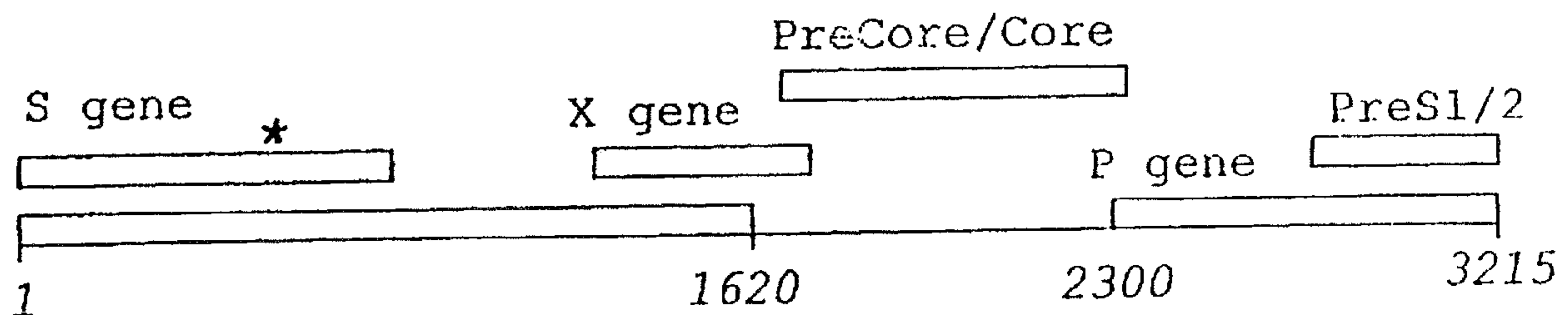




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(72) Inventeurs/Inventors:
LIM, GEK KEOW, SG;
ZHAO, YI, SG;
CHEN, WEI NING, SG;
OON, CHONG JIN, SG
(73) Propriétaire/Owner:
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE,
SG
(74) Agent: MARKS & CLERK

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(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

This invention provides an isolated strain of Hepatitis B virus designated Human Hepatitis B Virus Surface Antigen-'S'-133 Oon Strain (Methionine to Threonine) which constituent viral genome is deposited under Accession Nos. P97121501, P97121502 and P97121503 with the European Collection of Cell Culture on 15th December 1997. This invention also provides an isolated nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine rather than a methionine. This invention also provides an isolated nucleic acid which encodes a peptide, wherein the peptide is encoded by a nucleic acid molecule comprising nucleotides 527 through 595 of SEQ. ID. No. 1 and the purified peptide. This invention also provides various methods of using the disclosed isolated nucleic acid and peptides. This invention further provides various uses of the disclosed isolated nucleic acid, polypeptides and peptides, and antibodies.



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(54) Title: A MUTANT HUMAN HEPATITIS B VIRAL STRAIN AND USES THEREOF (57) Abstract This invention provides an isolated strain of Hepatitis B virus designated Human Hepatitis B Virus Surface Antigen-'S'-133 Oon Strain (Methionine to Threonine) which constituent viral genome is deposited under Accession Nos. P97121501, P97121502 and P97121503 with the European Collection of Cell Culture on 15th December 1997. This invention also provides an isolated nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine rather than a methionine. This invention also provides an isolated nucleic acid which encodes a peptide, wherein the peptide is encoded by a nucleic acid molecule comprising nucleotides 527 through 595 of SEQ. ID. No. 1 and the purified peptide. This invention also provides various methods of using the disclosed isolated nucleic acid and peptides. This invention further provides various uses of the disclosed isolated nucleic acid, polypeptides and peptides, and antibodies.		

A MUTANT HUMAN HEPATITIS B
VIRAL STRAIN AND USES THEREOF

5 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention concerns the human hepatitis B virus genome, isolated from hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), and with a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) within the major surface antigen, its nucleotide sequence, the deduced amino acid sequence of the four major proteins, antigen, antibody, detection systems, development of effective vaccines, and antiviral agents.

15 HCC is one of the most common human liver cancers, particularly in Asia where 70% of the worldwide new cases are found every year. It usually arises in cirrhotic livers as a complication of chronic liver disease. The clinical manifestations of HCC patients are unspecific with signs and symptoms only appearing in the later stages of the cancer.

One of the major causes of chronic liver diseases is hepatitis B viral infection. First discovered in 1963 as a human virus that is transmitted parenterally, chronic hepatitis B viral infection has been most commonly implicated in serological undefined pathogenesis of HCC. Despite the fact that hepatitis B virus does not display features of a complete viral oncogene, its involvement in the development of HCC can be attributed to various aspects of its interaction with host hepatocyte cells. These include the promiscuous transcriptional activity of the smallest viral protein, X, which enhances the expression level of many cellular target genes including proto-oncogenes. On the other hand, integrated viral DNA in the host chromosomes is regularly found in HCC patients. There is also evidence for an active

role in the development of HCC by the major surface antigen. This protein has served as the main detection marker for carriers of hepatitis B virus. The most antigenic epitope is a highly conserved region spanning 23 amino acid residues and located from amino acid position 124 to 147 of the major surface antigen. This small region designated as the group specific determinant "a" is found in all subtypes and isolates of hepatitis B viral genomes. Its antigenic properties seem due to its proposed double loop structure, to which the vaccine-induced neutralizing antibody binds.

Our epidemiological data indicate that the wild type major surface antigen has been found in most HCC patients. Furthermore, observation indicates that several variants of the major surface antigen from HCC patients may be involved in the pathogenesis of HCC. Direct sequencing analysis indicated that 24 out of 63 HCC patients (around 38%) carry various mutations in the "a" epitope of the major surface antigen. When both the wild type and variant cases are combined, the proportion of the variant virus carrying a mutation at amino acid residue 133, located in the first loop of the "a" epitope of the major surface antigen (Methionine to Threonine), is as high as 12.7% in 63 HCC patients from the Southeast Asia region, and present in 5 local HCC cases. However, the same mutation is found in only 2% of hepatitis B virus carriers in a random population (more than 100 cases). The significance of this variant at amino acid residue 133 is further strengthened by the fact that the proportion of variant virus at amino acid residue 145 (Glycine to Arginine), better known as a vaccine-induced mutant and located in the second loop of the "a" epitope, remains constant at 8% in hepatitis B virus carriers in the random population sample.

Although this variant hepatitis B viral strain, carrying a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface antigen in HCC patients, may arise differently from those induced following vaccination (i.e. with a mutation at amino acid residue 145 of the major surface

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antigen), this strain shares similar characteristics in that both are stable and cases of vertical transmission of these strains have been reported, despite effective hepatitis B virus prophylaxis and hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG) being
5 used.

The emergence of the variant human hepatitis B virus, carrying mutations in the "a" epitope of the major surface antigen, in HCC is of concern. The high proportion of the mutant virus
10 with a substitution at amino acid residue 133 of the major surface antigen is of particular interest as it may point to a close association with the pathogenesis of HCC. This correlation would therefore require the urgent development of specific detection systems as well as effective prophylactic
15 and therapeutic vaccines and antiviral agents. Determination of the nucleotide sequence of this mutant virus constitutes the first step towards these aims and will certainly be helpful for developing the above-mentioned diagnostic and treatment schemes.

20

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention provides an isolated strain of Hepatitis B virus designated Human Hepatitis B Virus Surface Antigen-'S'-
5 133 Oon Strain (Methionine to Threonine) which constituent viral genome is deposited under Accession Nos. P97121501, P97121502 and P97121503 with the European Collection of Cell Culture on 15th December 1997.

10 This invention further provides an isolated nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in
15 that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine rather than a methionine.

This invention further provides a method of producing the polypeptide and a method of obtaining the polypeptide in
20 purified form so as to recover a purified polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino
25 acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine rather than a methionine.

This invention further provides an oligonucleotide of at least 15 nucleotides capable of specifically hybridizing with
30 sequences of only the mutant viral strain of hepatitis B virus.

