
Supplementary information

Organ aging signatures in the plasma proteome track health and disease

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Organ aging signatures in the plasma proteome track health and disease

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1 Supplementary Discussion

4 A. Identification of putative organ-derived plasma proteins

5 We used the Gene Tissue Expression Atlas (GTEx) human tissue bulk RNA-seq database¹⁶ to
6 identify organ-specific genes and plasma proteins. We determined organ-specificity based on a
7 4-fold cutoff in bulk RNA-seq data for three main reasons:

- 8 1. Determining tissue specificity based on a 4-fold increase in RNA-seq expression
9 (“tissue-enriched”) from GTEx and other databases is a well-accepted approach,
10 established by the Human Protein Atlas (HPA) in multiple studies^{81–83}. The HPA’s tissue-
11 enriched gene sets are widely trusted and are provided in NCBI, GeneCards, and
12 enrichment analysis tools such as gprofiler⁷¹. We used the same metric but with the
13 updated, more deeply sequenced GTEx RNA-seq dataset and with a more generalizable
14 framework for tissue->organ mapping (Supplementary Table 2).
- 15 2. We considered determining organ-specificity based on tissue protein levels from a
16 human tissue proteomics atlas (Jiang et al)⁸⁴; however, we opted not to because organ
17 protein levels may be misleading in regard to determining the original organ source of
18 the protein. Specifically, a protein may be present in an organ because it was trafficked
19 there after being synthesized by another organ and secreted into the plasma. Albumin
20 and complement proteins are not enriched at the protein level in the liver even though
21 they are synthesized there, and there are proteins which are synthesized in the
22 hypothalamus that are enriched in the pituitary because they are stored there before
23 release⁸⁴. Generally, discordance between protein and RNA levels are interpreted as a
24 result of protein trafficking/export/secretion, while enrichment at the RNA level is
25 recognized as the tissue of origin for protein synthesis^{81,82,84,85}. It may also be true that
26 proteins which are present at the protein level in an organ but are not synthesized there
27 also contain important information about said organ. We believe this idea of cross-organ
28 communication in aging is an exciting area for future study. For the current manuscript,
29 our goal was to determine the putative organ source of plasma proteins to infer organ
30 age.
- 31 3. RNA-seq data contains nearly full coverage of the genome, while proteomics data has
32 much lower coverage. In Jiang et al, only 6320 proteins were detected in >50% of
33 samples, and these are heavily biased towards abundant proteins, which are detectable
34 by mass spectrometry. The percentage of these mappable to the SomaScan plasma
35 proteomics assay is even lower. Determining organ-specificity based on RNA-seq data
36 increased our coverage of the mappable organ-specific plasma proteome.

39 B. Non-linear associations between organ age gaps and mortality risk.

40 To better understand potential non-linear associations between age gaps and disease risk, we
41 performed a binned age gap versus mortality risk analysis in the LonGenity cohort
42 (Supplementary Figure 4). Specifically, we binned individuals into different age gap groups:

- 43 - Bin -2 (-2.5 < age gap < -1.5)
- 44 - Bin -1 (-1.5 < age gap < -0.5)
- 45 - Bin 0 (-0.5 < age gap < +0.5)
- 46 - Bin +1 (+0.5 < age gap < +1.5)
- 47 - Bin +2 (+1.5 < age gap < +2.5)
- 48 - Bin +3 (+2.5 < age gap < +3.5)

49 - Bin -3 and other more extreme bins were removed due to low sample size.

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51 We then compared every non-zero group with the zero group (denoting the non-zero group as 1
52 and the zero group as 0) for changes in mortality risk. We did this analysis for each of the aging
53 models. We did not adjust for multiple comparisons because the assumptions were not met:
54 each statistical test is done in a different subset of individuals, and tests for different bins in the
55 same organ are generally correlated.

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57 Interestingly, the association between the age gap and mortality risk was non-linear for some
58 organs, such as the heart, brain, pancreas, kidney. The relationship with the heart age gap
59 seems to be U-shaped where both high (+1, +2, +3) and extremely low heart age gaps (-2) are
60 associated with increased mortality risk. The kidney age gap was also interesting in that it was
61 not associated with mortality risk when looking at the whole age gap distribution (Fig. 2j), but the
62 +3 age gap group was positively associated with mortality, suggesting the “extreme agers”
63 framework may be more useful for certain organs and traits. Other organs, including the
64 organismal, adipose, artery, and immune, show a more linear relationship with mortality risk.
65 Whether these nonlinear dynamics also exist for other aging biomarkers, such as methylation
66 clocks, is unknown. This analysis points to a need for additional studies on the relationship
67 between extreme aging and disease risk.

