Identification Of Novel Genes Responsible for The Pathogenesis of Endometriosis: An In-Silico Approach

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***Abstract*—Among all the Female gynaecological disorders, Endometriosis is one of the most debilitating conditions which presents with severe abdominal pain, dysmenorrhea, vomiting and is a powerful stepping stone towards Infertility. It is an Immune-Reproductive disorder, fostered by massive immune infiltration, various genetic alterations, diet and environmental perturbations, and impaired gene regulation. The study revolves around deduction of novel genes that are responsible for the underlying condition and hence prove to be a diagnostic marker. Five genes, namely- DCN, EGFR, MET, FN1 and HSPA4 have been identified after relentless exploration of publicly available GEO datasets. Functional annotation of the genes is suggestive of their contribution towards several factors that are suitable for the progression of endometriosis. In future, these genes can be targeted using novel drugs through high throughput screening of libraries and provide a therapeutic edge to the study. SNP analyses can be conducted to find out the deleterious polymorphisms in these genes leading to disease progression.**

***Index Terms*—Endometriosis, Therapeutic, GEO, genes, novel.**

I. INTRODUCTION

ETIOPATHOLOGY AND INCIDENCE OF THE DISEASE:

Endometriosis, a chronic, estrogen-dependent inflammatory disease marked by the ectopic implantation of endometrial-like tissue outside the uterine cavity, affects about 10-15% of females who are active in terms of reproduction (Rahmioglu et al., 2023).

PATHOGENESIS - MOLECULAR AND CELLULAR MECHANISMS:

Several complementary models of pathogenesis coexist, including retrograde menstruation, coelomic metaplasia, stem/progenitor cell implantation, and lymphovascular dissemination. Molecular data suggest that these mechanisms are not mutually exclusive and are modulated by host genetics and the local microenvironment (Giudice et al., 2010; Nyholt et al., 2012). Key molecular hallmarks include estrogen dependence, resistance to progesterone signaling, aberrant angiogenesis, epithelial-to-mesenchymal transition (EMT), extracellular matrix remodeling, and a hypoxic microenvironment that favors the survival of ectopic implants (Laganà et al., 2019; McKinnon et al., 2018). Metabolic reprogramming is another central pathogenic axis. Endometriotic stromal and epithelial cells frequently show Warburg-like glycolytic shifts, mitochondrial dysfunction, altered amino acid metabolism, and lipid remodelling that support proliferation, resistance to apoptosis, and local immune suppression (Dutta et al., 2018; Choi et al., 2021; Kusum et al., 2022). Metabolites such as lactate, succinate, and certain acyl-carnitines function as signalling molecules (stabilizing HIF1α, altering immune cell phenotype) and can reinforce a pro-inflammatory, pro-angiogenic niche conducive to lesion maintenance (Arosh et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2022). Immune dysregulation is both a driver and consequence of ectopic lesion biology. Peritoneal fluid from women with endometriosis exhibits altered cytokine and chemokine profiles (elevated IL-6, IL-8, TNF-α), dysfunctional macrophage activity, impaired NK cell cytotoxicity, and T-cell subset imbalances that fail to clear retrograde menstrual debris and in fact promote

survival and vascularization of implants (Fassbender et al., 2015; Houshdaran et al., 2016). Single-cell and spatial transcriptomic studies reveal lesion-specific immune states, including immunotolerant macrophage phenotypes and regulatory T-cell enrichment, that correlate with stromal programs for fibrosis and angiogenesis (Tan et al., 2022; Shih et al.; Fonseca et al., 2022). Extracellular vesicles (EVs) and microRNAs released by ectopic tissue modulate peritoneal immune cells, allowing for systemic alterations in immune-metabolic homeostasis, and represent both mechanistic mediators and candidate non-invasive biomarkers (Chu et al., 2024; Schoeman et al., 2024).

CLINICAL PRESENTATION AND SYMPTOMS:

Symptoms of endometriosis vary considerably: the cardinal complaints are cyclic pelvic pain and dysmenorrhea, but many women experience chronic pelvic pain, deep dyspareunia, bowel or bladder symptoms (depending on lesion site), and infertility (Vitonis et al.2017; Zondervan et al.2018). Pain severity does not reliably correlate with lesion load, reflecting the multifactorial pain mechanisms (inflammatory mediators, neurogenesis in lesions, and central sensitization) (Borrelli et al., 2021; McKinnon et al., 2018). Comorbidities include increased risk of certain autoimmune diseases, metabolic dysfunction, and mood disorders, consistent with systemic inflammation and shared genetic architectures (Rahmioglu et al., 2020; Shafrir et al., 2018).

