

Lysine: Is it worth more?

Debatosh Datta*, Akshay Bhinge & Vidya Chandran

School of BioMedical Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay, Powai, Mumbai, India

(* Author for correspondence, E-mail: ddatta@cc.iitb.ac.in)

Received 4 April 2001; accepted 30 August 2001

Key words: biological properties, food preservative, immune therapy, lysine

Abstract

Lysine, an essential cationic amino acid, has a positively charged R group. The structure of lysine is given as $(\text{H}_3\text{N}^+)-\text{CH}(\text{COO}^-)-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{N}^+\text{H}_3$. While the anabolic role(s) of the molecule has been in focus for quite a few decades now, its biological properties, e.g. role in cellular proliferation *in vitro* (both anchorage dependent and anchorage independent) and *in vivo*, its ability to induce strong inflammatory and immune responses – both humoral and cell mediated, its role in augmented healing of all types of wounds in animal models as well as in human subjects (both acute and chronic), as well as its role in inducing extensive angiogenic responses, have never received reasonable attention so far. In the current brief and indicative review (rather than exhaustive reviews of each area), we intend to bring these biological properties of the molecule to focus while discussing a few other interesting aspects – lysine as a food preservative as well as its possible role(s) in immune therapy. While the areas look extremely divergent, we propose a common denominator in the form of a possible molecular mechanism of action of the molecule in all these diverse situations.

Lysine as a cell proliferator

Monomeric L-lysine HCl was supportive of cellular division and growth *in vitro* in an optimal concentration range of $7\text{--}10\ \mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ depending on the cell line (Datta et al., 1997a, b). We examined the phenomenon in few anchorage independent (AE9D6, CC9C10, HUT 78) and anchorage dependent (BHK 21 from NCCS) cell lines. Peak cellular growth was obtained, in all cases at 48 hr of culture (which could not be accounted for) and maximal cell concentration depended on a) initial cell density at seeding and b) cellular adaptability to culture conditions in terms of number of passages it went through before lysine stimulation. Both D- and L-configurations of oligomeric lysine (upto 6–7 residues; mol. wt. 1000) supported comparable cellular expansion at 48 hr. We examined whether lysine acts independently as a cellular growth/division promoting agent or not. It probably acts in conjunction with the serum derived growth factors. This was evident from viable cellular expansion data at 48 hr in serum containing media versus serum-free one. Sup-

plementation of the serum-free medium with insulin, transferin and selenite (ITS) in contrast (to QBSF alone), supported the characteristic 48 hr response *in vitro*. This evidently shows an indirect facilitating role(s) of the molecule at cell surface, possibly, through electrostatic binding of serum derived growth factor(s) just prior to or as a part of ligand receptor interaction (Figure 1) (Datta et al., 1997b, 2000). Least energy configuration model of 6 residue poly-L-lysine (molecular weight ~ 1000) showed characteristically close molecular orientation (twisting) in a plane of positively charged $-\text{NH}_3^+$ groups. TGF- $\beta(2)$ (recombinant human homodimer molecule), a known agent promoting wound healing, also showed typical lysine residue concentrate (4 to 5 in number) at each end. It is obviously interesting to speculate an active role for this lysine concentrate in TGF- β and its receptor binding, in its biological expressions. This corroborates quite well with the experimental data of poly-lysine only upto molecular weight 1000 and not beyond, acting as cellular growth promoting agent *in vitro* (Datta et al., 1997b, 2000a).

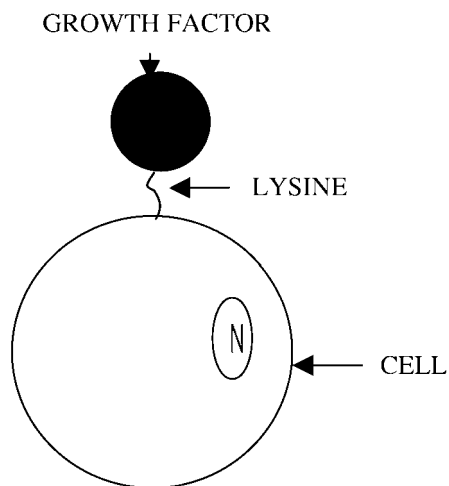


Figure 1. Mechanism of action of lysine.

Wound healing

In this world of cosmesis, a faster and scarless wound repair is much desired. A want is still felt for a molecule which can improve the rate and quality of healing without being prohibitively costly and having easy availability and high degree of cell/tissue compatibility.

A good amount of work has been done in the field of augmented wound healing using growth factors, which have known mitogenic potential. Epidermal growth factor (EGF) has been tried in improving wound strength and accelerating the rate of repair (Zhou et al., 1997). Delivery of platelet derived growth factor (PDGF) using cultured dermal fibroblasts transduced retrovirally with PDGF-B gene and adenoviral mediated gene transfer has been tried to overcome the ischaemic defect in wound healing (Breitbart et al., 1999; Liechty et al., 1999). Granulocyte colony stimulating factor (G-CSF) and granulocyte-macrophage colony stimulating factor (GM-CSF) also has been claimed to show promise (Jaschke et al., 1999; Grzybowski, 1999). Keratinocyte growth factor-2 (KGF-2) has been shown to accelerate wound healing with increase in wound strength and no obvious scarring (Junienez and Rampy, 1999). Basic fibroblast growth factor - β (bFGF) carried on a collagen matrix for inhibiting wound contracture has been tried out in diabetic and decubitus ulcers (Ono et al., 1999). TGF- β delivered through a collagen scaffold has also been tried in enhancing wound healing (Pandit, 1999). There is support for addition of protease inhibitors in

conjunction with any treatment using growth factors (Tregrove et al., 1999). Collagen and hyaluronan have been used by many as carriers for growth factors. Both per se have been used for tissue augmentation and wound healing (Ruszczak and Schwartz, 1999; Baichey et al., 1995; Jia et al., 1998). Platelet release treatment has also been tried in improving skin healing in diabetic rats through endogenous growth factor secretion (Moulin et al., 1998).

Accelerated wound healing has been seen in mice with a disruption of thrombospondin 2 gene (Kyriahides et al., 1999). Mice lacking Smad 3 have also shown accelerated healing (Ashcroft et al., 1999b).

Chitosan-heparin membrane is claimed to cause increased stabilization and concentration of growth factor in wound area. Immobilized heparin has also been shown to induce accelerated healing (Kratz et al., 1998). Water-soluble chitin has also been used as a wound-healing accelerator (Cho et al., 1999). It gave high tensile strength and arrangement of collagen fibres similar to normal skin. It has also been shown that positively charged dextran beads stimulate wound healing (Tawil et al., 1999). Thymosin beta 4 also has been shown to accelerate wound healing by increasing re-epithelialisation by stimulating keratinocyte migration, increasing collagen deposition and causing angiogenesis (Malinda et al., 1999).

A synthetic analogue of prostaglandin E₂ (PGE₂) has also been evaluated for its effect on wound healing. It was proposed it might be beneficial during early stages of inflammation rather than during later stages of remodelling (Talwar et al., 1996). Silver has also been shown to aid healing in sterile skin, although its mechanism of action is unknown (Lansdown et al., 1997). Topical estrogen has also been shown to accelerate cutaneous wound healing especially in aged humans associated with altered inflammatory response (Ashcroft et al., 1999a). Arnebin-1, a natural product isolated from *Arnebia mobilis*, has been shown to accelerate normal and hydrocortisone induced impaired wound healing (Sidhu et al., 1999a). Curcumin (diferuloyl methane), a neutral product from rhizomes of *Curcunia procera*, also showed enhanced wound healing (Sidhu et al., 1999b). The healing potential of *Calotropis procera* is also being evaluated (Rasik et al., 1999).

L-lysine HCl has shown remarkable improvement in both the rate and quality of wound healing. The molecule gives qualitatively better and much quicker wound healing with less scar and deformation in clean-cut model. Another remarkable feature of the

molecule is its ability to support healing process in really protracted wounds, e.g. in leprotic ulcer, long standing diabetic foot ulcer, etc.

On histopathology, lysine treated wounds showed a remarkable thickening of the dermo-epidermal layer, suggesting increased cell proliferation from the basal layer (Keratinocytes). From ^{14}C -glycine incorporation experiments, it was evident that in experimental wounds, nonspecific fibrous tissue formation and laying in and around the immediate vicinity of the wounds was less than the controls although both the experimental and the control wounds showed reasonable collagen laying in response to the wounds. Collagen synthesis in free skin of the same animals, away from the wound sites, was comparable in both the groups.

Typically lysine treated wound sites (chronic wound beds), showed a controlled degree of inflammation and angiogenesis process whereby, possibly, required extent of cellular and serum growth factors entry to the wound beds were ensured, thereby augmenting the healing process *in situ*.

It was postulated that lysine probably acts as a non-specific binding molecule between the cell and it is a growth factor thereby promoting increased cell proliferation (Figure 1). This enhanced cell proliferation is probably similar to that observed in the scarless foetal repairs where, because of extremely high rate of cell proliferation, probably, the wounds normally get more filled up with cellular mass rather than by matrix material (Datta et al., 2000b, 2001; Datta, 2000; Datta and Kundu, 1999) with subsequent remodelling.

This contrasts sharply with the current trends in the development of wound healing products and processes: (i) where, mostly, one growth factor (Regranex from J&J) is delivered to the wound site or (ii) where one particular cell type (platelet) is delivered to the wound bed (e.g. from Cytomedix Inc.) or (iii) where the *in vitro* process of replacement material development is elaborate time consuming and costly (e.g. Apligraf from Organogenesis Inc.). The unique aspect of the wound healing property of the molecule (and its derivatives) lies in the fact that it does not interfere in the fundamental process of healing and helps the process peripherally by augmenting angiogenesis.

Angiogenesis

Therapeutic angiogenesis is being attempted in animal model by exogenously added vascular endothelial

growth factor (VEGF) and other angiogenic growth factors. Therapeutic efficacy of simply injecting naked plasmid DNA or proteins into ischemic tissue to deliver secreted angiogenic factors holds promise (Marty and Risau, 1999). Focal angiogen therapy using intramyocardial delivery of an adenovirus vector coding for VEGF-121 has been shown to induce focal angiogenesis sufficient to normalise blood flow to ischaemic myocardium (Lee et al., 2000). Transfection of human HGF gene into infarcted myocardium has been shown to induce a beneficial response to the decreased endogenous HGF, thereby causing angiogenesis (Aoki, 2000). A single intrapericardial injection of FGF-2 in a porcine model of chronic myocardial ischaemia has been shown to cause functionally significant angiogenesis without any adverse outcomes (Laham et al., 2000). PR39 and related compounds are claimed to be potent inducers of angiogenesis by selectively inhibiting inducible factor-1 alpha (Li et al., 2000).

Gene therapy to stimulate angiogenesis is supposed to be an effective way of bypassing occluded arteries (Isner, 1999). Direct *in vivo* gene transfer using a replication deficient adenovirus vector has been carried out in an animal model. It has shown sustained and localised expression of a potent angiogenic mediator (Magovern, 1996). Autologous transplantation of bone marrow cells improved damaged heart function by inducing angiogenesis (Tomita et al., 1999).

Local injection of angiogenic growth factors into the ischemic site have been attempted by various routes like catheter based transendocardial injection, intrapericardial delivery etc. (Kornowski et al., 2000). Intramyocardial injection of bFGF has been shown to salvage myocardium in the border zone (Aaregawa, 1999). Transmyocardial laser treatment has been shown to cause angina relief by destruction of myocardial peripheral nerve endings and improving perfusion through induction of angiogenesis (Tjomsland, 1999).

On histopathology, topical application of L-lysine HCl has been shown to induce profound angiogenic response in cutaneous acute and chronic wounds. Moreover L-lysine HCl supports maximum cellular growth and expansion in serum containing media than in a serum-free media suggesting an action mediated through growth factors (Datta and Kundu, 1999; Datta et al., 2000a, b, 2001; Datta, 2000). Given that the molecule is basically a C-5 species with a chiral carbon (with an attached amino group and linear R-group of 4 carbon chains with terminal amino group), the amino acid should work as a non-

specific binding/attachment molecule between any cell and it is dedicated growth factor. Exactly this has been observed in all cell types – both in suspension and adherent cultures as well as *in vivo* repair wounds and inducing angiogenesis. Lysine mediated angiogenesis is postulated to be an end result of the molecule acting as a cell surface bridge binding the angiogenic factors to their receptors (Figure 1). It would be interesting to study details of angiogenic response in ischaemic myocardium where normally angiogenic factors are available at a higher concentration than adequately perfused myocardium (Laham et al., 1999, 2000). Given that the basic molecular mechanism of angiogenesis is universal and involves binding of the angiogenic factors to their receptors, the much augmented angiogenesis induced by the molecule may be the result of ligand-receptor binding process (Figure 1) (angiogenic factors and their receptors) getting more stable, widespread and predictable under the influence of this ‘new molecular bridge’ compared to the normal stochastic process.

