

# The prognostic effects of somatic mutations in ER-positive breast cancer

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## Abstract

DNA from primary breast cancer samples from 625 postmenopausal (UBC-TAM series) and 328 premenopausal (MA12 trial) hormone receptor-positive (HR+) patients were subjected to targeted sequencing of 83 genes to determine interactions between somatic mutation and prognosis. Independent validation of prognostic interactions was achieved using data from the METABRIC study. Previously established associations between MAP3K1 and PIK3CA with luminal A status/favorable prognosis and TP53 mutations with Luminal B/non-luminal tumors/poor prognosis were observed, validating the methodological approach. As observed in UBC-TAM, *NF1* frame-shift nonsense (*FS/NS*) mutations were also a METABRIC-validated poor outcome driver. For MA12, poor outcome associated with PIK3R1 mutation was also reproducible in METABRIC. DDR1 mutations were strongly associated with poor prognosis in UBC-TAM despite stringent false-discovery correction ( $q=0.0003$ ). In conclusion, uncommon recurrent somatic mutations should be further explored to create a more complete explanation of the highly variable outcomes that typifies ER+ breast cancer.

## Introduction

While recent genomic studies have provided a comprehensive catalog of genes that accumulate somatic point mutations and small insertions/deletions (indels) in estrogen receptor-positive (ER+) breast cancer, there remains considerable uncertainty as to how these newly discovered mutations relate to disease outcomes<sup>1,2,3</sup>. Most genomic discovery cohorts were neither uniformly treated nor followed long enough. For ER+ disease in particular, prognostic studies require prolonged observation since relapses often occur after 5 years<sup>4</sup>. Uniform treatment was a feature of a whole genome sequencing study of samples accrued from a neoadjuvant aromatase inhibitor (AI) clinical trial for ER+ clinical stage 2 or 3 disease, although only short-term anti-proliferative response to AI were reported. This investigation identified that mutations in *MAP3K1*, a tumor suppressor gene involved in stress kinase activation, were associated with indolent biological features and low proliferation rates<sup>5</sup>. The resulting hypothesis was that *MAP3K1* mutation would be associated with favorable outcomes. In contrast, *TP53* mutations associated with poor prognosis features and high proliferation rates.

To more comprehensively address the relationships between somatic mutations and outcomes in ER+ breast cancer, we developed an approach to detect somatic mutations in DNA isolated from formalin fixed tumor blocks that were over 20 years old. After curating existing mutational data from breast cancer genomics discovery studies (Supplementary Data 1), 83 genes were chosen for analysis (Supplementary Table 1). We applied DNA hybrid capture, sequencing and somatic analysis to three ER+ breast cancer discovery cohorts with contrasting clinical characteristics: An older cohort treated with adjuvant tamoxifen and no chemotherapy (UBC-TAM series<sup>6</sup>), a premenopausal cohort uniformly treated with chemotherapy and randomized to tamoxifen versus observation (NCIC MA12 clinical trial<sup>7</sup>); and a third mixed cohort that was used only to expand the mutational landscape analysis (POLAR) (Supplementary Table 2). An analytical pipeline was developed to identify somatic variants while compensating for the lack of matched normal DNA, which is generally unavailable in the setting of older formalin-fixed tumor material. Somatic mutations were analyzed for association with standard clinical variables, wherein mutated *TP53* and *MAP3K1* served as *a priori* hypotheses for poor and good outcome, respectively. Additional objectives were to identify new mutational hotspots, assess interactions with PAM50-based intrinsic subtypes and to determine mutation frequencies for therapeutic targets. Validation was possible by comparing our results to those in cBioPortal where the genes sequenced in the METABRIC cohort overlapped with the 83 genes investigated in the study described herein.

## Results

### Sequencing and final study cohorts

University of British Columbia Tamoxifen Series (UBC-TAM): These cases were drawn from a well-annotated cohort of patients treated with adjuvant tamoxifen without chemotherapy<sup>6</sup>. A total of 625 of 632 (98.8%) patient samples that fully met study criteria passed a minimum sequencing quality cutoff of at least 80% of targeted exonic bases covered at greater than 20X (mean coverage: 133X) with other quality metrics described in the

111 supplementary data (Supplementary Figure 1-5 and Supplementary Data 2). Mean depth was correlated with  
112 input DNA and negatively correlated with time since diagnosis (approximate age of sample) and duplication  
113 rates were negatively correlated with input DNA and positively correlated with sample age. However, despite  
114 these trends, overall metrics were excellent with an average of 135.8X coverage and 3.0% duplicate rate  
115 despite the generally low input amounts and old sample age. The final patient population had an average age  
116 of 67 at diagnosis (range: 40-89+). All were treated with five years of adjuvant tamoxifen, and were primarily  
117 postmenopausal, grade 2 or 3 cancers, of ductal histologic subtype (Supplementary Table 2). All were ER+  
118 (>1% cells positive by IHC) and at least 88.6% were clinically HER2- (13/625 unknown). A subset of 463 of  
119 these patients had PAM50 subtyping data available from a previous study<sup>6</sup>. The median follow up in the cohort  
120 examined was 25 years and one month.

121  
122 NCIC-MA12 Trial cohort: These cases were drawn from a clinical trial in premenopausal women treated with a  
123 standard adjuvant chemotherapy regimen and randomized to tamoxifen versus observation. A total of 459  
124 patient samples passed the minimum sequencing quality threshold (mean coverage: 200X), of which 328 were  
125 hormone receptor positive (HR+; >1% cells positive for ER or PR by IHC), and only the HR+ cohort were  
126 included here for most analyses. The majority were premenopausal (mean age of 45). All patients received  
127 chemotherapy, and 48% were treated with 5 years of adjuvant tamoxifen. A subset of 255 of these patients  
128 had PAM50 subtyping data available. The median follow up in the cohort examined was 9.7 years

129  
130 POLAR cohort: This patient series was a case-control study of ER+ (>1% cells positive by IHC) breast tumors,  
131 175 of 194 (90.2%) patient samples passed minimum sequencing quality thresholds (mean coverage: 75X). A  
132 case was defined as any patient who relapsed during follow-up, and controls were defined as lacking relapse  
133 through a similar follow-up duration. Based on these definitions, there were 91 cases and 84 controls. Of the  
134 cases, 43 were early relapses (<5 years since diagnosis) and 48 were late relapses (>5 years). Patients were  
135 only included if they received adjuvant endocrine therapy, but chemotherapy was not an exclusion criterion,  
136 nor was menopausal status. Because the POLAR study was a case-control design, outcome data could not be  
137 easily integrated into prognostic analysis. Therefore, these cases were used in the mutation landscape and  
138 hotspot analyses only.

139  
140 Across the three cohorts, there were 1,259 patient samples that passed minimum sequencing quality  
141 thresholds and 1,128 of these were ER+ (UBC-TAM and POLAR) or ER and/or PgR+ (HR+) (MA12).

### 142 Variant calling and filtering

143  
144 A total of over 62 million variants were identified in UBC-TAM. After extensive filtering against a set of nearly  
145 70,000 unmatched normal samples and manual review to eliminate common polymorphisms and false  
146 positives (see methods), 1,991 putative somatic variants were identified (0 to 26 variants per patient). A set of  
147 1,693 mutations was defined as the “non-silent” set for further analysis that excluded sequencing variants in  
148 splice regions (except proximal splice site), RNA genes (except *MALAT1*), UTRs, introns, and all silent  
149 mutations. Finally, a set of 408 frameshift or nonsense mutations was defined. The same filtering method was  
150 applied to both the POLAR and MA12 datasets. A total of 540 putative somatic mutations (436 non-silent, 145  
151 FS/NS) were identified in POLAR, and 2,104 (1,753 non-silent, 610 FS/NS) in MA12. Full details on these  
152 variants are included in Supplementary Data 3 and summarized for key genes in Supplementary Figure 6.

### 153 Mutation landscape analysis

154  
155 In 1128 samples passing quality control standards, considering only non-silent mutations, 17 genes were  
156 mutated at a rate greater than 5%, and 6 at a rate greater than 10%; *PIK3CA* was the only gene mutated in  
157 greater than 20% of samples (**Figure 1A**). The order from most recurrent to least for the 10 most frequently  
158 mutated genes was: *PIK3CA* (41.1%), *TP53* (15.5%), *MLL3* (13.4%), *MAP3K1* (12.0%), *CDH1* (10.5%),  
159 *MALAT1* (10.0%), *GATA3* (9.1%), *MLL2* (8.7%), *ARID1A* (7.2%), and *BRCA2* (6.6%). This list correlates well  
160 with previously reported recurrently mutated genes. For example, the top 4 most significantly mutated (non-  
161 silent) genes in the ER+ subset of TCGA breast project<sup>3</sup> were *PIK3CA* (24.0%), *TP53* (14.6%), *GATA3* (8.6%)  
162 and *MAP3K1* (6.1%). Considering METABRIC ER+ patients, the most recurrently mutated genes were *PIK3CA*  
163 (~46%), *TP53* (~21%), *GATA3*, *MLL3*, *CDH1*, and *MAP3K1* (all ~12-14%) demonstrating slightly higher but  
164

165 very similar frequencies. The overall average non-silent mutation frequency was estimated as 1.6 per MB of  
166 coding sequence (range: 0.5 to 5.8 mutations per MB, excluding samples with no mutations called). In order to  
167 determine whether mutations in any gene pair were mutually exclusive or co-occurring in this dataset, a  
168 pairwise Chi-squared or Fisher's exact test was performed. Mutations in PIK3CA and MAP3K1 were  
169 significantly more likely to co-occur (after BH FDR correction) in TAM dataset, and were near significance in  
170 MA12 although not after correction ( $p = 0.08$ ). These results are summarized in Supplementary Data 4.

### 171 Hotspot analysis

172 As anticipated<sup>8</sup>, mutations in *PIK3CA* at *E542K*, *E545K*, and *H1047R* were highly recurrent in this study with  
173 69/1259 (5.5%) *E542K*, 104 (8.3%) *E545K*, and 181 (14.4%) *H1047R* mutations (Supplementary Figure 6C).  
174 Mutations in the ligand binding domain of *ESR1* (1.1%) were extremely rare<sup>3, 9, 10</sup> (Supplementary Figure 6A).  
175 To uncover novel hotspots in these data, both Chi-squared and Fisher's exact tests were performed using  
176 mutation frequencies from previous sequencing studies as the expected values (see Methods for definition of  
177 multi-study MAF file) (Supplementary Table 3). The most notable novel finding was in *CBFB* (Figure 1B). At  
178 least 6 different genomic alterations were observed in 15 patients (Supplementary Data 3) that affected the  
179 donor splice site of exon 2. Manual review of this splice site identified at least two additional patients with  
180 evidence for mutations at this location. The predicted effect of these mutations is skipping of exon 2 or  
181 alternate donor site usage, each likely resulting in loss-of-function of the *CBFB* protein. Additional splice site  
182 mutations were observed at the exon 2, exon 4 and exon 5 acceptor sites of *CBFB*. *ErbB2* exhibited the  
183 anticipated profile of activating mutations from earlier publications<sup>11</sup> with 22/1259 (1.7%) samples harboring  
184 known activating mutations and another 6 variants of unknown significance in the kinase domain or at the  
185 S310 residue (Figure 8C).

