CLAIMS

1. A method of determining the amount of free IL-18 in a sample or *in situ* comprising detecting the specific binding of the IL-18 binding molecule to free IL-18 protein in the sample or *in situ* which includes the steps of:
   a) bringing a sample or a specific body part or body area suspected to contain free IL-18 into contact with the IL-18 binding molecule which specifically binds to free IL-18, but not to IL-18 bound in a complex and functions as the capturing molecule for free IL-18;
   b) allowing the IL-18 binding molecule to bind to free IL-18;
   c) detecting the binding of IL-18 to the IL-18 binding molecule and determining the amount of free IL-18 in the sample.

2. An IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder in a population of subjects diagnosed of having abnormal levels of free IL-18 and/or an abnormal ratio of free IL-18/IL-18BP in body samples, particularly in body fluids, compared to the levels in body fluids of a healthy control subject, wherein said abnormal level of free IL-18 in the body fluids:

   a) exceeds the level in body fluids of a healthy control subject by 5%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, 100%, or more than 100%; and

   b) are ≥5 pg/mL and, particularly, up to 10000 pg/mL, whereas the amount of free IL-18 in serum of healthy subject, particularly a healthy human is ≤4 pg/mL,

   Wherein the population of subjects diagnosed of having abnormal levels of free IL-18 and/or an abnormal ratio of free IL-18/IL-18BP in body samples, particularly in body fluids, compared to the levels in body fluids of a healthy control subject has been determined using the method of claim 1.

3. The method as claimed in claim 1 or the IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of claim 2, wherein the IL-18 binding molecule or IL-18 inhibitor, respectively, is IL-18BP, particularly human IL-18BP (hIL-18BP) or a functional equivalent or parts thereof, particularly an IL-18BP as shown in SEQ ID NO: 7, or a mutein, functional derivative, functional fragment, biologically active peptide, fraction, circularly permuted derivative, fused protein, isoform or a salt thereof.

4. The method as claimed in claim 1 or the IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of claim 2, wherein the IL-18 binding molecule or IL-18 inhibitor, respectively, is an antibody including any functionally equivalent antibody or parts thereof, particularly an antibody specific for free IL-18, particularly an antagonistic antibody, which prevents binding of free IL-18 to IL-18 receptor (IL-18R), especially free IL-18 binding either to IL-18Rα, IL-18Rβ or both, preferably wherein the IL-18 specific antibody including any functionally equivalent antibody or parts thereof binds to IL-18 at the binding site of IL-18BP or in the vicinity of the binding site of IL-18BP, but not IL-18/IL-18BP complexes.

5. The IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of any one of claims 2 to 4, wherein the subject to be treated belongs to a group of subjects which have been determined to have elevated levels of free IL-18 and/or an abnormal ratio of free IL-18/IL-18BP in body samples, particularly in a sample selected from the group consisting of broncho-alveolar lavage fluid (BALF) circulation fluids, secretion fluids, biopsy and homogenized tissue, particularly serum, plasma, urine, tear, saliva, bile, sweat, exhalation, expiration, sputum, bronchoalveolar fluid, sebum, cellular, gland, mucosa, and tissue secretion compared to the levels in the body fluids of a healthy subject.

6. The IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of any one of claims 2 to 5, wherein said IL-18 associated disease or disorder is:

a) one selected from the group consisting of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), transfusion-related lung injury, bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD), acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), Adult Still's disease, juvenile Still's disease, interstitial lung disease (ILD), idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, cystic fibrosis, pulmonary arterial hypertension, asthma, bronchiectasis, heart failure, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), dry eye disease (DED), keratitis, corneal ulcer and abrasion, corneal neovascularization, pathological intraocular neovascularization, iritis, glaucoma, macular degeneration, Sjögren's syndrome, autoimmune uveitis, Behçet's disease, conjunctivitis, allergic conjunctivitis, dermatitis of eyelid, diabetes type 2, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), steato hepatitis, solid organ and hematologic transplantation, ischemia reperfusion

injury, familial Mediterranean fever, tumor necrosis factor receptor 1-associated periodic syndromes, cryopyrin-associated periodic fever syndromes, hyper-IgD syndromes, gout, Schnitzler syndrome, Wegener's granulomatosis also called granulomatosis with polyangitis (GPA), Hashimoto's thyroiditis, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, immunoglobulin-4 (IgG4)-related diseases and stem cell therapies;

