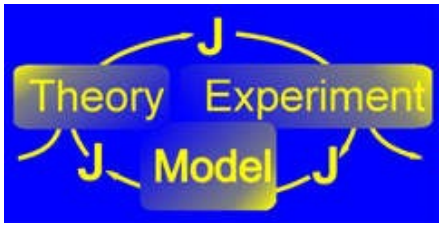
Overview of Research Activities

Prof Johann Rohwer

Laboratory for Molecular Systems Biology
Department of Biochemistry
Stellenbosch University
South Africa



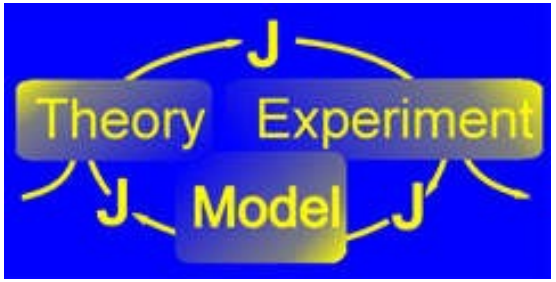
Biochemistry Honours Students
23 March 2018

Theory

- generalised supply-demand analysis
- rate equations for modelling
- symbolic MCA
- *in vitro vs. in vivo* kinetics

Experiment

- NMR “metabolomics”
  - *in vivo, in situ, in vitro* metabolite measurements
- enzyme kinetics for modelling
  - *in vivo* enzyme kinetics
  - pH, macromolecular crowding



Model

- development of software (PySCeS, psctb, SymCA, RateChar)
- kinetic models of cellular systems
  - microbial energy metabolism
  - cellular redoxin networks (with Dr C Pillay, UKZN)
  - plant metabolism
  - glucocorticoid receptor dimerisation (with Prof A Louw)

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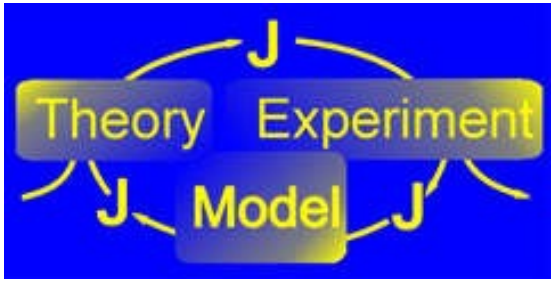

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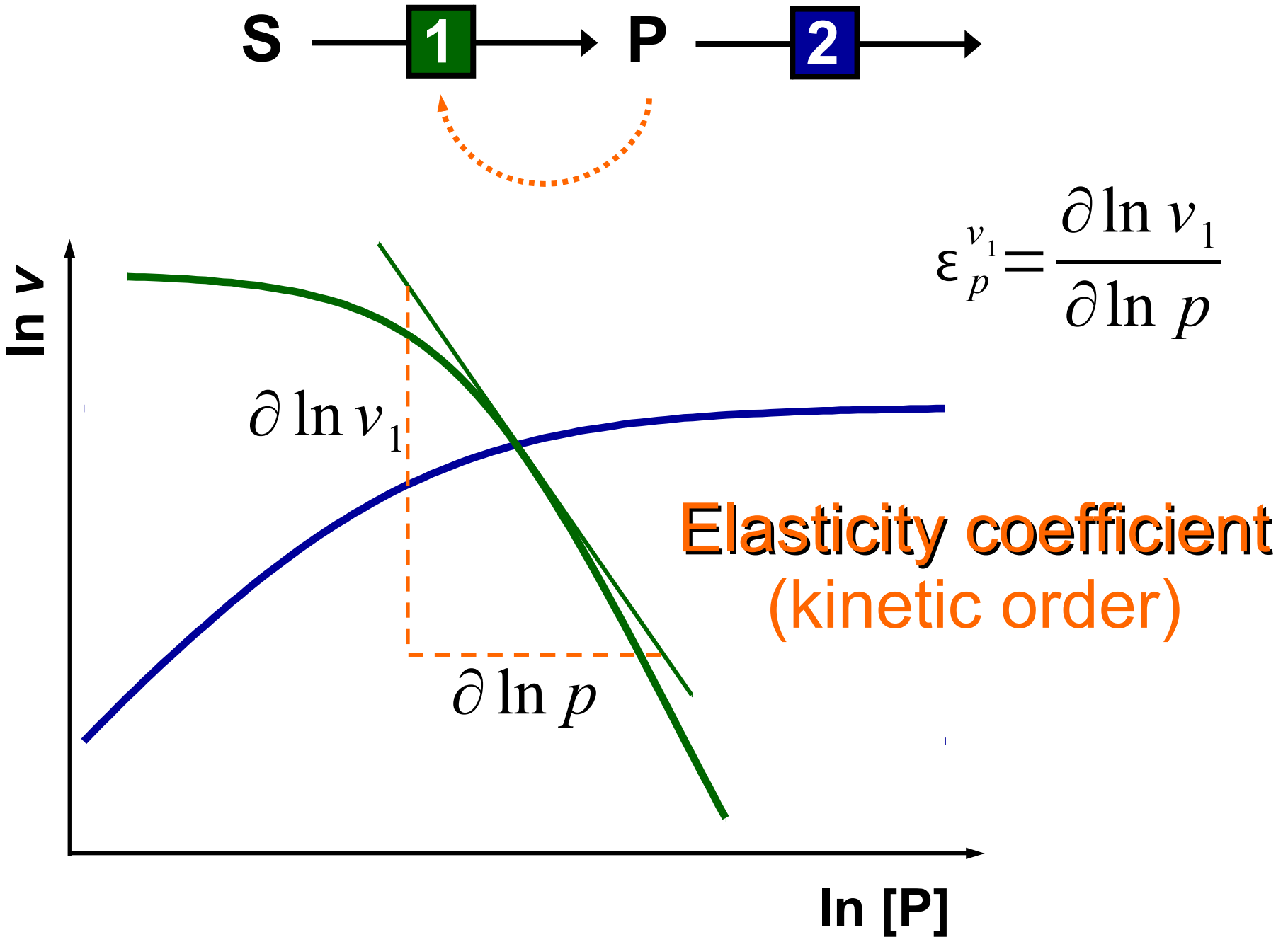
Theory: Example

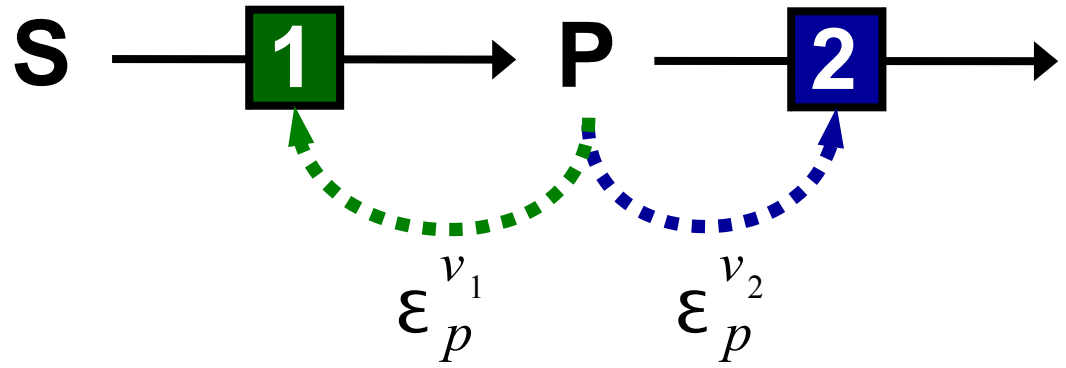
Generalised
supply-demand analysis



$$\varepsilon_p^{v_1} = \frac{\partial \ln v_1}{\partial \ln p}$$

Elasticity coefficient
(kinetic order)

Control analytic expressions



$$C_1^J = \frac{\varepsilon_p^{v_2}}{\varepsilon_p^{v_2} - \varepsilon_p^{v_1}} \qquad C_2^J = \frac{-\varepsilon_p^{v_1}}{\varepsilon_p^{v_2} - \varepsilon_p^{v_1}}$$

$$C_1^p = \frac{1}{\varepsilon_p^{v_2} - \varepsilon_p^{v_1}} \qquad C_2^p = \frac{-1}{\varepsilon_p^{v_2} - \varepsilon_p^{v_1}}$$

Problems with SDA

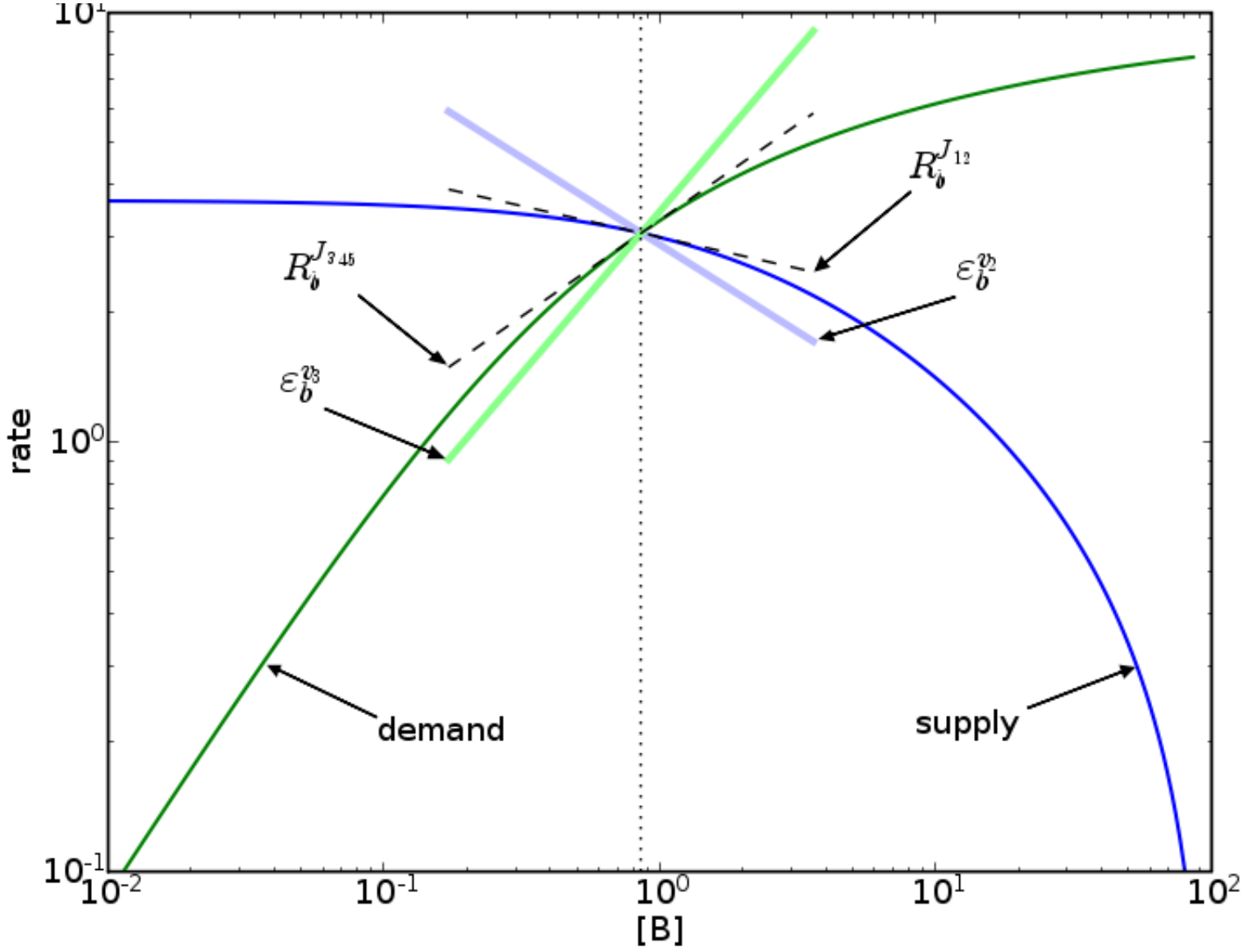
- Where to split system? Choice of intermediate
- Need for a generalised, programmatic, unbiased approach

Generalised supply-demand analysis

- Clamp each variable species of a model in turn and vary above/below steady-state value
- Plot fluxes through supply and demand reactions in log-log rate characteristic
- Compare elasticities and response coefficients

