

Large-scale multi-omics analyses in Hispanic/Latino populations identify genes for cardiometabolic traits

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Here, we present a multi-omics study of type 2 diabetes and quantitative blood lipid and lipoprotein traits conducted to date in Hispanic/Latino populations ($n_{\max} = 63,184$). We conduct a meta-analysis of 16 type 2 diabetes and 19 lipid trait GWAS, identifying 20 genome-wide significant loci for type 2 diabetes, including one novel locus and novel signals at two known loci, based on fine-mapping. We also identify sixty-one genome-wide significant loci across the lipid/lipoprotein traits, including nine novel loci, and novel signals at 19 known loci through fine-mapping. Next, we analyze genetically regulated expression, perform Mendelian randomization, and analyze association with transcriptomic and proteomic measure using multi-omics data from a Hispanic/Latino population. Using this approach, we identify genes linked to type 2 diabetes and lipid/lipoprotein traits, including *TMEM205* and *NEDD9* for HDL cholesterol, *TREH* for triglycerides, and *ANXA4* for type 2 diabetes.

Although genome-wide association studies (GWAS) have revolutionized our understanding of the genetic underpinnings of cardiometabolic disease, systemic underrepresentation of Hispanic and Latino individuals has limited the potential for improving public health and precision medicine in a population with significant cardiometabolic health disparities. Many cardiometabolic diseases are more prevalent in Hispanic/Latino populations compared to Non-Hispanic White populations; for example, recent prevalence estimates of type 2 diabetes (T2D) and low high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-C) in Hispanic/Latino populations are 15.5% and 21.9%, respectively, compared to 13.6% and 16.6% in Non-Hispanic White populations^{1,2}. These traits are of major clinical and public health importance. Elevated blood glucose and abnormal lipid levels comprise three components of the metabolic syndrome, which has a prevalence of 36.3% in US Hispanics and is known to underlie high rates of cardiometabolic diseases, including cardiovascular, liver and kidney diseases³. With increased recognition of the importance of racially, ethnically, and ancestrally diverse participants in genetic studies⁴, efforts have been made to expand diversity in GWAS of complex traits^{5,6}. However, Hispanic/Latino sample sizes remain limited. For example, recent genome-wide meta-analyses of lipid and lipoprotein (abbreviated as lipid throughout) concentrations, key biomarkers for development of

cardiometabolic disease, conducted in European-ancestry populations, comprise data from ~1.6 M participants, while the largest study performed to date in Hispanics/Latinos comprised about 48,000^{7,8}. Further, no GWAS of cardiometabolic traits in Hispanics/Latinos systematically functionally annotated gene-based findings in differential abundance analyses of transcriptomic and proteomic data directly measured in a Hispanic population.

Furthermore, despite these large studies in trans- and European-ancestry samples, there remains a gap between estimated heritability (h^2) and the variance explained by known variants. For T2D, a recent SNP-based h^2 explains only 19% of T2D risk⁹, whereas family-based h^2 estimates range from 20 to 80%^{10,11}. For lipid phenotypes, family-based h^2 estimates are as high as 83%^{7,12–16}; however, even in studies of over 180,000 individuals, known variants only explain 30–33% of genetic variance^{17,18}. Previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of studying diverse populations, both for further discovery and for deeper interrogation of established loci^{5,6,19,20}. Extending genetic research of currently underrepresented populations is an opportunity to simultaneously work to reduce a major health disparity and to improve our understanding of genetic variation underlying these traits.

Hispanic/Latino individuals represent a complex group of populations with diverse cultural traditions, foodways, religions, lifestyles,

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languages, cultural norms, histories, and social environments, as well as multiple sources of genetic ancestry resulting in widely varying patterns of admixture. Some genetic loci contributing to cardiometabolic traits may be more identifiable under certain environmental conditions and allele frequency differences between ancestries can affect the power to detect associations. As a result, while much of the genetic architecture of cardiometabolic disease risk is shared across populations and environmental contexts^{6,21}, Hispanic/Latino populations likely harbor genetic effects at loci only detectable in population-specific analysis as well as population-specific variants at previously known loci²².

To address this significant research gap, we performed GWAS meta-analyses in Hispanic/Latino populations for T2D and quantitative lipid traits, including high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-C), low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C), total cholesterol (TC), and triglycerides (TG). We then performed a summary statistic-based transcriptome-wide association analysis, including our islet expression prediction models using data from the InsPIRE (Integrated Network for Systematic analysis of Pancreatic Islet RNA Expression) consortium²³, and systematically followed up identified genes in differential abundance analyses using directly measured blood transcriptomic and proteomic data from an independent Hispanic population. These downstream analyses highlight the importance of measuring omics in underrepresented populations for functional characterization of large-scale genomic analyses.

Results

Study demographics

Characteristics of the study participants can be found in Supplementary Data 1. Of the 19 participating studies, 15 contributed to both T2D and lipids analyses, three contributed to the lipids analyses only, and one contributed only to the T2D analyses. Our meta-analyses included more females than males (~63% female). T2D cases had a 1.7 kg/m² higher BMI and were 3.2 years older on average than controls.

