

Amyloid Probe

-Insights into Its Binding Sites and Selectivity-

Literature Seminar #2

2021/10/14

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● Introduction

Background of amyloid-selective fluorescent probes

● Binding sites of probes to $A\beta$

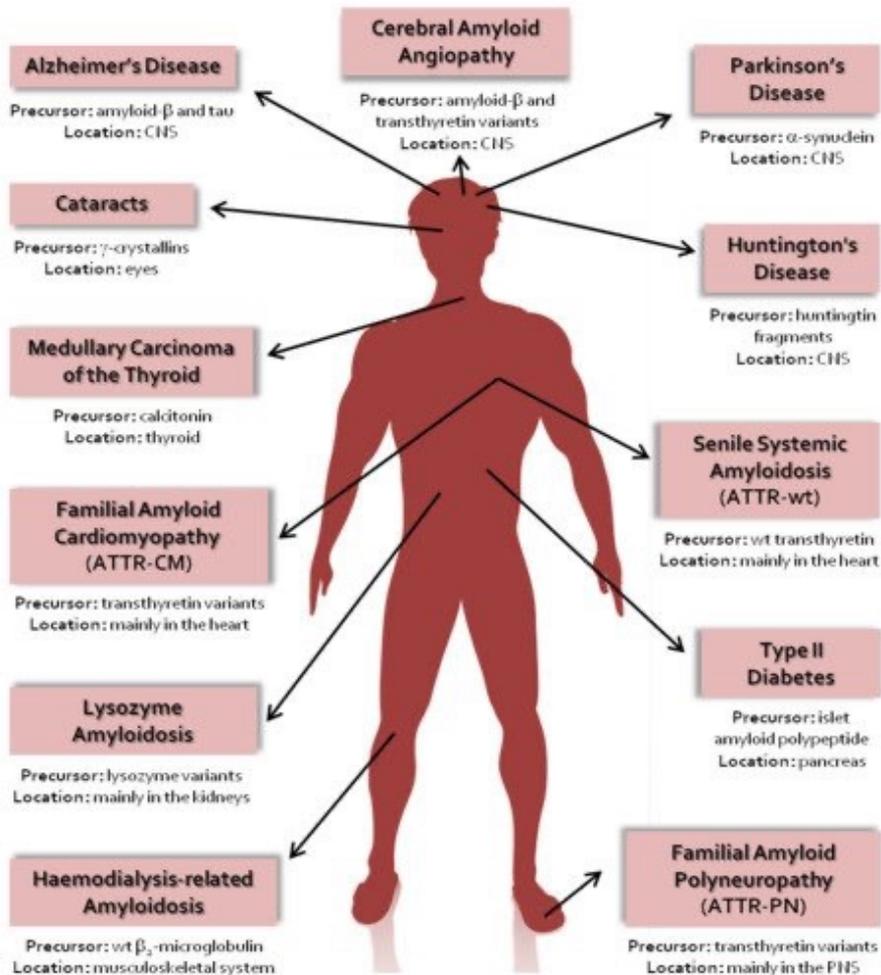
● Selectivity of probes

1. Selectivity to $A\beta$ oligomers
2. Selectivity to tau aggregates

● Summary

Amyloids and human diseases

Amyloids in Human Diseases

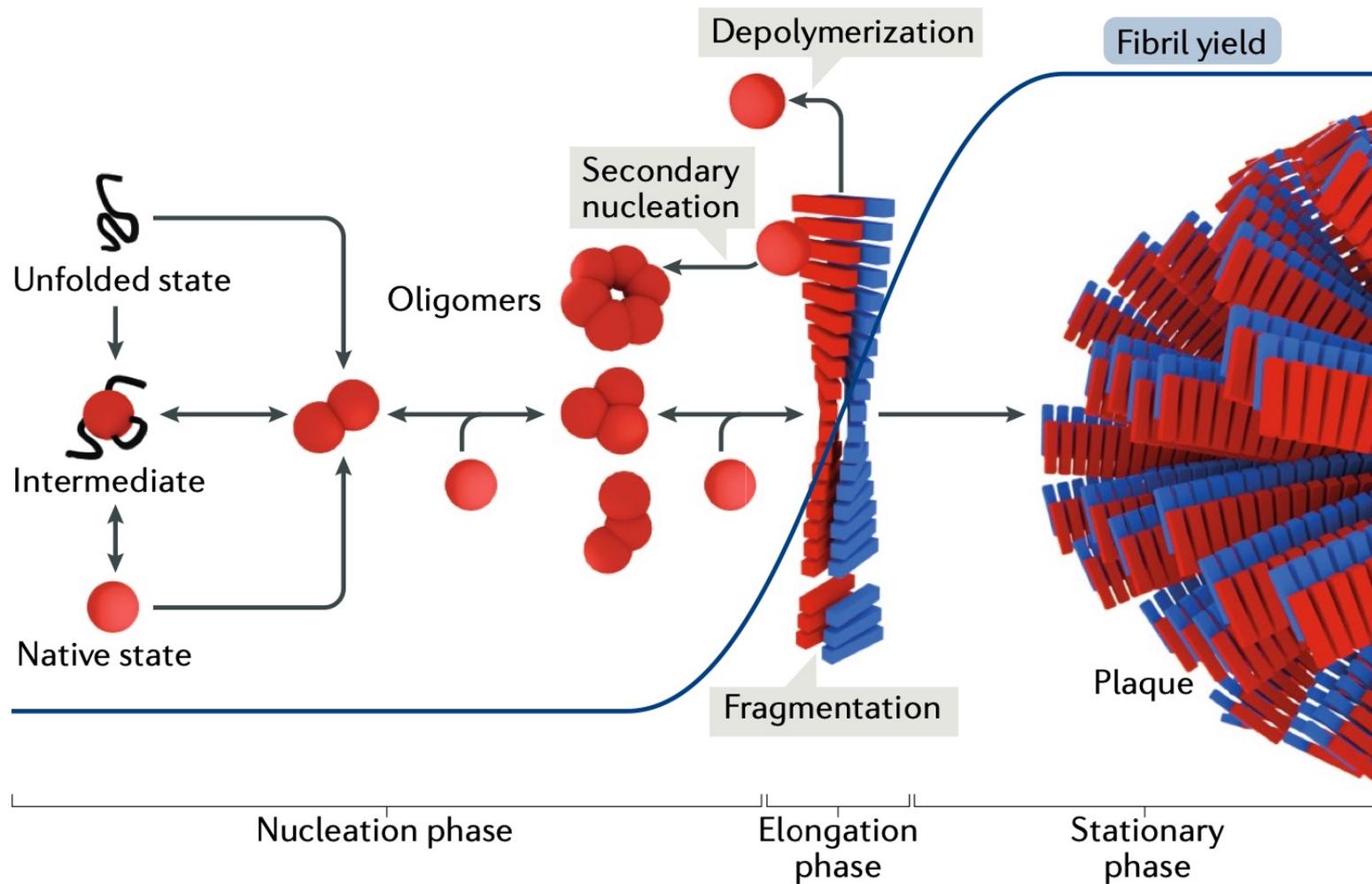


The aggregation of peptides into **amyloid fibrils** is the hallmark of misfolding diseases known as **amyloidosis**.

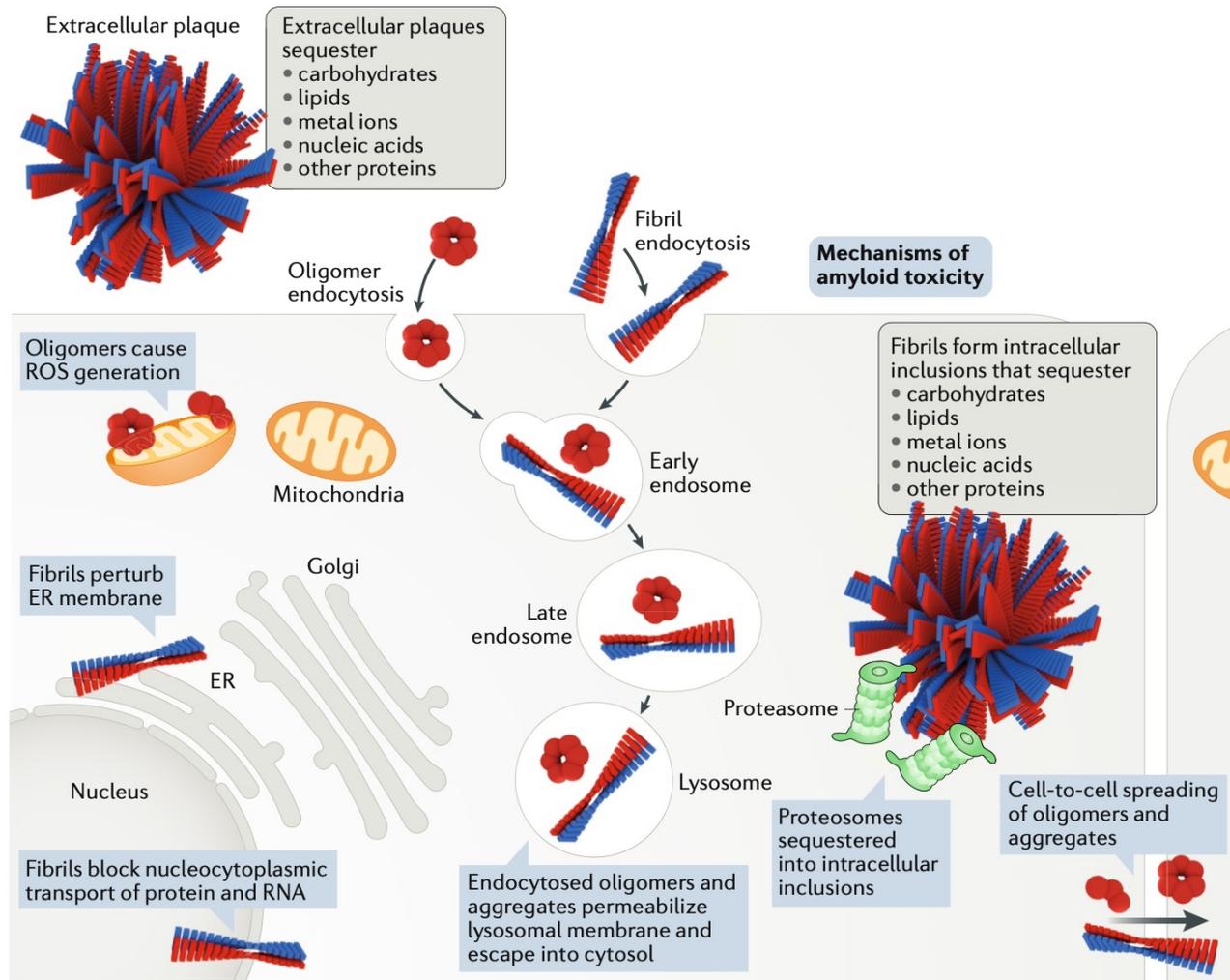
e.g.

- **Alzheimer's disease**
- **Parkinson's disease**
- **Huntington's disease**

The process of amyloid formation

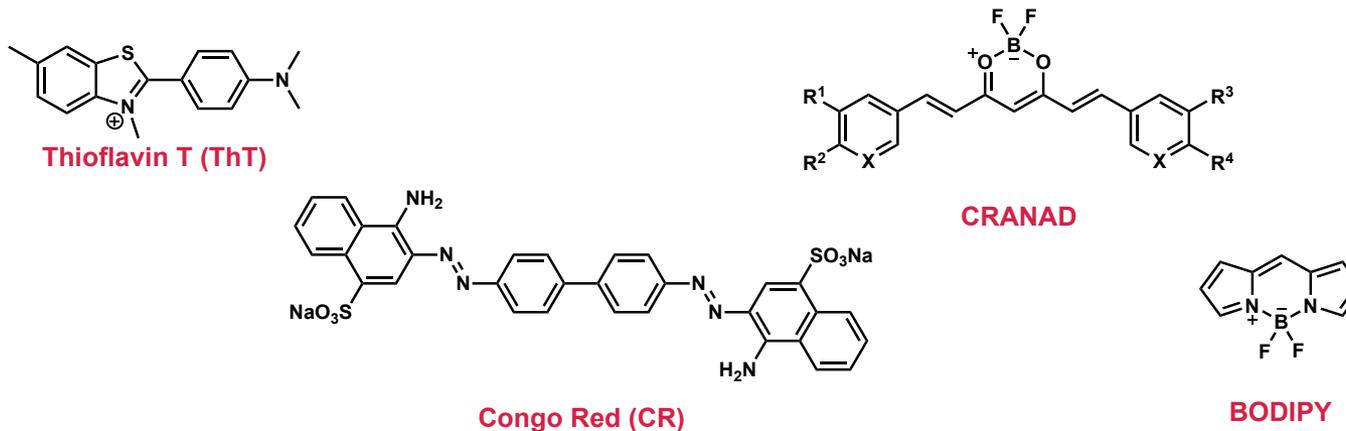


Cytotoxicity of amyloids



Not only fibrils but oligomers represent cytotoxicity.

Fluorescent probe for amyloid



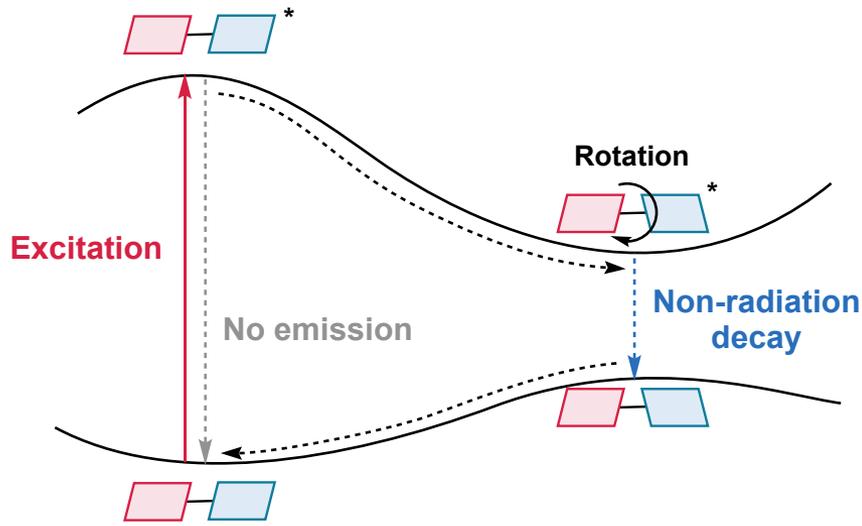
The strengths of fluorescent probe

- ✓ Real-time monitoring of self-assembly in vitro
- ✓ Recognition of amyloids in vivo
- ✓ To identify aggregation inhibitor
- ✓ Lower cost than PET (Positron Emission Tomography)
- ✓ No exposure to radioactivity

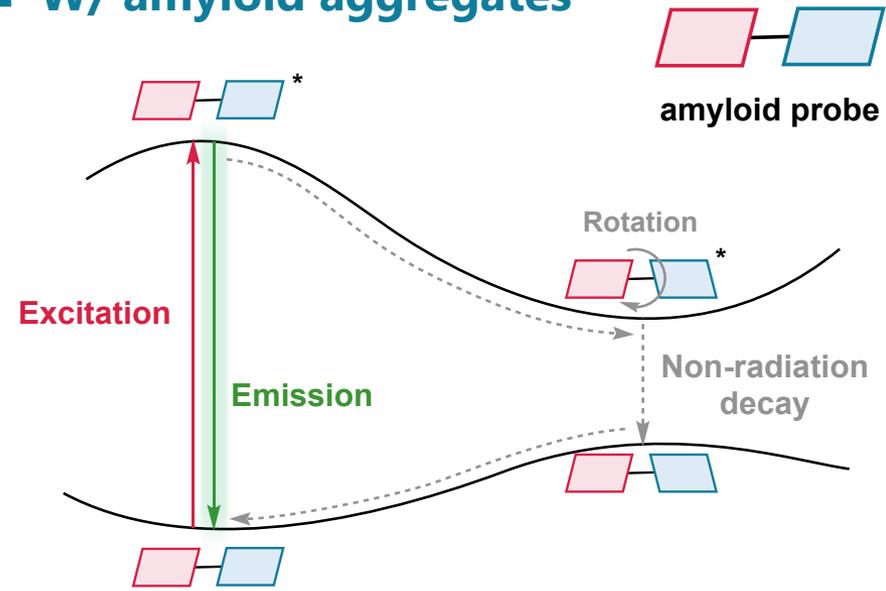
Especially, **ThT** has been used to elucidate the process of aggregate formation.

The mechanism of amyloid recognition

■ W/O amyloid aggregates



■ W/ amyloid aggregates



- In the unbound state, **intramolecular rotation causes rapid self-quenching.**
→ **No light emission**
- The presence of amyloid aggregates **restricts the intramolecular rotation.**
→ **The enhancement of fluorescence intensity**

Problems

- It is still **unclear** how amyloid probes bind to fibrils.
- **Heterogeneous structures** of amyloids *in vivo* make it difficult to elucidate their pharmacophore.
- For accurate diagnosis, **protein-selective amyloid probes** need to be developed.

