

¹ Transcripts with high distal heritability mediate genetic effects on
² complex metabolic traits

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⁷ **Abstract**

⁸ Although many genes are subject to local regulation, recent evidence suggests that complex distal regulation
⁹ may be more important in mediating phenotypic variability. To assess the role of distal gene regulation in
¹⁰ complex traits, we combined multi-tissue transcriptomes with physiological outcomes to model diet-induced
¹¹ obesity and metabolic disease in a population of Diversity Outbred mice. Using a novel high-dimensional
¹² mediation analysis, we identified a composite transcriptome signature that summarized genetic effects on
¹³ gene expression and explained 30% of the variation across all metabolic traits. The signature was heritable,
¹⁴ interpretable in biological terms, and predicted obesity status from gene expression in an independently
¹⁵ derived mouse cohort and multiple human studies. Transcripts contributing most strongly to this composite
¹⁶ mediator frequently had complex, distal regulation distributed throughout the genome. These results suggest
¹⁷ that trait-relevant variation in transcription is largely distally regulated, but is nonetheless identifiable,
¹⁸ interpretable, and translatable across species.

¹⁹ **Introduction**

²⁰ Gene expression is an important mediator between genotype and phenotype. There is ample evidence from
²¹ genome-wide association studies (GWAS) that regulation of gene expression accounts for the bulk of the
²² genetic effect on complex traits, as most trait-associated variants lie in gene regulatory regions^{1–7}. It is widely
²³ assumed that these variants influence local transcription, and methods such as transcriptome-wide association
²⁴ studies (TWAS)^{8–11} and summary data-based Mendelian randomization (SMR)¹⁰ have capitalized on this
²⁵ idea to identify genes associated with multiple disease traits^{12–15}

26 Despite the great promise of these methods, explaining trait effects with local gene regulation has been more
27 difficult than initially assumed^{16;17}. Although trait-associated variants tend to lie in non-coding, regulatory
28 regions, they often do not have detectable effects on gene expression¹⁶ and tend not to co-localize with
29 expression quantitative trait loci (eQTLs)^{17;18}.

30 The difficulty in explaining trait variation through local eQTLs may arise in part because gene expression is
31 not measured in the appropriate cell types¹⁶, or cell states¹⁹, and thus local eQTLs influencing traits cannot
32 be detected. In this situation, the effects of regulatory variants are measured indirectly, and gene expression
33 levels are a function of the broader transcription network. Because of the complexity of interactions in these
34 networks, every gene's expression is influenced indirectly by many variants throughout the genome, which is
35 observable as distal regulation^{18;20;21;15} over and above the effects of local variants. The transcriptome, then,
36 is an emergent state arising from the interactions defining and constraining gene expression. This model
37 suggests that the genetic control over the expression of trait-relevant genes, whose expression is directly
38 related to clinical outcomes, may be observable as largely distal and not localizable as eQTLs.

39 To assess the role of wide-spread distal gene regulation on complex traits, we investigated diet-induced
40 obesity and metabolic disease as an archetypal example. Diet-induced obesity and metabolic disease are
41 genetically complex with hundreds of variants mapped through GWAS^{22;23}. These variants are known to act
42 through multiple tissues that interact dynamically with each other^{24;25}, including adipose tissue, pancreatic
43 islets, liver, and skeletal muscle. The multi-system etiology of metabolic disease complicates mechanistic
44 dissection of the genetic architecture, requiring large, dedicated data sets that include high-dimensional,
45 clinically relevant phenotyping, dense genotyping in a highly recombined population, and transcriptome-wide
46 measurements of gene expression in multiple tissues.

47 Measuring gene expression in multiple tissues is critical to adequately assess the extent to which local gene
48 regulation varies across the tissues and whether such variability might account for previous failed attempts to
49 identify trait-relevant local eQTLs. Such data sets are extremely difficult to obtain in human populations,
50 particularly in the large numbers of subjects required for adequate statistical power. Thus, to further
51 investigate the role of local and distal gene regulation on complex traits, we generated two complementary
52 data sets in mice: A discovery data set in a large population of Diversity Outbred (DO) mice²⁶, and
53 an independent validation data set derived by crossing inbred strains from the Collaborative Cross (CC)
54 recombinant inbred lines²⁷ to form CC recombinant inbred intercross (CC-RIX) mice. Both populations were
55 maintained on a high-fat, high-sugar diet to model diet-induced obesity and metabolic disease¹².

56 The DO population and CC recombinant inbred lines were derived from the same eight inbred founder mouse

57 strains, five classical lab strains, and three strains more recently derived from wild mice²⁶. They represent
58 three subspecies of mouse, *Mus musculus domesticus*, *Mus musculus musculus*, and *Mus musculus castaneus*,
59 and capture 90% of the known variation in laboratory mice²⁸. The DO mice are maintained with a breeding
60 scheme that ensures equal contributions from each founder across the genome thus rendering almost the
61 whole genome visible to genetic inquiry²⁶. The CC mice were initially outcrossed to recombine the genomes
62 from all eight founders, and then inbred for at least 20 generations to generate multiple inbred lines. Because
63 these two populations have common ancestral haplotypes, we could directly and unambiguously compare
64 the local genetic effects on gene expression at the whole-transcriptome level while varying the population
65 structure driving distal regulation.

66 In the DO population, we paired clinically relevant metabolic traits from 371 mice¹², including body weight,
67 plasma levels of insulin, glucose and lipids, with transcriptome-wide gene expression in four tissues related to
68 metabolic disease: adipose tissue, pancreatic islets, liver, and skeletal muscle. We measured similar metabolic
69 traits in a CC-RIX population and gene expression from three of the four tissues used in the DO: adipose
70 tissue, liver, and skeletal muscle. Because the CC-RIX carry the same founder alleles as the DO, local gene
71 regulation is expected to match between the populations, but because the alleles are recombined through
72 the genome, distal effects are expected to vary from those in the DO, allowing us to directly assess the
73 role of local gene regulation in driving trait-associated transcript variation. Together, these data enable a
74 comprehensive view into the genetic architecture of metabolic disease.

75 Results

76 Genetic variation contributed to wide phenotypic variation

77 Although the environment was consistent across the DO mice, the genetic diversity present in this population
78 resulted in widely varying distributions across physiological measurements (Fig. 1). For example, body
79 weights of adult individuals varied from less than the average adult C57BL/6J (B6) body weight to several
80 times the body weight of a B6 adult in both sexes (Males: 18.5 - 69.1g, Females: 16.0 - 54.8g) (Fig. 1A).
81 Fasting blood glucose (FBG) also varied considerably (Fig. 1B), although few of the animals had FBG levels
82 that would indicate pre-diabetes (19 animals, 3.8%), or diabetes (7 animals, 1.4%) according to previously
83 developed cutoffs (pre-diabetes: FBG \geq 250 mg/dL, diabetes: FBG \geq 300, mg/dL)²⁹. Males had higher
84 FBG than females on average (Fig. 1C) as has been observed before suggesting either that males were more
85 susceptible to metabolic disease on the high-fat, high-sugar (HFHS) diet, or that males and females may
86 require different thresholds for pre-diabetes and diabetes.

87 Body weight was strongly positively correlated with food consumption (Fig. 1D $R^2 = 0.51$, $p < 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$)
88 and FBG (Fig. 1E, $R^2 = 0.21$, $p < 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$) suggesting a link between behavioral factors and metabolic
89 disease. However, the heritability of this trait and others (Fig. 1F) indicates that genetics contribute
90 substantially to correlates of metabolic disease in this population.

91 The trait correlations (Fig. 1G) showed that most of the metabolic trait pairs were only modestly correlated,
92 which, in conjunction with the trait decomposition (Supp. Fig. S1), suggests complex relationships among
93 the measured traits and a broad sampling of multiple heritable aspects of metabolic disease including overall
94 body weight, glucose homeostasis, and pancreatic function.

95 **Distal Heritability Correlated with Phenotype Relevance**

96 To comprehensively assess the genetic control of gene expression in metabolic disease we measured overall
97 gene expression via bulk RNA-Seq in adipose, islet, liver, and skeletal muscle in the DO cohort (Supp. Fig.
98 S2). We performed eQTL analysis using R/qltl2³⁰ (Methods) and identified both local and distal eQTLs for
99 transcripts in each of the four tissues (Supp. Fig. S2B-E). Significant local eQTLs far outnumbered distal
100 eQTLs (Supp. Fig. S2F) and tended to be shared across tissues (Supp. Fig. S2G) whereas the few significant
101 distal eQTLs we identified tended to be tissue-specific (Supp. Fig. S2H)

102 We calculated the heritability of each transcript in terms of local and all non-local (distal) genetic factors
103 (Methods). Overall, local and distal genetic factors contributed approximately equally to transcript abundance.
104 In all tissues, both local and distal factors explained between 8 and 18% of the variance in the median
105 transcript (Fig. 2A).

106 To assess the importance of genetic regulation of transcript levels to clinical traits, we compared the local
107 and distal heritabilities of transcripts to their trait relevance, defined as the maximum trait correlation for
108 each transcript. The local heritability of transcripts was negatively correlated with their trait relevance
109 (Fig. 2B), suggesting that the more local genotype influenced transcript abundance, the less effect this
110 variation had on the measured traits. Conversely, the distal heritability of transcripts was positively correlated
111 with trait relevance (Fig. 2C). That is, transcripts that were more highly correlated with the measured
112 traits tended to be distally, rather than locally, heritable. Importantly, this pattern was consistent across
113 all tissues. This finding is consistent with previous observations that low-heritability transcripts explain
114 more expression-mediated disease heritability than high-heritability transcripts²⁰. However, the positive
115 relationship between trait correlation and distal heritability demonstrated further that there are diffuse
116 genetic effects throughout the genome converging on trait-related transcripts.

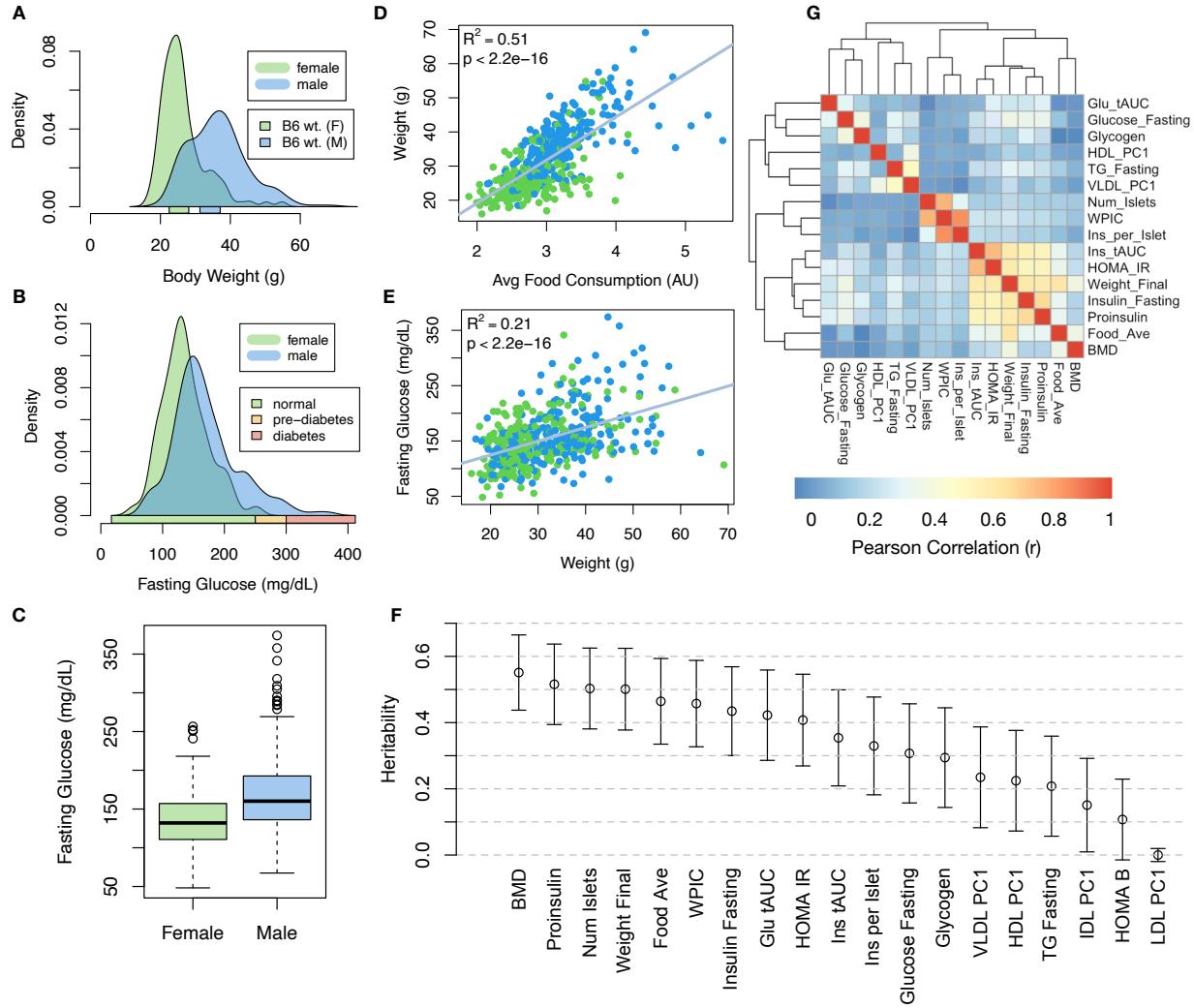


Figure 1: Clinical overview. **A.** Distributions of body weight in the diversity outbred mice. Sex is indicated by color. The average B6 male and female adult weights at 24 weeks of age are indicated by blue and green bars on the x-axis. **B.** The distribution of fasting glucose across the population split by sex. Normal, pre-diabetic, and diabetic fasting glucose levels for mice are shown by colored bars along the x-axis. **C.** Males had higher fasting blood glucose on average than females. **D.** The relationship between food consumption and body weight for both sexes. **E.** Relationship between body weight and fasting glucose for both sexes. **F.** Heritability estimates for each physiological trait. Bars show standard error of the estimate. **G.** Correlation structure between pairs of physiological traits. BMD - bone mineral density, WPIC - whole pancreas insulin content, Glu tAUC - glucose total area under the curve, HOMA IR - homeostatic measurement of insulin resistance, HOMA B - homeostatic measure of beta cell health, VLDL - very low-density lipoprotein, LDL - low-density lipoprotein, IDL - intermediate density lipoprotein, HDL - high-density lipoprotein, TG - triglyceride.

