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# Sample-Specific Models for Interpretable Analysis with Applications to Disease Subtyping

May 5, 2022

Banff International Research Station

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Computational Biology Lab, MIT

# Why does interpretability matter?

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## “Death by Round Numbers”

With



Rich Caruana Microsoft  
**Research**



Mark Nunnally 



Manolis Kellis 

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Elevated creatinine levels are an indicator of renal failure, so we expect mortality risk to increase with creatinine.

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**NYU Langone Health**



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Mortality Odds Ratio

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Creatinine (mg/dL)

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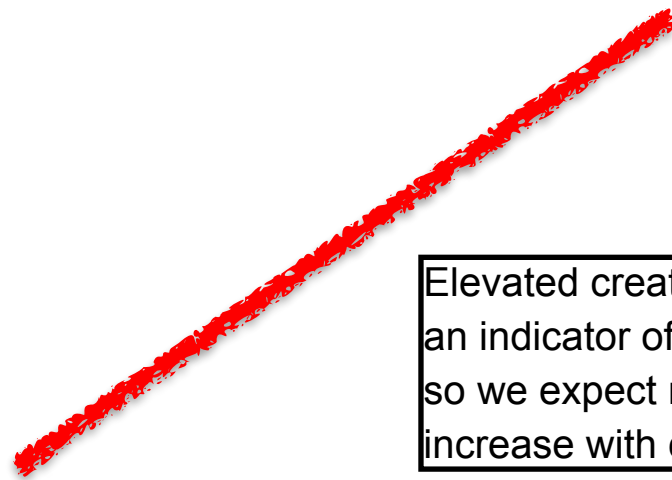
NYU Langone  
Health



Manolis Kellis

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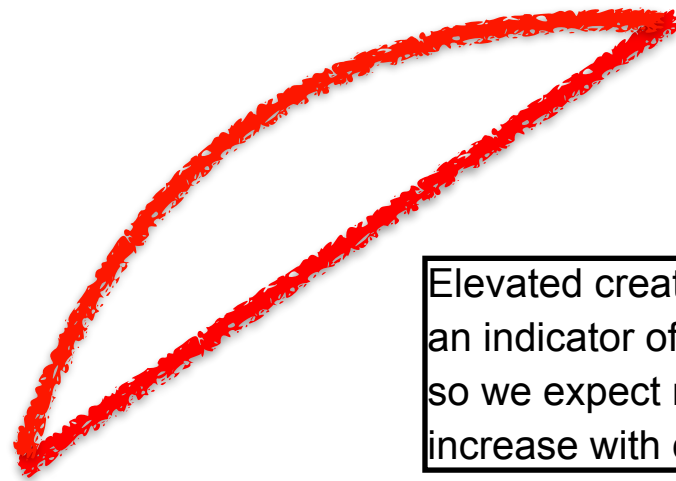


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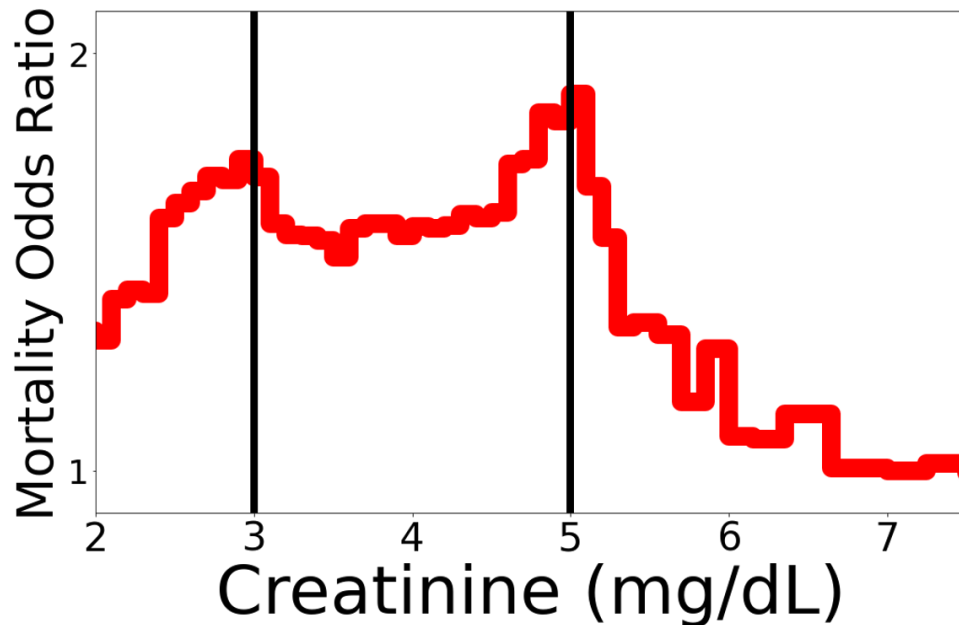
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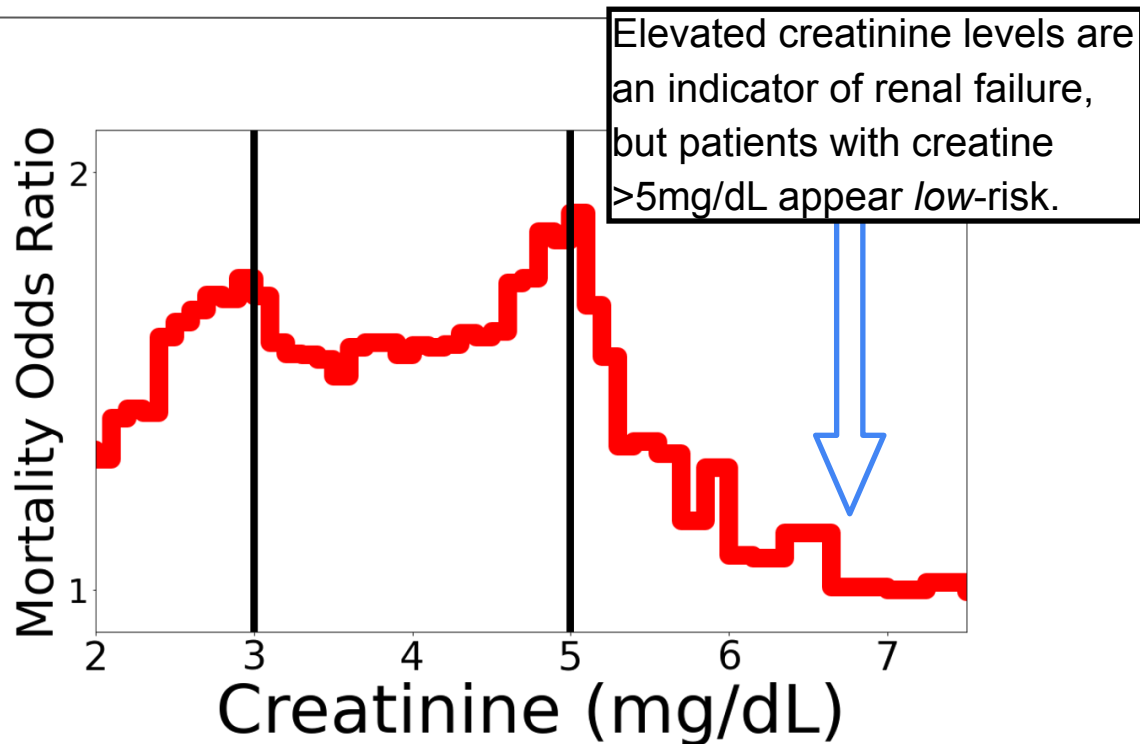
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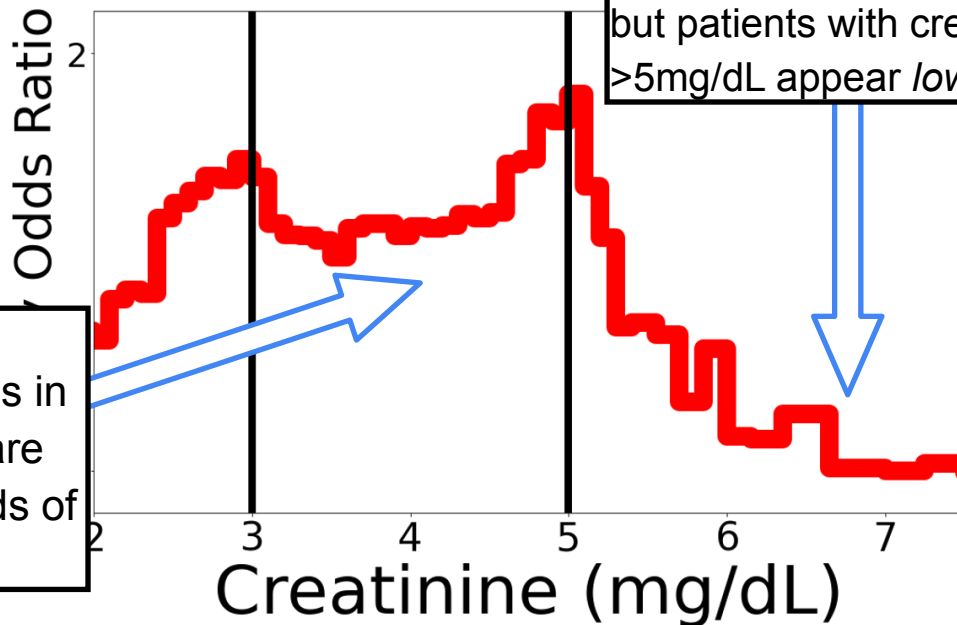


Mark Nurnberg



Manolis Kellis

Concave risk curve suggests that changes in physician behaviors are triggered by thresholds of 3 and 5 mg/dL.



Elevated creatinine levels are an indicator of renal failure, but patients with creatine >5mg/dL appear *low-risk*.



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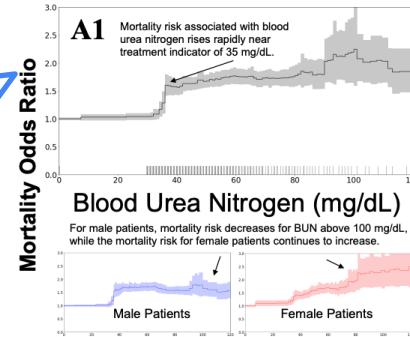
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# Many examples of confounding revealed by interpretability

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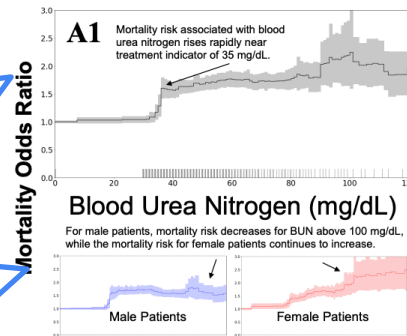
# Many examples of confounding revealed by interpretability

- Risk jumps, then flattens at BUN 35 mg/dL



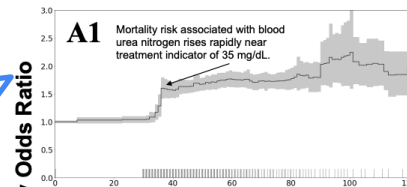
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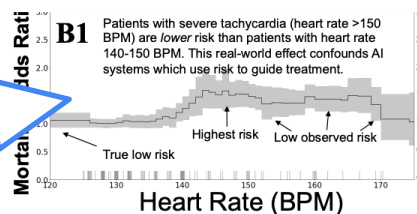
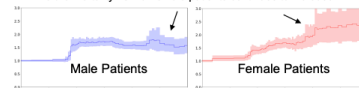
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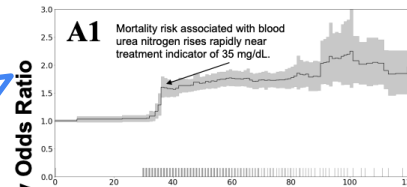
**Blood Urea Nitrogen (mg/dL)**

For male patients, mortality risk decreases for BUN above 100 mg/dL, while the mortality risk for female patients continues to increase.



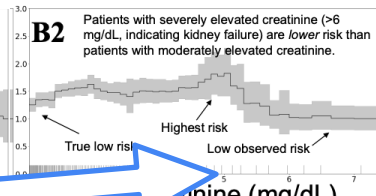
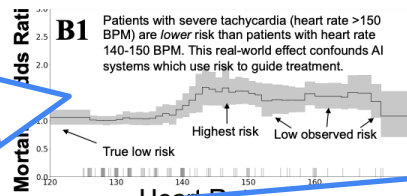
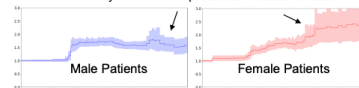
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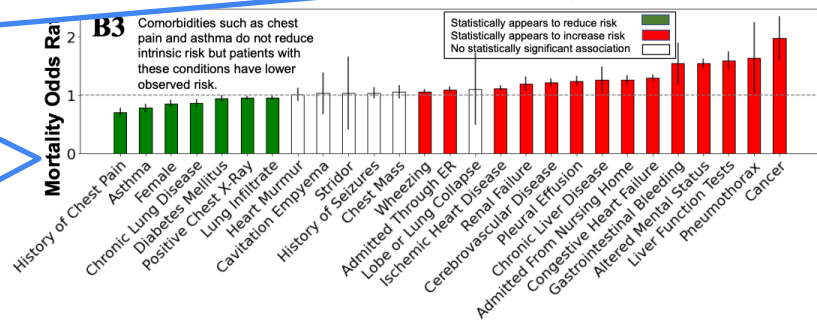
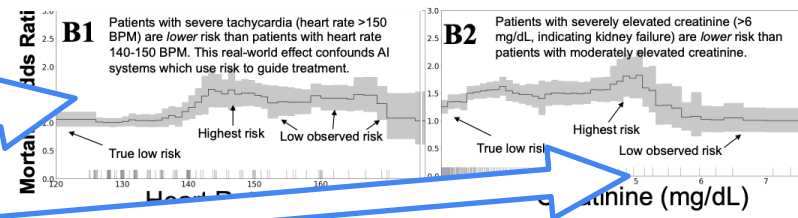
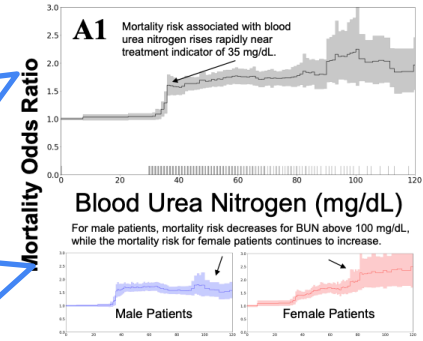
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# Many examples of confounding revealed by interpretability

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- Risk decreases for men BUN > 100 mg/dL, but for women risk continues climbing
- Severe tachycardia is good?
- Elevated creatinine is good?
- History of chest pain, asthma, chronic lung disease are good?



