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PARENT OF ORIGIN EFFECTS ON GENE EXPRESSION AND QUANTITATIVE  
TRAITS IN A FOUNDER POPULATION

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Epigraph Text

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1. Note: Due to the large size of some tables, the tables have been provided in a supplementary file accompanying the dissertation. In such cases, the page number provided below directs the reader to a table's caption.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

## ABSTRACT

Variants can affect traits differently depending on whether they are inherited from the mother or the father, but genome wide association studies (GWAS) treat maternal and paternal alleles as equivalent. In addition, the variants identified by GWAS do not account for a significant portion of the heritability for the corresponding trait and the “missing heritability” could be due to underlying biological mechanisms that are not yet well understood. My thesis addresses these limitations by disentangling the effects of maternal and paternal alleles on gene expression as well as on disease-associated phenotypes in the Hutterites, a founder population of European descent. With phased genotype data we can ask questions about parent of origin effects in this population. First, I tested for maternal and paternal genetic associations on cardiovascular disease and asthma associated traits and developed a novel method to detect variants that have opposite effects on the trait of interest depending on the parent of origin of the variant. We identified variants that have maternal-only or paternal-only effects, as well as variants that have opposite effects on traits, which would not be detected in a standard GWAS. This is the largest family based study of parent of origin effects on quantitative traits and the first to look for opposite parental effects. In the second chapter, I map RNA-seq rads from lymphoblastoid cell lines (LCLs) to parental haplotypes in 306 Hutterites and detect known imprinted genes and two novel imprinted genes (*PXDC1* and *PWAR6*). These imprinted gene patterns are validated using parent of origin expression from peripheral blood leukocyte (PBL) from 99 different Hutterites; imprinting control regions near the novel genes were validated using PBL methylation in the same 99 Hutterites. Finally, I explore searching for parent of origin effects on gene expression or parent of origin eQTLs, first for opposite effects and then for maternal and paternal specific effects.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

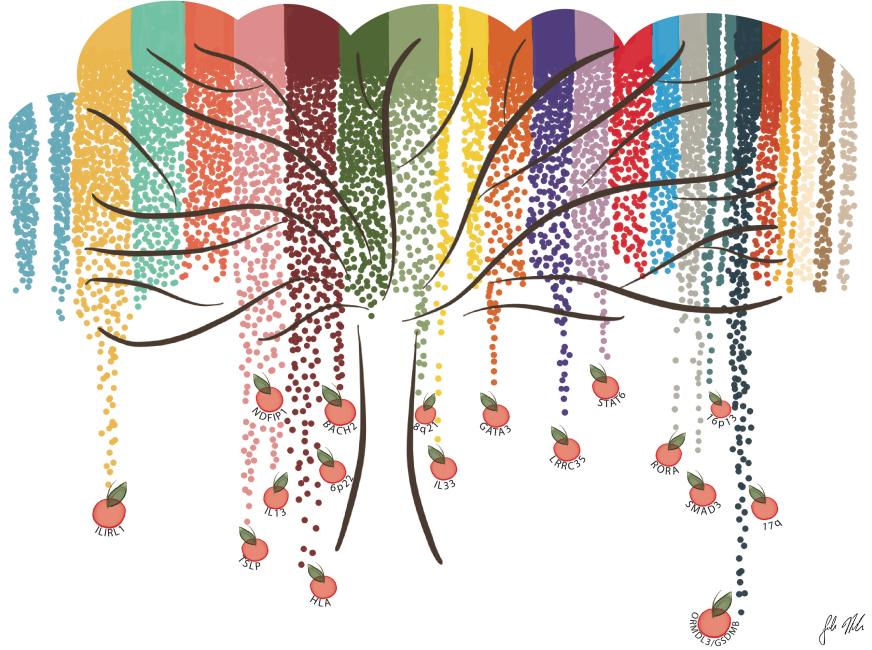
### 1.1 Human Genetics and the Genetics of Complex Traits

A central goal of genetics is to understand the contribution of genetic variation to phenotypic variation. The mechanism by which genetic variants contribute to a phenotype is determined by the genetic architecture of the phenotype, however, the underlying rules that determine how genetic variants contribute to phenotype diversity are still not fully known.

Monogenic traits are determined by genetic variation in one gene whereas complex traits do not have predictable patterns of inheritance and have heterogenous phenotypes. Genetic variation in many genes, as well as interaction of genes with environmental factors typically contribute to complex traits phenotypes.

Genome wide association studies (GWAS) have been effective in detecting associations between common variants and common diseases since 2005, with the first large GWAS with good coverage of the genome in 2007 from the Wellcome Trust Case Control Consortium [104].

Although GWAS have resulted in the discovery of thousands of novel associations to hundreds of phenotypes, the loci identified by GWAS explain a small proportion of the estimated heritability of the trait, or the fraction of phenotypic variation in a population that is due to genetic variation. There are many explanations that could account for this “missing heritability,” or the proportion of heritability not accounted for by these significant GWAS loci, including gene-environment interactions, epistatic interactions, inflated heritability estimates, rare variants or structural variants not tagged by GWAS SNPs, or common variants with small effect sizes, and parent of origin effects [105, 29, 35, 108]. Heritability of parent of origin effects have been extensively studied in mice [8, 66, 9, 7] and only beginning to be studied in humans [51]. The consistently significant GWAS associations, or “low-hanging fruit”



**Figure 1.1: Asthma GWAS Manhattan Plot.** Inverted manhattan plot for asthma GWAS highlighting “low hanging fruit” as apples hanging from the manhattan plot “tree.” Figure from Ober, 2016 [72] updated to reflect results from Demenais, 2018 [25].

have been further investigated but there still remains a lot of the genome, or “mid-hanging fruit,” that could contribute to a trait (Figure 1.1).

Additionally, in GWAS, the impact of parental origin of associated alleles has been largely ignored, and maternal and paternal alleles are treated as equivalent. Sequence variants could affect disease susceptibility or a quantitative trait differently depending on whether the variant was inherited from the father or the mother. Parent of origin effects include phenomena such as imprinting where epigenetic modifications determined by parental origin allows for differential gene expression of genes on homologous chromosomes [55, 52].

The classic examples of parent of origin effects are imprinted genes. More than 80% of imprinted genes in humans are found in genomic clusters, and at least thirteen clusters have been identified on eight chromosomes [52, 80, 81, 2]. These clusters contain both maternally and paternally expressed genes as well as non-coding RNA genes [80, 2]. Parent-specific

expression of the genes within a cluster is determined by cis-acting imprinting control regions (ICRs). ICRs show parental allele-specific DNA methylation and chromatin modifications. ICRs methylated in females during oogenesis typically contain the promoters of long non-coding RNA that are antisense to a protein- coding gene in the cluster and silence it. In contrast, ICRs that acquire methylation in the male germ line are located in intergenic regions.

The testing of maternal and paternal alleles separately can disentangle parent of origin effects. Parent of origin effects can alter gene expression levels that can ultimately affect other phenotypic traits including disease [52, 80] . Moreover, parent of origin eQTLs can provide insight into the molecular mechanisms that may underlie genetic associations with both rare and common diseases [52, 80, 50, 92, 31].

## 1.2 On The Origin of Genomic Imprinting

Genomic imprinting in its broadest sense suggests that a phenotype observed for a particular gene or genes depends on the sex of the parent from which the gamete containing that gene or genes originated [88]. It was said that a particular gene is imprinted if it results in a different phenotype when it is maternally inherited versus paternally inherited.

The first use of the term “imprinting” was used in reference to the recognition and selective elimination of the paternal chromosomes in *Sciara* [23, 88]. “The ‘imprint’ a chromosome bears is unrelated to the genic constitution of the chromosome and is determined only by the sex of the germ line through with the chromosome has been inherited.” [23]

The preferential inactivation of the paternally-derived X chromosomes in mouse were the first demonstrations of a functional imprint in mammalian genomes [95, 58, 18]. Imprinting on autosomes was first suggested by a deletion on mouse chromosome 17 that showed a different phenotype based on which parent the deletion was inherited from [43, 84]. It was not until the development of the pronuclear transplantation technique that allowed

for the creation of mice zygotes which contained only maternal or only paternal genetic contributions that there was any evidence that the maternal and paternal genomes are not equal. The differential imprinting on the parental chromosomes prevented complete embryonic development in these mice with complete uniparental disomy [88, 65]. Parental chromosomes have different regions silenced, or imprinted, such that one parental copy is expressed and having either both parental copies or neither expressed results in genetic and developmental abnormalities.

Further experiments suggested that imprinting occurs during gametogenesis and is necessary for full term development. An egg with a male pronucleus developed to term, but, an egg with two female pronuclei (gynogenetic embryos) or two male pronuclei (androgenetic) developed poorly[93, 65]. This provides evidence that input from both parents are required for normal development and the genome of the egg and sperm nuclei are not equal. Non-complementation in genetic crosses of translocated chromosomes provided a way to refine the imprinted regions of the genome[17].

Genetic characterization of Prader-Willi syndrome (PWS) was the first human genetic disease to be associated with maternal heterodisomy of chromosome 15q11-13[68]. It suggested that clinical phenotype of PWS arises from the absence of paternal contribution of 15q11-13 as opposed to a specific genetic mutation. Conversely the absence of maternal contribution to the same region should result in Angelman syndrome (AS) [68, 83]. This provided more evidence that, at “imprinted” regions, the functional differences depend on the sex of the transmitting parent and genetic input from both parents are required for normal human development [68]. Various other human imprinted syndromes due to loss or gain of expression of imprinted genes have been characterized summarized in Table 1.1.

Human syndrome	Syn-	Location	Major features	Causes
Transient neonatal diabetes mellitus type 1[59]		6q24	Neonatal hyperglycaemia and intrauterine growth restriction	Overexpression of <i>PLAG1</i> and <i>HYMAI</i>
Silver-Russell syndrome[28, 98]		11p15.5 (65%), MatUPD7 (10%)	Dysmorphism, intrauterine growth restriction and postnatal growth retardation	Complex: 11p15.5: hypomethylation of <i>H19</i> DMR, silencing of <i>IGF2</i> and biallelic expression of <i>H19</i> ; <i>MEST</i> and <i>GRB10</i> are candidates for MatUPD7 cases
Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome[20]		11p15.5	Prenatal and or postnatal overgrowth, enlarged tongue, abdominal wall defects, placental overgrowth and predisposition to embryonal tumours.	Complex: mostly epigenetic errors- silencing of <i>CDKN1C</i> or biallelic expression <i>IGF2</i> and silencing of <i>H19</i> ; inactivating mutations in <i>CDKN1C</i> ; PatUPD11
Temple Syndrome[42, 48] / MatUPD14 syndrome		14q32	Prenatal and postnatal growth retardation, premature puberty and obesity	Loss of paternal expression of <i>DLK1</i> and <i>RTL1</i>
Kagami-Ogata syndrome[47, 48, 74] / PatUPD14 syndrome		14q32	Dysmorphism, placentomegaly and excessive amniotic fluid	Increased expression of <i>RTL1</i>
Prader-Willi syndrome[15]		15q11-13	Developmental delay, obesity, hypogonadism, cognitive impairment	Loss of paternal expression up to 11 genes in 15q11-13 : paternal deletion of MatUPD15
Angelman syndrome[15]		15q11-13	Developmental delay, microcephaly, absent or limited speech, gait ataxia, characteristic EEG and behavioral profile with happy demeanour	loss of maternal expression of <i>UBE3A</i> , <i>UBE3A</i> mutation or patUPD15
Mulchandani-Bhoj-Conlin syndrome[67]		chr15	Prenatal growth restriction, severe short stature with proportional head circumference, and profound feeding difficulty	MatUPD20
Schaaf-Yang syndrome[32]		chr15	Delayed psychomotor development, intellectual disability, hypotonia, and behavioral abnormalities	inactivation of <i>MAGEL2</i> on paternal allele
Central precocious puberty 2[3]		chr15	Development of secondary sexual characteristics before age 8 in girls and age 9 in boys.	inactivation of <i>MKRN3</i> on paternal allele
Pseudo-hypoparathyroidism type 1a and type 1b[62, 30]		20q13.3	Dysmorphism, obesity, cognitive impairment, end-organ resistance to parathyroid hormone (which results in hypocalcemia and hyperphosphatemia) and resistance to other hormones	Inactivation/lack of maternal <i>GNAS</i>

Table 1.1: **Imprinted Gene Disorders.** Adapted from Peters (2014) and Mackay and Temple (2017) [80, 60]. UPD = Uniparental Disomy

### 1.3 The Search for Parent of Origin Effects

Parent of origin effects and imprinted genes have been most elegantly studied in mice, where two inbred strains are bred reciprocally to identify parent of origin effects on gene expression in progeny that have the same genotypes but different patterns of inheritance [7]. Such studies are obviously more challenging in humans. Previous studies have attempted to identify parent of origin alleles using different approaches, addressing parent of origin effects on gene expression and phenotypic traits.

In a study of gene expression, investigators examined Hardy Weinberg Equilibrium estimates using genotypes derived from RNA-seq data and considered imprinted loci to be those with no or fewer than expected heterozygotes (C.T. Watson, ASHG 2014). Garg et al. used gene expression in lymphoblastoid cell lines (LCLs) from 29 CEU and 30 YRI HapMap trios to identify 30 imprinting eQTLs with parent of origin specific effects on expression by first comparing maternal alleles and paternal alleles associated with gene expression, and then comparing reciprocal heterozygotes [34]. A study from the GTEx Consortium used RNA-seq data to determine allele specific expression (ASE) in 45 different tissues from various numbers of individuals to identify new imprinted genes [11]. By considering genes with monoallelic expression that were evenly distributed to both the reference and alternate alleles across individuals as evidence for imprinting, they identified 42 imprinted genes, both known and novel, and used family studies to confirm imprinting of 5 novel genes. Most recently, Santoni et al. identified nine novel imprinted genes using single-cell allele-specific gene expression and identifying genes with mono-allelic expression in fibroblasts from 3 unrelated individuals and probands of 2 family trios, and then using the trios to confirm parent of origin of the alleles [87].

Not many studies have searched for parent of origin effects on binary and quantitative traits. In a study on 38,167 Icelanders with known status for 7 diseases, investigators identified variants that were associated with breast cancer when paternally inherited and variants

associated with type 2 diabetes when maternally inherited [50]. Parent of origin associations with height in the same Icelandic population ( $n=88,835$ ) identified four associations of which three were in known imprinted regions, one of which was also replicated in the Sardinia population [107].

### *1.3.1 Dissertation Overview*

Large pedigrees are ideal for identifying parent of origin effects [11]. The advantages that large family studies have for these studies include: 1) formally proving parent of origin effects detected from ASE, and 2) detecting subtle imprinting that does not lead to strictly monoallelic expression [11]. The Hutterite population is ideally suited for these studies. The  $>1,400$  Hutterite individuals studied by our group are related to each other in a 13-generation pedigree that includes 3,671 individuals, all of whom are descendants of only 64 founders. Ninety-eight Hutterites were initially selected for whole genome sequencing; alleles were phased using Affymetrix framework markers in the 98 individuals and then imputed to the remaining 1,532 Hutterites who had been previously genotyped with the Affymetrix framework markers [54]. After quality control, parent of origin was assigned to more than 10 million variants. Of the 1,532 with genotype data, 431 also had RNA-seq expression data from LCLs, and between 600-1300 individuals have been phenotyped for cardiovascular disease (CVD) associated and asthma associated quantitative traits.

In this dissertation, I use a novel variation on GWAS to detect parent of origin effects on quantitative disease-related traits in the Hutterites that would be normally missed in standard GWAS. I am able to find maternal- and paternal-only effects, as well as opposite parent of origin effects. This method can be applied to any quantitative trait for which we know parent of origin of alleles, including gene expression. The method and results of testing this method with quantitative disease related traits is in Chapter 2. Using LCL gene expression and parent of origin allele information in the Hutterites, I develop a new method

of mapping RNA-seq reads to parental haplotypes and detect known and novel imprinted genes in Chapter 3. The patterns of imprinted genes are validated in a different sample of Hutterite individuals for which we have peripheral blood leukocyte (PBL) RNA-seq and DNA methylation. In Chapter 4, I use methods, including one from Chapter 2, to try and find parent of origin variants that have opposite effects on gene expression. Additionally, we tested for maternal and paternal effects on maternal and paternal gene expression, respectively, and used a parent of origin ASE (PO-ASE) test to identify differences in maternal and paternal gene expression among reciprocal heterozygotes.

# CHAPTER 2

## PARENT OF ORIGIN EFFECTS ON QUANTITATIVE PHENOTYPES IN A FOUNDER POPULATION

### 2.1 Abstract<sup>1</sup>

The impact of the parental origin of associated alleles in GWAS has been largely ignored. Yet sequence variants could affect traits differently depending on whether they are inherited from the mother or the father. To explore this possibility, we studied 21 quantitative phenotypes in a large Hutterite pedigree. We first identified variants with significant single parent (maternal-only or paternal-only) effects, and then used a novel statistical model to identify variants with opposite parental effects. Overall, we identified parent of origin effects (POEs) on 11 phenotypes, most of which are risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Many of the loci with POEs have features of imprinted regions and many of the variants with POE are associated with the expression of nearby genes. Overall, our results indicate that POEs, which can be opposite in direction, are relatively common in humans, have potentially important clinical effects, and will be missed in traditional GWAS.

### 2.2 Introduction

Genome-wide association studies (GWAS) typically treat alleles inherited from the mother and the father as equivalent, although variants can affect traits differently depending on whether they are maternal or paternal in origin. In particular, parent of origin effects (POEs) can result from imprinting, where epigenetic modifications allows for differential gene expression on homologous chromosomes that is determined by the parental origin of the chromosome. Mutations in imprinted genes or regions can result in diseases. For example,

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two very different diseases, Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) and Angelman Syndrome (AS), are due to loss of function alleles in genes within an imprinted region on chromosome 15q11-13. Inheriting a loss of function mutation for the *SNRPN* gene from the father results in PWS but inheriting a loss of function mutation for the *UBE3A* gene from the mother results in AS[80, 31]. Long noncoding RNA genes at this and other imprinted regions act to silence (i.e. imprint) genes in cis. Imprinted genes are often part of imprinted gene networks, suggesting regulatory links between these genes [78, 33, 97]. More than 200 imprinted loci have been described in humans [13] but there are likely many other, as yet undiscovered, imprinted loci.

Previous studies have utilized pedigrees to test maternal and paternal alleles separately for association with phenotypes or with gene expression to uncover new imprinted loci [50, 11, 34, 79, 13]. Kong *et al* [50] discovered one locus associated with breast cancer risk only when the allele is inherited from the father and another locus associated with type 2 diabetes risk only when the allele is inherited from the mother. Garg et al. reported parent-of-origin cis-eQTLs with known or putative novel imprinted genes affecting gene expression[34]. Two additional studies by Zoledziewsk et al. and Benonisdottir et al. identified opposite POEs on adult height at known imprinted loci[107, 13]. Both studies reported associations with variants at the *KCNQ1* gene, and one showed additional opposite POEs with height at two known imprinted loci (*IGF2-H19* and *DLK1-MEG3*)[13]These studies provide proof-of-principle that alleles at imprinted loci can show POEs, some with opposite effects, with common phenotypes.

Many existing studies and methods identify parent of origin effects use case/parent trios or case/mother duos[21, 40, 4, 102, 101]. Similar to Kong *et al.* [50], our method does not require data on the parent and only uses the parent of origin informative alleles which were assigned and phased using PRIMAL[54]. In contrast to Kong *et al.* [50] which used binary traits, our method tests for parent of origin effects on quantitative traits, similar to

Benonisdottir *et al.* [13] which tested for parent of origin effects on height.

No previous study has included a broad range of human quantitative phenotypes or has studied genome-wide variants with effects in different directions depending on the parent of origin. To address this possibility, we developed a statistical model that directly compares the effects of the maternal and paternal alleles to identify effects that are different, including those that are opposite. We applied this model in a study of 21 common quantitative traits that were measured in the Hutterites, a founder population of European descent for which we have phased genotype data [54]. We identified variants with maternally inherited or paternally inherited effects only and variants with opposite POEs. Some of the identified regions have characteristics similar to known imprinted genes. Overall, we show that this model can identify putative novel imprinted regions with POEs for a broad range of clinically relevant quantitative phenotypes.

## 2.3 Results

### 2.3.1 GWAS

We first performed standard genome-wide association studies (GWAS) of 21 traits in the Hutterites (Table S1). These studies identified one genome wide significant association ( $p < 5 \times 10^{-8}$ ) with each of five of the 21 traits: low density lipoprotein level (LDL)-cholesterol, triglycerides, carotid artery intima media thickness (CIMT), left ventricular mass index (LVMI), and monocyte count. The results of all 21 GWAS are summarized in Table S2 and Supplementary Figure 2.5a. Results for all variants for all GWAS are deposited in dbGaP (phs000185 - submission in progress).

### *2.3.2 Parent of Origin GWAS*

We considered two possible mechanisms of POEs. In the first, the effect size of one parent's allele is close to zero and the effect size of the other parent's allele is significantly different from zero. For these cases, we performed a paternal only or maternal only GWAS. In other cases, the maternal and paternal alleles may both have effect sizes different from zero, but the effects are significantly different from each other or opposite in direction. To detect these types of POEs, we developed a model that tests for differences between parental effects (see Methods). This model is especially powerful to identify variants with parental effects in opposite directions.

### *2.3.3 Maternal and Paternal GWAS*

Using the same phenotypes, genotypes, pedigree, and criteria for significance as in the standard GWAS, we tested for maternal and paternal effects on each trait by testing each parentally inherited allele with the trait of interest, similar to previous studies[50, 107, 34]. Variants were considered to have POEs if they had a p-value less than  $5 \times 10^{-8}$  in only one parent and were not significant in the standard GWAS (i.e., the LDL association on chromosome 19 and the triglycerides association chromosome 11 were not considered to have POEs; see Table S1). The most significant parent of origin associations are summarized in Table 2.1. All significant results of the parent of origin GWAS for all 21 phenotypes are included in Table S5.

Overall, seven phenotypes had genome-wide significant parent of origin associations: four in the maternal only GWAS and three in the paternal only GWAS. Three cardiovascular disease (CVD)-associated phenotypes (age at menarche, CIMT, LVMI) and one lung function phenotype (forced expiratory volume in one second [FEV<sub>1</sub>]) were associated with maternally-inherited alleles only.