Single variant T2D meta-analysis results

Twenty genome-wide significant loci were associated with T2D (Supplementary Data 3; Supplementary Fig 1a); six of the signals remained significant after adjusting for BMI (Supplementary Data 4). We identified one novel genome-wide significant T2D-associated locus, the intronic variant rs12344703 in *MOB3B* (odds ratio (OR)=1.07, 95% confidence interval (CI): (1.03, 1.11), $p=2.26 \times 10^{-8}$, effect allele frequency (EAF)=0.79; Supplementary Data 3). Fine-mapping at the *MOB3B* locus resulted in a 95% credible set of 10 additional variants (Supplementary Data 5). Fine-mapping analyses for all T2D single variant results indicated that two of our T2D single variant results are novel signals in known loci (Supplementary Data 5). SNP-based heritability in our T2D meta-analysis was 0.106 (SE: 0.011).

Replication of novel T2D single variant signals in DIAMANTE

We queried results from the DIAMANTE European, East Asian, and South Asian analyses to assess replication of the novel variants. We did not observe replication or a consistent direction of effect for the *MOB3B* variant. The signal at rs12344703 is primarily driven by effects observed in SIGMA1, however a later release of data from this project did not identify significant effects, suggesting this finding may be type 1 error²⁴.

S-PrediXcan results for T2D

We performed an S-PrediXcan analysis to identify associations between T2D and the heritable component of gene expression (GrEx) in all available tissues from GTEx and islets. Across all tissues, 65 genes were identified as having GrEx significantly associated with a phenotype (Supplementary Data 6). This included 19 genes that have been previously reported through single variant GWAS, 36 additional genes

in close proximity to (within 1Mb of) a previously reported GWAS variant, and 10 potentially novel genes that have neither been previously mapped to GWAS signals, nor are within 1Mb of previously reported variants (Supplementary Data 6).

Single variant lipids meta-analysis results

Across all lipid traits, we detected 52 known loci and nine novel loci associated with at least one lipid trait (Supplementary Data 7; Supplementary Figs 1b–e, 2c–k). One novel HDL-C-associated locus was identified with sentinel variant rs11653998 ($p=1.34 \times 10^{-9}$) intronic to *ERBB2* (Supplementary Data 7A). For LDL-C, two novel associations were detected, with sentinel variants rs75594955 ($p=3.41 \times 10^{-8}$) located in exon 10 of *TUB* ($p=3.41 \times 10^{-8}$), and rs186143467 ($p=1.82 \times 10^{-13}$) located in the intergenic region between *LOC387810* and *LOC101928847* (Supplementary Data 7B). One novel locus was identified for TC; the sentinel variant rs564036749 ($p=1.02 \times 10^{-8}$) is located in the intergenic region between *MBIP* and *SFTA3* (Supplementary Data 7C). Finally, six novel loci were identified for TG: rs143891608 ($p=4.42 \times 10^{-8}$), between *LINC01132* and *LOC101927851*; rs186560848 ($p=3.84 \times 10^{-10}$), between *LINC02106* and *LOC642366*; rs181676594 ($p=3.73 \times 10^{-10}$), between *GFOD1* and *SIRT5*; rs552736307 ($p=1.94 \times 10^{-8}$), between *TAB2* and *ZC3H12D*; rs8178824 intronic to *APOH*; and rs557199842 ($p=1.66 \times 10^{-15}$), between *ZNF536* and *LINC01791* (Supplementary Data 7D). Fine-mapping for our novel lipid signals identified 95% credible sets for each locus (Supplementary Data 5), and revealed novel signals at 12 known lipid loci (Supplementary Data 4). SNP-based heritability for HDL-C was estimated to be 0.101 (SE: 0.017), for LDL-C was estimated to be 0.068 (SE: 0.014), for TC was estimated to be 0.087 (SE: 0.017), and for TG was estimated to be 0.126 (SE: 0.038).

Replication of novel lipids single variant signals in MVP

We queried results from the MVP European- and African-ancestry subgroup analyses to assess for replication at the sentinel variants for our novel single variant lipid results (Supplementary Data 7). Results were only available for three of our novel results; one variant, rs11653998 in the *ERBB2* locus for HDL cholesterol, replicated ($p=1.97 \times 10^{-17}$ in MVP European-ancestry group, $p=1.03 \times 10^{-2}$ in MVP African ancestry).

S-PrediXcan results for lipids

As with T2D, we used S-PrediXcan to identify GrEx-trait associations for each of the lipid traits (Supplementary Data 8). For HDL-C, 193 genes were implicated in S-PrediXcan analyses (Supplementary Data 8A), including 91 genes previously reported through GWAS, 86 additional genes in close proximity to (within 1Mb of) a previously reported GWAS variant, and 16 potentially novel genes. One hundred sixty-eight genes were implicated through S-PrediXcan for LDL-C (Supplementary Data 8B), including 80 known GWAS genes, 67 unreported genes in known GWAS loci, and 21 potentially novel genes. For total cholesterol, 217 total genes were implicated in our S-PrediXcan analysis (Supplementary Data 8C), including 100 genes reported in GWAS, 103 genes near a GWAS variant, and 14 potentially novel genes. Finally, 220 genes were implicated for triglycerides, including 92 known GWAS loci, 99 genes in close proximity to GWAS variants, and 29 potentially novel genes (Supplementary Data 8D).

