Protein Microarray Data Analysis using the *PAA* Package

Michael Turewicz

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1 Introduction

1.1 General information

Protein Array Analyzer (*PAA*) is a package for protein microarray data analysis (esp., *ProtoArray* data). It imports single color (protein) microarray data that has been saved in 'gpr' file format. After pre- processing (background correction, batch filtering, normalization) univariate feature pre-selection is performed (e.g., using the "minimum M statistic" approach - hereinafter referred to as "mMs", [1]). Subsequently, a multivariate feature selection is conducted to discover biomarker candidates. Therefore, either a frequency-based backwards elimination approach or ensemble feature selection can be used. *PAA* provides a complete toolbox of analysis tools including several different plots for results examination and evaluation

In this vignette the general workflow of *PAA* will be outlined by analyzing an exemplary data set that accompanies this package.

1.2 Installation

The recommended way to install PAA is to type the commands described below in the R console comment: (note: an active internet connection is needed):

- > # only if you install a Bioconductor package for the first time
- > source("http://www.bioconductor.org/biocLite.R")
- > # else
- > library("BiocInstaller")
- > biocLite("PAA", dependencies=TRUE)

This will install PAA including all dependencies.

Furthermore, *PAA* has an external dependency that is needed to provide full functionality. This external dependency is the free *C++* software package "Random Jungle" that can be downloaded from http://www.randomjungle.de/. comment: Note: *PAA* will be usable without Random Jungle. However, it needs this package for random jungle recursive feature elimination (RJ-RFE) provided by the function selectFeatures(). Please follow the instructions for your OS in the README file to install Random Jungle properly on your machine.

2 Loading PAA and importing data

After launching R, the first step of the exemplary analysis is to load PAA.

```
> library(PAA)
```

New microarray data should be imported using the function loadGPR() which is mainly a wrapper to *limma*'s function read.maimages() featuring optional duplicate aggregation for *ProtoArray* data. *PAA* supports the import of files in 'gpr' file format. The imported data is stored in an expression list object (*EList*, respectively, *EListRaw*, see Bioconductor package *limma*). Paths to a targets file and to a folder containing 'gpr' files (all 'gpr' files in this folder that are listed in the targets file will be read) are mandatory arguments. The folder that can be obtained by the command system.file("extdata", package = "PAA") contains an exemplary targets file that can be used as a template. Below, the first 3 rows of this targets file are shown.

```
> targets <- read.table(file=list.files(system.file("extdata", package="PAA"),</pre>
+ pattern = "^targets", full.names = TRUE), header=TRUE)
> print(targets[1:3,])
                                                          Date Array SerumID
  ArrayID
                             FileName Group Batch
1
      AD1 GSM734833_PA41992_-_AD1.gpr
                                         AD Batch1 10.11.2010 41992
2
      AD2 GSM734834_PA41994_-_AD2.gpr
                                         AD Batch2 10.11.2010 41994
                                                                         AD2
      AD3 GSM734835_PA42006_-AD3.gpr
                                         AD Batch1 12.11.2010 42006
                                                                         AD3
```

The columns "ArrayID", "FileName", and "Group" are mandatory. "Batch" is mandatory for microarray data that has been processed in batches. The remaining three columns as well as custom columns containing further information (e.g., clinical data) are optional.

If array.type is set to "ProtoArray" (default) duplicate spots will be aggregated. After importing, the object can be saved in a '.RData' file for further sessions. In the following code chunk, loadGPR() is demonstrated using a exemplary dummy data set that comes with PAA and has been created from the real data described below.

```
> gpr <- system.file("extdata", package="PAA")
> targets <- list.files(system.file("extdata", package="PAA"),
+ pattern = "dummy_targets", full.names=TRUE)
> dummy.elist <- loadGPR(gpr.path=gpr, targets.path=targets)
> save(dummy.elist, file=paste(gpr, "/DummyData.RData",
+ sep=""), compress="xz")
```

PAA comes with an exemplary protein microarray data set. This 20 Alzheimer's disease serum samples vs. 20 controls data is a subset of a publicly available ProtoArray data set. It can be downloaded from the repository "Gene Expression Omnibus" (GEO, http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/, record "GSE29676"). It has been contributed by Nagele E et al. [2] (note: Because a data set stored in 'gpr' files would be too large to accompany this package the exemplary data is stored as an '.RData' file).

