Spatial Total RNA Sequencing of Formalin-Fixed Paraffin Embedded Tissues by spRandom-seq

Yuan Liao[1,5], Shunji Zhang[2,5], Jiaye Chen[1,5], Yu-sheng Chen[1], Yuexiao Lyu[1], Bin Zhu[3], Haide Chen[1], Yuyi Zhu[3], Ziye Xu[1], Yafei Yin[4], Xushen Xiong[1], Nan Liu[1], Hongshan Guo[1], Yongcheng Wang[1,2*]

Affiliations

[1] Department of Laboratory Medicine of The First Affiliated Hospital & Liangzhu Laboratory, Zhejiang University School of Medicine, Hangzhou, China;

[2] College of Biomedical Engineering and Instrument Science, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China;

[3] M20 Genomics, China;

[4] Department of Cell Biology and Department of Cardiology of the Second Affiliated Hospital, Zhejiang University School of Medicine, Hangzhou, China;

[5] These authors contributed equally: Yuan Liao, Shunji Zhang, Jiaye Chen;

* Correspondence: Yongcheng Wang (yongcheng@zju.edu.cn).

Abstract

Current oligo(dT) primers-based spatial transcriptomic methods are limited to fresh or fresh-frozen samples due to the low efficiency of oligo(dT) primers in capturing RNAs in degraded or microbial samples. Here, we have developed a random primer-based spatial total RNA sequencing (spRandom-seq) technology for simultaneously capturing whole host and microbial RNAs in formalin-fixed paraffin-embedded (FFPE) tissues. spRandom-seq eliminated 3' or 5' gene-body biases and outperformed oligo(dT)-based 10X Visium with an 8-fold higher capturing rate for lncRNA and other non-polyadenylated RNA biotypes, including miRNA, snRNA and miscRNA. In the clinical FFPE sections of breast cancer, we revealed the inherent heterogeneity within the tumor region. We also simultaneously captured host and microbial RNAs in *Klebsiella pneumoniae*-infected sections. Totally, spRandom-seq provided a versatile tool for both clinical pathology and infection biology with established spatial platforms, ensuring ease of operation and large-scale applications.

Introduction

Patients' formalin-fixed paraffin-embedded (FFPE) tissues are invaluable clinical repositories. However, the total RNAs in FFPE samples are prone to fragmentation and degradation, limiting the utility of oligo-dT primers. The absence of polyadenylated RNA also becomes critical when investigating host-microbial interactions, as pathogenic microorganisms colonize host tissues, and their spatial distribution patterns are linked to disease progression.[1-7]

Current spatially resolved transcriptomics techniques have two major categories: image-based and sequencing-based. Image-based methods such as 10X Xenium, MERFISH[8,9], seqFISH+[10] and CosMx[11] have been applied to

FFPE samples, but their targeted probes still limit them and lack full-length
gene coverage. The sequencing-based methods rely on poly(A) tails of mRNA,
primarily applicable to fresh or fresh-frozen samples because the limited
success of oligo(dT) primers in degraded RNA.[12-16] Alternatively, 10X Visium
Spatial Gene Expression and Patho-DBiT could be applied to FFPE samples
but still in a targeted manner or *in situ* RNA polyadenylation.[17] Spatial methods
for host-microbiome interactions, such as SHM-seq and SmT-seq, have been
developed by targeted primers to bacterial 16S rRNA or fungal internal
transcribed spacer and 18S rRNA.[18,19] However, these methods still have
limitations in capturing whole host and microbial RNAs within the same
biological specimen.
Random primers can bind to any location on RNA transcripts, offering an
alternative strategy for FFPE and non-polyadenylated microbial samples.[20-23]
Here, we introduce a random primer-based spatial total RNA sequencing
method (spRandom-seq), which enables comprehensive profiling of full-length
host and microbe total RNAs. With depletion of abundant sequences by
hybridization (DASH), we performed CRISPR-based rRNA depletion for
mRNA enrichment and dramatically reduced the rRNA percentage.[24,25] The
spRandom-seq captured long non-coding RNAs (lncRNAs), microbial RNAs
and other non-polyadenylated transcripts often neglected by conventional
workflows and demonstrated uniform distribution across gene bodies. With
mouse and clinical FFPE samples, we demonstrated that spRandom-seq can
seamlessly integrate with the commercially available 10X Visium and other
spatial transcriptomics platforms with various resolutions. We also conducted
spatial exploration of RNA biology in clinical FFPE breast cancer sections,
elucidating its architectural features and identifying several potential ncRNAs
implicated in tumorigenesis. Meanwhile, our analysis revealed spatially
structured microbial colonization patterns and localized immune responses,
identifying bacterial subpopulations with distinct metabolic adaptations and
their correlation with neutrophil-rich regions. This approach facilitates a
comprehensive understanding of high-sensitivity transcriptomics and enables
full-length total RNA analysis from both eukaryotic and prokaryotic sources
within archival FFPE tissues.
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Results
Overview of the spRandom-seq Method for FFPE Tissues
The main workflow of spRandom-seq is shown in Fig. 1. Initially, 5 µm sections
of banked FFPE tissue blocks were cut and subjected to deparaffinization,
rehydration, and decrosslinking using standard xylene, alcohol wash, and TE
buffer protocols (see methods). Then due to bacterial cell walls, we added the
permeabilization with tween and lysozyme to achieve lysis of host cells and
bacteria. Subsequently, total RNA was converted into cDNA through multiple
annealing of random primers and oligo(dT) primers during *in situ* reverse
transcription. The different length of random primers was evaluated using bulk

test, and the results indicated no significant difference (Fig. S1). The 3'
hydroxyl terminus of the cDNAs was terminated with poly(dA) tails by terminal
transferase (TdT), released through RNA degradation, and bound to poly(dT)
primers on a spatially barcoded DNA slide using 10X Genomics CytAssist. The
single-strand cDNAs were extended on the expression slide with a specific
spatial   barcode.   Finally,   barcoded   cDNAs   underwent   denaturation,
amplification,   and   preparation   for   paired-end   sequencing   using
next-generation sequencing (NGS). Inevitably, the use of random primers will
capture rRNA. To reduce the waste of sequencing reads and optimize the
workflow of spRandom-seq, we performed rRNA depletion on two FFPE
samples with the CRISPR-based strategy (Fig. S2). The rRNA-depletion
treatment reduced the rRNA proportion from 46.1% to 20.7% and 41.3% to
16.4% in two independent sections, respectively. Furthermore, we developed
comprehensive approaches to analyze protein-coding and non-coding RNAs
and characterize tumor heterogeneity in FFPE specimens. We established a
novel analytical framework for host-microbe spatial interaction studies, which
integrates   cross-species   genomic   alignment   with   microbial   localization
validation.

