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(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

The invention provides BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides and polynucleotides encoding BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides and methods for producing such polypeptides by recombinant techniques. Also provided are diagnostic, prophylactic and therapeutic uses.



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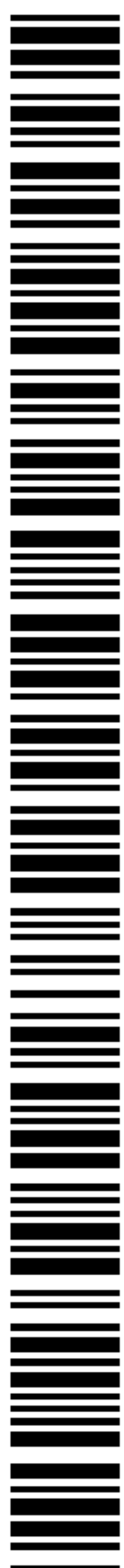
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(54) Title: NOVEL COMPOUNDS

(57) Abstract: The invention provides BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides and polynucleotides encoding BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides and methods for producing such polypeptides by recombinant techniques. Also provided are diagnostic, prophylactic and therapeutic uses.



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Novel Compounds

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to polynucleotides, (herein referred to as “BASB226 and BASB227
5 polynucleotide(s)”), polypeptides encoded by them (referred to herein as “BASB226 and
BASB227” or “BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptide(s)”), recombinant materials and
methods for their production. In another aspect, the invention relates to methods for using
such polypeptides and polynucleotides, including vaccines against bacterial infections. In a
further aspect, the invention relates to diagnostic assays for detecting infection of certain
10 pathogens.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Haemophilus influenzae is a non-motile Gram negative bacterium. Man is its only
natural host.

15

H. influenzae isolates are usually classified according to their polysaccharide capsule.
Six different capsular types designated a through f have been identified. Isolates that fail
to agglutinate with antisera raised against one of these six serotypes are classified as non
typeable, and do not express a capsule.

20

The *H. influenzae* type b is clearly different from the other types in that it is a major
cause of bacterial meningitis and systemic diseases. Non typeable *H. influenzae* (NTHi)
are only occasionally isolated from the blood of patients with systemic disease.

25 NTHi is a common cause of pneumonia, exacerbation of chronic bronchitis, sinusitis and
otitis media.

Otitis media is an important childhood disease both by the number of cases and its
potential sequelae. More than 3.5 millions cases are recorded every year in the United
30 States, and it is estimated that 80 % of children have experienced at least one episode of

otitis before reaching the age of 3 (1). Left untreated, or becoming chronic, this disease may lead to hearing loss that can be temporary (in the case of fluid accumulation in the middle ear) or permanent (if the auditive nerve is damaged). In infants, such hearing losses may be responsible for delayed speech learning.

5

Three bacterial species are primarily isolated from the middle ear of children with otitis media: *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, NTHi and *M. catarrhalis*. These are present in 60 to 90 % of cases. A review of recent studies shows that *S. pneumoniae* and NTHi each represent about 30 %, and *M. catarrhalis* about 15 % of otitis media cases (2). Other
10 bacteria can be isolated from the middle ear (*H. influenzae* type B, *S. pyogenes*, ...) but at a much lower frequency (2 % of the cases or less).

Epidemiological data indicate that, for the pathogens found in the middle ear, the colonization of the upper respiratory tract is an absolute prerequisite for the development
15 of an otitis; other factors are however also required to lead to the disease (3-9). These are important to trigger the migration of the bacteria into the middle ear via the Eustachian tubes, followed by the initiation of an inflammatory process. These other factors are unknown todate. It has been postulated that a transient anomaly of the immune system following a viral infection, for example, could cause an inability to control the
20 colonization of the respiratory tract (5). An alternative explanation is that the exposure to environmental factors allows a more important colonization of some children, who subsequently become susceptible to the development of otitis media because of the sustained presence of middle ear pathogens (2).

25 Various proteins of *H. influenzae* have been shown to be involved in pathogenesis or have been shown to confer protection upon vaccination in animal models.

Adherence of NTHi to human nasopharygeal epithelial cells has been reported (10).

Apart from fimbriae and pili (11-15), many adhesins have been identified in NTHi.

30 Among them, two surface exposed high-molecular-weight proteins designated HMW1

and HMW2 have been shown to mediate adhesion of NTHi to epithelial cells (16).

Another family of high molecular weight proteins has been identified in NTHi strains that lack proteins belonging to HMW1/HMW2 family. The NTHi 115 kDa Hia protein (17) is highly similar to the Hsf adhesin expressed by *H. influenzae* type b strains (18).

5 Another protein, the Hap protein shows similarity to IgA1 serine proteases and has been shown to be involved in both adhesion and cell entry (19).

Five major outer membrane proteins (OMP) have been identified and numerically numbered.

10

Original studies using *H. influenzae* type b strains showed that antibodies specific for P1 and P2 protected infant rats from subsequent challenge (20-21). P2 was found to be able to induce bactericidal and opsonic antibodies, which are directed against the variable regions present within surface exposed loop structures of this integral OMP (22-23). The lipoprotein P4 also could induce bactericidal antibodies (24).

15

P6 is a conserved peptidoglycan-associated lipoprotein making up 1-5 % of the outer membrane (25). Later a lipoprotein of about the same mol. wt. was recognized, called PCP (P6 crossreactive protein) (26). A mixture of the conserved lipoproteins P4, P6 and PCP did not reveal protection as measured in a chinchilla otitis-media model (27). P6 alone appears to induce protection in the chinchilla model (28).

20

P5 has sequence homology to the integral *Escherichia coli* OmpA (29-30). P5 appears to undergo antigenic drift during persistent infections with NTHi (31). However, conserved regions of this protein induced protection in the chinchilla model of otitis media.

25

In line with the observations made with gonococci and meningococci, NTHi expresses a dual human transferrin receptor composed of TbpA and TbpB when grown under iron limitation. Anti-TbpB protected infant rats. (32). Hemoglobin / haptoglobin receptors

30

have also been described for NTHi (33). A receptor for Haem: Hemopexin has also been identified (34). A lactoferrin receptor is also present in NTHi, but is not yet characterized (35).

- 5 A 80kDa OMP, the D15 surface antigen, provides protection against NTHi in a mouse challenge model. (36). A 42kDa outer membrane lipoprotein,LPD is conserved amongst *Haemophilus influenzae* and induces bactericidal antibodies (37). A minor 98kDa OMP (38), was found to be a protective antigen, this OMP may very well be one of the Fe-limitation inducible OMPs or high molecular weight adhesins that have been
- 10 characterized. *H. influenzae* produces IgA1-protease activity (39). IgA1-proteases of NTHi reveals a high degree of antigenic variability (40).
- Another OMP of NTHi, OMP26, a 26-kDa protein has been shown to enhance pulmonary clearance in a rat model (41). The NTHi HtrA protein has also been shown to be a protective antigen. Indeed, this protein protected Chinchilla against otitis media and
- 15 protected infant rats against *H. influenzae* type b bacteremia (42)

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The frequency of NTHi infections has risen dramatically in the past few decades. This phenomenon has created an unmet medical need for new anti-microbial agents, vaccines, drug screening methods and diagnostic tests for this organism. The present invention
5 aims to meet that need.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to BASB226 and BASB227, in particular BASB226 and
10 BASB227 polypeptides and BASB226 and BASB227 polynucleotides, recombinant materials and methods for their production. In another aspect, the invention relates to methods for using such polypeptides and polynucleotides, including prevention and treatment of microbial diseases, amongst others. In a further aspect, the invention relates to diagnostic assays for detecting diseases associated with microbial infections and conditions
15 associated with such infections, such as assays for detecting expression or activity of BASB226 and BASB227 polynucleotides or polypeptides.

Various changes and modifications within the spirit and scope of the disclosed invention will become readily apparent to those skilled in the art from reading the following
20 descriptions and from reading the other parts of the present disclosure.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides and polynucleotides as described in greater detail below. In particular, the invention relates to polypeptides and
25 polynucleotides of BASB226 and BASB227 of non typeable *H. influenzae* which are related by amino acid sequence homology to *Yersinia enterocolitica* outer membrane adhesin (YadA), an autotransporter protein. The BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides have a part of their amino acid sequences folded in a coiled-coil structure. This structure is common in autotransporter-like proteins. These coiled-coil structures are located from
30 residue 154 to residue 187 for the BASB226 polypeptide and from residue 100 to residue

128 for the BASB227 polypeptide. Amino acid sequences located N-terminal to the coiled-coil structure (located from residue 1 to residue 153 for BASB226 polypeptide and from residue 1 to residue 99 for BASB227), is likely to be exposed at the surface of the bacterium.

- 5 The invention relates especially to BASB226 and BASB227 polynucleotides and encoded polypeptides listed in table A. Those polynucleotides and encoded polypeptides have the nucleotide and amino acid sequences set out in SEQ ID NO:1 to SEQ ID NO:4 as described in table A.

Table A

Strain	Isolated in	from	BASB number	nucleotidic sequence	peptidic sequence
3224A	USA	Otitis media	BASB226	SEQ ID NO:1	SEQ ID NO:2
3224A	USA	Otitis media	BASB227	SEQ ID NO:3	SEQ ID NO:4

10

It is understood that sequences recited in the Sequence Listing below as "DNA" represent an exemplification of one embodiment of the invention, since those of ordinary skill will recognize that such sequences can be usefully employed in polynucleotides in general, including ribopolynucleotides.

- 15 The sequences of the BASB226 and BASB227 polynucleotides are set out in SEQ ID NO:1 and 3. SEQ Group 1 refers herein to any one of the polynucleotides set out in SEQ ID NO:1 or 3.

The sequences of the BASB226 and BASB227 encoded polypeptides are set out in SEQ ID NO:2 and 4. SEQ Group 2 refers herein to any one of the encoded polypeptides set out in

20 SEQ ID NO:2 or 4.

Polypeptides

- In one aspect of the invention there are provided polypeptides of non typeable *H. influenzae* referred to herein as "BASB226 and BASB227" and "BASB226 and BASB227
- 25 polypeptides" as well as biologically, diagnostically, prophylactically, clinically or therapeutically useful variants thereof, and compositions comprising the same.

The present invention further provides for:

- 5 (a) an isolated polypeptide which comprises an amino acid sequence which has at least 85% identity, preferably at least 90% identity, more preferably at least 95% identity, most preferably at least 97-99% or exact identity, to that of any sequence of SEQ Group 2;
- (b) a polypeptide encoded by an isolated polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence which has at least 85% identity, preferably at least 90% identity, more preferably at least 95% identity, even more preferably at least 97-99% or exact identity to any sequence of SEQ Group 1 over the entire length of the selected sequence of SEQ Group 1;
- 10 or
- (c) a polypeptide encoded by an isolated polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide which has at least 85% identity, preferably at least 90% identity, more preferably at least 95% identity, even more preferably at least 97-99% or exact identity, to the amino acid sequence of any sequence of SEQ Group 2.

15

The BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides provided in SEQ Group 2 are the BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides from non typeable *H. influenzae* strains as described in table A.

- 20 The invention also provides an immunogenic fragment of a BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptide, that is, a contiguous portion of the BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptide which has the same or substantially the same immunogenic activity as the polypeptide comprising the corresponding amino acid sequence selected from SEQ Group 2 ; That is to say, the fragment (if necessary when coupled to a carrier) is capable of raising an
- 25 immune response which recognises the BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptide. Such an immunogenic fragment may include, for example, the BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptide lacking an N-terminal leader sequence, and/or a transmembrane domain and/or a C-terminal anchor domain. In a preferred aspect the immunogenic fragment of BASB226 or BASB227 according to the invention comprises substantially all of the
- 30 extracellular domain of a polypeptide which has at least 85% identity, preferably at least

90% identity, more preferably at least 95% identity, most preferably at least 97-99% identity, to that a sequence selected from SEQ Group 2 over the entire length of said sequence.

5 A fragment is a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence that is entirely the same as part but not all of any amino acid sequence of any polypeptide of the invention. As with BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides, fragments may be "free-standing," or comprised within a larger polypeptide of which they form a part or region, most preferably as a single continuous region in a single larger polypeptide.

10

Preferred fragments include, for example, truncation polypeptides having a portion of an amino acid sequence selected from SEQ Group 2 or of variants thereof, such as a continuous series of residues that includes an amino- and/or carboxyl-terminal amino acid sequence. Degradation forms of the polypeptides of the invention produced by or in a host cell, are
15 also preferred. Further preferred are fragments characterized by structural or functional attributes such as fragments that comprise alpha-helix and alpha-helix forming regions, beta-sheet and beta-sheet-forming regions, turn and turn-forming regions, coil and coil-forming regions, hydrophilic regions, hydrophobic regions, alpha amphipathic regions, beta amphipathic regions, flexible regions, surface-forming regions, substrate binding region, and
20 high antigenic index regions.

Further preferred fragments include an isolated polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 15, 20, 30, 40, 50 or 100 contiguous amino acids from an amino acid sequence selected from SEQ Group 2 or an isolated polypeptide comprising an amino
25 acid sequence having at least 15, 20, 30, 40, 50 or 100 contiguous amino acids truncated or deleted from an amino acid sequence selected from SEQ Group 2 .

The BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides have coiled-coil structures located from residue 154 to residue 187 for the BASB226 polypeptide and from residue 100 to residue 128 for
30 the BASB227 polypeptide. The BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides also have surface-

exposed sequences (which may be exposed to a hosts immune system) which are located N-terminal to the coiled-coil structure of the proteins (located from residue 1 to residue 153 for BASB226 polypeptide and from residue 1 to residue 99 for BASB227). Preferred fragments include one of these sequences selected from the SEQ Group 2 polypeptides, or
5 variants thereof [as defined by the sequence identity ranges described above].

Still further preferred fragments are those which comprise a B-cell or T-helper epitope, for example those fragments/peptides described in Example 10.

10 Fragments of the polypeptides of the invention may be employed for producing the corresponding full-length polypeptide by peptide synthesis; therefore, these fragments may be employed as intermediates for producing the full-length polypeptides of the invention.

Particularly preferred are variants in which several, 5-10, 1-5, 1-3, 1-2 or 1 amino acids
15 are substituted, deleted, or added in any combination.

The polypeptides, or immunogenic fragments, of the invention may be in the form of the "mature" protein or may be a part of a larger protein such as a precursor or a fusion protein. It is often advantageous to include an additional amino acid sequence which
20 contains secretory or leader sequences, pro-sequences, sequences which aid in purification such as multiple histidine residues, or an additional sequence for stability during recombinant production. Furthermore, addition of exogenous polypeptide or lipid tail or polynucleotide sequences to increase the immunogenic potential of the final molecule is also considered.

25

In one aspect, the invention relates to genetically engineered soluble fusion proteins comprising a polypeptide of the present invention, or a fragment thereof, and various portions of the constant regions of heavy or light chains of immunoglobulins of various subclasses (IgG, IgM, IgA, IgE). Preferred as an immunoglobulin is the constant part of
30 the heavy chain of human IgG, particularly IgG1, where fusion takes place at the hinge

region. In a particular embodiment, the Fc part can be removed simply by incorporation of a cleavage sequence which can be cleaved with blood clotting factor Xa.

