

# Variant interpretation: from the clinic to the lab... and back again

Australian BioCommons webinar  
7 December 2022

Alliance members



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## Variant interpretation in a diagnostic setting



**Naomi Baker**  
Medical Scientist  
Victorian Clinical Genetics  
Services

## Variant interpretation in a research setting



**Joep Vissers**  
Curation Team Leader,  
University of Melbourne  
Centre for Cancer Research

## Variant interpretation training

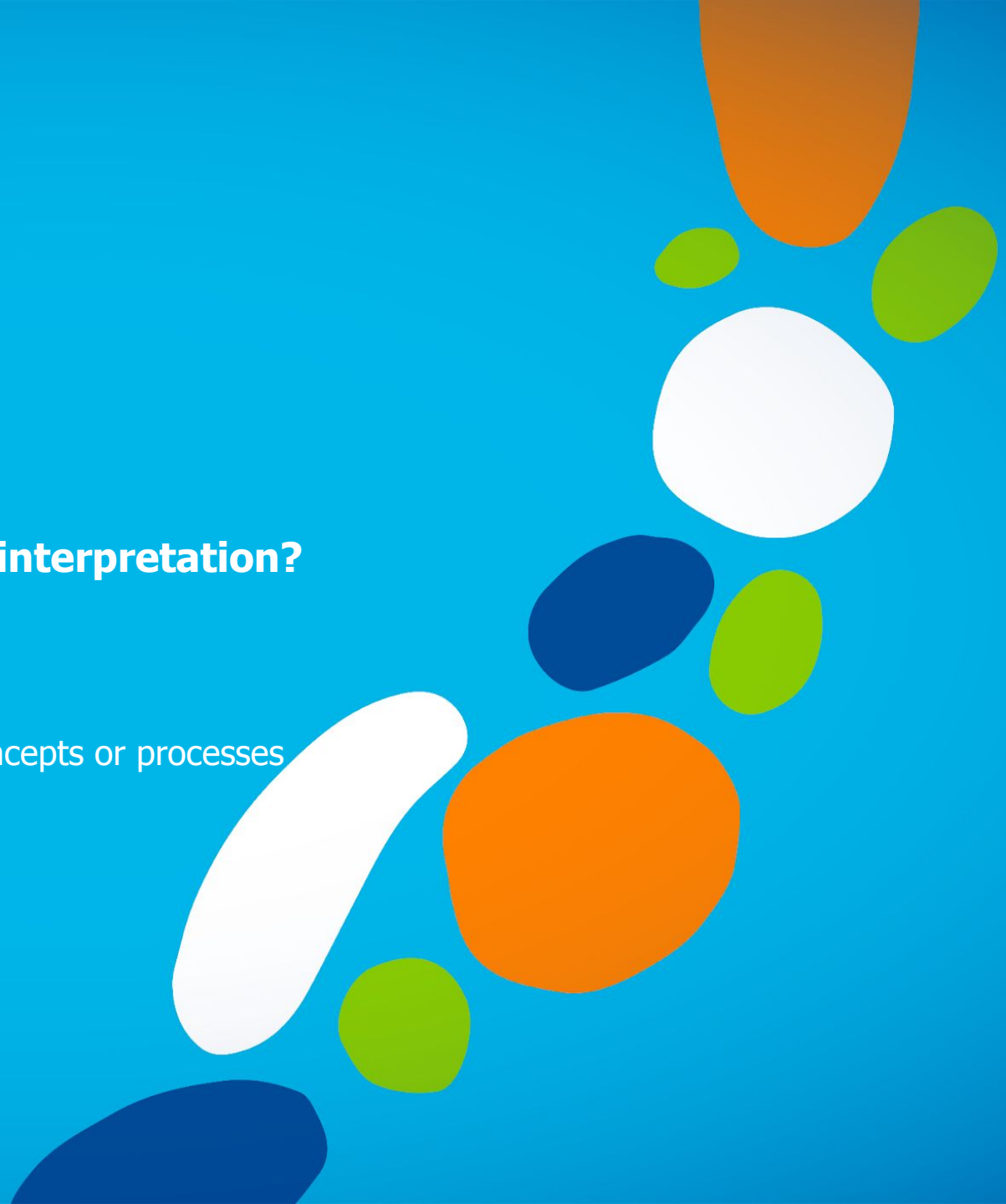


**Amy Nisselle**  
Genomics Workforce Lead  
Melbourne Genomics

# Poll

## How much experience do you have with variant interpretation?

- Never heard of it!
- I know the term but that's about it
- I've dabbled but don't know much about the underlying concepts or processes
- I've been doing it for a while in a research setting
- I've been doing it for a while in a clinical setting
- I supervise others to do it



# Variant interpretation in a diagnostic setting



**Dr. Naomi Baker**

Medical Scientist, Clinical Genomics, VCGS

**Victorian Clinical Genetics Services**  
Murdoch Children's Research Institute



# The genomic testing process

## Our lab's role

## My role

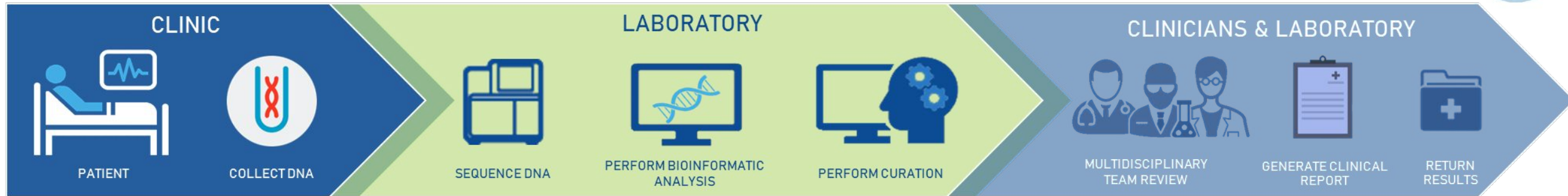


# Genomic Testing processes, pipelines and people

Primary Care / Hospital

Genomic Diagnostics

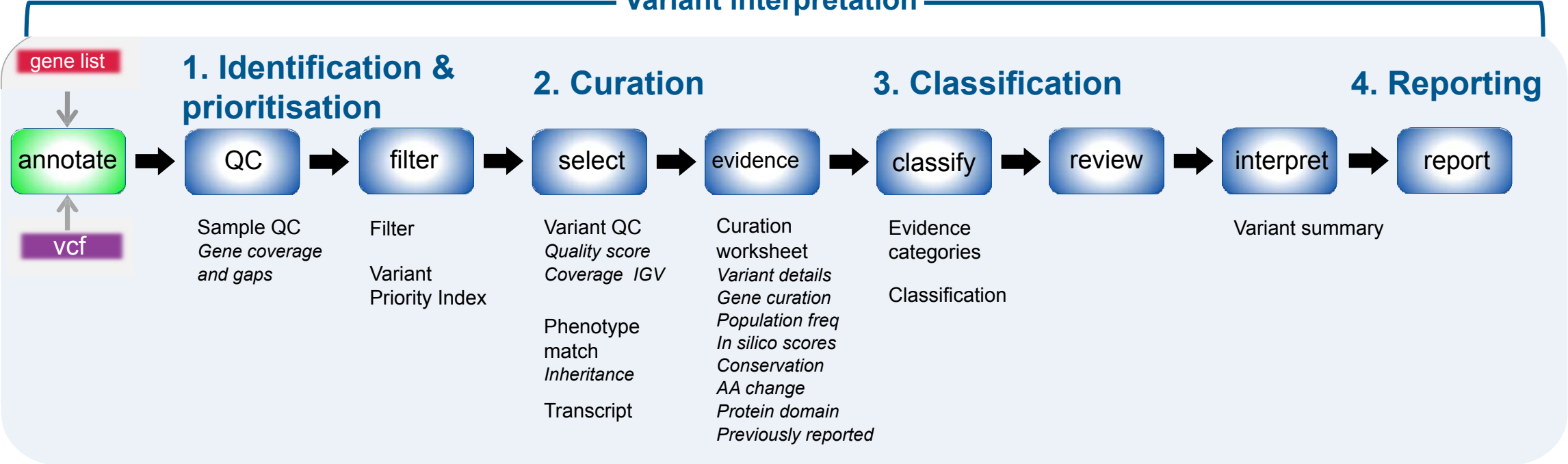
Genomic Diagnostics



# Variant interpretation is clinically integrated



## Variant interpretation



PMID: 26217397; Sadedin, S. et al. (2015) Genome Med. 7(1):68. "Cpipe: a shared variant detection pipeline designed for diagnostic settings."