SDA around B


S
1
A
2
B
3
C
4
D
5
P

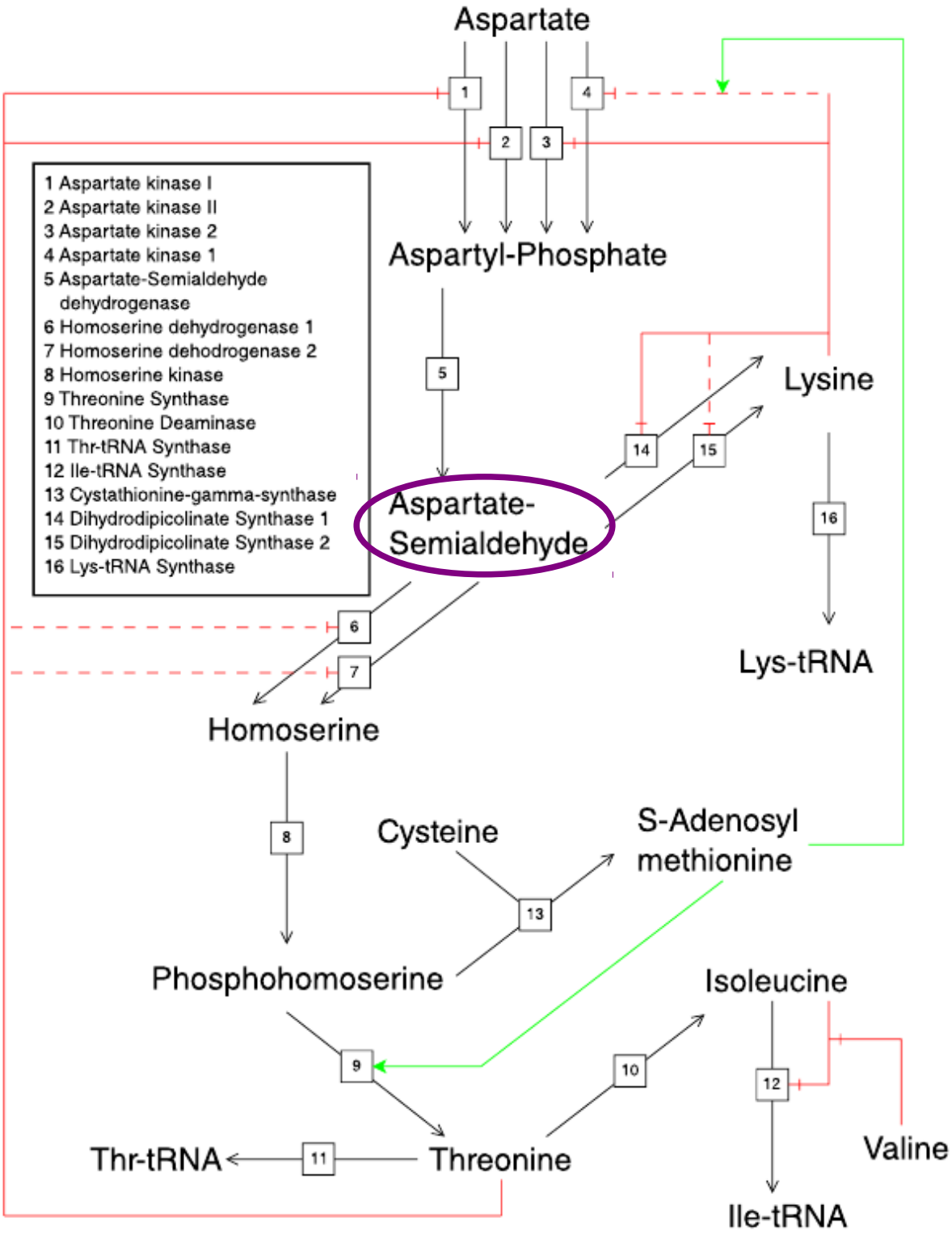

rate
[B]
demand
supply
$R_b^{J_{12}}$
$R_b^{J_{345}}$
$\varepsilon_b^{v_2}$
$\varepsilon_b^{v_3}$
10^{-2}
10^{-1}
10^{0}
10^{1}
10^{2}
10^{0}
10^{-1}

What can GSDA tell us?

- Potential sites of regulation
- $R = \varepsilon \neq 0$ → regulatory metabolite
- $R \to 0, \varepsilon \to 0$ → functional differentiation
- Different routes of communication quantified

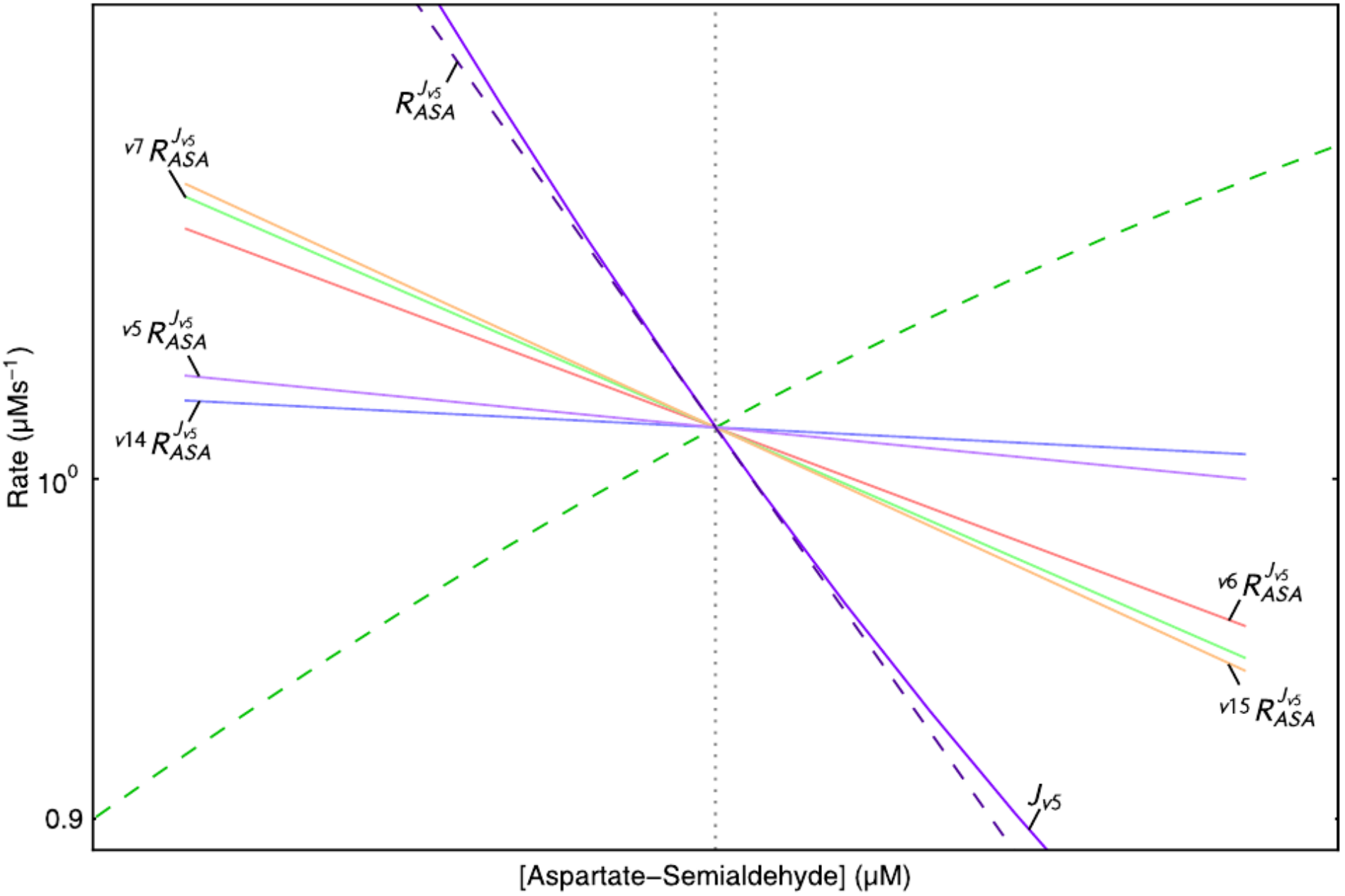
Rohwer & Hofmeyr, J. Theor. Biol. (2008)

“Real” model

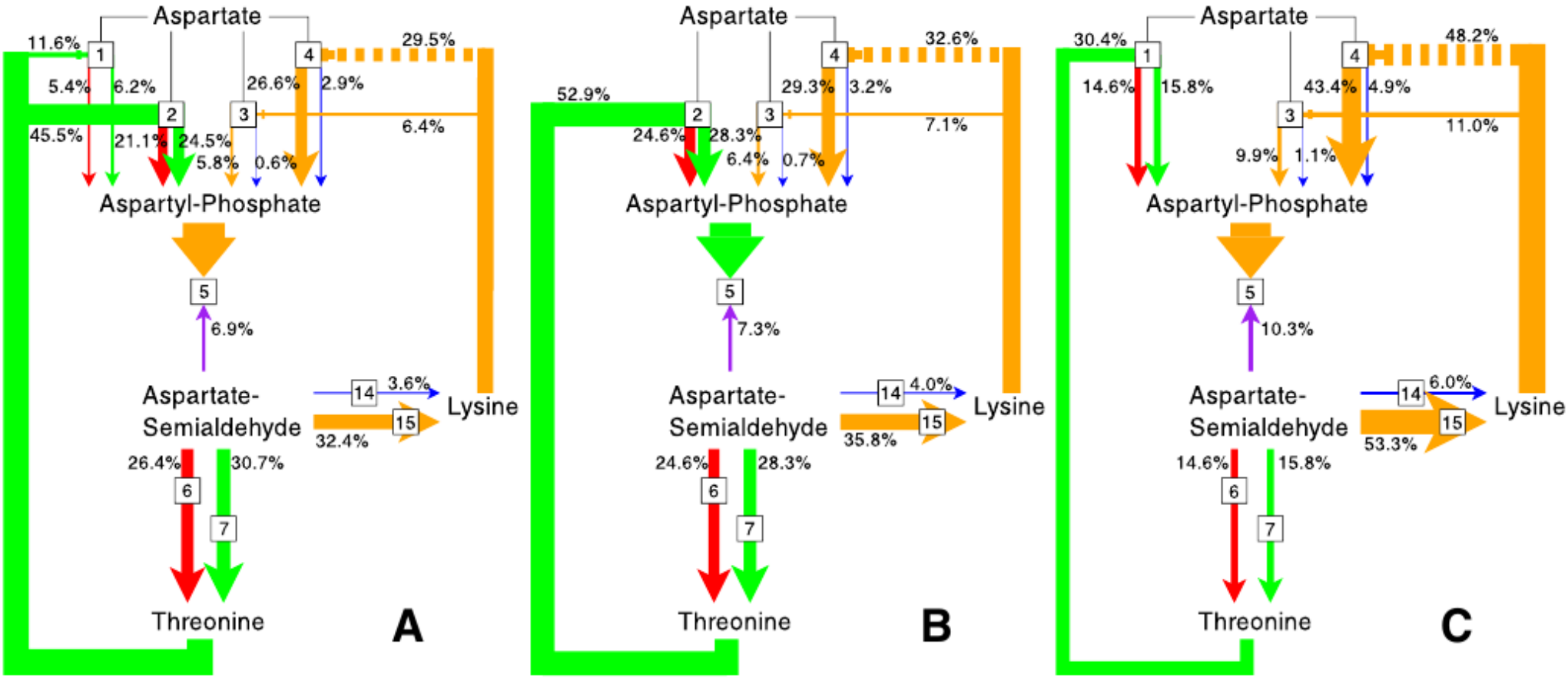


Curien *et al.* (2009, 2010)

GSDA around ASA



Knockout mutants



wild-type

AK I knockout

AK II knockout

Christensen, Hofmeyr & Rohwer (2015)

Ongoing work

- Application to various “real-life” models
- Integration with symbolic MCA and enzyme kinetics/regulation
- Development of visualisation tools
- Extension of PySCeS
  - PySCeS toolbox (psctb) – live demo!
    - RateChar
    - SymCA
    - thermokin
    - Christensen, Hofmeyr & Rohwer (2018) Bioinformatics

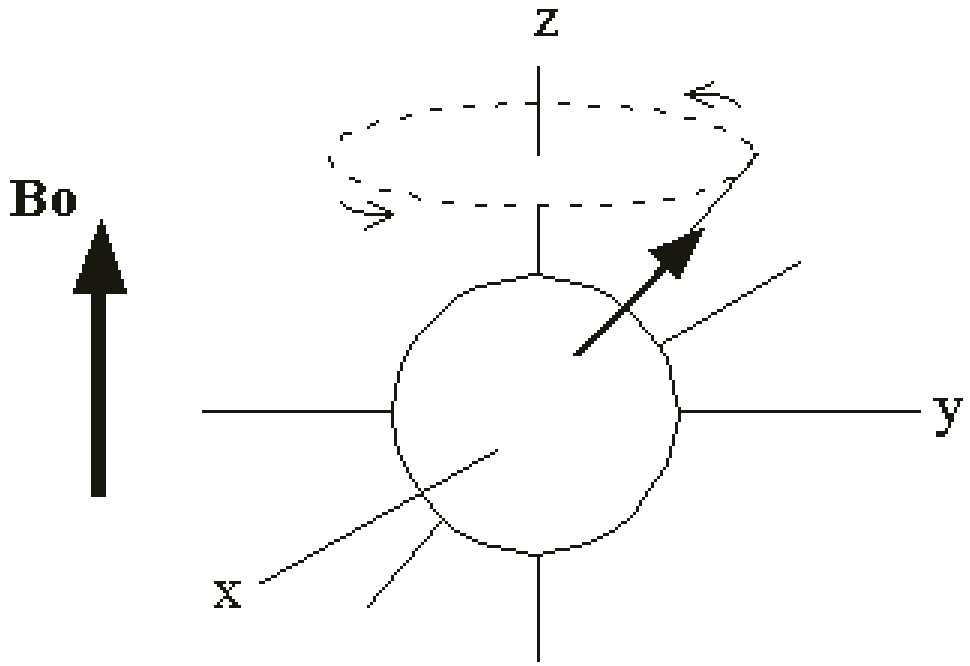
People

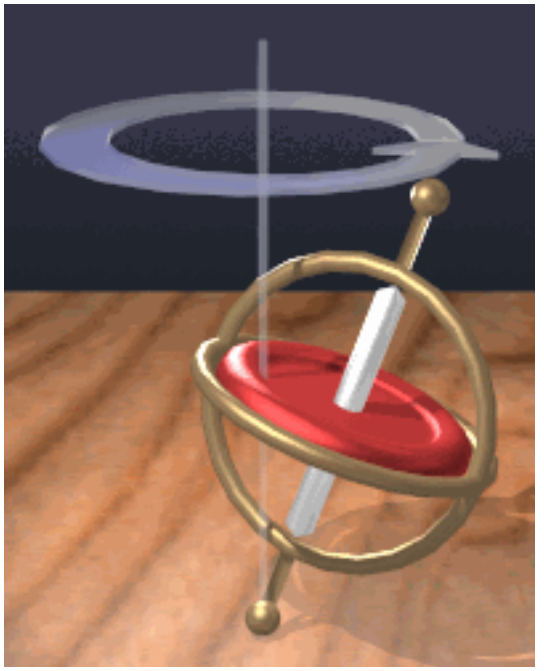
- Academic staff
  - Prof Jannie Hofmeyr
  - Dr Stefan van der Walt
- Students
  - Theo van Staden (Hons 2009)
  - Carl Christensen (Hons 2010, MSc 2011-2012, PhD 2013-2016, post-doc 2016-2017)