Furthermore, this invention relates to processes for the preparation of these fusion
5 proteins by genetic engineering, and to the use thereof for drug screening, diagnosis and therapy. A further aspect of the invention also relates to polynucleotides encoding such fusion proteins. Examples of fusion protein technology can be found in International Patent Application Nos. WO94/29458 and WO94/22914.

10 The proteins may be chemically conjugated, or expressed as recombinant fusion proteins allowing increased levels to be produced in an expression system as compared to non-fused protein. The fusion partner may assist in providing T helper epitopes (immunological fusion partner), preferably T helper epitopes recognised by humans, or assist in expressing the protein (expression enhancer) at higher yields than the native
15 recombinant protein. Preferably the fusion partner will be both an immunological fusion partner and expression enhancing partner.

Fusion partners include protein D from *Haemophilus influenzae* and the non-structural protein from influenza virus, NS1 (hemagglutinin). Another fusion partner is the protein
20 known as Omp26 (WO 97/01638). Another fusion partner is the protein known as LytA. Preferably the C terminal portion of the molecule is used. LytA is derived from *Streptococcus pneumoniae* which synthesize an N-acetyl-L-alanine amidase, amidase LytA, (coded by the *lytA* gene {Gene, 43 (1986) page 265-272}) an autolysin that specifically degrades certain bonds in the peptidoglycan backbone. The C-terminal
25 domain of the LytA protein is responsible for the affinity to the choline or to some choline analogues such as DEAE. This property has been exploited for the development of *E.coli* C-LytA expressing plasmids useful for expression of fusion proteins. Purification of hybrid proteins containing the C-LytA fragment at its amino terminus has been described {Biotechnology: 10, (1992) page 795-798}. It is possible to use the

repeat portion of the LytA molecule found in the C terminal end starting at residue 178, for example residues 188 - 305.

5 The present invention also includes variants of the aforementioned polypeptides, that is polypeptides that vary from the referents by conservative amino acid substitutions, whereby a residue is substituted by another with like characteristics. Typical such substitutions are among Ala, Val, Leu and Ile; among Ser and Thr; among the acidic residues Asp and Glu; among Asn and Gln; and among the basic residues Lys and Arg; or aromatic residues Phe and Tyr.

10

Polypeptides of the present invention can be prepared in any suitable manner. Such polypeptides include isolated naturally occurring polypeptides, recombinantly produced polypeptides, synthetically produced polypeptides, or polypeptides produced by a combination of these methods. Means for preparing such polypeptides are well understood in the art.

15

It is most preferred that a polypeptide of the invention is derived from non typeable *H. influenzae*, however, it may preferably be obtained from other organisms of the same taxonomic genus. A polypeptide of the invention may also be obtained, for example, from organisms of the same taxonomic family or order.

20

Polynucleotides

It is an object of the invention to provide polynucleotides that encode BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides, particularly polynucleotides that encode the polypeptides herein designated BASB226 and BASB227.

25

In a particularly preferred embodiment of the invention the polynucleotides comprise a region encoding BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides comprising sequences set out in SEQ Group 1 which include full length gene, or a variant thereof.

30

The BASB226 and BASB227 polynucleotides provided in SEQ Group 1 are the BASB226 and BASB227 polynucleotides from non typeable *H. influenzae* strains as described in table A.

5 As a further aspect of the invention there are provided isolated nucleic acid molecules encoding and/or expressing BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides and polynucleotides, particularly non typeable *H. influenzae* BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides and polynucleotides, including, for example, unprocessed RNAs, ribozyme RNAs, mRNAs, cDNAs, genomic DNAs, B- and Z-DNAs. Further embodiments of the invention
10 include biologically, diagnostically, prophylactically, clinically or therapeutically useful polynucleotides and polypeptides, and variants thereof, and compositions comprising the same.

Another aspect of the invention relates to isolated polynucleotides, including at least one full
15 length gene, that encodes a BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptide having a deduced amino acid sequence of SEQ Group 2 (or fragments thereof as described above) and polynucleotides closely related thereto and variants thereof.

In another particularly preferred embodiment of the invention relates to BASB226 and
20 BASB227 polypeptide from non typeable *H. influenzae* comprising or consisting of an amino acid sequence selected from SEQ Group 2 or a variant thereof.

Using the information provided herein, such as a polynucleotide sequences set out in SEQ Group 1, a polynucleotide of the invention encoding BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides
25 may be obtained using standard cloning and screening methods, such as those for cloning and sequencing chromosomal DNA fragments from bacteria using non typeable *H. influenzae* strain 3224A cells as starting material, followed by obtaining a full length clone. For example, to obtain a polynucleotide sequence of the invention, such as a polynucleotide sequence given in SEQ Group 1, typically a library of clones of
30 chromosomal DNA of non typeable *H. influenzae* strain 3224A in *E. coli* or some other

suitable host is probed with a radiolabeled oligonucleotide, preferably a 17-mer or longer, derived from a partial sequence. Clones carrying DNA identical to that of the probe can then be distinguished using stringent hybridization conditions. By sequencing the individual clones thus identified by hybridization with sequencing primers designed from the original polypeptide or polynucleotide sequence it is then possible to extend the polynucleotide sequence in both directions to determine a full length gene sequence. Conveniently, such sequencing is performed, for example, using denatured double stranded DNA prepared from a plasmid clone. Suitable techniques are described by Maniatis, T., Fritsch, E.F. and Sambrook et al., *MOLECULAR CLONING, A LABORATORY MANUAL*, 2nd Ed.; Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, Cold Spring Harbor, New York (1989). (see in particular Screening By Hybridization 1.90 and Sequencing Denatured Double-Stranded DNA Templates 13.70). Direct genomic DNA sequencing may also be performed to obtain a full length gene sequence. Illustrative of the invention, each polynucleotide set out in SEQ Group 1 was discovered in a DNA library derived from non typeable *H. influenzae*.

Moreover, each DNA sequence set out in SEQ Group 1 contains an open reading frame encoding a protein having about the number of amino acid residues set forth in SEQ Group 2 with a deduced molecular weight that can be calculated using amino acid residue molecular weight values well known to those skilled in the art.

The polynucleotides of SEQ Group 1, between the start codon and the stop codon, encode respectively the polypeptides of SEQ Group 2. The nucleotide number of start codon and first nucleotide of stop codon are listed in table B for each polynucleotide of SEQ Group 1.

Table B

nucleotidic sequence	encoded peptidic sequence	Start codon	1st nucleotide of stop codon
SEQ ID NO:1	SEQ ID NO:2	1*	562

SEQ ID NO:3**	SEQ ID NO:4	1*	556
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* first nucleotide of the first codon of partial encoding sequence

** contains a stop codon : first nucleotide of this stop codon is in position 232

In a further aspect, the present invention provides for an isolated polynucleotide

5 comprising or consisting of:

(a) a polynucleotide sequence which has at least 85% identity, preferably at least 90% identity, more preferably at least 95% identity, even more preferably at least 97-99% or exact identity, to any polynucleotide sequence from SEQ Group 1 over the entire length of the polynucleotide sequence from SEQ Group 1; or

10 (b) a polynucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide which has at least 85% identity, preferably at least 90% identity, more preferably at least 95% identity, even more preferably at least 97-99% or 100% exact identity, to any amino acid sequence selected from SEQ Group 2, over the entire length of the amino acid sequence from SEQ Group 2.

15

A polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide of the present invention, including homologs and orthologs from species other than non typeable *H. influenzae*, may be obtained by a process which comprises the steps of screening an appropriate library under stringent hybridization conditions (for example, using a temperature in the range of 45 – 65°C and an SDS

20 concentration from 0.1 – 1%) with a labeled or detectable probe consisting of or comprising any sequence selected from SEQ Group 1 or a fragment thereof; and isolating a full-length gene and/or genomic clones containing said polynucleotide sequence.

The invention provides a polynucleotide sequence identical over its entire length to a coding
25 sequence (open reading frame) set out in SEQ Group 1. Also provided by the invention is a coding sequence for a mature polypeptide or a fragment thereof, by itself as well as a coding sequence for a mature polypeptide or a fragment in reading frame with another coding sequence, such as a sequence encoding a leader or secretory sequence, a pre-, or pro- or prepro-protein sequence. The polynucleotide of the invention may also contain at least one
30 non-coding sequence, including for example, but not limited to at least one non-coding 5'

and 3' sequence, such as the transcribed but non-translated sequences, termination signals (such as rho-dependent and rho-independent termination signals), ribosome binding sites, Kozak sequences, sequences that stabilize mRNA, introns, and polyadenylation signals.

The polynucleotide sequence may also comprise additional coding sequence encoding additional amino acids. For example, a marker sequence that facilitates purification of the fused polypeptide can be encoded. In certain embodiments of the invention, the marker sequence is a hexa-histidine peptide, as provided in the pQE vector (Qiagen, Inc.) and described in Gentz *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci., USA* 86: 821-824 (1989), or an HA peptide tag (Wilson *et al.*, *Cell* 37: 767 (1984), both of which may be useful in purifying polypeptide sequence fused to them. Polynucleotides of the invention also include, but are not limited to, polynucleotides comprising a structural gene and its naturally associated sequences that control gene expression.

The nucleotide sequence encoding the BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptide of SEQ Group 2 may be identical to the corresponding polynucleotide encoding sequence of SEQ Group 1. The position of the first and last nucleotides of the encoding sequences of SEQ Group 1 are listed in table C. Alternatively it may be any sequence, which as a result of the redundancy (degeneracy) of the genetic code, also encodes a polypeptide of SEQ Group 2.

Table C

nucleotidic sequence	encoded peptidic sequence	Start codon	Last nucleotide of encoding sequence
SEQ ID NO:1	SEQ ID NO:2	1*	562**
SEQ ID NO:3***	SEQ ID NO:4	1*	556**

* First nucleotide of the first codon of partial encoding sequence

** Last nucleotide of the last codon of partial encoding sequence

*** Contains a stop codon : first nucleotide of this stop codon is in position 136

The term "polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide" as used herein encompasses polynucleotides that include a sequence encoding a polypeptide of the invention, particularly a bacterial polypeptide and more particularly a polypeptide of the non typeable *H. influenzae* BASB226 and BASB227 having an amino acid sequence set out in any of the sequences of SEQ Group 2 (or fragments thereof as described above). The term also encompasses

polynucleotides that include a single continuous region or discontinuous regions encoding the polypeptide (for example, polynucleotides interrupted by integrated phage, an integrated insertion sequence, an integrated vector sequence, an integrated transposon sequence, or due to RNA editing or genomic DNA reorganization) together with additional regions, that also
5 may contain coding and/or non-coding sequences.

The invention further relates to variants of the polynucleotides described herein that encode variants of a polypeptide having a deduced amino acid sequence of any of the sequences of SEQ Group 2 . Fragments of polynucleotides of the invention may be used, for example, to
10 synthesize full-length polynucleotides of the invention.

Preferred fragments are those polynucleotides which encode a B-cell or T-helper epitope, for example the fragments/peptides described in Example 10, or which encode the coiled-coil region or fragments N-terminal to the coiled-coil region as described above, and
15 recombinant, chimeric genes comprising said polynucleotide fragments.

Further particularly preferred embodiments are polynucleotides encoding BASB226 and BASB227 variants, that have the amino acid sequence of BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptide of any sequence from SEQ Group 2 in which several, a few, 5 to 10, 1 to 5, 1 to
20 3, 2, 1 or no amino acid residues are substituted, modified, deleted and/or added, in any combination. Especially preferred among these are silent substitutions, additions and deletions, that do not alter the properties and activities of BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptide.

25 Further preferred embodiments of the invention are polynucleotides that are at least 85% identical over their entire length to polynucleotides encoding BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides having an amino acid sequence set out in any of the sequences of SEQ Group 2 , and polynucleotides that are complementary to such polynucleotides. Alternatively, most highly preferred are polynucleotides that comprise a region that is at least 90% identical over
30 its entire length to polynucleotides encoding BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides and

polynucleotides complementary thereto. In this regard, polynucleotides at least 95% identical over their entire length to the same are particularly preferred. Furthermore, those with at least 97% are highly preferred among those with at least 95%, and among these those with at least 98% and at least 99% are particularly highly preferred, with at least 99%
5 being the more preferred.

Preferred embodiments are polynucleotides encoding polypeptides that retain substantially the same biological function or activity as the mature polypeptide encoded by a DNA sequence selected from SEQ Group 1.

10

In accordance with certain preferred embodiments of this invention there are provided polynucleotides that hybridize, particularly under stringent conditions, to BASB226 or BASB227 polynucleotide sequences, such as those polynucleotides of SEQ Group 1.

15 The invention further relates to polynucleotides that hybridize to the polynucleotide sequences provided herein. In this regard, the invention especially relates to polynucleotides that hybridize under stringent conditions to the polynucleotides described herein. As herein used, the terms "stringent conditions" and "stringent hybridization conditions" mean hybridization occurring only if there is at least 95% and preferably at least 97% identity
20 between the sequences. A specific example of stringent hybridization conditions is overnight incubation at 42°C in a solution comprising: 50% formamide, 5x SSC (150mM NaCl, 15mM trisodium citrate), 50 mM sodium phosphate (pH7.6), 5x Denhardt's solution, 10% dextran sulfate, and 20 micrograms/ml of denatured, sheared salmon sperm DNA, followed by washing the hybridization support in 0.1x SSC at about 65°C.

25 Hybridization and wash conditions are well known and exemplified in Sambrook, *et al.*, Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual, Second Edition, Cold Spring Harbor, N.Y., (1989), particularly Chapter 11 therein. Solution hybridization may also be used with the polynucleotide sequences provided by the invention.

The invention also provides a polynucleotide consisting of or comprising a polynucleotide sequence obtained by screening an appropriate library containing the complete gene for a polynucleotide sequence set forth in any of the sequences of SEQ Group 1 under stringent hybridization conditions with a probe having the sequence of said polynucleotide
5 sequence set forth in the corresponding sequence of SEQ Group 1 or a fragment thereof; and isolating said polynucleotide sequence. Fragments useful for obtaining such a polynucleotide include, for example, probes and primers fully described elsewhere herein.

As discussed elsewhere herein regarding polynucleotide assays of the invention, for
10 instance, the polynucleotides of the invention, may be used as a hybridization probe for RNA, cDNA and genomic DNA to isolate full-length cDNAs and genomic clones encoding BASB226 or BASB227 and to isolate cDNA and genomic clones of other genes that have a high identity, particularly high sequence identity, to the BASB226 or BASB227 genes.

Such probes generally will comprise at least 15 nucleotide residues or base pairs.

15 Preferably, such probes will have at least 30 nucleotide residues or base pairs and may have at least 50 nucleotide residues or base pairs. Particularly preferred probes will have at least 20 nucleotide residues or base pairs and will have less than 30 nucleotide residues or base pairs.

20 A coding region of BASB226 or BASB227 genes may be isolated by screening using a DNA sequence provided in SEQ Group 1 to synthesize an oligonucleotide probe. A labeled oligonucleotide having a sequence complementary to that of a gene of the invention is then used to screen a library of cDNA, genomic DNA or mRNA to determine which members of the library the probe hybridizes to.

