# scientific data

**Data Descriptor**



## **Deep sequencing-derived OPENMetagenome Assembled Genomes from the gut microbiome of liver transplant patients**

**Goutam Banerj[ee](http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5553-5350)<sup>1</sup>, Suraya Rahman Papri<sup>1</sup>, Hai Huang<sup>2</sup>, Sanjaya Kumar Satapathy<sup>3</sup>** ✉ **& Pratik Banerjee <sup>1</sup>** ✉

**Recurrence of metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD) after liver transplantation (LT) is a continuing concern. The role of gut microbiome dysbiosis in MASLD initiation and progression has been well established. However, there is a lack of comprehensive gut microbiome shotgun sequence data for patients experiencing MASLD recurrence after LT. In this data descriptor, we describe a dataset of deep metagenomic sequences of a well-defned LT recipient population. Community-based analysis revealed a high abundance of** *Akkermansia muciniphila***, consistently observed in most patient samples with a low (0–2) MASLD Activity Score (NAS). We constructed 357 metagenome-assembled genomes (MAGs), including 220 high-quality MAGs (>90% completion). The abundance of diferent species of** *Bacteroides* **MAGs dominated in patient samples with NAS>5 ("defnite MASH"). In contrast, the MAGs of** *A. muciniphila***,** *Akkermansia* **sp., and** *Blutia* **sp. dominated in samples from patients without MASH (NAS=0–2). In addition, the phylogenetic analysis of** *A. muciniphila* **and** *Akkermansia* **sp. MAGs identifed two new phylogroups of** *Akkermansia* **that are distinct from the previously reported three phylogroups.**

#### **Background & Summary**

Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), formerly known as nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), encompasses a wide range of liver disorders, and its escalating prevalence has become a global concern<sup>1</sup>. Estimates indicate that the prevalence of MASLD was approximately 25.5% in 2005, which increased to 38.7% in 2016[2](#page-8-1) . Te disruption of the gut-liver axis due to an imbalance in the gut microbial community can have a negative impact on energy homeostasis, leading to the development of various metabolic syndromes such as obesity and MASLD<sup>3,[4](#page-8-3)</sup>. Intestinal health is a crucial aspect of MASLD, and consequently, various studies have assessed the makeup of the gut microbial community and its abundance using sequence-based metagen-omic approaches<sup>3-[6](#page-9-0)</sup>. For microbiome analysis, deep shotgun sequencing (with more than 10 million reads/ sample) provides several advantages over shallow sequencing (<10 million reads/sample) and 16S rRNA amplicon sequencing-based approaches, such as identifying rare microbial taxa (at species levels), classifcation of uncultivated bacteria, metabolic profling, host-microbe interactions, novel gene discovery, identifcation of gene clusters responsible for secondary metabolite production, and for constructing metagenome-assembled genomes (MAGs)<sup>7-[9](#page-9-2)</sup>. The significance of gut microbiota composition and its functions in MASLD warrants the use of deep shotgun metagenomic sequencing. To the best of our knowledge, as of the current time, there is no publicly available ultra-deep shotgun sequencing dataset (with sequencing depth >20 million reads/sample) from patients who have undergone liver transplantation (LT) and subsequently developed MASLD recurrence.

In our previous prospective observational study, the gut microbial community status of LT patients with varying pathologies of metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH), formerly known as nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), recurrence was reported by utilizing the 16S rRNA amplicon sequencing-based

1Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL, 61801, USA. 2The Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research, Northwell Health, Manhasset, NY, USA. 3Division of Hepatology, Sandra Atlas Bass Center for Liver Diseases & Transplantation, Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell Health, Manhasset, NY, USA. ✉e-mail: [ssatapat@northwell.edu](mailto:ssatapat@northwell.edu); [pratik@illinois.edu](mailto:pratik@illinois.edu)



<span id="page-1-0"></span>Fig. 1 The detail workflow from DNA extraction to bioinformatics analysis. Every step and their associated sofware packages are given for better understanding of the analysis.

