

Claims:

1. ~~As isolated peptide being no longer than ten amino acids which comprises an amino acid sequence represented by the formula $X_1-X_2-X_3-X_4-X_5-X_6$ (SEQ ID NO: 17),~~

- ~~(i) wherein X_1 is proline, or an analogue or derivative thereof;~~
- ~~(ii) wherein X_2 is proline, or an analogue or thereof;~~
- ~~(iii) wherein X_3 is selected from the group of alanine, valine, leucine, cysteine, isoleucine, methionine and a derivative or analogue thereof;~~
- ~~(iv) wherein X_4 is selected from the group consisting of alanine, valine, serine and a derivative or analogue thereof;~~
- ~~(v) wherein X_5 is any amino acid;~~
- ~~(vi) wherein X_6 proline or an analogue or derivative thereof; and~~
- ~~(vii) wherein the peptide is capable of reducing the amount of dexamethasone-induced spleen and/or thymus weight loss in a mouse.~~

2. ~~The isolated peptide of claim 1, wherein said derivative of proline is selected from the group consisting of N-methyl proline, alpha-methyl proline and α -aminobutyric acid.~~

3. ~~The isolated peptide of claims 1 or 2, being 6 or 7 amino acids long.~~

41. ~~The An isolated peptide of claim 1 being no longer than ten amino acids, comprising an the amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 18 or SEQ ID NO: 21, wherein the peptide is capable of reducing the amount of dexamethasone-induced spleen and/or thymus weight loss in a mouse.~~

52. The isolated peptide of claim 1, consisting of an amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 18 or SEQ ID NO: 21.

6. ~~An isolated peptide being no longer than six amino acids which comprises an amino acid sequence represented by the formula $X_1-X_2-X_3-X_4-X_5$ (SEQ ID NO: 1),~~

- ~~(i) wherein X_1 is proline or an analogue or derivative thereof;~~
- ~~(ii) wherein X_2 is proline or an analogue or derivative thereof;~~
- ~~(iii) wherein X_3 is selected from the group of alanine, valine, leucine, cysteine, isoleucine, methionine and a derivative or analogue thereof;~~

(iv) ~~wherein X₄ is selected from the group consisting of alanine, valine, serine, proline and a derivative or analogue thereof;~~

(v) ~~wherein X₅ is any amino acid; and~~

(vi) ~~wherein the peptide is capable of reducing the amount of dexamethasone-induced spleen and/or thymus weight loss in a mouse.~~

73. ~~The An isolated peptide of claim 6, comprising the amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 7 or SEQ ID NO: 20, wherein the peptide is capable of reducing the amount of dexamethasone-induced spleen and/or thymus weight loss in a mouse, the peptide being no longer than six amino acids.~~

84. ~~The isolated peptide of claims 6 or 73, consisting of the amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 7 or SEQ ID NO: 20.~~

9. ~~The isolated peptide of any one of claims 1-8, wherein X₃ is leucine.~~

10. ~~The isolated peptide of any one of claims 1-9, wherein X₁ and/or X₃ are D amino acids.~~

115. ~~The isolated peptide of any one of claims 1-104, wherein the peptide is a stapled peptide.~~

126. ~~The isolated peptide of any one of claims 1-104, wherein the order of the sequence is reversed and all of the amino acids are of the D-type.~~

137. ~~The isolated peptide of any one of the claims 1-124, for use in treating a disease associated with apoptosis.~~

148. ~~The isolated peptide of claim 137, wherein said disease associated with apoptosis is an inflammatory or degenerative disease.~~

159. ~~A pharmaceutical composition comprising the peptide of any one of claims 1-124 as an active agent and a physiologically acceptable carrier.~~