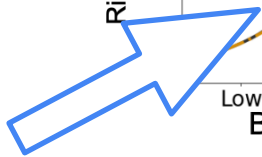
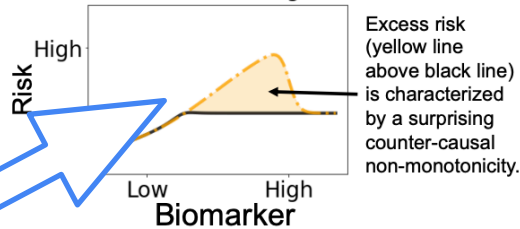
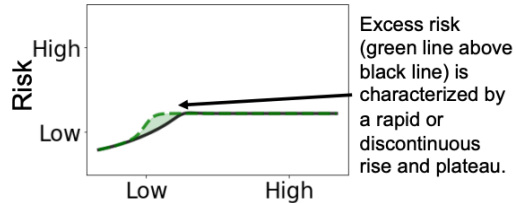
# Interpretability turns these confounding **problems** into **opportunities**

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## Observed Population Risk



Finding  
these risk  
patterns



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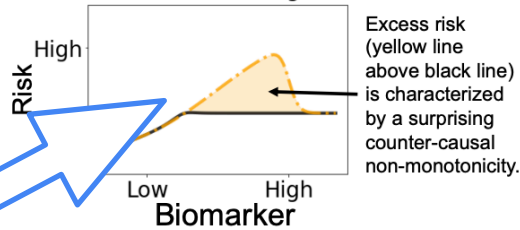
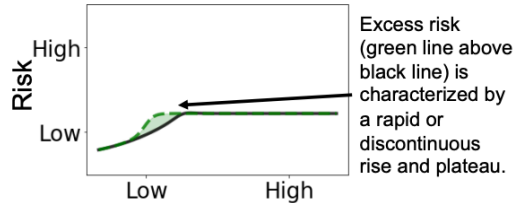
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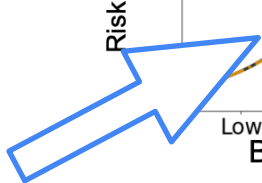
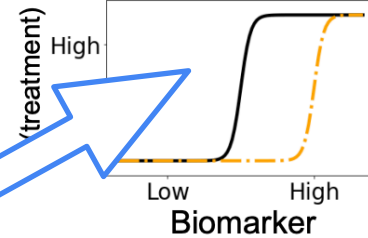
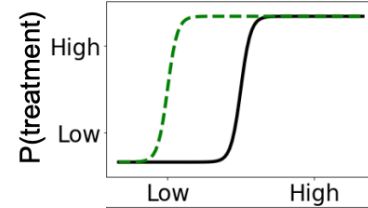
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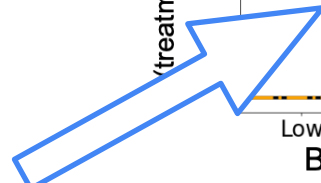
### Observed Population Risk



### Treatment Protocol



Finding these risk patterns



suggests the underlying protocols could be improved

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# What if interactions matter?

# If interactions do matter...Black-box Models?

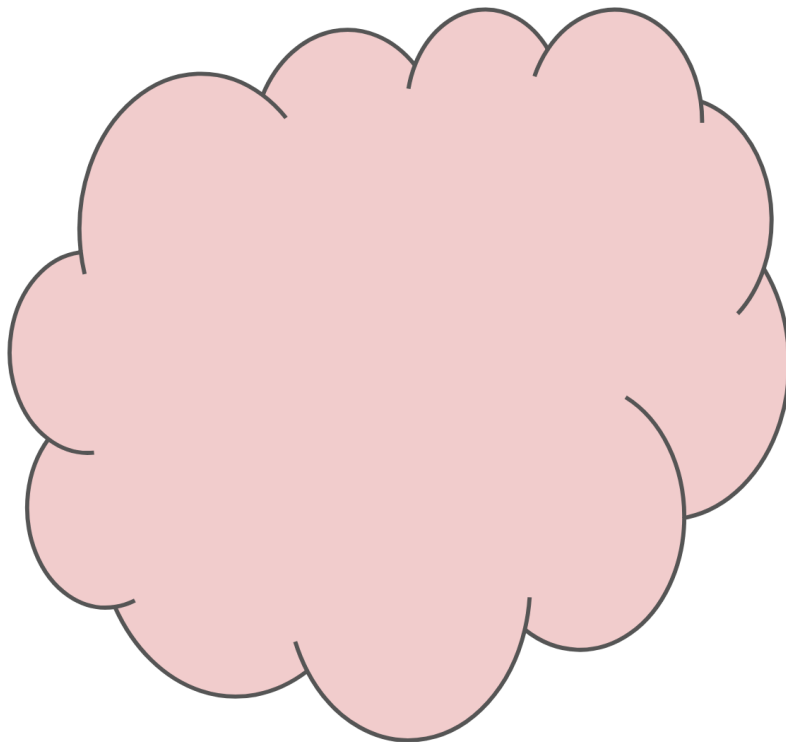
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Fit black-box model  
with non-linear  
decision surface

# If interactions do matter...Black-box Models?

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Fit black-box model  
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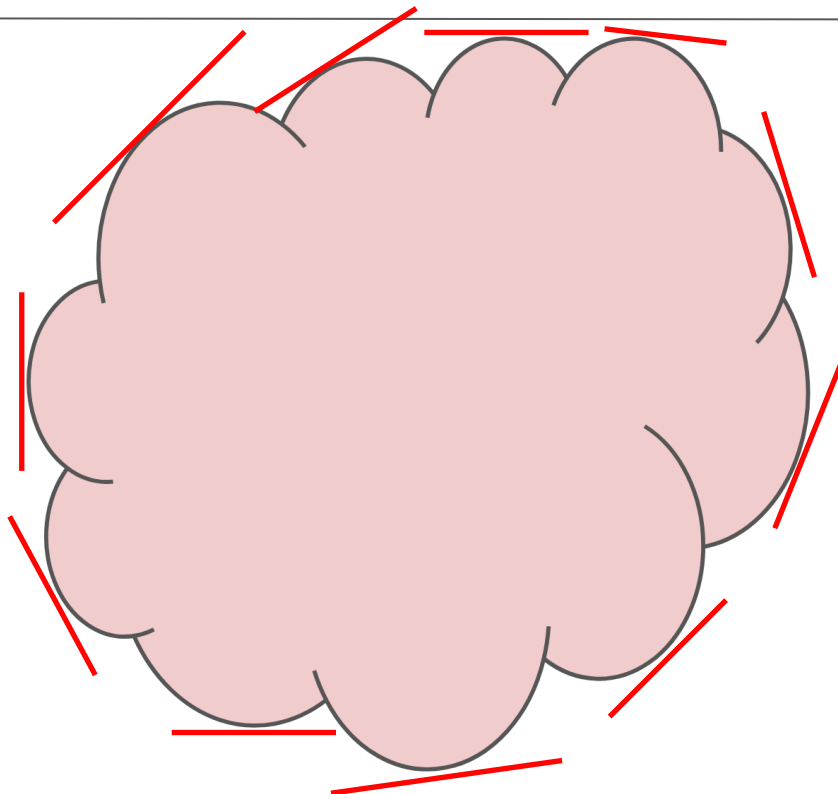
# If interactions do matter...Black-box Models?

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Fit black-box model  
with non-linear  
decision surface

Then interpret  
with locally-  
linear models

LIME, [Ribeiro et al. 2016](#)



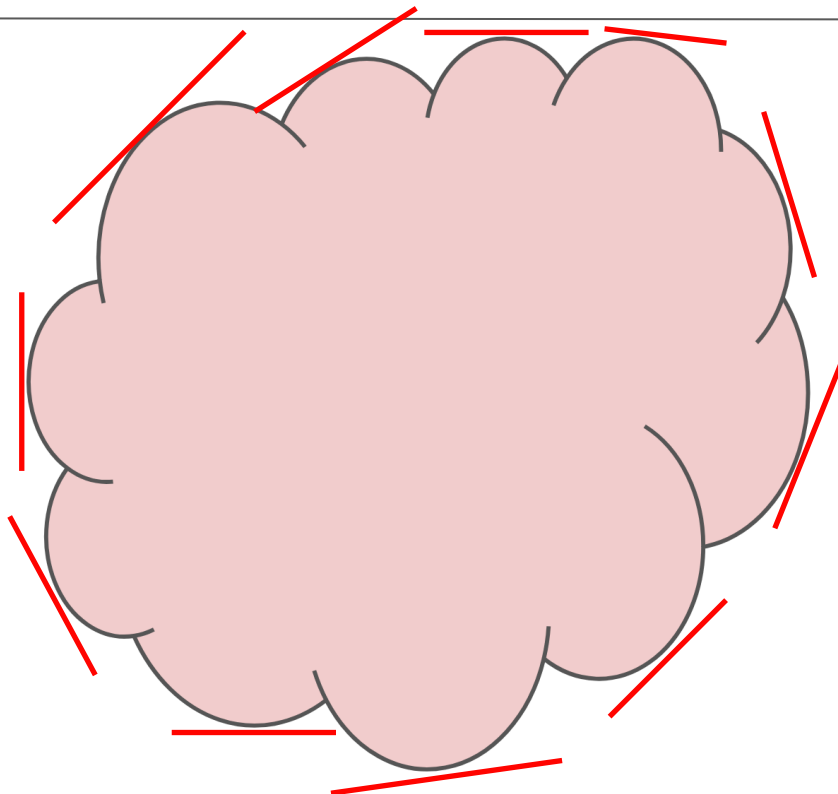
# Locally-Linear Models Sacrifice Nothing?

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ReLU NNs are both  
**universal**  
**approximators**

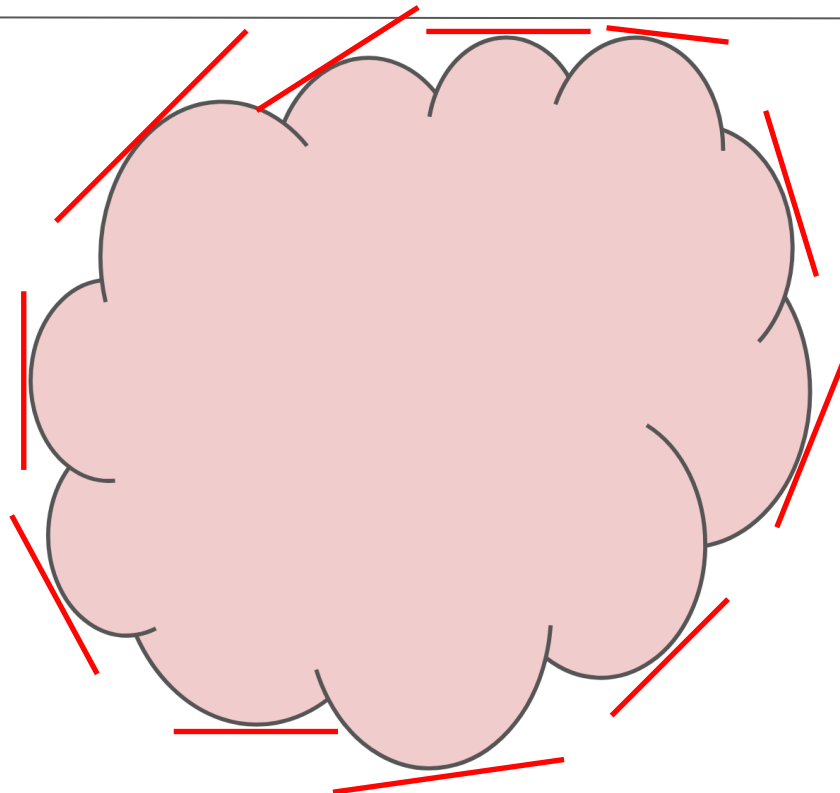
AND

**Piecewise-linear**



# So what's the point of the black-box model?

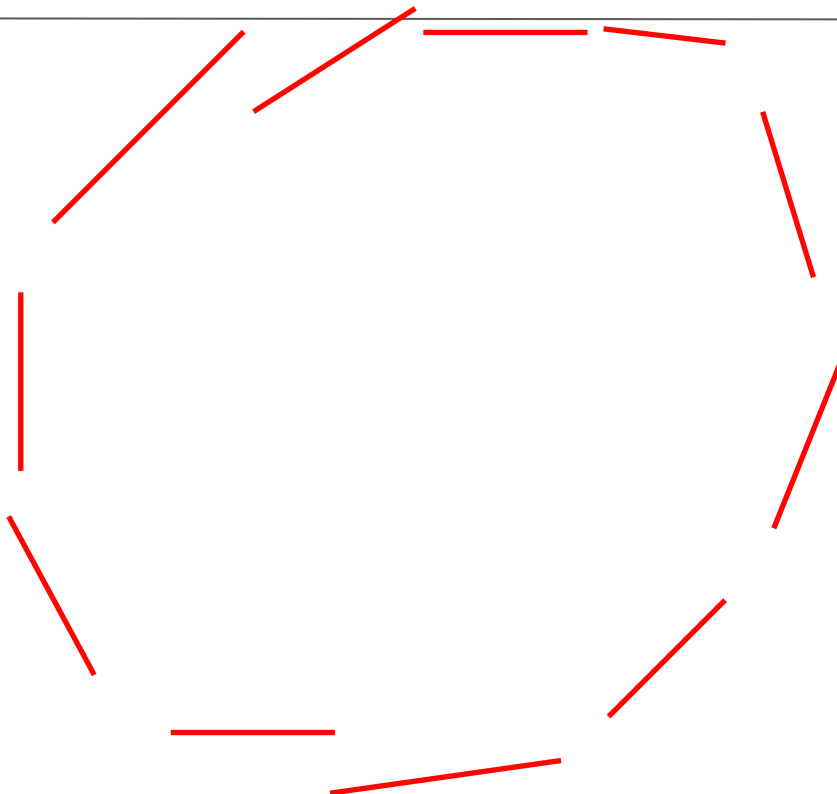
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# So what's the point of the black-box model?

