

Whole-genome analysis of papillary kidney cancer finds significant non-coding alterations

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Short title: Whole-genome analysis of papillary kidney cancer

Abstract: To date, studies on **papillary renal-cell carcinoma (pRCC)** have largely focused on coding alterations in traditional drivers, particularly *MET*. However, for a significant fraction of tumors, researchers have been unable to determine clear molecular etiologies. To address this, we perform the first whole-genome analysis of pRCC. Elaborating on previous results on *MET*, in the coding regions of this gene we find more somatic alternations and a germline SNP predicting prognosis (rs11762213). **We identify activation of promoter of retrotransposons in *MET* due to methylation dysregulation as a driver event.** Next, we scrutinize non-coding mutations, discovering potentially impactful ones in regions associated with *MET* and a long non-coding RNA (*NEATI*). Moreover, *NEATI* is implicated in other cancer and its mutations in pRCC are associated with increased expression and unfavorable outcome. Finally, we investigate genome-wide mutational patterns, finding they are governed mostly by methylation-associated C-to-T transitions. Also, we observe significantly more mutations in open chromatin **and early**

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Comment [1]: New results:

1. *MET* retrotransposons
2. SV: SDHB del.?
3. Evolution tree topology
4. CR defects associated with RT

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29 [replicated regions](#) in tumors with chromatin-modifier alterations. [We build evolution trees for](#)
30 [individual tumor and find their topologies are associated with tumor subtypes.](#)

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33 **Author Summary**

34 Renal cell carcinoma accounts for more than 90% of kidney cancers. Papillary renal cell
35 carcinoma (pRCC) is the second most common subtype of renal cell carcinoma. Previous studies,
36 focusing mostly on the protein-coding regions, have identified several key genomic alterations
37 that are key to cancer initiation and development. However, researchers cannot find any key
38 mutation in a significant portion of pRCC. Therefore, we carry out the first whole-genome study
39 of pRCC to discover triggering DNA changes explaining these cases. By looking at the entire
40 genome, we find additional potentially impactful alterations in and out of the protein-coding
41 regions. These newly identified critical mutations from scrutinizing the entire genome help
42 complete our understanding of pRCC genomes. Two alterations we found are associated with
43 prognosis, which could aid clinical decisions. We are also able to recognize mutation patterns,
44 signatures [and tumor evolution structures](#), which reflect the mutagenesis processes and give hints
45 on how cancer develops. Our study provides valuable additional information to facilitate better
46 tumor subtyping, risk stratification and potentially clinical management.

47

48 **Introduction**

49 Renal cell carcinoma (RCC) makes up over 90% of kidney cancers and currently is the
50 most lethal genitourinary malignancy (1). Papillary RCC (pRCC) accounts for 10%-15% of the

51 total RCC cases (2). Unfortunately pRCC has been understudied and there are no current forms
52 of effective systemic therapy for this disease. pRCC are further subtyped into two major groups:
53 type 1 and type 2 based on histopathological features. For many years, the only prominent
54 oncogene in pRCC (specifically, type 1) that physicians were able to identify was *MET*, a
55 tyrosine kinase receptor for hepatic growth factor. An amino acid substitution that leads to
56 constitutive activation and/or overexpression are two mechanisms of dysfunction of *MET* in
57 tumorigenesis. Recently, the Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) published its first result on pRCC
58 (3), which greatly improves our understanding of the genomic basis of this disease. Several more
59 genes and specific sub-clusters were identified to be significantly mutated in pRCC.
60 Nevertheless, a significant portion of pRCC cases still remains without any known driver.
61 Therefore we think it is time to explore the rest 98% non-coding regions of the genome using
62 whole genome sequencing (WGS). This is sensible because non-coding regions, previously
63 overlooked in cancer, have been showed to be actively involved in tumorigenesis (4-6).
64 Mutations in non-coding regions may cause disruptive changes in both cis- and trans-regulatory
65 elements, affecting gene expression. Understanding non-coding mutations helps fill the missing
66 “dark matter” in cancer research.

67 Multiple endogenous and environmental mutation processes shape the somatic mutational
68 landscape observed in cancers (7). Analyses of the genomic alterations associated with these
69 processes give information on cancer development, shed light on mutational disparity between
70 cancer subtypes and even indicate potential new treatment strategies (8). Additionally, genomic
71 features such as replication time and chromatin environment govern mutation rate along the
72 genome, contributing to spatial mutational heterogeneity. While identifying mutation signatures
73 is possible using data from whole exome sequencing (WXS), whole genome sequencing (WGS)

74 gives richer information on mutation landscape and minimizes the potential confounding effects
75 of exome capture process and driver selection.