117 **High-Dimensional Mediation Analysis identified a high-heritability composite trait that was
118 mediated by a composite transcript**

119 The above univariate analyses establish the importance of distal heritability for trait-relevant transcripts.
120 However, the number of transcripts dramatically exceeds the number of phenotypes. Thus, we expect the

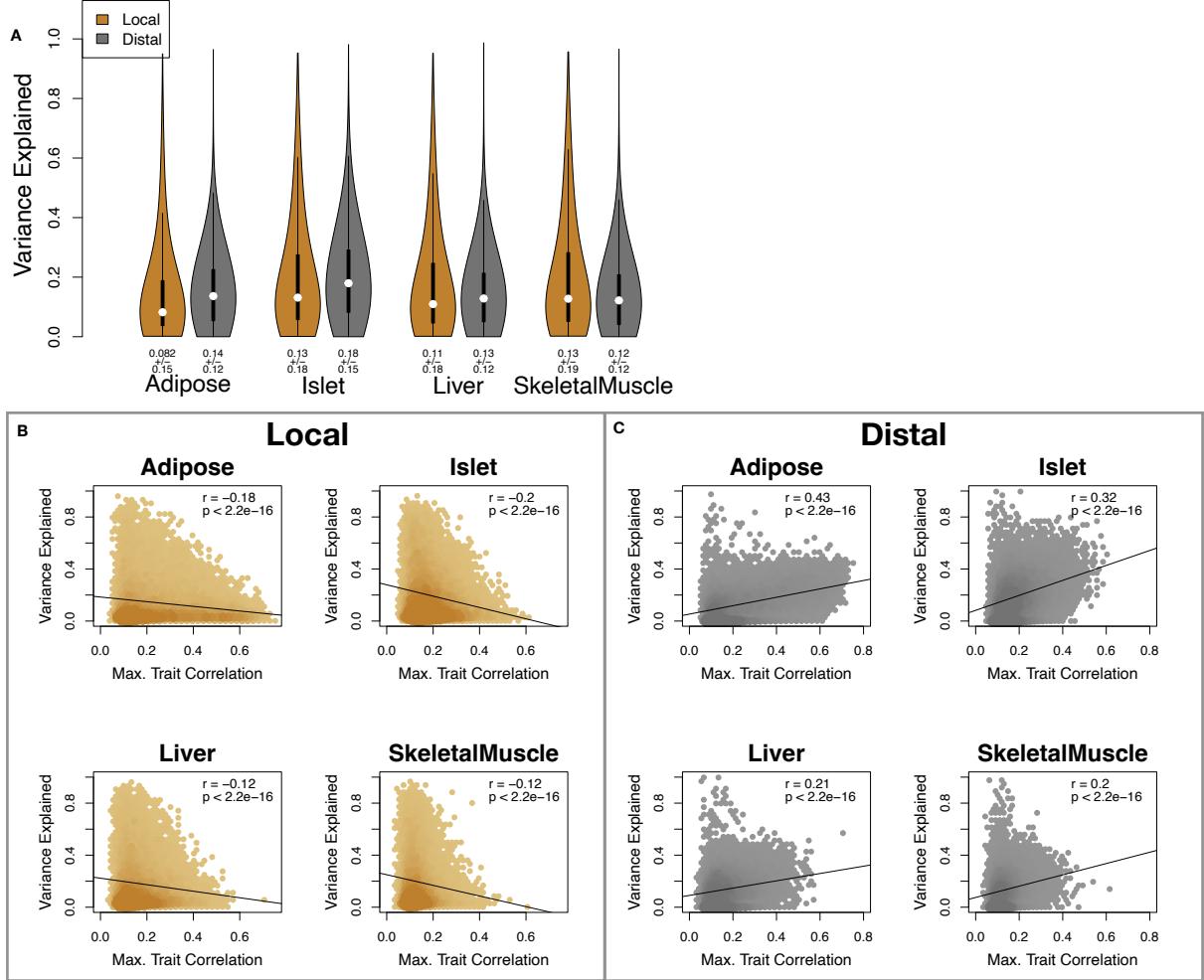


Figure 2: Transcript heritability and trait relevance. **A.** Distributions of distal and local heritability of transcripts across the four tissues. Overall local and distal factors contribute equally to transcript heritability. The relationship between **(B.)** local and **(C.)** distal heritability and trait relevance across all four tissues. Here trait relevance is defined as the maximum correlation between the transcript and all traits. Local heritability was negatively correlated with trait relevance, and distal heritability is positively correlated with trait relevance. Pearson (r) and p values for each correlation are shown in the upper-right of each panel.

121 heritable, trait-relevant transcripts to be highly correlated and organized according to coherent, biological
 122 processes representing the mediating endophenotypes driving clinical trait variation. To identify these
 123 endophenotypes in a theoretically principled way, we developed a novel dimension-reduction technique,
 124 high-dimension mediation analysis (HDMA), that uses the theory of causal graphical models to identify a
 125 transcriptomic signature that is simultaneously 1) highly heritable, 2) strongly correlated to the measured
 126 phenotypes, and 3) conforms to the causal mediation hypothesis (Fig. 3). HDMA projects the high-dimensional
 127 genome, transcriptome, and phenotype data onto one-dimensional scores—a composite genome score (G_C), a
 128 composite transcriptome score (T_C), and a composite phenotype score (P_C)—and uses the univariate theory of

129 mediation to constrain these projections to satisfy the hypotheses of perfect mediation, namely that upon
 130 controlling for the transcriptomic score, the genome score is uncorrelated to the phenotype score. A complete
 131 mathematical derivation and implementation details for HDMA are available in Supp. Methods.

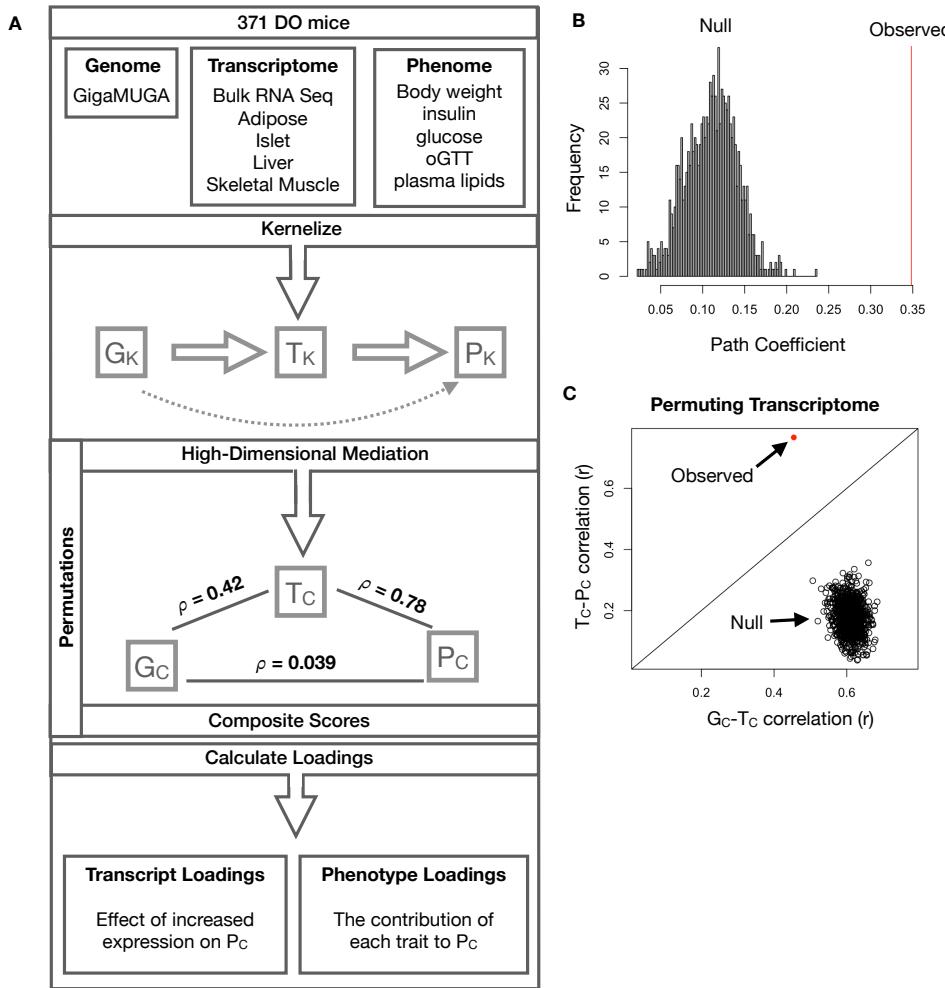


Figure 3: High-dimensional mediation. **A.** Workflow indicating major steps of high-dimensional mediation. The genotype, transcriptome, and phenotype matrices were independently normalized and converted to kernel matrices representing the pairwise relationships between individuals for each data modality (K_G = genome kernel, K_T = transcriptome kernel; K_P = phenotype kernel). High-dimensional mediation was applied to these matrices to maximize the direct path $G \rightarrow T \rightarrow P$, the mediating pathway (arrows), while simultaneously minimizing the direct $G \rightarrow P$ pathway (dotted line). The composite vectors that resulted from high-dimensional mediation were G_c , T_c , and P_c . The partial correlations ρ between these vectors indicated perfect mediation. Transcript and trait loadings were calculated as described in the methods. **B.** The null distribution of the path coefficient derived from 10,000 permutations compared to the observed path coefficient (red line). **C.** The null distribution of the G_c-T_c correlation vs. the T_c-P_c correlation compared with the observed value (red dot).

132 Using HDMA we identified the major axis of variation in the transcriptome that was consistent with mediating
 133 the effects of the genome on metabolic traits (Fig 3). Fig. 3A shows the partial correlations (ρ) between

134 the pairs of these composite vectors. The partial correlation between G_C and T_C was 0.42, and the partial
135 correlation between T_C and P_C was 0.78. However, when the transcriptome was taken into account, the
136 partial correlation between G_C and P_C was effectively zero (0.039). P_C captured 30% of the overall trait
137 variance, and its estimated heritability was 0.71 ± 0.084 , which was higher than any of the measured traits
138 (Fig. 1F). Thus, HDMA identified a maximally heritable metabolic composite trait and a highly heritable
139 component of the transcriptome that are correlated as expected in the perfect mediation model.

140 As discussed in Supp. Methods, HDMA is related to a generalized form of CCA. Standard CCA is prone to
141 over-fitting because in any two large matrices it can be trivial to identify highly correlated composite vectors³¹.
142 To assess whether our implementation of HDMA was similarly prone to over-fitting in a high-dimensional
143 space, we performed permutation testing. We permuted the individual labels on the transcriptome matrix
144 10,000 times and recalculated the path coefficient, which is the correlation of G_C and T_C multiplied by
145 the correlation of T_C and P_C . This represents the strength of the path from G_C to P_C that is putatively
146 mediated through T_C . The null distribution of the path coefficient is shown in Fig. 3B, and the observed path
147 coefficient from the original data is indicated by a red line. The observed path coefficient was well outside the
148 null distribution generated by permutations ($p < 10^{-16}$). Fig. 3C illustrates this observation in more detail.
149 Although we identified high correlations between G_C and T_C , and modest correlations between T_C and P_C in
150 the null data (Fig 3C), these two values could not be maximized simultaneously in the null data. In contrast,
151 the red dot shows that in the real data both the G_C - T_C correlation and the T_C - P_C correlation could be
152 maximized simultaneously suggesting that the path from genotype to phenotype through transcriptome is
153 highly non-trivial and identifiable in this case. These results suggest that these composite vectors represent
154 genetically determined variation in phenotype that is mediated through genetically determined variation in
155 transcription.

156 **Body weight and insulin resistance were highly represented in the expression-mediated com-**
157 **posite trait**

158 Each composite score is a weighted combination of the measured variables. The magnitude and sign of the
159 weights, called loadings, correspond to the relative importance and directionality of each variable in the
160 composite score. The loadings of each measured trait onto P_C indicate how much each contributed to the
161 composite phenotype. Body weight contributed the most (Fig. 4), followed by homeostatic insulin resistance
162 (HOMA_IR) and fasting plasma insulin levels (Insulin_Fasting). We can thus interpret P_C as an index
163 of metabolic disease (Fig. 4B). Individuals with high values of P_C have a higher metabolic disease index
164 (MDI) and greater metabolic disease, including higher body weight and higher insulin resistance. We refer to

165 P_C as the MDI going forward. Traits contributing the least to the MDI were measures of cholesterol and
 166 pancreas composition. Thus, when we interpret the transcriptomic signature identified by HDMA, we are
 167 explaining primarily the putative transcriptional mediation of body weight and insulin resistance, as opposed
 168 to cholesterol measurements.

