

1 **Transcriptome analysis reveals the effects of transgenic expression of the**  
2 **Gal4 protein on normal gene expression in silkworm tissues**

3 Tao Chen<sup>1</sup>, Yan Ma<sup>2</sup>, Rongpeng Liu<sup>2</sup>, Tingting Tan<sup>2</sup>, Lihua Huang<sup>3,\*</sup>, Hanfu Xu<sup>2,\*</sup>

4 <sup>1</sup>College of Biotechnology, Jiangsu University of Science and Technology; The Sericultural Research Institute,  
5 Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Jiangsu212003, China

6 <sup>2</sup>State Key Laboratory of Silkworm Genome Biology, College of Biotechnology, Southwest University, Chongqing  
7 400715, China

8 <sup>3</sup>International Bioinformatics Center, BGI Genomics Co., Ltd, Shenzhen, Guangdong518083, China

9 **\*Corresponding author**

10 Lihua Huang

11 Email: atomnhuang@gmail.com

12 Hanfu Xu

13 Email: xuhf@swu.edu.cn

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

## 24 **Abstract**

25 The Gal4/upstream activating sequence(UAS) system, a well-known genetic tool, has been widely  
26 used to analyze gene function in many organisms, including the silkworm (*Bombyx mori*), a model  
27 lepidopteran insect. Several studies have suggested that Gal4 protein activation in tissues can  
28 negatively affect transgenic individuals; however, whether and to what extent the Gal4 protein  
29 affects normal endogenous gene expression have rarely been studied. Here, we analyzed the  
30 transcriptomes of transgenic silkworms expressing the Gal4 protein at high levels in both the wing  
31 disc (WD) and epidermis (EP) and investigated gene expression changes in both tissues. Overall,  
32 24,593 genes were identified in the WD and EP libraries, and 2,025 and 2,488 were identified as  
33 significant differentially expressed genes(DEGs) in the WD and EP between the transgenic and  
34 control groups, respectively. These DEGs were further annotated by gene function classification and  
35 pathway assessment using public databases. In addition, 506 DEGs were shared (common) between  
36 both tissues. Of these, 97 genes were commonly upregulated, and 234 were commonly  
37 downregulated; many of them were annotated to be involved in metabolic processes such as “fat  
38 digestion and absorption”, “glycine, serine and threonine metabolism” and “glutathione metabolism”  
39 and in signal transduction pathways such as the “Rap1 signaling pathway”, “MAPK signaling  
40 pathway” and “Hippo signaling pathway”. Overall, this work enhances understanding of the effects  
41 of transgenic Gal4 protein expression on normal gene expression in silkworm tissues and suggests  
42 that researchers should pay attention to unexpected effects when using the Gal4/UAS system to study  
43 gene function.

44 **Keywords** Transgenic silkworm, Gal4 protein, wing disc, epidermis, transcriptome

## 45 **Introduction**

46 The Gal4/upstream activating sequence(UAS) binary expression system, derived from yeast and  
47 originally developed in *Drosophila* [1-3], is a powerful genetic tool that allows manipulation of  
48 target gene expression in a spatiotemporally precise fashion. Since its first application in *Drosophila*,  
49 the Gal4/UAS system has been widely used to analyze gene function in dozens of organisms,  
50 including mice [4], zebrafish [5], *Xenopus* [6], *Bombyx mori* [7], *Arabidopsis thaliana* [8],  
51 *Tribolium castaneum* [9], *Aedes aegypti* [10], *Anopheles stephensi* [11] and *Caenorhabditis elegans*

52 [12]. The Gal4/UAS system has also been employed to develop novel genetic tools, such as the  
53 enhancer/gene trap system and the Q system [13-15], and it has been combined with genome editing  
54 tools for conditional manipulation of gene expression *in vivo* [16-17].

55 In recent decades, remarkable progress in gene function analysis has been achieved with the  
56 Gal4/UAS system. However, the fact that high protein levels of Gal4 have certain toxicity toward  
57 cells coexpressing UAS-linked target genes and Gal4 protein cannot be ignored. Although some  
58 researchers have described and developed novel Gal4/UAS systems with smaller sizes but greater  
59 transactivation efficiency than the original system [18-20], little attention has been paid to the effects  
60 of Gal4 on the normal expression of nontarget genes. To objectively clarify the functions of target  
61 genes, it is necessary to determine whether and to what extent Gal4 protein expression affects normal  
62 nontarget gene expression.

63 Recently, we established a transgenic silkworm line (named A4G4) that expresses the Gal4  
64 mainly in the wing disc (WD) and epidermis (EP) under the control of the promoter of the *B. mori*  
65 *Actin4* gene [21]. This line is a good material for evaluation of the effects of Gal4 protein expression  
66 on normal gene expression in transgenic tissues. In this study, we conducted a comprehensive  
67 transcriptome analysis of WD and EP tissues and identified thousands of differentially expressed  
68 genes (DEGs) in both tissues. Our findings provide sufficient evidence, for the first time, that  
69 transgenic protein expression of Gal4 in silkworm tissues does affect the normal expression of  
70 nontarget genes.

## 71 **Materials and Methods**

### 72 **Silkworm and sample collection**

73 The wild-type (WT) silkworm strain *Nistari*, the A4G4 transgenic line, and the UtdTomato  
74 transgenic line harboring a UAS-linked red fluorescent protein variant (tdTomato) were maintained  
75 in our laboratory. The hatched larvae were reared at 24-28°C with fresh mulberry leaves. WT and  
76 A4G4 larvae at day5 of the fifth instar were selected, and the WDs and EPs were dissected, washed  
77 with precooled phosphate-buffered saline and used for subsequent experiments. The WD samples  
78 collected from WT and A4G4 larvae were named W5N\_S1/S2/S3 and W5A\_S1/S2/S3, respectively.  
79 The EP samples collected from WT and A4G4 larvae were named EP5N\_S1/S2/S3 and

80 EP5A\_S1/S2/S3, respectively.

## 81 **RNA preparation and sequencing**

82 Total RNA was extracted from the WD and EP samples using TRIzol Reagent (Ambion, USA) and  
83 examined on a NanoDrop 1000 spectrophotometer (Thermo Scientific, USA) and an Agilent  
84 Bioanalyzer 2100 system (Agilent Technologies, USA) for RNA integrity and quality. The qualified  
85 RNA samples were purified for poly-A-containing mRNA molecules using poly-T oligo-attached  
86 magnetic beads, fragmented into small pieces using divalent cations under elevated temperature and  
87 reverse transcribed using random primers. Thesecond-strand cDNA fragments were ligated with  
88 index adapters after being purified, end-repaired, and A-tailed. Suitable fragments were used as  
89 templates for PCR amplification. After quantification with a Qubit instrument, the PCR products  
90 were sequenced on a BGISEQ-500 platform at Beijing Genomics Institute (BGI, China).

## 91 **Alignment and quantification**

92 The raw sequencing data were preprocessed using SOAPnuke software  
93 (<https://github.com/BGI-flexlab/SOAPnuke>) to remove reads with adaptors, reads with more than 5%  
94 unknown bases, and reads with low sequencing quality. The clean reads were mapped to the *B. mori*  
95 genome (<http://sgp.dna.affrc.go.jp/KAIKObase/>, ver.3.2.2) using HISAT software [22], and the  
96 transcripts were reconstructed using StringTie [23]. Subsequently, Cuffcompare (Cufflinks tools,  
97 [24]) was utilized to compare the reconstructed transcripts. The novel coding transcripts predicted by  
98 the Coding Potential Calculator (CPC) [25] were combined with gene models from KAIKObase to  
99 obtain a new reference gene set. In addition, the clean reads were aligned against the new reference  
100 gene set using Bowtie [26]. Gene expression levels were quantified by RSEM [27] and normalized  
101 using the fragments per kilobase per million mapped reads (FPKM) method [24,27]. The DEGseq  
102 method [28] was used to detect DEGs with adjusted *P* values <0.001. Genes were considered  
103 significant DEGs if their fold changes were  $\geq 2$  and their adjusted probability values were <0.001.

## 104 **Gene Ontology (GO) and Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes (KEGG)** 105 **enrichment analysis**

106 The functions of the protein-coding genes were assigned according to the best matches derived from  
107 alignments to proteins in the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) nonredundant

108 (Nr) protein sequence database using DIAMOND [29]. GO annotation was performed for all  
109 identified DEGs, and WEGO software [30] was used to conduct the GO functional classification. GO  
110 terms with adjusted  $P$  values  $\leq 0.05$  were defined as significantly enriched GO terms for the DEGs.  
111 Pathway enrichment analysis of DEGs was performed based on the KEGG database [31] with the  
112 same criteria.

### 113 **Data availability**

114 The raw sequence reads are available from the NCBI search database (Bioproject PRJNA601576,  
115 run accessions SAMN13870652, SAMN13870653, SAMN13870654, and SAMN13870655). All  
116 relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

## 117 **Results and Discussion**

### 118 **Detection of Gal4 expression in transgenic silkworms**

119 Before collecting the WD and EP samples, we first generated A4G4>UtdTomato transgenic  
120 silkworms by crossing A4G4 moths with UtdTomato moths (S1 Fig), and we detected the  
121 fluorescence distribution in various tissues of A4G4>UtdTomato silkworms to further confirm the  
122 locations of Gal4 protein expression. As shown in Fig 1, strong fluorescence intensity was detected  
123 in both the WDs and EPs but not in other tissues of the A4G4>UtdTomato individuals. In other  
124 words, the expression of UAS-linked tdTomato was activated by the Gal4 protein mainly in these  
125 two tissues, which clearly demonstrated that the Gal4 protein was expressed at comparatively high  
126 levels in the WDs and EPs of A4G4 transgenic silkworms. Then, WD and EP samples were collected  
127 from day-5 fifth-instar larvae of the WT and A4G4 lines and submitted to RNA extraction, library  
128 construction and DNA sequencing.