76 In this study, we comprehensively analyzed 35 pRCC cases that were whole genome
77 sequenced along with an extensive set of WXS data on multiple levels. We went from
78 microscopic examination of driver genes to analyses of whole genome sequencing variants, and
79 finally, to investigation of high-order mutational features. First, we focused on *MET*, an
80 oncogene which plays a central role in pRCC, especially in type 1. We found rs11762213, a
81 germline exonic single nucleotide polymorphism inside *MET*, predicts cancer-specific survival
82 (CSS) in type 2 pRCC. We also discovered several potentially impactful non-coding mutation
83 hotspots in *MET* promoter and its first two exons. The previous TCGA study identifies a *MET*
84 alternative transcription event as a driver event but without illustrating the etiology (3). We
85 found that a cryptic promoter from a long interspersed nuclear element-1 (L1) triggers the
86 alternative isoform expression. Surprisingly, we did not find a significant amount of structural
87 variations affecting *MET* besides polysomy 7. Then we went onto cases not as easily explained
88 as those with *MET* alterations. We analyzed about 160,000 non-coding mutations throughout the
89 entire genomes and found several potentially high-impact mutations in non-coding regions.
90 Further zooming out, we discovered pRCC exhibits mutational heterogeneity in both nucleotide
91 context and genome location, indicating underlying vibrant mutational processes interplay. We
92 found methylation is the leading factor influencing mutation landscape. Methylation status drives
93 the intra-sample mutation variation by promoting more C-to-T mutations in the CpG context.
94 APOBEC activity, although infrequently observed, leaves an unequivocal mutation signature in a
95 pRCC genome but not in ccRCC. Also, we discovered samples with chromatin remodeler
96 alternations accumulate more mutations in open chromatin and early-replicated regions. Last, we

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102 [inferred evolution tree for each individual samples and found tree structures correlate with tumor](#)
103 [subtypes.](#)

104

105 **Results,**

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106 **1. An exonic SNP in *MET*, rs11762213, predicts prognosis in type 2 pRCC.**

107 We begin with coding variants in the long known driver *MET*. The TCGA study of 161
108 pRCC patients found 15 samples carrying somatic, nonsynonymous single nucleotide variant
109 (SNV) in *MET*. By analyzing 117 extra WXS samples (see Methods), we found six more
110 nonsynonymous somatic mutations in six samples (Table S1). V1110I and M1268T were two
111 recurrent mutations in this extra set. Both of them were observed in the TCGA study as well.
112 Additionally, we found two samples carrying H112Y and Y1248C respectively. H112Y has
113 been observed in two patients the original TCGA study cohort and H1118R is a long-known
114 germline mutation associated with hereditary papillary renal carcinoma (HPRC, 13). Y1248C
115 has been observed in type 1 pRCC before (rs121913246) and the TCGA cohort has a case
116 carrying Y1248H. All mutations occur in the hypermutated tyrosine kinase catalytic domain of
117 *MET*. Two out of these six samples were identified as type 1 pRCC while the subtypes of the rest
118 four were unknown.

119 Although many *MET* somatic mutations are believed to play a central role in pRCC,
120 some germline *MET* mutations have also been associated with the disease. In particular, a
121 germline SNP, rs11762213, has been discovered to predict recurrence and survival in a mixed
122 RCC cohort (14). ccRCC predominated the initial discovery RCC cohort. This conclusion was
123 later validated in a ccRCC cohort but never in pRCC (9). We wondered whether this SNP has a

125 prognostic effect in pRCC. Using an extensive WXS set of 277 patients (see Methods; Figure S1
 126 and Table S1); we found 14 patients carry one risk allele of rs11762213 (G/A, Table 1, minor
 127 allele frequency (MAF) = 2.53%). No homozygous A/A was observed. Cancer specific deceases
 128 are concentrated in type 2 pRCC. Among 96 type 2 pRCC cases, seven patients carry the minor
 129 A allele (MAF = 3.65%, Table 1). Survival is significantly worse in type 2 patients carrying the
 130 risk allele of rs11762213 ($p = 0.034$, Figure 1B). But we did not find significant association of
 131 this germline SNP with survival in type 1 patients. We did not find statistically significant
 132 association of rs11762213 with *MET* RNA expression in either tumor samples or normal controls
 133 ($p > 0.1$, two-sided rank-sum test). *Met* pY1235 levels in tumor samples, as measured by Reverse
 134 phase protein array (RPPA), were not significantly different in patients carrying the minor G
 135 allele compared to patients with A/A genotype ($p > 0.1$, two-sided rank-sum test).

Characteristic	G/A (n = 7)	A/A (n = 89)
Sex, No. (%)		
Male (%)	4 (57)	25 (28)
Female (%)	3 (43)	64 (72)
Age, median (IQR), y	54 (47-61)	65 (57-73)
Race, No. (%)		
White	6 (86)	65 (73)
Black	1 (14)	16 (18)
Asian	0	4 (4)
NA	0	4 (4)
T stage, No. (%)		
T1	4 (57)	47 (53)
T2	1 (14)	10 (11)
T3	2 (29)	31 (35)
T4	0	1 (1)
N stage, No. (%)		
N0	3 (43)	20 (22)
N1	0	15 (17)
N2	1 (14)	2 (2)
NX	3 (43)	52 (58)
M stage, No. (%)		
M0	3 (43)	54 (61)

M1	1 (14)	4 (4)
MX/NA	3 (43)	31 (35)
AJCC stage, No. (%)		
I	4 (57)	43 (48)
II	0	7 (8)
III	1 (14)	29 (33)
IV	2 (29)	6 (7)
NA	0	4 (4)
Median follow-up for surviving patients, days (IQR)	243 (132-354)	579 (219-1247)

136

137 **Table 1. Patient clinical profiles of the type 2 pRCC cohort in rs11762213 survival analysis.** AJCC: American
 138 Joint Committee on Cancer; IQR: interquartile range; NA: not available. Percentages may not add up to 100%
 139 because of rounding.

