Title: Genomic features of NF1-associated peripheral nerve sheath tumors: a cohort

analysis from the Johns Hopkins NF1 biospecimen repository.

Authors: Jineta Banerjee [1*], Yang Lyu [2*], Stavriani C. Makri [3*], Alexandra J. Scott [1],

Lindy Zhang [3,4], Ana Calizo [5], Kai Pollard [6], Kuangying Yang [2], John M. Gross [7], Jiawan

Wang [3], Carlos G. Romo [3,8], Robert Allaway [1], Jaishri O. Blakeley [3,8], Angela C. Hirbe [2],

Christine A. Pratilas [3,4]

*These authors contributed equally.

Affiliations:

Sage Bionetworks, Seattle, WA, USA (1);

Division of Oncology, Department of Internal Medicine, Siteman Cancer Center,

Washington University St. Louis (2);

Departments of Oncology (3), Pediatrics (4), Pathology (7), and Neurology (8), Johns

Hopkins University School of Medicine;

Cellular and Molecular Medicine Program, Johns Hopkins University (5);

Personal Genome Diagnostics (6).

Abstract

Background: Neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1) is a prevalent inherited neurocutaneous condition that predisposes to the development of peripheral nerve sheath tumors (PNST) including cutaneous neurofibromas (CNF), plexiform neurofibromas (PNF), atypical neurofibromatous neoplasms with unknown biological potential (ANNUBP), and malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumors (MPNST). Historically, therapeutic progress for PNF and MPNST has been limited in part due to restricted availability of primary tissues from patients with NF1. The successful advancement of therapeutic development for NF1-associated PNST necessitates ongoing efforts in the systematic acquisition and analysis of human tumor specimens and their corresponding model systems.

Methods: Patients with clinically or genetically confirmed NF1 having a clinically indicated surgical resection or biopsy of any NF1-associated tumor were invited to participate in an institutional review board (IRB) approved study for the collection and sharing of tissues and specimens. Tumors were assessed by the study pathologist, and banked in the laboratory as flash frozen tissues, paraffin embedded blocks or slides, DNA and RNA, or single cell suspensions. Efforts were made to create cell lines and patient derived xenografts (PDX) from primary human tissues. Clinical data for participating patients were fully annotated in a database that corresponds to banked tissue specimens. Applications for access to biospecimens, genomic data, and disease models, as well as de-identified clinical and molecular data are reviewed and approved with IRB oversight, to allow internal and external sharing to promote research collaboration.

Results: Since the inception of the JH NF1 biospecimen repository in 2016, 357 unique samples have been banked (from 183 unique patients) and include PNF (n=89), ANNUBP

(n=6), MPNST (n=62), CNF (n=103), and diffuse neurofibroma (diffuse NF, n=44).

Xenografts have successfully been generated from seven MPNST samples and cell lines

have been generated from three PNF and seven MPNST. RNA sequencing (RNAseq)

and whole genome sequencing (WES) data were generated from 73 and 114 primary

human tumor samples, respectively. These pre-processed data, standardized for

immediate computational analysis, are accessible through the NF Data Portal, allowing

immediate interrogation. Our analysis herein highlights key genetic variants and

alterations in gene expression patterns, linked to pathways implicated in the pathology of

the NF1-associated tumor types represented in the dataset. This work also combines new

sample data with previously released samples, offering a comprehensive view of the

entire cohort sequenced to date. Somatic variants in genes including *NF1*, *SUZ12* and

LRP1 and *LRP2* were identified in MPNST. Enrichment of RAS-RTK signaling pathways

was identified through analysis of variants in both PNF and MPNST, however, MPNST

demonstrated unique enrichment in pathways associated with extracellular matrix

organization and cell cycle regulation.

Conclusion: Analysis of primary human tissue samples is critical for identification of

therapeutically relevant molecular alterations. As a dedicated effort to systematically bank

tumor samples from people with NF1 undergoing surgery, in collaboration with molecular

geneticists and computational biologists who seek to advance understanding of NF1

biology, the Johns Hopkins NF1 biospecimen repository offers access to samples and

genomic data to the NF1 research community to promote advancement of NF1-related

therapies.

Materials and Methods:

Tumor sample collection and sequencing

Patient enrollment

All research was conducted according to a Johns Hopkins Hospital (JHH) institutional review board (IRB)-approved protocol, #IRB00096544.

Patients with clinically or genetically confirmed NF1 having a clinically indicated surgical resection or biopsy of any NF1-associated tumor (including, but not limited to, CNF, PNF, ANNUBP, MPNST, other NF1-associated neoplasm) were invited to participate. Written informed consent was obtained from all patients. The JHH IRB-approved consent form includes a statement about the voluntary nature of the research, a description of corresponding clinical data that will be collected for future analysis, and a statement that samples may be shared beyond JHH. Blood was collected from most patients on the day of surgery.

Medical records were retrospectively reviewed for demographic information and information related to the NF1 clinical condition (genetic diagnosis, family history, age of diagnosis), characteristics (phenotypic findings, symptoms), and tumor burden (number and size of NF1-associated tumors). These clinical data are stored in a password protected and de-identified database at JHH.

Tumor preservation and quality control

Surgical specimens were couriered to surgical pathology immediately after resection. The study neuropathologist performed immediate inspection of the tumor to ensure that

adequate tumor existed for clinical diagnostic needs. Upon approval, tumor pieces were

sampled for banking and transported to the research laboratory in harvest medium (RPMI

with 20% fetal bovine serum, supplemented with 1% penicillin-streptomycin and

glutamine).