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# Strategies for Generating Local Models

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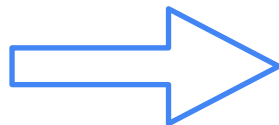


# Strategies for Generating Local Models

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Fit black-box model



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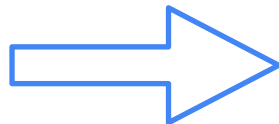
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# Strategies for Generating Local Models

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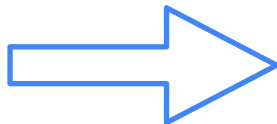
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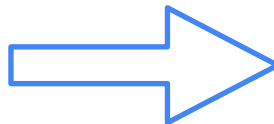
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Fit black-box model



Explain black-box model



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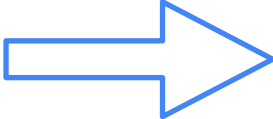


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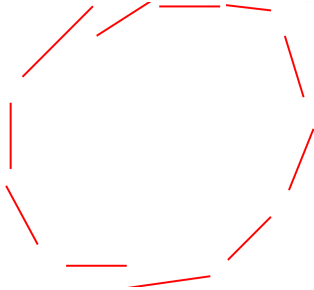
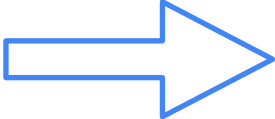
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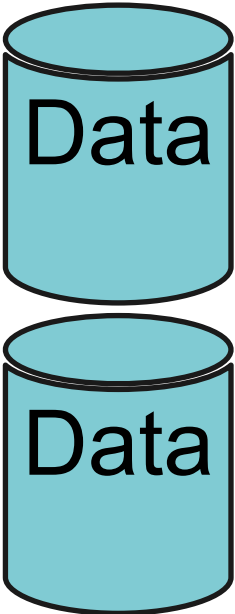


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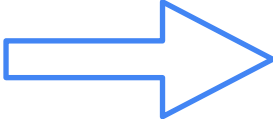


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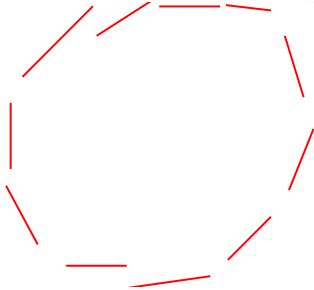
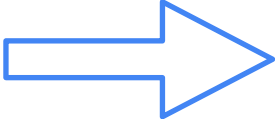
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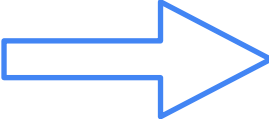


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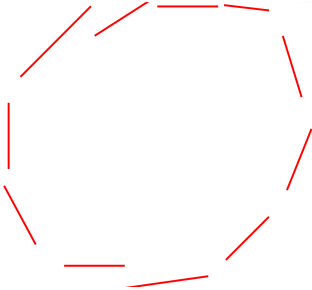
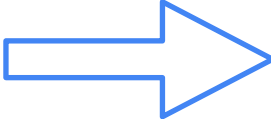
# Strategies for Generating Local Models



Fit black-box model



Explain black-box model



Fit meta-model to predict contextualized local models



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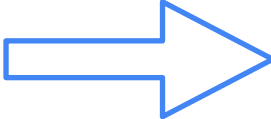
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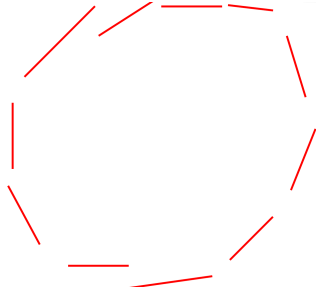
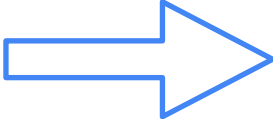
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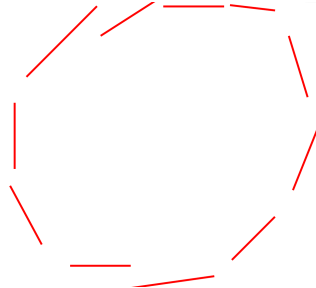
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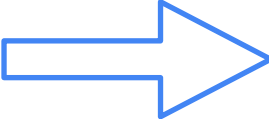


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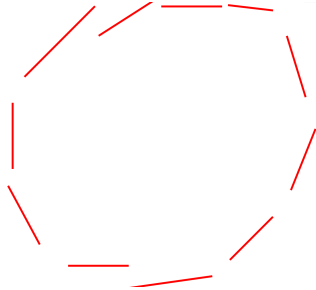
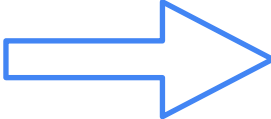
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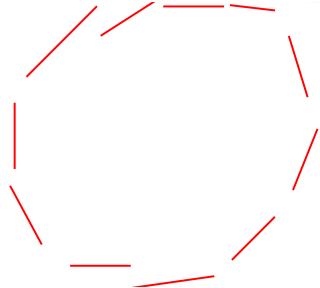
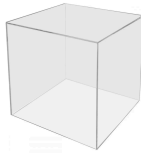
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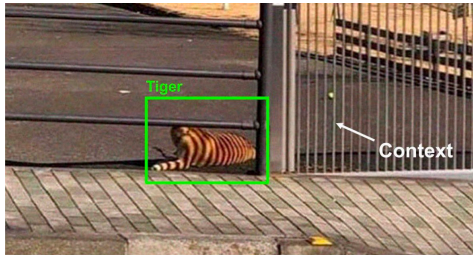
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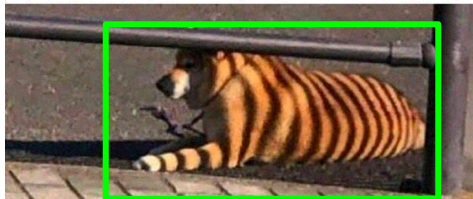
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# What are local models? 3 Philosophies:

- 1 Local models are **incorrect**, obscured by context factors

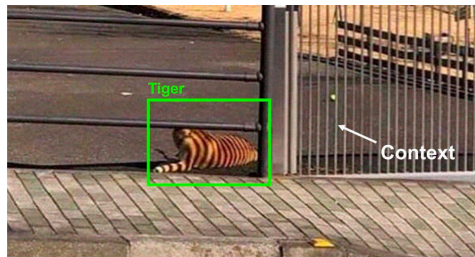


Tiger or Dog? ↓

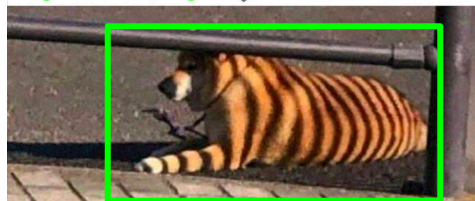


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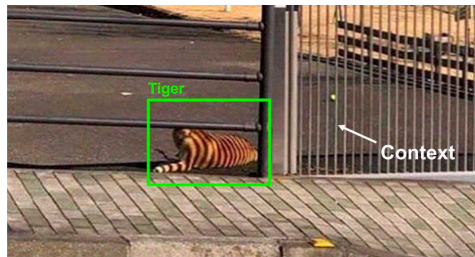
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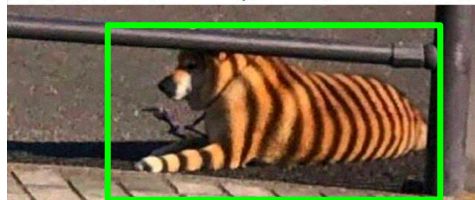
**Solution:** Subtract out influence of unseen context factors to estimate universal effects

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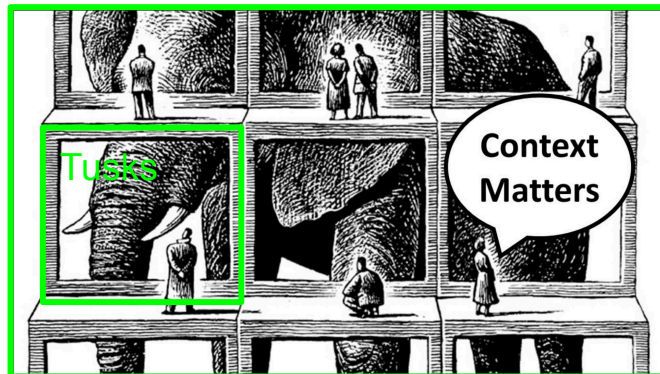
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Tiger or Dog? ↓



2 Local models are **context-specific views** of a universal phenomena

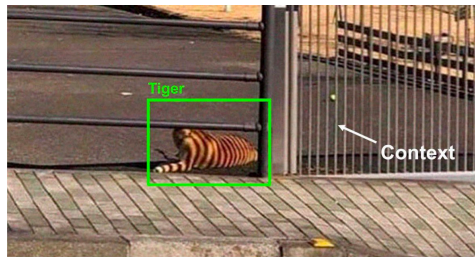


Elephant

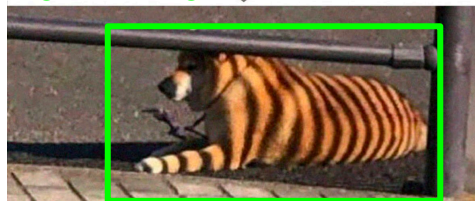
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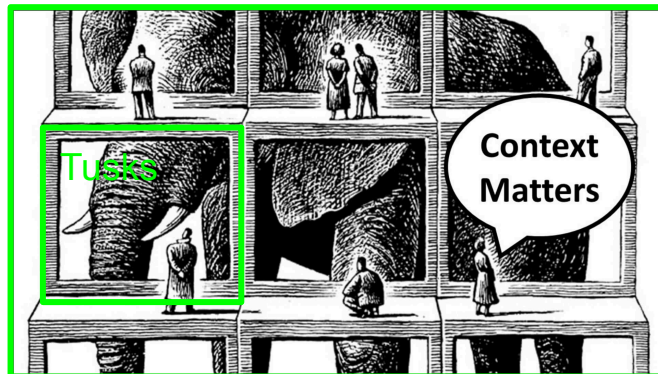


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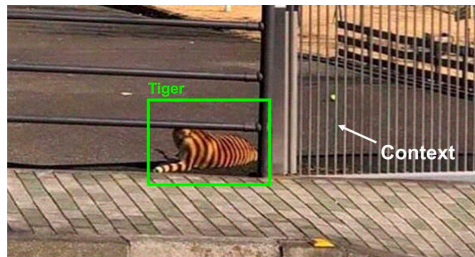


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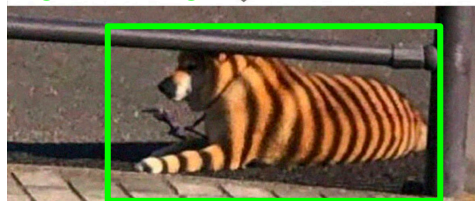
**Solution:** Context-specific models -> reconstruct into global model

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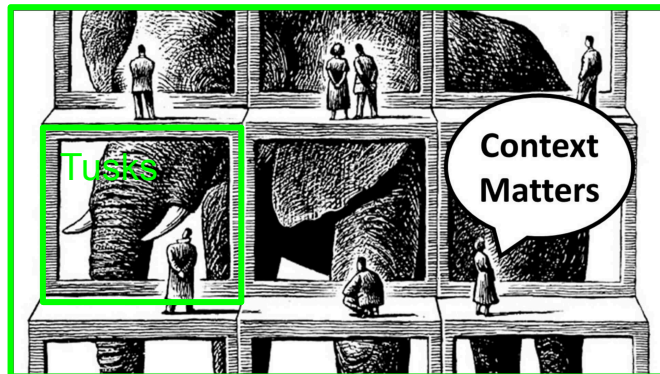


