

A Control Perspective on Antimicrobial Resistance Inhibition: from Systems to Synthetic Biology

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Co-supervisor: **Massimo Bellato**, Assist. Prof.

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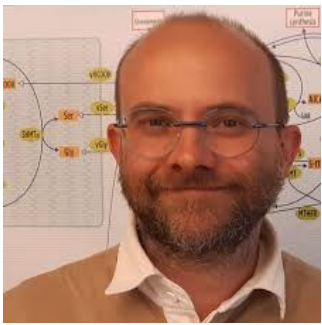
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Brun



Prof. Ignazio
Castegliuolo



Prof.ssa Giulia
Giordano



Prof. Luca
Marchetti



1. Problem of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

AMR in numbers

AMR IS A GLOBAL HEALTH PRIORITY



Every **45 seconds**

a person dies from an antibiotic-resistant infection.¹

700,000

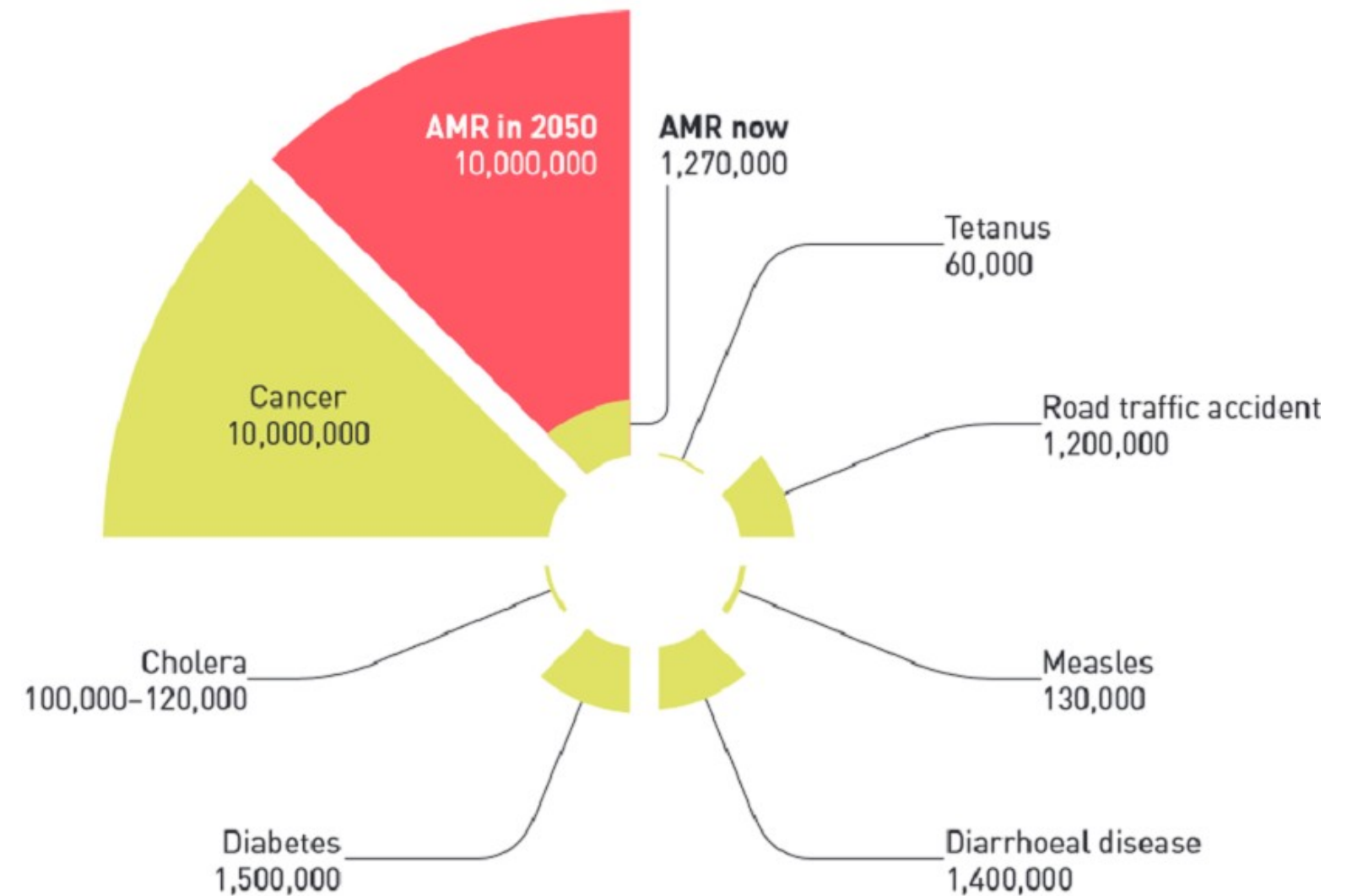
deaths annually worldwide.²



An estimated **10 million** deaths a year by 2050.²



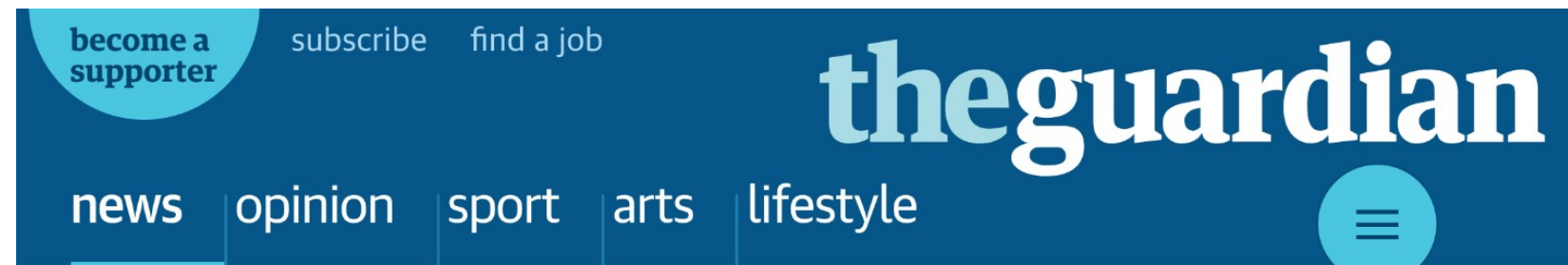
World Health Organization



1. Problem of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

AMR abroad

AMR in Italy



UK UK politics education media society law scotland wales northern ireland

Drug resistance The Observer

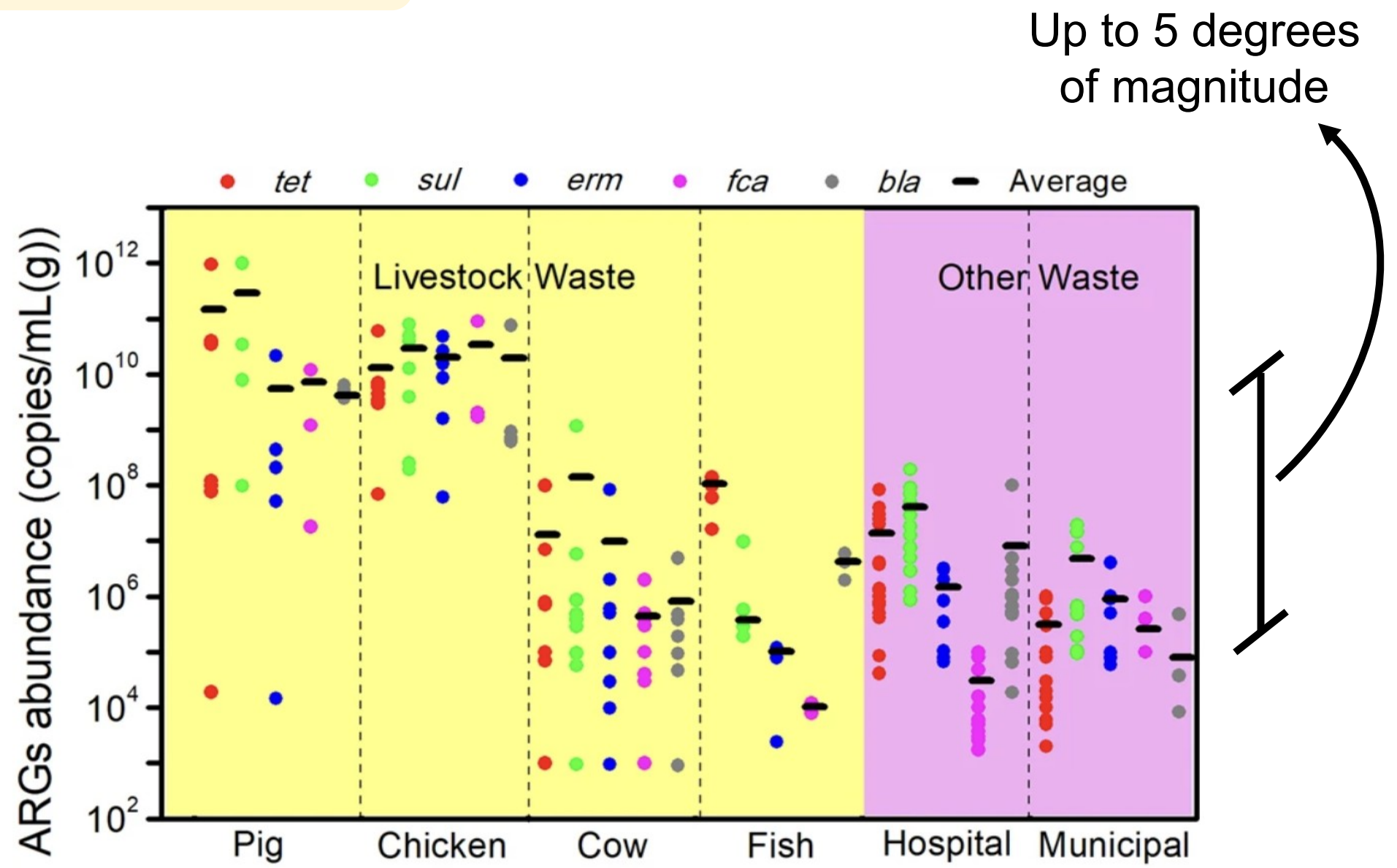
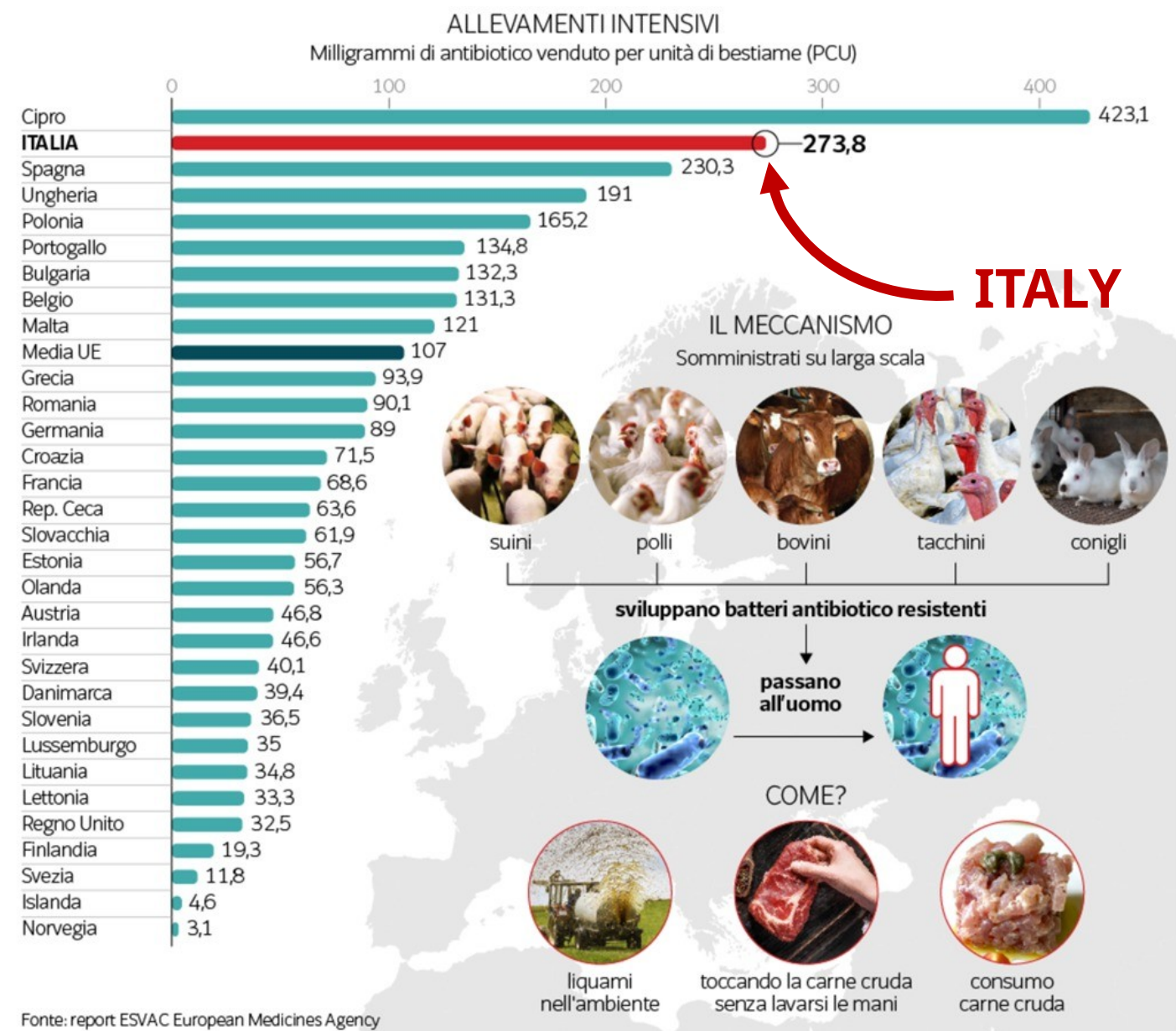
'Antibiotic apocalypse': doctors sound alarm over drug resistance

The terrifying prospect that even routine operations will be impossible to perform has been raised by experts alarmed by the rise of drug-resistant genes



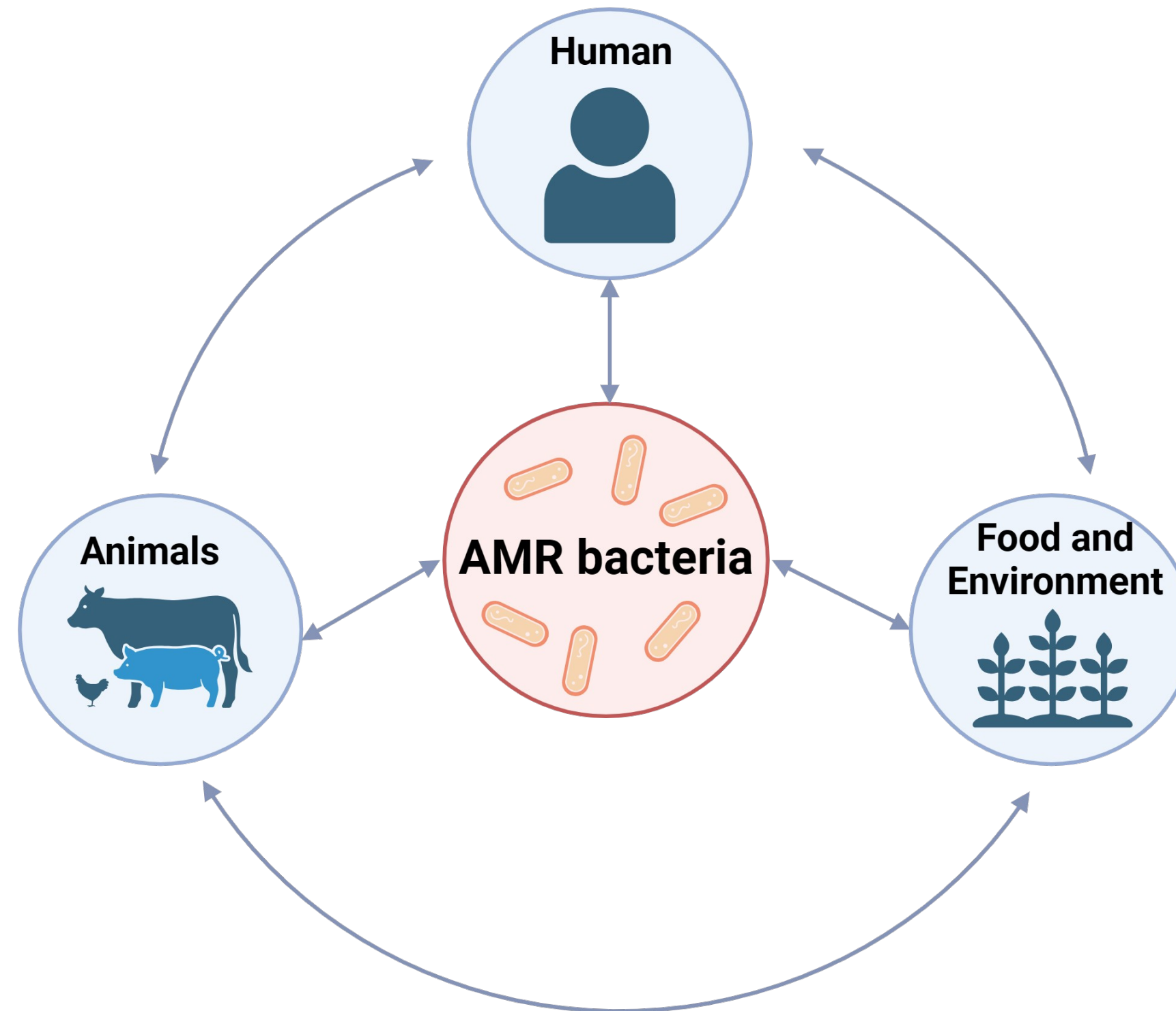
1. Problem of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

The One Health Approach

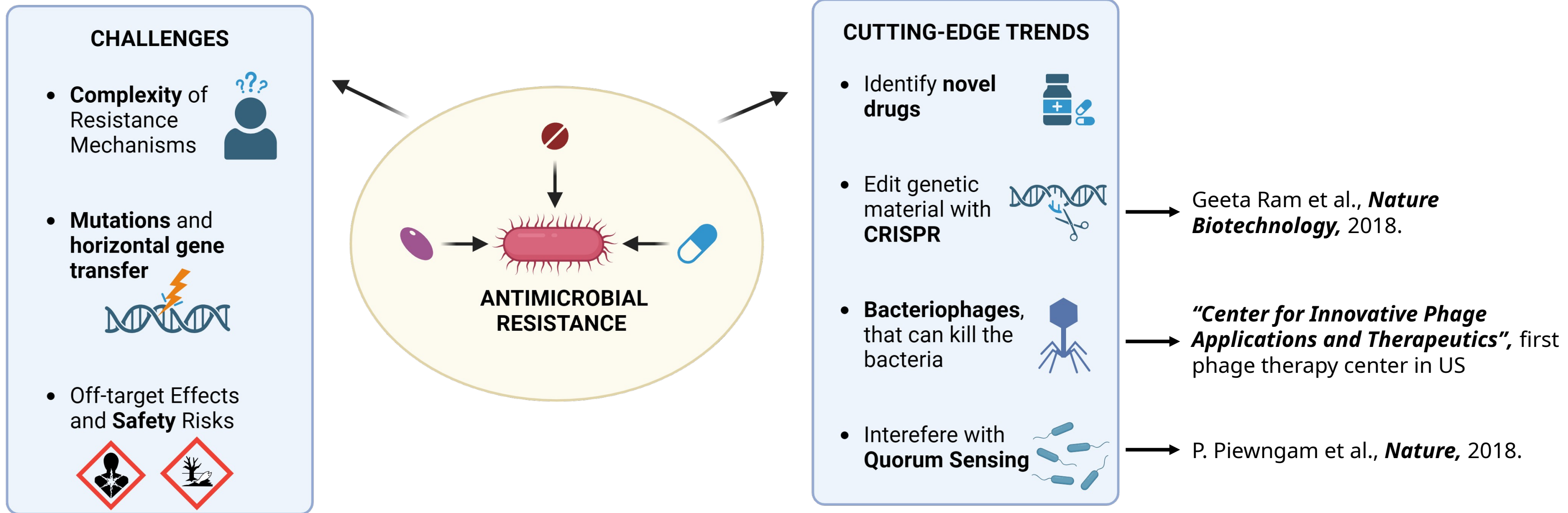


1. Problem of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

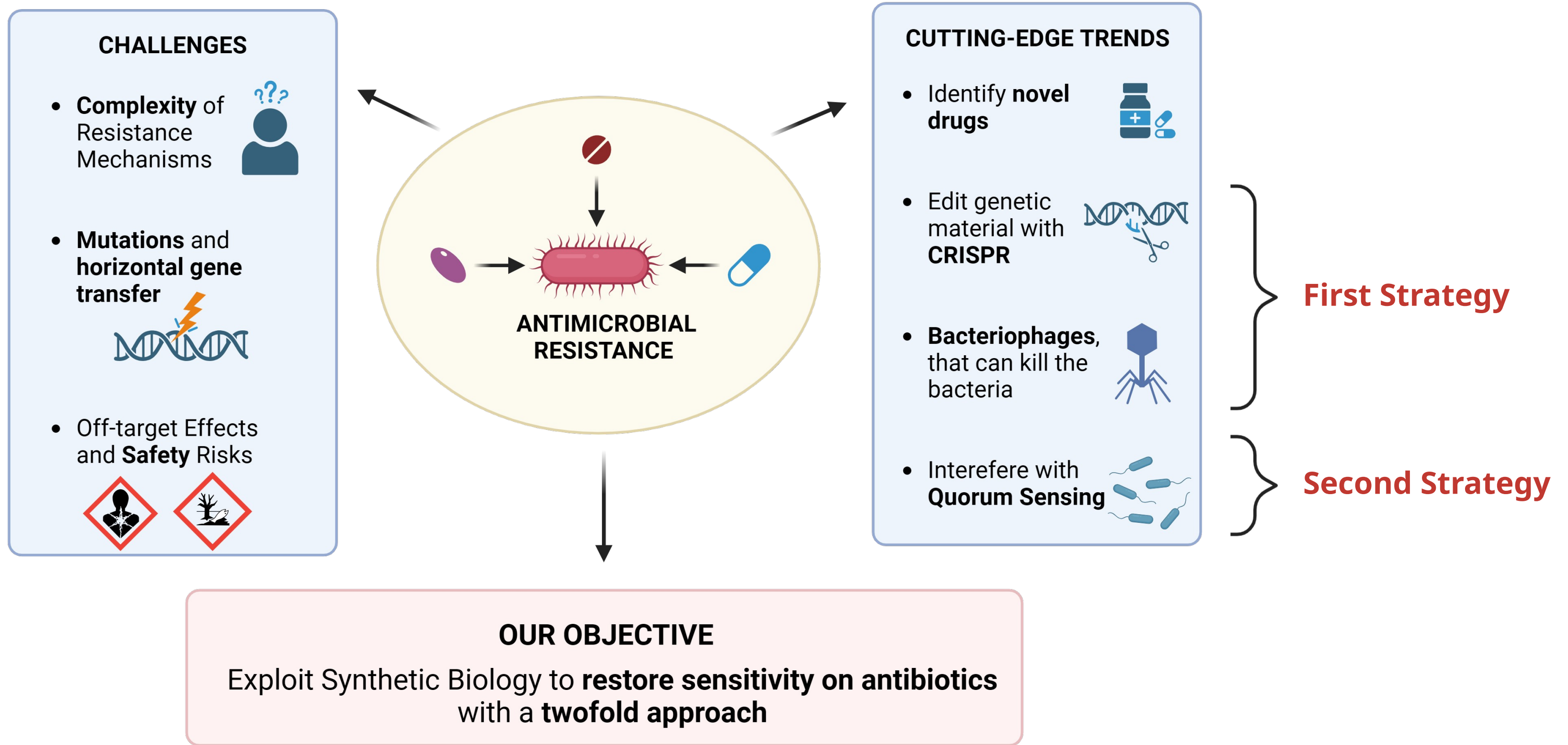
The One Health Approach



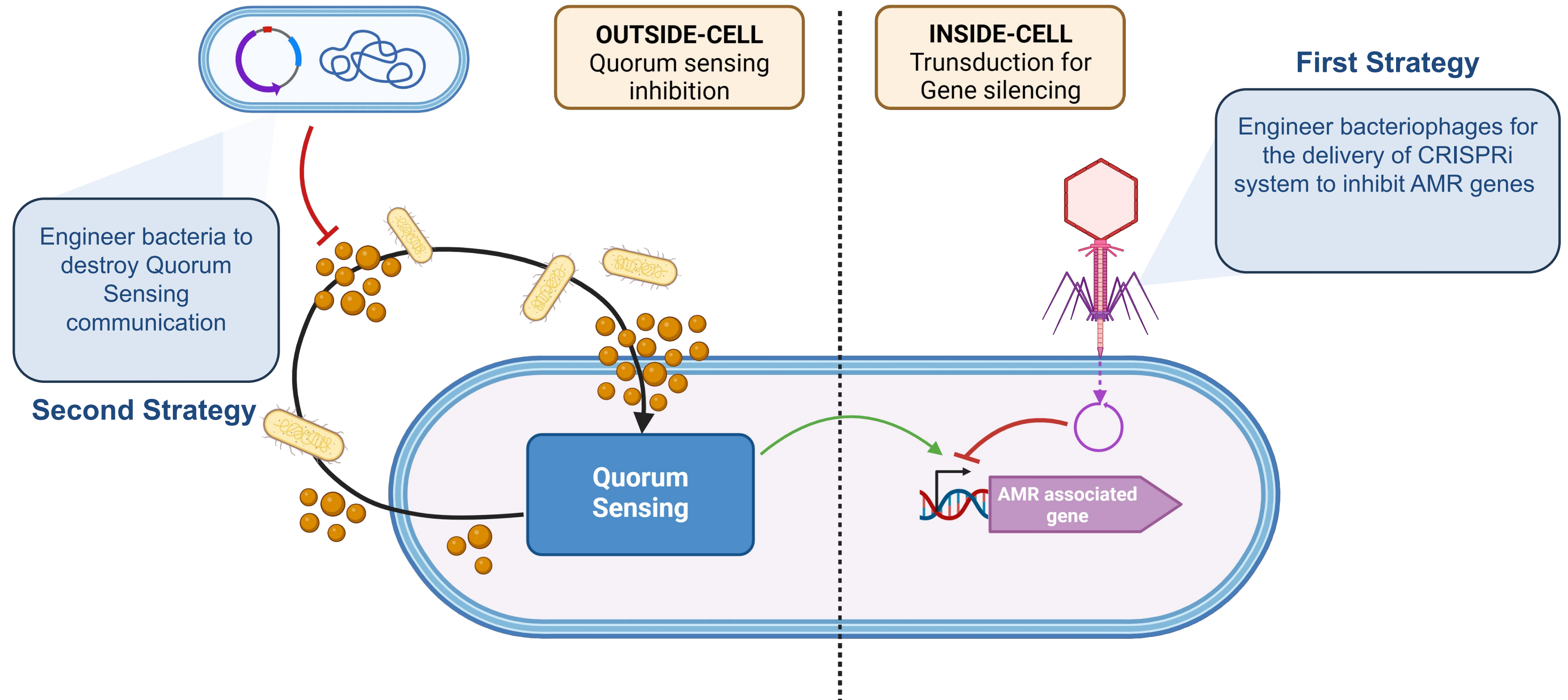
1. Problem of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)