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70 **C. Relationships between blood biochemistry markers and organ aging.**

71 While a full analysis of all clinical biochemistry markers is challenging, there are a number of
72 additional interesting relationships in the data.

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- BUN: Kidney, adipose, brain, immune, and muscle age gaps are significantly positively associated with BUN, artery age gap is significantly negatively associated. The strongest association is with the kidney age gap. While BUN is not specific, it is often considered a marker of kidney function clinically.
- AST: Kidney, heart, and artery age gaps are positively significantly associated with AST, while brain is significantly negatively associated. AST variation within the normal range is difficult to interpret clinically. Abnormally high AST is often a sign of liver or heart disease, and moderately high AST is most often noted as a sign of elevated cardiovascular risk in middle aged and elderly populations.
- ALT: The brain, control, liver, intestine, kidney, organismal, and pancreas age gaps are significantly negatively associated with ALT, while the kidney age gap is significantly positively associated with ALT. PhenoAge gap is positive but not significant. As discussed in the text, this is yet another U-shaped aging biomarker. Low ALT in the elderly is associated with increased frailty and reduced survival and has been previously suggested as a biomarker of aging⁸⁶. Abnormally high ALT can be a marker of acute liver damage, although it is also produced by other tissues and is not specific.
- Albumin: The immune, heart, liver, organismal, control, and PhenoAge gaps are significantly negatively associated with albumin levels. The strongest association is with the liver age gap. Albumin is produced by the liver, although it is not detected by the SomaScan assay so it is not a protein in the liver aging model. Clinically, lower albumin could be considered as a sign of worse health, and it can be low in a number of liver, kidney, and digestive diseases as well as in malnutrition/undernutrition.
- Plasma glucose is significantly positively associated with PhenoAge age gap and kidney age gap, while intestine and liver age gap are significantly negatively associated. The strongest association is with PhenoAge, which is unsurprising since plasma glucose is the highest weighted input biomarker in the PhenoAge model. Both kidney and intestine

99 age gap are positively associated with diabetes incidence but have differential
100 associations with plasma glucose. This further supports the hypothesis that different
101 organ models could be measuring different aspects of aging, in this case metabolic
102 aging. Insulin resistance, glucose response, and glucose levels are all known to degrade
103 with age, but insulin levels and glucose response have been noted to change more
104 dramatically than fasting blood glucose level⁸⁷.

105 There are many biomarkers of health which have a nonlinear relationship to aging
106 outcomes, and in the elderly many relationships between biomarkers and health/mortality/frailty
107 reverse direction compared to young and middle-aged adults. The distribution and mean age of
108 the population that an aging model is trained on will thus impact associations with traits. This is
109 not frequently discussed or accounted for in models of molecular aging.

110 Such a case is illustrated by diastolic blood pressure, where the strongest association
111 was with heart aging (adjusted Pearson $r=-0.18$, $q=2.62e-10$). Nine organ age gaps (adipose,
112 brain, control, heart, intestine, kidney, liver, muscle, organismal, pancreas) were significantly
113 associated with decreases in diastolic blood pressure, while the opposite association was seen
114 with the PhenoAge age gap (Supplementary Fig. 5a, Supplementary Table 14). Diastolic blood
115 pressure was one of many traits with a U-shaped relationship to aging outcomes
116 (Supplementary Fig. 5b). While high blood pressure in young and middle-aged adults is
117 indicative of cardiometabolic dysfunction, in the elderly low blood pressure is common and more
118 strongly associated with mortality and frailty⁸⁸⁻⁹⁰, though high blood pressure is also
119 detrimental⁹¹. The differences between PhenoAge and the organ age models could be due to
120 differences in the age distribution of the underlying training cohorts for the models. Our models
121 were trained in the KADRC, which has a greater proportion of elderly individuals, while
122 PhenoAge was trained in NHANES, which has a greater proportion of young individuals.

