



# State-of-the-art computational drug design, discovery, and development: Challenges and opportunities

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Chang-Guo Zhan, Ph.D.

*Director, [Molecular Modeling and Biopharmaceutical Center](#);*

*Director, Chemoinformatics and Drug Design Core,*

*[Center for Pharmaceutical Research and Innovation](#);*

*University Research Professor;*

*Endowed College of Pharmacy Professor in Pharm. Sciences;*

*Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences*

*College of Pharmacy, University of Kentucky*

*789 South Limestone, Lexington, KY 40516*

*E-mail: [zhan@uky.edu](mailto:zhan@uky.edu)*

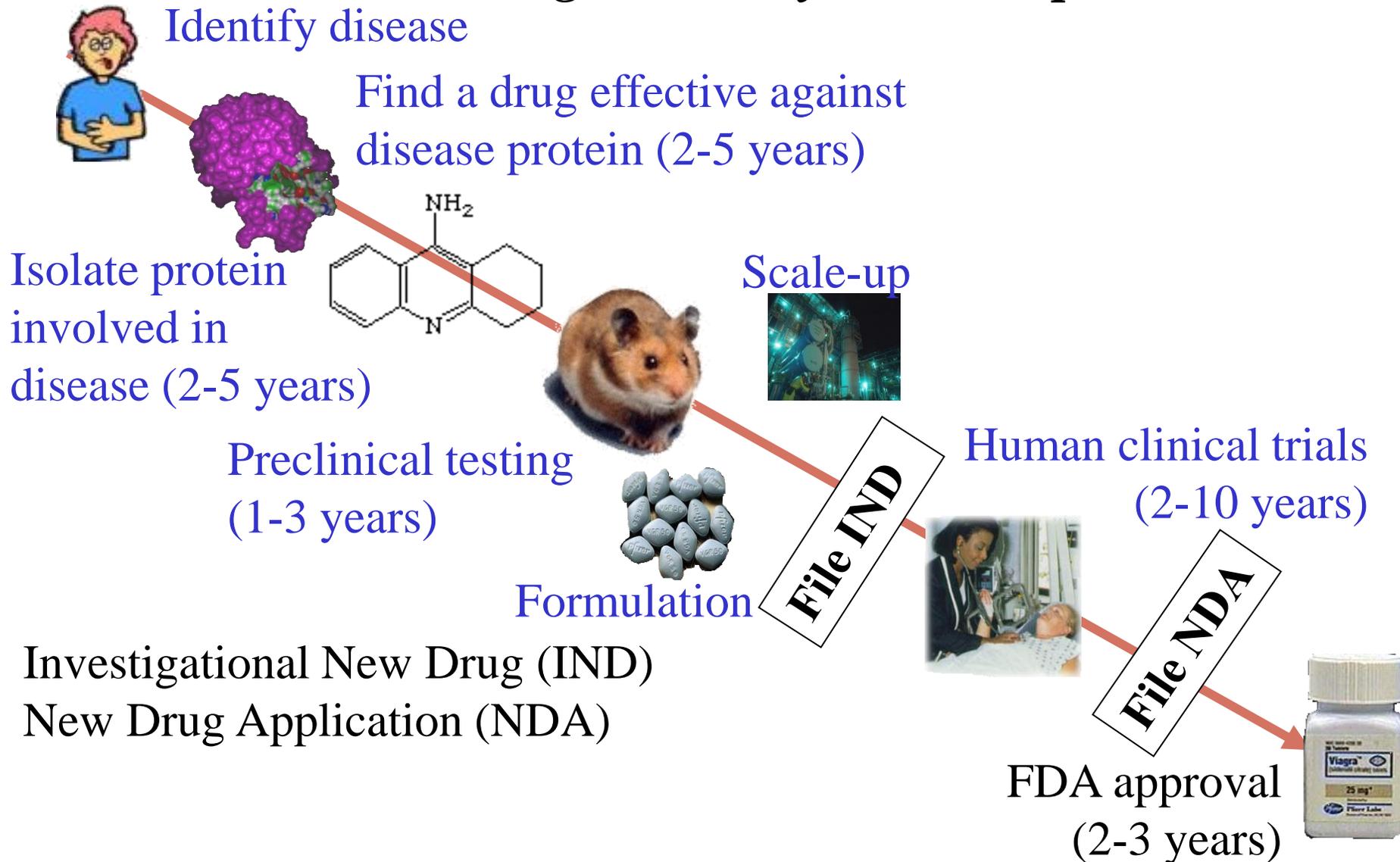
UK CCS Seminar, March 19, 2024

# Contents

- ◆ Challenges and opportunities for a computational drug designer in discovery and development
- ◆ Overview of our projects in drug discovery and development
- ◆ An example of virtual screening for drug repurposing
- ◆ Concluding remarks

# Overview

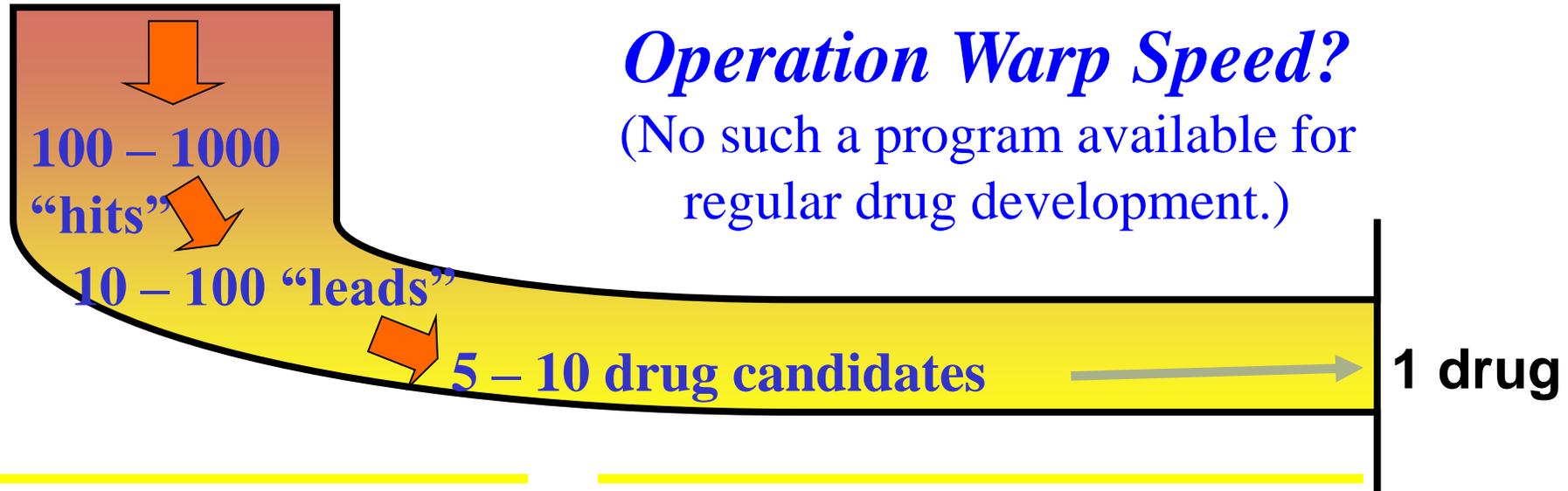
## *Traditional Drug Discovery & Development*



# Drug discovery and development process

*Time and money*

10,000 - 10,000,000 compounds are often screened to find a single drug



Discovery & Preclinical trials    Clinical trials: Phase I, Phase II, Phase III

12 to 25 years

Usually >\$1 billion

The average cost for a drug approved recently: ~\$1.3–2.8 billion

**Average success rate of clinical trials: <10%**

# Drug discovery and development process

10/4/2020

Cost of drug development - Wikipedia

Pharmaceutical company	Number of drugs approved	Average R&D spending per drug (in \$ Millions)	Total R&D spending from 1997-2011 (in \$ Millions)
<u>AstraZeneca</u>	5	\$11,790.93	\$58,955
<u>GlaxoSmithKline</u>	10	\$8,170.81	\$81,708
<u>Sanofi</u>	8	\$7,909.26	\$63,274
<u>Roche Holding</u>	11	\$7,803.77	\$85,841
<u>Pfizer</u>	14	\$7,727.03	\$108,178
<u>Johnson &amp; Johnson</u>	15	\$5,885.65	\$88,285
<u>Eli Lilly &amp; Co.</u>	11	\$4,577.04	\$50,347
<u>Abbott Laboratories</u>	8	\$4,496.21	\$35,970
<u>Merck &amp; Co Inc.</u>	16	\$4,209.99	\$67,360
<u>Bristol-Meyers Squibb Co.</u>	11	\$4,152.26	\$45,675
<u>Novartis</u>	21	\$3,983.13	\$83,646
<u>Amgen Inc.</u>	9	\$3,692.14	\$33,229

Severin Schwan, the CEO of the Swiss company Roche, reported that Roche's research and development costs amounted to \$12.3 billion in 2018<sup>[7]</sup>, a quarter of the entire National Institutes of Health budget.

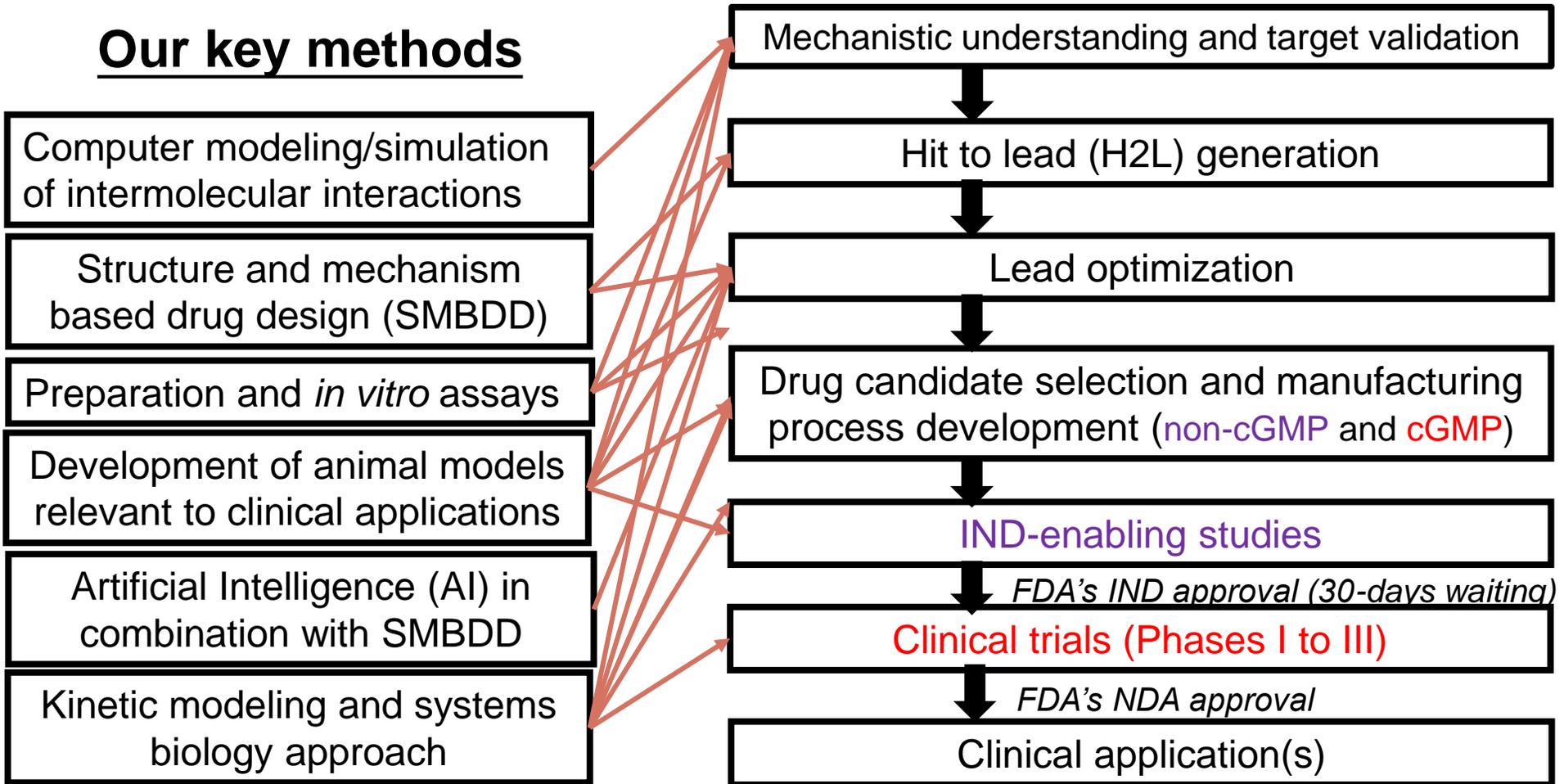
# Challenges and opportunities for a computational drug designer in discovery and development

- ◆ Perception of “drug design”: Design of drug candidates
- ◆ Definition of a drug candidate? Not just merely an active and selective compound (“hit” → ”lead” → ”drug candidate” → ”drug”).
- ◆ Necessity of extensive *in vitro* and *in vivo* tests and formulation development – very time-consuming.
- ◆ What is your expectation? Publication or drug product?
- ◆ Who still want to do the real “drug design”? Think about how history will remember you.

