Multi-omics analyses of early-onset familial Alzheimer's disease and Sanfilippo syndrome zebrafish models reveal commonalities in disease mechanisms

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Abstract:
Sanfilippo syndrome (mucopolysaccharidosis type III, MPSIII) causes childhood dementia, while Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of adult-onset dementia. There is no cure for either of these diseases, and therapeutic options are extremely limited. Increasing evidence suggests commonalities in the pathogenesis of these diseases. However, a direct molecular-level comparison of these diseases has never been performed. Here, we exploited the power of zebrafish reproduction (large families of siblings from single mating events raised together in consistent environments) to conduct sensitive, internally controlled, comparative transcriptome and proteome analyses of zebrafish models of early-onset familial Alzheimer's disease (EOfAD, $psen1^{Q96\_K97del/+}$) and MPSIIIB ($naglu^{A603fs/A603fs}$) within single families. We examined larval zebrafish (7 days post fertilisation), representing early disease stages. We also examined the brains of 6-month-old zebrafish, which are approximately equivalent to young adults in humans. We identified substantially more differentially expressed genes and pathways in MPS III zebrafish than in EOfAD-like zebrafish. This is consistent with MPS III being a rapidly progressing and earlier onset form of dementia. Similar changes in expression were detected between the two disease models in gene sets representing extracellular matrix receptor interactions in larvae, and the ribosome and lysosome pathways in 6-month-old adult brains. Cell type-specific changes were detected in MPSIIIB brains at 6 months of age, likely reflecting significant disturbances of oligodendrocyte, neural stem cell, and inflammatory cell functions and/or numbers. Our 'omics analyses have illuminated similar disease pathways between EOfAD and MPS III indicating where efforts to find mutually effective therapeutic strategies can be targeted.

Background

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is the most common form of dementia [1], and is an increasing

economic and social burden as societies age. Since the earliest descriptions of AD in the

early 1900's [2], we still do not have effective pharmaceutical treatments which can halt

cognitive decline in the long term. This reflects continuing uncertainty regarding the

fundamental cause(s) of AD pathology [3, 4].

Most AD cases show late-onset (LOAD, after 65 years of age), and occur sporadically with

no evidence of familial inheritance. Less commonly, AD can occur in younger individuals

and may be linked to dominant mutations i.e. early-onset familial AD (EOfAD). These

dominant mutations occur in the genes presenilin 1 (*PSEN1*) [5], presenilin 2 (*PSEN2*) [6,

7], amyloid β precursor protein (*APP*) [8], or sortilin-related receptor 1 (*SORL1*) [9, 10].

It is clear that the endo-lysosomal system plays a role in the pathogenesis of AD. All the

EOfAD genes express proteins with involvement in the cell's endo-lysosomal system [11-

14]. Additionally, many of the genes associated with increased risk for the development of

LOAD show endo-lysosomal system involvement [15]. In humans, enlarged endosomes

are one of the earliest pathologies observed in AD progression [16]. However, it is difficult

to dissect the mechanisms which underlie endo-lysosomal dysfunction in AD, particularly

in vivo. Damage to the brain observed in post-mortem AD brain tissue is extensive [17].

Many of the lesions seen may be secondary responses to pathological processes so that

the information gained may not be directly relevant to therapeutic interventions.

Pathological processes which occur early during disease development are likely the most

responsive to therapeutic intervention. However, we cannot easily access early diseased

human brain tissue for detailed molecular analyses.

Experiments performed in human cell lines can give some insight into the molecular

mechanisms underlying AD pathogenesis. However, the relevance of any such

observations must be tested *in vivo* (i.e., in animal models), since cultured cells exist in

highly artificial environments and some AD-relevant phenomena may be emergent

properties of complex multicellular systems such as the brain. A large number of different

AD animal models have been developed to investigate AD pathological mechanisms *in*

vivo (reviewed in [18, 19]), although the quality/relevance of these models is debated [20,

21]. Much of this uncertainty arises from questions regarding the pathological mode of

action of the mutant genes themselves (discussed in [22]). An alternative approach to

dissecting the role of the endo-lysosomal system in neurodegeneration is to examine

extreme forms of endo-lysosomal system dysfunction, as represented by lysosomal

storage disorders that result in childhood dementia.

Sanfilippo syndrome is a type of childhood dementia and has an incidence of

approximately 0.17–2.35 per 100,000 live births [23]. It results from one of four recessively

inherited lysosomal storage disorders (mucopolysaccharidosis type III, or MPS IIIA, B, C,

D; OMIM: 252900, 252920, 252930, 252940, respectively). Like AD, there are no effective

therapies are currently approved to treat children with MPS III. However, the genetics of

MPS III and the primary pathological mechanisms underlying the disorder are far better

understood. MPS III is caused by recessive mutations in genes encoding lysosomal

enzymes required for catabolism of the mucopolysaccharide heparan sulfate: N-

sulfoglucosamine sulfohydrolase (*SGSH*) [24], N-acetyl-alpha-glucosaminidase (*NAGLU*)

[25], heparan-alpha-glucosaminide N-acetyltransferase (*HGSNAT*) [26] and N-

acetylglucosamine-6-sulfatase (*GNS*) [27]. Incomplete catabolism of heparan sulfate (HS)

leads to its accumulation in lysosomes. Mutations in each of these genes define subtypes

of Sanfilippo syndrome, i.e. mutations in *SGSH*, *NAGLU*, *HGSNAT*, and *GNS* define MPS

IIIA, IIIB, IIIC, and IIID respectively. Arylsulfatase G (*ARSG*) deficiency causing MPS IIIE

has been observed in mice [28]. *ARSG* mutations in humans are associated with Usher

syndrome – a condition associated with hearing and vision loss. However, it is debated

whether this disease should be classified as MPS IIIE (reviewed in [29]).

While AD and MPS III are distinct disorders, MPS III is often colloquially referred to as

"childhood Alzheimer's", due to the similarity to AD of symptoms experienced by children

living with MPS III. At the cellular level in the brain, there are commonalities of phenomena

such as oxidative stress [30, 31], inflammation [31-33], amyloid β and tau-related

pathological processes [34-36], and, importantly, dysfunction of the endo-lysosomal

system [37]. However, these two diseases have never been compared directly within one

experimental system.

Zebrafish genetic models have emerged as powerful tools for studying cellular/molecular

phenomena in neurodegenerative diseases, particularly due to their ~70% genetic

similarity to humans [38, 39], similarity in brain architecture (reviewed in [40]) and their

high fecundity (reviewed in [41]). We have previously generated several zebrafish knock-

in models of mutations causing early-onset familial AD [42-46] and MPS III [47] and have

analysed their brain transcriptomes. We have noted that all the models of both diseases

exhibit differential expression of genes involved in metabolic pathways [47, 48].

The most sensitive comparisons of these disease models are best done within single

families. This is because family-specific effects reduce statistical power to detect changes

in the phenotype of interest [49]. Within single families, genetic and environmental

variation is reduced between experimental groups of interest, allowing the detection of

subtle changes to gene expression. This approach is widely utilised in transcriptomics in

zebrafish [50-53]. Here, we use intra-family analyses to compare the transcriptomes and

proteomes of a zebrafish model of EOfAD; *psen1*[Q96_K97del] [54], with those of *naglu*[A603fs], a

model of MPS IIIB [47]. We performed our analyses at two ages: 7 days post fertilisation

(dpf) which models very early, pre-symptomatic stages for both diseases, and in young

adult brains (6 months of age), which models pre-symptomatic disease stages for EOfAD

but is a symptomatic stage in MPS IIIB zebrafish [47]. We identified distinct changes in

gene expression and protein abundances in each model at both ages. However, important

age-related commonalities are also observed in genes implicating the extracellular matrix,

mitochondria, lysosomes and ribosomes, indicating fundamental, underlying similarities in

pathological mechanisms.

132   Methods

133   Zebrafish husbandry and breeding strategy

The generation of the *naglu*[A603fs] and *psen1*[Q96_K97del] lines of zebrafish used in this study

was described in [47] and [54] respectively. All fish were maintained and raised in a

recirculating water system with a constant temperature of approximately 26°C, salinity

levels at approximately 300 ppm, and conductivity approximately 800 µS/cm. These

parameters were measured using an ExStik EC500 meter (Extek Instruments, Nashua,

New Hampshire, United States). The pH level was measured using pH strips (Sigma

Aldrich, St. Louis, Missouri, United States) and was maintained between 6 and 7. All fish

were raised under a 14:10 hour light:dark cycle. Fish were fed twice daily with a diet of

NRD 5/8 dry food (Inve Aquaculture, Dendermonde, Belgium) in the mornings and live

Artemia salina (Inve Aquaculture) in the afternoon.

