**REINDEER: A Protein-Ligand Feature Generator Software for Machine Learning Algorithms**

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**Abstract**

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1- Introduction

In the past decade, we have witnessed a proliferation of data-driven approaches for designing protein-ligand scoring functions, which scientists apply to predict the binding affinity of a protein-ligand complex. These new scoring functions employ traditional machine learning (ML) and deep learning algorithms (DL) for deriving a non-linear relationship between binding affinity quantity and a representation of the protein-ligand complex [1-9].

A designed scoring function can be evaluated based on its ability to perform four tasks: scoring, ranking, docking, and screening. The first two tasks involve predicting binding affinity values, while the other two tasks evaluate the scoring function's ability to distinguish between native or near-native poses and decoys, as well as true binders from non-binders [10, 11]. The PDBbind dataset [12], DUD-E [13], and DEKOIS2.0 [14] are among the popular datasets for training and testing, in spite of the fact that there are some hidden biases in these datasets [15, 16].

In the ML case, it is needed to represent a protein-ligand complex in terms of a feature vector by applying feature engineering techniques, while in the DL case, these representations are mostly learned end-to-end during the training phase.

RF-Score [17], ECIF∷LD-GBT [18], and multi-shelled ECIF [19] are ML-based scoring functions that exploit the occurrence of interatomic contacts and ligand descriptors in ECIF∷LD-GBT case to generate a feature vector for ML algorithms like Random Forest (RF) or Gradient Boosting Decision Trees (GBT). ET-Score [20] and its’ enhanced versions, i.e., GB-Score [21] and ENS-Score [22], employed distance-weighted interatomic contacts and Extremely Randomized Trees (ERT) for constructing an ML-based scoring function. ∆vinaRF20 [23], ∆vinaXGB [24] and ∆LinF9XGB [25] employ some Autodock Vina empirical terms alongside other descriptors, e.g., RDKit descriptors for ligand, for feature generation procedures, and RF and eXtreme Gradient Boosting (XGB) algorithms as learners. Proteo-chemometrics IFPs [26] and PLEC-FP [27] apply different generalized versions of extended-connectivity fingerprints for protein-ligand representation. SMPLIP-Score [28] utilizes a featurization method to vectorize and embed the interaction fingerprint pattern between the ligand‑binding site environment and fragments of ligands. TB-IECS [29] employs some theory-based energy terms, e.g., van der Waals, for making a representation for an XGB algorithm.

Tomorrow add Topology-based methods

Next day add DL methods

Emphasis of ML-based

Lack of package to feature engineering

Comparing to existence one, use table, ML-PLIC paper

Reason for selection of these methods, exclusion of enery term based like DeltaVinaRF20

Last paragraph of introduction

2- Theory

Occurrence of Interatomic Contact

Occurrence of interatomic contact (OIC) was introduced by Ballester et al. for developing the RF-Score scoring function [17]. In this technique, the authors represented a protein-ligand complex by counting the number of occurrences of a specific pair of protein and ligand atoms below a distance threshold. Ten elemental atom types (H, C, O, N, F, P, S, Cl, Br, and I) were allocated for protein and ligand , although in its original implementation, the Hydrogen element was omitted. The following formula calculates the occurrence (1):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | (1) |

Where xi,j is the number of contacts between i and j atom types. k and l are protein and ligand atoms belonging to the i and j atom types. dkl is the Euclidean distance between k and l atoms, and Θ is the Heaviside step function that counts contacts below dcutoff=12 Å. The feature vector contains 50 integer-valued features.

Distance-Weighted Interatomic Contact

Distance-weighted interatomic contact (DWIC) was employed by ET-Score [20] for vectorial representation of a protein-ligand complex and further used by GB-Score [21] and ENS-Score [22]. Like OIC, ten elemental atom types are chosen for both ligand and protein. However, protein atom types are further augmented by considering the nature of amino acid side chains. To reflect the different characteristics of amino acids, they are classified into four groups (Charged (c), Polar (p), Amphipathic (a), and Hydrophobic (h)):

Charged={Arg, Lys, Asp, Glu}

Polar={Gln, Asn, His, Ser, Thr, Cys}

Amphipathic={Trp, Tyr, Met}

Hydrophobic={Ile, Leu, Phe, Val, Pro, Gly, Ala}

Therefore, each elemental protein atom type belongs to four groups. As an example, CP denotes a carbon atom of polar residues. At its’ core, DWIC is similar to OIC in the feature generation by considering atom types pair of protein and ligand, but, in DWIC, the Heaviside step function is replaced by a function, which differentiated close and distant interatomic contacts by applying an inverse-square factor. The following equation (2) describes this function:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | (2) |

The definition of symbols is similar to equation (1), and like OIC, dcutoff=12Å is applied. The DIWC feature vector includes 200 float-valued features.

Extended Connectivity Interaction Features

Extended Connectivity Interaction Features, or concisely ECIF, share the same essence, like DIWC, with OIC [18]. However, ECIF applies different atom type representations and dcutoff value (6Å) and only retains the counting atom type pairs scheme of OIC. The authors defined atom types in ECIF by considering the atom environment. Atom symbol, explicit valence, number of attached heavy atoms, number of attached hydrogens, aromaticity, and ring membership were employed for this definition, which results in 22 and 70 atom types for protein and ligand, respectively. The final feature vector comprises 1540 integer-valued features.

3- Method

4- Case Study

5- Conclusion

6- References

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