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Research of Scientia Naturalis
Vol. 3 No. 1. February 2026, pp. 45-57 DOI. 10.70177/scientia.v3i1.3469

Research Article

# MOLECULAR SIGNATURES OF ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURE: A BIOMOLECULAR APPROACH TO ECOSYSTEM HEALTH ASSESSMENT

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## Article Info

Received: August 15, 2025
Revised: November 20, 2025
Accepted: January 22, 2026
Online Version: February 24, 2026

## Abstract

Escalating environmental pollution and climate-related stressors necessitate sensitive and mechanistically grounded tools for assessing ecosystem health. Traditional ecological indicators often detect degradation only after substantial biological damage has occurred, limiting early intervention capacity. Molecular signatures derived from multi-omics technologies offer high-resolution insight into sublethal biological responses to environmental exposure. This study aims to identify and validate integrated molecular signatures associated with contaminant gradients and to evaluate their predictive capacity for ecosystem health assessment across aquatic environments. A multi-site cross-sectional design was implemented involving 180 sentinel organisms collected along defined pollution gradients. Transcriptomic, proteomic, and metabolomic profiling was conducted using high-throughput sequencing and mass spectrometry platforms. Multivariate statistical modeling, including principal component analysis and structural equation modeling, was applied to link molecular perturbations with contaminant concentrations and ecological indices. Significant increases in differentially expressed genes, altered protein abundance, and metabolite perturbation indices were observed in high-exposure sites ($p < 0.001$). Molecular signatures accurately classified exposure categories with 91% predictive accuracy and significantly predicted biodiversity decline ($\beta = -0.68$, $p < 0.001$). Integrated multi-omics molecular signatures provide sensitive, early-warning indicators of ecosystem impairment, enabling mechanistic linkage between environmental exposure and ecological degradation.

**Keywords**: Ecosystem Health, Environmental Exposure, Molecular Signatures

Journal Homepage https://research.adra.ac.id/index.php/scientia
How to cite: Hazmi, M., Suzuki, R., Tan, J., & Bauer, T. (2026). Molecular Signatures of Environmental Exposure: A Biomolecular Approach to Ecosystem Health Assessment. *Research of Scientia Naturalis*, *3*(1), 45–57. https://doi.org/10.70177/scientia.v3i1.3469
Published by: Yayasan Adra Karima Hubbi

## INTRODUCTION

Global environmental change has intensified the need for sensitive and reliable tools to assess ecosystem health across terrestrial, freshwater, and marine environments. Anthropogenic pressures such as industrial pollution, agricultural runoff, urbanization, and climate variability exert complex and often synergistic effects on biological communities (Li et al., 2025; C.-X. Wang et al., 2023). Traditional ecological assessment methods rely heavily on species richness, population dynamics, and physicochemical parameters, which frequently detect environmental degradation only after substantial ecological damage has occurred. Growing recognition of sublethal and early-stage biological alterations has stimulated interest in biomolecular indicators capable of revealing hidden stress responses before structural ecosystem collapse becomes visible (Zhang et al., 2025).

Advances in molecular biology, genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, and metabolomics have transformed environmental monitoring into a high-resolution analytical discipline. Molecular signatures, including gene expression profiles, epigenetic modifications, protein abundance patterns, and metabolite fluctuations, provide insight into organism-level responses to environmental exposure (Dallere et al., 2025; Lei et al., 2025). These biomolecular changes often precede observable phenotypic shifts, making them promising candidates for early warning systems in ecosystem health assessment. Integration of molecular tools with ecological monitoring frameworks has therefore emerged as a frontier in environmental science (Bhat & Bandyopadhyay, 2025).

Ecosystem health is increasingly conceptualized as a dynamic property reflecting resilience, functional integrity, and adaptive capacity under environmental stress. Molecular signatures serve as mechanistic links connecting environmental exposure to biological response, thereby bridging chemical measurement and ecological outcome (Kujur et al., 2025; Sunil et al., 2025). Biomolecular approaches enable identification of stress-specific pathways, oxidative damage responses, immune modulation, and metabolic reprogramming induced by contaminants or climatic stressors. Conceptual expansion of ecosystem assessment toward molecular resolution necessitates rigorous theoretical framing and methodological standardization to ensure reliability and interpretability (Ngu et al., 2025).