Validation of spRandom-seq Using the Degraded FFPE Mouse Tissues
To evaluate the performance of this technology, we applied spRandom-seq on
FFPE sections of mouse coronal brain and heart (the RIN values of these
samples were shown in Figure S3) with 10X Visium slides (Resolution: 55 µm).
The unsupervised clustering results of our spRandom-seq data aligned
perfectly with the annotated mouse brain regions, including the cortex,
hippocampus, and striatum, as defined by the Allen Brain Atlas (ABA) using
H&E staining (Fig. 2a). We observed comparable results in the mouse heart
section, showing the robustness of our methods (Fig. 2a and Fig. S4). At the
average sequencing depth of ~90,000 raw reads per spot, we detected a
median of 6,633 UMIs / 2,360 genes and 9,808 UMIs / 2,549 genes for mouse
brain and heart, respectively (Fig. 2b). Different cell types were deconvoluted
by CARD,[26] with a validated scRNA-seq dataset from the same tissue as
reference (Fig. 2c,d).[27] The location of each major cell type in spatial location
was visualized in Fig. 2c and Fig. S5. For instance, the excitatory neurons
specifically expressed the classical cell-type marker gene *Slc17a6* (Fig. 2e).
The location of these specific marker genes captured by spRandom-seq was
consistent with *in situ* hybridization data from ABA (Fig. 2e).[28] spRandom-seq
further exhibited detection capabilities for various ncRNAs such as *Mir6236*
and *Rnu12*, which were inadequately recovered by 10X Visium (Fig. S6a,b). To
explore the regional specificity of ncRNAs, we performed unsupervised
clustering with sole ncRNAs and the results aligned perfectly with mouse brain
regions (Fig. 2f). The major brain regions, such as the isocortex (Cluster 1),
dentate gyrus (DG, Cluster 8), CA (Cluster 7 & 9), thalamus (Cluster 2), and
hypothalamus (Cluster 3) were well-dissected without protein-coding features,
indicating potential region-specific regulatory functions of ncRNAs (Fig. 2f). We

performed the differential expression (DE) analysis for each cluster with
ncRNAs to further investigate the ncRNAs expressed exclusively in those
brain regions (Fig. S6c). Remarkably, *4921539H07Rik* exhibited the highest
expression in Cluster 7 (CA1), which recapitulated the previous findings that
4921539H07Rik is a cell-type specific lncRNA for CA1 excitatory neurons.[29]
Additionally, our data showed that *4921539H07Rik* and *Neurod2* exhibited a
similar spatial expression pattern in the CA1 region (Fig. 2g).[29] These data
demonstrated that spRandom-seq offered an approach to spatially
characterize the transcriptomic organization of intricate tissues within coding
and ncRNAs.
To investigate the performance of spRandom-seq on high-resolution
platforms, we applied spRandom-seq on a mouse olfactory bulb FFPE section
with a commercially available 15μm-resolution chip and detected a median of
3,700 UMIs and 941 genes. The clustering results successfully aligned with
the anatomic structure of mouse olfactory bulb (Fig. 2h). These data indicated
spRandom-seq's high compatibility with various spatial transcriptomics
platforms and expression chips with different resolutions.

Spatial Total Transcriptome Mapping of the Clinical Archival Breast
Cancer Using spRandom-seq
spRandom-seq was also employed to elucidate the cellular heterogeneity
within tumor tissues obtained from a patient diagnosed with breast cancer.
With 44% sequencing saturation, we detected a median of 28,942 UMIs and
5,853 genes per spot for breast cancer section. Unsupervised clustering
revealed 9 spatial clusters aligned with histological structures (Fig. 3a). The
UMAP delineated distinct cell types defined by canonical markers (Fig. 3b).
Our approach exhibited superior performance compared with the 10X Visium
fresh frozen sample with similar sequencing depth (Fig. 3c,d and Table S1).
spRandom-seq showed no discernible 3'- or 5'-end biases throughout the
gene body, in contrast to poly(A)-based 10X fresh-frozen Visium, which
displays a clear 3'-end bias when subjected to NGS (Fig. 3e and Fig. S7).
These results suggested that our method effectively captured full-length
transcripts, highlighting the critical distinction between poly(A)-based and
random primer-based strategy.
We performed cell-type deconvolution to obtain the cell-type distribution
across the breast cancer section using previous human breast scRNA-seq
data.[30] The location of each major cell type in spatial location was visualized in
Fig. 3f. Our data revealed a high expression of *ERBB2* and *ESR1* but low
expression of *PGR* in the tumor, suggesting the presence of HER2-positive
breast cancer (Fig. 3g). Additionally, the tumor purity score calculated by
ESTIMATE accurately identified the specific regions affected by the tumor (Fig.
3h).[31] We also observed a high expression of *MUCL1* in certain tumor regions,
accompanied by low-expression levels of *IGHG1* and *JCHAIN*. Previous
reports have suggested that this correlation is associated with worse
relapse-free survival in patients.[32] Additionally, the elevated expression of

CD24 (but not *CD47*) in the tumor area supports its potential as a promising
target for cancer immunotherapy in ovarian and breast cancers.[33] These
findings highlight the ability of spRandom-seq to capture the heterogeneity
present within clinical FFPE sections of breast cancer.