This invention further provides a method of obtaining antibodies to the polypeptide and to the antibodies produced.
35

This invention also provides use of the above-identified nucleic acid, polypeptide, peptide or antibody for determining whether a subject is infected with the above-identified viral

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strain.

This invention also provides use of the above-identified nucleic acid, polypeptide, peptide or antibody for determining
5 whether a subject has a predisposition for hepatocellular carcinoma.

This invention also provides a vaccine for preventing and treating hepatocellular carcinoma, as well as, a vaccine for
10 treating or preventing infection by the above-identified mutant strain of hepatitis B virus.

This invention also provides a method for identifying a chemical compound which is capable of treating or preventing
15 hepatocellular carcinoma and compositions containing such compounds.

This invention also provides a method for identifying a chemical compound which is capable of treating or preventing
20 infection by the above-identified mutant strain and compositions containing such compounds.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

Figure 1. Structure of the four open reading frames of human hepatitis B viral genome isolated from HCC (with a Methionine to Threonine mutation at amino acid residue 133 of the major surface antigen, as labeled by an asterisk). The major viral proteins: DNA polymerase, large/middle/major surface antigen, precore, core and transactivating X are denoted as P, PreS 1/PreS2/S, PreC, C and X respectively.

Figure 2. Strategy of cloning and sequence determination of the same hepatitis B viral genome.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Throughout this application, references to specific nucleotides are to nucleotides present on the coding strand of the nucleic acid. The following standard abbreviations are used throughout the specification to indicate specific nucleotides:

C=cytosine A=adenosine
T=thymidine G=guanosine

The present invention provides the nucleotide sequence of human hepatitis B virus genome isolated from hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), which carries a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface antigen, consisting of 3215 nucleotides (Figure 3) coding for 4 overlapping viral proteins shown in Figures 4-7.

The invention provides the amino acid sequences of the four major viral proteins, including the DNA polymerase, large/middle/major surface antigen, core and trans-activating X. These proteins can be produced using recombinant technology, and used in developing polyclonal or monoclonal antibodies.

The present invention also provides a human hepatitis B virus diagnostic system, specific for the mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface antigen, using the nucleotide or protein sequences, or antibodies described above.

This invention provides an isolated strain of Hepatitis B virus designated Human Hepatitis B Virus Surface Antigen-'S'-133 Oon Strain (Methionine to Threonine) which constituent viral genome is deposited under Accession Nos. P97121501, P97121502 and P97121503.

This invention also provides an isolated nucleic acid encoding

This invention also provides an isolated nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wildtype hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine rather than a methionine. In a specific embodiment, the polypeptide is being encoded by nucleotides 155 through 835 of the nucleic acid sequence designated SEQ. I.D. No. 1, comprising nucleotides "ACG" in position 551-553, instead of "ATG."

The isolated nucleic acid can be DNA or RNA, specifically cDNA or genomic DNA.

In another embodiment, the polypeptide has an amino acid sequence substantially identical to amino acid residues 174 through 400 of the amino acid sequence designated SEQ. I.D. No. 3.

This invention also provides an isolated nucleic acid which encodes a peptide, wherein the peptide is encoded by a nucleic acid molecule comprising nucleotides 527 through 595 of SEQ I.D. No. 1.

This invention also provides an isolated nucleic acid which encodes a peptide, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence comprising amino acid residues 298 through 320 of the amino acid sequence designated SEQ. I.D. No. 3.

This invention further provides a vector comprising an isolated nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major

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This invention further provides a vector comprising an isolated nucleic acid encoding a peptide, wherein the peptide is encoded by a nucleic acid molecule comprising nucleotides 527 through 595 of SEQ. I.D. No. 1.

5

Specifically the vectors above comprise viral DNA.

This invention also provides a host vector system for the production of a polypeptide or peptide and comprises the above-identified vectors in a suitable host.

10

Also in this invention, is a method of producing a polypeptide which comprises growing in the host vector systems described above, under suitable conditions permitting production of the polypeptide or the peptide and recovering the polypeptide or peptide.

15

This invention also provides a method of obtaining a polypeptide or peptide in purified form which comprises:

(a) introducing any of the above-describes vectors into a suitable host cell; (b) culturing the resulting host cell so as to produce the polypeptide; (c) recovering the polypeptide produced into step (b); and (d) purifying the polypeptide or peptide so recovered.

25

This invention also provides a purified polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine rather than a methionine. Specifically, one can obtain the purified polypeptide or peptide using the above methods.

30

This invention provides a purified peptide, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence comprising amino acid residues 298 through 320 of the amino acid sequence designated SEQ. I.D. No. 3.

35

This invention also provides an oligonucleotide of at least 15 nucleotides capable of specifically hybridizing with a unique sequence of nucleotides within a nucleic acid which encodes a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine rather than a methionine, without hybridizing to any sequence of nucleotides within a nucleic acid which encodes the major surface antigen of a wildtype hepatitis B virus. In an embodiment, the oligonucleotide comprises nucleotides 527 through 595 of SEQ. I.D. No. 1.

This invention also provides a composition capable of stimulating or enhancing antibody production for the polypeptide.

This invention also provides a method of obtaining antibodies to a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine, and not to the major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus, comprising: (a) obtaining the polypeptide in a purified form; (b) immunizing an organism capable of producing antibodies against the purified polypeptide; (c) collecting the produced antibodies; (d) combining the produced antibodies and the purified polypeptide under conditions to form a complex; and (e) determining which produced antibodies form a complex with the purified polypeptide so as to obtain antibodies to the polypeptide. In a specific embodiment, the polypeptide is being encoded by nucleotides 155 through 835 of the nucleic acid sequence designated SEQ. I.D. No. 1. In another embodiment, the polypeptide has an amino acid sequence substantially identical to amino acid residues 174 through 400

of the amino acid sequence designated SEQ. I.D. No. 3.

One can obtain these antibodies from organism such as a rabbit or a mouse.

5

This invention also provides a method of obtaining antibodies to a peptide, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence comprising amino acid residues 298 through 320 of the amino acid sequence designated SEQ. I.D. No. 3, comprising: (a) obtaining the peptide in a purified form; (b) immunizing an organism capable of producing antibodies against the purified peptide; (c) collecting the produced antibodies; (d) combining the produced antibodies and the purified peptide under conditions to form a complex; and (e) determining which produced antibodies form a complex with the purified peptide so as to obtain antibodies to the peptide.

10

15

This invention also provides for the antibodies obtained using the methods described above, specifically when the antibodies are monoclonal antibodies.

20

This invention also provides for antibodies capable of detecting a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine, and incapable of detecting the major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus.

25

30

This invention further provides for antibodies capable of detecting a peptide, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence comprising amino acid residues 298 through 320 of the amino acid sequence designated SEQ. I.D. No. 3.

35

This invention provides use of a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a

strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine for determining whether a subject is infected with a strain of Hepatitis B virus designated Human Hepatitis B Virus Surface Antigen-'S'-133 Oon Strain (Methionine to Threonine), wherein such determination comprises: (a) obtaining an appropriate nucleic acid sample from the subject; and (b) determining whether the nucleic acid sample from step (a) is, or is derived from, a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine.

In one embodiment, the nucleic acid sample in step (a) comprises mRNA corresponding to the transcript of DNA encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine, and wherein the determining of step (b), which comprises: (i) contacting the mRNA with the oligonucleotide under conditions permitting binding of the mRNA to the oligonucleotide so as to form a complex; (ii) isolating the complex so formed; and (iii) identifying the mRNA in the isolated complex so as to thereby determine whether the mRNA is, or is derived from, a nucleic acid which encodes the polypeptide.

35

In another embodiment, the nucleic acid sample in step (a) comprises mRNA corresponding to the transcript of DNA encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a

strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine, and wherein the determining of step (b) comprises: (i) translating the mRNA under suitable conditions to obtain an amino acid sequence; and (ii) comparing the amino acid sequence of step (i) with the amino acid sequence encoded by the above-described isolated nucleic acid so as to thereby determine whether the nucleic acid sample is, or is derived from, a nucleic acid which encodes the polypeptide.