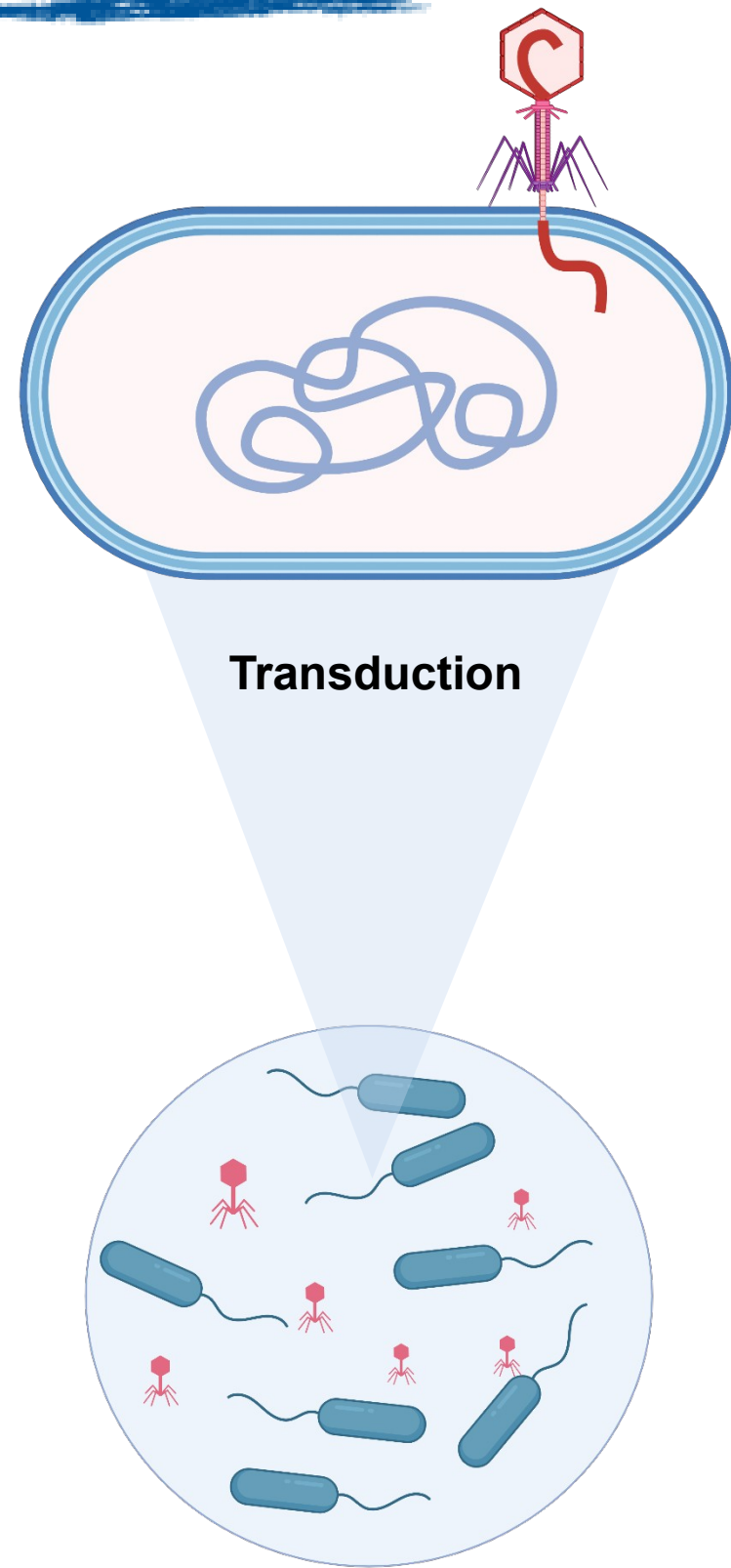
1. Problem of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)



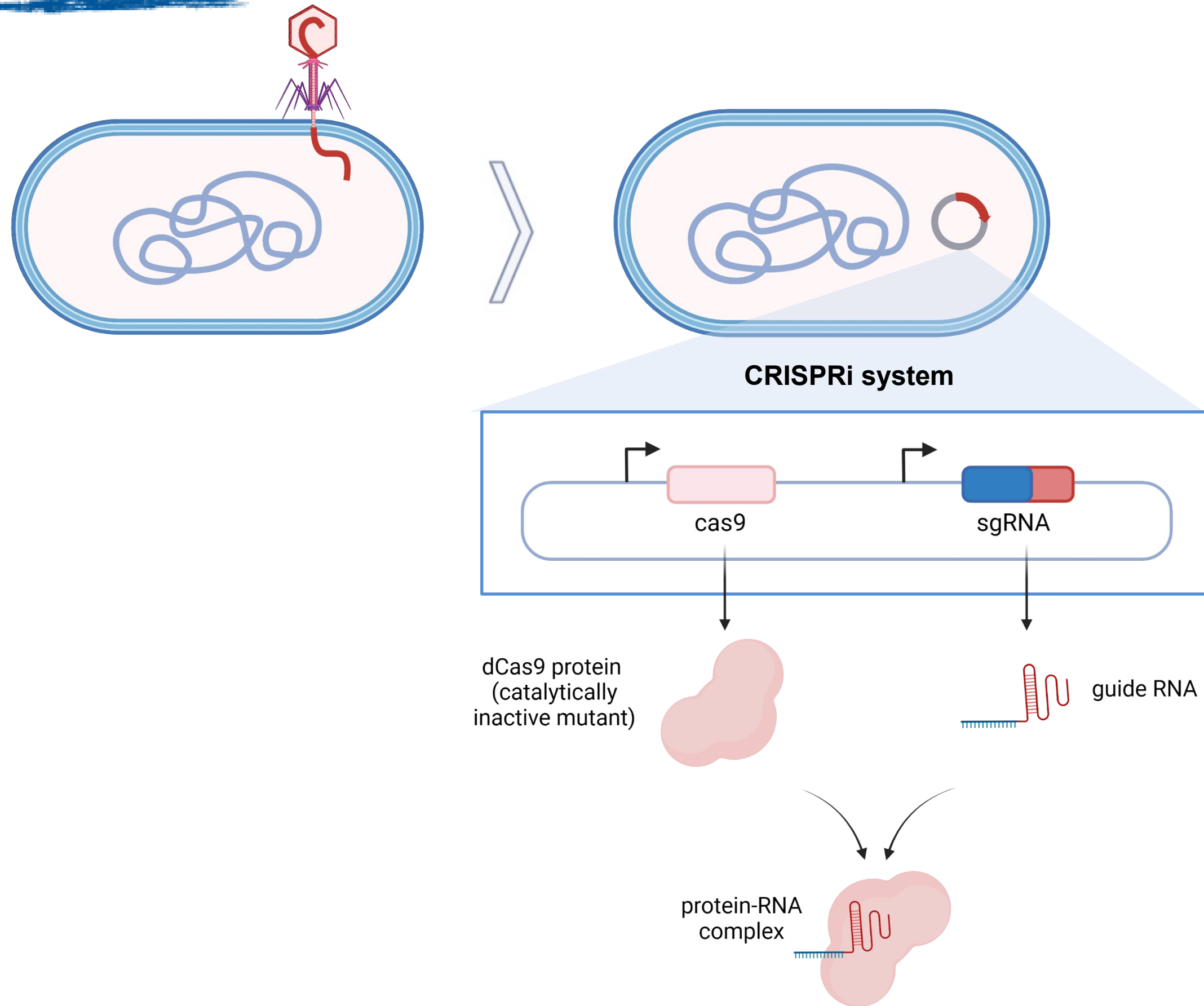
1. Antimicrobial Resistance Mechanisms



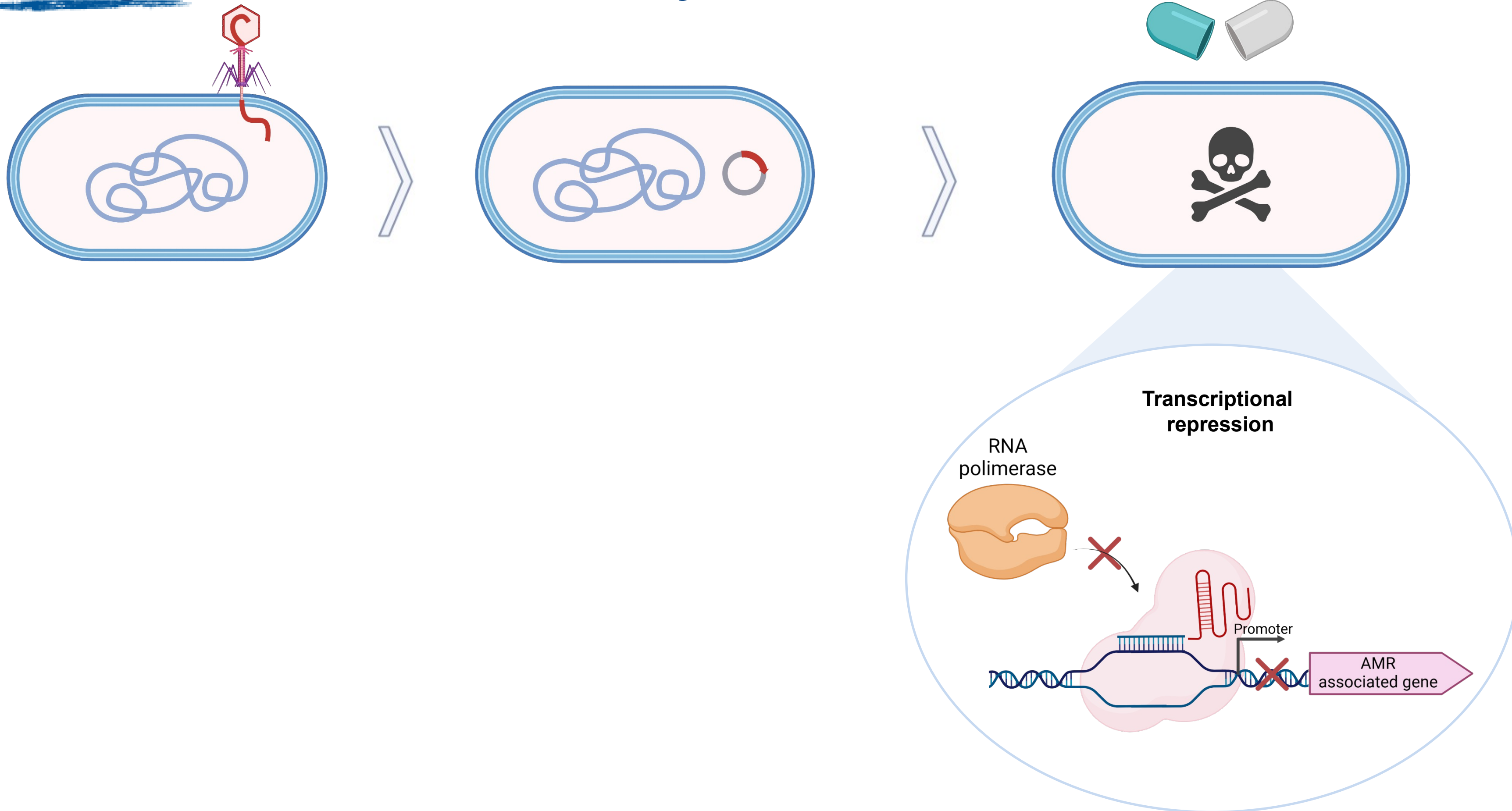
2. Phage-Mediated CRISPRi System



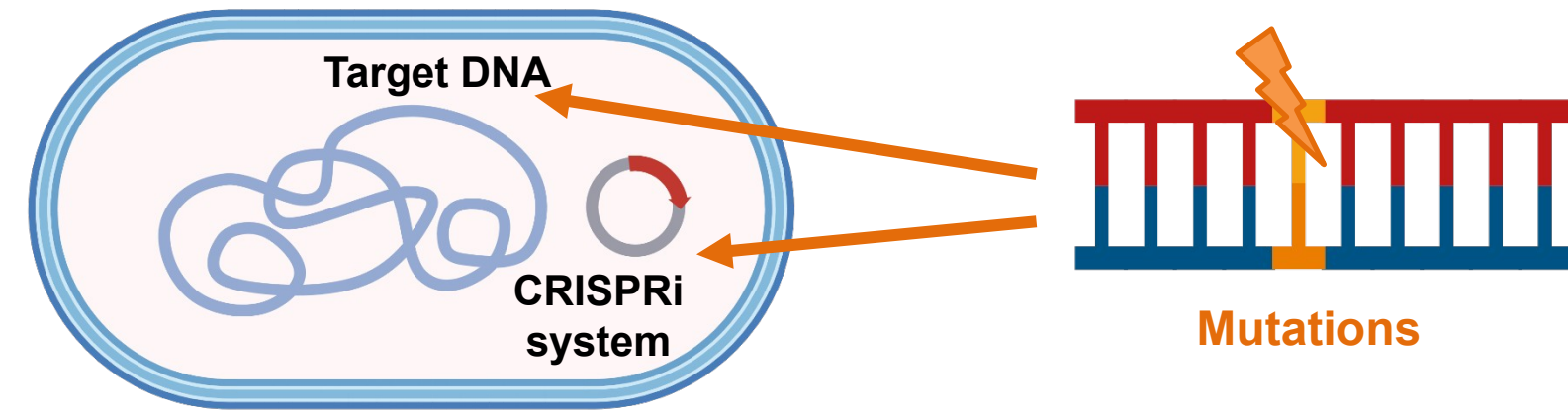
2. Phage-Mediated CRISPRi System



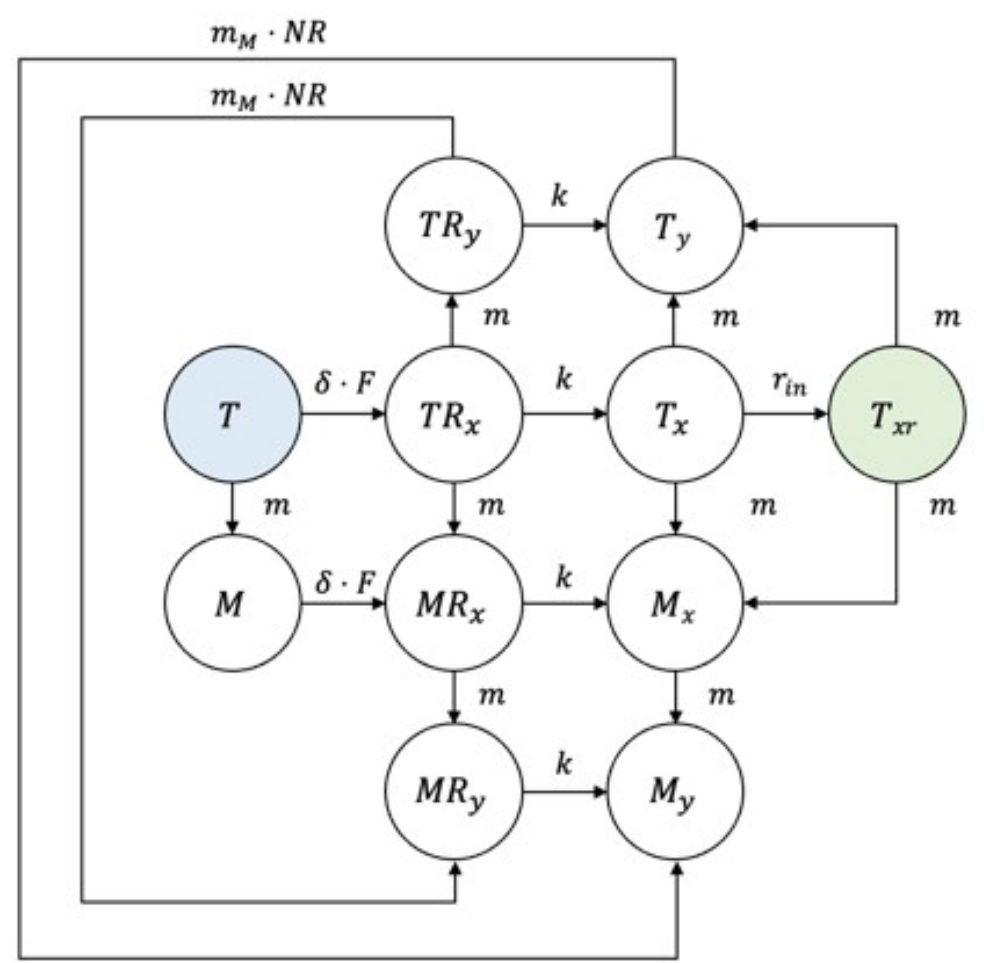
2. Phage-Mediated CRISPRi System



2. Phage-Mediated CRISPRi System



Transit compartmental model

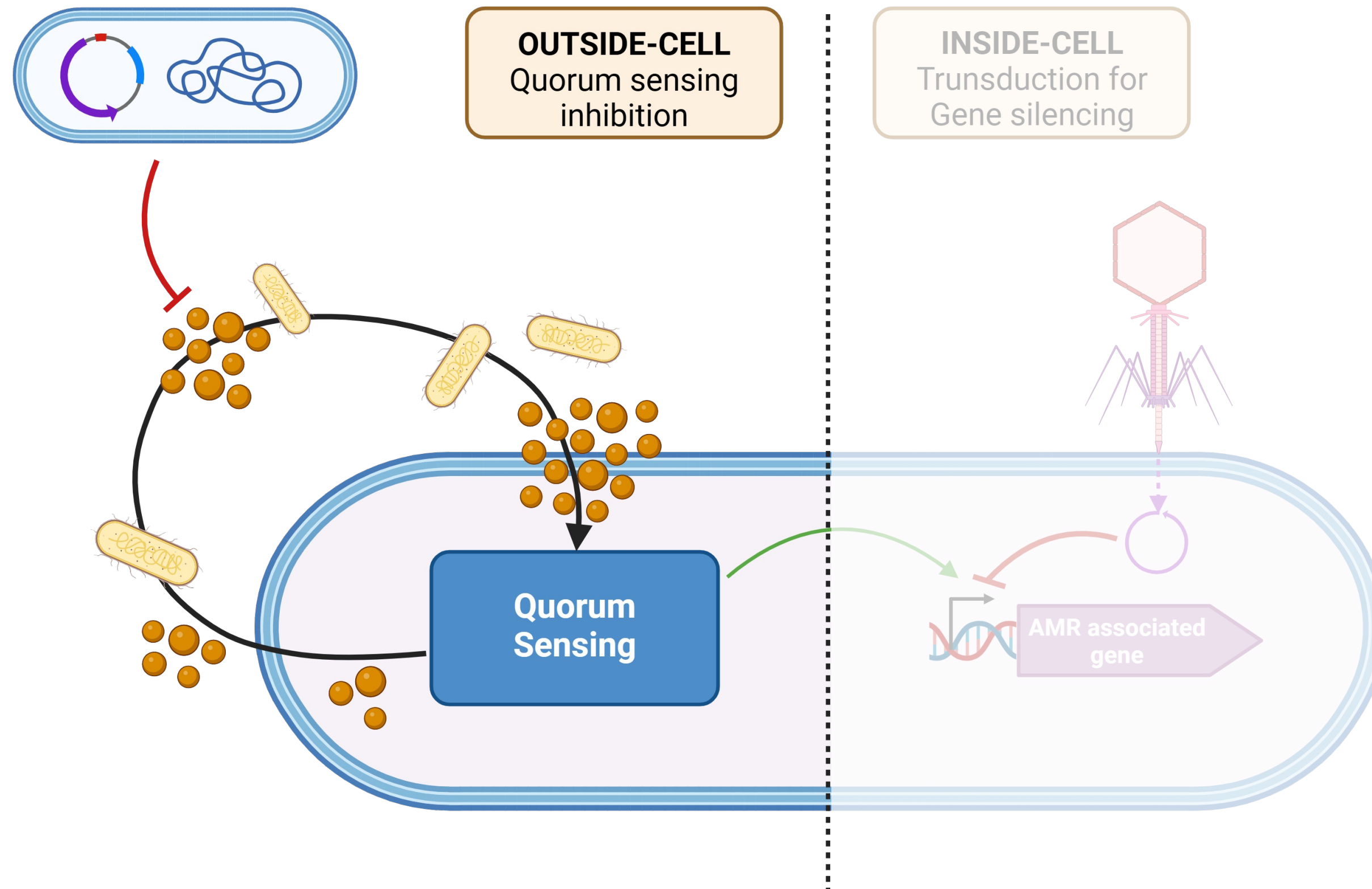


$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dT}{dt} &= -\delta \cdot F \cdot T - m \cdot T + [\lambda - w] \cdot T \\ \frac{dM}{dt} &= -\delta \cdot F \cdot M + m \cdot T + [\lambda - w] \cdot M \\ \frac{dTR_x}{dt} &= +\delta \cdot F \cdot T - (k + 2m) \cdot TR_x + [\lambda - w] \cdot TR_x \\ \frac{dTR_y}{dt} &= +m \cdot TR_x - (k + m) \cdot TR_y + [\lambda - w] \cdot TR_y \\ \frac{dMR_x}{dt} &= +\delta \cdot F \cdot M + m \cdot TR_x - (k + m) \cdot MR_x + [\lambda - w] \cdot MR_x \\ \frac{dMR_y}{dt} &= +m \cdot MR_x + m \cdot TR_y - k \cdot MR_y + [\lambda - w] \cdot MR_y \\ \frac{dT_x}{dt} &= +k \cdot TR_x - (r_{in} + 2m) \cdot T_x + [\lambda - w] \cdot T_x \\ \frac{dT_y}{dt} &= +k \cdot TR_y + m \cdot (T_x + T_{xr}) - m \cdot T_y + [\lambda - w] \cdot T_y \\ \frac{dM_x}{dt} &= +k \cdot MR_x + m \cdot (T_x + T_{xr}) - m \cdot M_x + [\lambda - w] \cdot M_x \\ \frac{dM_y}{dt} &= +k \cdot MR_y + m \cdot T_y + m \cdot M_x + [\lambda - w] \cdot M_y \\ \frac{dT_{xr}}{dt} &= +r_{in} \cdot T_x - 2m \cdot T_{xr} + [\lambda - w] \cdot T_{xr} - A \cdot T_{xr} \\ \frac{dF}{dt} &= -\delta \cdot (T + M) - w \cdot F \end{aligned}$$

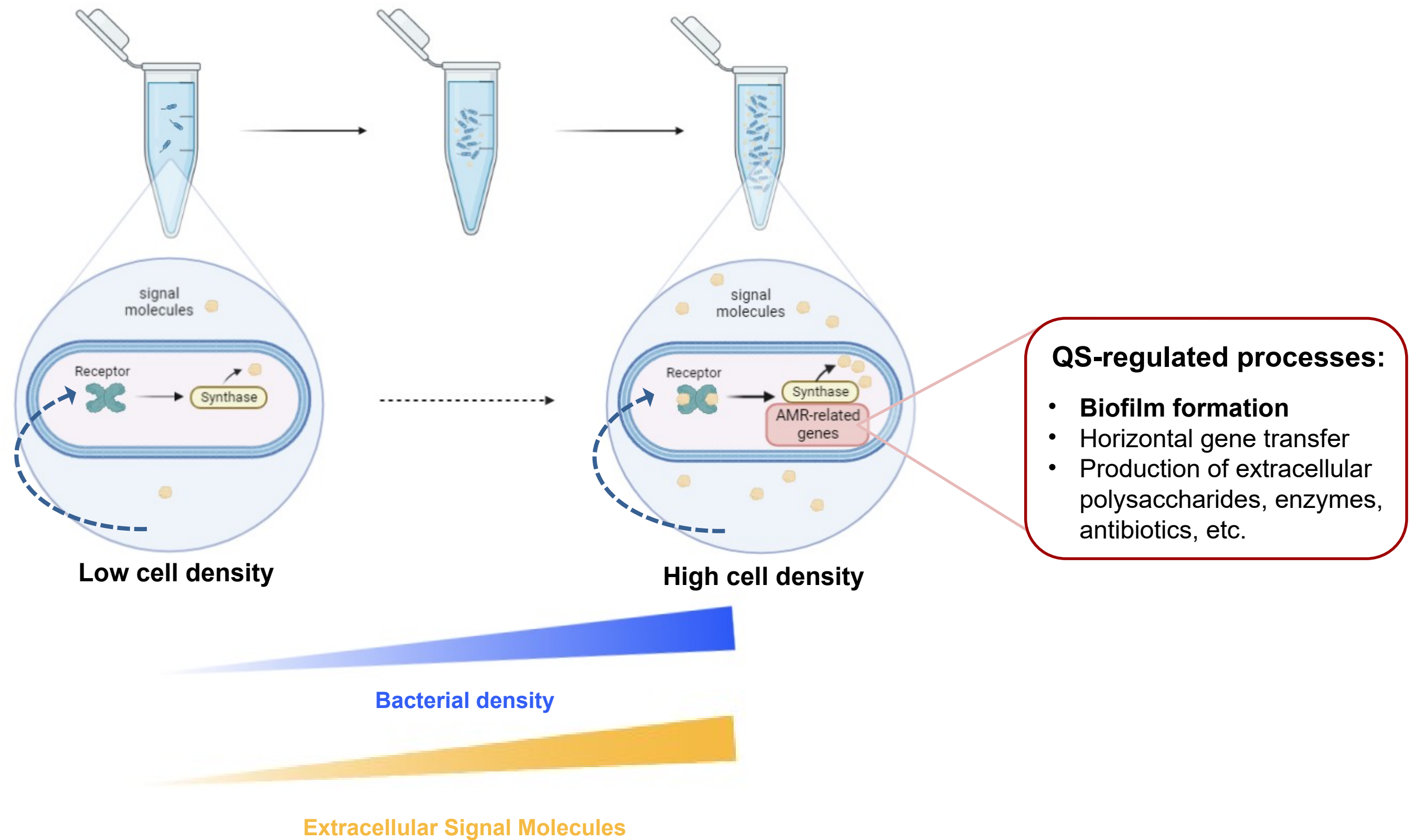
CONTRIBUTION

Develop a mathematical model of the phage-mediated CRISPRi system, with specific **focus on the mutations dynamics**

