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Next-Generation Biomarkers: Integration of Multi-Omics Approaches in Clinical Chemistry for Early Disease Detection

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Annotation: Biomarkers are molecules used as indicators of normal or pathological processes, or of pharmacological responses to therapy. Omics-based biomarker discovery is rapidly evolving. Next-generation multi-omics approaches are expected to fuel validation kits that will be marketable in precision diagnostics. Clinical chemists will be empowered to develop universal kits that incorporate clinically validated biomarkers from any omics realm, enabling screening for early onset of multiple and unrelated non-communicable diseases using small volumes of body fluids. Early clinical disease detection, through therapeutic or nutritional intervention, reduces mortality, treatment cost, and drug resistance. Multivariate biomarker panels provide higher sensitivity (clinically acceptable if >85%) and specificity (>90%) than single markers (acceptable when >80%), with the combined response displayed through probability scores. A set of safest

algorithms can deliver assay results and disease probability during the patient's clinic visit, increasing practitioner confidence, while the occurrence of any marker above the reference value should trigger patient-directed digital advice. Patient empowerment through digital engagement is required, with practice recommendations from both digital systems and physicians following, in chain with current best clinical practice.

Keywords: pharmacological, pathogenic processes, omics realm

1. Introduction to Biomarkers

Biomarkers, which serve as indicators of various biological or pathogenic processes, have historically maintained a central and crucial role in the fields of disease diagnosis, prognosis, and the assessment of therapeutic interventions. Recent technological advancements, particularly in high-throughput methodologies, have made it possible to gather large-scale datasets that span multiple domains of biological research, including genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, and metabolomics. These diverse datasets provide a wealth of complementary biological information that can further enhance our understanding of health and disease. By integrating these complementary layers of data, researchers and clinicians now have new and exciting opportunities to enhance the discovery of biomarkers and expand their clinical applications. Clinical chemistry, a specialized area focused on the accurate quantitation of clinically relevant markers, plays a vital role in facilitating a comprehensive and cost-effective approach aimed at utilizing these biomarkers to detect the onset of disease at its earliest possible stage. This review aims to outline the foundational principles of high-throughput omics analyses and to engage in a detailed discussion of their diverse applications in the realm of next-generation biomarker research, all within the important context of clinical chemistry. Through this exploration, we seek to illuminate the ways in which integrated data from these various omics approaches can transform our understanding and management of diseases, thereby significantly improving patient outcomes and advancing the overall field of biomedical research. [1][2]

2. Understanding Multi-Omics Approaches

The rapid accumulation of different types of omics data opens up the fascinating possibility of implementing a multi-faceted approach to unravel –omics data complexity [3]. Multi-omics integration plays a major role in biomarker identification [4]. Next-generation clinical chemistry relies heavily on multi-omic biomarkers.

A biomarker, such as a molecule secreted into inaccessible blood vessels, could aid in disease diagnosis or prognosis. The term biomarker embraces a large spectrum of applications and conceptual models. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate multi-omics approaches. With the enormous amount of omics data produced, omics integration represents an attractive strategy to enhance patient stratification and, consequently, the identification of clinical biomarkers. The different methods of multi-omics integration highlight various key ideas and perspectives. Multi-omics data integration approaches have the potential to become a new, more accurate, and a more widely used solution to better develop, fully characterize, and validate biomarkers for clinical chemistry.

2.1. Genomics

Genomics studies the entire genome, providing comprehensive insights from DNA sequencing within biological research. Its applications include understanding biological functions as encoded by the genome, investigating all genetic information of cells or organisms, identifying genetic causes of diseases, and contributing to regulatory science related to vaccines. The development of genome analysis technology as an 'omics' approach started with the Human Genome Project (HGP) and the establishment of high-throughput DNA sequencing technology. This gave rise to the concept of a 'multi-omics' approach to integrate subsequent methods such as transcriptomics, proteomics, and metabolomics [5]. This strategy underscores how the structure and function of the genome influence an organism and supports the simultaneous analysis and integration of various types of information to generate multifaceted insights and discoveries.