140

141 2. **Epigenetic alterations and mutation hotspots in non-coding regions**

142 The TCGA study has identified a *MET* alternative translation isoform as a driver event
 143 (3). However, the etiology of this new isoform is unknown. We identified this isoform results
 144 from the usage of a cryptic promoter from an L1 element (Figure 1A), likely due to a local loss
 145 of methylation (REF). This event was reported in several other cancer types (REF). To test its
 146 relationship with methylation, we found a closet probe (cg06985664, ~3kb downstream) on the
 147 Methylation array show marginally statistically significant (p=0.055, one-side rank-sum test).
 148 Additionally, as expected, this event is associated with methylation group 1 (odds ration (OR)=
 149 4.54, p<0.041), indicating genome-wide methylation dysfunction. This association is stronger in
 150 type 2 pRCC and it shows a significant association with the C2b cluster (OR= 17.5, p<0.007).

151 Despite the fact *MET* is the most common driver alteration, about 20% presumably *MET*-
 152 driven yet *MET* wild-type pRCC samples were still left unexplained (3). Therefore, we scanned
 153 the *MET* non-coding regions. We observed one mutation in *MET* promoter region in a type 1
 154 pRCC sample (Figure 1A and Table S2). This sample shows no evidence of a nonsynonymous

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157 mutation in *MET* gene but it has copy number gain of *MET*. Additionally, we observed 6/35
158 (17.1%) samples carry mutations in the intronic regions between exon 1-3 of *MET* (Figure 1A
159 and Table S2). Previously it is been established that alternative splicing of these exons is a driver
160 event (3). Therefore we speculated that these non-coding variants might correlate with the
161 alternative splicing. However, likely being hindered by a small size, we were not able to find
162 statistically significant association between the alternative splicing event and these intronic
163 mutations.

164 We further expanded our scope and ran FunSeq (4-5) to identify potentially high-impact,
165 non-coding variants in pRCC. First, we identified a high-impact mutation hotspot on
166 chromosome 1. 6/35 (17.1%) samples have mutations within this 6.5kb region (Figure 2A and
167 Table S2). This hotspot locates at the upstream of *ERRFI1* (ERBB Receptor Feedback Inhibitor
168 1) and overlaps with the predicted promoter region. *ERRFI1* is a negative regulator of EGFR
169 family members, including EGFR, HER2 and HER3, all have been implicated in cancer. Due to
170 a very limited sample size here, our test power was inevitably low. We didn't observe
171 statistically significant changes among mutated samples in mRNA expression level, protein level
172 and phosphorylation level of EGFR, HER2 and HER3.

173 Another potentially impactful mutation hotspot is in *NEATI*. We saw mutations inside
174 this nuclear long non-coding RNA in 6/35 (17.1%) samples (Figure 2B and Table S2). Several
175 studies indicated *NEATI* is associated in many other cancers (15-16). It promotes cell
176 proliferation in hypoxia (17) and alters the epigenetic landscape, increasing transcription of
177 target genes (18).

178 All the mutations we found fell into a putative promoter region of *NEATI*. We noticed
179 *NEATI* mutations were associated with higher *NEATI* expression (Figure 2C, $p < 0.032$, two-

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192 sided rank sum test). We also found *NEATI* mutations were associated with worse prognosis

193 (Figure 2D, $p < 0.041$, log-rank test). However, without mutation status, *NEATI* expression level
194 is not significantly linked with pRCC survival. Nonetheless, *NEATI* is overexpressed in 5%
195 ccRCC samples from the TCGA cohort. *NEATI* overexpression is significantly associated with
196 shorted overall survival (Fig SXX). *MALATI*, another noticeable lncRNA in cancer, is tightly co-
197 expressed with *NEATI* in both pRCC and ccRCC (Spearman's correlation: 0.79 and 0.87
198 respectively). Catalogue of Somatic Mutations in Cancer (COSMIC) (REF) annotates *MALATI*
199 as cancer consensus gene, associating it with pediatric RCCs and lung cancer. Overexpression of
200 *MALATI* is reported to be associated with cancer progression (REF).

201 We used DELLY (10) to perform structural variants (SVs) discovery from WGS reads
202 information (see Methods and Table S3). The SV discovery approach has higher sensitivity and
203 resolution than array-based methods, which were employed in the TCGA analysis. In the end we
204 found 424 somatic SV events, includes deletions, duplications, inversions and translocations
205 (Figure SXX). Based on the SV event number, samples clearly split into two types: genome
206 unstable (>40 events) and genome stable (<10 events).

207 First, by overlapping SVs with known pRCC related genes, we found two cases with
208 deletion in *SDHB*. The median *SDHB* expression is only ~50% compared to cases without
209 alternation (Figure SXX). We confirmed three cases carrying deletions affecting *CDKN2A*
210 called by TCGA array-based methods but not the other two cases, possibly due to large-scale
211 events (aneuploidy). Notably, three confirmed cases have significantly lower *CDKN2A*
212 expression but not in the unconfirmed two cases. This suggests SV calling from WGS is
213 accurate and predicts expression better. One sample, TCGA-B9-4116, which has extensive
214 amplification of *MET*, showed multiple SVs of various classes hitting *MET* regions. However,

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218 surprisingly, we did not find SVs affecting *MET* except this one example. We postulate
219 trisomy/polysomy 7 is the main mechanism of *MET* structural alteration rather than duplication
220 in a smaller scale. Besides duplication, we did not expect to find deletion, inversion or
221 translocation disrupting oncogene *MET*. These SVs are likely to cause loss-of-function rather
222 than gain-of-function mutations. This is consistent with the putative role of *MET* as an oncogene,
223 rather than a tumor suppressor. Last, we observed several interesting sporadic events, including
224 duplications in *EGFR* and *HIF1A* duplication and deletions in *DNMT3A* and *STAG2* (see SXX).

