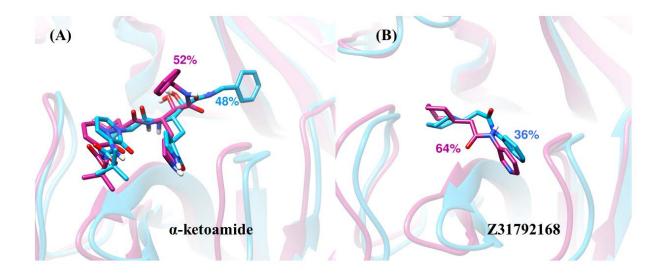
## **Supporting Information**

## Elucidating biophysical basis of binding of inhibitors to SARS-CoV-2 main protease by using molecular dynamics simulations and free energy calculations

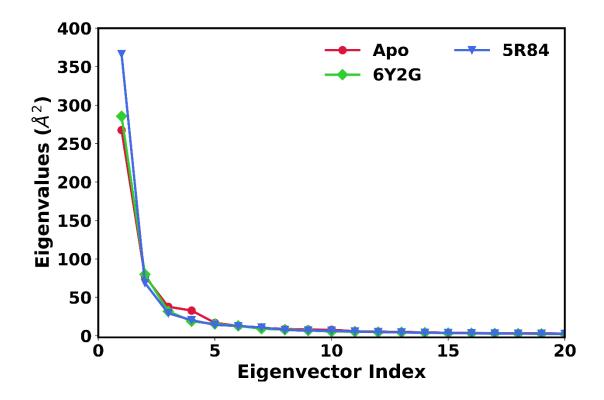
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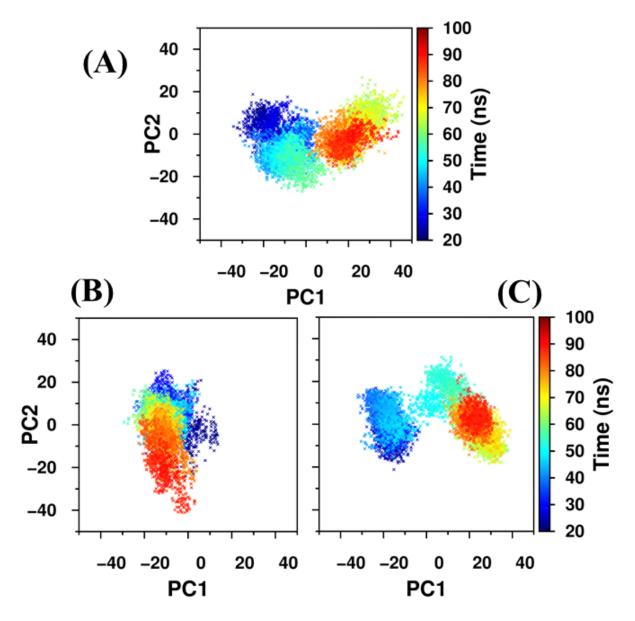
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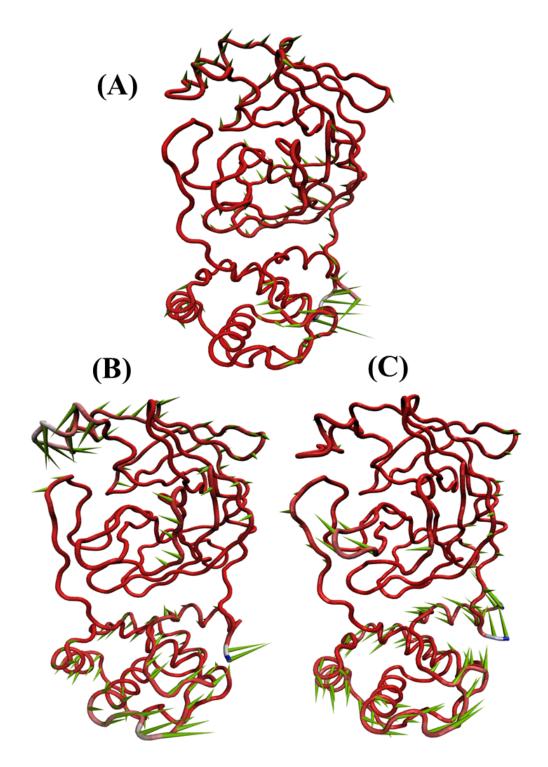
**Figure S1:** Orientation of the dominant conformation of inhibitors (A)  $\alpha$ -ketoamide and (B) Z31792168 obtained from the K-means clustering analysis.