# PanelApp Australia

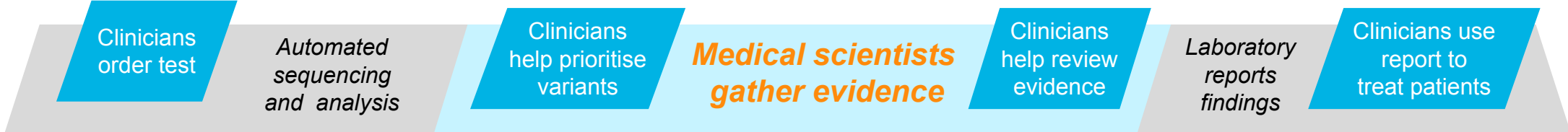


Victorian Clinical Genetics Services  
Murdoch Children's Research Institute

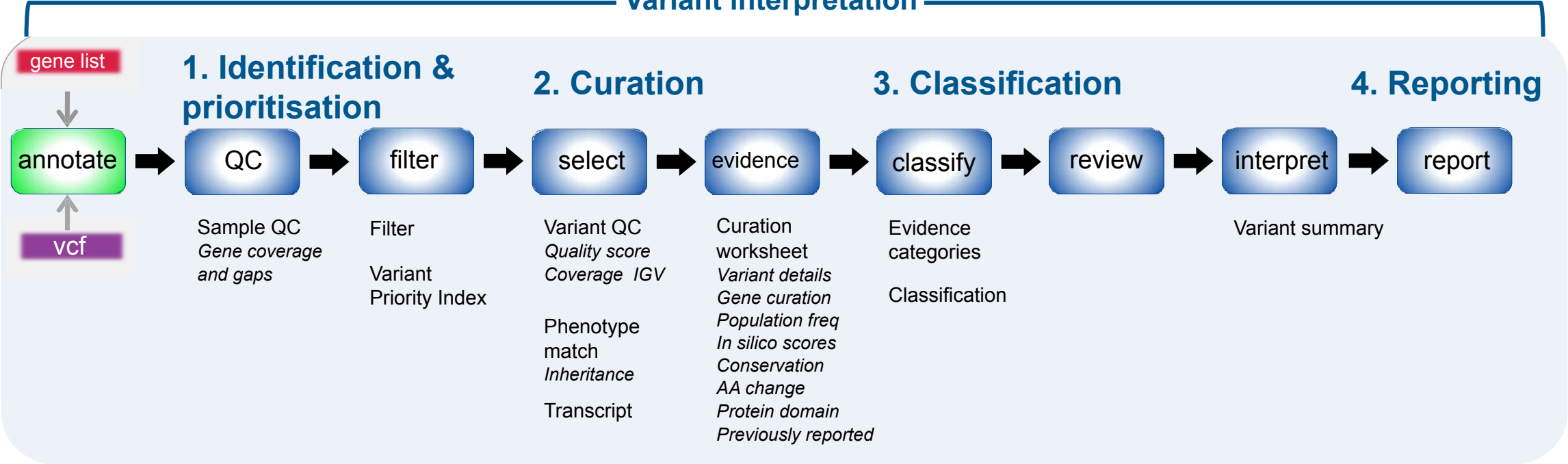
## Malignant Hyperthermia Susceptibility (Version 1.6)

Green	<b>CACNA1S</b>	1 review <a href="#">Add review</a>  1 green	MONOALLELIC, autosomal or pseudoautosomal, NOT imprinted	<p>Sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expert list</li> <li>Expert Review Green</li> </ul> <p>Phenotypes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{Malignant hyperthermia susceptibility 5} MIM#601887</li> </ul> <p>Tags</p>
Green	<b>RYR1</b>	1 review <a href="#">Add review</a>  1 green	MONOALLELIC, autosomal or pseudoautosomal, NOT imprinted	<p>Sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expert list</li> <li>Expert Review Green</li> </ul> <p>Phenotypes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{Malignant hyperthermia susceptibility 1} MIM#145600</li> </ul> <p>Tags</p>
Green	<b>STAC3</b>	1 review <a href="#">Add review</a>  1 green	BIALLELIC, autosomal or pseudoautosomal	<p>Sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expert list</li> <li>Expert Review Green</li> </ul> <p>Phenotypes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Myopathy, congenital, Baily-Bloch MIM#255995</li> </ul> <p>Tags</p>
Amber	<b>ASPH</b>	1 review <a href="#">Add review</a>	MONOALLELIC, autosomal or pseudoautosomal, imprinted status unknown	<p>Sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expert Review Amber</li> <li>Literature</li> </ul> <p>Phenotypes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exertional heat illness</li> <li>malignant hyperthermia susceptibility, MONDO:0018493, ASPH-related</li> </ul> <p>Tags</p>
Amber	<b>ATP2A1</b>	1 review <a href="#">Add review</a>	BIALLELIC, autosomal or pseudoautosomal	<p>Sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expert Review Amber</li> <li>Literature</li> </ul> <p>Phenotypes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brody myopathy MIM#601003</li> </ul> <p>Tags</p>
Amber	<b>TRPV1</b>	2 reviews <a href="#">Add review</a>  1 red	MONOALLELIC, autosomal or pseudoautosomal, NOT imprinted	<p>Sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expert Review Amber</li> <li>Literature</li> </ul> <p>Phenotypes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Malignant hyperthermia susceptibility</li> </ul> <p>Tags</p>
Red	<b>CACNB1</b>	2 reviews <a href="#">Add review</a>  1 red	Unknown	<p>Sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expert list</li> <li>Expert Review Red</li> <li>Other</li> <li>Royal Melbourne Hospital</li> </ul> <p>Phenotypes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Malignant hyperthermia susceptibility</li> </ul>

# Variant interpretation is clinically integrated



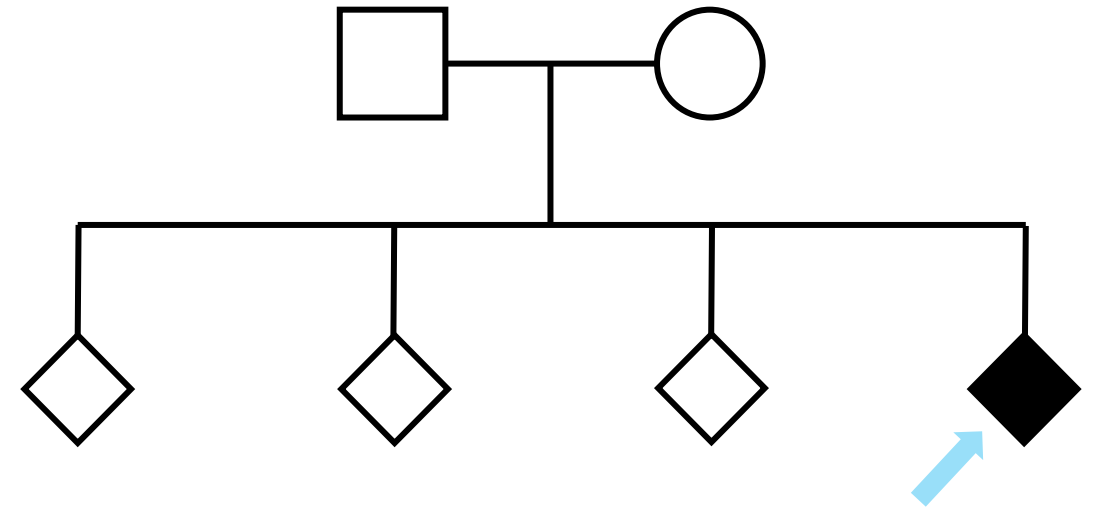
## Variant interpretation



PMID: 26217397; Sadedin, S. et al. (2015) Genome Med. 7(1):68. "Cpipe: a shared variant detection pipeline designed for diagnostic settings."

# Case Study

- Paediatrician referral
- 2 yo with severe global developmental delay and hypotonia
- Trio WES analysis
  - Intellectual disability syndromic and non-syndromic
  - Autism
  - Mendeliome







5500 variants

de novo / recessive filter  
gene panels

28 variants

phenotype match?

1 variant

Victorian Clinical Genetics Services  
Murdoch Children's Research Institute

TCF4 nonsense variant  
↓  
pathogenic  
↓  
diagnosis of Pitt-Hopkins syndrome

**MUSCLE, SOFT TISSUES**

- Hypotonia

**NEUROLOGIC**

*Central Nervous System*

- Mental retardation, severe
- Poor or absent speech development
- Delayed motor development
- Limited walking abilities
- Unstable, ataxic gait
- Incoordination
- Seizures
- Bulging of the caudate nuclei
- Ventricular asymmetry
- Agenesis or hypoplasia of the corpus callosum
- Atrophy of the frontal and parietal cortex
- Hypotonia

*Behavioral Psychiatric Manifestations*

- Happy personality
- Aggression
- Stereotypic movements

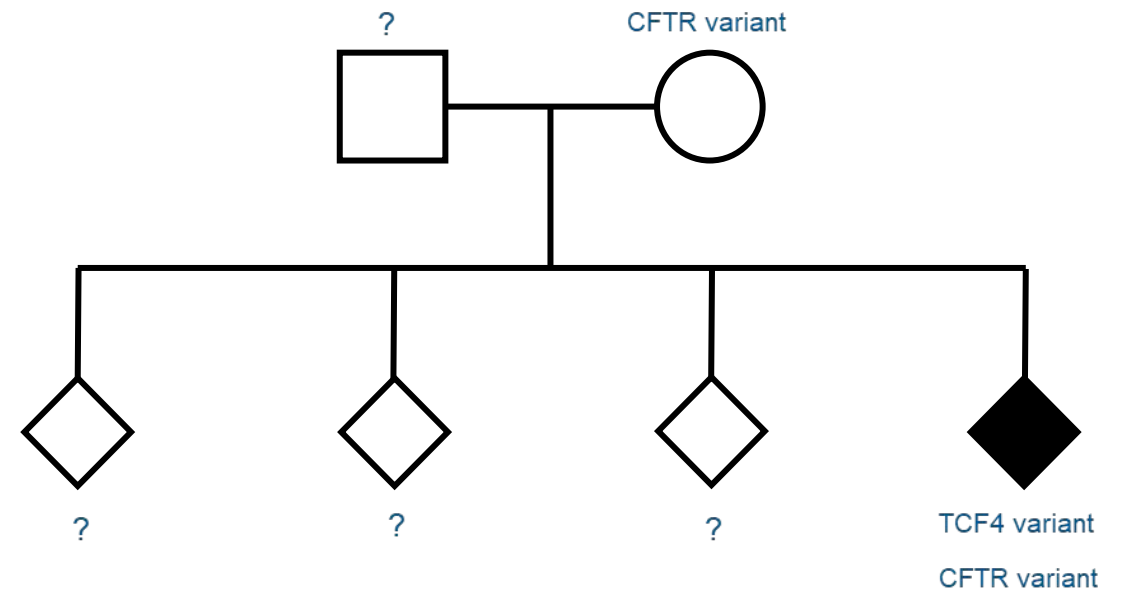
CFTR variant  
↓  
pathogenic  
↓  
incidental carrier finding





# Case Study

- Paediatrician referral; Genetic counsellor provided additional support
  - Contact details for support groups, referral pathways, counselling tips
- CF panel testing for father
  - Clarify reproductive risk
  - Risk for siblings
- Referral for formal genetic counselling
- May eventually provide testing for extended family





# Variant interpretation in a diagnostic setting

- Provide answers for patients and families
- Interaction with clinicians (Clinical Geneticists, Genetic Counsellors, other referrers) and scientists
- Team effort
- Use and continuous development of scientific knowledge

