

Gene interaction networks inference and search for complex disease biomarkers by complex networks analysis and data integration

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Summary

1 Overview

- About UFABC
- Systems Biology
- Research topics

2 GRN inference

- Motivation
- Definition
- Approach: feature selection
- SFFS-BA method

3 Prioritization of genes associated to complex diseases

- Complex diseases
- Network Medicine hypotheses
- NERI method - Overview
- NERI method - Results

4 Conclusion

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About UFABC

- Universidade Federal do ABC (Federal University of ABC - UFABC)
- 9 years old university
- Growing fast! (~ 12,000 undergrad students, ~ 1,500 grad students, ~ 550 professors)
- Interdisciplinarity as key to perform relevant science
- Research quality 60% superior to the world average in terms of impact factor (# 1 in Brazil)
- Strong internationalization (# 1 in Brazil)



Systems Biology

- **Systems Biology**: interdisciplinary field which studies the **complex networks** of interactions occurring in biological systems
- Development of models and approaches to reveal **emergent properties of cells**, tissues and organs, which work as an integrated system
- Typically involves studies of several types of biological networks (gene regulation, metabolic, protein interactions, cell signaling, etc...)
- Integration and analysis of massive, complex and heterogeneous datasets (**Big Data**)



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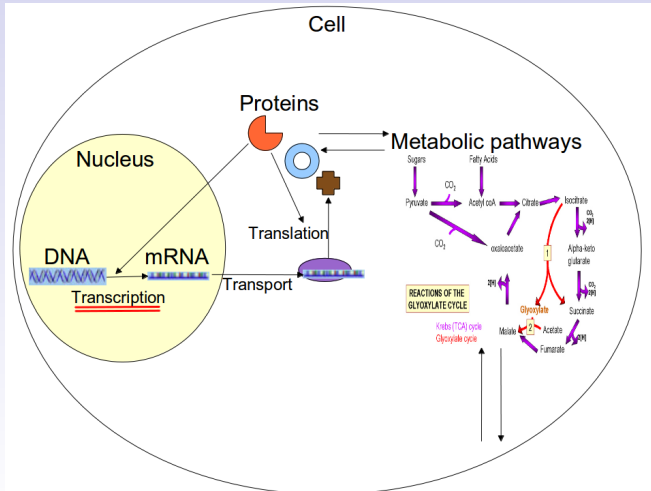


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Systems Biology



Two main research topics in Systems Biology

- Inference, modeling and simulation of gene regulatory networks (GRN)
- Prioritization of genes associated to complex diseases



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GRN inference - Motivation

- Cell control: result of a multivariate activity of genes
- Derivation of general laws on how the cell control works
- Identification of genes associated to certain biochemical features
- Investigation on how to control the dynamics of the biological system and the best way to do it (most practical, least costly, ...)
- Inference of parameters of a GRN from experimental data is one of the greatest challenges of bioinformatics
 - Small number of samples (dozens) with huge dimensionality (thousands of genes)



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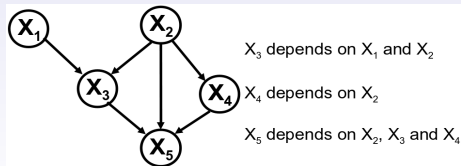
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GRN inference - Definition

- GRNs are gene interaction networks where the expression level of a gene is controlled by expression levels of other genes
 - Gene expression signal: abundance of transcribed mRNA
 - They can be viewed as graphs where nodes correspond to genes and edges correspond to dependences between genes



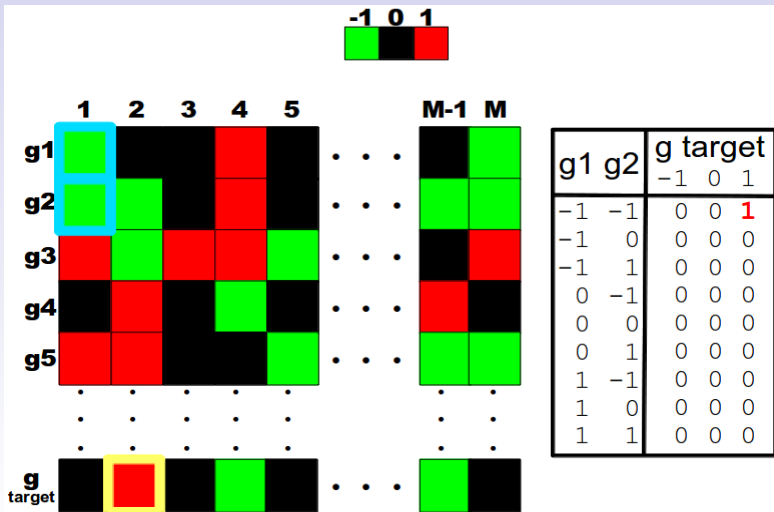
GRN inference - Approach: feature selection

