

SUPPLEMENTAL METHODS

RNA Sequencing (RNA-Seq) and Bioinformatic Analysis

Total liver RNA of HuR^{hKO} mice fed with WDSW for 4 weeks was isolated using Chemagic Prepito®-D Nucleic Acid Extractor (PerkinElmer, USA) with a Prepito RNA kit (PerkinElmer, USA). The RNA-Seq was performed by Genewiz Company based on the Illumina Hiseq® X platform (Genewiz Co., USA), as previously described (1).

Sequencing reads were trimmed and filtered using bbdut to remove adapters and low-quality reads (2). Reads from mouse samples were mapped to Ensembl GRCm38 transcripts annotation (release 82), using RSEM (3). Gene expression data normalization and differential expression analysis were performed using the R package edgeR (4). Significantly up-or downregulated genes were determined as fold change ≥ 1.8 and p-value < 0.05 . Hierarchical clustering was performed to show differential mRNA expression profiles among the samples (<http://www.bioinformatics.com.cn>). Volcano plot and heatmaps were created to visualize significantly dysregulated mRNAs using GraphPad Prism (version 8; GraphPad Software Inc., San Diego, CA). Gene Ontology (GO) analysis was performed to investigate three functionality domains: Biological Process (BP), Cellular Component (CC), and Molecular Function (MF) using DAVID v6.8 (<https://david.ncifcrf.gov/>). Pathway analysis was used to functionally analyze and map genes to Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes (KEGG) pathways (<https://pathview.uncc.edu/>)(1). QIAGEN IPA was used to explore the canonical pathways regulated by hepatic HuR.

Serum and Liver Biochemical Analysis

Serum levels of alkaline phosphatase (ALP), aspartate aminotransferase (AST) and

alanine aminotransferase (ALT), total triglyceride, total cholesterol, very-low-density lipoprotein (VLDL), and ALB (albumin) were determined using the Alfa Wassermann Vet ACE Axcel® System with commercially available assay kits from Alfa Wassermann diagnostic technologies (West Caldwell, NJ). Liver tissues were homogenized with a 10-fold 5% NP-40/ddH₂O solution. Total cholesterol and total triglyceride levels in the supernatant fluid of the liver homogenates were analyzed as described previously (1).

Histological and Immunohistochemical Staining

Liver tissues were processed for hematoxylin and eosin (H&E) staining and immunohistochemistry (IHC) staining for cytokeratin 19 (CK-19) and Ki67 at the Cancer Mouse Models Core at the VCU Massey Cancer Center (Richmond, VA, USA). Frozen liver tissue cut to 8 µm in thickness was preserved in 3.7% formaldehyde for 10 min and followed by Oil Red O staining described previously (1). Picro Sirius Red Staining was performed using the Picro Sirius Red Stain Kit from Abcam (Boston, MA) with the paraffin-embedded tissue sections according to the manufacturer's instructions. All the stained slides were scanned using a Vectra Polaris Automated Quantitative Pathology Imaging System from Akoya Biosciences (Marlborough, MA) and the images were captured using Phenochart software (Akoya Biosciences) (1).

Bile acid (BA) analysis

The serum, liver tissues, intestinal contents, and cecal contents were processed for bile acid analysis, as described previously (1).

Quantitative RT-PCR

Total liver RNA was isolated using Chemagic Prepito®-D Nucleic Acid Extractor (PerkinElmer, USA) with Prepito RNA kit (PerkinElmer, USA). cDNA synthesis and Quantitative RT-PCR analysis of

relative mRNA expression levels of target genes were previously described (5). Primer sequences will be provided upon request.

Immunoblotting Analysis

Total and nuclear proteins were prepared and subjected to Western blot analysis as previously described (6). Immunoblot images were captured using the Bio-Rad Gel Doc XR+ imaging system (Hercules, CA, USA). The density of immunoblotted bands was analyzed using BioRad Image Lab computer software and normalized with histone H3 or β -Actin. The antibodies used in the study are listed in **Supplementary Table S1**.

Supplementary Figure Legends

Figure S1. Effect of hepatocyte-specific HuR deficiency on serum biochemical parameters. Age and gender-matched HuR^{hKO} and control mice were fed *ad libitum* a high-fat diet (HFD), with 42% kcal from fat and containing 0.1% cholesterol plus a high fructose-glucose solution (23.1 g/L d-fructose +18.9 g/L d-glucose) (Western diet and sugar water, WDSW) for 4 weeks. **a** Relative mRNA levels of HuR in the liver of HuR^{hKO} and control mice were determined by real-time RT-PCR and normalized with HPRT1. **b** Representative immunoblot images of HuR in the liver are shown and normalized with β -actin as an internal control. **c** Relative protein levels of HuR. **d** Representative images of immunofluorescence staining of HuR in the liver of HuR^{hKO} and control mice (scale bar, 100 μ m for 10x magnification). **e** The ratio of liver/body weight. **f** Serum level of ALP. **g** Serum lipids analysis (total cholesterol, triglyceride, glucose). Data are expressed as the mean $\pm$ SEM. Statistical significance relative to control: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, $n=10-12$.

Figure S2. Gene Ontology (GO) and KEGG analysis for differentially expressed genes (DEGs). Total liver RNA of HuR^{hKO} and control mice fed with WDSW for 4 weeks was processed for transcriptome sequencing (RNA-Seq). Significantly up-or downregulated genes were determined as fold change ≥ 1.8 and p -value < 0.05 . Top 10 enriched terms of the DEGs in GO-BP (biological process) **a**, GO-CC (cellular component) **b**, and GO-MF (molecular function) **c**, and KEGG pathways (Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes) **d**, respectively.

Figure S3. Heatmap of genes involved in inflammation and neutrophil activation. a

Heatmap of genes involved in inflammation and stress in the liver of HuR^{hKO} vs control group fed with WDSW for 4 weeks. **b** Heatmap of genes involved in neutrophil activation. A Z-score is calculated for the RNA-seq data to normalize tag counts. Red and blue colors indicate high and low gene expression, respectively.

Figure S4. Oxidative phosphorylation pathway of HuR^{hKO} vs Control. KEGG pathway analysis was performed on RNA-seq data to functionally analyze and map genes involved in the Oxidative phosphorylation pathway. Red and blue colors indicate upregulated and downregulated gene expression, respectively.

Figure S5. MAPK signaling pathway of HuR^{hKO} vs Control. KEGG pathway analysis was performed on RNA-seq data to functionally analyze and map genes involved in the MAPK signaling pathway. Red and green colors indicate upregulated and downregulated gene expression, respectively.

Figure S6. Hepatocyte-specific HuR deficiency enhances WDSW-induced dysregulation of bile acid homeostasis. **a** BA composition profile in the intestinal contents expressed by % of total BA. **b** Total BA, TCA, the ratio of total primary conjugated BA to total primary unconjugated BA, the ratio of total conjugated BA to total unconjugated BA in the intestinal contents. **c** BA composition profile in the cecal contents expressed by % of total BA. **d** α MCA, β MCA, CDCA, and ω MCA in the cecal contents. Data are expressed as the mean $\pm$ SEM. Statistical significance relative to control: * $p < 0.05$, $n=10-12$.

Figure S7. Hepatocyte-specific HuR deficiency enhances WDSW-induced dysregulation of fatty acid and lipid metabolism. HuR^{hKO} and control mice were fed *ad libitum* a WDSW for 12 weeks. **a** Representative immunoblot images of HuR in the liver of HuR^{hKO} and control mice were determined by Western blot and normalized with β -actin as an internal control. Relative protein levels of HuR are shown. **b** The mRNA expression levels of key genes involved in fatty acid synthesis and lipid metabolism, including Srebp2, Ppara, Elovl7, HMG-CoAR, Pgc1 α , Lpl, Fgf21, Fads2, and Cyclin D1, were measured by real-time RT-PCR and normalized using HPRT1 as an internal control. Statistical significance relative to control: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, n=10-12.

Figure S8. Hepatocyte-specific HuR deficiency enhances WDSW-induced inflammation and oxidative stress. HuR^{hKO} and control mice were fed *ad libitum* a WDSW for 12 weeks. Relative mRNA levels of genes involved in inflammation and stress were determined by real-time RT-PCR and normalized with HPRT1 as an internal control. **a** Macrophage markers: F4/80, Cd11b, Cd63 and Cd68; Chemokines: Ccl2, Ccr2; Innate immune responses inflammatory markers: Tnf α , Cd14 and Tlr4; Other inflammatory genes: Cerk, Caspase 1, and Cox-2. **b** Neutrophil activation: Nox2, Ncf1, Ncf2, Elastin, Ncf4, Cyb α , IL2rg, and Selectin. Data are expressed as the mean $\pm$ SEM. Statistical significance relative to control: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, n=10-12.

