



*J. Serb. Chem. Soc.* 91 (0) 1–13 (2026)  
JSCS–13721

## December Armageddon: Biothermodynamic analysis of rhinoviruses based on the calculation of Gibbs energy change of antigen–receptor binding and biosynthesis of rhinovirus particles

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(Received 11 January, revised 12 February, accepted 8 April 2026)

**Abstract:** The subject of this research is a battle that is repeated every year and spreads epidemically across different territories, causing a large number of infected cases and casualties. Infections with rhinovirus are well known to the biomedical sciences. However, for a deeper understanding of the causes of rhinovirus disease and virus-host interaction (infection) it is necessary to understand them from the perspective of chemistry and biothermodynamics. This paper presents the empirical formulas, the driving forces of rhinovirus-host interactions, as well as a mechanistic model of virus-host interactions at the cell membrane and in the cytoplasm. Based on the described data, conclusions are presented about why 50 % of infections of the upper respiratory tract are caused by rhinoviruses. For the first time, the changes in Gibbs energies of biosynthesis of virus particles of rhinoviruses A2, B3 and C15, as well as change in Gibbs energy of binding of rhinovirus A2 are presented, which are needed to understand the lifecycle of rhinoviruses.

**Keywords:** enthalpy; entropy; growth reactions; empirical formulas; molar mass.

### INTRODUCTION

Rhinovirus is the most common cause of seasonal respiratory infections. It's estimated that rhinovirus causes of 50 % of all viral respiratory infections. Rhinovirus belongs to the group of RNA viruses.<sup>1,2</sup> The rhinovirus virion is unenveloped.<sup>3,4</sup> The virion consists of 60 copies each of the structural proteins VP1, VP2, VP3 and VP4.<sup>5–8</sup> The viral structural proteins form a capsid that surrounds a

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<https://doi.org/10.2298/JSC260111019P>

single-stranded positive-sense RNA genome.<sup>9,10</sup> Rhinoviruses are classified into RV-A, RV-B and RV-C species, each of which contains many subvariants.<sup>11,12</sup>

From the above, we can conclude that rhinovirus represents a macromolecular assembly that consists of nucleotides and amino acids. As such, rhinoviruses can be understood, not just as biological entities, but also as chemical entities.<sup>13</sup> Due to their chemical nature, viruses can be characterized by an empirical formula, as well as thermodynamic properties (changes in enthalpy, entropy and Gibbs energy).<sup>14</sup> Rhinovirus performs life processes inside host cells.<sup>15</sup> In essence, life processes represent chemical reactions, which obey the laws of chemical kinetics and thermodynamics, and are led by a driving force. For example, binding of viruses to host cells is a reaction similar to protein–ligand interactions.<sup>14,16</sup> It is led by a driving force – change in Gibbs energy of binding.<sup>14,17</sup> Virus multiplication also represents a reaction of polymerization of amino acids into viral proteins and nucleotides into viral nucleic acid,<sup>13,41–45</sup> which then undergoes self-assembly into virus particles.<sup>23,46,47</sup> A virus, during the life process of multiplication, performs hijacking of the host-cell metabolic machinery, as well as the material resources of host cells (nucleotides, amino acids, *etc.*).<sup>18–20</sup> The reaction of polymerization is led by its driving force – change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis.<sup>21,22</sup> Finally, the synthesized virus parts undergo the process of self-assembly and accumulate inside the host cell, which with time can lead to cell lysis and an increase in the number of virus particles inside the host organism.<sup>23</sup> The consequence of cell lysis is damage to the function and morphology of the tissue of the host organism.<sup>13,24</sup>

The aim of this paper is to chemically and thermodynamically characterize the rhinoviruses and make a comparison with other known viruses that have been described in the literature. Moreover, the known lifecycle of rhinoviruses is described using the fundamental physicochemical laws that describe virus-host interactions.

## EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

### *Data sources*

The genetic sequences of the rhinoviruses were taken from the NCBI database.<sup>25</sup> The analyzed genetic sequences can be found under the accession numbers: X02316.1 for rhinovirus A2, NC 038312.1 for rhinovirus B3 and GU219984.1 for rhinovirus C15.