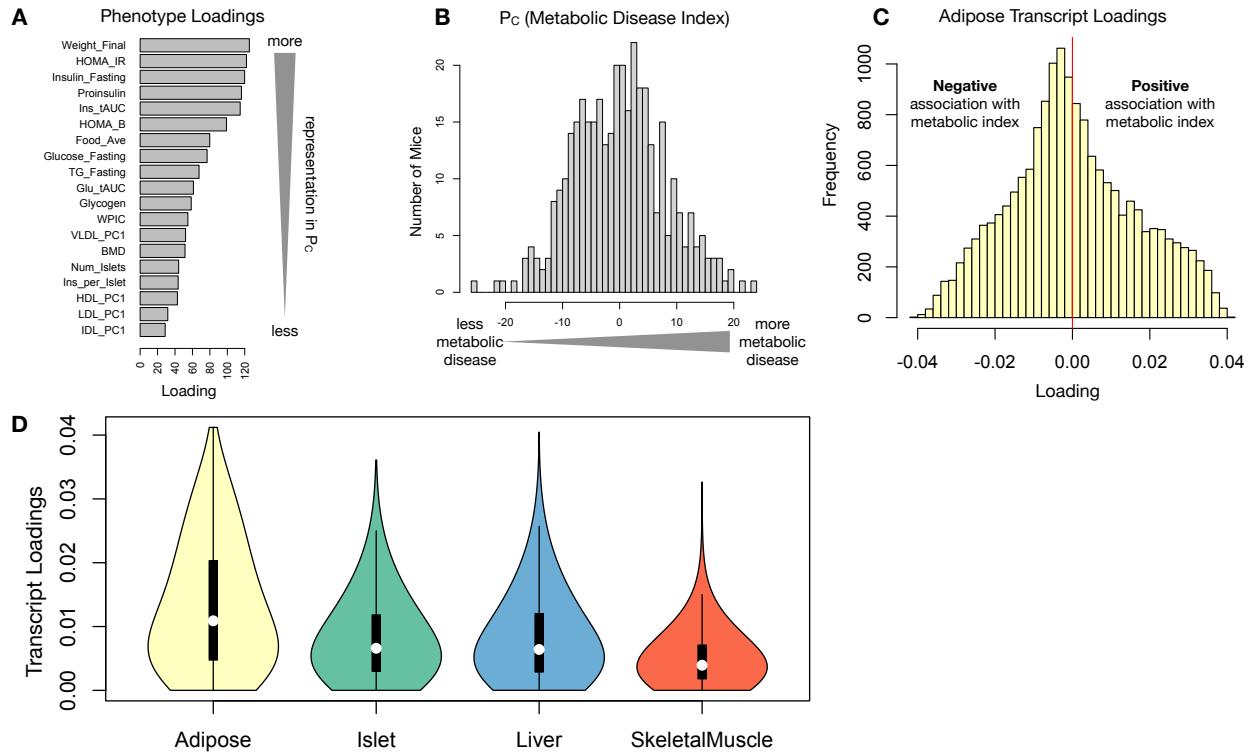


Figure 4: Interpretation of loadings. **A.** Loadings across traits. Body weight and insulin resistance contributed the most to the composite trait. **B.** Phenotype scores across individuals. Individuals with large positive phenotype scores had higher body weight and insulin resistance than average. Individuals with large negative phenotype scores had lower body weight and insulin resistance than average. **C.** Distribution of transcript loadings in adipose tissue. For transcripts with large positive loadings, higher expression was associated with higher phenotype scores. For transcripts with large negative loadings, higher expression was associated with lower phenotype scores. **D.** Distribution of absolute value of transcript loadings across tissues. Transcripts in adipose tissue had the largest loadings indicating that adipose tissue gene expression was a strong mediator of genotype on body weight and insulin resistance.

169 **High-loading transcripts have low local heritability, high distal heritability, and were linked
 170 mechanistically to obesity**

171 We interpreted large loadings onto transcripts as indicating strong mediation of the effect of genetics on the
 172 MDI. Large positive loadings indicate that higher expression was associated with a higher MDI (i.e. higher
 173 risk of obesity and metabolic disease on the HFHS diet) (Fig. 4C). Conversely, large negative loadings
 174 indicate that high expression of these transcripts was associated with a lower MDI (i.e. lower risk of obesity
 175 and metabolic disease on the HFHS diet) (Fig. 4C). We used gene set enrichment analysis (GSEA)^{32;33} to

176 look for biological processes and pathways that were enriched at the top and bottom of this list (Methods).

177 In adipose tissue, both GO processes and KEGG pathway enrichments pointed to an axis of inflammation and
178 metabolism (Figs. S3 and S4). GO terms and KEGG pathways associated with inflammation were positively
179 associated with the MDI, indicating that increased expression in inflammatory pathways was associated
180 with a higher burden of disease. It is well established that adipose tissue in obese individuals is inflamed
181 and infiltrated by macrophages^{34–38}, and the results here suggest that this may be a dominant heritable
182 component of metabolic disease.

183 The strongest negative enrichments in adipose tissue were related to mitochondrial activity in general, and
184 thermogenesis in particular (Figs. S3 and S3). Genes in the KEGG oxidative phosphorylation pathway were
185 almost universally negatively loaded in adipose tissue, suggesting that increased expression of these genes was
186 associated with reduced MDI (Supp. Fig. S5). Consistent with this observation, it has been shown previously
187 that mouse strains with greater thermogenic potential are also less susceptible to obesity on an obesigenic
188 diet³⁹.

189 Transcripts associated with the citric acid (TCA) cycle as well as the catabolism of the branched-chain amino
190 acids (BCAA) (valine, leucine, and isoleucine) were strongly enriched with negative loadings in adipose
191 tissue (Supp. Figs. S3, S6 and S7). Expression of genes in both pathways (for which there is some overlap)
192 has been previously associated with insulin sensitivity^{12;40;41}, suggesting that heritable variation in regulation
193 of these pathways may influence risk of insulin resistance.

194 Looking at the 10 most positively and negatively loaded transcripts from each tissue, it is apparent that
195 transcripts in the adipose tissue had the largest loadings, both positive and negative (Fig. 5A bar plot). This
196 suggests that much of the effect of genetics on body weight and insulin resistance is mediated through gene
197 expression in adipose tissue. The strongest loadings in liver and pancreas were comparable, and those in
198 skeletal muscle were the weakest (Fig. 5A), suggesting that less of the genetic effects were mediated through
199 transcription in skeletal muscle. Heritability analysis showed that transcripts with the largest loadings had
200 higher distal heritability than local heritability (Fig. 5A heat map and box plot). This pattern contrasts with
201 transcripts nominated by TWAS (Fig. 5B), which tended to have lower loadings, higher local heritability and
202 lower distal heritability. Transcripts with the highest local heritability in each tissue (Fig. 5C) had the lowest
203 loadings, consistent with our findings above (Fig. 2B).

204 We performed a literature search for the genes in each of these groups along with the terms “diabetes”,
205 “obesity”, and the name of the expressing tissue to determine whether any of these genes had previous
206 associations with metabolic disease in the literature (Methods). Multiple genes in each group had been

207 previously associated with obesity and diabetes (Fig. 5 bolded gene names). Genes with high loadings were
 208 most highly enriched for previous literature support. They were 2.4 times more likely than TWAS hits and 3.8
 209 times more likely than genes with high local heritability to be previously associated with obesity or diabetes.

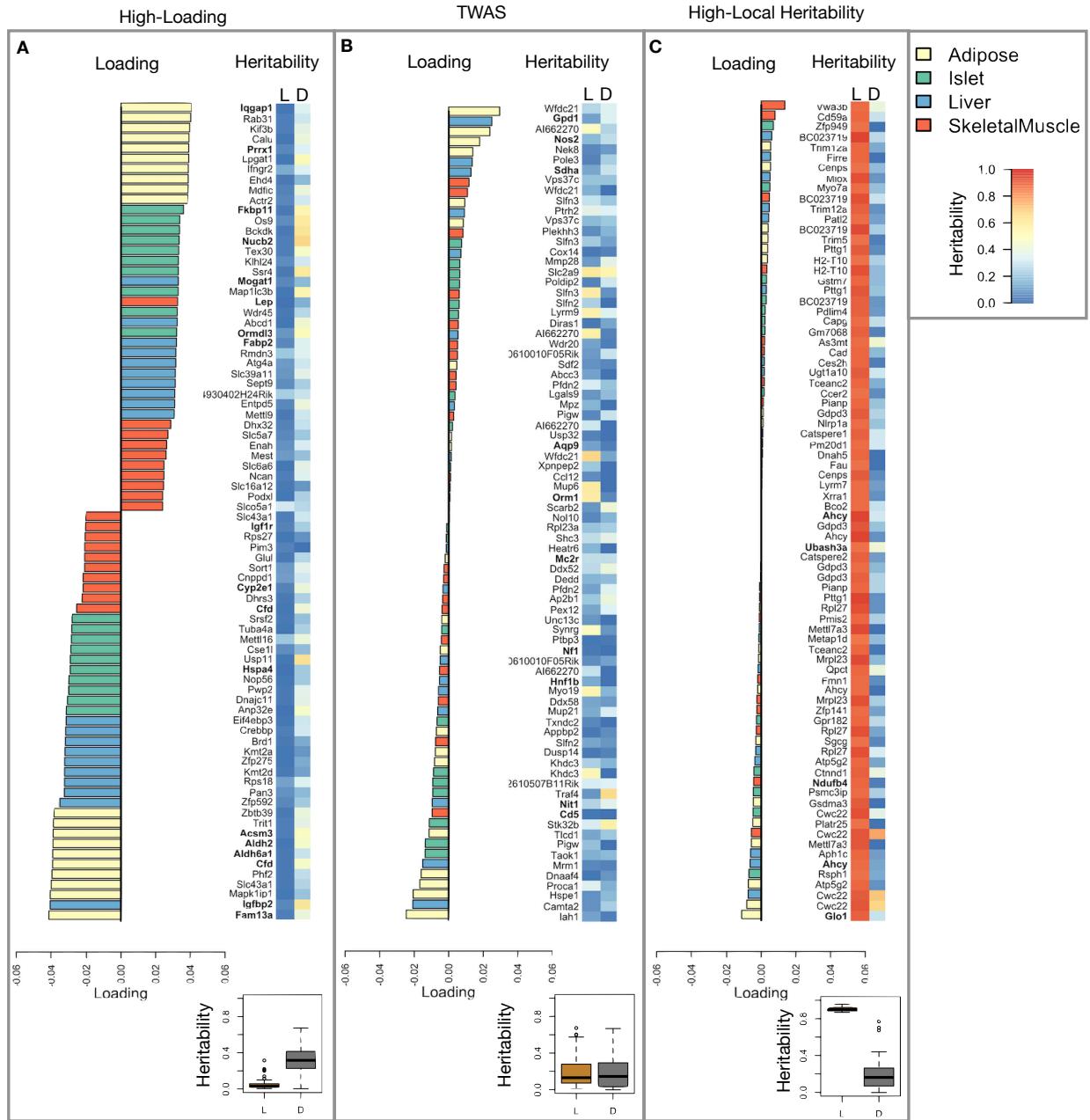


Figure 5: Transcripts with high loadings have high distal heritability and literature support. Each panel has a bar plot showing the loadings of transcripts selected by different criteria. Bar color indicates the tissue of origin. The heat map shows the local (L - left) and distal (D - right) heritability of each transcript. **A.** Loadings for the 10 transcripts with the largest positive loadings and the 10 transcripts with the largest negative loadings for each tissue. **B.** Loadings of TWAS candidates with the 10 largest positive correlations with traits and the largest negative correlations with traits across all four tissues. **C.** The transcripts with the largest local heritability (top 20) across all four tissues.

210 Tissue-specific transcriptional programs were associated with metabolic traits

211 Clustering of transcripts with top loadings in each tissue showed tissue-specific functional modules associated
212 with obesity and insulin resistance (Fig. 6A) (Methods). The clustering highlights the importance of immune
213 activation particularly in adipose tissue. The “mitosis” cluster had large positive loadings in three of the four
214 tissues potentially suggesting system-wide proliferation of immune cells. Otherwise, all clusters were strongly
215 loaded in only one or two tissues. For example, the lipid metabolism cluster was loaded most heavily in liver.
216 The positive loadings suggest that high expression of these genes, particularly in the liver, was associated with
217 increased metabolic disease. This cluster included the gene *Pparg*, whose primary role is in the adipose tissue
218 where it is considered a master regulator of adipogenesis⁴². Agonists of *Pparg*, such as thiazolidinediones, are
219 FDA-approved to treat type II diabetes, and reduce inflammation and adipose hypertrophy⁴². Consistent
220 with this role, the loading for *Pparg* in adipose tissue was negative, suggesting that higher expression was
221 associated with leaner mice (Fig. 6B). In contrast, *Pparg* had a large positive loading in liver, where it is
222 known to play a role in the development of hepatic steatosis, or fatty liver. Mice that lack *Pparg* specifically
223 in the liver, are protected from developing steatosis and show reduced expression of lipogenic genes^{43;44}.
224 Overexpression of *Pparg* in the livers of mice with a *Ppara* knockout, causes upregulation of genes involved in
225 adipogenesis⁴⁵. In the livers of both mice and humans high *Pparg* expression is associated with hepatocytes
226 that accumulate large lipid droplets and have gene expression profiles similar to that of adipocytes^{46;47}.

227 The local and distal heritability of *Pparg* is low in adipose tissue suggesting its expression in this tissue is
228 highly constrained in the population (Fig. 6B). However, the distal heritability of *Pparg* in liver is relatively
229 high suggesting it is complexly regulated and has sufficient variation in this population to drive variation in
230 phenotype. Both local and distal heritability of *Pparg* in the islet are relatively high, but the loading is low,
231 suggesting that variability of expression in the islet does not drive variation in MDI. These results highlight
232 the importance of tissue context when investigating the role of heritable transcript variability in driving
233 phenotype.

