

1 **Metabolomic profiling reveals systemic signatures of premature aging in-**  
2 **duced by Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome**

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21 Suggested running title: **Metabolic features of premature aging**

22 **Keywords:** Lamin; HGPS; Premature aging; Metabolomics; Biomarkers; Meta-  
23 bolic profiling.

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28

29 **Abstract**

30

31 Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome (HGPS) is an extremely rare genetic  
32 disorder. HGPS children present a high incidence of cardiovascular complica-  
33 tions along with altered metabolic processes and accelerated aging process. No  
34 metabolic biomarker is known and the mechanisms underlying premature aging  
35 are not fully understood. The present study analysed plasma from six HGPS  
36 patients of both sexes ( $7.7\pm 1.4$  years old; mean $\pm$ SD) and eight controls  
37 ( $8.6\pm 2.3$  years old) by LC-MS/MS in high-resolution non-targeted metabolomics  
38 (Q-Exactive Plus). Several endogenous metabolites with statistical difference  
39 were found. Multivariate statistics analysis showed a clear separation between  
40 groups. Potential novel metabolic biomarkers are identified using the multivari-  
41 ate area under ROC curve (AUROC) based analysis, showing an AUC value  
42 higher than 0.80 using only two metabolites, and reaching 1.00 when increasing  
43 the number of metabolites in the AUROC model. Targeted metabolomics was  
44 used to validate some of the metabolites identified by the non-targeted method.  
45 Taken together, changed metabolic pathways in that panel involve sphingolipid,  
46 amino acid, and oxidation of fatty acids among others. In conclusion our data  
47 show significant alterations in cellular energy use and availability, in signal  
48 transduction, and in lipid metabolites, creating new insights on metabolic altera-  
49 tions associated with premature aging.

50

51

## 52 **Introduction**

53           Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome (HGPS) is an extremely rare ge-  
54 netic disorder. Children with HGPS present a high incidence of severe cardio-  
55 vascular complications along with altered metabolic processes, associated with  
56 an accelerated aging process (1-4). Despite a great increase in the scientific  
57 knowledge about HGPS, no specific biomarker is known for HGPS and the un-  
58 derlying molecular mechanisms are not fully understood. HGPS is induced by a  
59 single mutation in the LMNA gene, creating a mutant protein isoform with dele-  
60 tion of 50 amino-acids near in the protein Lamin A. The mutated protein, known  
61 as progerin (isoform 6), is toxically accumulated in the cells. Progerin, despite  
62 being able to enter the cell nucleus, does not incorporate normally into the nu-  
63 clear membrane lamina, leading to several abnormalities in nuclear trafficking(5,  
64 6). Interestingly, unaffected aged individuals show a similar splice event, lead-  
65 ing to progerin expression that may play a role in cellular senescence(6).

66           Aging is the biological process of gradually accumulating deleterious  
67 changes in cells, decreasing the physiological capacity(7, 8). Aging is not con-  
68 sidered a disease, but it intensely rises the risk of developing chronic cardio-  
69 vascular(9) and metabolic diseases(10). It is known that metabolic systemic  
70 profiles are age-dependent, reflecting metabolism alterations, such as incom-  
71 plete fatty acid mitochondrial oxidation(11-13).

72           Metabolomics is, among other “omics” strategies, one of the most com-  
73 plete and reliable sources of information for circulatory mediator analysis, bi-  
74 omarker discovery pipeline and mechanistic disease investigation(14). In the  
75 present study, we applied metabolomics to samples from HGPS patients and  
76 identified several metabolites from different biological pathways dysregulated.  
77 Multivariate and univariate statistical analysis demonstrated metabolic pathways  
78 and potential new biomarkers that might act as central mediators in this syn-  
79 drome and in senescence.

## 80 **Results**

82

83 We used non-targeted based metabolomics to investigate metabolites  
84 differentially expressed in plasma samples obtained from 6 HGPS patients and  
85 8 healthy donors, as summarized in Table S1, aiming to identify new bi-  
86 omarkers and novel mechanisms of the disease.

87 In order to avoid the inclusion of exogenous compounds in our analysis,  
88 contaminants, medications, and their metabolites, food and flavouring com-  
89 pounds were excluded from the metabolite list, resulting in a final feature list of  
90 40 known molecules of endogenous origin presenting the statistical difference  
91 between the two groups. Each of the identified metabolites was found to have  
92 false discovery rates (FDRs) of less than 10%. Information regarding the me-  
93 tabolites identified in the present study is available in Table 1. Figure S1 shows  
94 typical total extracted ion chromatograms of all analyzed samples, demonstrat-  
95 ing the efficient separation of the plasma compounds and reproducibility. The  
96 deuterated internal standard spiked in during sample preparation was used to  
97 calculate the coefficient of variation (CV) of our method. Figure S2 demon-  
98 strates that our CVs were <15% among samples.

99 A data matrix including the average area values of the uniquely identified  
100 analyzed compounds in each sample was generated. Multivariate statistics us-  
101 ing both unsupervised and supervised strategies were then applied to the data.  
102 Unsupervised PCA of the metabolomics data demonstrated a clear separation  
103 between groups (Figure 1a). Percent Variance Captured by PCA Model for the  
104 Principal Component 1 (PC1) was 55.4%, and for Principal component 2 (PC2)  
105 was 6.9%. The green (patients) and red (controls) areas in Figure 1a represent  
106 the 95% confidence intervals for each group. The application of supervised  
107 PLS-DA also permits a detailed group separation between HGPS and control  
108 cohorts as shown in Figure 1b. The PLS-DA model captured 55.4% of the va-  
109 riance in component 1 and 5.1% in component 2. The components of the PLS-  
110 DA models were used to predict the accuracy (Accuracy) based on the cross-  
111 validation, the sum of squares captured by the model ( $R^2$ ), and the cross-  
112 validated  $R^2$  ( $Q^2$ ). The PLS-DA cross-validation data are summarized together  
113 with a set of permutation tests demonstrating statistical significance in the PLS  
114 model (Figure S3).

115 In order to discover potential biomarkers for HGPS, ROC curves were  
116 constructed. The area under the ROC curve (AUC) is a well-described strategy

117 for biomarker potential performance analysis, where the higher the AUC the  
118 more accurate is the model. As demonstrated in figure 2a, 6 AUC models were  
119 created, including different numbers of metabolites, varying from 2 to 40. The  
120 results demonstrate that the classification model using only two variables for the  
121 AUC resulted in a 0.803 value and 95% confidence interval (CI) ranging from  
122 0.5~1. Increasing the number of variables to 5 in the classification model, the  
123 AUC value increases to 0.912 and the 95% confidence interval ranges from  
124 0.625~1.