Further, one can determine step (b) by: (i) amplifying the nucleic acid present in the sample of step (a); and (ii) detecting the presence of polypeptide in the resulting amplified nucleic acid.

This invention also provides use of antibodies that recognize a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine for determining whether a subject is infected with a strain of Hepatitis B virus designated Human Hepatitis B Virus Surface Antigen-'S'-133 Oon Strain (Methionine to Threonine), wherein such determination comprises: (a) obtaining an appropriate sample from the subject; and (b) determining whether the sample from step (a) is, or is derived from, a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine by contacting the sample under appropriate conditions to bind to the antibodies

recognizing the polypeptide so as to determine whether a subject is infected.

5 In the above-identified uses, the isolated nucleic acid, oligonucleotide or antibody may be labeled with a detectable marker. Examples of detectable markers include radioactive isotopes, fluorophors, and enzymes.

10 In embodiments, the sample may comprise blood, tissue or sera.

This invention provides use of a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine for determining whether a subject has a predisposition for hepatocellular carcinoma, wherein such determination comprises: (a) obtaining an appropriate nucleic acid sample from the subject; and (b) determining whether the nucleic acid sample from step (a) is, or is derived from, a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine.

30 In one embodiment, the nucleic acid sample in step (a) comprises mRNA corresponding to the transcript of DNA encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine, and wherein the determining of step (b), which comprises: (i) contacting the

mRNA with the oligonucleotide under conditions permitting binding of the mRNA to the oligonucleotide so as to form a complex; (ii) isolating the complex so formed; and (iii) identifying the mRNA in the isolated complex so as to thereby
5 determine whether the mRNA is, or is derived from, a nucleic acid which encodes the polypeptide.

In another embodiment, the nucleic acid sample in step (a) comprises mRNA corresponding to the transcript of DNA encoding
10 a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is
15 a threonine, rather than a methionine, and wherein the determining of step (b) comprises: (i) translating the mRNA under suitable conditions to obtain an amino acid sequence; and (ii) comparing the amino acid sequence of step (i) with the amino acid sequence of the isolated nucleic acid which
20 encodes a polypeptide, wherein the polypeptide has an amino acid sequence substantially identical to amino acids 174 through 400 of the amino acid sequence designated SEQ. I.D. No. 3, so as to thereby determine whether the nucleic acid sample is, or is derived from, a nucleic acid which encodes
25 the polypeptide.

In another embodiment, the determining of step (b) comprises: (i) amplifying the nucleic acid present in the sample of step (a); and (ii) detecting the presence of polypeptide in the
30 resulting amplified nucleic acid.

This invention further provides use of antibodies that recognize a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide
35 having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a

methionine for determining whether a subject has a predisposition for hepatocellular carcinoma, wherein such determination comprises: (a) obtaining an appropriate sample from the subject; and (b) determining whether the sample from
5 step (a) is, or is derived from, a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that
10 the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine by contacting the sample under appropriate conditions to bind to the antibodies that recognize the polypeptide so as to determine whether a subject is infected.

15

In the above-described uses, the isolated nucleic acid, oligonucleotide or antibody may be labeled with a detectable marker. Examples of detectable markers include radioactive isotopes, fluorophors, and enzymes.

20

In embodiments, the sample may comprise blood, tissue or sera.

This invention provides a method for identifying a chemical compound for the manufacture of a medicament which is capable
25 of treating infection by a strain of Hepatitis B virus designated Human Hepatitis B Virus Surface Antigen-'S'-133 Oon Strain (Methionine to Threonine) which comprises: (a) contacting a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide
30 having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine, with the chemical compound under conditions
35 permitting binding between the polypeptide and the chemical compound; (b) detecting specific binding of the chemical compound to the polypeptide; and (c) determining whether the chemical compound inhibits the polypeptide so as to identify

a chemical compound which is capable of treating infection by the viral strain.

This invention also provides a method for identifying a chemical compound for the manufacture of a medicament which is capable of preventing infection by a strain of Hepatitis B virus designated Human Hepatitis B Virus Surface Antigen-'S'-133 Oon Strain (Methionine to Threonine), which comprises: (a) contacting a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine, with the chemical compound under conditions permitting binding between the polypeptide and the chemical compound; (b) detecting specific binding of the chemical compound to the polypeptide; and (c) determining whether the chemical compound inhibits the polypeptide so as to identify a chemical compound which is capable of preventing infection by the viral strain.

This invention also provides a method for identifying a chemical compound for the manufacture of a medicament which is capable of treating hepatocellular carcinoma which comprises: (a) contacting a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine, with the chemical compound under conditions permitting binding between the polypeptide and the chemical compound; (b) detecting specific binding of the chemical compound to the polypeptide; and (c) determining whether the chemical compound inhibits the polypeptide so as to identify a chemical compound which is capable of treating infection by the viral strain.

This invention also provides a method for identifying a chemical compound for the manufacture of a medicament which is capable of preventing hepatocellular carcinoma, which comprises: (a) contacting a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine, with the chemical compound under conditions permitting binding between the polypeptide and the chemical compound; (b) detecting specific binding of the chemical compound to the polypeptide; and (c) determining whether the chemical compound inhibits the polypeptide so as to identify a chemical compound which is capable of preventing infection by the viral strain.

This invention also provides a composition comprising the chemical compound identified by the above-described methods in an amount effective to treat or prevent infection by the strain and a pharmaceutically effective carrier.

This invention provides a composition comprising a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine, or derivative thereof, the amounts of such polypeptide being effective to stimulate or enhance antibody production in a subject, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

The actual effective amount will be based upon the size of the polypeptide, the biodegradability of the polypeptide, the bioactivity of the polypeptide and the bioavailability of the polypeptide. If the polypeptide does not degrade quickly, is bioavailable and highly active, a smaller amount will be

required to be effective. The effective amount will be known to one of skill in the art; it will also be dependent upon the form of the polypeptide, the size of the polypeptide and the bioactivity of the polypeptide. Use of an adjuvant for example, would lower the required amount of the polypeptide. One of skill in the art could routinely perform empirical activity tests to determine the bioactivity in bioassays and thus determine the effective amount.

Pharmaceutically acceptable carriers are well known to those skilled in the art and include, but are not limited to, 0.01-0.1M and preferably 0.05M phosphate buffer or 0.8% saline. Additionally, such pharmaceutically acceptable carriers may be aqueous or non-aqueous solutions, suspensions, and emulsions. Examples of non-aqueous solvents are propylene glycol, polyethylene glycol, vegetable oils such as olive oil, and injectable organic esters such as ethyl oleate. Aqueous carriers include water, alcoholic/aqueous solutions, emulsions or suspensions, including saline and buffered media. Parenteral vehicles include sodium chloride solution, Ringer's dextrose, dextrose and sodium chloride, lactated Ringer's or fixed oils. Intravenous vehicles include fluid and nutrient replenishers, electrolyte replenishers such as those based on Ringer's dextrose, and the like. Preservatives and other additives may also be present, such as, for example, antimicrobials, antioxidants, chelating agents, inert gases and the like.

This invention also provides a composition comprising a peptide, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence comprising amino acid residues 298 through 320 of the amino acid sequence designated SEQ. I.D. No. 3. or derivative thereof, the amounts of such peptide being effective to stimulate or enhance antibody production in a subject, and a pharmaceutically acceptable.

This invention also provides compositions comprising the chemical compound identified by the above-described methods in

an amount effective to treat or prevent hepatocellular carcinoma and a pharmaceutically effective carrier.

5 This invention also provides a composition comprising the chemical compound identified by the above-described methods in an amount effective to treat or prevent infection by a strain of hepatitis B virus designated Human Hepatitis B Virus Surface Antigen-'S'-133 Oon Strain (Methionine to Threonine) and a pharmaceutically effective carrier.