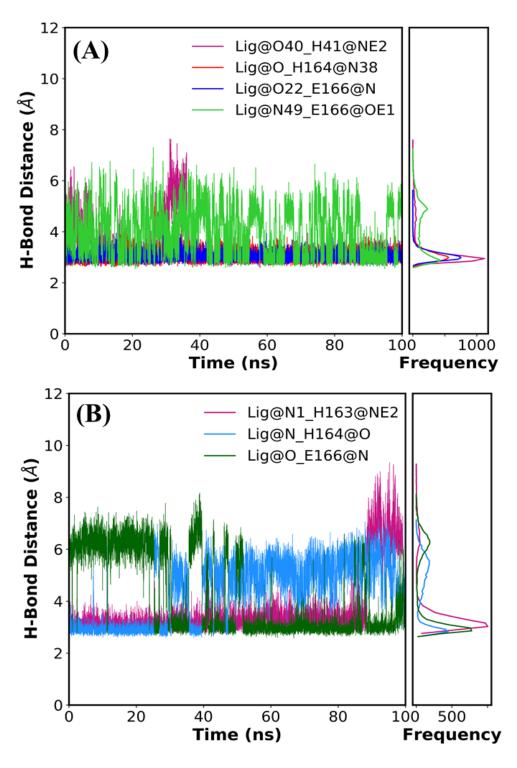
**Figure S2**: Comparison of the eigenvalues plotted against the corresponding eigenvector indices for apo (red),  $3CL^{pro}/\alpha$ -ketoamide (green), and  $3CL^{pro}/Z31792168$  (blue).



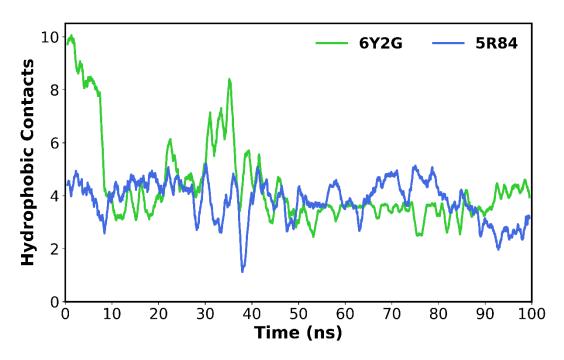
**Figure S3**: The maps of PC1 and PC2 during MD simulation of (A) apo, (B)  $3CL^{pro}/\alpha$ -ketoamide, and (C)  $3CL^{pro}/Z31792168$ . Colour codes represent the simulation time.



**Figure S4:** Porcupine plots showing prominent motions for (A) apo, (B)  $3CL^{pro}/\alpha$ -ketoamide and (C)  $3CL^{pro}/Z31792168$ . Green represent eigenvector showing the direction of prominent movements. Length of the eigenvectors represents the magnitude of the movements.



**Figure S5**: Time evolution of hydrogen bond distances and the probability distribution of (A)  $3CL^{pro}/\alpha$ -ketoamide and (B)  $3CL^{pro}/Z31792168$  complexes.



**Figure S6**: The time evolution of hydrophobic contacts for  $3CL^{pro}/\alpha$ -ketoamide (green) and  $3CL^{pro}/Z31792168$  (blue).