

May 7, 2010

To Whom it May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the Bioinformatics Support Group in the Advanced Biomedical Computing Center (ABCC) of the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

My collaboration with this group began in 2006 when a local database project was transformed and moved onto the internet as BotDB, an open access, web-based data resource for Clostridial neurotoxins. We have continued to expand this resource, and as a result have, thus far, published five peer-reviewed scientific journal articles, an invited book chapter along with national and international platform presentations. Notably, in 2007, this group received international recognition for BotDB from the United Kingdom's Intute database for education and research. In 2006, this group received the "Graph of the Month" award, 8/2006, for MEDLINE search results visualization (Mudunuri *et al.*, *Nuc. Acids Res.* 34:W748-52, 2006) from Germany's AbsInt Angewandte Informatik GmbH.

This group's expertise in database development, and maintenance forms a foundation for the bioinformatics portions of this resource. Some of the subsections within the BotDB include capabilities for extensive bibliographic searches, chemo-informatics information and three-dimensional molecular graphics. Descriptions of kinetic models are also part of this resource.

We also placed an emphasis on providing information about candidate inhibitors of these neurotoxins. As an important part of this effort, the Bioinformatics Support Group developed an on-line calculator. After the user supplies the required input values (toxin concentration, etc.) the calculator produces a set of inhibitory constants based on different kinetic mechanisms. The resulting set of answers allow the user to select which mechanism or set of mechanisms is the most appropriate for their problem.

The ability of the Bioinformatics Support Group to work as an effective and efficient team has enabled them to enhance the BotDB resource and to integrate information ranging from molecular structures to complex searches of the basic, applied and clinical areas of the biomedical literature. Their productive and internationally recognized efforts strongly argue for continued support.

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