# Acknowledgments

- Genetics and Genomics Division

- Sebastian Lunke (Head)

- Clinical Genomics – Clinical Geneticists

- Zornitza Stark
- Alison Yeung

- Clinical Genomics – Genetic Counsellors

- Manny Jacobs
- Sam Ayres

- Clinical Genomics – Scientists

- Belinda Chong (Head)
- Dean Phelan
- Sarah-Jane Pantaleo
- Ain Roesley
- Anna Ritchie
- Sze Chern Lim
- Daniel Flanagan
- Ee Ming Wong
- Elena Savva
- Hazel Phillimore
- Karina Sandoval
- Lucy Spencer
- Michelle da Cunha Torres
- Paul De Fazio
- Shannon Cowie
- Suliman Khan
- Teresa Zhao

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## Variant interpretation in a research setting



**Joep Vissers**  
Curation Team Leader,  
University of Melbourne  
Centre for Cancer Research





# Curation in the Research setting

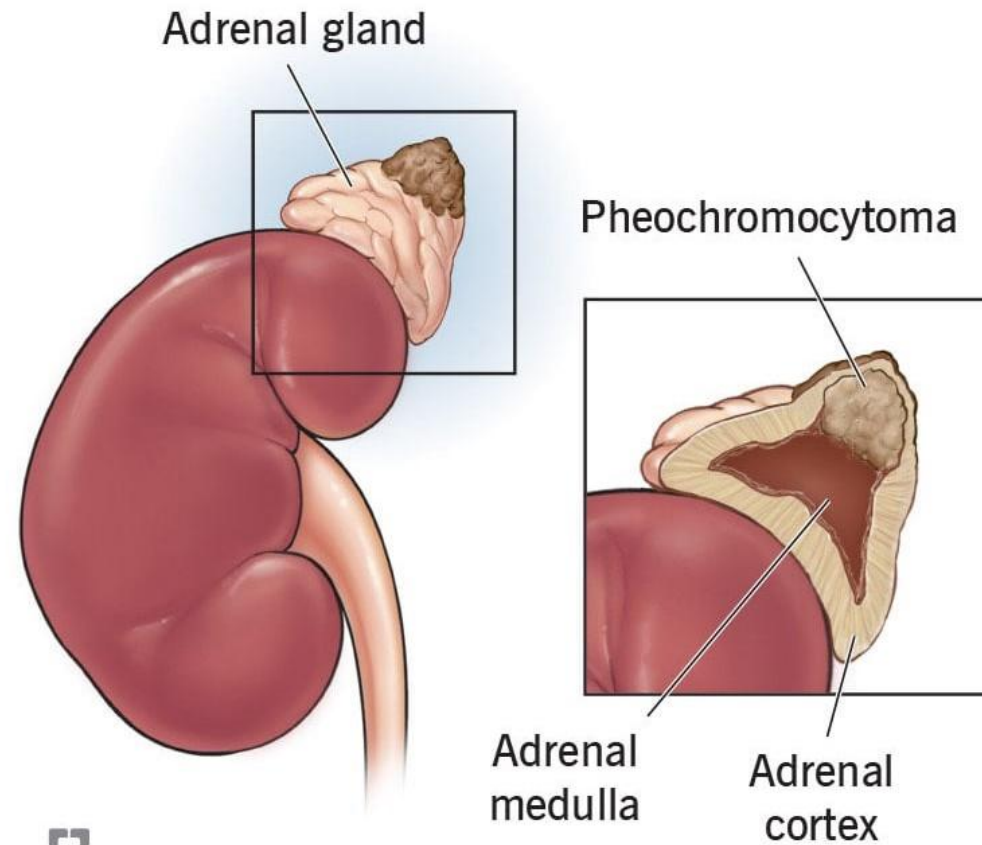
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**Joep Vissers**

University of Melbourne Centre  
for Cancer Research (UMCCR)

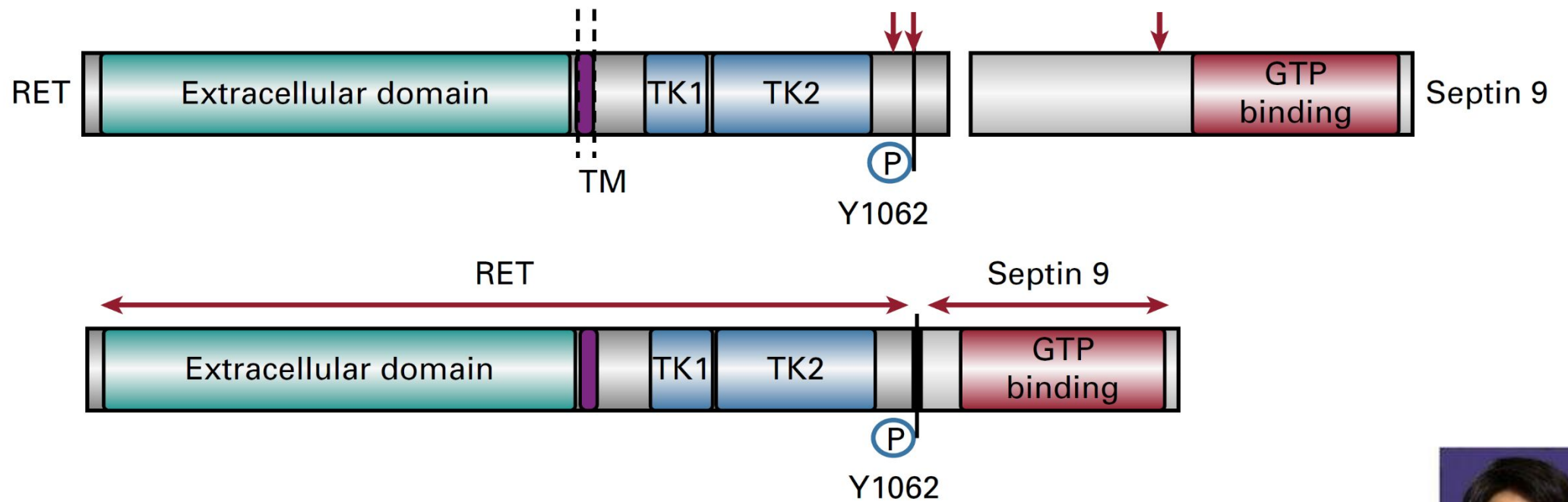


# Pheochromocytoma





# *RET::SEPTIN9* fusion gene



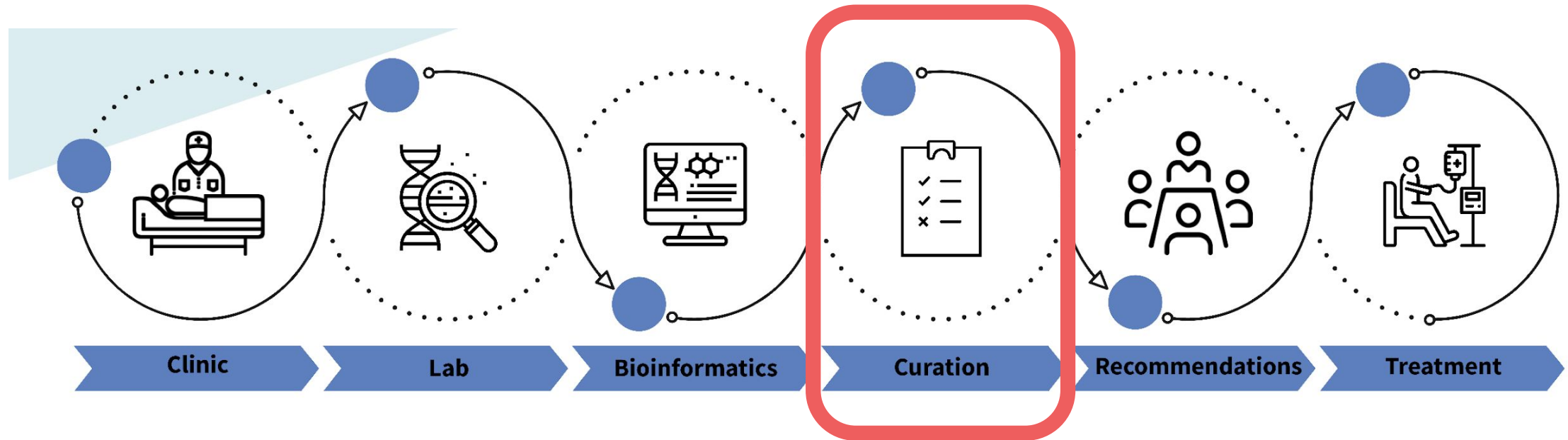
Huiling Xu, Peter Mac



# University of Melbourne Centre for Cancer Research



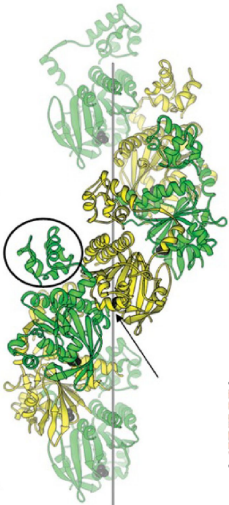
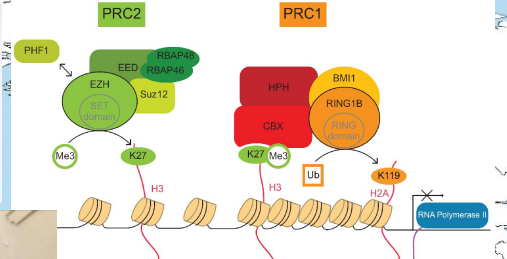
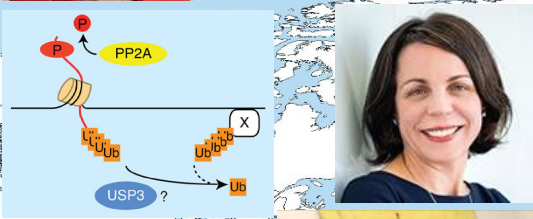
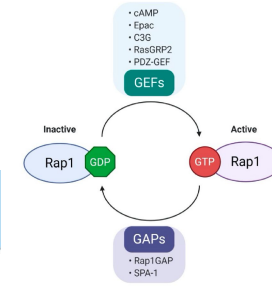
# Precision oncology at UMCCR