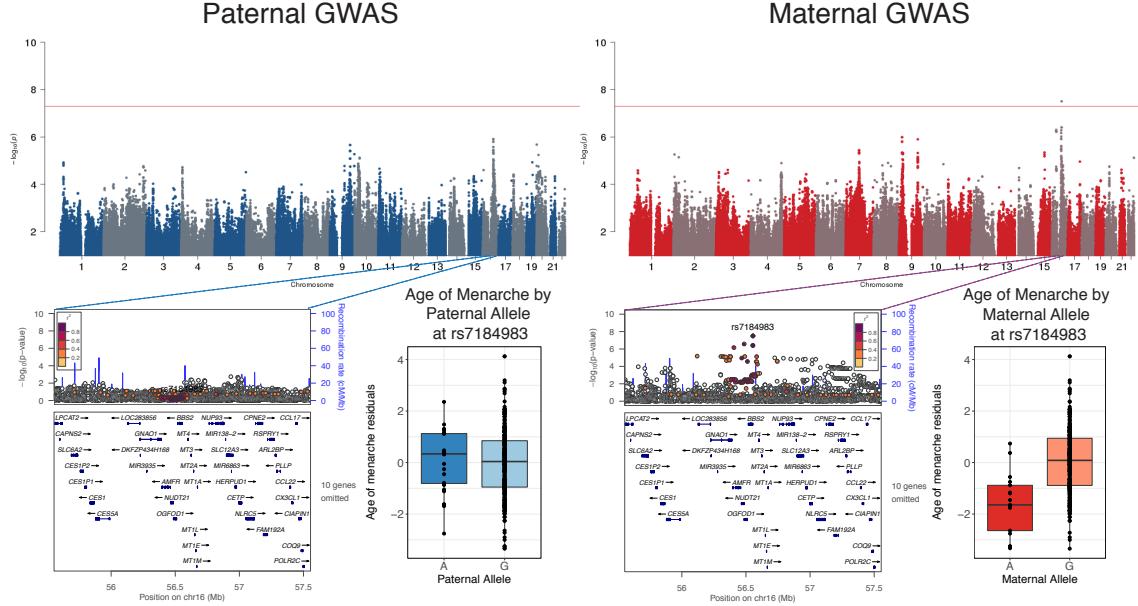
A maternally inherited allele at rs7184983 (G) on chromosome 16 was associated with

Phenotype	rsid	chr:loc	Variant Location	Nearest Gene	MAF	N	Beta (SE)	Paternal GWAS p-value	Maternal GWAS p-value	Standard GWAS p-value
<b>A. Maternal Associations</b>										
Age at Menarche	rs7184983	16:56554709	Upstream (A/G)	<i>BBS2</i>	0.059	336	0.862 (0.154)	5.01e-01	3.11e-08	6.75e-03
CIMT	rs4077567	2:216703202	Intronic (G/A)	<i>LINC00607*</i>	0.30	429	0.047 (0.008)	5.72E-01	3.02E-08	4.21E-06
FEV <sub>1</sub>	rs9849387	3:77764243	Intergenic (A/G)	<i>ROBO2</i>	0.39	1029	-0.089 (0.015)	3.87E-01	4.10E-09	4.38E-04
	rs6791779	3:74996505	Intergenic (C/G)	<i>MIR4444-1*</i>	0.24	879	-0.102 (0.021)	6.88E-02	1.48E-08	4.52E-02
LVMI	rs574232282	1:41662388	Intronic (G/A)	<i>SCMH1</i>	0.018	537	0.239 (0.042)	5.52E-01	1.39E-08	1.05E-03
<b>B. Paternal Associations</b>										
LDL	rs12024326	1:227146433	Intronic (A/G)	<i>ADCK3</i>	0.175	686	-0.295 (0.048)	8.06E-10	4.21E-01	4.24E-05
	rs4843650	16:87683486	Intronic (A/G)	<i>JPH3</i>	0.448	621	0.211 (0.036)	6.57E-09	2.21E-01	1.50E-04
SBP	rs1536182	13:46275415	Upstream (A/G)	<i>LINC01055*</i>	0.2	684	-0.028 (0.005)	1.53E-08	1.78E-01	6.93E-04
Total cholesterol	rs113588203	1:228979156	Intergenic (G/T)	<i>RHOU</i>	0.099	703	-0.341 (0.060)	1.76E-08	7.43E-02	8.08E-03

Table 2.1: **Phenotypes with significant single parent of origin associations.** \*The most significant variant ( $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$ ) at each locus for the (A) maternal and (B) paternal associations associated with each phenotype is shown. \*non-coding RNA genes

younger age of menarche ( $P = 3.11 \times 10^{-8}$ ) (Figure 2.1). This SNP, rs7184983, is located upstream of the *BBS2* gene and is associated with increased expression of *OGFOD1* in transformed fibroblast cells and tibial nerve [36]. The maternally inherited allele at rs4077567 (G) on chromosome 2 was associated with decreased CIMT ( $P = 3.02 \times 10^{-8}$ ) (Figure 2.6). This SNP is in the intron of a long intergenic noncoding gene, *LINC00607*, that is expressed in aorta, coronary, and tibial artery, all tissues potentially relevant to CIMT and atherosclerosis [36]. A maternally inherited allele at rs574232282 (G) in the intron of *SCMH1* on chromosome 1 was associated with increased LVMI ( $P = 1.39 \times 10^{-8}$ ) (Supplementary Figure 2.7). *SCMH1* is expressed in aorta, coronary, and tibial artery [36]. *SCMH1* protein associates with the polycomb group multiprotein complexes required to maintain the transcriptionally repressive state of certain genes[36]. Lastly, maternally inherited alleles at rs9849387 (A) and rs6791779 (C) on chromosome 3 were both associated with reduced FEV<sub>1</sub> ( $P= 4.10 \times 10^{-9}$  and  $1.48 \times 10^{-8}$ , respectively) (Supplementary Figure 2.8). The nearest gene to rs9849387 is *ROBO2* (65kb, downstream), which is expressed in the lung as well as in brain,

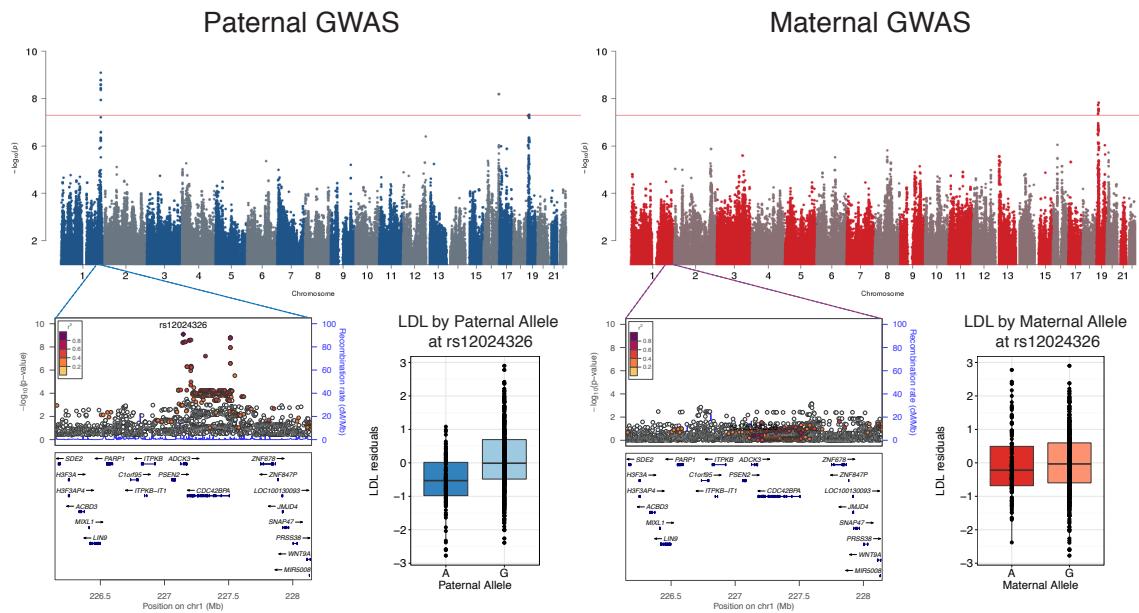
and ovary[36].The nearest gene to rs6791779 is *MIR4444-1*(267kb) whose expression has not been characterized.



**Figure 2.1: Maternal and Paternal GWAS results for Age of Menarche.** The top panel shows the Manhattan plots from the maternal (left) and maternal (right) GWAS. LocusZoom plots for both GWAS are shown in the lower panel for the associated region in the GWAS. Boxplots show the distribution of age of menarche residuals (y-axes) by the corresponding maternal and paternal alleles at this SNP (x-axes). The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show +/-1.5 x IQR.

Three other CVD-related phenotypes (systolic blood pressure, LDL-C, and total cholesterol) had associations with paternally inherited alleles only. The paternally inherited allele at rs12024326 (A) on chromosome 1 was associated with lower LDL-cholesterol levels ( $P = 8.06 \times 10^{-10}$ ) (Figure 2.2). rs12024326 is in the intron of gene *ADCK3*, and the same allele was associated with increased expression of *ADCK3* in whole blood, as well as decreased expression of a neighboring gene, *CDC42BPA* in brain (cerebellum), heart (left ventricle), esophagus, and tibial artery[36].The paternal G allele at rs4843650 on chromosome 16 was associated with increased LDL-C and is located in the intron of *JPH3*, which is expressed predominantly in the brain[36]. A SNP on chromosome 13 (rs1536182) was associated with

systolic blood pressure levels when it was inherited from the father (Figure 2.9). The paternally inherited A allele at this SNP was associated with decreased systolic blood pressure, as well as decreased expression of its closest gene, *LINC01055*, a long intergenic noncoding gene, in testis[36]. A paternally inherited allele at rs113588203 (G) on chromosome 1 was associated with lower total cholesterol ( $P = 1.76 \times 10^{-8}$ ) (Figure 2.10). This SNP is intergenic between *RHOU* (96kb, downstream), which is expressed across multiple tissues, and *MIRR4454* (331kb), which is expressed in adipose, kidney and heart tissues[36].



**Figure 2.2: Maternal and Paternal GWAS results for LDL Cholesterol.** The top panel shows the Manhattan plots from the maternal (left) and maternal (right) GWAS. LocusZoom plots for both GWAS are shown in the lower panel for the associated region in the GWAS. Boxplots show the distribution of LDL residuals (y-axes) by the corresponding maternal and paternal alleles at this SNP (x-axes). The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show  $\pm 1.5 \times$  IQR.

### 2.3.4 GWAS for Differential Parent of Origin Effects

Because some imprinted regions include genes that have both maternal or paternal specific tissue expression, we next tested for such differential effects with these 21 phenotypes. In

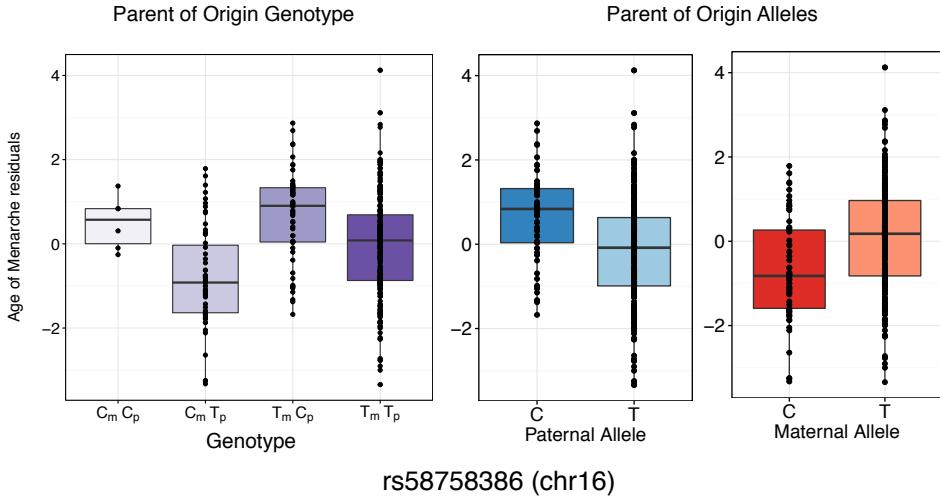
Phenotype	rsid	chr:loc	Variant Location	Nearest Gene	MAF	$\beta_M - \beta_P$ (SE)	Opposite Effect GWAS	Paternal GWAS		Maternal GWAS		GWAS p-value
								P-value	Beta(SE)	P-value	Beta(SE)	
Age of menarche	rs12447191	16:62199299	Intergenic	<i>CDH8</i>	0.17	-0.654 (0.109)	5.27E-09	5.20E-06	0.391 (0.085)	1.85E-05 (0.085)	-0.368	8.68E-01
BMI	rs77785972	5:97415767	Intergenic	<i>LINC01340</i> *	0.025	0.154 (0.025)	5.12E-10	5.84E-07	-0.094 (0.019)	1.58E-05 (0.019)	0.081	5.39E-01
	rs17605739	6:22962798	Intronic	<i>RP1-209A6.1</i> *	0.17	0.053 (0.010)	3.01E-08	6.99E-05	-0.032 (0.008)	1.42E-06 (0.007)	0.034	1.56E-01
Eosinophil count	rs2355879	1:18732860	Intergenic	<i>IGSF21</i>	0.14	0.091 (0.016)	1.69E-08	5.83E-08	-0.065 (0.012)	5.59E-04 (0.012)	0.043	2.53E-01
FEV1	rs12714812	3:74813002	Intergenic	<i>CNTN3</i>	0.45	-0.119 (0.021)	4.52E-08	1.78E-03	0.052 (0.017)	6.35E-06 (0.016)	-0.073	9.58E-01
LDL	rs1032596	16:86281537	Intronic	<i>LINC01081</i> *	0.30	-0.310 (0.056)	3.69E-08	1.05E-06	0.201 (0.041)	4.56E-04 (0.042)	-0.148	2.71E-01
LVMI	rs16853098	2:168013281	Intronic	<i>XIRP2</i>	0.12	-0.091 (0.053)	4.18E-08	5.29E-06	0.064 (0.014)	2.04E-04 (0.013)	-0.048	9.26E-01
Neutrophil count	rs14203084118:34371947	Intonic	<i>TPGS2</i>	0.042	-0.224 (0.041)	4.40E-08	2.25E-03	0.078 (0.025)	1.30E-07 (0.035)	-0.188	5.77E-01	
Triglycerides	rs7525463	1:218860879	Intronic	<i>MIR548F3</i> *	0.16	-0.401 (0.071)	2.51E-08	1.14E-03	0.195 (0.060)	5.52E-08 (0.049)	-0.267	2.84E-02
Total cholesterol	rs7033776	9:36704465	Intergenic	<i>MELK</i>	0.41	0.230 (0.041)	4.12E-08	5.60E-08	-0.183 (0.034)	2.28E-03 (0.032)	0.099	6.70E-02

Table 2.2: **Significant Opposite Parent of Origin Effect GWAS Associations.** The most significant variant at each locus for each phenotype is shown.  $\beta_M - \beta_P$  represents difference in parental effect size. \*non-coding RNA genes

these analyses, we compared the effect and direction of the association between maternal and paternal alleles to identify variants that have different effects, including opposite effects, on the phenotype. Such loci would be completely hidden in standard GWAS in which paternally and maternally inherited alleles are combined. These opposite effect GWAS revealed 11 independent loci with opposite POEs for nine different traits, at least six of which are associated with CVD risk (Table 2.2, Figure 2.4).

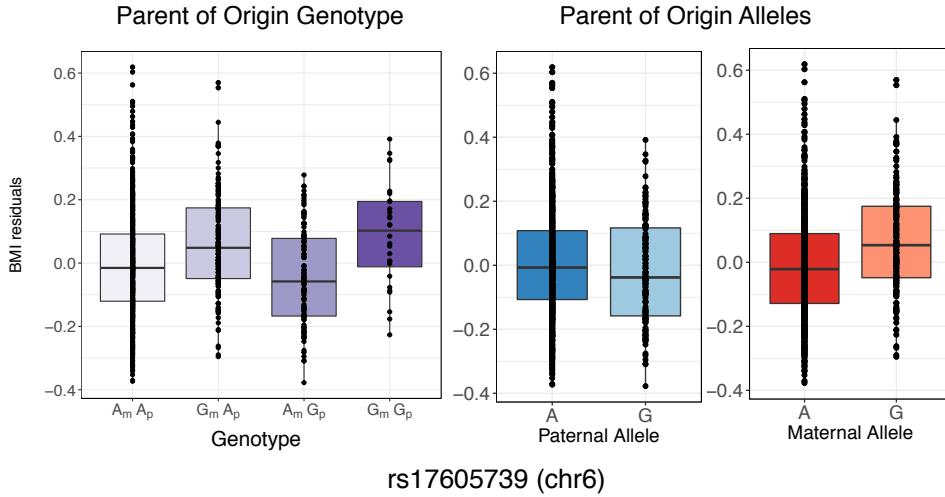
A locus on chromosome 16, near the *CDH8* gene (128kb, upstream), was associated with opposite POEs with age of menarche (Figure 2.3). *CDH8* is highly expressed in the brain, as well as in the aorta artery and pituitary gland. Two loci on chromosomes 5 and 6 were associated with opposite POEs on body mass index (BMI) (Figure 2.4). The most significant variant on chromosome 5 (rs77785972) is near a long intergenic noncoding gene, *LINC01340* (409kb, downstream), whose expression has not been well characterized. The SNP on chromosome 6 (rs17605739) is also in a long intergenic noncoding gene, *RP1-209A6.1*, which is expressed in low levels in the tibial artery, bladder, spleen, lung, pituitary gland, as well as testis.

A SNP on chromosome 16 (rs1032596) was associated with opposite POEs on LDL-



**Figure 2.3: Opposite Effect Parent of Origin GWAS Result for Age of Menarche.** Box plots of age of menarche residuals (y-axes) are shown for each of the four genotypes (left panel; x-axis), and for paternal (center panel; x-axis) and maternal (right panel; x-axis) alleles. The maternal C allele is associated with decreased and maternal T allele with increased age of menarche. The paternal C allele is associated with increased and the paternal T allele with decreased age of menarche. The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show  $\pm 1.5 \times$  IQR.

cholesterol (Figure 2.12). This SNP lies in the intron of another long noncoding RNA gene, *LINC01081*, which has been suggested to be imprinted because its downstream genes have also been shown to have parent- and tissue-specific activity[94]. A region on chromosome 2 has opposite effects associated with LVMI (Figure 2.13). The associated SNPs are in the intron of *XIRP2*, a cardiomyopathy associated protein that is expressed in skeletal muscle and heart left ventricle, suggesting that this gene could play a role in determining left ventricular mass[99, 71, 36]. In addition, the most significant SNP at this region, rs17616252 (and multiple SNPs in LD) is a strong eQTL ( $P = 1.8 \times 10^{-13}$ ) for the gene *XIRP2* in skeletal muscle, *XIRP2-AS1* in testis, and *B3GALT1* in transformed fibroblast cells[36]. Four variants in a region on chromosome 1 in a microRNA gene, *MIR548F3*, were associated with opposite POEs on triglyceride levels (Figure 2.14). The expression of *MIR548F3* has not been characterized. SNP rs7033776 near *MELK* (27kb, downstream) on chromosome 9 was



**Figure 2.4: Opposite Effect Parent of Origin GWAS Result for BMI.** Box plots of two significant loci plot BMI residuals (y-axes) for each of the four genotypes (left panel; x-axis), and for paternal (center panel; x-axis) and maternal (right panel; x-axis) alleles. For the (A) SNP on chromosome 5 the maternal A allele is associated with decreased and maternal G allele with increased BMI. The paternal A allele is associated with increased and the paternal G allele with decreased BMI. For the (B) SNP on chromosome 6 the maternal A allele is associated with decreased and maternal G allele with increased BMI. The paternal A allele is associated with increased and the paternal G allele with decreased BMI. The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show +/-1.5 x IQR.

associated with opposite effects on total cholesterol (Figure 2.15). *MELK* is expressed in the colon and esophagus in addition to transformed lymphocytes and fibroblasts[36].

Nine linked variants on chromosome 1 were associated with opposite POEs of blood eosinophil count (Figure 2.16). These variants are near the gene *IGSF21* (27kb, downstream) which is a member of the immunoglobulin superfamily and likely acts as a receptor in immune response pathways[76]. A variant on chromosome 3, rs12714812, was associated with opposite POEs for FEV<sub>1</sub> (Figure 2.17). This variant has been shown to regulate the expression of a gene *CNTN3* (45kb, upstream) in heart and brain[36]. Studies in mice have suggested that this gene is imprinted and maternally expressed in the murine placenta[14]. Variant rs142030841 in the intron of the gene TPGS2 on chromosome 18 has opposite POEs with neutrophil levels (Figure 2.18). This SNP is an expression quantitative trait locus (eQTL) for

the noncoding RNA gene *RP11-95O2.5* in skin, testis, breast, thyroid and adipose tissue, for *CELF4* in tibial nerve and lung, and for *TPGS2* in tibial artery and transformed fibroblast cells[36].

### 2.3.5 Parent of Origin Effects on Gene Expression

To determine if any of the associated variants also showed POEs on gene expression in the Hutterites, we used RNA-seq gene expression data from lymphoblastoid cell lines (LCLs) collected from 430 of the individuals in the GWAS sample. We first tested for association of maternal and paternal variants with genes detected as expressed in the LCLs and whose transcript start site was within 1Mb of each associated SNP. There were no significant associations after multiple testing correction, similar to a previous study[13]. However, because we considered this to be exploratory analyses, we show results for the five most significant parent of origin eQTLs (Table 3). We next used the opposite effect model for each SNP in Table 2.2 and expression of all genes that were detected as expressed in LCLs and whose transcript start site was within 1Mb of the associated SNP. This resulted in 57 tests (1 SNP for each of 8 phenotypes, and 57 genes). The five most significant opposite effect eQTLs, none of which passed the Bonferroni threshold of  $8.77 \times 10^{-4}$ , are shown in Table 4. The most significant opposite effect eQTL was for *POLR1E* expression with the SNP on chromosome 9 (rs7033776) that was associated with total cholesterol (opposite effect eQTL  $P = 9.86 \times 10^{-4}$ ) (Figure 2.19). *POLR1E* is involved in the purine metabolism pathway as well as DNA-directed polymerase activity. The same SNP, rs7033776, had modest opposite effects with the expression of three other genes in the region (*PAX5*, *FBXO10*, and *FRMPD1*), a signature consistent with an imprinted region. Another SNP with opposite POEs on LVMI, rs16853098, was an opposite effect eQTL for *STK39*, a gene that has been previously associated with hypertension[100].

## 2.4 Discussion

In this study, we introduced a novel statistical method that allows assessment of standard GWAS signals along with measures of differential POEs on common quantitative phenotypes. Similar to previous parent of origin studies of fewer phenotypes[50, 13, 34], we tested for associations of maternally- or paternally-derived alleles with each phenotype. We then extended this method to identify variants for which maternally- and paternally-derived alleles have different, including opposite, effects on phenotypic values. The focus on 21 common disease-associated phenotypes in a single large pedigree allowed us to broadly survey physiological effects of putative imprinted regions and the candidate genes at each associated locus. In contrast to previous studies, our new model can identify variants with opposite POEs that would be missed in traditional GWAS (Table 2.2).

Our studies of >1,000 Hutterites who are related to each other in a single pedigree allowed us to detect POEs, even when few genome-wide significant associations were detected in standard GWAS of the same phenotypes. Our method revealed parent of origin specific genome-wide significant associations for seven of the 21 phenotypes examined, with maternally-inherited alleles associated with four phenotypes, paternally-inherited alleles with three phenotypes (Table 2.1), and opposite parent of origin alleles with nine phenotypes, of which five also showed single POEs at different loci (Table 2.2). Overall, 11 of the 21 phenotypes examined showed genome-wide significant evidence of POEs with alleles at one or more loci. In contrast, standard GWAS of these same phenotypes and using the same markers in these same individuals revealed genome-wide significant association for only five traits.

It is notable that four of the nine significant opposite parent of origin effects (one each with LDL-C and triglycerides, and two with BMI) lie in or near long intergenic non-coding RNA genes (lincRNAs). LincRNAs are a feature of imprinted regions[80], where they can silence the expression of genes on the opposite chromosome[12, 78]. One of the variants, rs1032596, with an opposite parent of origin effect on LDL-C is located in the *LINC01081*

gene. This noncoding RNA, along with *LINC01082*, regulates the *FOXF1* enhancer resulting in *FOXF1* parent- and tissue-specific activity[94] providing experimental support for tissue specific expression, a feature of imprinted regions.

