Genomes to Hits *In Silico –* **Towards the discovery of antiviral inhibitors for NS1, NS3 and NS5 from Dengue**

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In

Bioinformatics *Submitted by*

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the M. Tech. dissertation entitled **"Genomes to Hits** *In Silico –* **Towards the discovery of antiviral inhibitors for NS1, NS3 and NS5 from Dengue"**, submitted by **Jai Nandini (DTU/13/M.Tech/357)** in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Technology, Delhi Technological University (Formerly Delhi College of Engineering, University of Delhi), is an authentic record of the candidate's own work carried out by her under my guidance.

The information and data enclosed in this dissertation is original and has not been submitted elsewhere for honouring of any other degree.

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DECLARATION

I, **Jai Nandini (DTU/13/MTECH/357)** declare that M. Tech. dissertation entitled **"Genomes to Hits** *In Silico –* **Towards the discovery of antiviral inhibitors for NS1, NS3 and NS5 from Dengue"**, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Technology, Delhi Technological University (Formerly Delhi College of Engineering, University of Delhi), is an authentic record of my own work carried out under the guidance of **Dr. Yasha Hasija**.

The information and data enclosed in this dissertation is original and has not been submitted elsewhere for honouring of any other degree.

Date: Name:

Place: Signature:

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ABSTRACT

Dengue is an ignored disease which one is the cause of 25 to 100 million infections per year and 22000**^a** deaths **^a** every year in**^a** the regions where it **^a** is common. Despite the **^a** great efforts invested in the research and study for dengue treatments, there is still no vaccine or antiviral drug has reached in the market, and the disease treatment and cure is limited to supportive care. Among all the strategies which are used in the search for the vaccine and for development of an antiviral drug against dengue, the most successful approach for treating the dengue is inhibiting the viral enzymes.

Making a truly effective dengue vaccine has proven difficult because of a phenomenon called antibody dependent enhancement. It is very difficult to create a vaccine which is used against all four **^a** type of dengue virus and can**^a** protect people In today's scenario**^a** biological information are rich but functional knowledge are poor, so challenges are grand. These challenges includes the functional annotation of the genes present in whole genome, detection of the druggable targets and calculation of three -dimensional structures of the druggable protein targets which can be done from the information of their amino acid sequences and arriving at lead compounds from the hits for these targets. We propose here a "Genome to Hits *In Silico*" strategy and illustrate it on Dengue virus (DENV). "Genome to hits" is a novel pathway incorporating a series of steps such as gene prediction, protein tertiary structure determination, active site identification, hit molecule generation, docking and scoring of hits to arrive at lead compounds. The current state of the art for **^a** each of the steps in the pathway**^a** is high-lighted and the **^a** feasibility of creating an automated genome to hits assembly line is discussed.

So best way to design antiviral is inhibiting the viral enzymes. NS1, has been associated with a role in protective immunity. NS3 is a protease and a helicase, whereas NS5 is the RNA polymerase in charge of viral RNA replication. NS3 (non-structural 3) and NS5 carry out all the enzymatic activities needed for polyprotein processing and genome replication.

INTRODUCTION

Antiviral **^a** drug discovery is becoming **^a** increasingly important due to **^a** the global threat of viral **^a** disease pandemics. Many **^a** members of the genus **^a** Flavivirus are significant human **^a** pathogens, among which dengue virus (DENV) alone poses a public health threat. Neither vaccine nor effective therapeutics is currently available for DENV. Development of a DENV vaccine has been challenging, because of the need to simultaneously immunize and induce a long-lasting protection against all four serotypes of DENV; an incompletely immunized individual may be sensitized to **^a** life-threatening dengue hemorrhagic **^a** fever or dengue shock **^a** syndrome. The challenges associated **^a** with vaccine development have **^a** underscored the importance **^a** of development of antiviral therapies for DENV and other flaviviruses.

The antiviral agents for a dengue can inhibit (*i*) viral entry; a (*ii*) the viral proteins; (*iii*) the viral capsid; *(iv)* the viral protease; (*v*) the viral helicase; (*vi*) the viral methyltransferase; (*vii*) the viral polymerase; and *(viii)* the host target. Inhibition of viral enzymes has been proven to be the most successful of antiviral approaches. (Canard *et al.*, 2009)

Flaviviruses are small, enveloped RNA viruses which cause a variety of diseases into animals and man. The dengue virus particle is about 50 nm in diameter. The 10,723-nucleotide RNA genome encodes an uninterrupted open reading frame (ORF), directing the synthesis of a polyprotein precursor in the order NH2-C-prM-E-NS1 - NS2A-NS2B-NS3 -NS4A-NS4B-NS5-COOH, where C is the capsid protein, M is the membrane-associated protein, E is the envelope protein, and NS1 through NS5 are nonstructural proteins. NS1 is produced in large quantities during dengue viral replication, and it can be detected as early as the first day the patient experiences a fever. NS3 and NS5 are sufficiently conserved within the four serotypes. The flavivirus proteases, including NS2B-NS3 protease, are essential for viral replication and infectivity. NS3 is a multi-functional enzyme, acting as a protease for polyprotein processing. A number of studies have already revealed that the non-structural NS3 serine protease is required for the maturation of the viral polyprotein and thus is a promising target for the development of antiviral inhibitors. NS5 is the largest (104 kDa) and the most conserved protein in DENV. It is also a bifunctional enzyme with a methyltransferase domain and a RNA-dependent RNA polymerase. The best characterized DENV nonstructural proteins are NS3 and NS5, which are multifunctional proteins presenting several enzymatic activities. (Agnihotri *et al., 2012*)

