

Orthology and Ontologies

Learning objectives:

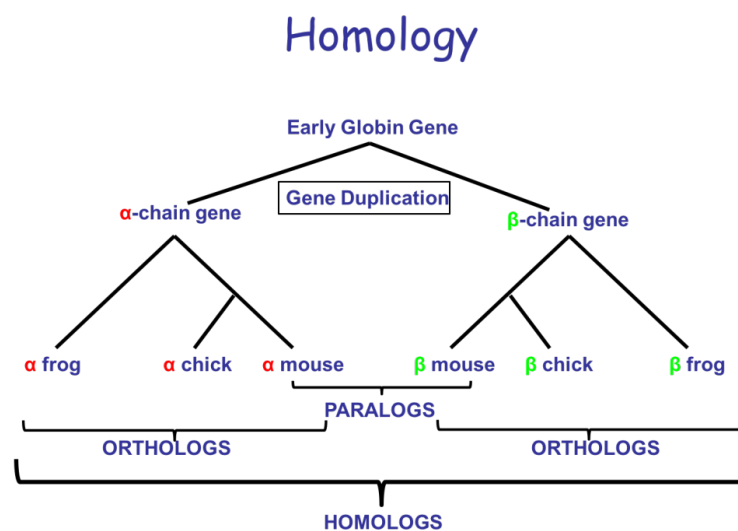
- Combine searches using the strategy system.
- GO enrichment

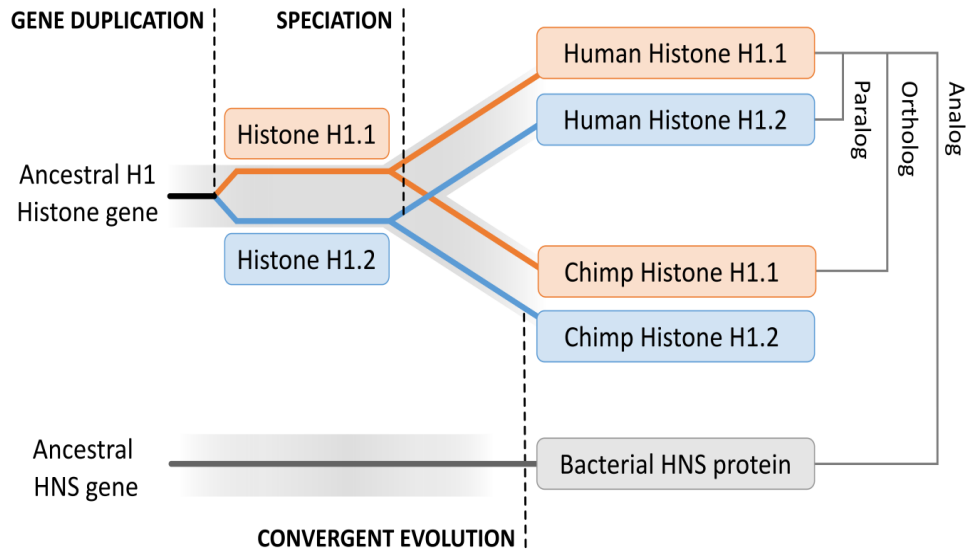
About Orthology and Phyletics

Homologs are genes that share ancestry either by speciation (orthologs), gene duplication (paralogs), or gene transfer events (xenologs). Paralogs of a conserved gene may occur in a single species or strain. Conserved sequences in genomes can be used to infer evolutionary history (e.g., ribosomal sequences), their similarities and differences can be used to trace the divergence and evolution of organisms. Genes that share function by convergent evolution, but do not share ancestry are known as analogs.

Ortholog groups can also allow you to explore the potential functions of a gene, or group of genes across species. In pathogens like *Plasmodium falciparum*, ortholog groups might facilitate the identification of potential targets for drug or vaccine development. A good place to start for more information about homology is [Koonin, EV. Orthologs, paralogs and evolution. Annu Rev Genet 2005.](#)

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*Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1. Gene phylogeny (orange and blue) within species phylogeny (grey). Top shows an ancestral gene duplication event, producing two paralogs of the Histone H1 gene, producing H1.1 and H1.2. This is followed by a speciation event leading to Chimpanzee and Human Orthologs of the two genes. Bottom shows a gene with separate evolutionary origin that has evolved similar function to H1 Histones through convergent evolution, HNS (histone-like nucleoid-structuring protein). HNS is a bacterial analog to H1 Histone. Figure adapted from [this image](#) by Thomas Shafee (2018).*

About OrthoMCL

OrthoMCL is a genome-scale database that groups orthologous protein sequences across the tree of life. An orthogroup contains genes descended from a common ancestor by a process of duplication and speciation (see figure above), so a single orthogroup may contain both genes across different species with similar function and paralogs within a single species. Each protein in every OrthoMCL species is assigned to precisely one ortholog group (e.g. [OG6_162879](#)). Importantly, proteins within a single OrthoMCL group have been shown to display a high degree of functional conservation (e.g., a group's proteins have consistent EC numbers) ([Li et al. 2003](#)). Orthology is important in predicting the function of the rapidly increasing number of newly identified proteins produced by genome sequencing and the automated discovery of protein sequences ([Glover et al. 2019](#)). Within VEuPathDB, orthology can be used to transform a list of genes from one species into their closest equivalents in another species.

