

# RNA sequencing analysis of FGF2-responsive transcriptome in skin fibroblasts

Baojin Wu<sup>1</sup>, Xinjie Tang<sup>1</sup>, Zhaoping Zhou<sup>1</sup>, Honglin Ke<sup>2</sup>, Shao Tang<sup>3</sup>, Ronghu Ke<sup>Corresp. 1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plastic, Huashan Hospital Affiliated to Fudan University, Shanghai, China

<sup>2</sup> Emergency, Huashan Hospital Affiliated to Fudan University, Shanghai, China

<sup>3</sup> Department of Statistics, Florida State University, CA, USA

Corresponding Author: Ronghu Ke

Email address: ronghuke@163.com

**Objective:** FGF2 plays important roles in the skin wounds. However, the mechanisms of FGF2 in wound repair have not been fully elucidated. This study aimed to comprehensively decipher the FGF2-responsive core genes and its regulatory networks in dermal fibroblasts.

**Methods:** RNA-seq was performed to compare the transcriptional profiles between FGF2-treated skin fibroblasts and control. Subsequently, GO (Gene Ontology) analysis and KEGG (Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes) analysis were used for the enrichment of DEGs (differentially expressed genes). Moreover, the co-expression networks between mRNAs and LncRNAs were constructed by Pearson correlation analysis and visualized by Cytoscape software. **Results:** A total of 1475 DEGs was identified. GO annotation showed these DGEs were mainly enriched in the ECM organization, cell adhesion and cell migration. KEGG pathway analysis demonstrated the FGF2-responsive DEGs were significantly involved in ECM-receptor interaction, PI3K-Akt signaling and Hippo pathway. Meanwhile, 213 differentially expressed LncRNAs were identified and three key LncRNAs (HOXA-AS2, H19, and SNHG8) were highlighted in FGF2-treated fibroblasts. **Conclusion:** The current study comprehensive analyzed the FGF2-responsive transcriptional profile and provide candidate mechanisms that may account for FGF2-mediated skin wounds.

1 **Title page**

2 **Title:** RNA sequencing analysis of FGF2-responsive transcriptome in skin fibroblasts

3  
4 **Authors:** Baojin Wu<sup>1#</sup>; Xinjie Tang<sup>1#</sup>; Zhaoping Zhou<sup>1</sup>; Honglin Ke<sup>2</sup>; Shao Tang<sup>3</sup>, Ronghu Ke

5 <sup>1§</sup>

6  
7 **Affiliation:** <sup>1</sup>Department of Plastic Surgery, <sup>2</sup>Department of Emergency, Huashan Hospital  
8 Affiliated to Fudan University, Shanghai, China. <sup>3</sup>Department of Statistics, Florida State  
9 University, FL, USA.

10  
11 <sup>#</sup>Baojin Wu and Xinjie Tang are equal to this work.

12  
13 **§Correspondence to:**

14 Ronghu Ke, MD

15 Department of Plastic Surgery, Huashan Hospital, Fudan University, Shanghai, China

16 No. 12, Wu Lu Mu Qi Road (M), Shanghai 200040, China.

17 Tel: +86(021) 5288 7832

18 Email: ronghuke@163.com

28

29

30

31 **Abstract**

32 **Objective:** FGF2 plays important roles in the skin wounds. However, the mechanisms of FGF2  
33 in wound repair have not been fully elucidated. This study aimed to comprehensively decipher  
34 the FGF2-responsive core genes and its regulatory networks in dermal fibroblasts.

35 **Methods:** RNA-seq was performed to compare the transcriptional profiles between FGF2-  
36 treated skin fibroblasts and control. Subsequently, GO (Gene Ontology) analysis and KEGG  
37 (Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes) analysis were used for the enrichment of DEGs  
38 (differentially expressed genes). Moreover, the co-expression networks between mRNAs and  
39 LncRNAs were constructed by Pearson correlation analysis and visualized by Cytoscape  
40 software.

41 **Results:** A total of 1475 DEGs was identified. GO annotation showed these DGEs were mainly  
42 enriched in the ECM organization, cell adhesion and cell migration. KEGG pathway analysis  
43 demonstrated the FGF2-responsive DEGs were significantly involved in ECM-receptor  
44 interaction, PI3K-Akt signaling and Hippo pathway. Meanwhile, 213 differentially expressed  
45 LncRNAs were identified and three key LncRNAs (HOXA-AS2, H19, and SNHG8) were  
46 highlighted in FGF2-treated fibroblasts.

47 **Conclusion:** The current study comprehensive analyzed the FGF2-responsive transcriptional  
48 profile and provide candidate mechanisms that may account for FGF2-mediated skin wounds.

