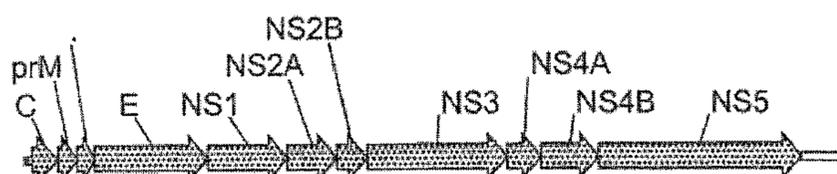




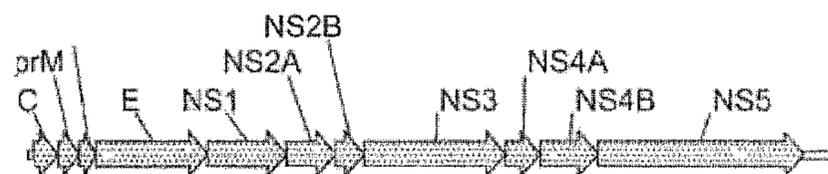
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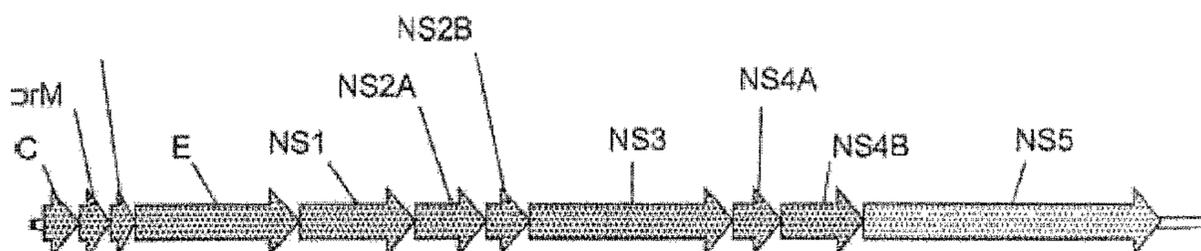
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 (54) **Title: DENGUE CHIMERIC VIRUSES**



Dengue



Yellow Fever



Dengue 5 Yellow Fever Hybrid

(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

The invention relates to Dengue chimeric viruses which are less prone to accumulate point mutations and genetic variations. In these Dengue chimeric viruses, the NS5 gene, which encodes polymerase, has been replaced by the corresponding NS5 sequence of a Yellow Fever virus.

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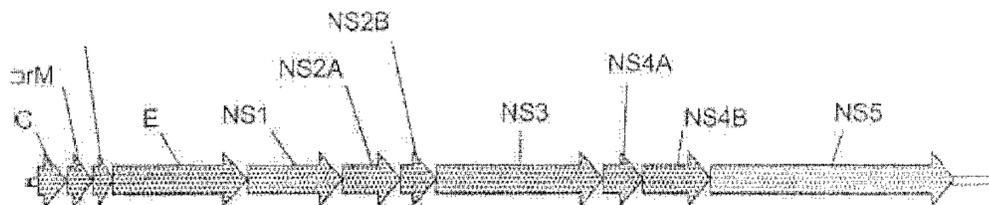
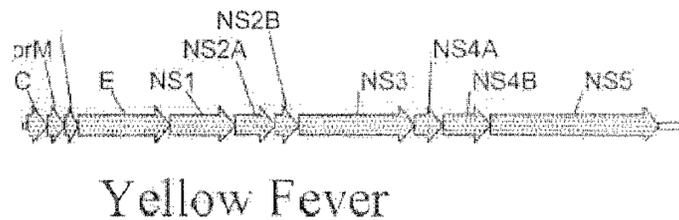
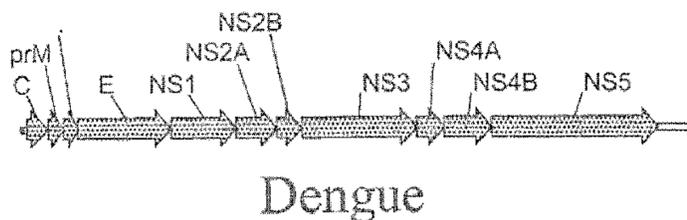
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(57) Abstract: The invention relates to Dengue chimeric viruses which are less prone to accumulate point mutations and genetic variations. In these Dengue chimeric viruses, the NS5 gene, which encodes polymerase, has been replaced by the corresponding NS5 sequence of a Yellow Fever virus.

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Dengue chimeric viruses

The invention relates to Dengue chimeric viruses of high genetic stability which are thus less prone to revert to a non-attenuated phenotype. In these
5 dengue chimeric viruses, the NS5 sequence, which encodes polymerase, has been replaced by the corresponding NS5 sequence of a Yellow Fever virus.

Dengue disease is the second most important tropical infectious disease after malaria, with over half of the world's population (2.5 billion) living in areas at risk for epidemic transmission. An estimated 50 to 100 million cases of
10 Dengue, 500,000 hospitalised DHF patients and 25,000 deaths occur each year. Dengue is endemic in Asia, the Pacific, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) is a severe febrile disease characterised by abnormalities of homeostasis and increased vascular
15 permeability that can lead to hypovolemia and hypotension (Dengue shock syndrome, DSS) often complicated by severe internal bleeding. The case fatality rate of DHF can be as high as 10% without therapy, but below 1% in most centres with therapeutic experience (WHO Technical Guide, 1986).

Dengue diseases are caused by four closely related, but antigenically
20 distinct, virus serologic types (Gubler, 1988; Kautner et al., 1997; Rigau-Pérez et al., 1998; Vaughn et al., 1997), of the genus Flavivirus (Gubler, 1988). Infection with a Dengue virus serotype can produce a spectrum of clinical illnesses ranging from a non-specific viral syndrome to severe, fatal haemorrhagic disease. The incubation period of Dengue fever (DF) after the
25 mosquito bite averages 4 days (range 3-14 days). DF is characterised by biphasic fever, headache, pain in various parts of the body, prostration, rash, lymphadenopathy and leukopenia (Kautner et al., 1997; Rigau-Pérez et al., 1998). The viremic period is the same as of febrile illness (Vaughn et al., 1997). Recovery from DF is usually complete in 7 to 10 days but prolonged asthenia is
30 common. Leukocytes and platelets counts decreases are frequent.

The viruses are maintained in a cycle that involves humans and *Aedes aegypti*, a domestic, day-biting mosquito that prefers to feed on humans. Human infection is initiated by the injection of virus during blood feeding by an

infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. Salivary virus is deposited mainly in the extravascular tissues. The primary cell subset infected after inoculation is dendritic cells, which subsequently migrate to draining lymph nodes (Wu et al., 2000). After initial replication in the skin and draining lymph nodes, virus
5 appears in the blood during the acute febrile phase, generally for 3 to 5 days.