### 186 Somatic mutation association with PAM50-based intrinsic subtype

187 PAM50 intrinsic subtype calls were obtained from previously published analyses to compare to their mutational  
188 profiles for UBC-TAM and MA12 (HR+ only) studies. In both studies about half the patients had luminal A  
189 tumors. However, the MA12 cohort had a higher proportion of non-luminal subtypes, with 19.8% HER2-E and  
190 6.6% basal and fewer luminal B tumors (25.1% versus 42.4%) (Figure 2A-B). As expected, patients with the  
191 HER2-E intrinsic subtype were enriched for HER2+ve status compared to other subtypes (Fisher's exact test  
192  $p < 0.0001$ ). Of interest, in the HER2-enriched group there were 51 tumors that were not HER2 amplified and of  
193 these 4 were HER2 mutant (~8%), indicating that HER2 mutation could be an occasional explanation for a  
194 HER2-E subtype assignment in the absence of HER2 amplification. For NF1 FS/NS mutations, there was also  
195 a statistically significant association with the HER2-E subtype ( $P = 0.002$ ) (supplementary Figure 7B, also  
196 supplementary data 5). Notably NF1 non-silent mutations were enriched in the HER2-E non-HER2 amplified  
197 subgroup, where they were present in 8/51 cases (16%). Compared to the frequency in all other subtypes  
198 12/582 (2%), this enrichment was significant (Fishers exact test  $p < 0.0001$ ) (Supplementary 7A right panel).  
199 This association could be reproduced in the METABRIC data with an NF1 non-silent mutation incidence in the  
200 HER2-E non HER2 amplified group of 8/80 (10%) versus 35/1283 (3%) in the rest of the subtypes ( $p = 0.003$ )  
201 (Supplementary 7A right panel). Age density plots by subtype serve to emphasize the large difference in the  
202 median age between the two sample cohorts (43 versus 65), and also the influence of age with respect to the  
203 intrinsic subtype incidence. Namely, in the younger MA12 cohort, there is a younger peak incidence with basal-  
204 like breast cancer than Luminal A disease (Figure 2D). In contrast in the older UBC-TAM cohort, an influence  
205 of age on intrinsic subtype was not observed (Figure 2C). Relationships between intrinsic subtype and  
206 mutation patterns were also explored, classifying mutation positive status as "non-silent", "missense",  
207 nonsense/frame-shift (FS/NS) or FS/NS+splice site (Supplementary Data 5). The FDR corrected p-value (q-  
208 value) took into account that 83 genes were examined. However, this level of false discovery detection could  
209 be viewed as overly conservative in an exploratory analysis. Therefore, any gene mutation with q-value  
210 association of  $< 0.2$  was therefore considered reportable for the purposes of subsequent validation efforts<sup>12, 13,</sup>  
211 <sup>14</sup>. For MA12, non-silent TP53 mutation was highly subtype-associated because of the very high incidence in  
212 non-luminal versus luminal subtypes. PIK3CA and MAP3K1 mutations were associated with Luminal A  
213 disease in both cohorts (Supplementary Figure 7B). Finally, there was a strong association between Luminal B  
214 status and non-silent (Supplementary Figure 7A) as well as FS/NS mutations in GATA3 (Supplementary Data  
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216  
217  
218

5, q value = 0.006) for MA12 (but not UBC-TAM). GATA3 mutations were present in 28-30% of Luminal B cases and less so in luminal A cases (5%). Considering q values of <0.2 the associations between FS/NS and non-silent mutations in ATM and Luminal B tumors in MA12 (8-13%) suggests that ATM disruption is also a possible luminal B driver (Supplementary Figure 7C), at least in younger women (MA12). Relationships between age and mutation incidence were therefore also explored (Supplementary Figure 7D), with the finding that both ATM mutation and GATA3 mutations were associated with an earlier age of onset within the luminal B category (Figure 2E and 2F). Some ATM mutations are likely to be germline (see discussion below), which could partially explain the association with younger age.

#### Survival analysis according to somatic mutation.

For the UBC-TAM Series (Figure 3A) univariate analysis, favorable prognostic associations for breast-cancer-specific survival (BCSS) were detected for non-silent mutations in *MAP3K1*, *ERBB3*, *XBP1* and *PIK3CA* (Figure 3B, Supplementary Data 6). Adverse prognostic effects were observed for non-silent mutations in *DDR1* and *TP53*, as well as for frame-shift and nonsense (FS/NS) mutations in *NF1*. An analysis for recurrence free survival (RFS) produced similar results, except for *ARID1B*, which was marginally associated with more favorable outcome. A multivariate Cox model was applied to put each gene in the context of clinical parameters (grade, tumor size and node status). These analyses indicated that the prognostic effects of non-silent *DDR1*, *PIK3CA*, *GATA3* FS/NS, *TP53* and *MAP3K1* mutations were independent of grade and pathological stage (Figure 3C). Multiple correction testing, yielded *DDR1* as the only gene that remained significant with a q-value of 0.0003 (Supplementary Data 5). For the MA12 clinical trial cohort (Figure 4A) we focused on overall survival associations, as this was the primary endpoint of the study and the most robust endpoint. A number of rarely mutated genes were associated with poor outcome in univariate analysis as displayed in Figure 4B. Multiple testing corrections indicated none of these findings could be considered significant<sup>12, 13, 14</sup>. However, in multivariate analysis, based on the uncorrected p value, the prognostic effects of mutations in *ErbB2*, *ErbB4*, *LTK* FS/NS, *MAP3K4*, *PIK3R1*, *RB1*, *RELN* and *TGFB2* were independent of pathological stage and grade (Figure 4B).

#### Verification of Prognostic effects of Mutations in METABRIC data.

While few genes were significant in univariate analysis after multiple testing correction, their identification provides valuable hypotheses for further testing and validation. We therefore sought additional data in the public domain to further assess the uncorrected p value-based findings in our data set. The METABRIC consortium have reported somatic mutations in cBioPortal<sup>15</sup> with co-reported detailed hormone receptor status, age at diagnosis (median age=64 years for ER+ patients), mean follow up of >8 years and disease-specific (breast-cancer-specific) outcome<sup>16, 17</sup>. This data set provided the opportunity to conduct a validation exercise for overlapping genes in the two data sets. For the UBC-TAM series (Figure 3), 9 genes with a univariate p value of <0.05 were brought forward for validation (Figure 5). Of the 6 overlapping genes also examined in METABRIC, consistent prognostic effects independent of clinical variables were observed for non-silent mutations in three genes, *MAP3K1* (favorable), *TP53* (unfavorable) and *NF1* FS/NS mutations (unfavorable). In order to maintain coherence in discovery and validation patient cohorts, a similar analysis was carried out restricting the patient pool to postmenopausal patients only. No significant variation in hazard ratio for candidate genes were observed (Supplementary Table 4). For the MA12 series (Figure 4), 5 shared genes were identified with univariate p values of <0.05, yet only *PIK3R1* mutations (non-silent or FS/NS) showed consistent adverse prognostic effects (Figure 6). The Kaplan Meier survival plots for the consistent adverse prognostic effects of *NF1* FS/NS (TAM vs METABRIC) and non-silent *PIK3R1* (MA12 vs METABRIC) mutations are illustrated in Figure 7A-D. Copy number aberrations and chromosomal instability have been associated with prognosis across multiple cancer types, including ER-positive (ER+) breast cancer<sup>16, 18, 19</sup>. To gauge the confounding nature of commonly amplified genes in breast cancer, we further performed multivariate analysis on the candidate genes with cases of amplification of *MYC*, *FGFR1*, *CCND1* and *ERBB2* (Supplementary Table 5). We did not observe a significant change in the hazard ratio reported in Figure 5B and 6B).

#### Prognostic interactions between PIK3CA and MAP3K1.

273 Since PIK3CA and MAP3K1 mutations co-associate, the combined effect of non-silent mutations in these  
274 genes was examined. Patients with tumors exhibiting both genes mutated have a more favorable clinical  
275 course than either singly mutant cases or cases without either gene mutated. While the prognostic effects  
276 were strongest in the UBC-TAM series, this result was also reproduced in the METABRIC data (**Figure 7E-F**).  
277

### 278 Mutation Analyses for Uncommon Targetable Kinases.

279 Of the 83 genes analyzed, at least 8 are directly targetable with small molecules or antibodies that are either  
280 FDA approved or in late-stage development (**Figure 8**). Pre-existing data on these mutations is summarized  
281 (Supplementary Data 7). PIK3CA is not further discussed here, since the mutation spectrum is well described  
282 and large therapeutic studies are already underway. An examination of the 23 mutations in ERBB2 revealed  
283 locations that were, as expected, clustered in 2 major domains, with 2 of 23 having extracellular domain  
284 mutations at residue 310 and 21 of 23 having kinase domain mutations between residues 755-842<sup>11, 20</sup>. To  
285 further investigate the preliminary finding of an adverse prognostic effect for ErbB2 mutation in the MA12  
286 series, an examination of the METABRIC data indicated that known activating mutations in ErbB2 were  
287 associated with a near significant adverse effect (HR=1.71, P=0.075) (Supplementary Figure 8).  
288

289 For ERBB3, 2 known-activating mutations were identified (V104L and E928A)<sup>21</sup>. The DDR1 kinase domain  
290 mutation, R776W, is possibly homologous to EGFR hot spot mutation L858R, but the remaining DDR1 variants  
291 are of unknown significance. For the mutations in JAK1, 3 of 12 are loss of function mutations (frame shift or  
292 non-sense) and the S816\* mutation has been reported in a lung adenocarcinoma sequencing data set<sup>22</sup>. The  
293 loss of function mutations in JAK1 have been shown to associate with immunotherapy resistance<sup>23, 24</sup>. A few  
294 mutations identified in ERBB4, MET, and PDGFRA have been previously reported but those reported here  
295 have not been functionally tested.  
296

### 297 **Discussion**

298 The strength of this investigation includes the prolonged follow up, controlled adjuvant treatment and the  
299 relatively large number of genes and patients studied. Weaknesses include the lack of treatment prediction  
300 because endocrine treatment in UBC Tam was uniform but not randomized. In MA12 the use of tamoxifen was  
301 randomized, but the numbers were too small to examine treatment interactions. The landscape of recurrently  
302 mutated genes in ER+ breast cancer observed in this study is consistent with reports where matched germline  
303 samples were available, indicating that our variant filters were effective for somatic mutation detection in a  
304 research setting. Overall, mutation frequencies were higher in our cohort (e.g., for *PIK3CA*, *MLL3*, *MAP3K1*)  
305 than the TCGA cohort, but were also lower for a few specific genes (e.g., *TP53* and *GATA3*). Due to higher  
306 sequencing data coverage of recurrently mutated target genes than TCGA and the use of a different hybrid  
307 capture reagent, we were likely able to detect mutations that were missed with lower-depth exome or whole  
308 genome sequencing data. Differences in patient populations may also be a factor. Frequencies were much  
309 closer to reported values for METABRIC which also used a targeted sequencing approach. It is also possible  
310 that in some instances we overestimated somatic mutation frequency, due to the lack of matched normal  
311 samples and imperfections in our germline polymorphism filtering. In particular, a significant number of *BRCA1*,  
312 *BRCA2*, and *ATM* mutations are likely *de novo* germline mutations that we would not be able to easily  
313 distinguish from somatic mutations. Of the 117 non-silent *BRCA1/2* mutations observed (from 110/1128  
314 patients across all 3 cohorts; 7 patients had two hits) 74 were observed at a VAF greater than 40% and 31  
315 were greater 60%. Additionally, of the 61 non-silent *ATM* mutations (from 58/1128 samples; 3 samples had 2  
316 hits) 39 had VAF greater than 40% and 18 had VAF greater than 60 (Supplementary Data 9). Variants with  
317 VAFs this high are less likely to be somatic given the general expectation of impure tumor samples and  
318 heterozygous mutations. Indeed, the VAFs for *BRCA1/2* and *ATM* non-silent mutations (mean=46.0%) were  
319 significantly higher than for other genes (mean=36.7%, p=5.92e-09). Even when considered separately, the  
320 VAFs for *BRCA1* (mean=46.6%), *BRCA2* (mean=43.8%) and *ATM* (mean=48.2%) were significantly higher  
321 than the other genes (p=0.002, p=0.0015, and 5.27e-5 respectively). Among the *BRCA1/2* variants, there were  
322 8 known pathogenic (ENIGMA expert reviewed) mutations according to a search of the BRCA Exchange  
323 database (<http://brcaexchange.org>, Nov 12, 2017) and another 37 assumed pathogenic (FS/NS) mutations. Of  
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327 the remaining, 4 were benign according to expert review (ENIGMA), and 8 benign, 15 likely benign and 45  
328 variants of unknown significance according to all public sources. Out of the 61 *ATM* variants queried in ClinVar,  
329 4 were designated as pathogenic, 3 were pathogenic/likely pathogenic, and 2 were likely pathogenic. Another  
330 7 were frameshift mutations and assumed pathogenic. Additionally, 23 variants had uncertain significance, 8  
331 variants had conflicting interpretations of pathogenicity (any combination of benign, likely benign, or uncertain  
332 significance), and the remaining 14 variants had no data. *ATM* variants were also queried in the Leiden Open  
333 Variation Database (LOVD)<sup>25</sup>, which identified 1 variant that affects function (designated as likely pathogenic  
334 by ClinVar), 10 variants with unknown effect, and 1 variant that probably does not affect function (uncertain  
335 significance in ClinVar). The remaining variants had no data in LOVD. Given these complexities the prognostic  
336 effects of somatic versus germline *BRCA1/2* and *ATM* mutations remain unresolved, however attention should  
337 clearly be paid to therapeutic strategies for these patients. The *ATM* findings deserve a particular highlight  
338 because of the younger age/luminal B association and the current lack of studies devoted to this population.  
339

