

DYNS3BIO

International Conference on Dynamics in Systems
and Synthetic Biology

Online

June 14th to June 18th, 2021

Abstracts Book

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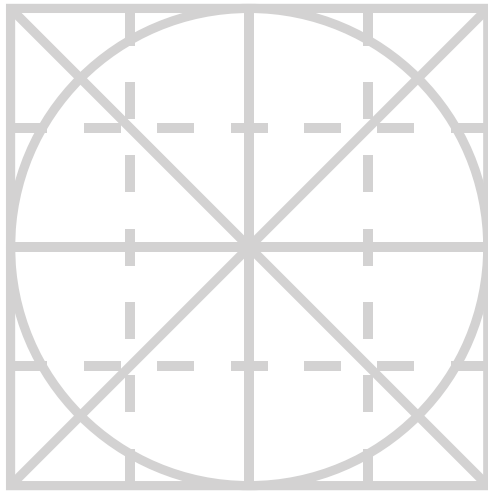
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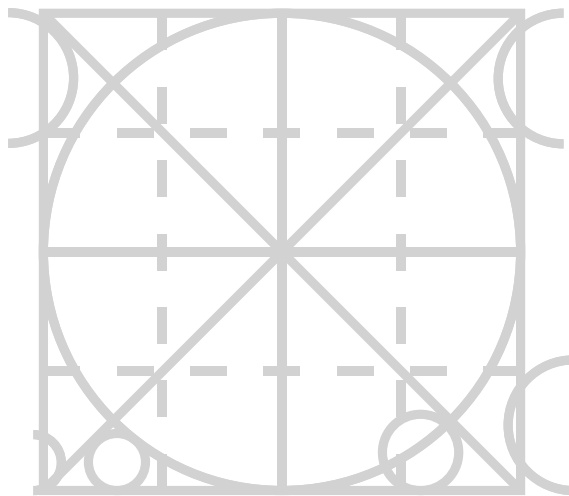
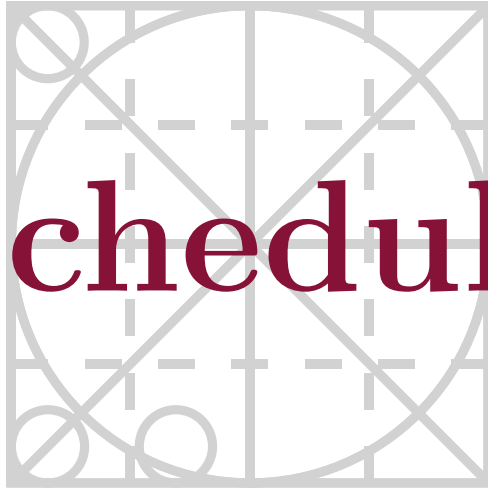
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Schedule



Monday 14th of June

9:45 – 10:00	CONFERENCE OPENING
10:00 – 11:00	<p>Virus-induced codon-specific reprogramming to favor viral RNA translation</p> <p>JUANA DíEZ, <i>MOLECULAR VIROLOGY GROUP. DEPARTMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES, UNIVERSITAT POMPEU FABRA</i></p>
11:00 – 11:30	<p>Towards a phage therapy against multi-drug-resistant <i>Klebsiella pneumoniae</i></p> <p>PILAR DOMINGO-CALAP, <i>INSTITUTO DE BIOLOGÍA INTEGRATIVA DE SISTEMAS, I2SYSBIO, UNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA-CSIC; DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS, UNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA</i></p>
11:30 – 11:45	BREAK
11:45 – 12:15	<p>Predictability: Can the turning point and end of an expanding epidemic be precisely forecast?</p> <p>SAÚL ARES, <i>GRUPO INTERDISCIPLINAR DE SISTEMAS COMPLEJOS (GISC); CENTRO NACIONAL DE BIOTECNOLOGIA</i></p>
12:15 – 12:45	<p>Application of Genome-wide Association Studies for Detection of Plant Genes Involved in a Defense Response to Virus Infection</p> <p>ANAMARIJA BUTKOVI, <i>INSTITUTO DE BIOLOGÍA INTEGRATIVA DE SISTEMAS (I2SYSBIO), CSIC-UNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA</i></p>
12:45 – 15:00	LUNCH
15:00 – 16:00	<p>Multiscale modelling of the structure, regulation and dynamics of immune responses to virus infections</p> <p>GENNADY BOCHAROV, <i>MARCHUK INSTITUTE FOR NUMERICAL MATHEMATICS, RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES; MOSCOW CENTER FOR FUNDAMENTAL AND APPLIED MATHEMATICS AT INM RAS; SECHENOV FIRST MOSCOW STATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY</i></p>
16:00 – 16:30	A systemic view on virus infection fate decisions

ANDREAS MEYERHANS, *INFECTION BIOLOGY LABORATORY, UNIVERSITAT POMPEU FABRA; INSTITUCIÓ CATALANA DE RECERCA I ESTUDIS AVANÇATS (ICREA); MARCHUK INSTITUTE FOR NUMERICAL MATHEMATICS*

16:30 – 17:00 **An agent-based model with interaction networks, infection dynamics, transmission dynamics, and natural history of infection for evaluation of non-pharmaceutical interventions against COVID-19**

ANEL NURTAY, *BIG DATA INSTITUTE, LI KA SHING CENTRE FOR HEALTH INFORMATION AND DISCOVERY, NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD*

■ Tuesday 15th of June

10:00 – 11:00 TBA

Lluís Alsedà

11:00 – 11:30 TBA

Núria Fagella

11:30 – 11:45

BREAK

11:45 – 12:15

Scaling laws for stochastic ghosts explained by Hamiltonian dynamics

J. TOMÁS LÁZARO, *DEPARTAMENT DE MATEMÀTIQUES, UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA DE CATALUNYA; CENTRE DE RECERCA MATEMÀTICA*

12:15 – 12:45

Some instances where we can encounter a beyond all order phenomenon

INMACULADA BALDOMÀ, *DEPARTAMENT DE MATEMÀTIQUES, UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA DE CATALUNYA*

12:45 – 15:00

LUNCH

15:00 – 16:00

Dynamical Parrondo paradoxes

ARMENGOL GASULL, *DEPARTAMENT DE MATEMÀTIQUES, UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA; CENTRE DE RECERCA MATEMÀTICA*

16:00 – 16:30

Can ecosystems live in a ghost state?

BLAI VIDIELLA, *ICREA-COMPLEX SYSTEMS LAB (UPF-PRBB); INSTITUT DE BIOLOGIA EVOLUTIVA (CSIC-UPF); CENTRE DE RECERCA MATEMÀTICA*

16:30 – 17:00 **Quasi-periodic perturbations of heteroclinic attractor networks in models of bistable perception**

GEMMA HUGUET, *DEPARTAMENT DE MATEMÀTIQUES, UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA DE CATALUNYA; CENTRE DE RECERCA MATEMÀTICA; INSTITUT DE MATEMÀTIQUES DE LA UPC - BARCELONATECH (IMTECH)*

Wednesday 16th of June

10:00 – 11:00 **Social dispersal in metapopulations**

DANIEL ORO, *THEORETICAL AND COMPUTATIONAL ECOLOGY LAB, CEAB (CSIC)*

11:00 – 11:30 TBA

David Alonso

11:30 – 11:45

BREAK

11:45 – 12:15 **On the basic reproduction number in continuously structured populations**

SÍLVIA CUADRADO, *DEPARTAMENT DE MATEMÀTIQUES, UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA*

12:15 – 12:45 **Normal forms in Ecology**

JOSEP SARDANYÉS, *CENTRE DE RECERCA MATEMÀTICA*

12:45 – 15:00

LUNCH

15:00 – 16:00 **Systemic Risk and Opportunity: Alternative Realities in Social and Ecological Systems**

SIMON LEVIN, *PRINCETON UNIVERSITY*

16:00 – 16:30 **Search behaviour in a model organism: a walk on the wild side of diffusion**