The implementation of the multi-omics approach has provided a more comprehensive view of biological systems and enhanced the speed of medical research and drug discovery, integrating multiple layers of information from genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, and metabolomics [6]. The recent regulatory revision calls for the integration of different types of ‘omics’ data using approaches such as single-cell multi-omics analyses and the combination of genome/transcriptome and proteome/metabolome profiles to deepen the understanding of living organisms in specific contexts. This is reflected in the promotion of integrated analyses of multi-omics data and multi-dimensional data listing strategies applied to the social infrastructure of big data. [7][8]

2.2. Transcriptomics

Accessing the transcriptome is also of importance for clinical chemistry-based biomarker development. Gene expression profiling detects and quantifies RNA molecules; typically, messenger RNA (mRNA) is studied. mRNA is complementary to DNA, as it copies the protein-coding sequence. Such studies can assist clinical chemistry in several ways. Measuring transcript abundance reveals which genes have been activated. Exposure to a disease, or the presence of disease itself, alters gene transcription. That transcript abundance differs in normal and diseased states led to microarray technology's development. This high-throughput technique assesses expression levels of tens of thousands of genes simultaneously [9]. Furthermore, Zhou and colleagues successfully integrated transcriptomics and metabolomics from plasma and bronchoalveolar lavage fluid (BALF) to characterize chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) pathology using clinical chemistry approaches.

Transcriptomics can also identify genes translated into stable proteins and detect processes releasing membrane and cellular proteins into the bloodstream. Proteins are the predominant entity detected in clinical chemistry, but analysis is challenging due to the proteome's variability, dynamic range, and post-translational modifications altering function [6].

2.3. Proteomics

Proteins comprise a significant portion of the human body and play vital roles in biological functions. Proteomics, the study of the entire complement of proteins and their interactions, is a valuable approach for the discovery and development of early diagnostic, prognostic, and therapeutic biomarkers. Since proteins are the final products of whole transcription and translation processes, alterations in proteins accurately reflect biological changes in the human body. Therefore, proteomics is widely employed for the identification of candidate biomarkers.

Automated laboratory instruments offer rapid and precise protein multiplexing. Sophisticated statistical algorithms enable the deconvolution and identification of a wide dynamic range of protein multicomponents. Numerous traditional biomarker candidates exist in the literature, and many new candidates have been introduced with the fast development of proteomic techniques. Examples of platforms and approaches for proteomic biomarkers include: iTRAQ and 2D-DIGE, which combine gel electrophoresis and stable isotope tags for quantitative analysis of complex

protein samples; MALDI-TOF-MS and SELDI-TOF-MS, which facilitate protein analysis with high mass accuracy and sensitivity; isotope-coded affinity tag and stable isotope labeling by amino acids in cell culture (SILAC), which use isotope labeling for comparative quantitative proteomics; protein microarrays for high-throughput analysis of protein interactions; and capillary electrophoresis-mass spectrometry and liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry, which provide high-resolution separation and sensitive detection of proteins [6].

2.4. Metabolomics

Metabolomics is the study of the complete set of low-molecular-weight metabolites within a biological sample [5]. Metabolomics studies involved in biomarker discovery are often performed following a phased biomarker-discovery pipeline that begins with a metabolite-discovery phase in small cohorts [10]. Metabolic phenotype is considered the net result of gene expression modulated by post-translational modification and environmental influences [11]. Every metabolic or signalling pathway or enzyme in the pathway is therefore a potential biomarker. Metabolomic studies of complex diseases, such as cancer, investigate the changes in endogenous metabolites that relate to the onset and progression of the disease, providing further insight into the mechanisms of the diseases as well as discovering new biomarkers for diagnosis.

3. The Role of Clinical Chemistry

Clinical chemistry, also known as chemical pathology or clinical biochemistry, applies chemical and molecular concepts to understanding health and disease. It focuses on the analysis of bodily fluids for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes. Today, medical laboratories analyze more than 5000 different types of biological tests, supplying physicians with a significant number of test results for diagnosing, monitoring, or predicting disease. Biomarkers serve a vital role in clinical chemistry and are widely used in clinical practice for prognosis, progression, and response to therapeutic interventions [12].

4. Integration of Multi-Omics in Clinical Practice

The clinical chemistry discipline is principally involved in the applied use of disease biomarkers, monitoring pathophysiological and metabolic indications, and assessing organ function. Specifically, the discipline relies on a diversity of multi-omics biomarkers—from genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, and epigenomics through to metabolomics. The cutting edge of clinical-chemistry research involves the integration of different multi-omics approaches and alteration detection for the early disease screening. Data-integration algorithms and clinical-decision support systems that mainly adhere to essential requirements and guidelines facilitate the analysis and synthesis of multi-omics information for supporting clinical decisions.