Identification of Spatial ncRNAs in the Clinical Archival Breast Cancer
Tissues
spRandom-seq exhibited robust detection capabilities for various ncRNAs that
were inadequately recovered or undetectable by 10X Visium, including miRNA,
snRNA, lncRNA, and miscRNA (Fig. 4a, b). To further elucidate the regulatory
role of ncRNAs in tumorigenesis, we first divided the human breast cancer
section into "High (Normalized value > 0.5)" and "Low (Normalized value <=
0.5)" regions according to the min-max normalized values of tumor purity,
immune score, and stromal score, respectively (Fig. S8a). We then conducted
a DE analysis for ncRNAs and protein-coding genes between the high and low
tumor/immune/stromal regions (Fig. 4c and Fig. S8b). A Pearson's correlation
test was performed on each pair of significant DE ncRNAs and DE
protein-coding genes. Many DE ncRNAs that showed a significant positive
correlation with those region-specific protein-coding genes have been reported
to be relevant. For instance, the pseudogene *CYP4Z2P* that was highly
correlated with DEGs in the high tumor region has been shown to be
responsible for maintaining the stemness of breast cancer cells in a previous
study (Fig. 4c).[34] To investigate the potential biological pathways that are
associated with those up-regulated ncRNAs in those regions, GO enrichment
analysis was performed on the DE protein-coding genes that showed positive
correlations with the top upregulated ncRNAs in high tumor/immune/stromal
regions respectively (Fig. 4d and Fig. S8c). These were enriched mainly in
biological pathway categories associated with epithelial to mesenchymal
transition and negative regulation of programmed cell death (Fig. 4e).

Validation of spRandom-seq in Capturing Total RNA from Microbes and
Hosts
The performance of spRandom-seq was assessed using infected and normal
mouse lung FFPE tissues (Resolution: 50 µm). With our single-nucleus
RNA-seq (snRandom-seq), unsupervised clustering of the integrated data
using classical cell type markers revealed 15 main cell types (Fig. S9a and
S9b).[35,36] The location of each major cell type and gene expressions in spatial
location was visualized using CARD (Fig. S10 and 5d).[26] At an average
sequencing depth of ~30,000 raw reads per spot, we detected a median of
12,046 UMIs/2,997 genes and 10,584 UMIs/2,980 genes in normal and
infected mouse lung tissue, respectively. To avoid potential contamination, we
set a threshold of 0.05% *K. pneumoniae* (*KP*) transcripts per spot. While *KP*
transcripts were undetectable in normal samples, infected samples showed a
KP distribution map with clear spatial patterns, with some spots containing up
to 5% *KP* transcripts (Fig. 5a). At the same sequencing depth, spRandom-seq

detected a median of 54 genes and 58 UMI counts for *KP* in the infected
sample, with no signal in the normal sample (Fig. 5b). Remarkably, our
approach was also effective in detecting *KP* RNA biotypes, recognizing
protein-coding RNA, rRNA, transfer messenger RNA (tmRNA), and tRNA (Fig.
5c). We observed that immune cells, especially neutrophils, were significantly
enriched in specific areas of the infected samples (Fig. 5d). To confirm that the
detected signal specifically indicates *KP* and neutrophils, we conducted IF
assays targeting F4/80 for neutrophils and RNA FISH for *KP* (Fig. 5f). The
results confirm colocalization and support spRandom-seq's ability to detect
both eukaryotic and prokaryotic RNA. To assess the co-localization of cell
types and *KP* distribution, we compared the spatial distribution of all cell types
in infected samples and their correlation with *KP* (Fig. 5e). Both capillary 1 cell
(CAP1) and alveolar fibroblast 1 (AF1) exhibit a negative correlation with
KP-infected regions and strongly colocalize (Fig. 5e), indicating their roles in
repairing and regenerating infected lung tissue. Notably neutrophils exhibited
strong colocalization with the infected lung regions, highlighting their
predominant role in the post-infection immune response (Fig. 5g).[37] In
summary, results show the spatial colocalization and correlations between *KP*
and host cells in infection, providing insights into the spatial reaction of
infection and immune responses.

Spatial Heterogeneity of *K. pneumoniae* Subpopulations Revealed by spRandom-seq

To analyze *KP* heterogeneity, we performed unsupervised clustering and
identified three differential subpopulations (Fig. 6a and S11a). Spatial mapping
confirmed that clusters 0, 1, and 2 exhibited clear spatial heterogeneity,
occupying distinct tissue regions rather than dispersing randomly. The analysis
revealed significant variation in microbial load among clusters (Kruskal-Wallis
test, $p < 2.2e\text{-}16$), with cluster 0 exhibiting the highest colonization burden,
followed by cluster 2 and cluster 1 (Fig. 6b). We performed DE analysis to
characterize the transcriptional profile of each cluster, and the top 10 DEGs for
each cluster are shown in Fig. S11c. Notably, we found cluster 0 exhibited a
higher proportion of immune cell infiltration than clusters 1 and 2 (Fig. S11d).
KEGG enrichment analysis showed that cluster 0 had significantly enriched
metabolic pathways, including carbon metabolism, nitrogen metabolism, and
secondary metabolite biosynthesis. Clusters 1 and 2 had fewer enriched
pathways (Fig. 6c). These results implied cluster 0 was experiencing increased
environmental pressure, leading to greater enrichment of metabolic
pathways.[38-40]

To identify co-expressed gene modules and reveal regional gene
expression differences during bacterial infection, we analyzed spRandom-seq
data from infected samples using high-dimensional weighted gene
co-expression network analysis (hdWGCNA) with a soft threshold power β of
10 (Fig. S12a and S12b).[41,42] Through dendrogram visualization, we identified
a total of 4 distinct gene co-expression modules, including green (M1), red