Experiment: Example

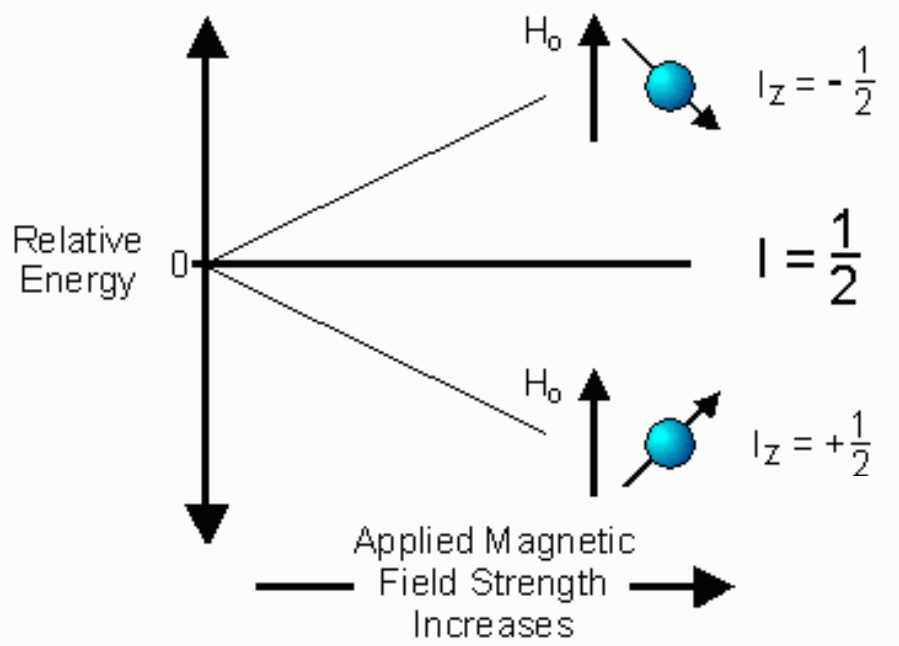
Enzyme kinetics for modelling by NMR spectroscopy
("*In vivo* enzyme kinetics")

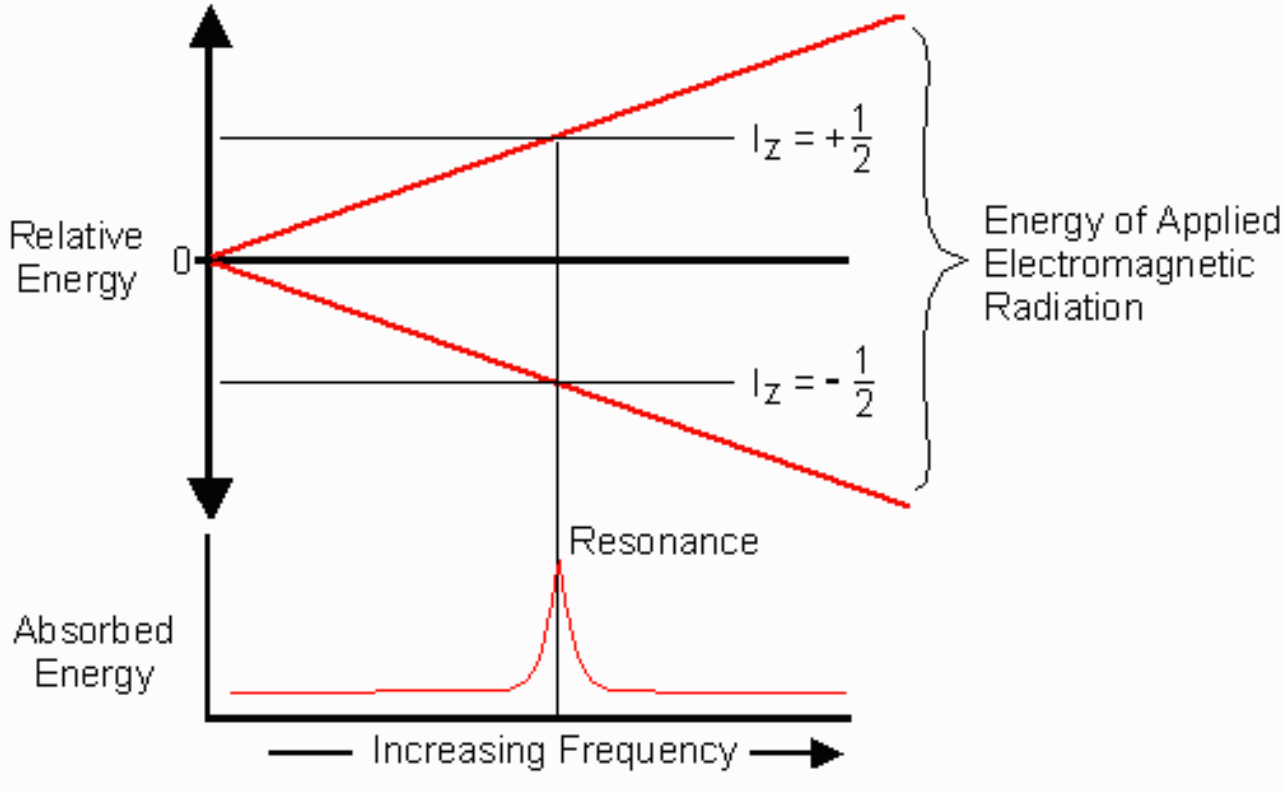
Brief NMR introduction: Nucleus in magnetic field



