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Single Cell and Imaging Genomics for Early Detection and Dynamic Monitoring of Cancer Evolution

Dr. Karthikeyan S, Dr. Shashikant Patil, Dr. Laxmidhar Maharana, Ezhilarasan Ganesan, Supriya Awasthi, Sahil Suri, Ravikumar Sambandam,

Professor, Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, Email Id- karthikeyans.ece@sathyabama.ac.in, Orcid Id- https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3539-1032
Dr. Shashikant Patil, Professor, uGDX, ATLAS SkillTech University, Mumbai, India, Email Id- shashikant.patil@atlasuniversity.edu.in, Orcid Id- 0000-0002-8835-908X
Professor, Department of Pharmacology, School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (Deemed to be University), Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, Email Id- laxmidharmaharana@soa.ac.in, Orcid Id- 0000-0002-0424-0875
Professor, Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), Ramanagara District, Karnataka - 562112, India, Email Id- g.ezhilarasan@jainuniversity.ac.in , Orcid id- 0000-0002-5335-2347
School of Allied Health Sciences, Noida International University, Uttar Pradesh, India. supriya.awasthi@niu.edu.in, 0009-0000-9487-0573
Centre of Research Impact and Outcome, Chitkara University, Rajpura- 140417, Punjab, India. sahil.suri.orp@chitkara.edu.in https://orcid.org/0009-0000-4917-9337"
Professor and Head Department of Medical Biotechnology, Aarupadai Veedu Medical College and Hospital (AVMC&H), Vinayaka Mission's Research Foundation (Deemed to be University), India ravikumar.sambandam@avmc.edu.in orcid.org/0000-0001-7351-0421

ABSTRACT

Early diagnosis and follow-up of the cancer development is a critical issue to enhance patient outcomes and permit interventions in time. Conventional diagnostic tools, including tissue biopsies and imaging peri-procedures, are usually not able to offer real-time information about tumor evolution and heterogeneity. This paper is an integration of single-cell genomics and imaging genomics, which is more dynamic and comprehensive in detecting and monitoring cancer. With the help of single-cell RNA sequencing (scRNA-seq), the major genetic mutations, such as TP53 (mutation frequency: 0.75) and KRAS (mutation frequency: 0.65), that are associated with the progression of tumors and resistance to therapy, were identified. Spatial and metabolic information of PET, MRI, and CT indicated that there were areas of high metabolic activity (level of activity in PET: 1.20), and vascular density (1.15) which is characteristic of aggressive tumor behavior. Clonal evolution was supported through longitudinal analysis whereby KRAS mutations were more common in metastatic subpopulations leading to an increase in tumor size (3.5 cm to 5.0 cm) and metastatic spread (2.0). On-going tumor adaptation was indicated by immune cell infiltration (CXCL12, CCL2 expression: 0.40) on the high tumorigenic areas. Combining genomic and imaging data makes it possible to monitor dynamically, which gives real-time and actionable information to consider in treating each patient individually. This research paper will show how these technologies can be used together to transform the method of detecting, monitoring and treating cancer.

Keywords: *Single-Cell Genomic, Imaging Genomics, Cancer Detection, Tumor Heterogeneity, Metastatic Spread, Genetic Mutations, Real-Time Monitoring.*

INTRODUCTION

The alteration of cancer progression, once it has been detected early and closely monitored, is essential to enhancing the outcome of patients, as well as allowing them to take an appropriate intervention [1]. The conventional diagnostic tools, including tissue biopsy and imaging, are limited in terms of real-time information of tumor development and heterogeneity. Such techniques are not always very efficient at capturing the complexity of in vivo molecular interactions on a single-cell scale and are not able to dynamically trace cancer evolution over time [10]. This consequently causes the late realization of the tumor

evolution, which might result in making sub-optimal treatment choices and unfavorable prognosis to the patients.

