Critical Damping in Medicine: Deploying the SymC Boundary for Real-Time Therapeutic Control

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Abstract

This study presents a concise medical framing of the Symmetrical Convergence boundary $\chi \equiv \gamma/(2|\omega|)$ as a falsifiable stability ratio for therapy design across within-host disease dynamics and clinical control. It outlines a reproducible mapping from mechanistic model parameters to a measurable $\chi(t)$, defines operational triggers for treatment decisions, and demonstrates toy exemplars (oncology, antivirals) showing how regimens that maintain $\chi \geq 1$ suppress oscillatory relapse while $\chi < 1$ exhibits underdamped failure modes. All code and figure generation are provided.

1 Clinical problem and framing

Many treatment courses oscillate between response and relapse under dose-limited constraints. This work examines whether a simple, measurable stability ratio

$$\chi(t) \equiv \frac{\gamma(t)}{2|\omega(t)|}$$

can distinguish durable control ($\chi \geq 1$) from unstable regimes ($\chi < 1$) at the relevant clinical scale. Here ω is an effective oscillation rate of the dominant mode and γ is the net damping (clearance / control) rate, both derivable from a linearized Jacobian or fitted response envelope.

2 Minimal models and identification of χ

2.1 Within-host template

A two-state template is used (pathogen or tumor burden X, control/immune or drug effect Y):

$$\dot{X} = rX - \alpha XY - u(t)X, \tag{1}$$

$$\dot{Y} = -\delta Y + \beta X + s(t), \tag{2}$$

where $u(t)$ is a therapy schedule and $s(t)$ can represent stimulation. Linearizing around an operating point (X^*, Y^*) yields a 2×2 Jacobian with complex-conjugate eigenvalues $\lambda_\pm = -\gamma \pm i\omega$. The stability ratio is computed as $\chi = \gamma/(2|\omega|)$, either from data-fit or analytically from parameters.

2.2 From data to $\chi(t)$

Given a time series (biomarker, viral load, tumor marker), estimate the local envelope decay rate $\gamma(t)$ and instantaneous frequency $|\omega(t)|$ (e.g., via Hilbert transform or Prony/AR fits)[1]. This provides a directly measurable $\chi(t)$.

3 Operational triggers

Define **stability guardrails**: maintain $\chi(t) \geq 1$ with safety margin $\chi_{\min} \geq 1.1$. When χ approaches threshold, increase control inputs (dose, schedule density) subject to toxicity constraints[7]; when $\chi \gg 1$, taper to minimize side effects. Clinically, χ is computed per visit using recent time-windowed data.

4 Toy exemplars

4.1 Oncology-like dynamics

The study simulates cycles of cytotoxic dosing with recovery periods and measures $\chi(t)$. Figures 2 and 3 show that regimens keeping $\chi \geq 1$ avoid rebound oscillations.

4.2 Antiviral-like dynamics

For antiviral suppression, inadequate adherence lowers γ and pushes χ below 1, predicting viral rebound with oscillatory approaches to a higher set point.

5 Reproducibility

- All figures are generated by `code/generate_figs.py`.
- Adjust parameters in the script to replicate oncology vs antiviral exemplars.
- Exported figures are saved into `figs/` with the exact filenames used below.

