



Synthetic Biology and Biosystems Control Lab  
Valencia UPV



# Modeling: ODEs and Hill Functions

Section 1: ODEs, Law of mass action and the central dogma

by Alejandro Vignoni (alvig2@upv.es)

An iGEM Measurement Committee Webinar

Week 2, June 23rd, 2020



$$\begin{cases} \frac{d[LuxI]_i}{dt} = b_i + u([AHL]_i) - \gamma_i [LuxI]_i \\ \frac{d[AHL]_i}{dt} = K_A [LuxI]_i + d([AHL]_i - [AHL]_e) - \gamma_A [AHL]_i \end{cases}$$

# Today Webinar's Topics

- ⚠ Section 1: ODEs, the law of mass action, and the central dogma (15 min)
- ⚠ Section 2: Derivation of a Hill function from the law of mass action (15 min)
- ⚠ Section 3: Hill function examples and intuitions: effects of parameters on activators, repressors, hybrid promoters, using a Matlab exploration package. (15min)
- ⚠ Q&A – (at the end of each 15 minutes block, total 15 min)

# Types of models

Schematic

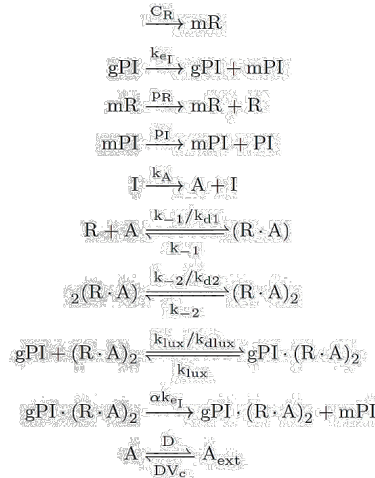
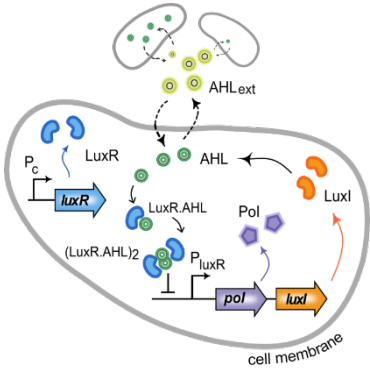
Biochemical  
Reactions

Mathematical  
Model (ODEs)

Reduced  
Mathematical  
Model

Part I

Part II



$$\begin{aligned}
 \dot{n}_1^i &= k_{eI} n_7^i + \alpha k_{eI} n_8^i - d_{mI} n_1^i \\
 \dot{n}_2^i &= C_R - d_{mR} n_2^i \\
 \dot{n}_3^i &= p_I n_1^i - d_I n_3^i \\
 \dot{n}_4^i &= p_R n_2^i + k_{-1} n_5^i - d_R n_4^i - \frac{k_{-1}}{k_{d1}} n_9^i n_4^i \\
 \dot{n}_5^i &= 2k_{-2} n_6^i + \frac{k_{-1}}{k_{d1}} n_9^i n_4^i + \left( -k_{-1} - d_{RA} - 2\frac{k_{-2}}{k_{d2}} n_6^i \right) n_5^i \\
 \dot{n}_6^i &= k_{lux} n_8^i + \frac{k_{-2}}{k_{d2}} n_5^i{}^2 + \left( -k_{-2} - d_{RA_2} - \frac{k_{lux}}{k_{dlux}} n_7^i \right) n_6^i \\
 \dot{n}_7^i &= k_{lux} n_8^i - \frac{k_{lux}}{k_{dlux}} n_6^i n_7^i \\
 \dot{n}_8^i &= -k_{lux} n_8^i + \frac{k_{lux}}{k_{dlux}} n_6^i n_7^i \\
 \dot{n}_9^i &= D \left( V_c n_{10} - n_9^i \right) - \left( \frac{k_{-1}}{k_{d1}} n_4^i + d_A \right) n_9^i + k_{-1} n_5^i + k_A n_3^i \\
 \dot{n}_{10} &= D \left( -N V_c n_{10} + \sum_{i=1}^N n_9^i \right) - d_{A_s} n_{10}
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \dot{n}_1^i &= \frac{C_I p_I}{d_{mI}} \left( \frac{k_{dlux} + a n_3^i}{k_{dlux} + n_3^i} \right) - d_I n_1^i \\
 \dot{n}_2^i &= \frac{C_R p_R}{d_{mR}} + k_{-1} n_6^i - \left( \frac{k_{-1}}{k_{d1}} n_4^i + d_R \right) n_2^i \\
 \dot{n}_3^i &= \frac{k_{-2}}{k_{d2}} (n_6^i)^2 - (k_{-2} + d_{RA_2}) n_3^i \\
 \dot{n}_4^i &= k_{-1} n_6^i + k_A n_1^i + D \left( \frac{n_5^i}{V_c} - n_4^i \right) - \left( \frac{k_{-1}}{k_{d1}} n_2^i + d_A \right)
 \end{aligned}$$