OrthoMCL contains two sets of genomes. A **Core** set of 150 genomes have been chosen as well annotated reference organisms that broadly represent the major branches of the tree of life. The OrthoMCL algorithm uses BLAST to calculate pairwise distances among all proteins in the 150 core genomes, normalizes the scores for sequence length and evolutionary distance, then uses MCL clustering ([Dongen 2000](#); www.micans.org/mcl) to create orthogroups of similar proteins. All of the non-core VEuPathDB species (pathogens, hosts, and vectors) have been added as **Peripheral** organisms, in some cases including multiple strains and genome assemblies for the same species. All proteins from the Peripheral organisms are assigned to the most similar Core cluster by best BLAST score, but proteins that do not match any Core protein with an e-value better than $1e^{-5}$ are set aside as

Residuals. Pairwise BLAST distances among all Residual proteins are computed and used for a second round of MCL clustering to create Residual groups (e.g. [OG6r20_100305](#))

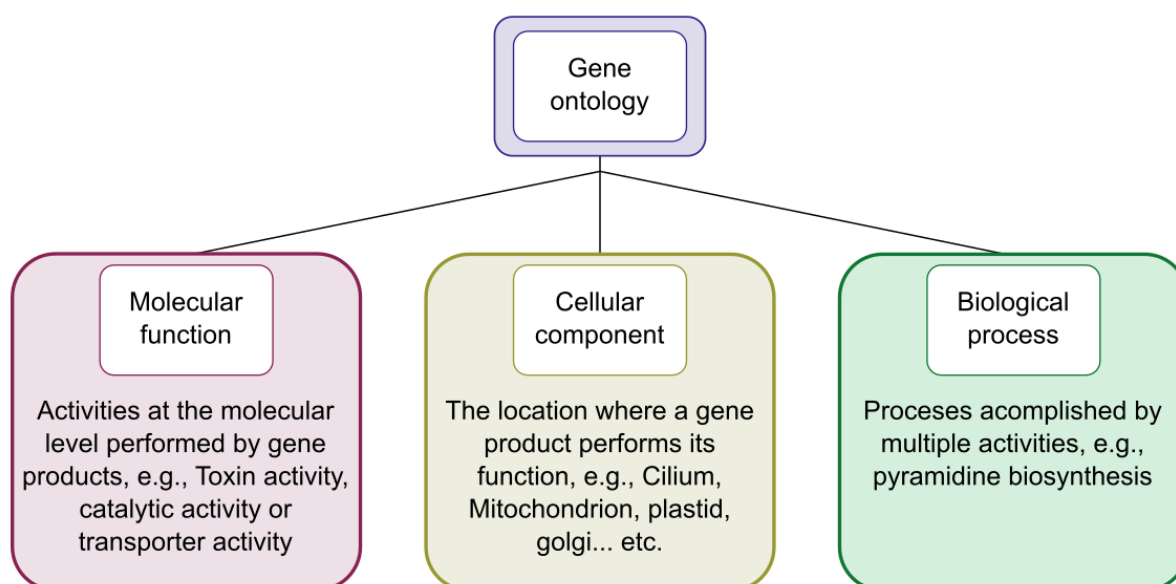
The OrthoMCL website offers the ability to explore ortholog groups by taxonomy, number of proteins or species, sequence similarity, EC numbers, PFAM domains, and text search of gene descriptions. Users can use the Ortholog Group or Protein queries in the grey Search box to the left or the Searches menu in the header bar, or just type a search term in the 'Site search' box above which will result in a list of proteins and groups to explore. In addition, users can use a VEuPathDB Galaxy workflow to map their own set of proteins (e.g. protein sequences derived from a genome sequence of an organism) to OrthoMCL groups. See the [Assign Proteins to Groups](#) page.

For more information, see the [About OrthoMCL](#) and [OrthoMCL FAQ](#) pages.