144   Harvesting of samples for RNA-seq and proteomics

To generate the zebrafish samples for the larval RNA-seq experiment, we crossed a

$psen1^{Q96\_K97del/+}$; $naglu^{A603fs/+}$ zebrafish with a $psen1^{+/+}$; $naglu^{A603fs/+}$ zebrafish, to generate

a family of 100 sibling larvae with a variety of genotypes (**Fig.1**). These larvae were raised

together in a 14 cm diameter plastic petri dish (VWR, Radnor, Pennsylvania, United

States) in 150 mL of E3 medium [55] (pH ~7) until 7 days post fertilisation (dpf). The E3

medium was changed every two days.

At 7 dpf, 100 sibling larvae were euthanised by cold shock in ice water, then individual

larvae were placed in 100 µL of RNA*later*™ Stabilization Solution (Invitrogen™, Waltham,

Massachusetts, United States). The larvae in RNA*later* were incubated overnight at 4°C.

Then, the tails of the RNA*later*-preserved larvae were removed for genotyping using

sterile needles to cut transversely at the level of the cloaca. The anterior ends of the

larvae were stored at -80°C until use (**Fig.S1**).

For analysis of 6-month-old adult brains, we raised two additional families of zebrafish

spawned by different parental pairs (**Fig.S1**). All fish in the families (at least 100 fish per

family) were euthanised by ice cold water shock, the sex of each fish was confirmed by

dissection and observation of testes or ovaries, entire heads were separated from bodies

at the level of the gills, and tails were removed for genotyping by PCR.

For RNA-seq analysis, each entire head was immediately placed in 600 µL of RNA*later*

solution and incubated at 4°C overnight. Subsequently, the RNA*later*-preserved brain was

dissected from the skull, and then stored in a fresh aliquot of 100 µL of RNA*later* at -80°C

until analysis. For proteomics analysis, the brain was dissected from the skull within two

minutes of death, snap frozen in liquid nitrogen, and stored at -80°C until use.

PCR genotyping

Genomic DNA (gDNA) was isolated from the tails of 7 dpf larvae and 6-month-old adults

by boiling in sodium hydroxide as described in [55]. These gDNA preparations were then

used as templates for genotyping by polymerase chain reactions (PCRs). Our method of

genotyping involved PCR amplification across mutation sites using the primers described

in **Table 1** (purchased from Sigma Aldrich). Then, we subjected the amplified PCR

products to electrophoresis using gels consisting of 2-3% agarose (Sigma Aldrich) in 1 x

Tris-acetate-EDTA (1 x TAE) buffer for 2 hours at 90V, alongside DNA marker ladders

generated from the pHAPE plasmid [56]. In this way, we could resolve two PCR products,

one each resulting from the wild type allele and/or mutant allele of each gene (see

Fig.S2,S3).

Table 1: Genotyping primer details		
Gene	**Primer direction**	**Sequence 5' - 3'**
naglu	Forward	AGAGATATTCACAGACTGTTGCC
naglu	Reverse	TTGCTGGAAAGGATGCGG
psen1	Forward	ATGAGGTGGAGCTGAACGG
psen1	Reverse	GGGGTTGTATGGAGTGTGAGG

RNA extraction and sequencing

Total RNA was isolated from the individual larval zebrafish and 6-month-old adult brains

using the *mir*Vana™ miRNA Isolation Kit (Invitrogen) following the manufacturer's

instructions. Only fish with genotypes $psen1^{+/+}$; $naglu^{+/+}$ (wild type), $psen1^{Q96\_K97del/+}$;

$naglu^{+/+}$ (EOfAD-like) and $psen1^{+/+}$; $naglu^{A603fs/A603fs}$ (MPS IIIB) were analysed as these

represent the genetic states of the respective human diseases. In the larval RNA-seq

experiment, we analysed n = 8 larvae per genotype (**Fig.1C**). For analysis of adult brain

transcriptomes, we analysed at least n = 3 per genotype and sex: 3 female and 5 male

wild type brains, 5 female and 3 male MPS IIIB brains, and 5 female and 3 male EOfAD-

like brains (**Fig.1D**). To remove any genomic DNA, we treated the total RNA isolates with

DNase I using the *DNA-free™* DNA Removal Kit (Invitrogen) following the manufacturer's

instructions for routine DNase digestion. Then, 400 ng of total RNA from larva or adult

brain were then delivered to the South Australian Genomics Center (SAGC, Adelaide,

South Australia, Australia) for stranded polyA+ library preparation using Nugen Universal

Plus mRNA-seq (Tecan, Männedorf, Switzerland), protocol M01442 v2. The libraries were

further processed using the MGIEasy Universal Library Conversion Kit, Part No.

MGI1000004155 (MGI, Shenzhen, China), then sequenced (2 x 98 paired-end with 8 bp

unique molecular identifiers) using the MGI DNBSEQ-G400 platform across four lanes

which were subsequently merged.

RNA-seq data pre-processing

We pre-processed the raw fastq files using a custom pipeline implemented in *snakemake*

[57]. For details of this pipeline, see **Fig.S4** and https://github.com/karissa-

b/2021_MPSIIIBvQ96-RNAseq-7dpfLarve. Briefly, *fastp* [58] was used to trim adaptors

and filter the reads by quality and length. Then, the reads were aligned to the zebrafish

genome (GRCz11, Ensembl release 104) using *STAR* [59] to generate sorted .bam files.

These were subsequently indexed using *samtools* [60]. After alignment, PCR duplicates

were de-duplicated using the *dedup* function of *umi-tools* [61]. The number of reads

aligning to gene models of the GRCz11 genome were counted using *featureCounts* [62].

FastQC [63] and *ngsReports* [64] were used to assess the quality of the raw and trimmed

data, as well as the original and deduplicated alignments.

Statistical analysis of RNA-seq data

Statistical analysis of the RNA-seq data was performed using R [65]. We first omitted

lowly expressed genes, which are statistically uninformative for differential gene

expression analysis. We defined a gene as lowly expressed if it contained a log counts per

million (logCPM) of less than 0.5. To account for genes expressed below this limit of

detection in some experimental groups, but not in the others, we retained the genes which

fell below this threshold if they contained sufficient logCPM values in at least 8 out of the

24 total RNA-seq samples (i.e. one of the mutant genotype groups) in each experiment for

each age.

Differential gene expression analysis was performed with likelihood ratio tests using

edgeR [66]. At 7 dpf, zebrafish larvae, are yet to become sexually dimorphic and so we

specified a design matrix with the wild type genotype as the intercept, and each of the

mutant genotypes as coefficients. For 6-month-old adult brains, we specified an intercept-

free design matrix with each genotype and sex combination as the coefficients (e.g. ~0 +

group). This was to allow pairwise contrasts between each mutant and their wild type

siblings within sexes. We considered a gene to be differentially expressed (DE) if the p-

value after adjusting for the false discovery rate (FDR) was less than 0.05.

We observed biases for differential expression of genes due to their guanine-cytosine

content (%GC) and their length (**Fig.S5**). To account for this bias, we used conditional

quantile normalisation (*cqn*, [67]). The offset term generated by *cqn* was then included in

an additional differential gene expression analysis with *edgeR* to give the final list of DE

genes.

Over-representation of gene ontology (GO) terms [68, 69] within the DE genes was

identified using *goseq* [70], setting a %GC content measure as a co-variate for each gene.

This measure was calculated as the average %GC content per transcript, weighted by the

transcript length, to account for the fact that different alternative transcripts per gene will

have different %GC contents. We considered a GO term to be significantly over-

represented in the DE genes if the FDR-adjusted p-value from *goseq* was < 0.05.

Due to the highly overlapping nature of GO terms, and the limitation of the hard threshold

of considering a gene to be DE, we also performed gene set enrichment analysis of the

KEGG [71] pathway gene sets using an ensemble approach. We calculated the statistical

significance of the changes to gene expression in the KEGG pathways using three gene

set enrichment tools, each having different statistical methodologies: *fry* [72], *camera* [73]

and *GSEA* [74, 75] as described previously [44]. Then, the individual p-values were

combined using the harmonic mean p-value (HMP) method, which has been shown

specifically to be robust to dependent tests [76]. To further protect from type I errors, we

considered a gene set to be significantly altered if the FDR-adjusted HMP was < 0.05.