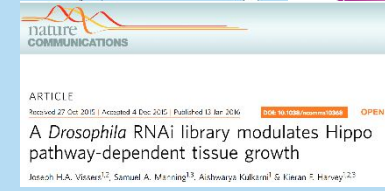




Utrecht University

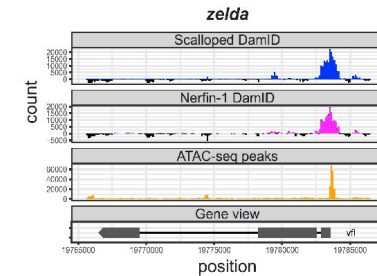
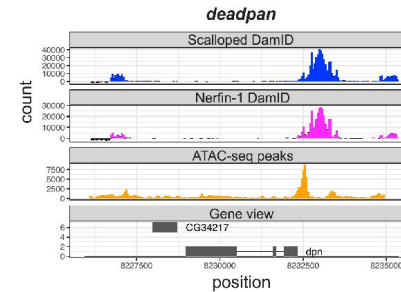


Peter Mac  
Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre  
Victoria Australia



# Skills and expertise

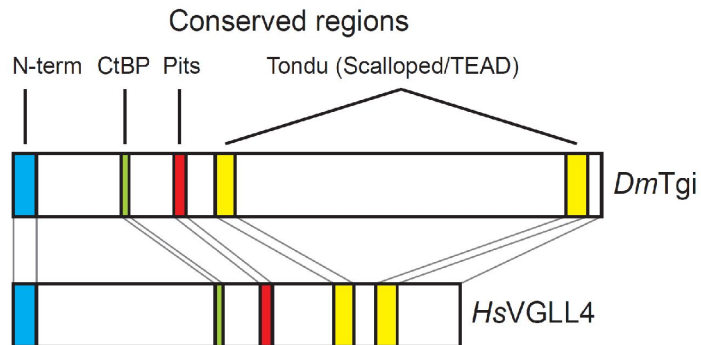
Family	Member	Database	Accession	Score	Mass	Num. of m	Num. of si	Num. of si	Num. of si	Num. of si	Num. of si	Description
1	1	UNIPROT	Q8IQJ9_D	13144	41114	908	296	33	33	152.38	SubName: Full=CG10741, isoform B; SubName: Full=RE45537p; - OS=Drosophila melanogaster (Fruit fly).	
1	2	UNIPROT	B4H6V1_C	1889	43089	53	51	11	11	2.26	SubName: Full=GL22083; - OS=Drosophila persimilis (Fruit fly).	
2	1	UNIPROT	AAV2S3_D	11958	42738	421	356	29	28	34.69	SubName: Full=C-terminal binding protein, isoform B; EC=1.1.1.-; SubName: Full=C-terminal binding protein, isoform C; EC=1.1.	
2	2	UNIPROT	B3P196_D	10585	51043	375	311	27	26	14.67	SubName: Full=GG19357; - OS=Drosophila erecta (Fruit fly).	
2	3	UNIPROT	EBNH65_C	3819	20954	120	100	12	11	15.8	SubName: Full=LD15041p; Flags: Fragment; - OS=Drosophila melanogaster (Fruit fly).	
3	1	UNIPROT	Q7JR58_D	8972	31961	301	286	22	22	84.53	SubName: Full=CG6543, isoform A; EC=4.2.1.17; SubName: Full=CG6543, isoform B; EC=4.2.1.17; SubName: Full=LD24265p; - OS=Drosophila yakuba (Fruit fly).	
3	2	UNIPROT	B4P459_D	7457	31802	241	229	19	19	51.87	SubName: Full=GG13337; - OS=Drosophila yakuba (Fruit fly).	
3	3	UNIPROT	B3NRG4_C	6595	31758	215	198	15	15	31.58	SubName: Full=GG22466; - OS=Drosophila erecta (Fruit fly).	
3	4	UNIPROT	B4NS79_D	4620	32190	185	152	16	13	7.67	SubName: Full=GI17937; - OS=Drosophila willistoni (Fruit fly).	
4	1	UNIPROT	B4LX2_D	2800	72387	93	86	32	32	4.4	SubName: Full=GI14717; - OS=Drosophila mojavensis (Fruit fly).	
4	2	UNIPROT	B3PO56_D	2324	71286	77	75	25	24	2.86	SubName: Full=GI16900; - OS=Drosophila erecta (Fruit fly).	
4	3	UNIPROT	Q6XV7_D	494	24172	31	26	9	9	2.21	SubName: Full=Similar to Drosophila melanogaster Hsc70-3; Flags: Fragment; - OS=Drosophila yakuba (Fruit fly).	
5	1	UNIPROT	B3MGF8_I	1425	50571	36	36	17	17	2.32	SubName: Full=GF12605; - OS=Drosophila ananassae (Fruit fly).	
6	1	UNIPROT	B7Z143_D	984	62298	29	28	12	12	1.28	SubName: Full=CG11138, isoform D; - OS=Drosophila melanogaster (Fruit fly).	
7	1	UNIPROT	B4I2CG_DI	900	43292	36	34	13	13	2.49	SubName: Full=GM18275; - OS=Drosophila sechellia (Fruit fly).	
8	1	UNIPROT	M9M5L3_L	785	92473	32	23	17	13	0.69	SubName: Full=Hsc70Cb, isoform G; SubName: Full=Hsc70Cb, isoform H; - OS=Drosophila melanogaster (Fruit fly).	
9	1	UNIPROT	B3N968_C	567	74257	16	16	11	11	0.61	SubName: Full=GG22433; - OS=Drosophila erecta (Fruit fly).	
10	1	UNIPROT	B3LYC5_D	544	50561	16	15	10	10	0.88	SubName: Full=GF17649; - OS=Drosophila ananassae (Fruit fly).	
11	1	UNIPROT	Q9VRI4_D	401	33825	15	12	11	9	1.32	SubName: Full=CG10672; EC=1.1.-; SubName: Full=SD02021p; - OS=Drosophila melanogaster (Fruit fly).	
12	1	UNIPROT	Q9V9T5_C	385	76752	11	10	10	9	0.46	SubName: Full=CG2118, isoform A; EC=6.4.1.4; SubName: Full=GM14617p; - OS=Drosophila melanogaster (Fruit fly).	
13	1	UNIPROT	Q9V168_D	313	31145	9	9	7	7	1.03	SubName: Full=CG4598, isoform A; EC=5.3.3.8; SubName: Full=CG4598, isoform B; EC=5.3.3.8; SubName: Full=RH73277p; SubN	
14	1	UNIPROT	E1J199_DF	290	49408	7	7	5	5	0.38	SubName: Full=FI18101p1; SubName: Full=Scalloped, isoform I; SubName: Full=Scalloped, isoform J; SubName: Full=Scalloped,	
15	1	UNIPROT	B3NF19_D	281	26930	9	9	5	5	1.26	SubName: Full=GG14898; - OS=Drosophila erecta (Fruit fly).	
16	1	UNIPROT	B3NSB3_D	270	50561	17	14	6	5	0.37	RecName: Full=Elongation factor 1-alpha; - OS=Drosophila erecta (Fruit fly).	
17	1	UNIPROT	B7Z0X1_D	258	51295	11	9	9	7	0.55	RecName: Full=Serine hydroxymethyltransferase; EC=2.1.2.1; - OS=Drosophila melanogaster (Fruit fly).	
18	1	UNIPROT	B3MR12_C	254	16312	5	5	2	2	0.46	SubName: Full=GF21290; - OS=Drosophila ananassae (Fruit fly).	
19	1	UNIPROT	Q8IMF5_C	253	127049	5	4	4	3	0.08	SubName: Full=Microtubule-associated protein 205, isoform B; - OS=Drosophila melanogaster (Fruit fly).	
20	1	UNIPROT	Q7K1UO_C	239	29087	7	7	5	5	0.72	SubName: Full=Arct1; SubName: Full=LD41905p; - OS=Drosophila melanogaster (Fruit fly).	
21	1	UNIPROT	B3PQ26_D	226	16242	8	7	5	4	1.14	RecName: Full=Single-stranded DNA-binding protein; - OS=Drosophila erecta (Fruit fly).	
22	1	UNIPROT	B3MLU8_I	205	15005	12	8	4	4	1.27	SubName: Full=GF15052; - OS=Drosophila ananassae (Fruit fly).	
23	1	UNIPROT	B4QJM4_C	199	34125	8	7	6	5	0.59	RecName: Full=Eukaryotic translation initiation factor 3 subunit H; Short=elF3h; - OS=Drosophila simulans (Fruit fly).	
24	1	UNIPROT	B4I8U9_D	193	51041	7	6	6	5	0.37	SubName: Full=GM15500; - OS=Drosophila sechellia (Fruit fly).	