Easier to use and to relate  
with experimental data

# But what is an Ordinary Differential Equations (ODE)?

These are equations with **variables** and their **derivatives**

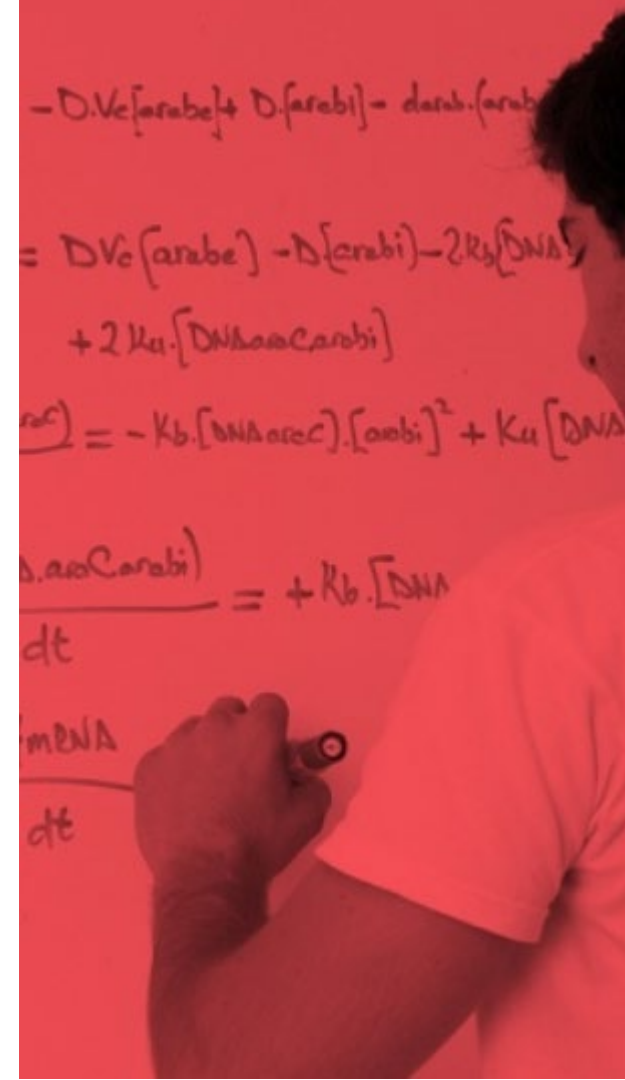
If we have any function (the typical one):

$$y = f(t) \quad (y \text{ only depends on the variable } t, \text{ but we could have } y = f(t, x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n))$$

Do you remember the definition of the derivative of a function?

$$\dot{y} = \frac{df(t)}{dt} = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(t+h) - f(t)}{h} \quad (\text{we can have higher order derivatives } y'', y''', y^{(n)})$$

But they can be very  
challenging and difficult to solve!!



# But if they're so complicated... how do we solve them?

We can solve differential equations in two ways:

⚠ **Analytically:** solving for the unknown...



⚠ **Numerically:** in an approximate way.

$$\dot{y} \simeq \frac{f(h+h)-f(x)}{h}$$

(with an  $h$  very small)

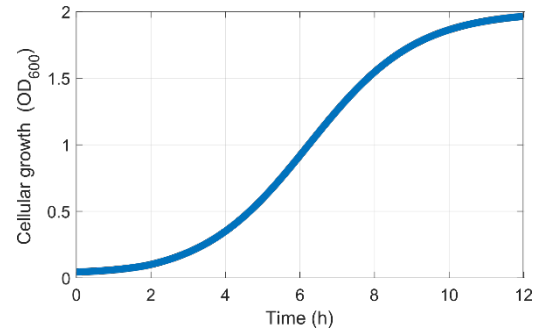


# Why do we use them?

Differential equations describe biological behaviour, physical laws, human activities, and much more....



$$\frac{dx}{dt} = \mu x \left( 1 - \frac{x}{x_{max}} \right)$$

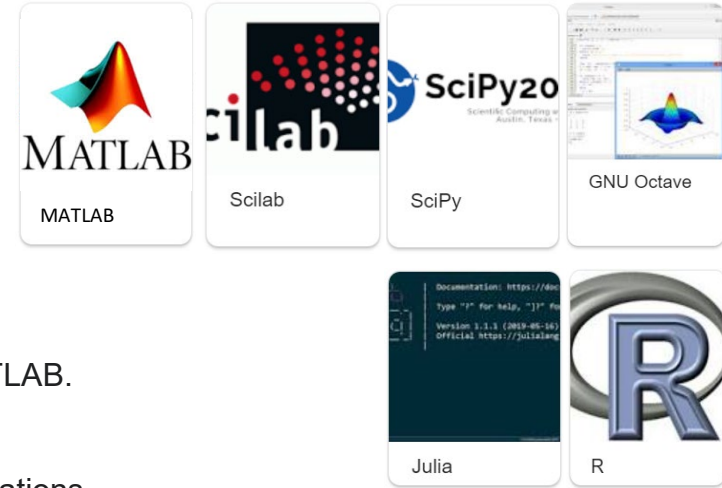


And the set of equations that describe a system, a phenomenon...  
is known as ODE model

# Software for Ordinary Differential Equations (ODEs) solving

- [MATLAB](#), a technical computing application (MATrix LABoratory)

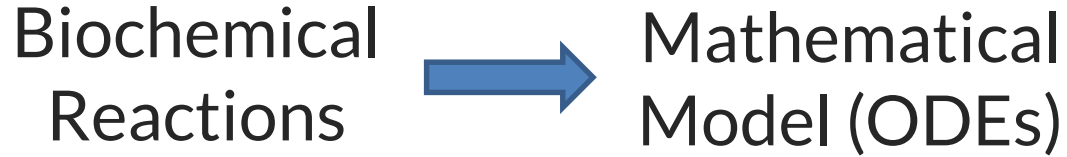
**FREE LICENSE WITH iGEM and the Measurement Committee has some software programmed in MATLAB for flow cytometry and plate reader data analysis and calibration.**



- [Maxima](#), an open-source [computer algebra system](#).
- [COPASI](#), a free software package for the integration and analysis of ODEs.
- [GNU Octave](#), a high-level language, basically a open-source version of MATLAB.
- [Scilab](#), an open source application for numerical computation.
- [Maple](#), a proprietary application for symbolic calculations.
- [Mathematica](#), a proprietary application primarily intended for symbolic calculations.
- [Julia \(programming language\)](#), a high-level language primarily intended for numerical computations.
- [SageMath](#), an open-source application that uses a Python-like syntax with a wide range of capabilities spanning several branches of mathematics.
- [SciPy](#), a Python package that includes an ODE integration module.
- [GNU R](#), an open source computational environment primarily intended for statistics, which includes packages for ODE solving.

