



## A Comparative Study of Binding of Different Drugs on gp120 Insight From Molecular Dynamics Simulation Study

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### ABSTRACT

HIV-I cellular infection triggered by CD4 receptor protein and viral envelop glycoprotein gp120 binding event. CD4:gp120 surface is directed by the contact points of a hydrophobic gp120 cavity capped by Phe43CD4 and ionic bonds residues Arg59CD4 and Asp368gp120. The binding sites originated by gp120 and CD4 interaction leads to the entry of HIV-I into the host membrane, where, gp120 and a CD4 binding site becomes the main mark for plenty of drug uncovering program. Here, we took the crystal structure of small-molecule of gp120 in a complex that concurrently pursues both of the hotspots of gp120 binding sites. All ligands in our study are small molecules that are able to obstruct the protein-protein interactions between CD4 and gp120. This study aims at the thermodynamical insights of the ligand binding in CD4 binding sites using Molecular Dynamics Simulations Study and calculation of binding free energy. The physical of binding of drugs distinctly indicates a hydrophobic and electrostatics interaction motivated binding of ligands which explicitly mark CD4 binding sites.

**Keywords:** MMGBSA, HIV-1 entry, gp120 binding, MD simulations.

### INTRODUCTION

By the end of 2017, over 70 million people were infected by HIV-1/AIDS, and about 36.9 million people are still septic by HIV-1<sup>1-3</sup>. HIV-1 (Virus type-I) changes in cells, as an originator gp160, and afterwards, split to gp-41 and mature gp120. The HIV-1 Env (Envelope protein), target host cells on viral entry into the cells<sup>4-6</sup>, that mechanized as a trimer of gp120-gp41. Receptor CD4 and its co-receptor CCR5/CXCR4 binds with Env-gp120, in an indirect virus-cell membrane fusion. Viral Env protein undergoes big conformational alteration

during its entry process. CD4 induces conformational changes into gp120 upon its binding, thus facilitating subsequent interaction through the CCR5 or CXCR4 co-receptors. Gp120 binds together with receptor CD4 and co-receptor CCR5/CXCR4, therefore, triggering an extreme conformational change in gp41 which permits viral and cell membranes fusions. HIV pathological process is aided by a number of attachment effect whose initiation is carried out by the viral envelope glycoproteins. These glycoproteins are organized into trimeric spikes which are present on the surface of the virion<sup>7</sup>. Every individual trimeric envelope confounds consist of three gp41



transmembrane proteins and three gp120 envelope glycoproteins<sup>8</sup>. Each of these processes, in fact, the overall step informs new potent mark for drug discovery<sup>9-11</sup>. Apparently, initial entry step of the virion into CD4 cells is an important yet difficult approach for the prevention of HIV-1 pathological process and AIDS. Indeed, there have not been thorough studies on designing viral entry drugs that mark this entry process<sup>12</sup>. At the CD4-gp120 interaction point, residue Phe43 of CD4 is situated on the CDR2-like loop. This residue binds inside the hydrophobic cavity of gp120, this cavity known as "Phe43 cavity", whereas Arg59 of CD4 is situated on a neighbour  $\beta$ -strand and creates electrostatic interaction with Asp368 of gp120<sup>13-14</sup>. Debnath *et al.*, recognized two drugs of CD4-gp120 namely NBD-556 and NBD-557<sup>15</sup> by preceding transmission of small-molecule inhibitors of viral fusion. Dual Hotspot HIV-1 Entry Inhibitors which engage both the sites i.e. hydrophobic Phe43 cavity and electrostatic interaction with Asp368 of gp120 with Arg59 of CD4, are used for inhibition<sup>16</sup>.

Although important residues are active in protein-ligand complexes, as suggested by present structural information, they do not furnish physical knowledge for the prominence in interaction pair of each residue. Hence, these become mandatory to clarify the physical assistance of phenomenon at the level of atomic resolution, so as to double-check the physical assistance of all residue near the attraction site participating in the stabilization of the complex. Here we performed computational methods to investigate the interaction between gp120 and ligands using MD simulation methods. Our findings promote us to validate the thermodynamic result. In addition, this analysis shows that the method used is MMGBSA method and is capable to imitate the experimental validation of the result of binding free energies.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The initial coordinates of the gp120- ligand complexes were obtained from the Protein Data Bank (PDB). The following PDB entries were used to construct our models: gp120 complex(gp120-OLM) with N-(4-chloro-3- fluorophenyl)-N'-(1,2,2,6,6-pentamethylpiperidin-4-yl)ethanediamide (OLM) code 4DKO; gp120 complex (gp120- OLL) with N-[(1S,2S)-2-amino-2,3-dihydro-1H-inden-1-yl]-N'-(4-chloro-3-fluorophenyl)ethanediamide (OLL), code