and/or

b) induced by viral infection; and/or

c) an IL-18 induced systemic manifestation of inflammation and associated comorbidities selected from the group consisting of emphysema, tissue inflammation, tissue destruction, lung resection, disappearance of the vasculature, apoptosis of endothelial cells, mucous metaplasia, cardiac hypertrophy, decrease of VEGF in the lung tissue, pulmonary vessel loss, vessel muscularization, vascular remodeling, collagen deposition, aberrant elastin layers in the lung, fibrotic airway remodeling, airspace enlargement, chronic remodeling of the airways and pulmonary vessels and decreased pulmonary function and wherein treatment comprises prevention, halting, alleviation or reversion of symptoms associated with said disease or disorder.

7. The IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of any one of claims 2 to 5, wherein the IL-18 inhibitor reduces binding of IL-18 to IL-18 receptor (IL-18R), particularly binding to either IL-18Rα, IL-18Rβ or both by at least 5%, particularly by at least 10%, particularly by at least 15%, particularly by at least 20%, particularly by at least 25%, particularly by at least 30%, particularly by at least 40%, particularly by at least 45%, particularly by at least 50%, particularly by at least 55%, particularly by at least 60%, particularly by at least 65%, particularly by at least 70, particularly by at least 75, particularly by at least 80, particularly by at least 85%, particularly by at least 90%, particularly by at least 95%, particularly by 100%.

8. A pharmaceutical composition for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder in a population of subjects diagnosed of having abnormal levels of free IL-18 and/or an abnormal ratio of free IL-18/IL-18BP in the body fluids compared to the levels in body fluids of a healthy control subject or having a predisposition to develop such a disease or disorder as defined in claim 6, wherein

said composition comprises the IL-18 inhibitor as defined in any one of claims 2 to 7, particularly in a prophylactically and/or therapeutically effective amount, wherein said composition optionally further provides another inhibitor of a pro-inflammatory cytokine or functional fragment thereof, or a regulatory factor, which induces in-situ expression of said inhibitor of pro-inflammatory cytokine or functional fragment thereof, co-therapeutic agents such as anti-inflammatory, bronchodilatory, antihistamine, decongestant or anti-tussive drug substances.

9. The method as claimed in claim 4 or the IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of claim 4, wherein the antibody including any functionally equivalent antibody or parts thereof, binds to IL-18 at the binding site of IL-18BP or in the vicinity of the binding site of IL-18BP, but not IL-18/IL-18BP complexes and particularly hinders or prevents the binding of IL-18BP to IL-18.

10. The method as claimed in claim 9 or the IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of claim 9, wherein said antibody or part thereof specifically binds to a single epitope, a combination of two epitopes or a combination of 3 epitopes, which epitope is:

a) comprised in a sequence selected from a group of sequences depicted in SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO: 2 and SEQ ID NO: 3; and/or

b) has a sequence which has 90%, 91%, 92%, 93%, 94%, 95%, 96%, 97%, 98%, 99%, 100% sequence identity to a sequence selected from a group of sequences depicted in SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 5 and SEQ ID NO: 6; and/or

c) is selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 5 and SEQ ID NO: 6.

11. The method as claimed in claims 9 or 10 or the IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of claims 9 or 10, wherein said antibody or parts thereof:

a) specifically binds to a single epitope, a combination of two epitopes or a combination of 3 epitopes comprised in a sequence selected from a group of sequences depicted in SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO: 2 and SEQ ID NO: 3; and/or

b) specifically binds to an epitope, which has a sequence identity of 90%, 91%, 92%, 93%, 94%, 95%, 96%, 97%, 98%, 99% or 100% to the sequence depicted in SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO:5 or SEQ ID NO: 6; and

c) specifically binds to IL-18 at the binding site of IL-18BP or in the vicinity of the binding site of IL-18BP; and

d) specifically binds to free IL-18 protein, but not IL-18/IL-18BP complexes; and

e) sterically hinders the binding of IL-18BP to IL-18; and

f) reduces binding of IL-18 to IL-18 receptor (IL-18R), particularly binding to either IL-18Rα, IL-18Rβ or both by at least 5%, particularly by at least 10%, particularly by at least 15%, particularly by at least 20%, particularly by at least 25%, particularly by at least 30%, particularly by at least 40%, particularly by at least 45%, particularly by at least 50%, particularly by at least 55%, particularly by at least 60%, particularly by at least 65%, particularly by at least 70, particularly by at least 75, particularly by at least 80, particularly by at least 85%, particularly by at least 90%, particularly by at least 95%, particularly by 100%.