125 Metabolites were ranked according to their capacity to distinguish be-  
126 tween HGPS and Control subjects and the result is summarized in figure 2b.  
127 Metabolites are shown as either downregulated (green) or upregulated (red) in  
128 patients with HGPS. Furthermore, we performed classical univariate ROC curve  
129 analysis for individual biomarkers. Figure 3 shows the ranked metabolites  
130 based on area under ROC curve (AUROC), suggesting that both arginine and  
131 5-hydroxytryptophol are robust upregulated candidates for HGPS biomarkers.  
132 Choline and phosphatidylcholine (16:0/16:0) on the other hand are robust  
133 downregulated candidates for HGPS biomarkers, showing potent diagnostic  
134 power. Aiming to validate the non-targeted metabolomic analysis, we per-  
135 formed targeted metabolomics based on LC-MS on a triple quadrupole using  
136 metabolite standards for prior calibration. Figure 4a shows ion chromatograms  
137 for arginine and ISTD. Each line represents one sample analyzed showing in-  
138 tensity and retention time in minutes. Figure 4b shows the calibration curve for  
139 arginine quantification. Our targeted method demonstrates an increase in argi-  
140 nine levels in samples from HGPS patients in the same manner as in the non-  
141 targeted approach as summarized in figure 4c. Data from arginine and other  
142 metabolites analyzed by triple quadrupole are summarized in table S3.

143 Aiming to evaluate the most relevant metabolic pathways altered in pa-  
144 tients with HGPS, pathway analysis was applied. Figure 5 shows an overview of  
145 Pathway Analysis, using only annotated metabolites identified to be significantly  
146 altered by HGPS. Figure 5a highlights pathways related to upregulated metabo-  
147 lites, suggesting alterations in fatty acids metabolism, glucose metabolism, and  
148 mitochondrial function. Figure 5b shows the metabolic pathways related to the  
149 downregulated metabolites in HGPS patients, demonstrating alterations related

150 to phospholipids, phenylacetate and phosphatidylcholine metabolism, among  
151 other alterations.

152

### 153 **Discussion**

154 Aging is a complex biological process poorly understood at the molecular  
155 level. HGPS is a rare fatal disease where an extremely accelerated aging pro-  
156 cess is observed leading to premature death mainly related to heart complica-  
157 tions. Despite great effort to increase knowledge about HGPS, biological bi-  
158 omarkers for this disease are not yet available, detailed disease mechanisms  
159 are still being investigated and there is currently no cure(19).

160 . In the present work, we created ROC curve models to identify metabolic  
161 HPGS biomarkers. As shown in results, biomarkers found to be statistically dif-  
162 ferent between the HGPS and control groups are highly likely to be associated  
163 with premature aging based on performance in terms of both specificity and  
164 sensitivity. Furthermore, targeted analysis using high purity standards of the  
165 metabolites of interest previously identified in the non-targeted experiments are  
166 in accordance with the non-targeted strategies, showing similar results in terms  
167 of statistical significance.

168 A number of investigations used this methodology to study the mecha-  
169 nisms underlying the aging progression, and whether strategies such as exer-  
170 cise training and hormonal treatment can revert the metabolic changes induced  
171 by aging. In a recent study by Houtkooper et al, metabolomic hallmarks of aging  
172 were demonstrated, including affected pathways in both liver and muscle tis-  
173 sues, indicating a significant modification in fatty acid metabolism(20). In the  
174 present study, we found several compounds up or downregulated in the plasma  
175 of HGPS patients, highlighting a profound metabolic alteration compared to our  
176 control cohort. Aging metabolomic studies showed an increase in lactate and  
177 glucose suggesting changes in glucose/pyruvate and glycogen metabolism(20),  
178 in accordance with our data using HGPS plasma, where we observed an in-  
179 crease in glucose and lactide, a dimer of lactic acid (Table 1). Metabolomic  
180 studies in diabetic patients also demonstrate glucose and lactate increase(21).  
181 In addition to the glucose/pyruvate pathway alteration, we observed an increase  
182 in a long chain carnitine family molecule, Acetyl-L-Carnitine, associated with

183 fatty oxidation. Interestingly, children in early-stage type 1 diabetes present ele-  
184 vated Acyl-Carnitine. Adult patients with type 2 diabetes may also present  
185 dysregulation of fatty acid oxidation, characterized by glucolipototoxicity(22). In  
186 this context, it is interesting to note that a recent study demonstrated that met-  
187 formin, a popular anti-diabetic biguanide, alleviates the nuclear defects and  
188 premature aging phenotypes in HGPS fibroblasts, perhaps constituting a prom-  
189 ising therapeutic approach for life extension in HGPS(23). Furthermore, insulin  
190 resistance has been described in children with HGPS(24).

191 Mitochondria play a key role in several metabolic inborn errors as well as  
192 in the aging process, highlighting a decline in mitochondrial respiration(20, 25,  
193 26). In this regard, carnitine metabolites are important during fatty acid oxidation  
194 in the mitochondria. We found an 11 fold increase in Acetyl-L-Carnitine and  
195 also in L-carnitine in HGPS patients reflecting a broad dysfunction in  $\beta$ -  
196 oxidation, indicating a diminished lipid transport capacity in the mitochondria(27,  
197 28). On the other hand, we found some carnitine metabolites decreased in the  
198 plasma of HGPS, such as Decanoylcarnitine. Interestingly, fetal congenital dis-  
199 orders are associated with decreases in some carnitines, such as  
200 Decanoylcarnitine among others(29, 30). Collectively, these findings highlight  
201 the multiplicity of perturbations in lipid metabolism related to mitochondrial dys-  
202 functions in HGPS. These metabolic alterations may be related to the growth  
203 abnormalities observed in HGPS children(31).

204 During aging as well as in systemic metabolic dysfunction, amino-acid  
205 metabolism is significantly modified(32, 33). Previous publications demonstrate  
206 that branched-chain amino acids (BCAA) as well as methionine content in the  
207 diet changes mice lifespan. In the present work, we identified altered amino ac-  
208 id availability in HGPS patients' plasma that was further investigated by targeted  
209 metabolomics. Our experiments showed a decrease in the levels of methionine  
210 and histidine, but in contrast levels of arginine and cystine were increased. In-  
211 terestingly, Cheng and coworkers demonstrated that amino acids concentra-  
212 tions, such as Histidine, might be related to human longevity (34). Regarding  
213 BCAA no changes were observed, as well as in other important amino-acids  
214 such as proline and alanine. In agreement with our findings, Houtkooper et al  
215 showed that methionine is decreased in the plasma of aged mice and no  
216 changes were observed in BCAA(20). Interestingly, choline supplementation

217 seems to improve cognitive function and is an important strategy to ameliorates  
218 Alzheimer's disease pathology, a pathological process typically associated with  
219 advanced age(35, 36). Furthermore, choline converts homocysteine, a neuro-  
220 toxic amino acid in methionine(37, 38), also found to be decreased in the HGPS  
221 patients in the present work.

