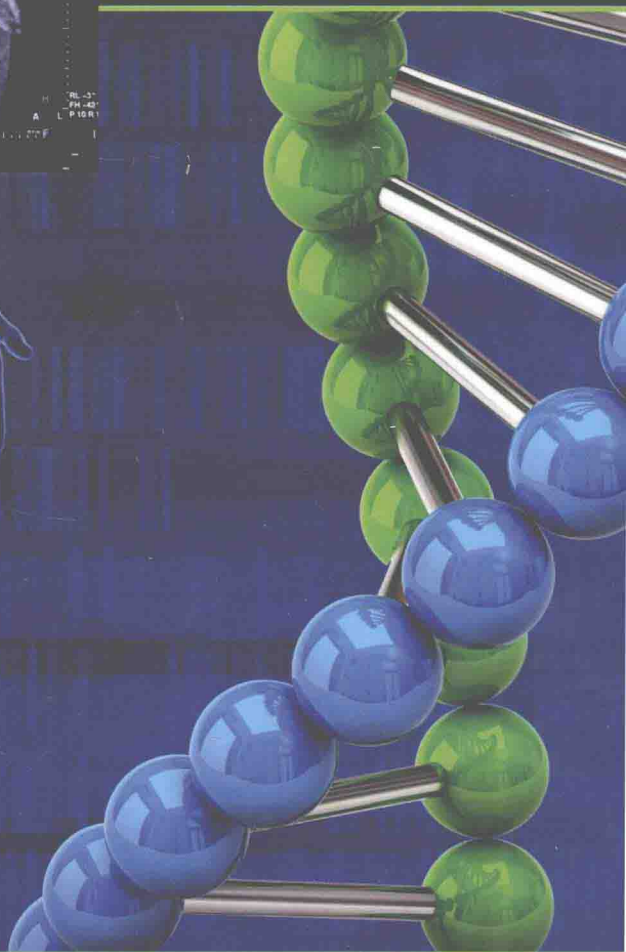
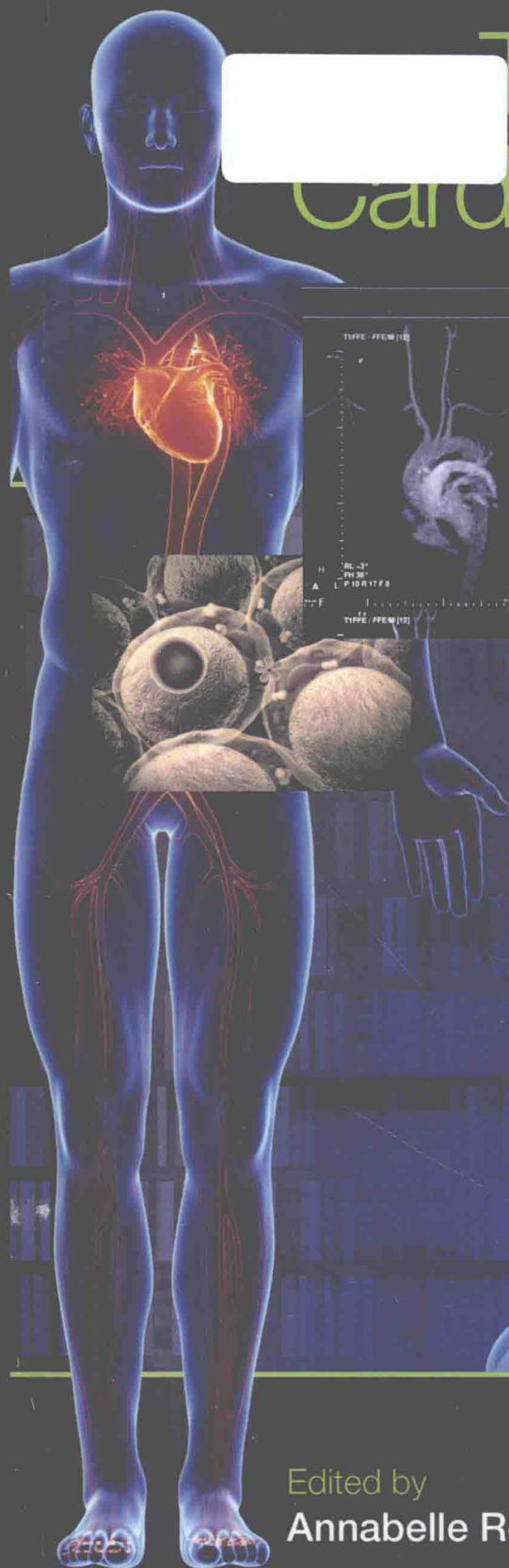