- How to measure the degree of dependence of a gene with regard to other genes?
 - Feature selection
 - Given a target gene, apply a feature selection (search) algorithm which tries to obtain the most relevant genes subset to describe the target behavior
 - Relevance criterion: e.g., mutual information (based on entropy), coefficient of determination (Bayesian error based)

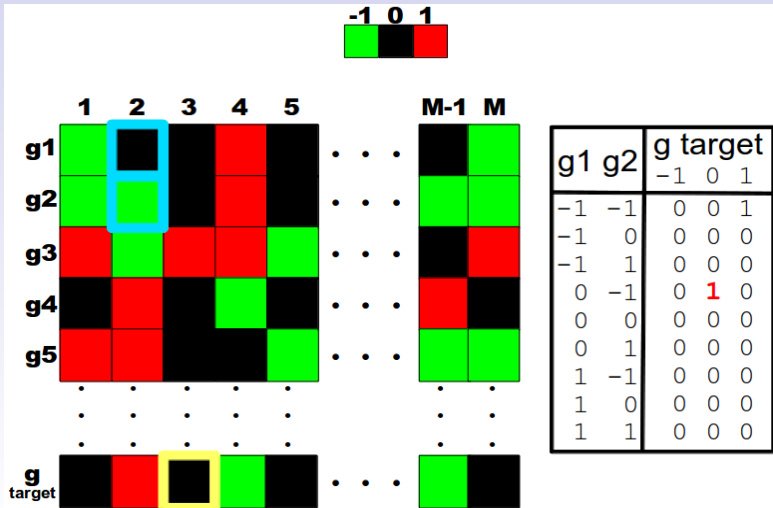
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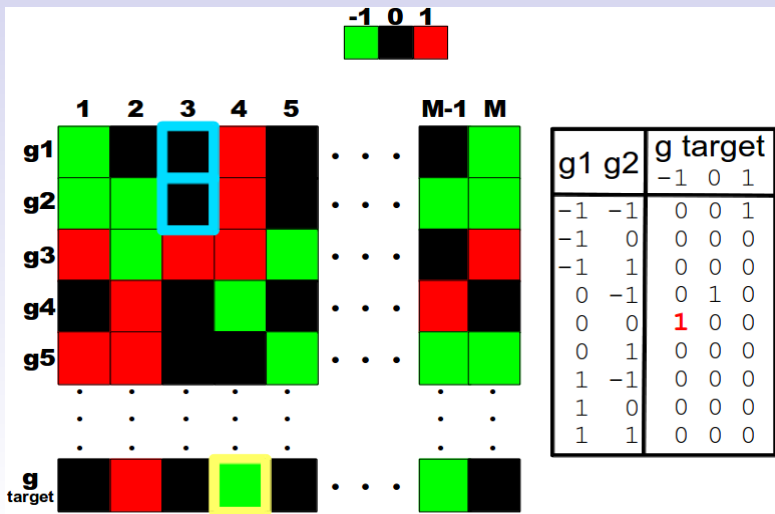
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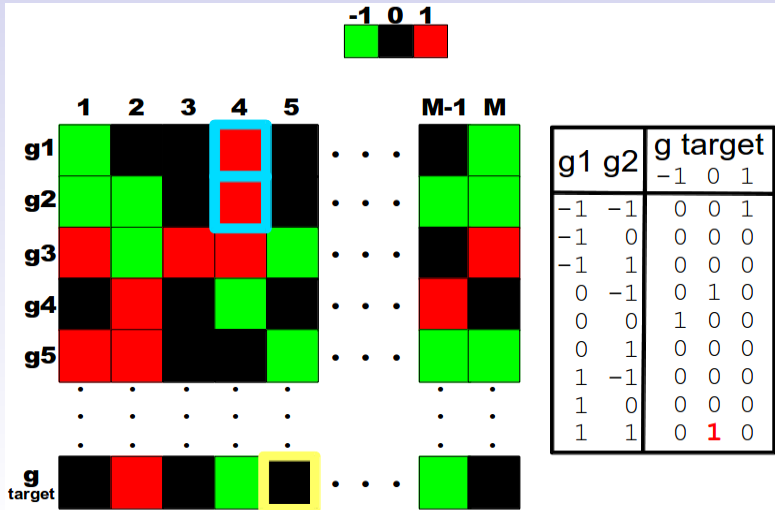
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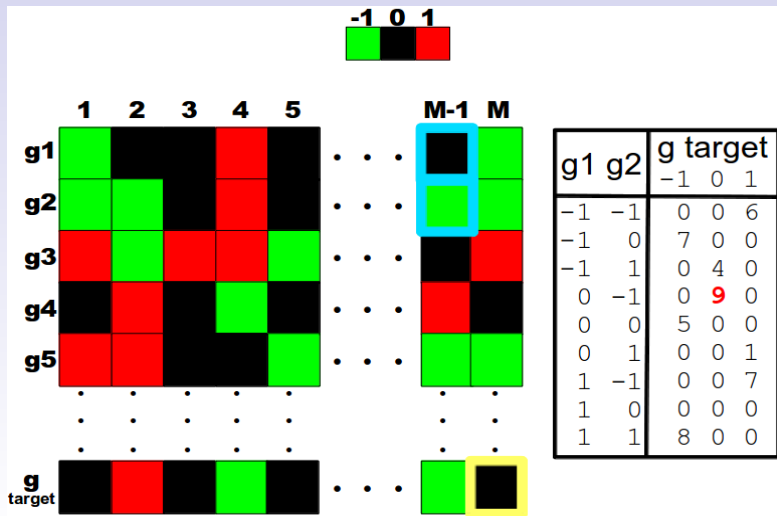
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GRN inference - Approach: feature selection