234 Gene lists for all clusters are available in Supp. File 1.

235 Gene expression, but not local eQTLs, predicted body weight in an independent population

236 To test whether the transcript loadings identified in the DO could be translated to another population, we
237 tested whether they could predict metabolic phenotype in an independent population of CC-RIX mice, which
238 were F1 mice derived from multiple pairings of Collaborative Cross (CC)^{48–51} strains (Fig. 7) (Methods).
239 We tested two questions. First, we asked whether the loadings identified in the DO mice were relevant to
240 the relationship between the transcriptome and the phenotype in the CC-RIX. We predicted body weight

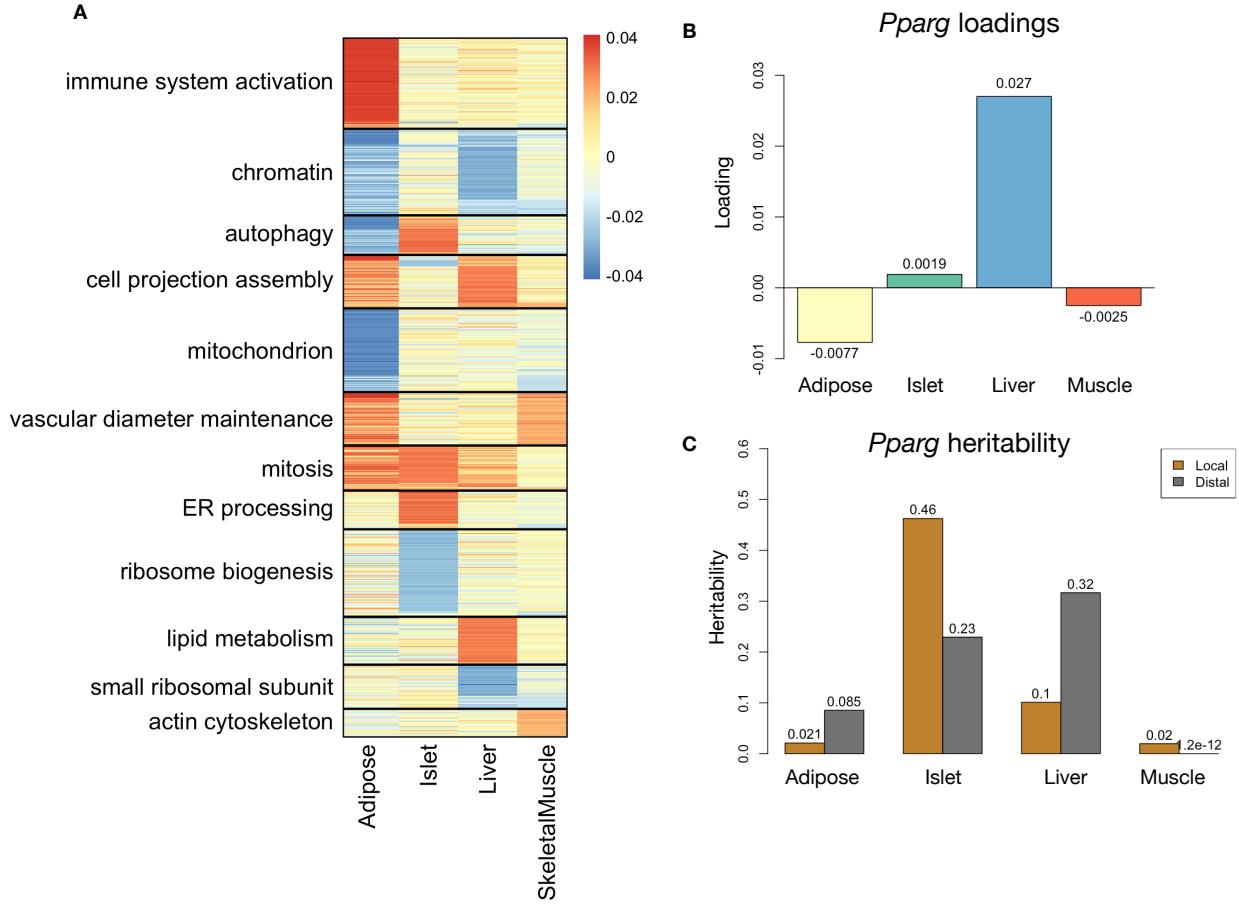


Figure 6: Tissue-specific transcriptional programs were associated with obesity and insulin resistance. **A** Heat map showing the loadings of all transcripts with loadings greater than 2.5 standard deviations from the mean in any tissue. The heat map was clustered using k medoid clustering. Functional enrichments of each cluster are indicated along the left margin. **B** Loadings for *Pparg* in different tissues. **C** Local and distal of *Pparg* expression in different tissues.

241 (a surrogate for MDI) in each CC-RIX individual using measured gene expression in each tissue and the
 242 transcript loadings identified in the DO (Methods). The predicted body weight and acutal body weight were
 243 highly correlated (Fig. 7B left column). The best prediction was achieved for adipose tissue, which supports
 244 the observation in the DO that adipose expression was the strongest mediator of the genetic effect on MDI.
 245 This result also confirms the validity and translatability of the transcript loadings and their relationship to
 246 metabolic disease.

247 The second question related to the source of the relevant variation in gene expression. If local regulation was
 248 the predominant factor influencing trait-relevant gene expression, we should be able to predict phenotype in
 249 the CC-RIX using transcripts imputed from local genotype (Fig. 7A). The DO and the CC-RIX were derived
 250 from the same eight founder strains and so carry the same alleles throughout the genome. We imputed gene

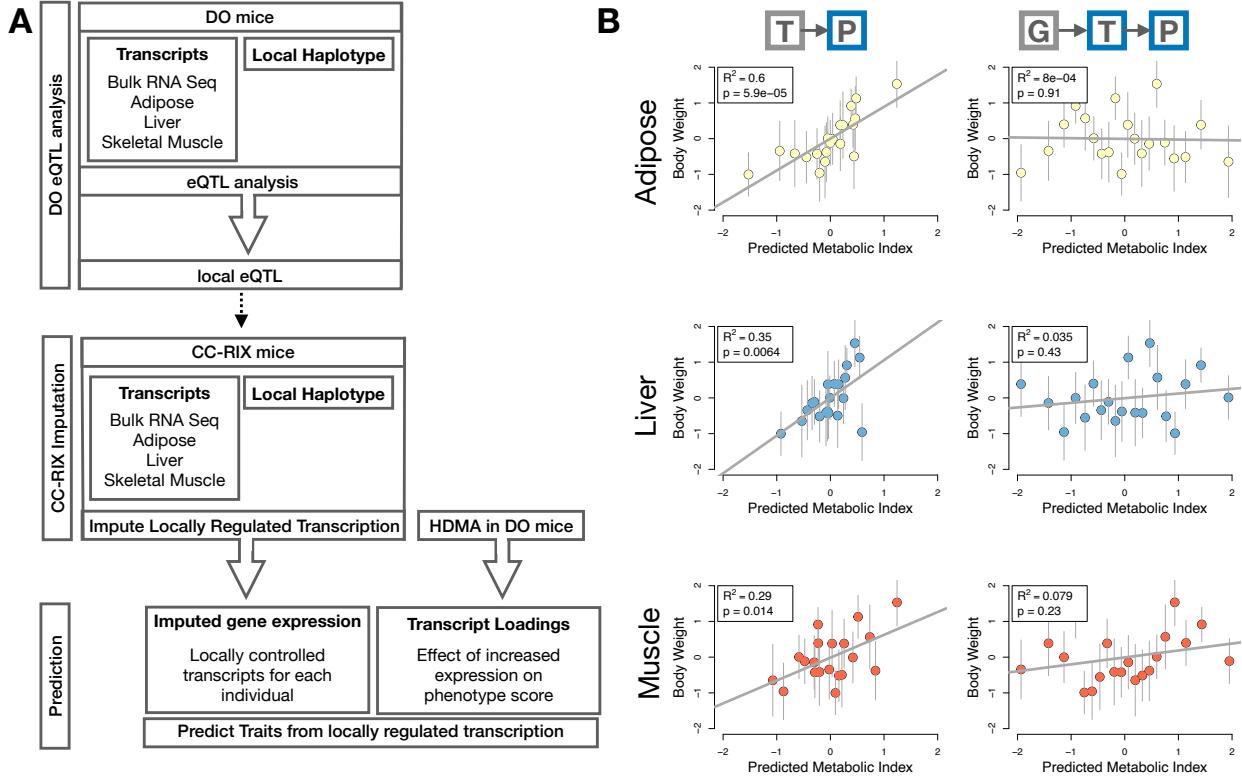


Figure 7: Transcription, but not local genotype, predicts phenotype in the CC-RIX. **A.** Workflow showing procedure for translating HDMA results to an independent population of mice. **B.** Relationships between the predicted metabolic disease index (MDI) and measured body weight. The left column shows the predictions using measured transcripts. The right column shows the prediction using transcript levels imputed from local genotype. Gray boxes indicate measured quantities, and blue boxes indicate calculated quantities. The dots in each panel represent individual CC-RIX strains. The gray lines show the standard deviation on body weight for the strain.

251 expression in the CC-RIX using local genotype and were able to estimate variation in gene transcription
 252 robustly (Supp. Fig. S8). However, these imputed values failed to predict body weight in the CC-RIX when
 253 weighted with the loadings from HDMA. (Fig. 7B right column). This result suggests that local regulation of
 254 gene expression is not the primary factor driving heritability of complex traits. It is also consistent with our
 255 findings in the DO population that distal heritability was a major driver of trait-relevant gene expression and
 256 that high-loading transcripts had comparatively high distal and low local heritability.

257 **Distally heritable transcriptomic signatures reflected variation in composition of adipose tissue
 258 and islets**

259 The interpretation of global genetic influences on gene expression and phenotype is potentially more challenging
 260 than the interpretation and translation of local genetic influences, as genetic effects cannot be localized to
 261 individual gene variants or transcripts. However, there are global patterns across the loadings that can inform

mechanism. For example, heritable variation in cell type composition can be inferred from transcript loadings. We observed above that immune activation in the adipose tissue was a highly enriched process correlating with obesity in the DO population. For example, in humans, it has been extensively observed that macrophage infiltration in adipose tissue is a marker of obesity and metabolic disease⁵². To determine whether the immune activation reflected a heritable change in cell composition in adipose tissue in DO mice, we compared loadings of cell-type specific genes in adipose tissue (Methods). The mean loading of macrophage-specific genes was significantly greater than 0 (Fig. 8A), indicating that obese mice were genetically predisposed to have high levels of macrophage infiltration in adipose tissue in response to the HFHS diet. Loadings for marker genes for other cell types were not statistically different from zero, indicating that changes in the abundance of those cell types is not a mediator of MDI.

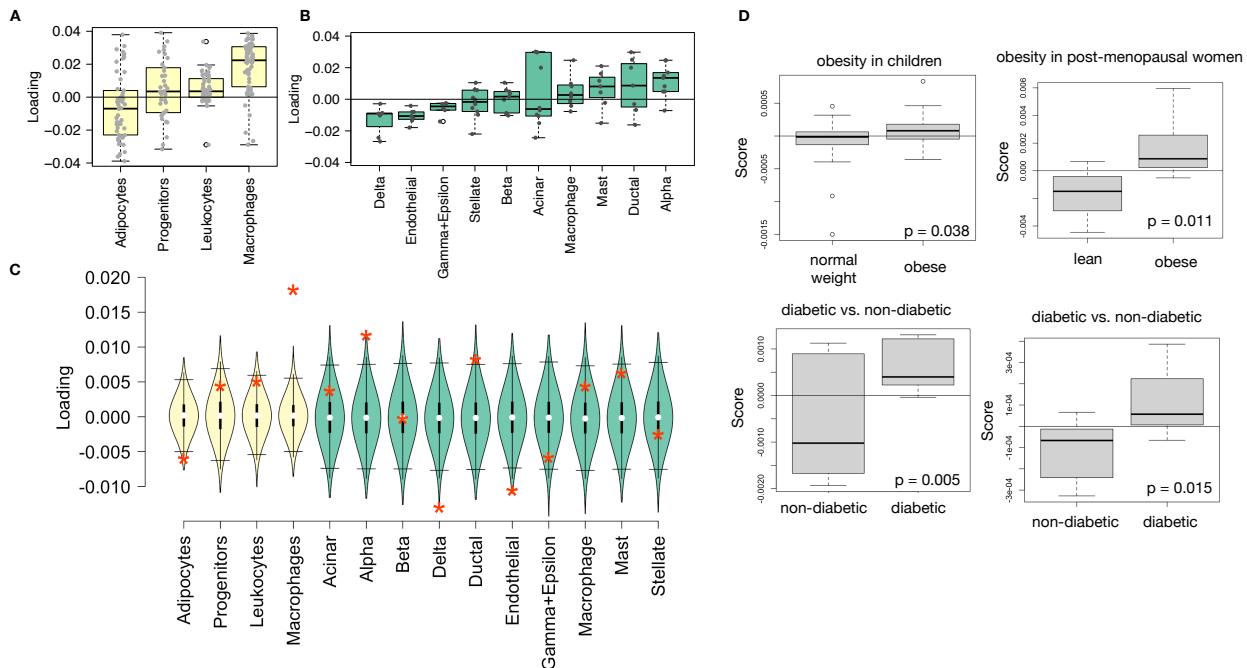


Figure 8: HDMA results translate to humans. **A.** Distribution of loadings for cell-type-specific transcripts in adipose tissue. **B.** Distribution of loadings for cell-type-specific transcripts in pancreatic islets (green). **C.** Null distributions for the mean loading of randomly selected transcripts in each cell type compared with the observed mean loading of each group of transcripts (red asterisk). **D.** Predictions of metabolic phenotypes in four adipose transcription data sets downloaded from GEO. In each study the obese/diabetic patients were predicted to have greater metabolic disease than the lean/non-diabetic patients based on the HDMA results from DO mice.

We also compared loadings of cell-type specific transcripts in islet (Methods). The mean loadings for alpha-cell specific transcripts were significantly greater than 0, while the mean loadings for delta- and endothelial-cell specific genes were significantly less than 0 (Fig. 8B). These results suggest that mice with higher MDI inherited an altered cell composition that predisposed them to metabolic disease, or that these compositional

276 changes were induced by the HFHS diet in a heritable way. In either case, these results support the hypothesis
277 that alterations in islet composition drive variation in MDI.

