

Exploiting the Depmap cancer dependency data using the depmap R package

Theo Killian¹ and Laurent Gatto¹

¹Computational Biology, UCLouvain

R version: R version 3.6.3 (2020-02-29)

Bioconductor version: 3.10

Package: 1.1.2 ->

Abstract

The `depmap` package facilitates access in the R environment to the data from the Depmap project, a multi-year collaborative effort by the Broad Institute and Wellcome Sanger Institute, mapping genetic and chemical dependencies and other molecular biological measurements of over 1700 cancer cell lines. The `depmap` package formats this data for use of popular R data analysis and visualizing tools such as `dplyr` and `ggplot2` to represent and visualize these rich datasets. In addition, the `depmap` package utilizes ExperimentHub, storing versions of the Depmap data accessible from the Cloud, which may be selectively downloaded, providing a reproducible research framework to support exploiting this data. This paper describes a workflow demonstrating how to access and visualize the Depmap data in R using this package.

Keywords

cancer, cancer dependency, Depmap, R, `dplyr`, `ggplot2`, ExperimentHub, Cloud, data mining, reproducible research, Bioconductor

Introduction

The consequences of genomic alterations of cancer cells on the molecular biological landscape of the cell may result in differential vulnerabilities, or “dependencies” compared to those of healthy cells. An example may be a gene not necessary for the survival in healthy cells, but essential for the vitality of particular cancer cell line. The exact nature of many of these dependencies in cancer cell lines is not completely understood [1]. A map illustrating the relationships between the genetic features of cancer and those of cancer dependencies is desirable. The Cancer Dependency Map or “Depmap”, a collaborative initiative between the Broad Institute and the Wellcome Sanger Institute, aims to map such dependencies in a broad range cancer cell lines, intended to mirror the distribution of various cancer diseases in the general population, with the intention of exploiting this knowledge to develop new therapies in precision cancer medicine [2].

The Depmap initiative is, as of the date of this publication, an ongoing project, with new data releases of select datasets every 90 days. As of the most current 20Q1 Depmap release, 1775 human cancer cell lines have been mapped for dependencies [2]. The primary method utilized in the Depmap project to map genomic dependencies is gene knockout performed by CRISPR [Broad [2]; Meyers et al. [3]; Dempster et al. [4]; dempster2019agreement]. Genetic dependency is calculated from the observed log fold change in the amount of shRNA detected after gene knockout [5, 6]. To correct for potential off-target effects of gene knockout in overestimating dependency with CRISPR, the Depmap initiative utilized the CERES algorithm to moderate the final dependency estimation [3]. It should be noted that due to advancements in the CERES algorithm to account for seed effects, the RNAi dependency has been rendered redundant, and further data releases for this dependency measurement have been discontinued as of 19Q3 [2, 4]. In addition genomic dependency measurements of cancer cell lines, chemical dependencies were taken via Depmap PRISM viability screens that as of the 20Q1 release, tested 4,518 compounds against 578 cancer cell lines [7, 2]. The Depmap project has also compiled additional datasets detailing molecular biological characterization of cancer cell lines, such as genomic copy number, Reverse Phase Protein Array (RPPA) data, TPM gene expression data for protein coding genes and genomic mutation data. These datasets are updated quarterly on a release schedule and are publically available under CC BY 4.0 licence [2].

The `depmap` Bioconductor package was created in order to maximally exploit these rich datasets and to aide reproducible research, by importing the data into the R environment. The Depmap datasets were cleaned by converting all datasets to the long format, as well as adding the unique key `depmap_id` for all data tables, in order to make features more comparable, facilitating the use of common R packages such as `dplyr` [8] and `ggplot2` [9].

As new Depmap datasets are released on a quarterly basis, it is not feasible to include all dataset files in binary directly within the directory of the `depmap` R package. To keep the package lightweight, the `depmap` package utilizes and fully depends on the ExperimentHub package [pasolli2017accessible; 10] to store and retrieve all versions of the Depmap data (starting from 19Q1 through 20Q1) in the Cloud using AWS. The `depmap` package contains accessor functions to directly download and cache the most current datasets from the Cloud into the local R environment. Specific datasets, such as older datasets, which have been used in prior research can also be downloaded, if desired. This feature has the added advantage of enhancing reproducible research, such that specific versions of Depmap data can be selected, in addition to having access to the most current datasets. The `depmap` R package is available as part of Bioconductor at: <https://bioconductor.org/packages/devel/data/experiment/html/depmap.html>

Use cases

The features of primary interest from the Depmap Project are the measurements of cancer dependency scores, found in datasets `crispr` and `rnai`, which illustrate genetic dependency and the dataset `drug_sensitivity`, which illustrates chemical dependency. In the case of genetic dependency, the dependency score is an expression of how vital a particular gene for a given cancer cell line is in terms of the lethality resulting from the knockout or knockdown of that gene. For example, a highly negative dependency score is derived from a large negative log fold change in the population of cancer cells after gene knockout or knockdown, implying that a given cell line is highly dependent on that gene. Genes that possess such highly negative dependency scores may be interesting targets for research in cancer medicine.

```
## load libraries
library("dplyr")
library("ggplot2")
library("tibble")
library("tidyr")
library("gridExtra")
library("stringr")
library("depmap")
library("ExperimentHub")
```