226 3. Mutation spectra and mutation processes of pRCC

227 To further get a high-order overview of the mutation landscape, we summarized the
228 mutation spectra of 35 whole genome sequenced pRCC samples (Figure 3A). C-to-T in CpGs
229 showed the highest mutation rates, which were roughly ten to twenty-fold higher than mutation
230 rates in other nucleotide contexts.

231 We used principle components analysis (PCA) to reveal factors that explain the most
232 inter-sample variation. The loadings on the first principle component (which explained 12.5% of
233 the variation) demonstrated C-to-T in CpGs contributed the most to inter-sample variation
234 (Figure 3B). C-to-T in CpGs is highly associated with methylation. It reflects the spontaneous
235 deamination of cytosines in CpGs, which is much more frequent in 5-methyl-cytosines (REF).
236 So we further explored the association between C-to-T in CpGs and tumor methylation status.
237 First we validated the TCGA identified methylation cluster 1 showed higher methylation level
238 than cluster 2 in all annotation regions (Figure S2, see Methods), prominently in CpG Islands
239 (OR of sites being differentially hypermethylated: 1.29, 95%CI: 1.20-1.39, p<0.0001). We
240 confirmed this association by showing samples from methylation cluster 1 had higher PC1 scores

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244 as well as higher C-to-T mutation counts and mutation percentages in CpGs (Figure 3C). This
245 trend was further validated using a larger WXS dataset as well. Especially, the most
246 hypermethylated group, CpG island methylation phenotype (CIMP), showed the greatest C-to-T
247 in CpGs (Figure S2). As expected, C-to-T mutations in CpGs in group 1 showed higher but not
248 statistically significant percentage overlapping with CpG islands compared with group 2 (1.8%
249 versus 1.4%, p=0.14). Therefore, methylation status is the most prominent factor shaping the
250 mutation spectra across patients. We further explored the functional impact of the excessive
251 mutations driven by methylation. C-to-T mutations in CpGs were more likely to be in the coding
252 region (OR=1.54, 95%CI: 1.27-1.85, p<0.0001) and nonsynonymous (OR=1.47, 95%CI: 1.17-
253 1.84, p<0.001). Yet, C-to-T mutations in CpGs did not show functional bias between two
254 methylation groups in non-coding regions.

255 Recently, several somatic mutation signatures were identified. Many have putative
256 etiology, revealing the underlying mutation processes (7). We used a LASSO-based approach
257 (see Methods) to decompose mutations into a linear combination of these canonical mutation
258 signatures in both WGS and WXS samples (Figure S3). The leading signature was signature 5,
259 which is consistent with previous studies (7). Interestingly, we found one type 2 pRCC case out
260 of 155 somatic WXS sequenced samples exhibited APOBEC-associated mutation signature 2
261 and 13. APOBEC mutation pattern enrichment analysis (see Method) further confirmed the
262 presence of APOBEC activity (Figure 3D). This sample was statistically enriched of APOBEC
263 mutations (adjusted p-value < 0.0003).

264 Prominent APOBEC activities were also incidentally detected in three upper track
265 urothelial cancer (UC) samples sequenced and processed in the same pipeline with pRCC

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266 samples. UC often carries APOBEC mutation signatures and our result is consistent with TCGA
267 bladder urothelial cancer study (19).

268 The APOBEC-signature carrying pRCC case was centrally reviewed by six pathologists
269 in the original study and confirmed to be type 2 pRCC (3). Thus this tumor is likely a special
270 case of type 2 with genomic alterations share some similarities with UC. It has non-silent
271 mutations in *ARID1A* and *MLL2* and a synonymous mutation in *RXRA*, all are identified as
272 significantly mutated genes in UC but not in pRCC. Potential pRCC driver events, for example
273 low expression of *CDKN2A* and nonsynonymous alternations in significantly mutated genes of
274 pRCC, are absent in this sample.

275 Noticeably, all four samples with APOBEC activities showed significantly higher
276 *APOBEC3A* and *APOBEC3B* mRNA expression level ($p < 0.0022$ and $p < 0.0039$ respectively,
277 one-side rank sum test, Figure S4). This is in concordance with previous studies of APOBEC
278 mutagenesis in various types of cancer (12).

279 Consistent with previous studies (12), we failed to detect statistically significant
280 APOBEC activities in an extensive WXS dataset consisting of 418 clear cell RCC (ccRCC)
281 samples, even after resampling to avoid p-value adjustment eroding the power. Very low levels
282 of APOBEC signatures (<15%) was found in less than 1%(4/418) samples. With a much larger
283 sample size, this result was unlikely to be confounded by detecting power.

284

285

286 4. **Defects in chromatin remodeling affects mutation landscape**

287 Chromatin remodeling genes are frequently mutated in pRCC and many other cancers
288 including ccRCC (20). Defects in chromatin remodeling cause dysregulation of chromatin
289 environment. Open chromatin regions show lower mutation rate, presumably due to more
290 effective DNA repair (21). Thus chromatin remodeler alternations could possibly alter the
291 mutation landscape, specifically increase mutation rate in previously open chromatin regions. To
292 test this hypothesis, we tallied the number of mutations inside DNase I hypersensitive sites
293 (DHS) in ~~eleven normal fetal kidney cortex samples (The NIH Roadmap Epigenomics Mapping~~
294 ~~Consortium, REF), which represent the normal, physiological condition.~~ ~~9/35~~ samples with
295 ~~disruptive~~ mutations in ~~ten~~ chromatin remodeling, cancer associated genes show higher genome-
296 wide mutation counts ($p < 0.021$, one-side rank-sum test), partially driven by higher mutation
297 counts in DHS region ($p < 0.0023$, one-side rank-sum test). The median number of mutations in
298 DHS region considerably increases by ~~60%~~ (~~67.5~~ versus ~~108~~) in samples carrying chromatin
299 remodeling defects. The effect is significant after normalizing against the total mutation counts
300 ($p < 0.019$, one-side rank-sum test, Figure 3E).

