

Intrinsically disordered proteins in human diseases: From polyfunctionality to multipathogenicity with intrinsic disorder

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Disclosure Statement

Speaker:

Dr. Vladimir Uversky

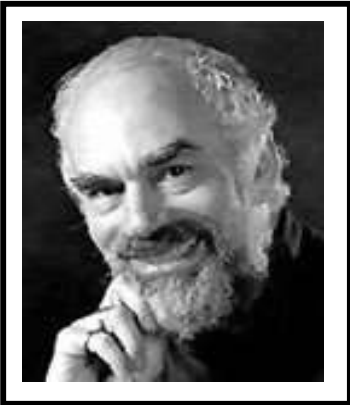
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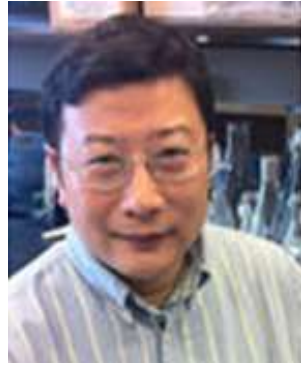
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**First, a few words of
gratitude**

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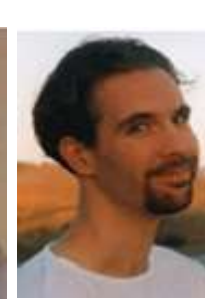
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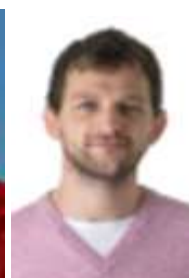
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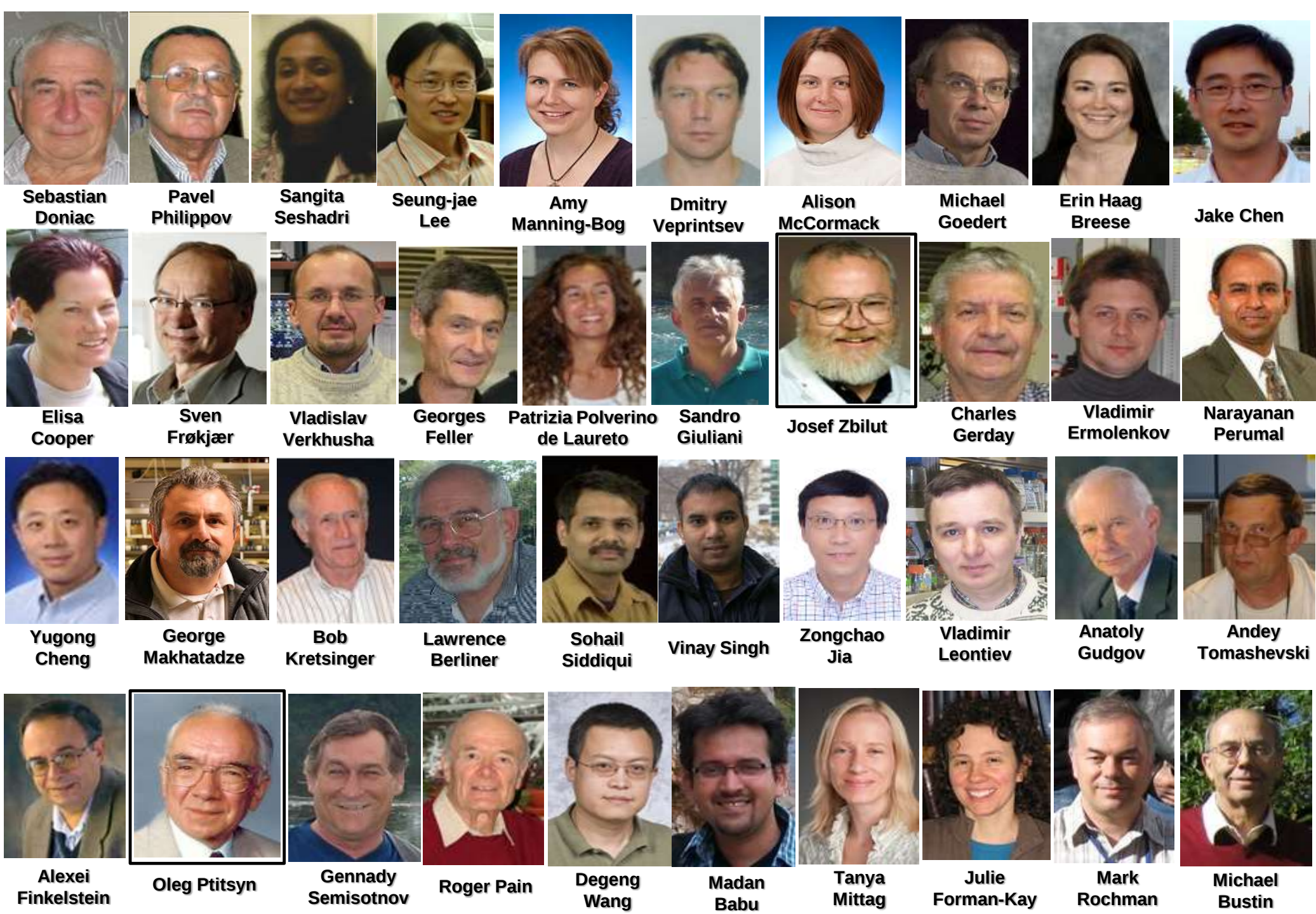
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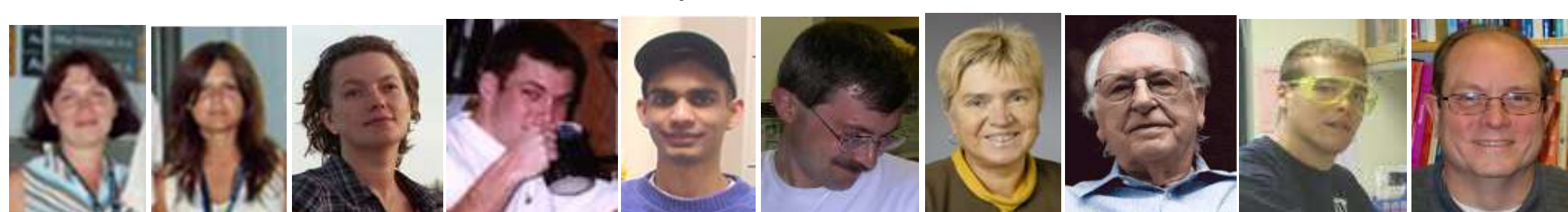
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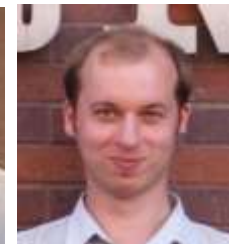
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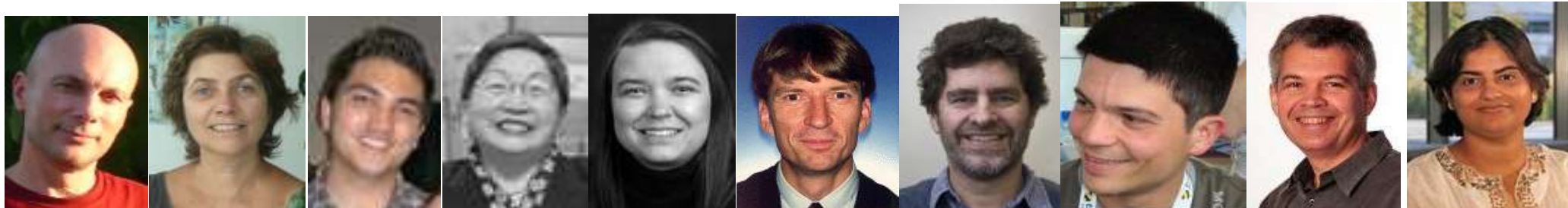
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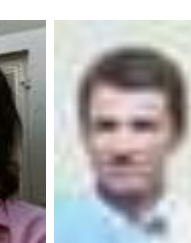
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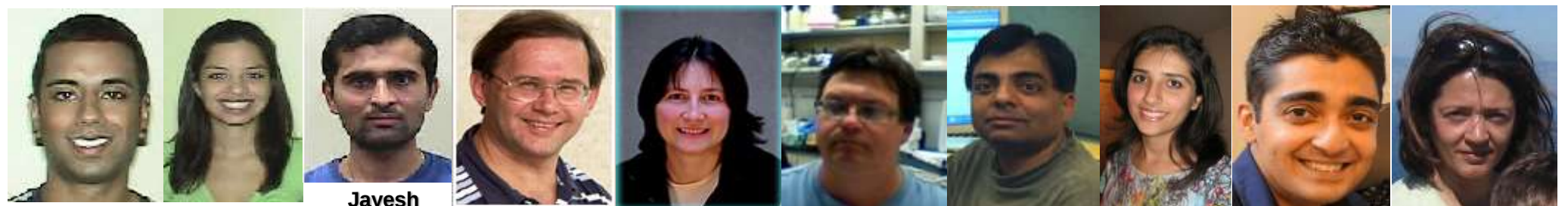
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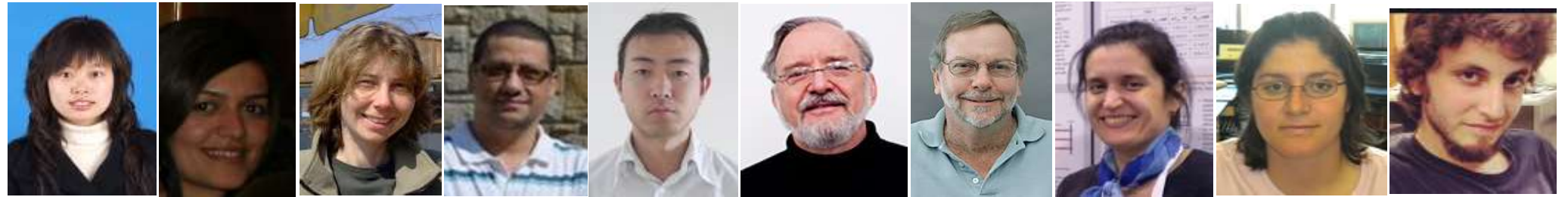
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**The last hope for the realization of the “Face Book” dream
was buried by “Database: The Journal of Biological
Databases and Curation – 2019”**

[illegible]

Database – The Journal of Biological Databases and Curation. 2019. article ID baz085 (66 pages). An article with 1,583 co-authors

now “Autophagy-1”

[illegible]

**Over the years, I collaborated with more than
12,500 colleagues from more than 2,750 research
organizations in 89 countries/territories**

This is my **interactome**

**Presented research would be impossible without
them.**

My sincere gratitude to all of them!

Outline of Talk

- Introduction of intrinsic disorder**
- Manifestations of intrinsic disorder**
- Disorder and protein structure-function continuum**
- Intrinsically disordered proteins and neurodegenerative diseases**
- Conclusions**

Introduction of intrinsic disorder

Classical protein structure-function paradigm



**Current
Protein
Structure/
Function
Paradigm**



Amino Acid Sequence

“Folding Problem”



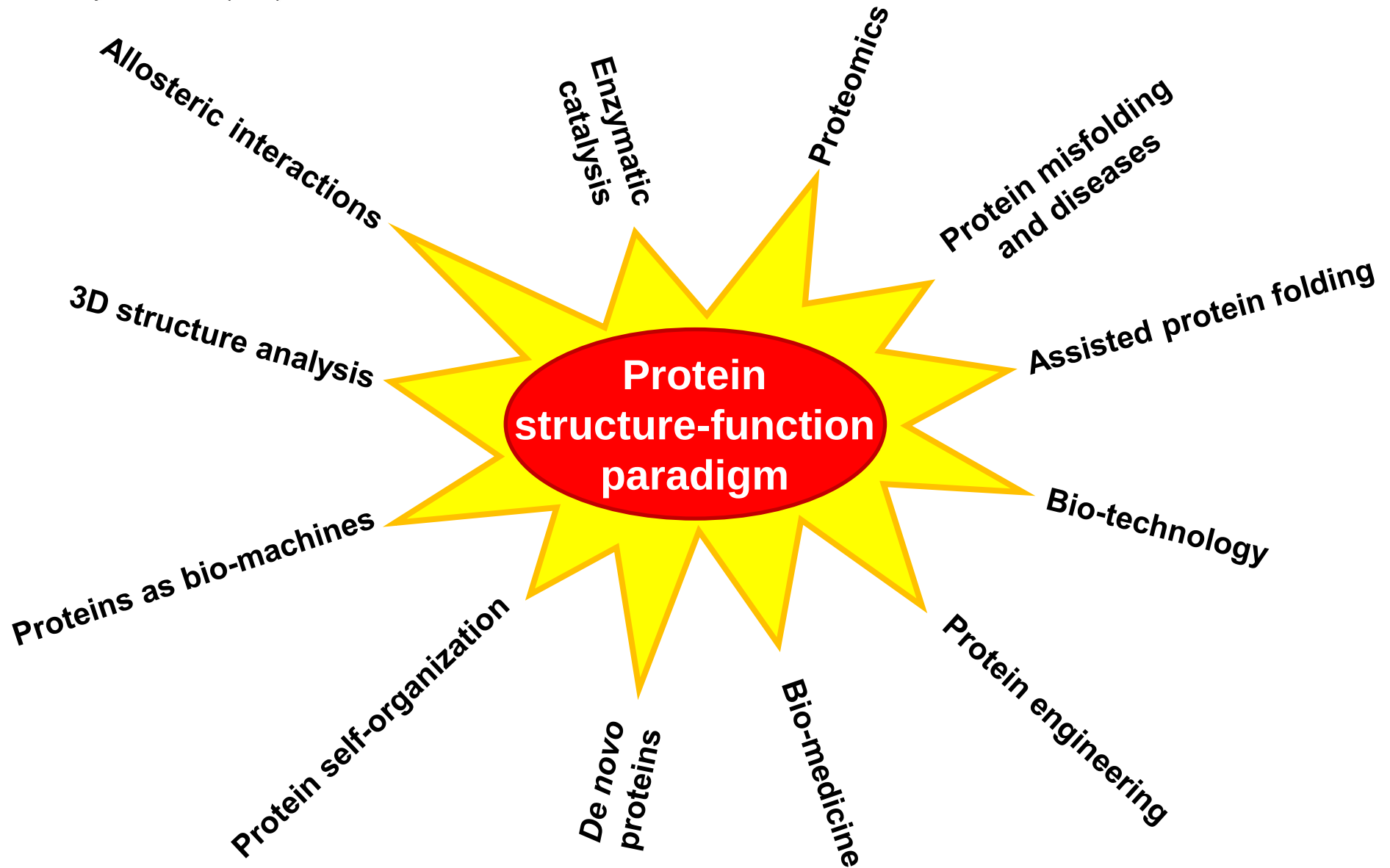
3-D Structure

Native = Ordered



Protein Function

[“Lock & Key”; “Induced Fit”]



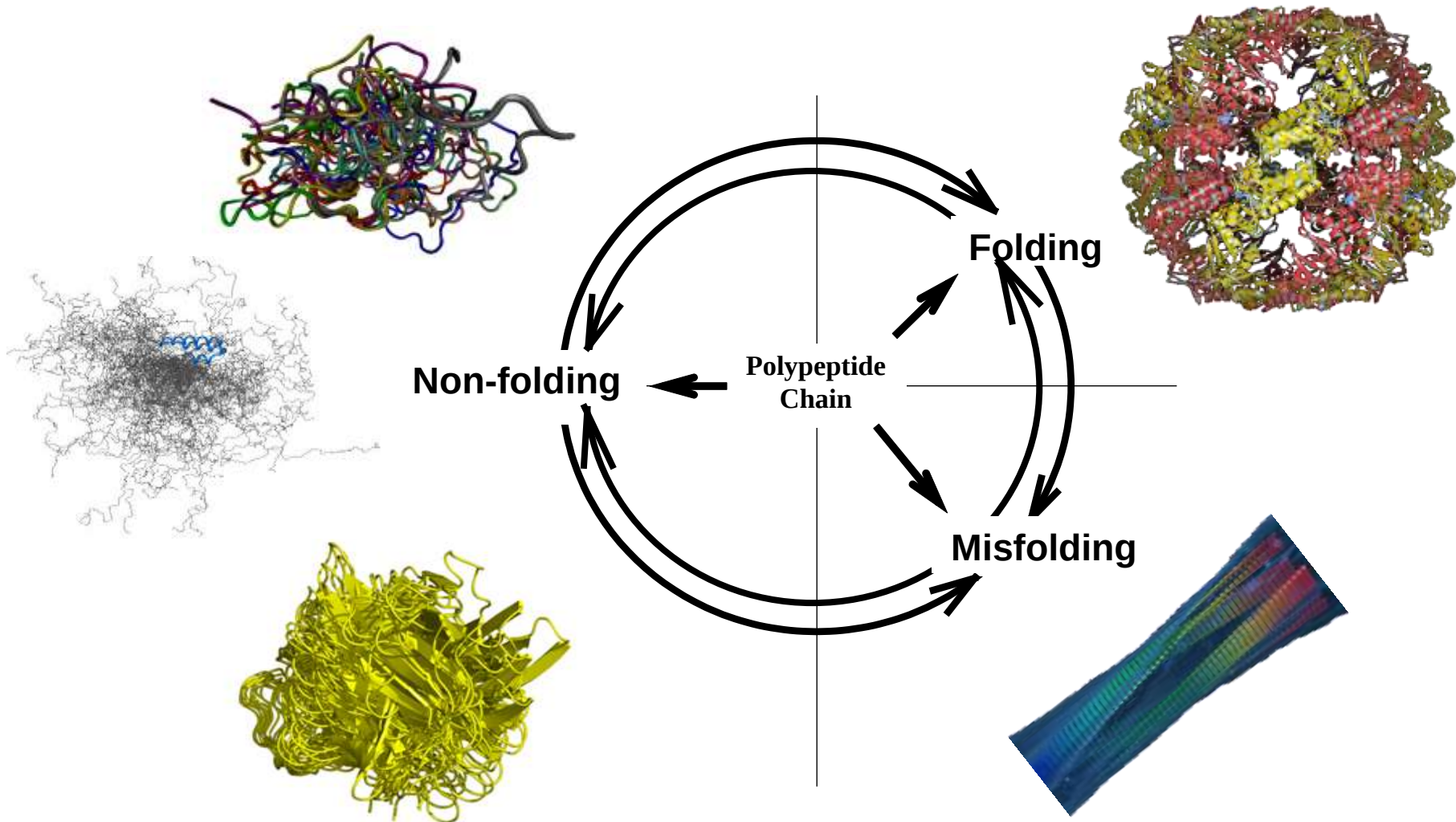
Recognition of intrinsic disorder by example

- **Many intrinsically disordered proteins were discovered as exceptions from the classical paradigm;**
- **Originally, these exceptions were rare;**
- **Phenomenon was rediscovered several times;**
- **This fact is reflected in the “paleontology” of intrinsic disorder: Originally, non-traditional proteins were called by different names.**

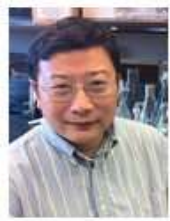
Turn of the century idea:

**Such non-foldable or
intrinsically disordered
proteins are not rare
exceptions, but could be
abundant in nature**

Fate of a polypeptide chain



**Natural abundance of
intrinsic disorder**

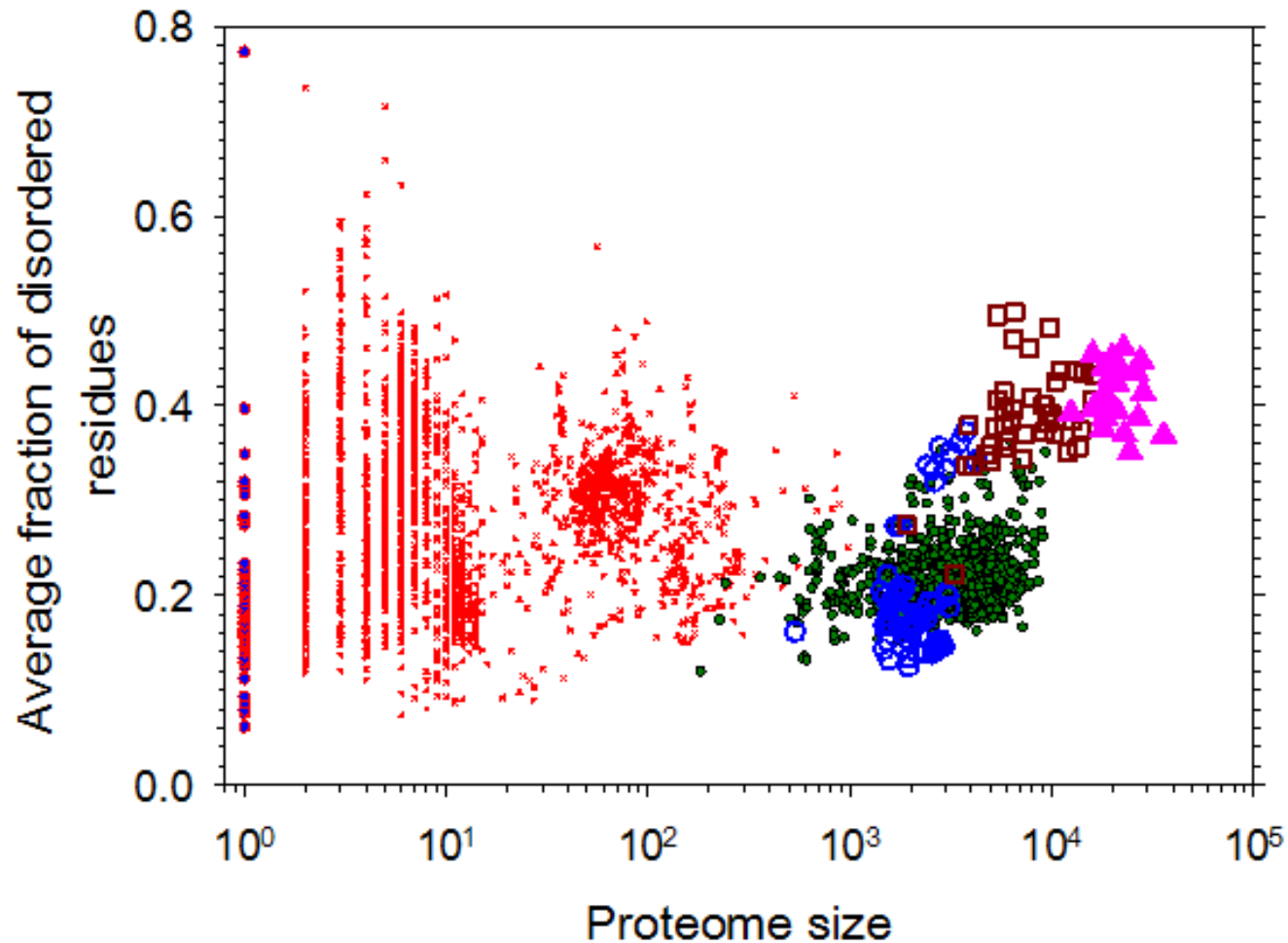


Predicted abundance of IDPs in various proteomes



Organisms	# Orgs.	# Proteins	Avg. # Proteins	% Disordered AA	%Proteins IDR >30	%Proteins Natively Unfolded
Archaea	53	536 – 4234	2052	12.5 – 35.6%	9.5 – 48.9%	3.2 – 28.6%
Bacteria	385	182 – 8172	3009	12.0 – 34.6%	11.5 – 53.7%	3.7 – 29.2%
Single-cellular Eukaryota	12	1909 – 12858	6231	27.4 – 47.1%	59.9 – 68.4%	19.2 – 43.8%
Multi-cellular Eukaryota	5	12459 – 24430	18327	35.1 – 46.1%	37.6 – 61.4%	28.3 – 42.0%

Predicted abundance of IDPs in nature

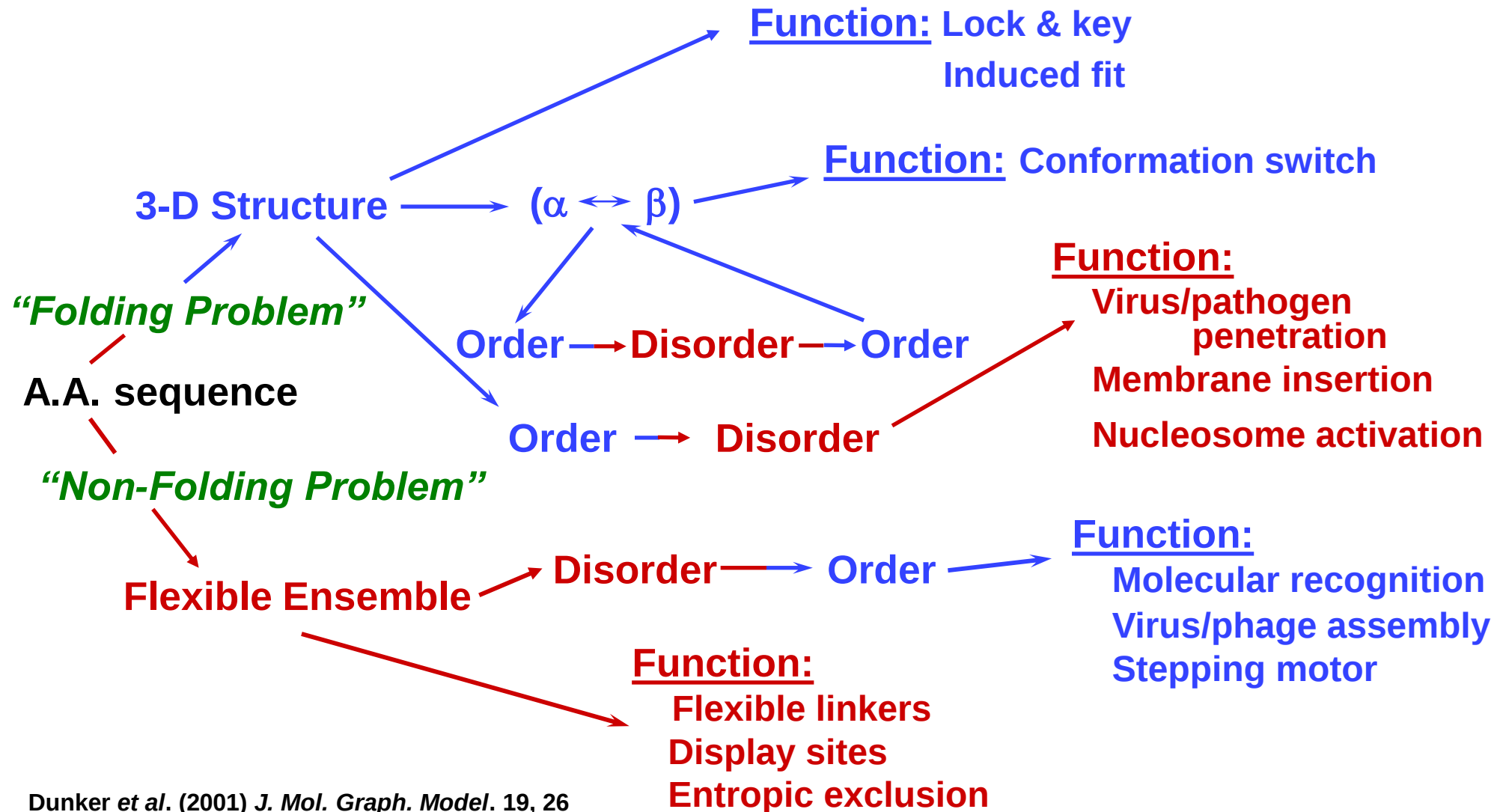


Q: Why are IDPs so abundant in different proteomes?

