

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An isolated peptide being five or seven amino acids which consists of an amino acid sequence represented by the formula $X_1-X_2-X_3-X_4-X_5-X_6-X_7$ (SEQ ID NO: 45), wherein

(i) X_1 is selected from the group consisting of leucine, d-leucine, d-valine, d-arginine and absent;

(ii) X_2 is selected from the group consisting of dimethylproline (dMP), proline, α -aminoisobutyric acid (Aib) and d-proline;

(iii) X_3 is selected from the group consisting of dMP, proline Aib and d-proline;

(iv) X_4 is selected from the group consisting of histidine, serine, valine, leucine, d-leucine and threonine;

(v) X_5 is proline or alanine;

(vi) X_6 is selected from the group consisting of tyrosine, d-valine, d-aspartic acid, tryptophan and phenylalanine; and

(vii) X_7 is selected from the group consisting of proline, dMP, d-proline and absent

the peptide is capable of reducing the amount of dexamethasone-induced spleen and/or thymus weight loss in a mouse, with the proviso that the peptide does not consist of the sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NOs 42, 43 or 44.

2. The isolated peptide of claim 1, consisting of the amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs: 6-33 and 34.

3. The isolated peptide of claim 1, consisting of the amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs: 6-12 and 13.

4. An isolated peptide being no longer than ten amino acids which comprises an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs: 1-33 and 34, wherein the peptide is capable of reducing the amount of dexamethasone-induced spleen and/or thymus weight loss in a mouse.

5. The isolated peptide of claim 4, comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs: 1-4 and 5.

6. The isolated peptide of claim 4, consisting of the amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs: 1-33 and 34.
7. The isolated peptide of any one of claims 1-6, wherein the peptide is a stapled peptide.
8. The isolated peptide of any one of claims 1-6, wherein the peptide is a cyclic peptide.
9. The isolated peptide of claim 4, wherein the order of the sequence is reversed and all of the amino acids are of the D-type.
10. The isolated peptide of any one of claims 1-9, wherein the peptide is attached to a cell penetrating moiety.
11. The isolated peptide of claim 10, wherein said cell penetrating moiety is attached to an N-terminus of the peptide.
12. The isolated peptide of any one of the claims 1-11 for use in treating disease associated with apoptosis.
13. The isolated peptide of claim 12, wherein said disease associated with apoptosis is an inflammatory or degenerative disease.
14. The isolated peptide of claim 13, wherein the inflammatory disease is an autoimmune disease.
15. The isolated peptide of claim 13, wherein said degenerative disease is a neurodegenerative disease.
16. The isolated peptide of claim 12, wherein said disease associated with apoptosis is selected from the group consisting of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), retinitis pigmentosa, stroke and myocardial infarction.

17. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the peptide of any one of claims 1-11 as an active agent and a physiologically acceptable carrier.