

Invited: CBIO-I-02

Thermodynamics and kinetics of amyloid aggregation from atomistic simulations

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A major cause for cellular toxicity involved in the onset of several neurodegenerative diseases is the aberrant aggregation of proteins into oligomers and eventually fibrils. In the case of Alzheimer's disease, the main aggregating protein is the amyloid β -protein with two main alloforms of 40 (A β 40) and 42 (A β 42) amino acids. Numerous experimental studies have shown that early oligomers on pathway to fibril formation are toxic, with A β 42 showing a higher toxicity than A β 40.[1] Recently, a secondary nucleation mechanism in the presence of fibrils has been proposed to produce toxic A β 42 oligomers that might have different conformation than oligomers formed in the absence of fibrils.[2] To explore the aggregation mechanisms and differences in the oligomeric conformations we follow the aggregation of A β 40 and A β 42 from isolated monomers in the absence of fibrils [3] as well as in the presence of A β 42 fibrils. We use all-atom molecular dynamics simulations to explore the aggregation process (up to 20-mers) and describe the kinetics of aggregation and differences in the pathways due to differences in the sequence and environment using transition networks.[4]

References:

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