12. The method as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 11 or the IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of claims 9 to 11, wherein said antibody including any functionally equivalent antibody or parts thereof or an antigen-binding portion thereof comprises:

a. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 9, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 10, respectively, including variants thereof; or

b. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 11, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 12, respectively, including variants thereof; or

c. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 13, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 14, respectively, including variants thereof; or

d. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 15, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 16, respectively, including variants thereof; or

e. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 15, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 17, respectively, including variants thereof; or

f. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 18, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 19, respectively, including variants thereof; or

g. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 20, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 22, respectively, including variants thereof; or

h. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 21, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 22, respectively, including variants thereof; or

i. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 23, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 24, respectively, including variants thereof; or

j. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 25, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 26, respectively, including variants thereof;

k. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region of antibody 107C6 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region antibody 107C6 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, including variants thereof;

l. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region of antibody 108F8 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region antibody 108F8 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, including variants thereof;

m. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region of antibody 109A6 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region antibody 109A6 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, including variants thereof;

n. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region of antibody 111A6 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region antibody 111A6 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, including variants thereof;

o. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region of antibody 131B4 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region antibody 131B4 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, including variants thereof;

p. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region of antibody 131E8 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region antibody 131E8 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, including variants thereof;

q. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region of antibody 131H1 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region antibody 131H1 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, including variants thereof;

r. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region of antibody 132H4 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region antibody 132H4 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, including variants thereof;

s. at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the heavy chain variable region of antibody 133A6 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, and/or at least one, at least two or all three complementarity determining regions (CDRs) of the light chain variable region antibody 133A6 as shown in Figure 11, respectively, including variants thereof;

Wherein said antibody, equivalent antibody or antigen-binding portion thereof binds free IL-18 protein, particularly at the binding site of IL-18BP or in the vicinity of the binding site of IL-18BP, but does not bind IL-18/IL-18BP complexes.

13. The method as claimed in claim 12 or the IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of claim 12, wherein said antibody comprises all 6 CDRs of the light chain variable region and the heavy chain variable region.

14. The method as claimed in claims 12 or 13 or the IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of claims 12 or 13, wherein said antibody comprises:

a. CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the heavy chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 27, SEQ ID NO: 28, and SEQ ID NO: 29, respectively; and CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the light chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 30, SEQ ID NO: 31, and SEQ ID NO: 32, respectively; or

b. CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the heavy chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 33,

SEQ ID NO: 34, and SEQ ID NO: 35, respectively; and CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the light chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 36, SEQ ID NO: 37, and SEQ ID NO: 38, respectively; or

c. CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the heavy chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 39, SEQ ID NO: 40, and SEQ ID NO: 41, respectively; and CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the light chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 42, SEQ ID NO: 43, and SEQ ID NO: 44, respectively; or

d. CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the heavy chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 45, SEQ ID NO: 46, and SEQ ID NO: 47, respectively; and CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the light chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 48, SEQ ID NO: 49, and SEQ ID NO: 50, respectively; or

e. CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the heavy chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 45, SEQ ID NO: 46, and SEQ ID NO: 47, respectively; and CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the light chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 51, SEQ ID NO: 52, and SEQ ID NO: 53, respectively; or

f. CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the heavy chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 54, SEQ ID NO: 55, and SEQ ID NO: 56, respectively; and CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the light chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 57, SEQ ID NO: 58, and SEQ ID NO: 59, respectively; or

g. CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the heavy chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 60, SEQ ID NO: 61, and SEQ ID NO: 62, respectively; and CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the light chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 66, SEQ ID NO: 67, and SEQ ID NO: 68, respectively; or

h. CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the heavy chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 63, SEQ ID NO: 64, and SEQ ID NO: 65, respectively; and CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the light chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 66, SEQ ID NO: 67, and SEQ ID NO: 68, respectively; or

i. CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the heavy chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 69, SEQ ID NO: 70, and SEQ ID NO: 71, respectively; and CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the light chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 72, SEQ ID NO: 73, and SEQ ID NO: 74, respectively; or

j. CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the heavy chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 75, SEQ ID NO: 78, and SEQ ID NO: 77, respectively; and CDR1, CDR2, and CDR 3 of the light chain variable region having the sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 78, SEQ ID NO: 79, and SEQ ID NO: 80, respectively.