Functional annotations of study-wide significant genes

To prioritize genes for future functional studies, we annotated study-wide significant S-PrediXcan genes with tissue-specific MR results. We identified nominal evidence of causal effects on T2D for 27 genes, 89 for HDL-C, 65 for LDL-C, 99 for TC, and 97 for TG (Fig. 1; Supplementary Data 6, 8). We conducted MR for all tissues (up to 49) that a gene was study-wide significant for as denoted in the additional tissues column in Supplementary Data 6, 8.

To further prioritize results by directly measured differential abundance of transcript or protein, we tested study-wide significant S-PrediXcan genes for association of measured gene expression and protein level in blood with each trait in an independent Hispanic cohort to annotate our S-PrediXcan findings. All available study-wide significant S-PrediXcan genes were tested ($n_{\text{transcriptomics}} = 53; 127; 113; 152; 138$ and $n_{\text{proteomics}} = 9; 34; 31; 39; 37$ tests performed for T2D, HDL-C, LDL-C, TC, and TG respectively; the number of tests performed stratified by novelty are provided in data legends).

In the Discussion, we highlight genes identified by S-PrediXcan analyses with two or more additional supportive analyses (Mendelian randomization, differential transcriptomics, and differential proteomics analyses), including *TMEM205* and *NEDD9* for HDL-C, *TREH* for triglycerides, and *ANXA4* for T2D.

Ancestry effects in single variant findings

Due to heterogeneity of admixture patterns between the studies included in this meta-analysis, we expected to observe heterogeneity of effect by study-level differences in ancestry. However, MR-MEGA detects variants with heterogeneity that are correlated with ancestry, and, for most of our single variant results, we did not observe significant ancestry-associated heterogeneity (Supplementary Data 3, 4, 7). We did identify variants that are specific to (i.e., observed only in or only at an appreciable frequency in) Hispanic/Latino and, sometimes, African-ancestry populations. One example of such a variant is HDL-C-associated variant rs188287950, which is located in intron one of *SIK3*. This is a known HDL-C locus including *APOA4* and many variants have previously been reported within one Mb of the sentinel variant (Supplementary Data 7). We observed this variant at an MAF of 0.05 in our data, but it is only observed in Admixed American populations in 1000 Genomes Project reference data (MAF = 0.05, MAF = 0 in all other 1000 Genomes populations). This variant is also observed at an MAF of 0.10 in Latino/Admixed American populations in gnomAD, and at an MAF < 0.005 in all other populations.

We also identified loci where the sentinel variant is present in other ancestry groups, but fine-mapping indicates that a haplotype distinct from previously reported associations underlies our observed signal at a known locus. An example of this is T2D-associated variant, rs1574285, at the *GLIS3* locus. Nearby variants have been previously identified in other T2D GWAS, including in both the DIAMANTE European and East Asian ancestry groups^{25,26}. However, none of the variants previously observed are contained within our 95% credible sets for this locus. These and other similar loci exhibit the importance of examining the genetic architecture in Hispanic/Latino populations for improving predictive modeling (e.g., polygenic risk scores), as has been previously noted^{27–29}.

Discussion

Thousands of loci for T2D and lipid traits have been identified in GWAS and yet populations most impacted by metabolic diseases have been largely overlooked and functional interrogation of identified loci has been limited. To address these long-standing gaps, we performed meta-analyses and fine-mapping of T2D and lipid traits, functionally oriented gene-based tests, and independent functional annotation of findings in large resources of whole blood RNA sequence data and proteomics in Hispanic/Latino populations. Across all traits studied, we discovered 11 novel loci and 21 novel signals in known loci, which may constitute distinct signals from the primarily European-ancestry-derived established variants in these loci (Fig. 2), demonstrating the importance of diverse populations in genomic studies.

Aggregation of single variant meta-analysis results using S-PrediXcan both across 49 GTEx tissues and models developed here using in pancreatic islet cells from the InsPIRE consortium²³ identified further loci and genes of interest. We then functionally prioritized genes associated with T2D and lipid traits using Mendelian

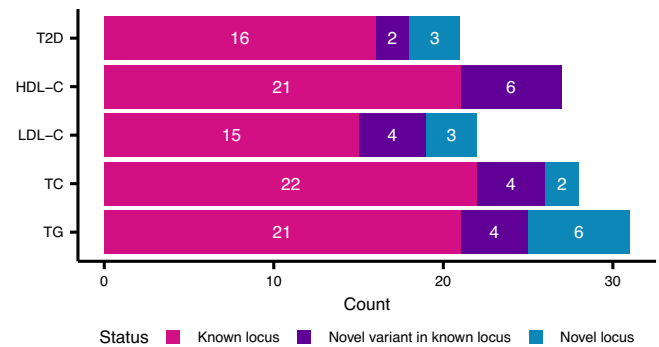


Fig. 2 | Single variant result counts for each trait, categorized by their status relative to previously reported variants and loci. A novel variant in a known locus was defined as a locus that had known variants within one Mb, but no known variants contained in its 95% credible set(s). A known locus was defined as a locus with known variants contained in its 95% credible set(s). A novel locus was defined as a variant with no known variants within one Mb or contained in its 95% credible set(s). Pink represents known variants in known loci, purple represents novel variants in known loci, and blue represents novel loci. Traits included are type 2 diabetes (T2D), HDL cholesterol (HDL-C), LDL cholesterol (LDL-C), total cholesterol (TC), and triglycerides (TG).

randomization to assess evidence for causality. Finally, using a multi-omics approach, we functionally annotated these prioritized genes with differential abundance analysis results from whole blood transcriptomic and proteomic data collected from participants of an independent Hispanic cohort. Our comprehensive, multi-tiered analysis identified novel genes and novel loci for T2D and lipid traits in Hispanic/Latinos, providing evidence for future functional studies.

