Network modeling of patients' biomolecular profiles for clinical phenotype/outcome prediction: Supplementary Information

Jessica Gliozzo^{1, 2}, Paolo Perlasca¹, Marco Mesiti¹, Elena Casiraghi¹, Viviana Vallacchi³, Elisabetta Vergani³, Marco Frasca¹, Giuliano Grossi¹, Alessandro Petrini¹, Matteo Re¹, Alberto Paccanaro⁴^{*} and Giorgio Valentini¹^{*}

1 AnacletoLab - Dipartimento di Informatica, Università degli Studi di Milano, Milano, Italy

2 Department of Dermatology, Fondazione IRCCS Ca' Granda - Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico, Milan, Italy

3 Unit of Immunotherapy of Human Tumors, Fondazione Istituto di Ricovero e Cura a Carattere Scientifico (IRCCS) Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori di Milano, Milan, Italy

4 Centre for Systems and Synthetic Biology - Department of Computer Science, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, London, UK

* E-mail: alberto@cs.rhul.ac.uk, valentini@di.unimi.it

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

1 Datasets

The Pancreatic cancer dataset (downloadable from ArrayExpress Archive [\[1\]](#page-17-0), accession number E-MEXP-2780) consists of microarray gene expression data from 30 patients that suffer from pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma. Following $[2]$, patients are split into the two groups *good prognosis* (GP; 15 patients) and poor prognosis (PP; 15 patients), depending on their time of survival. Patients are labelled as PP if their time of survival is below 17.5 months, otherwise the label is GP. Since the accurate prediction of PP patients is usually more interesting, they are treated as "positive patients" belonging to the group $V_C \subset V$ under study.

The data have been normalized using the Robust Multi-array Average (RMA) method [\[3\]](#page-17-2). We filtered out the genes with low expression and low variance, retaining only the probe sets with the highest mean expression for each gene (refer to [\[2\]](#page-17-1) for more details about dataset pre-processing, filtering and labelling steps).

The gene expression datasets Breast cancer (GSE2990), Colorectal cancer (GSE17536), Colon cancer (GSE17538), are all downloadable from GEO, and have been normalized through RMA. The GSE2990 dataset is composed of 189 invasive breast cancer patients and 64 among them are unlabeled. The remaining ones are divided into the classes high and low risk of recurrence. The GSE17536 includes gene expression data for 177 colorectal cancer patients and the patients are divided into three groups "recurrence", "no recurrence" and "unlabeled". Finally, the GSE17538 dataset is made up of 213 colon cancer patients which are divided into the same three classes.

2 Efficient implementation of P-Net

The P-Net algorithm uses an optimized leave-one-out (LOO) procedure to evaluate both the generalization performance of the algorithm and to select the optimal threshold τ to filter out the least relevant edges of the network. In this section are detailed both the implementation of the efficient LOO procedure to filter the network, and the double LOO procedure to both estimate the generalization performance and to filter the network. Finally a cross-validated implementation of P -Net is provided. The R code implementing all these procedures is available from GitHub (<https://github.com/GliozzoJ/P-Net>).

2.1 An efficient procedure to compute the "optimal" threshold

Using the trick which allows us to run just once the P-Net algorithm for the loo, we can introduce the procedure *Optimize_thresh_by_loo* which exploits the efficient implementation of the internal loo to select the optimal network threshold τ (Fig. [S1\)](#page-4-0).

Figure S1: *Optimize_thresh_by_loo*: a procedure to find the "optimal" filtering threshold τ .

Input:

 $-K: a \; n \times n$ kernel matrix of the graph $-V_T \subset V$: the set of patients to be tested $-V_C \subset V$: patients having the C phenotype - S: a score function - T: a set of thresholds to be tested begin 01: *diag* $(K) := 0$ 02: $AUC^* := 0; t^* := 0$ 03: for each $t \in T$ 04: $\boldsymbol{K}' := Filter(\boldsymbol{K}, t)$ 05: for each $i \in V_T$ 06: $:= S(i, \mathbf{K}'_i, V_C)$ 07: end for 08: $AUC := Compute_AUC(s, V_C)$ 09: if $(AUC > AUC^*)$ 10: $AUC^* := AUC$ $11:$ $^* := t$ 12: end if 13: end for end. Output: - t ∗ : the "optimal" threshold $- AUC^*$: the AUC obtained by filtering the net with t^*

