

REVIEW

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New genomic and proteomic biomarker discovery in cancer: revolutionizing diagnosis and prognostication

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Abstract

Cancer remains a major global health challenge, with substantial morbidity and mortality worldwide. Advances in genomic and proteomic biomarker discovery have transformed cancer diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment selection. The evolution from early serological markers such as carcinoembryonic antigen (CEA) and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) to modern multi-omics approaches enabled by next-generation sequencing (NGS), mass spectrometry (MS), and advanced bioinformatics has revolutionized personalized medicine and targeted therapy, leading to improved outcomes. This review highlights the historical evolution of cancer biomarkers and the current landscape of genomic, proteomic, and proteogenomic biomarkers. We emphasize the role of liquid biopsies, artificial intelligence (AI), and integrative multi-omics analytics in accelerating biomarker identification and validation. We also discuss the differential pace of clinical adoption in high-income versus low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and outline ongoing challenges including tumor heterogeneity, standardization, cost, and regulatory barriers. Despite these limitations, recent innovations in multi-omics technologies and AI-driven analysis promise to further advance precision oncology and enable more equitable, personalized cancer care worldwide.

Keywords Cancer, Genomic, Proteomic, Biomarkers, Bioinformatics, Multi-omics, Artificial intelligence

Background

Cancer continues to be a major global health burden, with approximately 20 million new cases and 9.7 million deaths reported worldwide in 2022, according to the GLOBOCAN 2022 publication [1]. The intricate heterogeneity of cancer has long challenged early detection, accurate diagnosis, and effective treatment. Over the

past few decades, the rise of genomic and proteomic biomarker discovery, driven by advancements in bioinformatics and open-access data repositories, has reshaped the oncology landscape, enabling precision medicine.

This review on “New Genomic and Proteomic Biomarker Discovery in Cancer” traces the historical evolution, development, and validation of genomic and proteomic biomarkers, emphasizing how scientific progress, technological innovations, bioinformatics, and open-access data have driven their identification and how these biomarkers have transformed cancer diagnosis and prognostication, improving patient outcomes. We further examine how these biomarkers are transforming cancer diagnosis and prognostication, and explore practical considerations for implementing such technologies

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in diverse health systems, including low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Added value of the study

While recent reviews have explored the latest advances in multi-omics technologies, this article specifically integrates discoveries in genomics, proteomics, and proteogenomics with a focus on their clinical readiness, regulatory status, and global implementation gaps. We pay particular attention to the unique barriers and opportunities in LMICs, where factors like limited infrastructure, higher costs, and workforce gaps affect how new technologies are adopted. This review further compares the strengths and weaknesses of methods such as next-generation sequencing, mass spectrometry, liquid biopsy, and AI-driven biomarker tools. It also covers the most recent findings from major research projects like The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) and the Clinical Proteomic Tumor Analysis Consortium (CPTAC), as well as developments in AI-assisted prediction, to provide a practical, globally relevant perspective on how biomarkers are discovered and validated for clinical use.

Historical evolution of cancer biomarkers

The concept of cancer biomarkers, i.e. molecular indicators of a biological state linked to malignancy, emerged in the mid-20th century. Early biomarkers were serological, such as carcinoembryonic antigen (CEA), identified in 1965 for colorectal cancer [2]. CEA became vital for monitoring disease progression and treatment response, though its limited specificity constrained its diagnostic utility. Prostate-specific antigen (PSA), introduced in the 1980s, revolutionized prostate cancer screening, contributing to a significant decline in mortality [3]. However, PSA's issues with false positives and over diagnosis underscored the need for more precise biomarkers.

The 1970s and 1980s marked a turning point with the discovery of oncogenes and tumor suppressor genes. In 1979, p53 was identified as a key tumor suppressor, mutated in over half of cancers [4]. The cloning of the retinoblastoma (Rb) gene in 1986 and the identification of HRAS and KRAS oncogenes in the early 1980s laid the foundation for genomic biomarkers [5, 6]. These discoveries facilitated targeted therapies, such as the KRASG12C inhibitor sotorasib, approved by the FDA in 2021 for non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) [7].

The 1990s brought hereditary cancer biomarkers, with BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations linked to elevated risks of breast and ovarian cancers [8, 9]. These findings enabled risk assessment and preventive strategies, including prophylactic surgeries and PARP inhibitors. Concurrently, advances in monoclonal antibodies and immunoassays transformed proteomic biomarker research by enabling detection of targetable cancer-associated proteins.

The early 2000s introduced high-throughput technologies, such as DNA microarrays and next-generation sequencing (NGS), which allowed comprehensive gene expression analysis [10]. Proteomics advanced with mass spectrometry (MS)-based techniques, identifying cancer-related proteins and peptides [11]. The rise of bioinformatics and open-access data repositories further accelerated biomarker discovery by enabling large-scale data analysis and sharing. These developments set the stage for multi-omics approaches integrating genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, and metabolomics (Fig. 1).

Genomic biomarkers

Genomic biomarkers include DNA-based alterations, such as mutations, copy number variations, and epigenetic changes, as well as RNA-based markers like microRNAs (miRNAs) and long non-coding RNAs (lncRNAs). Next-generation sequencing (NGS) has been pivotal in identifying these biomarkers. Whole-exome sequencing (WES) and whole-genome sequencing (WGS) have uncovered driver mutations, such as EGFR mutations in NSCLC and BRAF V600E in melanoma, p53 and RAS mutations in head neck cancer guiding targeted therapies like EGFR and BRAF inhibitors [12–14]. RNA sequencing (RNAseq) has broadened the scope of genomic biomarkers by identifying gene expression profiles and non-coding RNAs [15, 16]. The Oncotype DX assay, analyzing 16 genes in breast cancer, predicts recurrence risk and informs chemotherapy decisions [17]. MammaPrint, a 70-gene signature, stratifies breast cancer patients into low- and high-risk recurrence groups [18]. These assays, although clinically established, are single-omics transcriptomic tests and do not integrate additional molecular layers.

RNA sequencing has expanded the discovery of transcriptomic biomarkers, including gene expression signatures and non-coding RNAs. In gliomas, prognostic biomarkers such as IDH1/IDH2 mutations are identified through DNA sequencing rather than RNA-seq, and remain among the most clinically relevant genomic alterations associated with improved survival [19]. Despite significant technological advancements, biomarker development has faced several historical and ongoing challenges. Genomic biomarkers may suffer from tumor heterogeneity and sampling bias, leading to discordant results across tissue and liquid modalities.

