Can Supercomputers Help Cure Cancer?

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Ohio State University researchers are using supercomputers to help find cures for cancer. In particular, the researchers are looking at blocking the activity of a naturally occuring protein, interleukin 6 (IL-6). This protein is normally produced by cells of the immune system but in cancer, it is produced at too high levels and for too long. The scientists are working to identify the best way to block the activity of the protein by examining thousands of possible options with computer models. The researchers started with a small chemical produced by a marine bacteria. The chemical, madindoline, was known to partially inhibit IL-6. They programmed the computer to look at many different variants of that chemical and 'test' the activity of each derivative.

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