

# Enhancing Mendelian Randomization Causal Inference through Pleiotropic Clustering in the Presence of Correlated Horizontal Pleiotropy

## Supplementary Tables

**Supplementary Table 1:** False positive rate or Power to detect correlated horizontal pleiotropy in MR for different methods

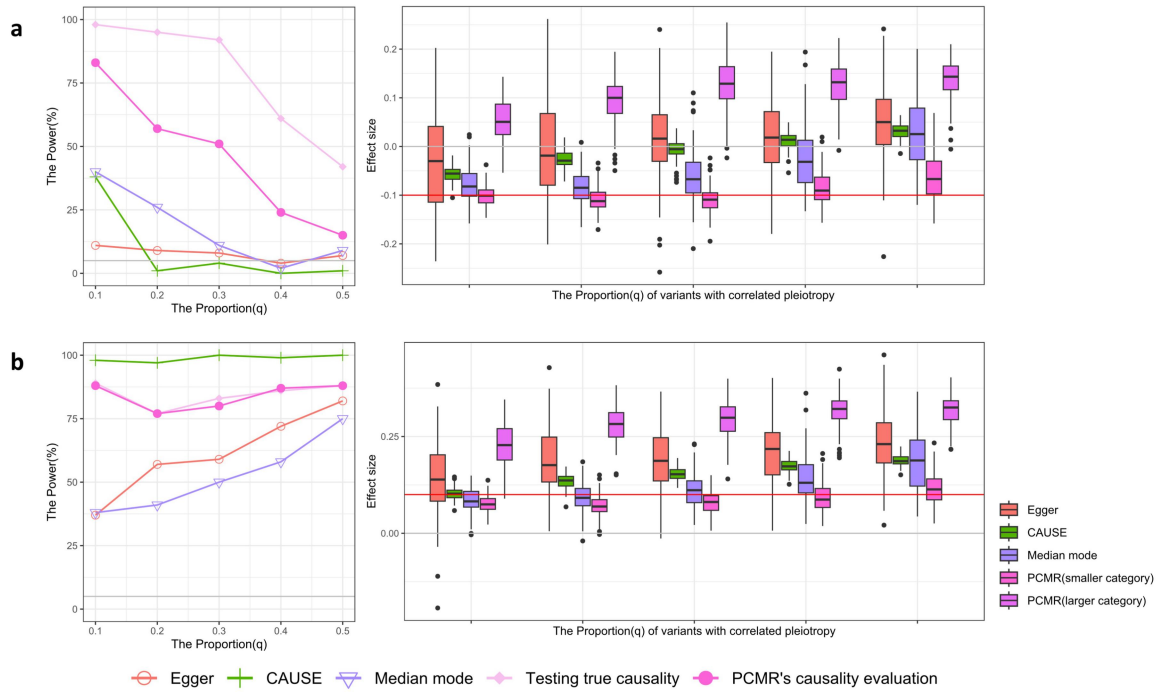
Correlated horizontal pleiotropy	Uncorrelated horizontal pleiotropy	P-threshold	Methods	Causal effect/Correlated horizontal pleiotropic effect ( $\gamma/\eta$ )						
				$\sqrt{0.00}$	$\sqrt{0.01}$	$\sqrt{0.02}$	$\sqrt{0.03}$	$\sqrt{0.04}$	$\sqrt{0.05}$	mean(%)
The Null (Absence)	Absence	0.05	MR-PRESSO	5	5	4	5	5	2	4.33
		0.05	PCMR	5	1	7	7	4	5	4.83
		0.10	MR-PRESSO	14	13	8	13	10	8	11.00
		0.10	PCMR	11	7	10	12	13	10	10.50
	Presence	0.05	MR-PRESSO	51	49	46	49	41	52	48.00
		0.05	PCMR	6	7	4	8	7	2	5.67
		0.10	MR-PRESSO	54	58	54	57	53	61	56.17
		0.10	PCMR	9	11	8	12	13	5	9.67
The Alternative (Presence)	Absence	0.05	MR-PRESSO	-	17	40	58	76	77	$\Delta 6.00$
		0.05	PCMR	-	10	30	57	67	74	
		0.10	MR-PRESSO	-	26	52	74	85	90	$\Delta 6.20$
		0.10	PCMR	-	24	41	67	82	82	
	Presence	0.05	MR-PRESSO	-	68	75	81	94	93	-
		0.05	PCMR	-	13	26	33	51	63	-
		0.10	MR-PRESSO	-	77	84	87	97	97	-
		0.10	PCMR	-	23	35	47	62	72	-

Power (%). There are 100 simulations in each scenario. In the absence of correlated horizontal pleiotropy (The Null), the scenarios are simulated in causal effects,  $\gamma$ , from  $\sqrt{0.00}$  to  $\sqrt{0.05}$ . In the presence of correlated horizontal pleiotropy (The Alternative), the scenarios set the causal effect at zero and simulated in 40% correlated horizontal pleiotropic variants with effect  $\eta$  from  $\sqrt{0.01}$  to  $\sqrt{0.05}$ . The heritability of exposure is solely through exposure or confounding in the absence of uncorrelated horizontal pleiotropy, or set at 0.25 in the presence of correlated horizontal pleiotropy. The  $\Delta$ -mean indicates the mean power difference between MR-PRESSO and PCMR's pleiotropy test.

13 **Supplementary Table 2:** The GWAS summary statistics for Common diseases and psychiatric disorders.  
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Trait	Abbreviation	Sample Size	PMID	First Author(Year)
Triglycerides <sup>1</sup>	tg	188577	24097068	Willer (2013)
ldl <sup>1</sup>	ldl	188577	24097068	Willer (2013)
hdl <sup>1</sup>	hdl	188577	24097068	Willer (2013)
height <sup>2</sup>	height	456426	30124842	Yengo L(2018)
body mass index <sup>3</sup>	bmi	238944	25673413	Locke AE (2015)
body fat percentage <sup>4</sup>	bf	100716	26833246	Lu Y (2016)
birth weight <sup>5</sup>	bw	133903	27680694	Horikoshi M (2016)
diastolic blood pressure <sup>6</sup>	dbp	757601	30224653	Evangelou E (2018)
systolic blood pressure <sup>6</sup>	sbp	757601	30224653	Evangelou E (2018)
fasting blood glucose <sup>7</sup>	fg	46186	20081858	Dupuis J (2010)
ever regular smoker <sup>8</sup>	smoking	1232091	30643251	Liu M (2019)
drinks per week <sup>8</sup>	alcohol	941280	30643251	Liu M (2019)
coronary artery disease <sup>9</sup>	cad	547261	29212778	van der Harst P (2017)
any stroke <sup>10</sup>	stroke	446696	29531354	Malik R (2018)
type 2 diabetes <sup>11</sup>	t2d	69033	22885922	Morris AP (2012)
asthma <sup>12</sup>	asthma	127669	29273806	Demenais F (2017)
Schizophrenia <sup>13</sup>	scz	144605	35396580	Trubetskoy V(2022)
Major depressive disorder <sup>14</sup>	mdd	170756	30718901	Howard(2019)
Type 1 bipolar disorder <sup>15</sup>	bip1	475038	34002096	Mullins(2021)