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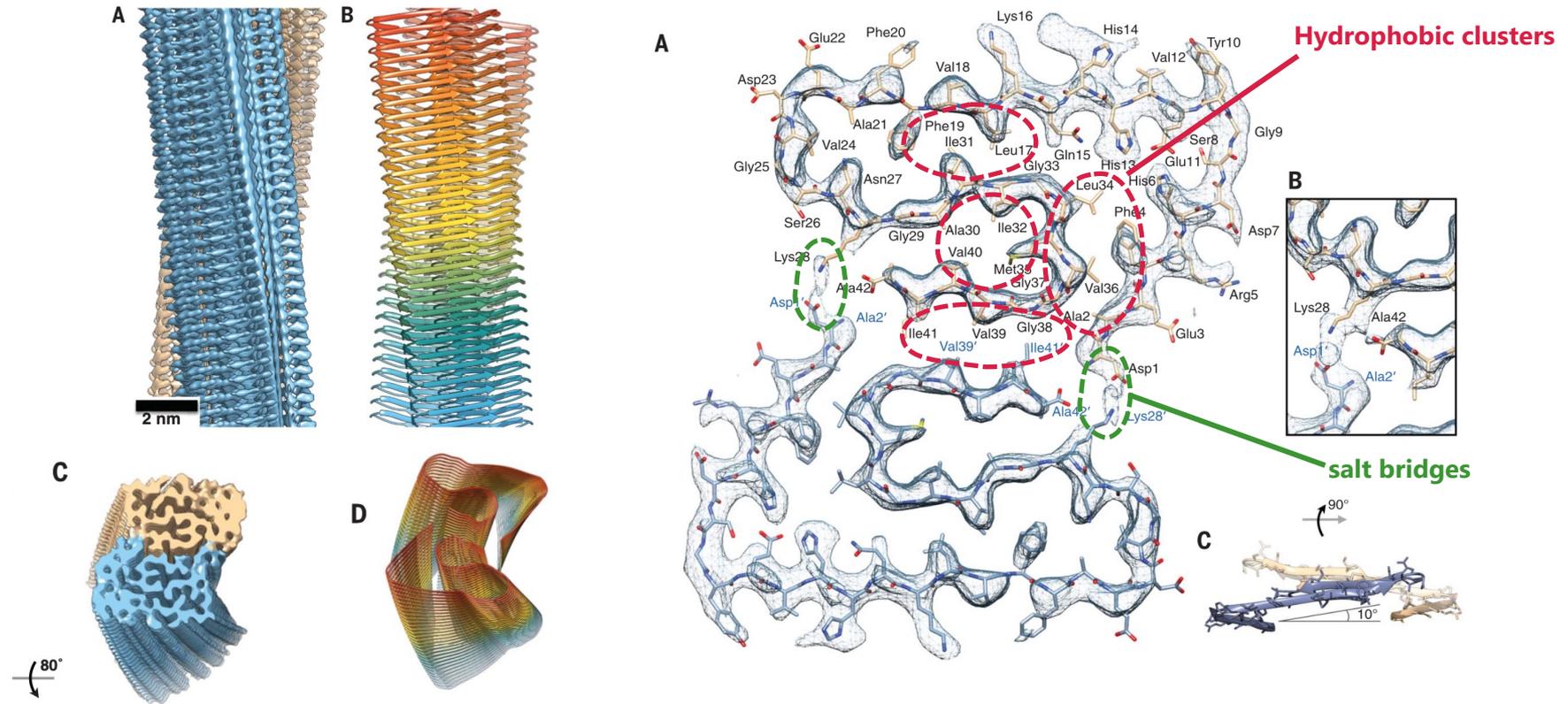
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The structure of A β fibrils

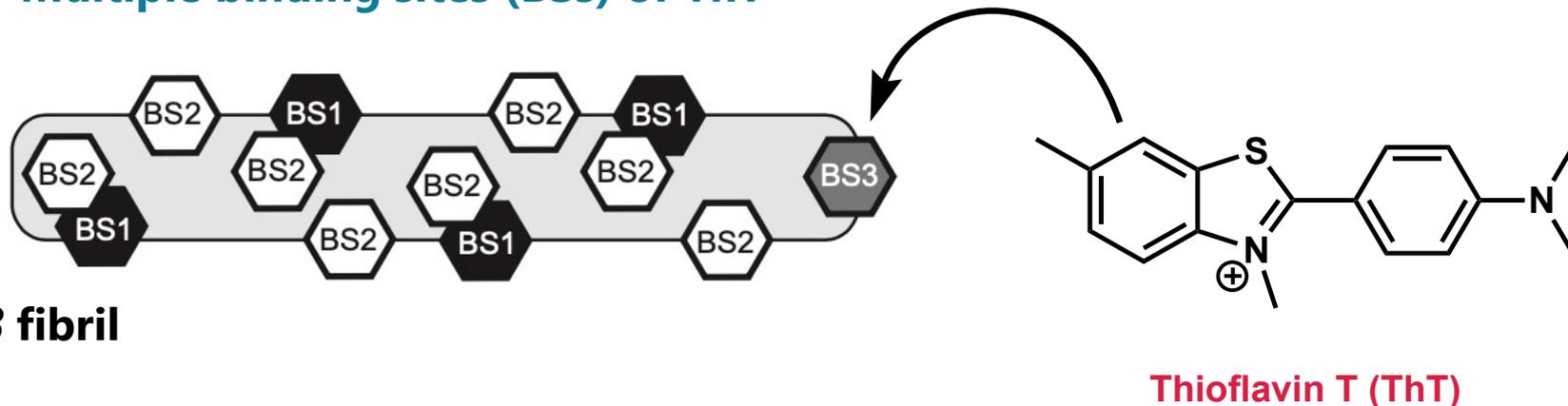
■ Fibril structure of A β determined by cryo-EM



- **Two twisted protofilaments** composed of A β (1–42) molecules stacked in a parallel.
- A single A β subunit forms an **LS-shaped** structure.

Binding sites of ThT

■ Multiple binding sites (BSs) of ThT



➤ BS1 & BS2

- **Relatively abundant** (approximately one site per 4-35 monomers)
- BS1 and BS2 are thought to be in **close proximity** (::FRET).
- Composed of **surface grooves created by aligned side chains**

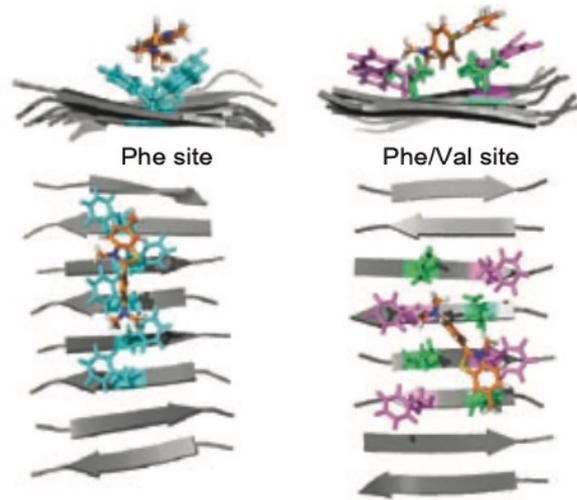
➤ BS3

- **Less abundant** than BS1 and BS2 (approximately one site for 300 monomers)

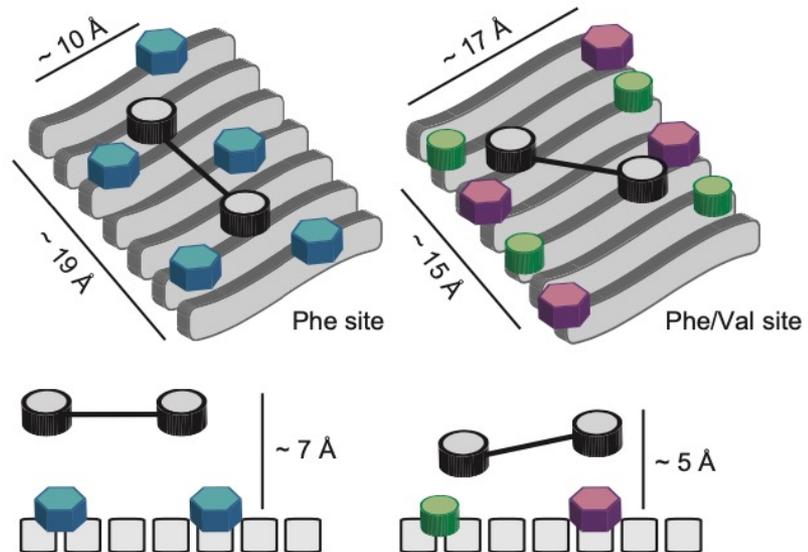
Binding sites of ThT

■ Two binding channels (molecular docking study)

C The ThT binding channels are lined with aromatic and hydrophobic residues located on both faces of protofibrils



D Different features define the most populated ThT binding sites



At least five, spatially consecutive, hydrophobic (Phe only or Phe and Val) side chains are important.

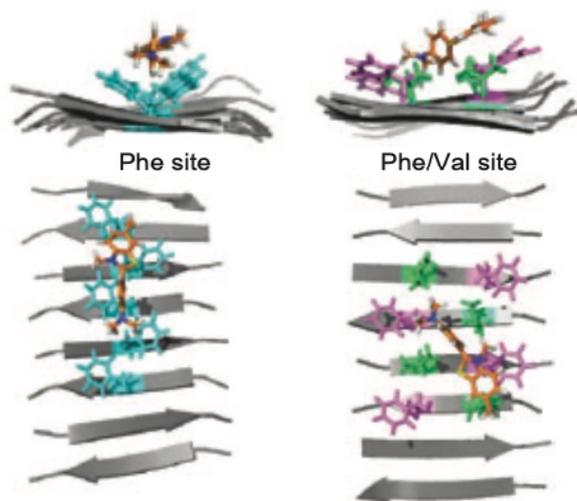
→ Hydrophobic interactions and π - π stacking

(Similar findings have been reported by Dr. Koide and Dr. Makabe)

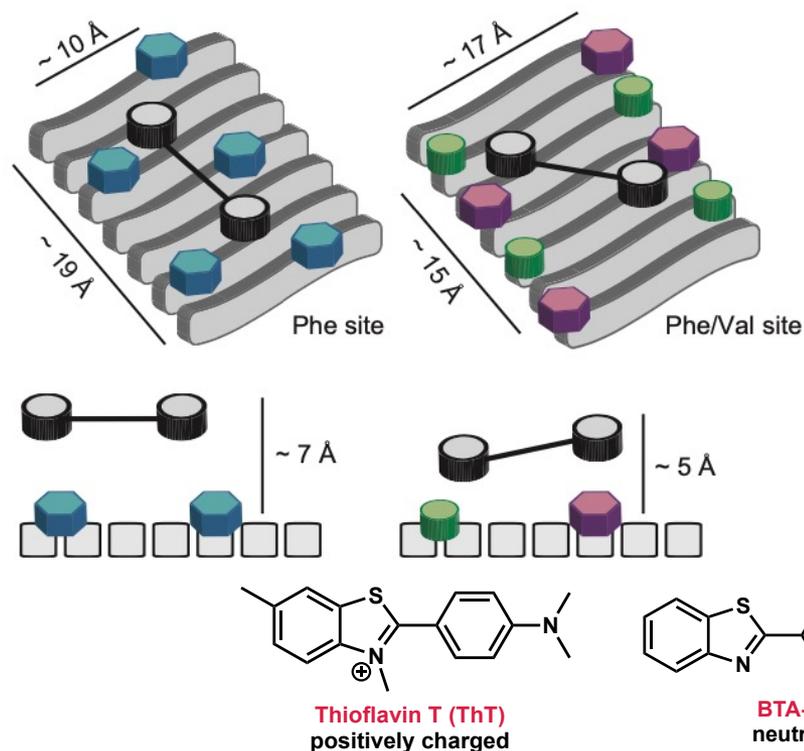
Binding sites of ThT

■ Two binding channels (molecular docking study)

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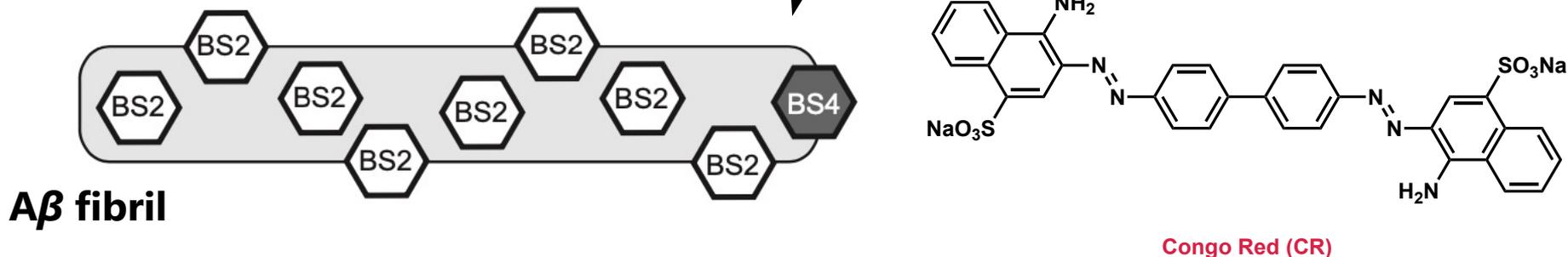
Neutral BTA-1 has much better affinity to A β fibrils

→ Neutral molecules can **bind deeper** into the **hydrophobic binding grooves**.

e.g. Phe only site (left) is **deeper and narrower** than Phe/Val site (right).

Binding sites of Congo Red (CR)

■ Multiple binding sites of ThT



➤ BS2

One site per 3 monomers

Shared by ThT (The competition between ThT and CR was reported.)

➤ BS4

Unique binding site for CR (Discrete binding sites of ThT and CR was also observed.)

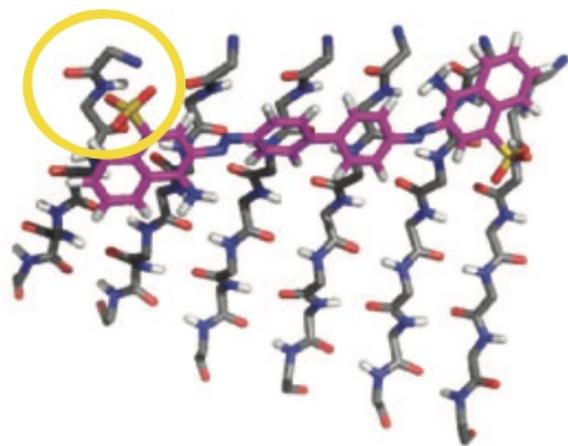
Lower density

BS4 may be **at the face of the growing fibril.**

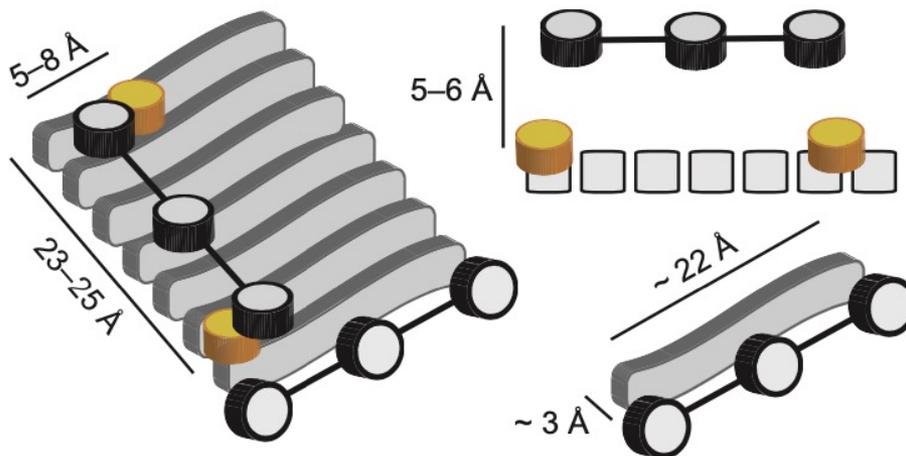
Binding sites of Congo Red (CR)

■ The binding channel of CR (molecular docking study)

D Charged groups of CR make polar contacts with amyloid fibrils backbone

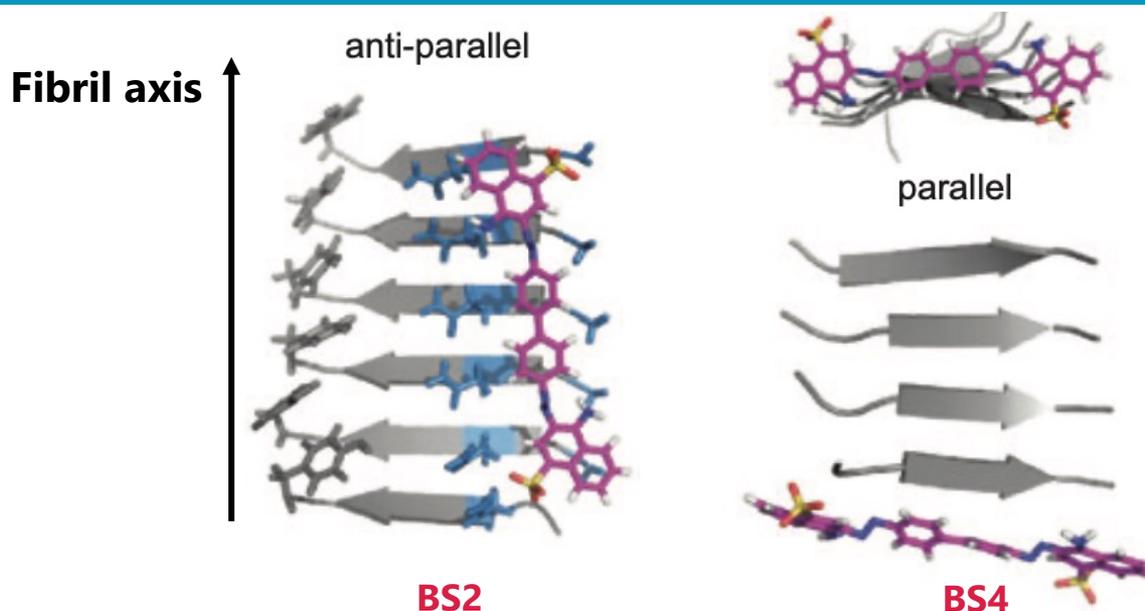


E Polar contacts drive CR binding



- The CR-binding channel is **longer** and **narrower** than that of ThT.
- The aligned residues are largely **polar and non-aromatic** (such as **Asn** and **Gly**).
→ **ionic or polar interactions** may be important.

Binding sites of Congo Red (CR)

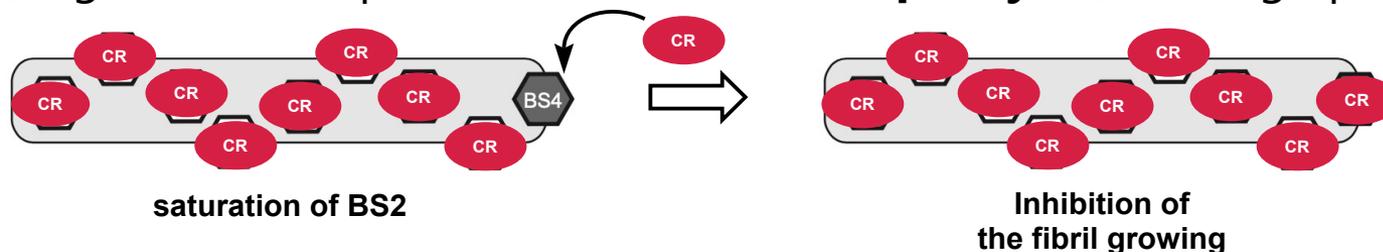


BS2 → Approximately **78 %** of the total CR binding clusters

BS4 → **11 %** of the total binding

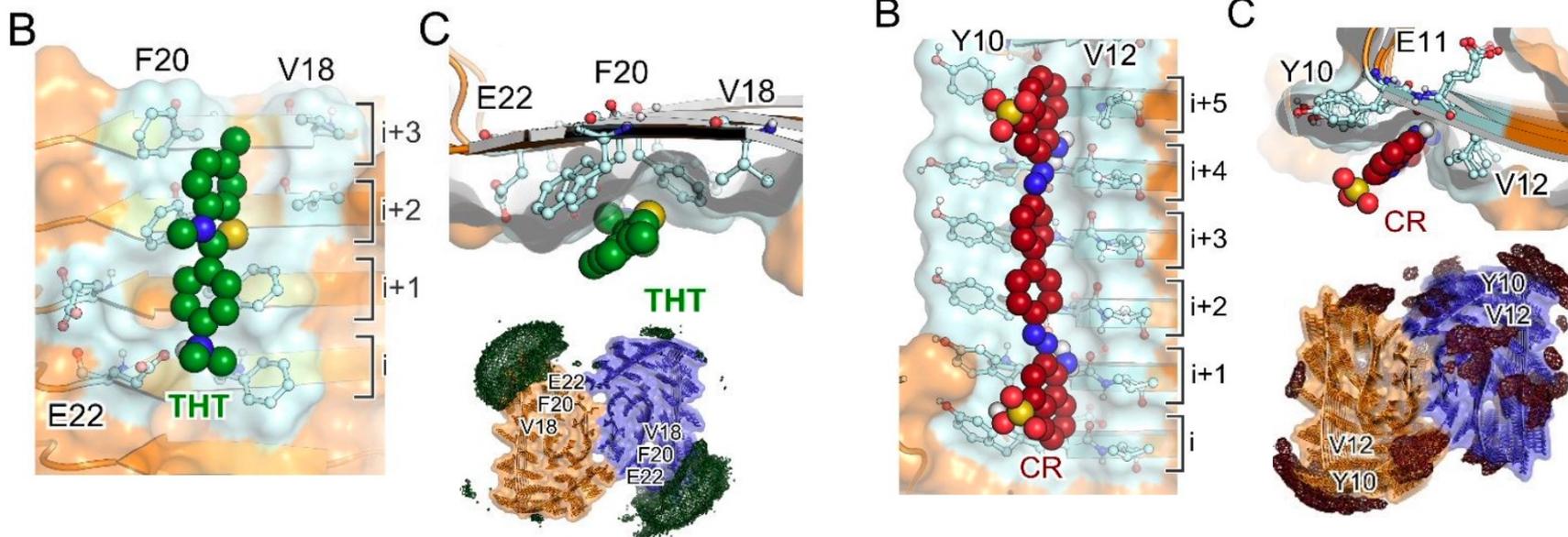


An explanation for the difference between CR **binding affinity** (K_d high nM ~ low μ M) and its **inhibition capacity** (K_d mid-high μ M)



Another example of binding modes

■ Binding sites of ThT and CR (molecular dynamic simulation)



■ ThT

- ThT binds across **multiple Aβ peptides**, forming **π - π stacking** with **F20**.
→ It recognizes only Aβ fibrils (not single Aβ).