To assess the statistical power achieved in these experiments, we used the *ssize_vary*()

function of *ssizeRNA* [77] using default parameters. Briefly, we defined the number of

genes considered detectable, the average read counts (accounting for the offset by *cqn*)

in the wild type group, and the dispersion estimate from each experiment. The proportion

of non-DE genes was set to 0.9, the pseudo-sample size to 30, the FDR level to 0.05, and

the range of absolute logFC values from 0-2.

Proteomics

For brain proteomics analysis, we analysed at least n = 3 fish per genotype and sex: 3 female and 4 male wild type brains, 6 female and 5 male MPS IIIB brains, and 6 female and 5 male EOfAD-like brains. An EasyPrep Micro MS Sample Prep Kit (Part No. A57864, Thermo Scientific) was used for proteomic sample preparation. First, 100 µL of lysis buffer from the kit was added to each Precellys homogenisation tube (Part No. P000933-LYSK0-A.0, Bertin Technologies). Frozen tissue samples were transferred to each tube and homogenised at 4 °C in a Precellys 24 Tissue Homogeniser (Bertin Technologies) at 4000 rpm for 2 rounds of 30 seconds with a 30 second pause between rounds. Pierce BCA Protein Assay (Part No. 23227, Thermo Scientific) was performed to quantify total proteins, and the proteins were then normalised to 10 µg protein and brought up to a total volume of 10 µL in lysis buffer. The sample preparation kit protocol was followed for the digestion and sample cleanup, with the sample being digested for 2.5 hours at 37 °C. After drying down the peptides in a vacuum concentrator, each sample was reconstituted to 200 ng peptides (negating sample loss) in loading buffer (2% MS-grade acetonitrile, 0.1% trifluoroacetic acid).

Prior to mass spectrometric analysis, samples were separated by reversed-phase liquid chromatography (LC) using a Waters ACQUITY UPLC M-Class System equipped with an Acclaim PepMap 100 C18 trap cartridge (5 mm x 1 mm, 5 µm, Part No. 160434, Thermo Scientific). During the 5-minute loading of the sample to the trap cartridge, Pump A of the Auxiliary Sample Manager (ASM) flowed at a rate of 10 µL/min with loading buffer, while the µBinary Solvent Manager flowed at a rate of 0.4 µL/min with 97% mobile phase A (MPA; 0.1% formic acid in water) and 3% mobile phase B (MPB; 0.1% formic acid in acetonitrile). This was followed by chromatographic separation at a constant 0.4 µL/min

flow rate using an Aurora ULTIMATE column (25cm x 75μm, 1.7μm C18) fitted with a

captive spray ionisation emitter (Part No. AUR3-25075C18-CSI, IonOpticks). The gradient

started at 3% MPB, gradually increasing to 17% at 60 min, 25% at 90 min, 37% at 100

min and 95% at 110 min; it was held at 95% MPB until 120 mins to wash the column,

sharply dropped to 3% at 121 mins and left to equilibrate until the end of the run at 130

mins.

A timsTOF Pro2 mass spectrometer (Bruker) equipped with a captive spray ionisation

source was used to collect data in positive ionisation mode using the dia-PASEF long

gradient method with default settings. Raw mass spectrometric data was converted into

.htrms files before being uploaded to Spectronaut v. 19.0 (Biognosys) for database

searching. Proteins were identified and quantified using Spectronaut DeepDIA without

cross-run normalisation and run against the zebrafish proteome FASTA database

(Proteome ID: UP000000437), downloaded as one protein sequence per gene, alongside

the FASTA file for porcine trypsin (Accession No. P00761) from Uniprot.org.

Statistical analysis of MS/MS data

Only proteins detected in all samples of genotype and sex were retained. Out of the 9,942

proteins detected in the analysis, 1421 showed missing values and these proteins were

omitted from the analysis. The remaining 8521 relative protein abundances were log-

transformed and quantile-normalised before being fitted to linear models using *limma* [78].

The design matrix was specified without an intercept, and each genotype and sex

combination as the coefficients (e.g., 0 + group). A contrasts matrix was also defined to

compare each of the mutant genotypes to their wild type siblings within each sex. We

considered a protein to be differentially expressed (DE) in each contrast if the p-value

after adjusting for the false discovery rate (FDR) was less than 0.05. Functional analysis

of the DE proteins was performed using STRING [79], and using the harmonic mean as

described for the transcriptome data.

Visualisation of the transcriptome and proteome data was performed using *ggplot2* [80],

tidyheatmap [81], *pathview* [82] and *UpSetR* [83].

Results

<u>What are the transcriptomic changes shared by MPS IIIB and *psen1* EOfAD-</u>
<u>like zebrafish larvae?</u>

We sought to compare directly the changes in global gene expression occurring due to

heterozygosity for an EOfAD-like mutation in *psen1* (*psen1*$^{Q96\_K97del}$) or homozygosity for

loss-of-function mutations in *naglu* (*naglu*^{A603fs} , i.e. causing MPS IIIB) in 7 dpf zebrafish

larvae using RNA-seq. First, to assess the overall similarity between samples, we used

principal component analysis (PCA). No distinct clustering of samples by genotype was

observed (**Fig.2A**), supporting that these mutant genotypes do not result in extensive

changes to larval zebrafish bulk transcriptomes.

We next asked whether any genes were differentially expressed (DE) in both MPS IIIB

and EOfAD-like zebrafish larvae, which may support some shared pathological changes.

However, we did not identify any genes with an FDR-adjusted p-value < 0.05 in the

EOfAD-like larvae (meaning that, at the single gene level, it was not possible to identify

any similarity in the changes to gene expression in EOfAD-like and MPS IIIB zebrafish

larvae). In contrast, 57 DE genes were identified for the MPS IIIB mutant genotype

(**Fig.2B** and full output in **Supplemental Table 1**) consistent with the earlier onset and

greater disease severity of MPS III relative to EOfAD. The DE genes in the MPS IIIB

larvae were significantly over-represented with 8 GO terms (**Fig.2C,** full output in

Supplemental Table 2) and the DE genes within these significant GO terms were

typically linked to multiple GO terms. Consequently, the enrichment of DE genes within

these GO terms is influenced to some extent by the same set of genes (**Fig.2D**).

To detect any subtle changes in gene expression, we then took an ensemble approach to

gene set testing utilising the calculation of the harmonic mean p-value (in which the input

does not rely on pre-defining DE genes). We applied this method to the gene expression

data from both mutants, using the KEGG [71] gene sets. In the MPS IIIB larvae we

detected significant changes to gene expression in 13 KEGG gene sets (**Fig.3A,** full

output in **Supplemental Table 3**). Not surprisingly, the gene sets for *lysosome*,

glycosaminoglycan degradation and *other glycan degradation* were found to be

significantly altered, consistent with the primary disease mechanisms in MPS III (reviewed

in [84]) (**Fig.3A** and **Fig.S6)**. Only 1 KEGG gene set was significantly altered in the

EOfAD-like mutant larvae; *ECM receptor interaction*. This gene set is also significantly

altered in the MPS IIIB larvae. A positive Pearson correlation was found for the logFC of

the genes in this gene set between the EOfAD-like and MPS IIIB mutants (**Fig.3B**), and

the genes in the pathway tended to be downregulated (**Fig.S7**). These observations

suggest that changes to ECM function could be a common, early disease mechanism

between EOfAD and MPS III.

We did not detect any differentially expressed genes in the n = 8 individual EOfAD-like

mutants (**Fig.2B,C**), while our previous analysis of this EOfAD-like mutation that was

performed on n = 6 pools each of 40 larvae at 7 dpf had identified 228 DE genes [85].

Therefore, we hypothesised that our experiment was statistically underpowered for the

use of individual larvae. Subsequently, we performed a post-hoc power calculation using

ssizeRNA [77]. Indeed, based on the variation observed within the wild type genotypes,

our experimental structure had achieved an estimated 51% power to detect DE genes. A

sample of size of > 20 individual larvae would be required to achieve 70% power

(**Fig.S8A**). This is not feasible to achieve within a single zebrafish family as, in our

experience, the maximum size for a single clutch of zebrafish rarely exceeds 150 viable

embryos. Therefore, we decided to repeat the analysis using adult zebrafish brains, where

we have previously shown that n = 6 generally gives approximately 70% power to detect

significant changes in gene expression [44].

What do the young adult brains of MPS IIIB and *psen1* EOfAD-like zebrafish have in common?

We first performed a post-hoc power calculation on the 6 month old adult brain RNA-seq

data and confirmed we achieved approximately 80% power to detect DE genes (**Fig.S8B**).

