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► **To cite this version:**

Simon Marillet, Marie-Paule Lefranc, Pierre Boudinot, Frédéric Cazals. Dissecting Interfaces of Antibody -Antigen Complexes: from Ligand Specific Features to Binding Affinity Predictions. [Research Report] RR-8770, Inria Sophia Antipolis. 2015, pp.61. hal-01191462

**HAL Id: hal-01191462**

**<https://inria.hal.science/hal-01191462>**

Submitted on 1 Sep 2015

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# Dissecting Interfaces of Antibody - Antigen Complexes: from Ligand Specific Features to Binding Affinity Predictions

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**RESEARCH  
REPORT**

**N° 8770**

September 2015

Project-Team Algorithms-  
Biology-Structure





# Dissecting Interfaces of Antibody - Antigen Complexes: from Ligand Specific Features to Binding Affinity Predictions

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Project-Team Algorithms-Biology-Structure

Research Report n° 8770 — September 2015 — 58 pages

**Abstract:** Adaptive immunity is based on antigen-specific lymphocyte responses, with in particular B cells secreting seric immunoglobulins (IG) involved in the opsonization of bacteria and the neutralization of viruses. At the heart of these mechanisms is the formation of IG - Ag complexes, which challenge our understanding in terms of binding affinity and interaction specificity.

In this work, we dissect the interfaces of IG - Ag complexes with high resolution crystal structures, making a stride towards a better understanding of binding affinity and interaction specificity. First, we present global interface statistics clearly distinguishing ligand types (proteins, peptides, chemical compounds), and stressing the role of side chains. Second, we analyze the relative positions of CDR with and without antigen, exhibiting a remarkably conserved pattern involving seven seams between CDR. We also show that this generic pattern exhibits specific properties as a function of the ligand type. Finally, we present binding affinity predictions of unprecedented accuracy, with a median absolute error of 1.02 kcal/mol.

We anticipate that our findings will be of broad interest, not only in studying immune responses at the structural level, but also in bio-engineering and IG design, with IG used extensively in diagnostics and as well as therapeutic agents.

**Key-words:** Antibody - antigen complex; interface ; affinity; relative CDR locations

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## Analyse des Interfaces de complexes Anticorps - Antigène: des caractéristiques propres au type de ligand à la prédiction d'affinité de liaison

**Résumé :** L'immunité adaptative est basée sur une réponse lymphocytaire spécifique de l'antigène, les lymphocytes B sécrétant en particulier des immunoglobulines (IG) sériques impliquées dans l'opsonisation des bactéries et la neutralisation des virus. Au cœur de ces mécanismes se situe la formation de complexes IG - Ag, défiant notre compréhension quant à la prédiction de l'affinité de liaison et de la spécificité des interactions.

Dans ce travail, nous disséquons les interfaces de complexes IG - Ag à partir de structures cristallographiques à haute résolution, faisant ainsi un pas en direction d'une meilleure compréhension de l'affinité de liaison et de la spécificité des interactions. Premièrement, nous présentons des statistiques sur les interfaces dans leur globalité permettant de distinguer clairement les types de ligands et de souligner l'importance des chaînes latérales. Deuxièmement, nous analysons les positions relatives des CDR en contact ou non avec un antigène, exhibant ainsi un motif remarquablement conservé impliquant sept *coutures* entre les six CDR. Nous montrons également que ce motif générique possède des propriétés spécifiques au type de ligand. Enfin, nous présentons des prédictions d'affinité d'une précision inégalée, avec une erreur absolue médiane de 1.02 kcal/mol.

Ces résultats sont d'intérêt général, non seulement pour l'étude des réponses immunitaires au niveau structural, mais également pour l'ingénierie biologique et le design d'IG, celles-ci étant largement utilisées pour les diagnostics et en tant qu'agents thérapeutiques.

**Mots-clés :** Complexe anticorps - antigène ; interface ; affinité; positions relatives des CDR

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Immunoglobulins and the immune response

Adaptive immunity is based on antigen (Ag)-specific lymphocyte responses. Upon specific recognition of an antigenic epitope by a given receptor unique to a lymphocyte, this cell gets activated and proliferates, leading to a clonal expansion. B lymphocytes thus recognize the native antigen through immunoglobulins (IG) or antibodies on their membranes. Following differentiation of lymphocytes into plasmocytes, IG are then secreted and bind the antigen as a soluble receptor. Seric IG can opsonize bacteria and facilitate their uptake by phagocytes, or neutralize viruses thus preventing recognition by their receptor or fusion with the target cell. During the secondary immune response, affinity maturation is responsible for the secretion of IG of higher affinity, a gain of up to three orders of magnitude being common.

Immunoglobulins fundamentally consist of two identical heavy (H) chains and two identical light (L) chains, each H chain being bound to an L chain by a disulfide bond and by noncovalent interactions between the variable domains VH and VL and the constant domains CH1 and CL. The antigen-binding site is located at the top of the paired VH and VL, and generally overlaps the two V domains. It mainly consists of three flexible loops on each V domain, called complementarity determining regions (CDR1-3) [72, 9].

Matching the universe of antigenic motifs specifically requires a very large diversity of recognition modes by immunoglobulins. This is achieved by a huge diversity of the loops constituting the antigen binding sites at the top of the VH and VL domains. The aforementioned CDR1 and 2 are encoded by the V gene and their diversity depends on genes and alleles, whereas the CDR3 loop corresponds to the site of the V(D)J rearrangements, which generate the highest sequence diversity [68], [55, Chapter 6].

## 1.2 IG - Ag complexes under the structural lens

From the structural standpoint, the functional relevance of an IG is described by its binding affinity for the targeted antigen and the specificity of such interactions. The specificity is critical to ensure that the response targets the antigen, and not, for example, a motif present on a self protein - and it is also the basis of immune memory and vaccination. The affinity sets the strength of the interaction and the time the antigen and the antibody are linked to each other. For the membrane bound IG, it determines if enough aggregation of surface IG and IG co-receptors occurs, so that a sufficient signal can be sent to the cell to induce activation and proliferation; for secreted IG, it sets the efficiency of IG-mediated pathogen opsonisation and/or neutralization, or IG effector properties (antibody-dependent cell-cytotoxicity (ADCC), complement-dependent cytotoxicity (CDC)), after binding to the target infected or tumoral cells [42]. In mouse and human, secondary immune responses are often accompanied by *affinity maturation*, a process during which B cells expressing IG with enhanced affinity are being selected. Such IG with higher affinity result from the selection of *random* mutations of their V(D)J genes produced by the enzyme activation-induced cytidine deaminase (AICDA, AID), which may modify the structure of the antigen binding site, hence the affinity of the interaction with the Ag.

The binding affinity is a thermodynamic parameter describing an equilibrium between three species, namely the partners and the complex they form. It is generally measured by a dissociation constant  $K_d$  of this equilibrium, or equivalently by the associated dissociation free energy. Thus, by nature, the affinity has enthalpic and entropic components. The enthalpic component describes the interaction energy. Generically, given two partners forming a complex, various parameters have been proposed to model the complex. Most of these parameters target the interface, and describe its size and morphology, shape (number of patches), biochemical

properties (salt bridges, solvation, H bonds), or packing properties and have been studied using crystal structures of complexes, see [33, 46, 8, 48] and the references therein. More recently, it has also been shown that non-interacting atoms play an important role, intuitively related to solvent interactions [35]. For the particular case of IG - Ag complexes, it has been observed that interfaces tend to have a smaller size, have curvature dependent on the ligand size [47]. The entropic component accounts for the dynamics of the partners. In particular, it has been shown that preconfiguration/prerigidification of the binding site may yield a decreased entropic loss, hence an enhanced binding affinity [49, 59, 15, 60]. The specific role played in Ag binding by CDR also prompted the analysis of CDR specific statistics. Using a handful of structures, *canonical structures* i.e. commonly occurring backbone CDR conformations were first reported [17] and subsequently updated [18, 2]. Moving from individual CDR to all CDR, correlations between canonical structures were further studied [70], highlighting the fact that selected combinations are multi-specific, while others are specific of an antigen type. The VH CDR3 is the most variable and was therefore the focus of several studies [62, 53, 64] which defined and updated sequence-based rules to predict its conformations. More recently, these studies have been refined, based on a larger number of structures (of the order of hundreds instead of tens). For VL CDR3, new canonical structures were proposed [38], and for VH CDR3, previous rules were updated and complemented [36, 37]. The work of Chothia et al [17] was also refined using 300 nonredundant IG structures and a pre-processing based on CDR length [54]. Distinguishing lambda versus kappa chains, it has been shown that canonical conformations from the former are more diverse than those from the latter in the human and the mouse [13]. However, the use of canonical conformations was questioned [16], since general prediction methods for loops matched (or even outperformed) the prediction performances of methods exploiting specific rules associated with canonical structures of CDR. Finally, two related works [3, 58] studied the differential CDR lengths and SDRU (proportion of structures contacting the antigen at a given site) between ligand types. However, these analyses do not extend to predictions of the antigen type. More generally, the reader may consult [27] for a review of structural and genetic aspects of natural and artificial antibody repertoires.

While the previous analyses certainly shed light on antigen recognition modes, they fall short from providing complete information on binding affinity. Predicting binding affinities from structural data is a notoriously challenging problem, for protein complexes in general [34, 50], and for IG - Ag complexes in particular [45]. This actually owes to the intrinsic nature of  $K_d$ , namely a macroscopic property describing the chemical equilibrium associated with the two partners (IG and Ag) and the complex (IG - Ag, denoted IG/Ag in the IMGT nomenclature [25]). That is, the magnitude of  $K_d$  has an enthalpic component, qualifying the *strength* of the interaction, but also an entropic component qualifying the loss of dynamical properties upon complex formation – intuitively the formation of the IG - Ag complex restricts the degrees of freedom of both partners. These two competing interests illustrate the *enthalpy - entropy* compensation phenomenon [52, 24], which stipulates that a favorable enthalpic change upon association is accompanied by an entropic penalty. In [56] and [69] the authors have shown that a preconfiguration process of the variable domains can be induced by the constant domain 1 (CH1) of the heavy chain, suggesting that the isotype switching commonly occurring during B cell differentiation may affect the affinity through changes in the dynamic properties of the IG. Parallel to binding affinity, the notion of functional affinity or avidity which takes into account the (possibly negative) cooperativity between IG is highly relevant in-vivo. In that context, constant regions have been shown to influence the avidity [22, 23, 51, 57]. Likewise, an intact ball-and-socket joint between VH and CH1 domains has been shown to condition antibody neutralizing activity [39].

**Contributions.** This work sheds new light on IG - Ag interactions. We use the annotated IMGT/3Dstructure-DB [25], focusing on *canonical complexes*, each such complex involving exactly one variable domain from the heavy chain (VH), one variable domain from the light chain (VL) and one antigen (Ag). Of particular interest is the ligand type (reduced to protein, peptide and chemical in this paper, see Section 2.3). Upon extracting canonical complexes from the IMGT/3Dstructure-DB, our analysis relies on hierarchical Voronoi interface models, and involves three main steps. IG atoms are first marked as belonging to CDR or framework regions (FR), using the IMGT unique numbering [43]. (Practically, we use the following notations: CDR1-IMGT of VH is written VH CDR1 and FR3-IMGT of VL is written VL FR3. Other CDR and FR follow the same scheme.) Subsequently, the interface between the IG chains and the Ag is determined using a Voronoi based model, and hierarchically decomposed into contributions from CDR, FR and other atoms.

Using these tools, we present novel analysis for IG - Ag complexes, in three directions. First, we report global interface statistics, in particular as a function of the ligand type, stressing the role of side chains and going beyond previous work solely based on backbone canonical conformations. In particular, these statistics discriminate between different ligand types, a key observation to understand binding specificity. Second, we present novel analysis of the relative contributions of CDR to binding, highlighting the relative positions of CDR. We notably mitigate the classical view of prominent contribution of CDR3 to the interface, showing that in terms of buried surface area, CDR3 on the one hand, and CDR1 + CDR2 on the other hand, must be considered on an equal footing. We also show that there exist a conserved pattern of contacts between CDR, with specific properties depending on the antigen type. Finally, we present binding affinity predictions of unprecedented accuracy.

## 2 Material and Methods

### 2.1 Voronoi Interface Models

Given a macro-molecular complex, an interface model is a structural model of the atoms accounting for the interactions. Various interface models have been developed, based in particular on distance thresholds and loss of solvent accessibility [4]. In the sequel, we use the Voronoi based interface model, which is a parameter free construction improving on previous models in several aspects. Since we shall be using features of this model, we present it briefly. (See also Fig. 1 for an illustration on an IG - Ag complex.)

**Solvent accessible models.** The *solvent accessible model* (SAM) of a set of atoms is a model where each atom is represented by a ball whose radius is the van der Waals radius expanded by the radius  $r_w = 1.4\text{\AA}$  of a water probe accounting for a continuous solvation layer [28, 4]. A convenient construction to study SAM is the Voronoi (power) diagram defined by the atoms [28]. In particular, the Voronoi diagram induces a partition of the molecular volume, obtained by computing for each atom its *Voronoi restriction*, namely the intersection between its atomic ball and its Voronoi region. The volume of a restriction can be used to define packing properties: the *raw packing property* of one atom is plainly the volume of its restriction; the *normalized packing property* is the volume of the restriction normalized by the volume of the corresponding ball.

**Buried surface area.** The *exposed surface* of a SAM consists of the boundary of the union of balls defining the SAM. (Prosaically, the visible surface of the molecule.) This surface consists of spherical polygons, delimited by circle arcs (every such arc is located on the intersection circle of

two atoms), themselves delimited by points (each such point is found at the intersection of three spheres). When two molecules assemble to form a complex, the *buried surface area* (BSA) is the portion of the exposed surface of the partners which gets buried [46]. BSA has been shown to exhibit remarkable correlations with various biophysical quantities [32], and notably dissociation free energies for complexes involving moderate flexibility [48].

**Voronoi interface.** Consider the SAM of a complex whose partners are denoted  $A$  and  $B$ , and also involving water molecules tagged  $W$ . Two atoms are in *contact* provided that their Voronoi restrictions are neighbors. Pairs of type  $(A,B)$  define the  $AB$  interface, namely direct contacts between the partners. Focusing on  $W$  molecules sandwiched between the partners, pairs  $(A,W)$  and  $(B,W)$  correspond to water mediated interactions. It can be shown that all atoms from the partners identified this way form a superset of atoms loosing solvent accessibility [12]. The *binding patch* of a partner consists of its interface atoms. The atoms of the binding patch can be assigned an integer called its *shelling order*, which is a measure of the distance of this atom to the boundary of the patch it belongs to [8]. This information generalizes the core-rim model [46], and has been shown to provide STAR correlations with solvent dynamics, conservation of amino acids [8], and dissociation free energies [48].

The Voronoi facets associated to pairs of type  $(A,B)$  define the *bicolor* interface  $A - B$  (bicolor since there are two partners); those associated to pairs of type  $(A,W)$  and  $(B,W)$  define the mediated interface  $AW - BW$ , since interactions between  $A$  and  $B$  are mediated by  $W$  molecules; finally, the union of the bicolor and mediated interface define the *tricolor interface*  $ABW$ . Geometrically, this interface is a polyhedron separating the partners. The curvature of this polyhedron is easily computed [11], and has been shown to provide information on binding modes [12].

**Application to IG - Ag complexes.** We partition the set  $\mathcal{I}$  of interface atoms into the atoms  $\mathcal{I}_{IG}$  contributed by the IG, and the atoms  $\mathcal{I}_{Ag}$  contributed by the Ag, so that  $\mathcal{I} = \mathcal{I}_{IG} \cup \mathcal{I}_{Ag}$ . It follows that the number of interface atoms  $|\mathcal{I}|$  satisfies  $|\mathcal{I}| = |\mathcal{I}_{IG}| + |\mathcal{I}_{Ag}|$ . Similarly, we charge the Buried Surface Area BSA to the IG and Ag respectively, so that  $BSA = BSA_{IG} + BSA_{Ag}$ . These quantities yield the average BSA per atom on IG and Ag side:

$$\overline{bsa}_{IG} = \frac{BSA_{IG}}{|\mathcal{I}_{IG}|} \quad (1)$$

$$\overline{bsa}_{Ag} = \frac{BSA_{Ag}}{|\mathcal{I}_{Ag}|} \quad (2)$$

Note that the previous average surface areas are computed using interface atoms only—not the number of atoms or exposed atoms of the whole individual molecules.

## 2.2 Hierarchical Voronoi Interface Models

Consider a complex where partner  $A$  is an IG, and partner  $B$  an antigen. We wish to accommodate the hierarchical structure of a Fab [42]. We focus on the variable domains of the heavy and light chains, denoted VH and VL respectively, and decompose each of them into seven regions, namely three Complementarity Determining Regions (CDR), and the four Framework Regions (FR) flanking them [43] (Supp. Table 1). For example, the domain VH is decomposed as  $FR1+CDR1+FR2+CDR2+FR3+CDR3+FR4$ .

Consider the partition of the variable domains VH and VL induced by the previous 14 labels. For the sake of conciseness and since we focus on interfaces involving the variable domains only,

the domains VH and VL are plainly denoted H and L. Using these notations, we partition the  $IGAg$  interface as follows:

- Hierarchical bicolor interface:  $IGAg = (L \cup H)Ag = VLAg \cup VHAg$
- Hierarchical mediated interface:  $IGW - AgW = (LW - AgW) \cup (HW - AgW)$
- Hierarchical tricolor interface:  $IGAgW = IGAg \cup (IGW - AgW)$

Analogously, the partition of the H (or L) V-domain into seven CDR and FR regions induces a partition of the HAg (or LAg) interface (Fig. 2).

### 2.3 The Dataset and Data Curation: the IMGT/3Dstructure-DB

**Structure** From a structural standpoint, we use the IG - Ag complexes from the IMGT/3Dstructure-DB (<http://www.imgt.org/3Dstructure-DB/> [25]), corresponding to the category  $IG/Ag$  for *IMGT complex type*. Only PDB files are kept. This dataset featured 1363 complexes as of January 2015. Of these complexes, 30 had been removed from the database by May 2015. We also discarded four files: two which contain only an IG and buffer molecules with no ligand (1MJU and 4KQ3), and two which contain an IG in complex with a molecule specifically crafted to bind the middle part of the IG (4GW1 and 4IOI). Each such complex is processed in order to identify canonical complexes (Supp. Section 7.1),

Upon inspecting these cases, two decisions are made. First, on the antigen side, we retain three types only (peptide, protein, chemical), due to the scarcity of cases involving other types (See also Supp. Fig. 11 for the distribution of ligands' sizes.) Moreover, we also remove complexes involving multiple ligands types. For the same reason, regarding species, complexes are assigned to three classes *human*, *mouse* and *other*. A total of 529 complexes are retained after filtering for missing data, inconsistencies and redundancy (Supp. Table 2). CDR and FR limits of the VH and VL domains [41] are according to the IMGT unique numbering [43] (Supp. Table 1).