4DKP; gp120 complex (gp120-OLK) with N-[(1S,2S)-2-carbamimidamido-2,3-dihydro-1H-inden-1-yl]-N'-(4-chloro-3-fluorophenyl)ethanediamide (OLK), code 4DKQ; and gp120 complex (gp120-OLJ) with (N-[(1R,2R)-2-carbamimidamido-2,3-dihydro-1H-inden-1-yl]-N'-(4-chloro-3-fluorophenyl)ethanediamide (OLJ), code 4DKR<sup>16</sup>. Chemical structure of all the ligand is shown in Figure 1.

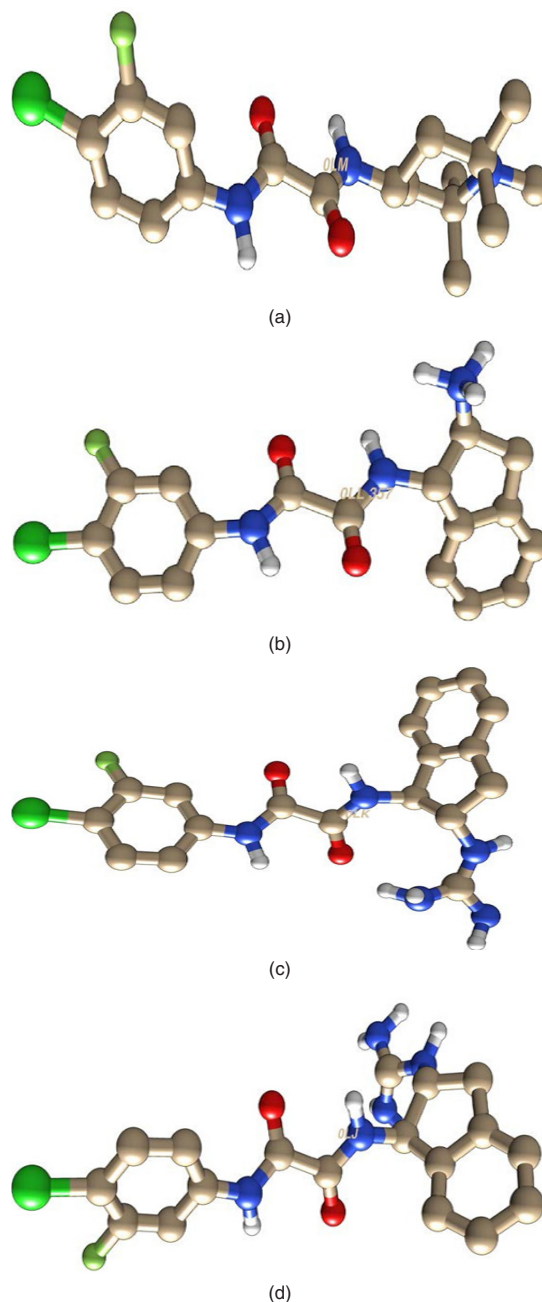


Fig. 1. Chemical structure of all the inhibitors named as a) OLM, b) OLL, c) OLK, d) OLJ respectively from top to bottom

The coordinate and parameter of the hydrogen atom for gp120 were generated by using LEAP module of using ff12SB AMBER force field<sup>17</sup>. Optimization of all ligands was accomplished by HF(Hartree-Fock) methodology with 6-31G\* basis set. Once the geometry optimization was done, consecutive frequencies were calculated to assure the fixed points. The partial atomic charge was calculated by Restrained electrostatic potential method (RESP)<sup>18-19</sup>. The complex was neutralized and solvated by using Na<sup>+</sup> and TIP3P octahedral water-box<sup>20</sup>. The solvated complex was then gradually strengthened from 10 to 300K for the period of 200 ps after that the system sustained in isothermal-isobaric(NPT) ensemble, to get the 300K temperature using Langevin thermostat<sup>21</sup> and 1atm pressure by using Barendsen barostat<sup>22</sup> with a collision frequency of 2ps and pressure relaxation time 1ps. SHAKE<sup>23</sup> was used for constraining the hydrogen bonds. For treating long-range electrostatic, Particle Mesh Ewald (PME) method<sup>24</sup> was used. Once the system attained a 300K temperature and 1atm pressure, the equilibrium dynamics was carried for 4ns, with the previously described parameters. Afterwards, production dynamics was started and continued up to 200 ns for the protein-ligand system. The coordinate construction in the trajectories of production dynamics was gathered at an interval of 10ps. Ptraj module of Amber14 was employed to carry out all the analysis of trajectories while for visualization of structure VMD 1.6.725, Chimera-1.526 module was used for the image purpose.