Figure S9. HuR was downregulated in the liver of NASH patients. **a** Relative mRNA levels of HuR in the liver of NASH patients and healthy control patients were determined by real-time

RT-PCR and normalized with HPRT1 as an internal control. Data are expressed as mean $\pm$ SEM. Statistical significance relative to control: $*p < 0.05$, $n = 8-16$. **b** Representative immunoblot images of HuR in the liver are shown and normalized with β -actin as an internal control. The relative protein level of HuR is shown. Statistical significance relative to control: $*p < 0.05$, $n = 3$. **c** Relative count of Cyp2c70 in the livers of HuR^{hKO} and control mice from the RNAseq analysis. Statistical significance relative to control: $*p < 0.05$, $n = 4$.

Supplementary Table 1. List of antibodies

Antibody	Species	Source	Catalog #	Application/ dilution
HuR	Mouse	Santa Cruz	Sc-5261	WB (1:500) or IF (1:50)
SphK2	Rabbit	Proteintech	17096-1-AP	WB (1:500)
S1PR2	Rabbit	Proteintech	21180-1-AP	WB (1:500)
CK19 (TROMA-III)	Rat	DSHB University of Iowa	TROMA-III	IHC (1:50)
F4/80	Rabbit	Cell Signaling	70076S	IHC (1:200)
Histone H3	Rabbit	Cell Signaling	9715S	WB (1:1000)
Ki67	Rabbit	Cell Signaling	12202S	IHC (1:200)
β-actin (JLA20)	Mouse	DSHB University of Iowa	JLA20	WB (1:500)
anti-Rabbit IgG (H+L)-HRP	Goat	Invitrogen	365-6120	WB (1:2500)
anti-Mouse IgG(H+L)-HRP	Goat	Bio-RAD	170-6516	WB (1:2500)
anti-Rat IgG Antibody (H+L)	Rabbit	Vector Laboratories	BA-4000	IHC (1:1000)

Supplementary Table S2: Bile acid profile in the serum of HuR^{hKO} mice (Mean±SD, nmol/L)		
Term	Control	HuR^{hKO}
Total BA	4,075.45±1,475.81	6,819.10±3,655.04*
Total primary BA	3,216.30±1,474.03	5,393.98±3,289.78*
Total primary conjugated BA	1,506.60±973.28	3,597.11±2,670.07*
Total primary unconjugated BA	1,709.69±1,107.79	1,796.87±1,410.80
Total secondary BA	859.15±345.78	1,425.12±556.35*
Total secondary conjugated BA	365.57±159.14	641.57±345.87*
Total secondary unconjugated BA	493.58±267.89	783.55±419.21*
Total conjugated BA	1,872.17±1,077.93	4,238.68±2,928.71*
Total unconjugated BA	2,203.28±1,149.17	2,580.42±1,776.82
Ratio of total primary BA to total BA	0.76±0.14	0.76±0.08
Ratio of total primary BA to total secondary BA	4.37±2.86	3.85±2.05
Ratio of total primary conjugated BA to total primary unconjugated BA	1.77±2.41	3.53±4.40
Ratio of total conjugated BA to total unconjugated BA	1.35±1.79	2.70±3.16
Ratio of total secondary BA to total BA	0.24±0.14	0.24±0.08
Ratio of total secondary conjugated BA to total secondary unconjugated BA	0.92±0.76	1.14±1.03
Statistical significance: * $p < 0.05$ vs Control, n=10-12.		

**Supplementary Table S3: Bile acid in the serum of
HuR^{hko} mice (Mean±SD, nmol/L)**

Term	Control	HuR ^{hko}
TαMCA	408.07±525.57	656.01±447.78
TβMCA	827.34±611.16	1,442.89±851.35*
TCA	439.72±352.53	1,705.93±1,423.62*
TCDCA	39.46±28.26	90.47±77.53*
CA	389.71±324.82	518.93±577.56
CDCA	38.38±3.23	49.09±30.42
αMCA	267.86±95.28	285.26±177.52
βMCA	1,182.89±747.08	1,130.43±735.51
TωMCA	182.57±91.69	387.49±262.72*
TDCA	31.34±27.84	82.87±71.34
TUDCA	107.96±47.58	128.62±94.05
THDCA	20.27±11.66	57.86±45.28*
GLCA	50.34±16.24	45.72±12.89
ωMCA	257.46±143.96	370.46±236.93
DCA	225.18±133.56	399.67±210.35*
LCA	12.16±5.20	14.76±5.27

Statistical significance: * $p < 0.05$ vs Control, n=10-12.

The contents of some bile acids were below their limit of quantitation, including GβMCA, GHCA, GUDCA, GHDCA, 7keto_DCA, GCA, MDCA, 3Keto, 7a, 12a(OH)2, HCA, UDCA, HDCA, GCDCA, 7keto_LCA, isoDCA, 12keto_LCA, GDCA, TLCA, isoLCA, allo_isoLCA, 3KetoLCA.

Supplementary Table S4: Bile acid in the liver of HuR^{hKO} mice (Mean±SD, ng/g)		
Term	Control	HuR^{hKO}
TαMCA	19.30±22.66	32.64±16.65
TβMCA	55.22±67.67	108.60±64.72
GβMCA	0.35±0.17	0.33±0.10
TCA	152.52±108.51	368.80±206.91*
TCDCA	11.12±4.55	12.88±3.54
GCA	0.26±0.17	0.75±0.93
αMCA	27.28±13.15	26.56±7.85
βMCA	223.26±131.20	223.62±64.83
CA	7.42±4.61	15.50±14.49
CDCA	0.10±0.07	0.68±0.82
TωMCA	15.06±17.74	44.24±46.10
TUDCA	8.33±7.25	9.00±4.81
THDCA	0.84±0.84	4.32±4.68
TDCA	13.34±9.91	26.60±8.36*
TLCA	0.32±0.11	0.38±0.04
GLCA	0.46±0.19	0.32±0.25
allo_isoLCA	0.62±0.04	0.52±0.23
7keto_DCA	3.00±3.45	1.64±0.79
ωMCA	21.70±9.70	30.54±18.28
UDCA	4.08±1.78	2.84±0.58
DCA	0.28±0.19	0.86±0.65*
LCA	0.26±0.15	0.18±0.08
MDCA	2.82±2.09	3.20±1.70
Statistical significance: * <i>p</i> < 0.05 vs Control, n=10-12. The contents of some bile acids were below their limit of quantitation, including GHCA, GUDCA, GHDCA, 3Keto,7a,12a(OH)2, HCA, HDCA, GCDCA, 7keto_LCA, isoDCA, 12keto_LCA, GDCA, isoLCA, 3KetoLCA.		

Supplementary Table S5: Bile acid profile in the liver of HuR^{hKO} mice (Mean±SD, ng/g)		
Term	Control	HuR^{hKO}
Total BA	566.20±361.61	914.78±391.04
Total primary BA	496.76±318.16	790.14±322.57
Total primary conjugated BA	238.70±199.56	523.78±287.92
Total primary unconjugated BA	258.06±146.92	266.36±69.09
Total secondary BA	69.44±44.70	124.64±75.83
Total secondary conjugated BA	40.30±36.24	87.02±58.28
Total secondary unconjugated BA	29.14±12.89	37.62±20.19
Total conjugated BA	279.00±235.63	610.80±343.99
Total unconjugated BA	287.20±158.66	303.98±78.30
Ratio of total primary BA to total BA	0.87±0.02	0.87±0.03
Ratio of total primary BA to total secondary BA	7.01±1.03	6.80±1.63
Ratio of total primary conjugated BA to total primary unconjugated BA	0.90±0.50	1.98±0.95*
Ratio of total conjugated BA to total unconjugated BA	0.94±0.53	2.00±0.87*
Ratio of total secondary BA to total BA	0.13±0.02	0.13±0.03
Ratio of total secondary conjugated BA to total secondary unconjugated BA	1.30±0.85	2.39±0.77*
Statistical significance: * <i>p</i> < 0.05 vs Control, n=10-12.		