49

50 **Key word:** FGF2, RNA-seq, fibroblast, wound healing

51

52

53

54

55

56

57 **INTRODUCTION**

58       Fibrotic diseases occur almost every organ including lung, liver, kidney, heart or skin.  
59       Fibrosis is a fundamental wound healing process that allows the ordered replacement of dead or  
60       damaged cells after injury. Despite numerous crucial differences among fibrotic pathologies of  
61       various organs, the ubiquity of the fibrotic response reveals commonalities among these tissues  
62       to the fibrotic program (Zeisberg & Kalluri 2013). One of these commonalities is the paradigm  
63       of fibroblast activation, during which fibroblasts are responsible for deposition of extracellular  
64       matrix proteins (Hinz 2016). Unfortunately, no curative treatments for fibroblast activation are  
65       yet available, highlighting the critical need for a better fundamental understanding of molecular  
66       mechanisms that may be therapeutically tractable.

67       Fibroblast growth factor 2 (FGF2), also known as basic fibroblast growth factor (bFGF), is  
68       one of the family members of mammalian fibroblast growth factors. FGF2 has been shown to be  
69       involved in mitogenesis, differentiation, proliferative lifespan, survival, oncogenesis, and stem  
70       cell self-renewal (Akl et al. 2016). Exogenous FGF2 has shown to have both accelerative and  
71       anti-fibrotic effects in various types of skin wounds including acute incision wounds, avulsions,  
72       and burn wounds (Akita et al. 2008; Matsumine 2015; Ono et al. 2007). Moreover, FGF2  
73       antagonized TGF $\beta$ 1-induced differentiation of fibroblasts and thus affected fibrosis during  
74       wound repair (Dolivo et al. 2017a). Importantly, FGF2 was observed to induce a shift in gene  
75       expression to a more anti-fibrotic signature attenuated the expression of pro-fibrotic genes,  
76       including collagen I, collagen III,  $\alpha$ -SMA, and MMP-1 (Dolivo et al. 2017b). In spite of the  
77       extensive observations, the mechanisms by which FGF2 regulates the fibrotic response remain  
78       incompletely understood.

79 Microarray and high-throughput sequencing technologies are powerful tools that can be used  
80 to investigate potential targets genes for diseases and underlying pathological mechanisms(Mery  
81 et al. 2019). In the present study, we performed RNA-seq to compare the expression profiles  
82 between FGF2-treated fibroblasts and control fibroblasts. Following the screening out the  
83 differentially expressed genes (DEGs), we identified the key genes and the signaling pathways  
84 triggered by FGF2 in skin fibroblasts by bioinformatics analysis. Thus, the study would provide  
85 a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms regulated by FGF2 in skin fibroblasts, which  
86 may guide subsequent studies on skin wounds.

## 87 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### 88 **Cell cultures and reagents**

89 Human skin FBs were prepared as previously described (Xuan et al. 2014). The collection of  
90 skin tissues was approved by Huashan hospital of ethical review board (Ref: 2020-350). FBs  
91 were grown in Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium (DMEM; Gibco BRL, Grand Island, NY,  
92 USA) supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum (PAA Laboratories, Etobicoke, Ontario,  
93 Canada), 100 U/mL penicillin, and 100 µg/mL streptomycin (Gibco BRL) at 37°C in a  
94 humidified atmosphere containing 5% CO<sub>2</sub>. When confluent, the cells were trypsinized using a  
95 0.25% trypsin/0.02% EDTA solution (Sigma, St Louis, MO, USA) and subcultured at a 1:3 ratio.  
96

### 97 **RNA isolation and RNA sequencing**

98 After 48 hours of culture, total RNA was extracted from 7 samples (4 samples from FGF2-  
99 treated FBs, 3 samples from control FBs) using Trizol (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA). The libraries  
100 were constructed by RNA Library Prep Kit for Illumina (NEB, MA, and USA) according to the  
101 manufacturer's instructions. The library products were sequenced using Illumina HiSeq™ 2500  
102 (Illumina, CA, USA). Index of the reference genome was built and paired-end clean reads were  
103 aligned to the reference genome using STAR. HTSeq v0.6.0 was used to count the reads  
104 numbers mapped to each gene. And then FPKM of each gene was calculated based on the length  
105 of the gene and reads count mapped to this gene. Differentially expressed RNA between the two

106 groups was performed using the DESeq. 2R package (1.10.1). The resulting p values were  
107 adjusted using the Benjamini and Hochberg's approach. Genes with an adjusted  $p < 0.05$  and  
108  $|\log_2FC| > 1.0$  were assigned as differentially expressed genes (DEGs) or LncRNAs.

109

### 110 **Annotation for DEGs**

111 For the functional annotation, all the DEGs were analyzed by using the DAVID web tool  
112 (<https://david.ncifcrf.gov/>). GO Annotation for DEGs included three terms, molecular functions  
113 (MF), biological processes (BP), and cellular components (CC) of genomic products. As for  
114 pathway enrichment, DEGs was analyzed by Kyoto encyclopedia of genes and genomes (KEGG)  
115 pathway within the DAVID database (Version 6.7).  $P < 0.05$  was considered as statistical  
116 significance.