A: Likely to be functional



Protein structure/function relationships



**Intrinsic disorder is (almost)
incompatible with catalysis,
but is suited rather well for
regulation, recognitions, and
signaling.**

Why?



Induced folding: High specificity combined with low affinity

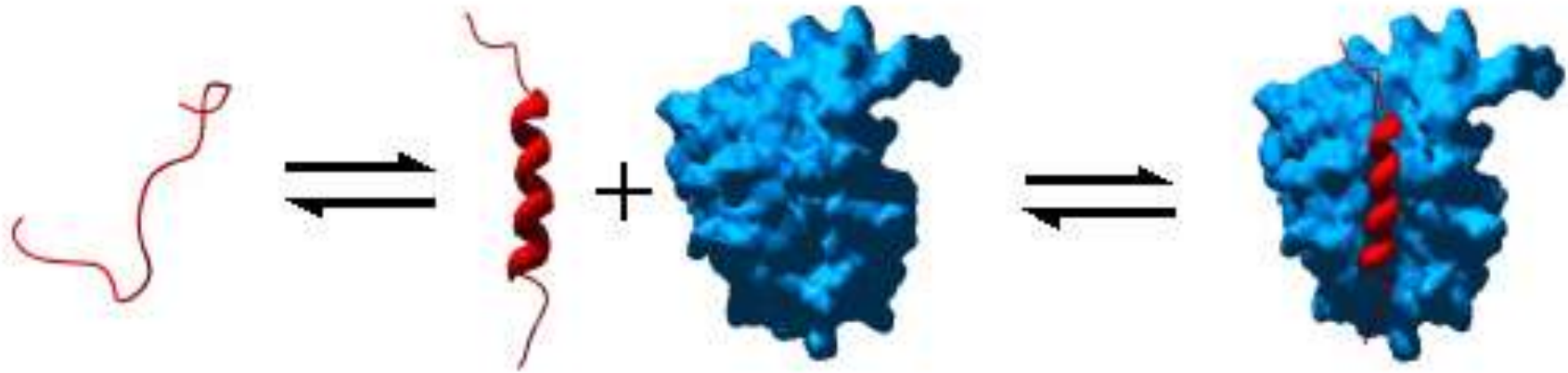
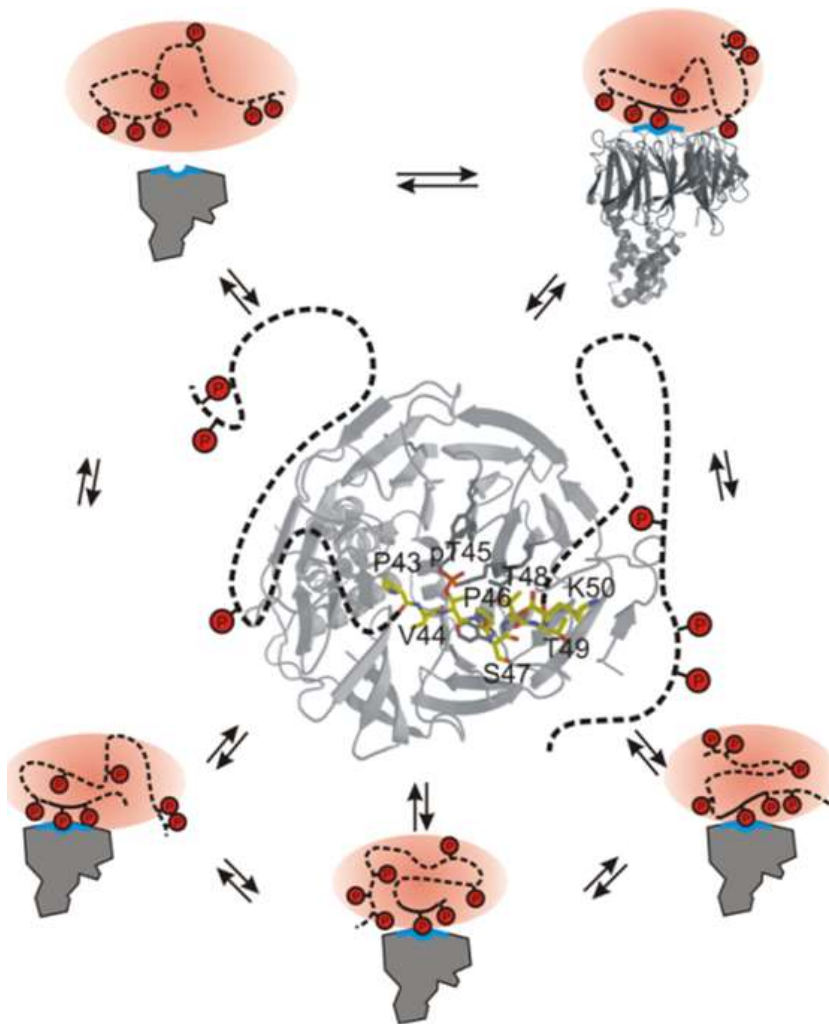


Illustration of disorder-to-order transition upon binding. This example shows the binding of a disordered region of Bad (ribbon) binding to Bcl-XL (globular). Red chain is named MoRF – molecular recognition feature.

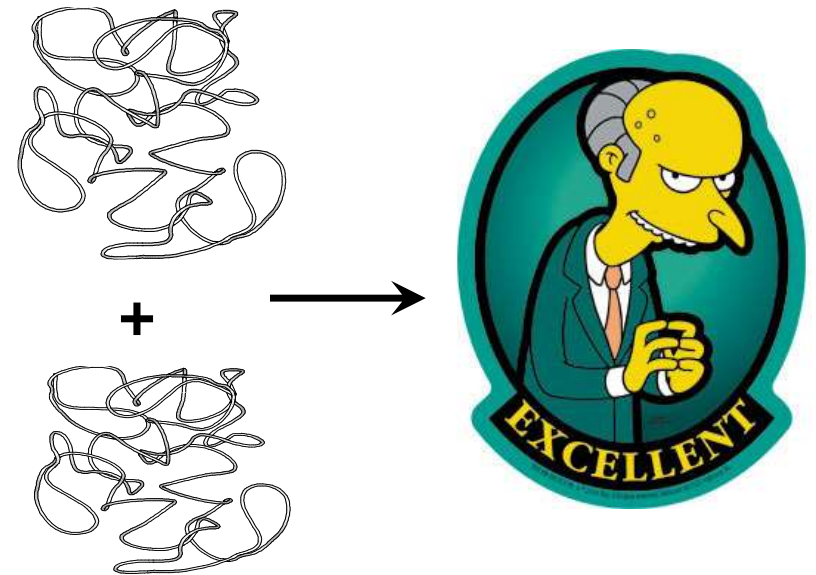
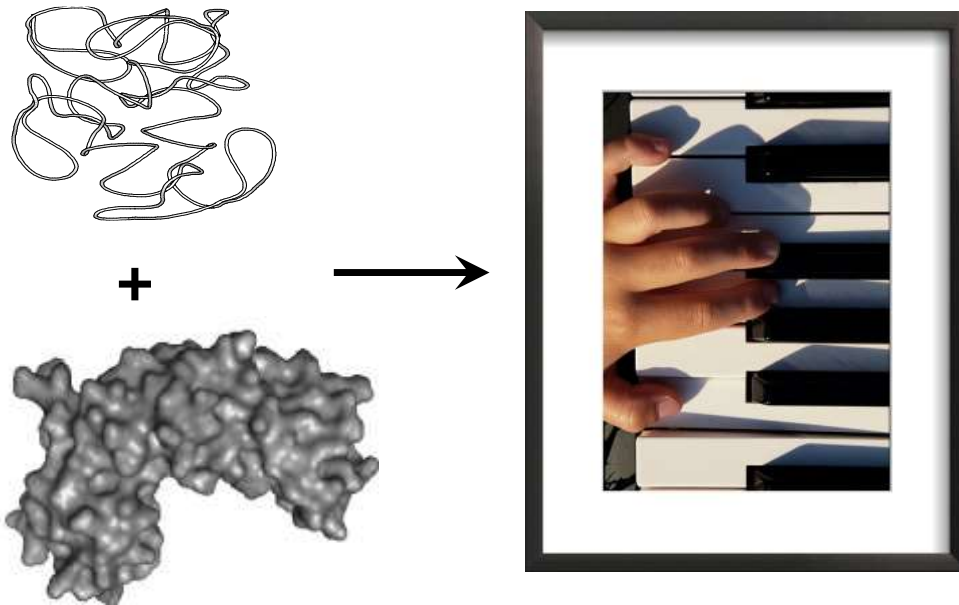
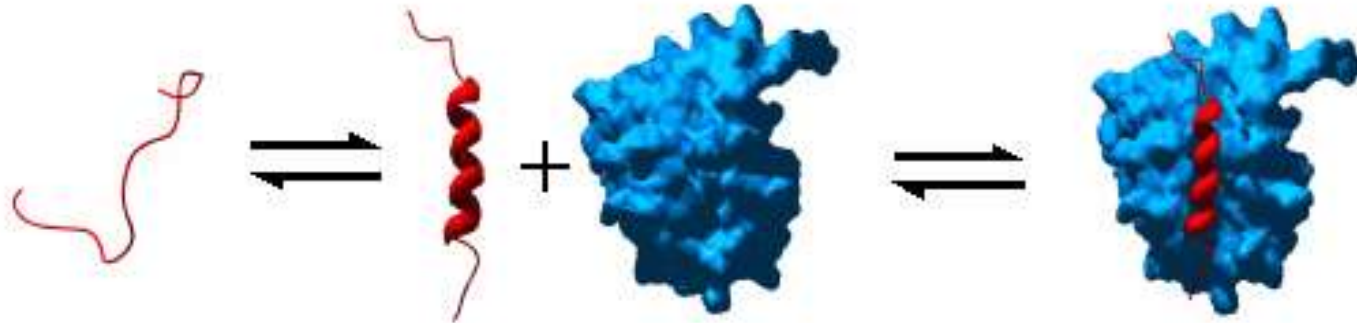


IDPs play staccato: “Polyelectrostatic” model



Dynamic complex of pSic1 and Cdc4.
Multiple sub-optimal binding motifs in
pSic1 interact with the binding pocket of
Cdc4 in a dynamic equilibrium.
J Mol Recognit. (2010) 23, 105-116.

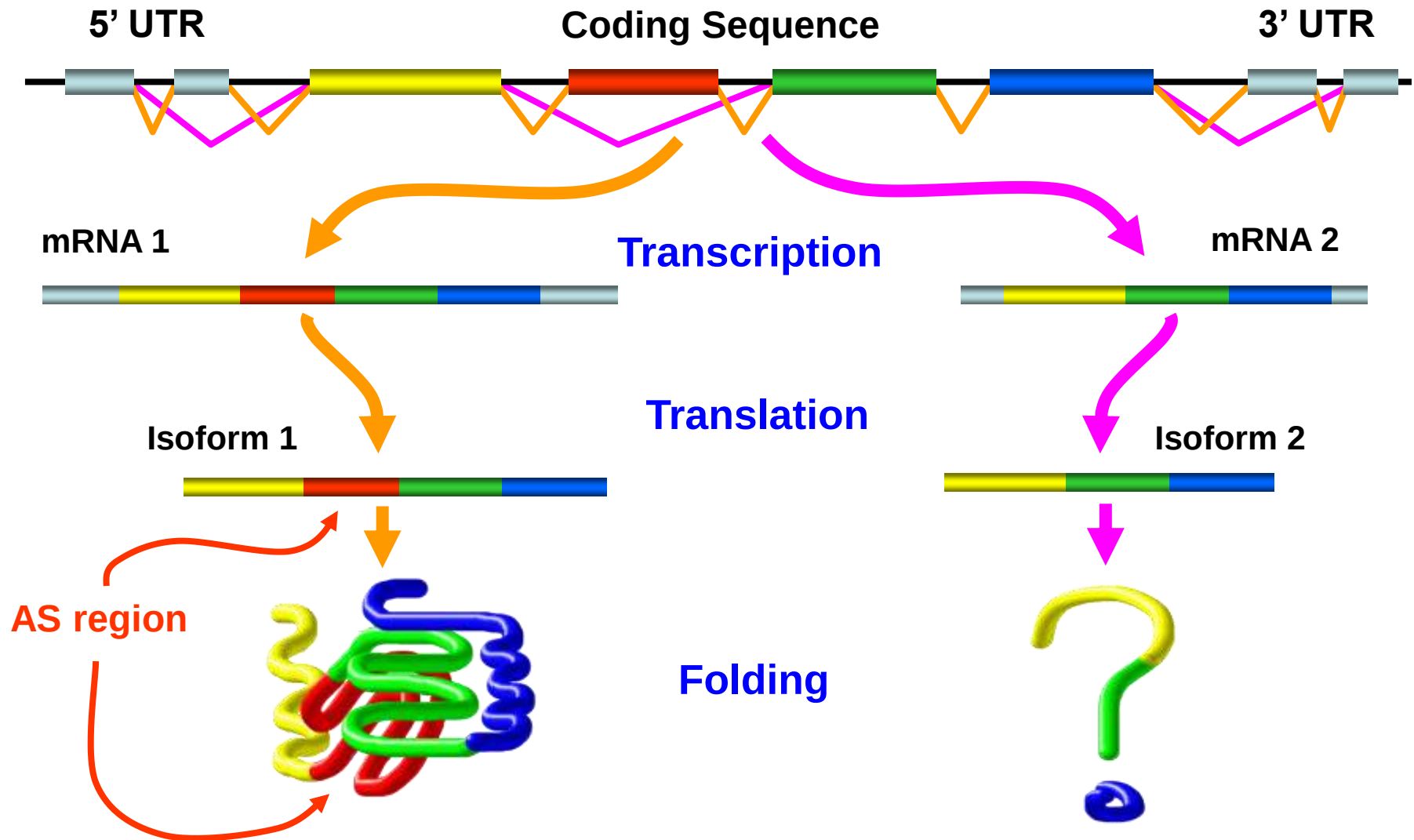
Modes of IDP interactions #1



Intrinsic disorder and alternative splicing



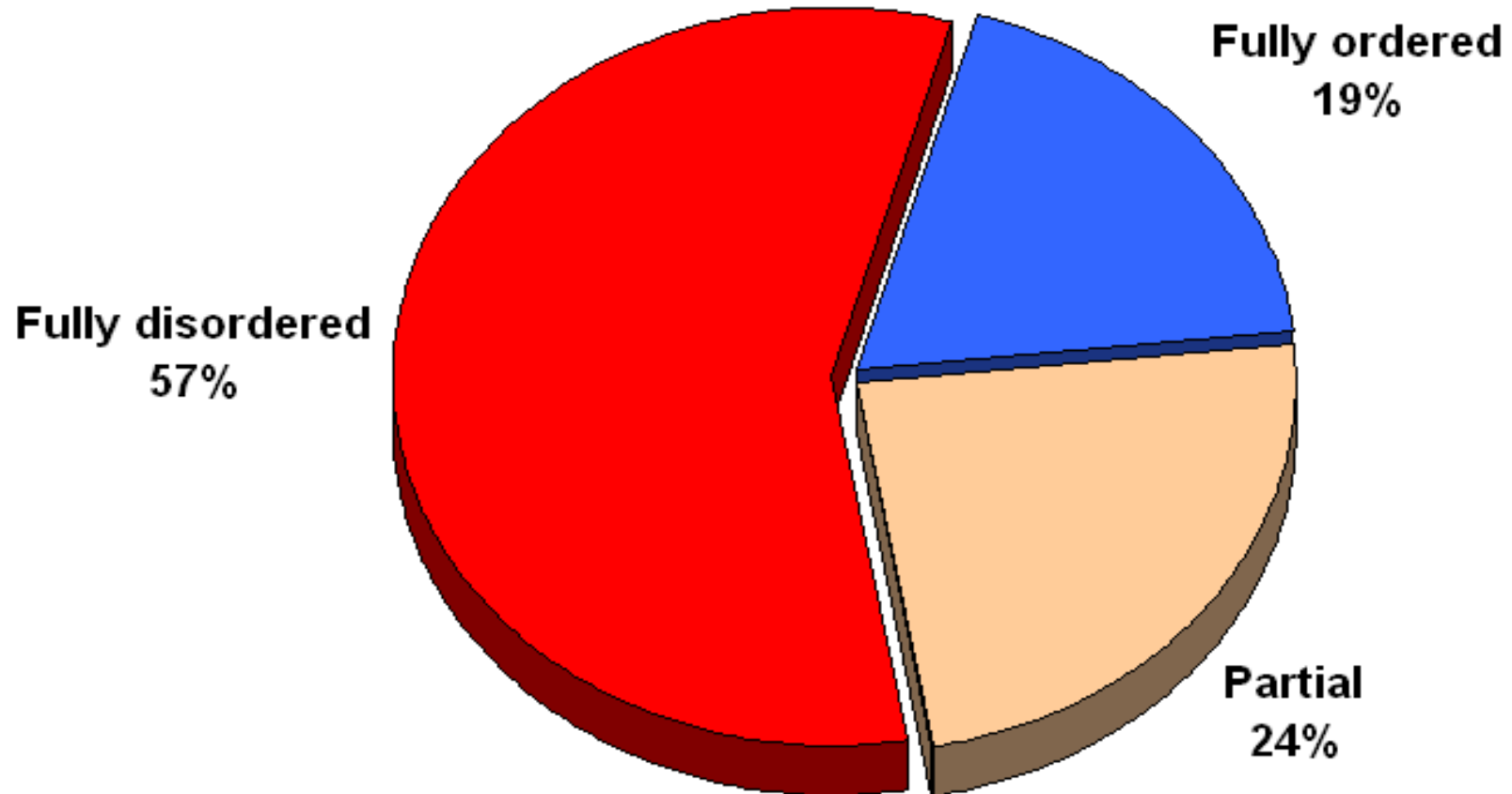
Alternative Splicing





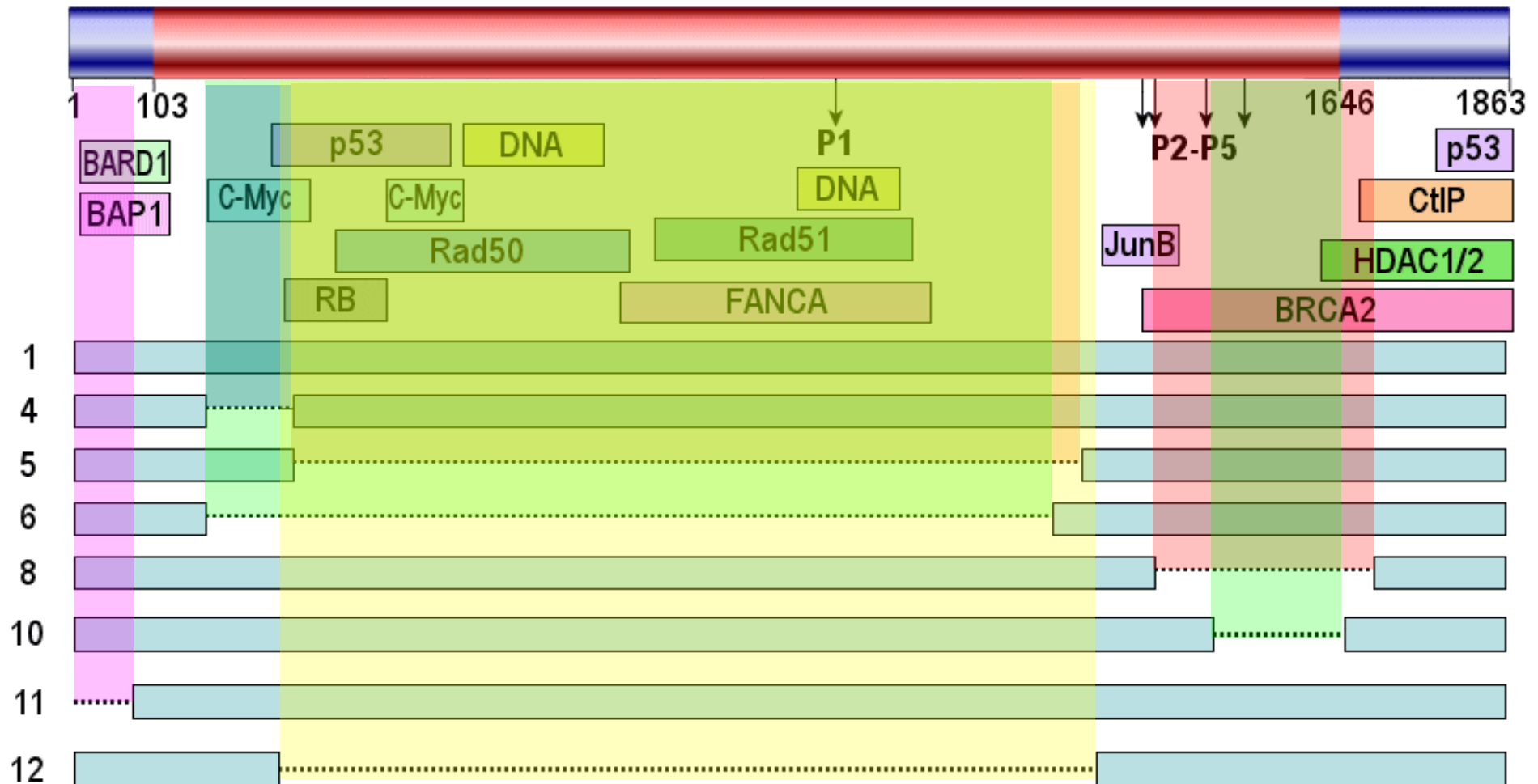
Abundance of disorder in alternatively spliced regions

Distribution of **structurally characterized** AS regions

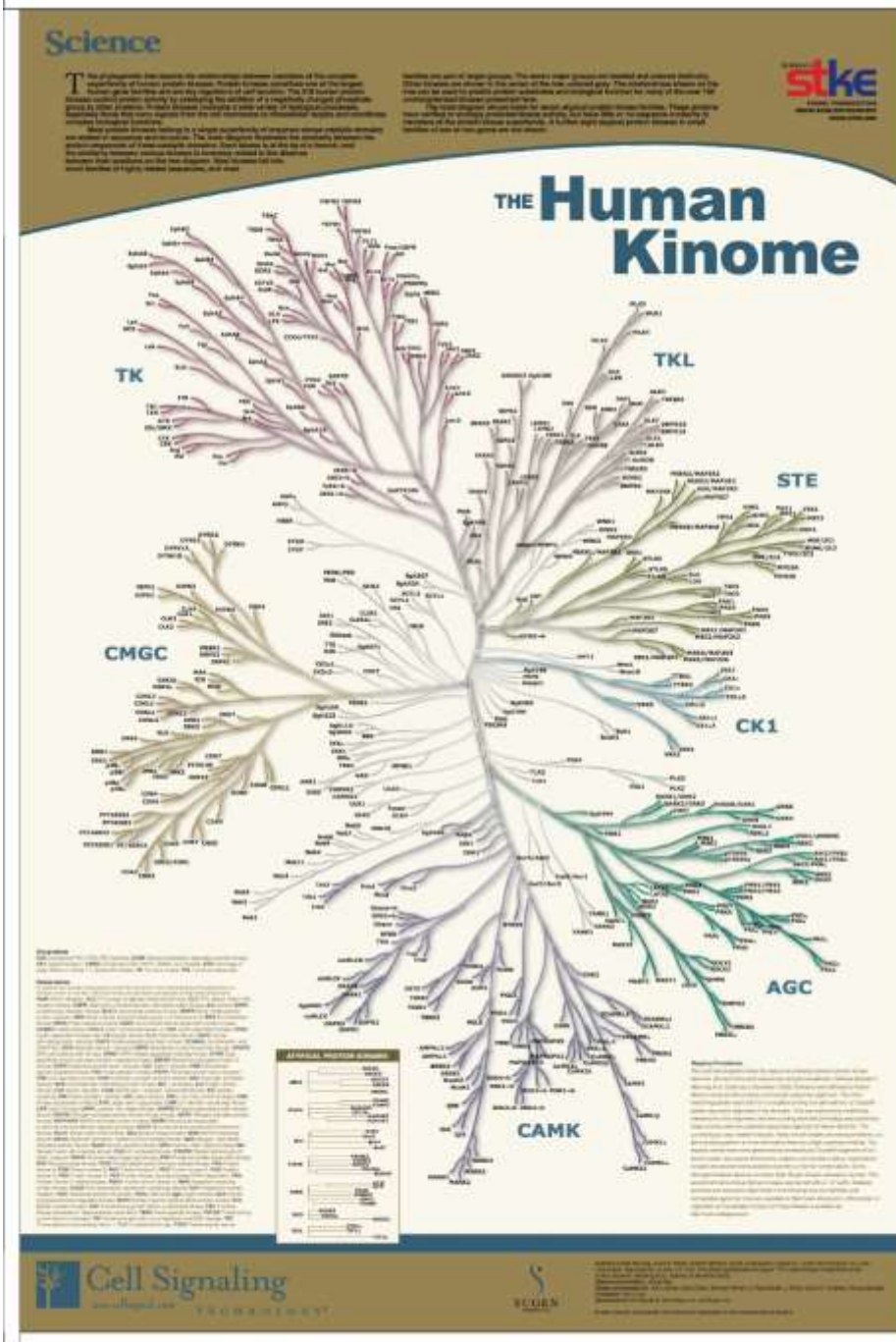




Functional regulation via AS: Breast Cancer Protein 1 (BRCA1)