The automation of genomes to hit molecules pathway poses several challenges. It involves, *inter alia*, (i) accurate genome annotation, (ii) identification of druggable target proteins, (iii) determination of 3-dimensional structures of protein targets, (iv) identification of hits for the target, (v) optimization of hits to lead molecules to realize high levels of affinity and selectivity to the target and low toxicity. It is important to mention that inhibition of virus enzymes is one of the most successful approaches for drug antiviral discovery.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 Dengue fever

In the tropical countries the dengue virus comes as a major threat to the health. A typical mosquito transmits the dengue virus, still with this limitation there are many people get infected by this virus per year. Patients with severe dengue illnesses can be treated successfully if they are diagnosed as early as possible. There are four antigenically different serotypes of the Dengue virus.

Dengue virus -1 Dengue virus -2 Dengue virus -3 Dengue virus -4

People become immune to a particular type of dengue virus once they've had it, but can still get **^a** sick from the other **^a** types of dengue if **^a** exposed. Catching **^a** different types of dengue, **^a** even years apart, **^a** increase the risk **^a** of developing **^a** severe dengue. **^a**

3.1.1 Dengue symptoms

Dengue fever has many symptoms, and people usually experience a combination of symptoms. Common symptoms of dengue fever are:

- sudden fever and extreme tiredness
- intense headache (especially behind the eyes)
- muscle and joint pain
- loss of appetite
- vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain
- a metallic taste in the mouth
- red or macular (small, flat red spots) rash occurs in half of cases
- minor bleeding from nose and gums(Oliveira *et al., 2014*)

An approach involves diagnosing dengue infections by detecting NS1, one of the seven nonstructural **^a** dengue proteins. NS1 **^a** is produced in large **^a** quantities during dengue **^a** viral replication, and it can be detected as early as the first day the patient experiences a fever.

3.2 Viral Structure

The dengue genome **^a** is a single stranded RNA **^a** molecule of positive **^a** polarity. However, **^a** the replicative form of dengue RNA is not a single linear molecule but rather, a cyclic or dimerized genome. This special genomic RNA organization proficient for replication carries many highly ordered secondary and tertiary structures ensuring proper regulation of dengue RNA synthesis. Most of these RNA structures are located in the 5' and 3' untranslated regions.

The dengue virus particle is about 50 nm in diameter. The 10,723-nucleotide RNA genome encodes an uninterrupted open reading frame (ORF), directing the synthesis of a polyprotein **^a**precursor in the order **^a** NH2-C-prM-E-NS1- NS2A **^a** -NS2B-NS3-NS4A **^a** -NS4B-NS5-COOH, where C is the capsid protein, M is the membrane-associated protein, E is the envelope protein, and NS1 through NS5 are nonstructural proteins (figure-1). The long open reading frame encoding a large polyprotein is flanked in 5' and 3' by untranslated regions (UTRs). The latter carry a number of cis-acting signals (stem loops, conserved sequences, ...) required for viral replication, and possibly RNA capping. There are complementary sequences in these UTRs that are thought to be responsible for cyclization of the genome, which is essential for replication. (Aleshin *et al., 2007*)

Figure-1: Dengue virus gene structure

There are four serotypes of Dengue virus. Here, a serotype is a group of viruses classified together based on their antigens on the surface of the virus. These four subtypes are different strains of dengue virus that have 60-80% homology between each other. The major difference for humans lies in subtle differences in the surface proteins of the different dengue subtypes. Infection induces long-life protection against the infecting serotype, but it gives only a short time cross protective immunity against the other types. The first infection cause mostly minor disease, but secondary**^a** infections has been reported**^a** to cause severe diseases **^a** (DHF or DSS) in**^a** both children and adults. This phenomenon is called [Antibody-Dependent Enhancement.](http://www.denguevirusnet.com/antibody-dependent-enhancement.html) (Halstead *et al., 2003*)

3.2.1 Life-Cycle of DENV

The life cycle of dengue involves endocytosis via a cell surface receptor. The virus uncoats intracellularly via a specific process. In the infectious form of the virus, the envelope protein lays flat on the surface of the virus, forming a smooth coat with icosahedral symmetry. However, when the virus is carried into the cell and into lysozomes, the acidic environment causes the protein to snap into a different shape, assembling into trimeric spike. Several hydrophobic amino acids at the tip of this spike insert into the lysozomal membrane and cause the virus membrane to fuse with lysozome. This releases the RNA into the cell and infection starts. **(Alcaraz ^a** *et al., 2010***)**

