

A Rational Approach to Identification of Wild Type Trans-sialidases  
for the Production of Human Milk Oligosaccharides

***By Rune Thorbjørn Nordvang***

*BioEng*

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*Glycobiology World Congress*

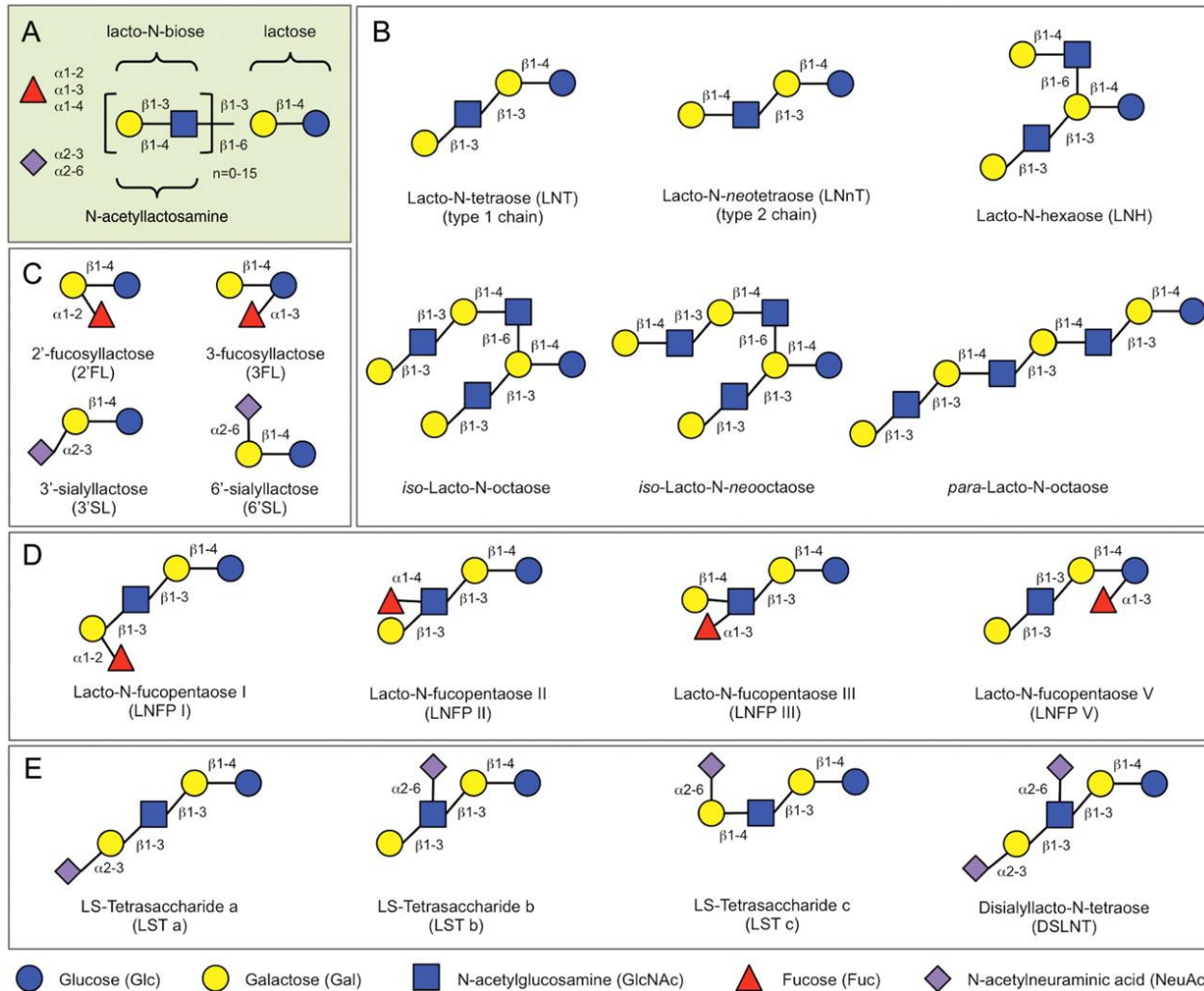
*August 11<sup>th</sup> 2015*

*Philadelphia*

# Outline

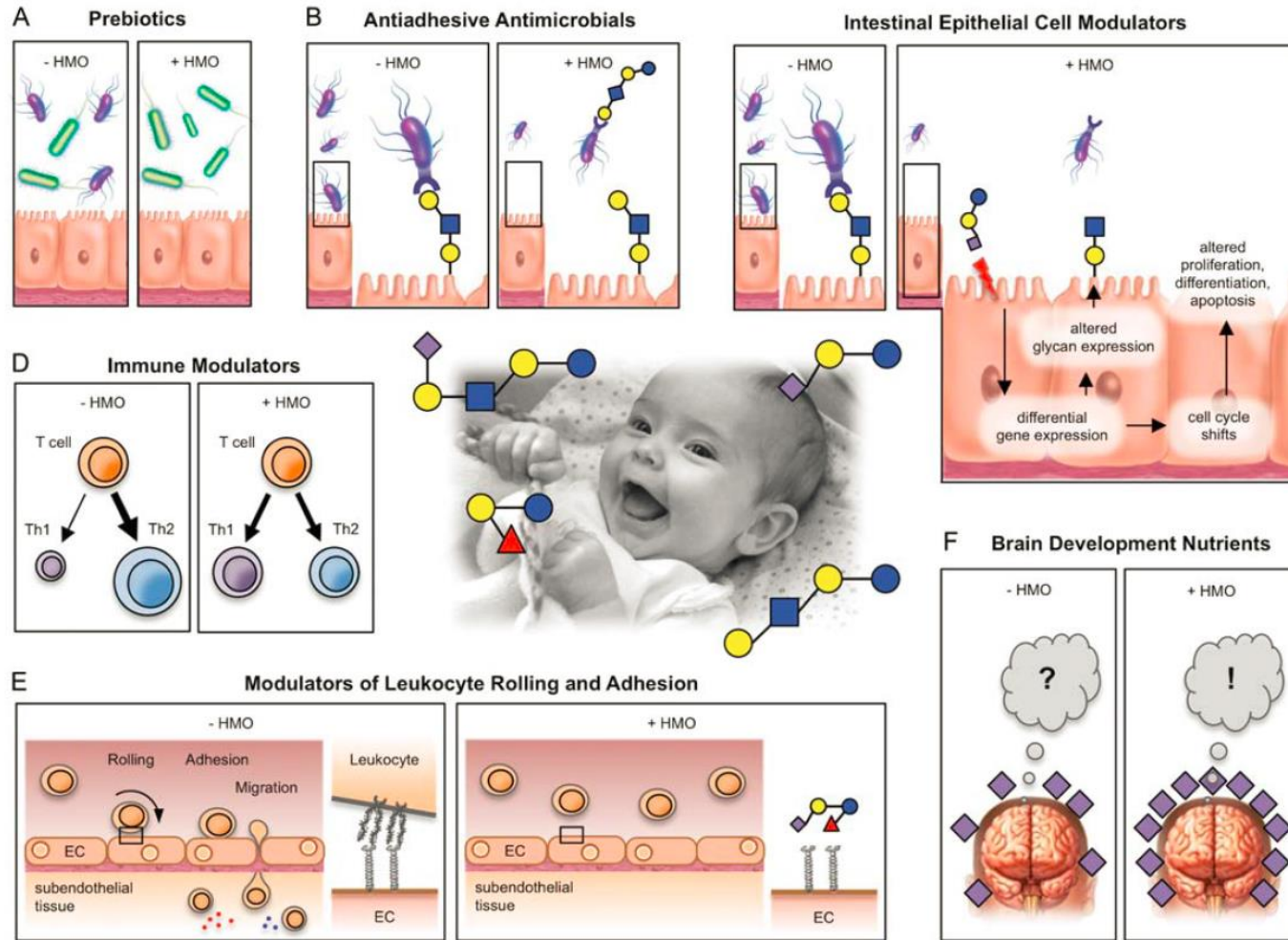
- Human Oligo Saccharides - structures and properties
- The BioEng HMO production setup (for sialylated HMOs)
- In silico Trans-sialidase discovery
  - Strategy development
  - In silico results
- In vitro verification
  - Experimental
  - In vitro results
- Conclusions & Perspectives

# HMO blueprint and selected HMO structures



Bode L *Glycobiology* 2012;22:1147-1162

# Enzyme-catalysed synthetic HMO production setup



Bode L Glycobiology 2012;22:1147-1162

# Enzyme-catalysed synthetic HMO production setup

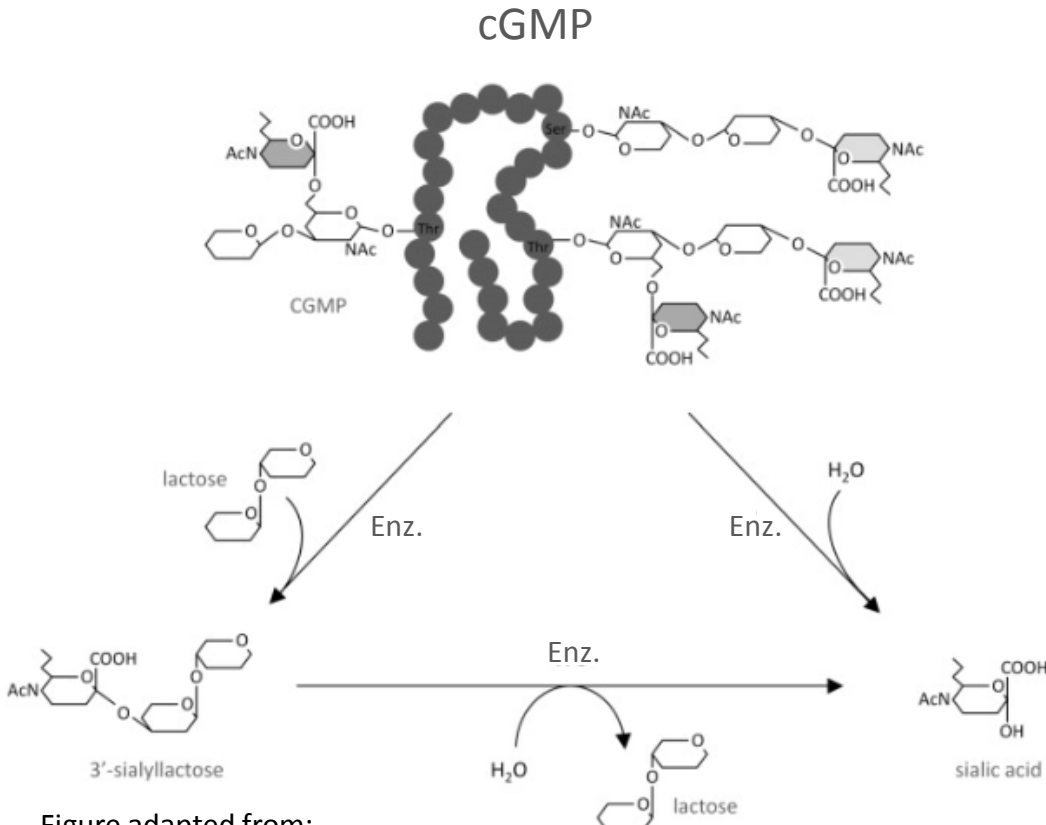


Figure adapted from:  
Zeuner B, *et al.* 2014 *Enzyme and Microbial Technology* 55:85-93

Separation and Purification Technology 138 (2014) 77–83

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CrossMark

Separation of 3'-sialyllactose and lactose by nanofiltration: A trade-off between charge repulsion and pore swelling induced by high pH

Rune T. Nordvang, Jianquan Luo, Birgitte Zeuner, Rasmus Prior, Mads F. Andersen, Jørn D. Mikkelsen, Anne S. Meyer, Manuel Pinelo\*

*Technical University of Denmark, Department of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering, Center for BioProcess Engineering, Søstegade 229, 2800 Kgs. Lyngby, Denmark*

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An integrated membrane system for the biocatalytic production of 3'-sialyllactose from dairy by-products

Jianquan Luo<sup>1</sup>, Rune T. Nordvang<sup>1</sup>, Sofie T. Morthensen, Birgitte Zeuner, Anne S. Meyer, Jørn Dalggaard Mikkelsen, Manuel Pinelo\*

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**HIGHLIGHTS**

- PLCC regenerated cellulose membrane (5 kDa) can be used to configure the EMR.
- NTR7450 membrane can be used for separation of 3'-sialyllactose and lactose.
- Lactose can be concentrated and recycled by NF45 membrane.
- TF6 sialidase can be reused in the EMR and retain the activity after centrifugation.
- CGMP residues accumulated in the EMR results in a flux decline and need to be removed.

**GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT**

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**ABSTRACT**

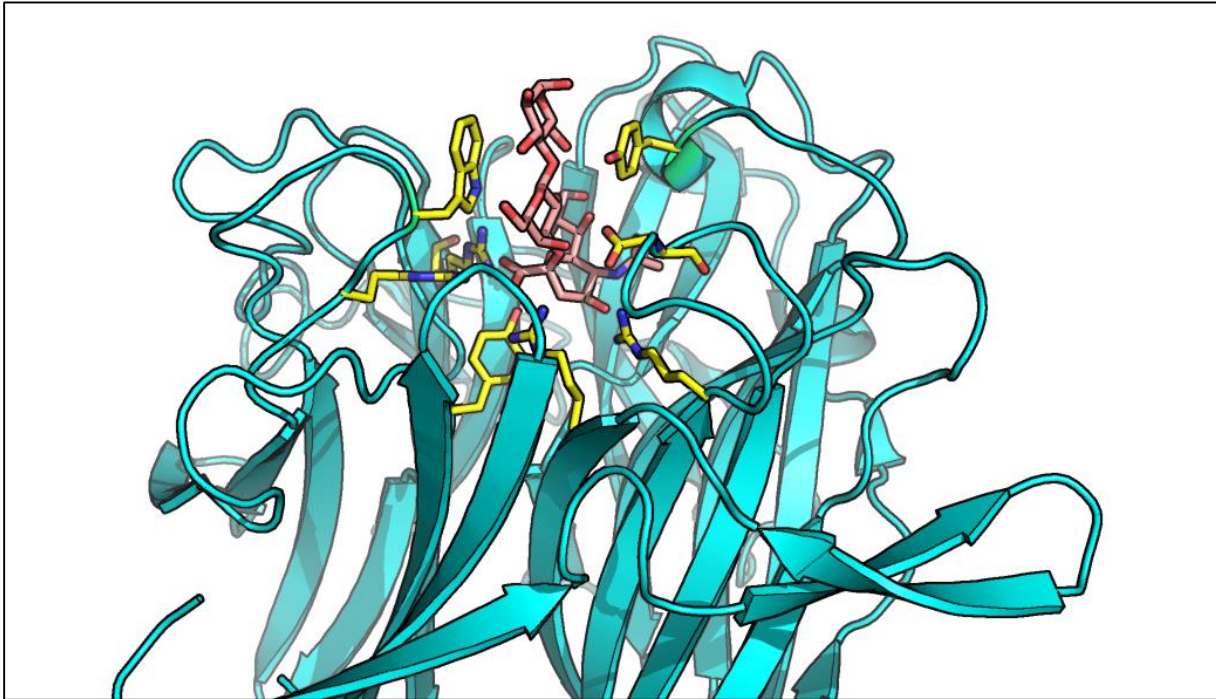
An integrated membrane system was investigated for the production of 3'-sialyllactose by an engineered sialidase using casein glycomacropeptide (CGMP) and lactose as substrates. CGMP was purified by ultrafiltration (UF) to remove any small molecules present and then an enzymatic membrane reactor (EMR) was used to separate the product and reuse the enzyme. A PLCC regenerated cellulose membrane was found to be the most suitable for both the UF purification and EMR. Subsequently, nanofiltration (NF) was conducted to increase the purity of the 3'-sialyllactose by removing the excess lactose present. The NTR7450 membrane outperformed others in NF due to its high retention of 3'-sialyllactose (88%) and relatively low rejection of lactose (40%). The lactose in the permeate could be concentrated by the NF45 membrane and recycled into the EMR. The described integrated membrane system enables a more economic and efficient enzymatic production of 3'-sialyllactose.