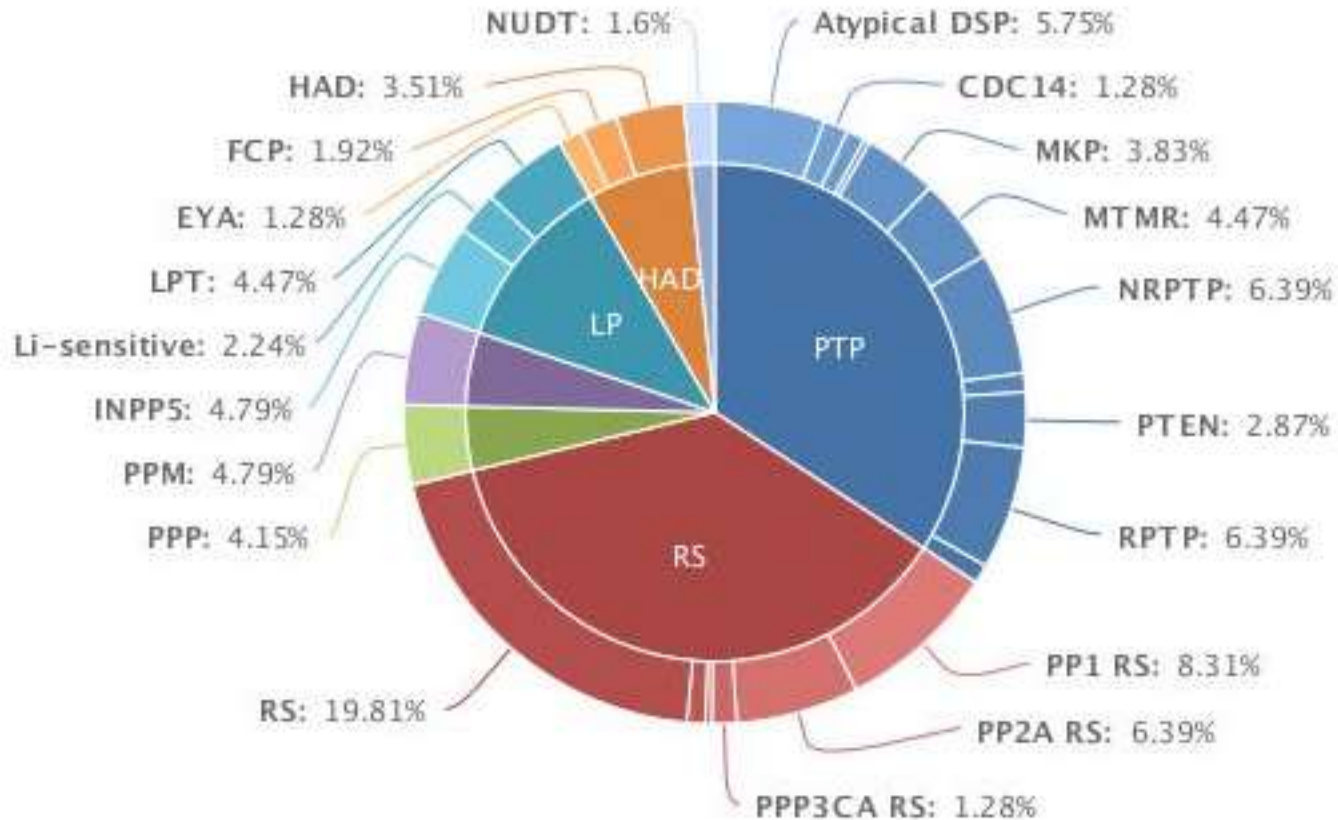
Intrinsic disorder and PTMs



The entire set of 518 protein kinases in the human genome makes up one of the largest of all human gene families. These enzymes catalyze the phosphorylation of proteins, specifically serine/threonine and tyrosine residues – an important reaction that regulates key cellular functions like cell division, metabolism, and apoptosis in normal and disease states. This makes kinases key therapeutic targets in several diseases such as cancer, neurodegeneration, behavioral disorders, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.

<https://evolutionofalabrat.wordpress.com/2015/11/13/the-human-kinome/>

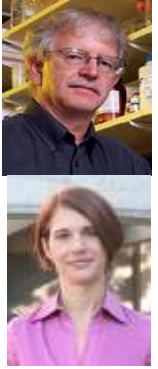
Human phosphatome



In humans, there are about 245 proteins either containing a phosphatase domain or experimentally characterized as regulatory subunits.



Phosphorylation & intrinsic disorder



- **>>75% of eukaryotic proteins can be phosphorylated;**
- **Each human protein kinase serves ~30 substrates;**
- **Each human phosphatase is expected to dephosphorylate ~61 clients;**
- **Few proteins $\pm$ phosphate in PDB;**
- **In PDB, nearly all eukaryotic protein sites without phosphate are natively disordered;**
- **Regions of intrinsic disorder commonly have phosphorylation sites;**



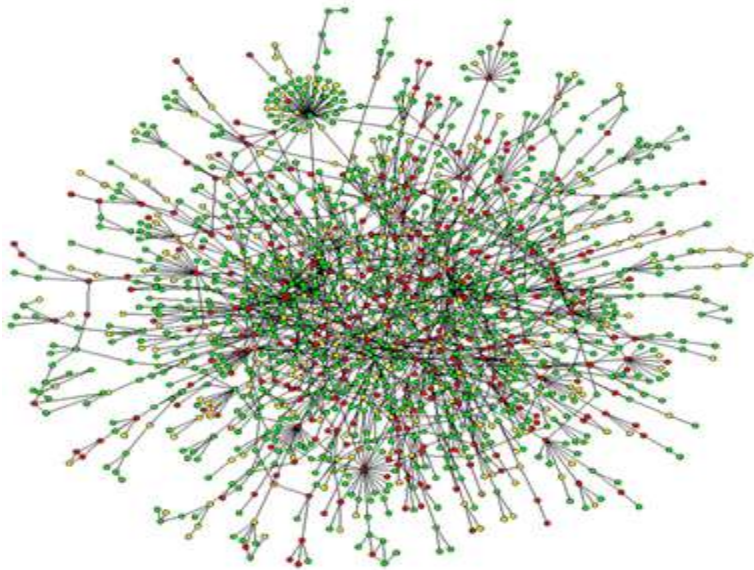
Posttranslational Modifications & Protein **Intrinsic Disorder**



- Phosphorylation, acetylation, ubiquitination, regulated proteolytic cleavage, etc. very often **(always?)** occur in regions of **intrinsic disorder**.
- Flexibility of **intrinsic disorder** facilitates **(enables?)** binding to the active site of the modifying enzyme.

Intrinsic disorder in protein-protein interaction networks

When key-and-lock does not work: Hub proteins



$\neq$



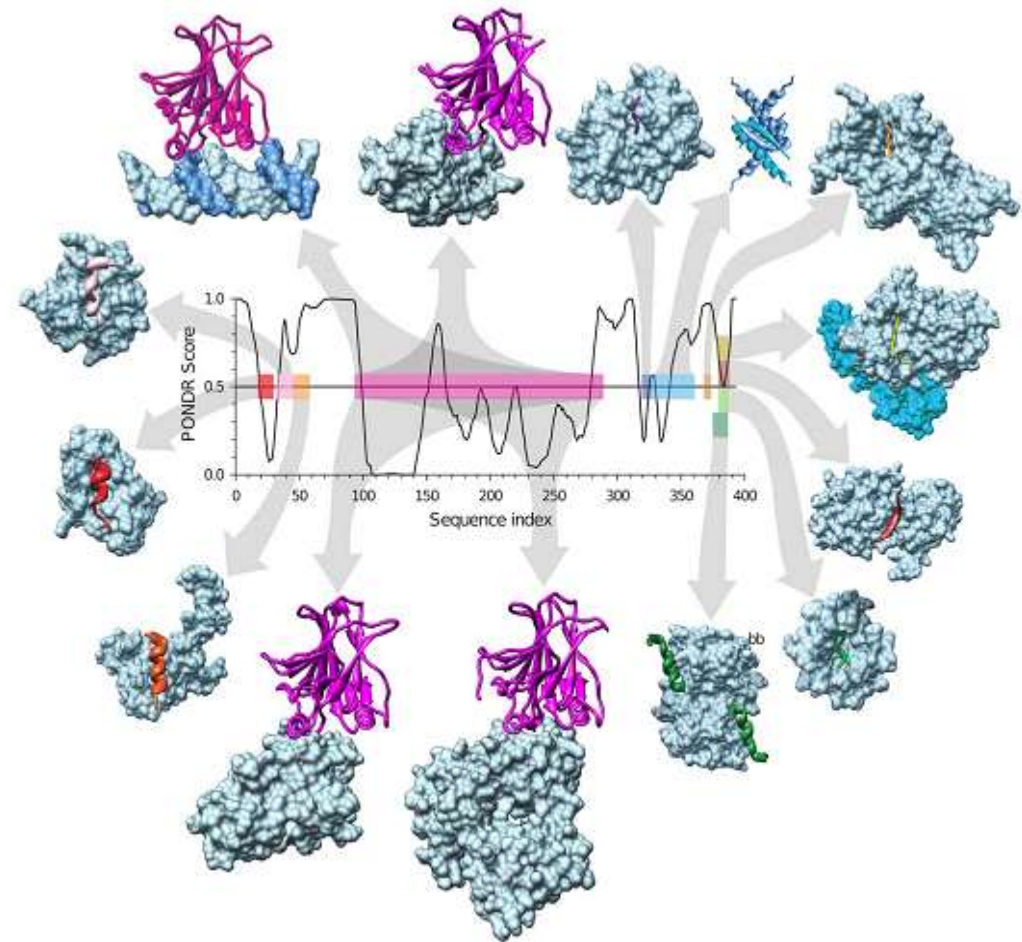
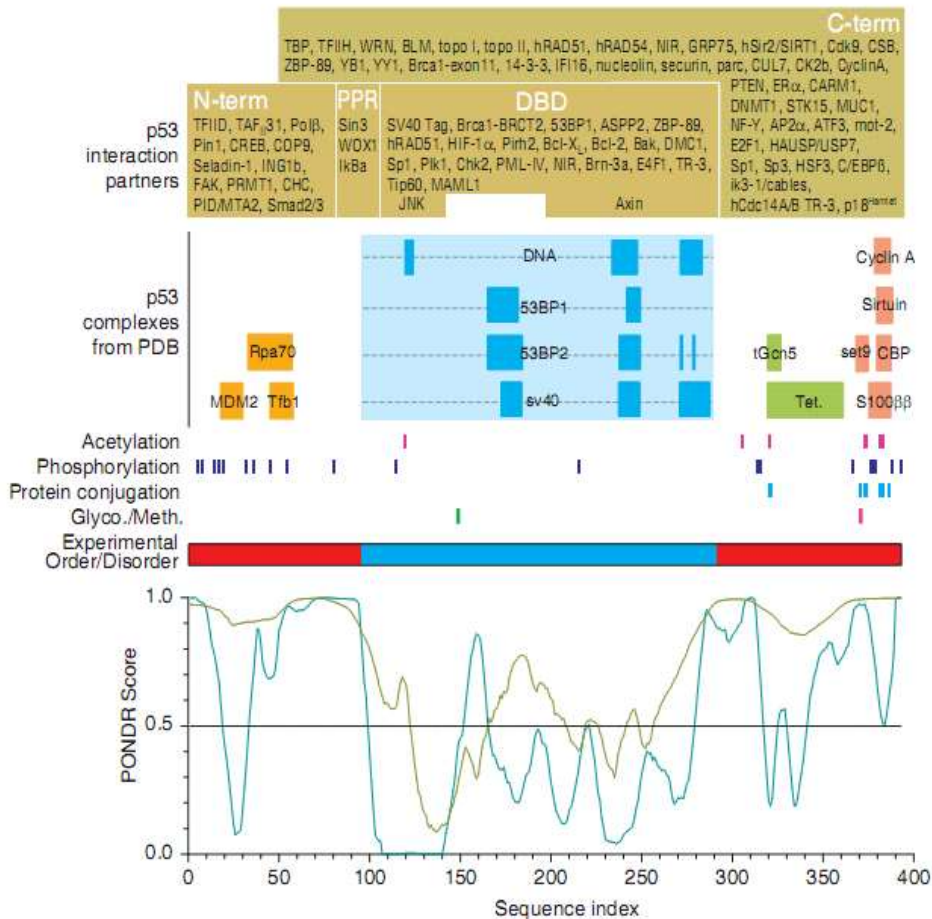


Binding promiscuity: Hubs

- Protein-Protein Interaction (PPI) networks typically have a few proteins (hubs) binding to many partners, but with most proteins binding to few partners.
- Standard lock and key mechanisms do not readily accommodate binding to multiple partners.
- Intrinsic disorder is crucial for PPI networks.
- Hubs are either disordered by themselves or interact with disordered partners.

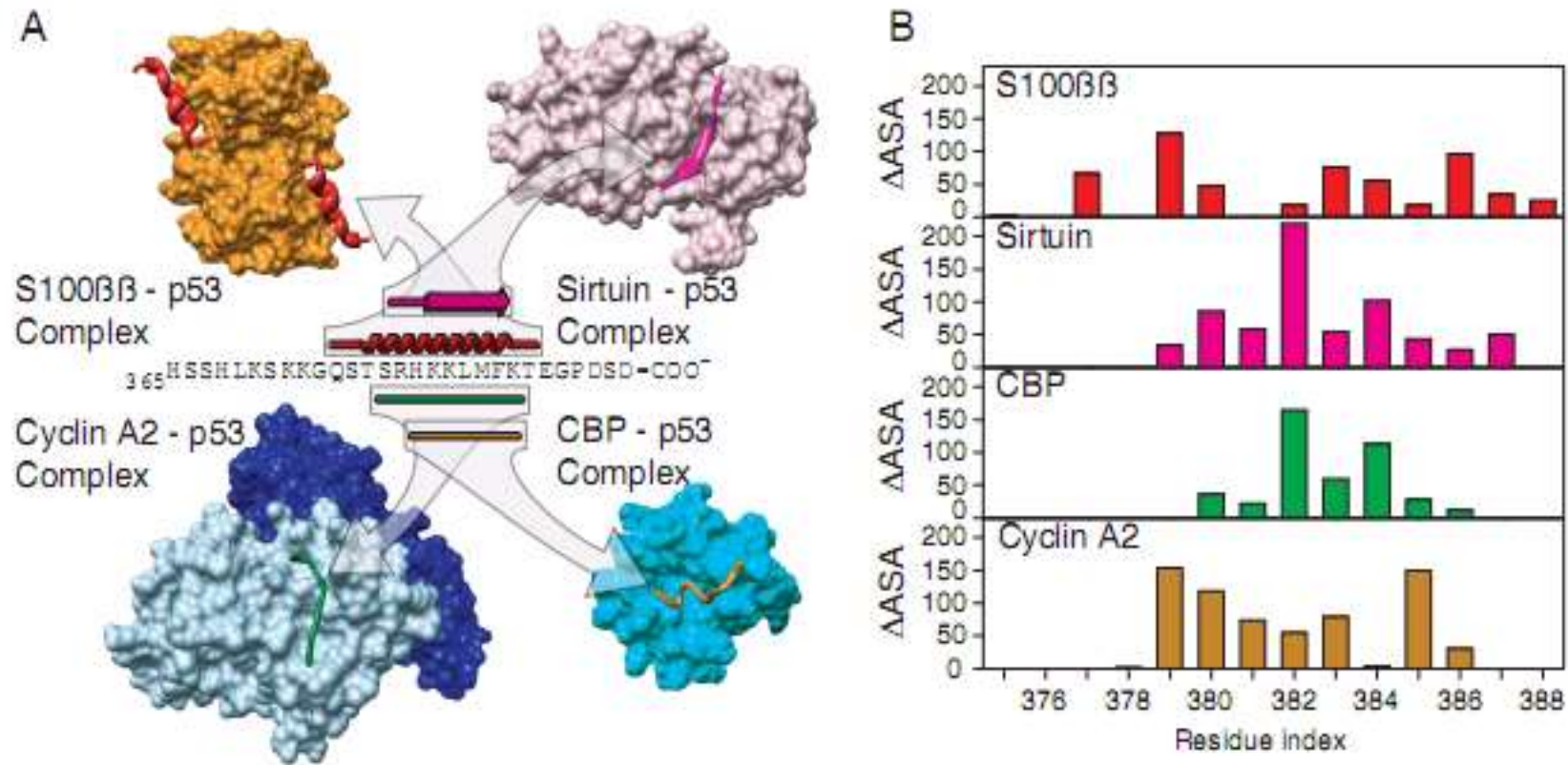


Binding promiscuity: p53 one-to-many binding scenario





Binding plasticity: p53 C-terminal Domain

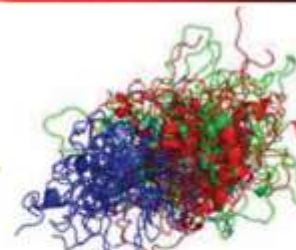
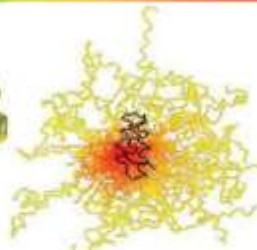
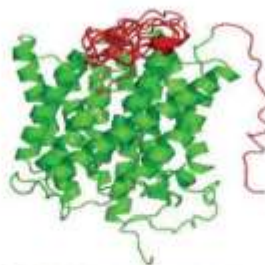
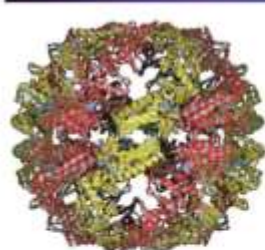
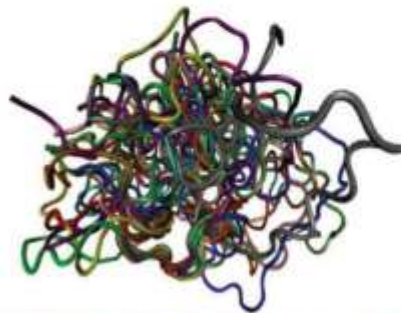
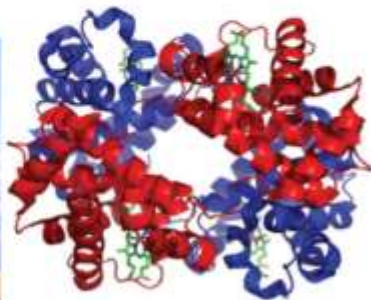


Protein structure-function continuum

Structural heterogeneity of IDPs or spectroscopy of intrinsic disorder

ORDERED PROTEINS

DISORDERED PROTEINS

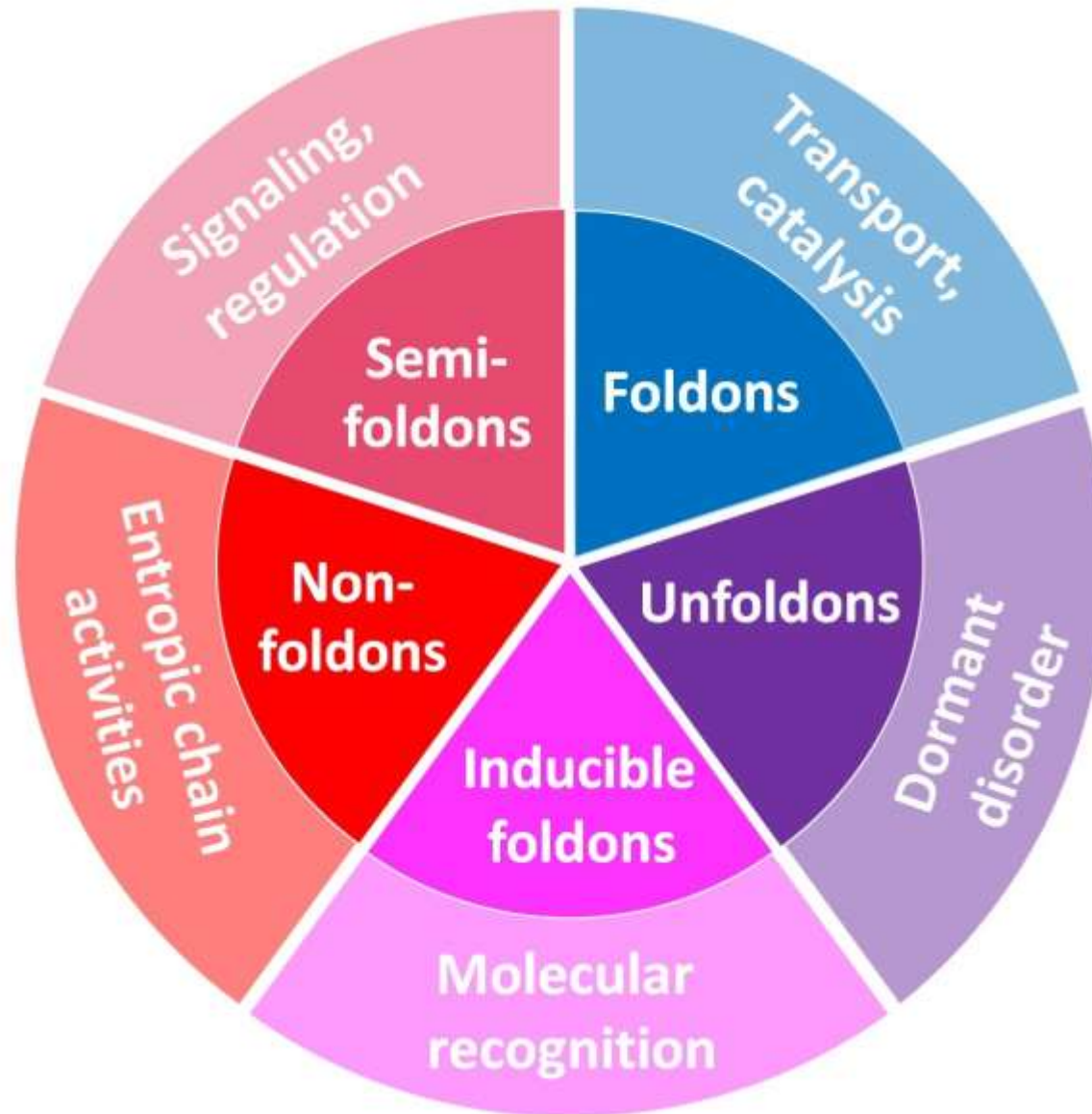


Structural heterogeneity of IDPs

IDPs can be described as various combinations of differently folded regions:

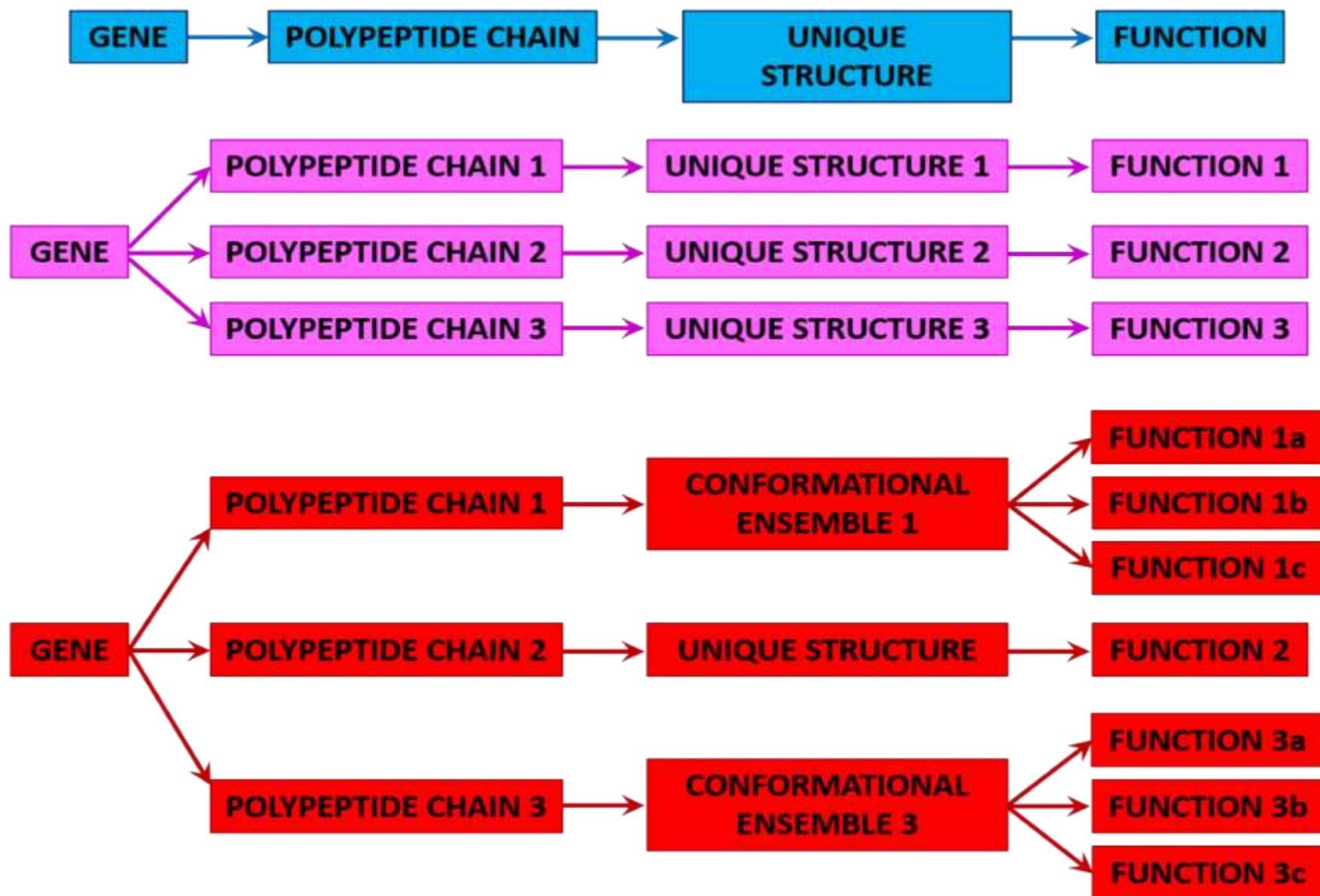
- Foldons (independent foldable units of a protein)
- Inducible foldons (disordered regions that can fold at least in part due to the interaction with binding partners)
- Inducible morphing foldons (disordered regions that can fold differently at interaction with different binding partners)
- Non-foldons (non-foldable protein regions)
- Semi-foldons (regions which are always in semi-folded state)
- Unfoldons (regions that undergo an order-to-disorder transition to become functional)

Different functions of foldons and Co.