Monocytes and macrophages are with dendritic cells among the primary target of dengue virus. Protection against homotypic reinfection is complete and probably lifelong, but cross-protection between dengue types lasts less than 12 weeks (Sabin, 1952). Consequently a subject can experience a second
10 infection with a different serotype. A second dengue infection is a theoretical risk factor of developing severe dengue disease. However, DHF is multifactorial including: the strain of the virus involved, as well as the age, immune status, and genetic predisposition of the patient. Two factors play a major role in the occurrence of DHF: a rapid viral replication with high viremia (the severity of the
15 disease being related to the level of viremia (Vaughn et al., 2000) and an important inflammatory response with release of high levels of inflammatory mediators (Rothman and Ennis, 1999).

There is no specific treatment against Dengue diseases. The management of DF is supportive with bed rest, control of fever and pain with
20 antipyretics and analgesics, and adequate fluid intake. The treatment of DHF needs correction of fluid loss, replacement of coagulation factors, and infusion of heparin.

Preventive measures presently rely on vector control and personal protection measures, which are difficult to enforce and expensive. No vaccine
25 against Dengue is currently registered. Since the 4 serotypes of dengue are circulating worldwide and since they are reported to be involved in cases of DHF, vaccination should ideally confer protection against all 4 dengue virus serotypes.

Live attenuated vaccines (LAVs), which reproduce natural immunity,
30 have been used for the development of vaccines against many diseases. The advantages of live-attenuated virus vaccines are their capacity of replication and induction of both humoral and cellular immune responses. In addition, the immune response induced by a whole virion vaccine against the different

components of the virus (structural and non-structural proteins) reproduced those induced by natural infection.

A dengue vaccine project was initiated in Thailand at the Centre for Vaccine Development, Institute of Sciences and Technology for Development Mahidol University. Candidate live-attenuated vaccines were successfully developed, at a laboratory scale, for dengue serotypes 1 to 4. These vaccines have been tested as monovalent (single serotype), bivalent (two serotypes), trivalent (three serotypes), and tetravalent (all four serotypes) vaccines in Thai volunteers. Those vaccines were found to be safe and immunogenic in children and in adults (Gubler, 1997). However, these LAV strains correspond to heterogeneous populations and represent a risk due to a potential *in vitro* or *in vivo* selection of one of the strain present in the composition. Indeed, dengue viruses are prone to generate mutations and genetic variations during their replication process.

Pugachev et al. (2004) have recently published that the polymerase encoded by the NS5 gene of the Yellow Fever virus is characterized by a greater fidelity as compared to other flaviviruses.

Hence, the inventors propose to use the unique features of the Yellow Fever polymerase to construct chimeric recombinant Dengue viruses wherein the original polymerase encoding sequence is replaced by the corresponding sequence of a Yellow Fever strain thus leading to live attenuated dengue viruses of higher genetic stability which would represent useful vaccine candidates.

The present invention is also directed to an isolated chimeric Dengue virus comprising the 5'-noncoding region (NCR); structural sequences capsid (C), premembrane/membrane (prM/M), and envelope (E); non-structural sequences NS1, NS2A, NS2B, NS3, NS4A and NS4B of one Dengue strain; the non-structural

3a

sequence NS5 of a Yellow Fever virus; and either the 3'-NCR sequence of said Dengue strain or the 3'-NCR sequence of said Yellow Fever virus.

The present invention is also directed to an isolated nucleic acid encoding for the isolated chimeric Dengue virus as defined herein.

The present invention is also directed to a polyprotein encoded by the nucleic acid as defined herein.

The present invention is also directed to an immunogenic composition comprising the isolated chimeric Dengue virus as defined herein, in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Definitions

By the expression "Yellow Fever strain", we mean here any Yellow Fever Strain. As a matter of example a YFD17 strain can be used. This strain has been described by Smithburn et al. (1956) and by Freestone (1995). YF17D has also been studied at the genetic level (Rice et al., 1985) and its genomic sequence is shown in SEQ ID No.7 (Genbank accession number NC 002031). Indeed in the context of the present invention, the NS5 sequence to be inserted

in the dengue virus can originate from any Yellow Fever Strain. In one embodiment of the invention, the NS5 encoding sequence of a Dengue virus is replaced by the corresponding NS5 encoding sequence of the YFD 17 strain. Advantageously, the 3'NCR sequence of the same Dengue virus is also
5 replaced by the corresponding 3'NCR sequence of the same Yellow Fever strain.

As used herein, a Dengue (DEN) virus denotes a wild-type Dengue virus of serotype 1, 2, 3 or 4, or a live attenuated Dengue viral strain of serotypes 1, 2, 3, or 4. Dengue viruses are RNA viruses presenting the following gene
10 organization: 5'-noncoding region (NCR), structural protein (capsid (C), premembrane/membrane (prM/M), envelope (E)) and non structural protein (NS1-NS2A-NS2B-NS3-NS4A-NS4B-NS5) and 3' NCR. The RNA genome is associated with the C proteins to form nucleotide (icosahedral symmetry). As with other flaviviruses, the DEN viral genome encodes an uninterrupted open
15 reading frame (ORF) which is translated to a single polyprotein.

In particular, a Dengue serotype 1 (DEN-1) virus may be the wild-type strain 16007. A Dengue serotype 2 (DEN-2) virus may be the wild-type strain 16681. A Dengue serotype 3 (DEN-3) virus may be the wild-type strain 16562 or the newly reintroduced Dengue virus type 3 in Martinique (Peyrefitte et al.,
20 2003; SEQ ID No.8). A dengue serotype 4 (DEN-4) may be the wild type strain 1036.

By "live attenuated" virus or strain, we mean here strain or virus that cause mild (i.e. acceptable in terms of regulatory purposes as presenting a positive benefit/risk ratio) to low or no secondary effects (i.e. systemic events
25 and/or biological abnormalities and/or local reactions) in the majority of the tested humans but still infect and induce an immune response. These live attenuated strains may initially derived from Dengue wild-type strains.

By "immune response", we mean here a response comprising a specific humoral immune response including neutralizing antibodies in primate
30 especially in humans. The induction of a specific humoral immune response can be easily determined by an ELISA assay. The presence of neutralizing antibody in the serum of a vaccine is evaluated by the plaque reduction neutralization test as described in Huang et al (2000). A serum is considered to

be positive for the presence of neutralizing antibodies when the neutralizing antibody titer thus determined is at least superior or equal to 1:10.

Dengue strains which can be used as a starting product for the construction of the chimeric dengue virus of the invention are e.g:

5 - the "LAV1" strain, which is the attenuated strain established after 13 passages of Dengue serotype 1 (DEN-1) strain 16007 in Primary Dog Kidney (PDK). LAV1 sequence is shown in SEQ ID No.9. As compared with DEN-1 16007, LAV1 bears 14 nucleotide substitutions: 1323 T>C, 1541 G>A, 1543 A>G, 1545 G>A, 1567 A>G, 1608 C>T, 2363 A>G, 2695 T>C, 2782 C>T, 5063
10 G>A, 6048 A>T, 6806 A>G, 7330 A>G, and 9445 C>T. The above-mentioned LAV 1 strain has been described in EP 1159968 in the name of the Mahidol University and was deposited before the Collection Nationale de Culture de Microorganismes (CNCM) on May 25, 2000, under number I-2480.