The protein sequences of the rhinoviruses were taken from the UniProt database.<sup>26</sup> The analyzed protein sequences can be found under the accession numbers: P04936 for rhinovirus A2, Q82081 for rhinovirus B3 and E5D8F2 for rhinovirus C15 (PTM/Processing section). The morphology of the rhinovirus particles was taken from the literature.<sup>5–8</sup>

The dissociation equilibrium constants,  $K_d$ , of rhinoviruses A2 and B3 were taken from the literature.<sup>27,28</sup> They were measured with atomic force spectroscopy and surface plasmon resonance.<sup>27,28</sup>

### *Atom counting method*

The molecular formulas, empirical formulas and molar masses of the rhinoviruses were calculated with the atom counting method, as described in the literature.<sup>29,30</sup> The atom counting

method is a computational approach for the calculation of chemical properties of micromolecules and macromolecular assemblies.<sup>29,30</sup> It is applied with a computer program, which goes along the genetic and protein sequences and adds atoms that come from nucleotide and amino acid residues.<sup>29,30</sup> For macromolecular assemblies, the numbers of atoms coming from constituent molecules are multiplied by the number of their copies in the macromolecular assembly.<sup>29,30</sup>

#### *Patel–Erickson–Battley model*

Thermodynamic properties of the live matter of rhinoviruses were calculated with the Patel–Erickson–Battley model, as described in the literature.<sup>13,14</sup> Based on the empirical formula, the degree of reduction,  $E$ , was calculated as:

$$E = 4n_C + n_H - 2n_O - 0n_N + 5n_P + 6n_S \quad (1)$$

where  $n_C$ ,  $n_H$ ,  $n_O$ ,  $n_N$ ,  $n_P$  and  $n_S$  are the numbers of C, H, O, N, P and S atoms in the empirical formula.<sup>31,32</sup> Then the Patel–Erickson equation was used to find the enthalpy change of combustion,  $\Delta_C H^0$ , of live matter:<sup>31,32</sup>

$$\Delta_C H^0(\text{bio}) = -111.4 \frac{\text{kJ}}{\text{C-mol}} E \quad (2)$$

The enthalpy change of combustion was then converted into the enthalpy change of formation,  $\Delta_f H^0$ , of live matter with Hess's law, as described in the literature.<sup>13,32</sup>

The Battley equation was used to calculate the molar entropy,  $S_m^0$ , of live matter based on its empirical formula:

$$S_m^0(\text{bio}) = 0.187 \sum_J \frac{S_m^0(J)}{a_J} n_J \quad (3)$$

where  $S_m^0(J)$  is the molar entropy of element  $J$ ,  $a_J$  is the number of atoms of element  $J$  in its standard state elemental form,  $n_J$  is the number of atoms of element  $J$  in the empirical formula of live matter and the summation is made over all  $J$  elements that are present in the live matter.<sup>33,34</sup> Moreover, change in entropy of formation,  $\Delta_f S^0$ , of live matter was calculated with the modified Battley equation:<sup>33,34</sup>

$$\Delta_f S^0(\text{bio}) = -0.813 \sum_J \frac{S_m^0(J)}{a_J} n_J \quad (4)$$

The change in Gibbs energy of formation,  $\Delta_f G^0$ , of live matter was calculated based on its enthalpy change of formation,  $\Delta_f H^0$ , and entropy change of formation,  $\Delta_f S^0$ :

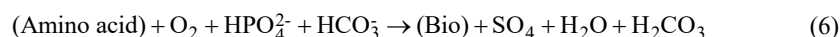
$$\Delta_f G^0(\text{bio}) = \Delta_f H^0(\text{bio}) - T \Delta_f S^0(\text{bio}) \quad (5)$$

where  $T$  is temperature.<sup>13</sup>

The Patel–Erickson–Battley model has been widely used in research on the thermodynamic properties of organisms.<sup>49,50</sup> It gives results in good agreement with experimental data.<sup>33,34,50</sup> The uncertainty in  $\Delta_C H^0$  calculated with the Patel–Erickson equation is 5.36 %.<sup>50</sup> The uncertainty in  $S_m^0$  calculated with the Battley equation is 19.7 %.<sup>33,34</sup>

