



(11)

EP 2 548 888 B1

(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION**

(45) Date of publication and mention of the grant of the patent:
01.11.2017 Bulletin 2017/44

(21) Application number: **11756409.6**

(22) Date of filing: **17.03.2011**

(51) Int Cl.:
C07K 14/78 ^(2006.01) **A01K 67/027** ^(2006.01)
A61K 38/00 ^(2006.01) **A61K 39/395** ^(2006.01)
A61K 45/00 ^(2006.01) **A61P 1/02** ^(2006.01)
A61P 37/06 ^(2006.01) **C07K 7/08** ^(2006.01)
C07K 16/28 ^(2006.01) **C12Q 1/02** ^(2006.01)
G01N 27/62 ^(2006.01) **G01N 33/15** ^(2006.01)
G01N 33/50 ^(2006.01) **G01N 33/53** ^(2006.01)

(86) International application number:
PCT/JP2011/056469

(87) International publication number:
WO 2011/115225 (22.09.2011 Gazette 2011/38)

(54) **PERIODONTAL-DISEASE-SPECIFIC PEPTIDE, AND TREATMENT AND DIAGNOSIS OF PERIODONTAL DISEASE USING SAME**

FÜR ZAHNFLEISCHERKRANKUNGEN SPEZIFISCHES PEPTID SOWIE BEHANDLUNG UND DIAGNOSE VON ZAHNFLEISCHERKRANKUNGEN DAMIT

PEPTIDE SPÉCIFIQUE D'UNE PATHOLOGIE PARODONTALE ET TRAITEMENT ET DIAGNOSTIC D'UNE PATHOLOGIE PARODONTALE L'INCLUANT

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AL AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MK MT NL NO PL PT RO RS SE SI SK SM TR

(30) Priority: **17.03.2010 JP 2010061673**

(43) Date of publication of application:
23.01.2013 Bulletin 2013/04

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Description

Technical Field

5 **[0001]** The present invention relates to a peptide expressed in a periodontal disease specific manner, a treatment and a diagnosis of said disease utilizing same, and the like.

Background Art

10 **[0002]** Periodontal disease refers to a state with a disorder in any of gingiva, alveolar bone, cementum and periodontal membrane, which are periodontal tissues that support the teeth, and representative diseases include chronic marginal periodontitis and the like. Periodontal disease is a lifestyle-related disease found in about 80% of the adults, and developed by bacterial infection.

15 **[0003]** It has been suggested that once periodontal bacteria per se, toxic substances produced thereby, or leukocytes resistant to these bacteria or substances such as cytokine, prostaglandin and the like, which are released from leukocytes, enter the blood and are delivered to the organs in the body, they provide various undesirable influences on the body. For example, diabetes patients can easily have periodontal diseases and a periodontal disease may aggravate diabetes. In addition, it has been confirmed that periodontal disease is a high risk factor of heart diseases caused by arteriosclerosis, and that pregnant women with periodontal disease often have preterm delivery of low birth weight baby and the like.

20 **[0004]** Thus, since periodontal disease not only causes loss of teeth but is deeply involved in the onset and aggravation of a serious, possibly lethal medical problem, effective means for early diagnosis and treatment, as well as prevention, have been desired.

25 **[0005]** There are not less than 10 species of causative bacteria of periodontal diseases, of which the most important pathogenic bacterium is *Porphyromonas gingivalis* (non-patent document 1). *P. gingivalis* is an anaerobic Gram negative rod-shaped bacterium, which enters into dental plaque and releases enzymes such as protease and the like for its own survival. The enzymes cause inflammation of gingiva, and develop gingivitis which is the beginning of a periodontal disease.