Another variant with POEs in our study has been suggested to be imprinted in previously published work. The variant associated with opposite POEs for FEV<sub>1</sub> is an eQTL for the gene *CNTN3*. *CNTN3* was shown to have exclusive maternal allele-specific expression in murine placentas[14], although this finding may have been due to contaminating maternal cells[75, 82].

Other regions associated with POEs harbor genes involved in transcriptional repression (e.g., *SCMH1* with LVMI on chromosome 1) or the associated SNPs are reported as eQTLs in GTEx with expression in tissues relevant to the phenotype under investigation (e.g., the LVMI-associated SNPs are eQTLs for *XIRP2*, which is expressed in skeletal muscle and heart left ventricle)[36]. Overall, these patterns of expression provide additional support that the parent of origin associations in our study are flagging imprinted regions or regions involved in the regulation of gene expression. Finally, we used gene expression in LCLs from the Hutterites to directly test for parent of origin eQTLs among SNPs associated with phenotypes in the parent of origin GWAS. Although none of the parent of origin eQTLs met criteria for significance after correcting for multiple testing, the SNP on chromosome 9 with opposite POEs on total cholesterol levels was borderline significant as an opposite parent of origin eQTL for *POLR1E*, and possible for three other genes at the same locus (*PAX5*, *FBXO10*, and *FRMPD1*). The presence of multiple genes with potential parent of origin expression patterns is further supportive of an imprinted locus. The availability of gene expression only in LCLs from the Hutterites limits the inferences we can draw about effects on expression because imprinted regions are often tissue-specific and sometimes developmentally regulated[80, 31]. Despite this limitation, the fact that many of the SNPs associated with POEs on phenotypes are themselves eQTLs in relevant tissues (GTEx) and

some are suggestive of having POEs on expression in LCLs from the Hutterites is generally supportive of the suggestion that some of the regions identified in this study are imprinted or have network interactions with imprinted genes[19] in humans. Additionally, our data suggest that loci with POEs influence a broad spectrum of quantitative phenotypes that are themselves risk factors for common diseases.

In particular, the discovery of POEs for eight traits that are associated cardiovascular disease risk is intriguing. These include metabolic phenotypes, such as BMI, total cholesterol, triglycerides, LDL, and age of menarche, that have indirect effects on cardiac health, as well as LVMI and CIMT, which more directly reflect cardiac health. Some of these phenotypes showed associations with paternally inherited alleles only (systolic blood pressure, LDL-C, total cholesterol), maternally inherited alleles only (LVMI, CIMT, and age at menarche), and/or with opposite effect variants (BMI, LDL-C, triglycerides, total cholesterol, LVMI, age at menarche). It has been suggested that genomic imprinting evolved in the mammalian lineage as a way to regulate maternally and paternally expressed genes in the placenta during pregnancy and modulate metabolic functions related to growth, where the parental interests may be in conflict — paternal alleles favoring growth of the fetus at the expense of the mother while maternal alleles favor restricting resources to the fetus to ensure preservation of her nutritional needs [37, 12, 78]. Our data show some effects that are consistent with this theory. For example, three independent paternally inherited alleles on chromosome 1 are associated with increased LDL-C (Fig. 2) and total cholesterol (Figure ); a paternal allele on chromosome 13 is also associated with increased systolic blood pressure (Figure ). However, it is not always possible to interpret our results in light of this model, such as the association of maternal allele on chromosome 2 with decreased CIMT (Figure 2.7), or the maternal allele on chromosome 16 associated with decreased age of menarche (Figure 2.1), which confers increased cardiovascular risk [16]. However, because many of the traits associated with POEs in this study were measured in adults, and none were measured in neonates, we

are likely observing the downstream effects of processes that occurred in utero. Nonetheless, this kinship theory, or parent-conflict hypothesis, could account for the enrichment of parent of origin associations, particularly those with opposite effects, among metabolic and CVD-associated traits [80].

Finally, we note that the parent of origin GWAS for 21 phenotypes in the Hutterites revealed overall twice as many genome-wide significant loci compared to standard GWAS of the same phenotypes in the same individuals, suggesting that variation at imprinted loci may represent some of the "missing heritability" of these phenotypes and potentially for the disease for which they confer risk. This idea is consistent with observations in both mice and humans [51]. POEs in mice contribute disproportionately to the heritability of 97 traits, including those related to total cholesterol, weight, HDL, and triglycerides [66]. Exactly how much loci with POEs in humans contribute to phenotypic variation and disease risk overall remains to be determined, but our study provides compelling evidence that it is likely to be significant for many important traits.

## 2.5 Methods

### 2.5.1 Sample Composition

The individuals in this study have participated in one or more of our studies on the genetics of complex traits in the Hutterites [24, 103, 1]. The more than 1,500 Hutterites in our study are related to each other in a 13-generation pedigree including 3,671 individuals.

### 2.5.2 Genotype Data

Variants detected in the whole genome sequences of 98 Hutterites were previously imputed to an additional 1,317 individuals using PRIMAL, a high-accuracy pedigree based imputation method [54]. PRIMAL was used to phase alleles and assign parent of origin for 83% of about

12 million autosomal SNPs. For these studies, we selected SNPs that had a MAF 1% and genotype call rate 85%. This yielded 5,891,982 autosomal SNPs. Parent of origin allele call rates differed among individuals and between phenotypes (Table S1

### *2.5.3 Phenotype Data*

We included 21 quantitative phenotypes that were previously measured in the Hutterites. Descriptions for each phenotype, as well as exclusion criteria, transformations, and covariates used with each phenotype in the GWAS, are available in the Supplementary Methods (Table S1

Descriptions for 18 of the 21 phenotypes can be found in Cusanovich et al [24]. The remaining three are described here. Height was measured in cm on a stadiometer with shoes removed. BMI was calculated using weight (kg, measured on scale) divided by height (m) squared. Age at menarche was collected retrospectively by interview.

### *2.5.4 GWAS*

We used a linear mixed model as implemented in GEMMA to test for genome wide association with 21 phenotypes using an additive model. We corrected for relatedness, as well as relevant covariates (Table S1

### *2.5.5 Maternal and Paternal GWAS*

To evaluated the evidence for POEs, we tested maternal and paternal alleles separately with each phenotype, comparing phenotypic differences between the maternally inherited alleles and between the paternally inherited alleles. We used a linear mixed model as implemented in GEMMA, which allows us to correct for relatedness as a random effect, as well as sex, age, and other covariates as fixed effects [106].The linear mixed model for the parent of

origin GWAS for testing maternal alleles and paternal alleles is shown in Equation 2.1 and Equation 2.2, respectively.

$$Y = W\alpha + X_M\beta_M + g + \epsilon \quad (2.1)$$

$$Y = W\alpha + X_P\beta_P + g + \epsilon \quad (2.2)$$

$n$  is the number of individuals,  $Y$  is an  $n \times 1$  vector of quantitative traits,  $W$  is an  $n \times c$  matrix of covariates (fixed effects) including intercept 1.  $\alpha$  is a  $c \times 1$  vector of covariate coefficients.  $X_M$  is an  $n \times 1$  vector of maternal alleles, and  $X_P$  an  $n \times 1$  vector of paternal alleles.  $\beta_M$  and  $\beta_P$  are the effect sizes of maternal and paternal alleles, respectively.  $g$  is a vector of genetic effects with  $g \sim N(0, A(\sigma_g)^2)$  where  $A$  is the genetic relatedness matrix;  $\epsilon$  is a vector of non-genetic effects with  $\epsilon \sim N(0, I(\sigma_e)^2)$ .

### 2.5.6 Differential Effect GWAS (PO-GWAS)

To test for a difference in the same allele inherited from each parent, including opposite effects, we re-parameterized the test model (Equation 2.3) from Garg et al[34]. The null model (Equation 2.4) is a standard GWAS model, ignoring parent of origin of alleles. The test model (Equation 2.3) is more significant when maternal and paternal alleles have differential effects on gene expression.

$$Y = W\alpha + X_M\beta_M + X_P\beta_P + g + \epsilon \quad (2.3)$$

This new model allows us to measure the difference in parental effect of the same allele when the genotype is a covariate in Equation 2.5.

$$Y = W\alpha + X_{MP}\beta_{MP} + g + \epsilon \quad (2.4)$$

$X_{PM}$  is a  $n \times 1$  vector of genotypes with possible values [ 0,1,2 ], equivalent to  $X_P + X_M \cdot (\beta_M - \beta_P)$  is the difference in parental effect size. If the difference in parental effect size is large and significantly different from 0 it suggests a parent of origin effect exists at this variant.  $((X_M - X_P))/2$  is a  $n \times 1$  vector of genotypes with possible values [-1,0,1].  $((\beta_P + \beta_M))/2$  is the average parental effect size that is captured in normal GWAS using genotypes. The average genotypes are added in as a covariate, with the average parental effect size the corresponding covariate coefficient. This differential effect GWAS was tested in GEMMA using BIMBAM format to use average genotype values[89].

### 2.5.7 Parent of Origin eQTL studies

RNA-seq data from LCLs were available from a previous study in the Hutterites[24]. For this study, sequencing reads were reprocessed as follows. Reads were trimmed for adaptors using Cutadapt (with reads <5 bp discarded) then remapped to hg19 using STAR indexed with gencode version 19 gene annotations[26, 63]. To remove mapping bias, reads were processed using WASP mapping pipeline[96]. Gene counts were collected using HTSeq-count[5]. VerifyBamID was used to identify sample swaps to include individuals that were previously excluded[46]. Genes mapping to the X and Y chromosome were removed; genes with a Counts Per Million (CPM) value of 1 (expressed with less than 20 counts in the sample with lowest sequencing depth) were also removed. The R/Bioconductor package edgeR was used to convert the RNA-seq counts to log2 TMM-normalized CPM values[86, 85]. Technical covariates that showed a significant association with any of the top principal components were regressed out (RNA Integrity Number and RNA concentration).

### 2.5.8 Maternal and Paternal Parent of Origin eQTL

LCL RNA-seq data was used to test the single parent model for the most significant SNP from the maternal or paternal only GWAS for each phenotype. We selected all genes detected

as expressed in the LCLs and residing within 1Mb of each most significant associated SNP. Summary of the SNPs and genes tested are in Table S3.

#### *2.5.9 Differential Parent of Origin eQTL*

LCL RNA-seq data was used to test the opposite effect model for the most significant SNP in each region that was associated with a phenotype in the parent of origin opposite effects GWAS. We selected all genes detected as expressed in the LCLs and residing within 1Mb of each associated SNP. Summary of the SNPs and genes tested are in Table S4.

## 2.6 Supplementary Information

### 2.6.1 Supplementary Figures

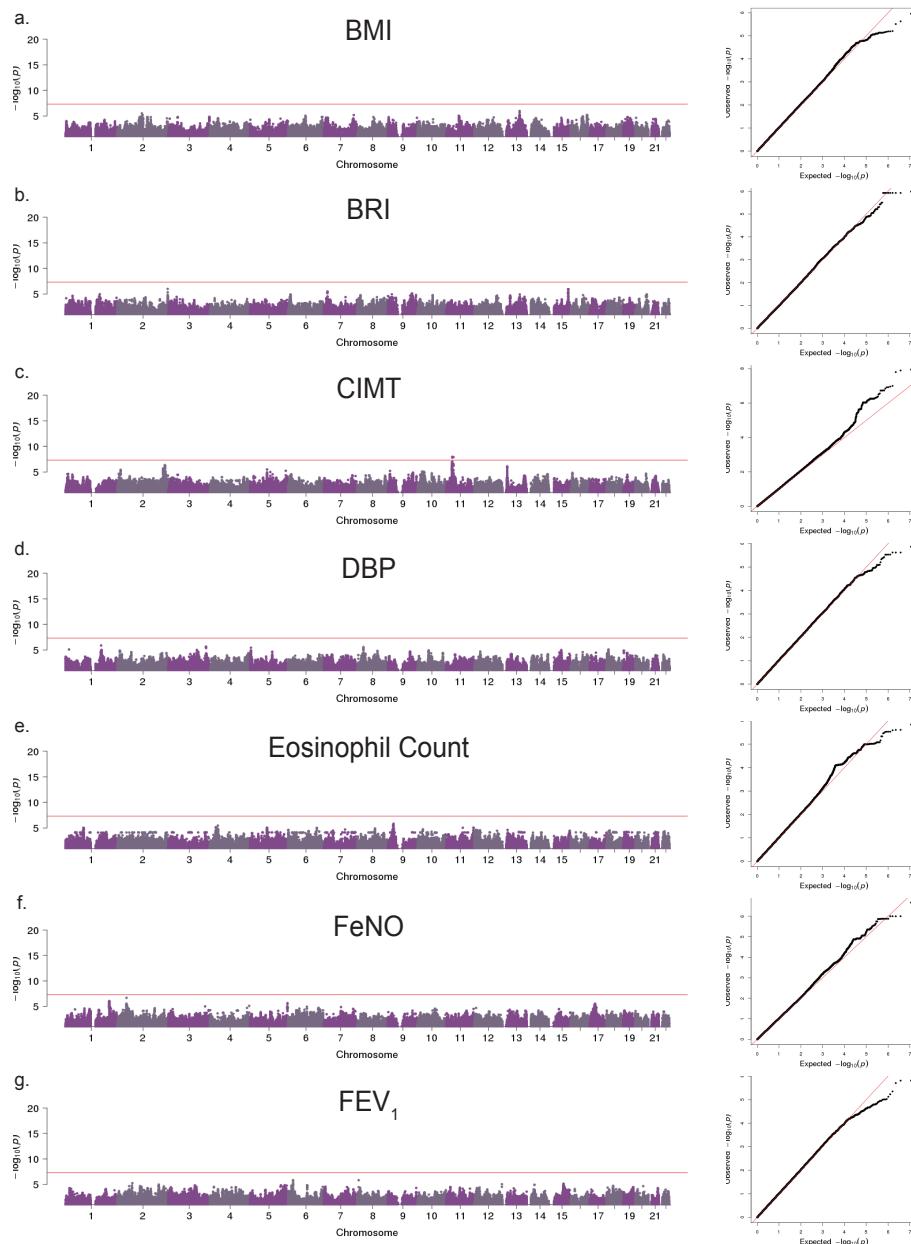


Figure 2.5a: Manhattan and QQ Plots from Standard GWAS of 21 Quantitative Phenotypes.

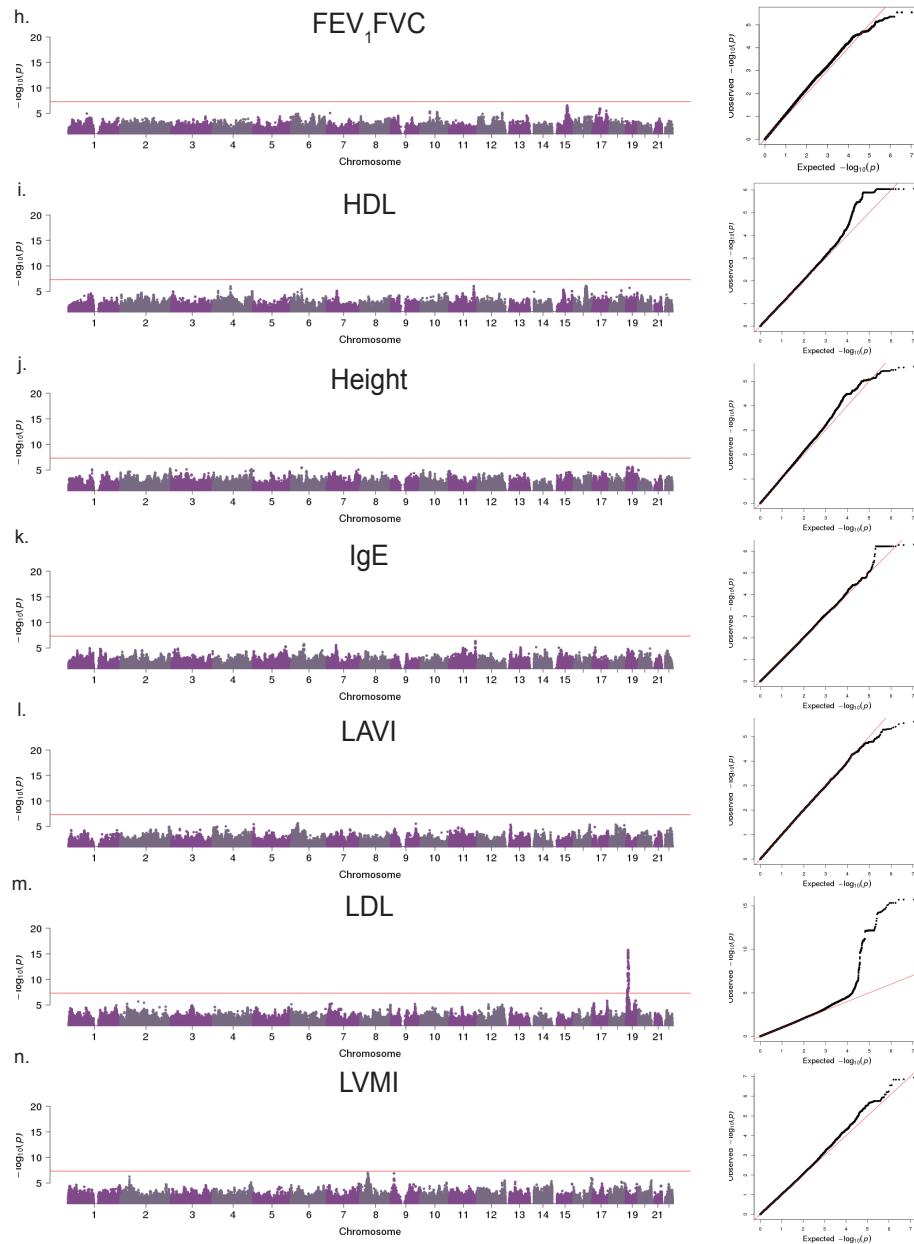


Figure 2.5b: Manhattan and QQ Plots from Standard GWAS of 21 Quantitative Phenotypes (Continued).

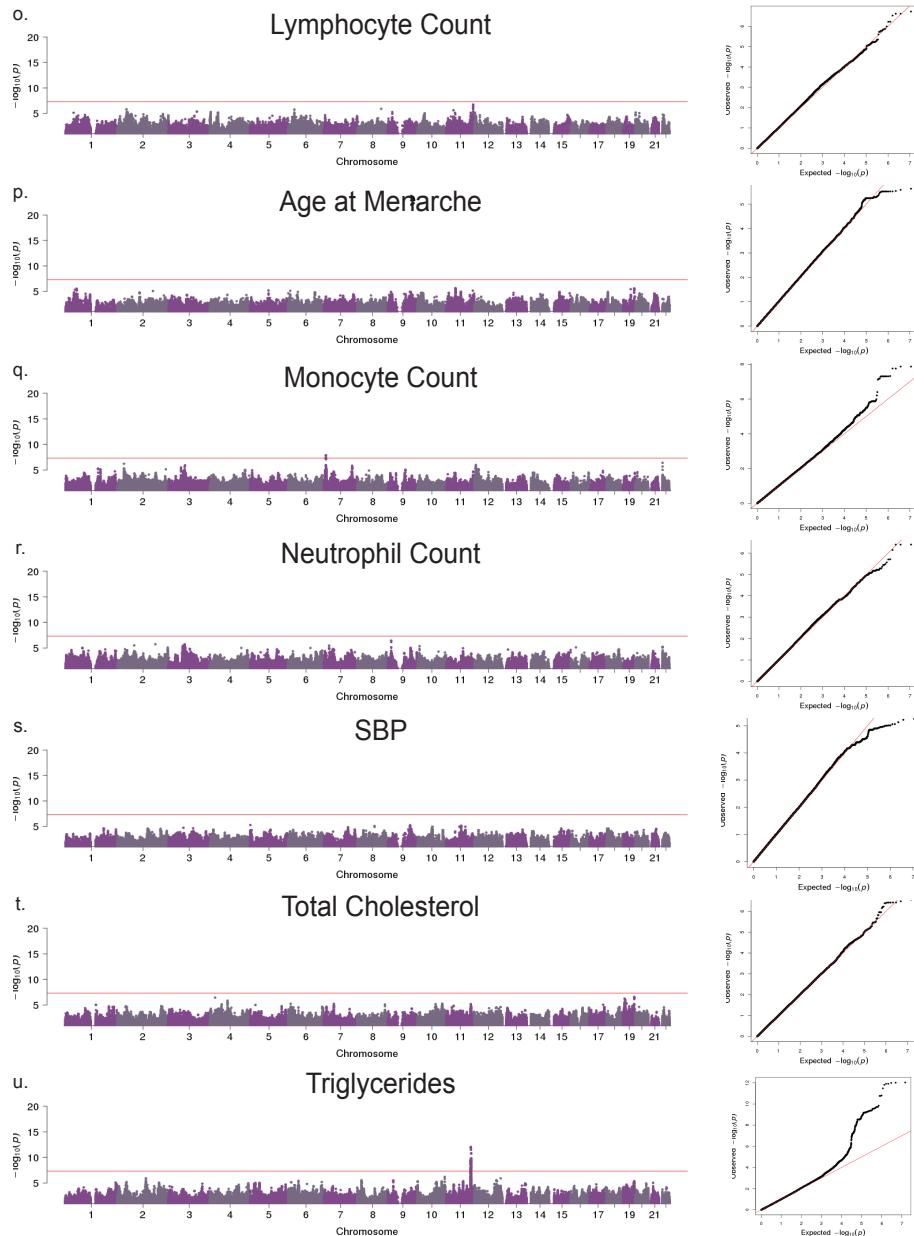
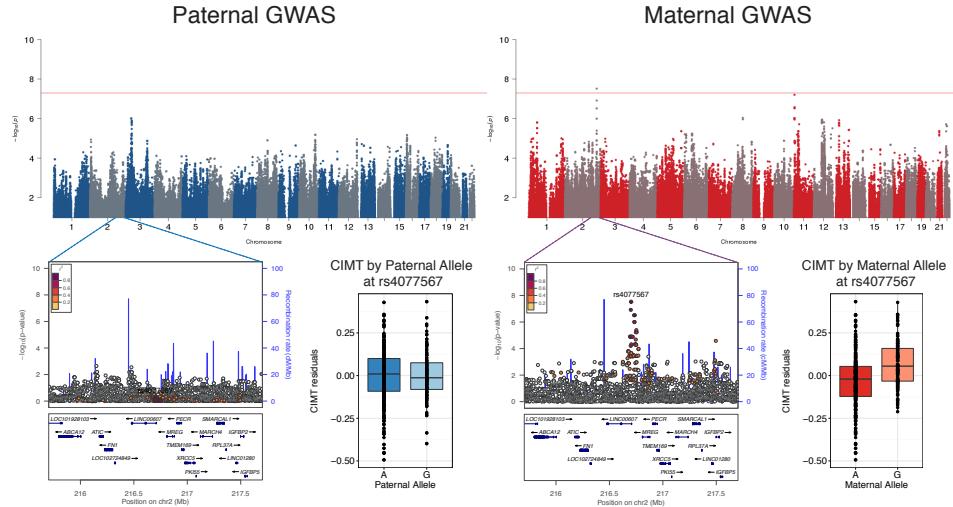
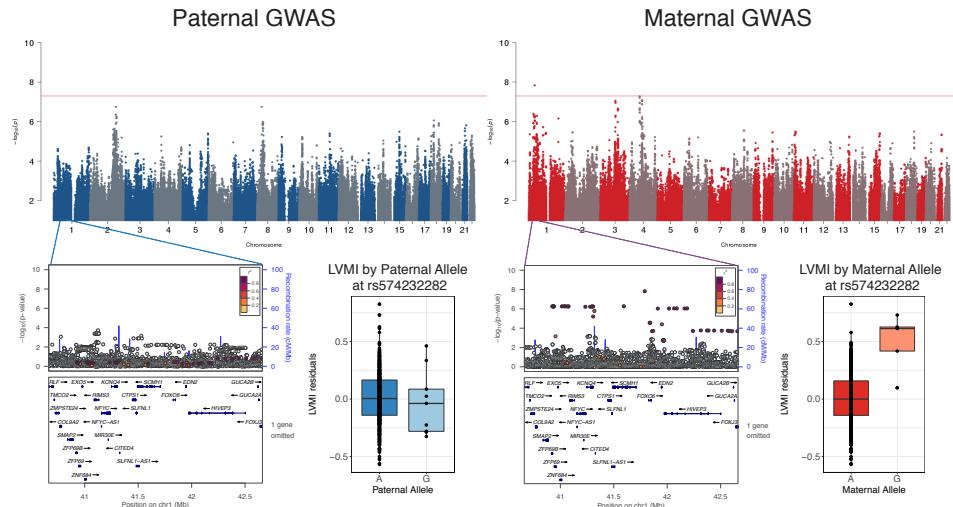


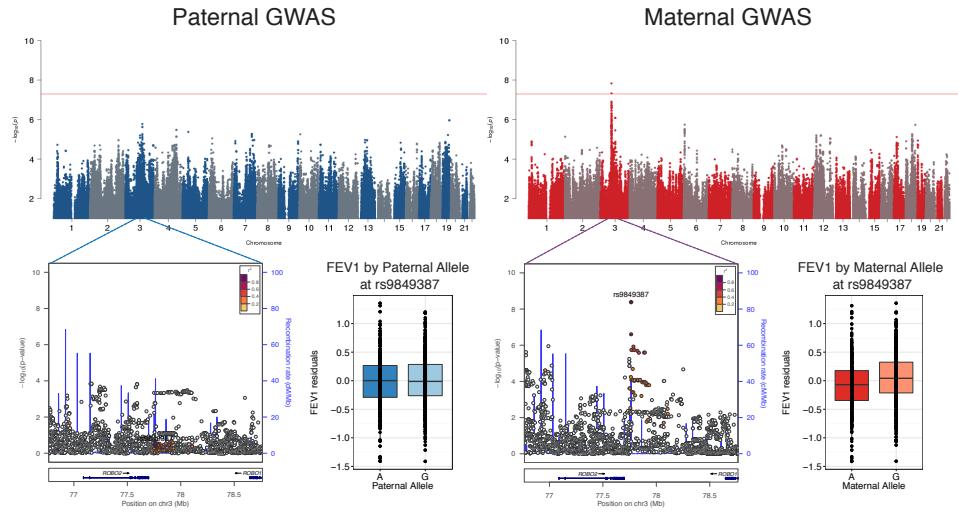
Figure 2.5c: Manhattan and QQ Plots from Standard GWAS of 21 Quantitative Phenotypes(Continued).



