

# The Effects of N-linked Glycosylation on SLC6 Transporters

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## Abstract

Membrane transporters of the solute carrier 6 (SLC6) family mediate various physiological processes by facilitating the translocation of amino acids, neurotransmitters, and other metabolites. In the human body, these transporters are tightly controlled through various post-translational modifications with implications on protein expression, stability, membrane trafficking, and dynamics. While N-linked glycosylation is a universal regulatory mechanism among eukaryotes, the exact molecular mechanism of how glycosylation affects the SLC6 transporter family. It is generally believed that glycans influence transporter stability and membrane trafficking, however, the role of glycosylation on transporter dynamics remains inconsistent, with differing conclusions

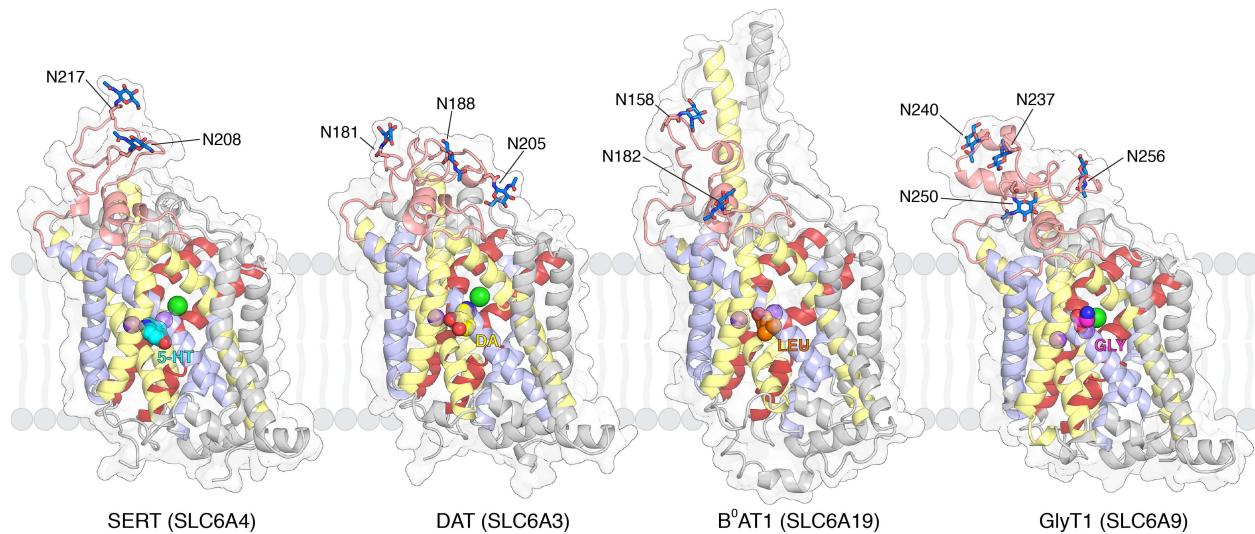
among individual transporters across the SLC6 family. In this study, we collected over 1 millisecond of aggregated all-atom molecular dynamics (MD) simulation data to identify the impact of N-glycans of four human SLC6 transporters: the serotonin transporter, dopamine transporter, glycine transporter, and neutral amino acid transporter B<sup>0</sup>AT1. We designed our computational study by first simulating all possible combination of a glycan attached to each glycosylation sites followed by investigating the effect of larger, oligo-N-linked glycans to each transporter. Our simulations reveal that glycosylation does not significantly affect transporter structure, but alters the dynamics of the glycosylated extracellular loop. The structural consequences of glycosylation on the loop dynamics are further emphasized in the presence of larger glycan molecules. However, no apparent trend in ligand stability or movement of gating helices was observed. In all, the simulations suggest that glycosylation does not consistently affect transporter structure and dynamics among the collective SLC6 family and should be characterized at a per-transporter level to further elucidate the underlining mechanisms of *in vivo* regulation.

## <sup>1</sup> Introduction

<sup>2</sup> The solute carrier 6 (SLC6) family is a class of secondary active co-transporters that mediates  
<sup>3</sup> the reuptake of amino acids, biogenic amines, osmolytes, and metabolites, thereby maintain-  
<sup>4</sup> ing cellular homeostasis throughout the body.<sup>1</sup> These transporters harness the energy of  
<sup>5</sup> a favorable sodium ion concentration gradient to power the uphill transport of substrates  
<sup>6</sup> across the plasma membrane. Many SLC6 transporters are also members of the neurotrans-  
<sup>7</sup> mitter:sodium symporter (NSS) family and are essential for regulating neurotransmission in  
<sup>8</sup> the central and peripheral nervous system.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Members of the SLC6 family adopt the canonical 12 transmembrane (TM) helix LeuT  
<sup>10</sup> fold with the transporter core formed by helices 1-5 and 6-10 arranged in a 5+5 inverted  
<sup>11</sup> pseudo-symmetric repeat topology and two additional helices, 11 and 12, residing on the

12 periphery of the core (Figure 1).<sup>3</sup> The transport of substrates is dictated by the structural  
13 rearrangements that enables the transporter to alternate between an extracellular acces-  
14 sible or outward-facing (OF) conformation to the intracellular accessible or inward-facing  
15 (IF) conformation. Specifically, SLC6 transporters undergo a rocking-bundle mechanism in  
16 which the transmembrane helices 1 and 6 serve as gating helices that undergo a "rocking"  
17 conformational shift from the rigid scaffold domain, thus enabling the opening and closure of  
18 the orthosteric binding site.<sup>4</sup> The recent determination of various SLC6 transporters and its  
19 bacterial homologs have established the structural basis of substrate and inhibitor molecule  
20 binding.<sup>3,5-8</sup>