In the following code chunk, the *PAA* installation path (where exemplary data is located) is localized, the new folder 'demo_output' (where all output of the following analysis will be saved) is created, and the exemplary data set is loaded (note: exceptionally not via loadGPR()).

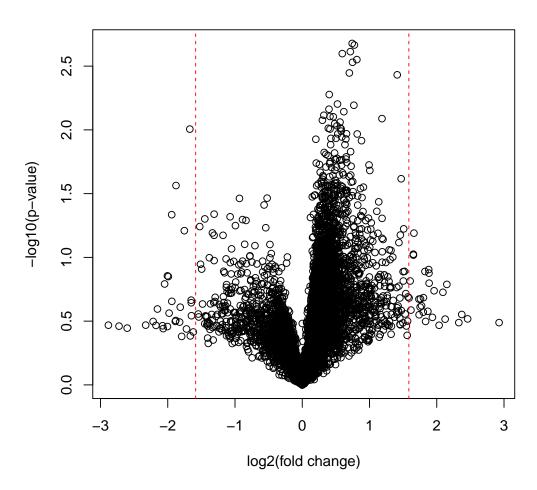
```
> cwd <- system.file(package="PAA")
> dir.create(paste(cwd, "/demo/demo_output", sep=""))
> output.path <- paste(cwd, "/demo/demo_output", sep="")
> load(paste(cwd, "/extdata/Alzheimer.RData", sep=""))
```

3 Pre-processing

If the microarrays were manufactured or processed in lots/batches, data analysis will suffer from batch effects resulting in wrong results. Hence, the elimination of batch effects is a crucial step of data pre-processing. A simple method to remove the most obvious batch effects is to find features that are extremely differential in different batches. In *PAA* this can be done for two batches using the function batchFilter(). This function takes an *EList* or *EListRaw* object and the batch-specific column name vectors lot1 and lot2 to find differential features regarding batches/lots. For this purpose, thresholds for p-values (Student's t-test) and fold changes can be defined. To visualize the differential features a volcano plot is drawn. Finally, the differential features are removed and the remaining data is returned.

- > lot1 <- elist\$targets[elist\$targets\$Batch=='Batch1','ArrayID']</pre>
- > lot2 <- elist\$targets[elist\$targets\$Batch=='Batch2','ArrayID']</pre>
- > elist <- batchFilter(elist=elist, lot1=lot1, lot2=lot2, p.thresh=0.001,
- + fold.thresh=3)

batch filter volcano



For background correction *limma*'s function backgroundCorrect() can be used:

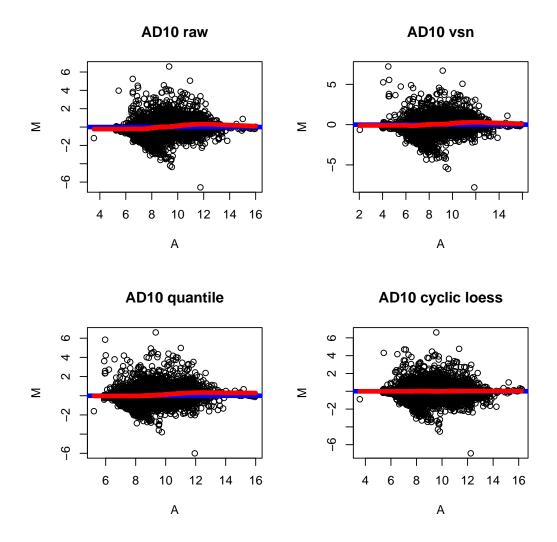
- > library(limma)
- > elist <- backgroundCorrect(elist, method="normexp",</pre>
- + normexp.method="saddle")