■ CR

- CR binds to the groove between **Y10** and **V12** forming edge-to-face **aromatic** and **hydrophobic interactions**.
- Carbonyl oxygen → Forming **hydrogen bond** with **E11**
- Sulfonate group → **Exposed to the solvent**

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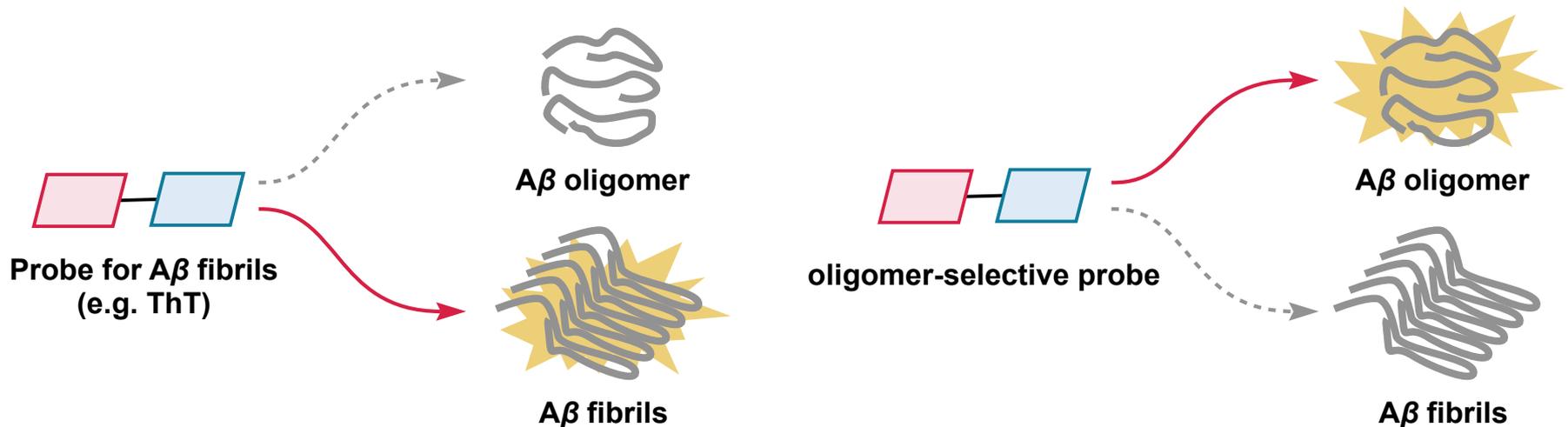
● Selectivity of probes

1. Selectivity to $A\beta$ oligomers

2. Selectivity to tau aggregates

● Summary

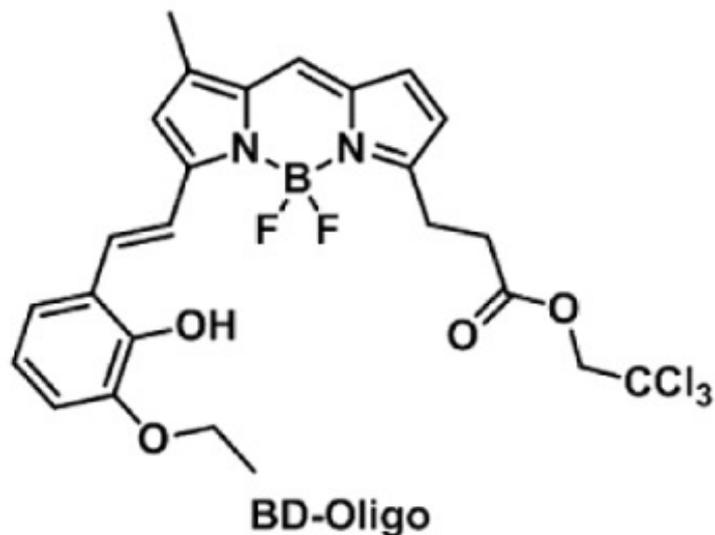
Selective detection for A β oligomers



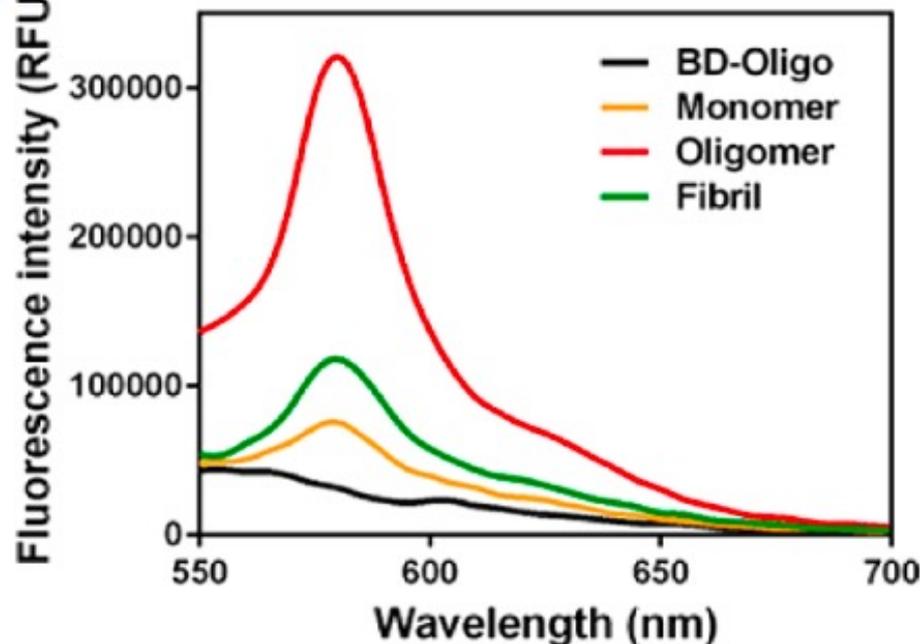
- **Oligomeric soluble A β** is responsible for the pathogenesis of Alzheimer's disease.
- There are a number of fibril-specific dyes but **few dyes which preferentially recognize A β oligomers**.
- It is necessary to develop **oligomer-selective small fluorescent molecular probes**.

Selective detection for $A\beta$ oligomers

a



b



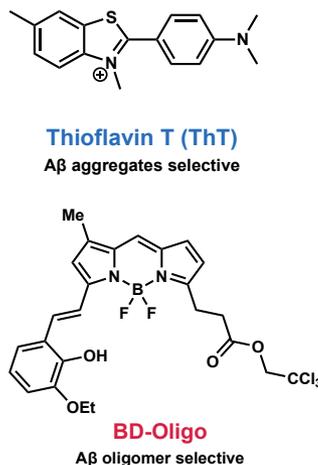
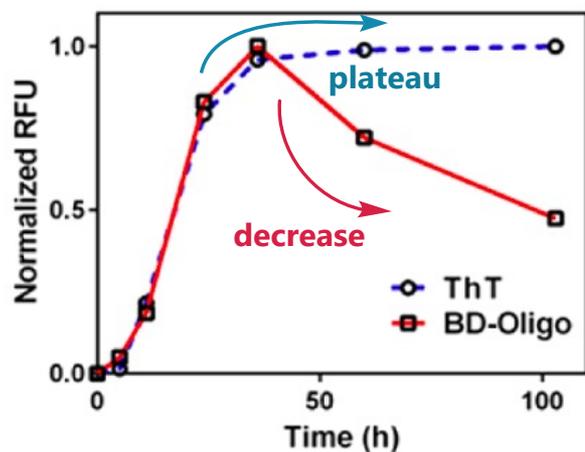
The highest fluorescence enhancement with $A\beta$ oligomers



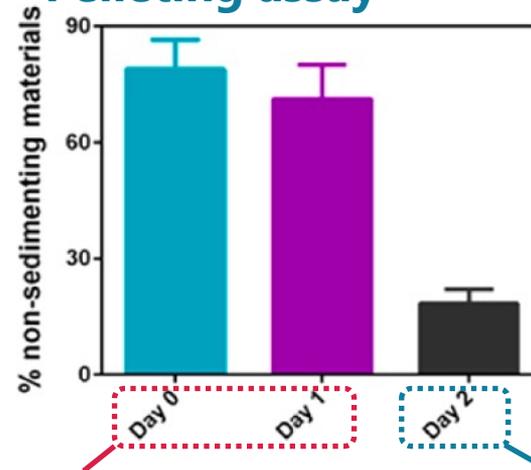
BD-Oligo preferentially recognizes $A\beta$ oligomers over monomers or fibrils

Selective detection for A β oligomers

ThT & BD-Oligo



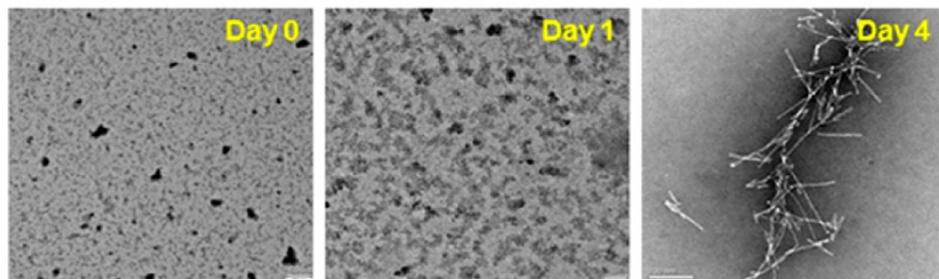
Pelleting assay



The majority of A β is still in solution

A β starts to form a large segmenting materials

TEM images



Day 0 and Day 1: No sign of fibrils

Day 4: Fibril formation was observed.

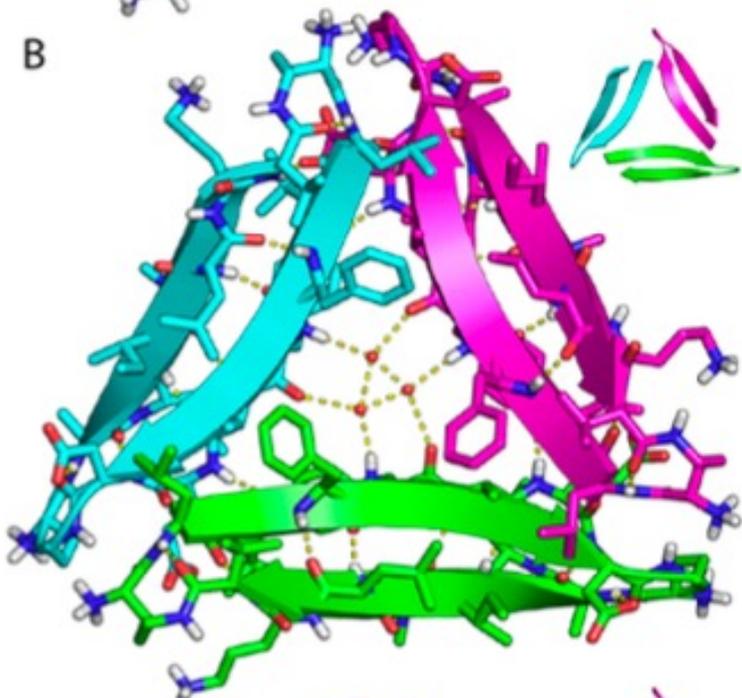
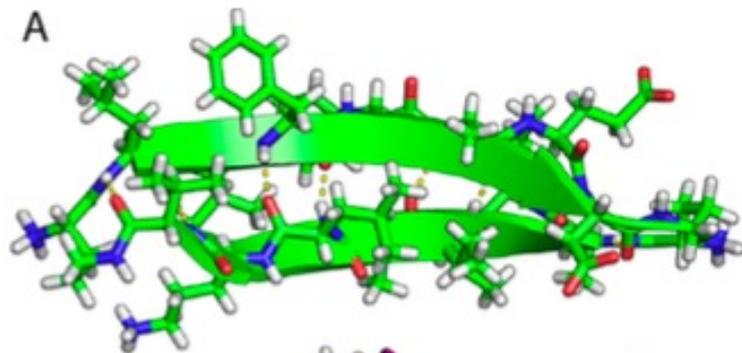
The presence of β -sheet structure alone does not suffice to explain the binding specificity of BD-Oligo.



What is the structural feature of A β oligomers?

A working model of A β oligomers

■ The structure of the mimic of A β ₁₇₋₃₆ trimer



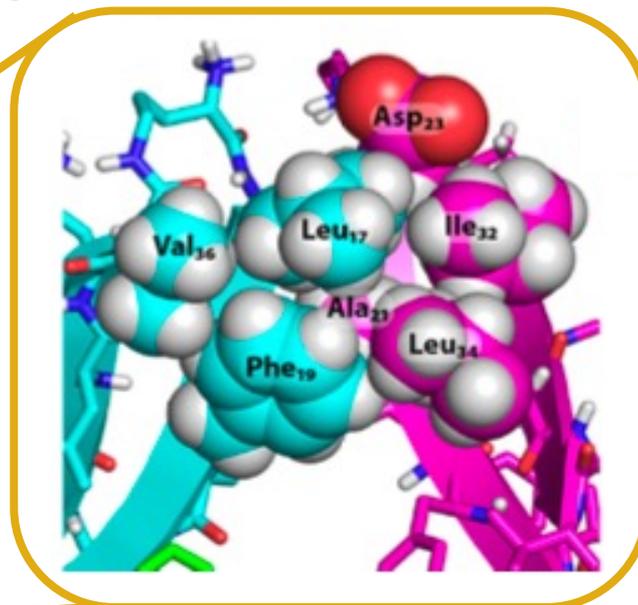
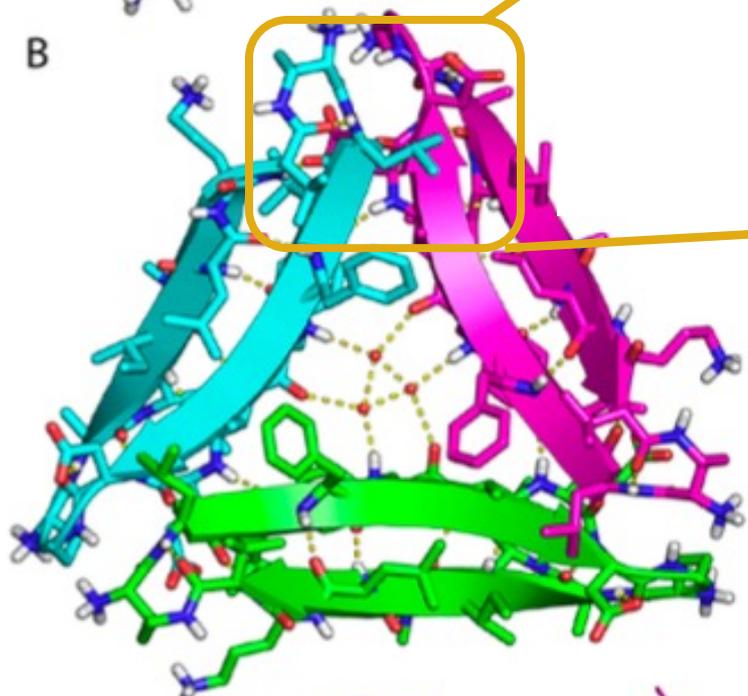
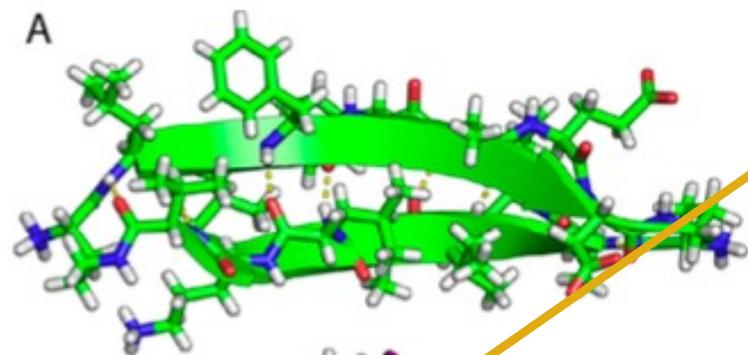
Structural features of A β trimer

- ✓ The trimer consists of **three twisted β -hairpins**.
- ✓ Phe19 and Val36 form **hydrophobic patches** at the center of A β trimer.

Importantly, these hydrophobic patches are exposed *only in A β oligomers* but *not in A β fibrils* (oligomer-specific).

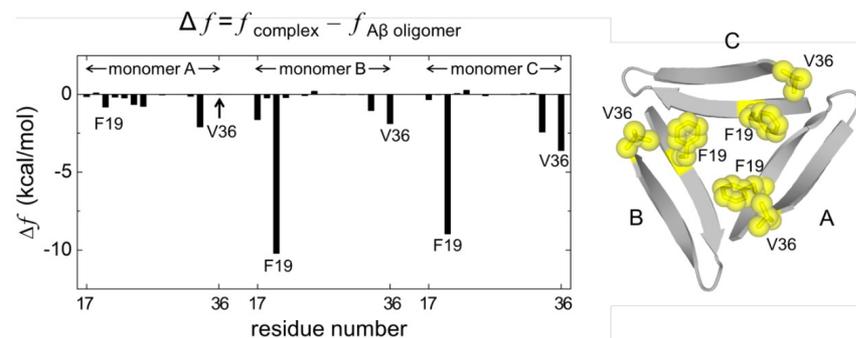
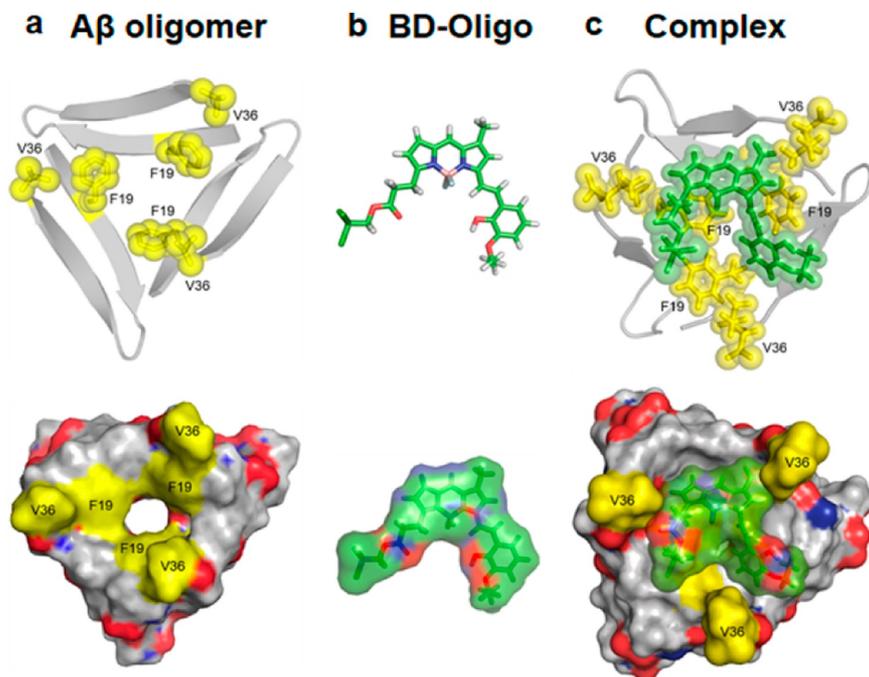
A working model of A β oligomers

■ The structure of the mimic of A β ₁₇₋₃₆ trimer



The side chains of **Leu₁₇**, **Phe₁₉**, **Ala₂₁**, **Asp₂₃**, **Ile₃₂**, **Leu₃₄** and **Val₃₆** form **extensive hydrophobic clusters**.