Food additives

Food additives in a broad sense just means any substance added to food. It refers to any substance, the intended use of which results or may reasonably be expected to result directly or indirectly in its becoming a component or otherwise affecting the characteristics of any food. This definition includes any substance used in the production, processing, treatment, packaging, transportation or storage of food. If a substance is added to a food for a specific purpose in that food, it is referred to as a direct additive. For example, the low-calorie sweetener aspartame, which is used in beverages, puddings, yogurt, chewing gum and other foods, is considered a direct additive. Some additives are manufactured from natural sources such as soybeans and corn, which provide lecithin to maintain product consistency, or beets, which provide beet powder used as food colouring. Other useful additives are not found in nature and must be man-made. Artificial additives can be produced more economically, with greater purity and more consistent quality than some of their natural counterparts.

Prebiotic agents are food additives which mainly consists of oligosaccharides and dietary fibres, mainly inulin, and are potentially beneficial in a number of ways: 1) potential protective effects against colorectal cancer and infectious bowel diseases by inhibiting

putrefactive bacteria (*Clostridium perfringens*) and pathogen bacteria (*Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria* and *Shigella*), respectively; 2) improvement of glucose and lipid metabolisms; 3) fibre-like properties by decreasing the renal nitrogen excretion; 4) improvement in the bioavailability of essential minerals; and 5) low carcinogenic factor (Grizard and Barthomeuf, 1999).

Colour additives like sulfiting agents are sometimes used to preserve the colour of foods such as dried fruits and vegetables, and to inhibit the growth of microorganisms in fermented foods such as wine. They are also sometimes used in baked goods, condiments, snack foods and other products.

Erythorbates are food ingredients that are used to inhibit the change of flavour and colour in food when exposed to air, such as when a cut apple is exposed to air. Produced from sugar, erythorbates are similar in chemical structure to vitamin C. Two forms of erythorbates, erythorbic acid and sodium erythorbate, are commonly used in hot dogs, luncheon meats, cured meats, fresh pork, poultry, frozen bananas, dehydrated apples and other foods (Food Additives, 1994, in cooperation with Food and Drug Administration).

Various kinds of food additives are supplemented due to some beneficial response either in certain diseased states or normally to increase growth and performance. For example: Aminoleban EN contains branched-chain amino acids and is known to be beneficial for the protein-energy malnutrition in cirrhotic patients (Meng et al., 1999). Cardiohel (Inrich production) which is a biologically active food additive has been recommended in Ischemic heart disease because it allows to reduce the dose of hypotensive and coronarolytic drugs by 35% and cardiac glycosides by 25%, thus lowering the risk of relevant side effects (Ivashkin et al., 1999). It has been proposed to fortify certain grain-based products with Iron EDTA to increase the bioavailability of iron in human diets and thereby improve the iron status (Heimbach et al., 2000). Nutritive factors like vitamin A and retinoids, vitamin D and selen are used due to important anticarcinogenic properties they have. The phytochemicals promise a lot in anticarcinogenesis to prevent cancer. Spice extracts act antioxidatively by food supplementation, and turmeric extract has been shown to have the ability to prevent the deposition of triacylglycerols in the liver (Sreter, 1999). Food such as blueberries and spinach which are high in antioxidant capacity have been examined for their effects to prevent and/or reverse age-related declines in cerebellar noradrener-

gic receptor function (Bickford et al., 1999). Mixture of amino acids has been seen to act on the pituitary to enhance the adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), luteinizing hormone (LH), and follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) response to corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH) + gonadotropic hormone-releasing hormone (GnRH) (di Luigi et al., 1999). Ingestion of carbohydrate/protein before and after exercise and dietary supplementation of various nutrients e.g. protein, glutamine, branched chain amino acid, creatine, leucine etc. have been purported to promote gains in fat free mass during resistance training. Creatine and calcium beta-hydroxy beta-methyl-buthylate (beta-HMB) supplementation during resistance training have been reported to increase fat-free mass in athletic and nonathletic populations (Kreider, 1999). Simplesse, a fat replacement (GRAS status confirmed by FDA in 1990) made from milk or egg white protein and olestra, which would partially replace fat have been evaluated.

Food additives have a great role to play in livestock production and animal feed industry. Added dietary pyridoxine has been shown to improve weanling pig growth performance (Woodworth et al., 2000). Oleamide has been reported to elevate milk oleic acid when fed to lactating Holstein cows (Jenkins, 2000). Cows fed diets supplemented with ruminally protected lysine and methionine showed increase in percentage of milk protein but no effect on production of milk, milk fat, and milk lactose. Infusion of isoleucine resulted in a higher milk lactose proportion and tended to produce more milk and milk lactose (Robinson et al., 1999). Alpha-ketoglutarate, precursor of glutamine, in combination with ornithine has been suggested to improve gut morphology and functions and counteract trauma-induced dysimmunity and exert anabolic/catabolic actions on protein metabolism. In combination they increase the synthesis of arginine, proline and polyamines that play key roles in metabolic adaptation to trauma (Cynober, 1999). Somatotropin has also been shown to improve body weight gain and feed efficiency (Tripp et al., 1998). Xylitol diet fed partially, also significantly prevented the reductions in body weight gain and food intake without affecting the early stage of inflammatory responses (Takahashi et al., 1999). Food additive ascorbic acid has been shown to have a protective effect against bacterial and viral diseases due to its effect on heterophil function (Andreasen and Frank, 1999). A previous study has shown that diet supplementation with thioprolin, an intracellular sulphhydryl antioxidant and free radical scavenger

stimulates lymphocyte functions. It has been shown to enhance immune function whenever it is depressed (Correa, 1999). Arginine is said to hold a key position in the cellular functions and interactions that occur during inflammation and immune responses. L-arginine improves pain-free and total walking distance in case of claudication in peripheral arterial disease due to enhanced activity of endothelium derived nitric oxide (Maxwell et al., 2000). Dietary supplementation with L-arginine is said to modify reactivity of endothelium and smooth muscle by at least two mechanisms: one associated with activation of potassium channels and the other with receptor-coupled release of nitric oxide (Ray et al., 1999). Lysine in combination with arginine is said to be used by bodybuilders for the combination's alleged effect of stimulating the release of growth hormone. According to the European Federation of Animal Feed Additive Manufacturers (FEFANA), increased use of amino acids combined with reduced crude protein levels in feeds is estimated to have the potential to reduce nitrogen excretion by up to 20–25%. This is seen as one of the major opportunities for reducing nitrogen pollution. Published work by Brudevold and Southern (1994) showed, in a series of five experiments, that diets containing 12% crude protein but supplemented with crystalline lysine, threonine, glutamic acid, methionine, histidine, isoleucine, tryptophan and valine, were able to support similar performance in 10–20 kg pigs to conventional control diets containing between 19–22% crude protein.

Animals in which high rates of lean tissue growth are achieved through either genetic selection or the application of growth hormones and repartitioning agents, lysine requirements are substantially higher (Goodband, 1990). In a report by Easter (1994) it has been shown that the level of dietary protein in a standard maize soybean meal can be reduced by as much as four percentage units if the diet is adequately fortified with lysine, tryptophan and threonine.

Nutritional supplementation with lysine is also recommended in case of herpes simplex infection. The amino acid lysine, in the amount of 1–3 g per day, is effective in inhibiting the recurrence of herpes simplex infections in some individuals (Flodin, 1997).

Food preservatives

A long shelf life, antimicrobial properties, no adverse reactions, harmless metabolites are some of the qual-

ities desired of a food preservative agent. Though currently many are in use, each is beset with a drawback of its own. Hence the search for an ideal and may be natural preservative continues.

The use of food preservatives, such as benzoic acid, nitrites, and sulphites, as antimicrobials, and butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT), ascorbic acid and tocopherols, as antioxidants, has probably changed food production patterns and eating habits more than has the use of any other class of food additive. These food preservative chemicals confer substantial benefits on man, not only by the preservation and increased palatability of food, but also by affording protection against the pathological effects of reactive oxygen species (ROS) which are associated with cancer, cardiovascular disease and aging. Nevertheless, although most preservatives are now considered to be without potential adverse effects there have been problems concerning the safety of some of these chemicals. Benzoic acid and sulphites probably cause allergies. The formation of nitrosamines from nitrites, which are carcinogenic, and the possible rodent carcinogenicity of BHA and BHT have cast a shadow over the safety of these agents (Parke and Lewis, 1992).

BHT and BHA antioxidants are capable of aggravating symptoms in certain patients with chronic urticaria (Goodman et al., 1990). The metabolites of BHT, 2,6-di-tert-butyl-p-benzoquinone (BHT-quinone), 2,6-di-tert-butyl-4-hydroperoxyl-4-methyl-2, 5-cyclohexadienone (BHT-OOH), and 3,5-di-tert-butyl-4-hydroxybenzaldehyde (BHT-CHO) are believed to be carcinogenic. BHT-OOH participates in oxidative DNA damage directly, whereas BHT-quinone causes DNA damage through H_2O_2 generation, which leads to internucleosomal DNA fragmentation (Oikawa et al., 1996).

Weak organic acid food preservatives are shown to exert a strong pro-oxidant action on aerobic yeast cells. In addition these acids are mutagenic toward the yeast mitochondrial genome, even at levels that are subinhibitory to growth. This has raised the concern that the large-scale consumption of these preservatives in the human diet may generate oxidative stress within the epithelia of the gastrointestinal tract (Piper, 1999).

Animal and *in vitro* studies have shown that vitamins C and E can effectively inhibit the formation of carcinogenic nitrosamines. Vitamin C supplementation has been reported to inhibit skin, nerve, and lung and kidney carcinogenesis. Vitamin E has been shown to inhibit skin, liver, oral, ear duct, and forestom-

ach carcinogenesis. Several suggested mechanisms of action include modification of the metabolism of polycyclic hydrocarbons, reduction of mutagenic activity and reaction with genotoxic free radicals (Chen et al., 1988).

Parabens, methyl, ethyl, propyl, benzyl, and butyl, are the most common preservatives in use today. They are the alkyl esters of p-hydroxybenzoic acid and are used extensively because they are relatively nonirritating and nontoxic and offer good antimicrobial coverage (Pederse et al., 2000). However they have been shown to evoke an oestrogenic response *in vivo*, in sexually immature rainbow trout. Also, isolated cases of allergic contact dermatitis have also been reported. But considering their high efficacy and favourable preservative profile they are still the most preferred food preservatives (Mowad, 2000).

Nisin and pediocin PA-1 are examples of bacteriocins from lactic acid bacteria (LAB) that have found practical applications as food preservatives. Like other natural antimicrobial peptides, LAB bacteriocins act primarily at the cytoplasmic membranes of susceptible microorganisms. The dissipation of proton motive force is the common mechanism for the lethal activity of LAB bacteriocin. It has been proposed that nisin forms poration complexes in the membrane through a multistep process of binding, insertion, and pore formation (Montville and Chen, 1998). Combination of sodium lactate and nisin was particularly effective in reducing total bacterial counts in this food product. It also appears that this combination provides an increased protection against common pathogenic contaminants of fresh pork sausage, i.e. *Staph. aureus* and *Salmonella* species (Scannell et al., 1997).

Interactions of monolaurin, eugenol (phenolic compound) and sodium citrate (chelator) on the growth of common meat spoilage (*Lactobacillus curvatus*, *Lactobacillus sake*, *Leuconostoc mesenteroides*, *Brochothrix thermosphacta*) and pathogenic (*Escherichia coli* O157:H7 and *Listeria monocytogenes*) organisms were investigated. It was shown that the combinations of these chemicals were required to have any potent effect. The presence of sodium citrate was necessary to yield potent inhibition of *Lb. curvatus* and *Lb. sake* growth by the monolaurin and eugenol combinations (Blaszkyk and Holley, 1997).