Another important step in pre-processing is normalization. To assist in choosing an appropriate normalization method for a given data set, *PAA* provides two functions: plotNormMethods() and plotMAPlots(). plotNormMethods() draws boxplots (one boxplot per sample) of raw data and data after all kinds of normalization provided by *PAA*. For each normalization approach sample-wise boxplots are created. All boxplots will be saved as a high-quality 'tiff' file, if an output path is specified.

> plotNormMethods(elist=elist)

plotMAPlots() draws MA plots of raw data and data after applying all kinds of normalization methods provided by *PAA*. If idx="all" and an output path is defined (default), for each microarray one 'tiff' file containing MA plots will be created. If idx is an integer indicating the column index of a particular sample, MA plots only for this sample will be created.

> plotMAPlots(elist=elist, idx=10)



After choosing a normalization method, the function normalizeArrays() can be used in order to normalize the data. normalizeArrays() takes an *EListRaw* object, normalizes the data, and returns an *EList* object containing normalized data in log2 scale. As normalization methods "cyclicloess", "quantile" or "vsn" can be chosen. Furthermore, for *ProtoArrays* robust linear normalization ("rlm", see *Shoner A. et al.* [3]) is provided.

> elist <- normalizeArrays(elist=elist, method="cyclicloess",

⁺ cyclicloess.method="fast")

In addition to batchFilter(), the function batchAdjust() can be used after normalization via normalizeArrays() to adjust the data for batch effects. This is a wrapper to sva's function ComBat() for batch adjustment using the empirical Bayes approach [4]. To use batchAdjust() the targets file information of the EList object must contain the columns "Batch" and "Group".

> elist <- batchAdjust(elist=elist, log=TRUE)</pre>

Found 2 batches
Adjusting for 1 covariate(s) or covariate level(s)
Standardizing Data across genes
Fitting L/S model and finding priors
Finding parametric adjustments
Adjusting the Data

Since for further analysis also data in original scale will be needed, a copy of the *EList* object containing unlogged data should be created.

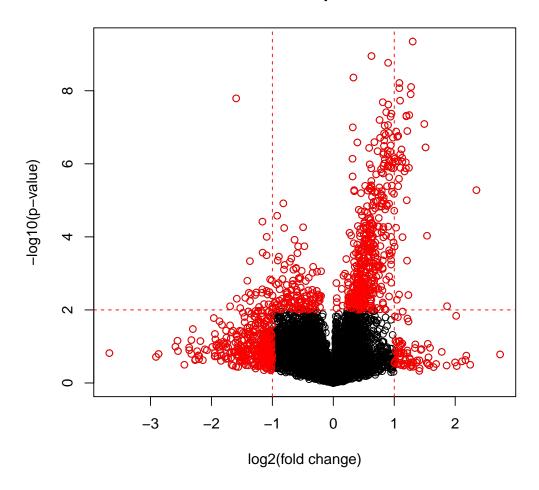
```
> elist.unlog <- elist
> elist.unlog$E <- 2^(elist$E)</pre>
```

4 Differential analysis

The goal of univariate differential analysis is to detect relevant differential features. Therefore, statistical measures such as t-test p-values or mMs as well as fold changes are considered. PAA provides plotting functions in order to depict the number and the quality of the differential features in the data set. Accordingly, the function volcanoPlot() draws a volcano plot to visualize differential features. Therefore, thresholds for p-values and fold changes can be defined. Furthermore, the p-value computation method ("mMs" or "tTest") can be set. When an output path is defined (via output.path) the plot will be saved as a 'tiff' file. In the next code chunk, an example with method="tTest" is given.

```
> c1 <- paste(rep("AD",20), 1:20, sep="")
> c2 <- paste(rep("NDC",20), 1:20, sep="")
> volcanoPlot(elist=elist.unlog, group1=c1, group2=c2, method="tTest",
+ p.thresh=0.01, fold.thresh=2)
```