#### *Biosynthesis reactions and thermodynamic properties*

Biosynthesis reactions are macrochemical equations that show how new live matter is produced from nutrients by organisms.<sup>13,14,48</sup> The biosynthesis reactions of viruses have the form:



where (Amino acid) represents amino acids with the empirical formula  $\text{CH}_{1.798}\text{O}_{0.4831}\text{N}_{0.2247}\text{S}_{0.022472}$  and (Bio) represents the empirical formula of new live matter. Amino acids are the source of energy, carbon, nitrogen and sulfur.<sup>1,13,14</sup>  $\text{O}_2$  is the electron acceptor.<sup>13,14,35</sup>  $\text{HPO}_4^{2-}$  is the source of phosphorus.<sup>1,13</sup>  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  is an additional metabolic product that takes excess sulfur.<sup>13,14</sup>  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}_3$  form a bicarbonate buffer that maintains a constant pH.<sup>13,14</sup>

The biosynthesis reactions and thermodynamic properties of live matter were used to calculate thermodynamic properties of biosynthesis with Hess's law:

$$\Delta_{\text{bs}}H^0 = \sum_{\text{products}} \nu \Delta_{\text{f}}H^0 - \sum_{\text{reactants}} \nu \Delta_{\text{f}}H^0 \quad (7)$$

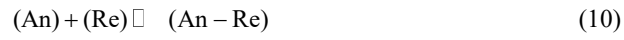
$$\Delta_{\text{bs}}S^0 = \sum_{\text{products}} \nu S_{\text{m}}^0 - \sum_{\text{reactants}} \nu S_{\text{m}}^0 \quad (8)$$

$$\Delta_{\text{bs}}G^0 = \sum_{\text{products}} \nu \Delta_{\text{f}}G^0 - \sum_{\text{reactants}} \nu \Delta_{\text{f}}G^0 \quad (9)$$

where  $\Delta_{\text{bs}}H^0$  is the enthalpy change of biosynthesis,  $\Delta_{\text{bs}}S^0$  change in the entropy of biosynthesis,  $\Delta_{\text{bs}}G^0$  change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis and  $\nu$  represents a stoichiometric coefficient.<sup>13,14</sup>

#### *Antigen–receptor binding*

Thermodynamic properties of antigen–receptor binding of rhinoviruses were calculated with the methodology of thermochemistry, as described in the literature.<sup>13,14,16</sup> Antigen–receptor binding represents a chemical reaction similar to protein–ligand interactions.<sup>13,14,16</sup> The reaction of antigen–receptor binding is:



where (An) is the free virus antigen, (Re) is the free host cell receptor, while (An–Re) is the antigen–receptor complex.<sup>13,14,16</sup> The dissociation equilibrium constant,  $K_{\text{d}}$ , is given as:

$$K_{\text{d}} = \frac{[\text{An}][\text{Re}]}{[\text{An} - \text{Re}]} \quad (11)$$

where [An], [Re] and [An–Re] are the concentrations of the free virus antigen, free host cell receptor and antigen–receptor complex.<sup>13,14,16</sup> The binding equilibrium constant,  $K_{\text{B}}$ , was calculated from  $K_{\text{d}}$  as:<sup>13,14,16</sup>

$$K_{\text{B}} = \frac{1}{K_{\text{d}}} = \frac{[\text{An} - \text{Re}]}{[\text{An}][\text{Re}]} \quad (12)$$

The change in Gibbs energy of binding,  $\Delta_{\text{B}}G^0$ , was calculated from  $K_{\text{B}}$  as:

$$\Delta_{\text{B}}G^0 = -RT \ln K_{\text{B}} \quad (13)$$

where  $T$  is temperature and  $R$  is the universal gas constant.<sup>13,14,16</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rhinovirus, in terms of its morphology might not be quite the simplest, but it belongs to the simpler (and smaller) virus particles. It can be characterized chemically by an empirical formula, which is different from those of all other viruses and thermodynamic properties that represent the driving force for physiological processes that comprise the lifecycle of the virus. Having in mind its simplicity, it can be expected that the process of virus multiplication proceeds relatively rapidly

compared to that of other larger viruses. Indeed, as was said in the introduction, infections caused by rhinovirus comprise half of all respiratory viral infections.