10

This invention further provides use of the above-identified compositions for treating a subject infected with a strain of Hepatitis B virus designated Human Hepatitis B Virus Surface Antigen-'S'-133 Oon Strain (Methionine to Threonine).

15

This invention also provides use of the above-identified compositions for preventing infection by a strain of Hepatitis B virus designated Human Hepatitis B Virus Surface Antigen-'S'-133 Oon Strain (Methionine to Threonine) in a subject.

20

This invention also provides use of the above-described compositions for treating or preventing hepatocellular carcinoma.

25

This invention also provides a method of screening bodily fluids from a subject for a strain of hepatitis B virus designated Human Hepatitis B Virus Surface Antigen-'S'-133 Oon Strain (Methionine to Threonine) which comprises: (a) obtaining an appropriate sample of bodily fluid from the subject; (b) determining the presence of a polypeptide which is a mutant major surface antigen of a strain of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the amino acid sequence of a major surface antigen of a wild type hepatitis B virus in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine, rather than a methionine in the sample of step (a) so as to screen the sample for the strain. Specifically, wherein the bodily fluid comprises blood, sera, or a nucleic

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acid sample of blood or sera.

This invention further provides a method of treating a subject infected with this viral strain.

5

This invention also provides a method of screening tissues and bodily fluids for this viral strain.

10

This invention provides a hepatitis vaccine, comprising a mutant form of the surface antigen of hepatitis B virus, such polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which differs from the wild type amino acid sequence of the major surface antigen of hepatitis B in that the amino acid at position number 133 of such polypeptide is a threonine rather than a methionine.

15

This invention also provides the above-described vaccine, further comprising an adjuvant.

20

This invention is illustrated in the Experimental Details section which follows. These sections are set forth to aid in an understanding of the invention but are not intended to, and should not be construed to, limit in any way the invention as set forth in the claims which follow thereafter.

Experimental Details

In the method described below, the human hepatitis B virus carrying the mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to
5 Threonine) of the major surface antigen was isolated, and its nucleotide sequence was determined.

Serum sample (5194) was obtained from a 63-year old Chinese female patient of surface antigen carrier. She was confirmed
10 as a HCC patient by subsequent biopsy. The hepatitis B virus from her serum carried a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) in the major surface antigen, as shown by previous sequencing analysis of the "a" epitope. Viral DNA was extracted prior to the determination of its
15 sequence in the present invention.

As described in the examples below, the genome of this hepatitis B mutant virus from HCC and carrying a mutation at the amino acid residue 133 of the major surface antigen,
20 consists of 3215 nucleotides which is identical to that of the wild type virus of the same subtype (adr). Open reading frames (ORF) coding for the major viral proteins are found at corresponding positions when compared to the wild type virus. Position 1 in the mutant hepatitis B virus genome is defined
25 according to that in the wild type virus.

The structure of the different ORFs in the mutant human virus genome are reported here and summarized in Fig. 1. The locations are indicated as follows:
30 - DNA polymerase gene starts at position 2307 and ends at position 1623, therefore consisting of 2532 nucleotides and coding for 843 amino acid residues;
- Large surface antigen gene starts at position 2848 and ends at position 835, therefore consisting of 1203 nucleotides and
35 coding for 400 amino acid residues. This large surface antigen overlaps the middle surface antigen which starts at position 3205 and the major surface antigen which starts at position 155. Both the middle (consisting of 281 amino acids

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residues) and the major (consisting of 226 amino acid residues) surface antigens end at the same position as the large surface antigen;

- Core gene starts at position 1814 and ends at position 2452, therefore consisting of 639 nucleotides and coding for 212 amino acid residues; and

- Trans-activating X gene starts at position 1374 and ends at position 1838, therefore consisting of 465 nucleotides and coding for 154 amino acid residues.

10

Furthermore, sequence analysis has established this mutant hepatitis B virus belongs to the adr subtype as indicated by a lysine residue and an arginine residue at positions 122 and 160 respectively in the major surface antigen. Consistent with previous analysis of the "a" epitope by direct sequencing, the mutation (from Methionine to Threonine) is found at amino acid residue 133 of the major surface antigen.

Compared with the wild type hepatitis B virus deposited in the Genbank database (accession number D16665), the identity of this hepatitis B viral strain is at 90.3% for the nucleotide sequence. The identity of different viral proteins of the present mutant hepatitis B virus as compared with its counterpart, the wild type virus, is 95.8%, 97.5%, 95.1% and 94.8% for DNA polymerase (PIR - Protein Identification Resources accession number S43491), large surface antigen (PIR accession number JQ2107), core (PIR accession number S43490) and trans-activating X (PIR accession number S35529) proteins respectively. Conversely, numerous amino acid substitutions are present in each of the viral proteins as compared to their wild type counterparts, these include: 5 mutations in DNA polymerase, 5 in large surface antigen (including the Methionine to Threonine change for the initiation codon of the major surface antigen), 5 in core and 4 in trans-activating X protein.

The human hepatitis B virus genome in the present invention, isolated from HCC and carrying mutation at amino acid residue

133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface antigen, can be used as material to design oligonucleotides specific to the mutant virus genome. These oligonucleotides can be used as material for highly specific diagnostic agents that detect
5 virus derived from HCC carrying a mutation at amino acid residue 133 of the major surface antigen.

The human hepatitis B virus genome in the present invention, with a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to
10 Threonine) of the major surface antigen, can be used as material to produce proteins of the invention by expressing a vector that carries the relevant coding region, and which can replicate in a host cell such as Escherichia coli by standard DNA recombinant technology.

15 Proteins of the present invention are useful as material for highly specific diagnostic agents capable of detecting hepatitis B virus from HCC, carrying a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface
20 antigen. Using known methods, these same proteins can be used to produce polyclonal and monoclonal antibodies.

Polyclonal and monoclonal antibodies can be used as material for diagnostic agents to detect with high specificity antigens
25 of hepatitis B virus, from HCC, with a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface antigen.

A detection system using each protein of the present invention
30 or proteins with partial replacement of amino acids, and a detection system using monoclonal or polyclonal antibodies to such proteins are useful as highly specific diagnostic agents capable of detecting of human hepatitis B virus from HCC to detect this virus from patients who are carriers of hepatitis
35 B surface antigen who may then be at risk of developing HCC. The proteins, or antibodies of such proteins can be used as a material for development of prophylactic and therapeutic vaccines against this viral strain.

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It is well known that one or more nucleotides in a DNA sequence can be substituted by other nucleotides to produce the same protein. The present invention also concerns such nucleotide changes which code for proteins reported in this invention. It is equally well known that one or more amino acids in a protein sequence can be replaced by other analogous amino acids, as defined by their hydrophilic properties or charges, to produce an analog of the amino acid sequence. Any analogs of the proteins of the present invention involving amino acid replacement, deletions, isosteres (modified amino acids that bear close structural and spatial similarity to protein amino acids), or additions, can be utilized, provided that the resulting sequences elicit antibodies recognizing hepatitis B virus from HCC with a mutation at amino acid mutation 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface antigen.

EXAMPLES

The nucleotide sequence and the deduced amino acid sequence of human hepatitis B virus, isolated from HCC and carrying a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface antigen, were determined in the following manner:

1. Isolation of Viral DNA

The viral DNA was isolated from a serum sample (5194) obtained from a 63-year old Chinese female patient of surface antigen carrier. She was confirmed as an HCC patient by biopsy. The hepatitis B virus from her serum carried a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) in the major surface antigen, as shown by our previous sequencing analysis of the "a" epitope.

The isolation method used was:

200 μ l of the serum sample was added with 400 μ l of the lysis buffer (Tris chloride 10 mM, pH7.4, EDTA 1 mM, and sodium

dodecyl sulfate 2%) and 25 μ l of proteinase K (20 mg/ml), incubated at 65⁰ C for 3 hours. Viral DNA was then extracted by phenol/chloroform and precipitated by ethanol.