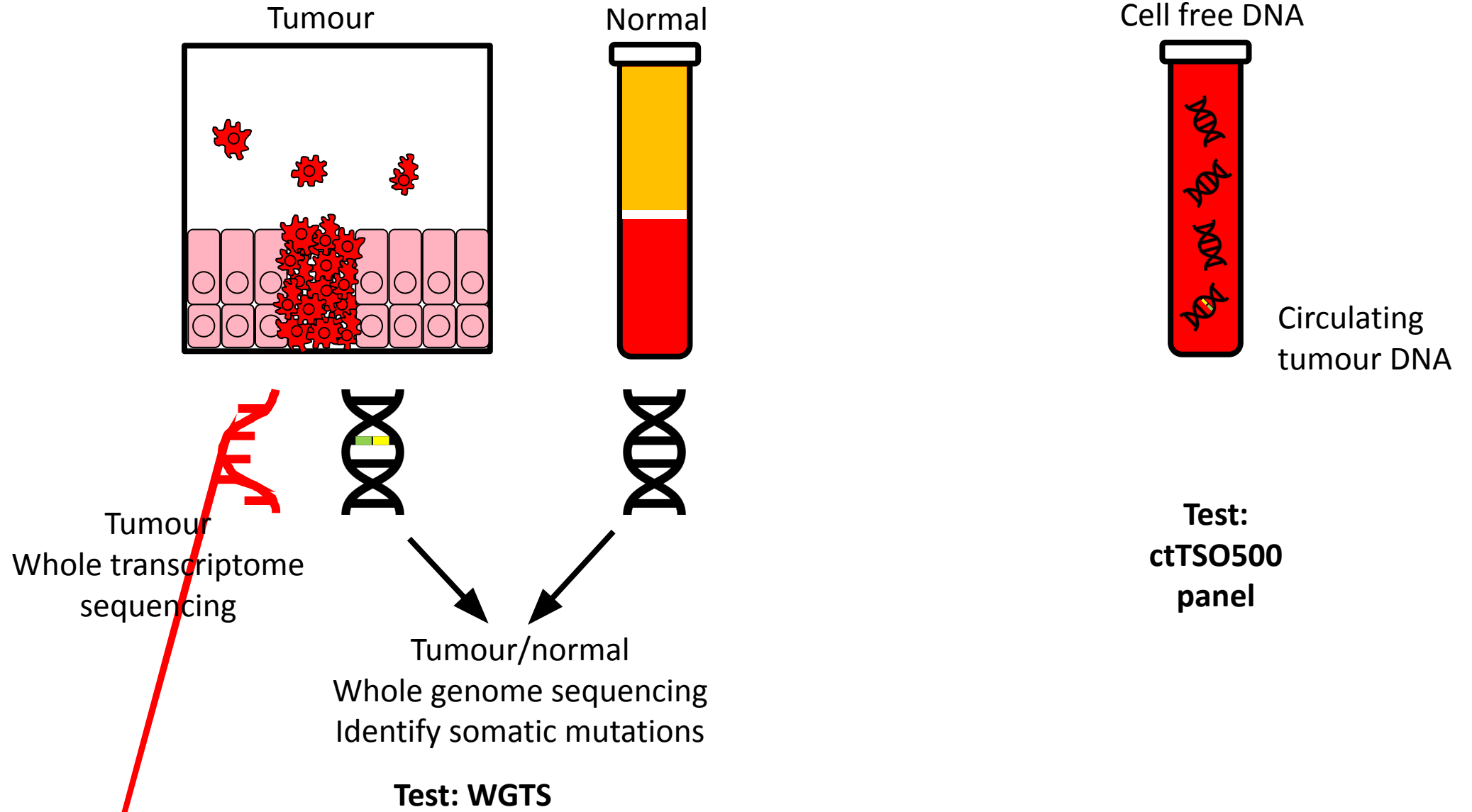
- |                     |                     |                    |                    |                                |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Notch</b>        | <b>Hippo</b>        | <b>Neurons</b>     | <b>Neuroblasts</b> | <b>Metabolism</b>              |
| <i>Notch</i>        | <i>warts</i>        | <i>elav</i>        | <i>miranda</i>     | <i>Asparagine synthetase</i>   |
| <i>Serrate</i>      | <i>kibra</i>        | <i>chinmo</i>      | <i>deadpan</i>     | <i>Glutaminase</i>             |
| <i>Delta</i>        | <i>expanded</i>     | <i>erect wing</i>  | <i>asense</i>      | <i>Phospholipase D</i>         |
| <i>mastermind</i>   | <i>four-jointed</i> | <i>Lim3</i>        | <i>worniu</i>      | <i>Adenylate kinase 1</i>      |
| <i>su(H)</i>        | <i>lgl</i>          | <i>SoxNeuro</i>    | <i>klumpfuss</i>   | <i>AMP deaminase</i>           |
| <i>numb</i>         | <i>karst</i>        | <i>roundabout3</i> | <i>inscuteable</i> | <i>ATP synthase, subunit C</i> |
| <i>E(spl) HLHm5</i> | <i>Pez</i>          |                    | <i>zelda</i>       | <i>Hexosaminidase 2</i>        |
| <i>E(spl) HLHm7</i> |                     |                    |                    | <i>CTP synthase</i>            |



Collaborate with bio-informaticians

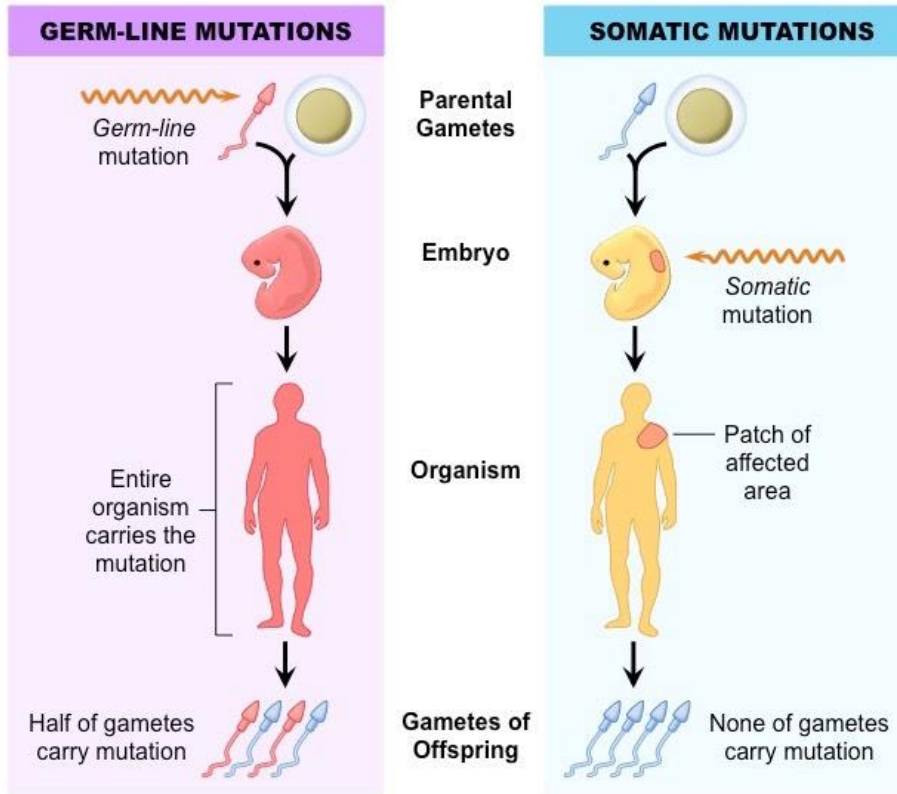


# UMCCR genomic testing





# Germline and somatic DNA variants



From: [ib.bioninja.com.au](http://ib.bioninja.com.au)

## Germline

## Somatic

	1	10	20	30	40	42
	-----+-----+-----+-----+-----					
Reference_genome	ACTGTGTTAAGTCGCGAATTCATTCAGAATTGACCATGACAA					
Patient_normal	ACTGTGTTAAGTCGCGAAT <b>A</b> CATTCAGAATTGACCATGACAA					

	1	10	20	30	40	43
	-----+-----+-----+-----+-----					
normal	ATGCAGCTAGTTTGCATGACAA <b>A</b> ACATGTCAGT <b>A</b> CCGTACAAA					
tumour	ATGCAGCTAGTTTGCATGACATACATGTCAG <b>G</b> CCGTACAAA					





# The Advanced Genomics Collaboration



## The Advanced Genomics Collaboration

### The Cancer Of Low sUrvival and unMet Need (COLUMN) initiative

Support thorough genomic investigation of challenging patients:

- (i) Rare cancers (incidence <6/100,000)
- (ii) Recalcitrant cancers (cancers that have poorest survival (<20% 5 year)
- (iii) Relapsed cancers (cancers that have exhausted standard of care )
- (iv) Enigmatic diagnoses (cancers with an ambiguous diagnosis or prognosis)



# Variant classification based on Clinical Significance

## SPECIAL ARTICLE

### Standards and Guidelines for the Interpretation and Reporting of Sequence Variants in Cancer



### *A Joint Consensus Recommendation of the Association for Molecular Pathology, American Society of Clinical Oncology, and College of American Pathologists*

Marilyn M. Li,<sup>\*†</sup> Michael Datto,<sup>\*‡</sup> Eric J. Duncavage,<sup>\*§</sup> Shashikant Kulkarni,<sup>\*¶</sup> Neal I. Lindeman,<sup>\*||</sup> Somak Roy,<sup>\*,\*\*</sup> Apostolia M. Tsimberidou,<sup>\*††</sup> Cindy L. Vnencak-Jones,<sup>\*‡‡</sup> Dayna J. Wolff,<sup>\*§§</sup> Anas Younes,<sup>\*¶¶</sup> and Marina N. Nikiforova<sup>\*,\*\*</sup>

# Variant classification based on Clinical Significance

## Tier I: Variants of Strong Clinical Significance

*Therapeutic, prognostic & diagnostic*

### Level A Evidence

FDA-approved therapy  
Included in professional guidelines

### Level B Evidence

Well-powered studies with consensus from experts in the field

## Tier II: Variants of Potential Clinical Significance

*Therapeutic, prognostic & diagnostic*

### Level C Evidence

FDA-approved therapies for different tumor types or investigational therapies

Multiple small published studies with some consensus

### Level D Evidence

Preclinical trials or a few case reports without consensus

## Tier III: Variants of Unknown Clinical Significance

Not observed at a significant allele frequency in the general or specific subpopulation databases, or pan-cancer or tumor-specific variant databases

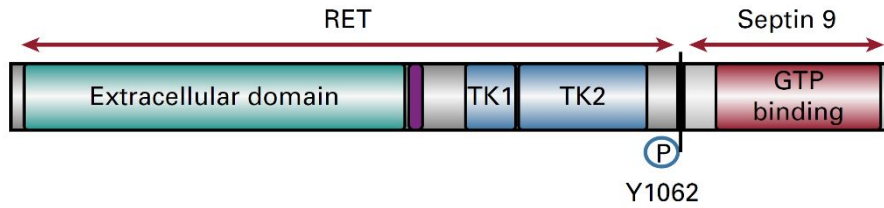
No convincing published evidence of cancer association

