Haplotype-aware analysis of somatic copy number variations from single-cell transcriptomes

Supplementary Information

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True haplotype • Major • Minor • Undetermined

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True haplotype • Major • Minor • Undetermined

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Truncal (nncys) Normal (n_/w)

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27522-Relapse-2

Genomic position

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Supplementary Table 1: Sample information and sequencing characteristics of analyzed scRNA-seq datasets.

Supplementary Table 2: List of significantly enriched pathways in multiple myeloma patient 27522. P value, unadjusted P values from gene set enrichment analysis (two-sided). Q value, adjusted P values using the Benjamini-Hochberg method.

Supplementary Table 3: Transition probability matrix in the joint Numbat HMM. t, copy number transition probability. p_s, phase switch probability. BAMP, balanced amplification. BDEL, balanced deletion.

Supplementary Methods

Derivation of the gene expression count model. Given a reference expression profile $\overrightarrow{\lambda}^*$ = $(\lambda_1^*, \lambda_2^*, ..., \lambda_N^*)$, we can model the expression magnitudes of the observed cell or pseudobulk using the following additive equation:

$$
\log \lambda_i = \mu + \log \lambda_i^* + \log \phi + \epsilon_i, \ \epsilon_i \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \sigma^2)
$$

where the factors that influence expression magnitudes include fixed components μ, λ^*_t, ϕ and the random noise component $\epsilon_i.$ Here λ_i^* represents the baseline expression magnitude. μ captures the systematic bias in expression magnitudes between the reference and observation (e.g., global up or down transcriptional regulation), and ϕ captures the effect of chromosomal dosage. σ^2 captures the expression variation in the comparison, which intuitively reflects the magnitude of differences between the reference and observation expression profiles (e.g., inter-individual differences if the reference is from the same cell type but a different subject, or cell type differences if the reference belongs to a difference cell type). Note that λ_i^* and ϵ_i are gene-specific, since each gene in the observation has its own baseline expression level and transcriptional noise in the measurement. ϕ is shared between genes in the same copy number segment. μ and σ^2 are shared across all genes and capture the global bias and variance between the reference and observation expression magnitudes. The model can be extended to incorporate gene-specific bias and variance when technical replicates of the reference and observation are available. Since we typically do not have access to technical replicates, we assume homoskedasticity and use the same set of μ and σ^2 for all genes.

We note that the expression magnitudes λ_i are not directly observed. Instead, we observe discrete counts X_i , which can be assumed to follow a Poisson distribution with rate λ_i :

$$
X_i \sim \text{Pois}(\lambda_i)
$$

Here *l* is the total library size. This gives rise to the following Poisson-Lognormal (PLN) mixture model as stated in Equation (1):

 $X_i \sim \text{PoisLogNorm}(\mu + \log(\lambda_i^*) + \log \phi, \sigma^2)$

Reference gene expression profile. Since gene expression varies substantially across tissue and cell types, comparing the observed expression profile with the expected expression profile of the same tissue or cell type (without aneuploidy) can help reveal CNV signal. We denote the reference profile as $\vec{A}^* = (\lambda_1^*, \lambda_2^*, ..., \lambda_N^*)$ which pre-specifies the background expression magnitudes in the model described above. $\vec{\lambda}^*$ can be obtained from the expression magnitudes estimated from a single reference cell type or a collection of reference cell types, which we can represent as matrix Λ^* of dimension $N \times C$ where C is the number of reference cell types. While analyzing an observed pseudobulk expression profile, we can model the pseudobulk as a mixture of the reference cell types where the cell type proportions (denoted as \vec{w}) are unknown. We therefore create $\vec{\lambda}^*$ from a convex combination of Λ^* that minimizes the least squared error between the two expression profiles in log scale:

 $\vec{w}^{\dagger} = \mathrm{argmin}_{\vec{w}} || \log(\Lambda^* \vec{w}) - \log(\vec{X}/l) ||_2^2$ Subject to: $|\vec{w}| = 1; w_k \ge 0, \forall k \in \{1...C\}$ $\vec{\lambda}^* = \Lambda^* \vec{w}^\dagger$

where only genes with non-zero expression in the pseudobulk and reference profiles are considered in the optimization. For CNV evaluation in single cells, we choose a single best reference cell type that maximizes the correlation with the observed expression magnitudes after $log(x + 1)$ transformation. By default, the Numbat package uses a collection of reference profiles from the Human Cell Atlas lung study¹. In practice, the user may wish to provide custom reference profiles created from data generated from the same sequencing platform or within the same processing batch in order to minimize noise due to technical factors.

