## Overview

- Week 2: Comparative methods and concepts
  - Similarity vs. Homology
  - Global vs. Local Alignments
  - Scoring Matrices
  - BLAST
  - BLAT
- Week 3: Predictive methods and concepts
  - Profiles, patterns, motifs, and domains
  - Secondary structure prediction
  - Structures: VAST, Cn3D, and de novo prediction



## Why do sequence alignments? Provide a measure of relatedness between nucleotide or amino acid sequences Determining relatedness allows one to draw biological inferences regarding structural relationships functional relationships evolutionary relationships *→ importance of using correct terminology*



- The quantitative measure: Similarity
  - Always based on an observable
  - Usually expressed as percent identity
  - Quantify changes that occur as two sequences diverge
     substitutions
    - substitutions
    - insertionsdeletions
  - Identify residues crucial for maintaining a protein's structure or function
- High degrees of sequence similarity *might* imply
  - a common evolutionary history
  - possible commonality in biological function



- The conclusion: *Homology* 
  - Genes *are* or *are not* homologous (not measured in degrees)
  - Homology implies an evolutionary relationship
- The term "homolog" may apply to the relationship
  - between genes separated by the event of speciation (*orthology*)
  - between genes separated by the event of genetic duplication (*paralogy*)











- Sequence comparison along the entire length of the two sequences being aligned
- Best for highly-similar sequences of similar length
- As the degree of sequence similarity declines, global alignment methods tend to miss important biological relationships



# Local Sequence Alignments Sequence comparison intended to find the most similar regions in the two sequences being aligned ("paired subsequences") Regions outside the area of local alignment are excluded More than one local alignment could be generated for any two sequences being compared Best for sequences that share some similarity, or for sequences of different lengths

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## Scoring Matrices

- *Conservation:* What residues can substitute for another residue and not adversely affect the function of the protein?
  - Ile/Val both small and hydrophobic
  - Ser/Thr both polar
  - Conserve charge, size, hydrophobicity, other physicochemical factors
- *Frequency:* How often does a particular residue occur amongst the entire constellation of proteins?



# Scoring Matrices Why is understanding scoring matrices important? Appear in all analyses involving sequence comparison Implicitly represent particular evolutionary patterns Choice of matrix can strongly influence outcomes of analyses





## PAM Matrices

- Margaret Dayhoff and colleagues, 1978
  - Look at patterns of substitutions in highly related proteins (> 85% similar) within multiple sequence alignments
  - Analysis documented 1572 changes in 71 groups of proteins examined
  - Substitution tables constructed based on results of this analysis
  - Given high degree of similarity within original sequence set, results represent substitution pattern that would be expected over short evolutionary distances



# PAM Matrices Short evolutionary distance change in function unlikely Point Accepted Mutation (PAM) The new side chain must function the same way as the old one ("acceptance") On average, 1 PAM corresponds to 1 amino acid change per 100 residues 1 PAM ~ 1% divergence Extrapolate to predict patterns at longer evolutionary distances

## PAM Matrices: Assumptions

- All sites assumed to be equally mutable, not accounting for conserved blocks or motifs
- Replacement of amino acids is independent of previous mutations at the same position
- Replacement is independent of surrounding residues
- Forces responsible for sequence evolution over shorter time spans are the same as those over longer time spans



## PAM Matrices: Sources of Error Small, globular proteins of average composition used to derive matrices Errors in PAM 1 are magnified up to PAM 250 (only PAM 1 is based on direct observation)

## **BLOSUM** Matrices

- Henikoff and Henikoff, 1992
- <u>Blocks Substitution Matrix</u>
  - Look only for differences in conserved, ungapped regions of a protein family ("blocks")
  - Directly calculated, using no extrapolations
  - More sensitive to detecting structural or functional substitutions
  - Generally perform better than PAM matrices for local similarity searches (*Henikoff and Henikoff, 1993*)