30 **[0006]** The protease produced by *P. gingivalis* includes plural molecular species. Particularly, trypsin-like cysteine proteases (gingipain; HRgpA, RgpB, Kgp) are major enzymes produced by this bacterium, and various researches thereof have been made (non-patent documents 2 and 3). Through such researches, it has been suggested that gingipain plays a key role in the maintenance, growth and infection processes of *P. gingivalis*, and strenuous attempts have been made to develop inhibitors of those proteases for the purpose of treating and preventing periodontal diseases (patent documents 1 - 4, non-patent documents 4 - 7). However, the target protein of gingipain in the body is yet to be clarified and information is insufficient for, for example, the research and development and the like of a substrate mimicking inhibitor. Moreover, whether or not protein degradation products due to gingipain are involved in the onset or aggravation of periodontal diseases, or concurrence of systemic complications has not at all been elucidated yet.

35 **[0007]** On the other hand, as the situation stands, the only highly reliable method for understanding the state of periodontal diseases is measurement of the depth of gingival sulcus (periodontal pocket) by a dental expert (CPI test). For diagnosis of periodontal diseases using a biomarker, detection of bacterium-derived components, blood protein, inflammation related component and the like present in periodontal pocket and saliva has been proposed and, for example, an examination kit for detection of α 1-antitrypsin (blood protein) and lactoferrin (inflammation-related component) in interdental liquid and the like are commercially available. In addition, it has been reported that detection of occult blood, alkaline phosphatase (bacterium-derived component), and leukocyte esterase (inflammation-related component) in saliva is effective for risk prediction of periodontal diseases. However, a biomarker permitting an early-stage and certain diagnosis of periodontal diseases has not been found, and there is almost no report relating to a blood biomarker.

40 **[0008]** In the meantime, with the progress of proteomics research including comprehensive analysis of protein expressed in vivo, a novel biomarker has been actively searched for by utilizing proteomics. Particularly, a study for search of a series of protein degradation products, which emerge in a certain disease in the disease specific manner due to the degradation of a particular target protein by a particular protease, as a biomarker of the disease is called degradomics, and is attracting attention not only as diagnosis of the disease but also as a search means for a new treatment target.

45 **[0009]** Keratin is a protein constituting an intermediate filament, which is a cytoskeleton of epithelial cells. In stratum corneum tissues such as nail, hair and the like, epithelial cells die by being filled with intermediate filaments consisting of specific keratin called rigid keratin and stiffen. Also in epithelial cells free of cornification such as mucosa and the like, keratin (cytokeratin) plays an important role as a protein constituting the intermediate filament, and the sheet structure of epithelial tissue maintains mechanical strength by the keratin fiber.

50 **[0010]** However, the relationship between periodontal diseases and periodontal bacterial enzymes and keratin has not been reported.

[0011] Koutouzis *et al* (non-patent document 8) describes autoreactivity of serum immunoglobulin to periodontal tissue

components.

[0012] WO 2008/007807 A1 (patent document 5) describes a method of detecting a proliferative cell disorder in a subject.

[0013] WO 00/55628 A1 (patent document 6) describes proteins for diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer.

[0014] WO 2008/021290 A2 (patent document 7) describes organ-specific proteins and methods of their use.

[Document List]

[patent documents]

[0015]

patent document 1: JP-A-2004-143127

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patent document 3: JP-A-2003-335648

patent document 4: JP-A-2007-16002

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patent document 6: WO 00/55628 A1

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[non-patent documents]

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non-patent document 7: Biol. Chem. 384: 911-920 (2003)

non-patent document 8: J. Periodontol. 80: 625-633 (2009)

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Problems to be Solved by the Invention

[0017] An object of the present invention is to provide a peptide that can be a diagnostic marker of a periodontal disease, particularly, a peptide which is a degradation product by periodontal bacterial enzyme, and an effective diagnosis method of a periodontal disease using the same. Another object of the present invention is to identify a peptide that can be a treatment target of a periodontal disease from among the aforementioned peptides and provide a novel therapeutic drug for a periodontal disease, which is based on a treatment concept of suppression of degradation of its parental protein and/or removal of the peptide. A still another object of the present invention is to provide a novel use of a periodontal bacterial enzyme and a substrate protein thereof, which utilizes the substrate specificity of the enzyme.