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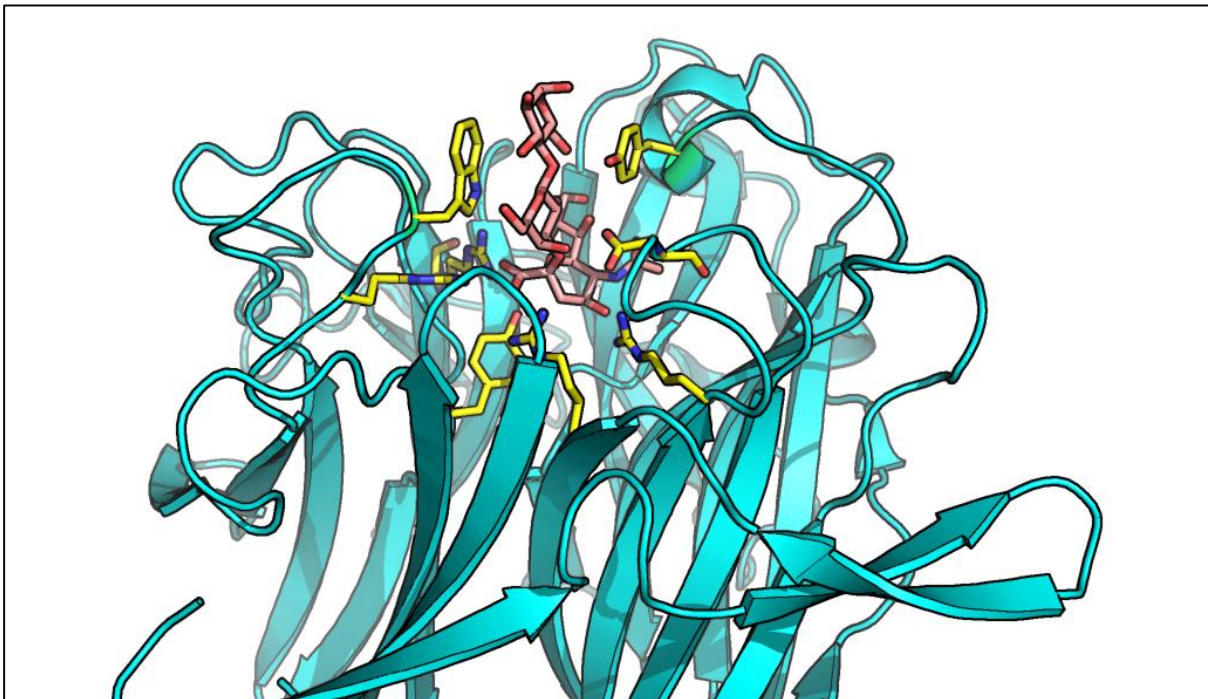
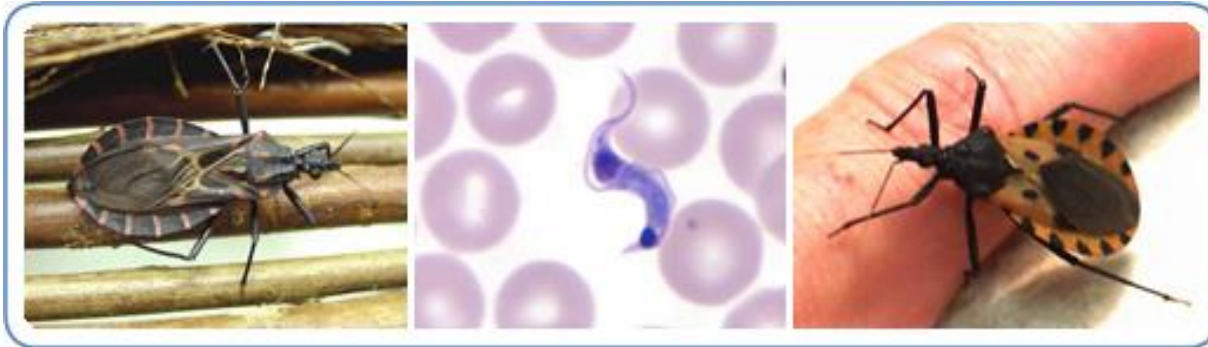
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# One native trans-sialidase is known



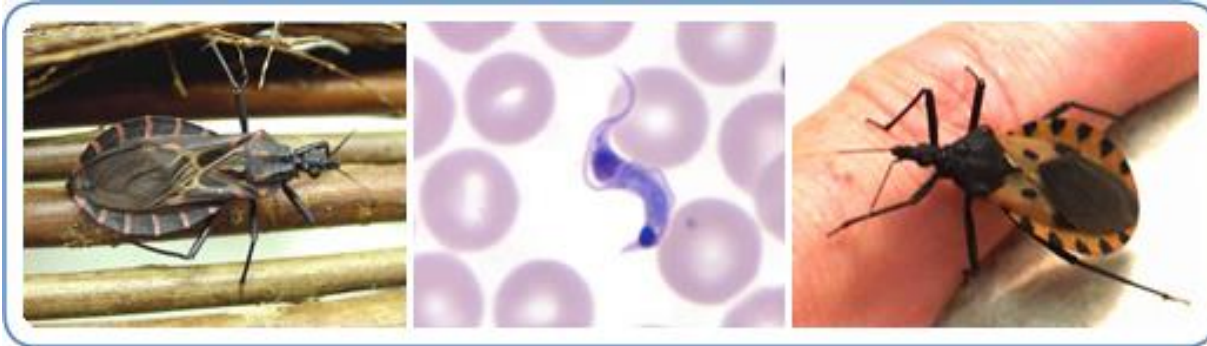
TcTS model based on Amaya M.F., et.al. (2004) Structure 12: 775–784

# The trans-sialidase of *Trypanosomas cruzi*

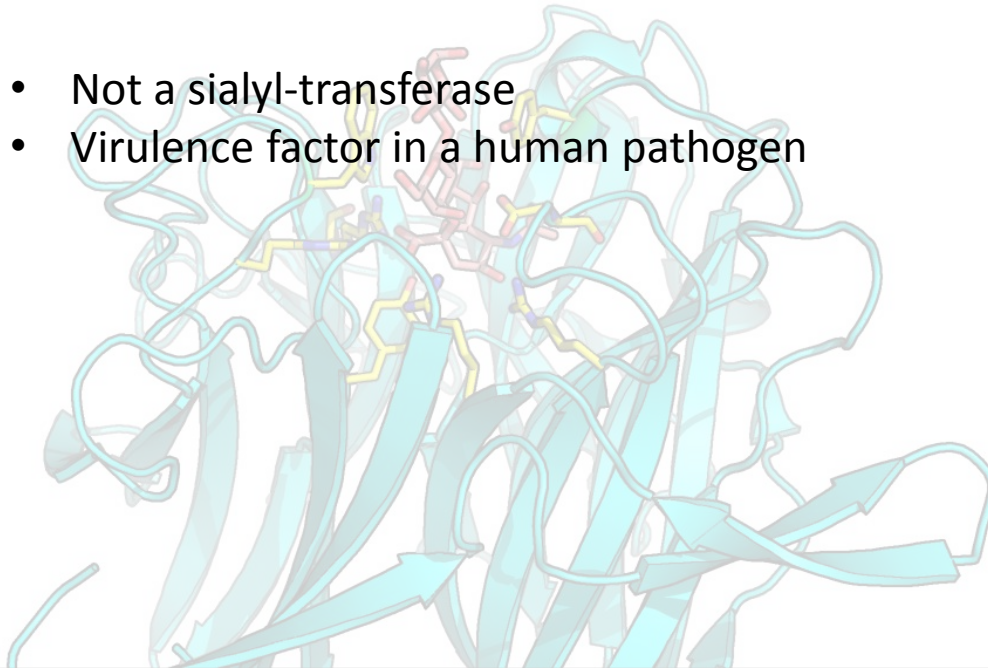


TcTS model based on Amaya M.F., et.al. (2004) Structure 12: 775–784

# The trans-sialidase of *Trypanosomas cruzi*

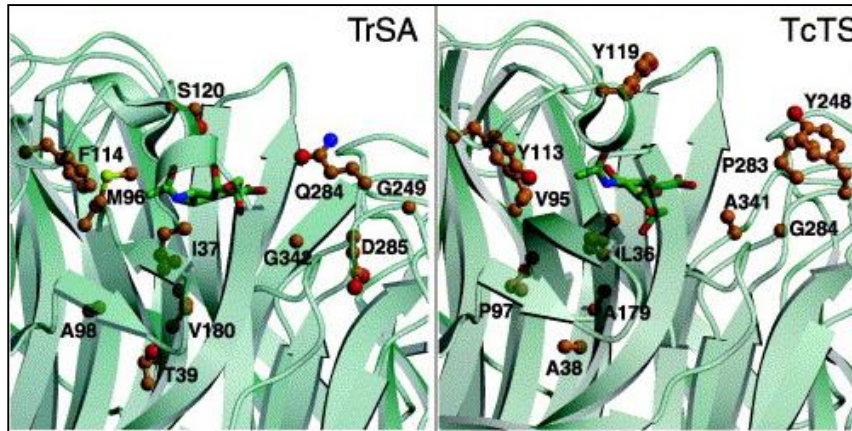


- Not a sialyl-transferase
- Virulence factor in a human pathogen





# A quintuple mutant of it's close cousin from the non-pathogenic *T. rangeli*



doi:10.1016/j.jmb.2004.09.031

J. Mol. Biol. (2005) 345, 923–934

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## A Sialidase Mutant Displaying *trans*-Sialidase Activity

Gastón Paris<sup>1\*</sup>, Laura Ratier<sup>1</sup>, María Fernanda Amaya<sup>2</sup>, Tong Nguyen<sup>2</sup>  
Pedro M. Alzari<sup>2</sup> and Alberto Carlos C. Frasch<sup>1</sup>

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*Trypanosoma cruzi*, the agent of Chagas disease, expresses a modified sialidase, the *trans*-sialidase, which transfers sialic acid from host glycoconjugates to  $\beta$ -galactose present in parasite mucins. Another American trypanosome, *Trypanosoma rangeli*, expresses a homologous protein that has sialidase activity but is devoid of *trans*-sialidase activity. Based on the recently determined structures of *T. rangeli* sialidase (TrSA) and *T. cruzi trans*-sialidase (TcTS), we have now constructed mutants of TrSA with the aim of studying the relevant residues in transfer activity. Five mutations, Met96-Val, Ala98-Pro, Ser120-Tyr, Gly249-Tyr and Gln284-Pro, were enough to obtain a sialidase mutant (TrSA<sub>mut</sub>) with *trans*-sialidase activity; and a sixth mutation increased the activity to about 10% of that of wild-type TcTS. The crystal structure of TrSA<sub>mut</sub> revealed the formation of a *trans*-sialidase-like binding site for the acceptor galactose, primarily defined by the phenol group of Tyr120 and the indole ring of Trp313, which adopts a new conformation, similar to that in TcTS, induced by the Gln284-Pro mutation. The transition state analogue 2,3-didehydro-2-deoxy-N-acetylneuraminic acid (DANA), which inhibits sialidases but is a poor inhibitor of *trans*-sialidase, was used to probe the active site conformation of mutant enzymes. The results show that the presence of a sugar acceptor binding-site, the fine-tuning of protein-substrate interactions and the flexibility of crucial active site residues are all important to achieve *trans*-sialidase activity from the TrSA sialidase scaffold.

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**Keywords:** *trans*-sialidase; sialidase; *Trypanosoma cruzi*; *Trypanosoma rangeli*; protein engineering

\*Corresponding author

### Introduction

Sialic acids are nine-carbon monosaccharides and comprise a family of about 40 members found in the outermost position of oligosaccharide chains of glycoproteins and glycolipids.<sup>1</sup> Advances in fields as different as cell adhesion and morphogenesis,<sup>2,3</sup> lymphocyte homing and inflammation,<sup>4</sup> viral, bacterial, and protozoan pathogenesis and nutrition<sup>5</sup>, and regulation of the immune system<sup>6,7</sup> stress the biological importance of sialic acids<sup>8–10</sup> and of the enzymes, sialidases and

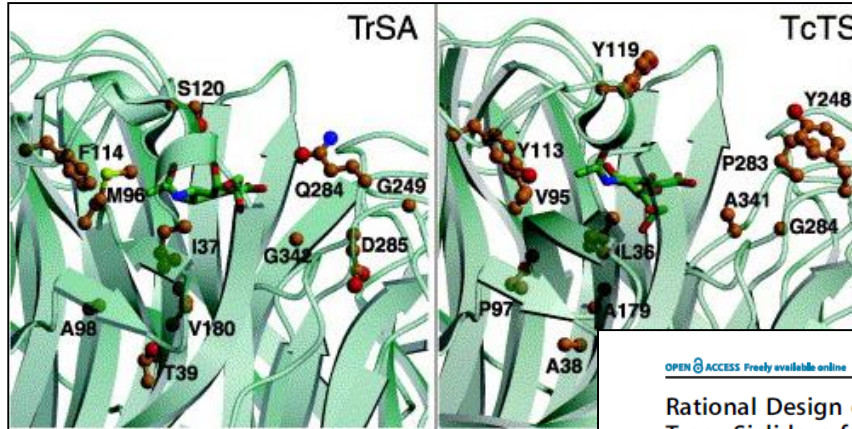
sialyltransferases, that regulate their presence and cell surface distribution.

*Trypanosoma cruzi*, the agent of Chagas disease and *Trypanosoma brucei*, the agent of the disease known as sleeping sickness in humans (*T. brucei* spp. *gambiense* and *T. brucei* spp. *rhodesiense*) and ngana in domestic animals (*T. brucei brucei*), are unable to synthesize sialic acid. Instead, these parasites express a glycosylphosphatidylinositol (GPI)-anchored surface *trans*-sialidase (TS) that scavenges sialic acid from host glycoconjugates.<sup>11–13</sup> The TS from *T. cruzi* (TcTS) has been extensively studied. TcTS was suggested to be involved in relevant processes such as parasite survival from the complement-mediated host immune response,<sup>13</sup> host cell invasion<sup>14–16</sup> and *T. cruzi* pathogenesis.<sup>17,18</sup> The involvement of TcTS in these processes is likely due to its capacity of sialylating the mucin molecules that cover the parasite surface with a dense protective layer.<sup>19</sup> TcTS has a globular catalytic domain and a C-terminal extension of tandemly repeated 12 amino

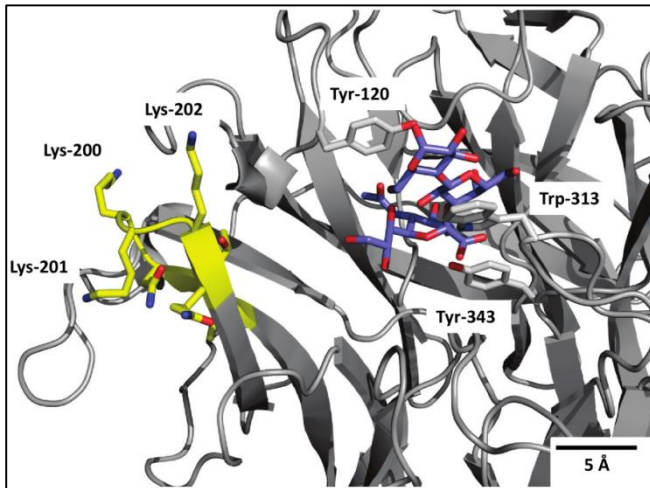
Abbreviations used: TS, *trans*-sialidase; TcTS, *Trypanosoma cruzi trans*-sialidase; TrSA, *Trypanosoma rangeli* sialidase; GPI, glycosylphosphatidylinositol; MeNAANA, 2-(4-methylumbelliferyl)-5-*o*-N-acetylneuraminic acid; DANA, 2, 3-didehydro-2-deoxy-N-acetylneuraminic acid; wt, wild-type.

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# Directed evolution



## Tr13



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PLOS ONE

### Rational Design of a New *Trypanosoma rangeli* Trans-Sialidase for Efficient Sialylation of Glycans

Carsten Jers<sup>1</sup>, Malwina Michalak<sup>1</sup>, Dorte M. Larsen<sup>1</sup>, Kasper P. Kepp<sup>2</sup>, Haiying Li<sup>3</sup>, Yao Guo<sup>3</sup>, Finn Kirpekar<sup>3</sup>, Anne S. Meyer<sup>3</sup>, Jørn D. Mikkelsen<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Center for Bioprocess Engineering, Department of Chemical and Biochemical Engineering, Technical University of Denmark, Lyngby, Denmark, <sup>2</sup> Department of Chemistry, Technical University of Denmark, Lyngby, Denmark, <sup>3</sup> Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Southern University of Denmark, Odense, Denmark

#### Abstract

This paper reports rational engineering of *Trypanosoma rangeli* sialidase to develop an effective enzyme for a potentially important type of reactivity: production of sialylated prebiotic glycans. The *Trypanosoma cruzi* trans-sialidase and the homologous *T. rangeli* sialidase has previously been used to investigate the structural requirements for trans-sialidase activity. We observed that the *T. cruzi* trans-sialidase has a seven-amino-acid motif (197–203) at the border of the substrate binding cleft. The motif differs substantially in chemical properties and substitution probability from the homologous sialidase, and we hypothesized that this motif is important for trans-sialidase activity. The 197–203 motif is strongly positively charged with a marked change in hydrogen bond donor capacity as compared to the sialidase. To investigate the role of this motif, we expressed and characterized a *T. rangeli* sialidase mutant, Tr13. Conditions for efficient trans-sialylation were determined, and Tr13's acceptor specificity demonstrated promiscuity with respect to the acceptor molecule enabling sialylation of glycans containing terminal galactose and glucose and even monomers of glucose and fucose. Sialic acid is important in association with human milk oligosaccharides, and Tr13 was shown to sialylate a number of established and potential prebiotics. Initial evaluation of prebiotic potential using pure cultures demonstrated, albeit not selectively, growth of Bifidobacteria. Since the 197–203 motif stands out in the native trans-sialidase, is markedly different from the wild-type sialidase compared to previous mutants, and is shown here to confer efficient and broad trans-sialidase activity, we suggest that this motif can serve as a framework for future optimization of trans-sialylation towards prebiotic production.