One novel gene implicated in our single variant results for LDL-C has compelling functional evidence of impact on cardiometabolic disease. An exonic variant in *TUB*, rs75594955, was associated with LDL-C in our meta-regression. Mutations in *TUB*'s murine analog *Tub* produce a well-known murine model of T2D and obesity and has been shown to impact plasma lipid levels^{30,31}. Similarly, a homozygous loss-of-function mutation in a consanguineous human family induced syndromic obesity as well as retinal dystrophy³². Expression of *TUB* in adipose tissue in obese individuals has also been shown to be reduced relative to non-obese controls³³.

In our novel single variant results for triglycerides, we observed a variant near *SIRT5*, which encodes a lysine deacylase. A study of the impact of *SIRT5* on bovine preadipocyte differentiation and an obese mouse model showed that *SIRT5* inhibits preadipocyte differentiation, as well as lipid synthesis and lipid deposition in adipocytes³⁴. In a separate study of an obese mouse model with hepatic *SIRT5* overexpression, the authors found a reduction in triglyceride levels in the liver and increased serum triglycerides, suggesting that *SIRT5* may play a role in exporting triglycerides from the liver to blood³⁵.

Most of our novel single variant results did not replicate in other population groups, though this result is not unexpected. Differences in allele frequency (and therefore, power) may explain lack of replication in some cases, including for variants that are appreciably more frequent in Hispanic/Latino populations and in some cases entirely unobserved in other populations. Indeed, seven of our ten novel lipid results have a MAF < 0.01 in the 1000 Genomes Project European population, and eight of the ten novel lipid results have a MAF < 0.01 in the 1000 Genomes Project African populations. Other variants are common across many ancestry groups, e.g., rs28712821 for T2D; for these loci, lack of replication may be due to other causes. For example, difference in linkage disequilibrium at the locus may result in different tag variants for a causal variant common between ancestry groups, allelic heterogeneity at a locus may result in causal variants that differ

by ancestry group, or differences in environmental risk or protective factors between populations may impact our power to observe effects.

Two genes implicated for HDL-C in our S-PrediXcan discovery analysis showed both nominal evidence of causality via Mendelian randomization and association with HDL-C in our independent transcriptomic association analysis, *TMEM205*, and *NEDD9*. *TMEM205* has primarily been previously linked to multiple cancer phenotypes, including resistance to chemotherapeutic agents^{36,37}. More recently, a study of a mouse model of nonalcoholic steatohepatitis revealed a role for *TMEM205* in lipid metabolism³⁸. Our results lend further support to this proposed pathway and broaden our understanding of its impact to lipoprotein levels, outside of the context of liver disease. *NEDD9* has previously been found to be near genome-wide significant in a GWAS of coronary artery disease³⁹, and in a study of gene-gene interactions that impact lipoprotein concentrations, *NEDD9* was found to interact with *SMAD3* to influence HDL-C, however *NEDD9* has not been previously implicated for HDL-C alone⁴⁰. Our findings suggest a functional role for genetic variation at this locus, through impact on regulation of *NEDD9* expression, and indicate that this dysregulation may be causally impacting HDL-C concentration.

For triglycerides, we highlight two genes that were study-wide significant in S-PrediXcan and nominally significant in Mendelian randomization and either transcriptome or proteome analyses. *ZNF513* was nominally associated in our transcriptomic analysis and has been previously implicated in an autosomal recessive form of retinitis pigmentosa⁴¹; neither genetic variation attributed to *ZNF513* nor expression of *ZNF513* has been previously linked to lipid traits, however nearby genes, including *SNX17*^{42,43}, *NRBPI*⁴⁴, and *GCKR*^{8,45} have been previously identified for TG via GWAS, suggesting that this region will need further study to elucidate the role of *ZNF513* and its interaction with nearby genes. *ANKKI*, which was nominally associated in our transcriptomic analysis, is physically near *DRD2*, which encodes Dopamine receptor D₂. This locus has been previously linked to neuropsychiatric disorders^{46–48}, as well as recently being implicated in a GWAS of TG⁷; an intronic variant in *DRD2* was associated with TG in the GWAS.