GENETIC INSIGHTS:

More than thirty risk loci have been identified as linked to endometriosis susceptibility through genome-wide association studies (GWAS). These loci are associated with genes related to hormone metabolism, inflammation, and tissue remodeling (Rahmioglu et al., 2014; Cardoso et al., 2020; Sapkota et al., 2017). Novel loci such as FN1, GREB1, CYP2C19, and WNT4 have been reported, with an emphasis on their regulatory roles in estrogen and progesterone signaling (Painter et al., 2014; Matalliotakis et al., 2019). These results collectively imply that vulnerable people are predisposed to the creation and maintenance of ectopic endometrial tissue due to SNP-mediated deregulation of angiogenic pathways, immunological response, and estrogen production.

In addition to affecting hormone signaling, variations in the genes controlling estrogen metabolism (CYP2C19, ESR1, GREB1) also alter the expression of metabolic enzymes, which leads to oxidative imbalance and lipogenesis (Painter et al., 2014; DOI: 10.1016/j.fertnstert.2014.04.015). The convergence of polymorphisms in FN1, VEZT, and WNT4 on pathways controlling cell adhesion, glycolytic flux, and mitochondrial activity is further demonstrated by integrative multi-omics analysis (Rahmioglu et al., 2023; Lefebvre et al., 2024). A hypoxic, pro-inflammatory milieu that promotes lesion formation and immune evasion is maintained by this genetic–metabolic interaction (Ortiz et al., 2021).

Cell-type-resolved insights into eutopic and ectopic endometrium have been made possible by developments in single-cell RNA sequencing (scRNA-seq) and spatial transcriptomics, which have identified distinct epithelial, stromal, and immune populations with unique transcriptional programs (Tan et al., 2022; Fonseca et al., 2023). These findings demonstrate that vascular endothelial subsets, profibrotic stromal fibroblasts, and immunotolerant macrophages coordinate the inflammatory environment of lesions (Shih et al., 2022).

CURRENT TREATMENT APPROACHES:

Current management focuses on pain control and fertility preservation, and includes analgesics, hormonal suppression, and surgery. First-line medical treatments are combined oral contraceptives, progestins, LNG-IUDs, and GnRH agonists/antagonists to create hypoestrogenic states and reduce lesion activity (Taylor et al., 2021; Becker et al., 2022). Surgical excision or ablation is indicated for refractory pain or for restoring pelvic anatomy in infertility, but recurrence rates remain substantial (Vitonis et al.2017; Zondervan et al.). Non-hormonal strategies (NSAIDs, neuropathic pain agents) address symptom control but not lesion biology.

Emerging therapies aim at molecularly targeted or metabolism-directed interventions. Examples include selective estrogen receptor modulators, aromatase inhibitors (for steroid-producing lesions), angiogenesis inhibitors, immunomodulators, and agents targeting altered metabolic enzymes (e.g., PDK inhibitors, LDHA modulators) or oxidative stress

pathways (Subramaniam et al.; Kobayashi et al.; Zheng et al.). Mendelian randomization and multi-omics prioritisation studies are nominating druggable metabolic and proteomic nodes (Zheng et al., 2025; Koti et al., 2024) that could enable genotype-stratified clinical trials. Non-pharmacologic interventions addressing metabolic comorbidities (diet, exercise, and insulin sensitizers like metformin) are under investigation for symptomatic and potential disease-modifying effects (Hwang et al.; Li et al.).

TOWARD INTEGRATED BIOMARKER AND THERAPEUTIC STRATEGIES:

In addition to being an inflammatory, estrogen-dependent gynaecological disorder, endometriosis is now understood to be a systemic, multi-layered disease caused by the interaction of acquired somatic/epigenetic changes, inherited genetic risk, and dynamic changes in cellular metabolism that collectively influence the development, persistence, and symptomatology of lesions (Rahmioglu et al., 2023).The following changes are indicative of hypoxia-driven metabolic reprogramming and an inflammatory microenvironment(Dutta et al., 2018; Kobayashi, 2021). These metabolic alterations have functional significance: lipid peroxidation products and modified antioxidant metabolites indicate oxidative stress, which contributes to lesion persistence, while succinate and lactate function as signaling metabolites that support HIF1α stability and pro-inflammatory programs.

Numerous risk loci, including WNT4, VEZT, GREB1, and FSHB, have been linked to genes controlling immunological, metabolic, and hormonal pathways through recent genome-wide association studies (GWAS) (Rahmioglu et al., 2014; Sapkota et al., 2017). According to Powell et al. (2016), these single-nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) change the expression of genes involved in inflammatory cascades, angiogenic responses, and estrogen and progesterone signaling. When combined, they show a dynamic SNP–metabolic cross-talk that characterizes systemic symptom heterogeneity and lesion biology.