Rhinovirus A is characterized by the empirical formula  $\text{CH}_{1.4750}\text{O}_{0.3938}\text{N}_{0.2973}\text{P}_{0.0222}\text{S}_{0.0060}$ , which is different from that of the JN.1 variant of SARS-CoV-2  $\text{CH}_{1.6390}\text{O}_{0.2841}\text{N}_{0.2300}\text{P}_{0.006439}\text{S}_{0.003765}$  (Ref. 36) or coxsackievirus A  $\text{CH}_{1.4665}\text{O}_{0.4007}\text{N}_{0.2963}\text{P}_{0.023292}\text{S}_{0.005318}$  (Ref. 30). The molar mass of a rhinovirus particle is 7.961 MDa. The molar masses of other viruses are 219.2 MDa for the virion of the JN.1 variant of SARS-CoV-2<sup>36</sup> and 8.16 MDa for the virion of coxsackievirus A.<sup>30</sup> The molar mass of rhinovirus is similar to that of coxsackievirus, while the molar mass of a SARS-CoV-2 particle is 27 times greater. The reason is that a SARS-CoV-2 particle is more complex and contains, in addition to the nucleocapsid, a lipid envelope with viral spike and membrane proteins. Empirical formulas of rhinoviruses are given in Table I. Molecular formulas of rhinoviruses are given in Table II.

TABLE I. Empirical formulas of rhinoviruses. The empirical formulas have the form  $\text{CH}_{n_{\text{H}}}\text{O}_{n_{\text{O}}}\text{N}_{n_{\text{N}}}\text{P}_{n_{\text{P}}}\text{S}_{n_{\text{S}}}$ , where  $n_{\text{H}}$ ,  $n_{\text{O}}$ ,  $n_{\text{N}}$ ,  $n_{\text{P}}$  and  $n_{\text{S}}$  are the numbers of H, O, N, P and S atoms present in live matter per carbon atom

| Name           | $n_{\text{H}}$ | $n_{\text{O}}$ | $n_{\text{N}}$ | $n_{\text{P}}$ | $n_{\text{S}}$ | $Mr / \text{g C}\cdot\text{mol}^{-1}$ |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Rhinovirus A2  | 1.4750         | 0.3938         | 0.2973         | 0.0222         | 0.0060         | 24.84                                 |
| Rhinovirus B3  | 1.4861         | 0.3986         | 0.2958         | 0.0225         | 0.0053         | 24.89                                 |
| Rhinovirus C15 | 1.4727         | 0.3918         | 0.2962         | 0.0223         | 0.0068         | 24.82                                 |

TABLE II. Molecular formulas of rhinoviruses. The molecular formulas have the form  $\text{C}_{m_{\text{C}}}\text{H}_{m_{\text{H}}}\text{O}_{m_{\text{O}}}\text{N}_{m_{\text{N}}}\text{P}_{m_{\text{P}}}\text{S}_{m_{\text{S}}}$ , where  $m_{\text{C}}$ ,  $m_{\text{H}}$ ,  $m_{\text{O}}$ ,  $m_{\text{N}}$ ,  $m_{\text{P}}$  and  $m_{\text{S}}$  are the total numbers of C, H, O, N, P and S atoms in the virus particles.  $Mr(\text{tot})$  represents the total molar mass of the virus particle

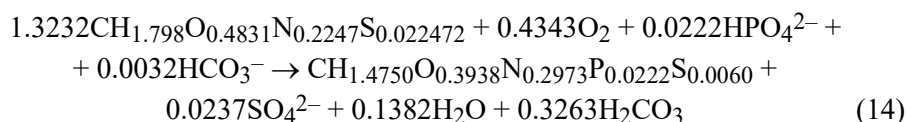
| Name           | $m_{\text{C}}$ | $m_{\text{H}}$ | $m_{\text{O}}$ | $m_{\text{N}}$ | $m_{\text{P}}$ | $m_{\text{S}}$ | $Mr(\text{tot}) / \text{MDa}$ |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Rhinovirus A2  | 320500         | 472733         | 126204         | 95297          | 7102           | 1920           | 7.961                         |
| Rhinovirus B3  | 319933         | 475467         | 127510         | 94635          | 7208           | 1680           | 7.965                         |
| Rhinovirus C15 | 319244         | 470164         | 125080         | 94557          | 7119           | 2160           | 7.924                         |