Specimens were sized into 5-10mm aliquots under sterile conditions in a biosafety

cabinet. Individual aliquots were placed into 10% neutral buffered formalin, cell freezing

media (Sigma #C6295), RNAlater (Qiagen #76104), and/ or placed into an empty vial and

snap frozen on dry ice. Formalin-fixed paraffin-embedded tissues were stained with

hematoxylin and eosin (H&E). H&E slides from each specimen were reviewed by the

study neuropathologist to confirm an accurate diagnosis of each preserved specimen.

Tumor sample preparation for DNA sequencing

Genomic DNA from blood and tumor was extracted using the QIAGEN DNeasy Blood &

Tissue kit. DNA library was constructed using KAPA HyperPrep Kits for NGS DNA Library

Prep (Roche #7962363001). Exomes were captured by IDT xGen Exome Hyb Panel v1.0

(IDT #1056115) and the libraries were sequenced by NovaSeq6000 S4 with ~100X

coverage for normal samples and tumor samples.

Tumor sample preparation for RNA sequencing

RNA was isolated from tumor by using TRIZOL. Samples containing at least 100ng total

RNA with RNA Integrity Number (RIN) > 6.5 were sequenced. For RNA extraction, the

first batch of samples were prepared with MGI/GTAC RiboErase method. Depletion was

performed with KAPA RiboErase HMR (Roche #07962274001). Library preparation was

performed with a WUSTL in-house preparation protocol. For the second batch, samples

were prepared with Illumina TruSeq® Stranded Total RNA Library Prep Gold kit

(#20020599) which includes RiboZero Gold depletion. Library preparation was performed

according to the manufacturer's protocol. Fragments from both batches were sequenced

on an Illumina NovaSeq-6000 using paired-end reads extending 150 bases.

<u>Whole exome sequencing data processing for somatic variant calling and analysis</u>

Raw fastq data files were quality checked using FastQC v0.11.9 and a report was

generated using MultiQC v1.8. Fastq files were aligned to GRCh38 using BWA 0.7.17-

r1188 (1). Duplicates were marked using GATK MarkDuplicates, and bases recalibrated

using GATK BaseRecalibrator and GATK ApplyBQSR (GATK v4.3.0.0) (2-4). Somatic

single nucleotide variants (SNVs) were then called using Strelka2 software (Strelka

v2.9.10) (5) and Mutect2 (GATK v4.4.0.0) (6). Strelka 2 was shown to have high precision

and recall for SNVs compared to others as tested in the precision FDA challenge (5, 7).

The variants were annotated using Variant Effect Predictor (VEP v99.2) and converted to

mutation annotation format (MAF) files using vcf2maf (vcf2maf v1.6.21). All of these steps

were completed on Nextflow Tower running the standardized nf-core pipeline sarek v3.1.2

(8).

<u>Variant calling from samples with paired normal in a separate batch</u>

The samples contained in syn52659564 and **Supplementary Table 1** were special cases

where the tumor samples and the paired normal samples were sequenced in two different

batches with different sequencing library kits and thus had two different browser

extensible data (BED) files for target capture. For the above samples, first the BED file

from JH_batch1 was lifted over from hg19 to hg38 coordinates using the UCSC liftOver

tool (9) and the liftover chain file named 'hg19ToHg38.over.chain.gz' and then sorted

using the sort function from bedtools suite. Then a common region BED file was

generated using the intersect function in bedtools suite with at least 50% overlap in

intervals between the BED file from JH_batch1 and WU_batch1. The common region

BED file (syn52594249) was then used to call somatic variants from these tumor-normal

pairs using the sarek v3.2.2 pipeline and Strelka2 and Mutect2 variant callers.

<u>Consensus variant calling using SomaticSeq</u>

To avoid detection of false positive variant calls in the samples, we identified and reported

the variant calls that had consensus between Strelka2 and Mutect2 callers. To identify

these consensus calls we used a previously benchmarked method called SomaticSeq

(10). Once consensus calls for SNVs and insertions and deletions (indels) were identified,

the variants in respective variant call formats (VCFs), were annotated using vcf2maf in

the sarek v3.2.2 pipeline to generate a merged MAF file that was used for further analysis.

The consensus variants were filtered for high confidence calls (PASS filtered) with

population allele frequency below 0.05 to identify robust variant calls excluding common

variants.

RNAseq data processing and analysis

Raw fastq files were processed using nf-core/rnaseq (v3.11.2) (11) and quantified using salmon: v1.10.1 (12). ComBat from sva R package (v3.42.0) was used for batch correction (13). DESeq2 (v1.34.0) was applied to call the differentially expressed genes (|fold change| > 1.2, adjust P < 0.05), and ggplot2 R package (v3.3.6) was applied to draw volcano plots. Principal component analysis (PCA) and uniform manifold approximation and projection (UMAP) (14) were applied for the visualization of samples. Gene set enrichment analysis (GSEA) was conducted by using R-package fgsea (v1.20.0) [13]. ggplot2 (v3.3.6) was used for the gene volcano plot and pathway enrichment plot [14]. Pheatmap (v1.0.12) was applied to plot gene expression heatmap. Singscore (v1.14.0) was applied to calculate single sample gene signature score (15).

Evaluation of relatedness in genomic and transcriptomic data

Somalier (v0.2.17) (16) was used to evaluate the relatedness between WES and RNAseq samples. The *extract* function was used to identify informative sites from the WES cram files and RNAseq bam files, and then the *relate* function was used to calculate statistics on the number of shared genotypes and the coefficient of relatedness between all samples. One WES sample, JH-2-009-2578C-A, did not contain data at a sufficient number of polymorphic sites to calculate relatedness to other samples and was excluded from further analysis. The pheatmap R package (v1.0.01) was used to generate heatmaps of the relatedness comparing each primary human WES sample exactly once

to each primary human RNAseq sample and the ggplot2 package was used to generate

scatter plots. Cell line and PDX samples were excluded from the heatmap.