Protein structure-function continuum: Proteoforms

- The major part of the complexity of the biological machinery is determined by protein variability rather than results from a high number of distinct genes (although the human genome contains about **21,000** protein-encoding genes, but the total number of proteins in human cells is estimated to be between **250,000** to **1,000,000**);
- Typical protein exists as an ensemble of proteoforms; i.e., different molecular forms in which the protein product of a single gene can be found, including changes due to genetic variations, alternatively spliced mRNA and PTMs

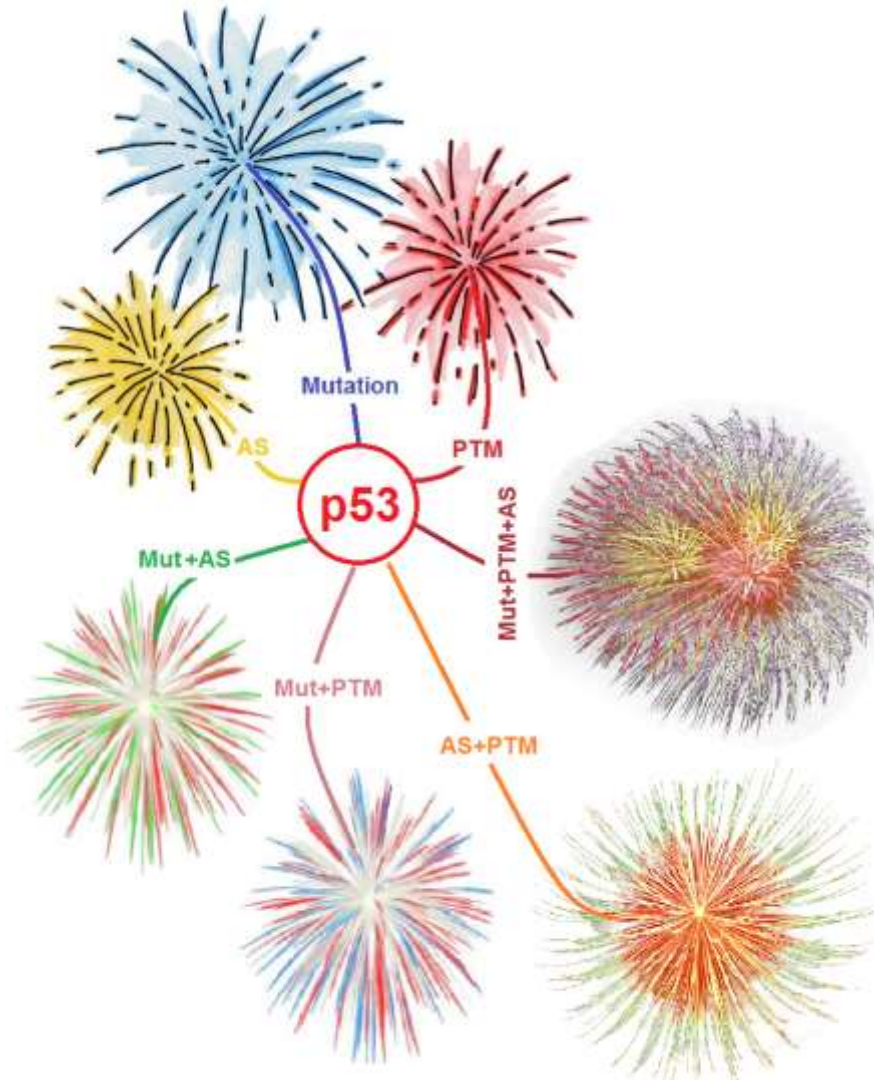


Protein structure-function continuum: Different types of proteoforms

Uversky (2016) *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*.17(11), 1874

- Basic (or intrinsic, or conformational) proteoforms – reflection of the fact that any protein exist as a dynamic conformational ensemble, members of which have different structures and potentially can have different functions.
- Inducible proteoforms originating due to the various alterations (mutations, PTMs, or consequences of alternative splicing) of the canonical protein sequence and representing a mixture of these various forms. Any member of the inducible (or modified) proteoform (i.e., any mutated, modified, or alternatively spliced form) is a conformational proteoform itself since it also represents a structural ensemble.
- Functioning proteoforms – reflection of the fact that protein function, interaction with specific partners, or placement inside the natural cellular environment can affect structural ensemble of both basic and induced proteoforms.

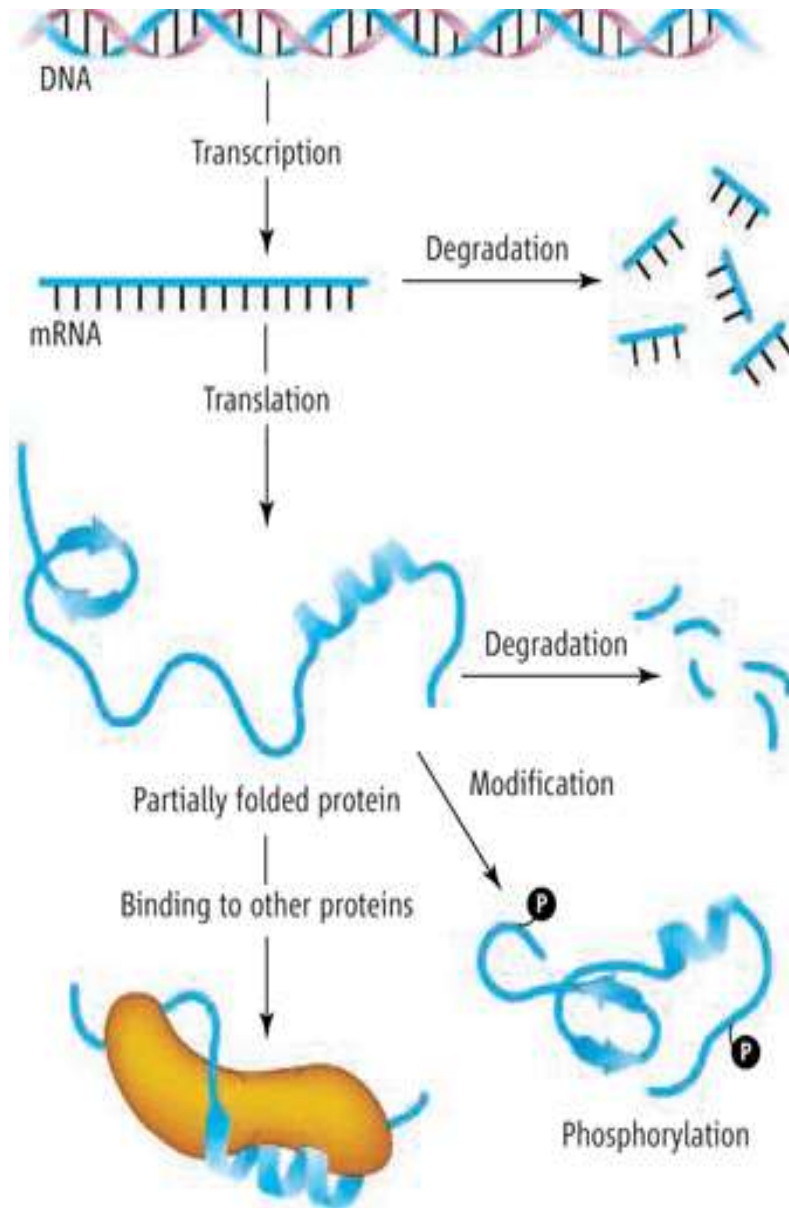
Firework representation of protein structure-function continuum



**Intrinsic disorder inside the
cell: Controlled chaos**



Controlled chaos



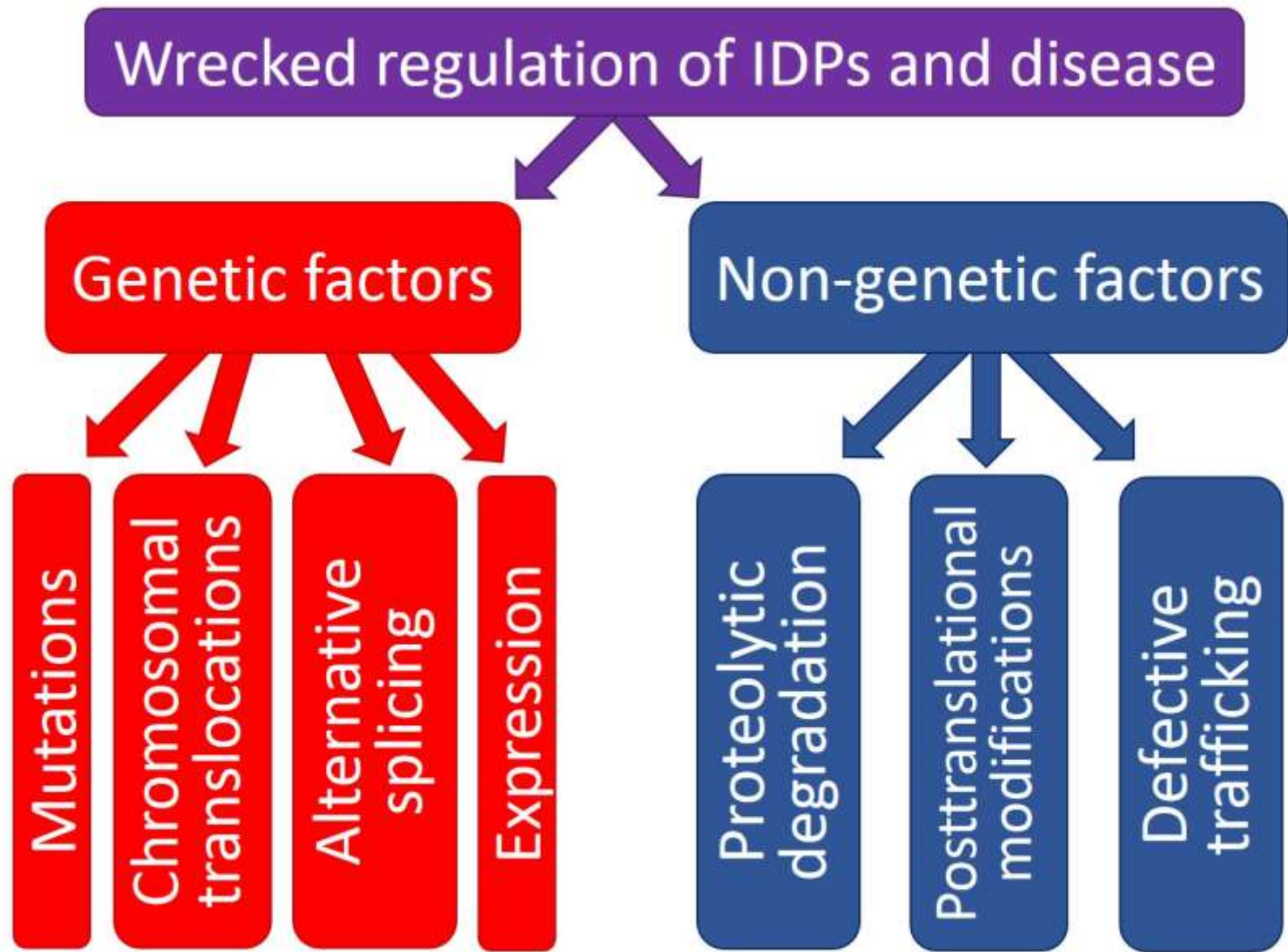
The availability and abundance of intrinsically disordered proteins inside a cell is under tight control.

Disorder management inside the cell. As a result of fast mRNA degradation, slow translation of mRNA into protein, and fast protein degradation, the overall amount of intrinsically disordered proteins inside a cell is less, and their half-lives are generally shorter, than those of ordered proteins. However, some disordered proteins can be present at high quantities and for long periods of time if they are modified (such as by phosphorylation) or interact with some specific binding partners.

Gsponer J., Futschik M.E., Teichmann S.A., Babu M. (2008) *Science* 322 (5906), 1365

Uversky V.N., Dunker A.K. (2008) *Science* 322 (5906), 1340

**Uncontrolled chaos:
Intrinsic disorder and human
diseases or D^2 concept**



Chromosomal translocation

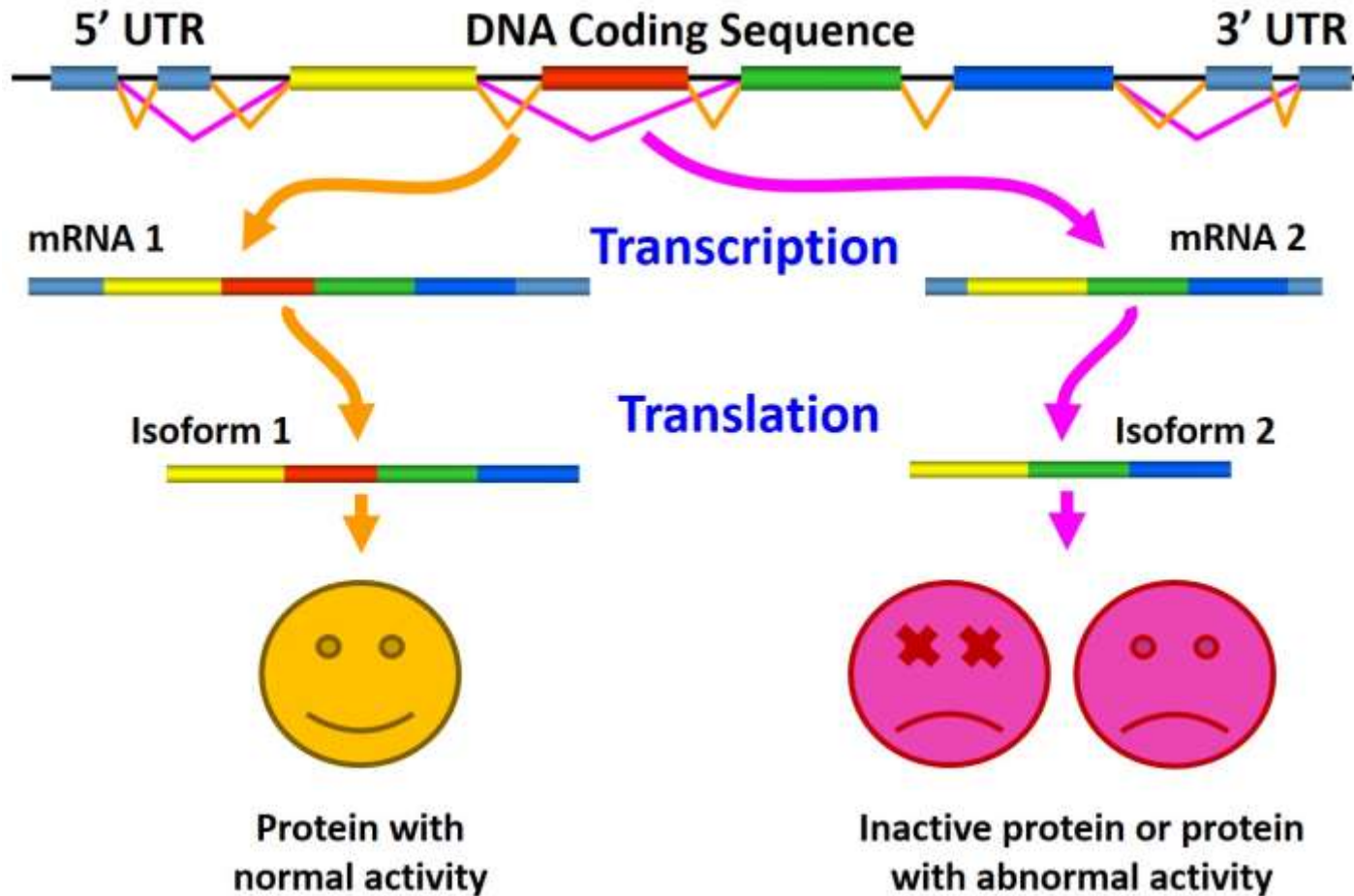
Original genes



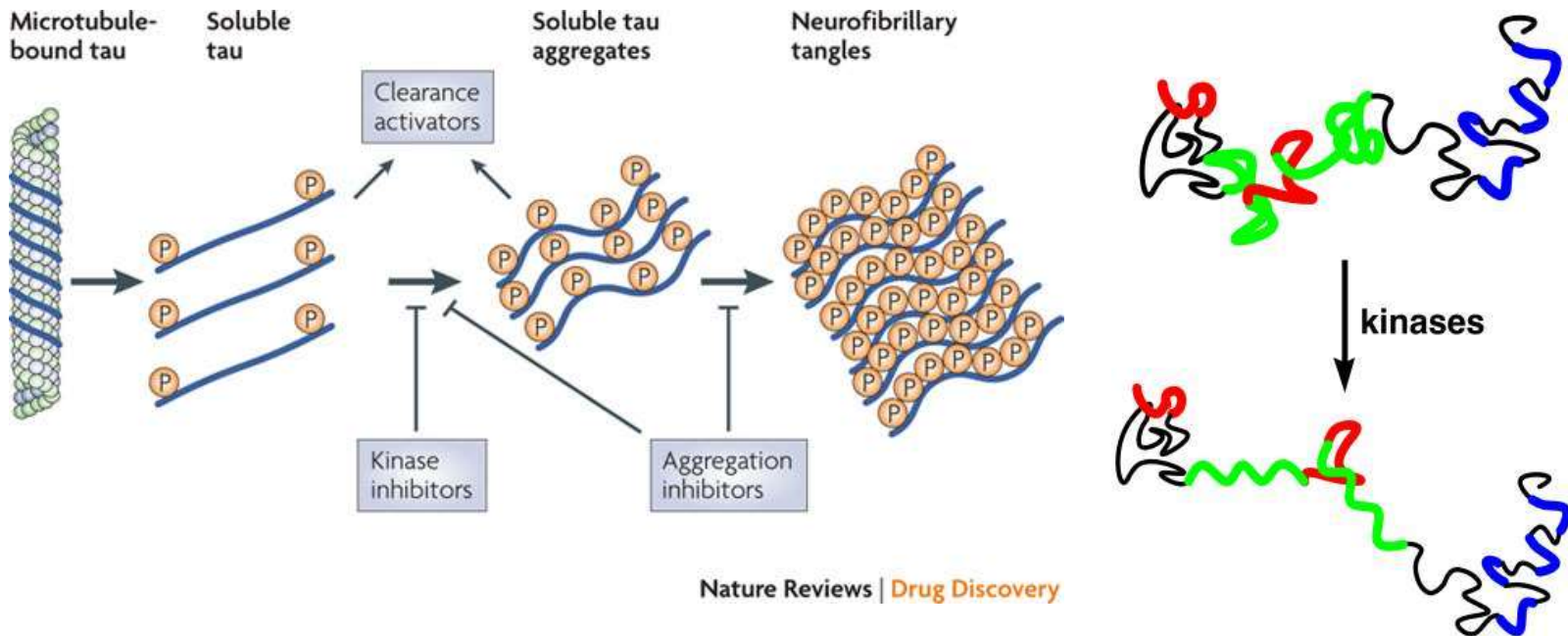
Translocation



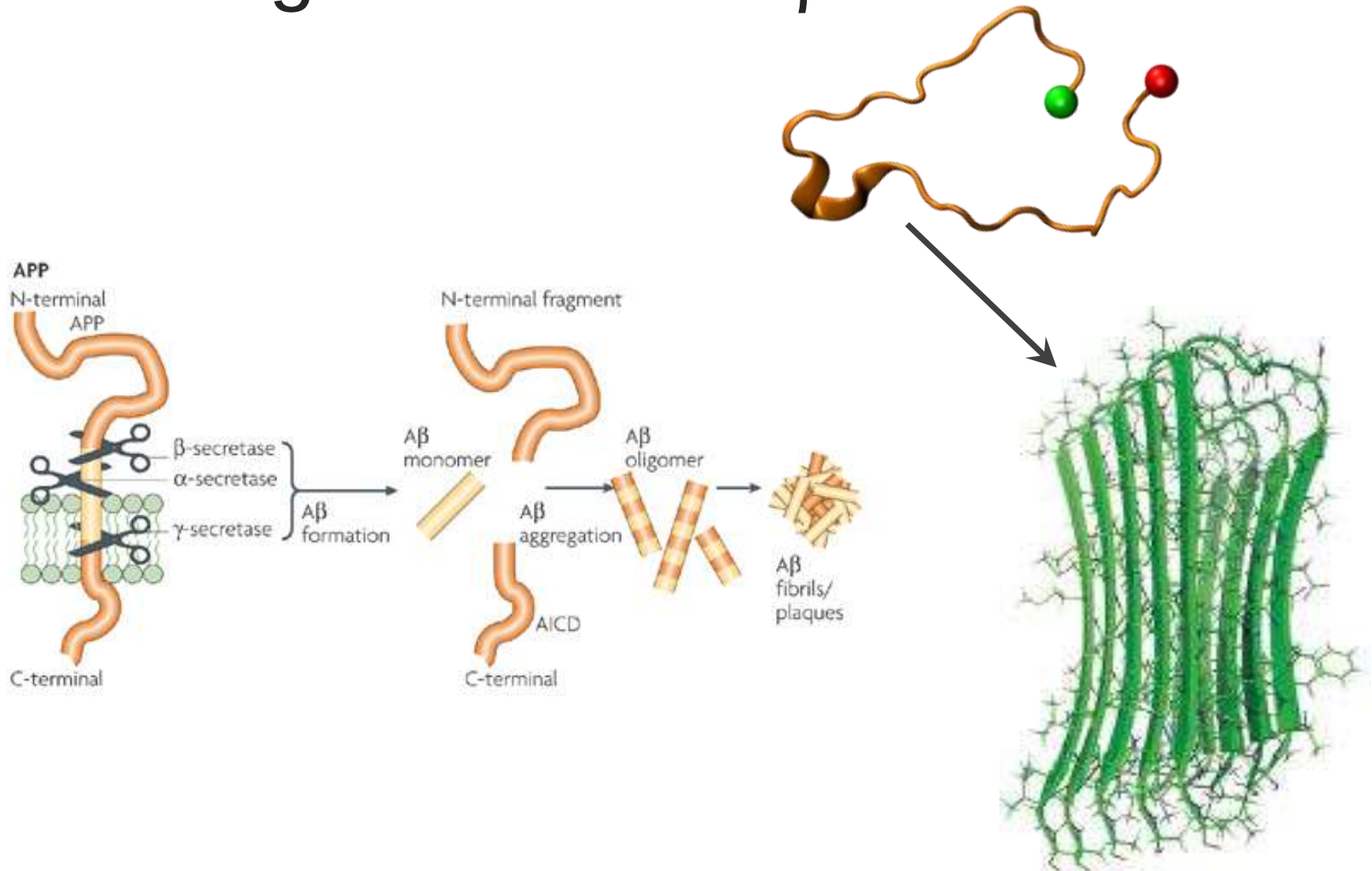
Aberrant alternative splicing



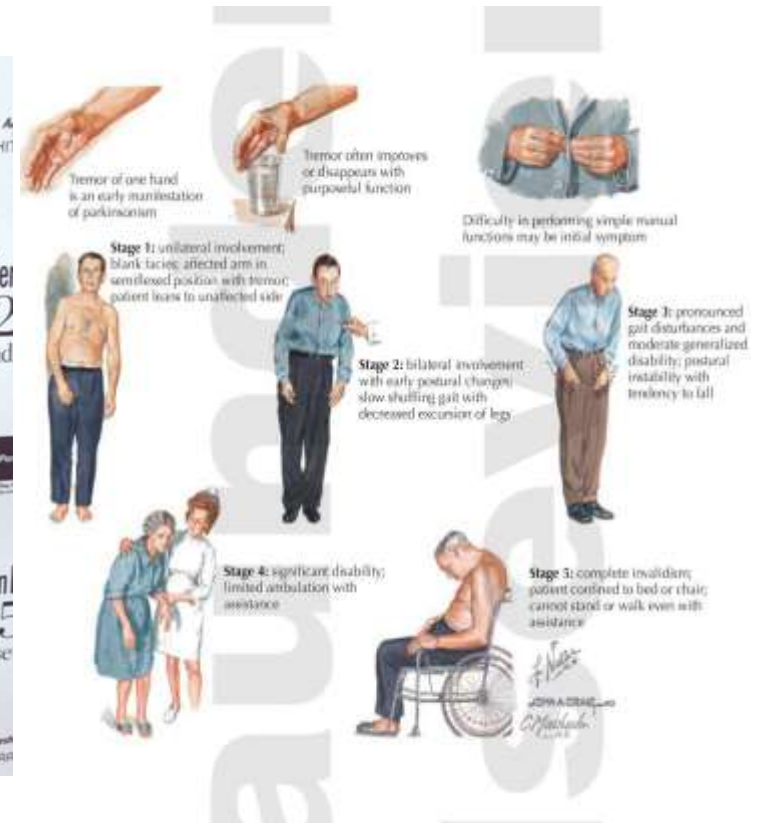
Aberrant posttranslational modifications of tau and AD



Aberrant proteolytic degradation of A β and AD



Parkinson's disease



Parkinson's diseases as a protein deposition disorder

- Second most common neurodegenerative disease
- An “environmental” disease (pesticides and metals)
- Due to the death of **dopaminergic neurons** in the ***substantia nigra***
- Pathological hallmark is intracellular proteinaceous inclusions called **Lewy bodies** and **Lewy neurites**