volcano plot

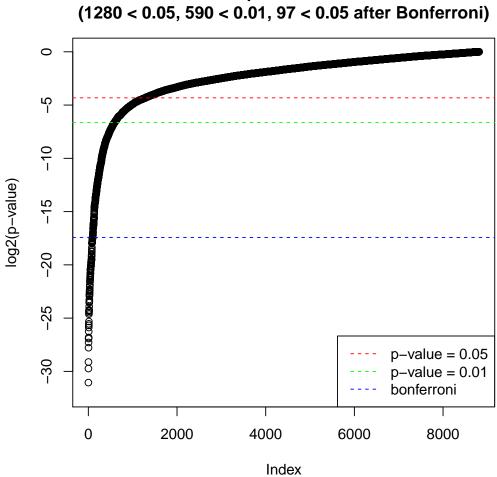


Here, an example with method="mMs" is given:

- > mMs.matrix1 <- mMs.matrix2 <- mMsMatrix(x=20, y=20)</pre>
- > volcanoPlot(elist=elist.unlog, group1=c1, group2=c2, method="mMs",
- + p.thresh=0.01, fold.thresh=2, mMs.matrix1=mMs.matrix1,
- + mMs.matrix2=mMs.matrix2, above=1500, between=400)

Another plotting function is pvaluePlot() which draws a plot of p-values for all features in the data set (sorted in increasing order and in log2 scale). The p-value computation method ("tTest" or "mMs") can be set via the argument method. Furthermore, when adjust=TRUE adjusted p-values (method: Benjamini & Hochberg, 1995, computed via p.adjust()) will be used. For a better orientation, horizontal dashed lines indicate which p-values are smaller than 0.05 and 0.01. If adjust=FALSE, additionally, the respective Bonferroni significance threshold (to show p-values that would be smaller than 0.05 after a possible Bonferroni correction) for the given data is indicated by a third dashed line. comment: Note: Bonferroni is not used for the adjustment. The dashed line is for better orientation only. When an output path is defined (via output.path) the plot will be saved as a 'tiff' file. In the next code chunk, an example with method="tTest" is given.

> pvaluePlot(elist=elist.unlog, group1=c1, group2=c2, method="tTest")



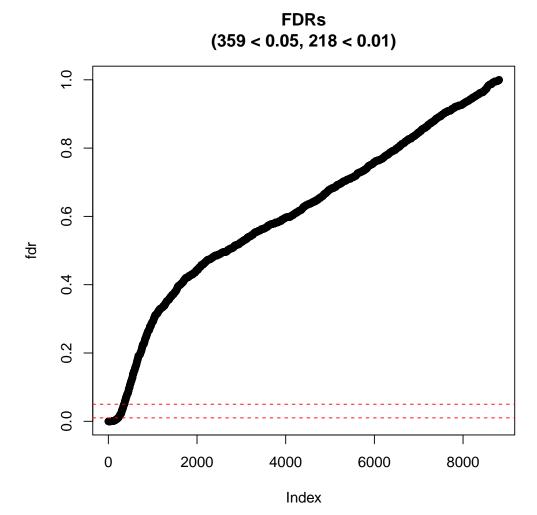
p-values
(1280 < 0.05, 500 < 0.01, 97 < 0.05 after Ronferroni

Here, an example with method="mMs" is given:

- > mMs.matrix1 <- mMs.matrix2 <- mMsMatrix(x=20, y=20)
- > pvaluePlot(elist=elist.unlog, group1=c1, group2=c2, method="mMs",
- + mMs.matrix1=mMs.matrix1, mMs.matrix2=mMs.matrix2, above=1500,
- + between=400)

Here, an example with method="tTest" and adjust=TRUE is given:

> pvaluePlot(elist=elist.unlog, group1=c1, group2=c2, method="tTest", adjust=TRUE)



Here, an example with method="mMs" and adjust=TRUE is given:

- > mMs.matrix1 <- mMs.matrix2 <- mMsMatrix(x=20, y=20)</pre>
- > pvaluePlot(elist=elist.unlog, group1=c1, group2=c2, method="mMs",
- + mMs.matrix1=mMs.matrix1, mMs.matrix2=mMs.matrix2, above=1500,
- + between=400, adjust=TRUE)

Finally, diffAnalysis() performs a detailed univariate differential analysis. This function takes an EList\$E- or EListRaw\$E- matrix (e.g., temp <- elist\$E) extended by row names comprising "BRC"-IDs of the corresponding features. The BRC-IDs can be created via:

brc <- paste(elist\$genes[,1], elist\$genes[,3], elist\$genes[,2]).</pre>

Next, the row names can be assigned as follows: rownames(temp) <- brc. Furthermore, the corresponding column name vectors, group labels and mMs- parameters are needed to perform the univariate differential analysis. This analysis covers inter alia p-value computation, p-value adjustment (method: Benjamini & Hochberg, 1995), and fold change computation. Since the results table is usually large, a path for saving the results should be defined via output.path. Optionally, a vector of row indices (features) and additionally (not mandatory for subset analysis) a vector of corresponding feature names (feature.names) can be forwarded to perform the analysis for a feature subset.

- > E <- elist.unlog\$E
- > rownames(E) <- paste(elist.unlog\$genes[,1], elist.unlog\$genes[,3],</pre>
- + elist.unlog\$genes[,2])
- > write.table(x=cbind(rownames(E),E), file=paste(cwd,"/demo/demo_output/data.txt",

```
sep=""), sep="\t", eol="\n", row.names=FALSE, quote=FALSE)
> mMs.matrix1 <- mMs.matrix2 <- mMsMatrix(x=20, y=20)</pre>
 diff.analysis.results <- diffAnalysis(input=E, label1=c1, label2=c2,
      class1="AD", class2="NDC", output.path=output.path,
      mMs.matrix1=mMs.matrix1, mMs.matrix2=mMs.matrix2, above=1500,
      between=400)
> print(diff.analysis.results[1:10,])
      BRC
                       t.test
                                         FDR.t. min..M.stat...mMs.
                                                                            FDR.mMs.
1
  1 2 11
            0.353106166996641 0.653515561033814 0.243589743589744 0.839889049396093
2
  1 2 13
           0.151047676620869 \ 0.497495334555317 \ 0.0241860325286354 \ 0.339954552910469
  1 2 15
           0.322661412277616 0.633943943562643
  1 2 17
           0.179355969483044 \ 0.525421988576413 \ 0.150422391245528 \ 0.836914478564923
5
  1 2 19
           0.270872133026702  0.59650077670273  0.243589743589744  0.839889049396093
6
  1 2 21 0.0705685797508109 0.394619856182675 0.0457380457380457 0.494409794409794
   1 3 1 0.0287047750392357 0.272016325183639
7
                                                                 1
                                                                                   1
    1 3 3 0.00964332079377621 0.146761073824875
8
                                                               0.5 0.91592184577011
9
    1 3 5 0.00585967882460956 0.105606031659068 0.053014553014553 0.494409794409794
10 1 3 7
            0.810874235449664 \ 0.917242284304696 \ 0.302494802494803 \ 0.91592184577011
         fold.change
                              mean.AD
                                              mean.NDC
                                                              median.AD
                                                                              median.NDC
    1.36424980900744\ 1385.39667514052\ 1015.50072867407\ 836.967141422826\ 856.924119132528
1
2
  0.259812534239783 \ 2174.63594761717 \ 8370.01938332266 \ 1301.78619646052 \ 2539.13568716016
   1.10187764526045 449.341637655751 407.796309861194 413.155296296934 417.153735113662
3
  4
5
  0.452784319410236 \ 2514.10669279988 \ 5552.54805659916 \ 1823.88915456646 \ 1845.85809953755
  0.756982579985154 2623.03091375803 3465.11397106322 2243.35546297194 2912.0113916556
7
    1.2628409159071 483.434476187839 382.815024520003 445.041330625547 348.039093254718
8
    1.48323540665116 \ 691.595735474642 \ 466.275098594175 \ 554.338819804953 \ 453.925085866405
9
    1.36256262849398 \quad 1987.7391153558 \ 1458.82403772723 \ 1862.02911541228 \ 1431.38640822381
10\;\; 0.910535317015786\;\; 818.500619086081\;\; 898.922429245971\;\; 728.594780869617\;\; 468.248941989062
              sd.AD
                              sd.NDC
  1652.18383300672 564.61322833277
1
  2944.53946690674 18321.9607074207
2
  165.514809954714 81.5402394496133
3
  1059.83503973736 3132.92109709241
5
  2423.24879814855 11762.9616782293
6
  1287.13398591756 1559.47972714554
7
  154.770438502943 122.65819388996
8
  342.739574049016 93.0408286530952
  719.952644954053 322.419391545683
10 438.081229970116 1419.40167042176
```