The depmap datasets are too large to be included into the binary of a typical R package, therefore this data is stored in the Cloud. There are two ways to access the depmap datasets from the Cloud. The first such way calls on dedicated accessor functions that download and cache the latest available dataset into the local R environment. An example is shown below:

```
rnai <- depmap_rnai()
crispr <- depmap_crispr()
copyNumber <- depmap_copyNumber()
TPM <- depmap_RPPA()
RPPA <- depmap_TPM()
metadata <- depmap_metadata()
mutationCalls <- depmap_mutationCalls()
drug_sensitivity <- depmap_drug_sensitivity()
```

Alternatively, a specific dataset (from any available release) can be accessed with the `ExperimentHub()` accessor function, which creates an `ExperimentHub` object, which can be queried for specific terms. The list of datasets available that correspond to the query, depmap are shown below:

```
## create ExperimentHub query object
eh <- ExperimentHub()
query(eh, "depmap")
```

```
## ExperimentHub with 22 records
## # snapshotDate(): 2019-10-22
## # $dataprovder: Broad Institute
## # $species: Homo sapiens
## # $rdataclass: tibble
## # additional mcols(): taxonomyid, genome, description,
## #   coordinate_1_based, maintainer, rdatadateadded, preparerclass, tags,
## #   rdatapath, sourceurl, sourcetype
## # retrieve records with, e.g., 'object[["EH2260"]]'
##
##           title
## EH2260 | rnai_19Q1
## EH2261 | crispr_19Q1
## EH2262 | copyNumber_19Q1
## EH2263 | RPPA_19Q1
## EH2264 | TPM_19Q1
## ... | ...
## EH3083 | RPPA_19Q3
## EH3084 | TPM_19Q3
## EH3085 | mutationCalls_19Q3
## EH3086 | metadata_19Q3
## EH3087 | drug_sensitivity_19Q3
```

Specific datasets are downloaded and cached into the local R environment by selecting them by their unique EH numbers. Shown below, datasets from the 19_Q3 release are downloaded in this way via their such as the unique EH numbers that corresponds each individual dataset.

```
## download and cache select datasets
rna1 <- eh[["EH3080"]]
mutationCalls <- eh[["EH3085"]]
metadata <- eh[["EH3086"]]
crispr <- eh[["EH3081"]]
TPM <- eh[["EH3084"]]
copyNumber <- eh[["EH3082"]]
drug_sensitivity <- eh[["EH3087"]]
```

By importing the depmap data into the R environment, the data can be mined more effectively. For example, if one was interested in researching soft tissue sarcomas and wanted to search all such cancer cell lines for the gene with the greatest dependency, it is possible to accomplish this task by using data manipulation and visualization tools dplyr and ggplot2. Below, the crispr dataset is selected for cell lines with “SOFT_TISSUE” in the CCL name, and displaying a list of the highest dependency scores.