The innovative integration of multi-omics approaches into biomarker discovery is a very active area of clinical-chemistry research. Recent explorations demonstrate the discovery and validation of novel biomarkers in various cancer types, as well as in cardiovascular and neurological disorders. The integration of multi-omics methods with clinical-chemistry applications enables deeper prospecting with disease detection and diagnosis and develops promising concepts for patient engagement and support. [13][8]

4.1. Data Integration Techniques

Data integration is pivotal for the effective combination of multiple omics layers developing from high-throughput and informatics technologies. Thorough clinical evaluation supports selection of relevant datasets and context within which to perform the merging. Data integration aims to support decision-making, highlight essential features, generate surrogate models for complex data, and represent biological processes appropriately [4]. Strategies have been distinguished as: (i) early data integration (concatenation-based integration), which merges multiple omics data into a joint matrix and analyzes it as a single dataset; (ii) intermediate data integration, where either joint dimensionality reduction or feature transformation/extraction is

applied to individual omics data and the results jointly analyzed; (iii) late data integration (model-based integration), in which each omics dataset is modeled separately and the models merged.

Practical solutions include automated machine-learning pipelines, Bayesian consensus clustering that determines the number of clusters automatically, penalized mixtures of generalized latent variable models, and knowledge-driven data mining based on heterogeneous models. Frameworks such as those introduced by [14] , [3] , and integrate multiple datasets and advanced statistical and machine-learning methods using biological knowledge associated with specific omics blocks. Systems provide algorithms for pre-processing, feature filtering, exploratory and statistical analysis, and integration of data, results, and prior knowledge to identify statistically significant values. Clinical decision support systems (CDSS) comply with physician-defined clinical questions, patient characteristics such as age, gender and ancestry, and biological and medical knowledge, delivering only relevant and understandable information.

4.2. Clinical Decision Support Systems

Clinical decision support systems (CDSS) augment healthcare providers' decision-making processes. They can integrate electronic health records to offer guidance for diagnoses, treatment regimens, and condition management. CDSS enhance patient safety, improve diagnostic accuracy, and streamline clinical workflows. Artificial intelligence and machine learning are increasingly incorporated to elevate predictive capacity and individualize patient management. These systems find applications in laboratory medicine, infectious disease identification, and risk evaluation, contributing to more efficient and effective patient care [15]. In biomarker application, single markers often contribute little to classification improvements, particularly when used alongside already effective parameters. Negative correlations among predictors can increase discriminatory power. Employing a comprehensive approach to plasma-proteome quantification generates extensive data that establishes individual-specific baselines. Plasma-protein concentrations remain stable yet person specific, facilitating interpretation without population-derived thresholds. The prevalence of comorbidities renders broad proteomic profiles a cost-effective strategy compared to sequential targeted diagnostics. Nonetheless, universal assays may reveal incidental findings that patients or clinicians prefer to avoid, as observed with genetic or imaging modalities. To reduce overdiagnosis while accommodating multiple conditions, clinicians favor multiplexed panels addressing specific disease groups. Handling the complex, multivariate output surpasses conventional evaluation methods, which rely on clinical hunches and experience. Integrating multiple biomarkers with clinical variables into algorithmic panels—potentially enhanced by deep learning—promises improved interpretative accuracy and decision support [12].

5. Biomarker Discovery and Validation

The large volume of multi-omics data produced provides opportunities for novel biomarker identification. High-throughput screening combined with robust statistics and machine-learning tools enables the identification of the most promising candidates [16]. Systematic characterization and validation demonstrate clinical readiness, facilitating the development of reliable diagnostic tests [6]. Pathways from biomarker discovery to 510(k) submissions illustrate market potential and assist decision-making processes.

The potential of multi-omics approaches for uncovering effective clinical biomarkers depends on a multipronged strategy that integrates large datasets and prior knowledge to form comprehensive models of molecular mechanisms underlying human phenotypes and diseases. Because no individual omics method can provide a complete picture, collection and integration of experimentally derived data from all sources become essential for comprehensive insights.

5.1. High-Throughput Screening

Progress in high-throughput screening has provided tools for the identification of molecular

biomarkers closely associated with disease progression in the postgenomic era. High-throughput omic technologies such as next-generation sequencing, microarray, and mass spectrometry are widely used to identify candidate biomarkers. In addition, approaches based on pathway and network analysis provide insight into the biological functions of biomarkers and their interconnections to improve disease diagnosis and outcome prediction. Classical approaches to the identification of molecular biomarkers often suffer from a relatively high false positive rate, a lack of focus on the interactions of biomarkers in global subnetworks and cellular pathways, and fragmental information from a single-platform dataset. Algorithms integrating a diversity of omics sources to model biological networks and signaling pathways are therefore urgently needed. Pathway- and network-based approaches have been introduced to solve these problems. Because cellular processes are commonly carried out by groups of interacting molecules rather than individual ones, focusing on pathways and networks can offer a better understanding of the biological association among genes and their products, in addition to providing a functional interpretation and prioritization of cancer biomarker molecules [17].