In summary, endometriosis represents a complex disease paradigm in which genetic susceptibility and metabolic dysfunction are closely intertwined. The integration of GWAS data, therefore, holds promise for uncovering novel biomarkers and therapeutic targets, marking a transition from descriptive pathology to a mechanistic understanding of this debilitating condition. Therefore, the aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of publicly available RNA-Seq and microarray datasets to identify novel genes associated with the condition, which can help us in a precision medicine approach and the development of new biomarkers

II. METHODOLOGY

SELECTION OF PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATASETS:

The datasets are recovered from the GEO NCBI database by searching the keywords “ENDOMETRIOSIS,” “HOMO SAPIENS,” and “EXPRESSION.” Two datasets, GEO23339 and GEO7305, are chosen for the study.

GEO accession number	Year of Study	Place of Study	Platform	Sample type	Number of participants
GSE23339	2010	Houston, USA	Illumina	Endometrial tissue	n=10 Endometrioma n=9 Healthy endometrium
GSE7305	2007	San Diego, USA	Affymetrix	Endometrial tissue	n=10 endometrium/ovary disease n=10 healthy endometrium

IDENTIFICATION OF DEGS:

Using the GEO2R tool embedded within the GEO NCBI database, two groups are made: "healthy control" and "endometriosis". The results are downloaded in TSV format and are analyzed. DEGs are identified from both datasets provided, and the p-value is set at less than 0.05 ($p < 0.001$). Downregulated genes are extracted by applying a filter to the log FC value, where log FC is less than -1. For upregulated ones, the filter is set to log FC greater than 1.

COMMON GENE IDENTIFICATION BY VENN DIAGRAM CONSTRUCTION:

The BioTools.fr Software (https://www.biotools.fr/misc/venny) is used to create a Venn diagram, allowing the identification of common genes present in both datasets. The same is done for upregulated and downregulated ones.

PPI (PROTEIN-PROTEIN INTERACTION) NETWORK CONSTRUCTION:

Using the STRING software, a network of all the DEGs is constructed. The network is created keeping a highest confidence level of 0.900, followed by exporting it in CSV format. The CSV file is opened using Cytoscape software, and from all the genes, the top 5 hub genes are extracted using the cytohubba plugin for further analysis.

ENRICHMENT ANALYSIS:

The top five (05) hub genes are functionally annotated using the DAVID and ShinyGO software, respectively. The MF (Molecular Functions), CC (Cellular Components), and BP (Basic Processes) are analyzed, followed by KEGG analysis to check the pathways in which the genes are involved.

The pathways, molecular functions, and basic processes reveal the mechanistic approach to endometriosis exacerbation.

III. RESULTS

ELUCIDATION OF DIFFERENTIALLY EXPRESSED GENES (DEGS):

From the dataset GSE23339, 1259 DEGs ($p < 0.001$) are identified, of which 718 are upregulated, and 541 are downregulated. 6382 DEGs ($p < 0.001$) are obtained from the GSE7305 dataset, of which 1659 genes are upregulated, and 1218 are downregulated.

970 common DEGs are extracted from both datasets and shown in the form of a Venn diagram in Figure 1. A few of the genes are: HOXC8, GPC3, BICC1, CLDN11, CKB, DCN, EGFR, ANO1, LY36, BRI3 and TIMP2.