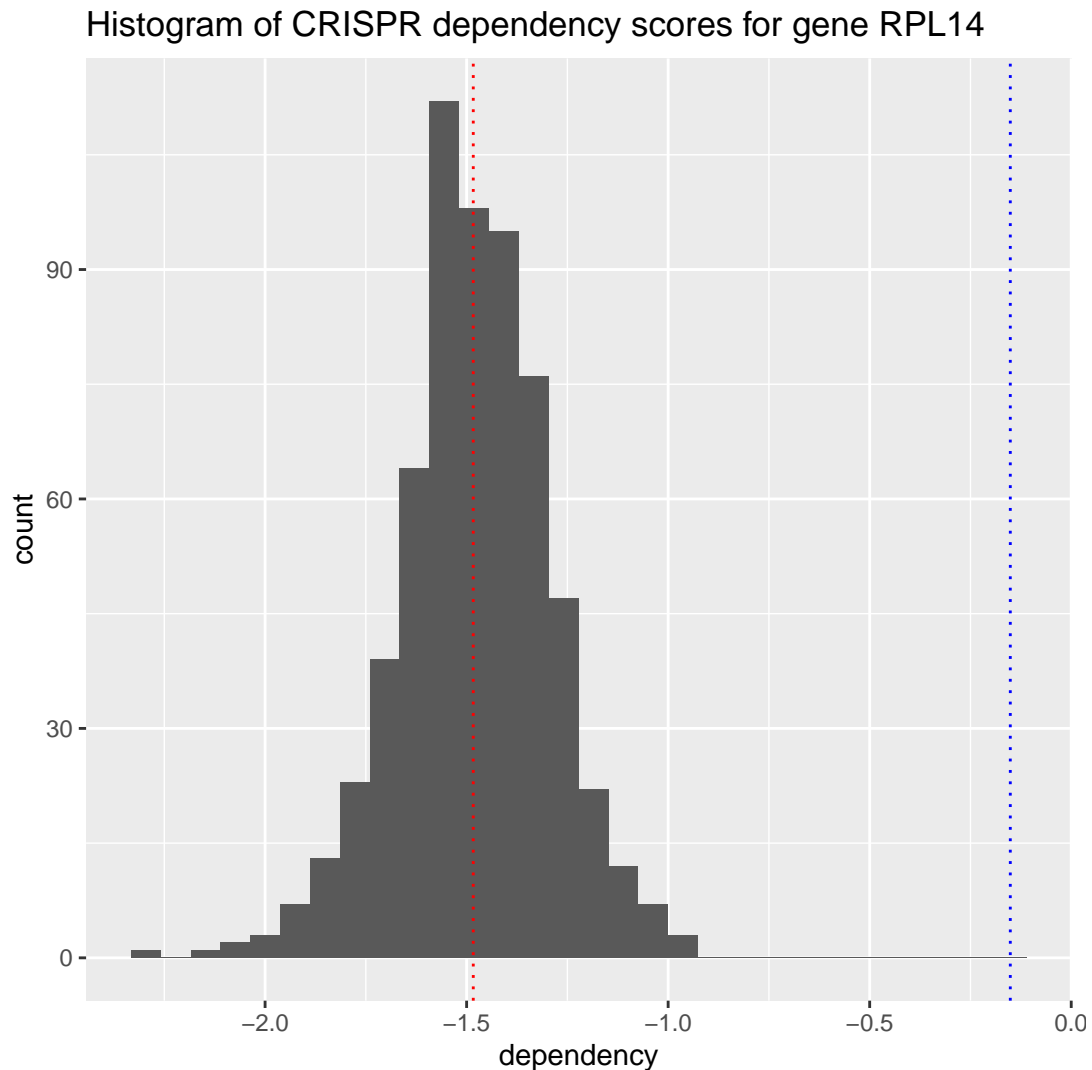
```
## list of dependency scores
crispr %>% dplyr::select(cell_line, gene_name, dependency) %>%
  dplyr::filter(stringr::str_detect(cell_line, "SOFT_TISSUE")) %>%
  dplyr::arrange(dependency) %>%
  head(10)
```

```
## # A tibble: 10 x 3
##   cell_line      gene_name dependency
##   <chr>          <chr>          <dbl>
## 1 RH30_SOFT_TISSUE RAN             -3.19
## 2 SCS214_SOFT_TISSUE RPL37          -2.85
## 3 RH30_SOFT_TISSUE BUB3            -2.83
## 4 RH30_SOFT_TISSUE C1orf109        -2.82
## 5 SCS214_SOFT_TISSUE POLR2J          -2.79
## 6 RH30_SOFT_TISSUE PSMD7            -2.75
## 7 SCS214_SOFT_TISSUE SOD1            -2.73
## 8 RH30_SOFT_TISSUE SS18L2          -2.69
## 9 SCS214_SOFT_TISSUE RNPC3          -2.69
## 10 RH30_SOFT_TISSUE CHAF1B          -2.68
```

The gene RPL14 appears several times in the top dependencies scores, and may make an interesting candidate target. Below, a plot of the crispr data is displayed as a histogram showing the distribution of dependency scores for gene RPL14. The red dotted line signifies the mean dependency score for that gene, while the blue dotted line signifies the global mean dependency score for all crispr measurements.

```
## Basic histogram
mean_crispr_dep <- crispr %>% dplyr::select(gene_name, dependency) %>%
  dplyr::filter(gene_name == "RPL14")

crispr %>% dplyr::select(gene, gene_name, dependency) %>%
  dplyr::filter(gene_name == "RPL14") %>%
  ggplot(aes(x = dependency)) + geom_histogram() +
  geom_vline(xintercept = mean(
    mean_crispr_dep$dependency, na.rm = TRUE), linetype = "dotted",
    color = "red") +
  geom_vline(xintercept = mean(crispr$dependency, na.rm = TRUE),
    linetype = "dotted", color = "blue") +
  ggtitle("Histogram of CRISPR dependency scores for gene RPL14")
```