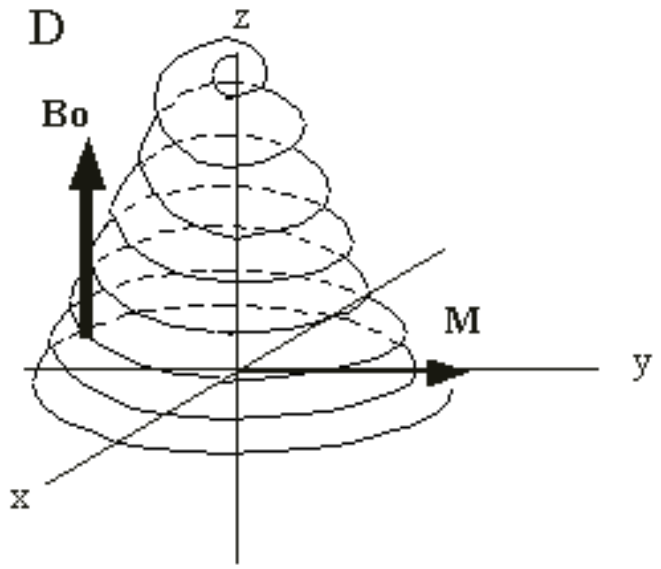


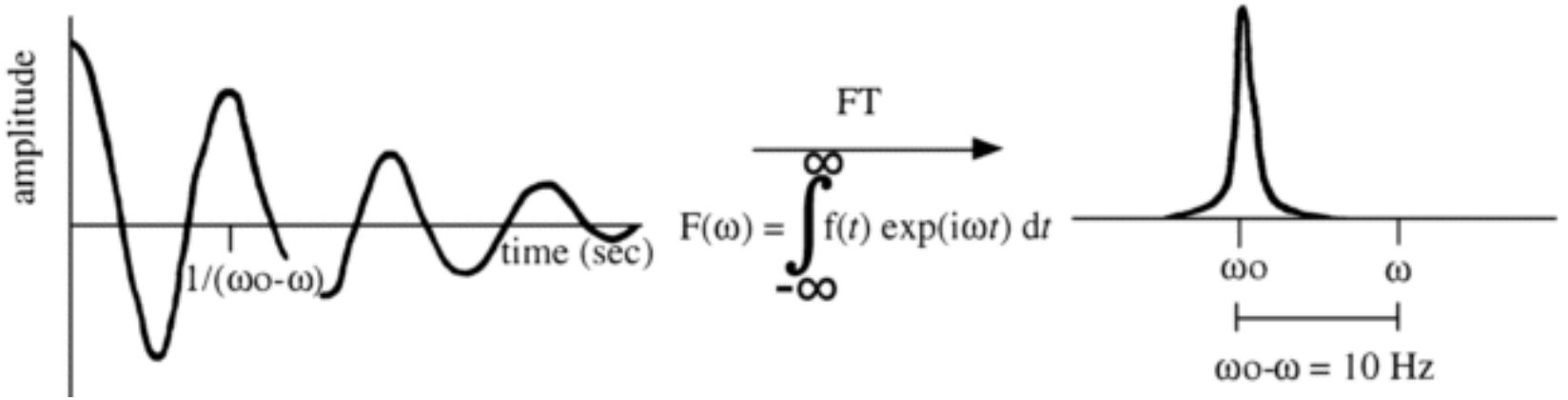
Split in energy levels





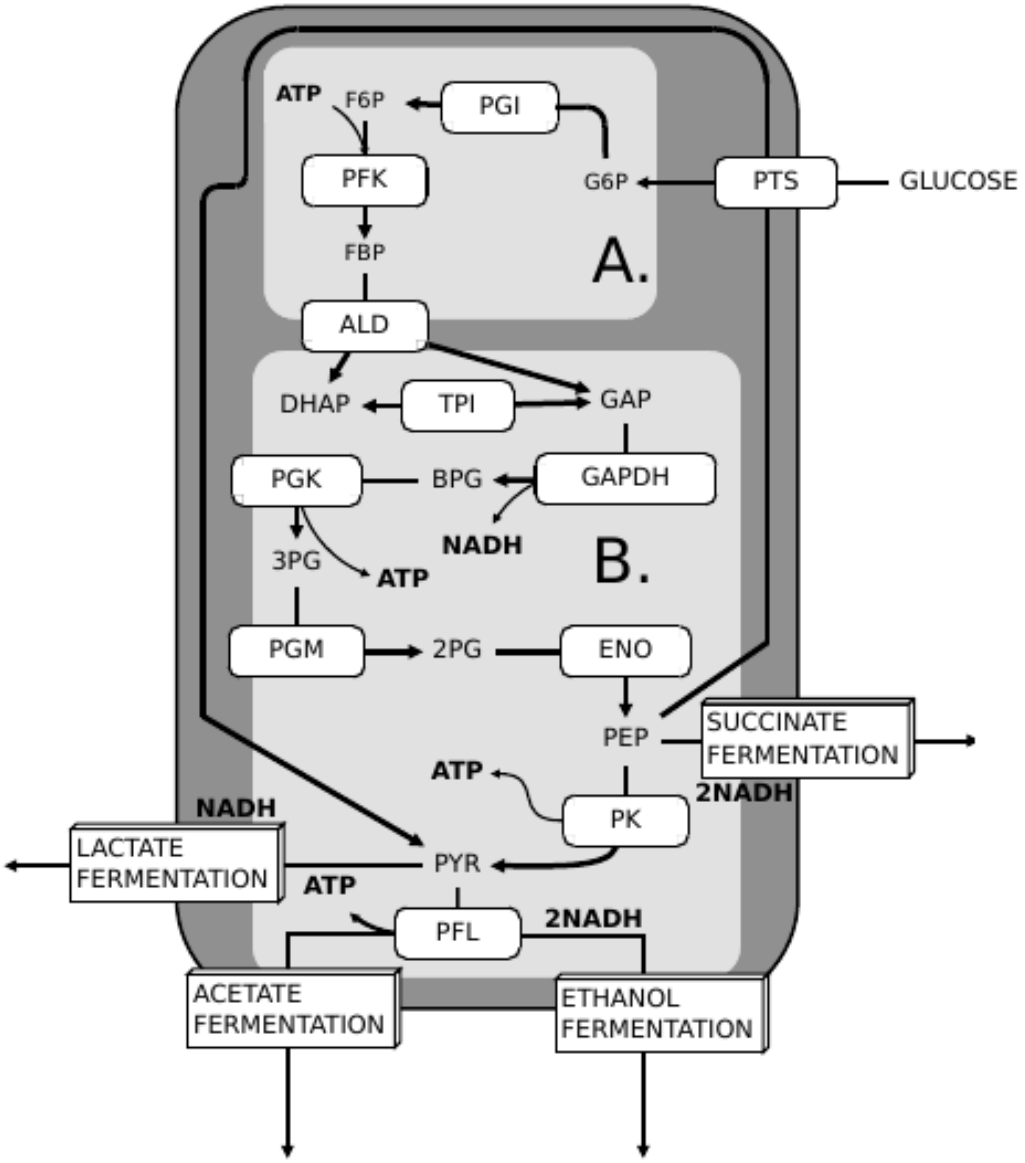
Relaxation and Fourier Transform





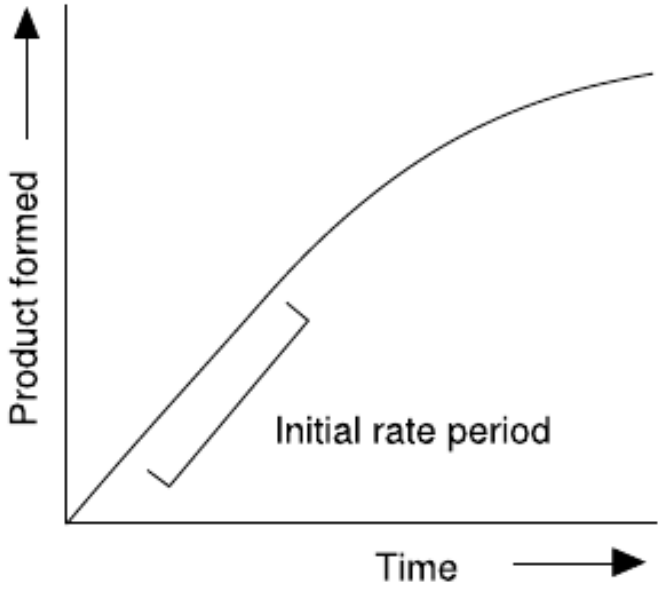
E. coli central carbon metabolism

- Mixed acid fermentation provides substrate and O_2 flexibility
- PhosphoTransferase System
- PFL vs. PDHC

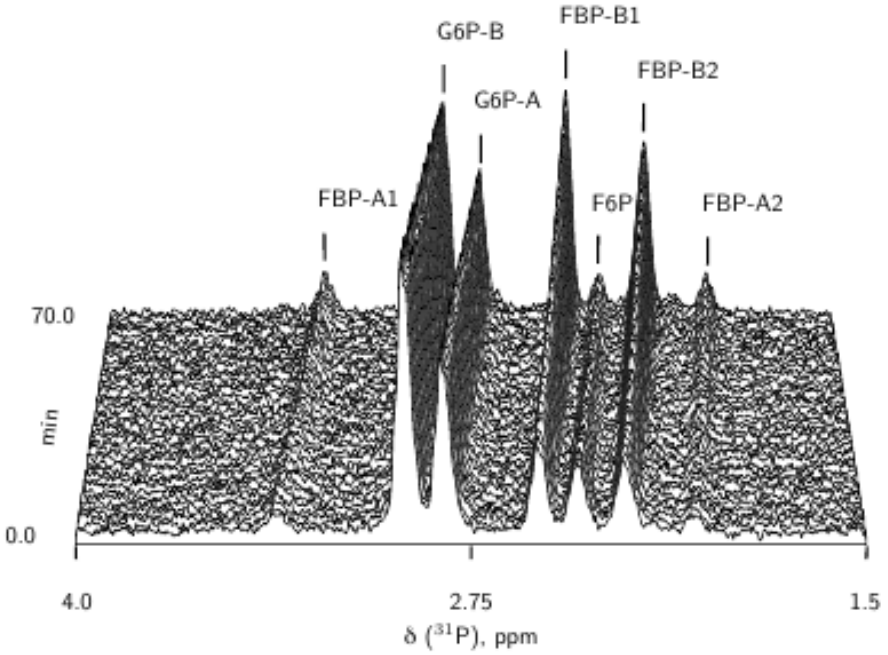


Why use NMR?

Initial rate assays

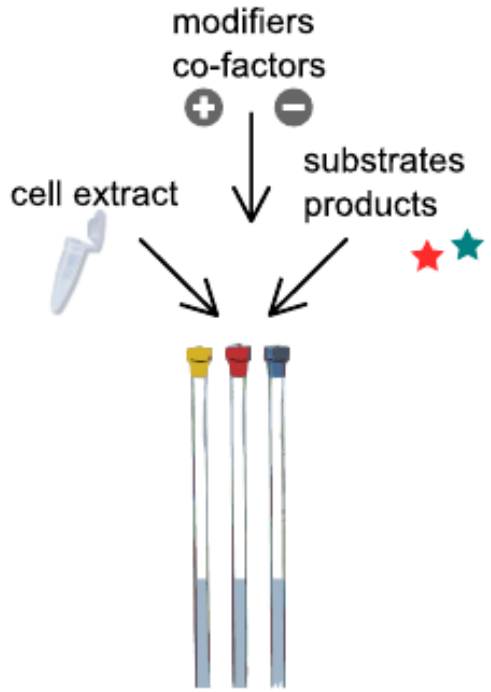


NMR progress curve assays

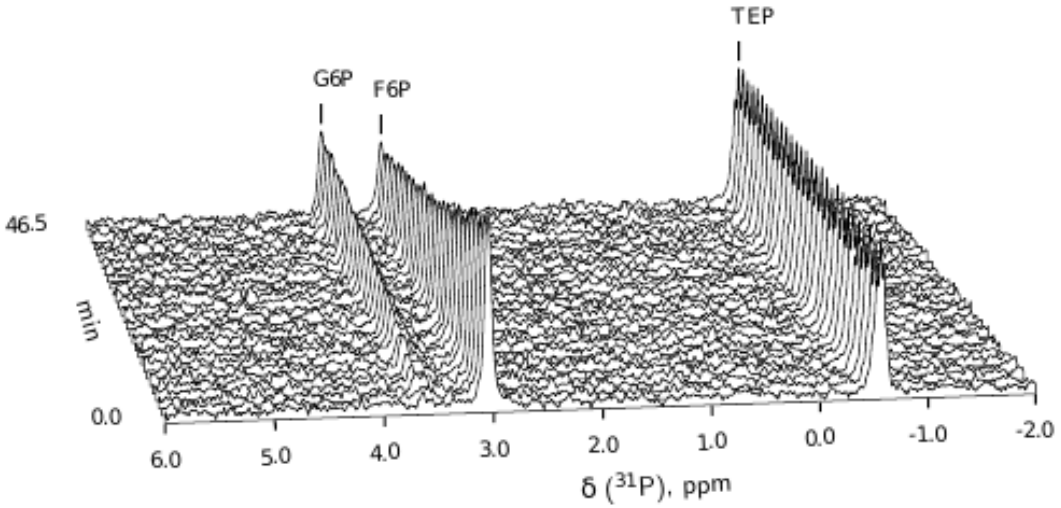


Workflow

1. Incubate, possibly supplementing with ^{13}C-labelled substrate

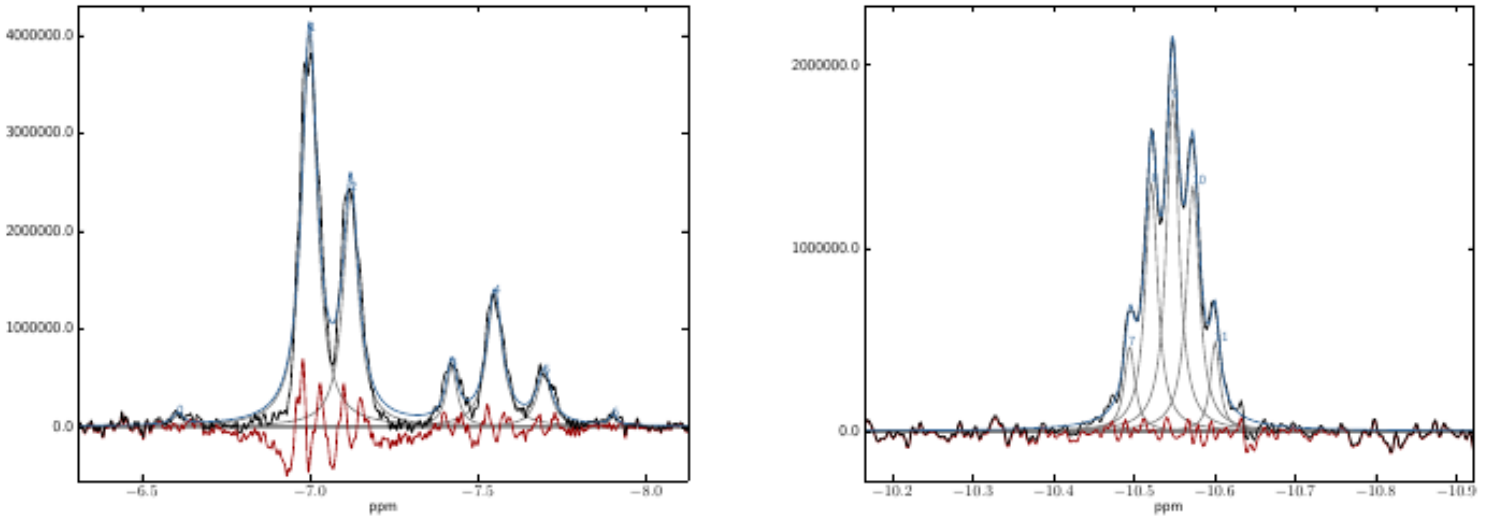


2. Acquire time series of NMR spectra



Workflow (2)

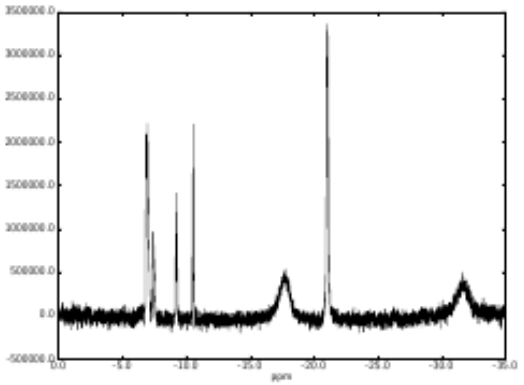
3. Deconvolute spectra to determine peak area

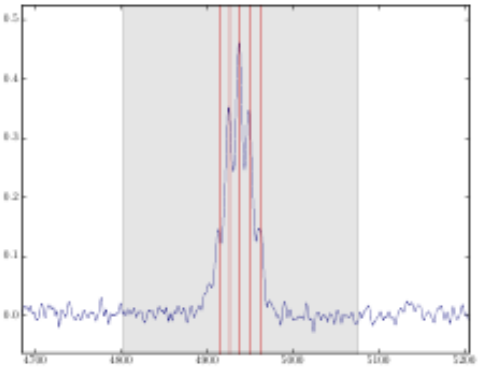


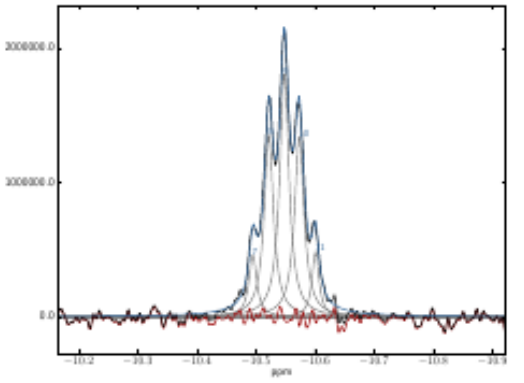
4. Fit splines to concentration time-courses, determine rates
5. Global fit of data to parameterise rate equation

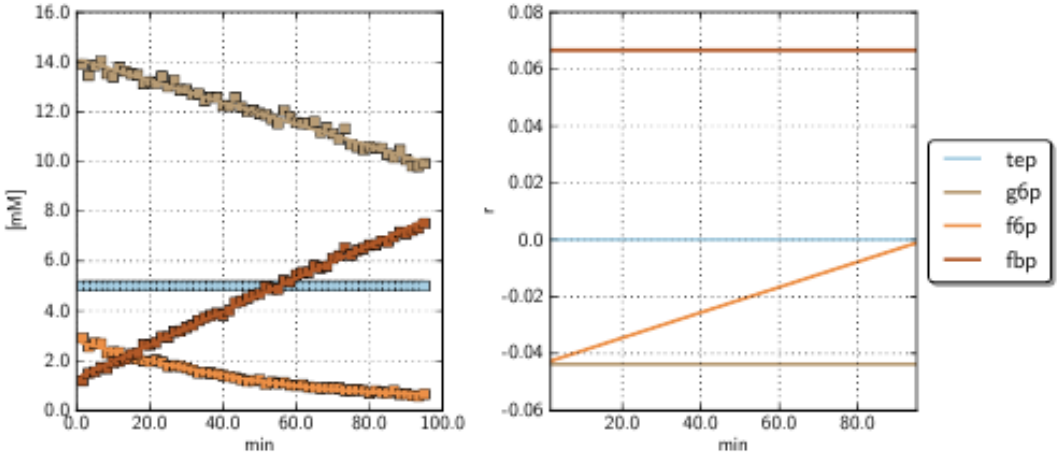
NMRPy

- Python NMR processing software suite
- no adequate software (proprietary or free)
- functionality:
  - processing, integration and deconvolution
  - arrayed spectra
  - interactive or batch processing
  - visualisation
- https://github.com/jeicher/NMRPy