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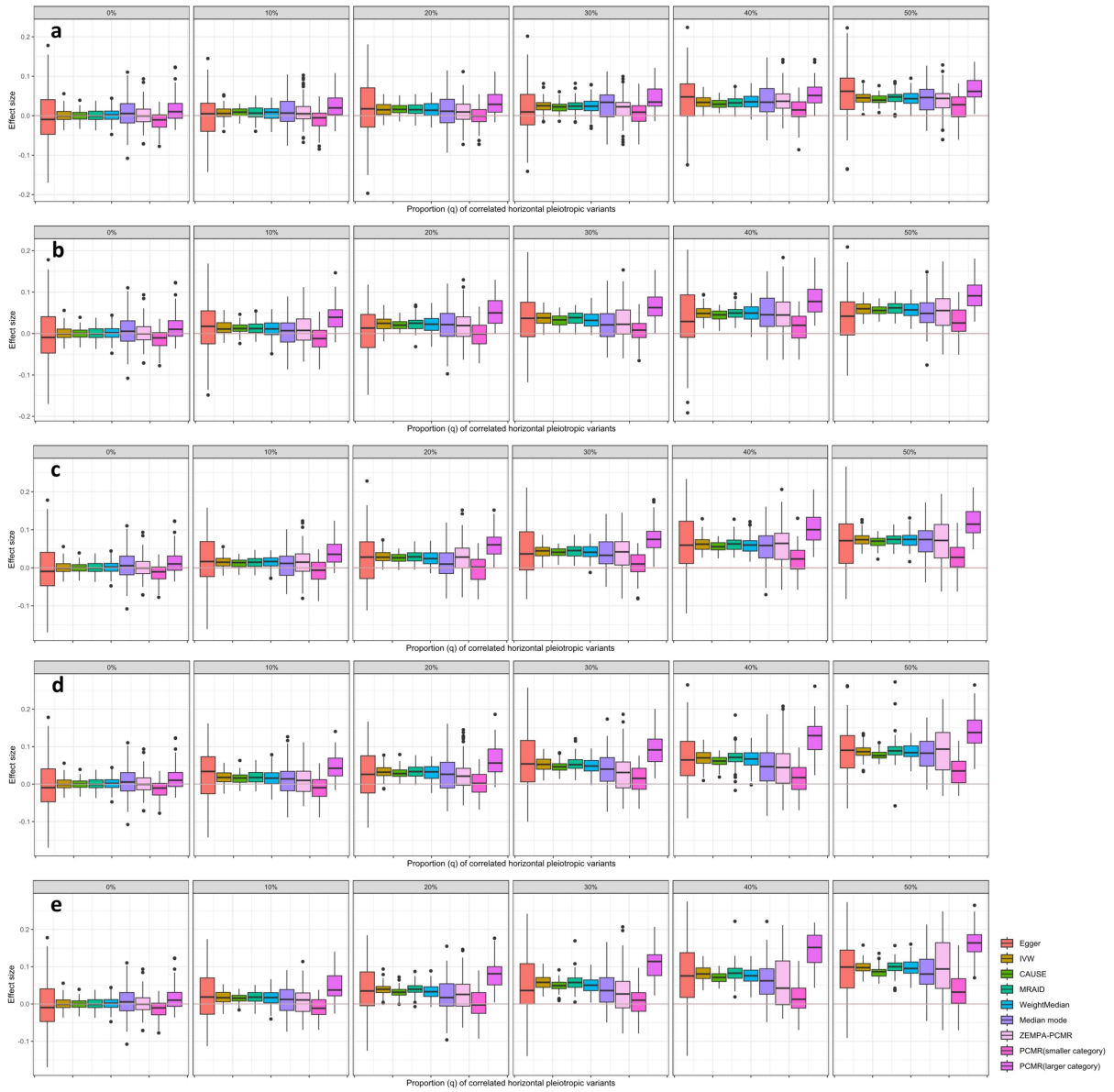
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20 **Supplementary Fig. 1| The power and estimates of PCMR and three alternative MR methods in alternative**  
21 **hypothesis with correlated horizontal pleiotropy. a,** Comparison when causal effect ( $\gamma = -0.1$ ) and correlated  
22 horizontal pleiotropic effect in opposite. The proportion of correlated horizontal pleiotropic variants is from 10% to 50%,  
23 and the heritability of outcomes mediated by causal effects and confounding is 5%. **b,** Comparison when causal effect  
24 ( $\gamma = 0.1$ ) and correlated horizontal pleiotropic effect in the same direction. Testing true causality indicates that when the  
25 IV category determining true causal effect is identified, causal inference for this IV category relies on bootstrapping.  
26 There are 100 simulations in each scenario using a p-value threshold of 0.05.