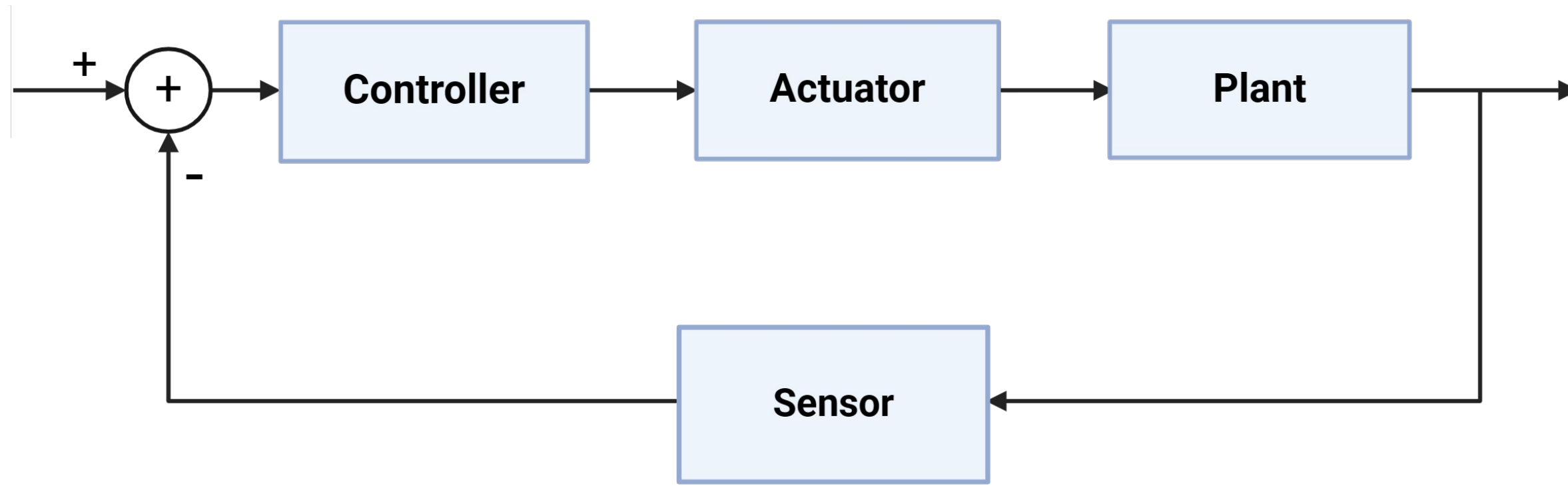
3. Antimicrobial Resistance Mechanisms



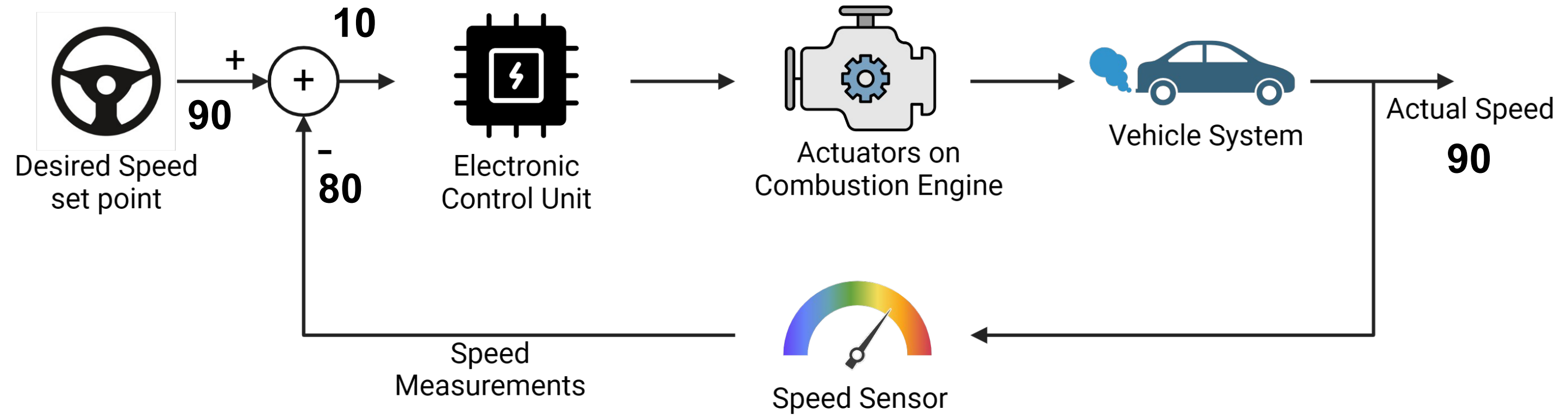
3. Quorum Sensing in Gram Negative bacteria



3. A control perspective

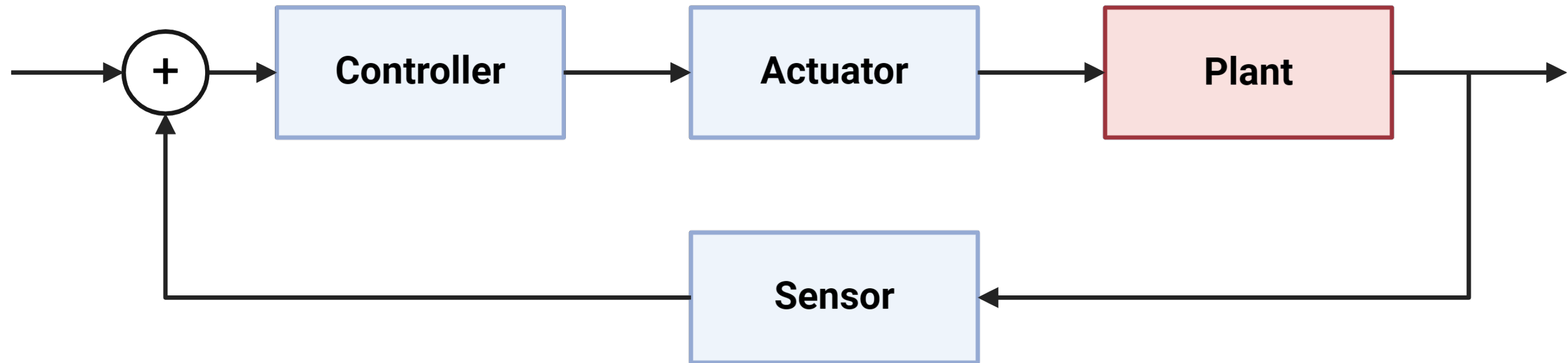


3. A control perspective

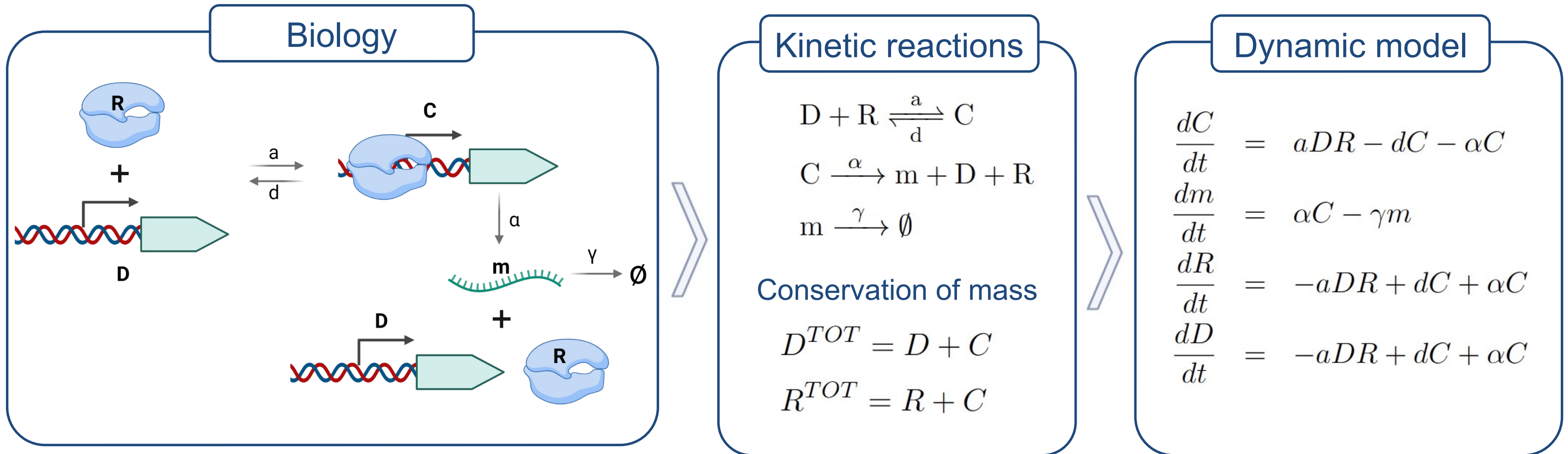


Cruise control system

3. Modelling of the Plant

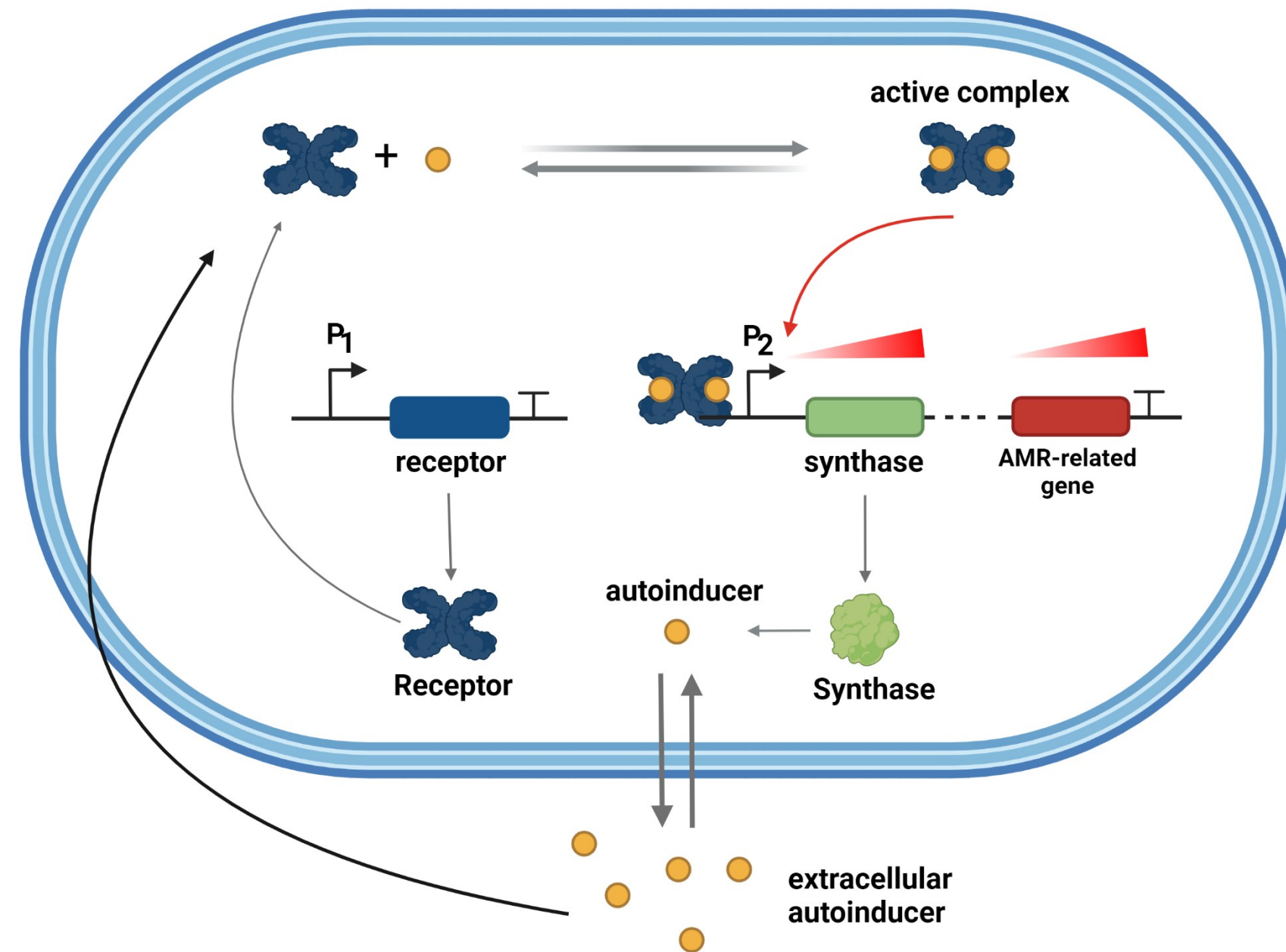


3. From biology to mathematical models

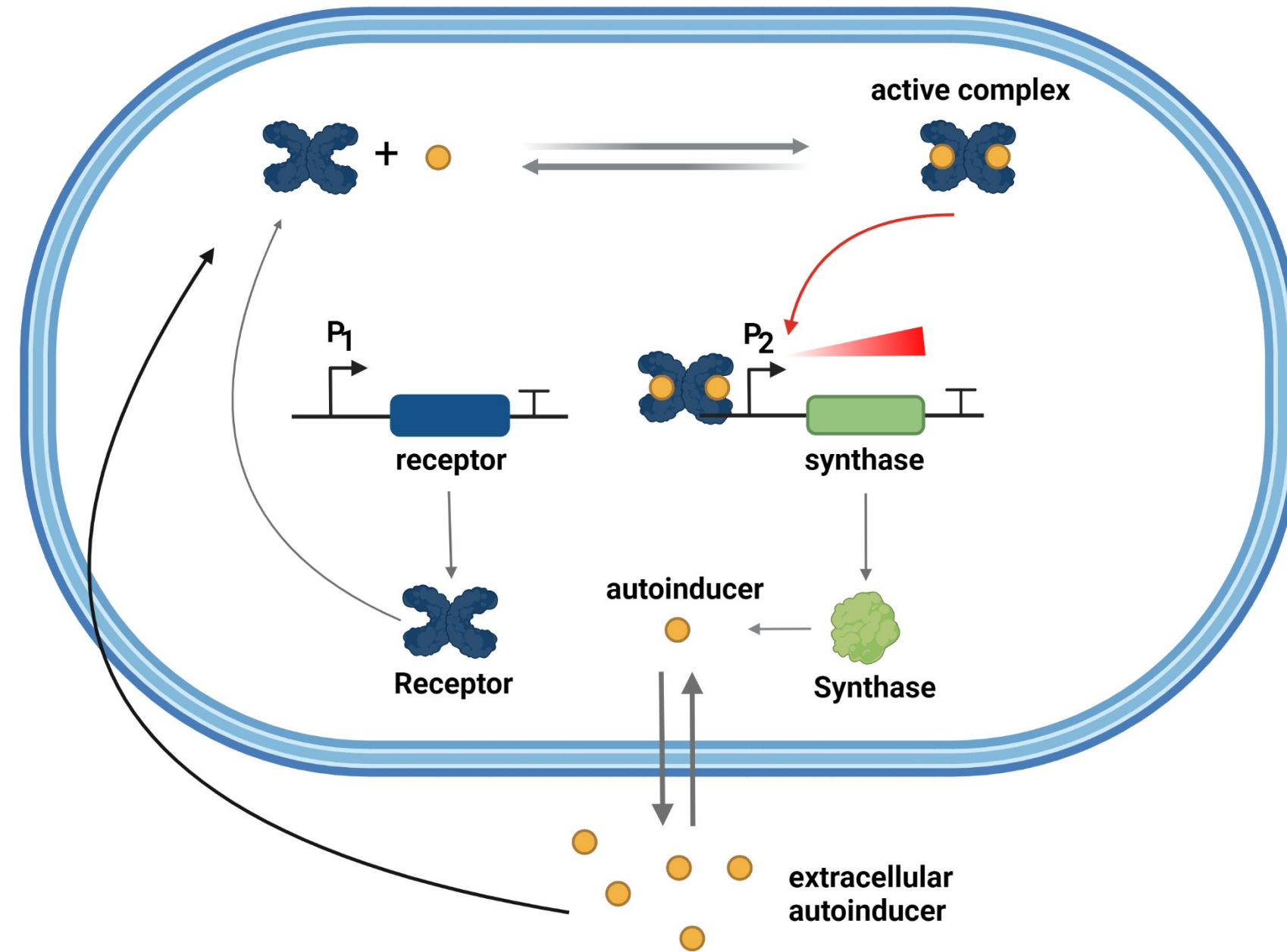


Mechanical derivation (*Systems Biology*, MS class DEI)

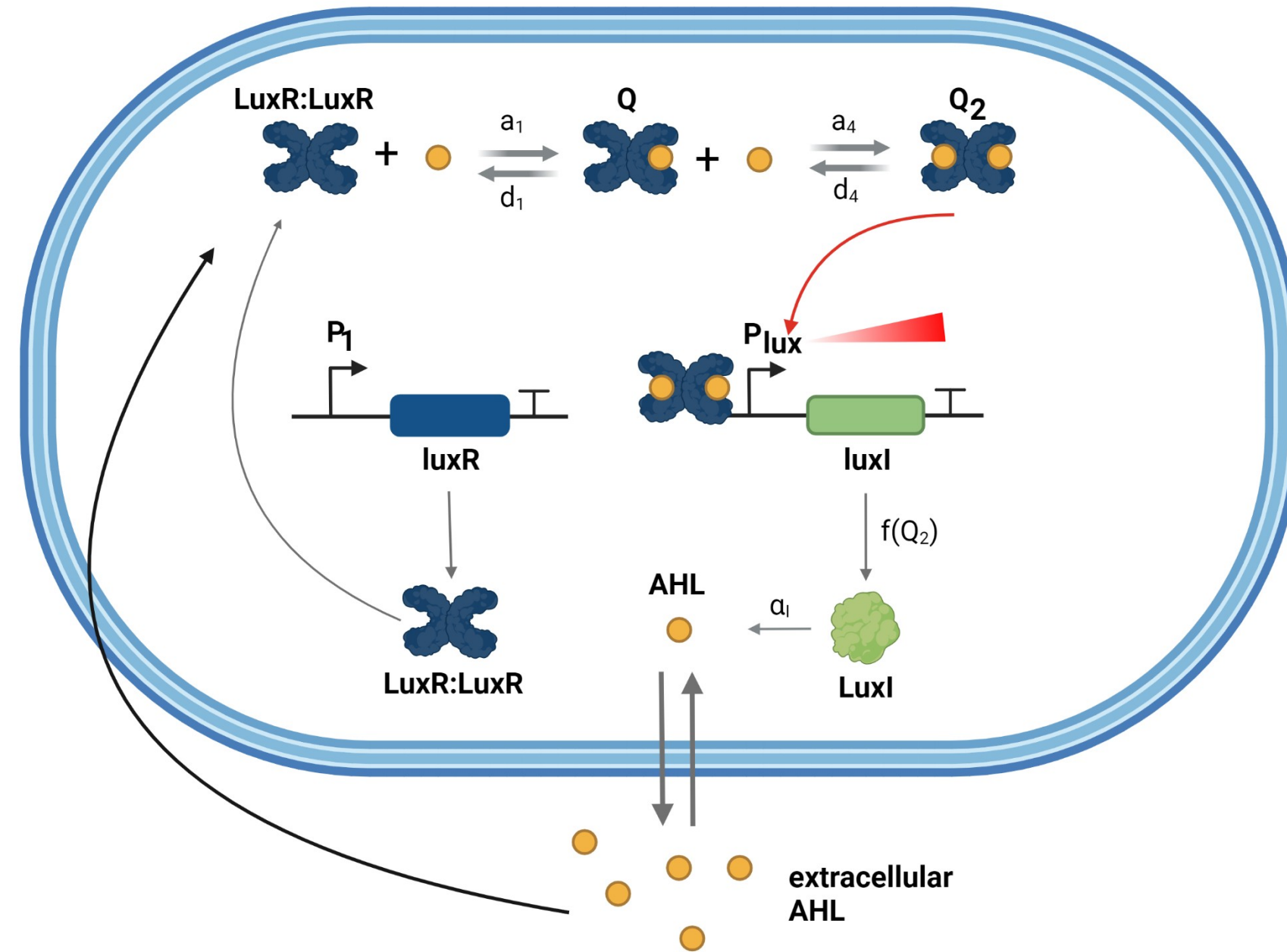
3. Single feedback QS system



3. Single feedback QS system

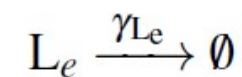
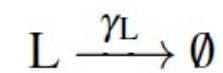
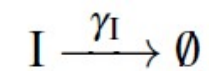
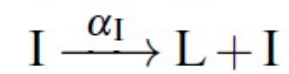
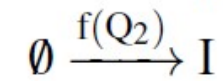
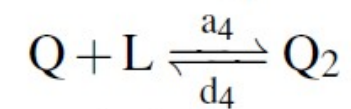
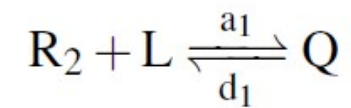


3. Single feedback QS system



3. Single feedback QS system

Reactions



Conservation of mass

$$R_2^{TOT} = R_2 + Q + Q_2 = R_2^{TOT}(0)$$

$$L^{TOT} = L + Q + 2Q_2$$

Model

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \beta_{lux} + \frac{\alpha_{lux} - \beta_{lux}}{1 + \frac{K_{lux}}{Q_2}} - \gamma_I I$$

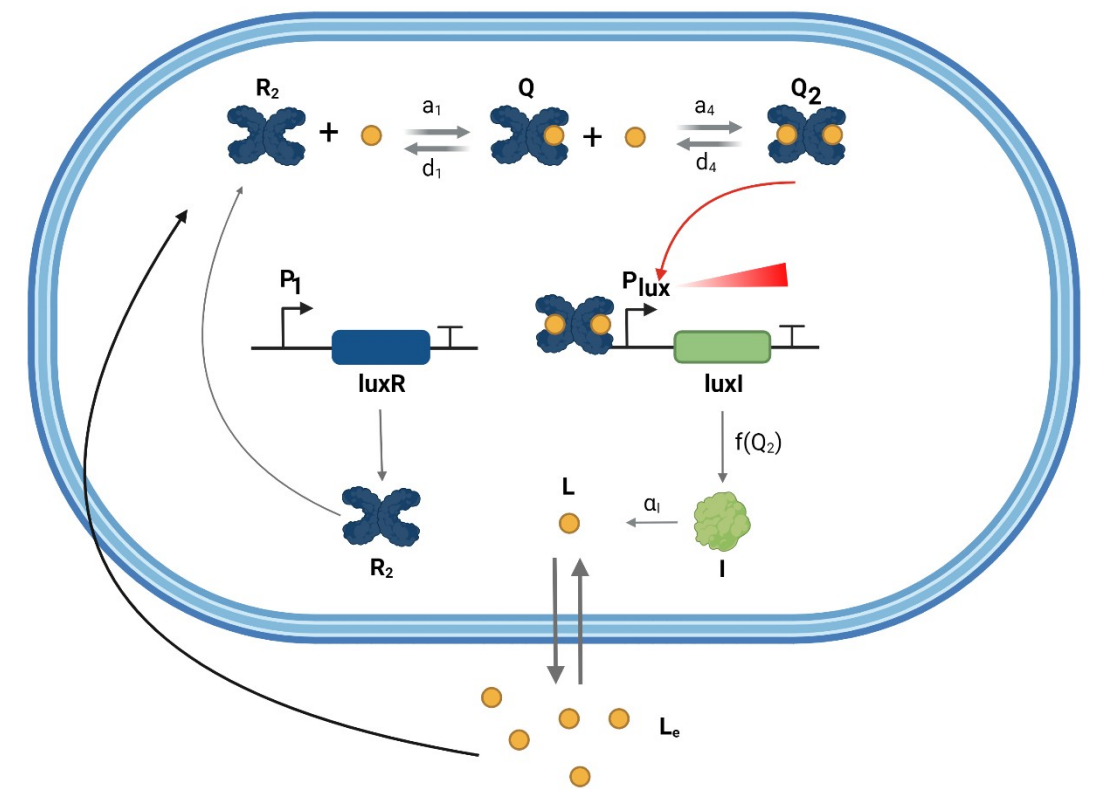
$$\frac{dL}{dt} = \alpha_I I - \gamma_L L + d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L + d_4 Q_2 - K_4 d_4 Q L + K_{15}(L_e - L)$$

$$\frac{dL_e}{dt} = K_{15} \frac{NV_I}{V - NV_I} (L - L_e) - \gamma_{L_e} L_e$$

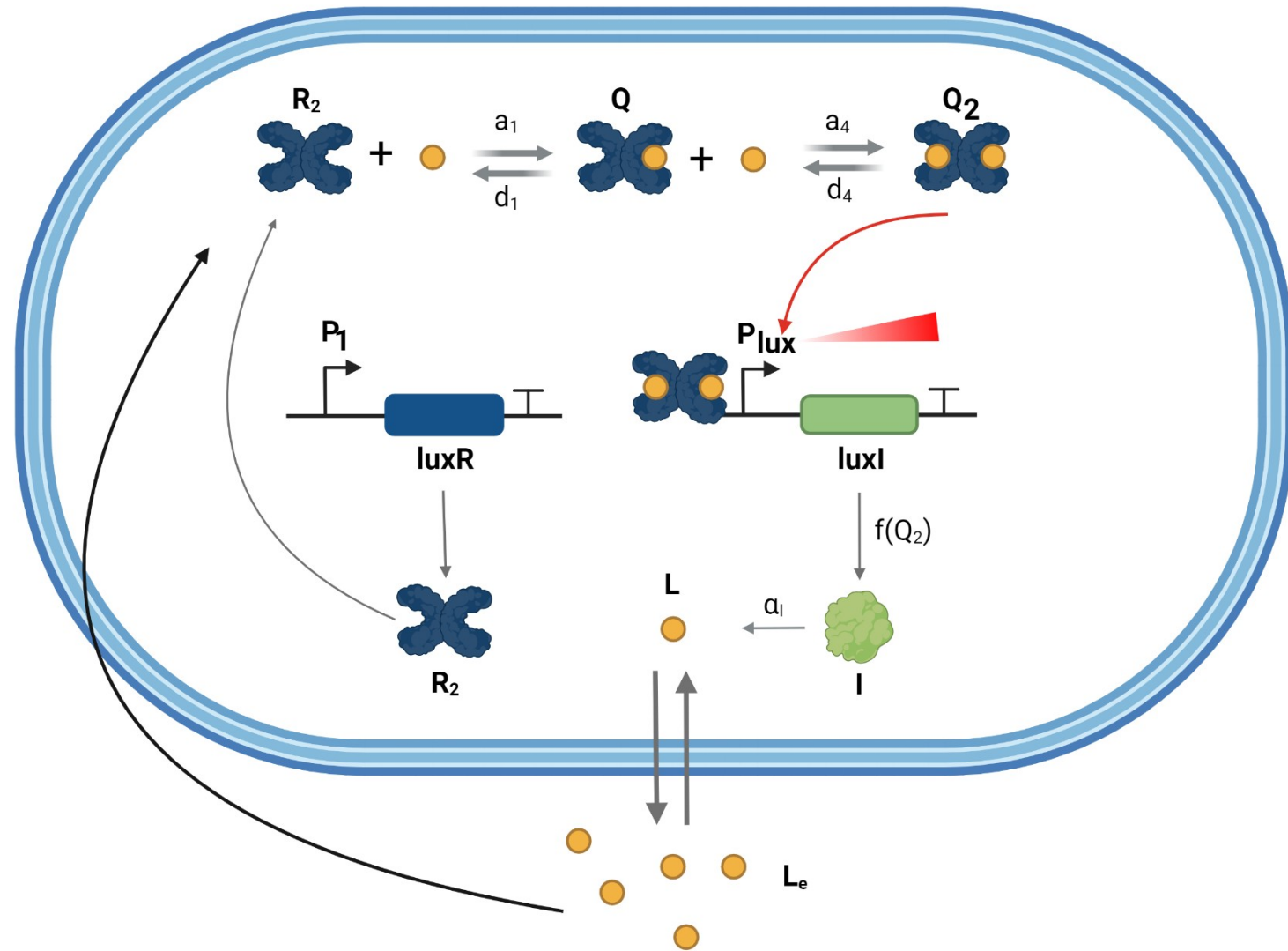
$$\frac{dR_2}{dt} = d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L$$

$$\frac{dQ}{dt} = K_1 d_1 R_2 L - d_1 Q - K_4 d_4 Q L + d_4 Q_2$$

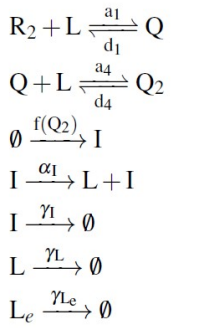
$$\frac{dQ_2}{dt} = K_4 d_4 Q L - d_4 Q_2$$