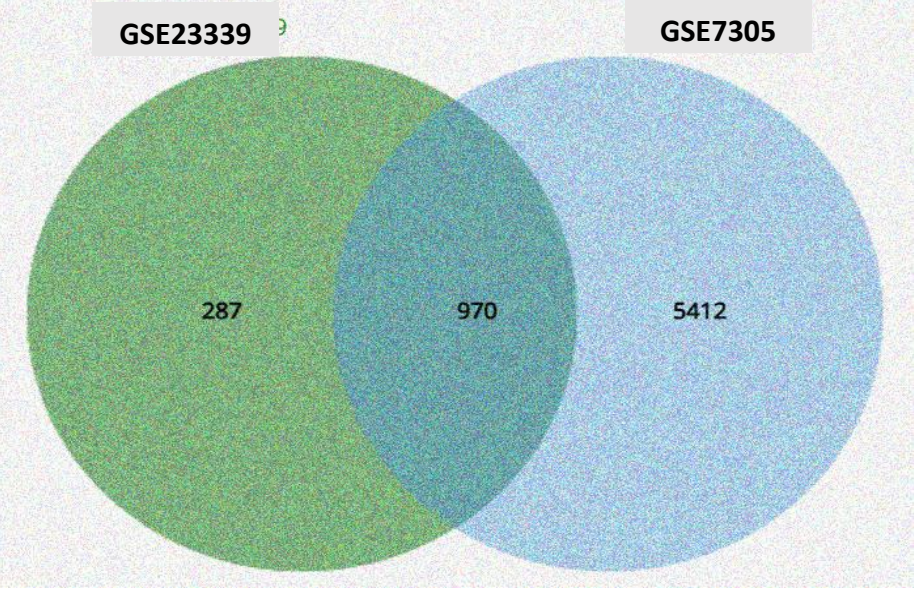


FIGURE 1: VENN DIAGRAM REFLECTING THE NUMBER OF COMMON GENES FOUND IN BOTH THE DATASETS.

PROTEIN-PROTEIN INTERACTION NETWORK AND EXTRACTION OF NOVEL GENES:

The DEGs are used to create a PPI network. Finally, the top five novel genes responsible for the condition have been unravelled. The top five genes, namely, are: DCN, MET, EGFR, FN1, and HSPA4, where EGFR is the central or key gene that interacts with the remaining genes as shadowed over in **Figure 2.**

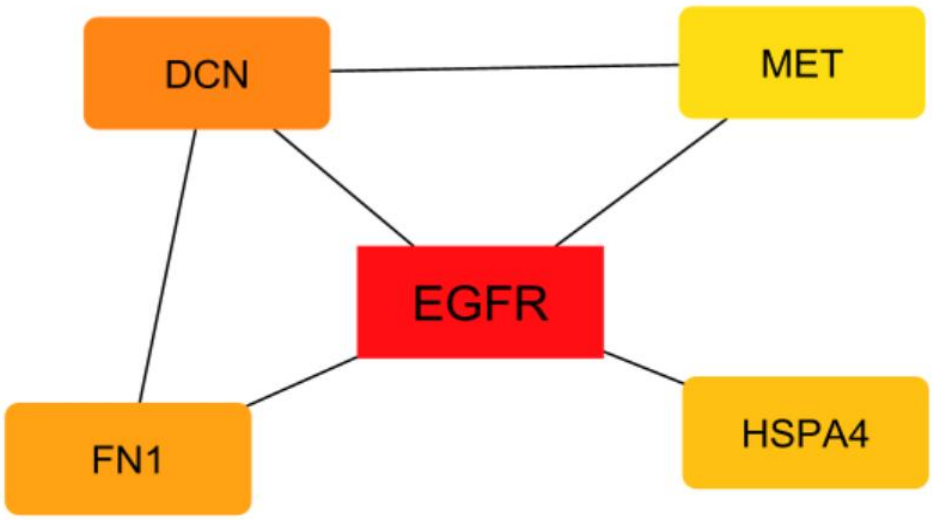


FIGURE 2: THE PROTEIN-PROTEIN INTERACTION NETWORK AS OBTAINED FROM CYTOSCAPE SOFTWARE.

EXPRESSION LEVELS OF THE FIVE NOVEL GENES:

A heatmap is constructed to reveal that the top five genes mentioned above are upregulated or downregulated in Endometriosis patients from both datasets. The down expressed ones are coloured in purple, whereas the ones which are upregulated are green stained. The logFC values in the trend line shown on the right-hand side of **Figure 3** ranges from -1 to 1.

