

## The Trans-Ancestral Genomic Architecture of Glycemic Traits

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**Abstract**

Glycemic traits are used to diagnose and monitor type 2 diabetes, and cardiometabolic health. To date, most genetic studies of glycemic traits have focused on individuals of European ancestry. Here, we aggregated genome-wide association studies in up to 281,416 individuals without diabetes (30% non-European ancestry) with fasting glucose, 2h-glucose post-challenge, glycated hemoglobin, and fasting insulin data. Trans-ancestry and single-ancestry meta-analyses identified 242 loci (99 novel;  $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$ ), 80% with no significant evidence of between-ancestry heterogeneity. Analyses restricted to European ancestry individuals with equivalent sample size would have led to 24 fewer new loci. Compared to single-ancestry, equivalent sized trans-ancestry fine-mapping reduced the number of estimated variants in 99% credible sets by a median of 37.5%. Genomic feature, gene-expression and gene-set analyses revealed distinct biological signatures for each trait, highlighting different underlying biological pathways. Our results increase understanding of diabetes pathophysiology by use of trans-ancestry studies for improved power and resolution.

474 Fasting glucose (FG), 2h-glucose post-challenge (2hGlu), and glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c) are  
475 glycemic traits used to diagnose diabetes<sup>1</sup>. In addition, HbA1c is the most commonly used biomarker  
476 to monitor glucose control in patients with diabetes. Fasting insulin (FI) reflects a combination of  
477 insulin secretion and insulin resistance, both components of type 2 diabetes (T2D), and insulin  
478 clearance<sup>2</sup>. Collectively, all four glycemic traits are useful to better understand T2D  
479 pathophysiology<sup>3-5</sup> and cardiometabolic outcomes<sup>6</sup>.

480

481 To date, genome-wide association studies (GWAS) and analysis of Metabochip and exome arrays  
482 have identified >120 loci associated with glycemic traits in individuals without diabetes<sup>7-15</sup>. However,  
483 despite considerable differences in the prevalence of T2D risk factors across ancestries<sup>16-18</sup>, most  
484 glycemic trait GWAS have insufficient representation of individuals of non-European ancestry.  
485 Additionally, they have limited resolution for fine-mapping of causal variants and for effector  
486 transcript identification. Here, we present large-scale trans-ancestry meta-analyses of GWAS for four  
487 glycemic traits in individuals without diabetes. We aimed to identify additional glycemic trait-  
488 associated loci; investigate the portability of loci and genetic scores across ancestries; leverage  
489 differences in effect allele frequency (EAF), effect size, and linkage disequilibrium (LD) across diverse  
490 populations to conduct fine-mapping and aid causal variant/effector transcript identification; and  
491 compare the genetic architecture of glycemic traits to further identify the cell-types and target  
492 tissues most influenced by these traits which inform T2D pathophysiology.

493

## 494 Results

### 495 Study design and definitions

496 To identify loci associated with glycemic traits FG, 2hGlu, FI, and HbA1c, we aggregated GWAS in up  
497 to 281,416 individuals without diabetes, ~30% of whom were of non-European ancestry [13% East  
498 Asian, 7% Hispanic, 6% African-American, 3% South Asian, and 2% sub-Saharan African (Ugandan  
499 data only available for HbA1c)]. Each cohort imputed data to the 1000 Genomes Project reference  
500 panel<sup>19</sup> (phase 1 v3, March 2012, or later; **Methods, Supplementary Table 1, Extended Data Figure**  
501 **1, Supplementary Note**). Up to ~49.3 million variants were directly genotyped or imputed, with  
502 between 38.6 million (2hGlu) and 43.5 million variants (HbA1c) available for analysis after exclusions  
503 based on minor allele count (MAC < 3) and imputation quality (imputation  $r^2$  or INFO score < 0.40) in  
504 each cohort. FG, 2hGlu and FI analyses were adjusted for BMI<sup>15</sup> but for simplicity they are  
505 abbreviated as FG, 2hGlu and FI (**Methods**).

506

507 We first performed trait-specific fixed-effect meta-analyses *within* each ancestry using METAL<sup>20</sup>  
508 (**Methods**). We defined “single-ancestry lead” variants as the strongest trait-associated variants  
509 ( $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$ ) within a 1Mb region in an ancestry (**Table 1**). Within each ancestry and each autosome,  
510 we used approximate conditional analyses in GCTA<sup>21,22</sup>, to identify “single-ancestry index variants”  
511 ( $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$ ) that exert conditionally distinct effects on the trait (**Table 1, Methods, Supplementary**  
512 **Note**). This approach identified 124 FG, 15 2hGlu, 48 FI and 139 HbA1c variants that were significant  
513 in at least one ancestry (**Supplementary Table 2**).

514

515 Next, we conducted trait-specific *trans-ancestry* meta-analyses using MANTRA (**Methods,**  
516 **Supplementary Table 1, Supplementary Note**) to identify genome-wide significant “trans-ancestry  
517 lead variants”, defined as the most significant trait-associated variant across all ancestries ( $\log_{10}$   
518 Bayes Factor [BF] > 6, equivalent to  $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$ )<sup>23</sup> (**Table 1, Methods**). Here, we present trans-ancestry  
519 results as our primary results (**Supplementary Table 2**).

520

521 Causal variants are expected to affect related glycemic traits and may be shared across ancestries.  
522 Therefore, we combined all single-ancestry lead variants, single-ancestry index variants, and/or  
523 trans-ancestry lead variants (for any trait) mapping within 500Kb of each other, into a single “trans-  
524 ancestry locus” bounded by 500Kb flanking sequences (**Table 1, Extended Data Figure 2**). As defined,

525 a trans-ancestry locus may contain multiple causal variants affecting one or more glycemic traits,  
526 exerting their effect in one or more ancestry.

527

### 528 **Glycemic trait locus discovery**

529 Trans-ancestry meta-analyses identified 235 trans-ancestry loci, of which 59 contained lead variants  
530 for more than one trait. In addition, we identified seven “single-ancestry loci” that did not contain  
531 any trans-ancestry lead variants (**Table 1, Supplementary Table 2**). Of the 242 combined loci, 99  
532 (including 6 of the 7 single-ancestry) had not been previously associated with any of the four  
533 glycemic traits or with T2D, at the time of analysis (**Figure 1, Supplementary Table 3, Supplementary**  
534 **note**). However, based on recent East Asian and trans-ancestry T2D GWAS meta-analyses<sup>23-27</sup>, the  
535 lead variants at 27/99 novel glycemic trait loci have strong evidence of association with T2D ( $P < 10^{-4}$ ;  
536 13 loci with  $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$ ), suggesting they are also important in T2D pathophysiology (**Supplementary**  
537 **Tables 2 and 4**).

538

539 Of the six single-ancestry novel loci, three were unique to non-European ancestry individuals  
540 (**Supplementary Table 3**). An African American association for FI (lead variant rs12056334) near  
541 *LOC100128993* (an uncharacterized RNA gene; **Supplementary Note**), an African American  
542 association for FG (lead variant rs61909476) near *ETS1* and a Hispanic association for FG (lead  
543 variant rs12315677) within *PIK3C2G* (**Supplementary Table 3**). Despite broadly similar EAF across  
544 ancestries, rs61909476 was significantly associated with FG only in African American individuals (EAF  
545 ~7%,  $b = 0.0812$  mmol/l,  $SE = 0.01$  mmol/l,  $P = 3.9 \times 10^{-8}$  vs EAF 10-17%,  $b = 0-0.002$  mmol/l,  $se = 0.003-$   
546  $0.017$  mmol/l,  $P = 0.44-0.95$  in all other ancestries, **Supplementary table 2, Supplementary note**). The  
547 nearest gene, *ETS1*, encodes a transcription factor that is expressed in mouse pancreatic  $\beta$ -cells, and  
548 its overexpression decreases glucose-stimulated insulin secretion in mouse islets<sup>28</sup>. Located within  
549 the *PIK3C2G* gene, rs12315677 has an 84% EAF in Hispanic (70-94% in other ancestries) and is  
550 significantly associated with FG in this ancestry alone ( $b = 0.0387$  mmol/l,  $SE = 0.0075$  mmol/l,  
551  $P = 4.0 \times 10^{-8}$  vs  $b = -0.0128-0.010$  mmol/l,  $SE = 0.003-0.018$  mmol/l,  $P = 0.14-0.76$  in all other ancestries,  
552 **Supplementary note**). In mice, deletion of *Pik3c2g* leads to a phenotype characterized by reduced  
553 glycogen storage in the liver, hyperlipidemia, adiposity, and insulin resistance with increasing age, or  
554 after a high fat diet<sup>29</sup>. Instances of similar EAFs but differing effect sizes between populations, could  
555 be due to genotype-by-environment or other epistatic effects. Alternatively, lower imputation  
556 accuracy in smaller sample sizes could deflate effect sizes, although imputation quality for these  
557 variants was good (average  $r^2 = 0.81$ ). Finally, the variants detected here may be in LD with ancestry-  
558 specific causal variants not interrogated here that differ in frequency across ancestries. However, we  
559 could not find evidence of rarer alleles in the cognate populations from the 1000G project  
560 (**Supplementary Table 5**). The final three single-ancestry loci were identified in individuals of  
561 European ancestry (**Supplementary note**).

562

563 Next, by rescaling the standard errors of allelic effect sizes to artificially boost the sample size of the  
564 European meta-analysis to match that of trans-ancestry meta-analysis, we determined that 21 of the  
565 novel trans-ancestry loci would not have been discovered with an equivalent sample size comprised  
566 exclusively of European ancestry individuals (**Supplementary note**). Their discovery was due to the  
567 higher EAF and/or larger effect size in non-European ancestry populations. In particular, two loci  
568 (near *LINCO0885* and *MIR4278*) contain East Asian and African American single-ancestry lead  
569 variants, respectively, suggesting that these specific ancestries may be driving the trans-ancestry  
570 discovery (**Supplementary Tables 2-3**). Combined with the three single-ancestry non-European loci  
571 described above, our results show that 24% (24/99) of novel loci were discovered due to the  
572 contribution of non-European ancestry participants, strengthening the argument for expanding  
573 genetic studies in diverse populations.