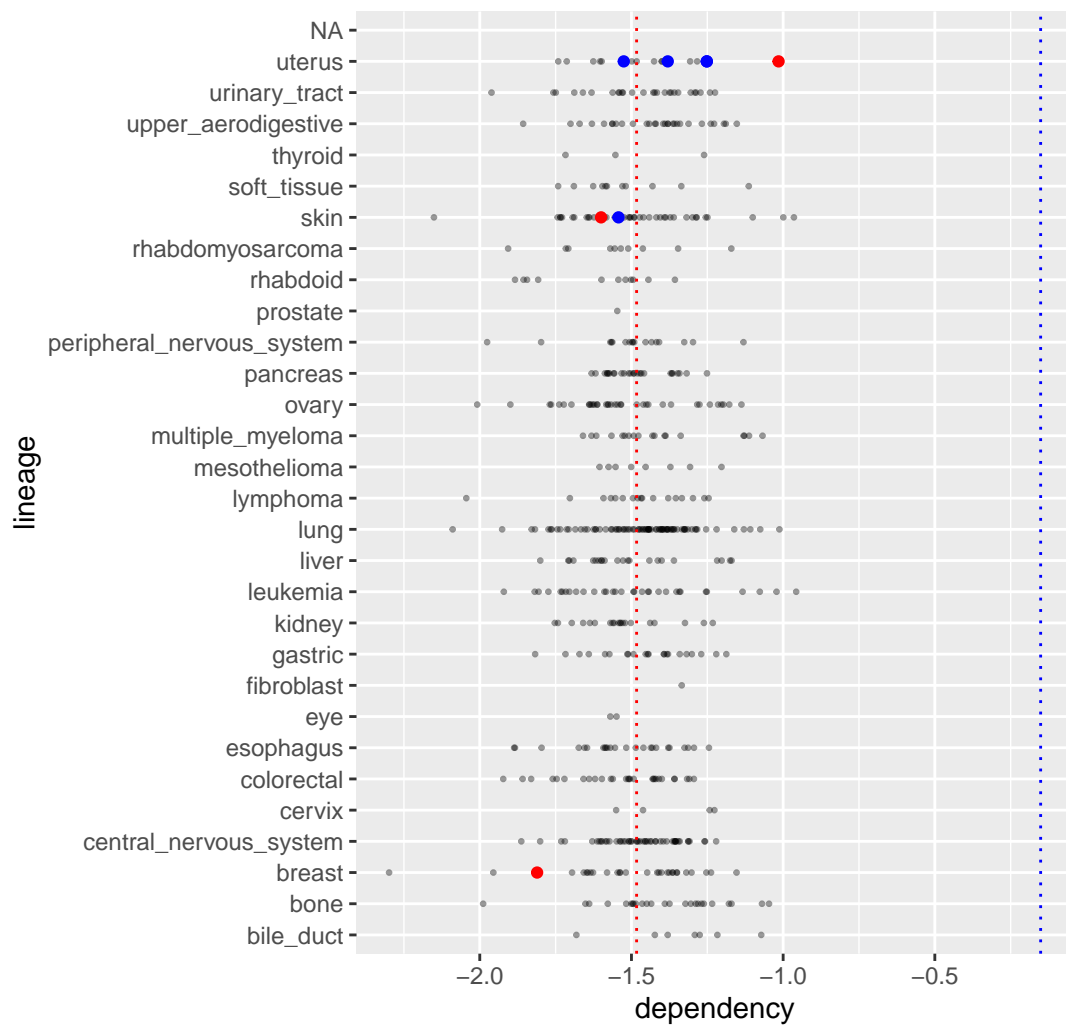


A more complex plot of the crispr data, as shown below involves plotting the distribution of dependency scores for gene RPL14 for each major type of cancer, while highlighting the nature of mutations of this gene in such cancer cell lines (e.g. if such mutations are damaging, etc.). Notice that the plot above reflects the same overall distribution in two dimensions.

```
meta_crispr <- metadata %>%
  dplyr::select(depmap_id, lineage) %>%
  dplyr::full_join(crispr, by = "depmap_id") %>%
  dplyr::filter(gene_name == "RPL14") %>%
  dplyr::full_join((mutationCalls %>%
    dplyr::select(depmap_id, entrez_id,
      is_cosmic_hotspot, var_annotation)),
    by = c("depmap_id", "entrez_id"))

meta_crispr %>%
  ggplot(aes(x = dependency, y = lineage)) +
  geom_point(alpha = 0.4, size = 0.5) +
  geom_point(data = subset(meta_crispr,
    var_annotation == "damaging"), color = "red") +
  geom_point(data = subset(meta_crispr,
    var_annotation == "other non-conserving"),
    color = "blue") +
  geom_vline(xintercept = mean(meta_crispr$dependency, na.rm = TRUE),
    linetype = "dotted", color = "red") +
  geom_vline(xintercept = mean(crispr$dependency, na.rm = TRUE),
    linetype = "dotted", color = "blue") +
  ggtitle("Plot of CRISPR dep. scores for gene RPL14 by lineage")
```