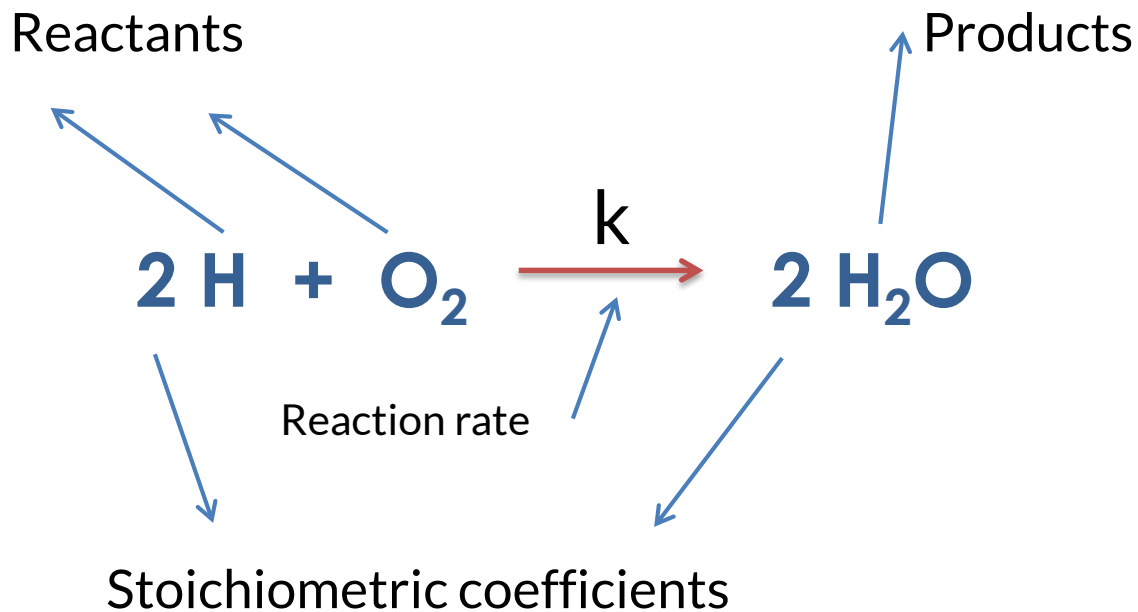


Let us begin this journey **Part I** from:



# Reminder: Law of mass action and kinetic equations

## Example: Reaction of Water



# Law of mass action and kinetic equations

## Reaction of Water – Kinetics of $H_2$



Rate of change  
of  $[H]$

Decreases or  
it is consumed

$$[\dot{H}_2] = -2k[H_2]^2[O_2]$$

Stoichiometric  
coefficient of  $[H_2]$  times  
the reaction rate  $k$

product of the concentrations of the  
reactants (  $[H_2] \times [H_2] \times [O_2] = [H_2]^2[O_2]$  )

# Law of mass action and kinetic equations

## Reaction of Water – Kinetics of $O_2$



Rate of change  
of  $[H]$

Decreases or  
it is consumed

$$[\dot{O}_2] = - k [H_2]^2 [O_2]$$

Stoichiometric  
coefficient of  $[O_2]$  times  
the reaction rate  $k$

product of the concentrations of the  
reactants (  $[H_2] \times [H_2] \times [O_2] = [H_2]^2 [O_2]$  )

# Law of mass action and kinetic equations

## Reaction of Water – Kinetics of $H_2O$



Rate of change  
of  $[H_2O]$

Increases or  
it is produced

$$[H_2O] = +2k[H_2]^2[O_2]$$

Stoichiometric  
coefficient of  $[H_2O]$   
times the reaction rate  $k$

product of the concentrations of the  
reactants (  $[H_2] \times [H_2] \times [O_2] = [H_2]^2[O_2]$  )

# Law of mass action and kinetic equations

## Reaction of Water – Kinetics



$$[\dot{H}_2] = -2k[H_2]^2[O_2]$$

$$[\dot{O}_2] = -k[H_2]^2[O_2]$$

$$[\dot{H}_2O] = 2k[H_2]^2[O_2]$$

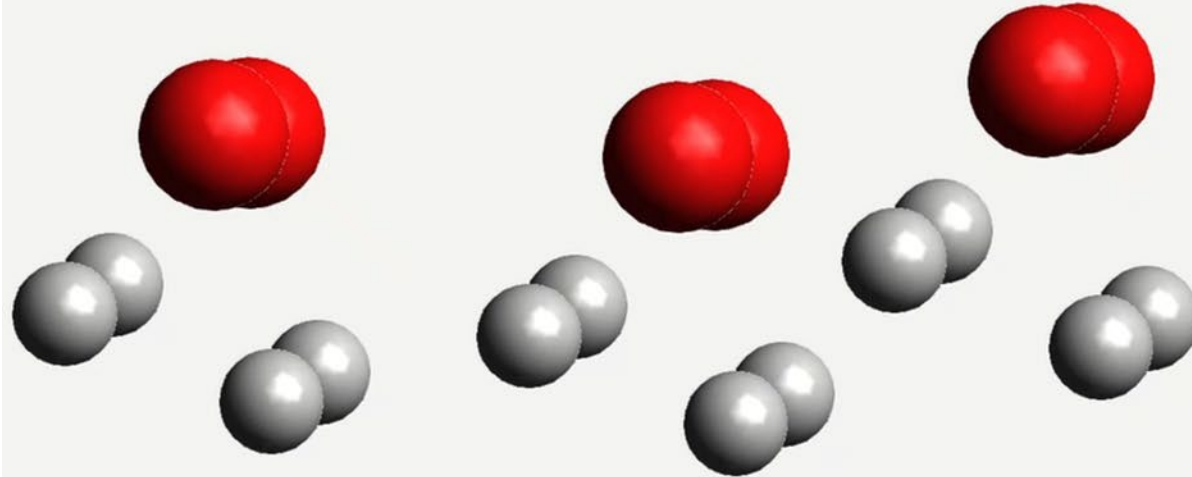
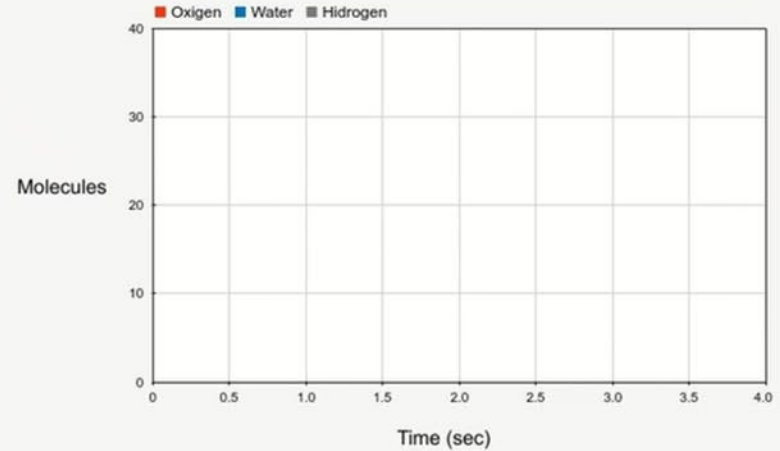
# Reaction of Water – Kinetics