117

### 118 **LncRNA-mRNA co-expression network construction**

119 To explore interactions among the differentially expressed mRNAs and LncRNAs, the co-  
120 expression networks between mRNAs and LncRNAs were constructed by Pearson correlation  
121 analysis. The lncRNA-mRNA networks were built according to the expression intensity in  
122 mRNAs and LncRNAs. The Pearson coefficients for each pair of mRNA-lncRNA were calculate  
123 and screened to obtain the significant correlation pairs with which to construct the networks  
124 (coefficient  $> 0.95$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). The PPI network of co-expressed genes of the top 10 lncRNAs was  
125 constructed from the network analyst website (<https://www.networkanalyst.ca/faces/home.xhtml>)  
126 (Wang et al. 2020a).

127

## 128 **RESULTS**

### 129 **Transcriptional profiles in FGF2-treated fibroblasts.**

130 To determine the effect of FGF2 on the FBs, skin FBs were treated FBs with FGF2 at different  
131 doses and assessed the changes in morphology. After Day2 of FGF2 treatment, skin fibroblasts  
132 revealed a smaller size, less spindle-like shape in a dose-dependent manner (Fig. 1A), indicating  
133 fibroblasts activation was suppressed by FGF2. To understand differential expression profiles  
134 between FGF2-treated fibroblasts and control, RNA-seq was performed. Our results showed a

135 total of 1475 mRNAs were differentially expressed in FGF2-treated fibroblasts (Fig.1B, Table  
136 S1), among which 676 genes were up-regulated and 799 genes were down-regulated (Fig.1C).  
137 Meanwhile, there were 213 LncRNAs with a fold change  $> 2$  (Fig.1B, Table S2), among  
138 which 80 LncRNAs were up-regulated and 133 were down-regulated (Fig.1C).

139

#### 140 **GO enrichment for DEGs.**

141 To explore the functions of the DEGs, the 1475 DEGs were annotated by three GO categories  
142 (biological processes, molecular functions, and cellular components). For GO biological process,  
143 DEGs were involved in the extracellular matrix (ECM) organization, angiogenesis, cell adhesion,  
144 positive regulation of cell migration and collagen catabolic process (Fig.2). For molecular  
145 function, the DEGs were significantly enriched in regulation of calcium ion binding, growth  
146 factor activity, ECM structural constituent, heparin binding and frizzled binding (Fig.2). For  
147 cellular component annotation, the most significant terms were enriched in extracellular space,  
148 extracellular region, proteinaceous ECM, ECM and plasma membrane (Fig.2).

149

#### 150 **KEGG pathway analysis.**

151 A KEGG pathway analysis was performed to identify the FGF2-associated pathways in FBs. The  
152 1475 DEGs were mapped to 44 KEGG pathways, and 37 pathways were significantly enriched  
153 ( $P \leq 0.05$ ) (Table S3). Several main pathways were represented, including ECM-receptor  
154 interaction, PI3K-Akt signaling pathway, hippo signaling pathway, complement and coagulation  
155 cascades, TGF-beta signaling pathway, MAPK signaling pathway, proteoglycans in cancer,  
156 protein digestion and focal adhesion (Fig.3). Using the STRING database, the 1475 DEGs were  
157 filtered into the PPI network.

158

#### 159 **lncRNA-mRNA co-expression network.**

160 To explore interactions between the differentially expressed mRNAs and lncRNAs, pairs of  
161 mRNAs-lncRNAs were analyzed by the Pearson correlation analysis and were sorted by the  
162 coefficients, which represented the associations of interactions between mRNA and LncRNA in  
163 the networks (Table. S4). Subsequently, the PPI networks of 213 lncRNA were constructed from

164 the network analyst website. The results showed the top 10 significant LncRNAs included  
165 HOXA-AS2, LOC100130417, H19, LOC100507420 and SNHG8 (Fig. 4A). Based on the GO  
166 enrichment, ECM organization was significantly involved in the FGF2-mediated biological  
167 process. And the potential networks of mRNAs-lncRNAs in the ECM organization were  
168 constructed. The three key LncRNAs, including HOXA-AS2, H19 and SNHG8 were identified  
169 in the FGF2-mediated ECM organization. The three LncRNAs were associated with six DEGs,  
170 including LOX, TGFB1, ITGA10, COL4A1, COL3A1 and PDGFA. Among the 6 DEGs, only  
171 ITGA10 was upregulated and other 5 DEGs were downregulated (Fig. 4B).

