

Reporting Summary

Nature Portfolio wishes to improve the reproducibility of the work that we publish. This form provides structure for consistency and transparency in reporting. For further information on Nature Portfolio policies, see our [Editorial Policies](#) and the [Editorial Policy Checklist](#).

Statistics

For all statistical analyses, confirm that the following items are present in the figure legend, table legend, main text, or Methods section.

n/a Confirmed

- The exact sample size (n) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement
- A statement on whether measurements were taken from distinct samples or whether the same sample was measured repeatedly
- The statistical test(s) used AND whether they are one- or two-sided
Only common tests should be described solely by name; describe more complex techniques in the Methods section.
- A description of all covariates tested
- A description of any assumptions or corrections, such as tests of normality and adjustment for multiple comparisons
- A full description of the statistical parameters including central tendency (e.g. means) or other basic estimates (e.g. regression coefficient) AND variation (e.g. standard deviation) or associated estimates of uncertainty (e.g. confidence intervals)
- For null hypothesis testing, the test statistic (e.g. F , t , r) with confidence intervals, effect sizes, degrees of freedom and P value noted
Give P values as exact values whenever suitable.
- For Bayesian analysis, information on the choice of priors and Markov chain Monte Carlo settings
- For hierarchical and complex designs, identification of the appropriate level for tests and full reporting of outcomes
- Estimates of effect sizes (e.g. Cohen's d , Pearson's r), indicating how they were calculated

Our web collection on [statistics for biologists](#) contains articles on many of the points above.

Software and code

Policy information about [availability of computer code](#)

Data collection	TopSpin software 3.6.4 (Bruker, Bremen, Germany) for NMR data collection; Thermo Xcalibur software 2.0 (Thermo Scientific Inc., San Jose, CA, USA) for mass data collection.
Data analysis	TopSpin software 3.6.4 (Bruker, Bremen, Germany) for NMR data analysis; Thermo Xcalibur software 2.0 (Thermo Scientific Inc., San Jose, CA, USA) for mass data analysis; ChemBioDraw Ultra 14.0 (Perkin Elmer, Waltham, MA, USA) for chemical structure drawing. ACEMD software (Acellera Ltd, Stanmore, UK) for simulation analysis.

For manuscripts utilizing custom algorithms or software that are central to the research but not yet described in published literature, software must be made available to editors and reviewers. We strongly encourage code deposition in a community repository (e.g. GitHub). See the Nature Portfolio [guidelines for submitting code & software](#) for further information.

Data

Policy information about [availability of data](#)

All manuscripts must include a [data availability statement](#). This statement should provide the following information, where applicable:

- Accession codes, unique identifiers, or web links for publicly available datasets
- A description of any restrictions on data availability
- For clinical datasets or third party data, please ensure that the statement adheres to our [policy](#)

Data availability statement: Supplementary Information is available for this paper. Data is available from the corresponding authors upon request.

Note: Detailed computational data on the molecular dynamics simulations is available upon request due to the vast number of data points per run (~500,000).

Human research participants

Policy information about [studies involving human research participants and Sex and Gender in Research](#).

Reporting on sex and gender n/a

Population characteristics n/a

Recruitment n/a

Ethics oversight n/a

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.

Field-specific reporting

Please select the one below that is the best fit for your research. If you are not sure, read the appropriate sections before making your selection.

Life sciences Behavioural & social sciences Ecological, evolutionary & environmental sciences

For a reference copy of the document with all sections, see nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf

Life sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

Sample size Sample size (single, duplicate or triplicate performed) for the chemical, biochemical, and modeling work was calculated based on a combination of the rigor in the field and typical assay variability. No cell- or animal-based assays were performed.

Data exclusions No data was truly excluded in our work, but we already noted in our methods for molecular simulations that we presented data only for internal sugars of chains to emulate polysaccharide structure and eliminate potential artifacts of end effects.

Replication Listed for the various tasks in the paper; please note that different techniques have different reproducibility standards.

Randomization We did not need these methods that are typically used for animal and patient studies.

Blinding We did not need these methods that are typically used for animal and patient studies.

Reporting for specific materials, systems and methods

We require information from authors about some types of materials, experimental systems and methods used in many studies. Here, indicate whether each material, system or method listed is relevant to your study. If you are not sure if a list item applies to your research, read the appropriate section before selecting a response.

Materials & experimental systems

n/a	Involvement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Antibodies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eukaryotic cell lines
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Palaeontology and archaeology
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Animals and other organisms
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Clinical data
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Dual use research of concern

Methods

n/a	Involvement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ChIP-seq
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Flow cytometry
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> MRI-based neuroimaging

Eukaryotic cell lines

Policy information about [cell lines and Sex and Gender in Research](#)

Cell line source(s) Insect cells SF9; Cat. # 12-659-017, Gibco

Authentication Gibco (vendor verified)

Mycoplasma contamination Tested negative for mycoplasma

Commonly misidentified lines
(See [ICLAC](#) register) n/a