Overdispersion parameter in the allele count model. We note that although the degree of overdispersion in allele counts can vary between genes, we do not have technical replicates of the same cell or cell populations to estimate gene-specific overdispersion. Therefore, the γ parameter in Equation (3) is shared across all genes:

$$
Y_j \sim \text{BetaBinom}(m_j, \theta \gamma, (1 - \theta) \gamma)
$$

If diploid regions are known, γ can be estimated using maximum likelihood for specific pseudobulk profiles. However, inference of diploid regions relies on detection of allelic imbalance. We therefore fix $y = 20$ which is suitable for most pseudobulk sizes, as estimated from the normal cells in the TNBC4 dataset.

Configuration of the Hidden Markov model. The 15 states in the haplotype-aware HMM and their respective parameter configurations are listed in the table below.

The set of parameters for each state is chosen to capture one or multiple copy number configurations that exhibit similar changes in expression magnitude and allele frequency at a given cell fraction and haplotype state. States with haplotype imbalance appear in pairs (e.g., states 2 and 3) that have opposite deviations of haplotype fractions, which correspond to major and minor haplotype states. For example, state pairs (2,3) and (4,5) respectively correspond to CNLoH at low and high cell fractions, whereas state pair (8,9) is aimed to capture multiple amplified states with high allelic imbalance (e.g., 3:1, 4:1, 3:0, 4:0). In addition, we introduce fixed prior abundances to each of the states: $\pi(z) = \{1 =$ $0.25, 2 = 0.125, 3 = 0.125, 4 = 0.125 \cdot 10^{-10}, 5 = 0.125 \cdot 10^{-10}, 6 = 0.125, 7 = 0.125, 8 = 0.125 \cdot 10^{-10},$ $9 = 0.125 \cdot 10^{-10}$, $10 = 0.125$, $11 = 0.125$, $12 = 0.125 \cdot 10^{-10}$, $13 = 0.125 \cdot 10^{-10}$, $14 = 0.25 \cdot 10^{-4}$, $15 = 0.25 \cdot 10^{-10}$.

The allele-only HMM and the expression-only HMM are special cases of the joint HMM defined above. The allele-only HMM includes a subset of the states (1-5) and only uses the allele counts, whereas the expression-only HMM only uses the gene expression counts and does not allow transition between haplotype states.

Detecting regions with clonal deletion. In samples with high tumor purity (e.g., tumor cell lines) without matched normal cells, heterozygous SNPs are challenging to identify in regions of LoH, leading to decreased power of detection. We therefore provide a separate HMM module to identify clonal deletions based on heterozygous SNP density when normal diploid cells are not available. The HMM allows two hidden states (neutral and clonal deletion), where each gene emits an expression read count X_i and heterozygous SNP count V_i . The emission probabilities of the expression read counts (X_i) follow the same definition in the joint HMM described before. We model the heterozygous SNP count per gene (V_i) using a Negative Binomial distribution:

$$
V_i | Z_i = z \sim \text{NBinom}(u_z \cdot h_i, \sigma^2)
$$

where h_i is the gene length in Mb, u is the heterozygous SNP density per Mb, and σ^2 is the variance in heterozygous SNP density along the transcriptome. We first fit a null model using the observed heterozygous SNP counts in all genes using maximum likelihood to obtain estimates \hat{u} and $\hat{\sigma}^2$. We then let $u_{\text{neu}} = \hat{u}$ and $u_{\text{del}} = 5$. The transition probabilities are determined by a single parameter t.

Identifying diploid regions. We use a graph-based clustering approach to identify genomic regions in the diploid (neutral) state from a given pseudobulk profile. First, regions of allelic imbalance are identified by the allele-only HMM and excluded. The remaining allelically balanced segments are assumed to be in even-valued copy number states². We then perform a pairwise comparison of the log expression fold-change (logFC) of the balanced segments using Student's t-test. We construct a graph where the nodes represent the balanced segments and the edges are determined by the adjusted *P* values (alpha level of 10^{-4}) from the previous step. An edge connecting two segments means that their expression magnitudes are not significantly different, and that they likely occupy the same total copy

number state. We note that a clique in such a graph would be a collection of segments that are most coherent in total copy number. Consequently, the diploid segments can be inferred as the maximum clique with the lowest average logFC³. An extension of this procedure can be used to identify shared diploid regions in multiple pseudobulk profiles (e.g., representing different subclonal populations), where balanced segments are compared within each pseudobulk profile and a Simes' test is used to determine edges in the graph.