25 There are several methods available and well known to those skilled in the art to obtain full-length DNAs, or extend short DNAs, for example those based on the method of Rapid Amplification of cDNA ends (RACE) (see, for example, Frohman, *et al.*, *PNAS USA* 85: 8998-9002, 1988). Recent modifications of the technique, exemplified by the Marathon™
30 technology (Clontech Laboratories Inc.) for example, have significantly simplified the

search for longer cDNAs. In the Marathon™ technology, cDNAs have been prepared from mRNA extracted from a chosen tissue and an 'adaptor' sequence ligated onto each end. Nucleic acid amplification (PCR) is then carried out to amplify the "missing" 5' end of the DNA using a combination of gene specific and adaptor specific oligonucleotide primers. The PCR reaction is then repeated using "nested" primers, that is, primers designed to anneal within the amplified product (typically an adaptor specific primer that anneals further 3' in the adaptor sequence and a gene specific primer that anneals further 5' in the selected gene sequence). The products of this reaction can then be analyzed by DNA sequencing and a full-length DNA constructed either by joining the product directly to the existing DNA to give a complete sequence, or carrying out a separate full-length PCR using the new sequence information for the design of the 5' primer.

The polynucleotides and polypeptides of the invention may be employed, for example, as research reagents and materials for discovery of treatments of and diagnostics for diseases, particularly human diseases, as further discussed herein relating to polynucleotide assays.

The polynucleotides of the invention that are oligonucleotides derived from a sequence of SEQ Group 1 may be used in the processes herein as described, but preferably for PCR, to determine whether or not the polynucleotides identified herein in whole or in part are transcribed in bacteria in infected tissue. It is recognized that such sequences will also have utility in diagnosis of the stage of infection and type of infection the pathogen has attained.

The invention also provides polynucleotides that encode a polypeptide that is the mature protein plus additional amino or carboxyl-terminal amino acids, or amino acids interior to the mature polypeptide (when the mature form has more than one polypeptide chain, for instance). Such sequences may play a role in processing of a protein from precursor to a mature form, may allow protein transport, may lengthen or shorten protein half-life or may facilitate manipulation of a protein for assay or production, among other things. As

generally is the case *in vivo*, the additional amino acids may be processed away from the mature protein by cellular enzymes.

For each and every polynucleotide of the invention there is provided a polynucleotide
5 complementary to it. It is preferred that these complementary polynucleotides are fully complementary to each polynucleotide with which they are complementary.

A precursor protein, having a mature form of the polypeptide fused to one or more
prosequences may be an inactive form of the polypeptide. When prosequences are removed
10 such inactive precursors generally are activated. Some or all of the prosequences may be removed before activation. Generally, such precursors are called proproteins.

In addition to the standard A, G, C, T/U representations for nucleotides, the term "N" may
also be used in describing certain polynucleotides of the invention. "N" means that any of
15 the four DNA or RNA nucleotides may appear at such a designated position in the DNA or RNA sequence, except it is preferred that N is not a nucleic acid that when taken in combination with adjacent nucleotide positions, when read in the correct reading frame, would have the effect of generating a premature termination codon in such reading frame.

20 In sum, a polynucleotide of the invention may encode a mature protein, a mature protein plus a leader sequence (which may be referred to as a preprotein), a precursor of a mature protein having one or more prosequences that are not the leader sequences of a preprotein, or a preproprotein, which is a precursor to a proprotein, having a leader sequence and one or more prosequences, which generally are removed during processing steps that produce
25 active and mature forms of the polypeptide.

In accordance with an aspect of the invention, there is provided the use of a polynucleotide of the invention for therapeutic or prophylactic purposes, in particular genetic immunization.

30

The use of a polynucleotide of the invention in genetic immunization will preferably employ a suitable delivery method such as direct injection of plasmid DNA into muscles (Wolff *et al.*, *Hum Mol Genet* (1992) 1: 363, Manthorpe *et al.*, *Hum. Gene Ther.* (1983) 4: 419), delivery of DNA complexed with specific protein carriers (Wu *et al.*, *J Biol Chem.* (1989) 264: 16985), coprecipitation of DNA with calcium phosphate (Benvenisty & Reshef, *PNAS USA*, (1986) 83: 9551), encapsulation of DNA in various forms of liposomes (Kaneda *et al.*, *Science* (1989) 243: 375), particle bombardment (Tang *et al.*, *Nature* (1992) 356:152, Eisenbraun *et al.*, *DNA Cell Biol* (1993) 12: 791) and *in vivo* infection using cloned retroviral vectors (Seeger *et al.*, *PNAS USA* (1984) 81: 5849).

10

Vectors, Host Cells, Expression Systems

The invention also relates to vectors that comprise a polynucleotide or polynucleotides of the invention, host cells that are genetically engineered with vectors of the invention and the production of polypeptides of the invention by recombinant techniques. Cell-free translation systems can also be employed to produce such proteins using RNAs derived from the DNA constructs of the invention.

15

Recombinant polypeptides of the present invention may be prepared by processes well known in those skilled in the art from genetically engineered host cells comprising expression systems. Accordingly, in a further aspect, the present invention relates to expression systems that comprise a polynucleotide or polynucleotides of the present invention, to host cells which are genetically engineered with such expression systems, and to the production of polypeptides of the invention by recombinant techniques.

20

For recombinant production of the polypeptides of the invention, host cells can be genetically engineered to incorporate expression systems or portions thereof or polynucleotides of the invention. Introduction of a polynucleotide into the host cell can be effected by methods described in many standard laboratory manuals, such as Davis, *et al.*, *BASIC METHODS IN MOLECULAR BIOLOGY*, (1986) and Sambrook, *et al.*, *MOLECULAR CLONING: A LABORATORY MANUAL*, 2nd Ed., Cold Spring Harbor

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Laboratory Press, Cold Spring Harbor, N.Y. (1989), such as, calcium phosphate transfection, DEAE-dextran mediated transfection, transvection, microinjection, cationic lipid-mediated transfection, electroporation, conjugation, transduction, scrape loading, ballistic introduction and infection.

5

Representative examples of appropriate hosts include bacterial cells, such as cells of streptococci, staphylococci, enterococci, *E. coli*, streptomyces, cyanobacteria, *Bacillus subtilis*, *Neisseria meningitidis*, *Haemophilus influenzae* and *Moraxella catarrhalis*; fungal cells, such as cells of a yeast, *Kluveromyces*, *Saccharomyces*, *Pichia*, a basidiomycete, *Candida albicans* and *Aspergillus*; insect cells such as cells of *Drosophila* S2 and *Spodoptera* Sf9; animal cells such as CHO, COS, HeLa, C127, 3T3, BHK, 293, CV-1 and Bowes melanoma cells; and plant cells, such as cells of a gymnosperm or angiosperm.

10

A great variety of expression systems can be used to produce the polypeptides of the invention. Such vectors include, among others, chromosomal-, episomal- and virus-derived vectors, for example, vectors derived from bacterial plasmids, from bacteriophage, from transposons, from yeast episomes, from insertion elements, from yeast chromosomal elements, from viruses such as baculoviruses, papova viruses, such as SV40, vaccinia viruses, adenoviruses, fowl pox viruses, pseudorabies viruses, picornaviruses, retroviruses, and alphaviruses and vectors derived from combinations thereof, such as those derived from plasmid and bacteriophage genetic elements, such as cosmids and phagemids. The expression system constructs may contain control regions that regulate as well as engender expression. Generally, any system or vector suitable to maintain, propagate or express polynucleotides and/or to express a polypeptide in a host may be used for expression in this regard. The appropriate DNA sequence may be inserted into the expression system by any of a variety of well-known and routine techniques, such as, for example, those set forth in Sambrook *et al.*, *MOLECULAR CLONING, A LABORATORY MANUAL*, (*supra*).

20

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In recombinant expression systems in eukaryotes, for secretion of a translated protein into the lumen of the endoplasmic reticulum, into the periplasmic space or into the extracellular

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environment, appropriate secretion signals may be incorporated into the expressed polypeptide. These signals may be endogenous to the polypeptide or they may be heterologous signals.

- 5 Polypeptides of the present invention can be recovered and purified from recombinant cell cultures by well-known methods including ammonium sulfate or ethanol precipitation, acid extraction, anion or cation exchange chromatography, phosphocellulose chromatography, hydrophobic interaction chromatography, affinity chromatography, hydroxylapatite chromatography and lectin chromatography. Most preferably, ion metal
- 10 affinity chromatography (IMAC) is employed for purification. Well known techniques for refolding proteins may be employed to regenerate active conformation when the polypeptide is denatured during intracellular synthesis, isolation and or purification.

- The expression system may also be a recombinant live microorganism, such as a virus
- 15 or bacterium. The gene of interest can be inserted into the genome of a live recombinant virus or bacterium. Inoculation and *in vivo* infection with this live vector will lead to *in vivo* expression of the antigen and induction of immune responses. Viruses and bacteria used for this purpose are for instance: poxviruses (e.g; vaccinia, fowlpox, canarypox), alphaviruses (Sindbis virus, Semliki Forest Virus, Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis
- 20 Virus), adenoviruses, adeno-associated virus, picornaviruses (poliovirus, rhinovirus), herpesviruses (varicella zoster virus, etc), *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, BCG, streptococci. These viruses and bacteria can be virulent, or attenuated in various ways in order to obtain live vaccines. Such live vaccines also form part of the invention.

25 **Diagnostic, Prognostic, Serotyping and Mutation Assays**

- This invention is also related to the use of BASB226 and BASB227 polynucleotides and polypeptides of the invention for use as diagnostic reagents. Detection of BASB226 or BASB227 polynucleotides and/or polypeptides in a eukaryote, particularly a mammal, and especially a human, will provide a diagnostic method for diagnosis of disease, staging of
- 30 disease or response of an infectious organism to drugs. Eukaryotes, particularly mammals,

and especially humans, particularly those infected or suspected to be infected with an organism comprising the BASB226 or BASB227 genes or proteins, may be detected at the nucleic acid or amino acid level by a variety of well known techniques as well as by methods provided herein.

5

Polypeptides and polynucleotides for prognosis, diagnosis or other analysis may be obtained from a putatively infected and/or infected individual's bodily materials. Polynucleotides from any of these sources, particularly DNA or RNA, may be used directly for detection or may be amplified enzymatically by using PCR or any other amplification technique prior to analysis. RNA, particularly mRNA, cDNA and genomic DNA may also be used in the same ways. Using amplification, characterization of the species and strain of infectious or resident organism present in an individual, may be made by an analysis of the genotype of a selected polynucleotide of the organism. Deletions and insertions can be detected by a change in size of the amplified product in comparison to a genotype of a reference sequence selected from a related organism, preferably a different species of the same genus or a different strain of the same species. Point mutations can be identified by hybridizing amplified DNA to labeled BASB226 or BASB227 polynucleotide sequences. Perfectly or significantly matched sequences can be distinguished from imperfectly or more significantly mismatched duplexes by DNase or RNase digestion, for DNA or RNA respectively, or by detecting differences in melting temperatures or renaturation kinetics. Polynucleotide sequence differences may also be detected by alterations in the electrophoretic mobility of polynucleotide fragments in gels as compared to a reference sequence. This may be carried out with or without denaturing agents. Polynucleotide differences may also be detected by direct DNA or RNA sequencing. See, for example, Myers *et al.*, *Science*, 230: 1242 (1985). Sequence changes at specific locations also may be revealed by nuclease protection assays, such as RNase, V1 and S1 protection assay or a chemical cleavage method. See, for example, Cotton *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci., USA*, 85: 4397-4401 (1985).

In another embodiment, an array of oligonucleotides probes comprising BASB226 or BASB227 nucleotide sequences or fragments thereof can be constructed to conduct efficient

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screening of, for example, genetic mutations, serotype, taxonomic classification or identification. Array technology methods are well known and have general applicability and can be used to address a variety of questions in molecular genetics including gene expression, genetic linkage, and genetic variability (see, for example, Chee *et al.*, *Science*,
5 274: 610 (1996)).

Thus in another aspect, the present invention relates to a diagnostic kit which comprises:
(a) a polynucleotide of the present invention, preferably any of the nucleotide sequences of SEQ Group 1, or a fragment thereof ;
10 (b) a nucleotide sequence complementary to that of (a);
(c) a polypeptide of the present invention, preferably any of the polypeptides of SEQ Group 2 or a fragment thereof; or
(d) an antibody to a polypeptide of the present invention, preferably to any of the polypeptides of SEQ Group 2 .

15

It will be appreciated that in any such kit, (a), (b), (c) or (d) may comprise a substantial component. Such a kit will be of use in diagnosing a disease or susceptibility to a Disease, among others.

20 This invention also relates to the use of polynucleotides of the present invention as diagnostic reagents. Detection of a mutated form of a polynucleotide of the invention, preferably any sequence of SEQ Group 1 , which is associated with a disease or pathogenicity will provide a diagnostic tool that can add to, or define, a diagnosis of a disease, a prognosis of a course of disease, a determination of a stage of disease, or a
25 susceptibility to a disease, which results from under-expression, over-expression or altered expression of the polynucleotide. Organisms, particularly infectious organisms, carrying mutations in such polynucleotide may be detected at the polynucleotide level by a variety of techniques, such as those described elsewhere herein.

Cells from an organism carrying mutations or polymorphisms (allelic variations) in a polynucleotide and/or polypeptide of the invention may also be detected at the polynucleotide or polypeptide level by a variety of techniques, to allow for serotyping, for example. For example, RT-PCR can be used to detect mutations in the RNA. It is particularly preferred to use RT-PCR in conjunction with automated detection systems, such as, for example, GeneScan. RNA, cDNA or genomic DNA may also be used for the same purpose, PCR. As an example, PCR primers complementary to a polynucleotide encoding BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides can be used to identify and analyze mutations.

10 The invention further provides primers with 1, 2, 3 or 4 nucleotides removed from the 5' and/or the 3' end. These primers may be used for, among other things, amplifying BASB226 or BASB227 DNA and/or RNA isolated from a sample derived from an individual, such as a bodily material. The primers may be used to amplify a polynucleotide isolated from an infected individual, such that the polynucleotide may then be subject to various techniques for elucidation of the polynucleotide sequence. In this way, mutations in the polynucleotide sequence may be detected and used to diagnose and/or prognose the infection or its stage or course, or to serotype and/or classify the infectious agent.

The invention further provides a process for diagnosing, disease, preferably bacterial infections, more preferably infections caused by non typeable *H. influenzae*, comprising determining from a sample derived from an individual, such as a bodily material, an increased level of expression of polynucleotide having a sequence of any of the sequences of SEQ Group 1. Increased or decreased expression of BASB226 or BASB227 polynucleotide can be measured using any one of the methods well known in the art for the quantitation of polynucleotides, such as, for example, amplification, PCR, RT-PCR, RNase protection, Northern blotting, spectrometry and other hybridization methods.