### 129 **Summary of the transcriptome data**

130 RNA sequencing (RNA-Seq) generated a total of 540.19 million raw reads for all samples. After  
131 processing of these raw data, 478.36 million clean reads were obtained, with an average read depth  
132 ranging from 32.26 to 45.38 million. A total of 87.60-89.50% of the reads in each sample reached the  
133 Q30 quality score. The majority of reads in each library were mapped to the ver.3.2.2 assembly of  
134 the *B. mori* genome, and the average mapping rate of the reads was 77.57% (Table 1). The  
135 assembled transcriptome data were used to identify known and predict novel coding transcripts,

136 which generated 24,593 genes (23,064 known genes and 1,529 novel genes). The gene number in  
137 each sample ranged from 16,439 to 18,097. Gene expression levels were calculated with RSEM  
138 software using the FPKM normalization method. Approximately 30% of the expressed genes had  
139 FPKM values larger than 10.0, and 30% had FPKM values lower than 1.0 (Fig 2).

## 140 **Identification of DEGs between the transgenic and WT groups**

141 By comparing transcriptome data between the transgenic and WT groups, a number of genes  
142 expressed in the WD and EP were identified as significant DEGs (Fig 3). In WD samples, 2,025  
143 genes were identified as DEGs, including 771 upregulated genes and 1,254 downregulated genes  
144 (Table S1). In EP samples, a total of 2,488 DEGs were identified, among which 771 genes were  
145 upregulated and 1,717 genes were downregulated (Table S2). Thus, approximately 8.23%  
146 (2,025/24,593) and 10.12% (2,488/24,593) of the genes in the WD and EP tissues of transgenic  
147 silkworms were upregulated and downregulated, respectively, which clearly indicates that transgenic  
148 expression of the Gal4 protein in either the WD or EP affects the normal expression of endogenous  
149 genes.

## 150 **GO annotation and KEGG pathway enrichment analysis of the DEGs**

151 To obtain valuable information for DEG functional prediction, the DEGs were annotated with the  
152 GO database. In total, 952 DEGs in WD samples were annotated in 38 functional categories,  
153 including 15 biological process categories, 12 cellular component categories and 11 molecular  
154 function categories. Among the biological process categories, “cellular process” was the main  
155 functional group, followed by “metabolic process” and “response to stimulus”. Among the cellular  
156 component categories, “membrane” was the main functional group, followed by “membrane part”  
157 and “cell”. Among the molecular function categories, “binding” and “catalytic activity” were the two  
158 main functional groups (Fig 4A). In EP samples, 1,621 DEGs were functionally annotated with 15  
159 biological process categories, 14 cellular component categories and 10 molecular function categories.  
160 The most enriched GO terms in the biological process category were “cellular process”, “metabolic  
161 process” and “biological regulation”. The terms “membrane”, “membrane part” and “cell” were  
162 significantly enriched at the cellular component level, and the terms “binding” and “catalytic activity”  
163 were significantly enriched at the molecular function level (Fig 4B). The top 10 up- and  
164 downregulated annotated DEGs as well as the significantly enriched GO terms for the DEGs in WD

165 and EP samples are listed in [Table S3 ~ Table S6](#).

166 To better interpret the pathways in which the DEGs were involved and enriched, we annotated  
167 the DEGs against the KEGG database. Briefly, the DEGs in WD samples were mainly enriched for  
168 the “phototransduction - fly”, “Influenza A”, “Hippo signaling pathway”, “fat digestion and  
169 absorption”, “viral myocarditis”, and “oxytocin signaling pathway” terms ([Fig 5A](#)). In EP samples,  
170 the DEGs were mainly annotated with the “complement and coagulation cascades”, “amoebiasis”,  
171 “tyrosine metabolism”, “ECM-receptor interaction”, “insect hormone biosynthesis”, “Hippo  
172 signaling pathway”, “axon guidance”, and “fat digestion and absorption” pathway terms, among  
173 others ([Fig 5B](#)).

### 174 **Comparative analysis of the DEGs between the WD and EP tissues**

175 Considering that the WD and EP are known to be involved in the regulation of wing development in  
176 *B. mori*, the DEGs in both tissues were further analyzed to identify commonalities and differences.  
177 As shown in the Venn diagram in [Fig 6A](#), 506 genes were identified as common DEGs in both  
178 tissues. Of these, 331 DEGs were common up- or downregulated genes (97 upregulated and 234  
179 downregulated). Moreover, 111 DEGs were upregulated in WD tissues and downregulated in EP  
180 tissues, while 64 DEGs were upregulated in EP tissues and downregulated in WD tissues ([Table S7](#)).  
181 We further focused on the 331 common DEGs, the patterns of which might be influenced by the  
182 Gal4 protein in a similar way in these two tissues.

183 First, the 331 DEGs were annotated in the NR NCBI database to a total of 208 Nr terms that  
184 encompassed 124 Nr functions. Genes annotated with more than 2 functions are listed in [Table 2](#).  
185 The downregulated genes were annotated with the “actin-5C-like”, “actin-4”, “actin, cytoplasmic 2”,  
186 “glucose dehydrogenase”, “atlastin”, “E3 ubiquitin-protein ligase”, “26S proteasome non-ATPase  
187 regulatory subunit”, and “histidine-rich glycoprotein-like” terms. Similarly, some upregulated genes  
188 were also annotated with the “actin-5C-like”, “actin-4”, “actin, cytoplasmic 2”, “glucose  
189 dehydrogenase”, “E3 ubiquitin-protein ligase”, and “26S proteasome non-ATPase regulatory subunit”  
190 terms. These findings imply that the Gal4 protein in either the WD or EP affects the expression of  
191 actin genes as well as genes involved in metabolic processes.

192 Next, we mapped all of the genes to terms in the GO database to look for significantly enriched  
193 GO terms. Among the 331 DEGs, 72 genes were annotated with 444 GO terms. Among the 60 most



194 enriched GO terms were “multi-organism process”, “multicellular organismal process” and  
195 “biological regulation” for the biological process category; “organelle part”, “cell” and  
196 “macromolecular complex” for the cellular component category; and “binding”, “catalytic activity”  
197 and “signal transducer activity” for the molecular function category (Fig 6B). Overall, 39 common  
198 genes were annotated with these GO terms, including 16 upregulated genes and 23 downregulated  
199 genes.

200 Finally, the 331 DEGs were annotated against the KEGG database to better understand the  
201 biochemical pathways in which they were involved. Among the 331 DEGs, 119 genes were annotated  
202 in 5 main categories. The 20 most enriched KEGG terms were “fat digestion and absorption”,  
203 “phagosome”, “antigen processing and presentation”, “phototransduction - fly”, “Rap1 signaling  
204 pathway”, “platelet activation”, “oxytocin signaling pathway”, “MAPK signaling pathway - fly”,  
205 “Hippo signaling pathway”, “pentose phosphate pathway”, “apoptosis”, “arachidonic acid  
206 metabolism”, “axon guidance”, “glycine, serine and threonine metabolism”, “glutathione  
207 metabolism”, “MAPK signaling pathway”, “Hippo signaling pathway - fly”, “phototransduction”,  
208 “thyroid hormone signaling pathway”, and “leukocyte transendothelial migration” (Fig 6C). Overall,  
209 59 genes were annotated with these 20 KEGG terms, 36 of which were downregulated and 23 of  
210 which were upregulated. Taken together, these functional annotations suggest that the expression of  
211 genes involved in a series of metabolic processes and signal transduction pathways is influenced by  
212 the Gal4 protein in either the WDs or the EPs of transgenic silkworms.

## 213 **Conclusion**

214 In this study, RNA-Seq, de novo assembly and functional annotation were performed to characterize  
215 the transcriptome profiles of two types of tissues, the WD and EP, that were collected from day-5  
216 fifth-instar larvae of silkworms of the WT *Nistari* line and the transgenic A4G4 line expressing the  
217 Gal4 protein mainly in the WD and EP. We conducted comparative transcriptome analyses to  
218 identify the DEGs and potentially related biological pathways in the silkworms. A total of 2,025 and  
219 2,488 genes were identified as significant DEGs in the WD and EP, respectively, among which 506  
220 DEGs were common to both tissues (97 were commonly upregulated, and 234 were commonly  
221 downregulated). Many of the common genes were annotated to be involved in metabolic processes  
222 (“fat digestion and absorption”, “glycine, serine and threonine metabolism”, “glutathione



223 metabolism”, etc.), and signal transduction pathways (“Rap1 signaling pathway”, “MAPK signaling  
224 pathway”, “Hippo signaling pathway”, etc.). Overall, our results present a comprehensive view of  
225 gene expression profiles in the WDs and EPs of WT and A4G4 silkworms and reveal that transgenic  
226 expression of the Gal4 protein affects normal gene expression in these tissues. Our findings also  
227 provide timely and valuable information for future studies on gene function using the Gal4/UAS  
228 binary system.

## 229 **Acknowledgments**

230 This work was supported by grants (31872291) from the National Natural Science Foundation of  
231 China and grants (cstc2017jcyjBX0041) from the Chongqing Research Program of Basic Research  
232 and Frontier Technology. American Journal Experts performed English language editing in this  
233 manuscript.

## 234 **Author Contributions**

235 Conceived and designed the experiments: HFX. Performed the experiments: RPL TTT. Analyzed the  
236 data: TC YM LHH HFX. Contributed reagents/materials/analysis tools: YM RPL. Wrote the paper:  
237 HFX LHH.