The DENV RNA genome is in the infected cell translated by the host ribosomes. The resulting polyprotein is **^a** subsequently cleaved by**^a** cellular and viral proteases **^a** at specific recognition sites. **^a**The viral nonstructural proteins **^a** use a negative-sense intermediate **^a** to replicate the **^a** positive-sense RNA genome, which then associates with capsid protein and is packaged into individual virions. Replication of all positive -stranded RNA viruses occurs in close association with virus-induced intracellular membrane structures. DENV also induces such extensive rearrangements of intracellular membranes, called replication complex **(RC)**. These RCs seem to contain viral proteins, **^a** viral RNA and host cell **^a** factors. The subsequently **^a** formed immature virions **^a** are assembled by budding of newly formed nucleocapsids into the lumen of the endoplasmic reticulum (ER), thereby acquiring a lipid bilayer envelope with the structural proteins prM and E. The virions mature during transport through the acidic trans **-Golgi network**, where the prM proteins stabilize the E proteins to prevent conformational changes. Before release of the virions from the host cell, the maturation process is completed when prM is cleaved into a soluble peptide and virion-associated **^a** M by the cellular protease furin. **^a** Outside the cell, the virus particles encounter a neutral pH, which promotes dissociation of the pr peptides from the virus particles and generates mature, infectious virions. At this point the cycle repeats itself. But researchers at the University of North Carolina have discovered a new target for human antibodies that could hold the key to a vaccine for the world's most widespread mosquito-borne disease. **^a**

3.3 The DENV targets for antiviral research

Making**^a** a truly effective dengue **^a** vaccine has proven difficult **^a** because of a phenomenon**^a** called antibody dependent enhancement. People infected with one type of dengue usually develop a natural immune response that rids the body of the virus and prevents a repeat infection of that same virus type. But if those people are infected with a second type of dengue, the virus is enhanced**^a** because of that first immune **^a** response. The result can**^a** be severe dengue hemorrhagic **^a** fever, which can be deadly. (Halstead *et al.*, 2003)

The best characterized DENV nonstructural proteins are NS3 and NS5, which are multifunctional proteins presenting several enzymatic activities. These proteins are the most conserved ones in all four dengue virus serotypes. Therefore, NS3 and NS5 are considered attractive targets for the search and development of dengue antiviral chemotherapeutics. It is important to mention that inhibition of virus enzymes is one of the most successful approaches for drug antiviral discovery. **(Canard** *et al.,* **2009)**

A dengue vaccine has **^a** proven difficult to develop, **^a** in part because there are **^a** four major subtypes of **^a** dengue virus, each with slightly**^a** different viral proteins. Many researchers **^a** currently believe **^a**that the deadly dengue **^a** hemorrhagic disease is **^a** caused when a person is infected **^a** with one subtype, and then infected later by a second subtype. The antibodies, and immunity, gained from the first infection appear to assist with the infection by the second subtype, instead of providing a general immunity to all subtypes. This means that an effective vaccine will have to stimulate protective antibodies against all four types at once, a feat that has not yet been achieved.

Dengue virus also makes several proteins that create new viruses once it is inside a cell. Two of the major ones are multifunctional proteins with several enzymes strung together. One is NS5 contains a methyltransferase and a polymerase, and the other one is NS3 contains a protease and a helicase. Each of these enzymes performs a different part of the life cycle. The polymerase builds new RNA strands based on the viral RNA, the helicase helps to separate these strands, and the methyltransferase adds methyl groups to the end of them, protecting the RNA strands and coaxing the cell's ribosomes to create viral proteins based on them. The viral proteins are created in one long polyprotein chain, which is finally clipped into the functional units by the protease. **(Agnihotri** *et al.*, 2012)

Proteolysis yields ten proteins, the three structural proteins (C, prM, and E) and the seven nonstructural (NS) proteins involved in genome replication and capping (NS1, NS2A, NS2B, NS3, NS4A, NS4B, and NS5). Some of these NS proteins also participate in pathogenesis and counteract the innate immunity of the host cell. Replication of the viral genome does not occur freely in the cytoplasm. Instead, there is an extensive intracellular membrane re-arrangement in

the infected cell, with various **^a** observable cell substructures containing **^a** most NS proteins organized**^a** along the virus replication**^a** cycle. (Lescar *et al., 2008*) ^a

3.3.1 The Non-Structural proteins

Out of the seven NS1-to-NS5, here we consider NS1, NS3 and NS5 so far as drug targets, not only because they are essential to virus growth but also because they exhibit enzyme activity, which is a plus regarding drug screening. The role and structure of NS1 is unknown. It is a soluble protein detected **^a** very early during **^a** infection. NS2a, NS2b, **^a** NS4a, and NS4B are membrane **^a** –associated proteins believed**^a** to anchor and regulate the **^a** replication complex during the **^a** virus life-cycle. **^a**

Presently, there are no drugs against dengue in the clinic. Therefore, what we call a validated target is only derived**^a** by analogy to other viruses **^a** for which drugs have proven**^a** to be effective. Herpes and HIV have been the drug-design founding viruses. Now for DENV, HCV is fulfilling this role. **^a** Recent data presented**^a** regarding a nucleoside analogue, **^a** although toxic, have **^a** shown that the NS5 protein is a validated target. The validated targets are thus the RNA-dependent RNA polymerase and, by analogy to HCV, the protease. More recently, the HCV NS5A protein seems to emerge as a very interesting target, but NS5A does not have an equivalent in dengue, so far. Conversely, the dengue **^a** RNA genome is capped, and**^a** the DENV genome encodes **^a** most of its own RNA capping machinery. This is not the case for HCV, which does not rely on RNA capping for **^a**gene expression. The RNA**^a** capping enzymes of **^a** dengue so far await **^a** validation in an animal model both at the level of efficiency, and toxicity. Indeed, it is not known if the abundance ofv cellular MTases will cause a specificity problem, i.e., if it will be possible to design an anti-dengue MTase inhibitor having non-significant toxicity effect through co-lateral inhibition of host cell MTases. (Goodsell *et al., 2008*)

• **NS1** The Flavivirus nonstructural protein 1 (NS1) is a conserved, membrane-associated and secreted glycoprotein with replication and immune evasion functions. Secreted NS1 is a hexameric, barrel -shaped lipoprotein that can bind back to the plasma membrane of cells. Antibodies targeting cell surface-associated NS1 can be protective in vivo in a manner dependent on Fc effector functions.