### Calculation of Absolute Binding Free Energies and Per-Residue Calculation

For the calculations of thermodynamic parameters and free energy of binding, MM-GBSA method was used. The principles of these methods are all well constituted and have been taken up elsewhere<sup>27-29</sup>. MMGBSA method used because it has been favourably applied for the analogous system, in this study but of various class in past studies<sup>30-35</sup>. The specific parameters employed in our approach are described here. The binding free energy ( $\Delta G_{\text{mmgbsa}}$ ) of the complex was calculated by using the following:

$$\Delta G_{\text{mmgbsa}} = G_{\text{complex}} - G_{\text{receptor}} - G_{\text{ligand}}$$

$$\Delta G_{\text{bind}} = \Delta E_{\text{MM}} + \Delta G_{\text{GB}} + \Delta G_{\text{SA}} - T\Delta S$$

Where  $\Delta E_{\text{MM}}$  is the total molecular mechanics energy of the molecular system in the

gas phase, including the van der Waals ( $\Delta E_{\text{vdw}}$ ) and electrostatic ( $\Delta E_{\text{ele}}$ ) interaction energies.  $\Delta G_{\text{sol}}$  and  $\Delta G_{\text{ele, sol}}$  are electrostatic and non polar contributions to desolvation upon ligand binding, respectively, and  $-T\Delta S$  is the entropy contribution arising from changes in the degrees of freedom of the solute molecules, which we reconsidered here to obtain  $\Delta G_{\text{bind}}$ ; therefore, our values reported for the MMGBSA calculations can be called absolute binding free energies. In order to get the crucial residue study, the absolute binding free energies were determined in terms of the contributions of each individual residues by using free-energy-per-residue decomposition theory.

## RESULT

Binding Free Energy Calculation Binding free energy of ligand with the receptor was calculated by using snapshots collected from trajectories during the last 40 ns time of Molecular Dynamics trajectories when the RMSD converges Fig. 2(a) and the findings are listed in Table 1. Binding free energy for all complex is shown in Fig. 2(b). According to this result the binding free energy ( $\Delta G_{\text{bind}}$ ) of the gp120-OLM, gp120-OLL, gp120-OLK, gp120-OLJ complexes are -8.46, -6.23, -12.67 and -8.39 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>, respectively, these results agree with the experimental findings. This finding discloses that the binding abilities of the third inhibitor, 0LK, are stronger than the other 3 inhibitors 0LL, 0LK and 0LJ. Moreover, the change in entropy ( $-T\Delta S$ ), induced by the inhibitor bindings yield a good correlation with enthalpy interaction ( $\Delta H_{\text{ot}}$ ). As observed from Table 1, the van der Waals interaction energy term ( $\Delta E_{\text{vdw}}$ ), non-polar solvation energy term ( $\Delta G_{\text{np}}$ ) give satisfactory involvement with inhibitor binding. Although the inhibitor bindings are favoured by the electrostatic interaction ( $\Delta E_{\text{ele}}$ ), this favourable factor is completely regulated by stronger unfavourable polar solvation energy term ( $\Delta G_{\text{pb}}$ ).

In contrast to the gp120-OLK complex, the van der Waals energy term and non-polar solvation energy term of the complex gp120-OLM binding are decreased by 13.83, and 1.42 kcalmol<sup>-1</sup>, respectively. Similarly, in gp120-OLL too, the binding leads to the reduction of van der Waals energy and non-polar solvation energy by 6.91 and 0.68 kcalmol<sup>-1</sup> respectively. Similarly, in gp120-OLJ the binding also

goes to the reduction in van der Waals energy and non-polar solvation energy by 3.60 and 0.09 kcalmol<sup>-1</sup> respectively. In a nutshell, this reduction in the van der Waals interaction may be considered as the main source of weaker binding affinities of inhibitors to 0LK, 0LL, and 0LJ in contrast to 0LK. The energetic contributions reveal that the association

between gp120 and the four different ligands are chiefly governed by nonpolar energy ( $\Delta E_{\text{nonpolar}}$ ), with which the van der Waals energy ( $\Delta E_{\text{vdw}}$ ) contribute greatly. The gas-phase electrostatic energy ( $\Delta E_{\text{ele}}$ ) of the complexes are found to be favourable. For the first complex, gp120-0LM, electrostatic energy are very low and it is quite evident that it does not make strong Hbond with inhibitor.