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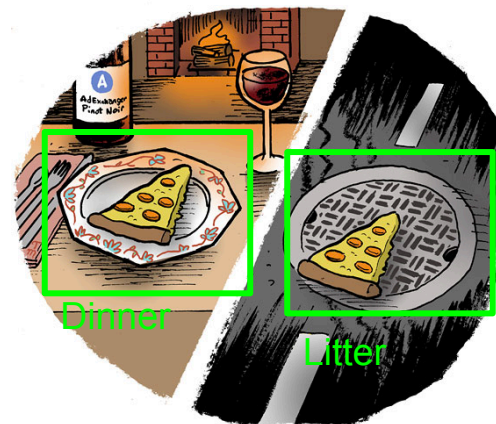
2 Local models are **context-specific views** of a universal phenomena



Elephant

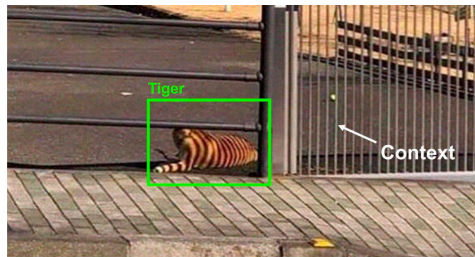
**Solution:** Context-specific models -> reconstruct into global model

3 Local models are accurate views of **context-specific phenomena**

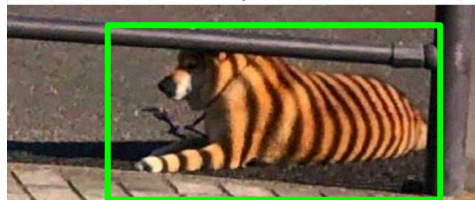


# What are local models? 3 Philosophies:

1 Local models are **incorrect**, obscured by context factors

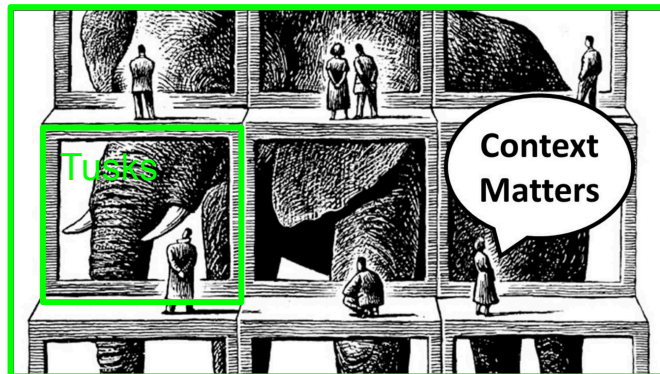


Tiger or Dog? ↓



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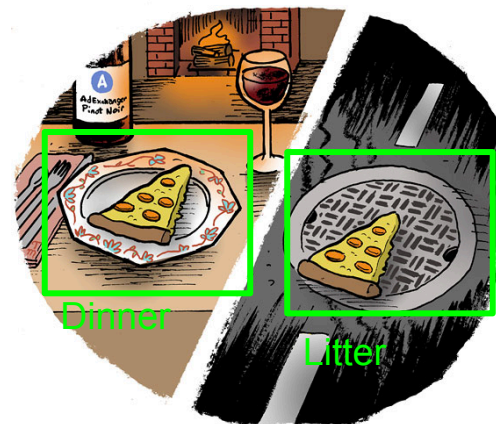
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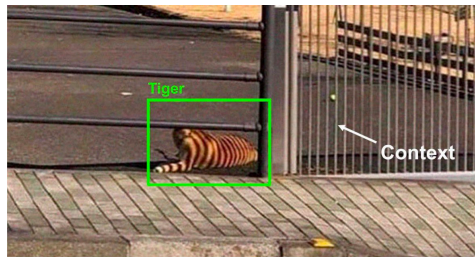


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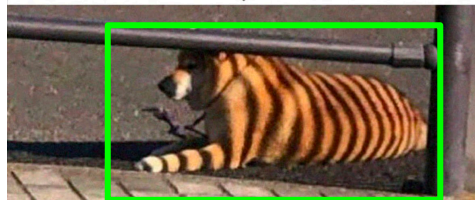


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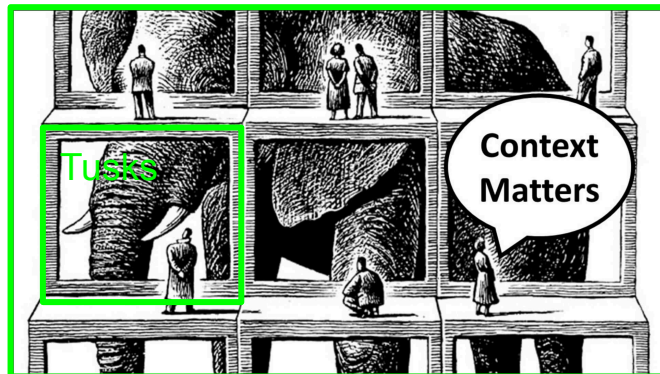


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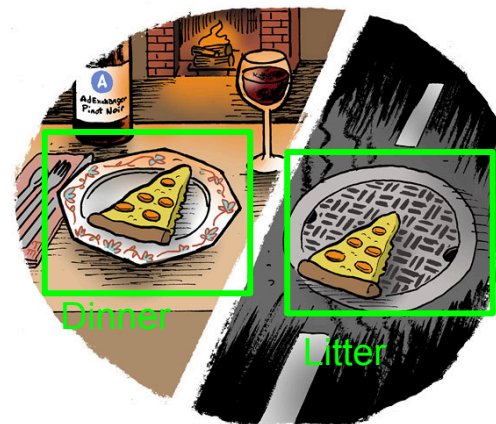
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**Solution:** Context-specific models -> context-specific effects



**Contextualized**  
Heterogeneous Modeling Toolbox

# Trevor Hastie and Rob Tibshirani got here first too...

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- Let's put it on modern ML steroids
  - If we can solve technical problems: dimensionality, stability, etc
  - Then backprop allows us to make *any* model class contextualized

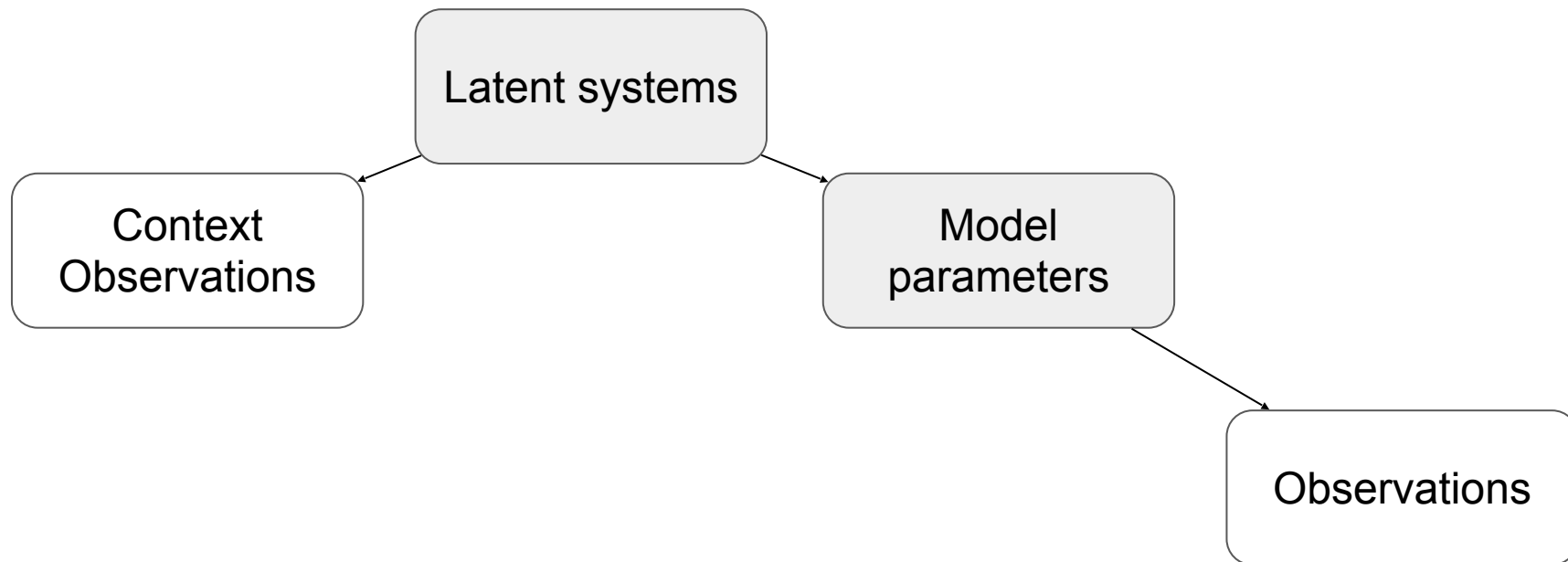
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# Our Solution: Contextualized Machine Learning



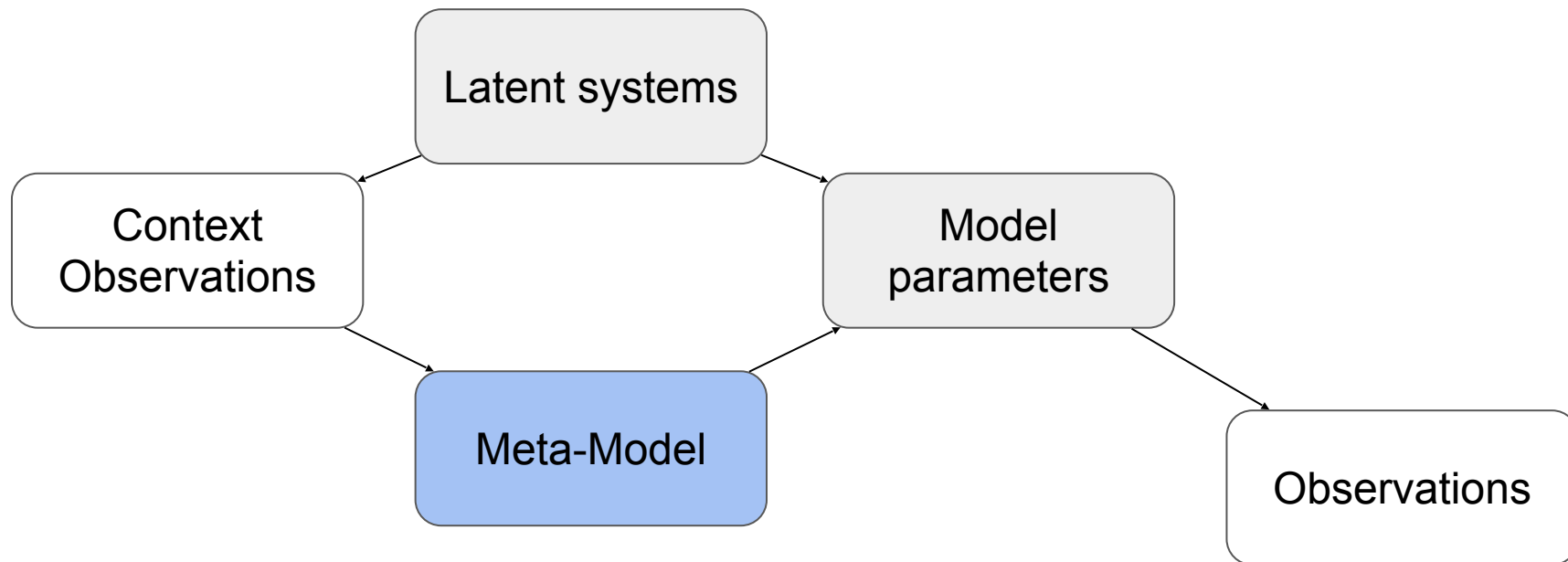
# Contextualized Machine Learning

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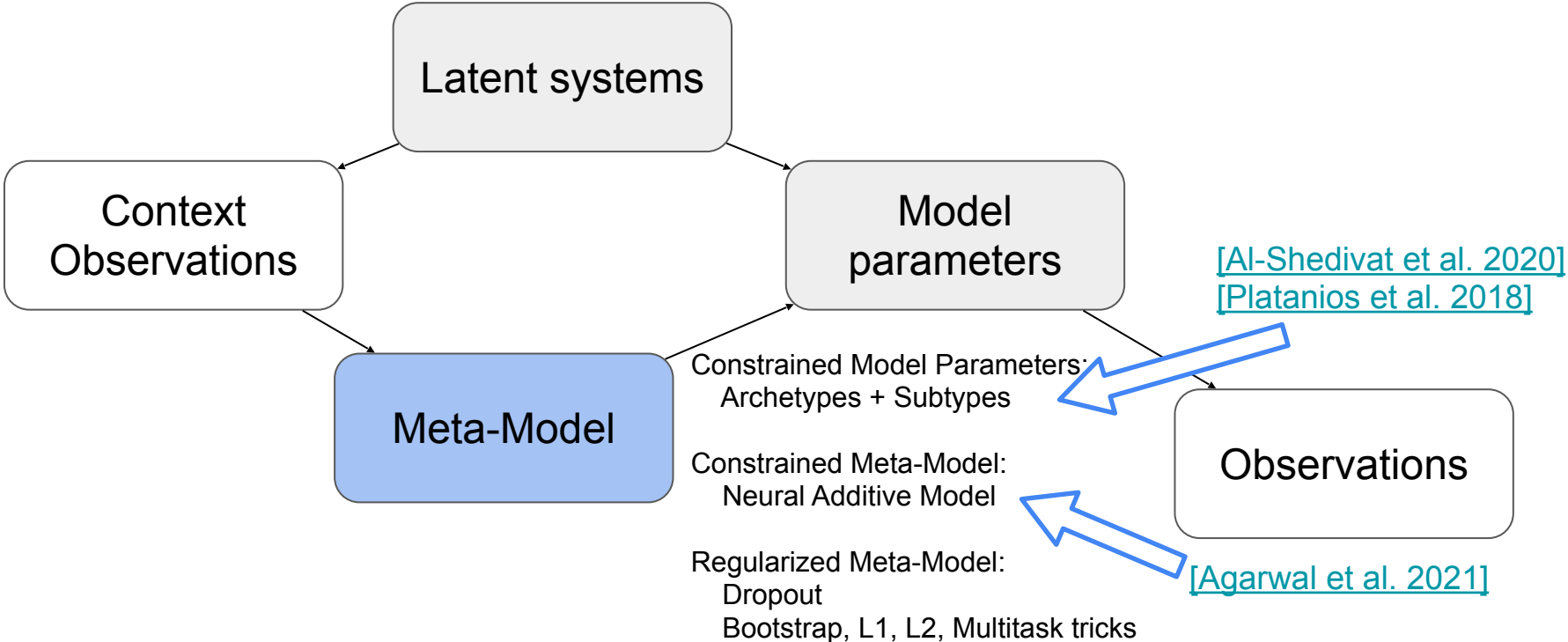