approach<sup>[4](#page-8-3)</sup>. As mentioned before, data generated from deep shotgun sequencing of the metagenomic samples is essential for comprehensive community-based functional analyses and constructing draft MAGs, enabling a deeper understanding of the disease outcomes<sup>10</sup>. In this study, we employed a deep shotgun sequencing approach (that generated over 20 million reads per sample) to investigate the gut microbial fora and construct MAGs from liver transplant (LT) patients manifesting varying degrees of MASH recurrence, as illustrated in Fig. [1.](#page-1-0)

Based on the NAS score, all samples have been categorized into three groups according to conventional clini-cal practices<sup>[11](#page-9-4),[12](#page-9-5)</sup>: "no MASH" (NAS 0–2), "borderline MASH" (NAS 3-4), and "definite MASH" (NAS  $\geq$  5) samples. Patient-level demographic and clinical data at the time of stool sample collection are provided in Table S1. At the phylum level, we observed variations in the abundance of three phyla—Fusobacteria, Euryarchaeota, and Verrucomicrobiota—across these three sample groups. Remarkably, our fndings align with our previous research involving 16S rRNA sequencing of the same samples. In this study, we observed a substantial increase in the abundance of *A. muciniphila* and *Akkermansia* sp. in the majority of samples from patients with low NAS (0–2), reaffirm-ing our earlier observations<sup>[4](#page-8-3)</sup>. The species-level functional profiling indicated that the elevated abundance of three amino acid biosynthesis pathways positively correlates with samples from patients with no MASH outcomes [NAS  $(0-2)$ ]<sup>[13](#page-9-6),[14](#page-9-7)</sup>. Additionally, we constructed and taxonomically classified the MAGs from all these samples (Fig. [2](#page-2-0)) and estimated their abundance using a mapping-based approach. The abundance of MAGs of *A. muciniphila* and *Blautia* sp. were very high in most patient samples with low or no MASH activities [NAS (0–2)]. We also have analyzed and compared the MAGs of *A. muciniphila* and *Akkermansia* sp. to explore the phylogenetic groups. Tis exploration led to identifying two potentially new phylogenetic clusters within *A. muciniphila* and *Akkermansia* sp. The information regarding pathway abundance, in conjunction with the MAGs, may contribute significantly to enhancing our understanding of the underlying disease mechanisms during the progression of MASLD.

#### **Methods**

**Study location, ethical clearance, and sample collection.** The study was conducted at James D. Eason Transplant Institute of Methodist University Hospital, afliated with the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center, Memphis, TN. Adult LT recipients (age >18) with MASH as an indication for LT, who had a liver biopsy one-year post-transplant, were recruited for this study<sup>4</sup>. The signed consent of all the participants had been taken prior to enrollment in the study. Te protocol and the study design were approved by the University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board (Study Protocol # 15-03891-XP UM). The stool samples from each participant were collected in accordance with the specified methodology described previously<sup>4</sup>.

**Fecal microbiota DNA extraction and quality check.** The genomic DNA was extracted following the protocol described in the PowerFecal DNA extraction kit (MO BIO Laboratories, Carlsbad, CA). Initially, the



<span id="page-2-0"></span>Fig. 2 The phylogenetic tree of high-quality MAGs constructed using maximum likelihood method (completeness >90% and contamination <5%) prepared by PhyloPhlAn 3.0 and visualized by iTOL. Te different colors in the tree represented a separate cluster of MAGs and their close relatives. The red colored cluster shows the *A. muciniphila* group.

quality and the quantity of the extracted DNA were checked on 0.8% agarose gel and NanoDrop spectrophotometer (Thermo Scientific, Wilmington, DE), respectively.

**Shotgun library preparation and sequencing.** The library preparation for shotgun sequencing was done following the protocol of the Kapa Hyper Stranded kit (Roche). Subsequently, the quality of the prepared libraries was assessed using the 5200 Fragment Analyzer (Agilent Technologies, USA). The libraries were then pooled; quantitated by qPCR and subjected to sequencing (NovaSeq. 6000) on one SP lane for 151 cycles from both ends of the fragments. The sequencing was done using paired-end reads  $(2 \times 150 \text{ bp})$ , yielding more than 25 million reads per sample on average, ensuring a robust coverage for subsequent analysis and interpretation of the genomic data.