(M2), blue (M3), and yellow (M4) modules (Fig. S12a). We identified hub
genes by calculating the eigengene connectivity (kME), and the top 20 genes
in each module were visualized (Fig. 6d). In M3, we observed the specific *KP*
genes, *KPHS r00160* and *KPHS t00620*, suggesting a potential link between
this module and the microbial infection process (Fig. 6d). The *S100a8* and
S100a9 genes were found in M3 and play key roles in bacterial infections,
such as antibacterial activity, regulating inflammation, and enhancing immune
cell functions. Subsequently, the enrichment fraction of these distinctive hub
genes was calculated within spatial maps and indicated that the M3 module
was elevated explicitly in the spots where *KP* reads were detected (Fig. 6e). In
four infection severity areas, we found that M3 showed significant expression
in cluster 0, while M2 had higher expression in cluster 1 (Fig. 6f). We extracted
the top 100 significant genes from the four modules for Gene Ontology (GO)
enrichment analysis (Fig. 6g and S12c). For M3, hub genes were significantly
enriched in pathways related to "response to bacterium," "defense response to
symbiont," and "response to molecule of bacterial origin," involving immune
and inflammatory processes such as cellular response to bacterial molecules,
chemotaxis, and cytokine production (Fig. 6g). In M1, hub genes were
primarily associated with vascular development and cell movement, crucial for
angiogenesis and differentiation (Fig. S12c). For M2, hub genes were linked to
extracellular matrix organization and cell movement, important for migration
and tissue development (Fig. S12c). In summary, our hdWGCNA analysis of
spRandom-seq data from infected samples identified four gene co-expression
modules. Module M3 was potentially linked to *KP* infection and showed
elevated expression in cluster 0. The results also indicated that microbial
infection induces localized immune responses under spatial regulation.
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Discussion
We developed a spRandom-seq technology by simultaneously capturing
full-length total host and microbial RNAs with random primers. This innovative
approach offers a potential spatial platform for analyzing full-length total RNA
from both eukaryotic and prokaryotic sources within archival FFPE tissues.
spRandom-seq leverages widely used spatial gene expression chips such as
10X Visium platform, ensuring ease of operation and commercial scalability for
large-scale applications.
Current spatially resolved transcriptomics techniques mainly rely on 3'-end
poly(A) tails of mRNA, which are limited to non-degraded and polyadenylated
RNA samples. 10X Visium Spatial Gene Expression utilizes probe-based
technology to capture spatial information for genes of interest, albeit with
limited coverage of the whole transcriptome. In contrast, spRandom-seq
enables unbiased and efficient spatial transcription profiling on host and
microbial RNA within FFPE samples. Notably, spRandom-seq achieves high
sensitivity for microbial transcripts (detecting ~5% bacterial reads in infected
spots), and its integration with snRandom-seq enhances spatial deconvolution,

overcoming resolution limitations in spatial transcriptomics. In our study, we identified cellular heterogeneity and microbial subpopulation, revealing a strong spatial correlation between *KP* clusters and neutrophil infiltration. Distinct *KP* subpopulations, enriched in metabolic pathways such as carbon, nitrogen, and glyoxylate metabolism, suggest bacterial adaptation to host microenvironments drives pathogen survival and virulence, aligning with prior studies on metabolic flexibility enhancing resistance to host defenses.

Additionally, the utilization of random primers in spRandom-Seq facilitates enhanced coverage of gene body regions, thereby enabling the identification of a substantial number of ncRNAs and facilitating the exploration of nascent transcripts. The availability of these comprehensive full-length total spatial RNA-seq datasets suggests the potential for a thorough analysis of copy number variation (CNV) and mutations at the spatial level.

Our method has a limitation on the resolution. The resolution of the expression slides in our experiments was about 55 and 15 µm, preventing single-cell analysis for several cell types and microbes. To achieve single-cell resolution, it is imperative to employ expression slides with higher spatial resolution in our methodology.

In conclusion, the straightforward experimental protocol and comprehensive spatial transcriptomic on host and microbial information obtained from the FFPE tissues described in this study are anticipated to facilitate the future large-scale application of spRandom-seq in both basic and clinical research endeavors.

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464

Methods

Tissues

Male wildtype C57BL6/J mice (6–8 weeks of age) were ordered from Shanghai
SLAC Laboratory Animal. Animals were euthanized with CO_2 followed by
cervical dislocation. Tissues were quickly dissected and soaked in

polyformaldehyde (PFA) overnight at 4℃. FFPE samples of mouse tissues

were prepared by HaoKe Biotechnology Co. Ltd. The procedures involving
mice in this study were approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the
First Affiliated Hospital, Zhejiang University School of Medicine (approval
numbers: 20231446). The collection of human samples and research
conducted in this study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of
the First Affiliated Hospital (approval numbers: IIT20210078B). Informed
consent for collection and research using surgically removed adult tissues was
obtained from each patient before the operation. All the protocols used in this
study were in strict compliance with the legal and ethical regulations of
Zhejiang University School of Medicine and Affiliated Hospitals. All the
protocols used in this study complied with the "Interim Measures for the
Administration of Human Genetic Resources" administered by The Ministry of

Science and Technology and The Ministry of Public Health.
484

Bacterial strains and culture conditions
Klebsiella pneumoniae AS1.1736, obtained from the China General
Microbiological Culture Collection Center (CGMCC; Beijing, China), was used
in this study. The KP strain was individually inoculated into 5 mL of fresh
Luria-Bertani (LB) liquid medium and incubated at 37°C with shaking at 150
rpm. The optical density at 600 nm (OD600) was measured using a
spectrophotometer. When the OD600 reached 0.6-0.8, bacterial cells were
harvested for subsequent study.
493

Murine Pneumonia Model
All animal experiments in this study were approved by the Research Ethics
Committee of the First Affiliated Hospital, Zhejiang University School of
Medicine (approval numbers: 20231446). The female C57BL/6 (4 weeks of
age) mice were purchased from Lingsci Biotechnology (Kunshan) Co. Ltd. All
mice acclimated for a week in a controlled environment with 12 h light per day,
air humidity of 40–70%, and temperature between 20°C and 26°C. Following
the induction of respiratory anesthesia in mice in day 0, the dose of 10^7 CFU
KP suspension in 50ul PBS was administered via intranasal instillation to
establish a pneumonia model. This method allows for the controlled
introduction of the pathogen and facilitates the study of infection dynamics and
host response. In day 3, the mice succumbed to the infection. Mouse lung
tissues were harvested under sterile conditions and immediately placed in 4%

polyformaldehyde (PFA) in PBS at 4℃ for fixation overnight.

FFPE sections treatment
FFPE samples of mouse tissues were prepared by HaoKe Biotechnology Co.