Subsequently, the most relevant differential features (i.e., features having low p-values and high absolute fold changes) can be extracted as a univariate feature selection. Nevertheless, it is recommended to perform also multivariate feature selection and to consider feature panels obtained from both approaches.

5 Feature pre-selection

Before multivariate feature selection will be performed, it is recommended to discard features that are obviously not differential. Discarding them will accelerate runtimes without any negative impact on results. In *PAA*, this task is called "feature pre-selection" and it is performed by the function preselect(). This function iterates all features of the data set to score them via *mMs*, *Student's t-test*, or *mRMR*. If discard.features is TRUE (default), all features that are considered as obviously not differential will be collected and returned for discarding. Which features are considered as not differential depends on the parameters method, discard.threshold, and fold.thresh.

- If method = "mMs", features having an *mMs* value larger than discard.threshold (here: numeric between 0.0 and 1.0) or do not satisfy the minimal absolute fold change fold.thresh will be considered as not differential.
- If method = "tTest", features having a p-value larger than discard.threshold (here: numeric between 0.0 and 1.0) or do not satisfy the minimal absolute fold change fold.thresh will be considered as not differential.
- If method = "mrmr", mRMR scores for all features will be computed as scoring method (using the function mRMR.classic() of the R package mRMRe). Subsequently, features that are not the discard.threshold (here: integer indicating a number of features) features having the best mRMR scores are considered as not differential.

```
> mMs.matrix1 <- mMs.matrix2 <- mMsMatrix(x=20, y=20)
> pre.sel.results <- preselect(elist=elist.unlog, columns1=c1, columns2=c2,
+ label1="AD", label2="NDC", discard.threshold=0.5, fold.thresh=1.5,
+ discard.features=TRUE, mMs.above=1500, mMs.between=400,
+ mMs.matrix1=mMs.matrix1, mMs.matrix2=mMs.matrix2,
+ method="mMs")
> elist <- elist[-pre.sel.results$discard,]</pre>
```

6 Feature selection

For multivariate feature selection *PAA* provides the function selectFeatures(). It performs a multivariate feature selection using "frequency-based" feature selection (based on *RF-RFE*, *RJ-RFE* or *SVM-RFE*) or "ensemble" feature selection (based on *SVM-RFE*).