$$[\dot{H}_2] = -2k[H_2]^2[O_2]$$

$$[\dot{O}_2] = -k[H_2]^2[O_2]$$

$$[H_2O] = 2k[H_2]^2[O_2]$$

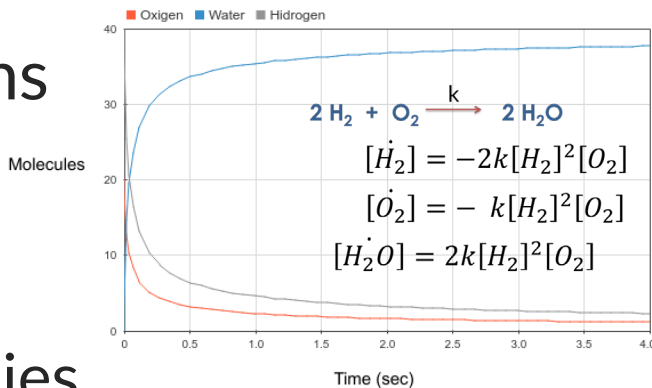


Check video on the repository!!

# Law of mass action and kinetic equations

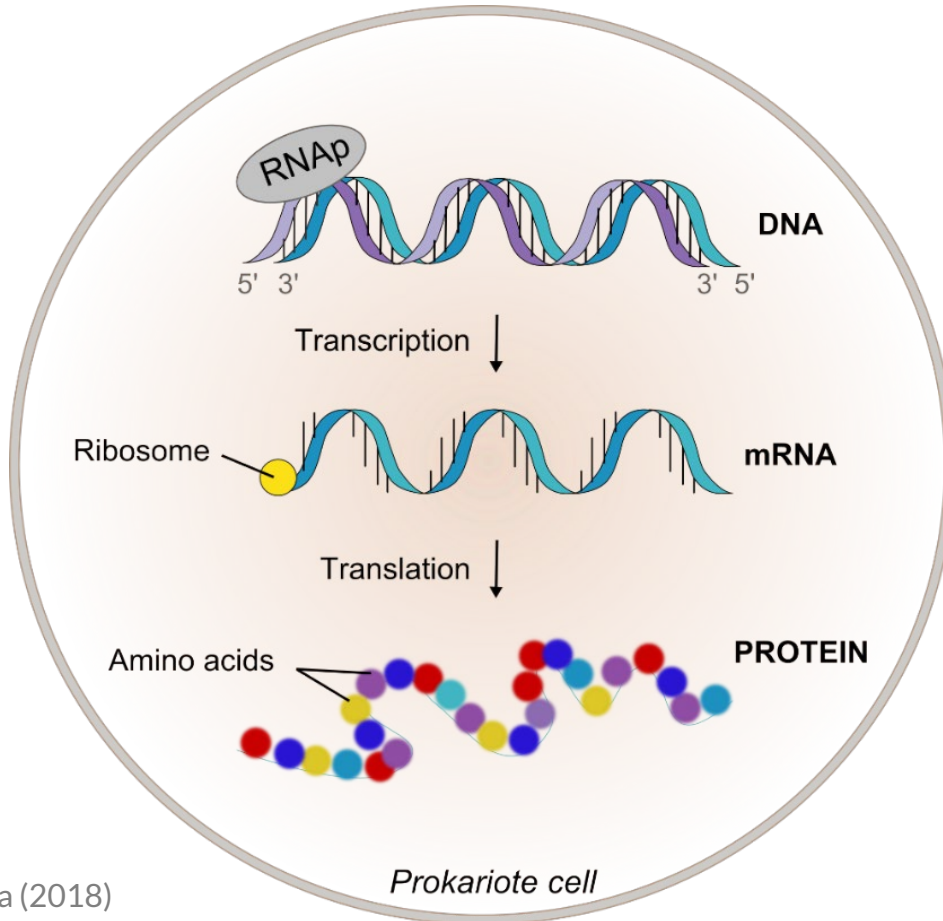
## Summary

- ⚠ One equation for each one of the species
- ⚠ Rate of change of  $[A]$  (concentration of species  $A$ ) is proportional to:
  - ⚠ Stoichiometric coefficient of  $A$  time reaction rate  $k$
  - ⚠ The product of the concentrations of the reactants