We next explored the overall similarity between brain transcriptomes using PCA. This

revealed some clustering of samples: the MPS IIIB samples formed a cluster distinct from

the wild type and EOfAD-like samples in both sexes (**Fig.4A-C**). This suggests that the 6-

month-old MPS IIIB brain transcriptome does not represent a wild type state, and that

significant changes are apparent. We next asked which genes were differentially

expressed due to MPS IIIB and EOfAD-like genotypes within each sex. Pairwise contrasts

between MPS IIIB mutants with their wild type siblings revealed 199 and 352 DE genes in

females and males respectively. In contrast, the EOfAD-like mutants exhibited far fewer

DE genes: 12 in females and 4 in males (**Fig. 4D,** full output in **Supplemental Data 1**). To

determine the biological context of these DE genes, we performed over-representation

analysis of gene ontology (GO) terms using *goseq*. Enrichment of GO terms implicating

lysosomes (e.g. lysosomal lumen), and oligodendrocytes (e.g. oligodendrocyte

differentiation) were identified only in MPS IIIB mutants (full output in **Supplemental Data**

2). No significant over-representation of GO terms were found in the EOfAD-like mutants

(**Supplemental Data 2**), likely due to the low number of DE genes in these mutant fish.

Due to the low number of DE genes in the EOfAD-like mutants, we next tested the KEGG

gene sets using the ensemble approach to gene set enrichment analysis, where pre-

defining DE genes is not required. Using this method, we detected 3 gene sets

significantly altered in both EOfAD-like and MPS IIIB mutant brains in at least one sex:

lysosome, *oxidative phosphorylation*, *ribosome* **(Fig.5A,** full output in **Supplemental**

Table 3). All these gene sets were broadly upregulated (**Fig.5B-D**).

To assess whether these gene sets were similarly affected in each mutant, we examined

the leading edge genes identified by *fgsea* [74], The leading edge genes are those which

contribute the most to the enrichment score, and can be interpreted as the core genes

driving the statistical significance of the gene set. For the *oxidative phosphorylation* gene

set, 37 leading edge genes were shared between female EOfAD-like (**Fig.5B**) and female

MPS IIIB brains (**Fig.5B**). This represents more than half of the leading edge genes in

each comparison, supporting that this gene set is altered in similar way in these female

mutants. Only 18 genes were common across all leading edge genes in MPS IIIB and

EOfAD-like mutants, which represents 38% (MPS IIIB females), 31% (EOfAD-like

females), and 28% (EOfAD-like males) of the leading edge genes. These observations

support that the *oxidative phosphorylation* pathway is partially altered in a similar way in

female MPS IIIB and female EOfAD-like mutant zebrafish, and in a different way in

EOfAD-like males.

For the *lysosome* gene set, 14 leading-edge genes were shared between both mutants

and sexes (**Fig.5C**). In females, a total of 27 leading edge genes were shared between

MPS IIIB and EOfAD-like mutants (68% and 54% of the leading edge genes respectively).

In males, 20 leading edge genes were shared, representing 51% (EOfAD-like) and 50%

(MPS IIIB) of all leading edge genes in each mutant. These results support that the

lysosome gene set is only partially similar in its dysregulation in EOfAD-like and MPS IIIB

mutants.

In the *ribosome* gene set, 48 leading edge genes were shared between MPS IIIB female

(89%), EOfAD-like female (86%) and MPS IIIB male (64%) mutants (**Fig.5D**). This

supports that gene set is altered in a similar way in these mutants. The magnitude of the

fold change of the shared leading edge genes across all mutants was broadly larger in the

MPS IIIB mutants compared to the EOfAD-like mutants (**Fig.S9**), consistent with MPS IIIB

being an earlier-onset neurodegenerative disease.

We next sought to assess whether the changes to gene expression in the brains of MPS

IIIB and EOfAD-like zebrafish were reflected at the protein level. To address this, we

performed a proteomics experiment on 6-month-old wild type, EOfAD-like and MPS IIIB

sibling brains. We detected up to 126,354 peptides per sample, corresponding to 9,942

unique proteins across the 30 samples.

We first performed PCA on the zebrafish brain proteomes to identify that the MPS IIIB

proteomes generally formed a distinct cluster from the wild type and EOfAD-like

genotypes (**Fig.6A-C**), similar to the RNA-seq data. We next tested which proteins were

differentially expressed in each genotype and sex using moderated *t*-tests implemented in

limma [78]. We found no statistical evidence supporting differentially expressed proteins in

the EOfAD-like brains relative to their non-mutant siblings. However, the MPS IIIB females

had 85 differentially expressed proteins, and the MPS IIIB males had 116 differentially

expressed proteins relative to their wild type siblings (**Fig.6D,E,** full output in

Supplemental Data 4). We then used STRING [79] to perform functional analysis of

these differentially expressed proteins in MPS IIIB mutants. This revealed changes to

lysosomal proteins and proteins involved in mTOR signalling in both sexes (**Fig.S10**).

Since we did not identify significant altered proteins at the single protein level in EOfAD-

like mutants, we subjected the proteomics data to the ensemble approach for gene set

testing, where more subtle changes to protein expression can be detected. Using this

approach, we detected statistical evidence for four gene sets to be altered in common in

MPS IIIB and EOfAD-like female zebrafish, and two gene sets in males (**Fig.7A,** the full

list of statistical significance of KEGG protein sets can be found in **Supplemental Data 3**).

Out of the 3 gene sets significantly altered in both mutants in the transcriptome, only the

lysosome and ribosome gene sets were also found to be significantly altered in both

mutants in the proteome in at least one sex. We observed broad increased abundance of

lysosomal proteins in MPS IIIB mutants (**Fig.7B**). Only 7 proteins were shared in the

leading edge for the *lysosome* protein set across the MPS IIIB mutants and the female

EOfAD-like mutants, and these proteins were altered in opposite directions (**Fig.S11A**).

The *ribosome* protein set was broadly upregulated in both male mutants (**Fig.7C**), and the

shared 25 proteins were altered in the same direction. Together, these results support that

lysosomal proteins are altered in a different way in EOfAD-like and MPS IIIB mutants, and

that ribosomal proteins are altered in a similar way.

The oxidative phosphorylation gene set was only significantly altered in MPS IIIB mutant

proteomes (**Fig.7A**). However, we noted the particular downregulation of Atp6v0cb protein

in MPS IIIB and female EOfAD-like mutants, an important component of the v-ATPase

complex (**Fig.S12**) involved in lysosomal acidification [86].

We also observed significant changes to two pathways involved in innate immunity in

EOfAD-like and MPS IIIB mutants that were not detected in the brain transcriptomes. The

statistical significance of these two gene sets, *Fc gamma r mediated phagocytosis* and

natural killer cell mediated cytotoxicity both are driven in part by the downregulation of the

Rac2 protein (**Fig.S13**).

Are changes in cell type proportions influencing the observed changes to gene expression?

In the analysis of bulk tissue, differences in the proportions of cell types between

comparison groups may result in differences in transcript or protein abundances between

those groups that are not related to changes in cellular functions. To assess whether this

has occurred for the larval and adult brain tissues we analysed here, we utilised single cell

RNA-seq datasets from 5 dpf zebrafish larvae [87] and from wild type (Tübingen) adult

brain [88] to define gene sets consisting of markers of various cell types in zebrafish (we

could not find a suitable dataset of 7 dpf zebrafish larvae in the literature). We then tested

whether these marker gene sets were significantly enriched with up- or downregulated

genes using *fry* [72] in both the transcriptomes and proteomes. No statistical evidence

was found supporting changes to cell type gene sets in the EOfAD-like mutants at either

age (**Fig.8A**, full output in **Supplemental Data 3**). However, significant changes to gene

expression in marker genes of neural cell types were identified in 6-month-old MPS IIIB

brains (**Fig.8A**). Notably, we observed a broad downregulation of genes expressed in

oligodendrocytes (**Fig.8B**) and neural stem cells (**Fig.8C**) at the mRNA and protein level,

suggesting that these cell types may show changes to their relative proportions.

Additionally, inflammatory cell types (macrophages and microglia) showed changes to

expression in MPS IIIB brains. However, a consistent direction of change was not

observed (**Fig.8D,E**), supporting that these cell types may be altered, rather than changed

in proportions. Collectively, these results indicate the presence of cell type-specific

dysfunction in the brains of 6-month-old MPS IIIB zebrafish, potentially accompanied by

alterations in the relative proportions of these cell types.