340 The discovery of a novel recurrent *CBFB* (core binding factor subunit beta) splice site mutation in this cohort  
341 illustrates a limitation of exome capture reagents. The affected bases in exon 2 of *CBFB* display reduced  
342 sequence coverage, possibly due to high GC content, in the breast TCGA exome dataset (Supplementary  
343 Figures 9-10). This site was mutated in at least 1.5% of ER+ breast cancers sequenced, bringing the overall  
344 rate of *CBFB* mutations to nearly 6%, which should drive further investigation of this gene in ER+ breast  
345 cancer pathogenesis. *CBFB* functions as a subunit in a heterodimeric core binding transcription factor that  
346 interacts with *RUNX1*<sup>26</sup>. Consistent with this model, *CBFB* mutants were mutually exclusive from *RUNX1*  
347 mutants in this cohort with only a single sample harboring non-silent mutations in both *CBFB* and *RUNX1*.  
348

349 The UBC-TAM and MA12 studies revealed different lists of potentially prognostic mutations. Prognostic effects  
350 are likely to be strongly affected by the use of systemic therapy as well as by patient age at diagnosis. The  
351 UBC-TAM series is the simplest study to interpret from a drug resistance perspective since the only systemic  
352 therapy was tamoxifen. Thus, the consistent adverse effect of *NF1* FS/NS mutation on prognosis is intriguing  
353 as this result is consistent with results from an *in vitro* screen for tamoxifen resistance<sup>27</sup>. Understanding why  
354 only FS/NS mutations predict poor outcome, rather than missense or other non-silent mutations, will require  
355 further investigation. **The association with the HER2-E, non-HER2 amplified subset with non-synonymous *NF1*  
356 mutations was observed in both the discovery and validation (METABRIC) data sets. It is a logical proposition  
357 that mutations that activate RAS, like *NF1* mutation, could create a tumor with a similar transcriptional  
358 phenotype as some HER2 amplified breast cancers.** *PIK3R1* mutation also emerged as a consistent poor  
359 prognosis mutation from the MA12 analysis, with validation in METABRIC. The proposed favorable prognostic  
360 effects of *PIK3CA* mutation were observed in the UBC-TAM series, but were not found to be independent of  
361 stage and grade, and *PTEN* mutations were neutral.  
362

363 According to our validation results, *NF1*, *PIK3R1*, *PIK3CA* and *TP53* are therefore likely to be prognostic  
364 drivers that are independent of clinical variables. In postmenopausal women treated with adjuvant endocrine  
365 therapy, *DDR1*, *PRKDC* and *XBP1* should be further studied and of these *DDR1* is the strongest candidate  
366 because it was significant despite strict false discovery correction. *DDR1* is a collagen-binding receptor  
367 expressed in epithelial cells that stabilizes E-cadherin-mediated intracellular adhesion<sup>28</sup>. *DDR1* mutations also  
368 occur in endometrial cancer<sup>29</sup>, acute leukemia<sup>30</sup> and lung cancer<sup>31</sup>. Loss of *DDR1* (*DDR1*-null mice) produces  
369 hyper-proliferation and abnormal branching of mammary ducts, suggesting *DDR1* is a breast tumor  
370 suppressor<sup>32</sup>. Mutations in *PRKDC* will potentially produce a defective *ATM* response/low *ATM* levels<sup>33</sup> which  
371 is interesting in the context of the finding herein that *ATM* mutations are a potential luminal B driver gene. The  
372 significance of a defective *ATM* pathway as a cause of endocrine resistance is highlighted by the recent finding  
373 that dysregulation of the MutL complex (*MLH1*, *PMS1* and *PMS2*) causes failure of *ATM*/*CHK2*-based negative  
374 regulation of *CDK4/6*<sup>34</sup>. Prognostic candidate mutations revealed by the MA12 analysis were different from the  
375 UBC TAM series, likely reflecting the different patient profiles and adjuvant treatments illustrated in **Figure 2**.  
376 The prognostic effects of mutations *ERBB2*, *ERBB4*, *JAK1*, *LTK*, *MAP3K4*, *MET*, *PDGFRA*, *RB1*, *RELN*,  
377 *TGFB2*, all await further study with even larger sample sizes.  
378

379 **A limitation of this study is that the mutation datasets we generated for UBC-TAM and MA12 cohorts lack  
380 comprehensive assessment of copy number signatures that have been associated with prognosis in ER+**

breast cancer<sup>16, 18, 19</sup>. While multivariate analysis considering key CNVs did not appear to affect our prognostic associations, future studies may be needed to completely understand the interplay between simple and large-scale variation for prognostic prediction. Another limitation to this study was the heterogeneity in the datasets in terms of age, treatment, and other factors that limited direct comparison and made validation with METABRIC somewhat challenging. The collection of sufficiently large, uniformly treated populations with long-term follow-up for discovery and validation remains a challenge that must be addressed to fully characterize the prognostic significance of somatic mutations, especially low-frequency mutations.

In conclusion, we have successfully utilized clinically well-annotated, uniformly treated patient samples using DNA from archival material greater than 20 years old without a matched normal to explore the prognostic effects encoded by the mutational landscape of ER+ breast cancer. We were able to confirm our prospective hypothesis from our earlier studies<sup>5</sup> that MAP3K1 is associated with indolent disease and TP53 with adverse outcomes. We also associated NF1 FS/NS mutations with strong adverse effects on prognosis. Similarly, PIK3R1 mutations were associated with an adverse prognosis, in contrast to PIK3CA mutation which were weakly favorable. This suggests somatic mutations in these two physically interacting gene products are not biologically equivalent with respect to PI3 kinase pathway activation and resistance effects. The possibility that the long tail of low frequency mutation events in luminal type breast cancer may harbor multiple molecular explanations for poor outcomes should spur new collaborative efforts to thoroughly screen thousands of properly annotated cases. Only after these iterative efforts of proposing and confirming candidates will a clinically useful and comprehensive somatic mutation-based classification of ER+ breast cancer emerge. **In the meantime, functional studies should be pursued to understand the biological effects of low frequency somatic mutations, prioritizing these studies according to whether the mutations are driving an adverse prognostic effect and whether their disruption creates a therapeutic vulnerability.**

## Methods

For the UBC-TAM series, an institutional review board approved study was based on formalin-fixed paraffin embedded (FFPE) primary tumor blocks from 947 female patients diagnosed with estrogen receptor positive invasive breast cancer in the province of British Columbia in Canada between 1986 and 1992<sup>6, 35, 36, 37</sup>. The sample flow and analysis are provided in a REMARK summary (**Figure 3A**). DNA was isolated from tumor-rich regions using the Qiagen blood and tissue kit, which yielded sufficient DNA in 645 samples, of which 625 met all study criteria and had sufficient sequence coverage. Similarly, approved studies provided 194 and 454 HR+ patient samples for the POLAR and MA12 (**Figure 4A**) cohorts. A total of 175 POLAR and 459 (328 HR+) MA12 samples yielded sufficient DNA and had sufficient sequence coverage for analysis. Detailed descriptions of the patient data sets are provided in Supplementary Table 3. A meta-analysis of six existing published large-scale breast cancer sequencing studies<sup>1, 2, 3, 5, 38, 39</sup> was performed to identify genes with recurrent coding region somatic mutations in breast cancer (Supplementary Data 1). Additional drug targets<sup>40</sup> and genes with relevance to breast cancer from targeted sequencing<sup>41</sup>, copy-number studies<sup>16</sup> or knowledge relating to somatic or germline mutations (e.g., *BRCA1*, *BRCA2*, *ERBB2*, *ESR1* and *PRLR*) were also included. This resulted in a final list of 83 breast-cancer-related genes (Supplementary Table 1). These genes were targeted comprehensively with 3,029 complementary probes for hybridization-based enrichment (Supplementary Data 8). Sequencing libraries were constructed, hybridized with capture probes, multiplexed and run on a single flow cell with up to 96 samples per pool per lane yielding approximately 375 Mb of DNA sequence per sample from an Illumina HiSeq paired end 2 X 100bp (TAM) or 2 X 125bp (POLAR, MA12) sequencing run following manufacturer's protocols.

Variant calling was performed with the Genome Modeling System as previously described<sup>42</sup>. Specifically, sequence data were aligned to reference sequence build GRCh37 using BWA<sup>43</sup> and de-duplicated with Picard. SNVs and indels were detected using the union of samtools<sup>44</sup> and VarScan2<sup>5</sup> and annotated using Ensembl version 70. Variants were restricted to the coding regions of targeted genes and filtered for false positives and germline polymorphisms against a database of nearly 70,000 unmatched normals from the ExAC consortium<sup>45</sup>, 1000 Genomes<sup>46</sup>, NHLBI exomes<sup>47</sup> and TCGA data sets<sup>3, 48</sup>. A binomial probability model was then applied to the variants using VAF and total coverage to determine a log-likelihood ratio of being a somatic variant as



435 previously described<sup>49</sup> (See Supplementary Methods). After filtering, all remaining variants were manually  
436 reviewed. To ensure that variants of known clinical relevance were not missed by automated variant calling  
437 approaches, a knowledge-based variant calling strategy was performed focused on the mutations in the  
438 Database of Curated Mutations<sup>50</sup>.

439  
440 Patient groups were defined by mutation status or truncating mutation status for each gene. Fisher's exact and  
441 Chi-squared tests were used for hotspot analysis, mutual exclusivity or co-occurrence, and other categorical  
442 clinical statistics (e.g., mutation status vs. intrinsic subtype) as appropriate. Univariate Kaplan-Meier and Cox  
443 survival analyses were performed for breast-cancer-specific survival (BCSS), relapse free survival (RFS), or  
444 overall survival (OS) with non-silent or truncating mutation status as a factor. Significant survival differences  
445 between the groups were determined by log rank (Mantel-Cox) test. The Benjamini-Hochberg method was  
446 performed for multiple testing corrections to report the false discovery rate adjusted p-value (q-value). A  
447 multivariate Cox proportional hazard model was fitted to BCSS and RFS separately on gene mutation status,  
448 node status, grade and tumor size and adjusted hazard ratios were calculated with Wald test p-values. All  
449 statistical analyses were performed in the R statistical programming language with core, 'survival' and  
450 'multtest' libraries. Genomic visualizations were created with ProteinPaint<sup>51</sup> and GenVisR<sup>52</sup>.

## 451 **Data Availability**

452 All mutation calls are made available as a MAF file with this publication. The raw sequence data from UBC-  
453 TAM patients are available in the database of Genotypes and Phenotypes (dbGaP) under accession number  
454 [dbGAP:phsxxx.x]. Raw sequence data from MA12 and POLAR could not be deposited in public repository  
455 due to patient consent issues and complexities of institutional certification. However, these data are available  
456 from the authors (contact Obi Griffith and Matthew Ellis). Primary clinical outcome data for UBC-TAM and  
457 MA12 can be made available to qualified researchers through application to the Canadian Cancer Trials  
458 Group. Primary clinical outcome data for POLAR can be made available to qualified researchers through  
459 application to Mitch Dowsett at the Ralph Lauren Centre for Breast Cancer Research.

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464  
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## 473 **Contributions**

474  
475  
476 O.L.G., T.O.N., M.J.E., and E.R.M. designed the experiments; N.C.S, M.A., M.G., J. K., C.A.M., K.K., J.H.,  
477 B.J.A., Z.L.S., K.C., R.K., C.F., L.C., J.E.S., S.D., V.M., D.E.L., R.S.F., S.L., and R.K.W. generated the  
478 sequencing data. T.O.N., B.Y., M.D., S.L., and D.V. orchestrated the sample pipeline, M.A., O.L.G. and N.C.S.  
479 prepared the figures and tables. O.L.G., N.C.S., M.A., J.L., and D.T. provided statistical analysis. S.M.K., R.B.,  
480 and E.C.C. provided functional annotations. T.O.N. provided pathology analysis. M.J.E., N.C.S., M.A., and  
481 O.L.G. wrote the manuscript. E.R.M., T.O.N., and M.D., critically read and commented on the manuscript.