574

### 575 **Allelic architecture of glycemic traits**

576 Single-ancestry and trans-ancestry results combined increased the number of established loci for FG  
577 to 102 (182 signals, 53 novel loci), FI to 66 (95 signals, 49 novel loci), 2hGlu to 21 (28 signals, 11  
578 novel loci), and HbA1c to 127 (218 signals, 62 novel loci) (**Supplementary Table 2**), with significant  
579 overlap across traits (**Extended Data Figure 3**). We also detected ( $P < 0.05$  or  $\log_{10}BF > 0$ ) the vast  
580 majority (~90%) of previously established glycemc signals, 70-88% of which attained genome-wide  
581 significance (**Supplementary Note, Supplementary Table 6**). Given that analyses for FG, FI, and  
582 2hGlu were performed adjusted for BMI, we confirmed that collider bias did not influence >98% of  
583 signals discovered (**Supplementary note**)<sup>31</sup>. As expected, given the greater power due to increased  
584 sample sizes, new association signals tended to have smaller effect sizes and/or EAFs in European  
585 ancestry individuals compared to established signals (**Extended Data Figure 4**).

586

#### 587 **Characterization of lead variants across ancestries**

588 To better understand the transferability of trans-ancestry lead variants across ancestries, we  
589 investigated the pairwise EAF correlation and the pairwise summarized heterogeneity of effect sizes  
590 between ancestries<sup>32</sup> (**Methods, Supplementary Note**). Consistent with population history and  
591 evolution, these results demonstrated considerable EAF correlation ( $\rho^2 > 0.70$ ) between European  
592 and Hispanic, European and South Asian, and Hispanic and South Asian populations, consistent  
593 across all four traits, and between African Americans and Ugandans for HbA1c (**Extended Data**  
594 **Figure 5**). Despite significant EAF correlations, some pairwise comparisons exhibited strong evidence  
595 for effect size heterogeneity between ancestries that was less consistent between traits (**Extended**  
596 **Data Figure 5**). However, sensitivity analyses demonstrated that, across all comparisons, the  
597 evidence for heterogeneity is driven by a small number of variants, with between 81.5% (for HbA1c)  
598 and 85.7% of trans-ancestry lead variants (for FG) showing no evidence for trans-ancestry  
599 heterogeneity ( $P > 0.05$ ) (**Supplementary Note**).

600

#### 601 **Trait variance explained by associated loci**

602 The trait variance explained by genome-wide significant loci was assessed using the single-ancestry  
603 variants only or a combination of single-ancestry and trans-ancestry variants (**Supplementary Table**  
604 **7**) with betas extracted from the relevant single-ancestry meta-analysis results (**Methods**). The  
605 variance explained was assessed by linear regression in a subset of the contributing cohorts  
606 (**Methods, Supplementary Tables 8-11**). In general, the approach that explained the most variance  
607 was to begin with the trans-ancestry lead variants that had  $P < 0.1$  in the relevant single-ancestry  
608 meta-analysis, then add in all single-ancestry variants that were not in LD with the trans-ancestry  
609 variants ( $LD\ r^2 < 0.1$ ) (List C, **Supplementary Tables 8-11, Figure 2**). Using this approach, the mean  
610 variance in the trait distribution explained was between 0.7% (2hGlu in EUR) and 6% (HbA1c in AA).  
611 The European-based estimates explained more variance relative to previous estimates of 2.8% for  
612 FG and 1.7% for HbA1c<sup>33</sup> (**Supplementary Note**).

613

#### 614 **Transferability of EUR ancestry-derived polygenic scores**

615 To investigate the transferability of polygenic scores across ancestries we used the PRS-CSauto  
616 software<sup>34</sup> to first build polygenic scores for each glycemc trait based on European ancestry data.  
617 However, the training set for 2hGlu was too small so this trait was excluded. To build the polygenic  
618 scores (PGS), for each trait we first removed five of the largest European cohorts from the European  
619 ancestry meta-analysis. These five cohorts were meta-analyzed and used as our European ancestry  
620 test dataset, for each trait. The remaining European ancestry cohorts were also meta-analyzed and  
621 used as the training dataset, from which we derived a PGS for each trait (**Methods**). We used PRS-  
622 CSauto to revise the effect size estimates for the variants in the score (obtained from the training  
623 European datasets) based on the LD of the test population. PRS-CSauto does not have LD reference  
624 panels for South Asian or Hispanic ancestry and as such we were unable to test the transferability of  
625 the PGS into those populations. The "gtx" package<sup>35</sup> (**Methods**) was used to obtain the  $R^2$  for each  
626 test population (**Figure 3, Supplementary Table 12**). Consistent with other complex traits<sup>36</sup>, the

627 European ancestry-derived PGS had greater predictive power into test data of European ancestry  
628 than other ancestry groups.

629

### 630 **Fine-mapping**

631 We fine-mapped, 231 trans-ancestry and six single-ancestry autosomal loci (**Supplementary Table 2,**  
632 **Supplementary note**). Using FINEMAP with ancestry-specific LD and an average LD matrix across  
633 ancestries, we conducted fine-mapping both within (161 loci with single-ancestry lead variants) and  
634 across ancestries (231 loci) for each trait (**Methods**). Because 59 of the 231 trans-ancestry loci were  
635 associated with more than one trait, we conducted trans-ancestry fine-mapping for a total of 305  
636 locus-trait associations. Of these 305 locus-trait combinations, FINEMAP estimated the presence of a  
637 single causal variant at 186 loci (61%), while multiple distinct causal variants were implicated at 126  
638 loci (39%), for a total of 464 causal variants (**Figure 4A**).

639

### 640 *Credible sets for causal variants*

641 At each locus, we next constructed credible sets (CS) for each causal variant that account for  $\geq 99\%$   
642 of the posterior probability of association (PPA). We identified 21 locus-trait associations (at 19 loci)  
643 for which the 99% CS included a single variant, and we highlight four examples (**Methods,**  
644 **Supplementary Note, Figure 4B, Supplementary Table 13**).

645

646 At *MTNR1B* and *SIX3* we identified, respectively, rs10830963 (PPA $>0.999$ , for both HbA1c and FG)  
647 and rs12712928 (PPA=0.997, for FG) as the likely causal variants. At both loci previous studies  
648 confirm these variants affect transcriptional activity<sup>37,38,39</sup> (**Supplementary note**). At a locus near  
649 *PFKM* associated with HbA1c, trans-ancestry fine-mapping identified rs12819124 (PPA $>0.999$ ) as the  
650 likely causal variant. This variant has been previously associated with mean corpuscular  
651 hemoglobin<sup>40</sup>, suggesting an effect on HbA1c via the red blood cell (RBC, **Supplementary note**). At  
652 *HBB*, we identified rs334 (PPA $>0.999$ ; Glu7Val) as the likely causal variant associated with HbA1c.  
653 rs334 is a causal variant of sickle cell anemia<sup>41</sup>, previously associated with urinary albumin-to-  
654 creatinine ratio in Caribbean Hispanic individuals<sup>42</sup>, severe malaria in a Tanzanian study population<sup>43</sup>,  
655 hematocrit and mean corpuscular volume in Hispanic/Latino populations<sup>44</sup>, and RBC distribution in  
656 Ugandan individuals<sup>45</sup>, all pointing to a variant effect on HbA1c via non-glycemic pathways.

657

658 The remaining locus-trait associations with a single variant in the 99% CS (**Supplementary Table 13**)  
659 point to variants that could be prioritized for functional follow-up to elucidate impact on glycemic  
660 trait physiology.

661

662 At an additional 156 locus-trait associations trans-ancestry fine-mapping identified 99% CS with 50  
663 or fewer variants (**Figure 4B, Supplementary Table 13**). Consistent with the potential for  $>1$  causal  
664 variant in a locus, 74 locus-trait associations contained 88 variants with PPA $>0.90$  that are strong  
665 candidate causal variants (**Supplementary Table 14**). For example, 10 are coding variants including  
666 several missense such as the *HBB* Glu7Val mentioned above, *GCKR* Leu446Pro, *RREB1* Asp1771Asn,  
667 *G6PC2* Pro324Ser, *GLP1R* Ala316Thr, and *TMPRSS6* Val736Ala, each of which have been proposed or  
668 shown to affect gene function<sup>12,46-50</sup>. We additionally identified *AMPD3* Val311Leu (PPA=0.989) and  
669 *TMC6* Trp125Arg (PPA $>0.999$ ) variants associated with HbA1c which were previously detected in an  
670 exome array analysis but had not been fine-mapped with certainty due to the absence of backbone  
671 GWAS data<sup>30</sup>. Our fine-mapping now suggest these variants are likely causal and identify their  
672 cognate genes as effector transcripts.

673

674 Finally, we evaluated the resolution obtained in the trans-ancestry versus single-ancestry fine-  
675 mapping (**Methods, Supplementary Note**). We compared the number of variants in 99% CS across  
676 98 locus-trait associations which, as suggested by FINEMAP, had a single causal variant in both trans-  
677 ancestry and single-ancestry analyses. Fine-mapping within and across ancestries was conducted

678 using the same set of variants. At 8 of 98 locus-trait associations single-ancestry fine-mapping  
679 identified a single variant in the CS. In addition, at 72 of the 98 locus-trait associations, the number  
680 of variants in the 99% CS was smaller in the trans-ancestry fine-mapping (**Figure 4C**), which likely  
681 reflects the larger sample size and differences in LD structure, EAFs, and effect sizes across diverse  
682 populations. To quantify the estimated improvement in fine-mapping resolution attributable to the  
683 multi-ancestry GWAS, we then compared 99% CS sizes from the trans-ancestry fine-mapping to  
684 single-ancestry-specific data emulating the same total sample size by rescaling the standard errors  
685 (**Methods**). Of the 72 locus-trait associations with estimated improved fine-mapping in trans-  
686 ancestry analysis, resolution at 38 (53%) was improved because of the larger sample size in the  
687 trans-ancestry fine-mapping analysis (**Figure 4C**), and this estimated improved resolution would  
688 likely have been obtained in a European-only fine-mapping effort with equivalent sample size.  
689 However, at 34 (47%) loci, the inclusion of samples from multiple diverse populations yielded the  
690 estimated improved resolution. On average, ancestry differences led to a reduction in the median  
691 number of variants in the 99% CS from 24 to 15 variants (37.5% median reduction; **Figure 4C**),  
692 demonstrating the value of conducting fine-mapping across ancestries.