Ltd. FFPE sections were cut from the paraffin block and were kept on at 60℃

for 2h. The sections were then washed twice with 4 ml Xylene for 20 min at
room temperature. The sections were immersing in a graded series of ethanol
solutions from pure 100% to 30% for 2 min each time. The sections were
washed three times with 4 ml pre-cold wash buffer (1X PBS with 1U/μL RNase
inhibitor) at room temperature for 5 min.
The FFPE sections placed on the chip were decrosslinking using pH 9.0 TE

buffer, incubated at 95℃ for 60 min and then washed three times with 2X SSC

buffer (2X SSC buffer with 1U/μL RNase inhibitor).
The FFPE sections with bacterium were washed and incubated with a solution
of 0.04% Tween-20 in PBS containing an RNase inhibitor. The
permeabilization of the bacterial cell wall was then performed using 2.5 mg/mL
lysozyme. Following the permeabilization step, the sections were promptly

washed three times with 2X SSC buffer.
525
Reverse transcription
The reverse transcription mix was prepared: 55 µL of ddH$_2$O, 20 µL of 5X
reverse transcription buffer, 5 µL of 100 mM dNTP, 10 µL of 10 µM random
primer, 5µL of Murine RNase Inhibitor, 5µL of reverse transcriptase. The FFPE
sections were incubated with the reverse transcription mix with multiple

annealing ramping from 8℃ to 42℃ and overnight at 42℃. After incubation,

the sections were washed with 2X SSCT (2X SSC with 0.05% T-ween 20)
three times to wash away the residual random primers and primer dimers.
534
535   **dA tailing**
536   The dA tailing mix was prepared: 78 µL of ddH$_2$O, 10 µL of 10X TDT buffer, 10
537   µL of CoCl$_2$ buffer, 1 µL of 100mM dATP, 1 µL of TdT enzyme. The FFPE

538   sections were incubated with the dA tailing mix at 37℃ for 30 min and then

539   were washed with 2X SSCT three times.
540
cDNA transfer
The transfer mix was prepared: 34.5 µL ddH$_2$O, 5 µL RNase H reaction buffer,
5 µL 1mg/mL Proteinase K, 3 µL RNase H and 2.5µL 10% TritonX 100.
Following dA tailing, the cDNA in the FFPE sections were transferred into a
gene expression slide (The 50 and 15 µm expression slides were purchased

from M20 Genomics) with the transfer mix at 37℃ for 30 min using the 10X

CytAssist or M20 Genomics Transfer. The details were following the manual
protocols respectively.
549
550   **DNA extension in situ**
551   The extension mix was prepared: 72 µL ddH$_2$O, 10 µL 10X buffer, 10 µL 10mM
552   dNTP and 8 µL DNA Polymerase. The gene expression slide were incubated

553   with the extension mix at 60℃ for 60 min.

554
Library preparation
Following DNA extension, the standard 10X Visium CytAssist library
preparation was followed to generate cDNA and final sequencing libraries: The
single cDNA containing the spatial barcode was eluted using 50 µl 0.08 M
KOH and 3 µl 1 M Tris-HCl pH 8.0. Amplify the mix using 10X Genomics
pre-amplification mix for 10 cycles and cleanup by SPRIselect. The cycles was:

98℃ 3 min; 10/rest cycles of 98℃ 15 s, 63℃ 20 s, 72℃ 30 s; End cycles, 72℃

1 min; 4℃ forever. The rest cycle number of determinations was performed by

qPCR and final sequencing libraries was amplified by dual index primers. The
libraries were then pooled and sequenced using the NovaSeq X (Illumina).
565
Immunofluorescence (IF)-RNA fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH)
double labeling
The Fluorescent in Situ Hybridization Kit was used following the SweAMI
probe-FISH□+□IF protocol. The steps were as follows: After deparaffinizing
and hydrating the paraffin sections, the sections were boiled in repair solutions
for 15□min. Proteinase K (20□µg/ml) was added for 20-30□min. After rinsing
with water, PBS washing was performed three times for 5□min each.
Prehybridization solution was added and incubated at 37□°C for 1□h. The
prehybridization solution was removed, and the hybridization solution
containing the probe was added, followed by overnight hybridization at 37□°C.
For immunofluorescence staining, sections were blocked with 3% BSA for 30
min, incubated with primary antibody overnight at 4°C, washed with PBS and
incubated with fluorescein-labeled secondary antibody for 50 min at room
temperature. Nuclei were counterstained with DAPI (RT, 8 min, dark), washed
with running water, and mounted with anti-fade medium. Fluorescent
microscopy was used to collect images with the following wavelengths: UV
(excitation 330–380 nm, emission 420 nm), FAM (488) (excitation 465–495 nm,
emission 515–555 nm), and CY5 (excitation 608–648 nm, emission 672–712
nm).
585
Computational Methods
Preprocessing and alignment of the sequencing data for mouse coronal
brain and heart samples
To pre-process the mouse coronal brain section and heart data, the barcode
(BC) and UMI sequences for each read were extracted from the fastq file for
R1 based on their standard lengths (16bp BC + 12bp UMI). For read 2, the
polyA sequence was trimmed for each read and we limited the read length
(after polyA removal) to be 90bp at most to match the read length of typical
10X Visium results. The processed fastq files were then aligned to the mouse
reference   genome   (mm39,
https://ftp.ebi.ac.uk/pub/databases/gencode/Gencode_mouse/release_M32/G
RCm39.primary_assembly.genome.fa.gz) downloaded from GENCODE with
STARsolo (v2.7.10b). The barcode whitelist file was retrieved from the space
ranger software (v2.1.0, visium-v4_coordinates.txt).
600
Preprocessing and alignment of the sequencing data for clinical human
breast cancer ffpe samples
To pre-process the clinical human breast cancer FFPE data, the barcode (BC)
and UMI sequences for each read were extracted from the fastq file for R1
based on their lengths (20bp BC + 8bp UMI). For read 2, the adapter and
polyA sequences were trimmed for each read. The processed fastq files were