278 Notably, the mean loading for pancreatic beta cell marker transcripts was not significantly different from
279 zero. We stress that this is not necessarily reflective of the function of the beta cells in the obese mice, but
280 rather suggests that any variation in the number of beta cells in these mice was unrelated to obesity and
281 insulin resistance, the major contributors to MDI. This is further consistent with the islet composition traits
282 having small loadings in the phenome score (Fig. 4).

283 **Heritable transcriptomic signatures translated to human disease**

284 Ultimately, the heritable transcriptomic signatures that we identified in DO mice will be useful if they inform
285 pathogenicity and treatment of human disease. To investigate the potential for translation of the gene
286 signatures identified in DO mice, we compared them to transcriptional profiles in obese and non-obese human
287 subjects (Methods). We limited our analysis to adipose tissue because the adipose tissue signature had the
288 strongest relationship to obesity and insulin resistance in the DO.

289 We calculated a predicted obesity score for each individual in the human studies based on their adipose
290 tissue gene expression (Methods) and compared the predicted scores for obese and non-obese groups as well
291 as diabetic and non-diabetic groups. In all cases, the predicted obesity scores were higher on average for
292 individuals in the obese and diabetic groups compared with the lean and non-diabetic groups (Fig. 8D).
293 This indicates that the distally heritable signature of MDI identified in DO mice is relevant to obesity and
294 diabetes in human subjects.

295 **Existing therapies are predicted to target mediator gene signatures**

296 Another potential application of the transcript loading landscape is in ranking potential drug candidates
297 for the treatment of metabolic disease. Although high-loading transcripts may be good candidates for
298 understanding specific biology related to obesity, the transcriptome overall is highly interconnected and
299 redundant. The ConnectivityMap (CMAP) database⁵³ developed by the Broad Institute allows querying
300 thousands of compounds that reverse or enhance the extreme ends of transcriptomic signatures in multiple
301 different cell types. By identifying drugs that reverse pathogenic transcriptomic signatures, we can potentially
302 identify compounds that have favorable effects on gene expression.

303 To test this hypothesis, we queried the CMAP database through the CLUE online query tool (<https://clue.io/query/>, version 1.1.1.43) (Methods). We identified top anti-correlated hits across all cell types
304 (Supp. Figs S9 and S10). To get more tissue-specific results, we also looked at top results in cell types that
305

306 most closely resembled our tissues. We looked at results in adipocytes (ASC) as well as pancreatic tumor
307 cells (YAPC) regardless of *p* value (Supp. Figs S11 and S12).

308 Looking across all cell types, the notable top hits from the adipose tissue loadings included mTOR inhibitors
309 and glucocorticoid agonists (Supp. Fig. S9). It is thought that metformin, which is commonly used to
310 improve glycemic control, acts, at least in part, by inhibiting mTOR signaling^{54;55}. However, long-term use
311 of other mTOR inhibitors, such as rapamycin, are known to cause insulin resistance and β -cell toxicity⁵⁵⁻⁵⁷.
312 Glucocorticoids are used to reduce inflammation, which was a prominent signature in the adipose tissues,
313 but these drugs also promote hyperglycemia and diabetes^{58;59}. Accute treatment with glucocorticoids has
314 further been shown to reduce thermogenesis in rodent adipocytes⁶⁰⁻⁶², but increase thermogenesis in human
315 adipocytes^{63;64}. Thus, the pathways identified by CMAP across all cell types were highly related to the
316 transcript loading profiles, but the relationship was not a simple reversal.

317 The top hit for the adipose composite transcript in CMAP adipocytes was a PARP inhibitor (Supp. Fig.
318 S11). PARPs play a role in lipid metabolism and are involved in the development of obesity and diabetes⁶⁵.
319 PARP1 inhibition increases mitochondrial biogenesis⁶⁶. Inhibition of PARP1 activity can further prevent
320 necrosis in favor of the less inflammatory apoptosis⁶⁷, thereby potentially reducing inflammation in stressed
321 adipocytes. Other notable hits among the top 20 were BTK inhibitors, which have been observed to suppress
322 inflammation and improve insulin resistance⁶⁸ as well as to reduce insulin antibodies in type I diabetes⁶⁹.
323 IkappaB kinase (IKK) is an enzyme complex involved in regulating cellular responses to inflammation⁷⁰.
324 Inhibitors of IKK have been shown to improve glucose control in type II diabetes^{71;72}.

325 Among the top most significant hits for the transcript loadings from pancreatic islets (Supp. Fig. S10),
326 was suppression of T cell receptor signaling, which is known to be involved in Type 1 diabetes⁷³, as well as
327 TNFR1, which has been associated with mortality in diabetes patients⁷⁴. Suppression of NOD1/2 signaling
328 was also among the top hits. NOD1 and 2 sense ER stress^{75;76}, which is associated with β -cell death in type
329 1 and type 2 diabetes⁷⁷. This cell death process is dependent on NOD1/2 signaling⁷⁵, although the specifics
330 have not yet been worked out.

331 We also looked specifically at hits in pancreatic tumor cells (YAPC) regardless of significance level to get a
332 transcriptional response more specific to the pancreas (Supp. Fig. S12). Hits in this list included widely used
333 diabetes drugs, such as sulfonylureas, PPAR receptor agonists, and insulin sensitizers. Rosiglitazone is a
334 PPAR- γ agonist and was one of the most prescribed drugs for type 2 diabetes before its use was reduced due
335 to cardiac side-effects⁷⁸. Sulfonylureas are another commonly prescribed drug class for type 2 diabetes, but
336 also have notable side effects including hypoglycemia and accelerated β -cell death⁷⁹.

337 In summary, the high-loading transcripts derived from HDMA in mice prioritized of drugs with demonstrated
338 effectiveness in reducing type 2 diabetes phenotypes in humans in a tissue-specific manner. Drugs identified
339 using the islet loadings are known diabetes drugs that act directly on pancreatic function. Drugs identified
340 by the adipose loadings tended to reduce inflammatory responses and have been shown incidentally to reduce
341 obesity-related morbidity.

342 **Discussion**

343 Here we investigated the relative contributions of local and distal gene regulation in four tissues to heritable
344 variation in traits related to metabolic disease in genetically diverse mice. We found that distal heritability
345 was positively correlated with trait relatedness, whereas high heritability was negatively correlated with
346 trait relatedness. We used a novel high-dimensional mediation analysis (HDMA) to identify tissue-specific
347 composite transcripts that are predicted to mediate the effect of genetic background on metabolic traits. The
348 adipose-derived composite transcript robustly predicted body weight in an independent cohort of diverse
349 mice with disparate population structure. However, gene expression imputed from local genotype failed to
350 predict body weight in the second population. Taken together, these results highlight the complexity of gene
351 expression regulation in relation to trait heritability and suggest that heritable trait variation is mediated
352 primarily through distal gene regulation.

353 **Supplemental Discussion**

354 Our result that distal regulation accounted for most trait-related gene expression differences is consistent
355 with a complex model of genetic trait determination. It has frequently been assumed that gene regulation in
356 *cis* is the primary driver of genetically associated trait variation, but attempts to use local gene regulation
357 to explain phenotypic variation have had limited success^{16;17}. In recent years, evidence has mounted that
358 distal gene regulation may be an important mediator of trait heritability^{20;18;80}. It has been observed that
359 transcripts with high local heritability explain less expression-mediated disease heritability than those with
360 low local heritability²⁰. Consistent with this observation, genes located near GWAS hits tend to be complexly
361 regulated¹⁸. They also tend to be enriched with functional annotations, in contrast to genes with simple
362 local regulation, which tend to be depleted of functional annotations suggesting they are less likely to be
363 directly involved in disease traits¹⁸. These observations are consistent with principles of robustness in complex
364 systems in which simple regulation of important elements leads to fragility of the system^{81–83}. Our results
365 are consistent, instead, with a more complex picture where genes whose expression can drive trait variation
366 are buffered from local genetic variation but are extensively influenced indirectly by genetic variation in the

367 regulatory networks converging on those genes.

368 Our results are consistent with the recently proposed omnigenic model, which posits that complex traits are
369 massively polygenic and that their heritability is spread out across the genome⁸⁴. In the omnigenic model,
370 genes are classified either as “core genes,” which directly impinge on the trait, or “peripheral genes,” which
371 are not directly trait-related, but influence core genes through the complex gene regulatory network. HDMA
372 explicitly models a central proposal of the omnigenic model which posits that once the expression of the core
373 genes (i.e. trait-mediating genes) is accounted for, there should be no residual correlation between the genome
374 and the phenotype. Here, we were able to fit this model and identified a composite transcript that, when taken
375 into account, left no residual correlation between the composite genome and composite phenotype (Fig. 3A).

376 Unlike in the omnigenic model, we did not observe a clear demarcation between the core and peripheral
377 genes in loading magnitude, but we do not necessarily expect a clear separation given the complexity of gene
378 regulation and the genotype-phenotype map⁸⁵.

379 An extension of the omnigenic model proposed that most heritability of complex traits is driven by weak
380 distal eQTLs that are potentially below the detection threshold in studies with feasible sample sizes⁸⁰. This
381 is consistent with what we observed here. For example, *Nucb2*, had a high loading in islets and was also
382 strongly distally regulated (66% distal heritability) (Fig. 5). Although its transcription was highly heritable
383 in islets, that regulation was distributed across the genome, with no clear distal eQTL (Supp. Fig. S13).
384 Thus, although distal regulation of some genes may be strong, this regulation is likely to be highly complex
385 and not easily localized.

386 Individual high-loading transcripts also demonstrated biologically interpretable, tissue-specific patterns. We
387 highlighted *Pparg*, which is known to be protective in adipose tissue⁴² where it was negatively loaded, and
388 harmful in the liver^{43–47}, where it was positively loaded. Such granular patterns may be useful in generating
389 hypotheses for further testing, and prioritizing genes as therapeutic targets. The tissue-specific nature of
390 the loadings also may provide clues to tissue-specific effects, or side effects, of targeting particular genes
391 system-wide.

392 In addition to identifying individual transcripts of interest, the composite transcripts can be used as weighted
393 vectors in multiple types of analysis, such as drug prioritization using gene set enrichment analysis (GSEA)
394 and the CMAP database. In particular, the CMAP analysis identified drugs which have been demonstrated
395 to reverse insulin resistance and other aspects of metabolic disease. This finding supports the causal role of
396 these full gene signatures in pathogenesis of metabolic disease and thus their utility in prioritizing drugs and
397 gene targets as therapeutics.

398 Together, our results have shown that both tissue specificity and distal gene regulation are critically important
399 to understanding the genetic architecture of complex traits. We identified important genes and gene signatures
400 that were heritable, plausibly causal of disease, and translatable to other mouse populations and to humans.
401 Finally, we have shown that by directly acknowledging the complexity of both gene regulation and the
402 genotype-to-phenotype map, we can gain a new perspective on disease pathogenesis and develop actionable
403 hypotheses about pathogenic mechanisms and potential treatments.

404 **Data and Code Availability**

405 **DO mice:** Genotypes, phenotypes, and pancreatic islet gene expression data were previously published¹².
406 Gene expression for the other tissues can be found at the Gene Expression Omnibus <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/> with the following accession numbers: DO adipose tissue - GSE266549; DO liver tissue
407 - GSE266569; DO skeletal muscle - GSE266567. Expression data with calculated eQTLs are available at
408 Figshare <https://figshare.com/> DOI: 10.6084/m9.figshare.27066979
409
410 **CC-RIX mice:** Gene expression can be found at the Gene Expression Omnibus <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/> with the following accession numbers: CC-RIX adipose tissue - GSE237737; CC-RIX liver tissue -
411 GSE237743; CC-RIX skeletal muscle - GSE237747. Count matrices and phenotype data can be found at
412 Figshare <https://figshare.com/> DOI: 10.6084/m9.figshare.27066979
413
414 **Code:** All code used to run the analyses reported here are available at Figshare: <https://figshare.com/> DOI:
415 10.6084/m9.figshare.27066979

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423 sequencing, necropsy services for the tissue harvests, and the Center for Biometric Analysis for metabolic
424 phenotyping.

425 **Supplemental Figures**

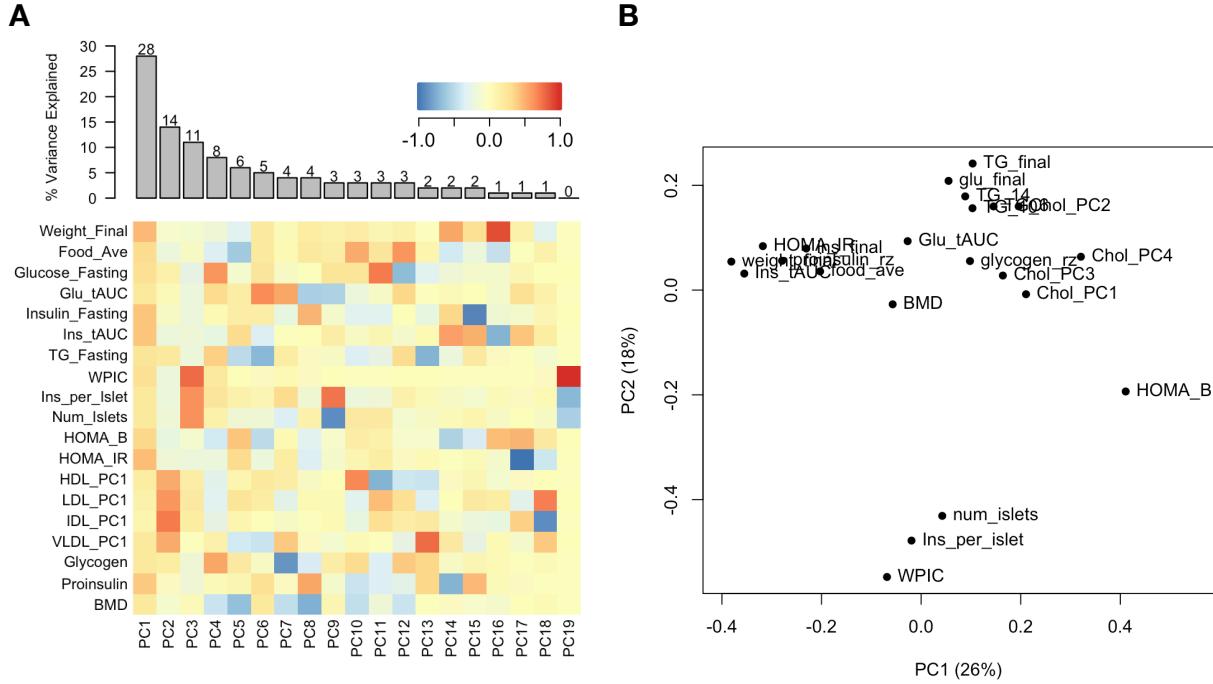


Figure S1: Trait matrix decomposition. **A** The heat map shows the loadings of each trait onto each principal component of the trait matrix. The bars at the top show the percent variance explained for each principal component. **B** Traits plotted by the first and second principal components of the trait matrix. This view shows clustering of traits into insulin- and weight-related traits, lipid-related traits, and ex-vivo pancreatic measurements.