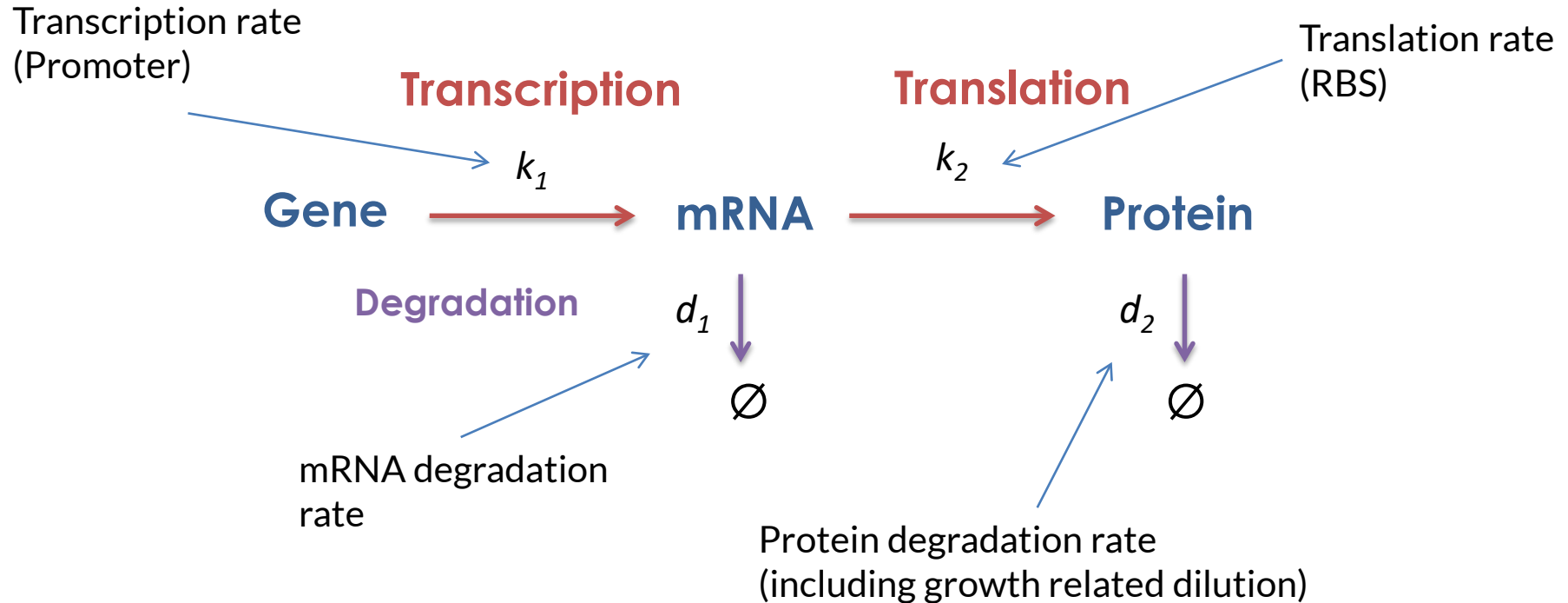
# The central dogma of molecular biology



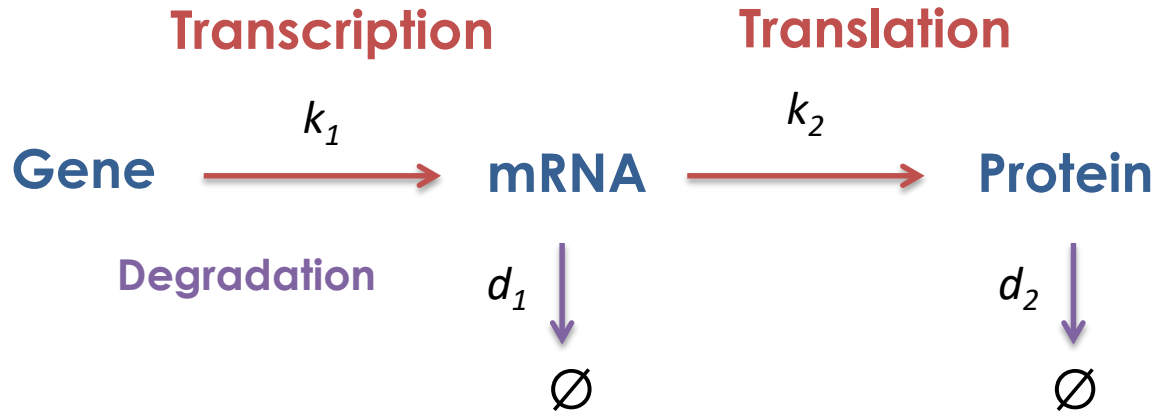
**Transcription** of DNA  
by RNA polymerase