In addition, a diagnostic assay in accordance with the invention for detecting over-expression of BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides compared to normal control tissue samples may be used to detect the presence of an infection, for example. Assay techniques

that can be used to determine levels of BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides, in a sample derived from a host, such as a bodily material, are well-known to those of skill in the art. Such assay methods include radioimmunoassays, competitive-binding assays, Western Blot analysis, antibody sandwich assays, antibody detection and ELISA assays.

5

The polynucleotides of the invention may be used as components of polynucleotide arrays, preferably high density arrays or grids. These high density arrays are particularly useful for diagnostic and prognostic purposes. For example, a set of spots each comprising a different gene, and further comprising a polynucleotide or polynucleotides of the invention, may be used for probing, such as using hybridization or nucleic acid amplification, using a probes obtained or derived from a bodily sample, to determine the presence of a particular polynucleotide sequence or related sequence in an individual. Such a presence may indicate the presence of a pathogen, particularly non-typeable *H. influenzae*, and may be useful in diagnosing and/or prognosing disease or a course of disease. A grid comprising a number of variants of any polynucleotide sequence of SEQ Group 1 is preferred. Also preferred is a number of variants of a polynucleotide sequence encoding any polypeptide sequence of SEQ Group 2 .

Antibodies

20 The polypeptides and polynucleotides of the invention or variants thereof, or cells expressing the same can be used as immunogens to produce antibodies immunospecific for such polypeptides or polynucleotides respectively. Alternatively, mimotopes, particularly peptide mimotopes, of epitopes within the polypeptide sequence may also be used as immunogens to produce antibodies immunospecific for the polypeptide of the invention.

25 The term “immunospecific” means that the antibodies have substantially greater affinity for the polypeptides of the invention than their affinity for other related polypeptides in the prior art.

In certain preferred embodiments of the invention there are provided antibodies against

30 BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides or polynucleotides.

Antibodies generated against the polypeptides or polynucleotides of the invention can be obtained by administering the polypeptides and/or polynucleotides of the invention, or epitope-bearing fragments of either or both, analogues of either or both, or cells expressing
5 either or both, to an animal, preferably a nonhuman, using routine protocols. For preparation of monoclonal antibodies, any technique known in the art that provides antibodies produced by continuous cell line cultures can be used. Examples include various techniques, such as those in Kohler, G. and Milstein, C., *Nature* 256: 495-497 (1975); Kozbor *et al.*, *Immunology Today* 4: 72 (1983); Cole *et al.*, pg. 77-96 in *MONOCLONAL*
10 *ANTIBODIES AND CANCER THERAPY*, Alan R. Liss, Inc. (1985).

Techniques for the production of single chain antibodies (U.S. Patent No. 4,946,778) can be adapted to produce single chain antibodies to polypeptides or polynucleotides of this invention. Also, transgenic mice, or other organisms or animals, such as other mammals,
15 may be used to express humanized antibodies immunospecific to the polypeptides or polynucleotides of the invention.

Alternatively, phage display technology may be utilized to select antibody genes with binding activities towards a polypeptide of the invention either from repertoires of PCR
20 amplified v-genes of lymphocytes from humans screened for possessing anti-BASB226 or anti-BASB227 or from naive libraries (McCafferty, *et al.*, (1990), *Nature* 348, 552-554; Marks, *et al.*, (1992) *Biotechnology* 10, 779-783). The affinity of these antibodies can also be improved by, for example, chain shuffling (Clackson *et al.*, (1991) *Nature* 352: 628).

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The above-described antibodies may be employed to isolate or to identify clones expressing the polypeptides or polynucleotides of the invention to purify the polypeptides or polynucleotides by, for example, affinity chromatography.

Thus, among others, antibodies against BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides or BASB226 or BASB227 polynucleotides may be employed to treat infections, particularly bacterial infections.

- 5 Polypeptide variants include antigenically, epitopically or immunologically equivalent variants form a particular aspect of this invention.

Preferably, the antibody or variant thereof is modified to make it less immunogenic in the individual. For example, if the individual is human the antibody may most preferably be
10 "humanized," where the complementarity determining region or regions of the hybridoma-derived antibody has been transplanted into a human monoclonal antibody, for example as described in Jones *et al.* (1986), *Nature* 321, 522-525 or Tempest *et al.*, (1991) *Biotechnology* 9, 266-273.

15

Antagonists and Agonists - Assays and Molecules

Polypeptides and polynucleotides of the invention may also be used to assess the binding of small molecule substrates and ligands in, for example, cells, cell-free preparations, chemical libraries, and natural product mixtures. These substrates and ligands may be natural
20 substrates and ligands or may be structural or functional mimetics. See, *e.g.*, Coligan *et al.*, *Current Protocols in Immunology* 1(2): Chapter 5 (1991).

The screening methods may simply measure the binding of a candidate compound to the polypeptide or polynucleotide, or to cells or membranes bearing the polypeptide or
25 polynucleotide, or a fusion protein of the polypeptide by means of a label directly or indirectly associated with the candidate compound. Alternatively, the screening method may involve competition with a labeled competitor. Further, these screening methods may test whether the candidate compound results in a signal generated by activation or inhibition of the polypeptide or polynucleotide, using detection systems appropriate to the
30 cells comprising the polypeptide or polynucleotide. Inhibitors of activation are generally

assayed in the presence of a known agonist and the effect on activation by the agonist by the presence of the candidate compound is observed. Constitutively active polypeptide and/or constitutively expressed polypeptides and polynucleotides may be employed in screening methods for inverse agonists or inhibitors, in the absence of an agonist or
5 inhibitor, by testing whether the candidate compound results in inhibition of activation of the polypeptide or polynucleotide, as the case may be. Further, the screening methods may simply comprise the steps of mixing a candidate compound with a solution containing a polypeptide or polynucleotide of the present invention, to form a mixture, measuring BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides and/or polynucleotides activity in the
10 mixture, and comparing the BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides and/or polynucleotides activity of the mixture to a standard. Fusion proteins, such as those made from Fc portion and BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides, as hereinbefore described, can also be used for high-throughput screening assays to identify antagonists of the polypeptide of the present invention, as well as of phylogenetically and and/or functionally related polypeptides (see
15 D. Bennett *et al.*, J Mol Recognition, 8:52-58 (1995); and K. Johanson *et al.*, J Biol Chem, 270(16):9459-9471 (1995)).

The polynucleotides, polypeptides and antibodies that bind to and/or interact with a polypeptide of the present invention may also be used to configure screening methods for
20 detecting the effect of added compounds on the production of mRNA and/or polypeptide in cells. For example, an ELISA assay may be constructed for measuring secreted or cell associated levels of polypeptide using monoclonal and polyclonal antibodies by standard methods known in the art. This can be used to discover agents which may inhibit or enhance the production of polypeptide (also called antagonist or agonist, respectively)
25 from suitably manipulated cells or tissues.

The invention also provides a method of screening compounds to identify those which enhance (agonist) or block (antagonist) the action of BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides or polynucleotides, particularly those compounds that are bacteriostatic and/or bactericidal.
30 The method of screening may involve high-throughput techniques. For example, to screen

for agonists or antagonists, a synthetic reaction mix, a cellular compartment, such as a membrane, cell envelope or cell wall, or a preparation of any thereof, comprising BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides and a labeled substrate or ligand of such polypeptide is incubated in the absence or the presence of a candidate molecule that may be a BASB226 or BASB227 agonist or antagonist. The ability of the candidate molecule to agonize or antagonize the BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptide is reflected in decreased binding of the labeled ligand or decreased production of product from such substrate. Molecules that bind gratuitously, *i.e.*, without inducing the effects of BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptide are most likely to be good antagonists. Molecules that bind well and, as the case may be, increase the rate of product production from substrate, increase signal transduction, or increase chemical channel activity are agonists. Detection of the rate or level of, as the case may be, production of product from substrate, signal transduction, or chemical channel activity may be enhanced by using a reporter system. Reporter systems that may be useful in this regard include but are not limited to colorimetric, labeled substrate converted into product, a reporter gene that is responsive to changes in BASB226 or BASB227 polynucleotide or polypeptide activity, and binding assays known in the art.

Another example of an assay for BASB226 or BASB227 agonists is a competitive assay that combines BASB226 or BASB227 and a potential agonist with BASB226 or BASB227 binding molecules, recombinant BASB226 or BASB227 binding molecules, natural substrates or ligands, or substrate or ligand mimetics, under appropriate conditions for a competitive inhibition assay. BASB226 or BASB227 can be labeled, such as by radioactivity or a colorimetric compound, such that the number of BASB226 or BASB227 molecules bound to a binding molecule or converted to product can be determined accurately to assess the effectiveness of the potential antagonist.

Potential antagonists include, among others, small organic molecules, peptides, polypeptides and antibodies that bind to a polynucleotide and/or polypeptide of the invention and thereby inhibit or extinguish its activity or expression. Potential antagonists also may be small organic molecules, a peptide, a polypeptide such as a closely related protein or antibody that

binds the same sites on a binding molecule, such as a binding molecule, without inducing BASB226 or BASB227 induced activities, thereby preventing the action or expression of BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides and/or polynucleotides by excluding BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides and/or polynucleotides from binding.

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Potential antagonists include a small molecule that binds to and occupies the binding site of the polypeptide thereby preventing binding to cellular binding molecules, such that normal biological activity is prevented. Examples of small molecules include but are not limited to small organic molecules, peptides or peptide-like molecules. Other potential antagonists include antisense molecules (see Okano, *J. Neurochem.* 56: 560 (1991); *OLIGODEOXYNUCLEOTIDES AS ANTISENSE INHIBITORS OF GENE EXPRESSION*, CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL (1988), for a description of these molecules). Preferred potential antagonists include compounds related to and variants of BASB226 or BASB227.

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In a further aspect, the present invention relates to genetically engineered soluble fusion proteins comprising a polypeptide of the present invention, or a fragment thereof, and various portions of the constant regions of heavy or light chains of immunoglobulins of various subclasses (IgG, IgM, IgA, IgE). Preferred as an immunoglobulin is the constant part of the heavy chain of human IgG, particularly IgG1, where fusion takes place at the hinge region. In a particular embodiment, the Fc part can be removed simply by incorporation of a cleavage sequence which can be cleaved with blood clotting factor Xa. Furthermore, this invention relates to processes for the preparation of these fusion proteins by genetic engineering, and to the use thereof for drug screening, diagnosis and therapy. A further aspect of the invention also relates to polynucleotides encoding such fusion proteins. Examples of fusion protein technology can be found in International Patent Application Nos. WO94/29458 and WO94/22914.

30

Each of the polynucleotide sequences provided herein may be used in the discovery and development of antibacterial compounds. The encoded protein, upon expression, can be used as a target for the screening of antibacterial drugs. Additionally, the polynucleotide

sequences encoding the amino terminal regions of the encoded protein or Shine-Delgarno or other translation facilitating sequences of the respective mRNA can be used to construct antisense sequences to control the expression of the coding sequence of interest.

- 5 The invention also provides the use of the polypeptide, polynucleotide, agonist or antagonist of the invention to interfere with the initial physical interaction between a pathogen or pathogens and a eukaryotic, preferably mammalian, host responsible for sequelae of infection. In particular, the molecules of the invention may be used: in the prevention of adhesion of bacteria, in particular gram positive and/or gram negative
10 bacteria, to eukaryotic, preferably mammalian, extracellular matrix proteins on in-dwelling devices or to extracellular matrix proteins in wounds; to block bacterial adhesion between eukaryotic, preferably mammalian, extracellular matrix proteins and bacterial BASB226 or BASB227 proteins that mediate tissue damage and/or; to block the normal progression of pathogenesis in infections initiated other than by the implantation of in-
15 dwelling devices or by other surgical techniques.

In accordance with yet another aspect of the invention, there are provided BASB226 or BASB227 agonists and antagonists, preferably bacteristatic or bactericidal agonists and antagonists.

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The antagonists and agonists of the invention may be employed, for instance, to prevent, inhibit and/or treat diseases.

- In a further aspect, the present invention relates to mimotopes of the polypeptide of the
25 invention. A mimotope is a peptide sequence, sufficiently similar to the native peptide (sequentially or structurally), which is capable of being recognised by antibodies which recognise the native peptide; or is capable of raising antibodies which recognise the native peptide when coupled to a suitable carrier.

Peptide mimotopes may be designed for a particular purpose by addition, deletion or substitution of elected amino acids. Thus, the peptides may be modified for the purposes of ease of conjugation to a protein carrier. For example, it may be desirable for some chemical conjugation methods to include a terminal cysteine. In addition it may be
5 desirable for peptides conjugated to a protein carrier to include a hydrophobic terminus distal from the conjugated terminus of the peptide, such that the free unconjugated end of the peptide remains associated with the surface of the carrier protein. Thereby presenting the peptide in a conformation which most closely resembles that of the peptide as found in the context of the whole native molecule. For example, the peptides
10 may be altered to have an N-terminal cysteine and a C-terminal hydrophobic amidated tail. Alternatively, the addition or substitution of a D-stereoisomer form of one or more of the amino acids (inverso sequences) may be performed to create a beneficial derivative, for example to enhance stability of the peptide. Mimotopes may also be retro sequences of the natural peptide sequences, in that the sequence orientation is reversed.
15 Mimotopes may also be retro-inverso in character. Retro, inverso and retro-inverso peptides are described in WO 95/24916 and WO 94/05311.

Alternatively, peptide mimotopes may be identified using antibodies which are capable themselves of binding to the polypeptides of the present invention using techniques such
20 as phage display technology (EP 0 552 267 B1). This technique, generates a large number of peptide sequences which mimic the structure of the native peptides and are, therefore, capable of binding to anti-native peptide antibodies, but may not necessarily themselves share significant sequence homology to the native polypeptide.

Vaccines

25 Another aspect of the invention relates to a method for inducing an immunological response in an individual, particularly a mammal, preferably humans, which comprises inoculating the individual with BASB226 or BASB227 polynucleotide and/or polypeptide, or a fragment or variant thereof, adequate to produce antibody and/ or T cell immune response to protect said individual from infection, particularly bacterial infection and most
30 particularly non typeable *H. influenzae* infection. Also provided are methods whereby

such immunological response slows bacterial replication. Yet another aspect of the invention relates to a method of inducing immunological response in an individual which comprises delivering to such individual a nucleic acid vector, sequence or ribozyme to direct expression of BASB226 or BASB227 polynucleotides and/or polypeptides, or a
5 fragment or a variant thereof, for expressing BASB226 or BASB227 polynucleotides and/or polypeptides, or a fragment or a variant thereof *in vivo* in order to induce an immunological response, such as, to produce antibody and/ or T cell immune response, including, for example, cytokine-producing T cells or cytotoxic T cells, to protect said individual, preferably a human, from disease, whether that disease is already established
10 within the individual or not. One example of administering the gene is by accelerating it into the desired cells as a coating on particles or otherwise. Such nucleic acid vector may comprise DNA, RNA, a ribozyme, a modified nucleic acid, a DNA/RNA hybrid, a DNA-protein complex or an RNA-protein complex.