## 172 **DISCUSSION**

173 Despite advancements in the understanding of the mechanism of skin wound repair, an  
174 effective method for accelerating the process remains to be identified. Fibroblasts play key roles  
175 in skin homeostasis. FGF2 contributes to the fibroblastic functions including cell migration,  
176 collagen synthesis and cell proliferation. Therefore, understanding the behavior of FGF2 in  
177 fibroblasts is essential to identify an effective way to improve wound healing. The present study  
178 performed RNA-seq to explore the DEGs of skin fibroblasts in response to FGF2. By  
179 bioinformatics analysis, we identified 1475 FGF2-responsive DEGs, including LOX, TGFB1,  
180 PDGFA, COL3A1, COL4A1 and ITGA10. Additionally, our results suggested HOXA-AS2, H19  
181 and SNHG8 were involved in FGF2-mediated ECM organization. Thus, the study would provide  
182 a comprehensive understanding of the FGF2-responsive genes in fibroblasts, which may guide  
183 subsequent studies on wound healing.

184 Our first goal was to identify the important biological processes in human fibroblasts  
185 exposure to FGF2. Our GO analysis demonstrated that the FGF2-associated DEGs were mainly  
186 enriched in the ECM organization, cell adhesion and cell migration. This result accorded with the  
187 knowledge that FGF2 functioned as important regulator in cell behavior, growth and survival  
188 (Akl et al. 2016; Klagsbrun 1992; Przybylski 2009). Also, we further explored the effect of  
189 exogenous FGF2 on signal pathways in skin fibroblasts. KEGG enrichment results implied that

190 FGF2 was mainly involved in classical pathways including ECM-receptor interaction and PI3K-  
191 Akt signaling pathway. The result was accordance with our knowledge that FGF signaling is of  
192 critical importance during development and homeostasis. Cell interactions with the ECM are  
193 mediated by integrins and various signalling cascades are activated, which control cell adhesion,  
194 proliferation, morphogenesis, differentiation, and survival (DiPersio & Van De Water 2019).  
195 Apart from the two canonical pathways, our enrichment results indicated that FGF2 was  
196 significantly associated with Hippo signaling pathway. Yes-associated protein (YAP) and T-Box  
197 5 (TBX5) are key regulators of the Hippo pathway. In line with our results, FGF2 was observed  
198 to promote the Hippo/YAP-signaling by inducing the nuclear-YAP expression during lens cell  
199 proliferation and differentiation, indicating FGF2 plays important roles in mediating Hippo  
200 suppression of YAP transcriptional activity(Dawes et al. 2018). Furthermore, FGFR1 and  
201 FGFR2 were showed to directly interact with YAP/TAZ at multiple tyrosine residues  
202 independent of upstream Hippo signaling (Azad et al. 2020). Thus, our study, together with  
203 previous observations, suggested that the pivotal role of the FGF/FGFR signaling in mediating  
204 Hippo signaling pathway.

205 In parallel, we deciphered the significant LncRNAs regulated by FGF2 in skin fibroblasts.  
206 Our study has identified 213 differentially expressed LncRNAs and highlighted the three key  
207 LncRNAs (HOXA-AS2, H19, and SNHG8) in FGF2-treated fibroblasts. HOXA-AS2 (HoxA  
208 cluster antisense RNA 2), located on chromosome 6, plays vital roles in the development of  
209 numerous cancers. HOXA-AS2 has been recently found to exhibit aberrant expression and  
210 promote cell migration and invasion abilities in a variety of malignancies, including non-small  
211 cell lung cancer, breast cancer, gastric cancer, gallbladder carcinoma, hepatocellular carcinoma  
212 and pancreatic cancer(Wang et al. 2018). But, whether HOXA-AS2 exhibits a certain function in  
213 fibroblasts remains elusive. Here, our result showed HOXA-AS2 was downregulated in FGF2-  
214 treated fibroblasts and was associated with the pathway of ECM organization. Based on the roles  
215 of ECM in skin wound, our study indicated HOXA-AS2 might involved in the FGF2-mediated  
216 ECM organization during wound healing. LncRNA H19 is an important imprinted gene locating

217 on human chromosome. H19 has been recently observed to be upregulated in keloid tissues and  
218 fibroblasts and silencing of H19 promoted cell viability, migration and invasion of the  
219 fibroblasts(Wang et al. 2020b). In the present study, H19 was downregulated in FGF2-treated  
220 fibroblasts, suggesting FGF2 attenuated the expression of H19. Conversely, Sun et al reported  
221 the H19 levels were remarkably increased in FGF2-treated human umbilical vein endothelial  
222 cells(Sun et al. 2019). Thus, our study and previous observation indicated the FGF2-mediated  
223 H19 expression appeared to exhibit a context-dependent pattern. SNHG8, an important member  
224 of SNHG, has been suggested to promote proliferation and invasion and act as an oncogene in  
225 colorectal cancer, gastric cancer and hepatocellular carcinoma. In spite of the significance of  
226 SNHG8 in cancer, the regulatory role of SNHG8 in fibroblasts as well as wound healing is rarely  
227 reported. Here, our study showed SNHG8 was downregulated in FGF2-treated fibroblasts.  
228 Taking into account the significance of FGF2 in wound healing, we postulated that the novel  
229 LncRNA provided candidate mechanisms that may account for FGF2-mediated wound healing.