## Tier IV: Benign or Likely Benign Variants

Observed at significant allele frequency in the general or specific subpopulation databases

No existing published evidence of cancer association

# Clinical significance - Therapeutic

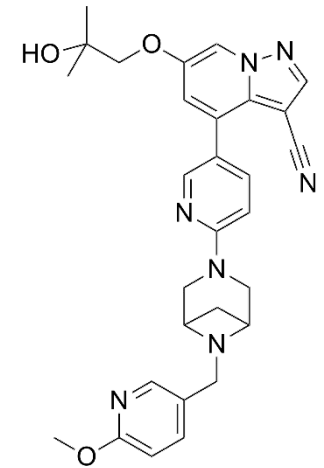


Before treatment



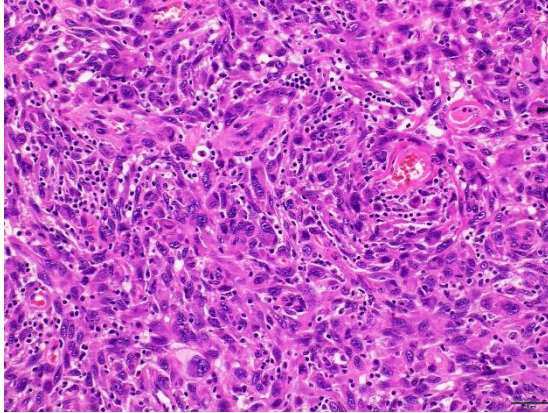
12 weeks treatment

RET kinase inhibitor:  
Selpercatinib

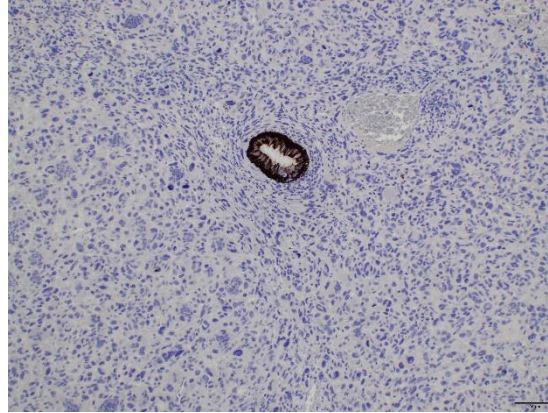




# Clinical significance - Diagnostic



H&E



High molecular weight  
Cytokeratin (negative)

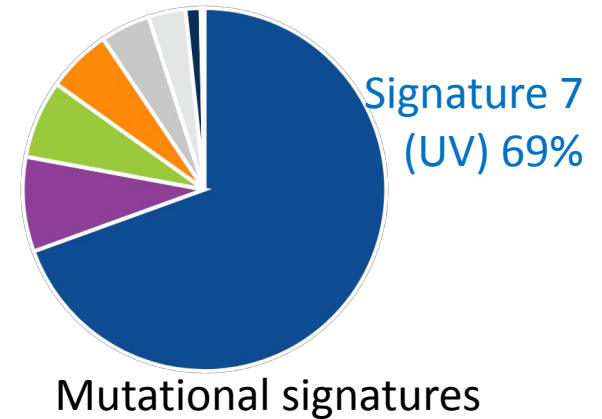
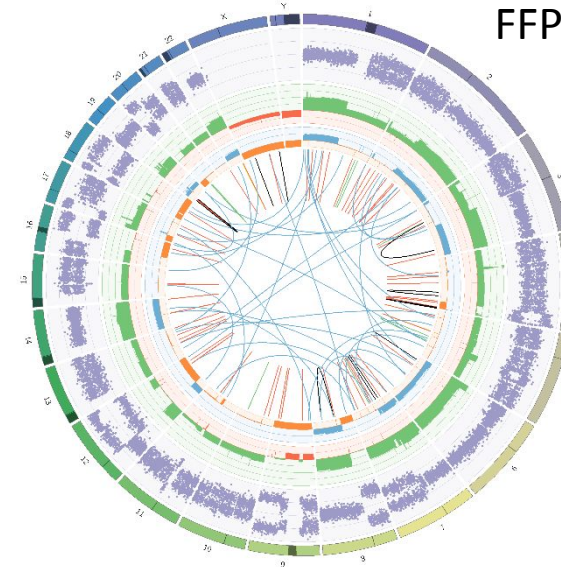
Lung lesion, Pleomorphic spindle cell morphology.

Pre-WGTS diagnostic differentials:

Carcinoma, sarcoma, melanoma or mesothelioma



Final diagnosis: skin cancer (cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma)

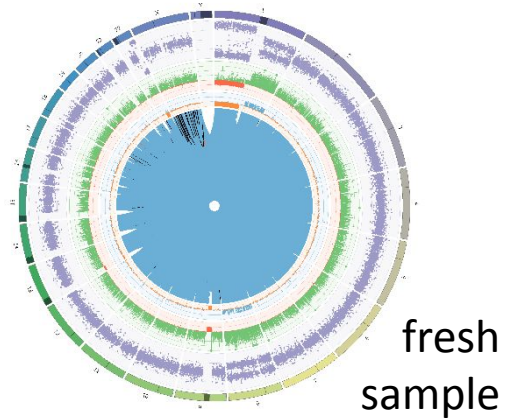
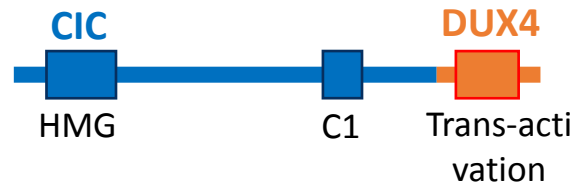


## WGTS findings:

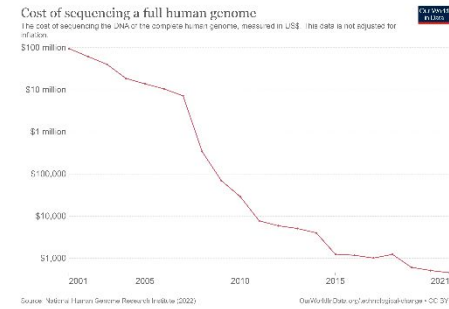
Tumour Mutational Burden:  
88.85 mutations / Mb (HIGH)

# Research

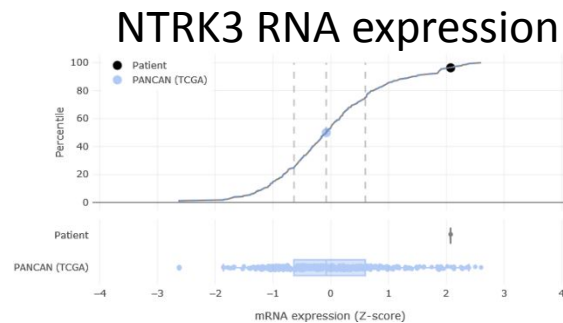
## Unusual biology:



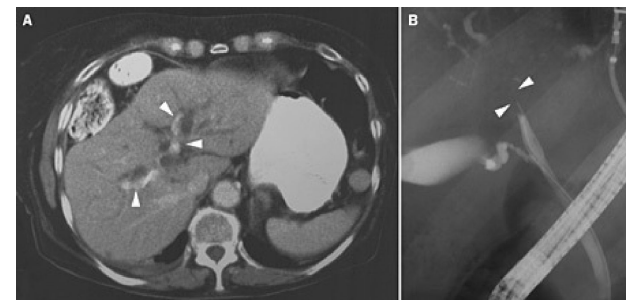
## Feasibility:



## The full clinical potential of WGTS:



## Areas of clinical need for ctDNA testing:



**Cholangiocarcinoma**  
Tissue biopsy:  
no tumour  
Liquid biopsy:  
Microsatellite instability

From: [www.hopkinsmedicine.org](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org)



# Acknowledgements

## TAGC Genomics Platform:

***Sean Grimmond***

Michael Christie

Michael Lee

Neeha Rajan

## **Curation Team:**

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Shannon Nicolson

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Wei Wen Lim

Hooman Riahi

## TAGC Bioinformatics Platform:

***Oliver Hofmann***

Alexis Lucattini

Andrew Patterson

Florian Reisinger

Helen Mitchell

Peter Diakumis

Roman Valls

Sehrish Kanwal

Stephen Watts

Victor San Kho Lin

William Putra Intan

## Mesogenome research program

Tom John

## VCCC Precision Oncology

Stephen Luen

Jayesh Desai

Variant meeting faculty

## Peter Mac Pathology:

***Stephen Fox***

Owen Prall

Catherine Mitchell

***Andrew Fellowes***

***Huiling Xu***

Christopher McEvoy

Rajini Sreenivasan

Shiva Balachander

Georgie Ryland

Alison Trainer

## RMH

Bryony Thompson

## Stafford Fox Rare Cancer Research

Program:

***Clare Scott***

Briony Milesi

Holly Barker

Ratana Lim

Damien Kee

Olga Kondrashova

Tony Papenfuss

## SUPER NEXT

***Richard Tothill***

***Linda Mileshkin***

SUPER-NEXT team



A PARTNERSHIP  
BETWEEN



**The  
Advanced  
Genomics  
Collaboration**

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF BETTER HEALTH



---

## **Variant interpretation training**



**Amy Nisselle**  
Genomics Workforce Lead  
Melbourne Genomics

# Variant interpretation education programs

## Scientists

### Awareness-raising webinars

Genomics for medical/data scientists, careers in genomics

## Scientists working in genetics

### Self-directed online courses

Theory + practicals + cases

## Variant curators

### Introductory course

#### In-person workshops

Review online modules  
Practice with tools  
Review simple cases with experts

### Advanced course

#### In-person workshops

Work through  
complex cases  
with experts



<https://melbournegenomics.org.au/genomics-education>  
[education@melbournegenomics.org.au](mailto:education@melbournegenomics.org.au)




# Melbourne Genomics learning management system

Melbourne Genomics Health Alliance

Home My Bookings Learning Plans Record of Learning Required Learning Reports Find Learning Calendar

Amy Nisselle



**MY COURSES**

- Rapid Genomics in the NICU / PICU
- Variant Curation (Part 2): Collection and Annotation of Evidence
- Variant Curation (Part 1): Variant Filtering and Prioritisation
- Fundamental Principles of Variant Interpretation and Clinical Bioinformatics
- Genomics Foundation for Clinicians
- Genomics in the Clinic 2022
- Clinical variant curation for medical scientists
- Introduction to Clinical Genomics
- Genomics for Oncologists
- Clinical Genomics for Kidney Disease
- All courses ...