5.2. Statistical Methods for Validation

An early step toward the general deployment of biomarkers concerns the application of stringent rules on marker-release security and approval. Three requirements are usually stipulated. The marker should be detected analytically and safely, that is, it must be possible to detect the marker in the population and to have a test performed in a safe manner; next, the marker should be clinically validated so that measurements of the marker correlate with a clinical finding or condition; finally, it is stipulated that it must be demonstrated that the actual use of the marker contributes to rational treatment that benefits the patient [16]. These requirements on biomarker release and approval lead to a large number of issues, some of which are highlighted below.

6. Applications of Multi-Omics in Disease Detection

Multi-omics approaches assume a prominent role worldwide as powerful tools for the identification of novel biomarkers, the study of molecular signalling networks, and the dissection of pathway-driven mechanisms [3]. Omics strategies embrace the global analyses of all the molecular species of a specific type within a cell, tissue, or organism. Today, the availability of advanced analytical technologies and computational methods permits one to analyse simultaneously complete sets of all genomic, epigenomic, transcriptomic, metagenomic, proteomic, and/or metabolomic profiles starting from the biological samples of the subjects under investigation. Multi-omics studies are expected to provide essential insights into specific biological systems and responses, helping researchers manoeuvre large and highly heterogeneous data sets in both a qualitative and quantitative way [18]. They also foster understanding the molecular bases of complex human diseases and, finally, paving the way towards the identification of disease-related biomarkers and molecular signatures. Multi-omics approaches suit perfectly the paramount requisites of clinical and biomarker research provided by clinical chemistry.

6.1. Cancer Biomarkers

Testing biomarkers in plasma using high-throughput technologies is promising for finding better marker combinations for early cancer detection [19]. A single marker often fails due to cancer heterogeneity, so combining new candidates with existing markers improves performance. For instance, OVX1 antigen enhances sensitivity when added to CA125 for ovarian cancer; CA19-9 combined with haptoglobin and SAA improves sensitivity and specificity for pancreatic cancer; and a six-serum-marker panel matches fecal testing sensitivity for colon cancer. Incorporating various biomolecular classes such as protein concentration, glycosylation, phosphorylation, mRNA, or microRNAs further enhances biomarker panels. Ratios of related markers, like a protein and its phosphorylated form, can also increase diagnostic accuracy.

Early-stage cancer screening substantially reduces mortality [20]. While morphologic assessment

suffices for accessible cancers, blood-based assays are needed to detect subtle molecular changes in early-stage or in-situ cancers at inaccessible sites such as the ovary or pancreas. The emergence of genomic-based technologies and molecular assays offers innovative pathways to identify sensitive and specific early detection markers. Current strategies prioritize markers suitable for early-stage diagnosis, aiming to improve screening for cancers at sites traditionally beyond morphologic reach.

6.2. Cardiovascular Disease Biomarkers

Although they remain the leading cause of death worldwide, cardiovascular diseases have been less studied than cancer, and treatments have benefited little from genomics and multi-omics approaches. For >200 years creatinine kinase isoform MB has served as a biomarker for myocardial infarction; however, it became apparent that it is neither specific nor sensitive for cardiac necrosis. Cardiac troponins and, a few years later, brain natriuretic peptides (BNP) entered clinical routine and were proven to be much more specific and sensitive and more suited for clinical decision making. Since then, several novel biomarker candidates have been proposed for the early diagnosis of myocardial infarction, myocardial ischemia, infarct size after myocardial infarction, risk prediction, and the prediction of adverse events such as acute heart failure. Novel circulating biomarkers of these cardiovascular events, including cardiovascular-related metabolites, lipids, proteins, miRNAs, and noncoding RNAs, continue to be identified. Although specific RNAs and proteins have been incorporated into routine analyses, an omics-based approach to biomarker identification has not yet been realized. Untargeted approaches for predicting drug response [e.g., clopidogrel-resistance modulated via cytochrome P450 (CYP) 2C19] have been developed.

Metabolic profiles consisting of ∼100 metabolites each have been proposed as candidate biomarkers for the prediction of the outcomes of acute myocardial infarction (AMI). Metabolomics profiling was also used to explore novel plasma metabolites that may be associated with the different phenotypes of hypertension. Among the published lipid biomarkers associated with---hypertension, phosphatidylethanolamine-ceramide lipid classes have been associated with arterial stiffness. The data obtained from experiments with mitochondria isolated from the hearts of rats treated with artemisinin revealed that artemisinin exerted antihypertrophic effects via a reduction in membrane potential and ATP generation in mitochondria.