About Gene Ontology

Ontologies are a controlled vocabulary of terms and concepts with relationships between them. Gene Ontology describes the knowledge of biological sciences and divides this knowledge into three broad categories: Molecular function, cellular component, and biological process. To learn more about Gene Ontology, please visit:

<http://geneontology.org/docs/ontology-documentation/>



A gene can be assigned a GO term either manually (by an annotator or curator when they evaluate experimental evidence from a publication) or computationally (based on the GO terms of genes that share sequence or functional domains). The origin of the assignment is documented; some researchers believe that manually assigned functional annotations are more accurate than those that are electronically transferred since a researcher has reviewed the manually annotated assignments. GO terms can be used to test whether your set of genes are enriched for a molecular function, cellular component, or biological process.

For example: A researcher performs a proteomics experiment on a protein fraction collected during an antimalarial treatment and identifies 100 proteins in total. When they examine the GO terms assigned to the gene set corresponding to the proteome, they see that 25 genes are assigned GO:0016301, kinase activity. Out of 5000 genes in the genome, only 100 are assigned GO:0016301. There is an overrepresentation of GO:0016301 in the researcher's proteome which is 'enriched' for kinase activity.

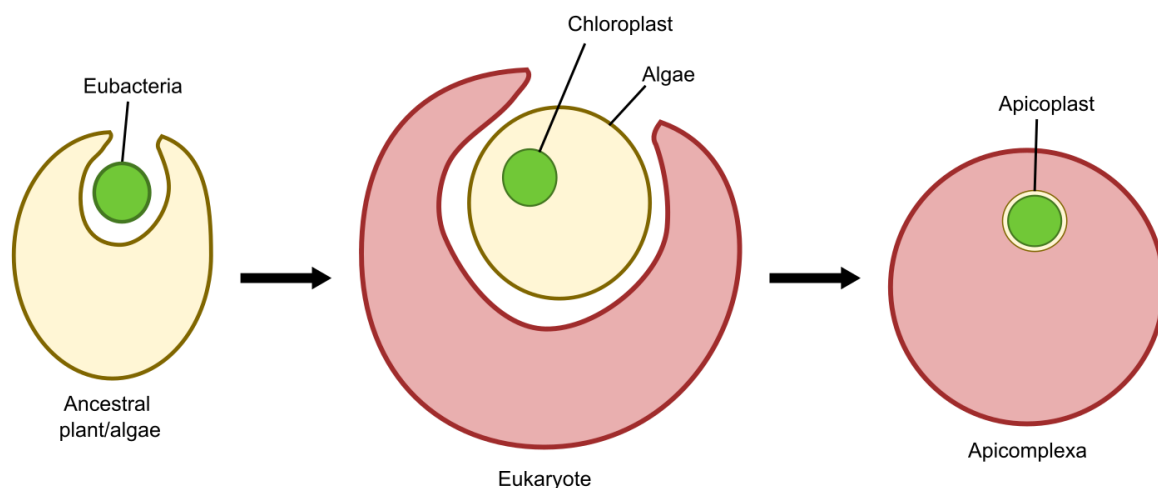
A standard enrichment determination method employs Fisher's exact test, a statistical test that evaluates a 2x2 contingency table (in this case, the number of genes in my set versus number of genes from the same genome not in my set, and number of genes with GO term X versus number of genes without term X). This test produces a p-value between 0 and 1, where $p \leq 0.05$ is considered significant (that is, less than 5% probability that the enrichment is due to chance).

However, the test is performed for each of the 100s of GO terms, increasing the chances that a GO term will be incorrectly considered enriched (a false positive, or type I, error). Thus, the original p-value must be adjusted for so-called multiple hypothesis testing, resulting in an adjusted p-value such as the Benjamini-Hochberg false discovery rate (FDR) or Bonferroni adjusted p-value.

1. **Identify apicoplast targeted genes in *Toxoplasma* and *Neurospora*.** Note: For this exercise use <https://veupathdb.org/veupathdb/app>

What is an apicoplast?

The apicoplast likely became encased in four membranes via a double endosymbiotic event. The chloroplast arose by engulfment of a cyanobacteria by a plant/algae ancestor. An algae was then engulfed by the ancestor of all apicomplexans. Thus, an apicoplast organelle arose with four membranes.



- a. Start by finding genes in *Plasmodium* that are predicted to target the apicoplast.
Hint: Navigate to the Pfal 3D7 Subcellular Localization search for Apicoplast. You can filter the types of search by text query.

Site search, e.g. PF3D7_1133400 or *reductase or "binding protein"

My Strategies **Searches** Tools My Workspace Data About Help

pf

Genes

- Protein features and properties
 - InterPro Domain
- Protein targeting and localization
 - Pfal 3D7 Subcellular Localization**
- Structure analysis

Find genes whose protein products are likely targeted to the apicoplast or the RBC membrane.

