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## *Supplemental Data*

# An Approach for Collaborative Development of a Federated Biomedical Knowledge Graph–Based Question-Answering System: Question-of-the-Month Challenges

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## S.1. Translator and Large Language Models (LLMs)

LLMs such as ChatGPT [1] became widely accessible and quickly rose to prominence at the end of 2022, affecting nearly every aspect of society, including biomedicine. As such, we would be remiss if we did not respond to inevitable comparisons between Translator and LLMs. Therefore, we conducted a *post hoc* systematic comparison between Translator’s performance on the Question-of-the-Month (QotM) and ChatGPT’s performance.

Specifically, we ran all six QotM questions through ChatGPT-4, reviewed responses, and summarized results (Table S1). The questions were submitted to ChatGPT-4 exactly as listed in the main manuscript (Table 1). One Translator team member was tasked with submitting the questions to ChatGPT one time only, to avoid biasing the results with repeated questions and regeneration of answers, and capturing the results. The results were then reviewed and summarized by Translator team members.

**Table S1.** Summary of ChatGPT-4’s performance on QotM Challenge questions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **QotM Question** | **Summary of ChatGPT-4 Response** | **ChatGPT-4 Query and Response** |
| QotM #1 | ChatGPT did not offer suggested answers to the question. | <https://chat.openai.com/share/12023210-103c-4a9a-a822-117060122be6>  |
| QotM #2 | ChatGPT did not offer suggested answers to the question. | <https://chat.openai.com/share/16e2daa0-54be-43f8-90a1-6455dc3ba8ab> |
| QotM #3 | ChatGPT provided the known relationship between CBD, valproic acid, and hepatotoxicity, but it did not make any suggestions for particular biological mechanisms to explain the relationship, including the insightful *PAK1* suggestion that Translator produced. | <https://chat.openai.com/share/3128de73-bc05-469d-9dbd-0f29b80ff527> |
| QotM #4 | ChatGPT had no information on the queried compound. | *N/A\** |
| QotM #5 | ChatGPT offered a number of epidemiologic-type answers to the question (e.g., smoking, comorbidities), in contrast to the list of disease-specific genes produced by Translator; therefore, in this example, the types of answers produced by the two systems were very different and highly complementary. | <https://chat.openai.com/share/81678441-d4ac-4be6-a2e9-6dead28468d7> |
| QotM #6 | ChatGPT provided general population-based guidelines for *ATP1A3*-related disorders, but it did not tailor these to the list of phenotypes\*\* that was provided. | <https://chat.openai.com/share/9dcf2428-1e80-4467-98c1-79b3871a8f8c> |

*Abbreviations: QotM = Question-of-the-Month*

*\*The challenge question was based on a proprietary compound and thus the response is not provided here. However, the question that was posed to both Translator and ChatGPT-4 was identical and included the name of the proprietary small molecule.*

*\*\*Note that the specific phenotypes varied by clinical case; however, the following phenotypes were generally shared across cases, albeit with varying severity: nystagmus; episodic hemiplegia; dystonia; tremors; global developmental delay; hypotonia; seizures; gastroesophageal reflux; paroxysmal dystonia; muscle weakness.*

As Table S1 indicates, ChatGPT-4’s performance was generally inferior to Translator’s performance. Moreover, our comparison identified a number of unique aspects to Translator that set it apart from ChatGPT. Specifically, Translator: (1) is fully open and transparent; (2) relies primarily on corpus of highly curated data sources, not unjustified assertions [2]; (3) draws on all sources of knowledge in its curated knowledge sources, including edge information derived from underlying KGs; (4) invokes Biolink Model as an upper-level ontology and data model to define biomedical entities and the relationships between them; (5) is equipped with advancing reasoning tools and algorithms designed to leverage the graph-based representation of knowledge upon which the Translator system is built, allowing users to view the level of reasoning complexity that was invoked to provide a given answer; and (6) provides full evidence, provenance, and confidence in answers. Moreover, Translator does not “hallucinate” or fabricate knowledge or assertions [3]; rather, it invokes reasoning algorithms to expose curated knowledge or draw inferences, supported by complete evidence, provenance, and confidence. In addition, Translator is not prone to variation in responses due to the nuances of “prompts” and the regeneration of answers, although as a federated system, Translator’s underlying knowledge is continually maturing and expanding and so answers derived from Translator and/or their ranking may change over time.

In contrast, ChatGPT: (1) is available as a free version or a subscription version equipped with advanced features, but neither version is transparent; (2) relies on unclear and questionable data sources, potentially raising concerns about licensing issues when reusing content from LLM responses; (3) trains on large amounts of text to identify probabilistic patterns and co-occurrences of terms, but lacks ontologies and other tools to accurately interpret the diverse contextual knowledge inherent in the training data, which can lead to misinterpretation of words such as “treats”; (4) does not invoke a structured data model to harmonize across entities and specify relationships between them, nor does it focus on a specific domain; (5) relies on a deep neural network architecture that is not mirroring multi-step scientific reasoning but rather is optimized for text generation independently of any scientific reasoning constraints; and (6) does not provide evidence, provenance, or confidence in answers on its own, although it can when coupled with a Bing search and/or ChatGPT plugins. In addition, ChatGPT is known to “hallucinate” [3] and is prone to variation in responses due to the nuances of prompts and the biases introduced through regeneration of answers.

Despite the weaknesses of ChatGPT, we acknowledge the potential utility of LLMs. We also recognize that LLMs might complement and even enhance Translator, and *vice versa*. For instance, Translator cannot process a user’s natural language question, unlike ChatGPT. Even the prototype Translator UI is template-based. The technology supporting ChatGPT’s natural language processing capability may be something that Translator can leverage. In addition, ChatGPT generates detailed, well-written, natural-language summaries of information. Translator provides users with a graphical representation of answers as subgraphs that explicitly describe the reasoning path and include complete evidence, provenance, and confidence in all assertions. A combination of both forms of knowledge representation may prove quite powerful. Moreover, we have been experimenting with the ability for ChatGPT to call out to Translator components via the ChatGPT-4 plugin mechanism. We also are investigating how Translator components might take advantage of GPT-4 capabilities through the OpenAI API. These are but a few examples. Other opportunities are likely to emerge as we learn more about ChatGPT and other LLMs.

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