301 Replication time is known to correlate greatly with mutation rate. Early replicating
302 regions have lower mutation rate compared to late replicating ones. Researchers reason
303 replication errors are more likely to be corrected by DNA repair system in early replicating
304 regions. With defects in mutated chromatin remodeling, we observed this trend became less
305 pronounced ($p < 0.031$, one-side rank-sum test, Figure S5). This is likely because dysregulation of
306 the chromatin environment hinders replication error repair by changing the accessibility of newly
307 synthesized DNA chains.

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309 5. Evolution tree analysis

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325 With the richness of SNVs in WGS samples, we inferred 35 individual evolution trees (Figure
326 SXX). Three trees have a largest population fraction <0.5 (likely due to low mutation number,
327 high sequence error and/or high heterogeneity) and thus excluded from downstream analysis. We
328 could further classify the trees into four types based on topology (Figure 4A, 4B): no branch, less
329 subclones (10, 32.3%), short branches (12, 37.5%), no branch, more subclones (5, 15.6%) and
330 long branches (5, 15.6%).
331 Short branch type is significantly enriched in Type I pRCC (p<0.011, two-tailed fisher exact test)
332 while the more heterogeneous types: long branches and no branch, more subclones type are
333 significantly depleted in Type I (p < 0.0034, two-tailed fisher exact test). This indicates type I
334 tumors are more homogenous and show less complex evolution features compared to type II and
335 unclassified samples.

337 **Discussion**

338 We comprehensively analyzed both WGS and an extensive set of WXS of pRCC,
339 scrutinizing local high-impact events as well as giving a macro overlook of the mutation
340 landscape. Our work further completed the genomic alteration landscape of pRCC (Figure 4B).
341 Beyond traditionally driver events, we suggested several novel noncoding alterations potentially
342 drive tumorigenesis.

343 First, we elaborated on previous results of the long known driver *MET*. In an extended
344 117 WXS dataset, we found six additional nonsynonymous somatic mutations in the
345 hypermutated tyrosine kinase catalytic domain. These somatic mutations are highly recurrent,
346 concentrated on a few critical amino acids. This is in line with *MET* being an oncogene and

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353 supports the central role of *MET* in pRCC. Then we found an exonic SNP in *MET*, rs11762213,
354 to be a prognostic germline variance in type 2 pRCC. Previously, rs11762213 was found to
355 predict outcome in a mixed RCC samples, predominated by ccRCC (14). Later, the result is
356 confirmed in a large ccRCC cohort (9). However, it is never clear whether rs11762213 only
357 predicts the outcome in ccRCC or other histological types as well. In this study, we concluded
358 that the minor alternative allele of rs11762213 also forecasts unfavorable outcome in type 2

359 pRCC patients. The mechanism of this exonic germline SNP remains unsettled. A previous study
360 proposes it disrupt a putative enhancer and thus affect *MET* expression. However, researchers
361 cannot find significant difference in *MET* expression in either tumor or normal tissues. We
362 noticed there is other gene within 100 kb of this SNP. Given the significant role of *MET* in
363 pRCC, we also think rs11762213 is affecting survival through *MET*, although the mechanism
364 unknown.

365 Remarkably, similar to ccRCC, type 2 pRCC is not primarily driven by *MET*. Not as
366 significantly mutated in ccRCC and type 2 pRCC, *MET* nonetheless seems to play a role in
367 cancer development. ccRCC responses to *MET* inhibitors (REF). This finding is potentially
368 meaningful in clinical management of patients with the more aggressive type 2 pRCC.
369 rs11762213 genotyping could become a reliable, low-cost risk stratification tool for these

370 patients. Also, rs11762213 might become a biomarker for predicting patient response to *MET*
371 inhibitors.

372 Interestingly, rs11762213 is prevalent mostly in European and American populations but
373 not in African populations and rare in populations in Asia. MAF of rs11762213 among African
374 American patients in our cohort is 2.73%, higher than MAFs in general African populations
375 observed in 1000 Genome phase 3 dataset (0.2%, 0% in Americans with African ancestry

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381 (ASW))) and the ExAC dataset (1.1%, excluding TCGA cohorts). This implies a possible effect
382 of rs11762213 on pRCC incidence among African Americans that is worth further investigation.

383 Besides, in *MET* non-coding regions, we first find a cryptic promoter from a
384 retrotransposon in the second intron initiates the alternative splicing event, which is classified as
385 a driver event by the TCGA study (3). Methylation is a major source of silencing
386 retrotransposon activities in human genome (REF). Indeed, we observed evidence for a local
387 loss of methylation and global methylation dysregulation in samples expressing alternative
388 isoforms. Therefore, we showed methylation change might drive pRCC growth through *MET*
389 pathway.

390 We also discovered mutations associated with *MET* promoter and first two introns.
391 Although the implication is unknown, our analysis suggests there is a mutation hotspot in *MET*
392 that calls for further research.