15 A further aspect of the invention relates to an immunological composition that when introduced into an individual, preferably a human, capable of having induced within it an immunological response, induces an immunological response in such individual to a BASB226 or BASB227 polynucleotide and/or polypeptide encoded therefrom, wherein the composition comprises a recombinant BASB226 or BASB227 polynucleotide and/or
20 polypeptide encoded therefrom and/or comprises DNA and/or RNA which encodes and expresses an antigen of said BASB226 or BASB227 polynucleotide, polypeptide encoded therefrom, or other polypeptide of the invention. The immunological response may be used therapeutically or prophylactically and may take the form of antibody immunity and/or cellular immunity, such as cellular immunity arising from CTL or CD4+ T cells.

25 BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides or a fragment thereof may be fused with co-protein or chemical moiety which may or may not by itself produce antibodies, but which is capable of stabilizing the first protein and producing a fused or modified protein which will have antigenic and/or immunogenic properties, and preferably protective properties.

30 Thus fused recombinant protein, preferably further comprises an antigenic co-protein,

such as lipoprotein D from *Haemophilus influenzae*, Glutathione-S-transferase (GST) or beta-galactosidase, or any other relatively large co-protein which solubilizes the protein and facilitates production and purification thereof. Moreover, the co-protein may act as an adjuvant in the sense of providing a generalized stimulation of the immune system of the organism receiving the protein. The co-protein may be attached to either the amino- or carboxy-terminus of the first protein.

In a vaccine composition according to the invention, a BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides and/or polynucleotides, or a fragment, or a mimotope, or a variant thereof may be present in a vector, such as the live recombinant vectors described above for example live bacterial vectors.

Also suitable are non-live vectors for the BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides, for example bacterial outer-membrane vesicles or "blebs". OM blebs are derived from the outer membrane of the two-layer membrane of Gram-negative bacteria and have been documented in many Gram-negative bacteria (Zhou, L *et al.* 1998. *FEMS Microbiol. Lett.* 163:223-228) including *C. trachomatis* and *C. psittaci*. A non-exhaustive list of bacterial pathogens reported to produce blebs also includes: *Bordetella pertussis*, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, *Brucella melitensis*, *Brucella ovis*, *Escherichia coli*, *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Legionella pneumophila*, *Moraxella catarrhalis*, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, *Neisseria meningitidis*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Yersinia enterocolitica*.

Blebs have the advantage of providing outer-membrane proteins in their native conformation and are thus particularly useful for vaccines. Blebs can also be improved for vaccine use by engineering the bacterium so as to modify the expression of one or more molecules at the outer membrane. Thus for example the expression of a desired immunogenic protein at the outer membrane, such as the BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides, can be introduced or upregulated (e.g. by altering the promoter). Instead or in addition, the expression of outer-membrane molecules which are either not relevant (e.g. unprotective antigens or immunodominant but variable proteins) or detrimental (e.g.

toxic molecules such as LPS, or potential inducers of an autoimmune response) can be downregulated. These approaches are discussed in more detail below.

The non-coding flanking regions of the BASB226 or BASB227 genes contain regulatory elements important in the expression of the gene. This regulation takes place
5 both at the transcriptional and translational level. The sequence of these regions, either upstream or downstream of the open reading frame of the gene, can be obtained by DNA sequencing. This sequence information allows the determination of potential regulatory motifs such as the different promoter elements, terminator sequences, inducible sequence elements, repressors, elements responsible for phase variation, the
10 shine-dalgarno sequence, regions with potential secondary structure involved in regulation, as well as other types of regulatory motifs or sequences. This sequence is a further aspect of the invention. Furthermore, SEQ ID NO: 5 and 6 are the non typeable *Haemophilus influenzae* upstream sequences (upstream of the predicted initiation codon of the preferred genes), of BASB226 and BASB227 polynucleotides, comprising
15 approximately 1000 and 186 bp (respectively).

This sequence information allows the modulation of the natural expression of the BASB226 and BASB227 genes. The upregulation of the gene expression may be
20 accomplished by altering the promoter, the shine-dalgarno sequence, potential repressor or operator elements, or any other elements involved. Likewise, downregulation of expression can be achieved by similar types of modification. Alternatively, by changing phase variation sequences, the expression of the gene can be put under phase variation control, or it may be uncoupled from this regulation. In another approach, the expression
25 of the gene can be put under the control of one or more inducible elements allowing regulated expression. Examples of such regulation include, but are not limited to, induction by temperature shift, addition of inductor substrates like selected carbohydrates or their derivatives, trace elements, vitamins, co-factors, metal ions, etc.

Such modifications as described above can be introduced by several different means. The modification of sequences involved in gene expression can be carried out *in vivo* by random mutagenesis followed by selection for the desired phenotype. Another approach consists in isolating the region of interest and modifying it by random mutagenesis, or site-directed replacement, insertion or deletion mutagenesis. The modified region can then be reintroduced into the bacterial genome by homologous recombination, and the effect on gene expression can be assessed. In another approach, the sequence knowledge of the region of interest can be used to replace or delete all or part of the natural regulatory sequences. In this case, the regulatory region targeted is isolated and modified so as to contain the regulatory elements from another gene, a combination of regulatory elements from different genes, a synthetic regulatory region, or any other regulatory region, or to delete selected parts of the wild-type regulatory sequences. These modified sequences can then be reintroduced into the bacterium via homologous recombination into the genome. A non-exhaustive list of preferred promoters that could be used for up-regulation of gene expression includes the promoters *porA*, *porB*, *lbpB*, *tbpB*, *p110*, *lst*, *hpuAB* from *N. meningitidis* or *N. gonorrhoeae*; *ompCD*, *copB*, *lbpB*, *ompE*, *UspA1*; *UspA2*; *TbpB* from *M. Catarrhalis*; *p1*, *p2*, *p4*, *p5*, *p6*, *lpD*, *tbpB*, *D15*, *Hia*, *Hmw1*, *Hmw2* from *H. influenzae*.

In one example, the expression of the gene can be modulated by exchanging its promoter with a stronger promoter (through isolating the upstream sequence of the gene, *in vitro* modification of this sequence, and reintroduction into the genome by homologous recombination). Upregulated expression can be obtained in both the bacterium as well as in the outer membrane vesicles shed (or made) from the bacterium.

In other examples, the described approaches can be used to generate recombinant bacterial strains with improved characteristics for vaccine applications. These can be, but are not limited to, attenuated strains, strains with increased expression of selected antigens, strains with knock-outs (or decreased expression) of genes interfering with the immune

response, strains with modulated expression of immunodominant proteins, strains with modulated shedding of outer-membrane vesicles.

Thus, also provided by the invention is a modified upstream region of the BASB226 and
5 227 genes, which modified upstream region contains a heterologous regulatory element
which alters the expression level of the BASB226 and 227 proteins located at the outer
membrane. The upstream region according to this aspect of the invention includes the
sequence upstream of the BASB226 and 227 genes. The upstream region starts
immediately upstream of the BASB226 and 227 genes and continues usually to a position
10 no more than about 1000 bp upstream of the gene from the ATG start codon. In the case of
a gene located in a polycistronic sequence (operon) the upstream region can start
immediately preceding the gene of interest, or preceding the first gene in the operon.
Preferably, a modified upstream region according to this aspect of the invention contains a
heterologous promotor at a position between 500 and 700 bp upstream of the ATG.

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The use of the disclosed upstream regions to upregulate the expression of the BASB226
and 227 genes, a process for achieving this through homologous recombination (for
instance as described in WO 01/09350 incorporated by reference herein), a vector
comprising upstream sequence suitable for this purpose, and a host cell so altered are all
20 further aspects of this invention.

Thus, the invention provides a BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides, in a modified
bacterial bleb. The invention further provides modified host cells capable of producing the
non-live membrane-based bleb vectors. The invention further provides nucleic acid vectors
25 comprising the BASB226 or BASB227 genes having a modified upstream region containing
a heterologous regulatory element.

Further provided by the invention are processes to prepare the host cells and bacterial blebs
according to the invention.

30

Also provided by this invention are compositions, particularly vaccine compositions, and methods comprising the polypeptides and/or polynucleotides of the invention and immunostimulatory DNA sequences, such as those described in Sato, Y. *et al.* Science 273: 352 (1996).

5

Also, provided by this invention are methods using the described polynucleotide or particular fragments thereof, which have been shown to encode non-variable regions of bacterial cell surface proteins, in polynucleotide constructs used in such genetic immunization experiments in animal models of infection with non typeable *H. influenzae*.

10

Such experiments will be particularly useful for identifying protein epitopes able to provoke a prophylactic or therapeutic immune response. It is believed that this approach will allow for the subsequent preparation of monoclonal antibodies of particular value, derived from the requisite organ of the animal successfully resisting or clearing infection, for the development of prophylactic agents or therapeutic treatments of bacterial infection, particularly non typeable *H. influenzae* infection, in mammals, particularly humans.

15

The invention also includes a vaccine formulation which comprises an immunogenic recombinant polypeptide and/or polynucleotide of the invention together with a suitable carrier, such as a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier. Since the polypeptides and polynucleotides may be broken down in the stomach, each is preferably administered parenterally, including, for example, administration that is subcutaneous, intramuscular, intravenous, or intradermal. Formulations suitable for parenteral administration include aqueous and non-aqueous sterile injection solutions which may contain anti-oxidants, buffers, bacteriostatic compounds and solutes which render the formulation isotonic with the bodily fluid, preferably the blood, of the individual; and aqueous and non-aqueous sterile suspensions which may include suspending agents or thickening agents. The formulations may be presented in unit-dose or multi-dose containers, for example, sealed ampoules and vials and may be stored in a freeze-dried condition requiring only the addition of the sterile liquid carrier immediately prior to use.

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The vaccine formulation of the invention may also include adjuvant systems for enhancing the immunogenicity of the formulation. Preferably the adjuvant system raises preferentially a TH1 type of response.

5 An immune response may be broadly distinguished into two extreme categories, being a humoral or cell mediated immune responses (traditionally characterised by antibody and cellular effector mechanisms of protection respectively). These categories of response have been termed TH1-type responses (cell-mediated response), and TH2-type immune responses (humoral response).

10

Extreme TH1-type immune responses may be characterised by the generation of antigen specific, haplotype restricted cytotoxic T lymphocytes, and natural killer cell responses. In mice TH1-type responses are often characterised by the generation of antibodies of the IgG2a subtype, whilst in the human these correspond to IgG1 type antibodies. TH2-
15 type immune responses are characterised by the generation of a broad range of immunoglobulin isotypes including in mice IgG1, IgA, and IgM.

20

It can be considered that the driving force behind the development of these two types of immune responses are cytokines. High levels of TH1-type cytokines tend to favour the induction of cell mediated immune responses to the given antigen, whilst high levels of TH2-type cytokines tend to favour the induction of humoral immune responses to the antigen.

25

The distinction of TH1 and TH2-type immune responses is not absolute. In reality an individual will support an immune response which is described as being predominantly TH1 or predominantly TH2. However, it is often convenient to consider the families of cytokines in terms of that described in murine CD4 +ve T cell clones by Mosmann and Coffman (*Mosmann, T.R. and Coffman, R.L. (1989) TH1 and TH2 cells: different patterns of lymphokine secretion lead to different functional properties. Annual Review of Immunology, 7, p145-173*). Traditionally, TH1-type responses are associated with
30

the production of the INF- γ and IL-2 cytokines by T-lymphocytes. Other cytokines often directly associated with the induction of TH1-type immune responses are not produced by T-cells, such as IL-12. In contrast, TH2- type responses are associated with the secretion of IL-4, IL-5, IL-6 and IL-13.

5

It is known that certain vaccine adjuvants are particularly suited to the stimulation of either TH1 or TH2 - type cytokine responses. Traditionally the best indicators of the TH1:TH2 balance of the immune response after a vaccination or infection includes direct measurement of the production of TH1 or TH2 cytokines by T lymphocytes *in*
10 *vitro* after restimulation with antigen, and/or the measurement of the IgG1:IgG2a ratio of antigen specific antibody responses.

Thus, a TH1-type adjuvant is one which preferentially stimulates isolated T-cell populations to produce high levels of TH1-type cytokines when re-stimulated with
15 antigen *in vitro*, and promotes development of both CD8+ cytotoxic T lymphocytes and antigen specific immunoglobulin responses associated with TH1-type isotype.

Adjuvants which are capable of preferential stimulation of the TH1 cell response are described in International Patent Application No. WO 94/00153 and WO 95/17209.

20

3 De-O-acylated monophosphoryl lipid A (3D-MPL) is one such adjuvant. This is known from GB 2220211 (Ribi). Chemically it is a mixture of 3 De-O-acylated monophosphoryl lipid A with 4, 5 or 6 acylated chains and is manufactured by Ribi Immunochem, Montana. A preferred form of 3 De-O-acylated monophosphoryl lipid A
25 is disclosed in European Patent 0 689 454 B1 (SmithKline Beecham Biologicals SA).

Preferably, the particles of 3D-MPL are small enough to be sterile filtered through a 0.22micron membrane (European Patent number 0 689 454).

3D-MPL will be present in the range of 10 μ g – 100 μ g preferably 25-50 μ g per dose
30 wherein the antigen will typically be present in a range 2-50 μ g per dose.

Another preferred adjuvant comprises QS21, an Hplc purified non-toxic fraction derived from the bark of *Quillaja Saponaria Molina*. Optionally this may be admixed with 3 De-O-acylated monophosphoryl lipid A (3D-MPL), optionally together with an carrier.

5

The method of production of QS21 is disclosed in US patent No. 5,057,540.

Non-reactogenic adjuvant formulations containing QS21 have been described previously (WO 96/33739). Such formulations comprising QS21 and cholesterol have
10 been shown to be successful TH1 stimulating adjuvants when formulated together with an antigen.

Further adjuvants which are preferential stimulators of TH1 cell response include immunomodulatory oligonucleotides, for example unmethylated CpG sequences as
15 disclosed in WO 96/02555.

Combinations of different TH1 stimulating adjuvants, such as those mentioned hereinabove, are also contemplated as providing an adjuvant which is a preferential stimulator of TH1 cell response. For example, QS21 can be formulated together with
20 3D-MPL. The ratio of QS21 : 3D-MPL will typically be in the order of 1 : 10 to 10 : 1; preferably 1:5 to 5 : 1 and often substantially 1 : 1. The preferred range for optimal synergy is 2.5 : 1 to 1 : 1 3D-MPL: QS21.

Preferably a carrier is also present in the vaccine composition according to the
25 invention. The carrier may be an oil in water emulsion, or an aluminium salt, such as aluminium phosphate or aluminium hydroxide.

A preferred oil-in-water emulsion comprises a metabolisable oil, such as squalene, alpha tocopherol and Tween 80. In a particularly preferred aspect the antigens in the vaccine
30 composition according to the invention are combined with QS21 and 3D-MPL in such

an emulsion. Additionally the oil in water emulsion may contain span 85 and/or lecithin and/or tricaprylin.

Typically for human administration QS21 and 3D-MPL will be present in a vaccine in
5 the range of 1µg – 200µg, such as 10-100µg, preferably 10µg – 50µg per dose.

Typically the oil in water will comprise from 2 to 10% squalene, from 2 to 10% alpha
tocopherol and from 0.3 to 3% tween 80. Preferably the ratio of squalene: alpha
tocopherol is equal to or less than 1 as this provides a more stable emulsion. Span 85
may also be present at a level of 1%. In some cases it may be advantageous that the
10 vaccines of the present invention will further contain a stabiliser.