**FRONT PAGE**

- Site blogs
- Site badges
- Tags
- Calendar
- Site announcements

**RESOURCES**

**Glossary**

A-Z

**Genomics Foundation for Clinicians**









**Welcome to our online genomics learning portal.**

This learning portal, hosted by the Melbourne Genomics Health Alliance, provides online resources for clinicians, scientists and other health professionals learning about the role and application of genomics in health care.

The content is developed by Melbourne Genomics or our Alliance members and partners, including Australian Genomics.

**Please select your course or program below.**

**MY CURRENT COURSES AND PROGRAMS**

 <p><b>Clinical Genomics for Kidney Disease</b></p> <p>33%</p> <p>Course</p>	 <p><b>Clinical variant curation for medical ...</b></p> <p>No criteria</p> <p>Course</p>	 <p><b>Clinical Variant Interpretation for ...</b></p> <p>0%</p> <p>Program</p>
 <p><b>Genomics for Oncologists</b></p> <p>No criteria</p>	 <p><b>Genomics Foundation for Clinicians</b></p> <p>0%</p>	 <p><b>Introduction to Clinical Genomics</b></p> <p>0%</p>
 <p><b>Introduction to Clinical Variant ...</b></p> <p>0%</p> <p>Program</p>	 <p><b>Rapid Genomics in the NICU / PICU</b></p> <p>66%</p> <p>Course</p>	



## Clinical Variant Interpretation for Medical Scientists (self-directed)

You are required to complete this program under the following criteria:

- Member of audience 'Clinical Variant Interpretation for Medical Scientists (Self-directed 2022)'.

Date assigned: 08 August 2022

Due date: No due date set

Progress:

0%



This self-directed online program provides an understanding of the principles and processes of variant interpretation pertinent to medical scientists specialising in genomic testing for rare germline disorders. To help us improve our education program, please complete this **SHORT SURVEY** before you begin.

### What will I learn?

- The processes and limitations of germline variant interpretation
- How a clinical context is integrated into the variant interpretation process
- How to collect evidence to curate variants
- How to use evidence to classify variants
- How variant interpretation is integral to the generation of genomic test reports

### How will I learn?

The program includes:

- **Theory modules** with learning content, knowledge checks and quizzes
- **Practical modules** with examples of software and tools, plus exercises to work through to consolidate understanding
- **Clinical case modules** with solutions, allowing you to put what you learn into practice.
- **Learning outcomes and quizzes** throughout for you to reflect and test your understanding as you go. The results can be included on a certificate of completion if needed to claim continuing professional development points.

## Variant Interpretation Short Courses

All courses in this set must be completed (unless this is an optional set).

### Course name

### Actions



Fundamental Principles of Variant Interpretation and Clinical Bioinformatics

Launch course



Variant Curation (Part 1): Variant Filtering and Prioritisation

Launch course



Variant Curation (Part 2): Collection and Annotation of Evidence

Launch course



Variant Classification and Reporting

Launch course





# Theory, pracs, exercises

## Module 1: Genetics Theory for Clinical Variant Interpretation [v1.0]

33% COMPLETE

- Learning Outcomes
- Getting started
- The Human Genome
- Gene Structure and Expression
- Variation in the human genome
- Single nucleotide and small variants
- Application of genetics to the interpretation of variants
- Inheritance
- Quiz and Self-Reflection

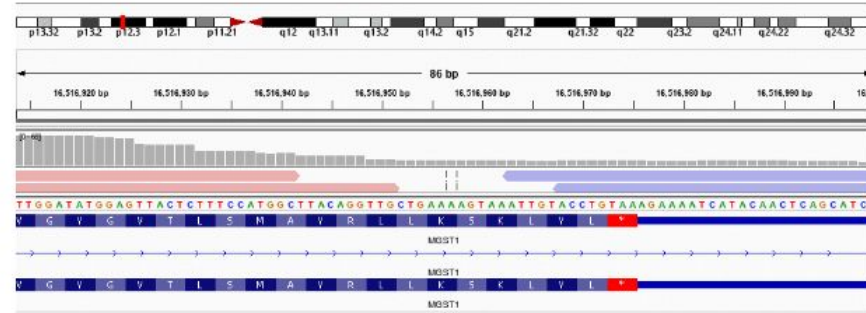
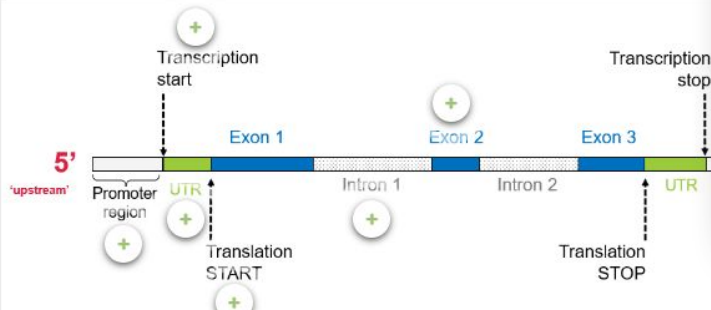
Lesson 4 of 9

## Gene Structure and Expression

### Gene structure

The need to regulate gene expression is reflected in the structure of genes. Genes contain coding regions (also referred to as 'structural' regions) that encode polypeptides, as well as regulatory areas which control gene expression.

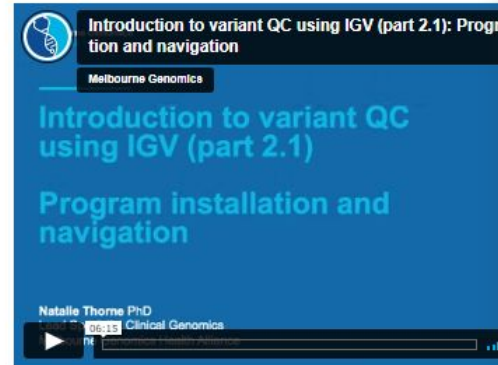
**A gene sequence can be on either strand of the DNA; the sequence is always written in the 5' to 3' direction. This will become very important when trying to interpret variants that are on either the forward or reverse strand.**



In the following 3 videos we take a deeper look at the various panels and functions of IGV that are used to explore genomic datasets and quality check variants.

You will learn how to:

- install IGV
- navigate around the program
- inspect the mRNA transcript(s) of a gene of interest
- distinguish true variants from artefacts



Lesson 9 of 24

## Exercises

### Amino acid physicochemical properties and conservation

Compare the physicochemical properties of the amino acids in each of the substitutions below. How do they differ?

Next, inspect the conservation of the two amino acid positions. Using the 'UCSC' button in Genomizer, link out to UCSC Genome Browser. The display should automatically be within a 21 bp window centred on the amino acid of interest. Select all species using the 'conservation' button, and then zoom out using the 3X and/or 1.5X button until you can see ~70-150bp. Make sure you check for homology in the region before you assess the level of conservation.

When you are ready to check your answer, click on the accordions below.

Genomizer links:

[NM\\_005249.4\(FOXG1\):c.543G>T, p.\(Lys181Asn\)](#)

[NM\\_000249.3\(MLH1\):c.632C>A, p.Ser211Tyr](#)

# Summaries, knowledge checks, quizzes

Lesson 8 of 24

## Summary

### Take-home points

In this section we looked at three pieces of evidence that variant curators use to address the effect of missense variants on protein function:

#### 1) Comparison of the physiochemical properties of the amino acid pair of interest

- amino acids vary in many ways, including their hydrophobicity, polarity, charge, and size
- generally, the greater the difference in the above physiochemical properties between an amino acid pair, the more likely the substitution is to impact protein function

#### 2) Grantham distance

- the Grantham distance/score reflects the effect of substitutions between amino acids based on three measures - polarity, size, and side-chain composition
- the greater the score, the greater the aggregate change in the three measures
- the Grantham distance is classified as minor (0-65), moderate (65-100), or major (>100)

#### 3) Conservation of the amino acid position of interest over evolutionary time

- variants at highly conserved positions are more likely to be pathogenic. Conversely, variants at poorly conserved positions are less likely to be pathogenic
- *in silico* predictions of conservation can be unreliable owing to technical limitations including poor alignments (incorporation of non-homologous sequences) and unstable methods, where subtle changes to specific parameters used changes the outcome

### Knowledge check

Which of the below statements is false?

- Most variants that alter the amino acid sequence are missense changes
- The Grantham distance/score reflects the effect of substitutions between amino acids based on three measures - charge, size and phobicity
- The Grantham scores are classified as minor (0-65), moderate (60-100), or major (>100)
- Many *in silico* predictions of conservation are automatic and do not provide any sampling and sequence context

SUBMIT

Q2 of 3: Match the following terms and descriptions: (click and drag right to left)

Provenance report

Less than 20 reads

Gap file

Information on the bioinformatics pipeline used to process the raw sequence data

QC report

Read coverage summaries at the whole sample and individual gene level

Poor coverage

Information on the size and location of gaps in the sequencing

SUBMIT





# Active learning throughout

Module 9:  
Transcript Selection and Variant Annotation Checking [v2.0]

50% COMPLETE

- Learning Outcomes
- Transcript selection
- Variant annotation checking
- Quiz and Self-Reflection

## Transcript selection

Recall that most genes are alternatively spliced, leading to the production of multiple mRNA transcripts. As such, you need to choose which transcript is relevant to the patient's phenotype. That is, you need to select the **condition-relevant transcript**. The process of transcript selection is introduced in the two videos below.