**Host contamination removal.** To enhance the accuracy of the downstream analysis, it is crucial to remove host DNA contamination from metagenomic reads. Here, we employed a mapping based method using bowtie2 v2.5.[015](#page-9-8) to remove human DNA contamination. In brief, *bowtie2 index* command was used to index the human reference genome (GRCh38) obtained from the NCBI database [\(https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/data-hub/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/data-hub/genome/GCF_000001405.26/) [genome/GCF\\_000001405.26/\)](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/data-hub/genome/GCF_000001405.26/), followed by an alignment step. Any reads that were successfully mapped to the human genome were identifed as host DNA and subsequently removed from the dataset.





<span id="page-3-0"></span>**Fig. 3** Bracken report based microbial diversity and community in each sample. (a) The distribution and abundance of top 20 phyla based on sample groups (**b**) heatmap representing the relative abundance of top 20 genera in diferent MASLD samples. (**c**) LDA enrichment of signifcant genera in diferent MASLD groups calculated using LEfSe considering  $g p < 0.05$  and LDA score 2.0.

**Microbial diversity and community analysis.** The clean microbial reads obtained from bowtie2 were subjected to assign taxonomic composition using Kraken2 package v2.0.8<sup>16</sup>. The mapping of clean reads was done against Kraken2 standard database ([https://benlangmead.github.io/aws-indexes/k2\)](https://benlangmead.github.io/aws-indexes/k2) (accessed on 11/02/2022). The output file (Kraken.report) generated in Kraken2 was further used as input in Bracken v2.8<sup>17</sup> to produce accurate phylum and species level abundance (Fig. [3](#page-3-0)). Results indicated that Firmicutes (also known as Bacillota) and Bacteroidetes were the most abundant phyla across all samples (Fig. [3a\)](#page-3-0). Interestingly, our analysis revealed notable diferences in the presence of the Euryarchaeota and Verrucomicrobia phyla among the sample groups. Specifcally, these phyla were detected in the majority of "no MASH" (NAS 0–2) samples but were largely absent in the "borderline MASH" (NAS 3-4), and "defnite MASH" (NAS≥5) samples (Fig. S1). Furthermore, the relative abundance at the genus level was calculated, and the top 20 genera are presented in Fig. [3b.](#page-3-0) The results indicated that the genus *Akkermansia* was highly abundant in samples from the NAS 0–2 and NAS 3-4 groups, with abundances ranging from 0.43 to 0.79 (Fig. [3b\)](#page-3-0). However, in patients with NAS≥5, the abundance of *Akkermansia* was either low or absent in most samples. *A. muciniphila* is generally considered a next-generation probiotic, and its high abundance in the gut is associated with various positive health outcomes, including MASLD<sup>[18](#page-9-11)</sup>. To identify the diferential abundance of the key genera in the MASLD sample groups, we performed Linear Discriminant Analysis (LDA) using LEfSe<sup>19,20</sup> with a threshold of  $p < 0.05$  and an LDA score of 2.0. Although the abundance of *Akkermansia* was high in samples from the NAS 0–2 and NAS 3-4 groups, it was not signifcantly enriched in these groups., and thus its abundance cannot be correlated with MAFLD outcome. The results indicated that the genera *Proteus* (LDA 4.35) and *Raoultella* (LDA 2.66) were enriched in the NAS 3-4 group (Fig. [3c](#page-3-0)). In contrast, the genera *Prevotella* (LDA 3.49) and *Vescimonas* (LDA 3.28) were enriched in the NAS 0–2 group. Interestingly, no signifcant diferential efects were observed in the NAS≥5 group.

Species level diversity was further analyzed and visualized using the Pavian platform through Sankey fow diagrams (Fig. [4\)](#page-4-0)<sup>21</sup>. The high abundance of *A. muciniphila* was consistently observed in samples from patients without MASH outcomes [NAS (0–2)] (Fig. [4r,t,u](#page-4-0)).

Furthermore, the alpha diversity indices (Table S2) strongly support our diversity fndings. For example, sample N1191 (Fig. [4u\)](#page-4-0) is highly dominated by a single species *A. muciniphila*, and thus its overall species diversity is low which is indicated by high Berger Parker's dominance value (0.78571) and lower Simpson's index value (0.3798).