Liquid biopsies, analyzing circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA), cell-free DNA (cfDNA), and circulating tumor cells (CTCs) in blood or biofluids, offer a non-invasive approach to genomic biomarker discovery. These tests enable real-time tumor monitoring, minimal residual disease detection, and identification of resistance mutations, such as EGFR T790M in NSCLC, which predicts response to osimertinib [20]. The FDA approval of liquid

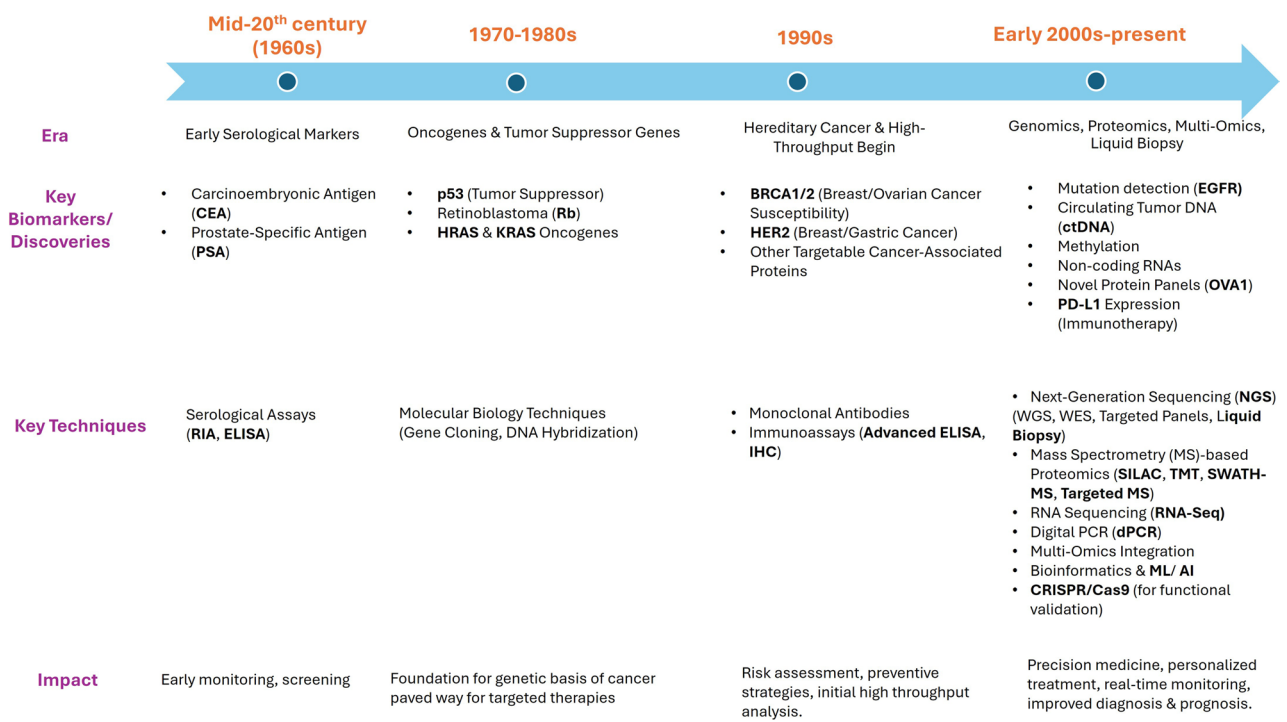


Fig. 1 Development of genomic and proteomic biomarkers. Historical evolution of cancer biomarker discovery and detection techniques. [The figure illustrates significant milestones and technological advancements that have accelerated biomarker research]

biopsy tests like Guardant360 CDx and FoundationOne Liquid CDx highlights their clinical value [21]. Liquid biopsies help in tumors where getting the tumor tissue is difficult due to anatomic reasons such as lung and gall-bladder cancer or where the tumor responds to neoadjuvant therapy like breast cancer, and it is where these techniques has been found to be most useful. However, liquid biopsy also exhibits variable sensitivity due to tumor shedding differences across cancer types. Early-stage cancers, gliomas, and certain indolent tumors often release insufficient ctDNA for reliable detection. Additionally, clonal hematopoiesis of indeterminate potential (CHIP) may introduce false positives, complicating interpretation. While genomic biomarkers remain foundational in oncology, their ability to predict outcomes is increasingly being enhanced or complemented by transcriptomic, proteomic, and epigenomic signatures.

Proteomic biomarkers

Proteomic biomarkers encompass proteins, peptides, and post-translational modifications (PTMs) reflecting cancer cell function. The human proteome, estimated at 500,000 proteins from approximately 35,000 genes, is highly complex due to alternative splicing and PTMs [22]. Mass spectrometry-based proteomics, including stable isotope labeling by amino acids in cell culture (SILAC), tandem mass tags (TMT), and sequential window acquisition of all theoretical fragment ion spectra (SWATH-MS), has enabled high-throughput protein analysis [23–25].

Emerging areas such as single-cell proteomics provide unprecedented resolution of intra-tumoral heterogeneity, revealing resistant cellular subpopulations and therapy-induced phenotypes.

Proteomic studies have identified clinically relevant biomarkers, such as the OVA1 assay for ovarian cancer, combining five proteins (CA125, prealbumin, apolipoprotein A1, beta-2-microglobulin, and transferrin) to assess malignancy risk [26]. Proteomic profiling of colorectal cancer tissues has revealed biomarkers like Mucin 5AC, linked to tumor invasiveness [27], in head neck cancers biomarkers like p53 antibodies, heat shock protein 70 etc., has been identified [28]. In hepatocellular carcinoma, SWATH-MS identified protein abundance changes as a prognostic biomarker tied to disease progression [29]. Clinical applications of proteomic biomarkers are expanding. Phospho-proteomic signatures, such as phospho-ERK and phospho-AKT patterns, are being evaluated as predictors of response to MEK and PI3K inhibitors in melanoma and lung cancers. Immuno-peptidomics has identified clinically actionable neoantigens that have progressed into early-phase vaccine trials.

Proteogenomic, integrating proteomic and genomic data, has uncovered novel biomarkers. A lung adenocarcinoma study identified MCT1 and GLUT1 as prognostic markers, demonstrating the synergy between genomic and proteomic data [30]. Proteomic analysis of tumor secretomes and microenvironments has also revealed biomarkers like class III β -tubulin in ovarian cancer,

predicting poor survival in neoadjuvant chemotherapy patients [31].