Identify Genes based on P.f. Subcellular Localization

Localization

Apicoplast

Get Answer

Subcell Loc
499 Genes

+ Add a step

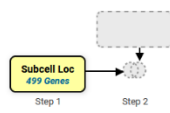
Step 1

- b. Expand your list of potentially Apicoplast targeted proteins by adding a GO terms search for the term "apicoplast" or the GO ID: "GO:0020011" in *P. falciparum* 3D7 (Which Boolean operation should you use? Union or intersect?)




Add a step to your search strategy

Combine with other Genes



Step 1 Step 2

Transform into related records



Step 1 Step 2



Use Genomic Colocation to combine with other features

1 Choose how to combine with other Genes

☐ 1 INTERSECT 2 ☒ 1 UNION 2 ☐ 1 MINUS 2 ☐ 2 MINUS 1

2 Choose which Genes to combine. From...

☒ A new search ☐ An existing strategy ☐ My basket

Function prediction

[GO Term](#)



Phenotype

[CRISPR Phenotype](#)

Text

[Text \(product name, notes, etc.\)](#)

Search for Genes by GO Term



The results will be  unioned with  the results of Step 1.

[Configure Search](#) [Learn More](#) [View Data Sets Used](#)

Organism

1 selected, out of 622

[select only these](#) | [add these](#) | [clear these](#)

- Apicomplexa
 - Aconoidasida
 - Haemosporida
 - Plasmodiidae
 - Plasmodium
 - Plasmodium falciparum
 - ☒ Plasmodium falciparum 3D7 [Reference]

Evidence

☒ Curated

☒ Computed


[select all](#) | [clear all](#)

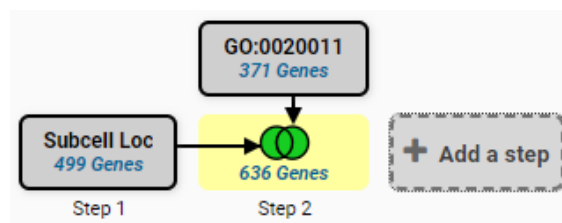
Limit to GO Slim terms

☐ Yes

☒ No

GO Term or GO ID





- c. Add a step to your strategy that transforms the results with *Toxoplasma* and *Neospora* orthologs.

Transform into related records

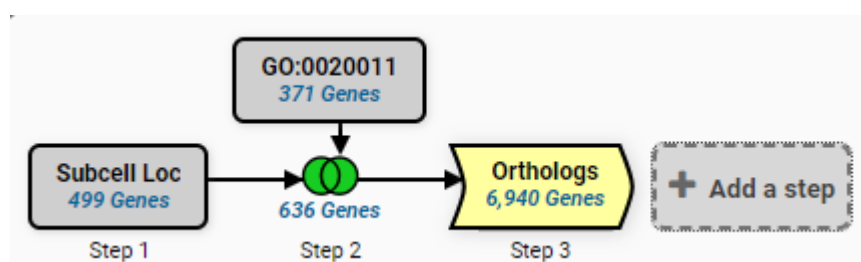
Organism

17 selected, out of 675
[select all](#) | [clear all](#) | [expand all](#) | [collapse all](#)

Filter list below... ? ☐ Reference only

- ☐ Amoebozoa
- ☒ Apicomplexa
 - ☐ Aconoidasida
 - ☒ Conoidasida
 - ☒ Coccidia
 - ☐ Cryptosporidiidae
 - ☐ Eimeriidae
 - ☒ Sarcocystidae
 - ☐ Besnoitia besnoiti strain Bb-Ger1 [Reference]
 - ☐ Cystoisospora suis strain Wien I [Reference]
 - ☐ Hammondia hammondi strain H.H.34 [Reference]
 - ☒ Neospora
 - ☐ Sarcocystis
 - ☒ Toxoplasma
 - ☐ Eugregarinorida
- ☐ Chromeraceae
- ☐ Euglenozoa
- ☐ Fornicata
- ☐ Fungi
- ☐ Heterolobosea
- ☐ Metazoa
- ☐ Oomycota
- ☐ Parabasalia
- ☐ Preaxostyla
- ☐ Vitrellaceae

Run Step



- d. Although *Cryptosporidium* is an apicomplexan parasite it has lost its apicoplast! Use this fact to refine your results from the above search and remove genes that also have orthologs in *Cryptosporidium*.

Hint: try subtracting out any orthologs present in *Cryptosporidium*. You will need to use a nested strategy. First retrieve all *Cryptosporidium* genes with the Genes by Taxonomy search and then transform these to their *Toxoplasma* and *Neospora* orthologs for the subtraction to complete. Think about what kind of intersection you should be using!