**Functional profling of gut microbial community.** Functional profling was done to gain a deeper understanding of the functional potential of the microbial communities and how it may relate to the observed pathologies associated with MASLD progression. In brief, the paired-end clean reads of each sample (r1 and r2) were first merged with *Cat* command in the Linux platform. The merged file was then used in MetaPhlAn v4.0<sup>[22](#page-9-15)</sup> to generate the taxonomy file. The merged clean read file and the corresponding taxonomy file were used as input in HUMAnN v3.0<sup>[23](#page-9-16)</sup> to generate three files: gene\_families, pathway\_abundance, and pathway\_coverage using *ChocoPhlAn* database v201901b (accessed on 04/23/2023). All pathway\_abundance fles obtained from 21 samples



<span id="page-4-0"></span>Fig. 4 The snakey diagram of the top 20 species generated from the Pavian platform and their absolute abundance in terms of read counts.



<span id="page-4-1"></span>Fig. 5 The functional profile of the top 10 species in each sample. (a-f) Here we have demonstrated six important pathways that might directly correlate with MASLD outcome. The important pathways were either dominated by *A. muciniphila* or *Blautia* sp.

were merged, normalized in HUMAnN v3.0 using *humann\_renorm\_table* command, and plotted using *humann\_ barplot* command (Fig. [5\)](#page-4-1). Several pathways like the folate transformations (Fig. [5b\)](#page-4-1), L-isoleucine biosynthesis (Fig. [5d\)](#page-4-1), and L-methionine biosynthesis (Fig. [5e\)](#page-4-1) exhibited higher abundance in "no MASH" (NAS 0–2) samples compared to "definite  $MASH$ " ( $NAS \ge 5$ ) samples, and interestingly, all these pathways were dominated by *A. muciniphila*. Similarly, the abundance of the other two microbial pathways: L-arginine biosynthesis (Fig. [5a](#page-4-1)) and glycogen degradation (Fig. [5c](#page-4-1)) were also high in low NAS (NAS 0–2) samples compared simples



<span id="page-5-0"></span>Fig. 6 The distribution of meta genome assembled genome (MAGs) in each sample. (a) Indicated the completeness and contamination of 220 high-quality MAGs. Each color represented a single MAG, and the attached line indicated the percentage of contamination. (**b**) Represent the top known species level genome bins or MAGs in diferent samples. Here, red and white blocks mean the presence and absence, respectively. (**c**) Along with species-level MAGs, several genus-level and other lineage MAGs were also constructed and presented here. The color density bar on the right side indicated the number of specific level MAGs in different samples.



<span id="page-5-1"></span>Fig. 7 The comparison of *A. muciniphila* MAGs constructed from different samples. (a) Represented the average nucleotide identity among diferent MAGs. (**b**) demonstrate the phylogenetic tree of *A. muciniphila* showing diferent phylogenetic groups. *Escherichia coli* was taken as an out-group.

with NAS ≥ 5 (definite MASH), and dominated by the probiotic bacteria *Blautia* sp<sup>14</sup>. Previous research high-lighted that an abundance of these pathways are associated with normal liver function<sup>13[,14](#page-9-7)[,24](#page-9-17)-26</sup>.

<span id="page-6-0"></span>

**Table 1.** Sequencing reads processing statistics of each data set based on FastQC result.

<span id="page-6-1"></span>

**Table 2.** Mapping percentage of clean reads using Kraken 2 standard database.

**Metagenomic assembly, contig generation, and quality check.** Metagenome assembly is the frst step in metagenome assembled genome (MAG) construction<sup>27</sup>. Here, we used SPAdes v3.15.5<sup>[28](#page-9-20)</sup> to construct long contigs from the clean reads using a *de novo* approach using -meta option. The quality and length of these assembled contigs were assessed by MetaQUAST<sup>29</sup>.

**Binning and refnement of MAGs.** Binning is the most critical step in the construction of MAG and here we used MetaWRAP<sup>30</sup> for binning the contigs obtained from metaSPAdes. MetaWRAP is a wrapper of three binning packages: MaxBin2, MetaBAT2, and CONCOCT. The bins obtained from MetaWRAP were often

<span id="page-7-0"></span>

**Table 3.** Assembly statistics of each data set assessed through MetaQuast.

<span id="page-7-1"></span>

**Table 4.** Genome statistics of *Akkermansia* MAGs taking *A. muciniphila* ATCC BAA-835 as reference.

fragmented due to uneven coverage and inter-species overlapping; thus, bin refnement is also recommended. The *metawrap bin\_refinement* command was used to refine the bins generated from MaxBin2, MetaBAT2, and CONCOCT using -c 50 -x 5 option, which has generated a total of 357 draf genomes or MAGs.

