1 **AmyCo: the Amyloidoses Collection**

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25

26 **Dr. Paraskevi L. Tsiolaki** is a Biologist with an MSc in Bioinformatics and a PhD in Molecular
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1 **AmyCo: the Amyloidoses Collection**

2 Amyloid fibrils are formed when soluble proteins misfold into highly ordered insoluble
3 fibrillar aggregates and affect various organs and tissues. The deposition of amyloid
4 fibrils is the main hallmark of a group of disorders, called amyloidoses. Curiously, fibril
5 deposition has been also recorded as a complication in a number of other pathological
6 conditions, including well-known neurodegenerative or endocrine diseases. To date,
7 amyloidoses are roughly classified, owing to their tremendous heterogeneity. In this
8 work, we introduce AmyCo, a freely available collection of amyloidoses and clinical
9 disorders related to amyloid deposition. AmyCo classifies 74 diseases associated with
10 amyloid deposition into two distinct categories, namely 1) amyloidosis and 2) clinical
11 conditions associated with amyloidosis. Each database entry is annotated with the major
12 protein component (causative protein), other components of amyloid deposits and
13 affected tissues or organs. Database entries are also supplemented with appropriate
14 detailed annotation and are referenced to ICD-10, MeSH, OMIM, PubMed, AmyPro and
15 UniProtKB databases. To our knowledge, AmyCo is the largest repository containing
16 information about amyloidoses and diseases related to amyloid deposition. The AmyCo
17 web interface is available at <http://bioinformatics.biol.uoa.gr/amyco>.

18 Keywords: amyloid, amyloidosis, database, aggregation, amyloid deposits

19

1 Introduction

2 Amyloidoses are a group of disorders typically characterized by the extracellular and/or
 3 intracellular deposition of misfolded protein aggregates, known as amyloid fibrils [1]. The
 4 deposition is mainly attributed to the abnormal transition of a soluble protein into highly
 5 ordered insoluble amyloid fibrils, which disrupts the normal tissue architecture and results in
 6 organ failure [2, 3, 4, 5]. Since their discovery, amyloidoses became the center of attention
 7 for the scientific community and underwent various classifications, mostly based on clinical
 8 observations [6, 7, 8]. A current classification system categorizes amyloidoses as either
 9 localized or systemic [8, 9, 10, 11], whereas other systems cluster amyloidoses as primary or
 10 secondary [12, 13], hereditary or acquired [6, 14] and parenchymal or mesenchymal [15].

11 “Amyloidosis” has long been used as a general term to describe a family of
 12 heterogenous pathologies, caused by the abnormal protein misfolding and deposition [6].
 13 Nevertheless, amyloid deposition is recorded as a clinical abnormality, occurring in a broad
 14 range of devastating, well-known or less common, disorders [16, 17]. Striking examples
 15 include the neurodegenerative Alzheimer disease [18, 19], with approximately 30 million
 16 people affected throughout the world and Diabetes Mellitus type 2 [20, 21], a metabolic
 17 disorder responsible for more than 1.5 million deaths annually [22]. Interestingly,
 18 amyloidosis was also traced as a rare complication of other clinical conditions with high
 19 prevalence in the human population, like certain types of cancer [23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29]
 20 and other severe diseases [30, 31, 32, 33].

21 To date, there are a few studies that systematically gather data for amyloidoses and
 22 store them in biological databases. Such examples are the Mutations in Hereditary
 23 Amyloidosis database [14], AL-Base [34], AlzGene [35], PDGene [36], PDBase [37] and
 24 AD&FTDMD [38]. However, it is evident, by looking up all previous systematic studies,

1 that the majority of currently available repositories are mainly dedicated to well-studied
2 diseases, while there is a lack of systematic approaches for the most rare and understudied
3 disorders, associated with amyloid deposition. This fact stresses the importance of creating
4 an up-to-date database that can assemble and categorize the heterogeneous group of diseases,
5 originating from the deposition of amyloid fibrils.