## 482 **Conflict of Interest**

488 Dr. Ellis and Dr. Mardis report income on patents on the PAM50 intrinsic subtype algorithm. Dr. Ellis reports  
489 ownership in Bioclassifier LLC that licenses PAM50 patents to Nanostring for the Prosigna breast cancer  
490 prognostic test. Commercial platforms and algorithms were not used in the analyses reported in this paper.  
491  
492

## Figure Legends

### Figure 1. Mutation recurrence and novel splice site mutation

A) The overall mutation recurrence rate ranged from 41.1% of samples for *PIK3CA* to 0.0% for *PIN1*. The figure depicts non-silent mutations for all 1128 patients for the top 17 most recurrently mutated genes (>5% recurrence). If a patient had multiple mutations it is colored according to the “most damaging” mutation following the order presented in the Mutation Type legend (vertical color bar). Mutations per MB were calculated using the total number of mutations observed over the total exome space corresponding to the tiled space from “SeqCap EZ Human Exome Library v2.0”. A correction factor was applied to account for genes not assayed using the expected number of additional mutations based on ER+ TCGA data. **The coverage histogram (top sidebar) shows the percent of targeted exonic bases with at least 20X, 30X and 40X coverage.** B) Mutation recurrence frequencies (amino acid level) in this study were compared to previously reported mutation frequency from a multi-study MAF file of six reported breast cancer sequencing studies (Supplementary Data 1). An entirely novel mutation “hot spot” was discovered affecting the exon 2 splice (donor) site of *CBFB* in at least 15 patients. Six different single nucleotide substitutions, insertions and deletions were observed, all affecting either the first or second base of the donor splice site. These mutations were most likely missed in previous studies because of a lack of sequencing coverage due to the GC-rich nature of exons 1 and 2 of *CBFB* (Supplementary Figures 9-10). Such mutations are predicted to significantly alter the canonical donor site and result in either alternate donor usage or skipping of one or more exons of *CBFB*.

### Figure 2. Cross-cohort age and subtype analysis

A-B) Percentage composition of samples by intrinsic subtype of the tumor in the two discovery cohorts for UBC-TAM (A) and MA12 (B) cohorts. C-D) Age-density plots for patients categorized by intrinsic subtype in UBC-TAM (C) and MA12 (D) cohorts. The overall median age shows that UBC-TAM is constituted mostly of post-menopausal patients (median age=65), in contrast to MA12, which has younger patients (median age=43). E-F) Younger luminal B subtype patients harbor *GATA3* (E) and *ATM* (F) mutations in the combined set of UBC-TAM and MA12 Luminal B cases (median age=52,  $p=0.01$ ; median age=58,  $p=0.03$  for *GATA3* and *ATM* respectively).

### Figure 3. Candidate discovery from UBC-TAM cohort and prognosis evaluation

(A) DNA was extracted from tumor specimens from 947 patients with ER+ breast cancer treated with tamoxifen monotherapy for 5 years. 632 samples with adequate yield were sequenced for 83 genes known to be recurrently mutated or breast cancer relevant. A total of 625 samples passed minimum quality checks and were sequenced to an average of 135.8X coverage. A total of ~62 million variants from the reference genome were identified. Extensive filtering and manual review reduced this list to 1,991 putatively somatic variants. Survival analysis was applied to non-silent and truncating gene mutation status versus disease outcome (relapse or breast-cancer-specific death). In addition, mutations were analyzed for novel hotspots, patterns of mutual exclusivity or co-occurrence and association with clinical variables. (B) Forest plot of impact of mutations in candidate genes, identified using the UBC-TAM population, on breast-cancer-specific survival (red) and recurrence-free survival (blue). The variant types are characterized based on non-silent or nonsense/frameshift (FS/NS) mutations. The box size is relative to frequency of mutations in the analysis, with larger boxes representing higher incidence mutations. (C) Multivariate forest plot of effect of mutations in UBC-TAM candidate genes on breast-cancer-specific survival when assessed together with clinical factors including Tumor Grade, Node positivity and Tumor Size (>5cm).

### Figure 4. Candidate discovery from MA12 cohort and prognosis evaluation

(A) DNA was extracted from tumor specimens and 470 samples with adequate yield were sequenced for 83 genes known to be recurrently mutated or breast cancer relevant. A total of 459 (328 HR+) samples passed minimum quality checks and were sequenced to an average of 272.6X coverage. A total of 406 million variants from the reference genome were identified. Extensive filtering and manual review reduced this list to 2104 putatively somatic variants. Survival analysis was applied to non-silent and truncating gene mutation status versus overall survival. (B) Forest plot showing effect of mutation in candidate genes on overall survival (univariate - blue, multivariate - orange), along with the clinical factors used in the multivariate analysis (black),

547 tumor grade, node positivity and tumor size (>5cm). The box size is relative to frequency of mutations in the  
548 analysis, with larger boxes representing higher incidence mutations. Note: a few boxes are not shown if their  
549 hazard ratios were greater than 4.0.  
550

### 551 **Figure 5. Validation of UBC-TAM candidates in ER+ METABRIC**

552 A) Six out of nine candidate genes from UBC-TAM analysis had mutations reported in the METABRIC cohort.  
553 1,060 ER+ samples with breast-cancer-specific survival information were used to test the effect of mutations in  
554 the candidate genes on prognosis. B) Forest plot shows effect of mutated candidate genes on breast-cancer-  
555 specific survival in METABRIC ER+ cohort with univariate cox proportional-hazard ratio in blue and multivariate  
556 in orange. The clinical factors used in the multivariate analysis, namely tumor grade, node positivity and tumor  
557 size (>5cm), are shown in black. The box size is relative to frequency of mutations in the analysis, with larger  
558 boxes representing higher incidence mutations. **The # cases/CNV column shows the total number of cases**  
559 **with the SNV/Indel variant surrounded by a ring chart indicating the proportion of total cases with CNV**  
560 **alterations.**  
561

### 562 **Figure 6. Validation of MA12 candidates in ER+ METABRIC**

563 A) Five out of eleven candidates from MA12 analysis had mutations reported in the METABRIC cohort. 1,415  
564 ER+ samples with overall survival information were used to test the effect of mutations in the candidate genes  
565 on prognosis. B) Forest plot shows effect of mutated candidate genes, shortlisted based on MA12 mutation  
566 analysis, on overall survival in METABRIC ER+ breast cancer patients. Univariate (blue) and multivariate  
567 (orange) cox proportional-hazard ratio depict the independent prediction of survival outcomes for the six  
568 candidate genes. The box size is relative to frequency of mutations in the analysis, with larger boxes  
569 representing higher incidence mutations. **The # cases/CNV column shows the total number of cases with the**  
570 **SNV/Indel variant surrounded by a ring chart indicating the proportion of total cases with CNV**  
571 **alterations.**

### 572 **Figure 7. Kaplan-Meier plots**

573 A-B) Kaplan-Meier graphs showing the prognostic role of NF1 mutations, separated by variant type – Missense  
574 (MUT MS, green), Frameshift/Nonsense (MUT FS/NS, blue) in ER+ breast cancer patients from A) UBC-TAM  
575 and B) METABRIC cohort establishing the association between FS/NS mutations in NF1 with poor prognosis.  
576 C-D) Kaplan-Meier graph showing the prognostic role of PIK3R1 in C) MA12 and D) METABRIC ER+ breast  
577 cancer patients, categorized based on tumors with wildtype (WT, black) or mutated PIK3R1 non-silent  
578 mutations (MUT, red). E-F) Kaplan-Meier graph demonstrating co-occurrence of non-silent mutations in  
579 MAP3K1 and PIK3CA (red) in E) UBC-TAM and F) METABRIC associates with better survival when compared  
580 against tumors with mutations exclusively in MAP3K1 (blue) or PIK3CA (green) or wildtype for both MAP3K1  
581 and PIK3CA (black). p, log rank (Mantel-Cox) test p-value.  
582

### 583 **Figure 8. Mutation profiles for selected genes**

584 Mutation frequency plots illustrate all non-silent mutations (TAM, POLAR, and MA12; n=1259) for  
585 representative transcripts for several kinase genes of interest. The domains belonging to A) DDR1 (RefSeq ID:  
586 NM\_013994) and B) JAK1 (NM\_002227) are indicated below the schematic diagram of each gene. The ECD  
587 (extracellular domain), TM (transmembrane domain), and kinase domain are depicted as green, red, and  
588 orange bars respectively for C) ERBB2 (NM\_004448), D) ERBB3 (NM\_001982), E) ERBB4 (NM\_005235), F)  
589 MET (NM\_000245), and G) PDGFRA (NM\_006206). The variant counts across the three datasets for each  
590 gene are provided below the gene's name. Note, in the mapping from Ensembl (**Supplementary Data 3**) to  
591 RefSeq annotations (required for use of ProteinPaint tool) a small number of variants annotations may have  
592 changed or been lost, despite selecting the most similar representative transcript possible.  
593