**Figure 1: Starting structures of SLC6 transporters used for MD simulations.** Transporters were modeled in the outward-facing conformation with substrates and ions initialized bound in the orthosteric pocket. Sodium and chloride ions are shown as purple and green spheres, respectively. Respective substrates are shown as spheres (5-HT: serotonin, DA: dopamine, LEU: leucine, GLY: glycine). The transporters are shown in cartoon representation and colored as follows: gating helices 1 and 6, red; 5+5 helix repeats, yellow and pale blue; extracellular loop 2, salmon. N-linked glycosylation sites with an N-acetylglucosamine glycan are represented as sticks and labeled accordingly.

21 Despite sharing 20-25% sequence identity with human SLC6 transporters, prokaryotic  
22 SLC6 proteins have historically illuminated the elusive structure-function relationships of  
23 this important class of transporters.<sup>3,9-11</sup> While the general understanding of transport and

24 conformational dynamics may be applied to characterize human transporters, the conse-  
25 quences of post-translational modifications cannot be inferred as prokaryotic homologs do  
26 not share the similar mechanisms or structural features of regulatory components as to their  
27 eukaryotic counterparts.<sup>1,12</sup> As such, recent work has focused on elucidating the molecular  
28 mechanisms of post-translation modifications and its effect on human SLC6 transporters.<sup>1,2</sup>  
29 These studies include phosphorylation,<sup>13-17</sup> palmitoylation,<sup>18,19</sup> glycosylation,<sup>20-24</sup> and ubiq-  
30 uitination<sup>25</sup> and its implications on transporter dynamics, stability, oligomerization, traffick-  
31 ing, and uptake activity.

32 The glycosylation of SLC6 transporters has been widely documented to affect trans-  
33 porter activity;<sup>20-24</sup> however, various mechanisms of how glycosylation mediates transporter  
34 function have been proposed for different SLC6 members.<sup>2</sup> For example, glycosylation has  
35 been suggested to influence transporter stability in the membrane as demonstrated for the  
36 serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine transporters,<sup>20,21,23</sup> whereas in glycine and GABA  
37 transporters, glycosylation regulates membrane trafficking.<sup>22,24</sup> The removal of glycans did  
38 not affect ligand binding or transport function for the serotonin and norepinephrine trans-  
39 porters;<sup>20,23</sup> however, mutagenesis of N-linked glycosylation sites in the dopamine and glycine  
40 transporters resulted in reduced uptake rates.<sup>21,22</sup> Furthermore, the degree of glycosyla-  
41 tion widely differs among expression organisms, tissues, and cell development,<sup>26-28</sup> and as  
42 such, the extent of glycosylation and its effect on transporter structure and dynamics remain  
43 ambiguous.

44 With the surge in performance of graphical processing units and numerical algorithms,  
45 molecular dynamics (MD) simulations present a powerful approach to characterize post-  
46 translational modifications and its effect on protein structure and dynamics. Recent appli-  
47 cations of atomistic simulations to investigate post-translational modifications has identified  
48 how phosphorylation alters the hydrogen bonding network the serotonin transporter,<sup>14</sup> glyco-  
49 sylation induces open conformations of the yeast disulfide isomerase,<sup>29</sup> and nitration prevents  
50 ligand binding of a plant abscisic acid receptor.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, MD simulations provide a tech-

51 nique to probe the structural dynamics in a label-free, fully atomistic approach, ideal for  
52 addressing the differences in experimental setup.

53 In this current work, we designed a computational study to systematically investigate the  
54 structural consequences of N-linked glycosylation on SLC6/NSS transporters. We performed  
55 microsecond MD simulations on four human SLC6/NSS transporters (Figure 1): the sero-  
56 tonin transporter (SERT, SLC6A4), the dopamine transporter (DAT, SLC6A3), the neutral  
57 amino acid transporter B<sup>0</sup>AT1 (SLC6A19), and the glycine transporter 1 (GlyT1, SLC6A9),  
58 to elucidate the role of glycans on transporter stability and conformational dynamics. We  
59 first examined the effects of glycosylation on the four transporters with glycans attached to  
60 each glycosylation site in a combinatorial fashion. In the second part of our study, we sim-  
61 ulated the transporters with various degrees and complexity of oligoglycans to probe in the  
62 influence of larger glycan chains on the protein structure. Our simulations reveal that gly-  
63 cosylation does not significantly affect overall transporter structure, but alters the dynamics  
64 of the extracellular loops, but not in a sequence-dependent manner. Overall, we conclude  
65 that glycosylation does not significantly affect dynamics associated with substrate transport  
66 and thus is likely more involved in cellular sensing and regulation in the cell.