<u>No observed effect on the expression of genes responsive to intracellular iron</u>
<u>levels.</u>

Our previous analysis of the EOfAD-like mutation *psen1*$^{Q96\_K97del}$ in 6-month-old female

zebrafish brains [89] revealed significant changes in gene expression in genes regulated

by intracellular iron levels. Specifically, the changes in expression occurred for genes

containing iron-responsive elements (IREs) in the 3' untranslated regions of their

transcripts. However, we did not detect any statistical evidence for changes in expression

of genes or proteins possessing IREs in either mutant at either age (**Fig. S14,** full output in

Supplemental Data 3). Therefore, these datasets do not support that intracellular iron

levels are abnormal in either of these mutants.

<u>Consistency with other changes in gene expression previously observed in</u>
<u>EOfAD-like zebrafish.</u>

Our failure to observe changes in IRE gene sets in the 6-month-old EOfAD brains

described here, led us to examine the consistency between all our analyses of the

psen1$^{Q96\_K97del}$ mutation across independent experiments. We have previously analysed

the effect of this mutation in n = 6 pools each of 40 larvae at 7 dpf [85], as well as in

female 6-month-old zebrafish brains at n = 4 fish per genotype [54, 89]. To assess the

overall similarity between samples across the experiments at each age, we performed

PCA on the logCPM values of genes considered detectable in each experiment. This

revealed that the samples separated based on their experiment of origin and not by

genotype. This supports that the overall effect of genotype is very subtle in these samples,

relative to the effect of experimental design (**Fig.9A,B**). We then applied our ensemble

approach to gene set testing to each of the previous datasets to identify whether similar

changes to the KEGG pathways could be identified. In 7 dpf larvae, this detected 85

significantly altered KEGG gene sets (**Fig.S15**), with the *ECM receptor interaction* gene

set having the highest level of statistical significance (the 10 most significantly altered

gene sets from the Dong et al. dataset [85] and their corresponding p-values from the

current dataset are shown in **Fig.9C**). In the 6-month-old female adult brain dataset

described in [54, 89], we detected 10 significantly altered KEGG gene sets, 6 of which

were significantly altered in this experiment (all gene sets found to be significantly altered

and their corresponding levels of statistical significance are shown in **Fig.9D**). Notably,

there was a lack of correlations of the logFC values of the genes within these gene sets

between the independent experiments (**Fig.9E-J**). Together, these results suggest that

while extensive variation is apparent (particularly at the single gene level) common

biological themes are still identified when the same mutation is analysed.

Discussion

In this study, we exploit the intra-family analysis strategy facilitated by zebrafish to

provide, for the first time, a sensitive and direct comparison of genetic models of two

inherited forms of early-onset dementia; EOfAD and MPS IIIB. We observed changes to

gene expression in the extracellular matrix genes very early in these disease models,

followed by changes to lysosomal and ribosomal gene and protein expression at later

stages. Changes to oxidative phosphorylation gene expression was detected in 6 month

old EOfAD-like and female MPS IIIB mutant brains, but this was only reflected in the MPS

IIIB, and not EOfAD-like adult brain proteomes. We also identified changes to marker

genes of specific neural cell types in MPS IIIB zebrafish brains, indicating these cell types

may be particularly dysfunctional in this disease.

Changes to ECM function could be an early, common disease mechanism in AD

and MPS III.

The extracellular matrix (ECM) is a complex network of proteins and carbohydrates that

surrounds cells in multicellular organisms, providing mechanical support and playing a

critical role in cellular functions such as tissue organisation and maintenance of tissue

integrity. It consists primarily of proteins such as collagens and elastins, and glycoproteins

such as laminins and fibronectin (reviewed in [90, 91]). Glycosaminoglycans incorporating

heparan sulfate also form part of the ECM.

We observed subtle, yet statistically significant (**Fig.3A**), broad downregulation (**Fig.S7**) of

the ECM genes in both MPS IIIB and EOfAD-like zebrafish larvae at 7 dpf. The ECM

receptor interaction gene set was not significantly altered in 6 month old adult brain

transcriptomes or proteomes, suggesting that ECM changes are restricted to larval

zebrafish and/or are too subtle and not detectable when analysing the brains of young

adults. The core pathology of MPS IIIB hinges on deficiency of NAGLU enzymatic activity,

leading to lysosomal accumulation of the heparan sulfate degradation product. Extracellular

accumulation of heparan sulfate has also been shown to occur in a *NAGLU* deficient cell

line [92], and other extracellular substrates in other lysosomal storage disorders (reviewed

in [93]), likely due to blockage of the endo-lysosomal system. Therefore, the broad

downregulation of these ECM constituent genes in MPS IIIB zebrafish larvae suggests that

the cells making up the bulk larval tissue are altering gene expression (presumably in an

attempt to maintain homeostasis) in response to detection of excess ECM components,

potentially due to impaired degradative capacity of lysosomes.

We observed a particular downregulation of the collagen genes in MPS IIIB larvae

(**Fig.S7B**). Increased collagen IV (and laminin α-5) has been observed in MPS IIIA

adenotonsillar tissue [94]. Interestingly, the formation of collagen I fibrils requires heparan

sulfate [95]. Additionally, cathepsin K is a potent hydrolase of type I collagen [96], and the

activity of this enzyme is inhibited by excess heparan sulfate [97]. Therefore, excess

heparan sulfate leading to inhibition of cathepsin K may be interfering with collagen fibril

formation in MPS IIIB larvae.

The role of the ECM in AD is not as clear. ECM proteins are upregulated in aged brains of

3xTg-AD mice [98], in hAPP-J20 mice [99] and in post-mortem AD brains [100, 101].

Increasing levels of extracellular matrix proteins are strongly associated with

neuropathological traits and cognition in human AD brains relative to controls [102].

Additionally, they were found to be the earliest detectable biomarker in EOfAD patient

cerebrospinal fluid proteomes, occurring 30 years before symptom onset [103].

The changes to ECM gene expression in EOfAD-like and MPS IIIB larvae are subtle.

Nevertheless, they align with transcriptome analyses of several iPSC-derived neuron lines

with *PSEN1* mutations [104-106], as well as in directly induced neurons (iNs) from AD

[107], which more closely retain their epigenetic aging profiles than iPSC-derived neurons.

Collagen type IV-encoding genes, which were downregulated in our zebrafish models, were

found to be upregulated in MPS IIIB human fibroblasts relative to the other MPS III

subtypes and MPS IV [108]. However, these collagen genes did not appear to be DE in

comparison to a wild type control cell line [108]. This may be due to issues in the design of

that transcriptome analysis such as low statistical power (one cell line per MPS disease)

and an inappropriate control cell line likely preventing detection of significant changes to

ECM-related gene expression. In contrast, iPSC-derived MPS IIIB neurons exhibited

changes to the expression of ECM genes [109].

Together, our results and observations from the literature suggest that changes to the ECM

play a role in the pathogenesis of MPS III and EOfAD. Our data indicate that these changes

may occur very early in disease progression, may not be restricted to brain tissue, and

potentially come about via similar mechanisms, as suggested by the similarity in changes to

gene expression observed in zebrafish larvae (**Fig.3B**). Further investigation is required to

confirm these mechanisms.

Common changes to mitochondrial, lysosomal and ribosomal function occur in

young adulthood

Zebrafish are recently sexually mature at 6 months of age, and we consider this

equivalent to early adulthood in humans. For MPS IIIB, this is considered relatively late in

disease progression as children typically succumb in their teenage years. This contrasts

with EOfAD, where changes in cognition are not expected until the fourth decade of life or

later. The dysregulation of genes associated with oxidative phosphorylation observed in

the young adult brains of zebrafish models of EOfAD and MPS IIIB (**Fig.5A,B** and

Fig.S12) suggests there may be a shared molecular pathway. However, the expression of

proteins associated with oxidative phosphorylation was only observed to be altered in

young adult MPS IIIB brain proteomes, not in EOfAD-like. Indeed, the magnitude of

change at the gene expression level was minor in EOfAD-like zebrafish (**Fig.5B**) and so it

is possible that these changes are not yet evident at the protein level.

Changes to the expression of the oxidative phosphorylation genes have been observed in

young, pre-symptomatic animal models of AD. We previously analysed the effects of

seven different AD-related mutations in 6-month-old zebrafish brains and found that these

all resulted in changes to oxidative phosphorylation gene expression [48]. Mice

engineered to express a humanised version of the human ε4 allele of the apolipoprotein E

gene (*APOE4*, the strongest genetic risk factor for LOAD) also show changes to gene

expression in the oxidative phosphorylation pathway at young ages [48, 110]. Impairment

of this pathway has also been observed in diverse AD mouse models [111-114]. In

humans, changes to the oxidative phosphorylation genes are found early in AD, both in

blood [115] and in post-mortem brains [116]. Additionally, brain glucose metabolism

(which generates metabolites to feed into oxidative phosphorylation) as measured by

fluoro-D-glucose positron emission tomography (FDG-PET) consistently shows changes

to glucose uptake during disease progression (reviewed in [117, 118]). Together, these

observations from the literature imply that changes to mitochondrial function and oxidative

phosphorylation occur early in AD. We suspect changes to oxidative phosphorylation

proteins may become evident in later ages in EOfAD-like zebrafish brains.