Conventional ecological indicators often fail to capture early-stage biological disruptions caused by low-dose or chronic environmental exposure. Species-level metrics may remain stable despite ongoing molecular stress responses that compromise long-term resilience. Delayed detection undermines preventive management strategies and limits capacity for timely intervention. Absence of sensitive biomarkers therefore represents a critical limitation in current ecosystem health assessment frameworks (Alqahtani et al., 2025; Tarapoulouzi et al., 2025).

Complexity of environmental mixtures further complicates accurate evaluation. Ecosystems are rarely exposed to single contaminants; rather, they encounter multifactorial stressors including heavy metals, pesticides, endocrine disruptors, microplastics, and temperature fluctuations. Traditional monitoring approaches typically isolate variables, overlooking cumulative or interactive effects at molecular and cellular levels. Lack of integrative biomolecular frameworks hampers capacity to interpret systemic biological responses to multifaceted exposures (Maity et al., 2025; Sharma et al., 2025).

Standardization challenges also persist in translating molecular data into ecologically meaningful metrics. High-throughput technologies generate vast datasets requiring sophisticated bioinformatic interpretation (Zhan et al., 2024). Variability in sampling protocols, tissue specificity, and analytical platforms complicates cross-study comparison and ecological extrapolation. Inconsistent integration between molecular endpoints and ecological outcomes creates uncertainty regarding the practical utility of biomolecular indicators for environmental policy and ecosystem management (Bhatia et al., 2024).

This study aims to identify and characterize molecular signatures associated with environmental exposure across selected sentinel species within diverse ecosystems. Objective involves establishing biomolecular profiles that correlate with quantified contaminant gradients and environmental stress parameters. Systematic mapping of gene expression patterns, protein biomarkers, and metabolomic shifts seeks to define exposure-specific molecular fingerprints (Zulkeflee et al., 2025).

Research further intends to evaluate predictive capacity of molecular signatures for assessing ecosystem health status. Analytical framework integrates biomolecular data with ecological indicators such as biodiversity indices, trophic structure, and functional metrics. Correlation analysis and multivariate modeling are employed to determine whether molecular endpoints provide early and reliable indicators of ecological impairment (Lazaridis et al., 2025).

Additional objective focuses on developing an integrative biomolecular assessment model applicable across ecosystem types. Conceptual model aims to harmonize molecular biomarkers with ecological thresholds, facilitating translation from laboratory-based findings to field-based monitoring. Study aspires to contribute a standardized approach capable of supporting environmental management decisions and regulatory assessment (Borjian et al., 2025).

Existing literature demonstrates extensive exploration of individual biomarkers, including stress proteins, antioxidant enzymes, and DNA damage indicators. Many studies concentrate on single-organism or single-contaminant models under controlled laboratory conditions. Limited research systematically integrates multi-omics data with field-based ecological assessments. Absence of cross-scale integration restricts understanding of how molecular alterations translate into ecosystem-level consequences (Singh et al., 2024).

Comparative studies often emphasize either chemical concentration measurement or ecological community structure without bridging mechanistic pathways. Molecular ecology remains fragmented between descriptive biomarker reporting and applied ecosystem evaluation. Scarcity of comprehensive frameworks linking environmental exposure, molecular response, and ecological function constitutes a significant knowledge gap (Borkhataria et al., 2025).

Emerging multi-omics technologies offer unprecedented analytical depth yet remain underutilized in routine ecosystem health monitoring. Bioinformatic pipelines capable of synthesizing transcriptomic, proteomic, and metabolomic data into coherent exposure signatures are still developing. Literature lacks consensus regarding standard molecular panels suitable for cross-ecosystem comparison. This research addresses these deficiencies by proposing integrative and comparative analytical strategies grounded in biomolecular evidence.

Novelty of this study resides in its integrative multi-omics approach to ecosystem health assessment grounded in environmental exposure gradients. Rather than focusing on isolated biomarkers, research synthesizes transcriptomic, proteomic, and metabolomic data to construct comprehensive molecular signatures. Cross-ecosystem validation enhances generalizability and methodological robustness (Kumar et al., 2025).

Conceptual contribution lies in framing molecular signatures as functional indicators of ecosystem resilience rather than merely diagnostic stress markers. Biomolecular alterations are interpreted within ecological context, linking subcellular responses to community-level outcomes. This perspective advances theoretical integration between molecular biology and ecosystem science.