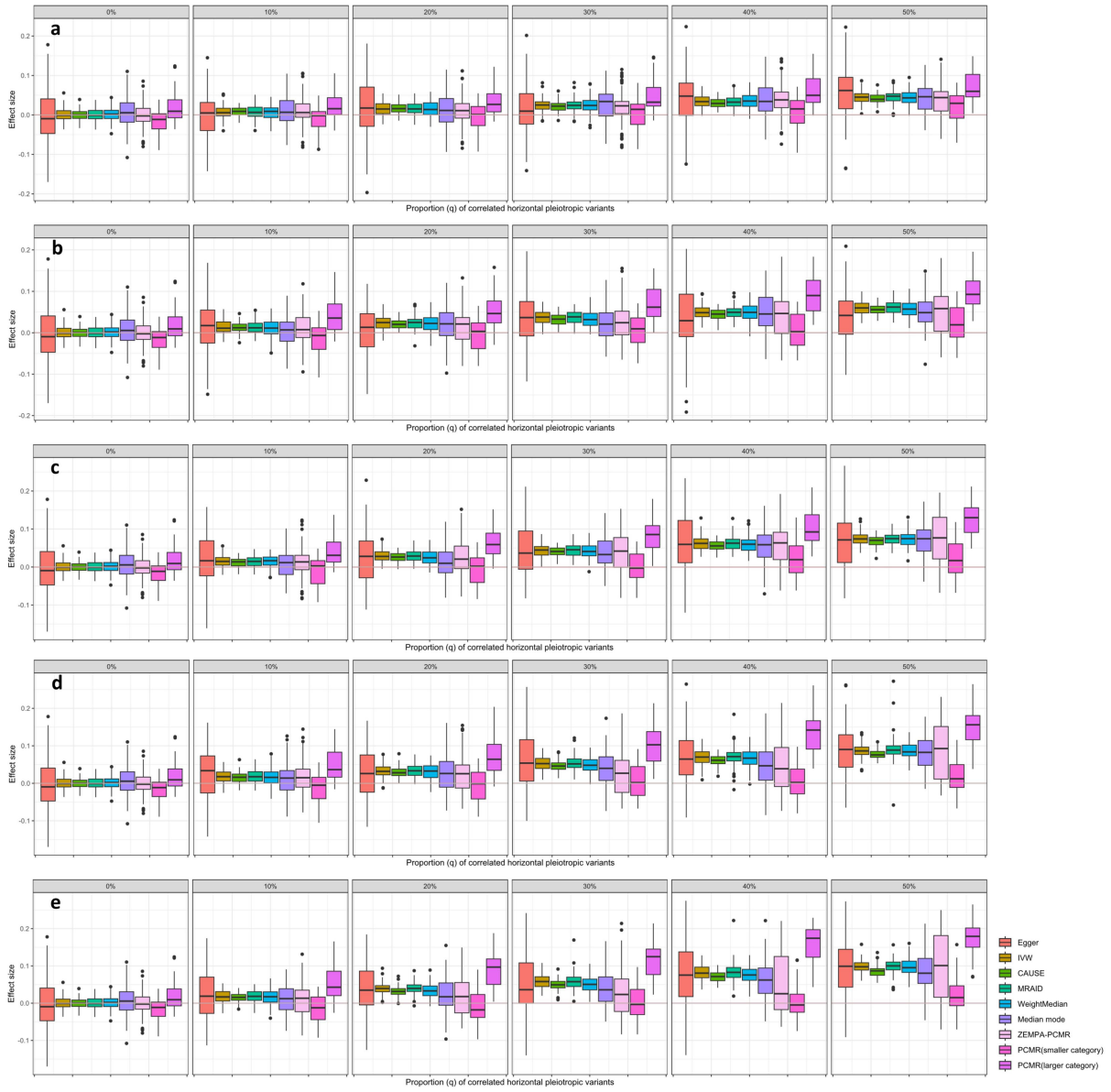
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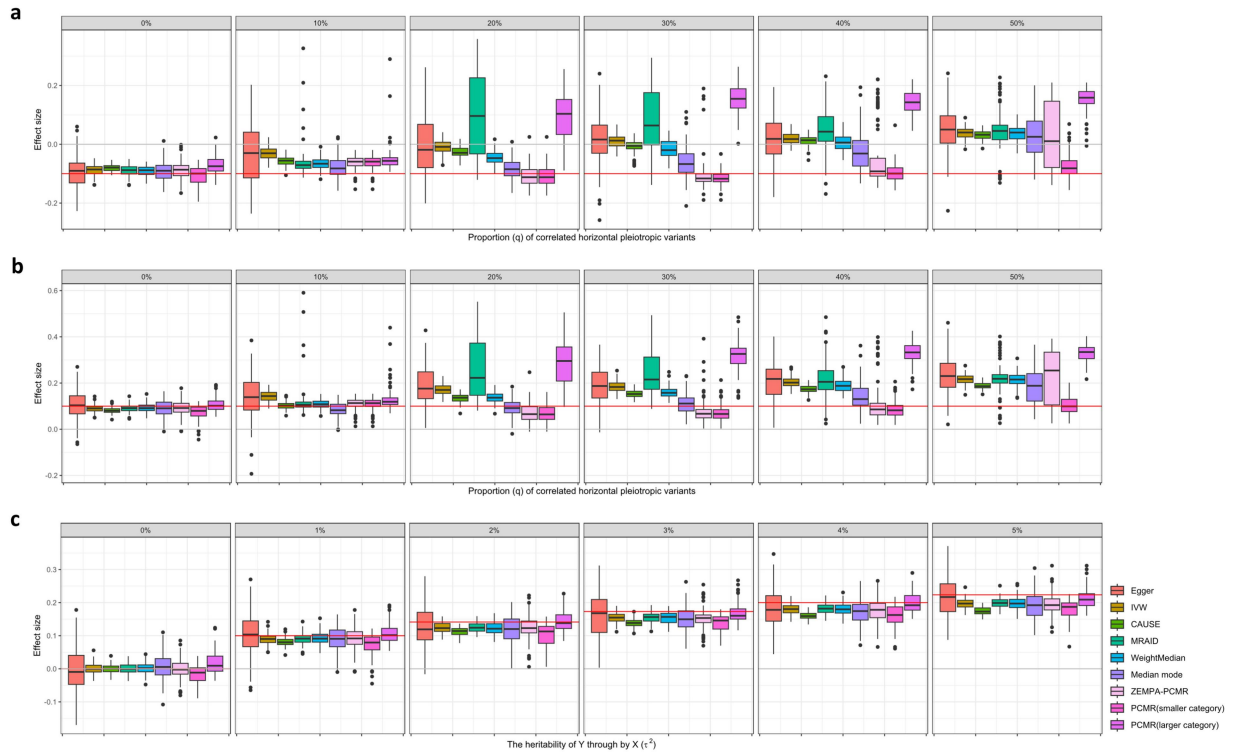
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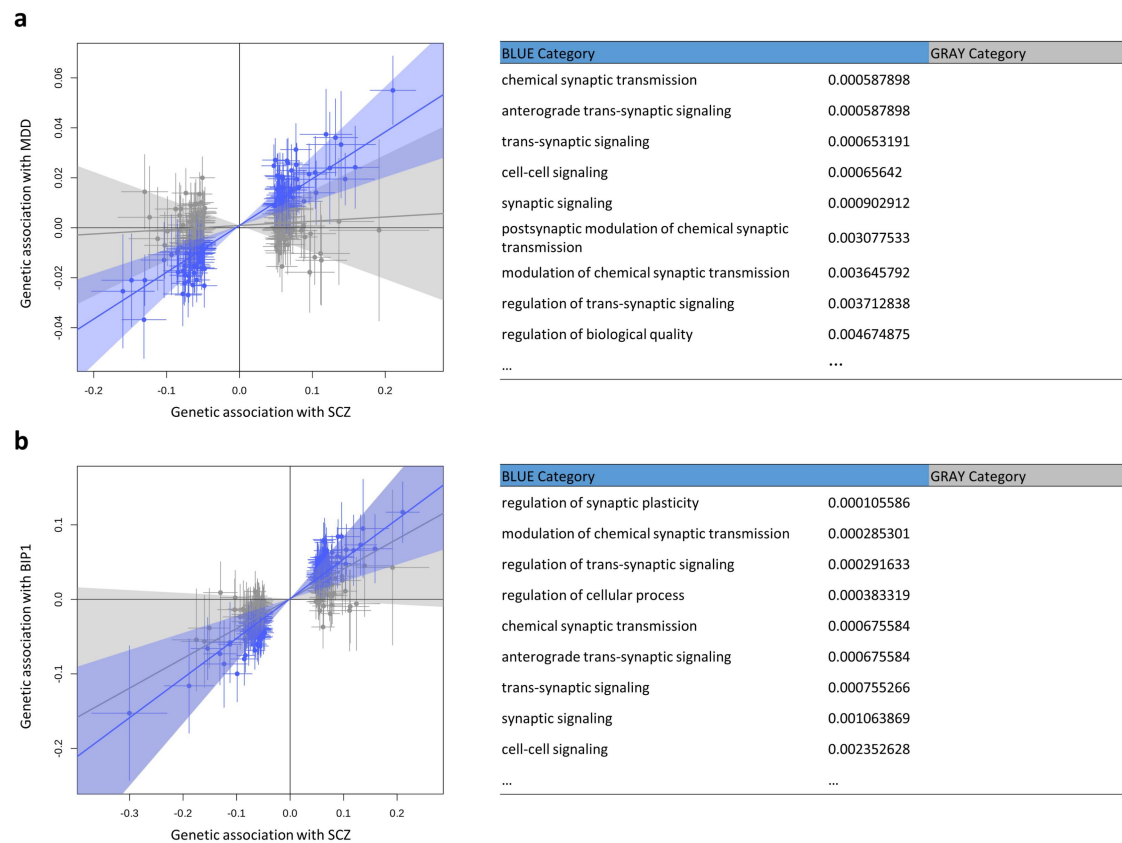
**Supplementary Fig. 2| The random effect model of PCMR and alternative methods in the null hypothesis.** The actual causal effect is zero in the presence of correlated pleiotropic variants ranging from 0% to 50% and correlated horizontal pleiotropic effects from  $\sqrt{0.01}$  to  $\sqrt{0.05}$ . **a**,  $\eta = \sqrt{0.01}$  **b**,  $\eta = \sqrt{0.02}$  **c**,  $\eta = \sqrt{0.03}$  **d**,  $\eta = \sqrt{0.04}$  **e**,  $\eta = \sqrt{0.05}$