3. Single feedback QS system



Reactions



Conservation of mass

$$\begin{aligned}
 R_2^{TOT} &= R_2 + Q + Q_2 = R_2^{TOT}(0) \\
 L^{TOT} &= L + Q + 2Q_2
 \end{aligned}$$

Model

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \beta_{lux} + \frac{\alpha_{lux} - \beta_{lux}}{1 + \frac{K_{lux}}{Q_2}} - \gamma_I I$$

$$\frac{dL}{dt} = \alpha_I I - \gamma_L L + d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L + d_4 Q_2 - K_4 d_4 Q L + K_{15} (L_e - L)$$

$$\frac{dL_e}{dt} = K_{15} \frac{NV_I}{V - NV_I} (L - L_e) - \gamma_{L_e} L_e$$

$$\frac{dR_2}{dt} = d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L$$

$$\frac{dQ}{dt} = K_1 d_1 R_2 L - d_1 Q - K_4 d_4 Q L + d_4 Q_2$$

$$\frac{dQ_2}{dt} = K_4 d_4 Q L - d_4 Q_2$$

3. Single feedback QS system

Quasi steady state approximation

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{dQ}{dt} &= K_1 d_1 R_2 L - d_1 Q - K_4 d_4 Q L + d_4 Q_2 = 0 \\ \frac{dQ_2}{dt} &= K_4 d_4 Q L - d_4 Q_2 = 0\end{aligned}$$

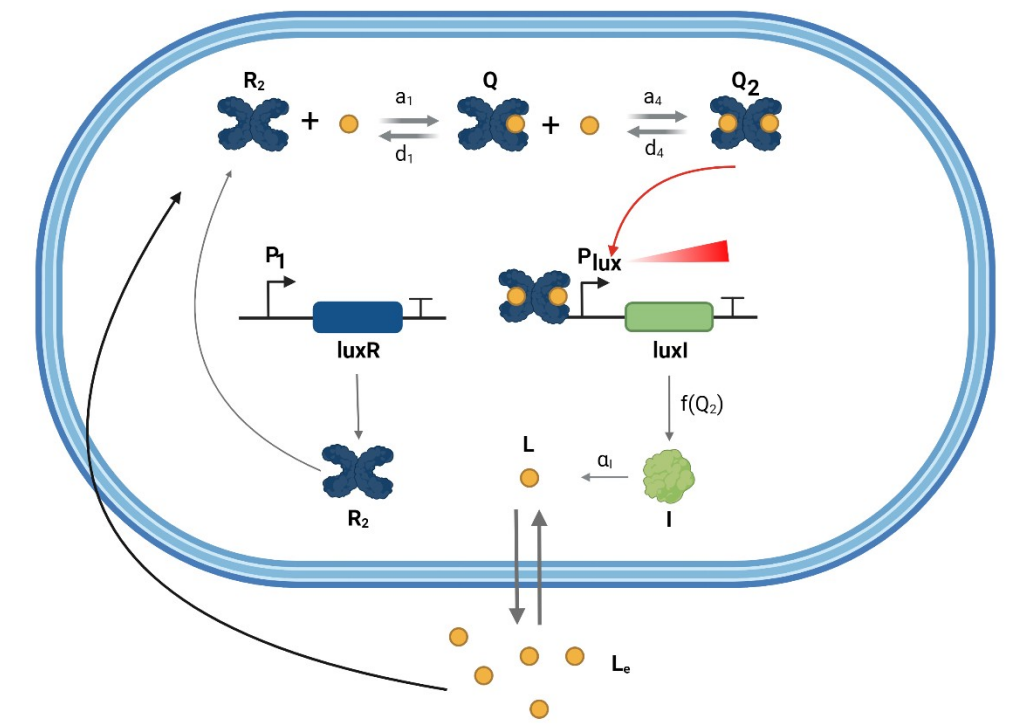
Conservation of mass

$$\begin{aligned}R_2 &= \frac{1}{1 + K_1 L + \frac{K_1^2}{4} L^2} R_2^{TOT} \\ Q &= \frac{K_1 L}{1 + K_1 L + \frac{K_1^2}{4} L^2} R_2^{TOT} \\ Q_2 &= \frac{\frac{K_1^2}{4} L^2}{1 + K_1 L + \frac{K_1^2}{4} L^2} R_2^{TOT}\end{aligned}$$

.....→

Simplified model

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{dI}{dt} &= \beta_{lux} + \frac{\alpha_{lux} - \beta_{lux}}{1 + \frac{K_{lux}}{Q_2}} - \gamma_I I \\ \frac{dL}{dt} &= \alpha_I I - \gamma_L L + K_{15}(L_e - L) \\ \frac{dL_e}{dt} &= K_{15} \frac{NV_I}{V - NV_I} (L - L_e) - \gamma_{L_e} L_e \\ Q_2 &= \frac{\frac{K_1^2}{4} L^2}{1 + K_1 L + \frac{K_1^2}{4} L^2} R_2^{TOT}.\end{aligned}$$

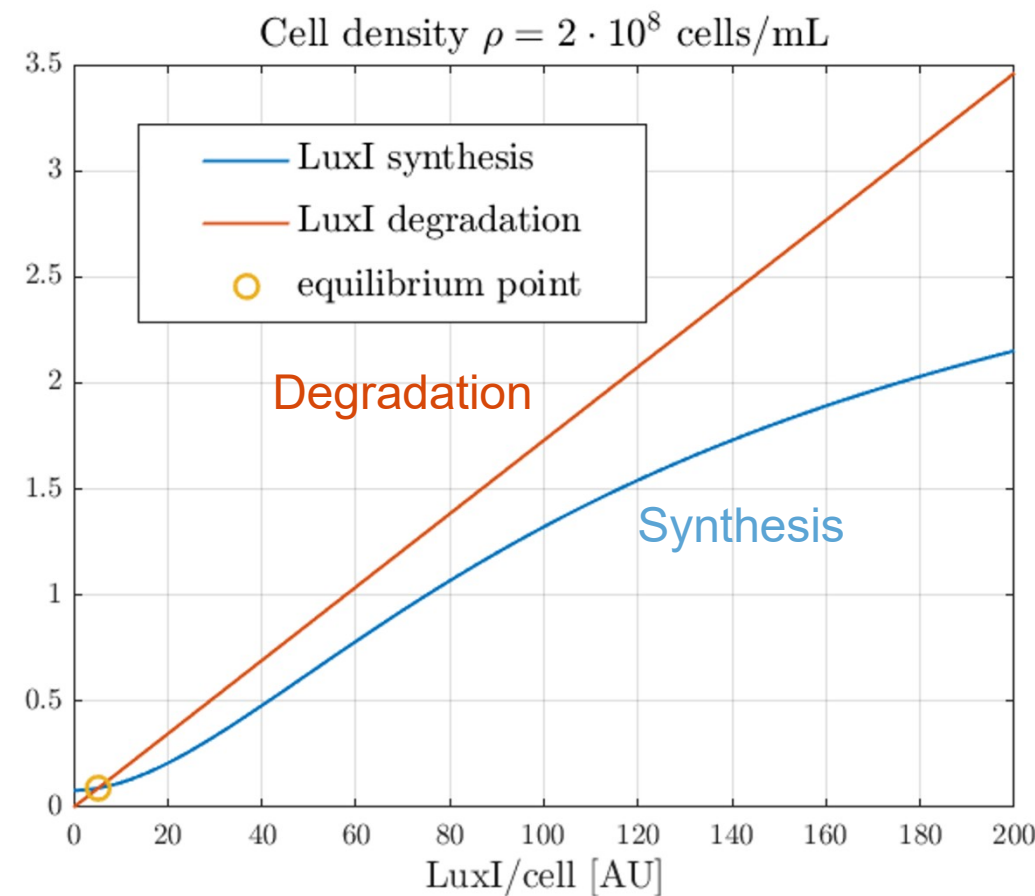


3. Equilibria Analysis

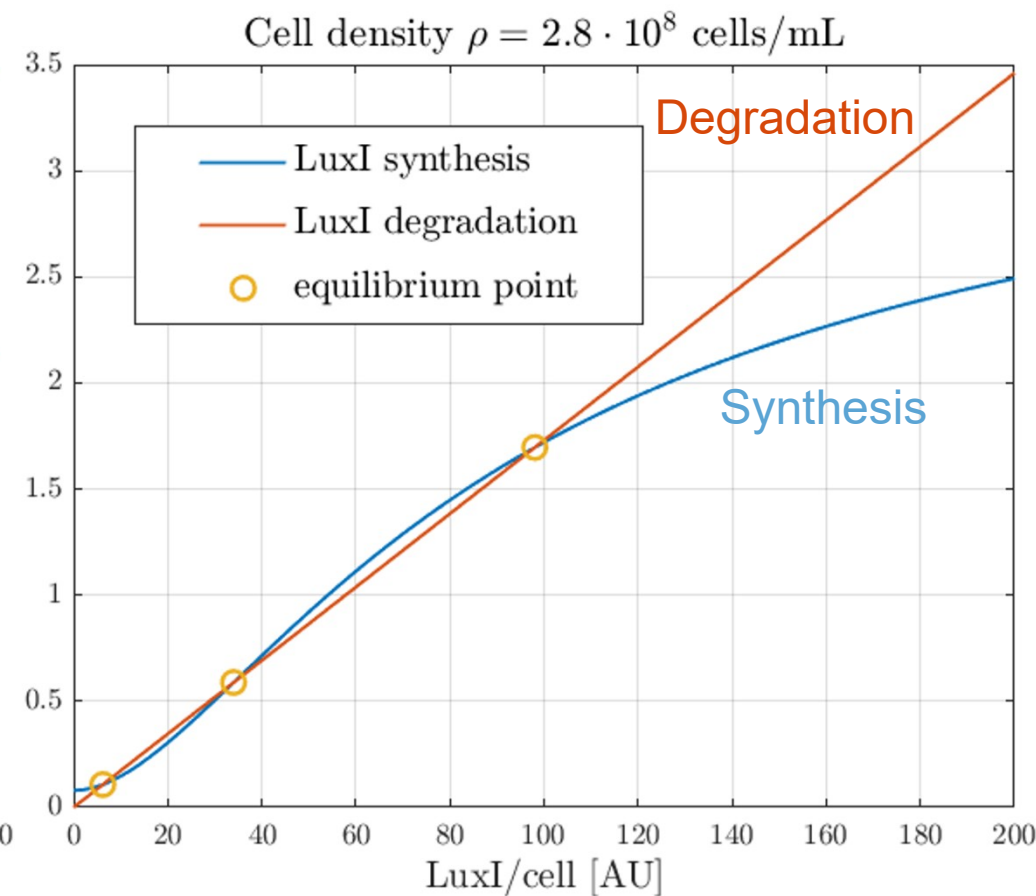
intr. autoinducer
synthase
 ρ_2 = receptor

$$\underbrace{\frac{dI}{dt} = \beta_{lux} + (\alpha_{lux} - \beta_{lux}) \frac{(\frac{K_1}{2}\chi I)^2}{(\frac{K_1}{2}\chi I)^2 + \frac{K_{lux}}{R_2^{TOT}}(1 + \frac{K_1}{2}\chi I)^2}}_{=synt_I} - \underbrace{\gamma_I I}_{=deg_I} = 0 \quad \text{where} \quad \chi = \frac{\alpha_I(\frac{K_{15}\rho V_I}{1-\rho V_I} + \gamma_{L_e})}{(\frac{K_{15}\rho V_I}{1-\rho V_I} + \gamma_{L_e})\gamma_L + K_{15}\gamma_{L_e}} \quad L \propto I$$

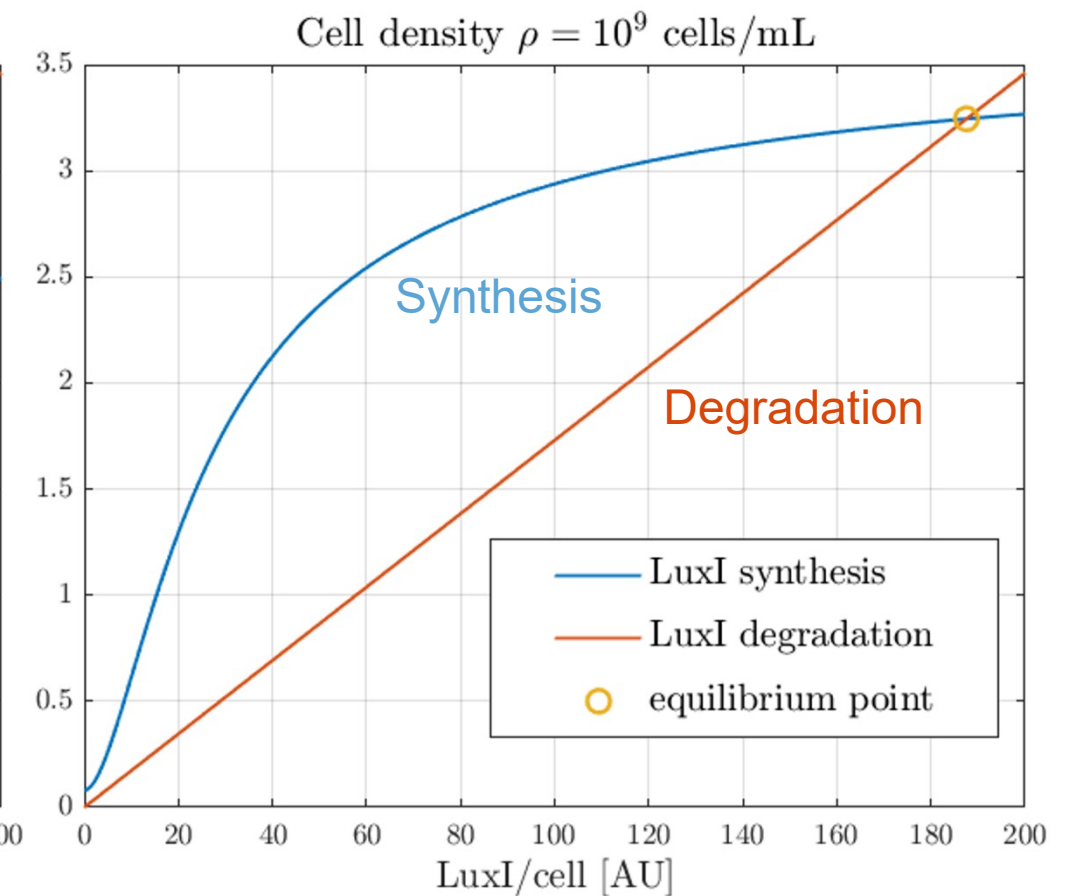
ρ = cell density



Low cell density ρ



Threshold cell density ρ



High cell density ρ

3. Bifurcation Diagram

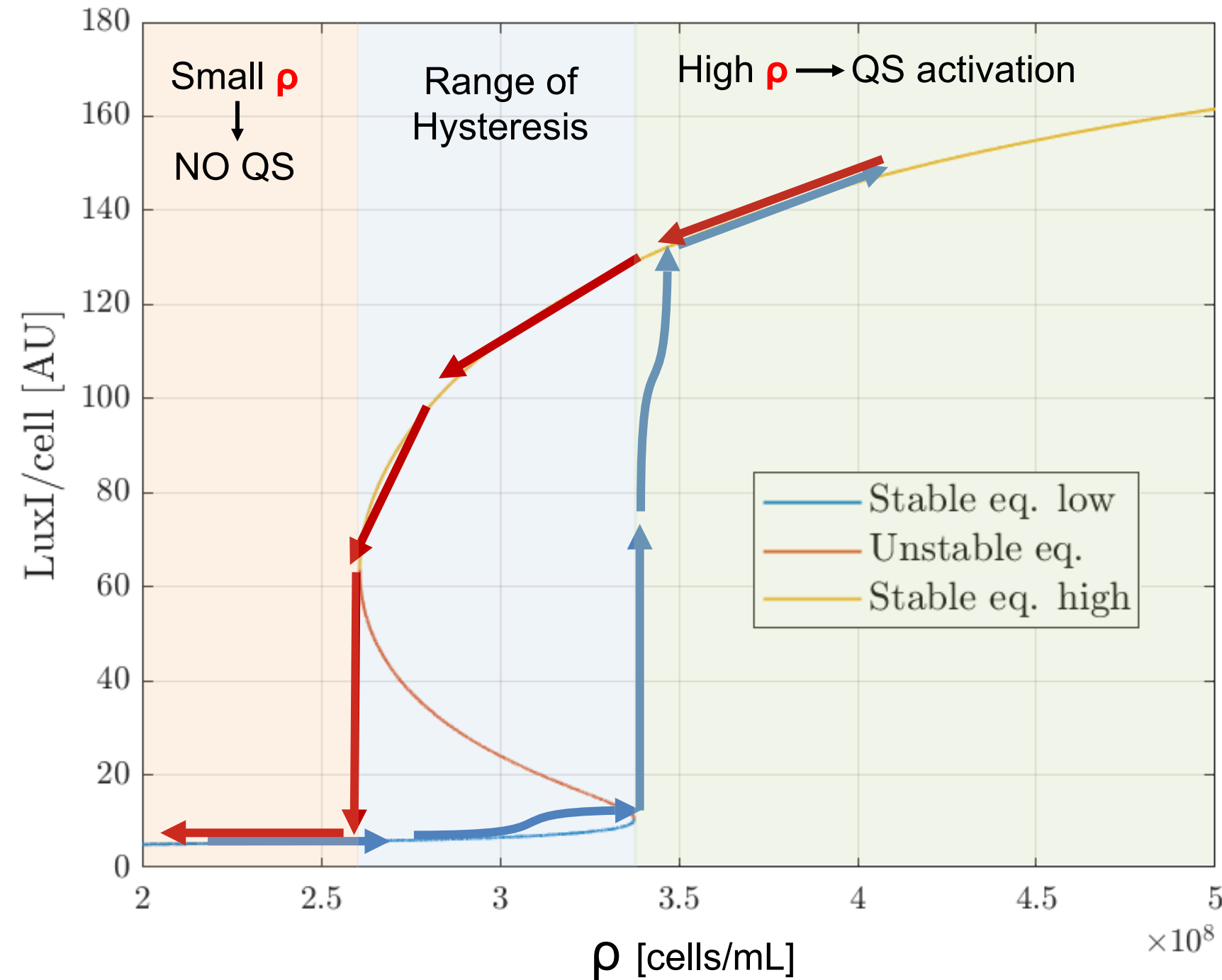
$$\underbrace{\frac{dI}{dt} = \beta_{lux} + (\alpha_{lux} - \beta_{lux}) \frac{(\frac{K_1}{2}\chi I)^2}{(\frac{K_1}{2}\chi I)^2 + \frac{K_{lux}}{R_2^{TOT}}(1 + \frac{K_1}{2}\chi I)^2}}_{=synt_I} - \underbrace{\gamma I}_{=deg_I} = 0$$

where

$$\chi = \frac{\alpha_I(\frac{K_{15}\rho V_I}{1-\rho V_I} + \gamma_{Le})}{(\frac{K_{15}\rho V_I}{1-\rho V_I} + \gamma_{Le})\gamma_L + K_{15}\gamma_{Le}}$$

$$L \propto I$$

ρ = cell density



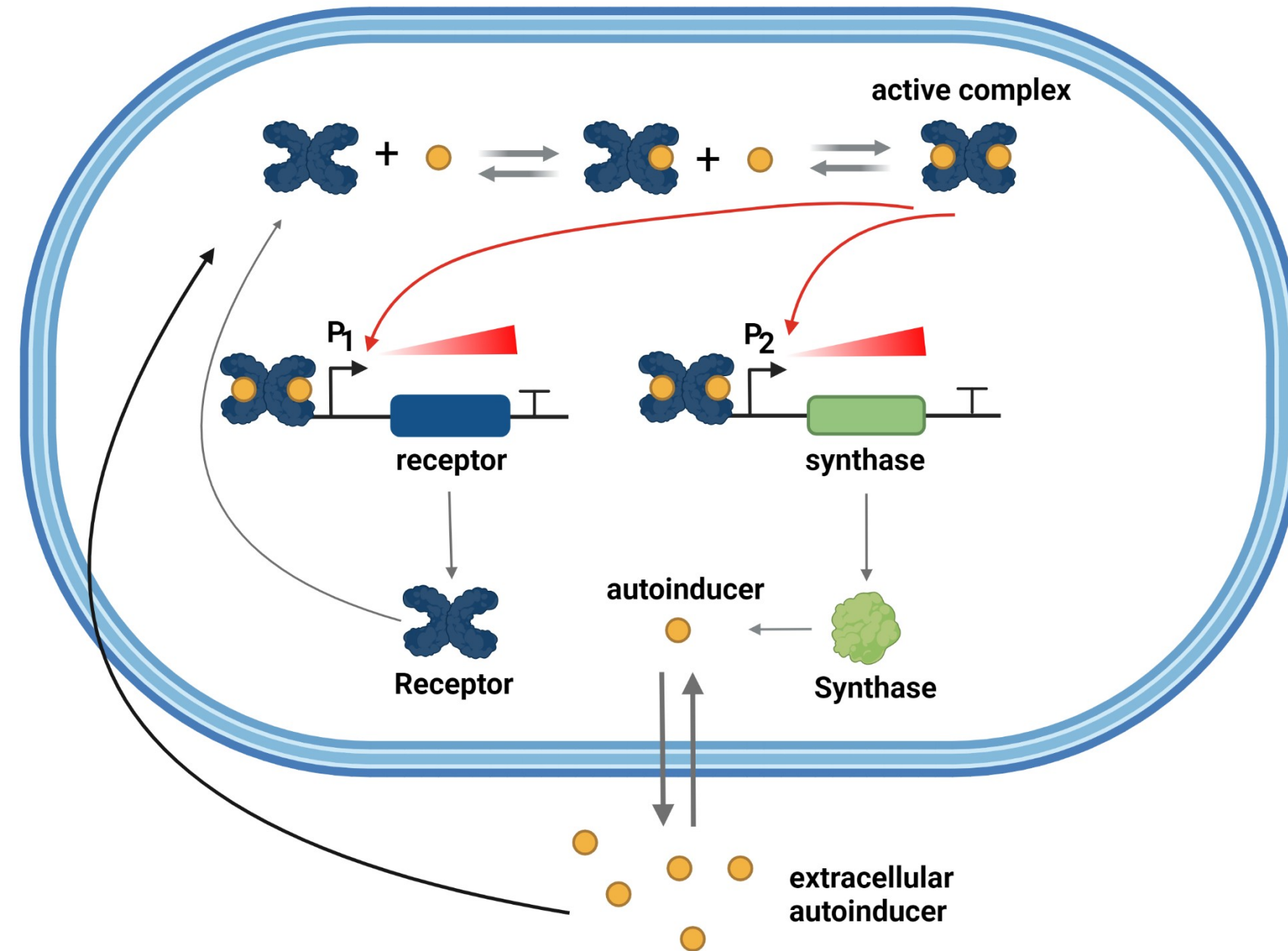
RESULTS

- ✓ Bistability
- ✓ Hysteretic behavior



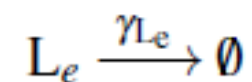
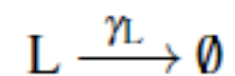
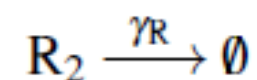
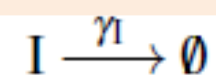
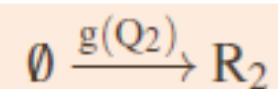
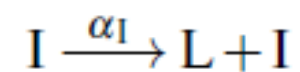
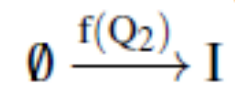
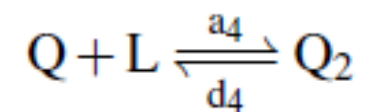
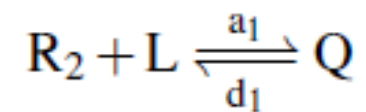
- History dependent
- Disturbance rejection
- **Robustness**