For T2D, we identified one gene, *ANXA4*, that was significantly associated with T2D status in S-PrediXcan and nominally significant in Mendelian randomization and our proteomics analysis. This gene has not been previously reported in GWAS of T2D. *ANXA4* expression has been shown to be impacted by knockout variants in *HNF1A* and *PDX1*⁴⁹, two monogenic diabetes genes; *ANXA4* was also shown to be a target gene of HNF4A⁵⁰. Further, the mouse gene *Anxa4* is downregulated in *lpfl/Pdx1*^{-/-} pancreatic progenitor cells²³. *ANXA4* is also part of the GSK3 β -Ikaros-ANXA4 signaling pathway, which has been demonstrated to inhibit migration of fibroblasts due to high glucose levels⁵¹. Our finding, that expression of *ANXA4* may exert causal effects on T2D risk and that ANXA4 protein abundance is dysregulated in T2D, provides compelling support of a role of *ANXA4* in non-monogenic diabetes risk as well.

Pancreatic islet cells are not a specific tissue type included in GTEx, yet are a central tissue in T2D pathophysiology that exhibits tissue-specific expression at key T2D genes, including *INS*^{23,26,52}. Therefore, we integrated pancreatic islet cell data from the InsPIRE consortium to generate S-PrediXcan models and applied those models to our meta-analysis results. We compared the results of the pancreatic islet cell models to those using bulk pancreas tissue to identify organelle-specific genetic regulation impacting islet cells.

All four S-PrediXcan associations in islets fall within an -2 Mb region surrounding *Insulin*. The S-PrediXcan model for *INS* itself was not significantly associated with T2D ($p = 0.6$). Nonetheless, these genes have molecular assays supporting their role in glucose homeostasis. For example, in vitro work shows BRSK2 phosphorylates PCTAIRE1, which in turn decreases insulin secretion in response to glucose⁵³. TRPM5 is a receptor that has been shown through knock out

mic, and subsequent in vitro work to be essential for glucose-stimulated insulin secretion⁵⁴. Further, chr11p15.5-p15.4 is a region known for complex imprinting, resulting in parent-of-origin-specific expression of various genes^{55–57}. *OSBPL5* has methylation disruptions in insulinomas⁵⁸. This region of the genome shows evidence of complex regulation, particularly in pancreatic islets. There may be mechanisms of co-regulation involved, as it contains many genes that influence glucose homeostasis; indeed, we see evidence of potential co-regulation of the associated genes based on correlation of expression in InsPIRE gene expression data (Supplementary Fig 3), however additional work in pancreatic beta cells is required to clarify.

Our S-PrediXcan analyses provide an opportunity to functionally annotate known loci, adding to our understanding of the biology of these signals by narrowing the likely causal gene(s) at the locus. In the known T2D locus on chromosome 22, we identified significant signals in both our GWAS and S-PrediXcan analyses. In our GWAS, rs16989540, in intron 27 of *DEPDC5*, was significantly associated with T2D status; Open Targets Genetics predicted *YWHAH* to be the causal gene for this signal. This locus has been previously reported in three prior studies, two of which had sample overlap with the present study and in a third study in a Maya population^{9,20,59}. In all three studies, the signal was mapped to either *DEPDC5* or *YWHAH*. However, S-PrediXcan functionally implicates a different gene in this locus, *SLCSAI*, in small intestine. The role of this gene, also known as *SGLT1*, in type 2 diabetes is supported by an abundance of non-GWAS evidence. Consistent with our observed direction of effect in small intestine, measured expression of this gene in the small intestine has been shown to be increased in people with type 2 diabetes^{60,61}. Indeed, the FDA recently approved a medication, called sotagliflozin, that targets SGLT-1 and SGLT-2, reducing blood glucose and treating heart failure in T2D patients^{62,63}. It is notable that all three GWAS that reported a signal at this locus included individuals with a large proportion of AMR ancestry, suggesting this might be a key population in which to explore drug efficacy. This is just one example of how functionally oriented analyses, using expression data from multiple tissues, can inform our interpretation of GWAS results and identify clinically actionable targets.

Our study had several limitations. Most notably, we were limited by GWAS data currently available for Hispanic/Latino populations, and even aggregating many of the extant GWAS of T2D and lipid traits in Hispanic/Latino populations in this meta-analysis resulted in a much lower sample size than analogous European-ancestry studies. This limitation must be addressed by prioritization of studies of non-European ancestry populations in biomedical research. This can only be accomplished through increased funding to engage and recruit members of diverse populations as partners in and beneficiaries of biomedical research efforts. This Euro-centric bias is pervasive, ranging from genotype array design to models of gene expression. Indeed, our S-PrediXcan analyses utilized publicly available models developed in GTEx Project data, which primarily comprises European ancestry individuals, similar to most publicly available gene expression datasets. Several studies have demonstrated that prediction performance of these models is maximized by matching genetic ancestry of the model training dataset to the testing dataset^{64–66}, however it is most likely that reduced predictive performance in cross-ancestry applications will result in a reduction in power rather than increased type 1 error⁶⁷, and prior application of models derived from primarily European-ancestry data to non-European-ancestry populations has indeed resulted in robust findings confirmed through replication^{67,68}. To address this lower power, future studies must prioritize inclusion of non-European-ancestry populations in transcriptome and other omics projects, as we have done here by generating a large resource of whole blood transcriptome data in a Hispanic/Latino population, to ensure that resources like ancestry-matched GREX prediction models, and ultimately the medical advances that discoveries from omics studies will drive, are available and accessible for all populations. Finally, this

study relied on meta-analysis of available imputed data, and we did not have universal access to individual-level data. Thus, we could not explore the impact of local ancestry, specific haplotypes in a locus, or leverage more diverse imputation reference panels. Further work will be needed to follow up on loci that have evidence of being population specific.