• **NS3** carries two functional domains, a N-terminal serine protease (~170 aa), (69 kDa) and a Cterminus helicase/RNA triphosphatase (~440 aa). The protease domain is inactive alone, and needs the presence of 40 aa of NS2b bound to form a protease active site. The NS2b/NS3 protease has been the first dengue protein target actively used in drug design programs. Two complementary approaches have been followed to discover antivirals based on the inhibition of this enzyme. The first approach has been the screening of a large chemical library and the second approach has been to design peptidomimetics The NS3 helicase domain is also an

interesting target because it contains features unique to flaviviruses, such as Domain III. (Agnihotri *et al., 2012*)

The viral protease is responsible for cleavage at a number of sites, including NS2A-NS2B, NS2B-NS3, NS3-NS4A, and NS4B-NS5; it also cleaves just upstream of the signal sequences at the C-prM and NS4A- NS4B junctions, within NS2A, and within NS3 itself. Later studies showed that expression of NS3 alone did not lead to production of an active protease; however, including a portion of NS2B with NS3 led to full proteolytic activity.(Lescar et al., 2008)

Viral proteases are proven antiviral targets, as evidenced by the clinical availability of ten human immunodeficiency virus 1 (HIV-1) protease inhibitors and the hepatitis C virus (HCV) protease inhibitors. Thus, it is plausible that a protease inhibitor for dengue virus would be efficacious in the clinic.(Noble *et al.*, 2010)

The important role of NS3 for the replication of the dengue virus makes this protein an interesting site for viral inhibiting.

• NS5 is the largest and most conserved and most conserved dengue protein. The NS5 is about 900 amino acids long and comprises a methyltransferase domain at its N terminus and an RNA-dependent RNA polymerase domain at its C-terminal end. Both enzymatic activities from attractive targets for antiviral development. ^a

The domain RNA-dependent RNA polymerase (RdRp) is responsible for the replication of the positive-strand RNA genome in an asymmetric and semi-conservative process in which the antigenome is only present in a double-stranded RNA replication intermediate. In DENV infections, the NS5 protein is primarily localized within the nucleus. However, not all flavivirus RdRps localize to the nucleus.(Lim *et al., 2015*)

Viral MTases are involved in the mRNA capping process, transferring a methyl group from the cofactor *S*-adenosyl-L-methionine (AdoMet) to the N7 atom of the cap guanine and onto the 2'OH group of the ribose moiety of the first RNA nucleotide. In the genus *Flavivirus*, both (guanine $-N7$)-methyltransferase (N7MTase) and (nucleoside -2 '-O-)- methyltransferase (2) ^{OMTase}) activities have been associated with the N-terminal domain of the viral NS5 protein.

The enzymes codified by NS5 show they have important functions in the replication of the virus, playing a key role and suggesting NS5 as a potential antiviral target. (Lim *et al., 2015*)

3.4 Genome Annotation

In recent times genomes and proteome related databases are growing very fast at an accelerated pace, so these are the times for bioinformatician, drug designer and computational biologist. That's why in this post genomic era there is heigh expectation for successful and fast treatment of diseases.

The computational genome annotation can play a vital role in finding potential therapeutic target molecules for pathogens. In the present research scenario, it is a big challenge to carry out the structural and functional annotation of the whole genome sequence or the translated ORFs (open reading frames). These annotations can be used in comparative genomics, pathway reconstruction and particularly in drug design. Genome annotation is the process of exploring biological/ functional information from sequences. It is done by following two main steps: (i) identification of distinct, potentially functional elements on the genome, a process called gene prediction in the context of identification of protein coding regions and (ii) assignment of biological function to these elements (genes or proteins). Automated annotation tools provide a faster computational annotation as compared to manual annotation (curation) which involves human expertise. Ideally, these approaches coexist and complement each other in the same annotation pipeline. (Jayaram *et al., 2012*). The basic level of annotation involves finding genes and isolating the protein coding sequences from non- coding sequences. A variety of computational approaches have been developed to permit scientists to view and share genome ^annotations (Table-1).