3. Two interlocked Feedbacks



3. Double-feedback Model

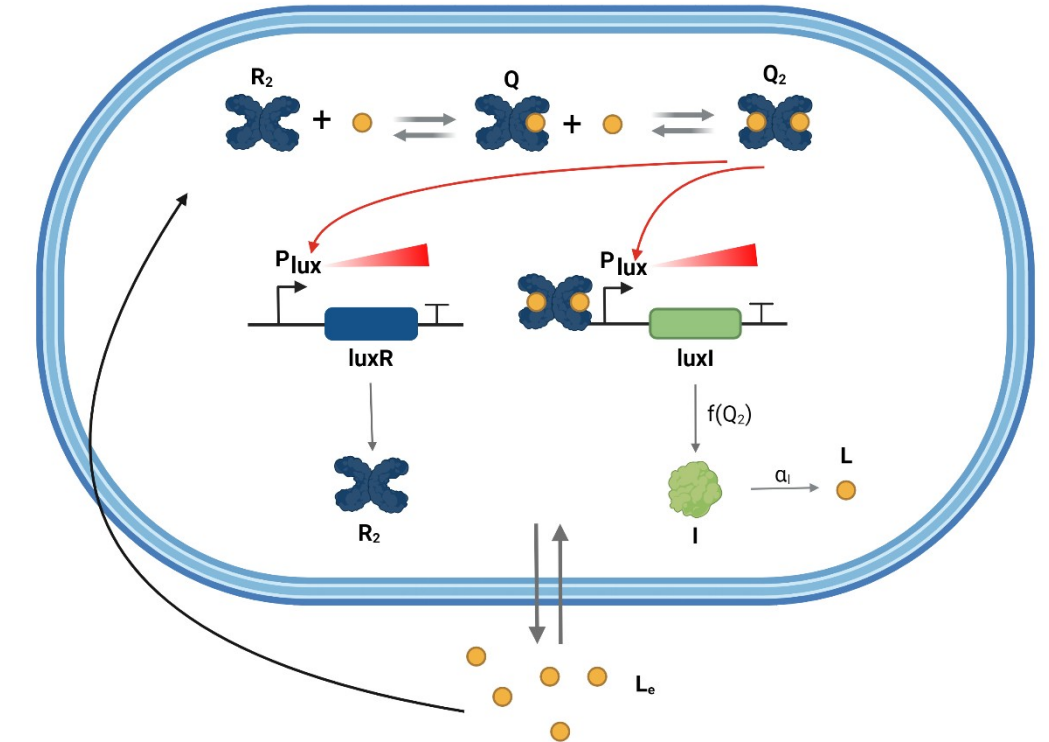
Reactions



Conservation of mass

$$R_2^{TOT} = R_2 + Q + Q_2$$

$$L^{TOT} = L + Q + 2Q_2$$



Model

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \beta_{lux} + \frac{\alpha_{lux} - \beta_{lux}}{1 + \frac{K_{lux}}{O_2}} - \gamma_I I$$

$$\frac{dR_2}{dt} = \beta_R + \frac{\alpha_R}{1 + \frac{K_R}{Q_2}} - \gamma_R R_2 + d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L$$

$$\frac{dL}{dt} = \alpha_l I - \gamma_L L + d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L + d_4 Q_2 - K_4 d_4 Q L + K_{15} (L_e - L)$$

$$\frac{dL_e}{dt} = K_{15} \frac{NV_I}{V - NV_I} (L - L_e) - \gamma_{L_e} L_e$$

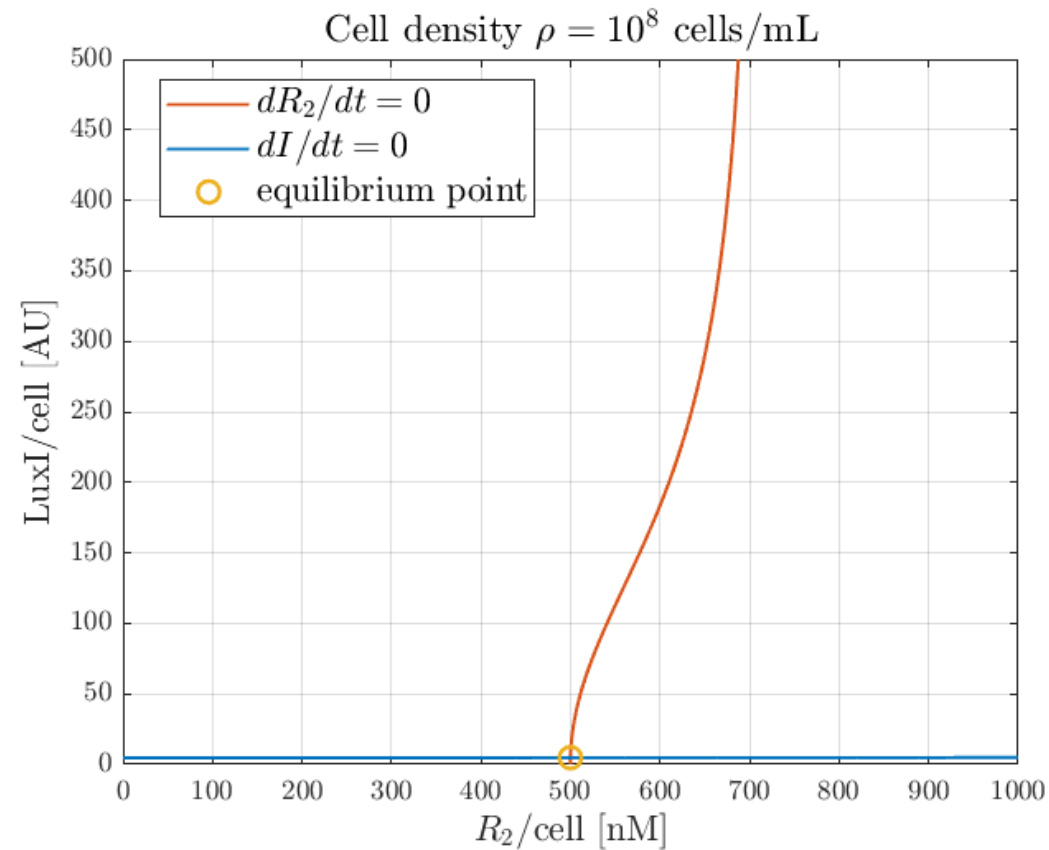
$$\frac{dQ}{dt} = K_1 d_1 R_2 L - d_1 Q - K_4 d_4 Q L + d_4 Q_2$$

$$\frac{dQ_2}{dt} = K_4 d_4 Q L - d_4 Q_2$$

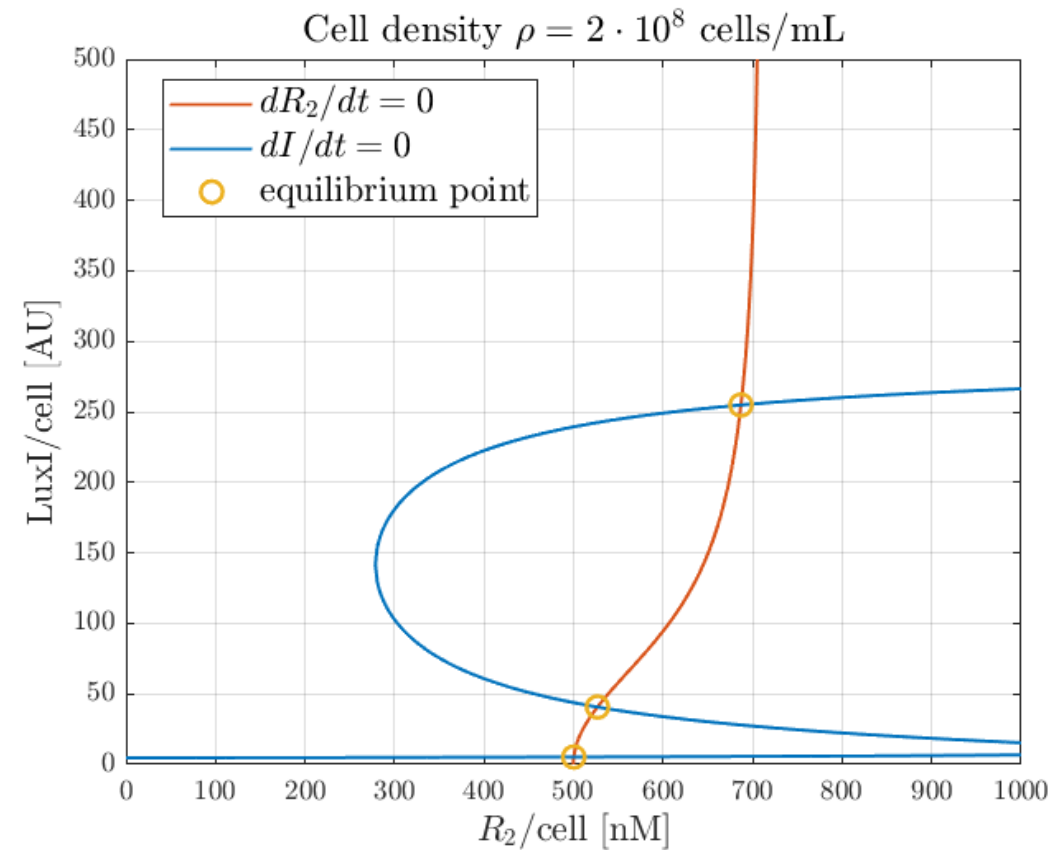
3. Equilibrium analysis

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \beta_{lux} + \frac{\alpha_{lux} - \beta_{lux}}{1 + \frac{4K_{lux}}{K_1^2 \chi^2 I^2 R_2}} - \gamma_I I = 0$$
$$\frac{dR_2}{dt} = \beta_R + \frac{\alpha_R}{1 + \frac{4K_R}{K_1^2 \chi^2 I^2 R_2}} - \gamma_R R_2 = 0$$

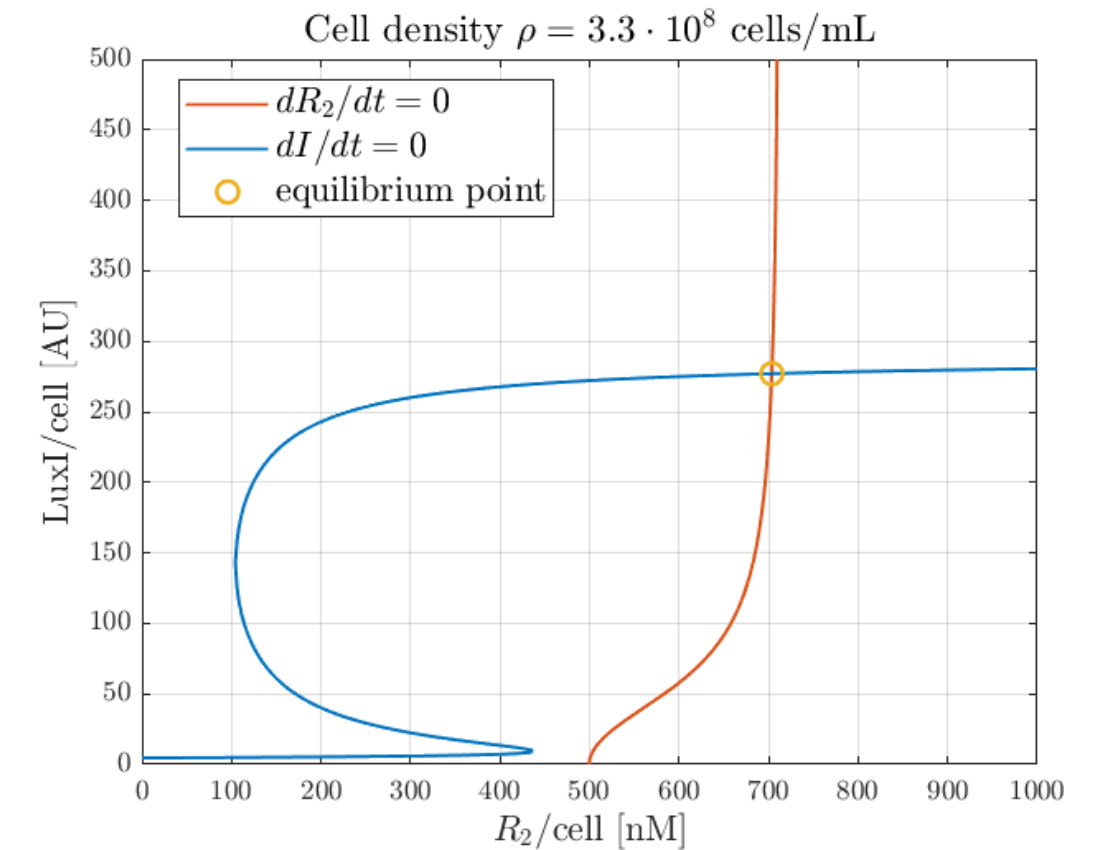
intr. autoinducer
synthase
₂ = receptor



Low cell density

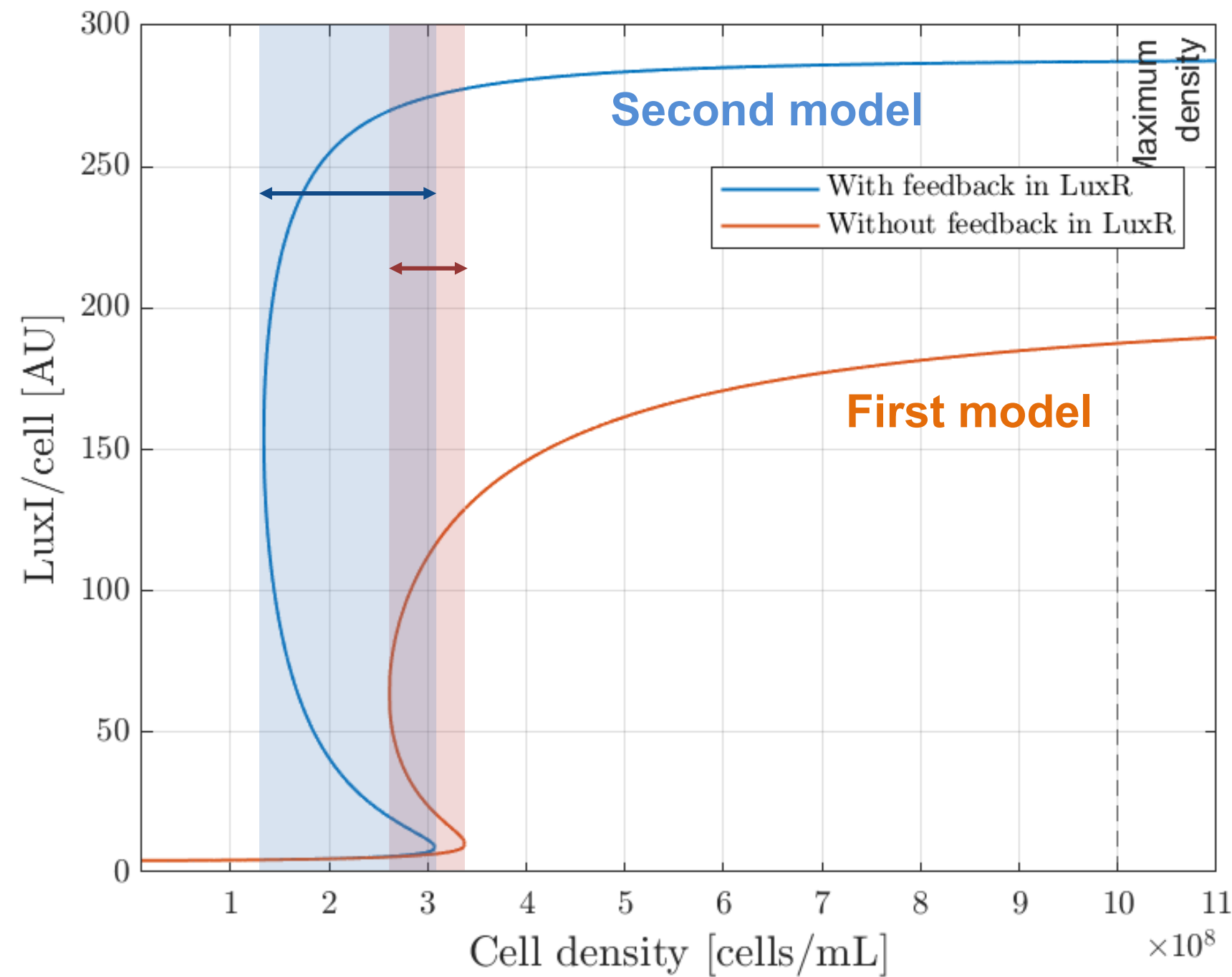


Threshold cell density



High cell density

3. Bifurcation Diagram



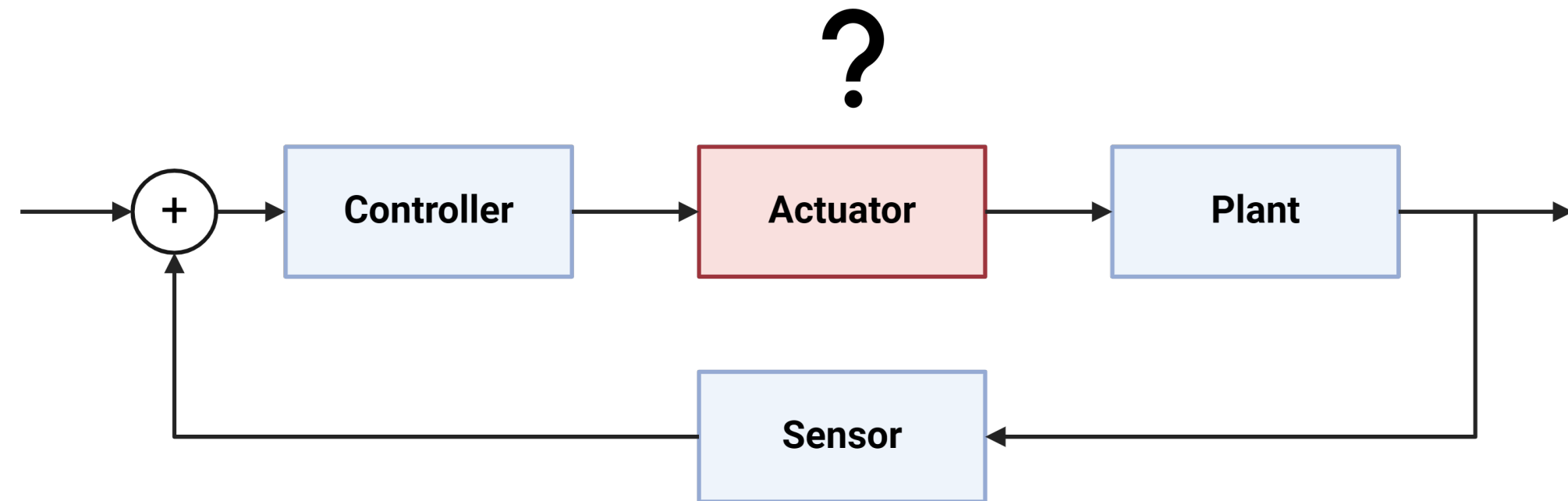
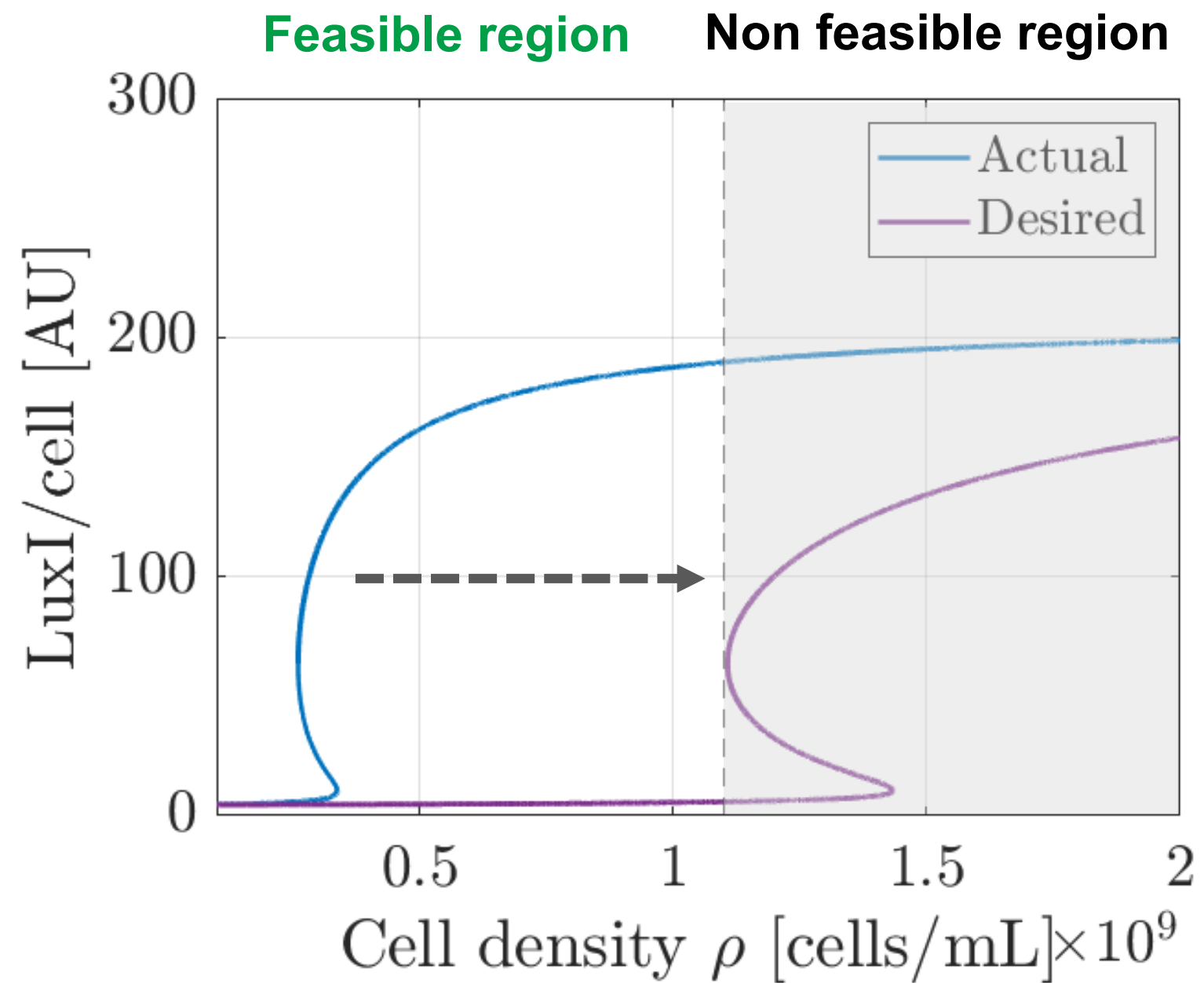
$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \beta_{lux} + \frac{\alpha_{lux} - \beta_{lux}}{1 + \frac{4K_{lux}}{K_1^2 \chi^2 I^2 R_2}} - \gamma I = 0$$
$$\frac{dR_2}{dt} = \beta_R + \frac{\alpha_R}{1 + \frac{4K_R}{K_1^2 \chi^2 I^2 R_2}} - \gamma_R R_2 = 0$$



RESULTS

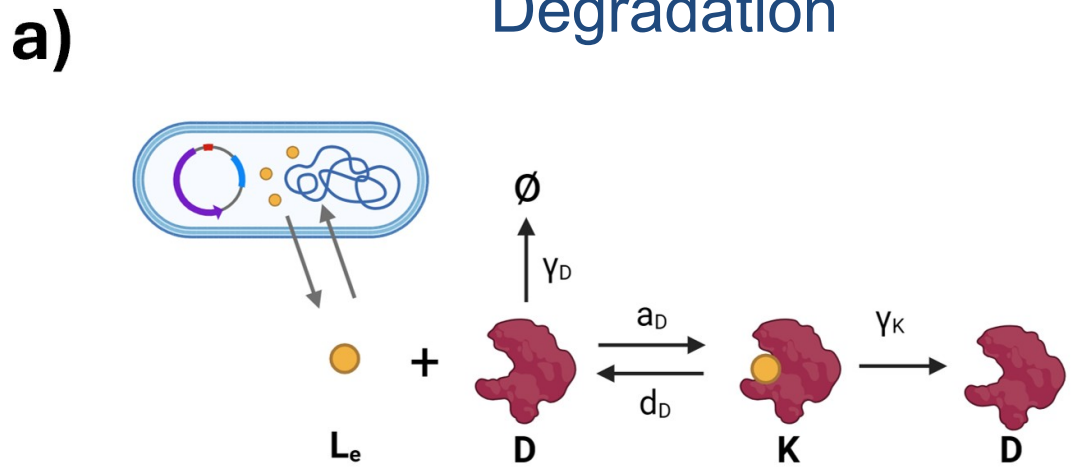
- ✓ **Robustness** increases due to enhance of the range of hysteresis
- ✓ Maximum steady state value increases
- ✓ Early activation of QS