## 230 **CONCLUSIONS**

231 In summary, the current study carried out RNA-seq to identify the crucial genes in FGF2-treated  
232 skin fibroblasts. Our results showed FGF2 was associated with ECM organization as well as  
233 other biological processes including cell adhesion and cell migration. Furthermore, our study  
234 identified the key genes (LOX, TGFB1, PDGFA, COL3A1, COL4A1 and ITGA10), with LOX  
235 being particularly prominent. Notably, our study highlighted the three key LncRNAs (HOXA-  
236 AS2, H19, and SNHG8) in FGF2-treated fibroblasts. Further studies are needed to delineate the  
237 mechanism that underlies the key LncRNAs in FGF2-mediated cellular functions. Therefore,  
238 the present study may provide new ideas and targets for the diagnosis and treatment of skin  
239 wound.

## 240 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

241 The authors gratefully thank Zi-Qi for his statistical assistance.

242

243 **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND DECLARATIONS**

244 **Funding**

245 This work was supported by Fund from National Natural Science Foundation of China  
246 (No.81401616) and Natural Science Foundation of Shanghai (14ZR1405100).

247

248 **Declaration of interests**

249 The authors declare that they have no competing interests

250

251 **Authors' contributions**

252 Baojin Wu , Xinjie Tang and Ronghu Ke conceived and designed the study. Xiejie Tang and  
253 Baojin Wu prepared the figures and tables. Zhaoping Zhou, Honglin Ke and Shao Tang analyzed  
254 the data. Ronghu Ke prepared the manuscript.

255

256 **Availability of data and materials**

257 Supporting data can be accessed if the corresponding author agrees.

258

259 **References**

260 Akita S, Akino K, Imaizumi T, and Hirano A. 2008. Basic fibroblast growth factor accelerates  
261 and improves second-degree burn wound healing. *Wound Repair Regen* 16:635-641.

262 [10.1111/j.1524-475X.2008.00414.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1524-475X.2008.00414.x)

263 Akl MR, Nagpal P, Ayoub NM, Tai B, Prabhu SA, Capac CM, Gliksman M, Goy A, and Suh KS.

264 2016. Molecular and clinical significance of fibroblast growth factor 2 (FGF2 /bFGF) in

265 malignancies of solid and hematological cancers for personalized therapies. *Oncotarget*

266 7:44735-44762. [10.18632/oncotarget.8203](https://doi.org/10.18632/oncotarget.8203)