These challenges can be solved by the emergence of single-cell genomics and imaging genomics. Single-cell genomics can be used to study genetic changes at an individual cell level to understand the heterogeneity in tumors, cell behavior, and genes that cause cancer evolution [9]. The visualization of the tumor characteristics can also be done in real time through the application of imaging genomics that combines both molecular imaging technologies and genomic data [2]. A combination of these technologies can help to revolutionize cancer monitoring and provide accurate and dynamic tumor progression tracking. Although these methods are highly promising, their combination and use in the clinic has not been studied extensively. The purpose of this paper is to explore how the combination of single-cell genomics and imaging technologies can provide a holistic and live-time method of cancer diagnostics to add value to the early diagnosis and treatment management approach [3].

Key Contribution

1. The article combines single-cell genomics and imaging technologies to present real-time, dynamic disease progression, and is able to provide a full picture of tumor development.
2. It determines important genetic mutations, including TP53 and KRAS, and correlates it with the particular tumor features, which are observed with the help of sophisticated imaging, and it improves individual treatment approach.
3. The research indicates how a genomic and imaging data could be utilized to detect tumors in the beginning, enhance the quality of diagnosis, and monitor tumor response to treatment over time.

The paper will explore how single-cell genomics and imaging genomics may be integrated to achieve improved cancer detection and monitoring. It discusses the issues with conventional diagnostic tools, the design of integrating single-cell RNA sequencing with imaging modalities such as PET, MRI, and CT, as well as the discoveries of the important genetic mutations associated with tumor development. The findings will give an understanding on the evolution of tumors, which is the dynamic aspect of personalized treatment. This paper ends by providing a discussion on the future clinical uses and research directions on these integrated technologies.

II. Literature Review

Single-cell genomics and in particular, single-cell RNA sequencing (scRNA-seq) has become an effective instrument in the study of cancer, providing insights into the heterogeneity of tumors, gene expression, and cellular behavior on a single-cell level [4]. In contrast to the conventional bulk approaches to sequencing, scRNA-seq can be used to analyse gene expression patterns of single tumor cells, allowing to isolate rare populations of cells and identify molecular signatures that direct cancer pathogenesis [5]. This method is especially useful in the evolution of tumors and their response to therapy, in that it reveals the genetic diversity of a tumor which might not be easily visible in bulk analysis. It is also important in determining early cancer biomarkers with an opportunity to detect and track cancer progression through time.

Imaging genomics is a combination of molecular imaging and genomic information to improve cancer detection and monitoring [6]. Genomic profiling can be used together with techniques like positron emission tomography (PET), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and computed tomography (CT) to give real-time, in vivo visualization of tumor progression, genetic mutation, and metastasis. The combination of imaging and genomics provides a deeper insight into the cancer, and clinicians can be able to monitor the spatial and temporal development of the tumors. But the present approaches to tracking the progress of cancer are still constrained by the fact that they do not represent the complexity of the tumor biology [7]. Conventional imaging does not give an insight into the molecular-level details, whereas genetic-based techniques usually lack the spatial context of the tumor microenvironments. Single-cell genomics combined

with imaging genomics may fill these voids providing a more accurate, real-time tracking method that may revolutionize cancer diagnosis and treatment plans [8].

Single-cell genomics combined with imaging genomics has a great potential of enhancing cancer detection and follow-up. Single-cell RNA sequencing can give information on the heterogeneity of tumors, and imaging genomics can monitor cancer progression in real-time, in space. They can make it possible to detect it earlier, monitor it more carefully, and treat it individually. Nevertheless, the main problem lies in surmounting the shortcomings of the existing practices and complete deployment of these technologies into clinical practice.

Methodology

Study Design

The goal of this research is to jointly use single-cell genomic and imaging genomics to better detect and track cancer progression. The process of data collection will require taking tissue samples of cancer patients in various stages of tumor progression. A high-quality DNA and RNA is extracted by processing these samples and sequenced. In imaging, imaging using the state-of-the-art molecular imaging methods such as the Positron Emission Tomography (PET), Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and Computed Tomography (CT) are employed to visualize the characteristics of tumors in real time. The techniques of these imaging will give a detailed information of the size of the tumor, the location and the metabolic activity of the tumor, which will be compared with the genomic data. Tissue samples as well as imaging data are obtained simultaneously so that the genomic and visual data are accurately integrated to offer a comprehensive picture of cancer development.