Supplementary Table S6: Bile acid in the intestinal contents of HuR^{hKO} mice (Mean±SD, nmol/g)		
Term	Control	HuR^{hKO}
TαMCA	8,474.72±7,201.98	6,849.72±5,497.64
TβMCA	24,958.61±19,505.45	29,071.20±25,184.95
GβMCA	96.69±141.65	83.61±75.59
TCA	20,108.28±14,631.67	32,074.56±29,888.29
GCA	77.20±105.88	102.46±93.30
TCDCA	2,428.36±2,908.51	2,116.10±2,246.07
TUDCA	2,996.02±3,285.91	2,701.20±2,616.61
αMCA	852.81±1,089.32	1,143.49±1,870.00
βMCA	2,010.31±2,878.05	2,913.87±3,587.54
CA	3,813.73±5,153.83	6,811.49±7,827.47
CDCA	143.01±255.42	200.47±260.01
UDCA	114.84±216.54	127.77±170.82
TωMCA	4,476.46±3,676.82	4,898.66±4,078.76
THDCA	543.54±602.59	477.22±435.30
TDCA	1,844.17±1,862.37	2,233.56±2,282.91
7keto_DCA	104.19±156.50	133.56±155.80
TLCA	8.07±9.07	7.07±6.48
GLCA	4.38±5.82	2.42±2.97
ωMCA	224.88±336.96	365.61±526.36
HDCA	57.87±67.28	52.71±55.02
DCA	151.36±301.16	230.99±328.55
LCA	1.38±1.38	2.03±1.62
MDCA	49.66±77.87	79.84±36.52
CA-7-S	474.98±725.11	188.10±280.91
CDCA-3-S	0.72±0.47	0.76±0.58
The contents of some bile acids were below their limit of quantitation, including GHCA, GUDCA, GHDCA, 3Keto,7a,12a(OH)2, HCA, GCDCA, 7keto_LCA, isoDCA, 12keto_LCA, GDCA, isoLCA, allo_isoLCA, 3KetoLCA, DCA-3-S, LCA-3-S, UDCA-3-S.		

Supplementary Table S7: Bile acid profile in the intestinal contents of HuR^{hKO} mice (Mean±SD, nmol/g)		
Term	Control	HuR^{hKO}
Total BA	73,787.02±51,549.64	92,463.71±75,078.82
Total primary BA	65,973.61±45,959.30	83,881.55±68,550.98
Total primary conjugated BA	59,139.87±42,181.26	72,998.84±62,154.31
Total primary unconjugated BA	6,833.74±9,493.16	10,882.71±13,139.36
Total secondary BA	7,813.42±6,389.19	8,582.16±6,987.99
Total secondary conjugated BA	7,392.80±6,035.78	7,914.71±6,455.78
Total secondary unconjugated BA	420.62±734.63	667.44±888.35
Total conjugated BA	66,532.67±47,322.10	80,913.56±68,030.96
Total unconjugated BA	7,254.35±10,218.79	11,550.15±14,009.85
Ratio of total primary BA to total BA	0.91±0.03	0.90±0.03
Ratio of total primary BA to total secondary BA	10.82±4.34	10.22±4.28
Ratio of total primary conjugated BA to total primary unconjugated BA	25.57±36.88	18.82±21.89
Ratio of total conjugated BA to total unconjugated BA	26.39±37.65	19.39±22.24
Ratio of total secondary BA to total BA	0.09±0.03	0.10±0.03
Ratio of total secondary conjugated BA to total secondary unconjugated BA	40.58±43.91	35.87±46.18

Supplementary Table S8: Bile acid in the cecal contents of HuR^{hKO} mice (Mean±SD, nmol/g)		
Term	Control	HuR^{hKO}
TαMCA	235.35±265.83	86.85±65.37*
TβMCA	338.55±301.61	248.77±241.25
GβMCA	7.72±5.33	5.72±4.35
TCA	159.26±99.18	159.36±166.94
TCDCA	7.83±6.61	8.11±9.23
TUDCA	9.25±8.83	6.93±7.47
αMCA	3,856.89±3,212.25	1,407.31±766.38*
βMCA	15,760.91±13,689.94	6,930.74±2,477.66*
CA	1,595.15±1,192.52	929.06±650.83
CDCA	168.76±143.53	50.95±48.03*
UDCA	209.64±174.25	87.14±74.71*
TωMCA	141.56±159.39	78.89±72.37
THDCA	5.81±7.76	4.76±3.88
TDCA	70.43±87.13	30.10±37.19
7keto_DCA	515.87±508.53	283.41±223.33
TLCA	2.96±3.56	1.19±0.84
GLCA	1.31±0.92	1.96±1.17
7keto_LCA	108.34±110.89	29.81±19.75
12keto_LCA	281.29±270.63	473.49±407.40
isoLCA	8.13±9.50	4.49±4.04
3KetoLCA	5.46±3.52	11.36±12.46
ωMCA	5,248.64±3,945.43	2,670.08±1,051.10
HDCA	150.74±124.71	83.60±61.89
DCA	3,144.88±2,331.84	2,028.45±1,078.39
LCA	183.05±156.61	103.89±93.37
MDCA	119.05±92.52	52.31±29.87
CA-7-S	1,702.68±1,510.46	1,228.52±1,844.67
DCA-3-S	53.55±41.02	12.17±11.07*
LCA-3-S	4.25±4.63	0.83±0.69
Statistical significance: * <i>p</i> < 0.05 vs Control. The contents of some bile acids were below their limit of quantitation, including GHCA, GUDCA, GHDCA, 3Keto,7a,12a(OH)2, HCA, GCDCA, isoDCA, GDCA, GCA, allo_isoLCA, UDCA-3-S, CDCA-3-S.		

Supplementary Table S9: Bile acid profile in the cecal contents of HuR^{hKO} mice (Mean±SD, nmol/g)		
Term	Control	HuR^{hKO}
Total BA	33,995.42±24,186.92	16,967.15±5,432.34*
Total primary BA	22,309.90±18,265.57	9,896.78±3,654.79*
Total primary conjugated BA	756.39±650.54	514.59±440.95
Total primary unconjugated BA	21,553.51±17,730.08	9,382.19±3,553.50*
Total secondary BA	11,685.51±6,930.24	7,070.37±2,759.78*
Total secondary conjugated BA	1,106.59±1,071.94	900.43±451.95
Total secondary unconjugated BA	10,578.93±6,024.18	6,169.94±2,744.30*
Total conjugated BA	3,610.63±1,784.92	2,650.98±1,914.54
Total unconjugated BA	30,384.79±23,134.35	14,316.17±5,428.09*
Ratio of total primary BA to total BA	0.62±0.09	0.58±0.09
Ratio of total primary BA to total secondary BA	1.77±0.74	1.49±0.50
Ratio of total primary conjugated BA to total primary unconjugated BA	0.04±0.03	0.06±0.06
Ratio of total conjugated BA to total unconjugated BA	0.20±0.22	0.21±0.17
Ratio of total secondary BA to total BA	0.38±0.09	0.42±0.09
Ratio of total secondary conjugated BA to total secondary unconjugated BA	0.09±0.06	0.17±0.10*
Statistical significance: * <i>p</i> < 0.05 vs Control.		