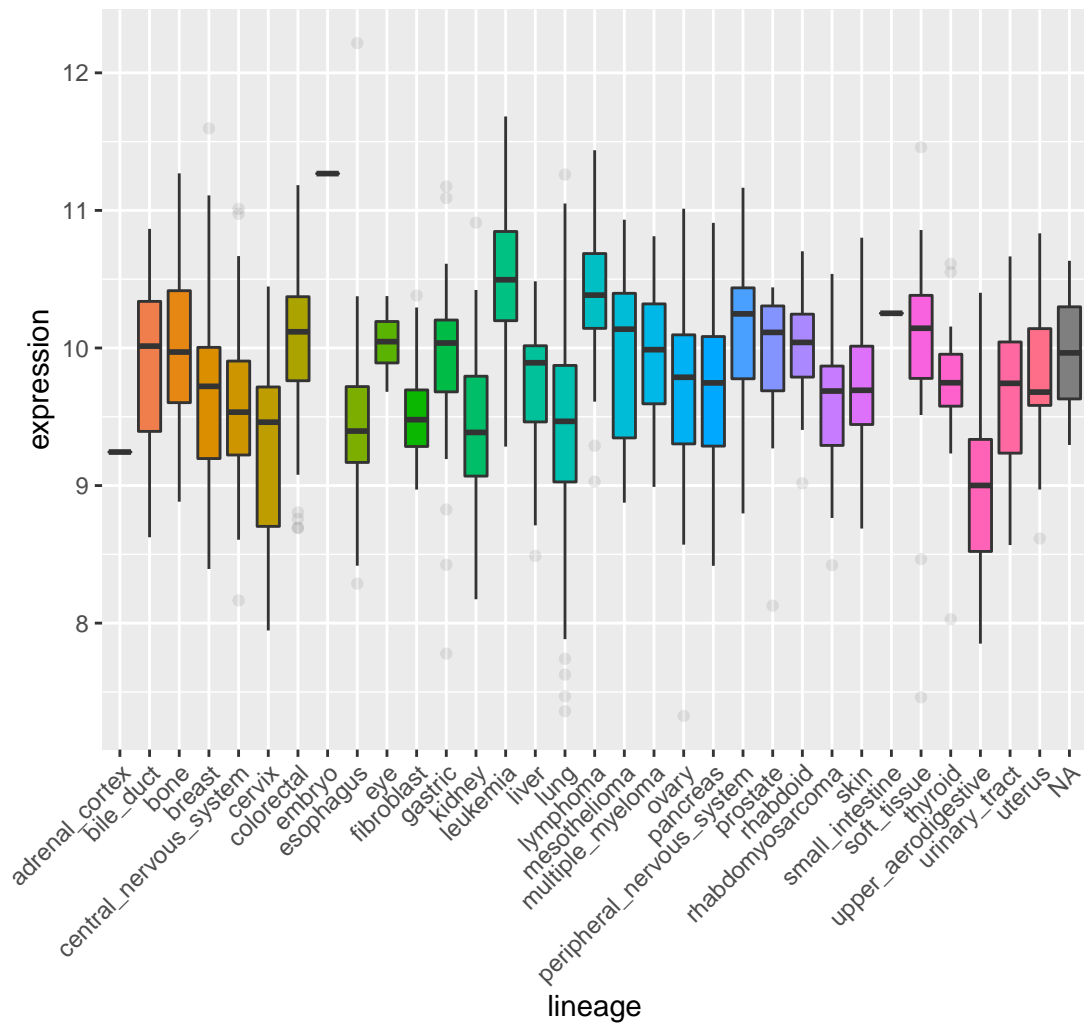
Plot of CRISPR dep. scores for gene RPL14 by



Many cancer phenotypes are the result of changes in gene expression [11, 12, 13]. The extensive coverage of the depmap data affords visualization of genetic expression patterns across many major types of cancer. Displayed below is a boxplot illustrating expression values for gene RPL14 by lineage:

```
metadata %>%
  dplyr::select(depmap_id, lineage) %>%
  dplyr::full_join(TPM, by = "depmap_id") %>%
  dplyr::filter(gene_name == "RPL14") %>%
  ggplot(aes(x = lineage, y = expression, fill = lineage)) +
  geom_boxplot(outlier.alpha = 0.1) +
  ggtitle("Boxplot of TPM expression values for gene RPL14 by lineage") +
  theme(axis.text.x = element_text(angle = 45, hjust = 1)) +
  theme(legend.position = "none")
```