FREDERIC BARTUMEUS, *THEORETICAL AND COMPUTATIONAL ECOLOGY GROUP (CEAB-CSIC)*

16:30 – 17:00 **The dynamics and resilience of ecological networks**

SONIA KÉFI, *CNRS, INSTITUT DES SCIENCES DE L'EVOLUTION DE MONTPELLIER*

Thursday 17th of June

- 10:00 – 11:00 TBA
Ricard Solé
- 11:00 – 11:30 **Making sense of a dynamic world: Information processing by recurrent biological networks**
JORDI GARCIA-OJALVO, *DEPARTMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES, UNIVERSITAT POMPEU FABRA*
- 11:30 – 11:45 BREAK
- 11:45 – 12:15 **Implementing Biological Computation with Distributed Multicellular Consortia**
EULÀLIA DE NADAL, *INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH IN BIOMEDICINE (IRB BARCELONA); CELL SIGNALING RESEARCH GROUP, UNIVERSITAT POMPEU FABRA (UPF)*
- 12:15 – 12:45 **Role of ancient duplicates in the metabolic switching in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae***
CHRISTINA TOFT, *I2SysBio CSIC-UV*
- 12:45 – 15:00 LUNCH
- 15:00 – 16:00 TBA
Jeff Gore
- 16:00 – 16:30 **Human Time vs. Mouse Time in Embryonic Development**
MIKI EBISUYA, *EMBL BARCELONA*
- 16:30 – 17:00 TBA
Núria Conde

Friday 18th of June

- 10:00 – 11:00 **Cancer Virotherapy with Oncolytic Adenoviruses**
RAMON ALEMANY BONASTRE, *CATALAN INSTITUTE OF ONCOLOGY/IDIBELL*
- 11:00 – 11:30 **Beating cancer “escape room”: let’s use mathematical modelling to unlock cells!**
NÚRIA FOLGUERA BLASCO, *THE FRANCIS CRICK INSTITUTE*
- 11:30 – 11:45 BREAK

Schedule



11:45 – 12:15 **Metabolic circuits operability and cancer immunotherapy efficacy**

JAVIER A. MENENDEZ, *METABOLISM AND CANCER GROUP, PROGRAM AGAINST CANCER THERAPEUTIC RESISTANCE (PROCURE); GIRONA BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IDIBGI)*

12:15 – 12:45 **Multiscale approach to understanding cell rearrangements in early angiogenesis**

DARIA STEPANOVA, *CENTRE DE RECERCA MATEMÀTICA*

12:45 – 15:00

LUNCH



Abstracts

of the

Invited Talks

Cancer Virotherapy with Oncolytic Adenoviruses

RAMON ALEMANY BONASTRE

Catalan Institute of Oncology/IDIBELL, Spain.

Cancer virotherapy seeks to eliminate cancer cells with tumor-selective or “oncolytic” viruses. Lysis of tumor cells by oncolytic viruses is highly immunogenic and it can revert the immune suppression developed by tumors. Among different oncolytic viruses, human adenoviruses are non-enveloped DNA viruses with a cellular tropism and life cycle particularly suitable for oncolysis of tumors of epithelial origin. However, limited efficacy in clinical trials indicates that oncolytic adenoviruses need to be improved at different levels. For a successful systemic tumor targeting of the virus, issues such as neutralizing antibodies, fast clearance from blood, liver tropism, and tumor penetration, need to be addressed. Once in tumors, intratumoral spread of the virus is hampered by diffusion barriers formed by an extracellular matrix and stromal cells. Finally, the ability to induce antitumor immune responses is limited by the dominant immunogenicity of viral proteins compared to tumor antigens. This talk will present strategies aimed to overcome these limitations.

Predictability: Can the turning point and end of an expanding epidemic be precisely forecast?

MARIO CASTRO¹, SAÚL ARES², JOSÉ A. CUESTA³,
SUSANNA MANRUBIA⁴

- ¹ *Grupo Interdisciplinar de Sistemas Complejos (GISC), Spain.
Instituto de Investigación Tecnológica, Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Spain.*
- ² *Grupo Interdisciplinar de Sistemas Complejos (GISC), Spain.
Centro Nacional de Biotecnología, Spain.
E-mail address: saul.ares@csic.es URL: <http://gisc.uc3m.es/~saul/>*
- ³ *Grupo Interdisciplinar de Sistemas Complejos (GISC), Spain.
Departamento de Matemáticas, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain.*
- ⁴ *Grupo Interdisciplinar de Sistemas Complejos (GISC), Spain.
Centro Nacional de Biotecnología, Spain.*

No, they can't [1]. Epidemic spread is characterized by exponentially growing dynamics, which are intrinsically unpredictable. The time at which the growth in the number of infected individuals halts and starts decreasing cannot be calculated with certainty before the turning point is actually attained; neither can the end of the epidemic after the turning point. An SIR model with confinement (SCIR) illustrates how lockdown measures inhibit infection spread only above a threshold that we calculate. The existence of that threshold has major effects in predictability: A Bayesian fit to the COVID-19 pandemic in Spain shows that a slow-down in the number of newly infected individuals during the expansion phase allows to infer neither the precise position of the maximum nor whether the measures taken will bring the propagation to the inhibition regime. There is a short horizon for reliable prediction, followed by a dispersion of the possible trajectories that grows extremely fast. The impossibility to predict in the mid-term is not due to wrong or incomplete data, since it persists in error-free, synthetically produced data sets, and does not necessarily improve by using larger data sets. Our study warns against precise forecasts of the evolution of epidemics based on mean-field, effective or phenomenological models, and supports that only probabilities of different outcomes can be confidently given.

Acknowledgments: This research has been funded by the Spanish Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación y Universidades (MICINN)-Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional funds of the European Union support, under Projects FIS2016-78883-C2-2-P and PID2019-106339GB-I00 (to M.C.), PGC2018-098186-B-I00 (to J.A.C.), FIS2017-89773-P (to S.M.), FIS2016-78313-P (to S.A.), and PID2019-109320GB-I00 (to S.A.). The Spanish MICINN has also funded the “Severo Ochoa” Centers of Excellence (to Centro Nacional de Biotecnología (CNB)) SEV 2017-0712 and Special Grant Proyecto Intramural Especial 2020-20E079 (to CNB, S.M. and S.A.) entitled “Development of protection strategies against SARS-CoV-2.”

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Some instances where we can encounter a beyond all order phenomenon

INMACULADA BALDOMÀ

Departament de Matemàtiques, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain.

E-mail address: immaculada.baldoma@upc.edu

URL: <http://mat.upc.edu/en/people/immaculada.baldoma>

In this talk we want to show three different settings where a beyond all order phenomenon occurs by means of exponentially small quantities with respect to a suitable parameter. It summarizes different joint works with Maria Aguares, Oriol Castejón, Mar Giralt, Marcel Guardia, Santiago Ibáñez and Teresa M. Seara.