222

223         Altered metabolic processes can lead to the formation of toxic metabo-  
224 lites as well as alterations in acid-base equilibrium. Interestingly, the 4,6-  
225 dioxoheptanoic acid, also known as Succinylacetone, a medium-chain keto ac-  
226 id, and derivative metabolite, was found in higher levels in HGPS plasma.  
227 Succinylacetone can rise due to abnormal activity of the enzyme  
228 fumarylacetoacetase, being suggested as an acidogenic, oncometabolite and a  
229 metabotoxin. Of note, aging and progeria course with a hypertrophic cardiac  
230 process, that dramatically increases the risk of severe cardiac complications. In  
231 this context, patients with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy are reported to have an  
232 increased level of this metabolite(39, 40).

233         Our study has limitations imposed by the cohort size used. As indicated  
234 in methods/results, we analyzed only 6 HGPS patients' samples, a small num-  
235 ber for a biomarker investigation and disease mechanism comprehension.  
236 However, HGPS is an extremely rare disease, as emphasized by the fact that in  
237 a 200 million people country like Brazil, only one donor was recruited. The 5  
238 other samples from our cohort were donated by The Progeria Research Foun-  
239 dation which collects patients' samples worldwide. These samples come from  
240 children with different genetic backgrounds, most probably contain different  
241 contaminants, were subject to distinct sample handling procedures and time of  
242 storage. Human genome databases show that the interindividual differences  
243 are very extensive between distinct populations. From the 40.000.000 variant  
244 polymorphic DNA sites predicted, some are rare and present only in a person or  
245 his family, ethnicity or country, which may reflect in their plasma  
246 metabolome(41). Remarkably, in view of the expected variability and the great  
247 possibility that the diverse genetic backgrounds might influence the metabolic  
248 plasma levels, our approach based in the multivariate analysis of multiple me-  
249 tabolites was capable to clearly separate patients from controls, generating an



250 important biomarker profile related to the disease, even using a very small  
251 sample size.

252 In summary, the present work applied a powerful metabolomics pipeline  
253 based in liquid chromatography coupled to high-resolution mass spectrometry  
254 along with multivariate statistics and pathway analysis. We were able to identify  
255 putative circulating biomarkers for the disease that may be interesting targets  
256 for pharmacological treatment, nutritional supplementation and for diagnosing  
257 and follow up of HGPS patients.

258

## 259 **Conclusions**

260 The present study reports for the first time a metabolic profiling with LC-MS  
261 based metabolomics of premature aging in patients with HGPS. We identified a  
262 total of 40 known metabolites differentially expressed between HGPS and age  
263 and sex-matched controls. Creating a panel with the most distinct metabolites,  
264 we identified circulating putative biomarkers candidates with high accuracy for  
265 group classification based on ROC curve models. Changed metabolic pathways  
266 involved fatty acids, amino-acids, and sphingolipids, among other metabolic  
267 pathways. Taken together these alterations impact the cellular energy use, en-  
268 zyme activities, and cell signalling, creating new insights into the molecular  
269 mechanisms underlying premature aging associated with HGPS.

## 270 **Methods**

271

### 272 Sample preparation

273

274 Plasma samples were obtained from 5 HGPS patients kindly donated by The  
275 Progeria Research Foundation ([www.progeriaresearch.org](http://www.progeriaresearch.org)), including 3 females  
276 (2.3, 4.7, 12.2 years old) and 2 males (8.5, 10.2 years old). An additional sam-  
277 ple was obtained from a Brazilian HGPS patient (female 8.4 years old) at the  
278 Federal University of Paraná as summarised in Table S1. The average age for  
279 HGPS patients was  $7.7 \pm 1.4$  years (mean  $\pm$  SD). As controls, we used 8 healthy  
280 donors of both genders (4 males and 4 females) with a mean age of  $8.6 \pm 2.3$   
281 years ( $p = 0.4154$ ).

282

283 Ethics statement

284 Parents or the legal guardians of all controls and of the Brazilian patient  
285 have given full written informed consent for participation in the study. The study  
286 has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the Instituto Nacional de  
287 Cardiologia, number - 27044614.3.0000.5272 and the Department of Pediatrics  
288 from the University Hospital of the Federal University of Paraná. All procedures  
289 were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible local Ethics  
290 Committees and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2000.

291

292 Metabolomics

293 Blood samples in Brazil were collected using EDTA tubes and plasma  
294 was obtained by centrifugation for 10 min at 10.000g (Megafuge 8R, Thermo  
295 Scientific, USA). The Progeria Research Foundation disposed frozen plasma  
296 samples. For metabolomic experiments, plasma proteins were precipitated with  
297 methanol (3:1 (v/v)) at -20°C for 1h. After protein precipitation, samples were  
298 centrifuged for 10 min at 14.000g, at 4°C, supernatants were collected and  
299 dried in a SpeedVac Concentrator (SPD111v, Thermo Scientific, USA). The  
300 metabolites were then reconstituted with a dilution factor of 3 in methanol/water  
301 (1:9 (v/v)). 5nM of deuterated testosterone (D3-Testosterone, purchased from LGC  
302 Standards; London, England) was spiked and used as an internal standard  
303 (ISTD) for coefficient of variance (CV) calculation. For quality control (QC), a  
304 pool of all the analyzed samples was prepared.

305

306 Non-targeted metabolomics

307 For liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS) analysis,  
308 5µl volumes of each sample were analyzed in triplicate. As a blank control,  
309 methanol/water followed the same steps and was used as background for data  
310 analysis as previously described(15). Between samples, a washing protocol  
311 was performed. Samples were analyzed in a random sequence and the QC  
312 sample was analyzed 5 different times along the experiment.