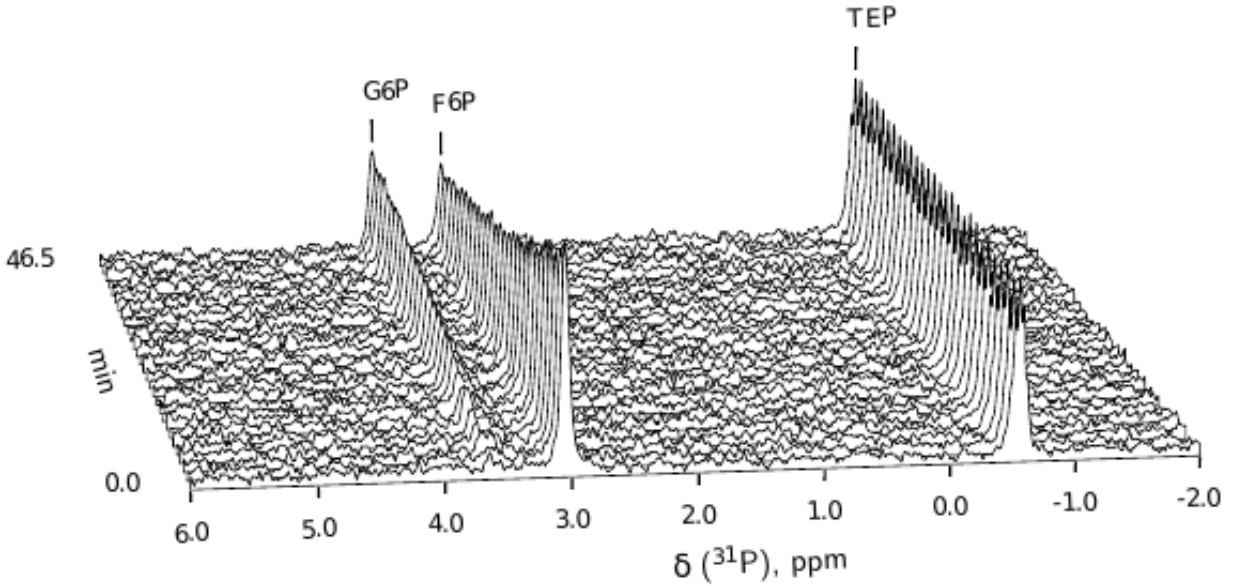


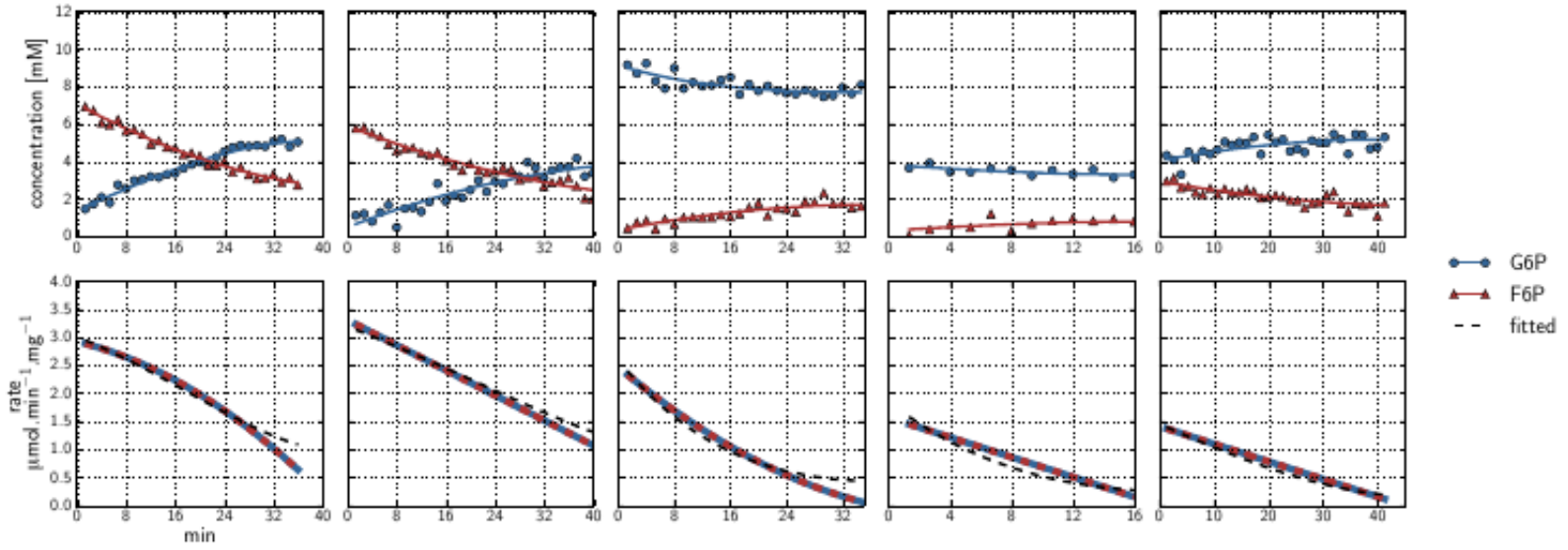




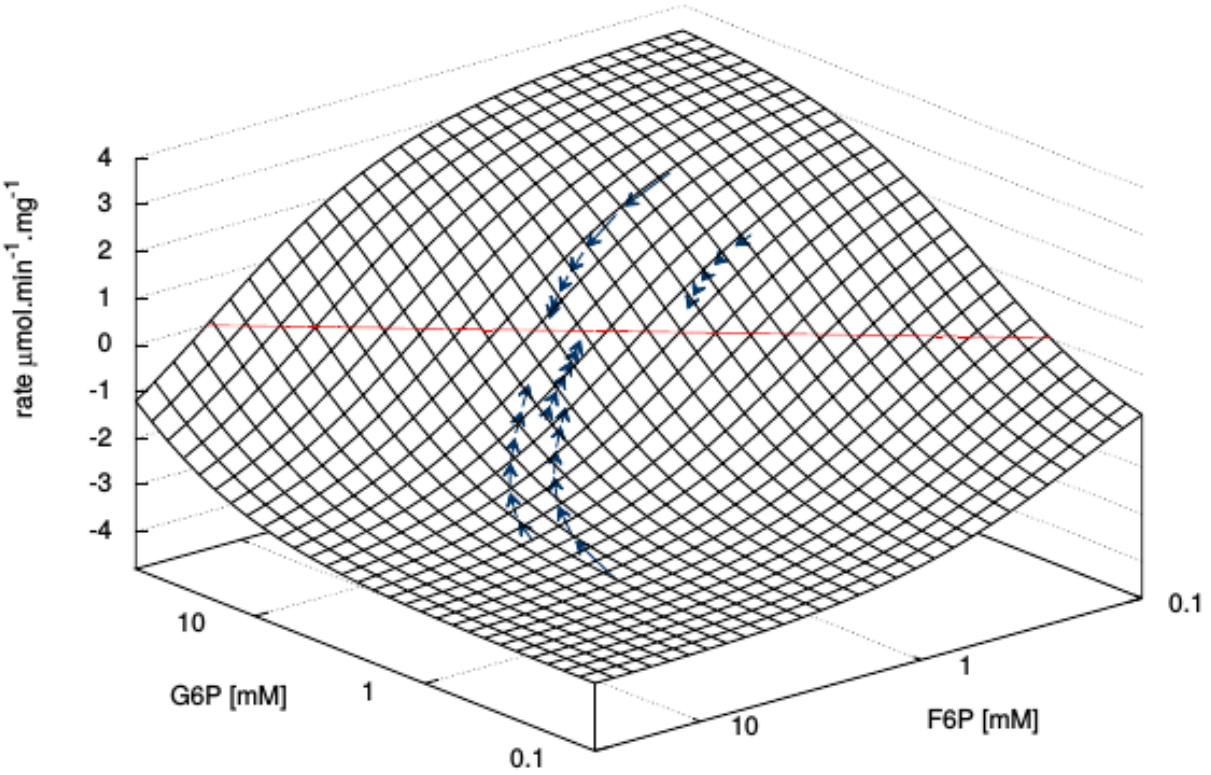


^{31}P-NMR time-course and spline-fitting of PGI





Rate equation fitting to PGI data



$$v = V_f \frac{g6p\left(1 - \frac{\Gamma}{K_{eq}}\right)}{1 + g6p + f6p}$$

Fitted parameters:

Param.	Value
V_f	3.551 ± 0.050
$G6P_{0.5}$	0.550 ± 0.236
$F6P_{0.5}$	0.152 ± 0.017
K_{eq}	$0.286 \pm 8 \times 10^{-6}$

(rates: $\mu mol.min^{-1}.mg^{-1}$)
(concentrations: mM)

People

- Students who have completed their degrees
  - Christiaan Crous, MSc (*Z. mobilis* SDA)
  - Sandra Alberts, MSc (*L. lactis* SDA)
  - Justin Smith, MSc (*S. cerevisiae* SDA & kinetics)
  - Johann Eicher, PhD (*E. coli* SDA, kinetics & modelling)
- Academic staff
  - Prof Jacky Snoep

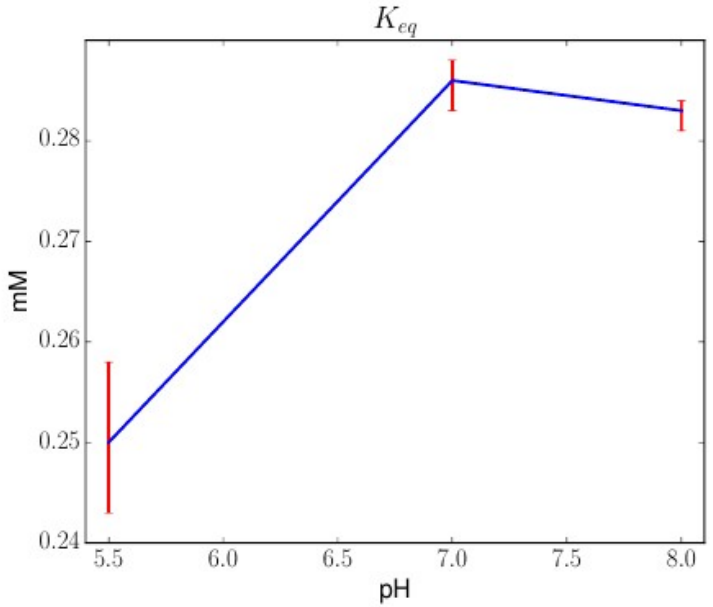
Ongoing work

- Question: are kinetic measurements in the *test tube* a realistic representation of *conditions in the cell*?
- Investigate "*in vivo*" enzyme kinetics
  - effect of macromolecular crowding
    - intracellular environment has very little accessible solvent space, [protein] = 250 mg/ml
  - effect of pH changes
    - intracellular pH not as constant as always thought, signal?
- *E. coli* and *S. cerevisiae* glycolytic enzymes

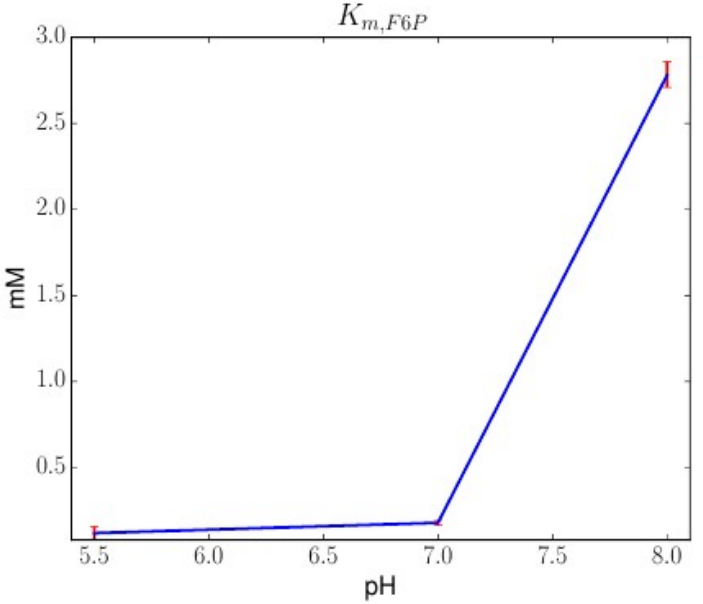
Current Students

- Z. mobilis kinetics and modelling
  - Theo v. Staden, PhD (*Z. mobilis* kinetics & modelling)
- Macromolecular crowding
  - Julian Wissing, MSc
- pH effect on kinetics and modelling
  - Tiaan Swanepoel, MSc (Mar 2018), PhD