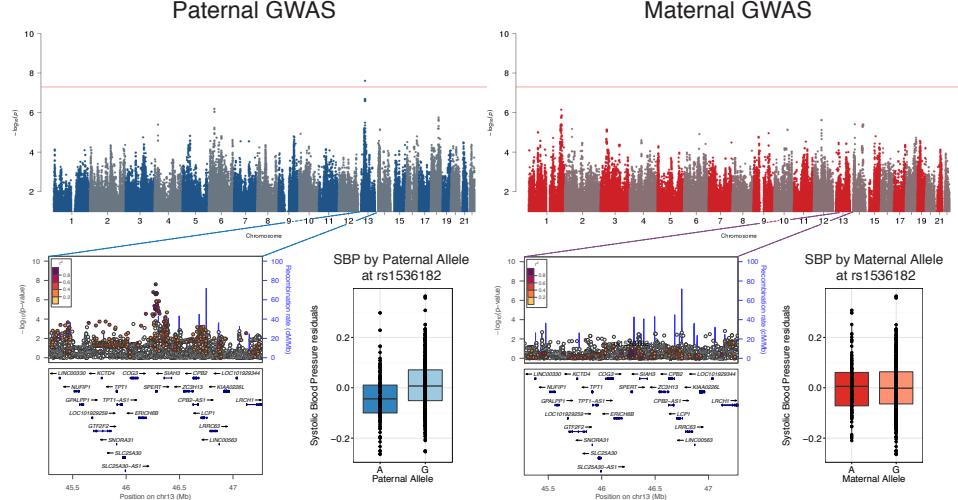
**Figure 2.6: Maternal and Paternal GWAS results for CIMT.** The top panel shows the Manhattan plots from the paternal (left) and maternal (right) GWAS. LocusZoom plots are shown in the lower panel for the associated region in the GWAS. Boxplots show the distribution of CIMT residuals (the residuals correspond to the inverse of raw CIMT values) (y-axes) by the corresponding maternal and paternal alleles at this SNP (x-axes). The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show  $\pm 1.5 \times$  IQR.



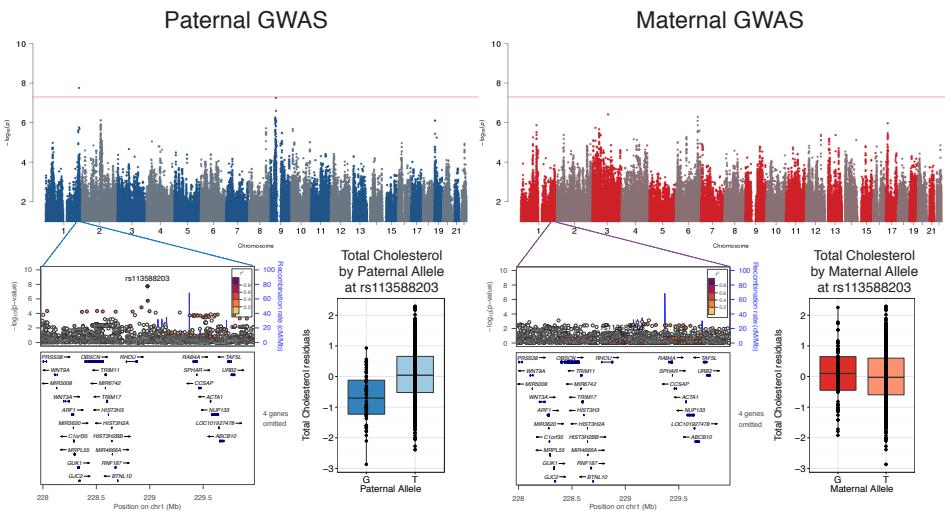
**Figure 2.7: Maternal and Paternal GWAS results for LVMI.** The top panel shows the Manhattan plots from the paternal (left) and maternal (right) GWAS. LocusZoom plots are shown in the lower panel for the associated region in the GWAS. Boxplots show the distribution of LVMI residuals (the residuals correspond to the inverse of raw CIMT values) (y-axes) by the corresponding maternal and paternal alleles at this SNP (x-axes). The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show  $\pm 1.5 \times$  IQR.



**Figure 2.8: Maternal and Paternal GWAS results for  $\text{FEV}_1$ .** The top panel shows the Manhattan plots from the paternal (left) and maternal (right) GWAS. LocusZoom plots for both GWAS are shown in the lower panel for the associated region in the GWAS. Boxplots show the distribution of  $\text{FEV}_1$  residuals (y-axes) by the corresponding maternal and paternal alleles at this SNP (x-axes). The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show  $1.5 \times \text{IQR}$ .



**Figure 2.9: Maternal and Paternal GWAS results for Systolic Blood Pressure.** The top panel shows the Manhattan plots from the paternal (left) and maternal (right) GWAS. LocusZoom plots for both GWAS are shown in the lower panel for the associated region in the GWAS. Boxplots show the distribution of systolic blood pressure residuals (y-axes) by the corresponding maternal and paternal alleles at this SNP (x-axes). The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show  $1.5 \times \text{IQR}$ .



**Figure 2.10: Maternal and Paternal GWAS results for Total Cholesterol.** The top panel shows the Manhattan plots from the paternal (left) and maternal (right) GWAS. LocusZoom plots for both GWAS are shown in the lower panel for the associated region in the GWAS. Boxplots show the distribution of total cholesterol residuals (y-axes) by the corresponding maternal and paternal alleles at this SNP (x-axes). The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show 1.5 x IQR.

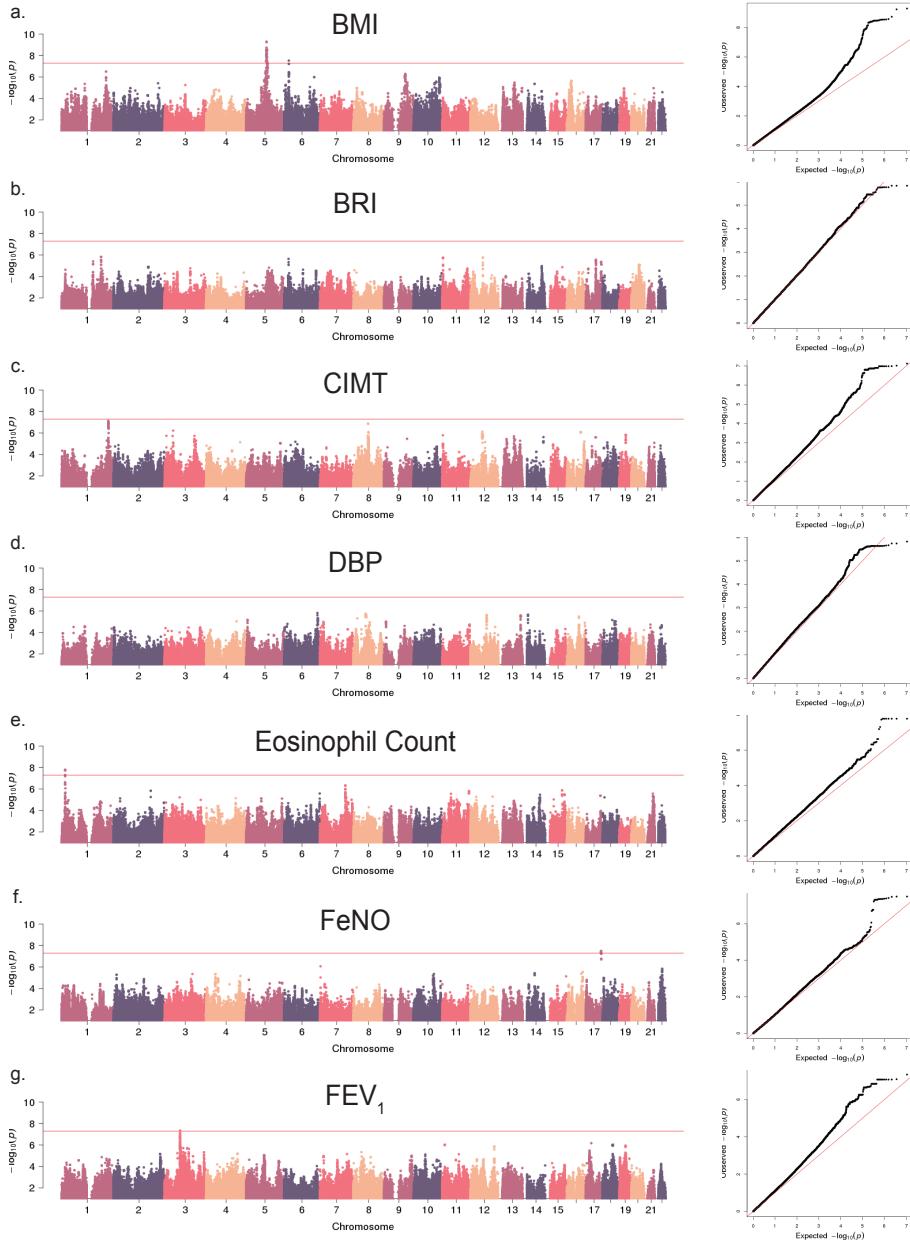


Figure 2.11a: Manhattan and QQ Plots from Differential Effect GWAS of 21 Quantitative Phenotypes

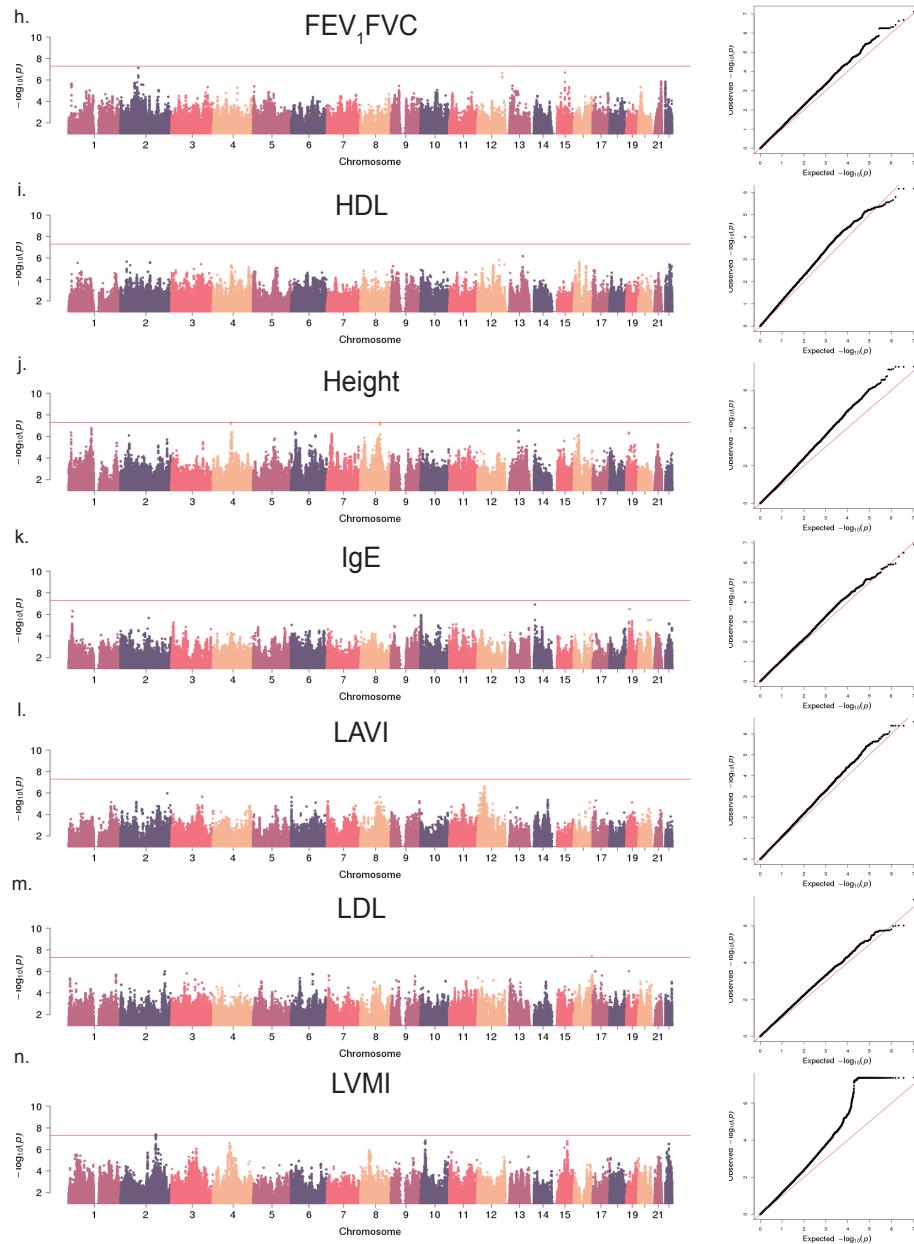


Figure 2.11b: Manhattan and QQ Plots from Differential Effect GWAS of 21 Quantitative Phenotypes (Continued).

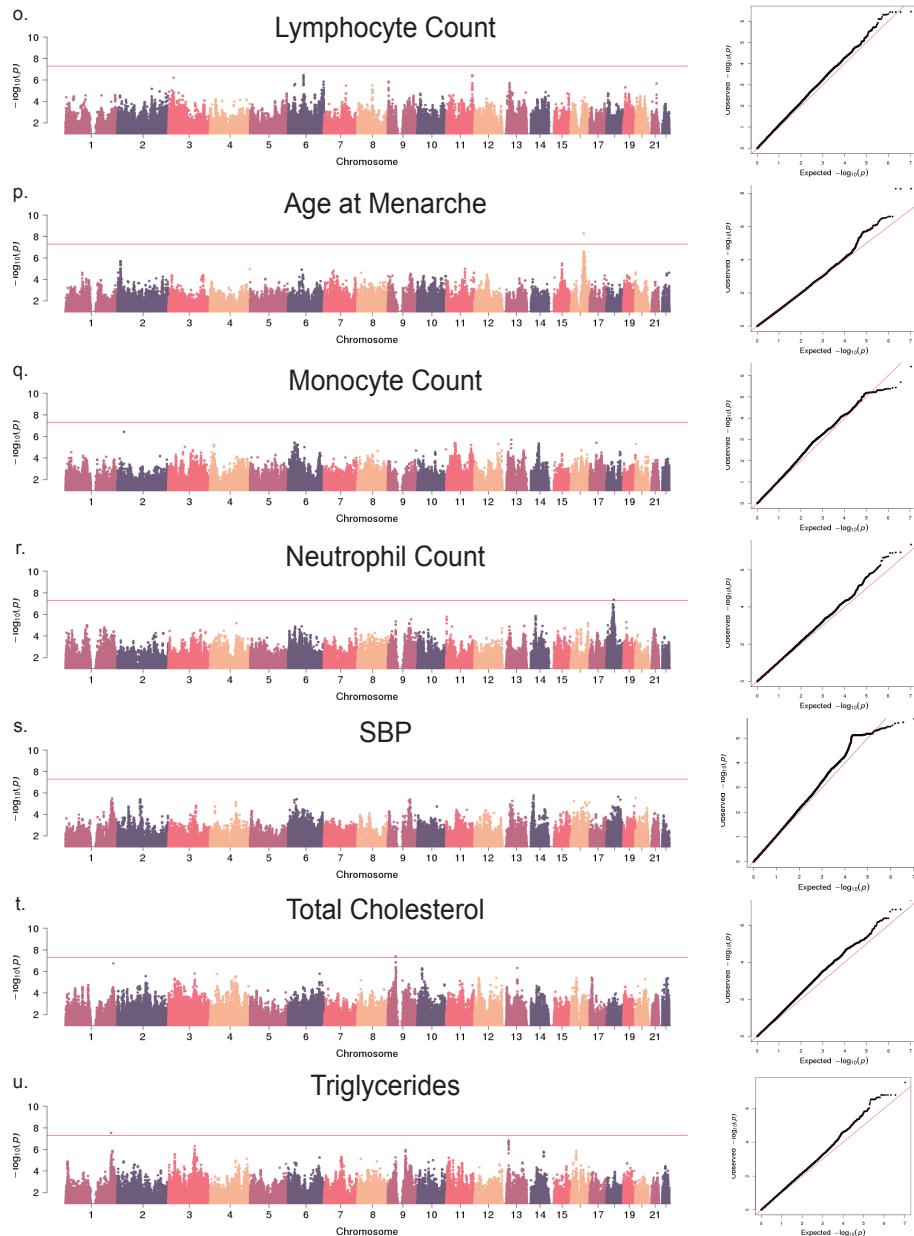
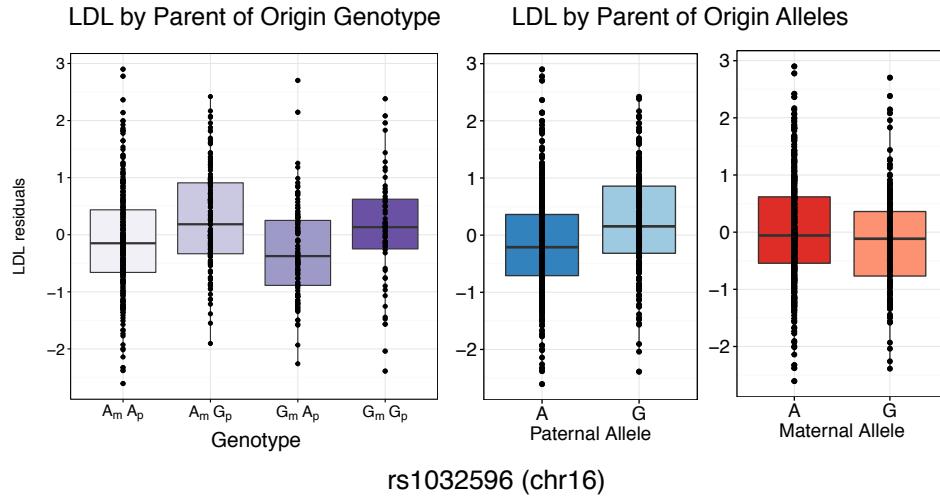
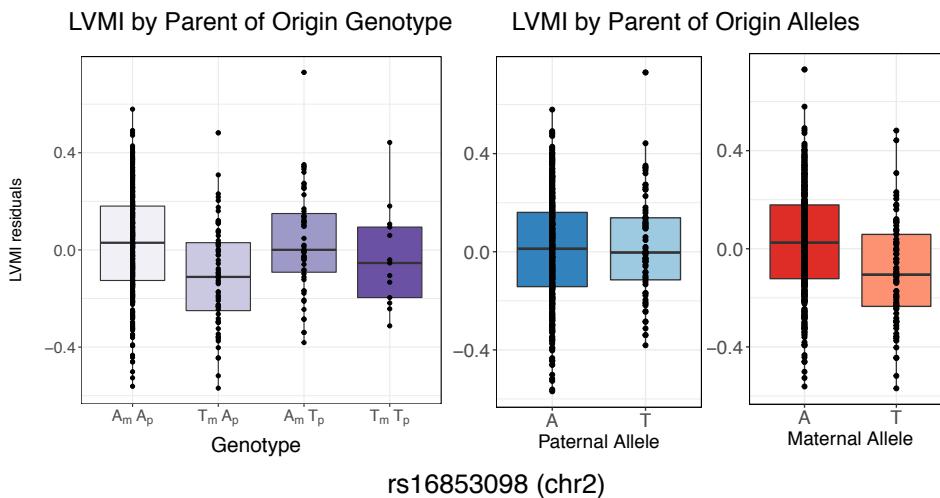


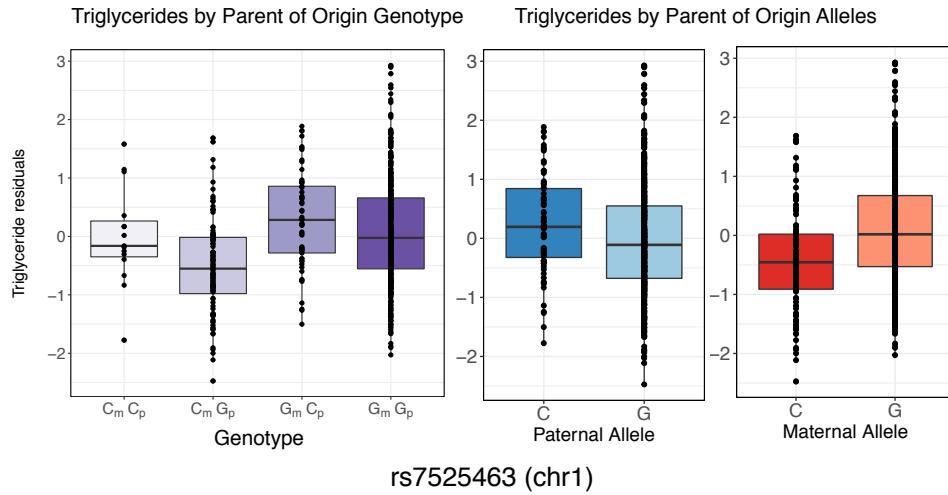
Figure 2.11c: Manhattan and QQ Plots from Differential Effect GWAS of 21 Quantitative Phenotypes (Continued).