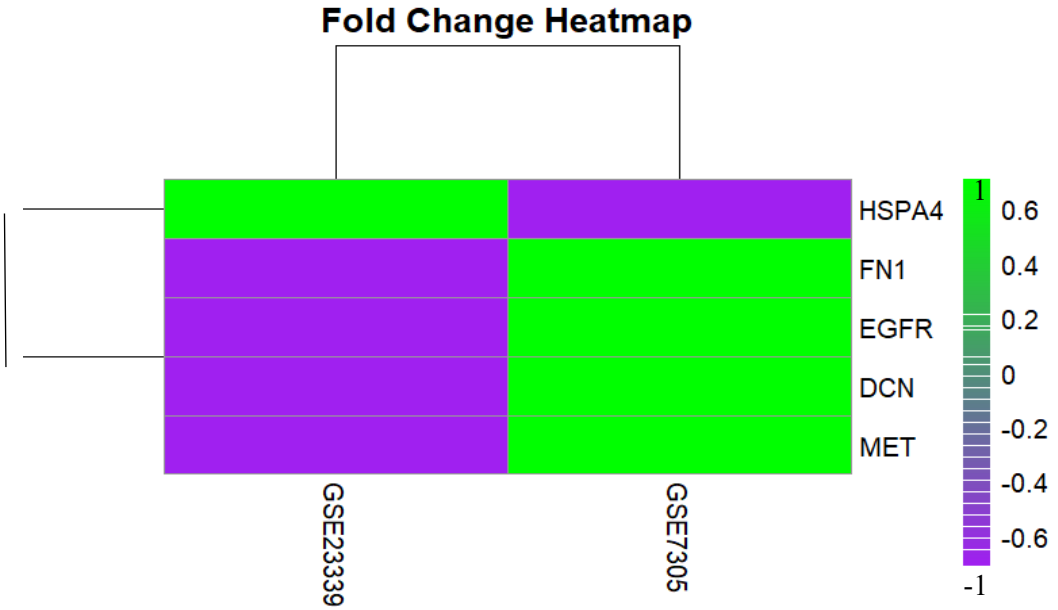
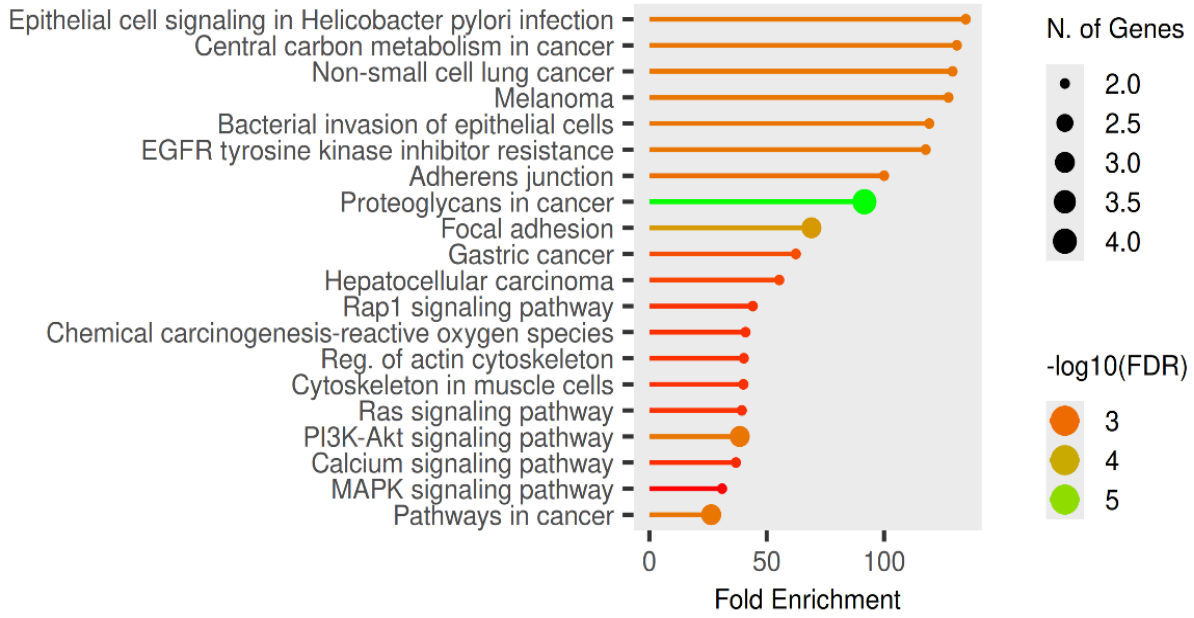


FIGURE 3: HEATMAP (MADE IN RSTUDIO) SHOWS THE STATUS OF GENE EXPRESSION FOR THOSE TOP FIVE GENES EXTRACTED FROM THE DATASETS.

GENE ONTOLOGY AND PATHWAY ENRICHMENT:

On analysis by ShinyGO, the five genes are found to play a role in EGFR inhibitor resistance, focal adhesion, adherens junction and various cell-signaling pathways as depicted below by the lollipop plot.



The results obtained by DAVID for functional annotation of the five genes are portrayed below.