**Translation** of mRNA by  
Ribosomes

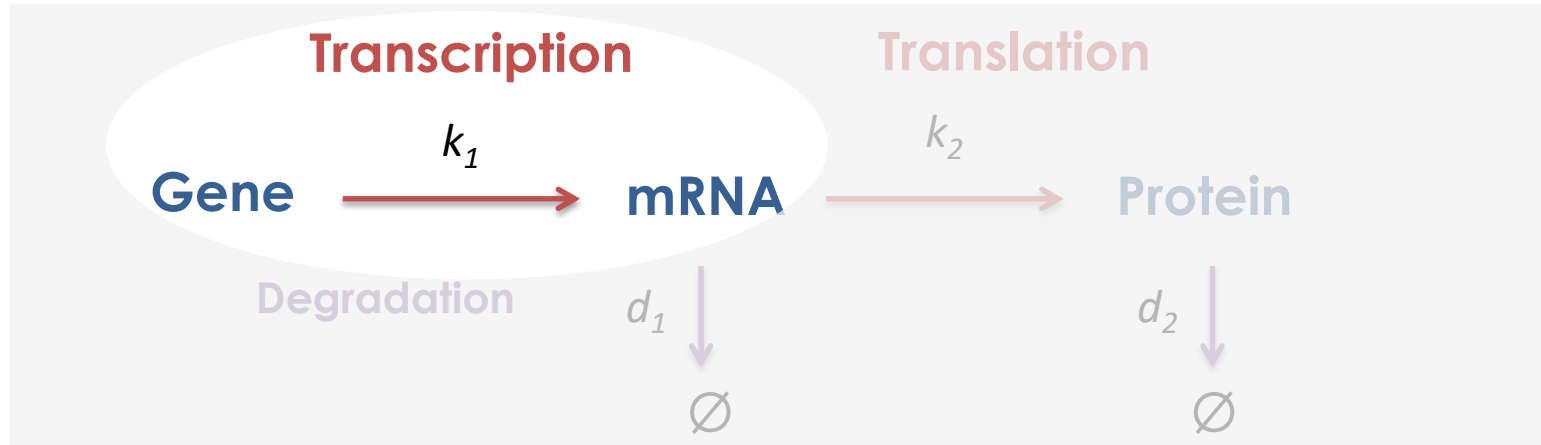
# Constitutive gene expression (Simplified version)