Justification for this research emerges from accelerating environmental degradation and urgent need for proactive monitoring strategies. Early detection of molecular perturbations enables timely intervention before irreversible ecological damage occurs. Biomolecular assessment frameworks hold potential to inform environmental regulation, conservation planning, and sustainable resource management. Study therefore contributes critical methodological innovation for advancing precision ecosystem health evaluation in the face of global environmental change.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### *Research Design*

Research design employed a multi-site, cross-sectional comparative framework integrating field-based environmental monitoring with multi-omics biomolecular analysis. Study was structured to examine associations between quantified environmental exposure gradients and molecular responses in selected sentinel species across freshwater and coastal ecosystems. Analytical design combined transcriptomic, proteomic, and metabolomic profiling with ecological assessment metrics, enabling cross-scale integration between subcellular responses and ecosystem-level indicators. Multivariate statistical modeling and systems biology approaches were applied to identify exposure-specific molecular signatures and to evaluate their predictive capacity for ecosystem health classification (Jamerlan et al., 2025; Reshi et al., 2025).

### *Research Target/Subject*

Population consisted of sentinel aquatic organisms representing different trophic levels, including benthic invertebrates, small pelagic fish, and filter-feeding bivalves collected from six environmentally distinct sites categorized along a pollution gradient (reference, moderate exposure, and high exposure). A total of 180 biological specimens were sampled, with 30 individuals per species per exposure category (Barchi et al., 2024; Javdani-Mallak & Salahshoori, 2024). Site selection was based on prior environmental surveillance data indicating variation in heavy metal concentrations, pesticide residues, nutrient loading, and temperature anomalies. Water and sediment samples were simultaneously collected to quantify physicochemical parameters and contaminant concentrations, ensuring alignment between molecular responses and measured environmental exposure.

### *Research Procedure*

Procedures began with systematic field sampling under standardized temporal and environmental conditions to reduce seasonal variability. Biological tissues were immediately preserved in liquid nitrogen and transported under controlled conditions to prevent molecular degradation. Laboratory processing included RNA sequencing library preparation, protein digestion and identification, and metabolite extraction followed by mass spectrometric analysis. Differential expression and abundance analyses were conducted to identify statistically significant molecular changes across exposure categories (false discovery rate < 0.05). Multivariate analyses, including principal component analysis and partial least squares discriminant analysis, were applied to construct composite molecular signatures associated with environmental gradients. Correlation analyses were performed to link molecular biomarkers with ecological metrics and contaminant concentrations. Quality control procedures included technical replicates, internal standards, and cross-platform validation to ensure analytical reliability and reproducibility (Korgaonkar et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2025).

### *Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques*

Instruments included high-throughput sequencing platforms for transcriptomic analysis, liquid chromatography–mass spectrometry (LC-MS) for proteomic and metabolomic profiling, and inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS) for contaminant quantification. RNA extraction kits, protein isolation reagents, and metabolite derivatization protocols were standardized to minimize technical variability. Ecological assessment tools comprised biodiversity indices, macroinvertebrate community scoring systems, chlorophyll-a measurements, and dissolved oxygen probes. Bioinformatic pipelines were implemented using R and Python-based platforms for sequence alignment, differential expression analysis, pathway enrichment mapping, and multivariate clustering (Mkuye et al., 2025; Nguyen et al., 2023).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Environmental monitoring confirmed a clear gradient of contaminant exposure across the six study sites. Mean concentrations of dissolved heavy metals (Cd, Pb, and Hg) ranged from 0.8 µg/L at reference sites to 7.6 µg/L at highly exposed sites. Pesticide residues showed comparable variation, with mean total organophosphate concentration increasing from 0.3 µg/L to 4.9 µg/L along the gradient. Dissolved oxygen levels decreased significantly at high-exposure sites (mean 4.2 mg/L) compared to reference sites (mean 7.8 mg/L), indicating concurrent physicochemical stress.