**Take-home message:** Drug discovery is much more than identification of an active compound.

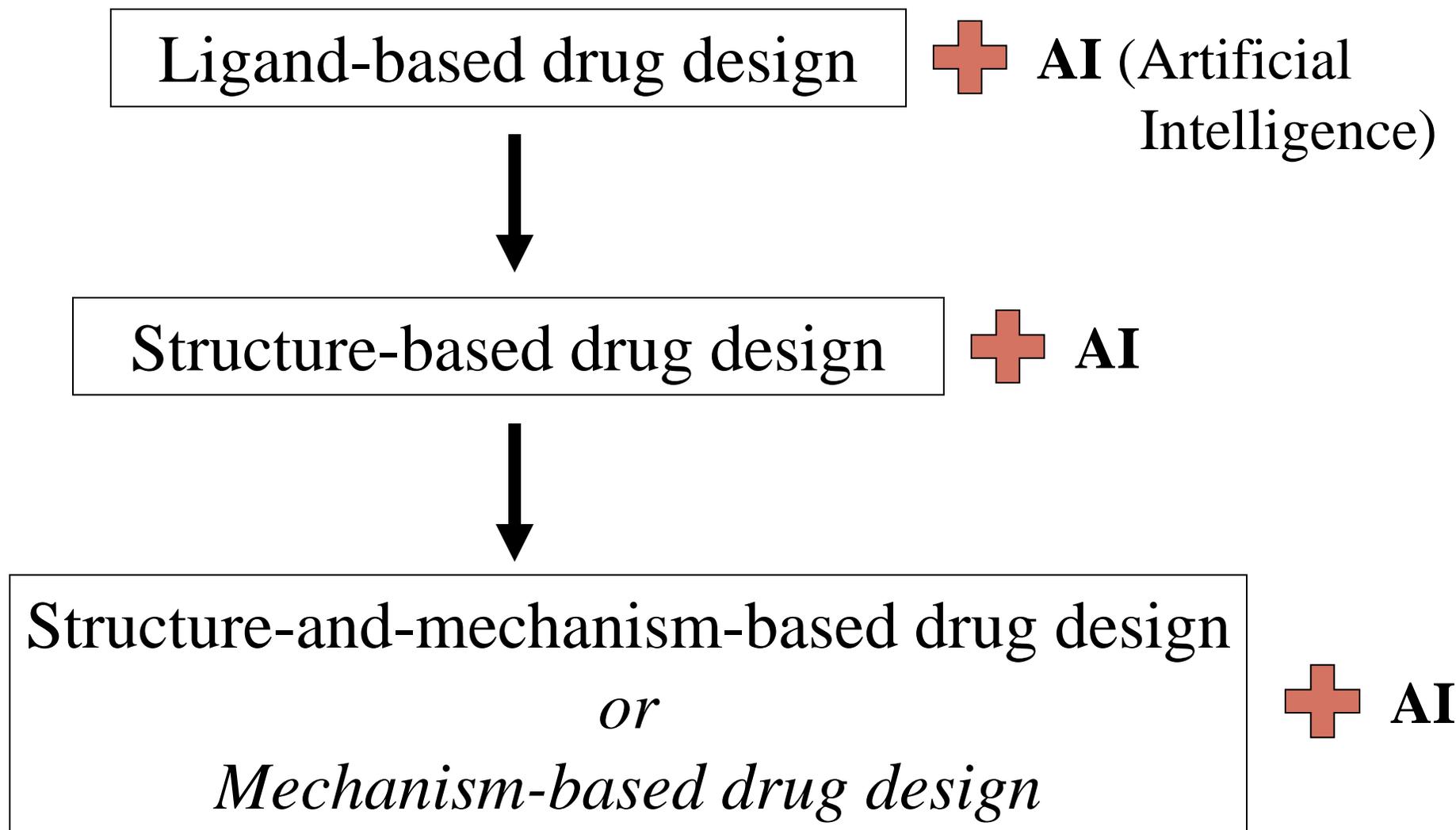
# Integrated computational & experimental Approach

## Our key methods



**Take-home message:** Computational modeling can be valuable in all stages of modern drug discovery and development process.

# Evolution of Rational Drug Design



# Ongoing Research Efforts in My Lab

*Ultimate goal of our current research:*

To discover and develop effective first-in-class therapeutic agents.

- **Type I Projects: Development of novel computational methodologies**

## Summary of computational methods for a large biological/material system

- **Scaling – multi-scale approach:**
  - Quantum Mechanics (QM)

# Quantum Mechanics



P. A. M. Dirac

*'... all the mathematics to solve the whole of chemistry is known, but the equations are too difficult to solve ...'*

The two shared Nobel Prize in Physics in 1933.



Erwin Schrödinger

## Dirac Equation

$$i\hbar\gamma^\mu\partial_\mu\psi(x) - mc\psi(x) = 0$$

To obtain relativistic wavefunction (accounting for relativistic effects)

## Time-dependent Schrödinger Equation

$$\hat{H}|\psi_n(t)\rangle = i\hbar\frac{\partial}{\partial t}|\psi_n(t)\rangle$$

Neglect relativistic effects

# Practical QM Computations for Molecules

Schrödinger's equation for electronic systems

$$H^{el} \psi^{el} = E^{el} \psi^{el}$$

Wavefunction Methods

John Pople  
(*Gaussian* program)



Density Functional Methods (DFT)

Walter Kohn  
(DFT)



1998 Nobel Prize in Chemistry (for development of computational methods to solve the **Schrödinger** equation for electronic system)



Martin  
Karplus



Arieh  
Warshel



Michael  
Levitt

2013 Nobel Prize in Chemistry (for development of computational methods in studying biological systems)

# Ongoing Research Efforts in My Lab

*Ultimate goal of our current research:*

To discover and develop effective first-in-class therapeutic agents.

- **Type I Projects: Development of novel computational methodologies**

## Summary of computational methods for a large biological/material system

- **Scaling – multi-scale approach:**
  - Quantum Mechanics (QM)
  - all-atom force field (MM)
  - coarse-grained (CG)
  - .... (further larger scale)?
- **Computational level for each scale, e.g. QM results are affected by**
  - Electron correlation level
  - basis set
  - relativistic effects
  - solvent/environmental effects
- **Dynamics of biological systems**
  - Time step and total simulation time
- **AI as a plus to expand the computational approach**
  - AI relies on large data set available.

# Ongoing Research Efforts in My Lab

*Ultimate goal of our current research:*

To discover and develop effective first-in-class therapeutic agents.

- **Type I Projects: Development of novel computational methodologies**  
e.g. Development of first-principles electronic structure approach (NSF CHE-1111761);  
Development of novel AI approach to molecular design (NSF CNSF DMS-2245903 with Dr. Duc Nguyen)
- **Type II Projects: Understanding molecular mechanisms of diseases to identify/validate novel drug targets** (e.g. NIH R01 DA057866, NIH 2R01 DA035714, NIH P01 NS097197, and NIH P20 GM130456)
- **Type III Projects: Design, discovery and development of small-molecule drugs** (sponsored by NIH, DoD, and/or pharmaceutical companies)  
e.g. Topic for presentation today: DoD W81XWH2211000, NIH U01 HL152392 and KYNETIC Grant.
- **Type IV Projects: Design, discovery and development of protein/peptide drugs** (e.g. NIH U01 DA051079, NIH UG3/UH3 NS134920, NIH R01 DA056646, NIH R01CA279455, VA 1I01BX004639-01 & DoD contract)

# Why Biologics?

# Top Selling Drugs in 2018

	DRUG	INDICATION	COMPANY	REVENUE (in Millions)	MONTHLY PRICE
1	HUMIRA® (Adalimumab)	Immunology (RA)	Antibody targeting TNF-α	\$ 12,120	\$ 6,600
2	ELIQUIS® (Apixaban)	Blood Clot	Bristol-Myers Scribb	\$ 9,879	\$ 472
3	REVLIMID® (Lenalidomide)	Blood-related Disorders	Celgene	\$ 9,690	\$ 21,000
4	OPDIVO® (Nivolumab)	Oncology	Antibody blocking PD-1	\$ 9,330	\$ 12,500
5	ENBREL® (Etanercept)	Immunology (RA)	Antibody targeting TNF-α	\$ 9,160	\$ 5,560
6	KEYTRUDA® (Pembrolizumab)	Oncology	Antibody targeting PD-1 receptor	\$ 8,770	\$ 13,500
7	HERCEPTIN® (Trastuzumab)	Oncology	Antibody targeting HER2	\$ 8,100	\$ 6,391
8	EYLEA® (Aflibercept)	Retinal Disease (AMD)	Fc fusion protein inhibiting VEGFs	\$ 7,770	\$ 2,000
9	AVASTIN® (Bevacizumab)	Oncology	Antibody inhibiting VEGF-A	\$ 7,100	\$ 840
10	RITUXAN® (Rituximab)	Oncology/Immunology	Antibody against CD20	\$ 6,770	\$ 989

Eight out of 10 top selling drug = **Biologics**

# Top Selling Drugs in 2020 and 2021

2020			2021		
Rank	Drug	Sale(10x\$B)	Rank	Drug	Sale(10x\$B)
1	Humira	203.9	1	Comirnaty	368
2	Keytruda	143.8	2	Humira	207
3	Revlimid	121.5	3	Spikevax	177
4	Eliquis	91.7	4	Keytruda	172
5	Imbruvica	84.3	5	Eliquis	167.3
6	Eylea	83.6	6	Revlimid	128
7	Stelara	79.4	7	Imbruvica	98
8	Opdivo	79.2	8	Stelara	91
9	Biktarvy	72.6	9	Eylea	89
10	Xarelto	69.3	10	Biktarvy	86
11	Enbrel	63.7	11	Opdivo	85
12	Pevnar 13	59.5	12	Xarelto	75
13	Ibrance	53.9	13	Ronapreve	75
14	Avastin	53.2	14	Trulicity	65
15	Trulicity	50.7	15	Darzalex	60
16	Ocrevus	46.1	16	Trikafta/Kaftrio	57
17	Rituxan	45.2	17	Gardasil 9	57
18	Xtandi	43.9	18	Dupixent	56
19	Tagrisso	43.3	19	Veklury	56
20	Remicade	41.95	20	Ibrance	54

→ Pfizer vaccine

→ Moderna vaccine

# Our designed first generation of therapeutic enzymes studied in Phase II clinical trials in humans

Enzyme ID	$k_{cat}$ (min <sup>-1</sup> )	$K_M$ (μM)	$k_{cat}/K_M$ (min <sup>-1</sup> M <sup>-1</sup> )	$t_{1/2}$ (hours)	
				Rat	Human
CocE-DM or RBP-8000	1,080	13	$8.3 \times 10^7$	0.2	
Albu-CocH1 or TV-1380	3,060	3.1	$9.9 \times 10^8$	8	43-77

## Computational redesign of human butyrylcholinesterase for anticocaine medication

Yongmei Pan, Daquan Gao, Wenchao Yang, Hoon Cho, Guangfu Yang, Hsin-Hsiung Tai, and Chang-Guo Zhan<sup>†</sup>

Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, College of Pharmacy, University of Kentucky, 725 Rose Street, Lexington, KY 40536

Edited by Stephen L. Mayo, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA, and approved October 3, 2005 (received for review August 23, 2005)

Molecular dynamics was used to simulate the transition state for the first chemical reaction step (TS1) of cocaine hydrolysis catalyzed by human butyrylcholinesterase (BChE) and its mutants. The down by the mutation. Reported computational modeling and experimental data indicated that the formation of the prereactive BChE<sub>2</sub>(-)-cocaine complex (the prereactive enzyme-substrate

Daquan Gao, Diwahar T. Narasimhan, Ioanna Macdonald, Remo Brim, Mei-Chuan Ko,

Dor 16656–16661 | PNAS | November 15, 2005 | vol. 102 | no. 46 han

Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, College of Pharmacy, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky (D.G., C.-G.Z.);

Department of Pharmacology, University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor, Michigan (D.L.N., R.B., M.-C.K., J.H.W.,

R.K.S.); and Division of Clinical Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, College of Physicians & Surgeons, Columbia

University, New York, New York (J.M.-D.W.)