# Constitutive gene expression (Simplified version)

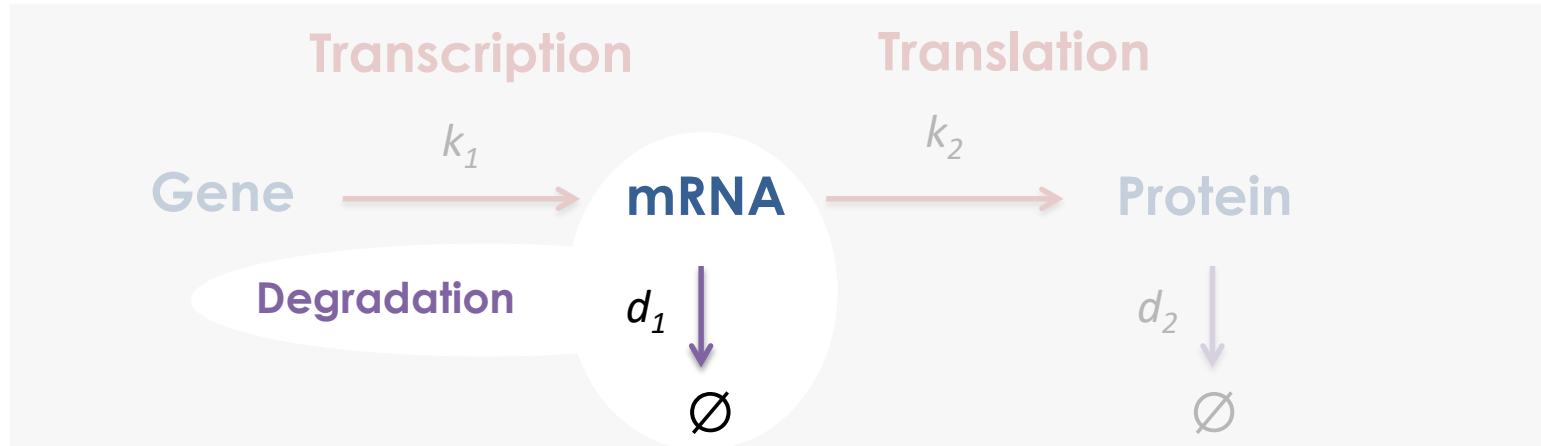


# Constitutive gene expression (Simplified version)



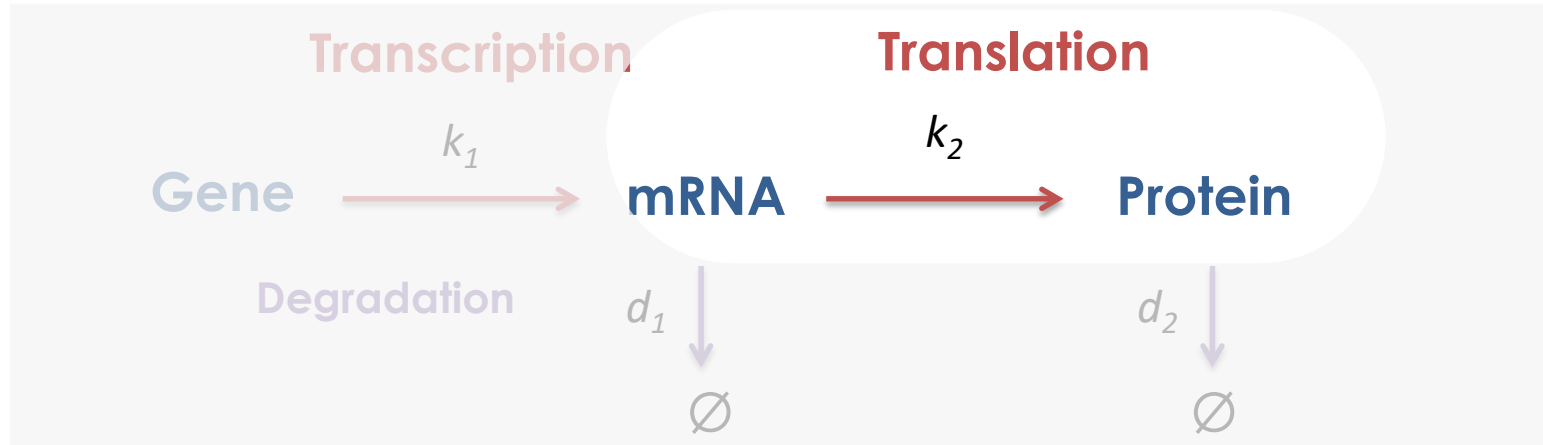
$$\dot{[mRNA]} = k_1 [Gene]$$

# Constitutive gene expression (Simplified version)



$$\dot{[\text{mRNA}]} = k_1 [\text{Gene}] - d_1 [\text{mRNA}]$$

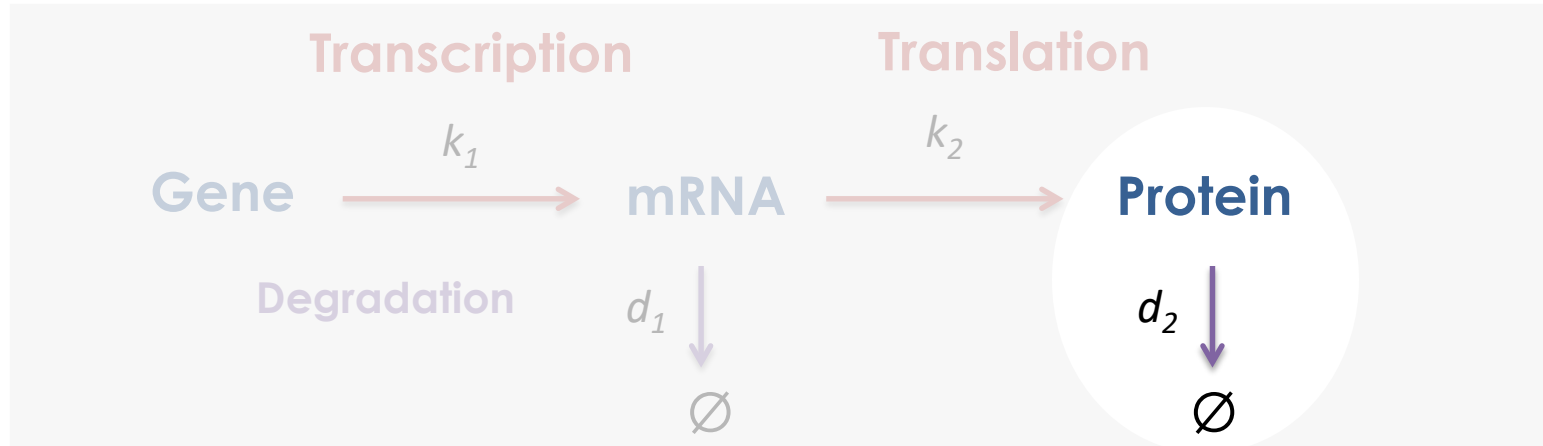
## Constitutive gene expression (Simplified version)



$$\dot{[\text{mRNA}]} = k_1 [\text{Gene}] - d_1 [\text{mRNA}]$$

$$\dot{[\text{Protein}]} = k_2 [\text{mRNA}]$$

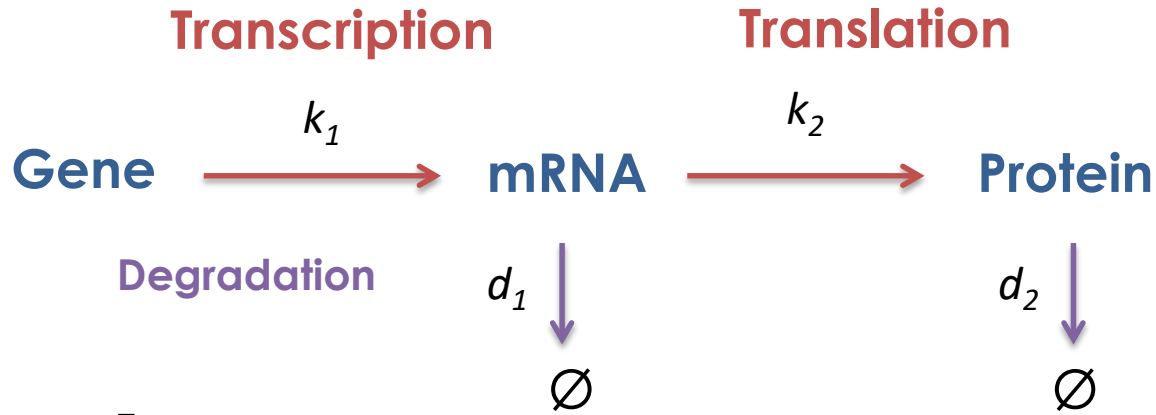
# Constitutive gene expression (Simplified version)



$$\dot{[\text{mRNA}]} = k_1 [\text{Gene}] - d_1 [\text{mRNA}]$$

$$\dot{[\text{Protein}]} = k_2 [\text{mRNA}] - d_2 [\text{Protein}]$$

# Constitutive gene expression (Simplified version)



$$\frac{d[\text{mRNA}]}{dt} = \dot{[\text{mRNA}]} = k_1[\text{Gene}] - d_1[\text{mRNA}]$$

$$\frac{d[\text{Protein}]}{dt} = \dot{[\text{Protein}]} = k_2[\text{mRNA}] - d_2[\text{Protein}]$$