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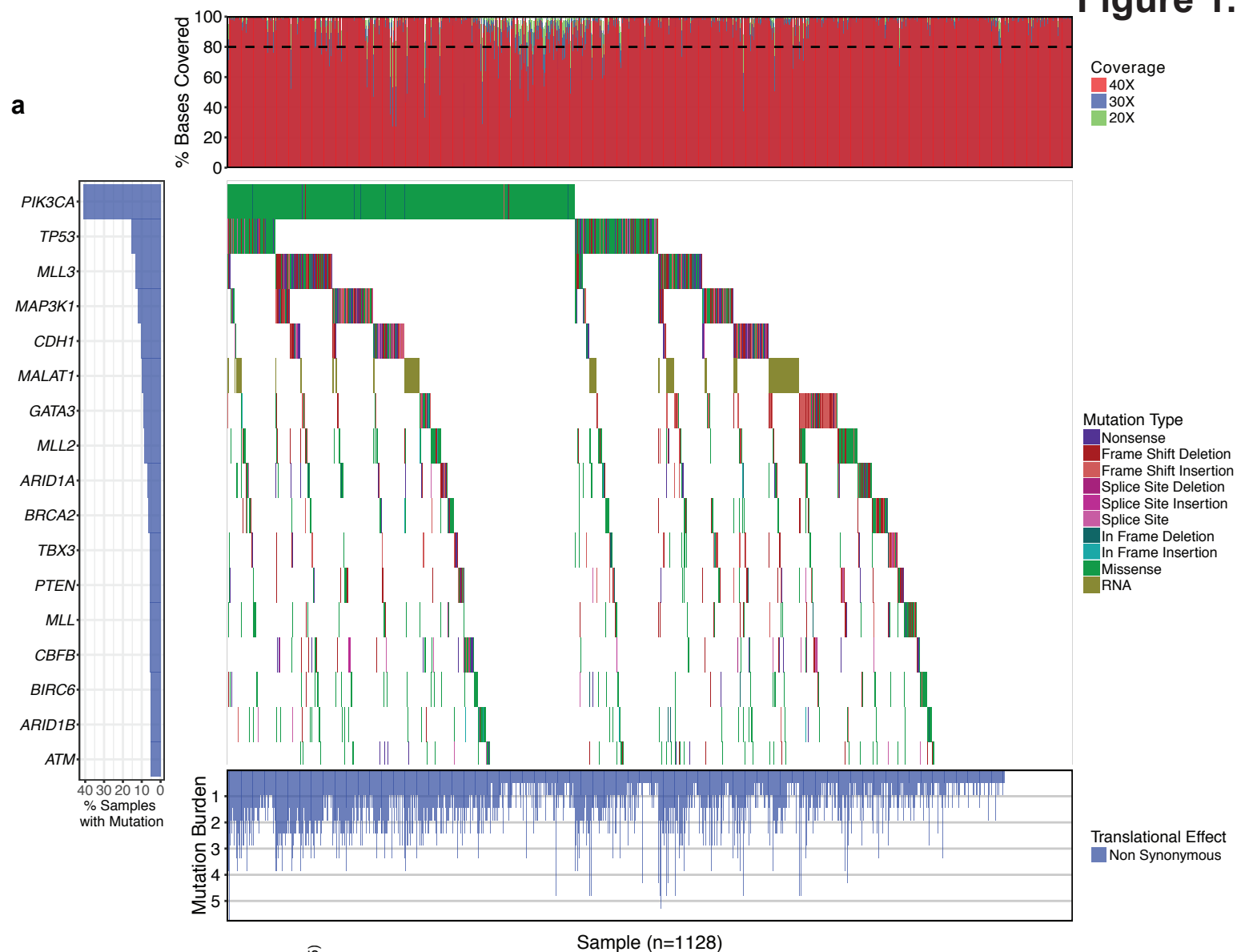
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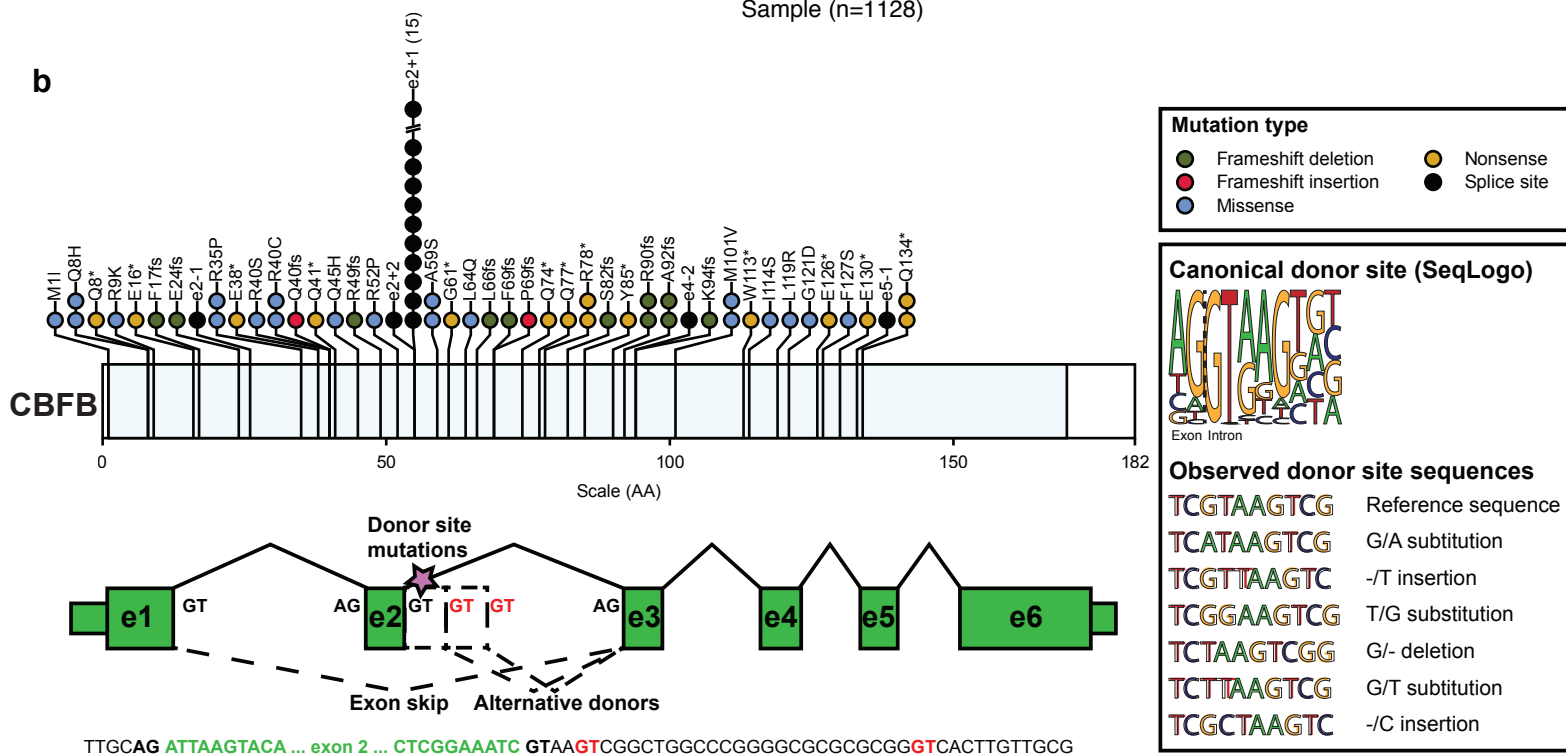
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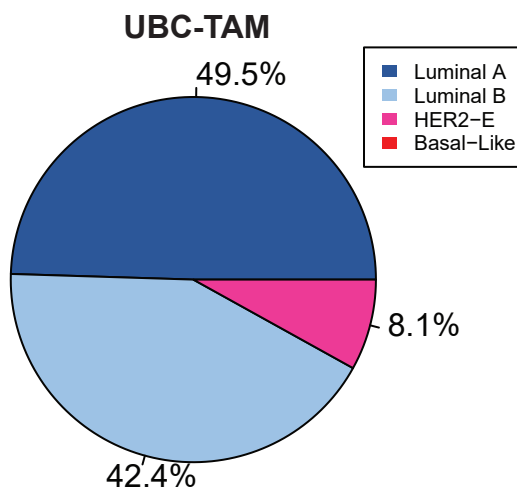
# Figure 1.