Received June 5, 2008; accepted November 4, 2008

Our second generation of therapeutic enzyme: *e.g.* CocH5-Fc(M6)

In preparation with NIH funding support (NIH U01 DA051079)

Received FDA's *Breakthrough Therapy* designation.

MOI  
PNAS

BIOLOGY



**Presentation (11/17/2021) as one of the six Finalists for**

**Gordon Bell Special Prize in COVID-19**

ACM (Association of Computing Machinery)

(Highlighted in *Nature Computational Science* in 2021)

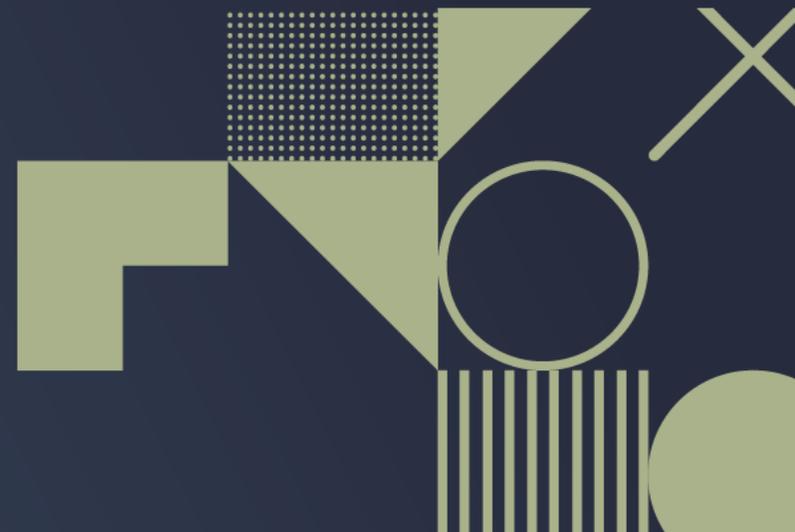


**SC21**

St. Louis, MO | science  
& beyond.

# FEP-based large-scale virtual screening for effective drug discovery against COVID-19 and clinical trials

Zhe Li, Chengkun Wu, Yishui Li, Runduo Liu, Kai Lu,  
Ruibo Wang, Jie Liu, Chunye Gong, Canqun Yang,  
Xin Wang, Chang-Guo Zhan, and Hai-Bin Luo



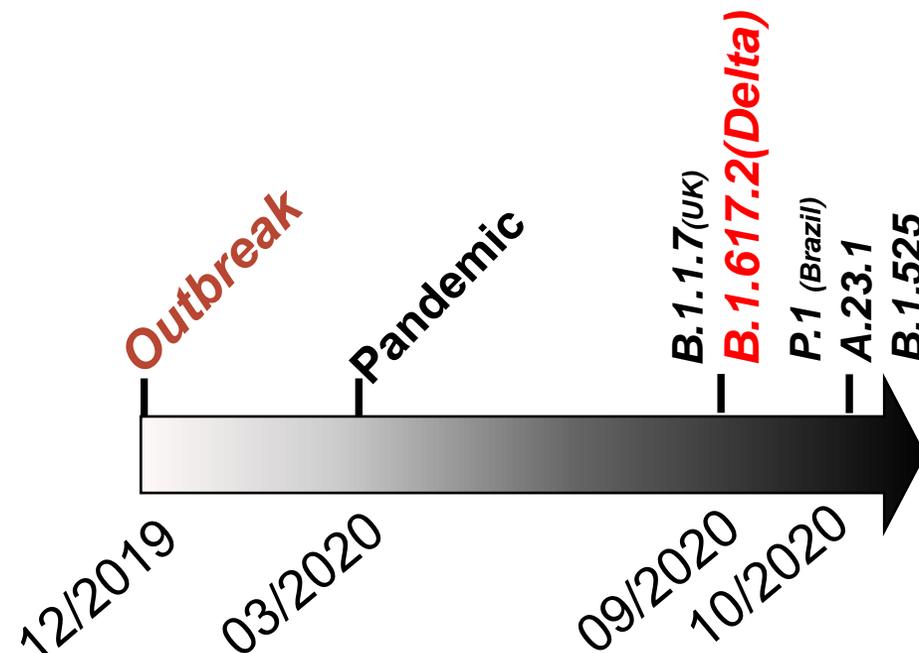
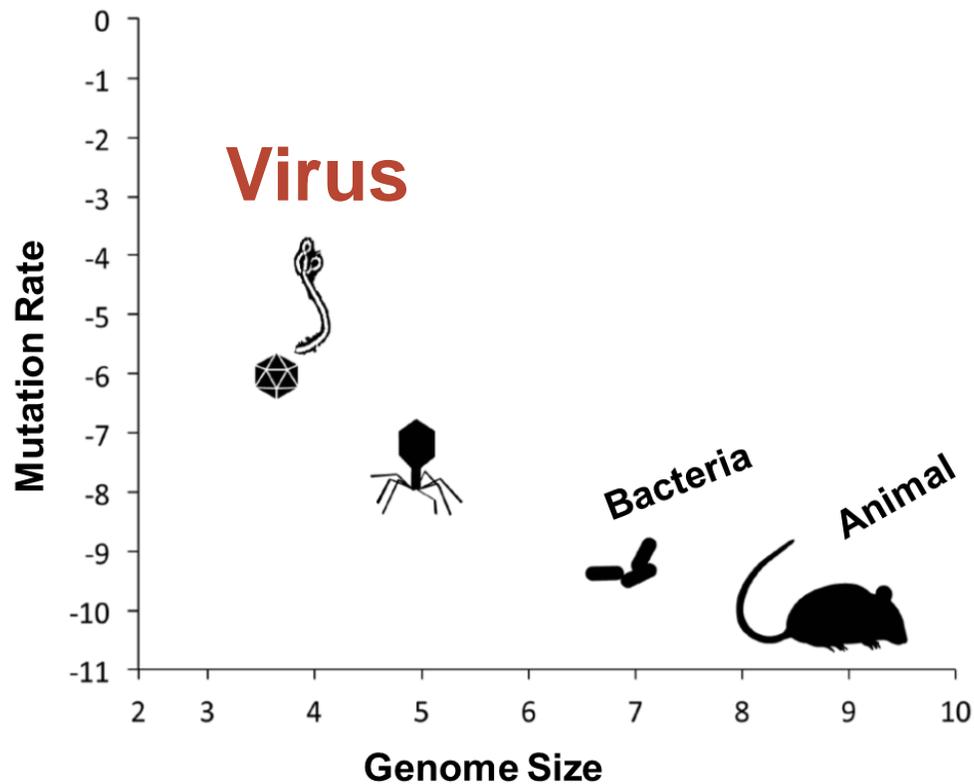
# Contents



## **Unmet need of rapid drug discovery against COVID-19 and other infectious diseases with pandemic potential – Computational challenges**

- II Virtual screening of drugs *via* Free Energy Perturbation (FEP) based absolute binding free energy (ABFE) calculations
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- VI Concluding remarks – Innovation and outlook

# Virus SARS-CoV-2 has generated hundreds of variants within 0.5 year



**0.5 year**  
**hundreds of variants**

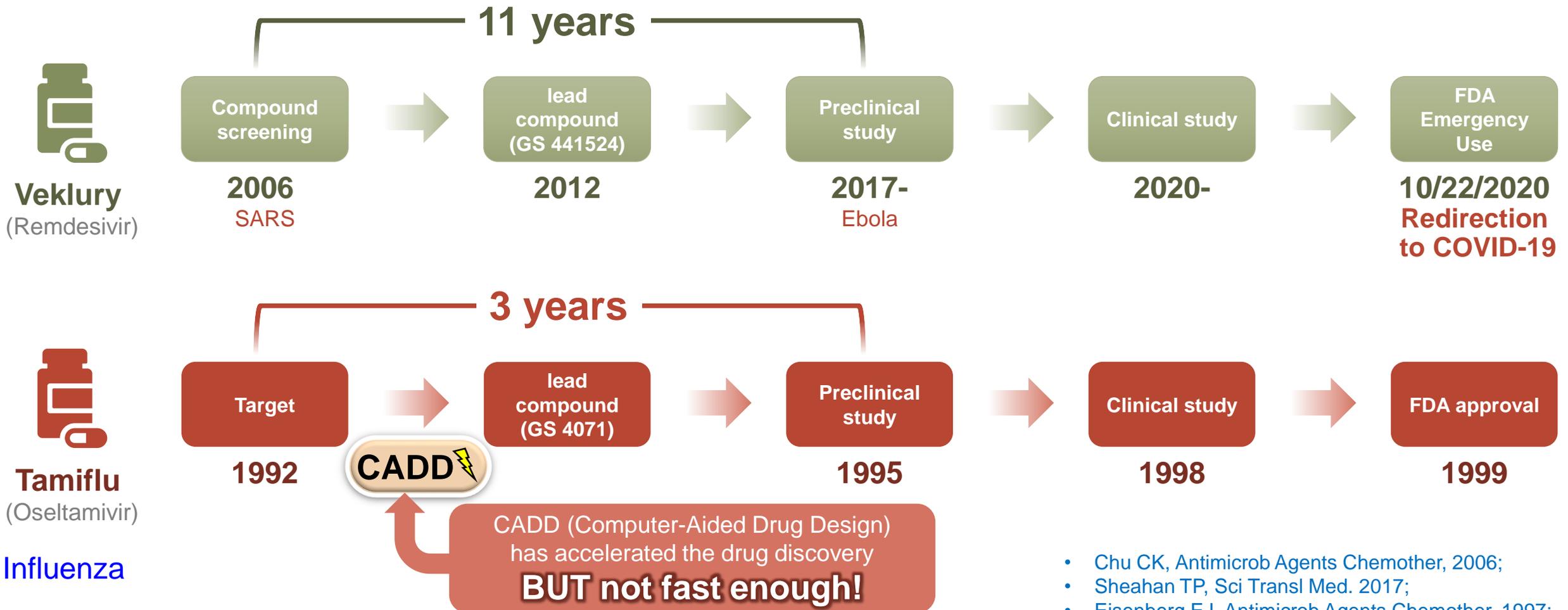
Siobain Duffy, PLoS Biology, 2018. with modifications