Thermodynamic properties of the live matter of rhinovirus particles are given in Table III. Enthalpy changes of formation of rhinovirus particles are negative, which means that the particles have a lower total energy content than their constituent elements. The reason for this is the attraction of valence electrons of less electronegative elements (C, H, P and S) by more electronegative elements, O and N. Entropy changes of the virions are positive, which is in agreement with the third law of thermodynamics. Changes in Gibbs energy of formation of the virions are negative. This means that the usable energy content of the virions is lower than that of their constituent elements.

TABLE III. Thermodynamic properties of live matter of rhinoviruses: enthalpy changes of formation,  $\Delta_f H^0$ , standard molar entropy,  $S_m^0$ , and the change in Gibbs energy of formation,  $\Delta_f G^0$

| Name           | $\Delta_f H^0 / \text{kJ C-mol}^{-1}$ | $S_m^0 / \text{J C-mol}^{-1} \text{K}^{-1}$ | $\Delta_f G^0 / \text{kJ C-mol}^{-1}$ |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Rhinovirus A2  | -86.07                                | 32.14                                       | -44.41                                |
| Rhinovirus B3  | -87.76                                | 32.34                                       | -45.85                                |
| Rhinovirus C15 | -85.38                                | 32.06                                       | -43.82                                |

Based on the empirical formulas, biosynthesis reactions of the rhinoviruses were formulated and are presented in Table IV. The biosynthesis reaction of rhinovirus A is:



where  $\text{CH}_{1.798}\text{O}_{0.4831}\text{N}_{0.2247}\text{S}_{0.022472}$  is the empirical formula of amino acids and  $\text{CH}_{1.4750}\text{O}_{0.3938}\text{N}_{0.2973}\text{P}_{0.0222}\text{S}_{0.0060}$  is the empirical formula of the newly synthesized virions.

TABLE IV. Biosynthesis reactions of rhinoviruses. The biosynthesis reactions have the form (Amino acid) +  $\text{O}_2$  +  $\text{HPO}_4^{2-}$  +  $\text{HCO}_3^-$   $\rightarrow$  (Bio) +  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  +  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  +  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}_3$ , where (Amino acid) represents amino acids with the empirical formula  $\text{CH}_{1.798}\text{O}_{0.4831}\text{N}_{0.2247}\text{S}_{0.022472}$  and (Bio) represents new live matter

| Name           | Reactants  |              |                     |                  | Products |                    |                      |                         |
|----------------|------------|--------------|---------------------|------------------|----------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
|                | Amino acid | $\text{O}_2$ | $\text{HPO}_4^{2-}$ | $\text{HCO}_3^-$ | Bio      | $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$ | $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ | $\text{H}_2\text{CO}_3$ |
| Rhinovirus A2  | 1.3232     | 0.4343       | 0.0222              | 0.0032           | 1        | 0.0237             | 0.1382               | 0.3263                  |
| Rhinovirus B3  | 1.3163     | 0.4260       | 0.0225              | 0.0036           | 1        | 0.0243             | 0.1333               | 0.3199                  |
| Rhinovirus C15 | 1.3180     | 0.4261       | 0.0223              | 0.0011           | 1        | 0.0229             | 0.1409               | 0.3192                  |

Changes in thermodynamic properties of the biosynthesis reactions are given in Table V. The enthalpy changes of biosynthesis of rhinoviruses are negative. The negative enthalpy changes contribute favorably to the thermodynamic feasibility of the biosynthesis reactions. Entropy changes of biosynthesis of rhinoviruses are negative, due to the assembly of simpler precursors, like amino acids into more complex virus particles. Changes in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis of virus particles are negative, which means that the biosynthesis process is thermodynamically favorable.

