

Table of Contents

Abstract	(i)
Declaration	(vii)
Certificate of the Principal Supervisor	(viii)
Certificate of the External Examiner and ODEC	(ix)
Acknowledgements	(x)
Table of Contents	(xi)
List of Figures	(xxii)
List of Tables	(xxxiv)
List of Abbreviations	(xliii)
List of Publications	(xlvi)
Conference Proceedings	(xlvii)

Chapter No.	Contents of the Chapter	Page No.
CHAPTER 1	Motivation and Outline of the Thesis	1-8
1.1	Motivation of the present work	2-4
1.2	Outline of the thesis	4-6
1.3	Bibliography	6-8
CHAPTER 2	Introduction and Review of Literature	9-80
2.1	COVID-19 and SARS-CoV-2	10-13
2.2	History of coronaviruses	13-16
2.3	Symptoms and signs	16-18
2.4	Pathophysiology	18-23
2.5	Occurrence of COVID-19 and SARS-COV-2 variants	24-30
2.6	Diagnosis and treatment	31-33
2.7	SARS-CoV-2 Viral proteins	33-42
2.7.1	Introduction to Spike protein – Structure and function	33-35
2.7.2	Receptor of spike: ACE2 and S protein-ACE2 interaction	35-37
2.7.3	Alternative receptors of Spike	37-39
2.7.4	Introduction to Mpro – Function and Structure	39-41
2.7.5	Inhibition of Mpro	41-42
2.8	Scope of the Thesis	42-44
2.9	Main Objectives of the Thesis	44
2.10	Bibliography	45-80

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 3	Materials and Methods	81-131
3.1	Tools and Techniques	82
3.1.1	Molecular dynamics (MD) simulation	82
3.1.1.1	History of Simulation	82-83
3.1.1.2	Theory of molecular dynamics simulation	83-84
3.1.1.3	Force field	85-86
3.1.1.4	Long range interactions: Ewald sum	86-87
3.1.1.5	Dealing with molecules: SHAKE algorithm	87-88
3.1.1.6	Periodic Boundary conditions	88-89
3.1.1.7	Temperature and Pressure computation and control	89-90
3.1.1.8	Water molecule models	91-92
3.1.1.9	Molecular Dynamics steps	92-97
3.1.2	Potential of mean force (PMF)	97-98
3.1.2.1	Umbrella Sampling (US)	98-99
3.1.2.2	Running the umbrella sampling calculations	99-100
3.1.2.3	The weighted histogram analysis method(WHAM) for free-energy calculations	100-101
3.1.3	Molecular Docking	101
3.1.3.1	Patch Dock	102-103
3.1.3.2	ClusPro web server	104
3.1.3.3	HADDOCK Web Server	104-105
3.1.4	Binding free energy calculation using Molecular Mechanics energies combined with the Poisson-Boltzmann or Generalized Born and Surface Area continuum solvation method (MM- PBSA/GBSA)	106
3.1.4.1	Free energy calculation using Perl Script (mm_pbsa.pl)	106-108
3.1.4.2	Free energy decomposition using Python Script MMPBSA.py	108-109
3.1.5	Binding free energy calculation using webserver	109
3.1.5.1	Prodigy Webserver	109-111
3.1.5.2	HawkDock Webserver	111
3.1.6	Prediction of protein-protein / protein-ligand interaction using in-silico tools	112
3.1.6.1	PDBsum server	112-113
3.1.6.2	LIGPLOT tool	113-114
3.1.6.3	Mapiya - contact maps	114-116
3.1.7	Prediction of binding pocket analysis using CASTp Server	116-117

