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Protein-protein interactions: modelling structure and affinity



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Celebrating fifty years of allostery

Allostery is all about protein-protein interaction

1961

Changeux (1961) Cold Spring Harbor Symp. Qu. Biol. 26:313 Monod & Jacob (1961) Cold Spring Harbor Symp. Qu. Biol. 26:389 Monod, Changeux & Jacob (1963) J. Mol. Biol. 6:306 Monod, Wyman & Changeux (1965) J. Mol. Biol. 12:88

Changeux & Edelstein (2005) Science 308:1424

2011

. . . .

Changeux (2011) Protein Sci. 20:1119





1. Protein-protein interaction (PPI)

in the Protein Data Bank (PDB)

- 2. Analyzing protein-protein interfaces
- 3. Modeling PPI: the CAPRI experiment
- 4. Modeling affinity: a structure/affinity benchmark

Protein-protein interaction (PPI), an essential component of biological structure and function

DNA codes for polypeptide chains, not proteins !

Most proteins are multi-chain assemblies, held together by non-covalent PPI



Quaternary structure:

- In bacteria, >50% proteins are oligomeric; they contain 2 to 12 polypeptide chains.
- In yeast, >50% proteins are part of stable assemblies that contain 2-15 chains

Transient assemblies:

- proteins A and B fold and assemble separately
- A and B "recognize" each other and form a non-covalent complex C when they meet

Examples

- Antigen-antibody recognition
- Enzyme-inhibitor interaction



Large protein assemblies : Rice dwarf virus

- Rice dwarf virus is the largest biological assembly known at the atomic level
- It has 780 polypeptide chains, plus the RNA, and a total momecular weight
 - ≈ 70 millions Da,
- The first virus X-ray structure was Tomato Bushy Stunt Virus (Harrison et al., 1978)



Trypsin /STI on the same scale

PPI in real life: the scale of time and affinity

Affinity is defined by the dissociation equilibrium constant K_d , or the free energy $\Delta G_d = -RT \ln K_d /c^{\circ}$ It determines:

which assemblies actually exist in a cell or an organism

non-specific

> whether an assembly is **permanent or transient** (and can exchange components)



specific

Measurable range

oligomeric proteins

Oligomeric proteins (Monod, Wyman & Changeux, 1965)

In the cell, most proteins are oligomeric

- Homo-oligomers: the polypeptide chains have the same sequence; they come from the same gene
- Hetero-oligomers: the polypeptide chains have different sequences; they come from different genes

In the PDB, 62% of the proteins are oligomeric					
#chains			Homo	Hetero	
1	Monomers	38%			
2	Dimers	35%	30%	5%	
3	Trimers	6%			
4	Tetramers	12%	9%	3%	
5	Pentamers	0.5%			
6	Hexamers	4%			
7	Heptamers	0.1%			
8 to 900)	4%			

3D-Complex database: *http://supfam.mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk/elevy/3dcomplex/*

Levy, Pereira-Leal, Chothia & Teichmann (2006)

Analyzing PPI in the PDB

The information in the PDB is **chemical** and **geometric**.

What does it tell us about the **physics** (thermodynamic stability) and the **biology** (functional relevance and evolution) of PPI ?

Validated sets of PDB entries allow us make the best use of this information.

Validated set	set size	ref.
Transient hetero complexes	75 to 144	Lo Conte et al. (1999); Janin et al. (2008)
		Kastritis et al. (2011)
Homodimers	315	Janin et al. (1988); Dey et al. (2010)
" weak	42	Dey et al. (2010)
Large crystal contacts (monomers)	188	Bahadur et al. (2004)



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ASA as a tool to analyze PPI in structures

ASA solvent accessible surface area

measures protein-solvent contacts

Lee & Richards (1971)

BSA buried surface area (=interface area)

measures protein-protein contacts

Chothia & Janin (1975)

The hydrophobic effect

The free energy of desolvating non-polar (aliphatic or aromatic) groups scales linearly with their ASA

 $\Delta G_{np} = \gamma ASA$ Chothia (1974) $\gamma = 24 \text{ cal/mol.} Å^2$

Other accepted values $\gamma = 30$ to 50 cal/mol.Å²

 $BSA = ASA_{A} + ASA_{B} - ASA_{AB}$



BSA and ΔG_{np} : do they explain the stability of PPI ?