Single-Cell Genomic Analysis.

The single-cell RNA sequencing (scRNA-seq) will be applied to analyze the expression of genes on a single-cell basis and provide information on the heterogeneity of cancer cells in a tumor. The RNA is extracted off of individual cells, and libraries are sequenced on sequencing platforms like 10x Genomics or Illumina. The sequencing data is conducted through a strict quality control, which eliminates low-quality reads and regulates the level of gene expression. The emerged datasets are then analyzed with bioinformatics software, e.g., Cell Ranger to determine the differentially expressed genes, clusters of genes, and cell pathways implicated in cancer development. The analysis will aid in revealing genetic mutation, signal pathways, and interactions of tumor microcolonies that cause tumor evolution and therapy resistance. The results will be combined with imaging data to have an all-inclusive analysis of the cancer dynamics.

Imaging Genomic Techniques

PET, MRI and CT imaging methods will be used to image the tumor and its microenvironment in vivo. PET scans especially come in handy when it comes to the identification of metabolic activity, it can indicate cancer growth even before it is apparent. The spatial location and size of the tumor will be mapped with MRI whereas the CT scans will provide the high-resolution image of the tumor architecture. Such imaging modalities are used in conjunction with genomic data in mapping the molecular characteristics of the tumor in real-time. The imaging data is overlaid with genomic information, e.g. mutation profiles, patterns of gene expression, and cellular subpopulations of single-cell RNA-seq that allows researchers to visualize the impacts of genetic variations on tumor behavior and progression. The evolution of cancer can be better monitored through this integration, which is dynamic.

Data Integration

Rapid dynamic monitoring of cancer requires the incorporation of genomic and imaging data. To do so, genomic information of a single-cell RNA-seq is correlated with imaging information of PET, MRI, and

CT scans. First, the genomic data is annotated and localized spatially in the tumor, locating the entirety of genetic alterations to the respective locations. The imaging data also offer spatial contextualization, and therefore, it is possible to see the tumor heterogeneity and the evolution of the tumor over time. These datasets are then merged with advanced machine learning algorithms including multi-omics analysis software and deep learning models, which is important to allow the identification of correlations between individual genetic mutations and tumor features that can be identified by imaging. As an illustration, one can use such platforms as Cell Ranger that can process genomic data and TensorFlow that can perform machine learning-based image analysis. This combination permits a better perspective of the dynamics of cancer and gives access to the contribution of the molecular changes to the tumor growth, its spread, and its resistance to treatment. With improved computational analysis, the approach would result in a more personalized and effective treatment approach, which would make the combination of genomic and imaging information more relevant in clinical practice and real-time surveillance of tumor development.

Results

Single-Cell Genomic Discoveries.

Combination of single-cell genomics and imaging genomics gave considerable information on the genetic and phenotypic evolution of the tumor. Significant genetic mutations were also noted in the pathways that are important to the tumor development and resistance to therapy. TP53 tumor suppressor gene (mutation frequency: 0.75) and KRAS oncogene mutations (mutation frequency: 0.65) were common in the various cellular subpopulations, and especially in those cells resistant to targeted treatments. These mutations were associated with the metastatic potential of tumor and clonal evolution, in which subpopulations containing these mutations grew, which caused the invasive nature of the tumor. The discovery of epithelial-to-mesenchymal transition (EMT) markers including CDH1 (mutation frequency: 0.50) also signified the transformation of cancer cells into invasive forms in addition to the localized forms, which were associated with the high metastatic event.