Our study reiterates the importance of large-scale studies of non-European populations for genetic discovery, presenting insight into trait biology through multiple lines of transcriptomic and proteomic data, in spite of significantly smaller sample sizes relative to current studies in European-ancestry populations. Our study also demonstrates how precision medicine advances can be made when we integrate GWAS with functional characterization through omics data, revealing candidate genes and functional variants. It is our hope that current and future efforts that prioritize inclusion of Hispanic/Latino populations, such as the All of Us research program⁶⁹ and the Mexico City Prospective Study⁷⁰, can substantially increase sample sizes in genetic and other omic studies to help ensure that advances in precision medicine are realized in all populations.

Methods

Ethics

Ethics statements for all studies contributing to the meta-analysis are given in Supplementary Table 1. The CCHC portion of this study was approved by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects of the University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston. Our study met all relevant regulations regarding the use of human study participants and was conducted in accordance with the criteria set by the Declaration of Helsinki. All study participants gave informed consent.

Genome-wide association study data

The T2D meta-analysis comprised 23,541 T2D cases and 37,434 controls from 16 contributing studies^{7,9,27,28,71–86} and the lipid (HDL-C, LDL-C, TC, and TG) meta-analyses included up to 63,184 samples from 19 contributing studies^{87–89} (Supplementary Data 1). All participants in the contributing studies self-identify as Hispanic and/or Latino. Sex was self-reported and confirmed to match gender through genetic data. Study-specific T2D and lipid phenotype measures, definitions, and exclusions are provided in Supplementary Data 1. Individuals that reported use of lipid-lowering medication were either excluded or lipid concentrations were adjusted to account for medication use (Supplementary Data 1).

Contributing study quality control and imputation

For each study, genome-wide array data were cleaned and imputed to 1000 Genomes Project (1KG) phase 1 or 3 reference data using Minimac3 or IMPUTE2^{90–94}. Study-specific array, quality control, and imputation details are given in Supplementary Data 2. For the Million Veteran Program data, GWAS results were obtained from dbGaP, accession number phs001672 [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/projects/gap/cgi-bin/study.cgi?study_id=phs001672.v12.p1], and additional details of quality control and analysis methods can be found in the original manuscripts^{7,9}. Additional details are provided in Supplementary Data 2.

Single variant analysis and study-level quality control

T2D association analyses for each contributing study were performed via logistic regression or linear mixed model in SNPTEST⁹⁵, EPACTS/EMMAX⁹⁶, SOLAR⁹⁷, GENESIS⁹⁸, PLINK⁹⁹, or R¹⁰⁰. All models were adjusted for age, sex, and any necessary study-specific covariates (e.g., study location or batch). All studies either adjusted for principal components and/or used a mixed model to control for population substructure. All studies also either excluded closely related individuals or used a mixed model to control for close relatedness.

Association testing for the four lipid phenotypes (HDL-C, LDL-C, TC, and log-transformed TG) were conducted via linear regression in SNPTEST⁹⁵, EPACTS/EMMAX⁹⁶, SOLAR⁹⁷, GENESIS⁹⁸, PLINK⁹⁹, or R¹⁰⁰. Residual lipid values were calculated, adjusting for age, sex, and any necessary study-specific covariates (e.g., study location or batch). The residual values were inverse rank normal transformed Relatedness and population substructure were controlled for as above. Study-level quality control included removal of low-quality variants (Minimac3 $r^2 < 0.3$ or IMPUTE2 info < 0.4), low-frequency variants (minor allele count (MAC) < 14 for T2D, MAC < 6 for lipids), duplicates, variants with large MAF discrepancy with AMR (absolute value of difference > 0.2), and variants where alleles did not match the AMR reference alleles.

Single variant meta-analysis

Meta-analyses were performed using MR-MEGA, which uses a meta-regression approach to model the effect of axes of genetic variation, representing study-level differences in genetic ancestry, allowing for partitioning of heterogeneity into effects correlated with ancestry differences and any remaining heterogeneity¹⁰¹. We included two measures of study-level mean allele frequency differences in our meta-regression, allowing for two axes of genetic variation. Two axes of variation were selected to capture major source of admixture within Hispanic/Latino populations (AMR, EUR, and AFR). For T2D, we performed an additional meta-analysis adjusting for BMI to explore if effects at our top findings are modified by BMI. Variants with MAC < 100 in the total meta-analysis sample were excluded. Single variant tests used a genome-wide significance threshold of $p < 5 \times 10^{-8}$. Sentinel variants, or variants with the lowest p -value, were identified for each region (1 Mb in either direction) with $p < 5 \times 10^{-8}$ and annotated using ANNOVAR¹⁰² and Open Targets Genetics^{103,104}.