The effects of 5% potassium sorbate (PS) and 3% lactic acid (LA) applications on total mesophilic aerobic bacteria, total psychrotrophic aerobic bacteria, lactic acid bacteria, staphylococci and coliform bacteria, pH values, thiobarbituric acid (TBA) numbers,

and sensorial properties of vacuum-packed chicken leg and breast meats have been investigated during storage at 4 ± 1 °C. In addition, residual sorbate was examined. A decrease in bacterial counts of chicken leg and breast meats was observed in the periods following the treatments of PS and LA; however, towards the end of the storage period, the effectiveness of PS was greater than that of LA. Quantities of sorbic acid found in the samples treated with PS were below the Acceptable Daily Intake established by the Food and Agriculture Organization/World Health Organization (Kolsarici and Candogan, 1995).

Welsh onion ethanol extracts were tested for their inhibitory activity against the growth and aflatoxin production of *Aspergillus flavus* and *A. parasiticus*. It was seen that the survival of spores of *A. flavus* and *A. parasiticus* depended on both the extract concentration and the exposure time of the spores to the Welsh onion extracts. The extracts have been shown to inhibit mycelial growth of two tested fungi cultured on yeast extract-sucrose broth. They also inhibited aflatoxin production in the culture at a concentration of 10 mg ml^{-1} or permitted only a small amount of aflatoxin production with extract concentration of 5 mg ml^{-1} after 2 weeks of incubation. Welsh onion ethanol extracts showed more pronounced inhibitory effects against the two tested aflatoxin-producing fungi than did the same added levels of the preservatives sorbate and propionate at pH values near 6.5. Thus they appear to potent biological preservative agents (Fan and Chen, 1999).

Lysine too has been found to play an interesting role as a preservative. Production of toxins A and B by *Clostridium difficile* is enhanced in a defined medium with biotin-limited conditions. Asparagine, glutamic acid and glutamine (10 mM) showed an effect on growth and toxin production similar to that of biotin. Lysine (10 mM) suppressed growth and inhibited toxin production. Addition of these toxin-inhibitory compounds within an incubation period of 2 days inhibited the enhanced toxin production, but later addition showed only slight inhibition of toxin production. Amino acids contained in the defined medium under the biotin-limited conditions were actively utilised in the presence of the three toxin-inhibitory amino acids, but in the presence of lysine, amino-acid utilisation was suppressed (Yamakawa et al., 1998). Homocitrate synthase is the first enzyme of the lysine biosynthetic pathway. It is feedback regulated by L-lysine. The effect of lysine inhibition was investigated in the strain *Penicillium chrysogenum*. Lysine decreases the biosyn-

thesis of penicillin (determined by the incorporation of [^{14}C] valine into penicillin) by inhibiting and repressing homocitrate synthase, thereby depriving the cell of alpha-aminoadipic acid, a precursor of penicillin. Lysine feedback has been shown to inhibit *in vivo* the biosynthesis and excretion of homocitrate by a lysine auxotroph, L2, blocked in the lysine pathway after homocitrate. The molecular mechanism of lysine feedback regulation in *Penicillium chrysogenum* involves both inhibition of homocitrate synthase activity and repression of its synthesis. *In vitro* studies indicated that L-lysine feedback inhibits and represses homocitrate synthase both in low- and high-penicillin-producing strains (Luengo et al., 1980).

Thus it is seen that lysine has remarkable antimicrobial properties. Since lysine is an amino acid, the chances of any immunological response against it are negligible. These qualities of lysine can be employed to use it as an effective food preservative.

Adjuvants

Immunological adjuvants are agents that enhance specific immune responses to vaccines. The capacity to identify the nature and form of antigenic epitopes in proteins allows the specific design of vaccines to promote relevant protective immune responses. Such vaccines, although ideal in terms of specificity and purity, may not always achieve the desired levels of protection through failure to reach relevant cells of immune system due to simple dilution, elimination by host enzymes or lack of specific targeting. Many vaccines, currently under development and testing, are composed of synthetic, recombinant, or highly purified subunit antigens, which are often considered to be safer than whole-inactivated or live-attenuated vaccines. Concomitant with the above there has been development of a plethora of adjuvants aimed at enhancing responses to these 'new' immunogens (Mrsny, 1998). Parallely, there has been an almost equal rapid enhancement in understanding the complex nature of the immune learning response, particularly with respect to antigen processing, the nature and role of cytokines and the importance of dendritic cells and T-cell subsets in protection from infections.

Despite substantial progress in the areas of basic and applied immunology over the past couple of decades, and drastic modifications being introduced to the approach of vaccination, the area of vaccinology is probably facing a formidable and extremely

fundamental requirement of a biocompatible adjuvant. Although a number of them are available, none really fits the bill of human use, ideally.

Adjuvants can be grouped according to their physical characteristics and mode of action. They include particulate adjuvants, oil and emulsifier-based adjuvants, adjuvants providing controlled antigen delivery, adjuvants based on specific targeting of antigen, and gel-type adjuvants (Jennings et al., 1998). They may act non-specifically in promoting an immune response to an antigen through depot formation, or very specifically as in a 'delivery system' where an antigen is linked to a cellular protein, or targeted to a specific cell receptor. It has also become necessary that these differing approaches be combined, and an adjuvant/delivery system designed, to provide slow release of a targeted antigen (Jennings et al., 1998).

Adjuvants have diverse mechanisms of action and should be selected for use, based on the route of administration and the type of immune response (antibody, cell-mediated, or mucosal) desired for a particular vaccine. As mentioned, adjuvant mechanisms of action include: (i) increasing the biological or immunological half-life of vaccine antigens; (ii) improving antigen delivery and presentation; and (iii) inducing the production of immunomodulatory cytokines (2). Conventionally the efficiency of an adjuvant used to be measured by the capacity to induce enhanced antibody titres in serum and cell mediated immunity (CMI) to a given antigen. Recently, the capacity of an adjuvant is also measured by the quality as well as the magnitude of the induced immune response, where quality includes isotype and IgG subclass responses, T-helper cell responses characterized by the cytokine profiles and extent of cytotoxic T cell (CTL) induction. In the early phase of immunization some adjuvants influence the antigen administration and uptake by a so-called depot effect exemplified by aluminium hydroxide gel and oil adjuvants, which possibly is not as desired as alledged. A 'modern' depot is exerted by slow release formulations, continuously releasing the antigen over a period of time at a steady rate or by pulses at intervals, although being basically a 'single injection' vaccine. Extensive efforts are put in to formulate efficient delivery combinations targeting the antigens from the site of administration to draining lymph nodes or distant lymphatic tissue or to mucosal surfaces by parenteral or mucosal administrations. Nowadays, non-replicating carriers besides replicating vaccines are formulated to induce mucosal immune responses encompassing secretory IgA and

CMI (Morein et al., 1996). Efforts to evoke immune responses on mucosal membranes distant from the site of administration have resulted mostly in little success (Morein et al., 1996). For a long time it was considered that CTL under the restriction of MHC Class I only could be evoked by replicating viruses or intracellular parasites (Morein et al., 1996). However, novel adjuvant delivery systems readily induce CTL by delivering the antigen to the APC resulting in intracellular transport to the cytosol for the MHC Class I presentation system, as well as to the endosomal pathway for the MHC Class II presentation (Morein et al., 1996).

Infant immunization is another particularly important area with multiple challenges for vaccine research and development. There is, together with a high susceptibility to infections, a lower efficacy of most vaccinations in newborns and young infants, compared to those administered later in life. Hence adjuvants play an important role to: (i) rapidly induce strong antibody responses of the appropriate isotypes; (ii) elicit sustained antibody responses extending beyond infancy; (iii) induce efficient Th1 and CTL responses in spite of the preferential Th2 polarization (in early life responses); (iv) escape from maternal antibody mediated inhibition of vaccine responses; (v) show acceptable reactogenicity in early life; and (vi) allow incorporation of several vaccine antigens into a single formulation so as to reduce the number of required injections (Kovarik and Siegrist, 1998).

Currently, aluminum salts and MF59 are the only vaccine adjuvants approved for human use. Of the novel compounds recently evaluated in human trials, immunostimulatory molecules such as lipopolysaccharide (LPS) derived monophosphoryl lipid (MPL) and saponin derivative QS21 appear most promising, although doubts have been raised as to their safety in humans (Singh and O'Hagan, 1999). Preclinical work with particulate adjuvants, such as the MF59 microemulsion and lipid-particle immune-stimulating complexes (Iscoms), suggest that these molecules are also potent elicitors of humoral and cellular immune responses (Singh and O'Hagan, 1999). In addition, preclinical data on CpG oligonucleotides appear to be encouraging, particularly with respect to their ability to selectively manipulate immune responses (Singh and O'Hagan, 1999).

MF59, an adjuvant approved for human use, typically elicits higher antibody titers than alum when used in combination with a variety of recombinant and natural subunit antigens. The mechanisms responsible

for the adjuvant action of MF59 however are not fully understood (Dupuis et al., 1999).

MPL has been shown to be a promising adjuvant due to the following advantages a) MPL retains the useful immunostimulating activities of the parent LPS molecule, but with greatly attenuated toxicity; b) produces diverse effects on the cellular elements of the immune system, including macrophage activation and T and B cell interaction, with concomitant cytokine and lymphokine release; c) proven adjuvant activity, in both the cellular and humoral effector arms of immunity; d) adjuvant activity when used alone, or in combination with other immunostimulants and delivery vehicles; and e) safe to humans (Ulrich and Myers, 1995).

Two novel oil adjuvant vaccines, Montanide ISA 25 and 206 are claimed to offer a number of advantages over $Al(OH)_3$, particularly in their ability to raise better immunity in pigs. Results indicate that vaccines, in presence of these adjuvants retain potency for a longer period and elicit good antibody responses in both pigs and cattle regardless of injection route without evidence of toxicity (Barnett et al., 1996).

It has been seen that formulation of a DNA vaccine encoding hepatitis B surface antigen with calcium- or aluminum phosphate adjuvants, increases antibody titers by 10 to 100-fold and decreases the immunogenic dose of DNA by 10-fold. Furthermore, boosting an HBs protein-primed response with the adjuvanted DNA vaccine resulted in a dramatic increase in the HBs-specific IgG2a response reflecting a shift towards a TH1 response. It has been suggested that the mechanism by which aluminum phosphate exerts its adjuvant effect is not through increased expression of HBsAg *in vivo* but by increasing the number and affinity of HBs peptide antigen-specific IFN- γ and IL-2 secreting T cells (Wang et al., 2000).

Microfluidized squalene or squalane emulsions act as efficient adjuvants, eliciting both humoral and cellular immune responses. Squalene or squalane emulsions have been administered in human cancer vaccines, with mild side effects and evidence of efficacy, in terms of both immune responses and antitumor activity (Allison, 1999).

Water-soluble fullerene derivatives have been suggested as prospective adjuvants due to their immunostimulating effect (Masalova et al., 1999).

The role of Bacillus Colmette-Guerin (BCG) as an adjuvant in autologous tumor vaccines has been examined. BCG results in increased VPLN (vaccine primed lymph node) cell yield as well as enhanced

type 1 (IFN- γ release) immune responses of VPLN cells to autologous tumor without upregulating type 2 (IL-10 release) response (Li et al., 2000).

Experiments demonstrate that heat killed *Lysteria* as an adjuvant for immunotherapy mediates immune deviation from a pathological Th2-dominated response toward a protective immune response in peripheral lymphoid tissues and in the lungs and may be clinically effective in the treatment of patients with established asthma and allergic diseases (Hansen et al., 2000).

The limited availability of efficient and non-toxic adjuvants, capable of promoting mucosal responses, presents with a problem in vaccinology. The potential usefulness of fibronectin-binding protein I (Sfbl) of *Streptococcus pyogenes* as immunological adjuvant has been assessed using ovalbumin (OVA) as a model antigen. Phenotypic analysis of proliferating cells show enrichment in CD4⁺ T cells, producing a pattern of cytokines (IL-4, IL-5, IL-6 and IL-10) characteristic of Th2-type cells. In contrast to immunization with soluble OVA alone, OVA-Sfbl induced the generation of CD8⁺ OVA-specific cytotoxic cells. These results demonstrate that Sfbl represents a promising mucosal adjuvant able to substantially improve cellular, humoral and mucosal responses when coupled to an antigen administered by intranasal route (Medina et al., 1998).