**Citation:** Jers C, Michalak M, Larsen DM, Kepp KP, Li H, et al. (2014) Rational Design of a New *Trypanosoma rangeli* Trans-Sialidase for Efficient Sialylation of Glycans. PLoS ONE 9(1): e83002. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0083002

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**Competing Interests:** The authors have filed a patent application ("A mutant sialidase having trans-sialidase activity for use in production of sialylated glycans", European Patent Application No. 13185318. This does not alter the authors' adherence to all the PLOS ONE policies on sharing data and materials, as detailed online in our guide for authors. All material relating to the patent is available in connection with this submission and the present article was used as the framework to design the patent application.

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#### Introduction

For production of human milk oligosaccharides (HMOs), glycan sialylation can be achieved chemically as well as enzymatically [1]. To achieve enzymatic synthesis, a trans-sialidase (TcTS) derived from *T. cruzi*, the causative agent of Chagas disease, has previously proven useful by transferring sialic acid from a donor to an acceptor glycan [2]. However, for industrial production of food-grade HMOs, it is a drawback that the enzyme constitutes an important virulence factor within *T. cruzi* [3]. Redesigning mutants of the non-pathogenic *T. rangeli* sialidase (TrSA) that possesses relatively low trans-sialidase activity [4] provides an attractive alternative for application in bioconversion processes. TrSA is

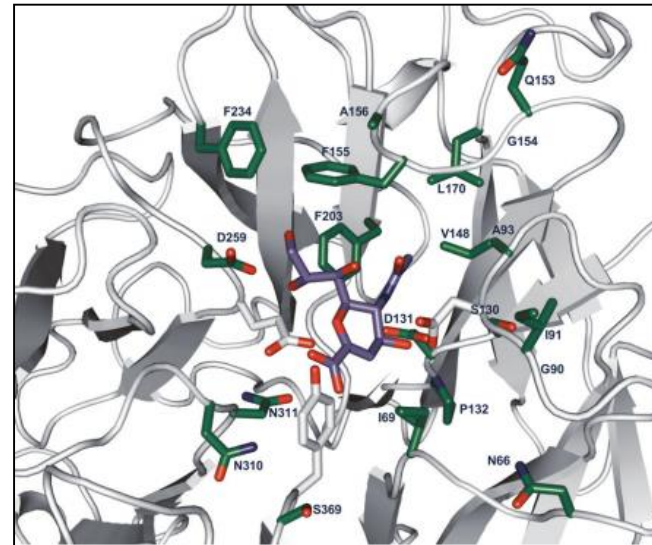
TrSA, W313 (corresponds to W312 in TcTS) is found in a different conformation due to a Q284P substitution, while the Y120 (corresponds to Y119 in TcTS) is replaced by serine [8]. In addition to these differences in the acceptor binding site, a conserved D97 hydrogen bonds differently to sialic acid in the two enzymes, possibly due to the substitutions W98M and P98A. Correction of both the acceptor-binding site (S120V, G249V, and Q284P) and the sialic acid binding pocket (M96V, and A98P) is required to confer trans-sialidase activity (1% of TcTS activity) to TrSA, and the additional single mutation I37I (in this study named Tr6) and G342A further increase activity to 10% of the TcTS activity [8,4]. Kinetic data, however, indicate that the mutants display a ~25-fold lower affinity for lactose and >100-

Chagas disease, expresses a modified which transfers sialic acid from host present in parasite mucins. Another *oma rangeli*, expresses a homologous it is devoid of transglycosidase activity. structures of *T. rangeli* sialidase (TrSA) we have now constructed mutants of levant residues in transfer activity. Five ser120-Tyr, Gly249-Tyr and Gln284-Pro, mutant (TrSA<sub>mut</sub>) with trans-sialidase eased the activity to about 10% that of re of TrSA<sub>mut</sub> revealed the formation of for the acceptor galactose, primarily 20 and the indole ring of Trp313, which to that in TcTS, induced by the Gln284- analogue 2,3-dihydro-2-deoxy-N- which inhibits sialidases but is a poor to probe the active site conformation w that the presence of a sugar acceptor protein-substrate interactions and the residues are all important to achieve TrSA sialidase scaffold.

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*Trypanosoma cruzi*; *Trypanosoma rangeli*;

rases, that regulate their presence and distribution. *ma cruzi*, the agent of Chagas disease *soma brucei*, the agent of the disease sleeping sickness in humans (*T. brucei* *ise* and *T. brucei* spp. *rhodesiense*) and omestic animals (*T. brucei* *brucei*), are synthesize sialic acid. Instead, these press a glycosylphosphatidylinositol red surface trans-sialidase (TS) that sialic acid from host glycoconju- TS from *T. cruzi* (TcTS) has been studied. TcTS was suggested to be relevant processes such as parasite on the complement-mediated host sponse,<sup>13</sup> host cell invasion<sup>14–16</sup> and ogenesis.<sup>17,18</sup> The involvement of TcTS ccesses is likely due to its capacity of the mucin molecules that cover the face with a dense protective layer.<sup>19</sup> globular catalytic domain and a C- ension of tandemly repeated 12 amino

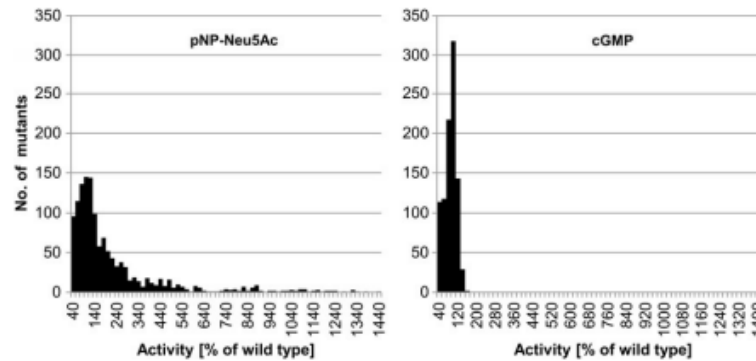
# Compared to *M. viridifaciens*



Jers C, et al.  
Oxford jour.  
doi: 10.1093/  
protein/gzu054

No trans-sialidase activity observed...

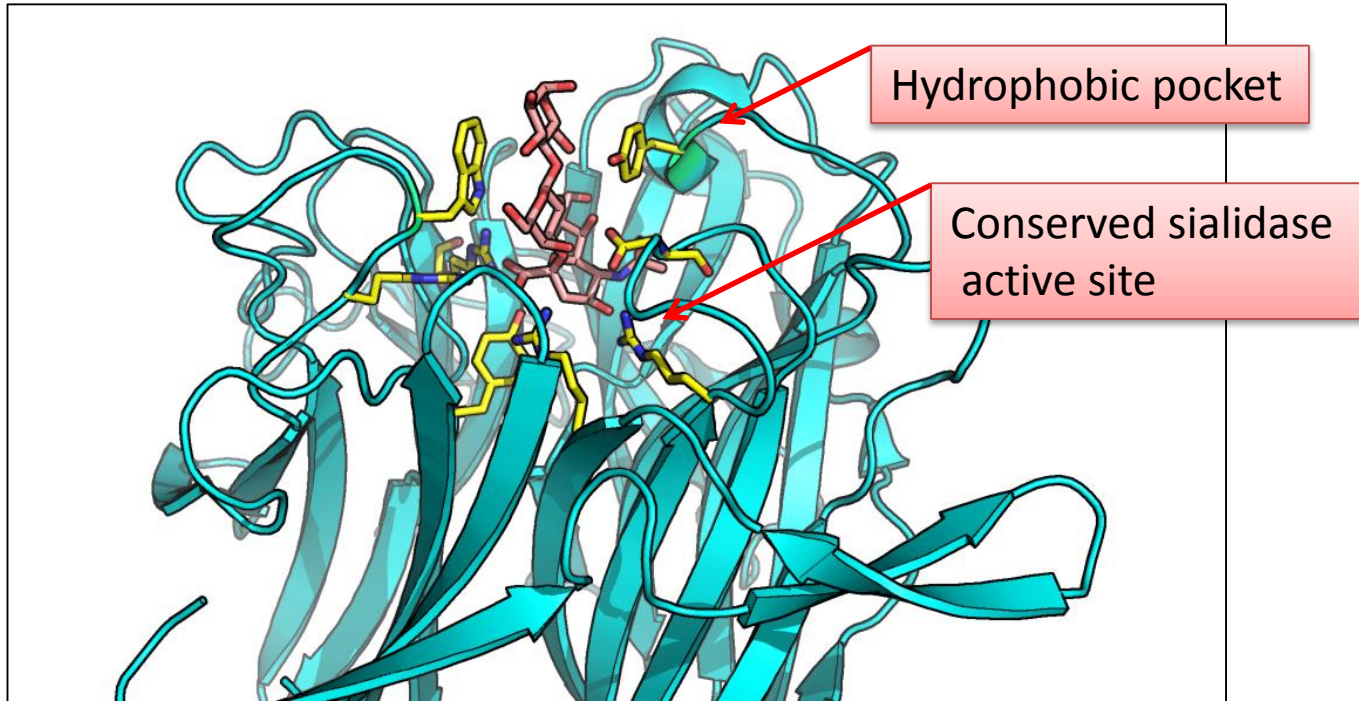
...From a population of more than 200 constructed mutants



# All advancements based on TcTS

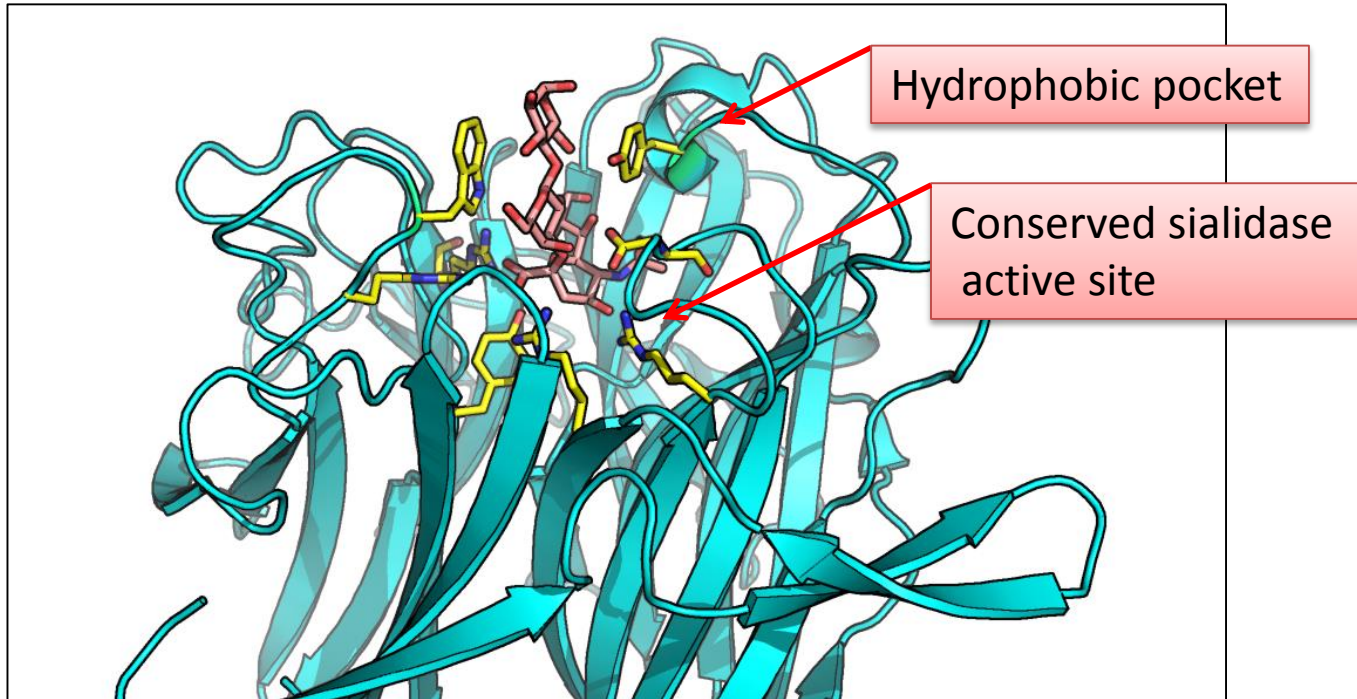
- New knowledge about trans-sialidases needed.
- No trans-sialylation screening assays.
- Hard to find conserved AA when TcTS is the only trans-sialidase.
- What to do?

# Reacquaint with TcTS



TcTS model based on Amaya M.F., et.al. (2004) Structure 12: 775–784

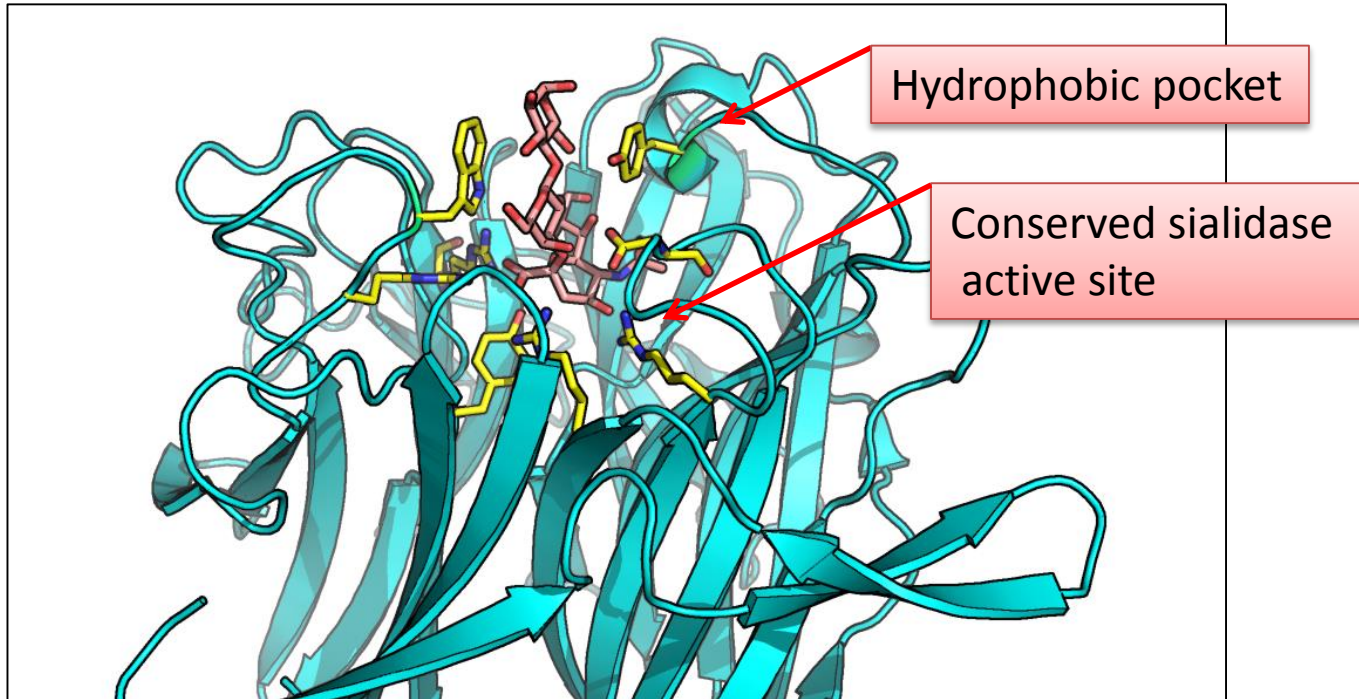
# Enzyme identification strategy development



TcTS model based on Amaya M.F., et.al. (2004) Structure 12: 775–784

Hypothesis 1: The family of sialidases is extremely conserved and it can be speculated that a trans-sialidase could have developed in parallel with the TcTS inferring an aromatic sandwich in a similar position as it is found in TcTS.