 - the "LAV2" strain, which is the attenuated strain established after 53
15 passages of Dengue serotype 2 (DEN-2) strain 16681 in PDK cells. LAV2 nucleotide sequence is shown in SEQ ID No.10. As compared with the genome sequence of strain 16681, LAV2 bears 9 nucleotide substitutions: 57 C>T, 524 A>T, 2055 C>T, 2579 G>A, 4018 C>T, 5270 A>(A/T), 5547 T>C, 6599 G>C, and 8571 C>T. The above-mentioned LAV2 strain has been described in EP
20 1159968 in the name of the Mahidol University and was deposited before the CNCM on May 25, 2000, under number I-2481.

 - the "LAV3" strain, which corresponds to a strain which has been established after 30 passages of Dengue serotype 3 (DEN-3) strain 16562 in Primary Green Monkey Kidney (PGMK) cells and 3 passages in Fetal Rhesus
25 Lung (FRhL) cells. LAV3 nucleotide sequence is shown in SEQ ID No.11. The above-mentioned LAV3 strain has been described in EP 1159968 in the name of the Mahidol University and was deposited before the CNCM on May 25, 2000, under number I-2482.

 - the "LAV4" strain, which corresponds to a strain which has been
30 established after 18 passages of Dengue serotype 4 (DEN-4) strain 1036 in Primary Dog Kidney (PDK) cells. LAV4 nucleotide sequence is shown in SEQ ID No.12 The above-mentioned LAV4 strain has been described in EP

1159968 in the name of the Mahidol University and was deposited before the CNCM on May 25, 2000, under number I-2483.

Live attenuated Vero-Derived serotype 1 and 2 viruses (VDV1 and VDV2) can also advantageously be used as the starting Dengue strain to construct the chimeric dengue viruses of the invention. VDV1 and VDV2 have been developed by the Applicant through a complex isolation and transfection process comprising various steps including in particular transfecting Vero cells with the purified genomic RNA of respectively LAV1 and LAV2 and plaque purifications. As compared with the genome sequence of strain LAV1, VDV1 (SEQ ID No.13) bears three nucleotide substitutions : 5962 C>A, and 7947 A>G, and optionally 2719 G>A. As compared with the genome sequence of strain LAV2, VDV2 (SEQ ID No.14) bears the following nucleotide substitutions: 736 G>C, 1619 G>A, 4723 T>A, 5062 G>C, 9191 G>A, 10063 T>A, and 10507 A>G, and optionally 1638 A>G, 2520 G>A, and 9222 A>G.

Substitutions identified in Dengue virus genomic sequences or polyproteins are designated pursuant to the nomenclature of Dunnen and Antonarakis (2000). As defined by Dunnen and Antonarakis at the nucleic acid level, substitutions are designated by ">", e.g. "31A>G" denotes that, at nucleotide 31 of the reference sequence, a A is changed to a G.

20

Chimeric Dengue / Yellow Fever viruses

The invention thus provides an isolated live chimeric Dengue virus, advantageously an isolated live attenuated chimeric dengue virus, in which the non structural sequence NS5 of the Dengue virus is replaced by the corresponding NS5 sequence of a Yellow Fever virus. Advantageously, the 3'NCR sequence of the Dengue virus is also replaced by the corresponding 3'NCR sequence of the same Yellow Fever virus.

This chimeric Dengue strain can be constructed and isolated using, for example, the protocol described in the attached examples.

These live chimeric dengue strains can be constructed starting from an attenuated dengue strain or from wild type dengue strain. In this latter case, the chimeric virus can then be attenuated, e.g. by serial passage on cell culture such as VERO cells.

Accordingly, in one embodiment, the chimeric dengue virus of the invention is constructed starting from a live attenuated Dengue strain. In a specific embodiment, said one Dengue strain is selected from the group consisting of LAV1 (SEQ ID No.9), LAV2 (SEQ ID No.10), LAV3 (SEQ ID No.11), LAV4 (SEQ ID No.12), Vero-Derived serotype 1 (SEQ ID No.13), and Vero-Derived serotype 2 (SEQ ID No.14).

In a particular embodiment, the NS5 sequence and optionally 3'-NCR sequence incorporated in these above listed attenuated strains are from the Yellow Fever vaccinal strain YF17D (SEQ ID No.7)

The thus produced chimeric dengue viruses can be stored either in the form of a freezed composition or in the form of a lyophilized product. For that purpose, the chimeric dengue virus is mixed with a diluent such as a buffered aqueous solution comprising cryoprotective compounds such sugar alcohol and stabilizer. The pH before freezing or lyophilisation is advantageously settled in the range of 6 to 9, e.g. 7, as determined by a pH meter at room temperature. Before use, the lyophilized product is mixed with a pharmaceutically acceptable diluent or excipient such as a sterile NaCl 4‰ solution to reconstitute a liquid immunogenic composition or vaccine.

Sequencing at the attenuation-specific loci of the virus recovered after transfection or after serial passages (e.g. 10 passages) on cell cultures allow to confirm the high genetic stability of the chimeric constructs.

Nucleic acid

The invention also relates to an isolated nucleic acid encoding a chimeric Dengue virus of the invention as defined above. The said nucleic acid thus comprises, or consists of, the 5'-noncoding region (NCR), structural sequences (capsid (C), premembrane/membrane (prM/M), and envelope (E)) and non structural sequences NS1, NS2A, NS2B, NS3, NS4A, and NS4B of one Dengue strain, and the non structural sequence NS5 of a Yellow fever virus and either the 3'-NCR sequence of said Dengue strain or advantageously the 3'-NCR sequence of said Yellow Fever virus.

A "nucleic acid molecule" refers to the phosphate ester polymeric form of ribonucleosides (adenosine, guanosine, uridine or cytidine; "RNA molecules") or deoxyribonucleosides (deoxyadenosine, deoxyguanosine, deoxythymidine, or deoxycytidine; "DNA molecules"), or any phosphoester analogs thereof, such as phosphorothioates and thioesters, in either single stranded form, or a double-stranded helix.

The present invention thus provides a cDNA sequence encoding a chimeric Dengue virus of the invention, as well as its equivalent RNA sequence.

By "equivalent RNA sequence" is meant the said DNA sequence wherein deoxythymidines have been replaced by uridines.

The present invention thus also provides the positive strand RNA of the chimeric dengue viruses of the invention.

The invention further relates to the polyprotein encoded by the nucleic acid of the invention.

Immunogenic and vaccine compositions

The invention also relates to an immunogenic composition, suitable to be used as a vaccine, which comprises at least one chimeric Dengue virus according to the invention in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

The immunogenic compositions according to the invention elicit a specific humoral immune response toward the dengue virus, including neutralizing antibodies.

According to one embodiment, the immunogenic composition is a vaccine.

According to an embodiment, the immunogenic is a monovalent composition, i.e. a composition which elicits a specific immune response and/or confers protection against the serotype of one Dengue serotype only.