Molecular docking using working model

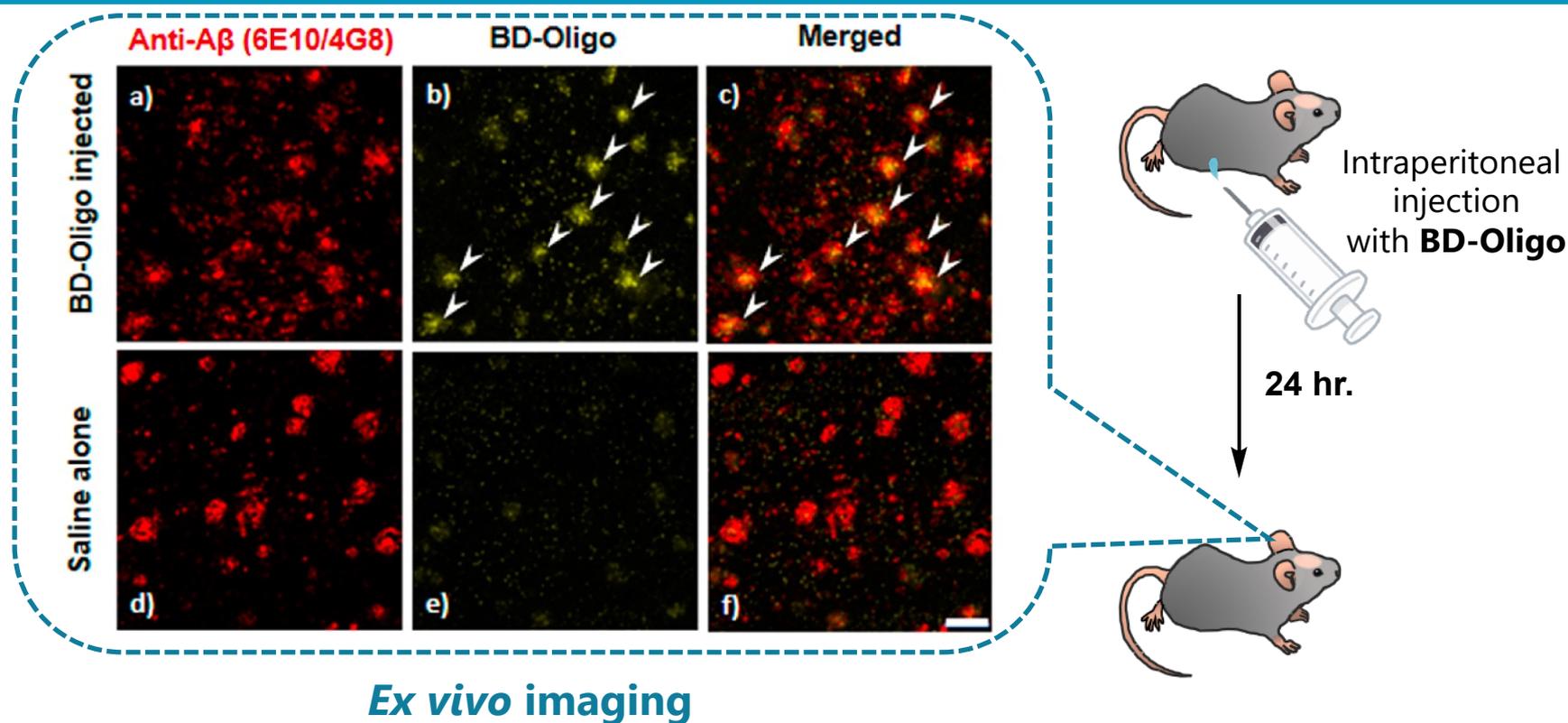


Site-directed thermodynamics analysis of the BD-Oligo complex with A β oligomer (A β 17-36)

BD-oligo recognizes F19 and V36 in A β oligomers.

- **Hydrophobic patches (F19)**
 π - π stacking with aromatic ring of BD-oligo
- **V36**
Hydrophobic interaction / CO---H bonding with carbonyl group of BD-oligo

Ex vivo binding of BD-Oligo in AD mouse brain

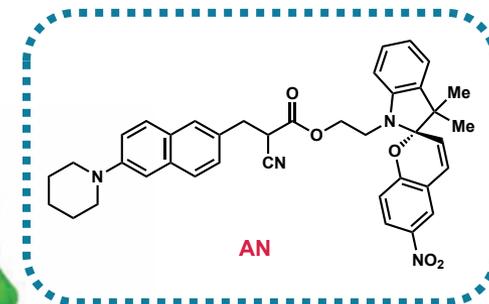
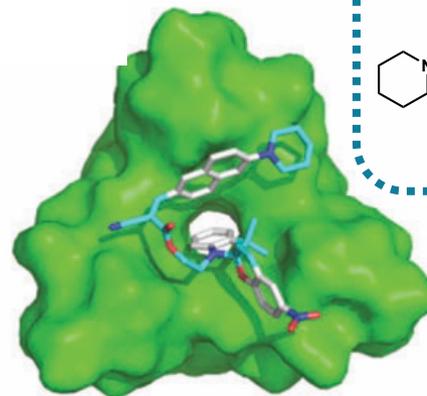
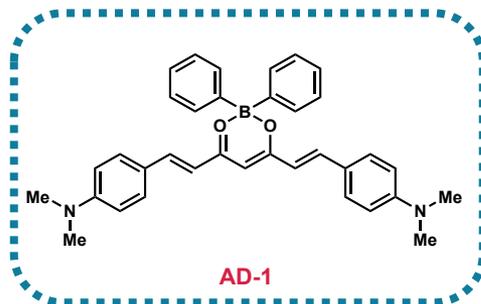
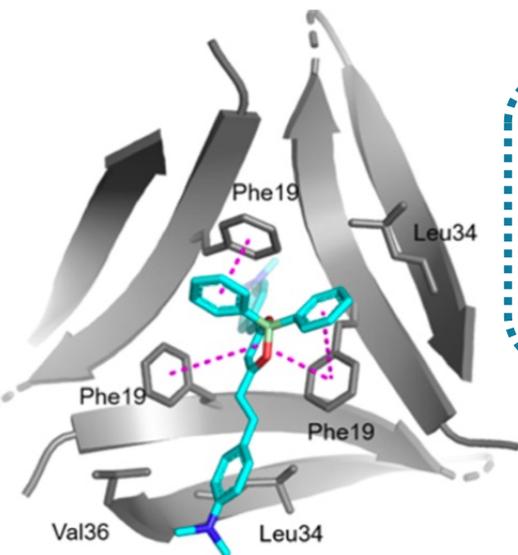


BD-Oligo labeling not only appeared in the **central core of A β plaques** but was also present in **the periphery of plaques**.



This result reflects the hypothesis that **A β plaque may function as a reservoir for soluble oligomers**.

Other examples of A β oligomer probes



*AD-1 also recognizes A β monomers and aggregates

The main binding mode is the **π - π stacking interactions** between **Phe 19** and **aromatic rings** of probes.

Their twisted structures may affect the binding affinity to oligomers ??

left: Yiran Ge *et al.* *ACS Chem. Neurosci.* **2021**, 12, 19, 3683–3689.

right: Guanglei Lv *et al.* *Chem. Commun.*, **2016**, 52, 8865–8868.

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1. Selectivity to $A\beta$ oligomers
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Difficulties in developing tau-selective probes

- Common β -sheet structure
- The lack of clear pharmacophore
- The structural diversity of tau proteins
- PTMs (Post-Translational Modification)

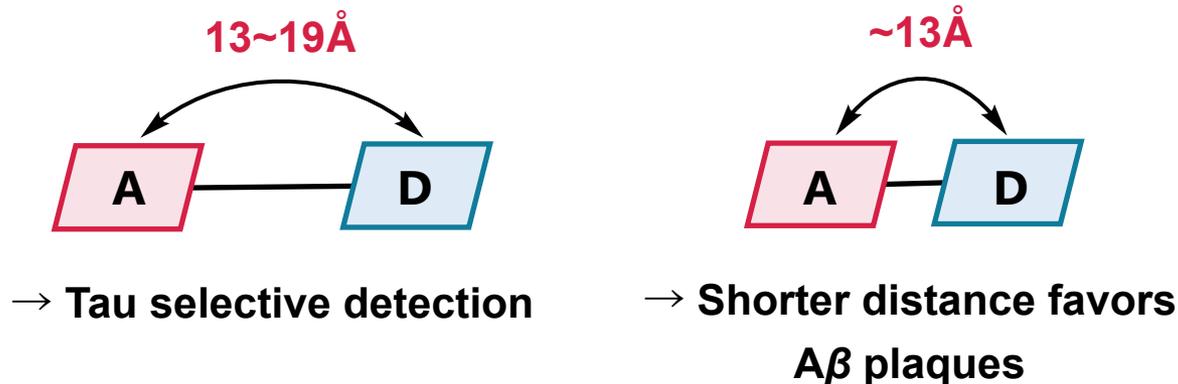


Rational design of tau-selective probes is difficult...

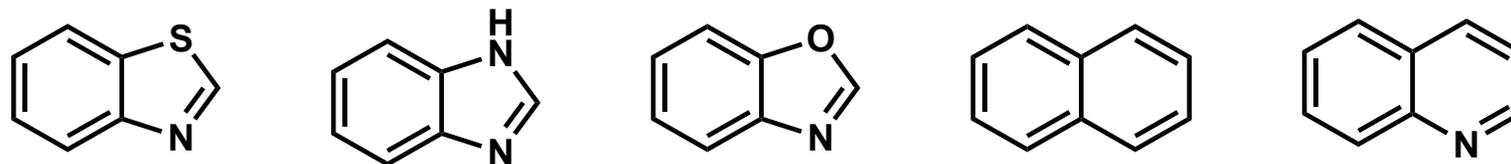
However, there are **two hypotheses** to guide the molecular design of tau binders.

Two hypotheses

1. A distance of **13 to 19Å** between the donor and acceptor parts benefits tau selectivity.



2. Dyes containing **fused ring system** tend to have tau selectivity over Aβ fibrils.



Examples of fused ring system

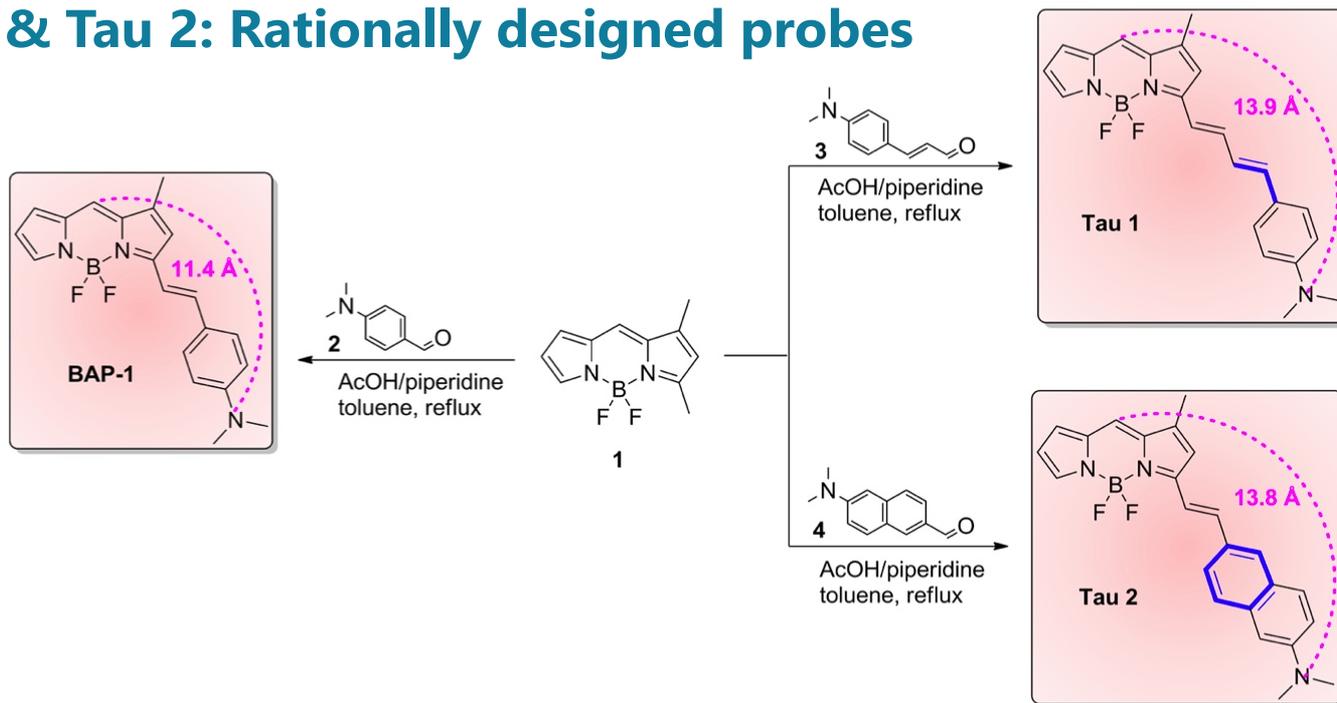
Ariza, M. et al. *J. Med. Chem.* **2015**, 58, 4365–4382.

Maruyama M. et al. *Neuron*, **2013**, 79, 1094–1108.

Peter Verwilst et al. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2017**, 139, 13393–13403.

New tau-selective probes

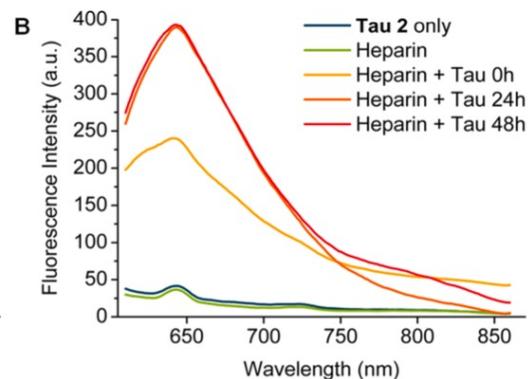
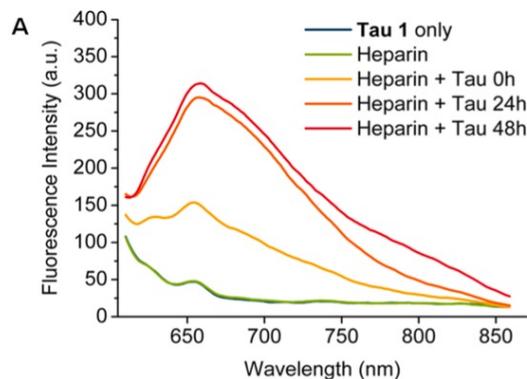
Tau 1 & Tau 2: Rationally designed probes



- ✓ **About 14Å between donor and acceptor**
- ✓ **Fused ring system**
 - More likely to interact with the β -sheet fibrillar aggregates present in PHF-tau
- ✓ **Short synthetic route**
- ✓ **Tau selective detection *in vitro* and *in vivo***

Selective responses to Tau aggregates

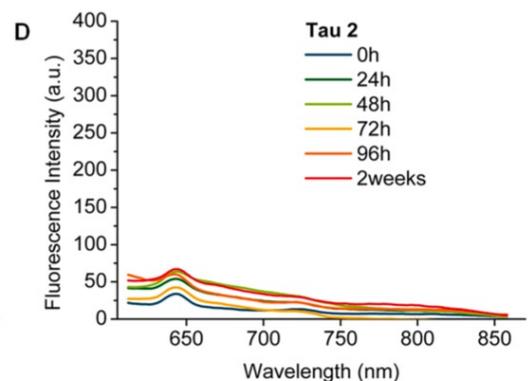
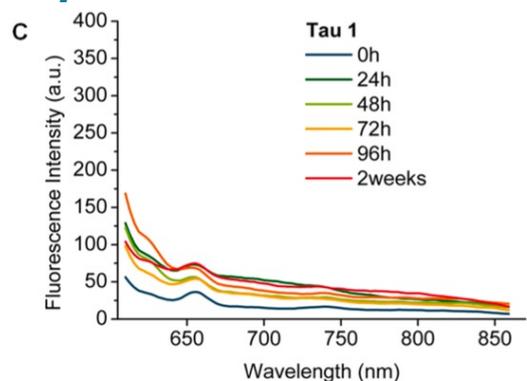
Tau



w/ tau aggregates

- ✓ No significant fluorescence in heparin only
- ✓ Time-dependent **fluorescent enhancement**