Table-1: List of Tools Available for Gene Prediction

Most of the available computational methods are knowledge -based and adopt techniques like Hidden Markov Models or machine learning methods. The accuracies of these models are limited by the availability of data on experimentally validated genes, and as typically seen in newly sequenced genomes, can lead to suboptimal levels of prediction. Ab initio methods originating in physico- chemical properties of DNA can help overcome the limitations of knowledge-based methods. Generally for annotation purposes, homologous sequences in protein sequence databases are searched. The state of the art tool for such database searches is PSI-BLAST (Position Specific Iterated Basic Local Alignment Search Tool). The performance of PSI-BLAST and other database search tools to identify homologs of a given query in a sequence database has been measured by others . However these benchmarks do not suffice the requirements in genome annotation. Our efforts are aimed at eliminating the limitations of PSI BLAST in correctly annotating protein coding sequences in genomes by using ab initio approacha. (Soni *et al., 2013*)

3.5 Protein Tertiary Structure Prediction

Despite the large genome sizes, only a fraction of the genome codes for proteins, particularly in higher organisms. For example, Human genome is \sim 3300Mb with \sim 20,500 protein coding genes and \sim 3000 non-protein coding RNA genes which is about 2% of the genome. The increasing gap between sequences and structures makes it simply impossible to solve the structures of all existing proteins experimentally. The knowledge of the 3D structure of a protein can usher in tools for structure based drug discovery. Thus, a reliable computational method for protein tertiary structure prediction is desperately needed. Various computational methodologies have been developed for the prediction of tertiary structures of proteins over the past few years. These include (a) comparative modeling, (b) fold recognition or threading, (c) *ab initio* or *de novo* methods. Comparative modeling and fold recognition methods are database driven and their prediction accuracies depend on the sequence similarities realized in known structures. These methods are extremely popular, reliable and fast for protein tertiary structure prediction when a close sequence homolog exists in the database. *Ab initio* or *de novo* methods are used for predicting structure of protein sequences with no close structural homologs. (Jayaram *et al., 2012*)Homology modeling and fold recognition methods utilize the information derived from structures solved previously via x -ray and NMR methods. This method is effective, popular, reliable and fast for protein tertiary structure prediction when a close sequence homolog exists in the structural repositories. Several protein structure prediction tools are available in the public domain (Table-2).

To make biological sense out of large volumes of sequence data, it is necessary to compare the protein sequences with those proteins that have been already characterized biochemically. To design drug molecules, structural annotation plays an important role. Structural genomics (SG) efforts facilitate such comparisons by determining the structures for a large number of protein sequences, but most SG targets have not been functionally characterized. It is already known that accurate functional details of a protein can neither be inferred from its sequence alone nor from sequence comparisons with other proteins whose structures and functions are known but only from its own native structure. Several efforts are being made to unravel the physico-chemical basis of protein structures and to establish some fundamental rules of protein folding. Despite the successes, protein tertiary structure prediction still remains a grand challenge - an unsolved

problem in computational biochemistry. *Ab initio* or *de novo* methods are frequently employed for predicting tertiary structures of proteins by incorporating the basic physical principles, irrespective of the availability of structural homologs. The knowledge of tertiary structures of proteins serves as a basis for structure-based drug design. (Noble *et al., 2010*)

3.6 Drug Design

The automation of genomes to hit molecules pathway poses several challenges. It involves, *inter alia*, (i) accurate genome annotation, (ii) identification of druggable target proteins, (iii) determination of 3-dimensional structures of protein targets, (iv) identification of hits for the target, (v) optimization of hits to lead molecules to realize high levels of affinity and selectivity to the target and low toxicity.

The ability of biomolecules to bind to their substrates in a highly specific manner is an important characteristic in many biological processes. One of the major challenges for the CADD (Computer Aided Drug Design) techniques is to achieve this specificity i.e. specific binding of a small molecule to the biomolecular target *in vivo* at minimum cost and time, while maintaining novelty of the scaffolds and proper ADMET profiles. The two main steps in computer based drug design protocols are target identification and lead optimization. The knowledge of the structure of a biomolecule, such as a protein $/$ nucleic acid assists in understanding the molecular level mechanism of action of drugs and lead optimization. (Kalra *et al., 2001*)

Structure of the protein target molecule can be determined either experimentally or computationally (as discussed above). The next step after target identification and structure determination is the detection of the ligand binding site. Most of the experimentally determined structures have some information on ligand binding site. In the absence of such information, detection of ligand binding site is required. Design of small molecules in structure based drug discovery requires knowledge of the binding pocket on the protein which upon blockade results in loss of function. Experimental information on protein active sites and function loss are useful. In the absence of any experimental information, one could identify all potential binding sites on the protein from the structural information (Table 3).

Table-3: List of Software Available for Active Site Prediction

The next step in CADD protocol is lead generation and optimization. A candidate molecule can either be sketched using publicly available drawing tools or searched from the small molecule libraries such as NRDBSM which embeds Lipinski's rules or the one developed by us more recently consisting of one million small molecules [\(http://www.scfbioiitd](http://www.scfbioiitd/). res.in/software/nrdbsm/moleculesearchnew .jsp). For a given biomolecular target, these databases of small molecules can be scanned for identifying hit molecules based on their physico -chemical parameters and functional groups. Assessment of the candidate molecules is performed by calculating the binding energies with the target, one of the major bottlenecks being

the computational time. The calculation of binding energy of a small ligand with a protein target using docking and scoring methods can take minutes, which approximates to around 12000 to 15000 hours for a dataset of one million molecules. There are many softwares and tool which can be used for the docking and drug design (Table 4). (Mukherjee *et al., 2013*)

Table-4: A list of Softwares for Drug Design

METHODOLOGY

The "Genome to hit" assembly line *in silico* for Dengue is given in a flowchart format below.