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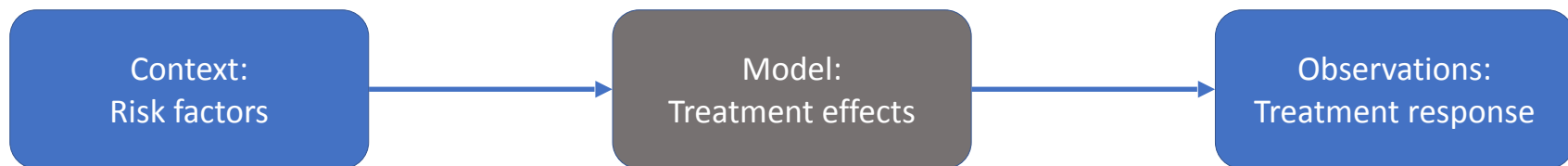


# Contextualized Machine Learning

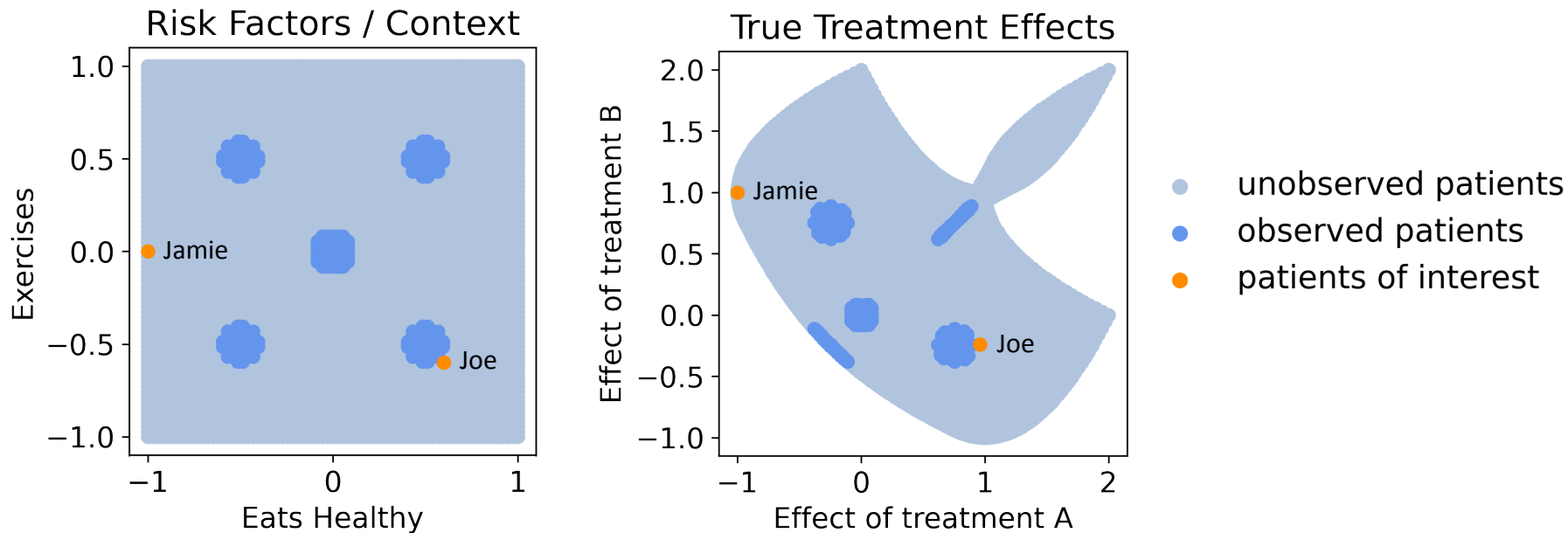


# Toy Example: Heterogeneous Treatment Effects

---

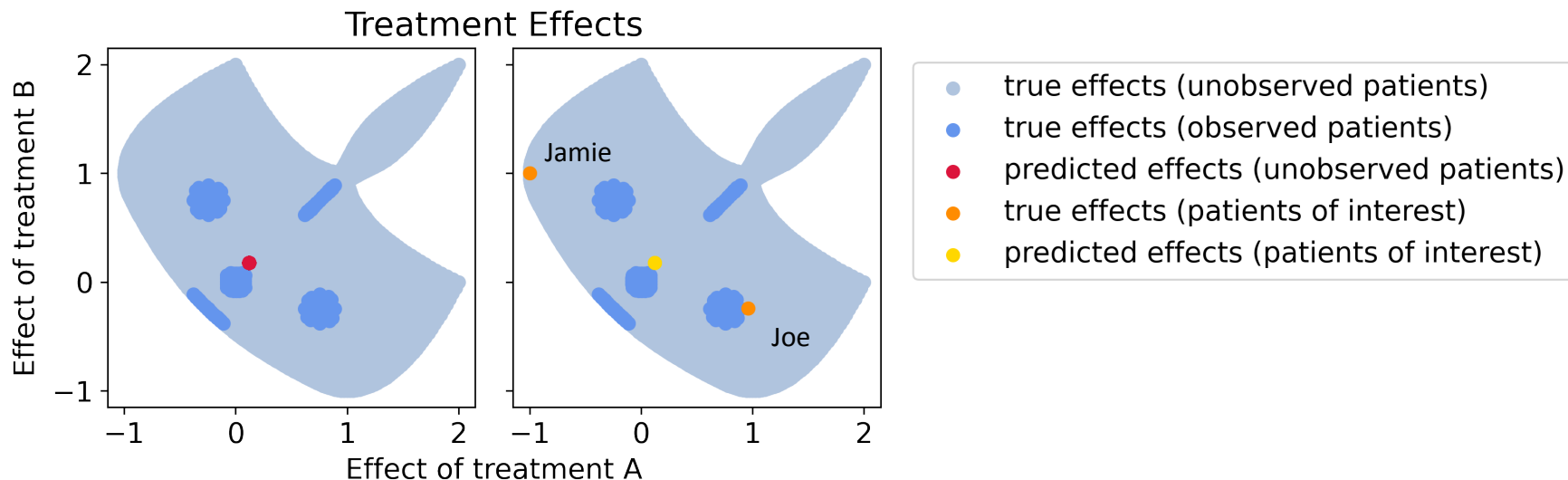


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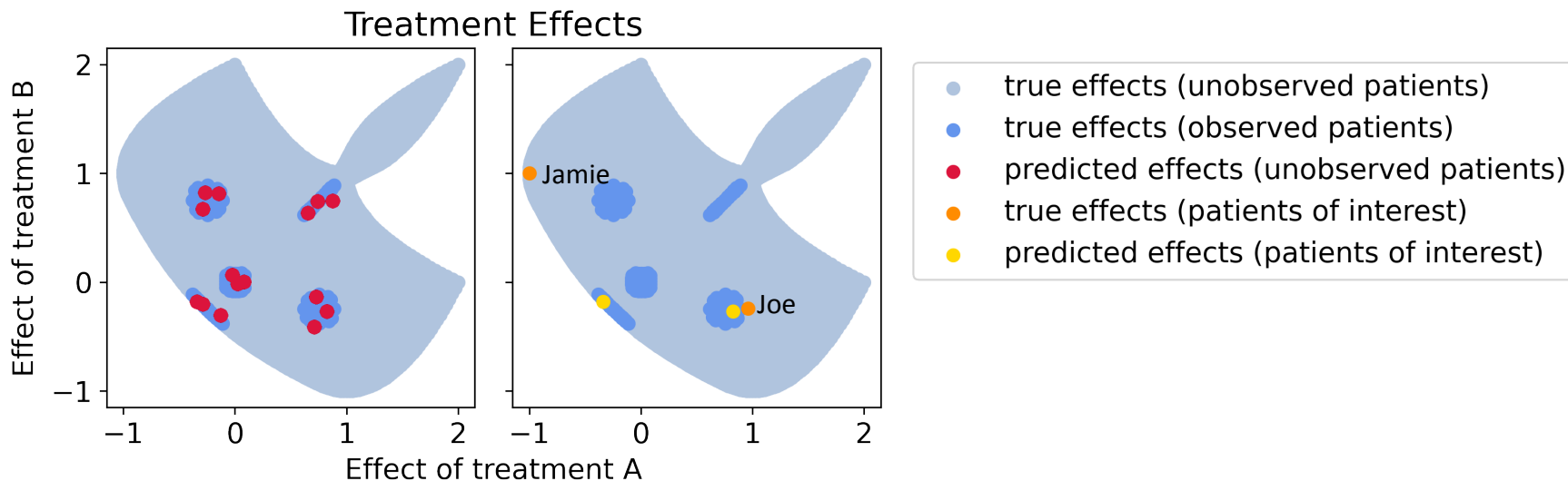
# Population Model: No Heterogeneity

Learn a single (population) model by solving  $Y = X\hat{\beta} + \hat{\mu}$



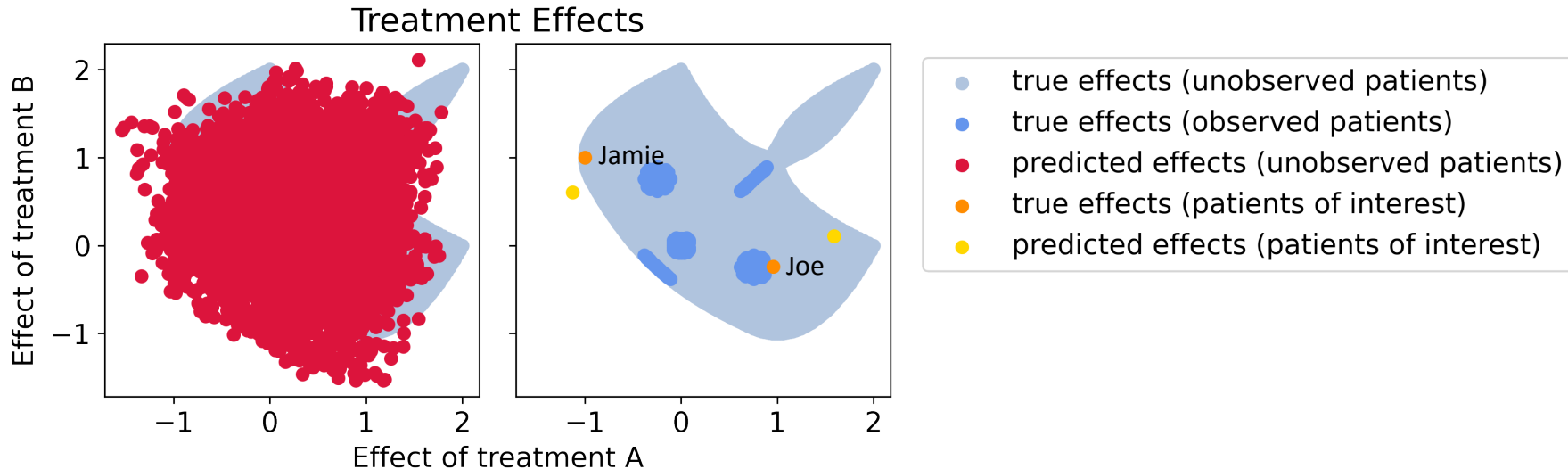
# Cluster-Based Models: Limited Heterogeneity

Cluster  $C$ , then for each cluster solve  $Y_c = X_c \hat{\beta}_c + \hat{\mu}_c$