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker>

High Mutation Rate of Viruses

Emerging New Variants/Viruses

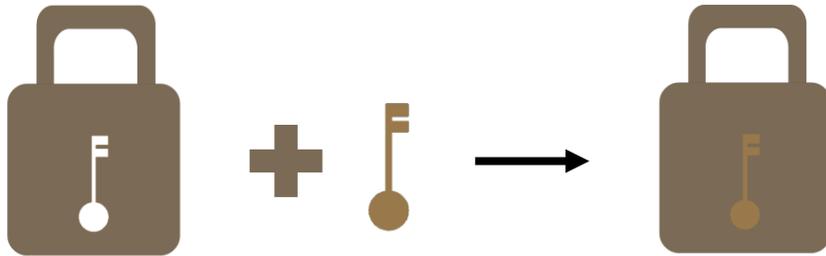
# Drug discovery: Not fast enough against viruses with a high mutation rate



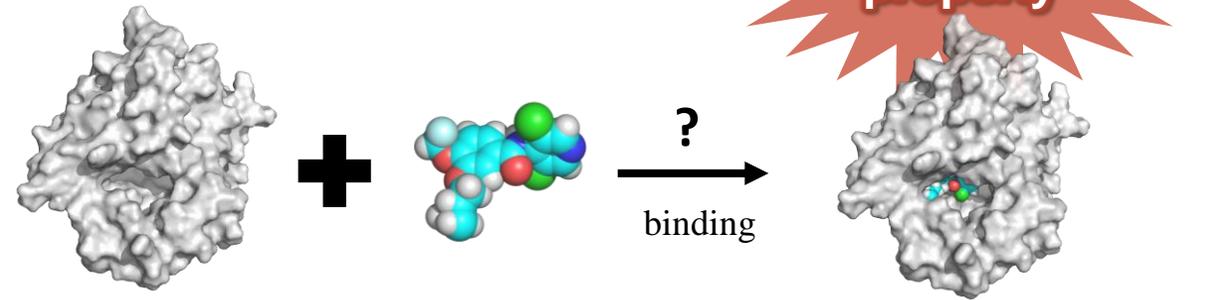
- Chu CK, Antimicrob Agents Chemother, 2006;
- Sheahan TP, Sci Transl Med. 2017;
- Eisenberg EJ, Antimicrob Agents Chemother. 1997;
- <https://www.fda.gov/>;
- <https://clinicaltrials.gov/>

# CADD: Predicting binding affinity of each potential drug candidate with a given target

Lock and key model for drug-target interaction



A drug binds to its target like lock and key



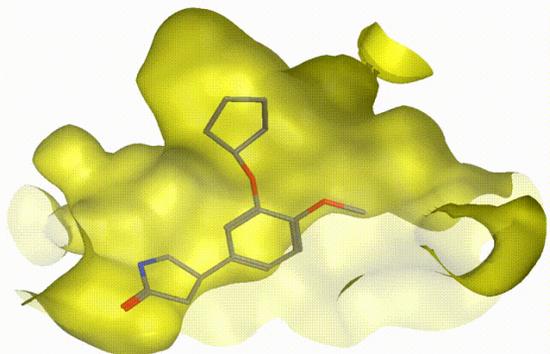
**Key point in CADD:**

To reliably predict binding free energy of each potential drug candidate with a given drug target



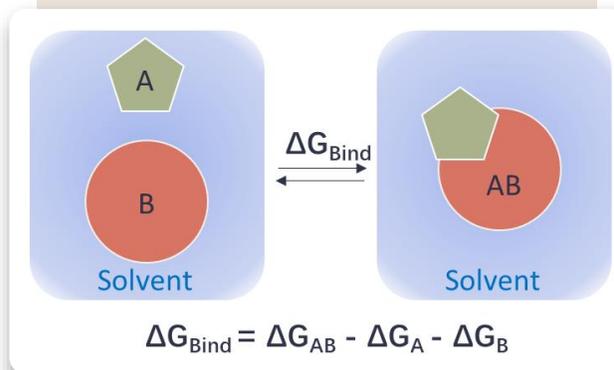
# Limitation of traditional computational methods for binding free energy prediction

## Scoring function (Molecular docking)



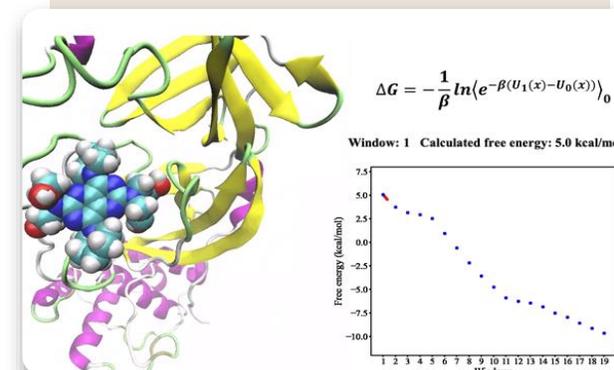
- **Fast** (billions of compounds)
- **Inaccurate, low hit rate (~2%)<sup>a</sup>**

## End point methods (MM-PBSA)



- **Moderate speed**
- **Moderate, hit rate (<10%)<sup>b</sup>**

## Statistical mechanical methods (FEP – Free Energy Perturbation)



- **Theoretically rigorous for relative binding free energy calculation**
- **Not designed for virtual screening**
- **Time consuming**

**Unmet need:** A truly accurate and efficient computational approach to absolute binding free energy calculations suitable for virtual screening

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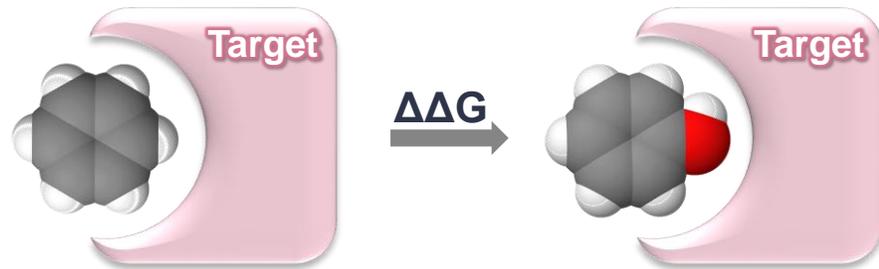
VI Concluding remarks – Innovation and outlook

# Why was FEP difficult for absolute binding free energy (ABFE) calculation?

FEP was designed to simulate a “perturbation” – a minor change of molecular structure; Computational simulation of the *perturbation* is reliable only for a truly *minor* structural change.

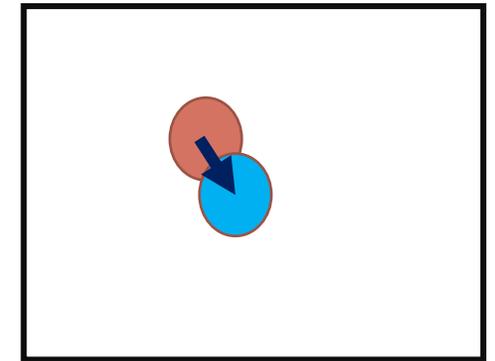
$$\Delta A = -\frac{1}{\beta} \ln \langle \exp[-\beta \Delta \mathcal{H}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}_x)] \rangle_0 = -\frac{1}{\beta} \ln \iint \exp[-\beta \Delta \mathcal{H}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}_x)] P_0(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}_x) \, d\mathbf{x} \, d\mathbf{p}_x$$

Current FEP: simulate a **minor structural change**



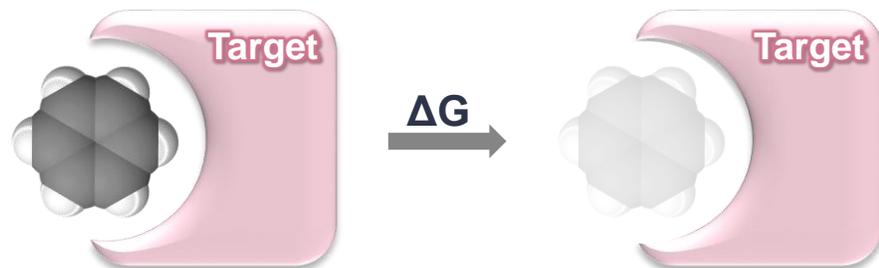
Relative binding free energy

- Changing < 10 atoms  
**Easy** to calculate



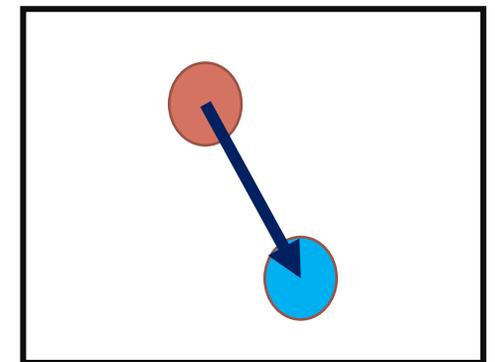
Phase space

Needed FEP: simulate **disappearance of an entire molecule**

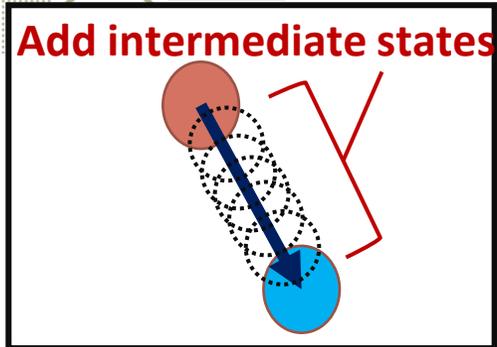


Absolute binding free energy

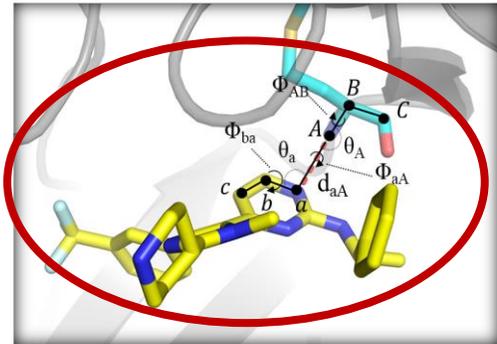
- Changing **50 ~ 100 atoms**  
**Difficult** to calculate



# Major problems preventing FEP-ABFE calculations-based virtual screening



- To deal with the large change, one must add many intermediate states, which means that one has to perform many FEP simulations for each FEP ABFE prediction--**Computationally time-consuming**



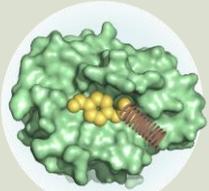
- Technically, to reliably evaluate conformational entropy contribution to ABFE, certain restraints are required. The choice of restraints required is case by case --**Difficult for automated virtual screening**

## **Our solution to the problems:**

- A restraint energy distribution (RED) function derived and used to minimize the # of intermediate states required for a converged ABFE calculation.
- A unique algorithm enabling to automatically identify restraints (with three ligand atoms and three target atoms, restrained to their equilibrium).