## 238 **References**

- 239 1. Laughon A, Gesteland RF. Primary structure of the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* GAL4 gene.  
240 *Molecular and Cellular Biology*. 1984;4: 260–267. doi:10.1128/mcb.4.2.260
- 241 2. Giniger E, Varnum SM, Ptashne M. Specific DNA binding of GAL4, a positive regulatory  
242 protein of yeast. *Cell*. 1985;40: 767–774. doi:10.1016/0092-8674(85)90336-8
- 243 3. Fischer JA, Giniger E, Maniatis T, Ptashne M. GAL4 activates transcription in *Drosophila*.  
244 *Nature*. 1988;332: 853–856. doi:10.1038/332853a0
- 245 4. Ornitz DM, Moreadith RW, Leder P. Binary system for regulating transgene expression in mice:  
246 targeting int-2 gene expression with yeast GAL4/UAS control elements. *Proceedings of the*  
247 *National Academy of Sciences*. 1991;88: 698–702. doi:10.1073/pnas.88.3.698
- 248 5. Scheer N, Campos-Ortega JA. Use of the Gal4-UAS technique for targeted gene expression in  
249 the zebrafish. *Mechanisms of Development*. 1999;80: 153–158.  
250 doi:10.1016/s0925-4773(98)00209-3
- 251 6. Hartley KO, Nutt SL, Amaya E. Targeted gene expression in transgenic *Xenopus* using the  
252 binary Gal4-UAS system. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 2002;99:

- 253 1377–1382. doi:10.1073/pnas.022646899
- 254 7. Imamura M, Nakai J, Inoue S, Quan GX, Kanda T, Tamura T. Targeted gene expression using  
255 the GAL4/UAS system in the silkworm *Bombyx mori*. *Genetics*. 2003;16 : 1329–1340.  
256 doi:10.1023/B:GENE.0000003842.72339.df
- 257 8. Laplaze L, Parizot B, Baker A, Ricaud L, Martinière A, Auguy F, et al. GAL4-GFP enhancer  
258 trap lines for genetic manipulation of lateral root development in *Arabidopsis thaliana*. *Journal of*  
259 *Experimental Botany*. 2005;56: 2433–2442. doi:10.1093/jxb/eri236
- 260 9. Schinko JB, Weber M, Viktorinova I, Kiupakis A, Averof M, Klingler M, et al. Functionality of  
261 the GAL4/UAS system in *Tribolium* requires the use of endogenous core promoters. *BMC*  
262 *Developmental Biology*. 2010;10: 53. doi:10.1186/1471-213x-10-53
- 263 10. Kokoza VA, Raikhel AS. Targeted gene expression in the transgenic *Aedes aegypti* using the  
264 binary Gal4-UAS system. *Insect Biochemistry and Molecular Biology*. 2011;41: 637–644.  
265 doi:10.1016/j.ibmb.2011.04.004
- 266 11. Obrochta DA, Alford RT, Pilitt KL, Aluvihare CU, Harrell RA. piggyBac transposon  
267 remobilization and enhancer detection in *Anopheles* mosquitoes. *Proceedings of the National*  
268 *Academy of Sciences*. 2011;108: 16339–16344. doi:10.1073/pnas.1110628108
- 269 12. Wang H, Liu J, Gharib S, Chai CM, Schwarz EM, Pokala N, et al. cGAL, a temperature-robust  
270 GAL4–UAS system for *Caenorhabditis elegans*. *Nature Methods*. 2016;14: 145–148.  
271 doi:10.1038/nmeth.4109
- 272 13. Yang MY, Armstrong J, Vilinsky I, Strausfeld NJ, Kaiser K. Subdivision of the *Drosophila*  
273 mushroom bodies by enhancer-trap expression patterns. *Neuron*. 1995;15: 45–54.  
274 doi:10.1016/0896-6273(95)90063-2
- 275 14. Asakawa K. The Tol2-mediated Gal4-UAS method for gene and enhancer trapping in zebrafish.  
276 *Methods*. 2009;49: 275–281. doi:10.1016/j.ymeth.2009.01.004
- 277 15. Potter CJ, Tasic B, Russler EV, Liang L, Luo L. The Q System: A Repressible Binary System for  
278 Transgene Expression, Lineage Tracing, and Mosaic Analysis. *Cell*. 2010;141: 536–548.  
279 doi:10.1016/j.cell.2010.02.025
- 280 16. Xue Z, Wu M, Wen K, Ren M, Long L, Zhang X, et al. CRISPR/Cas9 Mediates Efficient  
281 Conditional Mutagenesis in *Drosophila*. *G3 (Bethesda)*. 2014;4: 2167–2173.  
282 doi:10.1534/g3.114.014159
- 283 17. Santis FD, Donato VD, Bene FD. Clonal analysis of gene loss of function and tissue-specific  
284 gene deletion in zebrafish via CRISPR/Cas9 technology. *Methods in Cell Biology The Zebrafish*  
285 *- Genetics, Genomics, and Transcriptomics*. 2016;135: 171–188.  
286 doi:10.1016/bs.mcb.2016.03.006
- 287 18. Köster RW, Fraser SE. Tracing Transgene Expression in Living Zebrafish Embryos.  
288 *Developmental Biology*. 2001;233: 329–346. doi:10.1006/dbio.2001.0242
- 289 19. Kobayashi I, Kojima K, Uchino K, Sezutsu H, Iizuka T, Tatematsu K-I, et al. An efficient binary  
290 system for gene expression in the silkworm, *Bombyx mori*, using GAL4 variants. *Archives of*  
291 *Insect Biochemistry and Physiology*. 2011;76: 195–210. doi:10.1002/arch.20402

- 292 20. Zhang Y, Ouyang J, Qie J, Zhang G, Liu L, Yang P. Optimization of the Gal4/UAS transgenic  
293 tools in zebrafish. *Applied Microbiology and Biotechnology*. 2019;103: 1789–1799.  
294 doi:10.1007/s00253-018-09591-0
- 295 21. Tan T, Liu R, Luo Q, Ma J, Ou Y, Zeng W, et al. The intronic promoter of Actin4 mediates  
296 high-level transgene expression mainly in the wing and epidermis of silkworms. *Transgenic*  
297 *Research*. 2020; doi:10.1007/s11248-020-00192-0
- 298 22. Kim D, Langmead B, Salzberg SL. HISAT: a fast spliced aligner with low memory requirements.  
299 *Nature Methods*. 2015;12: 357–360. doi:10.1038/nmeth.3317
- 300 23. Pertea M, Pertea GM, Antonescu CM, Chang T-C, Mendell JT, Salzberg SL. StringTie enables  
301 improved reconstruction of a transcriptome from RNA-seq reads. *Nature Biotechnology*. 2015;33:  
302 290–295. doi:10.1038/nbt.3122
- 303 24. Trapnell C, Roberts A, Goff L, Pertea G, Kim D, Kelley DR, et al. Differential gene and  
304 transcript expression analysis of RNA-seq experiments with TopHat and Cufflinks. *Nature*  
305 *Protocols*. 2012;7: 562–578. doi:10.1038/nprot.2012.016
- 306 25. Kong L, Zhang Y, Ye Z-Q, Liu X-Q, Zhao S-Q, Wei L, et al. CPC: assess the protein-coding  
307 potential of transcripts using sequence features and support vector machine. *Nucleic Acids*  
308 *Research*. 2007;35. doi:10.1093/nar/gkm391
- 309 26. Langmead B, Salzberg SL. Fast gapped-read alignment with Bowtie 2. *Nature Methods*. 2012;9:  
310 357–359. doi:10.1038/nmeth.1923
- 311 27. Li B, Dewey CN. RSEM: accurate transcript quantification from RNA-Seq data with or without a  
312 reference genome. *BMC Bioinformatics*. 2011;12. doi:10.1186/1471-2105-12-323
- 313 28. Wang L, Feng Z, Wang X, Wang X, Zhang X. DEGseq: an R package for identifying  
314 differentially expressed genes from RNA-seq data. *Bioinformatics*. 2009;26: 136–138.  
315 doi:10.1093/bioinformatics/btp612
- 316 29. Buchfink B, Xie C, Huson DH. Fast and sensitive protein alignment using DIAMOND. *Nature*  
317 *Methods*. 2014;12: 59–60. doi:10.1038/nmeth.3176
- 318 30. Ye J, Fang L, Zheng H, Zhang Y, Chen J, Zhang Z, et al. WEGO: a web tool for plotting GO  
319 annotations. *Nucleic Acids Research*. 2006;34. doi:10.1093/nar/gkl031
- 320 31. Kanehisa M, Araki M, Goto S, Hattori M, Hirakawa M, Itoh M, et al. KEGG for linking genomes  
321 to life and the environment. *Nucleic Acids Research*. 2007;36. doi:10.1093/nar/gkm882

## 322 **Supporting Information**

323 **S1 Fig. Generation of A4G4>UtdTomato transgenic silkworms.** Adults positive for UtdTomato  
324 (carrying 3×P3-EGFP) and A4G4 (carrying 3×P3-DsRed) showed only GFP and RFP fluorescence,  
325 respectively, in the compound eye. A4G4>UtdTomato adults showed both GFP and RFP  
326 fluorescence in the compound eye. 3×P3 is an artificial promoter that can drive EGFP or DsRed  
327 expression mainly in the ocelli and nervous tissues of *B. mori*.

328 **S1 Table. List of DEGs in the WD between the control and transgenic groups.**

329 **S2 Table. List of DEGs in the EP between the control and transgenic groups.**

330 **S3 Table. Top 10 annotated DEGs in the WD between the control and transgenic groups.**

331 **S4 Table. Top 10 annotated DEGs in the EP between the control and transgenic groups.**

332 **S5 Table. Top enriched GO terms for the DEGs in the WD between the control and transgenic**  
333 **groups.**

334 **S6 Table. Top enriched GO terms for the DEGs in the EP between the control and transgenic**  
335 **groups.**

336 **S7 Table. List of common DEGs identified in both WD and EP samples.**

## 337 **Figure legends**

338 **Fig 1. Detection of tdTomato expression in A4G4>UtdTomato transgenic silkworms.** (A)  
339 Expression of tdTomato in A4G4>UtdTomato silkworms at different developmental stages. (B)  
340 Expression of tdTomato in tissues of day-5 A4G4>UtdTomato fifth-instar larvae. E9D, day-9  
341 embryo stage; 1L2D, day-2 first-instar larval stage; 2L2D, day-2 second-instar larval stage; 3L3D,  
342 day-3 third-instar larval stage; 4L3D, day-3 fourth-instar larval stage; 4LM, fourth molting stage;  
343 5L1D ~ 5L6D, day-1 to day-6 fifth-instar larval stages; W1D, day-1 wandering stage; P1D ~ P7D,  
344 day-1 to day-7 pupal stages; A1D, day-1 adult stage. The numbers on the photos denote the different  
345 microscope magnifications.