A transient protein-protein complex typically buries 900 Å² of non-polar protein surface.

Thus: $\Delta G_{np} > 20$ kcal/mol in favor of association !!!

Interface size and stability in homodimers



Dey, Chakrabarti & Janin (2010) JMB 398:146

- Most homodimeric proteins assemble while their subunits fold; their assembly is permanent and stable in solution
- Most also have large interfaces: 72% have a *BSA*>2000 Å², up to 10,000 Å²
- In homodimers (and in transient complexes), the smallest interfaces have a BSA ≈900 Å²
- Nearly all the homodimers with *BSA* <1000 Å² are **weak**: in solution, they are in equilibrium with the monomers, with K_d in the range 10⁻⁸ to 10⁻⁵ M.



Interface size in transient complexes



Interface size in transient complexes



Rigid-body vs. flexible recognition



Rigid-body recognition: chymotrypsin-inhibitor complex A standard-size, single patch interface: $BSA = 1470 \text{ Å}^2$ **Very little change** in conformation between the free and bound proteins: 0.6 Å C α RMS



Flexible recognition: Transducin Gα-Gβγ A large interface (*BSA* =2500 Å2) in two patches. ` major conformation changes (1.8 Å Cα RMS)

Signal transduction, large interfaces and conformation changes



The retina, a paradigm of signal transduction

The visual signal is initiated in **rhodopsin** as retinal absorbs a photon. Rhodopsin interacts with the **transducin** $G\alpha$ subunit. $G\alpha$ binds and hydrolyzes GTP, then associates with $G\beta\gamma$. $G\beta\gamma$ can also interact with the cyclase that produces the chemical signal cyclic-GMP.

X-ray structures by the group of the late P. Sigler (Yale)

Non-specific PPI at crystal contacts



Most crystal packing interfaces are much smaller than biological interfaces: their average BSA is only 570 Å²

But there are many exceptions: large crystal packing interfaces, which cannot be distinguished from real interface on the basis of their size only. They illustrate **non-specific PPI**

In crystals with no two-fold symmetry, packing interfaces with *BSA*>800 Å² follow an extreme value distribution. They are more frequent in crystals with two-fold symmetry, where they form **crystal dimers**, often mistaken as biological.

Janin (1997) *Nature Struct Biol* 4:973 Bahadur et al. (2004) *JMB* 336:943



Atomic packing at homodimer and crystal packing interfaces



A strong homodimer 1ctt cytidine deaminase



A weak homodimer 1b8e β-lactoglobulin



Weak protein-protein interfaces are loosely packed

L_d local density index (Bahadur et al., 2004)

D

- count the number of interface atoms within
 D = 12 Å of a given interface atom A_i
- L_d is the average over all interface atoms A_i.

Interface	L _D
homodimers	
strong	43±8
weak	35 ± 5
transient complexes	42
crystal contacts	32
Dey et al. 201	10

Conclusion (part 2)

There is a relation between stability and interface size

- > biologically relevant interfaces have a minimum size with a BSA \approx 900 Å²
- Small interfaces (BSA ≈1000 Ų) form weak homodimers and short-lived complexes
- > standard-size interfaces (BSA = 1200-2000 Å²) yield stable, specific assemblies

...but it is often masked by conformation changes and/or the atomic packing

- > large conformation changes always accompany the formation of large interfaces
- stable assemblies (transient complexes and strong homodimers) have close-packed interfaces
- > weak homodimers and crystal packing contacts have loosely packed interfaces.

Other features relevant to stability

- The interface is enriched in hydrophobic (aromatic/aliphatic) groups relative to the free protein surface In homodimers, but not in transient complexes; it is depleted of electric charges.
- > The interface core has a specific **amino acid composition**; the rim is like the protein surface
- > Residues of the interface core are **conserved in evolution**; the rim is not conserved

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Modeling protein-protein interaction by docking Wodak & Janin (1978)

Given the 3D structure of proteins R and L (*Receptor* and *Ligand*), build the R/L complex

- If R and L are in *bound* conformation (=taken from the complex), docking has only six degrees of freedom
- but in real life, proteins change conformation when they associate
- To be realistic, the prediction must start from *unbound* (=free) protein structures

Macromolecular docking: the procedure

What can docking do for you?