then aligned to the human reference genome (hg38,
https://ftp.ebi.ac.uk/pub/databases/gencode/Gencode_human/release_43/GR
Ch38.primary_assembly.genome.fa.gz) downloaded from GENCODE with
STARsolo (v2.7.10b).
611
Preprocessing and alignment of the msprandom-seq sequencing data
for the murine pneumonia model
To pre-process the sequencing data of murine model of KP-induced
pneumonia, the barcode (BC) and UMI sequences for each read were
extracted from the fastq file for R1 based on their lengths (20bp BC + 8bp UMI).
For read 2, the adapter and polyA sequences were trimmed for each read. The
processed fastq files were then aligned to the integrated reference genome of
mouse and KP with STARsolo (v2.7.10b). The mouse genome (mm39,
https://ftp.ebi.ac.uk/pub/databases/gencode/Gencode_mouse/release_M32/G
RCm39.primary_assembly.genome.fa.gz) was downloaded from GENCODE.
The reference genome of KP was downloaded from RefSeq
(https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/datasets/genome/GCF_000240185.1/).
624
Spatial transcriptomics sequencing data from other technologies
For mouse sample, the sequencing data for 10X Visium FF mouse coronal
brain section data was downloaded from the 10x Genomics website
(https://www.10xgenomics.com/resources/datasets/adult-mouse-brain-coronal
-section-fresh-frozen-1-standard) and was processed with the same pipeline
that we used for spRandom-seq. The mm39 genome annotation file
downloaded from GENCODE
(https://ftp.ebi.ac.uk/pub/databases/gencode/Gencode_mouse/release_M32/g
encode.vM32.primary_assembly.annotation.gtf.gz) was used to annotate gene
biotypes.
For human breast cancer sample, the filtered expression matrix for 10X
Fresh/Frozen human breast cancer section data was retrieved from 10X
Genomics website
(https://www.10xgenomics.com/datasets/human-breast-cancer-visium-fresh-fr
ozen-whole-transcriptome-1-standard). According to the provided summary file,
same human genome (GRCh38) was used to perform the sequence alignment.
The hg38 genome annotation file downloaded from GENCODE
(https://ftp.ebi.ac.uk/pub/databases/gencode/Gencode_human/release_43/ge
ncode.v43.primary_assembly.annotation.gtf.gz) was used to annotate the
gene biotypes.
645
Data processing of the snrandom-seq murine pneumonia model data
For all data generated by snRandom-seq, the genes expressed in fewer than 3
cells, and the cells with fewer than 200 genes detected were removed. To
further exclude cells that were highly contaminated by ambient RNAs, we
calculated contamination rate for each cell with decontX (v1.0.0) packages in

R. The cells with contamination rate higher than 0.2 were removed from the
expression matrix.
For all the data, the identification of top 3000 variable features
(`FindVariableFeatures`), the normalization (`SCTransform`), dimension
reduction (`runPCA`, `runUMAP`), the shared nearest-neighbor (SNN) graph
construction using (`FindNeighbors(dim = 1:30)`), and Louvain clustering
(`FindCluster`, algorithm = 1) were performed with built-in functions in Seurat
(v5.1.0) package in R (v4.3.3).
To perform the differential expression (DE) analysis with
`FindAllMarkers(only.pos = TRUE, min.pct = 0.1, logfc.threshold = 0.25)`
function in Seurat, scaling and normalization were re-performed on the RNA
assay with `NormalizeData()` and `ScaleData()` function in Seurat. Only the
DE genes that passed 0.05 threshold after false discovery rate correction were
retained for downstream analyses.
The visualization of scRNA-seq data was done by the SCP (v0.5.6) package in
R.
667
Data processing of the sprandom-seq sequencing data
For all data generated by spRandom-seq, the spots under tissue were first
selected manually based on the H&E images. For all the data, the identification
of top 3000 variable features (`FindVariableFeatures`), the normalization
(`SCTransform`), dimension reduction (`runPCA`, `runUMAP`), the shared
nearest-neighbor (SNN) graph construction using (`FindNeighbors(dim =
1:30)`), and Louvain clustering (`FindCluster`, algorithm = 1) were performed
with built-in functions in Seurat (v5.1.0) package in R (v4.3.3).
To perform the differential expression (DE) analysis with
`FindAllMarkers(only.pos = TRUE, min.pct = 0.1, logfc.threshold = 0.25)`
function in Seurat, scaling and normalization were re-performed on the RNA
assay with `NormalizeData()` and `ScaleData()` function in Seurat. Only the
DE genes that passed 0.05 threshold after false discovery rate correction were
retained for downstream analyses.
682
Cell deconvolution of the data generated by sprandom-seq
The cell deconvolution of the spRandom-seq data were done by CARD
package (v1.1) in R with all default parameters. The reference single-cell
RNA-seq data for mouse brain was the Adolescent Mouse Brain dataset
downloaded from the Mouse Brain Atlas (https://mousebrain.org/). The cell
type annotation of Mouse Brain Atlas dataset was reannotated with the
MapMyCells tool
(https://portal.brain-map.org/atlases-and-data/bkp/mapmycells) developed by
Allen Institute with Allen Brain Cell Atlas datasets to obtain more detailed
cell-type annotation.[10] The reference single-cell RNA-seq data for mouse
heart was downloaded from Tabula Muris
(https://tabula-muris.ds.czbiohub.org/). For human breast cancer sample, we

used the human breast single-cell RNA-seq dataset generated by Kumar et al.,
and the dataset was downloaded from the CELLxGENE database with the
following   link
(https://cellxgene.cziscience.com/collections/4195ab4c-20bd-4cd3-8b3d-6560
1277e731).[30] For the data of murine pneumonia model, the corresponding
snRandom-seq data was used as reference data.
The cell type proportion plot was generated with the `CARD.visualise.prop`
function in CARD package.
703
704 **Genebody coverage**
705 The gene body coverage from 5' end to 3' end for each sample was calculated
706 by using the 'genebody_coverage.py' script from RSeQC (v4.0.0) software.
707
Calculation of tumor purity for clinical sample with ESTIMATE
To calculate the tumor purity for the human breast cancer data, we performed
the ESTIMATE analysis with the estimate (v1.0.13) package in R. ESTIMATE
is a software that calculates the tumor purity, the infiltration level of immune
cells in tumor tissue, and the abundance of stromal cells based on expression
data. Based on the gene signatures derived from immune and stromal cells,
ESTIMATE analysis provides three scores: ESTIMATE score, immune score,
and stromal score. The ultimate tumor purity can be calculated with the
formula (`Tumour purity=cos (0.6049872018+0.0001467884 × ESTIMATE
score)`) provided in Yoshihara et al.[31]
To further classify regions on the human breast section for downstream
analysis, we applied min-max normalization on the tumor purity, immune score
and stromal score to ensure the normalized scores are in the range from 0 to 1.
Then we classify the spots on the section into High (normalized score > 0.5)
and Low (normalized score <= 0.5) region according to the normalized tumor
purity, immune score and stromal score respectively.
724
Microrna alignment and quantification
The human microRNA annotation file was downloaded from the miRBase
database   with   the   following   link
(https://www.mirbase.org/download/hsa.gff3).[20] We then searched through
the STAR-aligned reads in the BAM file to find reads that overlapped with
microRNAs. The duplicated reads that share the same barcode and UMI
sequences were removed. The filtered BAM was then used to quantify the
expression level of microRNAs.
733
734 **Differential expression analysis on protein coding genes and non-coding**
735 **rnas**
736 In order to identify differentially expressed genes and ncRNAs within the
737 pre-defined regions ("Tumor High", "Immune High", "Stromal High"), we
738 performed DE analysis using the `FindAllMarkers` function in Seurat package

without any p-values and log2 fold change cutoffs at the first place. The significant DE genes and ncRNAs were then selected with the standard: adjusted P-value <= 0.05 and averaged log2 fold change >= 0.25. Here, only up-regulated genes and ncRNAs were kept for downstream analyses. The volcano plots were plotted with ggplot2 package in R.