Despite substantial progress, proteomic biomarker development is constrained by pre-analytical variability, batch effects, protein instability, and differences in MS platforms. The high dynamic range of plasma proteins, with abundant proteins masking low-abundance candidates, presents an ongoing analytical challenge. Standardization of sample processing, MS workflows, and data analysis is critical for reproducible, multi-center proteomic biomarker validation.

Validation of genomic and proteomic biomarkers

The transition from biomarker discovery to clinical use requires rigorous validation to ensure sensitivity, specificity, and reproducibility. Challenges include tumor heterogeneity, biological variability, and technical limitations like sample collection and analytical variability. The Early Detection Research Network (EDRN) at the National Cancer Institute has standardized validation protocols [32]. The development pipeline is shown in Fig. 2.

Genomic biomarker validation

Genomic biomarkers are validated through large-scale clinical trials and cohort studies. EGFR mutations, predictive of EGFR tyrosine kinase inhibitor response in NSCLC, were validated through multi-center trials

showing improved progression-free survival [33]. The ClonoSEQ assay, the first FDA-approved NGS-based test for minimal residual disease in leukemia and multiple myeloma, was validated in extensive cohorts [34]. Challenges include NGS costs, platform standardization, and validating rare mutations due to limited cohorts. Sequential filtering and DNA pooling strategies enhance efficiency [35]. Open-access repositories like The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) and cBioPortal facilitate validation by providing large genomic datasets [36].

Proteomic biomarker validation

Proteomic validation is hindered by the complexity of biological samples, such as blood, with a high dynamic range of protein concentrations. Techniques like surface-enhanced laser desorption/ionization (SELDI) and two-dimensional gel electrophoresis (2-DE) aid protein separation, followed by MS identification [37]. Orthogonal methods, such as enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) and Western blotting, confirm results. Challenges include abundant proteins obscuring low-abundance biomarkers. Multi-center studies with standardized protocols and targeted MS assays are essential [38].

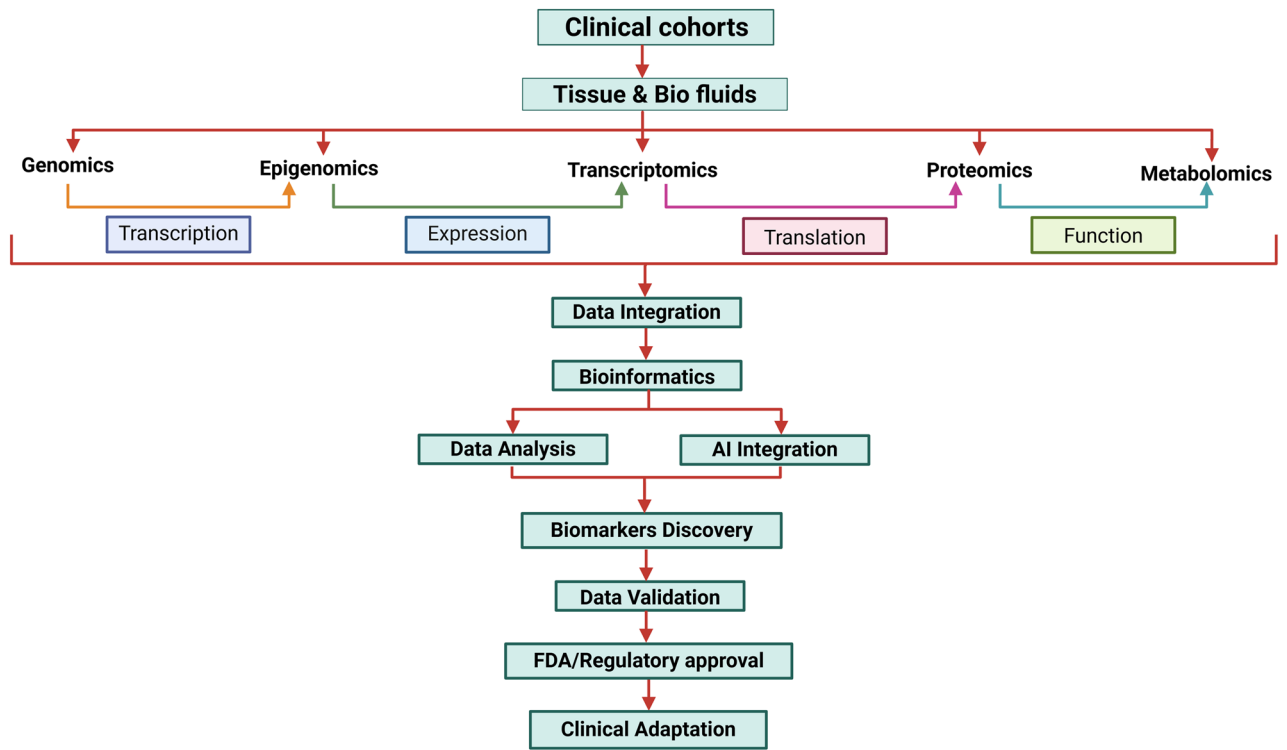


Fig. 2 Multi-omics workflow for biomarker discovery. [This image depicts the steps involved in integrating genomic, transcriptomic, proteomic, and metabolomic data to identify and validate potential biomarkers]

Technological advancements in biomarker discovery

The convergence of high-throughput molecular technologies and advanced computation has accelerated biomarker discovery. Table 1 below summarizes the key technologies that are driving the discovery of genomic and proteomic biomarkers. It gives a summary of the main platforms, their uses, and their significance in biomarker research.

Multi-omics biomarkers - clinical adoption vs. research-stage technologies

The integration of multiple molecular layers represents a paradigm shift beyond single-omics assays, enabling deeper biological insight and improved predictive power. Multi-omics technologies, including genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, metabolomics, and epigenomics, have significantly accelerated biomarker discovery; however, their integration into routine clinical oncology still lags far behind their rapidly growing presence in research.

In contemporary practice, the majority of clinically implemented biomarkers continue to rely on targeted genomic sequencing, immunohistochemistry (PD-L1 expression), microsatellite instability (MSI) testing, and a small number of validated transcriptomic panels such as Oncotype DX and MammaPrint. In contrast, comprehensive multi-omics assays that integrate multiple molecular layers, such as combined transcriptomic–proteomic (proteogenomic) signatures, are still largely confined to exploratory or translational research settings.