A reliable* and efficient* macromolecular docking procedure complements biochemical and structural studies

- allow building complex assemblies from the known structure of their components
- tell meaningful interactions apart from crystal contacts
- help in the interpretation of low resolution (EM, SAXS) data

and possibly:

- suggest possible interactions that have not been detected experimentally
- Inform on the nature and strength of the interaction

CAPRI is a community-wide experiment to test docking procedures in blind predictions

Assessing structural predictions in community-wide experiments: CAPRI and CASP

> CASP (Critical Assessment of methods of Structure Prediction):

- predict the mode of **folding** of a protein based on the amino acid sequence
- compare to an unpublished X-ray or NMR structure.
- J. Moult (CARB, Rockville MD) launched CASP in 1994
- round of predictions once every two years (CASP9 in 2010) with >100 targets

> CAPRI (Critical Assessment of PRedicted Interactions):

- predict the mode of **recognition** of two proteins by docking their 3D structures
- compare to unpublished X-ray structures of protein-protein complexes.
- CAPRI started in 2001
- Targets are few: a round of prediction begins any time one is made available

http://capri.ebi.ac.uk/

T37: Signalling & membrane traffic Arf6 / LZ2 of JNK-interacting protein 2 Isabet et al. 2009 EMBO J. 28:2835

T37 is a gift of J. Ménetrey (Institut Curie, Paris)

Round 16

Nov. 2008 47 predictors, 18 scorers					
Model quality	High	Med.	Accept		
Predictors	1	7	13		
Scorers	5	13	11		

Each chain of the leucine zipper interacts with the two Arf6

New in CAPRI !

LZ2 had to be model-built from the nonhomologous GCN4 leucine zipper. A great success for predictors and scorers!

The current state of docking methods

- > Make docking algorithms more efficient
- Improve the scoring functions for docking, identifying correct models, and refinement
- Use non-structural information more efficiently (sequence, mutation data etc...)
- Predict and simulate conformation changes
- > Model and predict affinity

Now, predict affinity ?

David Baker and Sarel Fleishman (University of Washington, Seattle) engineer proteins that form novel protein-protein interactions. They make gene constructs, express on the surface of yeast cells, and test if they interact with target proteins (Fleishman et al. 2011, *Science* 332:816)

David and Sarel gave us large sets of designed models, and challenged CAPRI participants to **predict which ones make a stable interaction** (very few actually do).

- CAPRI Round 20 (Feb. 2010):42 designs, one that binds
- CAPRI Round 21 (April-June 2010): 87 designs, one that binds

38 predictors CAPRI groups participated the results were essentially random... Scoring functions designed to rank docking models of proteins known to bind fail to predict whether two proteins bind or not. To do that, we must predict affinity !

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Modeling ΔG from structure Horton & Lewis (1992) oncentration (xN $\Delta G_{obs} = -RT \ln (K_d/c^{\circ})$ $\Delta \mathbf{G}_{calc} = \alpha \Delta \mathbf{G}_{np} + \beta \Delta \mathbf{G}_{pol} + \Delta \mathbf{G}_{rt}$ о Horton & Lewis, 1992 $\Delta G_{np} \approx 25 \text{ cal/mol}.\text{Å}^2$ (kcal/mol) 1HBS similar to Chothia (1974) 3CPA 2TPI-IV \geq ΔG_{pol} based on the atomic 1INS desolvation coefficients of Eisenberg & Mclachlan (1986) $\Delta {\bf G}_{obs}$ 4CPA • β = -1.2 wrong sign ! 2KAI 2SEC $\Delta G_{rt} = -6 \text{ kcal/mol}$ \succ 1CSE 2HFL 3SGB СПСНО (external degrees of freedom) R²=0.96 2551 2PTC **15 observed values** H 1TPA 2TPI-BPTI **3 variables** -20 -10 -20 0 $-\Delta G_{calc}$ (kcal/mol)

Later attempts to fit ΔG didn't do so well...