References

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Figure S1

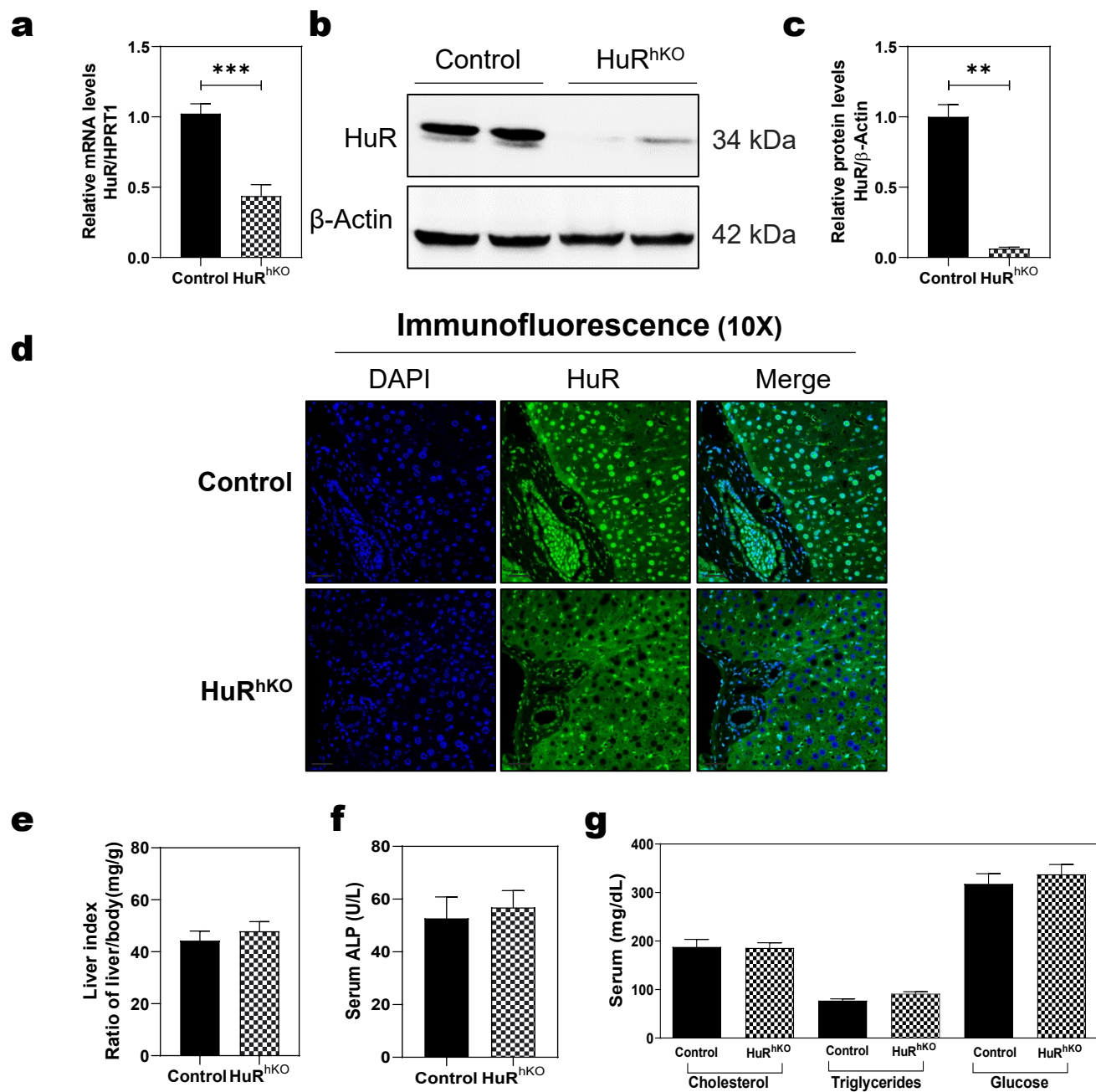


Figure S2

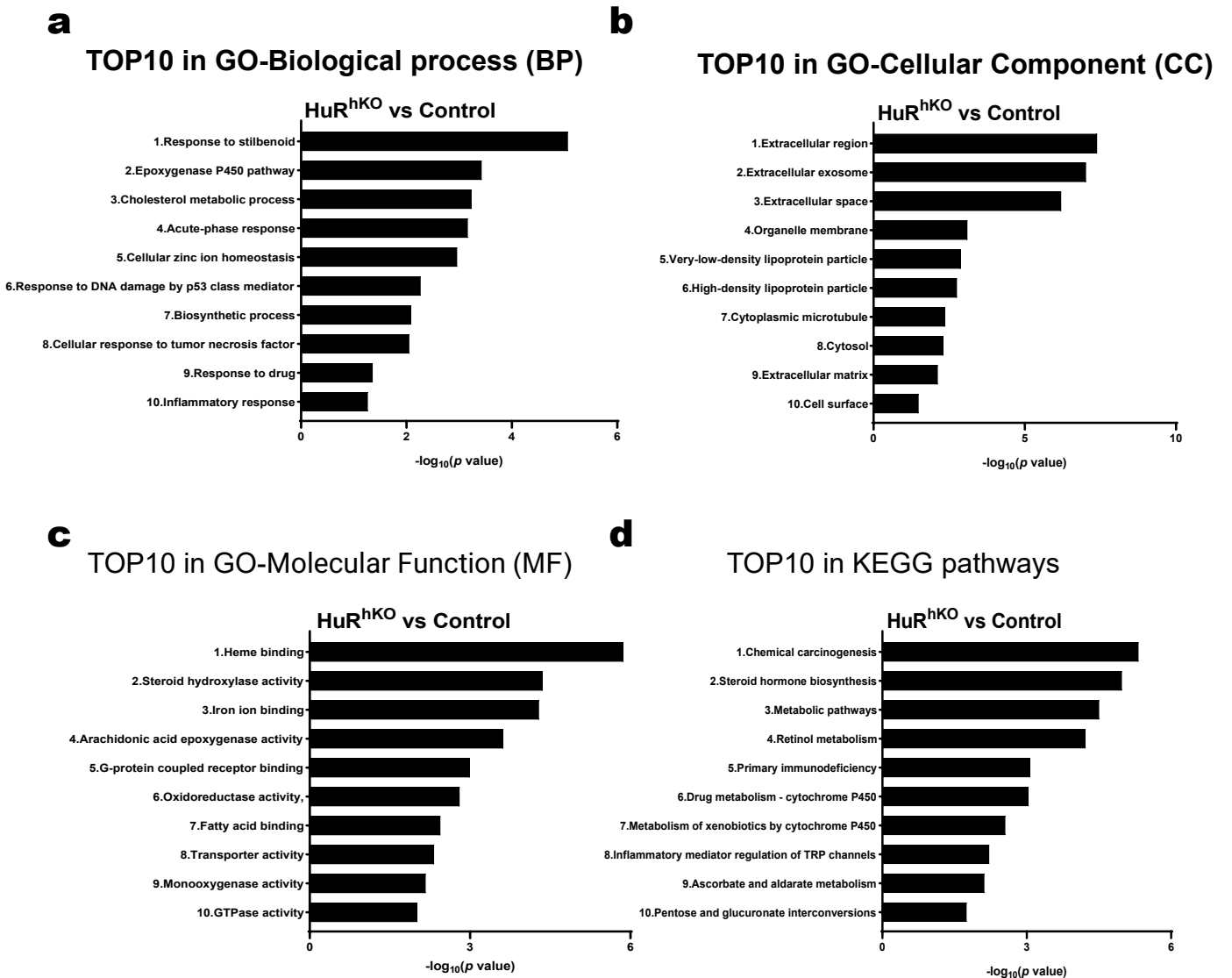


Figure S3

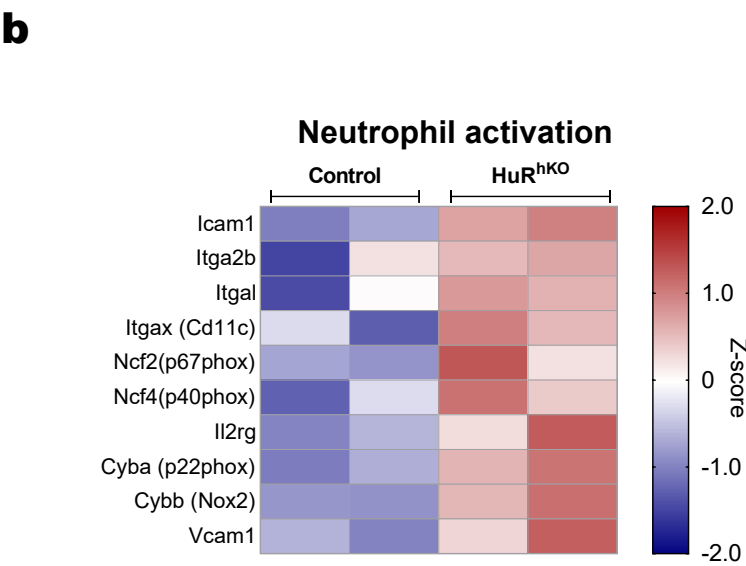
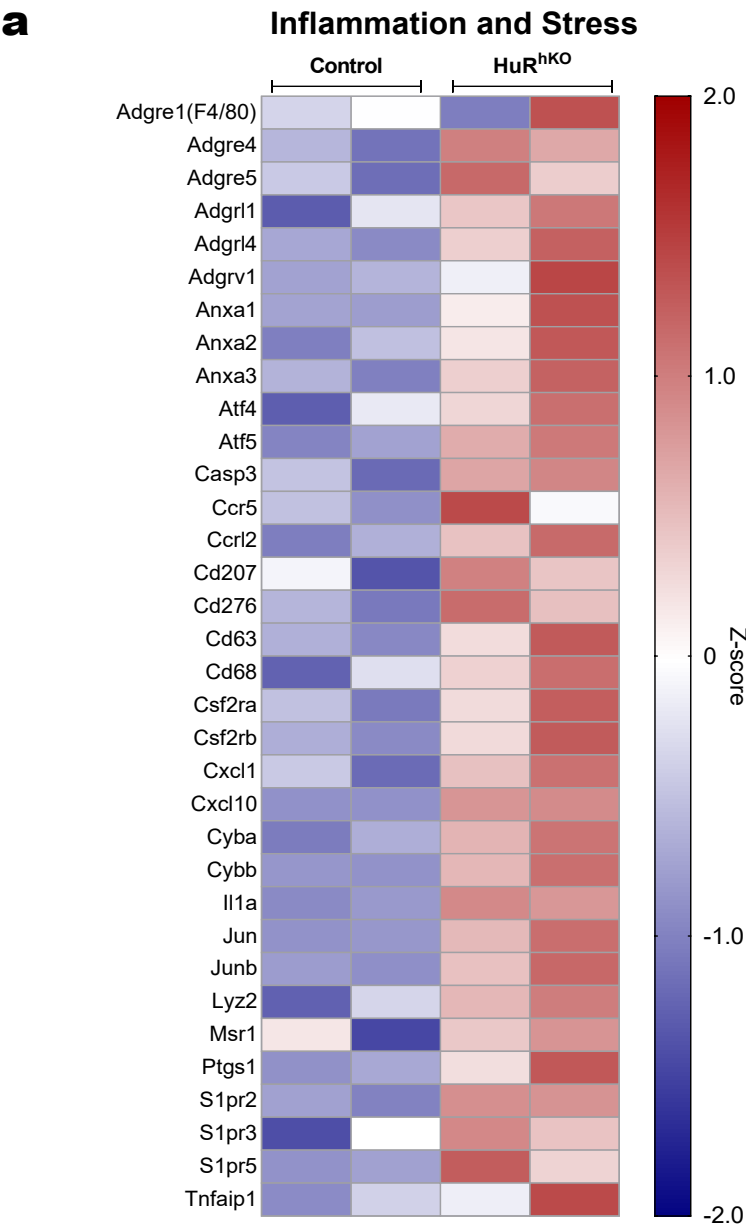