# Implicit Models: Unorganized

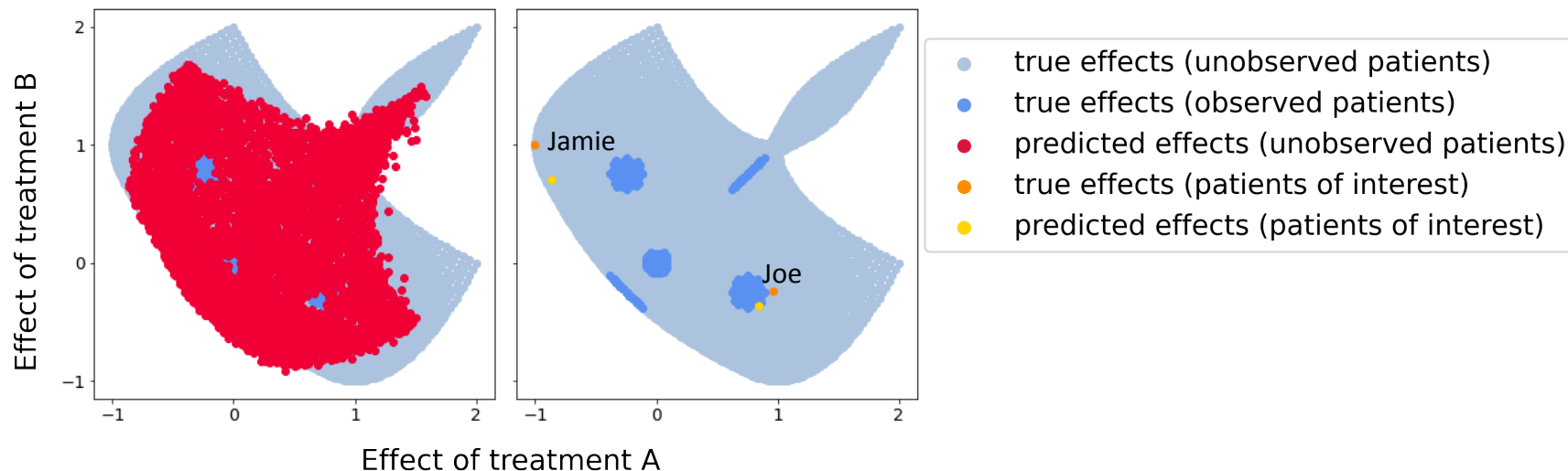
$$Y = \Phi(C, X) \rightarrow \hat{\beta} = \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial X}$$





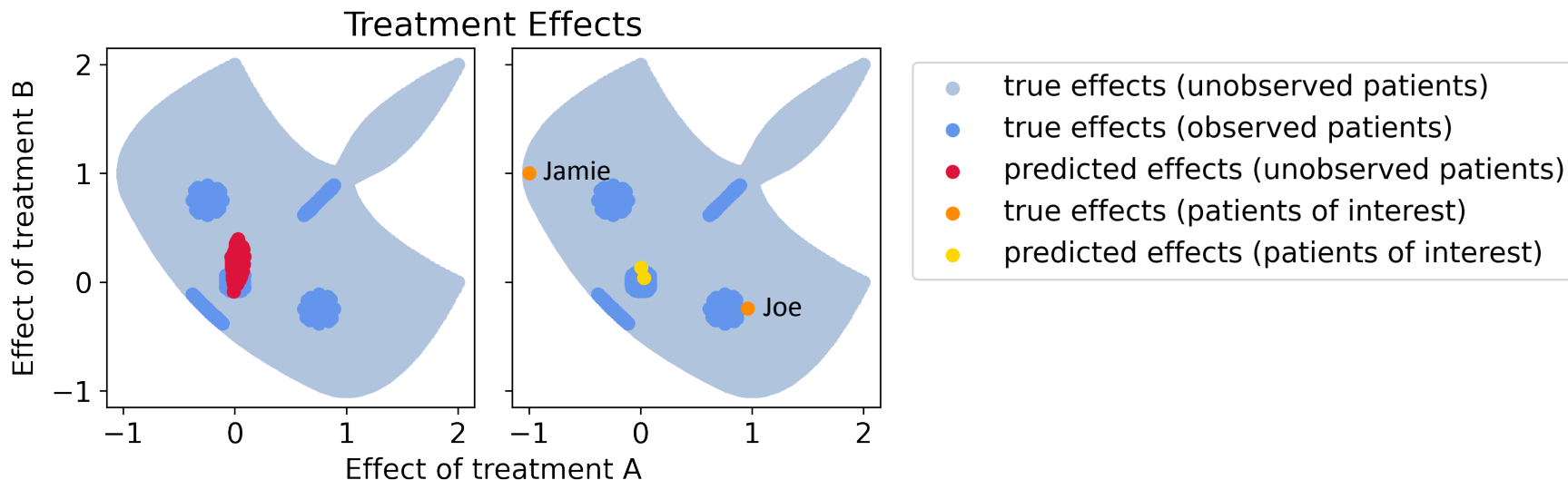
# Context Encoder: Generalizability by Learning Latent Structure

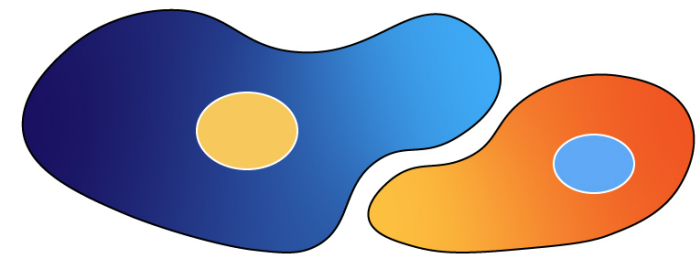
$$Y = X \beta_{\Phi}(C, \epsilon) + \mu_{\Phi}(C, \epsilon)$$



In the worst case, context encoders recapitulate the population model

$$Y = X \beta_{\Phi}(\epsilon) + \mu_{\Phi}(\epsilon) \rightarrow Y = X \hat{\beta} + \hat{\mu}$$





[contextualized.ml](https://contextualized.ml)

# Contextualized

## Heterogeneous Modeling Toolbox



With Caleb Ellington, Eric Xing, Manolis Kellis



MOHAMED BIN ZAYED  
UNIVERSITY OF  
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



Massachusetts  
Institute of  
Technology

# Contextualized Regression in Contextualized.ML

---

sklearn-like interface:

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from contextualized.easy import ContextualizedRegressor  
model = ContextualizedRegressor()  
model.fit(C, X, Y)
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Common keywords:

- n\_bootstraps
- n\_archetypes
- link function
- meta-model type
- multitask sharing strategy

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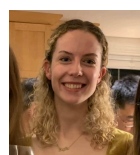
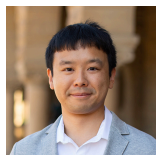
Making predictions:

```
Y_hats = model.predict(C_test, X_test)
beta_hats, mu_hats = model.predict_params(C_test)
```

---

# Disease Subtyping Vignette 1: Alzheimer's Disease

With Yosuke Tanigawa, Na Sun, Carles Boix, Leyla Akay, Manolis Kellis



# Contextualized Analysis Reveals Personalized Markers of Alzheimer's Disease

---

## Data

- 430 patients with single-cell RNA-seq of post-mortem brain samples
- Aggregated to pseudo cell-sorted (cell type), flattened for each patient
- Extensively pre-processed for QC
- Context: demographics, clinical factors
- Outcome: AD / Healthy



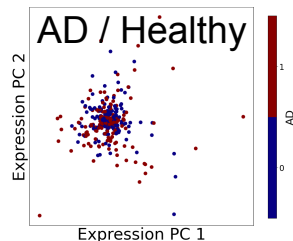


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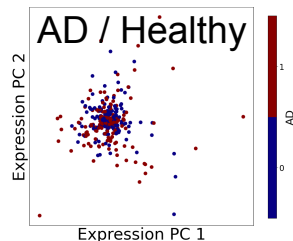


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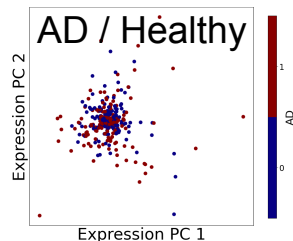
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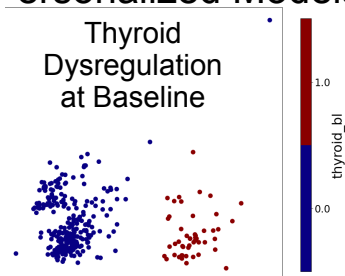


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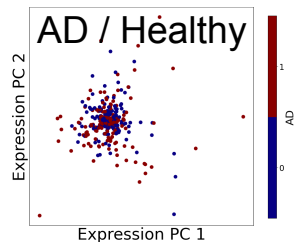


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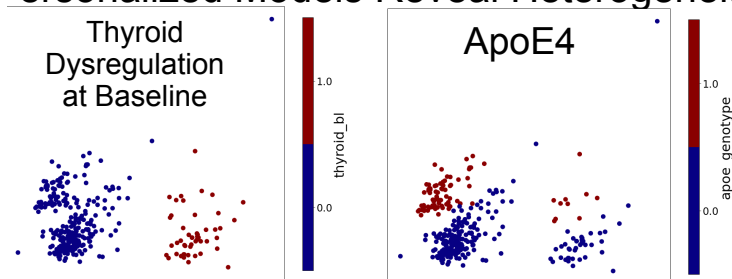


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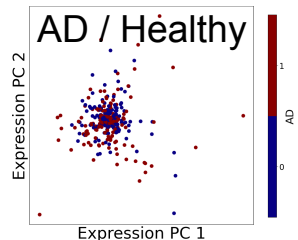


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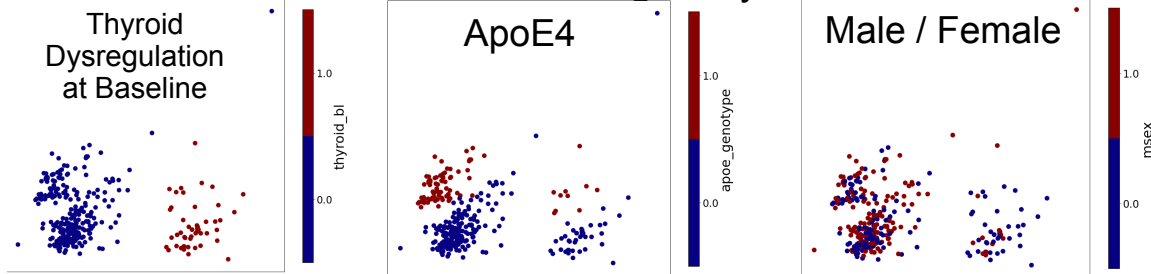


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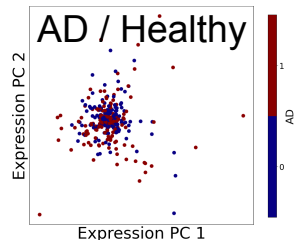


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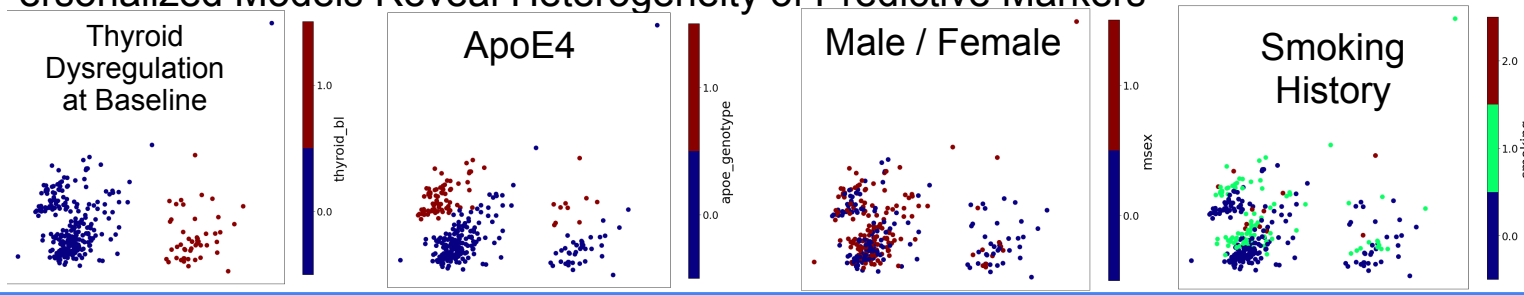


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---

# Disease Subtyping Vignette 2:

## Personalized Treatment Benefits in Covid-19

With Mark Nunnally, Yin Aphinyanaphongs, Caleb Ellington, Rich Caruana



# Personalized Treatment Benefits in Covid-19

---

Tree-based EBMs are **great** at modeling healthcare data, but not differentiable. Can we combine EBM benefits with contextualized treatment estimation?