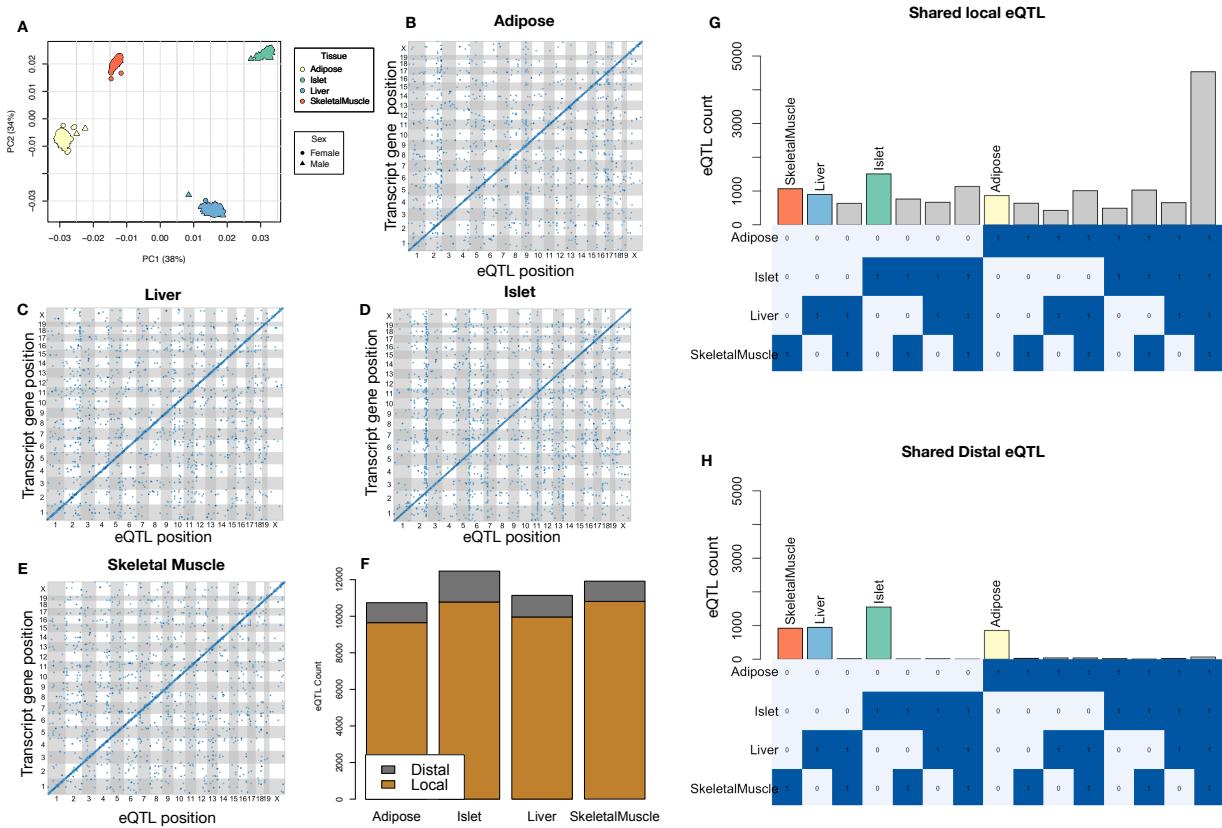


Figure S2: Overview of eQTL analysis in DO mice. **A.** RNA seq samples from the four different tissues clustered by tissue. **B.-E.** eQTL maps are shown for each tissue. The *x*-axis shows the position of the mapped eQTL, and the *y*-axis shows the physical position of the gene encoding each mapped transcript. Each dot represents an eQTL with a minimum LOD score of 8. The dots on the diagonal are locally regulated eQTL for which the mapped eQTL is at the within 4Mb of the encoding gene. Dots off the diagonal are distally regulated eQTL for which the mapped eQTL is distant from the gene encoding the transcript. **F.** Comparison of the total number of local and distal eQTL with a minimum LOD score of 8 in each tissue. All tissues have comparable numbers of eQTL. Local eQTLs are much more numerous than distal eQTL. **G.** Counts of transcripts with local eQTL shared across multiple tissues. The majority of local eQTLs were shared across all four tissues. **H.** Counts of transcripts with distal eQTL shared across multiple tissues. The majority of distal eQTL were tissue-specific and not shared across multiple tissues. For both G and H, eQTL for a given transcript were considered shared in two tissues if they were within 4Mb of each other. Colored bars indicate the counts for individual tissues for easy of visualization.

KEGG pathway enrichments by GSEA

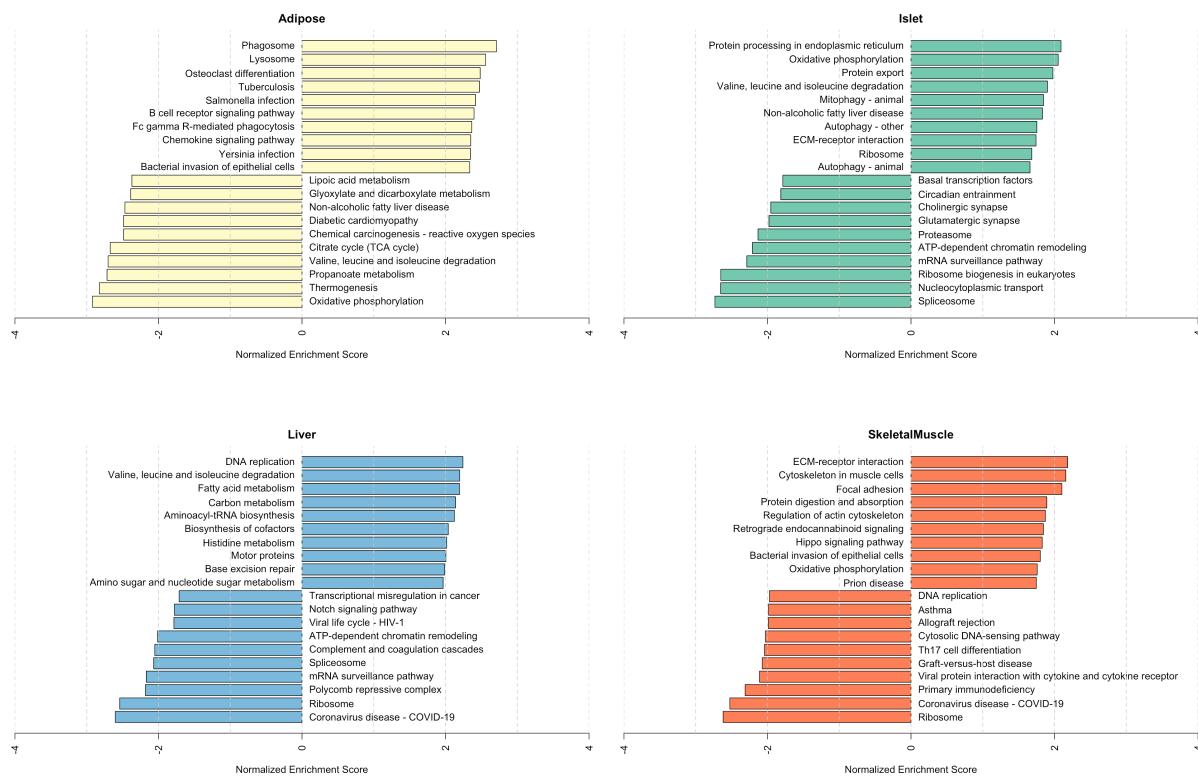


Figure S3: Bar plots showing normalized enrichment scores (NES) for KEGG pathways as determined by fast gene score enrichment analysis (fgsea). Only the top 10 positive and top 10 negative scores are shown. Colors indicate tissue. The name beside each bar shows the name of each enriched KEGG pathway.

Top GO term enrichments by GSEA

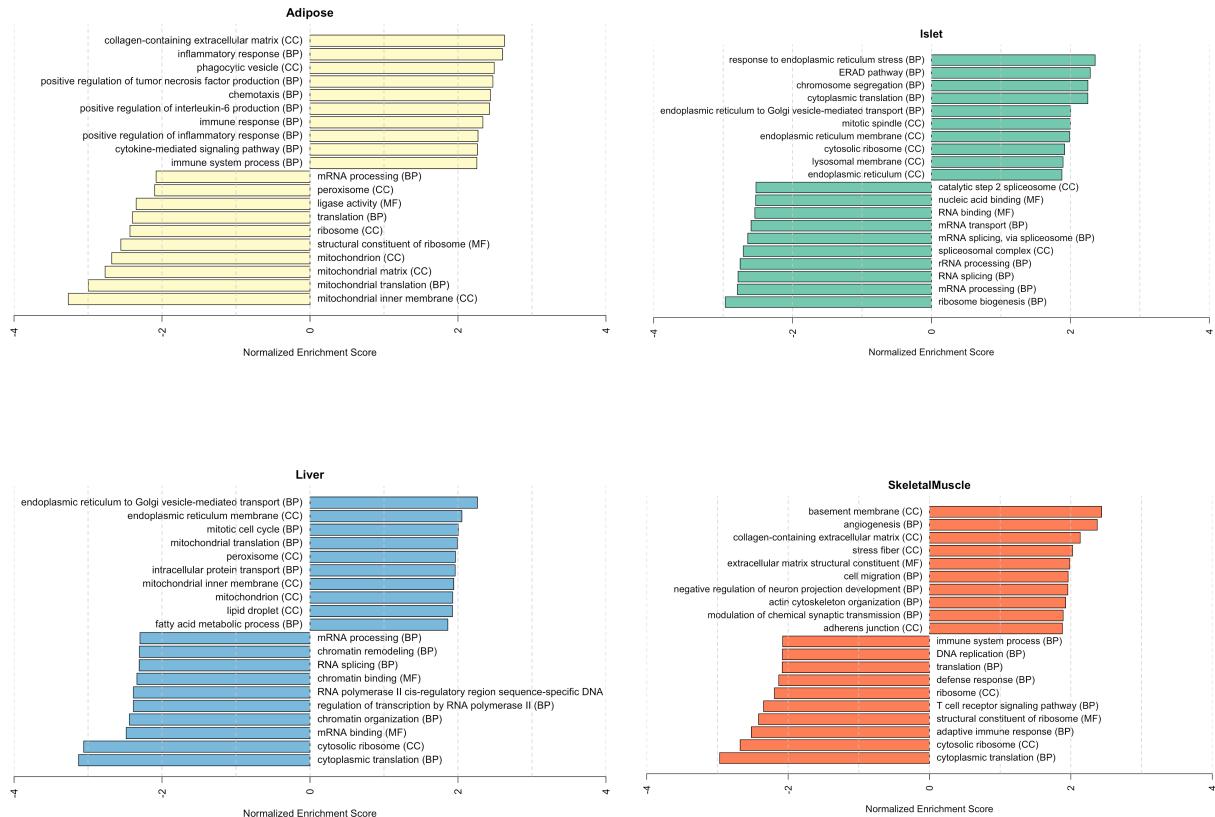


Figure S4: Bar plots showing normalized enrichment scores (NES) for GO terms as determined by fast gene score enrichment analysis (fgsea). Only the top 10 positive and top 10 negative scores are shown. Colors indicate tissue. The name beside each bar shows the name of each enriched GO term. The letters in parentheses indicate whether the term is from the biological process ontology (BP), the molecular function ontology (MF), or the cellular compartment ontology (CC).