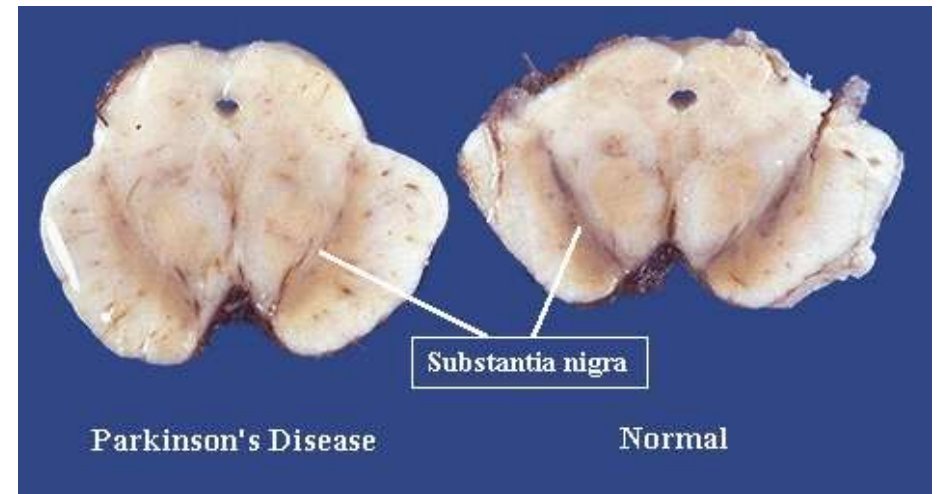
Pathology of Parkinson's disease: Neurodegeneration



Normal

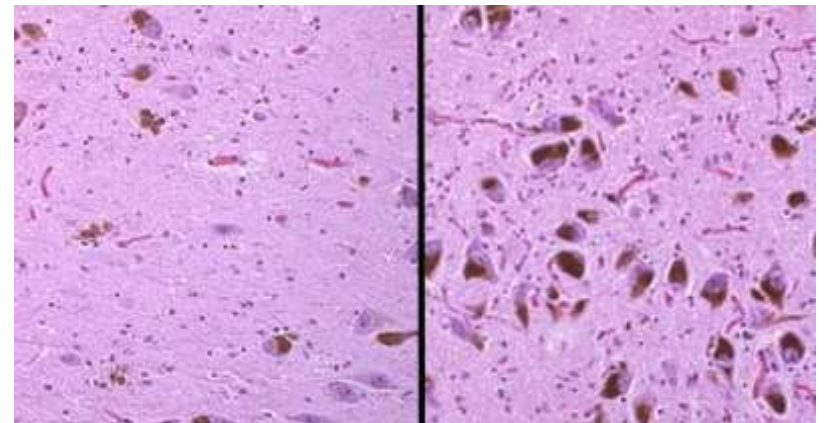


Parkinson's
Disease



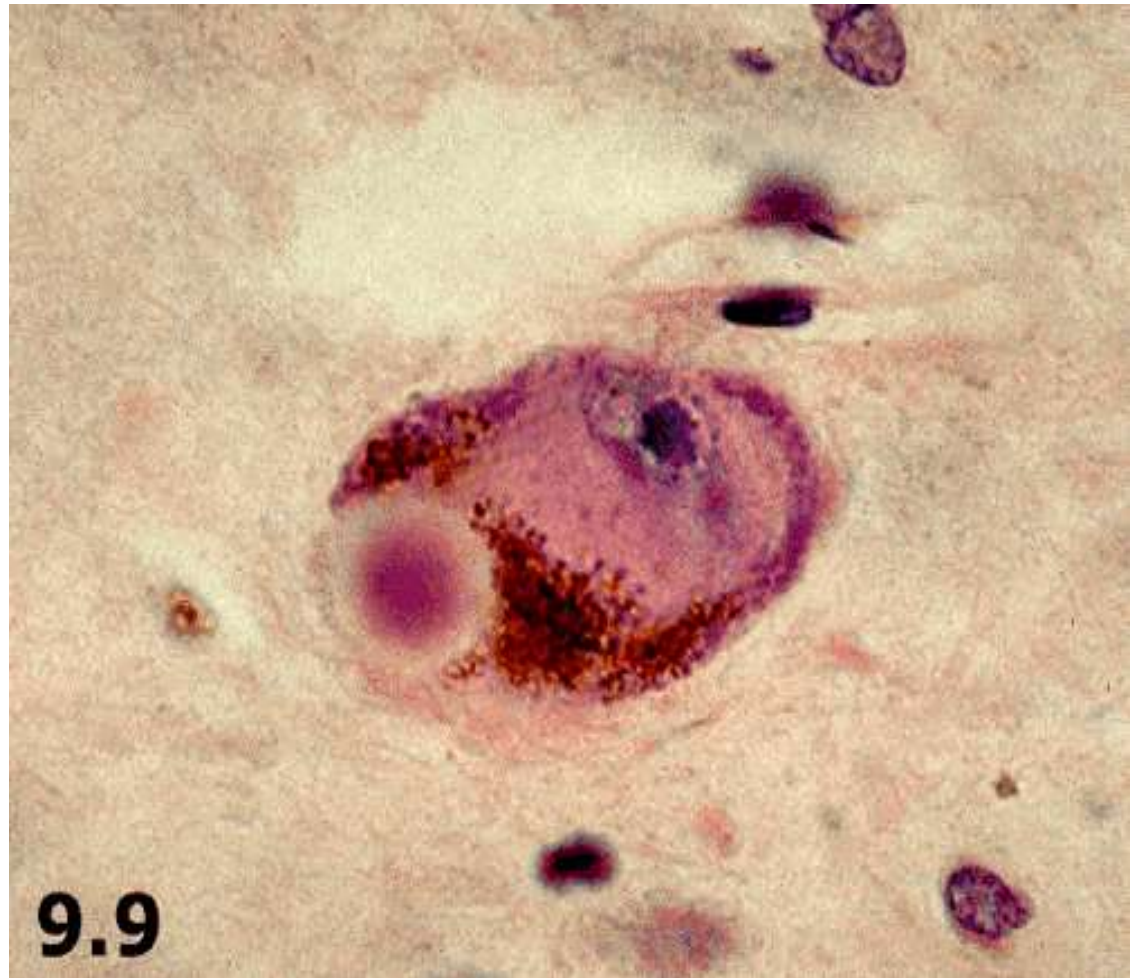
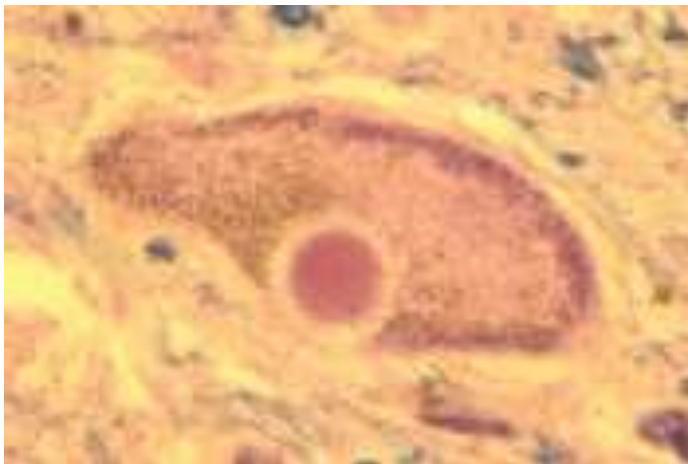
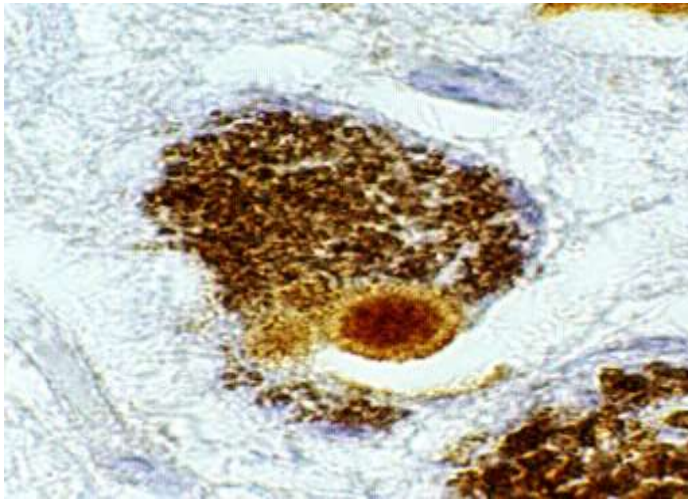
Parkinson's Disease

Normal

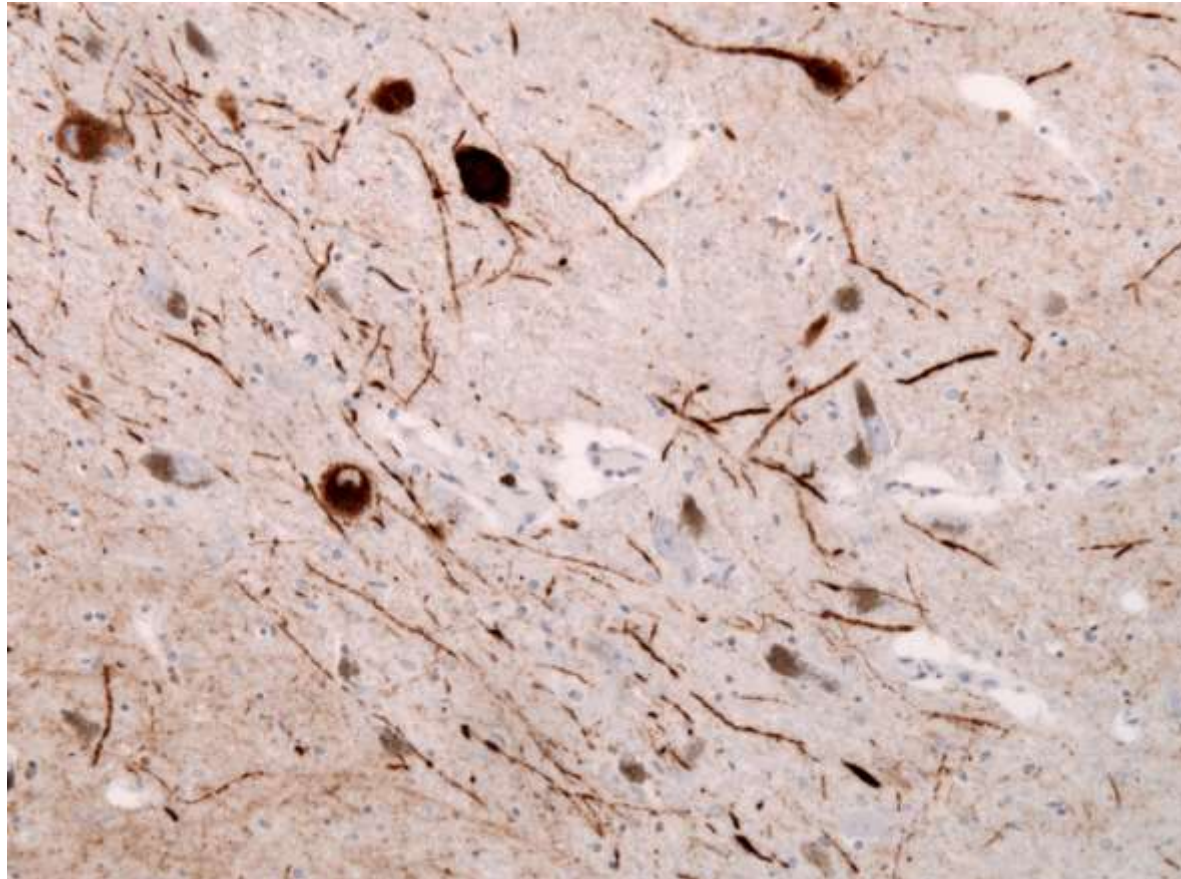


Pathology of Parkinson's disease:

Lewy bodies in *substantia nigra*



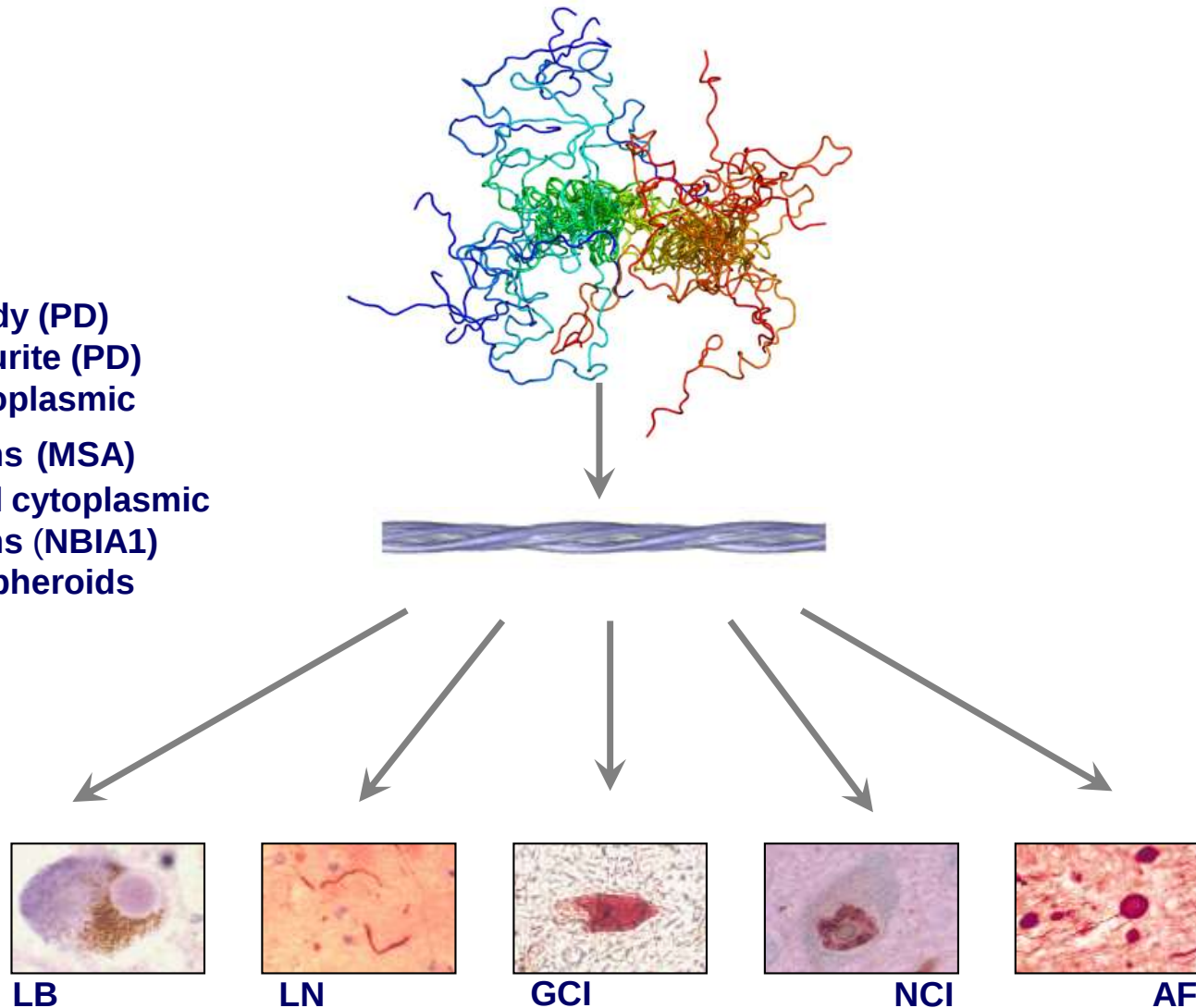
Lewy neurites: Another pathological culprit



Synucleinopathies:

α -Synuclein-containing inclusions

LB – Lewy body (PD)
LN – Lewy neurite (PD)
GCI - glial cytoplasmic
inclusions (MSA)
NCI - neuronal cytoplasmic
inclusions (NBIA1)
AF – axonal spheroids
(NBIA1)



Protein Misfolding Diseases: Synucleinopathies

Diseases with neuronal inclusions

Normal aging

Parkinson's disease

Idiopathic

Neurotoxicant-induced (incidental)

Familial

With α -synuclein point mutations

With α -synuclein gene triplication

With mutations in other proteins

Pure autonomic failure

Lewy body dysphagia

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis

Familial

Sporadic

Parkinsonism plus syndromes

Sporadic

Progressive supranuclear palsy

Olivoponto cerebellar atrophy (Shy-
Drager syndrome)

Cortical-basal ganglionic degeneration

Sporadic pallidal degeneration

Bilateral striatopallido dentate calcinosis

Parkinsonism with neuroacanthocytosis

Familial

Familial diffuse Lewy body disease

Familial dementia with swollen achromatic
neurons and cortico-basal inclusion
bodies

Parkinsonism plus syndromes (continued)

Familial (continued)

Frontotemporal dementia with parkinsonism
linked to chromosome 17

Associated with psychiatric disturbances

Associated with respiratory disturbances

Associated with dystonia

Associated with myoclonus and seizures

Familial progressive supranuclear palsy

Alzheimer's disease

Sporadic

Familial with APP mutation

Familial with PS-1 mutation

Familial with other mutations

Familial British dementia

Down's syndrome

*Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis-parkinsonism/dementia
complex of Guam*

Prion diseases

Ataxia telangiectatica

Meige's syndrome

Lewy body diseases

Dementia with Lewy bodies

Pure form - transitional/limbic

Pure form - neocortical

Diffuse Lewy body disease

Common form

Pure form

Lewy body diseases

Lewy body variant of Alzheimer's disease

Incidental Lewy body disease

Lewy body dementia

Senile dementia of Lewy body type

Dementia associated with cortical Lewy
bodies

Neuroaxonal dystrophies

Neurodegeneration with brain iron
accumulation, type I (Hallervorden-Spatz
syndrome or adult neuroaxonal dystrophy)

Motor neuron disease

Tauopathies

Frontotemporal degeneration/dementia

Pick's disease

Post-encephalitic parkinsonism

Dementia pugilistica

Argyrophilic grain disease

Corticobasal degeneration

Diseases with neuronal and glial inclusions

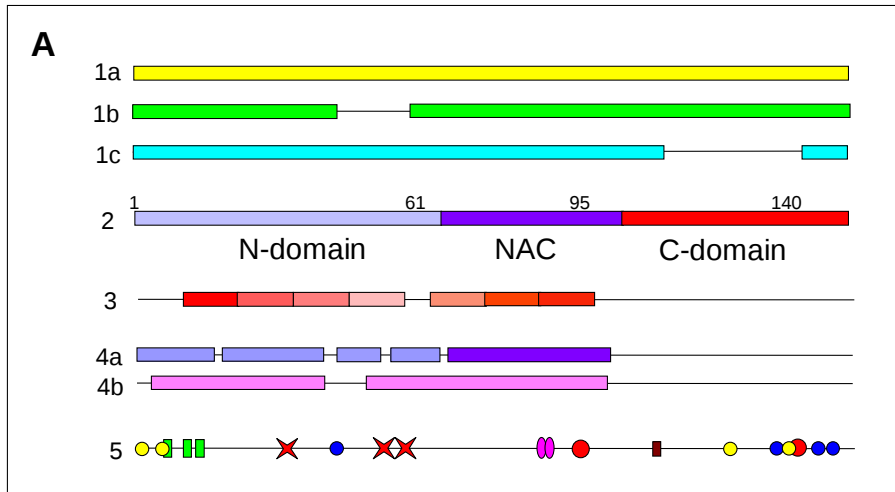
Multiple system atrophy

Shy-Drager syndrome

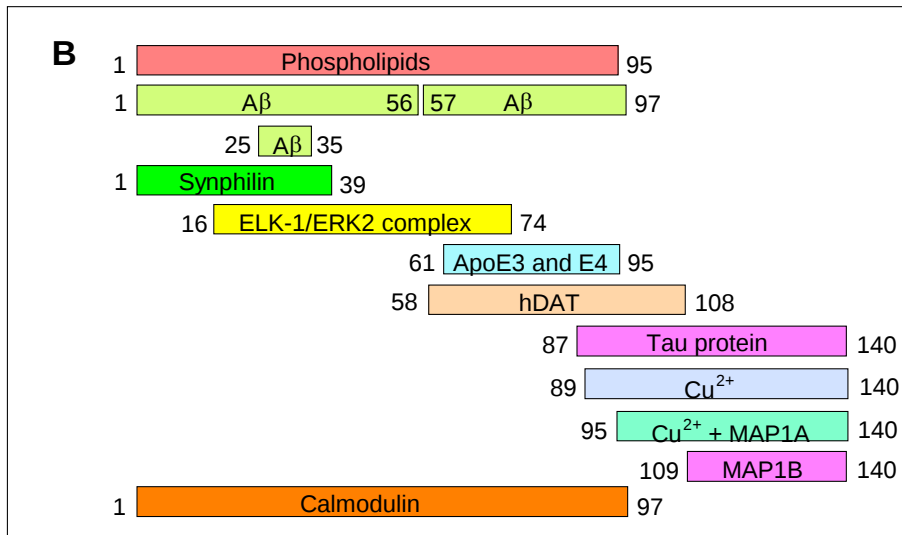
Striatonigral degeneration (MSA-P)

Olivopontocerebellar atrophy (MSA-C)

What is so special about α -synuclein?

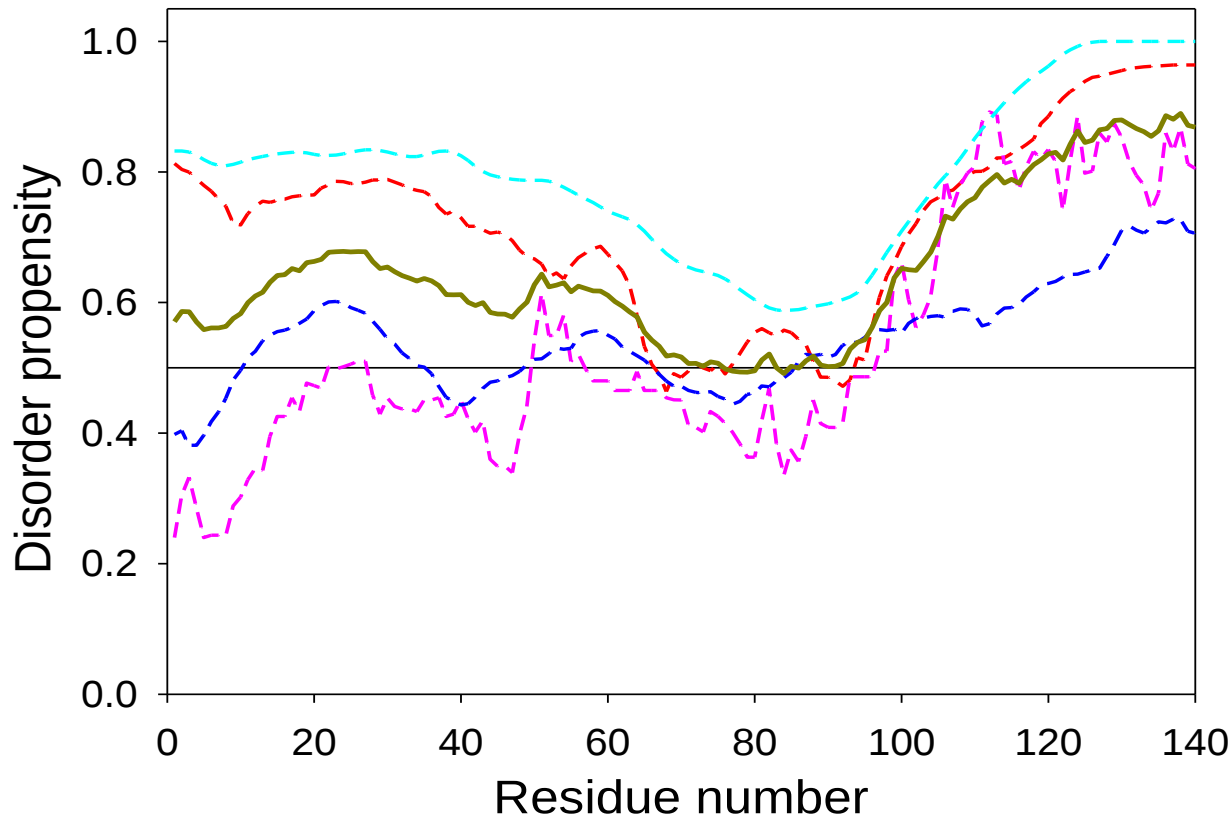


Plot A shows three AS isoforms of α -synuclein (1a, 1b, and 1c); three formal structural domain (2); seven imperfect repeats (3); predicted (4a) and experimentally determined α -helices (4b); PTM sites: oxidative methionines (yellow circles) and tyrosines (blue circles); phosphorylation sites (red circles); ubiquitination (green boxes); sumoylation (brown box); tTG crosslinking sites (red ovals); and PD-related mutations (three red stars)



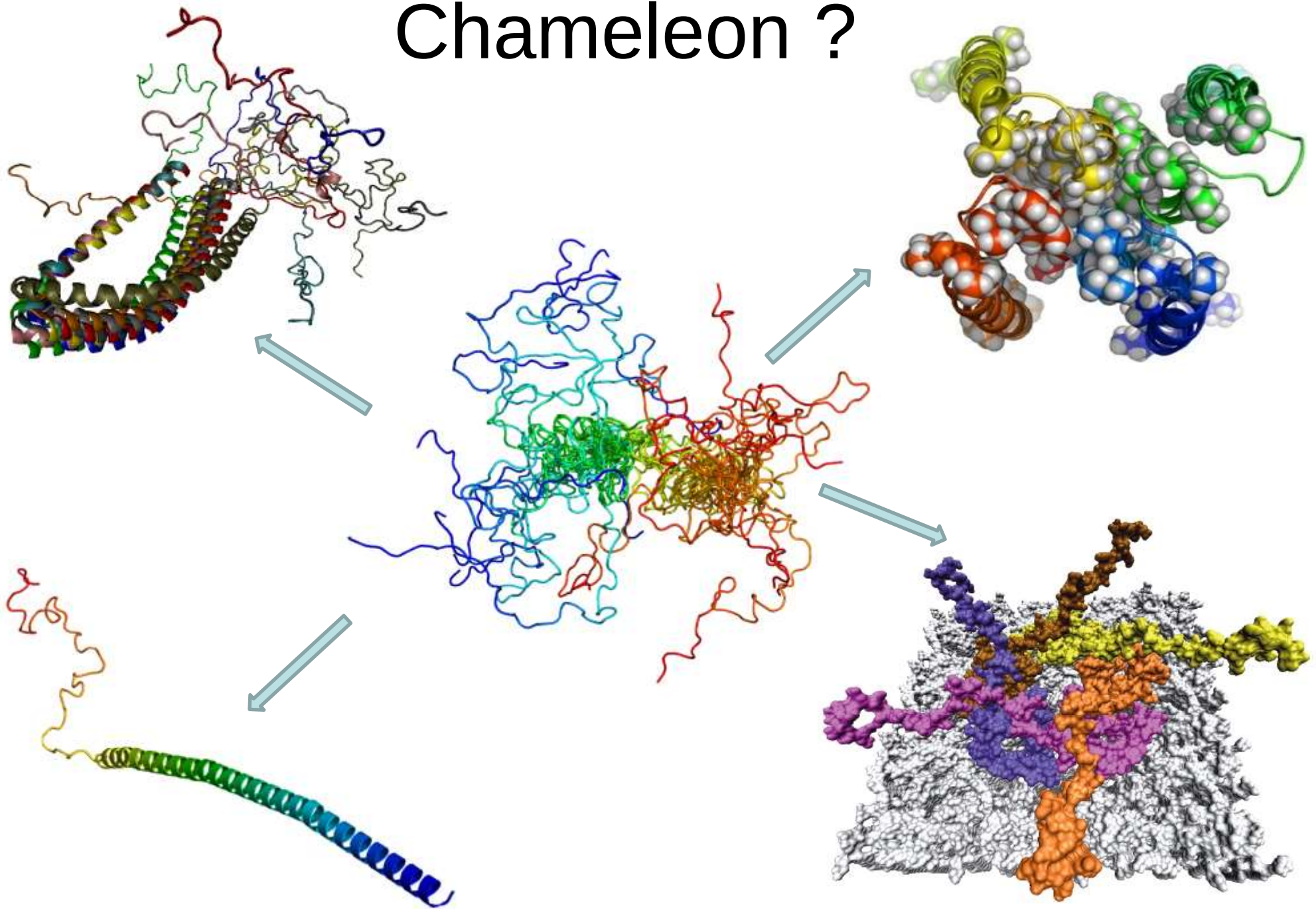
Plot B represents interaction domains responsible for binding of several ligands and proteins. The numbers on the bars correspond to the residues in α -synuclein sequence (modified from Dev K. K., Hofele K., Barbieri S., Buchman V. L. and van der Putten H. (2003) *Neuropharmacology* 45, 14-44).