Biosynthesis reactions show how new virus particles are produced from nutrients during multiplication of viruses. Every process in nature is led by a driving force.<sup>37,38</sup> Chemical reactions are led by a driving force – changes in Gibbs energy.<sup>37,39,40</sup> Phenomenological equations belong to nonequilibrium thermodynamics and show how rates of processes depend on their driving forces.<sup>37,39,40</sup> The

biosynthesis rate,  $r_{bs}$ , depends on the change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis,  $\Delta_{bs}G^0$ , according to the biosynthesis phenomenological equation:

$$r_{bs} = -\frac{L_{bs}}{T} \Delta_{bs}G \quad (15)$$

where  $L_{bs}$  is the biosynthesis phenomenological coefficient.<sup>13,14,37</sup> According to the biosynthesis phenomenological equation, an organism with a more negative change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis will have a higher biosynthesis rate.

TABLE V. Thermodynamic properties of biosynthesis of rhinoviruses: enthalpy changes of biosynthesis,  $\Delta_{bs}H^0$ , changes in entropy of biosynthesis,  $\Delta_{bs}S^0$ , and change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis,  $\Delta_{bs}G^0$

| Name           | $\Delta_{bs}H^0 / \text{kJ C-mol}^{-1}$ | $\Delta_{bs}S^0 / \text{J C-mol}^{-1} \text{K}^{-1}$ | $\Delta_{bs}G^0 / \text{kJ C-mol}^{-1}$ |
|----------------|---|--|---|
| Rhinovirus A2  | -202.58                                 | -34.32   | -192.59                                 |
| Rhinovirus B3  | -198.85                                 | -33.75   | -189.04                                 |
| Rhinovirus C15 | -198.64                                 | -33.53   | -188.89                                 |

A viral infection represents an interaction between a virus and its host organism. The interaction occurs at the chemical level. The virus enters the host cell and performs hijacking of the host metabolic machinery to multiply in a chemical process that requires energy and nutrients. The host cell also uses its metabolic machinery, energy and nutrients for the chemical reactions of reparation of damages that appear during life processes. Therefore, the virus–host interaction represents a competition for metabolic machinery, energy and nutrients. Virus multiplication and host cell reparation are competitive chemical reactions. According to the biosynthesis phenomenological equation, the reaction with a greater driving force (a more negative change in Gibbs energy) will dominate in the competition.

Rhinoviruses infect the tissues of the respiratory tract.<sup>1</sup> Fig. 1 shows changes in Gibbs energies of biosynthesis of rhinoviruses and their host tissue. The change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis of the respiratory tract is  $-49.76 \text{ kJ C-mol}^{-1}$ .<sup>24</sup> Changes in Gibbs energies of biosynthesis of rhinoviruses are between  $-188.89$  and  $-192.59 \text{ kJ C-mol}^{-1}$ . Therefore, rhinoviruses are characterized by a much greater driving force for multiplication, in the form of a more negative change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis, than their host tissue. According to the biosynthesis phenomenological equation, due to this greater driving force, the biosynthesis rate of the rhinovirus is higher than that of its host cells. This means that the metabolic machinery of infected host cells will produce more new virus particles than host cell components. Moreover, the production of new virus particles will consume more nutrients and energy. Therefore, the virus performs hijacking of the host metabolic machinery, due to its more negative change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis.

The initial interaction between the virus and its host cell occurs at the cell membrane with antigen–receptor binding. The process of antigen–receptor binding

is a chemical reaction similar to protein–ligand interactions. The driving force of the antigen–receptor binding reaction is the change in Gibbs energy of binding. Table VI presents changes in Gibbs energies of antigen–receptor binding of rhinoviruses. Rhinoviruses have negative changes in Gibbs energy of binding, which means that the antigen–receptor binding process is favorable. Due to the favorable Gibbs energy change, the virus can enter into the host cells and perform the infection process.