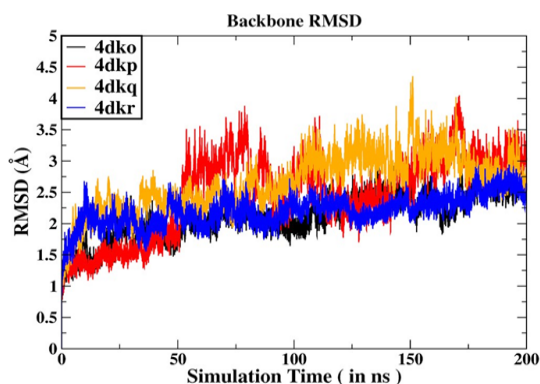


Fig. 2(a). The RMSD curve for C $\alpha$  atoms of protein with respect to time tells conformational fluctuations arising during molecular dynamics simulation in 200ns of time scale

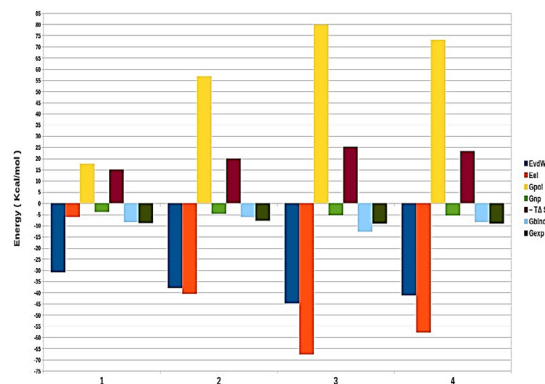


Fig. 2(b). Binding Energy for all the four complexes is shown in the figure. Standard deviations for all the energy terms are shown in Table 1

**Table 1: Binding free energies (kcal•mol<sup>-1</sup>). With Errors are written by signs “±” represents the standard errors of the mean**

Ligand	$\Delta E_{\text{ele}}$	$\Delta E_{\text{vdw}}$	$\Delta G_{\text{non-pol}}$	$\Delta G_{\text{GB}}$	$\Delta H_{\text{tot}}$	$-T\Delta S$	$\Delta G_{\text{exp}}$	$\Delta G_{\text{bind}}$
OLM	-6.19± 3.86	-30.97± 3.97	-3.95± 0.48	17.59± 3.42	-23.53±3.7	15.0± 1.75	-8.80	-8.46
OLL	-40.59± 3.86	-37.89± 2.58	-4.69± 0.21	56.85± 10.20	-26.32± 2.8	20.08± 3.9	-7.90	-6.23
OLK	-67.63± 1.02	-44.80± 2.33	-5.37± 0.15	79.88± 3.57	-37.93± 3.9	25.25± 1.9	-9.0	-12.67
OLZ	-57.85±12.95	-41.20± 1.95	-5.58± 0.04	73.01± 8.37	-31.62± 2.0	-23.2± 3.9	-8.90	-8.39

Here:

$\Delta E_{\text{vdw}}$  = van der Waals interaction term on ligand associations,

$\Delta E_{\text{ele}}$  = electrostatic interaction term on ligand associations,

$\Delta E_{\text{polar}}$  = polar interaction term on ligand associations,

$\Delta E_{\text{nonpolar}}$  = nonpolar interaction term on ligand associations,

$$\Delta G_{\text{gas}} = \Delta E_{\text{VDW}} + \Delta E_{\text{EEL}}$$

$$\Delta G_{\text{solv}} = \Delta E_{\text{polar}} + \Delta E_{\text{nonpolar}}$$

$$\Delta G_{\text{binding}} = \Delta G_{\text{gas}} + \Delta G_{\text{solv}}$$

Scrutiny of the entropic contributions ( $T\Delta S$ ) demonstrates that the formed complexes are distinguished by unfavourable entropy values due to a reduction in the degrees of freedom. The lowest entropy change ( $T\Delta S$ ) was observed in the arrangement of the first complex gp120-0LM with ligand 0LM and the value of entropy change ( $T\Delta S$ ) improved in terms of chain length thus disclosing