Figure S4

Oxidative Phosphorylation

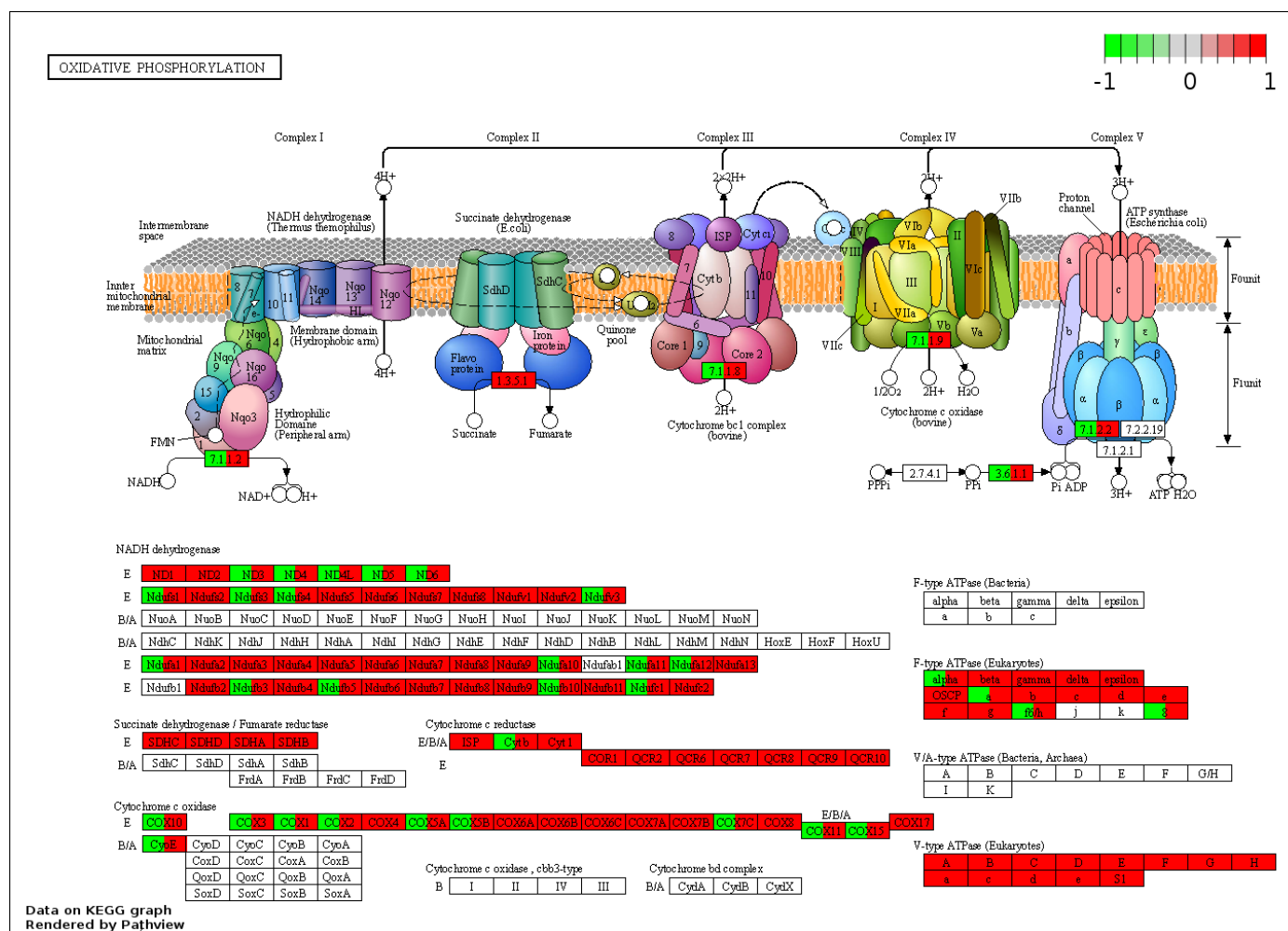


Figure S5

MAPK Signaling Pathway

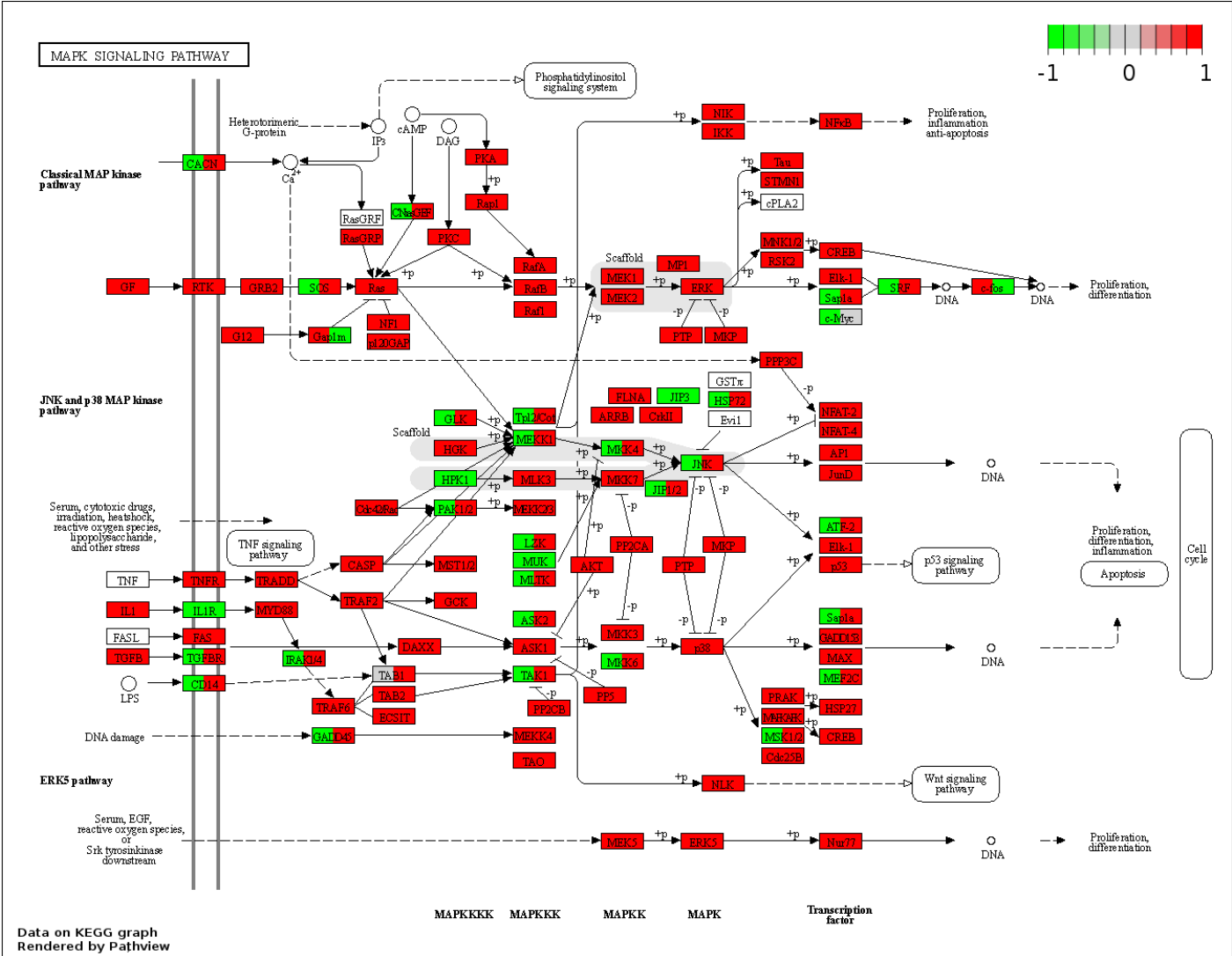
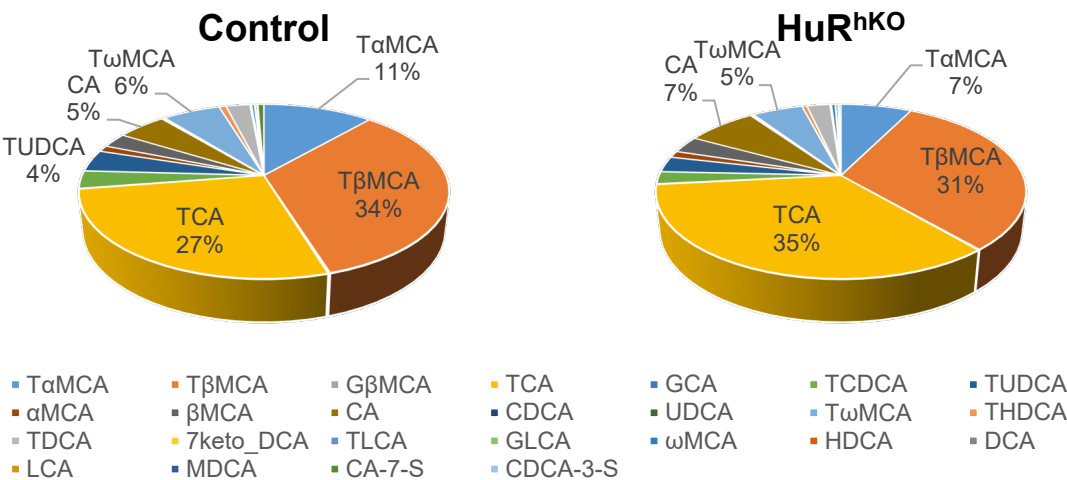
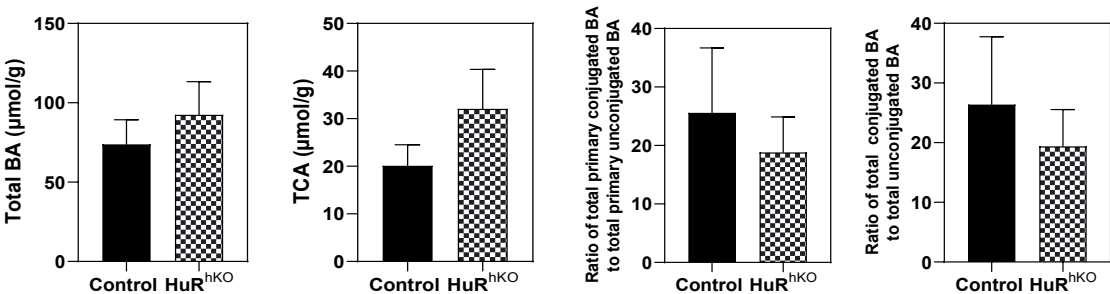


Figure S6