BASIC PROCESSES (BP):

- positive regulation of autophagy and macroautophagy
- negative regulation of endothelial cell migration
- negative regulation of angiogenesis
- positive regulation of transcription by RNA polymerase II
- positive regulation of phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase/protein kinase B signal transduction
- positive regulation of mitochondrial depolarization
- negative regulation of vascular endothelial growth factor signaling pathway
- angiogenesis
- cell-matrix adhesion
- calcium-independent cell-matrix adhesion
- integrin-mediated signaling pathway
- phagocytosis
- signal transduction
- cell surface receptor signaling pathway
- cell migration

CELLULAR COMPONENTS (CC):

- extracellular region
- fibrinogen complex
- basement membrane
- extracellular space
- endoplasmic reticulum-Golgi intermediate compartment
- plasma membrane
- extracellular matrix
- collagen-containing extracellular matrix

MOLECULAR FUNCTIONS:

- RNA binding
- protein binding
- glycosaminoglycan binding
- extracellular matrix structural constituent conferring compression resistance
- extracellular matrix binding
- protease binding
- signaling receptor binding
- integrin binding
- extracellular matrix structural constituent
- protein binding
- collagen binding
- heparin binding
- peptidase activator activity
- identical protein binding

IV. DISCUSSIONS

Proteoglycans are proteins heavily modified with glycosaminoglycan (GAG) chains, such as heparan sulphate, chondroitin sulphate, or dermatan sulphate. They exist in several forms, such as cell surface proteoglycans and extracellular matrix proteoglycans. They mediate the availability of growth factors such as FGF, VEGF, and TGF-β, modulate cell signaling pathways, control cell adhesion and migration, and maintain tissue architecture. Endometriosis is the most common gynaecological malignancy. Proteoglycans play a crucial role in the tumour microenvironment, influencing tumour invasion, metastasis, and angiogenesis.

DCN (DECORIN) is a small leucine-rich proteoglycan (SLRP) that acts as a tumour suppressor protein. It binds to and inhibits EGFR, MET, and other tyrosine kinase receptors, reducing proliferation, migration, and invasion. In healthy endometrium, DCN contributes to controlled cell proliferation, collagen organization, and anti-fibrotic signaling. In endometriosis, however, its expression and function are disrupted. Studies show that DCN levels are downregulated in ectopic endometrial tissue. Because DCN normally suppresses cell proliferation—partly by inhibiting growth factor signaling such as TGF-β, EGFR, and IGF-1R—its reduction removes a significant growth "brake." This allows ectopic endometrial cells to proliferate more easily and establish persistent lesions. Endometriotic lesions often become highly fibrotic. DCN normally limits collagen accumulation and regulates matrix organization.

Lower DCN expression leads to excess collagen deposition, stiffening of the extracellular matrix, and the promotion of scar-like, fibrotic lesions. This fibrosis contributes to chronic pelvic pain and organ distortion. It can inhibit pro-angiogenic factors such as VEGF. In endometriosis, reduced DCN supports increased blood vessel formation, which helps supply and maintain ectopic implants. DCN plays a role in modulating innate immune signaling. Low DCN levels may contribute to the chronic inflammatory microenvironment characteristic of endometriosis by reducing the body's ability to regulate cytokine activity and inflammation-driven proliferation. The alterations in cell mobility and increase in invasiveness allow the spread of endometrial cells outside the uterus.

MET (MESENCHYMAL EPITHELIAL TRANSITION FACTOR), the receptor for hepatocyte growth factor, appears to play a pro-disease role in endometriosis by strengthening the capacity of ectopic endometrial cells to survive, migrate, and invade surrounding tissue. In many studies, MET is found to be upregulated or overly active in endometriotic lesions, which intensifies key signaling pathways that promote cell proliferation and resistance to apoptosis. This heightened signaling helps displaced endometrial cells adhere to peritoneal surfaces and persist in an environment where they would normally be cleared. MET activity also supports the formation of new blood vessels, providing the oxygen and nutrients needed for lesion maintenance. By enhancing cell motility and promoting a more invasive cellular phenotype, MET–HGF signaling contributes to the establishment, growth, and long-term stability of endometriotic implants. MET's involvement in endometriosis extends beyond simply promoting growth and survival. Endometriotic cells often exist in a microenvironment rich in inflammatory cytokines, and MET signaling amplifies their responsiveness to these cues, allowing them to behave more aggressively than normal endometrial cells. When HGF binds to MET, it triggers a cascade that enhances cytoskeletal rearrangement, which in turn improves the ability of these cells to move through the peritoneal cavity and invade tissue boundaries. This invasive behaviour is a defining feature of endometriosis, helping to explain how lesions can establish themselves in multiple, sometimes distant, sites.

Another important aspect is MET's contribution to creating a supportive stromal environment. Stromal fibroblasts within lesions can also express MET, and when activated, they secrete factors that encourage fibrosis, angiogenesis, and chronic inflammation. This reciprocal interaction between epithelial and stromal cells reinforces the persistence and expansion of lesions. MET activation also appears to interfere with immune surveillance, as it enhances anti-apoptotic pathways and modulates local immune signaling, thereby reducing the likelihood that ectopic cells will be recognized and eliminated by immune cells.