According to another embodiment, the invention relates to a multivalent dengue immunogenic composition, i.e. a composition which elicits a specific immune response against at least 2, such as 3 or 4 dengue serotypes. Such a

multivalent immunogenic composition or vaccine may be obtained by combining individual monovalent dengue vaccines. The active component of a multivalent composition of the invention which induces a specific immune response against a second serotype may be a second chimeric Dengue virus of another serotype or a live attenuated Dengue virus of another serotype. For instance, the immunogenic or vaccine multivalent composition of the invention may comprise a chimeric Dengue serotype 1 virus of the invention in combination with at least a chimeric Dengue virus or a live attenuated Dengue virus selected from the group consisting of serotype 2, serotype 3, and serotype 4.

Advantageously, the immunogenic or vaccine composition may be a tetravalent Dengue vaccine composition.

The immunogenic compositions or vaccines according to the present invention may be prepared using any conventional method known to those skilled in the art. Conventionally the antigens according to the invention are mixed with a pharmaceutically acceptable diluent or excipient, such as water or phosphate buffered saline solution, wetting agents, fillers, emulsifier and stabilizer. The excipient or diluent will be selected as a function of the pharmaceutical form chosen, of the method and route of administration and also of pharmaceutical practice. Suitable excipients or diluents and also the requirements in terms of pharmaceutical formulation, are described in Remington's Pharmaceutical Sciences, which represents a reference book in this field.

Advantageously, the immunogenic composition or vaccine corresponds to an injectable composition comprising an aqueous buffered solution to maintain e.g. a pH (as determined at RT with a pH meter) in the range of 6 to 9.

The composition according to the invention may further comprise an adjuvant, i.e. a substance which improves, or enhances, the immune response elicited by the chimeric dengue virus(es). Any pharmaceutically acceptable adjuvant or mixture of adjuvants conventionally used in the field of human vaccines may be used for this purpose.

The immunogenic compositions or vaccines according to the invention may be administered by any conventional route usually used in the field of human vaccines, such as the parenteral (e.g. intradermal, subcutaneous, intramuscular) route. In the context of the present invention immunogenic
5 compositions or vaccines are preferably injectable compositions administered subcutaneously in the deltoid region.

Method for immunizing

The invention further provides for a method of immunizing a host in need
10 thereof against a Dengue infection which comprises administering the host with an immunoeffective amount of an immunogenic composition or a vaccine according to the invention.

A "host in need thereof" denotes a person at risk for Dengue infection, i.e. individuals travelling to regions where Dengue virus infection is present,
15 and also inhabitants of those regions.

The route of administration is any conventional route used in the vaccine field. The choice of administration route depends on the formulation that is selected. Preferably, the immunogenic composition or vaccine corresponds to an injectable composition administered via subcutaneous route,
20 advantageously in the deltoid region.

The amount of live attenuated chimeric Dengue virus in the immunogenic compositions or vaccines may be conveniently expressed in viral plaque forming unit (PFU) unit or Cell Culture Infectious Dose 50% (CCID₅₀) dosage form and prepared by using conventional pharmaceutical techniques.
25 For instance, the composition according to the invention may be prepared in dosage form containing 10 to 10^6 CCID₅₀, or from 10^3 to 10^5 CCID₅₀ of virus, for instance $4 \pm 0.5 \log_{10}$ CCID₅₀ of live attenuated chimeric Dengue virus for a monovalent composition. Where the composition is multivalent, to reduce the possibility of viral interference and thus to achieve a balanced immune
30 response (i.e. an immune response against all the serotype contained in the

composition), the amounts of each of the different dengue serotypes present in the administered vaccines may not be equal.

An “immunoeffective amount” is an amount which is capable of inducing a specific humoral immune response comprising neutralising antibodies in the serum of a vaccinee. Methods for evaluating the presence of neutralizing antibodies are well known by the one skilled in the art.

The volume of administration may vary depending on the route of administration. Subcutaneous injections may range in volume from about 0.1 ml to 1.0 ml, preferably 0.5 ml.

The optimal time for administration of the composition is about one to three months before the initial exposure to the dengue virus. The vaccines of the invention can be administered as prophylactic agents in adults or children at risk of Dengue infection. The targeted population thus encompasses persons which are naïve as well as well as non-naïve with regards to dengue virus. The vaccines of the invention can be administered in a single dose or, optionally, administration can involve the use of a priming dose followed by a booster dose that is administered, e.g. 2-6 months later, as determined to be appropriate by those of skill in the art.

The invention will be further described in view of the following figures and examples. For sake of clarity the following description details only the construction of a chimeric dengue virus of the invention from a LAV3 backbone.

FIGURES

Figure 1 is a diagrammatic representation of the three steps PCR strategy which can be used to construct a chimeric Dengue 3 virus containing the Yellow Fever NS5 sequence.

Figure 2 is a diagrammatic representation of the genomic organization of Dengue virus and Yellow Fever virus, and of the chimeric Dengue 3/Yellow Fever virus.

Figure 3 shows the position of the *ScaI* restriction sites on Dengue-3 genome and on the amplicon PCR1.

Figure 4 shows the position of the *NotI* and *SpeI* restriction sites on Dengue-3 genome and on the amplicon PCR2.

Figure 5 shows overlapping between amplicons PCR1 and PCR2.

5 EXAMPLES

Example 1: Construction of a chimeric Dengue 3 virus containing the Yellow Fever NS5 sequence.

To construct a chimeric dengue 3 virus of the invention, The complete
10 Dengue 3 genomic cDNA (SEQ ID No.11) can be cloned into a vector pVAX (Invitrogen) containing the T7 RNA polymerase promoter and engineered such that the unique *NotI* restriction site is flanking the 3' end of the viral sequence.

To link Dengue 3 NS4b and Yellow Fever NS5 one can use the following
15 strategy based on the technique of overlap extension. This technique is advantageously selected for it's capacity to perfectly fuse two genetic sequence avoiding the need to create new restriction sites at the point of junction.

The Dengue – Yellow Fever chimeric construct can be generated using three consecutive PCR steps, as shown on the diagrammatic representation on
20 Figure 1 and as described below.

In the first PCR step, two partially overlapping DNA fragments (PCR1 and PCR2) are generated as follows:

The PCR1 fragment is generated according to the strategy displayed on
25 Figure 3.

PCR 1

	Plasmid DNA (50 ng/μl)	0,5 μl
	10x Buffer	5 μl
	Primer 1 (125 ng/μl)	1 μl
30	Primer 2 (125 ng/μl)	1 μl
	dNTP 1,25 mM	8 μl
	Nuclease-free water	<u>34,5 μl</u>
	Final volume	50 μl

+ 1 μ l de Platinum Hi Fi Taq polymerase

with

Primer-1 :CGGCAGTACTTTTGCTAATCACACATTATG (SEQ ID No.1)

Primer-2: TTTTCCATTGCGCTCCCTCTTTTTCCTGTTCCAAGT

5 (SEQ ID No.2)

Primer 1 is located into the NS4b of Dengue 3 (nucleotides 7146 to 7175 of Dengue 3 sequence SEQ ID No.9) and contains the unique *ScaI* restriction site (underlined). Primer 2 overlaps NS4b Dengue 3 (bold characters) and NS5 Yellow Fever sequences.

