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(54) **Title:** METHODS AND COMPOSITIONS FOR USE IN DIAGNOSING AND CHARACTERIZING DISEASES INVOLVING ABNORMAL APOPTOSIS

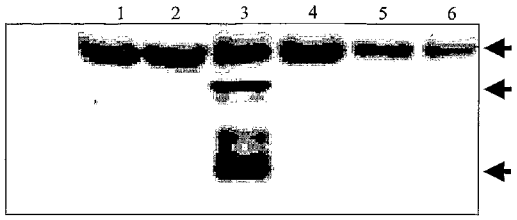


Figure 1 A Densitometric Scan of a Western Blot of Actin Protein and Actin Protein Fragments Present in Serum

Lane 1 - Patient #1 Serum
Lane 2 - Patient #2 Serum
Lane 3 - Patient #3 Serum
Lane 4 - Patient #4 Serum
Lane 5 - Normal Control Serum
Lane 6 - 0.5 microgram purified native Actin protein

Top arrow: 42 kDa molecular weight native Actin protein
Middle arrow: 27 kDa molecular weight Actin protein fragment
Bottom arrow: 15 kDa molecular weight Actin protein fragment

(57) **Abstract:** Methods are provided for diagnosing and/or characterizing disease involving abnormal levels of cellular apoptosis activity in a subject. In the subject methods, a sample is obtained from a subject suspected of having or known to have a disease involving abnormal levels of cellular apoptosis. The sample is then assayed for the presence of low molecular weight Actin protein fragments. The assay results are used to diagnose the presence of disease involving abnormal levels of cellular apoptosis activity and/or characterize disease involving abnormal levels of cellular apoptosis activity in the subject, e.g. to confirm an initial disease involving abnormal levels of cellular apoptosis diagnosis, to determine the stage of the disease, to monitor disease progression, to predict disease attacks, and the like. Also provided by the subject invention are kits for practicing the methods.

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