In addition, MET signaling can influence hormonal responsiveness. Endometriotic tissue is characterized by altered estrogen signaling, and heightened MET activity can further sensitize cells to estrogen-driven proliferation, thereby facilitating lesion growth even when progesterone signaling is impaired. Altogether, MET functions as a central coordinator of proliferative, invasive, angiogenic, and immune-evasive processes, making it an important driver of lesion establishment and chronic disease progression in endometriosis.

EPIDERMAL GROWTH FACTOR RECEPTOR (EGFR) plays a central role in the progression of endometriosis by promoting the abnormal growth, survival, and invasiveness of ectopic endometrial cells. In many patients, EGFR is expressed at higher levels in ectopic lesions compared with normal endometrium, and this heightened expression makes endometriotic cells more responsive to epidermal growth factor and related ligands present in the peritoneal environment. Once activated, EGFR triggers several intracellular signaling pathways—most prominently the MAPK/ERK and PI3K/AKT cascades—that drive persistent cell proliferation. Because endometriosis involves the ability of endometrial cells to survive outside the uterus, EGFR-dependent anti-apoptotic signaling becomes particularly important; the activation of downstream kinases helps ectopic cells evade normal cell-death mechanisms and persist in a location where they would otherwise be eliminated. This enhanced survival capacity contributes directly to the chronic and recurring nature of the disease. EGFR signaling also plays a crucial role in the adhesion and migration processes that enable endometrial cells to implant on peritoneal surfaces. The receptor influences cytoskeletal dynamics and upregulates adhesion molecules, thereby enhancing cells' ability to attach, spread, and migrate across mesothelial layers. This is crucial for the early development of lesions and the dissemination of endometriotic tissue within the pelvic cavity. Furthermore, EGFR activation stimulates the secretion of matrix-degrading enzymes such as matrix metalloproteinases, which enable cells to invade deeper tissues. The combination of enhanced motility and increased invasive capacity allows lesions to become more firmly established and can contribute to pain and organ dysfunction as disease severity increases.

Another key aspect of EGFR's involvement is its role in angiogenesis. Endometriotic lesions require a stable blood supply to grow, and EGFR signaling promotes the production of pro-angiogenic factors such as vascular endothelial growth factor. As new blood vessels form around the lesions, they deliver oxygen and nutrients necessary for ongoing proliferation. This vascular support is a hallmark of progressive lesions that are metabolically active and resistant to regression.

EGFR also interacts with inflammatory pathways that are already heightened in endometriosis. By stimulating the release of cytokines and chemokines, EGFR contributes to a pro-inflammatory environment that further enhances cellular proliferation, survival, and fibrosis. This interplay between growth factor signaling and inflammation solidifies EGFR's role as a major driver of disease progression. Through its coordinated effects on proliferation, survival, invasion, angiogenesis, and inflammation, EGFR supports the establishment, expansion, and long-term persistence of endometriotic lesions.

FIBRONECTIN 1 (FN1) is a critical extracellular matrix glycoprotein that plays a multifaceted role in the pathogenesis and exacerbation of endometriosis. In normal tissue, FN1 contributes to cell adhesion, migration, and wound healing; however, in endometriosis, its expression is significantly upregulated in ectopic endometrial lesions, thereby amplifying processes that sustain disease progression. One of the primary roles of FN1 in endometriosis is to facilitate the adhesion of endometrial cells to peritoneal and pelvic surfaces. This adhesion is mediated through interactions with integrins and other matrix receptors on the cell surface, which not only strengthen the attachment of ectopic cells but also enhance their ability to spread across the peritoneal lining. The increased adhesive capacity allows these cells to resist mechanical and immune-mediated clearance, creating the foundation for lesion establishment and long-term persistence.

FN1 also plays a pivotal role in cellular migration and invasiveness, which are essential for the expansion of endometriotic lesions. By activating downstream signaling pathways such as focal adhesion kinase

(FAK), MAPK/ERK, and PI3K/AKT, FN1 promotes cytoskeletal remodeling, enabling ectopic endometrial cells to migrate efficiently and invade surrounding tissues. This invasiveness contributes to the formation of deep infiltrating lesions, which are often associated with severe pelvic pain, organ dysfunction, and infertility. Moreover, FN1 is intricately involved in fibrosis, a hallmark of chronic endometriosis. Its upregulation supports extracellular matrix deposition and remodeling, promoting tissue stiffening and scarring within lesions. The fibrotic microenvironment not only stabilizes existing lesions but also sustains chronic inflammation, creating a feedback loop that further exacerbates disease progression.