At first the diagonal of the kernel matrix \boldsymbol{K} is set to zero (row 01). It is worthwhile to note that the input matrix in the algorithm can be or a kernel or a correlation matrix, but it has to be a symmetric matrix representing similarities between patients. In row 02 we initialize the optimal Area Under the Curve (AUC^*) and the optimal threshold t^* to zero. In the main for loop (rows 03-13) a set of pre-selected thresholds $t \in T$ is tested to find the optimal threshold t^* which is the threshold that gives the best performances in term of AUC when it is used to filter the graph. We used a set of quantiles as pre-selected thresholds. In this loop, the algorithm computes a different filtered Kernel matrix K' at each iteration by choosing a different threshold t each time. The Filter function removes all the edges with a weight below the selected threshold. In the following inner for loop (rows $05-07$) the score function S is applied to the filtered kernel matrix to compute the score s_i of each node i. Only the nodes included in the subset V_T are tested. At row 08 the function *Compute AUC* computes the AUC exploiting the vector of scores s obtained from the previous for loop. Then if the computed AUC is higher of the current maximal Area Under the Curve $(AUC^*),$ the AUC^* and the corresponding threshold t^* are updated (rows 09 – 12). At the end of the procedure the "optimal" threshold and the corresponding AUC are returned. The complexity of the algorithm *Optimize_thresh_by_loo* is $\mathcal{O}(n^2)$ if $|Q| \ll n$, otherwise the complexity is $\mathcal{O}(n^3)$. Indeed, within the for each loop the most expensive procedures are Filter (row 04) and the for loop at rows 05 – 07, both with complexity $\mathcal{O}(n^2)$.

2.2 A double loo procedure for the network-based ranking of patients with P-Net.

Fig. [S2](#page-5-1) shows the pseudo-code of the P-Net algorithm.

Figure S2: P-Net: double loo for network filtering and patient ranking

Input:

- \mathbf{K} : a $n \times n$ kernel matrix of the graph $-V_C \subset V$: patients having the C phenotype - S: a score function - T: a set of thresholds to be tested begin 01: for i from 1 to m $02:$ $t_i := Optimize_thresh_by_loo~({\bf K}, V \setminus \{i\}, V_C \setminus \{i\}, S, T)$ 03: $\boldsymbol{K}'_i := Filter(\boldsymbol{K}_i, t_i)$ 04: k $v'_{ii} := 0$ $05:$ $:= S(i, \mathbf{K}'_i, V_C)$ 06: end for end. Output: - the score vector s - the threshold vector t

The double loo procedure is characterized by a main for loop (rows $01 - 06$) necessary to obtain a score for each node i of the input matrix K . So, the P-Net algorithm computes the "optimal" threshold t_i and the score s_i for each node applying the same steps node by node. In row 02 the function Optimize_thresh_by_loo implements the internal loo to select the "optimal" threshold for the i^{th} node. In this loo the node i is left out and it is not considered in the computation. Then the threshold t_i is exploited to filter the i^{th} row of the matrix **K**. In the i^{th} row all the elements below to t_i are set to zero and this is equivalent to cut the edges incident to the node i in the corresponding graph. In row 04 the element k'_{ii} is set to zero: this is needed to implement the external loo through the main for loop (rows $01 - 06$). The last step (row 05) of the loop computes the score s_i using the filtered row K_i' . The outputs of this procedure are: a vector s which contains the scores for each node computed by external loo; a vector t which contains all the "optimal" thresholds selected for each sample by internal loo.

It is worthwhile to note that the double loo procedure seems to be computationally intensive but using the efficient implementation of the loo technique, the overall complexity of P-Net is $\mathcal{O}(n^3)$. Indeed, the *Optimize_thresh_by_loo* procedure has complexity $\mathcal{O}(n^2)$ when $|Q| \ll n$ is iterated *n* times.

2.3 A cross-validation-based implementation of $P-Net$

In this section we present another efficient implementation of $P-Net$ by which the generalization performances are assessed through a classical k-fold crossvalidation technique, while the selection of the "optimal" threshold is performed through the efficient implementation of the loo procedure.

The pseudocode of the cross-validated implementation of P -Net is presented in Fig $S3$. In row 01 the function *Split* divides randomly the vertices V in k folds. The main *for loop* evaluates the scores of the patients by external crossvalidation (rows $02 - 08$). More precisely, inside the main for loop, the optimal threshold t_i is selected by internal loo through the *Optimize_thresh_by_loo* function. Then the matrix \boldsymbol{K} is filtered using the optimal threshold for the fold V_i . Finally, in the second loop (rows $05 - 07$) the score for each node belonging to the test fold V_j is computed.