		Sample size	R ² correl. coeff	<∆G _{calc} - ∆G _{obs} > (kcal/mol)
Horton & Lewis (19	92)	15	0.96	0.8
Audie & Scarlata (2007)				
	training set	24	0.97	0.6
	test set	35	0.53	2.4
Zhang et al. (2005)		82	0.53	2.2
Su et al. (2009)	test set 5	82	0.53	2.2
	test set 6	86	0.58	2.2

Wrong models based on the reaction product, but not the reactants
Wrong data - and errors that propagate from one paper to the next

Building a structure-affinity benchmark

We* start from the **Docking Benchmark** version 4.0 (Hwang et al. 2010), which includes the structures of 176 complexes and their **unbound** components, and **collect K_d values** from the literature.

We do our best NOT to

- associate a K_d with the wrong proteins or the wrong complex
- use second hand data that can't be traced to an actual measurement
- > or data obtained *in vivo*, or under poorly defined conditions (IC_{50})
- copy typos (including typos in original papers)

while keeping track of

- method artefacts in K_d measurement (immobilization, reporter groups etc.)
- > the **conditions of the measurement** : pH, ionic strength etc.
- differences between the proteins in crystal and solution studies (genetic constructs, mutations, covalent modifications)
- > allosteric ligand effects

We*: Panos Kastritis (Utrecht), Iain Moal (London) All the data were triple-checked by the rest of the team...

Benchmark composition: Measuring K_d

144 experimental values:

40% Titration (Langmuir isotherm)

- Spectroscopy: fluorescence,
 UV absorbance, NMR etc...
- Calorimetry (ITC)

40% Kinetics $(K_d = k_d/k_a)$

- Surface plasmon resonance (SPR)
- Fast kinetics (stopped-flow)

15% Enzyme inhibition

 K_i corrected for competition with substrate and slow binding;

5% Other methods (AUC etc.)

How experimental conditions affect K_d

Ionic strength	0.1 - 0.5 M	0.12 - 0.38	3	
рН	5 - 8.5	0.15 - 8	53	

Data on *Streptomyces* inhibitor / thermolysin Kunugi et al. 1999 *FEBS Lett* 259:815

Error bars in K_d data

Source of discrepancy	О(К _d) / К _d	σ(∆G) kcal/mol	(K)
Experimental error (as reported)	20-50%	0.1-0.25	
Discrepancy between methods	2-10	0.4-1.4	
Protein sequence, modifications etc	1-10	<1.4	
Dependence on			
temperature (20-35°C)	2	0.4	
ionic strength (0.1-0.5 M)	2-10	0.4-1.4	
pH (6-8.5)	10-50	1.4-2.3	

Conclusion:

- > Most K_d values in our set are defined to within one order of magnitude
- > It makes no sense to model or predict ΔG to within better than 1.4 kcal/mol

unless one can also model its pH dependence

Same structure, different K_d: colicin DNase/immunity protein Kleanthous et al. (1998) *Mol. Microbiol.* 28:227; Meenan et al. (2010) *PNAS* 107:10080

Colicins are protein weapons excreted by *E. coli* strains to kill other bacteria; they carry DNase (or other) enzymic activities. To protect itself against its own colicin, each strain also produces an **immunity protein** that inhibits the cognate colicin very efficiently ($K_i < 1 \text{ pM}$), and other (non-cognate) colicins poorly ($K_i > 1 \text{ nM}$). Cell survival requires $K_i < 0.1 \text{ nM}$.

The DNase domain of colicin **E9** has been crystallized in complex with the cognate **Im9** and the noncognate **Im2** (68% seq id).

The two complexes have a very similar structure (rmsd = 0.4 Å), but extremely different affinities

PDB	complex	K _d		
1EMV	E9 / Im9	2.4 10 ⁻¹⁴ M		
2WPT	E9 / Im2	10 ⁻⁷ M		
K_d ratio = 4.10 ⁶ $\triangle \triangle G$ = 9.2 kcal/mol				

Trypsinogen as an allosteric protein Bode (1979) *JMB* 127:357

How trypsinogen becomes trypsin:

- Proteolytic cleavage of the Lys-Ile16 peptide bond releases a -NH₃⁺ that can interact with Asp194 at the active site, triggering a major **conformation change**. The protein becomes fully ordered, a substrate binding site forms, and the enzyme becomes active
- > **BPTI** binding induces the same change
- > addition of the *lleVal* dipeptide also !