Means of Solving the Problems

[0018] In an attempt to achieve the aforementioned objects, the present inventors have first tried to identify target proteins of gingipain in a periodontal disease. To be precise, rat gingival epithelial cells (also referred to as "GEC") were treated with any of three kinds of gingipain (HRgpA, RgpB, Kgp), and the peaks of the obtained degradation products were measured by mass spectrometry. As a result, peptides with molecular weights of about 2215 and about 2230 ("peptide 1" and "peptide 2", respectively) showing a remarkable increase as compared to no treatment and other gingipain treatment were found in Kgp-treated GEC. Similarly, in RgpB-treated GEC, peptides with molecular weights of about 2277 and about 2293 ("peptide 3" and "peptide 4", respectively) showing a remarkable increase as compared to no treatment and other gingipain treatment were found. Furthermore, a peptide with a molecular weight of about 2638 ("peptide 5") showing a remarkable increase as compared to no treatment and Kgp treatment was found in RgpB or HRgpA-treated GEC.

[0019] As a result of analysis of the amino acid sequences of peptides 1-5, these peptides were found to consist of

partial amino acid sequences of 4 kinds of proteins classified as keratin (peptide 4 was an oxide of peptide 3). The corresponding human keratin protein was examined by homology search and, as a result, peptide 1 matched with a partial amino acid sequence of keratin 6, peptide 2 matched with a partial amino acid sequence of keratin 5, peptides 3 and 4 matched with a partial amino acid sequence of keratin 14, and peptide 5 matched with a partial amino acid sequence of keratin 17. Thus, human Keratin 6 was digested with Kgp, and human Keratin 17 was digested with RgpB, and the amino acid sequence of the peak of the enzymatic degradation product detected by mass spectrometry was analyzed. As a result, two peptides (peptide 6: molecular weight about 2216, peptide 7: molecular weight about 2544) were newly identified as Kgp degradation products of Keratin 6, and 5 peptides (peptide 8: molecular weight about 1222, peptide 9: molecular weight about 1411, peptide 10: molecular weight about 1659, peptide 11: molecular weight about 1887, peptide 12: molecular weight about 2176) were newly identified as RgpB degradation products of Keratin 17. The partial amino acid sequences corresponding to peptides 6 and 7 were also found in Keratin 5, and the partial amino acid sequences corresponding to peptides 8, 9, 11 and 12 were also found in Keratin 14.

[0020] Then, to confirm actual, specific expression of the above-mentioned peptides obtained in vitro experiment in periodontal diseases, the present inventors have obtained dental plaque from interdental liquid of human patients with periodontal diseases and healthy subjects and examined the presence of the peptides therein by mass spectrometry. As a result, clear peaks of the peptides were detected only in periodontal disease patients. Furthermore, whether these peptides can be used as a blood biomarker was considered. As a result, several peptides including peptide 1 were detected (or significantly increased) in the sera of periodontal disease patients. From the above, it was confirmed that various gingipain degradation products of keratin can be mouth cavity and blood biomarkers of periodontal diseases.

[0021] Since a degradation product of keratin constituting the gingival epithelial tissue was detected in blood, the present inventors have predicted that the degradation product may play an important role in periodontal diseases as well as systemic complications associated with periodontal diseases, and first examined whether an autoimmune response to a degradation product occurred. As a result of drug-induced lymphocyte stimulation test (DLST), a sample testing positive to keratin 6 and a degradation product thereof (i.e., proliferation of T cell was induced) was found. Moreover, from the results of immunological analysis of sera of gingivitis and periodontitis patients, it has been clarified that the serum level of the degradation product and the autoantibody thereto have increased along with the progression of the symptoms.