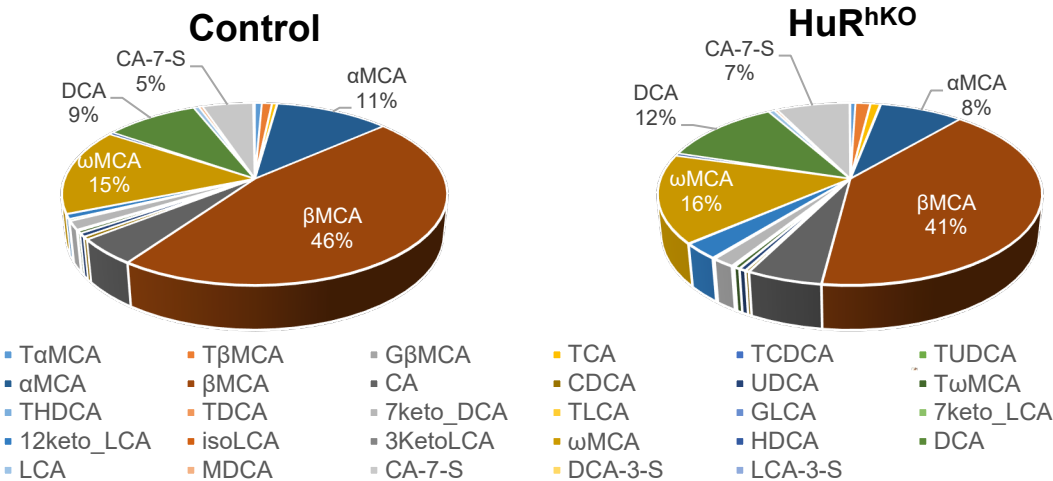
a Bile acid composition in intestinal contents



b Bile acids in intestinal contents



c Bile acid composition in cecal contents



d Bile acids in cecal contents

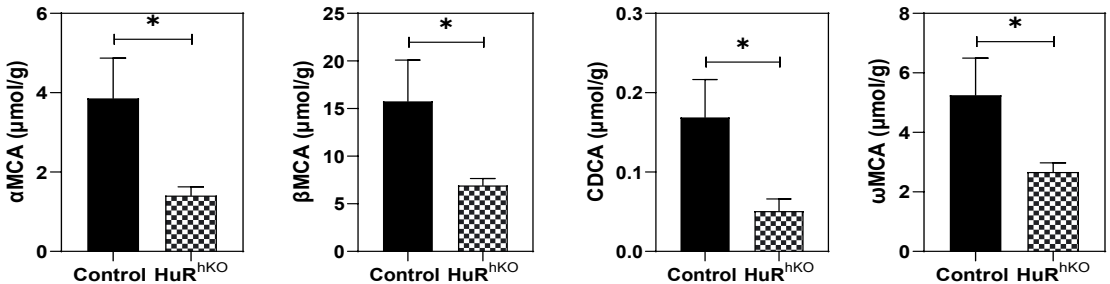
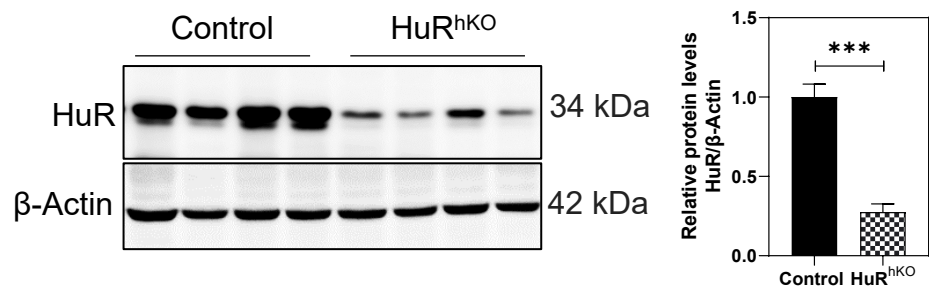