## 3 Results

### 3.1 Global interface analysis

**Signatures of binding patches exhibit a broken symmetry between the IG and Ag side.** The simplest and most informative variable describing protein interfaces is the buried surface area (BSA) [32], a statistic known to strongly correlate with the number of interface atoms  $|Z|$  (on our dataset: Pearson coefficient of 0.99, p-value  $< 2.225 \cdot 10^{-308}$ ; see Supp. Fig. 13a). When considering the average BSA per atom for the IG and the Ag (Eqs. 1 and 2 respectively), weaker correlations are observed, since the Pearson coefficient drop to 0.83 for  $|Z_{IG}|$  and  $BSA_{IG}$  (p-value =  $5.176e^{-136}$ , Supp Fig. 13b), and to 0.90 for  $|Z_{Ag}|$  and  $BSA_{Ag}$  (p-value =  $2.161e^{-189}$ , Supp Fig. 13c). This is due to the shape complementarity between the interfaces on the IG and Ag size, causing the sum of the BSAs and the number of atoms on each side to balance out. Prosaically, for small ligands, the binding patch of the IG *wraps around* that of the Ag. This fact is also supported by the negative correlation between  $\overline{bsa}_{IG}$  and  $\overline{bsa}_{Ag}$  (Fig. 3), with Pearson's coefficient of -0.84 (p-value =  $1.032e^{-143}$ ), and Spearman coefficient of -0.90 (p-value =  $2.257e^{-188}$ ).

Strikingly, the ligand type has a strong influence on these quantities: complexes involving a chemical ligand have a higher  $\overline{bsa}_{Ag}$  than those involving a peptide ligand which in turn have a higher  $\overline{bsa}_{Ag}$  than those involving a protein ligand. Since chemical ligands are typically small

and protein ligands are usually large (Supp. Fig. 11), we checked the correlation between ligand size,  $\overline{\text{bsa}}_{\text{Ag}}$  and  $\overline{\text{bsa}}_{\text{IG}}$ . Colors in the inset of Fig. 3 display the Ag size (number of atoms) instead of its type: although the gradient suggests an influence of the ligand size, there is a mix between large and medium-sized ligands in the right part of the plot. The circled outlier in Fig. 3 corresponds to entry 2O5X. It is a chimeric IG (gamma1-kappa Fab) in complex with a molecule of TRIS buffer. Since buffer molecules are usually not bound by IG, this is likely the result of a mis-labeling of such a molecule as ligand. Therefore unusual values of  $\overline{\text{bsa}}_{\text{Ag}}$  and  $\overline{\text{bsa}}_{\text{IG}}$  can help detecting issues in the dataset by checking blatant outliers.

Summarizing, the average BSA per atom is not symmetrical with respect to the IG and Ag side of the interface because of the shape complementarity of the two binding patches. This lack of symmetry depends itself on the type of ligand.

**Signatures of binding patches also identify ligand types.** The remarkable correlation between the average BSA per atom on the IG and Ag sides provides a strong indication of the ability of the two parameters  $\overline{\text{bsa}}_{\text{Ag}}$  and  $\overline{\text{bsa}}_{\text{IG}}$  to characterize interfaces as a function of the ligand type (Fig. 3). To further check this hypothesis, we build a decision tree to hierarchically partition the two-dimensional space defined by  $\overline{\text{bsa}}_{\text{Ag}}$  and  $\overline{\text{bsa}}_{\text{IG}}$  (Fig. 3, with the boundaries of the partition displayed as black lines, and Supp. Fig. 14). (Practically, we used the R package `rpart` with 10-fold cross validation, choosing the number of splits which minimize the cross validation error, and further pruning the tree.) With a classification error of 0.077 (Supp. Table 7), the regions defined by ligand types in the 2D parameter space indeed unambiguously determine the ligand type (Fig. 3).

In short, the average BSA per atom  $\overline{\text{bsa}}_{\text{IG}}$  and  $\overline{\text{bsa}}_{\text{Ag}}$  provide a proxy for the curvature of binding patches on the IG and Ag sides, clearly discriminating between ligand types.

**Side chain atoms: proportion at interface.** A classical focus while analyzing IG - Ag interface has been the study of backbone conformations [18, 13]. To assess the role of side chains, we study the proportion of interface atoms belonging to a side chain (Supp. Fig. 15). Despite some variability, the median is always between 0.68 and 0.72 across categories. Additionally, there is no significant difference between species, ligand types or lambda/kappa IG.

The contacts made by atoms belonging to the backbone are therefore far from being negligible but are still outnumbered by side-chain atoms.

### 3.2 On the respective contacts of CDR with the antigen

We now leverage interface statistics, exploiting the decomposition of the binding patches induced by the CDR and FR regions (Fig. 2). Since CDR are essentially the only regions contacting the antigen (Supp. Table 6), we focus on these six regions in the sequel.

**On the lengths of CDR.** As IG diversity of complete repertoires or in responses to specific pathogens has been largely been studied by CDR3 length spectratyping [1, 10, 65], we analyze the relationship between CDR length and recognition mode, and extend our survey to CDR1 and CDR2. From the analysis of the length of the various CDR in our dataset (Supp. Section 6.2, Supp. Fig. 16), four important points stand out.

First, for VL, a reduced set of CDR length combinations accounts for more than a third of the dataset. Namely, a single combination of VL CDR1, VL CDR2 and VL CDR3 [6.3.9] accounts for 35% of the human IG, and five combinations account for 65%. Moreover, two combinations account for 54% of the murine IG. Such a coupling with CDR3 length does not occur in VH which is likely related to the differences in the rearrangement process between VL and VH. Namely,

VL CDR3 results from the recombination of only two genes, VL and JL, which reduces both combinatorial and junctional diversity. Additionally, the DNA nucleotidyltransferase (DNTT) activity responsible of the nucleotide trimming and addition at the junction, is notoriously very low when VL V-J rearrangements occur. Altogether, this leads to shorter junctions in VL compared to VH. Second, our results confirm that VH CDR3 is the main region of diversity in terms of CDR length which underlines the power of the CDR3 length spectratyping approaches for repertoire characterization. Indeed, for the human dataset, apart from a peak at 12 amino-acids (AA) (15% of the dataset), the lengths of 94% of VH CDR3 are evenly distributed between 10 and 22 AA. The situation is similar for murine IG with a peak at 12 AA (19% of the dataset) as well, and 71% of VH CDR3 spread between 11 and 15 AA. On the other hand, both VH CDR1 and VH CDR2 are made of 8 AA for 81% of the human dataset, and for 66% of the murine dataset. Third, VL CDR2 is always of length 3 in the human, and has length 7 in only two murine IG. It is the least variable of all CDR and the shortest one on average. Finally, VL CDR1 length is more variable than that of VL CDR3 in the mouse. Indeed, VL CDR1 has 6 and 11 AA in 38% and 22% of the murine dataset, respectively, whereas 86% of murine IG have a VL CDR3 of length 9, which is due to the well known lack of DNTT activity at the time of VL V-J rearrangements.

**BSA: contribution of VH versus VL.** In an IG - Ag complex, it is generally believed that VH contributes more to the recognition than VL. With a BSA of VH strictly larger than that of VL for 457/529 complexes (86%) (Fig. 4), our analysis supports this claim. Among those 72 complexes for which the BSA of VL is larger than that of VH, the proportions of chemical, peptide and protein ligands are 22%, 32%, 46%, respectively—to be compared to those of the whole dataset: 15%, 24%, 62%, respectively. This is hardly conclusive, considering the small number of such complexes. The analysis of outliers bears some interest (circled cases, Fig. 4). The case 4OGY consists of a human IG (gamma1-kappa Fab) in complex with a protein (plasma kallikrein). The ligand, is strongly shifted toward VH. Moreover, VH CDR1 and VH CDR3 protrude from the Fab and extensively contacts the ligand. As for 3NGB, it results from a spurious assignment of Ag chains to the IG. Because four identical biological units are in the file and the IMGT annotation puts all four ligand chains as a single ligand, a part of the interface with VH actually comes from crystal contacts. This example shows that annotations issues can be detected by checking blatant outliers.

**BSA: contributions of the CDR within a V-domain.** To refine the previous analysis, we use our hierarchical interface models and dissect the BSA into contributions by the CDR within a V-domain. This analysis shows a great deal of variation independent from the species or the ligand type (Figs. 5). A common observation is that the sum of contributions of CDR1 and CDR2 essentially matches that of CDR3 for both VH and VL. Namely, for 244/529 complexes (46%)  $BSA(VH\ CDR1) + BSA(VH\ CDR2) > BSA(VH\ CDR3)$ . This is less obvious for VL since  $BSA(VL\ CDR1) + BSA(VL\ CDR2) > BSA(VL\ CDR3)$  for 218/529 complexes (41%). A Wilcoxon signed-rank test does not find a significant difference between the BSA of VH CDR1 + VH CDR2 and VH CDR3 (two-sided p-value = 0.1821), but does for VL CDR1 + VL CDR2 and VL CDR3 (two-sided p-value = 0.0004,) which confirms the previous results.

In the sequel, we call *free CDR* a CDR which does not loose any solvent accessibility—none of its atoms is buried by an atom of the antigen. Complexes with free VH CDR1 or VH CDR2 are not uncommon since they occur for 48/529 (9%) and 53/529 (10%) complexes, respectively (Fig. 5a). This is much rarer for VH CDR3 (7/529 occurrences, 1%).

On the other hand, 255/529 (48%) complexes involve a free VL CDR2 (Fig. 5b), a fact to be interpreted in the context of a lesser length variability and, as we shall see, a location on the



side. 74/529 (14%) complexes have an free VL CDR1 and 39/529 (7%) complexes have an free VL CDR3 which is almost seven times as much as VH CDR3.

In short, CDR1 and CDR2 contribute essentially as much as CDR3 in terms of BSA. Additionally, VH CDR3 is almost always at interface, whereas it is only the case for VL CDR2 in half of the dataset. Finally, VL CDR tend to be away from interface more often than VH CDR.

**CDR: lengths versus BSA.** It has been observed that CDR length differ between different antigen types [21, 58], a finding suggesting that CDR length influences the binding site shape to accommodate the ligand. Since all the atoms of a CDR may not contribute to the interface, we investigated the correlation between the length of a CDR and its contribution to the BSA (Figs. 6 and 7). Because of their shared genomic origin, we group CDR1 and CDR2 and subsequently investigate the relationship between (CDR1, CDR2) pairs and BSA on the one hand, and CDR3 and BSA on the other hand.

As illustrated by the scatter plots, a CDR of a given length can display widely varying levels of BSA. These results confirm that CDR lengths must be complemented to fully describe the involvement of a CDR in the interaction with the Ag. This is backed up by the very limited ability of neural networks trained on sequence data only to predict the ligand type bound by an IG in [21].

### 3.3 On the relative positions of CDR

The relative position of CDR is instrumental to understand binding modes, and has already been described qualitatively (e.g., [21, Fig. 1]). To make such description quantitative (Figs. 8 and 9), we study the *seams* i.e. the contact curves between the six CDR. Since six CDR yield a total of 15 pairs, our goal is to understand which pairs are in close vicinity. To this end, we consider seams associated with all types of ligands, which, abusing terminology, we call *consensus seams*, as well as seams observed for specific types of ligand.

More formally, recall that the boundary of a surface accessible model (SAM, see Section 2.1) consists of spherical polygons, circle arcs, and points. For a given CDR, two sets of atoms are of particular interest, namely the atoms making up the boundary of the SAM and the subset of these atoms which are found at the interface with the ligand. We note in passing that median values of the ratios between these two sets are 19%, 23%, 25%, for VH CDR1, VH CDR2, VH CDR3, respectively, and 18%, 10% and 24% for VL CDR1, VL CDR2 and VL CDR3, respectively.

Consider two CDR, and one set of atoms per CDR (either exposed atoms, or interfacial exposed atoms). The *seam* between these two sets of atoms is the contiguous set of circle arcs separating these two sets of atoms, if any. Its length is defined as the cumulative length of its constitutive circle arcs (Fig. 8). Practically, the seams associated with exposed and interfacial exposed atoms yield complementary pieces of information: the former describe the relative positions of CDR; the latter provide information on the ligand position across these seams.

We computed the length of seams observed between all pairs of CDR on groups of complexes involving (i) the same ligand type, namely protein, peptide or chemical, and (ii) the same type of VL domain, namely V-kappa or V-lambda. Denoting  $x$  and  $y$  two seam lengths, we define the *maximum normalized difference* as the following number  $\in [-100, 100]$ :

$$\text{MND}(x, y) = 100 \cdot \frac{x - y}{\max(x, y)}. \quad (3)$$

Given two CDR, we use the MND to compare the median value observed on a class of IG - Ag complexes, against the median value observed over all complexes – this latter value being referred

to as the *consensus value* or the value of the *consensus seam*. It is negative when the class-specific value is smaller than the consensus value, positive when it is greater and null if they are equal.

**Consensus seams.** We observe that the existing inter-chain contacts are the same when considering either all atoms or interface atoms only (Fig. 9, supp. Figs. 19 and 20). Intuitively, the Ag spreads evenly on the surface of the IG, covering all the seams.

Considering intra-chain contacts, we notice that the same are found in the VH and VL domains, namely CDR1 – CDR2 and CDR1 – CDR3. However, considering all atoms, these seams are slightly longer in VH with respectively 24.6 Å and 30.9 Å versus 16.0 Å and 26.9 Å for VL. The same applies for interface atoms with 13.3 Å and 14.9 Å for the VH versus 3.9 Å and 13.9 Å for VL, respectively. This is likely because CDR from VH are longer on average than those from VL. Interestingly, the seams length is divided by approximately two when considering only interface atoms except for seam VL CDR1 – VL CDR2 where it is divided by four.

For inter-chain contacts and considering all atoms, the length of the seam between VH CDR3 and VL CDR3 is slightly smaller than, but comparable to, those existing intra-chain seams (14.5 Å versus a median of 25.5 Å). The contacts VH CDR3 – VL CDR1 and VH CDR3 – VL CDR2 are rather unexpected and are of length of 10.0 and 5.9 Å, respectively. For interface atoms, the length of the seam between VH CDR3 and VL CDR3 is 10.3 Å versus a median across all other nonzero intra-chain seams of 12.6 Å.

Summarizing, the pattern of seams is the same either when considering all exposed CDR atoms, or only interface atoms. Moreover, VH CDR3 is the one making most contacts with other CDR, and VH CDR3 and VL CDR3 account for most of the inter-domain contacts.

**Comparison between ligand types.** We use the maximum normalized difference (Eq. 3) to compare the consensus seam length and those observed for specific ligand types. When considering seams for all the atoms, it is clearly seen that large values of MND have opposite signs for proteins on the one hand, and peptides and chemicals on the other hand (Fig. 10), an observation in line with the previously observed differences between ligand types. The relative locations of the CDR are therefore different between ligand types. Intuitively, these differences witness *pre-formed* features of CDR that will accommodate a particular ligand type. Moving to seams between interface atoms only, a similar observation is also expected. This turns out to be the case, except for the seam VH CDR3–VL CDR1, for which larger values are observed for peptides and chemicals (Fig. 10, left). In general, VL CDR1 shows differences opposite to VL CDR2 and VL CDR3 with respect to VH CDR3. This hints for a different role at the interface and potentially different dynamical properties.

**Comparison between V-lambda and V-kappa domain.** For all atoms, the largest length differences between V-kappa and V-lambda are found for the seams VH CDR1 – VH CDR2 (24.7 versus 20.4 Å, Supp Fig. 27), VH CDR2 – VH CDR3 (0.0 versus 3.2 Å) and VH CDR3 – VL CDR1 (9.4 versus 12.2 Å). Interestingly, two out of three are within VH and all involve VH CDR3. For interface atoms, the largest length differences between V-kappa and V-lambda are found for the seams VH CDR3 – VL CDR1 (5.6 versus 8.4 Å, Supp. Fig. 28), VL CDR1 – VL CDR3 (14.2 versus 11.0 Å).

The V-kappa/V-lambda classification only pertaining to the light chain, it is sound to find differences in the relative positions of VL CDR1 and VL CDR3. Considering the differences observed for VH CDR, one has to recall that the pairing between heavy and light chains is a criterion during the selection of productive IG. It could be that IGLV and IGKV of light chains have preferences for different sets of IGHV of heavy chains which would explain why looking

at IG with kappa light chains versus lambda light chains results in structural differences in the heavy chains.

### 3.4 Affinity prediction

As recalled in Introduction, estimating the affinity of an IG for an antigen is a challenging problem, due in particular to the necessity to estimate the entropic penalty inherent to binding. In [50], we developed an affinity estimation strategy yielding state-of-the-art results, selecting sparse linear regressors defined from a pool of 12 variables aiming at modeling the enthalpic and entropic changes upon binding. Of particular interest are variables coding atomic packing properties, and the position of atoms on binding patches, using their shelling order (Fig. 1 and [50]). To fit a model, we use the structure affinity benchmark (SAB) [34], a dataset containing 144 cases, each case being described by three crystal structures (the unbound partners and the complex) and the experimentally measured binding affinity. Interestingly, the SAB contains 17 IG - Ag cases<sup>1</sup>. We therefore trained the general model from [50] using the 139 - 14 cases, to predict the affinities of the selected 14 IG - Ag cases. We note in passing that the iRMSD and the total RMSD between the bound and unbound form of the IG are always smaller than 1.24 Å and 0.95 Å respectively. That is, the 14 cases are essentially rigid body docking cases, a property which, however, does not warrant easiness of binding affinity prediction [50].

Upon performing the affinity prediction, our model predicts 9 (64.29 %), 13 (92.86 %) and 14 (100 %) of the  $K_d$  within one, two and three orders of magnitude respectively, with a median absolute error of 1.024 kcal/mol (Supp. Fig. 31). From an absolute affinity prediction error, these results are satisfactory, as predicting  $K_d$  within one order of magnitude is essentially the best one can hope for without modeling subtle effects such as the pH in particular [31]. From a relative standpoint, they are also informative, as an affinity enhancement of two orders of magnitude is typically observed during affinity maturation [60].

## 4 Discussion

This paper presents a comprehensive analysis of IG - Ag complexes and their interfaces, based on state-of-the-art modeling tools relying upon hierarchical Voronoi interface models and related geometric constructions. Our dissection of IG - Ag interfaces yields a number of novel insights, which may be summarized by considering the whole interface level and the CDR level.

**Global interface statistics.** While a classical focus in previous work has been the classification of backbone conformations, an endeavor boiling down to comparing backbone traces, we focus instead on interfacial atoms, as identified by a solvent accessible model. In doing so, one observes that side chains contribute approximately twice as many atoms than backbones. While this statistic stresses the need to consider all interface atoms rather than backbone ones only, modeling side chains accurately enough to encompass their incidence on binding thermodynamic and kinetic properties is extremely challenging, due in particular to correlations between rotameric states of side-chains. The length of CDR3 also raises difficulties, and as an extreme case, one may consider exceptionally long VH CDR3, such as those found in bovine antibodies, where multiple cysteines facilitate the formation of disulfide bonds and *microfolds* [71, 7].

<sup>1</sup> (PDB IDs: 1AHW, 1BJ1, 1BVK, 1DQJ, 1E6J, 1FSK, 1IQD, 1JPS, 1MLC, 1NCA, 1NSN, 1P2C, 1VFB, 1WEJ, 2JEL, 2VIR and 2VIS). However, 1IQD and 1NSN are discarded as only an upper bound on their  $K_d$  is provided in the SAB. Furthermore, 1E6J is also discarded because too many atoms could not be matched between the bound and unbound structures.

Additionally, the simplest and most informative variable describing protein interfaces being the buried surface area (BSA), we refine this statistic by computing the average BSA contributed by interfacial atoms from the IG (statistic  $\overline{\text{bsa}}_{\text{IG}}$ ) and the Ag (statistic  $\overline{\text{bsa}}_{\text{Ag}}$ ). These quantities turn out to be clear signatures of the ligand type, a property which can further be exploited for classification purposes. While the classification of IG - Ag interfaces into classes depending on structural features has already been addressed [14, 40], our parameters are the first ones yielding such a clear separation between specific antigen types.