The first one is about the occurrence of Shilnikov bifurcations in analytic unfoldings of some Hopf-Zero singularities through a beyond all order phenomenon: the exponentially small breakdown of invariant manifolds which coincide at any order of the normal form procedure. The conditions we provide, are computable and satisfied by generic singularities and generic unfoldings. *Joint work with Oriol Castejón, Santiago Ibáñez and Teresa M. Seara.*

The second one deals with the existence of spiral wave solutions in oscillatory models having a rotational symmetry, such as generic λ - ω systems. These can be derived as the normal form of oscillatory reaction-diffusion systems near a Hopf bifurcation. Rigidly rotating spiral waves are commonly found in many chemical systems and biological processes [1, 2, 3, 4]. In these systems, we prove that the asymptotic wavenumber is an exponentially small quantity with respect to the (small) twist parameter. *Joint work with Maria Aguares and Teresa M. Seara.*

In the last instance we consider the Restricted Planar Circular 3-Body Problem (RPC3BP) with primaries mass ratio μ small. This configuration has a saddle-center equilibrium point called L_3 (collinear with the primaries and beyond the largest one) with a 1-dimensional stable and unstable manifold. Since the modulus of the hyperbolic eigenvalues are smaller than the elliptic ones by a factor of $\sqrt{\mu}$. As a consequence, when $\mu \rightarrow 0$, the 1-dimensional stable and unstable coincide at any order of μ . However, we can prove that they are not equal but its distance is exponentially small with respect to $\sqrt{\mu}$. *Joint work with Mar Giralt and Marcel Guardia.*

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Search behaviour in a model organism: a walk on the wild side of diffusion

ROGER LLORET-CABOT¹, DANIEL CAMPOS², WILL RYU³,
FREDERIC BARTUMEUS⁴

¹ *Theoretical and Computational Ecology Group (CEAB-CSIC), Accés Cala Sant Francesc 14, 17300 Girona.*

² *Department of Physics, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Cerdanyola del Vallès, 08193 Barcelona.*

³ *Department of Physics, University of Toronto, 25 Harbord St. Toronto, ON M5S 3G5 Canada.*

⁴ *Theoretical and Computational Ecology Group (CEAB-CSIC), Accés Cala Sant Francesc 14, 17300 Girona.*

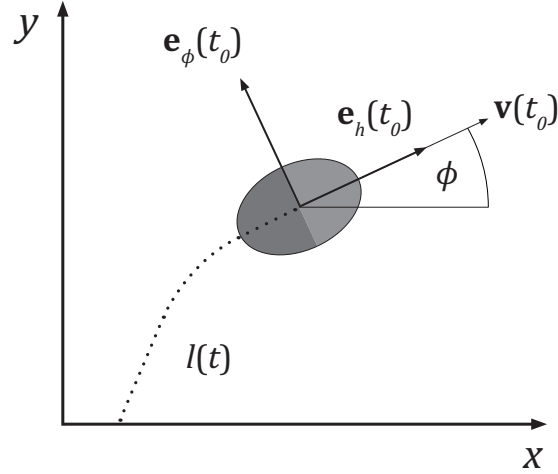
E-mail address: fbartu@ceab.csic.es URL: <http://www.theelab.net>

Search under large environmental uncertainty requires to solve the spatial exploration-exploitation tradeoff. Combining intensive and extensive sampling efforts, the searchers increase the chances to find both nearby and faraway targets from any given initial search position. Based on a high-throughput tracking system we study the search behaviour of *Caenorhabditis elegans* in a cue-deprived arena. This roundworm is a free-living transparent nematode of about 1 mm in length that is massively used as a model organism in genetics, neurosciences, and biomedicine research.

C.elegans exploratory behaviour combines both stereotyped strong reorientations, which abruptly break directional persistence, with smooth curvature control that is executed while crawling. Complex movement patterns and heterogeneous spatial sampling emerge from the combination of these two elements. Here, we use stochastic differential equations (Eq. 1, Eq. 2) to model *C.elegans* search trajectories. Our model reproduces the observed dynamics and allows us to investigate how motor control influences macroscopic properties of movement and search efficiency at much broader scales. We found that *C.elegans* combines periods of extensive spreading with local sampling, transiting between sub/super-diffusive regimes, and solving key tradeoffs related to optimal spatial sampling. Exploratory behaviour can be interpreted widely as a walk on the wild side of diffusion.

Mathematical notes:

In our movement model (Fig. 1), we distinguish the dynamics in the direction of motion (h , according to the figure) from the normal direction (ϕ). Then we apply



a Langevin framework (stochastic differential equations) with different forces in the mentioned directions. Basically, we consider that there is a propulsive force in the direction of motion that tries to keep the speed constant at a given speed v_s , then there is a constant force in direction ϕ (which induces a constant curvature in the motion) and finally we have Gaussian white noises in both directions with intensities σ_h and σ_ϕ . In consequence, the model reads:

$$\frac{d\mathbf{v}}{dt} = -\gamma(v - v_s)\mathbf{e}_h - \beta\mathbf{e}_\phi + \sigma_h\mathbf{e}_h + \sigma_\phi\mathbf{e}_\phi \quad (1)$$

where γ and β are constant parameters that determine the intensity of the propulsive force and the curvature force, respectively. The prevalent direction, \mathbf{e}^* can be alternatively represented in terms of the angle of movement ϕ^* .

When we expand the equations in the direction of motion and the normal direction separately, and for simplicity we assume $\mathbf{e}^* = \mathbf{i}$ (this is, the preferential direction of motion in the direction x) so that:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dv}{dt} &= -\gamma(v - v_s) + \sigma_h \\ \frac{d\phi}{dt} &= \frac{\beta + \sigma_\phi}{v} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

Acknowledgments: This work was financially supported by grant no. CGL2016-78156-C2-1-R from the Spanish Ministry (MINECO).

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Multiscale modelling of the structure, regulation and dynamics of immune responses to virus infections

GENNADY BOCHAROV¹, DMITRY GREBENNIKOV²,
ROSTISLAV SAVINKOV³, JORDI ARGILAGUET⁴,
ANDREAS MEYERHANS⁵

¹ *Marchuk Institute for Numerical Mathematics, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russian Federation.*

Moscow Center for Fundamental and Applied Mathematics at INM RAS, Russian Federation.

Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University, Russian Federation.

E-mail address: g.bocharov@inm.ras.ru

² *Marchuk Institute for Numerical Mathematics, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russian Federation.*

Moscow Center for Fundamental and Applied Mathematics at INM RAS, Russian Federation.

Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University, Russian Federation.

³ *Marchuk Institute for Numerical Mathematics, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russian Federation.*

Moscow Center for Fundamental and Applied Mathematics at INM RAS, Russian Federation.

⁴ *Infection Biology Laboratory, Department of Experimental and Health Sciences (DCEXS), Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain.*

IRTA, Centre de Recerca en Sanitat Animal (CReSA, IRTA-UAB), Campus de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain.

⁵ *Infection Biology Laboratory, Department of Experimental and Health Sciences (DCEXS), Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain.*

Institució Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avançats (ICREA), Spain.

Marchuk Institute for Numerical Mathematics, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russian Federation.

The course and outcome of publicly relevant human infections depend on the immune system. It functions as an hierarchically organized, spatially structured and pleiotropically regulated ensemble of recirculating cells and humoral factors that function to control antigenic homeostasis of a host organism. To understand the pathogenesis of infectious diseases and to predict their progression after therapeutic interventions, a range of challenges exist. These include the curse of dimensionality of a systems state space, the multiplicity of dynamics trajectories of pathological processes, the nonlinearity of regulation loops, and the heterogeneity and variability of innate- and adaptive immunity. To overcome these challenges, the deployment of mathematical and computational tools combining the rigor of mechanistic description and power of machine learning algorithms is needed. This shall enable a quantitative description of the immune system dynamics in the multidimensional space of physical and phenotypic traits, to allow a cause-and-effect type of analysis of pathological processes and to robustly predict the system's reaction to multi-modal therapies. A systematic approach to the development of multiscale multiphysics models of the immune system with a special focus on the structure, regulation and dynamics is presented [2, 1]. Our fundamental and translational studies are placed around two major immune-dependent disease classes, i.e., human infections (HIV-1, SARS-CoV-2) [3, 4, 6] and experimental animal infections (LCMV and MHV) [5].

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Application of Genome-wide Association Studies for Detection of Plant Genes Involved in a Defense Response to Virus Infection

ANAMARIJA BUTKOVI¹, RUBÉN GONZÁLEZ²,
SANTIAGO F. ELENA³

¹ *Instituto de Biología Integrativa de Sistemas (I2SysBio), CSIC-Universitat de València, Spain.*

E-mail address: anamarija.butkovic@csic.es

URL: <http://sfelenalab.csic.es/people.html>

² *I2SysBio, CSIC-Universitat de València, Spain.*

E-mail address: ruben.gonzalez@csic.es

URL: <http://sfelenalab.csic.es/people.html>

³ *I2SysBio, CSIC-Universitat de València, Spain.*

The Santa Fe Institute, Santa Fe, United States of America.