Frequency-based feature selection (method="frequency"): The whole data is splitted in k cross validation training and test set pairs. For each training set a multivariate feature selection procedure is performed. The resulting k feature subsets are tested using the corresponding test sets (via classification). As a result, selectFeatures() returns the average k-fold cross validation classification accuracy as well as the selected feature panel (i.e., the union set of the k particular feature subsets). As multivariate feature selection methods random forest recursive feature elimination (*RF-RFE*), random jungle recursive feature elimination (*RJ-RFE*) and support vector machine recursive feature elimination (*SVM-RFE*) are supported. To reduce running times, optionally, an additional univariate feature pre-selection can be performed (usage via preselection.method). As univariate pre-selection methods mMs ("mMs"), Student's t-test ("tTest") and mRMR ("mrmr") are supported. Alternatively, no pre-selection can be chosen ("none"). This approach is similar to the method proposed in *Baek et al.* [5].

Ensemble feature selection (method="ensemble"): From the whole data a previously defined number of subsamples is drawn defining pairs of training and test sets. Moreover, for each training set a previously defined number of bootstrap samples is drawn. Then, for each bootstrap sample SVM-RFE is performed and a feature ranking is obtained. To obtain a final ranking for a particular training set, all associated bootstrap rankings are aggregated to a single ranking. To score the cutoff best features, for each subsample a classification of the test set is performed (using a svm trained with the cutoff best features from the training set) and the classification accuracy is determined. Finally, the stability of the subsample-specific panels is assessed (via Kuncheva index, Kuncheva LI, 2007 [6]), all subsample-specific rankings are aggregated, the top n features (defined by cutoff) are selected, the average classification accuracy is computed, and all these results are returned in a list. This approach has been proposed and is described in Abeel et al. [7].

selectFeatures() takes an EListRaw or EList object, group-specific sample numbers, group labels and parameters choosing and setting up a univariate feature pre-selection method as well as a multivariate feature selection method (frequency-based or ensemble feature selection) to select a panel of differential features. When an output path is defined (via output.path) results will be saved on the hard disk and when verbose is TRUE additional information will be printed to the console. Depending on the selection method, one of two different results lists will be returned:

- 1. If method is "frequency", the results list contains the following elements:
 - accuracy: average k-fold cross validation accuracy.
 - sensitivity: average k-fold cross validation sensitivity.
 - specificity: average k-fold cross validation specificity.
 - features: selected feature panel.
 - all.results: complete cross validation results.
- 2. If method is "ensemble", the results list contains the following elements:
 - accuracy: average accuracy regarding all subsamples.
 - sensitivity: average sensitivity regarding all subsamples.
 - specificity: average specificity regarding all subsamples.
 - features: selected feature panel.
 - all.results: all feature ranking results.
 - stability: stability of the feature panel (i.e., Kuncheva index for the subrun-specific panels).

In the following two code chunks first "frequency-based" feature selection and then "ensemble" feature selection is demonstrated.

```
> selectFeatures.results <- selectFeatures(elist,n1=20,n2=20,label1="AD",
+ label2="NDC",selection.method="rf.rfe",subruns=2,candidate.number=1000,
    method="frequency")
> selectFeatures.results <- selectFeatures(elist,n1=20,n2=20,label1="AD",
+ label2="NDC",selection.method="rf.rfe",subsamples=10,bootstraps=10,
+ method="ensemble")</pre>
```

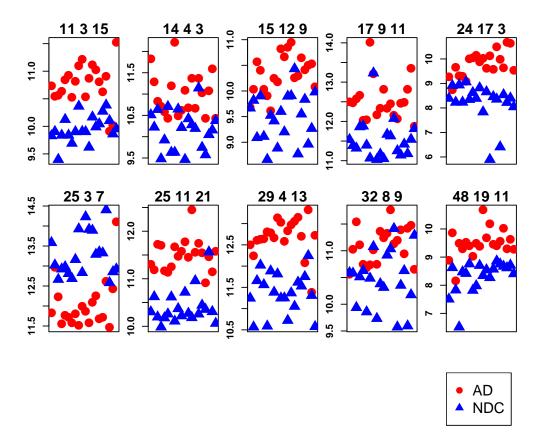
Because runtimes would take too long for this vignette *PAA* comes with pre-computated selectFeatures.results objects stored in '.RData' files. These objects can be loaded as follows:

```
> # results of frequency-based feature selection:
> load(paste(cwd, "/extdata/selectFeaturesResultsFreq.RData", sep=""))
> # or results of ensemble feature selection:
> load(paste(cwd, "/extdata/selectFeaturesResultsEns.RData", sep=""))
```