10

Program:

Initial denaturation	95 °C	30 sec	
Denaturation	95 °C	30 sec	
Hybridization	57 °C	1 min	for 30 cycles
Elongation	68 °C	1 min	

15

A 0.45 Kb fragment containing about 430 nucleotides of the Dengue NS4b sequence and a small extension corresponding to the 5' end of the Yellow Fever NS5 sequence can thus be obtained (PCR1, SEQ ID No.3).

The PCR2 fragment is generated according to the strategy displayed on Figure 4.

PCR 2

20	cDNA from YF virus (50 ng/ μ l)	0,5 μ l
	10x Buffer	5 μ l
	Primer 3 (125 ng/ μ l)	1 μ l
	Primer 4 (125 ng/ μ l)	1 μ l
	dNTP 1,25 mM	8 μ l
25	Nuclease-free water	<u>34,5 μl</u>
	Final volume	50 μ l

+ 1 μ l de Platinum Hi Fi Taq polymerase

with

Primer-3 CAGTTGGAACAGGAAAAAGAGGGAGCGCGAATGGAAAAA
(SEQ ID No.4)

Primer-4 GGACTAGTAACGCCGGCGAGTGGTTTTGTGTTTGTTCATC
(SEQ ID No.5)

- 5 Primer 3 overlaps NS4b Dengue 3 and NS5 Yellow Fever (bold characters) and is the reverse complement of primer 2. Primer 4 is located into the 3'UTR of Yellow Fever and contains *Not I* and *Spe I* restriction sites (underlined)

10 *Program:*

Initial denaturation	95 °C	30 sec	30 cycles
Denaturation	95 °C	30 sec	
Hybridization	57°C	1 min	
Elongation	68°C	4 min	

- 15 A 3.2 Kb fragment containing 15 Nucleotides of the 5' end of the Dengue NS4b sequence and the complete sequence encoding the Yellow Fever NS5 encoding sequence and the 3' region non coding sequence of the Yellow Fever genome can thus be obtained (PCR2, SEQ ID No.6).

In a second PCR step (reaction PCR3, Figure 5), a stoichiometric mixture of both partially overlapping fragments PCR1 and PCR2 is submitted to 10 PCR cycles. No primer is added.

20

PCR 3

Product of PCR 1	0,5 µl
Product of PCR 2	0,5 µl
25 10x Buffer	5 µl
dNTP 1,25 mM	8 µl
Nuclease-free water	<u>36 µl</u>
Final volume	50 µl
+ 1 µl de Platinum Hi Fi Taq polymerase	

Program:

Initial denaturation	95 °C	30 sec	10 cycles
Denaturation	95 °C	30 sec	
Hybridisation	57°C	1 min	
Elongation	68°C	4 min	

The third PCR step (reaction PCR4) is carried out with the product of the second reaction in the presence of primers 1 and 4 containing respectively the *ScaI* and *NotI/SpeI* restriction sites. To that end 1 µl of each of primer 1 and primer 4 (125 ng/µl) is added to the reaction product of PCR3 and the PCR reaction is continued for 25 additional cycles.

The resulting large DNA fragment can be purified on agarose gel, then digested with *ScaI* and *NotI* or *SpeI* restriction endonucleases and ligated to the original vector containing the whole Dengue 3 sequence.

Example 2: Recovery of chimeric dengue viruses.

To recover the chimeric dengue viruses, the following strategy can be used.

All recombinant plasmids can be amplified in *Escherichia coli* XL1-Blue cells. 500 ng of plasmid are then linearized by the *NotI* restriction endonuclease. Viral RNA can be obtained after *in vitro* transcription using T7 RNA polymerase and capped with the cap analog m⁷GpppA. And, then transfected into 3 × 10⁶ to 4 × 10⁶ LLC-MK₂ or BHK-21 cells by electroporation. Transfected cells are transferred to 75-cm² flasks in DMEM containing 10% FBS. The resulting chimeric virus is then amplified and isolated from the cells.

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CLAIMS

1. An isolated chimeric Dengue virus comprising the 5'-noncoding region (NCR); structural sequences capsid (C), premembrane/membrane (prM/M), and envelope (E); non-structural sequences NS1, NS2A, NS2B, NS3, NS4A and NS4B
5 of one Dengue strain; the non-structural sequence NS5 of a Yellow Fever virus; and either the 3'-NCR sequence of said Dengue strain or the 3'-NCR sequence of said Yellow Fever virus.
2. The isolated chimeric Dengue virus of claim 1, wherein the 3'NCR sequence of the Dengue virus has been replaced by the 3'NCR sequence of the same Yellow
10 Fever virus.
3. The isolated chimeric Dengue virus according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said Dengue virus is Dengue serotype 1, Dengue serotype 2, Dengue serotype 3, or Dengue serotype 4 viruses.
4. The isolated chimeric Dengue virus according to any one of claims 1 to 3,
15 wherein said Dengue virus is a live attenuated Dengue virus.
5. The isolated chimeric Dengue virus according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein said one Dengue strain is LAV1 (SEQ ID No.9), LAV2 (SEQ ID No.10), Vero-Derived serotype 1 (SEQ ID No.13), or Vero-Derived serotype 2 (SEQ ID No.14).
- 20 6. The isolated chimeric Dengue virus according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein said Yellow Fever virus is the vaccinal strain YF17D (SEQ ID No.7).
7. An isolated nucleic acid encoding for the isolated chimeric Dengue virus as defined in any one of claims 1 to 6.
8. A polyprotein encoded by the nucleic acid as defined in claim 7.

9. An immunogenic composition comprising the isolated chimeric Dengue virus as defined in any one of claims 1 to 6, in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
10. The immunogenic composition according to claim 9, which is a monovalent composition.
- 5 11. The immunogenic composition according to claim 9 or 10, which is a multivalent composition.

