

Artificial Intelligence Strategies for Protein Structure, Dynamics and Design

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1. First AI approaches in Structural Bioinformatics
 2. AlphaFold
 3. Protein flexibility prediction
 4. Pathogenicity prediction
 5. Recent developments
 6. Conclusion(s)

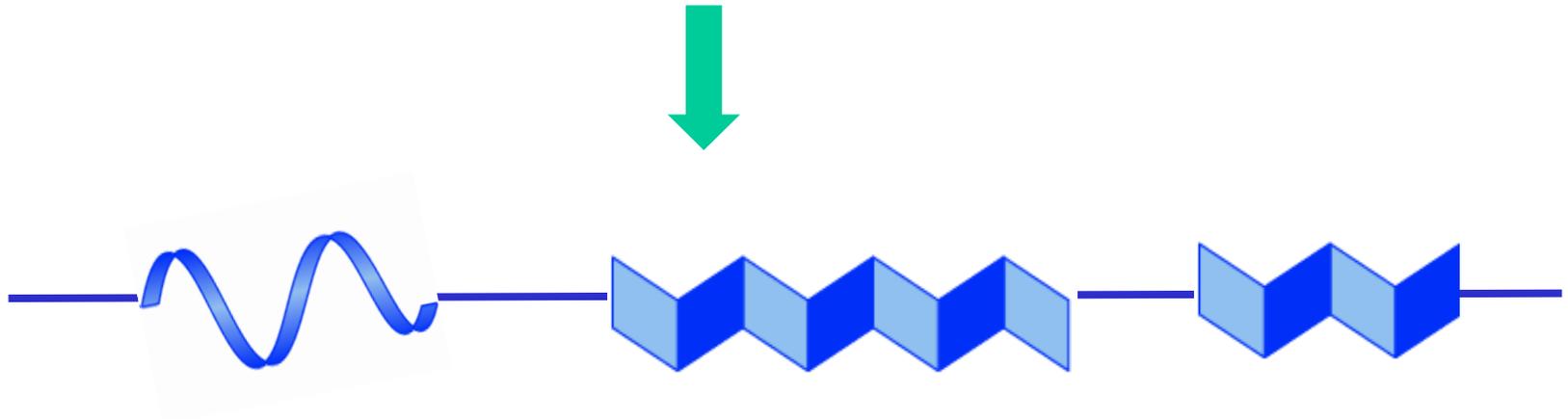
1. FIRST AI APPROACHES IN STRUCTURAL BIOINFORMATICS

-
- Prediction of secondary structures from the sequences

...SVAWCLPKPLPEGTEKDQTATIPSLSAMLGALFLWMFWPSFNSALLRSP IERKNAVFN...

- Prediction of secondary structures from the sequences

...SVAWCLPKPLPEGTEDKDKQTATIPSLSAMLGALFLWMFWPSFNSALLRSPIERKNAVFN...



➤ Stats - Garnier–Osguthorpe–Robson (and later with Gibrat)

GOR I (1978) information theory, single-residue statistics $Q_3 = 58.0\%$

GOR II (1985) Improved dataset, expanded statistics $Q_3 = 61.5\%$

GOR III (1996) Conditional probability including neighbors $Q_3 = 64.0\%$

GOR IV (1997) Longer windows, improved parameters, uses large curated datasets $Q_3 = 64.4\%$



$$Q_3 = \frac{\text{right state predicted}}{\text{total number res.}}$$

1988

➤ Qian and Sejnowski – Artificial Neural Networks

J. Mol. Biol. (1988) **202**, 865–884

Predicting the Secondary Structure of Globular Proteins Using Neural Network Models

Ning Qian and Terrence J. Sejnowski

*Department of Biophysics
The Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, MD 21218, U.S.A.*

(Received 25 September 1987, and in revised form 14 March 1988)

We present a new method for predicting the secondary structure of globular proteins based on non-linear neural network models. Network models learn from existing protein structures how to predict the secondary structure of local sequences of amino acids. The average success rate of our method on a testing set of proteins non-homologous with the corresponding training set was 64.3% on three types of secondary structure (α -helix, β -sheet, and coil), with correlation coefficients of $C_\alpha=0.41$, $C_\beta=0.31$ and $C_{\text{coil}}=0.41$. These quality indices are all higher than those of previous methods. The prediction accuracy for the first 25 residues of the N-terminal sequence was significantly better. We conclude from computational experiments on real and artificial structures that no method based solely on local information in the protein sequence is likely to produce significantly better results for non-homologous proteins. The performance of our method of homologous proteins is much better than for non-homologous proteins, but is not as good as simply assuming that homologous sequences have identical structures.

1986

➤ Qian and Sejnowski

Single network $Q_3 = 62.3\%$

GOR II (1985) $Q_3 = 61.5\%$

GOR III (1996) $Q_3 = 64.0\%$

GOR IV (1997) $Q_3 = 64.4\%$

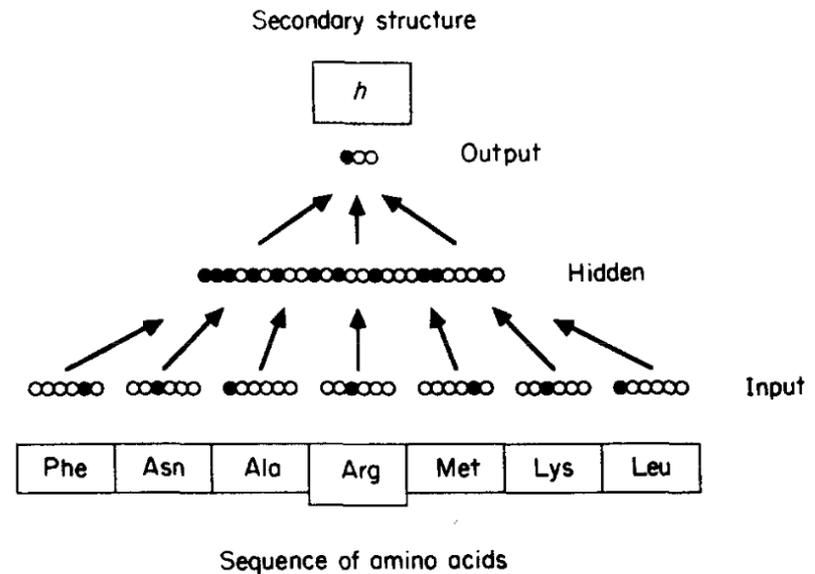


Figure 1. A diagram of network architecture. The standard network had 13 input groups, with 21 units/group, representing a stretch of 13 contiguous amino acids (only 7 input groups and 7 units/group are illustrated). Information from the input layer is transformed by an intermediate layer of “hidden” units to produce a pattern of activity in 3 output units, which represent the secondary structure prediction for the central amino acid.

1986

➤ Qian and Sejnowski

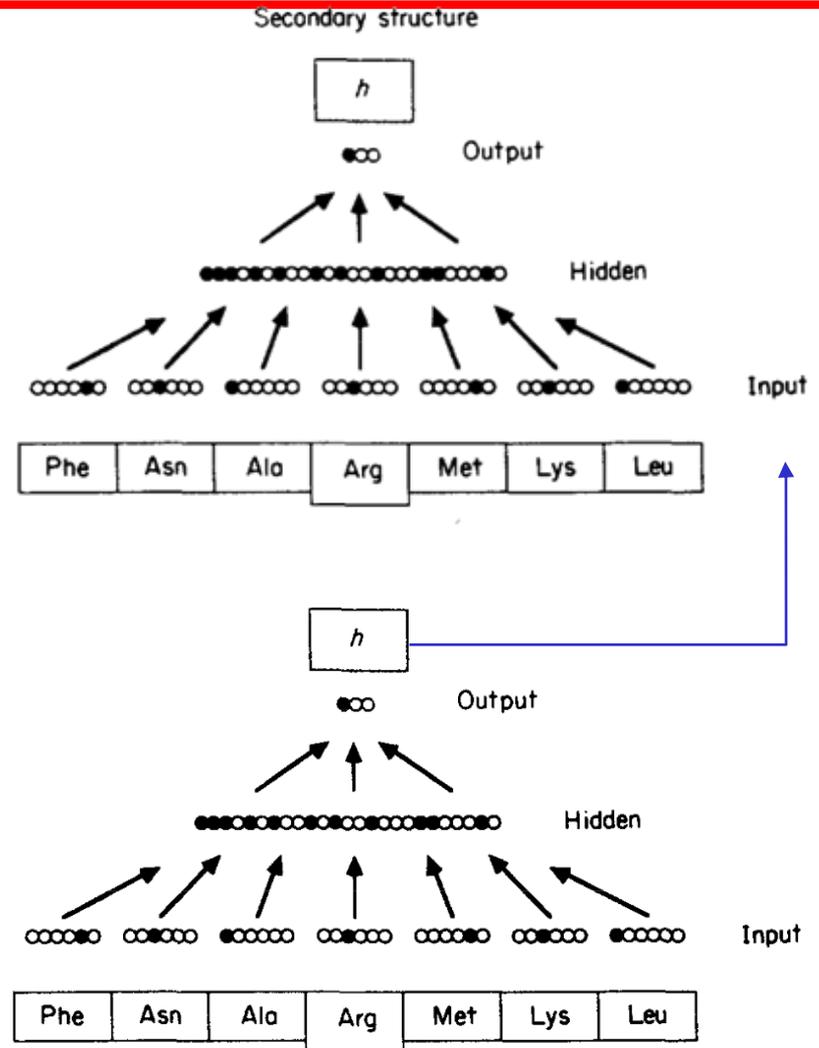
Single network $Q_3 = 62.3\%$

2-nets* $Q_3 = 64.3\%$

GOR IV(1997) $Q_3 = 64.4\%$

Not bad but GOR is statistics

*Network cascade



1993

➤ The Breaking point: PHD by Rost and Sander

J. Mol. Biol. (1993) 232, 584–599

Prediction of Protein Secondary Structure at Better than 70% Accuracy

Burkhard Rost and Chris Sander

*European Molecular Biology Laboratory
Meyerhofstraße 1, D-6900 Heidelberg, Germany*

(Received 1 February 1993; accepted 13 April 1993)

We have trained a two-layered feed-forward neural network on a non-redundant data base of 130 protein chains to predict the secondary structure of water-soluble proteins. A new key aspect is the use of evolutionary information in the form of multiple sequence alignments that are used as input in place of single sequences. The inclusion of protein family information in this form increases the prediction accuracy by six to eight percentage points. A combination of three levels of networks results in an overall three-state accuracy of 70.8% for globular proteins (sustained performance). If four membrane protein chains are included in the evaluation, the overall accuracy drops to 70.2%. The prediction is well balanced between α -helix, β -strand and loop: 65% of the observed strand residues are predicted correctly. The accuracy in predicting the content of three secondary structure types is comparable to that of circular dichroism spectroscopy. The performance accuracy is verified by a sevenfold cross-validation test, and an additional test on 26 recently solved proteins. Of particular practical importance is the definition of a position-specific reliability index. For half of the residues predicted with a high level of reliability the overall accuracy increases to better than 82%. A further strength of the method is the more realistic prediction of segment length. The protein family prediction method is available for testing by academic researchers *via* an electronic mail server.

Keywords: protein secondary structure prediction; multiple sequence alignments;
secondary structure content; neural network

1993

➤ The Breaking point: PHD by Rost and Sander

Better Protein Secondary Structure Prediction

589

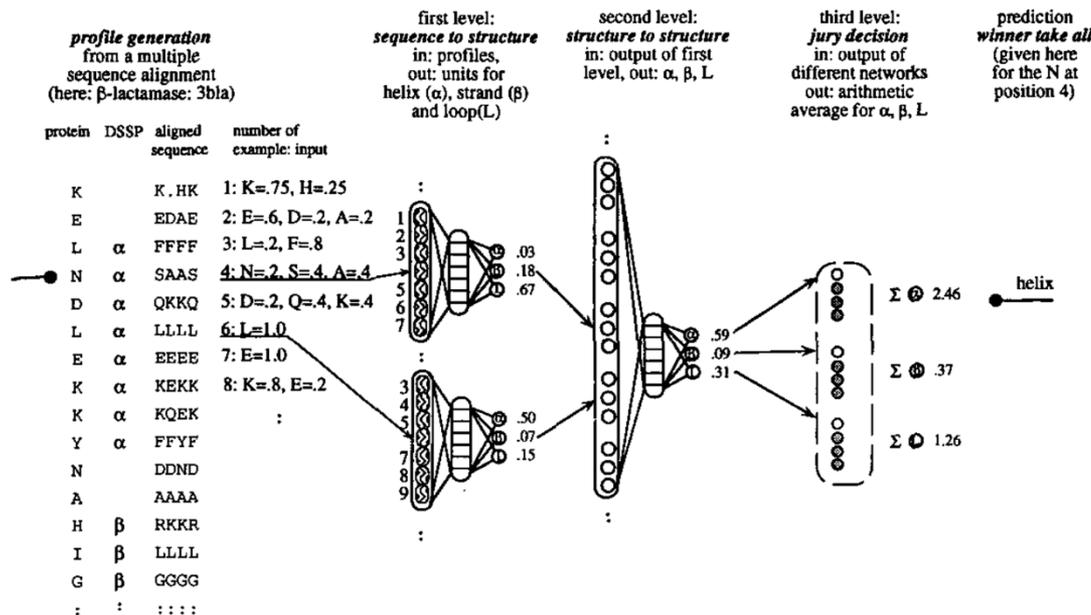


Figure 2. Our network system for secondary structure prediction. Our network system for predicting secondary structure consists of 3 layers: 2 network layers and 1 layer averaging over independently trained networks. Θ , Basic cell containing $20 + 1$ units to code residues at position 1 to w of the input window; here, $w = 7$. \ominus , Hidden units. Circled α , β and L, output units for helix, strand and loop. Stippled circles, output from architectures not shown here. \bullet , Example: residue N at position 4 predicted to be in helix \bullet .

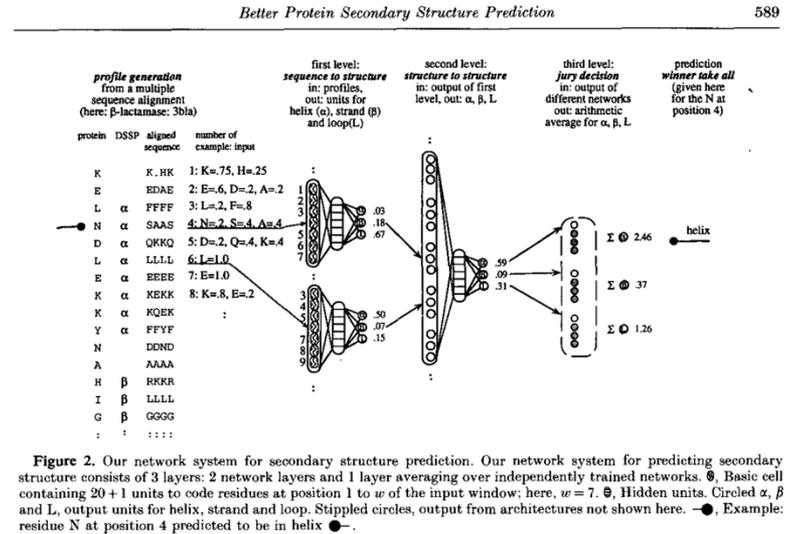
1993

➤ The Breaking point: PHD by Rost and Sander

PHD (Profile network from HeiDelberg)

Similar networks !

But not the same data :
 Evolution (PSI-BLAST-type profiles)



1993-97

➤ Evolution of PHD by Rost and Sander

(1993) $Q_3 = 71\%$

(1995) $Q_3 = 72.2\%$ on RS126

and a webserver !

(1997) $Q_3 = 76.0\%$ on RS126 and 513

Improvements included refine datasets, change in the window, and real PSSM from PSI-BLAST.

1993-97

➤ Evolution of PHD by Rost and Sander

(1993)	$Q_3 = 71\%$
(1995)	$Q_3 = 72.2\%$ on RS126
(1997)	$Q_3 = 76.0\%$ on RS126
Qian and Sejnowski (1988)	$Q_3 = 64.3\%$
GOR IV(1997)	$Q_3 = 64.4\%$

➤ More impressive: PHDtm for transmembrane helices

Protein Science (1995), 4:521-533. Cambridge University Press. Printed in the USA.
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Transmembrane helices predicted at 95% accuracy

BURKHARD ROST,¹ RITA CASADIO,² PIERO FARISELLI,² AND CHRIS SANDER¹

¹ Protein Design Group, EMBL Heidelberg, 69 012 Heidelberg, Germany

² Laboratory of Biophysics, Department of Biology, University of Bologna, 40 126 Bologna, Italy

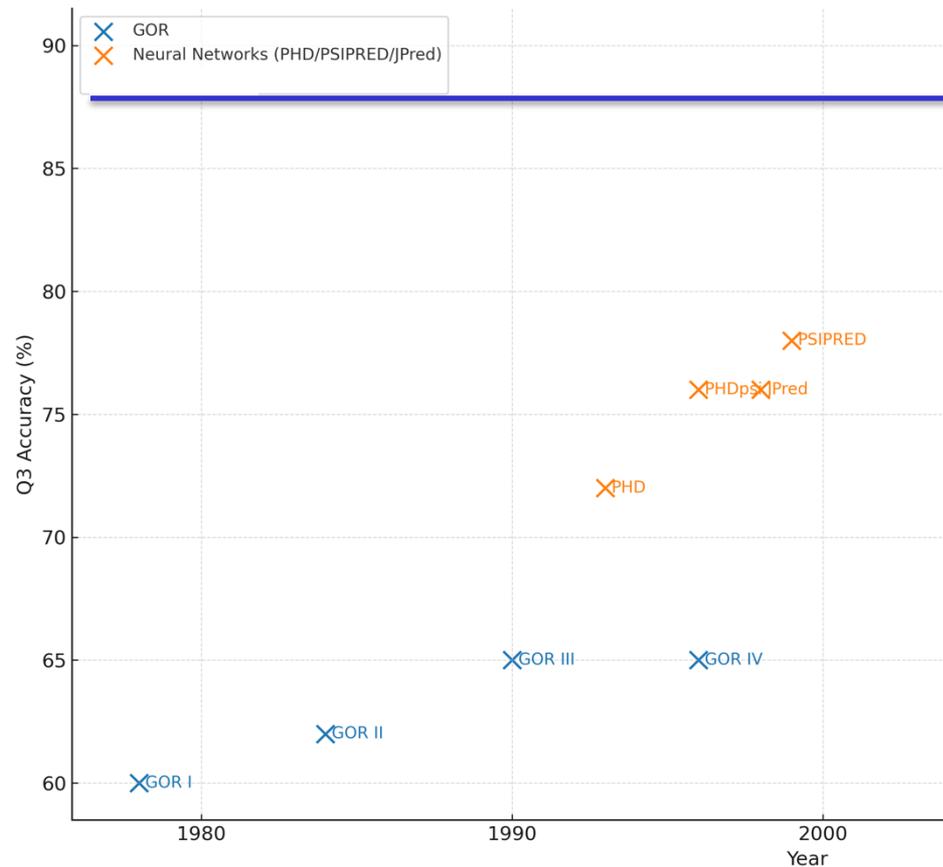
(RECEIVED October 31, 1994; ACCEPTED December 29, 1994)

Abstract

We describe a neural network system that predicts the locations of transmembrane helices in integral membrane proteins. By using evolutionary information as input to the network system, the method significantly improved on a previously published neural network prediction method that had been based on single sequence information. The input data were derived from multiple alignments for each position in a window of 13 adjacent residues: amino acid frequency, conservation weights, number of insertions and deletions, and position of the window with respect to the ends of the protein chain. Additional input was the amino acid composition and length of the whole protein. A rigorous cross-validation test on 69 proteins with experimentally determined locations of transmembrane segments yielded an overall two-state per-residue accuracy of 95%. About 94% of all segments were predicted correctly. When applied to known globular proteins as a negative control, the network system incorrectly predicted fewer than 5% of globular proteins as having transmembrane helices. The method was applied to all 269 open reading frames from the complete yeast VIII chromosome. For 59 of these, at least two transmembrane helices were predicted. Thus, the prediction is that about one-fourth of all proteins from yeast VIII contain one transmembrane helix, and some 20%, more than one.

Keywords: evolutionary information; integral membrane proteins; multiple alignments; neural networks; protein structure prediction; secondary structure; yeast VIII chromosome

➤ Gain in prediction accuracy



Theoretical
limit (88%)

➤ But is everything really so beautiful ...

-
- But is everything really so beautiful ...
 - dataset RS 126 ... is not really non – redundant ... so it bias the results ...

-
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 - And the dataset 513 is in fact also not really cleaned...

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 - The issue is that some non-specialists still use them !!!

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- But is everything really so beautiful ...
 - Dataset RS 126 ... is not really non – redundant ... so it bias the results ...
 - And the dataset 513 is in fact also not really cleaned...
 - The issue is that some non-specialists still use them !!!

Important point: Data, data, data ...

➤ But is everything really so beautiful ...

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Evaluation of methods for the prediction of membrane spanning regions

Steffen Möller¹, Michael D. R. Croning^{1,2} and Rolf Apweiler¹

¹EMBL-Outstation European Bioinformatics Institute, Wellcome Trust Genome Campus, Hinxton, Cambridge CB10 1SD, UK and ²School of Biological Sciences, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PT, UK

Received on December 15, 2000; revised on March 13, 2001; accepted on March 16, 2001

ABSTRACT

Motivation: A variety of tools are available to predict the topology of transmembrane proteins. To date no independent evaluation of the performance of these tools has been published. A better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the different tools would guide both the biologist and the bioinformatician to make better predictions of membrane protein topology.

Results: Here we present an evaluation of the performance of the currently best known and most widely used methods for the prediction of transmembrane regions in proteins. Our results show that TMHMM is currently the best performing transmembrane prediction program.

Contact: moeller@ebi.ac.uk; croning@ebi.ac.uk; apweiler@ebi.ac.uk

INTRODUCTION

Genome sequencing projects provide the scientific community with an ever-increasing rate of predicted protein sequences. To analyze these biochemically uncharacterized sequences, computer based methods have been established to provide researchers with an initial characterization. Many of these methods make use of sequence similarity to already described proteins. Other methods are used to predict certain properties like membrane spanning regions.

membrane transport of many ions and solutes, as well as being involved in the organism's recognition of self. The pharmaceutical industry has found them of particular interest, since membrane-bound receptors and channels have been repeatedly proven to be fruitful therapeutic targets. Additionally, membrane proteins often mediate acquired resistance to drugs.

Thorough structural analysis of membrane proteins is difficult to achieve since it is very hard to determine the structure due to the intrinsic difficulties involved in growing crystals of membrane proteins. It takes considerably less effort to biochemically determine just the membrane topology (Geest and Lolkema, 2000), which includes the determination of the localization of membrane spanning regions (MSRs) and the polarity of their integration into the membrane (sidedness).

Still, the topology of the vast majority of membrane proteins remains biochemically undetermined. Our group provides a collection of proteins with known biochemical characterizations of membrane topology (Möller *et al.*, 2000). However, this collection contains only ~200 well-characterized sequences. Consequently, the characterization of the remaining membrane proteins requires an accurate method for the automated prediction of MSRs.

Reliable computational methods for topology predictions are very valuable as they provide the basis for further experimental analysis. A variety of tools have

➤ But is everything really so beautiful ...

Table 4b. Comparison of performance on an identical set of proteins unknown to methods

Method	All MSRs found	Additionally correct sidedness
TMHMM-Retrain	52 (60%)	43 (83% of 52)
TMHMM 2.0	48 (55%)	36 (75% of 48)
TMHMM 1.0	45 (52%)	33 (73% of 45)
MEMSAT 1.5	41 (47%)	33 (80% of 41)
KKD	39 (45%)	n/a
TMAP	35 (40%)	12 (34% of 35)
KD8	33 (37%)	n/a
Tmpred	29 (33%)	9 (31% of 29)
Eisenberg	27 (31%)	n/a
SOSUI	27 (31%)	n/a
KD5	26 (30%)	n/a
KD9	25 (29%)	n/a
DAS	24 (28%)	n/a
HMMTOP	23 (26%)	19 (83% of 23)
KD6	21 (24%)	n/a
PHD	18 (21%)	17 (94% of 18)
Toppred 2	16 (18%)	6 (38% of 16)
ALOM 2	9 (10%)	n/a

Table 3. Performance on known MSRs not used in the training sets of the method

Method	TP + FN	TP	FN	FP	FN + FP	% correct
TMHMM-Retrain*	322	294	28	20	48	85.1
TMHMM 2.0	469	415	54	27	81	82.7
TMHMM 1.0	471	413	58	36	94	80
MEMSAT 1.5	722	620	102	69	171	76.3
Eisenberg	881	809	72	163	235	73.3
KKD	883	719	164	72	236	73.3
KD5	907	773	134	125	259	71.4
TMAP	696	538	158	68	226	67.5
DAS	626	598	28	210	238	62
SOSUI	829	638	191	137	328	60.4
KD9	885	494	391	25	416	53
Tmpred	882	525	357	80	437	50.5
HMMTOP	453	251	202	33	235	48.1
ALOM 2	883	429	454	17	471	46.7
PHD	883	564	319	207	526	40.4
Toppred 2	883	468	417	123	540	39

PHDtm

➤ But is everything really so beautiful ...

How PHDtm can drops from
95% to > 50% when using new
data ?

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➤ But is everything really so beautiful ...

Original training dataset:

0 structure ... (logical)

So delineation of TMb

were taken from UniProt,

i.e. prediction, and it is

Not good to do prediction on

prediction ...