The role of mitochondrial dysfunction in MPS III is not extensively characterised and how

brain energy metabolism changes during disease progression in children with MPS III is

poorly understood. Mitochondrial abnormalities and/or signs of oxidative stress (that can

arise from dysfunctional mitochondrial respiration) have been observed in the brains of

mouse models of MPS IIIA [119], IIIB [120], and IIIC [121-123]. Ultrastructural

abnormalities [124] and signs of oxidative stress have also been observed in MPS IIIB

human brain tissue [31]. A mouse model of MPS VII (lysosomal accumulation of several

mucopolysaccharides including HS [125, 126]) showed a generally decreased abundance

of the oxidative phosphorylation proteins which were not detected by microarray in age-

matched samples of the same strain [127]. While the precise mechanism(s) of how and

why mitochondria are affected throughout MPS III disease course is unclear, these may

be consequences of defective autophagy/mitophagy (reviewed in [128]) caused by

lysosome dysfunction.

Our analyses also detected significant changes to genes encoding lysosomal enzymes

and proteins (**Fig.5, Fig.7**) in both EOfAD-like and MPS IIIB zebrafish brains. This gene

set is broadly upregulated in both models at the mRNA level (**Fig.5C**). At the protein level,

this gene set remains broadly upregulated in MPS IIIB brains, but the key genes driving

the statistical significance of the gene set diverge in logFC in female EOfAD-like zebrafish

(more than half of which are cathepsin proteases, **Fig.S11**). Lysosomes maintain an acidic

lumen with pH values generally within a range of 4.5 – 5 [129] via a mechanism involving

the v-ATPase complex (reviewed in [130, 131]). The genes encoding the components of

this complex are broadly upregulated in both EOfAD-like and MPS IIIB zebrafish brains (in

the final column cluster in **Fig.S12**). At the protein level, we observed downregulation of

Atp6v0cb in MPS IIIB (only females) and EOfAD-like zebrafish brains. Atp6v0cb is a key

component of the v-ATPase complex, forming the ring-like structure involved in the proton

pumping mechanism (i.e. acidification) [132]. Aβ binds to the Atp6v0c subunit and this

disrupts v-ATPase activity [133]. Knockdown of Atp6v0c causes accumulation of the C99

fragment of APP β-CTFs (i.e. the precursor to Aβ, [134]), which also inhibits lysosomal

acidification [135]. The broad upregulation of these transcripts (**Fig.S12**), and the lower

abundance of Atp6v0cb (which implies defective v-ATPase activity), may reflect a

mechanism where the cells constituting these bulk brain RNA-seq samples are attempting

to restore the normal pH of defective lysosomes to maintain cellular homeostasis.

Lysosomal acidification defects have been detected in *PSEN1*-deficient and primary

PSEN1-EOfAD fibroblasts [136], as well as several other models of AD mutations [135,

137-139]. Lysosomal pH was not detected as significantly altered in MPS IIIA mouse

embryonic fibroblasts [140]. However, the existence of defective lysosomal acidification

requires exploration in other MPS III subtypes, and in other models, particularly as it has

been observed in several other lysosomal storage disorders [140-143] including MPS I

[144].

Sufficient lysosomal acidification is required for the release of ferrous iron into the cytosol

for absorption by mitochondria [145]. We did not observe significant changes to iron

homeostasis-related genes in either mutant at either age (**Fig.S15**), despite previous

detection of changes to iron transport gene expression in pools of EOfAD-like larvae at 7

dpf [85], changes in the *all 3' IRE* gene set (*ire-3all*) in female EOfAD-like brains at 6

months of age [89], and in all IRE gene sets in MPS IIIA zebrafish brains at 3 months of

age [47]. This was unexpected, and the reason(s) for this discrepancy is not fully

understood (discussed later). However, there is evidence supporting iron dyshomeostasis

in mild cognitive impairment (the precursor to AD) [146, 147], AD [148, 149], and in post-

mortem AD brains [150, 151]. Iron homeostasis in MPS IIIB is far less studied. However,

increased iron levels are observed in the cortex of a MPS IIIB mouse model in its

symptomatic disease stages [152], as well as in a human MPS IIIB patient [153]. We

suspect that changes to iron homeostasis genes in young adult zebrafish brains are very

subtle and may be detected more consistently at later ages.

We observed broad, yet subtle, upregulation of ribosomal protein genes in EOfAD-like and

MPS IIIB zebrafish brains (**Fig.5D**), and in male MPS IIIB and EOfAD-like proteomes.

(**Fig.7A,C**). Upregulation of the ribosomal gene *RPLPA* was observed in a MPS IIIB

patient-derived fibroblast line (and downregulation of the ribosomal genes *RPL10* and

RPL23 was observed in fibroblasts from other MPS III subtypes [108]). However, the

functionality of ribosomes in MPS III is poorly understood.

Early in AD, protein synthesis rates by ribosomes appear to be decreased [154], possibly

due to oxidation (by redox-active iron) of ribosomal proteins or RNA [155]. The observed,

broad upregulation of the ribosomal gene set could reflect a homeostatic response to

defects in protein synthesis in both EOfAD and MPS IIIB. Alternatively, we have

speculated previously that it may be due to changes in mTOR signalling caused by

changes in lysosomal function (discussed in [48]). This is supported by the dysregulation

of mTOR proteins in MPS IIIB brain proteomes (**Fig.S10**).

Cell type-specific changes to gene expression in MPS IIIB zebrafish brains

In MPS IIIB adult brains, we observed statistical evidence for changes to gene expression

in four main cell types. The two most statistically significantly altered marker gene sets

were those of oligodendrocytes and neural stem cells. These showed broad

downregulation (**Fig.8B,C**). Significant reduction of the expression of the oligodendrocyte

gene set was observed in the brains of our MPS IIIA, MPS IIIB and MPS IIIC zebrafish

models at 3 months of age [47], as well as in a mouse model of MPS VII at approximately

5 months of age [156]. These gene expression changes are consistent with the observed

demyelination in the cerebral cortex of MPS IIIB mice [157] and the corpus collosum of

MPS IIIC mice [158] at 6 months of age. Intriguingly, mucopolysaccharides have been

shown to inhibit oligodendrocyte maturation [159-161]. Together, our results along with

previous literature of animal models of MPS diseases support that changes to

oligodendrocyte differentiation and/or function occur due to the excess

mucopolysaccharides in symptomatic MPS disease stages. In children with MPS III, loss

of myelin [162, 163], and reduction of key oligodendrocyte proteins has been observed

[158]. However, changes to oligodendrocyte function and myelination are not currently

regarded as significant contributors to symptom manifestation.

We did not observe any evidence supporting oligodendrocyte dysfunction in EOfAD-like

zebrafish at 7 dpf or 6 months of age. However, increasing evidence supports a role for

oligodendrocytes in this disease. A brain imaging study of EOfAD patients revealed that

white matter hyperintensities may be occurring as early as 22 years prior to symptom

onset [164], which likely reflects demyelination and damage to the axons of neurons [165].

Intriguingly, expression of *PSEN1* in the human brain is highest in oligodendrocytes [166].

It is possible that oligodendrocytes in EOfAD-like zebrafish are affected, just not

detectably at these ages.

We also observed significant changes to the expression of genes normally expressed in

zebrafish macrophages and microglia (**Fig.8**), suggesting that inflammation is apparent in

MPS IIIB brains. We also observed significant changes to inflammatory KEGG gene sets

in the MPS IIIB brain proteomes: *Fc gamma r mediated phagocytosis* and *natural killer cell*

mediated cytotoxicity. A clear up- or downregulation was not observed in the cell type

gene sets, indicating they may not be under or over-represented in 6-month-old MPS IIB

brains, rather their functionality may be altered. Intriguingly, microglia were observed to be

the most affected cell type without any apparent changes in proportions in 8 month old

MPS IIIA mouse brains in a single-nuclei RNA-seq analysis [167]. The statistical

significance of the *Fc gamma r mediated phagocytosis* and *natural killer cell mediated*

cytotoxicity gene sets in zebrafish MPS IIIB brain proteomes are, to an extent, driven by

the downregulation of the protein Rac2. Rac2 is a small Rho GTPase expressed in

leukocytes in adult zebrafish brains [168]. Rac2 is an essential co-factor in NADPH

oxidase in leukocytes to form reactive oxygen species (ROS) inducing inflammation [169,

170]. While the role of Rac2 in zebrafish brains is not well characterised, its reduced

abundance may imply that excessive ROS are present in these zebrafish brains (possibly

generated by mitochondria via oxidative phosphorylation) potentially contributing to a

neuroinflammatory phenotype.