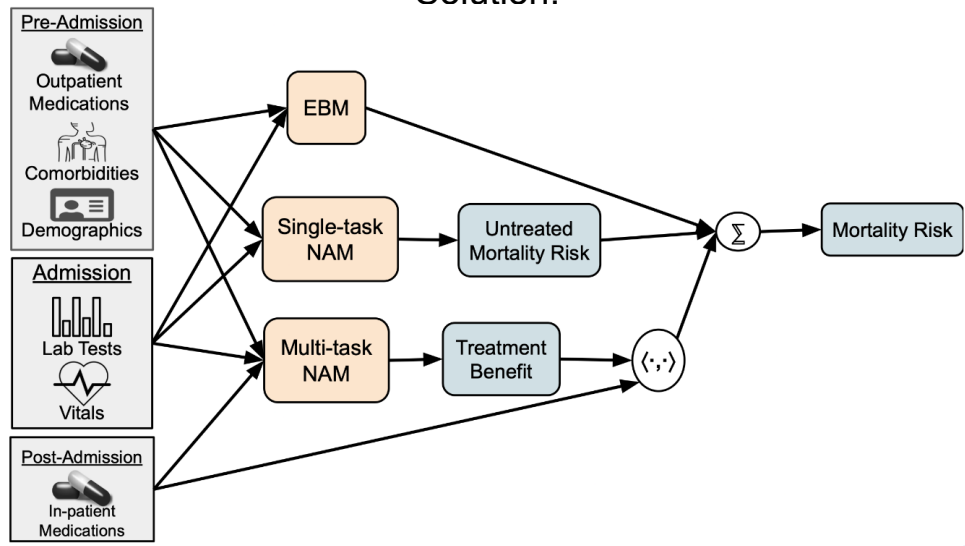
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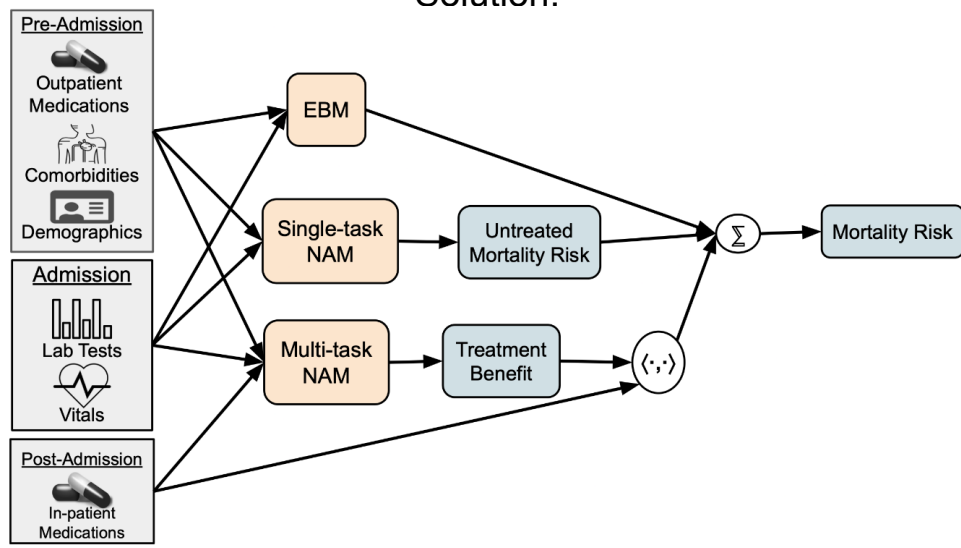
Solution:



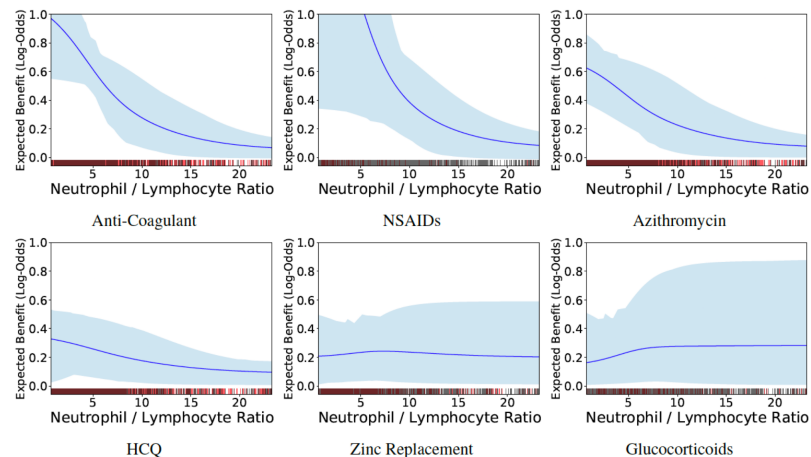
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Solution:



Reveals that treatment effectiveness changes based on inflammation and thrombosis factors:



---

# Disease Subtyping Vignette 3: Discriminative Subtypes of Lung Cancer

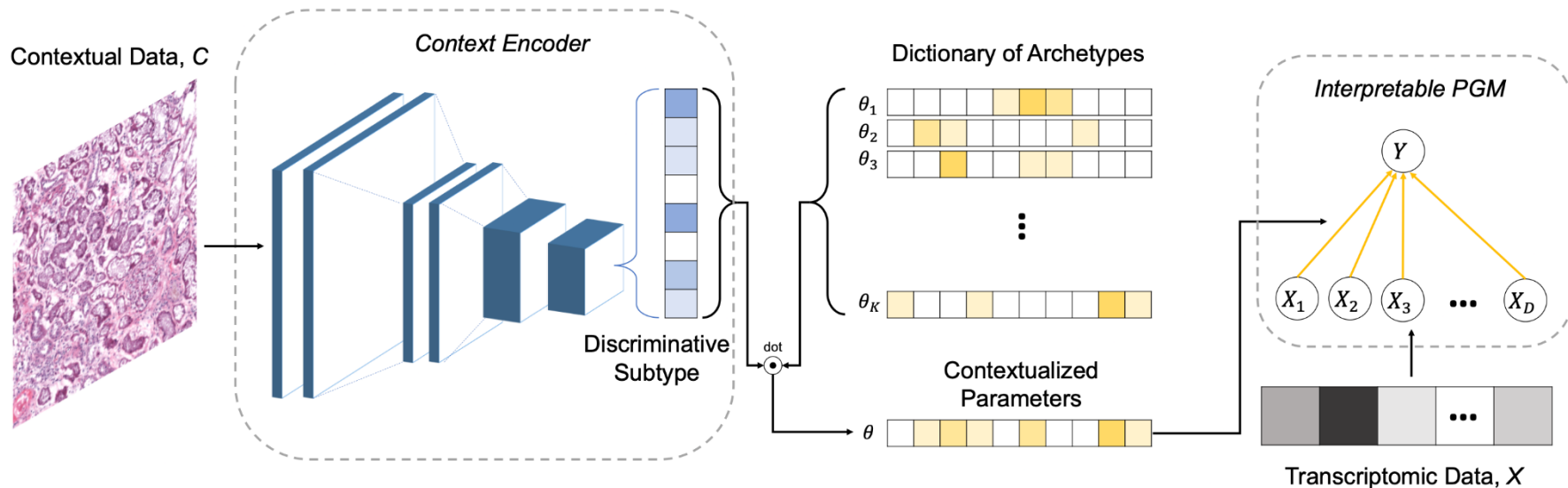
With Maruan Al-Shedivat, Amir Alavi, Jennifer Williams, Sami Labbaki, Eric Xing



**Carnegie Mellon University**

# Discriminative Subtypes Connect Histopathology and Transcriptomics

## 3-way Classification Task: Adenocarcinoma / Squamous Cell Carcinoma / Healthy



# Discriminative Subtypes Reveal Biological Patterns

Sample-specific models improve classification performance on held-out (test) patients

Model (Data)	Accuracy (%)	Macro F1
CEN (H+T)	<b>96.18</b>	<b>96.97</b>
Concatenated (H+T)	95.32	93.65
Ensemble (H+T)	94.61	90.23
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Transcriptomic Archetypes focus on biologically-relevant processes

Archetype	Term ID	Term Name	P-Val
1	KEGG:04071 KEGG:04310	Sphingolipid signaling pathway Wnt signaling pathway	0.037 0.049
6	REAC:R-HSA-6802952	Signaling by BRAF and RAF fusions	0.039
8	TF:M06732	Factor: ZNF304	0.023
12	REAC:R-HSA-8939236 GO:0010629	RUNX1 regulates transcription of genes involved in differentiation of HSCs negative regulation of gene expression	0.022 0.039
13	TF:M09657.1	Factor: Smad4	0.004
15	GO:0071385	cellular response to glucocorticoid stimulus	0.013
17	REAC:R-HSA-400206	Regulation of lipid metabolism by PPAR $\alpha$	0.018
18	TF:M04726.1	Factor: REST	0.001
19	TF:M05327.1	Factor: WT1	0.025
21	TF:M01224.1	Factor: P50:RELA-P65	0.034
25	TF:M09611.0	Factor: ER81	0.003
26	KEGG:04215	Apoptosis - multiple species	0.006
28	GO:0051240	positive regulation of multicellular organismal process	0.006
30	REAC:R-HSA-4791275	Signaling by WNT in cancer	0.045



# Discriminative Subtypes Reveal Biological Patterns

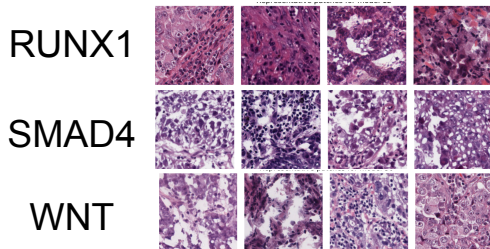
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Archetypal Models connect Transcriptomics to Morphology



---

# Disease Subtyping Vignette 4: Contextualized Network Inference

With Caleb Ellington, Bryon Aragam, Eric Xing, Manolis Kellis





# Context-Specific Bayesian Networks

---

- Bayesian Networks (BNs) are directed acyclic graphs (DAGs) which factorize joint distributions into sets of parent and children nodes.
- Context-Specific BNs use context  $C$  to allow the parameters and/or structure of the BNs to vary:

$$P(X, C) = \int_W dW P(X|W)P(W|C)P(C),$$

- where  $P(X|W) = \text{BN}(X|W)$

# Context-Specific Bayesian Networks

Assume that context-specific BNs lie on a subspace measured by a latent variable  $Z \in \mathbb{R}^k$  with  $C \perp (X, W) | Z$ . Then

$$P(W|X, C) \propto P(X|W) \int_Z dZ P(W|Z) P(Z|C)$$

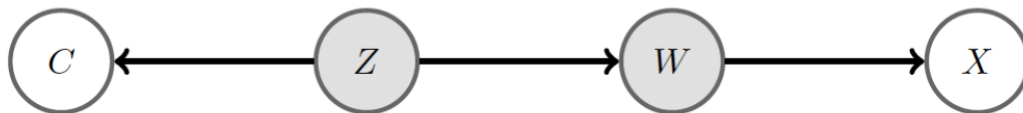


Figure 2: Graphical Model. Contextual covariates  $C$  and observations  $X$  are observed, while subtype  $Z$  and BN parameters  $W$  are latent.

How can we define tractable  $P(W|Z)$ ,  $P(Z|C)$ ?

# Context-Specific Bayesian Networks

---

Solution: Model context-specific BN parameters as the output of a smooth function:

$$P(X | C) = \text{BN}(X | \phi_{\theta}(C))$$

Challenge: How to ensure that learned  $\phi_{\theta}$  outputs BNs?

Difficult because BNs are directed **acyclic** graphs (DAGs) — a global constraint which must consider all entries in the adjacency matrix *simultaneously* and thus is not naturally amenable to local gradient-based updates.

# Solution: Smooth DAG-ness regularizer

---

[\[Zheng et al 2018\]](#) showed that “DAG”-ness can be encoded as a smooth function:

$$\text{tr}(e^{W \cdot W})$$

NOTEARS: Non-combinatorial Optimization via Trace Exponential and Augmented lagRangian for Structure learning

# NOTEARS-Optimized Mixtures of Archetypal DAGs (NOTMAD)

---

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Define the DAG for sample  $i$  as:

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$$W^i = \phi_{\theta}(C^i) = \sum_{k=1}^K \sigma(f_{\theta}(C^i))_k W_k$$

← Archetype Networks

← Sample Subtype

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← Archetype Networks  
← Sample Subtype

Giving us the optimization:

$$\arg \min_{\theta, W_{1:k}} \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{\alpha}{2} (X^i - X^i \phi_\theta(C^i))^2 + \beta \text{tr} \left( e^{\phi_\theta(C^i) \cdot \phi_\theta(C^i)} \right) + \sum_{k=1}^K \gamma |W_k|_1$$

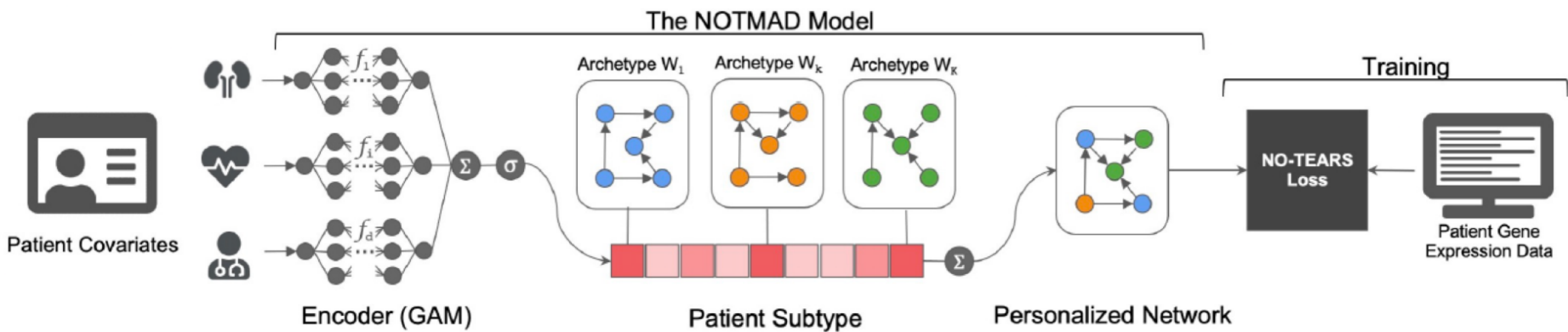
Data Likelihood (Squared Error)