# Translational Cardiometabolic Genomic Medicine



Edited by  
**Annabelle Rodriguez-Oquendo**



# TRANSLATIONAL CARDIOMETABOLIC GENOMIC MEDICINE

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*Edited by*

ANNABELLE RODRIGUEZ-OQUENDO



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# Contents

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## Contributors

xi

### 1. Metabolomics and Cardiovascular Medicine

WAQAS QURESHI, DAVID HERRINGTON

1. Introduction	1
2. Metabolomic Methods	3
3. Metabolomic Data Analysis	13
4. Metabolomic Informatics Resources	14
5. Clinical and Population-Based Studies of Metabolomics and Cardiometabolic Conditions	16
6. Metabolomics and Genome-Wide Association Studies	22
7. Conclusions	29
References	30

### 2. Modern Transcriptomics and Small RNA Diversity

KASEY C. VICKERS

1. Introduction	39
2. Small Non-Coding RNAs	41
References	50

### 3. A Systems-Level Understanding of Cardiovascular Disease through Networks

CHARLES R. FARBER, LARRY D. MESNER

1. Introduction	59
2. What Is a Network?	61
3. Network Organizing Principles	61
4. Types of Networks	65
5. Integrating Genetics and Networks	71
6. Applications of Network-Based Systems Genetics Studies	73
7. Conclusions and Future Prospects	76
List of Abbreviations	77
References	78

#### 4. Using Information about DNA Structure and Dynamics from Experiment and Simulation to Give Insight into Genome-Wide Association Studies

RODRIGO GALINDO-MURILLO, THOMAS E. CHEATHAM III

1. Introduction	83
2. The Structure and Characterization of DNA	86
3. DNA and Its Environment	91
4. Final Remarks	94
References	95

#### 5. Genomic Medicine and Lipid Metabolism: LDL Targets and Stem Cell Research Approaches

THEODORE P. RASMUSSEN

1. LDL Functions of the Hepatocyte	99
2. Human Single-Gene Genetic Disorders of LDL Metabolism	103
3. Recent Human Genomic Findings Related to LDL Dysfunction	105
4. Modeling Cholesterol Homeostasis Using In vitro Stem Cell Approaches	105
5. Using hiPSCs for Genetic Disease Modeling and Basic Personalized Medicine Research	109
6. Using Stem Cell-Derived Hepatocytes to Study Pharmacology	114
7. Future Directions	115
References	116

#### 6. Discovery of High-Density Lipoprotein Gene Targets from Classical Genetics to Genome-Wide Association Studies

LITA A. FREEMAN, ALAN T. REMALEY

1. Introduction	119
2. HDL-Modifying Genes Identified from Classic Genetic Disorders	123
3. HDL-Modifying Genes Identified from GWAS	129
4. Genes Previously Associated with Dyslipidemia and Lipid Metabolism	136
5. Genes Previously Associated with Diabetes and Obesity	145
6. Lipid Trafficking-Related Genes	146
7. Chromatin-Modifying Genes, Transcription Factors and RNA Processing Related Genes	147
8. Signal Transduction-Related Genes	148
9. Other GWAS-Identified HDL-Associated Genes	149
10. HDL-Modifying Genes Associated with CAD	149
11. Summary	150
Acknowledgment	152
References	152

## 7. The Genetics of Obesity

RODRIGO ALONSO, MAGDALENA FARÍAS, VERONICA ALVAREZ, ADA CUEVAS

1. Introduction	161
2. Leptin and Hypothalamic Control of Appetite and Energy Regulation	163
3. Monogenic Obesity	164
4. Common Obesity	165
5. The Missing Heritability	169
6. Gene—Environment Interaction Studies	170
7. Genetic Testing in Obesity	172
8. Conclusions	172
References	173

## 8. The Epidemiology and Genetics of Vascular Dementia: Current Knowledge and Next Steps

ADAM NAJ

1. Definition and Features of Vascular Dementia	179
2. Epidemiology of VaD	180
3. Genetics of VaD	183
4. Future of Genetic Studies	196
5. Summary	198
Abbreviations	198
References	198