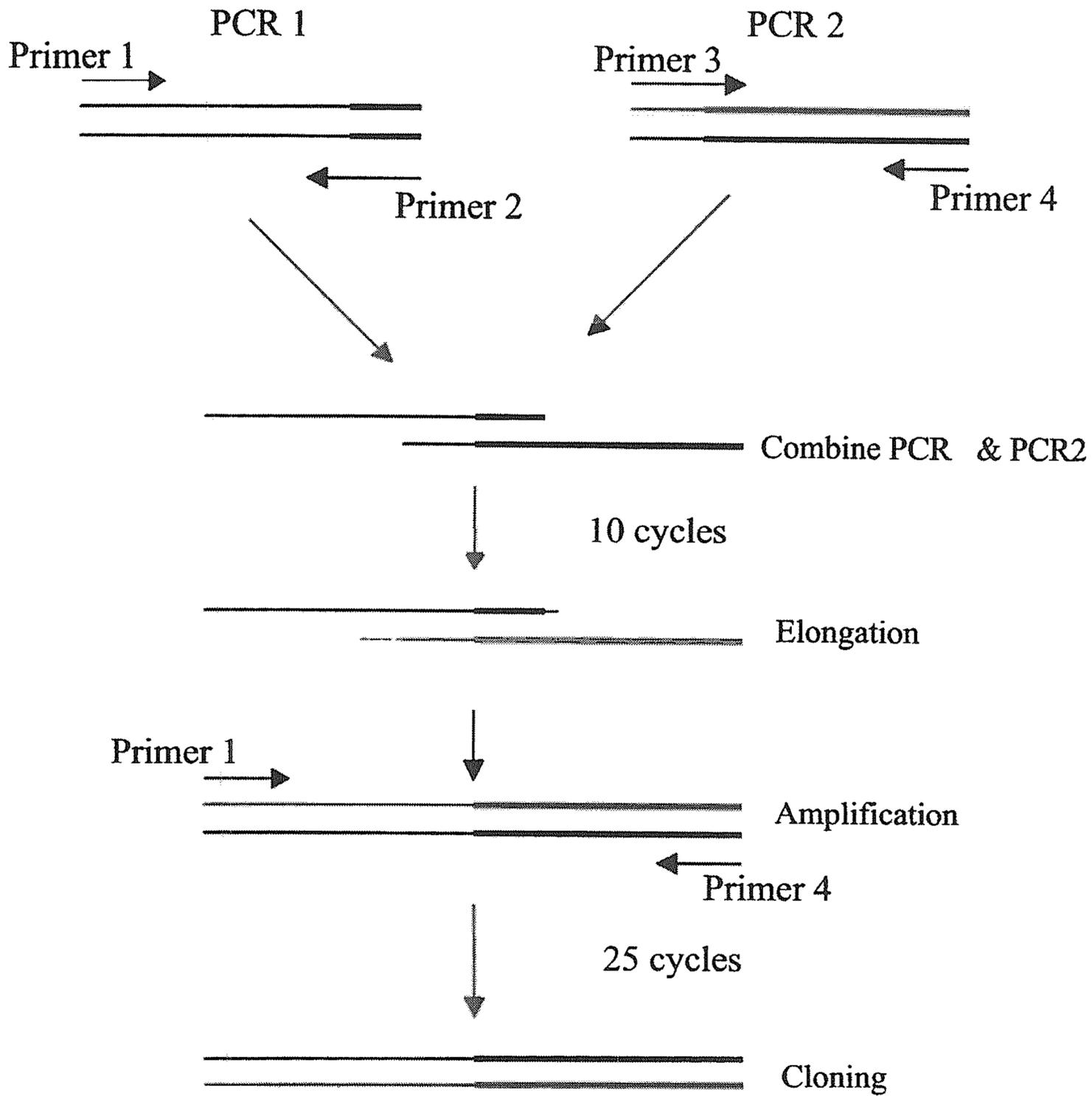
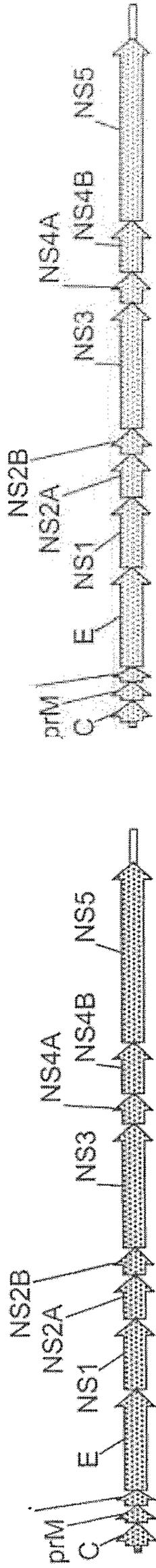
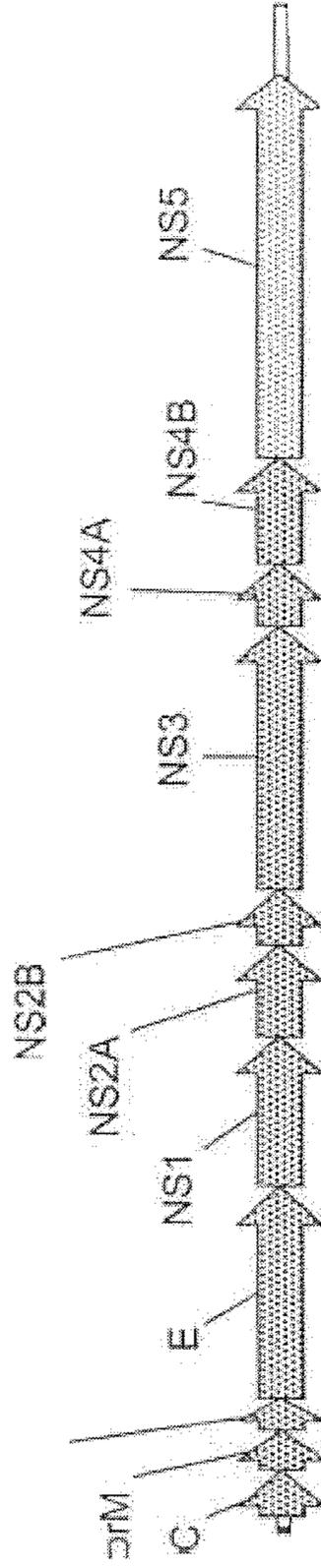