346 **Fig 2. Gene expression level distribution in different FPKM value ranges.** The X-axis represents  
347 the number of genes. FPKM  $\leq 1$ , genes with very low expression levels; FPKM = 1-10, genes with  
348 relatively low expression levels; FPKM  $\geq 10$ , genes with medium to high expression levels.

349 **Fig 3. DEGs identified in the WD and EP samples.** (A) Number of DEGs between the transgenic  
350 group and the WT group. (B) Volcano map of DEGs between the transgenic group and the WT  
351 group. Upregulated genes, downregulated genes, and non-significantly altered genes are indicated  
352 with red, blue, and gray points, respectively. The X-axis represents the fold change in each gene, and  
353 the Y-axis represents the significance level.

354 **Fig 4. GO analysis of the DEGs between the transgenic group and the WT group.** (A) GO  
355 classification of the DEGs in the WD. (B) GO classification of the DEGs in the EP.

356 **Fig 5. KEGG analysis of DEGs between the transgenic group and WT group.** (A) KEGG

357 classification of DEGs in the WD. (B) KEGG classification of DEGs in the EP.

358 **Fig 6. Comparison of the DEGs between WD and EP tissues.** (A) Venn plot comparing DEGs in  
 359 WD and EP tissues. (B) Bubble chart of the enriched GO terms for the DEGs. (C) Bubble chart of  
 360 the enriched KEGG pathways for the DEGs.

## 361 Table

362 **Table 1. Characteristics of the RNA-Seq reads of the WD and EP samples.**

Sample	Total Raw Reads (Mb)	Total Clean Reads (Mb)	Clean Reads Q30 (%)	Clean Reads Percentage (%)	Total Mapped (%)	Uniquely Mapped (%)
W5N_S1	47.33	42.34	88.28	89.47	73.15	61.30
W5N_S2	37.42	33.16	88.66	88.61	68.49	55.94
W5N_S3	49.08	42.96	88.37	87.52	70.17	58.66
W5A_S1	37.46	32.26	89.06	86.14	73.13	61.09
W5A_S2	45.25	40.10	88.56	88.62	70.76	59.23
W5A_S3	45.68	40.70	88.34	89.09	70.80	59.01
EP5N_S1	41.18	36.47	87.70	88.56	73.26	60.73
EP5N_S2	47.43	42.69	89.23	90.00	75.15	62.65
EP5N_S3	49.19	43.92	89.50	89.28	76.73	64.15
EP5A_S1	50.94	45.38	89.47	89.07	77.01	63.81
EP5A_S2	49.19	43.07	89.22	87.57	76.59	63.26
EP5A_S3	40.04	35.31	87.60	88.20	78.23	59.64

363 **Table 2. Genes annotated with more than 2 functions.**

Gene ID	Log2 (EP5A/E P5N)	Log2 (W5A/W5N )	Nr Annotation
BMgn003598	-2.48	-1.15253	XP_004930247.2 0.0e+00 atlastin [ <i>Bombyx mori</i> ]
BMgn005742	-1.17889	-1.09857	XP_004923914.2 0.0e+00 atlastin [ <i>Bombyx mori</i> ]
BMgn012863	-2.8081	-1.65447	XP_012548093.1 0.0e+00 glucose dehydrogenase [FAD, quinone] isoform X1 [ <i>Bombyx mori</i> ]
BMgn012872	-3.46208	-2.74461	XP_012548096.1 0.0e+00 glucose dehydrogenase [FAD, quinone] [ <i>Bombyx mori</i> ]
BMgn013005	-4.07261	-1.21234	XP_021205532.1 0.0e+00 glucose dehydrogenase [FAD, quinone] [ <i>Bombyx mori</i> ]
BMgn013008	-2.9674	-4.17712	XP_021205528.1 8.0e-163 glucose dehydrogenase [FAD, quinone]-like [ <i>Bombyx mori</i> ]
BMgn015000	-1.11199	-1.18581	XP_011564474.1 2.2e-68 PREDICTED: probable 26S proteasome non-ATPase regulatory subunit 3 [ <i>Plutella xylostella</i> ]
E_FL_bmmt_01L08_R_0	-4.79443	-1.64395	XP_019758493.1 7.9e-101 PREDICTED: actin-5C-like

			[ <i>Dendroctonus ponderosae</i> ]
E_FL_bmnt_07O06_F_0	-6.0958	-3.09502	XP_013136486.1 3.2e-56 PREDICTED: E3 ubiquitin-protein ligase ZNRF2 isoform X2 [ <i>Papilio polytes</i> ]
E_FL_dpe-_02E19_F_0	-2.66122	-2.27044	XP_004924489.1 1.2e-50 probable G-protein coupled receptor Mth-like 2 [ <i>Bombyx mori</i> ]
E_FL_fmngV_51I15_R_0	-1.18466	-4.27579	XP_019758493.1 7.2e-102 PREDICTED: actin-5C-like [ <i>Dendroctonus ponderosae</i> ]
E_FL_fner_10A05_R_0	-1.21217	-1.26425	XP_019758493.1 9.0e-94 PREDICTED: actin-5C-like [ <i>Dendroctonus ponderosae</i> ]
E_FL_fner_47N09_R_0	-2.21741	-1.94716	KOB77672.1 1.3e-85 26S proteasome non-ATPase regulatory subunit [ <i>Operophtera brumata</i> ]
E_FL_fner_52N05_R_0	-3.27478	-1.48226	XP_011501341.1 7.5e-09 PREDICTED: histidine-rich glycoprotein-like [ <i>Ceratosolen solmsi marchali</i> ]
E_FL_ftes_09L13_R_0	-2.56488	-2.28381	XP_004924489.1 1.5e-30 probable G-protein coupled receptor Mth-like 2 [ <i>Bombyx mori</i> ]
E_FL_ftes_43K14_R_0	-2.92985	-3.10448	XP_004924489.1 4.4e-24 probable G-protein coupled receptor Mth-like 2 [ <i>Bombyx mori</i> ]
E_FL_fwgp_51N21_F_0	-8.37787	-9.919	AGR44787.1 5.4e-151 actin-4 [ <i>Bombyx mori</i> ]
E_FL_wd--_21P11_R_0	-6.90228	-5.30772	XP_009896276.1 1.2e-30 PREDICTED: LOW QUALITY PROTEIN: actin, cytoplasmic 2 [ <i>Picoides pubescens</i> ]
E_FL_wd--_28G10_R_0	-2.55679	-5.206	XP_009896276.1 3.4e-30 PREDICTED: LOW QUALITY PROTEIN: actin, cytoplasmic 2 [ <i>Picoides pubescens</i> ]
brP-0880	-1.68186	-1.23617	XP_011501341.1 9.5e-09 PREDICTED: histidine-rich glycoprotein-like [ <i>Ceratosolen solmsi marchali</i> ]
brP-1638	-1.43669	-2.065	AGR44854.1 6.2e-119 truncated actin-4 [ <i>Bombyx mori</i> ]
fe8d-P11_F_I20	-8.65711	-1.18149	XP_014366484.1 2.7e-48 PREDICTED: RNA-directed DNA polymerase from mobile element jockey-like isoform X5 [ <i>Papilio machaon</i> ]
ovS311F08f	-1.17925	-1.20354	XP_009896276.1 3.5e-30 PREDICTED: LOW QUALITY PROTEIN: actin, cytoplasmic 2 [ <i>Picoides pubescens</i> ]
BMgn012997	6.761191	1.726472	XP_004928920.1 0.0e+00 glucose dehydrogenase [FAD, quinone]-like isoform X1 [ <i>Bombyx mori</i> ]
E_FL_bmnt_10M22_F_0	7.550044	6.623201	XP_013136486.1 3.9e-56 PREDICTED: E3 ubiquitin-protein ligase ZNRF2 isoform X2 [ <i>Papilio polytes</i> ]
E_FL_bmnt_14H21_R_0	1.800765	5.493634	XP_019758493.1 1.5e-81 PREDICTED: actin-5C-like [ <i>Dendroctonus ponderosae</i> ]
E_FL_fmngV_33M18_F_0	8.646377	6.611614	KOB77672.1 1.7e-86 26S proteasome non-ATPase regulatory subunit [ <i>Operophtera brumata</i> ]
E_FL_fner_08N04_R_0	7.881922	5.108628	XP_019758493.1 3.2e-82 PREDICTED: actin-5C-like [ <i>Dendroctonus ponderosae</i> ]
E_FL_fner_10D19_R_0	5.097958	8.602168	AGR44881.1 1.8e-88 actin-4 [ <i>Bombyx mori</i> ]
E_FL_fner_47G22_R_0	8.34665	8.575025	XP_019758493.1 7.7e-107 PREDICTED: actin-5C-like [ <i>Dendroctonus ponderosae</i> ]
E_FL_wd--_27A01_R_0	7.145351	8.021206	XP_009896276.1 1.2e-30 PREDICTED: LOW QUALITY PROTEIN: actin, cytoplasmic 2 [ <i>Picoides pubescens</i> ]

---

fepMP03_F_B14	1.731906	7.428733	XP_014366484.1 4.5e-51 PREDICTED: RNA-directed DNA polymerase from mobile element jockey-like isoform X5 [ <i>Papilio machaon</i> ]
---------------	----------	----------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