5 2. Amplification of Viral DNA by Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR)

The virus genome in the present invention was amplified by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) using 3 sets of overlapping
10 oligonucleotides, which were designed according to the wild type hepatitis B virus. Various restriction enzyme sites were included to facilitate the cloning of the PCR products. The position of these oligonucleotides is shown in Fig. 2 and indicated as follows:

- 15 - Flag 1 (ATAAGCTTATGCCCCTATCTTATCAACACTTCCGGA) (SEQ. I.D. No. 6) starts at the initiation site of the coding region of DNA polymerase, at position 2307 of the viral nucleotide sequence and matches the coding strand (sense oligonucleotide). An additional HindIII restriction enzyme site is underlined;
- 20 - Xba3 (GAGTCTAGACTCTGCGGTATTGTGA) (SEQ. I.D. No. 7) starts at the internal restriction enzyme site XbaI, at position 250 of the viral nucleotide sequence and matches the complementary strand (anti-sense oligonucleotide). An additional XbaI restriction enzyme site is underlined;
- 25 - Xba5 (GAGTCTAGACTCGTGGTGGACTTCT) (SEQ. I.D. No. 8) starts at the internal XbaI site, at the same location as that of Xba3 oligonucleotide but matches the coding strand (sense oligonucleotide). An additional XbaI restriction enzyme site is underlined;
- 30 - Common 3 (TGAGAATTCTCACGGTGGTCTCCATGCGACGT) (SEQ. I.D. No. 9) starts at the stop codon of the DNA polymerase, at position 1623 of the viral nucleotide sequence and matches the complementary strand (anti-sense oligonucleotide). An additional EcoRI restriction enzyme site is underlined;
- 35 - V11 (TTTGTTTACGTCCCGT) (SEQ. I.D. No. 10) starts near the initiation site of the X gene, at position 1420 of the viral nucleotide sequence and matches the coding strand (sense oligonucleotide);

- HindIIIADW3 (CTAAGCTTAGTTTCCGGAAGTGTGAT) (SEQ. I.D. No. 11) starts close to the initiation site of the DNA polymerase, at position 2340 and matches the complementary strand (anti-sense oligonucleotide). An additional Hind III restriction enzyme site is underlined.

Using viral DNA as template, PCR was then carried out on a DNA Thermal Cyclor (Perkin-Elmer. Cetus) for 35 cycles using Pfu polymerase (Stratagene, U.S.A.), each cycle consisting of 1.5 minutes at a denaturing temperature of 94° C, 2 minutes at an annealing temperature of 53° C and 4 minutes at an extension temperature of 72° C. The following combinations of oligonucleotides were used: Flag1/Xba3, Xba5/Common3 and V11/HindIIIADW3, and generated amplification products of 1.2 kb, 1.4 kb and 1.1 kb respectively.

3. Cloning of the Amplified Viral DNA Fragments

The amplified viral DNA fragment from Flag1/Xba3 (1.2 kb) was subjected to restriction enzyme digestion by HindIII and XbaI, prior to cloning in a BlueScript plasmid pre-treated by the same restriction enzymes. Similar digestion with XbaI and EcoRI was applied to PCR product from Xba5/Common3 (1.4 kb), prior to cloning in a BlueScript plasmid pre-treated by XbaI and EcoRI. On the other hand, the DNA fragment amplified with V11 and HindIIIADW3 (1.1 kb) was directly cloned into a ZeroBlunt plasmid, developed by InvitroGen (U.S.A.) for cloning blunt-end DNA fragments.

4. Determination of Nucleotide Sequence

Nucleotide sequence of the human hepatitis B virus isolated from HCC and reported in the present invention was determined on plasmid DNA template by chain-terminating inhibitors, using the Sequenase DNA Sequencing Kit (United States Biochemical Corp.). To facilitate the sequencing procedure, various internal oligonucleotides were designed (from V1 to V16) according to the wild type hepatitis B virus, and their

positions are indicated in Figure 2.

From the analysis described above, the full-length nucleotide sequence of the hepatitis B virus, isolated from HCC and carrying a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface antigen, was determined as shown in Figure 3. The deduced amino acid sequences coding for the major viral proteins are shown in Figures 4-7: hepatitis B viral DNA polymerase (Figure 4), the large surface antigen, including the middle and major surface antigen (Figure 5), the core protein (Figure 6) and the trans-activating X protein (Figure 7).

Alignment of the virus sequence in the present invention with other hepatitis B viral sequences, available in the Genbank database, will point to specific sequence differences which in turn can be used to design DNA probes. A detection system using polymerase chain reaction (PCR) can then be developed. Such PCR reactions will involve combinations of oligonucleotides specific to human hepatitis B virus in the present invention, with a mutation at the amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface antigen, thereby allowing highly specific detection of these mutant viral DNA. Briefly, viral DNA can be extracted as described in this invention. PCR reaction can be performed using specific oligonucleotides using the similar cycling conditions described above. Results can then be analyzed after resolving PCR products on a 1% agarose gel.

According to known immunological procedures, it is possible to determine epitopes from protein sequences as those in Figures 4-7. Determination of these epitopes specific to human hepatitis B virus, from HCC and carrying a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface antigen, will allow synthesis of peptides using known genetic engineering methods, synthesis of proteins, production of antibodies specific to these epitopes, development of specific diagnostic reagents, development of prophylactic and

therapeutic vaccines, and antiviral agents.

A detection system for antibody against hepatitis B virus isolated from HCC and carrying a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface antigen can be developed using polyvinyl microtiter plates and the sandwich method. Briefly, 50 μ l of 5 μ g/ml concentration of a peptide from the hepatitis B virus in the present invention, isolated from HCC and carrying a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface antigen, can be dispensed in each well of the microtiter plates and incubated overnight at room temperature for consolidation. A similar procedure can be applied to a protein purified from host cells such as Escherichia coli. The microplate wells can be washed five times with physiological saline solution containing 0.05% Tween 20TM. For overcoating, 100 μ l of NaCl buffer containing 30% (v/v) of calf serum and 0.05% Tween 20 (CS buffer) can be dispensed in each well and discarded after incubation for 30 minutes at room temperature.

To determine antibodies specific for the mutant (Methionine to Threonine at amino acid residue 133 of the major surface antigen) hepatitis B virus in serum, the primary reaction can be carried out such that 50 μ l of the CS buffer and 10 μ l of a serum sample can be dispensed in each microplate well and incubated on a microplate vibrator for one hour at room temperature. After completion of the primary reaction, microplate wells are washed five times as described above.

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In the secondary reaction, 1 ng of horseradish peroxidase labeled anti-human IgG mouse monoclonal antibodies dissolved in 50 μ l of calf serum can be dispensed in each microplate well and incubated on a microplate vibrator for one hour at room temperature. Upon completion, wells can be washed five times in the same way. After addition of hydrogen peroxide (as substrate) and 50 μ l of O-phenylenediamine solution (as color developer) in each well, and after incubation for 30

minutes at room temperature, 50 μ l of 4M sulphuric acid solution can be dispensed in each well to stop further color development and for reading absorbance at 490nm.

5 The present invention makes possible detection of the mutant human hepatitis B virus, in particular those carrying a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major surface antigen. The present invention also provides detection systems capable of a highly specific and
10 sensitive detection at an early stage of infection or development of HCC when the HCC may be treated and cured.

In addition, these features allow accurate diagnosis of patients at an early stage in the HCC and also help to inhibit
15 with higher efficiency mutant hepatitis B virus.

Proteins and their antibodies under the present invention can be utilized for development of prophylactic and therapeutic vaccines, as well as, immunological pharmaceuticals. Sequence
20 information on structural genes of these mutant viruses will be helpful for developing detection systems of the relevant protein antigens and antibodies.