6 Considering all these aspects, in this study we introduce AmyCo, a comprehensive,
7 well-annotated and updated online collection, which contains data for 74 disorders associated
8 with amyloid deposition. AmyCo entries were thoroughly gathered and supplemented with
9 detailed annotation. Hyperlinks to ICD-10 [39], MeSH [40], OMIM [41], PubMed [42],
10 AmyPro [43] and UniProtKB [44] databases were also included as additional disease details.
11 To our knowledge, AmyCo is currently the most extensive database for the remarkably
12 heterogeneous group of diseases, emerging from the deposition of amyloid fibrils.

13

14 **Methods**

15 *AmyCo Data collection and Classification*

16 AmyCo disease entries were collected through an extensive literature search (March 2018,
17 PubMed [42]). A total of 249 studies, indexed in PubMed, were used (Please refer to
18 Supplementary File 1 for more details). Data were additionally manipulated and diseases
19 were classified into two broad categories, based on the following scheme:

- 20 • Amyloidosis, when amyloid deposition is the main disease cause (e.g. AL
21 amyloidosis, Alzheimer disease)
- 22 • Clinical conditions associated with amyloidosis, when amyloid deposition is detected
23 but is neither the main nor the common disease cause (e.g. amyloid deposition in
24 Waldenström's macroglobulinemia)

1

2 *AmyCo Disease Nomenclature*

3 Disease entry names were thoroughly reviewed and selected. The following nomenclature
4 scheme was used for the main disease name:

- 5 • a MeSH name is assigned as a disease name when a disorder is recorded as a MeSH
6 entry
- 7 • an ICD-10 name, is assigned as a disease name when there is no available MeSH
8 entry, and
- 9 • the most common name of the disease found in the scientific literature is assigned as a
10 disease name when a disease has neither a MeSH nor an ICD-10 entry.

11 Common or less common disease names were also included as alternative disease
12 terms. The International Society of Amyloidosis (ISA) nomenclature was additionally added
13 for disease entries related to the majority of proteins that have been recorded as amyloid fibril
14 proteins in human according to the ISA [45].

15 *Additional AmyCo features*

16 Each database entry was manually annotated with major protein components (causative
17 protein) and minor protein components. The latter were especially included in the
18 “Amyloidosis” category in an attempt to correlate distinct protein components that happen to
19 be co-deposited in the amyloid plaques of one or more conditions [46, 47]. Co-deposited
20 components are experimentally verified by either immunohistochemistry, MS-based
21 proteomics, staining or imaging techniques [46, 47, 48, 49, 50]. Protein nomenclature, used
22 throughout the database, follows the modern guidelines suggested by the ISA [45]. In
23 addition to this feature, diseases belonging to the “Clinical conditions associated with

1 amyloidosis” category were annotated with a related “Amyloidosis” category, utilizing a
2 hyperlinked section. This AmyCo feature unravels the relationship between pathologies at a
3 disease level, based on existing literature data.

4 For each entry, information about the respective disease and associated proteins is
5 provided, along with literature references (PubMed [42]), cross-references to major publicly
6 available disease databases -when available- (MeSH [40], ICD [39], OMIM [41]) and protein
7 databases (UniProt [44], AmyPro [43]). Tissues or organs affected by amyloid deposits were
8 also collected from the literature and added as additional disease details [42]. Entries, which
9 have MeSH records, were further enriched with a MeSH description [40]. A supplementary
10 disease subdivision was embed, based on the well-established ICD-10 classification scheme
11 [39].

12 *AmyCo Implementation*

13 A web application for AmyCo has been created with a two-layer approach; a mySQL
14 database system and a Node.js application server. The first layer consists of a mySQL
15 database management system, with all disease and protein data stored in a relational database.
16 The second layer is a Node.js application server that receives user queries to the database and
17 returns data to the web browser. The web interface is based on modern technologies
18 (HTML5, CSS3 and Javascript) and can be viewed from any screen size (desktop, tablet or
19 mobile). A CytoscapeJS [51] viewer is integrated for the visualization of the association
20 between diseases and protein components of amyloid deposits.