---



Figure 1

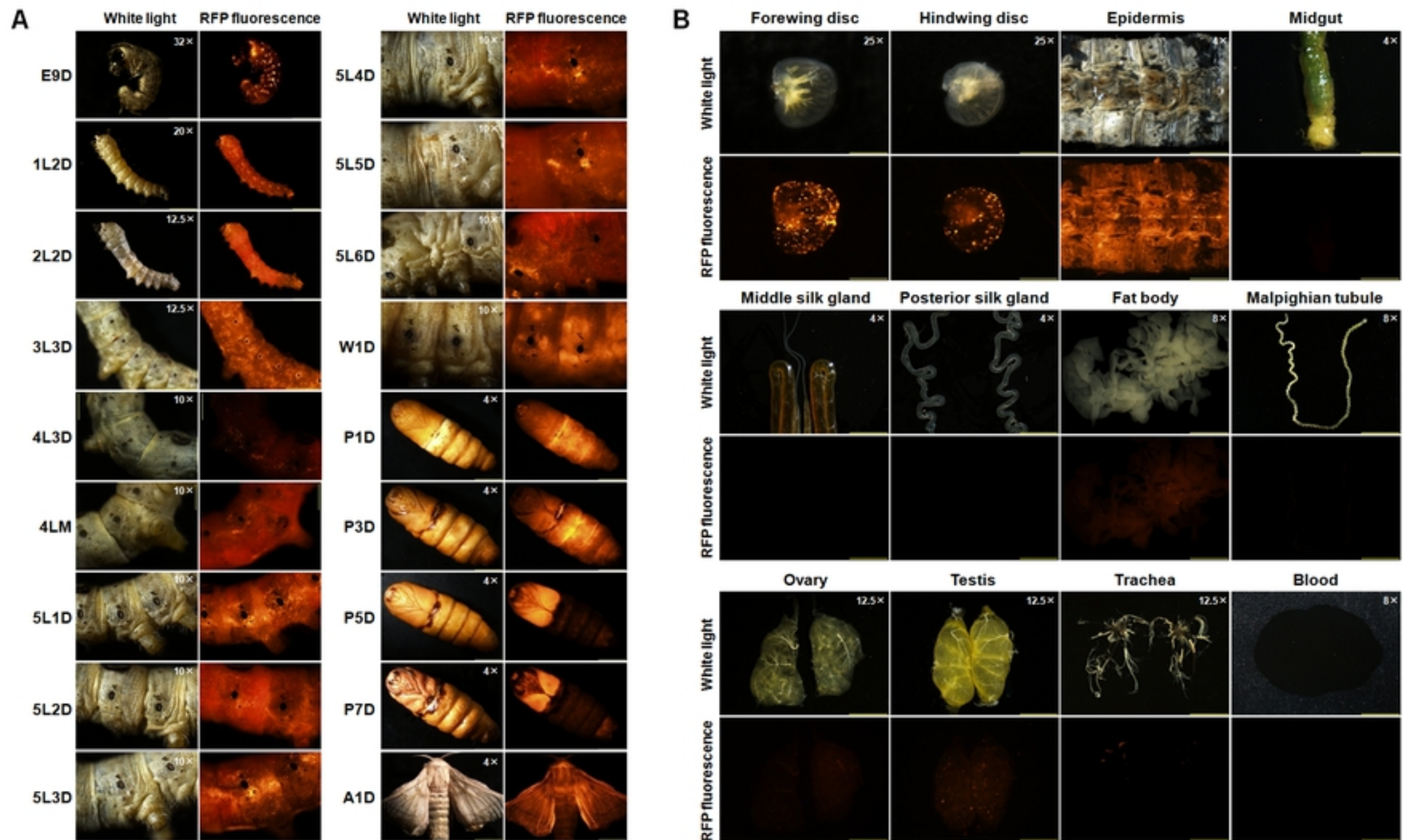


Fig 1

Figure 2

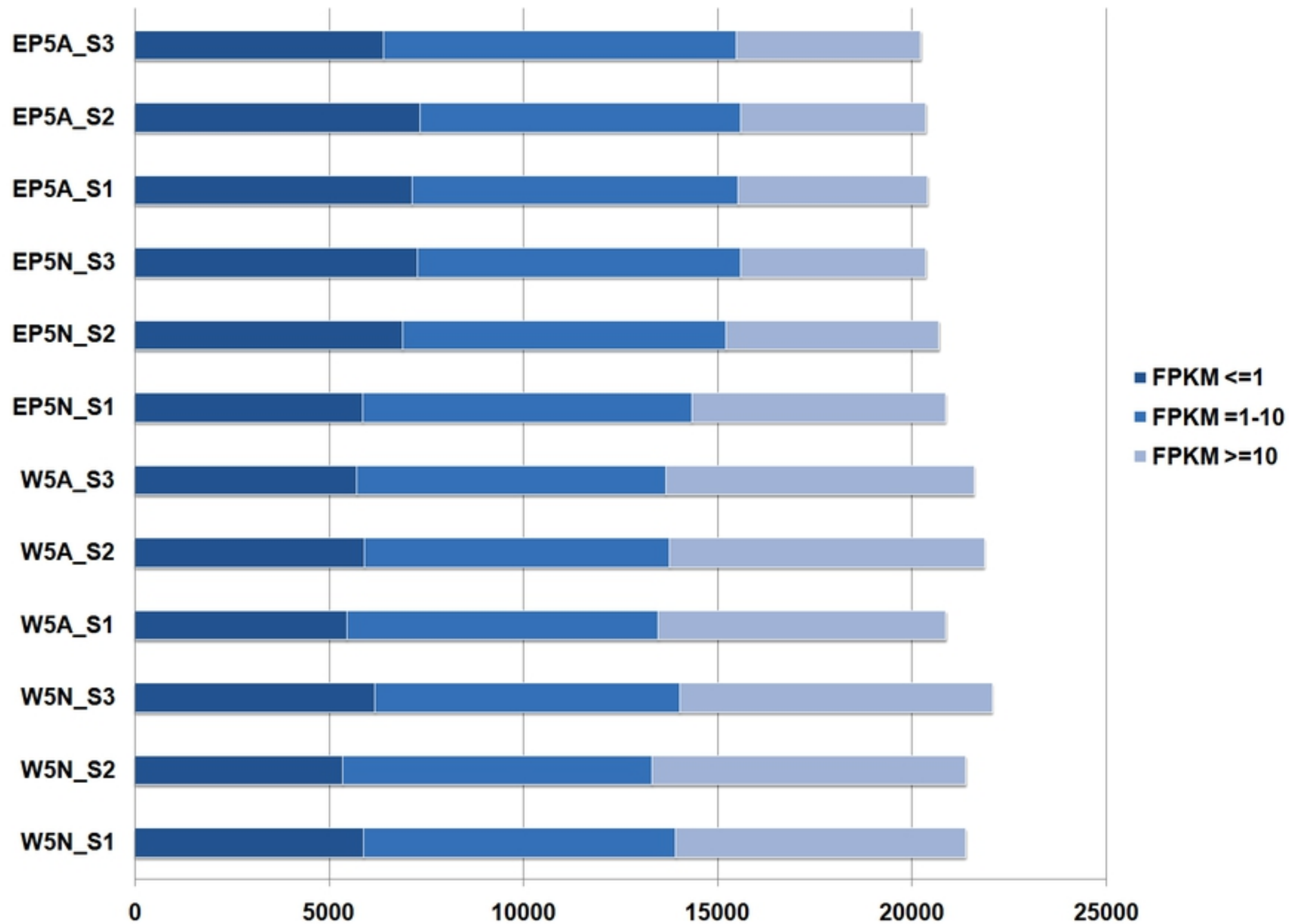
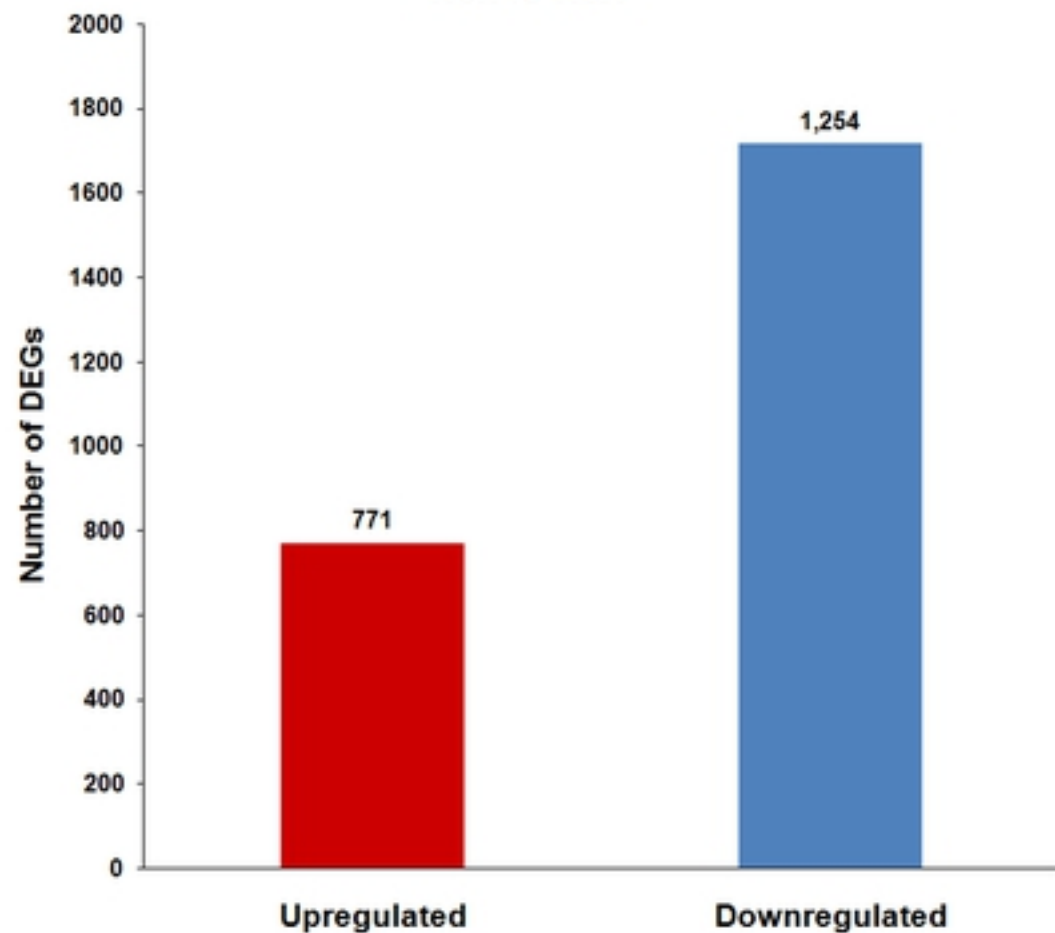