693

### 694 **HbA1c Signal Classification**

695 HbA1c-associated variants can exert their effects on HbA1c levels through both glycemic and non-  
696 glycemic pathways<sup>7,51</sup> and their correct classification can affect T2D diagnostic accuracy<sup>7,52</sup>. Using  
697 prior association results for other glycemic, RBC, and iron traits, and a fuzzy clustering approach we  
698 classified variants into their most likely mode of action (**Methods, Supplementary note**). Of the 218  
699 HbA1c-associated variants, 27 (12%) could not be characterized due to missing data and 23 (11%)  
700 could not be classified into a “known” class (**Supplementary note**). The remaining signals were  
701 classified as principally: a) glycemic (n=53; 24%), b) affecting iron levels/metabolism (n=12; 6%), or c)  
702 RBC traits (n=103; 47%). A genetic risk score (GRS) composed of all HbA1c-associated signals was  
703 strongly associated with T2D risk (OR=2.4, 95% CI 2.3-2.5,  $P=2.7 \times 10^{-298}$ ). However, when using  
704 partitioned GRSs composed of these different classes of variants (**Methods**), we found the T2D  
705 association was mainly driven by variants influencing HbA1c through glycemic pathways (OR=2.6,  
706 95% CI 2.5-2.8,  $P=2.3 \times 10^{-250}$ ), with weaker evidence of association (despite the larger number of  
707 variants in the GRS) and a more modest risk (OR=1.4, 95% CI 1.2-1.7,  $P=4.7 \times 10^{-4}$ ) imparted by signals  
708 in the mature RBC cluster that were not glycemic (i.e. where those specific variants had  $P>0.05$  for  
709 FI, 2hGlu and FG) (**Extended Data Figure 6, Supplementary note**). This contrasts our previous finding  
710 where we found no significant association between a risk score of non-glycemic variants and T2D<sup>7</sup>.  
711 Our current results could be partly driven by T2D cases being diagnosed based on HbA1c levels that  
712 may be influenced by the non-glycemic signals, or by glycemic effects not captured by FI, 2hGlu or  
713 FG measures.

714

### 715 **Biological signatures of glycemic trait associated loci**

716 To better understand distinct and shared biological signatures underlying variant-trait associations,  
717 we conducted genomic feature enrichment, eQTL co-localization, and tissue and gene-set  
718 enrichment analyses across all four traits.

719

### 720 **Epigenomic landscape of trait-associated variants**

721 We explored the genomic context underlying glycemic trait loci by computing overlap enrichment  
722 for annotations such as coding, conserved regions, and super enhancers merged across multiple cell  
723 types<sup>53-55</sup> using the GREGOR tool<sup>56</sup>. We observed that FG, FI and HbA1c signals (**Supplementary**  
724 **Table 7**) were significantly ( $P<8.4 \times 10^{-4}$ , Bonferroni threshold for 59 annotations) enriched in  
725 evolutionarily conserved regions (**Fig 5A, Extended Data Figure 7, Supplementary Table 15**).

726  
727 We then considered epigenomic landscapes defined in individual cell/tissue types. Previously,  
728 stretch enhancers (StrE, enhancer chromatin states  $\geq 3\text{kb}$  in length) in pancreatic islets were shown  
729 to be highly cell-specific and strongly enriched with T2D risk signals<sup>57</sup>. Considering StrEs across 31  
730 cell-types<sup>39</sup>, FG and 2hGlu signals showed the highest enrichment in islets (FG: fold-  
731 enrichment=4.70,  $P=2.7 \times 10^{-24}$ ; 2hGlu: fold-enrichment=5.51,  $P=3.6 \times 10^{-4}$  **Figure 5A, Supplementary**  
732 **Table 16**), highlighting the importance of islets for these traits. FI signals were enriched in skeletal  
733 muscle (fold-enrichment=3.17,  $P=7.8 \times 10^{-6}$ ) and adipose StrEs (fold-enrichment=3.27,  $P=1.8 \times 10^{-7}$ )  
734 consistent with these tissues as targets of insulin action (**Figure 5A**). StrEs in individual cell types  
735 showed higher enrichment than super enhancers merged across cell types, highlighting the  
736 importance of cell-specific analyses (**Figure 5A**). HbA1c signals were enriched in StrEs of multiple cell  
737 types and tissues, but have the strongest enrichment in K562 leukemia derived cells (fold-  
738 enrichment=3.24,  $P=1.2 \times 10^{-7}$ , **Figure 5A**). Among the “hard” glycemic and red blood cell (mature +  
739 reticulocyte) HbA1c signals, glycemic signals were enriched in islet StrEs (fold-enrichment=3.96,  
740  $P=3.7 \times 10^{-16}$ ) while red blood cell signals were enriched in K562 StrEs (fold-enrichment=7.5,  
741  $P=2.08 \times 10^{-14}$ , **Figure 5B, Supplementary Table 17**). These analyses suggest that these glycemic trait-  
742 associated variants influence the function of tissue-specific enhancers.

743  
744 Independent analyses with fGWAS<sup>58</sup> and GARFIELD<sup>59</sup> yielded consistent results (**Extended Data**  
745 **Figures 8 and 9, Supplementary Tables 16 and 18**). Notably, FI signals at a lenient threshold of  $P < 10^{-5}$   
746 were enriched in liver StrEs using GARFIELD (odds ratio=1.92,  $P=1.7 \times 10^{-4}$ ) (**Extended Data Figure**  
747 **9A**). This suggests that liver regulatory annotations are relevant for FI GWAS signals, but that we lack  
748 power to detect significant enrichment using the genome-wide significant loci and the current set of  
749 reference annotations.

750  
751 We next explored the 27 loci driving the FI enrichment in adipose and skeletal muscle, 11 of which  
752 overlapped StrEs in both tissues (**Figure 5C**). At the *COL4A2* locus, variants within an intronic region  
753 overlap StrEs in adipose tissue, skeletal muscle, and a human skeletal muscle myoblast (HSMM) cell  
754 line that are not shared across other cell/tissue types. Among these, rs9555695 (in the 99% CS) also  
755 overlaps accessible chromatin regions in adipose (**Figure 5D**). At a narrow signal with no proxy  
756 variants (LD  $r^2 > 0.7$  in Europeans), the lead trans-ancestry variant rs62271373 (PPA = 0.94) located in  
757 an intergenic region  $\sim 25\text{kb}$  from the *LINC01214* gene overlaps StrEs specific to adipose and HSMM  
758 and an active enhancer chromatin state in skeletal muscle (**Figure 5E**). Collectively, the tissue-  
759 specific epigenomic signatures at GWAS signals provide an opportunity to nominate tissues where  
760 these variants are likely to be active. This map may help future efforts to deconvolute GWAS signals  
761 into tissue-specific disease pathology.

### 762 763 **Co-localization of GWAS and eQTLs**

764 Among the 99 novel glycemic trait loci, we identified co-localized eQTLs at 34 loci in blood,  
765 pancreatic islets, subcutaneous or visceral adipose, skeletal muscle, or liver, providing suggestive  
766 evidence of causal genes (**Supplementary Table 19**). The co-localized eQTLs include several genes  
767 previously reported at glycemic trait loci: *ADCY5*, *CAMK1D*, *IRS1*, *JAZF1*, and *KLF14*<sup>60-62</sup>. For some  
768 additional loci, the co-localized genes have prior evidence for a role in glycemic regulation. For  
769 example, the lead trans-ancestry variant and likely causal variant, rs1799815 (PPA=0.993),  
770 associated with FI is the strongest variant associated with expression of *INSR*, encoding the insulin  
771 receptor, in subcutaneous adipose from METSIM ( $P=2 \times 10^{-9}$ ) and GTEx ( $P=5 \times 10^{-6}$ ). The A allele at  
772 rs1799815 is associated with higher FI and lower expression of *INSR*, consistent with the relationship  
773 between insulin resistance and reduced *INSR* function<sup>63</sup>. In a second example, rs841572, the trans-  
774 ancestry lead variant associated with FG, has the highest PPA (PPA=0.535) among the 20 variants in  
775 the 99% CS and is in strong LD ( $r^2=0.87$ ) with the lead eQTL variant (rs841576, also in the 99% CS)  
776 associated with *SLC2A1* expression in blood (eQTLGen  $P=1 \times 10^{-8}$ ). *SLC2A1*, also known as *GLUT1*,



777 encodes the major glucose transporter in brain, placenta, and erythrocytes, and is responsible for  
778 glucose entry into the brain<sup>64</sup>. rs841572-A is associated with lower FG and lower *SLC2A1* expression.  
779 While rare missense variants in *SLC2A1* are an established cause of seizures and epilepsy<sup>65</sup>, our data  
780 suggest that *SLC2A1* variants also affect plasma glucose levels within a population. These co-  
781 localized signals provide possible regulatory mechanisms for variant effects on genes to influence  
782 glycemic traits.

783  
784 The co-localized eQTLs also provide new insights into the mechanisms at glycemic trait loci. For  
785 example, rs9884482 (in the 99% CS) is associated with FI and *TET2* expression in subcutaneous  
786 adipose ( $P=2 \times 10^{-20}$ ); rs9884482 is in high LD ( $r^2=0.96$  in Europeans) with the lead *TET2* eQTL variant  
787 (rs974801). *TET2* encodes a DNA-demethylase that can affect transcriptional repression<sup>66</sup>. Adipose  
788 *Tet2* expression is reduced in diet-induced insulin resistance in mice<sup>67</sup>, and knockdown of *Tet2*  
789 blocked adipogenesis<sup>67,68</sup>. Consistently, in human adipose tissue, rs9884482-C was associated with  
790 lower *TET2* expression and higher FI. In a second example, rs617948 is associated with HbA1c (in the  
791 99% CS) and is the lead variant associated with *C2CD2L* expression in blood (eQTLGen  $P=3 \times 10^{-96}$ ).  
792 *C2CD2L*, also known as *TMEM24*, regulates pulsatile insulin secretion and facilitates release of  
793 insulin pool reserves<sup>69,70</sup>. rs617948-G was associated with higher HbA1c and lower *C2CD2L*, providing  
794 evidence for a role of this insulin secretion protein in glucose homeostasis. Our HbA1c “soft”  
795 clustering assigned this signal to both the “unknown” (0.51 probability) and “reticulocyte” (0.42  
796 probability) clusters. rs617948 is strongly associated with HbA1c ( $P < 6.8 \times 10^{-8}$ ), but not with FG, FI or  
797 2hGlu ( $P > 0.05$ , **Supplementary Table 20, Supplementary Note**). This suggests an effect of this  
798 variant on reticulocyte biology, and on insulin secretion, potentially influencing HbA1c levels through  
799 different tissues, and providing a plausible explanation for the classification as “unknown”.