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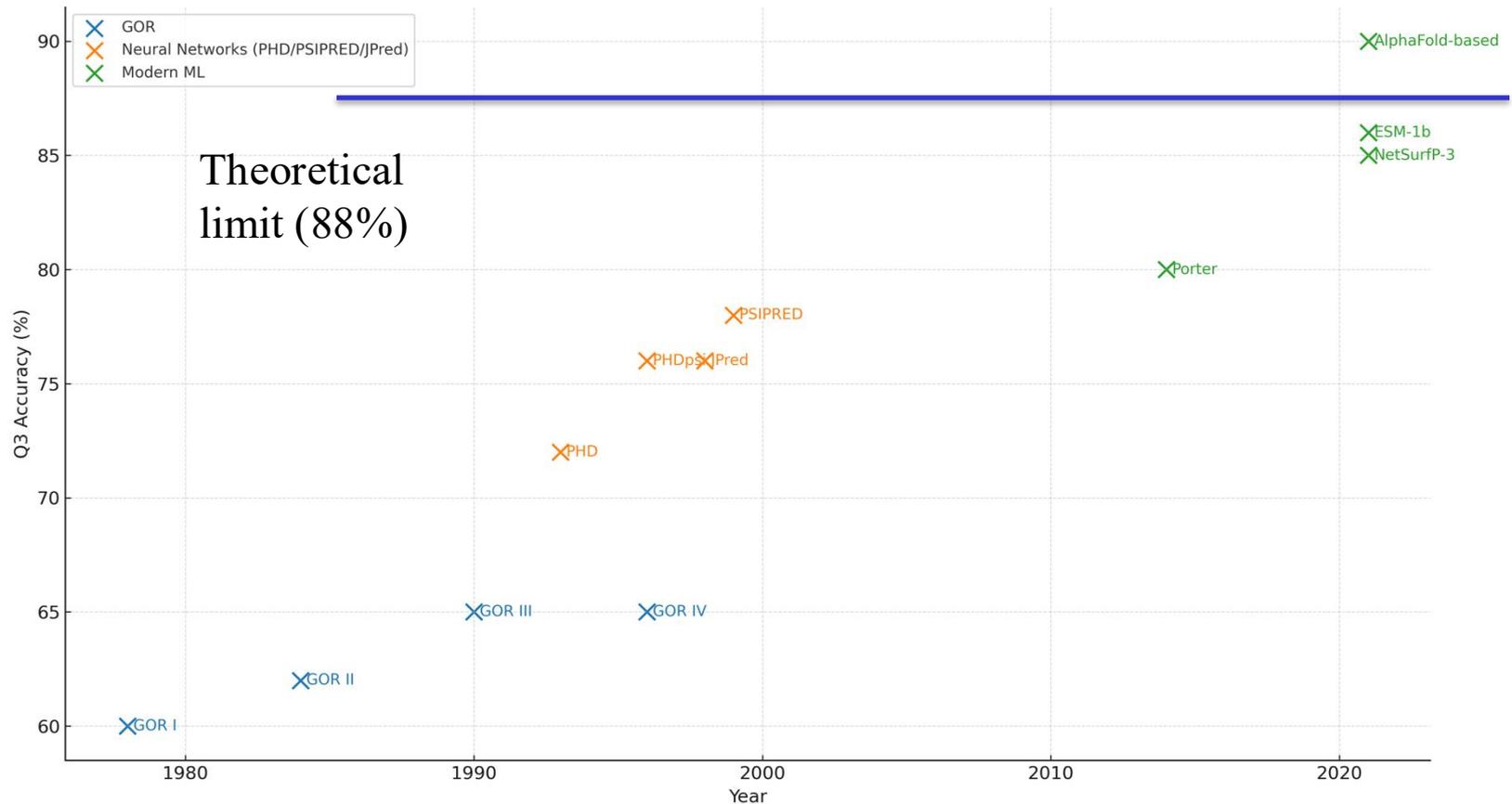
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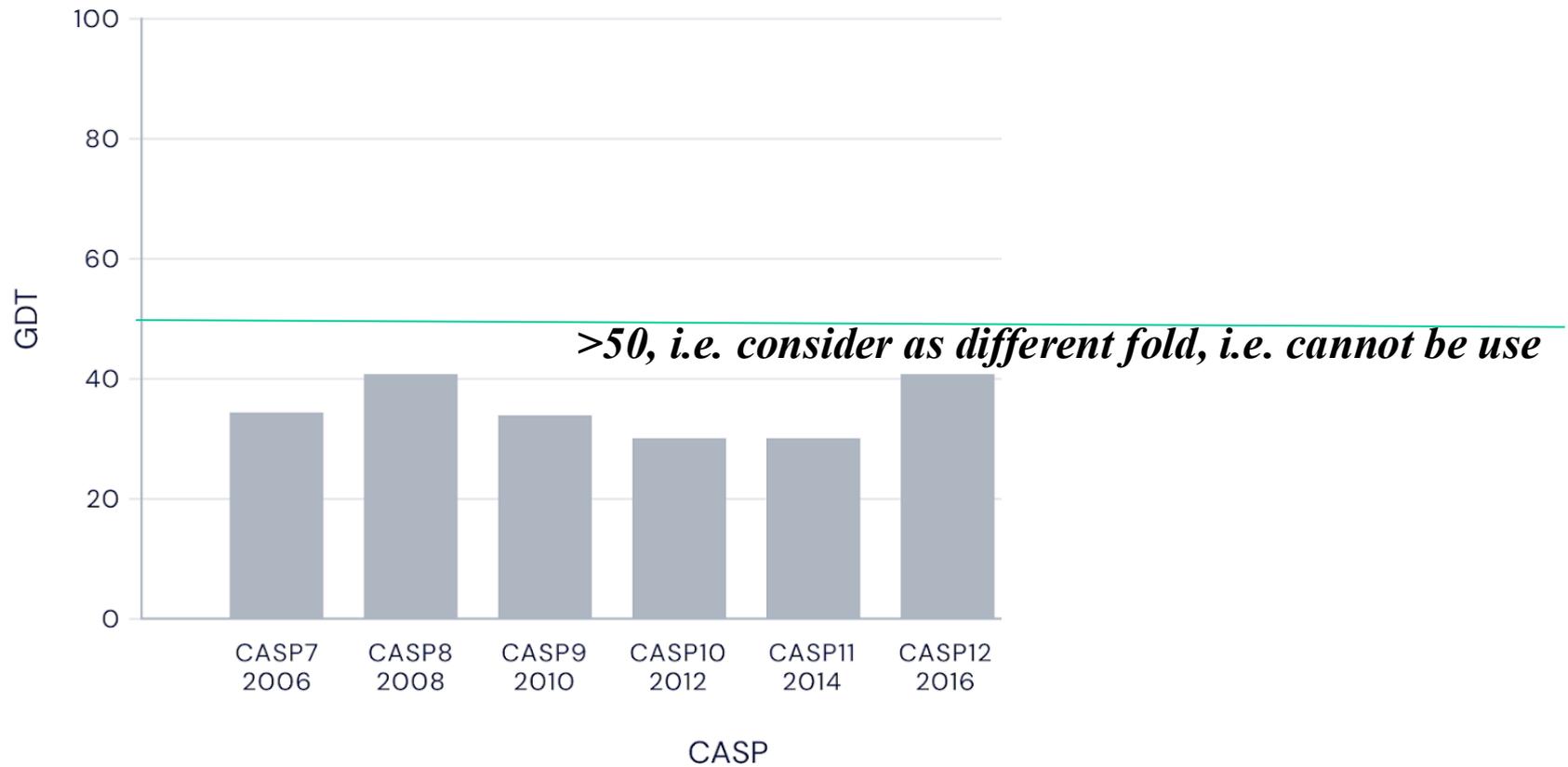
➤ So we must be careful !

➤ Gain in prediction accuracy

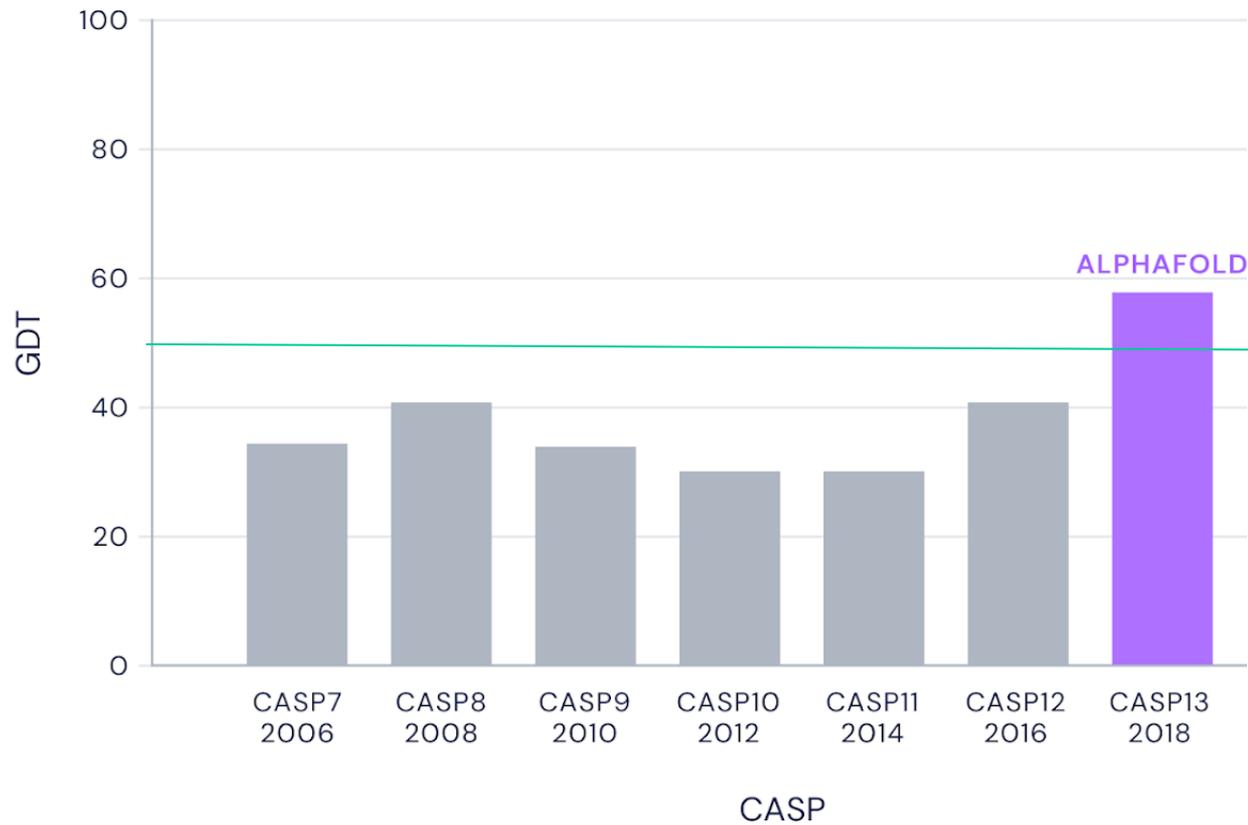


3. ALPHAFOLD

Median Free-Modelling Accuracy

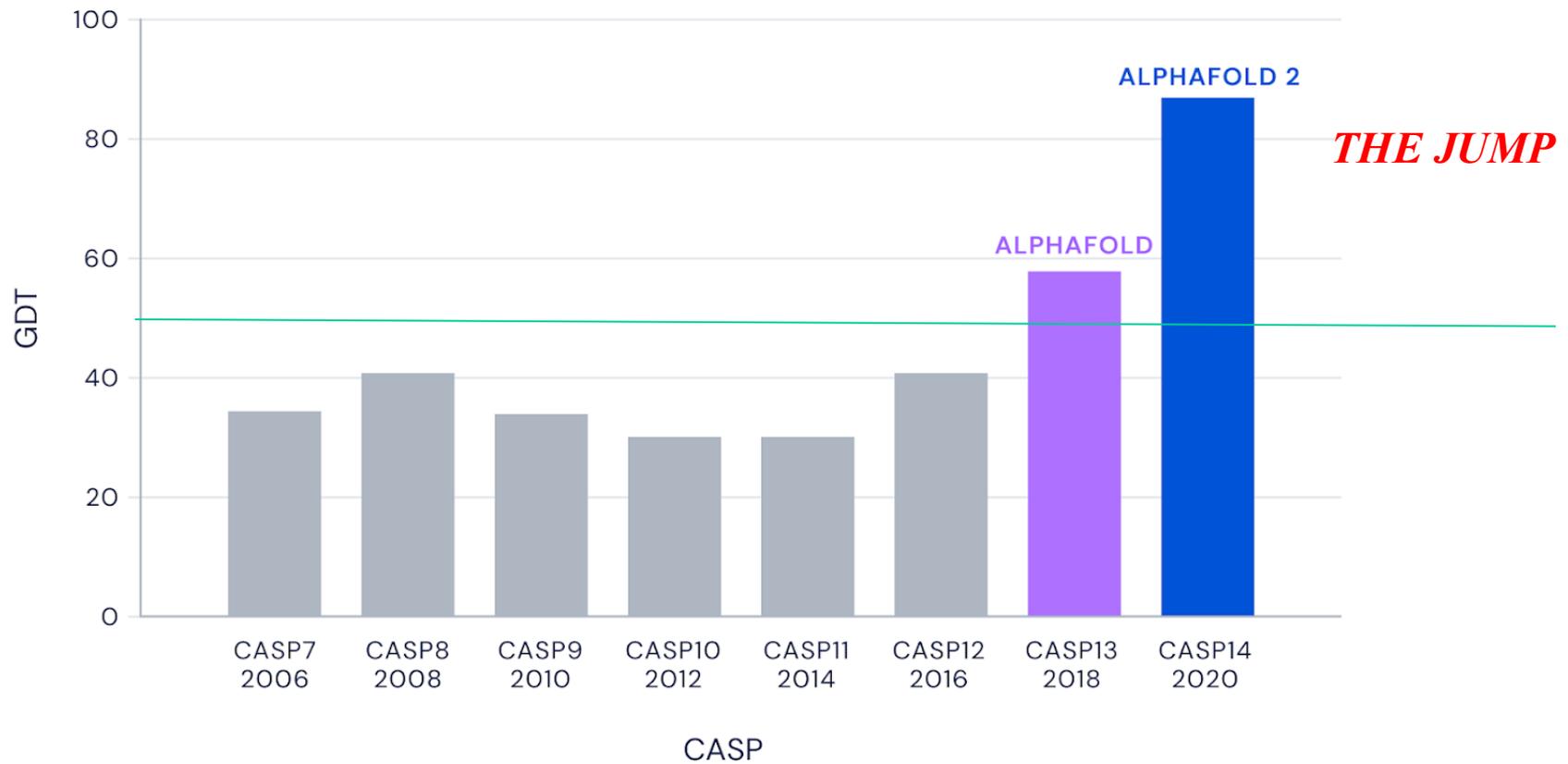


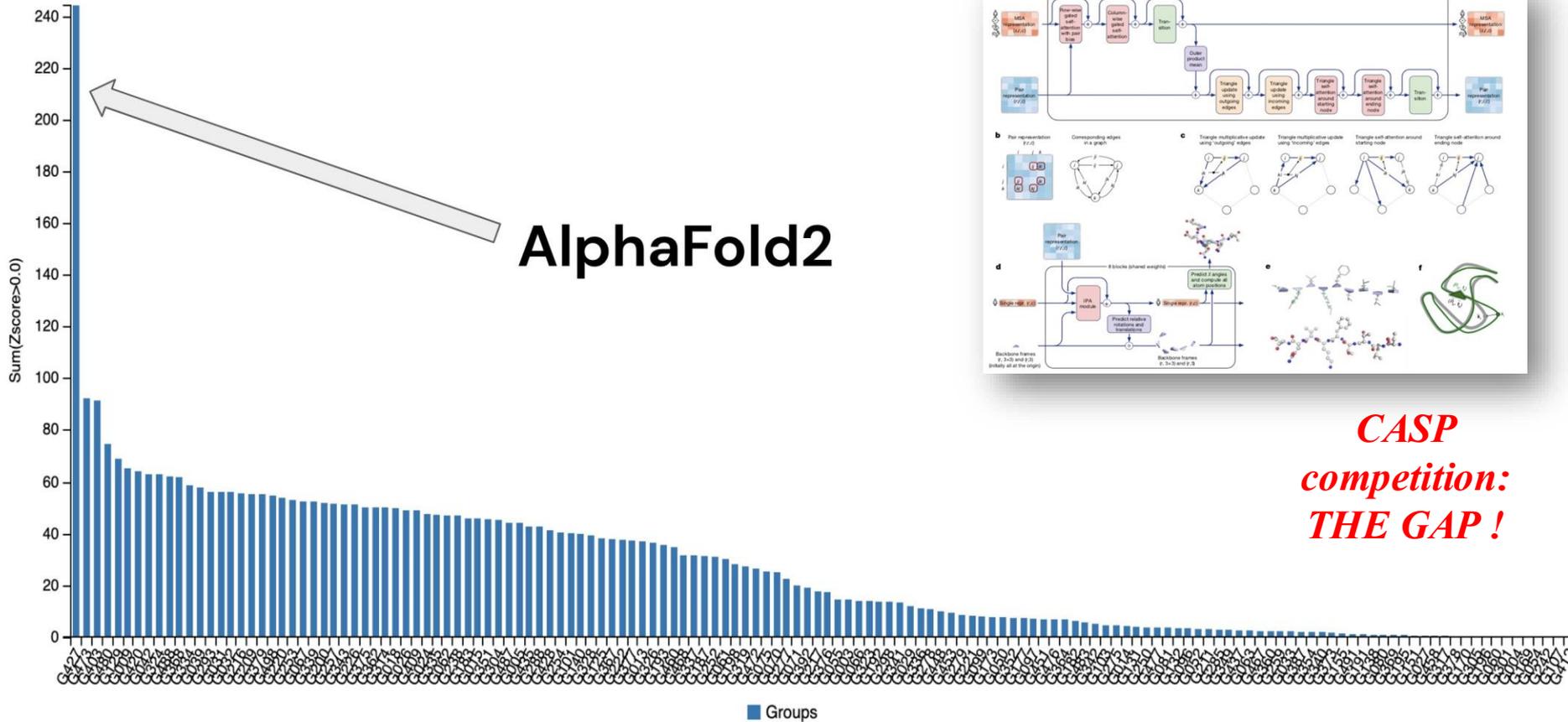
Median Free-Modelling Accuracy



*But
everybody
improves a
little*

Median Free-Modelling Accuracy





**CASP
competition:
THE GAP!**

#	GR code	GR name	Domains Count	SUM Zscore (>-2.0)	Rank SUM Zscore (>-2.0)	AVG Zscore (>-2.0)	Rank AVG Zscore (>-2.0)	SUM Zscore (>0.0)	Rank SUM Zscore (>0.0)	AVG Zscore (>0.0)	Rank AVG Zscore (>0.0)
1	427	AlphaFold2	92	244.0217	1	2.6524	1	244.0217	1	2.6524	1
2	473	BAKER	92	90.8241	2	0.9872	2	92.1241	2	1.0013	34

➤ In all papers !! → *Nature* 2021 (now > 30.000 citations)

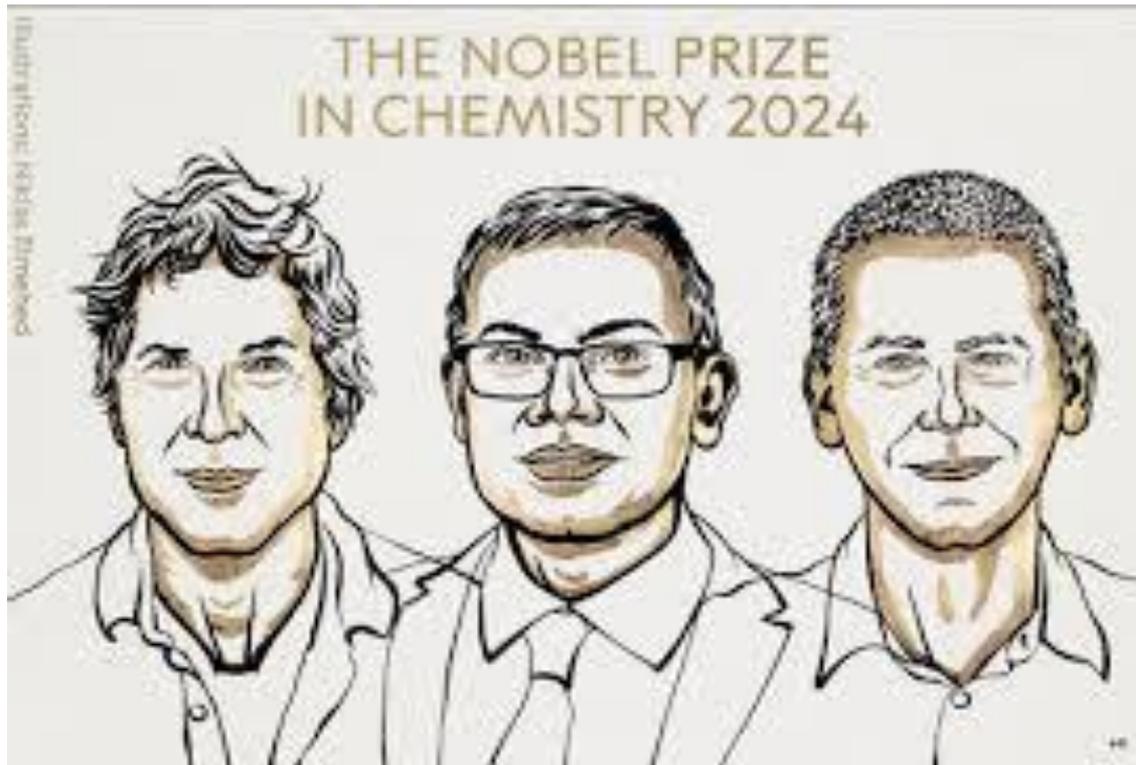
Breakthrough of the year *Science* 2021

Method of the year *Nature Methods* 2021

Best invention of 2022 (*Life*)

Prices

- And now, Chemistry Nobel prize 2024 (Demis Hassabis, born 1976 & John Jumper, born 1985)



David Baker

Demis Hassabis

John Jumper

- Deep Learning approaches
 - AF2 → close to LLM

Similarities to LLMs

Transformer Architecture:

AlphaFold 2's Evoformer is based on the Transformer architecture—the same core used in LLMs like GPT. It applies attention mechanisms to extract long-range dependencies, **not across words but across residues and sequences in an MSA.**

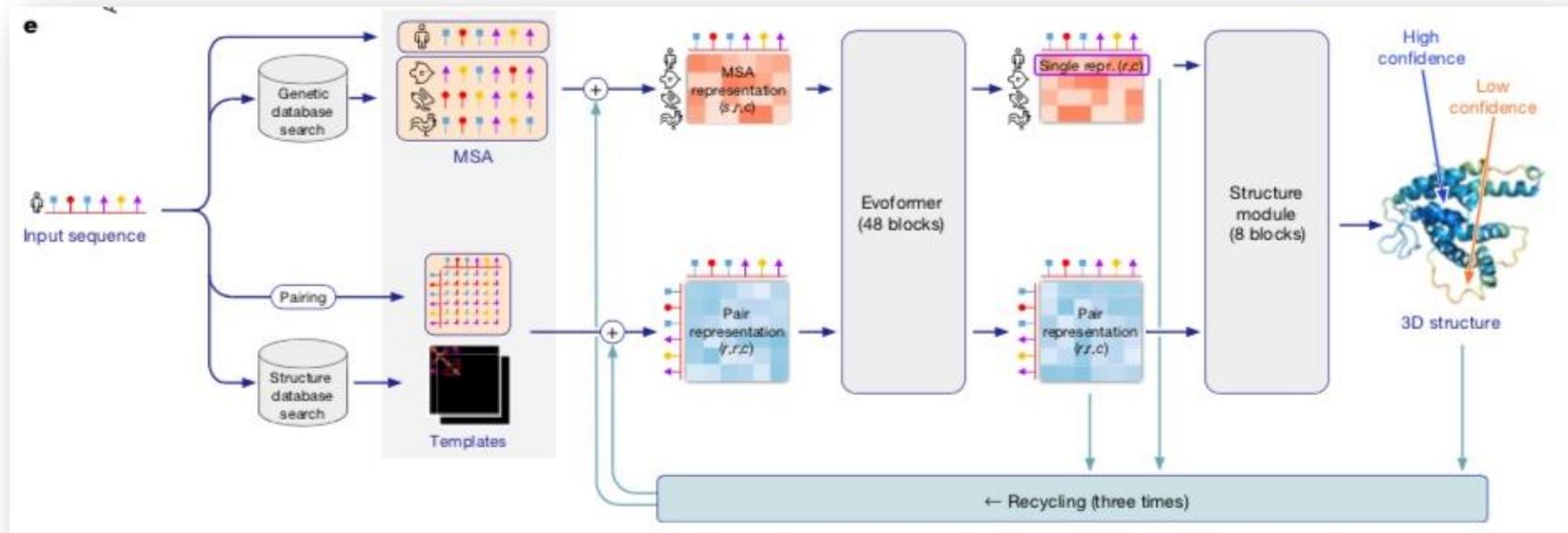
Sequence-based Learning:

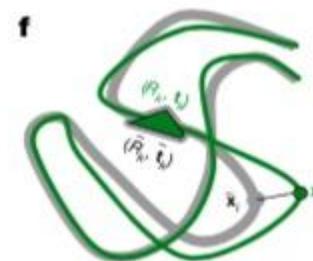
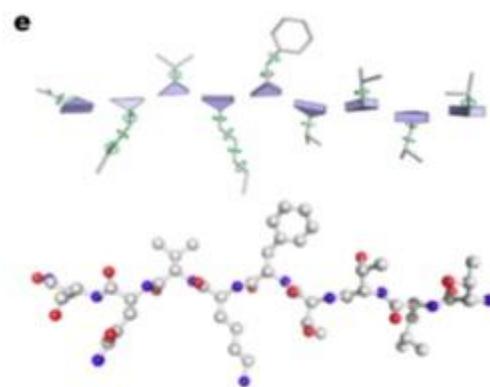
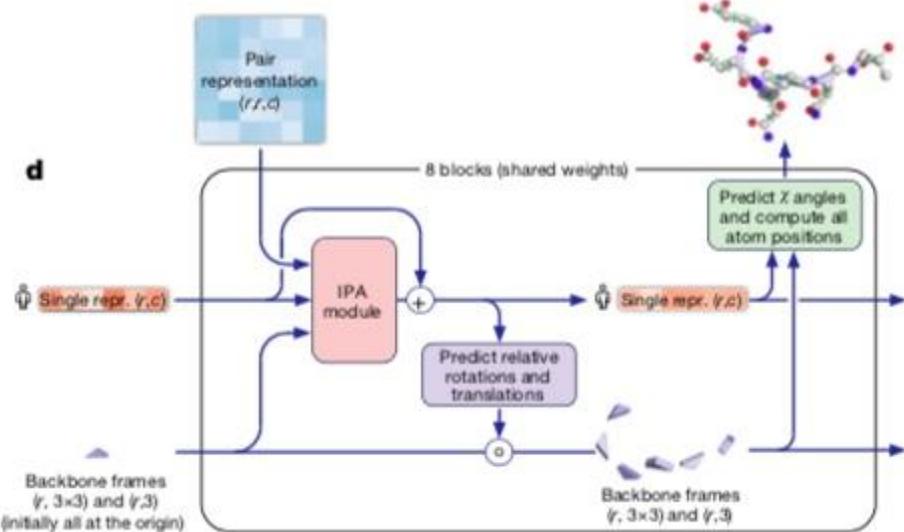
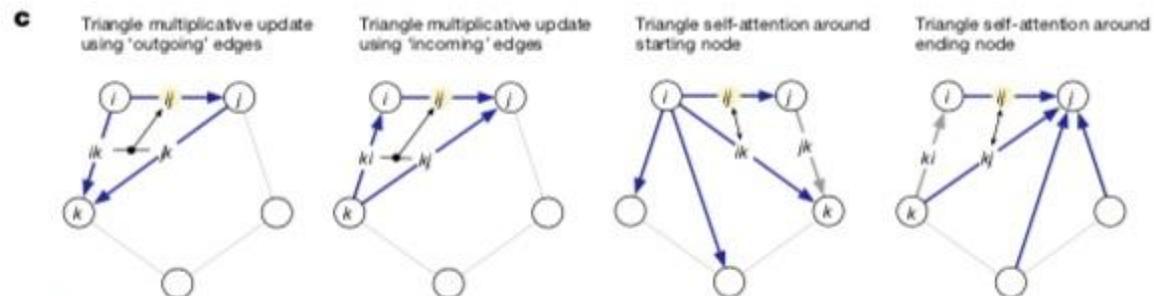
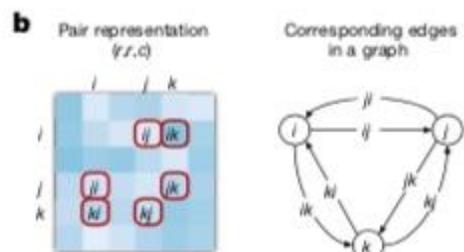
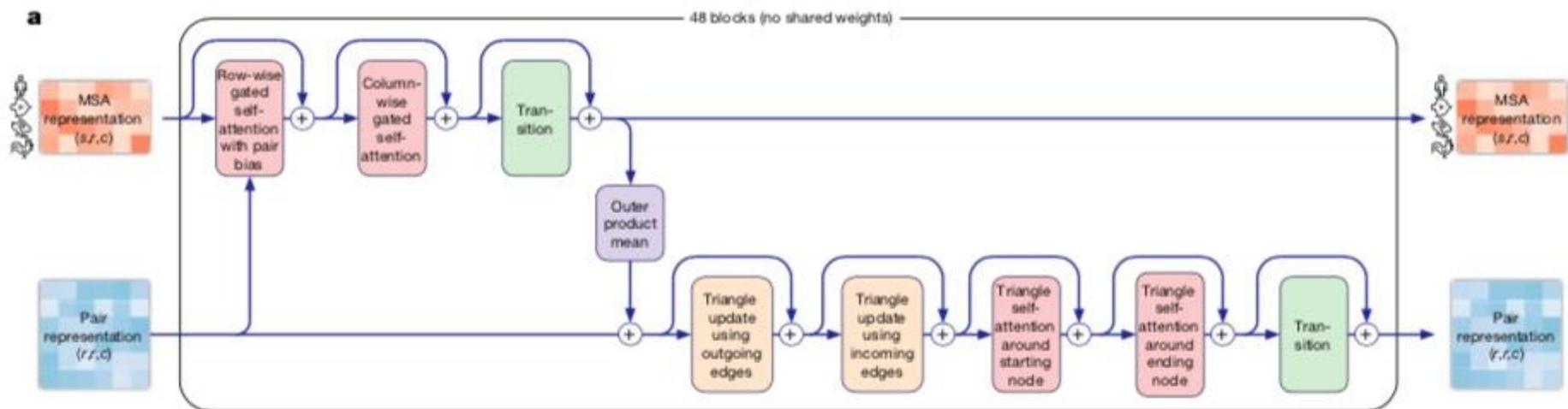
Like LLMs process text sequences, AlphaFold 2 processes biological sequences (protein sequences and their alignments). **It captures contextual information** about each amino acid based on its sequence and evolutionary context.

Representation Learning:

Both LLMs and AlphaFold 2 learn latent representations of input data: LLMs learn language semantics, while **AlphaFold 2 learns structural constraints and relationships between residues.**

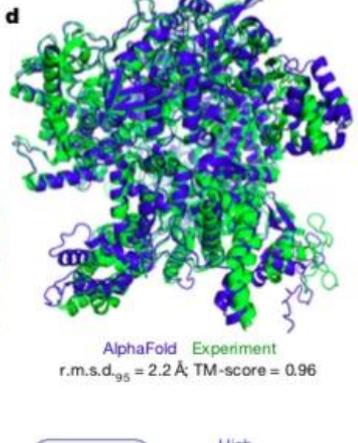
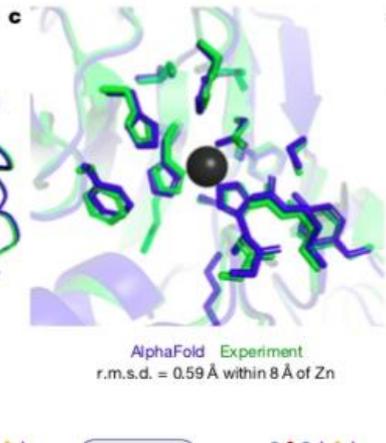
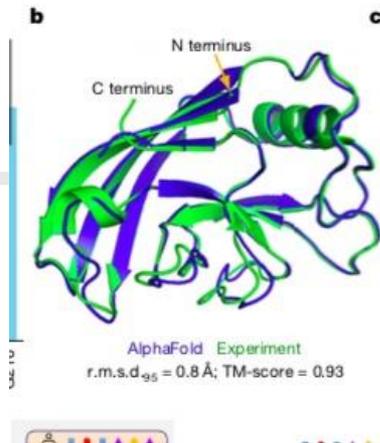
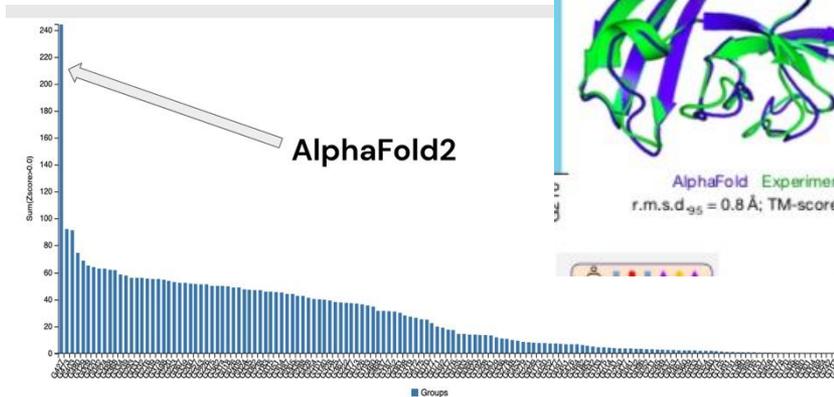
➤ AlphaFold2 simplified architecture





➤ Amazing results

Yes.



#	GR code	GR name	Domains Count	SUM Zscore (p<2.8)	Rank SUM Zscore (p<2.8)	AVG Zscore (p<2.8)	Rank AVG Zscore (p<2.8)	SUM Zscore (p<6.8)	Rank SUM Zscore (p<6.8)	AVG Zscore (p<6.8)	Rank AVG Zscore (p<6.8)
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2	473	BAKER	92	90.8241	2	0.9872	2	92.1241	2	1.0013	2

➤ You can use it at home

Algorithm is published and entirely available (was not the case for v1)

<https://github.com/deepmind/alphafold>

Commit Message	Date
Accept any ordering given by ListDir in t...	1d43aaf on 10 Sep
Skip obsolete PDB templates that don't have a replacement.	last month
Fix a few typos.	2 months ago
Initial release of AlphaFold.	3 months ago
Fix TensorFlow versions in AlphaFold Colab notebook.	2 months ago
Remove a redundant space.	2 months ago
Collapse hh-suite install steps into single layer.	3 months ago
Initial release of AlphaFold.	3 months ago
Initial release of AlphaFold.	3 months ago
Update the bibtex citation with the issue number and pages	last month
Switch to Tensorflow CPU-only. GPU not needed for data pipeline.	2 months ago
Use pLDDT in the B-factor column of the output PDBs.	2 months ago

➤ You can use it at home

So people have used it.

Results from a big consortium

“For 11 proteomes, an average of 25% additional residues can be confidently modelled when compared to homology modelling”

➔ Automatic homology modelling ...

Akdel et al (2021) *bioRxiv*
=> (2022) *Nat Struct Biol*

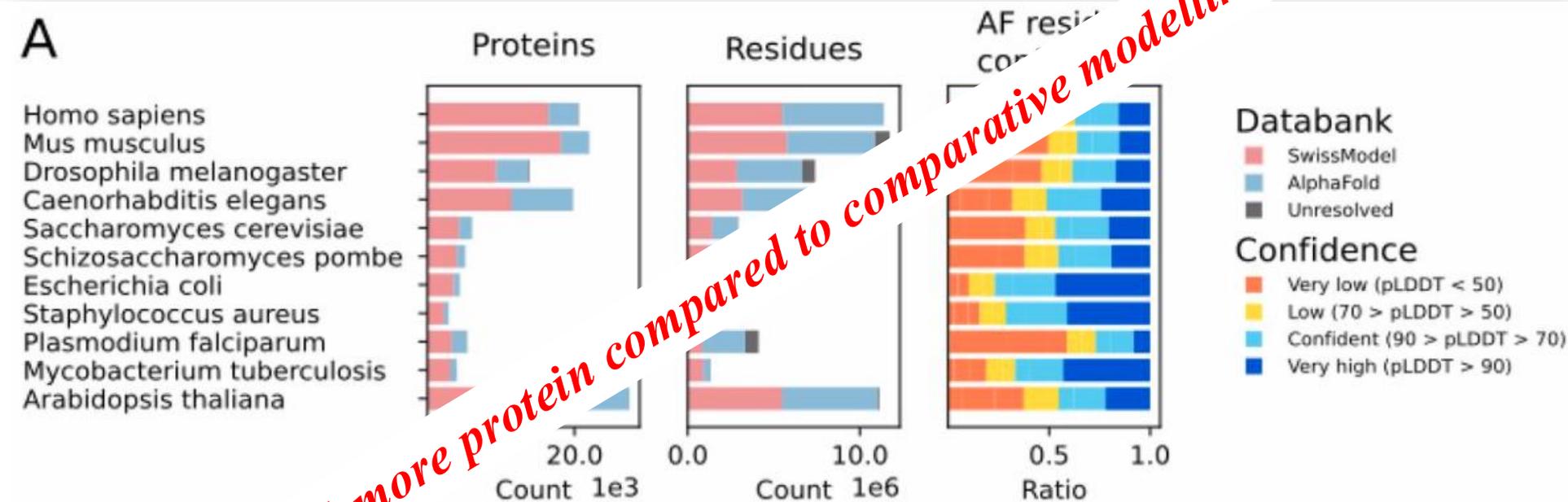
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A structural biology community assessment of AlphaFold 2 applications

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- 10 - Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics University of California, San Francisco
- 11 - Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Division of Science, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138

➤ You can use it at home



MODELLING

➔ Autom...
mod... Only 10% more protein compared to comparative modelling!

Akdel et al (2021) *bioRxiv*

⇒ (2022) *Nat Struct Biol*

4 - Barcelona Supercomputing Center (BSC)

5 - European Molecular Biology Laboratory, European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI), Cambridge, UK.

6 - Shemyakin-Ovchinnikov Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry, Russian Academy of Sciences, 117997 Moscow, Russian Federation

7 - European Molecular Biology Laboratory, Heidelberg, Germany

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9 - Linderstrøm-Lang Centre for Protein Science, Department of Biology, University of Copenhagen, DK-2200 Copenhagen N, Denmark

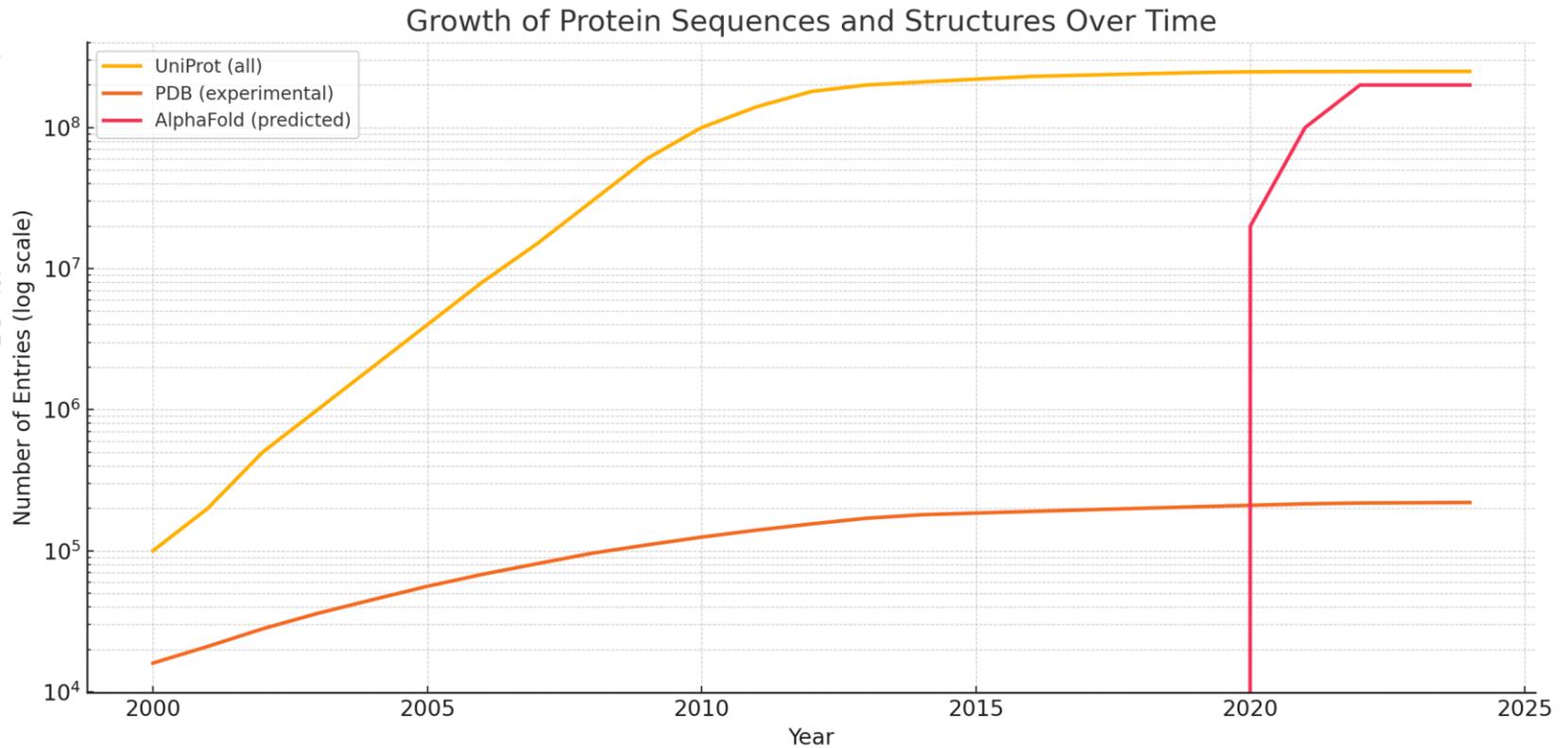
10 - Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics University of California, San Francisco

11- Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Division of Science, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138

- There is a database of already done model

EBI: <https://www.ebi.ac.uk/uniProt/>

Tunyas
596(78)



- There is a database of already done model

EBI: <https://www.alphafold.ebi.ac.uk>

AlphaFold2, at a scale that covers .. 98.5% of human proteins. The resulting dataset covers 58% of residues with a confident prediction, of which a subset (36% of all residues) have very high confidence.

➔ 36% for drug design

Tunyasuvunakool K, et al (2021), *Nature*. 596(7873):590-596.

Article

Highly accurate protein structure prediction for the human proteome

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03828-1>

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Open access

 Check for updates

Kathryn Tunyasuvunakool^{1,2}, Jonas Adler¹, Zachary Wu¹, Tim Green¹, Michal Zielinski¹, Augustin Židek¹, Alex Bridgland¹, Andrew Cowie¹, Clemens Meyer¹, Agata Laydon¹, Sameer Velankar², Gerard J. Kleywegt², Alex Bateman², Richard Evans¹, Alexander Pritzel¹, Michael Figurnov¹, Olaf Ronneberger¹, Russ Bates¹, Simon A. A. Kohl¹, Anna Potapenko¹, Andrew J. Ballard¹, Bernardino Romera-Paredes¹, Stanislav Nikolov¹, Rishub Jain¹, Ellen Clancy¹, David Reiman¹, Stig Petersen¹, Andrew W. Senior¹, Koray Kavukcuoglu¹, Ewan Birney², Pushmeet Kohli¹, John Jumper^{1,3,4,5} & Demis Hassabis^{1,3,5}

Protein structures can provide invaluable information, both for reasoning about biological processes and for enabling interventions such as structure-based drug development or targeted mutagenesis. After decades of effort, 17% of the total residues in human protein sequences are covered by an experimentally determined structure¹. Here we markedly expand the structural coverage of the proteome by applying the state-of-the-art machine learning method, AlphaFold², at a scale that covers almost the entire human proteome (98.5% of human proteins). The resulting dataset covers 58% of residues with a confident prediction, of which a subset (36% of all residues) have very high confidence. We introduce several metrics developed by building on the AlphaFold model and use them to interpret the dataset, identifying strong multi-domain predictions as well as regions that are likely to be disordered. Finally, we provide some case studies to illustrate how high-quality predictions could be used to generate biological hypotheses. We are making our predictions freely available to the community and anticipate that routine large-scale and high-accuracy

➤ There is a database of already done model

EBI: <https://www.alphafold.ebi.ac.uk>

AlphaFold2, at a scale that covers .. 98.5% of human proteins. The resulting dataset covers 58% of residues with a confident prediction, of which a subset (36% of all residues) have very high confidence.

➔ 36% for drug design

➔ 42% question about fold

Tunyasuvunakool K, et al (2021), *Nature*. 596(7873):590-596.

Article

Highly accurate protein structure prediction for the human proteome

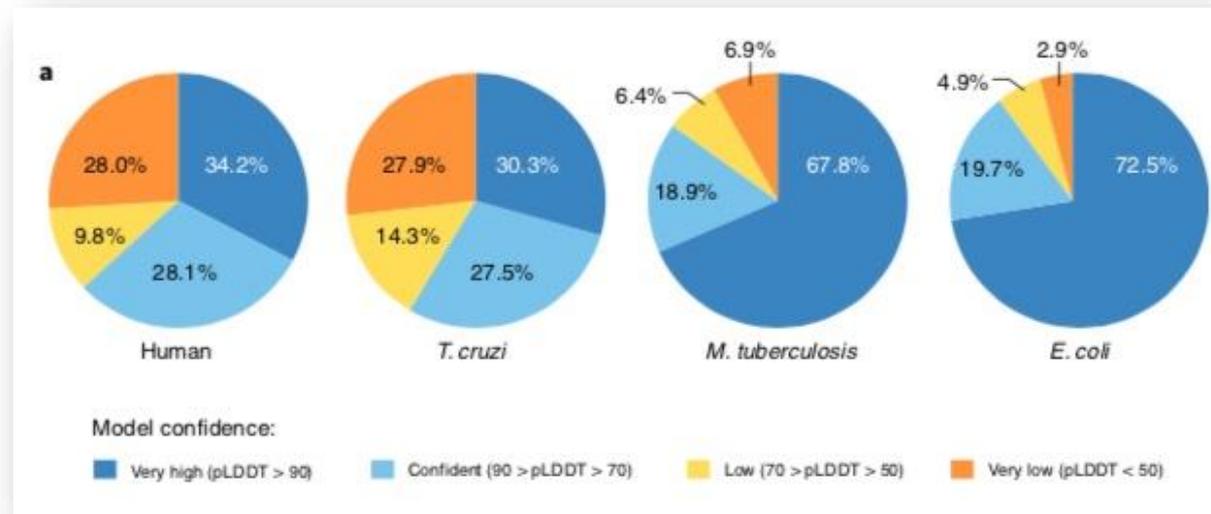
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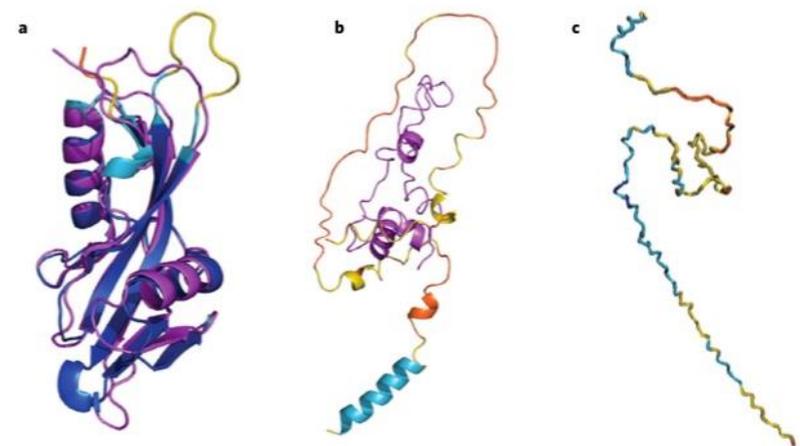
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- *Protein structures predicted using artificial intelligence will aid medical research, but the greatest benefit will come if clinical data can be similarly used to better understand human disease.*

Janet M. Thornton, Roman A. Laskowski and Neera Borkakoti. (2021) *Nat Med.* 27:1666-1671.



The good, the bad and the ugly'

- The new prediction algorithms do not solve the protein folding problem in the sense that they do not reveal how a sequence encodes three-dimensional structure.
- However, they do solve the problem in practical terms, as they can reliably predict structure from sequence, *at least in many cases.*
- *Although only time will tell*, this advance is expected to represent a breakthrough in structural biology that is comparable to previous major advances,

Cramer P. (2021) *Nat Struct Mol Biol.* 28(9):704-705.

The screenshot shows a document header with a purple bar containing the word "correspondence" and a "Check for updates" button. The title "AlphaFold2 and the future of structural biology" is prominently displayed. The main text is organized into columns. The left column contains the "To the Editor" section, which discusses the implications of AlphaFold2 as a machine-learning algorithm for protein structure prediction. The middle column is titled "AlphaFold2 and the community" and describes how the structural biology community has decided to collect experimentally resolved macromolecular structures in an open-access database, the Protein Data Bank (PDB). The right column discusses the future of structural biology, mentioning that new prediction algorithms will improve automated model building and that structural models will be used to explain experimental data. A section titled "New challenges for computational biology" is also visible at the bottom right.

correspondence

AlphaFold2 and the future of structural biology

To the Editor — AlphaFold2 is a machine-learning algorithm for protein structure prediction that has now been used to obtain hundreds of thousands of protein models. The resulting resource is marvelous and will serve the community in many ways. Here I discuss the implications of this breakthrough achievement, which changes the way we do structural biology.

Imagine a website where you could download a reliable three-dimensional model of your protein of interest. Until recently, this was just a dream. Now such structure prediction has become reality, at least for many monomeric proteins. As a result of a collaboration between the company DeepMind and the European Molecular Biology Laboratory, hundreds of thousands of protein models were published online 22 July 2021.

It has been a long-term goal of the scientific community to provide structural information on the human proteome. However, despite decades of effort, only ~18% of the total residues in human protein sequences are covered by experimentally determined structures at this time. This

already been applied to predict structures of several protein complexes. Like AlphaFold2, RoseTTA Fold is available to the community and can now be used as an alternative route to predict protein structure from sequence.

AlphaFold2 and the community

Half a century ago, the structural biology community had decided that all experimentally resolved macromolecular structures should be collected in an open-access database, the Protein Data Bank (PDB). The PDB has been a great investment in the future and was essential for training the machine-learning algorithm of AlphaFold2. From the features learned during this training on experimentally determined structures, the algorithm could predict unknown structures with considerably higher accuracy than what has been achieved before.