Results

Efforts to generate a genomically and clinically annotated NF1 biospecimen repository,

for the purpose of sharing resources, to promote collaborative research, and make

specimens and genomic data available to the NF1 research community, were previously

reported (17). As of December 2023, the Johns Hopkins NF1 biospecimen repository

includes 357 banked tumor tissues from 183 unique patients with NF1. A full specimen

inventory is available online (https://bit.ly/nf1biobank) and investigators can request

specimens by providing a statement of scientific rationale and intended use. More than

65 requests for sharing of available specimens, models, and/ or genomic data have been

fulfilled to date.

<u>Patient and sample information</u>

Clinical and demographic information on the patients whose tumors have been

genomically characterized, including sex and age by range, are included in **Table 1**.

Specific ages at time of tumor collection are not provided to protect patient identities given

the rarity of some NF1-associated conditions. Sample and file information can be found

in Synapse.org datasets (WES: syn53132831.1, RNAseq: syn53133024.1; for more

details, refer to the Data Availability selection) and accessed on the NF Data Portal for

further analysis.

Relatedness of WES and RNAseq data from individual patients was confirmed as a measure of quality control.

As a quality and validation step, we used Somalier (16) to evaluate relatedness between WES and RNAseq samples, comparing each WES sample exactly once to each RNAseq sample. We found that all sample comparisons that originated from different individuals had a relatedness coefficient <0.9. Based on this and the clinical annotations of the samples, we set a threshold of relatedness coefficient ≥0.9 to be the confirmation that a pair of WES and RNAseq samples were indeed from the same individual (**Figure 1A**).

With this threshold in place, all but three corresponding samples from the same patient were found to meet the definition of relatedness (**Figure 1A,B**). One RNAseq sample from a recurrent tumor, JH-2-079-CB92G-FG226, had a relatedness coefficient of 0.86 to both the normal WES sample from the same individual and to a WES sample from a different tumor in the same individual. However, it had high relatedness (0.997) to the WES sample generated from the same recurrent tumor. Two additional RNAseq samples that originated from one individual had lower than expected relatedness to other samples from that individual. On examination of the clinical annotations, we found that JH-2-002-GAF53-2E57B was an RNAseq sample of a patient-derived cell line and JH-2-002-GAF53-3BAGC was an RNAseq sample of a xenograft developed from the tumor sample. This distinction suggested that the threshold of relatedness coefficient determined by our analysis was sensitive enough to detect differences between primary samples and the cell lines and xenografts derived from them.

 Unbiased exploration of somatic variants identifies NF1 among the top genes with

variants using WES

WES data from the human tumor samples were haplotype matched to their respective

normal samples (**Supplementary Table 2**). To explore the variant landscape of the

human tumor samples from the biobank, we consulted six highly cited reports (17-22) to

generate a list of 60 priority genes that are deemed to be of key biological importance in

NF1-MPNST. Given the differences in detecting limits of variant caller algorithms, we

used multiple variant callers to identify single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) and short

indels for these genes of interest in the tumor samples. Variants detected using Strelka2

(**Figure 2A,D,E)** exceeded those detected using Mutect2 (**Figure 2B,F,G**). The median

number of variants found in the samples using Strelka2 and Mutect2, respectively, are

shown in **Figure 2D** (median =129) and **2F** (median=11) and highlight that the majority of

the variants detected were missense variants. The top ten genes with variants detected

using Strelka2 and Mutect2 callers are shown as **Figures 2E,G**. To find variants that were

identified regardless of the variant caller used, we identified consensus variant calls with

SomaticSeq – (**Figure 2C,H,I**). Samples in which no high-confidence variants were

detected using at least one variant caller were excluded from further analysis, and those

that had consensus calls for variants using SomaticSeq are visualized in **Figure 2C**. A

median of 6 variants including missense, nonsense, splice-site, nonstop, and translation

start-site variants were found per sample when only consensus calls were considered

(**Figure 2H)**. In the consensus calls, *NF1, SUZ12, LRP1, and LRP2* genes were found

within the top 10 genes with variants with moderate or high impact on gene function

among the samples (**Figure 2I**).

Given that PNF and MPNST tumor types represented the greatest number of samples in

our cohort, and PNF may undergo malignant transformation to MPNST, we focused on

exploring the consensus genomic variants identified in these two tumor types with

attention to their similarities, and differences that may relate to malignant transformation.

<u>Somatic variants in known oncogenic pathways identified in PNF and MPNST samples</u>

We identified somatic SNVs in the *NF1* gene in 31% of PNF samples and 26% of MPNST

samples examined. The genetic loci of *NF1* variants identified in our samples and the

predicted effect on protein expression are shown schematically alongside a protein

structure representation of the *NF1* gene (**Figure 3A**, PNF shown at top, MPNST shown

at bottom). **Figure 3B** represents a diagrammatic rendition of known functional domains

in the NF1 protein for illustration, modified from (23).