1. Whole genome sequences of all 4 serotype of Dengue virus is retrived from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nuccore/NC_001477.1 (Type1) http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nuccore/NC_001474.2 (type2) http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nuccore/NC_002640.1(Type3) http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nuccore/NC_001475.2 (type4)

2. Genes are predicted which are then translated into protein sequences using Chemgenome 3.0 http://www.scfbio-iitd.res.in/chemgenome/chemgenome3.jsp

3. Perform blastn of these gene's sequences with Human genomic + transcript database. <http://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Blast.cgi>

4. These polyprotein sequences are splitted w.r.t. literature and results are processed for tertiary structure prediction by Bhageerath-H

http://www.scfbio-iitd.res.in/bhageerath/bhageerath_h.jsp

5. Modeled structure are examined for identification of potential active sites by active site finder AADS http://www.scfbio-iitd.res.in/dock/ActiveSite_new.jsp

6. A million compound library of small molecules is screened against binding sites using RASPD http://www.scfbio-iitd.res.in/software/drugdesign/raspd.jsp

7. The screened molecules are docked, scored and optimized iteratively using ParDock http://www.scfbio-iitd.res.in/dock/pardock.jsp

8. Hits ready to be synthesized and tested in laboratory and optimized iteratively.

Above mentioned steps are described below.

1. As all we know that there are 4 serotypes of Dengue virus. To download the whole sequences of these serotype of dengue we go to the NCBI site http://[www.ncbi.nlm.nih](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/).gov and download the all four serotypes with help of NCBI ID NC_001477.1, NC_001474.2, NC_002640.1, NC_001475.2 for type-1, type-2, type-3, type- 4 respectively.

Table- 5: Dengue virus serotype

In table-5 basic information about all serotypes of Dengue virus is written like nucleotide length, GC content, their NCBI ID and the starting point and the ending point of the gene.

Figure-2 Excel sheet of gene information.

In figure-2 all the essential information about the Dengue Virus gene is available like the start and end point of nucleotide of genes and their protein IDs, their nucleotide sequences and their protein sequences.Making of this sheet will be very useful to go ahead in this project.

2. After that we perform blastn of all the gene's sequences with the Human genomic + transcript database to check that whether the sequences of viral genes is similar to human genomic data + transcript data or not.

3. After downloading the whole genome sequences of all the 4 serotypes next step is the finding the genes, protein coding region. So we go to the home page of Chemgenome. Paste the genome in FASTA format. We run chemgenome with default parameters. If you want to specify, you can specify additional parameters Specify email address optionally to get the result mailed in inbox. The output generated will be both in tabular and graphical representation.

An alternative to the knowledge based methods for gene prediction is an *ab initio* model ChemGenome 2.0 (figure-3) is an *ab initio* method for gene prediction in prokaryotes. It examines physicochemical properties and geometrical structures of codons to structural and thermodynamic properties of DNA sequences, more specifically, the hydrogen bond, the stacking and the solvation energies computed from molecular dynamics generated structures. (Soni *et al., 2013*)

CUEMCENOME 2 0

Figure-3: Homepage of Chemgenome

4. Third step is predicting 3- D structure of viral enzymes. Bhageerath is an energy based software suite for predicting tertiary structures of small globular proteins. The protocol comprises eight different modules which use physicochemical properties of proteins and *ab initio* methodology to predict five candidates for the native from the input query sequence. Bhageerath -H (figure-4) is a homology *ab initio* hybrid server for protein tertiary structure prediction. The protocol identifies regions having local sequence similarity with database to generate 3D fragments which are patched with *ab initio* modeled fragments to put together complete structure of proteins. For sequences with available sequence homologs, Bhageerath -H software predicts a structure within 5 Å RMSD from the native. It identifies regions which show local sequencesimilarity in respect to sequences in RCSB (protein data bank) to generate 3D fragments which are patched with *ab initio* modeled fragments to generate complete structures of the proteins. The knowledge of tertiary structures of proteins serves as a basis for structure-based drug design. (Bhushan *et al., 2006*)

BHAGEERATH : An Energy Based Protein Structure Prediction Server

The present version of"Bhageerath" accepts amino acid sequence and secondary structure information to predict 5 candidate structures for the native. It is anticipated that at least one native like structure (RMSD < 7Å without end loops) is present in the final structures. The server has been validated on 80 small globular proteins. Know about Protein Folding

Download BHAGEERATH 1.0 for Solaris 10.0 environment from here.

Secondary Structure Information

Figure-4: Homepage of Bhageerath

5. After predicted the 3-D structure of proteins, next steps is to finding the active sites present in the viral enzymes. The active site finder identifies all cavities in a protein and scores them based on the physicochemical properties of functional groups lining the cavities in the protein. Methodology for an automated identification of ten potential binding pockets which are expected to bracket the true "active site" (binding pocket) from AADS (figure-5). Top ten cavity points identified are then submitted for an automated docking of an input ligand/candidate molecule. The docking protocol uses an all atom energy based Monte Carlo method. (Singh *et al., 2011*)

Figure-5: Homepage of Active site prediction

6. Now next step is RASPD (A Rapid Scoring Methodology Based on Physico-Chemical Descriptors of Million Molecules) by using various molecular descriptors of candidate drug like molecules/active site of proteins for computation of binding free energy of target protein with significantly reduced time and cost (figure-6). This is done by predicting the highly possible candidates for binding from a large data set (millions) and using a reduced set of likely candidate molecules to achieve the same result as done in traditional techniques. For checking the protein active site information and determining the binding affinity of you drug molecule to the target protein, click on RASPD button and then on Submit button in the upcoming pop up window. (Mukherjee *et al., 2013*)