The vast structural knowledge available in the PDB was thus a *conditio sine qua non* for developing the new prediction tools. Obtaining the many experimental structures that are collected in the PDB has required decades of hard work by the structural

solution of domain structures by NMR may be replaced by fast predictions so that the unique advantages of NMR in investigating protein folding and dynamics and the binding of ligands and nucleic acids can be utilized more readily.

The new prediction algorithms should also improve automated model building. This will not change the general approach in structural biology, which has always combined model building with experimental observations. The best-known example may be the DNA double helix, which was originally modeled to fit experimental observations that came from X-ray fiber diffraction and biochemistry¹. Until today, structural models were built to explain experimental data, but soon machine-learning methods may be combined with classical refinement tools to largely automate model building, to the benefit of the community.

New challenges for computational biology

The new algorithms will be used to predict the structured proteome of any organism

Biochimie 207 (2023) 11–19

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An agnostic analysis of the human AlphaFold2 proteome using local protein conformations

Alexandre G. de Brevern*

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Structural alphabet: protein structure
Deep learning

ABSTRACT

Knowledge of the 3D structure of proteins is a valuable asset for understanding their precise biological mechanisms. However, the cost of production of 3D structures and experimental difficulties limit their obtaining. The proposal of 3D structural models is consequently an appealing alternative. The release of the AlphaFold Deep Learning approach has revolutionized the field. The recent near-complete human proteome proposal makes it possible to analyse large amounts of data and evaluate the results of the approach in greater depth. The 3D human proteome was thus analysed in light of the classic secondary structures, and many less-used protein local conformations (PolyProline II helices, type of γ -turns, of β -turns and of β -bulges, curvature of the helices, and a structural alphabet). Without questioning the global quality of the approach, this analysis highlights certain local conformations, which maybe poorly predicted and they could therefore be better addressed.

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1. Introduction

Proteins are essential constituents of cells, one of the major macromolecules of life. Composed of 20 amino acids, proteins ensure a variety of essential biological functions. The dogma of molecular biology emphasizes the link between the nucleic sequence and the protein sequence to arrive at protein structures and their functions. Nowadays, access to these sequences has become particularly cheap [1]. Databases contain millions of protein sequences, while the three-dimensional structures of proteins are much more difficult to obtain experimentally [2].

Hence for more than 30 years, different computational approaches have been implemented to propose three-dimensional (3D) structural models of proteins from their amino acid sequence [3]. The classic categories of these approaches include homology or comparative modelling, threading, *ab initio*, *de novo* approaches, and meta-servers; these last combined several approaches. It is possible to notice the best-known tools such as Modeller [4], the golden standard of homology/comparative modelling and *de novo* most recent approaches Rosetta and I-

TASSER [5–7]. These two last have won numerous Critical Assessment for Protein Structure Prediction (CASP) meetings [8,9].

Arrived at the CASP13 (2018), the company DeepMind presented its new Deep Learning approach named AlphaFold [10]. It won the Free Modelling category, i.e. the prediction of novel protein folds [11], whereas template-Based Modelling category, i.e. protein folds already found in the Protein Data Bank, was won by Zhang's group [12]. Two years later, AlphaFold version 2 obtained particularly remarkable at CASP14 (2020) [13,14], some models were within the uncertainties of the experimental resolution, an impressive result. This improvement combined the delicate use of evolution, contacts within proteins, and large GPU computing power that allowed the implementation of a particularly complex and elegant architecture [15,16].

AlphaFold 2 was a hot topic for 2020 and 2021 [17–20], leading to a revolution in protein structural model building [21,22] and opening potential new opportunities, e.g. new drug design researches [23,24]. Three points can be noticed (i) the code can be downloaded freely on GitHub (<https://github.com/deepmind/alphafold>) and is really useable [25], (ii) different online notebooks for non-specialists are easy to use (e.g. https://colab.research.google.com/github/sokrypton/ColabFold/blob/main/batch/AlphaFold2_batch.ipynb) [26], and (iii) EBI provides structural model databases [27]. Indeed, model building is expensive in

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E-mail address: alexandre.debrevern@u-paris.fr.

Not all local conformations are properly predicted !

PPIIs are not good

γ -turns are not good

Cis- ω are not good

β -sheets are in limited number ...

de Brevern A.G. An agnostic analysis of the human AlphaFold2 proteome using local protein conformations. *Biochimie* (2023) **207**:11-19.



Perspective
AlphaFold2 Update and Perspectives

Sébastien Tourlet¹, Ragousandirane Radjasandirane², Julien Diharce² and Alexandre G. de Brevern^{2,*}

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² Department of Biological Research on the Red Blood Cells, Université Paris Cité and Université des Antilles and Université de la Réunion, INSERM, BGR, DSIMB Bioinformatics Team, F-73014 Paris, France
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Abstract: Access to the three-dimensional (3D) structural information of macromolecules is of major interest in both fundamental and applied research. Obtaining this experimental data can be complex, time consuming, and costly. Therefore, in silico computational approaches are an alternative of interest, and sometimes present a unique option. In this context, the Protein Structure Prediction method AlphaFold2 represented a revolutionary advance in structural bioinformatics. Named method of the year in 2021, and widely distributed by DeepMind and EMBL, it was thought at this time that protein-folding issues had been resolved. However, the reality is slightly more complex. Due to a lack of input experimental data, related to crystallographic challenges, some targets have remained highly challenging or not feasible. This perspective exercise, dedicated to a non-expert audience, discusses and correctly places AlphaFold2 methodology in its context and, above all, highlights its use, limitations, and opportunities. After a review of the interest in the 3D structure and of the previous methods used in the field, AF2 is brought into its historical context. Its spatial interests are detailed before presenting precise quantifications showing some limitations of this approach and finishing with the perspectives in the field.

Keywords: molecular modelling; protein sequences; protein structures; comparative modelling; threading; de novo; meta-servers; deep learning; CASP



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1. Foreword

The idea for this short perspective comes from multiple discussions about the real impact of AlphaFold2 (AF2) with fellow specialists, biologists, and students. We provide a simple but comprehensive overview including the expertise of researchers who deal with AF2 on a regular basis, for non-specialists such as medical doctors. AF2 is has various users. It is a method that has been discussed in an unparalleled way in recognized scientific journals (method of the year for Nature Methods [1], with a \$3 million award for its designers [2]) and has impacted non-specialists (e.g., the Times best inventions 2022 [3]). Statements asserting that ‘It will change everything’ [4] or ‘DeepMind AI cracks 50-year-old problem of protein folding’ [5] bring questions, especially when the reality and impact of the results differ from one research lab to another.

This strategic perspective exercise is articulated in four parts. First, we outline for the record the issues of interest in protein structure and the history of the field of three-dimensional (3D) structural model prediction. Second, we discuss more specifically the deep learning approaches in Structural Bioinformatics. Third, we present our ideas on the contributions and limitations of AF2. Finally, we conclude with perspectives for the evolution of the field.

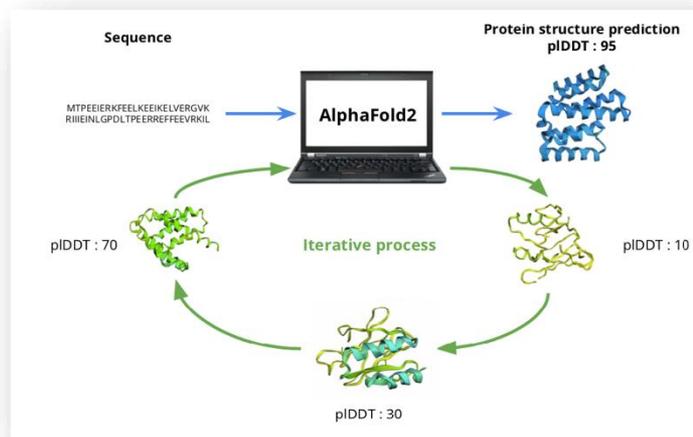
2. Introduction

2.1. Proteins and 3D Structures

Proteins are composed of a succession of amino acids, essential biological molecules that are the building blocks of macromolecules. With 20 different types, these amino acids



Analyses of the impact of AlphaFold2 on the daily life of a Structural Bioinformatics lab.



Tourlet S., Radjasandirane R., Diharce J., de Brevern A.G. AlphaFold2 Update and Perspectives. *BioMedInformatics* (2023) 3(2), 378–390.

What I was doing before AlphaFold2

(a)

➤ **Protocol:**

protein properties (S2, disorder, PTMs,...)
PSI-BLAST, HMM, ... searching in databases
Looking for evolution
Comparative modelling if possible (Modeller)
Tools and webservers:
comparative, e.g. SwissModel,
threading, e.g. Phyre
de novo, e.g. I-Tasser, Rosetta

➤ **Analyses**

Tourlet S., Radjasandirane R., Diharce J., de
Brevin A.G. AlphaFold2 Update and
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378-390.

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Tools and webservers:
comparative, e.g. SwissModel,
threading, e.g. Phyre
de novo, e.g. I-Tasser, Rosetta

➤ **Analyses**



What I am doing now

(b)

➤ **Protocol:**

protein properties (S2, disorder, PTMs,...)
PSI-BLAST, HMM, ... searching in databases
Looking for evolution
Comparative modelling if possible (Modeller)
Tools and webservers:
comparative, e.g. SwissModel,
threading, e.g. Phyre
de novo, e.g. I-Tasser, Rosetta

Deep learning, e.g. AlphaFold2

➤ **Analyses**

Tourlet S., Radjasandirane R., Diharce J., de Brevin A.G. AlphaFold2 Update and Perspectives. *BioMedInformatics* (2023) **3**(2), 378-390.

➤ *Editorial* : Should We Expect a Second Wave of AlphaFold Misuse After the Nobel Prize?



Editorial

Should We Expect a Second Wave of AlphaFold Misuse After the Nobel Prize?

Alexandre G. de Brevern 

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AlphaFold (AF) was the first deep learning tool to achieve exceptional fame in the field of biology [1]. To sum up, we first recall the existence of the CASP (Critical Assessment of Structural Prediction) competition, which allows the evaluation of individual prediction methods by proposing protein structural models. In 2018, the first version of the AF obtained excellent results, close to those of the best approaches available at the time [2,3]. Two years later, in 2020, a particularly significant average improvement was observed [4,5], and then with the communicative power of a company spun off from Alphabet, a great increase in media coverage of structural bioinformatics occurred.

-
- Yes, AlphaFold is a revolution, because now Deep Learning (Artificial Intelligence) is everywhere in Biology
 - But it is **methodological revolution**, for Structural Bioinformatics it is only an **evolution**
 - It only provides 10% more proteins and 25 residues per protein on average in regards to comparative modeling
 - Not so simple to be highly sure

➤ An example:

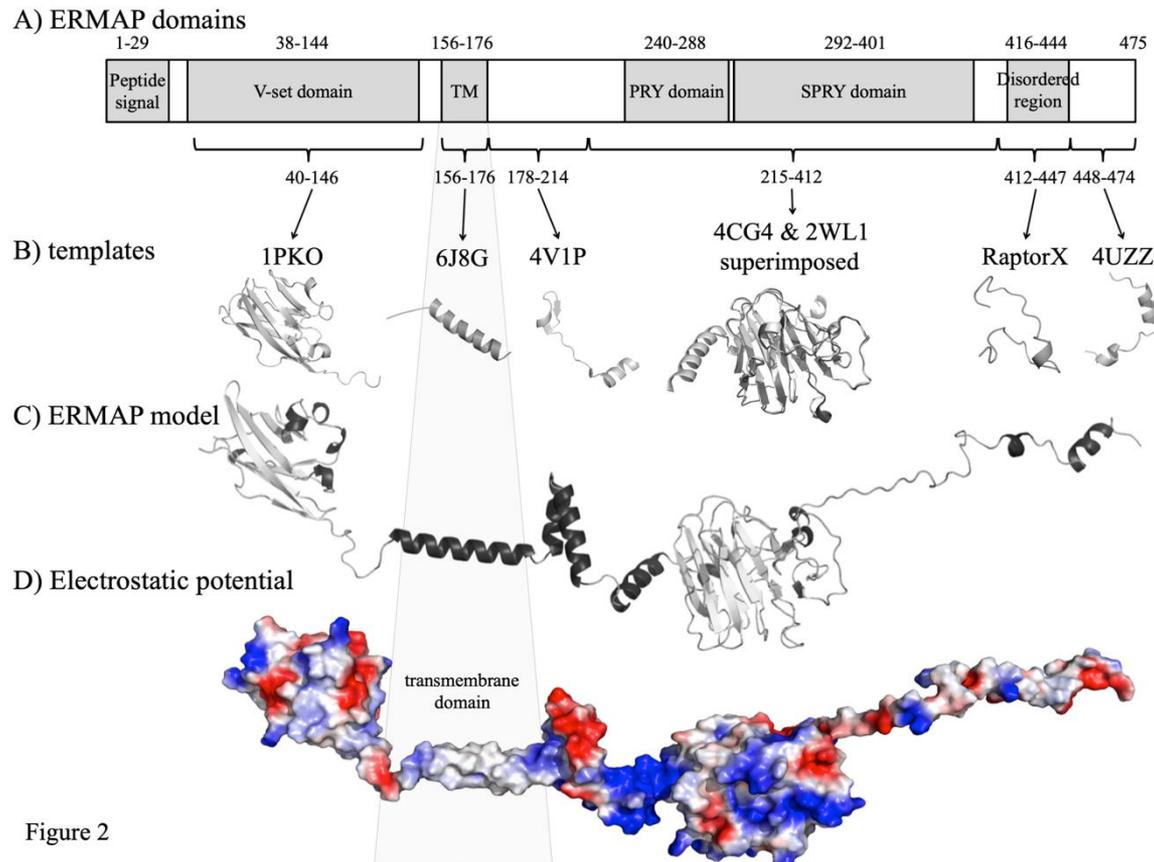
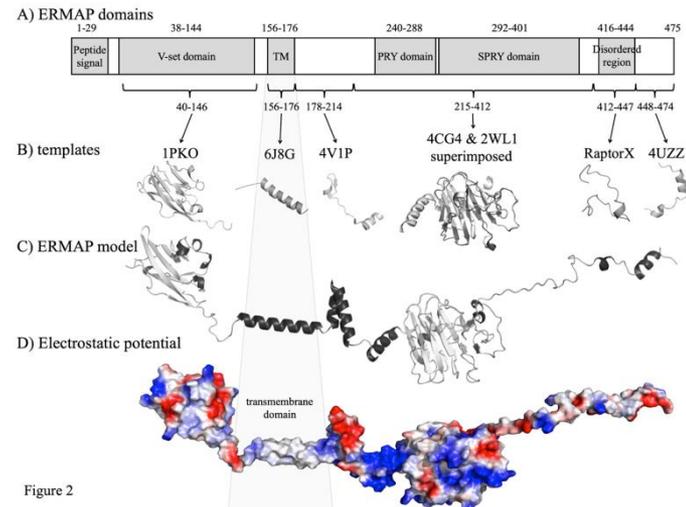
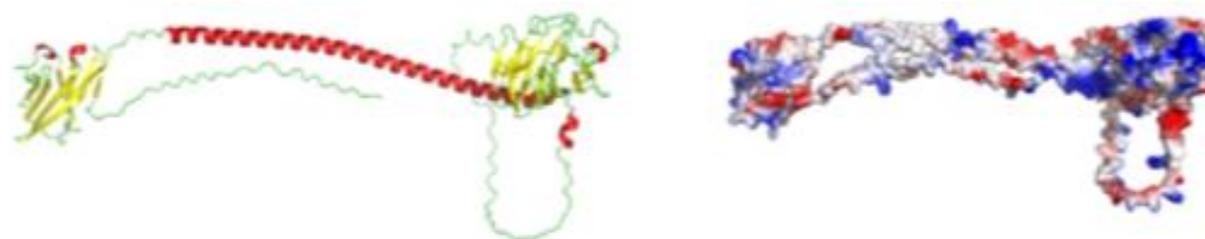


Figure 2

➤ An example:



*AF2:
 wrong model*



➤ An example:

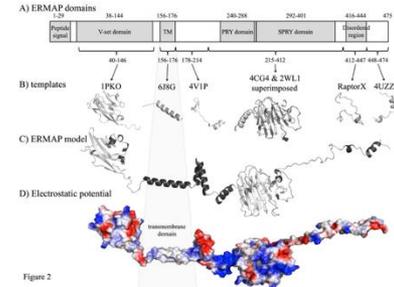
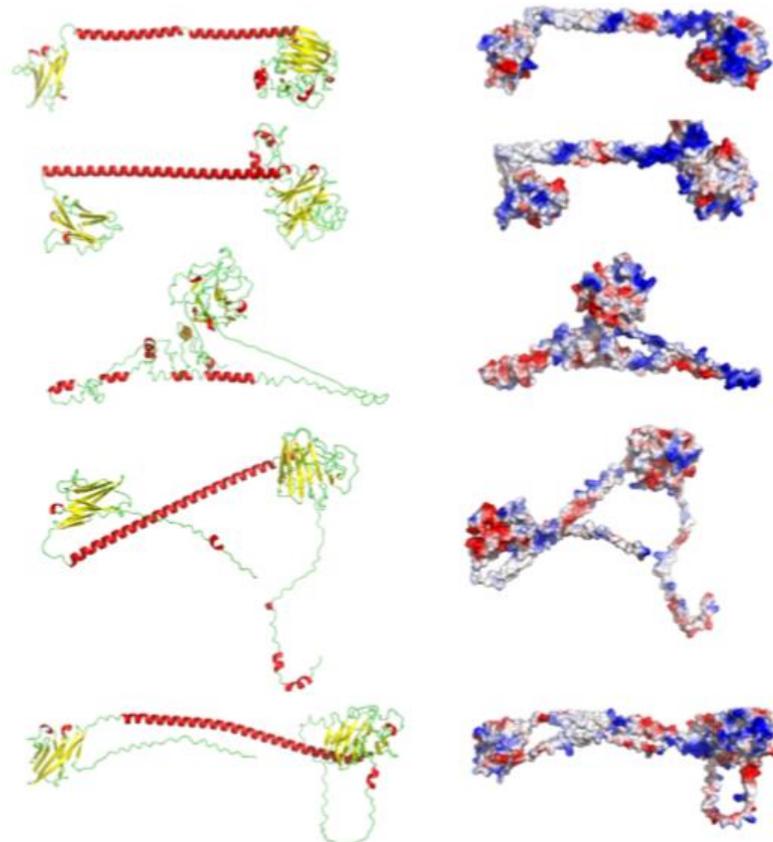
Raptor X

trRosetta

I-Tasser

RoseTTAFold

AF2

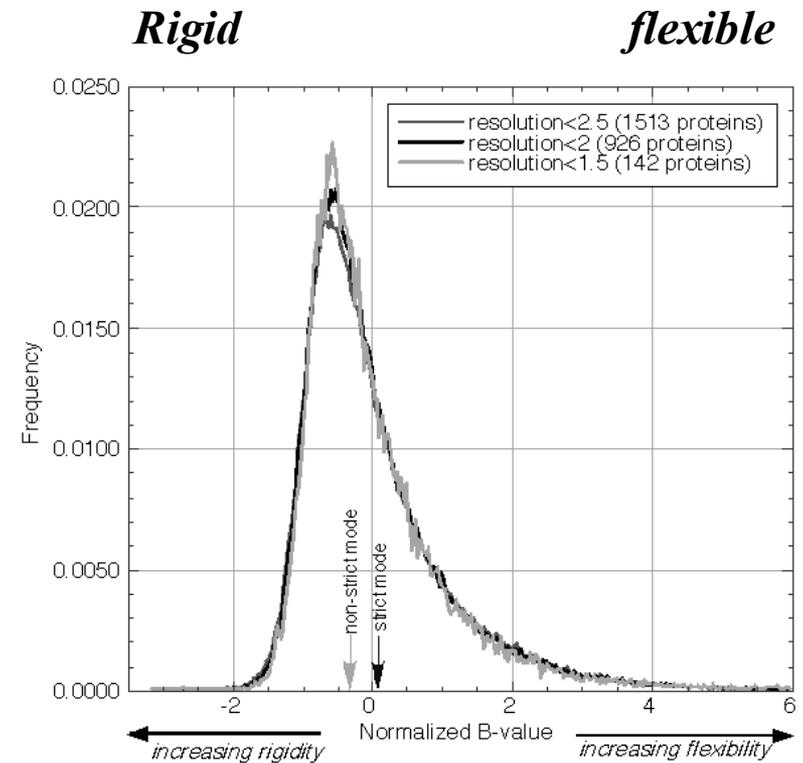
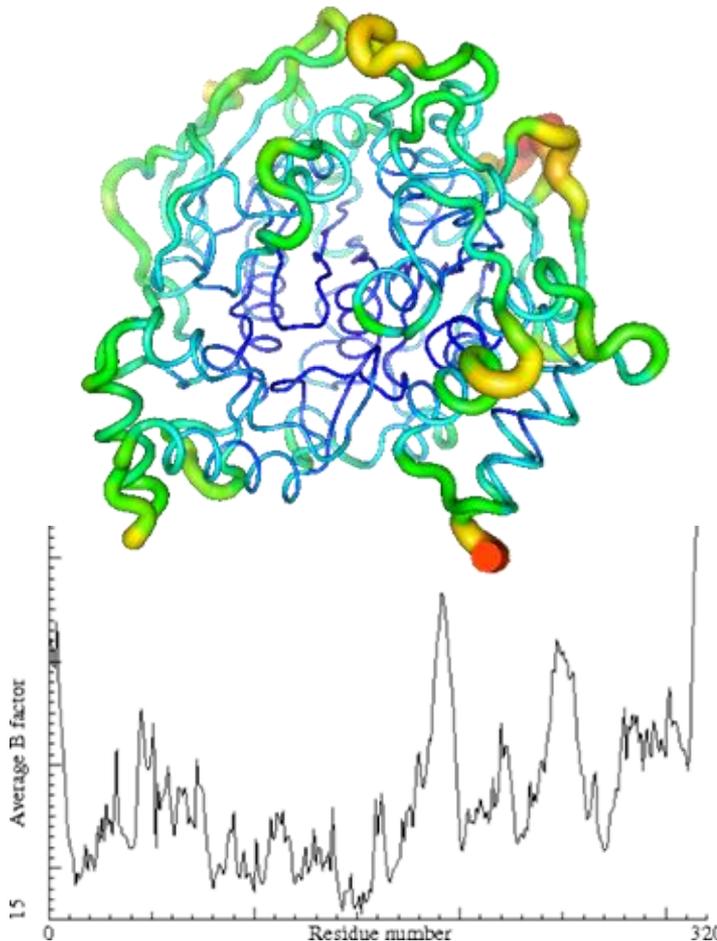


When it is complicated, it
is complicated



3. PROTEIN FLEXIBILITY PREDICTION

➤ Flexibility: Distribution of B-factors



2005

➤ Schlessinger & Rost

PROTEINS: Structure, Function, and Bioinformatics 61:115–126 (2005)

Protein Flexibility and Rigidity Predicted From Sequence

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ABSTRACT Structural flexibility has been associated with various biological processes such as molecular recognition and catalytic activity. In silico studies of protein flexibility have attempted to characterize and predict flexible regions based on simple principles. B-values derived from experimental data are widely used to measure residue flexibility. Here, we present the most comprehensive large-scale analysis of B-values. We used this analysis to develop a neural network-based method that predicts flexible-rigid residues from amino acid sequence. The system uses both global and local information (i.e., features from the entire protein such as secondary structure composition, protein length, and fraction of surface residues, and features from a local window of sequence-consecutive residues). The most important local feature was the evolutionary exchange profile reflecting sequence conservation in a family of related proteins. To illustrate its potential, we applied our method to 4 different case studies, each of which related our predictions to aspects of function. The first 2 were the prediction of regions that undergo conformational switches upon environmental changes (switch II region in Ras) and the prediction of surface regions, the rigidity of

structural flexibility that enables this motion has been associated with various biological processes such as molecular recognition and catalytic activity.^{1–21} In fact, even such a coarse-grained aspect of protein structure as the secondary structure assigned from X-ray crystals of proteins captures flexibility relevant for protein function.²²

Flexible regions can be predicted from sequence. In silico studies have attempted to characterize and predict flexible regions from the amino acid sequence. Different groups used different definitions for flexibility. On a very coarse-grained level, all regions with high net charge and low hydrophobicity were considered to be natively unfolded.²³ The rationale for this assumption is that repulsion from equal charge–charge interactions and the reduced “folding driving force” in regions of low hydrophobicity account for flexibility. Dunker and his group introduced another radical approach that considers all regions with missing coordinates in X-ray structures as “disordered” and applied neural networks to predict such regions.^{1,24,25} Other groups have used the same definition to develop related methods to predict such “disorder.”^{26–28} Our group took a much simpler angle to identify long regions with NORS (i.e., stretches of 70 or more sequence-consecutive residues depleted of helices and strands).^{2,29} Analyzing all proteins

2005

➤ Schlessinger & Rost: rigid or flexible

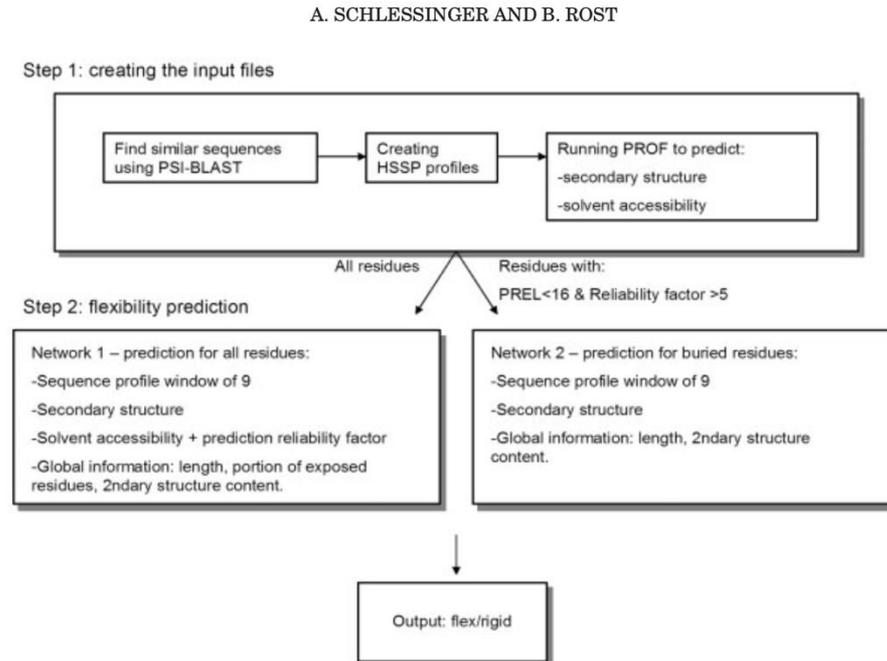


Fig. 2. Prediction system. Step 1: Compile information used for neural network input. HSSP profiles were created using PSI-BLAST; these profiles are used to predict 1D structure (secondary structure and solvent accessibility) by PROFphd. Step 2: System of neural networks. Network 1 was trained on all residues with all input features, while network 2 was trained exclusively on reliably predicted buried residues. Residues that PROFacc predicted as buried with high reliability were passed to network 2; all others to network 1.