Additionally, we compared the presence of variants in known oncogenic pathways from

The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) (24) to the consensus genetic variants found in our

cohort. Specifically, we tested the enrichment of genes where genetic variants were found

in PNF samples and in MPNST samples separately to understand which pathways may

be affected by the presence of variants in each of these tumor types. SNVs in our cohort

of PNF samples identified enrichment of variants in genes related to the RAS-RTK

pathway (**Figure 3C**). Fourteen out of 36 PNF samples had variants in at least one gene

involved in RAS-RTK signaling pathways. In MPNST samples, however, five out of 19

MPNST samples had variants in at least one gene related to the RAS-RTK pathway, and

in several samples, genetic variants related to the Hippo, TP53, MYC, and PI3K pathways

were enriched (**Figure 3D).**

<u>MPNSTs demonstrate enrichment in pathways associated with extracellular matrix</u>

<u>organization and cell cycle regulation</u>

We employed PCA and UMAP to generate a clustering visualization, based on the

expression of all genes in all tumor samples (**Figure 4A,B**). The majority of CNF tumors

fell into a distinct cluster, appearing less related to MPNST, indicating divergent gene

expression profiles between the two tumor types. Some PNF and MPNST samples

however, clustered nearby each other, possibly indicating a range of biological behavior

in PNF, which are known to have a propensity for malignant progression in some patients,

or possibly MPNST with less aggressive biology or potential for metastasis. Interrogation

of the clinical outcomes for specific patients from whom these PNF were obtained would

take years of follow up and is therefore outside the scope of this analysis. For other tumor

types, strong discernible patterns were not evident, due to the constraints imposed by

limited sample numbers.

To further characterize the MPNST and PNF cohorts, we evaluated the expression of

genes previously implicated in MPNST biology [29]. We found that *ERBB3, S100B, CNP,*

PMP22, PDGFB, and *TGFBR2* were significantly downregulated in MPNST compared to

PNF, while *CCNB2, TWIST1, COL6A3, PTK7, GAS1,* and *TGFB2* were significantly

upregulated in MPNST (**Figure 4C,D**) (|fold change| > 1.2 with adjusted P < 0.05),

consistent with previous reports [29, 30].

To elucidate the underlying pathways implicated in MPNST biology, we employed gene

set enrichment analysis (GSEA) on all genes differentially expressed between MPNST

and PNF in our cohort (**Figure 5**). Our analysis revealed alterations in six pathways within

Hallmark gene sets in MPNST versus PNF (adjusted P < 0.01) (**Figure 5A and**

Supplementary Table 3). Notably, the three most statistically significant pathways

involved upregulation of genes related to epithelial to mesenchymal transition, G2M

checkpoint, and myogenesis (25). Volcano plots depicting the involved genes are shown

in **Figure 5C,D,E** and heatmaps showing corresponding gene expression are shown in

Figure S1 A,B,C. Differentially expressed genes in these pathways are listed in

Supplementary Tables 5, 6, 7 (adjusted P < 0.01 & |FC|>1.2). Additionally, we evaluated

pathways within Reactome gene sets (26) and identified 23 pathways that were

significantly different in MPNST vs. PNF (adjusted P < 0.01) (**Figure 5B and**

Supplementary Table 4). The three most statistically significant pathways were

associated with upregulation of genes involved in extracellular matrix (ECM) organization,

ECM degradation, and collagen degradation. Genes involved in these pathways are

shown in the volcano plots in **Figure 5F,G,H** and corresponding heatmaps of gene

expression are shown in **Figure S1 D,E,F**. Differentially expressed genes in these

pathways are listed in **Supplementary Tables 8, 9, 10** (adjusted P < 0.01 and |FC| >

1.2). Taken together, these findings suggest that MPNST exhibit a stronger mesenchymal

phenotype compared to PNF and that MPNST display increased ECM and activated

collagen degradation, potentially fostering tumor metastasis (27-29).

Further, as expected, we observed significant activation of several pathways previously

reported in the literature, which have clear links to MPNST biology including "H3K27me3-

associated", "metastasis-associated", and "mTOR-associated" pathways in MPNST

(**Supplementary Figure 2**). The single sample gene signature score for each of these

gene sets was significantly higher in MPNST versus PNF (**Supplementary Figure 3,**

p<0.01, Wilcox test).

Discussion

The Johns Hopkins NF1 biospecimen repository continues to preserve human tissues

from patient volunteers with NF1 undergoing surgical resection of any tumor or tissue for

the purposes of: 1) analysis of current and emerging diagnostic criteria for PNST; 2)

histologic and genomic characterization of these samples; and 3) creating a publicly

accessible, clinically and genomically annotated biospecimen repository that enables

therapeutic discovery research for NF1 across internal and external collaborators. The

goal of this project is to collect and store blood and tumor samples with accompanying

clinical data from 15-20 patients per year, including those with CNF, PNF, ANNUBP,

MPNST, and other NF1-associated neoplasms. We expect ongoing accrual at this rate,

given the volume of patients with NF1 seen at the Johns Hopkins Comprehensive NF

Center annually and patient interest. At present, we have banked 357 tissue samples

from a total of 183 unique patients with NF1 since the inception of the biospecimen

repository in 2016. These tissues, as well as cell lines and PDX models derived from

human tissue collection, and accompanying genomic data, represent publicly available

resources which are shared routinely with investigators upon request and free of charge,

to promote ongoing collaborative science focused on therapeutic discovery in the NF1

research community. A total of 187 samples (plus 71 corresponding normal samples)

from banked tissues have been sequenced, including whole exome on a total of 114

tumors (33 MPNST, 4 ANNUBP, 57 PNF, 9 diffuse NF, and 11 CNF) and RNA sequencing

on a total of 73 tumors (18 MPNST, 1 ANNUBP, 38 PNF, 9 diffuse NF, 6 CNF, nodular

NF 1). These genomic data are now publicly available to NF1 researchers to support an

array of important lines of scientific inquiry.

With this publication, we are releasing curated datasets of pre-processed WES and

RNAseq data that are ready for general re-use. These datasets are processed using

standardized publicly vetted processing workflows to reduce the efforts of data re-use.

Multiple variant callers and well known RNAseq quantification methods have been used

to generate datasets designed for maximum reusability. Additionally, these datasets are

well annotated with clinical metadata to enable appropriate re-analysis of the data as

needed.