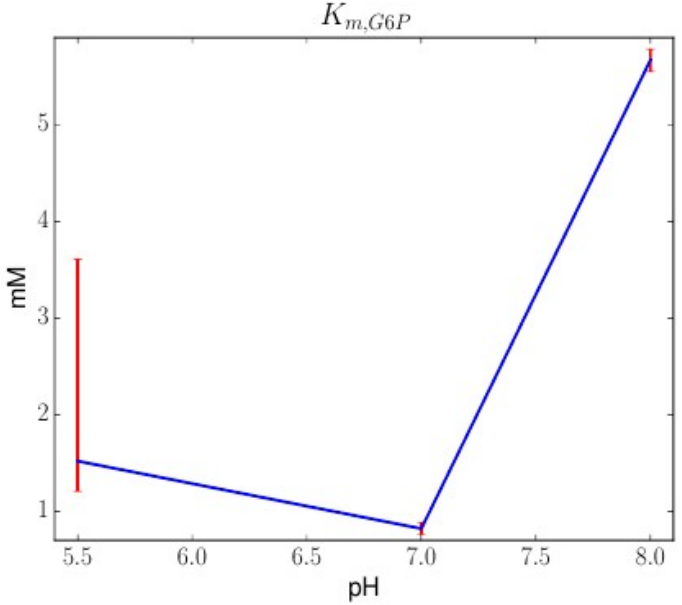
Effect of pH on PGI kinetics



(a)



(b)



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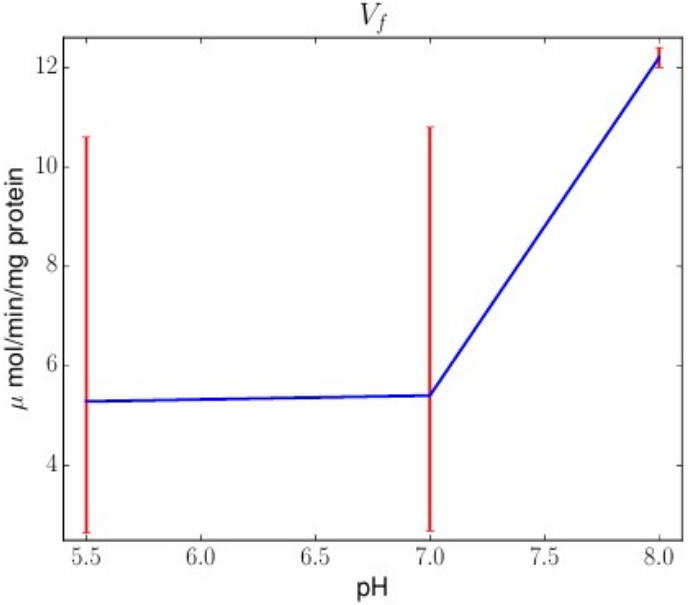


(d)

T. Swanepoel
MSc thesis (2018)

Model: Example

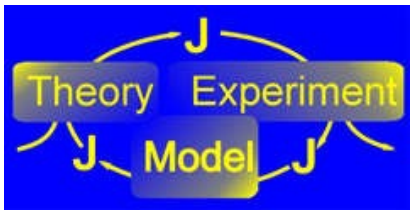
Modelling cellular redoxin networks

Johann Rohwer

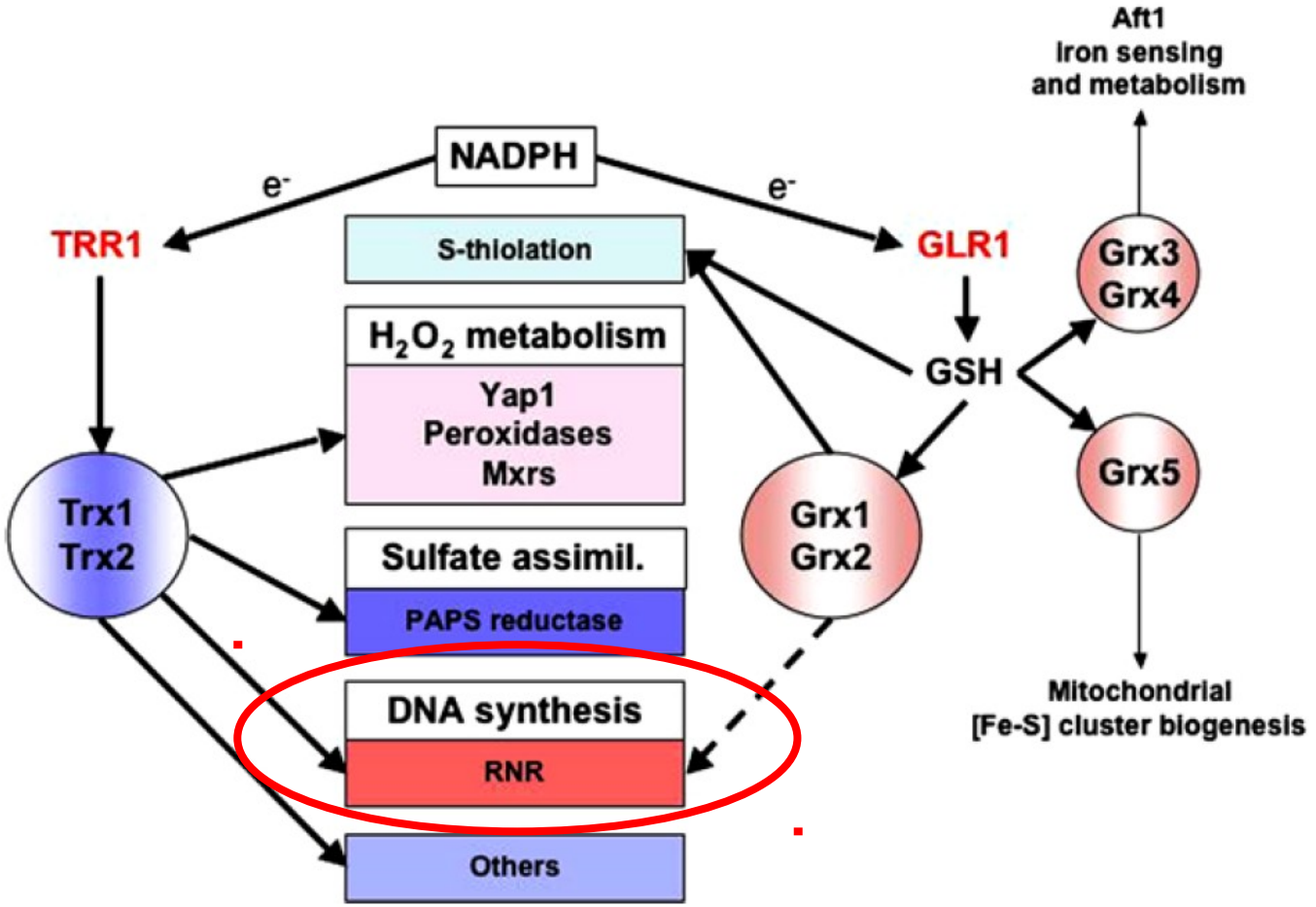
Laboratory for Mol. Systems Biology
Dept. of Biochemistry
Stellenbosch University
South Africa

Ché Pillay

School of Life Sciences
UKZN
Pietermaritzburg
South Africa

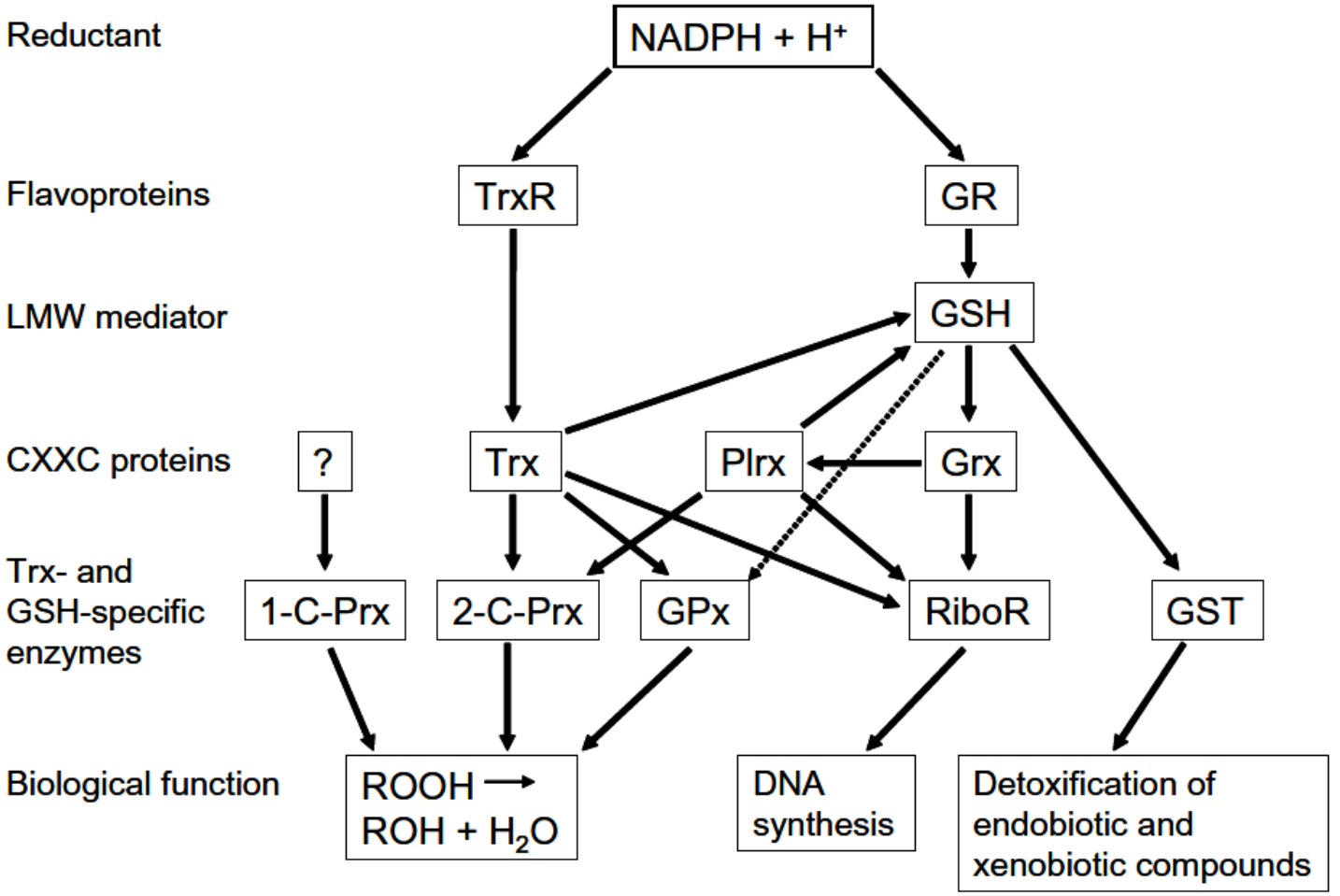


Redoxin networks are essential for all living organisms



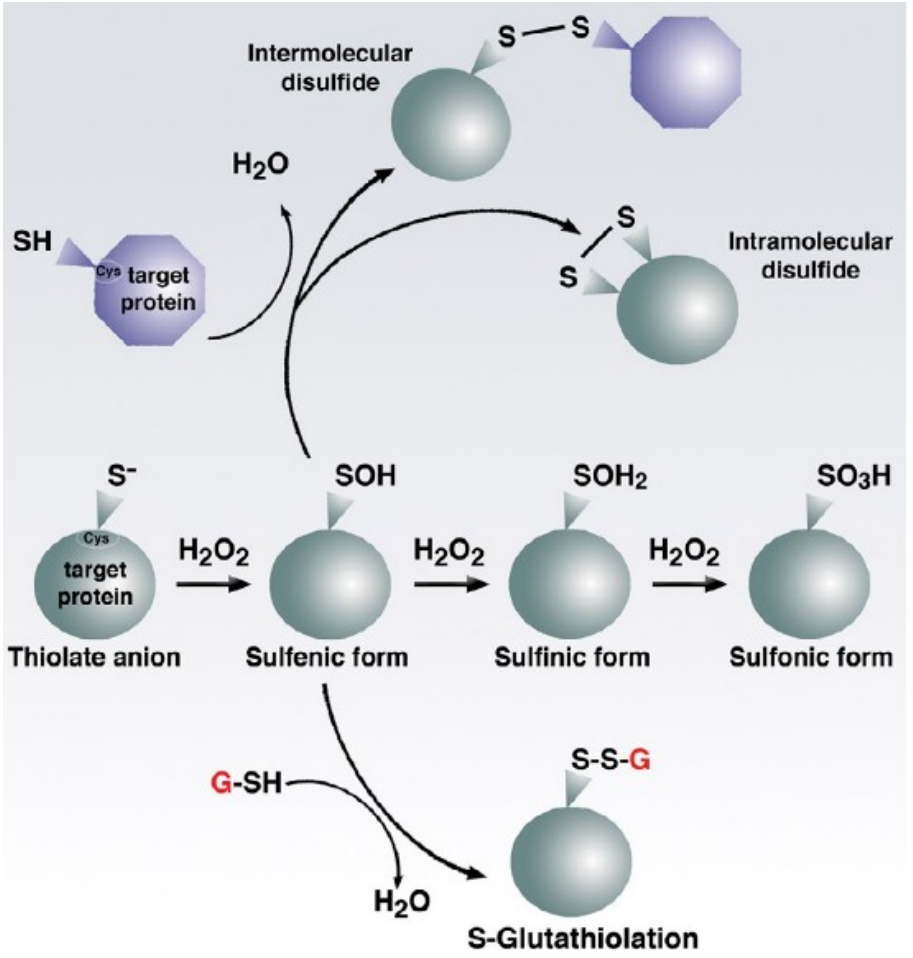
Toledano et al. (2007) FEBS Lett.