Antigen-antibody complexes can be detected by known methods.
25 Specific monoclonal and polyclonal antibodies can be raised by immunizing animals such as mice and rabbits with peptides or proteins specific to mutant hepatitis B viruses from HCC. Inhibitory antiviral agents can be designed and targeted against these proteins and molecules in cell culture or in
30 vivo.

The present invention is based on studies on human hepatitis virus genome isolated from HCC and carrying a mutation at amino acid residue 133 (Methionine to Threonine) of the major
35 surface antigen. The invention makes possible highly specific detection of these mutant hepatitis B virus from HCC, and provides material such as protein, polyclonal and monoclonal antibodies for development of such detection system.

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SEQUENCE LISTING

(1) GENERAL INFORMATION:

- (i) APPLICANT:
 - (A) NAME: Government of the Republic of Singapore
 - (B) STREET: 18 College Road
 - (C) COUNTRY: Singapore
 - (D) POSTAL CODE (ZIP): 169854
- (ii) TITLE OF INVENTION: A MUTANT HUMAN HEPATITIS B VIRAL STRAIN
AND USES THEREOF
- (iii) NUMBER OF SEQUENCES: 11
- (iv) CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS:
 - (A) NAME: Marks & Clerk
 - (B) STREET: 280 Slater Street, Suite 1800
 - (C) CITY: Ottawa
 - (D) STATE: Ontario
 - (E) COUNTRY: Canada
 - (F) POSTAL CODE (ZIP): K1P 1C2
- (v) COMPUTER READABLE FORM:
 - (A) MEDIUM TYPE: Diskette
 - (B) COMPUTER: IBM PC
 - (C) OPERATING SYSTEM: MS DOS
 - (D) SOFTWARE: PatentIn Ver. 2.1
- (vi) CURRENT APPLICATION DATA:
 - (A) APPLICATION NUMBER:
 - (B) FILING DATE: 1998-06-19
 - (C) CLASSIFICATION: Unknown
- (vii) PRIOR APPLICATION DATA:
 - (A) APPLICATION NUMBER:
 - (B) FILING DATE:
 - (C) CLASSIFICATION: Unknown
- (viii) PATENT AGENT INFORMATION:
 - (A) NAME: Richard J. Mitchell
 - (B) REGISTRATION NUMBER:
 - (C) REFERENCE/DOCKET NUMBER: 10415-9-NP
- (ix) TELECOMMUNICATION INFORMATION:
 - (A) TELEPHONE: 613-236-9561
 - (B) TELEFAX: 613-230-8821

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:1:

- (i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:
 - (A) LENGTH: 3215 base pairs
 - (B) TYPE: nucleic acid
 - (C) STRANDEDNESS: double
 - (D) TOPOLOGY: circular

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:1:

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(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:2:

37

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 843 amino acids
- (B) TYPE: amino acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:2:

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Leu	Asn	Arg	Arg	Val	Ala	Glu	Asp	Leu	Asn	Leu	Gly	Asn	Leu	Asn	Val	35	40	45	
Ser	Ile	Pro	Trp	Thr	His	Lys	Val	Gly	Asn	Phe	Thr	Gly	Leu	Tyr	Ser	50	55	60	
Ser	Thr	Val	Pro	Val	Phe	Asn	Pro	Glu	Trp	Gln	Ile	Pro	Ser	Phe	Pro	65	70	75	80
His	Ile	His	Leu	Gln	Glu	Asp	Ile	Ile	Asn	Arg	Cys	Gln	Gln	Tyr	Val	85	90	95	
Gly	Pro	Leu	Thr	Val	Asn	Glu	Lys	Arg	Arg	Leu	Lys	Leu	Ile	Met	Pro	100	105	110	
Ala	Arg	Phe	Tyr	Pro	Asn	Leu	Thr	Lys	Tyr	Leu	Pro	Leu	Asp	Lys	Gly	115	120	125	
Ile	Lys	Pro	Tyr	Tyr	Pro	Glu	His	Ala	Val	Asn	His	Tyr	Phe	Lys	Thr	130	135	140	
Arg	His	Tyr	Leu	His	Thr	Leu	Trp	Lys	Ala	Gly	Ile	Leu	Tyr	Lys	Arg	145	150	155	160
Glu	Thr	Thr	Arg	Ser	Ala	Ser	Phe	Cys	Gly	Ser	Pro	Tyr	Ser	Trp	Glu	165	170	175	
Gln	Glu	Leu	Gln	His	Gly	Arg	Leu	Val	Phe	Gln	Thr	Ser	Thr	Arg	His	180	185	190	
Gly	Asp	Glu	Ser	Cys	Cys	Ser	Gln	Ser	Ser	Gly	Ile	Leu	Ser	Arg	Ser	195	200	205	
Pro	Val	Gly	Pro	Cys	Val	Arg	Ser	Gln	Leu	Lys	Gln	Ser	Arg	Leu	Gly	210	215	220	
Leu	Gln	Pro	Gln	Gln	Gly	Ser	Leu	Ala	Arg	Gly	Lys	Ser	Gly	Arg	Ser	225	230	235	240
Gly	Ser	Ile	Arg	Ala	Arg	Val	His	Pro	Thr	Thr	Arg	Arg	Ser	Phe	Gly	245	250	255	

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Gly Glu Pro Ser Gly Ser Gly His Ile Asp Asn Ser Ala Ser Ser Thr
 260 265 270
 Ser Ser Cys Leu His Gln Ser Ala Val Arg Lys Thr Ala Tyr Ser His
 275 280 285
 Leu Ser Thr Ser Lys Arg Gln Ser Ser Ser Gly His Ala Val Glu Leu
 290 295 300
 His Asn Ile Pro Pro Ser Ser Ala Arg Ser Gln Gly Glu Gly Pro Ile
 305 310 315 320
 Phe Ser Cys Trp Trp Leu Gln Phe Arg Asn Ser Lys Pro Cys Ser Asp
 325 330 335
 Tyr Cys Leu Ser His Ile Val Asn Leu Leu Glu Asp Trp Gly Pro Cys
 340 345 350
 Thr Glu His Gly Glu His Asn Ile Arg Ile Pro Arg Thr Pro Ala Arg
 355 360 365
 Val Thr Gly Gly Val Phe Leu Val Asp Lys Asn Pro His Asn Thr Ala
 370 375 380
 Glu Ser Arg Leu Trp Trp Thr Ser Leu Asn Phe Leu Gly Gly Ala Pro
 385 390 395 400
 Thr Cys Ser Trp Pro Lys Phe Ala Val Pro Asn Leu Gln Ser Leu Thr
 405 410 415
 Asn Leu Leu Ser Ser Asn Leu Ser Trp Leu Ser Leu Asp Val Ser Ala
 420 425 430
 Ala Phe Tyr His Ile Pro Leu His Pro Ala Ala Met Pro His Leu Leu
 435 440 445
 Val Gly Ser Ser Gly Leu Pro Arg Tyr Val Ala Arg Leu Ser Ser Thr
 450 455 460
 Ser Arg Asn Ile Asn His Gln His Gly Ala Met Gln Asp Leu His Asp
 465 470 475 480
 Ser Cys Ser Arg Lys Leu Tyr Val Ser Leu Leu Leu Leu Tyr Lys Thr
 485 490 495
 Phe Gly Arg Lys Leu His Leu Tyr Ser His Pro Ile Ile Leu Gly Phe
 500 505 510
 Arg Lys Ile Pro Met Gly Val Gly Leu Ser Pro Phe Leu Leu Ala Gln
 515 520 525
 Phe Thr Ser Ala Ile Cys Ser Val Val Arg Arg Ala Phe Pro His Cys
 530 535 540
 Leu Ala Phe Ser Tyr Met Asp Asp Val Val Leu Gly Ala Lys Ser Val
 545 550 555 560