**Contributions of CDR.** In considering IG - Ag interfaces, it is generally believed that VH CDR3 plays a prominent role [73] and is the most variable, a property owing to the genetic V(D)J rearrangement mechanisms underlying its formation and that it is the one with dominant contribution to the Ag binding. To refine this view, our goal has been to precisely characterize the respective contributions of CDR at interfaces, and the relative positions of the six CDR along with the ligand position across them.

For the roles of all CDRs, while we confirm the prominent role of VH CDR3, we also observe that in terms of buried surface area, the contribution of VH CDR3 is essentially matched by the joint contributions of VH CDR1 and VH CDR2. Thus, in terms of binding affinity and while focusing on the interaction energy between the IG and the Ag, a precise description needs to consider VH CDR3 and VH CDR1 + VH CDR2 on an equal footing. The BSA has long been known as a simple and informative descriptor of interfaces [4], and we show that the average BSA per atom is a signature of the ligand type bound by an IG. Since we also show that the length of CDR does not correlate with their BSA, we suggest that despite the statistical significance of correlations between CDR length and ligand type [21], predicting the ligand type bound by an IG requires more than only CDR length information. Moreover the fact that CDR of the same length can have radically different contribution at the interface, calls into question the classification of CDR into canonical structures based on individual CDR lengths [54]. Finally, we also note that VL CDR2 hardly contributes to the interface for chemical ligands, and very little in general.

As far as the relative position of CDR is concerned, a precise characterization was missing to complement qualitative views [20, Chapter 4]. We fill this gap analyzing seam statistics, namely contiguous boundaries between pairs of CDR, for all CDR atoms, and also for interfacial CDR atoms. Remarkably, out of 15 possible seams, only seven appear, and these are remarkably conserved—irrespective of the ligand type or the category of atoms considered. Phrased differently, the same seams occur within VH and VL, but they are longer in VH. Several other remarkable facts emerge from this analysis. First, the arrangement of CDR are more similar between peptide and chemical ligands than between peptide or chemical ligands and protein ligands. In a similar vein, the seam between VL CDR1 and VL CDR2 contributes more to the interface for protein ligands than for peptide or chemical ligands. These features specifically identify the ligand targeted, a property complementing the observations already made at the whole interface level. Second, VL CDR2 is often away from the interface.

We finally note that our approach favors a purely geometric description of the IG and the IG - Ag complex structures, and that, as such, it complements the numerous analyses focused on CDR amino acid composition and length based on sequence data [61, 30, 26, 19] [6, 67, 5].

**Affinity prediction.** To complement the previous analysis, we applied recent binding affinity predictors based on the same structural parameters [50] so as to predict the binding affinity of 14 IG with their respective Ag. These are all rigid cases as the interface RMSD and whole IG RMSD were below 1.24 and 0.95 Å, respectively. The predictions of  $K_d$  are accurate within two orders of magnitude for all but one complex and within one order of magnitude for 9 of them.

Although they were obtained on a very small dataset, these results suggest that predictions at this level of accuracy for IG may be easier than for more general protein - protein complexes [50].

However, obtaining more accurate predictions, say within one order of magnitude or equivalently within 1.4 kcal/mol remains an open problem, as taking subtle entropic effects coding the dynamics appears mandatory [60].

**Future work.** This work proposes novel parameters shedding light on the specificity of IG for their antigens, and the binding affinity of the corresponding complexes. Outstanding questions remain, both to model interfaces of IG - Ag complexes, and to model whole IG.

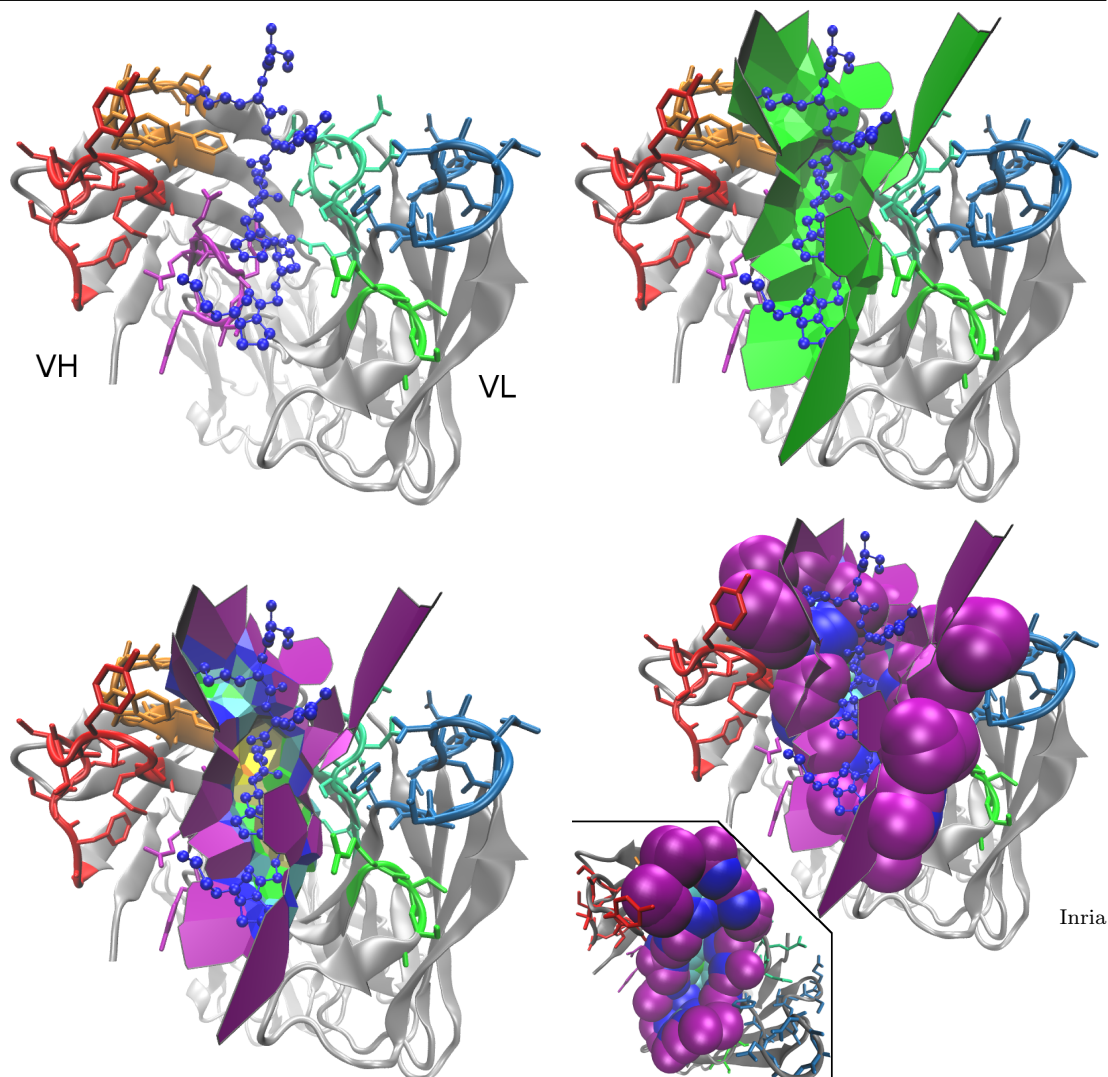
At the interface level, predicting the geometry of a complex given the unbound partners, and the associated affinity remains a daunting challenge. The classical route consists of using sampling techniques and docking algorithms to generate poses for the complex, which are further ranked by scoring functions aiming at detecting the most plausible ones. Our work bears promises in this pipeline, as our structural parameters (in particular the BSA per atom and the seam patterns) may be used to check that the complex selected matches the specific observations raised, in particular as a function of the ligand type. Likewise, upon generating a valid geometry, our affinity prediction tools can be used to predict the affinity—a strategy calling again for tests on more cases. Together, these tools could lead to consequent advances in antibody design [45, 63].

At the whole IG level, various structural features of IG proteins influence their properties whence their efficacy in the immune response. These include the ball-and-socket joint relating VL and VH, the CL and CH1 constant domains [44, 66], and more generally the constant regions which have been shown to influence the avidity [22, 23, 51, 57], and are involved in IG effector properties, such as ADCC or CDC [29]. A quantitative assessment of the role of these features requires going beyond the IG - Ag interface level, with a clear focus on the dynamics of the whole IG protein. In doing so, novel ideas will be needed to sample efficiently conformations of whole IG, and study the associated (potential, free) energy landscapes.

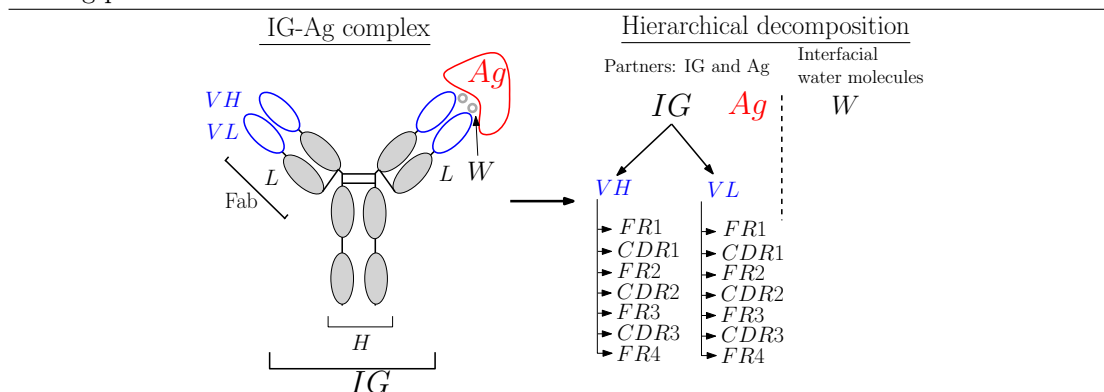


## 5 Artwork

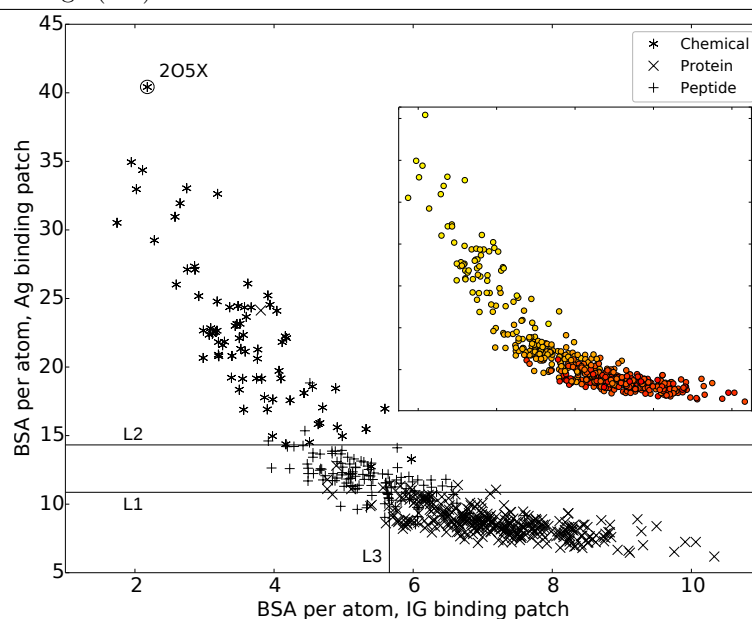
**Figure 1 Voronoi interface model of an Immunoglobulin - Antigen (IG - Ag) complex, defined from the solvent accessible model of the crystallographic complex.** The IG consists of H and L chains, with here the VH and VL domains shown in grey (cartoon representation), while the Ag consists of the chain in blue (CPK representation). **(Top left)** IG - Ag complex, with the six complementarity determining regions (CDR) colored using the IMGT conventions (VH CDR1: red, VH CDR2: orange, VH CDR3: purple, VL CDR1: blue, VL CDR2: green, VL CDR3: green-blue). **(Top right)** The Voronoi interface is a polyedral model separating the partners, whose parameters (area, curvature) convey information of the binding modes. **(Bottom left)** The Voronoi interface can be divided into concentric shell. Each shell contains the Voronoi facets which are at the same minimum distance from the interface boundary. This distance is called the shelling order of the facet (SO for short). For instance, purple facets touch the boundary (SO=1), blue facets must cross a purple facet to reach the boundary (SO=2), and so on. **(Bottom right)** Each face of the Voronoi interface involves two interacting atoms, either from the partners or the interfacial water molecules sandwiched between them. The *buried surface area* (BSA) on each partner (by the second partner and interfacial water) is of prime interest to describe the interface. For the IG, the BSA can be charged to the CDR and framework regions (FR). **(Bottom right inset)** The interface atoms of a partner define its binding patch, and, similarly to the Voronoi interface, can be shelled into concentric shells (from the outside to the core), defining a distance to the patch boundary. The binding patch on the IG side is shown from above (inset) to get a clearer view of all the shells.



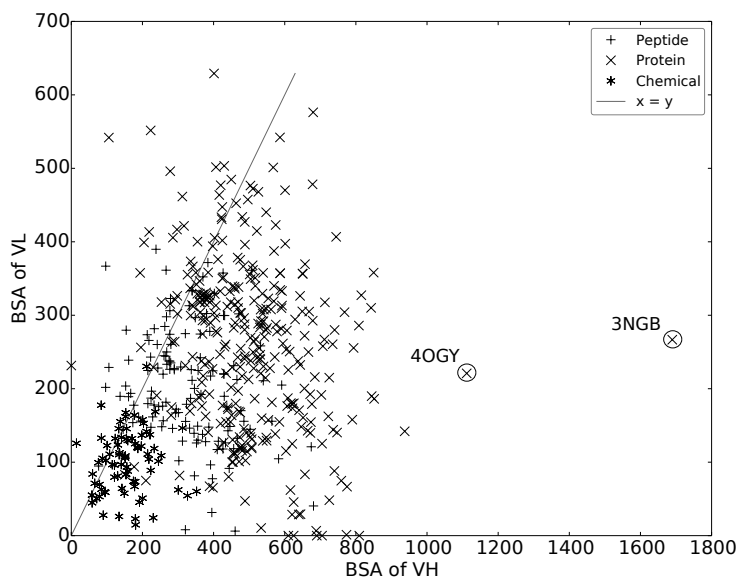
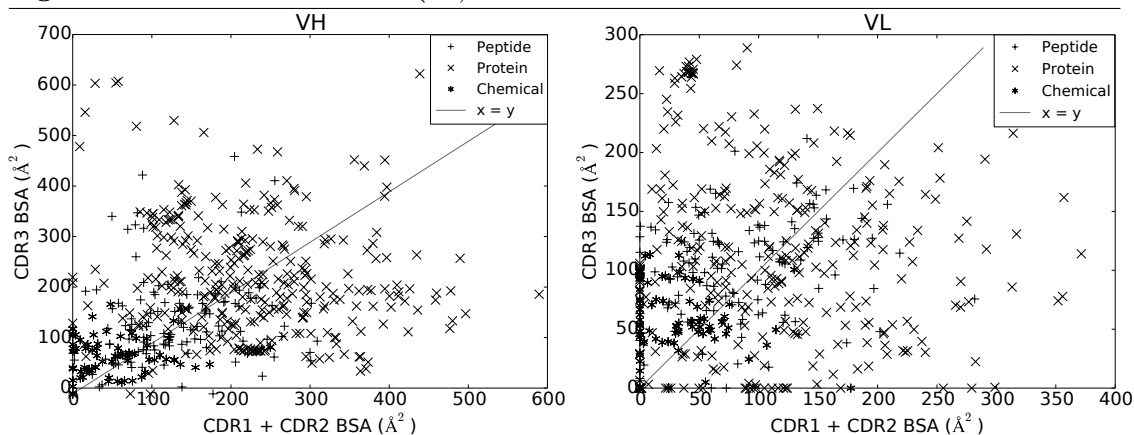
**Figure 2 Hierarchical decomposition of the Voronoi interface of Fig. 1.** The IG (or the Fab fragment) is decomposed into heavy (H) and light (L) chains (one H and one L per Fab) whose variable domains only (VH and VL) are of interest in this study. These domains are further decomposed into three complementarity determining regions (CDR) and four framework regions (FR). These fourteen primitive labels induce a partition of the Voronoi interface and binding patches.



**Figure 3 Average buried surface areas per atom (Equations (1) (2)):  $\overline{bsa}_{IG}$  versus  $\overline{bsa}_{Ag}$ .** (Main panel) Scatter plot as a function of the ligand type. The three lines show the separators defined by the decision tree rules, separating the ligand types (see main text and Supp. Fig. 14). (Inset) Color gradient indicating the ligand size, in number of atoms, from small (yellow) to large (red).

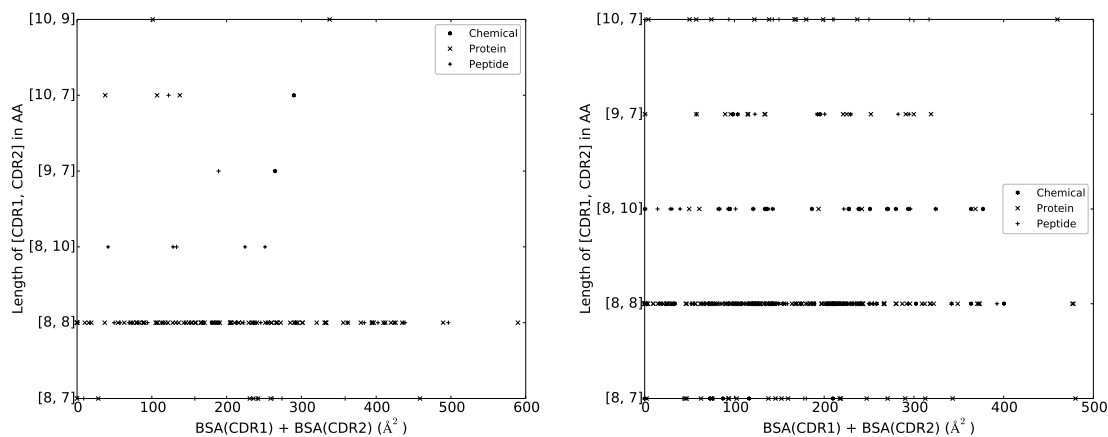




**Figure 4 Buried Surface Area ( $\text{\AA}^2$ ): relative contributions of the VH and VL.**

**Figure 5 Buried Surface Area ( $\text{\AA}^2$ ): relative contributions of the CDR.**

**(a)** Relative contributions of the CDR from VH.

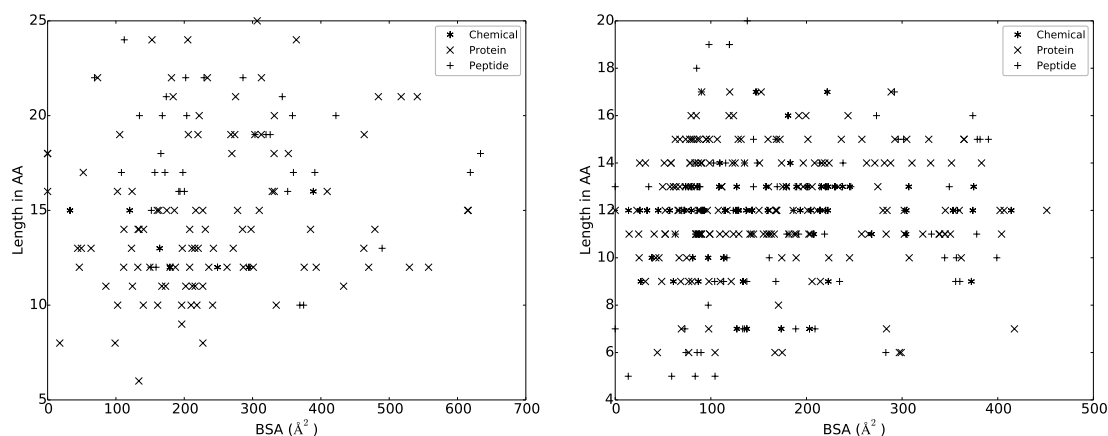
**(b)** Relative contributions of the CDR from VL

**Figure 6** VH CDR length versus BSA. VH CDR1 and VH CDR2 are grouped due to their common genomic origin.



(a) VH CDR1 and VH CDR2, Human. Five complexes are discarded because of aberrant VH CDR1 and VH CDR2 lengths (see Supp. Section 6.2).