Redoxin networks play important roles in health and disease



Jaeger, Flohé (2006) BioFactors

Oxidation states of biological thiol groups

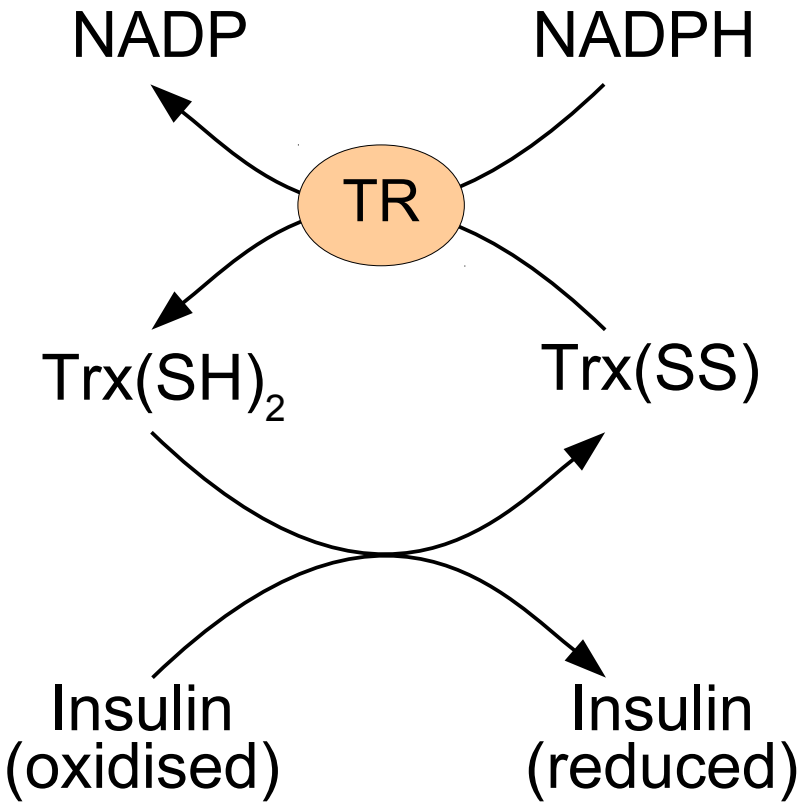


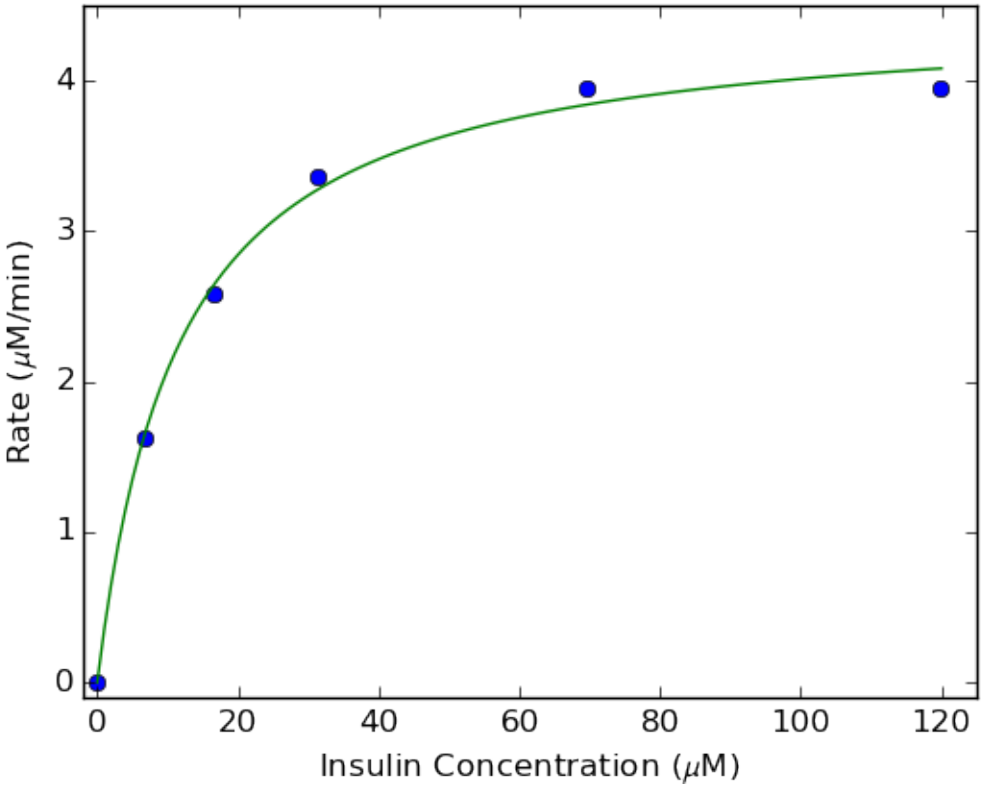
Finkel (2011) J. Cell Biol.

Contents

- Enzymes or redox couples?
- Unravelling ultrasensitivity in the Trx system
- Dynamics of H_2O_2 metabolism
- Conclusions

Thioredoxin system

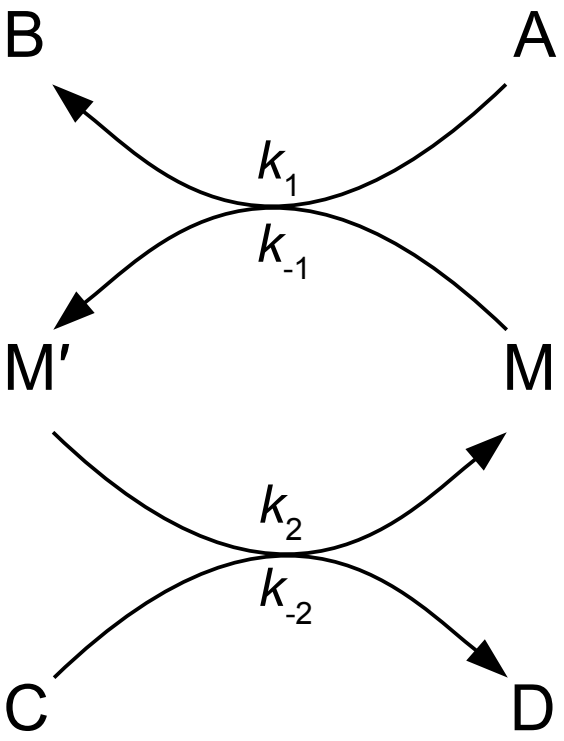




Data: Holmgren 1979 JBC
Model fit: Pillay et al. 2009 Biochem. J.

- classic Michaelis-Menten response
- model with *mass action*

Core model



- differential equation

$$\frac{dm'}{dt} = k_1 am - k_{-1} bm' - k_2 cm' + k_{-2} dm$$

- solve for *m* subject to steady state

$$m = \frac{m_t (k_{-1} b + k_2 c)}{k_1 a + k_{-2} d + k_{-1} b + k_2 c}$$

- calculate v_2

$$v_2 = \frac{k_1 k_2 m_t a c \left(1 - \frac{\Gamma}{K_{eq}}\right)}{k_1 a + k_{-2} d + k_{-1} b + k_2 c}$$

- irreversible case

$$v_2 = \frac{(k_1 a m_t) c}{\frac{k_1}{k_2} a + c}$$

Apparent V_{max}: $k_1 a m_t$

Apparent K_m: $\frac{k_1}{k_2} a$

$$\therefore \quad \frac{k_{cat}}{K_m} = k_2$$

Pillay et al. (2009) Biochem. J.

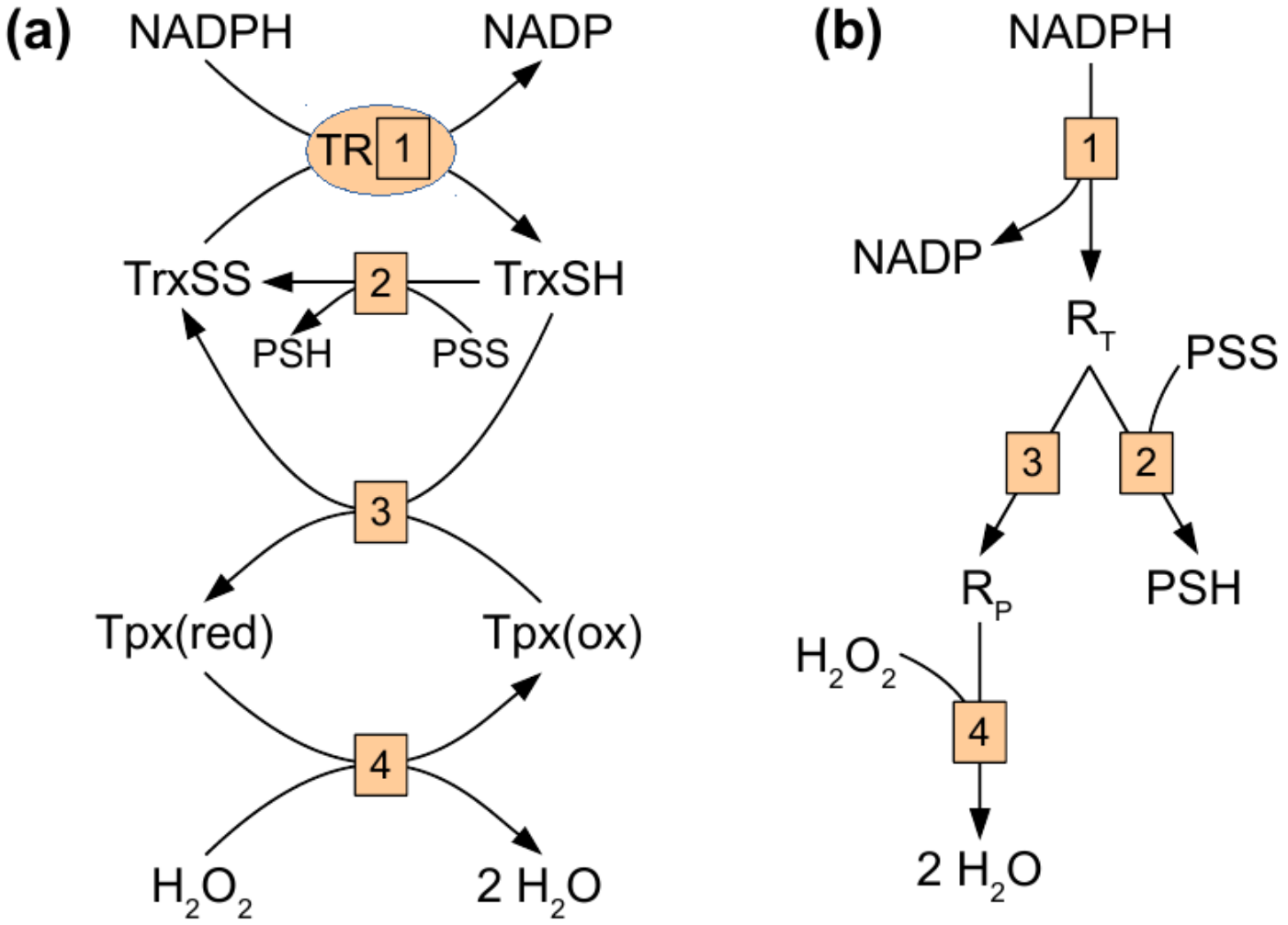
Changes in apparent Michaelis-Menten parameters

Model Parameters				Apparent M-M Parameters			
V_{TR}	k_2	$[Trx]_t$	NADPH	K_m	V_{max}	k_{cat}	k_{cat}/K_m
1	1	2	1	0.186	0.386	0.193	1.035
10	1	2	1	2.183	4.378	2.189	1.003
100	1	2	1	21.925	43.860	21.930	1.000
1	10	2	1	0.012	0.348	0.174	14.620
1	100	2	1	0.001	0.333	0.167	263.158
1	1	50	1	0.001	0.496	0.010	8.333
1	1	0.1	1	0.462	0.046	0.463	1.002
1	1	2	10	0.356	0.724	0.362	1.018
1	1	2	0.1	0.026	0.065	0.032	1.236