393 Expanding our scope from coding to non-coding and use FunSeq to group SNVs by
394 functional elements, we found several potentially significant non-coding mutation hotspots
395 relevant to tumorigenesis throughout the entire genome. A mutation hotspot was found upstream
396 of *ERRF1*, an important regulator of the EGFR pathway, which may serve as a potential tumor
397 suppressor. EGFR inhibitors have been used in papillary kidney cancer with an 11% response
398 rate observed (22). These mutations potentially disrupt regulatory elements of *ERRF1* and thus
399 play a role in tumorigenesis. However, likely limited by a small sample size, we were not able to
400 detect statistically significant functional changes in *ERRF1* and related pathways. Another non-
401 coding hotspot is in *NEATI*, a long non-coding RNA that has been speculated to involve in
402 cancer. All mutations locate in a putative regulatory region of the gene. Patients carrying
403 mutations in *NEATI* have significantly higher *NEATI* expression and worse prognosis. High

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410 expression of *NEATI* predicts significantly worse survival in ccRCC as well. *NEATI* has been
411 shown to be hypermutated in other cancers and some studies also linked high *NEATI* association
412 with unfavorable prognosis in several other tumors (23-24). Last, a downstream lncRNA,
413 *MALATI*, shows tight co-expression pattern with *NEATI* in both pRCC and ccRCC. *MALATI* is
414 in COSMIC consensus cancer gene list and annotated as related with pediatric RCCs.
415 WGS provides many times more SNVs compared to WXS, and noncoding SNSs are less
416 constrains by selection pressure. Thus it gives us a great opportunity to look into the high-level
417 landscape of mutations in pRCC. We identified mutation rate dispersion of C-to-T in CpG motif
418 contributes the most to the inter-sample mutation spectra variations. We further pinned down the
419 cause of dispersion by showing the hypermethylated cluster, identified in the previous TCGA
420 study (3), has higher C-to-T rate in CpGs. This hypermethylated cluster is associated with later
421 stage, type 2 pRCC, *SETD2* mutation and worse prognosis (3). Although increased C-to-T in
422 CpG is likely the result of hypermethylation, we cannot rule out the possibility the change of
423 mutation landscape plays a role in cancer development. For example, C-to-T in methylated CpG
424 causes loss of methylation, which could have effects on local chromatin environment, trans-
425 elements recruitment and gene expression regulation. In our study, we observed C-to-Ts in CpG
426 are enriched in coding regions, which indicates they have higher functional impacts in cancer
427 genome.

428 Significant APOBEC activities and consequential mutation signatures were observed in
429 one type 2 pRCC case. APOBEC activities were known to be prevalent in UCs (12, 19). We also
430 successfully detected prominent APOBEC signatures in all three UC samples processed in the
431 same pipeline as pRCCs. Intriguingly, despite being considered to have the same cellular origin
432 with pRCC, we were not able to detect significant APOBEC activities in ccRCC. This is in

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435 agreement with previous studies (12). APOBEC mutation signature was also found in a small
436 percentage of chromophobe renal cell carcinoma (25), although they are believed to have a
437 different cellular origin. APOBEC activities have been linked with genetic predisposition and
438 viral infection (26). Given a statistically robust signal in our conservative algorithm, it is
439 plausible that a small fraction of otherwise driver mutation absent type 2 pRCCs might share
440 some etiologically and genomically similarity with UC. Standard treatment for UC involves
441 cytotoxic chemotherapy and radiation while RCC shows low response rate to cytotoxic therapy.
442 Pending further research, this finding might lead to actionably clinical implications (still too
443 strong?),

444 Chromatin remodeling pathway is highly mutated in pRCC (3). Several chromatin
445 remodelers, for example *SETD2* and *PBRM1*, have been identified as cancer drivers in pRCC.
446 We investigate the relationship between samples with mutated chromatin remodelers and those
447 without such mutations in terms of overall mutational spectrum. We demonstrated pRCC with
448 defects in chromatin remodeling genes show s higher mutation rate in general, driven by an even
449 stronger mutation rate increase in putative open chromatin regions in normal kidney tissues. This
450 is likely because chromatin remodeling defects affect normal open chromatin environment and
451 impede DNA repairing in these regions.

452 It is known that replication time strongly governs local mutation rate. Early replication
453 regions have fewer mutations. But the difference dissipates when DNA mismatch repair becomes
454 defective (21). In our study, we found this correlation weakened in chromatin remodeling genes
455 mutated samples, presumably caused by failure of replication error repair in an abnormal
456 chromatin environment. By adapting defects in chromatin remodeling genes, tumor alters its
457 mutation rate and landscape, which might further provide advantage in cancer evolution. Yet,

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470 high mutation burden in functional important open chromatin regions also raises the chance that
471 tumor antigens activate host immune system. Researchers found tumors with DNA mismatch
472 repair deficiency response better to PD-1 blockage (27), [while these tumors also accumulates](#)
473 [more mutations in early replicated regions \(21\)](#). Thus chromatin remodeler alterations might as
474 well correlate with higher response rate of immunotherapy,

475 In this first whole genome study of pRCC, we found several novel non-coding alterations
476 that might have meaningful clinical impacts. However, due to a limited sample size, our
477 statistical tests were underpowered. As the cost of sequencing keeps dropping, we expect to have
478 more pRCC whole genome sequenced in the near future (28). With a larger cohort, we hope to
479 gain enough power to test the hypotheses we formed as well as further explore the noncoding
480 regions of pRCC.