that the ligand size plays a significant part in entropic part ( Fig. 1). The Colour map for all the residues of the receptor is shown in Fig. 3. Here, acidic residues like aspartic acid and glutamic acid are shown in red, hydrophobic residues (Ala, Val, Ile, Leu, Tyr, Phe, Trp, Met, Cys, Pro) in white, basic residues like histidine, lysine, arginine in blue, polar residues (Ser, Thr, Gln, Asn) in green and other residues like glycine in gray.

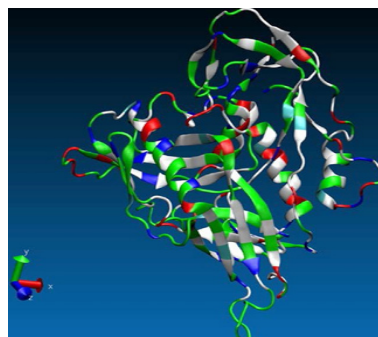
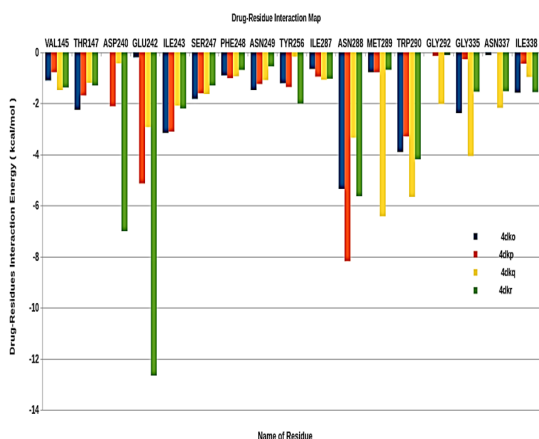


Fig. 3. Colour map for all the residues



### Residue-wise Decomposition Free Energy

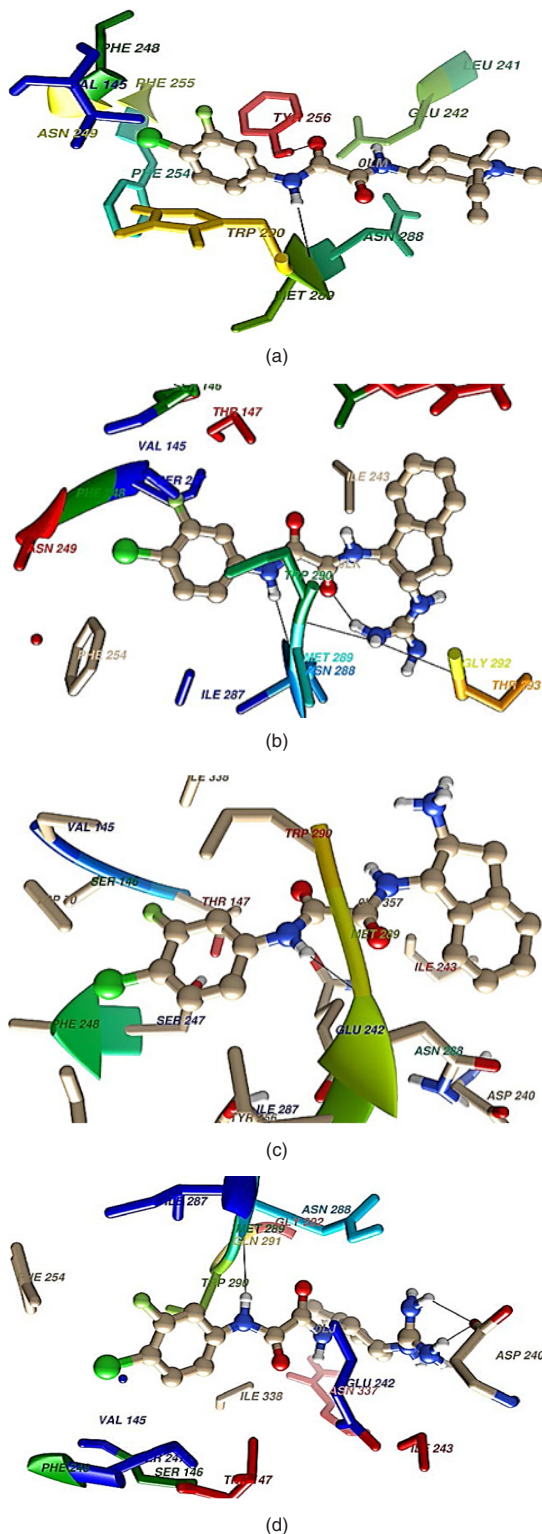
Energy decomposition investigation allows us to explain the part of respective amino acid in deciding complex stabilization. The figure demonstrates the primal residues for bonding and the contributions of total free energy ( $\Delta G_{total}$ ).