FIG.1



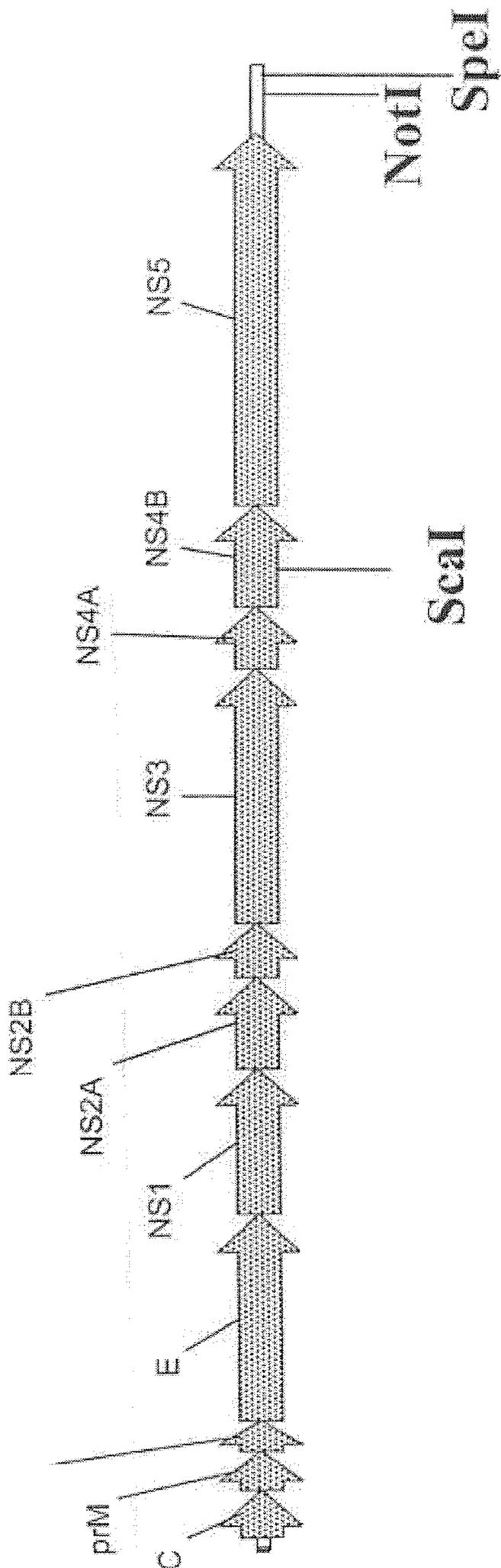
Yellow Fever

Dengue



Dengue 5 Yellow Fever Hybrid

FIG.2



PCR

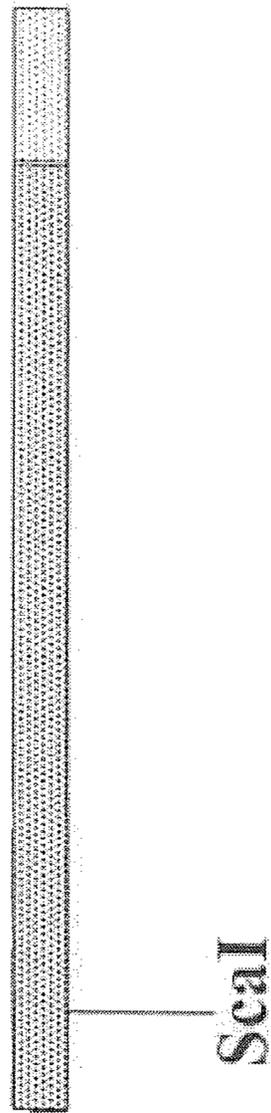
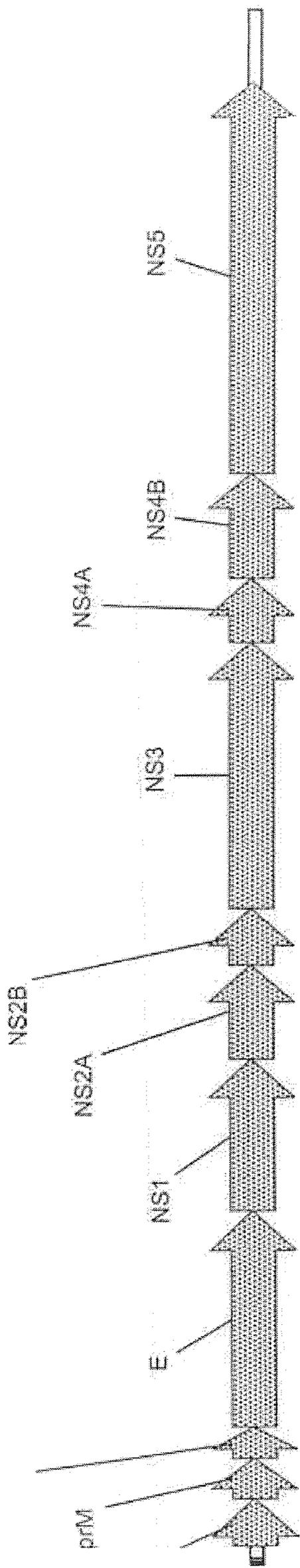


FIG.3



PCR ?