## 9. Genomic Medicine and Ethnic Differences in Cardiovascular Disease Risk

ALEXIS C. FRAZIER-WOOD, STEPHEN S. RICH

1. Introduction	209
2. Methodological Issues with Cross-Cultural Research	210
3. The Impact of Ethnicity on the Epidemiology of Cardiovascular Disease	211
4. Ethnic Differences in CVD Risk Factors	212
5. Ethnic Differences in Biomarkers of CVD	215
6. The Role of the Genome	219
7. Impact of Personalized Genomics for CVD	227
8. Synthesis	228
References	229

## 10. Genomics-Guided Immunotherapy of Human Epithelial Ovarian Cancer

SAHAR AL SEESI, FEI DUAN, ION I. MANDOIU, PRAMOD K. SRIVASTAVA, ANGELA KUECK

1. Epithelial Ovarian Cancer from a Clinical Perspective: Current Treatments and Challenges	237
2. Immune Response to Ovarian Cancer	239

3. Next-Generation Sequencing and Its Application to Cancer Genomics	240
4. Analysis of Ovarian Cancer Samples in the TCGA Database	244
5. Implications for Genomics-Driven Immunotherapy of Human Ovarian Cancer	246
References	247

## 11. Overview of the Intersection of Genomics of Cholesterol Metabolism and Cardiometabolic Disease with Reproductive Health, Especially in Women

ANTHONY M. DEANGELIS, MEAGHAN ROY-O'REILLY,  
ANNABELLE RODRIGUEZ-OQUENDO

1. Introduction	251
2. Cholesterol and Infertility	252
3. Cholesterol Metabolism	253
4. Genetic Alterations Affecting Cholesterol Uptake and Their Influence on Human Fertility	256
5. Genetic Alterations Affecting Cholesterol Mobilization and Their Influence on Human Fertility	260
6. Genetic Alterations Affecting De Novo Cholesterol Synthesis and Their Influence on Human Fertility and Embryonic Viability	261
7. The Genomics of Human Fertility Disorders	266
8. Polycystic Ovary Syndrome	267
9. Premature Ovarian Failure	269
10. Endometriosis	270
11. Conclusions	272
References	272

## 12. Overview of Intersection of Genomics of Cardiometabolic Disease and Other Disease States, Such as Eye Health (Macular Degeneration)

GARETH J. MCKAY

1. Introduction	283
2. Characteristic AMD Lesions	285
3. The Genetics of AMD	286
4. Age, Oxidative Stress, and Reverse Cholesterol Transport	287
5. Apolipoprotein E	289
6. LIPC and CETP Genes	291
7. Nutritional Influences	291
8. Inflammation and the Complement Pathway	293
9. Angiogenesis	296
10. Conclusion	297
References	298

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## 13. Translating Genomic Research to the Marketplace

STEVEN MYINT

1. Introduction	307
2. The Cardiovascular Genomics Marketplace	307
3. Initial Considerations in Commercializing Research	311
4. Commercialization Model	312
5. Intellectual Property	313
6. Product Development: Developing a Biomarker or Companion Diagnostic	315
7. Regulatory Considerations	317
8. Marketing and Sales Development	320
9. Concluding Discussion	320
References	321

<b>Index</b>	<b>323</b>
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# Metabolomics and Cardiovascular Medicine

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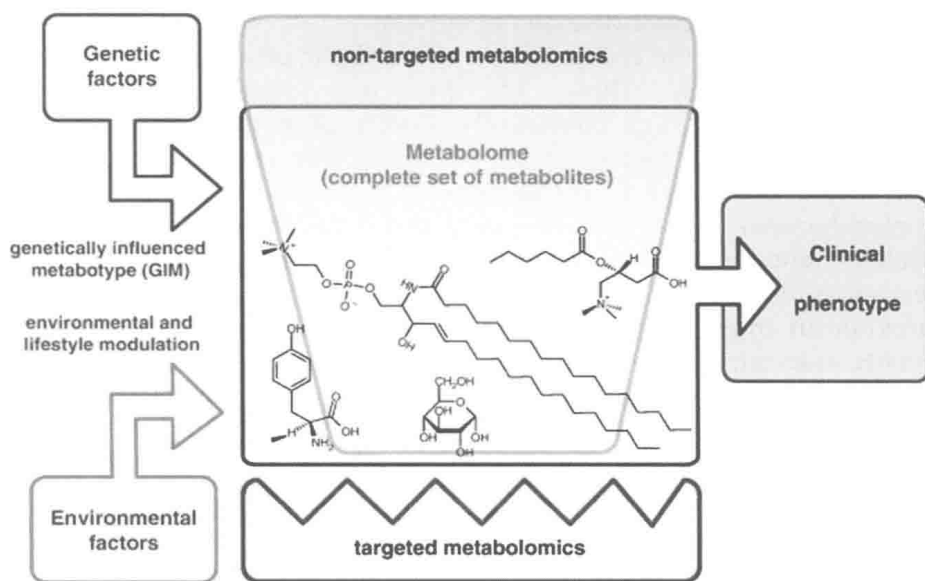
## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cardiovascular disease is a complex, multifactorial disease that currently affects 1.5 billion people worldwide [1]. Many causative pathways through which risk factors act are still unclear. Metabolomics has recently emerged as a promising field that may help elucidate intricate details of the relationships between changes in human biology and complex cardiovascular disease phenotypes.