It is easy to see that the hold-out version of P-Net, by which data are split in training and test set, can be obtained from the cross-validation version of Fig. [S3.](#page-6-1) Indeed we can substitute the Split function at row 01 of Fig. [S3](#page-6-1) with a simpler splitting of the vertices V in training and test set. Then the outer for loop can be eliminated: it is sufficient a single iteration of the for loop at rows $02 - 08$, and finally V_j can be substituted with the test set.

Figure S3: P-Net using cross-validation for network filtering and patient ranking

Input:

- K: a $n \times n$ kernel matrix of the graph $-V_C \subset V$: patients having the C phenotype - k: number of folds for the cross-validation - S: a score function - T: a set of thresholds to be tested begin 01: $\{V_1, \ldots, V_k\} := Split (V, k)$ 02: for j from 1 to k 03: $t_j := Optimize_thresh_by_loo~(\mathbf{K}, V \setminus V_j, V_C \setminus V_j, S, T)$ 04: $\boldsymbol{K}' :=$ Filter (\boldsymbol{K}, t_j) 05: for each $i \in V_j$ 06: $:= S(i, \boldsymbol{K}_i^{\prime}, V_C \setminus V_j)$ 07: end for 08: end for end. Output: - the score vector \boldsymbol{s} - the threshold vector t

3 A non parametric test to validate patient ranking

To evaluate whether the ranking of the patients has been obtained by chance, we can apply a classical non parametric test based on random shuffling of patients' labels. Having a kernel matrix K we can apply multiple random shufflings (e.g. k times) of the set of the labels of patients. Then we apply P -Net with both the "unshuffled" and with the shuffled set of labels, and we compute the AUC and the scores for each patient for both the unshuffled and shuffled version of the labels. More precisely at each iteration i of the shuffling we compare the AUC obtained by $P\text{-}Net$ with the "true labels" (AUC_T) with respect to the AUC obtained with the "shuffled labels" $(AUC_S^{(i)})$. We can obtain the following pvalue of the ranking, by counting how many times the AUC computed with the shuffled labels is larger or equal than the AUC computed with the true labels:

p-value =
$$
\frac{1}{k} \sum_{i=1}^{k} \{AUC_T \le AUC_S^{(i)}\}
$$
 (1)

where the operator $\{P\}$ returns 1 if the predicate P is true, otherwise 0.

4 Experimental set-up with Pancreatic cancer data

The generalization performances have been evaluated through a Monte Carlo cross-validation technique (MCCV), i.e. a hold-out procedure repeated 1000 times (see Fig. [S4\)](#page-8-0).

Figure S4: One step of the Monte Carlo cross-validation procedure with P-Net.

The main steps of the P-Net MCCV can be summarized as follows:

- 1. The data are randomly split into training set and test set using a stratified approach to obtain a balanced representation of the two considered classes (GP and PP) into the sets.
- 2. Student's t-test is applied to the training set data only, and the 1000 genes with the smallest p-value are selected.
- 3. P-Net is executed using only the features selected in the precedent step. The optimization of the edge threshold τ is carried out by internal leaveone-out on the training set data and the estimation of the scores is performed on the test set.
- 4. P-Net assigns a score to each patient, and the "optimal" score threshold to separate PP from GP patients is assessed on the training set.
- 5. The above score threshold is then used to classify each patient of the test set: patients having a score above the threshold are classified as PP, otherwise as GP.
- 6. Predicted and "true" labels are compared to calculate the accuracy as fraction of correctly predicted patients.

After 1000 rounds of the above procedure, the average accuracy across the rounds is computed.

5 Experimental set-up for the analysis of Breast, Colorectal and Colon cancer patients

Park et al. compared their method with three supervised classification algorithms (Support Vector Machine, Na¨ıve Bayes, Random Forest) and with the semi-supervised version of SVM (TSVM). Following the same approach of [\[4\]](#page-17-3), the performances have been evaluated through a 10-fold cross validation procedure repeated 15 times on each dataset, using as metrics the accuracy, sensitivity, specificity and AUC averaged across all the repetitions.