39

Gln	His	Leu	Glu	Ser	Leu	Phe	Thr	Ser	Ile	Thr	Asn	Phe	Leu	Leu	Ser			
				565					570					575				
Leu	Gly	Ile	His	Leu	Asn	Pro	Asn	Lys	Thr	Lys	Arg	Trp	Gly	Tyr	Ser			
			580					585					590					
Leu	Asn	Phe	Met	Gly	Tyr	Val	Ile	Gly	Ser	Trp	Gly	Thr	Leu	Pro	Gln			
		595					600					605						
Glu	His	Ile	Val	Leu	Lys	Leu	Lys	Gln	Cys	Phe	Arg	Lys	Leu	Pro	Val			
	610					615					620							
Asn	Arg	Pro	Ile	Asp	Trp	Lys	Val	Cys	Gln	Arg	Ile	Val	Gly	Leu	Leu			
625					630					635					640			
Gly	Phe	Ala	Ala	Pro	Phe	Thr	Gln	Cys	Gly	Tyr	Pro	Ala	Leu	Met	Pro			
				645					650					655				
Leu	Tyr	Ala	Cys	Ile	Gln	Ser	Lys	Gln	Ala	Phe	Thr	Phe	Ser	Pro	Thr			
			660					665					670					
Tyr	Lys	Ala	Phe	Leu	Cys	Lys	Gln	Tyr	Leu	Asn	Leu	Tyr	Pro	Val	Ala			
		675					680					685						
Arg	Gln	Arg	Ser	Gly	Leu	Cys	Gln	Val	Phe	Ala	Asp	Ala	Thr	Pro	Thr			
	690					695					700							
Gly	Trp	Gly	Leu	Ala	Ile	Gly	His	Gln	Arg	Met	Ala	Gly	Thr	Phe	Leu			
705					710					715					720			
Ala	Pro	Leu	Pro	Ile	His	Thr	Ala	Glu	Leu	Leu	Ala	Ala	Cys	Phe	Ala			
				725					730					735				
Arg	Ser	Arg	Ser	Gly	Ala	Lys	Leu	Ile	Gly	Thr	Asp	Asn	Ser	Val	Val			
			740					745					750					
Leu	Ser	Arg	Lys	Tyr	Thr	Ser	Phe	Pro	Trp	Leu	Leu	Gly	Cys	Ala	Ala			
		755					760					765						
Asn	Trp	Ile	Leu	Arg	Gly	Thr	Ser	Phe	Val	Tyr	Val	Pro	Ser	Ala	Leu			
	770					775					780							
Asn	Pro	Ala	Asp	Asp	Pro	Ser	Arg	Gly	Arg	Leu	Gly	Leu	Tyr	Arg	Pro			
785					790					795					800			
Leu	Leu	His	Leu	Pro	Phe	Arg	Pro	Thr	Thr	Gly	Arg	Thr	Ser	Leu	Tyr			
				805					810					815				
Ala	Val	Ser	Pro	Tyr	Val	Pro	Ser	His	Leu	Pro	Asp	Arg	Val	His	Phe			
			820					825					830					
Ala	Ser	Pro	Leu	His	Val	Ala	Trp	Arg	Pro	Pro								
		835					840											

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:3:

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(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 400 amino acids
- (B) TYPE: amino acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:3:

Met	Gly	Gly	Trp	Ser	Ser	Lys	Pro	Arg	Gln	Gly	Met	Gly	Thr	Asn	Leu	1	5	10	15
Ala	Val	Pro	Asn	Pro	Leu	Gly	Phe	Phe	Pro	Asp	His	Gln	Leu	Asp	Pro	20	25	30	
Ala	Phe	Gly	Ala	Asn	Ser	Asn	Asn	Pro	Asp	Trp	Asp	Phe	Asn	Pro	Asn	35	40	45	
Lys	Asp	His	Trp	Pro	Glu	Ala	Asn	Gln	Val	Gly	Val	Gly	Ala	Phe	Gly	50	55	60	
Pro	Gly	Phe	Thr	Pro	Pro	His	Gly	Gly	Leu	Leu	Gly	Gly	Ser	Pro	Gln	65	70	75	80
Ala	Gln	Gly	Ile	Leu	Thr	Thr	Val	Pro	Ala	Ala	Pro	Pro	Pro	Ala	Ser	85	90	95	
Thr	Asn	Arg	Gln	Ser	Gly	Arg	Gln	Pro	Thr	Pro	Ile	Ser	Pro	Pro	Leu	100	105	110	
Arg	Asp	Ser	His	Pro	Gln	Ala	Thr	Gln	Trp	Asn	Ser	Thr	Thr	Phe	His	115	120	125	
Gln	Ala	Leu	Leu	Asp	Pro	Arg	Val	Arg	Gly	Leu	Tyr	Phe	Pro	Ala	Gly	130	135	140	
Gly	Ser	Ser	Ser	Gly	Thr	Val	Asn	Pro	Val	Pro	Thr	Thr	Ala	Ser	Pro	145	150	155	160
Ile	Ser	Ser	Ile	Phe	Ser	Arg	Thr	Gly	Asp	Pro	Ala	Pro	Asn	Met	Glu	165	170	175	
Asn	Thr	Thr	Ser	Gly	Phe	Leu	Gly	Pro	Leu	Leu	Val	Leu	Gln	Ala	Gly	180	185	190	
Phe	Phe	Ser	Leu	Thr	Arg	Ile	Leu	Thr	Ile	Pro	Gln	Ser	Leu	Asp	Ser	195	200	205	
Trp	Trp	Thr	Ser	Leu	Asn	Phe	Leu	Gly	Gly	Ala	Pro	Thr	Cys	Pro	Gly	210	215	220	
Gln	Asn	Ser	Gln	Ser	Pro	Thr	Ser	Asn	His	Ser	Pro	Thr	Ser	Cys	Pro	225	230	235	240
Pro	Ile	Cys	Pro	Gly	Tyr	Arg	Trp	Asn	Cys	Leu	Arg	Arg	Phe	Ile	Ile	245	250	255	

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Phe Leu Phe Ile Leu Leu Leu Cys Leu Ile Phe Leu Leu Val Leu Leu
 260 265 270
 Asp Tyr Gln Gly Met Leu Pro Val Cys Pro Leu Leu Pro Gly Thr Ser
 275 280 285
 Thr Thr Ser Thr Gly Pro Cys Lys Thr Cys Thr Thr Pro Ala Gln Gly
 290 295 300
 Asn Ser Thr Phe Pro Ser Cys Cys Cys Thr Lys Pro Ser Asp Gly Asn
 305 310 315 320
 Cys Thr Cys Ile Pro Ile Pro Ser Ser Trp Ala Phe Ala Arg Phe Leu
 325 330 335
 Trp Glu Trp Ala Ser Val Arg Phe Ser Trp Leu Ser Leu Leu Val Pro
 340 345 350
 Phe Val Gln Trp Phe Val Gly Leu Ser Pro Thr Val Trp Leu Ser Val
 355 360 365
 Ile Trp Met Met Trp Tyr Trp Gly Arg Ser Leu Tyr Asn Ile Leu Ser
 370 375 380
 Pro Phe Leu Pro Leu Leu Pro Ile Phe Phe Cys Leu Trp Val Tyr Ile
 385 390 395 400

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:4:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 212 amino acids
- (B) TYPE: amino acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:4:

Met Gln Leu Phe Leu Leu Cys Leu Ile Ile Ser Cys Ser Cys Pro Thr
 1 5 10 15
 Val Gln Ala Ser Lys Leu Cys Leu Gly Trp Leu Trp Asp Met Asp Ile
 20 25 30
 Asp Pro Tyr Lys Glu Phe Gly Ala Ser Ala Glu Leu Leu Ser Phe Leu
 35 40 45
 Pro Ser Asp Phe Phe Pro Ser Ile Arg Asp Leu Leu Asp Thr Ala Ser
 50 55 60
 Ala Leu Tyr Arg Glu Ala Leu Glu Ser Pro Glu His Cys Ser Pro His
 65 70 75 80
 His Thr Ala Leu Arg Gln Ala Ile Leu Cys Trp Gly Glu Leu Met Asn
 85 90 95

