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## Computational studies of influenza hemagglutinin

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*Document Version*

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*

2017

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Boonstra, S. (2017). *Computational studies of influenza hemagglutinin: How does it mediate membrane fusion?* [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. University of Groningen.

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## Acknowledgments

There were only two reasons to return to Groningen after a long journey around the world: the chance to graduate under the supervision of Prof. Erik van der Giessen and the appealing subject of this PhD research, as I had read in the proposal. Once settled in, I started this project with a steep learning curve on the biology of influenza viruses and on the intricacies of molecular dynamics simulations. Inexperienced as I was with these kinds of simulations, a struggle with unexpected results from various force fields followed, combined with challenges such as how to correctly setup the plethora of parameters and how to reach sufficient sampling. A link with our experimental collaborators seemed many lengthscales away. So, the question whether I would ever produce enough results to write a thesis, among other doubts that are not uncommon among PhD students, has lingered in my mind for three and a half years. However, starting at the end of the second year, the hard work started to pay off and from then on, a research subject got synthesized into a manuscript each year. Moreover, the efforts spent in literature research culminated in two literature reviews. This ultimately led to that moment of relief when you know that you will finish it; you only need to do it. And I did it; but not without the help, guidance, inspiration and support that I got from a number of people that I would like to acknowledge here.

First of all my supervisors, Prof. Erik van der Giessen and Prof. Patrick R. Onck. You both leave nothing to be desired from a supervisor, and then you add some more. I very much appreciate your trust in me, giving me the freedom and confidence to study, try and learn without feeling pressured most of the time. You both took the time to review my work, always in time, and to give constructive feedback. This worked especially well towards the end, when the inevitable pressure to finish the writing rose. Thank you for having your doors open so often, and for your prompt attention and honest response every time that I walked in with questions. Because we get along so well, our regular meetings were always a pleasure. Your style of supervision will be an example for me in my further career.

Erik, thanks for writing the proposal for this research in the first place, and then inviting me to take on the challenge. Back then, I sometimes naively thought that you would just tell me how it worked when I could not figure it out. However, getting to know the answers together was much more rewarding and fun. Thanks as well for the unforgettable experience to develop and teach a new course together with you, especially because of its innovative cooperative-learning approach and the sense of adventure that this gave. On top of this, I am glad that I could also discuss other subjects with you, such as how it is to be a professor, the current educational system, as well as more personal issues. This personal connection made working with you a great experience.

Patrick, you would already turn towards the door when you heard my footsteps approaching your office, illustrating how open you are to (my) questions. You gave me the

feeling that I could ask you anything, anytime. I very much appreciate your dedication to the project, giving feedback, asking questions and keeping the big picture in mind.

I hereby express my gratitude to the reading committee, Prof. Siewert-Jan Marrink, Prof. Alexander Kros (Leiden University) and Prof. Wouter H. Roos, for allotting time to read my thesis in their crowded schedule, for their constructive comments and for their approval.

Jelle Blijleven, my experimental collaborator, paranimf and conference buddy ('those two tall Dutch guys'), has had a great contribution to the research and ideas presented in this thesis. Regularly sharing our most recent findings and ideas during our 'furbly' meetings was fun and rewarding. Jelle, I very much enjoyed working together on both the reviews and the virus mutants. So, thanks for the great collaboration. We managed to bridge the lengthscales! Hopefully, the mutants turn out to be a tad more useful soon.

Dr. Tijana Ivanovic (Brandeis University, USA), deserves many thanks for producing and testing the virus mutants and for discussing the results. I would also like to thank Prof. Antoine van Oijen (University of Wollongong, Australia) and Prof. Wouter H. Roos, Jelle's supervisors, for their efforts in this project, their revisions on the reviews and their input in our Big Fusion Meetings. Regarding these meetings, thanks for logging into Skype at hours like 5 am or 9 pm in order to connect people from three places spread around the world (Boston, Groningen and Wollongong).

When using other people's methods and results, you sometimes get stuck in need of additional information. I could then turn to Dr. Alex de Vries in the MD group for advice. After lecturing the fruitful MD course in my first year, he was also very helpful in discussing the more advanced methods that I used later on. Again, thanks for your time, Alex! In addition, I think that I had quite some luck with the people I emailed with further questions, who all responded promptly. One of them was Dr. Robert B. Best (NIH, Bethesda, USA), whom I thank for discussing the discrepancies we saw when using different water models, and who even ran some simulations himself. Further, I would like to thank Prof. Arjan van der Vaart (University of South Florida, USA) and Prof. Marco Cecchini (Université de Strasbourg, France) for helpful discussions on the confinement free energy method. Prof. van der Vaart also assisted in adding the mass-weighted restraint to NAMD and provided Python scripts that implement the MBAR calculations.