**Fig. 4.** The binding free energy of protein-inhibitor complexes are evaluated using MM-GBSA methodology which is depicted from interaction map

These figures represent that all the complexes are stabilized mainly by hydrophobic and polar amino acid (Fig. 4). All ligands are surrounded by several hydrophobic and polar residues and detail interaction of this amino acid with all the four drugs is shown in figure (Fig. 5). It is self-evident that the ligands OLM and OLL interact with a maximum number of amino acids. In case of OLM - Trp290, Met289, Asn288, and Glu242 play strongly and are principal amino acid responsible for strong binding. For OLL - Asn288, and Ile338 provide the main interactions. Similar is the case with ligand OLK in which Trp290, Met289, Asn288, Ile243 and Glu242 are crucial. Also, in regard to the ligand OLZ, Trp290, Asn288, and Glu242 are the major contributors for favourable interactions.

In accordance with the total free energy contributions, residues Trp290, Asn288 and Glu242 of gp120 have the greatest impact in the binding energy which proposes that these amino acid play a critical part in ligand binding. In addition, the role of polar, non-polar, van der Waals and electrostatics energy for all the amino acid are given in (Table 2) for all the four complexes.



**Fig. 5.** Name of Residues who surrounded around all inhibitors for all complex 4DKO-OLM, 4DKP-OLL, 4DKQ-OLK and 4DKR-OLZ from top to bottom respectively

**Table 2(a): The contribution of each energy terms in binding affinity for complex named as 4DKO-OLM**

Ligand	Residues	Van der Waals	Electrostatic	Polar Solvation	Non-polar solvent	$\Delta G_{\text{bind}}$
OLM	TRP70	-0.477	-0.117	0.168	-0.325	-0.751
OLM	VAL145	-0.552	-0.112	-0.058	-0.384	-1.106
OLM	SER146	-0.227	0.123	-0.12	-0.056	-0.280
OLM	THR147	-1.233	0.14	-0.079	-1.085	-2.257
OLM	GLN148	-0.141	0.033	-0.032	-0.049	-0.189
OLM	PRO236	-0.12	0.068	-0.077	-0.008	-0.137
OLM	GLU242	-0.161	0.707	-0.733	-0.016	-0.203
OLM	ILE243	-1.506	-0.062	0.039	-1.635	-3.164
OLM	MET24	-0.129	-0.077	0.061	-0.062	-0.207
OLM	HIE246	-1.072	0.002	-0.227	-0.532	-1.829
OLM	SER247	-0.591	-0.34	0.233	-0.208	-0.906
OLM	PHE248	-0.358	-0.036	0.013	-0.097	-0.478
OLM	ASN249	-0.823	-0.51	0.407	-0.558	-1.484
OLM	PHE254	-0.675	-0.413	0.393	-0.518	-1.213
OLM	TYR256	-0.486	0.275	-0.092	-0.358	-0.661
OLM	ILE287	-0.860	-5.33	2.031	-1.188	-5.347
OLM	ASN288	-0.512	0.017	-0.072	-0.215	-0.782
OLM	MET289	-2.233	-0.354	-0.045	-1.271	-3.903
OLM	TRP290	-0.074	-0.107	0.092	-0.012	-0.101
OLM	GLN291	-0.236	-0.052	-0.012	-0.204	-0.504
OLM	PRO333	-0.496	-0.111	-0.01	-0.338	-0.955
OLM	GLY334	-1.294	0.085	-0.06	-1.112	-2.381
OLM	GLY335	-0.128	-0.045	0.054	0.000	-0.119
OLM	GLY336	-0.897	-0.063	0.045	-0.668	-1.583