Boxplot of TPM expression values for gene RPL14 by lineage



Differentially expressed genes and elevated genetic dependency in cancer cell lines have been observed [1, 6]. Therefore, such genes are may present themselves as interesting research targets. Below is a plot of expression versus CRISPR gene dependency for Rhabdomyosarcoma Sarcoma. The red vertical line represents the average expression for this form of cancer, while the horizontal line represents the average dependency for this cancer.

```
## expression vs crispr gene dependency for Rhabdomyosarcoma Sarcoma
sarcoma <- metadata %>%
  dplyr::select(depmap_id, cell_line, primary_disease, subtype_disease) %>%
  dplyr::filter(primary_disease == "Sarcoma",
    subtype_disease == "Rhabdomyosarcoma")

crispr_sub <- crispr %>% dplyr::select(depmap_id, gene, gene_name, dependency)

tpm_sub <- TPM %>% dplyr::select(depmap_id, gene, gene_name, expression)

sarcoma_dep <- sarcoma %>% dplyr::left_join(crispr_sub, by = "depmap_id") %>%
  dplyr::select(-cell_line, -primary_disease,
    -subtype_disease, -gene_name)

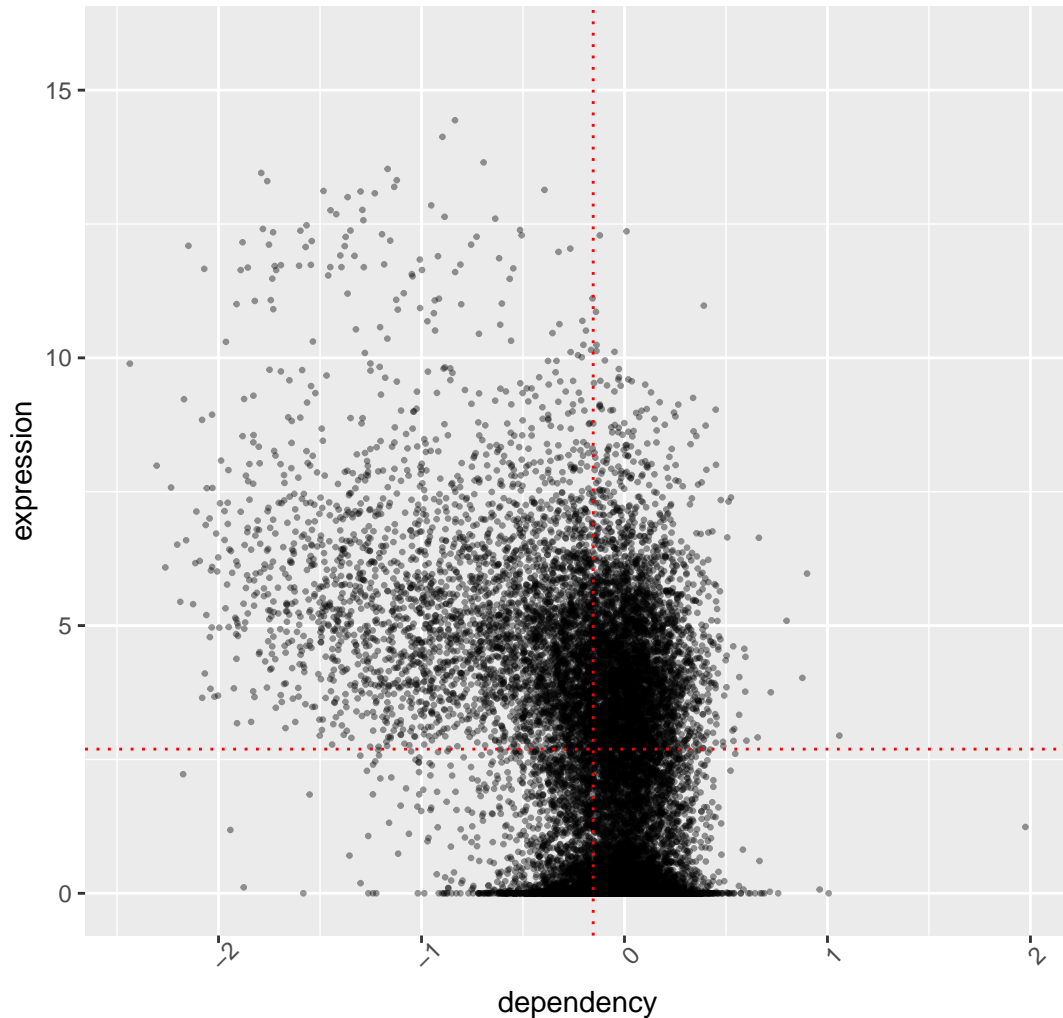
sarcoma_exp <- sarcoma %>% dplyr::left_join(tpm_sub, by = "depmap_id")

sarcoma_dat_exp <- dplyr::full_join(sarcoma_dep, sarcoma_exp,
  by = c("depmap_id", "gene")) %>%
  dplyr::filter(!is.na(expression))

p3 <- ggplot(data = sarcoma_dat_exp, aes(x = dependency, y = expression)) +
  geom_point(alpha = 0.4, size = 0.5) +
```

```
geom_vline(xintercept = mean(sarcoma_dat_exp$dependency, na.rm = TRUE),
  linetype = "dotted", color = "red") +
geom_hline(yintercept = mean(sarcoma_dat_exp$expression, na.rm = TRUE),
  linetype = "dotted", color = "red") +
ggtitle("Scatterplot of CRISPR dependency vs expression values for gene")
p3 + theme(axis.text.x = element_text(angle = 45))
```

Scatterplot of CRISPR dependency vs expression values for gene



Genes with the lowest dependency scores and highest TPM gene expression are found in the upper left section of the plot above. Such genes may present an example as interesting research targets. Below shows a table of such genes.

```
sarcoma_dat_exp %>%
  dplyr::select(cell_line, gene_name, dependency, expression) %>%
  dplyr::arrange(dependency, expression) %>%
  head(10)
```

```
## # A tibble: 10 x 4
##   cell_line      gene_name dependency expression
##   <chr>          <chr>          <dbl>      <dbl>
## 1 SCRCRM2_SOFT_TISSUE RAN            -2.44        9.89
## 2 SCRCRM2_SOFT_TISSUE SNRPD1          -2.30        7.99
## 3 SCRCRM2_SOFT_TISSUE POLR2L          -2.26        6.09
## 4 SCRCRM2_SOFT_TISSUE PSMA3            -2.23        7.58
## 5 SCRCRM2_SOFT_TISSUE POLR2I            -2.20        6.51
## 6 SCRCRM2_SOFT_TISSUE ATP6V1B2          -2.19        5.44
```

