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(54) Title: USE OF THE CRH (CORTICOTROPIN RELEASING HORMONE) - UCN (UROCORTIN) SYSTEM IN THE TREATMENT OF INFLAMMATORY DISEASES

(57) Abstract: The invention relates to the use of corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH) receptor-1 (RI) antagonists and/or CRH-R2 receptor agonists for the treatment of inflammatory diseases via regulation of monocyte / macrophage cell activation, proliferation, differentiation, apoptosis, and inflammatory cytokine production. As CRH system we define natural and synthetic CRH and urocortin (UCN) agonists and antagonists for the CRH-R1 and CRH-R2 receptors and their subtypes as well as the CRH-binding protein (BP), a CRH pseudo receptor. The invention is directed towards pharmacological intervention for the amelioration or treatment of inflammatory diseases using the CR. system-mediated control of monocyte / macrophage cells which play a key role in initiating and maintaining the inflammatory response via production of pro-inflammatory cytokines such as is the interleukin (IL)-1, IL-6 and tumor necrosis factor (TNF)-alpha. By the term inflammation we define the response of an organism to noxious endogenous or exogenous stimuli causing tissue injury. Inflammation is a host defence mechanism, which might harm the defending organism. The invention also provides methods for the in vitro and in vivo evaluation of natural and synthetic CRH system modulators for the control of the monocyte / macrophage system.