21

1 **Results & Discussion**

2 The deposition of amyloid fibrils has been linked to the development of a broad class of life-
3 threatening diseases, called amyloidoses [1]. While amyloid fibril deposition has been
4 recorded as a major and/or minor complication in a number of pathological conditions, it still
5 remains unclear whether it is the cause or the consequence of these diseases [16]. Despite
6 intensive studies during the past decades in the field of amyloid research, until now there is a
7 lack of a standard classification for amyloidoses. In this work, we created AmyCo, a novel
8 manually curated collection of amyloidoses and clinical conditions associated with amyloid
9 deposition. AmyCo displays a novel classification system for these rare disorders and
10 provides links to important literature references and other significant disease databases. To
11 the best of our knowledge, AmyCo collects the largest number of disorders (74) related to
12 amyloid deposition and associates proteins acting as principal causative disease agents (83).
13 A detailed comparison between AmyCo and other available resources is presented in Table 1.

14 One of the main challenges during the creation of AmyCo was to manually filter the
15 plethora of available information, form the final non-redundant dataset of diseases and clarify
16 nomenclatures for both the diseases and their associated proteins. In a similar way, an
17 interesting approach to group amyloidosis, based on the type of precursor proteins that form
18 insoluble amyloid fibrils, was introduced by Misumi and Ando, back in 2014 [52]. In turn,
19 our final classification scheme divided 74 diseases into two distinct categories, namely
20 “amyloidosis” and “clinical conditions associated with amyloidosis” (Please see Materials
21 and Methods for more details). This classification scheme allowed us to unify current and
22 older nomenclatures, accurately allocate alternative disease names, and subsequently, gather
23 relevant knowledge from both the scientific literature [42] and other more generic databases
24 [39, 40, 41]. Literature data reveal that when it comes to amyloidoses there is a variable use
25 of terms [8, 53], despite the efforts of the ISA nomenclature committee to establish a

1 common classification system [6, 45, 54]. Alternative disease terms were included in an
 2 attempt to ensure the consistency of our database and improve the overall information flow.
 3 Universal MeSH and ICD-10 terms were assigned as the main disease name, following the
 4 scheme described in the Materials and Methods section. Thus, AmyCo is a valuable
 5 reference for anyone using contemporary nomenclature or older disease designations that are
 6 still extensively in use in the literature.

7 At the same time, 83 experimentally validated protein components of amyloid
 8 deposits were assigned to each of the diseases (Figure 1). The ISA classification system was
 9 used as a reference for the nomenclature of these protein components. The co-existence of
 10 proteins in amyloid deposits gained a lot of attention due to its established connection with
 11 protein aggregation [17, 55]. A variety of experimental techniques, direct or indirect, are
 12 used to capture this common phenomenon [46, 47, 48, 49, 50]. Such examples are the
 13 Gerstmann-Straussler-Scheinker Syndrome, where amyloid PrP (APrP) and A β are both
 14 found in amyloid plaques [49], or the Alzheimer's disease, in which many proteinaceous
 15 components have been recorded as co-deposits of the amyloid plaques [48, 56, 57]. Co-
 16 deposition of proteins, occurred either through cross-seeding [17, 55] or cross-inhibition [17,
 17 55] is an extremely important detail for these rare diseases, as it could be a key starting point
 18 towards associating the majority of amyloid-related diseases and understanding the inevitable
 19 cascade of protein aggregation.

20 Apart from the systematic data collection from the scientific literature, which will be
 21 performed in a regular basis in order to maintain AmyCo records, an interesting option is the
 22 feature that allows the scientific community contribution. User contribution is an inseparable
 23 component of biological databases that wish to stay updated and incorporate the ever-
 24 growing biological knowledge [58, 59]. Furthermore, community annotation allows the

1 synergy between curators and researchers, helps towards the maintenance of a repository and
 2 promotes interdisciplinary collaborations [60]. In the case of AmyCo, user annotation is a
 3 feature of utmost importance, since this collection was based upon the entire scientific
 4 literature (Supplementary File 1) and thus, some data may be falsely filtered out or certain
 5 biases may be reflected during the disease collection. More importantly, there is an excessive
 6 amount of information about amyloidoses that is generated daily by the community and
 7 added to the amyloid research vault. A submission form, provided in the contact page of the
 8 AmyCo v1.1 web application, allows user annotation and welcomes the insertion of
 9 comments or new data. This utility renders AmyCo a valuable tool for the interaction of the
 10 scientific community dealing with amyloidoses.