It's important to note that mRNA transcript reference sequences are periodically reviewed and updated. In turn, the relevant transcript for a condition will change occasionally. As such, every time you curate a variant the condition-relevant transcript must be checked, even if it's a condition you have work on before.

Following on from previous modules, we will continue with the CREBBP case. To work along with the below video you will need to open the bam files for the CREBBP V2 and V5 variant in IGV (links below). Remember, you'll need to have IGV open for the links to work.

**CREBBP variant bam files:**

[CREBBP V5.g.3808917G>A](#)

[CREBBP V2.g.3900336 C>T](#)

Introduction Transcript selection and Var annotation check\_2020\_V9\_p1

Melbourne Genomics

### Introduction to Transcript Selection and Variant Annotation Checking

Part 1: Checking for the presence of a variant in the coding region of transcripts

Natalie Thorne PhD  
Lead Specialist Clinical Genomics

05:44

Follow along with the next video to use [ClinVar](#) to select the CREBBP transcript relevant to Rubinstein-Taybi syndrome.

**Question:** There is a clear discrepancy between the ClinVar entries for CREBBP shown in the following video and what you will see yourself as you follow along. Can you see what it is? When you are ready to check your answer, click on the accordion below this video.

Introduction Transcript selection and Var annotation check\_2020\_V9\_p2

Melbourne Genomics

### Introduction to Transcript Selection and Variant Annotation Checking

Part 2: Transcript selection using ClinVar

Natalie Thorne PhD  
Lead Specialist Clinical Genomics

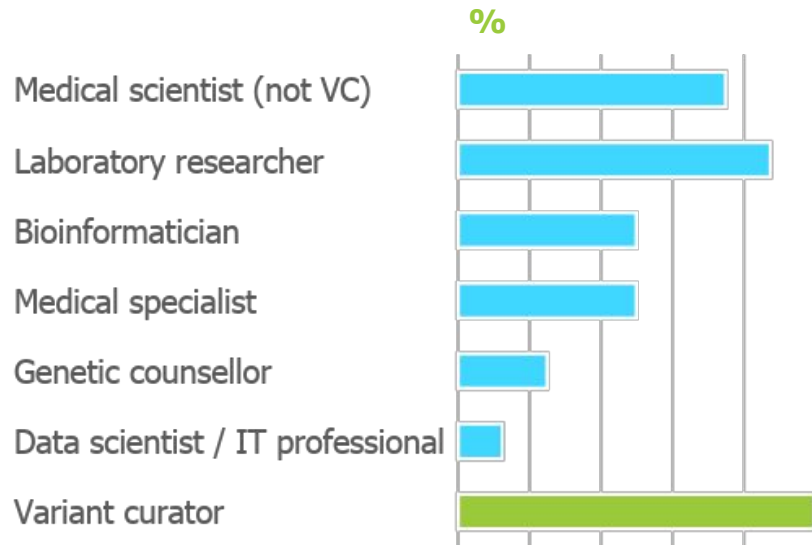
04:53

CREBBP ClinVar data discrepancy +

Lesson 3 - Variant annotation checking



# Who typically completes our programs



I know the term but that's about it! 64%

I've dabbled but don't know much

I've been doing it a while but would like a refresher

I'm comfortable doing it under supervision

I'm comfortable doing it on my own

I supervise others to do it

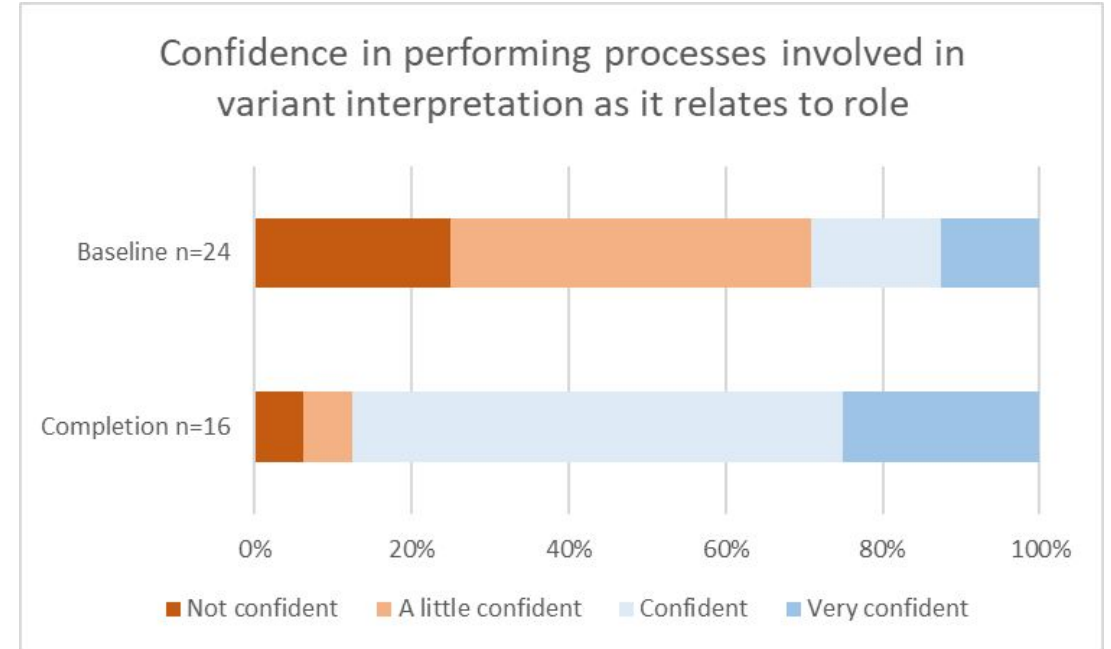
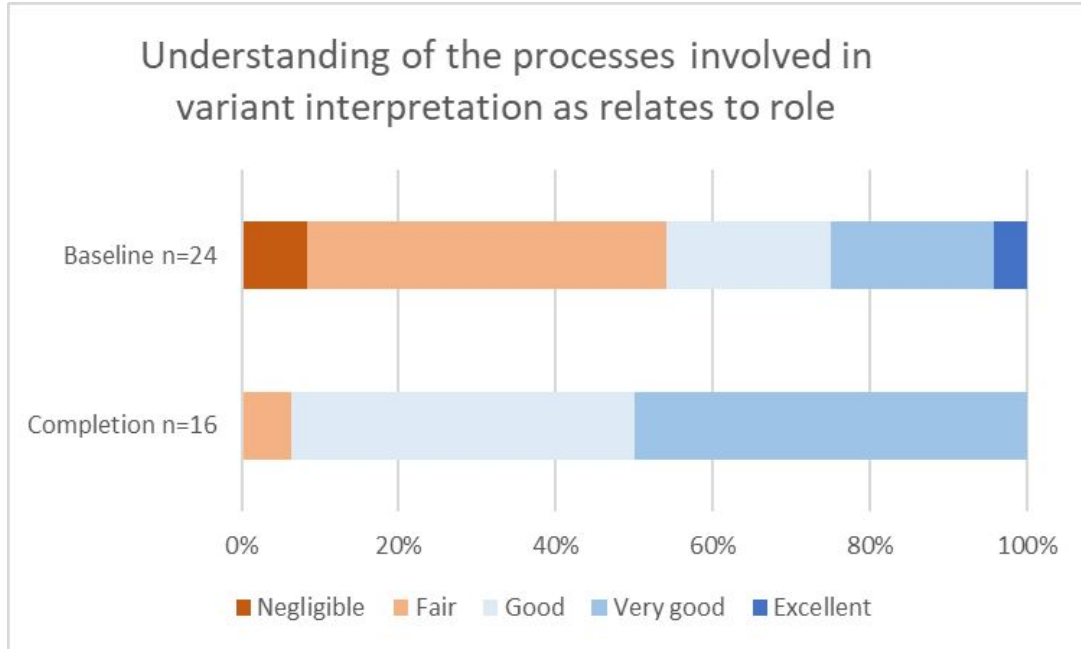
## Why

Foundations

Upskill in variant interpretation

Possibly move into the role

# Improves understanding & confidence



*Good structure and **comprehensive** modules. Also enjoyed having **case studies** to apply the knowledge.*

*PhD student (somatic)*

*In-depth explanations and exercises for learning how to **navigate all the databases** used for variant interpretation.*

*Medical scientist (not VC)*



# In-person workshops

with experts + multidisciplinary peer groups  
(in Melbourne)

## Introductory

- Review online modules
- Work through pracs + simple case

## Advanced

- Learn advanced topics
- Work through complex cases

[www.melbournegenomics.org.au/genomics-education](http://www.melbournegenomics.org.au/genomics-education)





# Acknowledgements

## VGCS

Dean Phelan  
Ivan Macciocca  
Lyndon Gallacher  
Miriam Fanjul Fernandez  
Naomi Baker  
Sebastian Lunke  
Tiong Tan  
Zornitza Stark

## RMH

Bryony Thompson  
Paul James

## PMCC

Ain Roesley  
Andrew Fellowes  
Ella Thompson  
Victoria Bashay

## Melbourne Genomics

Amy Nisselle  
Clara Gaff  
Donna Halton  
Douglas Liddicoat  
Melissa Martyn  
Nat Thorne





**Melbourne Genomics**  
Health Alliance

Melbourne Genomics education

[www.melbournegenomics.org.au/genomics-education](http://www.melbournegenomics.org.au/genomics-education)

University of Melbourne Centre for Cancer Research

<https://mdhs.unimelb.edu.au/centre-for-cancer-research>

The Advanced Genomics Collaboration

<https://www.tagcaustralia.com/>

Victorian Clinical Genetics Services

[www.vcgs.org.au/tests/genomics](http://www.vcgs.org.au/tests/genomics)



Alliance members



Supported by



# Slide deck identification

## Intended Audience

Name	Title
Australian BioCommons audience	

## Purpose

**Introduce Australian BioCommons audience to variant interpretation/ clinical genomics applications of big data concepts and processes**

## Contributing Authors

Name	Date
Amy Nisselle, MGx	Nov 2022
Naomi Baker, VCGS	Nov 2022
Joep Vissers, UoM	Nov 2022

## Reviewers

Name	Date