Table of Contents

3.1.8	Predicting Physicochemical Properties, secondary structure, Intrinsically Disordered regions, and Mutation Effects on Protein Stability	117-118
3.1.9	3-D structure visualization tools	118-119
3.1.10	3-D structure modelling tools	119
3.1.11	Analysis of trajectories	119-120
3.1.12	Bibliography	121-131
CHAPTER 4	Study on the salient structural features of SARS-CoV-2 Main protease (Mpro) and Spike protein (S protein) along with the conformational accessibility of S-protein	132-151
4.1	Abstract	133
4.2	Introduction	133-135
PART A		
4.3	Materials and methods	135
4.3.1	Data retrieval	135
4.3.2	Salient structural features analysis	135
4.3.2.1	Analysis of physicochemical parameter	135
4.3.2.2	Prediction of secondary structural changes	136
4.3.2.3	Identification of conserved residues	136
4.3.2.4	Intrinsically disordered protein prediction	136
4.4	Results and Discussions	136
4.4.1	Analysis of physicochemical parameter	136-137
4.4.2	Prediction of secondary structural changes	137-138
4.4.3	Identification of conserved residues	138
4.4.4	Intrinsically disordered protein prediction	139
4.5	Conclusion	139-140
PART B		
4.6	Materials and methods	140
4.6.1	Data retrieval	140-141
4.6.2	Salient structural features analysis	141
4.6.2.1	Analysis of physicochemical parameter	141
4.6.2.2	Prediction of secondary structural changes	141
4.6.2.3	Identification of conserved residues	141
4.6.2.4	Intrinsically disordered protein prediction	142

Table of Contents

4.6.2.5	Docking	142
4.6.2.6	Interaction study	142
4.6.2.7	Binding free energy calculation	142
4.7	Results and Discussions	142
4.7.1	Analysis of physicochemical parameter	142-143
4.7.2	Prediction of secondary structural changes in spike protein	143-144
4.7.3	Identification of conserved residues	144-145
4.7.4	Intrinsically disordered protein prediction	146
4.7.5	Determination of the interface interactions of the S protein-ACE2 complexes	147-148
4.7.6	Binding free energy (BFE) calculation	148-149
4.8	Conclusion	149
4.9	Bibliography	150-151
CHAPTER 5	Computational Investigation on the Efficiency of Small Molecule Inhibitors Identified from Indian Spices against SARS-CoV-2 Mpro	152-200
5.1	Abstract	153
5.2	Introduction	153-156
5.3	Materials and methods	156
5.3.1	Initial structure preparation and molecular docking	156
5.3.1.1	Preparation of receptor (SARS-CoV-2 Mpro)	156
5.3.1.2	Preparation of ligands	156
5.3.1.3	Preparation of the SARS-CoV-2 Mpro-ligand complexes	156-158
5.3.2	MD simulation of receptor-ligand complexes	159-159
5.3.3	PMF calculation	159-160
5.3.4	MD simulation of the structure with the lowest energy of the SARS-CoV-2 Mpro-small molecule inhibitor complexes	160
5.3.5	Binding free energy (BFE) analyses for the four SARS-CoV-2 Mpro-small molecule inhibitor complexes	161-162
5.3.6	Enthalpy calculations with MM-GBSA/PBSA	162
5.3.7	Conformational entropy calculation based on nmode	162-163
5.4	Results and Discussions	163
5.4.1	PMF profile of SARS-CoV-2 Mpro-ligand complexes	163-170
5.4.2	Salient structural features of the minimum PMF structure of the small molecule inhibitors-SARS-CoV-2 Mpro complex	170

Table of Contents

5.4.2.1	Molecular dynamics analysis	170
5.4.3	Stability profile analysis of the SARS-CoV-2 Mpro protein-ligand complexes	171
5.4.3.1	Root Mean Square Deviation (RMSD) analysis	171-172
5.4.3.2	Root Mean Square Fluctuation (RMSF) analysis	173
5.4.3.3	Radius of Gyration (Rg) analysis	173-174
5.4.3.4	Protein ligand contact profiles	174-183
5.4.3.5	Binding free energy (BFE) and per residue energy decomposition (PRED) analysis	183-189
5.4.3.6	The decomposition of residue	189-193
5.5	Conclusion	194
5.6	Bibliography	194-200
CHAPTER 6	Computational Design of Peptide Inhibitors targeting the SARS-CoV-2 Main Protease	201-247
6.1	Abstract	202
6.2	Introduction	202-204
6.3	Materials and methods	204
6.3.1	Initial structure preparation and molecular docking	204
6.3.1.1	Preparation of receptor (Mpro) and HDAC2	204-205
6.3.1.2	Preparation of the SARS-CoV-2 Mpro-HDAC2 complex	205-206
6.3.2	Determination of the protein-protein interface interactions of the (Mpro-HDAC2) complex	206-207
6.3.3	Designing of peptides	208-209
6.3.4	Preparation of the peptide-Mpro complexes	209-210
6.3.5	Screening of peptides	210
6.3.5.1	Toxicity	210-211
6.3.5.2	Binding affinity between the Mpro and Peptides	211-212
6.3.5.3	Interaction study between Mpro and Peptides	212-221
6.3.6	Absorption, Distribution, Metabolism, Excretion, and Toxicity (ADMET) analysis	222-223
6.3.7	MD simulation	223-225
6.3.8	Analysis of MD simulation trajectories	225-228
6.3.9	Binding Free energy calculations	228-229
6.4	Result and discussion	229
6.4.1	Root mean square deviation (RMSD)	229-230
6.4.2	Root mean square fluctuation (RMSF)	230-231