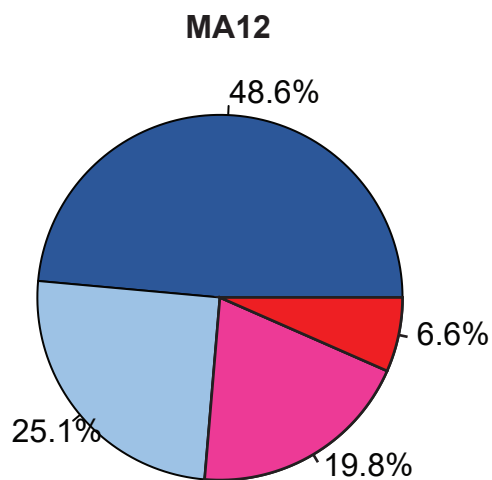
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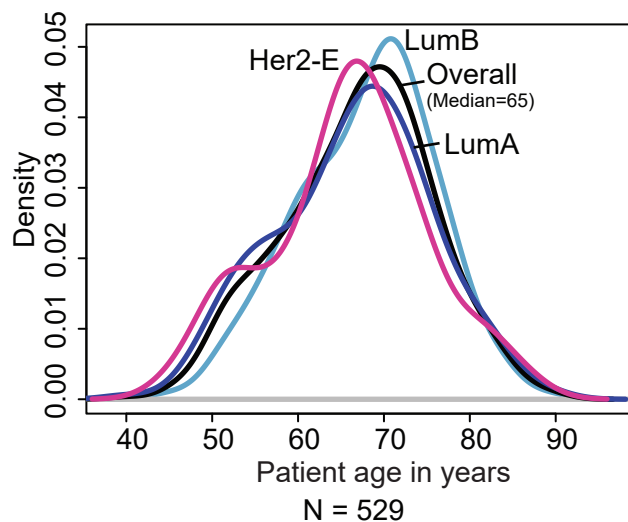
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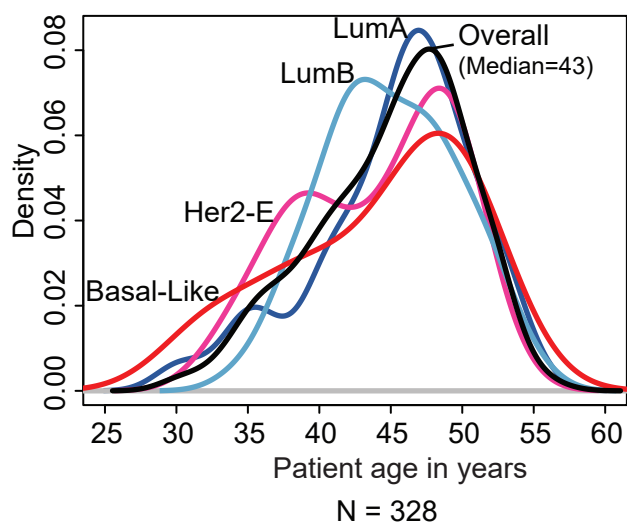
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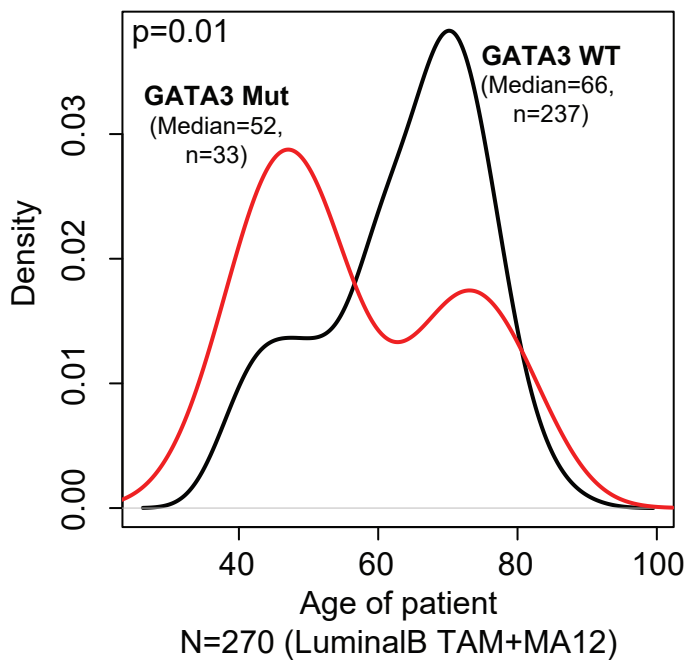
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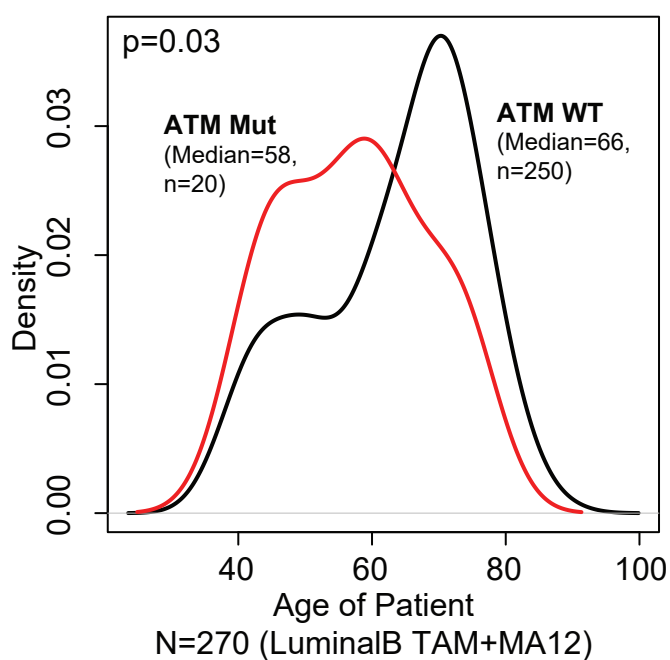
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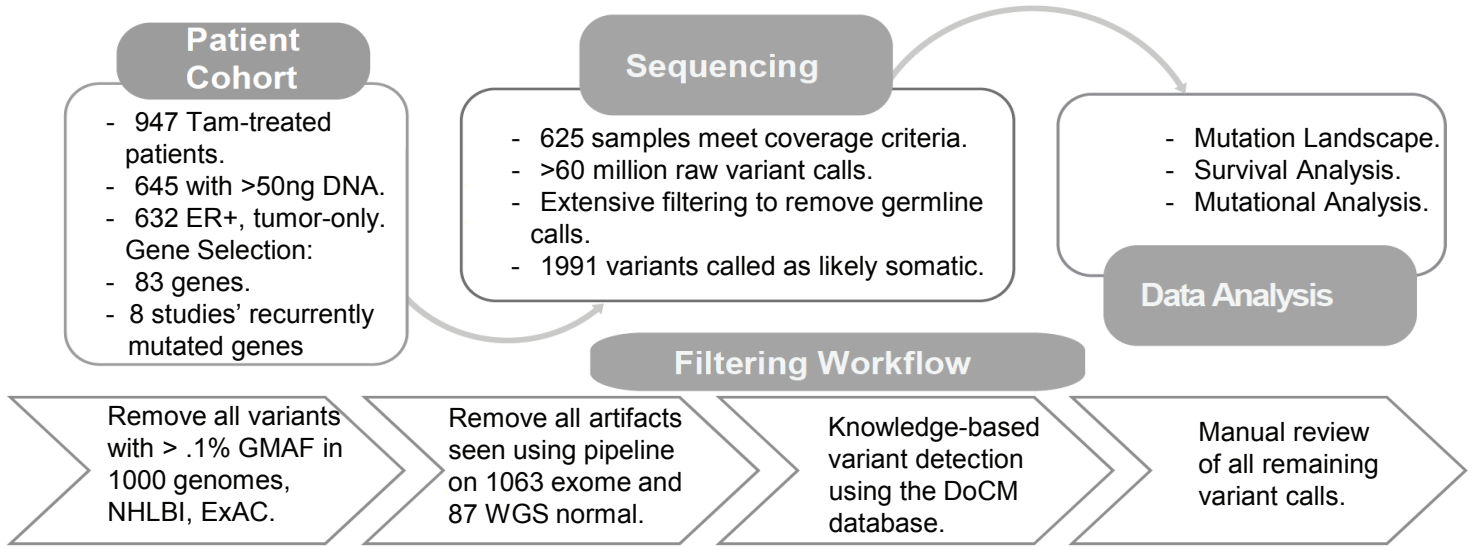
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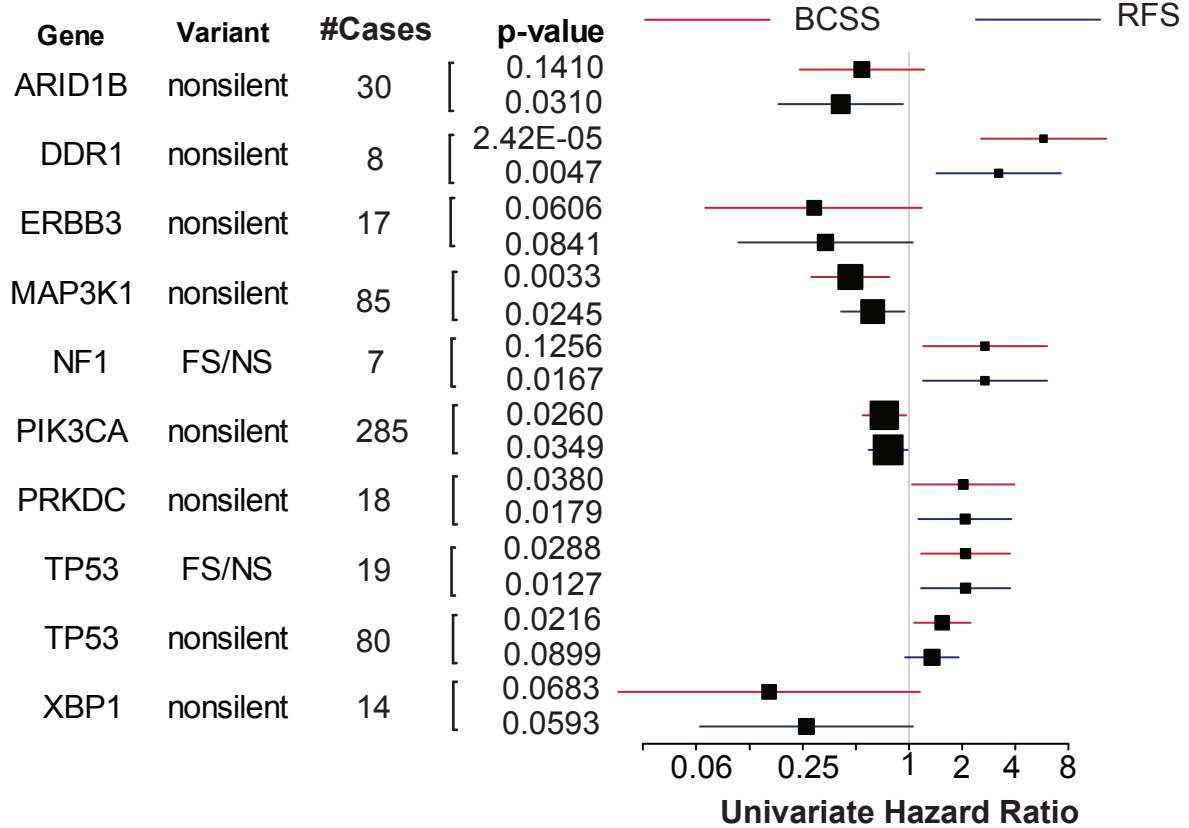
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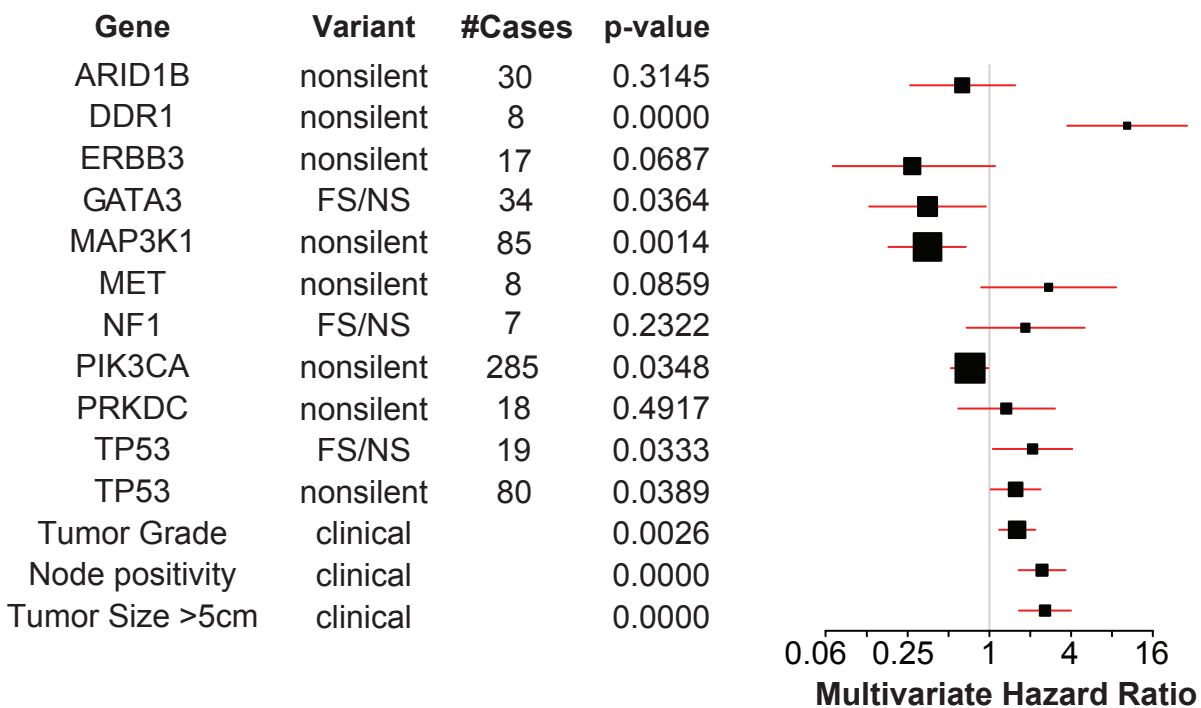
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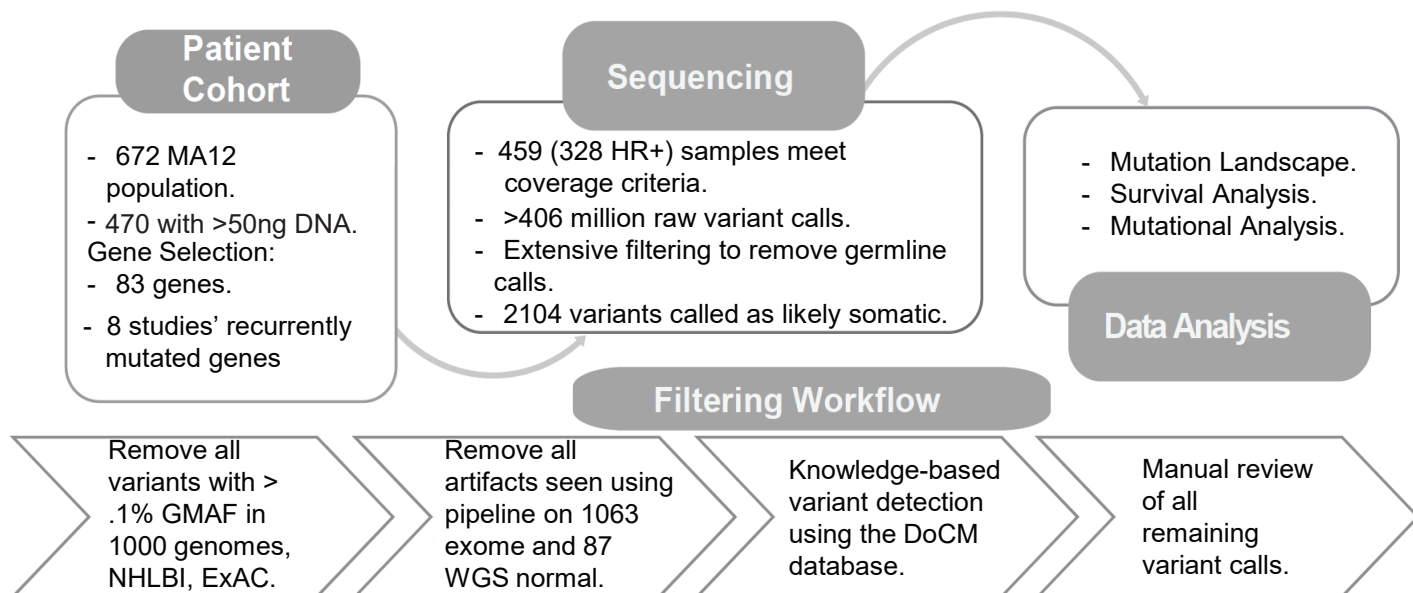
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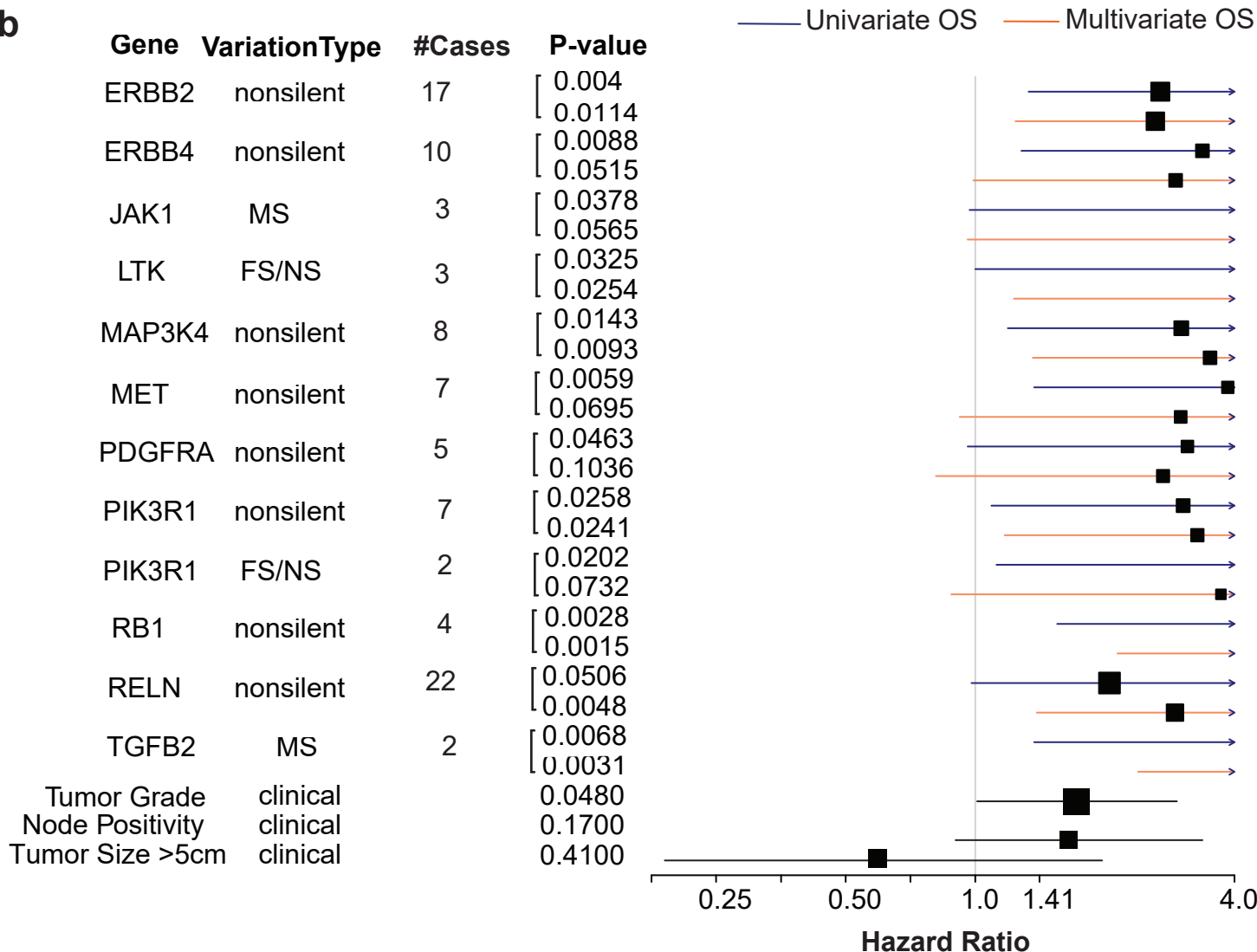
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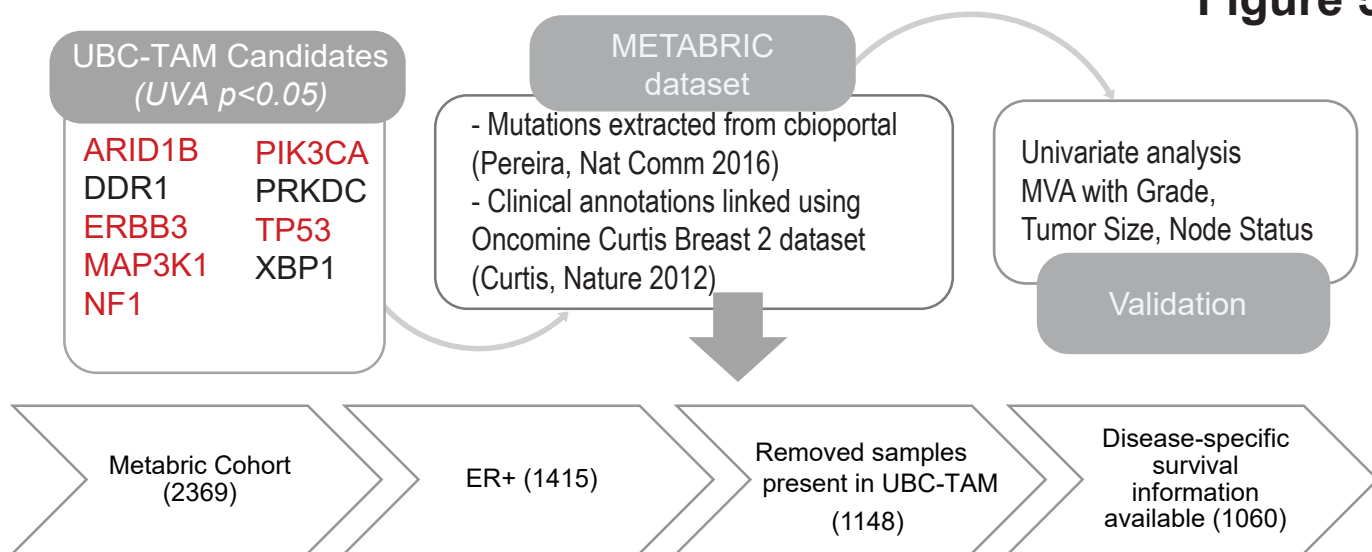