## 67 Results

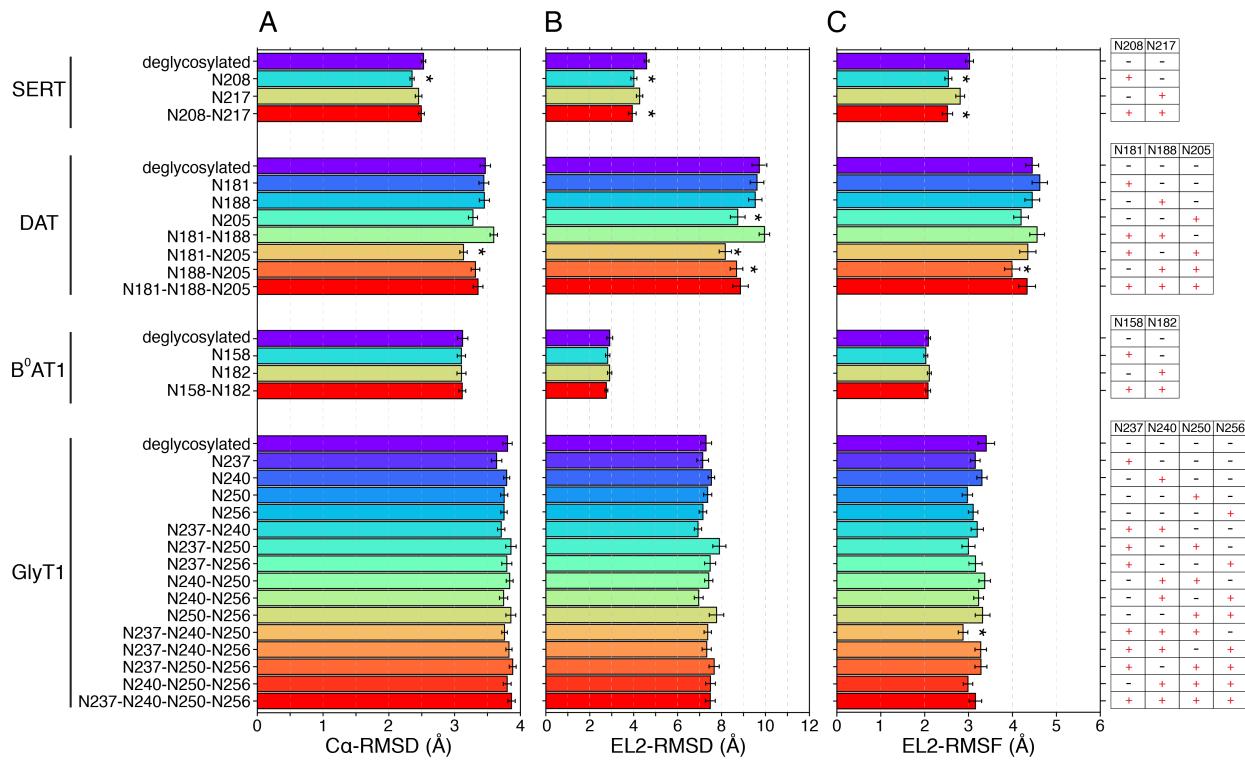
### 68 Glycosylation does not significantly affect transporter structure but 69 alters loop dynamics

70 The extracellular loop (EL) 2 of SLC6 transporters contain two to four N-linked glycosylation  
71 sites that follow the Asn-X-Ser/Thr amino acid sequence motif, where X is any residue except  
72 proline (Figure S1).<sup>31</sup> Previous biophysical characterization of NSS transporters have reveal  
73 the extracellular loops to be coupled with the substrate transport dynamics,<sup>32-34</sup> and as such,  
74 we hypothesized if the addition of bulky, hydrophobic glycans may affect the structure and  
75 dynamics of the transporter. We performed microsecond long MD simulations of four SLC6

76 transporters with a N-acetylglucosamine glycan modeled to each N-linked glycosylation site  
77 in a combinatorial fashion (Figure 1 and Table S1). Simulations were initiated from an  
78 outward-facing conformation with ions and respective substrates bound in the orthosteric  
79 binding site and embedded in a multicomponent phospholipid bilayer. A total of 29-30 MD  
80 replicates of 1 $\mu$ s long simulations were collected for each transporter and glycosylation state,  
81 resulting in an aggregated simulation dataset of 949  $\mu$ s (Table S1).

82 The root-mean-square deviation (RMSD) and fluctuations (RMSF) with respect to the  
83 initial starting structure is presented in Figure 2. The simulations reveal that glycosyla-  
84 tion does not significantly affect the overall transporter structure, with the exception of  
85 SERT-N208 and DAT-N181-N188 exhibited a marginal decrease in RMSD as compared to  
86 the deglycosylated transporter (Figure 2A). When specifically examining the structure of  
87 EL2 alone, the simulations of glycosylated B<sup>0</sup>AT1 and GlyT1 were not observed to signif-  
88 icantly differ from the respective deglycosylated transporters (Figure 2B). In contrast, two  
89 glycosylated SERT systems and three glycosylated DAT systems were found to have a sig-  
90 nificant decrease in EL2 RMSD (Figure 2B). The averaged RMSF of EL2 further reveals the  
91 same two glycosylated SERT systems (N208, N208-N217) to experience decreased dynamics  
92 (Figure 2C). However, for the other studied transporters, only a doubly glycosylated DAT  
93 (N188-N205) and a triply glycosylated GlyT1 (N237-N240-N250) were found to have signif-  
94 icantly decreased EL2 fluctuations. In the remaining transporters, including all the B<sup>0</sup>AT1  
95 simulations, glycosylation was not observed to profound impact on EL2 dynamics.