α -Synuclein is a natively unfolded protein

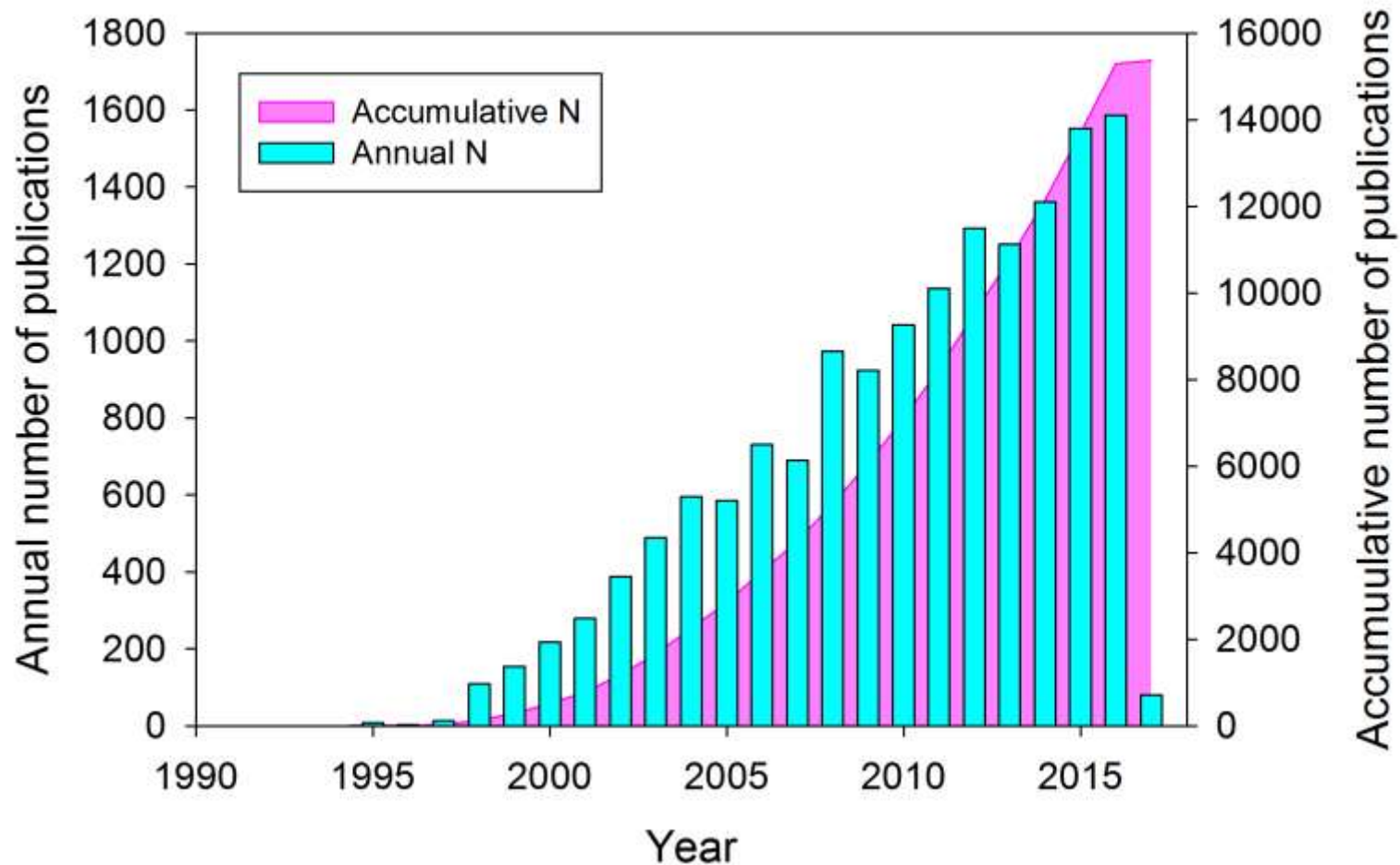


Intrinsic disorder propensity in human α -synuclein estimated by IUPred (pink dashed line); RONN (blue dashed line); POND VSL2 (red dashed line) and POND VSL3 (cyan dashed line). Solid dark yellow line represents the averaged results.

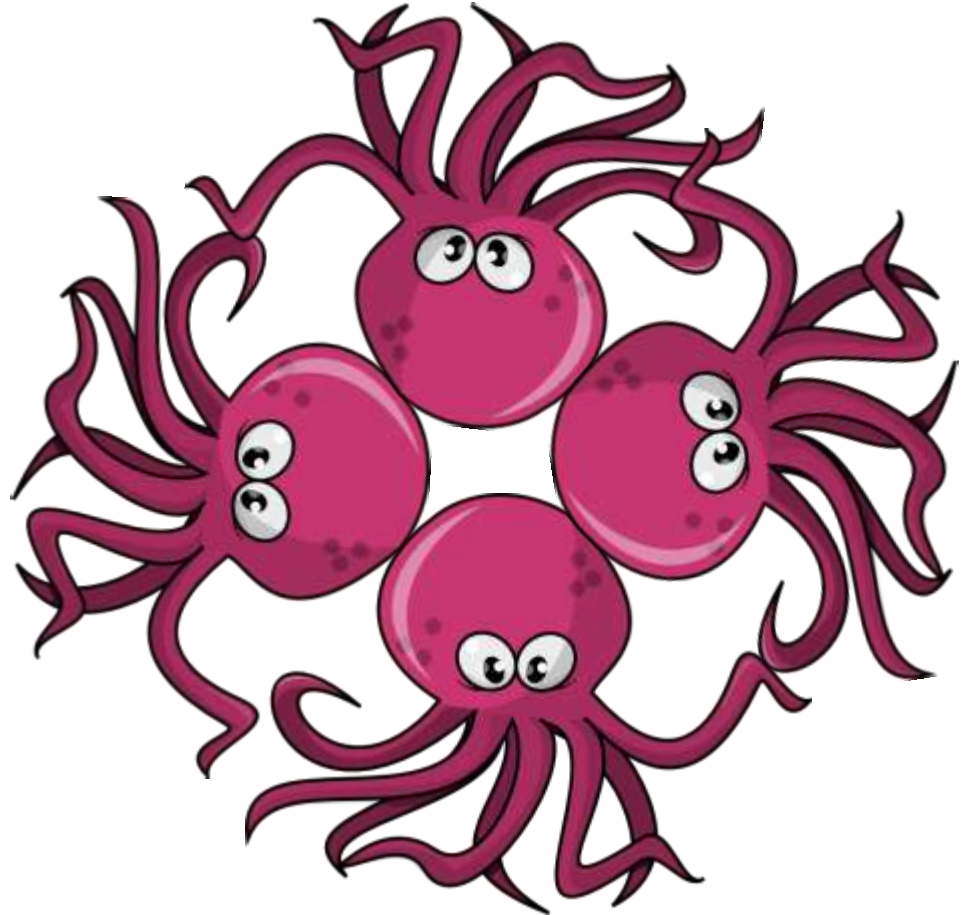
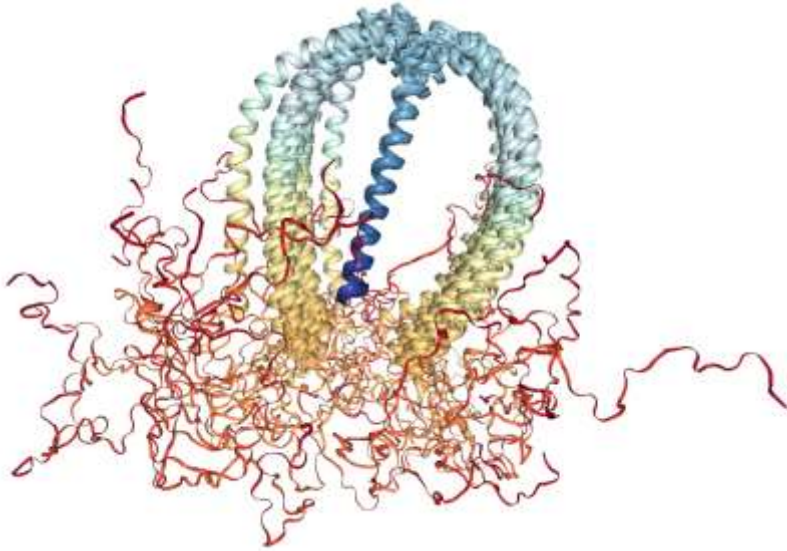
Chameleon ?



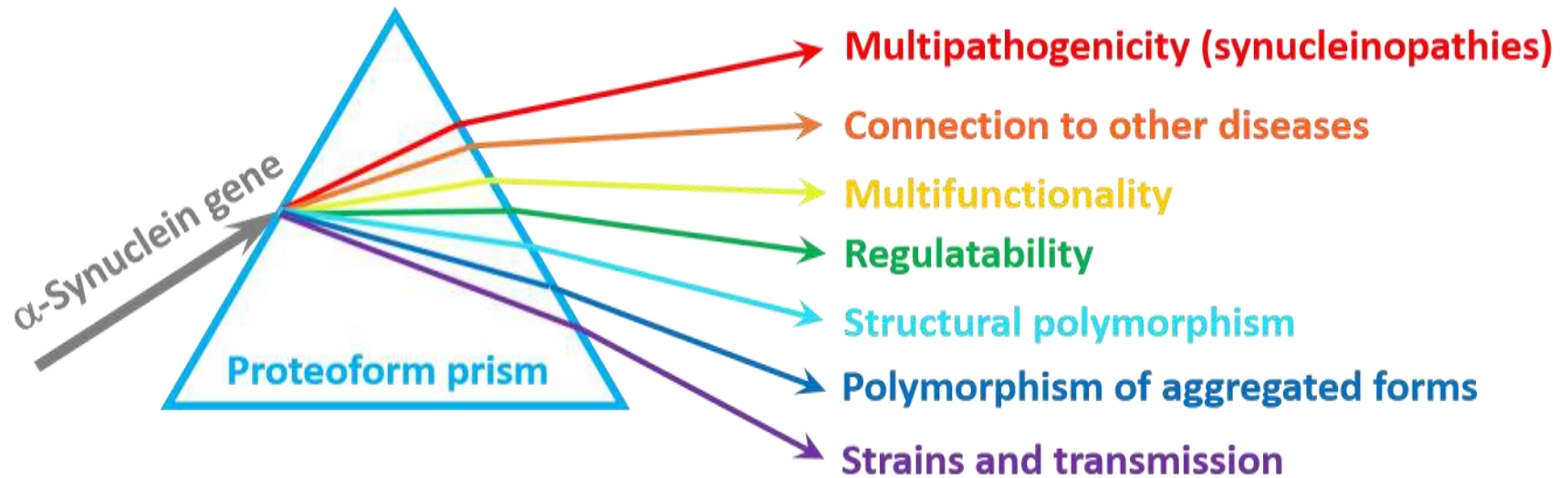
Protein with unknown function



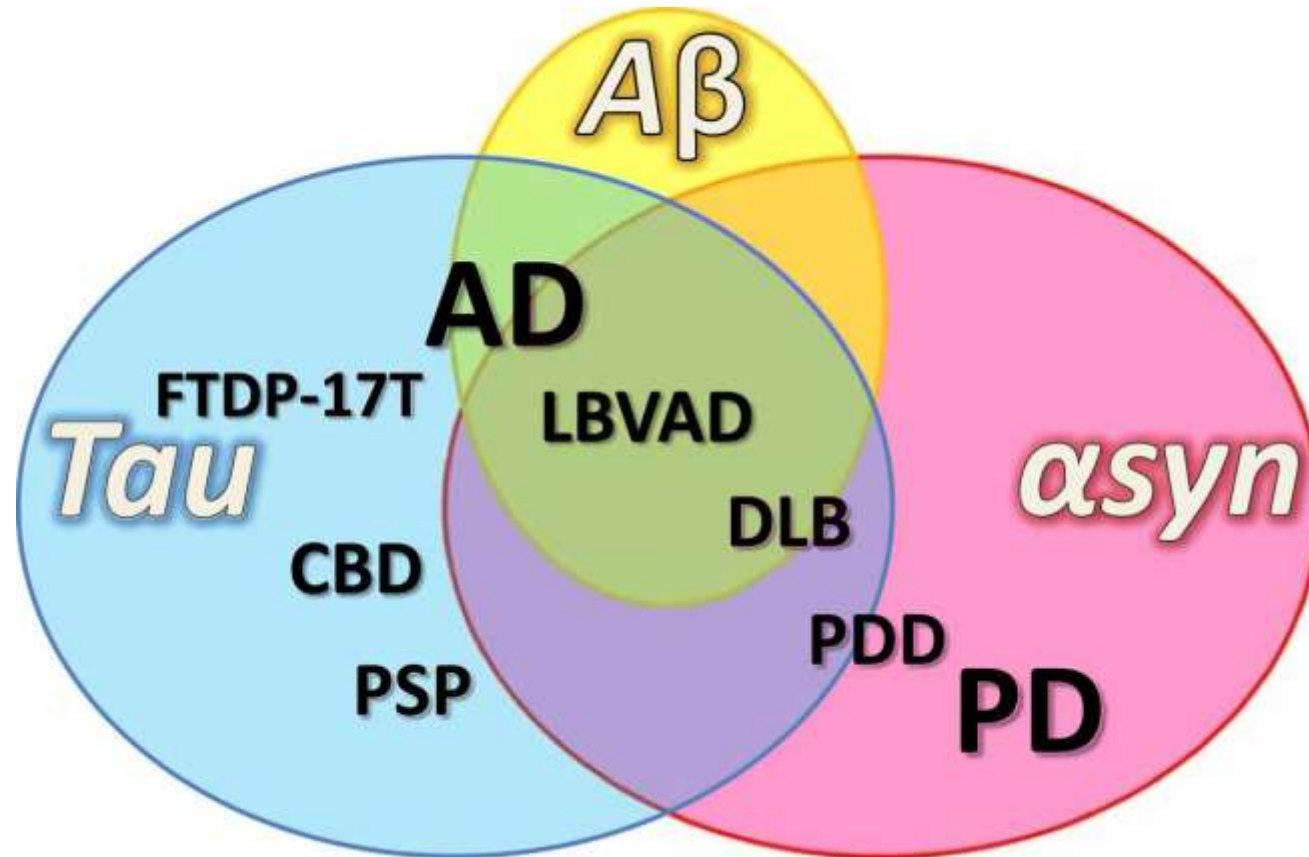
Octopus view of α -synuclein functionality



Looking at α -synuclein through the proteoform prism

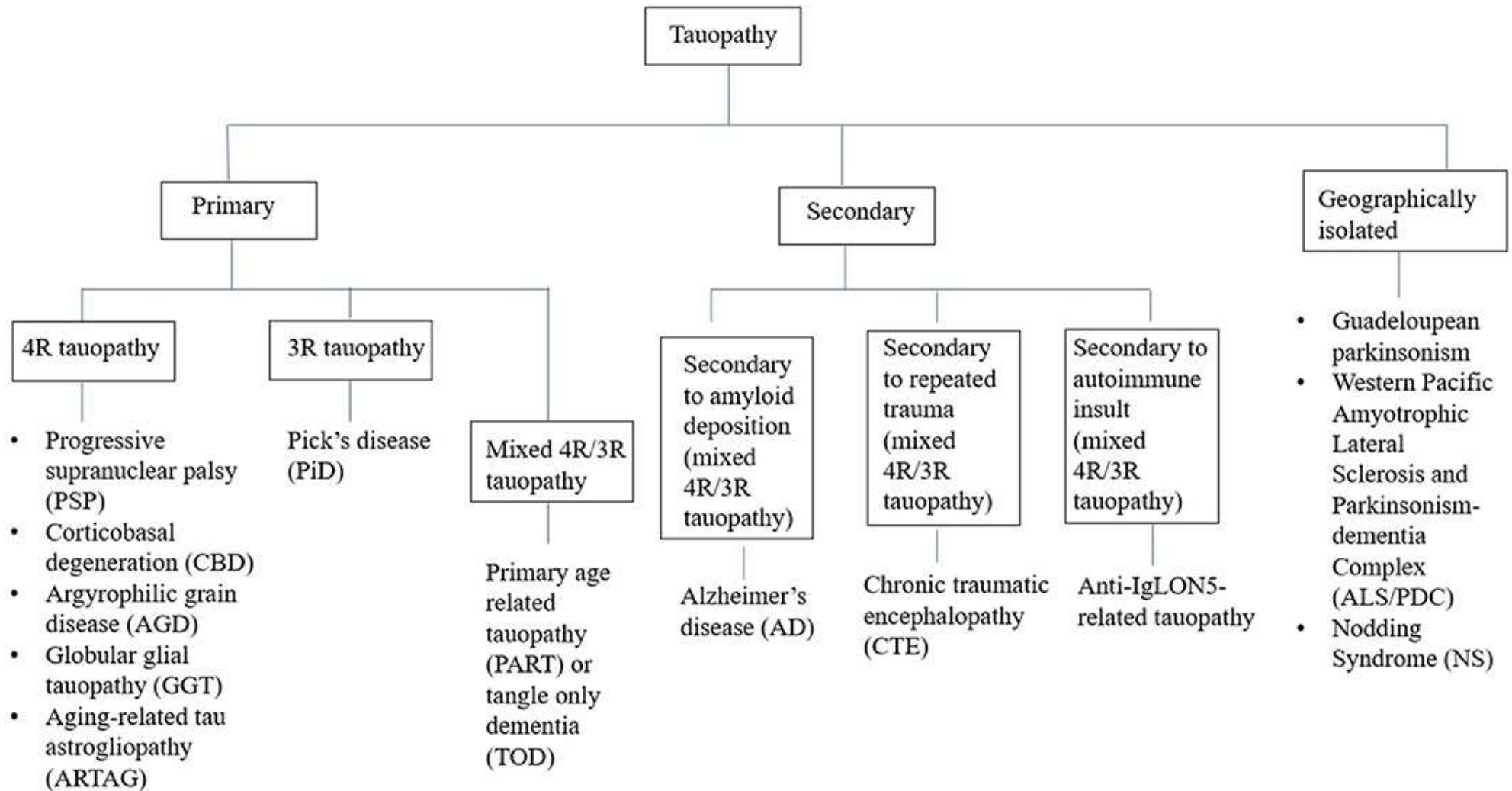


α -Synuclein, A β , and tau: teammates in neurodegeneration

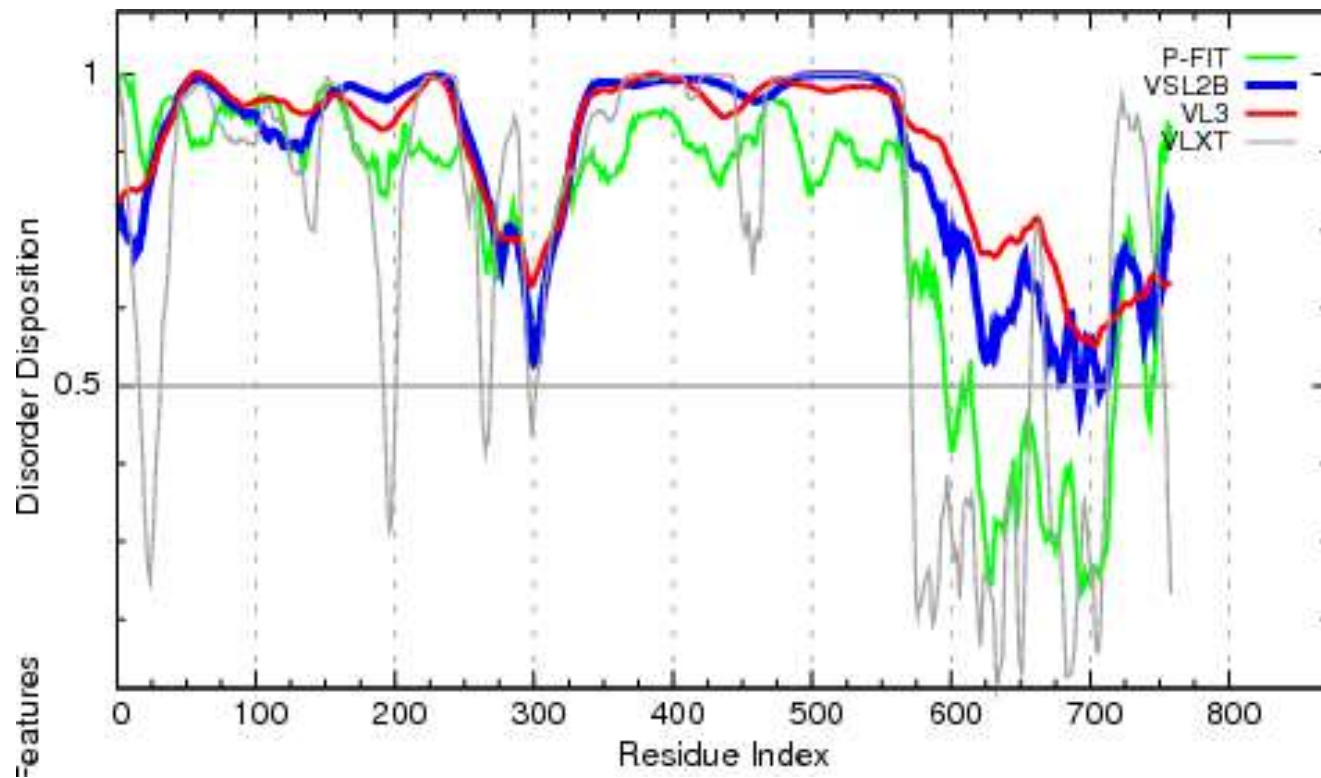


- ❖ AD, Alzheimer's disease
- ❖ PD, Parkinson's disease
- ❖ LBVAD, Lewy body (LB) variant of AD
- ❖ DLB, dementia with LBs
- ❖ PDD, PD dementia
- ❖ CBD, corticobasal degeneration
- ❖ PSP, progressive supranuclear palsy
- ❖ FTDP-17T, Frontotemporal dementia with parkinsonism-17