Metabolites are the end-products of metabolic processes occurring in cellular organelles. These are molecules smaller than 1 kDa ( $1 \text{ Da} = 1.66 \times 10^{-27} \text{ kg}$ ). Historically, studies of metabolism have typically focused on a narrow range of metabolites or specific metabolic pathways. In contrast, metabolomics generally involves a more comprehensive assessment of many metabolites and pathways. The Metabolomics Society defines metabolomics as “comprehensive characterization of the small molecule metabolites in biological systems. It can provide an overview of the metabolic status and global biochemical events associated with a cellular or biological system” [2]. Similarly, Nicholson [3] defined metabolomics as a “quantitative measurement of the dynamic multi-parametric metabolic response of living systems to pathophysiologic stimuli or genetic modification...” [3]. The term “metabolome” was first coined by Oliver et al. [4] and Tweeddale et al. [5] in 1998. Fiehn et al. used the term “metabolomics” for the first time in 2001 [6]. Although the term was initially used in the literature pertaining to plants and agricultural research, with advancement in analytical tools and sample extraction methods, human and animal medical fields have also embraced these terms and approaches.

A major advantage of studying the metabolome is that metabolites are generally considered to be molecular phenotypes much closer to clinical traits of interest—reflecting the integrated effects of both upstream molecular signals (e.g., genome, epigenome, transcriptome, and proteome) and environmental factors (e.g., diet, psychological stressors, microbiome, and environmental exposures—collectively referred to as the exposome). This concept was built on central dogma from the 1950s that there is a linear and unidirectional flow of information from genome to phenome. More recently, this concept has evolved into a complex network-based framework to account for multiple interconnected factors at all levels that determine a clinical phenotype. Nevertheless, the metabolome remains at the intersection of many factors that ultimately reflect or determine the health of an individual (Figure 1). Thus, it is essential to understand both the metabolome and its interactions with other -omics to apply metabolomics to practice.

The application of this concept in clinical and population research is still relatively new. However, already many important insights about the relationship between the metabolome and clinical cardiovascular disease have emerged, and several studies have identified key genome–metabolome associations that better characterize the molecular signals contributing to pathogenesis of atherosclerosis, hypertension, and other cardiovascular conditions. In this chapter, we provide an overview



Current Opinion in Biotechnology

FIGURE 1 System biology network. Adapted from Adamski et al. *Curr Opin Biotechnol* 2013; 24:39–47.

of metabolomics trends and techniques, and review current understanding of the relationships among the metabolome, the genome, and the cardiovascular disease.

## 2. METABOLOMIC METHODS

A metabolomic study is composed of several discrete steps including bio-sampling, separation, metabolite detection, and data analysis (Figure 2). Each step is critically important to ensure valid and interpretable results.

### 2.1 Bio-specimen Selection and Handling

Particular attention should be given to the type of bio-sample and sampling techniques, as these determine the types of metabolites that need to be studied (Table 1). While collecting bio-samples, care must be taken to avoid degradation and contamination of collected sample. Some necessary considerations for sampling include timing (e.g., 24-h sampling versus collection after a 12- to 14-h fasting period), sudden dietary changes (potentially interfere with the metabolome for over a week), bacterial or fungal contamination (especially for urine samples), medication intake (metabolites of medications may change the metabolome), diurnal variation in the hormones (anabolic and catabolic hormones vary during the day and may alter the metabolome), randomization, and transport and storage conditions of samples.