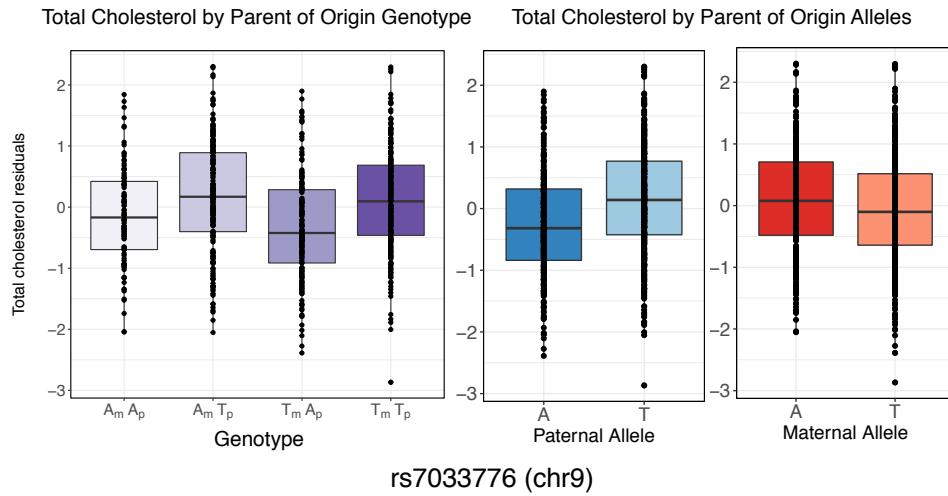
**Figure 2.12: Opposite Effect Parent of Origin GWAS Result for LDL.** Box plots of LDL residuals (y-axes) are shown for each of the four genotypes (left panel; x-axis), and for paternal (center panel; x-axis) and maternal (right panel; x-axis) alleles. The maternal C allele is associated with decreased and maternal T allele with increased LDL. The paternal C allele is associated with increased and the paternal T allele with decreased LDL. The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show +/-1.5 x IQR.



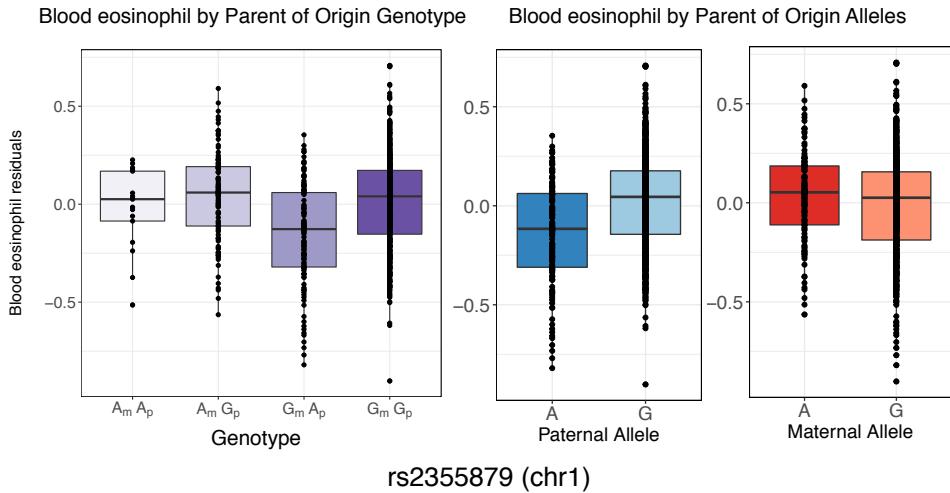
**Figure 2.13: Opposite Effect Parent of Origin GWAS Result for LVMI.** Box plots of LVMI residuals (y-axes) are shown for each of the four genotypes (left panel; x-axis), and for paternal (center panel; x-axis) and maternal (right panel; x-axis) alleles. The maternal C allele is associated with decreased and maternal T allele with increased LVMI. The paternal C allele is associated with increased and the paternal T allele with decreased LVMI. The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show +/-1.5 x IQR.



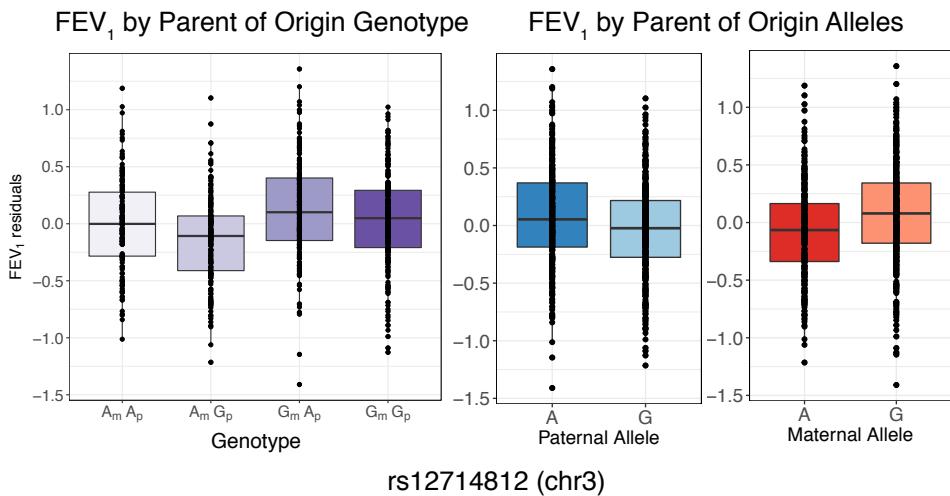
**Figure 2.14: Opposite Effect Parent of Origin GWAS Result for Triglycerides.** Box plots of triglyceride residuals (y-axes) are shown for each of the four genotypes (left panel; x-axis), and for paternal (center panel; x-axis) and maternal (right panel; x-axis) alleles. The maternal C allele is associated with decreased and maternal T allele with increased triglycerides. The paternal C allele is associated with increased and the paternal T allele with decreased triglycerides. The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show +/-1.5 x IQR.



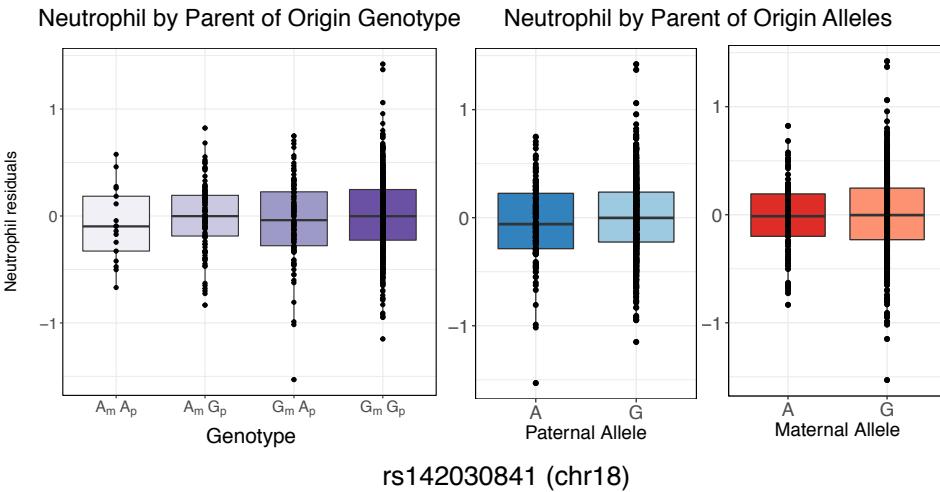
**Figure 2.15: Opposite Effect Parent of Origin GWAS Result for Total Cholesterol.** Box plots of total cholesterol residuals (y-axes) are shown for each of the four genotypes (left panel; x-axis), and for paternal (center panel; x-axis) and maternal (right panel; x-axis) alleles. The maternal A allele is associated with decreased and maternal T allele with increased total cholesterol. The paternal A allele is associated with increased and the paternal T allele with decreased total cholesterol. The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show +/-1.5 x IQR.



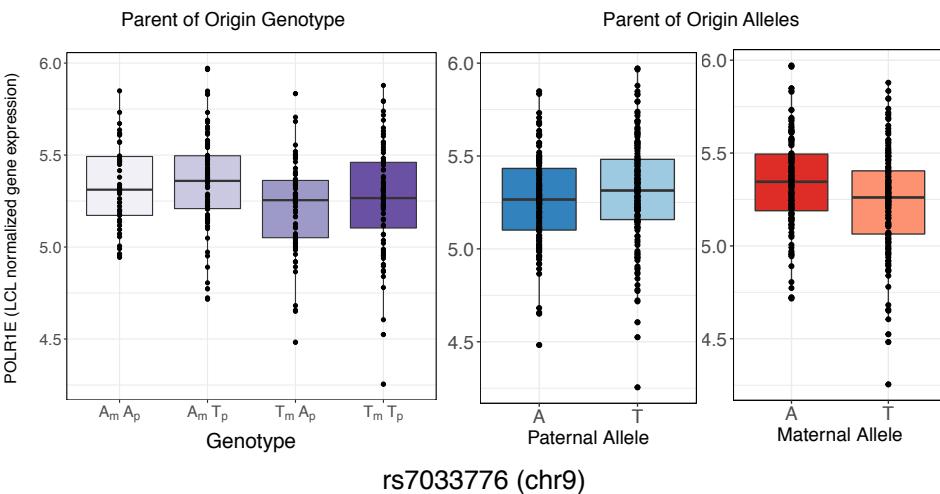
**Figure 2.16: Opposite Effect Parent of Origin GWAS Result for Blood Eosinophil Count.** Box plots of eosinophil residuals (y-axes) are shown for each of the four genotypes (left panel; x-axis), and for paternal (center panel; x-axis) and maternal (right panel; x-axis) alleles. The maternal C allele is associated with decreased and maternal T allele with increased eosinophil count. The paternal C allele is associated with increased and the paternal T allele with decreased eosinophil count. The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show +/-1.5 x IQR.



**Figure 2.17: Opposite Effect Parent of Origin GWAS Result for FEV<sub>1</sub>.** Box plots of FEV<sub>1</sub> residuals (y-axes) are shown for each of the four genotypes (left panel; x-axis), and for paternal (center panel; x-axis) and maternal (right panel; x-axis) alleles. The maternal C allele is associated with decreased and maternal T allele with increased FEV<sub>1</sub>. The paternal C allele is associated with increased and the paternal T allele with decreased FEV<sub>1</sub>. The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show +/-1.5 x IQR.



**Figure 2.18: Opposite Effect Parent of Origin GWAS Result for Neutrophil Count.** Box plots of neutrophil residuals (y-axes) are shown for each of the four genotypes (left panel; x-axis), and for paternal (center panel; x-axis) and maternal (right panel; x-axis) alleles. The maternal G allele is associated with decreased and maternal A allele with increased neutrophil count. The paternal G allele is associated with increased and the paternal A allele with decreased neutrophil count. The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show  $\pm 1.5 \times \text{IQR}$ .



**Figure 2.19: Opposite Effect eQTL for rs7033776.** Box plots of two significant loci plot *POLR1E* gene expression residuals (y-axes) for each of the four genotypes (left panel; x-axis), and for paternal (center panel; x-axis) and maternal (right panel; x-axis) alleles. The maternal T allele is associated with decreased and maternal A allele with increased *POLR1E* expression. The paternal T allele is associated with increased and the paternal A allele with decreased *POLR1E* expression. The horizontal bar of the boxplot shows the median, the box delineates the first and third quartile, and the whiskers show  $\pm 1.5 \times \text{IQR}$ .

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **PARENT OF ORIGIN GENE EXPRESSION IN A FOUNDER POPULATION IDENTIFIES TWO NOVEL IMPRINTED GENES AT KNOWN IMPRINTED REGIONS.**

### **3.1 Abstract<sup>1</sup>**

Genomic imprinting is the phenomena that leads to silencing of one copy of a gene inherited from a specific parent. Mutations in imprinted regions have been involved in diseases showing parent of origin effects, such as Prader-Willi and Angelman syndrome, among others. Identifying genes with evidence of parent of origin expression patterns in family studies allows the detection of more subtle imprinting. Here we use allele specific expression in lymphoblastoid cell lines from 306 Hutterites related in a single pedigree to provide formal evidence for parent of origin effects. Our approach identified known imprinted genes, two putative novel imprinted genes, and 12 genes with asymmetrical parent of origin gene expression. We used gene expression in peripheral blood leukocytes (PBL) to validate our findings, and then confirmed imprinting control regions (ICRs) using DNA methylation levels in the PBLs.

### **3.2 Introduction**

Imprinted genes have one allele silenced in a parent of origin specific manner. In humans, approximately 105 imprinted loci have been identified, many of which play important roles in development and growth[31, 80]. Dysregulation of imprinted genes or regions can cause diseases that show parent of origin effects, such as Prader-Willi or Angelman syndrome, among others[80]. Imprinted regions have also been associated with complex traits, such as

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1. Citation for chapter: Mozaffari SV, Stein MM, Magnaye KM, Nicolae DL, Ober C. Gene Expression and Methylation of Imprinted Genes in the Hutterites bioRxiv (2018).

height and age of menarche [13, 107], as well as common diseases such as obesity and some cancers [80]. More than 80% of imprinted genes in humans are clustered in genomic regions that contain both maternally and paternally expressed genes, as well as genes that encode non-coding RNAs. Parent-specific expression of the genes within a cluster are maintained by complex epigenetic mechanisms at cis-acting imprinting control regions (ICRs) [49], which show parent of origin specific DNA methylation patterns and chromatin modifications.

Using RNA-seq and allele specific expression (ASE) we can map genes to parental haplotypes and identify those that are expressed when inherited from only the father or only from the mother, a hallmark feature of imprinted loci. Parent of origin effects and imprinted genes have been most elegantly studied in mice, where two inbred strains are bred reciprocally to identify parent of origin effects on gene expression in progeny that have the same genotypes but different patterns of inheritance[9]. Additionally, uniparental inheritance of imprinted regions in mice were associated with abnormal developmental phenotypes[17] before it was shown that imprinting defects are associated with human disease[68]. One approach to identifying imprinted loci in humans has been to test for parent of origin effects on gene expression and phenotypes in pedigrees[50, 13]. For example, Garg et al. used gene expression in LCLs from HapMap trios to identify 30 imprinting eQTLs with parent of origin specific effects on expression including two imprinted genes[34]. A study from the GTEx Consortium used RNA-seq data and allele specific expression to identify allelic imbalance in 45 different tissues. By considering genes with monoallelic expression that was evenly distributed to both the reference and alternate alleles across individuals as evidence for imprinting, they identified 42 imprinted genes, both known and novel, and used family studies to confirm imprinting of 5 novel imprinted genes[11]. Santoni et al. identified nine novel imprinted genes using single-cell allele-specific gene expression and identifying genes with mono-allelic expression in fibroblasts from 3 unrelated individuals and probands of 2 family trios, and then using the trios to confirm parent of origin of the alleles[87].

Here, we perform a parent of origin ASE study in a large pedigree to characterize parent of origin specific gene expression in the Hutterites, a founder population of European descent, for which we have phased genotype data[54]. We use RNA-seq from lymphoblastoid cell lines (LCLs) to map transcripts to parental haplotypes and identify known and two not previously reported imprinted genes. We validated the two putative imprinted genes by showing the same patterns of parent of origin expression PBLs from different Hutterite individuals, and show DNA methylation signatures of imprinting in the PBLs at these imprinted regions.

### 3.3 Results

#### 3.3.1 *Mapping Transcripts to Parental Haplotypes*

For each of 306 individuals, the total number of transcripts at each gene was assigned as maternally inherited, paternally inherited, or unknown parent of origin. The last group included transcripts without heterozygote SNPs or SNPs without parent of origin information. Transcripts were assigned to the parentally inherited categories using SNPs in the reads and matching alleles to either the known maternally or paternally inherited alleles. All the genes analyzed had some transcripts of unknown origin (average 97.8%, range 8.3-100%). For each gene we assigned parental origin to an average of 1.8% of transcripts (range: 0-34.7%), and for each individual we assigned parental origin to an average of 1.4% of transcripts (range: 0-1.7%). On average, about 40 SNPs per gene were used to assign the transcripts of a gene to parent (range 1-1839 SNPs).

After quality control (see Methods), transcripts in 15,889 genes were detected as expressed in 306 individuals. Transcripts for 14,791 of those genes could be assigned to a parent. Of these, 75 genes were only expressed on the paternally-inherited allele in at least one individual and not on the maternally inherited allele in anyone. Similarly, 64 genes were only expressed on the maternally-inherited allele in at least one individual and not on the

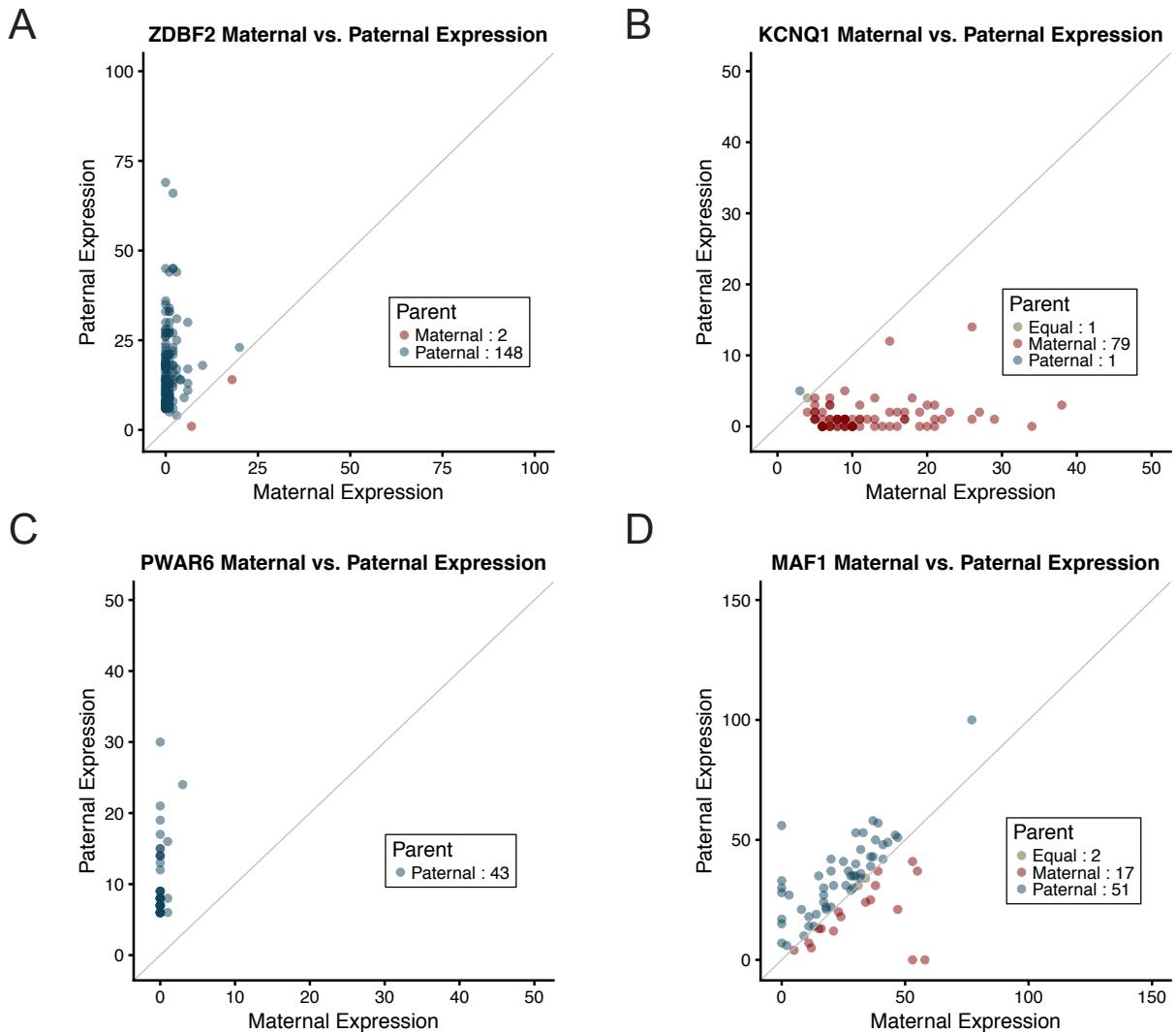
paternally inherited allele in any individuals (S1 Table).

### 3.3.2 Imprinted Genes in Lymphoblastoid Cell Lines (LCLs)

Among the 139 genes with only paternally inherited expression or only maternally inherited expression, there are three known imprinted genes (*CDKN1C*, *NDN*, *SNRPN*) and one predicted to be imprinted (*IFITM1*)[56]. *CDKN1C* showed patterns opposite of what has been reported[38, 64], which could be due to the small sample (only three individuals showed expression from one parent) or to the different cell types used here (LCLs) and in previous studies (developing brain and embryonal tumors for *CDKN1C*).

We expect some imprinted genes to have “leaky” expression, such that there is some expression from the parental chromosome that is mostly silenced. To detect these genes, we used a binomial test to find patterns of gene expression asymmetry by parental transcript levels. This analysis identified 28 genes with an FDR <5% (Table 2). The 11 genes that showed the most asymmetry are known imprinted genes: *ZDBF2*, *PEG10*, *SNHG14*, *NHP2L1*, *L3MBTL1*, *ZNF331*, *LPAR6*, *FAM50B*, *KCNQ1*, *NAP1L5*, and *IGF1R*. Parent of origin expression for *ZDBF2* and *KCNQ1* are shown in Fig 1A and 1B, respectively. We identified two additional genes that showed asymmetry in parental expression from mostly one parent (*PXDC1*, *PWAR6*), which we consider potentially novel imprinted genes. The remaining fifteen genes showed significant patterns of asymmetry but had expression from both maternal and paternal transcript levels. These genes are likely not imprinted but could have asymmetry in expression that could be due to an expression quantitative trait loci (eQTL).

Two genes showed gene expression signatures consistent with imprinting but have not previously been recognized as imprinted genes. The first potentially novel imprinted gene is *PXDC1*, which is in the same region and next to (<100kb) a known imprinted gene, *FAM50B*. The second potentially novel imprinted gene is *PWAR6*, or Prader Willi Angelman Region



**Figure 3.1: Plot of maternal (x-axis) and paternal (y-axis) gene expression for four genes.** Plot of maternal (x-axis) and paternal (y-axis) gene expression for four genes. (A) maternally imprinted gene *ZDBF2* (paternally expressed), (B) paternally imprinted gene *KCNQ1* (maternally expressed), (C) novel maternally imprinted gene *PWAR6* (paternally expressed), (D) gene with asymmetry in parental expression *MAF1*. Each point represents one individual. Numbers in the legend represent the number of individuals with equal maternal and paternal expression, more maternal expression, or more paternal expression.