# Performance of our novel approach to the conformational entropy estimation

## Physical model derivation



$$U_{ini} = k_{ini} (r - r_0)^2 \quad (S1)$$

$$\Delta U_{i+1,i} = \Delta \lambda_{i+1,i} k_{res} (r - r_0)^2 \quad (S2)$$

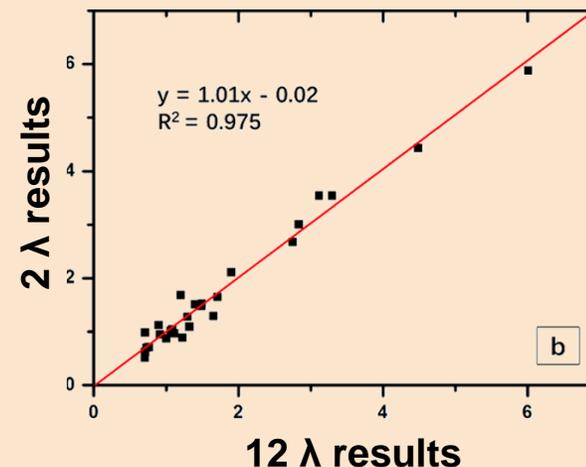
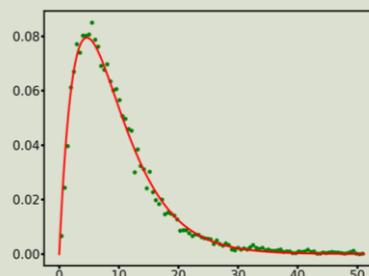
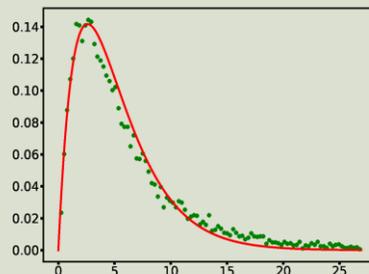
$$P(U_i) = \frac{\exp(-\beta U_i) \Omega(U_i)}{Z} \quad (S3)$$

$$P(U_i) = \frac{\exp(-\beta(k_{ini} + \lambda_i k_{res})(r - r_0)^2) 4\pi(r - r_0)^2}{Z} \quad (S6)$$

★ RED function:

$$P(\Delta U) = b^2 \cdot \exp(-b\Delta U) \cdot \Delta U$$

## Finding the best match



- Fast
- Accurate
- Automatic

Z. Li, et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 2020

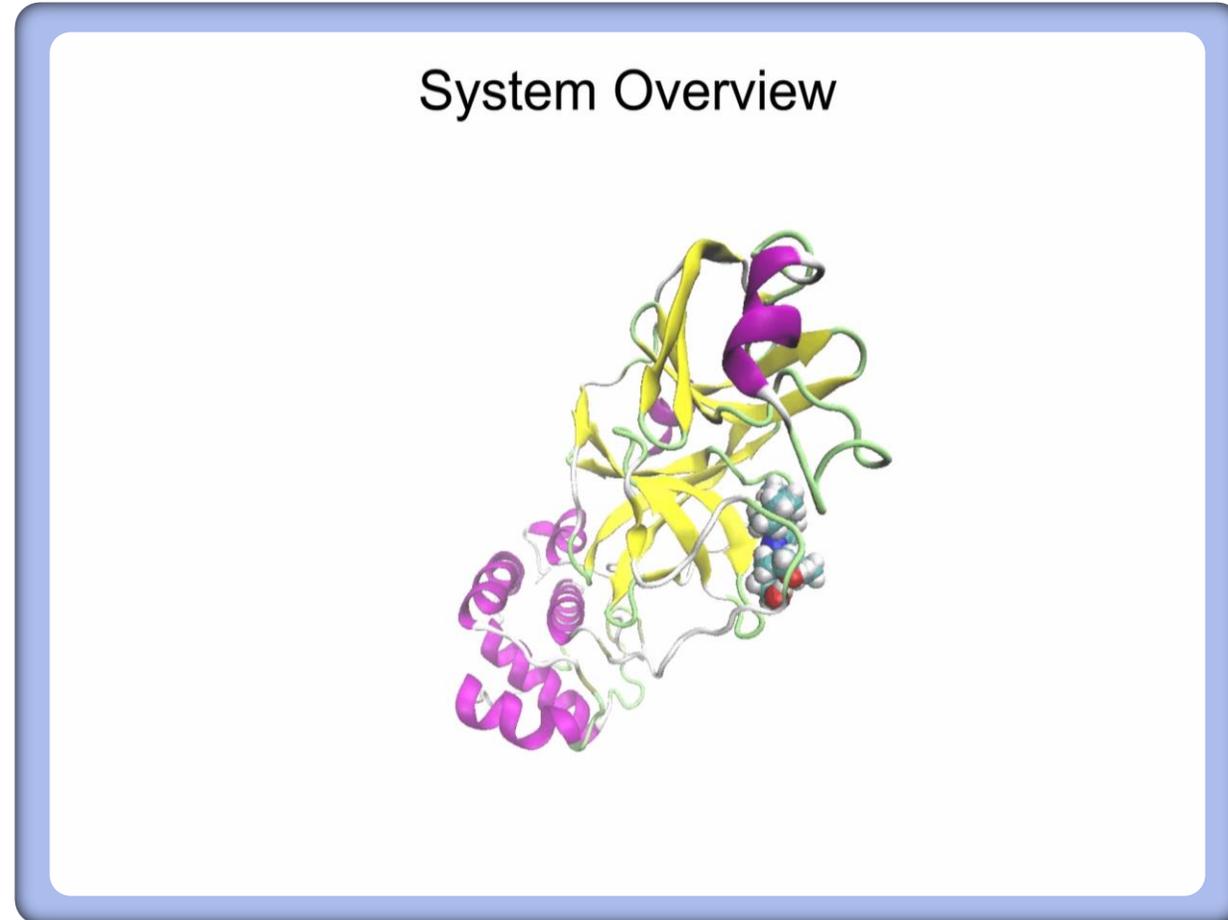
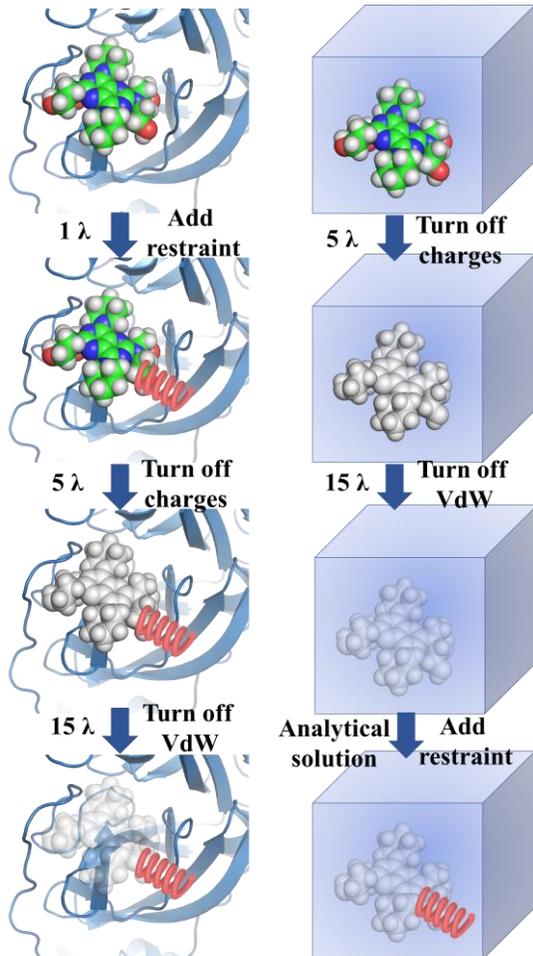
Designed algorithm

Conformational entropy estimation  
accelerated > 6 times

# FEP-ABFE protocol used in this work

1. Pre-equilibrate MD
3. Turn off charges ( $5 \lambda$ )

2. Automatic restraint addition
4. Turn off vdW ( $15 \lambda$ )



42 MD simulations for each FEP-ABFE calculation

# Acceleration of FEP-ABFE calculation using the new protocol on Tianhe HPC

A single 8-cores server  
Traditional protocol



Intel Xeon E5  
~30 days/compound

~60,000 times faster



Tianhe supercomputer  
New protocol



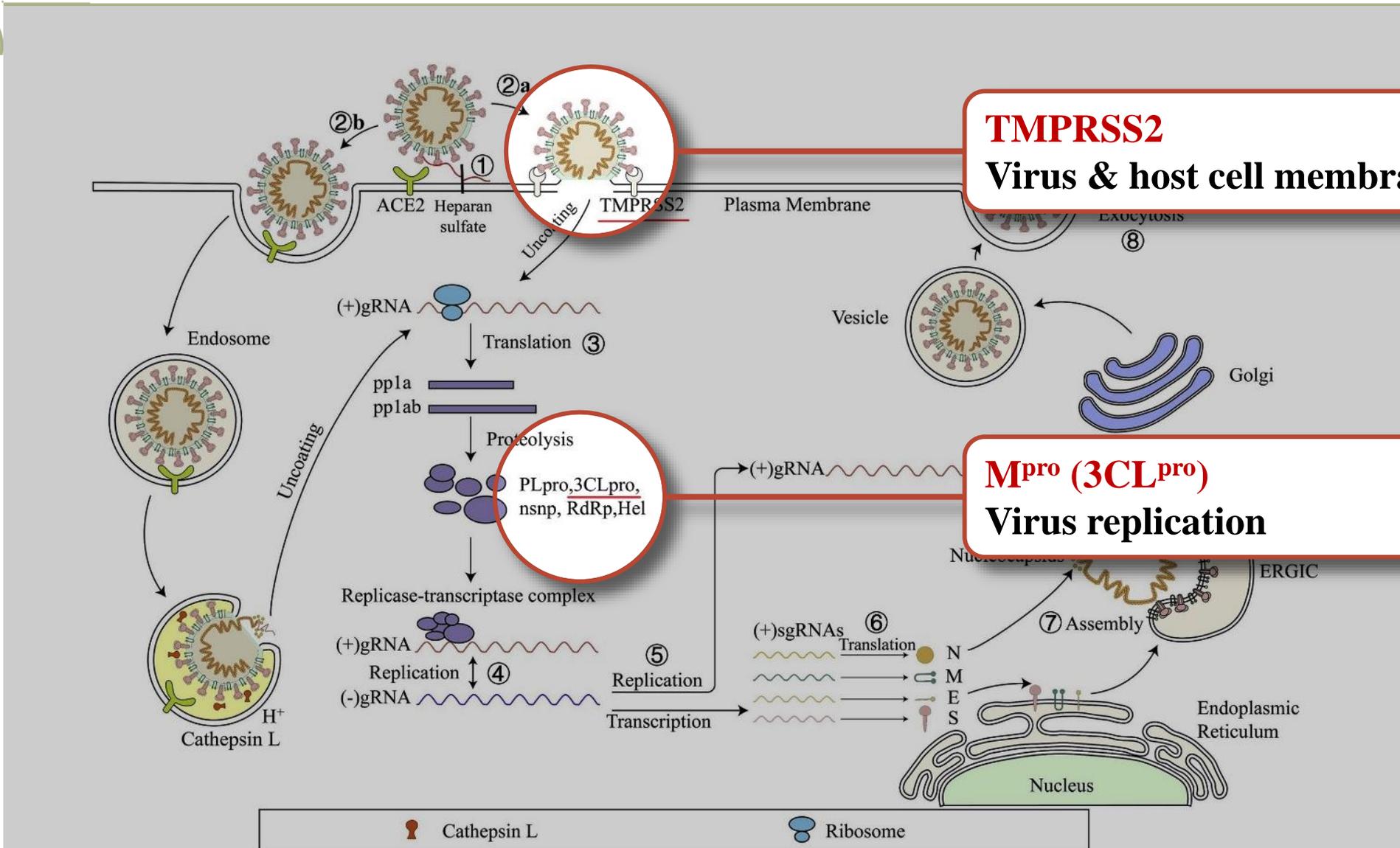
6 days / 12,000 compounds  
(or 2,000 compounds per day)

**Emergency drug discovery**

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# Choose key targets for large-scale FEP-ABFE based virtual screening



# Large-scale virtual screening on Tianhe supercomputer

Large-scale compound database (1,800,000)

Docking to TMPRSS2 and M<sup>pro</sup>

**Top 12,000 protein-ligand complexes**

>500,000 MD  
75,000 nodes, 1,200,000 cores

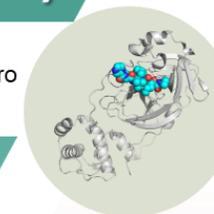
Fully automated FEP protocols

M<sup>pro</sup> : 98 compounds  
TMPRSS2: 66 compounds

Bioassay

50 hits (M<sup>pro</sup>)  
16 hits (TMPRSS2)