## BLOSUM n

- Clustering reduces contribution of closelyrelated sequences (less bias towards substitutions that occur in the most closely-related members of a family)
- Substitution frequencies are more heavilyinfluenced by sequences that are more divergent than this cutoff
- Reducing *n* yields more distantly-related sequences



Triple-PAM Strategy (Altschul, 1991)			
PAM 40	Short alignments, highly similar	70-90%	
PAM 160	Detecting known members of a protein family	50-60%	
PAM 250	Longer, weaker local alignments	~ 30%	
BLOSUM (	Henikoff, 1993)		
BLOSUM 90	Short alignments, highly similar	70-90%	
BLOSUM 80	Detecting known members of a protein family	50-60%	
BLOSUM 62	Most effective in finding all potential similarities	30-40%	
BLOSUM 30	Longer, weaker local alignments	< 30%	





## Gaps

- Compensate for insertions and deletions
- Used to improve alignments between two sequences
- Must be kept to a reasonable number, to not reflect a biological implausible scenario (~1 gap per 20 residues good rule-of-thumb)
- Cannot be scored simply as a "match" or a ٠ "mismatch"

## Affine Gap Penalty

Fixed deduction for introducing a gap *plus* an additional deduction proportional to the length of the gap

Deduction for a gap = G + Ln

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where	G	=	gap-opening penalty	5	11
	L	=	gap-extension penalty	2	1

and

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= length of the gap п

Can adjust scores to make gap insertion more or less permissive, but most programs will use values of G and Lmost appropriate for the scoring matrix selected

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## BLAST Basic Local Alignment Search Tool Seeks high-scoring segment pairs (HSP) pair of sequences that can be aligned with one another when aligned, have maximal aggregate score (score cannot be improved by extension or trimming) score must be above score threshhold S gapped or ungapped Results not limited to the "best HSP" for any given sequence pair

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	Program	Query Sequence	Target Sequence		
	BLASTN	Nucleotide	Nucleotide		
	BLASTP	Protein	Protein		
	BLASTX	Nucleotide, six-frame translation	Protein		
	TBLASTN	Protein	Nucleotide, six-frame translation		
	TBLASTX	Nucleotide, six-frame translation	Nucleotide, six-frame translation		













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- · Biological origins and role not well-understood
  - DNA replication errors (polymerase slippage)?
  - Unequal crossing-over?
- May confound sequence analysis
  - BLAST relies on uniformly-distributed amino acid frequencies
  - Often lead to false positives
  - Filtering is advised (and usually enabled by default)



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Query	421	PRILLDADY LDEDDDDC VDYRTSGGCLKRYGHDLRARVERI VSGNKCSFSGCLAQAG QLQVNGCKKRKLYQPQQHAMERYVaaaaGLNFGLNLQSMMLDQEDSESNELESPQIQQKR	540	

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- Low-quality sequence hits
  - Expressed sequence tags (ESTs)
  - Single-pass sequence reads from large-scale sequencing (possibly with vector contaminants)



# BLAST 2 Sequences Finds local alignments between two protein or nucleotide sequences of interest All BLAST programs available Select BLOSUM and PAM matrices available for protein comparisons Same affine gap costs (adjustable) Input sequences can be masked

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## Overview

- Week 2: Comparative methods and concepts
  - Similarity vs. Homology
  - Global vs. Local Alignments
  - Scoring Matrices
  - BLAST
  - BLAT
- Week 3: Predictive methods and concepts
  - Profiles, patterns, motifs, and domains
  - Secondary structure prediction
  - Structures: VAST, Cn3D, and de novo prediction



## BLAT

- "BLAST-Like Alignment Tool"
- Designed to rapidly-align longer nucleotide sequences  $(L \ge 40)$  having > 95% sequence similarity
- Can find exact matches reliably down to L = 33
- Method of choice when looking for exact matches in nucleotide databases
- 500 times faster for mRNA/DNA searches
- May miss divergent or shorter sequence alignments
- Can be used on protein sequences







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