481

482 **Materials and Methods**

483 **Data acquisition**

484 We downloaded pRCC and ccRCC WXS and pRCC WGS variation calls from TCGA
485 Data Portal (<https://tcga-data.nci.nih.gov/tcga/tcgaDownload.jsp>) and TCGA Jamboree
486 respectively. pRCC RNAseq, RPPA and methylation data were downloaded from TCGA Data
487 Portal as well. Repli-seq and DHS data were obtained from ENCODE
488 (<https://www.encodeproject.org/>).

489

490 **Testing rs11762213 on prognosis and exploring somatic mutations in *MET***

491 We downloaded pRCC clinical outcomes from TCGA Data Portal (<https://tcga->
492 [data.nci.nih.gov/tcga/tcgaDownload.jsp](https://tcga-)). pRCC samples that failed the histopathological review
493 were excluded (3). In total, we included 277 patients in our analyses (Figure S1, Table S1). For
494 germline calls, the majority of samples, 163 out of 277, were supported by SNV callings from at
495 least two centers (102 from three centers). 100% genotype concordance rate was observed. Also,
496 162 curated rs11762213 genotypes were in agreement with automated callsets. With proved high
497 confidence in accuracy of genotyping rs11762213 in germline, we recruited additional 114
498 samples from single-center (BCM), automated calls to form an extensive patients set (Figure S1).
499 For somatic SNVs in *MET*, after excluding cases that were recruited in the TCGA study, we
500 formed an additional set encompassing 117 patients. Five callings were supported by two
501 centers. The rest were supported by single-center (BCM) automated calls.

502 Cancer-specific survival was defined using the same criteria as described in a ccRCC
503 study (9). Deaths were considered as cancer-specific if the “Personal Neoplasm Cancer Status” is
504 “With Tumor”. If “Tumor Status” is not available, then the deceased patients were classified as
505 cancer-specific death if they had metastasis (M1) or lymph node involvement ($\geq N1$) or died
506 within two years of diagnosis. An R package, “survival”, was used for the survival analysis.

507

508 SV calling procedure

509 We remapped the reads using bwa 0.7.12, which support split read mapping. Then
510 we used DELLY (10) with default parameters for somatic SV calling. To avoid sample
511 contamination or germline SVs, we filtered our callsets against the entire TCGA pRCC WGS
512 dataset, regardless of sample match or pathological reviews. We discharge all callings that were
513 marked “LowQual” (PE/SR support below 3 or mapping quality below 20). Last, to further

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519 eliminate germline contamination, we filtered out SVs that show at least 0.8 reciprocally
520 overlapping with 1000 Genome Phase III SV callsets (only 1/425 found).

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522 **Mutation spectra study**

523 WGS Mutations were extracted from flanking 5' and 3' nucleotide context. The raw
524 mutation counts were normalized by trinucleotide frequencies in the whole genome.

525 To identify signatures in the mutation spectra, we used a robust, objective LASSO-based
526 method. First, 30 known signatures were downloaded from COSMIC
527 (<http://cancer.sanger.ac.uk/cosmic/signatures>). Then we solve a positive, zero-intercept linear
528 regression problem with L1 regularizer to obtain signatures and corresponding weights for each
529 genome. Specifically, we solve the problem:

$$\min_W (\|SW - M\|_2 + \lambda \|W\|)$$

530 Where M is the mutation matrix, containing the mutations of each sample in 96
531 nucleotide contexts. S is the 96×30 signature matrix, representing the mutation probability in 96
532 nucleotide contexts of the 30 signatures. W is the weighting matrix, representing the contribution
533 of 30 signatures to each sample.

534 The penalty parameter lambda (λ) was determined empirically using 10-fold cross-
535 validation individually for every sample. λ was chosen to maximize sparsity and constrained to
536 keep mean-square error (MSE) within one standard error of its minimum. Last, we discharged
537 signatures that composite less than 5% of the total detectable signatures.

538

540 **Methylation association analysis**

541 In total, we collected HumanMethylation450 BeadChip array data for 139 samples that
542 are either methylation cluster 1 or 2. We used an R package “IMA” to facilitate analysis (11).
543 After discharging sites with missing values or on sex chromosomes, we obtained beta-values on
544 366,158 CpG sites in total. Then we test beta-values of each site by Wilcoxon rank sum test
545 between two methylation clusters. After adjusting p-value using Benjamini-Hochberg procedure,
546 we called 9,324(2.55%) hypermethylation sites. These sites have an adjusted p-value of less than
547 0.05 and mean beta-values in methylation cluster 1 are 0.2 or higher than the ones in methylation
548 cluster 2.

549

550 **APOBEC enrichment analysis**

551 We used the method described by Roberts et al. (12). For every $C \in \{T, G\}$ and $G \in \{A, C\}$
552 mutation we obtained 20bp sequence both upstream and downstream. Then enrichment fold was
553 defined as:

$$Enrichment\ Fold = \frac{Mutation_{TCW/WGA} \times Context_{C/G}}{Mutation_{C/G} \times Context_{TCW/WGA}}$$

554 Here TCW/WGA stands for $T[C \in \{T, G\}]W$ and $W[G \in \{A, C\}]A$. W stands for A or T. p-
555 value for enrichment were calculated using one-side Fisher-exact test. To adjust for multiple
556 hypothesis testing, p-values were corrected using Benjamini-Hochberg procedure.