RNA6, a gene encoding regulatory class of RNA. Although this gene is located within the intron of a known imprinted region, *SNHG14*, this noncoding RNA has not previously been recognized as having parent of origin specific expression (Fig 1C).

The remaining fifteen genes show significant asymmetry using the binomial test but do

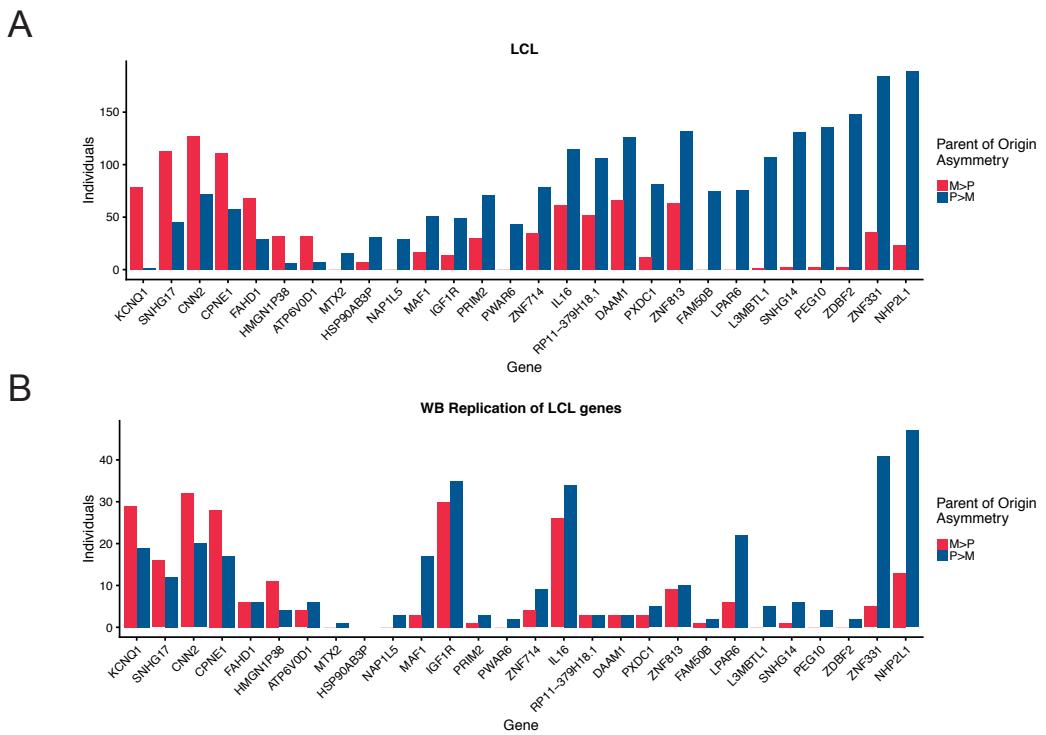
not have expression from mostly one parental chromosome. One of these genes, *SNHG17*, is a noncoding RNA. Another gene with parent of origin asymmetry, *ZNF813*, is next to a known imprinted gene, *ZNF331*. The remaining genes with asymmetrical parent origin expression have almost equal expression on both parental chromosomes. These genes include *DAAM1*, which is involved in cytoskeleton, specifically filopodia formation [39, 57], and has a suggested role for cytoskeleton organization during Mammalian testis morphogenesis and gamete progression [77]; *RP11-379H18.1*, a noncoding RNA gene; *HMGN1P38* [91]; *MTX2*, a nuclear gene that interacts with mitochondrial membrane protein metaxin 1 and is involved in mitochondrial protein import and metabolism of proteins in mice; *MAF1* a negative regulator of RNA polymerase 2; *ZNF714*, *CPNE1*, *IL16*, *ATP6V0D1*, *FAHD1*, *HSP90AB3P*, and *CNN2* are the remaining genes that show parent of origin asymmetry but not with a pattern consistent with imprinting (S1 Figure).

### 3.3.3 Validation of Imprinted Genes in PBLs

Using the same methods described above, we assigned parent of origin to transcripts in PBLs from 99 Hutterite individuals not included in the LCL studies. Maternal and paternal expression in PBLs for all 28 genes identified in LCLs showed similar trends of asymmetry as in LCLs (Figure 2).

### 3.3.4 Methylation at Imprinting Control Regions

One of the mechanisms underlying parent of origin effects on expression at imprinted loci is differential methylation at cis-acting imprinting control regions (ICRs). DNA methylation from the Illumina HumanMethylation 450K array was available in PBLs from the same individuals included in the validation studies described above. To determine the expected patterns of methylation at known imprinted loci, we first looked at previously characterized methylated regions at known imprinted regions from Court et al. and Joshi et al. [22, 45].



**Figure 3.2: Validation in PBLs.** Histogram showing the number of individuals with more maternal expression (M > P) or more paternal expression (P > M) for the 28 genes showing parent of origin asymmetry in LCLs (A) and PBLs (B). Genes are ordered by the magnitude of the difference in the number of individuals with more maternal expression than paternal expression in LCLs.

The methylation patterns at the two potentially novel imprinted genes identified in this study, *PXDC1* and *PWAR6*, lie in or near known imprinted regions that contain previously characterized ICRs. Previously characterized ICRs near show about 50% methylation (beta value of between 0.25 and 0.75) in our DNA methylation data, which likely reflect methylation at only one parental chromosome in all the cells in the sample. Methylation patterns in PBLs at these two ICRs fall within this hemi-methylation range, further suggesting that these two genes are indeed imprinted (Fig 3).

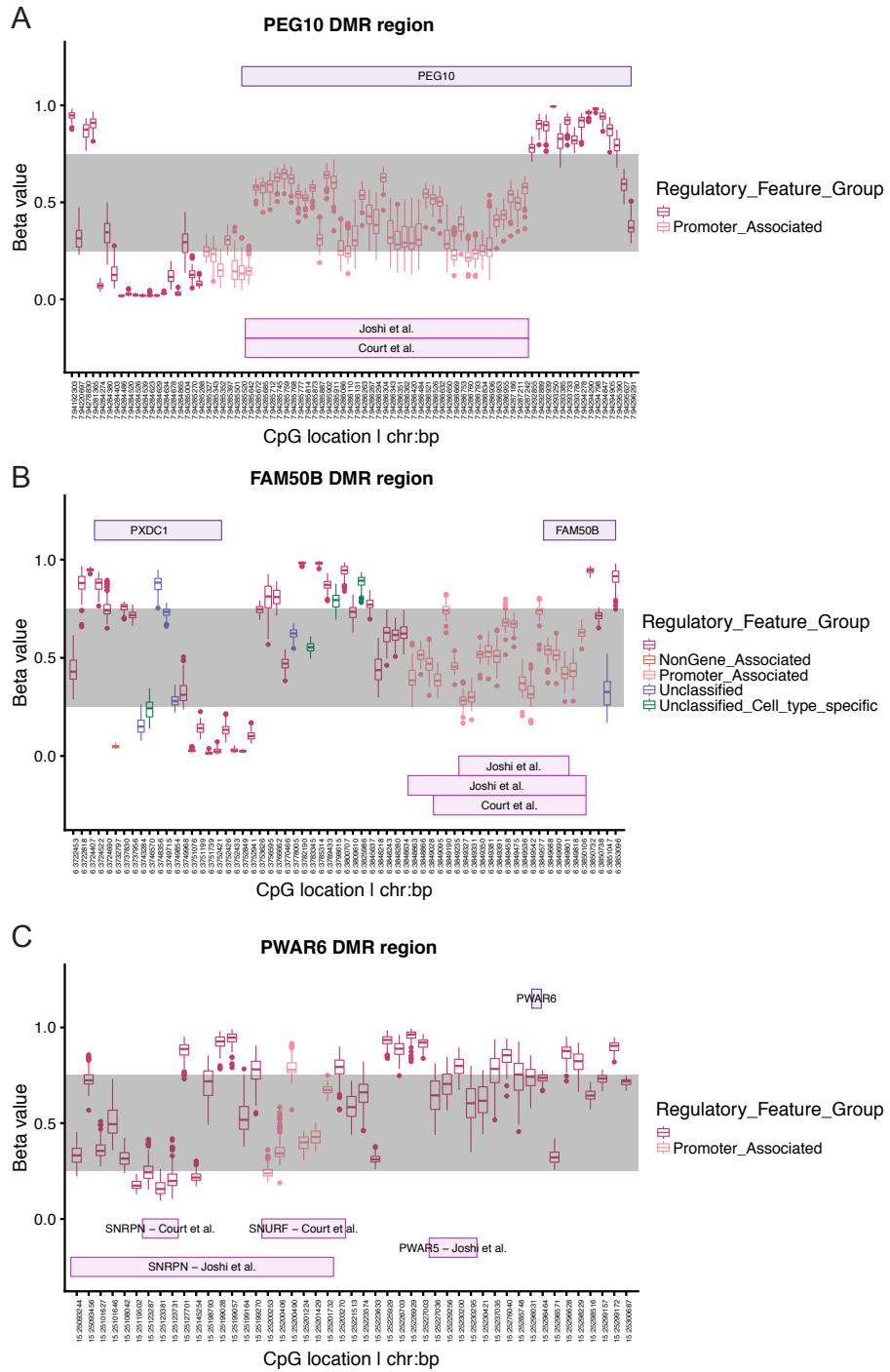


Figure 3.3: **Methylation at ICRs.** DNA methylation levels near known and novel imprinted genes previously defined by Joshi et al. and Court et al. (A) *PEG10*, (B) *PXDC1* and *FAM50B*, (C) *PWAR6*.

### 3.4 Discussion

Dysregulation of imprinted genes can have a large impact on mammalian development and has been associated with significant diseases in humans. Studies aimed at identifying imprinted genes at genome-wide levels have used allele specific expression and imbalance to infer parent of origin. Here we used a large pedigree with assigned parent of origin alleles to map transcripts to chromosomes with known parent of origin and identify imprinted genes.

Using this approach, we found genes with expression primarily from either the maternal or paternal haplotype. Because gene silencing at imprinted loci may be incomplete, we used a binomial test on parent of origin gene expression and identified 11 known imprinted genes and two potentially novel imprinted genes. Both of these novel genes, *PWAR6* and *PXDC1*, lie in known imprinted regions but have not themselves been characterized as imprinted. The remaining genes that have significant parent of origin asymmetry in gene expression do not show clear imprinting expression patterns. To validate these findings, we mapped gene expression in PBLs from Hutterite individuals not included in the LCL study. The same genes showed similar patterns of asymmetry in these different cell sources (transformed B cells and peripheral blood leukocytes) from different individuals.

In addition to validating gene expression, we characterized methylation patterns near genes showing asymmetry. Using results from studies that had previously characterized ICRs in patients with uniparental disomy at many imprinted regions [45, 22], we estimated regions for defining hemi-methylation near the genes identified in our study. Using this approach, we were able to provide additional supportive data for the two potentially novel imprinted genes to be true imprinted genes regulated by previously characterized ICRs.

Although our study is the largest pedigree-based study to date to search genome-wide for imprinted genes, it has limitations. First, we are able to determine the parent of origin for many transcripts in the Hutterites but we could not assign every RNA sequencing read to a parent due to lack of heterozygous sites or missing parent of origin information

for alleles. Second, we conducted these studies in lymphoblastoid cell lines, and therefore could only study genes imprinted in this cell type and would miss the many imprinted genes that are tissue-specific and/or developmentally regulated. Third, while we can verify previously characterized ICRs, our study is not designed to identify novel ICRs because DNA methylation values from an array cannot be assigned to parental haplotype. Lastly, although we characterized the gene expression and methylation patterns for two potentially novel imprinted genes, replication of these genes in a different population and in different tissues, and functional characterization of these genes are required to confirm their status as imprinted genes. Similarly, some of the other genes with parent of origin asymmetry in the blood cells examined in this study may show more clear-cut evidence for imprinting in other tissues or at specific periods of development.

In summary, we have identified novel imprinted genes using gene expression from a founder population. The genes with asymmetrical parental expression had similar patterns of asymmetry in a different source of blood cells and in different individuals, and we were able to replicate the methylation patterns in known ICRs near the known and novel imprinted genes in this study. Our method and study population allowed us to map reads to parental haplotypes and uncovered *PWAR6* and *PXDC1* as novel imprinted genes that could potentially impact disease risk and development.

## 3.5 Methods

### 3.5.1 Genotypes

Hutterite individuals (n=1,653) were genotyped using one of three Affymetrix genotype arrays, as previously described[54], of which 121 underwent whole genome sequencing by Complete Genomics, Inc (CGI) (n=98) or Illumina whole genome sequencing (n=27). A total of 10,235,233 variants present in the sequenced individuals were imputed and phased to the

remaining 1532 genotyped individuals using PRIMAL[54]. Parent of origin was assigned to 89.85% of the alleles with call rate 81.6842% after QC. For this study, we included individuals with genotyped parents in the primary analyses in LCLs. Written consents for these studies were obtained from the adult participants and parents of children under 18; written assents were obtained from all children. This study was approved by the University of Chicago Institutional Review Board.

### *3.5.2 RNA-seq in Lymphoblastoid Cell Lines (LCLs).*

RNA-seq was performed in LCLs as previously described [24]. For this study, sequencing reads were reprocessed as follows. Reads were trimmed for adaptors using Cutadapt (reads less than 5 bp discarded) then remapped to hg19 using STAR indexed with gencode version 19 gene annotations[26, 63]. To remove mapping bias, reads were processed and duplicate reads removed using WASP [96]. We used a custom script modified from WASP to separate reads that overlap maternal alleles or paternal alleles. Reads without informative SNPs (homozygous, or no parent of origin information) were categorized as unknown where the unknown, maternal, and paternal make up the total gene expression. Gene counts were quantified using STAR for each category. VerifyBamID was used to identify sample swaps [46]. Genes mapping to the X and Y chromosome were removed; genes with a CPM log transformed value less than 1 in less than 20 individuals were also removed.

### *3.5.3 RNA-seq in Peripheral Blood Leukocytes (PBLs)*

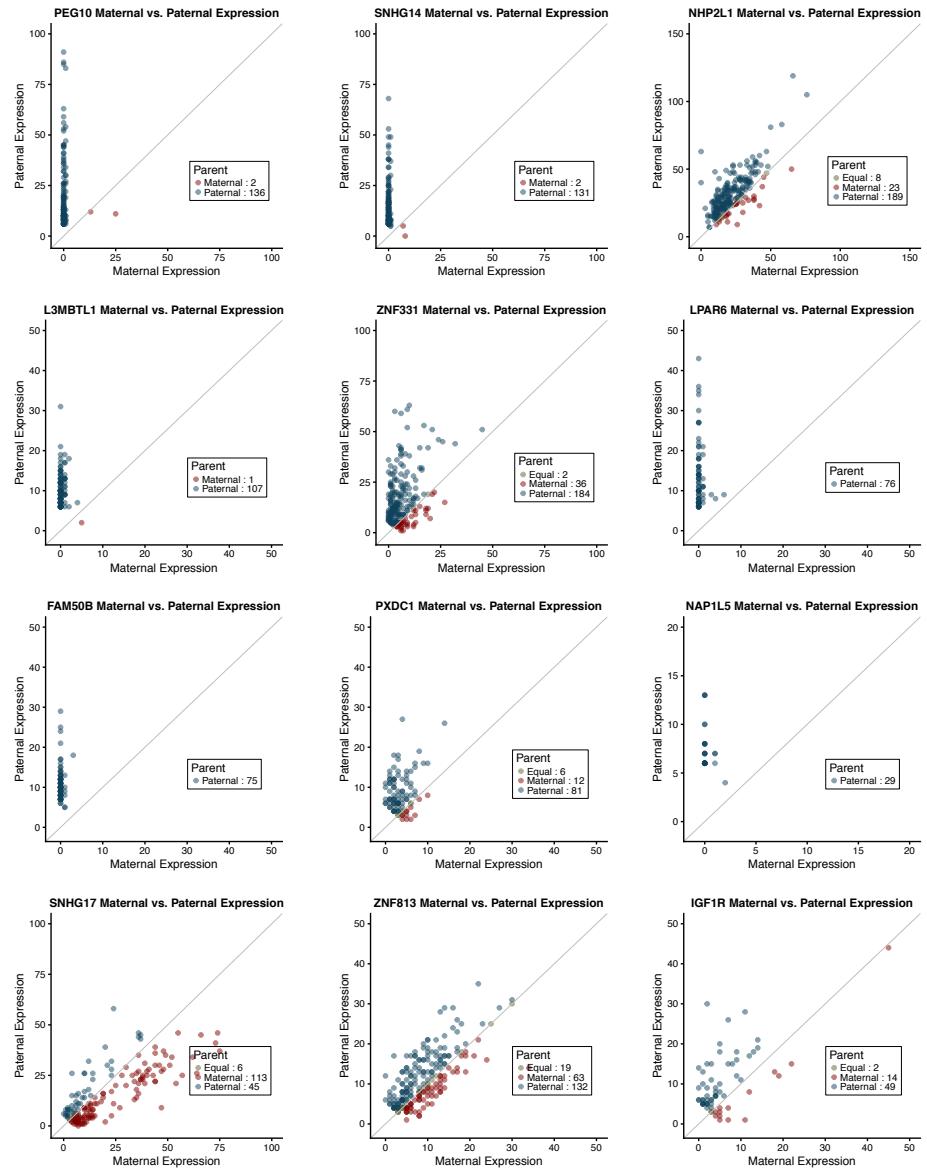
RNA-seq was performed in whole blood as previously described [90]. For this study, sequencing reads were reprocessed as described above for the studies in LCLs. For all analyses, we excluded 32 individuals who were also in the LCL study.

### *3.5.4 Identifying Imprinted Genes*

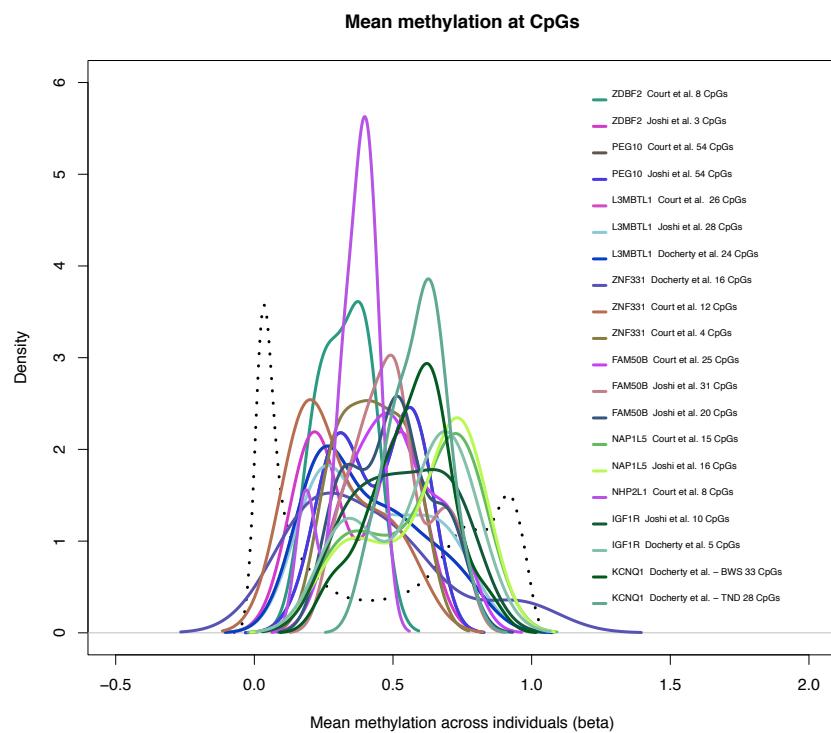
We used a binomial test to detect asymmetry in parent of origin gene expression. We generated a binomial Z-score for each individual for each gene ( $Z_i$ ) and excluded those where  $Z_i = 0$ . For each gene, the number of subjects with  $Z_i > 0$  can be modeled by a Binomial distribution with probability 1/2. For imprinted genes that show patterns of asymmetry, we expect a distribution of Z-scores that are skewed to one direction: right-skewed for genes asymmetrically maternally expressed and left-skewed for genes asymmetrically paternally expressed. Because we are only asking whether there are more individuals with more maternal expression or more paternal expression and not gene expression measures there is no need to model over-dispersion.

### *3.5.5 DNA methylation profiling and processing in PBLs*

One milliliter of whole blood from 145 Hutterites was drawn into TruCulture (Myriad RBM; Austin, Texas) tubes containing proprietary TruCulture media. DNA was extracted using AllPrep DNA/RNA Mini Kits (Qiagen). DNA samples were bisulfite converted and hybridized to the Illumina HumanMethylation 450K array at the University of Chicago Functional Genomics Center. Samples were processed using default parameters using the R package minfi [6], normalized using SWAN (subset within-array normalization [61]) and quantile normalized similar to previous methylation studies [69]. Probes were removed if: (1) mapped non-uniquely to a bisulfite-converted genome; (2) mapped to sex chromosomes; (3) had a probe detection p-value  $>0.01$  in at least 25% of samples; and (4) contained common SNPs within the probe sequence, as previously described[10]. Principal components analysis (PCA) was used to identify significant technical covariates, and the ComBat function [44] within the R package sva [53] was used to correct for chip effect. Analyses of DNA methylation levels were conducted using beta values, which were converted from M-values using the lumi R package [27].



**Figure 3.4: Plots of maternal and paternal expression for remaining genes with parent of origin asymmetry.** Maternal gene expression along x-axis and paternal gene expression along y-axis.



**Figure 3.5: Density plot for DMRs for all imprinted genes.** DNA methylation density plots for all imprinted genes with methylation levels in Joshi *et al.*[45] and Court *et al.*[22]

# CHAPTER 4

## PARENT OF ORIGIN EFFECTS ON GENE EXPRESSION

### 4.1 Abstract

In this chapter, I explore the impact of parental origin of genetic variation on gene expression. We are interested in identifying any variants that are eQTLs but differ in direction by the parent the variant was inherited from. We perform opposite effect eQTL (oeQTL) and *cis* maternal and paternal eQTL (mat-eQTL, pat-eQTL) using LCL gene expression in 306 Hutterites. We do not find any variants that have opposite effects by parental origin on gene expression with either of these two approaches. We also used a  $\chi^2$  test to search for parent specific effects on reciprocal heterozygotes using parent specific gene expression and identified SNPs that have modest parent of origin eQTL effects that need to be investigated further.

### 4.2 Introduction

Imprinted genes have one allele silenced in a parent of origin specific manner. In humans, approximately 105 imprinted loci have been identified, many of which play important roles in development and growth [31, 80]. Dysregulation of imprinted genes or regions can cause diseases that show parent of origin effects, such as Prader-Willi or Angelman syndrome, among others [80]. Dysregulation of imprinted genes can be caused by large deletions but also by single variant mutations. Imprinted regions have also been associated with complex traits, such as height and age of menarche [13, 107], as well as common diseases such as obesity and some cancers [80]. We know that SNPs associated with traits are more likely to be eQTLs [70], and here we explore if different parentally inherited alleles can have different impacts on gene expression and can be identified as parent of origin eQTLs. We are not the first to look for parent of origin effects on gene expression: Garg et al. used gene expression

in LCLs from HapMap trios to identify 30 imprinting eQTLs with parent of origin specific effects on expression of which two were known imprinted genes [34]. Garg et al. have looked for impact of parent of origin specific effects on gene expression [34], but none have looked for eQTLs on parent specific expression coming from the same haplotype as the parentally inherited allele.