In addition to its roles in adhesion, migration, and fibrosis, FN1 contributes indirectly to angiogenesis. Its presence within the extracellular matrix can support endothelial cell adhesion and migration, facilitating the formation of new blood vessels that supply nutrients and oxygen to growing lesions, thereby sustaining their metabolic activity. FN1 is also implicated in modulating the inflammatory microenvironment of endometriotic tissue. By interacting with immune cells and influencing cytokine release, FN1 helps maintain chronic inflammation, which is central to lesion survival, proliferation, and pain generation.

Collectively, FN1 functions as a key mediator that integrates multiple pathological processes in endometriosis, including enhanced adhesion, invasiveness, fibrosis, angiogenesis, and chronic inflammation. Its overexpression in ectopic lesions reinforces the persistence and progression of disease, contributing to the severity of clinical symptoms and the difficulty in achieving long-term lesion regression. Through these combined effects, FN1 represents both a marker of disease exacerbation and a potential therapeutic target for limiting lesion growth and mitigating the chronic complications of endometriosis.

HSPA4, also known as heat shock protein A4, is a member of the HSP110 family of molecular chaperones, playing a crucial role in maintaining protein homeostasis, responding to stress, and promoting cellular survival. In the context of endometriosis, HSPA4 has been increasingly recognized as a significant contributor to disease progression by supporting the survival, proliferation, and invasiveness of ectopic endometrial cells. Endometriotic lesions exist in a hostile microenvironment characterized by hypoxia, oxidative stress, and chronic inflammation. Under these conditions, normal endometrial cells would typically undergo apoptosis; however, HSPA4 is upregulated in ectopic tissue, where it functions to stabilize misfolded proteins, prevent aggregation, and maintain proper protein folding. This cytoprotective role allows ectopic cells to resist stress-induced cell death, facilitating their long-term survival outside the uterine cavity and contributing to the persistence and recurrence of lesions.

Beyond its chaperone function, HSPA4 influences several intracellular signaling pathways that drive the progression of endometriosis. By modulating pathways such as PI3K/AKT and MAPK/ERK, HSPA4 enhances cell proliferation, motility, and invasion, enabling endometrial cells to adhere to peritoneal surfaces, migrate across the extracellular matrix, and infiltrate surrounding tissues. Its anti-apoptotic activity also diminishes the effectiveness of immune-mediated clearance, allowing ectopic cells to evade normal immune surveillance and establish stable lesions. This interplay between stress response and signaling-mediated survival makes HSPA4 a central regulator of lesion expansion and resilience. It further contributes to the inflammatory and angiogenic environment that supports lesion growth. Through its influence on stress-responsive signaling and cytokine modulation, HSPA4 helps maintain chronic inflammation, which promotes tissue remodeling, fibrosis, and pain associated with endometriosis. Additionally, by stabilizing pro-angiogenic proteins and supporting endothelial cell survival, HSPA4 indirectly facilitates neovascularization, ensuring that growing lesions receive sufficient oxygen and nutrients. This combination of effects on survival, proliferation, invasion, inflammation, and angiogenesis positions HSPA4 as a multifaceted promoter of endometriosis progression.

Overall, HSPA4 functions as a key molecular chaperone that enhances the adaptability and aggressiveness of ectopic endometrial cells, allowing them to persist, expand, and maintain a supportive microenvironment in ectopic locations. Its upregulation in endometriotic lesions highlights its importance in disease exacerbation and identifies it as

a potential biomarker and therapeutic target for interventions aimed at limiting lesion growth, improving cellular clearance, and mitigating chronic inflammation in endometriosis.

V. CONCLUSION

The novel genes thus identified from the publicly available datasets play a significant role in immune invasion, angiogenesis, and subsequent promotion towards Endometriosis. These genes might prove to be a potent biomarker for screening and early diagnosis of the condition, and can also be used as a therapeutic target. Further, extensive wet-lab studies like Gene expression profiling, cell culture assays are required to validate the study. Methylation specific assays would add an extra edge to the research since it would delve into Epigenetics. The genes can be targeted through new small molecule inhibitors and/or phytochemicals which can be chalked out by virtue of Virtual Screening.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have declared no conflict of interest in this study.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Idea: A.C, Manuscript writing: T.M and A.C, Editing: P.J and T.M, Picture and presentation: S.P, Data acquisition: A.C and P.J, Finalisation of the draft: A.C, T.M, P.J and S.P

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