Various multi-omics related tools that have progressed to clinical adoption include a limited number of validated

assays that combine genomic and transcriptomic information for therapeutic decision-making. Most clinically implemented biomarker assays, are based solely on mRNA expression profiling and therefore represent single-omics transcriptomic assays, not multi-omics biomarkers. These include transcriptomic expression panels such as Oncotype DX (21-gene panel) and MammaPrint (70-gene signature), both of which guide adjuvant therapy decisions in early-stage breast cancer [45]. Similarly, homologous recombination deficiency (HRD) and BRCA deficiency assays integrate measures of genomic instability to help identify patients who may benefit from PARP inhibitor therapy [46]. In contrast, true multi-omics assays integrate at least two molecular layers - such as DNA + RNA, DNA + methylation, RNA + protein, or proteogenomic profiles. Clinically adopted multi-omics tests remain relatively few, but they represent a critical bridge between discovery-stage multi-omics research and routine precision oncology.

In the liquid biopsy domain, circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA) assays - including Guardant360 CDx and FoundationOne Liquid CDx - combine multiple molecular layers, such as sequence variants, copy-number alterations, and methylation features, to support molecular profiling when tissue biopsies are limited or infeasible [47]. Furthermore, clinical NGS-based diagnostic panels targeting 30–500 genes are now routinely used across oncology to detect actionable mutations, refine diagnosis, and inform targeted treatment strategies. Collectively, these examples represent the small subset of multi-omics-derived approaches that have achieved integration into routine clinical workflows. The assays listed in Table 2 represent the few platforms that integrate multi-layer molecular data and therefore qualify as true multi-omics biomarkers with emerging or established clinical relevance.

A structured search of ClinicalTrials.gov identified a total of 121 cancer-related clinical studies investigating multi-omics biomarkers (Table 3). These trials encompass a broad spectrum of applications, including early cancer detection, risk stratification, treatment-response prediction, surgical planning, and molecular or digital pathology - based decision support. Only 10 clinical trials were found to have reached full completion, demonstrating the most mature evidence base within this landscape. This compiled list highlights that, despite increasing interest, truly multi-omics clinical trials represent only a small fraction of ongoing biomarker research. Most registered trials remain in the recruitment or early-phase exploratory stage, underscoring the gap between technological capability and clinical translation.

Several barriers continue to hinder the widespread clinical adoption of multi-omics biomarkers. These include the high cost and specialized expertise required for mass spectrometry–based proteomics, limited standardization

Table 1 Key technologies driving biomarker discovery

Technology	Description	Impact on Biomarker Discovery
Next-Generation Sequencing (NGS)	Rapid sequencing of genomes, exomes, or gene panels	Identifies somatic mutations and epigenetic alterations in cancers like NSCLC [39]
Mass Spectrometry (MS)	High-throughput protein quantification using SILAC, TMT, and SWATH-MS	Enables single-cell proteomics and PTM detection [40]
Liquid Biopsies	Analysis of ctDNA, cfDNA, and CTCs in biofluids	Monitors tumor dynamics non-invasively [41]
Multi-Omics Integration	Combines genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, and metabolomics	Uncovers novel biomarkers via holistic analysis [42]
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Analyzes omics data using machine learning	Enhances diagnostic accuracy through pattern recognition [43]
CRISPR/Cas9	Gene editing for functional genomics	Validates biomarker function and targets [44]

Table 2 Clinically available multi-omics biomarker products and their molecular components

S. No.	Product Name	Molecular Layers (Multi-Omics)	Clinical Application	Regulatory Status	Key Reference
1	FoundationOne® CDx (Foundation Medicine / Roche)	DNA mutations, CNVs, gene fusions, MSI, TMB (Genomics + mutational signatures)	Tumor profiling; targeted therapy selection; For all solid tumors	FDA-approved CDx	[48]
2	Guardant360® CDx (Guardant Health)	cfDNA mutations, CNVs, fusion detection (Genomic liquid biopsy + fragmentomics)	Non-invasive tumor profiling; For advanced solid tumors	FDA-approved CDx	[49]
3	Caris Molecular Intelligence® (Caris Life Sciences)	DNA sequencing + RNA sequencing + protein/IHC + MSI/ methylation	Comprehensive therapy selection and resistance profiling; For solid tumors	CLIA-certified multi-omics platform	[50]
4	Tempus xT (500 + gene panel)	DNA sequencing + RNA sequencing + AI-based fusion/expression analysis	Actionable mutation profiling; expression-based therapy markers; For solid tumors	CLIA/CAP-certified	[51]
5	MSK-IMPACT® + MSK-Fusion RNA Panel	DNA sequencing (IMPACT) + RNA-seq for fusions + MSI/TMB	Pan-cancer actionable molecular profiling; For solid tumors	FDA-recognized NYS test	[52]
6	Galleri® MCED test (GRAIL)	cfDNA methylation + fragmentation patterns + AI classifier (Epigenomics + computational multi-omics)	Multi-cancer early detection and tissue-of-origin prediction; screens for a “cancer signal” across over 50 types of cancer	LDT; large clinical trials	[53]
7	ClonoSEQ® MRD Assay (Adaptive Biotechnologies)	IGH/IGK/TRA immune receptor sequencing + Bayesian multi-omic modeling	Minimal residual disease (ALL, CLL, Multiple myeloma); lymphoid blood cancers	FDA-authorized	[54]
8	Caris GPSai™ (AI Multi-Omics)	DNA + RNA + Protein/IHC + clinical features integrated by AI	Predicts therapy response; tumor classification; For Cancer of Unknown Primary (CUP).	CLIA-certified	[55]
9	ExoDx Prostate IntelliScore™	EV-derived RNA signatures + cfRNA (Transcriptomic + EV proteomic context)	Predicts risk of high-grade prostate cancer	CLIA assay	[56]
10	ThyroSeq® v3 (Thyroid cancer)	DNA mutations, RNA fusions, copy-number alterations, expression markers	Indeterminate thyroid nodule classification	CLIA-approved	[57]