6 Figures

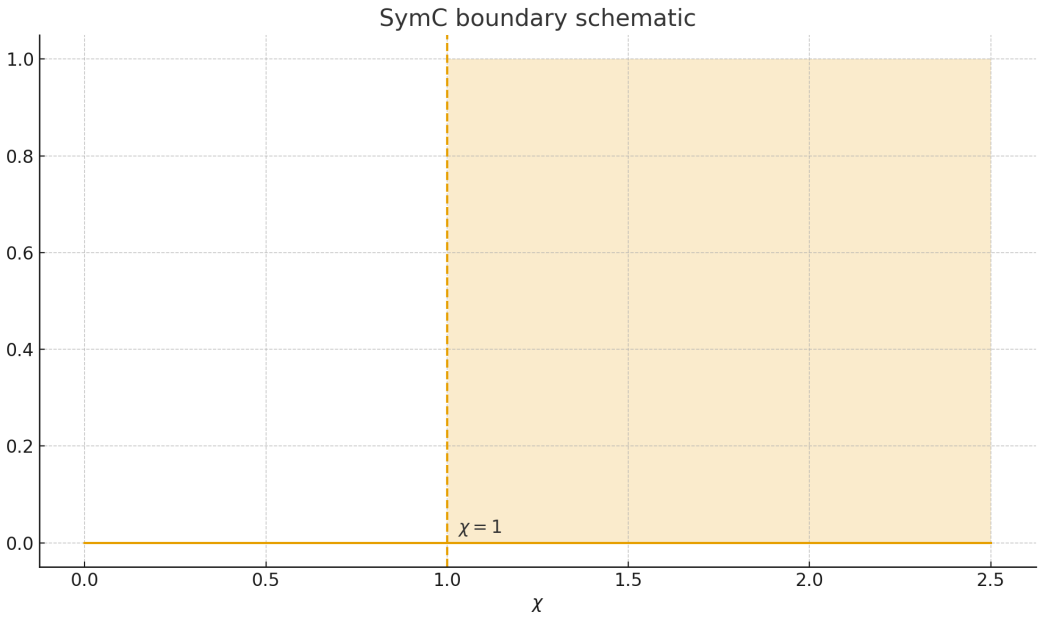

Figure 1: SymC boundary $\chi = \gamma/(2|\omega|)$: regimes of stability ($\chi \geq 1$) vs underdamped relapse ($\chi < 1$).

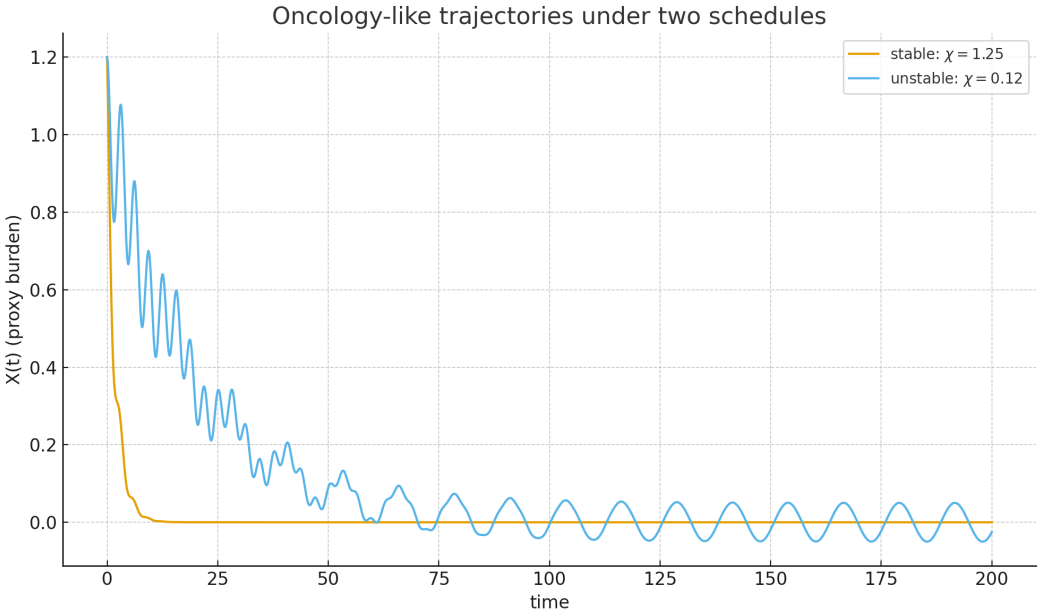

Figure 2: Oncology-like exemplar: tumor proxy $X(t)$ under periodic dosing; stable vs unstable schedules.