Pearson's correlation test between differentially expressed protein coding genes and ncRNAs
For the DEGs identified in each pre-defined region, we selected top50 protein coding genes with highest log2 fold change and most significant p-values. Then we performed the pearson's correlation test between each pair of the top50 protein coding genes and DE ncRNAs. The ggsankey (v0.0.99999) package in R was used to draw the sankey plot to display correlated ncRNA-protein coding gene pairs within "Tumor High", "Immune High", and "Stromal High" regions.

Gene ontology (GO) enrichment analysis on differentially expressed protein coding genes
For the DEGs identified in each pre-defined region, we kept all protein coding genes for the GO enrichment analysis. The `gost` function in gProfiler2 (v0.2.3) package was applied for the analysis. We limited the source to biological processes in Gene Ontology database only. Then the top GO terms for each region were selected and the overlapped genes were extracted to calculate the module scores for each selected GO terms based on the expression data of the human breast cancer sample. The module score was calculated by the `addModuleScore` function in Seurat.

Spatial and functional heterogeneity of K. Pneumoniae subpopulations in infected samples
To explore the potential spatial and functional sub-populations of KP within the infected samples, we first subset the original expression matrix with solely KP genes. We then performed the identification of top 500 variable features (`FindVariableFeatures`), the normalization (`SCTransform`), dimension reduction (`runPCA`, `runUMAP`), the shared nearest-neighbor (SNN) graph construction using (`FindNeighbors(dim = 1:10)`), and Louvain clustering (`FindCluster`, algorithm = 1) with built-in functions in Seurat (v5.1.0) package in R (v4.3.3). To perform the differential expression (DE) analysis with `FindAllMarkers(only.pos = TRUE, min.pct = 0.05, logfc.threshold = 0.05)` function in Seurat, scaling and normalization were re-performed on the RNA assay with `NormalizeData()` and `ScaleData()` function in Seurat. Only the DE genes that passed 0.1 threshold after false discovery rate correction were retained for downstream analyses. The cluster 0,1, and 2 have differentially expressed genes and much more specific spatial distribution so they were kept for downstream analysis.

To test the difference in KP infection among cluster 0,1, and 2, we performed
the Kruskal-Wallis test and the post hoc pairwise wilcoxon tests with the
`stat_compare_means` function in the ggpubr (v0.6.0) package in R, while
plotting the boxplot with the `ggboxplot` function.
To investigate the functional heterogeneity among cluster 0,1, and 2, we
applied the `enrichKEGG()` function in the clusterProfiler (v4.8.3) package in R
to perform the gene ontology enrichment analysis with the KEGG database.
The organism code corresponds to the Klebsiella pneumoniae subsp.
pneumoniae HS11286 is "kpm". The query gene set for each cluster was the
DE genes passed the filtering criteria mentioned above. The KEGG terms with
FDR-corrected p-value less than 0.15 were determined as significantly
enriched terms for a certain cluster.
795

High-dimensional weighted gene co-expression network analysis on
infected samples
To identify co-expressed gene modules and reveal regional gene expression
differences and interactions during bacterial infection, we analyzed
mspRandom-seq data from infected samples using high-dimensional weighted
gene co-expression network analysis (hdWGCNA) with the hdWGCNA
(v0.4.00) package in R. When we constructed the meta spot with
`MetacellsByGroups()` function, we used the spatial coordinates as the
dimensionality reduction result, set the number of the nearest neighbors to be
10 (k=10), and allowed maximum of 6 (max_shared = 6) shared spots between
two meta spots. We then followed the basic workflow of hdWGCNA to
normalize the data, find the optimized power, and identify hub genes within
significant modules based on their intra-module connectivity.
809

Gene ontology analysis of module hub genes
To determine the underlying biological functions of the co-expressed gene
modules identified by hdWGCNA, we performed the gene ontology enrichment
analysis with the top 100 hub genes. The `gost` function in gProfiler2 (v0.2.3)
package was applied for the analysis. We limited the source to GO (GO:BP,
GO:MF), KEGG, REAC, and CORUM. The GO terms had adjusted p-values
less than 0.05 were determined to be significant. The top and most biologically
relevant GO terms were selected manually to be visualized and used to
generate the enrichment network. The `enrichmentNetwork()` function in the
aPEAR (v1.0.0) package in R was used to generate the enrichment network
for each module, while setting clustering method to 'hierarchical clustering' and
similarity method to 'cosine similarity'.
822

823 **Reporting summary**
824 Further information on research design is available in the Nature Portfolio
825 Reporting Summary linked to this article.
826

Data availability

The Visium mouse coronal brain section data can be downloaded from 10x Genomics website (https://www.10xgenomics.com/resources/datasets/adult-mouse-brain-coronal-section-fresh-frozen-1-standard). The 10X Visium Fresh/Frozen human breast cancer section data can be retrieved from 10X Genomics website (https://www.10xgenomics.com/datasets/human-breast-cancer-visium-fresh-frozen-whole-transcriptome-1-standard). The spatial total transcriptome data generated with spRandom-seq in this study can be found on Gene Expression Omnibus (GEO) and is available under the accession number "GSE247881" (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/query/acc.cgi?&acc=GSE247881).

Code availability

The scripts for data pre-processing and downstream analysis can be found at https://github.com/WangycLab/spRandom-seq.

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Author Contributions

All authors contributed to the manuscript. Y.L. and J.C. conceived the study. Y.L., S.Z., Y.C., Y.L., B.Z., H.C. and Y.Z. conducted the experiments. Z.X., Y.Y., X.X., N.L. and J.C. analyzed the data and wrote the paper. Y.W., H.G. and J.C. supervised this project. All authors participated in manuscript revision and approved the final manuscript.

Competing interests

Y.W. is a co-founder of M20 Genomics. B.Z. and Y.Z. are employers of M20 Genomics. Y.L. and Z.X. have submitted a patent application related to the spRandom-seq. The other authors declare no competing interests.

