CLAIMS

1. A humanized or chimeric antibody or fragment thereof capable of binding to interleukin-10 (IL-10), wherein said antibody or fragment thereof comprises a variable light chain comprising the amino acid sequences SEQ ID NO: 71, 72 and 73, and a variable heavy chain comprising the amino acid sequences SEQ ID NO: 74, 75 and 76.

2. A humanized or chimeric antibody or fragment thereof according to claim 1, wherein said antibody or fragment thereof is capable of being administered to a subject in the absence of an intolerable increase in the level of pro-inflammatory cytokines.

3. A humanized or chimeric antibody or fragment thereof according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the antibody or fragment thereof is capable of being administered to a subject in the absence of an increase in body temperature of greater than 2°C.

4. A humanized or chimeric antibody or fragment thereof according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the antibody or fragment thereof is capable of being administered to a subject in the absence of an increase of a pro-inflammatory cytokine which is greater than 500% of the upper limit of normal (ULN), wherein the pro-inflammatory cytokine is selected from TNF-α, IFN-γ, IL-1 beta.

5. A humanized or chimeric antibody or fragment thereof according to claim 4 wherein the antibody or fragment thereof is capable of being administered to a subject in the absence of an increase of the pro-inflammatory cytokine which is greater than 300% of the upper limit of normal (ULN).

6. A humanized or chimeric antibody or fragment thereof according to any one of claims 1 to 5 which is capable of inducing IL-1 receptor antagonist (IL-1ra) in the subject.

7. A humanized or chimeric antibody or fragment thereof according to claim 1 wherein said antibody does not elicit a greater than 500% increase in the level of a pro-

inflammatory cytokines released from a peripheral blood mononuclear cell (PBMC) when contacted with said cell in vitro.

8. A humanized or chimeric antibody or fragment thereof according to any one of claims 2 to 5 or 7 wherein the pro-inflammatory cytokine is at least one of TNF-α, IFN-γ, and IL-1 beta.

9. A humanized or chimeric antibody or fragment thereof according to any one of claims 1 to 8 comprising a light chain variable domain having SEQ ID NO: 69 and/or a heavy chain variable domain having SEQ ID NO: 70.

10. A humanized or chimeric antibody or fragment thereof capable of binding to interleukin-10 comprising a light chain variable domain having SEQ ID NO: 69 and a heavy chain variable domain having SEQ ID NO: 70.

11. A humanized or chimeric antibody or fragment thereof according to any one of claims 1 to 10 further comprising an IgG constant domain.

12. A humanized or chimeric antibody or fragment thereof according to claim 11 wherein the IgG constant domain is IgG1.

13. A nucleic acid encoding the antibody or fragment thereof of any one of claims 1 to 12.

14. A vector comprising a nucleic acid according to claim 13.

15. A host cell comprising a nucleic acid according to claim 13 or a vector according to claim 14.

16. A method for the production of an antibody or a fragment thereof according to any one of claims 1 to 12 comprising a step of culturing the host cell according to claim 15 in a culture medium under conditions allowing the expression of the antibody or fragment thereof and separating the antibody or fragment from the culture medium.

17. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the antibody or fragment thereof according to any one of claims 1 to 12, and further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

18. An antibody or fragment thereof according to any one of claims 1 to 12 for use in medicine.

19. An antibody or fragment thereof according to any one of claims 1 to 12 for use in the treatment of SLE in a patient.

20. An antibody or fragment thereof for use according to claim 19 wherein the patient is not simultaneously or separately treated with a corticosteroid.

21. Use of an antibody or fragment thereof according to any one of claims 1 to 12 in the manufacture of a medicament for treating or preventing a medical condition in a patient, wherein the medical condition is mediated by an elevated level or activity of IL-10.

22. Use of an antibody or fragment thereof according to any one of claims 1 to 12 in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of SLE in a patient.

23. Use of an antibody or fragment thereof according to claim 21 or claim 22 wherein the patient is not simultaneously or separately treated with a corticosteroid.

24. A labeled antibody or fragment thereof comprising the antibody or fragment thereof according to any one of claims 1 to 12 and a label.

25. An in vitro method for neutralizing IL-10 in a sample, comprising a step of contacting the sample with an antibody or fragment thereof according to any one of claims 1 to 12 so as to bind the antibody or fragment thereof to the IL-10.

26. An in vitro method for detecting the presence of IL-10 in a sample comprising a step of contacting an unlabeled or labeled antibody or fragment thereof according to any one of claims 1 to 12 or claim 24 with the sample, washing to remove antibody or antibody fragments which are not bound to the sample, and detecting the presence of the antibody or fragment or label in the sample.