Here, we present an analysis of 133 primary tumor samples sequenced using WES (82

total: MPNST 24; ANNUBP 1; PNF 45; diffuse NF 1; CNF 10, nodular NF 1) and RNAseq

(51 total: MPNST 14; ; PNF 29; diffuse NF 1; CNF 6, nodular NF 1). All existing RNAseq

and WES raw data for these tumors, as well as 4 MPNST cell lines and 2 PDX, have been

deposited in the NF Data Portal. The analysis presented herein is a preliminary

demonstration of whole exome and RNA sequencing analysis, meant to provide the

scientific community with an overview of available samples and their potential utility.

Several aspects of NF1 associated tumors were confirmed in this work. First, as expected

the *NF1* gene was the most commonly mutated gene in MPNST and PNF. We note that

variants in the *NF1* gene were detected in 35% of the samples rather than the expected

100% of samples, given their origin from people with the NF1 clinical condition. The

incomplete detection of *NF1* variants is likely due to a combination of factors: 1) detection

sensitivity of WES is limited by lack of coverage on intronic regions; 2) WES analysis is

not sensitive for microdeletion or copy number changes; 3) somatic variant analysis will

be unable to call a variant in tumor samples with loss of heterozygosity of the *NF1* gene

since both tumor and normal samples will have the same genetic variants; and 4) variants

will not be called with high confidence in tumor samples with low tumor cell purity. These

limitations suggest that targeted high depth clinical sequencing may be more sensitive in

capturing *NF1* variants in these tumors (30-33). The inability to detect *NF1* variants in all

samples despite a clinical diagnosis highlights the current limitations with WES

technology and the many ways in which the *NF1* gene can be altered resulting in the

variable clinical presentation of NF1. Second, we demonstrated that the main pathway in

which oncogenic variants are detected in PNF involves RTK-RAS signaling. In MPNST

samples, the bulk of genetic variants affected not only RAS-RTK signaling, but also the

Hippo and TP53 pathways. This finding agrees with prior work indicating that progression

to MPNST involves genetic changes beyond those affecting RAS biology. Third, through

our RNAseq analysis, we demonstrated an increase in activation of pathways involving

extracellular matrix organization and degradation as well as cell cycle checkpoints in

MPNST compared to PNF. These biologic insights are in accordance with the aggressive

nature of MPNST. While it would be validating to find that these expression signatures

are even further enhanced in recurrent or metastatic MPNST, compared to those that

remained localized or did not recur, the numbers of samples included herein limit the

ability to achieve meaningful significance in this analysis.

In summary, this study showcases the release of WES and RNA sequencing data from

human NF1 associated peripheral nerve sheath tumors, along with pre-processed data

in analysis-ready format to facilitate reuse without additional efforts. Our exploration of

the data confirms findings that are concordant with available literature regarding the

genomics of NF1 associated tumors and validate this biospecimen repository as a rich

resource for the scientific community.

Author Contribution:

Authorship was determined using ICMJE recommendations.

Conceptualization: JB, ACH, JOB, CAP

Data curation: JB, YL, SCM, AC, KP, LZ

Formal Analysis: JB, YL, AJS

Funding acquisition: JOB, RJA, JB, CAP

Investigation: all authors

Methodology: JB, YL, SCM, AC, KP, LZ, AJS

Project administration: ACH, JOB, CAP

Resources: JB, YL,

Software: JB, YL, AJS

Supervision: ACH, JOB, RJA, CAP

Validation: not applicable

Visualization: JB, YL, AJS

Writing: original draft: JB, YL, SCM, AJS, ACH, CAP

Writing: review & editing: all authors

Code and Data Availability:

All the figures in this article are generated through reproducible R code which is available

on Github (https://github.com/nf-osi/biobank-release-2). All raw data files were processed

for analyses using nf-core pipelines available through https://nf-co.re/ and specific

versions used in this study have been noted in the methods section. All the raw data files

are available on Synapse.org (WES: dataset format: syn53132831.1, RNAseq: dataset

format: syn53133024.1). All processed data visualized in this article are available on

Synapse.org (WES: Somatic Variants Mutect2 – syn53149144.2, Somatic Variants

Strelka2 – syn53149128.1, RNAseq quantification files: syn53140231.1, RNAseq counts

files: syn53141534.1).

Table 1. List of samples with RNAseq and/ or WES, including age (in in years by range), sex, and type of NF1-associated PNST, included in the current analysis of samples and for which sequencing data are available (inclusive of samples released with Pollard et al, *Sci Data*, 2020 (17)). WES and RNA sequencing are indicated by an "x" and "y" symbol, respectively.

Patient ID	Age at collection	Sex	Normal (blood)	CNF	Nodular NF	Diffuse NF	PNF	ANNUBP	MPNST
JH-2-001		F	x				x, y		
JH-2-002		M	x*				x*, y		x*, y*
JH-2-003		M					y		
JH-2-004		F	x				x, y		
JH-2-006		F	x				x, y		
JH-2-007		M		y					
JH-2-009		M	x				x		x*, y*
JH-2-010		M	x				x, y		
JH-2-012		M	x				x, y		
JH-2-013		F	x				x, y		
JH-2-014		M	x				x, y		
JH-2-015		M	x				x*		x, y
JH-2-016		F	x				x, y		x, y
JH-2-017		M	x				x, y		
JH-2-019		F	x				x, y		
JH-2-021		M	x		x, y				
JH-2-023		M	x				x		x*, y*
JH-2-026		F	x				x, y		
JH-2-029		M	x	x, y					
JH-2-031		M	x						x*, y*
JH-2-032		F	x$				x, y		
JH-2-044		F	x$				x, y		
JH-2-045		F	x$	x, y					x
JH-2-054		M	x				x*		
JH-2-055		F	x				x		x*, y
JH-2-057		F	x				x		
JH-2-060		M	x				x*		
JH-2-061		F	x				x, y		
JH-2-068		M	x				x*, y		
JH-2-072		M	x						x