Figure Legends

Fig. 1 |Overview of spRandom-seq workflow for FFPE tissues. The workflow of spRandom-seq for FFPE tissues includes FFPE section pre-treatment, reverse transcription, dA tailing, cDNA transfer, extension, one-strand elution, DNA amplification and sequencing.

Fig. 2 |Validation and benchmark of spRandom-seq using a FFPE mouse brain section. a, Spatial visualization of coronal FFPE mouse brain and heart section analyzed by spRandom-seq at 55 μm resolution. **b**, Numbers of Genes/UMIs detection for FFPE mouse brain and heart using spRandom-seq. **c**, Spatial maps of classic cell-type for spRandom-seq in FFPE mouse brain section. Spots in which the transcript was not detected are shown as yellow. Color scale indicates log-normalized expression. **d**, Heatmap showing the correlation between clusters and cell types. **e**, Spatial visualization of six selected genes expressions of the FFPE mouse brain section and ISH images of the adult mouse brain taken from ABA. **f**, UMAP of clustering results of coronal FFPE mouse brain section using only protein-coding or non-coding RNAs respectively. **g**, Spatial maps of lncRNA 4921539H07Rik and Neurod2 for spRandom-seq datasets. Spots in which the transcript was identified as lncRNA are depicted in red, while those identified as Neurod2 are depicted in blue. Spots exhibiting co-expression are represented in pink. **h**, Spatial visualization of FFPE mouse olfactory bulb section analyzed by spRandom-seq at 15 μm resolution.

Fig. 3 |Validation and benchmark of spRandom-seq using a clinical FFPE breast cancer section. **a**, Spatial visualization of the clinical FFPE breast cancer section analyzed by spRandom-seq at 50 μm resolution. **b**, Dotplot of top differentially expressed genes in each cluster based on the unsupervised clustering. **c**, Saturation analysis of spRandom-seq based on the the clinical FFPE breast cancer tissues. **d**, Genes/UMIs detection comparison the clinical FFPE breast cancer tissues using spRandom-seq and fresh frozen breast by 10X Genomics. **e**, Read coverage along the gene body by spRandom-seq in FFPE breast cancer section. **f**, Cell-type deconvolution results displaying spatial distribution of major cell types in breast section. Color scale indicates the proportion of a given cell type in a spot. **g**, Spatial maps of classic cell-type marker genes for spRandom-seq in FFPE breast cancer section. Color scale indicates log-normalized expression. **h**, Spatial maps displaying tumor purity, immune and stromal scores from ESTIMATE analysis of spRandom-seq FFPE breast cancer section.

Fig. 4 |Spatial ncRNA regulation in the clinical FFPE breast cancer section. **a**, Comparison of different RNA biotypes detection between spRandom-seq FFPE breast cancer section and 10X Visium fresh frozen breast cancer section. **b**, Spatial count maps of various ncRNA biotypes. **c**, Volcano plots displaying differentially expressed ncRNAs between the high tumor/immune/stromal and low tumor/immune/stromal regions. **d**, Top-ranked upregulated ncRNAs and protein-coding RNAs showing high correlation with

the tumor/immune/stromal regions. **e**, Spatial interactions involving the top upregulated ncRNAs and upstream signaling pathways. The biological pathways were enriched by all protein coding DEGs that showed positive correlation with the ncRNAs. Module score was calculated based on the expression of all intersection genes of a given GO term.

Fig. 5 |Validation and benchmark of spRandom-seq using normal and infected mouse lungs. **a**, Spatial mappings of the proportion of the KP transcripts in all transcripts per spot in normal and KP-infected samples (Top left and right). Spatial mappings of the Gene counts, and UMI counts of *KP* in KP-infected samples (Bottom right and left). Color scale indicates log-normalized expression. **b**, Numbers of *KP* Genes and UMIs detected per spot in normal and KP-infected samples. **c**, RNA biotypes detected in KP-infected samples. **d**, Cell-type deconvolution results of using snRandom-seq data displaying spatial distribution of major cell types in infected samples. Color scale indicates the normalized proportion of a given cell type in a spot. **e**, Spatial correlation map of the deconvoluted cell-type proportion between cell types (Top right). The correlation analysis between KP transcripts proportion and deconvoluted cell-type proportion of 15 cell types (Bottom left).   Correlation is measured by Pearson's rho. **f**, The lung of normal and infected mouse was analyzed through immunofluorescence and fluorescence *in situ* hybridization. Ly6G (Green), DAPI (Blue), and *KP* (Red). Scale bars, 20 µm. **i**, The Correlation analysis between Neutrophil's deconvoluted cell-type proportion and *KP* transcripts proportion.

Fig. 6 | Spatial and functional heterogeneity of *K. pneumoniae* subpopulations in infected samples revealed by spRandom-seq. **a**, UMAP projection and the spatial distribution of major *KP* subpopulations. **b**, The boxplot of KP transcript percentages within clusters 0, 1, and 2. The Kruskal-Wallis test indicates significant differences among clusters (p < 2.2e-16). **c**, Bubble plots of KEGG enrichment analysis for cluster 0,1 and 2 of *KP*. **d**, The hub genes in four modules ranked by kME. **e**, Spatial mappings of module scores calculated by hub genes for the four modules. **f**, The radar plot displaying the relative enrichment of each module in different *KP* clusters. **g**, Top Gene Ontology (GO) terms enriched in the GO Enrichment Analyses with M3 hub genes.

Figure 1

Workflow

1. Tissue Treatment
(De-paraffin and de-crosslink)

2. Permeabilization

3. *in situ* Reverse Transcription
and dA taling

🟩⊥⊥⊥ Random Primer ⊥⊥⊥⊥ cDNA

AAA AAA AAA
Poly(A) RNA AAAA

AAA AAA
Non-poly(A) RNA

AAA AAA AAA
Eukaryotic RNA AAAA

AAA AAA AAA
Prokaryotic RNA

5. Extension

UMI
Barcode
Adaptor

4. cDNA capture

6. Release

7. DNA amplification

8. Cas9-based rRNA Depletion

9. Sequencing

Analysis

- **Whole transcriptome mapping**

Protein-coding RNA   Non-coding RNA

- **Clinical FFPE samples analysis**

- **Host and microbial transcriptomics mapping**

Host   Microbe

- **Spatial heterogeneity of microbial function**

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6