← Add a step to your search strategy ?

Combine with other Genes

Step 3 Step 4

Transform into related records

Step 3 Step 4

- Choose *how* to combine with other Genes

☐ 3 INTERSECT 4
 ☐ 3 UNION 4
 ☒ 3 MINUS 4
 ☐ 4 MINUS 3
- Choose *which* Genes to combine. From...

☒ A new search
 ☐ An existing strategy
 ☐ My basket

Taxonomy
☒ Organism



Add a step to your search strategy

The results will be subtracted from the results

Configure Search Learn More View Data Sets Used

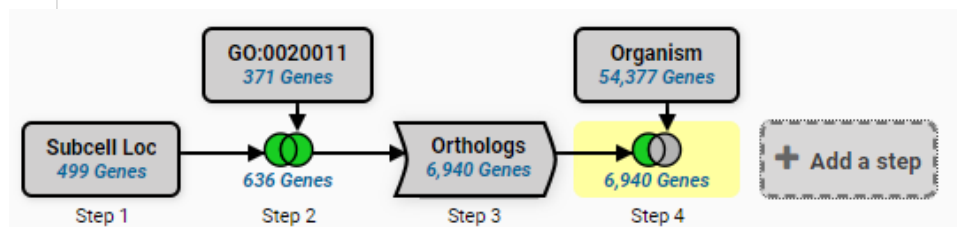
Reset values to default

Organism

14 selected, out of 675
[select only these](#) | [add these](#) | [clear these](#)

☐ Reference only

- [-] Apicomplexa
 - [-] Conoidasida
 - [-] Coccidia
 - ☒ Cryptosporidiidae
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium andersoni isolate 30847 [Reference]
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium bovis isolate 45015 [Reference]
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium hominis
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium hominis TU502 [Reference]
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium hominis UdeA01
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium hominis isolate 30976
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium hominis isolate TU502_2012
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium meleagridis strain UKMEL1 [Reference]
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium muris RN66 [Reference]
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium parvum
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium parvum IOWA-ATCC
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium parvum Iowa II [Reference]
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium ryanae 45019 [Reference]
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium sp. chipmunk genotype I strain 37763 [Reference]
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium tyzzeri isolate UGA55 [Reference]
 - ☒ Cryptosporidium ubiquitum isolate 39726 [Reference]



My Organism Preferences (785 of 785) disabled

My Search Strategies

Opened (1) All (1) Public (11) Help

Unnamed Search Strategy *

Details for step **Organism** 54377 Genes

Organism Cryptosporidium andersoni isolate 30847, Cryptosporidium bovis isolate 45015, Cryptosporidium hominis TU502, Cryptosporidium hominis UdeA01, Cryptosporidium hominis isolate 30976, Cryptosporidium hominis isolate TU502_2012, Cryptosporidium meleagridis strain UKMEL1, Cryptosporidium muris RN66, Cryptosporidium parvum IOWA-ATCC, Cryptosporidium parvum Iowa II, Cryptosporidium ryanae 45019, Cryptosporidium sp. chipmunk genotype I strain 37763, Cryptosporidium tyzzeri isolate UGA55, Cryptosporidium ... Show more

+ Ad Give this search a weight

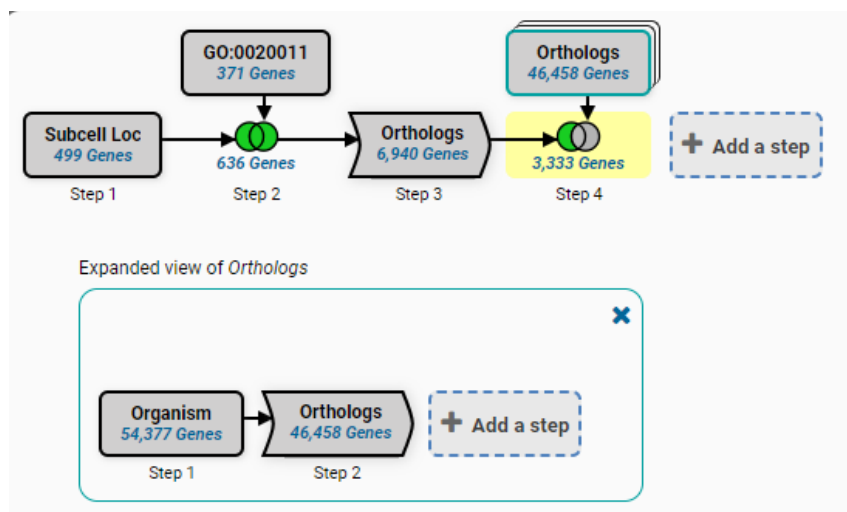
Organism

17 selected, out of 675

select all | clear all | expand all | collapse all

Filter list below...