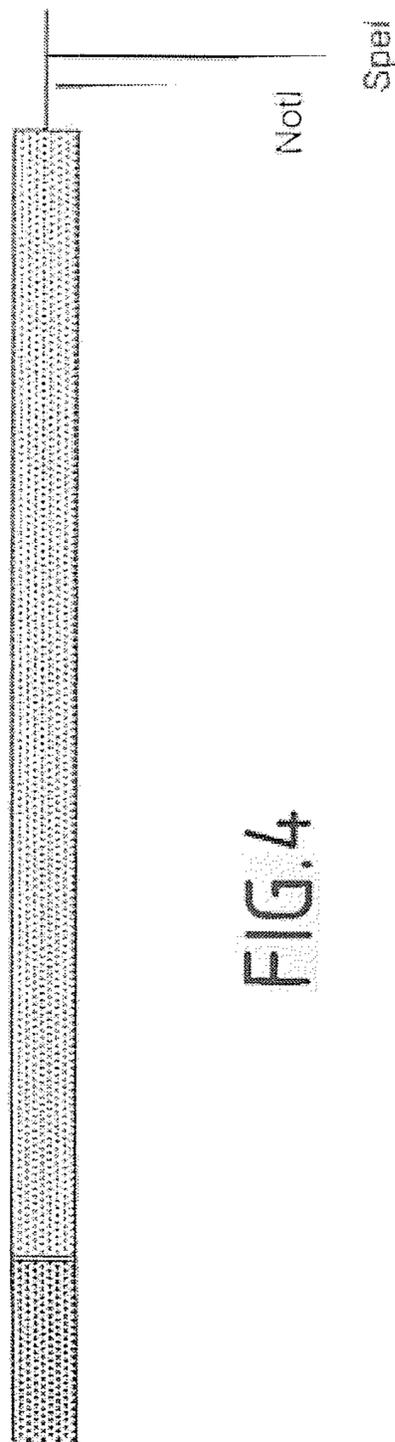
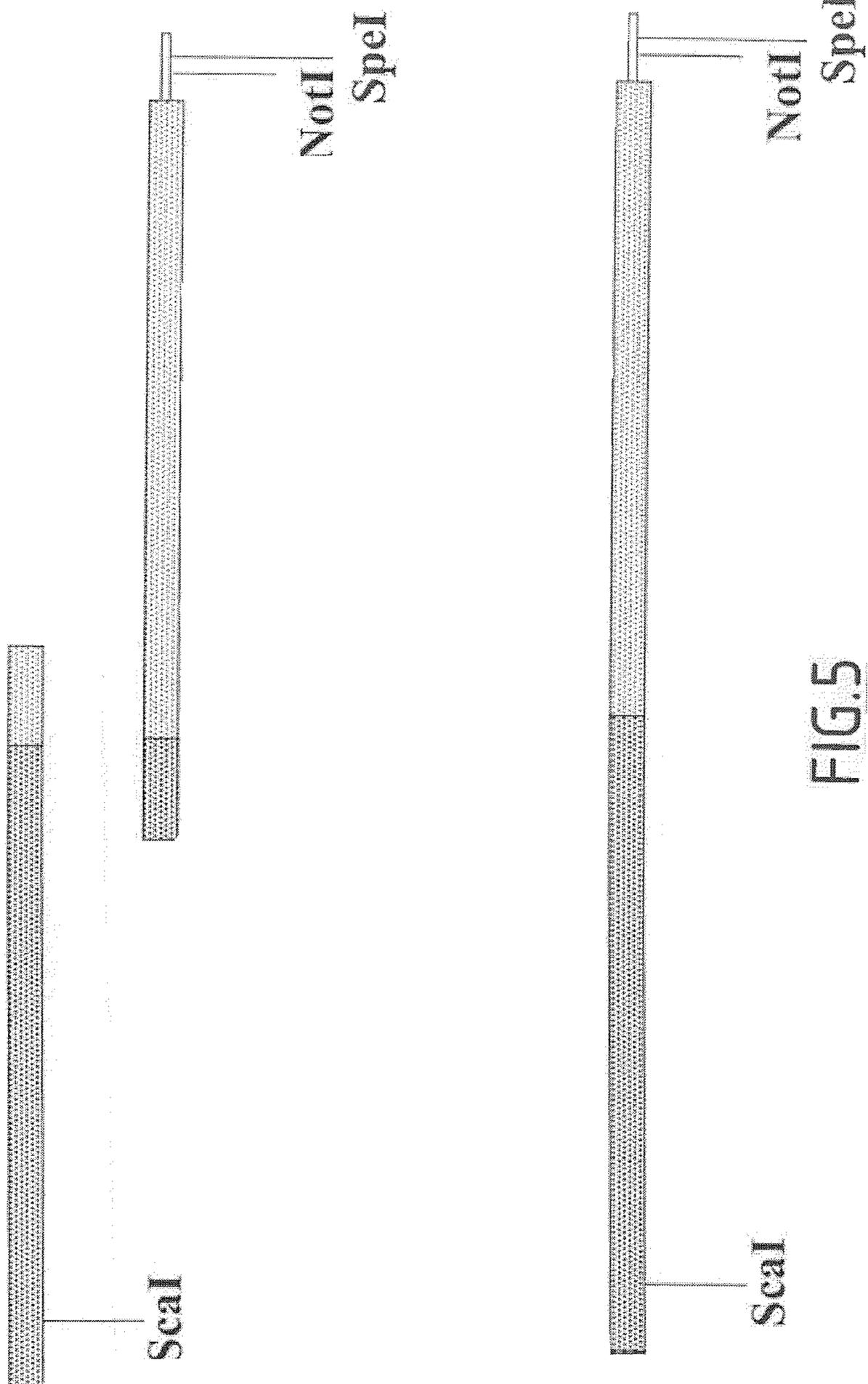
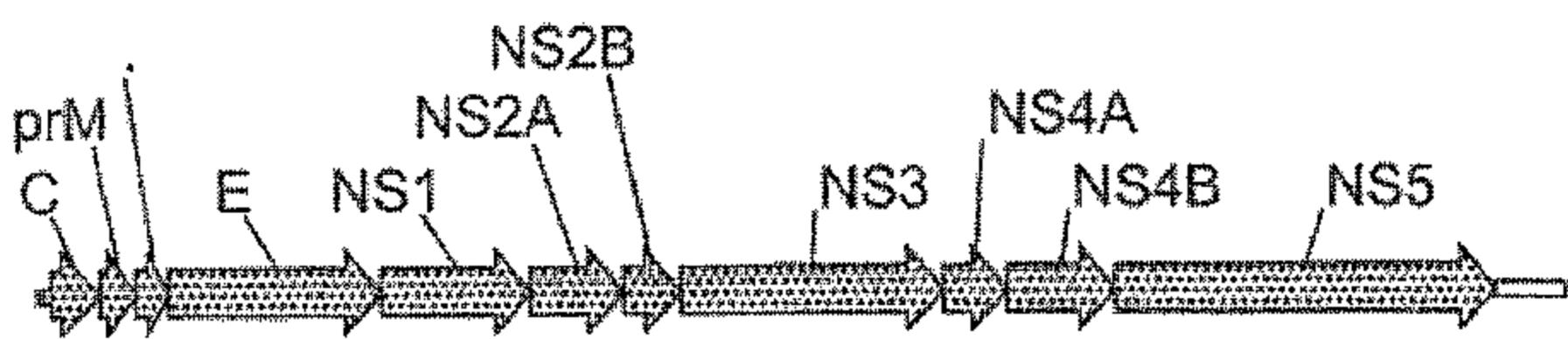
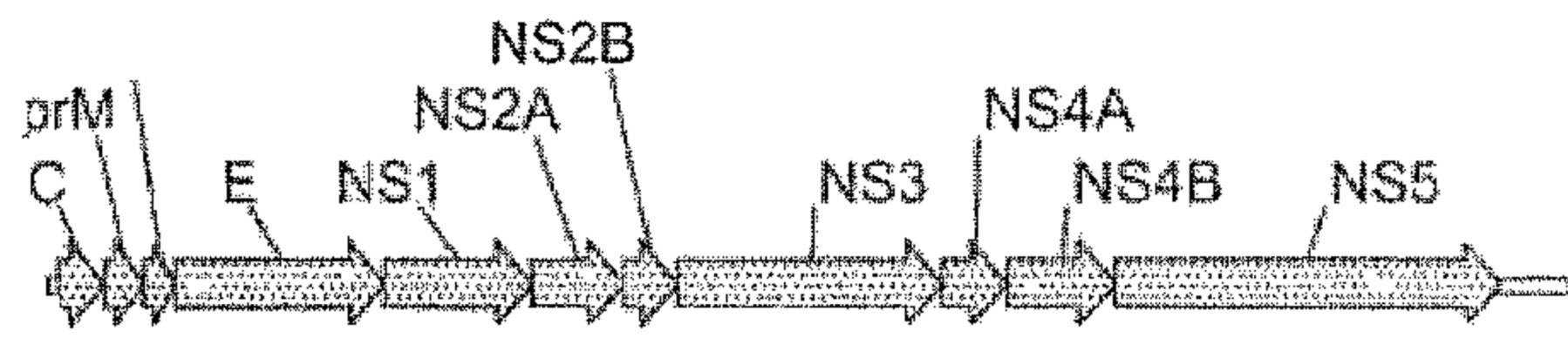


FIG. 4

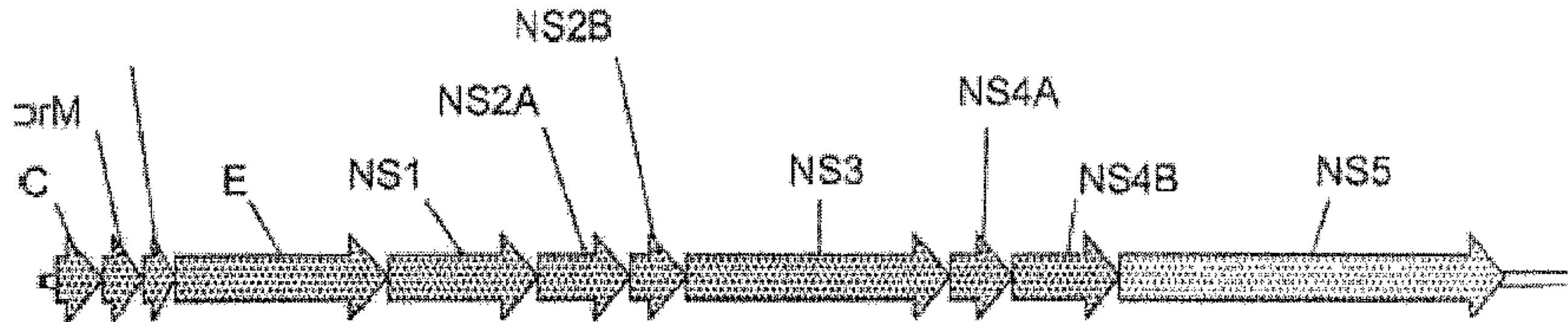




Dengue



Yellow Fever



Dengue 5 Yellow Fever Hybrid