Sample	Age	Sex						
JH-2-074		M	x			x		
JH-2-075		M	x	x		x, y		
JH-2-076		F	x	x		x, y		
JH-2-077		F	x			x		
JH-2-079		F	x					x*, y*
JH-2-082		M	x			x, y		x, y
JH-2-085		M	x			x, y		
JH-2-086		M	x			x, y		
JH-2-089		M	x			x, y		
JH-2-090		M	x		x, y		x	
JH-2-091		M	x			x, y		
JH-2-092		F	x	x*,y*				
JH-2-093		M	x	x*, y				
JH-2-094		F	x			x, y		x
JH-2-095		M	x			x		
JH-2-096		M	x					x
JH-2-099		F	x			x		
JH-2-100		F	x			x, y		
JH-2-102		F	x	x				
JH-2-103		M	x					x
JH-2-104		M	x			x, y		
JH-2-107		M				y		
JH-2-111		M	x			x, y		
JH-2-113		F	x					x

Key: Age (years)

	0-10
	11-20
	21-30
	31-40
	41-50
	>50

424   x   WES

425   y   RNAseq

426   *   more than one same sample was sequenced \

427     $ normal tissue was sequenced (not blood)

 Figure legends

 Figure 1. Relatedness between WES and RNAseq samples. A) A scatter plot of the

 relatedness coefficient versus the number of sites with the same genotype between two

 samples, as calculated by Somalier. Comparisons between two samples annotated as

 being from the same individual are shown in red and those from different individuals are

 colored blue. The shape of the point indicates the tissue of origin of the samples

 compared. The vertical line indicates the cutoff value (≥ 0.9) used to determine whether

 two samples are from the same individual based on the relatedness coefficient. B) A

 heatmap of the relatedness coefficient of pairwise comparisons between WES and

 RNAseq data from primary human samples as shown in (A), excluding cell lines or

 xenografts derived from these samples. RNAseq samples are shown on the x-axis and

 WES samples are on the y-axis. The relatedness coefficient is displayed according to the

 color scale bar shown in the figure.

 Figure 2. Summary of somatic variants detected in PNST (10 CNF, 1 nodular NF, 1

 diffuse NF, 36 PNF, 1 ANNUBP, and 19 MPNST). A) Oncoplot of variants in selected

 genes of interest (see methods) in the cohort of biobank patients detected using Strelka2.

 B) Oncoplot of variants in selected genes of interest in the cohort of biobank patients

 detected using Mutect2. C) Oncoplot of the consensus of variants in selected genes of

 interest in the cohort of biobank patients detected using SomaticSeq. The status of *NF1*

 functional inactivation in the patients was determined using either clinical genetic testing

 or clinical diagnosis and is provided using colored bars in the bottom panel of each

 oncoplot. (D, F, H) Barplot showing the number of variants per sample, by SNV class

(missense, nonsense, splice site, nonstop or translation start site). (E, G, I) Bar plot of

the top 10 genes with variants of moderate or high impact in the cohort.

Figure 3. Somatic variants in plexiform neurofibromas and malignant peripheral nerve

sheath tumors. A) Lollipop plot showing different positions and protein consequences of

variants in the *NF1* gene as detected in this cohort using WES. B) Schematic

representation of neurofibromin protein with various functional domains. Domains: CBD

caveolin-binding domains, CSRD cysteine and serine rich domain, CTD C-terminal

domain, GRD RAS-GAP-related domain, HLR HEAT-like repeats, LRD leucine-rich

domain, PH pleckstrin homology, SBR syndecan-binding region, TBD tubulin-binding

domain (adapted from Mo et al, 2022, with permission) (23). C) Plots showing top

oncogenic pathways that are affected by genomic variants in PNF samples. D) Plots

showing top oncogenic pathways that are affected by genomic variants in MPNST

samples.

Figure 4. A) Principal component analysis (PCA) plot illustrating the distribution of all

tumors based on RNAseq gene counts. B) Uniform manifold approximation and projection

(UMAP) plot depicting the tumor distribution using RNAseq gene counts. C) Volcano plot

highlighting differentially expressed genes associated with MPNST compared to PNF

($|FC| > 1.2$ and $P < 0.05$). D) Heatmap displaying the expression patterns of differentially

expressed genes associated with MPNST in comparison to PNF.

Figure 5. Pathway enrichment analysis in MPNST versus PNF (RNAseq). A) Dot plot

showing significant pathways in Hallmark gene sets in MPNST versus PNF (adjusted *P*

< 0.01).   B) Dot plot showing significant pathways in Reactome gene sets in MPNST

versus PNF (adjusted *P* < 0.01 & |FC| > 1.2). C,D,E) Volcano plots for top three significant

Hallmark pathways (epithelial-mesenchymal transition, G2M checkpoint, and

myogenesis) highlighting differentially expressed genes in MPNST vs. PNF (adjusted *P*

< 0.01). F,G,H) Volcano plots for top three significant Reactome pathways (extracellular

matrix organization, collagen degradation, and extracellular matrix degradation)

highlighting differentially expressed genes in MPNST vs. PNF (adjusted *P* < 0.05 &

|FC|>1.2).

Supplementary Materials

Supplementary figures

Supplementary Figure 1. Heatmap of gene expression in significant pathways in MPNST vs. PNF tumors. Heatmap illustrating the expression of differentially expressed genes in significant Hallmark pathways (A,B,C – epithelial-mesenchymal transition, G2M check-point, and myogenesis) and Reactome pathways (D,E,F – extra cellular matrix organization, collagen degradation, and extracellular matrix degradation) in MPNST vs. PNF tumors.