6.3. Neurological Disorder Biomarkers

Neurological disorder diagnosis remains a challenge due to often limited tissue availability, a dearth of ante mortem diagnostic methods, and the lack of truly representative animal models for many diseases [21]. Inborn errors of metabolism—many of which cause a neurological phenotype—often have effective therapies, and early diagnosis is critical to initiating those treatments before irreversible neurological damage occurs. Over the last 50 years, improvements in biochemical compound analysis have led to the discovery of a large number of these disorders. Biomarkers present in cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), plasma, dried blood spots, or urine have been described for many neurometabolic disorders, resulting in the introduction of newborn and targeted screening tests. Detection of such biomarkers typically requires multiple assays, relatively large sample volumes, and a high level of expertise, making the process laborious [22].

The combination of multi-omics tools—including chromosomal microarray analysis, next-generation sequencing (NGS), and metabolomics—can accelerate biomarker discovery and assist in determining the pathogenicity of genetic variants [23]. Metabolomics identifies and quantifies small-molecule metabolic products, providing an overview of physiological or disease states. Untargeted metabolomics attempts to measure all detectable metabolites, whereas targeted metabolomics focuses on specific groups of related compounds. When employed within a multi-center multi-omics framework, these approaches facilitate the diagnosis of a number of rare neurological diseases. Analysis challenges arise due to the large data volumes generated: NGS can produce thousands of variants in a single sample, while untargeted metabolomics yields tens

of thousands of biochemical features. Filtering variants to pinpoint pathogenic mutations is complex, and interpretations remain provisional until confirmed by biochemical or functional evidence. Metabolomic assessment is further complicated by considerable variation in biochemical profiles influenced by diet, environment, therapy, and genetics. Nevertheless, when combined with NGS, metabolomics provides an additional layer of evidence to corroborate the pathogenicity of candidate mutations.

7. Challenges in Multi-Omics Integration

Integrating multi-omics data for robust biomarker identification faces daunting challenges. Large-scale data from multiple omics technologies can lead to artifact generation. Data quality and integrity vary substantially between research centers and across instrumentation platforms. An agreed-upon standard outlining best practices in data acquisition, storage, and sharing is urgently required to enable system-wide approaches and to realize the potential for community-wide analyses. Compliance to Proposals for Minimum Information About a Microarray Experiment (MIAME) for the reporting of microarray data has been widely adopted by journals, databases, and software tools, but is rarely applied to other high-throughput technologies. Developing community-driven standards is key to ensuring that open databasing, efficient querying, and integration become a reality in the post-genomic era [24]. Computational challenges include developing models that incorporate data from multiple omics technology platforms. A successful integrative model should incorporate the diverse types of omics-associated data and be capable of describing biological processes and predicting outcomes. This remains a significant challenge, as the appropriate form of such a model is unclear and the integration of diverse measurements captured at different scales in a meaningful way is far from straightforward. In addition to technological challenges, the scientific community is increasingly lacking researchers skilled in the complex range of disciplines required to enable progress in multi-omics research [3]. Adequate use of large multi-omics datasets requires an understanding of biology, computer science, informatics, statistics, and numerous other areas. At present there are few researchers with significant expertise spanning even a small subset of these areas, which hinders algorithm design and assessment, biological interpretation, and experimental validation.

7.1. Data Complexity

Massive amounts of data sets and the extracted data are no longer easily interpreted by humans unless properly integrated and reduced. Data integration is, therefore, an absolute necessity for biomarker research. Integration emerges as the key to capitalize on the benefits and complementary strengths of each Omics method. Integrated data analysis generally improves the discrimination between biological states, reducing false positive rates and enhancing clearer biological interpretations. Since the experimental systems and the sources of data are so diverse, multi-Omics data integration naturally encounters more challenges than single Omics data analysis [4]. Raw data from different Omics levels are processed using distinct techniques and software. Some Omics methods (e.g., genomics) are better established with well-standardized data acquisition, while others (e.g., metabolomics) still face challenges of experimental bias and instrument platform discrepancies. Data formats differ across quantitation techniques, necessitating conversion into compatible formats for integration [14]. Variations in quantitation accuracy among Omics methods complicate direct comparison of expression levels. Omics datasets measured at different time points further increase integration difficulties. To address the overwhelming data complexity and intervene in early disease onset or progression, significant changes to biomedical data acquisition and analysis strategies are essential. Implementing integrative strategies—including multi-Omics approaches, data integration techniques, and clinical decision support systems—is crucial for such diseases. The ensuing sections will elaborate on these strategies in detail, elucidating the integration of advanced technologies with clinical-chemical framework techniques in next-generation biomarker research.

