PCT WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
International Bureau

B00004799-3

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification 6 :
C07K 16/10, C12N 5/20, G01N 33/576 // C07K 14/18

A2

(11) International Publication Number: WO 99/50301

(43) International Publication Date: 7 October 1999 (07.10.99)

(21) International Application Number: PCT/EP99/02154

(22) International Filing Date: 29 March 1999 (29.03.99)

(30) Priority Data:
98870060.5 27 March 1998 (27.03.98) EP

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(81) Designated States: AE, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SL, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published
Without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report.

(54) Title: EPITOPES IN VIRAL ENVELOPE PROTEINS AND SPECIFIC ANTIBODIES DIRECTED AGAINST THESE EPITOPES: USE FOR DETECTION OF HCV VIRAL ANTIGEN IN HOST TISSUE

(57) Abstract

Antibodies to two new epitopes on the HCV envelope proteins were identified which allow routine detection of native HCV envelope antigens, in tissue or cells derived from the host. The new epitopes are: the E1 region aa 307–326 and the N–terminal hyper variable region of E2 aa 395–415. Surprisingly, we characterised an antibody that reacts with various sequences of the hypervariable domain of E2. Specific monoclonal antibodies directed against these epitopes and allowing routine detection of viral antigen are described.