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(54) Title: PHAGOCYTIC ASSAY METHOD

(57) Abstract

The invention provides assay methods for determining whether a compound is an enhancer or an inhibitor of a signal transduction pathway which promotes phagocytosis of apoptotic cells. The methods involve exposing a phagocytic cell to apoptotic cells, optionally transfected with a reporter gene, and measuring the extent of phagocytosis in the presence or absence of the test compound. Expression vectors are provided to transfect mammalian cells with DNA sequences which when expressed influence the rate of phagocytosis of apoptotic cells such as the human homologue of the *C. elegans* ced–6 gene.