Figure-6: Homepage of RASPD

- 7. Docking can be performed in two ways.
	- Docking and Scoring with Case 1: After We have selected the drug and target proteinligand complex by screening them through Lipinski's filter and RASPD respectively, go to the ParDOCk home page (figure-7). On doing so, in a pop-up window be appear and asked to give the total formal charge of the chosen drug molecule along with e-mail id and then submit the job. Four docked structures along with their predicted binding affinity values will be sent back via e-mail. (Latha et al., 2006)

Figure-7: Homepage of ParDOCK

Docking and Scoring with Case 2: When the target protein has a Multiple Binding Site. AADS (Active Site identification followed by docking and scoring) methodology predicts binding sites in a protein. The top ten binding sites reported by the above algorithm have an accuracy of 100%. The top ten binding sites predicted by the above algorithm are submitted for an automated docking and scoring. The candidate drug molecule is docked at all the ten binding sites predicted by the above algorithm and the docked structures are finally scored using an in house developed scoring function christened BAPPL. Finally ten docked structures along with their predicted binding free energy values are reported back to the user via e-mail. (Latha *et al.*, 2006)

After obtaining the cavity points through AADS, click on the Click here for Docking button. On doing so, in a pop-up window we'll be asked to give the total formal charge of the chosen drug molecule along with e-mail id and then submit the job (figure-8). Ten docked structures along with their predicted binding affinity values will be sent back via e-mail.

Figure-8: Docking Directly from AADS

All steps which are mentioned above will be repeated for all the genomes of four serotypes of Dengue virus.

RESULTS

ChemGenome 2.0 output

There is one protein coding regions in all four serotype of Dengue virus. Gene predicted by the ChemGenome 2.0 software encodes for Dengue virus polypeptide.

Figure-9: Output of Chemgenome 2.0

Output shows the both tabular view and graphical view of the genome to show the genes presents in the genome (figure-9). It shows the result from all six reading frames

			Supercomputing Facility for Bioinformatics & Computational Biology, IIT Delhi	. .
		ChemGenome3.0		
		Genes predicted in Second Main Frame of the sequence submitted		
		Download all Gene Sequences		
		Download all Protein Sequences		
		Download both Gene and Protein Sequences		
S. No.	Strand	Start	Stop	
1	$\ddot{}$	95	10267	
$\overline{2}$	$\ddot{}$	10508	10612	
		Close © Copyright 2004-2015, Prof B. Jayaram & Co-workers. All rights reserved. Disclaimer		

Figure-10: Tabular view of Gene

Figure- 10 showing the result of second reading frame in tabular form. And figure-11 showing the result of the same reading frame but in graphical representation, red regions are non-coding region and blue regions are coding regions in genome of Dengue Type 3 virus.

Figure-11: Graphical view of gene

The gene sequence is translated into amino acid sequence using DNA converter (http://www.scfbio-iitd. res.in/chemgenome/genetranslator .jsp), which is then used as an input to the *Bhageerath*-H (or *Bhageerath*) for 3D structure prediction.

Blast Output

In the output of blastn of genes of Dengue virus with Human genomic + transcript database, there was no similarity between the sequences of the genes of viral genome and the transcript of Human (figure-12). It means that in humans there is no such protein which is similar to viral protein. On the basis of the output of the blastn we can assume that the hits which we are going to produce against the viral enzymes are not going to bind with human proteins. It means hits against NS1, NS3 and NS5 will not bind to human proteins and will not block the activity of human proteins.

Bhageerath-H Output

Proteins with experimentally known (X-ray/NMR) 3D structures can be used directly for active site detection and docking studies. In the absence of a known structure, computational softwares like Bhageerath-H or Bhageerath can be used. For the purposes of illustration, we have given the amino acid sequence of the protein with known crystal structure for Bhageerath-H prediction.

Top five energy ranked structures ^are shown in figure-13 as Bhageerath-H output.

Figure-13: Output of Bhageerath-H

AADS Output

All the structures modeled by Bhageerath- H could be considered for active site identification. Here we used Model 1 as an input to the Active Site Finder. There will be top ten potential binding pockets which are expected to bracket the true "active site" (binding pocket) shown in figure- 14.

Figure-14: Output of AADS

File Name = cavity_1_VATPEWNFHSIGMKLDRQY

Figure-15: cavity 1 information

In above figure-15 the information about the cavity which was predicted by the AADS like which amino acids are presents are in the cavity, what is the cavity point and volume of the cavity.

RASPD output

The predicted binding sites could also be used to derive this information which is then used as input for RASPD calculation with an average cut off binding affinity to limit the number of candidates. A list of molecules were selected with good binding energy from one million molecule database corresponding to the top 10 predicted binding sites. (Mukherjee *et al., 2013*) Figure- 16, RASPD output gives library of molecules for the all top ten cavities of the protein.