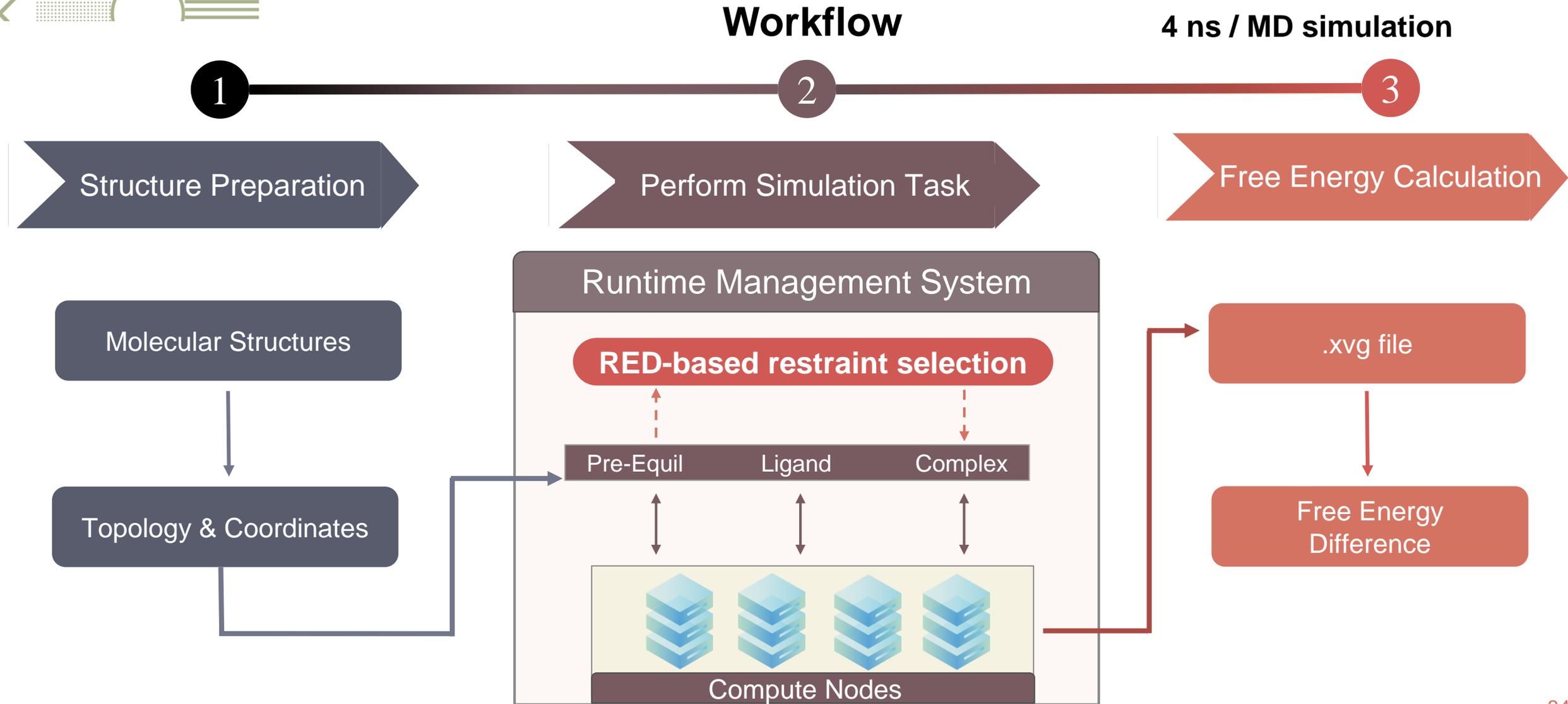
1 clinical candidate



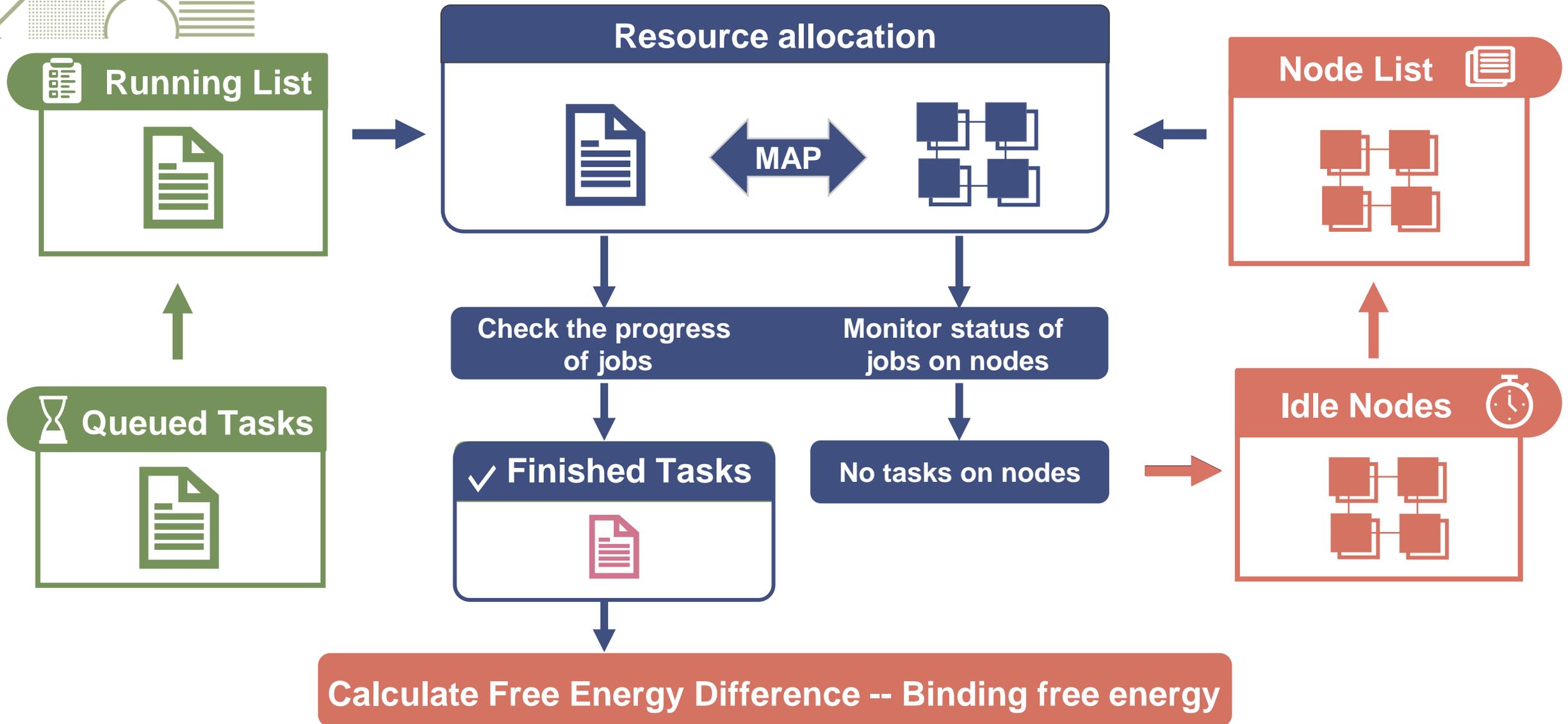
# Total number of MD simulation jobs (4 ns / MD simulation)

Target	Ligand DB	Pre-Equilibrate	Ligand	Complex
M <sup>pro</sup>	FDA	100	2000	2100
	Chemdiv	3143	62860	66003
	SPECS	3027	60540	63567
TMPRSS2	Chemdiv	3004	60060	63084
	SPECS	2825	56500	59325
Total		12099	241960	254079
		508,138		

# Intelligent job management system ( > 500,000 MD simulation tasks)



# Intelligent job management system ( > 500,000 MD simulation tasks)



# Computational resource and time used for the large-scale virtual screening

## Time for the virtual screening with single precision



Job Type	System used	Time (including IO )
Pre-Equilibrate	12,000 nodes	27.4 h
Ligand	63,000 nodes	23.7 h
Complex	75,000 nodes	114.5 h
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,200,000 CPU cores 75,000 nodes</b>	<b>141.9 h</b>

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- VI Concluding remarks – Innovation and outlook

# Experimental validation of the computational predictions

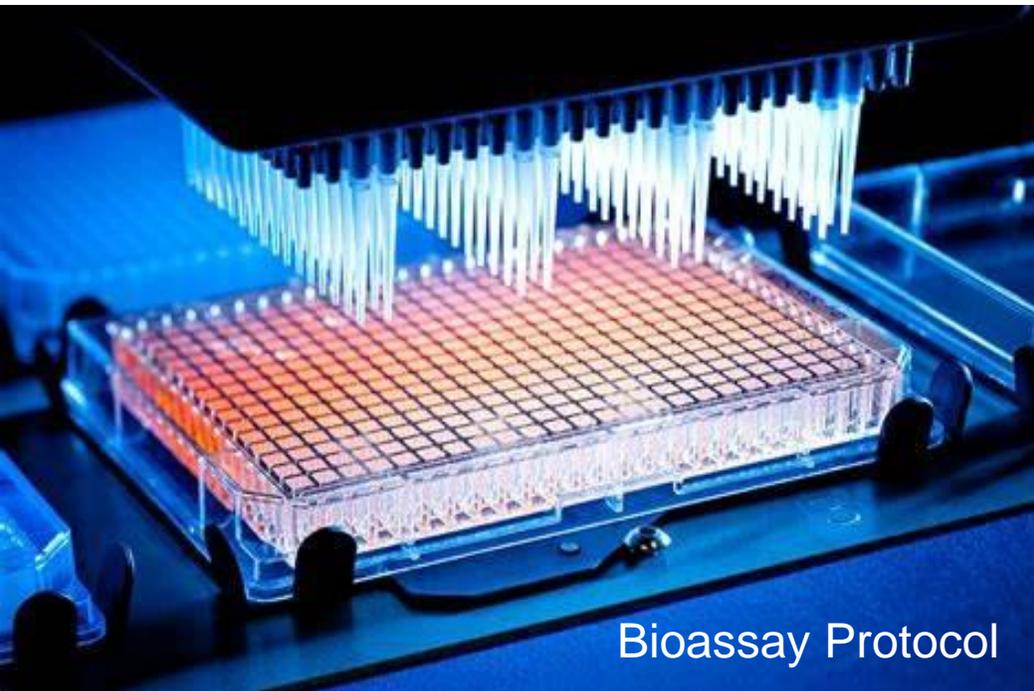


## Hits against M<sup>pro</sup>

Database	Number of tested compounds	>50% Inhibition at 100 $\mu$ M	>33% Inhibition at 100 $\mu$ M
SPECS	38	18	24
ChemDiv	35	16	19
FDA	25	16	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>50 (51%)</b>	<b>63 (64%)</b>