313 Samples were analyzed by Dionex Ultimate 3000 UHPLC coupled to a  
314 Q-Exactive Plus high-resolution mass spectrometer (Thermo Scientific, USA).  
315 LC separations were obtained using a 2.1 x 50mm ZORBAX 1.8µm C18 column  
316 (Agilent, USA). Mobile phases used were: phase A) water with 0.1% formic acid

317 and 5mM ammonium formate, and phase B) methanol with 0.1% formic acid.  
318 Total run time was 30 min. The first 4 min of the run consisted of a linear gradi-  
319 ent from 10% to 60% of B phase, followed by a 20 min linear gradient from 60%  
320 to 98% of B. After reaching 98%, a stable run with 98% of B was sustained for 3  
321 minutes followed by 3 minutes of 10% of B solution to regenerate the column  
322 pumped at 450  $\mu$ L/min with a column temperature of 55°C and the sample  
323 chamber held at 7°C acquired in positive mode. The data were obtained with  
324 the MS detector in full-scan mode (Full-MS) with the data-dependent acquisition  
325 (dd-MS2) for the top-10 most abundant ions per scan(15), with settings: In-  
326 source CID 0.0 eV, micro scans = 1, resolution = 70,000, AGC targeted 1e6,  
327 maximum IT = 50 ms, scan range 67 to 1000 m/z, spectrum data = Profile. De-  
328 tector setting for dd-MS2 were: micro scans = 1, resolution = 17,500, AGC tar-  
329 geted 1e5, maximum IT = 100 ms, loop count = 10, isolation window 2.0 m/z,  
330 NCE 15, 35, 50, spectrum data = profile, underfill ratio = 1.5%, charge exclusion  
331 = unassigned, dynamic exclusion = 6s.

332

### 333 Data analysis and statistics

334 Data were analyzed by Compound Discoverer 2.1 (Thermo Fischer,  
335 USA). For compound detection a mass tolerance of 5 ppm was accepted to ex-  
336 tract ions with a minimum of 1.000.000 peak intensity; for compound consolida-  
337 tion, a 0.2 min of retention time tolerance was employed. The ChemSpider  
338 search including BioCyc and Human metabolome database (HMDB)(16) was  
339 used with 5ppm mass tolerance as well as the mzCloud search. In the non-  
340 targeted method, the identification of non-novel metabolites was based on ac-  
341 curate mass and tandem mass spectra, without chemical standards references,  
342 providing a level 2 identification (putatively annotated). The samples were ana-  
343 lyzed in triplicate. A principal component analysis (PCA) was performed to eval-  
344 uate the experimental reproducibility and the QC samples were used to identify  
345 the reproducibility throughout experiments. Data of the triplicate injection exper-  
346 iments were unified and the average was used as a unique value. Data were  
347 scaled by auto-scaling. For statistical analysis, group area data from control vs  
348 patient data fold change was calculated and the p-value per group was calcu-  
349 lated by t-test. Compounds that presented  $p < 0.05$  after adjustment using p-  
350 value (FDR) cutoff of 0.1 were considered statistically different. Chromatogram

351 visualization and base peak chromatogram figure generation were performed  
352 using MZmine 2.26 software(17) and metabolomics statistics data was per-  
353 formed using MetaboAnalyst (18). The curated data matrix was used to gener-  
354 ate a model for sample class discrimination via PCA and Partial Least Squares -  
355 Discriminant Analysis (PLS-DA) using online MetaboAnalyst (18). The model  
356 quality was analyzed by the goodness-of-fit parameter (R<sup>2</sup>) and the goodness-  
357 of-prediction parameter (Q<sup>2</sup>). For biomarker analysis, multivariate ROC curve  
358 based exploratory analysis was performed using a classification method (SVM)  
359 and feature ranking method (SVM built-in) applied to the statistically different  
360 metabolites between the two groups.

361

#### 362 Targeted metabolomics

363 Amino-acid mixture standard was purchased from Sigma-Aldrich (São Paulo,  
364 Brazil) and D3-testosterone (ISTD) from LGC Standards (London, England).  
365 Amino acid quantification was carried out using a TSQ Quantiva from Thermo  
366 Scientific (San Jose, USA) with a Dionex Ultimate 3000 HPLC system  
367 (Germering, Germany). Chromatographic separation was achieved using a re-  
368 versed phase column (C18 Zorbax, 50 × 3 mm, 1,7 µm, Agilent, Santa Clara,  
369 USA). The analyte was eluted from the column using a gradient with the eluent  
370 changing from 5% to 100% methanol in water within 3 min. The column was  
371 washed for 1.2 min in 100% methanol and equilibrated for 3 min at the initial  
372 eluent composition. All solvents contained 0.1% formic acid. The flow rate, col-  
373 umn temperature, and injection volume were 300 µL/min, 40°C and 5 µL, re-  
374 spectively.

375 Amino-acids were monitored by selected reaction monitoring (SRM) in the posi-  
376 tive ion mode. The transitions selected for amino-acid quantification and ISTD  
377 are listed in Table S2. The curve was constructed using a mix of amino-acids in  
378 triplicate at 1; 2,5; 5; 10 and 20 nmol/mL. All samples were spiked with D3-  
379 Testosterone (ISTD) at 5 ng/mL. The area ratios of the total extracted ion of the  
380 product ions and the product ion of the IS were plotted versus the concentra-  
381 tion.

382

383 Statistical analysis

384

385 Data are presented as mean  $\pm$  SEM. Two-tailed Student's *t*-test was used. We  
386 did not use statistical methods to predetermine sample size; samples sizes  
387 were determined on the basis of sample availability. The non-targeted metabo-  
388 lomics statistics is described in detail with the metabolomics data analysis  
389 methods above. Values of  $P < 0.05$  were considered statistically significant us-  
390 ing GraphPad Prism 6.0 (GraphPad Software, USA).

391

### 392 **Acknowledgments**

393 We are grateful to The Progeria Research Foundation for the availability of  
394 plasma samples, to Edna Aleixo from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro  
395 for assistance with the importation process and to the Laboratório de Apoio ao  
396 Desenvolvimento Tecnológico (LADETEC) of the Institute of Chemistry of the  
397 Federal University of Rio de Janeiro for providing high quality infrastructure for  
398 the LC-MS analysis.

### 399 **Author contributions**

400 GM and ACCC conceptualized the study and wrote the manuscript; GM,  
401 CGMS, JAME, GPCE, FCSN, GC, GBD, LM, ACCC acquired and analyzed the  
402 data; VOC, GBD, FCSN, ACCC critically revised the study and the manuscript.

### 403 **Funding**

404 This work was funded by the Brazilian National Research Council (CNPq), the  
405 Carlos Chagas Filho Rio de Janeiro State Research Foundation (FAPERJ) and  
406 National Institutes of Science and Technology for Regenerative Medicine.