**Table 2(b): The contribution of each energy terms in binding affinity for complex named as 4DKP-OLL**

Ligand	Residues	Van der Waals	Electrostatic	Polar Solvation	Non-polar solvent	$\Delta G_{\text{bind}}$
OLL	TRP70	-0.322	-0.132	0.139	-0.185	0.5
OLL	VAL145	-0.407	0.39	-0.504	-0.259	-0.78
OLL	SER146	-0.357	-0.092	0.046	-0.146	-0.549
OLL	THR147	-1.054	1.164	-1.052	-0.752	-1.694
OLL	ASP240	-0.971	-20.659	20.37	-0.855	-2.115
OLL	GLU242	-2.959	-22.573	22.161	-1.763	-5.134
OLL	ILE243	-1.634	0.428	-0.667	-1.239	-3.112
OLL	SER247	-1.116	-0.062	0.093	-0.519	-1.604
OLL	PHE248	-0.668	-0.203	0.086	-0.228	-1.013
OLL	ASN249	-0.463	0.6	-0.595	-0.169	-0.627
OLL	PHE254	-0.74	0.185	-0.183	-0.504	-1.242
OLL	PHE255	-0.157	-0.506	0.538	-0.025	-0.15
OLL	TYR256	-0.817	0.457	-0.586	-0.417	-1.363
OLL	ILE287	-0.768	1.321	-1.046	-0.461	-0.954
OLL	ASN288	-0.345	-5.509	-0.762	-1.561	-8.177
OLL	MET289	-0.991	-0.087	0.595	-0.301	-0.784
OLL	TRP290	-2.109	-0.75	0.814	-1.253	-3.298
OLL	GLN291	-0.166	-0.648	0.612	0.000	-0.202
OLL	GLY292	-0.1	0.513	-0.554	-0.008	-0.149
OLL	GLY336	-0.1	-3.281	3.192	-0.09	-0.279
OLL	ILE338	-0.283	1.046	-1.044	-0.165	-0.446

**Table 2(c): The contribution of each energy terms in binding affinity for complex named as 4DKQ-OLK**

Ligand	Residues	Van der Waals	Electrostatic	Polar Solvation	Non-polar Solvent	$\Delta G_{\text{bind}}$
OLK	TRP70	-0.357	-0.103	0.143	-0.18	0.496
OLK	GLY84	-0.069	-2.095	2.000	-0.072	-0.237
OLK	VAL145	-0.847	0.461	-0.614	-0.481	-1.480
OLK	SER146	-0.397	-0.363	0.198	-0.149	-0.711
OLK	THR147	-0.791	1.241	-1.090	-0.559	-1.198
OLK	ASP240	-0.236	-21.198	21.062	-0.066	-0.439
OLK	GLU242	-1.765	-18.431	18.32	-1.056	-2.932
OLK	ILE243	-1.194	0.610	-0.696	-0.812	-2.092
OLK	HIE246	-0.076	0.070	-0.100	-0.001	-0.107
OLK	SER247	-0.939	-0.050	-0.063	-0.586	-1.637
OLK	PHE248	-0.645	-0.234	0.212	-0.271	-0.938
OLK	ASN249	-0.321	0.567	-0.539	-0.086	-0.379
OLK	PHE254	-0.619	0.148	-0.166	-0.451	-1.088
OLK	TYR256	-0.23	0.542	-0.478	-0.012	-0.179
OLK	ILE287	-0.718	0.381	-0.214	-0.528	-1.079
OLK	ASN288	-1.218	-2.091	0.754	-0.792	-3.348
OLK	MET289	-1.245	-7.433	3.138	-0.882	-6.422
OLK	TRP290	-3.321	-1.235	0.872	-1.975	-5.659
OLK	GLN291	-0.468	-1.638	1.445	-0.075	-0.736
OLK	GLY292	-0.946	-1.548	1.339	-0.873	-2.027
OLK	THR293	-0.694	1.371	-1.104	-0.43	-0.857
OLK	GLY294	-0.249	-2.599	2.151	-0.171	-0.868
OLK	GLN295	-0.092	1.162	-1.179	-0.003	-0.112
OLK	GLY335	-0.295	-0.794	0.792	-0.16	-0.456
OLK	GLY336	-2.032	-2.039	1.035	-1.027	-4.064
OLK	ASN337	-1.289	-0.035	0.048	-0.898	-2.174
OLK	ILE338	-0.7	0.909	-0.872	-0.308	-0.971