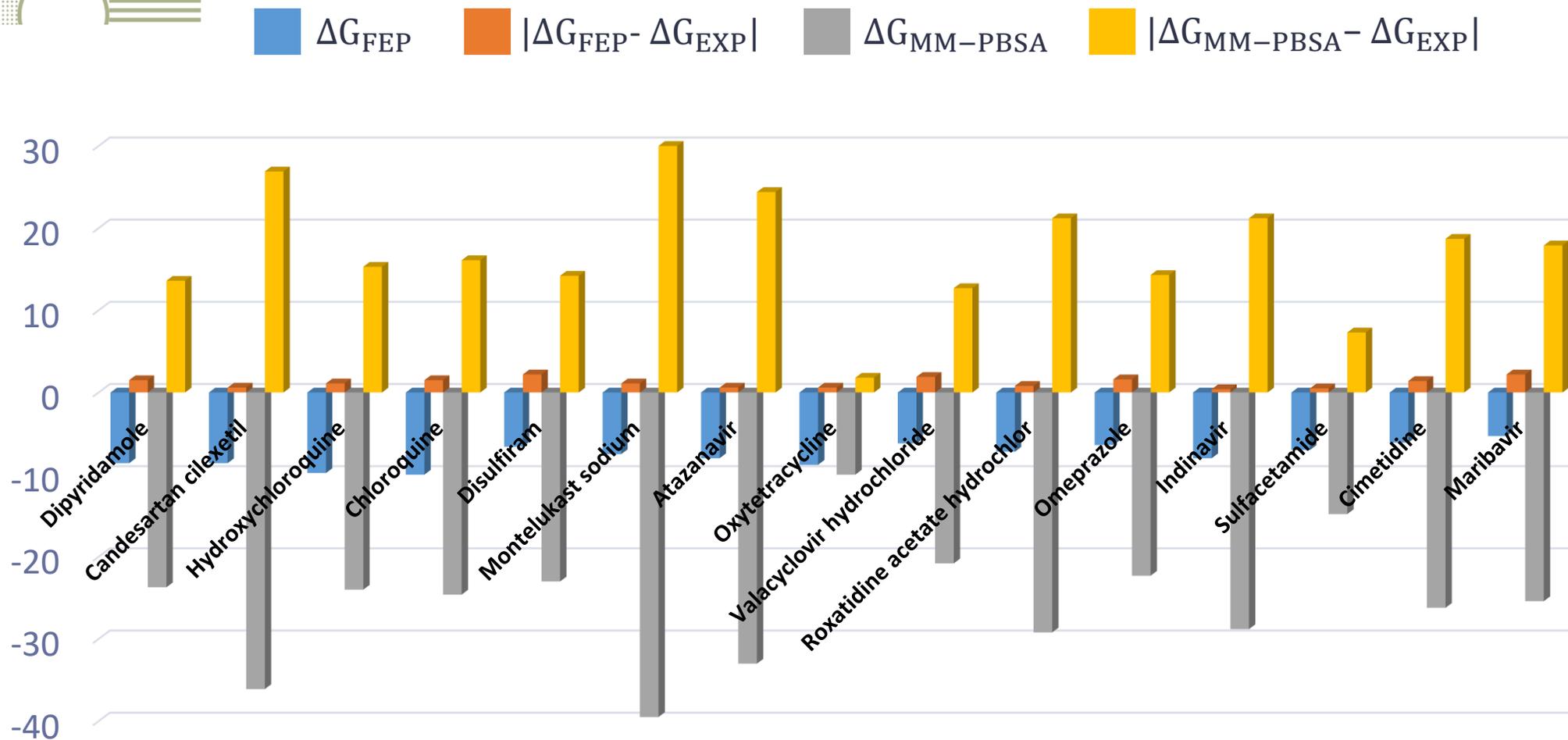
# Experimental validation of the computational predictions

## Hits against TMPRSS2



Database	Number of tested compounds	>50% Inhibition at 100 $\mu$ M	>33% Inhibition at 100 $\mu$ M
SPECS	35	9	24
ChemDiv	31	7	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>16 (24%)</b>	<b>44 (67%)</b>

# Superior performance of the FEP-ABFE predictions compared to the MM-PBSA

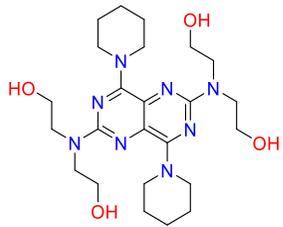


Li Z, et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA. 2020

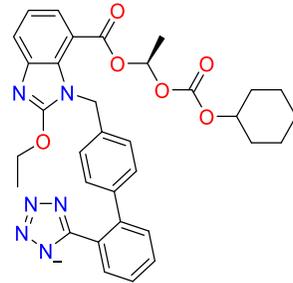
# Representative Hits

Further consideration in repurposing a drug for treatment of COVID-19 patients: Known functions of the drug

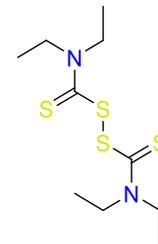
## 1) Active $M^{\text{pro}}$ inhibitors from known FDA-approved drugs



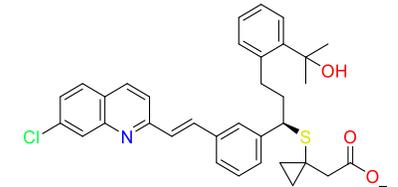
Dipyridamole



Candesartan Cilextil

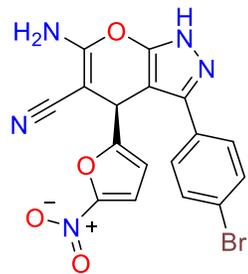


Disulfiram



Montelukast Sodium

## 2) Active $M^{\text{pro}}$ inhibitors from commercial compound libraries



Analogue 1

Analogue 2

Analogue 3

.....

Structural optimizations  
are being performed...

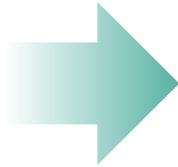
# Inspiration: Identify a drug with both anti-viral and anti-thrombosis activities

## Clinical variables in 124 patients with COVID-19



**Prof. Fuling Zhou**

**Head of hematology**



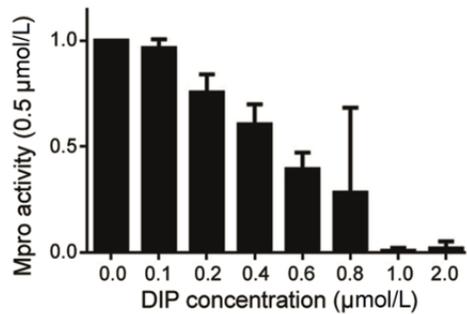
Variable	Range for normal subjects	Range for COVID-19 patients (Total number = 124)
PLT ( 10 <sup>9</sup> /L)	125-350	191.7 ± 80.0 (54-525)
Lymphocyte (10 <sup>9</sup> /L)	1.1-3.2	0.9 ± 0.6 (0.1-5.0)
MPV (fL)	6-12	9.1 ± 1.3 (6.6-12.3)
PT (S)	9.4-12.5	13.0 ± 1.4 (8.6-17.8)
APTT (S)	25.1-36.5	30.3 ± 3.2 (22.4-38.1)
FIB (mg/dL)	238-498	429.8 ± 88.7 (203-750)
<b>D-dimer (µg/L)</b>	<b>0-500</b>	<b>1168.6 ± 3652.7 (35-26315)</b>

Zhongnan Hospital of Wuhan University

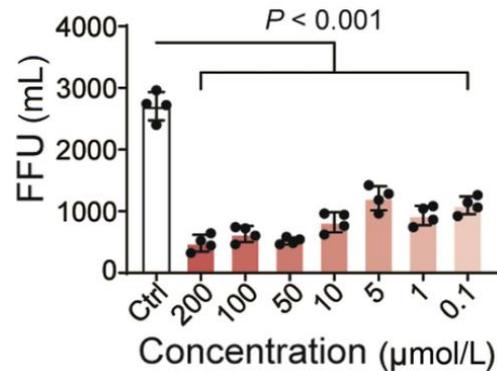
Liu XY, et al, Acta Pharm. Sin. B. 2020.

**Hypercoagulability** was associated with COVID-19 disease severity.

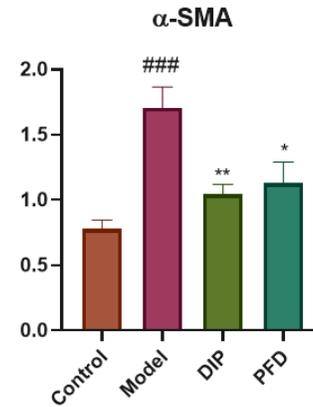
# Identified clinical candidate against COVID-19: Persantine (Dipyridamole or DIP)



A) M<sup>pro</sup> inhibition



B) Anti-viral replication



C) Anti-pulmonary fibrosis



D) Anti-thrombosis

New discovery in this work

Known function

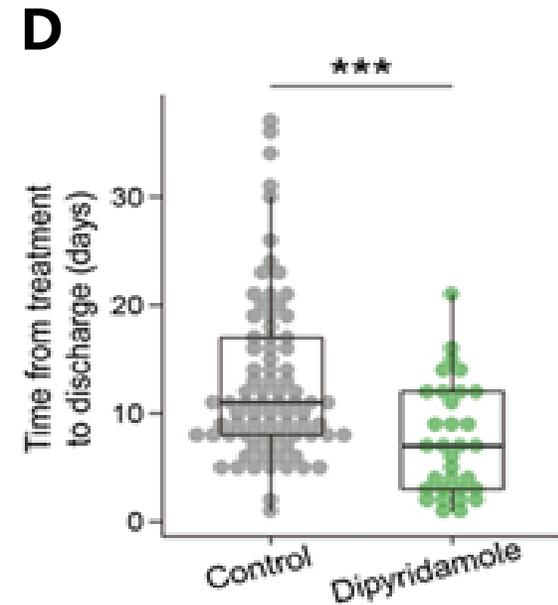
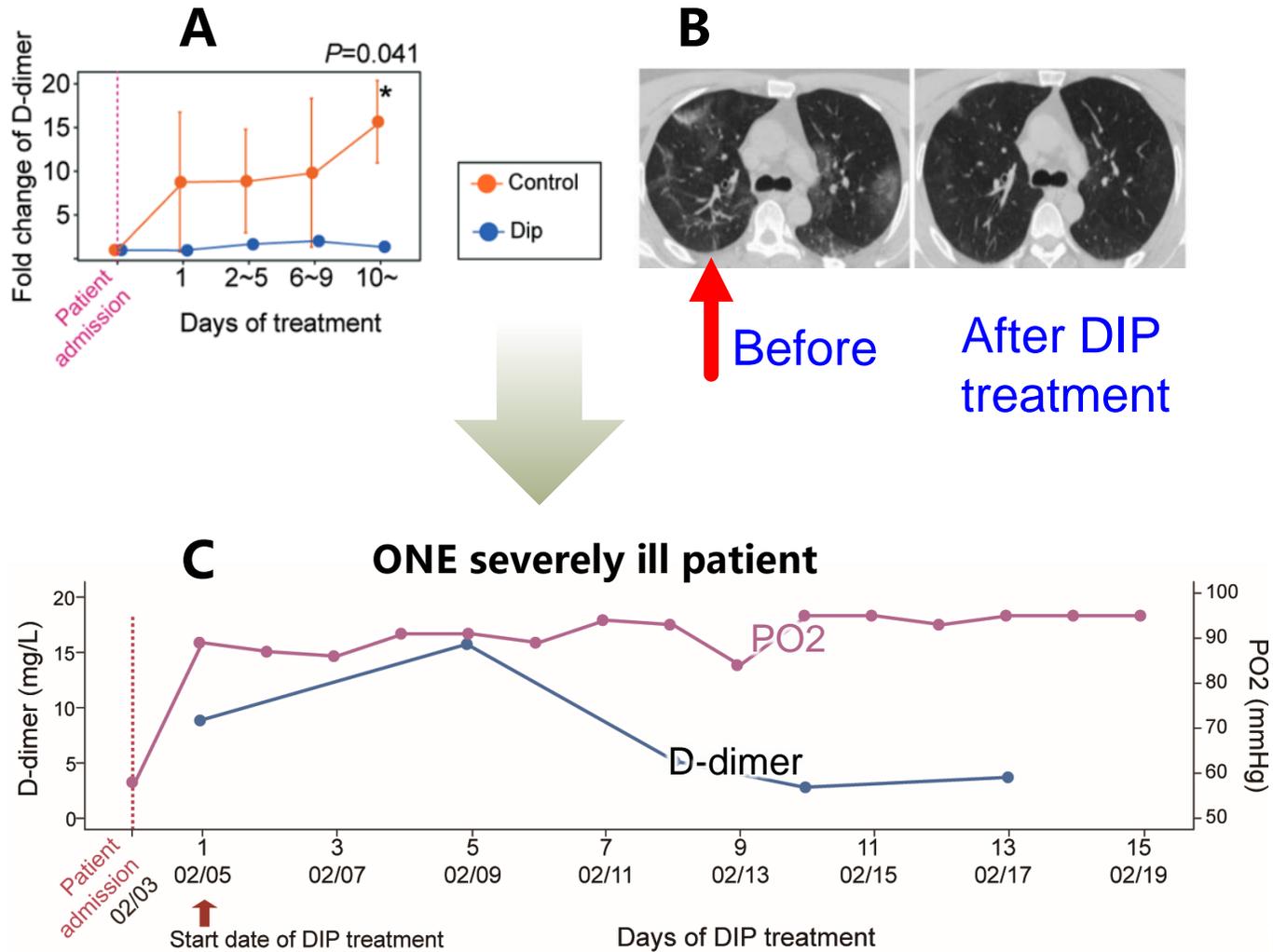
In vitro and in vivo validation:  
Emergency drug discovery

Liu XY, et al, Acta Pharm. Sin. B. 2020.