3. From Systems to “Feedback Control”

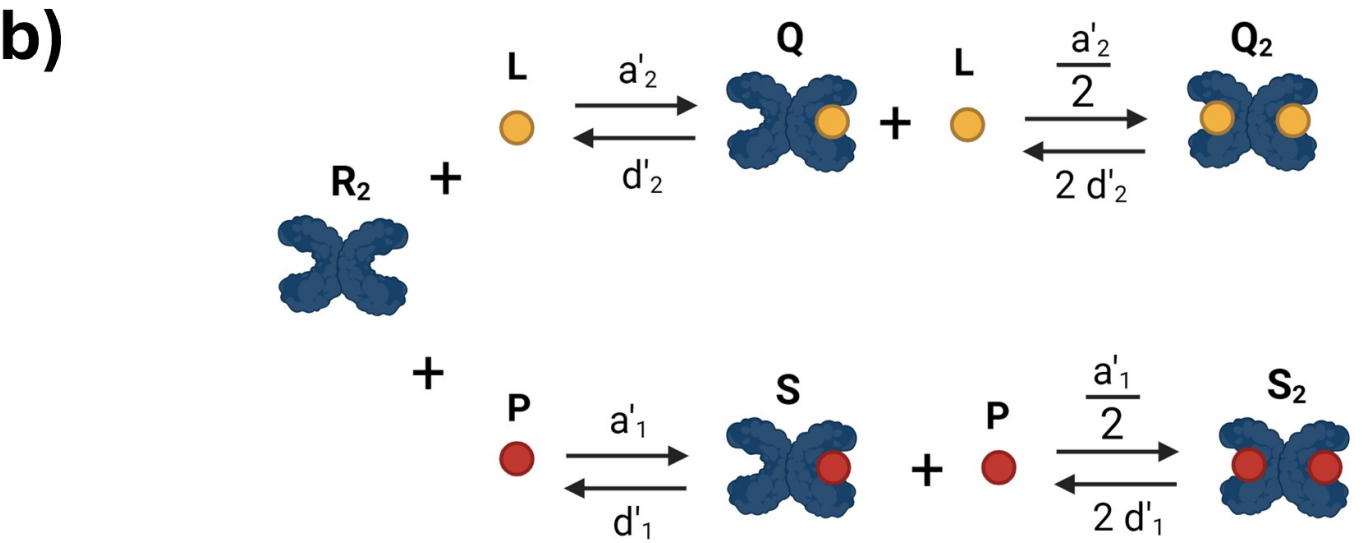


4. QS Inhibition: Actuators

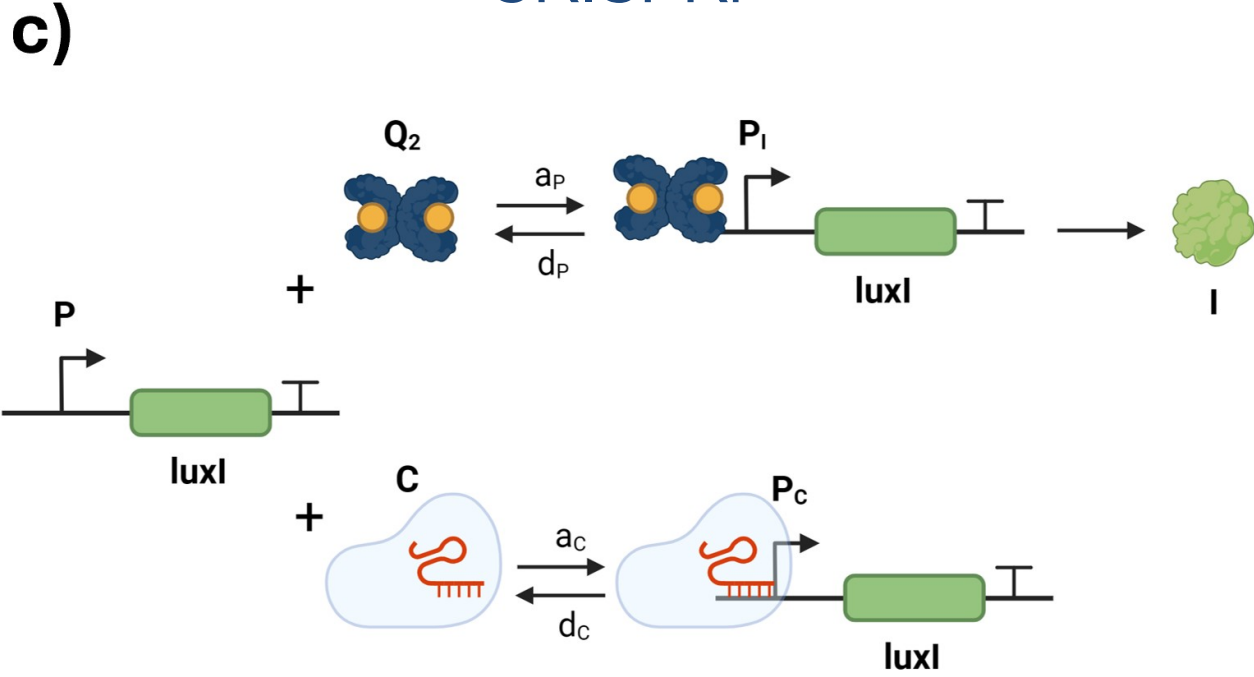
Extracellular Signal Molecule Degradation



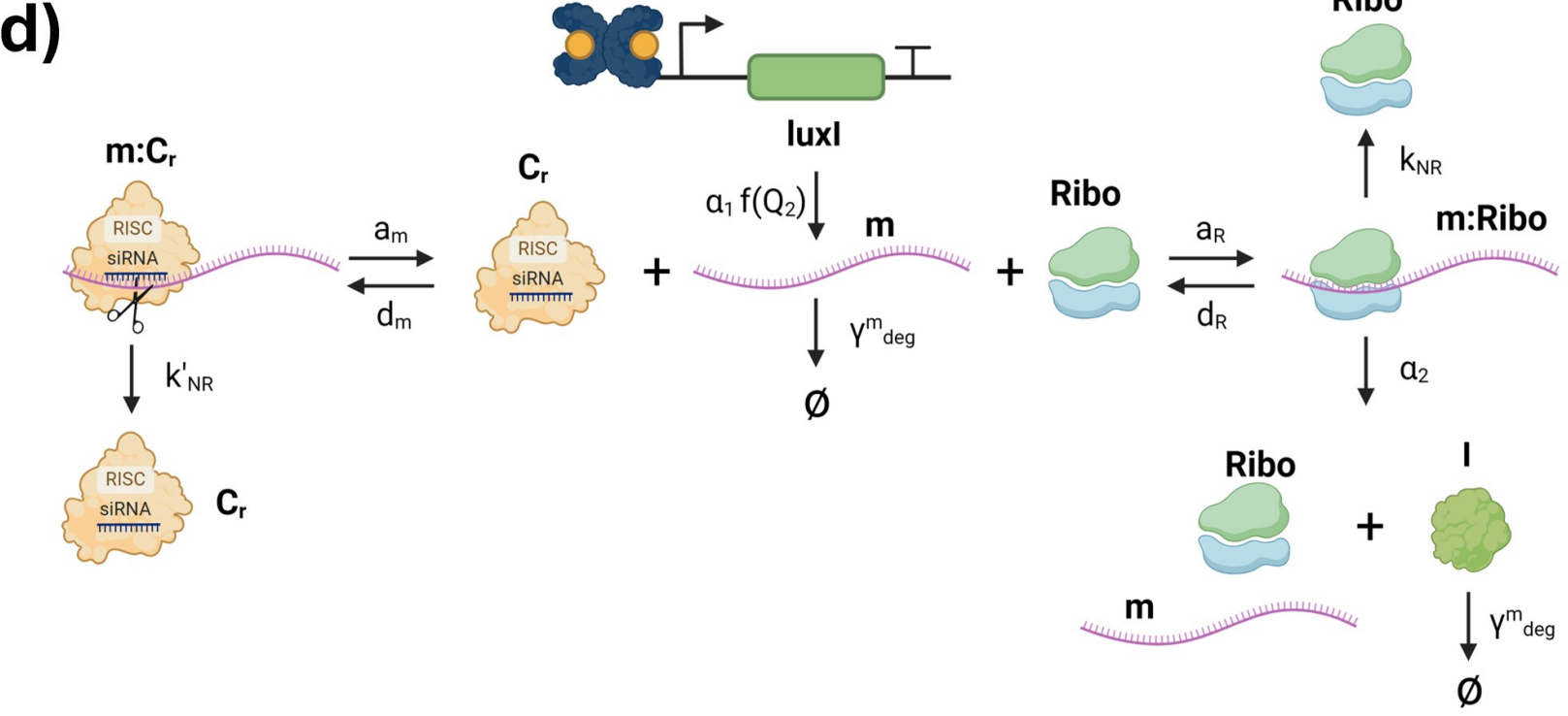
Receptor Sequestration



CRISPRi

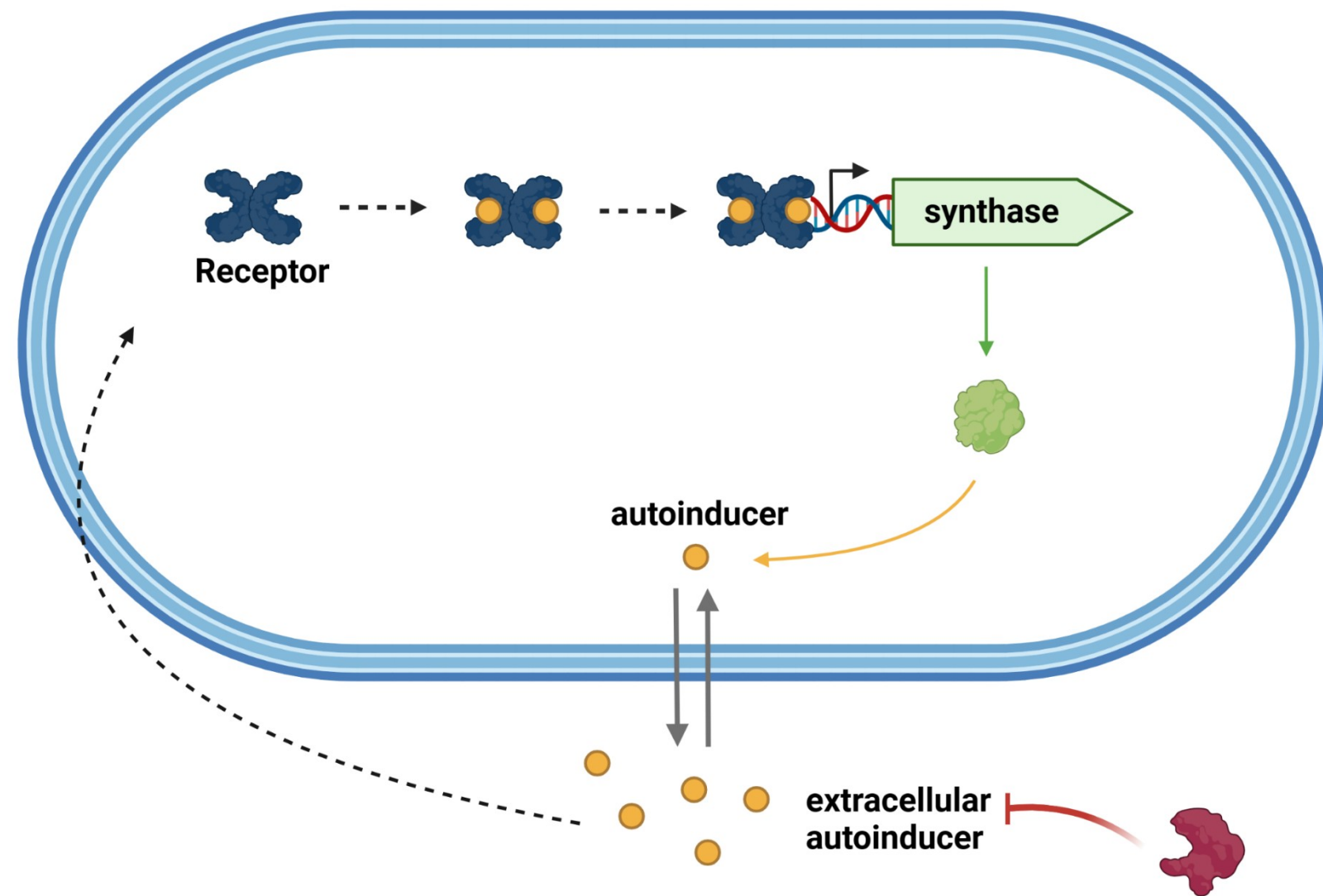


RNAi



4. QS Inhibition

1. Extracellular Signal Molecule Degradation

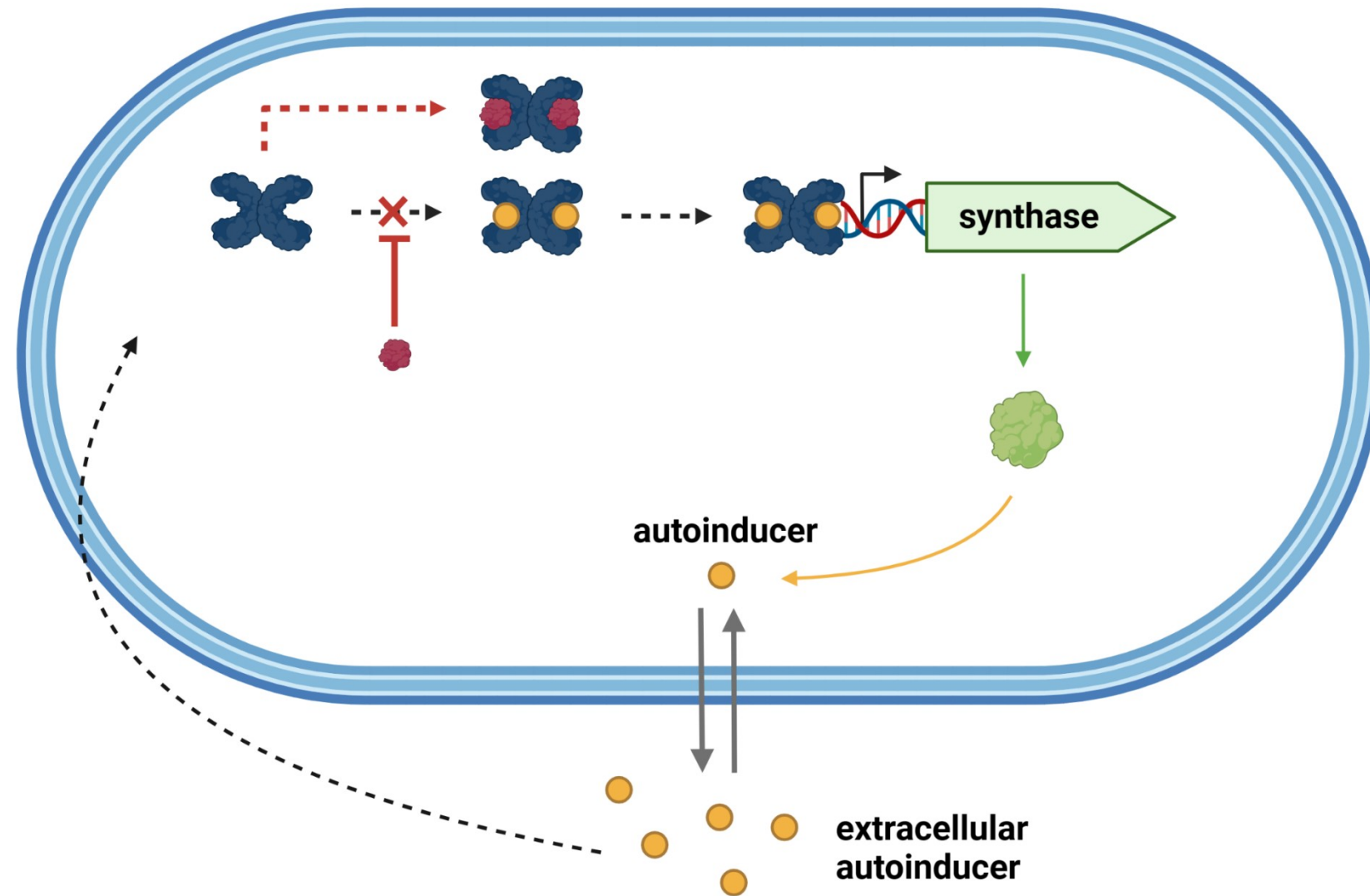


Increase of degradation rate of extracellular autoinducer

$$\begin{aligned}
 \frac{dI}{dt} &= \beta_{lux} + \frac{\alpha_{lux} - \beta_{lux}}{1 + \frac{K_{lux}}{Q_2}} - \gamma_I I \\
 \frac{dR_2}{dt} &= \beta_R + \frac{\alpha_R}{1 + \frac{K_R}{Q_2}} - \gamma_R R_2 + d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L \\
 \frac{dL}{dt} &= \alpha_I I - \gamma_L L + d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L + d_4 Q_2 - K_4 d_4 Q L + K_{15} (L_e - L) \\
 \frac{dL_e}{dt} &= K_{15} \frac{NV_I}{V - NV_I} (L - L_e) - \gamma_{L_e} L_e \\
 \frac{dQ}{dt} &= K_1 d_1 R_2 L - d_1 Q - K_4 d_4 Q L + d_4 Q_2 \\
 \frac{dQ_2}{dt} &= K_4 d_4 Q L - d_4 Q_2
 \end{aligned}$$

4. QS Inhibition

2. Receptor Sequestration



Decrease the association rate among the receptor and the autoinducer

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \beta_{lux} + \frac{\alpha_{lux} - \beta_{lux}}{1 + \frac{K_{lux}}{Q_2}} - \gamma_I I$$

$$\frac{dR_2}{dt} = \beta_R + \frac{\alpha_R}{1 + \frac{K_R}{Q_2}} - \gamma_R R_2 + d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L$$

$$\frac{dL}{dt} = \alpha_I I - \gamma_L L + d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L + d_4 Q_2 - K_4 d_4 Q L + K_{15} (L_e - L)$$

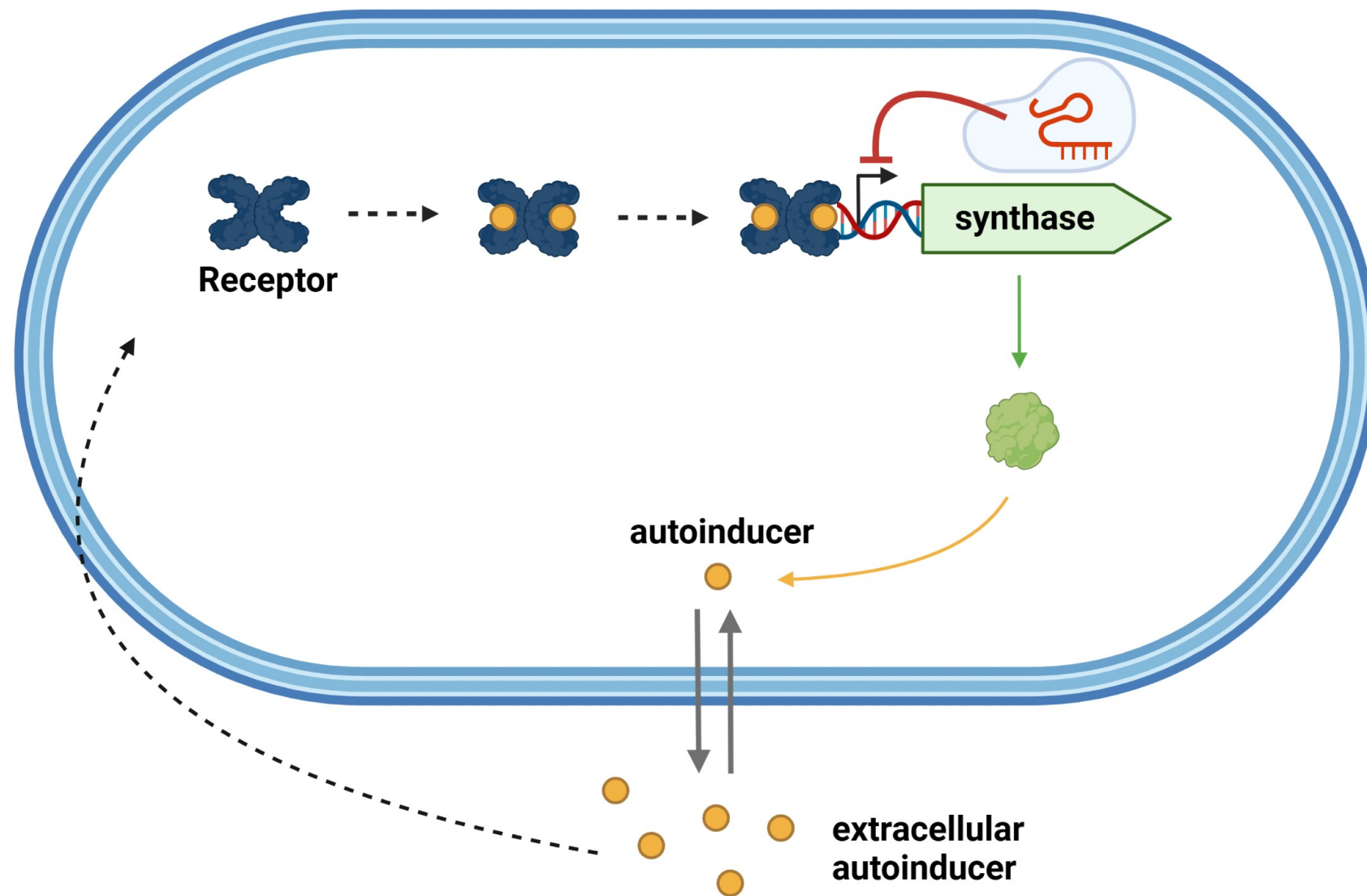
$$\frac{dL_e}{dt} = K_{15} \frac{NV_I}{V - NV_I} (L - L_e) - \gamma_{L_e} L_e$$

$$\frac{dQ}{dt} = K_1 d_1 R_2 L - d_1 Q - K_4 d_4 Q L + d_4 Q_2$$

$$\frac{dQ_2}{dt} = K_4 d_4 Q L - d_4 Q_2$$

4. QS Inhibition

3. Synthase synthesis reduction - CRISPRi



Reduce

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \beta_{lux} + \frac{\alpha_{lux} - \beta_{lux}}{1 + \frac{K_{lux}}{Q_2}} - \gamma_I I$$

$$\frac{dR_2}{dt} = \beta_R + \frac{\alpha_R}{1 + \frac{K_R}{Q_2}} - \gamma_R R_2 + d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L$$

$$\frac{dL}{dt} = \alpha_I I - \gamma_L L + d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L + d_4 Q_2 - K_4 d_4 Q L + K_{15} (L_e - L)$$