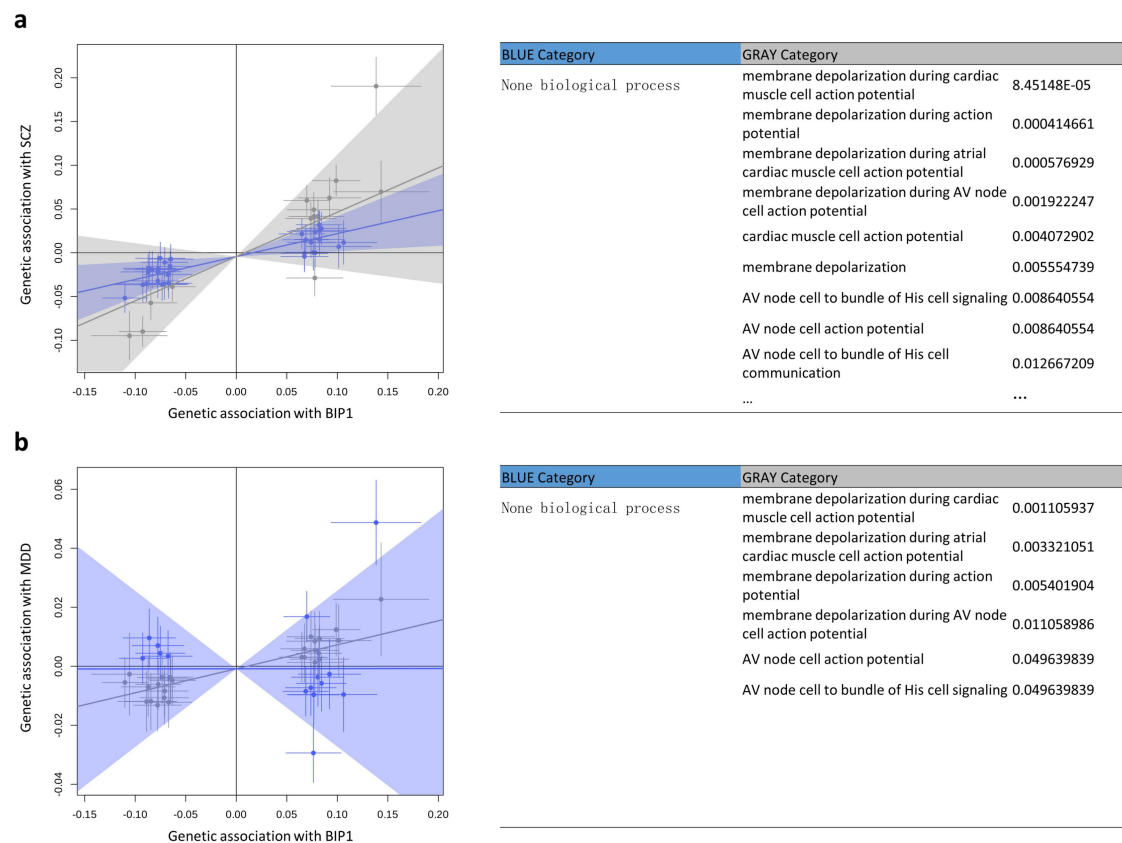
**Supplementary Fig. 3| The fixed effect model of PCMR and alternative methods in the null hypothesis.** The actual causal effect is zero in the presence of correlated pleiotropic variants ranging from 0% to 50% and correlated horizontal pleiotropic effects from  $\sqrt{0.01}$  to  $\sqrt{0.05}$ . **a**,  $\eta = \sqrt{0.01}$  **b**,  $\eta = \sqrt{0.02}$  **c**,  $\eta = \sqrt{0.03}$  **d**,  $\eta = \sqrt{0.04}$  **e**,  $\eta = \sqrt{0.05}$