800

#### 801 **Tissue Expression**

802 Consistent with effector transcript expression analysis using GTEx data<sup>30</sup>, we found significant  
803 differences in tissue expression across the glycemic trait signals. FG signals were enriched for genes  
804 expressed in the pancreas (FDR<0.05), while there were an insufficient number of significant  
805 associations in 2hGlu to identify enrichment for any tissue or cell type at FDR<0.2 threshold. FI  
806 signals were enriched for connective tissue and cells (which includes adipose tissue), endocrine  
807 glands, blood cells, and muscles (FDR<0.2) and HbA1c signals were significantly enriched for genes  
808 expressed in the pancreas, hemic, and immune system (FDR<0.05) (**Figure 6, Supplementary Table**  
809 **21**). Consistent with previous analysis<sup>30</sup>, FI-enrichment for connective tissue was driven by adipose  
810 tissue (subcutaneous and visceral), while the newly described enrichment with endocrine glands was  
811 driven by the adrenal glands and cortex (**Supplementary Table 21**). Beyond enrichment for genes  
812 expressed in glycemic-related tissues, HbA1c signals were enriched with genes expressed in blood,  
813 consistent with the role of RBC in this trait and our previous results<sup>30</sup>.

814

815 The association between FI signals and genes expressed in adrenal glands is notable, suggesting a  
816 possible direct role for these genes in insulin resistance. These genes might influence cortisol levels,  
817 which could contribute to insulin resistance and FI levels through impaired insulin receptor signaling  
818 in peripheral tissues, as well as influencing body fat distribution, stimulate lipolysis, and other  
819 indirect mechanisms<sup>71,72</sup>.

820

821

#### 822 **Gene-set Analyses**

823 Next, we performed gene-set analysis using DEPICT (**Methods**). In keeping with previous results<sup>30</sup>,  
824 we found distinct gene-sets enriched (FDR<0.05) for each glycemic trait except 2hGlu, which had  
825 insufficient associations to have power in this analysis. FG-associated variants highlighted gene-sets  
826 involved in metabolism and gene-sets involved in general cellular function such as “cytoplasmic  
827 vesicle membrane” and “circadian clock” (**Figure 7A**). In contrast, in addition to metabolism-related

828 gene-sets, FI-associated variants highlighted pathways related to growth, cancer and reproduction  
829 (**Figure 7B**). This is consistent with the role of insulin as a mitogenic hormone, and with  
830 epidemiological links between insulin and certain types of cancer<sup>73</sup> and reproductive disorders such  
831 as polycystic ovary syndrome<sup>74</sup>. HbA1c-associated variants highlighted many gene-sets (**Figure 7C**),  
832 including those linked to metabolism and hematopoiesis, again recapitulating our postulated effects  
833 of variants on glucose and RBC biology. Additional pathways from HbA1c-associated variants also  
834 highlighted previous “CREBP PPI” and lipid biology related to T2D<sup>75</sup> and HbA1c<sup>76</sup>, respectively, and  
835 potential new biology through which variants may influence HbA1c.

836

### 837 Discussion

838 Here we describe a large glycemic trait meta-analysis of GWAS for which 30% of the population was  
839 composed of East Asian, Hispanic, African-American, South Asian and sub-Saharan African  
840 participants. This effort identified 242 loci (235 trans-ancestry and seven single-ancestry), which  
841 jointly explain between 0.7% (2hGlu in European ancestry individuals) and 6% (HbA1c in African  
842 American ancestry individuals) of the variance in glycemic traits in any given ancestry. While  
843 114/242 loci are associated with T2D ( $P < 10^{-4}$ ; 83 loci with  $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$ , **Supplementary Table 4**),  
844 absence of strong evidence of association at the remaining loci ( $P \geq 10^{-4}$ ) suggests that for alleles  
845 more frequent than 5% we can exclude T2D  $ORs \geq 1.07$  with 80% power ( $\alpha = 5 \times 10^{-8}$ ; and  $ORs \geq 1.05$   
846 for  $\alpha = 10^{-4}$ ) given a current study of 228,499 T2D cases and 1,178,783 controls<sup>27</sup>. We identified  
847 486 signals associated with glycemic traits, of which eight have  $MAF < 1\%$ , and 45 have  $1\% \leq MAF < 5\%$   
848 in all ancestries, highlighting that 89% of signals identified are common in at least one ancestry  
849 studied.

850

851 A key aim of our study was to evaluate the added advantage of including population diversity in  
852 genetic discovery and fine-mapping efforts. Beyond the larger sample size included in the trans-  
853 ancestry meta-analysis, we were able to estimate the contribution of non-European ancestry data in  
854 locus discovery and fine-mapping resolution. We found that 24 of the 99 newly discovered loci owe  
855 their discovery to the inclusion of East Asian, Hispanic, African-American, South Asian and sub-  
856 Saharan African participant data, due to differences in EAF and effect sizes across ancestries.

857

858 Comparison of 295 trans-ancestry lead variants (315 locus-trait associations) across ancestries  
859 demonstrated that between 81.5% (HbA1c) and 85.7% (FG) of the trans-ancestry lead variants had  
860 no evidence of trans-ancestry heterogeneity in allelic effects ( $P > 0.05$ ).

861

862 Given sample size and power limitations, genome-wide significant trait-associated variants in a  
863 single-ancestry explain only a modest proportion of trait variance in that ancestry (**Figure 2**). We  
864 demonstrate that trans-ancestry lead variants explain more trait variance than the ancestry-specific  
865 variants (**Figure 2**). This shows that even though some trans-ancestry lead variants are not genome-  
866 wide significant in all ancestries, they contribute to the genetic architecture of the trait in most  
867 ancestries.

868

869 We evaluated for the first time the transferability of European ancestry-derived glycemic trait PGS  
870 into other ancestries. Consistent with other traits<sup>36,77,78</sup>, we confirm that European ancestry-derived  
871 PGS perform much worse when the test dataset is from a different ancestry. Each trait-specific PGS  
872 improves trait variance explained by between 3.5-fold (HbA1c) and 6-fold (FG) in the European  
873 dataset (**Figure 3, Supplementary Table 12**) compared to a score built only from trans-ancestry lead  
874 variants and European index variants (**Figure 2, Supplementary tables 9-12**).

875

876 Despite development of approaches to derive polygenic risk scores<sup>79</sup>, we note the difficulty in using  
877 summary level data to build a PGS in one ancestry and then apply it in test datasets of different  
878 ancestry. While PRS-CSauto<sup>34</sup> is able to use summary level data, revision of the effect size estimates

879 to account for LD required reference panels that matched the ancestry of the test dataset. However,  
880 the current software lacks appropriate reference panels for many ancestries, precluding its broad  
881 application. Future developments of trans-ancestry PGS are required for improved cross-ancestry  
882 performance.

883

884 We show that fine-mapping resolution is improved in trans-ancestry, compared to single-ancestry  
885 fine-mapping efforts. In ~50% of our loci, we showed that the improvement was due to differences  
886 in EAF, effect size, or LD structure between ancestries, and not just due to the overall increased  
887 sample size available for trans-ancestry fine-mapping. By performing trans-ancestry fine-mapping,  
888 and co-localizing GWAS signals with eQTL signals and coding variants, we identified new candidate  
889 causal genes. Altogether, these results motivate continued expansion of genetic and genomic efforts  
890 in diverse populations to improve understanding of these traits in groups disproportionately affected  
891 by T2D.

892

893 Given data on four different glyceic traits and their utility to diagnose and monitor T2D and  
894 metabolic health, we also sought to characterize biological features underlying these traits. We  
895 show that despite significant sharing of loci across the four traits, each trait is also characterized by  
896 unique features based on StrE, gene expression and gene-set signatures. Combining genetic data  
897 from these traits with T2D data will further elucidate pathways driving normal physiology and  
898 pathophysiology, and help further develop useful predictive scores for disease classification and  
899 management<sup>4,5</sup>.