A β

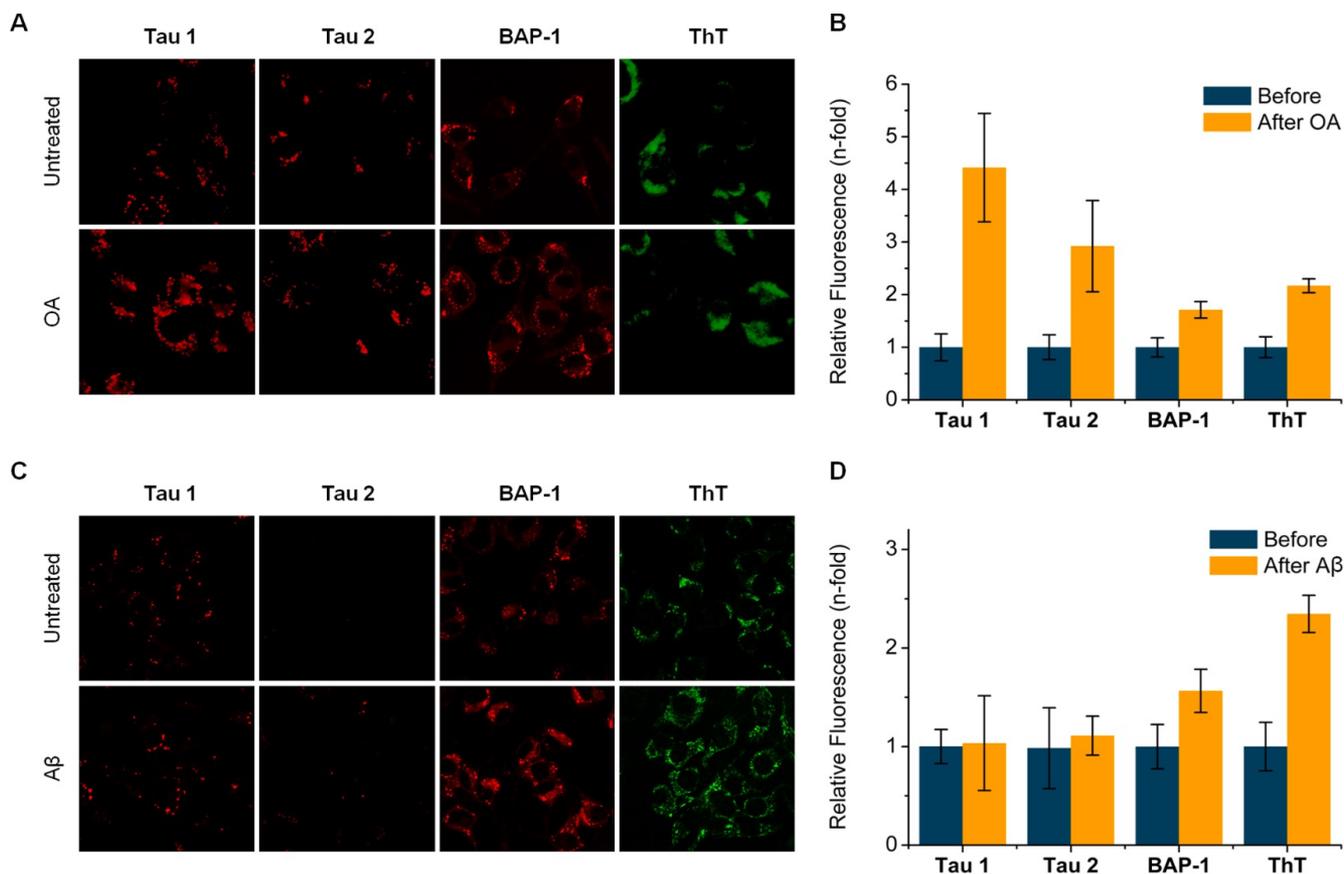


w/ A β aggregates

- ✓ **Trivial responses** to the presence of A β aggregates

Tau 1&2 are highly selective to Tau protein aggregates over A β aggregates

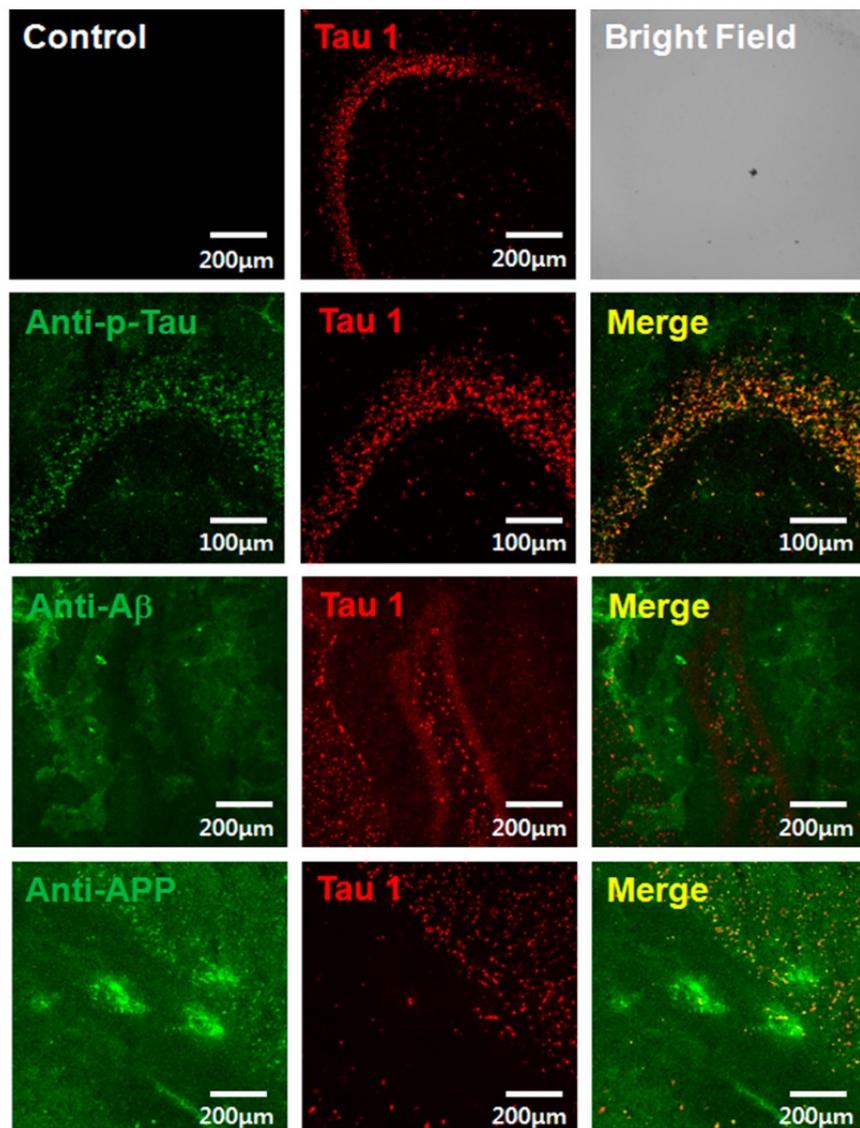
In cell assay



*OA: Okadaic acid(an inhibitor of phosphatases) → *In vitro* tau hyperphosphorylation model

Both of two probes (especially **Tau 1**) are capable of detecting **hyperphosphorylated tau aggregates selectively over Aβ aggregates even in cellular environments.**

Ex vivo imaging of Tau 1



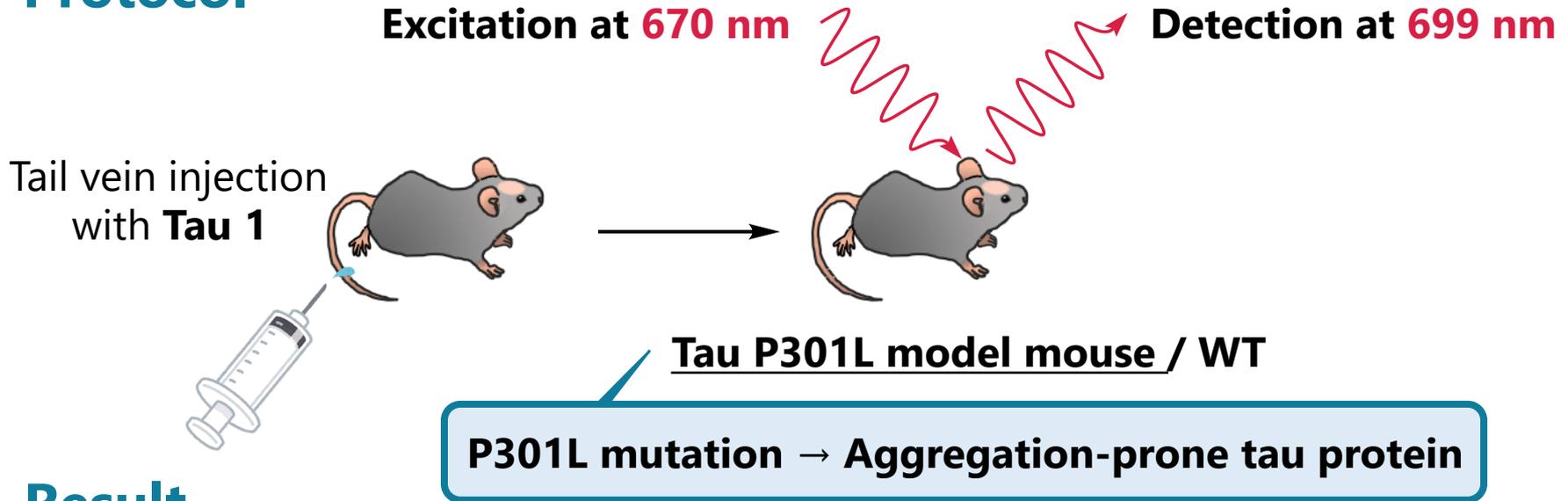
- ✓ **Anti tau and Tau 1**
→ a very high degree of overlap
- ✓ **Anti A β / APP and Tau 1**
→ virtually no overlap



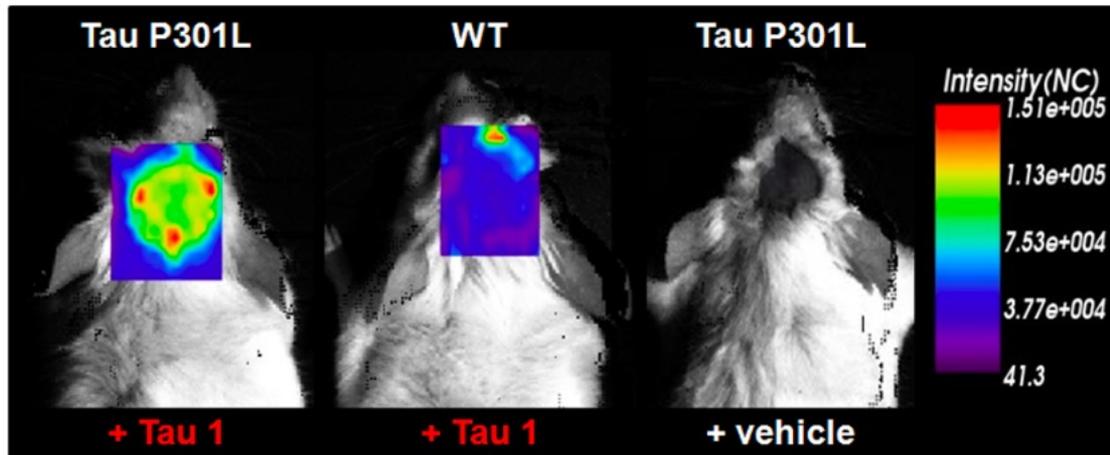
**Tau 1 co-localized with tau
but not with A β
under these conditions**

In vivo imaging of Tau 1

Protocol



Result

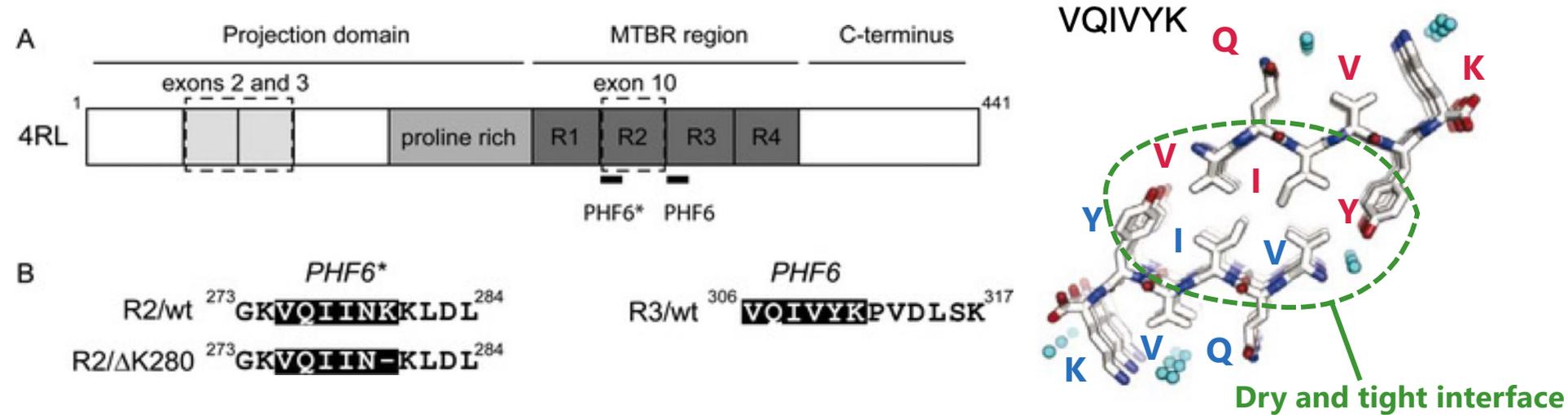


A significantly enhanced fluorescence
in the transgenic mouse model



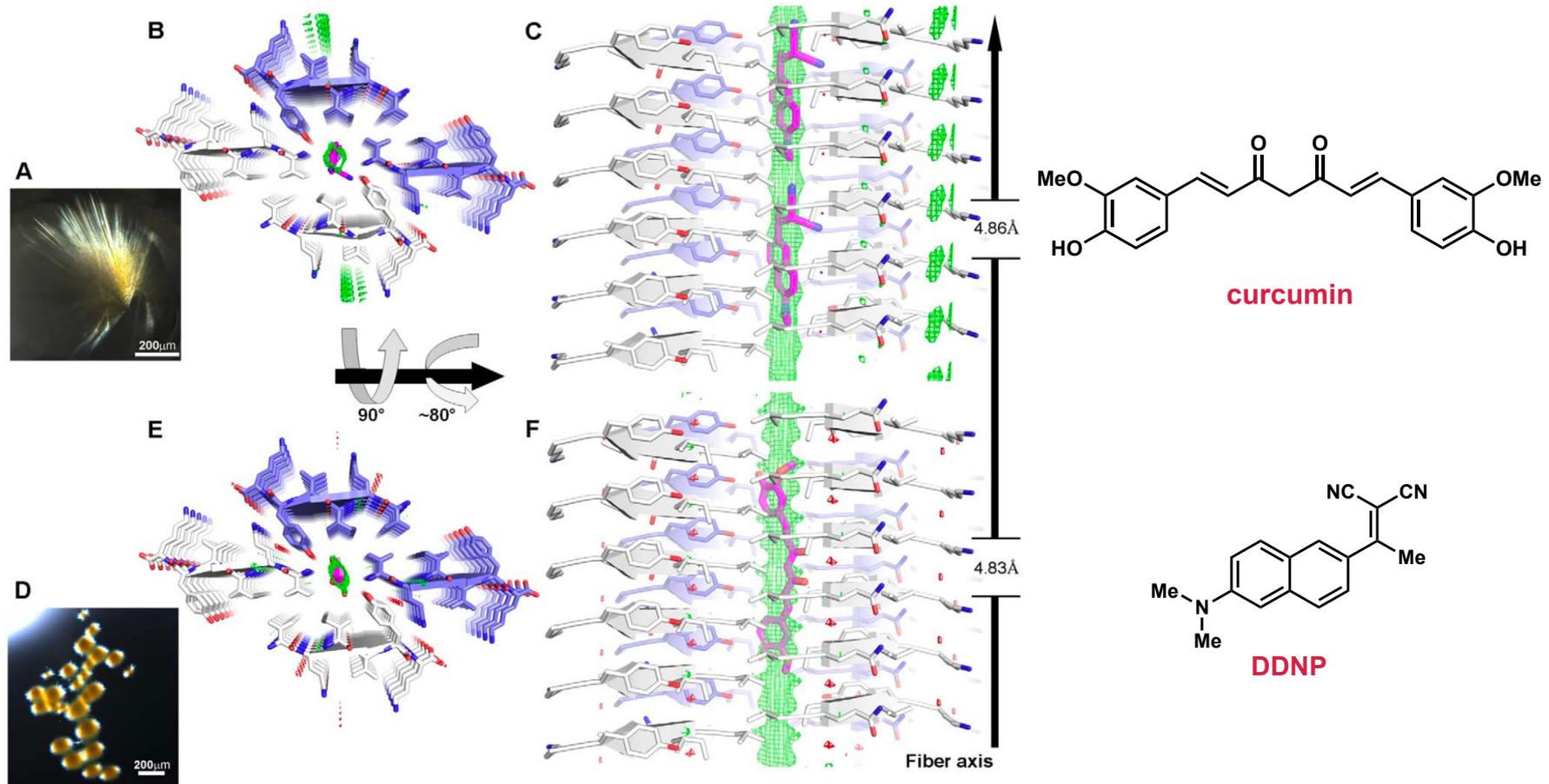
**Tau 1 can detect the presence of
tau tangles in mice !!**

PHF fragment ($^{306}\text{VQIVYK}^{311}$)



- **PHF sequence** has been demonstrated to play a **pivotal role** in the aggregation of tau protein.
- The crystal structures of **VQIVYK peptide** consists **the steric zipper structure**.
- Co-crystallization with some compounds reveals a **propensity to generate tunnels** along the fibril axis (See next page).

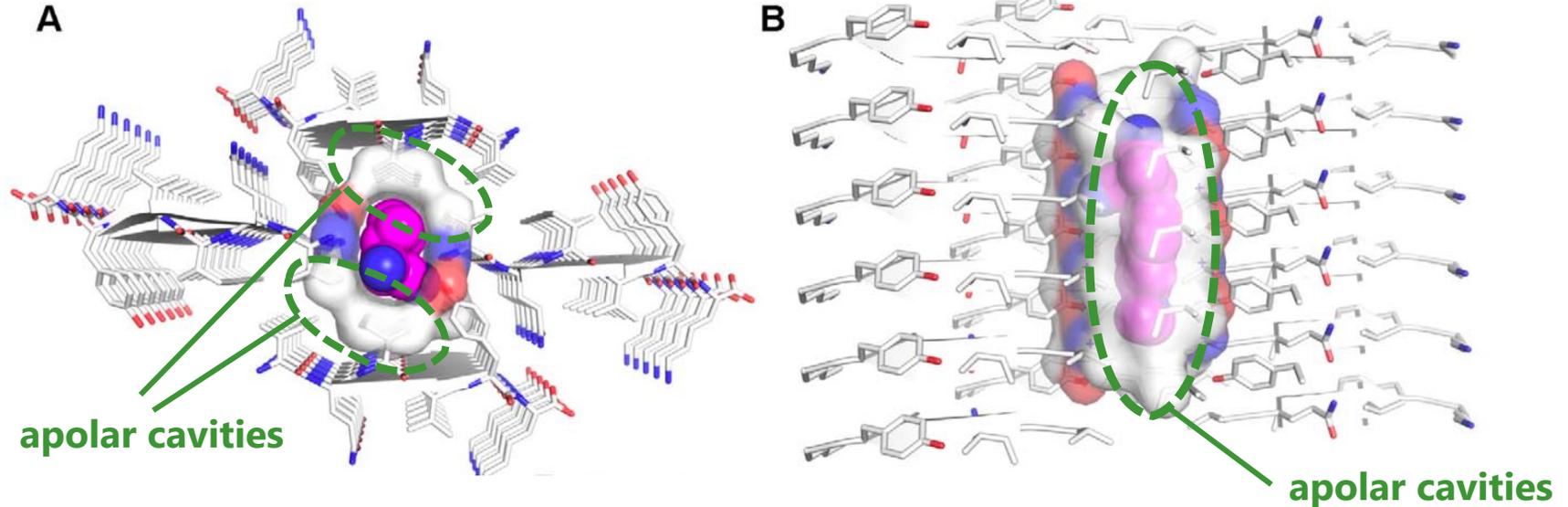
Co-crystallization with dyes



These dyes bind to the β -sheets with their long axes parallel to the fiber axis.