96 Figure 3 shows the difference per-residue RMSF with respect to the deglycosylated  
97 transporter for the four studied SLC6 transporters. The plots reveal that glycosylation al-  
98 ters the dynamics of EL2 in a differing manner among transporters (Figure 3). In SERT  
99 simulations, glycosylation consistently decreases the fluctuations of EL2 as compared to  
100 the deglycosylated SERT (Figure 3A). However, the effects of glycosylation on EL2 dynamics  
101 varies and does not show a consistent trend among DAT and GlyT1 transporters (Figure 3B,  
102 D). In DAT specifically, we observed the fully glycosylated transporter (N181-N188-N205)



**Figure 2: Glycosylation does not significantly affect transporter structure.** Structural measurements of (A) the root-mean-square deviations (RMSD) of all transporter C $\alpha$  atoms, (B) RMSD of extracellular loop 2 (EL2), and (C) averaged root-mean-square fluctuations (RMSF) of extracellular loop 2 atomic displacement. The initial structure used for MD simulations was used as the respective reference for all calculations. Quantities are averaged from all 1 $\mu$ s MD replicates for each respective system. Error bars represent standard error across the replicates. \* indicates values significantly different ( $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ , independent  $t$ -test) from the respective deglycosylated transporter. A table depicting the N-glycosylated residues is shown on the right, with (+) indicating a N-acetylglucosamine glycan was added and (-) as deglycosylated.

103 to increase the dynamics of the cytoplasmic base of TM5 (Figure 3B). Extensive literature  
 104 supports the unwinding of the TM5 as a key structural rearrangement for propagating  
 105 transition to the inward-facing state.<sup>32,34-36</sup> Furthermore, the number of glycosylated Asn  
 106 residues did not appear to be correlated with effects on dynamics. Interestingly in B<sup>0</sup>AT1,  
 107 glycosylation did not have a pronounced effect on EL2 dynamics, but allosterically alters  
 108 the displacements of the nearby EL4 (Figure 3C). The glycans were not observed to come  
 109 into contact with EL4, but the cryo-EM complex reveals that EL4 and the extended TM7  
 110 play a role in trafficking and interfacing with the angiotensin-converting enzyme 2.<sup>37</sup> EL4

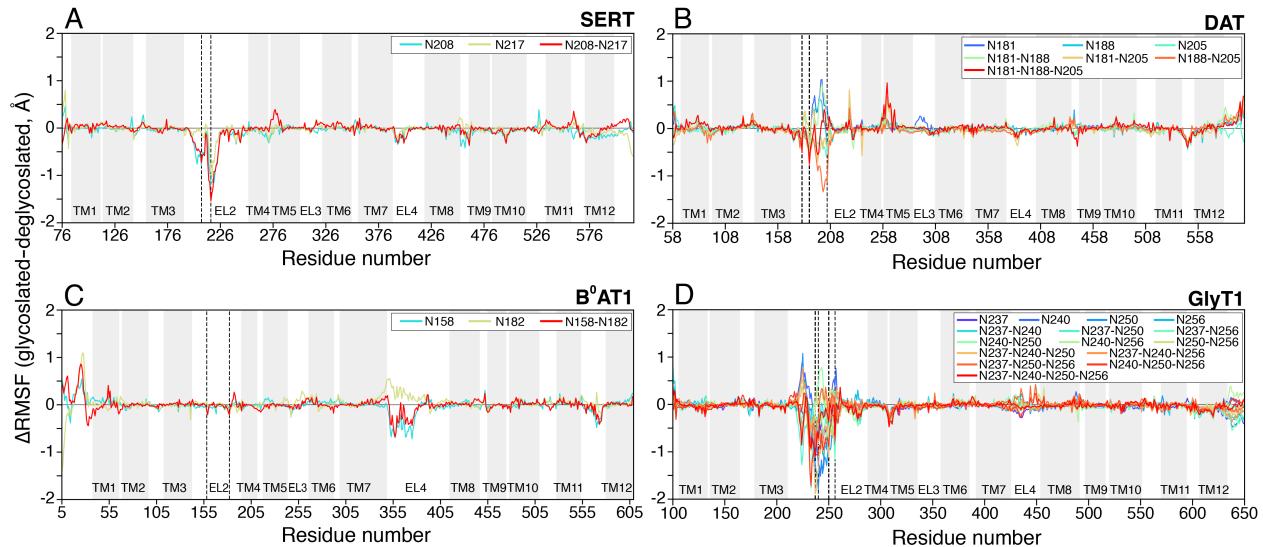
111 of B<sup>0</sup>AT1 contains a number of N-linked glycosylation sites,<sup>37</sup> but the effects of these sites  
112 were not investigated in this study.

113 Overall, though the difference in deviations is of relatively small magnitude ( $\sim$ 0.5-1.5 Å),  
114 N-glycosylation of EL2 does not consistently affect the structural dynamics within individ-  
115 ual transporters and across the sampled SLC6 family. From the simulations, we observed  
116 marginal differences ( $< 1\text{Å}$ ) in the distance distributions of gating helices, thus suggesting  
117 that N-glycosylation does not have a profound effect on transport dynamics (Figure S2).  
118 Furthermore, glycosylation does not consistently affect the stability of the ligand bound in  
119 the orthosteric site, with the exception of SERT (Figure S3). The simulations of SERT and  
120 its glycosylated forms reveal that the RMSD of the serotonin, with respect to the initial  
121 bound pose, is decreased thus suggesting greater ligand stability upon glycosylation (Figure  
122 S3A). In all, the simulations reveal that the presence of hydrophobic glycans on a solvent-  
123 exposed domain of the transporter alters its local environment, but does not extend to the  
124 remainder of the transporter.