900

901

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903

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## 1248 **Competing interests statement**

1249 A. Astrup is the recipient of honoraria as speaker for a wide range of Danish and international  
1250 concerns and receives royalties from textbooks, and from popular diet and cookery books. A. Astrup  
1251 is also co-inventor of a number of patents, including Methods of inducing weight loss, treating  
1252 obesity and preventing weight gain (licensee Gelesis, USA) and Biomarkers for predicting degree of  
1253 weight loss (licensee Nestec SA, CH), owned by the University of Copenhagen, in accordance with  
1254 Danish law. I. Barroso and spouse own stock in GlaxoSmithKline and Incyte Corporation. B.H. Chen is  
1255 now an employee of Life Epigenetics, Inc.; all work was completed prior to employment at Life  
1256 Epigenetics. A.Y. Chu is now an employee of Merck & Co.; all work was completed prior to  
1257 employment by Merck & Co. J.C. Florez has received consulting honoraria from Janssen. J. Gayan is  
1258 now an employee of F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd, and owns stock of Roche and GlaxoSmithKline. A.L.  
1259 Gloyn has received honoraria from Merck and Novo Nordisk. As of June 2019, ALG discloses that her  
1260 spouse is an employee of Genentech and hold stock options in Roche. E. Ingelsson is now an  
1261 employee of GSK; all work was completed prior to his employment by GSK. W. März has received  
1262 grants and/or personal fees from the following companies/corporations: Siemens Healthineers,  
1263 Aegerion Pharmaceuticals, AMGEN, Astrazeneca, Sanofi, Alexion Pharmaceuticals, BASF, Abbott  
1264 Diagnostics Numares AG, Berlin-Chemie, Akzea Therapeutics, Bayer Vital GmbH, bestbion dx GmbH,  
1265 Boehringer Ingelheim Pharma GmbH Co KG, Immundiagnostik GmbH, Merck Chemicals GmbH, MSD  
1266 Sharp and Dohme GmbH, Novartis Pharma GmbH, Olink Proteomics, and Synlab Holding  
1267 Deutschland GmbH. M.I. McCarthy has served on advisory panels for Pfizer, NovoNordisk, ZOE Global  
1268 and received honoraria from Merck, Pfizer, NovoNordisk and Eli Lilly. He holds stock options in ZOE  
1269 Global and has received research funding from Abbvie, Astra Zeneca, Boehringer Ingelheim, Eli Lilly,  
1270 Janssen, Merck, NovoNordisk, Pfizer, Roche, Sanofi Aventis, Servier, Takeda. He is now an employee  
1271 of Genentech and a holder of Roche stock. J.B. Meigs has consulted for Quest Diagnostics, Inc., who  
1272 manufacturers of an HbA1c assay. M.E. Montasser has received grant funding from Regeneron  
1273 Pharmaceutials. M.E. Montasser is also an inventor on a patent that was published by the United  
1274 States Patent and Trademark Office on December 6, 2018 under Publication Number US 2018-  
1275 0346888, and international patent application that was published on December 13, 2018 under  
1276 Publication Number WO-2018/226560; all work was completed before these COI arose, and are  
1277 unrelated to this work. D. Mook-Kanamori is a part-time clinical research consultant for Metabolon.  
1278 J.L. Nadler is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board for Veralox Therapeutics Inc. C.N.A. Palmer  
1279 has received research support from GlaxoSmithKline and AstraZeneca unrelated to this project. B.M.  
1280 Psaty serves on the Steering Committee of the Yale Open Data Access Project funded by Johnson &  
1281 Johnson. N. Sattar has consulted for Astrazeneca, Boehringer Ingelheim, Eli Lilly, Novo Nordisk, Napp  
1282 and Sanofi and received grant support from Boehringer Ingelheim. R.A. Scott is an employee and  
1283 shareholder of GlaxoSmithKline. T. Spector is the founder of ZOE Global Ltd. J. Tuomilehto receives  
1284 research support from Bayer, is a consultant for Eli Lilly, and holds stock in Orion Pharma and  
1285 Aktivolabs Ltd.

## 1286 1287 **Figure Legends**

1288  
1289 **Figure 1 - Summary of all 242 loci identified in this study.** 235 trans-ancestry loci are shown in  
1290 orange (novel) or black (established) along with seven single-ancestry loci (blue) represented by  
1291 nearest gene. Each locus is mapped to corresponding chromosome (outer segment). Each set of  
1292 rows shows the results from the trans-ancestry analysis (orange) and each of the ancestries:  
1293 European (purple), African American (tan), East Asian (grey), South Asian (green), Hispanic (yellow),  
1294 sub-Saharan African (Ugandan-pink). Loci with a corresponding type 2 diabetes signal are  
1295 represented by red circles in the middle of the plot.

1296 **Figure 2 – Trait variance explained by associated loci.** The boxplots show the maximum, first  
1297 quartile, median, third quartile and minimum of trait variance explained when using a genetic score  
1298 with single-ancestry lead and index variants (EUR, AA, EAS, HISP and SAS) or a combination of  
1299 individual trait trans-ancestry lead variants and single-ancestry lead and index variants (TA+EUR,

1300 TA+AA, TA+EAS, TA+HISP and TA+SAS). Variance explained for each trait (FG, FI and HbA1c) in each  
1301 ancestry is shown on different panels and in different colors. Data points represent the variance  
1302 explained in individual cohorts used in this analysis.  $R^2$  was estimated in 1 to 11 cohorts with sample  
1303 sizes ranging from 489 to 9,758 (**Supplementary Tables 8-11**).

1304 **Figure 3 – Transferability of PGS across ancestries.** For each trait, the barplots represent trait  
1305 variance explained when using a European ancestry-derived PGS in European, East Asian and African  
1306 American test datasets. Variance explained (the height of each bar) for each trait (FG, FI and HbA1c)  
1307 in each ancestry is shown on different panels and in different colors.

1308  
1309 **Figure 4 - Trans-ancestry fine-mapping.** A) Number of plausible causal variants at each locus-trait  
1310 association derived from FINEMAP. B) Number of variants within each 99% credible set. Twenty-one  
1311 locus-trait associations at 19 loci were mapped to a single variant in the 99% credible set. C) Fine-  
1312 mapping resolution. For each of the 98 locus-trait associations with a predicted single causal variant  
1313 in both trans-ancestry and single-ancestry analyses, the number of variants included in the 99%  
1314 credible set in the single-ancestry fine-mapping (x axis; logarithmic scale) is plotted against those in  
1315 the trans-ancestry fine-mapping (y axis; logarithmic scale). Trans-ancestry and single-ancestry fine-  
1316 mapping were based on the same set of variants. After removing eight locus-trait associations with  
1317 one variant in the 99% credible sets in both trans-ancestry and single-ancestry analyses, there were  
1318 18 locus-trait associations (in grey) where trans-ancestry fine-mapping did not improve the  
1319 resolution of fine-mapping results (i.e. number of variants in the 99% credible set did not decrease).  
1320 Of the 72 locus-trait associations with improved trans-ancestry fine-mapping resolution (blue and  
1321 red) further analyses in European fine-mapping emulating the total sample size in trans-ancestry  
1322 fine-mapping demonstrated that 34 locus-trait associations (in red) were improved because of both  
1323 total sample size and differences across ancestries, while 38 locus-trait associations (in blue) were  
1324 only improved due to increased sample size in the original trans-ancestry fine-mapping analysis.

1325 **Figure 5 - Epigenomic landscape of trait-associated variants.** A: Enrichment of GWAS variants to  
1326 overlap genomic regions including ‘Static Annotations’ which are common or ‘static’ across cell types  
1327 and ‘Stretch Enhancers’ which are identified in each tissue/cell type. The numbers of signals for each  
1328 trait are indicated in parentheses. Enrichment was calculated using GREGOR<sup>56</sup>. One-sided test for  
1329 significance (red) is determined after Bonferroni correction to account for 59 total annotations  
1330 tested for each trait; nominal significance ( $P < 0.05$ ) is indicated in yellow. B: Enrichment for HbA1c  
1331 GWAS signals partitioned into “hard” Glycemic and Red Blood Cell cluster (signals from “hard”  
1332 mature Red Blood Cell and reticulocyte clusters together) to overlap annotations including StrEs in  
1333 Islets and the blood-derived leukemia cell line K562, respectively (additional partitioned results in  
1334 **Supplementary Table 17**). C: Individual FI GWAS signals that drive enrichment in Adipose and  
1335 Skeletal Muscle StrEs. D, E: Genome browser shots of FI GWAS signals – intronic region of the  
1336 *COL4A2* gene (D) and an inter-genic region ~25kb from *LINC01214* gene (E) showing GWAS SNPs  
1337 (lead and LD  $r^2 > 0.8$  proxies), ATAC-seq signal tracks and chromatin state annotations in different  
1338 tissues/cell types.

1339 **Figure 6 - Tissues and cell types significantly enriched for genes within glycemic-associated loci.**  
1340 Top panel FG-associated loci, middle panel FI-associated loci, bottom panel Hba1c-associated loci.  
1341 FDR thresholds are shown in red ( $q < 0.05$ ), orange ( $q < 0.2$ ), black ( $q \geq 0.2$ ).

1342 **Figure 7 - Gene-set enrichment analyses.** Results from affinity-propagation clustering of significantly  
1343 enriched gene-sets (FDR  $< 0.05$ ) identified by DEPICT for A) FG, B) FI, and C) HbA1c. Each node is a  
1344 meta gene-set which is represented by an exemplar gene-set within the meta gene-set. For example,  
1345 in B. “chronic myeloid leukemia “ is an exemplar gene-set representing a much broader meta gene-  
1346 set relating to cancer and represented in the zoomed in section on the right. Similarities between  
1347 the meta gene-sets are represented by Pearson correlation coefficients ( $r > 0.3$ ). The nodes are

1348 colored according to the minimum gene-set enrichment p-value for gene-sets in that meta gene-set..  
1349 PPI=protein-protein interaction network.  
1350

1351 **Tables**

1352

1353 **Table 1 – Glossary of terms** - This study combined analyses of trait-associations across multiple correlated  
 1354 glycemic traits and across multiple ancestries, which has presented challenges in our ability to apply commonly  
 1355 used terms with clarity. For this reason, we define below terms often used in the field with variable meaning,  
 1356 as well as definitions of new terms used in this study.

1357

Term	Definition
EA (Effect allele)	The effect allele was that defined by METAL based on trans-ancestry FG results and aligned such that the same allele was kept as the effect allele across all ancestries and traits, irrespective of its allele frequency or effect size for that particular ancestry and trait, in this way the effect allele is not necessarily the trait-increasing allele.
Single-ancestry lead variant	Variant with the smallest p-value amongst all with $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$ , within a 1Mb region, based on analysis of a single trait in a single ancestry.
Single-ancestry index variants	Variants identified by GCTA analysis of each autosome, and that appear to exert conditionally distinct effects on a given trait in a given ancestry ( $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$ ). As defined, these include the single-ancestry lead variants.
Trans-ancestry lead variant	Variant identified by trans-ethnic meta-analysis of a given trait that has the strongest association for that trait ( $\log_{10}BF > 6$ , which is broadly equivalent to $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$ ) within a 1Mb region.
Single-ancestry locus	1Mb region centred on a single-ancestry lead variant which does not contain a lead variant identified in the trans-ancestry meta-analysis (i.e., does not contain a trans-ancestry lead variant).
Signal	Conditionally independent association between a trait and a set of variants in LD with each other and which is noted by the corresponding index variant.
Trans-ancestry locus	A genomic interval that contains trans-ancestry trait-specific lead variants, with/out additional single-ancestry index variants, for one or more traits. This region is defined by starting at the telomere of each chromosome and selecting the first single-ancestry index variant or trans-ancestry lead variant for any trait. If other trans-ancestry lead variants or single-ancestry index variants mapped within 500kb of the first signal, then they were merged into the same locus. This process was repeated until there were no more signals within 500kb of the previous variant. A 500kb interval was added to the beginning of the first signal, and the end of the last signal to establish the final boundary of the trans-ancestry locus ( <b>Extended Data Figure 2</b> ). As defined, a trans-ancestry locus may not have a single lead trans-ancestry variant, but may instead contain multiple trans-ancestry lead variants, one for each trait.