Co-crystallization with dyes

■ Crystal structure (DDNP)



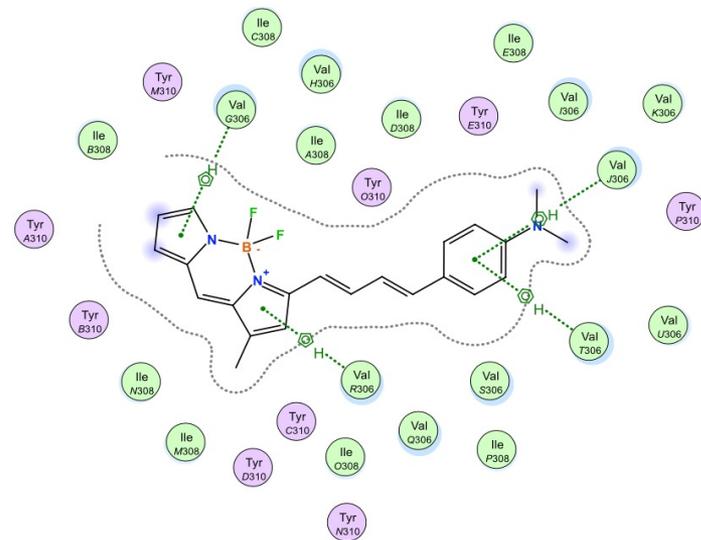
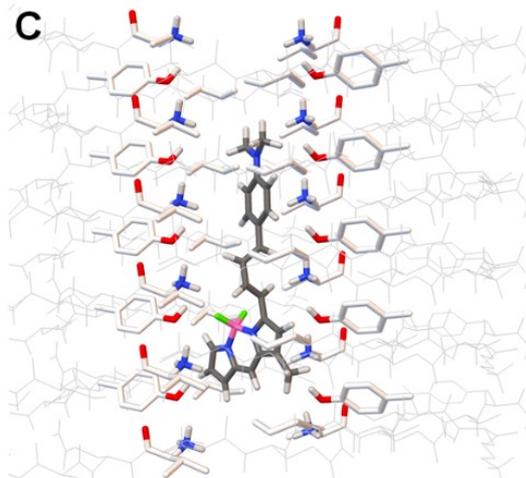
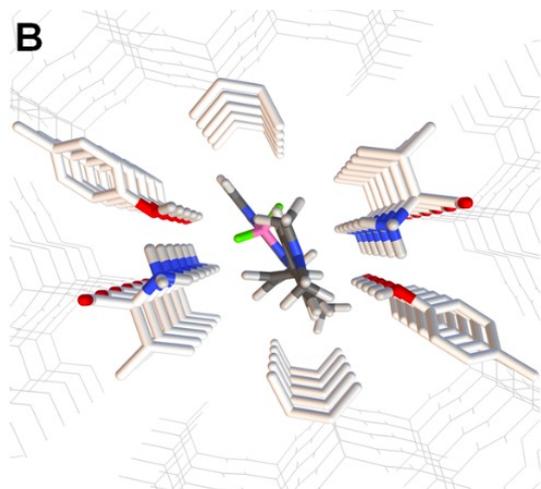
The atomic groups lining the tunnel are about half **apolar** (colored in white) and half **polar** (colored in red and bleu).



This cylindrical, partially apolar structure favors various apolar or aromatic compounds.

These cavities also provide binding sites of apolar drugs (benzodiazepines and anesthetics etc.)
→ An explanation for **the altered pharmacokinetic properties** and **increased sensitivity** in elderly patients ??

Molecular docking studies (Tau 1)

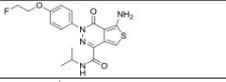
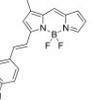
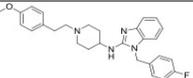
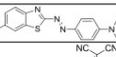
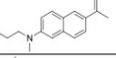
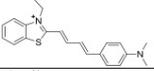
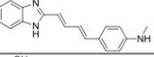
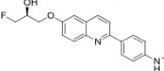


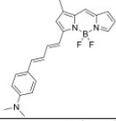
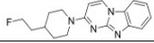
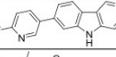
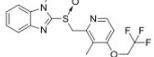
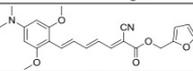
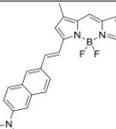
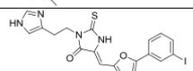
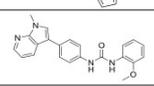
Tau 1 demonstrated a **tight fit** in the tunnel.

The main binding mode is the **hydrophobic interactions** between **aromatic rings of Tau1** and **side chains of Val**.

Molecular docking studies

■ Binding affinity of tau-selective probes

Name	Structure	Docking affinity (kCal/mol)
F-ATPZ-38		-5.0
BAP-1		-7.1
Astemizole		-7.4
I-PDB3		-7.6
FDDNP		-7.7
PBB5		-7.7
BF-188		-7.8
S-F-THK-5117		-7.8

Tau 1		-7.8
F-T808		-7.9
F-T807		-8.5
Methyl-Lansoprazole		L: -8.5 D: -8.7
3h		-8.6
Tau 2		-8.6
I-TH2		-8.9
N-(2-methoxyphenyl)-N'-[4-(1-methyl-1H-pyrrolo[2,3-c]pyridin-3-yl)phenyl]urea		-9.3
F-SKT04-137		-9.3

- Lower binding affinity of BAP-1 → Due to its **smaller surface area** ?
- F-ATPZ-38 & astemizole → Favorable to interact with **other topologies** ?

Table of contents

● Introduction

Background of amyloid-selective fluorescent probes

● Binding sites of probes to $A\beta$

● Selectivity of probes

1. Selectivity to $A\beta$ oligomers
2. Selectivity to tau aggregates

● Summary

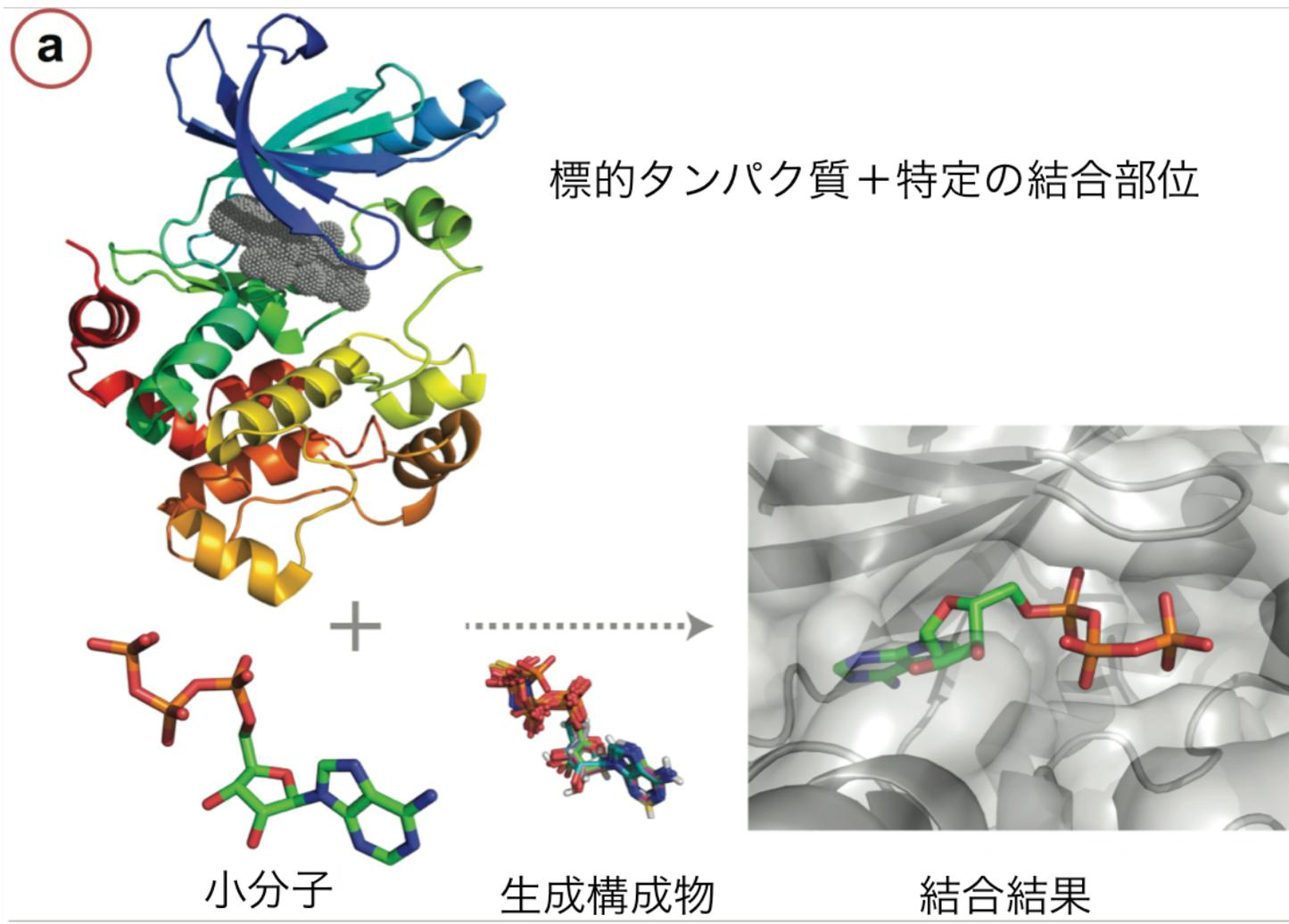
Summary

- The binding mode of amyloid probes has been **well studied** by utilizing **molecular docking simulation** or **molecular dynamics simulation**.
- These studies provide insights into the **pharmacophore** and keys to the **rational design** of amyloid probes.
- However, these findings need to be interpreted **with caution** as **the exact structures of amyloid fibrils (or oligomers) *in vivo*** are **still unclear**.

Thank you for your listening !!

APPENDIX

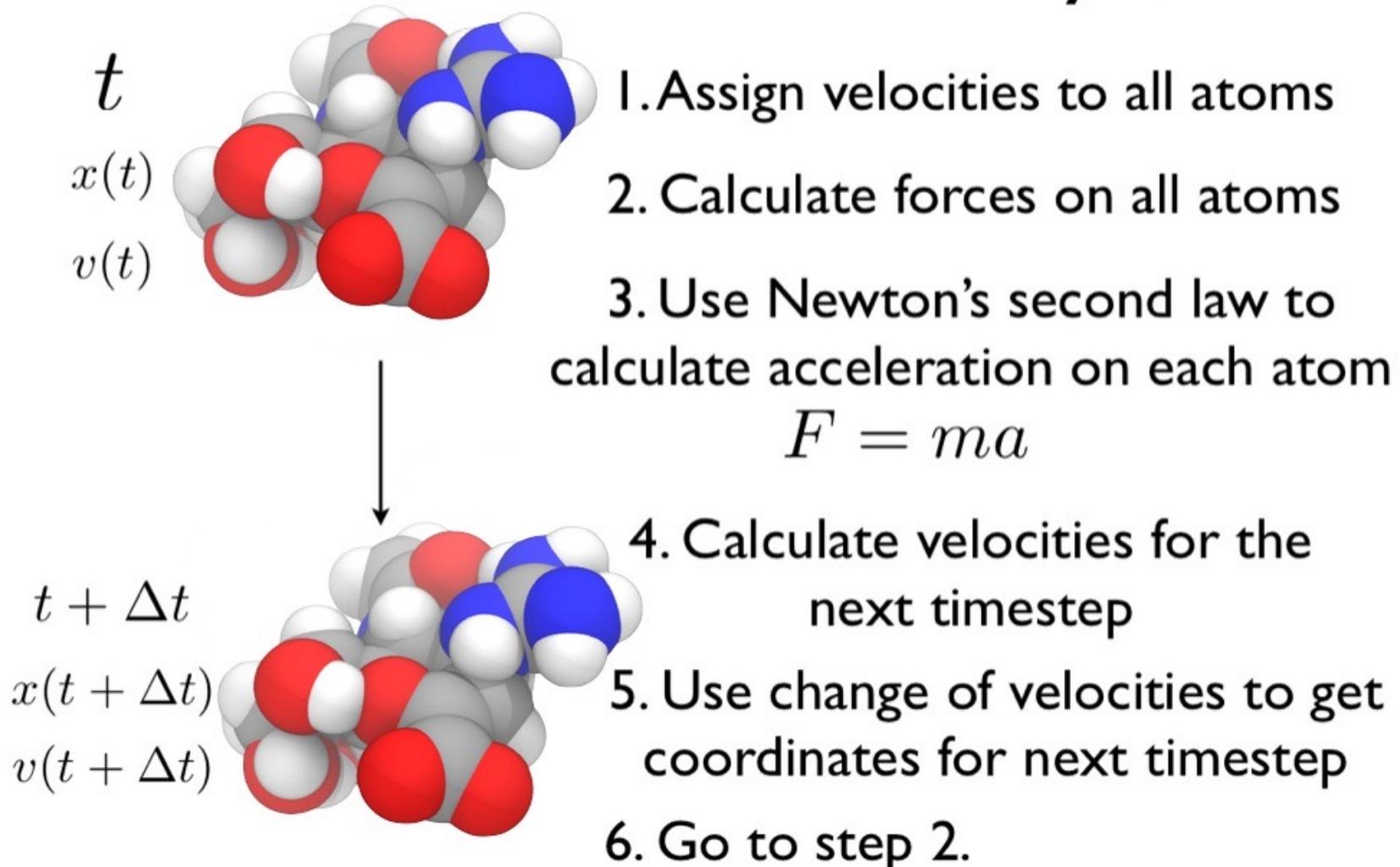
Molecular docking simulation



*結合部位があらかじめ定められている場合に有効
(今回取り扱った各文献では、結合部位を想定した上でMDが行われている)

Molecular dynamics simulation

Molecular Dynamics



Detailed structure of A β fibril

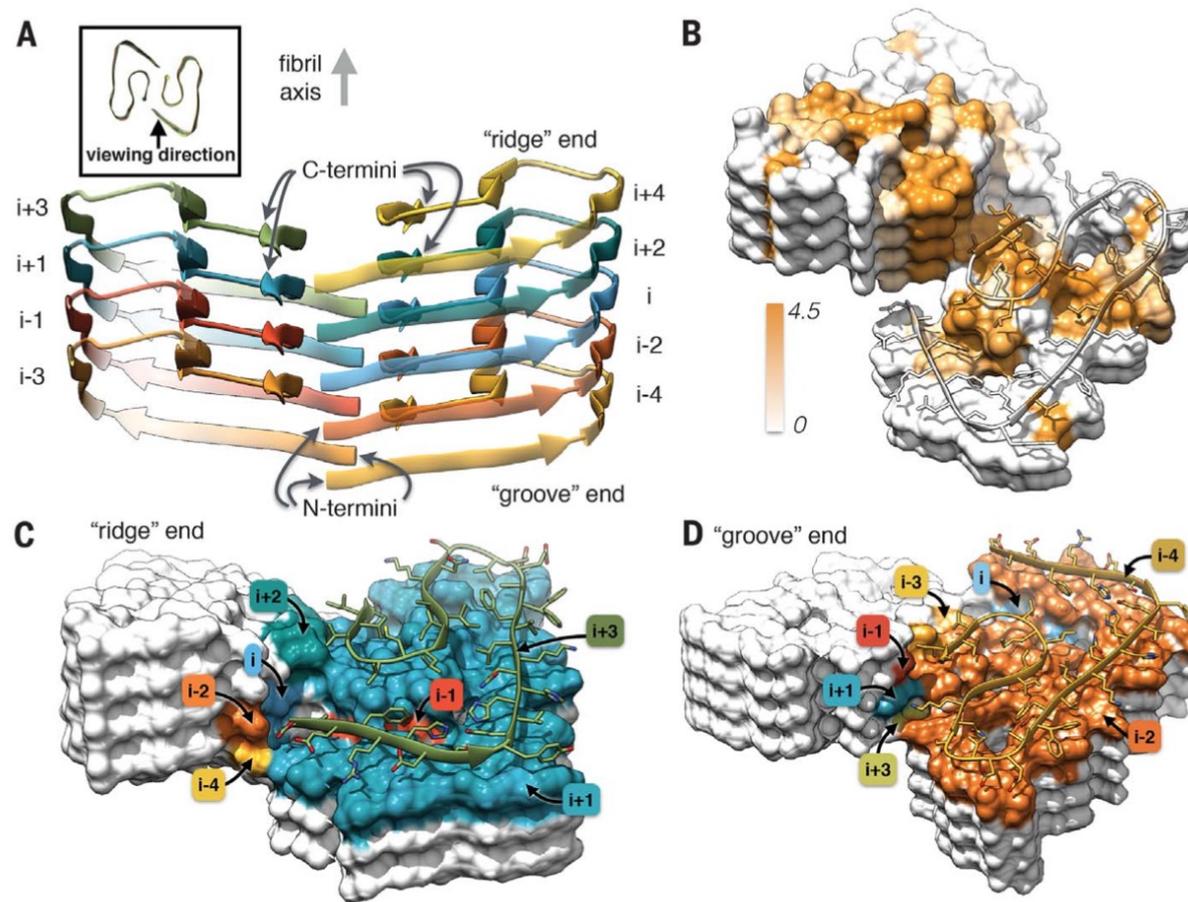


Fig. 4. Details of the A β (1–42) fibril architecture. (A) Side view of the atomic model showing the staggered arrangement of the nonplanar subunits. (B) Surface representation of a fragment of the atomic fibril model. Surface is colored according to hydrophobicity (Kyte-Doolittle scale) [gradient from brown (hydrophobic, 4.5) to white (neutral, 0.0)]. (C and D) View of the "ridge" (C) and "groove" (D) fibril ends. Only the contact surfaces of the subunits with the respective capping monomer [$i+3$ in (C) and $i-4$ in (D), shown as ribbons] are colored [color coding according to layer number; see (A)].