DAG-ness

Archetype Sparsity

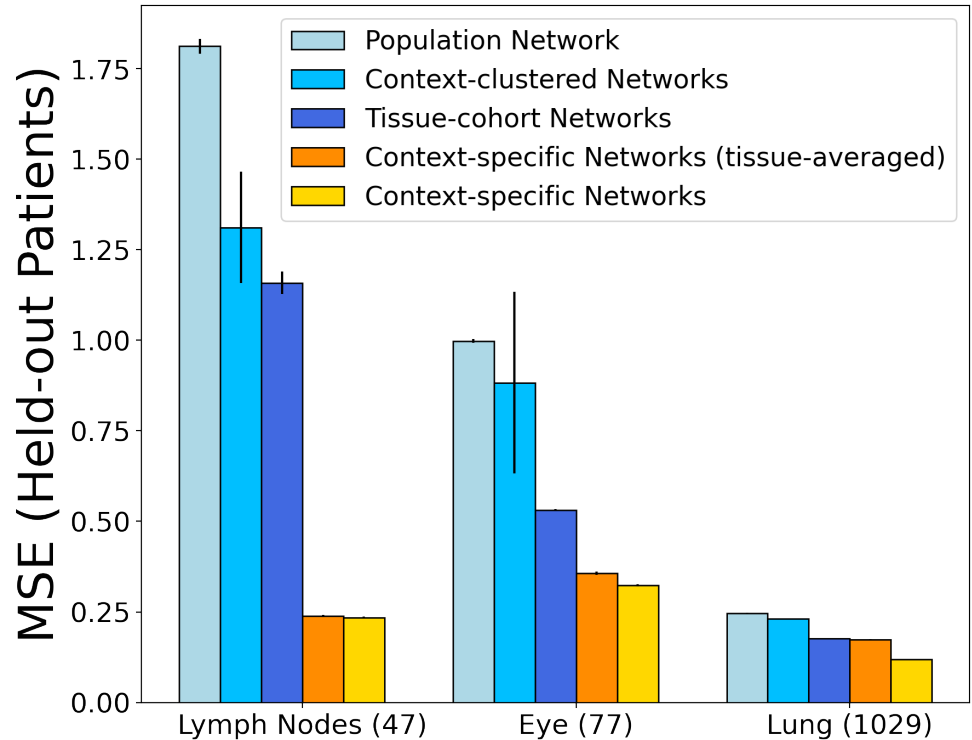


# NOTEARS-Optimized Mixtures of Archetypal DAGs (NOTMAD)

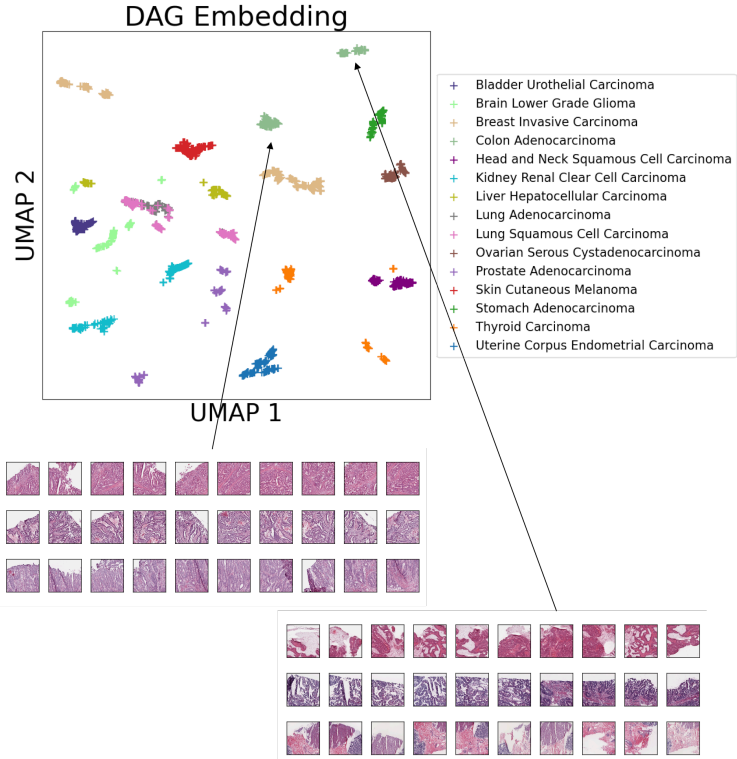


# Personalized Networks allow us to ask about gene network heterogeneity

- The Cancer Genome Atlas
- Context: patient demographics, immune cell proportions
- Network data: bulk RNA-seq
- Plot: samples grouped by cancer tissue-of-origin, (#) indicates the number of samples from that tissue in the training set
- Lower MSE (mean squared error) is better

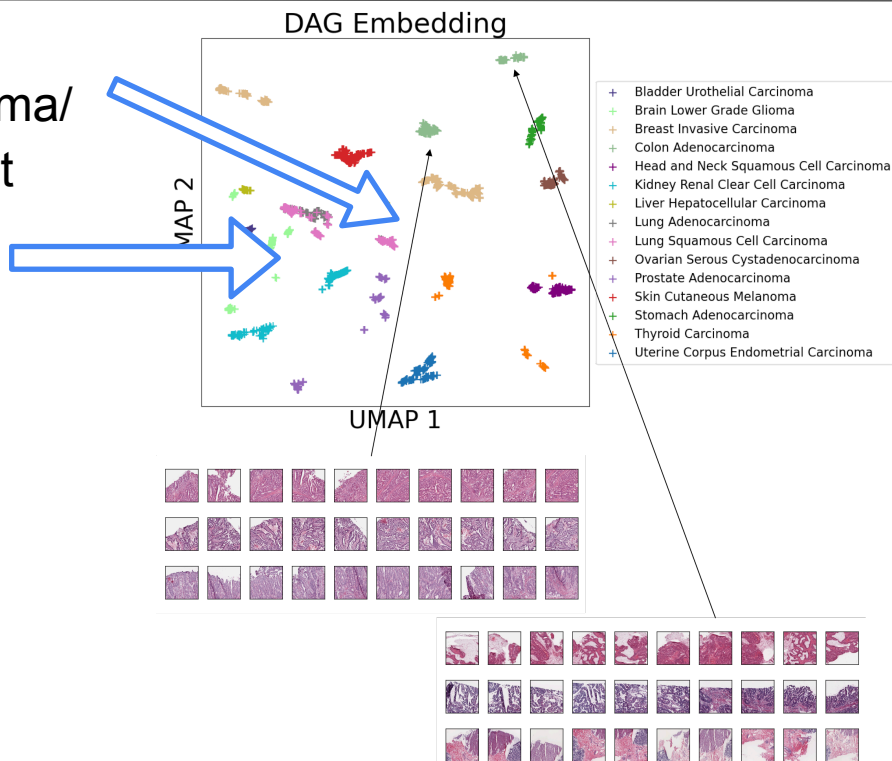


# Sample Networks Cluster According to Medical Heterogeneity



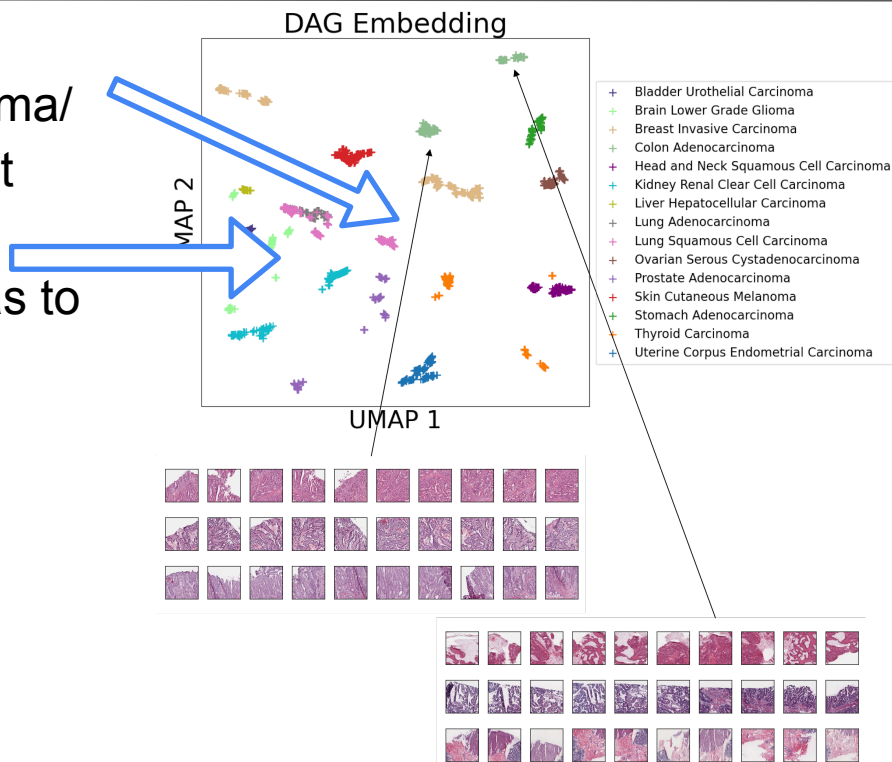
# Sample Networks Cluster According to Medical Heterogeneity

- Recovers Lung Adenocarcinoma/  
Squamous cell carcinoma split



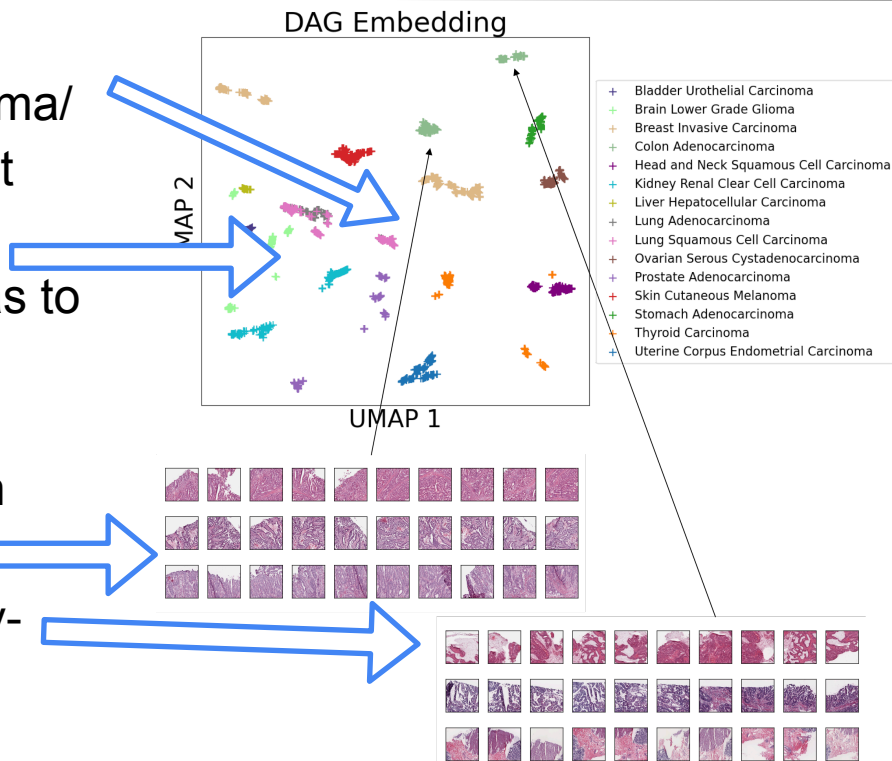
# Sample Networks Cluster According to Medical Heterogeneity

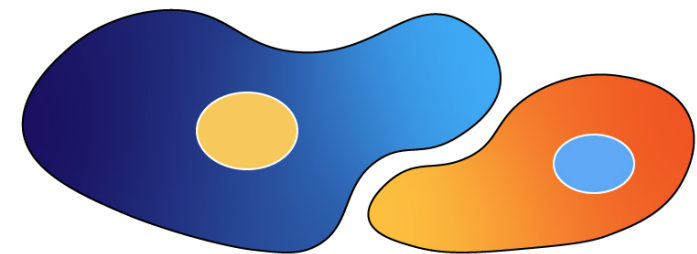
- Recovers Lung Adenocarcinoma/  
Squamous cell carcinoma split
  - Identifies a subset of  
squamous cell carcinomas to  
be molecularly similar to  
adenocarcinomas



# Sample Networks Cluster According to Medical Heterogeneity

- Recovers Lung Adenocarcinoma/  
Squamous cell carcinoma split
  - Identifies a subset of squamous cell carcinomas to be molecularly similar to adenocarcinomas
- Identifies two clusters of colon adenocarcinomas which correspond to morphologically-distinct tumors





[contextualized.ml](https://contextualized.ml)

# Contextualized

## Heterogeneous Modeling Toolbox



With **Caleb Ellington**, **Eric Xing**, **Manolis Kellis**

**Carnegie  
Mellon  
University**



**MOHAMED BIN ZAYED  
UNIVERSITY OF  
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

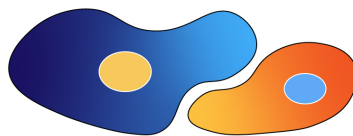


**Massachusetts  
Institute of  
Technology**

# Thank you!

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  - Harsha Nori
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  - Maruan Al-Shedivat
  - Bryon Aragam



**Contextualized**  
Heterogeneous Modeling Toolbox

[contextualized.ml](https://contextualized.ml)

Demos online  
Pull requests/issues welcome  
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