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1367 **Online Methods**

1368 **Study design and participants**

1369 This study included trait data from four glycemic traits: fasting glucose (FG), fasting insulin (FI), 2hr  
1370 post-challenge glucose (2hGlu), and glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c). The total number of contributing  
1371 cohorts ranged from 41 (2hGlu) to 131 (FG), and the maximum sample size for each trait ranged  
1372 from 85,916 (2hGlu) to 281,416 (FG) (**Supplementary Table 1**). Ancestry was initially defined at the  
1373 cohort level, but within each cohort ancestry was confirmed with genetic data with ancestry outliers  
1374 removed (**Supplementary Table 1**). Overall, European ancestry (EUR) participants dominated the  
1375 sample size for all traits, representing between 68.0% (HbA1c) to 73.8% (2hGlu) of the overall  
1376 sample size. African Americans (AA) represented between 1.7% (2hGlu) to 5.9% (FG) of participants;  
1377 individuals of Hispanic ancestry (HISP) represented between 6.8% (FG) to 14.6% (2hGlu) of  
1378 participants; individuals of East-Asian ancestry (EAS) represented between 9.9% (2hGlu) to 15.4%  
1379 (HbA1c) of participants; and South-Asian ancestry (SAS) individuals represented between 0% (no  
1380 contribution to 2hGlu) to 4.4% (HbA1c) of participants. Data from Ugandan participants were only  
1381 available for the HbA1c analysis and represented 2% of participants.

1382

1383 **Phenotypes**

1384 Analyses included data for FG and 2hGlu measured in mmol/l, FI measured in pmol/l, and HbA1c in  
1385 % [where possible, studies reported HbA1c as a National Glycohemoglobin Standardization Program  
1386 (NGSP) percent]. Similar to previous MAGIC efforts<sup>7</sup>, individuals were excluded if they had type 1 or  
1387 type 2 diabetes (defined by physician diagnosis); reported use of diabetes-relevant medication(s); or  
1388 had a FG  $\geq 7$  mmol/L, 2hGlu  $\geq 11.1$  mmol/L, or HbA1c  $\geq 6.5\%$ , as detailed in **Supplementary Table 1**.  
1389 2hGlu measures were obtained 120 minutes after a glucose challenge in an oral glucose tolerance  
1390 test (OGTT). Measures for FG and FI taken from whole blood were corrected to plasma level using  
1391 the correction factor 1.13<sup>80</sup>.

1392

1393 **Genotyping, quality control, and imputation**

1394 Each participating cohort performed study-level quality control, imputation, and association  
1395 analyses following a shared analysis plan. Cohorts were genotyped using commercially available  
1396 genome-wide arrays or the Illumina CardioMetaboChip (MetaboChip) array (**Supplementary Table**  
1397 **1**)<sup>81</sup>. Prior to imputation, each cohort performed stringent sample and variant quality control (QC) to  
1398 ensure only high-quality variants were kept in the genotype scaffold for imputation. Sample quality  
1399 control checks included removing samples with low call rate  $< 95\%$ , extreme heterozygosity, sex  
1400 mismatch with X chromosome variants, duplicates, first- or second-degree relatives (unless by  
1401 design), or ancestry outliers. Following sample QC, cohorts applied variant QC thresholds for call rate  
1402 ( $< 95\%$ ), Hardy-Weinberg Equilibrium (HWE)  $P < 1 \times 10^{-6}$ , and minor allele frequency (MAF). Full  
1403 details of QC thresholds and exclusions by participating cohort are available in **Supplementary Table**  
1404 **1**.

1405

1406 Imputation was performed up to the 1000 Genomes Project phase 1 (v3) cosmopolitan reference  
1407 panel<sup>82</sup>, with a small number of cohorts imputing up to the 1000 Genomes phase 3 panel<sup>19</sup> or  
1408 population-specific reference panels (**Supplementary Table 1**).

1409

1410 **Study level association analyses**

1411 Each of the glycemic traits (FG, natural log FI, and 2hGlu) were regressed on BMI (except HbA1c),  
1412 study-specific covariates, and principal components (unless implementing a linear mixed model).  
1413 Analyses for FG, FI, and 2hGlu were adjusted for BMI as we had previously shown this did not  
1414 materially affect results for FG and 2hGlu but improved our ability to detect FI-associated loci<sup>15</sup>. For  
1415 simplicity, we refer to the traits as FG, FI and 2hGlu. For a discussion on collider bias see  
1416 **Supplementary Note section 2c**. Both the raw and rank-based inverse normal transformed residuals  
1417 from the regression were tested for association with genetic variants using SNPTTEST<sup>23</sup> or

1418 Mach2Qtl<sup>83,84</sup>. Poorly imputed variants, defined as imputation  $r^2 < 0.4$  or INFO score  $< 0.4$ , were  
1419 excluded from downstream analyses (**Supplementary Table 1**). Following study level QC,  
1420 approximately 12,229,036 variants (GWAS cohorts) and 1,999,204 variants (Metabochip cohorts)  
1421 were available for analysis (**Supplementary Table 1**).

1422

### 1423 **Centralized quality control**

1424 Each contributing cohort shared their summary statistic results with the central analysis group who  
1425 performed additional QC using EasyQC<sup>85</sup>. Allele frequency estimates were compared to estimates  
1426 from 1000Gp1 reference panel<sup>82</sup>, and variants were excluded from downstream analyses if there  
1427 was a minor allele frequency difference  $> 0.2$  for AA, EUR, HISP, and EAS populations against AFR,  
1428 EUR, MXL, and ASN populations from 1000 Genomes Phase 1, respectively, or a minor allele  
1429 frequency difference  $> 0.4$  for SAS against EUR populations. At this stage, additional variants were  
1430 excluded from each cohort file if they met one of the following criteria: were tri-allelic; had a minor  
1431 allele count (MAC)  $< 3$ ; demonstrated a standard error of the effect size  $\geq 10$ ; or were missing an  
1432 effect estimate, standard error, or imputation quality. All data that survived QC (approximately  
1433 12,186,053 variants from GWAS cohorts and 1,998,657 variants from Metabochip cohorts) were  
1434 available for downstream meta-analyses.

1435

### 1436 **Single-ancestry meta-analyses**

1437 Single-ancestry meta-analyses were performed within each ancestry group using the fixed-effects  
1438 inverse variance meta-analysis implemented in METAL<sup>20</sup>. We applied a double-genomic control (GC)  
1439 correction<sup>15,86</sup> to both the study-specific GWAS results and the single-ancestry meta-analysis results.  
1440 Study-specific Metabochip results were GC-corrected using 4,973 SNPs included on the Metabochip  
1441 array for replication of associations with QT-interval, a phenotype not correlated with our glycemc  
1442 traits<sup>15</sup>.

1443

### 1444 **Identification of single-ancestry index variants**

1445 To identify distinct association index variants across each chromosome within each ancestry (**Table**  
1446 **1**), we performed approximate conditional analyses implemented in GCTA<sup>21</sup> using the --cojo-slct  
1447 option (autosomes) and distance-based clumping (X chromosome). Linkage disequilibrium (LD)  
1448 correlations for GCTA were estimated from a representative cohort from each ancestry: WGHS  
1449 (EUR); CHNS (EAS); SINDI (SAS); BioMe (AA); SOL (HISP) and Uganda (for itself). The results from  
1450 GCTA were comparable when using alternative cohorts for the LD reference. For any index variant  
1451 with a QC flag which caused reason for concern, we performed manual inspection of forest plots to  
1452 decide whether the signal was likely to be real (**Supplementary note**). Among 335 single-ancestry  
1453 index variants across all traits, this manual inspection was done for 40 signals of which 32 passed  
1454 and 8 failed after inspection. Thus, a total of 327 single-ancestry index variants passed and 8 failed.

1455

### 1456 **Trans-ancestry meta-analyses**

1457 To leverage power across all ancestries, we also conducted trait-specific trans-ancestry meta-  
1458 analysis by combining the single-ancestry meta-analysis results using MANTRA (**Supplementary**  
1459 **note**)<sup>87</sup>. We defined  $\log_{10}$ Bayes' Factor (BF)  $> 6$  as genome-wide significant, approximately  
1460 comparable to  $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$ .

1461

### 1462 **Manual curation of trans-ancestry lead variants**

1463 To ensure trans-ancestry lead variants were robust, we performed manual inspection of forest plots  
1464 by at least two authors, for any variants with flags indicating possible QC issues (**Supplementary**  
1465 **note**). Of 463 trans-ancestry lead variants across all traits, 184 passed without inspection, 131  
1466 passed after inspection, and 148 failed after inspection.