E-mail address: santiago.elena@csic.es, sfelena@santafe.edu

URL: <http://sfelenalab.csic.es/sfelena/>

Genome wide association studies (GWAS) link specific genetic variants with particular diseases and they are becoming increasingly popular in the last decade. These discoveries have helped us to identify genes responsible for different diseases or medical conditions. In GWAS we scan the genomes of many, often up to thousands, individuals of the same species, taking into consideration healthy individuals and the individuals with a disease we are interested in. Then using statistical methods, such as, linear mixed models (LMM), look for places in the genome that are consistently different between diseased and healthy individuals [1]. Once we identify genetic markers associated with our disease of interest we can focus more on experimental studies to clarify the exact role of this region and develop appropriate prevention measures.

In our GWAS project we have characterized *Arabidopsis thaliana* genes involved in the response to infection with Turnip mosaic virus (TuMV), a prototypical RNA plant virus. *Arabidopsis* is a great model organism to perform GWA analyses on since it is small, easy to work with, very well studied and a lot of genetic data is readily available. TuMV is an interesting virus to study because it causes a lot

of economic losses in agricultural production each year and is commonly used and well characterized in our laboratory. With the help of LMM [2], genes that are correlated with TuMV infection were found and further characterized. Using the Bayesian sparse linear mixed model (BSLMM) [3], that is a hybrid of LMM and the Bayesian variable selection regression models (BVS), we inferred the genetic architecture of the infection-related trait. This approach has helped us to understand if several disease-related traits of interest are well explained with the genomic information available.

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On the basic reproduction number in continuously structured populations

CARLES BARRIL¹, ÀNGEL CALSINA², SÍLVIA CUADRADO³,
JORDI RIPOLL⁴

¹ *Departament de Matemàtiques, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain.*
E-mail address: carlesbarril@mat.uab.cat

² *Departament de Matemàtiques, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Spain.*
E-mail address: acalsina@mat.uab.cat

³ *Departament de Matemàtiques, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain.*
E-mail address: silvia@mat.uab.cat

⁴ *Departament d'Informàtica, Matemàtica Aplicada i Estadística, Universitat de Girona, Spain.*
E-mail address: jripoll@imae.udg.edu

In a deterministic epidemic model, the basic reproduction number \mathcal{R}_0 is defined as the expected number of new infections a newly infected individual will produce in a wholly susceptible population over the full course of the disease. In an ecological model, the basic reproduction number \mathcal{R}_0 is, by definition, the expected number of offspring that an individual has during its lifetime. In constant and time periodic environments it is calculated as the spectral radius of the so-called *next-generation operator* ([1, 2]). In continuously structured populations defined in a Banach lattice X with concentrated states at birth one cannot define the next-generation operator in X . In this talk we present an approach to compute the basic reproduction number of such models as the limit of the basic reproduction number of a sequence of models for which \mathcal{R}_0 can be computed as the spectral radius of the next-generation operator. We will show an application of these results to some examples.

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Virus-induced codon-specific reprogramming to favor viral RNA translation

JUANA DÍEZ

*Molecular Virology Group. Department of Experimental and Health Sciences,
Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain.*

Codon usage bias regulates gene expression, as synonymous codons are not decoded with the same efficiency (1). How viruses, such as the emerging mosquito-borne Chikungunya virus (CHIKV), express their genomes at high levels despite an enrichment in rare codons remains a puzzling question. Using ribosome footprinting, we analysed translational changes at the ER and the cytosol, the two major translation compartments, in CHIKV-infected cells. Here we show that CHIKV infection induces a codon-specific reprogramming of the host translation machinery to favor translation of viral RNA genomes over host mRNAs featuring optimal codon usage. This reprogramming was specifically apparent at the ER, where CHIKV RNA efficiently translates. Mechanistically, it involves CHIKV-induced overexpression of KIAA1456, an enzyme that modifies the wobble U34 position in the anticodon of tRNAs required for proper decoding of a specific set of codons highly enriched in CHIKV RNA. Our findings demonstrate an unprecedented interplay of viruses with the host tRNA epitranscriptome to adapt the host translational machinery to the viral codon usage.

Towards a phage therapy against multi-drug-resistant *Klebsiella pneumoniae*

PILAR DOMINGO-CALAP

Instituto de Biología Integrativa de Sistemas, I2SysBio, Universitat de València-CSIC, Spain.

Department of Genetics, Universitat de València, Spain.

E-mail address: pilar.domingo@uv.es

The emergence of multi-drug-resistant bacteria is a major threat nowadays. *Klebsiella pneumoniae* is considered by the WHO as a priority pathogen to be treated, due to its high levels of resistance emergence [1]. Alternative treatments are needed, and bacteriophages, viruses that kill bacteria, have been proposed as promising therapeutic tools [2]. Understanding phage-host interactions of *Klebsiella* phages, and their combination with antibiotics, will help us in the fight against *Klebsiella pneumoniae* and in the development of future phage-based treatments. Mathematical modelling will provide an excellent tool for understanding the dynamics of bacteriophage infections and determining the fate of populations. Interestingly, the inclusion of complex parameters such as the emergence of resistant bacteria [3] and coinfection [4] will produce a qualitative description of these biological processes.

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Human Time vs. Mouse Time in Embryonic Development

MIKI EBISUYA

EMBL Barcelona, Spain.

Different species have different tempos of development: larger animals tend to grow more slowly than smaller animals. My group has been trying to understand the molecular basis of this interspecies difference in developmental time, using the segmentation clock as a model system. The segmentation clock is the oscillatory gene expressions that regulate the timing of body segment formation during early embryogenesis. We have recently succeeded in recapitulating the segmentation clock from both human and mouse pluripotent stem cells, detecting oscillations and traveling waves in vitro. Interestingly, the oscillation period of human segmentation clock was 5-6 hours while that of mouse was 2-3 hours. Taking advantage of our in vitro system and simple mathematical models, we have been comparing the genome sequences and molecular processes of the segmentation clock between human and mouse to explain the interspecies difference in the oscillation period.

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Beating cancer “escape room”: let’s use mathematical modelling to unlock cells!

NÚRIA FOLGUERA BLASCO¹, RUBÉN PÉREZ-CARRASCO²,
JAVIER MENÉNDEZ³, TOMÁS ALARCÓN⁴

¹ *The Francis Crick Institute, London, UK.*

E-mail address: nuria.folguerablasco@crick.ac.uk

URL: <http://www.crick.ac.uk/research/find-a-researcher/nuria-folguera-blasco>

² *Faculty of Natural Sciences, Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London, London, UK.*

³ *Metabolism and Cancer Group, Translational Research Laboratory-Catalan Institute of Oncology, Girona, Espanya.*

⁴ *ICREA and Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Campus UAB, Edifici C, 08193 Bellaterra, Barcelona, Espanya.*

The inherent capacity of differentiated cells to switch their phenotype in vivo in response to damage stimuli might have a pivotal role in ageing and cancer. However, how the mechanisms of phenotype reprogramming are established remains poorly understood. In order to elucidate such mechanisms, we present a stochastic model of combined epigenetic regulation (ER)-gene regulatory network (GRN) to study the plastic phenotypic behaviours driven by ER heterogeneity. Our analysis of the coupled system reveals the existence of pluripotent stem-like and differentiated steady-states. Crucially, ER heterogeneity is responsible for conferring abnormal robustness to pluripotent stem-like states, which cause the locking of the cells in a stem cell-like state prone to cancer development. By analysing the ER heterogeneity, we formulate epigenetic heterogeneity-based strategies capable of unlocking and facilitating the transit from differentiation-refractory (pluripotent stem-like) to differentiation-primed epistates. Our results suggest that epigenetic heterogeneity regulates the mechanisms and kinetics of phenotypic robustness of cell fate reprogramming. The occurrence of tunable switches capable of modifying the nature of cell fate reprogramming from pathological to physiological might pave the way for new therapeutic strategies to regulate reparative reprogramming in ageing and cancer.