Table 3 List of clinical trials studies associated with multi-omics biomarkers

NCT Number	Study Title	Study Status	Interventions
NCT04972201	A Proof-of-Concept Study of Pan-cancer Early Detection by Liquid Biopsy	COMPLETED	DEVICE: Multi-cancer early detection test
NCT06969768	Proteogenomics for Follicular Cell-derived Thyroid Cancer: Development of a Classification and Prognosis Prediction Model	COMPLETED	
NCT05197504	Predictive Biomarkers in Patients With Advanced Hepatocellular Carcinoma Treated With Systemic Therapy	COMPLETED	DRUG: atezolizumab plus bevacizumab
NCT04871321	Biomarker Discovery in Patients With Advanced Biliary Tract Cancer	COMPLETED	DRUG: nab-paclitaxel plus gemcitabine-cisplatin
NCT06573424	Tirellizumab + Anlotinib VS Anlotinib for MSS-type CRC	COMPLETED	COMBINATION_PRODUCT: Tislelizumab + anlotinib DRUG: anlotinib
NCT05417451	Multi-Omics Study of the Effect and Mechanisms of Acupuncture on Psychoneurological Symptoms Among Breast Cancer Survivors	COMPLETED	OTHER: Acupuncture
NCT05729906	Dynamic Predictions of the Links Between Psychological and Physical Health of Older Patients in Nursing Home	COMPLETED	OTHER: psychological and physical tests
NCT07102069	Pharmacogenomic and Pharmacoeepigenomic Studies of Antipsychotic Drugs in First-Episode Schizophrenia	COMPLETED	
NCT06759467	Diagnosis of Peritoneal Exfoliative Cytology-positive Gastric Cancer Based on Artificial Intelligence-driven Virtual Biopsy Technology	COMPLETED	DIAGNOSTIC_TEST: AI-Driven Virtual Biopsy for Diagnosis of Peritoneal Exfoliative Cytology-Positive Gastric Cancer

of pre-analytical workflows, lack of CLIA-validated protocols, dependency on advanced computational infrastructure, challenges in reimbursement, and the absence of sufficiently powered, multi-center, clinically annotated cohorts for robust validation. Together, these limitations highlight the urgent need for simplified, cost-effective, and clinically deployable multi-omics workflows to enable the broader translation of these technologies into routine oncology practice.

Artificial intelligence (AI)-based biomarker discovery

Artificial intelligence plays a dual role in biomarker science enhancing multi-omics biomarker discovery and supporting clinical diagnostics through automated interpretation. AI- based biomarker discovery has emerged as a powerful approach for identifying clinically relevant molecular signatures from high-dimensional genomic and transcriptomic datasets. Traditional biomarker discovery relies largely on differential expression and hypothesis-driven analyses, which often fail to capture non-linear relationships, population-level heterogeneity, or complex regulatory interactions.

In contrast, AI and machine learning algorithms can simultaneously evaluate thousands of features, integrate multi-omics layers, and identify robust biomarkers that are predictive of disease progression, prognosis, and treatment response. Methods such as random forest, LASSO, gradient boosting, autoencoders, and graph-based deep learning models enable unbiased feature selection and can uncover hidden patterns that may remain undetected using standard statistical approaches. When combined with survival modeling and multi-cohort validation, AI-driven frameworks enhance biomarker reproducibility and translational potential, making them particularly valuable for rare and heterogeneous malignancies such as gallbladder cancer.

It is important to differentiate between AI models developed for biomarker discovery and those that are

implemented in clinical practice. AI discovery models extract molecular signatures from omics or imaging data, whereas clinically approved AI tools primarily support diagnostic image interpretation and do not directly generate molecular biomarkers (Table 4).

AI and bioinformatics are effectively enabling to uncover genomic and proteomic biomarkers by swiftly analyzing big and complex data. A Random Survival Forest model including clinical and CT-based radiomic characteristics outperformed the conventional Cox model (0.775) in non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) with a C-index of 0.841 [66]. A DeepSurv model that combined radiomic and clinical data produced C-index values of 0.74–0.75 and AUCs of 0.73–0.76 at 8, 12, and 24 months [67]. An interpretable XGBoost model that included tumor and normal-lung radiomics produced a C-index of 0.76 on external validation in patients with locally advanced lung cancer treated with radiation [68]. In gastric cancer, a deep-learning radiogenomic model combining contrast-enhanced CT radiomics with clinical data predicted MSI status with an AUC of 0.883 in training and 0.802 in validation, suggesting that it can serve as a non-invasive “virtual biopsy” method [69]. Despite the high predictive accuracy of these AI models, challenges like low interpretability, overfitting risk, and a lack of prospective multi-center validation still exist.

Table 4 Clinically available AI-based biomarker products

S. No.	Product Name	Biomarker Type	Disease Area	Clinical Purpose & Status	Discovery Approach	Reference
1	Galleri™ (GRAIL MCED Test)	cfDNA methylation deep-learning classifier	Multi-cancer early detection	Detects > 50 cancers; predicts tissue of origin, Laboratory Developed Test (LDT)	Deep neural networks trained on > 15,000 cfDNA methylation profiles from CCGA study	[53]
2	IDx-DR® (Digital Diagnostics)	AI deep-learning retinal image classifier	Diabetic retinopathy	Assists in detecting prostate adenocarcinoma on whole-slide images, FDA-cleared autonomous AI diagnosis	CNN trained on > 900,000 expert-labeled fundus images	[58]
3	Paige Prostate®	Deep-learning histology cancer detector	Prostate cancer	AI detection of prostate carcinoma on whole-slide imaging, Research-only	Weakly supervised CNN trained on > 44,000 WSIs	[59]
4	Ibex Galen™ AI	CNN-based AI pathology biomarker	Breast & prostate cancer	Automated cancer detection & grading, CE-IVDR marked)	CNN trained on thousands of annotated pathology slides	[60]
5	CNS Tumor Classifier (DKFZ)	DNA methylation Random Forest AI classifier	Brain tumors	Molecular diagnosis & subtype classification, Research-stage	Random forest model trained on 2,801 methylation profiles	[61]
6	DeepGlioma™	Deep-learning molecular classifier	Glioma	Rapid intraoperative molecular diagnosis, Research-stage	Deep neural networks on spectroscopy + sequencing	[62]
7	HRDetect	AI-based mutational signature model (LASSO ML classifier)	Breast cancer	Identifies BRCA1/2 deficiency & HRD, Research-stage	LASSO logistic regression on 3,479 genome-wide mutational features	[63]
8	PathAI® (Research-use AI)	Deep-learning histopathology predictor	NSCLC	Predicts histologic subtype & driver mutations, Research-stage	CNN trained on > 4,000 H&E slides	[64]
9	Melanoma Immune Response AI Model	ML-based transcriptomic immune classifier	Melanoma	Predicts response to immunotherapy, Research-stage	ML trained on RNA-seq + mutation data for immune-score extraction	[65]

Role of bioinformatics and open-access data in biomarker discovery

Bioinformatics has been instrumental in managing and analyzing the vast datasets generated by genomic and proteomic studies. Computational tools enable pattern recognition, data integration, and predictive modeling, accelerating biomarker discovery. For instance, machine learning algorithms analyze high-dimensional omics data to identify cancer-specific signatures, such as gene expression profiles in breast cancer predicting recurrence [18]. Deep learning has enhanced histopathological image analysis, identifying spatial patterns linked to tumor aggressiveness, complementing molecular biomarkers [43]. Bioinformatics platforms like Bioconductor and Galaxy provide open-source tools for differential gene expression analysis, protein quantification, and pathway enrichment, democratizing access to advanced analytics [70]. These platforms provide defined settings for preprocessing, standardizing, and annotating high-dimensional omics data, which may then be effortlessly integrated into ML models for biomarker identification. For example, Bioconductor tools like *caret* and *mlr* enable users to develop classification models on processed gene-expression datasets, whereas Galaxy provides automated pipelines that integrate feature selection, clustering, and predictive modeling [70].