Norwegian outer membrane vesicle (OMV) vaccine against group B meningococcal disease has proved to be strongly immunogenic when administered intranasally in mice. All vaccinees developed marked increases in OMV-specific IgA antibodies in nasal secretions. It is thus possible that a nasal OMV vaccine may induce protection against invasive meningococcal disease, and also that it might be used as a vehicle for nasal vaccines against other diseases (Haneberg et al., 1998).

Whole killed meningococci (Nm) and pertussis bacteria (Bp) has been tested for mucosal immunogenicity and as mucosal adjuvants for an inactivated influenza virus vaccine given intranasally to unanaesthetized mice. With Bp or Nm admixed, serum IgG and IgA and salivary IgA responses to the influenza virus were substantially augmented ($P < 0.005$) (Berstad et al., 2000).

A study has been carried out to demonstrate that two mutants of *Escherichia coli* heat-labile toxin (LT), LTK63, which lacks ADP-ribosylating activity, and LTR72, which has partial enzyme activity, act as po-

tent mucosal adjuvants for the nasal delivery of an acellular pertussis (Pa) vaccine (Ryan et al., 1999).

Synthetically prepared N-terminal parts of the lipoprotein from Enterobacteria carrying three fatty acid residues or lipopeptide analogs containing one to four aminoacids bound to S-glycerylcysteine act as potent immunoadjuvants *in vivo* in combination with or covalently linked to antigens. Thus, bacterial cell wall components such as lipopolysaccharide, a variety of membrane proteins, murein, and lipoprotein can act as immunoadjuvants for bacterial vaccines, thus enhancing protection from bacterial infections. The immunoadjuvant properties of the lipopeptides are mediated by an enhancement of the humoral immune response (Schlecht et al., 1993).

Though vaccination has been the most cost-effective way of controlling infectious diseases, the logistics of delivering at least two to three doses of conventional vaccines for primary immunization to achieve protection are difficult and compliance is frequently inadequate, particularly in developing countries. In recent years biodegradable polymer microspheres have received much attention for the purposes of controlled release of antigens: (i) to reduce the number of doses needed for primary immunization to as few as a single dose and (ii) to better-target an antigen to microfold cells on mucosal surfaces after oral administration or to antigen-presenting cells after parenteral inoculations. A variety of vaccine antigens have been encapsulated in microspheres usually composed of poly (lactic/glycolic) acid (PLGA). Based on the size of the microspheres, molecular weight of polymer and ratio of lactic to glycolic acid in the polymer, the antigen may be targeted to various cells of the immune system or it may form a depot at the site of injection, allowing slow release of the antigen for extended periods. Additionally, an adjuvant may be incorporated inside microspheres together with the antigen, further enhancing or modulating the immune response to the desired type. The major problems in developing controlled-release vaccines include instability of vaccine antigens during micro-encapsulation, storage and subsequent hydration (Gupta et al., 1998).

Prolonged presence of mIFN gamma at the site of antigen presentation is crucial for the generation of systemic immune responses in the B16 melanoma model. Studies show that liposomal encapsulation of cytokines proves to be an attractive strategy for paracrine cytokine delivery in tumor vaccine development (Van Slooten et al., 2000).

Archaeosomes act as promising vaccine carriers capable of facilitating strong primary and memory responses, both in humoral and cell-mediated immunity sectors to entrapped antigens. In contrast, conventional liposomes induced little cell-mediated immunity, whereas alum stimulated only an IL-4 response. In contrast to alum and Freund's adjuvant, archaeosomes composed of *Thermoplasma acidophilum* lipids, evoked a dramatic memory antibody response to the encapsulated protein (at approximately 300 days) after only two initial immunizations (days 0 and 14). This correlated with increased antigen-specific cell cycling of CD4⁺ T cells through increase in synthetic (S) and mitotic (G(2)/M) phase and decrease in resting (G(1)) phases of CD4⁺ cell cycle (Krishnan et al., 2000).

One of the approaches of tumor vaccines is a mixture of irradiated tumor cells with cytokine containing liposomes. These vaccines are quite easy to prepare and, in contrast to vaccines consisting of cytokine-gene transfected-tumor cells, their composition (cell dosage, cytokine dosage) can be easily varied. Vaccination efficiency depended on (a) the immunogenicity of the tumor cells (b) vaccination frequency and (c) the dose of the cytokine encapsulated in the admixed liposome depots. Immunity to the tumors could be induced only within a narrow cytokine-dose range ('IL-2-dose window') (Krup et al., 1999).

Dendritic cells (DCs) have also been widely considered to be promising adjuvants for inducing immunity to cancer (Thurner et al., 1999). Studies using mature, monocyte-derived DCs to elicit resistance to malignant melanoma have been undertaken. In one of the studies, DCs were pulsed with Mage-3A1 tumor peptide and a recall antigen, tetanus toxoid or tuberculin. This study proved the principle that DC 'vaccines' can frequently expand tumor-specific CTLs and elicit regressions even in advanced cancer and, in addition, provides evidence for an active CD8⁺ CTL-tumor cell interaction *in situ* as well as escape by lack of tumor antigen expression (Thurner et al., 1999).

The co-delivery of interferon (IFN)-gamma, interleukin (IL)-12, and IL-18 genes along with DNA vaccine constructs to engineer the immune response *in vivo* towards more T-helper Th1-type cellular responses, has been investigated. Co-immunization of IFN-gamma and IL-18 in macaques enhanced the level of antigen-specific antibody responses. Similarly, co-delivery of IL-12 and IL-18 also enhanced the level of antigen-specific Th proliferative responses (Kim et al., 1999).

The immunostimulatory sequences can also be identified within a pleiotropic cytokine like IL-1 and used in the rational design of novel vaccination strategies. The human interleukin-1beta (IL-1beta) domain in position 163-171, comprising the amino acids VQGEESNDK, has been synthesized as a nine-amino-acid-long peptide and used *in vivo* as a nontoxic HCl salt. The IL-1beta nonapeptide reproduces immunostimulatory and adjuvant effects of the whole mature IL-1beta, but does not possess any of the IL-1beta inflammatory, vasoactive, tumor-promoting, and systemically toxic effects, nor can it synergize with tumor necrosis factor alpha or other molecules in inducing toxicity and shock. Thus it acts as a promising adjuvant (Boraschi and Tagliabue, 1999).

IL-12 has also been investigated as a promising adjuvant. Its main effect is to drive Th-cell differentiation throughout a T-helper type-1 response, thus inducing interferon gamma (IFNgamma) and favoring IgG2a. These properties make IL-12 a candidate adjuvant for vaccination against cancer and infective diseases. But, experience of some toxicity in humans has hampered its further development into clinical applications, which, however, are still possible if restricted to local administration. Gene transfer has been proposed to be the preferred approach to obtain local release of cytokine (Rodolfo and Colombo, 1999).

Synthetic oligodeoxynucleotides containing CpG motifs [immunostimulatory sequences (ISS)] have been described as potent adjuvants of type 1 immune responses when co-administered with protein or peptide vaccines. ISS causes a rapid release of IL-12 and IFN-gamma in sera from treated mice. This data provide a first evidence for the ability of ISS to induce an anti-CHO (polysaccharide) type 1-like immune response and demonstrate that ISS have the potential to increase host antibody response against both the CHO and the protein component of a conjugated vaccine (von Hunolstein et al., 2000). Addition of CpG ODN (Oligodeoxynucleotides) to hepatitis B vaccine greatly increases the seroconversion rate and the titers of antibody against HBsAg (anti-HBs). This is the first demonstration of CpG DNA in a great ape and the results have important implications for the vaccination of humans against HBV and other diseases (Davis et al., 2000).

Studies have indicated that professional APCs in the periphery, such as dendritic cells and macrophages, play an important role in initiating DNA vaccine-specific immune responses. To engineer the immune response induced by DNA vaccines *in vivo*

the modulatory effects of codelivering growth factor genes for the hematopoietic APCs along with DNA vaccines was investigated. Specifically, the effects on the antigen-specific immune responses following the codelivery of the gene expression cassettes for macrophage-colony stimulating factor (M-CSF), granulocyte-colony stimulating factor (G-CSF), and granulocyte macrophage-colony stimulating factor (GM-CSF) along with HIV-1 DNA immunogen constructs were studied. It was observed that coimmunization with GM-CSF increased the antibody response and resulted in a significant enhancement of lymphoproliferative response. Furthermore, among all coinjection combinations, M-CSF coinjections resulted in a high level of CTL enhancement. This enhancement of CTL responses observed from the coinjection with M-CSF was CD8⁺ T cell dependent and was associated with the presence of CD11c⁺ cells at the site of injection and with the antigen-specific induction of the beta-chemokine MIP-1beta, suggesting a role for this chemokine in CTL induction. These results suggest that hematopoietic growth factors should be further studied as potential adjuvants for *in vivo* modulators of immune responses (Kim, 2000).

In the study that is being carried in the authors' laboratory, monomeric lysine has been observed to augment the Ig responses irrespective of the type and size of the antigens. Heat killed *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* was observed to give a massive augmentation of Ig responses reproducibly in the presence of the monomeric aminoacid. BCG strains were also remarkably potentiated in their ability to induce humoral immunity. Few other antigens are being studied at the moment along with characterisation of the elicited humoral and cellular types of immunity including characterisation of the antibodies and cells (mostly CD4⁺ and CD8⁺) generated.

Antimicrobial peptides

Many peptides have antimicrobial activity. They encompass a wide variety of structural motifs. The majority of these peptides are cationic and amphipathic but there are also hydrophobic alpha-helical peptides, which possess antimicrobial activity. In addition, some beta-sheet peptides have antimicrobial activity and even antimicrobial alpha-helical peptides which have been modified to possess a beta-structure retain part of their antimicrobial activity. There are also antimicrobial peptides, which are rich in certain specific

amino acids (for example shepherin I and shepherin II, glycine- and histidine-rich peptides) (Park et al., 2000). There are antimicrobial peptides which are lipopeptides (for example Daptomycin) (Hodinka et al., 1987). In spite of the structural diversity, a common feature of the cationic antimicrobial peptides is that they all have an amphipathic structure which allows them to bind to the membrane interface (Epand and Vogel, 1999). Indeed, most antimicrobial peptides interact with membranes and may be cytotoxic as a result of disturbance of the bacterial inner or outer membranes (Epand and Vogel, 1999). Alternatively, a necessary but not sufficient property of these peptides may be their ability to pass through the membrane to reach a target inside the cell (Epand and Vogel, 1999). The interaction of these peptides with biological membranes is not just a function of the peptide but is also modulated by the lipid components of the membrane. It is not likely that this diverse group of peptides has a single mechanism of action, but interaction of the peptides with membranes is an important requirement for most, if not all, antimicrobial peptides (Epand and Vogel, 1999).

It has been seen that thiazole and oxazole containing amino acids like alanine, valine, proline, leucine and alanine and some peptides containing the 5-ring heterocyclic backbone modifications show moderate antibacterial activity *in vitro* against various Gram-positive (*Staphylococcus aureus*, *Bacillus cereus*, etc.) and Gram-negative (*Escherichia coli*, *Proteus vulgaris*, etc.) bacteria, fungi (*Candida albicans*), and yeast (Stanchev et al., 1999).

The derivatives of cholic acid with basic aminoacids also show significant antimicrobial activity, especially marked when L-arginine is the condensed aminoacid (Bellini et al., 1979).

Macrocyclic peptides possess specific and potent antimicrobial activity that is salt dependent (Tam et al., 1999). It has been suggested that their initial interactions with the microbial surface may be electrostatic, an effect commonly found in defensin antimicrobial peptides. They have an end to end cyclic structure with a cystine-knot motif. It has been suggested that this might provide a useful template for design of novel peptide antimicrobials (Tam et al., 1999).

Nisin, an amphiphilic peptide, shows a strong antimicrobial activity against various Gram-positive bacteria. Its activity results from permeabilization of bacterial membranes, causing efflux of cytoplasmic compounds. It has been suggested that pore formation of nisin involves translocation of the C-terminal region

of the molecule across the membrane (Van Kraaij et al., 1998).