Park et al. used PPI information to filter out genes having no known interactions and to identify the most informative pairs of genes [\[4\]](#page-17-3). Even if PPI interactions can be useful to identify functional relationships between genes, to avoid filtering genes only on the basis of their known interactions with other genes, we simply applied a t-test to select informative genes to be used with $P-Net$. The following steps summarize the set-up we used for a single repetition of the 10-fold cross validation with P-Net:

- 1. We applied the Student's t-test on each independent probe using all the gene expression data from the labeled patients of the dataset. Then we retained all the probes having a Bonferroni corrected p-value < 0.05.
- 2. We constructed the similarity matrix W using Pearson correlation between all the available patients (labeled and unlabeled ones).
- 3. Then we applied a Random Walk Kernel on the resulting similarity matrix W.
- 4. The resulting Kernel matrix is filtered to remove all the edges having a weight below the selected threshold τ .
- 5. The performances on the test set are evaluated using accuracy, sensitivity, specificity and AUC averaged across the repetitions of the cross validation. To find the optimal score threshold in an unbiased way, we computed the

scores on the training set and we tested an arbitrary vector of quantiles to classify the patients and to compute the corresponding accuracy. The optimal score threshold is equal to the quantile that returns the best accuracy on the training set.

- 6. A score function is then used to compute the scores on the test set and the optimal score threshold is employed to classify the patients of the test set according to their scores.
- 7. Finally, we compared our predictions with the labels and we computed all the metrics for a single repetition of the 10-fold cross validation
- 8. The procedure is repeated 15 times and all the metrics are averaged across the repetitions to get the final results.

6 Summary of P-Net results

Table [S1](#page-10-1) shows the average AUROC, AUPRC, Accuracy and F-score and their respective standard deviation obtained using P-Net on the considered datasets. Results obtained with Breast, Colorectal and Colon data sets are significantly more stable than those obtained with Pancreatic cancer data: this is not surprising since the cardinality of the first three datasets is significantly larger than that of Pancreatic cancer. For this latter data set we reported also the results for different sizes of the training set, according to the set-up proposed in [\[2\]](#page-17-1): by reducing the test size, as expected, the standard deviation significantly increases, since the Monte-Carlo cross-validation, with a very small data set tends to behave like a leave-one-out procedure, that is known to be characterized by a large variance.

Table S1: Summary of P-Net AUROC, AUPRC, Accuracy and Fscore results. For each dataset we provide the average value and the standard deviation (in brackets) achieved with different metrics.

Dataset	AUROC		AUPRC		Accuracy		F-score	
Breast	0.915	(0.019)	0.848	(0.036)	0.841	(0.026)	0.793	(0.034)
Colorectal	0.784	(0.021)	0.499	(0.049)	0.790	(0.017)	0.352	(0.053)
Colon	0.744	(0.018)	0.516	(0.045)	0.764	(0.012)	0.360	(0.043)
Pancreatic (Training set size 0.5)	0.688	(0.149)	0.662	(0.128)	0.642	(0.111)	0.639	(0.137)
Pancreatic (Training set size 0.6)	0.704	(0.160)	0.679	(0.139)	0.649	(0.122)	0.644	(0.144)
Pancreatic (Training set size 0.7)	0.722	(0.175)	0.701	(0.155)	0.660	(0.130)	0.658	(0.146)
Pancreatic (Training set size 0.8)	0.753	(0.220)	0.755	(0.193)	0.680	(0.185)	0.697	(0.186)
Pancreatic (Training set size 0.9)	0.781	(0.404)	0.833	(0.297)	0.781	(0.404)	0.786	(0.401)

Figure S5: Breast cancer graph constructed by P-Net. Square nodes represent "high risk", circles "low risk" of recurrence patients, while triangles represent unlabeled patients. The scores predicted by P-Net are represented in red (high risk) and white (low risk) with intermediate scores represented in pink. Two high risk subgroups of patients are outlined in red, while two subgroups of low risk patients are outlined in green. Unlabeled patients are predicted as low risk patients (outlined in gray).

and breast cancer (right). Top: percentage of genes found in enriched pathways; bottom: − log(p − value) according to the Fisher exact

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test.

13

Dataset	Kernel	Score Function		
Pancreatic	RWK 8-steps	Nearest Neighbour		
Breast	RWK 1-step	Differential Normalized		
Colorectal	RWK 1-step	Differential		
Colon	RWK 1-step	Differential		

Table S2: P-Net methods applied to each dataset. "RWK" stands for Random Walk Kernel followed by the number of steps.

Table S3: Results with Breast, Colorectal and Colon cancer patients. The results for each method are presented in the form accuracy(sensitivity/specificity) and the highest values for each dataset are in bold. For the TSVM only the accuracy values are provided. With P-Net, the Random Walk Kernel 1-step resulted the best choice for all the datasets; the differential normalized score achieved the highest accuracy in the Breast cancer dataset and the differential score the best results with the other datasets.