Fig 2

Figure 3A

W5N vs W5A



EP5N vs EP5A

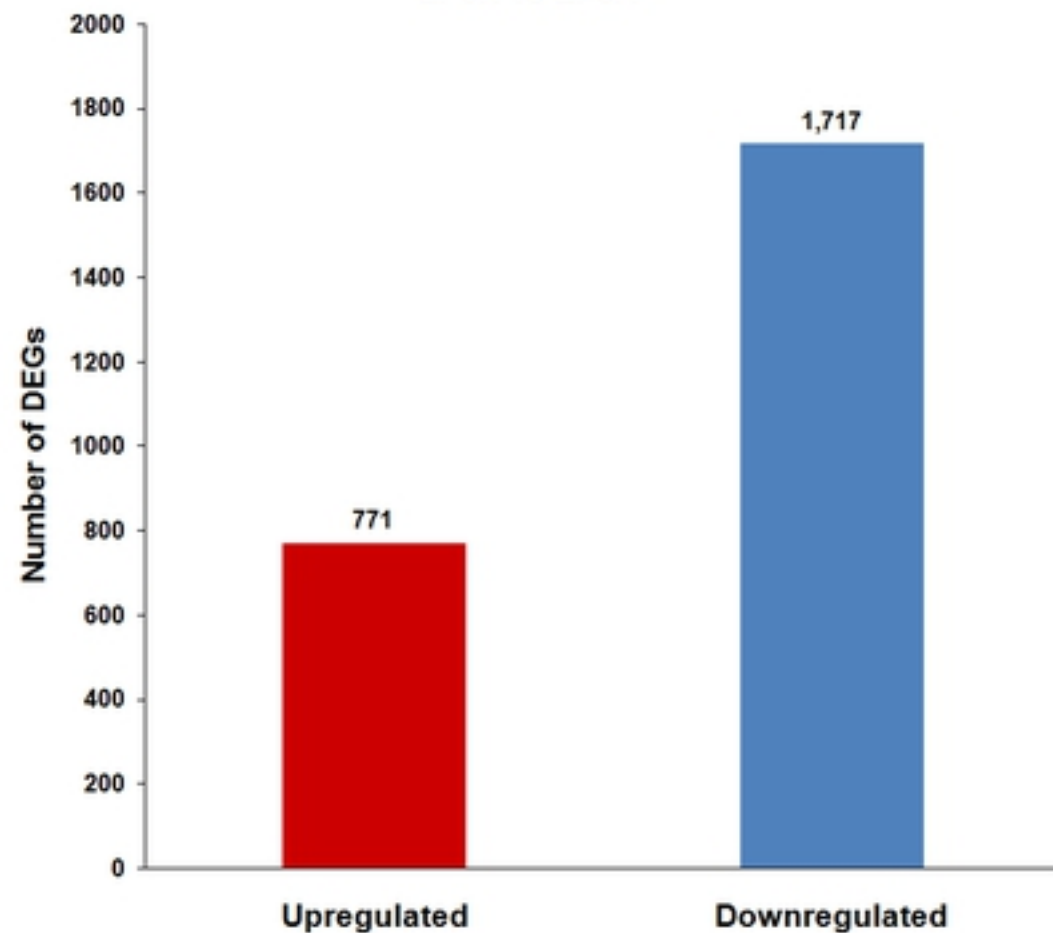


Fig 3A

Figure 3B

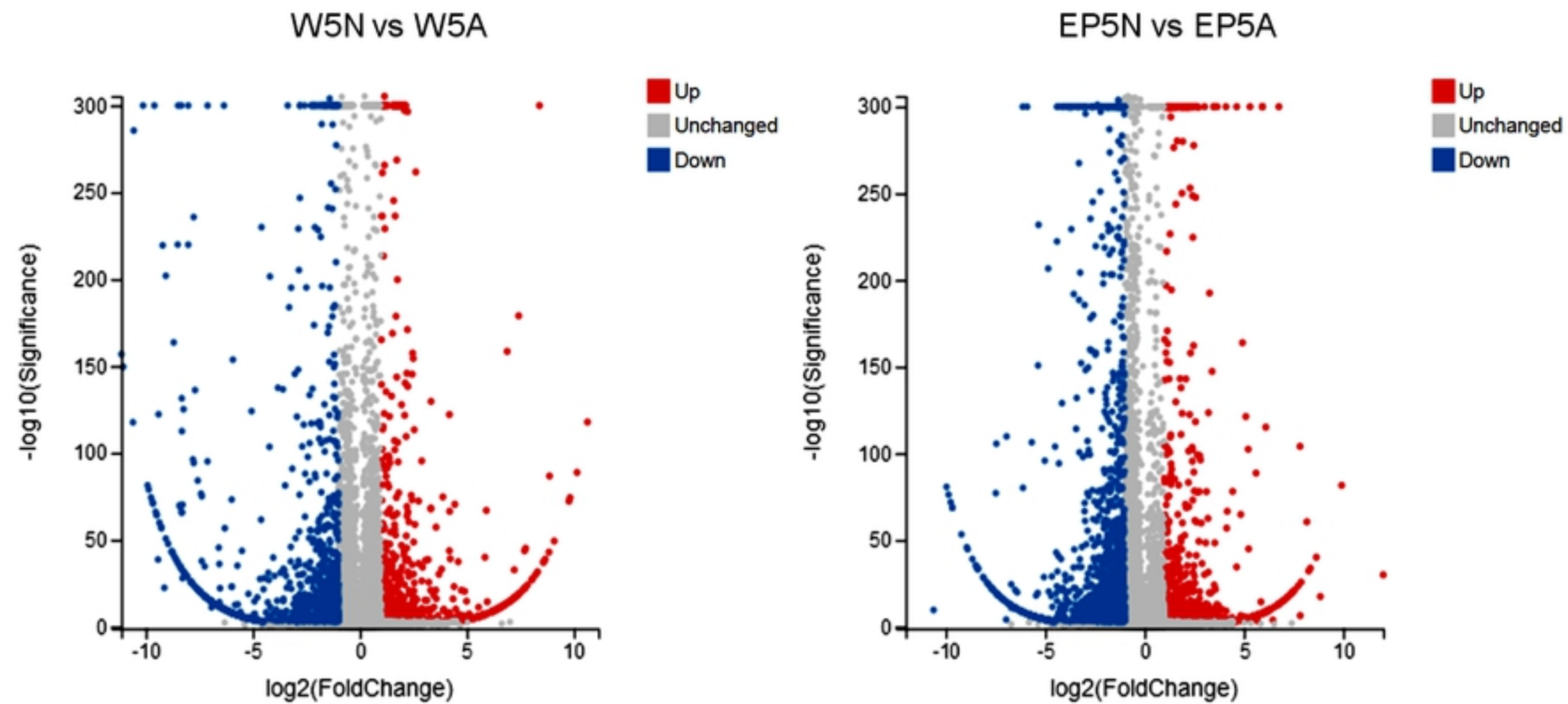