- ☐ Amoebozoa
- ☒ Apicomplexa
 - ☐ Aconoidasida
 - ☒ Conoidasida
 - ☒ Coccidia
 - ☐ Cryptosporidiidae
 - ☐ Elmeriidae
 - ☒ Sarcocystidae
 - ☐ Besnoitia besnoiti strain Bb-Ger1 [Reference]
 - ☐ Cystoisospora suis strain Wien I [Reference]
 - ☐ Hammondia hammondi strain H.H.34 [Reference]
 - ☒ Neospora
 - ☐ Sarcocystis
 - ☒ Toxoplasma
 - ☐ Eugregarinorida
 - ☐ Chromeraceae
 - ☐ Euglenozoa
 - ☐ Fornicata
 - ☐ Fungi
 - ☐ Heterolobosea
 - ☐ Metazoa
 - ☐ Oomycota
 - ☐ Parabasalia
 - ☐ Preaxostyla
 - ☐ Vitrellaceae



This leaves you with apicomplast specific genes for *Toxoplasma* and *Neospora* that you could target in future research.

<https://veupathdb.org/veupathdb/app/workspace/strategies/import/543f14bfab645f7e>

- e. Use the **Send to** button to explore the data in ToxoDB.

The screenshot shows the VEuPathDB interface. On the left is an 'Organism Filter' with a search bar and a list of organisms. The main area displays a table of gene results for *Neospora caninum*. The table has columns for Gene ID, Transcript ID, Organism, Genomic Location, and Product Description. A 'Send to...' button is circled in red in the top right of the table. A dropdown menu is open from this button, showing a list of databases and strategies. A red arrow points to 'ToxoDB.org Strategy' in the list.

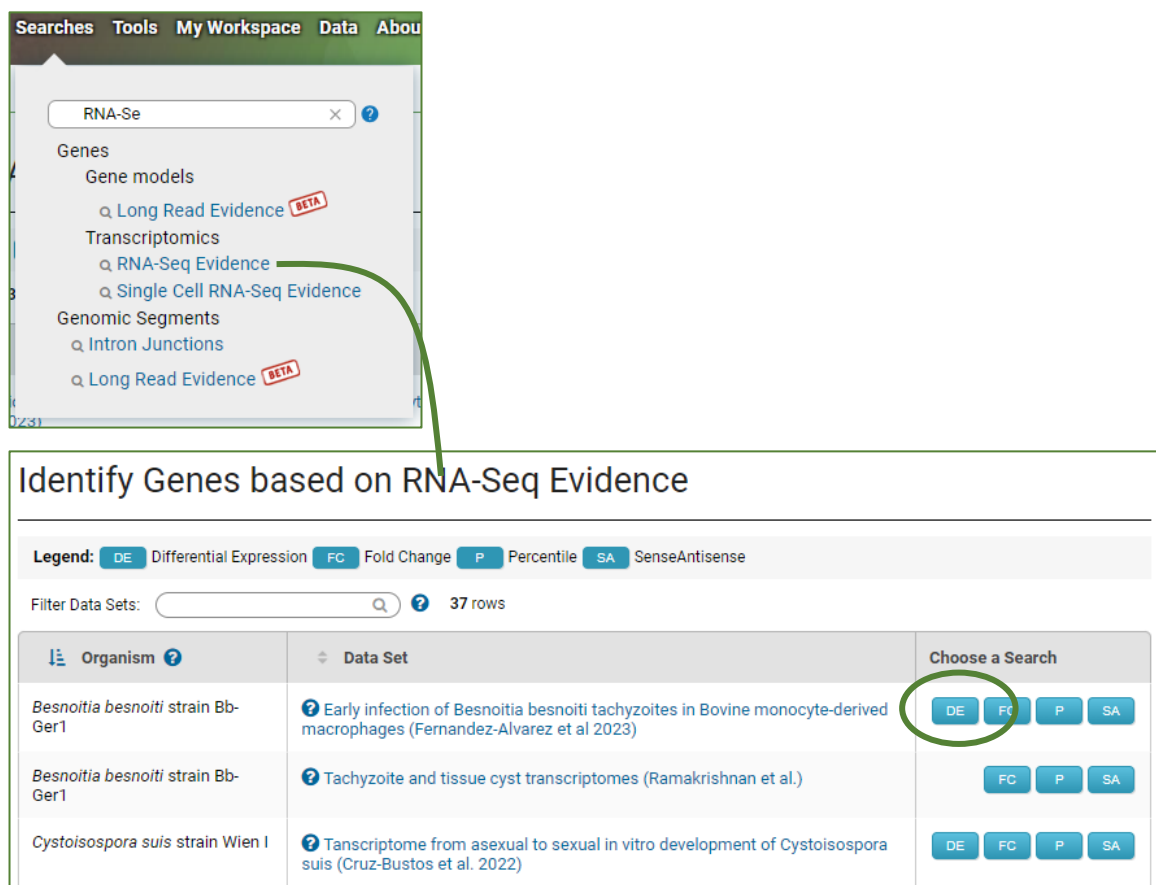
- f. Once your gene list is in ToxoDB intersect your results with the hyper_LOPIT subcellular localization data. Does the hyper_LOPIT data confirm the apicoplast location of *T. gondii* ME49 genes?