Non-toxic oil in water emulsions preferably contain a non-toxic oil, e.g. squalane or
squalene, an emulsifier, e.g. Tween 80, in an aqueous carrier. The aqueous carrier may
be, for example, phosphate buffered saline.

15

A particularly potent adjuvant formulation involving QS21, 3D-MPL and tocopherol in
an oil in water emulsion is described in WO 95/17210.

While the invention has been described with reference to certain BASB226 and BASB227
20 polypeptides and polynucleotides, it is to be understood that this covers fragments of the
naturally occurring polypeptides and polynucleotides, and similar polypeptides and
polynucleotides with additions, deletions or substitutions which do not substantially affect
the immunogenic properties of the recombinant polypeptides or polynucleotides. Preferred
fragments/peptides are described in Example 10.

25

The present invention also provides a polyvalent vaccine composition comprising a vaccine
formulation of the invention in combination with other antigens, in particular antigens useful
for treating *otitis media*. Such a polyvalent vaccine composition may include a TH-1
inducing adjuvant as hereinbefore described.

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In a preferred embodiment, the polypeptides, fragments and immunogens of the invention are formulated with one or more of the following groups of antigens: a) one or more pneumococcal capsular polysaccharides (either plain or conjugated to a carrier protein); b) one or more antigens that can protect a host against *M. catarrhalis* infection; c) one or
5 more protein antigens that can protect a host against *Streptococcus pneumoniae* infection; d) one or more further non typeable *Haemophilus influenzae* protein antigens; e) one or more antigens that can protect a host against RSV; and f) one or more antigens that can protect a host against influenza virus. Combinations with: groups a) and b); b) and c); b), d), and a) and/or c); b), d), e), f), and a) and/or c) are preferred. Such vaccines may be
10 advantageously used as global otitis media vaccines.

The pneumococcal capsular polysaccharide antigens are preferably selected from serotypes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6B, 7F, 8, 9N, 9V, 10A, 11A, 12F, 14, 15B, 17F, 18C, 19A, 19F, 20, 22F, 23F and 33F (most preferably from serotypes 1, 3, 4, 5, 6B, 7F, 9V, 14, 18C,
15 19F and 23F).

Preferred pneumococcal protein antigens are those pneumococcal proteins which are exposed on the outer surface of the pneumococcus (capable of being recognised by a host's immune system during at least part of the life cycle of the pneumococcus), or are
20 proteins which are secreted or released by the pneumococcus. Most preferably, the protein is a toxin, adhesin, 2-component signal transducer, or lipoprotein of *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, or fragments thereof. Particularly preferred proteins include, but are not limited to: pneumolysin (preferably detoxified by chemical treatment or mutation) [Mitchell *et al.* Nucleic Acids Res. 1990 Jul 11; 18(13): 4010 "Comparison
25 of pneumolysin genes and proteins from *Streptococcus pneumoniae* types 1 and 2.", Mitchell *et al.* Biochim Biophys Acta 1989 Jan 23; 1007(1): 67-72 "Expression of the pneumolysin gene in *Escherichia coli*: rapid purification and biological properties.", WO 96/05859 (A. Cyanamid), WO 90/06951 (Paton et al), WO 99/03884 (NAVA)]; PspA and transmembrane deletion variants thereof (WO 92/14488; WO 99/53940; US
30 5804193 - Briles *et al.*); PspC and transmembrane deletion variants thereof (WO

99/53940; WO 97/09994 - Briles et al); PsaA and transmembrane deletion variants thereof (Berry & Paton, Infect Immun 1996 Dec;64(12):5255-62 "Sequence heterogeneity of PsaA, a 37-kilodalton putative adhesin essential for virulence of *Streptococcus pneumoniae*"); pneumococcal choline binding proteins and transmembrane deletion variants thereof; CbpA and transmembrane deletion variants thereof (WO 97/41151; WO 99/51266); Glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate - dehydrogenase (Infect. Immun. 1996 64:3544); HSP70 (WO 96/40928); PcpA (Sanchez-Beato et al. *FEMS Microbiol Lett* 1998, 164:207-14); M like protein, SB patent application No. EP 0837130; and adhesin 18627 (SB Patent application No. EP 0834568). Further preferred pneumococcal protein antigens are those disclosed in WO 98/18931, particularly those selected in WO 98/18930 and PCT/US99/30390.

Preferred *Moraxella catarrhalis* protein antigens which can be included in a combination vaccine (especially for the prevention of otitis media) are: OMP106 [WO 97/41731 (Antex) & WO 96/34960 (PMC)]; OMP21; LbpA &/or LbpB [WO 98/55606 (PMC)]; TbpA &/or TbpB [WO 97/13785 & WO 97/32980 (PMC)]; CopB [Helminen ME, et al. (1993) Infect. Immun. 61:2003-2010]; UspA1 and/or UspA2 [WO 93/03761 (University of Texas)]; OmpCD; HasR (PCT/EP99/03824); PilQ (PCT/EP99/03823); OMP85 (PCT/EP00/01468); lipo06 (GB 9917977.2); lipo10 (GB 9918208.1); lipo11 (GB 9918302.2); lipo18 (GB 9918038.2); P6 (PCT/EP99/03038); D15 (PCT/EP99/03822); OmpLA1 (PCT/EP99/06781); Hly3 (PCT/EP99/03257); and OmpE.

Preferred further non-typeable *Haemophilus influenzae* protein antigens which can be included in a combination vaccine (especially for the prevention of otitis media) include: Fimbrin protein [(US 5766608 - Ohio State Research Foundation)] and fusions comprising peptides therefrom [eg LB1(f) peptide fusions; US 5843464 (OSU) or WO 99/64067]; OMP26 [WO 97/01638 (Cortecs)]; P6 [EP 281673 (State University of New York)]; protein D (EP 594610); TbpA and/or TbpB; Hia; Hsf; Hin47; Hif; Hmw1; Hmw2; Hmw3; Hmw4; Hap; D15 (WO 94/12641); P2; and P5 (WO 94/26304).

Preferred influenza virus antigens include whole, live or inactivated virus, split influenza virus, grown in eggs or MDCK cells, or Vero cells or whole flu virosomes (as described by R. Gluck, Vaccine, 1992, 10, 915-920) or purified or recombinant proteins thereof, such as HA, NP, NA, or M proteins, or combinations thereof.

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Preferred RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) antigens include the F glycoprotein, the G glycoprotein, the HN protein, or derivatives thereof.

Compositions, kits and administration

10 In a further aspect of the invention there are provided compositions comprising a BASB226 or BASB227 polynucleotides and/or a BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptides for administration to a cell or to a multicellular organism.

The invention also relates to compositions comprising a polynucleotide and/or a
15 polypeptides discussed herein or their agonists or antagonists. The polypeptides and polynucleotides of the invention may be employed in combination with a non-sterile or sterile carrier or carriers for use with cells, tissues or organisms, such as a pharmaceutical carrier suitable for administration to an individual. Such compositions comprise, for instance, a media additive or a therapeutically effective amount of a polypeptide and/or
20 polynucleotide of the invention and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or excipient. Such carriers may include, but are not limited to, saline, buffered saline, dextrose, water, glycerol, ethanol and combinations thereof. The formulation should suit the mode of administration. The invention further relates to diagnostic and pharmaceutical packs and kits comprising one or more containers filled with one or more of the ingredients of the aforementioned
25 compositions of the invention.

Polypeptides, polynucleotides and other compounds of the invention may be employed alone or in conjunction with other compounds, such as therapeutic compounds.

The pharmaceutical compositions may be administered in any effective, convenient manner including, for instance, administration by topical, oral, anal, vaginal, intravenous, intraperitoneal, intramuscular, subcutaneous, intranasal or intradermal routes among others.

- 5 In therapy or as a prophylactic, the active agent may be administered to an individual as an injectable composition, for example as a sterile aqueous dispersion, preferably isotonic.

In a further aspect, the present invention provides for pharmaceutical compositions comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a polypeptide and/or polynucleotide, such
10 as the soluble form of a polypeptide and/or polynucleotide of the present invention, agonist or antagonist peptide or small molecule compound, in combination with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or excipient. Such carriers include, but are not limited to, saline, buffered saline, dextrose, water, glycerol, ethanol, and combinations thereof. The invention further relates to pharmaceutical packs and kits comprising one or more containers filled with one
15 or more of the ingredients of the aforementioned compositions of the invention.

Polypeptides, polynucleotides and other compounds of the present invention may be employed alone or in conjunction with other compounds, such as therapeutic compounds.

The composition will be adapted to the route of administration, for instance by a systemic or
20 an oral route. Preferred forms of systemic administration include injection, typically by intravenous injection. Other injection routes, such as subcutaneous, intramuscular, or intraperitoneal, can be used. Alternative means for systemic administration include transmucosal and transdermal administration using penetrants such as bile salts or fusidic acids or other detergents. In addition, if a polypeptide or other compounds of the present
25 invention can be formulated in an enteric or an encapsulated formulation, oral administration may also be possible. Administration of these compounds may also be topical and/or localized, in the form of salves, pastes, gels, solutions, powders and the like.

For administration to mammals, and particularly humans, it is expected that the daily
30 dosage level of the active agent will be from 0.01 mg/kg to 10 mg/kg, typically around 1

mg/kg. The physician in any event will determine the actual dosage which will be most suitable for an individual and will vary with the age, weight and response of the particular individual. The above dosages are exemplary of the average case. There can, of course, be individual instances where higher or lower dosage ranges are merited, and such are
5 within the scope of this invention.

The dosage range required depends on the choice of peptide, the route of administration, the nature of the formulation, the nature of the subject's condition, and the judgment of the attending practitioner. Suitable dosages, however, are in the range of 0.1-100 µg/kg of
10 subject.

A vaccine composition is conveniently in injectable form. Conventional adjuvants may be employed to enhance the immune response. A suitable unit dose for vaccination is 0.5-5 microgram/kg of antigen, and such dose is preferably administered 1-3 times and with an
15 interval of 1-3 weeks. With the indicated dose range, no adverse toxicological effects will be observed with the compounds of the invention which would preclude their administration to suitable individuals.

Wide variations in the needed dosage, however, are to be expected in view of the variety of
20 compounds available and the differing efficiencies of various routes of administration. For example, oral administration would be expected to require higher dosages than administration by intravenous injection. Variations in these dosage levels can be adjusted using standard empirical routines for optimization, as is well understood in the art.

25

Sequence Databases, Sequences in a Tangible Medium, and Algorithms

Polynucleotide and polypeptide sequences form a valuable information resource with which to determine their 2- and 3-dimensional structures as well as to identify further sequences of similar homology. These approaches are most easily facilitated by storing the sequence in a
30 computer readable medium and then using the stored data in a known macromolecular

structure program or to search a sequence database using well known searching tools, such as the GCG program package.

Also provided by the invention are methods for the analysis of character sequences or strings, particularly genetic sequences or encoded protein sequences. Preferred methods of sequence analysis include, for example, methods of sequence homology analysis, such as identity and similarity analysis, DNA, RNA and protein structure analysis, sequence assembly, cladistic analysis, sequence motif analysis, open reading frame determination, nucleic acid base calling, codon usage analysis, nucleic acid base trimming, and sequencing chromatogram peak analysis.

A computer based method is provided for performing homology identification. This method comprises the steps of: providing a first polynucleotide sequence comprising the sequence of a polynucleotide of the invention in a computer readable medium; and comparing said first polynucleotide sequence to at least one second polynucleotide or polypeptide sequence to identify homology.

A computer based method is also provided for performing homology identification, said method comprising the steps of: providing a first polypeptide sequence comprising the sequence of a polypeptide of the invention in a computer readable medium; and comparing said first polypeptide sequence to at least one second polynucleotide or polypeptide sequence to identify homology.

All publications and references, including but not limited to patents and patent applications, cited in this specification are herein incorporated by reference in their entirety as if each individual publication or reference were specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference herein as being fully set forth. Any patent application to which this application claims priority is also incorporated by reference herein in its entirety in the manner described above for publications and references.

DEFINITIONS

"Identity," as known in the art, is a relationship between two or more polypeptide sequences or two or more polynucleotide sequences, as the case may be, as determined by comparing the sequences. In the art, "identity" also means the degree of sequence relatedness between polypeptide or polynucleotide sequences, as the case may be, as determined by the match between strings of such sequences. "Identity" can be readily calculated by known methods, including but not limited to those described in (*Computational Molecular Biology*, Lesk, A.M., ed., Oxford University Press, New York, 1988; *Biocomputing: Informatics and Genome Projects*, Smith, D.W., ed., Academic Press, New York, 1993; *Computer Analysis of Sequence Data*, Part I, Griffin, A.M., and Griffin, H.G., eds., Humana Press, New Jersey, 1994; *Sequence Analysis in Molecular Biology*, von Heine, G., Academic Press, 1987; and *Sequence Analysis Primer*, Gribskov, M. and Devereux, J., eds., M Stockton Press, New York, 1991; and Carillo, H., and Lipman, D., *SIAM J. Applied Math.*, 48: 1073 (1988). Methods to determine identity are designed to give the largest match between the sequences tested. Moreover, methods to determine identity are codified in publicly available computer programs. Computer program methods to determine identity between two sequences include, but are not limited to, the GAP program in the GCG program package (Devereux, J., et al., *Nucleic Acids Research* 12(1): 387 (1984)), BLASTP, BLASTN (Altschul, S.F. et al., *J. Molec. Biol.* 215: 403-410 (1990), and FASTA(Pearson and Lipman *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 85: 2444-2448 (1988). The BLAST family of programs is publicly available from NCBI and other sources (*BLAST Manual*, Altschul, S., et al., NCBI NLM NIH Bethesda, MD 20894; Altschul, S., et al., *J. Mol. Biol.* 215: 403-410 (1990). The well known Smith Waterman algorithm may also be used to determine identity.

Parameters for polypeptide sequence comparison include the following:

Algorithm: Needleman and Wunsch, *J. Mol Biol.* 48: 443-453 (1970)

Comparison matrix: BLOSSUM62 from Henikoff and Henikoff,

Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA. 89:10915-10919 (1992)

Gap Penalty: 8

Gap Length Penalty: 2

A program useful with these parameters is publicly available as the "gap" program from Genetics Computer Group, Madison WI. The aforementioned parameters are the default
5 parameters for peptide comparisons (along with no penalty for end gaps).

Parameters for polynucleotide comparison include the following:

Algorithm: Needleman and Wunsch, J. Mol Biol. 48: 443-453 (1970)

Comparison matrix: matches = +10, mismatch = 0

10 Gap Penalty: 50

Gap Length Penalty: 3

Available as: The "gap" program from Genetics Computer Group, Madison WI. These are the default parameters for nucleic acid comparisons.

15 A preferred meaning for "identity" for polynucleotides and polypeptides, as the case may be, are provided in (1) and (2) below.