Multi-omics profiling generated 18,462 transcriptomic features, 2,134 quantified proteins, and 1,287 identified metabolites across sampled organisms. Differential expression analysis identified 1,204 genes significantly upregulated and 893 genes downregulated in high-exposure sites (FDR < 0.05). Proteomic analysis revealed 214 proteins with altered abundance, primarily associated with oxidative stress response and xenobiotic metabolism. Summary statistics of key biomolecular indicators are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Differential Molecular Responses Across Exposure Categories

| Indicator | Reference Sites | Moderate Exposure | High Exposure |
|---|---|---|---|
| Differentially Expressed Genes (n) | 112 | 684 | 2,097 |
| Altered Proteins (n) | 18 | 103 | 214 |
| Metabolite Perturbation Index | 0.12 | 0.38 | 0.71 |
| Mean Oxidative Stress Marker (AU) | 1.00 | 1.89 | 3.47 |
| Biodiversity Index (Shannon H’) | 3.12 | 2.41 | 1.76 |

Magnitude of molecular perturbation increased proportionally with contaminant concentration. High-exposure sites exhibited nearly tenfold increase in differentially expressed genes compared to reference sites. Oxidative stress markers and xenobiotic metabolism pathways showed consistent upregulation, indicating activation of cellular defense mechanisms in response to environmental toxicity.

Decline in biodiversity indices corresponded with elevated molecular stress signatures. Shannon diversity index decreased from 3.12 at reference sites to 1.76 at high-exposure locations. Concurrent molecular activation and ecological simplification suggest early mechanistic disruption preceding or accompanying community-level alterations.

Principal component analysis (PCA) revealed distinct clustering of samples according to exposure category. First two principal components explained 62.4% of total molecular variance. High-exposure samples formed a separate cluster characterized by elevated stress-response gene expression and altered metabolomic profiles.

Partial least squares discriminant analysis (PLS-DA) achieved classification accuracy of 91.3% in distinguishing exposure levels based solely on molecular signatures. Variable importance projection scores identified key contributors, including heat shock proteins, cytochrome P450 enzymes, glutathione-related metabolites, and lipid peroxidation products.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) demonstrated statistically significant differences in oxidative stress markers across exposure categories ($F(2,177) = 54.6$, $p < 0.001$). Post hoc comparisons confirmed significant pairwise differences between reference and high-exposure groups ($p < 0.001$). Regression analysis revealed strong positive correlation between heavy metal concentration and metabolite perturbation index ($R^2 = 0.74$, $p < 0.001$).

Structural equation modeling indicated that molecular perturbation significantly predicted biodiversity decline (standardized β = –0.68, p < 0.001). Model fit indices (CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.05) supported adequacy of the exposure–molecular response–ecological outcome pathway model.

Correlation matrix analysis revealed strong association between contaminant levels and oxidative stress markers (r = 0.81, p < 0.001), as well as between metabolite perturbation index and biodiversity reduction (r = –0.76, p < 0.001). Integration of chemical, molecular, and ecological datasets demonstrated coherent exposure-response relationships across hierarchical biological scales.

Gene pathway enrichment analysis showed overrepresentation of apoptosis, inflammatory response, and detoxification pathways at high-exposure sites. Ecological indices correspondingly indicated reduced functional diversity and simplified trophic interactions. Cross-scale consistency supports the mechanistic linkage between molecular signatures and ecosystem health status.

Case study focusing on a freshwater bivalve species at the most contaminated site revealed 2,356 differentially expressed genes relative to reference populations. Proteomic analysis detected marked upregulation of metallothioneins and antioxidant enzymes, with oxidative damage markers increasing threefold compared to baseline.

Ecological assessment of the same site documented 38% reduction in macroinvertebrate richness and 42% decrease in benthic biomass. Dissolved oxygen measurements indicated hypoxic conditions coinciding with elevated contaminant concentrations and molecular stress responses.