Consistent changes to gene expression can be detected at the pathway level across

independent experiments

The changes to gene expression we observed in the EOfAD-like zebrafish in this

experiment were consistent with our previous analyses [48, 54, 85, 89]. In each of those

datasets, we observed significant changes to gene expression in pathways associated

with the ECM in larvae, and in mitochondria, ribosomes and lysosomes in EOfAD-like

adult brain. However, comparisons made at the single gene level did not reveal

consistency (**Fig.9**). The differences at the single gene level may be attributed to technical

factors inherent to conducting experiments independently, such as differences in sample

preparation and sequencing platforms. Moreover, the inherent biological variability within

the zebrafish models analysed at different times may lead to distinct outcomes when

comparisons are not performed within a single experiment. Nevertheless, while single

gene expression comparisons were inconsistent, the same pathways were generally

identified to be significantly altered. This exemplifies the importance of interpreting results

at the pathway or gene set level, where common pathways are identified, rather than at

the single gene level when analysing transcriptome data.

Limitations

In the work described in this paper, we have employed zebrafish as a model organism due

to its unique advantages of being a commonly used vertebrate model species with high

fecundity, genetic tractability, and fairly high genetic similarity to humans (reviewed in

[171]). It is important to acknowledge that zebrafish may not fully recapitulate all aspects

of human neurodegenerative diseases (particularly for AD), and the relative simplicity and

small size of zebrafish brains may limit their equivalence to the human brain diseases we

are attempting to model. Additionally, zebrafish are exceptionally regenerative, including

the ability to regenerate brain tissue [172]. Therefore, zebrafish are not an ideal model to

study the mechanisms of neurodegeneration specifically. Consequently, while our

zebrafish models offer valuable insights into disease mechanisms preceding

neurodegeneration, any findings should be interpreted with consideration of potential

species-specific differences.

We observed broad downregulation of oligodendrocyte and neural stem cell marker genes

in MPS IIIB zebrafish brains. This could be interpreted as indicating that the functions of

these cell types are particularly disturbed by the MPS IIIB genotype. Alternatively, it could

imply that there are significant changes in the proportions of these cell types constituting

the MPS IIIB bulk brain transcriptome samples. In future work, we will dissect the changes

to gene expression in MPS IIIB brains at the level of single cells to explore cell-type

specific changes to gene expression, and whether there are changes to proportions of

these cell types. Additionally, our findings will be verified with functional assays.

Conclusion

Here, we provide the first direct comparison of zebrafish models of MPS IIIB and EOfAD,

which lead to childhood and adult-onset dementia respectively. While the upstream

genetic causes of these diseases are independent, our results suggest there may be

some common disease mechanisms (summarised in **Table 2**). If this proves to be the

case, common therapeutic strategies could be applied with benefit for people living with

these devastating diseases.

Table 2: Summary of pathways altered in both MPS III and EOfAD-like zebrafish.

Only pathways altered in both mutants in larvae, and both the transcriptome and proteome

in at least one sex of each mutant are listed.

Pathway	Age/tissue	Transcriptome	Proteome	Comment
ECM receptor interaction	7 dpf	down	NA	
Lysosome	6 mo brain	upregulated	Up in MPS IIIB, mixed in EOfAD-like	not significant in EOfAD-like male proteomes
Ribosome	6 mo brain	upregulated	upregulated	not significant in female brain proteomes
Oxidative phosphorylation	6 mo brain	upregulated	upregulated	only significant in MPS IIIB brain proteomes

Figure legends

Fig.1: Intra-family transcriptome analysis strategy. A) A female zebrafish heterozygous for both the *naglu*[A603fs] (MPS IIIB) and the *psen1*[Q96_K97del] (EOfAD-like) mutations was mated with a male zebrafish only heterozygous for *naglu*[A603fs]. The subsequent family of ~100 sibling zebrafish are raised together in a shared environment. **B)** Table showing expected genotype proportions in the MPS IIIB/EOfAD-like families. **C)** Schematic showing the pairwise comparisons between MPS IIIB and EOfAD-like zebrafish to wild type zebrafish in each RNA-seq experiment for each age. Detailed numbers of number of fish per genotype and sex can be found in **Fig.S1**.

Fig.2: Differential gene expression analysis in zebrafish larvae at 7 days post fertilisation (dpf). A) Principal component analysis (PCA) on the $\log_{10}$ counts per million (logCPM) values after adjusting for %GC and length bias using cqn [67]. Each point represents a larval zebrafish transcriptome sample which is coloured by genotype. The percentage variations that principal component 1 (PC1) and 2 (PC2) explain in the dataset are indicated in parentheses in the axis labels. **B)** Numbers of differentially expressed genes for each mutant genotype relative to wild type zebrafish larvae. **C)** Volcano plots showing the log fold change (logFC) and negative $\log_{10}$ of the p-value of the genes expressed in MPS IIIB and EOfAD-like larval zebrafish samples. Each point represents a gene which is coloured red if the differential expression FDR-adjusted p-value was less than 0.05. The x-axis labels are constrained to within -2 and 2 for visualisation purposes. **D)** The 10 most significantly over-represented Gene Ontology (GO) terms among the differentially expressed genes in MPS IIIB zebrafish larvae. The vertical black line represents where the FDR = 0.05. **E)** Network visualisation indicating the overlap of DE genes within the significantly over-represented GO terms in MPS IIIB larvae. GO term nodes (black) are connected by unweighted edges to the nodes representing DE genes (blue) to which they are assigned.

Fig. 3. KEGG pathway analysis in zebrafish larvae at 7 days post fertilisation (dpf). A) Heatmap indicating the KEGG gene sets significantly altered in at least one of the mutant larval zebrafish samples. Cells in the heatmap are coloured by the $\log_{10}$ of the harmonic mean p-value (i.e. the brighter, more yellow cells are more statistically significant). These appear shaded and grey if the p-value did not reach the significance threshold of $p < 0.05$. The numbers inside the heatmap are the FDR-adjusted harmonic mean p-values. **B)** Pearson correlation of the logFC values of genes in the KEGG gene set for extracellular matrix (ECM) receptor interaction. Grey shading indicates confidence intervals.

Fig.4: Differential gene expression analysis in zebrafish brains at 6 months of age. Principal
component analysis (PCA) on the $\log_{10}$ counts per million (logCPM) values after adjusting for %GC
and length bias using *cqn* [67]. Each point represents an adult zebrafish brain transcriptome
sample in **A)** all samples, **B)** only female samples and **C)** only male samples that are coloured by
genotype and shaped by sex (F: female, M: male, wt: wild type). The percent variations that
principal component 1 (PC1) and 2 (PC2) explain in the dataset are indicated in parentheses in
the axis labels. **D)** Volcano plots showing the log fold change (logFC) and negative $\log_{10}$ of the p-
value of the genes expressed in MPS IIIB and EOfAD-like zebrafish adult brains. Each point
represents a gene which is coloured red if the gene was differentially expressed at a FDR-
adjusted p-value of less that 0.05. The x-axis labels are constrained to within -2 and 2 for
visualisation purposes.

Fig.5: KEGG gene sets significantly altered in zebrafish brain transcriptomes at 6 months of
age. A) Heatmap indicating those KEGG gene sets significantly altered in least two comparisons
of mutant zebrafish to wild type. Cells in the heatmap are coloured by the $\log_{10}$ of the harmonic
mean p-value (i.e. the brighter, more yellow cells are more statistically significant). They appear
grey if the p-value did not reach the significance threshold of < 0.05. The numbers indicate the
FDR-adjusted p-value. **B)** Heatmaps indicating the similarities in the log fold change (logFC) of
genes in the KEGG gene sets for *lysosome*, **C)** *oxidative phosphorylation* **D)** *ribosome* and **E)**
other glycan degradation in EOfAD-like and MPS IIIB mutant zebrafish brains. Upset plots display
the overlap of leading-edge genes across the gene sets. The numbers next to each contrast
represent the total number of leading-edge genes. The numbers above the bars indicate the
number of genes shared between the gene sets in each contrast shown in the corresponding
intersections.