GRN inference - Approach: feature selection



GRN inference - Approach: feature selection

g1 g2		g target		
		-1	0	1
-1	-1	0	1	6
-1	0	7	0	0
-1	1	0	4	0
0	-1	0	9	0
0	0	5	0	0
0	1	0	0	1
1	-1	0	0	7
1	0	0	0	0
1	1	8	0	0

Properties of the pair (g1,g2)

- **High** mutual information / CoD
- **Almost perfect** prediction
- **Strong candidate** to be classified between the best pairs (g1 and g2 may be connected to the target gene)

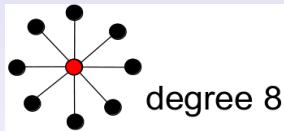
g3 g5		g target		
		-1	0	1
-1	-1	2	2	2
-1	0	3	2	2
-1	1	0	3	1
0	-1	2	4	3
0	0	1	1	2
0	1	1	0	1
1	-1	2	3	1
1	0	1	1	0
1	1	4	2	2

Properties of the pair (g3,g5)

- **Small** mutual information / CoD
- **Very bad** prediction
- **Discarded**

GRN inference - Ongoing research

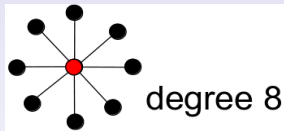
- How to infer “hubs” from small samples? (and how to decide its input degree?)
 - Hub: gene with large input degree



- In binary systems, a gene with degree 8 has a table with $2^8 = 256$ rows
- If we have 30 samples, at least 226 rows are not observed (!!!)

GRN inference - Ongoing research

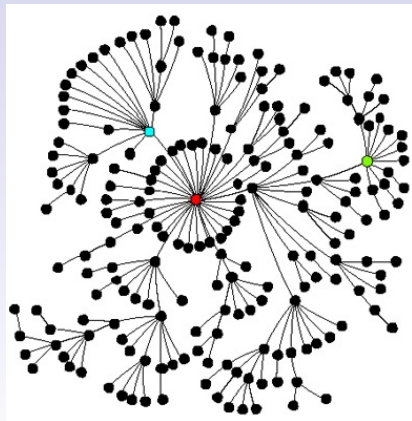
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GRN inference - Ongoing research

- In particular, inference of hubs is important to infer scale-free networks
 - Small number of nodes with large input degree
 - Large number of nodes with small input degree
- Also known as Barabási-Albert (BA) network model
[Barabasi:2004]



GRN inference - SFFS-BA method



- SFFS-BA: GRN inference method guided by topological scale-free properties [Lopes:2014]

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journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ins



A feature selection technique for inference of graphs from their known topological properties: Revealing scale-free gene regulatory networks

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^a Federal University of Technology - Paran , Brazil
^b Federal University of ABC, Brazil
^c Institute of Mathematics and Statistics, University of S o Paulo, Brazil
^d Brazilian Bioethanol Science and Technology Laboratory (CTBE), Brazil