267 Azad T, Nouri K, Janse van Rensburg HJ, Maritan SM, Wu L, Hao Y, Montminy T, Yu J,

268 Khanal P, Mulligan LM, and Yang X. 2020. A gain-of-functional screen identifies the

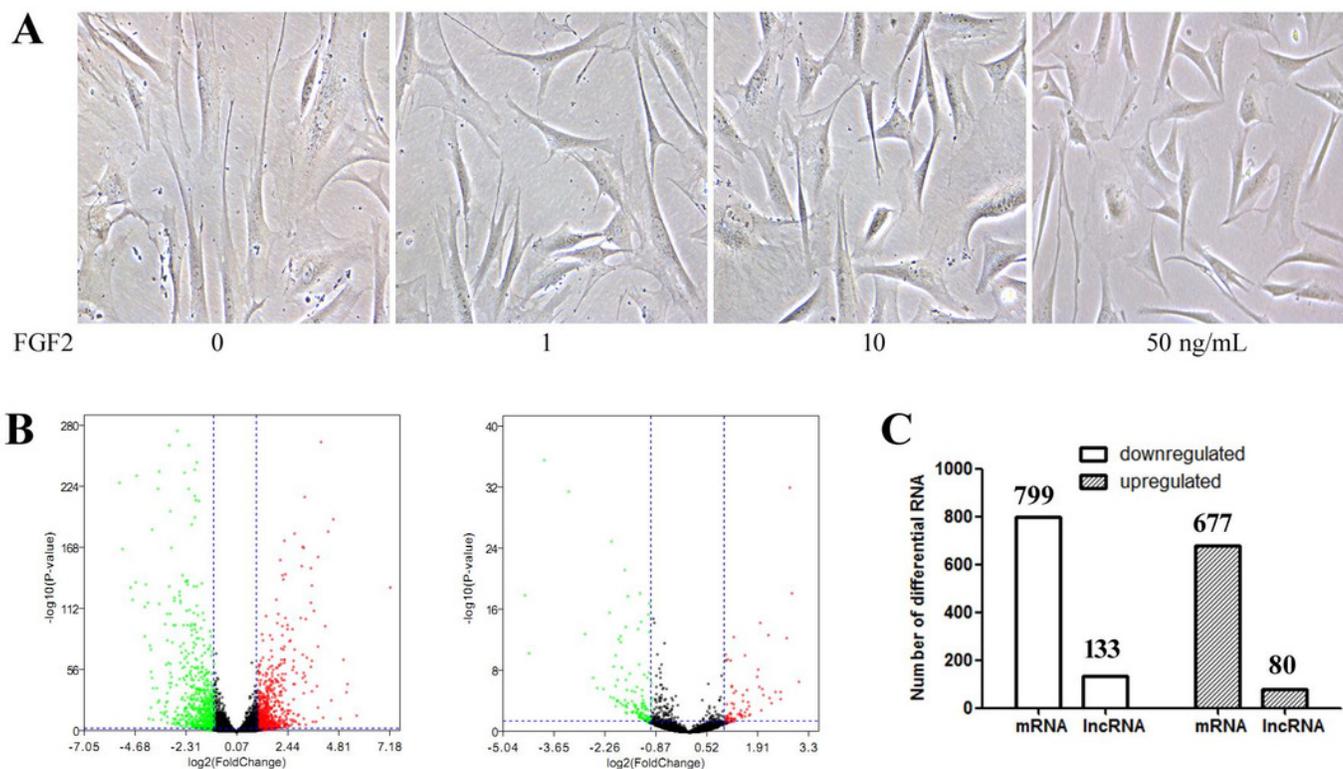
- 269 Hippo pathway as a central mediator of receptor tyrosine kinases during tumorigenesis.  
270 *Oncogene* 39:334-355. 10.1038/s41388-019-0988-y
- 271 Dawes LJ, Shelley EJ, McAvoy JW, and Lovicu FJ. 2018. A role for Hippo/YAP-signaling in  
272 FGF-induced lens epithelial cell proliferation and fibre differentiation. *Exp Eye Res*  
273 169:122-133. 10.1016/j.exer.2018.01.014
- 274 DiPersio CM, and Van De Water L. 2019. Integrin Regulation of CAF Differentiation and  
275 Function. *Cancers (Basel)* 11. 10.3390/cancers11050715
- 276 Dolivo DM, Larson SA, and Dominko T. 2017a. FGF2-mediated attenuation of myofibroblast  
277 activation is modulated by distinct MAPK signaling pathways in human dermal  
278 fibroblasts. *J Dermatol Sci* 88:339-348. 10.1016/j.jdermsci.2017.08.013
- 279 Dolivo DM, Larson SA, and Dominko T. 2017b. Fibroblast Growth Factor 2 as an Antifibrotic:  
280 Antagonism of Myofibroblast Differentiation and Suppression of Pro-Fibrotic Gene  
281 Expression. *Cytokine Growth Factor Rev* 38:49-58. 10.1016/j.cytogfr.2017.09.003
- 282 Hinz B. 2016. Myofibroblasts. *Exp Eye Res* 142:56-70. 10.1016/j.exer.2015.07.009
- 283 Klagsbrun M. 1992. Mediators of angiogenesis: the biological significance of basic fibroblast  
284 growth factor (bFGF)-heparin and heparan sulfate interactions. *Semin Cancer Biol* 3:81-  
285 87.
- 286 Matsumine H. 2015. Treatment of skin avulsion injuries with basic fibroblast growth factor. *Plast*  
287 *Reconstr Surg Glob Open* 3:e371. 10.1097/GOX.0000000000000341
- 288 Mery B, Vallard A, Rowinski E, and Magne N. 2019. High-throughput sequencing in clinical  
289 oncology: from past to present. *Swiss Med Wkly* 149:w20057. 10.4414/smw.2019.20057
- 290 Ono I, Akasaka Y, Kikuchi R, Sakemoto A, Kamiya T, Yamashita T, and Jimbow K. 2007.  
291 Basic fibroblast growth factor reduces scar formation in acute incisional wounds. *Wound*  
292 *Repair Regen* 15:617-623. 10.1111/j.1524-475X.2007.00293.x
- 293 Przybylski M. 2009. A review of the current research on the role of bFGF and VEGF in  
294 angiogenesis. *J Wound Care* 18:516-519. 10.12968/jowc.2009.18.12.45609