123 This kind of U-shaped relationship with age and aging outcomes is quite common and is
124 also seen with BMI⁹². Prospective studies in older adults have shown that while obesity slightly
125 increases mortality and cardiovascular disease risk, the highest risk groups are those with a
126 BMI under 23. Interestingly, the intestine and pancreas age gaps show a negative association
127 with BMI and obesity but a positive association with mortality risk, while the kidney age gap
128 shows a positive association with BMI, suggesting that the full picture of organ health in aging
129 and disease may be more complex than currently understood.

130 131 132 **D. Relationship between CognitionBrain age gap and brain volume.**

133 To further examine the relationship between the CognitionBrain age model and brain
134 aging, we tested associations between CognitionBrain age gap and changes in brain volume. We
135 used plasma-matched brain MRI data from 469 individuals in the Stanford-ADRC and SAMS
136 cohorts to assess the relationship between the CognitionBrain age gap and brain region-specific
137 volumes (Extended Data Fig. 7c, Supplementary Table 22). 39 out of 65 (60%) associations were
138 significant after multiple hypothesis correction. The most significant associations were negative
139 associations with the superior frontal cortex (adjusted $r=-0.20$, $q=8.49e-5$), hippocampus
140 (adjusted $r=-0.21$, $q=1.36e-4$), and total cortex (adjusted $r=-0.20$, $q=1.39e-4$), whereby individuals
141 with smaller brain region volumes appeared older based on their CognitionBrain age gaps. We
142 also found a negative association with the AD signature region (adjusted $r=-0.16$, $q=3.61e-3$), a
143 composite measure of the parahippocampal gyrus, entorhinal cortex, inferior parietal lobes,
144 hippocampus, and precuneus⁹³.

145 We then compared our plasma proteomics-based brain age to two MRI brain aging clocks.
146 Based on its established publication record, we started with the BARACUS model⁷⁸, a linear
147 support vector machine based aging clock trained on brain MRI-based volumetric data from 1,166
148 cognitively normal individuals aged 20-80. However, when assessing predicted versus
149 chronological age correlation, we noticed an odd technical artifact: the predicted age had a ceiling

150 near 75, even for individuals with chronological age above 90. Looking more closely at the original
 151 publication, we found the same issue of an upper ceiling, and also a lower ceiling, to predicted
 152 age. This leads us to believe that the BARACUS algorithm cannot accommodate all ages in our
 153 cohort.

154 Due to this technical limitation of BARACUS, we also assessed brainageR¹⁴, a Gaussian
 155 Processes based aging clock trained on brain MRI-based volumetric data from n=3,377
 156 cognitively healthy individuals aged 18-92, and which has shown better performance than
 157 BARACUS in other studies⁹⁴. The CognitionBrain age gap was positively correlated with the
 158 brainageR age gap ($r=0.16$, $p=7.51e-4$) (Extended Data Fig. 6h), but not as strongly as the
 159 correlation between CognitionBrain age gap and individual brain volumes (ie. hippocampus:
 160 adjusted $r=-0.21$, $q=1.36e-4$). This is likely due to the fact that BARACUS and brainageR do not
 161 take into account total intracranial volume and thus capture more noise.

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164 **E. Literature review of highly weighted brain aging proteins.**