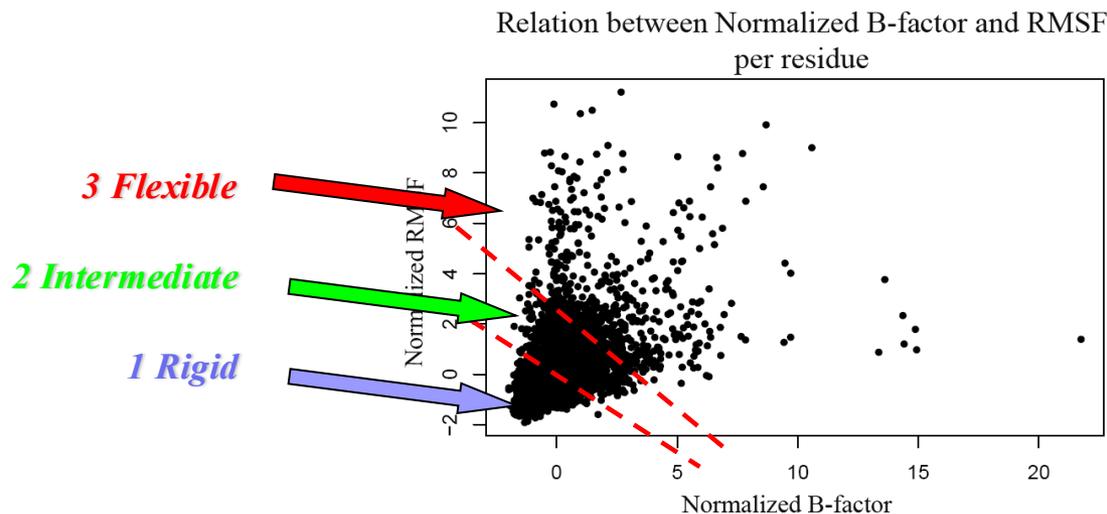
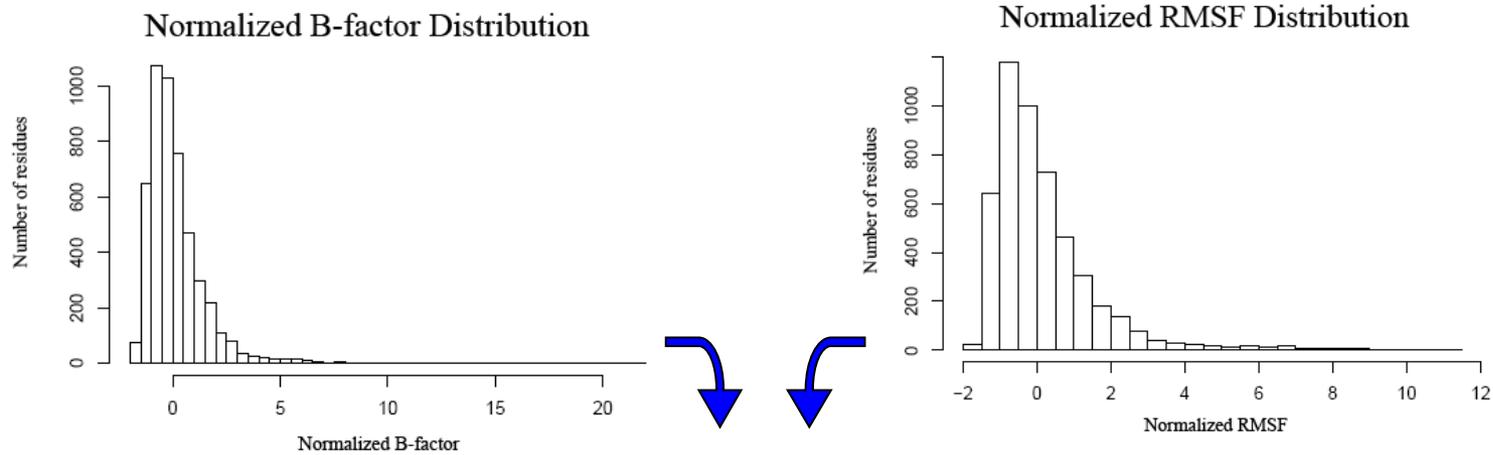
2009

➤ PredyFlexy

- Rigid / intermediate / flexible (from 2- to 3-states)
- Using experimental data (B-factors) and results from Molecular Dynamics (RMSF *)



**Root Mean Square Fluctuations*



- *Experimental and simulation uncertainties*
- **3 Flexibility classes**

➤ PredyFlexy

A prediction of local protein conformations made with Support Vector Machines.

➤ PredyFlexy

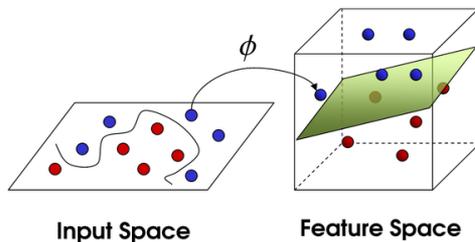
A prediction of local protein conformations made with Support Vector Machines.

120 different Local Structure Prototypes (11 residues length),
so 120 Support Vector Machines (each times 1 against the 119
others, defining the second class)

➤ PredyFlexy

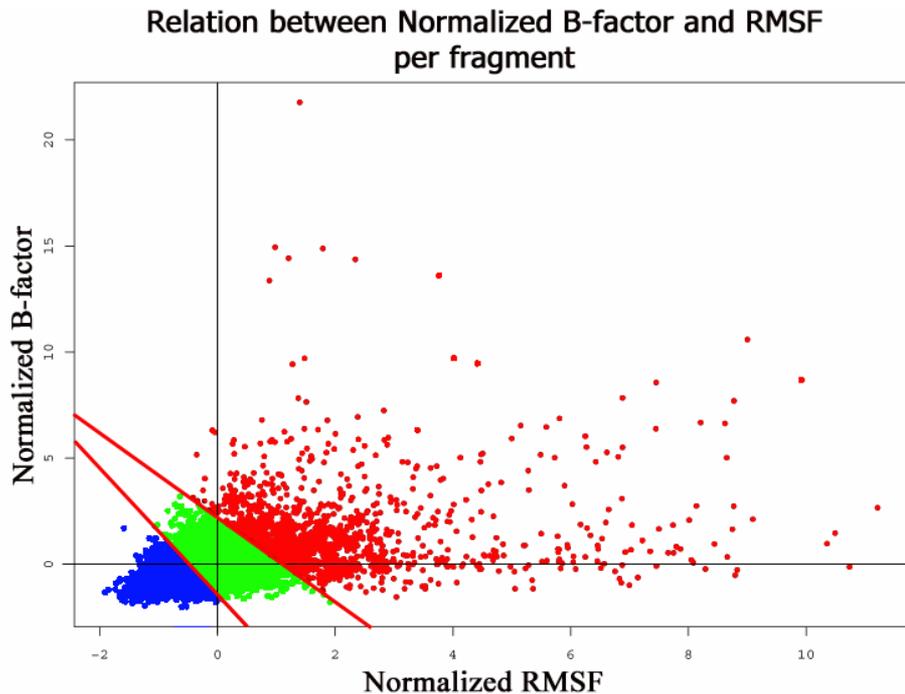
A prediction of local protein conformations made with Support Vector Machines.

120 different Local Structure Prototypes (11 residues length), so 120 Support Vector Machines (each times 1 against the 119 others, defining the second class)



optimization with RBF (2 parameters tested in grid), i.e. 1000 simulations.

➤ PredyFlexy



➤ Fragment repartition :

- Rigid Class 1: 40.4 %
- Intermediate Class 2 : 36.7 %
- Flexible Class 3 : 22.9 %

■ Limited confusion between extremely different classes :

- Rigid Class normalized RMSF and Flexible Class normalized B-factor: ~ 2 %
- Flexible Class normalized RMSF and normalized Rigid Class B-factor: ~ 2 %

2012

➤ PredyFlexy



Bornot A, Etchebest C, de Brevern AG (2011) Predicting Protein Flexibility through the Prediction of Local Structures. *Proteins*. 79(3):839-52.

de Brevern AG, Bornot A, Craveur P, Etchebest C, Gelly J-C (2012) PredyFlexy: Flexibility and Local Structure prediction from sequence. *Nucleic Acid Res.* 40:W317-22.

PredyFlexy : Flexibility and Local Structure prediction from sequence

Home

Contacts

About Method

Example

Download

DSIMB

Introduction

This server is designed to predict local protein structures and protein flexibility from its sequence. Results can be visualised at the amino acid level through a table and graphics.

Protein Local Structure Prediction

It is now admitted that the folded state of proteins, that is, the native 3D structure, can be described by a limited set of recurring local structures (Fitzkee *et al.*, *Trends Biochem. Sci.* 2005). This observation led to the development of fragment libraries designed to characterize in the most suitable way, the local structures of all proteins with known 3D structures. These libraries consist in a finite set of representative structural fragments. Nowadays, when no homologue protein is available, the most successful methods for predicting global 3D protein structures use fragment assembly techniques.

A library of 120 3D structural prototypes encompassing all known local protein structures has been developed (Benros *et al.*, *Proteins*, 2006). These Local Structure Prototypes (LSPs) were mean representative fragments of 120 overlapping structural classes of 11-residues fragments. They ensured a good quality of approximation. An associated local structure prediction method from sequence was also created. Its principal interest was to propose a limited number of relevant structural candidates for a given target sequence. Recently, we achieved a balanced improvement of the prediction rate by coupling evolutionary information with support vector machines (SVMs). A very satisfying correct prediction rate of 63.1% was obtained for 5 proposed candidates (Bornot *et al.*, *Proteins*, 2009). This prediction method is implemented in this web service.

Protein Flexibility Prediction

In the same way, protein structures are not rigid macromolecules. We analysed local structure flexibility features in proteins by relying on: (i) B-factors from X-ray experiments and (ii) backbone fluctuations in solution observed in molecular dynamics simulations. Finally, an original flexibility prediction method from sequence was developed (Bornot *et al.*, *Proteins*, 2011). Three classes of flexibility are considered. Very few confusion between rigid and flexible classes was observed. Only 13.5% of rigid residues were predicted as flexible and reciprocally, only 5.8% of flexible ones were predicted as rigid. This method is implemented for this web service.

Launch a prediction

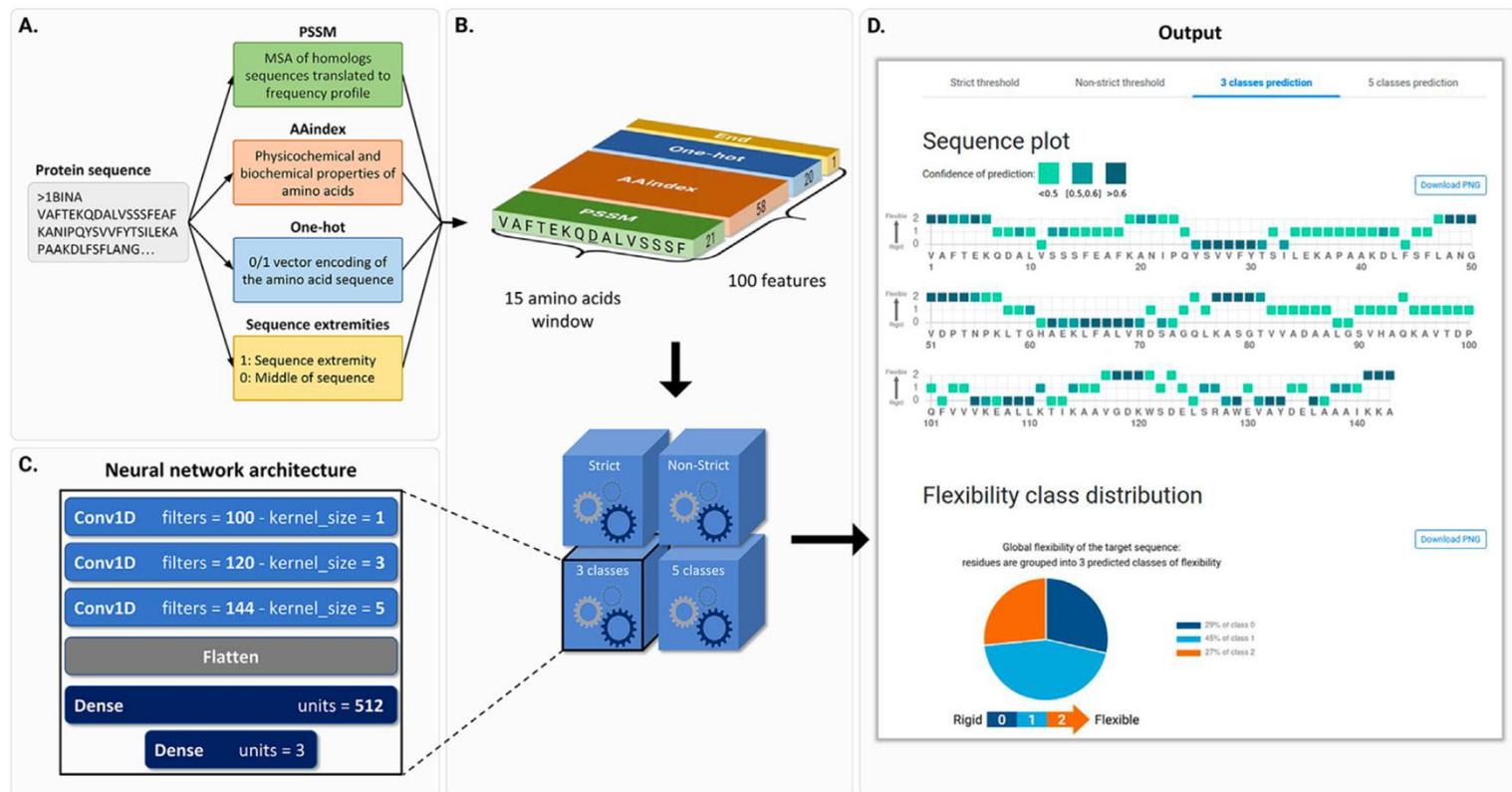
Paste your sequence file (fasta file format):

```
>example
MSLNDDATFWRNARHHLVRYGGTFPEPMI IERAKGSFVYDADGRIILDFTSGQMSAVLG
HCHPEIVSVIGETAGKLDHLSSEMLSRVVDLALRANITPPGLDRALLLSGAEENE
ALIMAKLVTKYETVGFQSHWCHTGLAASATYSAGRKGVCPAAVGSFAIPDFYR
PRFERNGAYDYLAELDVAFDLIDRQSSCNLAFTAEPILSGGGIIELPDQYMAALKRK
CEARNGMLILDQAQTGVGRGTGMPACQRDGVDPDILTLKFTLGLGLAAIVTSAIEF
ERAHGLGYLFYTHVSDPLPAVGLRVLVDVQQRDGLVARANVMGDRLRGLLDMERF
DCIGDVRGRLLLGVEIVKDRRTKEPADLGAKITRECNMLGMSNI VQLPGMGVFR
IAPPLTVSEBIDLGLSLLGQAIERAL
```

PREDICTION

2021

➤ MEDUSA: Deep Learning approach



2021

➤ MEDUSA: Deep Learning approach

A.

Tool	Balanced accuracy		Sensitivity		Precision		F1-Score	
	MEDUSA	PROFbval	MEDUSA	PROFbval	MEDUSA	PROFbval	MEDUSA	PROFbval
Non-Strict	0.678 ± 0.011	0.662	0.678 ± 0.011	0.662	0.678 ± 0.011	0.663	0.677 ± 0.011	0.662
Strict	0.684 ± 0.014	0.638	0.684 ± 0.014	0.638	0.672 ± 0.013	0.677	0.672 ± 0.014	0.642

B.

Real class	Non-Strict		Strict		
	MEDUSA	PROFbval	MEDUSA	PROFbval	
Rigid	0.677	0.323	0.677	0.323	MEDUSA
Flexible	0.322	0.678	0.310	0.690	PROFbval
Rigid	0.615	0.385	0.864	0.136	
Flexible	0.291	0.709	0.587	0.413	
	Rigid	Flexible	Rigid	Flexible	
	Predicted class				

C.

Real class	Predicted class		
0	0.636	0.226	0.138
1	0.338	0.319	0.343
2	0.115	0.192	0.693
	0	1	2

D.

Real class	Predicted class				
0	0.588	0.201	0.104	0.052	0.055
1	0.384	0.236	0.181	0.106	0.093
2	0.167	0.171	0.233	0.203	0.226
3	0.091	0.103	0.177	0.243	0.387
4	0.052	0.050	0.103	0.214	0.581
	0	1	2	3	4

➤ Excellent results: 2-, 3- and 5-states

➤ with B-factors

2021

➤ MEDUSA: Deep Learning approach



MEDUSA: Prediction of Protein Flexibility from Sequence

Yann Vander Meersche, Gabriel Cretin, Alexandre G. de Brevern,
Jean-Christophe Gelly* and Tatiana Galochkina*

Université de Paris, Inserm UMR_S 1134 - BIGR, INTS, 6 rue Alexandre Cabanel, 75015 Paris, France
Laboratoire d'Excellence GR-Ex, 75015 Paris, France

Correspondence to Jean-Christophe Gelly, Tatiana Galochkina: christophe.gelly@u-paris.fr (J.-C. Gelly),
tatiana.galochkina@u-paris.fr (T. Galochkina)
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmb.2021.166882>

Edited by Michael Sternberg

Abstract

Information on the protein flexibility is essential to understand crucial molecular mechanisms such as protein stability, interactions with other molecules and protein functions in general. B-factor obtained in the X-ray crystallography experiments is the most common flexibility descriptor available for the majority of the resolved protein structures. Since the gap between the number of the resolved protein structures and available protein sequences is continuously growing, it is important to provide computational tools for protein flexibility prediction from amino acid sequence. In the current study, we report a Deep Learning based protein flexibility prediction tool MEDUSA (<https://www.dsimb.inserm.fr/MEDUSA>). MEDUSA uses evolutionary information extracted from protein homologous sequences and amino acid physico-chemical properties as input for a convolutional neural network to assign a flexibility class to each protein sequence position. Trained on a non-redundant dataset of X-ray structures, MEDUSA provides flexibility prediction in two, three and five classes. MEDUSA is freely available as a web-server providing a clear visualization of the prediction results as well as a standalone utility (<https://github.com/DSIMB/medusa>). Analysis of the MEDUSA output allows a user to identify the potentially highly deformable protein regions and general dynamic properties of the protein.



2021

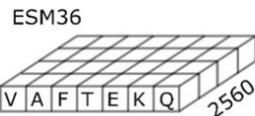
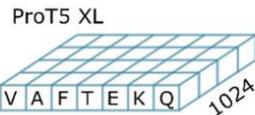
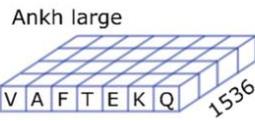
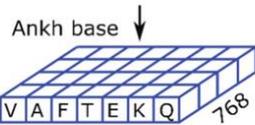
- MEDUSA: Deep Learning approach
- Excellent results: 2-, 3- and 5-states
- A dedicated webserver
- ~150,000 to 350,000 trainable parameters

2025

➤ To predict RMSF

Sequence Embeddings

encoding by pLM
 >1BINA
 VAFTEKQDALVSSSEAF



16 CNN predictors

- RMSF
- Std. Phi
- Std. Psi
- mean LDDT

- RMSF
- Std. Phi
- Std. Psi
- mean LDDT

- RMSF
- Std. Phi
- Std. Psi
- mean LDDT

- RMSF
- Std. Phi
- Std. Psi
- mean LDDT

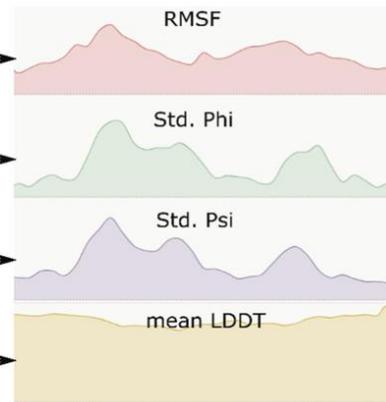
Prediction mean

$$\frac{1}{4} \sum_{i=1}^4$$

$$\frac{1}{4} \sum_{i=1}^4$$

$$\frac{1}{4} \sum_{i=1}^4$$

$$\frac{1}{4} \sum_{i=1}^4$$



PEGASUS output

2025

- To predict RMSF
- Flexibility prediction in 2 classes (rigid/flexible): F1 score of 0.71 vs. 0.65
- Better predictions despite a $7 \times$ smaller training set
- Embeddings more informative than classical evolutionary/physicochemical descriptors
- Capable of detecting changes in flexibility induced by point mutations



Received: 19 November 2024 | Revised: 21 May 2025 | Accepted: 25 June 2025
DOI: 10.1002/jps.70221

TOOLS FOR PROTEIN SCIENCE

PEGASUS: Prediction of MD-derived protein flexibility from sequence

Yann Vander Meersche | Gabriel Duval | Gabriel Cretin |
Aria Gheeraert | Jean-Christophe Gelly | Tatiana Galochkina

Abstract
Protein flexibility is essential to its biological function. However, experimental methods for its assessment, such as X-ray crystallography and nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, are often limited by experimental variability and high cost, leading to a gap between the number of identified protein sequences and the available experimental information on protein dynamics. On the other hand, molecular dynamics (MD) simulations provide a uniform and detailed description of the expected protein flexibility, and the availability and quality of such data are increasing significantly during the last years. In this study, we use the recently released ATLAS database to develop Protein language models for prediction of Simulated dynamicS (PEGASUS), a sequence-based predictor of MD-derived information on protein flexibility (<https://dsimb.inserm.fr/PEGASUS/>). PEGASUS integrates four different representations of protein sequences generated by Protein Language Models to predict residue-wise MD-derived values of backbone fluctuation (root mean square fluctuation), Phi and Psi dihedral angles standard deviation, and average Local Distance Difference Test across the trajectory. The PEGASUS web server was optimized to perform instantaneous predictions for an individual protein sequence and also allows batch submission of up to 100 sequences of 1 k residues each. For more complex queries, we also release PEGASUS as a user-friendly standalone utility (<https://github.com/DSIMB/PEGASUS>).

KEYWORDS
deep learning, molecular dynamics, prediction of protein properties, protein dynamics, protein flexibility, protein language models, sequence-based predictors

1 | INTRODUCTION
Protein function is largely determined by its molecular structure and associated dynamic properties. Proteins constantly undergo structural changes of varying amplitude and frequency. Therefore, the flexibility of different protein regions determines its molecular function in various biological mechanisms (Telum et al., 2009). However, available experimental information on protein dynamics, such as B-factor values obtained by X-ray crystallography and the general order parameter S^2 and conformational ensembles from nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy, remains limited and highly dependent on the experimental conditions (Carugo, 2018, 2022; Sun et al., 2019). Due to the recent breakthrough in protein structure prediction (Jumper et al., 2021), reliable static

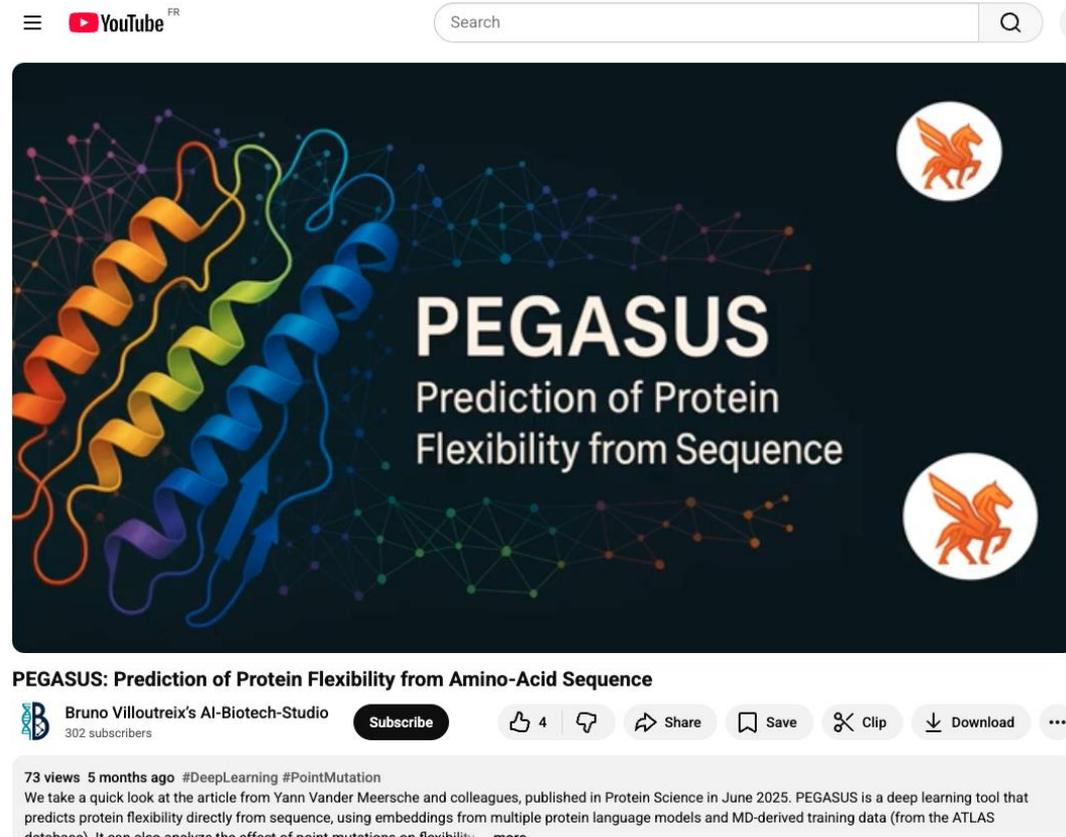
Yann Vander Meersche, Gabriel Duval and Gabriel Cretin contributed equally to this work.