Figure S7

a



b

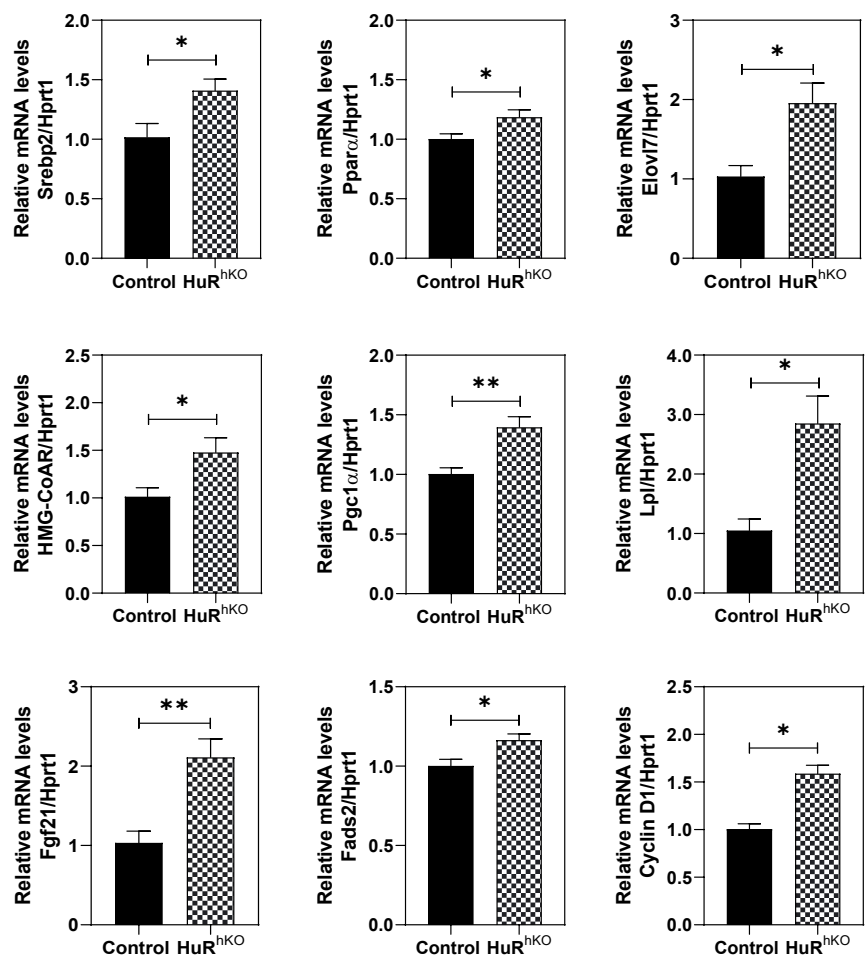
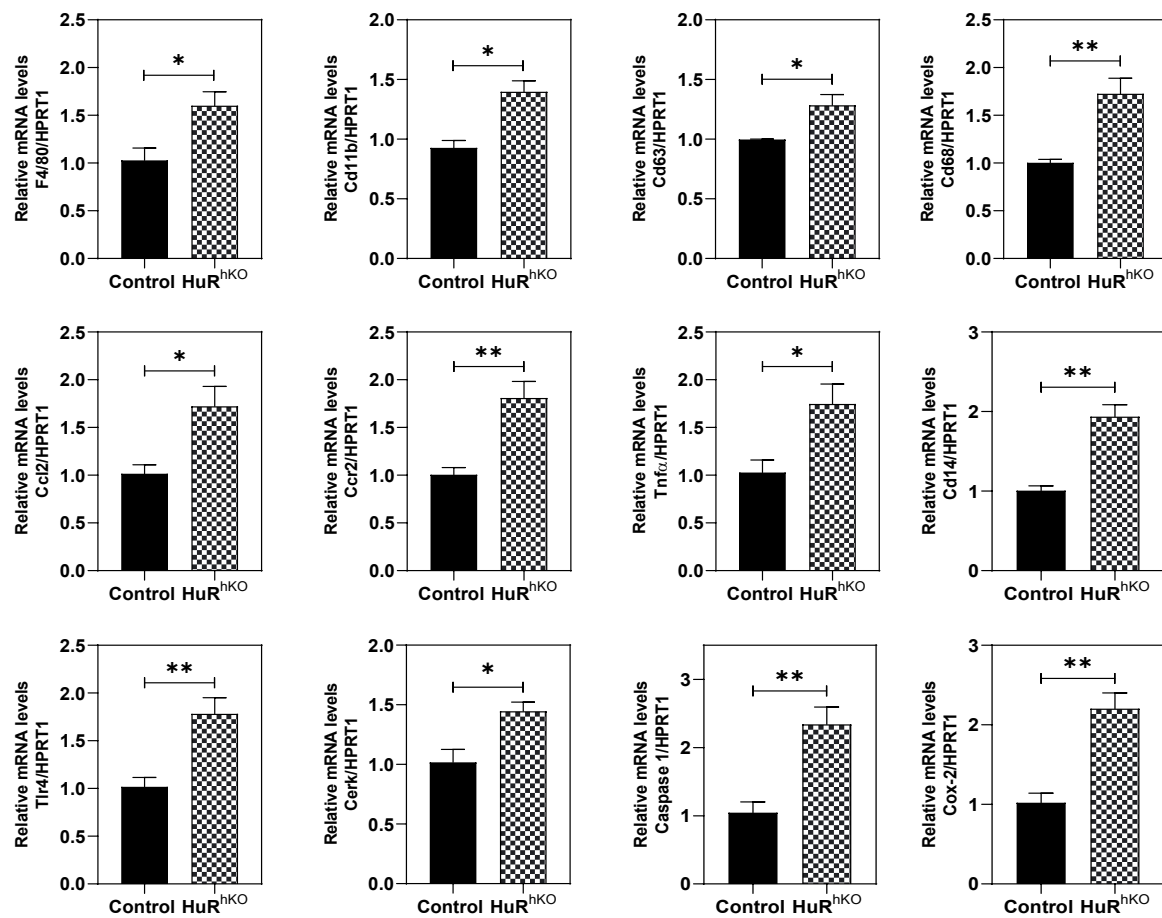


Figure S8

a



b

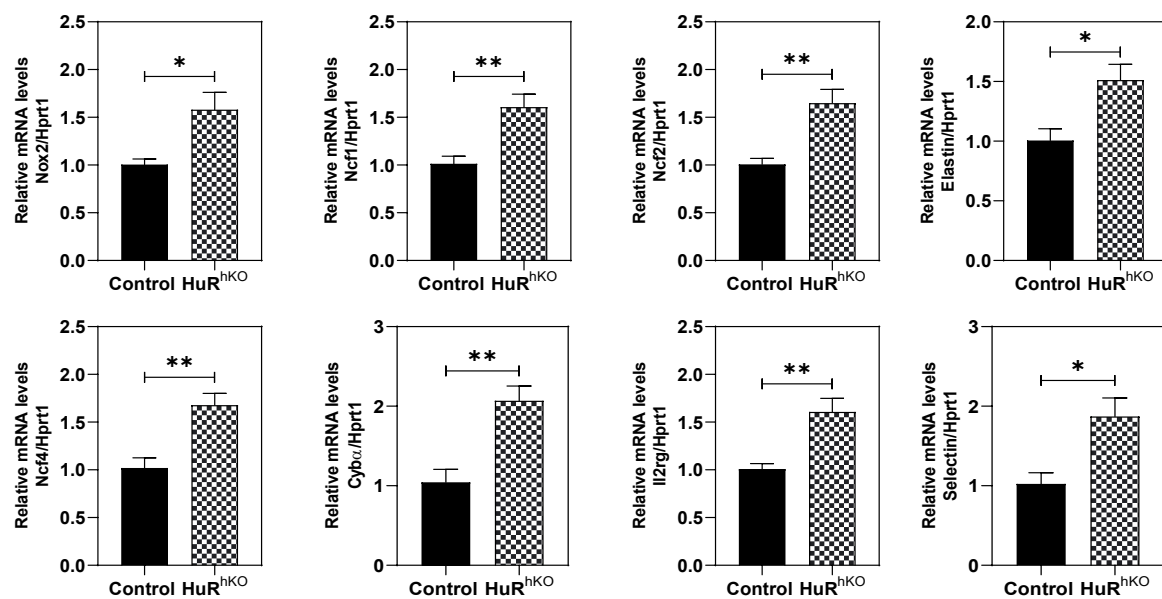
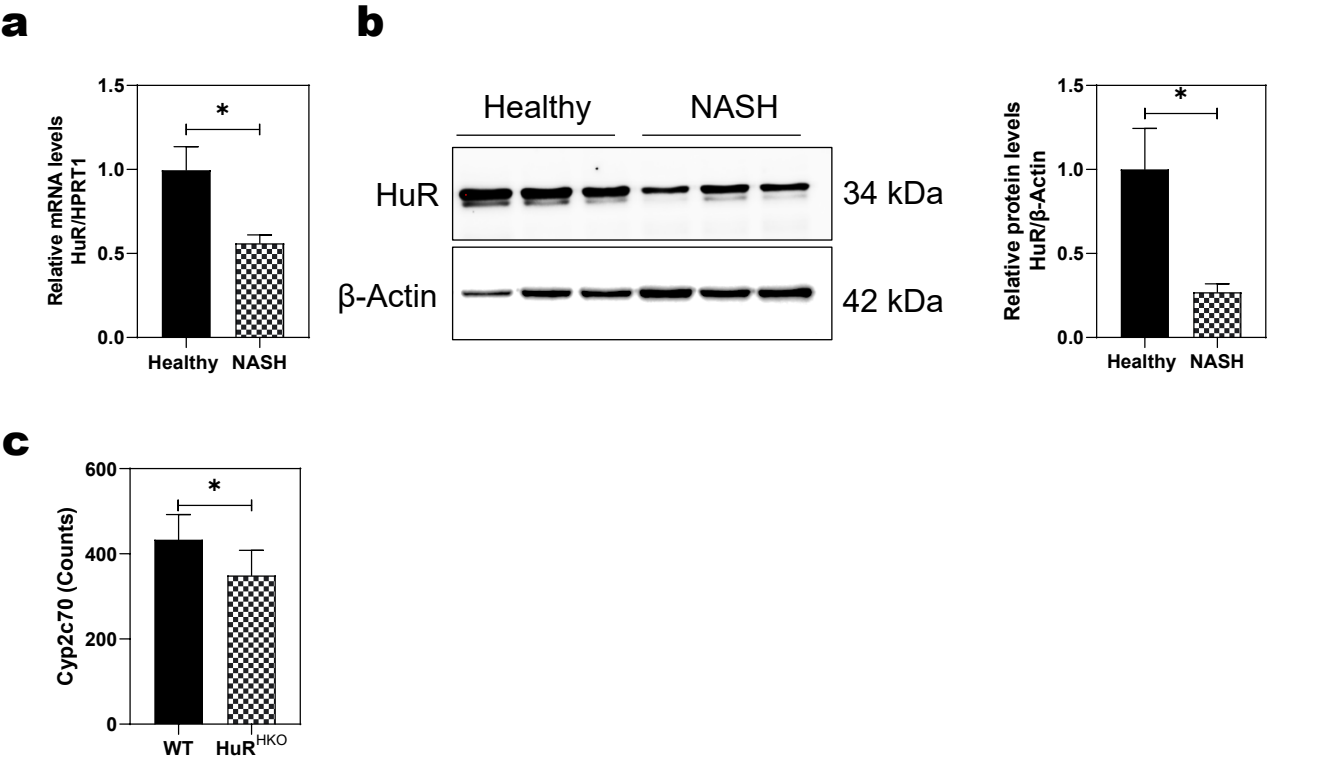


