

# Training Exercise: Post-GWAS Analysis Using FUMA

KidneyGenAfrica Training Programme

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January 2026

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# What is Post-GWAS Analysis?

Post-GWAS analysis refers to analyses performed **after a genome-wide association study (GWAS)** to translate statistical associations into biological insight.

Goals:

- Interpret GWAS signals beyond single SNP associations
- Identify relevant variants, genes, and pathways
- Link genetic signals to biological mechanisms

# Key Inputs for Post-GWAS

Post-GWAS analyses typically rely on:

- GWAS summary statistics
- Linkage disequilibrium (LD) information
- Genotype or reference panel data
- External functional and biological databases

# Common Post-GWAS Analyses

- Quality assessment:  $\lambda$ , QQ plots, Manhattan plots
- Identification of significant SNPs and loci
- Fine-mapping to prioritize causal variants
- Functional annotation and visualization
- Replication of known associations

# Gene-Level and Pathway Analyses

- Gene-based association tests
- Gene-set and pathway enrichment analyses
- Variant-to-gene mapping using:
  - eQTLs
  - Chromatin interaction data

# More Advanced Analyses

- Polygenic Risk Scores (PRS)
- Mendelian Randomization
- Multi-omics integration:
  - Transcriptomics
  - Epigenomics
  - Proteomics

The choice of tools depends on:

- Research question
- Available data
- Computational resources



## Advantages

- High flexibility
- Full transparency

## Limitations

- Time-consuming
- Error-prone

# Common Tools for Manual Analysis

- **PLINK** – filtering, clumping
- **GCTA** – conditional analysis, heritability
- **LocusZoom** – regional plots
- **FINEMAP, SuSiE, CAVIAR** – fine-mapping
- **ANNOVAR, VEP** – variant annotation
- **MAGMA** – gene and gene-set analysis
- **R / Python** – custom analyses

# Pipelines and Workflows

- Automated and reproducible
- Scalable (HPC / cloud)
- Require setup and maintenance

## Example:

- H3AGWAS pipeline

- Minimal computational burden
- Predefined workflows
- Reduced flexibility

## **Example:**

- FUMA

# What is FUMA?

FUMA (Functional Mapping and Annotation of GWAS) is a web-based platform for:

- Functional annotation of GWAS results
- Gene prioritization
- Visualization and biological interpretation

Tutorial: <https://fuma.ctglab.nl/tutorial>

- **SNP2GENE**

- SNP selection
- Locus definition
- Functional annotation
- MAGMA analysis

- **GENE2FUNC**

- Expression and pathway analysis

- **Cell Type**

- Cell-type enrichment using MAGMA

# Independent Significant SNPs

Independent significant SNPs:

- $P \leq 5 \times 10^{-8}$
- Independent at  $r^2 \leq 0.6$

They serve as anchors for downstream analyses.

## Lead SNPs:

- Subset of independent significant SNPs
- Independent at a stricter threshold ( $r^2 < 0.1$ )
- Represent distinct association signals



Genomic risk loci are defined by:

- 1 Grouping SNPs in LD ( $r^2 \geq 0.1$ )
- 2 Merging nearby loci (default 250 kb)
- 3 Selecting the SNP with the smallest P-value

## Candidate SNPs:

- In LD with independent significant SNPs
- Optional threshold:  $P \leq 0.05$
- Fully annotated and used for gene mapping

# Functional Annotation Outputs

- Annotated candidate SNPs
- ANNOVAR functional consequences
- Mapped genes
- eQTL mappings
- GWAS Catalog overlap

# Gene-Based Analysis with MAGMA

- SNP-wise mean model
- SNPs assigned to genes by position
- Gene-level association statistics
- Gene-set and gene-property analyses

# Visualization in FUMA

- SNP-level Manhattan plots
- Gene-based Manhattan plots
- Regional association plots

Alternative tool:

- LocusZoom v2: <http://locuszoom.org/>

# Interpretation and Limitations

- LD-based loci are approximations
- Lead SNPs are not necessarily causal
- Multiple signals may be merged into one locus

Bayesian fine-mapping provides more precise causal inference.

# Dataset Description

- ~67,000 African American individuals
- Meta-analysis of 8 cohorts
- Generated using METAL

Data: <https://susztaklab.com/GWAS2M/Download.php>

# FUMA Parameters Used

- Reference panel: 1000 Genomes (African populations)
- LD threshold:  $r^2 > 0.6$
- MAF  $> 0.01$
- eQTL mapping enabled
- MAGMA enabled

Results: <https://fuma.ctglab.nl/browse/697303>



# Exercise Questions (1)

- How many genomic risk loci are identified?
- How are lead SNPs supported by neighboring variants?
- What differences do you observe across loci?

# Exercise Questions (2)

- Which loci overlap with GWAS Catalog?
- Which loci appear novel?
- What are the limitations of GWAS Catalog overlap?

# Exercise Questions (3)

- Which SNPs are potentially pathogenic?
- Which genes are significant in MAGMA?
- How do gene-based and SNP-based results differ?

# African-Ancestry Considerations

- Is  $5 \times 10^{-8}$  appropriate?
- Impact of higher diversity and shorter LD
- Trans-ethnic significance thresholds
- Alternative validation strategies