## 125 **Oligo-N-linked glycosylation further stabilizes loop fluctuations**

126 Though ubiquitous among eukaryotes, it is evident to note that the degrees of glycosylation  
127 and its regulatory role widely differs among species and cell types.<sup>28</sup> The previous body of  
128 literature has extensively explored the use of cell lines from a variety of organisms including,  
129 but not limited to, human (HEK-293),<sup>21</sup> insect (Sf9),<sup>20</sup> monkey (COS),<sup>22</sup> pig (LLC-PK1),<sup>23</sup>  
130 and hamster (CHO).<sup>24</sup> Moreover, in humans, N-glycosylation patterns have been noted to  
131 differ among various cell types and developmental stages<sup>26,27</sup> and thus further illuminates  
132 the complexity of glycosylation in the nervous system and throughout the body.<sup>38</sup>

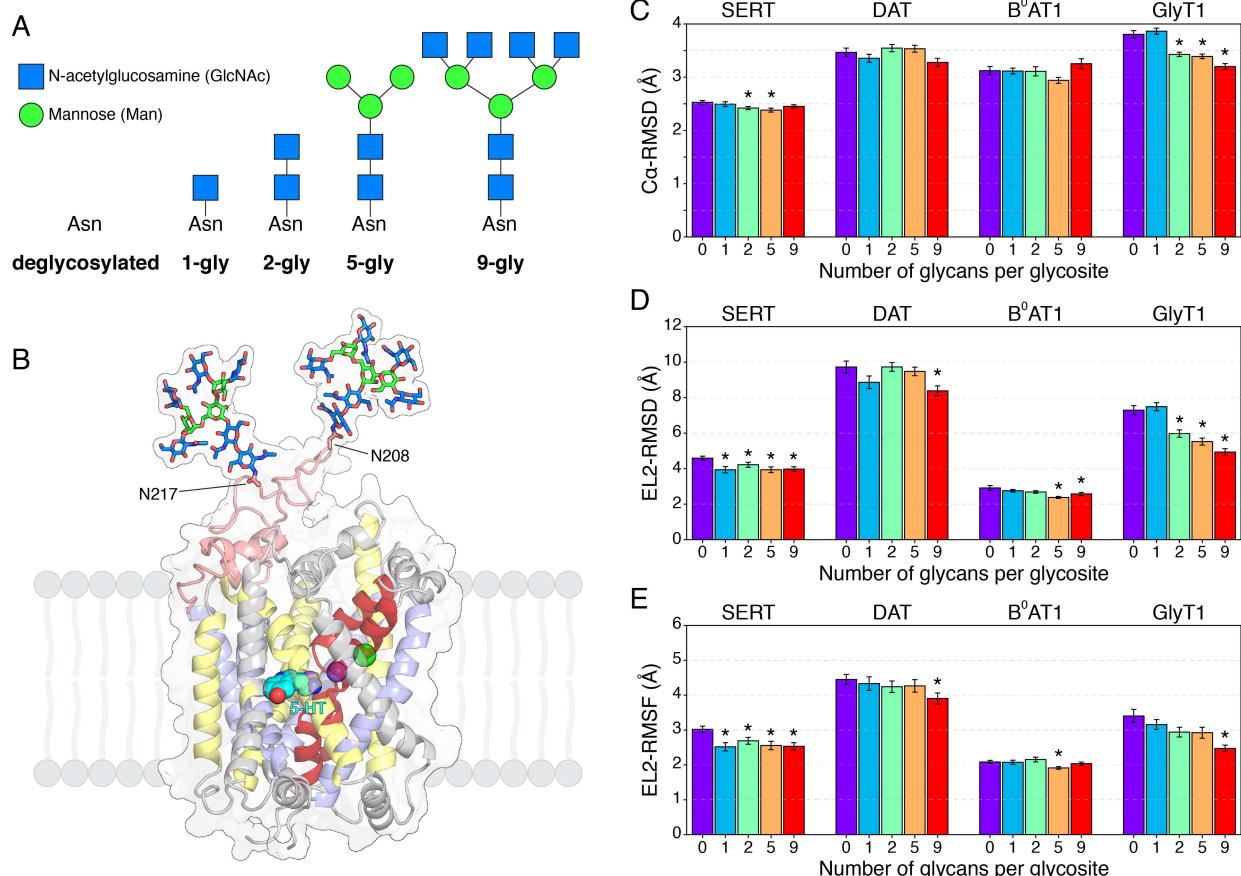
133 As it is not feasible to investigate all possible glycan and linkage patterns, nor has  
134 it been characterized in exact detail, we designed MD systems of the four studied trans-  
135 porters in a pattern of increasing glycans moieties to serve as a representative and general  
136 model of complex oligoglycans (Figure 4A). The complex glycans ranged from a linear 2



**Figure 3: Difference RMSF plots of the glycosylated transporters.** The difference RMSF ( $\Delta$ RMSF) in which the RMSF of the deglycosylated transporter was subtracted from the glycosylated transporter is plotted along the primary residue sequence. The initial structure used for MD simulations was used as the respective reference for RMSF calculations. Quantities are averaged from all  $1\mu\text{s}$  MD replicates for each respective system. The glycosylated systems are plotted and colored according to Figure 2. Transmembrane helices are marked in gray regions along the residue numbers. N-linked glycosylation sites are marked in black dashed line.