# Enzyme identification strategy development

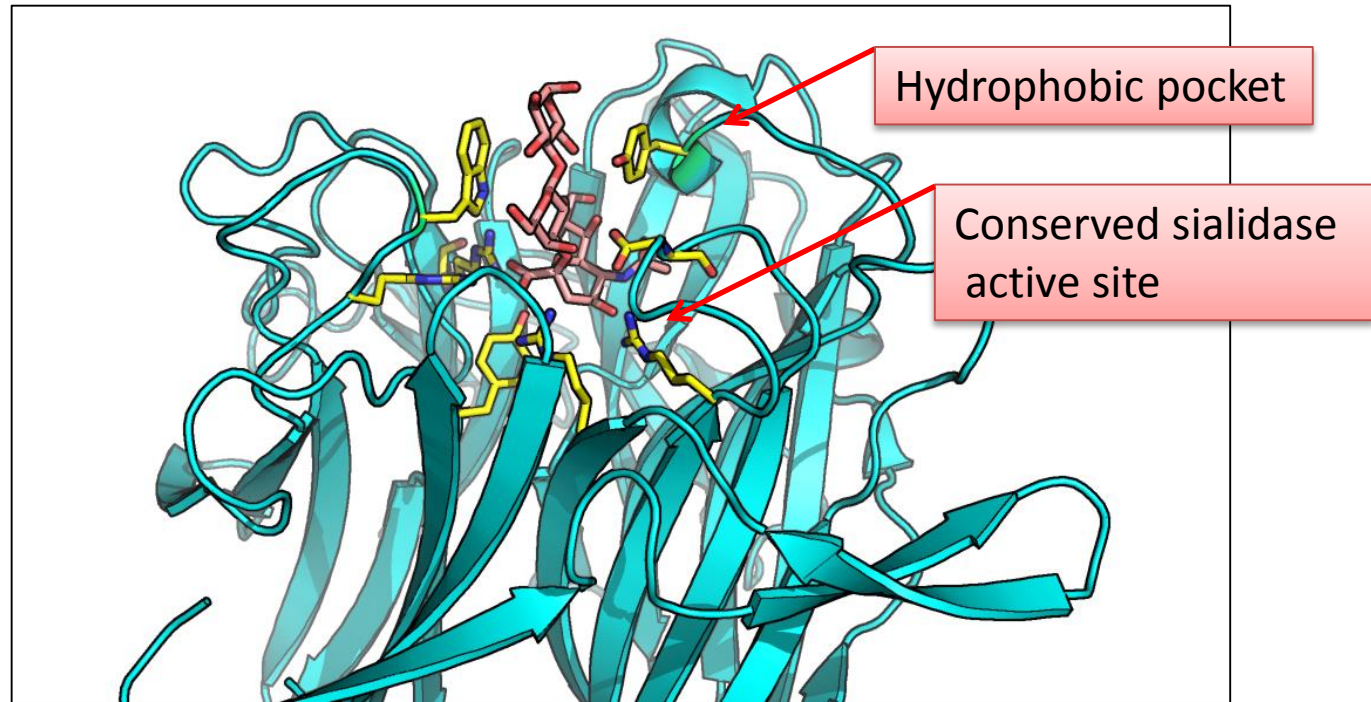


TcTS model based on Amaya M.F., et.al. (2004) Structure 12: 775–784

Hypothesis 2: If hypothesis 1 is correct, sialidases with an aromatic sandwich above the active site will be a good candidates for identifying sialidases with trans-activity.

# Enzyme identification strategy development

2909 Genes  
are labeled as  
Sialidases in  
GenBank

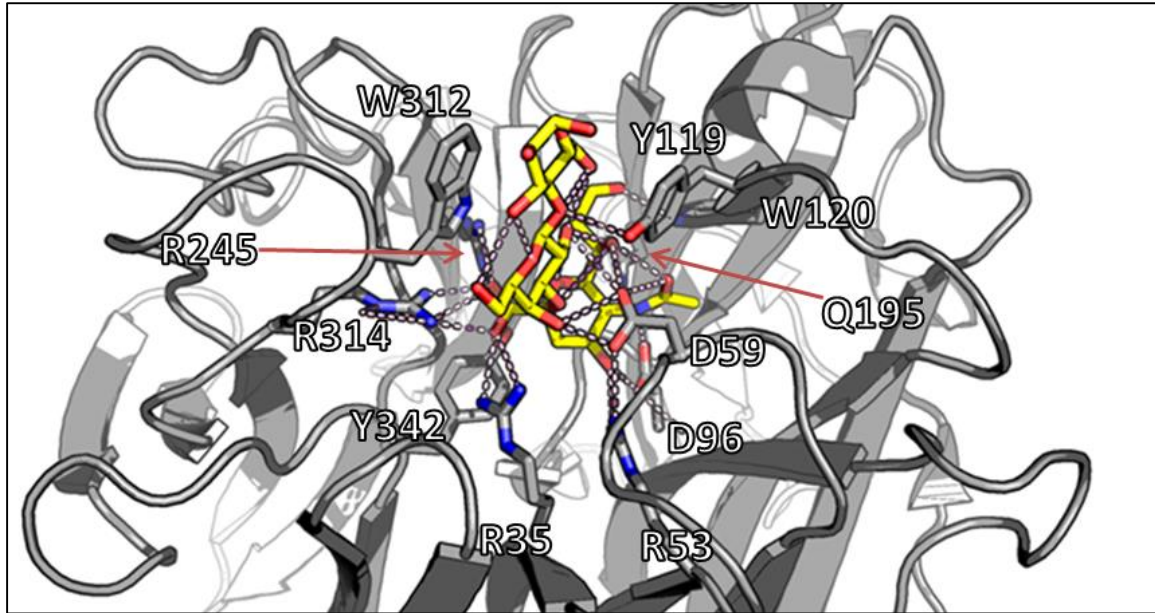


TcTS model based on Amaya M.F., et.al. (2004) Structure 12: 775–784

Search for motif: [W/Y/F-x-R-D-R]



# A closer look at the TcTS active site

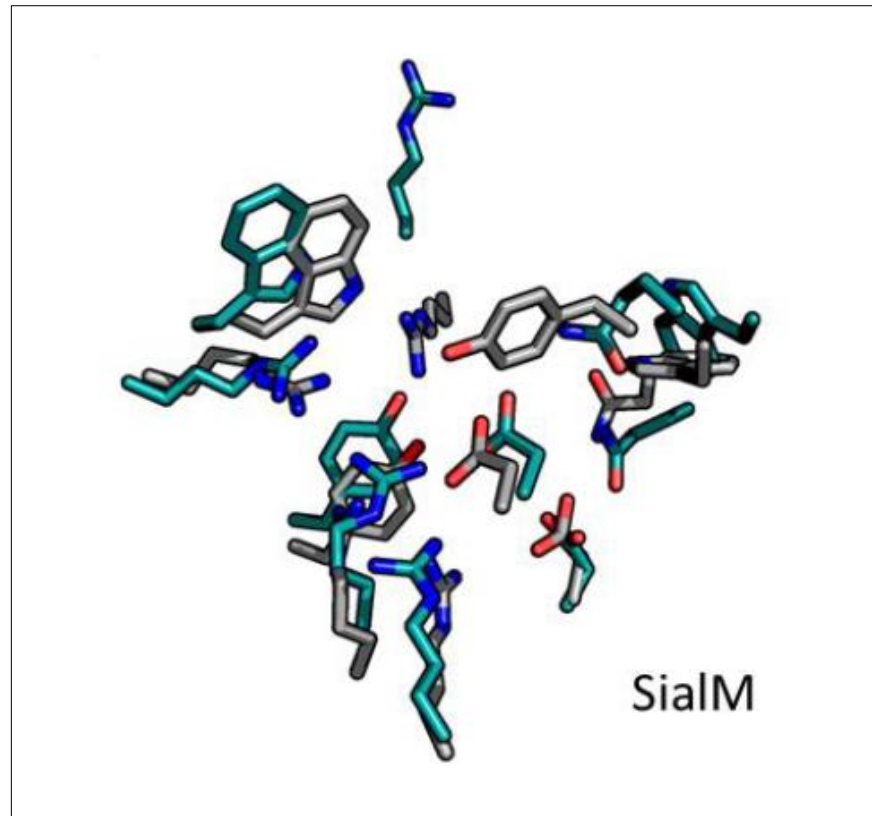


TcTS model based on Amaya M.F., et.al. (2004) Structure 12: 775–784

TcTS properties	Highlighted residues	Role of residues	Hydrogen bonds (to substrate)	Hydrophobic interactions
	Arg35			-
	Arg245	Carboxylate fixation	SA_O1A, SA_O1B	-
	Arg314			-
Sialic acid moiety fixation	Asp96	Acetamide fixation	SA_N5	-
	Trp120	Glycerol fixation	SA_O9	-
	Gln195		SA_O8, SA_O9	-
	Arg53	Ring fixation	SA_O4	-
Catalysis	Asp59	Acid/base catalyst	SA_O2	-
	Tyr342	Enzymatic nucleophile	(covalent binding to C2)	-
Lactose moiety fixation	Tyr119	Aromatic sandwich	-	+
	Trp312		-	+

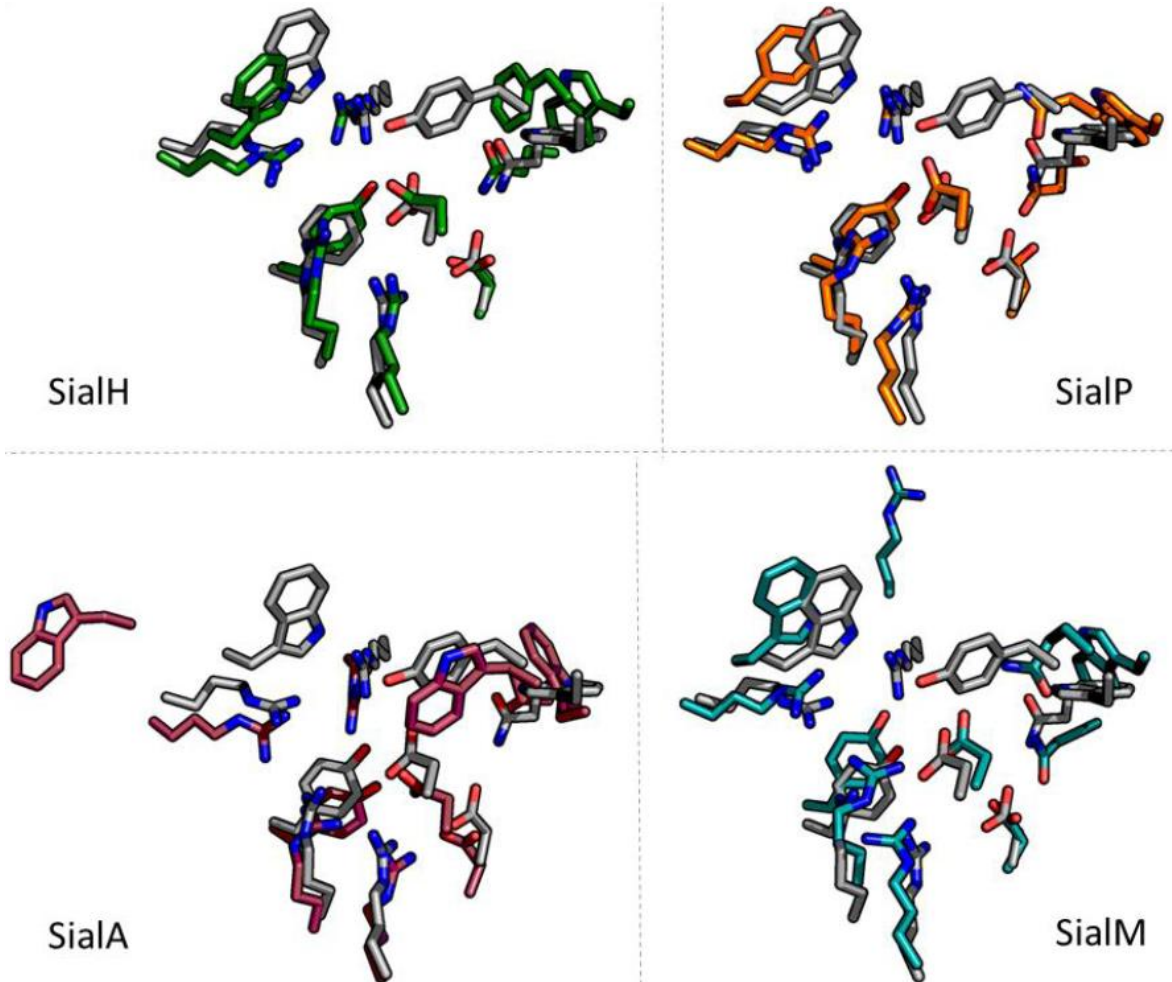
# Candidate selection

- 3D homology modeling using HHpred and CPHmodels
- Alignment of active site residues
- Visual inspection