Using RNA-seq and allele specific expression (ASE) we can map genes to parental haplotypes that will inform us of gene expression from parental chromosomes. With parentally mapped gene expression data, we can ask if genetic variation on the parental haplotype can influence gene expression from the same haplotype. We are the first to look for 1) parental genetic variation that can have opposite effects on gene expression, as well as 2) maternal or paternally inherited genetic variation that could affect parental gene expression on the same chromosome.

We use methods to detect opposite parent of origin effects on total expression, as well as parent-specific expression in the Hutterites, a founder population of European descent, for which we have phased genotype data [54]. We use RNA-seq from lymphoblastoid cell lines (LCLs) to map transcripts to parental haplotypes and use the parental gene expression to look for variation in *cis* that would effect gene expression. Our study is likely underpowered to identify any opposite effect parent of origin eQTLs but we do identify a few parent of origin eQTLs where parentally inherited variation affects parent specific gene expression from the same haplotype. There is no known biological mechanism as to why parent of origin eQTLs could exist outside of imprinted loci.

### 4.3 Results

For each of 306 individuals, the total number of transcripts at each gene was assigned as maternally inherited, paternally inherited, or unknown parent of origin. The last group included transcripts without heterozygote SNPs or SNPs without parent of origin information.

Transcripts were assigned to the parentally inherited categories using SNPs in the reads and matching alleles to either the known maternally or paternally inherited alleles. All the genes analyzed had some transcripts of unknown origin (average 97.8%, range 8.3-100%). For each gene we assigned parental origin to an average of 1.8% of transcripts (range: 0-34.7%), and for each individual we assigned parental origin to an average of 1.4% of transcripts (range: 0-1.7%). On average, about 40 SNPs per gene were used to assign the transcripts of a gene to a parent (range 1-1839 SNPs).

#### *4.3.1 Opposite Parent of Origin eQTL (oeQTL)*

Our original oeQTL identified three significant opposite effect associations but these associations were driven by one individual's genotype. The significant associations are shown in Figures 4.1. Once we subset SNPs on having at least three individuals in each of three genotype groups, we did not find any significant results (Bonferroni corrected p-value).

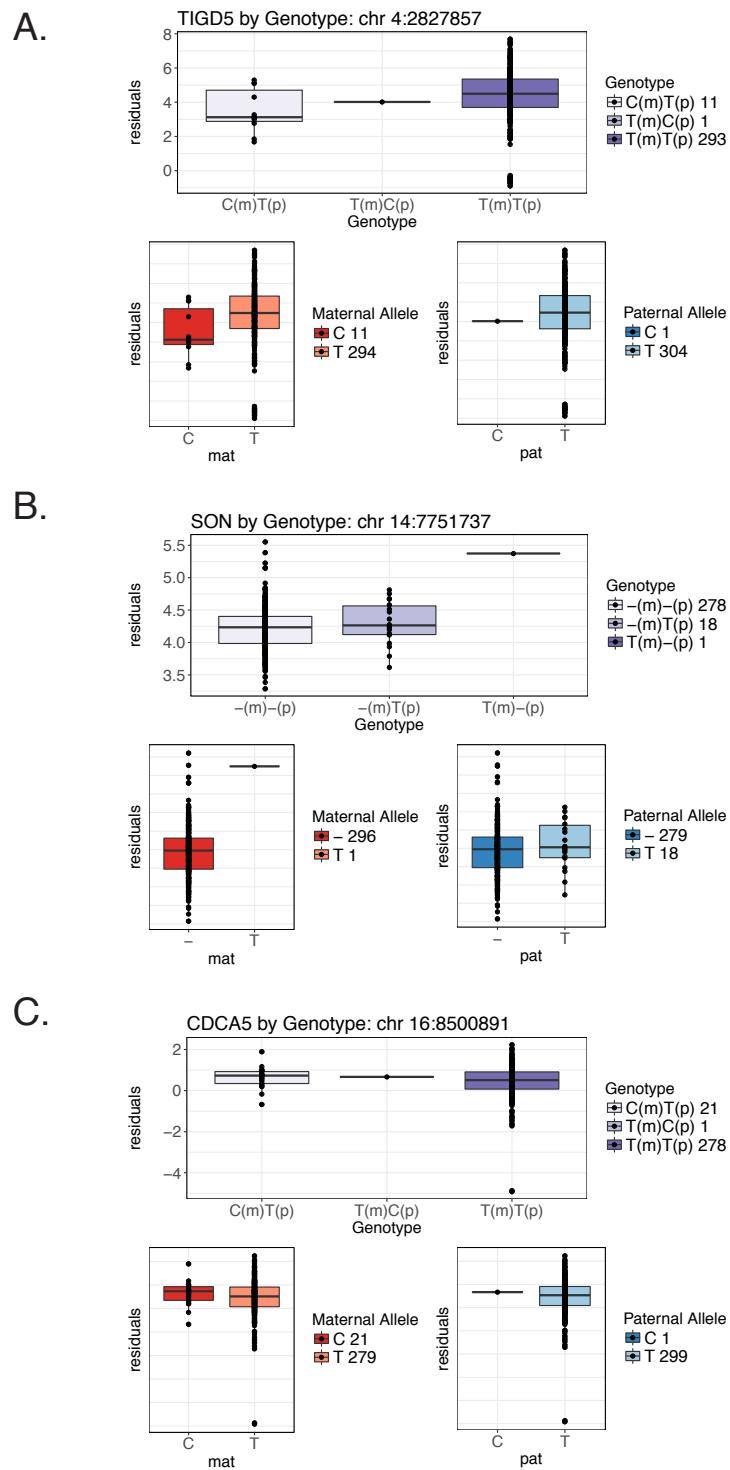
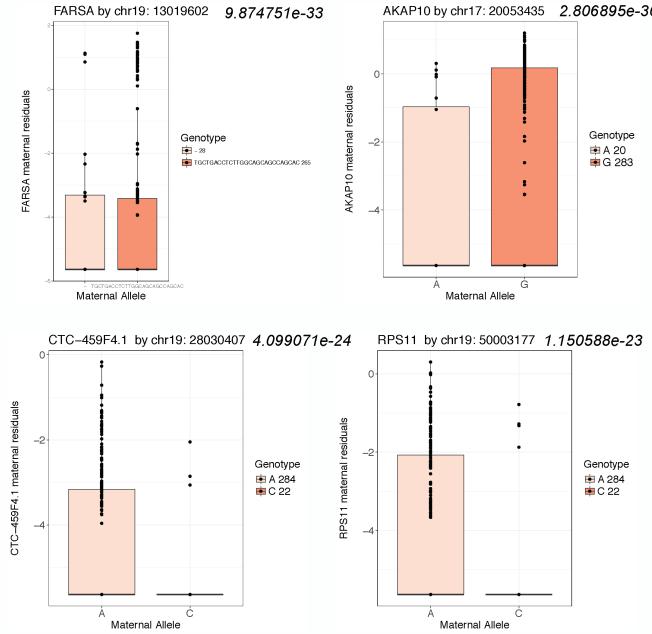


Figure 4.1: **Opposite effect eQTLs driven by one individual's genotype.** The three most significant opposite effect eQTLs for genes A) *TIGD5* (p-value 3.1e-09), B) *SON* (p-value 4.3e-09) and C) *CDCA5* (p-value 3.5e-09). The parent of origin eQTL is driven by one individual with a heterozygote genotype for each gene.

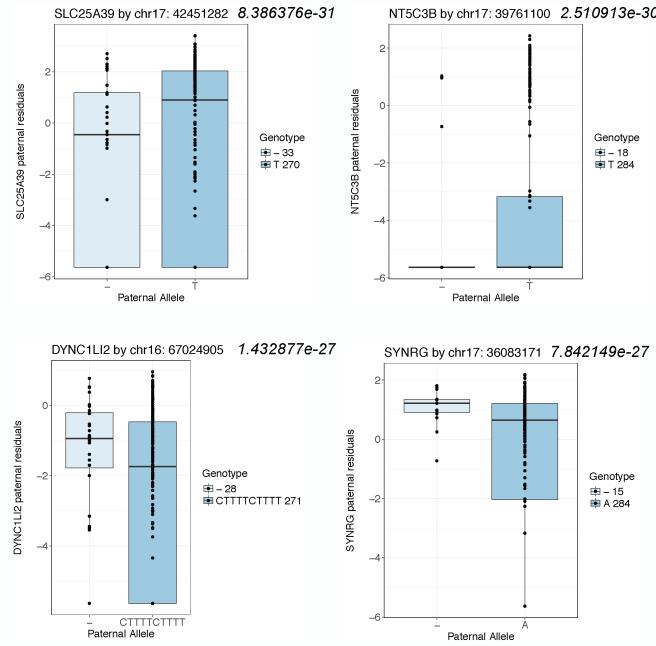
#### 4.3.2 Single Parent eQTL (mat-eQTL, pat-eQTL)

We performed the mat-eQTL and pat-eQTL analysis, using parent of origin normalized expression. We normalized the parental gene expression data using library sizes from the total gene expression(see Methods). However, the data was sparse and zeros drove most of the analysis. The significant maternal and paternal associations were driven by zeros in the data shown in Figures 4.2 and 4.3.



**Figure 4.2: Maternal eQTL Associations Driven by Null Values.** The four most significant maternal eQTL associations. Most of the individuals have no value of expression for these genes, we see most of the genes have a median that corresponds to a value of zero after normalization.

To address this problem, we redid the same analysis using only informative reads, removing zeros that were due to absence of heterozygous SNPs in the gene (see Methods for more detail). There were 7,398,096 SNP-gene pairs we could compare across both single parent eQTLs. For eQTLs significant in both, (60,549 SNP gene pairs), the effect sizes were all



**Figure 4.3: Paternal eQTL Associations Driven by Null Values.** The four most significant paternal eQTL associations. Most of the individuals have no value of expression for these genes, we see most of the genes have a median that corresponds to a value of zero after normalization.

in the same direction: no SNPs had opposite effects on their corresponding parental gene expression (Figure 4.4). The imbalance of positive and negative effect sizes in Figure 4.4 is likely due in large part to the sparsity of the data, where most individuals have an expression value of zero that drives the effect size to be positive.

We compared SNP gene pairs that were significant (Bonferroni) in one parent, and not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) in the other parent. 7,712 SNP-gene pairs were maternally significant and not paternally significant and 10,815 paternal significant associations were not maternally significant). An example of each is shown in Figure 4.5 where the maternally inherited A allele at 20:20036897 (Figure 4.5 A) is associated with increased maternal expression, but at least half of the individuals with the paternally inherited A allele at the same SNP have no expression from the paternal haplotype. In Figure 4.5 B, the A allele at 9:134850002 is

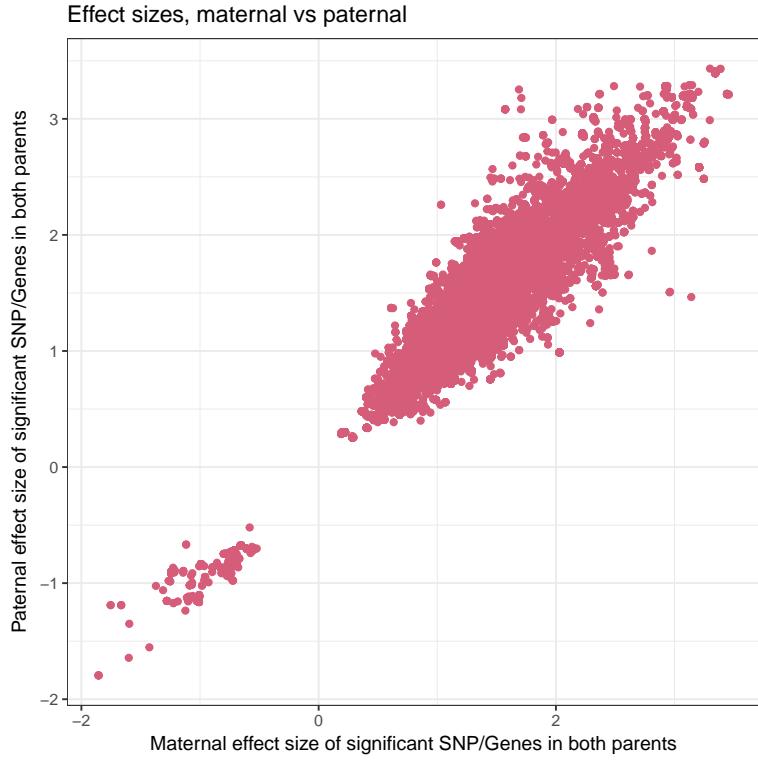
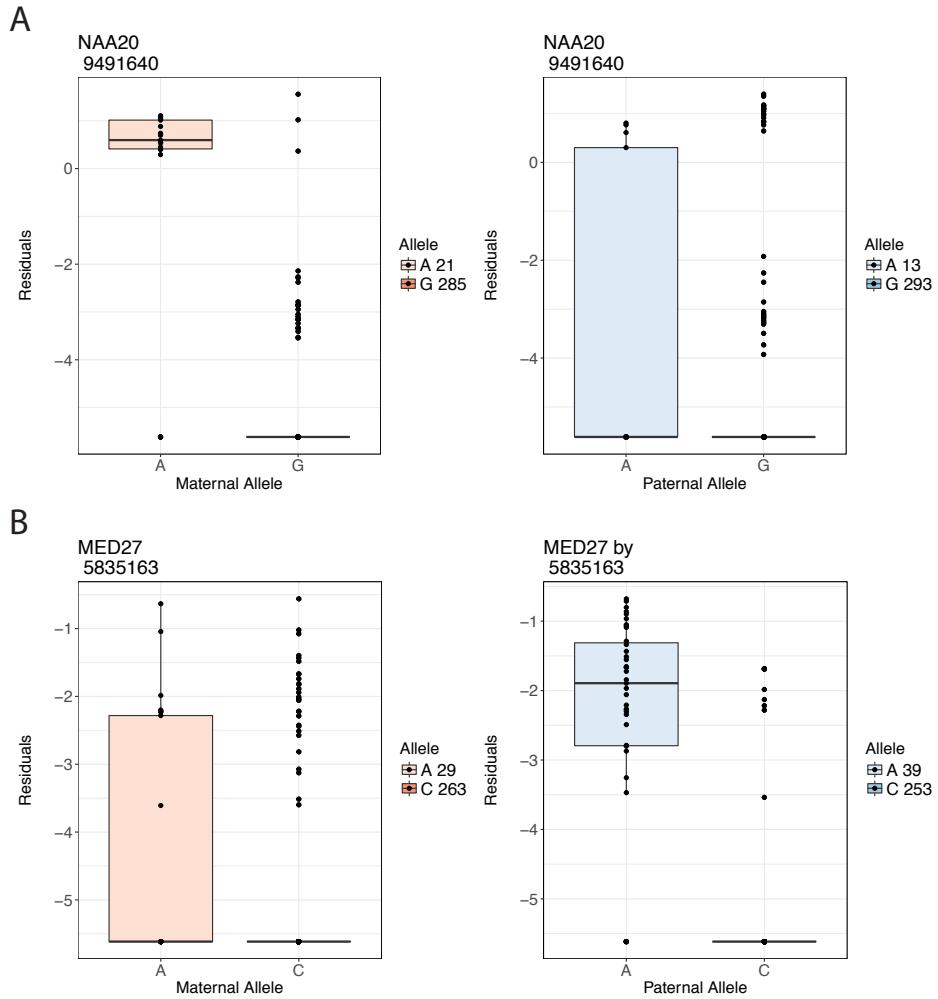


Figure 4.4: **Similar effect sizes across mat-eQTL and pat-eQTL.**

associated with increased paternal expression when inherited from the father but not when inherited from the mother.

#### 4.3.3 Parent of Origin (PO) - ASE Test

To detect parent of origin effects on expression using a different approach, we did a PO ASE test (see Methods) using parental gene expression count data. We identified 56,800 significant results using a Bonferroni corrected p-value . The top ten significant genes with their most significant SNPs are included in Table 4.1. The top four genes with their most significant SNPs shown in Figures 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9. Of the 10 most significant genes, 5 are imprinted (*SNHG14*, *ZDBF2*, *PEG10*, *L3MBTL1*, *FAM50B*.)



**Figure 4.5: Parent specific eQTLs significant in one parent and not the other.**  
 (A) Variant on chromosome 20:20036897 has a significant mat-eQTL association (left) with gene *NAA20* ( $p\text{-value} = 2.32\text{e-}27$ ) where the pat-eQTL (right) from the same variant is not significant ( $p\text{-value} = 2.18\text{e-}02$ ). In contrast, (B) Variant on chromosome 9:134850002 has a significant pat-eQTL association (right) with gene *MED27* ( $p\text{-value} = 4.7\text{e-}32$ ) and mat-eQTL is not significant ( $p\text{-value} = 2.75\text{e-}03$ ) (left).

Chr	bp	Gene	Maternal Reads (Ref/Alt)	Paternal Reads (Ref/Alt)	p-value
15	8034579	<i>SNHG14</i> *	15/11	587/983	0
2	1459666	<i>ZDBF2</i> *	34/49	638/1190	0
5	3342675	<i>ERAP2</i>	3948/2445	4790/7067	0
7	4671649	<i>PEG10</i> *	42/4	635/1073	0
8	5271050	<i>PABPC1</i>	600/2564	21/494	0
20	9548868	<i>L3MBTL1</i> *	13/18	527/699	9.88e-248
14	8007882	<i>IGHG1</i>	794/156	1711/918	5.15e-191
6	3666034	<i>FAM50B</i> *	0/6	481/362	1.58e-180
22	9799426	<i>IGLV2-5</i>	240/499	23/1	6.56e-145
6	3758995	<i>BTN3A2</i>	3609/1049	3328/3330	8.40e-144

Table 4.1: **Top Ten Significant Genes from PO-ASE Test.** Five of the top ten significant genes from the PO-ASE test are imprinted genes (\* represents imprinted genes). P-value of 0 corresponds to a really small p-value (<10e-248)

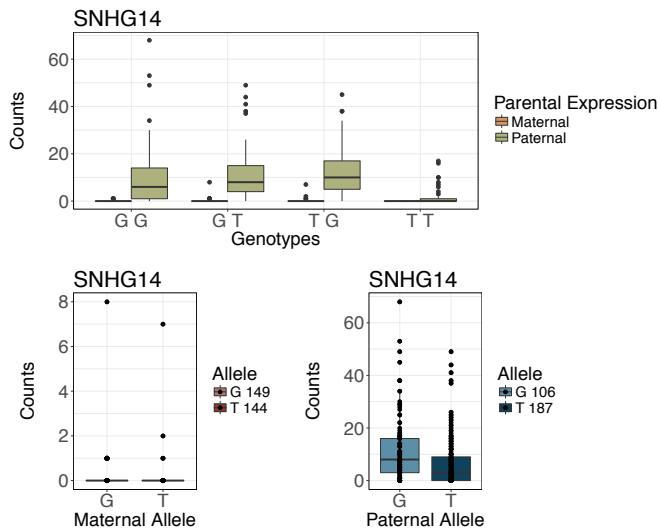


Figure 4.6: **Significant PO-ASE association with gene *SNHG14*.**

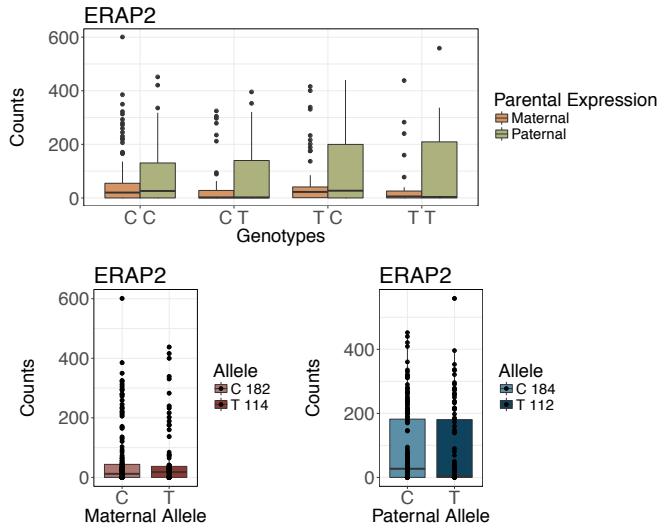


Figure 4.7: Significant PO-ASE association with gene *ERAP2*.

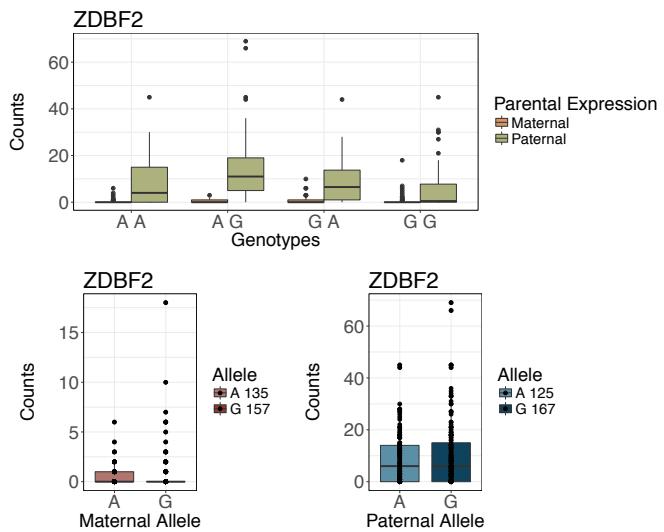


Figure 4.8: Significant PO-ASE association with gene *ZDBF2*.

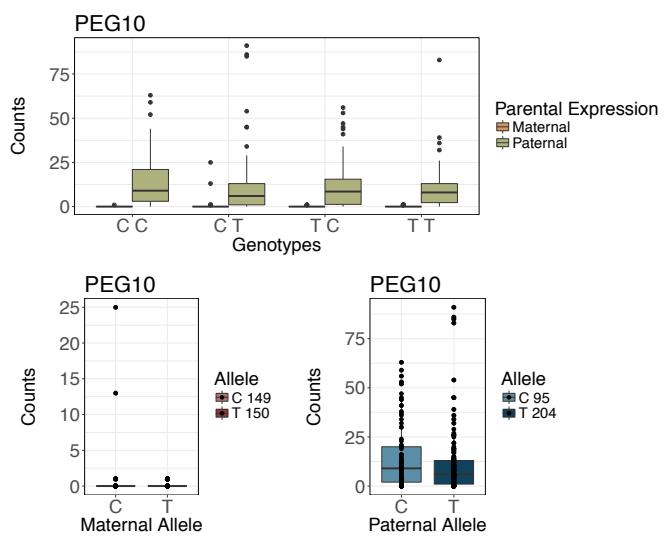


Figure 4.9: Significant PO-ASE association with gene *PEG10*.

#### 4.3.4 Modified ASE Test on Symmetrically Expressed Genes

We were not surprised to find that the most significant genes from the PO-ASE test were imprinted genes since one haplotype of imprinted genes is silenced, and the other haplotype will be expressed contributing to the contrast in parental gene expression. We are searching for genes that have different parental expression based on a parentally inherited allele in *cis*. Imprinted genes, as those we identified in Figures 4.6, 4.8, and 4.9, are consistently not expressed with either allele on the imprinted haplotype.

