(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

CORRECTED VERSION

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
12 December 2002 (12.12.2002)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 02/099383 A3

(51) International Patent Classification[7]: C12Q 1/70

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US02/18078

(22) International Filing Date: 4 June 2002 (04.06.2002)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
09/874,475 4 June 2001 (04.06.2001) US
60/295,871 4 June 2001 (04.06.2001) US

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(81) Designated States *(national)*: BR, CN, JP, SG, ZA.

(84) Designated States *(regional)*: European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR).

Published:
— *with international search report*

(88) Date of publication of the international search report:
28 August 2003

(48) Date of publication of this corrected version:
11 December 2003

(15) Information about Correction:
see PCT Gazette No. 50/2003 of 11 December 2003, Section II

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

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(54) Title: COMPOSITIONS AND METHODS FOR EVALUATING VIRAL RECEPTOR/CO-RECEPTOR USAGE AND INHIBITORS OF VIRUS ENTRY USING RECOMBINANT VIRUS ASSAYS

(57) Abstract: The invention provides a method for identifying whether a compound inhibits entry of a virus into a cell which comprises: (a) obtaining nucleic acid encoding a viral envelope protein from a patient infected by the virus; (b) co-transfecting into a first cell (i) the nucleic acid of step (a), and (ii) a viral expression vector which lacks a nucleic acid encoding an envelope protein, and which comprises an indicator nucleic acid which produces a detectable singal, such that the first cell produces viral particles comprising the envelope protein encoded by the nucleic acid obtained from the patient; (c) contacting the viral particles produced in step (b) with a second cell in the presence of the compound, wherein the second cell expresses a cell surface receptor to which the virus binds; (d) measuring the amount of signal produced by the second cell in order to determine the infectivity of the viral particles; and (e) comparing the amount of signal measured in step (d) with the amount of signal produced in the absence of the compound, wherein a reduced amount of signal measured in the presence of the compound indicates that the compound inhibits entry of the virus into the second cell.