Protein	Reference	Title	Organism
CPLX1	Yu, et. al., <i>JAMA Psychiatry</i> (2020)	Cortical Proteins Associated with Cognitive Resilience in Community-Dwelling Older Persons	Human
CPLX1	Glynn, et. al., <i>Human Molecular Genetics</i> (2005)	Profound ataxia in complexin I knockout mice masks a complex phenotype that includes exploratory and habituation deficits	Mouse
CPLX1,CPLX2	Tannenberg, et. al., <i>Neurochemistry International</i> (2006)	Selective loss of synaptic proteins in Alzheimer's disease: Evidence for an increased severity with APOE $\epsilon 4$	Human
CPLX2	Begemann, et al. <i>Arch. Gen. Psychiatry</i> (2010)	Modification of Cognitive Performance in Schizophrenia by Complexin 2 Gene Polymorphisms	Human
CPLX2	Glynn, et. al., <i>Human Molecular Genetics</i> (2003)	Complexin II is essential for normal neurological function in mice	Mouse
CPLX2	Li, et. al., <i>Oxidative Medicine and Cellular Longevity</i> (2020)	Proteomic Profile of Mouse Brain Aging Contributions to Mitochondrial Dysfunction, DNA Oxidative Damage, Loss of Neurotrophic Factor, and Synaptic and Ribosomal Proteins	Mouse
FGF4	Konijnenberg, et. al., <i>Alzheimer's Research & Therapy</i> (2020)	APOE $\epsilon 4$ genotype-dependent cerebrospinal fluid proteomic signatures in Alzheimer's disease	Human
FGF4	Kosaka, et. al., <i>Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology</i> (2006)	FGF-4 regulates neural progenitor cell proliferation and neuronal differentiation	Mouse
LANCL1	Drummond, et. al., <i>Brain</i> (2020)	Phosphorylated tau interactome in the human Alzheimer's disease brain	Human
LANCL1	Huang, Chen, and Peng, et. al., <i>Developmental Cell</i> (2014)	Developmental and Activity-Dependent Expression of LanCL1 Confers Antioxidant Activity Required for Neuronal Survival	Mouse
LANCL1	Tan and Chen, et. al., <i>Cell Death & Differentiation</i> (2020)	LanCL1 promotes motor neuron survival and extends the lifespan of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis mice	Mouse
NPTXR	Begcevic, et. al., <i>F1000Research</i> (2018)	Neuronal pentraxin receptor-1 is a new cerebrospinal fluid biomarker of Alzheimer's disease progression	Human
NPTXR	Pelkey, et. al. <i>Neuron</i> (2015)	Pentraxins Coordinate Excitatory Synapse Maturation and Circuit Integration of Parvalbumin Interneurons	Mouse
NRXN3	Hishimoto, et. al., <i>Alzheimer's Research & Therapy</i> (2019)	Neurexin 3 transmembrane and soluble isoform expression and splicing haplotype are associated with neuron inflammasome and Alzheimer's disease	Human
NRXN3	Zheng, et. al., <i>Medicine</i> (2018)	Low expression of aging-related NRXN3 is associated with Alzheimer disease	Human
NRXN3	Martinez-Mir, et. al., <i>J Alz Disease</i> (2013)	Genetic study of neurexin and neuroligin genes in Alzheimer's disease	Human
NRXN3	Aoto, et. al. <i>Nature Neuroscience</i> (2015)	Distinct circuit-dependent functions of presynaptic neurexin-3 at GABAergic and glutamatergic synapses	Mouse

Protein	Reference	Title	Organism
OLFM1	Nakaya, et. al., <i>Experimental Neurology</i> (2013)	Deletion in the N-terminal half of olfactomedin 1 modifies its interaction with synaptic proteins and causes brain dystrophy and abnormal behavior in mice	Mouse
OLFM1	Nakaya, et. al., <i>Journal of Biological Chemistry</i> (2012)	Olfactomedin 1 Interacts with the Nogo A Receptor Complex to Regulate Axon Growth	Mouse
STMN2	Theunissen, et. al., <i>Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience</i> (2021)	Novel STMN2 Variant Linked to Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Risk and Clinical Phenotype	Human
STMN2	Krus, et. al., <i>Cell Reports</i> (2022)	Loss of Stathmin-2, a hallmark of TDP-43-associated ALS, causes motor neuropathy	Human
STMN2	San Juan and Nash, et. al., <i>Neuron</i> (2022)	Loss of mouse <i>Stmn2</i> function causes motor neuropathy	Mouse
TNR	Wagner, et. al., <i>Genetics in Medicine</i> (2020)	Loss of TNR causes a nonprogressive neurodevelopmental disorder with spasticity and transient opisthotonus	Human
TNR	Dankovich, et. al., <i>Nature Communications</i> (2021)	Extracellular matrix remodeling through endocytosis and resurfacing of Tenascin-R	Mouse
TNR	Bauch and Faissner, <i>Cells</i> (2022)	The Extracellular Matrix Proteins Tenascin-C and Tenascin-R Retard Oligodendrocyte Precursor Maturation and Myelin Regeneration in a Cuprizone-Induced Long-Term Demyelination Animal Model	Mouse

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168 F. Complete study references

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