I had the privilege to supervise two bachelor students in my project and was lucky enough that they both worked hard and successfully finished their projects. Cees de Wit, thanks for making the Hamiltonian REMD simulations work. Your results on the hinge peptide did not make it into this thesis, but gave valuable molecular insight nonetheless. Anton Jansen, the results of your steered MD simulations on H1 were the inspiration for the hypothesis on HA productivity and the single particle experiments on the virus mutants. Thank you for that!

It is easy to feel comfortable among my fellow nerds (Not Even Remotely Dorky) in the  $\mu\text{Me}\chi$ -group. Special thanks goes to Ali Ghavami, my go-to man for MD-related is-

sues, to Ria Sibma, who offered helpful advice in all kinds of situations, to Tarun Katiyar for numerous squash sessions, to Dogan Yilmaz and Jaap Aikema as system administrators, and to Edwin de Jong as my co-interim system administrator. Further, in an effort to be brief, I tried to sum up my gratitude to these and the other (former) group members Sandeep, Siva, Prabhat, Ali, Ilker, Hengxu, Ling, Arjan, Stefanos, Ankur, RP, Jianqiao, Fangfang, Rongjing, Henry, Andrea, Hamid and the visiting bachelor and master students in a back-on-the-envelope calculation. My derivation quickly simplified to

$$\sum_0^{\infty} \text{👉} \quad (\text{TNX.1})$$

in which 👉 summarizes the pleasure of attending and sharing coffees, cakes, lunches, dinners, meetings, outings, codes and not-even-remotely-dorky jokes with all of you. In addition to Equation (TNX.1), thank you for tolerating the pictures of random people with their thumbs held up that sometimes appeared in my email messages.

De families Boonstra, ter Haar en Benthem en mijn vrienden, met in het bijzonder tante Agine, Anne-jongetje, Esther, Berend, Jan, Wouter, Paul, Anna, Geertje, Teake, Jakob, Willemijn, Jaap, Jorien, Wander en Jorien en mijn oud-studiegenoten en collega's Tom B., Jasper, Bas, Kamerbeek, Onur, Jakko, Gert, Thijs, Reeuwert, Niels, Roel, Erik, Roald, Ludo, Leo en Gerrit wil ik bedanken voor jullie uitgesproken interesse in mijn werk. Mijn gesprekken met jullie hebben vaak tot nieuwe ideeën en motivatie geleid. Los daarvan ben ik heel blij dat ik zoveel leuke momenten met jullie kon delen zonder daarbij aan mijn werk te denken! Emmie, dankjewel voor het ontwerpen van de omslag.

Dick en Rens, bedankt voor jullie interesse, hulp en voor het meelevan met presentaties en deadlines. Bedankt dat we altijd bij jullie terecht kunnen.

Papa en mama, bedankt voor jullie liefde en steun, het hele eind. Jullie gaven mij veel vrijheid en leerden mij daarmee verantwoordelijkheid. Jullie moedigden mijn nieuwsgierigheid aan en steunden mij met alle nieuwe dingen die ik probeerde. Ik ben jullie dankbaar voor waar jullie mij hebben gebracht.

Lieve Art Jan en Hedzer, het is iedere keer weer een feest om door jullie te worden uitgezwaaid. Met dat jullie 's middags op mij af komen rennen en kruipen kan ik mijn werk thuis steeds relatief snel van mij af zetten. Jullie zetten mijn leven in een heel ander perspectief. Geweldig dat je dan ook nog vraagt, Art Jan: "Hoe was het op je werk? Was Ankur er ook? En Patrick? En ...". Maar Art Jan, jij was toch ook een proefschrift aan het maken? Hoe gaat het daar nu mee?

Liefste Anne, jij verdient hier de meeste dank. Jij liet mij vrij om te kiezen voor dit project terwijl we nog superveel plezier hadden aan de andere kant van de wereld. Toen ik hieraan begonnen was, gaf jij mij het vertrouwen dat het goed zou komen. Jij maakte thuis alle keren mee, dat mijn aandacht ergens anders was en mijn antwoord onbewust. Maar jawel, we konden op den duur mijn eerste artikel en mijn eerste citatie vieren. Je hebt mijn hele proefschrift doorgespit en je bent paranimf op mijn promotie. Maar nog

veel specialer, we hebben samen Art Jan en Hedzer. We hebben het zwaar gehad, maar gelukkig nog veel vaker mooi. Bedankt voor alles; je geduld, begrip en liefde. dutch