### 407 **Competing Interests**

408

409 The authors declare no competing interests.

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416

## 417 **Figure legends**

### 418 **Figure 1. Multivariate analysis of the metabolomics data**

419 a) Principal component analysis (PCA) 2D score plot and b) Partial Least  
420 Squares - Discriminant Analysis (PLS-DA) 2D score plot from the dataset with  
421 all of the features expected to be endogenous metabolites with statistical differ-  
422 ence. The green (patients) and red (controls) areas represent the 95% confi-  
423 dence interval regions for each group.

### 424 **Figure 2. Potential biomarkers in diagnosing HGPS with metabolomics**

425 a) Areas under the ROC curve (AUC) for different numbers of variables used to  
426 construct the ROC curves. The inset shows the number of variables used for  
427 the AUCs models. b) The most significant features of the ROC model  
428 downregulated (green) or upregulated (red) in patients with HGPS compared to  
429 controls.

### 430 **Figure 3. ROC curve analysis of individual biomarkers for HGPS based 431 metabolomics**

432 Top ranked metabolites based on area under ROC curve (AUROC) identified by  
433 the non-targeted metabolomics analysis of HGPS plasma samples. The rectan-  
434 gle to the right of the ROC curves show the individual values determined for  
435 each metabolite in the control and HGPS groups. The red line represents the  
436 mean value for the control group + two standard deviations.

437

### 438 **Figure 4. Targeted metabolomics performed by LC-MS/MS for biomarker 439 validation**

440 a) Extracted ion chromatograms for arginine and internal standard (ISTD). Each  
441 colored line represents one sample analyzed showing intensity and retention  
442 time (RT) in minutes. b) Calibration curve for arginine quantification. c) Graph  
443 shows arginine quantification in each group and bars represent SEM. \* indi-  
444 cates  $P < 0.05$ .

445

446 **Figure 5. Metabolic pathways altered by HGPS**

447 Overview of Pathway Analysis highlighting potential functional relationships be-  
448 tween the set of annotated metabolites identified to be significantly altered by  
449 HGPS. a) Pathways related to upregulated and b) downregulated metabolites in  
450 the HGPS patients.

451

452 Table 1. Significant dysregulated metabolites of HGPS

Metabolite	Class	HMDB ID	Fold Change	p-value	FDR
LysoPC(17:0)	Glycerophospholipid	HMDB0012108	0.57	0.0179	0.12
LysoPC(16:0)		HMDB0010382	0.50	0.0007	0.02
PC(16:0/18:2)		HMDB0011211	0.45	0.0004	0.01
Glucose	Carbohydrates and carbohydrate conjugates	HMDB0000122	3.66	0.0001	0.01
N(6)-Methyllysine	Carboxylic acids and derivatives	HMDB0002038	7.74	0.0238	0.13
Arginine		HMDB0000517	2.48	0.0056	0.06
gamma-Aminobutyric acid		HMDB0000112	1.80	0.0413	0.19
Aminolevulinic acid		HMDB0001149	0.77	0.0331	0.17
Phenylalanine		HMDB0000159	0.54	0.0003	0.01
N-Phenylacetylglutamine		HMDB06344	0.45	0.0172	0.12
Pyroglutamylglycine		HMDB00061890	0.32	0.0016	0.02
Aceglutamide		HMDB0006029	0.29	0.0011	0.02
Threoninyl-Aspartate		HMDB00029057	0.27	0.0005	0.01
Oleoylcarnitine		HMDB0005065	0.44	0.0071	0.07
L-Carnitine		HMDB0000062	1.72	0.0087	0.08
Acetyl-L-carnitine		HMDB0000201	11.23	0.0312	0.16
3-Dehydroxycarnitine	HMDB0006831	0.75	0.0275	0.15	
Palmitoylcarnitine	HMDB0000222	0.64	0.0263	0.15	
Decanoylcarnitine	HMDB0000651	0.47	0.0411	0.19	



9-Decenoylcarnitine		HMDB0013205	0.44	0.0005	0.01
Phosphatidylcholine(16:0/16:0)	Glycerophospholipids	HMDB0011206	0.67	0.0015	0.02
1-octadecylglycero-3-phosphocholine		HMDB0062195	0.57	0.0066	0.07
Glycerylphosphorylcholine		HMDB0000086	0.51	0.0049	0.06
Dipalmitoylphosphatidylcholine		HMDB0000564	0.47	0.0029	0.04
Lactide		Hydroxy acids and derivatives	not found	3.62	0.0001
5-Hydroxytryptophol	Indoles and derivatives	HMDB0001855	6.65	0.0121	0.10
4,6-Dioxoheptanoic acid	Keto acids and derivatives	HMDB00635	2.04	0.0032	0.04
LysoPC(P-16:0)	Lysophospholipid	HMDB0010407	0.35	0.0003	0.01
Choline	Organonitrogen compounds	HMDB0000097	0.57	0.0002	0.01
PC(o-18:1(11Z)/16:0)	Phosphatidylcholine	HMDB0013424	0.77	0.0342	0.17
PC(O-16:0/18:2(9Z,12Z))		HMDB0011151	0.51	0.0074	0.07
N-Methylethanolaminium phosphate	Phosphoethanolamine	HMDB0060173	0.46	0.0367	0.18
(3beta,19alpha)-3,19,23,24-Tetrahydroxy-12-oleanen-28-oic acid	Prenol lipids	HMDB0040784	0.23	0.0168	0.12
Pyridoxamine	Pyridines and derivatives	HMDB0001431	0.56	0.0142	0.11
Citicoline	Pyrimidine nucleotides	HMDB0001413	0.55	0.0055	0.06
13-cis retinol	Retinoids	HMDB0006221	2.16	0.0156	0.12
Palmitoyl sphingomyelin	Sphingolipids	HMDB0061712	0.70	0.0136	0.11
Pregnenolone	Steroids and steroid derivatives	HMDB0000253	2.10	0.0188	0.12
(3beta,24R,24'R)-fucosterol epoxide	Sterol Lipids	not found	0.43	0.0389	0.19
Bilirubin	Tetrapyrroles and derivatives	HMDB0000054	6.34	0.0128	0.10