**Supplementary Fig. 4| The fixed effect model of PCMR and other MR methods in the alternative hypothesis. a, b, c, Box plot of estimated causal effect by methods. a, b, Comparison of estimated effect in the presence of correlated pleiotropy. The proportion of correlated horizontal pleiotropic variants from 0% to 50%, and the heritability of outcome mediated by exposure and confounding,  $\tau^2 + \omega^2$ , is 5%. a,  $\gamma = -0.1$  is in the opposite direction with correlated horizontal pleiotropic effect ( $\eta = \sqrt{\omega^2}$ ); b,  $\gamma = 0.1$  is the same direction with correlated horizontal pleiotropic effect. c, Comparison of estimated effect in the absence of correlated pleiotropy. The heritability of outcome mediated by exposure,  $\tau^2$ , from 1% to 5%. ( $\gamma = \sqrt{\tau^2}$ )**

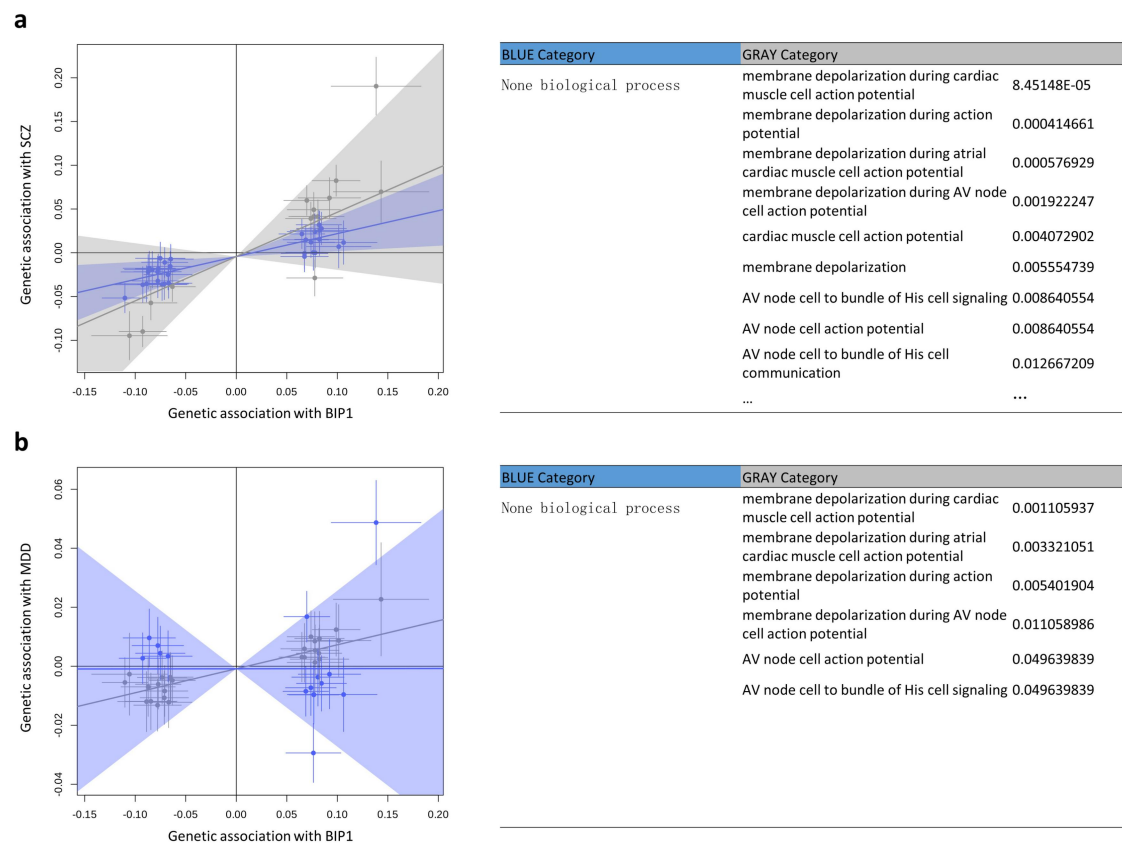


**Supplementary Fig. 5| Enrichment analysis based on classified IV categories by PCMR when SCZ is the exposure.** The BLUE IV category is the largest proportion. **a, SCZ on MDD.** PCMR classified IVs into the BLUE IV category ( $\phi_1 = 0.187$ ,  $\sigma_{\phi_1}^2 = 0.002$ , 50.19%) and the GRAY IV category ( $\phi_2 = 0.017$ ,  $\sigma_{\phi_2}^2 = 0.004$ , 49.81%). **b, SCZ on BIP1.** PCMR classified IVs into the BLUE IV category ( $\phi_1 = 0.532$ ,  $\sigma_{\phi_1}^2 = 0.024$ , 50.01%) and the GRAY IV category ( $\phi_2 = 0.399$ ,  $\sigma_{\phi_2}^2 = 0.049$ , 49.99%).