Method	Breast (GSE2990)	Colorectal (GSE17536)	Colon (GSE17538)
P-Net	0.841 (0.778/0.884)	0.790(0.233/0.974)	0.764 $(0.253/0.954)$
Park Method	0.725(0.617/0.795)	0.807 (0.485/0.906)	0.756 $(0.163/\mathbf{0.977})$
TSVM	$0.543(-/-)$	$0.752(-/-)$	$0.728(-/-)$
SVM	0.528 $(0.671/0.306)$	0.772(0.889/0.389)	0.796(0.917/0.469)
Naïve Bayes	0.592(0.605/0.571)	0.759(0.844/0.500)	0.707 $(0.826/0.388)$
Random Forest	0.664 (0.921/0.265)	0.752(0.963/0.111)	0.713(0.955/0.061)

Table S4: KEGG terms overrepresented in the hypergeometric test on Breast cancer dataset. KEGG terms are linked to the corresponding pathway. The last column shows the reference supporting the association.

Table S5: GO BP terms overrepresented in the hypergeometric test on Breast cancer dataset. GO BP terms are linked to the corresponding entry in AmiGO 2 website. The last column shows the reference supporting the association.

Table S6: KEGG terms overrepresented in the hypergeometric test on Colon cancer dataset. KEGG terms are linked to the corresponding pathway.

GO IDs	p-value	Term	References
GO:2001295	0.001	malonyl-CoA biosynthetic process	41
GO:0031999	0.003	negative regulation of fatty acid beta-oxidation	$[42]$
GO:0038110	0.003	interleukin-2-mediated signaling pathway	43
GO:0038113	0.003	interleukin-9-mediated signaling pathway	44, 45
GO:0071104	0.004	response to interleukin-9	44
GO:0070669	0.005	response to interleukin-2	46
GO:0006853	0.006	carnitine shuttle	47
GO:0006768	0.006	biotin metabolic process	[48, 49]
GO:0035723	0.008	interleukin-15-mediated signaling pathway	$\vert 50 \vert$
GO:0070672	0.008	response to interleukin-15	[50, 51]
GO:0006346	0.010	methylation-dependent chromatin silencing	[52, 53]
GO:2000738	0.010	positive regulation of stem cell differentiation	$\sqrt{54}$
GO:0010884	0.011	positive regulation of lipid storage	[55]
GO:1903672	0.011	positive regulation of sprouting angiogenesis	$\left[56\right]$
GO:0045922	0.013	negative regulation of fatty acid metabolic process	42
GO:0060334	0.014	regulation of interferon-gamma-mediated signaling pathway	$\sqrt{57}$
GO:0046320	0.016	regulation of fatty acid oxidation	$[58]$
GO:0006084	0.019	acetyl-CoA metabolic process	[59]
GO:0038111	0.019	interleukin-7-mediated signaling pathway	[60, 61]
GO:0097009	0.019	energy homeostasis	$\lceil 62 \rceil$
GO:0098760	0.020	response to interleukin-7	61
GO:0045540	0.024	regulation of cholesterol biosynthetic process	63
GO:0060338	0.025	regulation of type I interferon-mediated signaling pathway	$\vert 64 \vert$
GO:0035384	0.028	thioester biosynthetic process	65
GO:0050994	0.028	regulation of lipid catabolic process	[66]
GO:0035722	0.031	interleukin-12-mediated signaling pathway	67
GO:0070671	0.031	response to interleukin-12	[67]
GO:0016126	0.041	sterol biosynthetic process	$\left 68 \right $
GO:0051304	0.042	chromosome separation	69
GO:0038094	0.047	Fc-gamma receptor signaling pathway	70
GO:0046620	0.047	regulation of organ growth	$\left[71 \right]$
GO:0071357	0.048	cellular response to type I interferon	[64]
GO:0015908	0.050	fatty acid transport	$[72]$

Table S7: GO BP terms overrepresented in the hypergeometric test on Colon cancer dataset. GO BP terms are linked to the corresponding entry in AmiGO 2 website.

Table S8: KEGG terms overrepresented in the hypergeometric test on Colorectal cancer dataset. KEGG terms are linked to the corresponding pathway.

Table S9: GO BP terms overrepresented in the hypergeometric test on Colorectal cancer dataset. GO BP terms are linked to the corresponding entry in AmiGO 2 website.

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