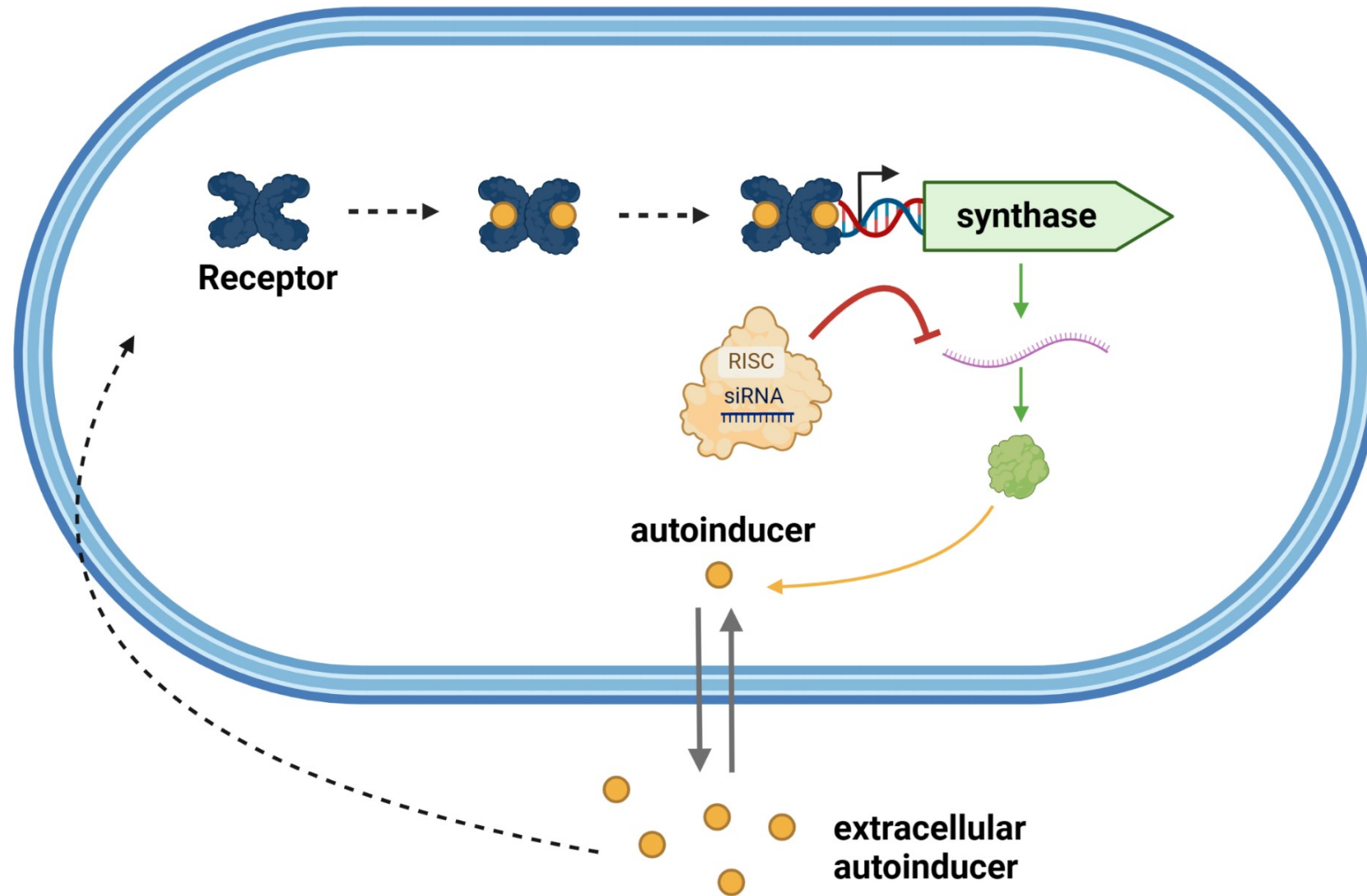
$$\frac{dL_e}{dt} = K_{15} \frac{NV_I}{V - NV_I} (L - L_e) - \gamma_{L_e} L_e$$

$$\frac{dQ}{dt} = K_1 d_1 R_2 L - d_1 Q - K_4 d_4 Q L + d_4 Q_2$$

$$\frac{dQ_2}{dt} = K_4 d_4 Q L - d_4 Q_2$$

4. QS Inhibition

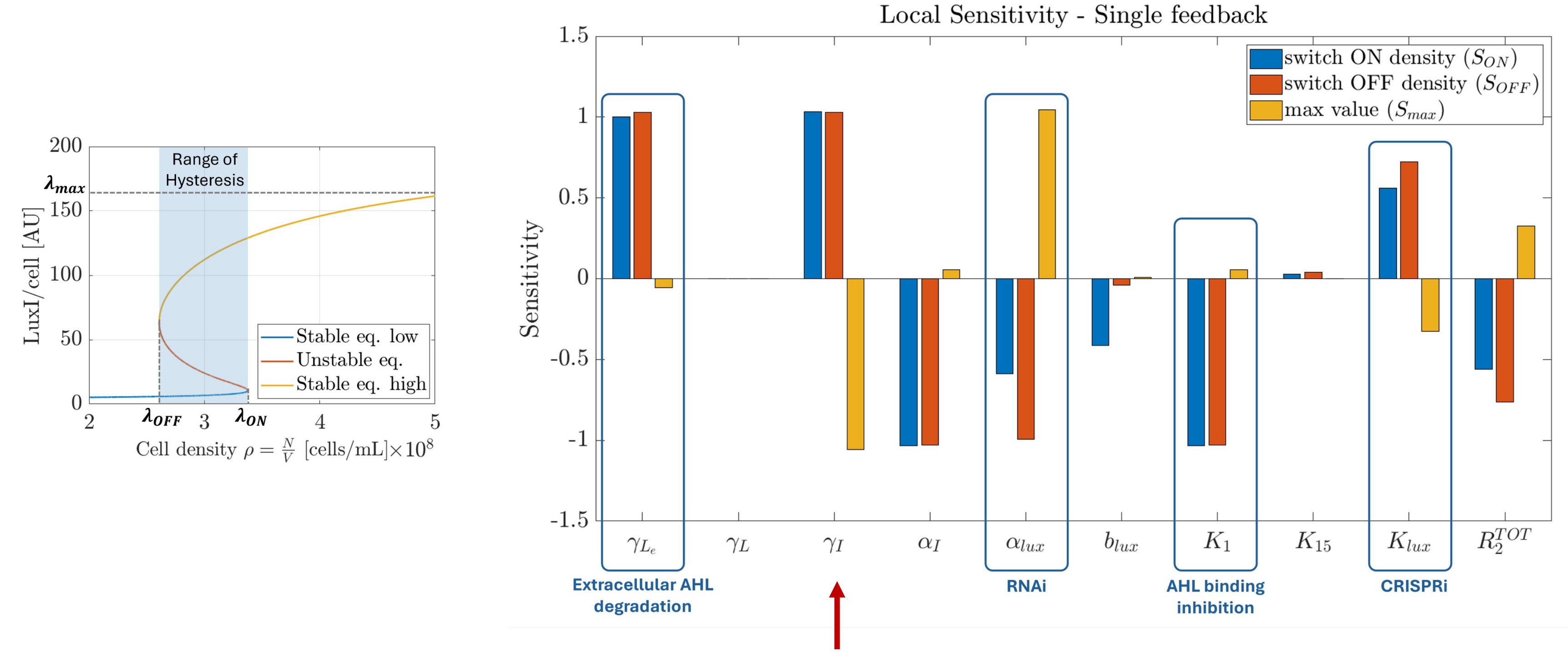
4. Post-transcriptional interference - RNAi



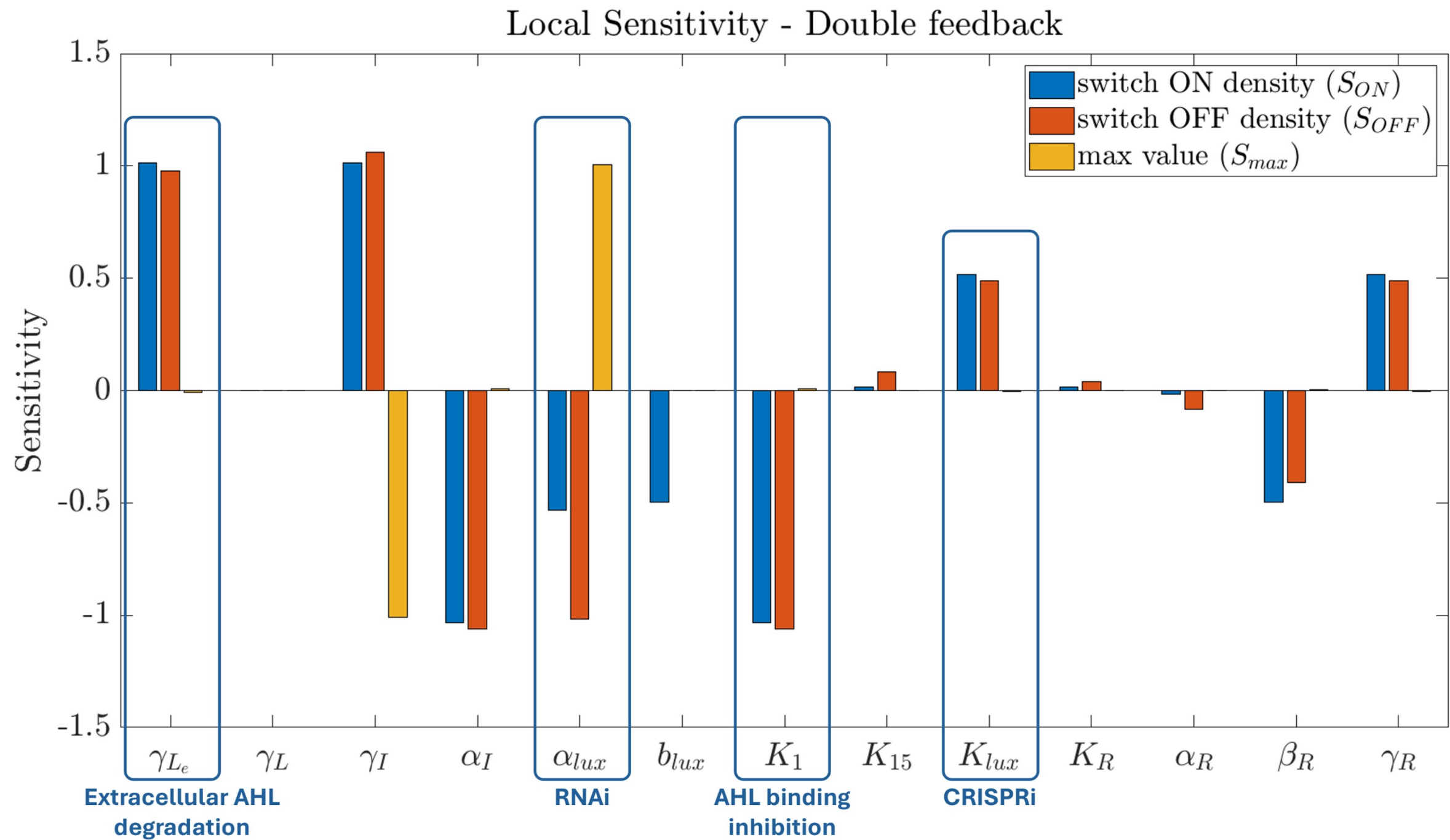
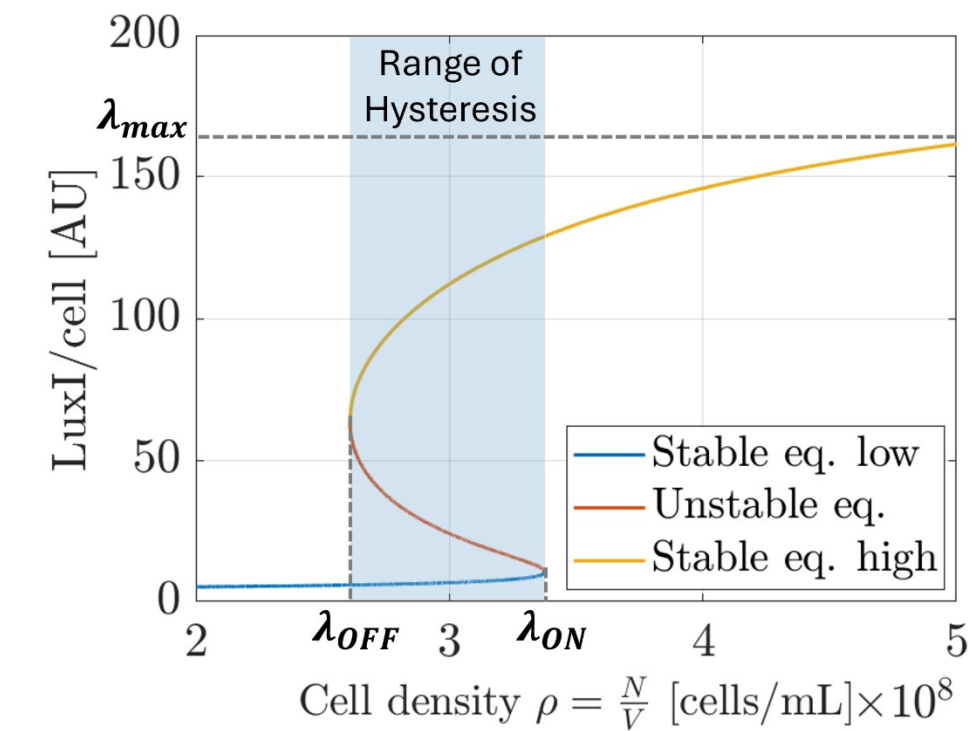
Reduce the synthesis rate of synthase

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{dI}{dt} &= \beta_{lux} + \frac{\alpha_{lux}}{1 + \frac{K_{lux}}{Q_2}} - \beta_{lux} - \gamma_I I \\ \frac{dR_2}{dt} &= \beta_R + \frac{\alpha_R}{1 + \frac{K_R}{Q_2}} - \gamma_R R_2 + d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L \\ \frac{dL}{dt} &= \alpha_I I - \gamma_L L + d_1 Q - K_1 d_1 R_2 L + d_4 Q_2 - K_4 d_4 Q L + K_{15} (L_e - L) \\ \frac{dL_e}{dt} &= K_{15} \frac{NV_I}{V - NV_I} (L - L_e) - \gamma_{L_e} L_e \\ \frac{dQ}{dt} &= K_1 d_1 R_2 L - d_1 Q - K_4 d_4 Q L + d_4 Q_2 \\ \frac{dQ_2}{dt} &= K_4 d_4 Q L - d_4 Q_2\end{aligned}$$

4. Sensitivity analysis – Single Feedback



4. Sensitivity analysis – Double Feedback



4. QS Inhibition

Inhibition strategies

1. Extracellular autoinducer degradation

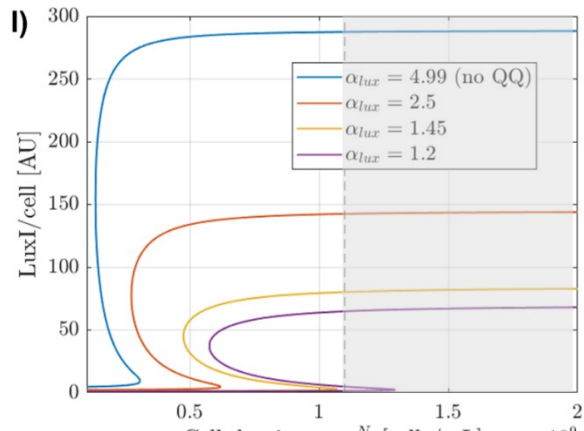
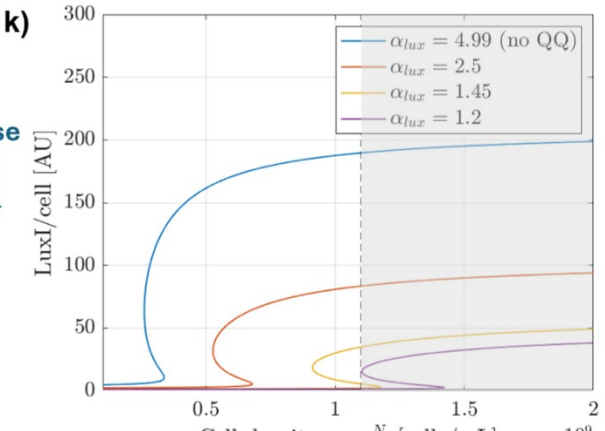
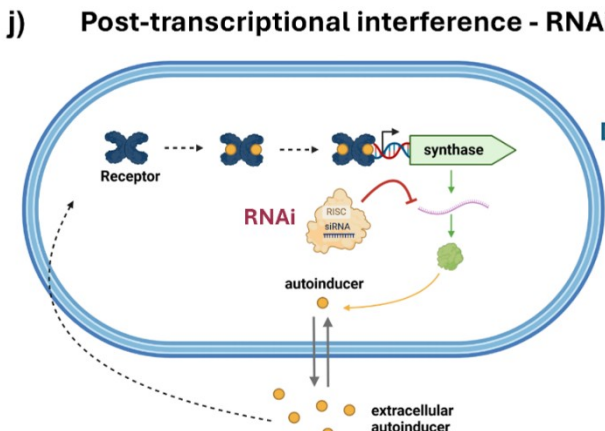
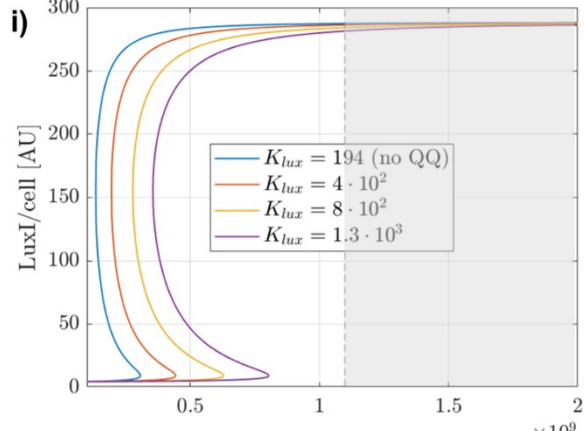
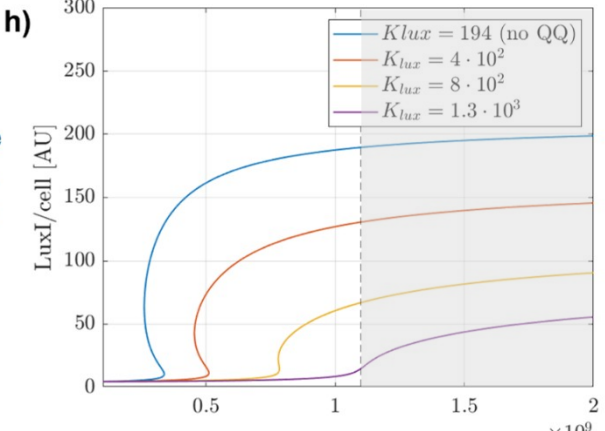
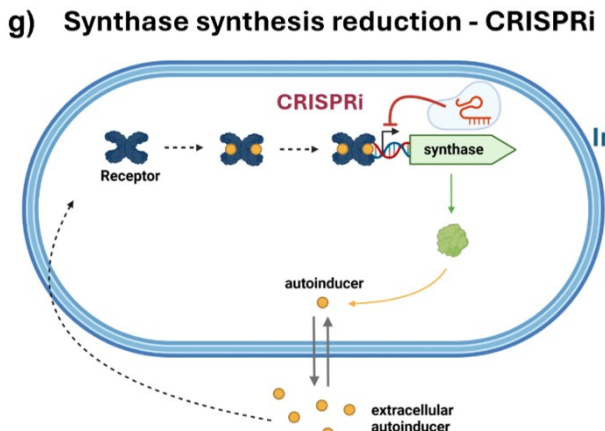
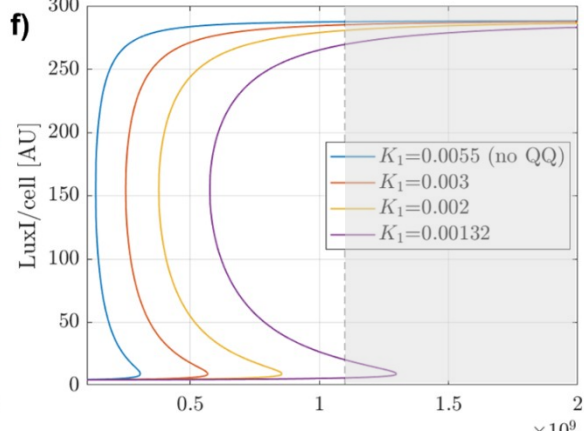
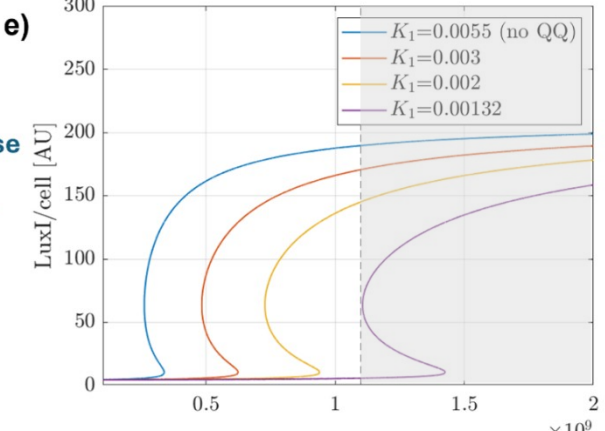
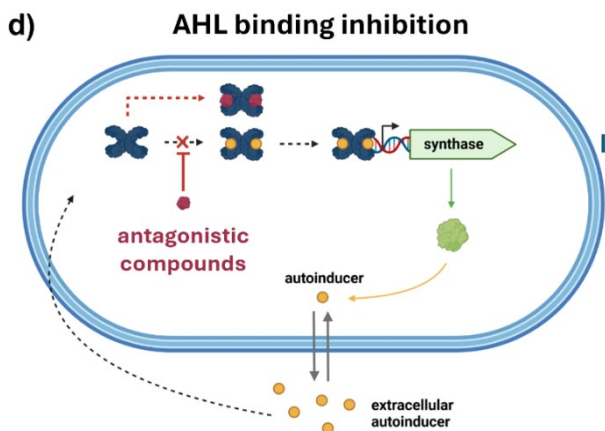
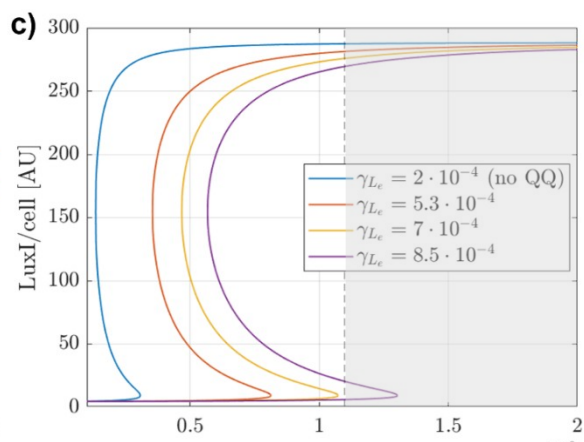
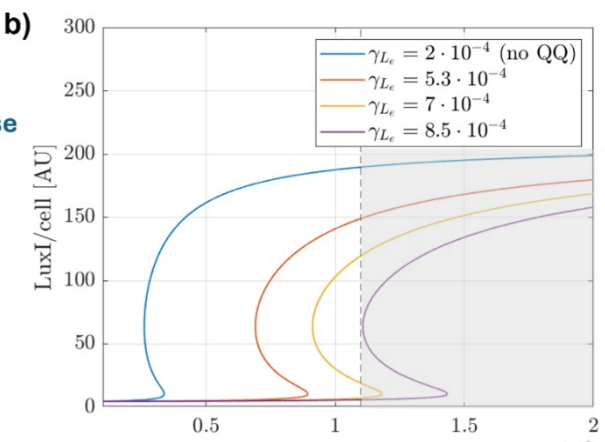
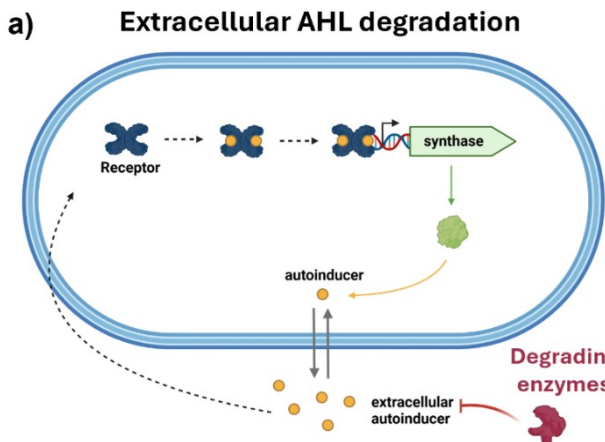
2. AHL binding inhibition via antagonistic compounds

3. Synthase synthesis reduction CRISPRi

3. Post-transcriptional interference - RNAi

Single-feedback

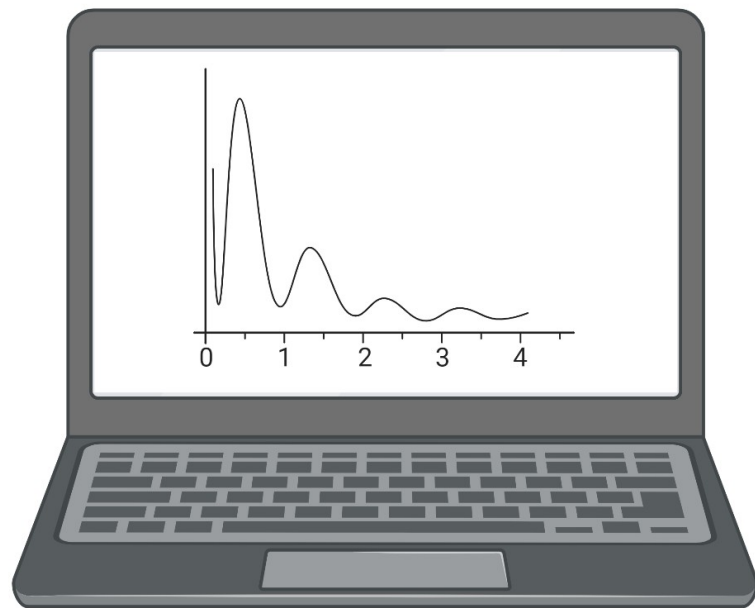
Double-feedback



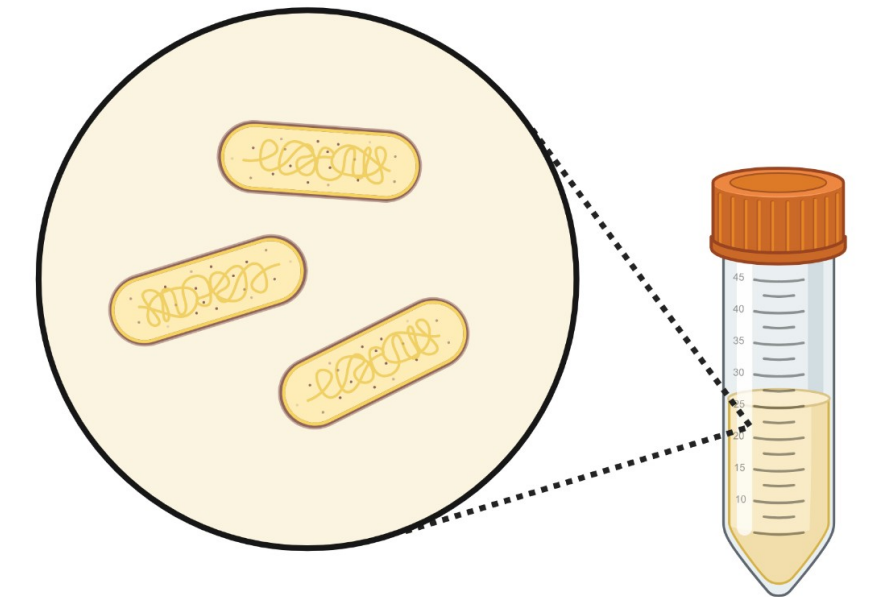
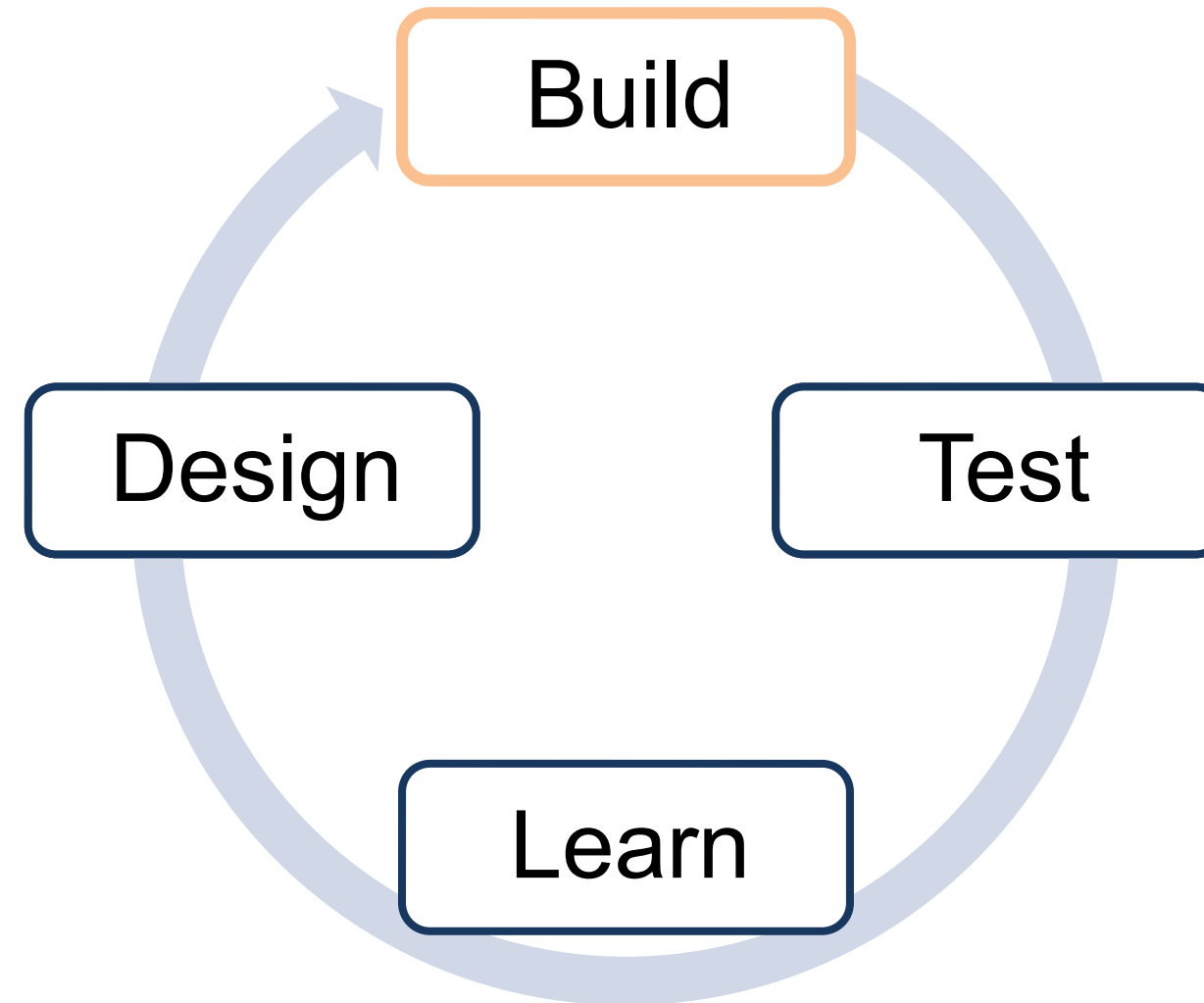
CONTRIBUTION