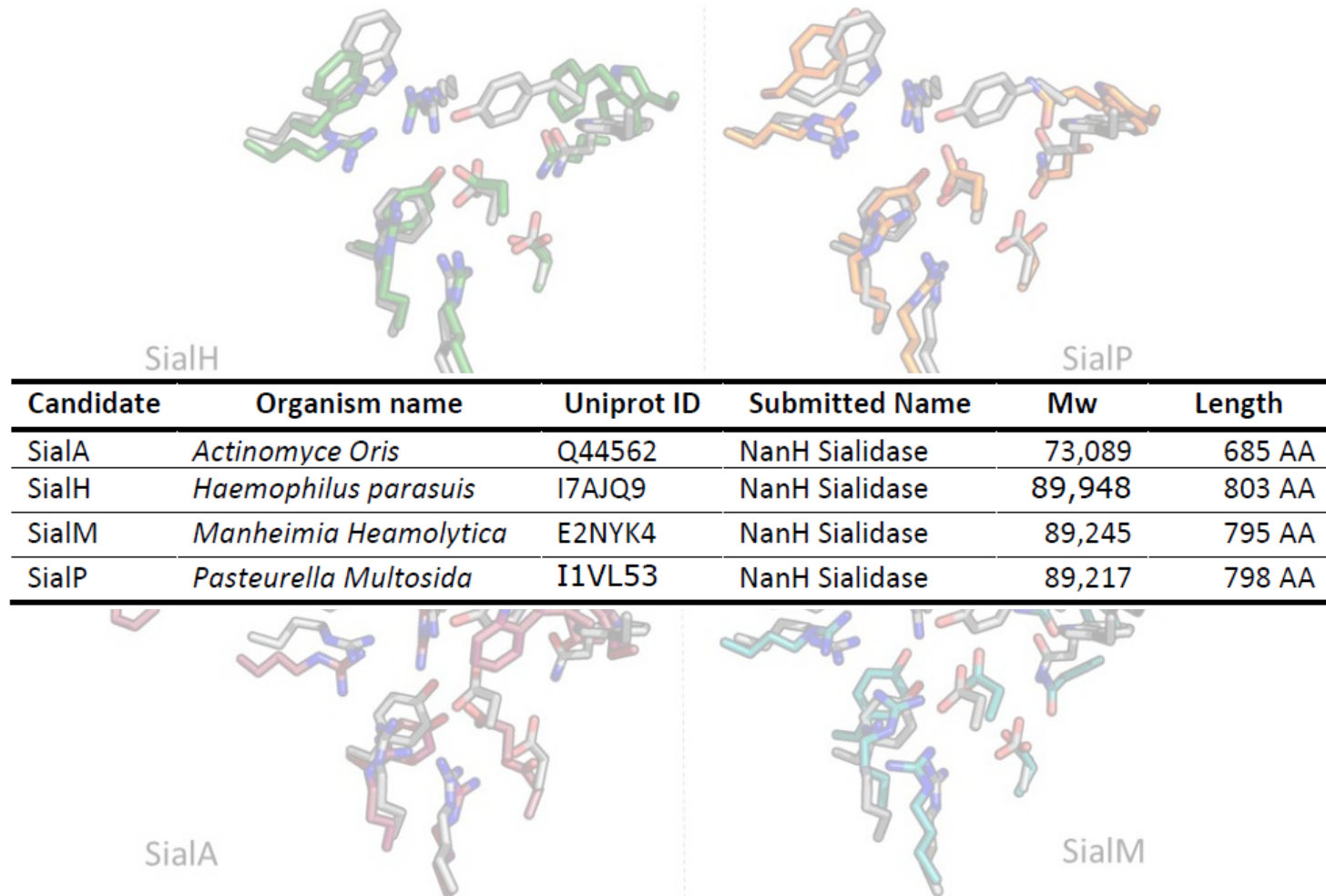


Aligned active site residues for 1 of 15 candidate enzymes

# 4 candidates enzymes model and align well



# 4 candidate enzymes selected for in vitro analysis



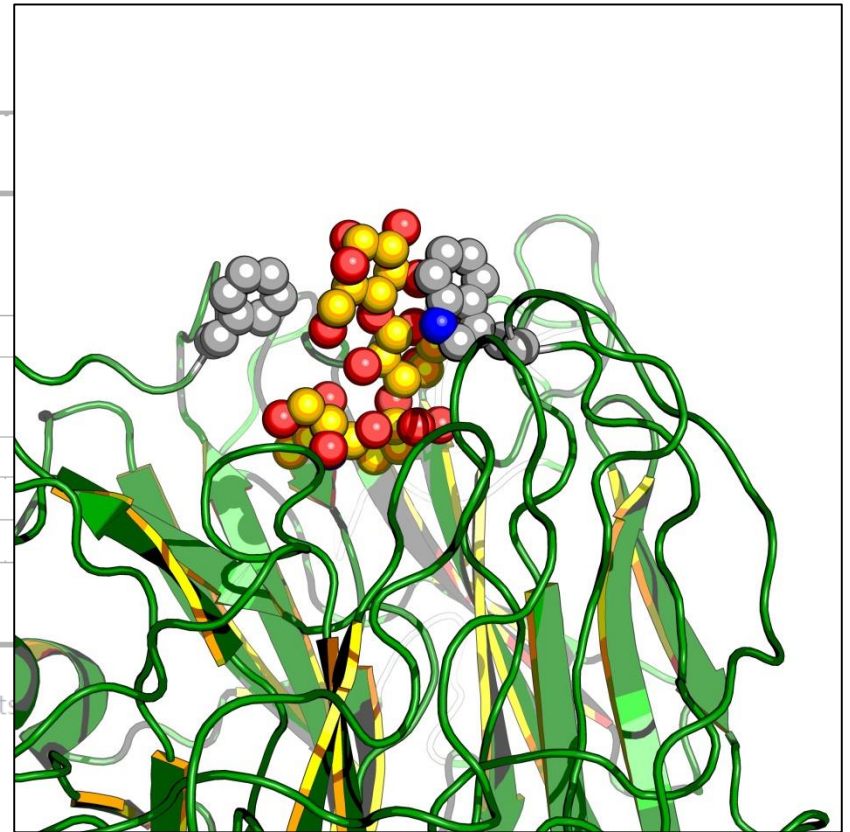
# Candidate alignment overview

<b>TcTS AC properties</b>	TcTS	SialH	SialP	SialA	SialM
Sialic acid moiety fixation	R35	R80	R73	R311	R79
	R245	R298	R291	R524	G296 (R297) <sup>1</sup>
	R314	R368	R359	R592	R360
	D96	D143	D136	D379	D142
	W120	W169	W162	W403	W168
	Q195	Q245	Q238	T473 (Q472) <sup>1</sup>	Q243
Catalysis	R53	R99	R92	R330	R98
	D59	D105	D98	D340	D104
Lactose moiety fixation	Y342	Y402	Y393	Y620	Y394
	Y119	F168 <sup>3</sup>	N161 <sup>2</sup>	G404 (W403) <sup>1</sup>	Q167 <sup>2</sup>
	W312	W366	Y357 <sup>3</sup>	W590	W358

<sup>1</sup> Modelling error suspected - alternative alignment in brackets, <sup>2</sup> Non-aromatic residue, <sup>3</sup> Alternative aromatic residue

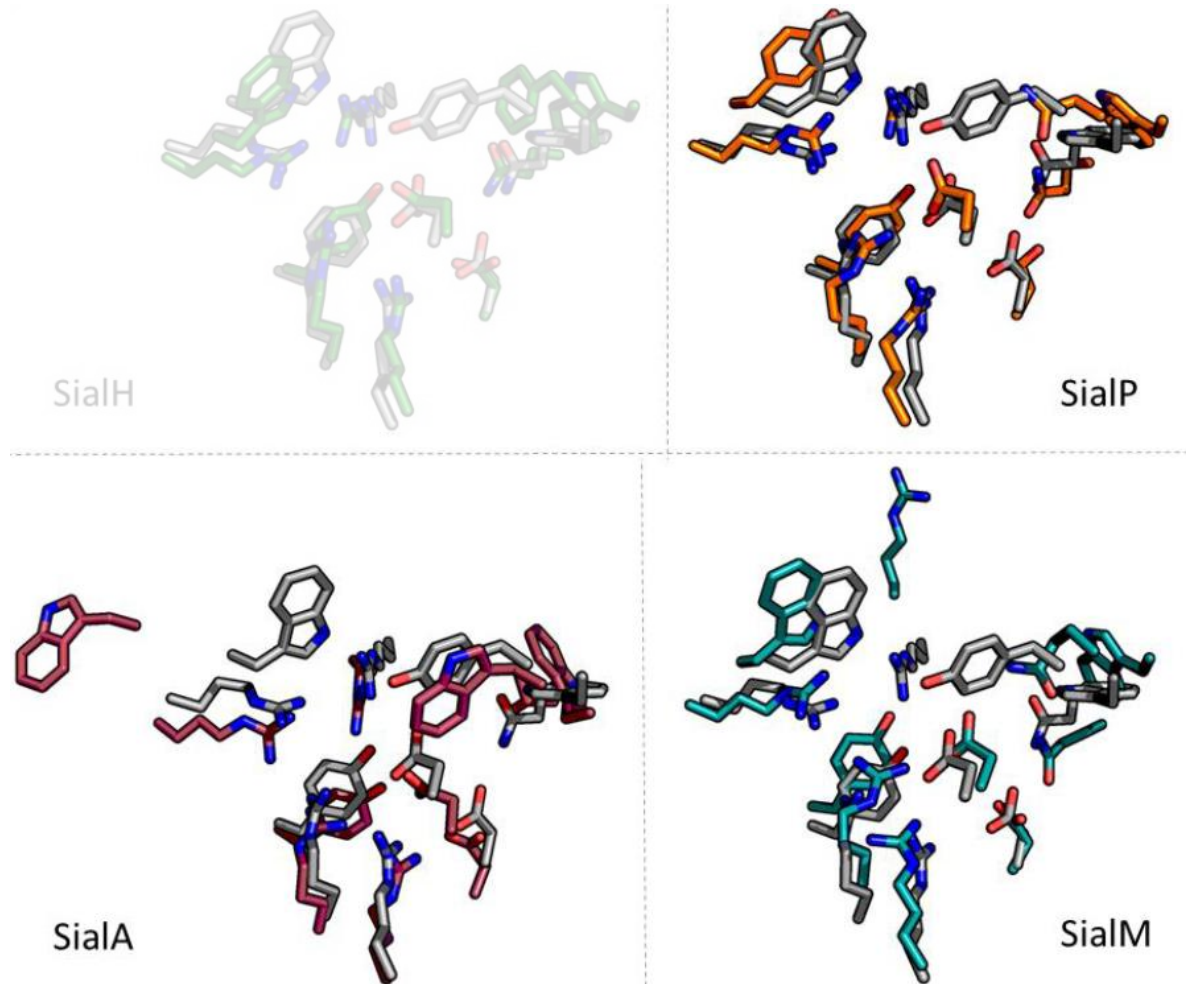
# One candidate stands out

TcTS AC properties	TcTS	SialH
Sialic acid moiety fixation	R35	R80
	R245	R298
	R314	R368
	D96	D143
	W120	W169
Catalysis	Q195	Q245
	R53	R99
Lactose moiety fixation	D59	D105
	Y342	Y402
	Y119	F168 <sup>3</sup>
	W312	W366

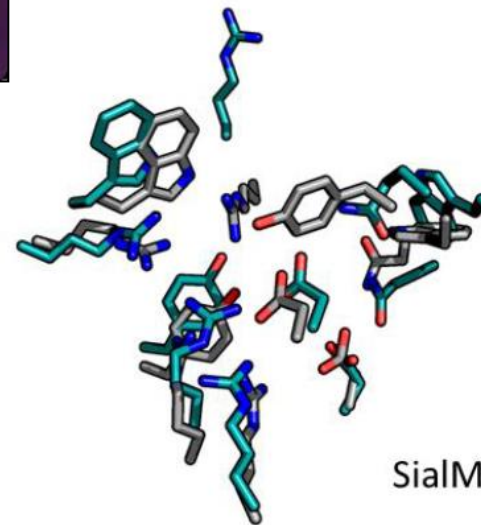
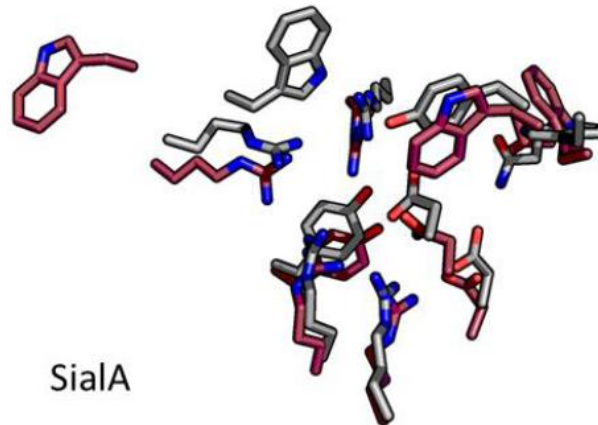
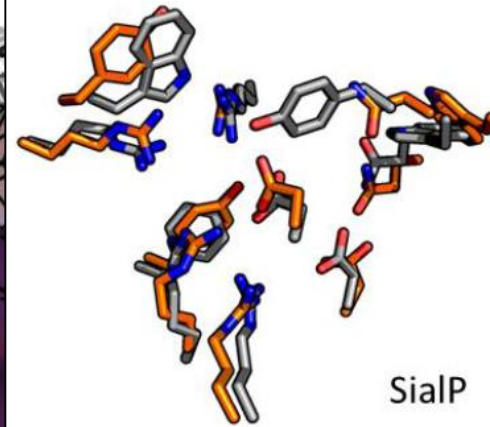
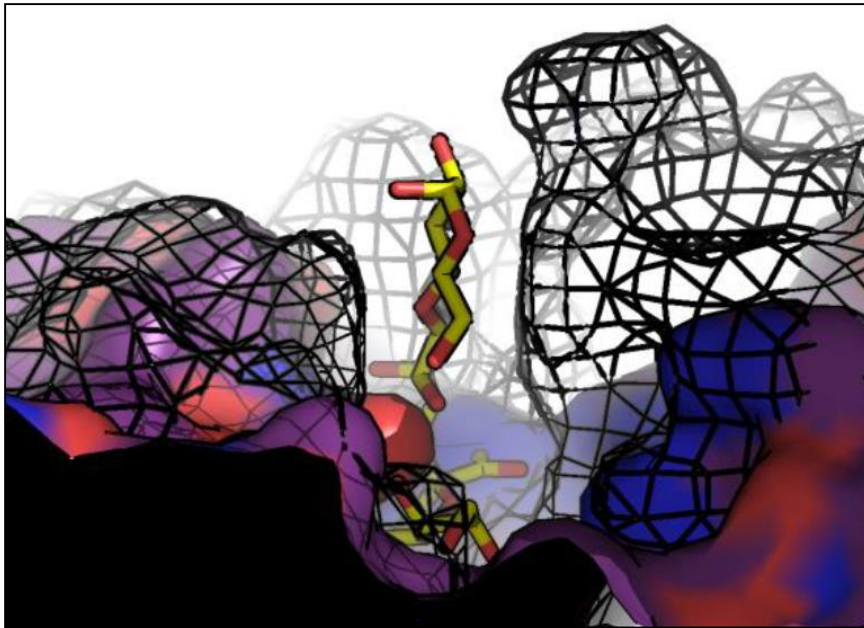


<sup>1</sup> Modelling error suspected - alternative alignment in brackets

The remaining 3 candidates included  
- Deep narrow binding pockets



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- Deep narrow binding pockets





## Enzyme expression setup

- Gene sequences synthesized (DNA2.0)
  - With N-terminal His-tag
  - T7 promotor expression system vector
- Transformed into *E. coli* BL2 (DE3)
- Overnight 30° C autoinduction expression
- Enzyme recovery
  - Sonication
  - Äkta purification

# Applying the candidate enzymes to the trans-sialidase setup

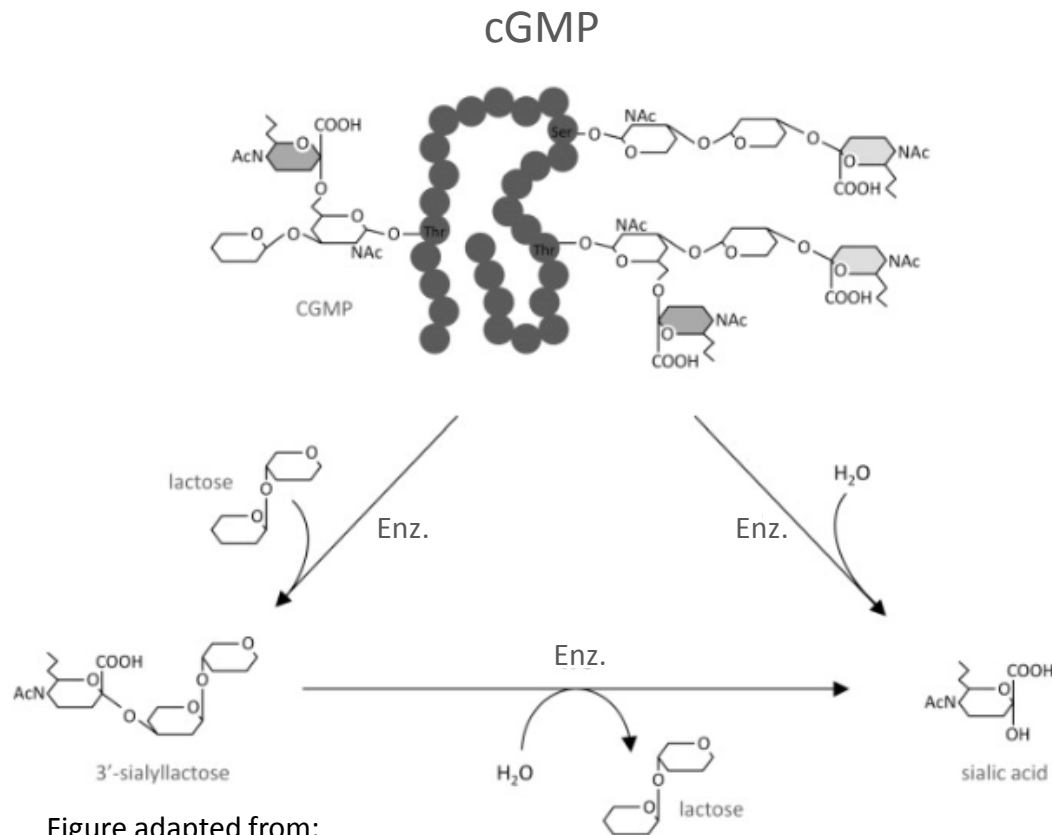


Figure adapted from:  
Zeuner B, *et al.* 2014 *Enzyme and Microbial Technology* 55:85-93

## Reaction conditions

Volume: 1ml (Eppendorf tubes)

Lactose: 100 g/L

cGMP: 40 g/L

Temperature: 30°C (Thermo mixer)

pH: 6.4

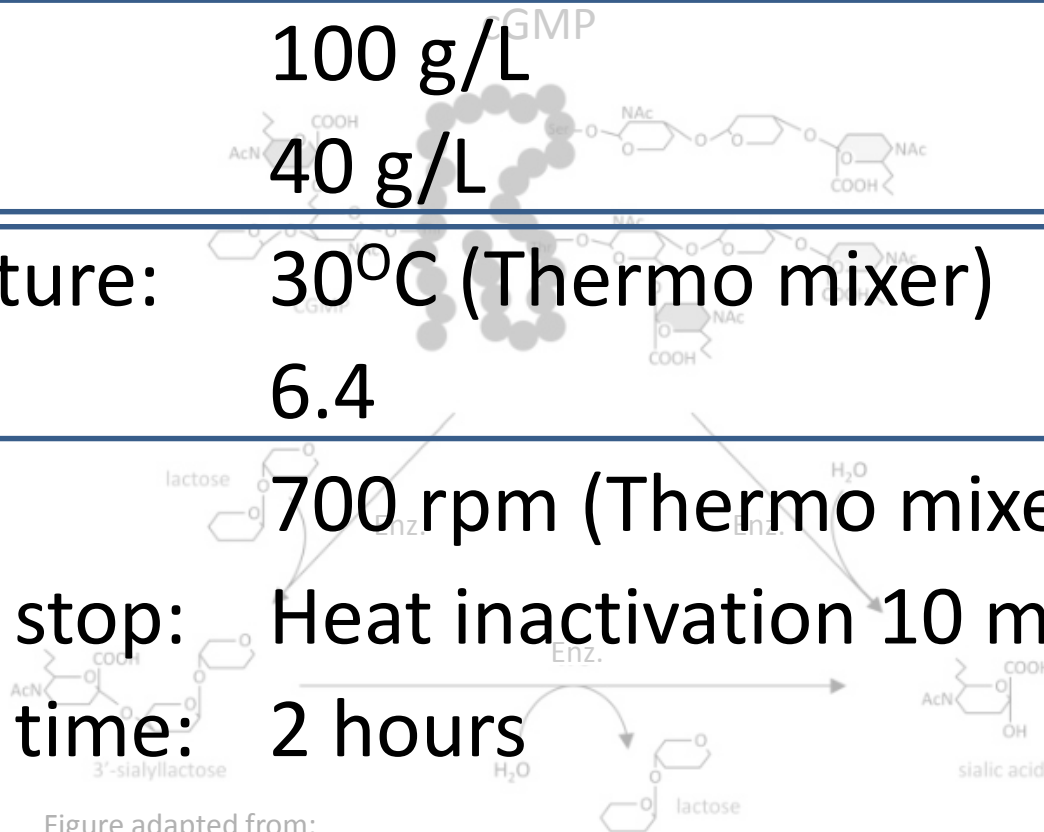
Mixing: 700 rpm (Thermo mixer)

Reaction stop: Heat inactivation 10 min.