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Leu Ala Thr Trp Val Gly Ser Asn Leu Glu Asp Pro Ala Ser Arg Glu
 100 105 110
 Leu Val Val Ser Tyr Val Asn Val Asn Met Gly Leu Lys Leu Arg Gln
 115 120 125
 Ile Leu Trp Phe His Ile Ser Cys Leu Thr Phe Gly Arg Glu Thr Val
 130 135 140
 Leu Glu Tyr Leu Val Ser Phe Gly Val Trp Ile Arg Thr Pro Thr Ala
 145 150 155 160
 Tyr Arg Pro Pro Asn Ala Pro Ile Leu Ser Thr Leu Pro Glu Thr Thr
 165 170 175
 Val Val Arg Arg Arg Gly Arg Ser Pro Arg Arg Arg Thr Pro Ser Pro
 180 185 190
 Arg Arg Arg Arg Ser Gln Ser Pro Arg Arg Arg Arg Ser Gln Ser Arg
 195 200 205
 Glu Ser Gln Arg
 210

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:5:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 154 amino acids
- (B) TYPE: amino acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:5:

Met Ala Ala Arg Val Cys Cys Gln Leu Asp Pro Ala Arg Asp Val Leu
 1 5 10 15
 Cys Leu Arg Pro Val Gly Ala Glu Ser Arg Gly Arg Pro Val Ser Gly
 20 25 30
 Pro Phe Gly Ala Leu Pro Ser Pro Ser Ser Ser Ala Val Pro Ala Asp
 35 40 45
 His Gly Ala His Leu Ser Leu Arg Gly Leu Pro Val Cys Ala Phe Ser
 50 55 60
 Ser Ala Gly Pro Cys Ala Leu Arg Phe Thr Ser Ala Arg Arg Met Glu
 65 70 75 80
 Thr Thr Val Asn Ala Arg Gln Val Leu Pro Lys Val Leu Tyr Lys Arg
 85 90 95
 Thr Leu Gly Leu Ser Ala Met Ser Thr Thr Asp Leu Glu Ala Tyr Phe
 100 105 110
 Lys Asp Cys Val Phe Lys Asp Trp Glu Glu Leu Gly Glu Glu Ile Arg
 115 120 125

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Leu Lys Ile Tyr Val Leu Gly Gly Cys Arg His Lys Leu Val Cys Ser
 130 135 140

Pro Ala Pro Cys Asn Phe Phe Ser Ser Ala
 145 150

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:6:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 36 base pairs
- (B) TYPE: nucleic acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:6:

ATAAGCTTAT GCCCCTATCT TATCAACACT TCCGGA

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(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:7:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 25 base pairs
- (B) TYPE: nucleic acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:7:

GAGTCTAGAC TCTGCGGTAT TGTGA

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(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:8:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 25 base pairs
- (B) TYPE: nucleic acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:8:

GAGTCTAGAC TCGTGGTGGA CTTCT

25

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:9:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 32 base pairs
- (B) TYPE: nucleic acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:9:

TGAGAATTCT CACGGTGGTC TCCATGCGAC GT

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(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:10:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 16 base pairs
- (B) TYPE: nucleic acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:10:

TTTGTTTACG TCCCGT

16

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:11:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 36 base pairs
- (B) TYPE: nucleic acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:11:

ATAAGCTTAT GCCCCTATCT TATCAACACT TCCGGA

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The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising nucleotides 155 through 835 of SEQ. I.D. No.: 1.
2. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising nucleotides 527 through 595 of SEQ. I.D. No.: 1.
3. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising nucleotides 1 through 3215 of SEQ. I.D. No.: 1.
4. An isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding a peptide comprising amino acid residues 174 through 400 of SEQ. I.D. No.: 3.
5. An isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding a peptide comprising amino acid residues 298 through 320 of SEQ. I.D. No.: 3.

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PCT/SG98/00046

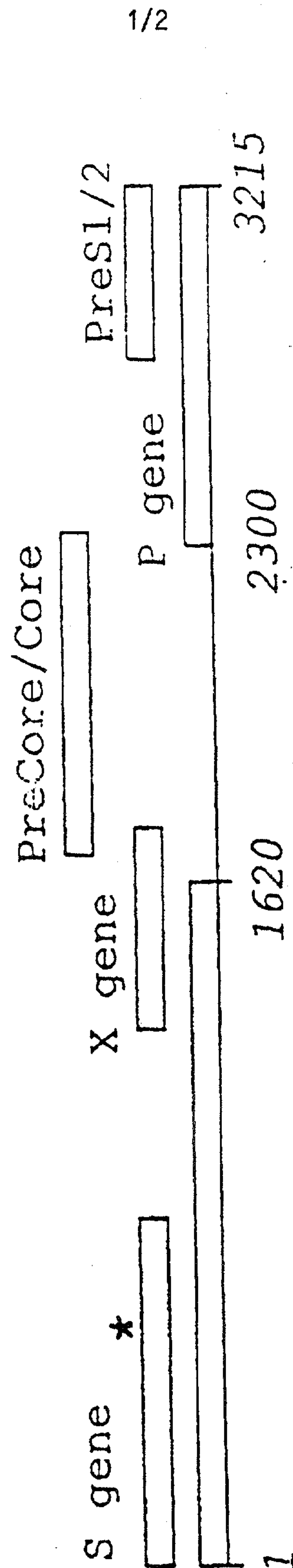


Figure 1
SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

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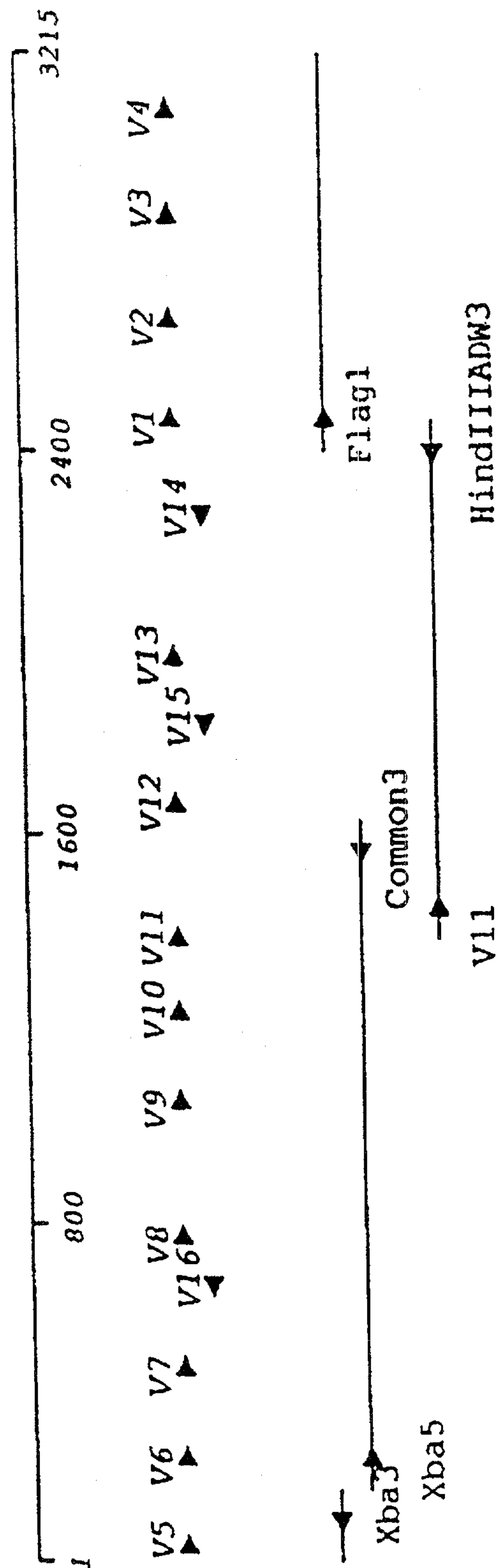


Figure 2