Fine-mapping

Fine-mapping was performed using the method described in Magi et al., including all variants within one Mb of our sentinel variant for each region¹⁰¹. Briefly, we calculated a posterior probability of driving the association at a locus for each variant, then selected variants by Bayes' factor, in descending order, summing the cumulative posterior probability until it met or exceeded 95%. The resulting 95% credible sets were queried for previously reported variants, or any variants in the NHGRI-EBI GWAS catalog within one Mb of our sentinel variant associated with the same trait¹⁰⁵. A known signal was defined as a locus with known variants contained in its 95% credible set(s). A novel signal was a variant with no known variants within one Mb or contained in its 95% credible set(s). We defined a novel signal in a known locus as a locus that had known variants within one Mb, but no known variants contained in its 95% credible set(s).

Replication of single variant novel signals

The T2D meta-analyses were a part of a larger multi-ancestry meta-analysis effort by the DIAMANTE Consortium²⁰. Five groups were assembled, including our Hispanic/Latino group, an African ancestry group (MEDIA), an East Asian ancestry group (AGEN-T2D)²⁵, a European ancestry group (DIAGRAM)²⁶, a South Asian ancestry group (SA-T2D)¹⁰⁶, and the multi-ancestry meta-analysis of these five groups²⁴. We queried our top novel T2D results for replication using summary statistics from the European, East Asian, and South Asian ancestry groups. For lipid traits, we queried publicly available results from the European- and African-ancestry subgroups of the Million Veteran Program (MVP) GWAS⁷ for each trait to assess for replication (the MVP Hispanic subgroup was included in our meta-regression).

Development of pancreatic islet cell prediction models

Because pancreatic islet cells are a central tissue in T2D pathophysiology and exhibit a tissue-specific expression profile (e.g., 40–73% of islet eQTLs replicate in GTEx), especially at T2D-relevant genes such as

*INS*²³, in addition to leveraging extant GTEx prediction models^{107,108} we constructed models from extant pancreatic islet RNA sequence and associated genomic data²³. The InsPIRE consortium was formed to aggregate human islet RNA-Seq data and genetic data to identify eQTLs and characterize genetic regulation of gene expression in a tissue central to T2D pathogenesis²³. Here, we leveraged a subset 254 participants of the InsPIRE dataset that were made available to us upon request. Given that samples collected in the US were all described as Caucasian and the remainder of sampling occurred in Europe (Geneva, Edmonton, and Oxford) we expect the proportion of the islet sample that is of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity is minimal.

For each gene, we trained *in silico* models of gene expression in pancreatic islet cells using genetic variants as features. Consider n samples with covariate-adjusted gene expression levels y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n . For covariates, we used sex, the first four principal components (PCs) derived from the genotype data, and the first 30 PCs for expression. Each gene model used elastic net regularization, solving the following optimization problem:

$$\hat{\beta} = \arg \min_{\beta} (1/2) \sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - x_i^T \beta)^2 + \lambda \left(\left(\frac{1-\alpha}{2} \right) \|\beta\|_2^2 + \alpha \|\beta\|_1 \right). \quad (1)$$

The regularization term includes an L_1 penalty on the effect-size vector β (enforcing sparsity) and an L_2 penalty (promoting grouping effect). The parameter $\alpha = 0.5$ determines the relative weights of the two penalties. This approach closely follows the conventional PrediXcan implementation¹⁰⁷.

Functionally oriented meta-analysis

To examine the final meta-regression results in a functionally oriented context, S-PrediXcan was used to determine association of each phenotype with genetically regulated gene expression (GRex) levels¹⁰⁹. Using publicly available Joint-Tissue Imputation models for 49 tissues developed in the Genotype-Tissue Expression (GTEx) project v8 data¹⁰⁸ and our pancreatic islet cell models, we inferred tissue-specific GRex association with phenotype from our meta-GWAS summary statistics from MR-MEGA. As recommended by the S-PrediXcan authors, we applied this approach across all tissues, agnostic of currently known trait biology, as they found that generally accepted disease-relevant tissues are not typically enriched for GRex associations and, thus, a tissue-agnostic approach improves discovery¹⁰⁹. We used a Benjamini-Hochberg adjustment across all tissues, genes, and phenotypes to account for multiple testing, as a Bonferroni correction for all tissues and traits would be too conservative due to correlation of both the expression models between tissues and the set of phenotypes tested. We considered an adjusted $p < 0.01$ to be significant.

Mendelian randomization

We assessed evidence of causality for genes identified in S-PrediXcan analyses and found to be significant after study-wide multiple test correction. The GTEx v8 tissue-specific eQTLs of target genes were used as instrumental variables for MR. We performed LD clumping to select eligible instrumental variables in each tissue separately with the LD panels from the 1000 Genome Admixed Americans (AMR), and the `bigsnpr` R package^{110,111}. We used the median weighted MR method from the `MendelianRandomization` R package¹¹², which offers unbiased and reliable estimation even when half of instrumental variables violate the assumptions of MR and in the presence of genetic pleiotropy^{112,113}.

LD scores

LD scores for variants in meta-analysis results were created using HCHS/SOL genotype data and GCTA v1.93.2, with an LD window size of 1 Mb and an LD r^2 cut-off of 0.01¹¹⁴. eQTL effects were obtained from GTEx v8 eQTL Tissue-Specific All SNP Gene Associations data ([https://](https://www.gtexportal.org/home/datasets)

www.gtexportal.org/home/datasets) and filtered to retain variants within 1 Mb of the gene.