Reaction time: 2 hours

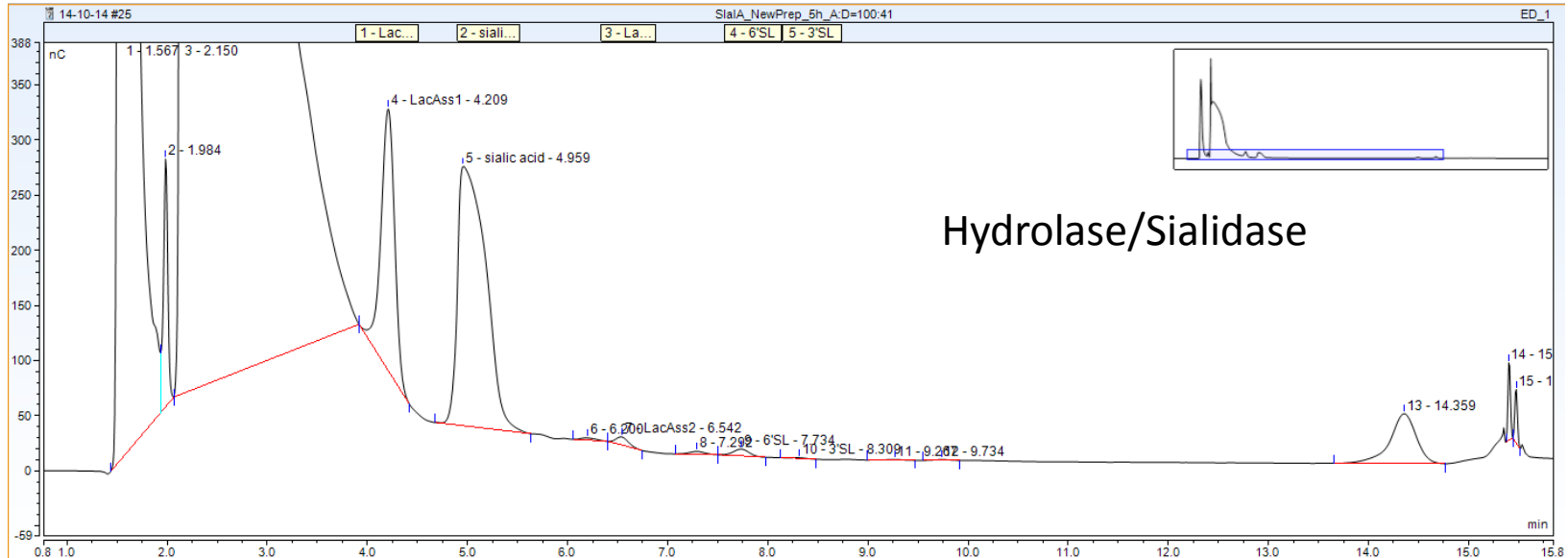
Figure adapted from:

Zeuner B, *et al.* 2014 *Enzyme and Microbial Technology* 55:85-93



# HPLC - Analysis

Sial A

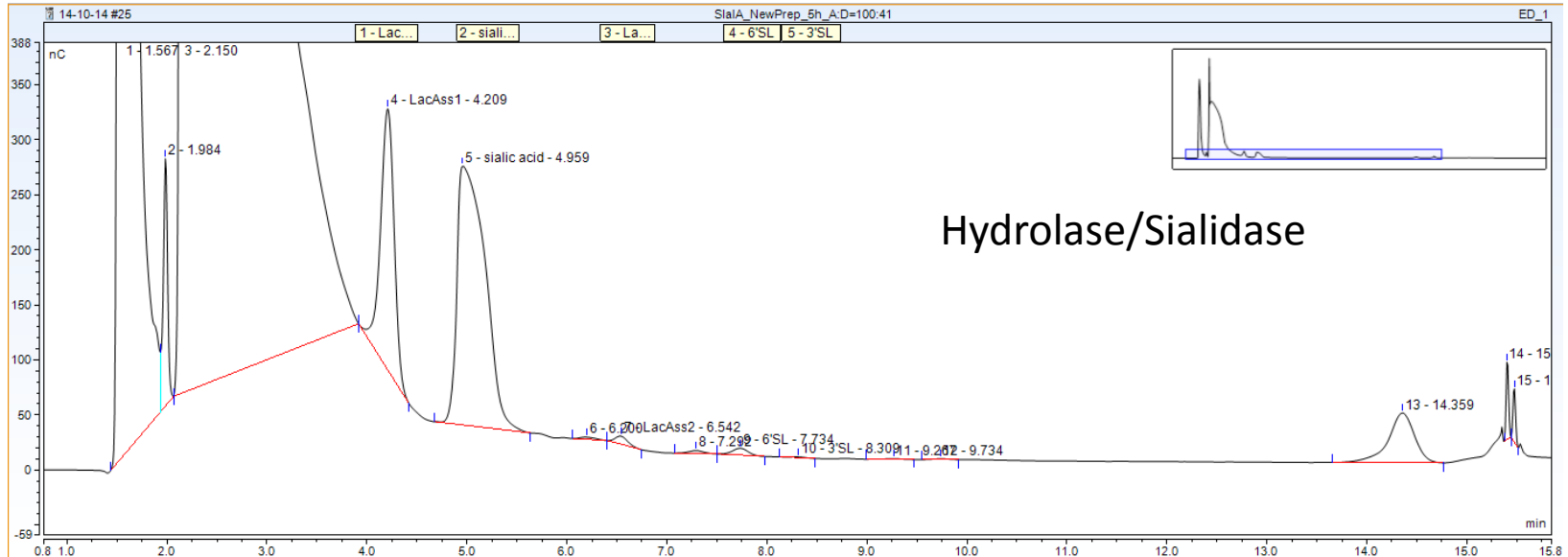


Type: HPAEC-PAD  
Column: CarboPac™ PA100  
Machine: ICS 3000

(Dionex Corp., Sunnyvale, CA)