To exclude imprinted genes in the analysis we only tested genes that did not have significant asymmetrical expression (see Methods). We wanted genes that were more symmetrically expressed from each parental haplotype to identify if a parentally inherited allele can affect expression from the same haplotype in *cis*. We identified 15,340 significant SNPs (not pruned for LD) with 518 genes (using Bonferroni p-value 5.99e-09). The two most significant genes with symmetric expression that are also significant in this test are plotted with their most significant SNPs in Figures 4.10 and 4.11. The top ten genes and their most significant SNPs are listed in Table 4.2.

Chr	bp	Gene	Maternal reads (Ref/Alt)	Paternal reads (Ref/Alt)	p-value
1	404610	SEC22B	148/101	513/478	1.11e-98
3	2222154	ZMAT3	1320/1650	257/2085	3.53e-83
8	5425272	PARP10	128/334	324/1018	1.06e-71
12	7253839	OAS3	4465/939	2069/4327	1.06e-65
11	6368707	IRF7	620/2463	2079/167	2.94e-6520
14	8008568	IGHV2-5	291/295	22/135	1.80e-62
17	8884867	CCDC137	1449/865	173/1819	1.45e-57
14	7958818	ITPK1	387/686	862/1056	2.48e-57
17	8865144	SEPT9	560/2595	2594/1305	7.50e-50
17	8730038	SLFN5	2528/3084	1678/2539	1.27e-48

**Table 4.2: Top Ten Significant Genes from PO-ASE Test after Filtering Asymmetically Expressed Genes.** Filtering on symmetrical expression removed imprinted genes from being the most significant genes from PO-ASE test.

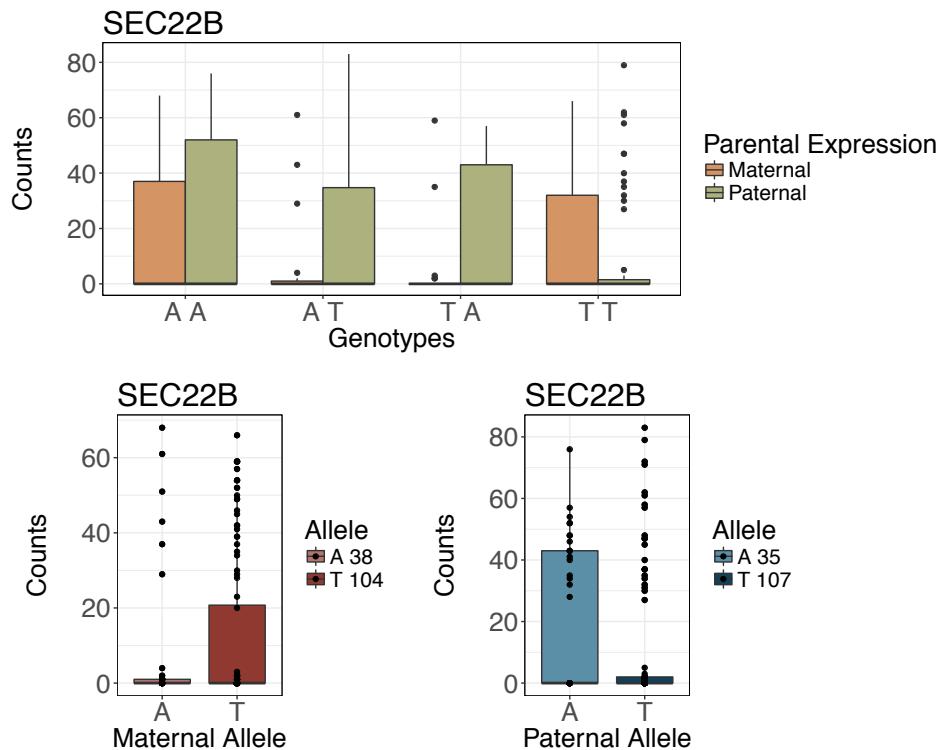


Figure 4.10: **Significant Association from PO-ASE test with *SEC22B*.** The most significant SNP (1:404610) with the most significant gene *SEC22B*. In the top plot with all four genotypes we see expression from the paternal allele in all four genotypes except TT. Maternal expression is only seen in the homozygotes. In the plots by parental allele below, it is clear that the maternal T allele is associated with increased maternal expression compared to the maternal A allele at this SNP. We see the opposite effect with paternal allele where the paternal A allele is associated with increased paternal expression and the paternal T allele with decreased expression. Based on the parental origin of the allele, the expression from the haplotype is different.

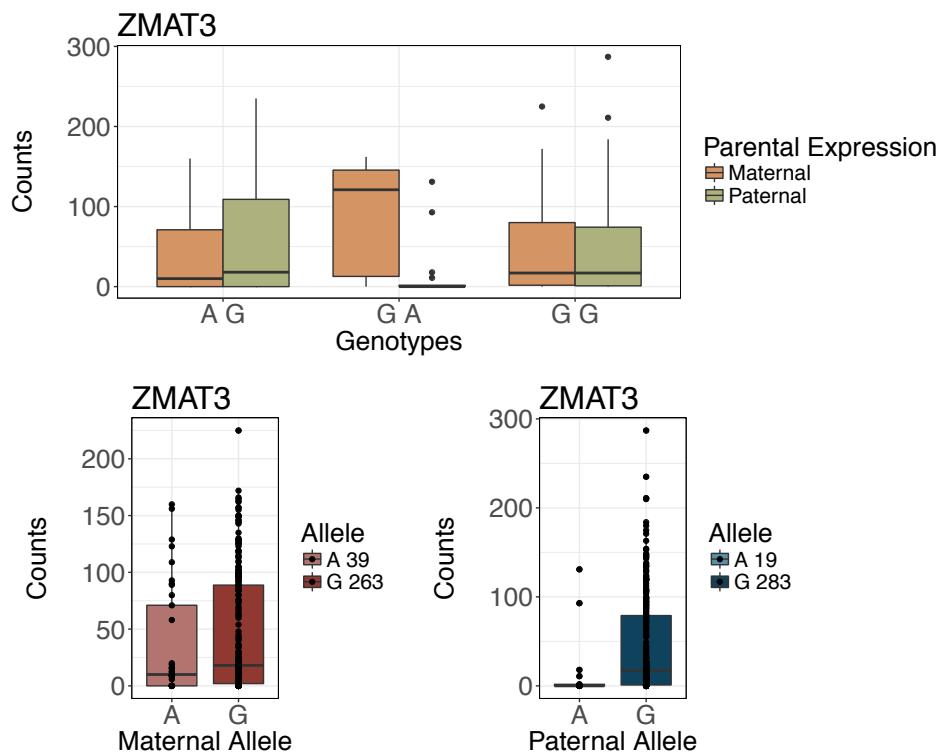


Figure 4.11: **Significant Association from PO-ASE test with *ZMAT3*.** The most significant SNP (3:2222154) with the second most significant gene *ZMAT3*. In the top plot with all three genotypes we see expression from the paternal allele in all four genotypes except GA. Maternal expression in all genotypes. In the plots by parental allele below, it is clear that the maternal alleles are associated with maternal expression, but the paternal A allele, in contrast to the paternal G allele, is not associated with paternal expression.

## 4.4 Discussion

Previous studies using parental alleles and gene expression have identified imprinted genes and genetic variation that affects quantitative traits [107, 11, 13, 34], but none to our knowledge have looked at how genetic variation can impact parent of origin expression from the same haplotype as the genetic variation.

Here we used parental specific gene expression in 306 Hutterites to characterize genetic effects on parental expression. We first performed a parent of origin opposite effect eQTL (oeQTL) using total gene expression. We then did a maternal and a paternal eQTL study of maternal and paternal gene expression (mat-eQTL, pat-eQTL), respectively. Finally, we tested for parent of origin effects among reciprocal heterozygotes.

Our opposite effect model has been successful in identifying opposite effects of parentally inherited variants on quantitative traits in the Hutterites but we were not able to find any with gene expression in LCLs. These could be due to a number of reasons, including sample size and the tissue studied. We also performed a *cis* mat-eQTL and pat-eQTL study. This test identified known significant eQTLs that showed up in both the mat-eQTL and pat-eQTL results since the effect does not depend on the parent of origin. None of the variants compared across the mat-eQTL and pat-eQTL showed opposite effects by parent of origin. We were not able to find any maternal or paternally only effects on gene expression without modifying our test.

We found that most of the negative results were driven by sparsity in the data. Null expression values for gene expression could be due to two factors: 1) no heterozygous/parent of origin SNPs in the gene such that homozygous reads could not be assigned to a parent, or 2) there are heterozygous SNPs in the genes but there are no reads. We assigned genes for individuals that did not have any heterozygous SNPs as missing and kept the values for those with at least one heterozygous site in a gene. This resulted in different numbers of individuals and genes to be tested, and provided a more conservative and informative

data set but still we did not find any significant maternal or paternal only effects on gene expression.

Finally, we performed a PO- ASE test among reciprocal heterozygotes to identify effects of parental variation on gene expression. The missing gene expression (i.e. uninformative) for some individuals decreased the numbers of reciprocal heterozygotes we could test for each gene.

These few results from the PO-ASE test and the opposite effect eQTL could be due to many limitations of our study. Although we were able to determine the parent of origin for many transcripts in the Hutterites, we could not assign every RNA sequencing read to a parent due to lack of heterozygous sites or missing parent of origin information for alleles. Missing parental gene expression resulted in very sparse data. Second, we conducted these studies in LCLs, and therefore would miss effects in other tissues or developmental time points. Additionally, our models to test for parent of origin eQTL effects are effective but could be much improved, such as to model over-dispersion in gene expression.

In summary, we did not identify any genetic variation with opposite parental effects on either parentally mapped gene expression or total gene expression. We did identify SNPs with parent of origin eQTLs even though our data are still noisy and underpowered. Deeper sequencing and better modeling could potentially identify more genetic variation that impacts parental gene expression if such a biological mechanism exists. We expect these possible parent of origin eQTLs from the PO-ASE test to identify variation that can impact imprinting or other gene silencing mechanisms by parent of origin. For example, for the *ZMAT3* gene in Figure 4.11 we see expression from all haplotypes except from the paternal A allele. It could suggest that the paternal G allele is disrupting the mechanism that turns off paternal expression at this gene or that the paternal A allele turns on the mechanism to silence the gene expression from the paternal haplotype. There has been no study of such a mechanism and if more evidence for such effects are identified, could lead to

new approaches to understanding genetic variation and its impact on gene expression and, ultimately, disease and human health.

## 4.5 Methods

### 4.5.1 Genotypes and Sample Information

LCL RNA-seq transcripts for 306 individuals were mapped to parental haplotypes as in Chapter 3. We used the measures of total as well as maternal and paternal expression in this study. We used multiple approaches to characterize parent of origin effects on gene expression. To be conservative, we used 306 Hutterite individuals for which we have parental genotypes and tested SNPs for which we have at least three individuals in at least three of four parent of origin genotype classes (such that we have at least three individuals in at least one heterozygote category and one heterozygote individual will not drive our analysis). We used QCed SNPs with MAF >5%.

### 4.5.2 RNA-seq QC

Multiple approaches required different QC methods. For the total gene expression, we used normalized gene expression. First, we removed lowly expressed genes with a log count per million (cpm) greater than 1 in at least 20 individuals. The R/Bioconductor package edgeR was used to convert the RNA-seq counts to log2 TMM-normalized CPM values[86, 85]. Technical covariates correlated with gene expression Principal Components were regressed out (RIN, DNA concentration, RNA concentration, Flowcell/Lane).

### 4.5.3 Parent of Origin Expression QC

Maternal gene expression was used as both counts and as normalized gene expression. Maternal gene expression counts were used directly from STAR gene count output[26] subsetted

on genes included in the total gene expression analysis. Normalized maternal expression was calculated using similar to total gene expression using edgeR and converting RNA-seq counts to log<sub>2</sub> TMM normalized CPM values using normalization factors (library sizes) from the total gene expression (maternal gene expression too sparse on its own). Same method was used to get paternal gene expression counts and normalized paternal gene expression.

#### *4.5.4 Informative Genes*

To separate informative parental gene expression from uninformative parental gene expression I compiled all of the heterozygous SNPs for each individual for each gene that was expressed in LCLs. If a gene for an individual did not have any heterozygous parent of origin SNPs (i.e. informative SNPs), the gene was considered missing (converted to NA for downstream analysis). If there was at least one heterozygous parent of origin SNPs in the corresponding gene, the gene expression value was not altered, since zero expression for that gene for that parent could be informative. This nulled different numbers of genes for different individuals (Figure 4.12).

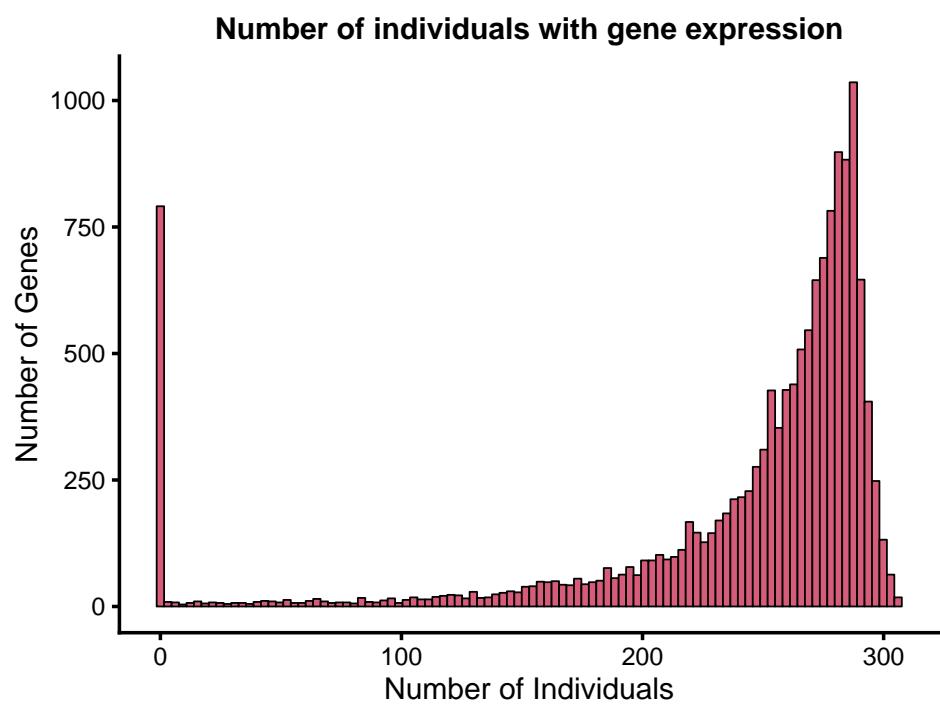


Figure 4.12: Number of Individuals with Gene Expression.

### 4.5.5 Opposite Parent of Origin eQTL

We used the same method outlined in Chapter 2 to detect if SNPs had opposite effects on total gene expression by parental origin. We tested SNPs in *cis*, defined as +/-250kb from the TSS of the gene. The model as implemented in GEMMA[106] where we used sex and age as covariates and corrected for relatedness (see Methods from Chapter 2).

### 4.5.6 Single Parent eQTL

To use the parent of origin expression, we performed a *cis* eQTL testing for specific parental effects on the same parental gene expression as follows. We defined *cis* as +/- 250kb from the TSS of the gene. The model as implemented in GEMMA[106] where we used sex and age as covariates and corrected for relatedness.

$$Y_M = W\alpha + X_M\beta_M + g + \epsilon \quad (4.1)$$

$$Y_P = W\alpha + X_P\beta_P + g + \epsilon \quad (4.2)$$

### 4.5.7 PO ASE Test

We used a simple  $\chi^2$  test on the reciprocal heterozygotes on their corresponding allelic expression using maternal and paternal count data corresponding to haplotype specific expression.

Layout of the matrix for the test is in Table 4.3.

Genotype	A allele (ref) expression	G allele (alt) expression
$A_M G_P$	148 (maternal expression)	478 (paternal expression)
$G_M A_P$	513 (paternal expression)	101 (maternal expression)

Table 4.3: **Setup for PO-ASE test.** For reciprocal genotypes we use the maternal and paternal gene expression counts corresponding to opposite alleles. The chi-squared test here will determine if there is an allele and parental effect.

#### *4.5.8 Not Asymmetrically Expressed Genes*

We used a binomial test to determine which genes had more maternal expression than paternal expression. We summed paternal and maternal gene expression across all individuals for a gene and used the sum of maternal and paternal gene expression in a binomial test to determine if the ratio of maternal to the sum of maternal and paternal expression is only 1/2. We kept genes not significant (Bonferroni,  $p > 3.5\text{e-}06$ ) for the Modified ASE Test.

## CHAPTER 5

## CONCLUSION

As we look past the "low hanging fruit" of GWAS, we turn to other biological mechanisms where genetics can influence our traits, including studies of rare variation[41], gene by environment interactions, and parent of origin effects among others. The Hutterites that the Ober Lab studies are an ideal population to look for parent of origin effects on quantitative disease related traits and gene expression[103, 1, 73]. With RNA-seq and novel methods for imputing and phasing data at a population scale[54], we are able to start investigating such questions.

### **5.1 A novel method to detect opposite effects of parentally inherited variants on cardiovascular disease and asthma associated traits**

In Chapter 2, I describe our study to detect genetic variation than can impact cardiovascular disease and asthma associated traits when inherited from one parent and not the other. In order to maximize on our data, we develop a novel method in this chapter that can be used to detect if parentally inherited alleles can have opposite effects on quantitative traits depending on which parent they were inherited from. These associations would be missed in traditional GWAS. Previous studies have explored parent of origin effects but mostly using trios[34, 4, 40] and on case control status[50, 4]. Only a few have begun to search for parent of origin effects on quantitative traits, starting with height[13, 107].

Using this novel method, we identify parent of origin effects (POEs) on 11 phenotypes in the Hutterites, most of which are risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Most of the loci we identified have features of imprinted regions and many of the variants are associated with expression of nearby genes. Most of the phenotypes are also associated with metabolic traits

consistent with the parent conflict hypothesis of imprinted genes put forward by Haig[37, 12, 78]. The idea suggests that parental interests may be in conflict such that paternal alleles favor growth of the fetus at the expense of the mother while maternal alleles favor restricting resources to the fetus to ensure preservation of her own nutritional needs. We show that POEs, which can be opposite in direction, are relatively common in humans, are possible imprinted regions, and have potentially important clinical effects.

### 5.1.1 Future Directions

It is necessary to still replicate the results in a different population to verify these effects exist. They did not replicate in the Sardinia population. Additionally a power analysis should be done to confirm our method would pick up genetic variants of the effect size and minor allele frequency that we identified.

It is important to further investigate these regions. One of the regions with a POE identified in our study, *LINC01081* has been studied in detail by another group showing that a parent of origin effect exists at this region independent of our study[94]. Others have shown POEs at known imprinted regions that affect height[13, 107]. It would be the next step to show whether or not the regions we identify with POEs lie in or near previously unidentified imprinted regions.

## 5.2 Identifying two novel imprinted genes in known imprinted regions using parent of origin gene expression

In Chapter 3, I identified two new imprinted genes using parent of origin and allele specific expression. Using a novel method as a variation on WASP[96], I mapped RNA-seq reads to parental haplotypes using SNPs in the reads and parent of origin information of SNPs. We identified known imprinted genes and two novel imprinted genes, *PXDC1* and *PWAR6*,

among our genes with asymmetrical parent of origin gene expression. We validated the patterns of gene expression using RNA-seq from peripheral blood leukocytes (PBLs). To validate the imprinted genes further, we used DNA methylation levels in the PBLs to confirm imprinting control regions (ICRs) previously defined[45, 22]. Our two new imprinted genes lie in known imprinted regions with known ICRs providing more evidence for their imprinting status.

This is the largest pedigree based genome-wide scan for imprinted regions to date with 306 Hutterite individuals. We also provide a new way of mapping reads to parent of origin haplotypes and identify two new possible imprinted genes.

### 5.2.1 Future Directions

It is still necessary to further validate *PXDC1* and *PWAR6* as imprinted genes in a different population. Further characterization of this locus is still required. We identified these genes as imprinted but had overall very few parentally mapped reads. This would need to be replicated with many more parentally mapped reads. It is surprising they have not yet been discovered as imprinted genes since they are in known and somewhat well characterized imprinted regions. It is possible they are tissue and/or developmentally specific as has been shown for other imprinted genes[11].

## 5.3 Can parentally inherited genetic variation influence gene expression on the same haplotype?

In Chapter 4, I explored if parentally inherited genetic variation can affect gene expression as well as haplotype specific gene expression. Using the method of Chapter 2 to detect opposite effect association, we did not identify any SNPs that had opposite effects on total gene expression depending on which parent the allele was inherited from. To get at the same

effect in a different way, we performed a maternal eQTL (mat-eQTL) with maternal alleles on maternal expression as well as a paternal eQTL (pat-eQTL) with paternal alleles on paternal expression. Across all the SNP gene pairs analyzed on both we did not identify any effects that were opposite in direction.

To determine if any alleles had a specific effect on gene expression when inherited from one parent or the other, we used a parent of origin allele specific expression (PO-ASE) test and identified alleles that when inherited from one parent, and not the other, had a different effect on gene expression on that haplotype.

### 5.3.1 Future Directions

While our model has picked up genes that look like they have a PO allele specific effect, there is still a lot of room for improvement. We use gene expression counts but our model is not accounting for overdispersion which needs to be accounted for when looking at gene expression. We are looking for PO-ASE effects with very few parentally mapped reads. For standard eQTL studies we require at least 10 million reads, whereas, here, we have on average 1.8% of 10 million reads mapped to a parental haplotype resulting in, on average, about 1.8 million reads to use for an eQTL study. Our study is likely underpowered to identify SNPs that have opposite effects on gene expression depending on which parent it was inherited from. More reads are required to perform this eQTL study and find parent specific effects.

Even with these parent of origin eQTLs identified in the latter part of Chapter 4, it is not clear what known biological mechanism could lead to such an effect. It is possible that the parentally inherited allele different from the rest could disrupt normal expression by inducing silencing of the gene in a chromosome specific manner. It is also possible that the opposite allele - from the same parent - results in aberrant over expression of the allele. Both of these would result in a parent of origin effect on gene expression but why or how these would exist is still not yet known.

## 5.4 Concluding remarks

In this thesis, I contribute to the growing knowledge of additional biological mechanisms, specifically, parent of origin effects, that can contribute to phenotypes and disease risk missed in standard GWAS. In all the chapters of this dissertation we are able to leverage the parent of origin alleles we have for our population and use them to uncover novel effects of genetic variation on gene expression and quantitative traits. In Chapter ?? I develop a new method to test for opposite effects of parentally inherited genetic variation on quantitative traits and we find 11 parent of origin effects, including opposite, maternal, and paternal effects. In Chapter 3 I map RNA-seq to parental haplotypes using parent of origin of alleles and uncover known and new imprinted genes (*PXDC1* and *PWAR6*), which show similar patterns of expression in PBLs and have well characterized ICRs in the region. In Chapter 4, I explore how parent of origin genetic variation could influence gene expression. We don't find any opposite effects on gene expression but do identify alleles that when inherited from one parent show altered gene expression patterns.

Throughout this research, I investigated the basis for parent of origin effects for which we have not had the methodology and unique dataset I have today to explore such a phenomenon. The novelty of this dataset and question has allowed for the expansion of this research from one original aim to a full dissertation covering 3 independent projects and future directions, including measuring parent of origin heritability on traits and gene expression. I believe the research in this dissertation provides methods and basis for studying parent of origin effects and other less well characterized effects that could contribute to heritability of traits and disease risk.

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