Measured transcriptomic expression analyses

To better understand molecular signatures associated with T2D and lipids for study-wide significant functionally oriented S-PrediXcan results, we directly measured whole blood gene expression in 884 (for T2D) and 696 (for lipid measures) Mexican-American individuals from the Cameron County Hispanic Cohort (CCHC) and performed association analyses between gene expression level and phenotype for each novel S-PrediXcan hit¹¹⁵. RNA sequencing was conducted using 150 bp paired-end reads on the Illumina NovaSeq 6000 by Vanderbilt Technologies for Advanced Genomics. Initial sequencing quality was checked by FastQC¹¹⁶. STAR-2.7.8a was applied to align sequencing reads to the human genome reference (UCSC, hg38)¹¹⁷, and the aligned reads were assigned to genes using featureCounts in the Rsubread package¹¹⁸. We excluded samples with less than 15 M total aligned reads or a rate of successful alignment of less than 20%. The sequencing library size was normalized using DESeq2¹¹⁹. Individuals taking lipid-lowering medication were excluded, and triglyceride concentrations were log-transformed. We then tested for association of gene expression of the novel genes implicated in our S-PrediXcan analyses with trait, using linear regression, with RNA expression as the dependent variable and trait as the independent variable, and adjusting for age, sex, estimated cell type proportions (including granulocytes, CD19 + B cells, CD4 T lymphocytes, CD8 T lymphocytes, and CD14+ monocytes), three genetic PCs to capture population substructure, and ten probabilistic estimation of expression residual (PEER) factors to capture hidden factors that explain variation in the expression data.

Proteomic analyses

To further explore significant S-PrediXcan findings in measured proteomic data, we measured the Olink Explore 3072 panel on 528 stored plasma samples from 271 individuals in CCHC. Normalized Protein eXpression (NPX) was generated in the full dataset, which included multiple measures for many individuals. Our proteomic analyses restricted to one time point per individual and adjusted for age, sex, and five genetic principal components in logistic (T2D) or linear regression (lipids), using the phenotypes measured at the time of specimen collection. Triglycerides were log-transformed.

Heritability analyses

Linkage disequilibrium score regression (as implemented in LDSC¹²⁰) was applied to estimate SNP-based heritability. Heritability was estimated based on the relationship between GWAS summary statistics and linkage disequilibrium. To account for admixture in our Hispanic/Latino populations, cov-LDSC¹²¹ was applied to calculate the linkage disequilibrium score and was adjusted for the top ten genetic PCs from PC-AiR^{78,122}. In this study, the linkage disequilibrium score was calculated with all 1,274,124 genotyped SNPs in 10,050 unrelated individuals from HCHS/SOL; the maximum unrelated set was calculated in PRIMUS and defined as unrelated at \geq third degree¹²³.

Reporting summary

Further information on research design is available in the Nature Portfolio Reporting Summary linked to this article.

Data availability

Complete summary statistics for the primary meta-analyses are available in the NHGRI-EBI Catalog of human genome-wide association studies under accession numbers: [GCST90528074](https://www.ebi.ac.uk/gwas/studies/GCST90528074), [GCST90528075](https://www.ebi.ac.uk/gwas/studies/GCST90528075), [GCST90528076](https://www.ebi.ac.uk/gwas/studies/GCST90528076), [GCST90528077](https://www.ebi.ac.uk/gwas/studies/GCST90528077), [GCST90528078](https://www.ebi.ac.uk/gwas/studies/GCST90528078), and [GCST90528079](https://www.ebi.ac.uk/gwas/studies/GCST90528079). The Cameron County Hispanic Cohort transcriptomic and proteomic data generated in this study are available in dbGaP under accession number phs003894.v1.p1 [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih>

[gov/projects/gap/cgi-bin/study.cgi?study_id=phs003894.v1.p1](https://github.com/gamazonlab/IsletCellsGReXModels)]. The islet gene expression imputation models generated in this study are available at <https://github.com/gamazonlab/IsletCellsGReXModels>. The Million Veterans Program data used in this study are available in dbGaP under the study accession number phs001672 [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/projects/gap/cgi-bin/study.cgi?study_id=phs001672.v12.p1], analysis accession numbers pha004829.1 [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/projects/gap/cgi-bin/analysis.cgi?study_id=phs001672.v12.p1&pha=4829], pha004832.1 [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/projects/gap/cgi-bin/analysis.cgi?study_id=phs001672.v12.p1&pha=4832], pha004835.1 [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/projects/gap/cgi-bin/analysis.cgi?study_id=phs001672.v12.p1&pha=4835], pha004838.1 [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/projects/gap/cgi-bin/analysis.cgi?study_id=phs001672.v12.p1&pha=4838], and pha004946.1 [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/projects/gap/cgi-bin/analysis.cgi?study_id=phs001672.v12.p1&pha=4946]. Source data is provided with this paper. Source data are provided with this paper.

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Competing interests

A.M. and M.I.M. are employees of Genentech and a holders of Roche stock. L.S.E. is now an employee of Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS) and a holder of BMS stock. The remaining authors declare no competing interests.

Additional information

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














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