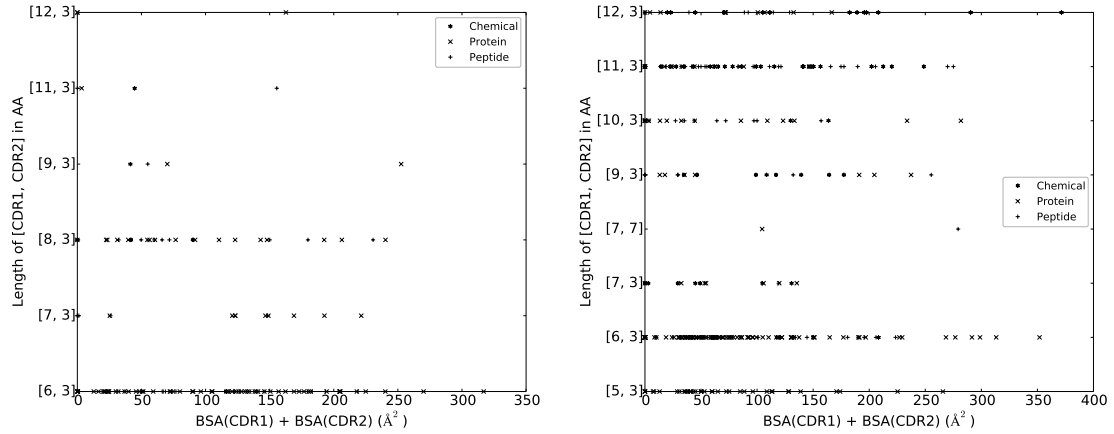
(b) VH CDR1 and VH CDR2, Mouse.



(c) VH CDR3, Human. Twelve complexes are discarded because of aberrant VL CDR1 and VL CDR2 lengths (see Supp. Section 6.2).

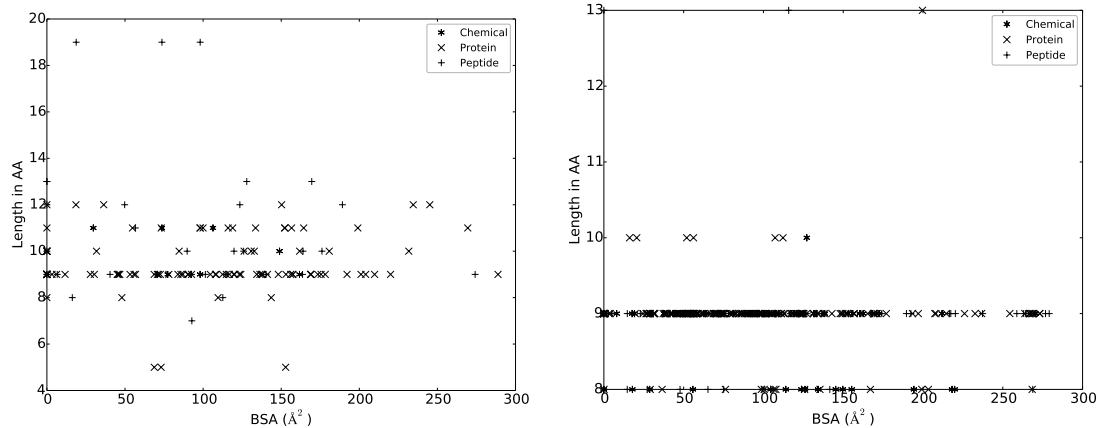
(d) VH CDR3, Mouse.

**Figure 7 VL CDR length versus BSA.** VL CDR1 and VL CDR2 are grouped due to their common genomic origin.



(a) VL CDR1 and VL CDR2, Human. The [CDR1.CDR2] lengths [6.3] characterize both V-kappa and V-lambda. The other lengths characterize either V-kappa ([7.3], [11.3] and [12.3]) or V-lambda ([8.3] and [9.3]).

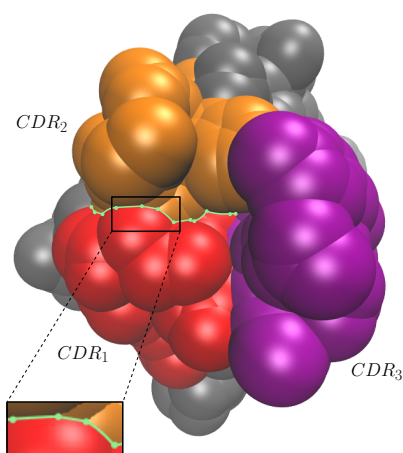
(b) VL CDR1 and VL CDR2, Mouse. The [CDR1.CDR2] lengths [7.7] and [9.3] characterize V-lambda. The other lengths characterize V-kappa.



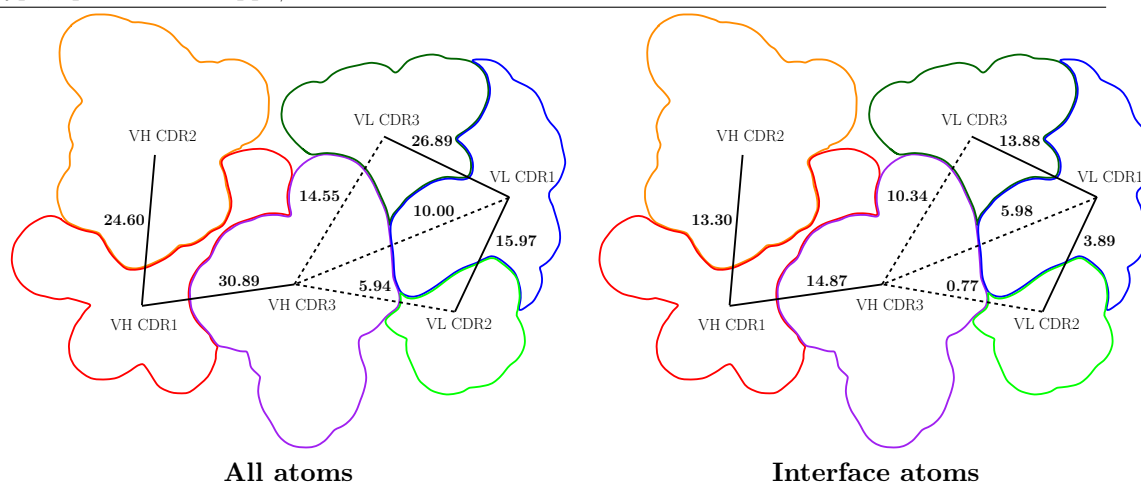
(c) VL CDR3, Human.

(d) VL CDR3, Mouse.

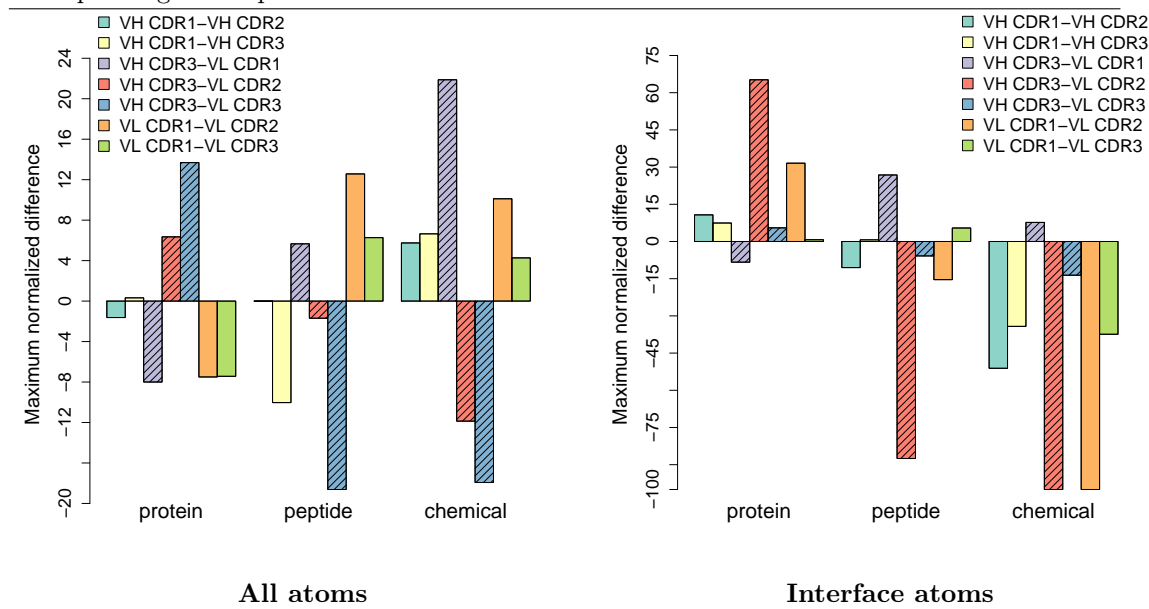
**Figure 8 Relative position of CDR analyzed with seams statistics.** Heavy chain (chain B) from 1A2Y, with CDR shown using the IMGT color scheme, namely red: CDR1, orange: CDR2, purple: CDR3. The **seam** between two CDR is the the curve separating their exposed atoms in their solvent accessible representations. It consists of circle arcs contributed by pairs of intersecting atoms. On this example, the seam between VH CDR1 and VH CDR2 involves 11 circle arcs (in green).



**Figure 9 Consensus representations for seams between CDR.** The contacts between the 6 CDR are represented as a graph, with one edge between two CDR for which seam statistics were collected. The statistic reported is the median value of all the observations (in Å). Dashed edges show inter-chain contacts. See section 6.3 for equivalent figures as a function of the ligand type, species or V-kappa/V-lambda domain.



**Figure 10 Comparison between the consensus median seam lengths and the median lengths for specific ligand types.** The  $y$  axis represents the maximum normalized difference (Eq. (3)) between the consensus median length and the median length for specific ligand types. Filled bars correspond to inter-chain contacts. Note that for a given ligand type, there are 7 bars corresponding to the pairs of CDR in contact.



**Acknowledgements.** Patrice Duroux is acknowledged for his help with the IMGT/3Dstructure-DB database.

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## 6 Supplemental: Results

### 6.1 Dataset

We use the IMGT/3Dstructure-DB database [25], version of January 2015. For each entry, the atoms of the complementarity determining regions (CDR) of the IG are annotated using the IMGT unique numbering scheme [43], recalled in Table 1. Out of 1363 submitted files, 1035 were processed (other were discarded because of various problems, see the report in appendix), 596 complexes were extracted after the redundancy was filtered, out of which 537 could be part of the analysis (26 other were discarded because there was no interface or the contacts were not made with the Fab of the IG)

**Table 1 Amino acid positions associated with each IMGT label defining the decomposition of a V-domain into seven regions** Positions of the complementarity determining regions (CDR) using the IMGT numbering scheme [43].

Region	FR1	CDR1	FR2	CDR2	FR3	CDR3	FR4
start-stop	1 - 26	27 - 38	39 - 55	56 - 65	66 - 104	105 - 117	118 - 128

**Table 2 Summary of the number of IG - Ag complexes in each class of species / ligand type. The dataset includes VH (V-domains of heavy chains) and VL comprising V-KAPPA (V domains of kappa chains) and V-LAMBDA (V domains of lambda chains).**

	Mouse	Human	Other	total
Peptide	81	34	11	126
Protein	191	104	31	326
Chemical	65	7	5	77
total	337	145	47	529

**Table 3 Number of occurrences of the isotypes in the dataset**

Isotype	A	G	M	Unknown
Number of occurrences	1	484	0	44

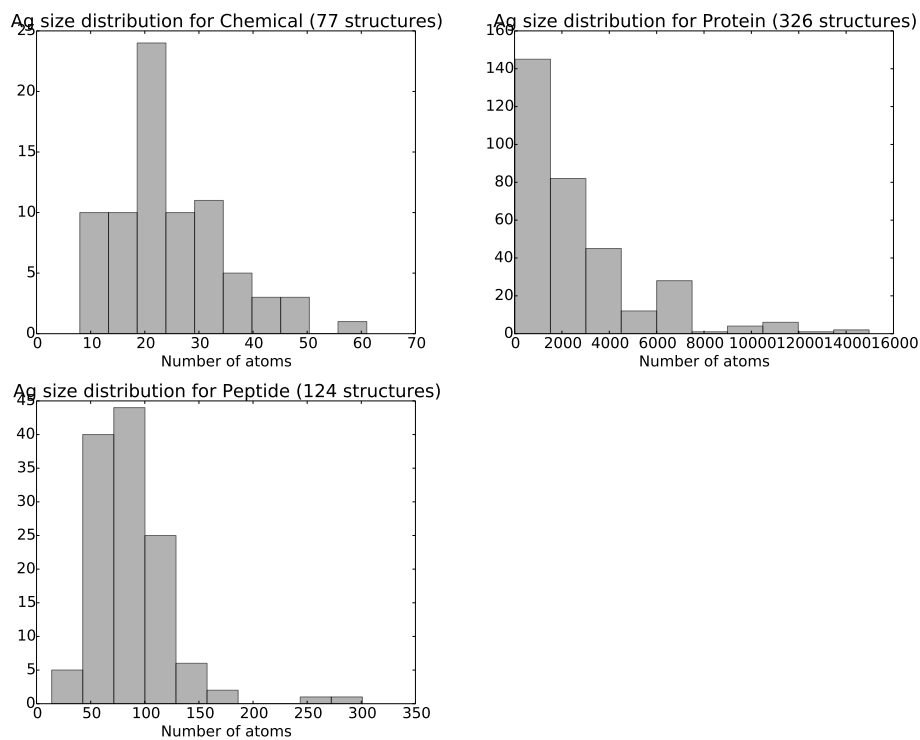
**Table 4 V-domains of the IG – Ag complexes are assigned to the respective subgroups: VH to the IGHV subgroups, V-kappa to the IGKV subgroups and V-lambda to the IGLV subgroups.** The number (Nb) of functional (F) genes per IGHV, IGKV and IGLV subgroup in human (*Homo sapiens*) and the CDR1 and CDR2 lengths [CDR1.CDR2.] of the germline genes are from IMGT Protein displays. Eight complexes were annotated with aberrant CDR lengths considering their IGH subgroup, twelve considering their IGK subgroups, and one considering its IGL subgroup. They were not counted in this table.

Human											
IGHV subgroups and genes				IGKV subgroups and genes				IGLV subgroups and genes			
Subgroup	[CDR1. CDR2]	NB F	VH	Subgroup	[CDR1. CDR2]	NB F	V-kappa	Subgroup	[CDR1. CDR2]	NB F	V-lambda
IGHV1	[8.8]	11	36	IGKV1	[6.3]	19	58	IGLV1	[8.3] [9.3]	4 1	27 0
IGHV2	[10.7]	3	3	IGKV2	[11.3] [12.3]	7 2	3 0	IGLV2	[9.3]	5	3
IGHV3	[8.8] [8.7] [8.10]	16 3 4	60 2 5	IGKV3	[6.3] [7.3]	4 3	8 14	IGLV3	[6.3]	10	13
IGHV4	[9.7] [8.7] [10.7]	3 2 5	2 10 2	IGKV4	[12.3]	1	3	IGLV4	[7.7]	3	0
IGHV5	[8.8]	2	12	IGKV5	[6.3]	1	0	IGLV5	[9.7]	4	0
IGHV6	[10.9]	1	2	IGKV6	[6.3]	2	0	IGLV6	[8.3]	1	2
IGHV7	[8.8]	1	3					IGLV7	[9.3]	2	1
								IGLV8	[9.3]	1	0
								IGLV9	[7.8]	1	0
								IGLV10	[8.3]	1	0
Total			137				86				46

**Table 5 V-domains of the IG – Ag complexes are assigned to the respective subgroups: VH to the IGHV subgroups, V-kappa to the IGKV subgroups and V-lambda to the IGLV subgroups.** The number (Nb) of functional (F) genes per IGHV, IGKV and IGLV subgroup in mouse (*Mus musculus*) and the CDR1 and CDR2 lengths [CDR1.CDR2.] of the germline genes are from IMGT Protein displays. One complex was annotated with aberrant CDR lengths considering its IGK subgroup and was therefore not counted in this table.

Mouse											
IGHV subgroups and genes				IGKV subgroups and genes				IGLV subgroups and genes			
Subgroup	[CDR1. CDR2]	NB F	VH	Subgroup	[CDR1. CDR2]	NB F	V-kappa	Subgroup	[CDR1. CDR2]	NB F	V-lambda
IGHV1	[8.8]	111	121	IGKV1	[11.3]	8	63	IGLV1	[9.3]	2	22
IGHV2	[8.7]	22	16	IGKV2	[11.3]	4	10	IGLV2	[7.7]	1	2
IGHV3	[10.7]	2	0	IGKV3	[10.3]	10	28				
	[9.7]	3	26								
	[8.7]	3	8								
IGHV4	[8.8]	1	18	IGKV4	[7.3]	11	15				
					[5.3]	14	36				
IGHV5	[8.8]	26	40	IGKV5	[6.3]	12	25				
	[8.7]	1	6								
IGHV6	[8.10]	5	11	IGKV6	[6.3]	12	14				
IGHV7	[8.10]	3	20	IGKV7	[12.3]	1	0				
IGHV8	[10.7]	6	20	IGKV8	[12.3]	8	33				
IGHV9	[8.8]	8	24	IGKV9	[6.3]	3	5				
IGHV10	[8.10]	4	6	IGKV10	[6.3]	3	29				
IGHV11	[8.8]	2	0	IGKV11	[6.3]	1	1				
IGHV12	[10.7]	1	1	IGKV12	[6.3]	7	18				
	[9.7]	1	0								
IGHV13	[8.10]	1	0	IGKV13	[6.3]	2	6				
IGHV14	[8.8]	5	20	IGKV14	[6.3]	4	19				
IGHV15	[9.8]	1	0	IGKV15	[6.3]	0	0				
IGHV16	[9.8]	1	0	IGKV16	[6.3]	1	4				
				IGKV17	[6.3]	2	3				
				IGKV18	[6.3]	1	0				
				IGKV19	[6.3]	1	3				
				IGKV20	[6.3]	1	0				
Total		337				312				24	

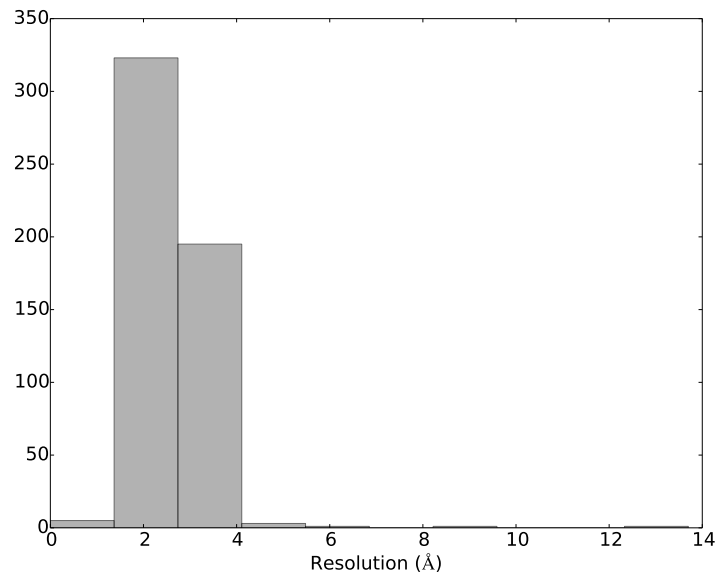
**Figure 11 Size of antigens (number of atoms)** Two large peptides (IMGT-PDB file 3W11 chain E, 2301 atoms, and IMGT-PDB file 4R4N chain I, 5172 atoms) are not displayed for readability.