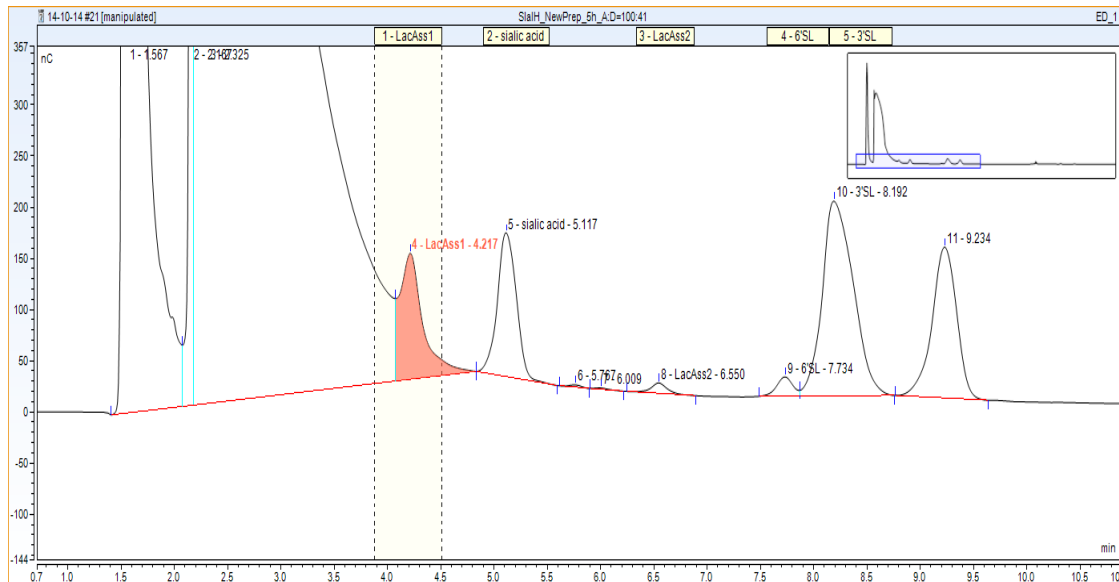
# HPLC - Analysis

## Sial A



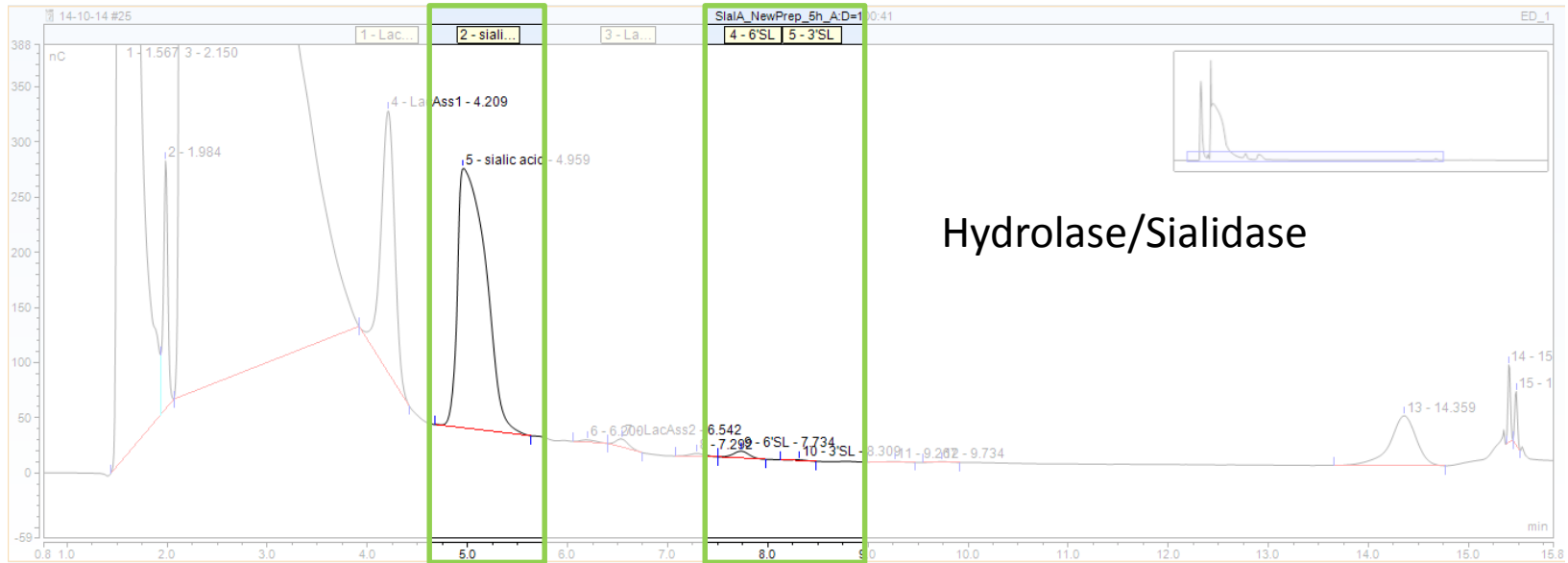
Hydrolase/Sialidase

## Sial H



# HPLC - Analysis

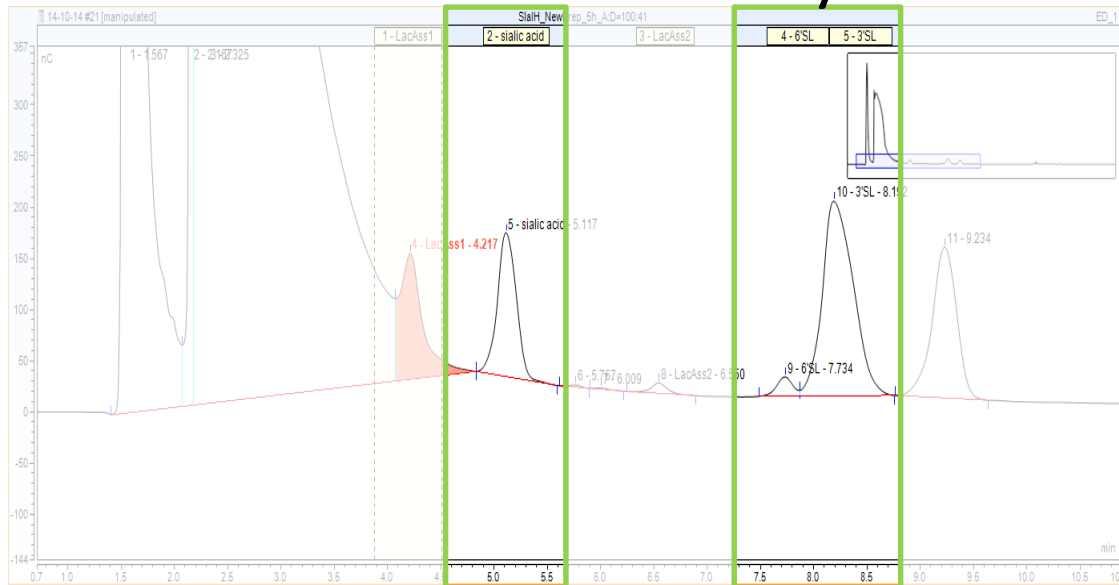
## Sial A



## Sial H

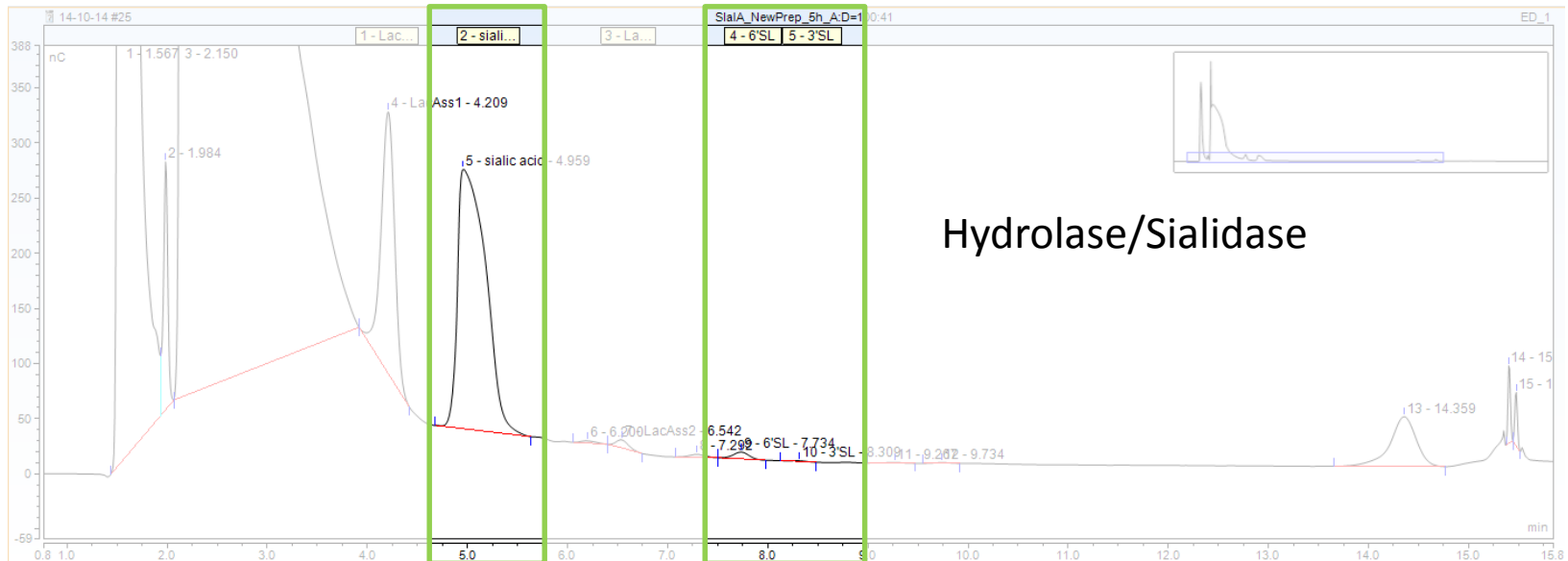
## Sialic acid

## Sialyllactose



# HPLC - Analysis

Sial A

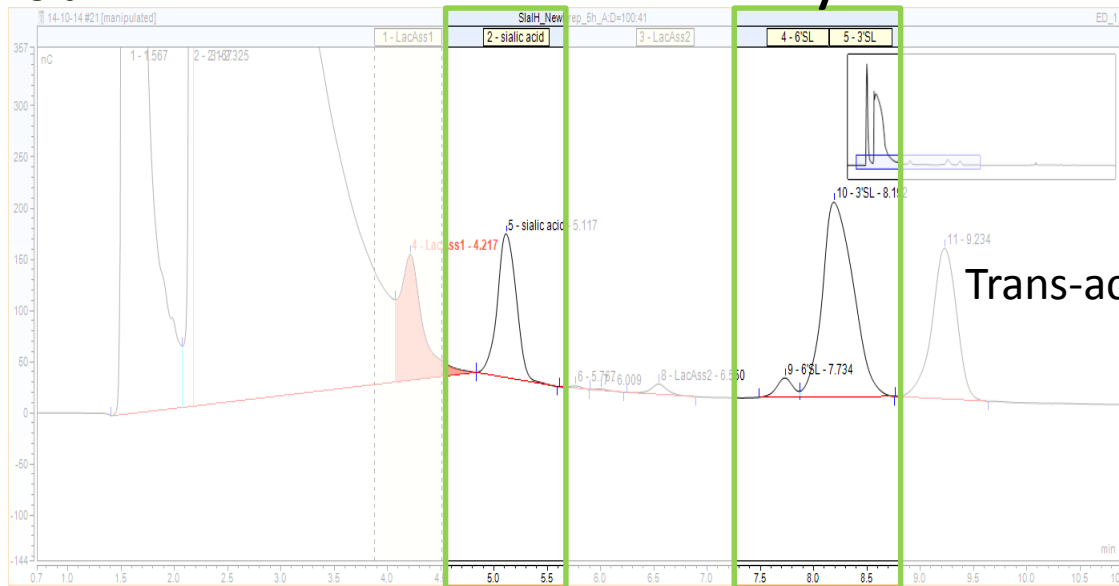


Hydrolase/Sialidase

Sial H

Sialic acid

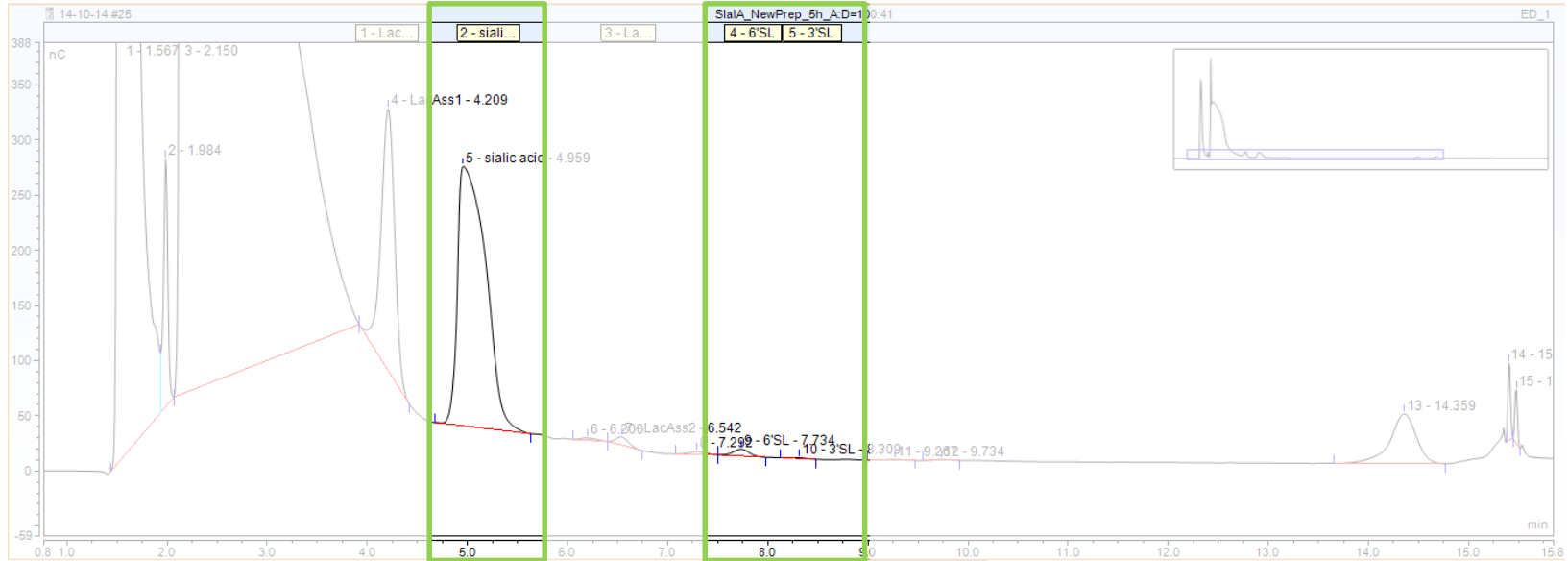
Sialyllactose



Trans-activity!!!

# HPLC - Analysis

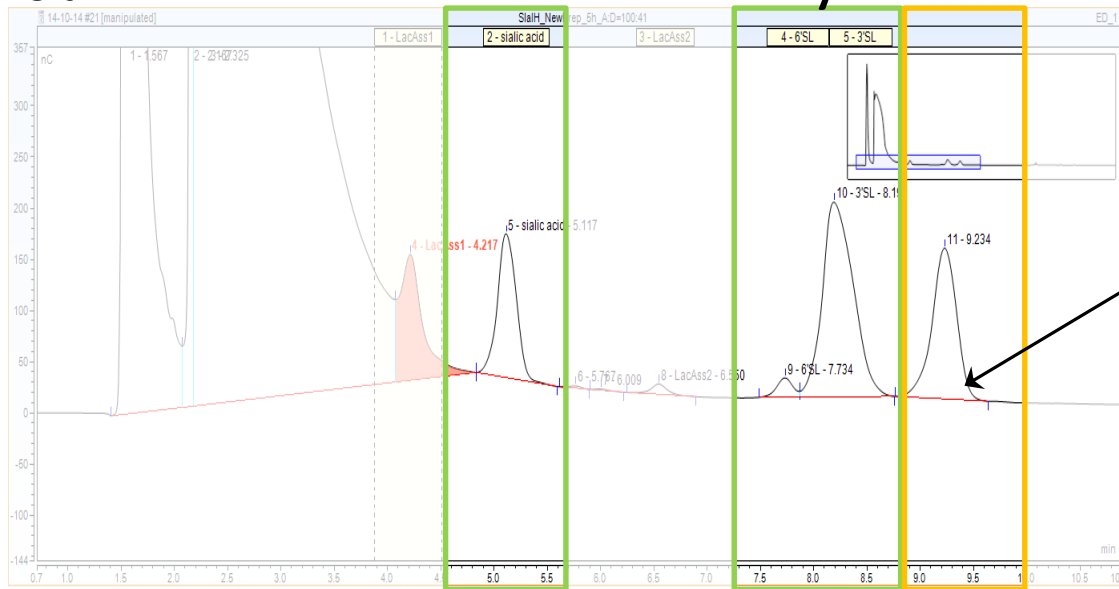
## Sial A



## Sial H

## Sialic acid

## Sialyllactose

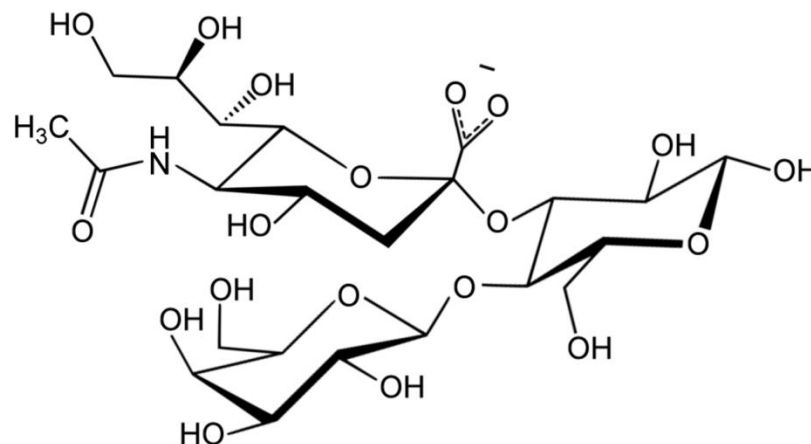
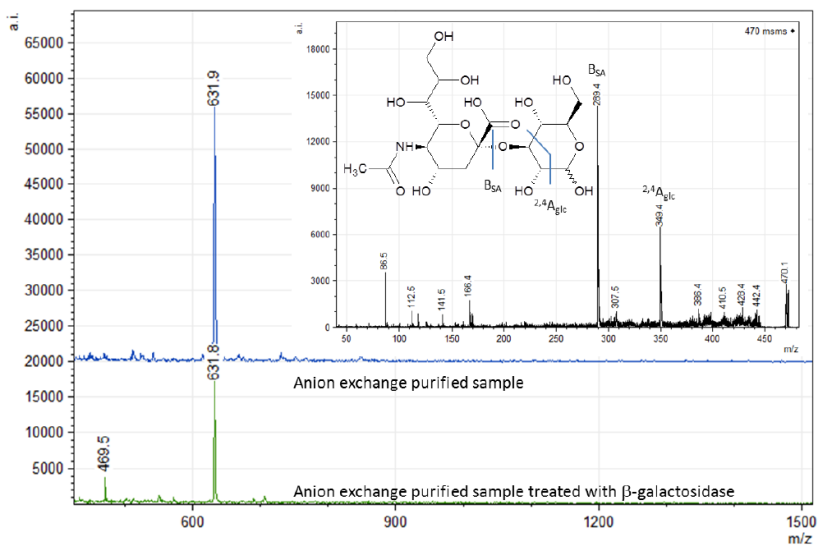


Mystery peak 2



# Product identification

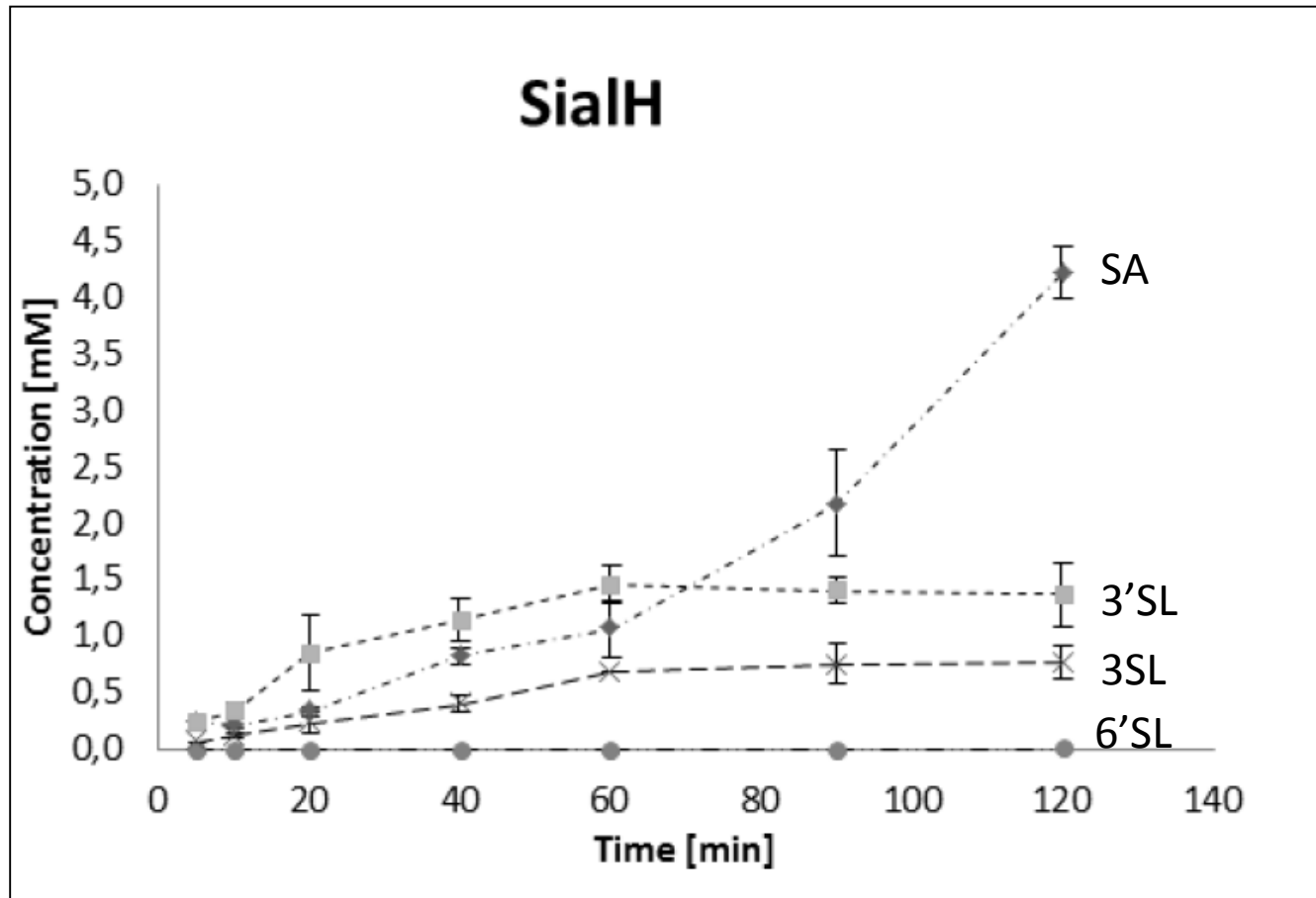
## MS and $\beta$ -galactosidase treatment