The screenshot shows the 'Add a step to your search strategy' dialog box. It has three main sections: 'Combine with other Genes', 'Transform into related records', and 'Use Genomic Colocation to combine with other features'. The 'Combine with other Genes' section is selected, and it shows a diagram of two sets intersecting. Below this, there are radio buttons for '1 INTERSECT 2', '1 UNION 2', '1 MINUS 2', and '2 MINUS 1'. The '1 INTERSECT 2' option is selected. The 'Choose which Genes to combine. From...' section has three radio buttons: 'A new search', 'An existing strategy', and 'My basket'. 'A new search' is selected. Below this is a search box with the text 'subcell' and a dropdown list of related terms: 'Protein targeting and localization', 'Localization by LOPIT Mass Spec', 'Predicted Signal Peptide', and 'Transmembrane Domain Count'. A red arrow points to the 'Localization by LOPIT Mass Spec' option.

2. Determine functional enrichment of the set of genes that are upregulated at least 2-fold in an early infection of *Besnoitia besnoiti* tachyzoites in Bovine monocyte-derived macrophage. For this exercise use [ToxoDB](#).

ToxoDB has RNA-sequence data from a study of the early interaction between *B. besnoiti* tachyzoites and primary bovine monocyte-derived macrophages *in vitro*. [Data set record](#). Dual transcriptomic profiling of *B. besnoiti* tachyzoites and *Bos taurus* macrophages was conducted at early infection 4 h and 8 h post infection by high-throughput RNA sequencing. Bovine macrophages inoculated with heat-killed tachyzoites (MO-hkBb) and non-infected macrophages (MO) were used as controls. In this exercise we will find a list of genes that are differentially expressed based on the RNA Seq data and investigate the functional enrichment (if any) for the gene set.

- a. Run a differential expression search looking for genes that are upregulated at least 2-fold at 8 hours post infection compared to 4 hours with $p < 0.001$. Navigate to the RNA-seq searches in ToxoDB and choose the DE search for **Early infection of *Besnoitia besnoiti* tachyzoites in Bovine monocyte-derived macrophages (Fernandez-Alvarez et al 2023)**.



The screenshot shows the ToxoDB interface. On the left, a sidebar menu under 'Searches' has 'RNA-Se' selected. A green arrow points from 'RNA-Seq Evidence' in the sidebar to the 'Identify Genes based on RNA-Seq Evidence' page. The page has a legend: DE (Differential Expression), FC (Fold Change), P (Percentile), and SA (SenseAntisense). Below the legend, it says 'Filter Data Sets: 37 rows'. The main table lists three data sets. The first row, 'Early infection of *Besnoitia besnoiti* tachyzoites in Bovine monocyte-derived macrophages (Fernandez-Alvarez et al 2023)', has its 'DE' button circled in green. The second row, 'Tachyzoite and tissue cyst transcriptomes (Ramakrishnan et al.)', has 'FC', 'P', and 'SA' buttons. The third row, 'Transcriptome from asexual to sexual in vitro development of *Cystoisospora suis* (Cruz-Bustos et al. 2022)', has 'DE', 'FC', 'P', and 'SA' buttons.

Organism	Data Set	Choose a Search
<i>Besnoitia besnoiti</i> strain Bb-Ger1	Early infection of <i>Besnoitia besnoiti</i> tachyzoites in Bovine monocyte-derived macrophages (Fernandez-Alvarez et al 2023)	DE FC P SA
<i>Besnoitia besnoiti</i> strain Bb-Ger1	Tachyzoite and tissue cyst transcriptomes (Ramakrishnan et al.)	FC P SA
<i>Cystoisospora suis</i> strain Wien I	Transcriptome from asexual to sexual in vitro development of <i>Cystoisospora suis</i> (Cruz-Bustos et al. 2022)	DE FC P SA

- b. Arrange the search to return genes upregulated at least 2-fold ($p < 0.001$) in the 8hr Bbes in MO sample compared to 4hr Bbes in MO.