- 295 Sun B, Ding Y, Jin X, Xu S, and Zhang H. 2019. Long non-coding RNA H19 promotes corneal  
296 neovascularization by targeting microRNA-29c. *Biosci Rep* 39. 10.1042/BSR20182394
- 297 Wang J, Su Z, Lu S, Fu W, Liu Z, Jiang X, and Tai S. 2018. LncRNA HOXA-AS2 and its  
298 molecular mechanisms in human cancer. *Clin Chim Acta* 485:229-233.  
299 10.1016/j.cca.2018.07.004
- 300 Wang J, Yu H, Yili A, Gao Y, Hao L, Aisa HA, and Liu S. 2020a. Identification of hub genes  
301 and potential molecular mechanisms of chickpea isoflavones on MCF-7 breast cancer  
302 cells by integrated bioinformatics analysis. *Ann Transl Med* 8:86.  
303 10.21037/atm.2019.12.141
- 304 Wang Z, Feng C, Song K, Qi Z, Huang W, and Wang Y. 2020b. lncRNA-H19/miR-29a axis  
305 affected the viability and apoptosis of keloid fibroblasts through acting upon COL1A1  
306 signaling. *J Cell Biochem*. 10.1002/jcb.29649
- 307 Xuan YH, Huang BB, Tian HS, Chi LS, Duan YM, Wang X, Zhu ZX, Cai WH, Zhu YT, Wei  
308 TM, Ye HB, Cong WT, and Jin LT. 2014. High-glucose inhibits human fibroblast cell  
309 migration in wound healing via repression of bFGF-regulating JNK phosphorylation.  
310 *PLoS One* 9:e108182. 10.1371/journal.pone.0108182
- 311 Zeisberg M, and Kalluri R. 2013. Cellular mechanisms of tissue fibrosis. 1. Common and organ-  
312 specific mechanisms associated with tissue fibrosis. *Am J Physiol Cell Physiol*  
313 304:C216-225. 10.1152/ajpcell.00328.2012
- 314
- 315

# Figure 1

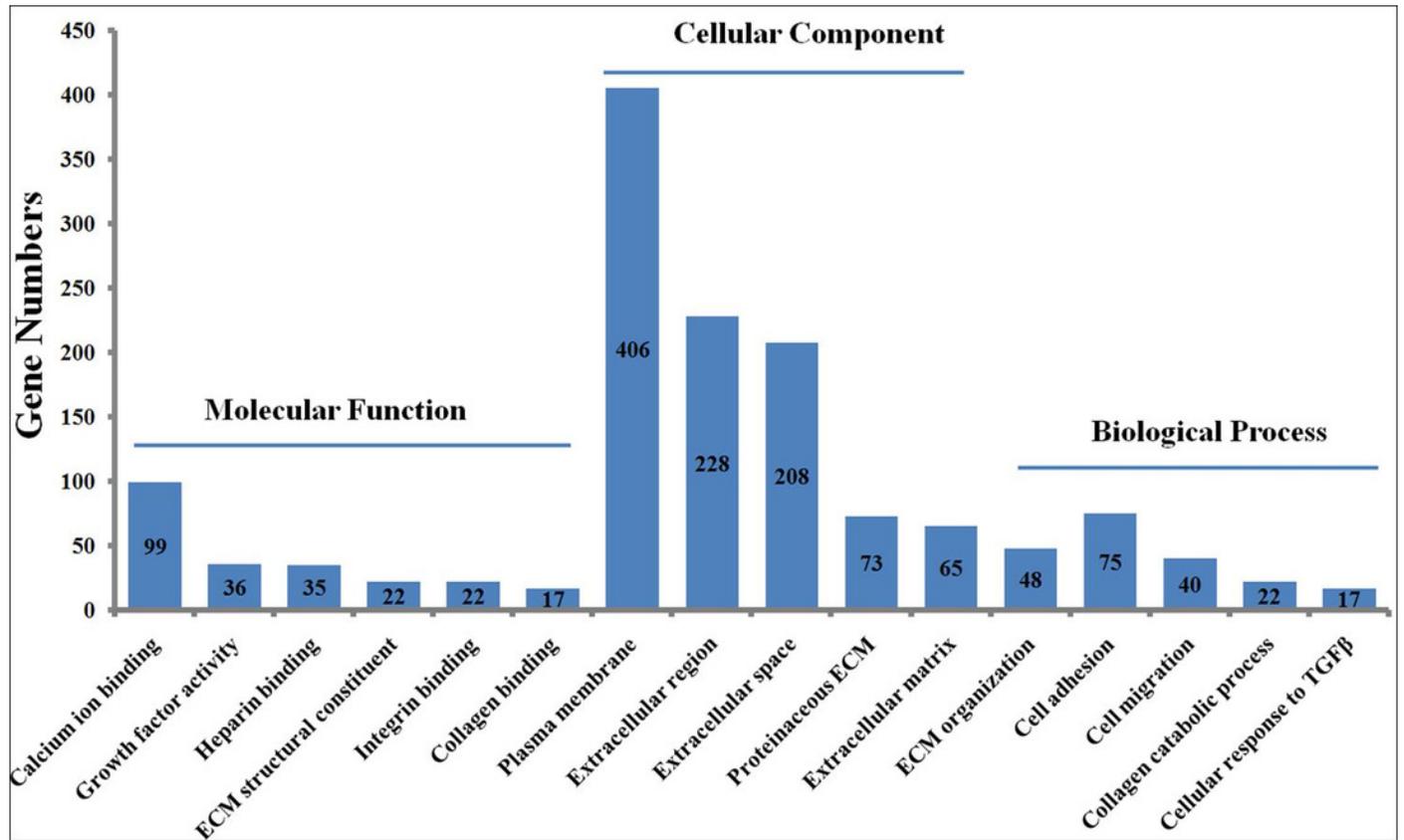
Figure 1. Transcriptional profiles in skin fibroblasts exposure to FGF2

(A) Representative morphology of skin fibroblasts treated with FGF2 at indicated dose. (B) volcano plot of mRNAs and LncRNAs expression profiles. (C) Summary of differentially expressed mRNAs and LncRNAs ( $P < 0.05$  and fold change  $> 2$ ).