1467

### 1468 **Comparison of TA lead variants across ancestries**



1469 For each pair of ancestries, we calculated Pearson's correlation in EAFs for each trans-ancestry lead  
1470 variant. The pairwise summarized heterogeneity of effect sizes between ancestries was then tested  
1471 using the joint F-test of heterogeneity<sup>32</sup>. The test statistic is the sum of Cochran Q-statistics for  
1472 heterogeneity across all trans-ancestry signals. Under the null hypothesis, the statistics follows the  $\chi^2$   
1473 distribution with n degrees of freedom, where n is the number of the trans-ancestry lead variants.  
1474

#### 1475 ***LD-pruned variant lists***

1476 Several downstream analyses (for example, genomic feature enrichment, genetic scores, and  
1477 estimation of variance explained by associated variants) require independent LD-pruned variants  
1478 ( $r^2 < 0.1$ ) to avoid double-counting variants which might otherwise be in LD with each other and that  
1479 do not provide additional "independent" evidence. Therefore, for these analyses we generated  
1480 different lists of either TA or single-ancestry LD pruned ( $r^2 < 0.1$ ) variants, keeping in each case the  
1481 variant with the strongest evidence of association (**Supplementary Table 7**). Subsequently, we  
1482 combined TA and single-ancestry variant lists and conducted further LD pruning. For some analyses,  
1483 we took the TA pruned variant list and added single-ancestry signals if the LD  $r^2 < 0.1$ , while for others  
1484 we started with the single-ancestry pruned lists and supplemented with TA lead variants if the LD  
1485  $r^2 < 0.1$ . One exception was the list used for eQTL co-localizations, which included all single-ancestry  
1486 European signals (without LD pruning) and supplemented with any additional TA lead variants  
1487 (starting from the variants with the most significant P-values) in EUR LD  $r^2 < 0.1$  with any of the  
1488 variants already in list, and that reached at least  $P < 1 \times 10^{-5}$  in the European ancestry meta-analysis.  
1489

#### 1490 **Trait variance explained by associated loci**

1491 To determine how much of the phenotypic variance of each trait could be explained by the  
1492 corresponding trait-associated loci, variants were combined in a series of weighted genetic scores  
1493 (GS). The analysis was performed in a subset of the cohorts included in the discovery GWAS (with  
1494 representation from each ancestry) and in a smaller number of independent cohorts (European  
1495 ancestry only). Up to three different GS were derived per trait (and for each ancestry) in order to  
1496 evaluate the potential for the trans-ancestry meta-GWAS identified loci to provide additional  
1497 information above and beyond that contributed by the ancestry-specific meta-analysis results. These  
1498 GS comprised: List A - single-ancestry signals; List B - single-ancestry signals plus trans-ancestry  
1499 signals; and List C - trans-ancestry signals plus single-ancestry signals (**Supplementary Table 7**). In  
1500 the case of the European ancestry cohorts that contributed to the GWAS, we employed the method  
1501 of Nolte *et al.*<sup>33</sup> to adjust the effect sizes (betas) from the GWAS for the contribution of that cohort,  
1502 providing sets of cohort-specific effect sizes that were then used to generate the GS. The association  
1503 between each GS and its corresponding trait was tested by linear regression and the adjusted  $R^2$   
1504 from the model extracted as an estimate of the variance explained.  
1505

#### 1506 ***Transferability of polygenic scores (PGS) across ancestries***

1507 We used the PRS-CSauto<sup>34</sup> software to first build European ancestry-derived PGS for each glycemic  
1508 trait (FG, FI, 2hGlu, HbA1c) on the basis of summary statistics. However, PRS-CSauto does not  
1509 perform well when the training dataset is relatively small and the genetic architecture is sparse<sup>34</sup>.  
1510 Consequently, 2hGlu was excluded from this analysis. For each trait, to obtain European ancestry  
1511 training and test datasets, we first removed all cohorts only genotyped on the MetaboChip which  
1512 were not included in this analysis. From the remaining cohorts we then removed five of the largest  
1513 European cohorts contributing to the respective European ancestry meta-analysis. For each trait,  
1514 these five cohorts were meta-analyzed and used as the European ancestry test dataset.  
1515 Subsequently, the remaining European ancestry cohorts were also meta-analyzed and used as the  
1516 European ancestry training dataset. For each of the other ancestries, cohorts only genotyped on the  
1517 MetaboChip were also removed, and the remaining cohorts were meta-analyzed, and used as the  
1518 non-European ancestry test datasets. Variants with  $MAF < 0.05$  or missing in over half of the  
1519

1520 individuals in the training dataset were removed<sup>34,88</sup>. The PGS for each trait was built using PRS-  
1521 CSauto with default settings<sup>34</sup> with the effect size estimates based on the European training dataset  
1522 being revised based on an LD reference panel matching the test dataset. The proportion of the trait  
1523 variance explained by the European ancestry-derived PGS ( $R^2$ ) was estimated using the R package  
1524 “gtx”<sup>89</sup> based on the revised effect sizes and summary statistics from the test dataset for each  
1525 ancestry.

1526  
1527

### 1528 **Fine-mapping**

1529 Of the 242 loci identified in this study, 237 were autosomal loci which we took forward for fine-  
1530 mapping (**Supplementary Table 2**). We used the Bayesian fine-mapping method FINEMAP<sup>90</sup> (version  
1531 1.1) to refine association signals and attempt to identify likely causal variants at each locus.  
1532 FINEMAP estimates the maximum number of causal variants at each locus, calculates the posterior  
1533 probability of each variant being causal, and proposes the most likely configuration of causal  
1534 variants. The posterior probabilities of the configurations in each locus were used to construct 99%  
1535 credible sets.

1536

1537 We performed both single-ancestry and trans-ancestry fine-mapping. In both analyses, only data  
1538 from cohorts genotyped on GWAS arrays were used, and analyses were limited to trans-ancestry  
1539 lead variants and other single-ancestry lead variants present in at least 90% of the samples for each  
1540 trait. For the single-ancestry fine-mapping, FINEMAP estimates the number of causal variants in a  
1541 region up to a maximum number, which we set to be two plus the number of distinct signals  
1542 identified from the GCTA signal selection. FINEMAP uses single-ancestry and trait-specific z-scores  
1543 from the fixed-effect meta-analysis in METAL<sup>20</sup> and an ancestry-specific LD reference, which we  
1544 created from a subset of cohorts (combined sample size > 30% of the sample size for that ancestry),  
1545 weighting each cohort by sample size. In the trans-ancestry fine-mapping, FINEMAP was similarly  
1546 used to estimate the number of causal variants starting with two, and trait-specific z-scores and LD  
1547 maps were generated from the sample size weighted average of those used in the single-ancestry  
1548 fine-mapping. The maximum number of causal variants was iteratively increased by one until it was  
1549 larger than the number of causal variants supported by data (Bayes factor), which was the estimated  
1550 maximum number of causal variants used in the final run of fine-mapping analysis.

1551

1552 To compare fine-mapping results obtained from the single-ancestry and trans-ancestry efforts,  
1553 analyses were limited to fine-mapping regions with evidence for a single likely causal variant in both,  
1554 enabling a straightforward comparison of credible sets (**Supplementary note**). To ensure any  
1555 difference in the fine-mapping results was not driven by different sets of variants being present in  
1556 the different analyses, we repeated the single-ancestry fine-mapping limited to the same set of  
1557 variants used in the trans-ancestry fine-mapping. The fine-mapping resolution was assessed based  
1558 on comparisons of the 99% credible sets in terms of number of variants included in the set, and  
1559 length of the region. To assess whether the improvement in the trans-ancestry fine-mapping was  
1560 due to differences in LD, increased sample size, or both, we repeated the trans-ancestry fine-  
1561 mapping mimicking the sample size present in the single-ancestry fine-mapping by dividing the  
1562 standard errors by the square root of the sample size ratio and compared the results with those  
1563 from the single-ancestry fine-mapping.

1564

### 1565 **Functional Annotation of trait-associated variants**

1566

#### 1567 ***HbA1c signal classification***

1568 There were 218 HbA1c-associated signals from either the single-ancestry (i.e. all GCTA-signals from  
1569 any ancestry) or trans-ancestry meta-analyses. To classify these signals in terms of their likely mode  
1570 of action (i.e., glycemic, erythrocytic, or other<sup>7</sup>), we examined association summary statistics for the

1571 lead variants at the 218 signals in other large European datasets for 19 additional traits: three  
1572 glycemic traits from this study (FG, 2hGlu and FI); seven mature red blood cell (RBC) traits<sup>91,92</sup> (red  
1573 blood cell count, mean corpuscular volume, hematocrit, mean corpuscular hemoglobin, mean  
1574 corpuscular hemoglobin concentration, hemoglobin concentration and red cell distribution width);  
1575 five reticulocyte traits (reticulocyte count, reticulocyte fraction of red cells, immature fraction of  
1576 reticulocytes, high light scatter reticulocyte count and high light scatter percentage of red cells)<sup>91,92</sup>,  
1577 and four iron traits (serum iron, transferrin, transferrin saturation and ferritin)<sup>93</sup>. Of the 218 HbA1c  
1578 signals, data were available for the lead (n=183) or proxy (European LD  $r^2 > 0.8$ , n = 8) variants at 191  
1579 signals.

1580

1581 The additional traits were clustered using hierarchical clustering to ensure biologically related traits  
1582 would cluster together (**Supplementary note**). We then used a non-negative matrix factorization  
1583 (NMF)<sup>94</sup> process to cluster the HbA1c signals. Each cluster was labelled as glycemic, reticulocyte,  
1584 mature RBC, or iron related based on the strength of association of signals in the cluster to the  
1585 glycemic, reticulocyte, mature RBC and iron traits (**Supplementary note**). To verify that our cluster  
1586 naming was correct, we used HbA1c association results conditioned on either FG or iron traits, or  
1587 type 2 diabetes association results (**Supplementary note**).

1588

### 1589 ***HbA1c genetic risk scores (GRSs) and T2D risk***

1590 We constructed GRS for each cluster of HbA1c-associated signals (based on hard clustering) and  
1591 tested the association of each cluster with T2D risk using samples from the UK Biobank. Pairs of  
1592 HbA1c signals in LD (EUR  $r^2 > 0.10$ ) were LD pruned by removing the signal with the less significant *P*-  
1593 value of association with HbA1c. The GRS for each cluster was calculated based on the logarithm of  
1594 odds ratios from the latest T2D study summary statistics<sup>95</sup> and UK Biobank genotypes imputed to the  
1595 Haplotype Reference Consortium<sup>19</sup>. From 487,409 UK Biobank samples (age between 46 and 82  
1596 years, and 55% female), we excluded participants for the following reasons: 373 with mismatched  
1597 sex; 9 not used in the kinship calculation; 78,365 non-European ancestry individuals; and 138,504  
1598 with missing T2D status, age, or sex information. We further removed 26,896 related participants  
1599 (kinship  $> 0.088$ , preferentially removing individuals with the largest number of relatives and  
1600 controls where a T2D case was related to a control). T2D cases were defined by: (i) a history of  
1601 diabetes without metformin or insulin treatment, (ii) self-reported diagnosis of T2D, or (iii) diagnosis  
1602 of T2D in a national registry (N = 17,022, age between 47 and 79 years, and 36% female). Controls  
1603 were participants without a history of T2D (N = 226,240, age between 46 and 82 years, and 56%  
1604 female). We tested for association between each GRS and T2D using logistic regression including  
1605 covariates for age, sex, and the first five principal components. Significance of association was  
1606 evaluated by a bootstrap approach to incorporate the variance of each HbA1c associated signal in  
1607 the T2D summary data. To do this, we generated the GRS of each cluster 200 times by resampling  
1608 the logarithm of odds ratio of each signal with T2D. For each non-glycemic class that had a GRS  
1609 significantly associated with T2D, we performed sensitivity analyses to evaluate whether the  
1610 association was driven from variants that also belonged to a glycemic cluster when using a soft  
1611 clustering approach (the signals were classified as also glycemic in the soft clustering or had an  
1612 association  $P \leq 0.05$  with any of the three glycemic traits).