7.2. Standardization Issues

A fundamental challenge in the effective use of biomarkers spans every step of the discovery-to-deployment process: Few rigorously validated markers have made the transition to FDA-approved diagnostic tests, and many that do reach the market languish because biomarker promising potential has not been supported by appropriately rigorous performance data [25]. Conversely, methods capable of delivering high-quality data within expected guidelines remain available to only a small audience of specialists [26]. There is, therefore, an undeniable need for a broadly accessible diagnostic technology capable of meeting the high standards necessary to translate biomarker discovery into clinical utility.

7.3. Interpretation of Results

Interpretation of results depends on the nature of the measurable. Nominal data are grouped into discrete categories or sets, such as blood type correction in genotype-driven blood typing analysis, or positive and negative in Western blot analysis for viral infection. Ordinal data indicate a class, with similar objects being grouped into an evaluation, such as high cholesterol level, medium acidity, or large peak intensity. For ordinal data, tests that examine the similarity with reference dataset such as Hamming Distance and Pearson correlation [14] can be applied. Absolute and relative measurement data are the most important data in medical and clinical chemistry applications, and have been widely used for the diagnosis of illness for centuries. Comparison with a reference dataset provides higher reliability regarding to the accuracy of the measurements and the robustness of the results [25]. In medical and clinical chemistry applications, correction of the physiological effect is also important and may affect the interpretation of results. For example, glucose level in bloodstream changes approximately four-fold depending on the time after a meal, which, if not accounted for, causes mis-interpretation of test results. Therefore, factors affecting the clinical concentrations of a biomarker need to be carefully considered as part of the analysis process.

8. Future Directions in Biomarker Research

Revisiting biomarker discovery by plasma proteomics addresses future directions, emphasizing the evolution toward multi-omics integration in clinical chemistry for early disease detection [12]. Given the inherent complexity of multi-omics data, high-throughput screening technologies and statistical procedures are essential to identify promising biomarker candidates. Clinical decision support systems can then integrate the contextualized information from various omics layers to facilitate early disease detection. To enhance diagnosis, prevention, and treatment monitoring, biomarker panels should encompass multiple omics domains (e.g., genome, proteome, metabolome) to capture the associated pathophysiological changes comprehensively [5].

8.1. Personalized Medicine

Disease states are the result of multiple perturbations of the underlying biological systems that contribute to the ultimate phenotype in exposure to environmental influences. ‘Biomarkers’ originally meant the signature phenotype associated with the disease itself, such as anatomical changes or physical lesions. The reductionist approach adopted over the last few decades was to characterize single molecules known as histological and genetic markers, as well as those based on nucleic acids, proteins and peptides. However, it has been realized that complex age-related or genetic disease cannot be explained by a single change, but instead events occur across multiple pathways and biological systems. It has become necessary to identify multiple synergistic biomarkers that, as a panel, can be indicative of the physiological state of an individual. By combining different types of omics data, complementary but very different quantitative information about biological systems can be harnessed. Linking molecular changes to disease processes and physiological pathways aims to provide a holistic understanding of the aetiology of multifactorial syndromes. Such a systematic analysis yields both new insights into

specific disease phenotypes and unravels the complex interplay of genes, transcripts, proteins and metabolites within a biological system [27].

8.2. Technological Advancements

Developments in testing technology have led to a parallel increase in opportunities for biomarker testing. Programmable bio-nano-chip (p-BNC) platforms and printed electrodes in microfluidic arrays represent recent advances. A programmable bio-nano-chip (p-BNC) system comprises modular components and a rapid one-step chemiluminescence assay design intended for measuring both protein- and nucleic acid-based biomarkers [25]. Constructed from a flexible microfluidic platform, each module addresses a different health indicator, offering macro-to microscale insights into systemic health. The system accommodates a variety of applications, ranging from cardiac risk assessments to prostate- and ovarian-cancer instruction. Meanwhile, printed-electrode immunoarrays in microfluidic devices furnish ultra-sensitive multiplexed detection capabilities for panels of cancer biomarker proteins [28]. Exploiting two distinct amperometric detection strategies, microfluidic immunoarrays detect up to eight proteins at sub-to low-pg mL−1 concentrations within 30 minutes. Separation of the assay step from detection permits rapid measurement. Collectively, such innovations may enable approximation of total health status based on analysis of gaps in various biomarker landscapes. This would provide a complete overview for early warning and management schemes, along with ongoing evidence of progression or remission [6].