3-sialyllactose

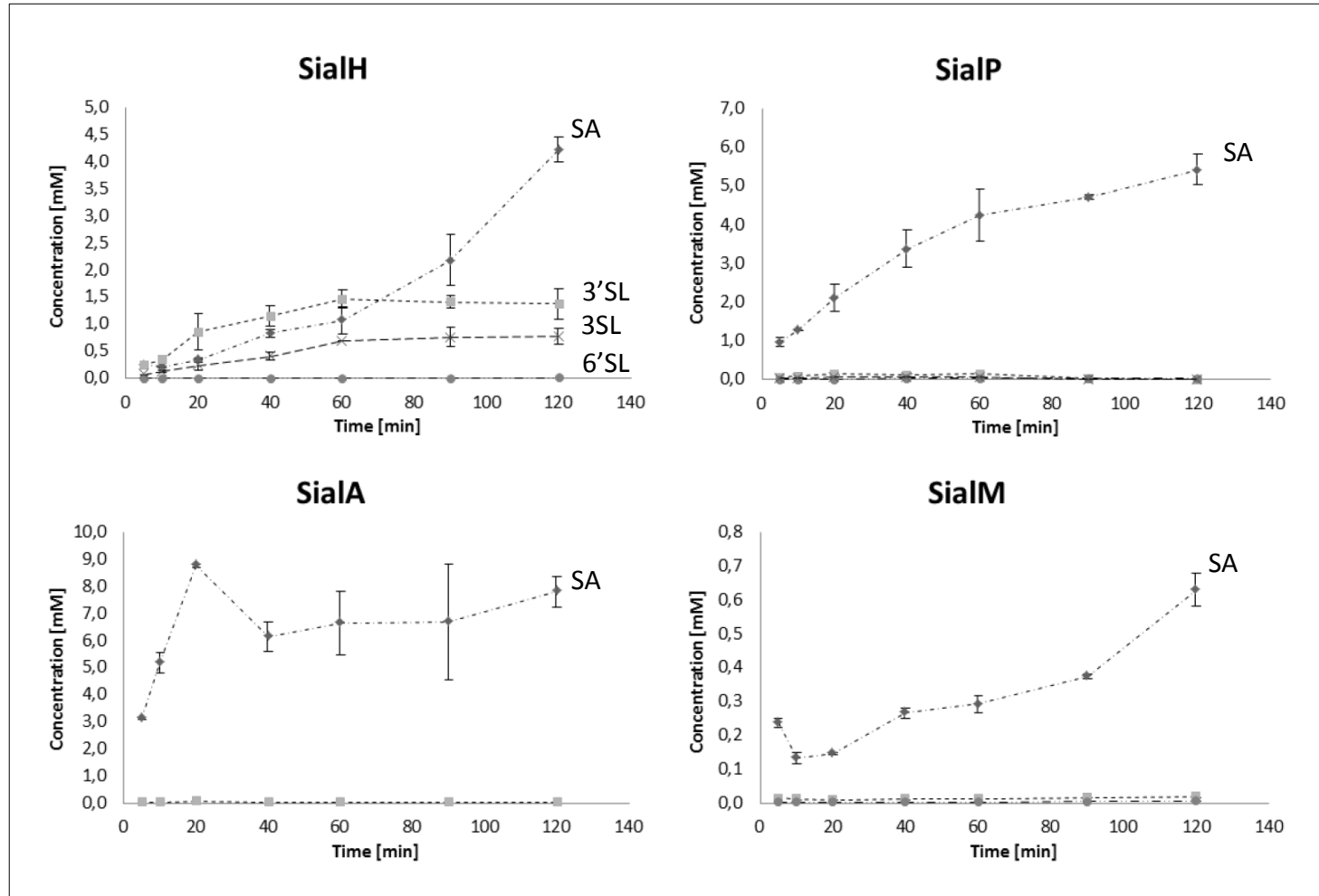
Confirmed by NMR

# Time study SialH

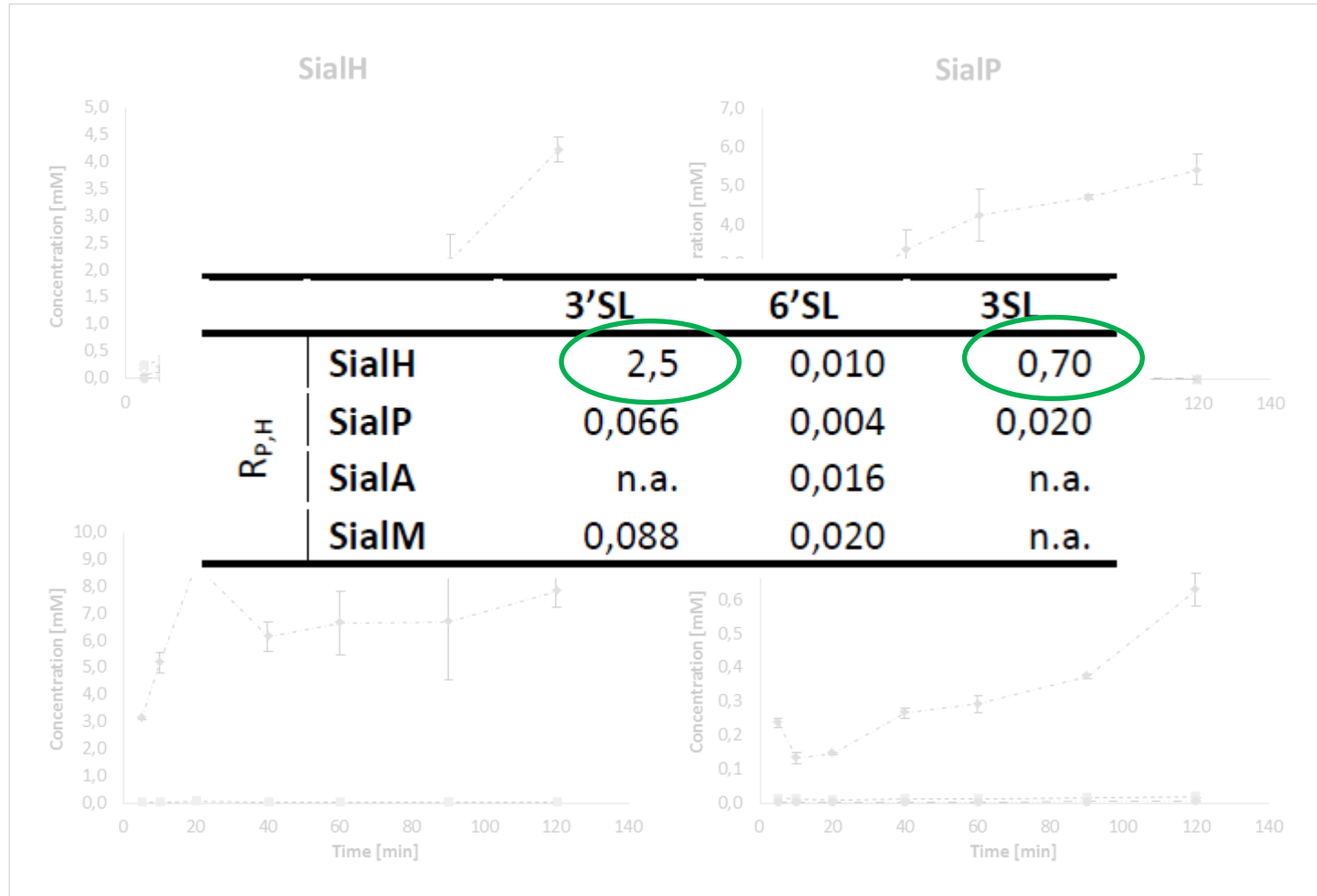


Products 3'SL and 3SL reaches levels of 1.5 mM and 0.9 mM respectively

# Time study (all candidates)



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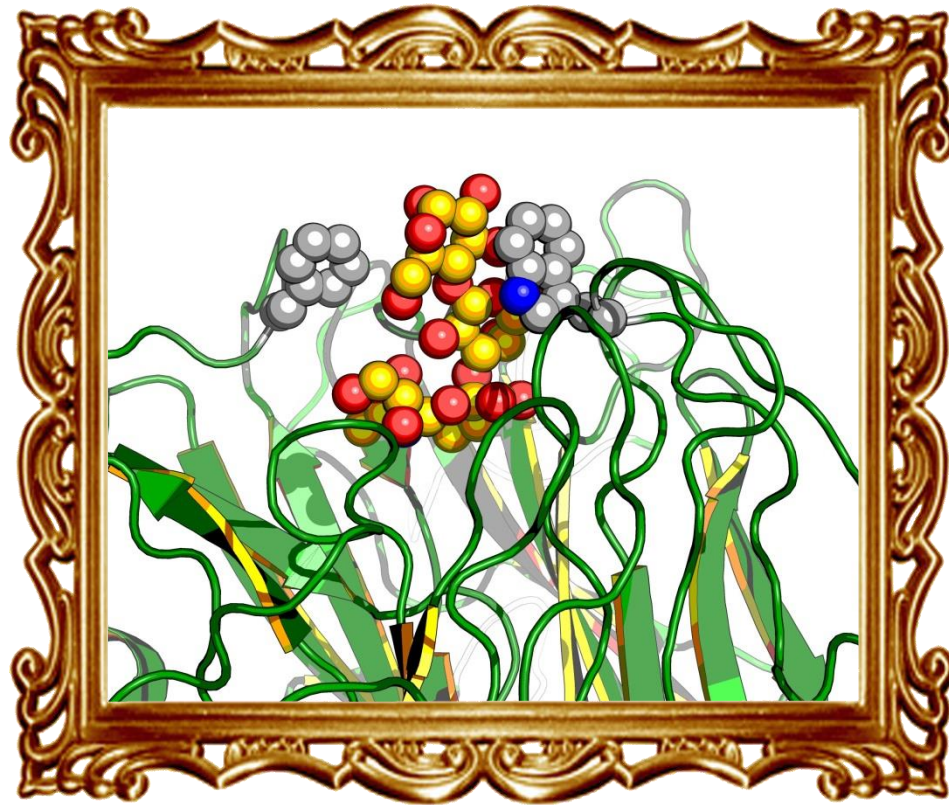


# Conclusion

*"We give to you"*

# Conclusion

The trans-sialidase of *Haemophilus parasuis* (HpTS)



# Conclusion

## **Novel trans-sialidase identified**

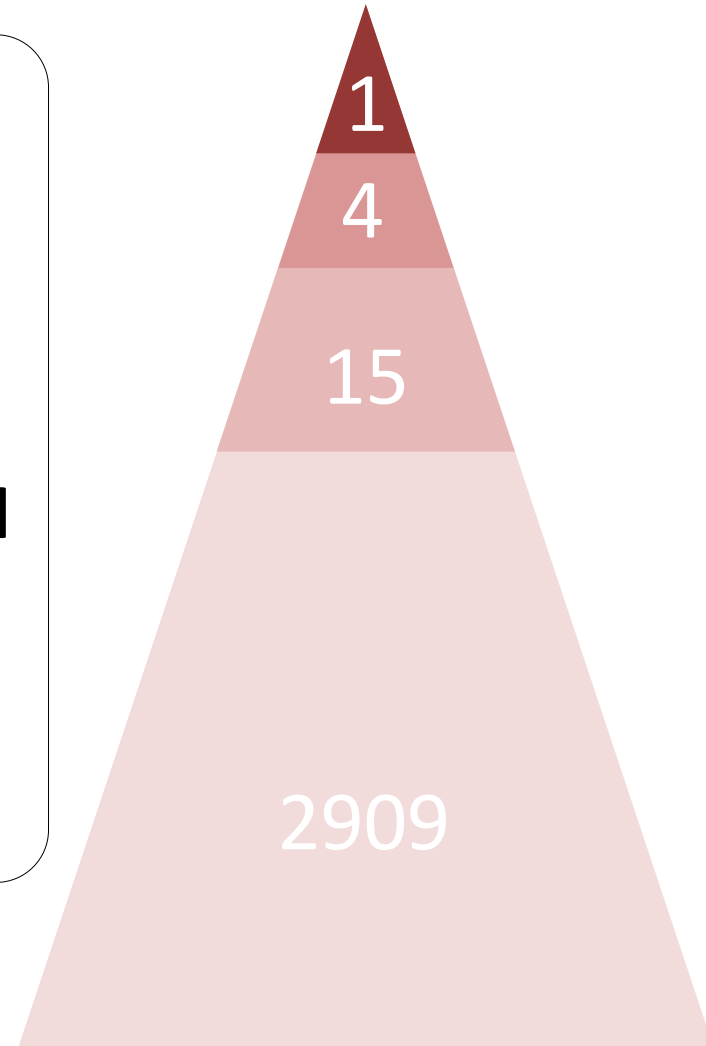
- From a database of 2909 sialidases
- Identified by rational sequence analysis strategy
- First confirmed bacterial trans-sialidase
- Trans-sialidase of *H. parasuis*

## **Novel sialylation product identified**

- New type of 3-sialyllactose

## **4 candidates showed trans-activity**

- Although higher hydrolysis rates were observed



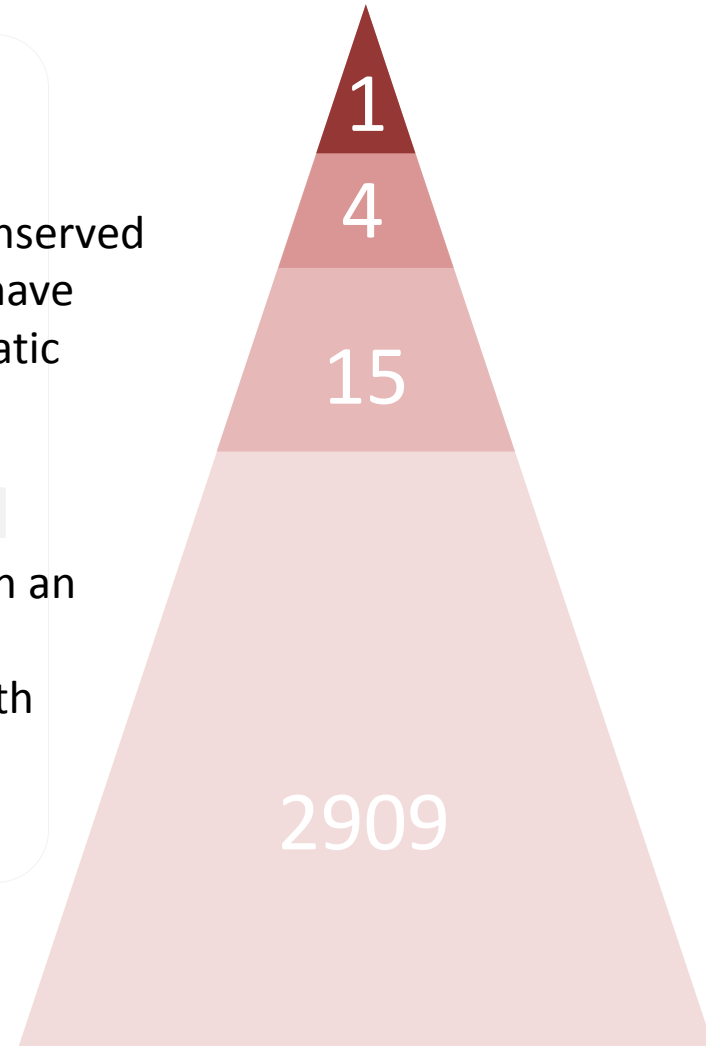
# Conclusion

## Novel trans-sialidase identified

- From a database of 2909 sialidases
- Identified by rational design from analysis of activity
- Hypothesis 1: The family of sialidases is extremely conserved and it can be speculated that a trans-sialidase could have developed in parallel with the TcTS inferring an aromatic sandwich in a similar position as it is found in TcTS.
- Trans-sialidase of *T. parasuis*

## Novel sialylation product identified

- New type of 3-sialylactose
- 4 novel sialidase candidates identified
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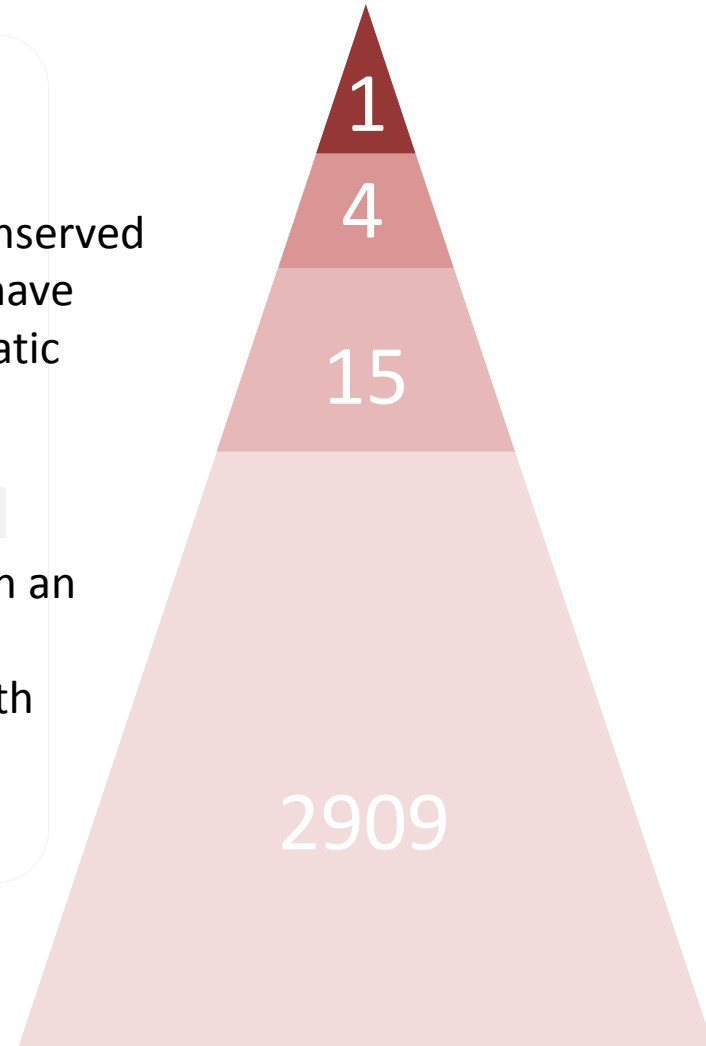
# Conclusion

## Novel trans-sialidase identified

- From a database of 2909 sialidases
- Identified by rational design and analysis of activity
- Hypothesis 1: The family of sialidases is extremely conserved and it can be speculated that a trans-sialidase could have developed in parallel with the TcTS inferring an aromatic sandwich in a similar position as it is found in TcTS.
- Trans-sialidase of *T. parasuis*

## Novel sialylation product identified

- New type of 5-sialylactose
- 4 novel sialidase candidates identified
- Although higher hydrolysis rates were observed
- Hypothesis 2: If hypothesis 1 is correct, sialidases with an aromatic sandwich above the active site will be a good candidates for identifying sialidases with trans-activity.



## Perspectives

- Crystallography of HpTS
  - Common traits between TcTS and HpTS
  - Further improvement of Tr13?
  - Identification of more native trans-sialidases
- Identification of other trans-glycosidases
  - “Where can I find a sandwich ?”

# Acknowledgements

- Colleagues:



Prof JD Mikkelsen

(Supervisors)



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PhD C. Nyffenegger



PhD C. Jers



PhD B. Zeuner



PhD J. Holck



PhD Candidate S Jamek



PhD M. Lezyk



Prof AS Meyer

- Arla Foods A.M.B.A for providing substrate for donating the trans-sialylation reaction substrates

Questions please

*Thank you for your attention*