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Protein Science, 2025, 34, e70221.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jps.70221>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jps.70221> | 1 of 13

2025



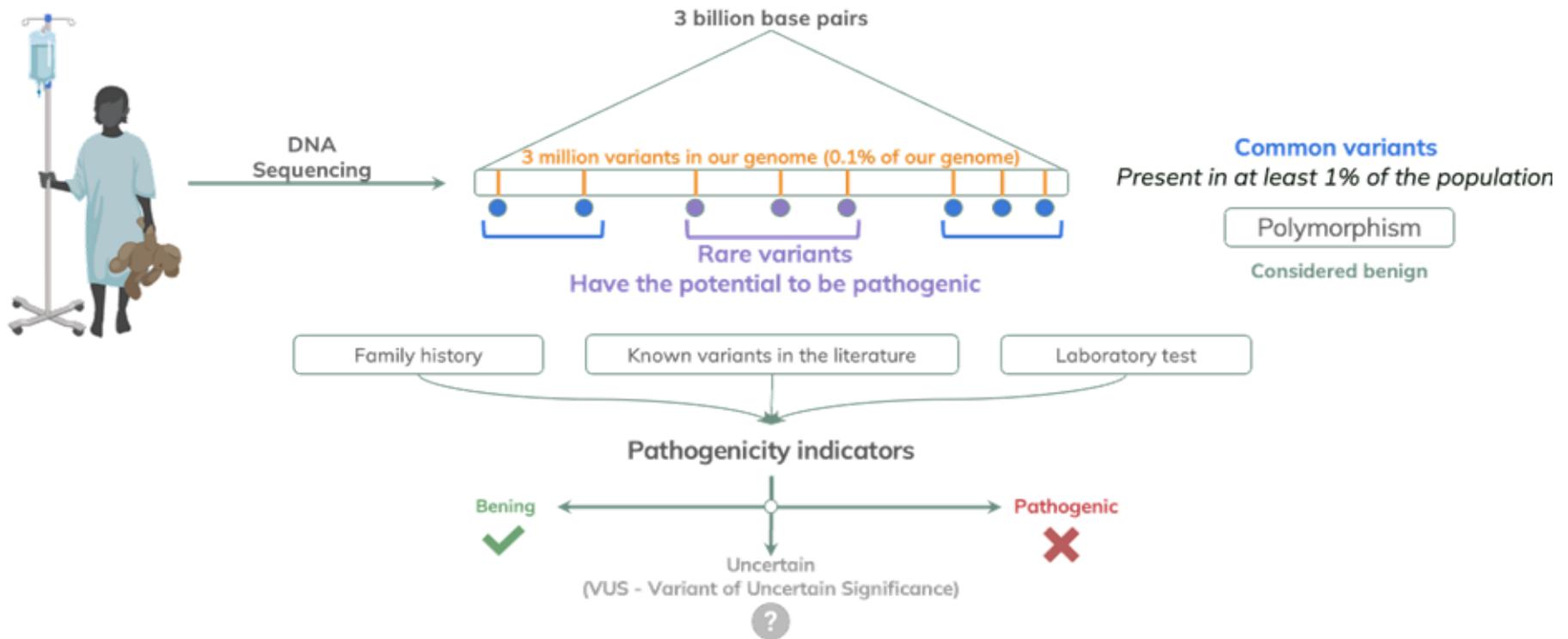
The image shows a screenshot of a YouTube video player. The video title is "PEGASUS: Prediction of Protein Flexibility from Sequence". The channel name is "Bruno Villoutreix's AI-Biotech-Studio" with 302 subscribers. The video has 73 views and was uploaded 5 months ago. The description mentions that the video is a quick look at an article from Yann Vander Meersche and colleagues, published in Protein Science in June 2025. The article describes PEGASUS as a deep learning tool that predicts protein flexibility directly from sequence, using embeddings from multiple protein language models and MD-derived training data (from the ATLAS database). It can also analyze the effect of point mutations on flexibility.

Bruno Villoutreix's AI-Biotech-Studio

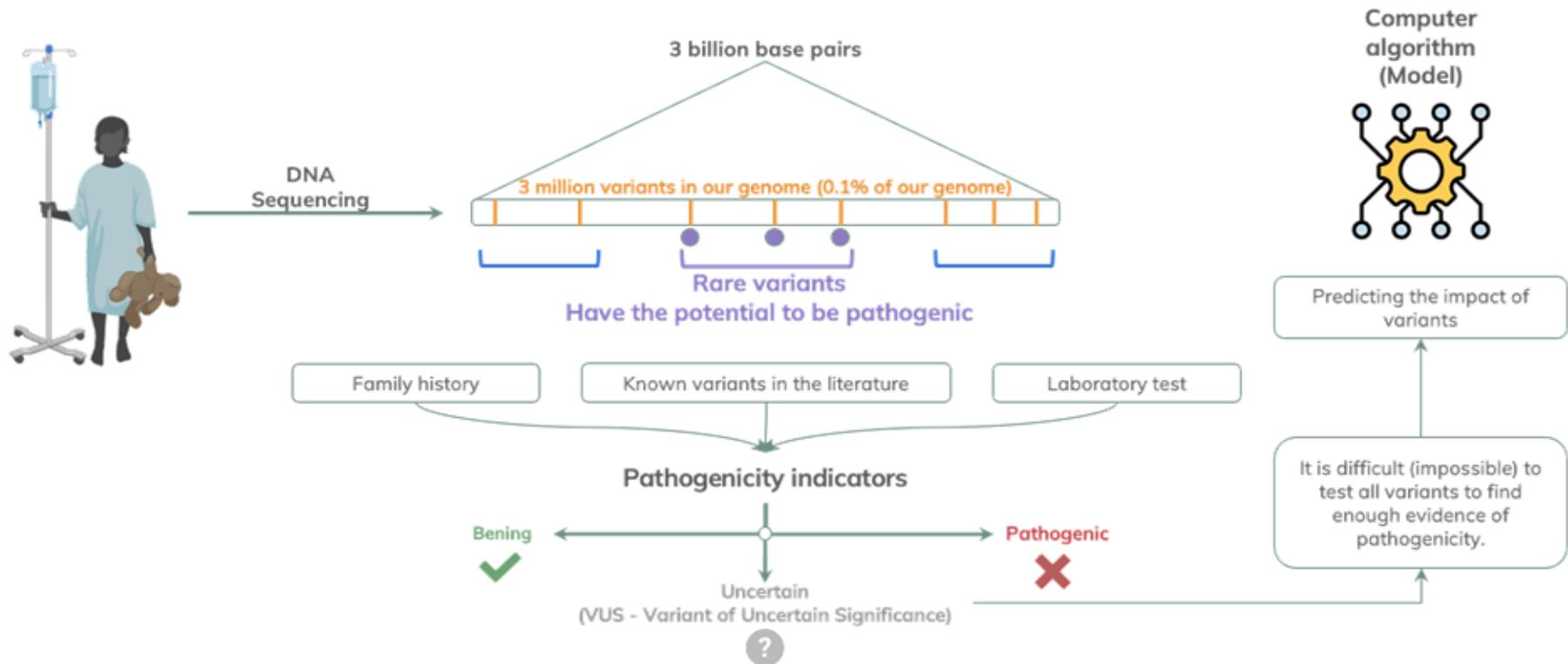
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXu53l1K7h8>

4. PATHOLOGY PREDICTION

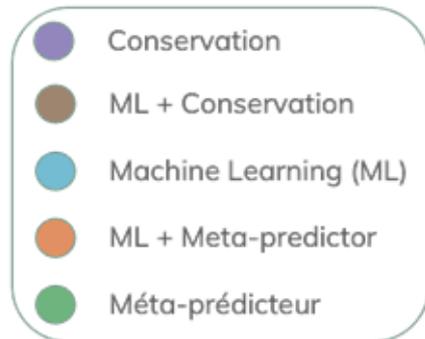
➤ Pathology prediction: the question



➤ Pathology prediction: model – Variant Effect Predictor

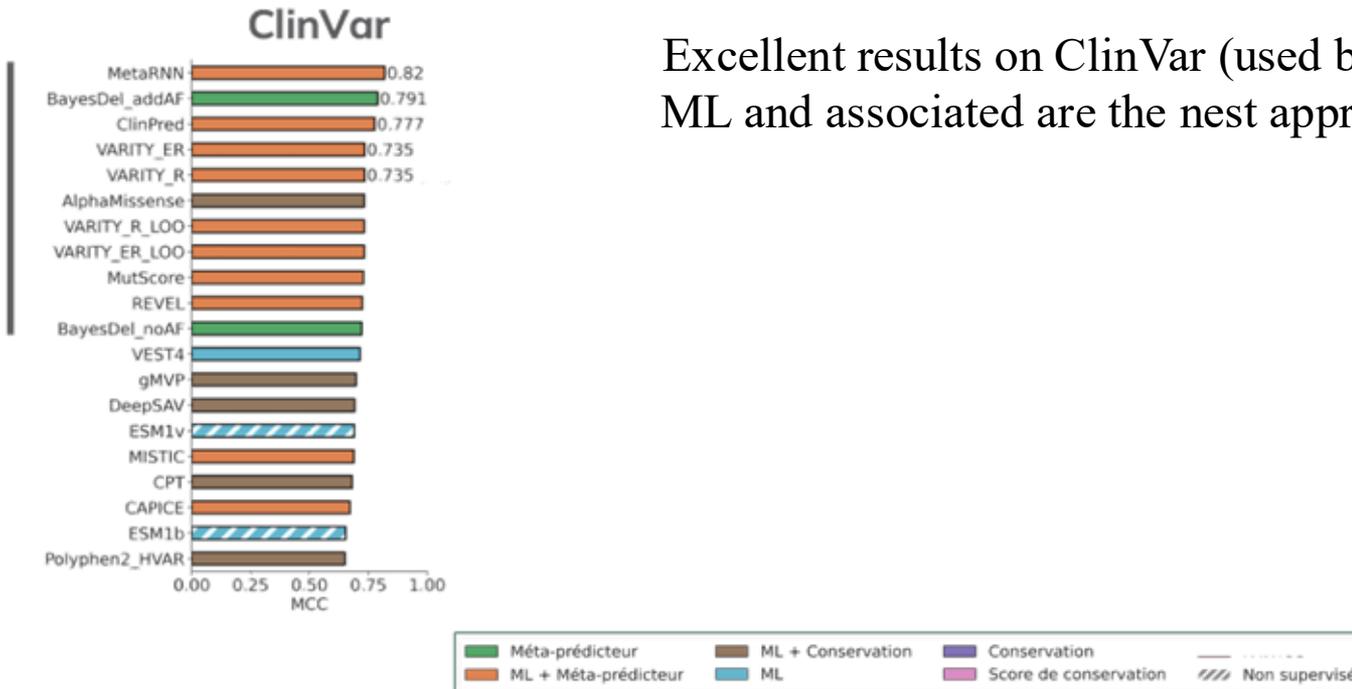


➤ Pathology prediction: VEP chronology

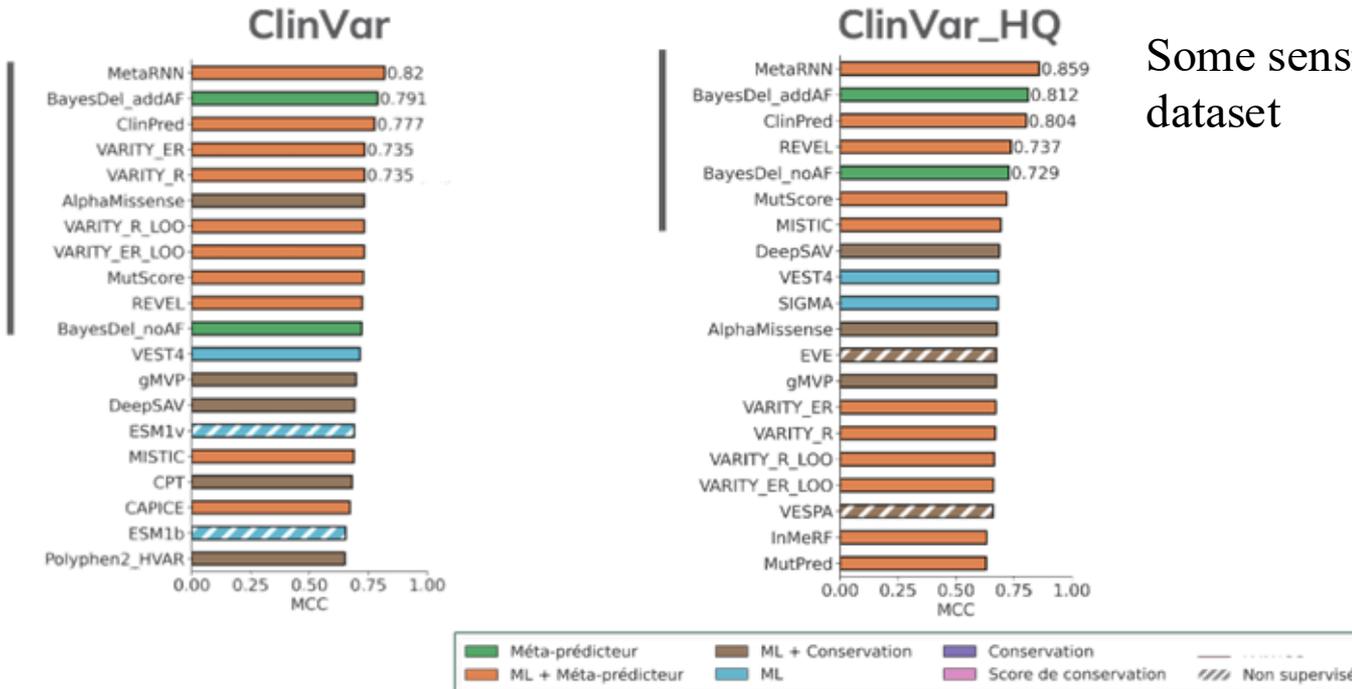


➤ Pathology prediction: benchmark (MCC)

Excellent results on ClinVar (used by most methods)
 ML and associated are the best approaches



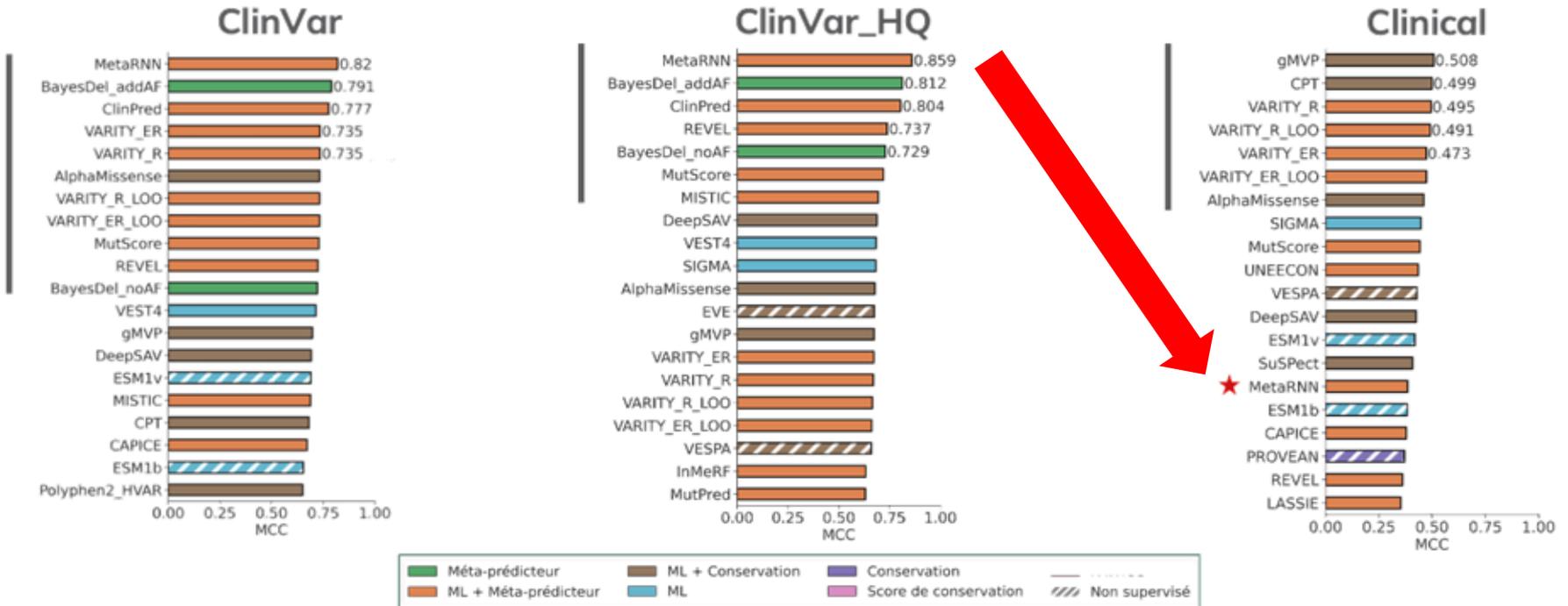
➤ Pathology prediction: benchmark (MCC)



Pathology prediction

➤ Pathology prediction: benchmark (MCC)

In fact, terribly sensible on the dataset (different type of bias)



➤ Pathology prediction: benchmark

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Insights for variant clinical interpretation based on a benchmark of 65 variant effect predictors
Ragousandirane Radjasandirane, Julien Diharce, Jean-Christophe Gelly¹, Alexandre G. de Brevern^{1,*}
Université Paris Cité and Université de la Réunion, INSERM, EFS, BGR U1134, DSIMB Bioinformatics team, F-75015 Paris, France

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Misense variants
Benchmark
Pathogenicity
ClinVar
Variant effect predictor
AlphaMisense
AlphaFold2

ABSTRACT
Single amino acid substitutions in protein sequences are generally harmless, but a certain number of these changes can lead to disease. Accurately predicting the effect of genetic variants is crucial for clinicians as it accelerates the diagnosis of patients with missense variants associated with health problems. Many computational tools have been developed to predict the pathogenicity of genetic variants with various approaches. Analysing the performance of these different computational tools is crucial to provide guidance to both future users and especially clinicians. In this study, a large-scale investigation of 65 tools was conducted. Variants from both clinical and functional contexts were used, incorporating data from the ClinVar database and bibliographic sources. The analysis showed that AlphaMisense often performed very well and was in fact one of the best options among the existing tools. In addition, as expected, meta-predictors perform well on average. Tools using evolutionary information showed the best performance for functional variants. These results also highlighted some heterogeneity in the difficulty of predicting some specific variants while others are always well categorized. Strikingly, the majority of variants from the ClinVar database appear to be easy to predict, while variants from other sources of data are more challenging. This raises questions about the use of ClinVar and the dataset used to validate tools accuracy. In addition, these results show that this variant predictability can be divided into three distinct classes: easy, moderate and hard to predict. We analyzed the parameters leading to these differences and showed that the classes are related to structural and functional information.

1. Introduction
In living organisms, DNA molecules are subject to replication cycles, a fundamental process for the generation of new cells and the transfer of genetic information. Sometimes, alterations occur in the nucleotide sequence during duplications, leading to different outcomes. A mutation can be neutral, having no effect on the cell and the biological processes. Nucleotide changes of sufficient magnitude can have a particularly negative effect on cells, leading to disease. Finally, in the most serious case, the nucleotide changes may be so lethal that the cell cannot survive [1]. Hence, these nucleotide changes can range from a single nucleotide mutation (i.e. Single Nucleotide Polymorphism or SNP), to larger deletions / insertions, frameshifts or even breaks and rearrangements of a large portion of sequence. The sequencing of several human genomes has revealed the extensive nature of human polymorphisms, indicating that most SNPs are harmless. Only a fraction of them have been directly linked to diseases [2] and are called Single Nucleotide Variants or SNVs rather than SNPs which refer specifically to highly frequent variants (with an allele frequency superior to 1 %). The first set of variants are called benign, the second pathogenic.
The criteria for deciding whether a variant should be annotated as benign or pathogenic are now well documented. A recognized guideline is provided by the American College of Medical Genetics (ACMG) and Association for Molecular Pathology (AMP) [3], it lists several good

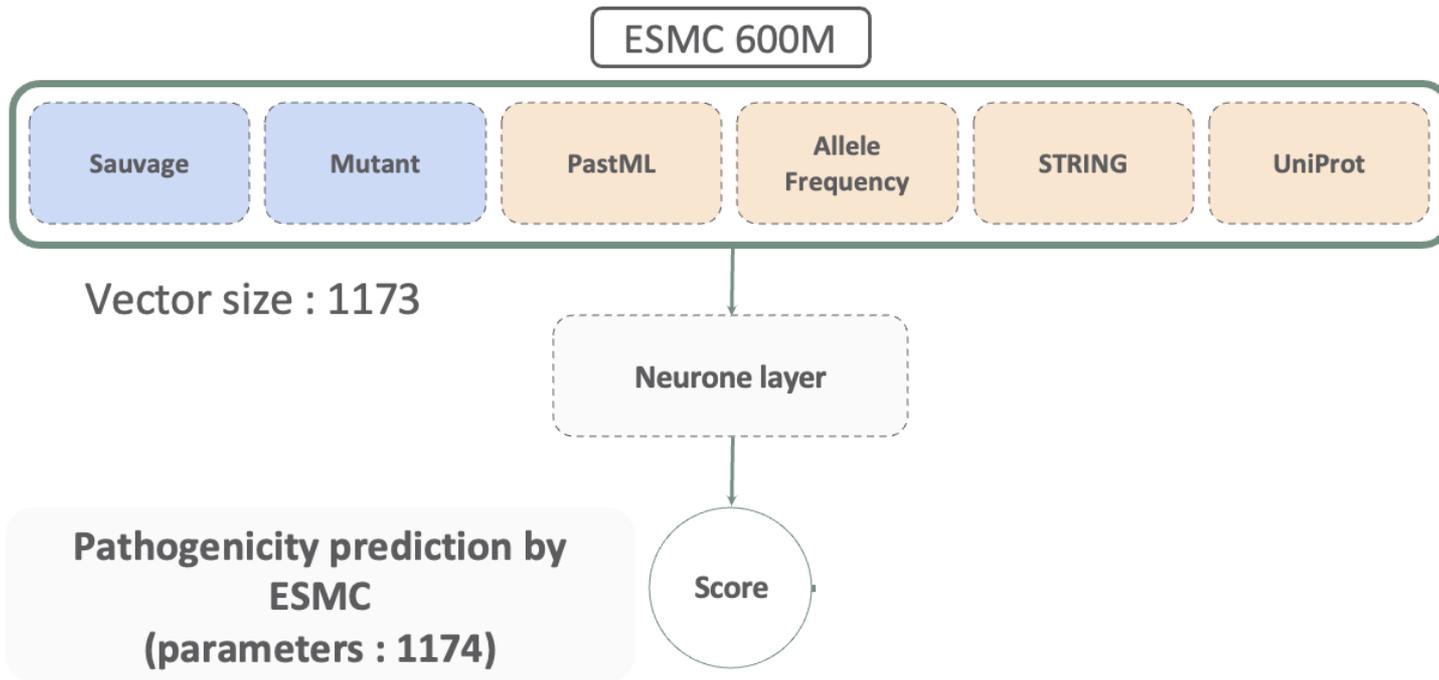
Abbreviations: ACMG, American College of Medical Genetics; AMP, Association for Molecular Pathology; SNP, Single Nucleotide Polymorphism; OMIM, Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man; HGMD, Human Gene Mutation Database; VEP, Variant Effect Predictor; AF2, AlphaFold2 ML, Machine Learning; AI, Artificial Intelligence; DMS, Deep Mutation Scanning; TIC, Type 1 Circularity; TIC, Type 2 Circularity; AUROC, Area Under the ROC curve; MCC, Matthews Correlation Coefficient; BER, Balanced Error Rate; SASA, Solvent Accessible Surface Area.
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E-mail address: alexandre.debrevern@univ-paris-diderot.fr (A.G. de Brevern).
¹ Both authors contributed equally.