GRN inference - SFFS-BA (summary and results)

- Adaptation of a classical feature selection method (Sequential Floating Forward Search - SFFS) to look for scale free patterns → SFFS-BA
- Comparison involving Sequential Forward Search (SFS), SFFS and SFFS-BA
- Evaluation by simulated artificial gene networks (AGN) generating scale-free topologies and probabilistic Boolean dependences
- Evaluation by real data from *Escherichia coli* microarrays



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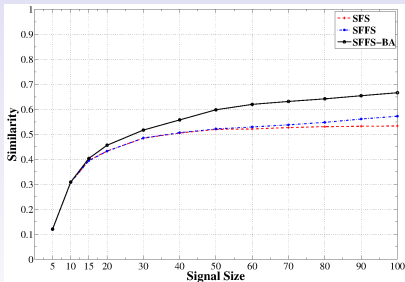
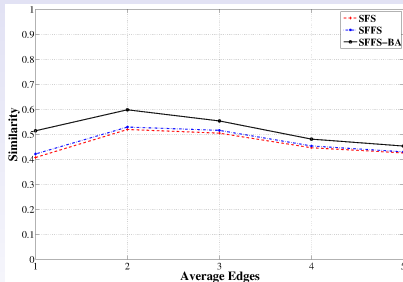


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GRN inference - SFFS-BA (summary and results)

Artificial gene networks results



GRN inference - SFFS-BA (summary and results)

- *E. coli* results

Algorithm	<i>PPV</i>	<i>Sensitivity</i>	<i>Similarity</i>	<i>AUPR</i> (%)
SFS	0.1598	0.0169	0.0520	0.0488 (4.88%)
SFFS	0.2416	0.0315	0.0872	0.0629 (6.29%)
SFFS-BA	0.4878	0.0484	0.1537	0.0786 (7.86%)

Prioritization of genes associated to complex diseases

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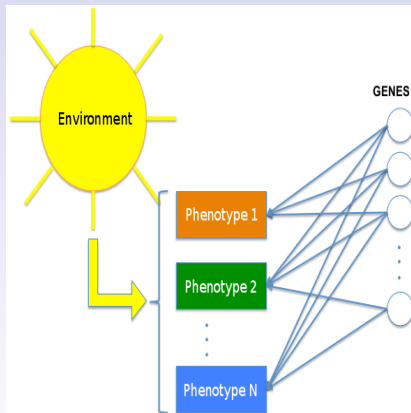
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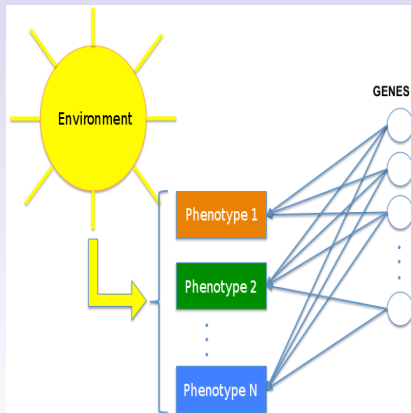
Complex diseases

- Complex diseases are **polygenic** and **multifactorial**
- Many genes can cause the same phenotype
- A single gene can cause distinct phenotypes
- → studies in complex diseases are challenging
- Distinct studies of a given complex disease usually produce gene lists with very small overlap (**small replication**)
- Integrative approaches from systems biology, as well as modeling and analysis of complex networks are required



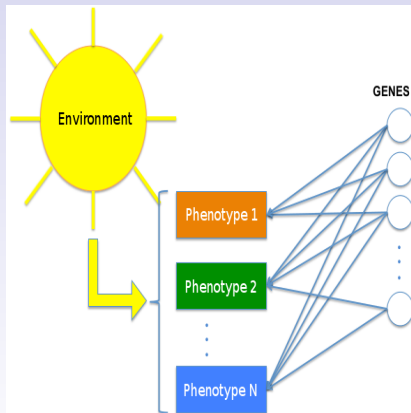
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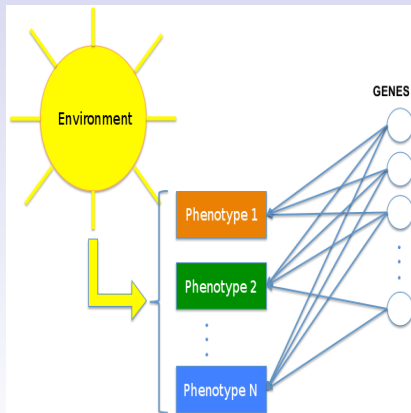
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Network Medicine hypotheses [Barabási:2011]

- Modeling of complex network theory properties and **Network Medicine** hypotheses to prioritize genes
- **Hubs**: genes/proteins of high degree are considered essential (e.g. TP53)
- **Locality Hypothesis**: Genes/proteins involved in the same function (or disease phenotype) possess increased tendency to interact with each other
- **Modularity Hypothesis**: Cellular components associated to a given function (or disease specific phenotype) tend to be in the same cluster
- **Parsimony Principle**: Molecular pathways usually coincide with the molecular shortest paths between components known to be associated to the disease.