Fig 3B



Figure 4

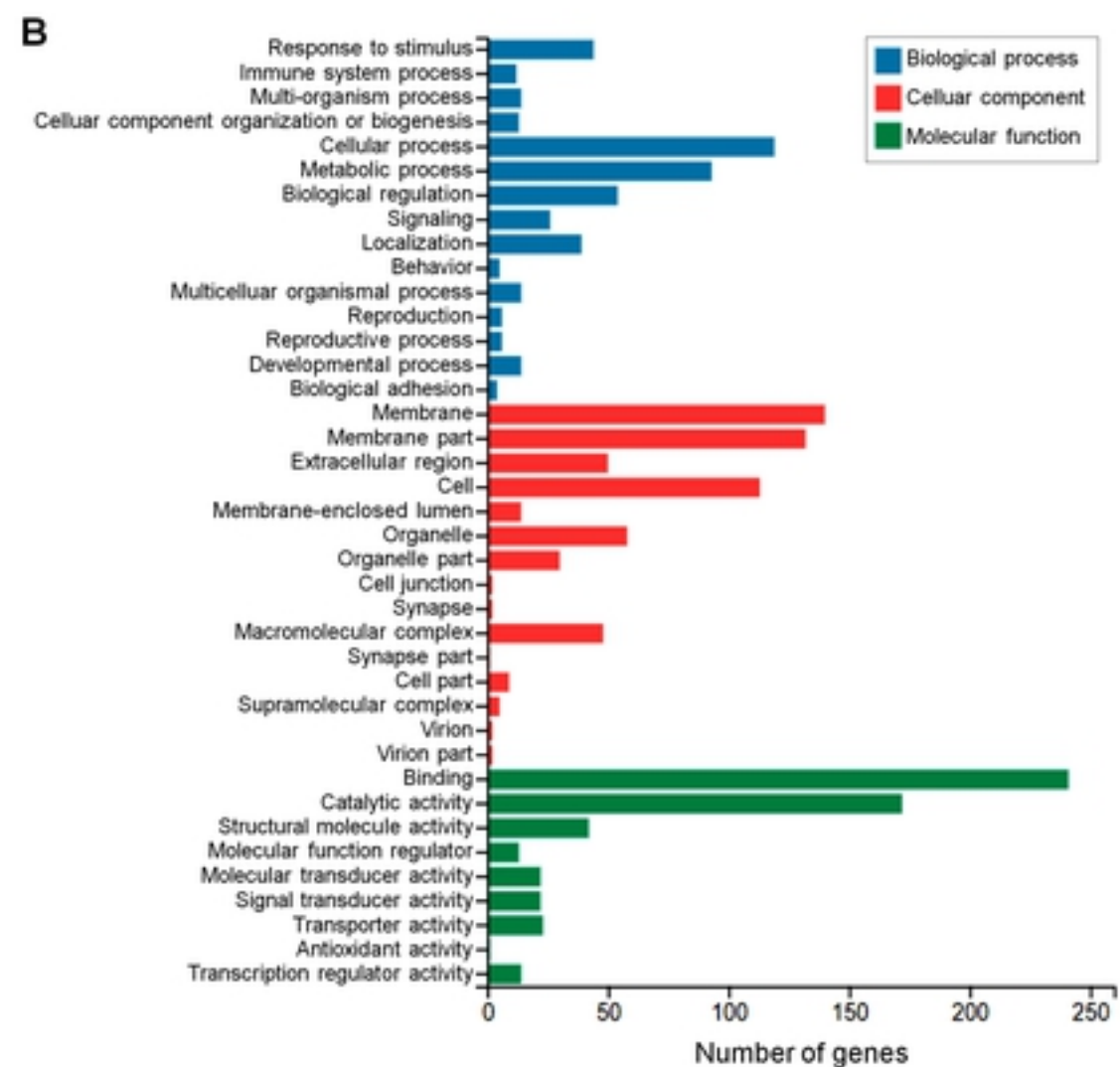
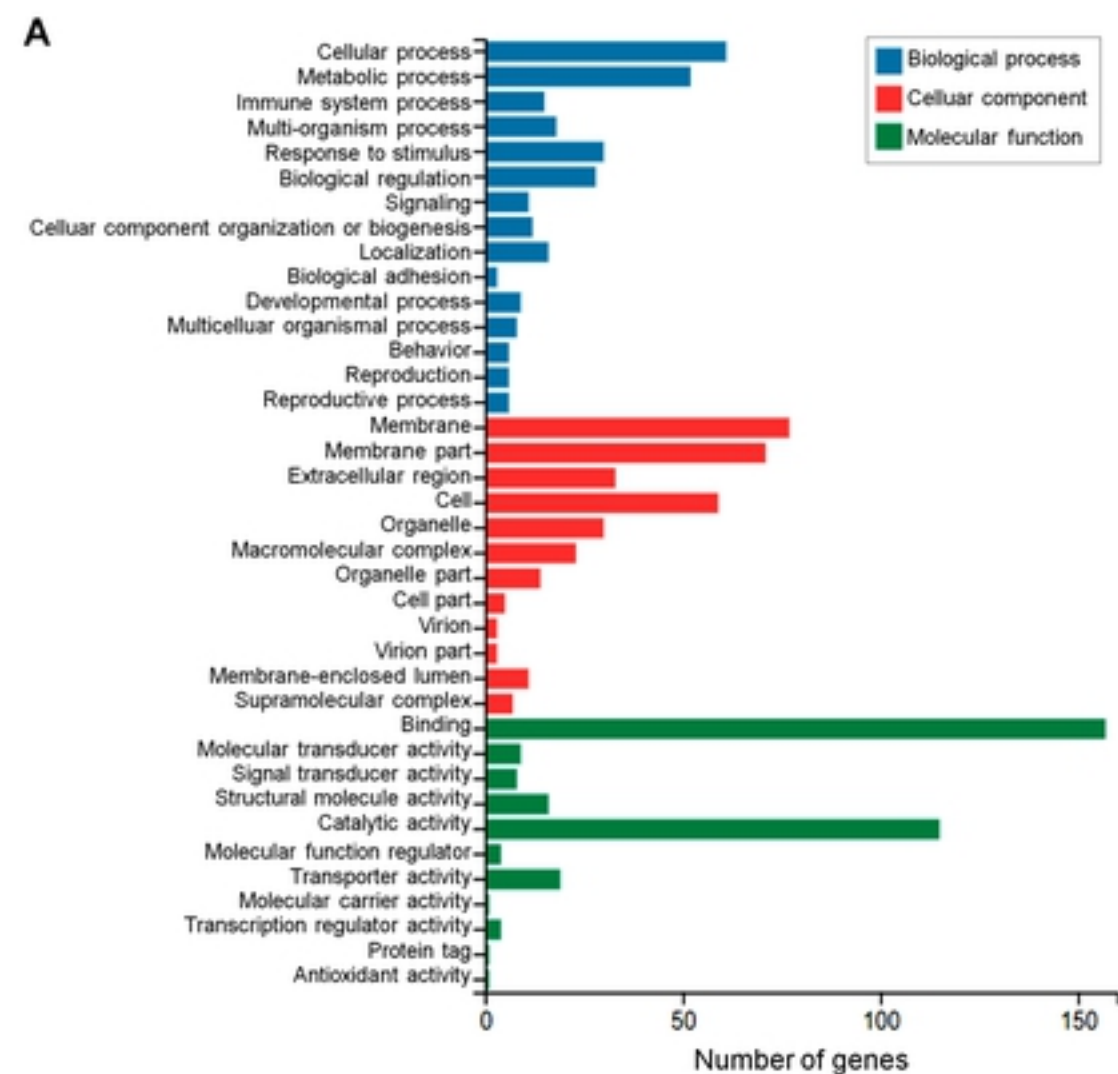
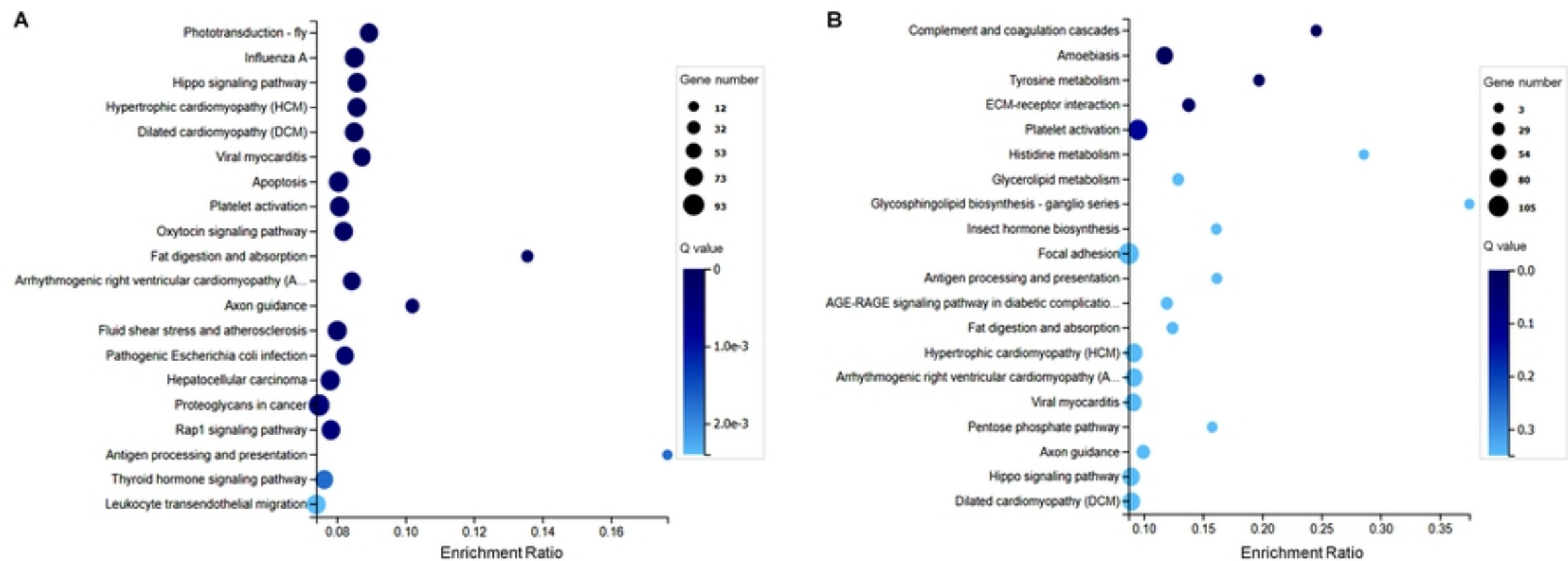


