 proportion in WGS data from

730PCAWG versus the number of scars using the Telli2016 approach. **k** Correlation (Pearson,

731r=0.51) between the SBS3 exposure in WES data from OVA-TCGA inferred using SigMA

732versus the number of scars using the Telli2016 approach in SNP arrays.

734**Supplementary Figure 3. HRD detected by ovaHRDscar is associated with better PFS**

735**and OS in ovarian cancer patients after normalizing with relevant covariables. a to c**

736Kaplan-Meier plots of PFS in Hercules cohort, the patients were stratified using different

737criteria; in the left panel (**a**) patients were stratified according to *BRCA*mut/del status with no

738significant difference in their PFS probability (p=0.14); in the middle panel (**b**) patients were

739stratified according to Telli et al, 2016 algorithm; in the right panel (**c**) patients were stratified

740using the ovaHRDscar algorithm and there is a significant difference (improvement) in PFS

741time (p = 0.024). **d** Hazard ratios (HR) for improvement of PFS in ovarian cancer patients

742using different criteria in two independent cohorts, the colors, rows and columns descriptions

743are the same as in Figure 2d. **e to f** Kaplan-Meier plots of PFS in the TERVA cohort,

744patients were stratified using different criteria; in the left panel (**e**) patients were stratified

745according to Telli et al, 2016 algorithm; in the right panel (**f**) samples were stratified using the

746ovaHRDscar. **g** Hazard ratios (HR) for improvement of PFS in the TERVA cohort, patients

747were stratified using different criteria the colors, rows and columns descriptions are the same

748as in Figure 2b. **h to j** Kaplan-Meier plots of OS in Hercules patients and stratified using

749different criteria; in the left panel (**h**) patients were stratified according to *BRCA*mut/del

750status with no significant difference (p=0.045), in the middle panel (**i**) patients were stratified

751according to Telli et al, 2016 algorithm with no significant difference (p=0.022), in the right

752panel (**j**) samples were stratified using the ovaHRDscar algorithm and there is a significant

753difference (improvement) in PFS time (p = 0.006). **k** Hazard ratios (HR) for improvement of

754OS in ovarian cancer, patients were stratified using different criteria inside two independent

755cohorts, for every cox regression it was used as covariable the patient age at diagnosis, the

756rows, colors and columns descriptions are the same as in Figure 2h. **l to m** Kaplan-Meier

757plots of OS in the PCAWG cohort, at the left panel (**l**) the patients were stratified according

758to CHORD signature reported by developers, at the right panel (**m**) the patients were

759stratified according to ovaHRDscar approach. **n** Hazard ratios (HR) for improvement of OS

760in the PCAWG cohort, patients were stratified using different CHROD and ovaHRDscar

761criteria; the dot colors, rows and columns descriptions are the same as in Figure 2d.

763**Supplementary Figure 4. Differences in ovaHRDcar intra patient and relationship with**

764**tumor purity. a** Difference in the ovaHRDscar values intra-patients and inter-patients in the

765Hercules prospective cohort (U test, p=1.95e-38)**. b** Schemed of the paired samples over

766treatment time, their purity and ovaHRDcar levels. **c** For each patient it was calculated the

767difference in ovaHRDscar and purity between every pair of their samples, no association

768between purity and ovaHRDscar difference (Pearson, p=0.4). **d** HR status classification

769using five different approaches to assess the ovaHRDscar values per patient (see results

770sections), per patient genomic alterations related with HR are shown. **e** Hazard ratios (HR)

771for improvement of PFS in the hercules cohort using different criteria to determine HR and

772under the five different approaches to assess the scar values (see results sections), for

773every cox regression it was used as covariable the residual tumor status (yes or no) after

774surgery, the colors, rows and columns descriptions are the same as in Figure 2b.

Figure 1

h Difference in abundance between OV and TNBC

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4