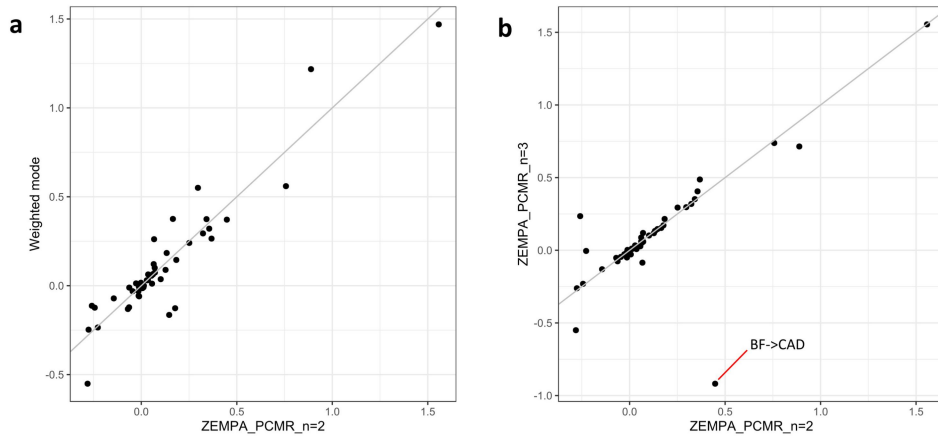


**Supplementary Fig. 6| Enrichment analysis based on classified IV categories by PCMR when BIP1 is the exposure.** The BLUE IV category is the largest proportion. **a**, **BIP1 on SCZ**. PCMR classified IVs into the BLUE IV category ( $\phi_1 = 0.262$ ,  $\sigma_{\phi_1}^2 = 0.010$ , 50.87%) and the GRAY IV category ( $\phi_2 = 0.506$ ,  $\sigma_{\phi_2}^2 = 0.113$ , 49.12%). **b**, **BIP1 on MDD**. PCMR classified IVs into the BLUE IV category ( $\phi_1 = 0.000$ ,  $\sigma_{\phi_1}^2 = 0.018$ , 52.04%) and the GRAY IV category ( $\phi_2 = 0.081$ ,  $\sigma_{\phi_2}^2 = 0.000$ , 47.96%).





**Supplementary Fig. 7| Enrichment analysis based on classified IV categories by PCMR when BIP1 is the exposure.** The BLUE IV category is the largest proportion. **a**, **BIP1 on SCZ**. PCMR classified IVs into the BLUE IV category ( $\phi_1 = 0.262$ ,  $\sigma_{\phi_1}^2 = 0.010$ , 50.87%) and the GRAY IV category ( $\phi_2 = 0.506$ ,  $\sigma_{\phi_2}^2 = 0.113$ , 49.12%). **b**, **BIP1 on MDD**. PCMR classified IVs into the BLUE IV category ( $\phi_1 = 0.000$ ,  $\sigma_{\phi_1}^2 = 0.018$ , 52.04%) and the GRAY IV category ( $\phi_2 = 0.081$ ,  $\sigma_{\phi_2}^2 = 0.000$ , 47.96%).



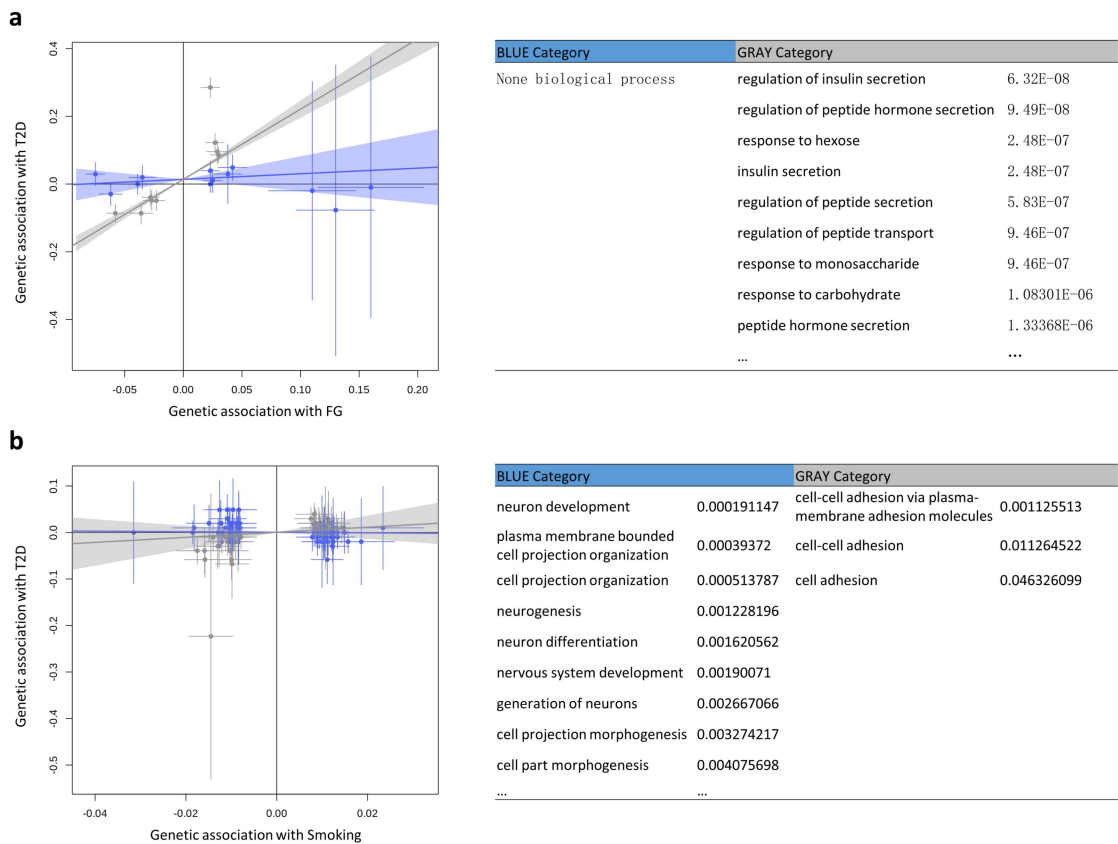
**Supplementary Fig. 8| Comparison of PCMR and Weighted mode under the ZEMPA in 48 pairs of common diseases.** **a**,  $\text{PCMR}(n_\phi = 2)$  and Weighted mode based on ZEMPA. The correlation coefficient of the estimated results between  $\text{PCMR}(n_\phi = 2)$  and Weighted mode reached 0.934. **b**,  $\text{PCMR}(n_\phi = 2)$  and  $\text{PCMR}(n_\phi = 3)$  based on ZEMPA. Most of the estimates are similar in  $\text{PCMR}(n_\phi = 2)$  and  $\text{PCMR}(n_\phi = 3)$ . For the outlier trait pair, BF and CAD, it is mainly due to the detection of distinct IV categories by ZEMPA. The clustering results of the two models are still similar. ( $\text{PCMR}(n_\phi = 2)$ :  $\phi_1 = 0.448, \phi_2 = -0.665$ ;  $\text{PCMR}(n_\phi = 3)$ :  $\phi_1 = -0.918, \phi_2 = 0.383, \phi_3 = 0.383$ )

98 SN1.1 FG and T2D

99 According to the categorization of causality credibility in CAUSE, some literature supports the relationship between FG  
100 and T2D, yet PCMR's causality evaluation did not yield a significant outcome. To gain a deeper understanding of these  
101 findings, we analyzed IVs associated with this pair of traits and attempted to prioritize the IV category determining  
102 causality.