15. The method as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 14 or the IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of any one of claims 9 to 14, wherein said antibody comprises, including any functionally equivalent antibody or parts thereof or an antigen-binding portion thereof:

a. a light chain variable region that has at least 75%, 80%, 82%, 83%,84%, 85%, 86%, 87%, 88%, 89%, 90%, 91%, 92%, 93%, 94%, 95%, 96%, 97%, 98%, 99%, 100% sequence identity to the sequence shown in SEQ ID NOs: 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 22, 24 and 26, respectively, and/or

b. a heavy chain variable region that has at least 75%, 80%, 82%, 83%,84%, 85%, 86%, 87%, 88%, 89%, 90%, 91%, 92%, 93%, 94%, 95%, 96%, 97%, 98%, 99%, 100% sequence identity to the sequence shown in SEQ ID NOs: 9, 11, 13, 15, 18, 20, 21, 23, and 25, respectively.

16. The method as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 15 or the IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of any one of claims 9 to

15, wherein said antibody comprises, including any functionally equivalent antibody or parts thereof or an antigen-binding portion thereof:

a. the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 9, respectively, and/or the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 10, respectively, including variants thereof; or

b. the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 11, respectively, and/or the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 12, respectively, including variants thereof; or

c. the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 13, respectively, and/or the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 14, respectively, including variants thereof; or

d. the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 15, respectively, and/or the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 16, respectively, including variants thereof; or

e. the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 15, respectively, and/or the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 17, respectively, including variants thereof; or

f. the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 18, respectively, and/or the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 19, respectively, including variants thereof; or

g. the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 20, respectively, and/or the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 22, respectively, including variants thereof; or

h. the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 21, respectively, and/or the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 22, respectively, including variants thereof; or

i. the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 23, respectively, and/or the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 24, respectively, including variants thereof; or

j. the heavy chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 25, respectively, and/or the light chain variable region as shown in SEQ ID NO: 26, respectively, including variants thereof; or ;

k. the heavy chain variable region of antibody 107C6 as shown in Figure 11, and/or the light chain variable region of antibody 107C6 as shown in Figure 11 including variants thereof;

l. the heavy chain variable region of antibody 108F8 as shown in Figure 11, and/or the light chain variable region of antibody 108F8 as shown in Figure 11 including variants thereof;

m. the heavy chain variable region of antibody 109A6 as shown in Figure 11, and/or the light chain variable region of antibody 109A6 as shown in Figure 11 including variants thereof;

n. the heavy chain variable region of antibody 111A6 as shown in Figure 11, and/or the light chain variable region of antibody 111A6 as shown in Figure 11 including variants thereof;

o. the heavy chain variable region of antibody 131B4 as shown in Figure 11, and/or the light chain variable region of antibody 131B4 as shown in Figure 11 including variants thereof;

p. the heavy chain variable region of antibody 131E8 as shown in Figure 11, and/or the light chain variable region of antibody 131E8 as shown in Figure 11 including variants thereof;

q. the heavy chain variable region of antibody 131H1 as shown in Figure 11, and/or the light chain variable region

of antibody 131H1 as shown in Figure 11 including variants thereof;

r. the heavy chain variable region of antibody 132H4 as shown in Figure 11, and/or the light chain variable region of antibody 132H4 as shown in Figure 11 including variants thereof;

s. the heavy chain variable region of antibody 133A6 as shown in Figure 11, and/or the light chain variable region of antibody 133A6 as shown in Figure 11 including variants thereof;

Wherein said antibody, equivalent antibody or antigen-binding portion thereof binds free IL-18 protein, particularly at the binding site of IL-18BP or in the vicinity of the binding site of IL-18BP, but does not bind IL-18/IL-18BP complexes.

17. The method as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 16 or the IL-18 inhibitor for use in the treatment of an IL-18 associated disease or disorder of any one of claims 9 to 16, wherein said antibody is a monoclonal, polyclonal, chimeric, single chain, bispecific or bi-effective, simianized, human or humanized antibody.

18. A diagnostic kit for detecting free IL-18, comprising the IL-18 binding molecule as defined in any one of the preceding claims as the capturing molecule, and a second IL-18 specific binding molecule as the detection molecule and, optionally, a second IL-18 specific capturing molecule, wherein the detection molecule binds to different sites of IL-18 than the capturing molecule.

19. The diagnostic kit of claim 18 for use in a method according to claim 1.