

# Defne Surujon

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## Overview

Accomplished computational biologist with 5 years of industry experience in clinical diagnostics. Strong foundation in microbial genomics, short and long read sequencing analysis, pathogen detection and antimicrobial susceptibility prediction in microbial genomics data.

## Education

**Boston College**, PhD in Biology

**2016-2021**

PhD in Biology, defended Jan 11, 2021

Thesis: *Computational Approaches in Infectious Disease Research: Towards Improved Diagnostic Methods*

**Amherst College**, BA in Biochemistry and Mathematics, *summa cum laude*

**2010-2014**

Thesis: *Creating an rdeA-/fbxA- double knockout to investigate intracellular signalling processes in D. discoideum*

## Software and code

- [ShinyOmics](#) (R): a browser-based visualization application for omics data
- BFClust ([MATLAB](#), [Python](#)): Package for large-scale clustering of biological sequences
- R&D code ([Python](#)): In vitro adaptive evolution data processing and analysis

## Research and Work Experience

**DAY ZERO DIAGNOSTICS** | Boston, MA

**Senior Research Scientist, Computational Biology** (January 2021-October 2025)

- Led the development and update of Keynome ID, DZD's species ID algorithm, reducing the turn-around-time per sample to <30min and for the first time adding interpretability to the Keynome ID numeric output
- Led deep dive R&D projects supporting ML model interpretability and troubleshooting for antibiotic susceptibility prediction models, leading to several actionable recommendations in terms of improving model accuracy
- Designed a bioinformatics pre-processing and quality control pipelines for MicrohmDB (genomic AST training database) and MicroRefDB (species ID reference database)
- Worked with the Software Engineering team to develop DZD's database pre-processing, bioinformatics, build and deployment pipelines for species ID. Established an automated, versioned and reproducible database build and validation process.
- Working with the regulatory affairs team, drafted a technical overview of DZD's species ID algorithm and reference database, resulting in a successful Q-Submission to the FDA
- Supported the product engineering, molecular assay development and clinical teams in data analysis, interpretation, and experimental design
- Continued CLIA proficiency certification and operational support for EpiXact; DZD's outbreak detection service
- Hired, trained and managed 2 direct reports on R&D projects
- Led clinical data processing operations for 1 year, automated per-sample report generation for hundreds of samples.

**BOSTON COLLEGE** | Boston, MA

**PhD Student – Microbial Systems Biology Laboratory** (June 2016-January 2021)

- Application of machine learning and predictive modeling in bacterial fitness and adaptive outcome
- Microfluidic device design, manufacturing and application in antimicrobial susceptibility testing
- Mentored 3 undergraduate students, teaching wet-lab and computational SOPs, guiding experimental design, giving constructive feedback on experimental outcomes and scientific communication

**USDA HUMAN NUTRITION RESEARCH CENTER ON AGING** | Boston, MA

**Research Technician - Obesity Metabolism Laboratory** (June 2014-June 2016)

- Developed data tools for the analysis and visualization of high-dimensional data such as microarray, intestinal microbial diversity and untargeted metabolomics

- Performed immunohistochemistry, 16S microbiome sequencing and analysis, qRT-PCR and gene expression analysis, and indirect calorimetry experiments
- Maintained cell cultures, multiple colonies of mice, genotyping animals, performing metabolic and microbiome profiling experiments
- Ensured cleanliness and safety compliance of lab, managed inventory of consumables, trained lab members on SOPs

## **Patents**

Forecasting bacterial survival-success and adaptive evolution through multiomics stress-response mapping and machine learning. Patent Number [11591634](#).

## **Selected Publications**

- Rosconi, F., Rudmann, E., Li, [and 8 others including **Surujon D**]. A bacterial pan-genome makes gene essentiality strain-dependent and evolvable. Nat Microbiol 7, 1580–1592 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41564-022-01208-7>
- Zhu Z\*, **Surujon D**\*, Ortiz-Marquez J C, Wood S, Huo W, Isberg R R , Bento J and van Opijnen T. Entropy of a bacterial stress response is a generalizable predictor for fitness and antibiotic sensitivity. Nat Commun 11, 4365 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-18134-z>
- Wood S, Zhu Z, **Surujon D**, Rosconi F, Ortiz-Marquez J C, and van Opijnen T. 2019 A pan-genomic perspective on the emergence, maintenance and predictability of antibiotic resistance. Cham: Springer International Publishing; 2020. p. 169–202. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-38281-0\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-38281-0_8)
- **Surujon D**., van Opijnen T. ShinyOmics: collaborative exploration of omics-data. BMC Bioinformatics 21, 22 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12859-020-3360-x>
- **Surujon D**, Ponty Y, Clote P. Small-World Networks and RNA Secondary Structures. Journal of Computational Biology. 2018 Oct 31;26(1):16–26.

\* Equal contribution

## **Selected Oral Presentations**

- \*Computational approaches in infectious disease research and diagnostics. Amherst College Biology Weekly Seminar. November 2023. Amherst MA.
- Direct bacterial species identification from blood for rapid sepsis diagnostics. Boston Bacterial Meeting. June 2022. Boston, MA.
- Entropy of a bacterial stress response is a generalizable predictor for fitness and antibiotic sensitivity. Genome Informatics. November 2019. Cold Spring Harbor, NY.
- \*Entropy is a generalizable predictor for bacterial fitness. MIT PLS Short Talks. October 2019. Cambridge, MA.
- ShinyOmics: A Browser-Based Tool for Collaborative Exploration of Omics-Data. Systems Biology and Antibacterial Resistance Program Annual Meeting. September 2019. Galveston, TX.

\* Invited talk

## **Community, Service, and Leadership**

- **Scientists in Solidarity Annual Conference** (September 2025): Invited panelist
- **Day Zero Diagnostics Diversity Equity Inclusion Committee** (July 2021 – August 2022): Committee member involved in putting together resources for hiring managers, outreach to local organizations that support DEI efforts, organizing quarterly company-wide events around DEI issues.
- **Boston Bacterial Meeting Organizing Committee** (November 2019-January 2024): Operational support for arranging breakout sessions, coordination with panelists, evaluating submitted abstracts, design and editing of abstract book, fundraising
- **Science on Tap Organizer** (June 2018-June 2020): Organizer of the student-run summer seminar series Science on Tap at Boston College
- **PreLights** (July 2019-Current): [Contributing author](#) for The Company of Biologists preprint highlight website
- **Ad hoc reviewer** for Journal of Open Source Software, European Conference on Computational Biology
- **Guest Lecturer** at Boston College. BIOL6110 Advanced Genetics (2016-2019), BIOL3150 Introduction to Genomics(2020)