Serum is generally the preferred blood bio-specimen for metabolomic studies. This is because plasma retains fibrinogen and other coagulation cascade proteolytic enzymes that can continue to be active *ex vivo* and alter the metabolome or interfere with metabolite detection. Furthermore, ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid is typically used as the anticoagulant in plasma samples and can denature chromatograms and proteins in a way that may influence results. Serum has fewer potentially interfering coagulation cascade enzymes and proteins. However, even in serum there remain active enzymes that can continue to modify the metabolome *ex vivo*. To counteract these enzymatic processes, serum can be collected on ice. It is recommended to use samples stored at  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  within 7 days and samples stored at  $-80^{\circ}\text{C}$  within 1 month. However, in one report, changes in the metabolome were negligible after storage for 2.5 years [7]. In the case of repeated usage, fewer than three freeze-thaw cycles is advisable [7].

Until now, urine has been the most common sample for human metabolomics studies. It has many advantages, such as a noninvasive method of collection, lack of special preparation for collection, almost no

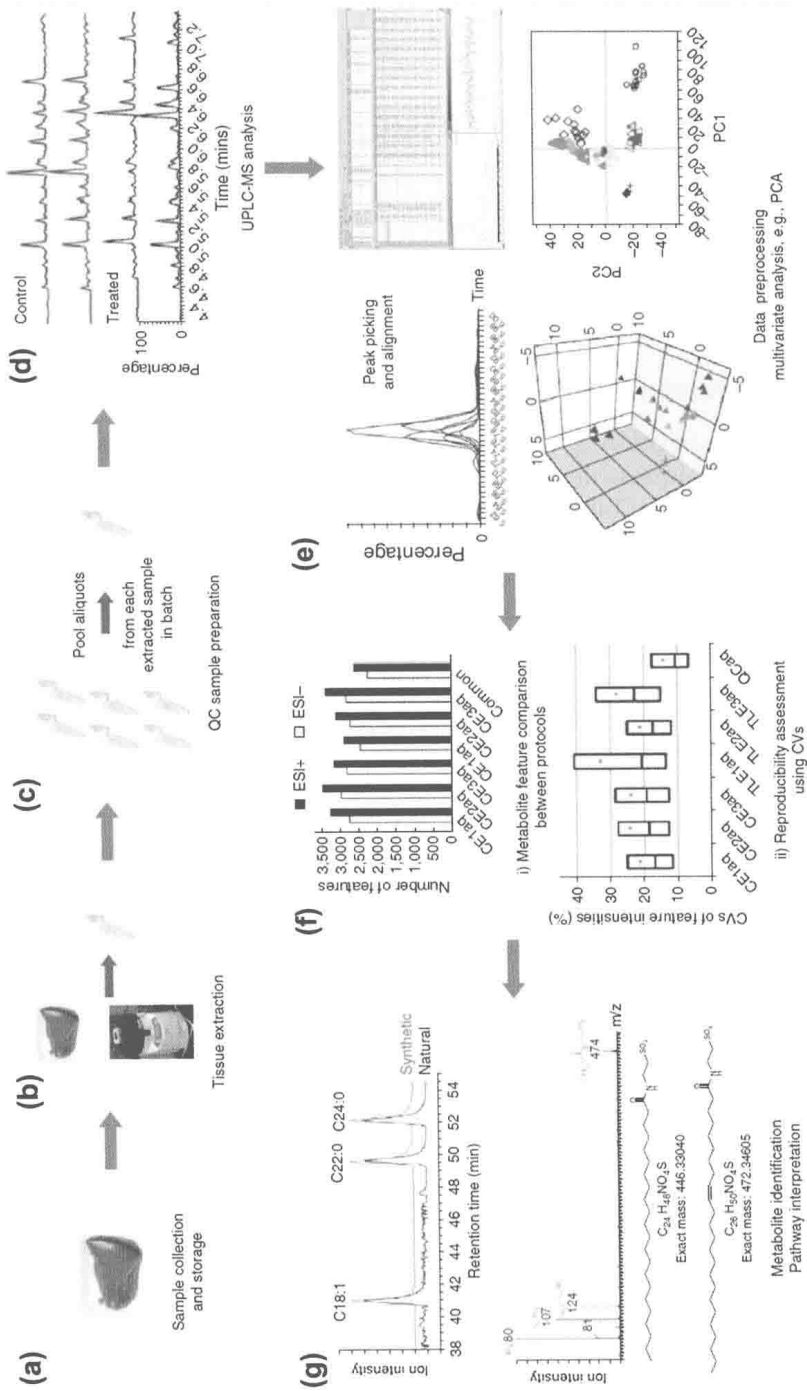


FIGURE 2 Schematic view of steps of a metabolomic study. Adapted from Want et al. *Nature Protoc* 2013; 8:17–32.