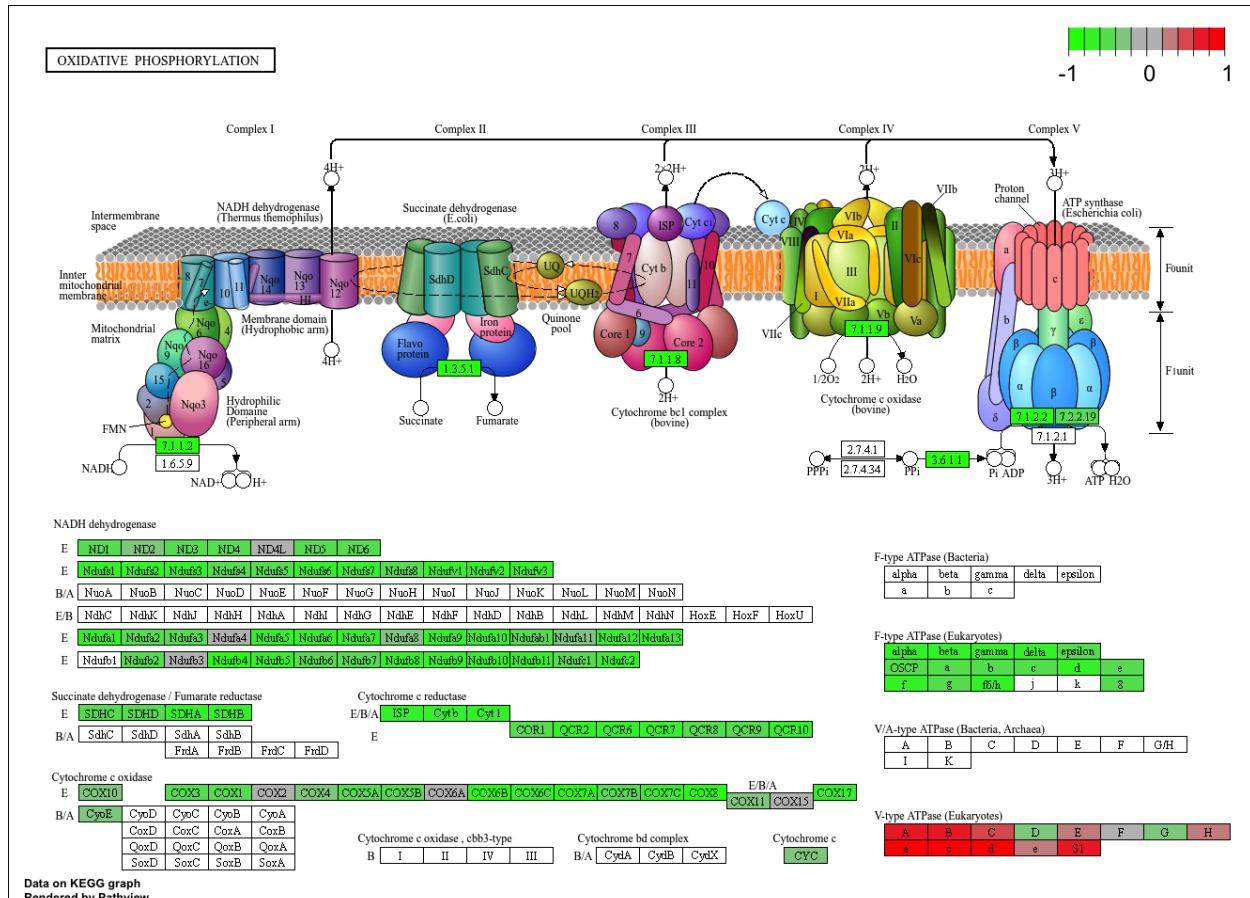


Figure S5: The KEGG pathway for oxidative phosphorylation in mice. Each element is colored based on its HDMA loading from adipose tissue normalized to run from -1 to 1. Genes highlighted in green had negative loadings, and those highlighted in red had positive loadings. Almost the entire pathway was strongly negatively loaded indicating that increased expression of genes involved in oxidative phosphorylation was associated with reduced MDI.

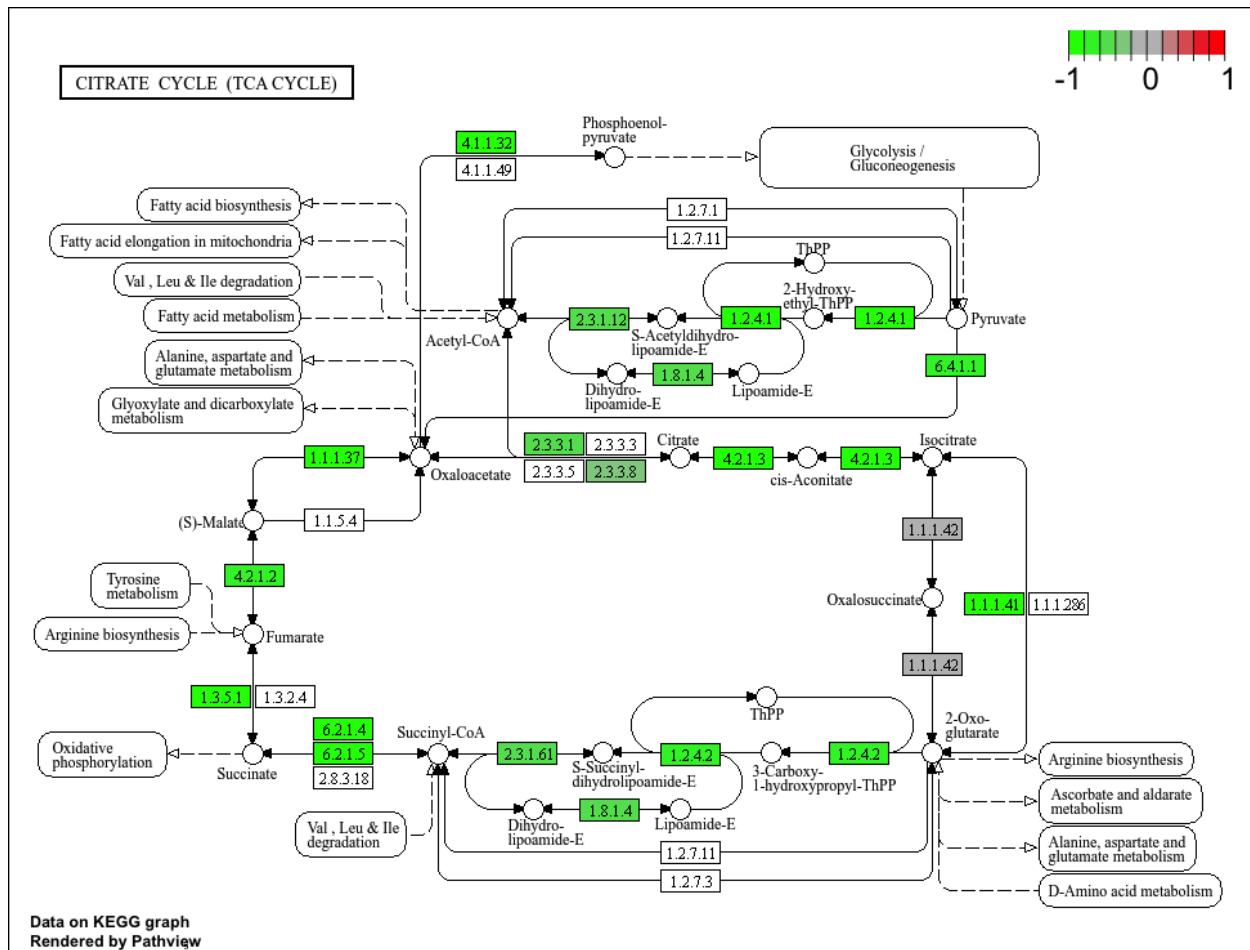


Figure S6: The KEGG pathway for the TCA (citric acid) cycle in mice. Each element is colored based on its HDMA loading from adipose tissue normalized to run from -1 to 1. Genes highlighted in green had negative loadings, and those highlighted in red had positive loadings. Many genes in the cycle were strongly negatively loaded indicating that increased expression of genes involved in branched-chain amino acid degradation was associated with reduced MDI.

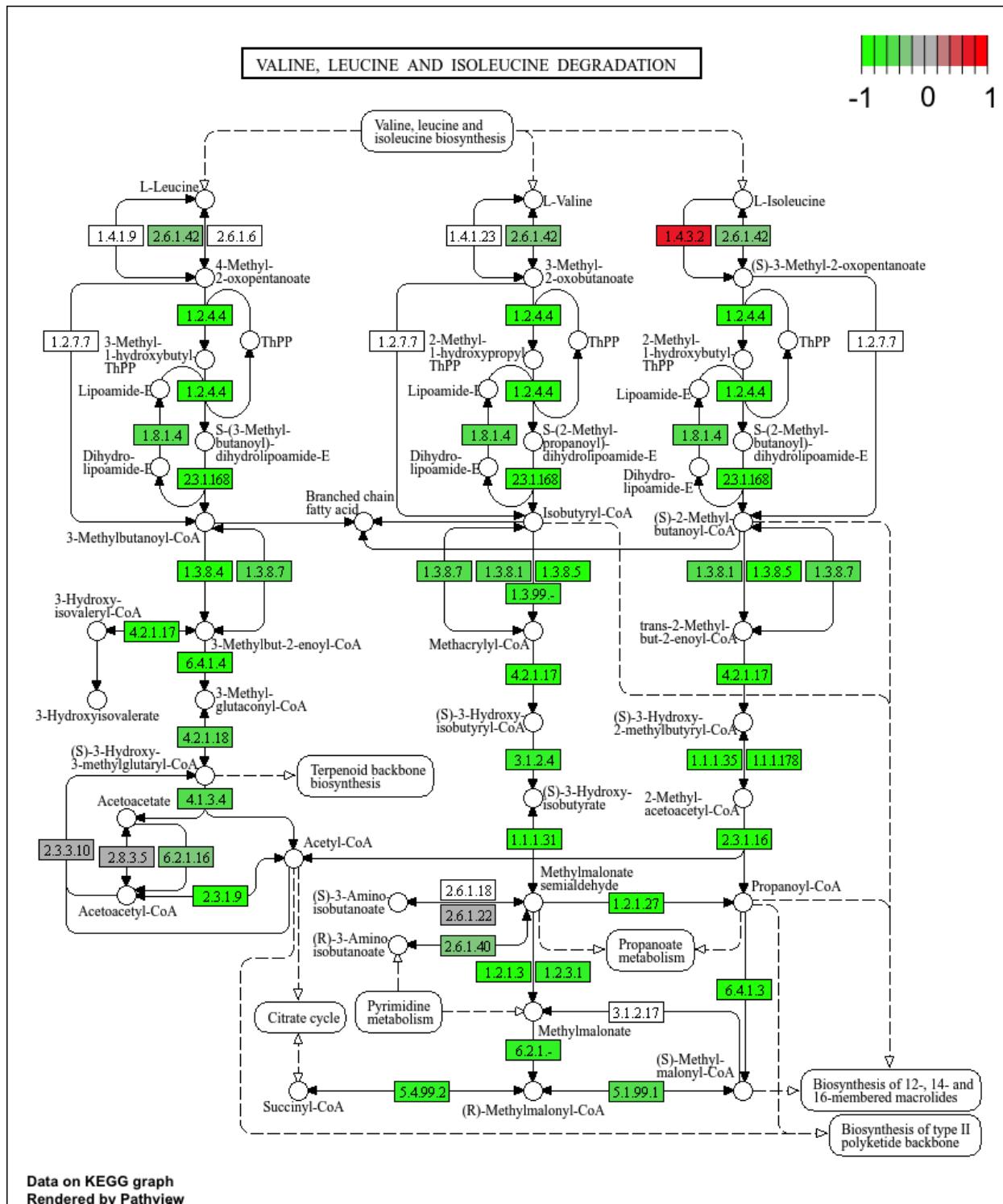


Figure S7: The KEGG pathway for branched-chain amino acid degradation in mice. Each element is colored based on its HDMA loading from adipose tissue normalized to run from -1 to 1. Genes highlighted in green had negative loadings, and those highlighted in red had positive loadings. Almost the entire pathway was strongly negatively loaded indicating that increased expression of genes involved in branched-chain amino acid degradation was associated with reduced MDI.

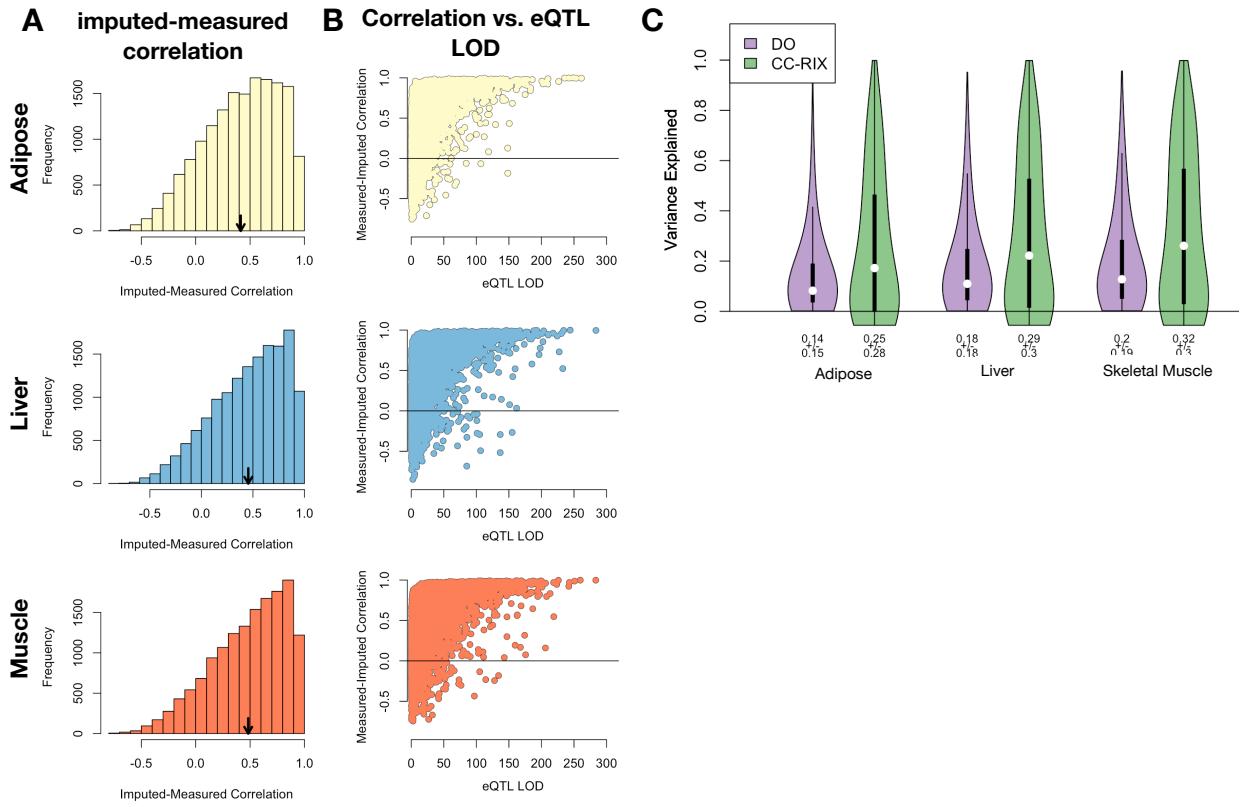


Figure S8: Validation of transcript imputation in the CC-RIX. **A.** Distributions of correlations between imputed and measured transcripts in the CC-RIX. The mean of each distribution is shown by the red line. All distributions were skewed toward positive correlations and had positive means near a Pearson correlation (r) of 0.5. **B.** The relationship between the correlation between measured and imputed expression in the CC-RIX (x-axis) and eQTL LOD score. As expected, imputations are more accurate for transcripts with strong local eQTLs. **C.** Variance explained by local genotype in the DO and CC-RIX.