Open-access data repositories have transformed biomarker discovery by enabling global data sharing and validation. The TCGA, launched in 2006, provides genomic, transcriptomic, and proteomic data for over 33 cancer types, facilitating the identification of novel biomarkers like IDH mutations in glioma [36]. The CPTAC integrates proteomic and genomic data, revealing biomarkers like MCT1 in lung adenocarcinoma [30]. cBioPortal offers user-friendly access to TCGA and other datasets, enabling researchers to explore genetic alterations and their clinical implications [71]. The Human Protein Atlas provides proteomic data on protein expression across tissues, aiding biomarker validation [72]. These repositories have reduced duplication, accelerated hypothesis testing, and fostered collaboration, particularly for rare cancers with limited cohorts.

A total of 26 clinical trials that were AI-based biomarkers or computational decision-support tools, found to have reached full completion, demonstrating that AI-driven tools are increasingly being evaluated in real-world clinical research settings (Table 5). These trials span diagnostics, prognostication, treatment-response prediction, surgical planning, imaging biomarkers, and digital pathology, reflecting the broad applicability of AI in translational oncology. In addition to these completed trials, the dataset also contained 41 studies that were actively recruiting, demonstrating a rapidly expanding pipeline of AI-assisted clinical research. These ongoing

trials focus on next-generation applications such as multi-analyte AI blood tests, advanced radiogenomic signatures, AI-enabled clinical trial matching, automated surgical planning, early cancer detection tools, and immune-response prediction algorithms. The large number of recruiting studies underscores significant global interest and investment in the clinical deployment of AI-based biomarker technologies.

In addition, AI-based biomarker discovery pipelines are vulnerable to biases arising from underrepresentation of specific ethnic or geographic populations in training datasets. Such biases can lead to reduced diagnostic accuracy and unequal clinical performance. To make results fairer and more reliable, researchers now combine data from diverse populations and use methods that check for and correct these biases. Testing models on different groups and including information from large, international datasets helps make sure any new biomarkers discovered work well for everyone.

Bioinformatics and open-access data have also addressed tumor heterogeneity by enabling single-cell omics analysis, revealing subpopulations driving resistance [73]. Multi-omics integration, supported by bioinformatics, uncovers complex interactions between genomic and proteomic alterations, as seen in ovarian cancer studies identifying diagnostic panels [74]. However, challenges remain, including data standardization, privacy concerns, and computational demands, necessitating robust bioinformatics infrastructure.

Although AI has transformed biomarker discovery research, the clinical implementation of AI-based biomarkers remains limited. Most radiomic, radiogenomic, and deep-survival models described in the literature—including those for NSCLC, gastric cancer, and lung radiotherapy—represent research-stage tools that have not undergone regulatory validation or multicenter harmonization. These models perform well in retrospective cohorts but are vulnerable to dataset bias, overfitting, limited ethnic diversity, and lack of external validation, which restricts their diagnostic deployment.

In contrast, only a small number of AI tools have achieved FDA clearance or CE marking, and these predominantly address diagnostic image analysis rather than molecular biomarker discovery. The IDx-DR system for diabetic retinopathy screening and digital pathology algorithms such as Paige Prostate and Ibex Galen, which support histopathological detection and grading. Importantly, these systems do not replace pathologists but enhance detection consistency, reduce oversight errors, and serve as decision-support tools.

A clear gap therefore exists between AI models used to discover biomarkers (transcriptomic feature selection, mutational classifiers, immune-score prediction) and AI tools used clinically. Translational barriers include the