Three distinct binding sites

Compound	FLINT1 K_{d1}	FLINT2 K_{d2}	Ratio K_{d1}/K_{d2}
	<i>nM</i>		
Thio T	30,350	750	40.5
[³ H]Me-BTA-1	ND	ND	ND
BTA-1	5230	ND	ND
IMPY-H ^b	43,410^b	1420	30.6
IMPY-Me	35,560	1000	35.6
TZDM	430	120	3.6
TZPI	870	170	5.1
BF1	300	120	2.5

K_{d1} : プローブ濃度を固定し、 $A\beta$ モノマー濃度を変動させた時の結合定数

K_{d2} : $A\beta$ モノマー濃度を固定し、プローブ濃度を変動させた時の結合定数

K_{d1} / K_{d2} : **モノマーいくつ分に対してそのプローブの結合部位があるかを示す値**

ThT, IMPY-H^b, IMPY-Me → **30~40モノマー**あたり一つの結合部位 (**BS1**)

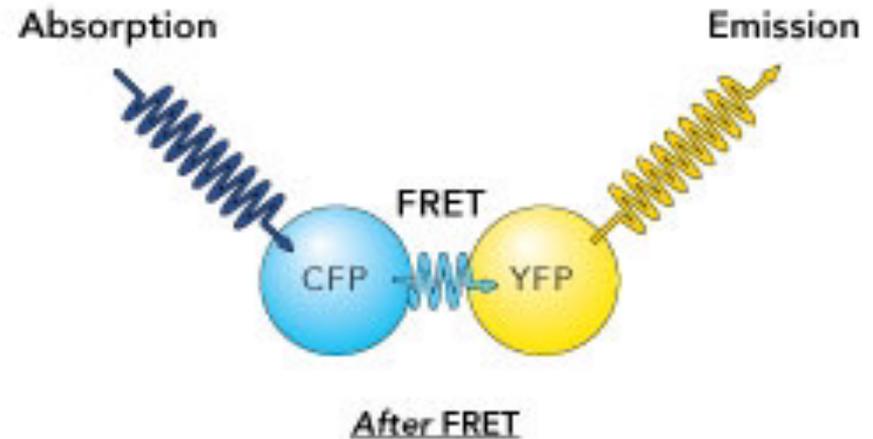
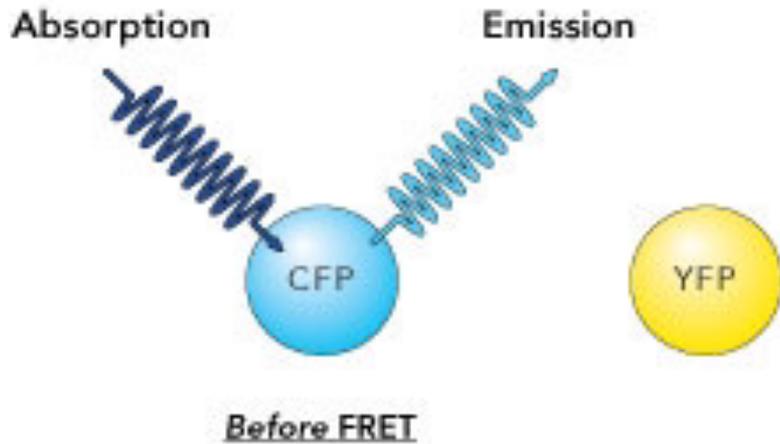
TZDM, TZPI, BF1 → **3~5モノマー**あたり一つの結合部位 (**BS2**)

→ 2つの結合部位があることの示唆する

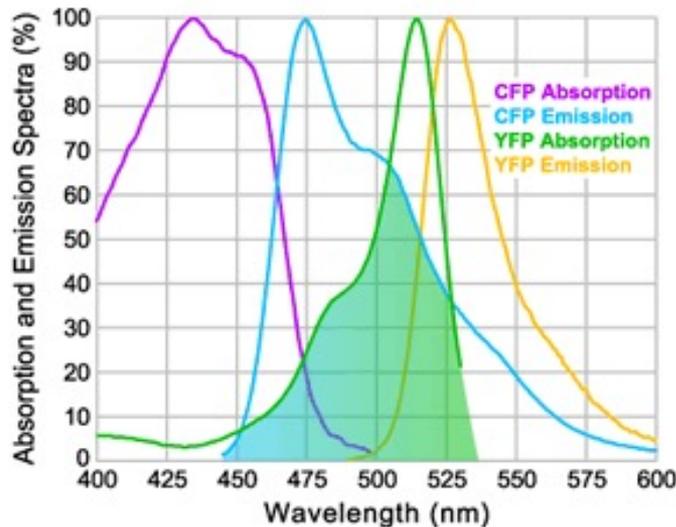
前者(**BS1**)より後者(**BS2**)の方がより多く $A\beta$ 上に存在するということがわかる

その他、300モノマーあたりに一つ存在するBSもあるという結果が→**BS3**とした

FRET (Fluorescence Resonance Energy Transfer)



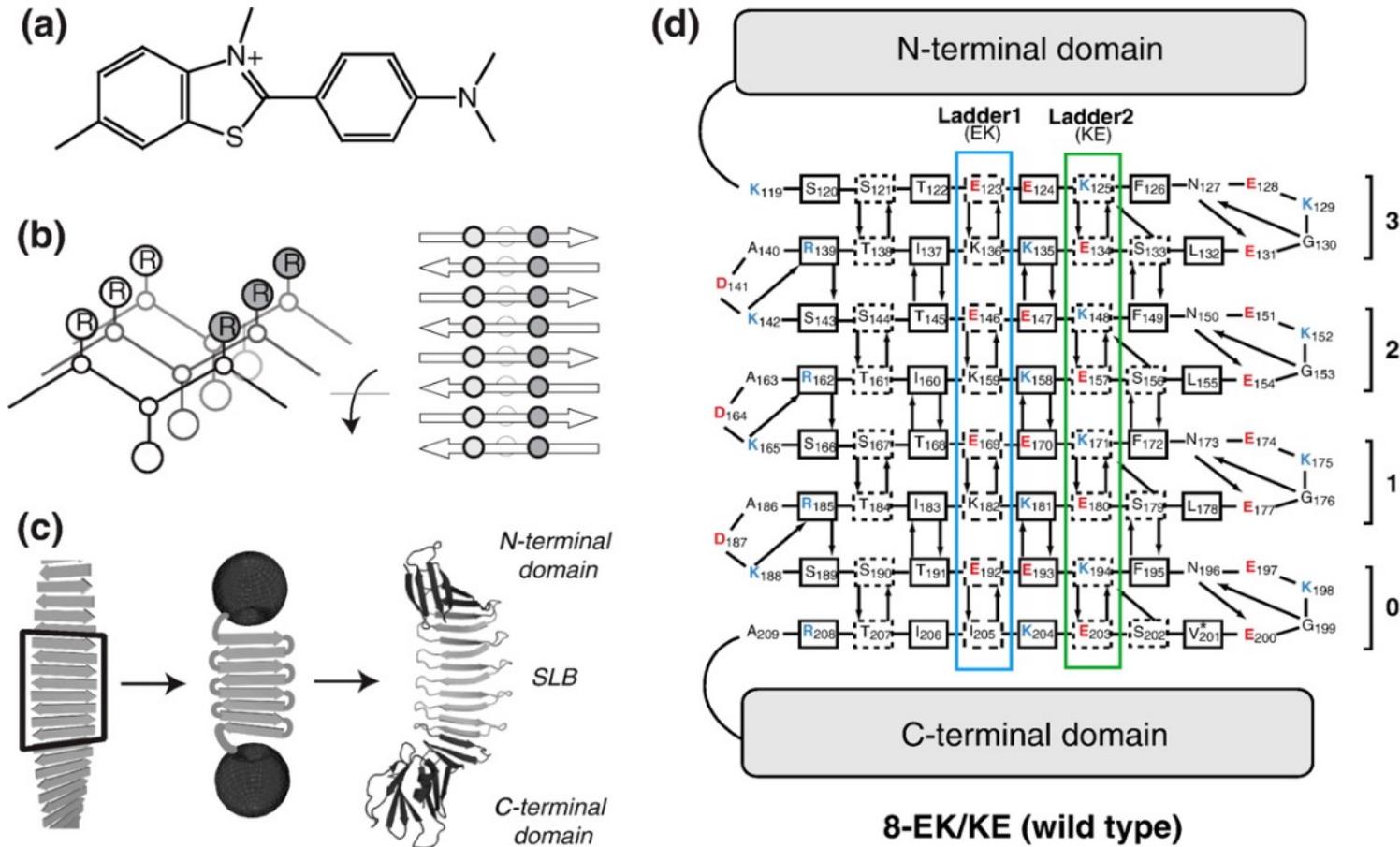
Distance-dependent interaction



This figure shows CFP (donor) and YFP (acceptor) absorption and emission spectra. Overlap between CFP emission and YFP absorption (shaded region) leads to efficient FRET interaction.

Works of Dr. Koide and Dr. Makabe

■ PSAM as a model of β -sheet structure



Works of Dr. Koide and Dr. Makabe

■ Tyrosine is the key to the binding mode of ThT

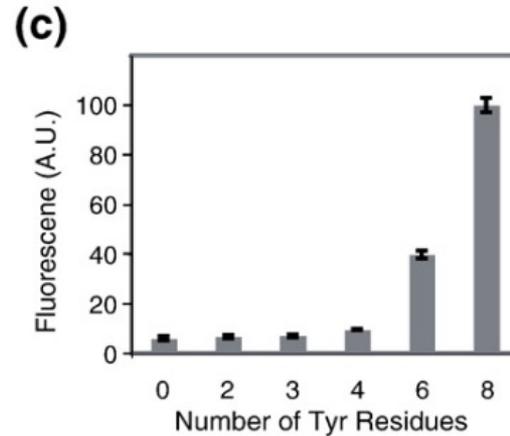
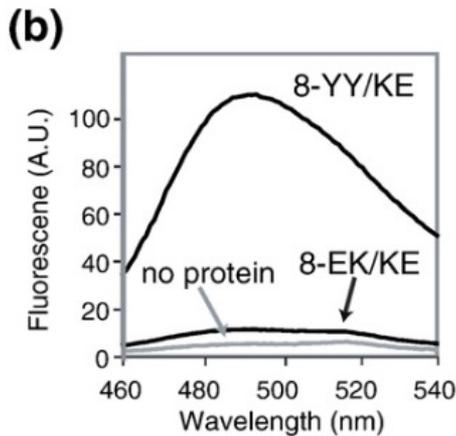
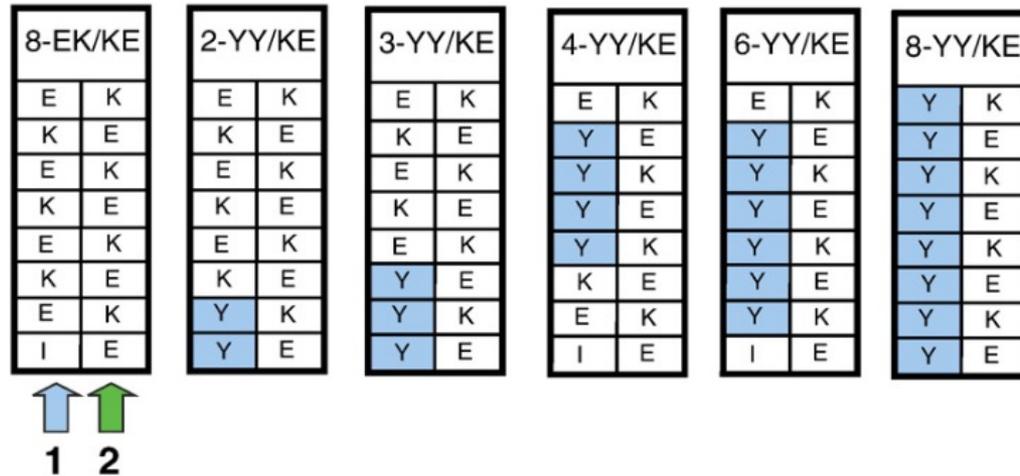
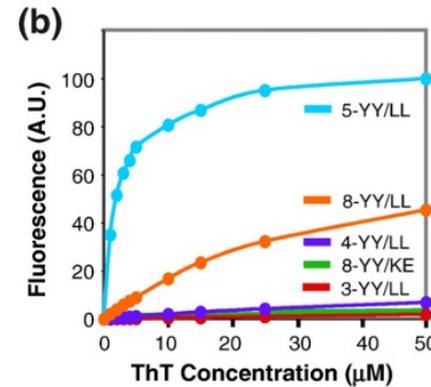
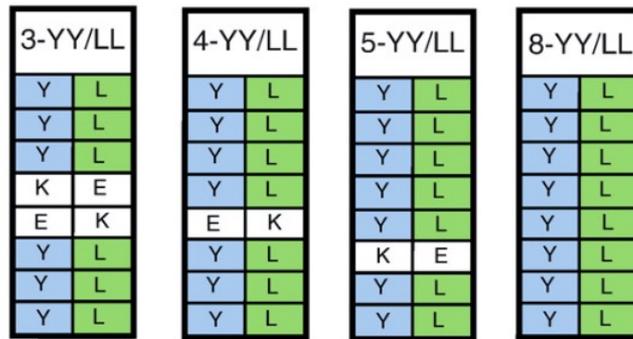


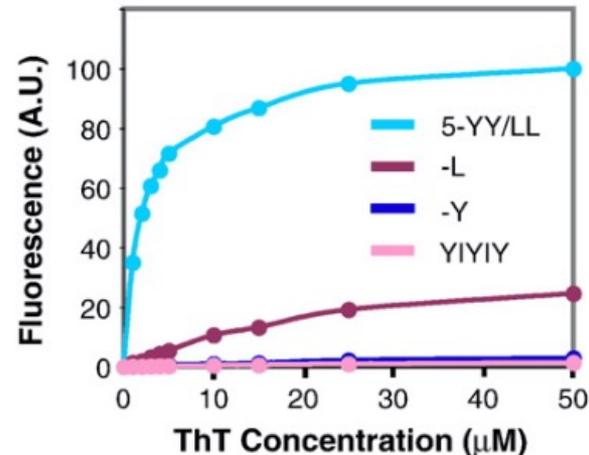
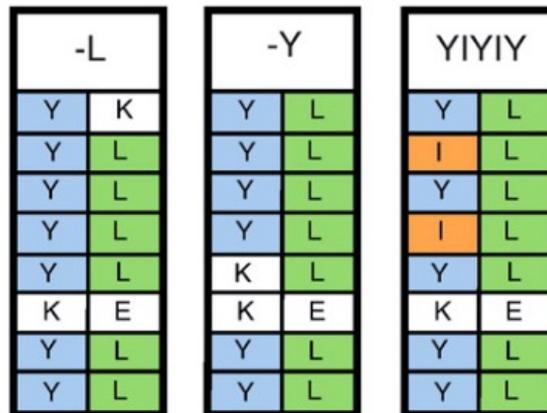
Fig. 2. Design of single cross-strand ladders in the PSAM and their ThT-binding properties. (a) A scheme of single Tyr-ladders of different lengths used in this work. Note that the locations of the Tyr ladder mutations were dictated by our limited ability to specifically introduce mutations at certain positions due to the redundancy of the PSAM gene. (b) Fluorescence emission spectra of 10 μM ThT in the absence and in the presence of 100 μM 8-YY/KE or 100 μM 8-EK/KE. (c) ThT fluorescence emission as a function of the number of contiguous cross-strand Tyr residues. The fluorescence intensity at 485 nm is shown after subtracting the blank (no protein) spectrum of 10 μM ThT, and are normalized relative to the 8-YY/KE signal.

At least 4~6 tyrosines are needed.

Works of Dr. Koide and Dr. Makabe



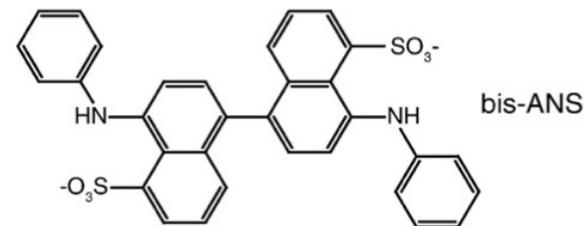
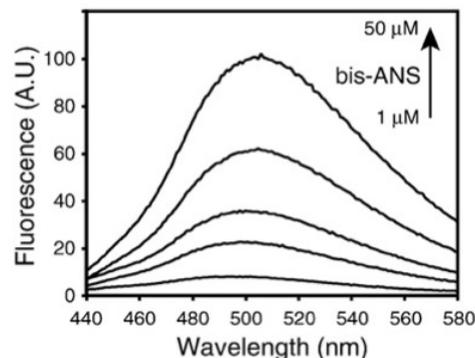
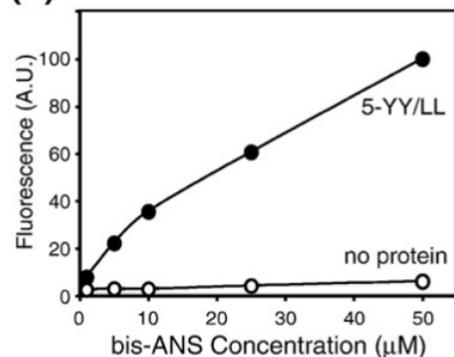
(f) → **5-YY/LL is the most favorable.**



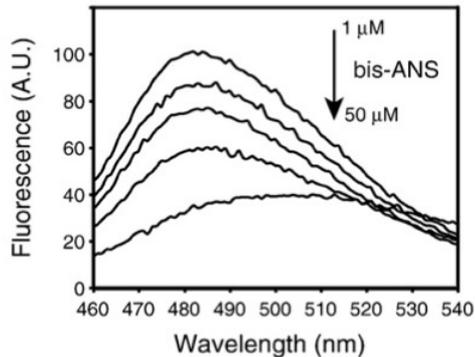
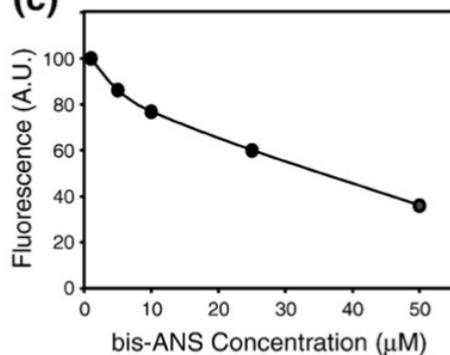
- **Aromatic side chains of Tyr** is important.
- The **Leu ladder** seems to have a secondary role in forming ThT-binding site.

Works of Dr. Koide and Dr. Makabe

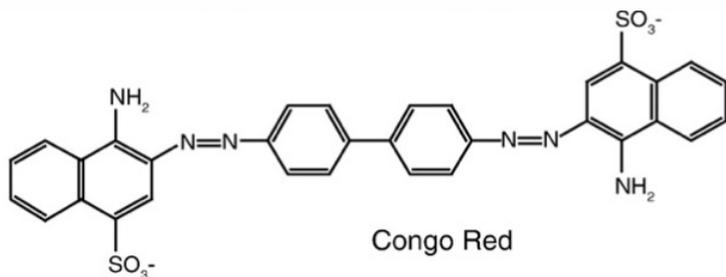
(b)



(c)

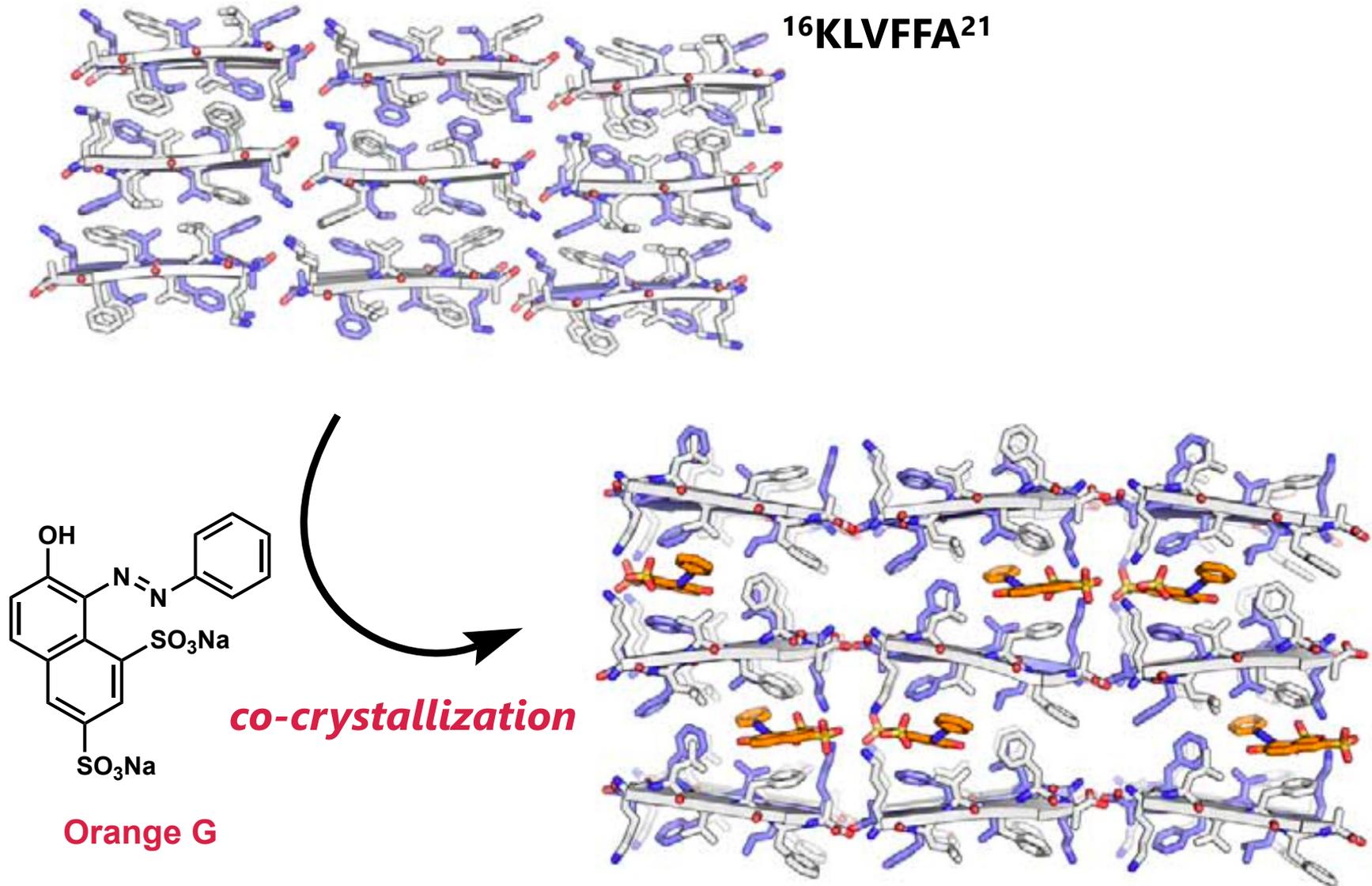


bis-ANS seems to share
the binding sites with ThT.