Table of Contents

6.4.3	Hydrogen bond analysis	231-237
6.4.5	Binding Free energy (BFE) and per residue energy decomposition (PRED) analysis	237-239
6.5	Conclusion	239-240
6.6	Bibliography	240-247
CHAPTER 7	Effect of Double Mutation (L452R and E484Q) in RBD of Spike Protein on its Interaction with ACE2 Receptor Protein	248-277
7.1	Abstract	249
7.2	Introduction	249-251
7.3	Materials and methods	251
7.3.1	Molecular dynamics simulations.	251-252
7.3.2	Binding free energy calculations.	252-254
7.4	Results and Discussion	254
7.4.1	MD simulation	254
7.4.1.1	RMSD analysis.	255-258
7.4.1.2	RMSF analysis.	258
7.4.1.3	Hydrogen bond analysis.	259
7.4.1.4	Determination of the interface interactions of the S protein (WT)-ACE2 and S protein (DM)-ACE2 complexes.	259-270
7.4.1.5	Binding Free energy and per residue energy decomposition (PRED) analysis.	270-272
7.5	Conclusion	272-273
7.6	Bibliography	273-277
CHAPTER 8	Impact of mutations in the SARS-CoV-2 spike RBD region of Delta and Delta-Plus variants on its interaction with ACE2 Receptor Protein	278-312
8.1	Abstract	279
8.2	Introduction	279-281
8.3	Materials and methods	281
8.3.1	Molecular dynamics simulations.	281-282
8.3.2	Binding free energy calculations.	282-283
8.4	Results and Discussion	283

Table of Contents

8.4.1	MD simulation	283
8.4.1.1	RMSD analysis.	283-286
8.4.1.2	RMSF analysis.	287
8.4.1.3	Hydrogen bond analysis.	287-292
8.4.1.4	Determination of the interface interactions of the S protein (Delta)-ACE2) and (S protein (Delta-Plus)-ACE2 complexes.	292-303
8.4.1.5	Binding Free energy and per residue energy decomposition (PRED) analysis.	303-306
8.5	Conclusion	307
8.6	Bibliography	307-312
CHAPTER 9	Impact of mutations in the SARS-CoV-2 spike RBD region of BA.1 and BA.2 variants on its interaction with ACE2 Receptor Protein	313-359
9.1	Abstract	314
9.2	Introduction	314-316
9.3	Materials and methods	316-317
9.3.1	Molecular dynamics simulations.	317-319
9.3.2	Binding free energy calculations.	319-320
9.4	Results and Discussion	320
9.4.1	MD simulation	320
9.4.1.1	RMSD analysis.	320-323
9.4.1.2	RMSF analysis.	324
9.4.1.3	Hydrogen bond analysis.	324-336
9.4.1.4	Determination of the interface interactions of the S protein (BA.1)-ACE2) and (S protein (BA.2)-ACE2 complexes.	336-350
9.4.1.5	Binding Free energy and per residue energy decomposition (PRED) analysis.	350-352
9.5	Conclusion	353
9.6	Bibliography	354-359
CHAPTER 10	Computational investigation on the impact of mutations in the SARS-CoV-2 spike RBD region of BA.2.12.1 and BA.4 variants on its interaction with ACE2 Receptor Protein	360-401