id	norm_ss	cell_iname	pert_type	raw_ss▲	fdr_q_nlog10	set_type	src_set_id
		HA1E	TRT_CP	-0.97	15.65	PCL	CP_PROTEIN_SYNTHESIS_INHIBITOR
		PC3	TRT_SH.CGS	-0.90	15.65	PATHWAY_SET	BIOCARTA_EIF4_PATHWAY
		A375	TRT_CP	-0.87	15.65	MOA_CLASS	RAF_INHIBITOR
		HCC515	TRT_CP	-0.84	15.65	PCL	CP_TOPOISOMERASE_INHIBITOR
		HEPG2	TRT_SH.CGS	-0.82	15.65	PATHWAY_SET	BIOCARTA_BCR_PATHWAY
		PC3	TRT_CP	-0.77	15.65	MOA_CLASS	MTOR_INHIBITOR
		HCC515	TRT_CP	-0.76	15.65	PCL	CP_GLUCOCORTICOID_RECECTORAGONIST
		HCC515	TRT_CP	-0.76	15.65	MOA_CLASS	GLUCOCORTICOID_RECECTORAGONIST
		A375	TRT_CP	-0.72	15.65	MOA_CLASS	MTOR_INHIBITOR
		-666	TRT_CP	-0.70	15.65	PCL	CP_PROTEIN_SYNTHESIS_INHIBITOR
		-666	TRT_CP	-0.68	15.65	PCL	CP_JAK_INHIBITOR
		A549	TRT_CP	-0.67	15.65	PCL	CP_GLUCOCORTICOID_RECECTORAGONIST
		A549	TRT_CP	-0.67	15.65	MOA_CLASS	GLUCOCORTICOID_RECECTORAGONIST
		-666	TRT_CP	-0.57	15.65	PCL	CP_MTOR_INHIBITOR
		-666	TRT_CP	-0.55	15.65	MOA_CLASS	MTOR_INHIBITOR
		-666	TRT_CP	-0.55	15.65	PCL	CP_PI3K_INHIBITOR
		-666	TRT_CP	0.85	15.65	MOA_CLASS	PKC_ACTIVATOR

Figure S9: CMAP results using the *adipose* tissue composite transcript as an input. Table includes results from *all cell types* sorted with a $-\log_{10}(q) > 15$. The results are sorted by the correlation of the query to the input with the most negative results at the top.

id	norm_CS	cell_iname	pert_type	raw_CS▲	fdr_q_nlog10	set_type	src_set_id
		VCAP	TRT_SH.CGS	-0.99	15.65	PATHWAY_SET REACTOME_DOWNSTREAM_TCR_SIGNALING	
		VCAP	TRT_SH.CGS	-0.99	15.65	PATHWAY_SET REACTOME_NOD1_2_SIGNALING_PATHWAY	
		A549	TRT_SH.CGS	-0.92	15.65	PATHWAY_SET BIOCARTA_TNFR1_PATHWAY	
		VCAP	TRT_SH.CGS	-0.92	15.65	PATHWAY_SET HALLMARK_WNT_BETA_CATENIN_SIGNALING	
		HT29	TRT_CP	-0.92	15.65	PCL CP_TUBULIN_INHIBITOR	
-666			TRT_OE	-0.88	15.65	PCL OE_CELL_CYCLE_INHIBITION	
		VCAP	TRT_SH.CGS	-0.87	15.65	PATHWAY_SET REACTOME_P75_NTR_RECECTOR_MEDIATED_SIGNALLING	
		HT29	TRT_CP	-0.86	15.65	MOA_CLASS TUBULIN_INHIBITOR	
		MCF7	TRT_CP	-0.85	15.65	PCL CP_TUBULIN_INHIBITOR	
-666			TRT_CP	-0.81	15.65	PCL CP_PROTEASOME_INHIBITOR	
-666			TRT_SH.CGS	-0.80	15.65	PATHWAY_SET REACTOME_DOWNREGULATION_OF_ERBB2_ERBB3_SIGNALING	
		HCC515	TRT_CP	-0.80	15.65	PCL CP_GLUCOCORTICOID_RECECTORAGONIST	
		HCC515	TRT_CP	-0.80	15.65	MOA_CLASS GLUCOCORTICOID_RECECTORAGONIST	
		A549	TRT_OE	-0.78	15.65	PATHWAY_SET REACTOME_RAF_MAP_KINASE CASCADE	
		A549	TRT_OE	-0.78	15.65	PATHWAY_SET PID_RAS_PATHWAY	
-666			TRT_SH.CGS	-0.78	15.65	PCL KD_RIBOSOMAL_40S_SUBUNIT	
		A549	TRT_OE	-0.76	15.65	PATHWAY_SET REACTOME_SIGNALLING_TO_P38_VIA_RIT_AND_RIN	
		A549	TRT_OE	-0.76	15.65	PATHWAY_SET REACTOME_PROLONGED_ERK_ACTIVATION_EVENTS	
		A549	TRT_OE	-0.73	15.65	PATHWAY_SET PID_TCR_RAS_PATHWAY	
		HA1E	TRT_OE	-0.73	15.65	PATHWAY_SET REACTOME_SHC RELATED_EVENTS	
		HA1E	TRT_OE	-0.71	15.65	PATHWAY_SET PID_EPHB_FWD_PATHWAY	
-666			TRT_CP	-0.70	15.65	MOA_CLASS GLYCOGEN_SYNTHASE_KINASE_INHIBITOR	
		HA1E	TRT_OE	-0.70	15.65	PATHWAY_SET PID_GMCSF_PATHWAY	
		A549	TRT_OE	-0.69	15.65	PATHWAY_SET REACTOME_SIGNALLING_TO_ERKS	
-666			TRT_LIG	-0.69	15.65	PATHWAY_SET PID_ERBB_NETWORK_PATHWAY	
-666			TRT_CP	-0.67	15.65	MOA_CLASS PROTEASOME_INHIBITOR	
-666			TRT_CP	-0.66	15.65	PCL CP_GLYCOGEN_SYNTHASE_KINASE_INHIBITOR	
-666			TRT_CP	0.73	15.65	MOA_CLASS MTOR_INHIBITOR	

Figure S10: CMAP results using the *pancreatic islet* tissue composite transcript as an input. Table includes results from *all cell types* sorted with a $-\log_{10}(q) > 15$. The results are sorted by the correlation of the query to the input with the most negative results at the top.

id	norm_ss	cell_iname	pert_type	raw_ss ▲	fdr_q_nlog10	set_type	src_set_id
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.94	0.79	PCL	CP_PARP_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.94	0.79	MOA_CLASS	PROTEIN_TYROSINE_KINASE_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.84	0.45	MOA_CLASS	BTK_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.81	0.39	MOA_CLASS	LEUCINE_RICH_REPEAT_KINASE_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.81	0.79	PCL	CP_HSP_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.80	0.93	PCL	CP_EGFR_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.79	0.32	MOA_CLASS	T-TYPE_CALCIUM_CHANNEL_BLOCKER
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.79	1.09	PCL	CP_MTOR_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.76	0.97	PCL	CP_PI3K_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.75	0.20	MOA_CLASS	HISTONE_DEMETHYLASE_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.74	0.42	PCL	CP_IKK_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.74	0.83	PCL	CP_AURORA_KINASE_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.74	0.17	PCL	CP_LEUCINE_RICH_REPEAT_KINASE_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.72	0.36	PCL	CP_BROMODOMAIN_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.71	1.09	MOA_CLASS	TYROSINE_KINASE_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.70	0.82	PCL	CP_PROTEIN_SYNTHESIS_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.67	0.69	PCL	CP_SRC_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.67	0.81	MOA_CLASS	AURORA_KINASE_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.65	0.89	MOA_CLASS	FLT3_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.62	0.40	MOA_CLASS	FGFR_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.59	0.66	MOA_CLASS	MEK_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.59	0.13	MOA_CLASS	SYK_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.58	0.01	PCL	CP_PKC_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.58	0.65	PCL	CP_HDAC_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.58	0.65	PCL	CP_ATPASE_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.53	0.09	PCL	CP_FLT3_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.53	0.42	PCL	CP_P38_MAPK_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.53	0.22	MOA_CLASS	IKK_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.52	0.58	PCL	CP_VEGFR_INHIBITOR
		ASC	TRT_CP	-0.51	-0.00	PCL	CP_T-TYPE_CALCIUM_CHANNEL_BLOCKER

Figure S11: CMAP results using the *adipose* tissue composite transcript as an input. Table includes the top 30 results derived *only from normal adipocytes* (ASC) regardless of significance. The results are sorted by the correlation of the query to the input with the most negative results at the top.

id	norm_CS	cell_iname	pert_type	raw_CS ▲	fdr_q_nlog10	set_type	src_set_id
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-1.00	0.67	MOA_CLASS	ABL_KINASE_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.99	0.66	PCL	CP_CDK_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.97	1.41	PCL	CP_TOPOISOMERASE_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.95	0.70	MOA_CLASS	THYMIDYLATE_SYNTHASE_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.95	0.62	MOA_CLASS	ADRENERGIC_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.94	0.50	MOA_CLASS	BENZODIAZEPINE_RECECTOR_ANTAGONIST
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.89	0.63	PCL	CP_RIBONUCLEOTIDE_REDUCTASE_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.88	0.52	MOA_CLASS	VASOPRESSIN_RECECTOR_ANTAGONIST
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.85	0.63	MOA_CLASS	ANGIOTENSIN_RECECTOR_ANTAGONIST
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.85	0.33	PCL	CP_CANNABINOID_RECECTORAGONIST
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.84	0.30	PCL	CP_RETINOID_RECECTORAGONIST
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.83	1.19	MOA_CLASS	NFKB_PATHWAY_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.83	0.54	MOA_CLASS	DNA_ALKYLATING_DRUG
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.80	0.50	MOA_CLASS	CHOLESTEROL_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.79	0.15	MOA_CLASS	SULFONYLUREA
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.78	0.52	MOA_CLASS	HIV_INTEGRASE_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.78	0.13	MOA_CLASS	LEUKOTRIENE_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.78	0.45	PCL	CP_PPAR_RECECTORAGONIST
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.78	0.54	MOA_CLASS	INSULIN_SENSITIZER
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.77	0.51	MOA_CLASS	ESTROGEN_RECECTOR_ANTAGONIST
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.77	0.76	MOA_CLASS	DNA_SYNTHESIS_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_XPR	-0.77	0.67	PATHWAY_SET	BIOCARTA_PARKIN_PATHWAY
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.77	0.51	PCL	CP_VEGFR_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.75	0.39	MOA_CLASS	RNA_SYNTHESIS_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.72	0.60	MOA_CLASS	BCR-ABL_KINASE_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_XPR	-0.71	0.66	PATHWAY_SET	BIOCARTA_EIF_PATHWAY
		YAPC	TRT_XPR	-0.69	0.54	PATHWAY_SET	PID_CIRCADIAN_PATHWAY
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.68	0.77	MOA_CLASS	TOPOISOMERASE_INHIBITOR
		YAPC	TRT_XPR	-0.64	0.49	PATHWAY_SET	BIOCARTA_CBL_PATHWAY
		YAPC	TRT_CP	-0.64	0.53	MOA_CLASS	TUBULIN_INHIBITOR

Figure S12: CMAP results using the *pancreatic islet* composite transcript as an input. Table includes the top 30 results derived *only from YAPC cells*, which are derived from pancreatic carcinoma cells. Results are shown regardless of significance and are sorted by the correlation of the query to the input with the most negative results at the top.

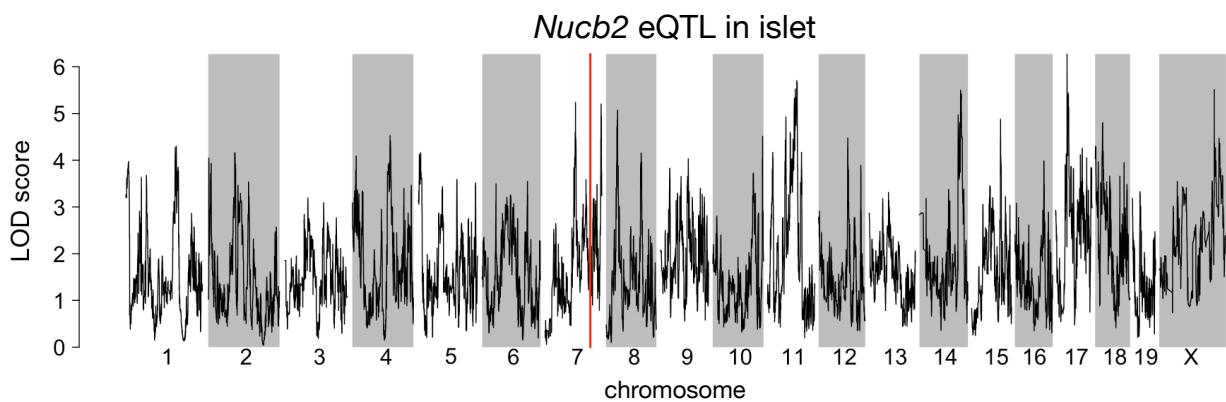


Figure S13: Regulation of *Nucb2* expression in islet. *Nucb2* is encoded on mouse chromosome 7 at 116.5 Mb (red line). In islets the heritability of *Nucb2* expression levels is 69% heritable. This LOD score trace shows that there is no local eQTLs at the position of the gene, nor any strong distal eQTL anywhere else in the genome.

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