454 **References**

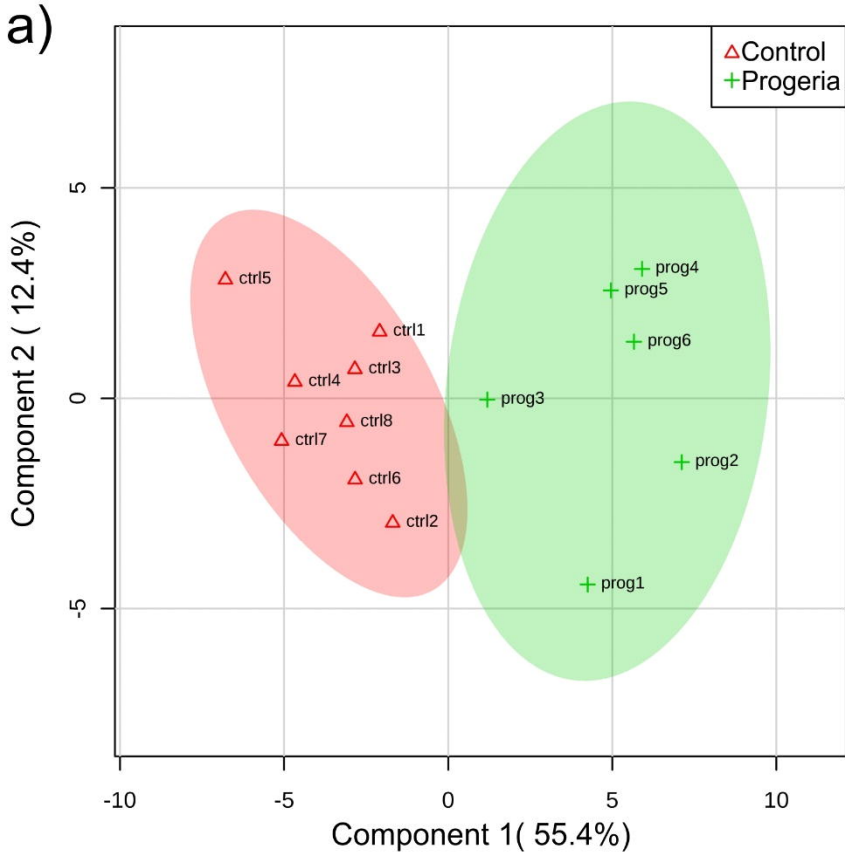
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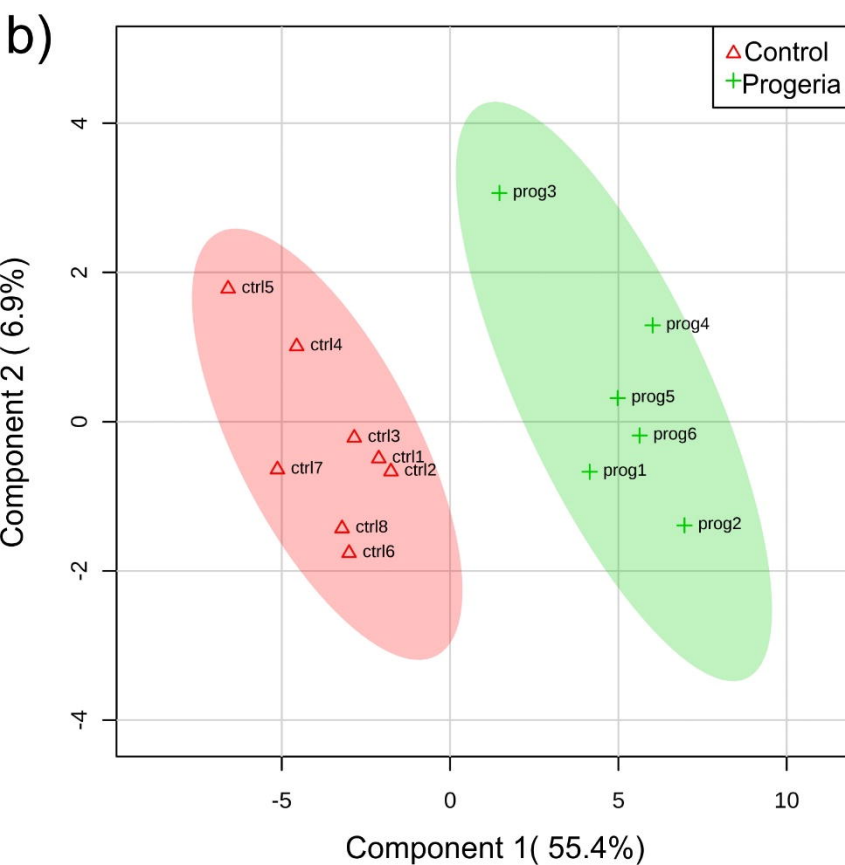
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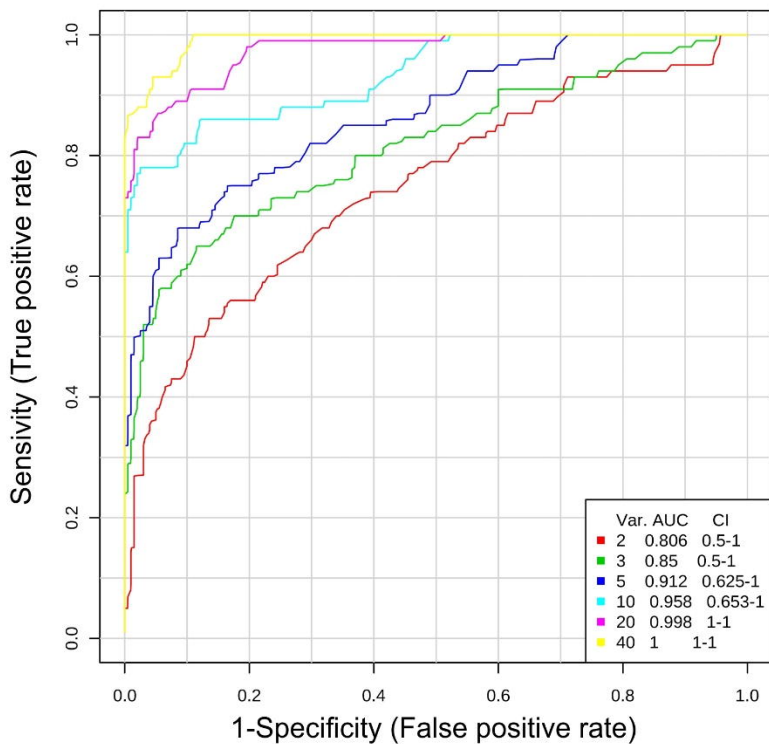
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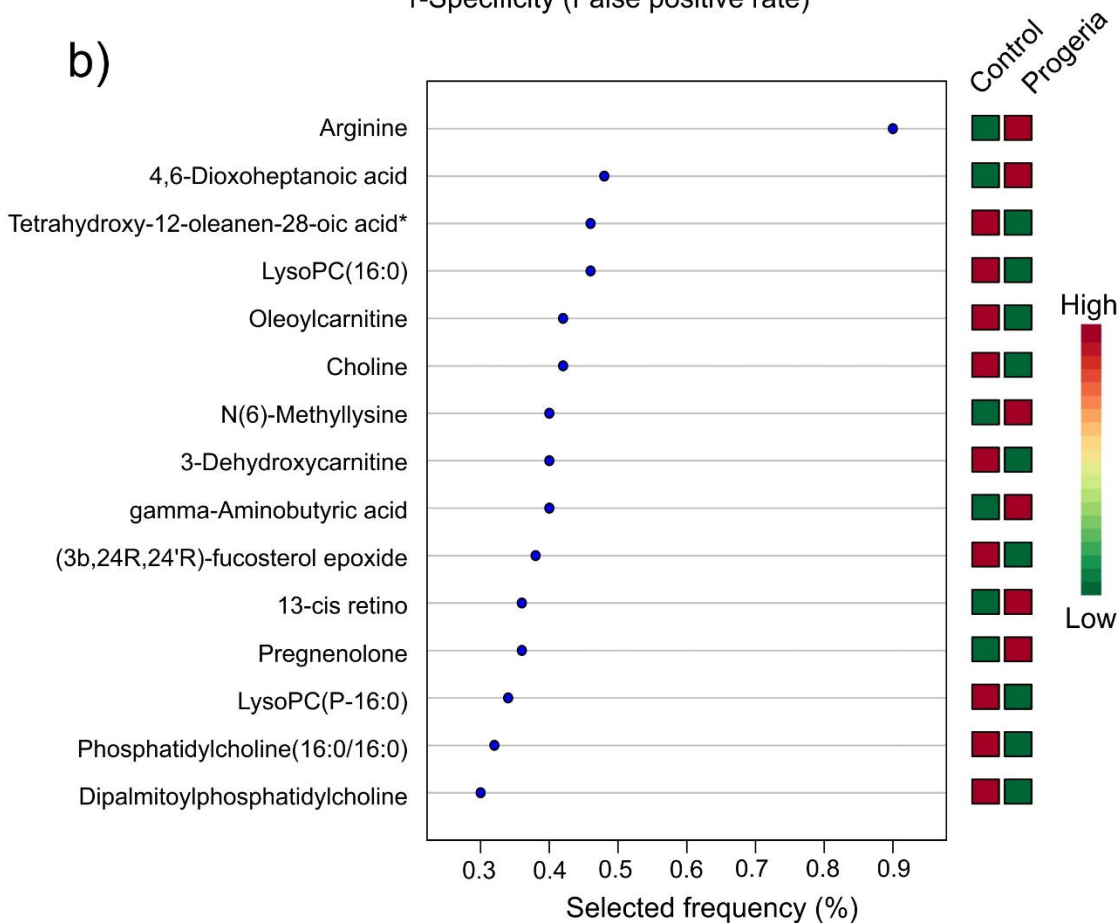
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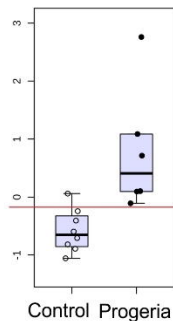
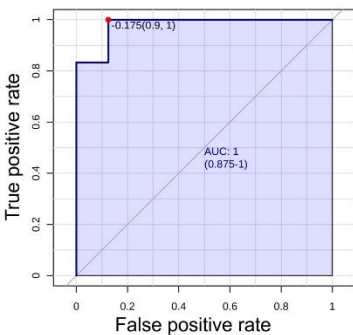
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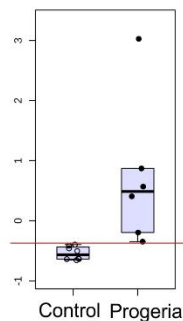
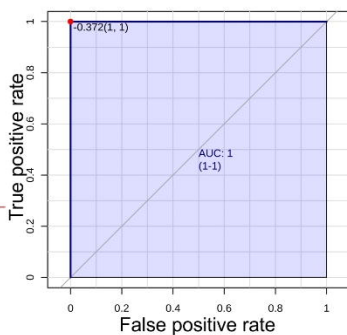
b)