A family of aminoacyl alkyl citrate compounds called viridifungins, which are novel squalene synthase inhibitors, have broad spectrum fungicidal activity but lack antibacterial activity. Although the compounds inhibit squalene synthase, the first committed step in ergosterol biosynthesis, results presented show that inhibition of fungal growth is not related to inhibition of ergosterol synthesis (Onishi et al., 1997).

Novel pseudopeptides, corresponding to a membrane active depsipeptide, show more resistance to serum proteases than peptides and similar antimicrobial activities, without hemolytic activity. The pseudopeptides were found to be active against current drug resistant fungi and pathogenic fungi isolated from patients, and also have a strong synergism with current antifungal drugs against *Candida albicans*. The leakage assays suggest that the pseudopeptides act on the lipid membrane of pathogenic cells. Thus it is believed that they would have advantage over the peptide(s) as candidate(s) for novel antifungal(s) (Oh et al., 1999).

Peptoids, which differ from peptides in having a N-substituted rather than alpha-carbon-substituted glycine units, have been evaluated for antimicrobial activity. It has been seen *in vitro* that the peptoid CHIR29498 and some of its analogues were active in the range of 3 to 12 μM ml^{-1} against a panel of gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria which included isolates which were resistant to known antibiotics. Beta-Galactosidase and propidium iodide leakage assays indicate that the membrane is the most likely target of activity. Positional isomers of an active peptoid were also active, consistent with a mode of action, such as membrane disruption, that does not require a specific fit between the molecule and its target (Goodson et al., 1999).

Calprotectin, a protein in neutrophil cytoplasm and abscess fluids, appears to inhibit microbial growth through competition for zinc. It has been suggested that calprotectin's antimicrobial activity may be related to certain histidine-based zinc-binding sequences (Loomans et al., 1998).

A novel 26-residue proline-rich immune-inducible peptide, Metchnikowin, has been characterised from *Drosophila*, which exhibits both antibacterial (gram-positive) and antifungal activities (Levashina et al., 1995).

The antibacterial effect of o-carboranylalanine (o-Cba), a highly lipophilic analog of phenylalanine,

against some species is comparable to that of the widely used agricultural antibiotic, streptomycin. This carborane-containing amino acid is more toxic to Gram-positive bacteria, than to gram negative ones. Compared to the commercial fungicide, prochloraz, o-Cba is found to be weakly toxic against various fungi (Oros et al., 1999).

Two novel phenylalanine-rich antimicrobial peptides, Styelin A and Styelin B, purified from the hemocytes of *Styela clava*, are effective against a panel of gram negative and gram positive bacterial pathogens of humans, usually acting with minimal inhibitory concentrations of $<1.5 \mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ ($<0.5 \mu\text{M}$), even in the presence of 100 mM NaCl. The presence of antimicrobial peptides (Styelins) in tunicate hemocytes is evidence that such molecules are ancient mediators of host defense within the vertebrate lineage (Lee et al., 1997).

L-methionine has long been known to prevent reinfection with chronic urinary tract infection. The therapeutic result is essentially due to its influence on bacterial cytoadherence (Funfstuck et al., 1997).

Dermaseptins s1, s2, s3, s4, and s5, a family of cationic (lysine-rich), amphipathic antifungal peptides of 28–34 residues, share a similar spectrum of lytic activity against the filamentous fungi that are responsible for opportunistic lethal infections that follow the immunodeficiency syndrome or the use of immunosuppressive agents. They exhibit marked differences in their potencies to arrest the growth of gram-positive and gram-negative pathogenic bacteria and yeasts (Mor et al., 1994). The mechanisms of antimicrobial actions of magainin 2, buforin II and poly L-lysine against various *Escherichia coli* strains have been studied. Poly L-lysine inhibits BL21, AD 434 and GroE⁺/DnaK⁺ growth without lysing the cell. Magainin 2 has a pore-forming activity on BL 21 and AD 434 membrane but could not inhibit the GroE⁺/DnaK⁺ growth in a nutrient-rich medium. Buforin II, which kills BL21 and AD 434 without cell membrane damage, lysed GroE⁺/DnaK⁺ to death. Once they were introduced into the cell by electroporation, all three peptides were able to inhibit cell growth at concentrations of 10 times lower than their MICs (Liang and Kim, 1999). The antimicrobial activity of racemomycin compounds tended to be stronger with increase in the number of beta-lysine moieties in the molecule (Inamori et al., 1990).

Novel unnatural amino acids with more positively charged and bulky side chain group than lysine residue were synthesised. The incorporation of this amino

acid increased the resistance of the peptide against serum protease more than three times without a decrease in the antimicrobial activity. It has been suggested that the amino acids synthesized in this study could be used not only as a novel building block for combinatorial libraries of antimicrobial peptides, but also for structure-activity relationship studies about antimicrobial peptides (Oh and Lee, 1999).

An amphiphilic, cationic peptide composed of eight leucines and six lysines was synthesized by solid phase peptide synthesis (SPPS) and tested against *E. coli* O157:H7 grown in TSB. The peptide was bactericidal and bacteriostatic at concentrations of 50 and $25 \mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$, respectively. An inhibitory effect was also observed against stationary phase cells. Intracellular K⁺ and ATP depletion were also observed. These results suggest that the peptide increased the cell membrane permeability but it did not lyse the cells (Appendini and Hotchkiss, 1999).

It has been reported that a new group of diastereomers of short-model peptides (12 amino acids long) composed of leucine and lysine with varying ratios, possess several properties that make them potentially better than native or *de novo*-designed all L-amino acid antimicrobial peptides. Preliminary studies have revealed that modulating the hydrophobicity and positive charges of these diastereomers is sufficient to confer antibacterial activity and cell selectivity (Hong et al., 1999).

Oxalysine, a novel anti-fungal antibiotic, isolated from *Streptomyces roseoviridofuscus* showed a good activity against *Candida parapsilosis* when compared to Amphotericin-B and 5-Fluorocytosine. It was found that oxalysine 0.4 mmol L^{-1} did not significantly inhibit their incorporations into protein and/or DNA, but strongly inhibited the incorporation of (¹⁴C)-adenine into RNA (Zhang et al., 1993).

L-lysine works as a good anti viral agent for herpes simplex. Supplementation of l-lysine is one of the best options available for the treatment of herpes simplex virus infections, especially oral forms. L-lysine is also much cheaper than antiviral drugs such as Acyclovir. L-lysine supplementation works by tilting the balance between lysine and arginine heavily in favor of lysine. This ameliorates herpes outbreaks because the herpes virus depends on the presence of arginine for its replication. Lysine, in the amount of 1–3 g per day, is effective in inhibiting the recurrence of herpes simplex infections in some individuals (Flodin, 1997).

Cell fixatives

Most laboratories use formalin, glutaraldehyde, ethanol, paraformaldehyde and Bouin's liquid for tissue fixation. Coagulative fixatives are less popular. However, problems with formalin fixation comprise delay of fixation and variations in the duration of the fixation mainly (Ezaki et al., 2000). Quantification of DNA extracted by microdissection of tissue sections can be used for qualitative PCR analysis. Formalin fixation, before microdissection significantly diminishes the amount of extractable DNA and may lead to less reliable results, even of qualitative PCR analysis (Serth et al., 2000). Also a major artifact induced by formaldehyde fixation is the masking of tissue antigens due to cross-linking of protein amino acid residues (Ezaki et al., 2000). Bouin's fluid has been shown to affect PCR analysis. The performance of PCR has been shown to decrease for samples fixed in Bouin's liquid for longer than 6 hr or after 48 hr of incubation in a vacuum infiltration processor (in which Bouin's liquid-fixed and formalin-fixed samples are mixed (Camilleri-Bruet et al., 2000). Glutaraldehyde affects lipids adversely. Classical procedure i.e. glutaraldehyde fixation followed by epoxy resin embedding, results in the loss of 73–91% of the tissue lipids (Maneta-Peyret et al., 1999).

But there is a better side to glutaraldehyde as a cell fixative. When gelatin films were treated with glutaraldehyde (GA) solution at 60 °C, free aldehyde groups were introduced in the film. The bonding strength of GA-crosslinked gelatin films (GA gelatin films) with biological tissue was assessed using porcine skins. It was found that bonding strength increased with increasing aldehyde content in the film (Matsuda et al., 1999).

Ninety-five percent (95%) ethanol is the standard cytological fixative used in many laboratories. Commercially available ethanol is expensive and not freely available in some institutions. Methanol, a tissue dehydrant, is also known to be a cytological fixative. Methanol has been shown to be as effective as ethanol for fixation of smears and cheaper (Kumarasinghe et al., 1997).

To establish a quantitative method for analysis of gene expressions in small areas of tissue after paraffin embedding, preliminary validation experiments with RT-PCR and Western blotting were performed using methacarn-fixed rodent tissues and a cultured PC12 cell line. It was shown that in addition to its advantages for immunohistochemistry, methacarn-fixed

paraffin-embedded tissue has benefits for analysis of both RNAs and proteins in the cells of histologically defined areas (Shibutani et al., 2000).

Adequate preservation of the cells and matrix of mineralising tissues remains difficult, as organic components and initial mineral deposits may be lost during conventional processing for electron microscopy. An attempt has been made to decrease the processing time by using microwave irradiation (MWI). Rat molar tooth germs were fixed using standard fixatives in a microwave oven. Under electron microscopy, differentiating ameloblasts and odontoblasts, plasma membranes, mitochondria, rough endoplasmic reticulum, the Golgi complex, together with all other cytoplasmic organelles showed excellent preservation, especially microtubules, microfilaments and coated vesicles. Crystal-like mineral deposits were conspicuously present in relation to dentine matrix vesicles and collagen fibrils as well as in enamel matrix. Thus this promises to be a fast and effective method when mineralised tissue is involved (Massa LF, Arana-Chavez et al., 2000). Even when applied in immunohistochemistry, MWI greatly shortens the fixation, processing, and immunolabeling times without compromising the quality of ultrastructural preservation and the specificity of labeling (Rangell and Keller, 2000).

Integral immunohistochemical analysis of immune responses in frozen sections requires that, in addition to constitutively expressed membrane CD markers, less stable determinants should be reliably visualized.

Fixation with pararosanine, as compared to acetone, resulted in better morphology of all tissues. Out of a number of determinant-tissue combinations, staining sensitivity and intensity were markedly increased for selected determinant-tissue combinations, e.g., for IL-4 in human spleen and CD40 in human and mouse spleen. These data show that pararosanine is a useful alternative to acetone, resulting in superior morphology and specific staining for selected determinant-tissue combinations (Schrijver et al., 2000).

Acetone fixation at –18 °C with subsequent embedding in methyl-/butylmethacrylate is a reliable method for the routine processing of bone marrow biopsies. This method allows good conventional histological visualization of morphological details, which is comparable with other fixation procedures. The essential advantage of this method is that a wide range of monoclonal antibodies and polyclonal antisera can be used for immunohistochemical investigations for

diagnostic and scientific purposes. The addition of 5% polyethylene glycol 400 to the acetone minimizes freeze-related artefacts (Hantschick and Stosiek, 1998).

Poly-D-lysine (PDL) and Poly-L-Lysine (PLL) are synthetic molecules which have been used to enhance cell attachment to plastic and glass surfaces (McKeehan, 1984). For many anchorage-dependent cells, the nature of the culture substrate has a major effect on cell growth and the requirement for serum proteins. Tissue culture plastic has a net negative surface charge, which is produced by plasma treatment of the polystyrene (LaRocca and Barker, 1996). Many researchers have shown that serum-free or reduced serum cultures can be dramatically improved by coating the culture surface with positively charged polymers, i.e., PDL and PLL (Yavin and Yavin, 1974; McKeehan and Ham, 1976). Poly-lysine surface treatment improves adhesive properties by altering the charge on the vessel surface from negative to positive. In addition to promoting cell adhesion, Poly-lysine also enhances the adsorption of serum or extracellular matrix proteins to the culture substrate (McKeehan, 1984).

While both PDL and PLL are being widely used, PDL may be preferred for some cell types and applications because PDL, unlike PLL, is not broken down by the proteases released by cells in culture (Banker and Goslin, 1991). As PDL and PLL are synthetic molecules, they do not stimulate biological activity in the cells cultured on them. In addition, they do not introduce impurities carried by natural polymers (Ham and McKeehan, 1979).

