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SUBSTRATE LOCKING PROMOTES DIMER-DIMER DOCKING OF AN ENZYME ANTIBIOTIC TARGET

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Protein dynamics manifested through structural flexibility play a central role in the function of biological molecules. Here we explore the substrate-mediated change in protein flexibility of an enzyme antibiotic target, *Clostridium botulinum* dihydrodipicolinate synthase (DHDPS). We demonstrate that the substrate, pyruvate, stabilizes the more active dimer-of-dimers or tetrameric form of the enzyme. Surprisingly, there is little difference between the crystal structures of apo and substrate-bound DHDPS, suggesting protein dynamics may be important. Neutron and small angle X-ray scattering experiments were used to probe substrate-induced dynamics on the sub-second timescale, but no significant changes were observed. We have therefore developed a simple technique, coined Protein Dynamics-Mass Spectrometry (ProD-MS), which enables measurement of time-dependent alkylation of cysteine residues. ProD-MS together with X-ray crystallography and analytical ultracentrifugation analyses indicates that pyruvate locks the conformation of the dimer that promotes docking to the more active tetrameric form, offering new insight into ligand-mediated stabilization of multimeric enzymes.

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