11 *User interface and website features*

12 The AmyCo database has a user-friendly interface that offers convenient ways to gain access
 13 into its data. The ‘Home’ page provides a short description and database statistics. From the
 14 navigation bar, at the top of every page, users can either perform searches or browse the
 15 database contents. A ‘Manual’ page explaining the functionalities of AmyCo, a ‘Contact’
 16 page with author contact information and a submission form for user contribution are also
 17 available.

18 Search queries utilize either simple protein and disease names or the more complex
 19 UniProt ACs/IDs [44] and HUGO Gene Names [61]. Terms can be used indiscriminately by
 20 the user as active search keywords, provided that are spelt correctly (Please refer to
 21 Supplementary File 2 for more details). Results can be sorted by using our disease
 22 classification system. While browsing AmyCo, a user can have access to all disease entries
 23 or filter them by disease category and/or ICD-10 classification [39]. Results retrieved from
 24 both browsing and searching the database are displayed in tables. Direct links to disease

1 entry pages are given at the end of each row. An additional BLAST search tool[62] is
2 integrated for running protein BLAST searches against the database, using as input one or
3 more FASTA formatted sequences [63].

4 AmyCo is currently available in three formats (text, XML and JSON) and is supported
5 for download by the ‘Download’ button, at the top navigation bar. The AmyCo manual is
6 also provided as a separate supplementary file (Supplementary File 2).

7 ***Disease Entries***

8 Database entries are generated dynamically via browsing, searching or through direct URL
9 links. As shown in Figure 1, direct links for data downloading are provided on the top of
10 each page. A table displaying all entry sections (e.g. disease name, ISA name, alternative
11 name etc.) is also available. CytoscapeJS [51] is used to visualize all the relationships
12 between a disease and its associated proteins in a comprehensive functional context [64].
13 Detailed information about each related protein can be also viewed by pressing the respective
14 button. Major protein components are also supplemented with AmyPro links [43] and useful
15 literature references, whereas experimental evidence is also provided for all the co-deposited
16 amyloid components. External interconnections with literature references, disease
17 repositories and protein databases enhance each disease entry with significant details (Please
18 refer to the Supplementary File 2).

19 **Conclusions**

20 AmyCo assembles and categorizes the heterogeneous group of diseases, associated with the
21 deposition of amyloid fibrils. Our novel database provides a uniform access to data recorded
22 in different literature sources and classifies 74 diseases into two distinct categories, namely 1)
23 amyloidosis and 2) clinical conditions associated with amyloidosis. The added value of

1 detailed literature references and the manual annotation feature render AmyCo a unique
 2 database for diseases associated with amyloid deposition. It is hoped that this approach will
 3 aid both clinical scientists and researchers, in the need of a comprehensive resource,
 4 referencing biological information on amyloidoses. AmyCo is available at
 5 <http://bioinformatics.biol.uoa.gr/amyco>

6

7 **Disclosure statement**

8 The authors declare no conflict of interest

9

10 **Acknowledgements**

11 The authors thank the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens for support. The
 12 authors would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers and the handling editor for their
 13 valuable comments and constructive criticism.

14

15 **Author Contributions**

16 Study design: KCN, GIN, PLT, ZIL, VAI; Conceptualization: ZIL, KCN, VAI; Literature
 17 and Database search: GIN; Database design and development: KCN; Data Curation: PLT,
 18 GIN, KCN, ZIL; Web Application Design: KCN; Web Application Quality Assurance: PLT,
 19 GIN, KCN, ZIL, VAI; Writing - original draft: KCN, GIN, PLT; Writing - review and
 20 editing: GIN, PLT, KCN, ZIL, VAI; Supervision: VAI; Funding Acquisition: VAI.

1

2 **Funding**

3 The present work was co-funded by the European Union and Greek national funds through
4 the Operational Program "Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation", under the call
5 “RESEARCH-CREATE-INNOVATE” (project code: 00353).