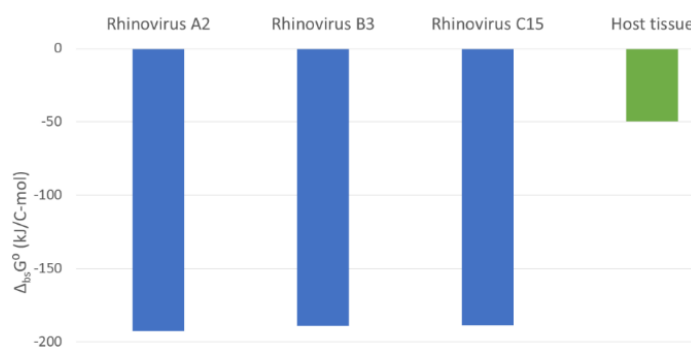


Fig. 1. Changes in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis of rhinoviruses and their host tissue. The change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis represents the driving force for virus multiplication in host cells.<sup>13</sup>

TABLE VI. Thermodynamic properties of antigen–receptor binding of rhinoviruses: dissociation equilibrium constant,  $K_d$ , binding equilibrium constant,  $K_B$ , and standard change in Gibbs energy of binding,  $\Delta_B G^0$ . VLDLR1-8 is a soluble native-like recombinant very-low-density-lipoprotein receptor (VLDLR) fragment that encompasses the entire ligand binding domain, which is fused to maltose binding protein (MBP) at the N-terminus and to His<sub>6</sub> at the C-terminus. ICAM-1 is intercellular adhesion molecule 1 (also known as CD54). The  $K_d$  values were taken from Refs.<sup>27,28</sup> The  $\Delta_B G^0$  value of rhinovirus B3 was taken from Ref.<sup>28</sup>

| Name          | Interaction         | $K_d / M$ | $K_B / M^{-1}$ | $\Delta_B G^0 / kJ mol^{-1}$ |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Rhinovirus A2 | Virion and VLDLR1-8 | 2.40E-08  | 4.17E+07       | -43.49                       |
| Rhinovirus B3 | Virion and ICAM-1   | 8.3E-07   | 1.20E+06       | -34.72                       |

Viruses interact with their host organisms during infection. Infections with different viruses can lead to different signs and symptoms of disease, even if they multiply in the same host tissue. Rhinovirus and SARS-CoV-2 cause infections of the respiratory tract. As of March 2026, the dominant SARS-CoV-2 variant worldwide is the XFG variant, while JN.1 has been designated as a variant of interest by WHO.<sup>51,52</sup> Change in the Gibbs energy of biosynthesis of the XFG variant of SARS-CoV-2 is  $-221.75 kJ C-mol^{-1}$ .<sup>14</sup> Change in the Gibbs energy of biosynthesis of the JN.1 variant of SARS-CoV-2 is  $-221.74 kJ C-mol^{-1}$ .<sup>36</sup> Change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis of the XFG and JN.1 variants of SARS-CoV-2 are more negative than those of rhinoviruses. The more negative change in Gibbs

energy of biosynthesis means that the XFG and JN.1 variants of SARS-CoV-2 have a greater driving force for multiplication inside host cells. This means that the XFG and JN.1 variants of SARS-CoV-2 will multiply inside host cells at a greater rate, according to the biosynthesis phenomenological equation. The greater rate of multiplication leads to the production of more virus particles and greater damage to host tissues. Greater damage to host tissues leads to more pronounced signs and symptoms of disease. This means that the XFG and JN.1 variants of SARS-CoV-2 are characterized by greater pathogenicity than rhinoviruses. Therefore, rhinoviruses produce less pronounced signs and symptoms of disease and are characterized by a lower pathogenicity than SARS-CoV-2 due to their lower driving force for multiplication (a less negative change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis).

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how suddenly an emerging virus can appear and how rapidly it can spread all over the world. This is why it is important to have a method to predict the risk posed by an emerging virus to human health early after its appearance. This is often difficult since very little information is known about viruses soon after their appearance. The biothermodynamic methodology applied in this research uses genetic and protein sequence data that can be collected early during an epidemic caused by an emerging virus. It allows the prediction of the driving forces of antigen–receptor binding (change in Gibbs energy of binding) and virus multiplication inside host cells (change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis). Based on these properties, it is possible to analyze the severity of signs and symptoms and the pathogenicity of the virus. This provides an advantage in the analysis of risks posed by emerging viruses to human health.