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Available online 22 March 2025
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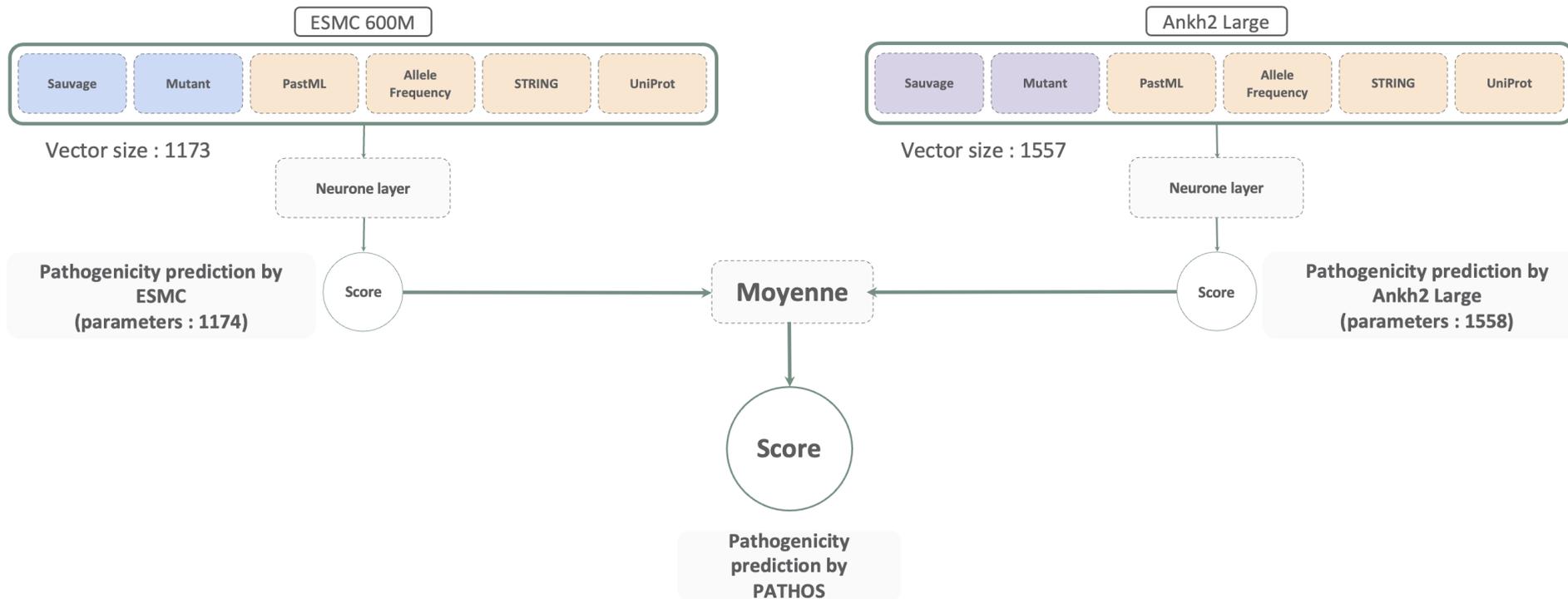
In fact, terribly sensible on the dataset (different type of bias)



- Pathology prediction: a new approach (with proper data)

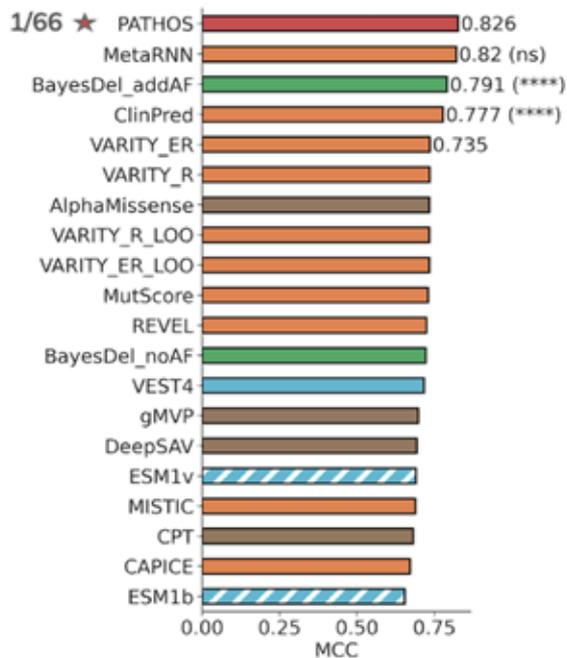


➤ Pathology prediction: PATHOS

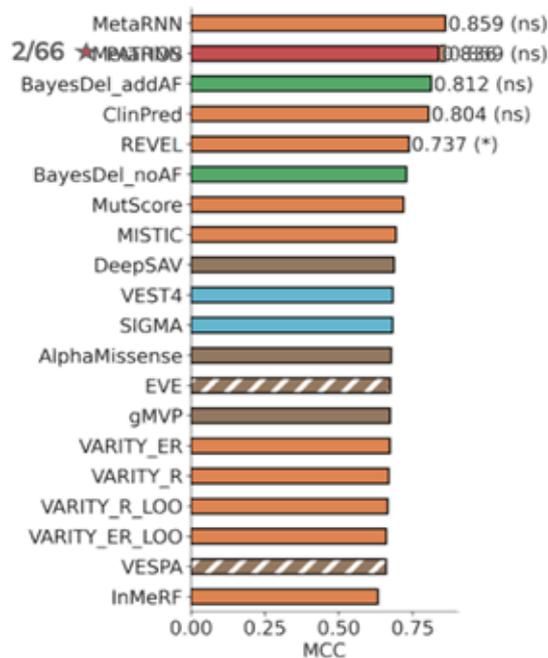


➤ Pathology prediction: PATHOS

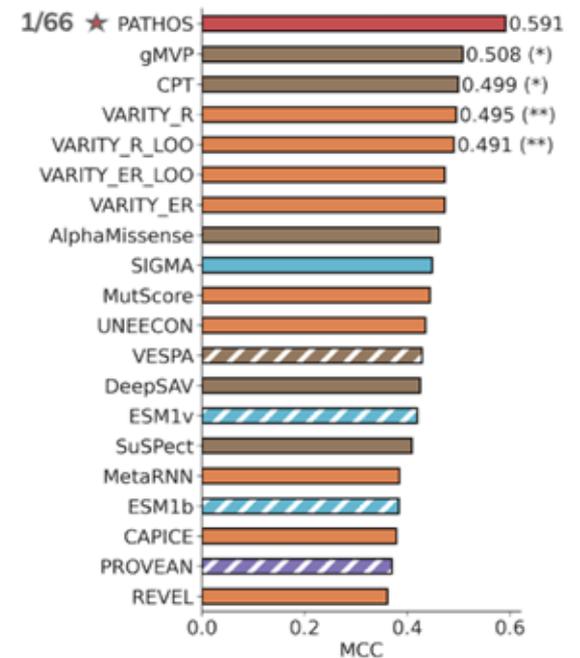
ClinVar



ClinVar_HQ



Clinical



➤ Pathology prediction: PATHOS



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PATHOS: Predicting Variant Pathogenicity by Combining Protein Language Models and Biological Features

👤 Ragousandirane Radjasandirane, 👤 Gabriel Cretin, 👤 Julien Diharce, 👤 Alexandre G. de Brevern, 👤 Jean-Christophe Gelly

doi: <https://doi.org/10.64898/2025.12.22.25342839>

This article is a preprint and has not been peer-reviewed [what does this mean?]. It reports new medical research that has yet to be evaluated and so should not be used to guide clinical practice.

Abstract Full Text Info/History Metrics Preview PDF

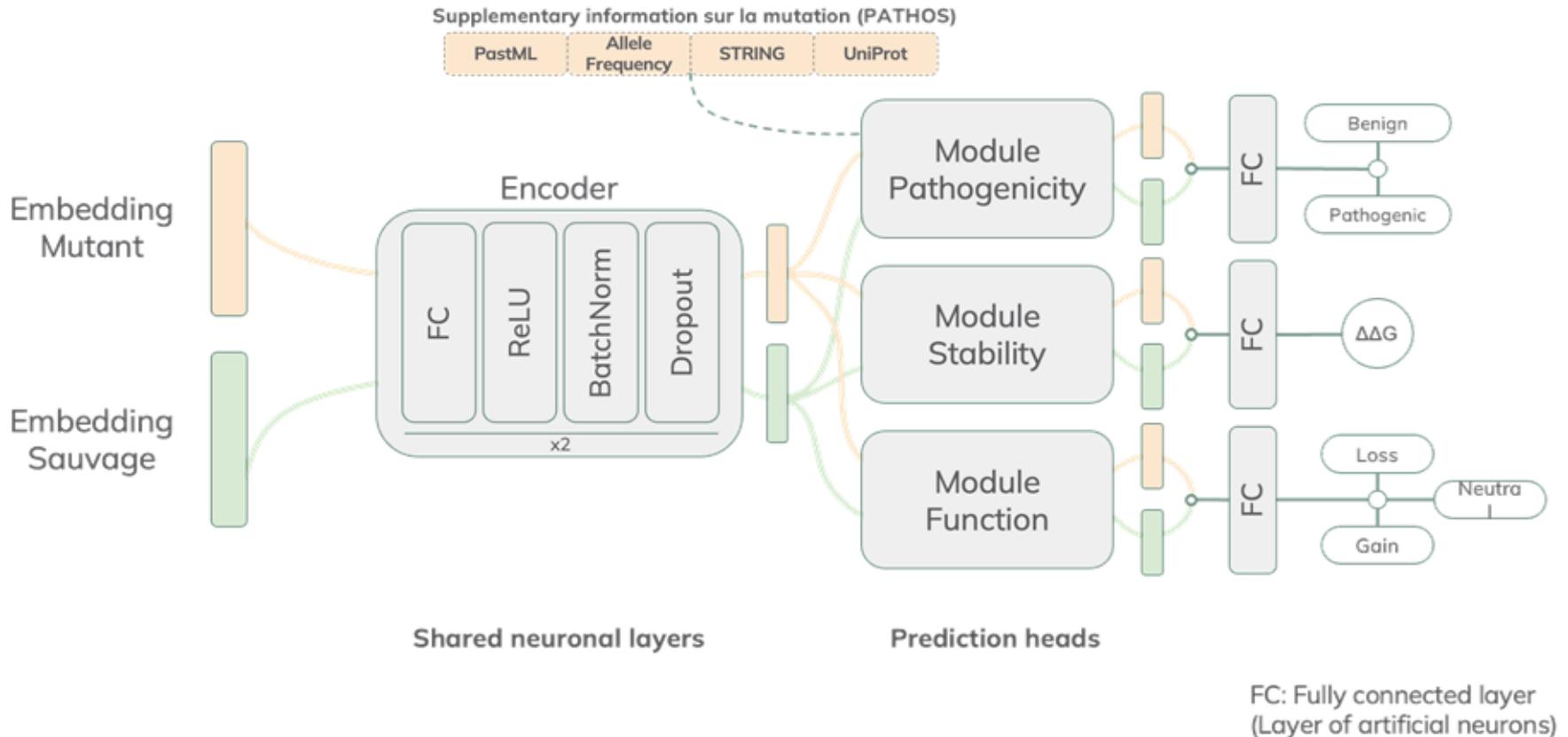
Abstract

Predicting the pathogenic impact of missense variants is essential for understanding and diagnosing genetic diseases. These approaches have undergone significant evolution, with the latest methodologies based on deep learning approaches. Nonetheless, only a limited number use the potential of Protein Language Models (PLMs), which have demonstrated strong performance across various protein-related tasks.

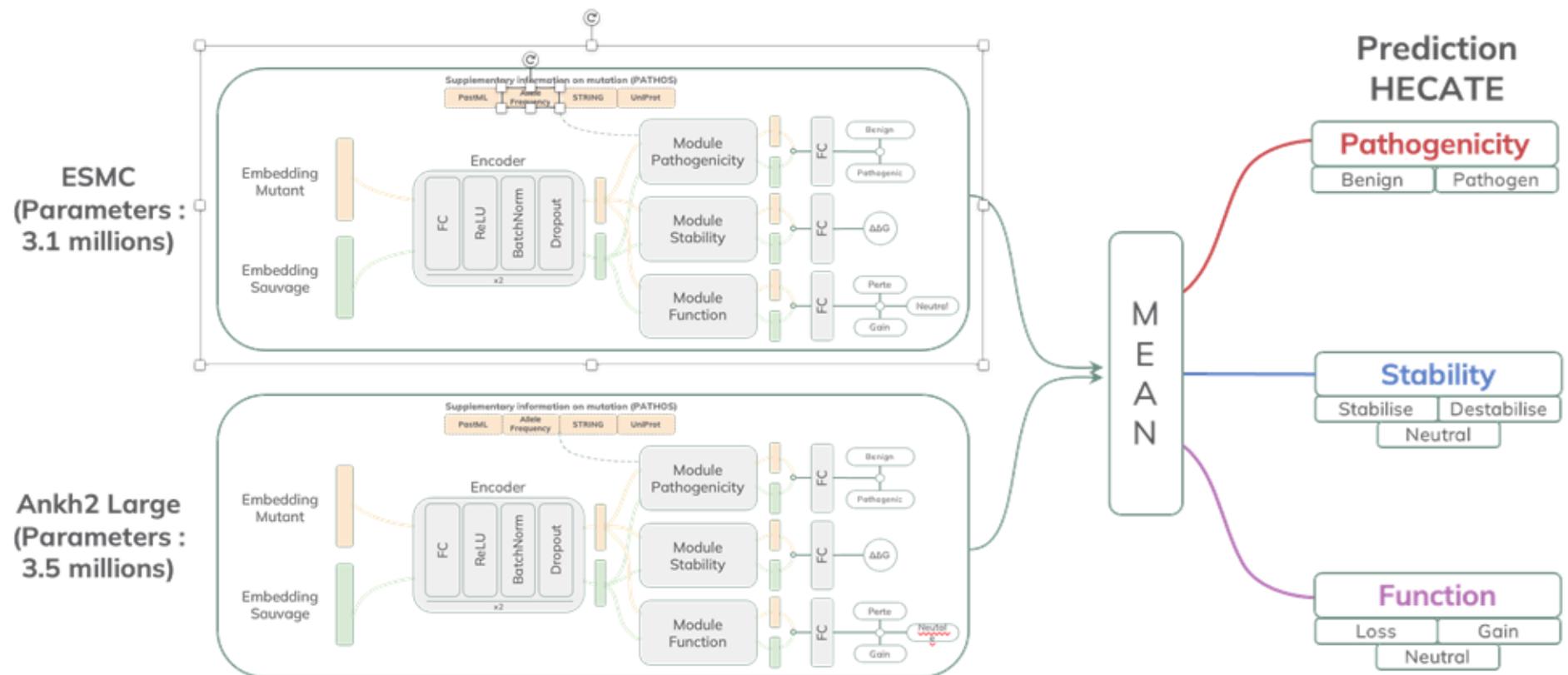
A new predictor, called PATHOS, was developed; it combines embeddings from an optimal set of two PLMs, namely ESM C 600M and Ankh 2 Large. Their embeddings were combined with additional crucial biological features such as phylogenetic probabilities, allele frequency, and protein annotations; they were aggregated using a



➤ Pathology prediction ++ ... : HECATE, a Siamese model



➤ Pathology prediction ++ ... : HECATE, a Siamese model



➤ HECATE results



Pathogenicity

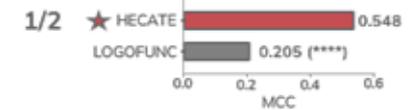
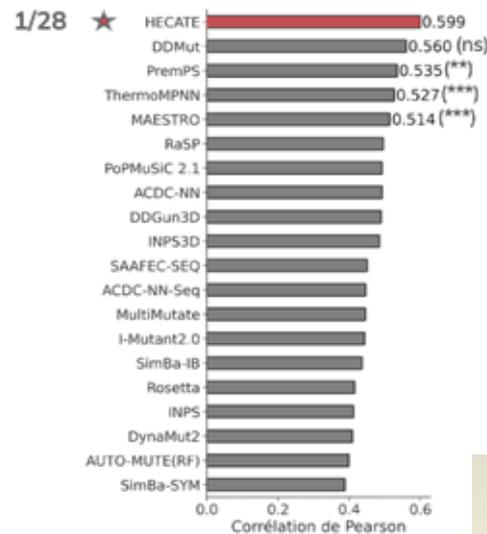
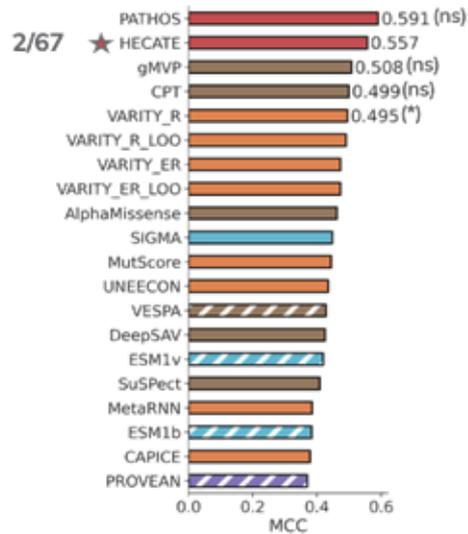
Stability

Gain/Loss of Function

Comparative evaluation published by
Zheng et al.
27 tools tested on 4038 mutations

Dataset published by Flanagan et al. 133
mutations from the literature and patient
cohorts

Data : Clinical, used in our
comparative evaluation



HECATE performs well in all areas



➤ Pathology prediction

Terribly sensitive to the data curation

Improvement can be done

Architecture can be used for other property researches

5. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

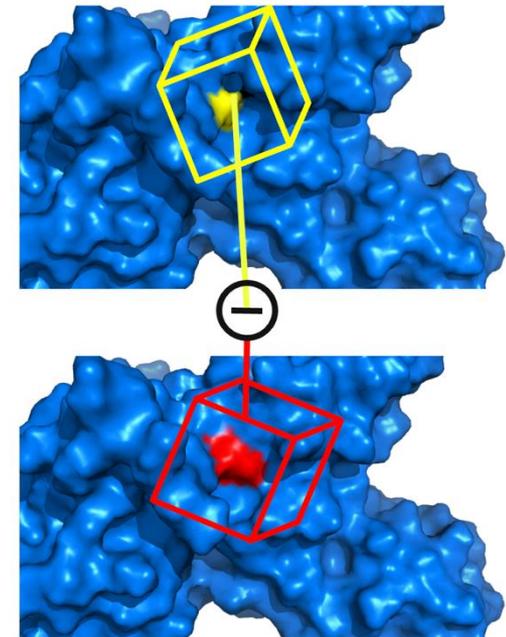
➤ Prediction of the effects of mutations on protein interactions



Alessandra Carbone

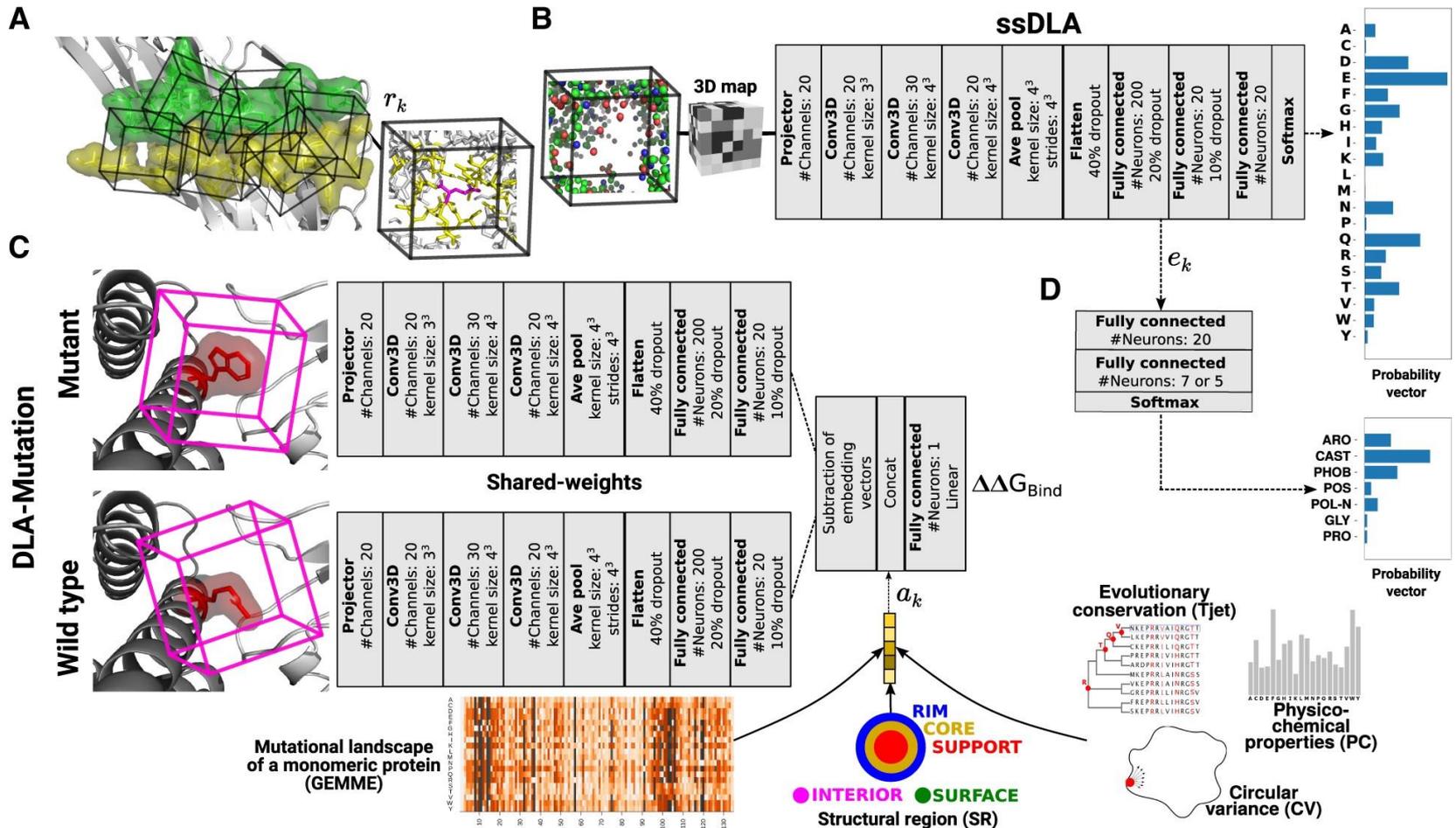


Élodie Laine



- ◆ A deep learning framework
- ◆ Mutations on the interface of PPI
- ◆ Direct prediction of $\Delta\Delta G_{Bind}$
- ◆ Local changes
- ◆ Leverage the knowledge of protein-protein interactions
- ◆ Transfer the knowledge in an end-to-end architecture

Prediction of the effects of mutations on protein interactions



➤ Prediction of the effects of mutations on protein interactions

Bioinformatics, 2023, **39**, i544–i552
<https://doi.org/10.1093/bioinformatics/btad231>
ISMB/ECCB 2023



Deep Local Analysis deconstructs protein–protein interfaces and accurately estimates binding affinity changes upon mutation

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Abstract

Motivation: The spectacular recent advances in protein and protein complex structure prediction hold promise for reconstructing interactomes at large-scale and residue resolution. Beyond determining the 3D arrangement of interacting partners, modeling approaches should be able to unravel the impact of sequence variations on the strength of the association.

Results: In this work, we report on Deep Local Analysis, a novel and efficient deep learning framework that relies on a strikingly simple deconstruction of protein interfaces into small locally oriented residue-centered cubes and on 3D convolutions recognizing patterns within cubes. Merely based on the two cubes associated with the wild-type and the mutant residues, DLA accurately estimates the binding affinity change for the associated complexes. It achieves a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.735 on about 400 mutations on unseen complexes. Its generalization capability on blind datasets of complexes is higher than the state-of-the-art methods. We show that taking into account the evolutionary constraints on residues contributes to predictions. We also discuss the influence of conformational variability on performance. Beyond the predictive power on the effects of mutations, DLA is a general framework for transferring the knowledge gained from the available non-redundant set of complex protein structures to various tasks. For instance, given a single partially masked cube, it recovers the identity and physicochemical class of the central residue. Given an ensemble of cubes representing an interface, it predicts the function of the complex.