Table of Contents

10.1	Abstract	361
10.2	Introduction	361-362
10.3	Materials and methods	362
10.3.1	Preparation of initial structures and docking.	362-363
10.3.2.	Physiochemical parameter analysis	363
10.3.3.	Secondary structure prediction in spike protein of BA.2.12.1 and BA.4 variants	364
10.3.4.	Identification of conserved residues and mutation	364
10.3.5.	Intrinsically disordered protein prediction	364
10.3.6.	Molecular Dynamics Simulations	364-365
10.3.7.	Binding Free energy calculations	365-366
10.4.	Results and Discussion	366
10.4.1.	Physiochemical properties evaluated using ExPASy ProtParam	366-367
10.4.2.	Prediction of secondary structural changes in spike protein	367-368
10.4.3.	Identification of conserved residues and mutation	368-369
10.4.4.	Intrinsically disordered protein prediction	369-370
10.4.5.	MD simulation of the BA.4 and B.A.2.12.1 variant of SARS-CoV-2 spike receptor-binding domain bound with ACE2.	370-371
10.4.5.1.	RMSD Analysis.	371-372
10.4.5.2.	RMSF Analysis	372-373
10.4.5.3.	Hydrogen bond Analysis	374-382
10.4.5.4.	Determination of the interface interactions of the S protein (BA.4)-ACE2 and (S protein (BA.2.12.1)-ACE2 complexes.	382-394
10.4.5.5.	Binding Free energy and per residue energy decomposition (PRED) analysis.	395-397
10.5.	Conclusions	397
10.6	Bibliography	397-401
CHAPTER 11	Computational investigation on the Physio-chemical, Structural and Binding features of BA.2.75 and BA.2.75.2 Omicron variants of SARS-CoV-2	402-449
11.1	Abstract	403

Table of Contents

11.2	Introduction	403-404
11.3	Materials and methods	405
11.3.1	Data retrieval	405
11.3.2	Analysis of physicochemical parameter	405
11.3.3	Prediction of secondary structural changes in spike protein	405
11.3.4	Identification of conserved residues	405
11.3.5	Intrinsically disordered protein prediction	405
11.3.6	Prediction of protein stability	405
11.3.7	Protein-Protein interaction of the RBD of Spike protein (BA.2.75/BA.2.75.2)-ACE2 complexes	406
11.3.8	Effect of mutations on Protein functioning	407
11.3.9	Molecular Dynamics (MD) simulations.	407
11.3.10	Binding free energy calculations.	408
11.4.	Results and Discussion	408
11.4.1	Determination of physical parameters of the proteins	408
11.4.2	Mutations on the BA.2.75 and BA.2.75.2 spike protein	409
11.4.3	Prediction of secondary structural changes	409-410
11.4.4	Identification of conserved residues and mutation	410
11.4.5	Intrinsically disordered prediction	410-418
11.4.6	Prediction of protein stability changes upon mutation	418-420
11.4.7	Determination of the interface interactions of the S protein (BA.2.75)-ACE2 and S protein (BA.2.75.2)-ACE2 complex.	420-428
11.4.8	Effect of protein functioning upon mutations	429-431
11.4.9	Salient structural features of RBD of spike protein (BA.2.75 and BA.2.75.2) when bound to ACE2 from MD simulation.	431
11.4.9.1	RMSD analysis.	431-434
11.4.9.2	RMSF analysis.	434-435
11.4.9.3.	Hydrogen bond analysis.	435-439
11.4.9.4.	Binding Free energy (BFE) and per residue energy decomposition (PRED) analysis.	440-443
11.5	Conclusion	443
11.6	Bibliography	444-449

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 12	Efficiency of CAT and L-SIGN as alternative or co-receptors for SARS-CoV-2 Spike Protein	450-490
12.1	Abstract	451
12.2	Introduction	451-454
12.3	Materials and methods	454
12.3.1.	Online resources	454
12.3.2.	Protein structures prediction	454
12.3.3.	Preparation of SARS-CoV-2 RBD of S Protein-Receptor complexes	454-455
12.3.4.	Molecular Dynamics Simulations.	455
12.3.5.	Analysis of MD simulation trajectories	456-457
12.3.6.	Binding Free energy calculations.	457
12.4.	Results and Discussion	457
12.4.1.	MD Simulation analysis	457
12.4.1.1.	RMSD Analysis.	458
12.4.1.2.	RMSF Analysis	458-459
12.4.1.3.	Hydrogen bond Analysis	460-470
12.4.1.4.	Determination of the protein-protein interface interactions of the (S protein-L-SIGN) and (S protein-CAT) complexes.	470-482
12.4.1.5.	Binding Free energy.	482
12.4.1.6.	Per residue energy decomposition (PRED) analysis	483-484
12.5.	Conclusion	484-485
12.6	Bibliography	485-490
CHAPTER 13	Summary and Future Prospects	491-494
13.1	Overview of Results	492-493
13.2	Future Prospects	493-494
	Publications (First Page)	