Allosteric interaction: BPTI binding raises the affinity of trypsinogen for *IleVal* by > 5 orders of magnitude.

Same structure, different K_d: trypsin and trypsinogen / BPTI Felhammer, Bode, Huber (1977) *JMB* 111:415

trypsinogen

X-ray structures (W. Bode)

T, T:I and *Tg*:I are all very similar, but **Tg is different** (no substrate binding site, disordered loops)

Affinity for BPTI

Experimental	
trypsin T	$K = 6 \ 10^{-14} M$
trypsinogen Tg	K = 2.3 10 ⁻⁶ M
Assuming $Tg \approx T$	K ₂ ≈ 6 10 ⁻¹⁴ M
From the linkage equation	
isomerization Tg -> Tg	K ₁ ≈310 ⁻⁸

Allosteric systems

- > There are many allosteric proteins our affinity benchmark
- > They play essential roles in regulation
- > Their affinity for a protein ligand can be highly dependent on the presence (and concentration) of another ligand :

H⁺ (pH effect), Ca⁺⁺, small molecule, DNA etc...

Example: G-proteins

- o G-proteins bind GTP and hydrolyze it to GDP in a highly regulated way
- o they change conformation when GDP or GTP binds ('switch' regions)
- o they interact with many partner proteins (GAP, GEF, kinases etc...)
- K_d for a partner protein may change by 3 to 5 orders of magnitude between the 'empty' form, the GDP complex and the GTP complex
- o Signaling depends on that allosteric effect

Fitting ΔG in the rigid-body case

48 of the 145 complexes (33%) display small changes at the interface
(Σ δx² <35 Å², I_rmsd below ≈1 Å)

On those, ΔG_d correlates with the interface size: the *BSA* accounts for \approx 1/3 of the variance

The outliers 2ptc (trypsin/BPTI) ele ctrostatics? 1z0k (Rab4/rabenosyn-5) poor packing?

Fitting ΔG : the cost of conformation changes

27 of the 145 complexes (20%) display very large movements and/or disorderto-order transitions ($\Sigma \ \delta X^2 > 165 \ \text{\AA}^2$, I_rmsd = 1.5 to 9 Å)

All have $\Delta G_{obs} < \Delta G_{calc}$ 1jiw (UEV/ubiquitin) has a Zn metal bond.

 ΔG_{obs} - ΔG_{calc} is an estimate of the average free energy cost of the conformation changes :

 $<\Delta G_{conf}> = 4.7 \text{ kcal.mol}^{-1}$

(the maximum difference is 34 kcal.mol⁻¹)

What is new in the structure/affinity benchmark ?

- > We found a reliable K_d value for ≈ 80% of the complexes in the Docking Benchmark - but only after a lot of cross-checking !
- > We now have the first version of a database
- > Along with the complexes, the unbound structures are available
- > Nine entries represent cognate/non-cognate pairs of complexes,
- Many proteins are allosteric and have ligand binding sites that interact (trypsinogen, G-proteins, receptors etc...)
- > Many displays large conformation changes ... and that costs free energy !

http://bmm.cancerresearchuk.org/~bmmadmin/Affinity Kastritis et al. (2011) Protein Sci. 20:482

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Protein-protein interfaces in the PDB

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Structure/affinity benchmark

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H. Hwang, Z. Weng (U Mass, Worcester, Mass)

Benchmark composition: functional classes

Class	Class		non- cognate	∆ G (kcal/m	s.d. ol)*
Α	Antigen/antibody	19	2	12.2	1.3
EI	Enzyme/inhibitor	41%{ {40	4	13.8	2.2
ES	Enzyme/substrate	11	1	9.1	1.8
OG	G-proteins	19	-	9.0	2.
OR	Receptors	14	-	11.4	1.6
ΟΧ	Miscellaneous	41	2	9.1	2.3
	All	144	9	10.7	2.9
				* cognato only	

* cognate only

Within a functional class, the mean value of ΔG is a predictor

> at least as good as any published physical model: s.d. < 2.4 kcal/mol

> nearly optimal for A (antibodies) and OR (receptors): s.d. ≈ 1.4 kcal/mol)