**Table 2(d): The contribution of each energy terms in binding affinity for complex named as 4DKR-OLZ**

Ligand	Residues	Van der Waals	Electrostatic	Polar Solvation	Non-polar Solvent	$\Delta G_{\text{bind}}$
OLJ	TRP70	-0.305	-0.093	0.131	-0.155	-0.422
OLJ	VAL145	-0.84	0.373	-0.468	-0.448	-1.383
OLJ	SER146	-0.463	0.604	-0.54	-0.155	-0.554
OLJ	THR147	-0.611	0.405	-0.472	-0.624	-1.302
OLJ	ASP240	-0.255	-38.113	32.458	-1.096	-7.006
OLJ	GLU242	-2.983	-39.339	31.702	-2.035	-12.655
OLJ	ILE243	-1.281	0.69	-0.684	-0.924	-2.199
OLJ	SER247	-0.57	-0.584	0.304	-0.452	-1.302
OLJ	PHE248	-0.383	-0.425	0.305	-0.193	-0.696
OLJ	ASN249	-0.308	0.35	-0.383	-0.089	-0.43
OLJ	PHE254	0.012	-0.275	0.27	-0.566	-0.559
OLJ	TYR256	-0.945	-0.587	0.125	-0.6	-2.007
OLJ	ILE287	-0.768	0.629	-0.395	-0.504	-1.038
OLJ	ASN288	-1.626	-2.611	0.017	-1.412	-5.632
OLJ	MET289	-1.05	0.138	0.619	-0.398	-0.691
OLJ	TRP290	-2.591	-0.425	0.297	-1.469	-4.188
OLJ	GLN291	-0.228	-0.818	0.731	-0.009	-0.324
OLJ	GLY292	-0.112	0.394	-0.385	-0.007	-0.11
OLJ	GLY335	-0.123	-0.209	0.16	-0.015	-0.187
OLJ	GLY336	-0.83	0.291	-0.462	-0.545	-1.546
OLJ	ASN337	-0.851	1.389	-1.293	-0.771	-1.526
OLJ	ILE338	-1.001	0.49	-0.506	-0.549	-1.566

From figure one can infer that the van der Waals and electrostatics energy play an essential role in total binding energy for almost all hydrophobic and polar residues. Asn288 and Glu242 have maximum electrostatics contribution in total binding affinity. Still, hydrophobic residues contribute via van der Waals interaction

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Here, the binding interaction between gp120 and four experimentally known ligands were evaluated with the help of conformational analysis and the binding free energy calculated over 200 ns dynamics using the MMGBSA methodology. The energetic analysis revealed a qualitative agreement of the theoretically calculated binding free energies with their experimentally reported values. The calculated results tell that the inhibitors produce stronger binding to 0LK as compared to 0LM, 0LL, 0LZ. Also, the increase in van der Waals interaction of inhibitors with 0LK relative to the other inhibitors is the main factor responsible for stronger bindings of inhibitors. The fact that the reduction in van der Waals energy may be a main cause of weaker binding of inhibitor 0LK than to other inhibitors

However, decomposition free energy asserted not only that plausible free energies arise only from favourable interactions due to residues Asn288 and Glu242 but also these actions were amongst the most favourable role, proclaiming the essential contribution of these energy interactions is helpful in the ligand structure. The Entropic analysis demonstrated that all four complexes did undergo a conformational reduction which in turn played important role in bringing the MMGBSA results in

more closer to the observational absolute binding free energies.

Furthermore, energetic contributions to the binding are attributed by a large number of hydrophobic contacts. Asn288 makes a strong H-bond with all inhibitors and is significantly accountable for electrostatic interactions (Fig. 5). Moreover, Trp290 also provides a great energetic interaction via its hydrophobic side chain and is the chief contributor for the enhanced van der Waals interactions.

In the present study, the per-residue binding free energy decomposition tells us to acknowledge Asn288, Glu242, Trp290, Asp240 and Met289 as the crucial amino acid for the complex stabilization of the four ligands, which is also in good agreement with experimental values for the GP120 complexes. Val145, Thr147, Glu242, Ser247, Tyr256, Ile287, Met289, Gly292, Gly335, Asn337, and Ile338 as the chief amino acid for the complex stabilization of the four ligands. Since these residues are very close and near to the binding site, hence they become potentially crucial targets for advance drug uncovering projects as we can design new inhibitors which can act more efficiently with them and may be an excellent inhibitor than inhibitors named as 0LM, 0LL, 0LK and 0LJ respectively

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