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Making sense of a dynamic world: Information processing by recurrent biological networks

JORDI GARCIA-OJALVO

Department of Experimental and Health Sciences, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain.

E-mail address: jordi.g.ojalvo@upf.edu

URL: <http://dsb.upf.edu>

Living organisms must monitor the dynamics of their environment continuously, in order to adapt to present conditions and anticipate future changes. But anticipation requires processing temporal information, which in turn requires memory. We have recently shown that both cells [1] and simple nervous systems [2] can perform such dynamical information processing by leveraging the recurrent architecture of gene regulatory and neuronal networks, respectively. Here we review these studies, showing in particular how recurrent network architectures enable the long-term storage of information, through a phenomenon reminiscent of generalized chaos synchronization. We also discuss the size requirements that recurrent networks must fulfill under realistic biological conditions.

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Dynamical Parrondo paradoxes

ARMENGOL GASULL

Departament de Matemàtiques, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain.

Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Spain.

E-mail address: gasull@mat.uab.cat

We start showing that for planar periodic non-autonomous discrete dynamical systems, even when a common fixed point for each of the autonomous associated dynamical systems is repeller, this fixed point can become a local attractor for the whole system, giving rise to a Parrondo's dynamical type paradox. This result can be easily extended to even dimension.

Afterwards we study a similar situation, involving two planar homeomorphisms. This planar construction can also be extended to any dimension greater than 2 and shows the appearance of the dynamical Parrondo's paradox in odd dimensions.

Finally this paradox is proved to appear also in two other situations:

- Some iterated function system generated by two maps f and g , where each of them appears with a certain probability; and
- Some planar alternating ordinary differential equations, which can be used to model systems with seasonality.

This talk based on the works [1, 2, 3].

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Quasi-periodic perturbations of heteroclinic attractor networks in models of bistable perception

AMADEU DELSHAMS¹, ANTONI GUILLAMON², GEMMA HUGUET³

¹ *Departament de Matemàtiques, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain.
Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Spain.*

Institut de Matemàtiques de la UPC - BarcelonaTech (IMTech), Spain.

E-mail address: amadeu.delshams@upc.edu

URL: <http://web.mat.upc.edu/amadeu.delshams/>

² *Departament de Matemàtiques, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain.
Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Spain.*

Institut de Matemàtiques de la UPC - BarcelonaTech (IMTech), Spain.

E-mail address: antoni.guillamon@upc.edu

URL: <http://web.mat.upc.edu/antoni.guillamon/>

³ *Departament de Matemàtiques, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain.
Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Spain.*

Institut de Matemàtiques de la UPC - BarcelonaTech (IMTech), Spain.

E-mail address: gemma.huguet@upc.edu

URL: <http://web.mat.upc.edu/gemma.huguet/>

Bistable perception is characterized by alternation of percepts under a steady sensory input. Alternatively to the profusely used two-attractor models for bistable perception, heteroclinic networks have been considered successfully to model this phenomenon [1]. Heteroclinic networks consist of the union of several heteroclinic orbits between saddle points. In bistable perception models, noise plays a leading role to explain the statistics of dominance times of percepts observed in experiments. Thus, trajectories of heteroclinic networks are characterized by long periods in neighbourhoods of saddle points from which they escape thanks to noise. In fact, noise is meant to model a diversity of inputs impinging on the areas represented in the model.

In this talk we consider quasiperiodic perturbations of heteroclinic networks, assuming that the system is receiving events, either internal or from other brain areas,

that include only a finite number of (incongruent) frequencies. We show how these systems can achieve good agreement with gamma distributions of the dominance times observed in bistable perception, and we compare these results with those obtained with noise. We present a methodology based on the separatrix map to model the dynamics close to heteroclinic networks with quasi-periodic perturbations. Our methodology considers two different approaches, one based on Melnikov integrals and another one based on variational equations. The perturbed system shows chaotic behaviour while dominance times achieve good agreement with Gamma distributions. Results can be found in [2].

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The dynamics and resilience of ecological networks

SONIA KÉFI

(in collaboration with Virginia Domínguez-García, Ismaël Lajaaiti and Vasilis Dakos)

CNRS, Institut des Sciences de l'Evolution de Montpellier, France.

E-mail address: sonia.kefi@umontpellier.fr

URL: <http://sonia.kefi.fr/>

Understanding the stability of ecological communities has proved to be a challenging task. In particular, while the need to consider the multidimensionality of stability has been clearly stated in the ecological literature for decades, little is known about how different metrics of stability relate to each other in ecological communities. Indeed, our understanding of stability has remained fragmented and is limited largely to simple or simplified systems. I'll present results of dynamical simulations of multispecies communities under different perturbation scenarios, in which we measured how frequently used stability metrics relate to each other. I'll discuss how these results may contribute to improve the quantification of stability in theory and in practice.

Scaling laws for stochastic ghosts explained by Hamiltonian dynamics

TOMÁS ALARCÓN¹, J. TOMÁS LÁZARO², CARLOS PEÑA³,
JOSEP SARDANYÉS⁴

¹ *Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Edifici C, Campus de Bellaterra, 08193 Cerdanyola del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain.*

E-mail address: tarcon@crm.cat

URL: <http://www.crm.cat/person/50/alarcon-cor-tomas/>

² *Departament de Matemàtiques, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, ETSEIB, Av. Diagonal, 647, 08028, Barcelona, Spain.*

Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Edifici C, Campus de Bellaterra, 08193 Cerdanyola del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain.

E-mail address: jose.tomas.lazaro@upc.edu

URL: <http://web.mat.upc.edu/jose.tomas.lazaro/>

³ *Laboratorio Subterráneo de Canfranc (LSC), Paseo de los Ayerbe s/n, 22880, Canfranc-Estación, Spain.*

E-mail address: cpenya@lsc-canfranc.es

URL: <http://lsc-canfranc.es/user/cpenya>

⁴ *Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Edifici C, Campus de Bellaterra, 08193 Cerdanyola del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain.*

E-mail address: jsardanyes@crm.cat

URL: <http://www.crm.cat/person/37/sardanyes-cayuela-josep/>

Universal scaling laws occur in deterministic dynamical systems. Several of these scaling laws arise (in many cases) from long transients at the vicinity of local bifurcations. In these situations time transients τ follow laws of the form $\tau \sim |\mu - \mu_c|^\alpha$, where μ is the bifurcation parameter and μ_c the value at which the bifurcation takes place. The exponent α depends on the bifurcation type, being $-1/2$ for the saddle-node bifurcation. Multitude of research has focused on this slowing down phenomenon, the so-called *ghost*, using deterministic approaches, which conserve such a scaling behaviour. However, the impact of stochasticity (i.e., intrinsic or demographic noise) on ghosts still remains poorly explored.

Reference [4] explored the impact of intrinsic noise in the vicinity of a local saddle-node bifurcation in one- and two-dimensional dynamical systems including cooperation, competition, and species decay. They numerically found that this scaling law was more intricated than the one for deterministic systems, and that an increase of noise stabilised the dynamics producing longer transients. To the best of our knowledge, there is no yet a satisfactory theoretical body to this explain this phenomenon from a dynamical point of view.

In this talk, we will provide an analytical approach to evaluate how intrinsic noise shapes these stochastic transients and their associated scaling law by means of a Hamiltonian approach. This approach, based upon conservative dynamical systems, will be applied to a simple model for autocatalysis and to a cooperative system modelled with a Hill function.

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Systemic Risk and Opportunity: Alternative Realities in Social and Ecological Systems

SIMON LEVIN

Princeton University, United States of America.