7 Results inspection

After the selection of a feature panel, these features should be validated by manual inspection and evaluation for further research. To aid results inspection, *PAA* provides several functions. The function plotFeatures() plots the intensities of all features (represented by BRC-IDs) that have been selected by selectFeatures() (one sub-plot per feature) in group-specific colors. All sub-plots are aggregated in one figure. If output.path is not NULL, this figure will be saved in a 'tiff' file in output.path.

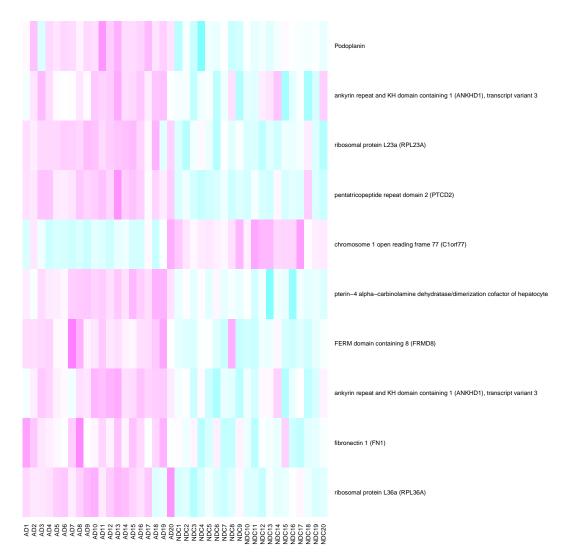
- > plotFeatures(features=selectFeatures.results\$features, elist=elist, n1=20,
- + n2=20, group1="AD", group2="NDC")



Alternatively, the function plotFeaturesHeatmap() plots intensities of all features given in the vector features (represented by BRC-IDs) as a heatmap. If description is TRUE (default: FALSE), features will be described via protein names instead of uniprot accessions. Again, if output.path is not NULL, the heatmap will be saved as a 'tiff' file in output.path.

 $[\]verb|> plotFeaturesHeatmap| (features=selectFeatures.results\$features, elist=elist,$

⁺ n1=20, n2=20, description=TRUE)



Finally, the function printFeatures() creates a table containing the selected biomarker candidate panel as well as additional information for results inspection. If output.path is defined, this table will be saved in a 'txt' file ('candidates.txt').

> printFeatures(features=selectFeatures.results\$features, elist=elist.unlog)[,-2]

	BRC		AD1		AD2		AD3		AD4	
1	11 3 15	1703.318	337653865	1491.17	023063965	1516.13	683196889	1586.553	323368053	
2	14 4 3	3638.241	183490315	2507.73	791136244	1819.30	785847308	1682.589	58141381	
3	15 12 9	821.0917	703810558	1050.40	509812001	1516.12	540728299	1351.489	75396829	
4	17 9 11	5787.752	253046833	5671.34	450215111	6126.47	135063687	6486.172	248013198	
5	24 17 3	614.5841	148494639	429.887	812284176	807.83	272996343	637.3202	267615249	
6	25 3 7	3635.531	112882019	7990.41	506031096	4796.06	511893852	2997.110	69054398	
7	25 11 21	2531.723	344068389	2338.0	008855226	3374.42	979464504	3335.54	06174437	
8	29 4 13	5818.846	509184953	4835.6	334896692	6260.78	284330114	6362.767	48930227	
9	32 8 9	1508.372	205423432	2087.86	339225907	2978.2	370633432	2213.840	66817173	
10	48 19 11	473.7910	048911754	934.424	698346471	284.642	146467594	717.0191	51760854	
		AD5		AD6		AD7		AD8		AD9
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