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Research paper

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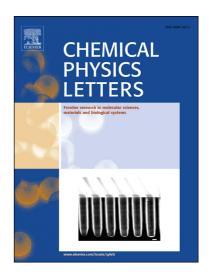
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Determination of the absolute binding free energies of HIV-1 protease inhibitors using non-equilibrium molecular dynamics simulations

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Abstract

The absolute binding free energy of an inhibitor to HIV-1 Protease (PR) was determined throughout evaluation of the non-bonded interaction energy difference between the two *bound* and *unbound* states of the inhibitor and surrounding molecules by the fast pulling of ligand (FPL) process using non-equilibrium molecular dynamics (NEMD) simulations. The calculated free energy difference terms help clarifying the nature of the binding. Theoretical binding affinities are in good correlation with experimental data, with R = 0.89. The paradigm used is able to rank two inhibitors having the maximum difference of ~1.5 kcal/mol in absolute binding free energies.

Keywords: Fast pulling of ligand approach; HIV-1 PR; NEMD simulations; absolute binding affinity; interaction energy; pulling work;

1. Introduction

The binding free energies between proteins and their inhibitors are of great interest in part due to their role in the understanding of biophysical problems [1]. Several methods were established to evaluate the protein-ligand binding affinity including the thermodynamic integration (TI) [2], free energy perturbation (FEP) [3],

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