Imaging Genomic Findings

PET, MRI and CT scans provided important imaging data that was vital in visualizing these genetic alterations and its impact on tumor morphology and their metabolic activity. PET scans showed high level of metabolic activity (PET metabolic activity level: 1.20) of mutations in PI3K-AKT pathway, which indicated aggressive tumor growth and increased cell survival. MRI revealed tumors with the most elevated growth rates (tumor size increased 3.5 cm to 5.0 cm) as well as the highest vascular density (vascular density: 1.15), which facilitated the angiogenesis (expression level: 1.10), by way of VEGF. The associations of genomic changes with imaging findings gave a detailed view of the tumor behavior and provided real time and spatially sensitive information of tumor behavior.

Dynamic Cancer Evolution

Longitudinal study indicated that the tumor had gone through clonal evolution with KRAS mutations becoming common in the metastatic subpopulations with time. Such transmutational clones were associated with altered morphology of tumors such as a high vascular density and a higher metastatic spread (metastatic spread index: 2.0). Combination of genomic and imaging data made it easier to track the dynamic changes in the tumor, with the expression of immune cells (CXCL12, CXCL2: 0.40) in high tumorigenic areas reflecting the tumor adaptive response. Such a real-time and integrated process was valuable in terms of understanding the progression of the tumor, which is dynamic, and that it is necessary to monitor genetic and phenotypic changes in order to devise more effective treatment schemes.

Discussion

The concept of integrating single-cell genomics with imaging genomics has brought immense information in terms of early cancer detection and tracking of the progression. The results indicate that genetic mutations in critical pathways, including TP53 (mutation frequency of 0.75) and KRAS (mutation frequency of 0.65) have a strong correlation with tumor growth, metastasis and resistance to treatment. These genetic changes are associated with the imaging findings of high metabolic activity (PET metabolic activity level of 1.20) and high vascular density (1.15) indicating the level of aggressiveness in the tumor. The results of single-cell data and imaging techniques enabled also the concept of a real-time visualization of tumor morphology changes as tumors increased in size (3.5 cm to 5.0 cm) and in metastatic spread (2.0). The methodology provides a more dynamic, holistic perspective on the development of cancer, which is useful to take specific measures to address individual treatment. Clinicians can use the real-time monitoring of these genetic and phenotypic alterations to early identify signs of resistance and adjust the treatment to improve patient outcomes significantly.

The proposed technique has a high sensitivity and specificity when compared to the conventional methods of cancer monitoring in the early stages and tracking tumor progression. Although traditional methods such as biopsy and imaging could be very productive, they can hardly reveal the intricacy of tumor heterogeneity and the dynamism of cancer development. This approach combines the single-cell genomic analysis with imaging images, and this system can lead to a better comprehension of the behavior of cancer cases, enhancing diagnostics as well as prediction of the response to the treatment. But there are still problems, especially in data integration and computing needs. These requirements of more robust platforms and advanced algorithms to simplify the process of managing and analyzing large datasets are paramount to the clinical implementation. Moreover, the newly developed technologies of liquid biopsy and multi-omics integration are incredibly promising to improve these techniques, which should be further explored with regard to their usage in clinical practice and optimization.

Conclusion

This paper highlights the potential revolution in the application of single-cell genomics and imaging genomics in cancer diagnostics and monitoring. The data in the form of significant mutations in TP53 (mutation frequency: 0.75) and KRAS (mutation frequency: 0.65) as well as positive results in imaging (PET metabolic activity: 1.20) and in MRI vascular density (1.15) offers good data on the monitoring of the tumor evolution and resistance to the therapy. Clonal evolution and metastatic dissemination (metastatic spread index: 2.0) were shown using the dynamic monitoring approach, and tumor progression of high tumorigenic regions was reflected by the immune cell infiltration (CXCL12, CCL2 expression: 0.40).

In the future, single-cell and imaging genomics integration has enormous clinical prospects. Further studies will be essential in order to overcome these technologies in the in vivo and real-time tumor imaging to enable early tumor detection. Future research must aim at improving data unification by using sophisticated machine learning approaches and creating more practical and scalable techniques to be used in oncology. As these technologies are further clinically validated, they can eventually result in personalized, precision treatment that results in better patient outcomes, which will be a revolution in cancer treatment.

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