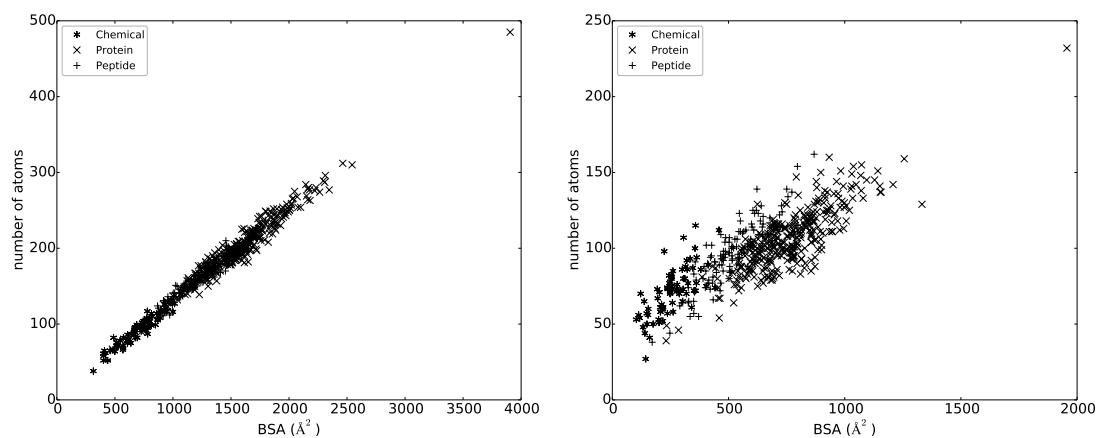
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**Figure 12** Distribution of the resolution of structures

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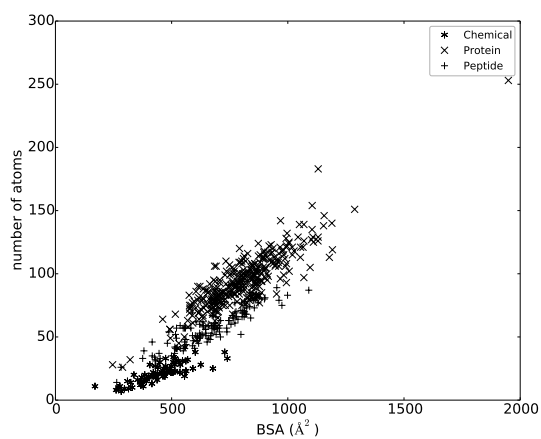


**Figure 13 Buried Surface Area versus number of atoms: whole interface, IG side, Ag side.** The strong correlation between BSA and  $|\mathcal{I}|$  (panel (a)) gets weaker when considering the IG (panel (b)) and the Ag sides (panel (c)) separately.



(a) one BSA versus  $|\mathcal{I}|$ .

(b)  $\text{BSA}_{\text{IG}}$  versus  $|\mathcal{I}_{\text{IG}}|$ .



(c)  $\text{BSA}_{\text{Ag}}$  versus  $|\mathcal{I}_{\text{Ag}}|$ .

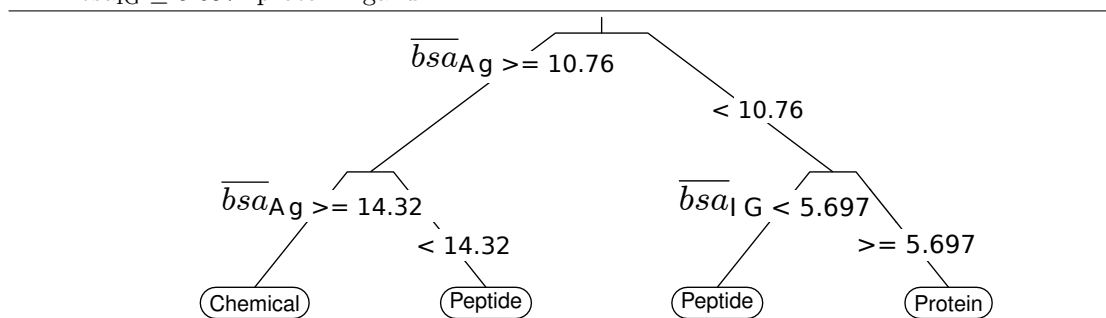


Table 6 Median BSA and median of BSA/BSA<sub>IG</sub> for all Species / ligand type couples.

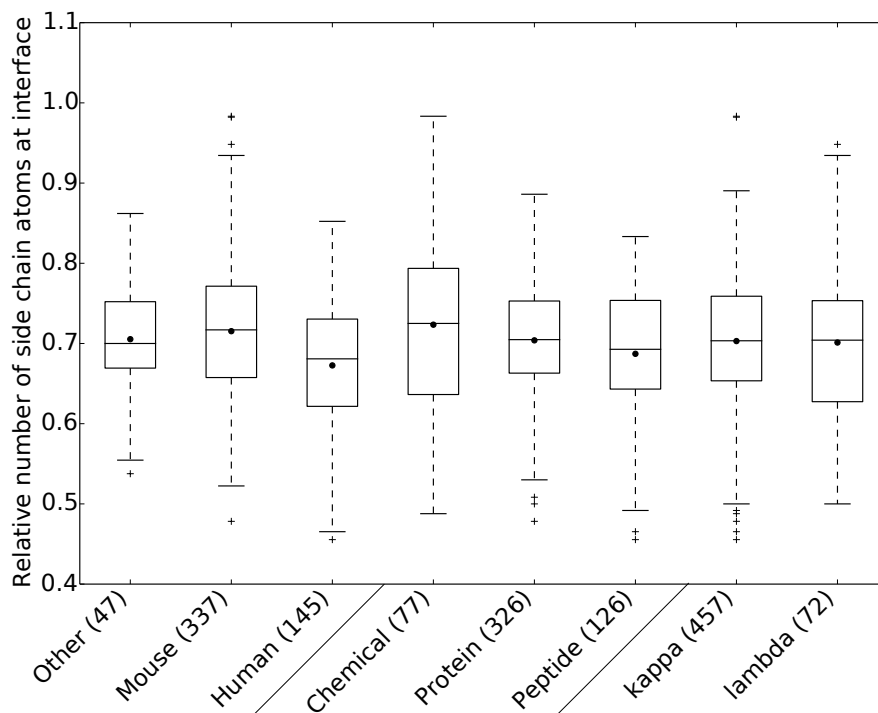
	Human		Mouse		Other	
	Chemical	Protein	Chemical	Protein	Chemical	Protein
IG	143.7 (100.0%)	647.1 (100.0%)	820.7 (100.0%)	820.7 (100.0%)	275.0 (100.0%)	773.8 (100.0%)
VH	89.8 (57.0%)	427.1 (66.8%)	588.8 (68.2%)	588.8 (68.2%)	141.1 (54.4%)	469.0 (63.4%)
VH CDR	49.4 (39.6%)	381.3 (56.9%)	518.0 (62.5%)	518.0 (62.5%)	116.2 (42.3%)	419.3 (57.5%)
VH CDR1	10.3 (7.5%)	68.6 (11.1%)	86.1 (9.4%)	86.1 (9.4%)	23.6 (7.7%)	51.6 (7.7%)
VH CDR2	0.0 (0.0%)	78.6 (12.6%)	140.6 (17.5%)	140.6 (17.5%)	0.0 (0.0%)	151.2 (20.7%)
VH CDR3	44.0 (26.9%)	188.7 (29.3%)	234.9 (30.9%)	234.9 (30.9%)	97.3 (35.4%)	192.3 (26.0%)
VH FR	25.8 (11.7%)	27.3 (5.5%)	31.0 (3.5%)	31.0 (3.5%)	15.0 (6.9%)	57.6 (7.9%)
VH FR1	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)
VH FR2	8.1 (5.3%)	7.8 (1.6%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	11.3 (3.7%)	0.1 (0.0%)
VH FR3	0.0 (0.0%)	18.6 (2.7%)	20.0 (2.5%)	20.0 (2.5%)	0.0 (0.0%)	30.9 (3.6%)
VH FR4	0.1 (0.1%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)
VH OTHER	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)
VL	71.2 (43.0%)	197.3 (33.2%)	262.6 (31.8%)	262.6 (31.8%)	132.8 (45.6%)	296.3 (36.6%)
VL CDR	46.3 (30.2%)	175.9 (31.0%)	213.0 (26.6%)	213.0 (26.6%)	113.6 (41.3%)	248.9 (32.9%)
VL CDR1	0.0 (0.0%)	53.8 (9.2%)	79.5 (8.8%)	79.5 (8.8%)	13.5 (4.9%)	83.6 (12.7%)
VL CDR2	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	4.5 (0.5%)	4.5 (0.5%)	0.0 (0.0%)	8.8 (0.9%)
VL CDR3	45.0 (23.7%)	114.9 (17.9%)	98.1 (12.1%)	98.1 (12.1%)	94.4 (34.2%)	111.4 (14.5%)
VL FR	25.0 (16.3%)	0.0 (0.0%)	15.2 (1.6%)	15.2 (1.6%)	3.7 (1.2%)	1.8 (0.3%)
VL FR1	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)
VL FR2	15.4 (9.5%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	3.7 (1.2%)	0.0 (0.0%)
VL FR3	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	1.6 (0.2%)	1.6 (0.2%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)
VL FR4	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)
VL OTHER	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)	0.0 (0.0%)

**Table 7 Confusion matrix for ligand type prediction.** Results when the tree is run as a classifier on the training data, for the pruned decision tree using variables  $\overline{bsa}_{Ag}$  and  $\overline{bsa}_{IG}$ .

Predicted \ Actual	Chemical	Peptide	Protein
Chemical	75	3	1
Peptide	2	104	16
Protein	0	19	309

**Figure 14 Rules characterizing the binding patch depending on the ligand types.** See main text for details. The classification rules are:  $\overline{bsa}_{Ag} \geq 14.32$ : chemical ligand;  $10.76 \leq \overline{bsa}_{Ag} < 14.32$ : peptide ligand;  $\overline{bsa}_{Ag} < 10.76$  AND  $\overline{bsa}_{IG} < 5.697$ : peptide ligand;  $\overline{bsa}_{Ag} < 10.76$  AND  $\overline{bsa}_{IG} \geq 5.697$ : protein ligand.

**Figure 15** Fraction of interface atoms contributed by the side-chains of the amino acids for the VH and VL CDR. The central bar shows the median, the dot shows the average.



## 6.2 Lengths of CDR

We now study the distribution of CDR lengths in our dataset. The IG - Ag complexes found in our dataset represent well the whole of existing subgroups, both for human and mice, in terms of [CDR1.CDR2] lengths (Supp. Tables 4 and 5).

Supp. Fig. 16 displays the abundance of combinations of CDR1/CDR2 and CDR3 lengths for VH and VL in the mouse and human. CDR1 and CDR2 are grouped in *pairs* because they share the same genomic origin whereas CDR3 is the product of an entirely different process [20, Chapter 6]. We now discuss in order: VH CDR and VL CDR of human IG, and VH CDR and VL CDR of murine IG.

Notice that when discussing the lengths of VH CDR, the human dataset consists of 140 complexes instead of 145 because we discard 5 complexes whose VH CDR1 and VH CDR2 lengths are aberrant (annotation not corresponding to any existing V-gene). For the same reason, we consider 133 complexes for VL CDR in the human dataset after discarding 12 of them for aberrant VH CDR1 and VH CDR2 lengths.

For VH CDR in human, a striking 81% (113/140) of IG have both their VH CDR1 and VH CDR2 of length 8 although 6 different pairs occur. Except for a peak at 12 amino acids (15% of the dataset, 21/140), the lengths for 94% (132/140) of VH CDR3 are evenly distributed between 10 and 22 amino acids; even though it can reach a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 25 amino acids.

For VL CDR in the human, 59% (79/133) of IG have their VL CDR1 and VL CDR2 of length 6 and 3, respectively; for 22% (29/133) they are of length 8 and 3; and for 10% (14/133) they are of length 7 and 3. Those three pairs therefore make up 92% of the human IG in this dataset although 6 distinct pairs actually occur. Interestingly, only VL CDR2 consisting of two amino acids occur in the dataset. VL CDR3 is made of 9 amino acids in 56% (75/133) of the IG and of 10, 11 and 12 amino acids in 11% (15/133), 13% (18/133) and 7% (10/133) of the human IG. This makes 89% of all human IG in our dataset even though 9 distinct length actually occur. Interestingly, 35% (46/133) of the human IG have CDR of lengths 6, 3, and 9 for VL CDR1, VL CDR2 and VL CDR3, respectively. Moreover, the 5 combinations out of 26 ([6.3.9], [8.3.9], [6.3.10], [7.3.9], [6.3.11]) make 65% of the dataset.

From this analysis, it stems that:

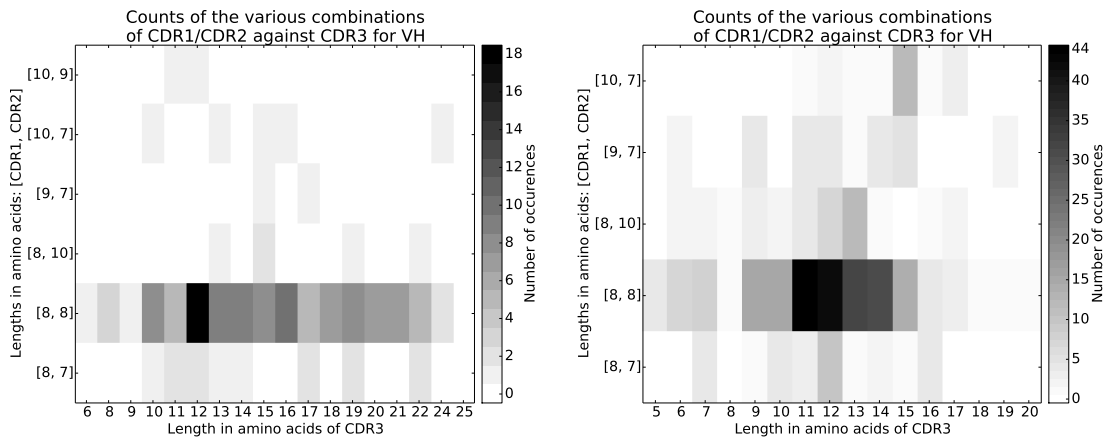
- for human IG, the major locus of diversity is VH CDR3,
- whichever V gene is encoding the V-region, VL CDR2 is always of length 3,
- a single combination of VL CDR represents more than a third of the human dataset.

For VH CDR in mice, the situation is similar to that of human IG for VH CDR1 and VH CDR2: both are of length 8 for 66% (223/337) of the dataset although 5 distinct pairs occur. As for human IG, the most represented length for VH CDR3 is 12 (19% of the dataset, 65/337). Additionally, 71% (239/337) of murine VH CDR3 have between 11 and 15 amino acids while the minimum and maximum lengths are 5 and 20, respectively.

For VL CDR in the mouse, 38% (127/337) of IG have their VL CDR1 and VL CDR2 of length 6 and 3, respectively. Additionally, they are of length 11 and 3 for 22% (73/337) of the dataset. A longer VL CDR1 is therefore more common in mice than in humans. Similarly to the human dataset, only two IG have a VL CDR2 of length other than 3 (namely 7). The overwhelming majority (86%, 290/337) of murine IG have a VL CDR3 of length 9 although four distinct lengths occur. Finally, two particular combinations of CDR are over-represented: [6.3.9] and [11.3.9] for [VL CDR1.VL CDR2.VL CDR3] which occur for 35% (119/337) and 19% (65/337) of the murine IG, respectively.

The two first points of the discussion for human IG also hold for murine IG. Moreover, two combinations of VL CDR make up half of the dataset. Finally we notice that VL CDR1 is more variable in length than VL CDR3.

**Figure 16 Length of the CDR in number of amino acids.** The four panels correspond to the combinations  $\{\text{VH, VL}\} \times \{\text{Human, Mouse}\}$ . For a given matrix, the gray shade encodes the number of occurrences found in the dataset, from white (null count) to black (maximum for that matrix, as indicated on the vertical bar on the right hand side.)



(a) VH, Human. Five complexes are discarded because of aberrant VH CDR1 and VH CDR2 lengths.

(b) VH, Mouse.

(c) VL, Human. Twelve complexes are discarded because of aberrant VL CDR1 and VL CDR2 lengths. The [CDR1.CDR2] lengths [6.3] characterize both V-kappa and V-lambda. The other lengths characterize either V-kappa ([7.3], [11.3] and [12.3]) or V-lambda ([8.3] and [9.3]).

(d) VL, Mouse. The [CDR1.CDR2] lengths [7.7] and [9.3] characterize V-lambda. The other lengths characterize V-kappa.