Hybridoma

With rising costs in medical treatment, prevention of diseases have become more important than the cure. Hence the trend is towards early diagnosis so that therapy is initiated at the earliest. The field of diagnostics has over the years developed and honed itself into one of the most important sectors of clinical medicine. These techniques rely heavily on the ability of monoclonal antibodies (MAbs) for their specificity and affinity for the antigens.

Since the advent of hybridoma technology in 1975 (Köhler and Milstein, 1975), MAbs have rapidly become one of the most important humanised animal cell products. They have rapidly made inroads into diagnosis, research, therapy, and purification processes (Chua et al., 1994). However, production of MAbs

is cost intensive. This is mainly due to the expensive media requirements, low maximum cell densities, relatively low productivities and elaborate and high-end downstream processing. This problem is further compounded by the fact that hybridoma cell lines are very unstable during prolonged cell culture, frequently giving rise to non-producer cells (Chua et al., 1994).

There are two major approaches to obtain higher yield of MAbs in culture. High density culture/large scale culture of hybridomas constitute one approach and the other is the enhancement of individual cellular productivity (Sugahara et al., 1991).

Last couple of decades, optimisations have been directed mostly to reactor modifications (Martens et al., 1992; Lu et al., 1995), entrapment of cells (Lee and Palsson, 1993), media modifications and modulation of addition/feeding so that metabolite formation is limited and kept to the minimum (Chua et al., 1994; Bibila and Robinson, 1995; Bushell et al., 1994; Hiller et al., 1994; Jo et al., 1992, 1993; Kurokawa et al., 1994). Also, quite a few unique additives have been attempted and this has enabled the bioprocess engineers to scale up bioreactors and achieved greater productivity both through stand-alone and coupled approaches (Hiller et al., 1994; Murray et al., 1996; Sugahara et al., 1994).

In high-density culture there is a two-pronged approach to enhance antibody yield:

- (1) Increasing the specific antibody secretion rate per cell in culture.
- (2) To increase cell culture time, cell concentration and hybridoma longevity thereby obtaining a higher yield.

A model of cellular stoichiometry based on estimated cell composition, product profile, micronutrient and ATP demand etc has been used to design nutrient feeds. It has been shown that the use of nutrient feeds in the form of concentrated complete media eliminates the labour and time associated with the identification of the limiting nutrients and the optimisation of the feeding strategy (Bibila and Robinson, 1995). Supplementation with complete concentrated medium has also shown to increase culture longevity (Jo et al., 1992, 1993). The beneficial effects of concentrated medium is offset by the high cost of formulation and build up of high concentration of toxic by-products like NH_3 . Another aspect of using concentrated medium is the enhancement in osmolarity of

suspending fluid which is harmful to the cells (Bibila et al., 1994a).

Physico-chemical stimulation of hybridoma cells in culture is one of the various approaches of enhancing MAb production. Of these, chemical additives have been tried extensively (Xie and Wang, 1994a, b; Maeda, 1992; Sugahara et al., 1997, 1998; Voigt and Zintl, 1999) along with physical manipulations (Chua et al., 1994; Sanfeliu et al., 1996; Ker-hwa Ou and Patterson, 1997).

Production of MAbs has been hyperstimulated by high osmolarity in eRDF medium. It was shown that the medium eRDF, with or without serum, could stimulate MAb production better than the basal RPMI, DMEM media (Chua et al., 1994). It has been shown that in the presence of high concentrations of glucose and glutamine the antibody secretion rate decreases as compared to low concentration of glucose (0.2 g l^{-1}) and glutamine (0.1 g l^{-1}) where there was an increase of three to fourfold in production of MAbs in culture (Kurokawa et al., 1994). Dichloroacetate has been shown to enhance the growth phase by 20 hr thereby achieving a higher viable cell count leading to enhanced MAb yield (Murray et al., 1996).

Number of serum-free media have been developed and their effects on the growth and production of MAbs have been studied (Moore and Hood, 1993). Completely protein free media have also been developed (Fike et al., 1991). The physiological changes that take place during the adaptation of cells to low serum concentrations and serum-free media are of interest because downstream processing becomes much easier as the contaminating proteins are absent and the metabolite build-up is also relatively low. Additions of amino acids cysteine with methionine, tryptophan and isoleucine with valine and vitamin B12 has been shown to result in significant increases in viable cell concentrations (Hiller et al., 1994).

Basic proteins and poly-basic amino acids have been used to increase the yield of IgM MAbs from human-human hybridomas. Addition of histones H1, H2A and H2B enhanced the Ig productivity by 3.2-, 2.6- and 2.8-fold, respectively. Poly-basic amino acids (poly L-lysine) have also been shown to enhance the production whereas poly L-arginine did not (Sugahara et al., 1994). Stimulation with step changes of lysine added media showed a marked increase in viable cell density and simultaneous increase in MAb titre. This was observed with the cell line AE9D6 and the cells could be kept viable for over 1400 hr in the fed-batch culture (Datta et al., 1997a, b, c, d, 1999, 2000, 2001).

Subsequent work based on lysine mediated cellular expansion in high-density culture of hybridoma cells has resulted in few marked improvements in the area of high-value-low-volume biochemical production (mostly MAbs) where partitioned co-product ion of more than one species of MAbs was possible with much simplification of down-stream processing (manuscript in preparation).

Adoptive immune therapy and immunomodulation

Adoptive immune therapy involves the passive transfer of antigen-primed T cells to initiate an immune response. The T cells are extracted from the host, 'taught' to recognise the foreign antigen and then transferred back into the host to initiate an effective immune response.

An important application of this recent and mostly experimental mode of therapy is against cancer. Tumour immunology consists of two essential concepts: immune surveillance, which specifies the host immune reactions against tumour cells, and tumour immune escape, which refers to the tumour-cell evasion process against the host immune system (Sheu et al., 1999). Cytotoxic T cells have an important role to play in the immune response against tumour cells (Toes et al., 1994). Adoptive T-cell therapy involves the passive transfer of antigen-reactive T cells to a tumour-bearing host in order to initiate tumour rejection. Both CD4^+ and CD8^+ cells are capable of initiating tumour rejection after adoptive transfer. Several different culture methods have been reported that permit *in vitro* expansion of immune T cells while retaining tumour specificity in this field (Li and Chang, 1999; Chang and Shu, 1996). Future directions in this field involve the selective isolation and expansion of subpopulations of T cells critical to initiating tumour rejection, and the use of molecular techniques to generate effector T cells (Markiewicz and Gajewski, 1999).

Adoptive transfer of polyclonal, tumour-specific, $\text{IFN-}\gamma$ -producing CD4^+ T cells [T helper type-1 (Th1) cells] have been used successfully against disseminated lymphomas. A single injection of 0.5×10^6 A20-specific Th1 cells has been shown to eradicate disseminated A20 lymphomas and provide lifelong protection without inducing autoimmune disease (Egeter et al., 2000). Cytotoxic T cell immunotherapy has also been tried against invasive cancers.

A 27-year-old woman with systemic chemoresistant and radioresistant metastatic disease secondary to a recurrence of human papillomavirus (HPV)-18 infected cervical adenocarcinoma of the uterine cervix received adoptive transfer of peripheral blood T cells stimulated with HPV18 E7-pulsed autologous dendritic cells (DC). The patient received two infusions of cytotoxic tumour specific T cells at two weeks intervals, and *in-vivo* distribution of the T cells was followed by ¹¹¹I-oxine labeling and serial gamma camera imaging. Persistent accumulation of radioactivity in the lungs, which harbored extensive metastatic disease, was detected upto 120 hr. after the infusion (Santin et al., 2000). *In vitro* CTL induction, however, is difficult in patients with advanced cancer. But once the cells are induced successfully, some favourable clinical effects are seen by the adoptive transfer of such cell populations (Soda et al., 1999).

Viral infections are also being combated by adoptive transfer of T cells. However, immunocytotherapy for persistent viral infections has proven successful in animal models but less effective in humans. Adoptive transfer of T cells has been shown to effectively purge virus from all tissues. But, maintenance of CD8⁺ T cell effective functions after adoptive transfer is directly proportional to the amount of co-transferred, virus-specific CD4⁺ T cells (Berger et al., 2000). Infectious bronchitis virus (IBV) infection and associated illness may be dramatically modified by passive transfer of immune T lymphocytes. As determined by respiratory illness and viral load, transfer of syngeneic immune T lymphocytes protected chicks from challenge infections (Seo et al., 2000). *In vitro* generated primary antigen specific Tc1 effective cells, producing high amounts of IFN- γ , or resting Tc1 memory cells, generated from these effectors, were protective against lethal pulmonary influenza infection in mice. Highly activated CD62L^{low} Tc1 effectors accumulated in the lung with rapid kinetics and most efficiently reduced the pulmonary viral titre early during infection (Cerwenka et al., 2000). Prophylactic administration of Epstein Barr virus specific cytotoxic T lymphocytes (EBV-CTL) early after bone marrow transplantation (BMT) in humans appears to provide the most effective protection against the development of EBV-associated lymphoproliferative disease. Administration of EBV-CTLs before the onset of the EBV-DNA peak has been shown to stabilise virus titres within two to three logs above the normal levels. Administration of two to four infusions of 10⁷ EBV-specific cytotoxic T lymphocytes CTLs/m² starting

from the time of maximal virus load resulted in a 2- to 3-log decrease of virus titres (Gustafsson et al., 2000). Thus adoptive immune therapy appears to have an important say in the therapy against viral infections.

Another important application is against parasites. Experiments involving adoptive transfer of T cells have been successful in controlling malaria and toxoplasma infections in murine models. Adoptive transfer of CD8⁺ T-cell splenocytes from *Neospora caninum*-infected mice was found to be protective against challenge with toxoplasma. The CD8⁺ T-cells from *Neospora*-infected mice proliferated to both *neosporea* and *toxoplasma* antigens *in vitro* and secreted substantial quantities of gamma IFN when pulsed with the parasite antigen (Kasper and Khan, 1998). In a murine model, it has been demonstrated that the adoptive transfer of intraepithelial lymphocytes (IEL) obtained from inbred mice at day 11 postinfection is able to protect against a virulent challenge by *toxoplasma* in syngenic recipients. A purified CD8 α /CD8 β ⁺ IEL population was isolated from infected mice at day 11 postinfection. These cells were able to protect naive mice by adoptive transfer against a lethal parasite challenge. RNA analysis by reverse-transcriptase PCR revealed that primed CD8 α /CD8 β ⁺ IEL produce significant message for IFN- γ , an essential cytokine for host protection against toxoplasmosis (Buzoni-Gatel et al., 1997).

CD4⁺T cells seems to play an important role in malaria infection. Cultured CD4⁺ T-cells that produce interferon gamma and IL-2, but not IL-4, in response to stimulation with the rodent parasite *Plasmodium berghei* have been found to reduce but not eliminate parasites *in vivo* after adoptive transfer (Hirunpetcharat and Good, 1998). *In vitro* cultured CD4⁺ T-cells, generated following immunisation with dead blood stage *Plasmodium yoelii* parasites were found to mediate protection against homologous challenge infection in reconstituted nude mice. *P. yoelii*-specific T cell line cells produced IFN- γ after *in vitro* stimulation with specific antigen, and were protective when adoptively transferred into athymic nude mice (Amante and Good, 1997).

Infectious diseases like leprosy have been combated by adoptively transferred T cells, although in a murine model. The model used was severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID) mice which lack both T and B cells. Cells from a known responder to mycobacterial antigens and from a non responder were activated by *M. leprae* cell wall antigens. The cells were harvested and co-injected with fresh *M. leprae*

into the right hind foot pads of SCID mice. After three months, there was no growth of *M. leprae* in the foot pads of mice co-injected with cells from the mycobacterial antigen responder, while growth was uninhibited in mice receiving cells from the non-responder (Converse et al., 1995). Dendritic cells (DC) are being tried to generate an effective immune response against mycobacterium tuberculosis infection. Conditionally immortalised dendritic cell line (tsDC) were infected with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. These activated DCs were shown to be capable of eliciting antigen-specific T cell responses and potent anti-mycobacterial protective immunity in a murine model of experimental tuberculosis infection (Tascon et al., 2000). To overcome the difficulty in generating specific CTLs, stable artificial antigen-presenting cells (AAPCs) are being developed that can be used to stimulate T cells of any patient of a given Human Leukocyte Antigen (HLA) type. Mouse fibroblasts are retrovirally transduced with a single HLA-peptide complex along with the human accessory molecules B7.1, ICAM-1, and LFA-3. These AAPCs consistently elicit strong stimulation and expansion of HLA-restricted CTLs (Latouche and Sadelain, 2000). Works are underway as for the role(s) of lysine and its analogues, acting as 'stimulating' co-stimulatory molecules in antigen presentation process (unpublished data). This seems interesting given the fact that the amino acid does act as a molecular bridge connecting cells and their growth factors (Datta and Kundu, 1999; Datta et al., 2000a, 2001). In a simultaneous study being carried out heat-killed MTb Ag showed varied types of immune reactions when administered with the amino acid given subcutaneously over a definite immunization regime. One of the main considerations of this immunomodulation capacity – both humoral and cell mediated – of the amino acid was whether it was injected separately or premixed with antigen (unpublished data).