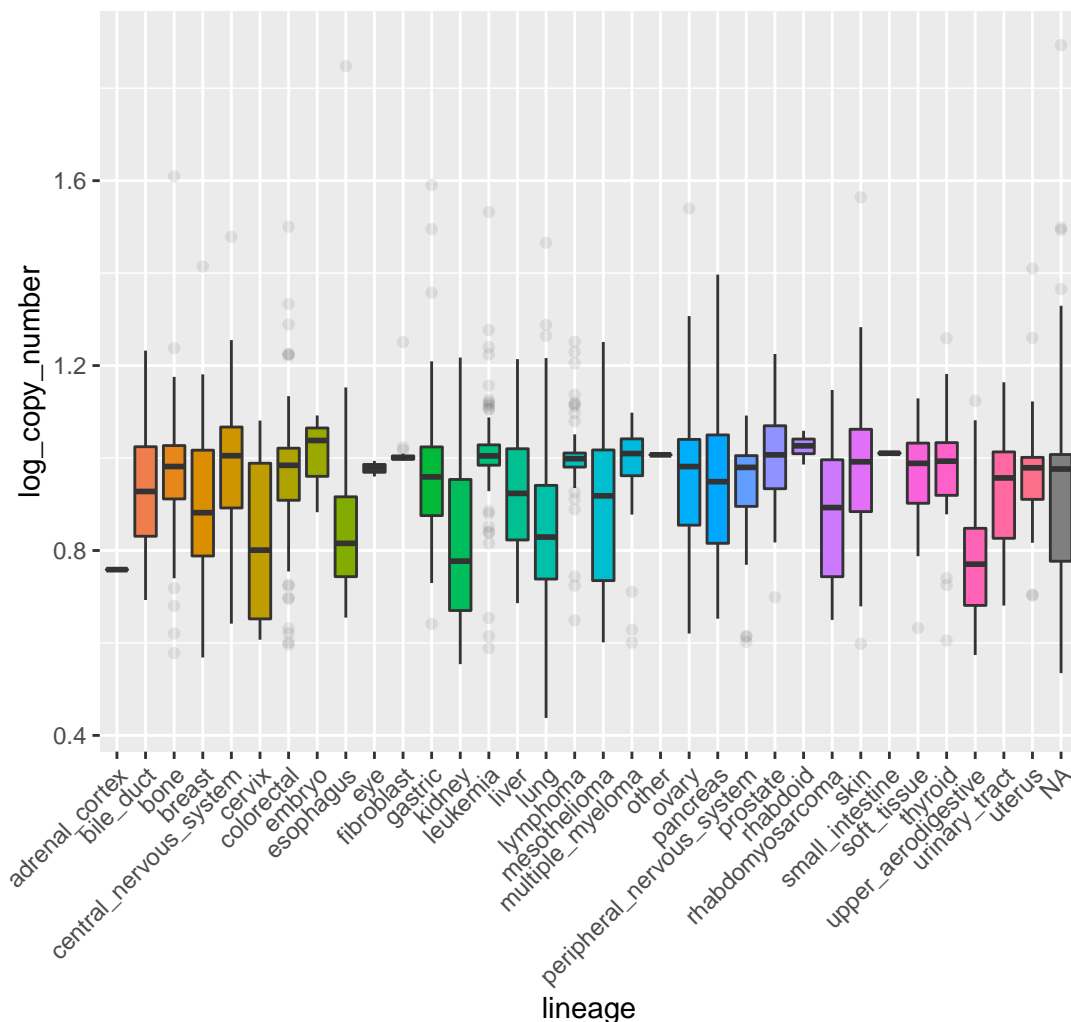


```
## 7 SCRCRM2_SOFT_TISSUE CHAF1B      -2.17      2.22
## 8 SCRCRM2_SOFT_TISSUE HSPE1       -2.17      9.23
## 9 SCRCRM2_SOFT_TISSUE RRM2        -2.16      6.59
## 10 SCRCRM2_SOFT_TISSUE RPL12      -2.15     12.1
```

Changes in genomic copy number also play a role in some cancer phenotypes [3, 14, 15]. The depmap data allows the display of log genomic copy number for across many cancer lineages. Below shows such a plot for gene RPL14 for each major type of cancer lineage:

```
metadata %>%
  dplyr::select(depmap_id, lineage) %>%
  dplyr::full_join(copyNumber, by = "depmap_id") %>%
  dplyr::filter(gene_name == "RPL14") %>%
  ggplot(aes(x = lineage, y = log_copy_number, fill = lineage)) +
  geom_boxplot(outlier.alpha = 0.1) +
  ggtitle("Boxplot of log copy number for gene RPL14 by lineage") +
  theme(axis.text.x = element_text(angle = 45, hjust = 1)) +
  theme(legend.position = "none")
```

Boxplot of log copy number for gene RPL14 by lineage



Discussion and Outlook

We hope that this package will be used by cancer researchers to dig deeper into the Depmap data and to support their research. Additionally, we highly encourage future depmap users to combine depmap data with other datasets of interest, such as TCGA and CCLE.