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# DIP adjunctive therapy improved the coagulation profiles and shortened the time for discharging the patients

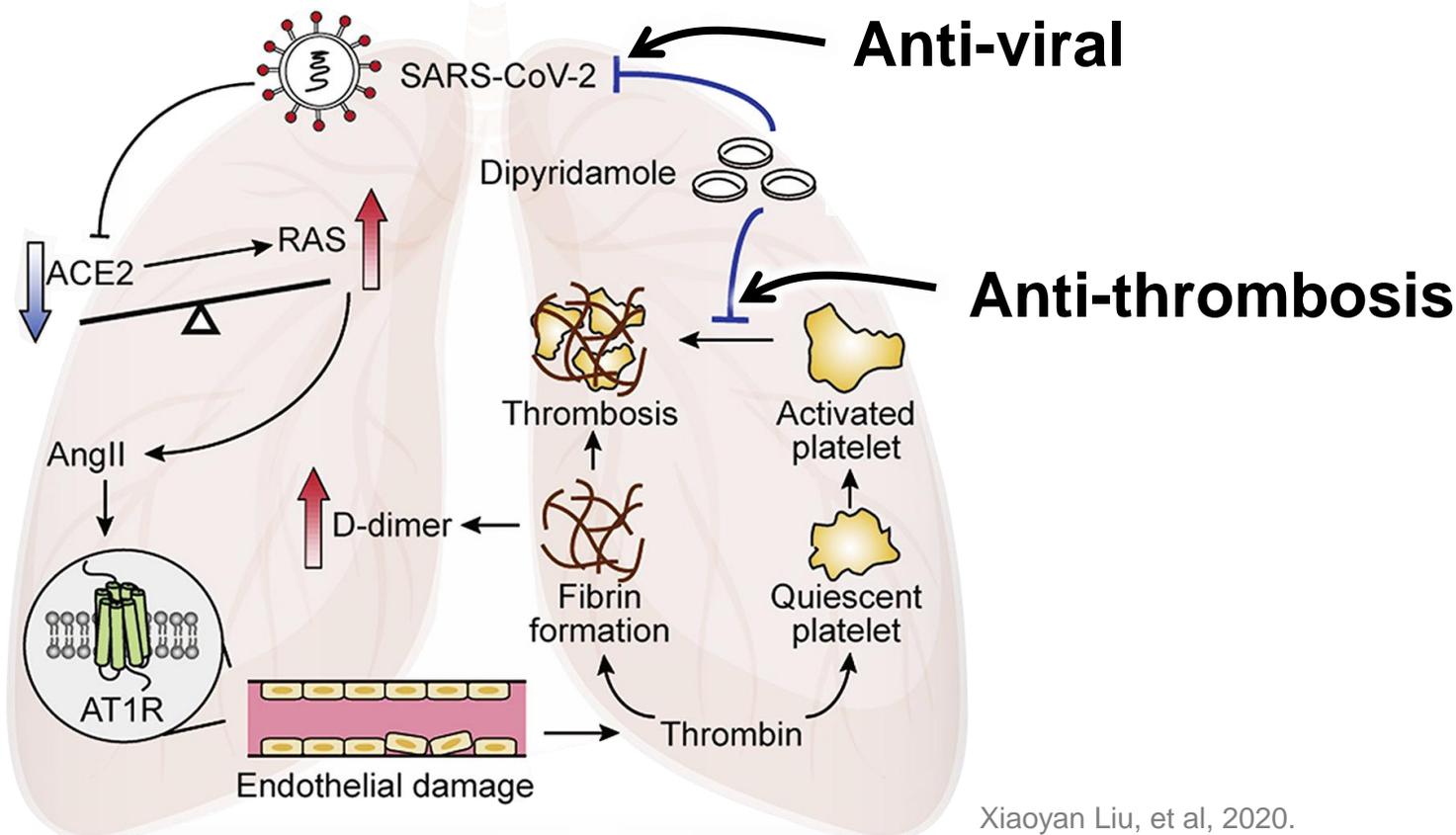


## Discharge time for the patients

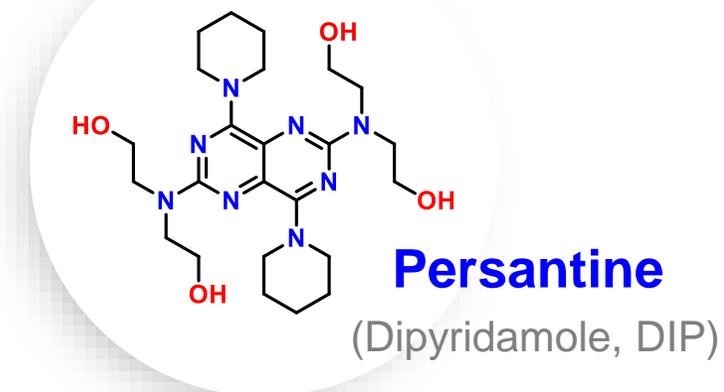
Group	Patients	Median time from treatment to discharge (days)
Control	86	11
DIP	37	7

Feb.-Apr., 2020 Jiang M, et al, J. Cell. Mol. Med. 2021.

# The mechanism of dipyridamole: Anti-viral and anti-thrombosis



Xiaoyan Liu, et al, 2020.



Clinical Studies

# Ongoing clinical trials of dipyridamole against COVID-19 (by other independent groups)

Trial and Title	<b>NCT04424901</b> : Open Label Dipyridamole- In Hospitalized Patients With COVID-19	<b>NCT04410328</b> : Aggrenox To Treat Acute COVID-19	<b>NCT04391179</b> : Dipyridamole to Prevent Coronavirus Exacerbation of Respiratory Status (DICER) in COVID-19
Trial Type	Randomized Phase II Open Label clinical trial	Randomized Phase III clinical trial	Randomized Phase II clinical trial
Status	Recruiting	Recruiting	Completed; results not yet disclosed
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ COVID-19 Pneumonia</li> <li>➤ Vascular Complications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ COVID-19</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ COVID</li> <li>➤ Corona Virus Infection</li> <li>➤ COVID-19</li> <li>➤ SARS-CoV-2 Infection</li> </ul>
Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Drug: Dipyridamole (Standard Care vs Standard Care with Dipyridamole)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Drug: Dipyridamole ER 200mg/ Aspirin 25mg orally/enterally and Standard of care</li> <li>➤ Other: Standard of care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Drug: Dipyridamole 100 Milligram(mg)</li> <li>➤ Drug: Placebo oral tablet</li> </ul>
Locations	UConn Health, Farmington, Connecticut, United States	Rutgers New Jersey Medical School University Hospital, Newark, New Jersey, United States	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, United States

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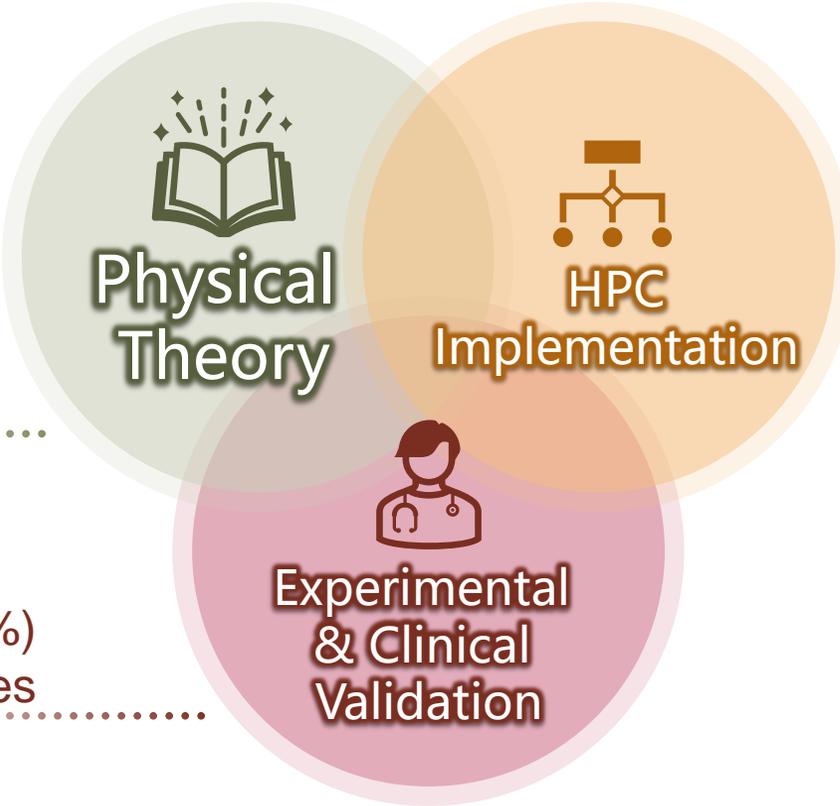
VI

**Concluding remarks – Innovation and outlook**

# Summary of the major innovation and an unprecedentedly high hit rate

A new restraint energy distribution (RED) function for accelerated ABFE prediction & a novel algorithm allowing FEP-ABFE-based automated virtual screening

High hit-rate (51%)  
Promising clinical outcomes



A large-scale virtual screening runtime management system

- Automated high-throughput FEP-ABFE calculation protocol
- **Milestone:** The first time FEP-ABFE was used in large-scale virtual screening
- Efficiency of FEP was greatly increased – applied in emergency drug discovery

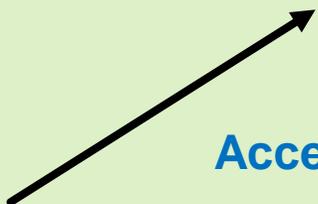
# Outlook

Serve as a general approach for emergency drug discovery using a supercomputer like Tianhe to make us ready against next breakout



FEP algorithm optimization

More reliable and more efficient



Ultra-large scale FEP-ABFE-based  
virtual screening

(FEP-ABFE predictions for millions of compounds)



Wet lab validation



HPC on a larger scale

Accelerate

Pushing CADD to the next generation



# Concluding Remarks

- Discovery and development of a novel class of drug are usually a very long, complex process.
- Computational modeling and simulation can be valuable in accelerating the complex process.
- It is always important to develop more accurate and efficient computational approaches even with increasingly more powerful HPC resources.
- State-of-the-art computational methods can make truly valuable predictions.
- Integrated computational-experimental approaches are promising.

# Acknowledgements

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R01 DA057866 (Zhan & Zhu); P20 GM130456 (Thorson); R01 DA013930 (Zhan);  
R01 CA187273 (Rangnekar); U01 HL152392 (Dwoskin) – KYNETIC project (Zheng);  
P01 NS097197 (Gentry); UL1 TR000117 (Kern, CTSA); R01 CA172379 (Liu);  
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R41/R42 HD055009 (Yokel); R01 DA035714 (Zhan, Zhu, McLaughlin, PIs);  
R21 DA030667 (Zheng); RC1 MH088480 (O'Donnell & Zhan, PIs);  
R01 DK098176 (Wang); R01 CA222596 (Zhou); R56AI137020-1 (Wei);  
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## **Supercomputing Time**

University of Kentucky Computer Center