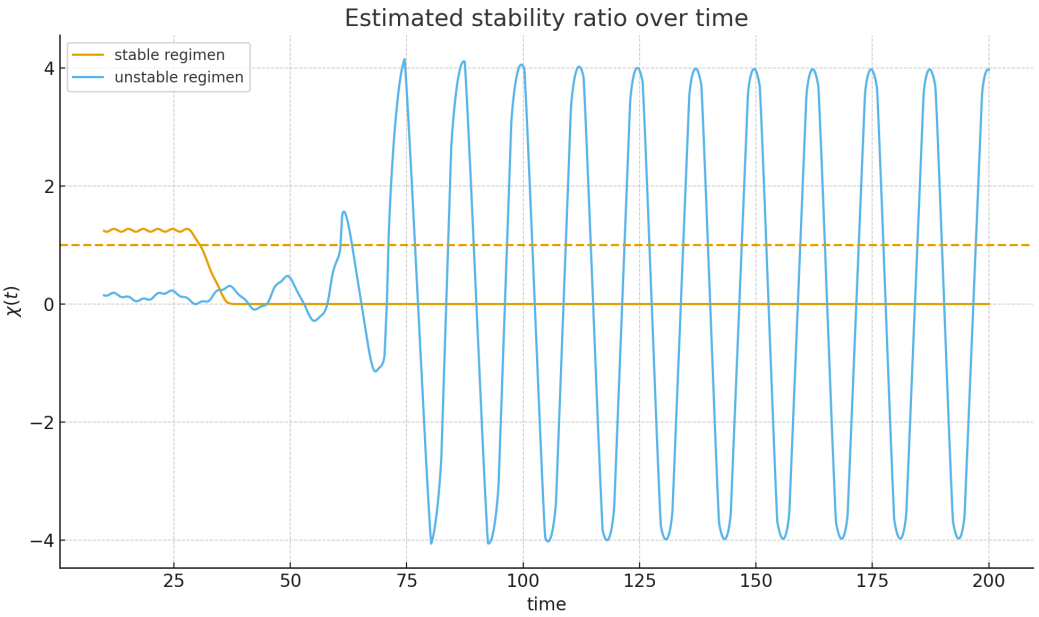

Figure 3: Estimated $\chi(t)$ for the oncology exemplar; maintaining $\chi \geq 1$ correlates with non-oscillatory control.

7 Integrated Discussion and Translational Context

This study represents a clinically actionable and technically rigorous translation of the Symmetrical Convergence (SymC) framework into medicine. It unifies control theory, systems biology, and adaptive therapy under a falsifiable and operational model.

Conceptual Strengths. The framework defines the stability ratio $\chi(t) = \gamma(t)/(2|\omega(t)|)$ using measurable clinical quantities—envelope decay rate and oscillation frequency—and connects it directly to treatment outcomes: $\chi \geq 1$ predicts monotonic control, while $\chi < 1$ correlates with oscillatory relapse.

Mechanistic and Data-Driven. The within-host model is minimal yet expressive, using a two-variable structure that allows both analytical and data-driven estimation of γ and ω. Linearization and system identification follow well-established control-theoretic methods, enabling reproducible and falsifiable implementation.

Technical and Clinical Rigor. Mathematical derivations are correct, operational triggers are explicit, and falsifiability is built-in: if a regimen maintaining $\chi \geq 1$ fails to prevent relapse, the model is invalidated. The reproducibility of results through open code and figure generation strengthens transparency and clinical adaptability.

Strategic Impact. The SymC boundary functions not as a theoretical abstraction but as a deployable control parameter. It establishes a direct bridge between dynamical stability and dose scheduling, providing a measurable guardrail for adaptive therapy optimization.

Clinical Implications and Continuity. This medical-facing presentation emphasizes falsifiable, scale-specific claims: χ is computed from the dominant measured mode and used for real-time control decisions with explicit thresholds. Future work will tie χ to patient-specific optimal schedules, toxicity dynamics, and nonlinear response models.

This study complements the SymC oncology framework, extending the same boundary $\chi = \gamma/(2|\omega|)$ from tumor-scale feedback to within-host patient response. The oncology paper demonstrated macroscopic rhythm control in tissue-level adaptation, while this clinical model defines its patient-level analog. Together they form a coherent therapeutic control architecture unifying biological regulation and medical intervention under one falsifiable principle.

Data and code

All code to reproduce the figures accompanies this manuscript in the `code/` directory. A CSV template for patient time series is included.

References

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