URL: <http://slevin.princeton.edu>

Phase transitions between distinct states are common throughout our world, from physical systems to financial systems and our societies. Understanding these transitions and their consequences is crucial for efforts at sustainability and for the development of effective management regimes. I will discuss the nature of the challenges, the search for early warning indicators of impending changes, and implications for the design of management strategies.

Metabolic circuits operability and cancer immunotherapy efficacy

ELISABET CUYÀS¹, JAVIER A. MENENDEZ²

¹ *Metabolism and Cancer Group, Program Against Cancer Therapeutic Resistance (ProCURE), Catalan Institute of Oncology, Girona, Spain.*

Girona Biomedical Research Institute (IDIBGI), Girona, Spain.

² *Metabolism and Cancer Group, Program Against Cancer Therapeutic Resistance (ProCURE), Catalan Institute of Oncology, Girona, Spain.*

Girona Biomedical Research Institute (IDIBGI), Girona, Spain.

E-mail address: jmenendez@idibgi.org

URL: <http://https://idibgi.org/grups/metabolisme-i-cancer/>

Targeting the “don’t eat me” signals that cancer cells employ to evade detection and destruction by the immune system with cancer immunotherapy has revolutionized cancer treatment, but efficacy remains limited in major cancer types and clinical settings. Given that only 1 in 8 cancer patients would obtain a therapeutic benefit from this potentially curative modality, further progress towards more broadly effective immunotherapeutic strategies urgently requires an unbiased identification of novel mechanisms of tumor cell-intrinsic immune evasion.

While most efforts to biologically rationalize and clinically broaden the utility of immunotherapeutics have mostly revolved around the genetic aberrations of cancer cells, relatively little information exists on how cancer cell-intrinsic metabolism might operate as a self-autonomous barrier against antitumor immunity and cancer immunotherapy. We recently envisioned that the operability of metabolic circuits might drive the composition and/or functionality of immune-escape mechanisms and consequently fine-tune the responsiveness of cancer cells to T-cells and immunotherapeutics. We have proposed that a molecular-level delineation of the metabolic blueprint shaping the balance between “eat me” and “don’t eat me” signals in cancer cells should provide an unforeseen perspective on the frequently overlooked relevance of basic metabolism research in the post-genomic era of cancer research.

To functionally interrogate the contribution of tumor-intrinsic metabolic circuits to tumor immune evasion we can take advantage of the versatility of the CRISPR-Cas9

technology for functional gene screening. We here illustrate how CRISPR/Cas9-based drop-out of single or combinatorial perturbations of metabolic circuits working patterns in combination with automated, real-time measurements of the cytolytic interactions between T-cells and cancer cells at different effector-to-target ratios (as representative grades of T cell-selection pressure), can unbiasedly identify cancer cell-autonomous metabolic traits as tumor-intrinsic factors regulating sensitivity to T cell-mediated killing and cancer immunotherapy. Using small molecule drug-responsive metabolic circuits, we exemplify also how we can couple perturbations of metabolic circuits operability with the activation of endogenous chromogenic reactions in drug-resistant cellular states that self-promote their escape from the immune system but at fitness cost to the cancer cell that can be exploited for therapeutic benefit (i.e., the so-called 'one-two punch' model for cancer therapy).

The development of mathematical models and computational tools to run 'metabolic machines' capable of generating immunotherapy efficacy maps based on metabolic circuits operability would provide not only a highly innovative resource to discover and manipulate novel metabolic regulators of immune evasion but also to accelerate the translation and implementation of lab-based discoveries on tumor/T-cell basic metabolic science into immuno-oncology clinical trials.

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A systemic view on virus infection fate decisions

ANDREAS MEYERHANS¹, JORDI ARGILAGUET², EVA DOMENJO³,
VALENTINA CASELLA⁴, ANNA ESTEVE-CODINA⁵, SIMON HEATH⁶,
GENNADY BOCHAROV⁷

¹ *Infection Biology Laboratory, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain.*

Institució Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avançats (ICREA), Spain.

Marchuk Institute for Numerical Mathematics, Russia.

² *Infection Biology Laboratory, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain.*

IRTA, Centre de Recerca en Sanitat Animal (CReSA), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain.

³ *Infection Biology Laboratory, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain.*

⁴ *Infection Biology Laboratory, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain.*

⁵ *CNAG-CRG, Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology, Spain.*

Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), Spain.

⁶ *CNAG-CRG, Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology, Spain.*

Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), Spain.

⁷ *Marchuk Institute for Numerical Mathematics, Russia.*

The immune system usually fights an invading virus until it is eliminated. Such an infection course is named an acute infection. Alternatively, if the pathogenic threat is very high, the immune system may surrender by immune cell exhaustion to establish a co-existence with the virus, a chronic infection. Neither the decisive elements of this infection fate decision nor the elements that partly control viremia in the chronic phase are completely understood. In our laboratory, we therefore aimed to analyze the sequential events underlying acute and chronic virus infection fate decisions and understand their regulatory mechanisms. Studies of acute and chronic infections of mice with the Lymphocytic Choriomeningitis Virus (LCMV) will be described and possible points of therapeutic interventions discussed.

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Implementing Biological Computation with Distributed Multicellular Consortia

DAVID CANADELL¹, NICOLÁS ORTIZ², FRANCESC POSAS³,
EULÀLIA DE NADAL⁴

- ¹ *Institute of Research in Biomedicine (IRB Barcelona), Spain.
Cell Signaling Research Group, Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), Spain.*
- ² *Institute of Research in Biomedicine (IRB Barcelona), Spain.
Cell Signaling Research Group, Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), Spain.*
- ³ *Institute of Research in Biomedicine (IRB Barcelona), Spain.
Cell Signaling Research Group, Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), Spain.*
- ⁴ *Institute of Research in Biomedicine (IRB Barcelona), Spain.
Cell Signaling Research Group, Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), Spain.
E-mail address: eulalia.nadal@irbbarcelona.org
URL: <http://www.irbbarcelona.org/en/research/cell-signaling>*

Engineering approaches to synthetic biology have shown that several strategies can be used to build complex functional constructs with computational abilities. In this regard, efforts have been devoted to build artificial computational devices for a wide range of applications, including bioremediation, food production or biomedicine. Using yeast as a model organism, we have successfully implemented complex circuits by distributing computation within cellular consortia. This approach to biological computation paves the way for the design and development of a novel method, which can be combined in multiple ways to create complex computational circuits. The potential use of this approach is demonstrated by the implementation of complex logical functions responding to up to six inputs, the building of a synthetic biological memory switch or a circuit with an incoherent feed-forward loop architecture (FFL) to generate single pulse responses, or the implementation of reprogrammable biological devices. Our results might serve as a blueprint for the future development of biocomputing cellular devices.

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An agent-based model with interaction networks, infection dynamics, transmission dynamics, and natural history of infection for evaluation of non-pharmaceutical interventions against COVID-19

ROBERT HINCH¹, WILLIAM J M PROBERT², ANEL NURTAY³

¹ *Big Data Institute, Li Ka Shing Centre for Health Information and Discovery, Nuffield Department of Medicine, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK.*

² *Big Data Institute, Li Ka Shing Centre for Health Information and Discovery, Nuffield Department of Medicine, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK.*

³ *Big Data Institute, Li Ka Shing Centre for Health Information and Discovery, Nuffield Department of Medicine, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK.*
E-mail address: anel.nurtay@bdi.ox.ac.uk

In the absence of pharmaceutical interventions, novel infectious diseases such as COVID-19, apart from causing deaths and illness in millions, have proven to demand strict restrictions on social and economic activity in order to be contained. Various computational models are being employed by policy makers to estimate the effects of different interventions and to predict spread of infection. One of the tools that has been developed to help assess the effects of public health measures is OpenABM-Covid19: an agent-based simulation of the epidemic which includes detailed age-stratification and realistic social networks. The model can be parametrised to demographics of any country, and can evaluate non-pharmaceutical interventions. Interaction networks, infection dynamics, transmission dynamics, and natural history of infection are taken into consideration in the model to assure it being a flexible yet precise tool. It can simulate a population of one million people in seconds per day, which allows parameter sweeps if necessary and formal statistical model-based inference. OpenABM-Covid19 is an open-source project with Python and R interfaces, which allows scientists and policy makers to evaluate and compare different combinations of interventions.