The depmap R package will continue to be maintained in line with the biannual Bioconductor release, in addition to quarterly releases of Depmap data.

We welcome feedback and questions from the community. We also highly appreciate contributions to the code in the form of pull requests.

Software availability

Please note that this manuscript uses version 1.12 of the depmap R package, which is in the development version of Bioconductor (v.3.10). There are two possible ways of installing it:

- 1) Install the development version of R (v.3.6) — required for Bioconductor v.3.10 — and install depmap using the command:

```
BiocManager::install('depmap', version = 'devel')
```

—or—

- 2) Install depmap 1.0 directly from the github repository using the devtools R package:

```
install.packages('devtools')
library(devtools)
install_github('uclouvain-cbio/depmap')
```

Session information

```
## R version 3.6.3 (2020-02-29)
## Platform: x86_64-pc-linux-gnu (64-bit)
## Running under: Ubuntu 18.04.4 LTS
##
## Matrix products: default
## BLAS: /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/atlas/libblas.so.3.10.3
## LAPACK: /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/atlas/liblapack.so.3.10.3
##
## locale:
##  [1] LC_CTYPE=en_US.UTF-8      LC_NUMERIC=C
##  [3] LC_TIME=fr_FR.UTF-8      LC_COLLATE=en_US.UTF-8
##  [5] LC_MONETARY=fr_FR.UTF-8  LC_MESSAGES=en_US.UTF-8
##  [7] LC_PAPER=fr_FR.UTF-8     LC_NAME=C
##  [9] LC_ADDRESS=C             LC_TELEPHONE=C
## [11] LC_MEASUREMENT=fr_FR.UTF-8 LC_IDENTIFICATION=C
##
## attached base packages:
## [1] parallel stats      graphics grDevices utils      datasets methods
## [8] base
##
## other attached packages:
##  [1] ExperimentHub_1.12.0 AnnotationHub_2.18.0 BiocFileCache_1.10.2
##  [4] dbplyr_1.4.2         BiocGenerics_0.32.0  depmap_1.1.2
##  [7] stringr_1.4.0        gridExtra_2.3        tidyr_1.0.2
## [10] tibble_3.0.0         ggplot2_3.3.0        dplyr_0.8.5
##
## loaded via a namespace (and not attached):
##  [1] Rcpp_1.0.4           utf8_1.1.4
##  [3] assertthat_0.2.1     digest_0.6.25
##  [5] mime_0.9             R6_2.4.1
##  [7] stats4_3.6.3         RSQLite_2.2.0
##  [9] evaluate_0.14        httr_1.4.1
## [11] pillar_1.4.3         rlang_0.4.5
## [13] curl_4.3             rstudioapi_0.11
## [15] blob_1.2.1           S4Vectors_0.24.3
## [17] rmarkdown_2.1        labeling_0.3
## [19] bit_1.1-15.2         munsell_0.5.0
## [21] shiny_1.4.0.2        compiler_3.6.3
## [23] httpuv_1.5.2         xfun_0.12
```

```
## [25] pkgconfig_2.0.3          htmltools_0.4.0
## [27] tidyselect_1.0.0         interactiveDisplayBase_1.24.0
## [29] bookdown_0.18            IRanges_2.20.2
## [31] fansi_0.4.1             crayon_1.3.4
## [33] withr_2.1.2             later_1.0.0
## [35] rappdirs_0.3.1          grid_3.6.3
## [37] xtable_1.8-4            gtable_0.3.0
## [39] lifecycle_0.2.0        DBI_1.1.0
## [41] git2r_0.26.1           magrittr_1.5
## [43] scales_1.1.0           BiocWorkflowTools_1.12.1
## [45] cli_2.0.2              stringi_1.4.6
## [47] farver_2.0.3           fs_1.3.2
## [49] promises_1.1.0         ellipsis_0.3.0
## [51] vctrs_0.2.4            tools_3.6.3
## [53] bit64_0.9-7           Biobase_2.46.0
## [55] glue_1.3.2             purrr_0.3.3
## [57] BiocVersion_3.10.1     fastmap_1.0.1
## [59] yaml_2.2.1            AnnotationDbi_1.48.0
## [61] colorspace_1.4-1       BiocManager_1.30.10
## [63] memoise_1.1.0         knitr_1.28
## [65] usethis_1.5.1
```

Competing interests

No competing interests were disclosed.

Grant information

References

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