Comprehensive, model-driven evaluation of QS inhibition strategies to identify optimal QQ approaches

5. From simulation to experiments

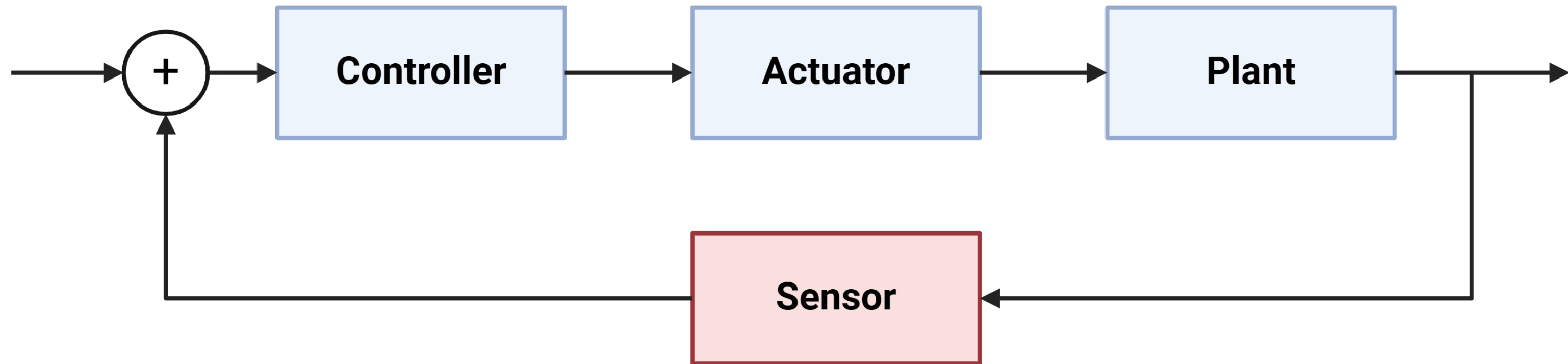


Systems biology

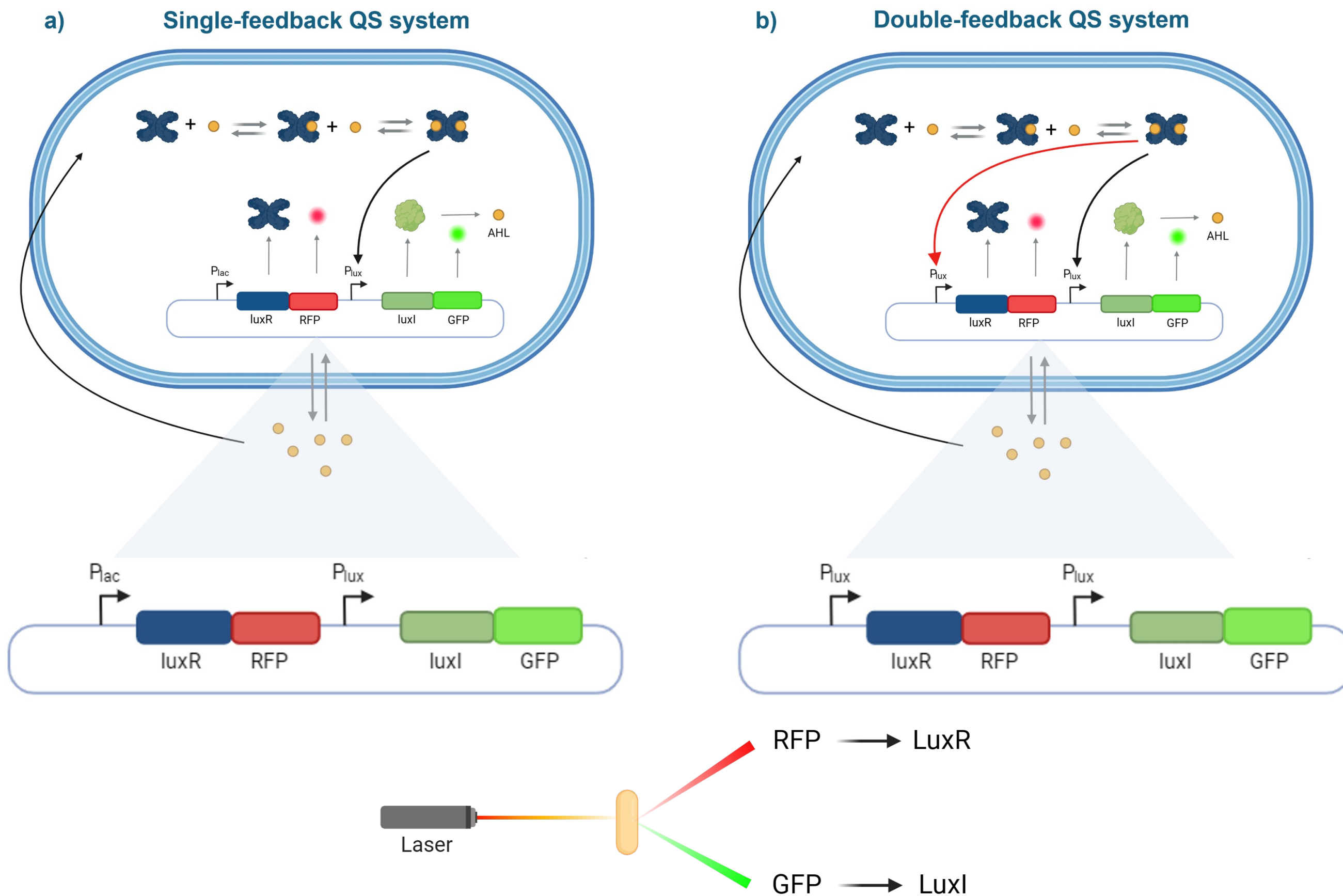


Synthetic biology

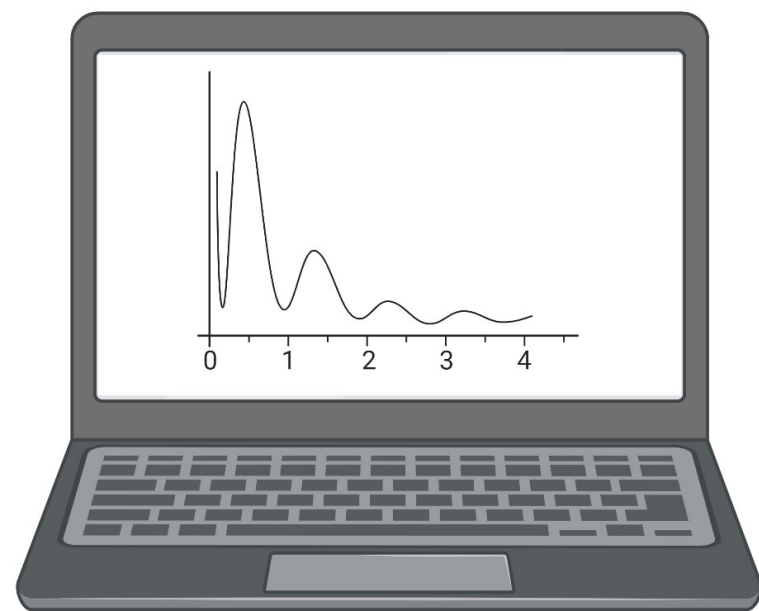
5. Engineering QS bacterial strains: Sensor



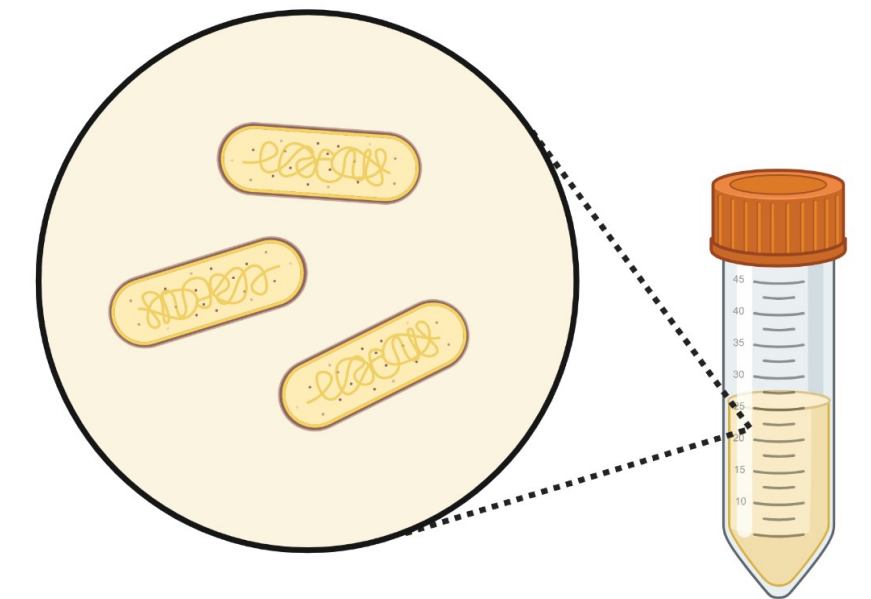
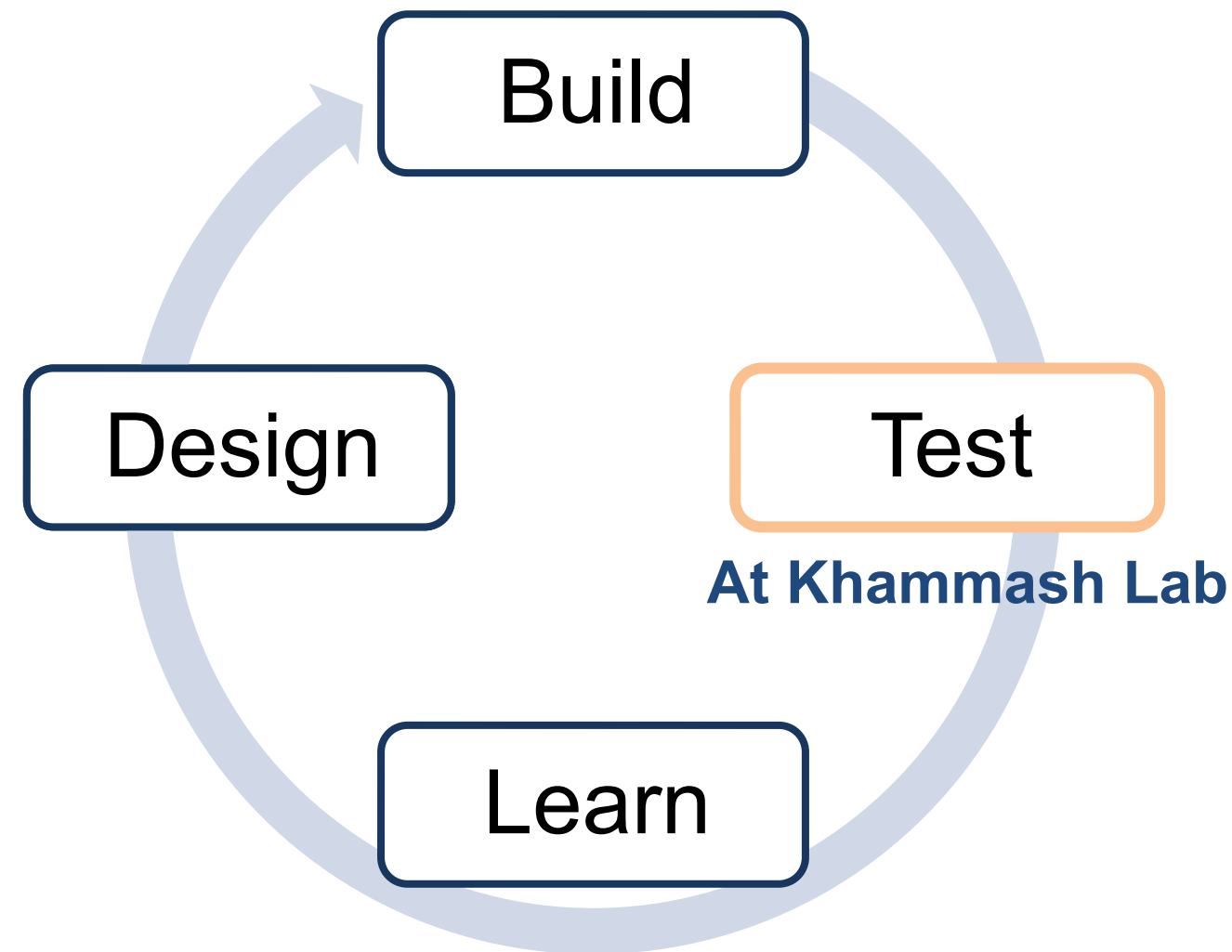
5. Engineering QS bacterial strains



5. Future Perspectives



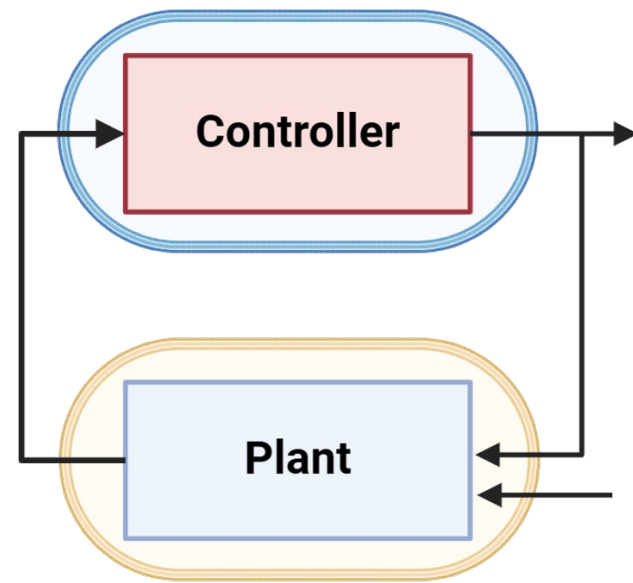
Systems biology



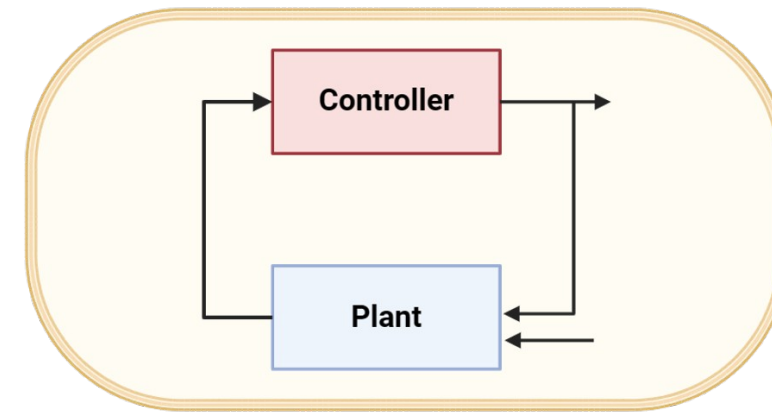
Synthetic biology

6. Future Perspectives

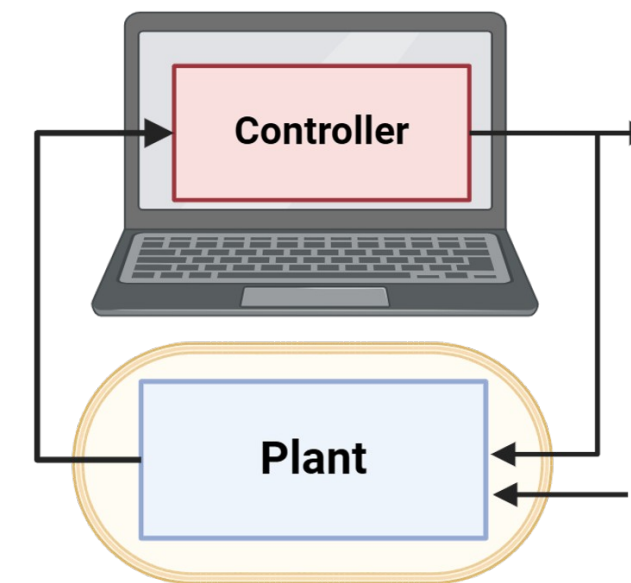
- ❑ **Feedback control** on the QS communication system



Out-cell

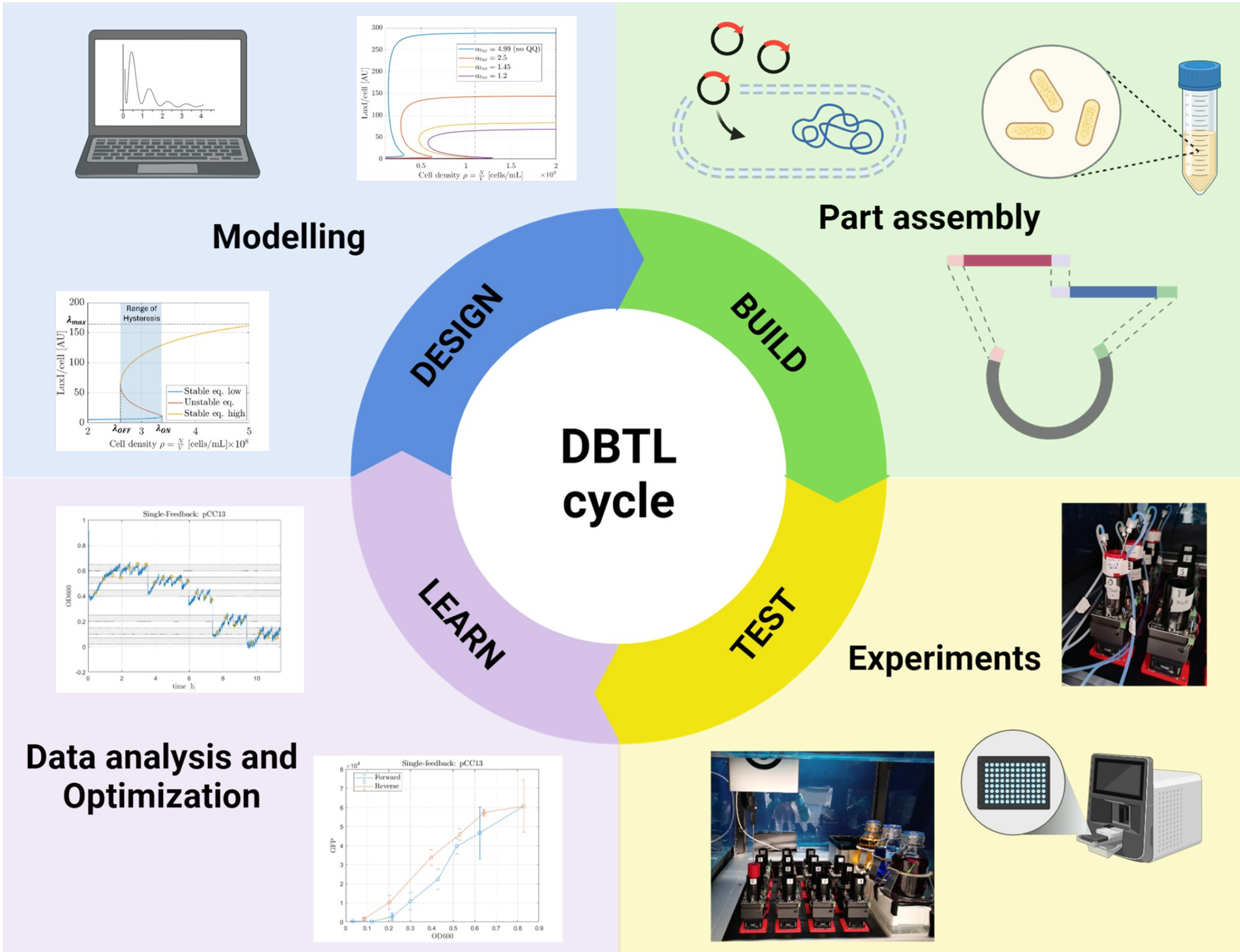


In-cell



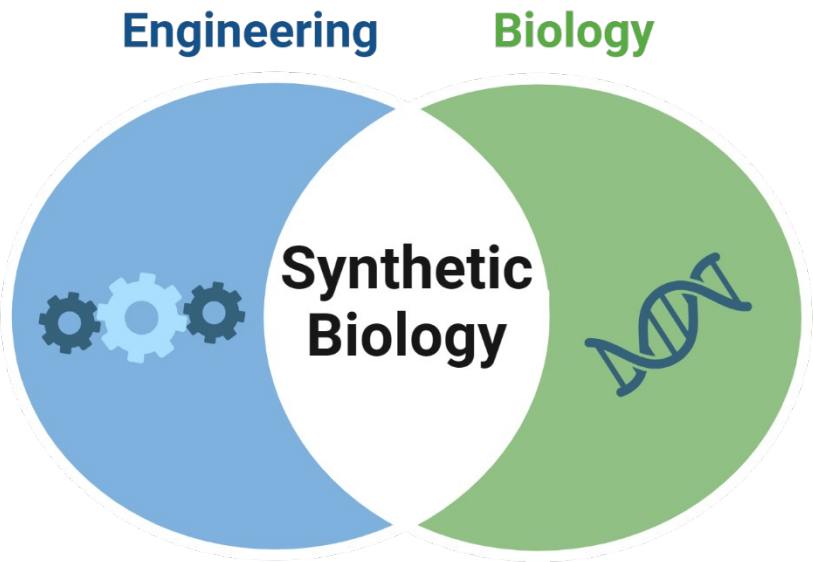
Cyber in the loop

6. Summarizing



CONTRIBUTION

1. **Model** of the phage-mediated CRISPRi system with **mutations dynamics**.
2. **Model-driven evaluation** of QS inhibition strategies
3. **First experimental validation** of the **hysteretic behavior** of **QS** as function of bacterial cell density



Conference and Journal papers

1. C. Cimolato, G. Selvaggio, L. Marchetti, G. Giordano, L. Schenato, M. Bellato. “*Quorum Sensing Model Structures Inspire the Design of Quorum Quenching Strategies*”, IEEE Transactions on Molecular, Biological, and Multi-Scale Communications (under review).
2. M. Bellato, C. Cimolato, S. Letrari, L. Schenato, “*Mathematical Modeling of Phage-Mediated CRISPRi System for Inhibiting Antibiotic Resistance*”, BBCC 2024, Napoli, Italy.
3. C. Cimolato, M. Bellato, G. Selvaggio, L. Marchetti, G. Giordano, L. Schenato “*Model Driven Design of Bacterial Communication Inhibition: from Quorum Sensing to Quorum Quenching*”, Automatica.it 2024, Bolzano.
4. Sara Letrari, Chiara Cimolato, Mahmoud Elsayed Mossad Shalata, Claudia Del Vecchio, Veronica Zatta, Giulia Bernabé, Paola Brun, Luca Schenato, Ignazio Castagliuolo and Massimo Bellato, “*Exploiting Synthetic Biology and Phage Delivery Technologies to Tackle Antimicrobial Resistance*”. 2023 International Conference on Microbiome Engineering (ICME23)
5. C. Cimolato, M. Bellato, G. Selvaggio, L. Marchetti, L. Schenato. “*Controlling bacterial communication: uncovering quorum sensing and quenching structural properties via a systems biology approach*”, Automatica.it 2023, Catania.
6. C. Cimolato, G. Selvaggio, M. Bellato, L. Marchetti, L. Schenato. “*Uncovering quorum sensing and quenching structural properties: a systems biology approach*”, VIII Congress of the National Group of Bioengineering (GNB), 2023.
7. E. Gaetan, C. Cimolato, L. Schenato, M. Bellato. “*Modeling metabolic overload effects in bacterial growth rate in synthetic biology*”, VIII Congress of the National Group of Bioengineering (GNB), 2023.



ETH zürich

C.T.S.B
CONTROL THEORY & SYSTEMS BIOLOGY

Prof. **Mustafa Khammash**

Thank you for your
attention



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