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33 2012;8(3):e1002548. doi: 10.1371/journal.pgen.1002548. PubMed PMID: 22438815; PubMed
34 Central PMCID: PMC3305333 the company. MJ Farrer and Mayo Foundation received royalties from
35 H.Lundbeck A/S and Isis Pharmaceuticals. In addition, MJ Farrer has received an honorarium for a
36 seminar at Genzyme. T Gasser has received consultancy fees from Cephalon and Merck-Serono,
37 grants from Novartis, payments for lectures including service on speakers' bureaus from Boehringer
38 Ingelheim, Merck-Serono, UCB, and Valean, and holds patents NGFN2 and KASPP. JA Hardy has
39 received consulting fees or honoraria from Eisai and his institute has received consulting fees or
40 honoraria from Merck-Serono. DM Maraganore has received extramural research funding support

- 1 from the National Institutes of Health (2R01 ES10751), the Michael J. Fox Foundation (Linked
2 Efforts to Accelerate Parkinson Solutions Award, Edmond J. Safra Global Genetics Consortia
3 Award), and from Alnylam Pharmaceuticals and Medtronic (observational studies of Parkinson's
4 disease). DM Maraganore has also received intramural research funding support from the Mayo
5 Clinic and from NorthShore University Health System. DM Maraganore filed a provisional patent for
6 a method to predict Parkinson's disease. This provisional patent is unlicensed. He also filed a
7 provisional patent for a method to treat neurodegenerative disorders. That provisional patent has been
8 licensed to Alnylam Pharmaceuticals and DM Maraganore has received royalty payments in total of
9 less than \$20,000. K Stefansson has received grants from deCODE.
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1 Tables

2 Table 1. A comparison between AmyCo and other databases that include information of
3 diseases, associated with amyloid deposition.

Database features	AmyCo (current work)	Mutations in Hereditary Amyloidosis [14]	AL-Base [34]	AlzGene [35]	PDGene [36]	PDBase [37]	AD&FTDMD [38]
Database contents	1) amyloidosis and 2) clinical conditions associated with amyloidosis. Available protein components.	Genes and mutations in hereditary amyloidosis including their associated clinical phenotypes.	Immunoglobulin light chain sequences from patients with AL amyloidosis and patients with multiple myeloma or healthy controls.	GWAS studies in Alzheimer's disease.	GWAS studies in Parkinson's Disease.	Parkinson's Disease related genes, genetic variations, and functional elements.	Mutations in Alzheimer's disease and other frontotemporal disorders.
Method of data retrieval	Manual	Manual	Manual	Semi- automated	Semi- automated	Semi- automated	Manual
Literature references	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cross- referenced databases	6	3	0	3	3	6	0
User annotation	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes

4

5

1 **Figure Legends**

2 Figure 1. An AmyCo disease entry. The user can access basic information about the disease,
3 including the disease name, a MeSH short description, an ICD-10 classification and the major
4 or other protein component, related to the disease. Cross-references to other databases are
5 also provided. All data are available for download in text, JSON and XML formats.

6

1 Figures

2 Figure 1

3

AmyCo

The Amyloidoses Collection

AmyCo Search Browse Blast Search Manual Download Contact

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Basic Information

Disease Name: Dementia, familial British

ISA Name: ABri Amyloidosis

Alternative Names:

- Cerebral Amyloid Angiopathy, Iltm2b-Related, 1
- Cerebral amyloid angiopathy, British type
- Presenile dementia with spastic ataxia
- Familial dementia, British type
- Dementia Familial British
- Bri Amyloidosis
- Familial British Dementia (FBD)

MeSH Description: No information available

Type: Amyloidosis

ICD-10 Classification: Diseases of the Circulatory System

Tissue: Central Nervous System (CNS), Pancreas, Heart

Major Components: Q9Y287: Integral membrane protein 2B

Other Components:

O00468: Agrin	O75056: Syndecan-3
P01011: Alpha-1-antichymotrypsin	P01034: Cystatin-C
P02649: Apolipoprotein E	P02743: Serum amyloid P-component
P10909: Clusterin	P18827: Syndecan-1
P34741: Syndecan-2	P35052: Glypican-1
P98160: Basement membrane-specific heparan sulfate proteoglycan core protein	

Interaction Network

Right click on Protein Nodes to go to UniProt.

Red Colored Edges Indicate a connection between the disease and a Major Component, while Blue Colored Edges Indicate a connection with Other Components

Cross-References

MeSH:	C538208
ICD:	I68
OMIM:	176500
PubMed:	2364266 7751049 10391242 11193180 11159188