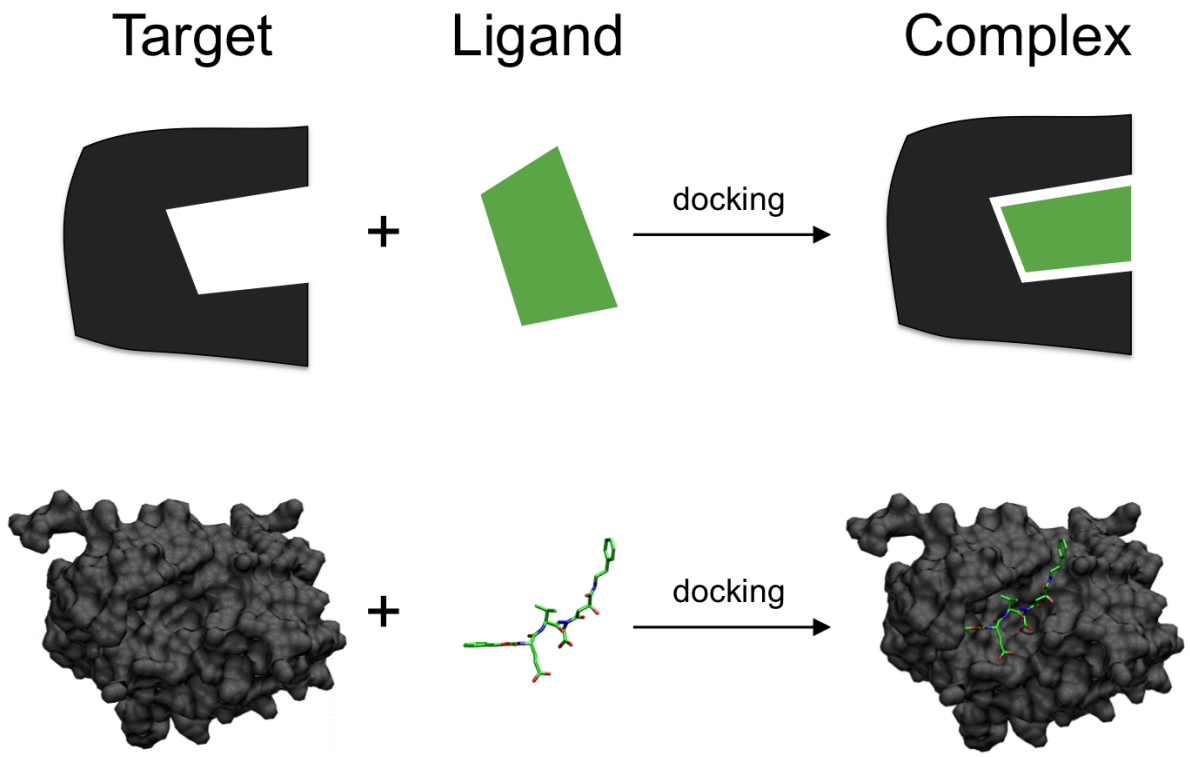
Michelle Marchesini Vanegas
CS366
Charlie Peck

The Use of GPGPUs in Molecular Docking

Molecular docking is a technique utilized in biology and drug discovery to anticipate how the ligand (a molecule) aligns with the target or receptor (another molecule) when they come together to create a stable complex. This plays a role in comprehending the interactions between molecules, like enzymes, substrates or drugs and their target proteins. The primary objective of docking is to pinpoint the energetically favorable position of the ligand when connected to the receptor along with estimating the strength of their interaction. By predicting how molecules bind and interact at the atomic level, molecular docking helps in understanding biological processes and aids in the design of new drugs by identifying potential lead compounds that can bind tightly and selectively to a target protein.



Source: Scigenis

Typically molecular docking algorithms involve exploring and sampling a big number of binding conformations and placements of the ligand within the receptors binding site. These algorithms commonly employ scoring mechanisms to evaluate each binding pose, energy and feasibility taking into account hindrances, hydrogen bonding, electrostatic interactions and hydrophobic interactions.

GPGPUs, (General-Purpose Graphics Processing Units), have become an effective tool for speeding up computational jobs in the field of molecular docking, which includes predicting the preferred orientation of one molecule to another when they bond together to form a stable complex. The main issue with molecular docking is the computational complexity of modeling molecule-to-molecule interactions, which usually entails calculating possible binding conformations and energies. The enormous computing needs of these activities are frequently too much for conventional CPU-based techniques to perform effectively. By using their parallel processing powers, GPGPUs provide a faster way to complete these computations.

The Fast Fourier Transform (FFT)-based approach is one of the main molecular docking techniques that are used on GPGPUs. The convolution of two functions is a frequently computed approach that is useful for quickly determining possible binding conformations in docking simulations. One popular open-source molecular docking program that enables GPGPU acceleration is called AutoDock. GPGPUs are used by AutoDock to expedite the energy evaluation stage, resulting in faster and more effective docking simulations. Another platform is vina, a well-liked open-source molecular docking tool that enables GPGPU acceleration. Vina is based on the AutoDock algorithm. It uses GPGPU computing in conjunction with effective search methods to dramatically accelerate the process of docking a large number of ligands to a receptor.

Molecular docking researchers can accelerate their simulations and more effectively explore larger chemical spaces by utilizing the computational power of GPGPUs and parallel processing-optimized algorithms. This can result in significant progress in the fields of drug discovery and molecular design.