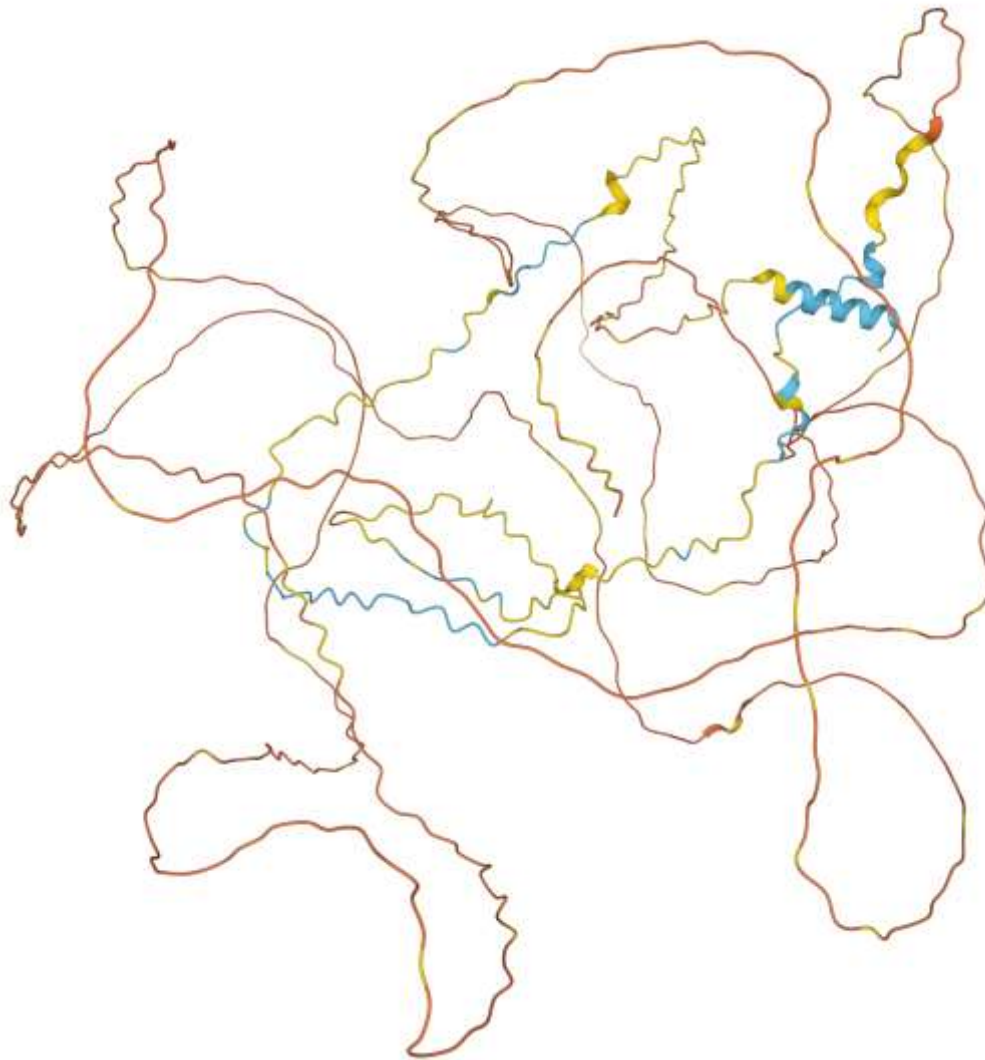
Classification of tauopathies



Tau as an IDP



3D model of human Tau structure generated by AlphaFold



Model Confidence:

- Very high (pLDDT > 90)
- Confident (90 > pLDDT > 70)
- Low (70 > pLDDT > 50)
- Very low (pLDDT < 50)

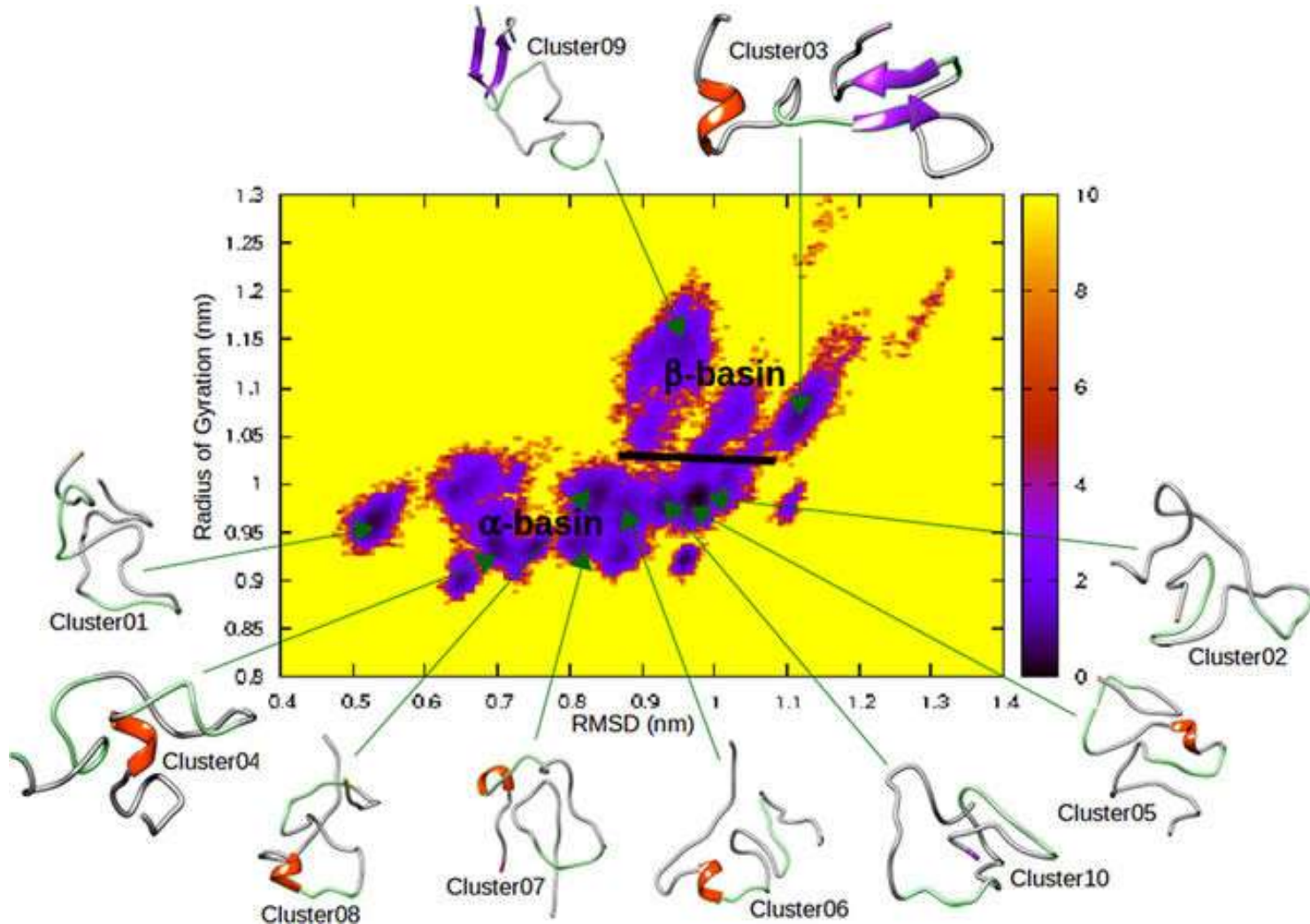
AlphaFold produces a per-residue confidence score (pLDDT) between 0 and 100. Some regions below 50 pLDDT may be unstructured in isolation.

Amyloidopathies

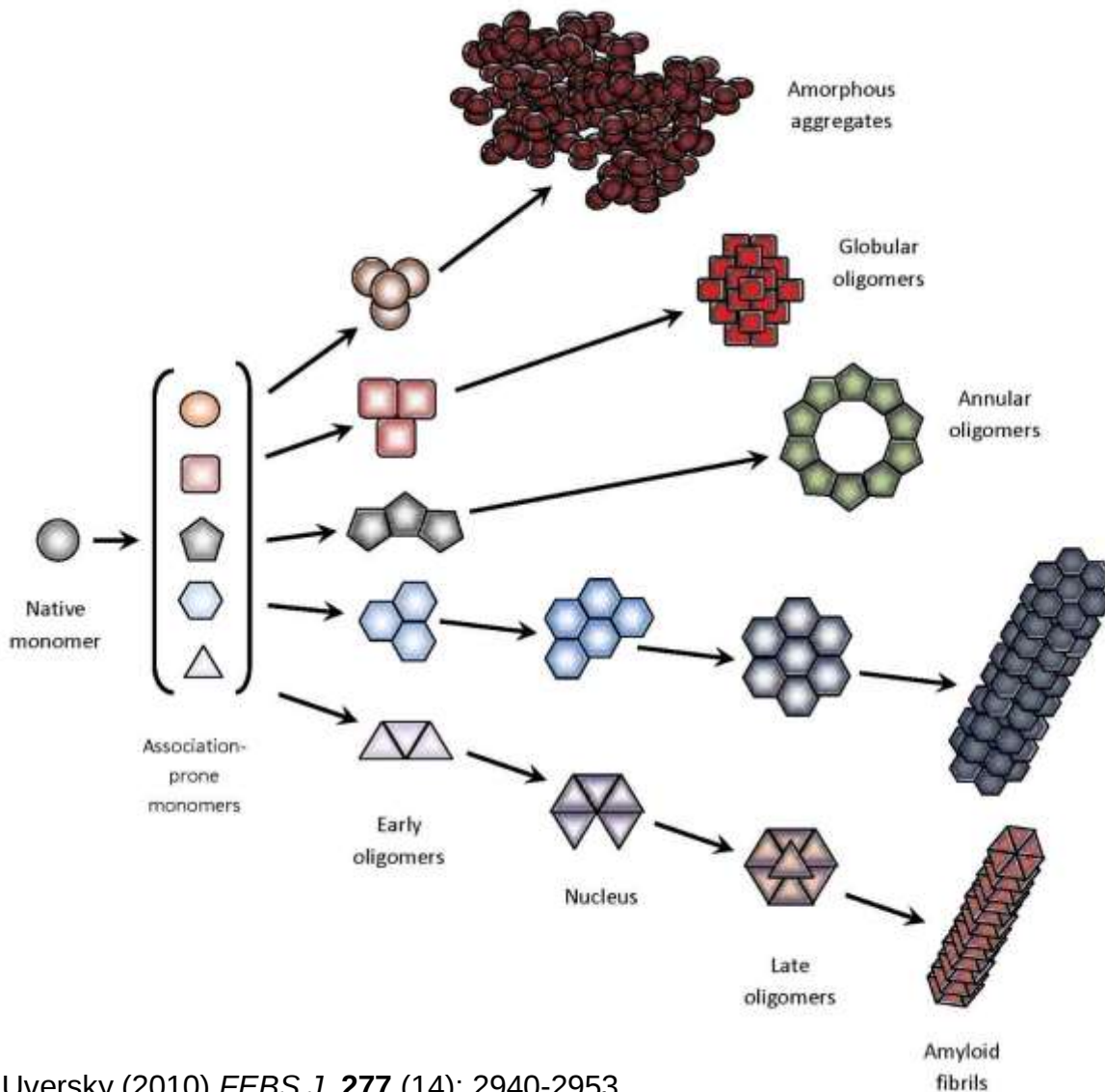
Pathologic accumulation of A β results in at least four distinct neurologic disorders that affect middle-aged and elderly adults:

- Alzheimer disease (AD);
- Cerebral amyloid angiopathy (CAA);
- Inflammatory CAA
- Cerebral amyloidoma

Conformational ensemble of A β



Multi-Facial Aggregates

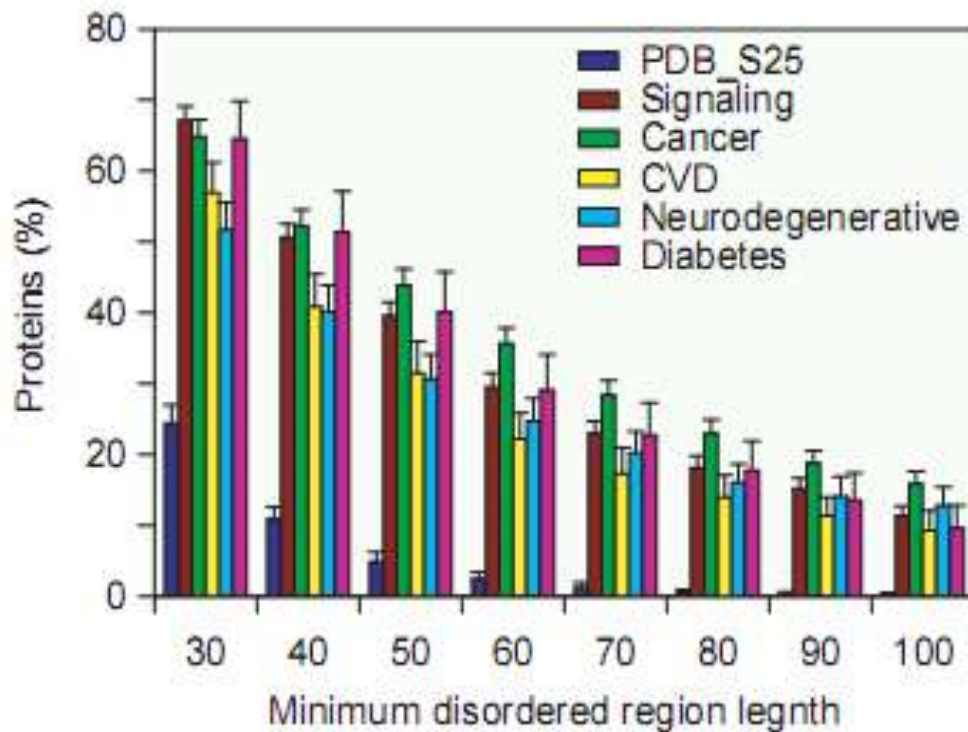


Schematic, oversimplified representation of protein self-association process. Formation of multiple association-prone monomeric forms generates multiple aggregation pathways. There are three major products of the aggregation reaction – amorphous aggregates (bottom pathway), morphologically different soluble oligomers (second and third from the top pathways) and morphologically different amyloid fibrils (two bottom pathways). Two types of soluble oligomers (spheroidal and annular) and two morphologically different amyloid fibrils are shown. Changes in color reflect potential structural changes within a monomer taking place at each elementary step. In reality, the picture is more complex and more species can be observed. Interconversions between various species at different pathways are also possible.

**From individual cases
to a general picture**



IDPs in human diseases

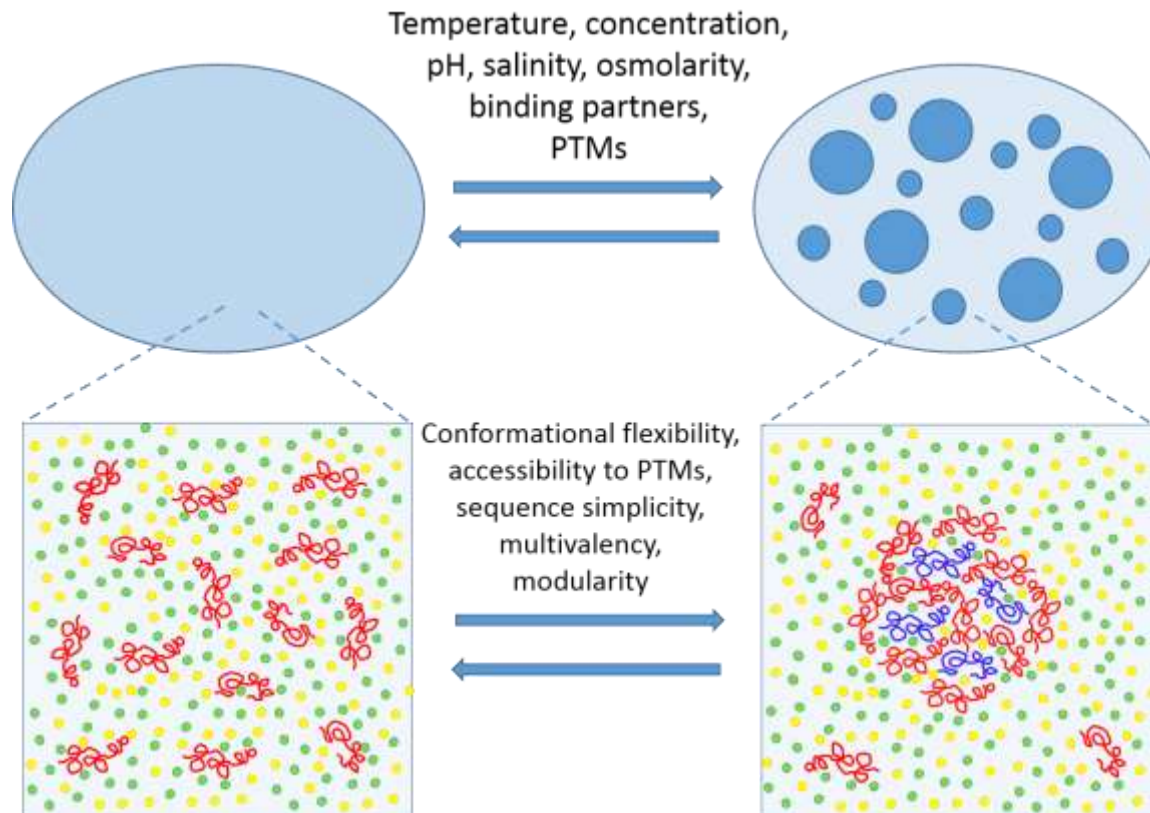


Analyzed datasets:

1,138 ordered proteins;
2,329 signaling proteins;
1,786 cancer-associated proteins;
487 CVD-related proteins;
689 proteins associated with neurodegenerative diseases;
285 diabetes-related proteins

**IDPs, liquid-liquid phase
transitions, and proteinaceous
membrane-less organelles:
Cell as an aqueous multi-phase system**

Intrinsic disorder and LLPTs

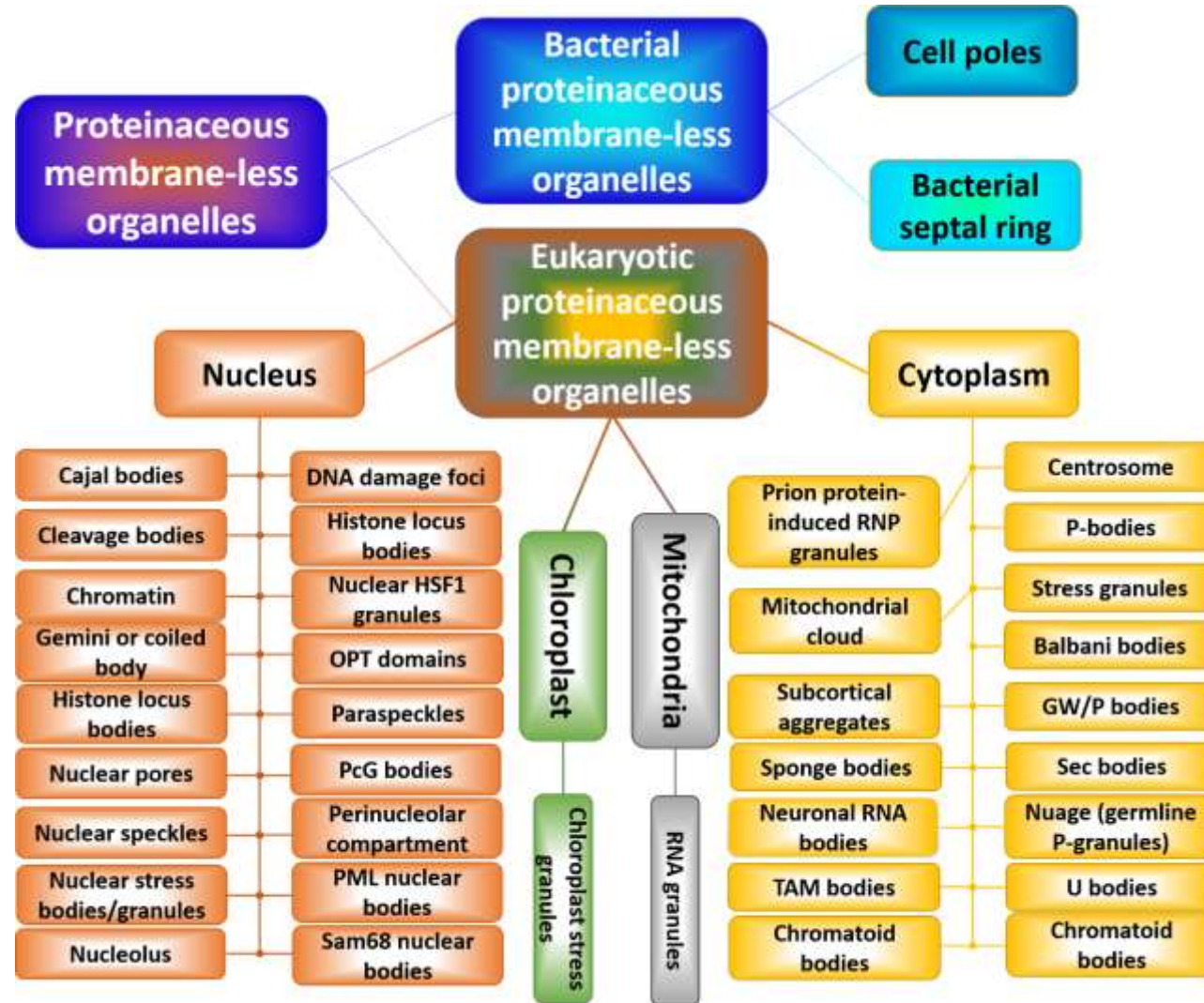


Thermodynamic factors (top) and disorder-related features controlling liquid-liquid phase transitions in protein solutions.

Intrinsic disorder, PMLOs, and LLPTs

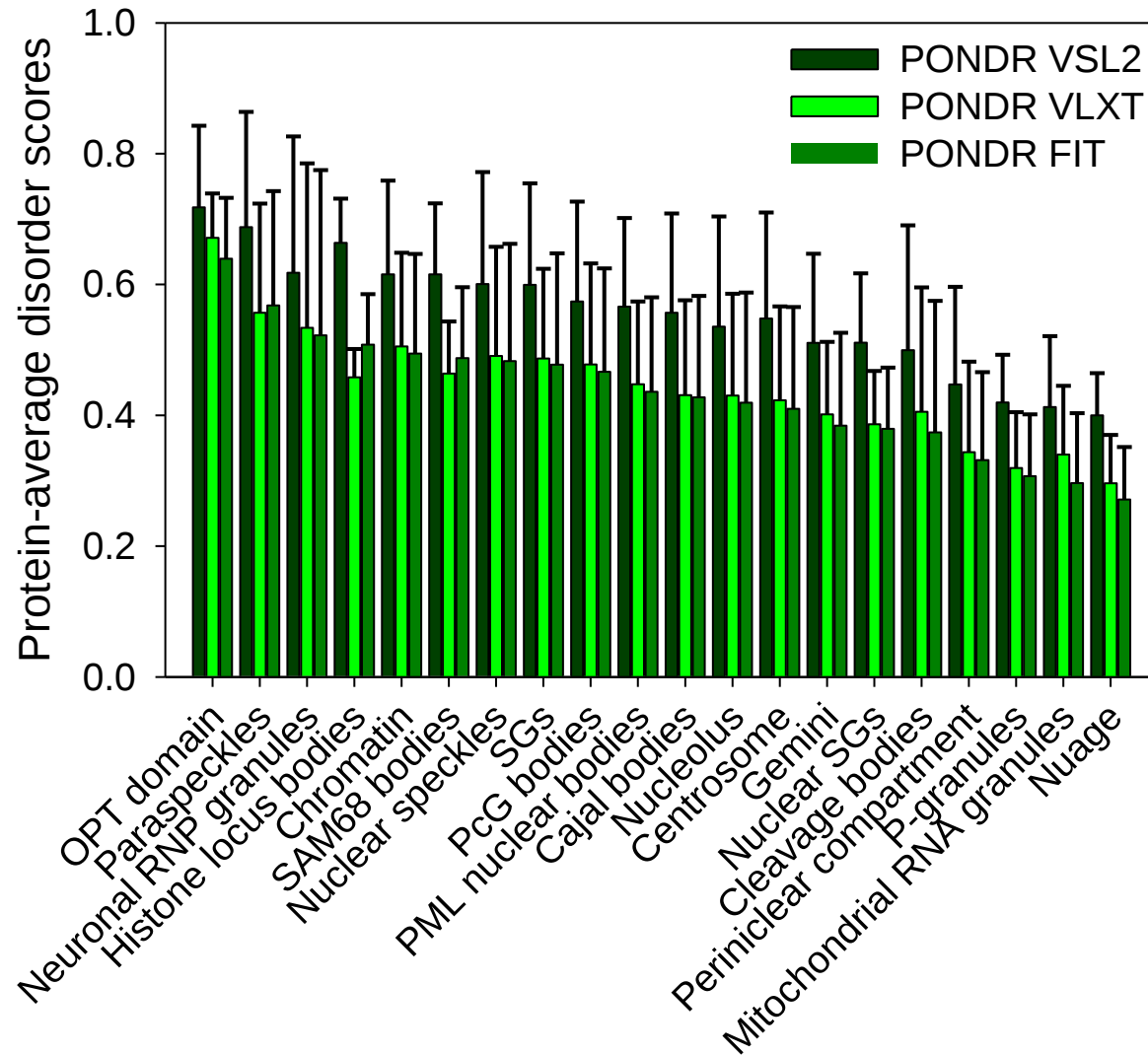
- Eukaryotic cells are inhomogeneously crowded and contain various cellular bodies
- Many of these bodies are proteinaceous membrane-less organelles (PMLOs)
- PMLOs are formed as a result of highly controlled liquid-liquid phase transitions (LLPTs)
- The interior of these condensed liquid droplets represents an overcrowded milieu
- PMLOs are invariantly enriched in intrinsically disordered proteins
- Intrinsic disorder is crucial for formation, disassembly, and functionality of PMLOs

Multitude of PMLOs





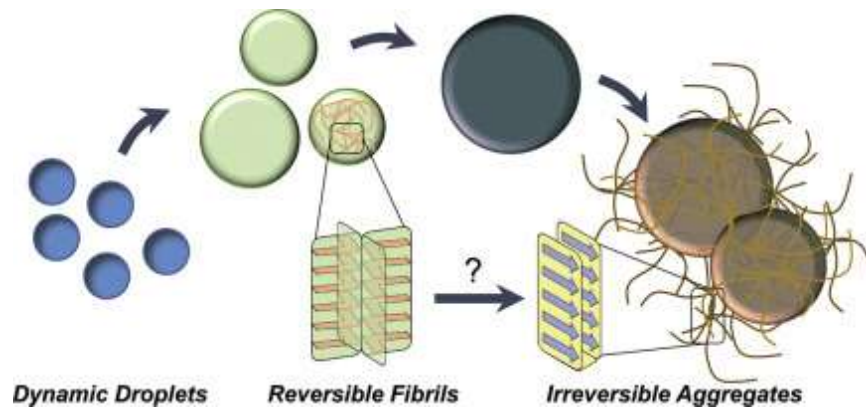
Unfoldome of human PMLOs



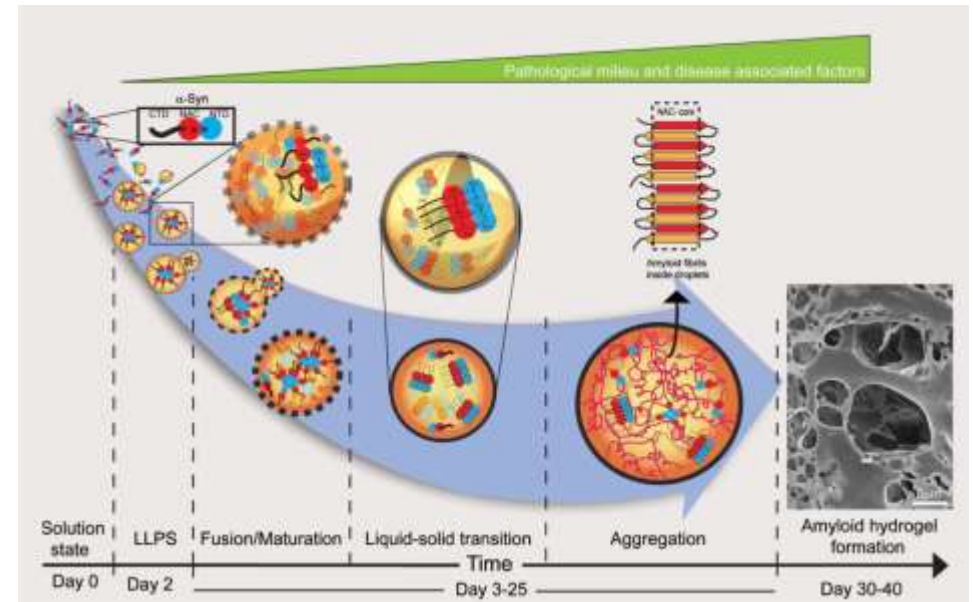
IDPs and liquid-liquid phase transitions (LLPTs)

- PMLOs are many and are often formed in response to changes in the cellular environment.
- Being typically liquid in nature, these organelles can be described as products of the reversible and highly controlled LLPTs.
- Many of these PMLOs are complex coacervates containing (almost invariantly) intrinsically disordered proteins and often nucleic acids.
- It seems that lack of stable structure in major proteinaceous constituents of these organelles is crucial for the formation of phase-separated droplets.
- The liquid-like properties of phase-separated droplets could facilitate functions of their constituents, which are accumulated within droplets at high concentrations but remain dynamic.