Supplementary Figure 2. Volcano plot and heatmap of gene expression in three pathways with established biological activity in MPNST vs. PNF tumors ("H3K27me3-associated", "metastasis-associated", and "mTOR-associated"). Genes with fold change > 2 (adjusted P < 0.05) are labeled in the volcano plots (A,B,C) and gene expression patterns of differentially expressed genes in MPNST vs. PNF (adjusted P < 0.05 & |FC| >1.2|) are shown in heatmap (D,E,F).

Supplementary Figure 3. Boxplot of the single sample gene signature score (singscore) in three significant pathways in MPNST vs. PNF tumors as shown in Fig S2. These three pathways as shown in aggregate score, are upregulated in MPNST compared to PNF (A,B,C, Wilcox test, P < 0.05).

Supplementary tables

Supplementary table 1. Tumor samples with paired-normal samples sequenced in two different batches.

Supplementary table 2. HLA typing results of WES data.

Supplementary table 3. Hallmark pathways that meet significance thresholds in MPNST vs. PNF (adjusted *P* < 0.05).

Supplementary table 4. Reactome pathways that meet significance thresholds in MPNST vs. PNF (adjusted *P* <0.05).

Supplementary table 5. Differentially expressed genes in "HALLMARK_EPITHELIAL_ MESENCHYMAL_TRANSITION" in MPNST vs. PNF (adjusted *P* < 0.05, |FC| > 1.2).

Supplementary table 6. Differentially expressed genes in "HALLMARK_G2M_CHECKPOINT" in MPNST vs. PNF (adjusted *P* < 0.05 & |FC| > 1.2).

Supplementary table 7. Differentially expressed genes in "HALLMARK_MYOGENESIS" in MPNST vs. PNF (adjusted *P* < 0.05 & |FC| > 1.2).

Supplementary table 8. Differentially expressed genes n "REACTOME_EXTRACELLULAR_ MATRIX_ORGANIZATION" in MPNST vs. PNF (adjusted *P* < 0.05 & |FC| > 1.2).

Supplementary table 9. Differentially expressed genes in "REACTOME_COLLAGEN_ DEGRADATION" in MPNST vs. PNF (adjusted *P* < 0.05 & |FC| > 1.2).

527 **Supplementary table 10**. Differentially expressed genes in

528 "REACTOME_DEGRADATION_OF_ THE_EXTRACELLULAR_MATRIX" in MPNST vs.

529 PNF (adjusted P < 0.05 & |FC| > 1.2).

Acknowledgements

Funding: This publication was supported by funding from the Neurofibromatosis

Therapeutic Acceleration Program (NTAP) (https://www.n-tap.org/) at the Johns Hopkins

University School of Medicine, to C.A.P. and to A.C.H (Grant ID: 212027, 152009). Its

contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the

official views of The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Bioinformatics

analyses were supported by funding from NTAP to R.J.A. and J.B (Grant ID: 229101).

The funders were involved in reviewing the manuscript and providing feedback.

References

1.   Li H. Aligning sequence reads, clone sequences and assembly contigs with BWA-MEM 2013 [

2.   McKenna A, Hanna M, Banks E, Sivachenko A, Cibulskis K, Kernytsky A, et al. The Genome Analysis Toolkit: a MapReduce framework for analyzing next-generation DNA sequencing data. Genome Res. 2010;20(9):1297-303.

3.   DePristo MA, Banks E, Poplin R, Garimella KV, Maguire JR, Hartl C, et al. A framework for variation discovery and genotyping using next-generation DNA sequencing data. Nat Genet. 2011;43(5):491-8.

4.   Van der Auwera GA, Carneiro MO, Hartl C, Poplin R, Del Angel G, Levy-Moonshine A, et al. From FastQ data to high confidence variant calls: the Genome Analysis Toolkit best practices pipeline. Curr Protoc Bioinformatics. 2013;43(1110):11 0 1- 0 33.

5.   Kim S, Scheffler K, Halpern AL, Bekritsky MA, Noh E, Kallberg M, et al. Strelka2: fast and accurate calling of germline and somatic variants. Nat Methods. 2018;15(8):591-4.

6.   Cibulskis K, Lawrence MS, Carter SL, Sivachenko A, Jaffe D, Sougnez C, et al. Sensitive detection of somatic point mutations in impure and heterogeneous cancer samples. Nat Biotechnol. 2013;31(3):213-9.

7.   Kandoth C, Gao JJ, Qwang M, Mattioni M, Struck A, Boursin Y, et al. mskcc/vcf2maf: vcf2maf v1.6.16 2018 [Available from: doi:10.5281/zenodo.593251.

8.   Garcia M, Juhos S, Larsson M, Olason PI, Martin M, Eisfeldt J, et al. Sarek: A portable workflow for whole-genome sequencing analysis of germline and somatic variants. F1000Res. 2020;9:63.

9.   Kuhn RM, Haussler D, Kent WJ. The UCSC genome browser and associated tools. Brief Bioinform. 2013;14(2):144-61.

10.   Fang LT, Afshar PT, Chhibber A, Mohiyuddin M, Fan Y, Mu JC, et al. An ensemble approach to accurately detect somatic mutations using SomaticSeq. Genome Biol. 2015;16(1):197.

