Summary and Evaluation of Zuzana Novakova Bachelor Thesis

The bachelor's thesis, "Introduction to Protein Structure Disorder," provides a comprehensive exploration of intrinsically disordered proteins (IDPs) and intrinsically disordered regions (IDRs). The author presents a detailed examination of their properties, classification, and significance in various biological processes and diseases, along with methodologies for their identification and recent advancements in predictive technologies.

The thesis begins by challenging the traditional view of proteins as strictly ordered structures, essential for their function. The introduction effectively sets the stage by presenting IDPs/IDRs as crucial elements in cellular processes, despite their lack of fixed structure. This literature review is thorough and well-cited, offering a solid foundation for the subsequent discussion. A detailed comparison between ordered and disordered protein structures follows. The author successfully elucidates the hierarchical structure of ordered proteins and contrasts it with the flexibility and functional versatility of IDPs. The discussion on the driving forces of protein folding and the unique properties of IDPs is well-articulated, supported by relevant references, and enhanced by clear explanations of complex concepts like the Levinthal Paradox and the energy landscape funnel.

The thesis highlights the adaptability of IDPs/IDRs in various cellular functions, such as signaling and phase separation. The discussion on molecular recognition features and post-translational modifications showcases the regulatory roles of IDPs, adding significant clinical relevance by connecting these proteins to diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. This connection underscores the importance of understanding IDPs in the context of human health. The author delves into the physicochemical properties of amino acids that contribute to protein disorder, providing a nuanced view of how amino acid composition and distribution influence the structural dynamics of IDPs. The classification of amino acids based on their propensity to promote disorder is clear and insightful, contributing to a deeper understanding of the unique characteristics of disordered proteins.

Methodologies for identifying IDPs/IDRs are examined comprehensively, with a balanced discussion of both experimental approaches and predictive methods. The limitations of traditional techniques like X-ray crystallography are well-addressed, and the emphasis on NMR spectroscopy and tools like PONDR and DISOPRED is appropriate. The comparative analysis of different predictors highlights ongoing challenges and advancements, providing a critical perspective on the state of the field. Advancements in deep learning for predicting IDP structures are timely and relevant. The discussion on tools like AlphaFold and their limitations in predicting IDPs reflects the current state of research. The evaluation of emerging models such as ALBATROSS and Phanto-IDP offers a forward-looking perspective on the potential of AI in understanding IDPs, while critically assessing their accuracy and reliability.

The thesis also compares the occurrence of IDPs/IDRs across different organisms, from bacteria to eukaryotes. The choice of model organisms, such as E. coli, Homo sapiens, and Toxoplasma gondii, effectively illustrates the variability in protein disorder and highlights the specific functions of IDPs in different biological contexts. The discussion on the cellular localization of IDPs adds depth to the understanding of their functional roles and their distribution across various cellular compartments.

In conclusion, the thesis reiterates the significance of studying IDPs/IDRs and the challenges in their detection and prediction. The author calls for further research and development of specialized predictive tools, emphasizing the clinical importance of understanding protein disorder. This thesis is a well-structured, comprehensive, and insightful

examination of intrinsically disordered proteins and regions. The author demonstrates a deep understanding of the subject matter and effectively communicates complex concepts, making a significant contribution to the field of structural biology.

Overall, I highly recommend this thesis for acceptance. The depth of research, clarity of presentation, and critical evaluation of current and emerging methodologies make it a valuable piece of scholarly work. The exploration of the clinical implications of IDPs/IDRs further underscores the importance of this study. I suggest to evaluate the bachelor thesis by the highest grade – A.

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Prof. RNDr. Jiri Vondrasek, PhD
Ustav organicke chemie a biochemie AV CR