Pathological transformations in MLOs

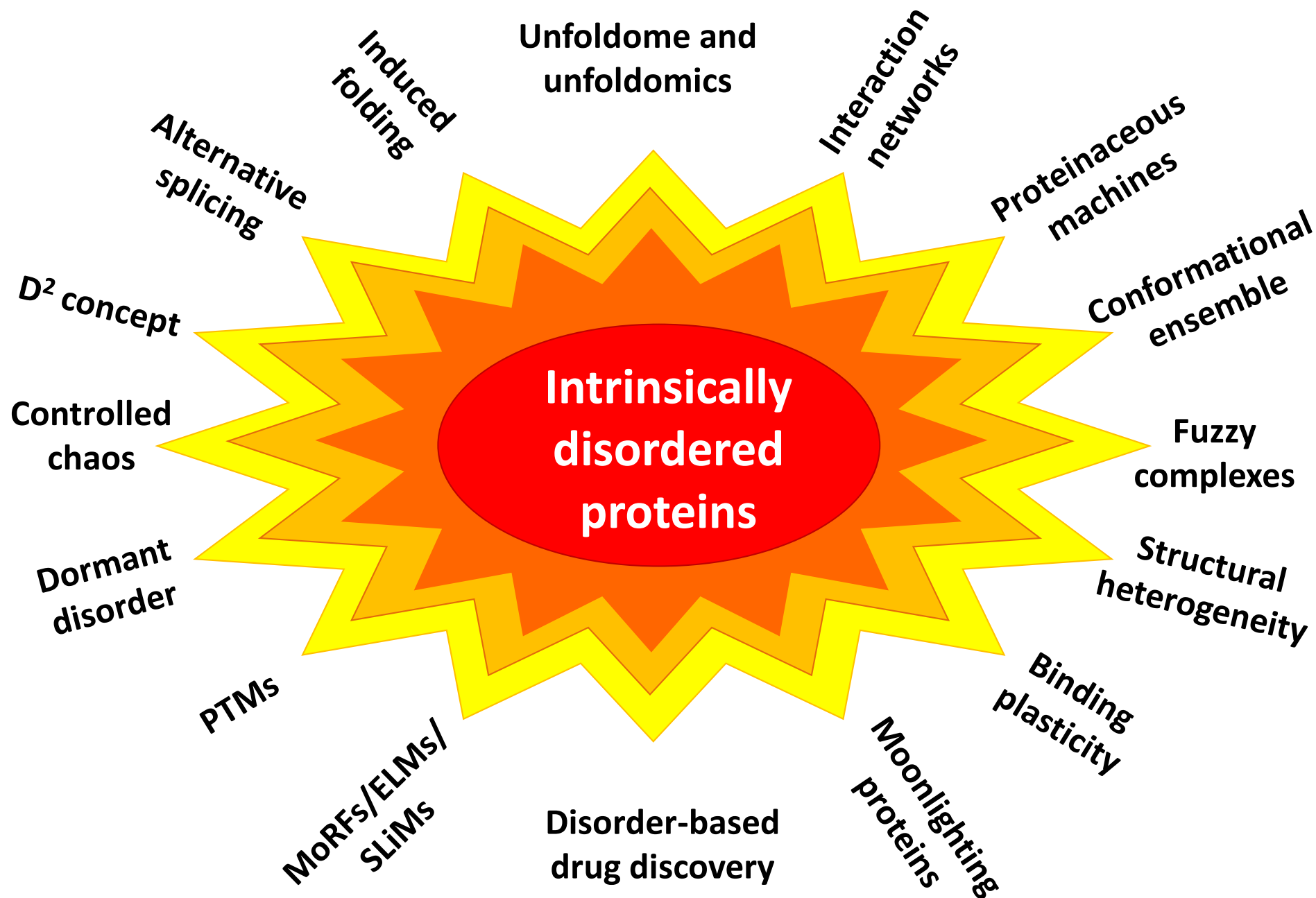


W. Michael Babinchak, Witold K.Surewicz
(2020) JMB 432 (7), 1910-1925



Soumik Ray, Nitu Singh, Satyaprakash Pandey, Rakesh Kumar, Laxmikant Gadhe, Debalina Datta, Komal Patel, Jaladhar Mahato, Ambuja Navalkar, Rajlaxmi Panigrahi, Debdeep Chatterjee, Siddhartha Maiti, Sandhya Bhatia, Surabhi Mehra, Ajay Singh, Juan Gerez, Arindam Chowdhury, Ashutosh Kumar, Ranjith Padinhateeri, Roland Riek, G Krishnamoorthy, Samir K Maji (2019)
bioRxiv 619858; doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/619858>

Intrinsically disordered proteins: New concept in protein science



Concluding remarks

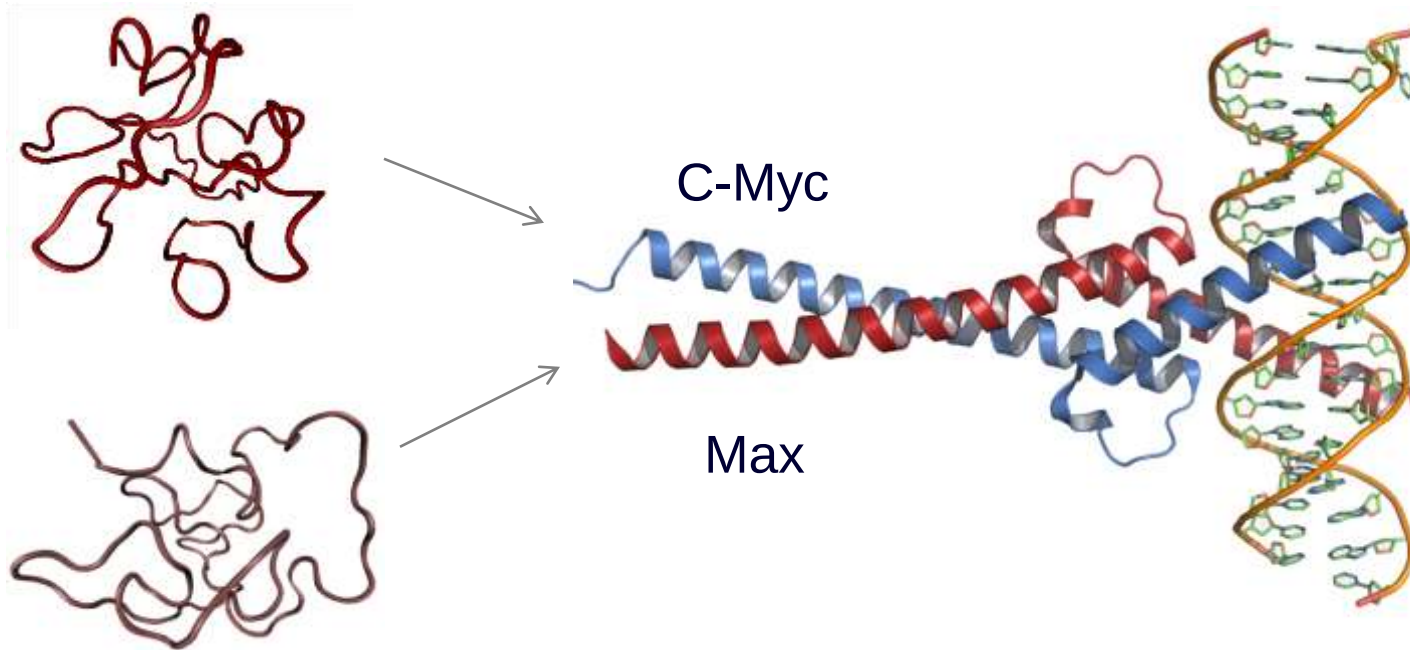
- ❑ **Intrinsic disorder is highly abundant in various proteomes especially in their signaling proteins;**
- ❑ **Intrinsic disorder defines protein structure-function continuum;**
- ❑ **IDPs are tightly controlled in the norm;**
- ❑ **Uncontrolled chaos leads to various diseases and many disease-related proteins are IDPs;**

**Thank you for your
attention!!!**

**IDPs, liquid-liquid phase
transitions, and proteinaceous
membrane-less organelles:
Cell as an aqueous multi-phase system**

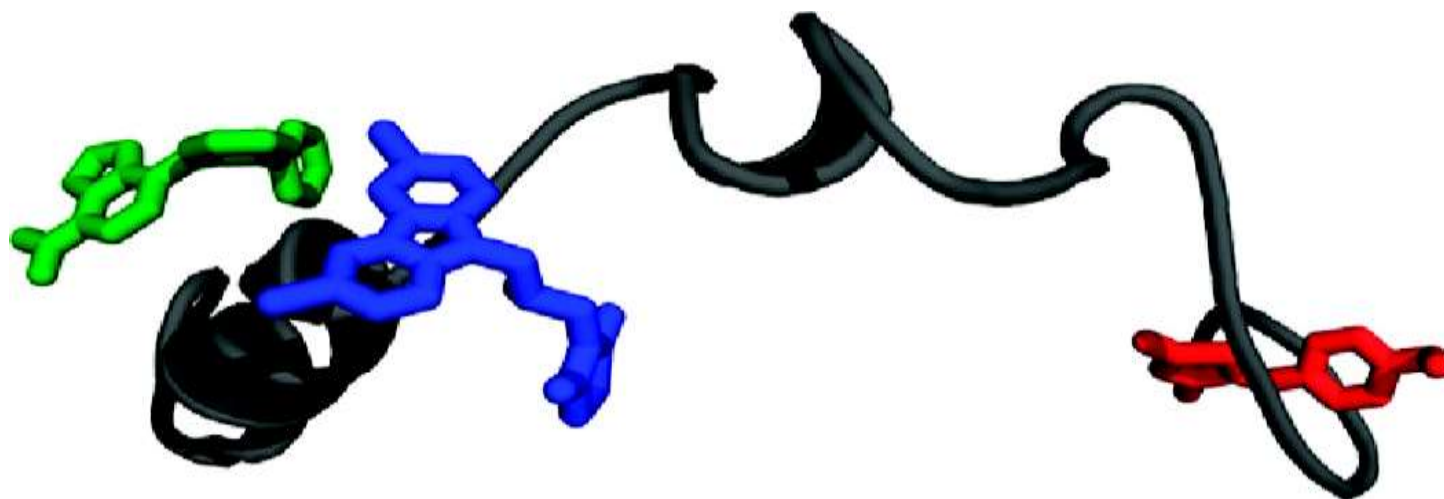
Disorder and drug discovery

c-Myc-Max complex as potential drug target



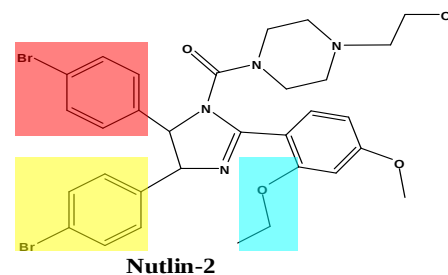
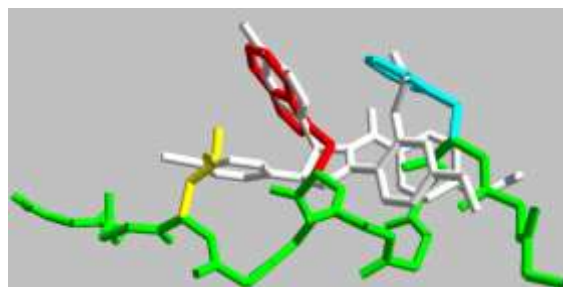
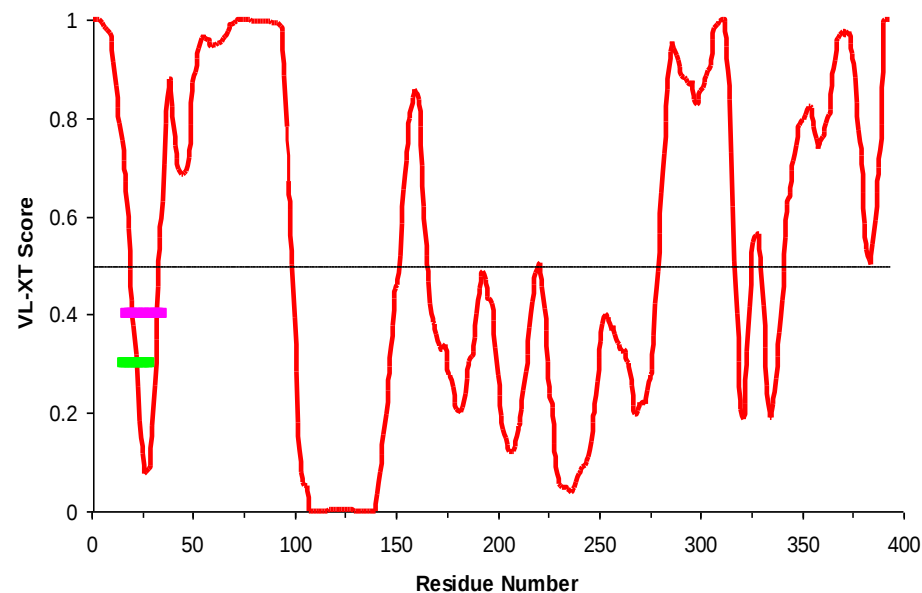
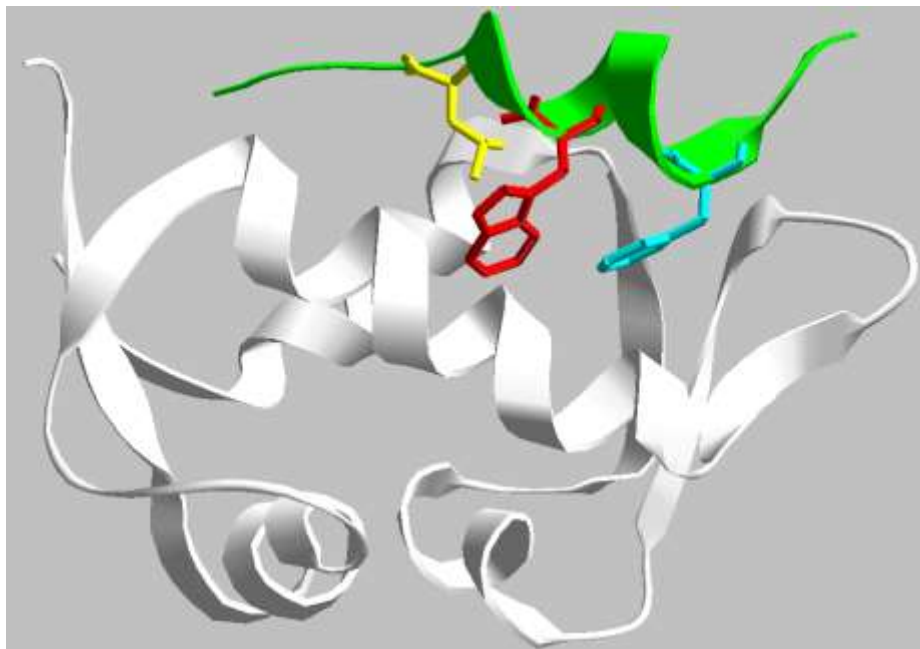
Deregulation of the c-Myc transcription factor is involved in many types of cancer. Inhibition of the dimer formation between the basic helix-loop-helix leucine zipper (bHLHZip) domain of c-Myc and a similar domain of Max is an attractive drug target. As monomers, bHLHZip proteins are intrinsically disordered but they fold on complex formation.

c-Myc possesses multiple independent binding sites for small-molecule inhibitors



c-Myc-Max inhibitors bind to distinct ID regions of c-Myc. These binding sites are composed of short contiguous stretches of amino acids that can selectively and independently bind small molecules. Inhibitor binding induces only local conformational changes, preserves the overall disorder of c-Myc, and inhibits dimerization with Max.

Protein disorder features and small molecule design: p53-Mdm2 interaction:



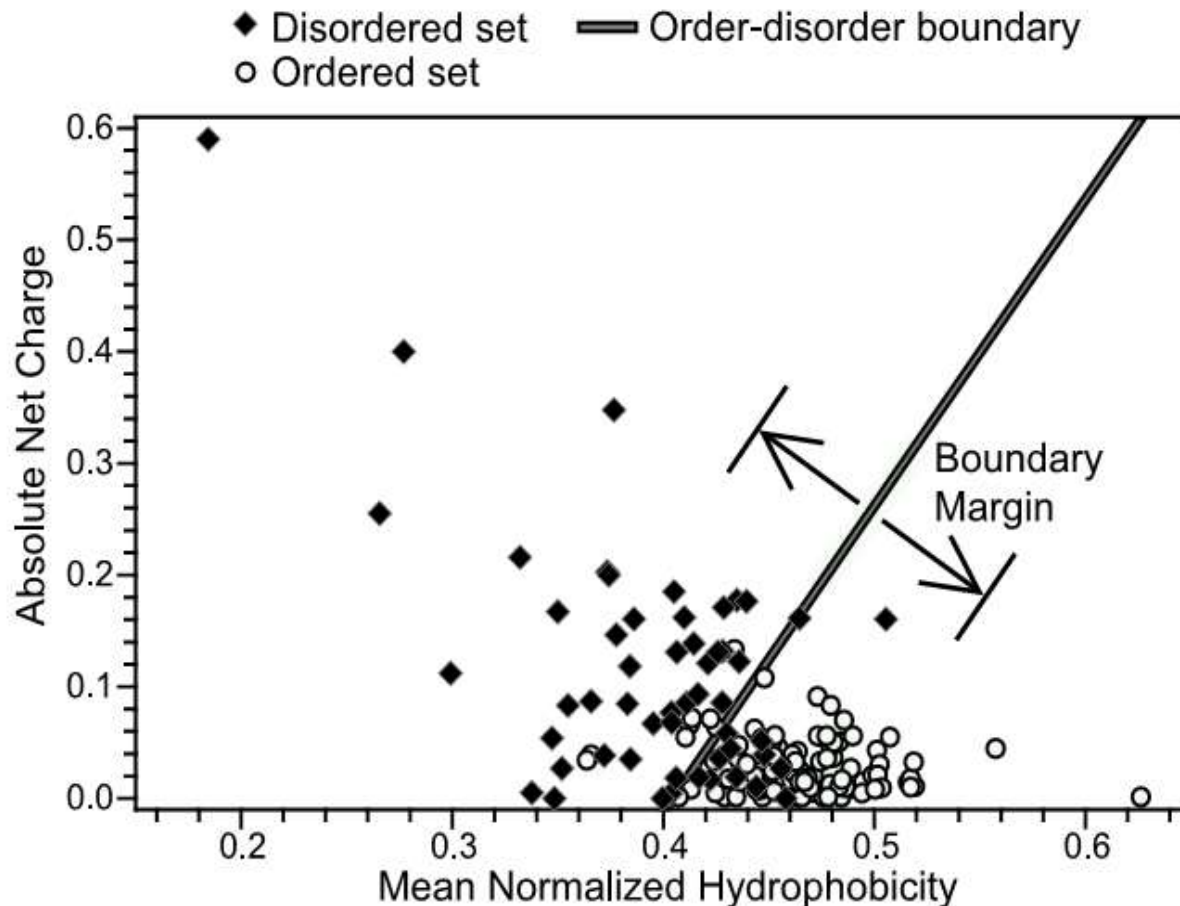
Manifestations of intrinsic disorder:

Amino acid sequence peculiarities

**IDPs and “normal” proteins
are different enough to be
separated based on the
specific features of their
amino acid sequences**



Protein non-folding: Why?



An extreme case conformationally unstable proteins are so-called natively unfolded proteins. They possess unique combination of low mean hydrophobicity and high mean net charge. High net charge leads to strong electrostatic repulsion, and low hydrophobicity means less driving force for compaction.

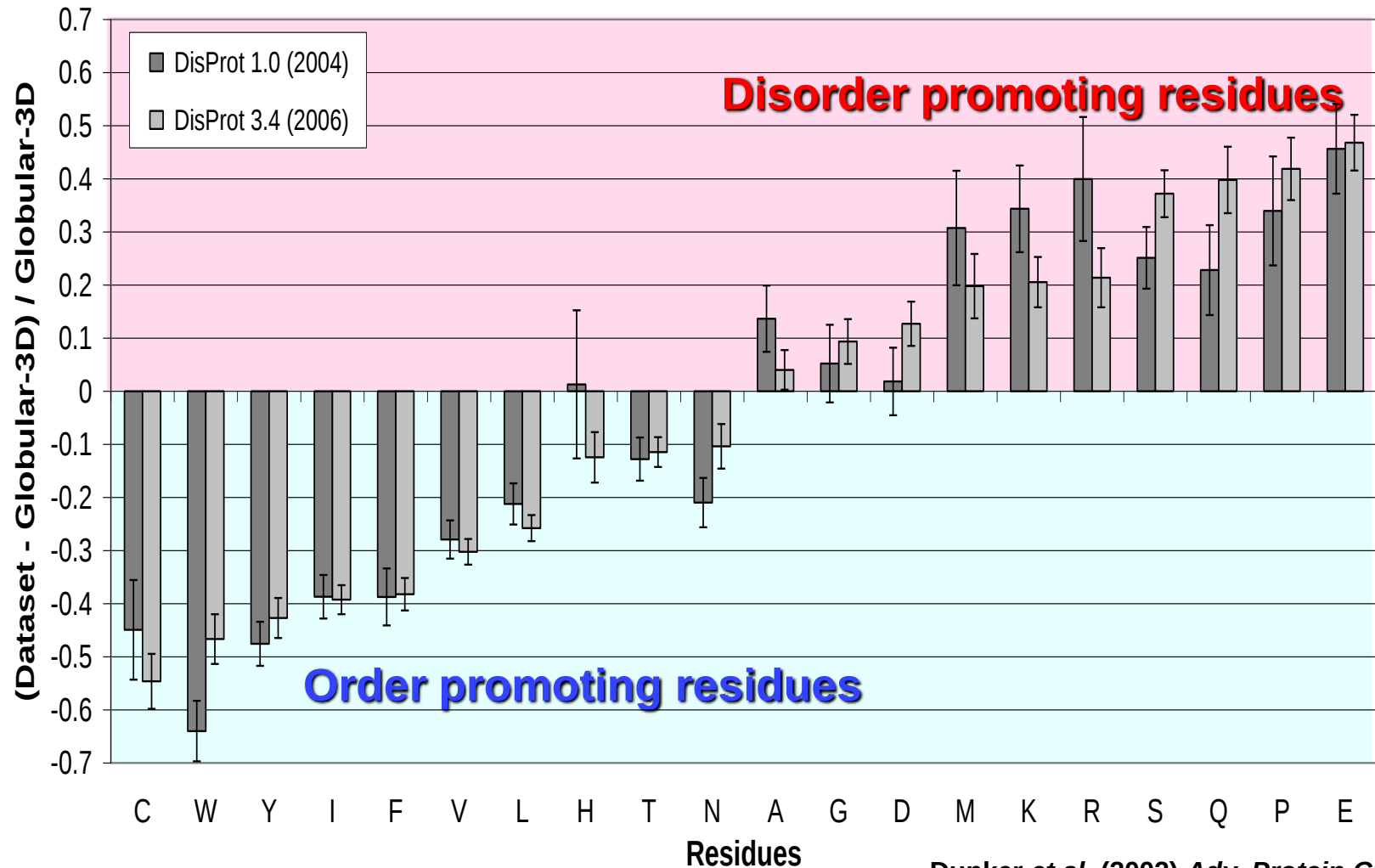
Uversky et al. (2000) *Proteins* 42, 415

Oldfield et al. (2005) *Biochemistry*

44 (37) 12454 - 12470



Amino acid determinants of protein foldability





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VL3, VL3H,
VL3E

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Provesan D et al. **DisProt 7.0: a major update of the database of disordered proteins**
Nucleic Acids Res., 2016.

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Welcome to DisProt



DisProt is a **community resource** annotating protein sequences for intrinsically **disorder regions** from the literature.

It classifies intrinsic disorder based on **experimental methods** and three ontologies for **molecular function, transition and binding partner**.

See **About** page for more information.



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BioComputing



NGP-net
Non-globular proteins in
molecular physiopathology



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