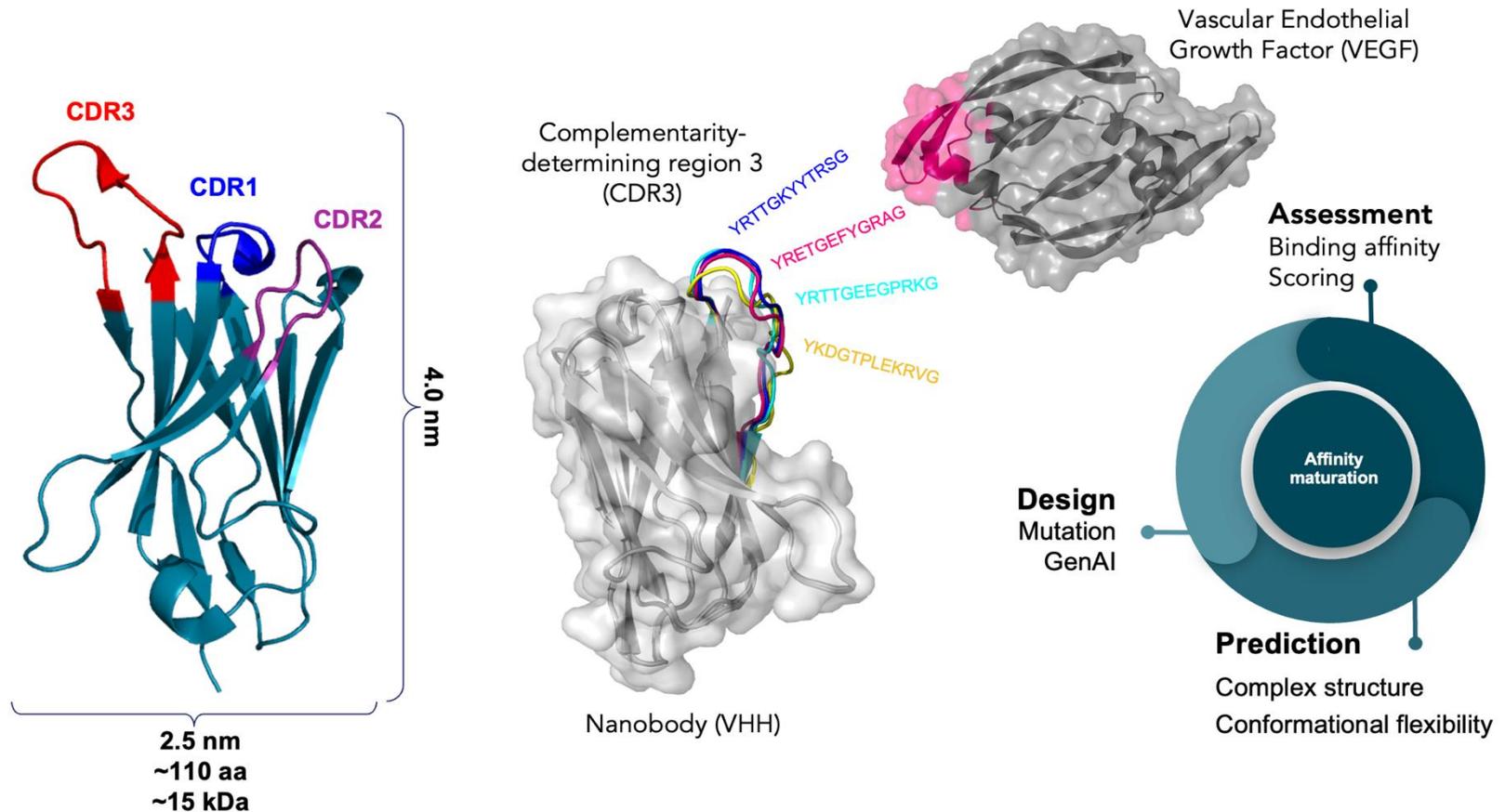
Availability and implementation: Source code and models are available at <https://github.com/yasser-mohseni-behbahani/dla>

1 Introduction

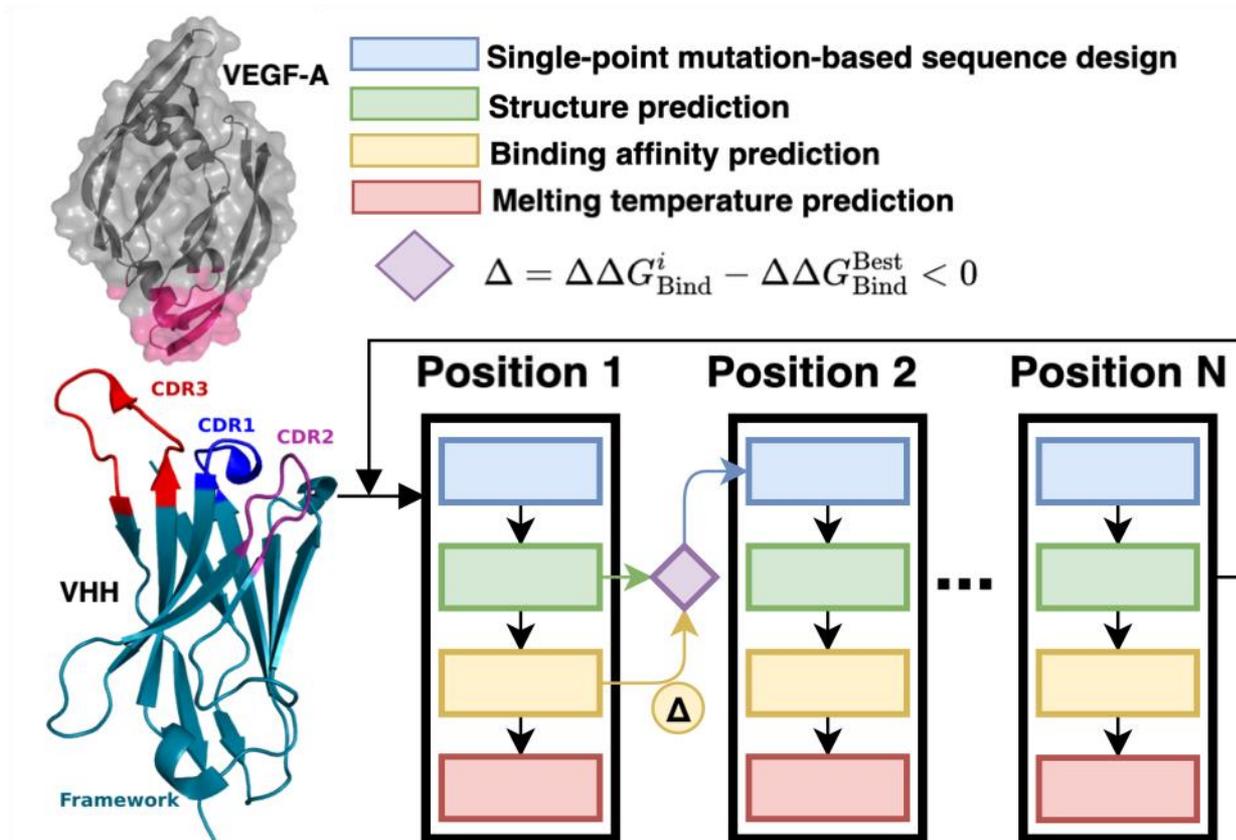
The ever-growing number of sequenced individual genomes and the possibility of obtaining high-resolution 3D structural

respectively. Significant efforts have been expended over the past decade to produce, collect and curate binding affinity measurements for wild-type and mutated complexes (

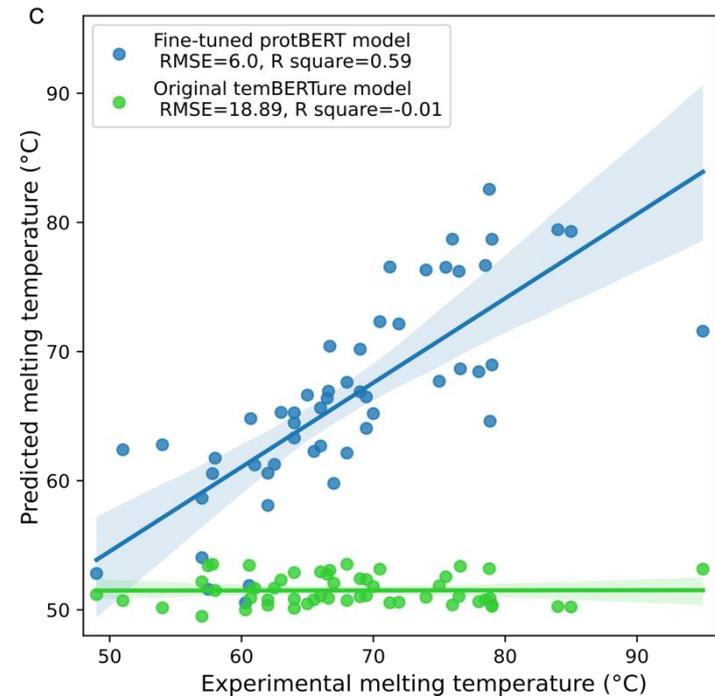
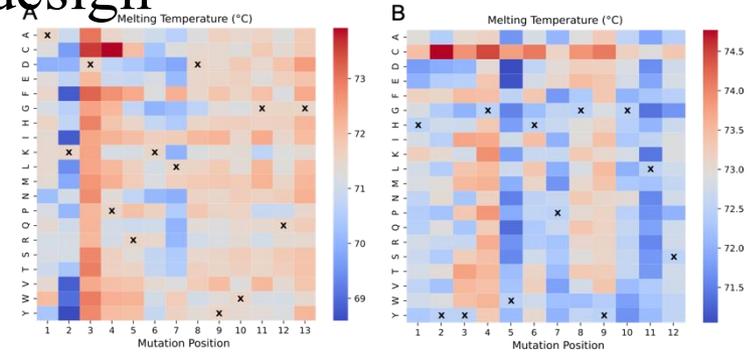
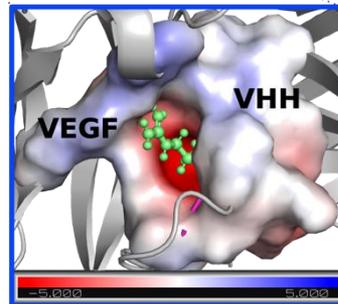
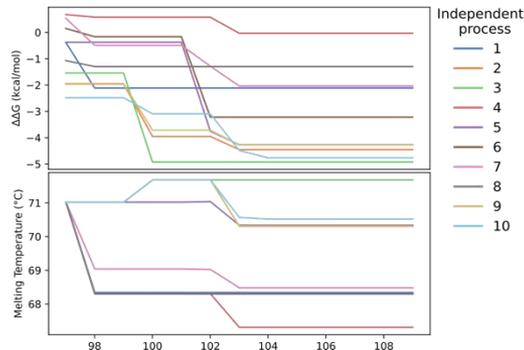
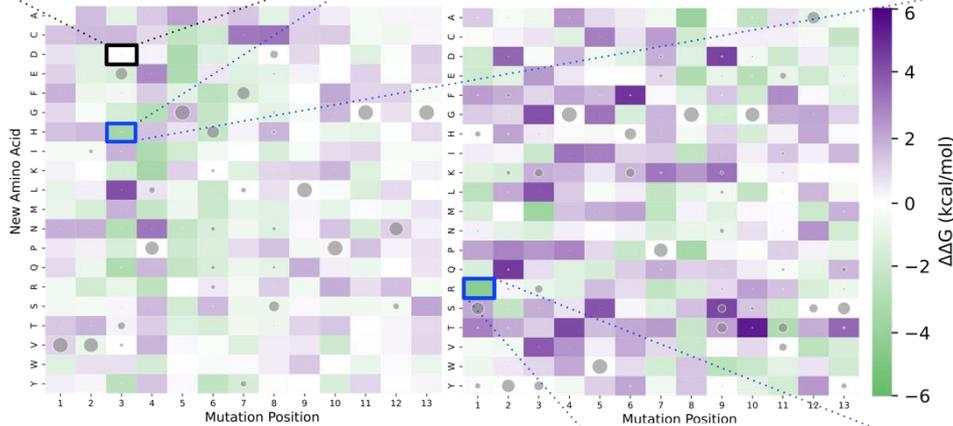
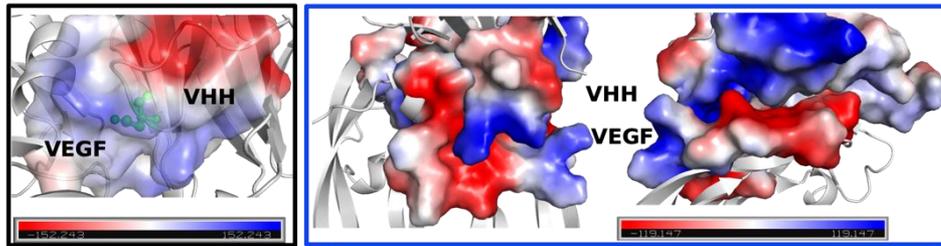
➤ Deep learning-based nanobody design



➤ Deep learning-based nanobody design



➤ Deep learning-based nanobody design



➤ Deep learning-based nanobody design



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A deep learning approach for rational affinity maturation of anti-VEGF nanobodies

Gaëlle Verdon, Laurent David, Alexandre de Brevern, Yasser Mohseni Behbahani

doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.10.20.683442>

This article is a preprint and has not been certified by peer review [what does this mean?].

Abstract

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Abstract

Nanobodies offer several advantages over conventional antibodies due to their lower immunogenicity, enhanced stability, and superior tissue penetration, making them promising candidates for cancer therapy. In this study, we employ deep learning algorithms to design anti-VEGF nanobodies via affinity maturation. Our approach integrates structure-guided mutational modeling and systematic measurement of binding affinity and stability for rational optimization of Complementarity Determining Regions. In addition, we developed a sequence-based melting temperature predictor for nanobodies, ensuring stability of the designed mutants. Our method achieves energy reductions up to -4.92 kcal/mol. Our melting temperature predictor demonstrated a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.772. These findings emphasize the potential of computational approaches for nanobody affinity maturation and stability prediction, paving the way for more effective therapeutic designs.

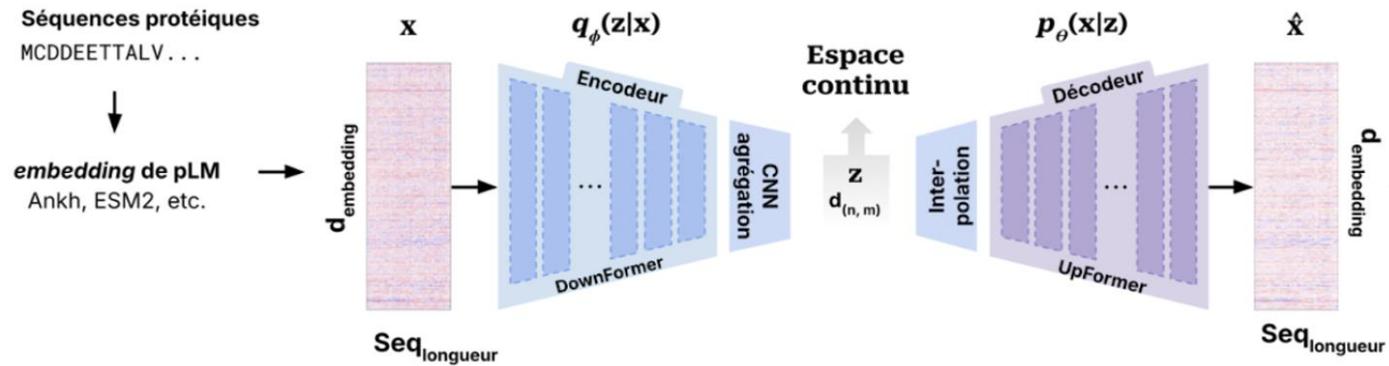
Competing Interest Statement



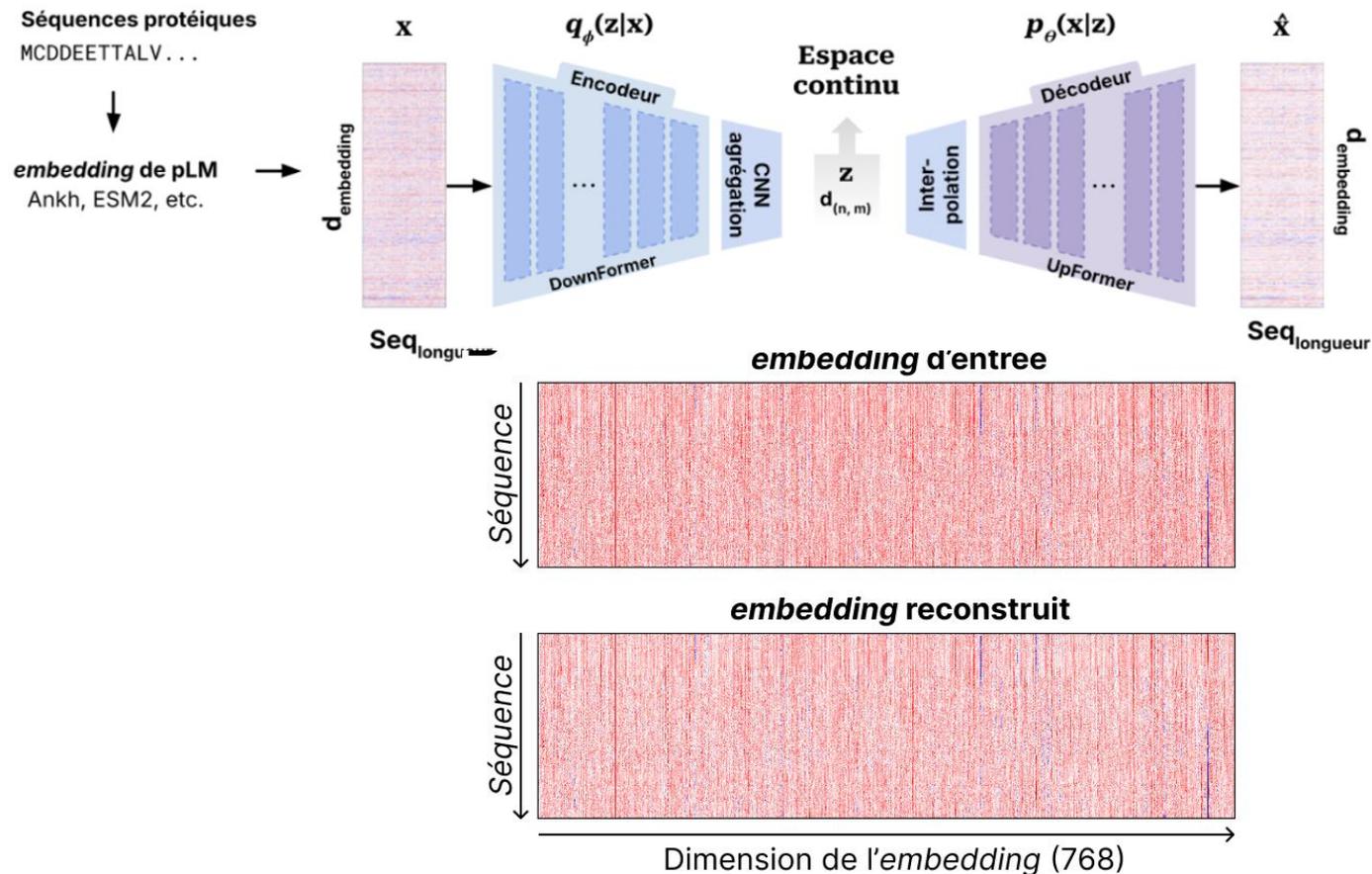
Gaëlle Verdon



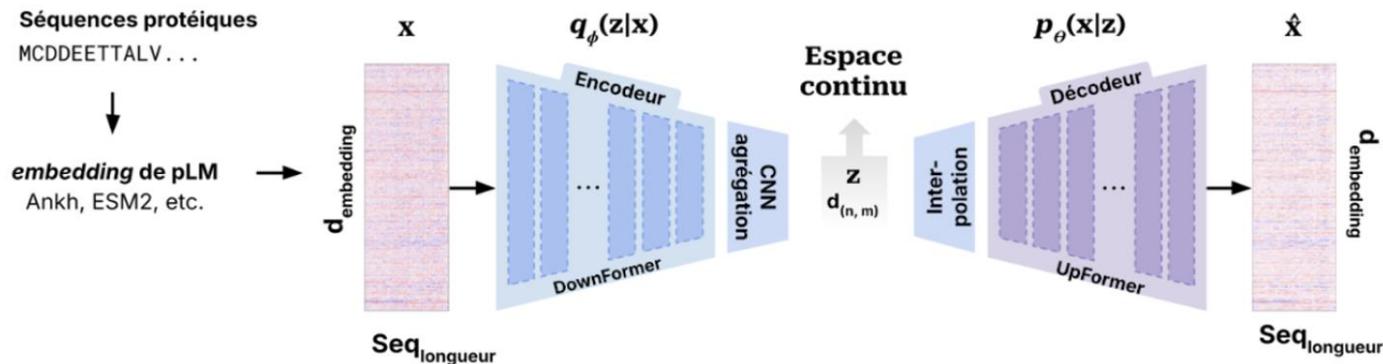
➤ Compress the embeddings:



- Compress the embeddings: Faithful reconstruction despite x96 compression



➤ Compress the embeddings:



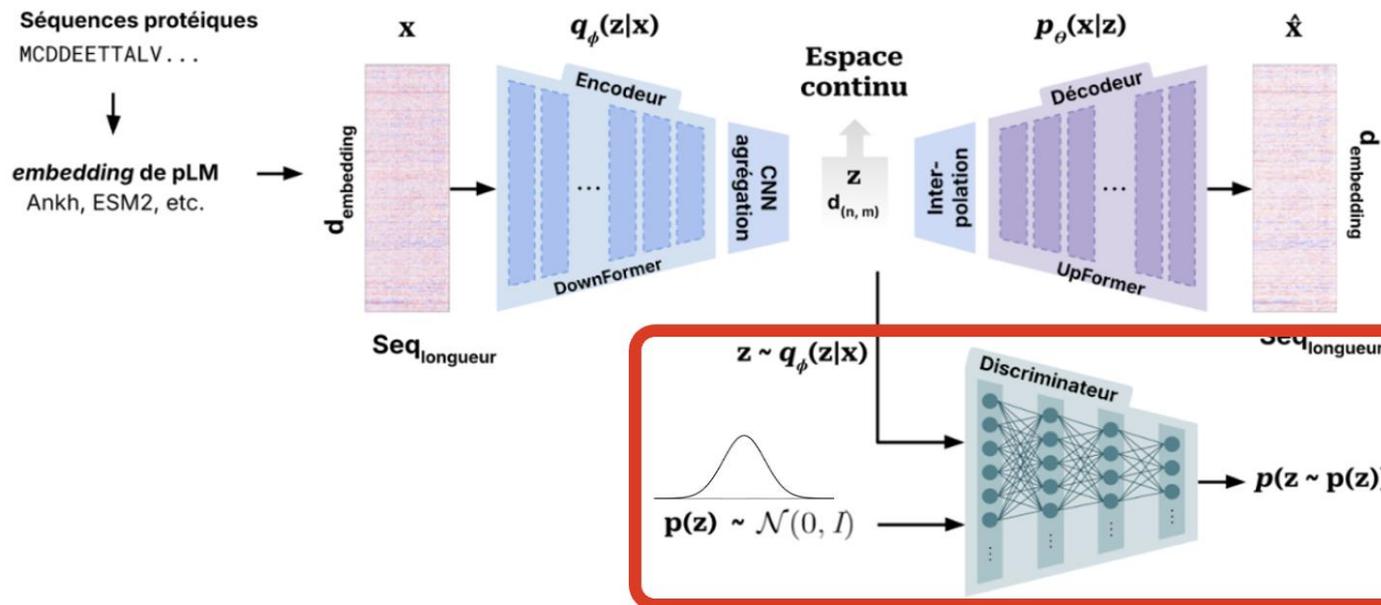
Compression down to x96, thus reducing storage costs and enabling learning for downstream task prediction.

However, variable-sized compressed embeddings and latent space are still not continuous.

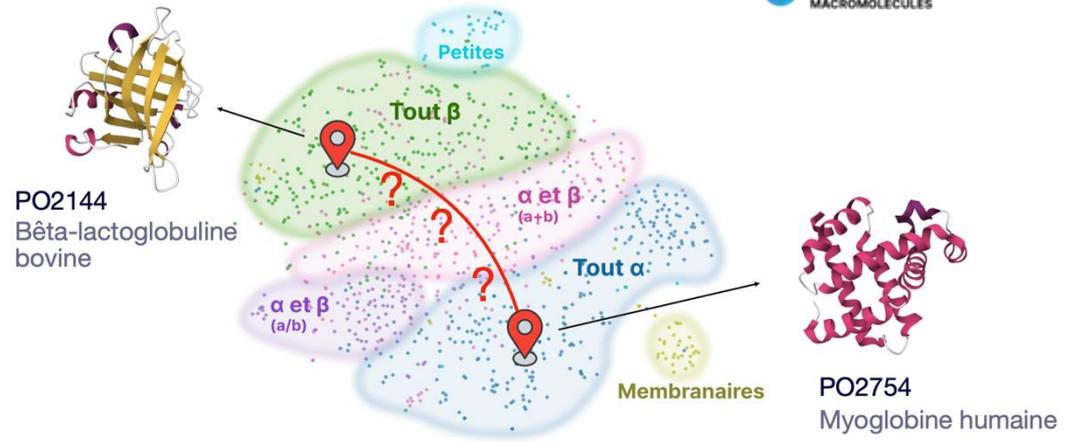
- Compress the embeddings: now x400 and more continuous

Compression to a fixed size of 64 x 32 (x400)

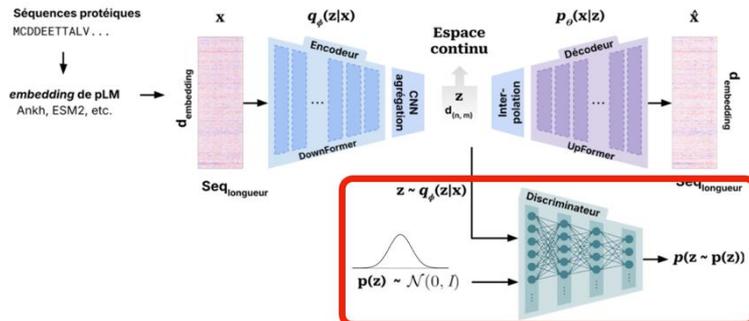
Sequence dimension **Dimension embedding**



➤ Compress the embeddings



Compression to a fixed size of **64 x 32 (x400)**
 Sequence dimension Dimension embedding



6. CONCLUSION(S)

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-
- A methodological revolution

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-
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6. Conclusion(s)

-
- A methodological revolution
 - An evolution in the field of Structural Bioinformatics
 - Data, data... is always the most important
 - Very different types of approaches, needs to be properly defined (size of the dataset)
 - Black boxes, no explanation
 - Lot of 'experts', difficult to assess all the new approaches and papers (example of protein design)



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Thank you