Fig.6: Differential protein expression analysis in zebrafish brains at 6 months of age.
Principal component analysis (PCA) on protein abundance values after log2 transformation and
quantile normalisation. Each point represents an adult zebrafish brain proteome sample in **A)** all
samples, **B)** only female samples and **C)** only male samples that are coloured by genotype and
shaped by sex (F: female, M: male, wt: wild type). The percent variations that principal component
1 (PC1) and 2 (PC2) explain in the dataset are indicated in parentheses in the axis labels. **D)**
Volcano plots showing the log fold change (logFC) and negative $\log_{10}$ of the p-value of the proteins
expressed in MPS IIIB and EOfAD-like zebrafish adult brains. Each point represents a protein
which is coloured red if the gene was differentially expressed at an FDR-adjusted p-value of less
that 0.05.

Fig.7: KEGG gene sets significantly altered in zebrafish brain proteomes at 6 months of
age. A) Heatmap indicating those KEGG protein sets significantly altered in least two comparisons
of mutant zebrafish to wild type. Cells in the heatmap are coloured by the $\log_{10}$ of the harmonic
mean p-value (i.e. the brighter, more yellow cells are more statistically significant). The numbers
indicate the FDR-adjusted p-values that were less than 0.1. **B)** Heatmaps indicating the similarities
in the log fold change (logFC) of proteins in the KEGG protein sets for *lysosome* and **C)** *ribosome*
in EOfAD-like and MPS IIIB mutant zebrafish brains. Upset plots display the overlap of leading
edge proteins across the protein sets. The numbers next to each contrast represent the total
number of leading-edge protein. The numbers above the bars indicate the number of protein
shared between the protein sets in each contrast shown in the corresponding intersections.

Fig.8 Possible changes to cell type proportions in MPS IIIB zebrafish brains. A) Heatmaps
indicating the statistical significance of cell type marker gene sets in 7 days post fertilisation (dpf)
larvae and 6 months of age (6m) adult brains. The cells in the heatmap are coloured by the $\log_{10}$ of
the harmonic mean p-value (i.e. the brighter, more yellow cells are more statistically significant.
The numbers indicate the FDR-adjusted p-values that were less than 0.1. **B)** Heatmap indicating
the logFC values of the genes expressed in oligodendrocytes, **C)** neural stem cells, **D)**
macrophages with high *grn1* expression and **E)** microglia with high *apoc1* expression.

Fig.9 Consistent changes to KEGG pathways can be detected across independent
experiments analysing EOfAD-like zebrafish. **A)** Principal component (PC) analysis of logCPM
values in wild type (wt) and EOfAD-like zebrafish larvae at 7 days post fertilisation when analysing
individuals (this experiment) or pools of 40 larvae [85]. **B)** PC analysis of logCPM values in 6-
month-old wt (wild type) and EOfAD-like zebrafish brains in this experiment and from the data
described in Hin et al. [89] **C)** Dumbbell plot showing the $-\log_{10}$ of the harmonic mean p-value of
the 10 most significantly altered KEGG gene sets in 7 dpf individuals (red) or pooled (blue)
EOfAD-like zebrafish larvae. **D)** Dumbbell plot showing the $-\log_{10}$ of the harmonic mean p-value of
the KEGG gene sets significantly altered in the brains of 6-month-old EOfAD-like zebrafish in this
experiment (red) or in the experiment described by Hin et al. [89] (blue). Points in **C)** and **D)**
appear grey if they did not reach the threshold for being considered statistically significant at FDR
< 0.05. **E)** Pearson correlation of the logFC values for genes in the KEGG gene set *ECM receptor*
interaction in 7 dpf zebrafish larvae. **F)** Pearson correlation of the logFC values in 6-month-old
EOfAD-like zebrafish brains for genes in the KEGG gene sets **F)** *oxidative phosphorylation*, **G)**
ribosome, **H)** *Alzheimer's disease*, **I)** *lysosome* and **J)** *Parkinson's disease.*

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

All experiments involving zebrafish were conducted under the auspices of the Animal

Ethics Committee of the University of Adelaide (approval numbers S-2021–067 and S-

2021–041), and Institutional Biosafety Committee (PC2 NLRD 15037).

Consent for publication

Not applicable.

Availability of data and materials

The raw fastq files from these analyses have been deposited to the GEO database

(https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/) under the accession numbers GSE217196 (7 dpf

larvae) and GSE242370 (adult brain). The data arising from our previous analyses of the

EOfAD-like mutations can be obtained from the GEO database under accession numbers

GSE148631 (pools of 7 dpf larvae) and GSE149149 (adult brain). The mass spectrometry

proteomics data have been deposited to the ProteomeXchange Consortium via the PRIDE

[173] partner repository with the dataset identifier PXD058264. All code to reproduce

these analyses can be found at https://github.com/karissa-b/2021_MPSIIIBvQ96-RNAseq-

7dpfLarve.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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University respectively.

<u>Authors' contributions</u>

KB and ML conceived the project. RB and MS generated the proteomics data. KB, RB and

MS analysed the proteomics data. KB performed all other experiments and analyses

described in this manuscript, prepared the figures, and wrote the first draft under the

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1446

A

♀ | mut/+ | *naglu* genotype
| mut/+ | *psen1* genotype

✕

| mut/+ | ♂
| +/+ |

➡

Large experimental families of 100 siblings
Raised together in shared environment
e.g., same tank, same petri dish

B

Genotype		% of progeny
naglu	*psen1*	
+/+	+/+	12.5
mut/+	+/+	25
mut/mut	+/+	12.5
+/+	mut/+	12.5
mut/+	mut/+	25
mut/mut	mut/+	12.5

C **RNA-seq larvae**

Wild type

psen1 +/+
naglu +/+
N = 8

MPS IIIB

psen1 +/+
naglu mut/mut
N = 8

EOfAD-like

psen1 mut/+
naglu +/+
N = 8

D **RNA-seq 6 mo brain**

Wild type

psen1 +/+
naglu +/+
3 females. 5 males

MPS IIIB

psen1 +/+
naglu mut/mut
5 females, 3 males

EOfAD-like

psen1 mut/+
naglu +/+
5 females, 3 males

E **Proteomics 6 mo brain**

Wild type

psen1 +/+
naglu +/+
3 females. 4 males

MPS IIIB

psen1 +/+
naglu mut/mut
6 females, 5 males

EOfAD-like

psen1 mut/+
naglu +/+
6 females, 5 males

A All samples

B Females

C Males

sex ● F ▲ M

genotype ● wt ● EOfADlike ● MPSIIIB

D

Effect of genotype in females · Effect of genotype in males

EOfADlike_F — 11 down · 1 up

EOfADlike_M — 3 down · 1 up

MPSIIIB_F — 122 down · 77 up

MPSIIIB_M — 141 down · 211 up

FDR < 0.05? · FALSE · TRUE

A

	female				male	
	EOfADlike_F	MPSIIIB_F	LYSOSOME		EOfADlike_M	MPSIIIB_M
	0.0011	1.3e-32	LYSOSOME			4.9e-31
		2.3e-17	GLYCOSAMINOGLYCAN DEGRADATION			2.1e-16
		9.4e-15	AMINO SUGAR AND NUCLEOTIDE SUGAR METABOLISM			2e-17
		1.7e-14	SPHINGOLIPID METABOLISM			1e-15
	0.052	5.7e-09	ANTIGEN PROCESSING AND PRESENTATION			3.6e-16
		7.1e-11	OXIDATIVE PHOSPHORYLATION			0.00026
		3.4e-08	SNARE INTERACTIONS IN VESICULAR TRANSPORT			5.4e-06
	0.032	6.1e-08	ALZHEIMERS DISEASE			0.035
		0.00013	OTHER GLYCAN DEGRADATION			2e-06
	0.032	0.0018	FC GAMMA R MEDIATED PHAGOCYTOSIS		0.025	0.017
		8.1e-06	GLYCOSPHINGOLIPID BIOSYNTHESIS GLOBO SERIES			0.00065
		1.3e-05	ABC TRANSPORTERS			4e-04
			RIBOSOME		0.00016	0.012
	0.067	0.0097	B CELL RECEPTOR SIGNALING PATHWAY			0.018
		0.014	DRUG METABOLISM OTHER ENZYMES			0.00011
	0.0068	0.015	NATURAL KILLER CELL MEDIATED CYTOTOXICITY			
		0.018	CELL ADHESION MOLECULES CAMS			0.0019

-log10(pvalue)

B Lysosome

C Ribosome