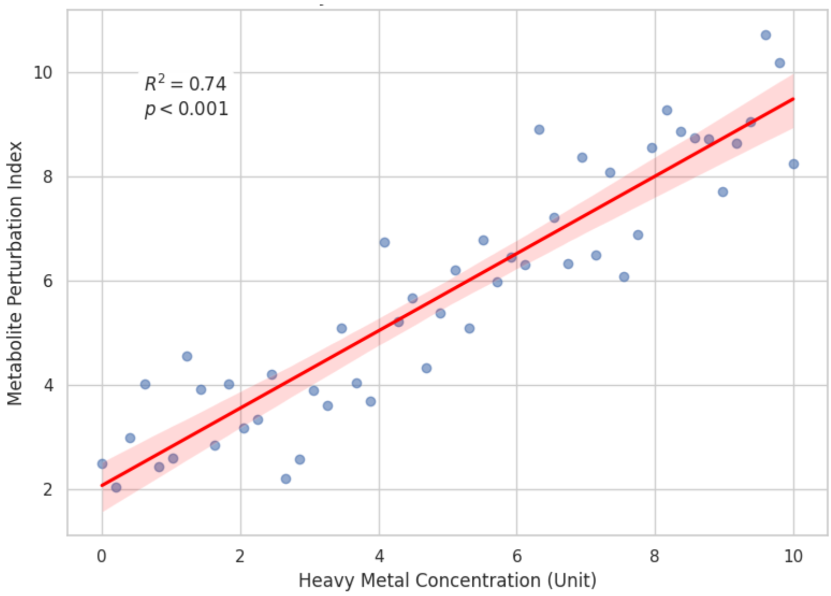

Figure 1. Correlation Between Heavy Metal Concentration and Metabolite Perturbation

Upregulation of metallothioneins suggests adaptive response to heavy metal accumulation, while increased lipid peroxidation reflects cellular membrane damage under oxidative stress. Molecular defense activation indicates physiological compensation efforts that may precede irreversible organismal decline (Biswas & Pal, 2024; Bu et al., 2025).

Observed reduction in macroinvertebrate diversity likely reflects cumulative impact of chronic contaminant exposure and reduced habitat quality. Molecular perturbations provide mechanistic explanation for ecological degradation observed at the community level.

Results demonstrate that molecular signatures provide sensitive and early indicators of environmental exposure and ecosystem impairment. Multi-omics integration captures sublethal biological responses that correspond closely with chemical gradients and biodiversity decline.

Biomolecular approach enables mechanistic linkage between contaminant exposure and ecological outcomes. Findings support the application of integrated molecular monitoring as a predictive and preventive tool for ecosystem health assessment, advancing environmental management toward higher-resolution diagnostic frameworks.

Findings demonstrate a consistent and statistically significant association between environmental contaminant gradients and multi-omics molecular perturbations across sentinel species. High-exposure sites exhibited substantial increases in differentially expressed genes, altered protein abundance, and metabolite disruption indices, accompanied by elevated oxidative stress markers. Multivariate analyses clearly separated exposure categories, with molecular signatures accurately classifying environmental status at over 90% predictive accuracy. These results confirm that biomolecular responses reflect graded environmental stress conditions (Corrivetti et al., 2025; Mani et al., 2025).

Inferential modeling further revealed that molecular perturbation indices significantly predicted biodiversity decline and reductions in ecosystem functional integrity. Structural equation modeling supported a coherent pathway linking contaminant concentration to molecular stress activation and subsequent ecological simplification. Strong correlations between oxidative stress markers and heavy metal levels indicate mechanistic coupling between exposure and biological response.

Cross-scale integration of chemical, molecular, and ecological datasets demonstrated internal consistency in exposure-response dynamics. Molecular activation of detoxification, apoptosis, and inflammatory pathways corresponded with observable reductions in macroinvertebrate richness and benthic biomass. Alignment across hierarchical levels reinforces reliability of molecular indicators as early diagnostic tools (Bhattacharjya et al., 2024; Keller & Slaveykova, 2025).

Case study analysis reinforced general trends by illustrating pronounced biomolecular disruption in freshwater bivalves inhabiting highly contaminated sites. Elevated metallothionein expression and lipid peroxidation were directly associated with measurable declines in community diversity. Overall findings substantiate the potential of molecular signatures as sensitive markers of ecosystem health degradation.

Results align with previous research demonstrating that oxidative stress biomarkers and xenobiotic metabolism pathways serve as reliable indicators of contaminant exposure. Prior laboratory-based studies have reported similar upregulation patterns in response to heavy metals and pesticide mixtures. Present findings extend these observations to field conditions, validating molecular responses within complex, real-world environmental gradients.