Fig 4

**Figure 5****Fig 5**

**Figure 6A**

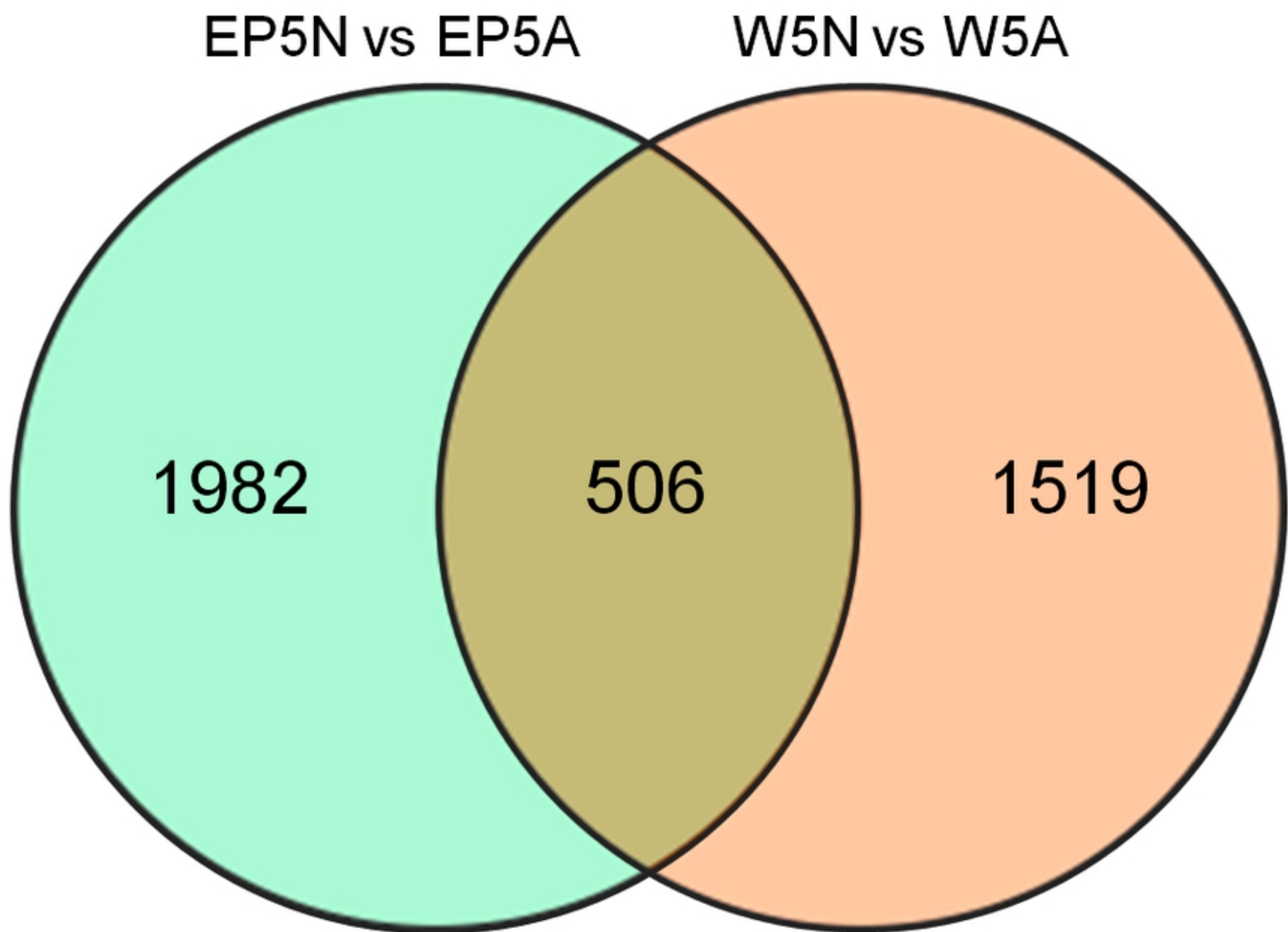


Fig 6A



# Figure 6B

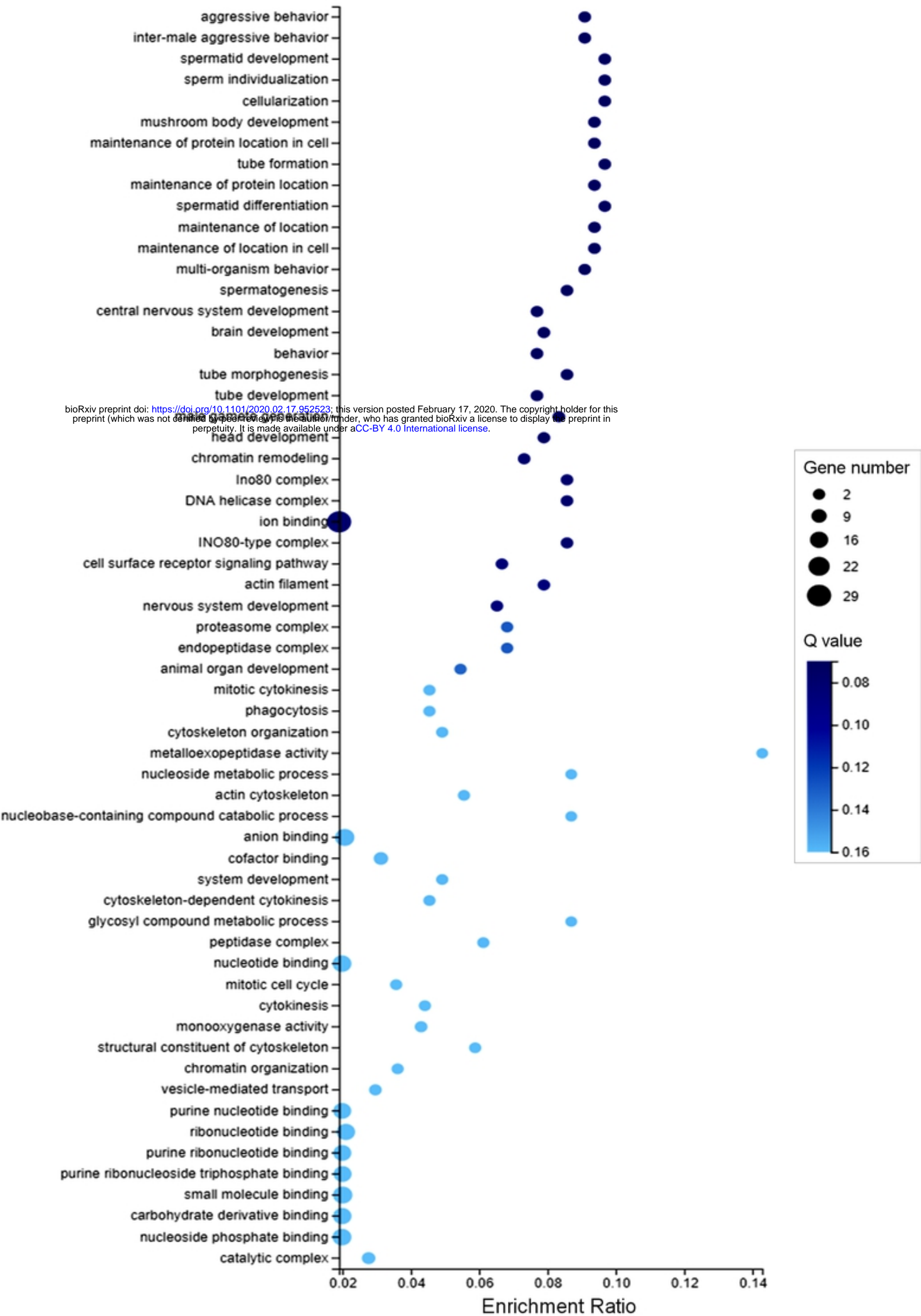


Fig 6B

Figure 6C

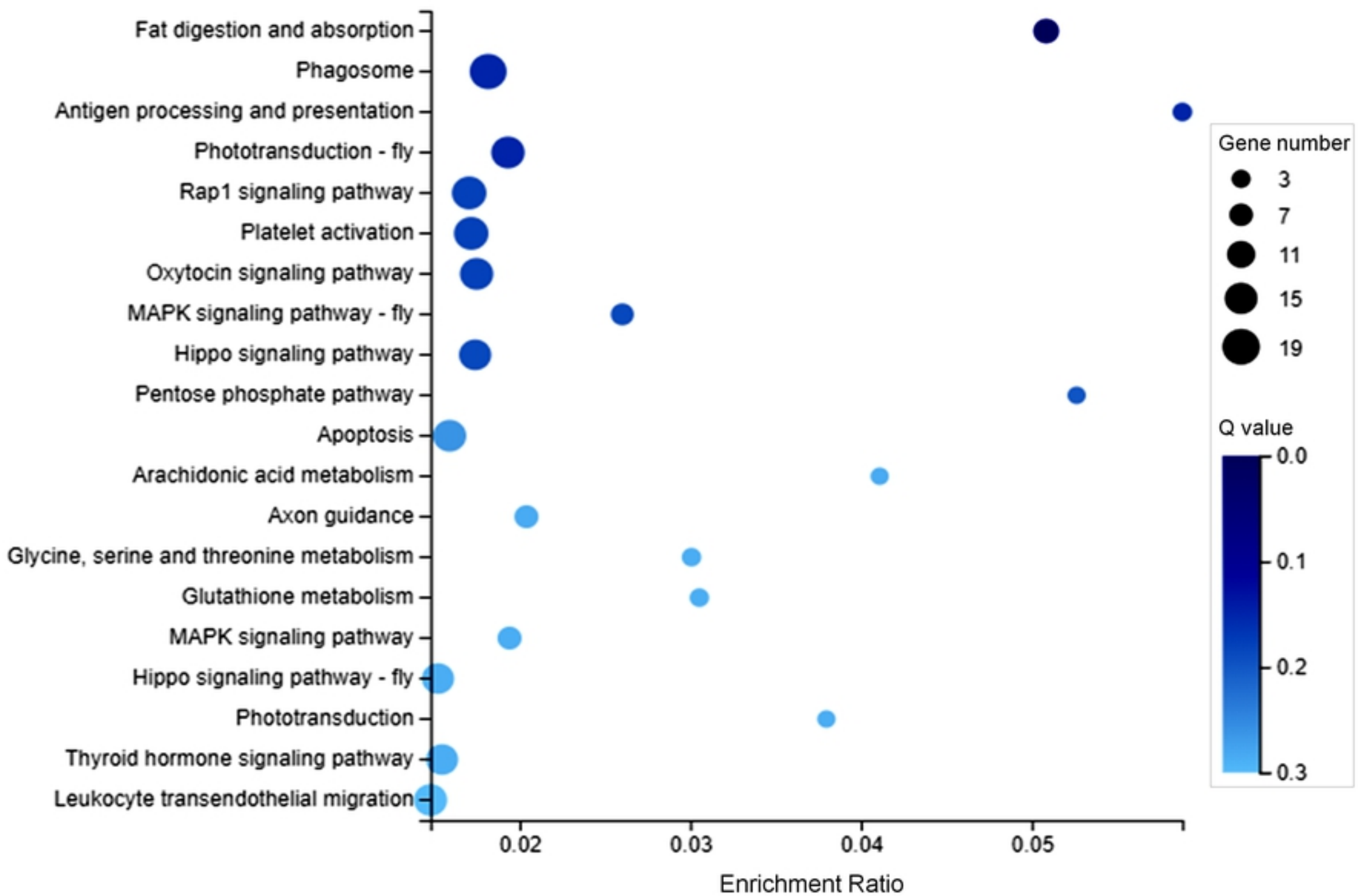


Fig 6C