8.3. Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns around clinical proteomics and multi-omics relate to beneficence, justice, and autonomy [29]. The readiness to benefit is covered by beneficence. A high degree of readiness is demonstrated by showing a strong connection to health benefits and by shouldering the potential burdens of undergoing proteomic analysis and receiving the results. Restricted access to proteomic profiling combined with healthcare inequalities constitutes a justice challenge. A relevant equity concern consists of an already disadvantaged population receiving a lower quality of care than others. Practical justice is given, when the individual autonomous choice to obtain a profile is acknowledged by the system’s access to proteomic profiling and vice versa. Additionally, autonomy captures the dilemma around the return of proteomic information. On the one hand, the right to information and the insight provided by proteomic profiles that can greatly improve the control of one’s health gives a strong argument to provide results. On the other hand, the right not to know can be satisfied only by withholding information. A balanced policy is needed to protect both interests.

9. Regulatory and Clinical Guidelines

Biomarker development and approval are regulated through policies and comprehensive guidelines. The FDA’s Biomarker Qualification Program (BQP) supports the development of biomarkers that can be used across multiple drug development programs [26].

The most rigorous and publicly available criteria stem from the Institute of Medicine’s 2010 report. It specifies that proper biomarker validation incorporates three elements: analytical validation, qualification, and utilization. Analytical validation establishes that a biomarker reliably and accurately measures a biological property, determining characteristics such as sensitivity, specificity, accuracy, precision, and the standard curve [16]. Biomarker qualification links an indicator with biological processes and clinical endpoints, often utilizing targeted studies, ancillary biological information, retrospective meta-analyses, or observational studies. Following analytical validation and qualification, the qualified biomarker is integrated into a specific context of use.

To foster biomarker development and adoption, the FDA emphasizes collaboration across government agencies, industry, and academia, demonstrated in efforts such as the Foundation for the NIH Biomarkers Consortium, the National Cancer Institute’s Early Detection Research

Network, and the Clinical Proteomic Tumor Analysis Consortium (CPTAC). Regulatory agencies also provide extensive guidance on the proper integration of biomarkers into clinical trials, monitoring for misuse, misinterpretation, misreporting, and suggesting adherence to established guidelines.

Further guidance on biomarker application is available in the FDA's biomarker qualification and clinical evaluation guideline documents.

9.1. FDA Guidelines on Biomarkers

Biomarkers play a crucial role in clinical practice for the diagnosis and prognosis of various diseases. They serve as indicators of biological processes and have been extensively researched to detect diseases at an early stage. Recognising the potential of biomarkers to enhance existing screening methods, efforts have intensified to develop innovative approaches that identify new biomarkers. Nevertheless, the translation of biomarker discoveries into clinical assays has progressed slowly. Transferring discovery phase biomarkers to the clinical setting presents numerous challenges, and few assays have achieved regulatory approval.

The FDA categorises biomarkers into four classes: (1) diagnostic (detecting or confirming disease presence or subtype); (2) monitoring (assessing disease status or treatment response); (3) pharmacodynamic/response (indicating biological response to treatment); and (4) predictive (forecasting the likelihood of a clinical outcome or treatment effect). Some biomarkers may span multiple categories. Each class necessitates specific study designs and clinical evidence to establish their intended use. [16]

9.2. International Standards

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provides detailed recommendations defining the categories of biomarkers and their respective roles, including susceptibility/risk, diagnostic, monitoring, prognostic, predictive, pharmacodynamic/response, and safety biomarkers, along with recommended titles for biomarker-based assays. A similar approach is adopted by the Medical Subject Headings Browser (MeSH) Classification.

Additionally, international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), the Global Burden of Disease (GBD), and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) in its various editions set standards for the assessment of diseases, emphasizing the crucial role of diagnostic methods and their validation through well-defined biomarkers. The integration of the latest multi-omics methods with clinical chemistry concept is highly promising for more effective and earlier detection of a broader range of diseases.

10. Case Studies in Multi-Omics Applications

Several cases illustrate the successful application of multi-omics integration in clinical research. Multi-omics integration identified metabolic pathways implicated in the disease, highlighting the potential to identify novel biomarkers through genome-scale models.

[30] reviewed omics studies of prostate cancer (PCa) to annotate available datasets and discover processes, pathways, and molecules associated with different stages of PCa. They described widely used multi-omics datasets and web-based databases and tools to facilitate multi-omics data analysis. Such resources support the discovery of stage- and disease-specific biomarkers and inform the development of personalized treatment protocols.

[3] demonstrated the potential of integrative analysis for personalized medicine. Multi-omics data identified personalized driver genes through integrated proteomic, transcriptomic, mutation, and interaction analyses. Incorporating metabolomics data with mutation and clinical observations differentiated molecular predictors in depressive disorders. This approach can inform personalized therapies and novel interventions for complex diseases.