557 WXS data for APOBEC enrichment and signature analysis was obtained from a high
558 quality somatic callset: hgsc.bcm.edu_KIRP.IlluminaGA_DNASeq.1.protected.maf. This dataset

559 includes 155 pRCC samples and three UC samples. We use
560 hgsc.bcm.edu_KIRC.Mixed_DNASeq.1.protected.maf for ccRCC analyses.

561

562 Chromatin remodeling genes and replication time association

563 We identified chromatin remodeling genes based on its significance in pRCC and
564 function. Our gene list is the intersection of gene lists in the original TCGA pRCC study
565 molecular feature table (supplementary table 3) with the chromatin remodeling and SNI/SWF
566 pathway gene lists (supplementary table 4). Our gene set include ten genes: *SETD2, KDM6A,*
567 *PBRM1, SMARCB1, ARID1A, ARID2, MLL2 (KMT2D), MLL3(KMT2C), MLL4(KMT2B),*
568 *EP300.* We found adding BAP1 into the list won't change the significance of our tests. We
569 defined chromatin remodeling defect as nonsynonymous mutations in these genes. For missense
570 mutations, we filtered out mutations with polyphen score less then 0.8 (benign).

571 In order to avoid cell type redundancy, we only kept GM12878 as the representative of
572 all lymphoblastoid cell lines. Eleven cell types were included in our analysis: BG02ES, BJ,
573 GM12878, HeLaS3, HEPG2, HUVEC, IMR90, K562, MCF7, NHEK, SK-NSH. Wave
574 smoothed replication time signal was averaged in a ± 10 kb region from every mutation. To avoid
575 potential selection effects, we removed mutations in exome and flanking 2bp. Regions overlap
576 with reference genome gaps and DAC blacklist (<https://genome.ucsc.edu/>) were removed as
577 well. Last, we picked the median number from 11 cell types at each mutation position for further
578 analysis.

579 To test the significance of replication time of non-coding mutations between two groups,
580 we assigned all the mutation with its local replication time and then defined the ones stand above

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590 90 percentile in all pooled mutations as “mutations in early replicated regions”. Then we
591 calculate the percentage of “mutations in early replicated regions” in total mutations for each
592 sample and compare between two groups using rank-sum test.

594 Evolution tree inference:

595 We use PhyloWGS (REF) to infer the evolution trees for each individual tumor. To mitigate the
596 effects on copy number change, we removed all the SNVs inside the copy number change
597 regions as defined by assay-based method in the original TCGA study (REF). To be prudent, we
598 defined any region with an absolute log tumor copy number to normal ratio larger than 0.3. Last,
599 we removed all SNVs with allele frequency higher than 0.6 as they are likely affected by copy
600 number loss.

601
602 **Author contributions:** SL, BMS and MG conceived and designed the study. SL carried out the
603 computation and data analysis, SL, BMS and MG interpreted the results. SL wrote the
604 manuscript. BMS and MG co-directed this work. All authors have read and approved the final
605 manuscript. **Competing interests:** The authors declare no competing interests.

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608 Sciences High Performance Computing Center. We thank Patrick McGillivray for his help in
609 manuscript preparation.

611 **References**

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718 **Figure 1. MET noncoding alterations and Survival analysis of rs11762213 in pRCC patients.**

719 (A) A schematics diagram of non-coding mutations on MET. The germline SNP, rs11762213, is also shown. Thin
720 black lines indicate retrotransposon initiated alternative isoform.

721 (B) Genotypes are shown in the legend. Peto & Peto modification of the Gehan-Wilcoxon test.

722

723 **Figure 2. Noncoding alterations in pRCC.**

724 (A) A schematics diagram of non-coding mutations on ERFF1. (B) A schematics diagram of non-coding mutations
725 on NEAT1. One tumor carries two mutations on NEAT1. (C) Tumors with mutations on NEAT1 show higher NEAT1
726 expression. (D) Survival analysis shows mutations in NEAT1 are associated with worse prognosis. To avoid
727 potential confounding effects, we removed one subject who carries rs11762213 but not NEAT1 mutation. Log-rank
728 test.

729

730 **Figure 3. Mutation spectra and mutation processes in pRCC.**

731 (A) The mutation spectrum of all pRCC WGS samples. Mutations are ordered in alphabetical order of the reference
732 trinucleotides (with the mutated nucleotide in the middle, from A[C>A]A to T[T>G]T) from left to right. Then we
733 use PCA to maximize inter-sample variation. The loadings on the first principle component is strongly dominated by
734 C>T in CpGs. (B) PC1, along with C>T in CpGs mutation counts and the fractions of such mutations among total
735 mutations are significantly different between two methylation groups. (C) APOBEC mutation signatures are shown
736 for both pRCC (along with three UC samples, which have blue outer circles) and ccRCC TCGA cohorts. Red
737 dashed line represents the median APOBEC enrichment. (D) Comparison of total mutation counts, mutations counts
738 in open chromatin regions and percentages of mutations in open chromatin regions of total mutations between
739 tumors with chromatin remodeling genes alterations and the ones without.

740

741 **Figure 4. Evolution trees and genomic alteration landscape of 35 whole genome sequenced pRCC samples.**

742 (A) Two individual evolutions trees. Cancer related mutations firstly appear in each population is marked by
743 corresponding colors (B) Index: patient index, see Table S2

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Deleted: (A) A schematics diagram of non-coding mutations on MET. The germline SNP, rs11762213, is also shown.

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Deleted: Grey cells represent genomic alterations. CN: copy number.