11.   Patel HE, P., Peltzer, A. Botvinnik, O., Manning, J., Sturm, G., Garcia, M. Moreno, D. Vemuri, P., nf-core bot, Pantano, L., Binzer-Panchal, M., Zepper, M., Syme, R., Kelly, G., Hanssen, F., rfenouil, Espinosa-Carrasco, J., marchoeppner, Miller, E., Zhou, P., Guinchard, S., Gabarnet, G., Mertes, C., Straub, D., DiTommaso, P. nf-core/rnaseq: nf-core/rnaseq v3.13.2 - Cobalt Colt 2023 [updated November 21, 2023. Version 3.13.2:[

12.   Patro R, Duggal G, Love MI, Irizarry RA, Kingsford C. Salmon provides fast and bias-aware quantification of transcript expression. Nat Methods. 2017;14(4):417-9.

13.   Leek JT, Johnson WE, Parker HS, Jaffe AE, Storey JD. The sva package for removing batch effects and other unwanted variation in high-throughput experiments. Bioinformatics. 2012;28(6):882-3.

14.   McInnes L, Healy J, Melville J. UMAP: Uniform Manifold Approximation and Projection for Dimension Reduction: arXiv; 2018 [

15.   Foroutan M, Bhuva DD, Lyu R, Horan K, Cursons J, Davis MJ. Single sample scoring of molecular phenotypes. BMC Bioinformatics. 2018;19(1):404.

16.   Pedersen BS, Bhetariya PJ, Brown J, Kravitz SN, Marth G, Jensen RL, et al.
Somalier: rapid relatedness estimation for cancer and germline studies using efficient
genome sketches. Genome Med. 2020;12(1):62.
17.   Pollard K, Banerjee J, Doan X, Wang J, Guo X, Allaway R, et al. A clinically and
genomically annotated nerve sheath tumor biospecimen repository. Sci Data.
2020;7(1):184.
18.   Zhang M, Wang Y, Jones S, Sausen M, McMahon K, Sharma R, et al. Somatic
mutations of SUZ12 in malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumors. Nat Genet.
2014;46(11):1170-2.
19.   Lee W, Teckie S, Wiesner T, Ran L, Prieto Granada CN, Lin M, et al. PRC2 is
recurrently inactivated through EED or SUZ12 loss in malignant peripheral nerve sheath
tumors. Nat Genet. 2014;46(11):1227-32.
20.   De Raedt T, Beert E, Pasmant E, Luscan A, Brems H, Ortonne N, et al. PRC2
loss amplifies Ras-driven transcription and confers sensitivity to BRD4-based therapies.
Nature. 2014;514(7521):247-51.
21.   Sohier P, Luscan A, Lloyd A, Ashelford K, Laurendeau I, Briand-Suleau A, et al.
Confirmation of mutation landscape of NF1-associated malignant peripheral nerve
sheath tumors. Genes Chromosomes Cancer. 2017;56(5):421-6.
22.   Cortes-Ciriano I, Steele CD, Piculell K, Al-Ibraheemi A, Eulo V, Bui MM, et al.
Genomic Patterns of Malignant Peripheral Nerve Sheath Tumor (MPNST) Evolution
Correlate with Clinical Outcome and Are Detectable in Cell-Free DNA. Cancer Discov.
2023;13(3):654-71.
23.   Mo J, Moye SL, McKay RM, Le LQ. Neurofibromin and suppression of
tumorigenesis: beyond the GAP. Oncogene. 2022;41(9):1235-51.
24.   Sanchez-Vega F, Mina M, Armenia J, Chatila WK, Luna A, La KC, et al.
Oncogenic Signaling Pathways in The Cancer Genome Atlas. Cell. 2018;173(2):321-37
e10.
25.   Liberzon A, Birger C, Thorvaldsdottir H, Ghandi M, Mesirov JP, Tamayo P. The
Molecular Signatures Database (MSigDB) hallmark gene set collection. Cell Syst.
2015;1(6):417-25.
26.   Gillespie M, Jassal B, Stephan R, Milacic M, Rothfels K, Senff-Ribeiro A, et al.
The reactome pathway knowledgebase 2022. Nucleic Acids Res. 2022;50(D1):D687-
D92.
27.   Brockman QR, Scherer A, McGivney GR, Gutierrez WR, Voigt AP, Isaacson AL,
et al. PRC2 loss drives MPNST metastasis and matrix remodeling. JCI Insight.
2022;7(20).
28.   Thomson CS, Pundavela J, Perrino MR, Coover RA, Choi K, Chaney KE, et al.
WNT5A inhibition alters the malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumor microenvironment
and enhances tumor growth. Oncogene. 2021;40(24):4229-41.
29.   Errico A, Stocco A, Riccardi VM, Gambalunga A, Bassetto F, Grigatti M, et al.
Neurofibromin Deficiency and Extracellular Matrix Cooperate to Increase Transforming
Potential through FAK-Dependent Signaling. Cancers (Basel). 2021;13(10).
30.   Koboldt DC. Best practices for variant calling in clinical sequencing. Genome
Med. 2020;12(1):91.

31.   Viray H, Li K, Long TA, Vasalos P, Bridge JA, Jennings LJ, et al. A prospective,
multi-institutional diagnostic trial to determine pathologist accuracy in estimation of
percentage of malignant cells. Arch Pathol Lab Med. 2013;137(11):1545-9.
32.   Smits AJ, Kummer JA, de Bruin PC, Bol M, van den Tweel JG, Seldenrijk KA, et
al. The estimation of tumor cell percentage for molecular testing by pathologists is not
accurate. Mod Pathol. 2014;27(2):168-74.
33.   Dudley J, Tseng LH, Rooper L, Harris M, Haley L, Chen G, et al. Challenges
posed to pathologists in the detection of KRAS mutations in colorectal cancers. Arch
Pathol Lab Med. 2015;139(2):211-8.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

A

Tumor type
- plexiform neurofibroma
- malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumor
- cutaneous neurofibroma
- nodular neurofibroma
- diffuse infiltrating neurofibroma

C

D

- plexiform neurofibroma
- malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumor

Figure 5