Figure 17 Buried Surface Area ( $A^2$ ): relative contributions of the CDR from VH

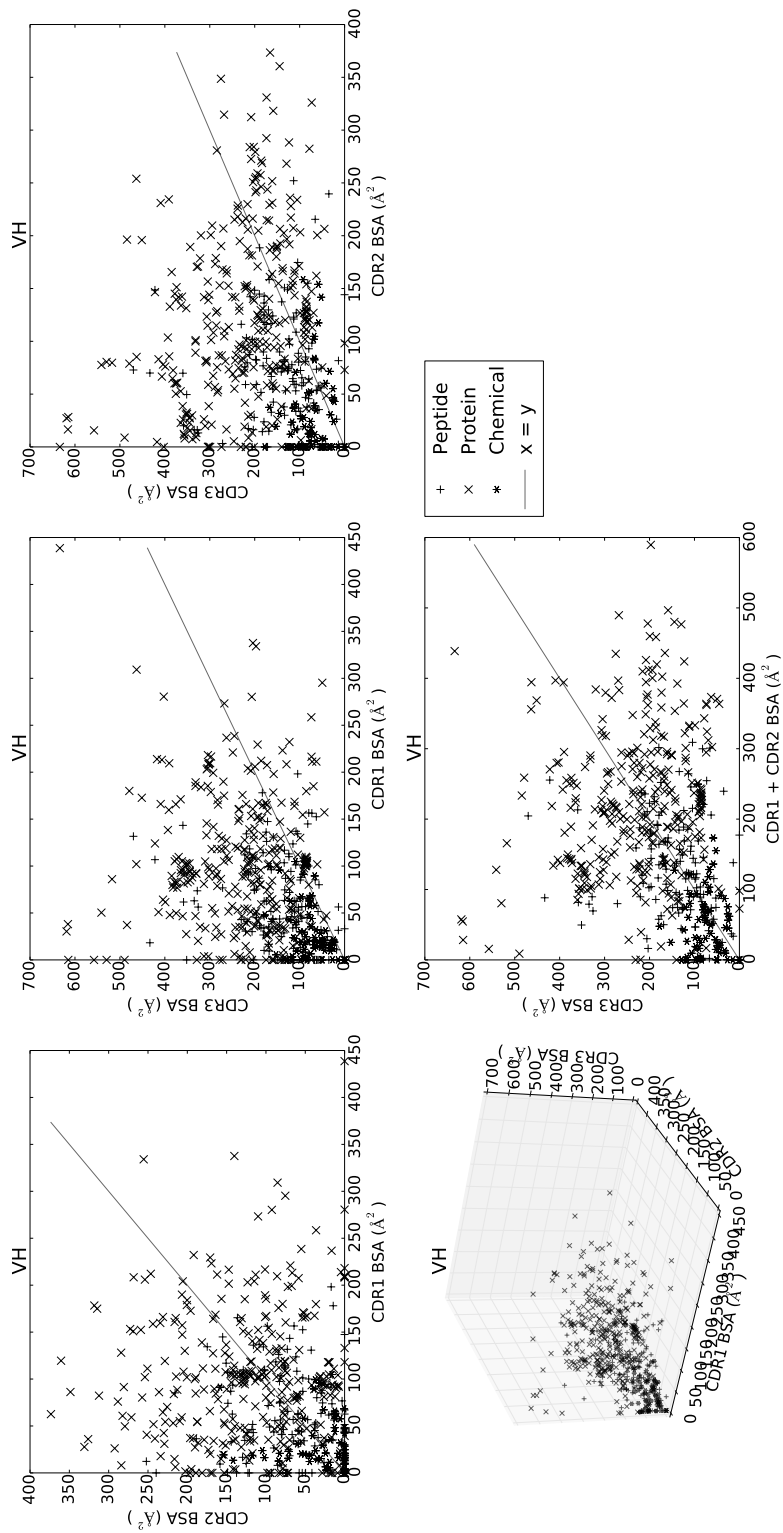
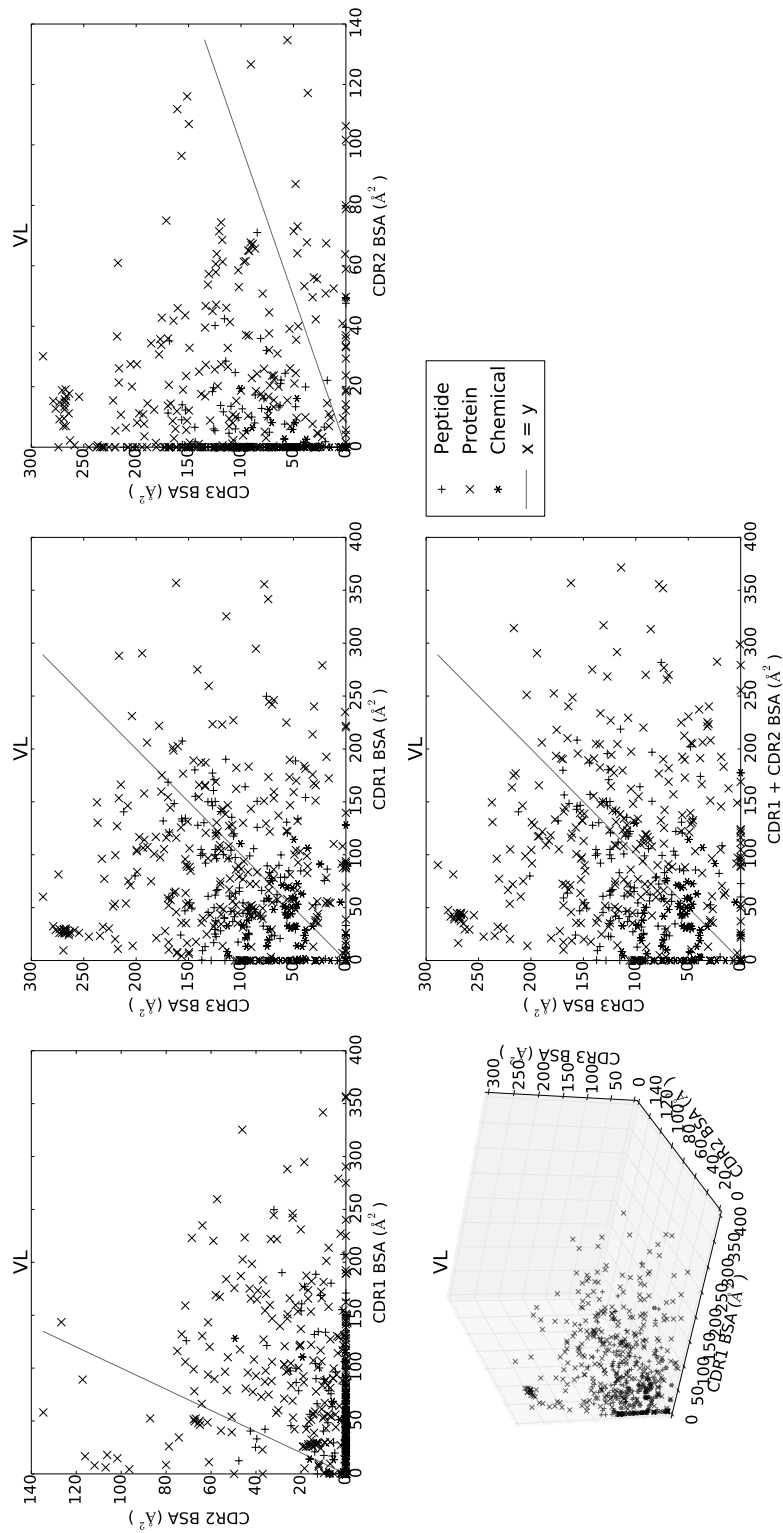


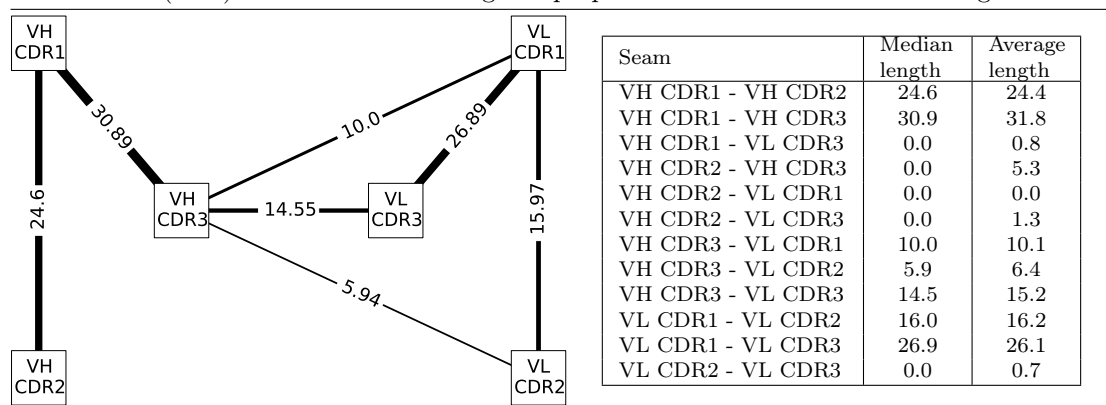
Figure 18 Buried Surface Area ( $A^2$ ): relative contributions of the CDR from VL



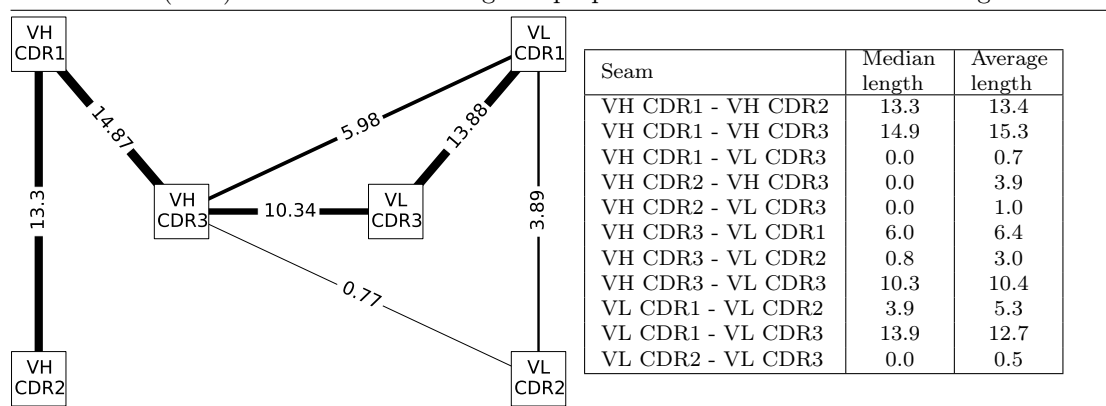
### 6.3 Seams between CDR

In this section, we present seam statistics, for all ligands, and then for ligands of a given type. As opposed to Fig. 19, all figures were generated automatically. Thus, for the sake of uniformity, Fig. 9 reproduces the lengths displayed on Fig. 19.

**Figure 19 Length of the seams between CDR for all atoms (whole dataset).** The contacts between the 6 CDR are represented as a graph, with one edge between two CDR for which seam statistics were collected. The statistic reported is the median value of all the observations (in Å). The width of the edges is proportional to the median seam length.

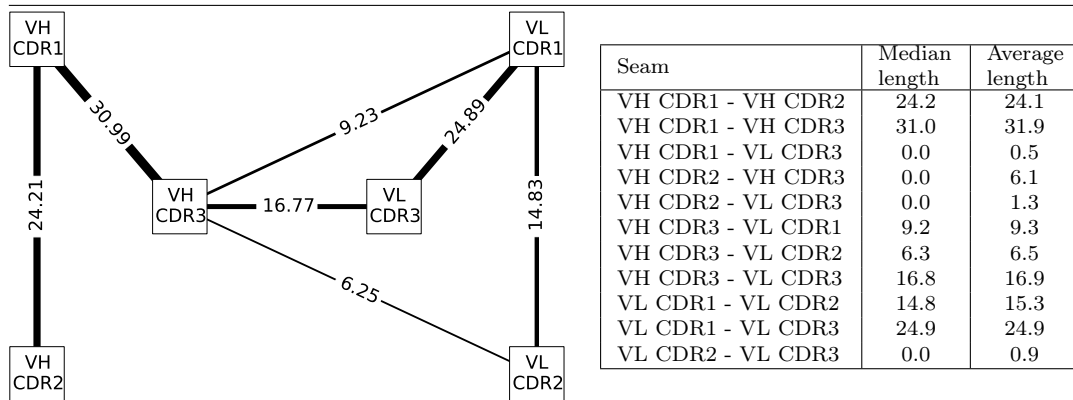


**Figure 20 Length of the seams between CDR for interface atoms (whole dataset).** The contacts between the 6 CDR are represented as a graph, with one edge between two CDR for which seam statistics were collected. The statistic reported is the median value of all the observations (in Å). The width of the edges is proportional to the median seam length.

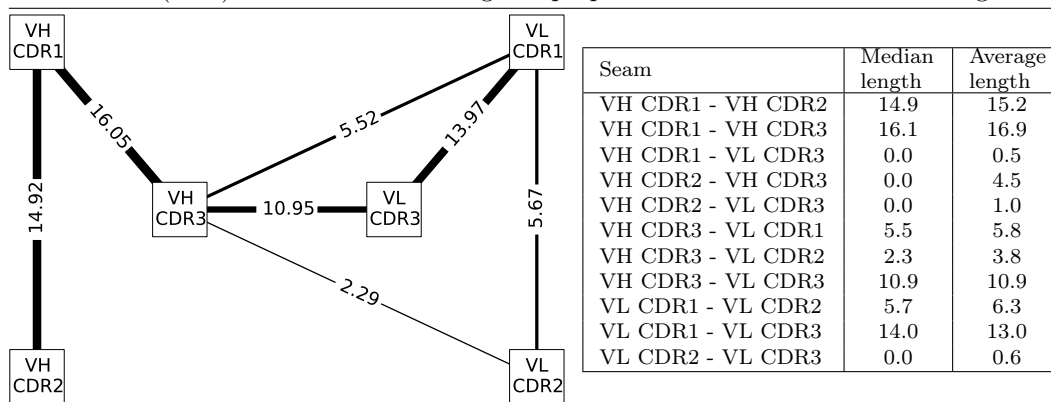




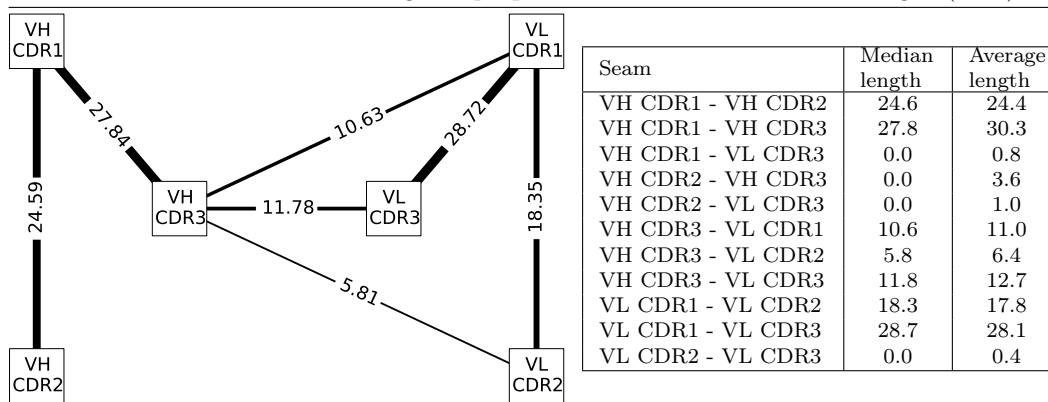
**Figure 21 Length of the seams between CDR for protein ligands, all atoms.** The contacts between the 6 CDR are represented as a graph, with one edge between two CDR for which seam statistics were collected. The statistic reported is the median value of all the observations (in Å). The width of the edges is proportional to the median seam length.



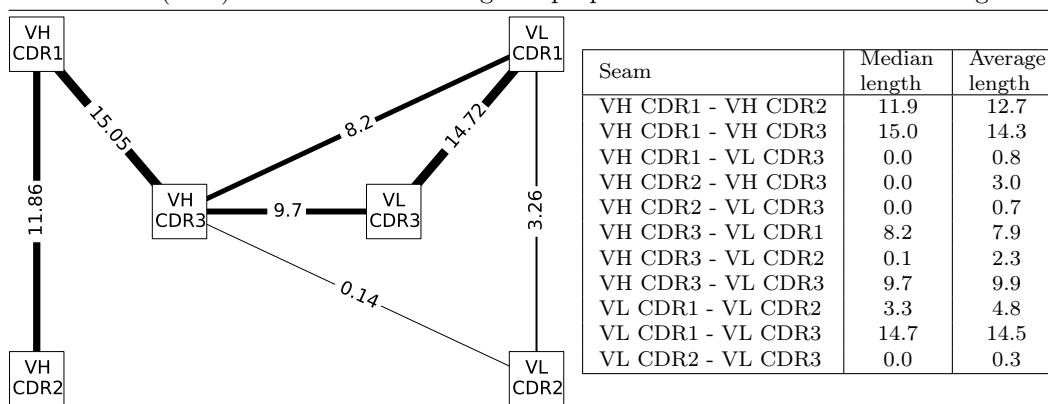
**Figure 22 Length of the seams between CDR for protein ligands, interface atoms.** The contacts between the 6 CDR are represented as a graph, with one edge between two CDR for which seam statistics were collected. The statistic reported is the median value of all the observations (in Å). The width of the edges is proportional to the median seam length.



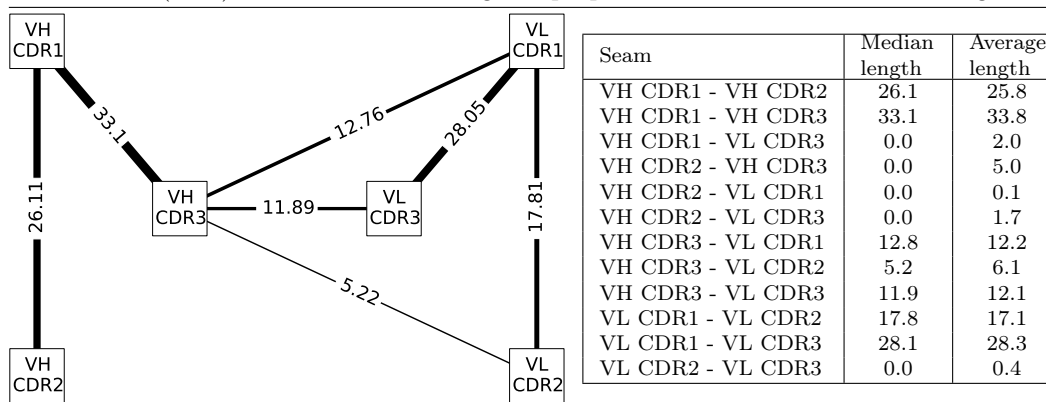
**Figure 23** Length of the seams between CDR for peptide ligands, all atoms. The contacts between the 6 CDR are represented as a graph, with one edge between two CDR for which seam statistics were collected. The statistic reported is the median value of all the observations. The width of the edges is proportional to the median seam length (in Å).



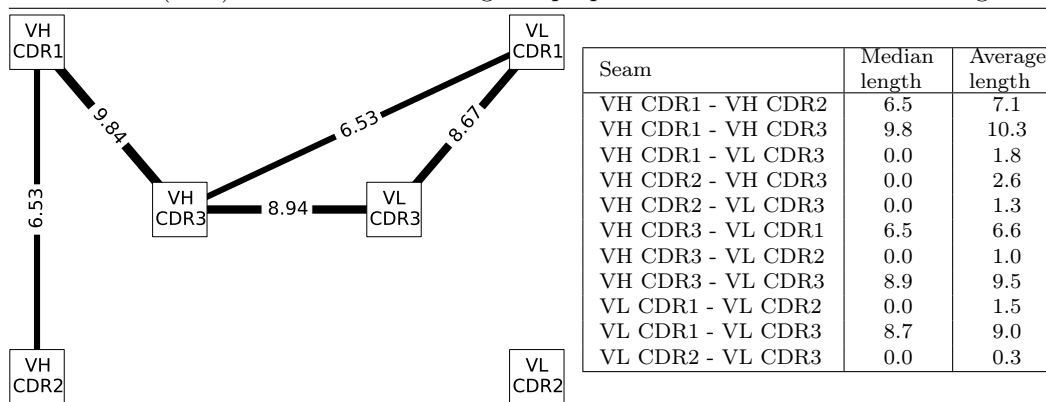
**Figure 24** Length of the seams between CDR for peptide ligands, interface atoms. The contacts between the 6 CDR are represented as a graph, with one edge between two CDR for which seam statistics were collected. The statistic reported is the median value of all the observations (in Å). The width of the edges is proportional to the median seam length.



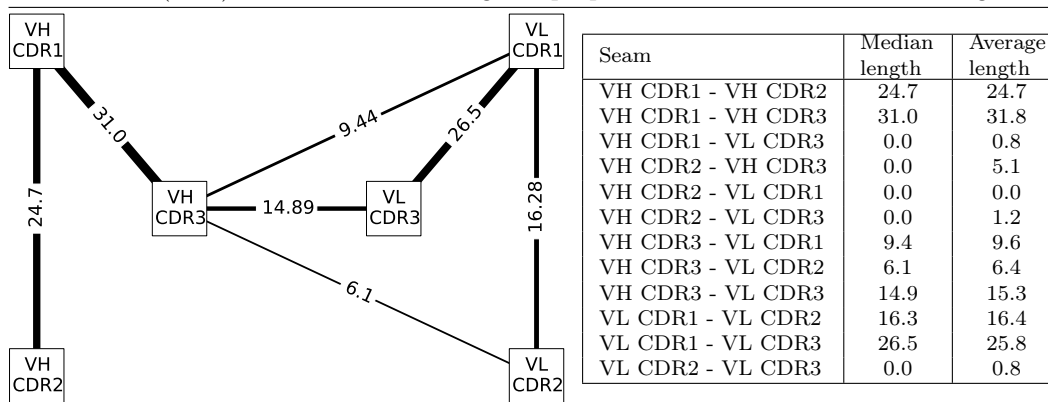
**Figure 25 Length of the seams between CDR for chemical ligands, all atoms.** The contacts between the 6 CDR are represented as a graph, with one edge between two CDR for which seam statistics were collected. The statistic reported is the median value of all the observations (in Å). The width of the edges is proportional to the median seam length.