Cavity-1			
	-16.8 ZINC19857639		
	-16.5 ZINC12050585		
	-16.4 ZINC02831975		
	-16.4 ZINC09669021		
	-16.4 ZINC11913294		
	-16.4 ZINC12576410		
	-16.3 ZINC16480347		
	-16.2 ZINC00680516		
	-16.2 ZINC02836173		
	-16.2 ZINC03143011		
	-16.2 ZINC03877717		
	-16.2 ZINC22064237		
	-16.1 ZINC12419773		
	-16.1 ZINC19835705		
	-16 ZINC01139950		
	-16 ZINC09233632		
	-16 ZINC11790331		
	-16 ZINC11974393		
	-15.9 ZINC01799612		
	-15.9 ZINC02109070		
	-15.9 ZINC02760064		
	-15.9 ZINC02942316		
	-15.9 ZINC08769779		
	-15.9 ZINC11912462		
	-15.9 ZINC13081002		
	-15.9 ZINC14885566		
	-15.9 ZINC15005335		

Figure-16: Output of RASPD

ParDOCK Output

Out of these molecules which are extracted from RASPD, 100 molecules for each Non structural protein chosen randomly are given as input to ParDOCK for atomic level binding energy calculations. Common molecules from the RASPD output for the all four serotype given to ParDOCK for a better hits (figure-17). ParDOCK gives the output of the Ligand -protein docking result with binding affinity of the molecule to the all top 10 active sites of the predicted protein structure.

Figure-17: Output of ParDOCK

There are all values of the binding affinity of the molecules with NS1, NS3 and NS5 of all four serotypes of Dengue virus given in table-6.

After all this we screen best 10 molecules having best binding affinity for NS1, NS3 and NS5 each. This is given in table-7.

Table-7: list of highly scored molecules

In table-8 popular name, SMILES and structure of these 30 screened molecules are written.

These molecules may prove to be potential identity in modulating disease manifestation for all the serotypes of Dengue virus.

CONCLUSIONS

Post-genomic research era encompasses many diverse aspects of modern science. The "Genome" to hits" pathway described here symbolizes the emergence of an integrated technology to address specific health issues, and more specifically provides a novel and rapid approach to identifying new and potent hit molecules from genomic information.

Inhibiting the viral enzymes is the best way to design an antiviral. NS1 has been associated with a role in protective immunity. NS3 is a protease and a helicase; whereas NS5 is the RNA polymerase in charge of viral RNA replication.NS3 (non-structural 3) and NS5 carry out all the enzymatic activities needed for polyprotein processing and genome replication.

Two general strategies can be pursued for any antiviral therapy. The first is to inhibit viral targets. The second is to inhibit host targets. Inhibition of targets in the host continues to be risky since it is not yet known what all the mechanisms of infection and disease development in the host are, particularly in cases of dengue hemorrhagic fever. Another point is that the action of the drug should be well known to minimize side effects.

In this case, inhibition of viral targets is a good way. The best characterized DENV proteins are nonstructural proteins NS3 and NS5, which are multifunctional proteins presenting several enzymatic activities. These proteins are the most conserved ones in all four dengue virus serotypes. It is a good point to create an efficient drug that acts in all four serotypes. Checking the similarities between the genes of viral genome with Human transcripts shows that there is no such similarity found. It means hits against NS1, NS3 and NS5 will not bind to human proteins and will not block the activity of human proteins.

Although there are still no specific vaccines or chemotherapeutic regimes for prevention and treatment for flavivirus based diseases like dengue, hemorrhagic fever, encephalitis etc. In recent years there has been substantial progress in our understanding the life cycle of flavivirus, the various stages of which represent potential targets for the development of novel antiviral drugs. NS3 and NS5 protein are particularly interesting molecular target for antiviral compounds because of it central role in all the viral life cycle of flaviviruses. The development of such drugs requires a more informed structure- based drug discovery program. We hope that the lead molecules generated from this structure based drug designing of NS1, NS3 and NS5 protein would be helpful in identifying structurally diverse compounds with desired biological activity for the successful treatment of Dengue.

DISCUSSION AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

The wealth of information available from experimental host pathogen interaction studies invites computational biologists to develop databases and newer computational methods to advance further focused experimentation. Consequently, bioinformatics is rapidly evolving into independent fields addressing specific problems in interpreting (i) genomic sequences, (ii) protein sequences and 3D-structures, as well as (iii) transcriptome and macromolecular interaction data. It is thus increasingly difficult for the biologist to choose the computational approaches that perform best in inhibiting the growth of pathogen in the host. Genome to hit technology is used in this project to Dengue virus. Genome to hit assembly line is a culmination of several recent advances in computational chemistry and computational biology implemented in a high performance computing environment. At least three areas for further improvement can be immediately identified $:$ (i) development of algorithms for cleavage of polyproteins, (ii) algorithms for identification of druggable protein targets, (iii) improved accuracies in tertiary structure prediction of nonstructural proteins, (iv) development of methods for determining tertiary structures of structural proteins and (v) identification of hit molecules with reduced toxicities. This protocol should ultimately result in an accelerated emergence of new methods for treating infectious diseases. Similarly, metabolic disorders can also be accessed via the "Genome to Hit" pathway. (Noble *et al., 2010*)

Even with forthcoming advances, a drug for clinical trials has not yet been obtained. A greater understanding of the viral replicative cycle in the host and the variations that occur in different serotypes will be necessary for the choice and improvement of a suitable drug. A challenging aspect in the search for potent, Selective antiviral drugs that interfere with multifunctional NS3 and NS5 is the design of appropriate assays for druggable sites that are relevant for viral replication *in vivo*.

Although challenging, recent research has generated optimistic results and has encouraged researchers to develop an effective therapy against the dengue virus in the near future. This protocol can be used for the other structural and non-structural viral enzymes to identify the hits for Dengue virus.

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