(1) Polynucleotide embodiments further include an isolated polynucleotide
20 comprising a polynucleotide sequence having at least a 50, 60, 70, 80, 85, 90, 95, 97 or 100% identity to the reference sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, wherein said polynucleotide sequence may be identical to the reference sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 or may include up to a certain integer number of nucleotide alterations as compared to the reference sequence, wherein said alterations are selected from the group consisting of at least one
25 nucleotide deletion, substitution, including transition and transversion, or insertion, and wherein said alterations may occur at the 5' or 3' terminal positions of the reference nucleotide sequence or anywhere between those terminal positions, interspersed either individually among the nucleotides in the reference sequence or in one or more contiguous groups within the reference sequence, and wherein said number of nucleotide
30 alterations is determined by multiplying the total number of nucleotides in SEQ ID NO:1

by the integer defining the percent identity divided by 100 and then subtracting that product from said total number of nucleotides in SEQ ID NO:1, or:

$$n_n \leq x_n - (x_n \bullet y),$$

5

wherein n_n is the number of nucleotide alterations, x_n is the total number of nucleotides in SEQ ID NO:1, y is 0.50 for 50%, 0.60 for 60%, 0.70 for 70%, 0.80 for 80%, 0.85 for 85%, 0.90 for 90%, 0.95 for 95%, 0.97 for 97% or 1.00 for 100%, and $\bullet$ is the symbol for the multiplication operator, and wherein any non-integer product of x_n and y is rounded
10 down to the nearest integer prior to subtracting it from x_n . Alterations of polynucleotide sequences encoding the polypeptides of SEQ ID NO:2 may create nonsense, missense or frameshift mutations in this coding sequence and thereby alter the polypeptide encoded by the polynucleotide following such alterations.

15 By way of example, a polynucleotide sequence of the present invention may be identical to the reference sequences of SEQ ID NO:1, that is it may be 100% identical, or it may include up to a certain integer number of nucleic acid alterations as compared to the reference sequence such that the percent identity is less than 100% identity. Such alterations are selected from the group consisting of at least one nucleic acid deletion,
20 substitution, including transition and transversion, or insertion, and wherein said alterations may occur at the 5' or 3' terminal positions of the reference polynucleotide sequence or anywhere between those terminal positions, interspersed either individually among the nucleic acids in the reference sequence or in one or more contiguous groups within the reference sequence. The number of nucleic acid alterations for a given percent
25 identity is determined by multiplying the total number of nucleic acids in SEQ ID NO:1 by the integer defining the percent identity divided by 100 and then subtracting that product from said total number of nucleic acids in SEQ ID NO:1, or:

$$n_n \leq x_n - (x_n \bullet y),$$

wherein n_n is the number of nucleic acid alterations, x_n is the total number of nucleic acids in SEQ ID NO:1, y is, for instance 0.70 for 70%, 0.80 for 80%, 0.85 for 85% etc., $\bullet$ is the symbol for the multiplication operator, and wherein any non-integer product of x_n and y is rounded down to the nearest integer prior to subtracting it from x_n .

(2) Polypeptide embodiments further include an isolated polypeptide comprising a polypeptide having at least a 50,60, 70, 80, 85, 90, 95, 97 or 100% identity to the polypeptide reference sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein said polypeptide sequence may be identical to the reference sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 or may include up to a certain integer number of amino acid alterations as compared to the reference sequence, wherein said alterations are selected from the group consisting of at least one amino acid deletion, substitution, including conservative and non-conservative substitution, or insertion, and wherein said alterations may occur at the amino- or carboxy-terminal positions of the reference polypeptide sequence or anywhere between those terminal positions, interspersed either individually among the amino acids in the reference sequence or in one or more contiguous groups within the reference sequence, and wherein said number of amino acid alterations is determined by multiplying the total number of amino acids in SEQ ID NO:2 by the integer defining the percent identity divided by 100 and then subtracting that product from said total number of amino acids in SEQ ID NO:2, or:

$$n_a \leq x_a - (x_a \bullet y),$$

wherein n_a is the number of amino acid alterations, x_a is the total number of amino acids in SEQ ID NO:2, y is 0.50 for 50%, 0.60 for 60%, 0.70 for 70%, 0.80 for 80%, 0.85 for 85%, 0.90 for 90%, 0.95 for 95%, 0.97 for 97% or 1.00 for 100%, and $\bullet$ is the symbol for the multiplication operator, and wherein any non-integer product of x_a and y is rounded down to the nearest integer prior to subtracting it from x_a .

By way of example, a polypeptide sequence of the present invention may be identical to the reference sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, that is it may be 100% identical, or it may include up to a certain integer number of amino acid alterations as compared to the reference sequence such that the percent identity is less than 100% identity. Such alterations are selected from the group consisting of at least one amino acid deletion, substitution, including conservative and non-conservative substitution, or insertion, and wherein said alterations may occur at the amino- or carboxy-terminal positions of the reference polypeptide sequence or anywhere between those terminal positions, interspersed either individually among the amino acids in the reference sequence or in one or more contiguous groups within the reference sequence. The number of amino acid alterations for a given % identity is determined by multiplying the total number of amino acids in SEQ ID NO:2 by the integer defining the percent identity divided by 100 and then subtracting that product from said total number of amino acids in SEQ ID NO:2, or:

$$n_a \leq x_a - (x_a \bullet y),$$

wherein n_a is the number of amino acid alterations, x_a is the total number of amino acids in SEQ ID NO:2, y is, for instance 0.70 for 70%, 0.80 for 80%, 0.85 for 85% etc., and $\bullet$ is the symbol for the multiplication operator, and wherein any non-integer product of x_a and y is rounded down to the nearest integer prior to subtracting it from x_a .

"Individual(s)," when used herein with reference to an organism, means a multicellular eukaryote, including, but not limited to a metazoan, a mammal, an ovid, a bovid, a simian, a primate, and a human.

25

"Isolated" means altered "by the hand of man" from its natural state, *i.e.*, if it occurs in nature, it has been changed or removed from its original environment, or both. For example, a polynucleotide or a polypeptide naturally present in a living organism is not "isolated," but the same polynucleotide or polypeptide separated from the coexisting materials of its natural state is "isolated", as the term is employed herein. Moreover, a polynucleotide or

30

polypeptide that is introduced into an organism by transformation, genetic manipulation or by any other recombinant method is "isolated" even if it is still present in said organism, which organism may be living or non-living.

- 5 "Polynucleotide(s)" generally refers to any polyribonucleotide or polydeoxyribonucleotide, which may be unmodified RNA or DNA or modified RNA or DNA including single and double-stranded regions.

“Variant” refers to a polynucleotide or polypeptide that differs from a reference
10 polynucleotide or polypeptide, but retains essential properties. A typical variant of a polynucleotide differs in nucleotide sequence from another, reference polynucleotide. Changes in the nucleotide sequence of the variant may or may not alter the amino acid sequence of a polypeptide encoded by the reference polynucleotide. Nucleotide changes may result in amino acid substitutions, additions, deletions, fusions and truncations in
15 the polypeptide encoded by the reference sequence, as discussed below. A typical variant of a polypeptide differs in amino acid sequence from another, reference polypeptide. Generally, differences are limited so that the sequences of the reference polypeptide and the variant are closely similar overall and, in many regions, identical. A variant and reference polypeptide may differ in amino acid sequence by one or more
20 substitutions, additions, deletions in any combination. A substituted or inserted amino acid residue may or may not be one encoded by the genetic code. A variant of a polynucleotide or polypeptide may be a naturally occurring such as an allelic variant, or it may be a variant that is not known to occur naturally. Non-naturally occurring variants of polynucleotides and polypeptides may be made by mutagenesis techniques or
25 by direct synthesis.

"Disease(s)" means any disease caused by or related to infection by a bacteria, including, for example, otitis media in infants and children, pneumonia in elderlies, sinusitis, nosocomial infections and invasive diseases, chronic otitis media with hearing

loss, fluid accumulation in the middle ear, auditive nerve damage, delayed speech learning, infection of the upper respiratory tract and inflammation of the middle ear.

EXAMPLES:

The examples below are carried out using standard techniques, which are well known and routine to those of skill in the art, except where otherwise described in detail. The examples are illustrative, but do not limit the invention.

Example 1: Cloning of the BASB226 and BASB227 gene from non typeable *Haemophilus influenzae* strain 3224A.

Genomic DNA is extracted from the non typeable *Haemophilus influenzae* strain 3224A from 10^{10} bacterial cells using the QIAGEN genomic DNA extraction kit (Qiagen GmbH). This material (1 µg) is then submitted to Polymerase Chain Reaction DNA amplification using two specific primers. A DNA fragment is obtained, digested by the suitable restriction endonucleases and inserted into the compatible sites of the pET cloning/expression vector (Novagen) using standard molecular biology techniques (Molecular Cloning, a Laboratory Manual, Second Edition, Eds: Sambrook, Fritsch & Maniatis, Cold Spring Harbor press 1989). Recombinant pET-BASB226 and BASB227 is then submitted to DNA sequencing using the Big Dyes kit (Applied biosystems) and analyzed on a ABI 373/A DNA sequencer in the conditions described by the supplier.

Example 2: Expression and purification of recombinant BASB226 and BASB227 protein in *Escherichia coli*.

The construction of the pET-BASB226 or BASB227 cloning/expression vector is described in Example 1. This vector harbours the BASB226 or BASB227 gene isolated from the non typeable *Haemophilus influenzae strain 3224A* in fusion with a stretch of 6 Histidine residues, placed under the control of the strong bacteriophage T7 gene 10 promoter. For expression study, this vector is introduced into the *Escherichia coli* strain Novablue (DE3) (Novagen), in which, the gene for the T7 polymerase is placed under the control of the isopropyl-beta-D thiogalactoside (IPTG)-regulatable *lac* promoter.

Liquid cultures (100 ml) of the Novablue (DE3) [pET-BASB226 and BASB227] *E. coli* recombinant strain are grown at 37°C under agitation until the optical density at 600nm (OD600) reached 0.6. At that time-point, IPTG is added at a final concentration of 1mM and the culture is grown for 4 additional hours. The culture is then centrifuged at 10,000 rpm and the pellet is frozen at -20°C for at least 10 hours. After thawing, the pellet is resuspended during 30 min at 25°C in buffer A (6M guanidine hydrochloride, 0.1M NaH₂PO₄, 0.01M Tris, pH 8.0), passed three-times through a needle and clarified by centrifugation (20000rpm, 15 min). The sample is then loaded at a flow-rate of 1ml/min on a Ni²⁺ -loaded Hitrap column (Pharmacia Biotech). After passage of the flowthrough, the column is washed succesively with 40ml of buffer B (8M Urea, 0.1MNaH₂PO₄, 0.01M Tris, pH 8.0), 40ml of buffer C (8M Urea, 0.1MNaH₂PO₄, 0.01M Tris, pH 6.3). The recombinant protein BASB226 and BASB227/His6 is then eluted from the column with 30ml of buffer D (8M Urea, 0.1MNaH₂PO₄, 0.01M Tris, pH 6.3) containing 500mM of imidazole and 3ml-size fractions are collected. Highly enriched BASB226/His6 or BASB227/His6 protein can be eluted from the column. This polypeptide is detected by a mouse monoclonal antibody raised against the 5-histidine motif. Moreover, the denatured, recombinant BASB226-His6 or BASB227-His6 protein is solubilized in a solution devoid of urea. For this purpose, denatured BASB226-His6 or BASB227-His6 contained in 8M urea is extensively dialyzed (2 hours) against buffer R (NaCl 150mM, 10mM NaH₂PO₄, Arginine 0.5M pH6.8) containing successively 6M, 4M, 2M and no urea. Alternatively, this polypeptide is purified under non-denaturing conditions using protocoles described in the Quiexpresssionist booklet (Qiagen GmbH).

Example 3: Production of Antisera to Recombinant BASB226 and BASB227

Polyvalent antisera directed against BASB226 or BASB227 proteins are generated by vaccinating rabbits with the purified recombinant BASB226 or BASB227 proteins. Polyvalent antisera directed against BASB226 or BASB227 proteins are also generated by vaccinating mice with the purified recombinant BASB226 or BASB227 protein. Animals are bled prior to the first immunization ("pre-bleed") and after the last

immunization.

Anti-BASB226 or anti-BASB227 protein titers are measured by an ELISA using purified recombinant BASB226 or BASB227 protein as the coating antigen. The titer is defined as mid-point titers calculated by 4-parameter logistic model using the XL Fit software. The antisera are also used as the first antibody to identify the protein in a western blot as described in example 5 below.

Example 4: Immunological characterization: Surface exposure of BASB226 and BASB227

Anti-BASB226 or anti-BASB227 protein titres are determined by an ELISA using formalin-killed whole cells of non typable *Haemophilus influenzae* (NTHi). The titer is defined as mid-point titers calculated by 4-parameter logistic model using the XL Fit software.

Example 5: Immunological Characterisation: Western Blot Analysis

Several strains of NTHi, as well as clinical isolates, are grown on Chocolate agar plates for 24 hours at 36°C and 5% CO₂. Several colonies are used to inoculate Brain Heart Infusion (BHI) broth supplemented by NAD and hemin, each at 10 µg/ml. Cultures are grown until the absorbance at 620nm is approximately 0.4 and cells are collected by centrifugation. Cells are then concentrated and solubilized in PAGE sample buffer. The solubilized cells are then resolved on 4-20% polyacrylamide gels and the separated proteins are electrophoretically transferred to PVDF membranes. The PVDF membranes are then pretreated with saturation buffer. All subsequent incubations are carried out using this pretreatment buffer.

PVDF membranes are incubated with preimmune serum or rabbit or mouse immune serum. PVDF membranes are then washed.

PVDF membranes are incubated with biotin-labeled sheep anti-rabbit or mouse Ig. PVDF membranes are then washed 3 times with wash buffer, and incubated with streptavidin-peroxydase. PVDF membranes are then washed 3 times with wash buffer and developed with 4-chloro-1-naphtol.

Example 6: Immunological characterization: Bactericidal Activity

Complement-mediated cytotoxic activity of anti-BASB226 or anti-BASB227 antibodies is examined to determine the vaccine potential of BASB226 or BASB227 protein antiserum that is prepared as described above. The activities of the pre-immune serum
5 and the anti-BASB226 or BASB227 antiserum in mediating complement killing of NTHi are examined.

Strains of NTHi are grown on plates. Several colonies are added to liquid medium. Cultures are grown and collected until the A620 is approximately 0.4. After one wash
10 step, the pellet is suspended and diluted.

Preimmune sera and the anti-BASB226 or BASB227 sera are deposited into the first well of a 96-wells plate and serial dilutions are deposited in the other wells of the same line. Live diluted NTHi is subsequently added and the mixture is incubated.
15 Complement is added into each well at a working dilution defined beforehand in a toxicity assay.

Each test includes a complement control (wells without serum containing active or inactivated complement source), a positive control (wells containing serum with a know
20 titer of bactericidal antibodies), a culture control (wells without serum and complement) and a serum control (wells without complement).

Bactericidal activity of rabbit or mice antiserum (50% killing of homologous strain) is measured.

25 **Example 7: Presence of Antibody to BASB226 and BASB227 in Human Convalescent Sera**

Western blot analysis of purified recombinant BASB226 or BASB227 is performed as described in Example 5 above, except that a pool of human sera from children infected by NTHi is used as the first antibody preparation.

Example 8: Efficacy of BASB226 and BASB227 vaccine: enhancement of lung clearance of NTHi in mice.