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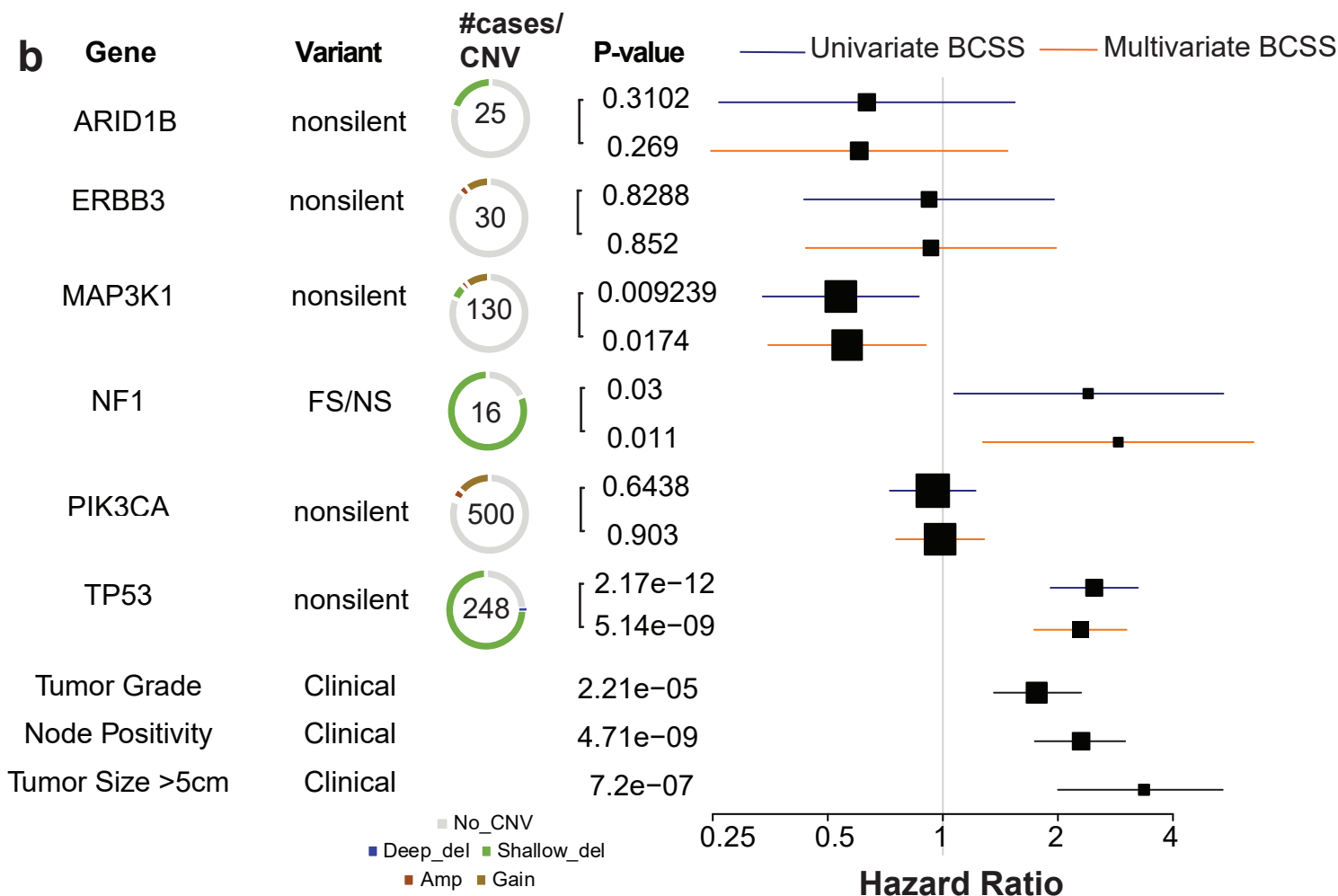