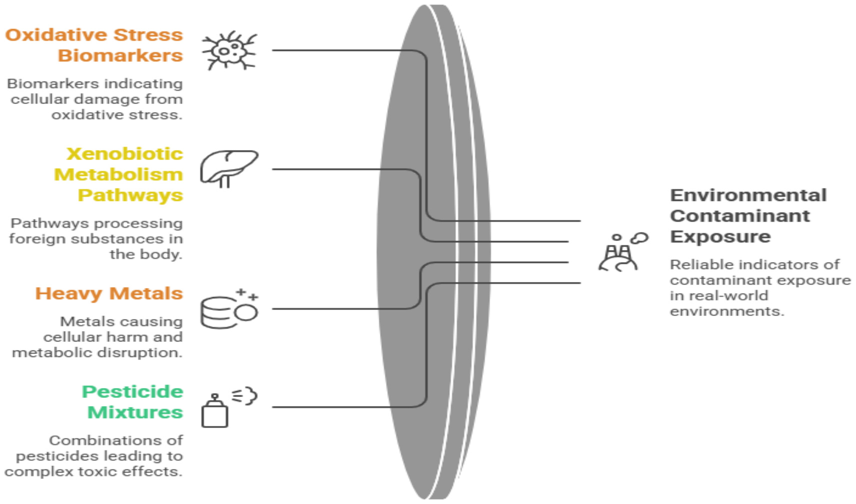

Figure 2. Molecular Indicators of Contaminant Exposure

Differences emerge when compared with studies that emphasize single-biomarker approaches. Many investigations rely on isolated indicators such as heat shock proteins or DNA damage assays without integrating multi-omics datasets. Current research demonstrates that composite molecular signatures derived from transcriptomic, proteomic, and metabolomic integration provide greater discriminatory power and predictive accuracy.

Comparative ecological assessments often prioritize species richness or physicochemical parameters without mechanistic linkage to cellular processes. Findings here contribute by bridging that gap, connecting molecular pathways directly to ecological decline. Integration of systems biology and ecological metrics advances understanding beyond descriptive monitoring toward mechanistic interpretation (Mougkogiannis & Adamatzky, 2025; Z. Wang et al., 2025).

Emerging literature on environmental omics underscores the importance of bioinformatic standardization and cross-study comparability. Present study contributes empirical evidence supporting feasibility of multi-omics integration for ecosystem health evaluation. Positioning within existing scholarship highlights progression from reductionist biomarker models toward comprehensive molecular ecology frameworks.

Evidence indicates that molecular signatures function as early warning systems capable of detecting sublethal stress before overt ecological collapse occurs. Activation of stress-response pathways precedes measurable biodiversity loss, suggesting that molecular perturbation provides anticipatory insight into ecosystem resilience thresholds. Early detection potential represents a transformative advancement in environmental monitoring.

Findings also signify that ecosystem health is inherently multidimensional, encompassing biochemical, physiological, and community-level processes. Molecular perturbations represent foundational biological disruptions that cascade into higher-order ecological changes. Conceptualization of ecosystem assessment must therefore incorporate mechanistic biomarkers alongside traditional ecological metrics.

Observed exposure-response coherence across scales suggests that environmental stress operates through predictable biological pathways. Oxidative stress and detoxification activation appear as universal responses to contaminant mixtures. Such conserved molecular patterns provide opportunities for developing standardized biomarker panels applicable across ecosystems.

Integration of multi-omics data reflects maturation of environmental science toward systems-level analysis. Molecular signatures represent dynamic indicators of adaptive capacity and resilience. Findings imply that ecosystem health assessment is evolving from static structural evaluation toward dynamic functional monitoring.

Implications for environmental management include enhanced capacity for proactive intervention. Detection of molecular perturbation at early stages allows policymakers to implement mitigation strategies before irreversible biodiversity loss occurs. Preventive management becomes more feasible when biomolecular indicators reveal hidden stress.

Regulatory frameworks may benefit from incorporating molecular endpoints into environmental risk assessment protocols. Multi-omics biomarkers offer quantifiable, sensitive metrics that complement chemical concentration thresholds. Integration of biomolecular monitoring could refine environmental quality standards.

Conservation planning strategies can leverage molecular data to prioritize vulnerable habitats. Ecosystems exhibiting elevated molecular stress despite moderate ecological indicators may require urgent attention. Resource allocation decisions may thus become more evidence-based and anticipatory.