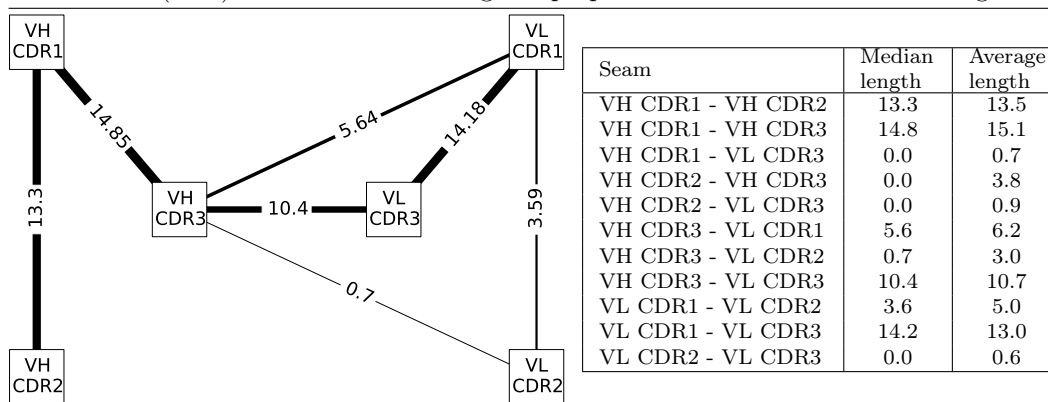
**Figure 26 Length of the seams between CDR for chemical ligands, interface atoms.** The contacts between the 6 CDR are represented as a graph, with one edge between two CDR for which seam statistics were collected. The statistic reported is the median value of all the observations (in Å). The width of the edges is proportional to the median seam length.



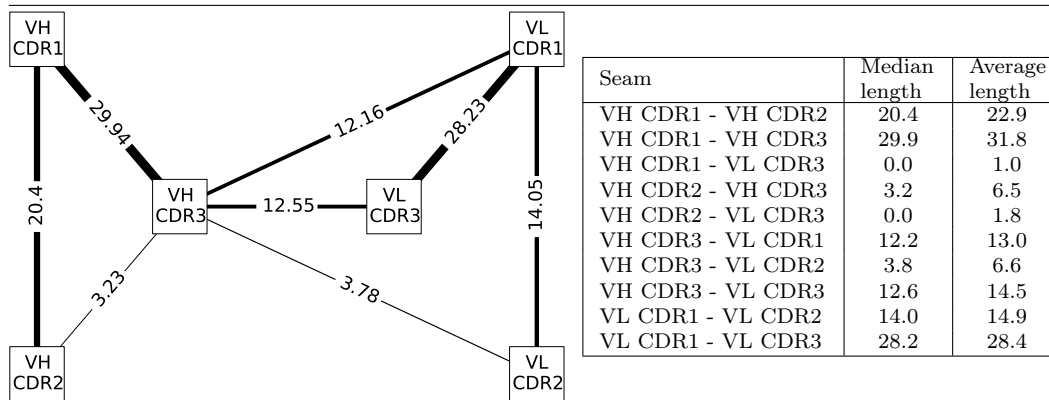
**Figure 27** Length of the seams between CDR for VL = V-kappa, all atoms. The contacts between the 6 CDR are represented as a graph, with one edge between two CDR for which seam statistics were collected. The statistic reported is the median value of all the observations (in Å). The width of the edges is proportional to the median seam length.



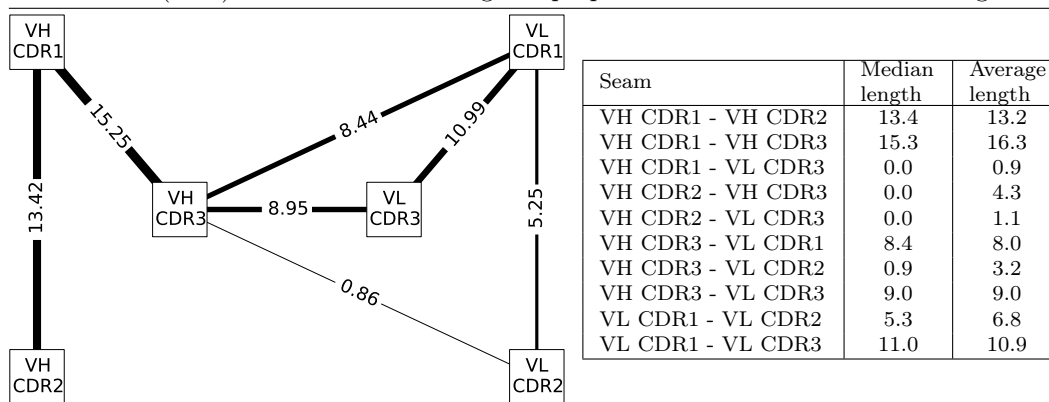
**Figure 28** Length of the seams between CDR for VL = V-kappa, interface atoms. The contacts between the 6 CDR are represented as a graph, with one edge between two CDR for which seam statistics were collected. The statistic reported is the median value of all the observations (in Å). The width of the edges is proportional to the median seam length.



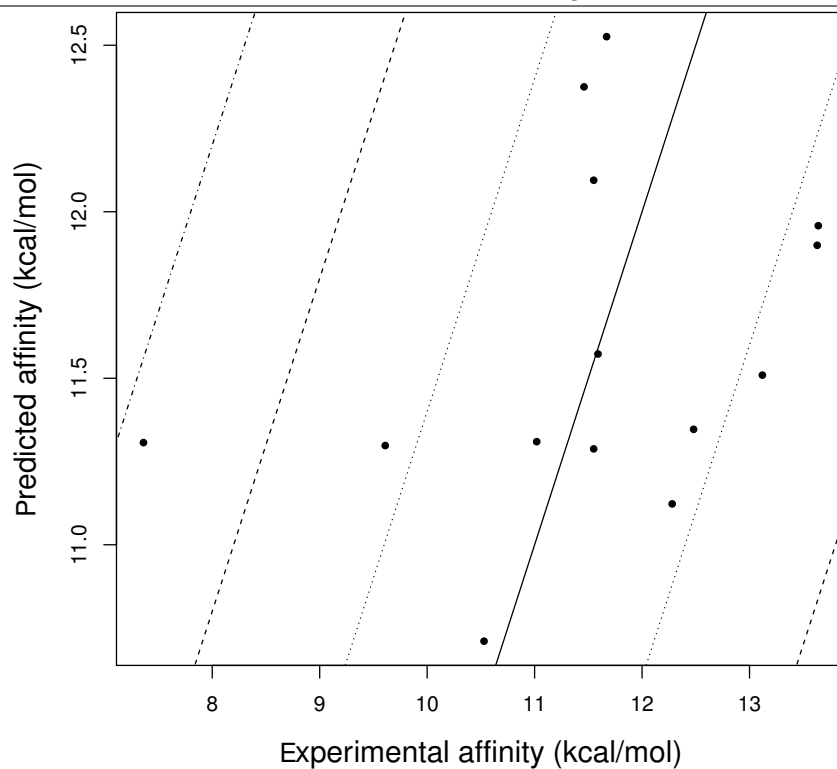
**Figure 29** Length of the seams between CDR for VL = V-lambda, all atoms. The contacts between the 6 CDR are represented as a graph, with one edge between two CDR for which seam statistics were collected. The statistic reported is the median value of all the observations (in Å). The width of the edges is proportional to the median seam length.



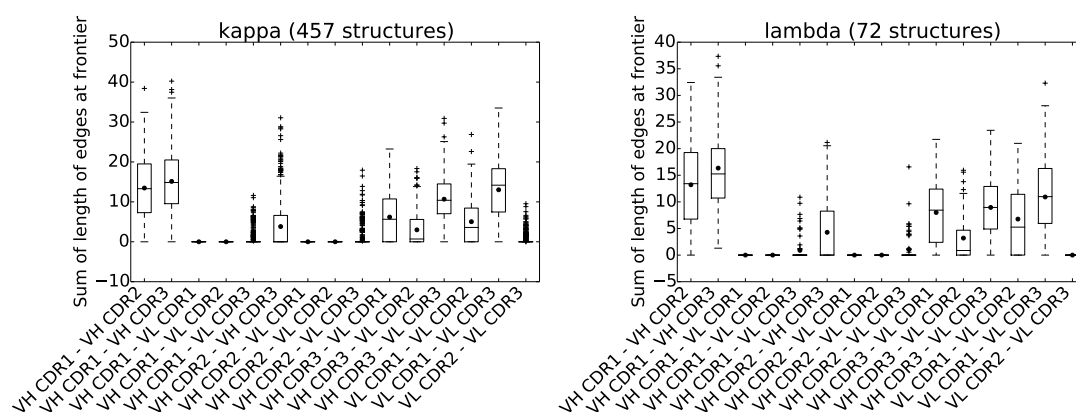
**Figure 30** Length of the seams between CDR for VL = V-lambda, interface atoms. The contacts between the 6 CDR are represented as a graph, with one edge between two CDR for which seam statistics were collected. The statistic reported is the median value of all the observations (in Å). The width of the edges is proportional to the median seam length.



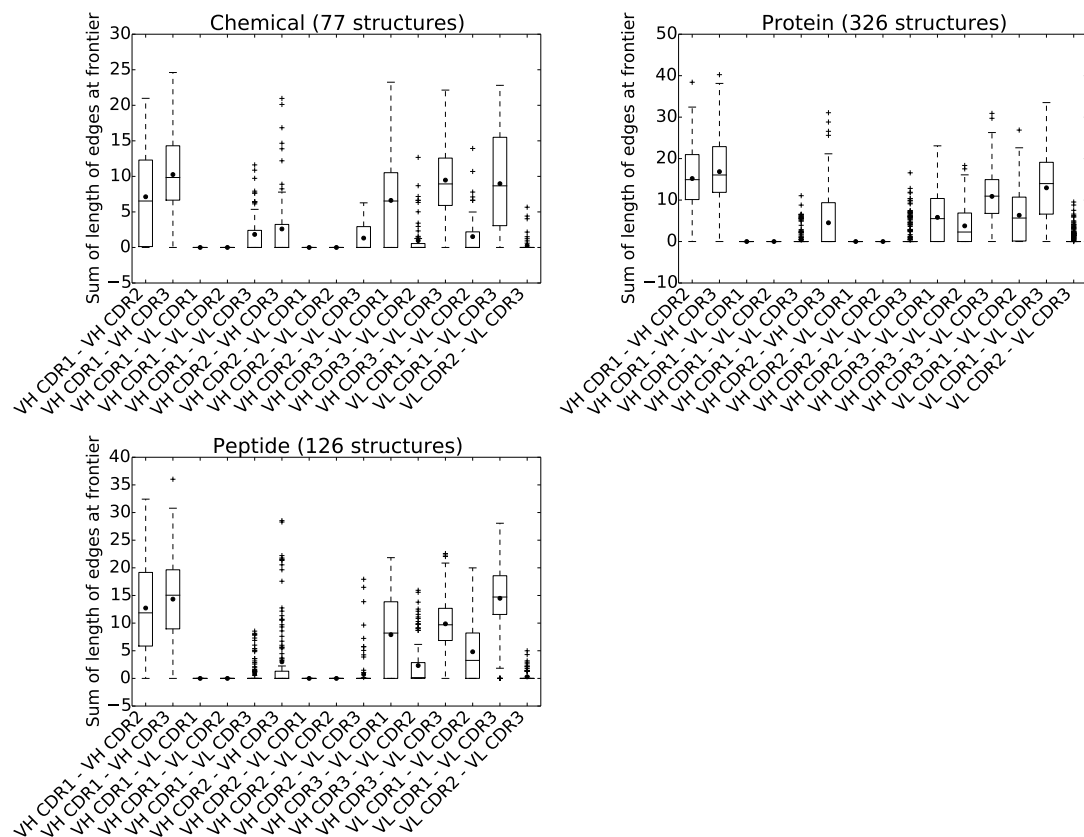
**Figure 31 Predicted versus experimental affinities for IG - Ag complexes.** Dashed, dash-dotted and dotted lines respectively show errors of  $\pm 1.4$ ,  $\pm 2.8$ ,  $\pm 4.2$  kcal/mol, corresponding to  $K_d$  approximated within one, two and three orders of magnitude.



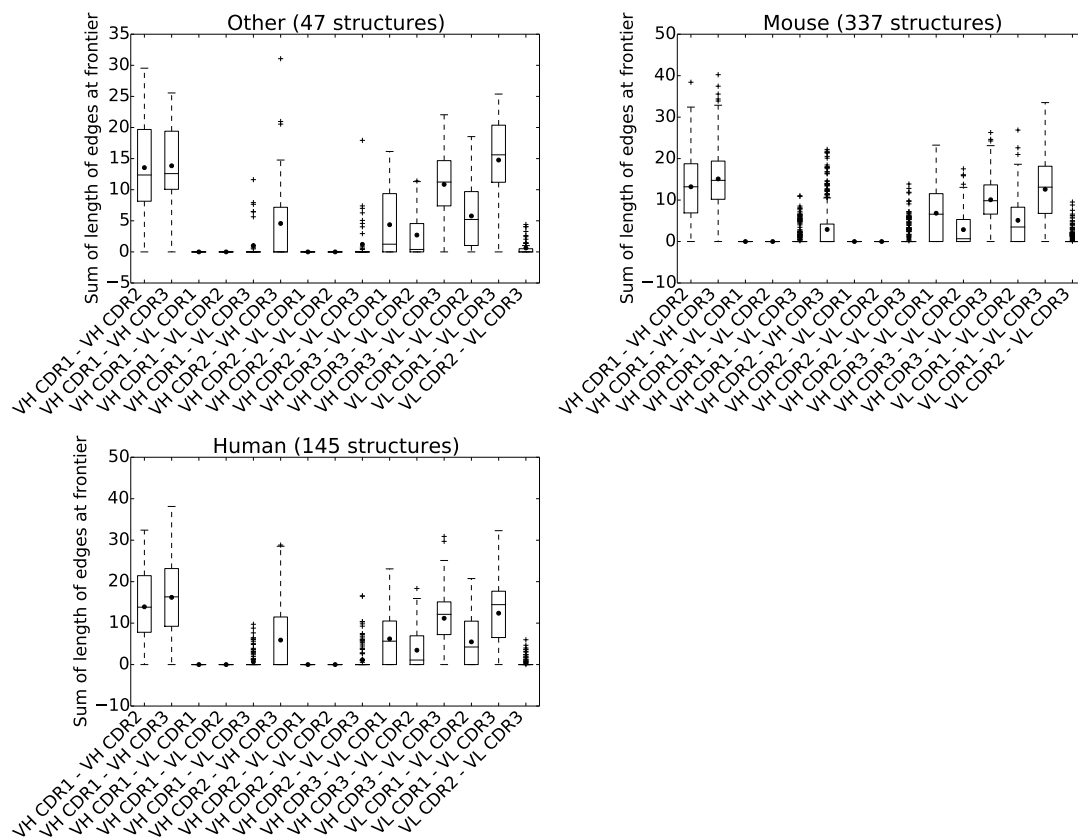
**Figure 32 Distribution of the length of the seams between CDR.** Comparison between VL V-kappa and V-lambda, atoms at interface.



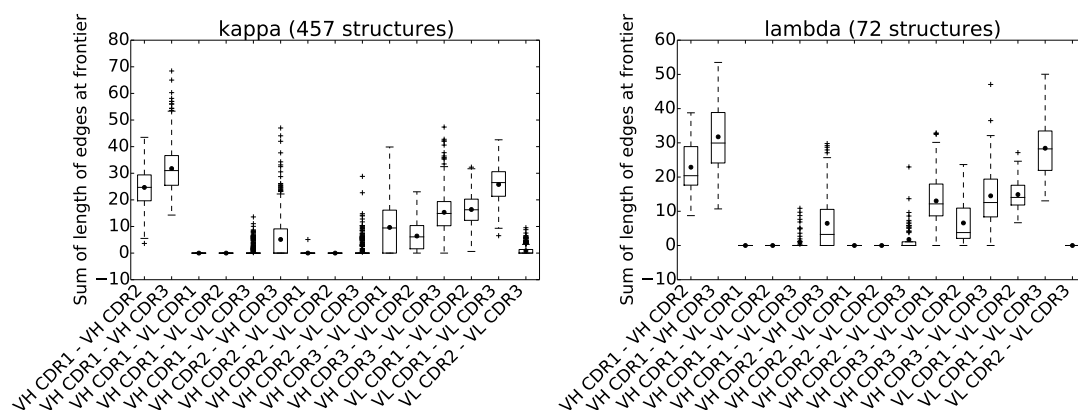
**Figure 33** Distribution of the length of the seams between CDR. Comparison between ligand types, atoms at interface.