# Figure 5.

**a**

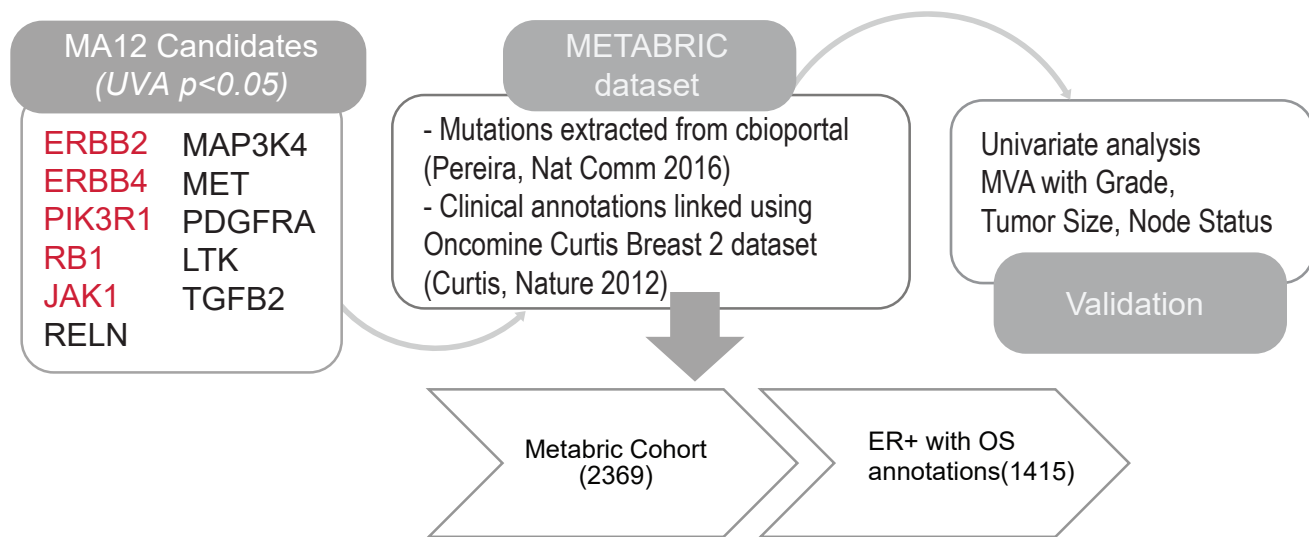


**b**

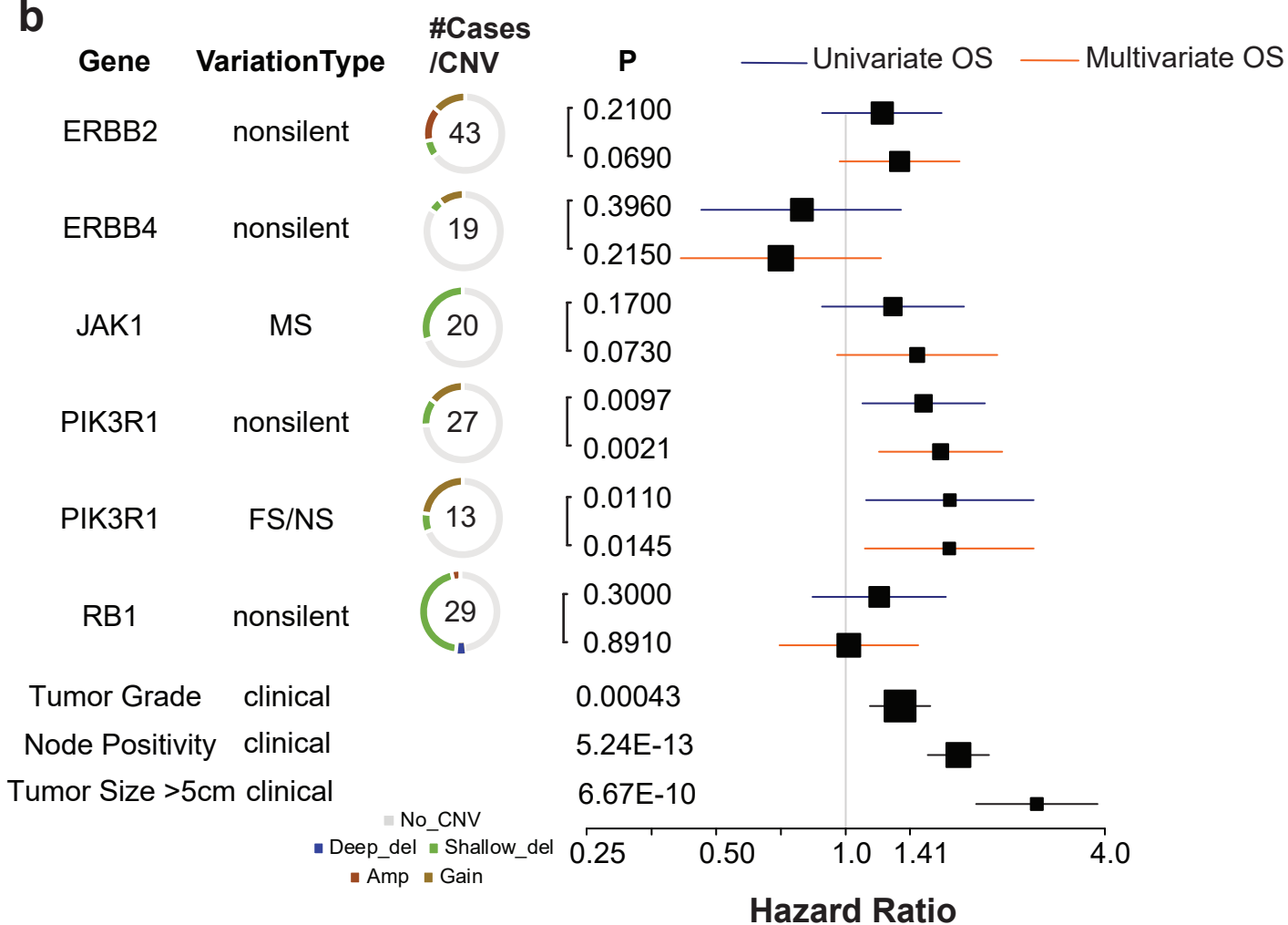


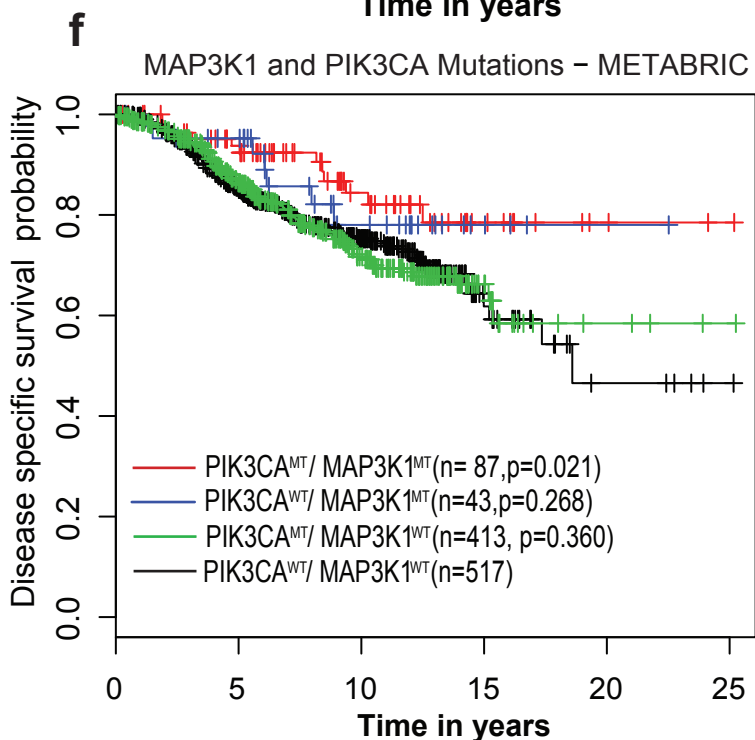
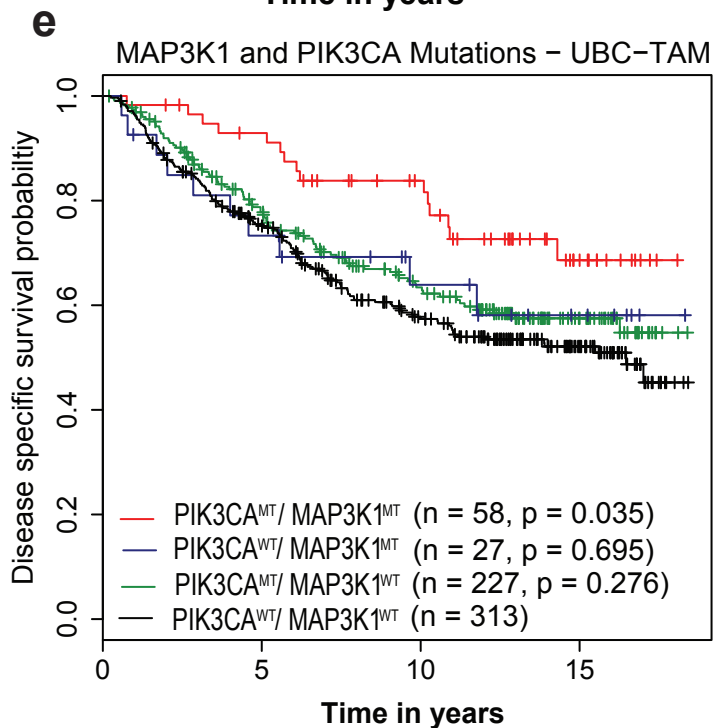
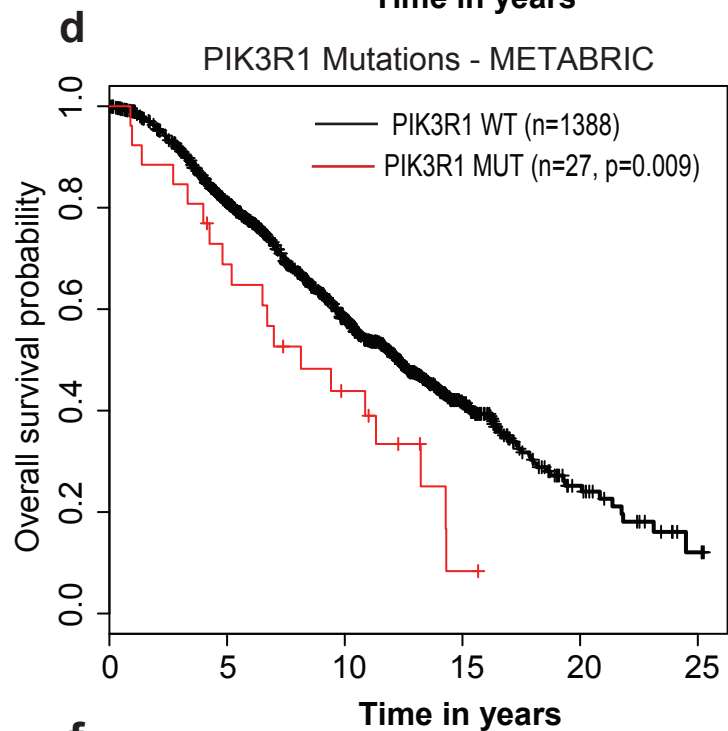
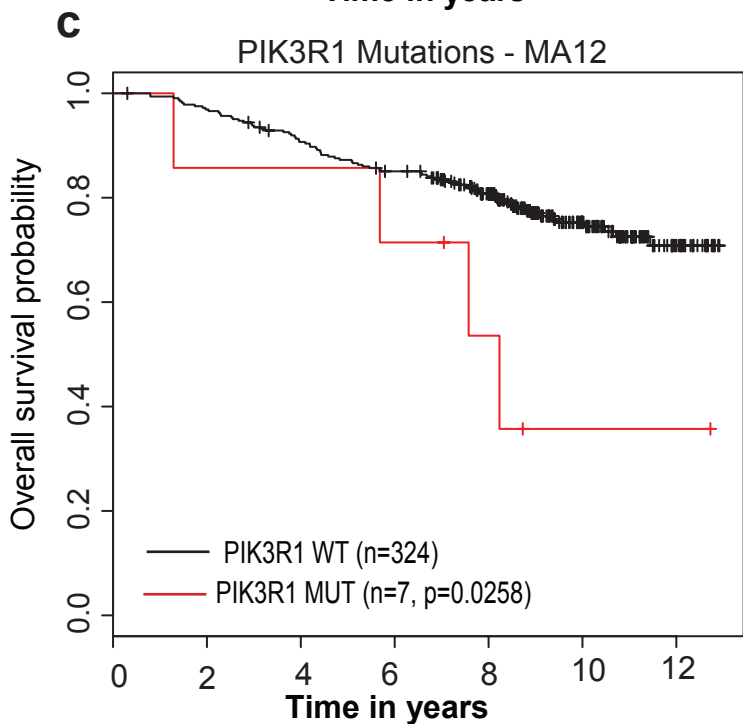
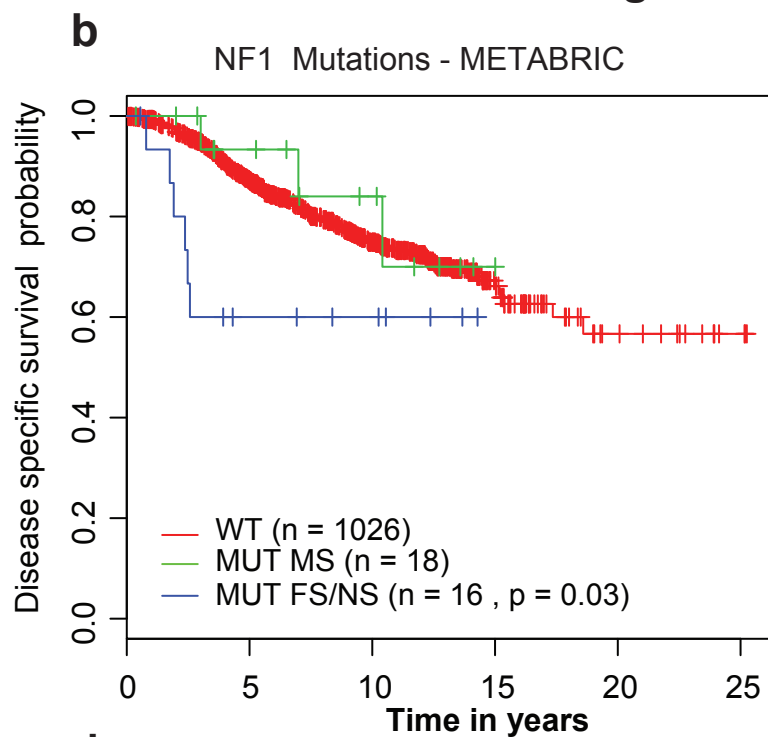
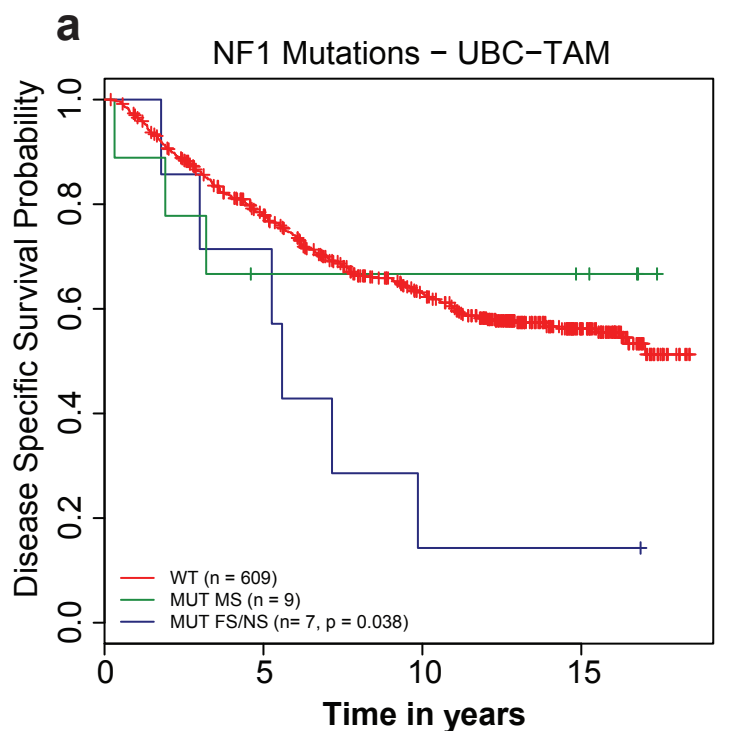
**Figure 6.**

**a**



**b**





**Figure 8.**