Table 5 List of clinical trials studies associated with AI-based biomarkers

NCT Number	Study Title	Study Status	Interventions
NCT06759467	Diagnosis of Peritoneal Exfoliative Cytology-positive Gastric Cancer Based on Artificial Intelligence-driven Virtual Biopsy Technology	COMPLETED	DIAGNOSTIC_TEST: AI-Driven Virtual Biopsy for Diagnosis of Peritoneal Exfoliative Cytology-Positive Gastric Cancer
NCT06888089	Deep Clinical Trajectory Modeling to Optimize Accrual to Cancer Clinical Trials	COMPLETED	OTHER: AI-assisted MatchMiner Platform
NCT03955627	REJOIN Trial for Older Breast Cancer Survivors	COMPLETED	BEHAVIORAL: Relieving Joint Pain and Improving AI Adherence in Older Breast Cancer Survivors (REJOIN)
NCT05396807	REVERT - tarGeted thErapy for adVanced colorEctal cancerR paTients	COMPLETED	DEVICE: AI
NCT07049627	AI-Based Prediction of Pathological Response in Rectal Cancer Patients Receiving Total Neoadjuvant Therapy	COMPLETED	OTHER: Total Neoadjuvant Therapy (TNT)
NCT06526754	Feasibility Analysis of LCD-SLA 3D Printing Technology for Overall Surgical Planning of Liver Malignant Tumors	COMPLETED	DEVICE: 3D-Printed Liver Model PROCEDURE: Digital Simulation-Based Surgical Planning
NCT01564368	DWI in Assessing Treatment Response in Patients With Breast Cancer Receiving Neoadjuvant Chemotherapy	COMPLETED	PROCEDURE: diffusion-weighted magnetic resonance imaging
NCT06648512	Association of Ex Vivo Drug Response (EVDR) and Clinical Outcome in Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (EXCYTE-2)	COMPLETED	OTHER: No Interventions
NCT03688906	AI-EMERGE: Development and Validation of a Multi-analyte, Blood-based Colorectal Cancer Screening Test	COMPLETED	
NCT01322802	Vaccine Therapy in Treating Patients With Stage III-IV or Recurrent Ovarian Cancer	COMPLETED	BIOLOGICAL: pUMVC3-hIGFBP-2 multi-epitope plasmid DNA vaccine OTHER: laboratory biomarker analysis
NCT01928186	FLT PET in Measuring Treatment Response in Patients With Newly Diagnosed Estrogen Receptor-Positive, HER2-Negative Stage I-III Breast Cancer	COMPLETED	DRUG: Fluorothymidine F-18 PROCEDURE: Positron Emission Tomography OTHER: Laboratory Biomarker Analysis DRUG: Run-in (short pre-surgery course) of endocrine-targeted therapy
NCT02737475	An Investigational Immuno-Therapy Study of Experimental Medication BMS-986,178 by Itself or in Combination With Nivolumab and/or Ipilimumab in Participants With Solid Cancers That Are Advanced or Have Spread	COMPLETED	DRUG: BMS-986,178 DRUG: Nivolumab DRUG: Ipilimumab BIOLOGICAL: Tetanus vaccine BIOLOGICAL: DPV-001 vaccine DRUG: Cyclophosphamide
NCT02206984	Endocrine Response in Women With Invasive Lobular Breast Cancer	COMPLETED	DRUG: Tamoxifen DRUG: Anastrozole DRUG: Fulvestrant
NCT01478477	Omega-3 Fatty Acids in Preventing Joint Symptoms in Patients With Stage I-III Breast Cancer Receiving Anastrozole, Exemestane, or Letrozole	COMPLETED	DIETARY_SUPPLEMENT: omega-3 fatty acid supplement OTHER: Placebo OTHER: Clinical assessments OTHER: Assessment of therapy complications PROCEDURE: Magnetic Resonance Imaging PROCEDURE: Correlative/special studies
NCT02448420	Study of Palbociclib and Trastuzumab With Endocrine Therapy in HER2-positive Metastatic Breast Cancer	COMPLETED	DRUG: Palbociclib DRUG: Trastuzumab DRUG: Endocrine therapy DRUG: Chemotherapy DRUG: Antibody-Drug Conjugates
NCT05369156	The Effects of Chiropractic Care in Adults With Subclinical Spinal Pain	COMPLETED	OTHER: Chiropractic Care OTHER: Control Group
NCT02730546	Pembrolizumab, Combination Chemotherapy, and Radiation Therapy Before Surgery in Treating Adult Patients With Locally Advanced Gastroesophageal Junction or Gastric Cardia Cancer That Can Be Removed by Surgery	COMPLETED	DRUG: Carboplatin PROCEDURE: Computed Tomography DRUG: Fluorouracil OTHER: Laboratory Biomarker Analysis DRUG: Leucovorin Calcium DRUG: Oxaliplatin DRUG: Paclitaxel BIOLOGICAL: Pembrolizumab PROCEDURE: Positron Emission Tomography RADIATION: Radiation Therapy PROCEDURE: Therapeutic Conventional Surgery
NCT04164069	Dasatinib for the Prevention of Oxaliplatin-Induced Neuropathy in Patients With Metastatic Gastrointestinal Cancer Receiving FOLFOX Chemotherapy With or Without Bevacizumab	COMPLETED	BIOLOGICAL: Bevacizumab DRUG: Dasatinib DRUG: Fluorouracil DRUG: Leucovorin DRUG: Leucovorin Calcium DRUG: Oxaliplatin OTHER: Quality-of-Life Assessment
NCT02833350	Safety and Efficacy Study of GDC-0853 Compared With Placebo and Adalimumab in Participants With Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)	COMPLETED	DRUG: GDC-0853 DRUG: Adalimumab DRUG: Folic Acid DRUG: MTX DRUG: Placebo
NCT02983227	A Study to Evaluate the Long-Term Safety and Efficacy of GDC-0853 in Participants With Moderate to Severe Rheumatoid Arthritis Enrolled in Study GA29350	COMPLETED	DRUG: GDC-0853

Table 6 Global comparison

S. No.	Platform	Strengths	Limitations
1.	NSG	Broad mutation detection	Cost, bioinformatics complexity, VUS issues
2.	MS Proteomics	PTM profiling, pathway insights	Reproducibility, dynamic range issues
3.	Liquid Biopsy	Non-invasive, longitudinal	Low ctDNA in early tumors, CHIP interference
4.	AI	Pattern recognition	Bias, overfitting, limited multi-ethnic data

need for prospective trials, explainability requirements, uncertainty quantification, regulatory validation pathways, and challenges integrating AI into existing laboratory information systems. These limitations underscore that AI-based biomarker identification is a promising but still evolving field whose real-world deployment is emerging only gradually. It is important to distinguish between AI models used for biomarker discovery and AI tools that are clinically deployed. While the former extract molecular signatures from omics data, the latter such as IDx-DR, Paige Prostate, and Ibex Galen support diagnostic decision-making but do not directly generate multi-omics biomarkers. This distinction is critical for interpreting their clinical applicability. Therefore, while AI has revolutionized biomarker discovery, its integration into routine molecular diagnostics is still emerging and requires multi-center validation, transparency in model interpretability, and standardized evaluation frameworks.

Impact on cancer diagnosis and prognostication
Diagnosis

Biomarkers have improved diagnostic accuracy by distinguishing malignant from benign lesions and identifying subtypes. HER-2 amplification, detected by fluorescence in situ hybridization or immunohistochemistry, guides anti-HER2 therapy in breast and gastric cancers [75]. PSA testing, combined with multiparametric MRI, enhances prostate cancer diagnosis [76]. Liquid biopsies detect early cancer-specific alterations, such as hypermethylated cfDNA in cancer or ncRNA [77, 78]. Multi-omics panels, leveraging bioinformatics, offer high sensitivity for early-stage cancers, as shown in ovarian cancer [74].

Prognostication

Biomarkers predict recurrence, treatment response, and survival. Oncotype DX and MammaPrint stratify breast cancer patients by recurrence risk, reducing unnecessary chemotherapy [17, 18]. KRAS mutations in colorectal cancer, present in 30–40% of cases, predict anti-EGFR therapy resistance [79]. Proteomic biomarkers like class III β -tubulin in ovarian cancer predict survival [31]. The RAF-MEK-ERK pathway, altered in half of cancers, is

prognostic in breast cancer, with BRAF mutations linked to worse survival [80]. Liquid biopsies monitor minimal residual disease, detecting early recurrence in NSCLC [81].

Comparative assessment of multi-omics platforms
The Table 6 below address a new comparative summary.