Thus the important elements of adoptive immune therapy and immunomodulation are generation of stable antigen specific cells and their expansion. Lysine has been postulated to act as a non-specific bridging molecule. It holds a definite prospect in bridging the presented antigen to the T cell and thus ensure efficient priming of the T-cell against the antigen. Also, once antigen specific T-cells are created, the amino acid can possibly be used to bring about rapid cell proliferation expansion *in-vitro*. Thus a large bank of primed cells seems to be a distinct possibility using this molecule.

Tissue engineering

Tissue engineering is an emerging field focused on the creation of living tissues and organs for use in tissue repair and transplantation. Tissue engineering involves the fabrication of new functional living tissue using living cells which are seeded onto biocompatible scaffolds which can be natural, man-made or composite of both and grown under physiological conditions to produce human biointeractive implants. Tissue engineering is still in its embryonic stage with a reasonable degree of challenges ahead. The scientific challenge here lies in understanding the cells themselves, including their behaviour in an altered environment, their mass transfer requirements and their interaction with the immediate milieu and the fabrication of compatible materials to provide scaffolding and templates. Large cell banks composed of universal cells that would be immunologically transparent to any individual are required. A viable alternative is to have autologous cells. Development of immunologically inert cells requires manipulation of these cells which still poses a great challenge. Advances in genetic manipulations might be required. These cells could be either differentiated ones or stem cell reservoirs which could then be signalled to differentiate into different lineages for structural application. These then need to be expanded to appropriate cell number before transfer to templates where further remodelling is expected to take place. A proper substrate for cell survival and differentiation is required. One of the strategies here is to use biocompatible implants composed of extracellular matrix molecules seeded with autologous cells or heterologous cells in conjunction with immunosuppressing drugs. Addition of growth and differentiation factors to these matrices as well as agonists and antagonists that favour cell matrix interactions can potentially increase the rate of successful tissue replacement. Collagen, either alone or in combination with other materials, is an important natural biomaterial that is used in a variety of tissue-engineering applications. The adhesiveness of collagen may be spatially controlled to allow controlled localization or redistribution of cells (Myles et al., 2000). Among one of the many approaches involving different tissues, a biocompatible heterogeneous hydrogel of poly [N-(2-hydroxypropyl) methacrylamide] (PHPMA) matrix has been studied for its neuroinductive and neuroconductive properties. It has the potential to repair tissue defects in the central nervous system by replacing lost tissue and by promoting the formation of a histotypic tissue mat-

rix that facilitates and supports regenerative axonal growth (Woerly et al., 1999).

Recently, tissue-engineering strategies have included cell and gene therapy. 'Cell therapy', use of cells to deliver active factors, is an emerging technique in the treatment of neurodegenerative disease. The method entails encapsulation into a hollow fiber device of discrete numbers of cell-containing microcarriers. Proliferation control is attained by embedding cell-containing microcarriers in nonmitogenic hydrogels. In one of the approaches, ability to control dose released over a several-fold range was demonstrated with encapsulated PC-12 cells delivering neurotransmitters and C2C12 mouse myoblast cells delivering neurotrophic factors (CNTF) (Li et al., 1999).

Tissue-engineering advances will be interdependent with advances in gene therapy techniques to restore function at a cellular level. The combination of tissue-engineering strategies with gene therapy approaches might allow transfection of diseased tissues with designated cDNA to eliminate inherent or acquired defects. Identification of the growth factors capable of directing tissue development and of the technique to be used for their delivery would aid in the engineering of human tissue (Amiel et al., 2000).

Tissue engineering strategies are being applied to replace various tissues and organs in various systems of the body. Tissue engineering of musculoskeletal tissues is a rapidly advancing field. In bone, technology has centred on bone graft substitute materials and the development of biodegradable scaffolds (Boyan et al., 1999). A composite matrix, containing esterified hyaluronic acid and gelatine, has been shown to facilitate the osteochondral differentiation of culture-expanded, bone marrow-derived mesenchymal progenitor cells. Thus, this composite matrix is useful for *in vitro* tissue engineering for repair of chondral and osseous defects (Angele et al., 1999). Important ongoing research is being aimed at tissue-engineering cartilage for surgical repair of tracheal defects (Van Veenendaal et al., 2000). Myoblast transplantation to date has been limited to the cellular level of replacement. It has been suggested that myoblast-polyglycolic acid constructs may be useful in defining the application of tissue engineering for future skeletal muscle transplantation. A study was conducted to tissue engineer three-dimensional vascularized skeletal muscle using isolated myoblasts attached to synthetic biodegradable polymer for tissue replacement in the enhancement of muscle regeneration. In this study, organisation of neomuscle strands surrounded by vascularized tissue

composed of degrading polymer and fusing myoblasts demonstrated the ability of myoblast constructs to survive, reorganise and regenerate tissue-like structures (Saxena et al., 1999). An attempt has been made to culture ligament tissues *in vitro* by seeding human anterior cruciate ligament and medial collateral ligament cells onto synthetic biodegradable polymer fiber scaffolds. In the present study, mechanical stimulus and transforming growth factor enhanced proliferation whereas inflammatory agents had a negative effect (Lin et al., 1999).

Near term products, including injectable human matrix for contour defects and tissue-engineered cartilage, are proving to be important tools for plastic and reconstructive surgery (Naughton and Mansbridge, 1999). The development of tissue-engineered fat equivalents for reconstructive and augmentation purposes will be most welcome by nearly every surgical discipline and prove to be especially useful for plastic surgeons (Katz et al., 1999).

Improvement of cell culture conditions and functional cell expansion strategies in hepatic tissue engineering may permit cell/tissue banking and the generation of liver tissue equivalents for transplantation. Stimulatory effects of pancreatic islets on hepatocytes in co-culture for continuous hepatotrophic stimulation has been investigated in this context (Kauffman et al., 1999).

Bladder regeneration is another important area where extensive tissue engineering studies are carried out. Currently, two techniques for the induction of bladder regeneration are being researched. The first, *in vivo* technique, involves the use of a biodegradable scaffold that the host bladder can use to remodel and regenerate. This technique takes advantage of the cell's natural ability to heal or regenerate itself back to a normal state. The second technology, the *in vitro* technique, involves establishment of primary cell cultures from the host's native bladder. These cells are seeded on a biodegradable scaffold to create a composite graft that is then transplanted back into the host for continuation of the regeneration process (Kropp and Cheng, 2000). Tissue engineering for neointestine is also being studied. It has been shown that anastomosis between tissue-engineered intestine and native small bowel has a moderately high patency rate and a positive effect on maintenance of the size of the neointestine and development of the neomucosa (Kaihara et al., 1999). An attempt has been made to tissue engineer branched or bifurcated hybrid vascular prosthesis using bovine smooth muscle cells and type

I collagen with minimal reinforcement by a knitted fabric mesh made of segmented polyester. A branched hybrid graft with mesh reinforcement is expected to be applicable to arterial replacement in a branching region (Kobashi and Matsuda, 1999). A new type of a biodegradable nerve graft conduit material, the amnion tube, has been developed. The amnion tube is a potential ideal nerve conduit material secondary to its unique characteristics: it contains important neurotropic factors, is biodegradable, provokes a very weak immune response, is semiflexible, is readily available, and is easily manufactured into different sizes and diameters (Mohammad et al., 2000). Tissue engineering for bioprosthetic and mechanical valves and valved conduits poses quite a challenge because of its inability to grow, repair or remodel. An attempt to evaluate the feasibility of creating 3-leaflet, valved, pulmonary conduits from autologous ovine vascular cells and biodegradable polymers with tissue-engineering techniques has been tried (Stock et al., 2000).

Surface wound healing is another important area studied in the context of tissue engineering. Tissue-engineered skin implants have shown efficacy in a variety of wound care applications. Research efforts to modify cultured autologous skin transplants for large full-thickness burn wounds and in chronic ulcers are shifting from multilayered differentiated grafts ('sheet' grafts) toward smaller units of basal undifferentiated single cell suspensions in a transport medium and subconfluent covered static carriers (Voigt et al., 1999). A novel living skin replacement (LSR) biotherapy concept, combining the elements of cell therapy along with those of tissue engineering took advantage of the biodegradable microspheres, onto which donor skin epidermal and dermal cells could be attached and expanded *in vitro* for subsequent direct application down to the deepest recesses of the wound bed. This novel approach presents a number of advantages over existing therapies including facilitated cell manipulations, ease of storage and transportation, rapid clinical intervention due to the elimination of any surgical suturing or stapling, and a more natural three-dimensional tissue remodelling and anatomical compliance (LaFrance and Armstrong, 1999).

It is evident that the basic principle in tissue engineering is seeding appropriate number of cells after proper expansion on an appropriate substrate. This requires good cell proliferation to provide the appropriate cell number before seeding onto substrate and good cell viability. It has been observed that L-lysine HCl supports good cell proliferation both *in-vivo* and

in-vitro, both in anchorage dependent and independent cells and it would be interesting to study any positive effects it might have in rapid expansion of autologous cells for development of bioengineered soft tissue prosthesis. Autologous fibroblast layered bioprosthetic heart valve (aortic) development is in progress in the authors laboratory involving a new approach of fibre renewal *in situ*.

Gene therapy and DNA vaccination

Gene therapy has attracted much interest since the first submissions of phase I clinical trials in the early 1990s, for the treatment of inherited genetic diseases. Preliminary results were very encouraging and prompted many investigators to submit protocols for phase I and phase II clinical trials for the treatment of inherited genetic diseases and cancer. Also in 1990, the first gene therapy clinical trial for the treatment of patients with melanoma (Rosenberg et al., 1990) was conducted. The results of this study indicated that retroviral-mediated gene transfer in patients was safe. This finding prompted the submission of many other protocols for gene therapy clinical trials to treat patients affected by cancer, primarily in the area of melanoma (Osanto et al., 1993; Mahvi et al., 1997), followed by ovarian carcinoma (Deshane et al., 1997), sarcoma (Mahvi et al., 1997), brain tumor (Kun et al., 1995), and lung cancer (Nguyen et al., 1996). There is also a strong interest in beginning gene therapy clinical trials for the treatment of patients with AIDS, cardiopathies, and neurologic diseases. Indeed, gene transfer technology has already been applied in the phase I and phase II trials for the AIDS vaccine programs, which have recently begun in the U.S.A. (Haynes, 1996; Weber, 1996). As already anticipated, the spectrum ranges from the treatment of inherited or acquired genetic disorders to cancer, AIDS, cardiopathies, and neurologic diseases. This is strongly encouraging to the pursuit of gene therapy programs in medicine (stem cell).

There are a wide variety of vectors used to deliver DNA or oligonucleotides into mammalian cells, either *in vitro* or *in vivo*. The most common vector systems are based on retroviruses (Cournoyer and Caskey, 1993; Gilboa, 1990; Kohn et al., 1989; Miller, 1990; Temin, 1986), adeno-associated virus (AAV) (Berns et al., 1975; Cheung et al., 1980; Podsakoff et al., 1994), adenovirus (Karlsson et al., 1985; Yamada et al., 1985), herpes simplex virus (HSV) (Glorioso et

al., 1995), cationic liposomes (Thierry et al., 1992; Benne et al., 1992; Ropert et al., 1993). The stage of development of vectors and their variety are still not sufficient to be efficiently applied in therapy.