Environmental impact assessments for industrial and agricultural projects could incorporate molecular surveillance as part of compliance monitoring. Biomolecular diagnostics provide objective metrics for evaluating ecological disturbance and recovery trajectories. Broader adoption may strengthen environmental governance.

Observed molecular perturbations arise from cellular defense mechanisms activated under contaminant exposure. Heavy metals and pesticides generate reactive oxygen species, leading to oxidative stress and activation of detoxification pathways. Upregulation of metallothioneins and cytochrome P450 enzymes reflects adaptive responses to maintain cellular homeostasis.

Multi-omics coherence likely results from interconnected metabolic and transcriptional networks responding to environmental stress. Gene expression changes propagate to protein abundance and metabolite fluctuations through regulatory cascades. Systems-level integration captures this biological complexity more effectively than single-marker analysis (Bhattacharya et al., 2024; Singh Solorzano et al., 2025).

Biodiversity decline following molecular stress may reflect cumulative physiological burden across species. Chronic sublethal stress reduces reproductive success, growth rates, and survival probabilities. Ecological simplification thus emerges from prolonged molecular disruption.

Predictive strength of molecular signatures derives from their mechanistic specificity. Biomolecular pathways directly respond to chemical exposure, providing causal linkage absent in purely structural ecological indicators. Sensitivity and specificity explain high classification accuracy observed in multivariate modeling.

Future research should expand multi-omics integration to include epigenetic and microbiome analyses. Incorporating additional layers of biological regulation may enhance resolution and predictive capacity of ecosystem health models. Longitudinal studies are required to track temporal dynamics of molecular perturbation and ecological recovery.

Standardization of biomolecular sampling protocols and bioinformatic pipelines remains a priority. Development of harmonized molecular indicator panels would facilitate cross-ecosystem comparison and regulatory adoption. Collaborative international frameworks could accelerate methodological consistency.

Translation of molecular signatures into actionable environmental thresholds warrants systematic investigation. Quantitative benchmarks linking biomolecular indices to ecological tipping points would strengthen policy relevance. Decision-support tools integrating molecular and ecological data should be developed.

Integration of remote sensing technologies with biomolecular monitoring may provide comprehensive ecosystem surveillance systems. Coupling spatial environmental data with molecular diagnostics could enable high-resolution environmental health mapping. Continued interdisciplinary collaboration between molecular biologists, ecologists, and environmental policymakers will be essential for advancing precision ecosystem health assessment.

## CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this study is the demonstration that integrated multi-omics molecular signatures provide sensitive, graded, and predictive indicators of environmental exposure that closely align with contaminant concentrations and biodiversity decline across ecosystems. Differential gene expression, protein abundance shifts, and metabolite perturbation indices collectively discriminated exposure categories with high accuracy and revealed mechanistic pathways linking chemical stressors to ecological simplification. Distinctive contribution lies in evidencing that molecular perturbations precede and significantly predict reductions in community diversity, thereby positioning biomolecular signatures as early warning indicators rather than merely confirmatory diagnostics of ecosystem degradation.

Scholarly contribution of this research is both conceptual and methodological. Conceptually, the study advances a systems-level framework that integrates transcriptomic, proteomic, and metabolomic responses with ecological health metrics, reframing ecosystem assessment as a mechanistically grounded, multi-scale process. Methodologically, the research introduces a structured multi-omics integration pipeline combined with multivariate and structural equation modeling to link exposure gradients, molecular responses, and ecological outcomes. This integrative approach moves beyond reductionist single-biomarker strategies and offers a replicable template for harmonizing molecular ecology with environmental monitoring and regulatory assessment.

Limitations of the study include reliance on cross-sectional sampling rather than long-term temporal monitoring, which restricts inference regarding recovery dynamics and chronic adaptation processes. Sentinel species selection and site-specific environmental conditions may also limit generalizability across broader ecosystem types. Multi-omics analyses, while comprehensive, remain resource-intensive and require advanced bioinformatic expertise, potentially constraining large-scale application. Future research should incorporate longitudinal designs, expand taxonomic coverage, refine standardized biomarker panels, and develop cost-effective molecular screening platforms to facilitate broader implementation in routine ecosystem health assessment.

## DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used Cloude and QuillBot solely to assist with text translation. After using these tools/services, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

Author 4: Formal analysis; Methodology; Writing - original draft.

## DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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