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NERI method

- NERI: NETwork Medicine Relative Importance
[Simões:2015]

Simões *et al.* *BMC Bioinformatics* 2015, **16**(Suppl 19):S9
<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2105/16/S19/S9>



RESEARCH

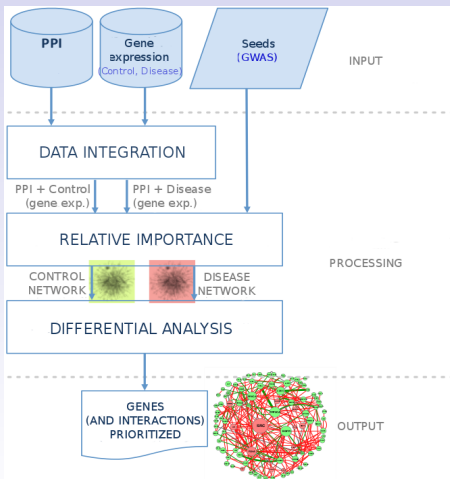
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NERI: network-medicine based integrative approach for disease gene prioritization by relative importance

Sérgio N Simões^{1,2*}, David C Martins Jr³, Carlos AB Pereira¹, Ronaldo F Hashimoto¹, Helena Brentani^{4,5,6}



NERI method - Overview



NERI method - Overview

- Modeling the **locality**, **modularity** and **parsimony** hypotheses
- Integration of seeds (genome-wide association studies - GWAS), gene expression and protein-protein interaction networks (PPI) data
- Obtainment of two **PPI network cuttings** around the neighborhood of the seeds: one for control and one for disease conditions
- Cutting: **best shortest paths** (according to **gene expression concordance**) connecting the seeds
- Two **relative importances** are assigned to each gene: one for control and another for disease condition
- Relative importance: mix of fequency along the shortest paths between seeds, **concordance of expression** along these paths and **proximity to the seeds**
- Genes with the **largest difference** in their two relative importances (control/disease) are prioritized

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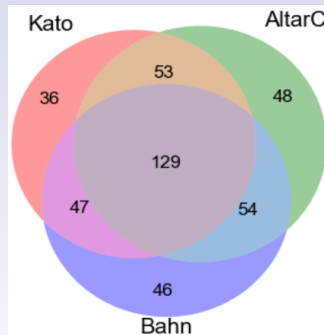
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NERI method - Results

- Case study: Schizophrenia
- 30 seed genes obtained from association studies (also known as “core genes”)
- KATO (33 C, 34 D), ALTAR (29 C, 21 D) and BAHN (33 C, 34 D) gene expression databases

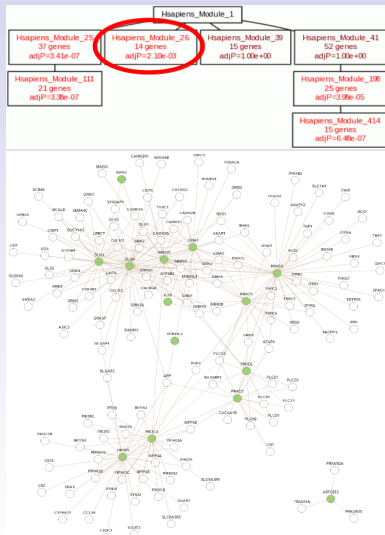
NERI method - Results

- Intersection of the top 10% genes ranked by the method in each study KATO, ALTAR and BAHN
- Intersection p-value $< 10^{-58}$ (hipergeometric test)
- Large replication among the gene expression studies



NERI method - Results

- WebGestalt protein interaction enrichment of the overlap genes list (129 genes)
- Module 26 (glutamate receptor signaling pathway) with 14 genes (green nodes)
 - Such function is known to be associated to schizophrenia



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4 Conclusion

Conclusion

Data integration and complex networks analyses are keys to improve GRN inference and gene prioritization processes



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Thank You!