1613

### 1614 ***Chromatin states***

1615 To identify genetic variants within association signals that overlapped predicted chromatin states,  
1616 we used a previously published, 13 chromatin state model that included 31 diverse tissues, including  
1617 pancreatic islets, skeletal muscle, adipose, and liver<sup>39</sup>. Briefly, this model was generated from  
1618 cell/tissue ChIP-seq data for H3K27ac, H3K27me3, H3K36me3, H3K4me1, and H3K4me3, and input  
1619 control from a diverse set of publicly available data<sup>53,57,96,97</sup> using the ChromHMM program<sup>98</sup>. As  
1620 reported previously<sup>39</sup>, StrEs were defined as contiguous enhancer chromatin state (Active Enhancer  
1621 1 and 2, Genic Enhancer and Weak Enhancer) segments longer than 3kb<sup>57</sup>.

1622 ***Enrichment of genetic variants in genomic features***

1623 We used GREGOR (version 1.2.1) to calculate the enrichment of GWAS variants overlapping static  
1624 and StrEs<sup>56</sup>. For calculating the enrichment of glyceimic trait-associated variants in these annotations,  
1625 we used the filtered list of trait-associated variants as described above (**Supplementary Table 7**) as  
1626 input. For calculating the enrichment of sub-classified HbA1c variants, we included the list of loci  
1627 characterized as Glyceimic, another list of loci characterized as Reticulocyte or mature Red Blood  
1628 Cell, collectively representing the red blood cell fraction, along with lists of iron related or  
1629 unclassified loci (**Supplementary Table 17**). We used the following parameters in GREGOR  
1630 enrichment analyses: European  $r^2$  threshold (for inclusion of variants in LD with the lead variant) =  
1631 0.8, LD window size = 1 Mb, and minimum neighbour number = 500.

1632  
1633 We used fGWAS (version 0.3.6)<sup>58</sup> to calculate enrichment of glyceimic trait-associated variants in  
1634 static and StrE annotations using summary level GWAS results. We used the default fGWAS  
1635 parameters for enrichment analyses for individual annotations for each trait. For each annotation,  
1636 the model provided the natural log of maximum likelihood estimate of the enrichment parameter.  
1637 Annotations were considered as significantly enriched if the log<sub>2</sub> (parameter estimate) and  
1638 respective 95% confidence intervals were above zero or significantly depleted if the log<sub>2</sub> (parameter  
1639 estimate) and respective 95% confidence intervals were below zero.

1640  
1641 We tested enrichment of trait-associated variants in static and StrE annotations with GARFIELD  
1642 (v2)<sup>59</sup>. We formatted annotation overlap files as required by the tool; prepared input data at two  
1643 GWAS thresholds - of  $1 \times 10^{-5}$  and a more stringent  $1 \times 10^{-8}$  by pruning and clumping with default  
1644 parameters (garfield-prep-chr script). We calculated enrichment in each individual annotation using  
1645 garfield-test.R with  $-c$  option set to 0. We also calculated the effective number of annotations using  
1646 the garfield-Meff-Padj.R script. We used the effective number of annotations for each trait to obtain  
1647 Bonferroni corrected significance thresholds for enrichment for each trait.

1648  
1649 ***eQTL analyses***

1650 To aid in the identification of candidate casual genes at the European-only and trans-ancestry  
1651 association signals, we examined whether any of the lead variants associated with glyceimic traits  
1652 (**Supplementary Table 7**) were also associated with expression level (FDR < 5%) of nearby transcripts  
1653 located within 1 Mb in existing eQTL data sets of blood, subcutaneous adipose, visceral adipose,  
1654 skeletal muscle, and pancreatic islet samples<sup>60,61,99-102</sup>. LD was estimated from the collected cohort  
1655 pairwise LD information, where available, else from the European samples in 1000G phase 3. GWAS  
1656 and eQTL signals likely co-localize when the GWAS variant and the variant most strongly associated  
1657 with the expression level of the corresponding transcript (eSNP) exhibit high pairwise LD ( $r^2 > 0.8$ ;  
1658 1000 Genomes Phase 3, EUR). At these signals, we conducted reciprocal conditional analyses to test  
1659 association between the GWAS variant and transcript level when the eSNP was also included in the  
1660 model, and vice versa. We report GWAS and eQTL signals as co-localized if the association for the  
1661 eSNP was not significant (FDR  $\geq 5\%$ ) when conditioned on the GWAS variant; we also report signals  
1662 from the eQTLGen whole blood meta-analysis data that meet only the LD threshold because  
1663 conditional analysis was not possible.

1664  
1665 ***Tissue and gene-set analysis***

1666 We performed enrichment analysis using DEPICT (Data-driven Expression-Prioritized Integration for  
1667 Complex Traits) version 3, specifically developed for 1000 Genomes Project imputed meta-analysis  
1668 data<sup>103</sup> to identify cell types and tissues in which genes at trait-associated variants were strongly  
1669 expressed, and to detect enrichment of gene-sets or pathways. DEPICT data included human gene  
1670 expression data for 19,987 genes in 10,968 reconstituted gene sets, and 209 tissues/cell types.  
1671 Because gene expression data in DEPICT is based on European samples and LD, we selected trait-  
1672 associated variants with  $P < 10^{-5}$  in the European meta-analysis and tested for enrichment of signals in

1673 each reconstituted gene-set, and each tissue or cell type. Enrichment results with a false discovery  
1674 rate (FDR)<0.05 were considered significant. We ran DEPICT based on association results for all traits  
1675 among: (i) cohorts with genome-wide data, or (ii) all cohorts (genome-wide and MetaboChip  
1676 cohorts). Because results were broadly consistent between the two approaches, we present results  
1677 from the analysis that contained all cohorts as it had greater statistical power.

1678

### 1679 ***Statistics and reproducibility***

1680

#### 1681 *Sample size*

1682 No statistical method was used to predetermine sample size. We aimed to bring together the largest  
1683 possible sample size with GWAS data from individuals of diverse ancestries (European, Hispanic,  
1684 African American, East Asian, South Asian and sub-Saharan African) without diabetes and with data  
1685 for one or more of the following traits: fasting glucose, fasting insulin, 2hr post-challenge glucose,  
1686 and glycated hemoglobin. The sample sizes were 281,416 (FG), 213,650 (FI), 215,977 (HbA1c) and  
1687 85,916 (2hGlu) (**Supplementary Table 1**). Our sample size was sufficiently powered to detect  
1688 common variant associations with each of the glycemic traits and was able to detect associations at  
1689 242 loci.

1690

#### 1691 *Randomization/ Blinding*

1692 This is a study of continuous traits therefore there were no experiments to randomize and there was  
1693 no “outcome” to which investigators needed to be blinded to.

1694

#### 1695 *Data exclusions*

1696 Prior to conducting this study, we identified reasons for which data should be excluded from the  
1697 analysis at either the cohort or summary level; these exclusions are as follows. Sample quality  
1698 control checks included removing samples with low call rate < 95%, extreme heterozygosity, sex  
1699 mismatch with X chromosome variants, duplicates, first- or second-degree relatives (unless by  
1700 design), or ancestry outliers. Following sample QC, cohorts applied variant QC thresholds for call rate  
1701 (< 95%), Hardy-Weinberg Equilibrium (HWE)  $P < 1 \times 10^{-6}$ , and minor allele frequency (MAF). Full  
1702 details of QC thresholds and exclusions by participating cohort are available in **Supplementary Table**  
1703 **1**. Each contributing cohort shared their summary statistic results with the central analysis group  
1704 who performed additional QC using EasyQC. Allele frequency estimates were compared to estimates  
1705 from 1000Gp1 reference panel, and variants were excluded from downstream analyses if there was  
1706 a minor allele frequency difference > 0.2 for AA, EUR, HISP, and EAS populations against AFR, EUR,  
1707 MXL, and ASN populations from 1000 Genomes Phase 1, respectively, or a minor allele frequency  
1708 difference > 0.4 for SAS against EUR populations. At this stage, additional variants were excluded  
1709 from each cohort file if they met one of the following criteria: were tri-allelic; had a minor allele  
1710 count (MAC) < 3; demonstrated a standard error of the effect size  $\geq 10$ ; imputation  $r^2 < 0.4$  or INFO  
1711 score < 0.4; or were missing an effect estimate, standard error, or imputation quality.

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#### 1714 ***Data Availability***

1715 Ancestry-specific and overall meta-analysis summary level results are available through the MAGIC  
1716 website (<https://www.magicinvestigators.org/>). Summary statistics are also available through the  
1717 GWAS catalogue (<https://www.ebi.ac.uk/gwas/>) with the following accession codes: GCST90002225,  
1718 GCST90002226, GCST90002227, GCST90002228, GCST90002229, GCST90002230, GCST90002231,  
1719 GCST90002232, GCST90002233, GCST90002234, GCST90002235, GCST90002236, GCST90002237,  
1720 GCST90002238, GCST90002239, GCST90002240, GCST90002241, GCST90002242, GCST90002243,  
1721 GCST90002244, GCST90002245, GCST90002246, GCST90002247, and GCST90002248.

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1724 **Code availability**

1725 Source code implementing methods described in the paper are publicly available on  
1726 <https://zenodo.org/badge/latestdoi/346687844>.

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1728 **References for Methods**

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