**Figure 34** Distribution of the length of the seams between CDR. Comparison between species, atoms at interface.

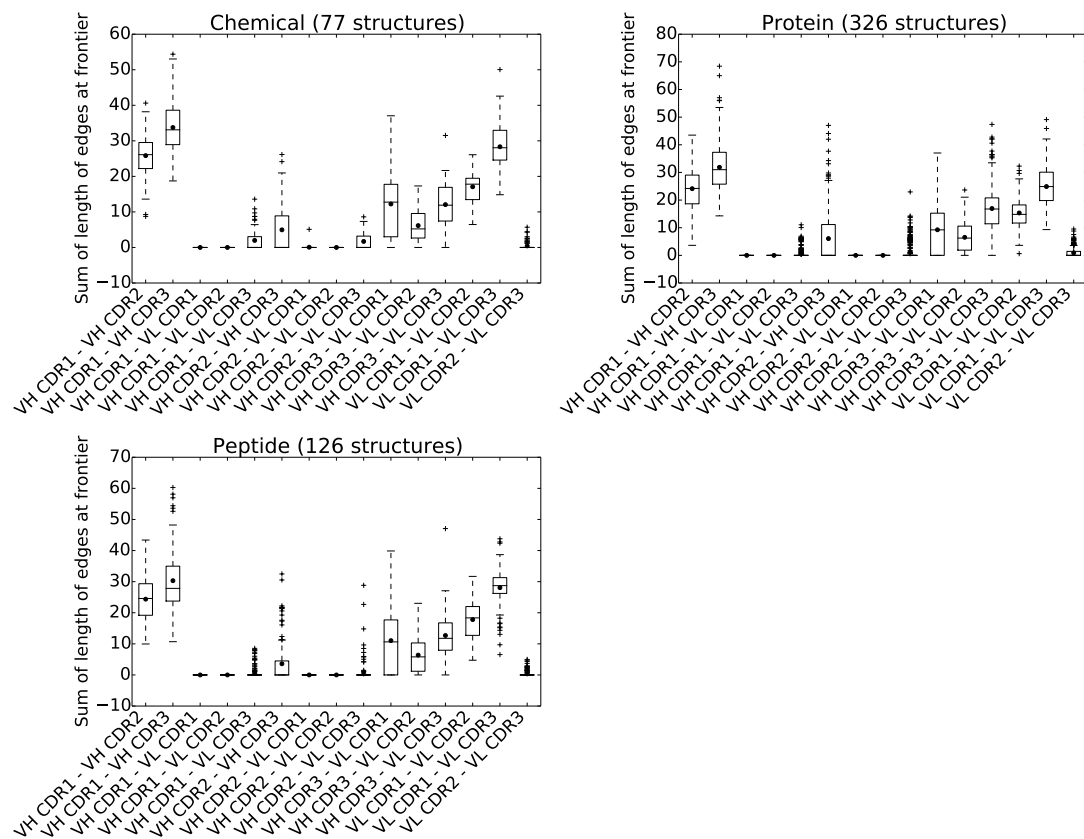


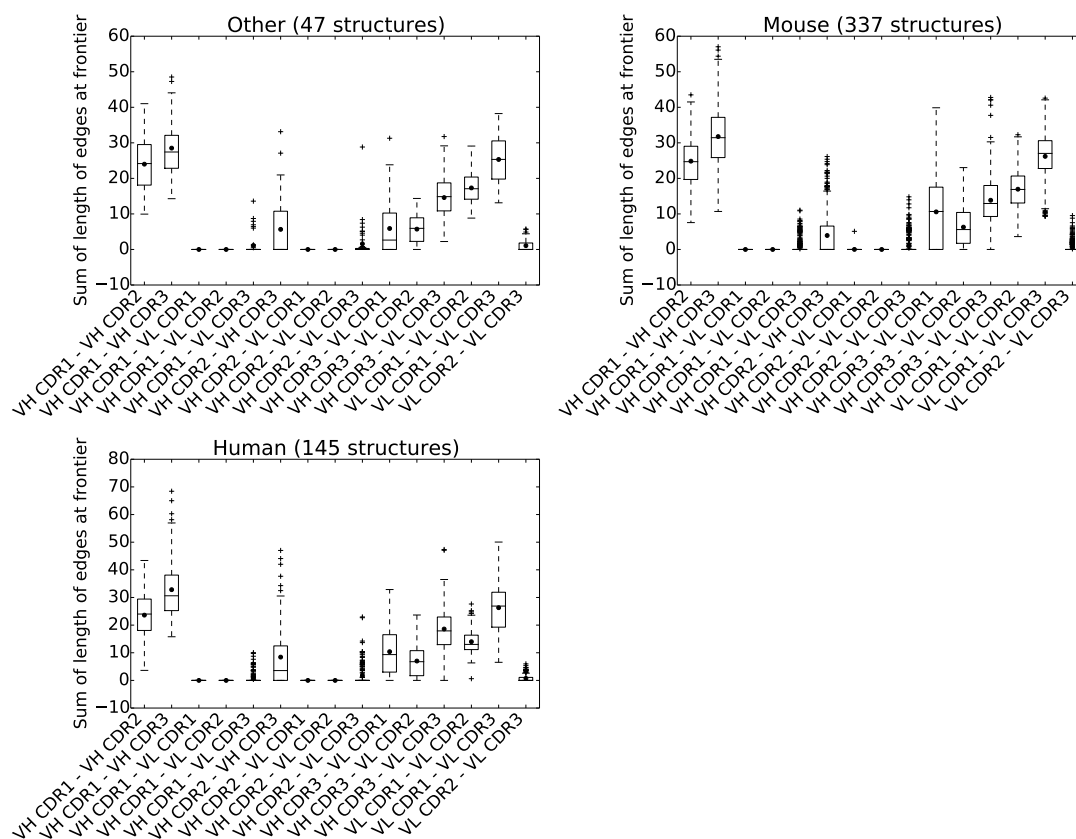
**Figure 35** Distribution of the length of the seams between CDR. Comparison between VL V-lambda and V-kappa, all atoms.





**Figure 36** Distribution of the length of the seams between CDR. Comparison between ligand types, all atoms.



**Figure 37** Distribution of the length of the seams between CDR. Comparison between species, all atoms.

**Correlation between seam length and interface curvature / ligand size.** We investigated the correlation between individual seams lengths and three parameters: the size of the Ag and the curvature of the interface on both the IG and Ag side (Supp. Tables 8-13).

Note that the values in Supp. Tables 8 are the opposite of those in Supp. Tables 10. The same applies for Supp. Tables 9 and 11. This is expected since the curvatures of both size of the interface are complementary. We therefore limit our discussion to Supp. Tables 8, 9, 12 and 13.

Overall, the correlation are low, ranging from -0.37 to 0.21 for linear relationships and from -0.36 to 0.31 for non-linear monotonous relationships.

Considering the seams between all atoms, linear correlations range between -0.37 (VH CDR3-VL CDR3 versus interface curvature) and 0.21 (VH CDR3- VL CDR3 versus Ag size) and non-linear monotonous correlations range between -0.36 (VH CDR3- VL CDR3 versus interface curvature) and 0.31 (VH CDR3- VL CDR3 versus interface Ag size).

Considering the seams between interface atoms, linear correlations range between -0.22 (VH CDR1-VH CDR3 versus interface curvature) and 0.19 (VH CDR1- VL CDR3 vs interface curvature and VH CDR1- VH CDR3 versus Ag size), and non-linear monotonous correlations range between -0.23 (VH CDR1- VL CDR3 vs Ag size) and 0.29 (VH CDR1- VH CDR3 versus interface Ag size).

**Table 8 Correlation between length of seams at interface and curvature of the interface, IG side**

		VH CDR2	VH CDR3	VL CDR1	VL CDR2	VL CDR3
VH CDR1	Pearson	-0.11	-0.22	-	-	0.19
	p-value	8.236e-03	4.548e-07	-	-	8.130e-06
	Spearman	-0.12	-0.20	-	-	0.18
	p-value	7.876e-03	2.777e-06	-	-	3.107e-05
VH CDR2	Pearson	-	-0.20	-	-	-0.05
	p-value	-	5.416e-06	-	-	2.711e-01
	Spearman	-	-0.22	-	-	-0.04
	p-value	-	3.852e-07	-	-	3.135e-01
VH CDR3	Pearson	-	-	0.01	-0.15	0.06
	p-value	-	-	7.612e-01	5.687e-04	1.876e-01
	Spearman	-	-	-0.02	-0.17	0.02
	p-value	-	-	7.017e-01	1.060e-04	5.906e-01
VL CDR1	Pearson	-	-	-	-0.17	0.07
	p-value	-	-	-	1.108e-04	1.259e-01
	Spearman	-	-	-	-0.18	0.07
	p-value	-	-	-	2.516e-05	1.264e-01
VL CDR2	Pearson	-	-	-	-	-0.02
	p-value	-	-	-	-	6.953e-01
	Spearman	-	-	-	-	-0.01
	p-value	-	-	-	-	8.840e-01

**Table 9 Correlation between length of seams and curvature of the interface, IG side**

		VH CDR2	VH CDR3	VL CDR1	VL CDR2	VL CDR3
VH CDR1	Pearson	0.16	-0.08	-	-	0.18
	p-value	1.679e-04	7.329e-02	-	-	4.345e-05
	Spearman	0.15	-0.04	-	-	0.14
	p-value	5.268e-04	3.527e-01	-	-	1.399e-03
VH CDR2	Pearson	-	-0.22	0.03	-	-0.07
	p-value	-	3.833e-07	4.445e-01	-	9.498e-02
	Spearman	-	-0.23	0.04	-	-0.07
	p-value	-	1.160e-07	3.843e-01	-	1.171e-01
VH CDR3	Pearson	-	-	-0.00	-0.05	-0.37
	p-value	-	-	9.254e-01	2.514e-01	3.028e-18
	Spearman	-	-	-0.02	-0.07	-0.36
	p-value	-	-	7.084e-01	1.225e-01	2.819e-17
VL CDR1	Pearson	-	-	-	0.17	0.17
	p-value	-	-	-	5.701e-05	6.837e-05
	Spearman	-	-	-	0.19	0.21
	p-value	-	-	-	1.242e-05	7.123e-07
VL CDR2	Pearson	-	-	-	-	-0.06
	p-value	-	-	-	-	1.439e-01
	Spearman	-	-	-	-	-0.06
	p-value	-	-	-	-	2.063e-01

**Table 10 Correlation between length of seams at interface and curvature of the interface, Ag side**

		VH CDR2	VH CDR3	VL CDR1	VL CDR2	VL CDR3
VH CDR1	Pearson	0.11	0.22	-	-	-0.19
	p-value	8.236e-03	4.548e-07	-	-	8.130e-06
	Spearman	0.12	0.20	-	-	-0.18
	p-value	7.876e-03	2.777e-06	-	-	3.107e-05
VH CDR2	Pearson	-	0.20	-	-	0.05
	p-value	-	5.416e-06	-	-	2.711e-01
	Spearman	-	0.22	-	-	0.04
	p-value	-	3.852e-07	-	-	3.135e-01
VH CDR3	Pearson	-	-	-0.01	0.15	-0.06
	p-value	-	-	7.612e-01	5.687e-04	1.876e-01
	Spearman	-	-	0.02	0.17	-0.02
	p-value	-	-	7.017e-01	1.060e-04	5.906e-01
VL CDR1	Pearson	-	-	-	0.17	-0.07
	p-value	-	-	-	1.108e-04	1.259e-01
	Spearman	-	-	-	0.18	-0.07
	p-value	-	-	-	2.516e-05	1.264e-01
VL CDR2	Pearson	-	-	-	-	0.02
	p-value	-	-	-	-	6.953e-01
	Spearman	-	-	-	-	0.01
	p-value	-	-	-	-	8.840e-01

**Table 11 Correlation between length of seams and curvature of the interface, Ag side**

		VH CDR2	VH CDR3	VL CDR1	VL CDR2	VL CDR3
VH CDR1	Pearson	-0.16	0.08	-	-	-0.18
	p-value	1.679e-04	7.329e-02	-	-	4.345e-05
	Spearman	-0.15	0.04	-	-	-0.14
	p-value	5.268e-04	3.527e-01	-	-	1.399e-03
VH CDR2	Pearson	-	0.22	-0.03	-	0.07
	p-value	-	3.833e-07	4.445e-01	-	9.498e-02
	Spearman	-	0.23	-0.04	-	0.07
	p-value	-	1.160e-07	3.843e-01	-	1.171e-01
VH CDR3	Pearson	-	-	0.00	0.05	0.37
	p-value	-	-	9.254e-01	2.514e-01	3.028e-18
	Spearman	-	-	0.02	0.07	0.36
	p-value	-	-	7.084e-01	1.225e-01	2.819e-17
VL CDR1	Pearson	-	-	-	-0.17	-0.17
	p-value	-	-	-	5.701e-05	6.837e-05
	Spearman	-	-	-	-0.19	-0.21
	p-value	-	-	-	1.242e-05	7.123e-07
VL CDR2	Pearson	-	-	-	-	0.06
	p-value	-	-	-	-	1.439e-01
	Spearman	-	-	-	-	0.06
	p-value	-	-	-	-	2.063e-01

**Table 12 Correlation between length of seams at interface and Ag size**

		VH CDR2	VH CDR3	VL CDR1	VL CDR2	VL CDR3
VH CDR1	Pearson	0.06	0.19	-	-	-0.15
	p-value	1.730e-01	1.285e-05	-	-	4.892e-04
	Spearman	0.23	0.29	-	-	-0.23
	p-value	7.413e-08	1.448e-11	-	-	9.712e-08
VH CDR2	Pearson	-	0.11	-	-	0.00
	p-value	-	1.447e-02	-	-	9.462e-01
	Spearman	-	0.13	-	-	-0.04
	p-value	-	2.323e-03	-	-	4.214e-01
VH CDR3	Pearson	-	-	-0.00	0.04	0.08
	p-value	-	-	9.493e-01	3.680e-01	5.721e-02
	Spearman	-	-	-0.03	0.21	0.13
	p-value	-	-	5.235e-01	9.478e-07	2.135e-03
VL CDR1	Pearson	-	-	-	0.13	-0.17
	p-value	-	-	-	2.646e-03	8.668e-05
	Spearman	-	-	-	0.22	-0.05
	p-value	-	-	-	5.204e-07	2.238e-01
VL CDR2	Pearson	-	-	-	-	0.01
	p-value	-	-	-	-	7.755e-01
	Spearman	-	-	-	-	0.09
	p-value	-	-	-	-	3.920e-02

**Table 13 Correlation between length of seams and Ag size**

		VH CDR2	VH CDR3	VL CDR1	VL CDR2	VL CDR3
VH CDR1	Pearson	-0.11	0.14	-	-	-0.13
	p-value	1.532e-02	1.373e-03	-	-	1.910e-03
	Spearman	-0.12	0.06	-	-	-0.19
	p-value	6.057e-03	1.838e-01	-	-	1.204e-05
VH CDR2	Pearson	-	0.11	-0.03	-	-0.00
	p-value	-	1.554e-02	4.884e-01	-	9.146e-01
	Spearman	-	0.08	-0.07	-	-0.03
	p-value	-	5.079e-02	1.192e-01	-	5.038e-01
VH CDR3	Pearson	-	-	0.09	-0.08	0.21
	p-value	-	-	4.017e-02	7.548e-02	6.631e-07
	Spearman	-	-	-0.02	0.00	0.31
	p-value	-	-	7.262e-01	9.625e-01	1.407e-13
VL CDR1	Pearson	-	-	-	-0.18	-0.26
	p-value	-	-	-	2.731e-05	2.120e-09
	Spearman	-	-	-	-0.24	-0.29
	p-value	-	-	-	2.542e-08	7.610e-12
VL CDR2	Pearson	-	-	-	-	0.01
	p-value	-	-	-	-	8.804e-01
	Spearman	-	-	-	-	0.11
	p-value	-	-	-	-	1.410e-02

These values are too low to bring about any meaningful conclusions, but we notice that 1) the previous highest correlations only involve VH CDR3- VL CDR3 or seams between VH CDR1 and the CDR3 from both VH and VL; 2) the seams VH CDR3- VL CDR3 and VH CDR1- VH CDR3 show the highest absolute linear correlations with both interface curvature and Ag size for all atoms and interface atoms respectively.

## 7 Supplemental: Dataset Curation

### 7.1 Inferring Canonical Complexes

A canonical configuration for a IMGT/3Dstructure-DB IMGT-PDB file is as follows: *one H chain, one L chain, one ligand*. A non canonical configuration may occur for different reasons:

- The asymmetric unit of the crystal structure contains two or more Fabs.
- Several molecules have co-crystallized with the IG - Ag complex.
- Two IG chains, H and L, and one Ag chain are found but the IG chains are not annotated as forming a receptor in the IMGT 410 section.
- An IG receptor is annotated as containing more than two chains.
- The ligand is a multi-chain protein

The following issues are faced:

- A file may not be canonical i.e. there might be several complexes in a single file.
- There might be some issues with the numbering of the chains.
- There might be missing data (residues, chains information, labels)
- Several complexes might be similar and bias the results.
- Some molecules annotated as ligand may actually be buffer molecules (e.g. glycerol)
- Some purification proteins remain (e.g. protein L, A or G) and do not engage in specific contacts with the IG

Using the Voronoi interface model presented in section 2.1, we proceed in two steps. First, we infer the chains *pairings* in every file which does not contain a canonical complex. For this, we compute the interfaces between all pairs of chains. We then group L and H chains in pairs for which the number of atoms at the interface is the highest. We then assign the ligand(s) chains to the HL pairs if they make contacts with either chain.

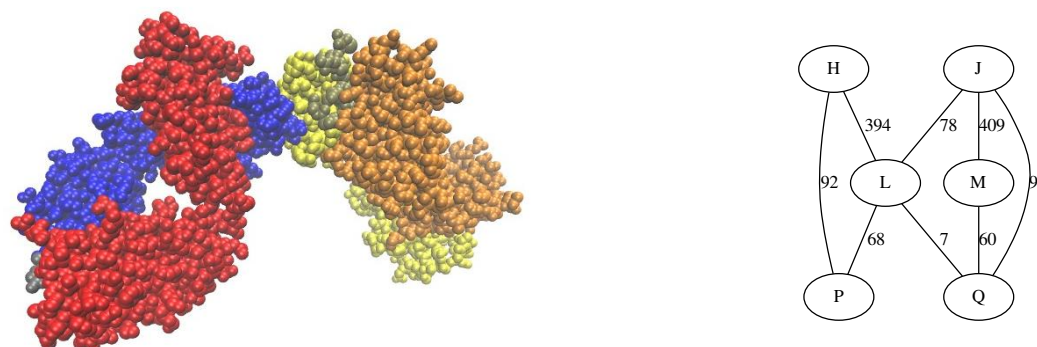
Note that in the case where an Ag is in contact with several IG, it will be assigned to both IG.

Finally, all buffer molecules and IG purification proteins (namely protein L, A and G whose annotated name satisfy the regexp `"immunoglobulin g-binding|protein[ ]+[gl]($|\s|\')|glycerol"`) are removed from the files because they are not representative of IG - Ag interactions.

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**Figure 38 Inferring complexes within an IMGT-PDB file (IMGT-1GGI.pdb): crystal structure in its van der Waals representation, and associated connectivity graph from which two complexes are defined.** (Left) The seven chains from the file: L (blue), H (red), P (grey), J (yellow), M (orange), Q (chartreuse green). (Right) The graph summarizes the connectivity between chains computed by *intervor-bif*, from the package *Intervor*. Vertices are chains (with their IDs) and the edges are weighted by the number of atoms at the interface. Here H and J are the Fab heavy chains, L and M are the Fab light chains and P and Q are the ligand chains. Thus, this file defines two complexes.

---



**Crystal contacts.** The previous automatic detection raises the problem of crystal contacts, since complexes reported might be false positives.

They could potentially be ruled out by using a cutoff such as the minimal number of atoms at an interface to be considered significant, however, there might also be few contacts between a Fab and a small ligand. It is therefore necessary to study the distribution of the number of atoms at the interface for different classes of ligands to set a specific cutoff.

To circumvent this issue, we currently exclude from the analysis complexes which do not have at least one contact with the variable domain (CDR or FR).

## 7.2 Removing redundancies

Redundant complexes may come from two sources: the same complex may be found in the same asymmetric crystal unit, or it may be found in two different IMGT-PDB files.

We therefore need to remove the redundancy of the dataset to avoid biasing the statistics. For this, we need to consider similarities at the interface level. Once all complexes are extracted from the database, we need to compare the interfaces of all pairs of complexes, group complexes having a similar interface, and keep one representative complex for each group.

Currently, we rely on a quick method based upon IMGT labels. We consider triplets formed by the IMGT labels of both IG chains and the Ag chain. We record triplets which have already been included in the analysis and exclude complexes which make the same triplet.



## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1	Immunoglobulins and the immune response . . . . .	3
1.2	IG - Ag complexes under the structural lens . . . . .	3
<b>2</b>	<b>Material and Methods</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	Voronoi Interface Models . . . . .	5
2.2	Hierarchical Voronoi Interface Models . . . . .	6
2.3	The Dataset and Data Curation: the IMGT/3Dstructure-DB . . . . .	7
<b>3</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1	Global interface analysis . . . . .	7
3.2	On the respective contacts of CDR with the antigen . . . . .	8
3.3	On the relative positions of CDR . . . . .	10
3.4	Affinity prediction . . . . .	12
<b>4</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Artwork</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Supplemental: Results</b>	<b>28</b>
6.1	Dataset . . . . .	28
6.2	Lengths of CDR . . . . .	37
6.3	Seams between CDR . . . . .	41
<b>7</b>	<b>Supplemental: Dataset Curation</b>	<b>56</b>
7.1	Inferring Canonical Complexes . . . . .	56
7.2	Removing redundancies . . . . .	57



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Publisher  
Inria  
Domaine de Voluceau - Rocquencourt  
BP 105 - 78153 Le Chesnay Cedex  
[inria.fr](http://inria.fr)

ISSN 0249-6399