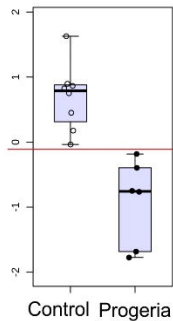
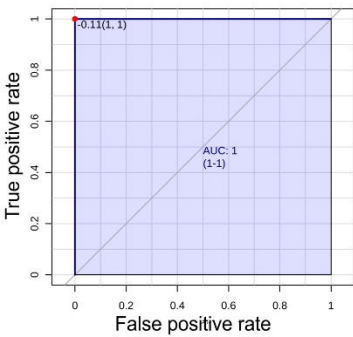
Arginine



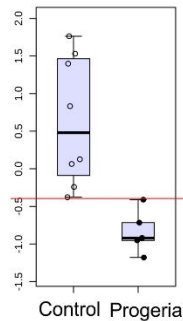
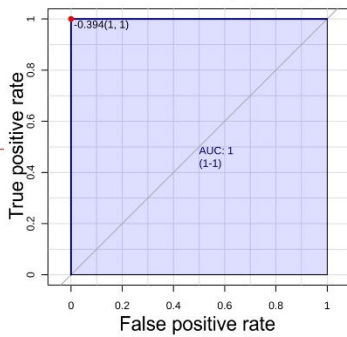
5-Hydroxytryptophol