Among the other popular techniques for gene delivery, particle-mediated bombardment with a device called the gene gun has become an important developmental tool. This instrument has been used in numerous examples of wound gene therapy with growth factors or their receptors in the last decade. Among the advantages of particle-mediated bombardment are ease and speed of preparation of the delivery vehicle, the stability of the DNA preparation, the absence of (viral) antigens, the ability to target the projectiles to different tissue depths and areas, and the rapid shedding of both particles and DNA if they are targeted to the epidermis. Clinical application of the technology remains limited by the relatively low efficiency of the method, the potential tissue damage created by impact of the particles, and the coverage area (Kun et al., 1995). The field of gene therapy is at present actively involved in the challenging task of improving the design of vector systems for *in vivo* applications.

DNA vaccines have been used to stimulate protective immunity against many infectious pathogens, malignancies, and autoimmune disorders in animal models. Since their inception in 1950, there have been many research works done on the ability of DNA vaccines to induce strong immune responses against proteins from infectious agents such as malaria (Hoffman et al., 1997; Kalinna, 1997; Wang et al., 1998; Strugnell et al., 1997; Kaufmann, 1995; Lowrie et al., 1997), rabies virus (Xiang et al., 1994), hepatitis B virus (HBV) (Davis et al., 1994; Tacket et al., 1999), HSV (Kriesel et al., 1996), Ebola virus (Xu et al., 1998), and HIV (Boyer et al., 1997, 1999; Wang et al., 1993a, b). The strategy of most of these investigations is relatively simple: A DNA plasmid encoding a desired protein is injected into the muscle or skin of an animal, where it thereupon enters host cells and directs the synthesis of its polypeptide antigen. Once the plasmid-antigen is processed and presented by transfected host cells, a cellular and humoral immune response against the antigen is provoked. Genetic immunization exhibits many advantages over traditional vaccines that use live-attenuated or killed pathogen, proteins, or synthetic peptides: (a) Immunogenicity: can induce both humoral and cellular immune responses at low effective dosages (micrograms) in animal models. (b) Safety: Unability to revert into virulence unlike live vaccines and efficacy

does not require the use of toxic treatments unlike some killed vaccines. (c) Engineering: Plasmid vectors are simple to manipulate and can be tested rapidly. Also, combination approaches can be easily adapted. (d) Manufacture: Conceptually low cost and reproducible large-scale production and isolation. Also can be produced at high frequency in bacteria and easily isolated. (e) Stability: More temperature-stable than conventional vaccines and has a long shelf-life. (f) Mobility: Ease of storage and transport (Shedlock and Weiner, 2000).

Another facet of DNA vaccine technology focuses on immune-related diseases, such as autoimmunity and cancer (Chen et al., 1999). By manipulating the balance of T helper (Th) 1 and 2 lymphocytes using DNA plasmid immunization, many of the pathogenic qualities of autoimmune disease may be potentially addressed (Ramshaw et al., 1997). DNA immunization has also proven as an effective candidate in the fight against certain cancers. The growth of human tumor cells that produce and secrete a target protein has been retarded or inhibited by a DNA vaccine construct encoding a subunit of that target protein (Geissler et al., 1997).

The most popular method of administering DNA vaccines has been parenterally, which includes needle injection into muscle or skin and gas-powered, DNA-covered particle bombardment using a 'gene-gun' (g.g.) (Shedlock and Weiner, 2000). Noninvasive methods of plasmid delivery involve the topical application of plasmid to the skin or mucosae. The induction of antigen-specific immune responses has been shown following the application of a plasmid solution to various mucosal surfaces including intranasal (Klavinskis et al., 1999; Hamajima et al., 1998), oral (Etchart et al., 1997), and intravaginal (Bagarazzi et al., 1998; Wang et al., 1997). Forms of delivery targeting the skin, including i.d. injection, g.g. bombardment, and topical application, have been shown to elicit a humoral response primarily, characterized by a rapid progression to a Th2-type response, associated with the production of an IgA and IgG1 antibody isotype (Fan et al., 1999; Boyle et al., 1997). Conversely, injection into muscle results in the induction of a strong cellular-mediated response, or Th1 type, that primes antigen-specific cytolytic T lymphocytes (CTLs) and is associated with the production of IgG2a antibody (Sin et al., 1999). DNA vaccines elicit strong and long-lasting humoral and cell-mediated immune responses in many animal models. At the cellular level, the efficacy of DNA vaccination de-

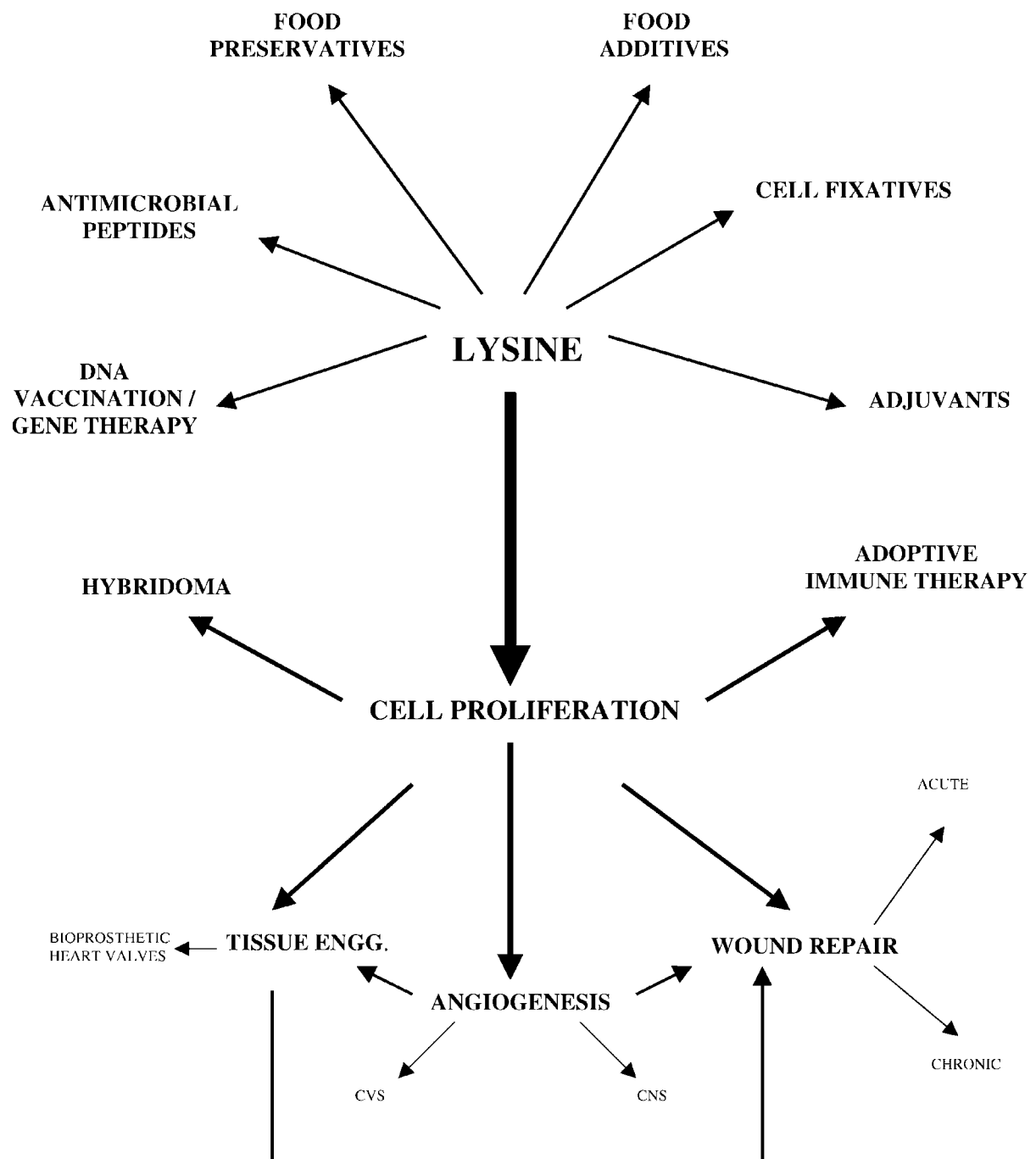


Figure 2. Schematic diagram depicting the biochemical roles of lysine.

depends on the interaction between their polypeptide products and the two major groups of cells that mediate immunity: lymphocytes and APCs. The codelivery of plasmids encoding costimulatory molecules is a method theorized to improve the antigen-presenting capabilities of transfected host cells. Another strategy currently under development is the coadministration of cell-surface molecules that induce cellular apoptosis. Theoretically, this technique targets vaccine antigen to the cross-priming pathway by delivering antigen associated with apoptotic cells to DCs and thereby guiding immune responses toward a Th1 phenotype (Chattergoon et al., 2000). Recently, expression of fusion proteins from a DNA vaccine is an attractive means of modulating an antigen-specific immune response without the use of potentially toxic chemical adjuvants (Shedlock and Weiner, 2000). Combination vaccination strategies are also being targeted nowadays. Many heterologous prime-boost strategies use DNA vaccines, recombinant virus, and protein in different assortments, which 'prime' the immune system to the vaccine antigen first, followed by a subsequent 'boost' immunization, which enhances the preliminary response. Strategies gaining the most attention are DNA vaccine-priming followed by protein or recombinant virus-boosting (Sin et al., 1999). Currently, many promising techniques of immune enhancement are being developed that modulate the intensity and direction of responses, such as the use of genetic adjuvants and DNA vectors of greater immunostimulation (Shedlock and Weiner, 2000).

Due to the hazards associated with viral vectors nonviral DNA complexes show promise as alternative and attractive gene delivery vectors for treating genetic diseases. Nonviral DNA complexes are typically formed by combining DNA with various condensing/complexing agents such as lipids, polyelectrolytes, polymers, polypeptides, and surfactants in solution. DNA/poly-L-lysine polyplex formation kinetics are probed by time-resolved multiangle laser light scattering (TR-MALLS), which yields the time evolution of the supramolecular complex mass and geometric size. Primary polyplexes whose geometric size is smaller than individual DNA molecules in solution are formed very rapidly upon mixing DNA and poly-L-lysine. Over time, these primary polyplexes aggregate into larger structures whose ultimate size is determined primarily by the relative concentrations of DNA and poly-L-lysine (Lai and Van Zanten, 2001). Polylysine (pLy) has been used as a DNA carrier in nonviral gene delivery systems because it forms com-

plexes with plasmid DNA via charge interaction, and condenses it into a compact structure. It has been recently shown that cross-linking nuclear localization sequences (NLSs) to pLy can enhance transfection by conferring specific recognition by the cellular nuclear import 'receptor', the NLS-binding importin alpha/beta heterodimer. A clear correlation has been indicated between the pLy-DNA structure, importin alpha/beta recognition, and gene transfer efficiency, thus underlining the importance of using pLy-DNA at the optimal Ly/Nucleotide ratio (Chan et al., 2000). Poly-L-lysine has been shown to be a major contributor for gene transfer to hematopoietic progenitor cells, mediating the initial vector-cell binding. Human progenitor cell lines are poorly transduceable with recombinant adenovirus vectors. This new poly-L-lysine-modified, adenovirus-based vector could overcome virus tropism restrictions and consistently achieve very high transduction efficiency (>90%) in cells otherwise refractory to adenovirus gene transfer. Polylysine-based adenovirus vectors may have promise for situations in which high-efficiency gene transfer with transient high level transgene expression in hematopoietic cells is needed, such as leukemia vaccine protocols or for purging strategies in leukemia cell contaminated stem cell preparations (Schwarzenberger et al., 2001).

Modification of poly-L-lysine and poly-L-ornithine by the covalent attachment of palmitoyl and methoxypoly (ethylene glycol) (mPEG) residues produces a new class of amphiphilic polymers-PLP and POP, respectively. These amphiphilic amino acid based polymers have been found to assemble into polymeric vesicles in the presence of cholesterol. *In vitro* biological testing revealed that POP and PLP vesicle-DNA complexes are about one to 2 orders of magnitude less cytotoxic than the parent polymer-DNA complexes although more haemolytic than the parent polymer-DNA complexes. The polymeric vesicles condense DNA at a polymer: DNA weight ratio of 5:1 or greater and the polymeric vesicle-DNA complexes improved gene transfer to human tumor cell lines in comparison to the parent homopolymers despite the absence of receptor specific ligands and lysosomotropic agents such as chloroquine (Brown et al., 2000).

Thus it is seen that lysine can be employed to build an intracellular DNA delivery system, which in addition to being efficient is also non-toxic.

Finally the biochemical roles and applications of lysine are summarised in Figure 2.

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