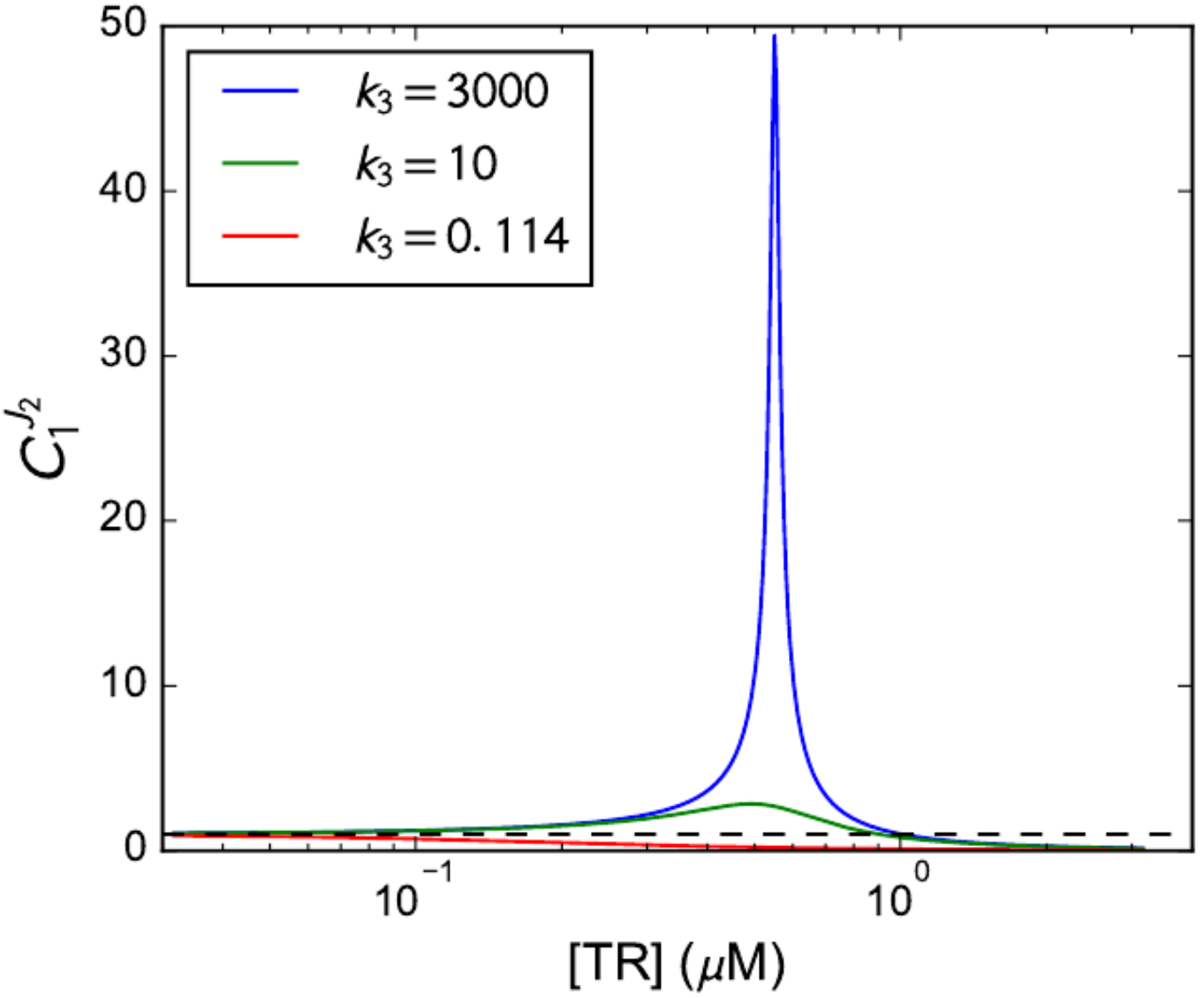
Contents

- Enzymes or redox couples?
- Unravelling ultrasensitivity in the Trx system
- Dynamics of H_2O_2 metabolism
- Conclusions

Simplified model



Ultrasensitivity i.t.o. MCA



Conditions for ultrasensitivity

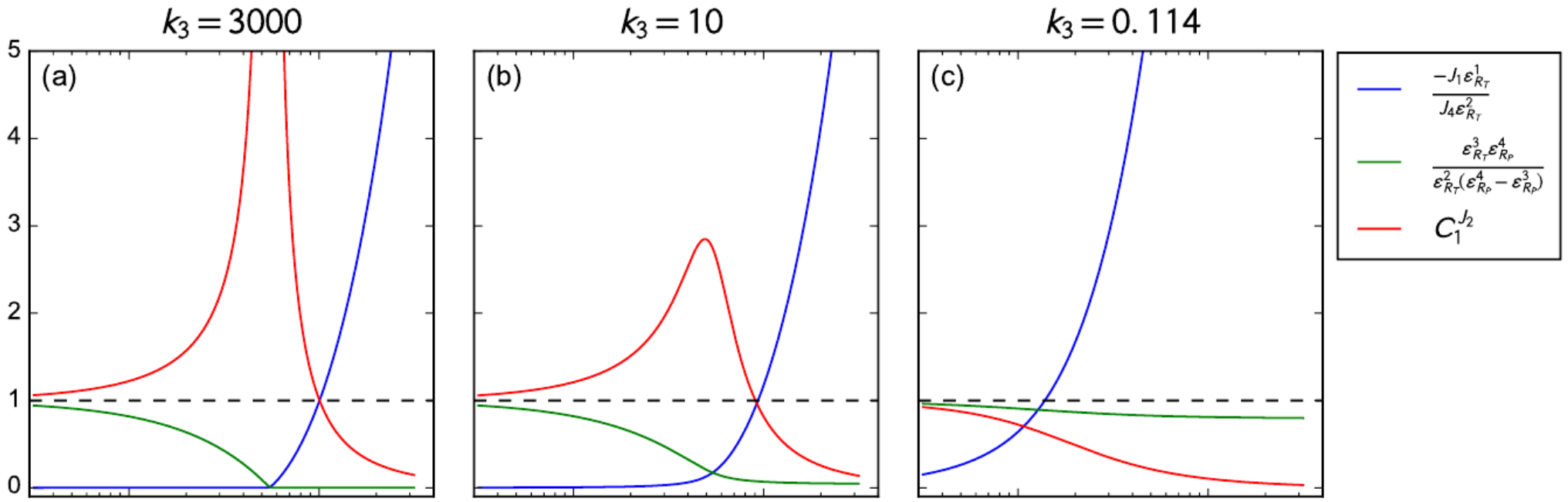
$$C_1^{J_2} = \frac{-J_1\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_2}\varepsilon_{R_P}^{v_3} + J_1\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_2}\varepsilon_{R_P}^{v_4}}{J_1\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_1}\varepsilon_{R_P}^{v_3} - J_1\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_1}\varepsilon_{R_P}^{v_4} - J_2\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_2}\varepsilon_{R_P}^{v_3} + J_2\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_2}\varepsilon_{R_P}^{v_4} + J_4\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_3}\varepsilon_{R_P}^{v_4}}$$

$$-\frac{J_1\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_1}}{J_4\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_2}} + \frac{\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_3}\varepsilon_{R_P}^{v_4}}{\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_2}\left(\varepsilon_{R_P}^{v_4} - \varepsilon_{R_P}^{v_3}\right)} < 1$$

Condition 1: $$-\frac{J_1\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_1}}{J_4\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_2}} < 1$$

Condition 2: $$\frac{\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_3}\varepsilon_{R_P}^{v_4}}{\varepsilon_{R_T}^{v_2}\left(\varepsilon_{R_P}^{v_4} - \varepsilon_{R_P}^{v_3}\right)} < 1$$

Plot conditions



Rohwer et al. (2016) Perspect. Sci.

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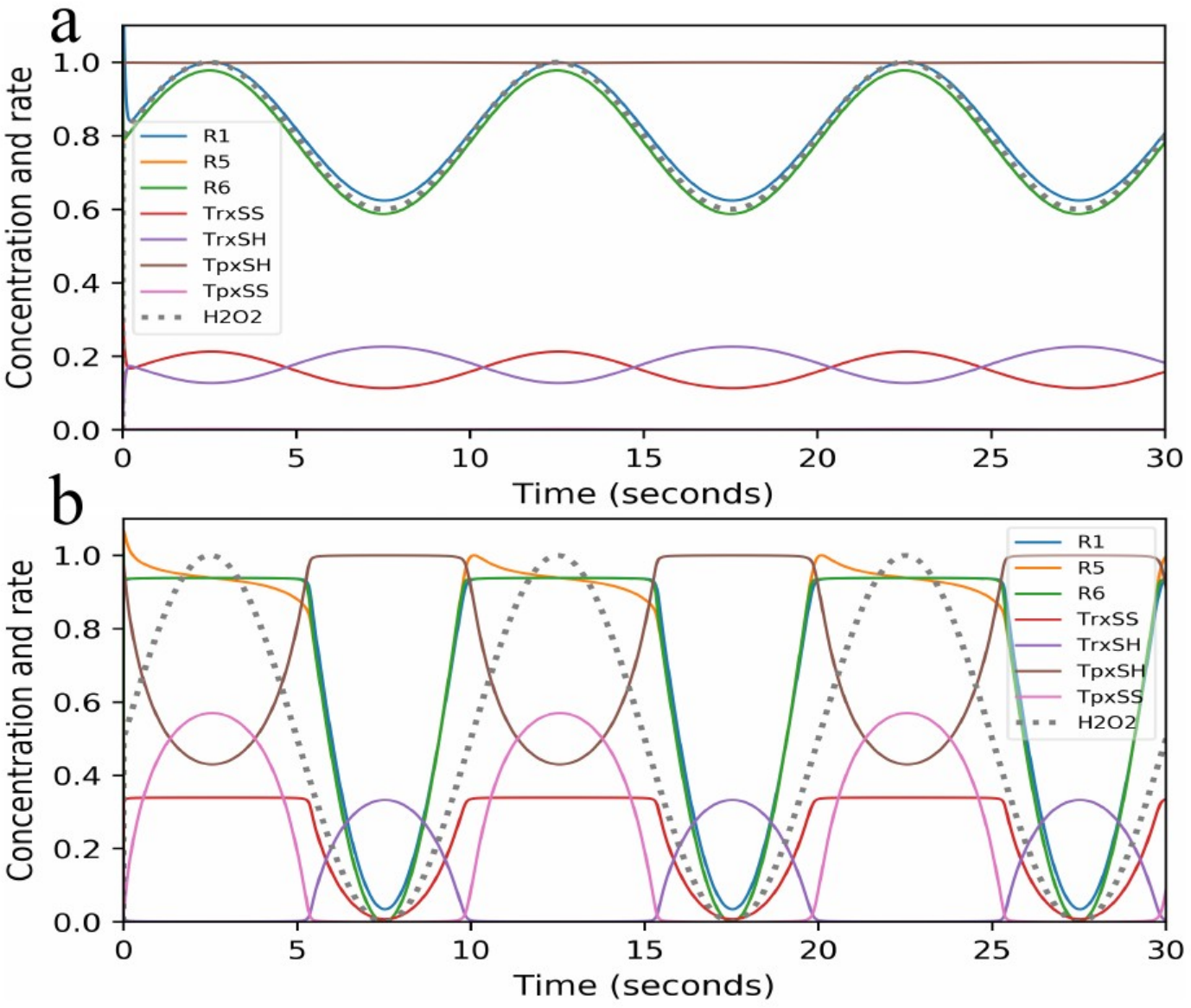
Response of *E. coli* model to oscillating H_2O_2



0.1 μM midpoint
25% amplitude

0.2 μM midpoint
99% amplitude

M. Badenhorst (2017)

Work in progress...

- comparative analysis of redoxin networks
  - Generalised Supply-Demand Analysis
- quantitative analysis of redox signalling
- develop kinetic models of
  - peroxiredoxins
    - dynamics of H_2O_2
    - effect of Prx decamerisation
  - *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* redoxin network

Conclusions

- Why should I model redoxin networks?
  - detect kinetic motifs
  - fit parameters from experimental data
  - explore untested scenarios
  - quantify control parameters
  - unravel mechanism

People

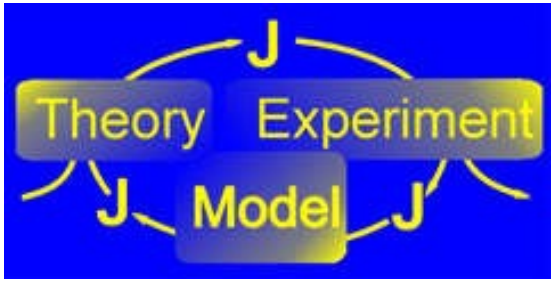
- University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg)
  - Dr Ché Pillay
  - Diane Lind (MSc)
  - Nolyn John (PhD)
- Stellenbosch University
  - Prof Jannie Hofmeyr
  - Chris Barry (PhD 2017-)
  - Melinda Badenhorst (MSc 2018-)

Theory

- generalised supply-demand analysis
- rate equations for modelling
- symbolic MCA
- *in vitro vs. in vivo* kinetics

Experiment

- NMR “metabolomics”
  - *in vivo, in situ, in vitro* metabolite measurements
- enzyme kinetics for modelling
  - *in vivo* enzyme kinetics
  - pH, macromolecular crowding



Model

- development of software (PySCeS, psctb, SymCA, RateChar)
- kinetic models of cellular systems
  - microbial energy metabolism
  - cellular redoxin networks (with Dr C Pillay, UKZN)
  - plant metabolism
  - glucocorticoid receptor dimerisation (with Prof A Louw)

Interested in joining the lab?

- Contact me any time to discuss options!
- jr@sun.ac.za or 021-808-5843