103  
104 PCMR classified the IVs into two distinct categories with correlated horizontal pleiotropic effects:  $\phi_1 = 0.166$  ( $\sigma_{\phi_1}^2 =$   
105  $0.069, 52.00\%$ ) and  $\phi_2 = 2.075$  ( $\sigma_{\phi_2}^2 = 0.018, 48.00\%$ ), respectively. The non-significant result in PCMR's causality  
106 evaluation is the absence of a dominant IV category supporting a significant non-zero causal effect. That is attributed to  
107 the larger IV category, which contributes to an insignificant non-zero effect ( $\phi_1 = 0.166$ ; a bootstrapping test for this IV  
108 category yielded  $P_{boot} = 0.398$ ). Furthermore, we conducted an enrichment analysis of biological processes among the  
109 genes mapped by different IV categories, as illustrated in SN Fig. 1a. The enrichment revealed that the BLUE IV category  
110 (corresponding to  $\phi_1$ ) did not exhibit enrichment in any biological process. Conversely, the GRAY IV category  
111 (corresponding to  $\phi_2$ ) showed significant enrichment in 48 biological processes, with the regulation of insulin secretion  
112 being the most prominent ( $P = 5.603 \times 10^{-5}$ ). Given the importance of insulin regulation in T2D, the GRAY category  
113 might exhibit correlated horizontal pleiotropy ( $\phi_2 = \gamma + \eta$ ). Thus, the BLUE category is more likely to correspond to the  
114 causality of FG and T2D, and we conducted a bootstrap test to make causal inferences based on the GRAY category  
115 ( $P_{gray} = 0.398, 95\%CL: (-0.251, 1.761)$ ). This finding aligns with that of Merino et al.<sup>16</sup>, which excludes FG-increasing  
116 variants associated with type 2 diabetes.

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118

119 **SN Fig. 1|Enrichment analysis based on classified IV categories by PCMR.**  $\beta_X$  estimates from GWAS summary of  
120 exposure (horizontal axis) are plotted against  $\beta_Y$  estimates from GWAS summary of outcome (vertical axis). **a, FG and**  
121 **T2D.** PCMR classified IVs into the BLUE IV category ( $\phi_1 = 0.166, \sigma_{\phi_1}^2 = 0.069, 52.00\%$ ) and GRAY IV category  
122 ( $\phi_2 = 2.075, \sigma_{\phi_2}^2 = 0.018, 48.00\%$ ). **b, Smoking and T2D.** PCMR classified IVs into the BLUE IV category ( $\phi_1 = -$   
123  $0.063, \sigma_{\phi_1}^2 = 0.0, 50.11\%$ ) and GRAY IV category ( $\phi_2 = 0.545, \sigma_{\phi_2}^2 = 0.407, 49.89\%$ ).

## 125 SN1.2 Smoking and T2D

126 Smoking has been identified as a cause of the increased risk of T2D<sup>17</sup>, but no method can detect a significant relationship  
 127 between smoking and T2D. PCMR classified all IVs into two distinct IV categories with correlated HVP effects  
 128 (proportion)  $\phi_1 = -0.063$  ( $\sigma_{\phi_1}^2 = 0.0, 50.11\%$ ) and  $\phi_2 = 0.545$  ( $\sigma_{\phi_2}^2 = 0.407, 49.89\%$ ), respectively. Though PCMR's  
 129 pleiotropy test did not detect significant correlated horizontal pleiotropy ( $P_{plei-test} = 0.269$ ), the two IV categories  
 130 showed distinct associated biological processes in enrichment analysis, as shown in SN Fig. 1b. The BLUE IV category  
 131 exhibited significant enrichment in 14 biological processes, with neuron development being the most significant ( $P =$   
 132  $1.91 \times 10^{-4}$ ). On the contrary, the GRAY IV category exhibited significant enrichment in 3 biological processes,  
 133 primarily related to cell-cell adhesion. Dysregulation in dietary intake<sup>18,19</sup> and insulin secretion<sup>20</sup> associated with  
 134 neurotransmission can trigger the onset of type 2 diabetes (T2D), indicating that the BLUE category might exhibit  
 135 correlated horizontal pleiotropy. Correlated horizontal pleiotropy, which is in the opposite direction of the actual causal  
 136 effect, may be responsible for the failure of all methods to detect a significant causal relationship. We employed a  
 137 bootstrap test to make causal inferences based on the GRAY category and obtained a near-significant result ( $P_{gray} =$   
 138  $0.07, 95\%CL: (-0.022, 1.23)$ ).

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## 142 SN 2 EM estimation

143 We apply the EM algorithm to estimate the parameters of  $\hat{\Theta} = \arg \max_{\Theta} \ln L(\Theta)$ , where

$$\ln L(\Theta) \propto \sum_i \sum_j \sum_k \left[ Q(Z^{(i)} = (j, k)) \ln \frac{f(\hat{\beta}_{Y,i} - \phi_j \hat{\beta}_{X,i} - \theta_k | \phi_j, b_k) \cdot q_{\phi_j} \pi_{\theta_k}}{Q(Z^{(i)} = (j, k))} \right]$$

144 To better illustrate the derivation of **the random effect model**, we first simplify by assuming two independent GWAS  
 145 summary statistics of exposure and outcome, setting  $\rho$  to zero, and omitting the variance of exposure association  $\hat{s}_{X,i}^2$ ,  
 146 setting  $(\phi_j)^2 \hat{s}_{X,i}^2$  to zero. Therefore, the distribution (4) in the main text,

$$\hat{\beta}_{Y,i} - \phi_j \hat{\beta}_{X,i} - \theta_k \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$$

147 where  $\sigma^2 = \hat{s}_{Y,i}^2 - 2\phi_j \cdot \rho \hat{s}_{X,i} \hat{s}_{Y,i} + (\phi_j)^2 \hat{s}_{X,i}^2 + \hat{\beta}_{X,i}^2 \sigma_{\phi_j}^2 + \sigma_{\theta_k}^2$ , is simplified to

$$\hat{\beta}_{Y,i} - \phi_j \hat{\beta}_{X,i} - \theta_k | \phi_j, b_k \sim N(0, \hat{s}_{Y,i}^2 + \hat{\beta}_{X,i}^2 \sigma_{\phi_j}^2 + \sigma_{\theta_k}^2).$$

148 We set the initial parameters as  $\Theta_0 = (q_{\phi_{j0}}, \phi_{j0}, \sigma_{\eta_{j0}}, \pi_{b_{k0}}, b_{k0}, \sigma_{b_{k0}})$ , and let  $\Theta_{old} = \Theta_0$ .