## Figure 2

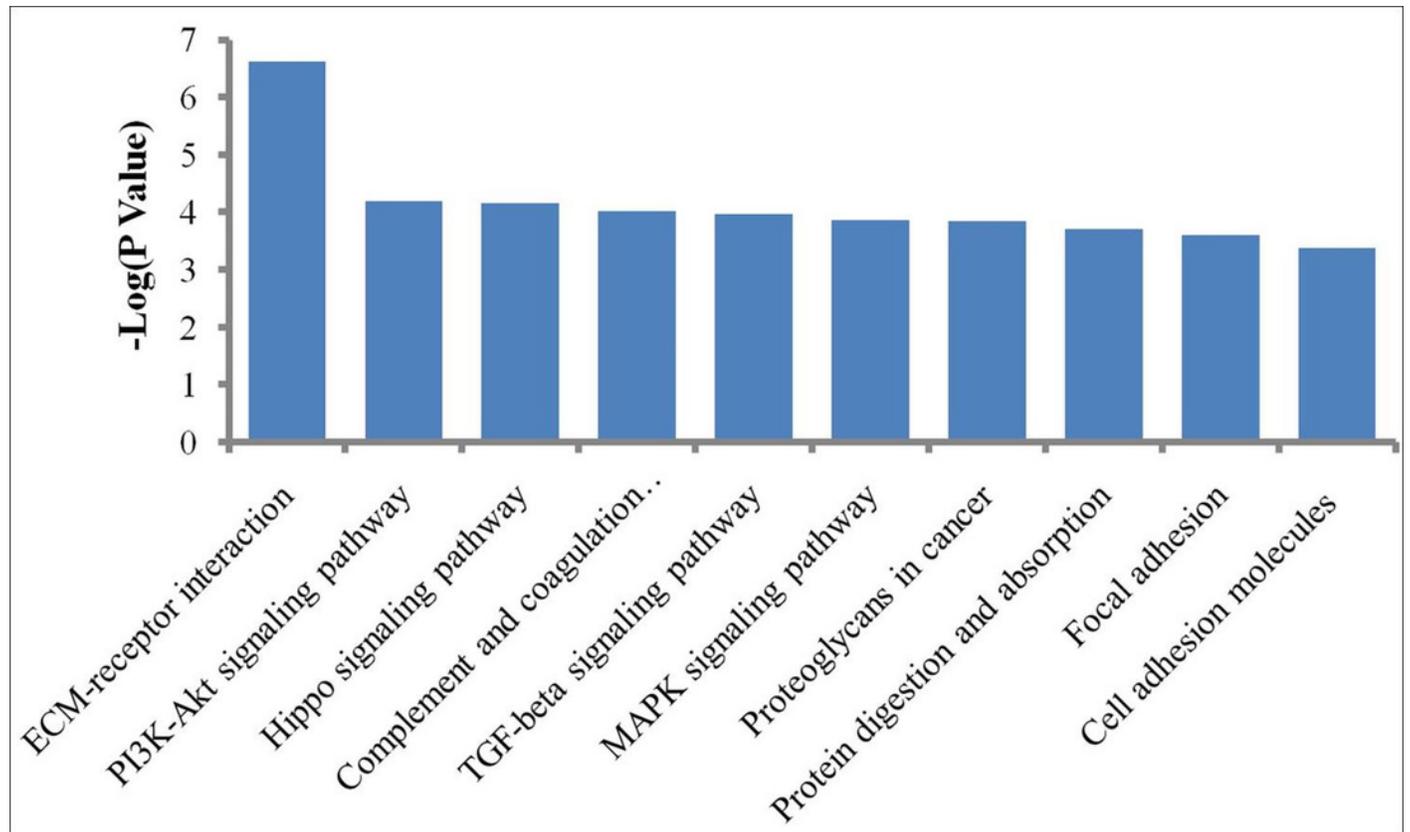
GO enrichment analysis of differently expressed mRNAs



## Figure 3

Figure 3. KEGG pathway analysis differently expressed genes

Figure 3. KEGG pathway analysis differently expressed genes.



## Figure 4

Figure 4. Networks of protein-protein interaction

(A). Networks of the differently expressed LncRNAs created by the network analyst website.

(B). The co-expression network of the ECM-associated LncRNAs with their co-expression genes created by Pearson's correlation. The diamond and ellipses nodes denote significant LncRNAs and mRNAs, respectively. The red and green nodes indicate upregulated and downregulated transcripts, respectively.