Experiment

☒ Early infection of *Besnoitia besnoiti* tachyzoites in Bovine monocyte-derived macrophages - Sense
☐ Early infection of *Besnoitia besnoiti* tachyzoites in Bovine monocyte-derived macrophages - Antisense

Reference Sample

☒ 4 hpi Bbes in MO
☐ 8 hpi Bbes in MO

Comparator Sample

☐ 4 hpi Bbes in MO
☒ 8 hpi Bbes in MO

Direction

up-regulated

fold difference >=

2

adjusted P value less than or equal to

0.001

Get Answer

c. From the result page, choose the Analyze Results tab to go to the Enrichment Tool.

Bbes infection in Bbos macrop... 135 Genes

Step 1

135 Genes (118 ortholog groups) [Revise this search](#)

Gene Results **Genome View** **Analyze Results**

Rows per page: 20

Gene ID	Transcript ID	Organism	Product Description	Fold Change	Adjusted P
BESB_010080	mrna.BESB_010080	<i>Besnoitia besnoiti</i> strain Bb-Ger1	rhopty kinase family protein ROP37 (incomplete catalytic triad)	7.28	5.8381
BESB_012870	mrna.BESB_012870	<i>Besnoitia besnoiti</i> strain Bb-Ger1	hypothetical protein	6.83	3.3591
BESB_073760	mrna.BESB_073760	<i>Besnoitia besnoiti</i> strain Bb-Ger1	hypothetical protein	5.71	4.1921
BESB_006260	mrna.BESB_006260	<i>Besnoitia besnoiti</i> strain Bb-Ger1	alpha amylase, catalytic domain-containing protein	5.36	1.1281
BESB_020840	mrna.BESB_020840	<i>Besnoitia besnoiti</i> strain Bb-Ger1	hypothetical protein	5.27	5.1741

Analyze your Gene results with a tool below.

GO






Gene Ontology Enrichment

Metabolic Pathway Enrichment









kinase
phosphatase
exported
membrane

Word Enrichment

- d. Run a GO enrichment analysis on the Biological Process ontology terms associated with your gene list.

Organism  Besnoitia besnoiti strain Bb-Ger1
 Ontology 
☒ Biological Process
☐ Cellular Component
☐ Molecular Function
 Evidence 
☒ Computed
☒ Curated
select all | clear all
 Limit to GO Slim terms 
☒ No
☐ Yes
 P-Value cutoff  0.05 (0 - 1)
 Submit

Analysis Results: 27 rows Open in Revigo Show Word Cloud Download

GO ID 	GO Term 	Genes in the bkgd with this term 	Genes in your result with this term 	Percent of bkgd genes in your result 	Fold enrichment 	Odds ratio 	P-value 	Benjamini 	Bonferroni 
GO:0006468	protein phosphorylation	200	19	9.5	5.75	7.78	3.02e-10	2.74e-8	5.25e-8
GO:0016310	phosphorylation	225	20	8.9	5.38	7.30	3.15e-10	2.74e-8	5.49e-8
GO:0006796	phosphate-containing compound metabolic process	372	23	6.2	3.74	5.02	1.57e-8	7.17e-7	2.72e-6
GO:0006793	phosphorus metabolic process	373	23	6.2	3.73	5.01	1.65e-8	7.17e-7	2.87e-6
GO:0036211	protein modification process	363	22	6.1	3.67	4.84	5.03e-8	1.46e-6	8.75e-6

- e. What is the top enriched GO term from this analysis? Does this make sense for an enrichment analysis of the biological processes associated with your differentially expressed genes? Notice that the p-value with Benjamini or Bonferroni correction is very low. What do each of the columns in the analysis table represent? Hint: move your mouse over the question mark next to each column header

- Fold enrichment -The ratio of the proportion of genes in the list of interest with a specific GO term over the proportion of genes in the background with that term.
- Odds ratio -The odds of the GO term appearing in the gene list are the same as that for the background list.
- P-value –The null hypothesis or the probability of getting a result that is equal or greater than what was observed.
- Benjamini-Hochburg false discovery rate – A method for controlling false discovery rates for type 1 errors.

- f. Click on the link in the 'Genes in your result with this term' column. This will create a one-step strategy that returns only the genes with this GO term.
- g. Perform the enrichment analysis on the other ontologies. Its possible to modify the paramaters of the current enrichment analysis but you will overwrite your current results. To run a new analysis and save the old, start with the Analyze Results tab.

- h. Is there a cellular location or molecular function that is enriched? Do these support the biological process enrichments?