10.1. Successful Integrations

Multi-omics approaches support identification of new biomarkers, disease-specific mechanisms, and pharmacological targets [25] [24]. Although clinical chemistry has a decades-long history of employing biomarkers, methods continue to evolve and expand in scope and precision. Specifically, oncology, cardiology, and neurology increasingly depend on multi-omics methods that fill gaps and augment capabilities already served by classical methods.

Patient stratification, course prognosis, and therapy monitoring constitute one component of a two-tier clinical-application scheme. More sensitive detection—the second component—supports early detection in subjects with no symptoms and the associated near-term acceleration of diagnostic procedures. Given clinical-chemistry protocols that link patients tightly to specific diagnostic equipment and procedures, multi-omics methods form a critical enabling capacity. This scheme responds to parallel—and convergent—developments, including the search for novel biomarkers; discourse on utilization policies; and the creation of distributable, practical platforms.

10.2. Lessons Learned

Real-world examples of the application of multi-omics approaches in clinical practice illustrate the maturation of multi-omics integration into a viable framework for biomarker use, as outlined in preceding sections. Early examples combine mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and metabolomics analysis with clinical chemistry to contribute novel biomarkers for matrix expansion-associated diseases and pancreatic/gastrointestinal cancers, respectively [25]. Later applications exploit the integrated use of transcriptomics and proteomics to establish biomarker candidates for polycythaemia vera and severe sepsis [16]. The consequent focus on a particular multi-omics intersection—the combination of proteomics and metabolomics—highlights a knowledge gap that fuels exploration of the emerging bioanalytical realm of clinical multi-omic chemistry. The ultimate objective is to extend the established framework beyond proteomics, thereby expanding the domain of application to improve epidemiological or clinical outcomes whenever a multi-omics mixture is considered.

11. Patient Perspectives and Engagement

Patients provide informed consent for participation in multi-omics-based biomarker studies. An important step to maximize broad patient acceptance involves educating patients about biomarkers and their potential applications in disease detection and clinical management [31].

11.1. Informed Consent

Multi-omics biomarkers combine multiple omics layers into a single panel, offering a promising route to bridge the existing gap between laboratory-scale research and clinical application. The success of omics-based biomarker discovery relies heavily on data organization and mining strategies. High-throughput analysis and downstream mining of omics data sets can be guided by multivariate analyses, strategic filtering, computational consolidation, or specific predictive modeling to delineate meaningful biomarker panels. This strategy also enhances the exploration of broad chemical classes of potential biomarkers and associated molecular networks; selecting optimal biomarkers necessitates meticulous multi-experimental validation, statistical analysis, and modeling. Despite these advances, several barriers still impede clinical implementation. When omics data are processed and integrated with clinical laboratory metadata, routine computational workflows for benchmarking and reporting results have yet to be defined. Furthermore, issues related to patient consent and regulatory oversight during data sharing and post-detection processing remain unresolved, underscoring the need for comprehensive data- and ethical-driven strategies to structure the multi-omics biomarker discovery process effectively [16] [32] [25].

11.2. Patient Education

Advances in biomarker development, from discovery to clinical translation, require integrated approaches that support not only broad research applications, but also evaluation within large person cohorts and a regulatory framework for commercialization. Poly-omic datasets, analysis platforms, and supporting infrastructure for managing multi-center trials remain open areas of development. Future systems that meet these requirements will drive wide adoption of multi-omics biomarker profiling to provide early, inexpensive disease detection for a wide spectrum of conditions and challenges. The diagnostic power of integrated multi-omics biomarker panels, coupled to emerging point-of-care profiling devices, necessitates clear patient communication. Patient education is fundamental to informed consent and proactive engagement in a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape. Enhancing lay comprehension of key biochemical and physiological information is an immediate need. [13][8]

12. Conclusion

Advances in high-throughput screening methods and data analysis techniques over the past two decades have driven platforms to routinely assess thousands of molecules simultaneously. As technology continues to evolve rapidly, it is now possible to simultaneously assess thousands—even millions—of molecules. Consequently, the classical definition of a biomarker—a feature that can be objectively measured to characterize a biological system—remains best suited for next-generation diagnostic candidates. Translating the complex systems-level understanding of disease pathophysiology underpinned by whole systems biology into viable diagnostic products remains a major challenge. The integration of multi-omics data sets within clinical chemistry platforms represents one of the greatest opportunities remaining to revolutionize patient health and system-wide health economics. When clinically implemented, multi-omics-based strategies could substantially supplant existing antiquated molecular diagnostics, enabling earliest possible interventions while optimizing the availability and utilization of scarce healthcare resources

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