137 N-acetylglucosamine glycans to a branch oligoglycan containing 9 carbohydrates in total.  
 138 For simulations of the oligoglycans, all Asn glycosylation sites on EL2 were modeled as in  
 139 the glycosylated form. Figure 4B shows a representative structure of 9-glycan system for  
 140 SERT. The glycosylated transporters were constructed in the same protocol as the single  
 141 N-acetylglucosamine glycosylated transporter systems and a total of 29-30 replicates were  
 142 simulated for  $1\mu\text{s}$  each, totaling in an additional  $359\mu\text{s}$  of aggregate data.

143 Similar to simulations of the single N-acetylglucosamine glycosylated transporters, the  
 144 simulations of the complex oligoglycans further suggest that N-glycosylation does not uni-  
 145 formly affect SLC6 transporters. With regards to the overall transporter structure, both  
 146 DAT and  $B^0AT1$  when glycosylated to any degree were not observed to display differences  
 147 among the sets of simulations (Figure 4C). The glycosylated SERT systems shown minimal  
 148 differences in overall transporter RMSD ( $< 0.5\text{ \AA}$ ), though the 2- and 5-glycan systems were



**Figure 4: Structural effects of oligo-N-linked glycans.** **(A)** The oligo-N-linked glycans modeled in this study. The oligoglycans were added to all glycosylation sites for each transporter and simulated under the same protocol as the single N-acetylglucosamine glycan simulations. **(B)** Representative structure of SERT and the 9-glycan group added to both glycosylation sites. Transmembrane helices and substrates are represented and colored according to Figure 1. **(C, D, E)** Structural measurements of the oligoglycan-transporter systems, similarly calculated as to Figure 2. The values of **(C)**  $\text{Ca}$  RMSD, **(D)** EL2 RMSD, and **(E)**, averaged EL2 RMSF were averaged from the  $1\mu\text{s}$  MD replicates for each respective system. Error bars represent standard error across the replicates. \* indicates values significantly different ( $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ , independent  $t$ -test) from the respective deglycosylated (0 glycan) transporter.

149 indicated as significant when compared to deglycosylated SERT. When examining the struc-  
 150 ture and dynamics of EL2, the simulations for the largest simulated glycans reveal that the  
 151 RMSD of DAT and B<sup>0</sup>AT1 EL2 to be significantly lower compared to the deglycosylated  
 152 transporter (Figure 4D). In SERT, the single N-acetylglucosamine added to both glycosy-  
 153 lation site N208 and N217 was observed to decrease the EL2 RMSD (Figure 2B) and the

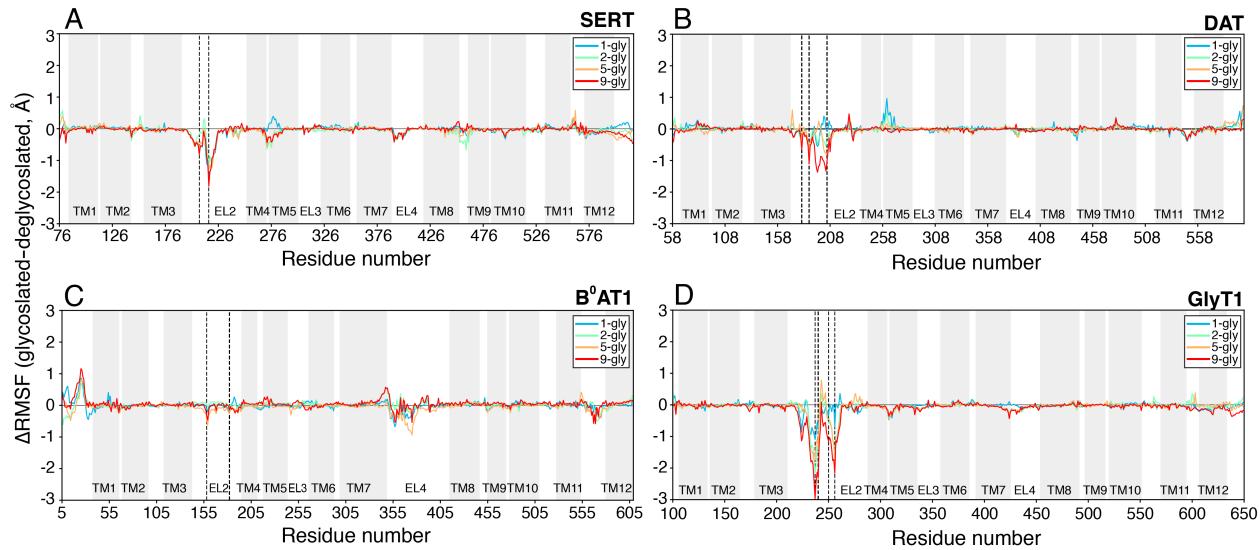
154 presence of larger glycans did not significantly further influence the EL2 structure (Figure  
155 4D, E). Most strikingly, increasing the number of glycans and complexity of linkages added  
156 to GlyT1 was correlated with a decrease in overall transporter and EL2 RMSD (Figure 4C,  
157 D).

158 The simulations further reveal that the dynamics of EL2 are reduced when glycosylated  
159 with complex oligoglycans, with the most significant differences observed with more glycans  
160 added per glycosylation site (Figure 4E). The RMSF plots of the oligo-glycosylated trans-  
161 porters illustrate that the fluctuations of EL2 are also altered compared to the deglycosylated  
162 transporter (Figure 5). The dynamics of EL2 on SERT and B<sup>0</sup>AT1 do not differ widely from  
163 the single N-acetylglucosamine glycosylated transporters (Figure 5A, C). However, more no-  
164 tably, the fluctuations for DAT and GlyT1 EL2 when glycosylated with the oligoglycans are  
165 generally diminished across all degrees of glycosylation (Figure 5B, D). Furthermore, the  
166 presence of the complex oligoglycans did not consistently affect the motions of the gating  
167 helices (Figure S4) nor the stability of the bound ligand as similarly observed in the single  
168 N-acetylglucosamine transporter simulations (Figure S5).