Figure S9



Raw images

Fig. 5a

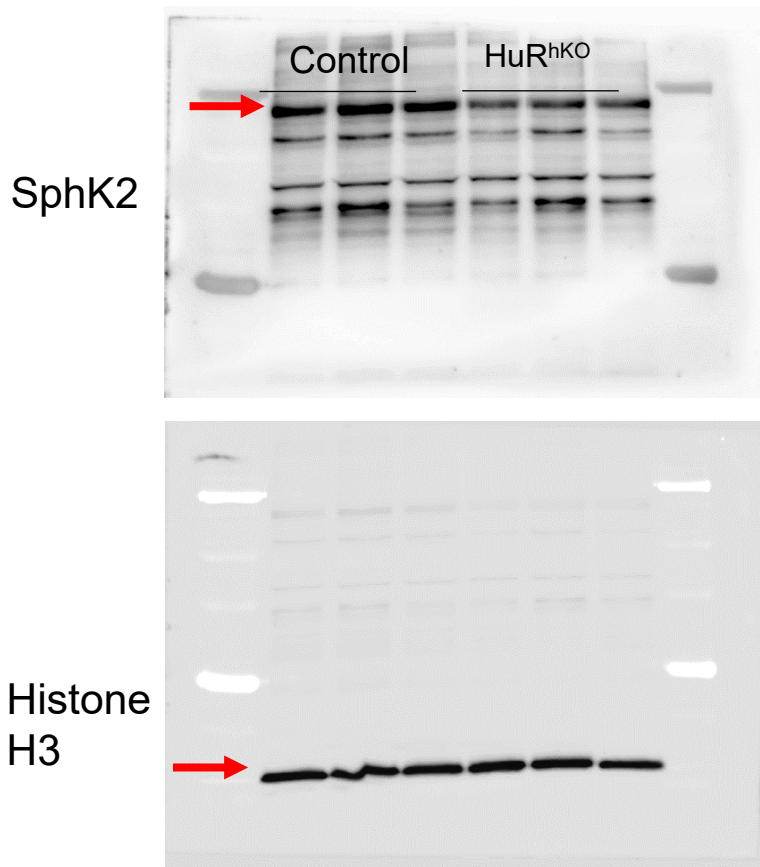


Fig. 5b

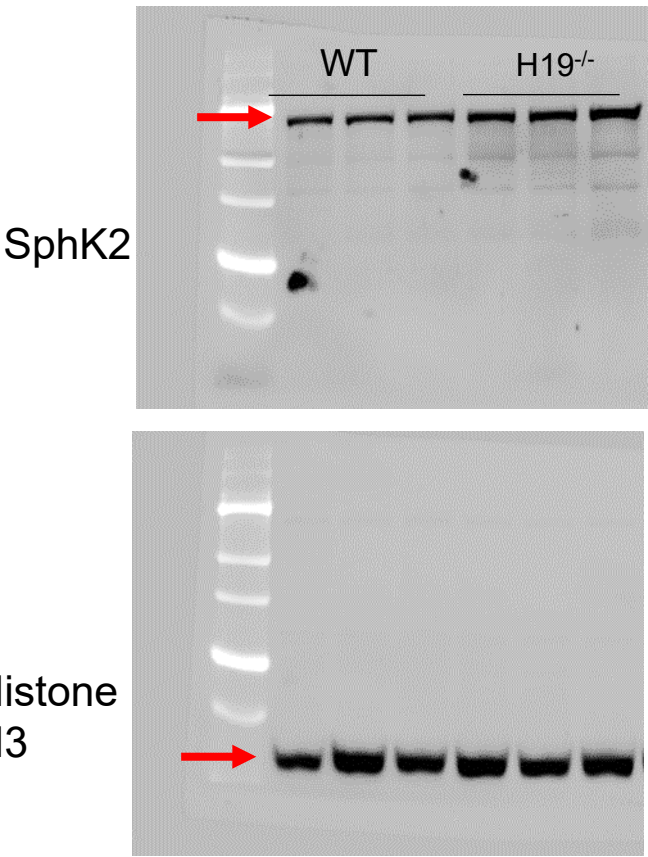


Fig. 5d

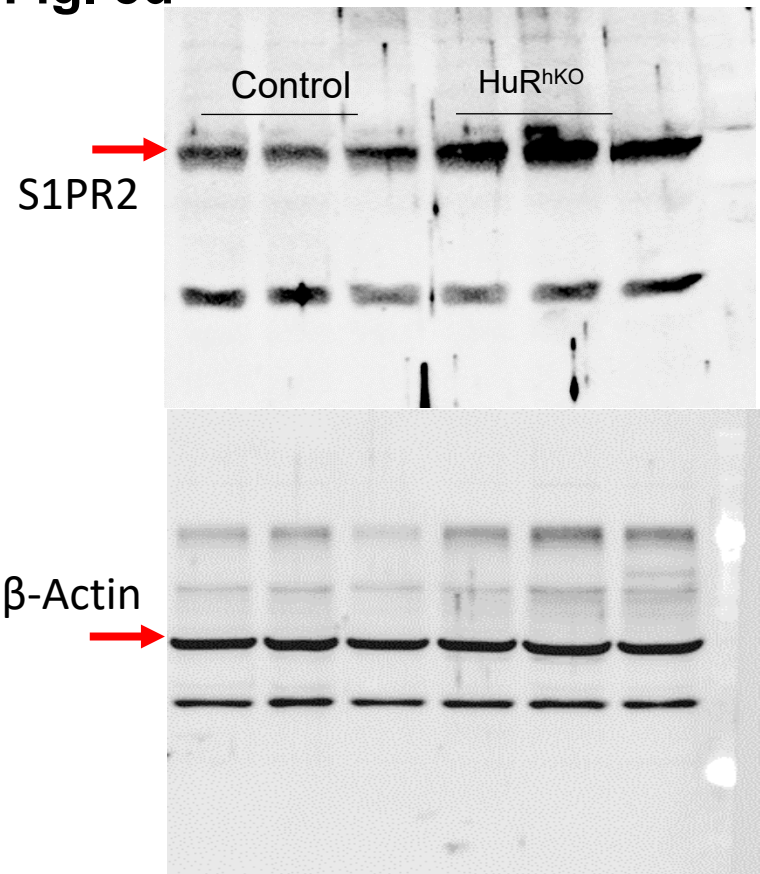


Fig. 8b