# Constitutive gene expression - Simulation

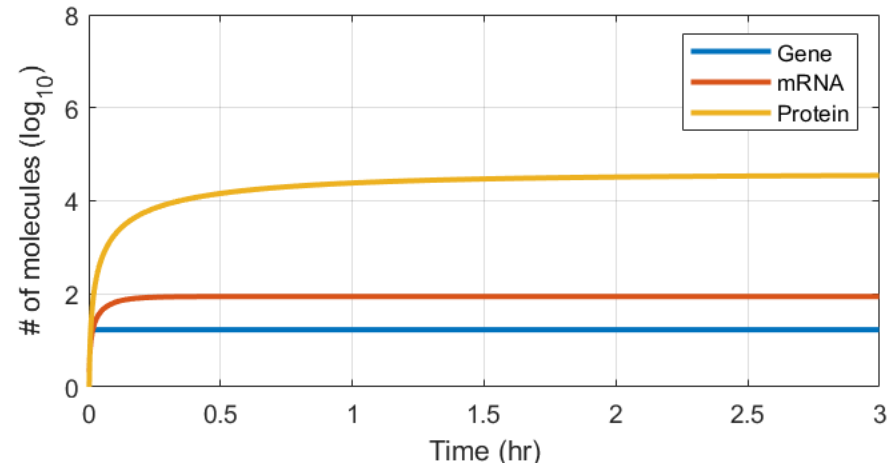
ODE model

$$[mRNA] = k_1[Gene] - d_1[mRNA]$$

$$[Protein] = k_2[mRNA] - d_2[Protein]$$

Function defines the ODE model

```
% Constitutive gene expression model.
% Updated 17/06/2020 Alejandro Vignoni
function [dxdt] = model_const(t,x,p)
%x1 = mRNA
dxdt(1,1) =p.CN*p.k1-p.d1*x(1);
%x2 = Protein
dxdt(2,1)=p.k2*x(1)-p.d2*x(2);
end
```



Main\_const.m

# Constitutive gene expression - Simulation

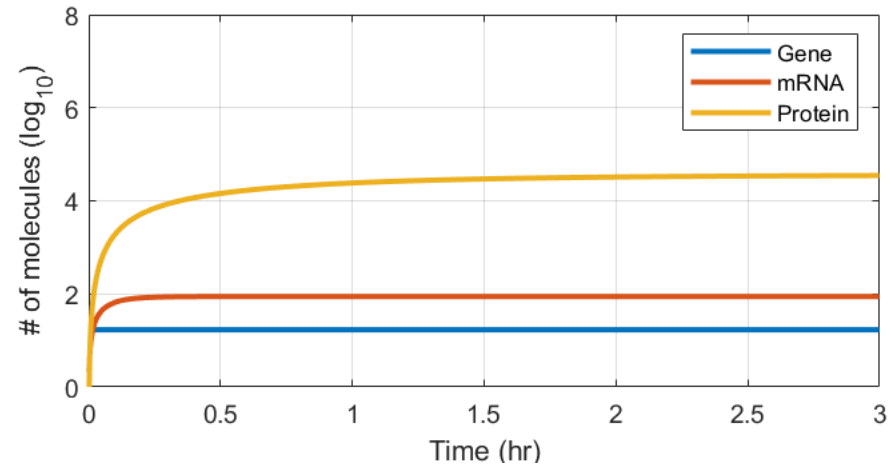
## Parameters definition

```
%Parameters
p.CN = 17;           % plasmid number pACYC184 (17 copies/cell)
p.d1 = log(2)/3;     % mRNA degradation rate [1/min]
p.d2 = 0.02;         % degradation rate [1/min]
p.k2 = 8.23;         % translation rate [1/min]
p.k1 = 1.19;         % transcription rate [1/min]
```

## Simulation configuration and execution

```
tfin = 60*3;         %simulation final time
step = 0.1;          %simulation step
tspan = 0:step:tfin-step;
% options for ode function
opti = odeset('AbsTol',1e-8,'RelTol',1e-6);
Init = [0 0];        %initial conditions

[t0,x0] = ode23t(@ (t,x) model_const(t,x,p),tspan, Init, opti);
```



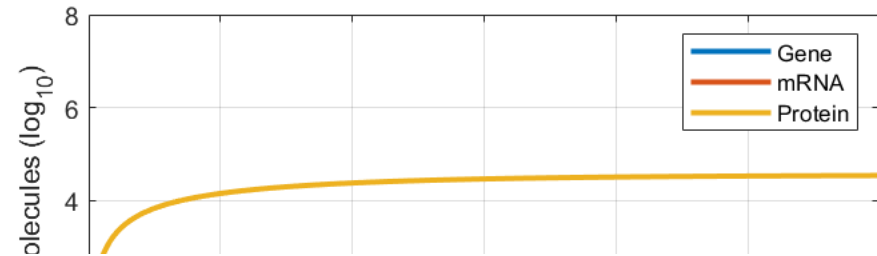
# Constitutive gene expression - Simulation

## Parameters definition

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★ Sponsor Webinar - MathWorks: Modeling and Analysis of Synthetic Biology Systems with SimBiology and MATLAB

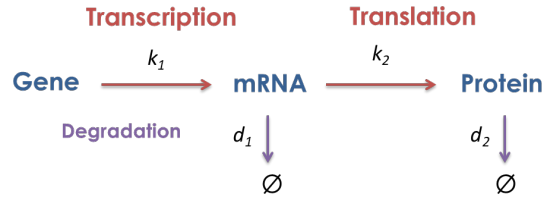
July

👤 Team: MathWorks

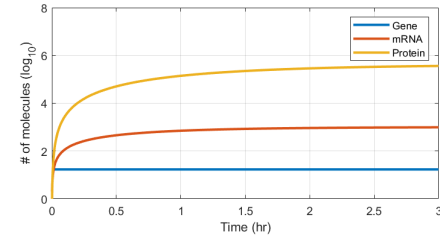
🕒 Date: July 23, 10:00AM EDT

📍 Location: Online

# Constitutive gene expression - Remarks



$$\begin{aligned} \dot{[mRNA]} &= k_1 [Gene] - d_1 [mRNA] \\ \dot{[Protein]} &= k_2 [mRNA] - d_2 [Protein] \end{aligned}$$



[Gene] is considered a constant value and depends on: the Origin of Replication and the Plasmid Copy Number where the Gene is cloned.

We are considering:

- RNA polymerase and Ribosomes are sufficient enough so that they are not limiting the kinetics.
- Binding/Unbinding processes are much faster than transcription and translation.
- Protein degradation includes growth associated dilution.

# Questions?

Ask writing in the chat or contact me  
by email (alvig2 [at] upv [dot] es)

Stay tuned, next Section 2:

Derivation of a Hill function from  
the law of mass action (15 min)