## 169 Discussion

170 The activity of SLC6 transporters are tightly controlled through intricate regulatory mecha-  
171 nisms. Consequently, dysregulation of transport activity is associated with various neurode-  
172 generative, respiratory, and cardiovascular diseases.<sup>1,2</sup> As these transporters are essential  
173 for maintaining cellular homeostasis, understanding the conformational heterogeneity and  
174 how post-translational modification alter the underlying dynamics is pivotal for designing  
175 effective therapeutic molecules.

176 In this study, we investigated the structural effects of N-linked glycosylation on four  
177 human SLC6 transporters using MD simulations in two sets of computational experiments.  
178 In first simulating all possible combinations of N-linked glycosylation on the EL2 of the



**Figure 5: Difference RMSF plots of the oligo-glycosylated transporters.** The difference RMSF ( $\Delta$ RMSF) in which the RMSF of the deglycosylated (0-gly) transporter was subtracted from the glycosylated transporter is plotted along the primary residue sequence. The initial structure used for MD simulations was used as the respective reference for RMSF calculations. Quantities are averaged from all  $1\mu\text{s}$  MD replicates for each respective system. MD systems with varying degrees of glycosylation are plotted and colored according to Figure 4. Transmembrane helices are marked in gray regions along the residue numbers. N-linked glycosylation sites are marked in black dashed line.

179 studied transporters, we observed a few significant differences in overall transporter RMSD  
 180 and EL2 dynamics as compared to the deglycosylated transporter. The RMSF plots further  
 181 show that glycosylation reduces the dynamics of EL2 of SERT, is indiscernible from the  
 182 deglycosylated system in  $B^0\text{AT1}$ , and ununiformly affects DAT and GlyT1 EL2. However, in  
 183 the second set of simulations, when complex oligoglycans are attached to the transporters, the  
 184 EL2 dynamics were generally decreased. In both sets of simulations, single and oligoglycan,  
 185 we did not observe discernible differences in the dynamics of the gating helices nor the  
 186 stability of the bound ligand within the simulated timescales. As such, we conclude that the  
 187 simulations support the existing literature that glycosylation does not have significant effect  
 188 on the substrate transport dynamics and is likely more involved in maintaining stability and  
 189 proper trafficking in the membrane.

190 Glycosylation is an essential and universal post-translation modification for regulating

191 protein function. The use of MD simulations enables an atomistic characterization of the  
192 structural and dynamic consequences of glycosylation<sup>29,39,40</sup> and other post-translational  
193 modifications.<sup>14,41,42</sup> Though, glycosylation has been widely understood to affect SLC6 trans-  
194 porter stability and trafficking,<sup>1,2</sup> our simulations show that N-glycosylation minimally af-  
195 fects overall transporter dynamics, but reduces the fluctuation of the extracellular loops.  
196 However, we did not observe glycosylation to consistently alter SLC6 transporter structure  
197 which may further explain the differences in regulatory function previously characterized  
198 experimentally.<sup>20-24</sup> Furthermore, previous simulations of glycoproteins further underlines a  
199 lack of uniformity in regulating protein structure and dynamics<sup>39,43,44</sup> and may suggest that  
200 the disruption of the local protein environment has a greater role in modulating dynamics  
201 and stability rather than the glycans itself.

## 202 Methods

### 203 System preparation

204 To investigate the effects of glycosylation on transporter dynamics and stability, we selected  
205 four human transporters from the SLC6/NSS family: the serotonin transporter (SERT),  
206 dopamine transporter (DAT), neutral amino-acid transporter B<sup>0</sup>AT1, and the glycine trans-  
207 porter 1 (GlyT1). These transporters have extensive structural and/or biochemical charac-  
208 terization of the effects of glycosylation.<sup>5-7,20-22,37</sup>

209 We initiated all simulations from an outward-facing conformation with the transporter's  
210 respective substrates bound in the orthosteric pocket. The initial structures were obtained  
211 as followed: SERT, three-dimensional coordinates from the outward-facing crystal struc-  
212 ture (PDB: 5IX6) with Na1, Na2, Cl<sup>-</sup> bound and serotonin (5-HT) modeled based  
213 on our previous MD simulation study;<sup>32</sup> DAT, a homology model based on the outward-  
214 facing *Drosophila melanogaster* DAT crystal structure (PDB: 4XP1) with Na1, Na2, Cl<sup>-</sup> and  
215 dopamine (DA) modeled based on the crystal structure; B<sup>0</sup>AT1: three-dimensional coordi-

216 nates from the outward-facing cryo-EM structure (PDB: 6M18) with with Na1, Na2, and  
217 leucine based on the structural alignment with Leu-bound LeuT (PDB: 2A65); and GlyT1,  
218 a homology model based on the outward-facing *Drosophila melanogaster* DAT crystal struc-  
219 ture previously modeled by Zhang *et al.*<sup>45</sup> with Na1, Na2, Cl<sup>-</sup> bound and glycine bound  
220 based on the structural alignment with Gly-bound LeuT (PDB: 3F4J). The GlyT1 model  
221 did not initially contain extracellular loop 2 (EL2) and as such, we modeled the loop us-  
222 ing the comparative modeling module of the ROBETTA web server.<sup>46</sup> The resulting EL2  
223 model displayed alpha helical secondary structure elements at residues 235 to 239 and 243 to  
224 252, which is further suggested by the IUPRED intrinsic disorder structure prediction web  
225 server.<sup>47</sup>