Social dispersal in metapopulations

DANIEL ORO¹, RICARDO MARTINEZ-GARCIA²

¹ *Theoretical and Computational Ecology Lab, CEAB (CSIC), Spain.*

E-mail address: d.oro@csic.es URL: <http://www.theelab.net>

² *ICTP South American Institute for Fundamental Research, Brasil.*

E-mail address: ricardom@ictp-saifr.org

In perturbed patches, a behavioural response of individuals in populations is to disperse to more suitable patches to increase fitness prospects. Dispersal is known to affect metapopulation dynamics, but in social species where social copying is common, dispersal may be non-linear. This non-linearity may result from a behavioural dispersal avalanche once a threshold value of perturbation is attained [1]. We assess here the difference between nonsocial and social dispersal and the consequences for the population under perturbation. We explore the nontrivial steady states of a logistic model depending on the dispersal strategy and found the existence of an Allee effect. This suggests that in social species, there is a minimum critical size for a population to successfully colonize an empty patch.

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Normal forms in Ecology

JOSEP SARDANYÉS

Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Spain.

E-mail address: jsardanyes@crm.cat

URL: <http://www.crm.cat/person/37/sardanyes-cayuela-josep/>

Normal forms are the simplest equations or formulas explaining mathematical phenomena. They are extremely useful in dynamical systems theory to illustrate, understand and investigate dynamics and bifurcations. In this talk I will develop the concept of biological normal forms, focusing on ecological systems, and introducing an extremely simple differential equation capturing dynamics of intra-specific cooperation (or facilitation) together with competition and decay. This particular equation has been used to investigate the population dynamics of autocatalytic replicators or metapopulations with facilitation. I will explain this ecological normal form, introducing its main dynamical features and how these characteristics change upon the consideration of explicit metapopulations and spatially-extended dynamics of facilitation.

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Multiscale approach to understanding cell rearrangements in early angiogenesis

DARIA STEPANOVA¹, HELEN M. BYRNE², PHILIP K. MAINI³,
TOMÁS ALARCÓN⁴

¹ *Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Spain.*
E-mail address: dstepanova@crm.cat

² *Wolfson Centre for Mathematical Biology, Mathematical Institute, University of Oxford, UK.*

³ *Wolfson Centre for Mathematical Biology, Mathematical Institute, University of Oxford, UK.*

⁴ *Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Spain.*

Angiogenesis is the process whereby endothelial cells (ECs) migrate from a pre-existing vascular bed guided by local environmental cues and interacting with each other to eventually create a new vascular network. We introduce a multiscale model of migration-driven angiogenic sprouting which accounts for the individual phenotype selection of ECs, cell-cell and cell-extracellular matrix interactions [1]. The model, calibrated and validated against various experimental data, captures the characteristic behavior of ECs: branching, cell mixing and, chemotactic sensitivity. These properties, rather than being hard-wired into the model, emerge naturally due to accounting for heterogeneous behavior of ECs depending on their gene expression pattern. This allows us to use the model to investigate the role of cell rearrangements during angiogenic sprouting on the vascular network structure. In particular, we show how cells with impaired gene expression of a specific receptor are characterised by reduced levels of cell rearrangement which influences the branching pattern of vascular networks. Overall, our results support the hypothesis that cell rearrangements play a central role in angiogenesis.

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Role of ancient duplicates in the metabolic switching in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*

BEATRIZ SABATER-MUÑOZ¹, FLORIAN MATTENBERGER²,
MARIO A. FARES³, CHRISTINA TOFT⁴

¹ *I2SysBio CSIC-UV, Spain.*

² *I2SysBio CSIC-UV, Spain.*

³ *I2SysBio CSIC-UV, Spain.*

Smurfit institute of Genetics, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

⁴ *I2SysBio CSIC-UV, Spain.*

E-mail address: christina.toft@csic.es

Gene duplication events have been associated with increasing biological complexity throughout the tree of life, but also with illnesses, such as cancer. Early evolutionary theories indicated that duplicated genes could explore alternative functions due to the relaxation of selective constraints in one of the copies, as the other remains an ancestral-function backup. In unicellular eukaryotes like yeasts, it has been demonstrated that the fate and persistence of both duplicated copies in the genome depend on the duplication mechanism (whole-genome or small-scale events). Although it has been shown that small-scale duplicates tend to innovate and whole-genome duplicates specialize in ancestral functions, the implication of ancient duplicates transcriptional plasticity and transcriptional divergence on environmental and metabolic responses remains largely obscure. Here we subject *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* to a metabolic switch by enforcing acute and chronic growth on a non-fermentative carbon source (including ethanol, lactic acid and glycerol) unrevealing the central and common role, the ancient duplicates have in these kinds of metabolic shifts. In particular, the duplicates respond by transcriptional rewiring, depending on their transcriptional background. Our results shed light on the mechanisms that determine the role of duplicates, and on their continued evolvability.

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Can ecosystems live in a ghost state?

BLAI VIDIELLA

(in collaboration with Josep Sardanyés, Ricard Solé, Lluís Alsedà, Ernest Fontich, J. Tomás Lázaro, Antoni Guillamon, Sergi Valverde and Tomàs Alarcón)

ICREA-Complex Systems Lab (UPF-PRBB), Spain.

Institut de Biologia Evolutiva (CSIC-UPF), Spain.

Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Spain.

E-mail address: blai@vidiella.science

URL: <http://www.vidiella.science>

Current ecosystems are threatened by anthropogenic activities. Growing human societies are increasing their demand of resources (such as water, minerals, or food), promoting dangerous effects for wildlife due to water pollution, CO_2 emissions, and habitat destruction. As a result, ecosystems are suffering transition towards degraded states (e.g. loss of species, desertification and coral bleaching, among others). These perturbations in natural systems may push them to their sustainability limits. Once an ecosystem is perturbed beyond a critical boundary, it can shift to a degraded state. Depending on the nonlinearities raised from ecosystem's species interactions, the ecosystem will be able to exhibit different response behaviours. For instance, a change from a stable state to an oscillatory one. After a tipping point (or bifurcation), the dynamics can get trapped into a non-existing previously stable state. This can make the ecosystem to remain stable but actually being trapped in a transient state (delayed transition) transitioning towards an undesired state e.g., extinction or highly degraded status. In this talk, we will show different transients arising in a variety of transitions. We will explore local bifurcation effects like the so-called critical slowing-down (typical from transcritical and pitchfork bifurcations) and the so-called ghosts, which appear close to saddle-node bifurcations. Furthermore, we will explain our adventures in more complex dynamics, such as transients induced by an heteroclinic bifurcation from a resource-consumer model, to the one induced by a normally hyperbolic invariant manifold (NHIM) identified in a cooperator-parasite system.