**Completeness, contamination, and taxonomy of MAGs.** The completeness and contamination of MAGs were further assessed by using CheckM v1.1.3<sup>[31](#page-9-23)</sup>, and the result of high-quality MAGs (>90% completeness and <5% contamination) was tabulated accordingly (Table S3, Fig. [6a](#page-5-0)). We have documented the most abundant species-level MAGs, providing insights into the specifc microbial species that are abundant within the samples (Fig. [6b](#page-5-0)). The overall distribution of high-quality MAGs, categorizing them at different taxonomic levels, including species, genus, and other taxonomic ranks was illustrated in Fig. [6c.](#page-5-0) The high-quality MAGs were annotated with Prokka v1.14.6<sup>32</sup> using a default command. The taxonomic classification of annotated MAGs was performed in Phylophlan 3.0<sup>[33](#page-9-25)</sup>, and the generated tree file was visualized in iTOL online platform [\(https://itol.embl.de/](https://itol.embl.de/)) (Fig. [2\)](#page-2-0).

Abundance of MAG. The abundance of each MAG in respective samples was calculated following the method described by Zorrilla *et al*. [34](#page-9-26). In brief, fasta fles of each MAGs generated in Prokka were merged (each sample separately) using *Cat* command, followed by mapping in bwa v0.7.17<sup>35</sup> to generate sam files. The *Samtool\_ view* and *samtools\_sort* commands<sup>36</sup> were used to convert the sam file to the sorted bam file. The *samtools flagstat* command was fnally employed to calculate the mapping reads, and the relative abundance of each MAG was calculated as the total number of mapped reads divided by the total number of reads in the corresponding sample (Table S4). Interestingly, in all "definite MASH" samples (NAS  $\geq$  5) except one sample (N1167), the dominant species level MAGs belong to *Bacteroides ovatus* (N1155, 36.58%), and *Bacteroides vulgatus* (N1158, 15.11%), and *Bacteroides dorei* (N1165, 10.8%) (Table S4). However, in most of the samples from patients without MASLD or MASH (NAS 0–2) the abundant MAGs belong to the species *Blautia obeum* (ranges between 12.41% to 41.46%)), *A. muciniphila* (ranges between 25.31% to 72.49%) (and *Akkermansia* sp. (54.38%) (Table S4).

**Average nucleotide identity and phylogenetic analysis of** *Akkermansia* **MAGs.** Most of the "no MASH" (NAS 0–2) samples have a high abundance of *A. muciniphila*, which indicates a positive correlation with MASLD status. Therefore, we calculated the average nucleotide identity (ANI) among these *A. muciniphila* and *Akkermansia* sp. MAGs using OrthoANI tool v0.93.1[37](#page-9-29) (Fig. [7a\)](#page-5-1). Interestingly*, A. muciniphila* MAGs obtained from samples with low NAS (0-2) such as AK\_N1157.9, AK\_N1164.13, AK\_N1191.18 clustered together which indicates that the *A. muciniphila* strains from diferent samples with favorable NAS scores share a high degree of genomic similarity. In order to check the phylogenetic group of the constructed *A. muciniphila* MAGs, we selected a few *A. muciniphila* strains randomly representing diferent phylogenetic clusters (AmI, AmII, and AmIII)<sup>38</sup>. The fasta files of these strains were downloaded from the NCBI genome database, followed by annotation in Prokka using the default command. The 16S rRNA gene sequences were then extracted and aligned in MEGA 6 sofwar[e39](#page-9-31) to generate the phylogenetic tree to compare the phylogenetic position of *A. muciniphila* MAGs and *Akkermansia* sp. MAGs (Fig. [7b\)](#page-5-1). *A. muciniphila* MAG obtained from the N1173 sample (NAS 0) and N1167 (NAS 6) clustered with AmII and AmI, respectively. Furthermore, *A. muciniphila* MAGs constructed from "borderline MASH" (NAS 3–4) sample (N1157) and "no MASH" (NAS 0–2) samples (N1164, N1170, and N1191) clustered together and formed a new phylogroup AMV (Fig. [6B\)](#page-5-0). However, genus level *Akkermansia* MAGs obtained from N1174 and N1175 exhibited an new phylogroup AMIV, along with previously described phylogenetic groups (AmI, AmII, AmIII)<sup>38</sup>. This phylogenetic analysis can shed light on the genetic diversity and adaptation strategies of *A. muciniphila* within the context of MASLD and its correlation with disease outcomes.