149

150 **In the E-step**, we derive  $Q$  function by

$$Q(Z^{(i)} = (j, k) | \Theta_{old}) = \frac{f_{j,k}(\hat{\beta}_{Y,i} - \phi_j \hat{\beta}_{X,i} - \theta_k | \Theta_{old})}{\sum_j \sum_k p_{j,k}(\hat{\beta}_{Y,i} - \phi_j \hat{\beta}_{X,i} - \theta_k | \Theta_{old})}$$

151 where  $f_{j,k}$  is the density function of  $N(0, \hat{s}_{Y,i}^2 + \hat{\beta}_{X,i}^2 \sigma_{\phi_j}^2 + \sigma_{\theta_k}^2)$ .

152

153 **In the M-step**, we estimate parameters of interest to the maximum  $\ln L(\Theta)$ . By setting the derivative of  $\ln L(\Theta)$  function  
 154 to zero, we obtain:

$$\phi_j = \frac{\sum_i \sum_k [Q(Z^{(i)} = (j, k)) \hat{\beta}_{X,i} (\hat{\beta}_{Y,i} - b_k) / (\hat{s}_{Y,i}^2 + \hat{\beta}_{X,i}^2 \sigma_{\phi_j}^2 + \sigma_{\theta_k}^2)]}{\sum_i \sum_k [Q(Z^{(i)} = (j, k)) \hat{\beta}_{X,i}^2 / (\hat{s}_{Y,i}^2 + \hat{\beta}_{X,i}^2 \sigma_{\phi_j}^2 + \sigma_{\theta_k}^2)]}, j = 1, \dots, n_{\phi}$$

$$b_k = \frac{\sum_i \sum_j \left[ Q \left( Z^{(i)} = (j, k) \right) \left( \widehat{\beta}_{Y,i} - \phi_j \widehat{\beta}_{X,i} \right) / \left( \widehat{s}_{Y,i}^2 + \widehat{\beta}_{X,i}^2 \sigma_{\phi_j}^2 + \sigma_{\theta_k}^2 \right) \right]}{\sum_i \sum_j \left[ Q \left( Z^{(i)} = (j, k) \right) / \left( \widehat{s}_{Y,i}^2 + \widehat{\beta}_{X,i}^2 \sigma_{\phi_j}^2 + \sigma_{\theta_k}^2 \right) \right]}, \quad k = 1, \dots, n_\theta$$

$$q_{\eta_j} = \frac{\sum_i \sum_k Q \left( Z^{(i)} = (j, k) \right)}{\sum_i 1}, \quad j = 1, \dots, n_\phi$$

$$\pi_{b_k} = \frac{\sum_i \sum_j Q \left( Z^{(i)} = (j, k) \right)}{\sum_i 1}, \quad k = 1, \dots, n_\theta$$

155 The analytical solutions for  $\frac{\partial L}{\partial(\sigma_{\phi_j}^2)} = 0$  and  $\frac{\partial L}{\partial(\sigma_{\theta_k}^2)} = 0$  are complicated, so we use the optimization method to estimate:

$$\sigma_{\phi_j}^2 = \arg \max_{\sigma_{\phi_j}^2} L(\Theta | \Theta_{old}), \quad j = 1, \dots, n_\phi$$

$$\sigma_{\theta_k}^2 = \arg \max_{\sigma_{\theta_k}^2} L(\Theta | \Theta_{old}), \quad k = 1, \dots, n_\theta$$

156 Repeat the E-step and M-step until convergence. Just set  $\sigma_{\phi_j}^2$  at zero, the derivation involves solving **the fixed effect**  
 157 **model** of PCMR.  
 158

159 When considering the sample overlapping and not ignoring the variance of exposure, where  $\rho \neq 0$  and  $(\phi_j)^2 \widehat{s}_{X,i}^2 \neq 0$ , the  
 160 partial derivation of  $\frac{\partial L}{\partial(\gamma + \eta_j)} = 0$  lacks an analytical solution. The estimation of  $\phi_j$  also need by optimization method:

$$\phi_j = \arg \max_{\phi_j} L(\Theta | \Theta_{old}), \quad j = 1, \dots, n_\phi$$

161 We use the 'optimize' function in R for the optimization method here.

### SN 3 Alternative methods

We compare the performance of PCMR with six alternative methods, including IVW, Egger, Weighted-median, weighted mode, CAUSE and MRAID. We also compare PCMR's pleiotropy test with MR-PRESSO outlier test in detecting correlated horizontal pleiotropy. The candidate IVs are selected by each method default, and LD pruning ensures no pair of IVs has a pairwise  $r^2 > 0.1$ . These methods are implemented as follows.

method	R package	Version	Function	parameters	Threshold of IVs
IVW	MendelianRandomization	0.6.0	mr_ivw	default	$5 \times 10^{-8}$
Egger	MendelianRandomization	0.6.0	mr_egger	default	$5 \times 10^{-8}$
Weighted-median	MendelianRandomization	0.6.0	mr_median	default	$5 \times 10^{-8}$
Median mode	MendelianRandomization	0.6.0	mr_mbe	default	$5 \times 10^{-8}$
CAUSE	cause	1.2.0.0335	cause	default	$1 \times 10^{-3}$
MRAID	MRAID	1.0	MRAID	default	$5 \times 10^{-8}$
MR-PRESSO	MRPRESSO	1.0	mr_presso	default	$5 \times 10^{-8}$

**Note:** MRAID can use a relaxed p-value threshold and estimate causal effect under LD, influencing the statistic power but not the false positive control.<sup>21</sup> For convenience, we use a strict threshold ( $5 \times 10^{-8}$ ) and LD pruning for MRAID.

## References

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