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Participants

&

Collaborators

List of Participants

Stefanella Boatto	Federal University of Rio de Janeiro
Sandra Igual Roger	Universitat de València
Beatriz Sabater-Munoz	CSIC
Caio Sampaio	University of São Paulo
Vaibhav Tyagi	Newcastle University
Tomás Alarcón	ICREA – CRM
Ramon Alemany	Catalan Institute of Oncology – IDIBELL
David Alonso Giménez	Centre d’Estudis Avançats de Blanes
Lluís Alsedà i Soler	UAB – CRM
Rui Alves	Universitat de Lleida
Karen Amaral de Oliveira	University of Strasbourg
Daniel Amor	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Théo André	Aix-Marseille University
Danilo Andrés García Hernández	University of Campinas
Mirianne Andressa Silva Santos	Federal University of São Carlos
José Antônio Suzano	Federal University of Rio de Janeiro
Khitam Aqel	University of Texas at Arlington
Saul Ares	CSIC
Sara Atienza	Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
Yasmine Baktash	Universitat de València
Imma Baldomà	UPC – CRM
Jordi Baró Urbea	Centre de Recerca Matemàtica
Jorge Barriuso	CSIC
Frederic Bartumeus Ferré	Centre d’Estudis Avançats de Blanes
Bernat Bassols Cornudella	Imperial College London
Tomas Berjaga Buisan	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Miguel Blanco	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Gennady Bocharov	Russian Academy of Sciences
Javier Buceta	CSIC
Miguel Bustamante	University College Dublin
Ana-Marija Butkovic	CSIC

Participants & Collaborators



Susanna C. Manrubia	Centro Nacional de Biotecnología CNB-CSIC
Alba Calonge García	Universitat de València
Angel Calsina	UAB – CRM
Pablo Carbonell	Universitat Politècnica de València
Ana Caroline Silva	Fluminense Federal University
Marc Carrascosa	Universitat de València
Pablo Casaní-Galdón	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Pau Casanova Ferrer	Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
Conrado Catarcione Pinto	UFRJ
Arianna Ceccarelli	Imperial College London
Judit Chamorro Servent	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Cyrine Chenaoui	Pasteur Institute of Tunis
Pau Clusella	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Bartomeu Coll	Universitat de Les Illes Balears
Núria Conde	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Martina Conte	Universidad de Granada
Paola Corbin Agusti	CSIC
Silvia Cuadrado	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Claudio Daniel Tenório de Barros	National Laboratory for Scientific Computing
Jose David Gutiérrez de Alba	Universidad de Sevilla
Eulàlia de Nadal	Institut de Recerca Biomèdica Barcelona
Andrea Del Carmen Fabregat	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Elena Díaz Santiago	Universidad de Málaga
Juana Díez	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Pilar Domingo Calap	I2SysBio (CSIC-UV)
Miki Ebisuya	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Jorge Edwin Cuba Pari	universidad nacional jorge basadre grohmann
Musa Egahi	Åbo Akademi University
Sasha Eremina	University of Cambridge
Melina Estela	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Santiago F. Elena	Institute for Integrative Systems Biology CSIC-UV
Núria Fagella	Universitat de Barcelona

Participants & Collaborators



Pol Fernández López	CSIC
Arián Ferrero Fernández	Universitat de València
Robert Florido Llinàs	Universitat de Barcelona
Nuria Folguera Blasco	The Francis Crick Institute
Narcís Font	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Ernest Fontich	Universitat de Barcelona
Jose Francisco Catala Senent	Universitat de València
jean-pierre Françoise	Pierre-and-Marie-Curie University
Javier G. P. Gamarra	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Leticia Galera-Laporta	University of California
Esmeralda García	Universitat de València
Jordi Garcia-Ojalvo	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Armengol Gasull	UAB – CRM
Joan Gimeno	University of Rome Tor Vergata
Mar Giralt Miron	Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya
Lucas Goiriz Beltrán	CSIC
Mariana Gomes	Federal University of Rio de Janeiro
Pedro Gómez López	CSIC
Rodrigo Gonçalves Schaefer	Uppsala University
Eva Gonzalez Flo	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Ángel Goñi-Moreno	Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
Jeff Gore	Massachussets Institute for Technology
Patrick Govoni	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Natalie Grefenstette	Santa Fe Institute
Isabel Guano	Universitat de València
Antoni Guillamon	Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya
Léna Guitou	Universitat de València
Madhu Gupta	University of Texas at Arlington
Marc Gutiérrez	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Wei Hao Tey	Imperial College London
Guilherme Hilário Monteiro	Federal University of Rio de Janeiro
Gemma Huguet Casades	Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya

Participants & Collaborators



Vicente J. Ontiveros	CSIC
Alfonso Jaramillo	University of Warwick
Connah Johnson	University of Warwick
María José Olmo	CSIC
David Juher	Universitat de Girona
Artem Kaznatcheev	University of Pennsylvania
Sonia Kéfi	University of Montpellier
Cansu Koyunlar	Erasmus University Rotterdam
Enrique Lacasa Claver	Universitat de Lleida
Aniello Lampo	Universitat Rovira i Virgili
Giulia Laura Celora	University of Oxford
Tomás Lázaro	UPC – CRM
Simon Levin	Princeton University
Roger Lloret Cabot	Centre d'Estudis Avançats de Blanes (CEAB-CSIC)
Adriaan Ludl	University of Bergen
Juan Manuel Vicente	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Dimitra Maoutsa	Technical University of Berlin
Marianthi Maria Kokkaleniou	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Rosa Marquez	CSIC
Paulina Martínez	University of Concepción
Kevin Martínez Añón	Centre de Recerca Matemàtica
Izan Melero	Universitat de València
Javier Menéndez	Institut d'Investigació Biomèdica de Girona
Josep Mercadal	Universitat de Barcelona
Andreas Meyerhans	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Ernest Montbrió	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
José Mora	Universidad de Málaga
Juan Moriano	Universitat de Barcelona
Celeste Moya	Universitat de València
Aurelio Moya García	Universidad de Málaga
Jaime Muñoz	Universitat Politècnica de València
Jose Muñoz	Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya

Participants & Collaborators



Lorenzo Nagar	Euskal Herriko Unibertsitateko
Evangelos Nastas	University at Albany
Juan Neftalí Morillo García	Universidad Complutense de Madrid
Aleksandra Norczyk Simón	Universitat de València
Anel Nurtay	University of Oxford
Michael Orieux	Aalborg University
Daniel Oro	Centre d'Estudis Avançats de Blanes
Carmen Ortega	Universidad de Castilla La Mancha
Ivan Ortiz	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Elisenda Ortiz Castillo	Universitat de Barcelona
Irene Otero-Muras	CSIC
Adrián P. Bustamante	Georgia Institute of Technology
Leonardo P. C. da Cruz	Federal University of São Carlos
Lola Pailler Garía	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Savvas Paragkamian	University of Crete
Marta Pardo Araujo	Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya
Martin Parga Pazos	Euskal Herriko Unibertsitateko
Imma Passaret	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Pol Pastells	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Stefano Pedarra	Centre de Recerca Matemàtica
Juan Pello García	Universitat de Barcelona
Ruben Perez-Carrasco	Imperial College London
Andrea Perna	University of Pisa
Marc Plana	Centre de Recerca Matemàtica
Rafel Prohens	Universitat de Les Illes Balears
Krishna Pusuluri	Emory University
Salomón Rebollo-Perdomo	Universidad del Bío-Bío
Miguel Román	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Daniel Ruiz-Reynés	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Isaac Salazar Ciudad	Centre de Recerca Matemàtica
Josep Sardanyés	Centre de Recerca Matemàtica
Carles Simó	Universitat de Barcelona

Participants & Collaborators



Sudhir Singh	National Institute of Technology Trichy India
Ricard Solé	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
David Soriano-Paños	Universidad de Zaragoza
Daria Stepanova	Centre de Recerca Matemàtica
Djoukwe Tapi Myriam Sonia	Not provided
Gheorghe Tigan	Politehnica University of Timisoara
Cristhina Toft	I2SysBio (CSIC-UV)
Joan Torregrosa	UAB – CRM
Marc Torrent Burgas	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Carlos Toscano	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Olga Tsiouri	University of Thessaly
Mónica Uceda	Universitat de València
Arantxa Urchueguia	CSIC
Sergi Valverde	CSIC
Àngela Vidal	Universitat de València
Cristina Vidal	Universitat de València
Blai Vidiella	Centre de Recerca Matemàtica
Lena Vincent	University of Wisconsin–Madison
Krzysztof Wabnik	Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
Patrick Wall	Indiana University – Bloomington
Charles Wan	Erasmus University Rotterdam
Carlos Xosé Sequeiros Ferreiro	Universidade Da Coruña
Manish Yadav	Technical University of Dortmund
Haris Zafeiropoulos	University of Crete

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