Free energy calculation of modified nucleotides by molecular dynamics simulations

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- Secondary structures can be decomposed into loops formed by adjacent pairs
- A free energy contribution is assigned to each loop

$$E(\mathcal{S}) \approx \sum_{l \in \mathcal{S}} E(l)$$

Virtually no energy parameters for modified bases (I, $\Psi,$ m6A, D, 7DA, and P)^1

¹Varenyk, Y., Spicher, T., Hofacker, I.L, Lorenz, R., "Modified RNAs and predictions with the ViennaRNA Package", Bioinformatics, Nov. 2023

Thermodynamic cycle from Transformato²





 $^{^{2}}$ Karwounopoulos et al. "Relative binding free energy calculations with transformato: A molecular dynamics engine-independent tool." Frontiers in Molecular Biosciences 9 (2022)

Thermodynamic cycle from Transformato²



• Construction of an alchemical path

$$\Delta \Delta G_{unmod \to mod} = \Delta G_{mod} - \Delta G_{unmod}$$
$$= \Delta G_{DSu \to m} - \Delta G_{SSu \to Sm}$$

 $^{^{2}}$ Karwounopoulos et al. "Relative binding free energy calculations with transformato: A molecular dynamics engine-independent tool." Frontiers in Molecular Biosciences 9 (2022)

Thermodynamic cycle from Transformato²



- Construction of an alchemical path
- Maximum common substructure

$$\Delta \Delta G_{unmod \to mod} = \Delta G_{mod} - \Delta G_{unmod}$$
$$= \Delta G_{DSu \to m} - \Delta G_{SSu \to Sm}$$

 $^{^{2}}$ Karwounopoulos et al. "Relative binding free energy calculations with transformato: A molecular dynamics engine-independent tool." Frontiers in Molecular Biosciences 9 (2022)

GC - GU

	MD	Lit	diff
GC <mark>U</mark> GC CGGCG	2.72	2.20	0.52
GCUAC CGGUG	3.10	2.30	0.80
GA <mark>U</mark> CC CUGGG	2.02	2.60	-0.58
GG <mark>U</mark> GC CCGCG	1.73	1.90	-0.17
GC <mark>U</mark> CC CGGGG	3.53	3.00	0.53
GG <mark>U</mark> AC CCGUG	2.20	2.00	0.20
GA <mark>U</mark> CC CUGGG	1.64	2.60	-0.96
GG <mark>U</mark> CC CCGGG	2.64	2.70	-0.06
GA <mark>U</mark> GC CUGCG	0.78	1.80	-1.02
GG <mark>U</mark> CC CCGGG	2.79	2.70	0.09



 $\begin{array}{l} \mathsf{RMSE} = 0.70 \\ \mathsf{std} \ \mathsf{MD} = 0.24 \\ \mathsf{std} \ \mathsf{Lit} = 0.14 \end{array}$

Modifications





Energy predictions GC - IC

	MD	Lit	diff
GCC <mark>I</mark> CGC CGGCGCG	2.41	2.05	0.36
GCG <mark>I</mark> CGC CGCCGCG	2.44	2.19	0.25
GCG <mark>I</mark> GGC CGCCCCG	2.71	1.75	0.96
GCU <mark>I</mark> UGC CGACACG	2.43	2.32	0.11
GCG <mark>I</mark> AGC CGCCUCG	2.39	1.90	0.49
GCU <mark>I</mark> CGC CGACGCG	2.32	2.65	-0.33
GCU <mark>I</mark> GGC CGACCCG	2.63	2.21	0.42
GCA <mark>I</mark> CGC CGUCGCG	1.84	2.04	-0.20
GCA <mark>I</mark> GGC CGUCCCG	2.08	1.60	0.48
GCA <mark>I</mark> UGC CGUCACG	1.68	1.71	-0.03
GCC <mark>I</mark> AGC CGGCUCG	2.29	1.76	0.53
GCG <mark>I</mark> UGC CGCCACG	1.97	1.86	0.11
GCCIUGC CGGCACG	2.43	1.72	0.71



 $\begin{array}{l} \mathsf{RMSE} = 0.47 \\ \mathsf{std} \ \mathsf{MD} = 0.23 \\ \mathsf{std} \ \mathsf{Lit} = 0.55 \end{array}$

Energy predictions GU - IU

	MD	Lit	diff
GCCIAGC CGGUUCG	0.94	2.36	-1.42
GCCICGC CGGUGCG	1.27	2.10	-0.83
GCUIGGC CGAUCCG	1.33	2.25	-0.92
GCUICGC CGAUGCG	1.34	2.84	-1.50
GCGIGGC CGCUCCG	1.57	1.04	0.53
GCCIUGC CGGUACG	0.95	1.53	-0.58
GCUIUGC CGAUACG	1.18	2.27	-1.09
GCGIAGC CGCUUCG	1.65	1.89	-0.24
GCGICGC CGCUGCG	1.60	1.63	-0.03
GCGIUGC CGCUACG	1.42	1.06	0.36
GCAIAGC CGUUUCG	1.55	1.92	-0.37
GCAIUGC CGUUACG	1.33	1.09	0.24
GCAIGGC CGUUCCG	0.98	1.07	-0.09



 $\begin{array}{l} \mathsf{RMSE} = 0.85\\ \mathsf{std} \ \mathsf{MD} = 0.23\\ \mathsf{std} \ \mathsf{Lit} = 0.56 \end{array}$

Energy parameters Inosine



 $\begin{aligned} \mathsf{RMSE} &= 0.48\\ \mathsf{IC} \; \mathsf{RMSE} &= 0.37\\ \mathsf{IU} \; \mathsf{RMSE} &= 0.58 \end{aligned}$

Common Core U to Ψ



Ongoing Work

- Implementation for the Amber forcefield instead of Charmm
- Analysis of the common core
 - Base pair distances
 - Energy differences between the two CC states
- Construction of the common core

Conclusion and Outlooks

- Promising results with Inosine
- \bullet New NN parameters predicted for $I \bullet C$ and $I \bullet U$ next to $G \bullet U$
- Pipeline for NN parameters with modifications
- Not only stacking base pairs, but also larger loops

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The whole TBI team

Thank you for your attention





Base pair distances GC - GU

	MD	Lit	diff
GA <mark>U</mark> GC CUGCG	0.78	1.80	-1.02
GG <mark>U</mark> CC CCGGG	2.79	2.70	0.09