#### **Data Records**

The Illumina NovaSeq sequencing reads are available in the NCBI Sequence Read Archive (SRA) under BioProject identifier PRJNA970820<sup>40</sup>, with accession number SRP438221<sup>41</sup>. High quality MAGs (n = 220) are available at SAMN36703611- SAMN36703829 and SAMN36726309 under the same BioProject identifier<sup>[40](#page-9-32)</sup>. The information regarding patient fat percentage and NAS score (Supplementary Table 1), microbial alpha diversity (Supplementary Table 2), MAG quality assessment (Supplementary Table 3), MAG abundance in each sample set (Supplementary Table 4), and diferential abundance of three phyla in all sample sets (Supplementary Figure 1) were deposited to figshare<sup>42</sup> with https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.27730911.

#### **Technical Validation**

Here, we have explored the microbial diversity and abundance of MAGs in stool samples of LT patients using deep shotgun Illumina sequencing. Microbial community assessment and construction of MAGs underwent a series of quality control processes, including removing host contamination (Fig. [1,](#page-1-0) Table [1](#page-6-0)). The sequencing platform generated a total of 538.6 million reads. Following quality fltering with a threshold of q<25, 535.1 million reads were retained (Table [1](#page-6-0)). Tis stringent quality fltering process ensures that only high-quality reads are included in downstream analyses, enhancing the reliability and accuracy of the results obtained from the sequencing data. The mapping percentage of classified clean reads of most of the sample is above 60% (Table [2](#page-6-1)), confrming the reading quality and depth.

A total number of 968898 contigs were prepared from clean reads during the MAGs construction process (Table [3](#page-7-0)), which varies from 95554 (highest) to 16091 (lowest). The number of long contigs  $\geq$ 5000 bp and very long contigs ≥50000bp varies from 4621 (highest) to 747 (lowest) and 316 (highest) to 51 (lowest), respectively, which indicates the high quality and depth of the sequencing reads, as well as the efectiveness of the assembler. To increase the accuracy of binning and construction of MAGs, we have excluded the contigs ≲2,500bp to avoid high contamination and low completeness. The MAGs were validated following the standards defined by the Minimum Information about a Metagenome-Assembled Genome (MIMAG) of bacteria and archaea consortium<sup>43</sup>. In brief, CheckM v1.1.3<sup>31</sup> was used to calculate the completeness and contamination of each MAG using CheckM marker gene list. Only the high-quality MAGs (completeness >90% and contamination <5%) showing single-copy genes within a phylogenetic lineage[31](#page-9-23) were considered and deposited in the NCBI genome database (BioProject number PRJNA970820). Furthermore, the quality of *Akkermansia* MAGs was assessed considering the type strain of *A. muciniphila* (ATCC BAA-835) (Table [4\)](#page-7-1). The lower number of contigs (varies from 39 to 14), along with scaffold-gap at extensive misassemblies (0) and a number of uncalled bases or N's (0), confirmed the accuracy of assembly and draft genome quality.

#### **Code availability**

We used all open-source software or packages to analyze our data and did not use any custom codes. The version of each package was provided with non-default parameters when required.

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#### **Author contributions**

Sampling: P.B. and S.K.S.; Study design: P.B., G.B.; Methodology: G.B., S.R.P.; Writing – original draf: G.B., P.B., S.R.P.; Writing – review & editing: P.B., G.B., H.H., S.K.S.

### **Competing interests**

We declare that none of the authors except Pratik Banerjee have any confict of interest. Pratik Banerjee is a member of the Editorial Board at Scientifc Data.

#### **Additional information**

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**Correspondence** and requests for materials should be addressed to S.K.S. or P.B.

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