Initial approximation of single-cell phylogeny and subclonal structure. By default, Numbat builds an initial phylogeny using window-smoothed expression signals. First, normalized gene expression levels in transcript per million are $log(x + 1)$ transformed. The expression signals are then smoothed by a running mean procedure using a window size of 101 genes³. Hierarchical clustering (Ward's minimum variance method) is then applied on the smoothed single-cell expression profiles to obtain a hierarchical cluster tree. Initial subtrees and subclones are determined by cutting the tree (*cutree* function in R) into k groups (default: $k = 3$). The initial number of subclones k can be set based on prior knowledge of the number of subclones, which can be used to obtain more accurate approximations in the initial iteration.

Obtaining consensus CNV events from cell subpopulations. To obtain consensus CNV segments from different cell subpopulations while leveraging their phylogenetic relationships, we apply the following heuristic procedure (Supplementary Fig. 10). First, HMMs are run independently on pseudobulk profiles formed from all possible subtrees in the phylogeny. Each CNV is represented as a node in a graph, and an edge is added between pairs of nodes if the two CNV segments significantly overlap (e.g., length of the overlap is more than 45% in either segment). The nodes are then grouped by connected components of the resulting graph. Within each component, the CNVs are ranked by likelihood evidence (combined LLR of expression and allele deviation). All CNVs (within the same component) from the pseudobulk profile that harbors the top event are kept as part of the consensus segments. For instance, let there be three cell populations where population 1 is the ancestor of population 2 and 3 (Supplementary Fig. 10). We aggregate cells by subtrees defined by each node (i.e., subpopulation) in the lineage hierarchy, so that pseudobulk 1 contains cells from all three populations, pseudobulk 2 contains cells from only population 2, and pseudobulk 3 contains cells from only population 3. Thus, HMM on each pseudobulk achieves joint copy number segmentation of cells under the same lineage, which may harbor common CNV breakpoints. Let A be an event called from pseudobulk 1 and B, C be events called in pseudobulk 2 and D be an event called in pseudobulk 3. This situation can arise when higher-resolution segmentations are produced by lower subtrees, which are purer in terms of clonal composition (e.g., pseudobulk 2). Event D could be an artifact that does not have strong evidence. The four events form a connected component in the graph due to the overlaps between (B,D), (A,D), (A,C), and (A,B). Since event B from pseudobulk 2 has the highest likelihood evidence and C is called from the same pseudobulk, we include both B and C in the consensus CNV call set. Lastly, we retest the remaining regions (detected as aberrant in any subtree but not covered by the consensus calls) in each subtree to obtain the final consensus CNV profile.

Mutation placement on the phylogeny. Although the mutation placement on the single-cell phylogeny by maximum likelihood is optimal in terms of the goodness of fit, it is not necessarily the most parsimonious (i.e., it tends to produce intermediate genotypes for which there is not enough evidence in order to gain better fit to the observed data). We therefore adopt the following refinement procedure to enforce evolutionary parsimony. After identifying the optimal mutation placement on the tree by maximum likelihood, we iteratively simplify the mutational history (i.e., reduce the number of evolutionary steps) by re-assigning a mutation to the same branch as another mutation that occurred directly upstream or downstream, effectively collapsing an internal branch. The cost for such reassignment is defined by the corresponding decrease in the genotype likelihood. We iteratively perform the least costly reassignment until a prespecified maximum cost threshold is reached. For example, if the maximum likelihood mutation assignment infers a mutation history of $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$, we simplify the mutation history as $A, B \rightarrow C$ or $A \rightarrow B, C$ (i.e., reassigning mutation B to the same branch as A or C, effectively collapsing the A \rightarrow B branch or B \rightarrow C branch) if there is no sufficient likelihood evidence to ascertain that mutation B was acquired after A or before C. In practice, we determine the maximum reassignment cost as a function of the number of cells $(n \cdot \tau)$, where τ reflects the degree of parsimony in simplifying the phylogeny (default: $\tau = 0.3$). A higher τ produces a more simplified mutational history with fewer evolutionary steps and intermediate genotypes.

The final phylogeny specifies not only the lineage relationship between cells but also the genotypes of each subclone (defined as a paraphyletic or monophyletic group in the phylogeny sharing the same mutation profile). The tumor lineage can be identified as the clade in the phylogeny with the highest mutation burden (total number of mutations across all cells in the clade).

Supplementary References

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