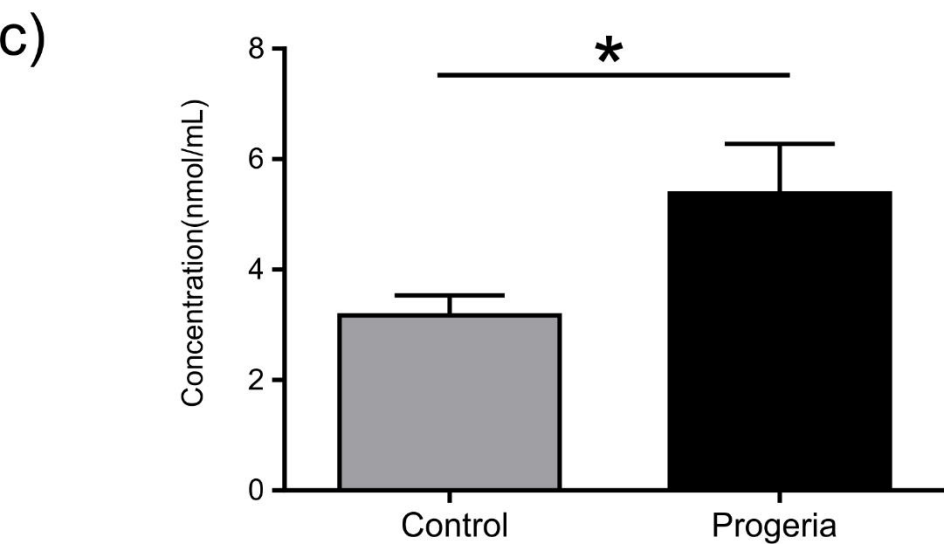
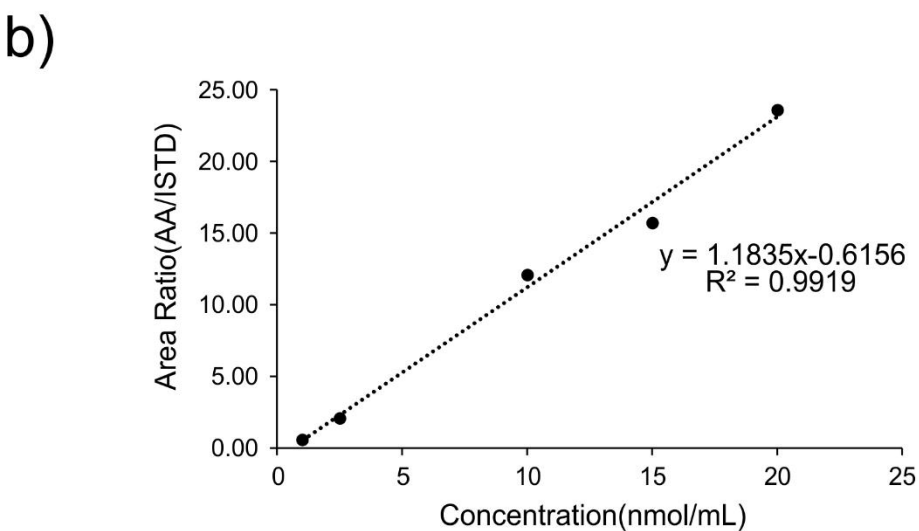
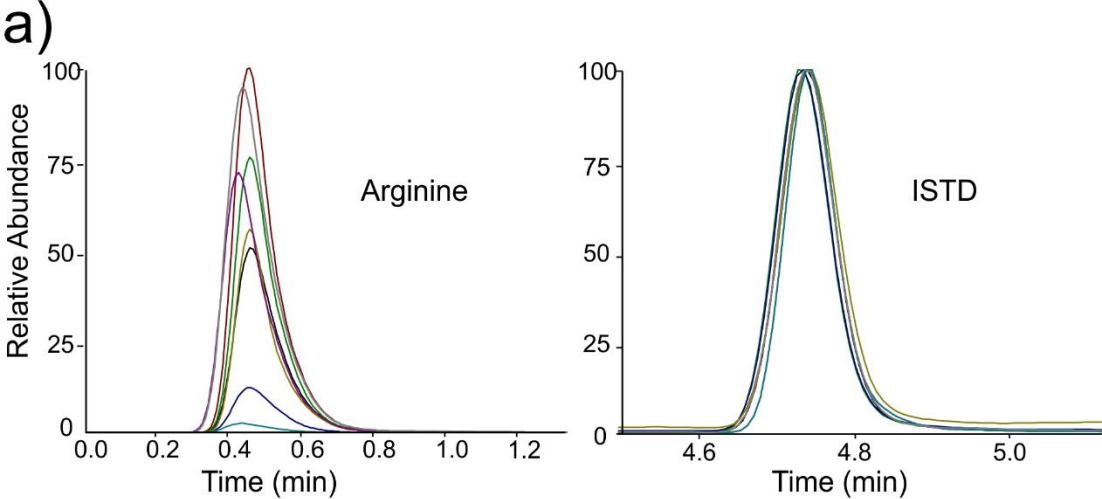


Choline



Phosphatidylcholine160/160

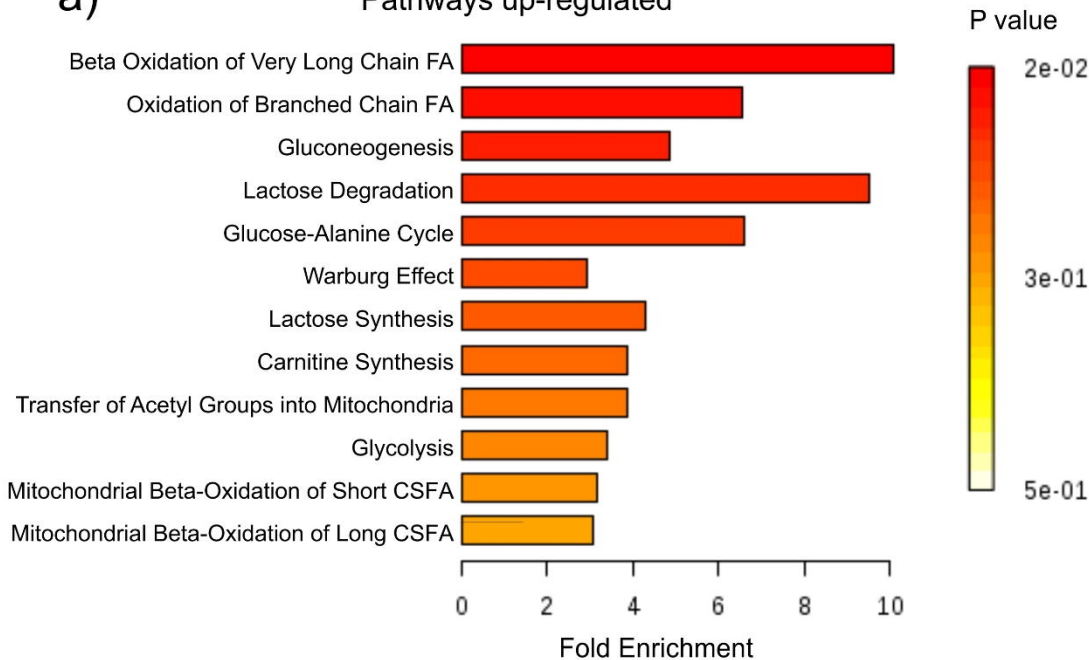






a)

## Pathways up-regulated



b)

## Pathways down-regulated