This mouse model is based on the analysis of the lung invasion by NTHi following a standard intranasal challenge to vaccinated mice.

- 5 Groups of mice are immunized with BASB226 or BASB227 vaccine. After the booster, the mice are challenged by instillation of bacterial suspension into the nostril under anaesthesia. Mice are killed between 30 minutes and 24 hours after challenge and the lungs are removed aseptically and homogenized individually. The log10 weighted mean number of CFU/lung is determined by counting the colonies grown on agar plates after
- 10 plating of dilutions of the homogenate. The arithmetic mean of the log10 weighted mean number of CFU/lung and the standard deviations are calculated for each group. Results are analysed statistically.

In this experiment groups of mice are immunized either with BASB226 or BASB227 or with a killed whole cells (kwc) preparation of NTHi or sham immunized.

15 **Example 9: Inhibition of NTHi adhesion onto cells by anti-BASB226 and BASB227 antiserum.**

This assay measures the capacity of anti BASB226 or anti BASB227 sera to inhibit the adhesion of NTHi bacteria to epithelial cells. This activity could prevent colonization of the nasopharynx by NTHi.

- 20 One volume of bacteria is incubated on ice with one volume of pre-immune or anti-BASB226 or anti-BASB227 immune serum dilution. This mixture is subsequently added in the wells of a 24 well plate containing a confluent cells culture that is washed once with culture medium to remove traces of antibiotic. The plate is centrifuged and incubated.
- 25 Each well is then gently washed. After the last wash, sodium glycocholate is added to the wells. After incubation, the cell layer is scraped and homogenised. Dilutions of the homogenate are plated on agar plates and incubated. The number of colonies on each plate is counted and the number of bacteria present in each well calculated.

Example 10: Useful Epitopes

The B-cell epitopes of a protein are mainly localized at its surface. To predict B-cell epitopes of BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides two methods were combined: 2D-structure prediction and antigenic index prediction. The 2D-structure prediction was made using the PSIPRED program (from David Jones, Brunel Bioinformatics Group, Dept. Biological Sciences, Brunel University, Uxbridge UB8 3PH, UK) (Fig.1 and 2).

The antigenic index was calculated on the basis of the method described by Jameson and Wolf (CABIOS 4:181-186 [1988]). The parameters used in this program are the antigenic index and the minimal length for an antigenic peptide. An antigenic index of 0.9 for a minimum of 5 consecutive amino acids was used as threshold in the program.

Peptides comprising good, potential B-cell epitopes are listed in table 1 and 2. These can be useful (preferably conjugated or recombinantly joined to a larger protein) in a vaccine composition for the prevention of ntHi infections, as could similar peptides comprising conservative mutations (preferably 70, 80, 95, 99 or 100% identical to the sequences of table 1, 2 and 3) or truncates comprising 5 or more (e.g. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 20 or 25) amino acids therefrom or extensions comprising e. g. 1, 2, 3, 5, 10 further amino acids at either or both N-terminal and/or C-terminal ends of the peptide from the native context of BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptide which preserve an effective epitope which can elicit an immune response in a host against the BASB226 or BASB227 polypeptide.

Table 1: Potential B-cell epitopes from SEQ ID NO:2

Position	Sequence
1	KSLSKQNS
33	SSDKTWQ
53	VNNQFTQVDTRLNRTDLR
89	LGEDDK
103	SYKNA
131	SGSEKTF
145	FGSKSKP
183	KALRK

Table 2: Potential B-cell epitopes from SEQ ID NO:4

Position	Sequence
6	ESEAKNETGTNKV
26	NKAKAKYNN
41	SSETTRENE
54	REGTERY

66	AAEKDTDAVNKKMDDGDTQTLQTANQYTD
103	TQMNNF
122	LDSKLE
170	TPSKYHVKKRY

The T-helper cell epitopes are peptides bound to HLA class II molecules and recognized by T-helper cells. The prediction of useful T-helper cell epitopes of BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptide was based on the TEPITOPE method describe by Stumliolo at al. (Nature Biotech. 17: 555-561 [1999]). Peptides comprising good, potential T-cell epitopes are listed in table 3, 4. These can be useful (preferably conjugated to peptides, polypeptides or polysaccharides) for vaccine purposes, as could similar peptides comprising conservative mutations (preferably 70, 80, 95, 99 or 100% identical to the sequences below) or truncates comprising 5 or more (e.g. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 25, 30 or 35) amino acids therefrom or extensions comprising e. g. 1, 2, 3, 5, 10 further amino acids at either or both N-terminal and/or C-terminal ends of the peptide from the native context of BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides which preserve an effective T-helper epitope from BASB226 and BASB227 polypeptides.

Table 3: Potential T-helper cell epitopes from SEQ ID NO:2

Position	Sequence
9	LIRLSLISLLISTSFYVSQSFVADSSDKTWQLQTGQGL
53	VNNQFTQVD
69	LRINRLGASAA
81	LASLKPAQL
101	VGSYKNAQAMAM
116	FKPAENVLL
145	FGSKSKPAV
159	VNSAEVLQLRQEISAMQ

Table 4: Potential T-helper cell epitopes from SEQ ID NO:4

Position	Sequence
22	IALGNKAKAKYNNNSIAVGY
52	FGREGTERYIANVKAAEK
96	LKLGTLQTQMNNFQ
139	LVL PQVVGKASFSA
154	VGGYGSRNA
174	YHVKKRYQL

Deposited materials

A deposit of strain 3 (strain 3224A) has been deposited with the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) on May 5 2000 and assigned deposit number PTA-1816.

5

The non typeable *Haemophilus influenzae* strain deposit is referred to herein as "the deposited strain" or as "the DNA of the deposited strain."

The deposited strain contains a full length BASB226 and BASB227 gene.

10

The sequence of the polynucleotides contained in the deposited strain, as well as the amino acid sequence of any polypeptide encoded thereby, are controlling in the event of any conflict with any description of sequences herein.

15 The deposit of the deposited strain has been made under the terms of the Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Micro-organisms for Purposes of Patent Procedure. The deposited strain will be irrevocably and without restriction or condition released to the public upon the issuance of a patent. The deposited strain is provided merely as convenience to those of skill in the art and is not an admission that a deposit is required
20 for enablement, such as that required under 35 U.S.C. §112. A license may be required to make, use or sell the deposited strain, and compounds derived therefrom, and no such license is hereby granted.

REFERENCE NUMBER

INDICATIONS RELATING TO A DEPOSITED MICROORGANISM

(PCT Rule 13bis)

A. The indications made below relate to the microorganism referred to in the description on page 66 lines 1-22.	
B. IDENTIFICATION OF DEPOSIT	
Further deposits are identified on an additional sheet ☐	
Name of depositary institution AMERICAN TYPE CULTURE COLLECTION	
Address of depositary institution (including postal code and country) 10801 UNIVERSITY BLVD, MANASSAS, VIRGINIA 20110-2209, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	
Date of deposit 5 May 2000	Accession Number PTA-1816
C. ADDITIONAL INDICATIONS (leave blank if not applicable) This information is continued on an additional sheet ☐	
In respect of those designations where a European Patent is sought, a sample of the deposited microorganisms will be made available until the publication of the mention of the grant of the European Patent or until the date on which the application has been refused or withdrawn, only by issue of such a sample to an expert nominated by the person requesting the sample	
D. DESIGNATED STATES FOR WHICH INDICATIONS ARE MADE (if the indications are not for all designated States)	
E. SEPARATE FURNISHING OF INDICATIONS (leave blank if not applicable)	
The indications listed below will be submitted to the International Bureau later (specify the general nature of the indications e.g., "Accession Number of Deposit")	

For receiving Office use only	
☒	This sheet was received with the international application
Authorized officer  M. Rossi	

For International Bureau use only	
☐	This sheet was received by the International Bureau on:
Authorized officer	

Form PCT/RO/134 (July 1992)

SEQUENCE INFORMATION**BASB226 and BASB227 Polynucleotide and Polypeptide Sequences****5 SEQ ID NO:1 polynucleotide sequence of BASB226**

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 ATAA

15 SEQ ID NO:2 polypeptide sequence of BASB226

KSLSKQNSLIRLSLISLLISTSFYSVQSFVADSSDKTWQLQTGQGLDAKIGQVNNQFTQVDTRLNRTDLRIN
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SEQ ID NO:3 polynucleotide sequence of BASB227

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SEQ ID NO:4 polypeptide sequence of BASB227

30 HAIGYESEAKNETGTNKVENAIALGNKAKAKYNNSIAVGYSSETTRENEVSFGREGTERYIANVKAAEKD
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SEQ ID NO:5 polynucleotide sequence upstream of the predicted initiation**codon of polynucleotide BASB226**

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 40 CTTTGCAATTTGATGGTTCCGAATGAATGAATCATCCTTTTTTGCCATCGACCTGTAAAAAACCAAAACCTTCG
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SEQ ID NO:6 polynucleotide sequence upstream of the predicted initiation

codon of polynucleotide BASB227

5 TGCGGCGAGTGACAATTCAATTAGTACGAATTACGGCATTAAAGAGTTTGGGGCGTATAGCCTGATCATTGG
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CLAIMS:

1. An isolated polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence which has at least 85% identity to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ Group 2 ,
5 over the entire length of said sequence from SEQ Group 2 .
2. An isolated polypeptide as claimed in claim 1 in which the amino acid sequence has at least 95% identity to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ Group 2, over the entire length of said sequence from SEQ Group 2 .
10
3. The polypeptide as claimed in claim 1 comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ Group 2.
4. An isolated polypeptide of SEQ Group 2 .
15
5. An immunogenic fragment of the polypeptide as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4 in which the immunogenic activity of said immunogenic fragment is substantially the same as the polypeptide of SEQ Group 2 .
- 20 6. A polypeptide as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5 wherein said polypeptide is part of a larger fusion protein.
7. An isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide as claimed in any of claims 1 to 6.
- 25 8. An isolated polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide that has at least 85% identity to an amino acid sequence selected from SEQ Group 2 over the entire length of said sequence from SEQ Group 2; or a nucleotide sequence complementary to said isolated polynucleotide.

9. An isolated polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence that has at least 85% identity to a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide selected from SEQ Group 2 over the entire coding region; or a nucleotide sequence complementary to said isolated polynucleotide.

5

10. An isolated polynucleotide which comprises a nucleotide sequence which has at least 85% identity to a DNA sequence selected from SEQ Group 1 over the entire length of said sequence from SEQ Group 1; or a nucleotide sequence complementary to said isolated polynucleotide.

10

11. The isolated polynucleotide as claimed in any one of claims 7 to 10 in which the identity is at least 95% to a DNA sequence selected from SEQ Group 1 .

12. An isolated polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide selected from SEQ Group 2 .

15

13. An isolated polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide selected from SEQ Group 1.

14. An isolated polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide selected from SEQ Group 2 obtainable by screening an appropriate library under stringent hybridization conditions with a labeled probe having the corresponding DNA sequence of SEQ Group 1 or a fragment thereof.

20

15. An expression vector or a recombinant live microorganism comprising an isolated polynucleotide according to any one of claims 7 - 14.

25

16. A host cell comprising the expression vector of claim 15 or a subcellular fraction or a membrane of said host cell expressing an isolated polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence that has at least 85% identity to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ Group 2 .

30

17. A process for producing a polypeptide of claims 1 to 6 comprising culturing a host cell of claim 16 under conditions sufficient for the production of said polypeptide and recovering the polypeptide from the culture medium.

5

18. A process for expressing a polynucleotide of any one of claims 7 – 14 comprising transforming a host cell with the expression vector comprising at least one of said polynucleotides and culturing said host cell under conditions sufficient for expression of any one of said polynucleotides.

10

19. A vaccine composition comprising an effective amount of the polypeptide of any one of claims 1 to 6 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

20. A vaccine composition comprising an effective amount of the polynucleotide of any one of claims 7 to 14 and a pharmaceutically effective carrier.

15

21. The vaccine composition according to either one of claims 19 or 20 wherein said composition comprises at least one other non typeable *H. influenzae* antigen.

22. An antibody immunospecific for the polypeptide or immunological fragment as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6.

20

23. A method of diagnosing a non typeable *H. influenzae* infection, comprising identifying a polypeptide as claimed in any one of claims 1 - 6, or an antibody that is immunospecific for said polypeptide, present within a biological sample from an animal suspected of having such an infection.

25

24. Use of a composition comprising an immunologically effective amount of a polypeptide as claimed in any one of claims 1 – 6 in the preparation of a medicament for use in generating an immune response in an animal.

30

25. Use of a composition comprising an immunologically effective amount of a polynucleotide as claimed in any one of claims 7 - 14 in the preparation of a medicament for use in generating an immune response in an animal.

5

26. A therapeutic composition useful in treating humans with non typeable *H. influenzae* disease comprising at least one antibody directed against the polypeptide of claims 1 – 6 and a suitable pharmaceutical carrier.

1/2

Figure 1: Prediction of 2D structure, B-cell epitopes and T-helper cell epitopes of BASB226 polypeptide

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2D Pred : EEEEEEEEEEECCCEEEEEEEEEEECCCCCCCCCHHHHCCHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH
Bepitope:          BBBBBBB          BBBBBBB
Tepitope: TTTT          TTTTTTTTTT          TTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT

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seqid2  : LKKALRK
2D Pred : HHHHHCC
Bepitope: BBBBB
Tepitope:
```

H : α -helix, E : β -strand, C : coil

B : Potential B-cell epitopes

T : Potential T-Helper cell epitopes

Figure 2: Prediction of 2D structure, B-cell epitopes and T-helper cell epitopes of BASB227 polypeptide

	1	10	20	30	40	50	60
Seqid4	:	HAIGYESEAKNETGTNKVENAIALGNKAKAKYNNSIAVGYSETTRENEVSFGREGTERY					
2D Pred	:	CCCCCCHHHHHHHHHHHCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCC					
Bepitope:		BBBBBBBBBBBBBB		BBBBBBBBBB		BBBBBBBBBB	
Tepitope:		TTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT				TTTTTTTTTT	

	70	80	90	100	110	120
Seqid4	:	IANVKAAEKDITDAVNKK.MDDGDTQTLQTANQYTDLKLGLTQTQMNNFQSGFNELNGKLG				
2D Pred	:	CCCHHHHHHHCCCCCHHHHHCCCCCHHHHHHHHHHCCHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH				
Bepitope:		BBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBB				BBBBBB
Tepitope:		TTTTTTTTTT		TTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT		

	130	140	150	160	170	180
Seqid4	:	KLDSKLERGLAAANALSGLVLPQVVGKASFSAAVGGYGSRNAVEIGVGYTPSKYHVKKRY				
2D Pred	:	HHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHCCCCCCCCCHHHHHHHHHCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCC				
Bepitope:		BBBBBB		BBBBBBBBBBBBBB		
Tepitope:		TTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT				TTTTTTT

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Seqid4	:	QLFFS
2D Pred	:	EEEC
Bepitope:		
Tepitope:		TT

H : α -helix, E : β -strand, C : coil

B : Potential B-cell epitopes

T : Potential T-Helper cell epitopes