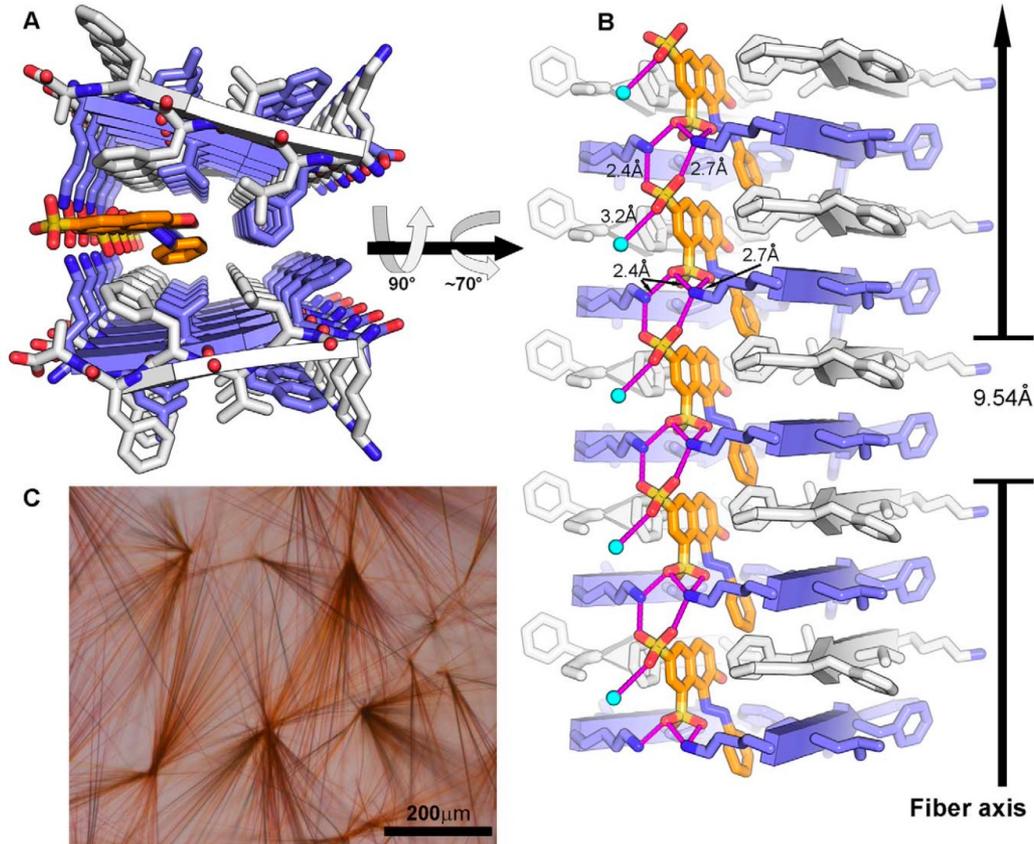


No evidence for binding of Congo Red
to 5-YY/LL
→ Binding site of 5-YY/LL is **too small??**
(CR: ~26 Å, ThT: ~15 Å)

Co-crystallization with Orange G



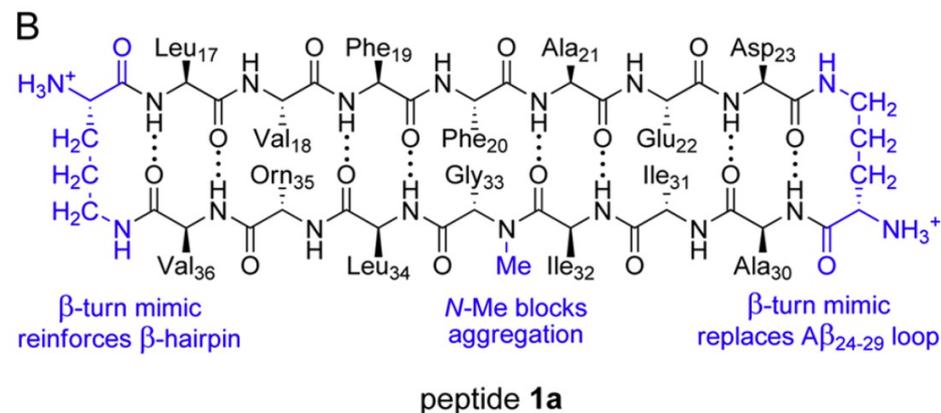
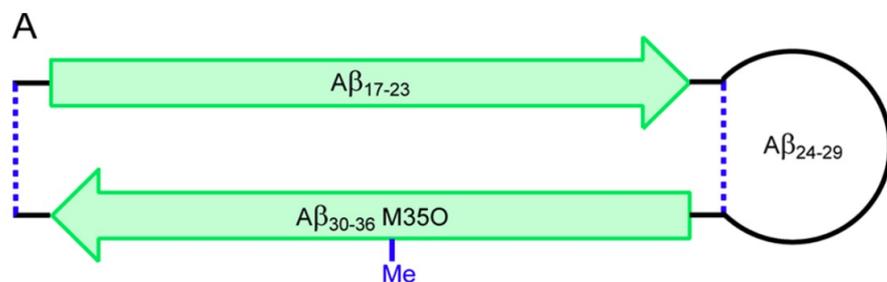
Co-crystallization with Orange G



This crystal structure may provide a pharmacophore of $A\beta$ -selective probes??

A working model of A β oligomers

■ peptide 1a: as a mimic of A β ₁₇₋₃₆

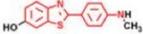
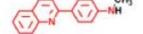
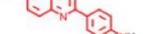
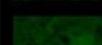
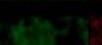
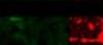
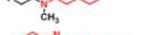
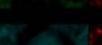
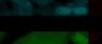
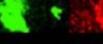
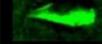
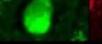
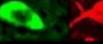
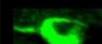
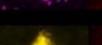
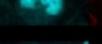


The structure of trimers or higher-order oligomers were **not known**.



- ✓ Crystallization was achieved by **modifying side chains** of A β ₁₇₋₃₆.
- ✓ The crystal structure of A β trimer provides a **working model**.

Tau selectivity

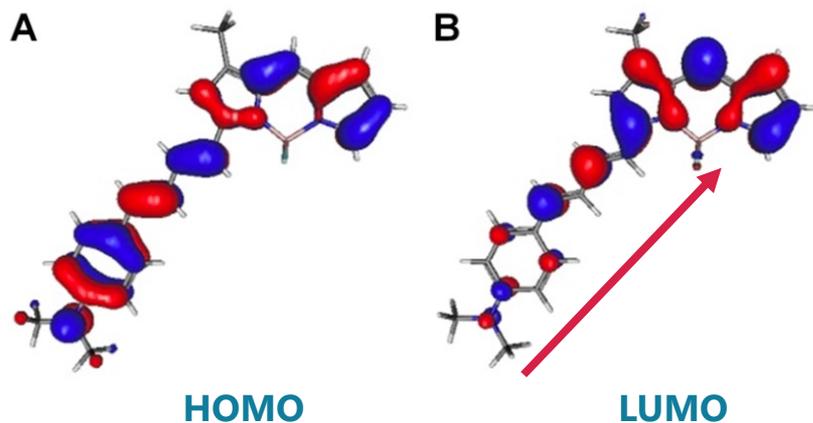
Structure	Core M. W.	Core length (Å)	Compound name	AD NFT		Pick body		PS19	
				Probe	AT8	Probe	AT8	Probe	AT8
	216.2	10.9	PIB						
	208.2	11.1	BF-158						
	217.3	11.1	THK523						
	201.2	11.7	FDDNP						
	234.2	12.1	BF-227						
	240.2	13.2	DMSB						
	264.2	15.6	PBB1						
	264.2	16.0	PBB2						
	266.3	15.6	PBB3						
	264.2	15.6	PBB4						
	264.2	15.5	PBB5						
	239.3	15.6	Curcumin						
	264.2	16.6	FSB						
	346.4	17.3	Thioflavin-S						
	280.2	18.5	BF-189						
	356.5	20.5	DM-POTEB						

13-19 Å between D & A
 ↓
 Well detected!

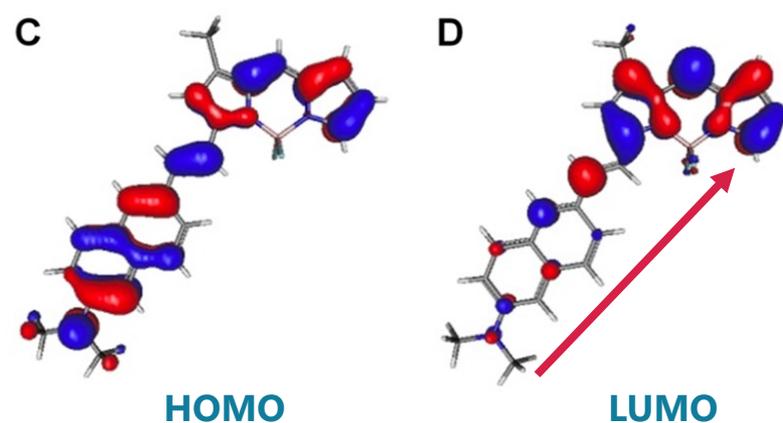
*AT8: Anti PHF-tau antibody

TICT of Tau 1 and Tau 2

Tau 1



Tau 2

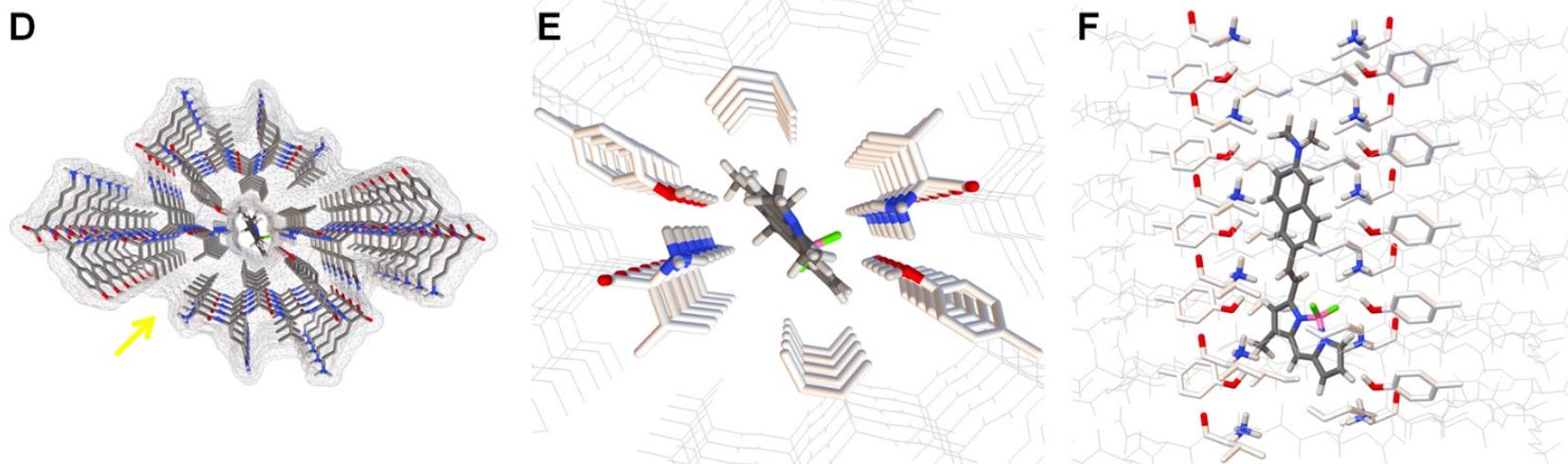


Electron redistribution from the **aniline / aminonaphthalene** in the HOMO to the **BODIPY core** in the LUMO



Involvement of **TICT process (large Stokes shift)**
(Large Stokes shift contributes to better signal over noise ratio)

Molecular docking studies (Tau 2)



Tau 2 also demonstrated a tight fit in the tunnel.

Check the selectivity of ThT & BAP-1

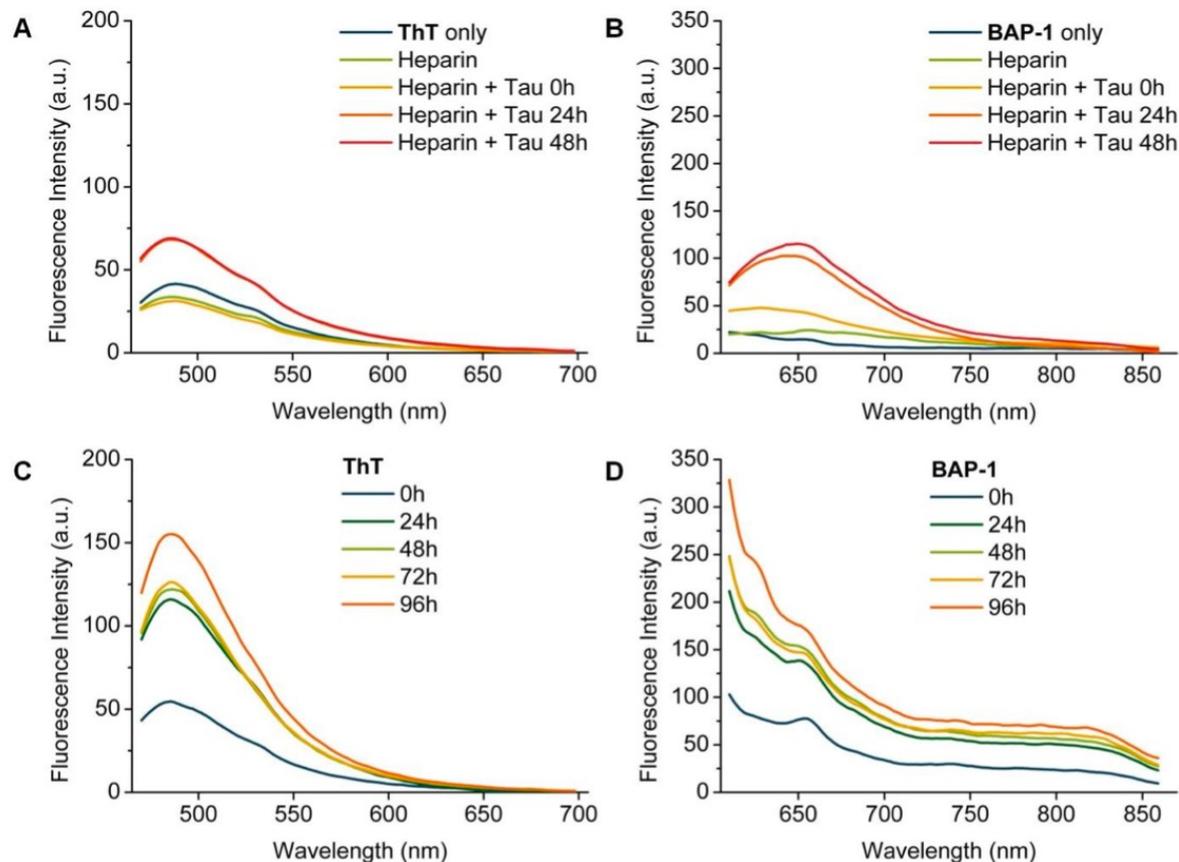
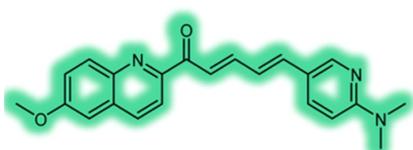


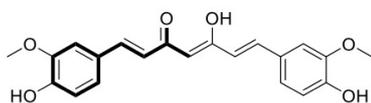
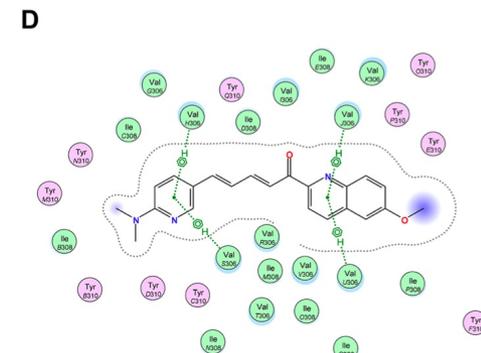
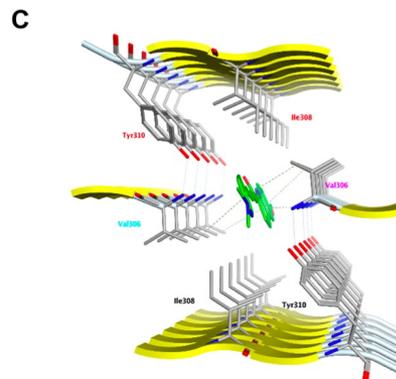
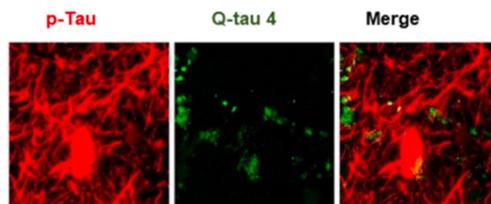
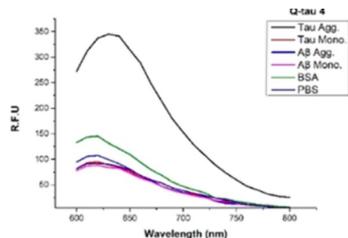
Figure S32. Time dependent fluorescence enhancement of **ThT** and **BAP-1** (10 μM) in the presence of protein aggregates. (A) Emission spectra of **ThT** in the presence of tau protein (10 μM) and heparin (2.5 μM), excited at 450 nm, (B) Emission spectra of **BAP-1** in the presence of tau protein (10 μM) and heparin (2.5 μM), excited at 590 nm, (C-D) Emission spectra of **ThT** and **BAP-1** in the presence of A β fibrils (50 μM).

Another example of tau-selective probe

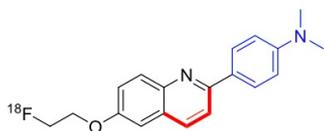


Q-tau 4

- ✓ Tau λ_{em} = 630 nm
- ✓ Tau K_d = 16.6 nM

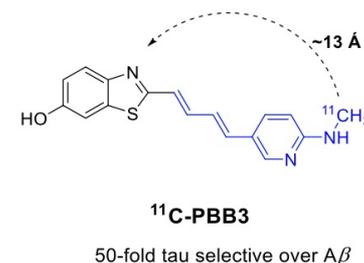
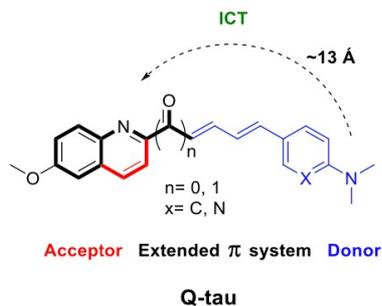


Curcumin



¹⁸F-THK-5377

tau K_i = 51 nM



The design of this probe also follows **two hypotheses of tau-selectivity**. Molecular docking study demonstrated the **high affinity** to ³⁰⁶VQIVYK³¹¹ tunnel as well.