Biomarker implementation in LMICs - opportunities and practical considerations

The adoption of genomic, proteomic, and multi-omics biomarkers in LMICs is limited by systemic barriers, including high equipment and consumable costs, lack of molecular pathology expertise, absence of reimbursement mechanisms, inconsistent electricity and cold-chain infrastructure, and limited access to high-performance computing [82, 83]. These constraints restrict deployment of NGS, MS-based proteomics, and liquid biopsy assays in routine oncology practice. The absence of reimbursement mechanisms for molecular testing and limited integration of precision oncology into national cancer control strategies further hinder adoption [84]. Within this setting, biomarker deployment must prioritize appropriate, scalable, and cost-effective technologies.

Several LMIC-adapted solutions have demonstrated feasibility. Targeted sequencing panels of 25–50 genes offer clinically relevant substantially lower cost than whole-exome or whole-genome assays and have been validated in resource-constrained settings [85]. Low-cost methylation assays, including methylation-sensitive restriction enzyme (MSRE)-based qPCR, enable early cancer detection where array- or sequencing-based methylation profiling is impractical [86]. Portable nanopore sequencing platforms, such as the Oxford Nanopore MinION, allow near-real-time mutation detection without specialized infrastructure and have been deployed successfully in LMIC molecular diagnostic programs [87]. Cloud-based bioinformatics resources—including Galaxy, Terra, and DNAnexus—further circumvent the need for local high-performance computing, reducing hardware barriers to molecular interpretation [88].

At the system level, regional biobanking and sequencing hubs operating under shared-resource models can reduce duplication of costs and expand access to standardized molecular testing [89]. Telepathology and AI-assisted triage platforms have improved diagnostic turnaround times and mitigated shortages of pathology expertise in several LMICs [90]. Furthermore, pooled DNA sequencing strategies have emerged as a cost-saving approach for high-volume public hospitals conducting population-scale mutation screening [91]. Collectively, these context-appropriate approaches provide a practical roadmap for advancing biomarker-driven oncology in

LMICs and support more equitable global access to precision cancer care.

Policy-level recommendations for LMIC implementation

To accelerate equitable biomarker integration in LMICs, policy frameworks must prioritize (i) national cancer genomic programs with shared sequencing hubs, (ii) government-supported reimbursement for essential biomarker tests, (iii) international public–private partnerships for subsidized reagents and instruments, (iv) workforce development programs in molecular diagnostics and bioinformatics, and (v) harmonized quality-control standards for sample handling, NGS workflows, and data reporting. These measures ensure scalability, sustainability, and long-term integration of biomarker-driven oncology in resource-constrained settings. Strategic investment in scalable technologies, cloud-based computation, and regional resource-sharing models can enable LMICs to leapfrog traditional infrastructure constraints and rapidly adopt biomarker-driven precision oncology.

Challenges and future directions

Although multi-omics technologies have transformed biomarker discovery, still there are lot of challenges that need to be resolved. Challenges include tumor heterogeneity, biological variability. NGS provides high-resolution detection of somatic mutations and gene fusions but is limited by sequencing costs, bioinformatics complexity, and challenges in interpreting variants of uncertain significance [92]. Although, targeted NGS panels and focused proteomic assays provide cost-effective alternatives to whole-genome or deep proteomic profiling. Mass spectrometry enables deep protein and PTM profiling but suffers from batch effects, limited sensitivity for low-abundance proteins, and reproducibility issues across laboratories. Integrating these platforms introduces additional challenges, including multi-layer data harmonization, analytical noise, and computational demands.

Bioinformatics faces issues with data standardization and computational demands. Open-access repositories require improved interoperability and privacy safeguards. Cloud-based bioinformatics pipelines lower computational barriers by enabling remote analysis without local servers. Establishing regional testing hubs and biobanks can support multi-institutional sample processing and validation at scale. Moreover, open-access datasets enable researchers in LMICs to contribute to biomarker discovery without incurring high experimental costs. Public–private partnerships, government-supported screening initiatives, and capacity-building programs can further facilitate the integration of genomics and proteomics into cancer care in resource-limited settings.

A challenge in biomarker research is ensuring reproducible results, which is difficult due to differences in data collection, processing, and reporting between studies. To address these concerns, numerous international guidelines have been developed to aid with data standardization. MIAME (Minimum Information About a Microarray Experiment) guidelines provide a standardized framework for describing experimental design, sample preparation, array protocols, and data processing processes in transcriptomic studies, allowing researchers to generate transparent and reproducible datasets. In proteomics, the HUPO Proteomics Standards Initiative (HUPO-PSI) provides standardized formats and reporting criteria for mass spectrometry processes, protein identification, and quantification.

There are additional factors that influence the real-world implementation of these biomarkers, including cost-effectiveness, regulatory hurdles, and challenges in integrating them into clinical policy. Another concern is bringing a cancer biomarker test from research to clinical use, which necessitates significant validation and regulatory approval. Tests like Guardant360 CDx, FoundationOne Liquid CDx, and Oncotype DX demonstrate the level of evidence required to demonstrate a biomarker's accuracy, clinical utility, and safety prior to its adoption in standard healthcare. Future directions include standardizing protocols to enhance reproducibility, integrating multi-omics with AI for novel biomarkers, and advancing single-cell omics to address heterogeneity [73]. Despite cost and infrastructure constraints, LMICs can benefit substantially from emerging biomarker technologies through strategic adaptation.

Conclusion

Genomic and proteomic biomarker discovery, powered by bioinformatics and open-access data, has revolutionized cancer care. From CEA and PSA to NGS, MS, and liquid biopsies, scientific and technological progress has enhanced our understanding of cancer, improving diagnosis and prognostication.

Bioinformatics and repositories like TCGA and CPTAC have accelerated discovery by enabling data integration and collaboration. Despite challenges, multi-omics, AI, and global efforts promise to advance precision oncology, delivering personalized, effective care to patients worldwide.

Collectively, advances in multi-omics biomarker development, AI-assisted analysis, and scalable technologies provide a roadmap toward equitable precision oncology. Continued integration of omics data, machine learning, clinical validation, and health system reforms will be essential to narrow the global gap in cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Clinical trial number

Not applicable.

Authors' contributions

MR and RD wrote the manuscript. MR and RD prepared figures. MP reviewed and edited the manuscript. All authors reviewed the manuscript.

Funding

No funding.

Data availability

No datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

Declarations**Ethics approval and consent to participate**

Not applicable.

Consent for publication

All authors agree that the work will be published in a journal and understand and agree to the full terms and conditions of its publication.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Received: 17 September 2025 / Accepted: 27 December 2025

Published online: 27 January 2026

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