#### CONCLUSION

Chemical and thermodynamic properties of rhinoviruses A, B and C are reported, which include molecular formulas, empirical formulas, molar masses, biosynthesis reactions and thermodynamic properties of live matter, biosynthesis and binding. The chemical and thermodynamic properties of rhinoviruses are different from those of other viruses described in the literature.

During infection, virus multiplication and host cell reparation are chemical reactions that compete for energy and nutrients. Rhinoviruses have a much more negative change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis than their host cells. This means that rhinovirus multiplication has a much greater driving force than host cell reparation. Due to the greater driving force of virus multiplication, the host metabolic machinery will produce more new virus particles than host cell components needed for reparation. Virus multiplication will also consume more energy and nutrients. This means that rhinoviruses hijack the metabolism of their host cells due to their greater driving force for multiplication in the form of a more negative Gibbs energy of biosynthesis.

Different viruses that interact with the same tissue during infection lead to signs and symptoms of different severity. Rhinoviruses and SARS-CoV-2 are respiratory viruses. However, change in Gibbs energy of biosynthesis of the XFG and JN.1 variants of SARS-CoV-2 are more negative than those of rhinoviruses, which means that the XFG and JN.1 variants of SARS-CoV-2 have a greater driving force for multiplication. Due to the greater driving force, according to the biosynthesis phenomenological equation, the XFG and JN.1 variants of SARS-CoV-2 will multiply faster and produce more new virus particles and greater damage to host tissue. The greater damage to host tissues will lead to more severe signs and symptoms of disease, as well as greater pathogenicity of the XFG and JN.1 variants of SARS-CoV-2. Therefore, different driving forces of multiplication lead to differences in the severity of signs and symptoms of disease and pathogenicity between rhinoviruses and SARS-CoV-2. The biothermodynamic methodology described in this research can be used in the analysis of risks posed to human health by emerging viruses.

#### NOMENCLATURE

VLDLR1-8 is a soluble native-like recombinant very-low-density-lipoprotein receptor (VLDLR) fragment that encompasses the entire ligand binding domain, which is fused to maltose binding protein (MBP) at the N-terminus and to His<sub>6</sub> at the C-terminus. ICAM-1 is intercellular adhesion molecule 1 (also known as CD54).

*Acknowledgements.* This work was supported by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia (Grant No. 451-03-136/2025-03/200026).

#### ИЗВОД

### ДЕЦЕМБАРСКИ АРМАГЕДОН: БИОТЕРМОДИНАМИЧКА АНАЛИЗА РИНОВИРУСА ЗАСНОВАНА НА ПРОРАЧУНУ ПРОМЕНЕ ГИБСОВЕ ЕНЕРГИЈЕ АНТИГЕН–РЕЦЕПТОР ВЕЗИВАЊА И БИОСИНТЕЗЕ ЧЕСТИЦА РИНОВИРУСА

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Предмет овог истраживања је битка која се понавља сваке године и епидемијски се шири на различитим територијама, узрокујући велики број заражених случајева и жртава. Инфекције риновирусом су добро познате биомедицинским наукама. Инфекције риновирусима су добро познате биомедицинским наукама. Међутим, за дубље разумевање узрока болести риновируса и интеракције вирус–домаћин (инфекције) неопходно је разумети је из перспективе хемије и биотермодинамике. Овај рад представља емпиријске формуле, покретачку силу интеракција риновирус–домаћин, као и механистички модел интеракција вирус–домаћин на ћелијској мембрани и у цитоплазми. На основу описаних података, изнети су закључци о томе зашто је 50 % инфекција горњих дисајних путева узроковано риновирусима. По први пут су представљене вредности промена Гибсове енергије биосинтезе вирусних честица риновируса А2, В3 и С15, као и промена Гибсове енергије везивања риновируса А2, које су потребне за разумевање животног циклуса риновируса.

(Примљено 11. јануара, ревидирано 12. фебруара, прихваћено 8. априла 2026)

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