226 The transporters were embedded in a 90 x 90 Å<sup>2</sup> multi-component phospholipid bilayer  
227 using the CHARMM-GUI web server.<sup>48</sup> For SERT, DAT, and GlyT1, the transporter was  
228 embedded in a 2:1 POPC:POPE symmetric lipid bilayer, loosely based on the neuronal  
229 plasma membrane composition.<sup>49</sup> As B<sup>0</sup>AT1 is expressed in the membrane of the small  
230 intestine,<sup>50</sup> we embedded the transporter in a 3:2:1 POPE:POPC:POPS membrane to mimic  
231 its native environment.<sup>51</sup> We note the exclusion of cholesterol molecules in the simulated  
232 membranes. While cholesterol is physiological relevant in the human membrane environment,  
233 it has been extensively shown to sterically stabilize outward-facing conformations.<sup>52,53</sup> As  
234 such, we excluded cholesterol to prevent unintended inhibition of transporter dynamics. N-  
235 and C-termini were capped with acetyl and methyl amide groups, respectively. Titratable  
236 residues were modeled in accordance to pK<sub>a</sub> calculations using PROPKA3.0.<sup>54</sup> The systems  
237 were solvated with TIP3P water molecules and 150 mM NaCl. The mass of hydrogen atoms  
238 and connecting atoms were repartitioned accordingly to Hopkins *et. al.*<sup>55</sup> For single-glycan  
239 simulations, an N-acetylglucosamine glycan was modeled to Asn glycosylation sites in a  
240 combinatorial fashion. For simulations of oligoglycans (2-gly, 5-gly, and 9-gly), the glycans  
241 were simultaneously modeled on all Asn glycosylation sites. Individual details of constructed  
242 system are presented in Table S1 and S2.

## 243 Molecular dynamics simulations

244 Prior to production, the systems were minimized and equilibrated using the AMBER18 MD  
245 package employing CHARMM36m force field. The CHARMM *psf* topology and coordinate files  
246 were converted to AMBER *prmtop* and *rst7* file using the *chamber* module of the ParmED  
247 package.<sup>56</sup> Each system was first subjected to an energy minimization protocol of 5,000 steps  
248 using the steepest descent method, followed by 45,000 minimization steps using the conjugate  
249 gradient method. The systems were then heated to 300K for 5 ns in a constant particle,  
250 pressure, temperature (NPT) ensemble while the protein backbone, bound substrates, and  
251 glycans were restrained with a force constant of 5 kcal/mol-Å<sup>2</sup>. The equilibrated snapshot  
252 was then converted to an OpenMM system parameterized with an OpenMM ForceField using  
253 the CHARMM36m force field.<sup>57</sup>

254 Production simulations were performed using the OpenMM 7.7.0 package<sup>58</sup> on either  
255 the Folding@Home distributing computing platform<sup>59</sup> or the University of Illinois National  
256 Center for Supercomputing Applications Delta supercomputer. Langevin dynamics was per-  
257 formed using a Langevin integrator using an integration timestep of 4 fs, temperature of 300  
258 K, and collision rate of  $\sqrt{2}$  ps<sup>-1</sup>. The system pressure of 1 bar was maintained using the  
259 Monte Carlo Membrane Barostat with a surface tension of 200 bar-nm and update frequency  
260 of 100 steps. Nonbonded forces were calculated using the particle mesh Ewald method with a  
261 12 Å cutoff distance. Simulations were performed using mixed numerical precision, periodic  
262 boundary conditions, and hydrogen mass repartitioning.<sup>55</sup> A total of 30 MD replicates for  
263 each system with different initial velocities were sent to Folding@Home users and simulated  
264 up to 1  $\mu$ s. Trajectories in which simulation data was not received from Folding@Home  
265 clients were not used for analysis. In all, a total of 29-30 1 $\mu$ s long trajectories for each glyco-  
266 sylated system and transporter were collected and analyzed (Table S1 and S2). Trajectory  
267 snapshots were saved every 100 ps during production simulations.

## 268 Trajectory analysis

269 Trajectories were processed with in-house scripts utilizing CPPTRAJ, pytraj, and MDTraj  
270 packages<sup>60,61</sup> and visualized using Visual Molecular Dynamics (VMD)<sup>62</sup> and PyMOL. The  
271 root-mean-square deviation (RMSD) of atomic positions were calculated on only C $\alpha$  atoms.  
272 The root-mean-square fluctuations (RMSF) of each residue was calculated on all atoms and  
273 mass-averaged by residue. The initial structure used for production simulations was used as  
274 the reference for these calculations. An independent *t*-test was performed to compare RMSD  
275 and RMSF of the glycosylated and the respective deglycosylated system with a significance  
276 level of 0.05. C $\alpha$  atoms used for the center-of-mass calculations for the distance distribution  
277 of the gating helices are listed in Table S3. Plots were generated using the matplotlib Python  
278 library.

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## 287 Author contributions statement

288 D.S. acquired funding for this project. D.S. and M.C.C. designed the study. M.C.C per-  
289 formed the simulations. M.C.C. and D.S. analyzed the results. M.C.C. and D.S. prepared  
290 the manuscript.

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