[0022] The present inventors have also found that, on the lymphocyte cell surface of periodontitis patients, expression of RANKL, which is known as a ligand of cell surface receptor Receptor Activator of NF κ B (RANK) which promotes differentiation of osteoclast progenitor cell into osteoclast, remarkably increases after stimulation with Keratin 6 or a degradation product thereof, and lymphoblast formation occurs, and that expression of RANKL mRNA is remarkably suppressed by anti Keratin 6 fragment antibody. Furthermore, when the rat was immunized with Keratin 6 or a degradation product thereof, RANKL-expressing T cells proliferate among the peripheral blood mononuclear cells, and remarkable alveolar bone resorption was observed. It has further been clarified that, in gingival fibroblasts stimulated with a Keratin 6 degradation product, MAPK signaling that promotes osteoclast differentiation by signal transduction of RANK/RANKL is activated, and expression of various cytokines/chemokines related to the migration of osteoclast progenitor cells/osteoclast differentiation/bone resorption/inflammation increases.

[0023] The above results reveal that alveolar bone destruction and initiation/aggravation of inflammation, which result from digestion of keratin in the gingival epithelial tissue by periodontal bacterial enzymes, followed by stimulation of the growth of T cells by keratin and a degradation product thereof transferred into the blood, which induces autoimmune response thereto, as well as induction of expression of RANKL in T cells by keratin and a degradation product thereof, and induction of differentiation of osteoclast progenitor cell into osteoclast by the activated T cells to promote bone resorption, are deeply involved in the onset and progression of periodontal diseases, as well as the onset of systemic complications. Therefore, it is possible to prevent the onset of a periodontal disease, suppress the progression thereof, and prevent the onset of systemic complications by suppressing the generation of keratin degradation products, rapidly removing the generated degradation products from the mouth cavity to prevent transfer thereof into the blood, preventing initial immunization and/or booster effect, suppressing differentiation of osteoclast via RANKL by activated T cells and production of autoantibody, and removing the autoantibody to the degradation product from the mouth cavity to prevent the gingival epithelial tissue from being attacked, thus suppressing inflammation.

[0024] The present inventors have conducted further studies based on these findings and completed the present invention.

[0025] Accordingly, the present invention provides the following.

[1] A peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence shown by any of SEQ ID NOs: 1-3, 5 and 7-9.

[2] An antibody specifically recognizing the peptide of the above-mentioned [1].

[3] A diagnostic reagent for a periodontal disease, comprising an antibody specifically recognizing a peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence shown by any of SEQ ID NOs: 1-10.

[4] A test method for the diagnosis of a periodontal disease of a test animal, comprising measuring an amount of

one or more peptides selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6 and/or one or more autoantibodies selected from the group consisting of autoantibodies to respective peptides of said group of peptides, in a biological sample selected from blood, plasma, serum, interdental liquid, urine or saliva obtained from the test animal, wherein the amount of the peptides and/or autoantibodies are measured by applying the biological sample to mass spectrometry, or by a method selected from ELISA method, RIA method, nephelometry and SPR method.

[5] The method according to [4], comprising using one or more antibodies selected from the group consisting of antibodies to respective peptides consisting of the amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6, and/or one or more peptides selected from the group of peptides consisting of the amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6.

[6] The method according to [5], comprising measuring the peptides and/or the autoantibodies according to a method selected from ELISA method, RIA method, nephelometry and SPR method.

[7] The method of any of [4]-[6], comprising providing biological samples collected from the test animal in a chronological order, and measuring time course changes of an amount of one or more peptides selected from the group of peptides consisting of the amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6, and/or one or more autoantibodies selected from the group consisting of autoantibodies to respective peptides of said group of peptides in the samples.

[8] A method of evaluating a treatment effect in a patient with a periodontal disease, comprising measuring changes of an amount of one or more peptides selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6, and/or one or more autoantibodies selected from the group consisting of autoantibodies to respective peptides of said group of peptides, in biological samples obtained from said patient before and after the treatment.

[9] A peptide selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralog thereof as shown in Tables 3-6, or an antibody to the peptide, for use in the inhibition of an autoimmune response to the peptide in a mammal having a periodontal bacterium in the oral cavity.

[10] The peptide or antibody according to [9], for the prophylaxis and/or treatment of a periodontal disease and/or a complication thereof.

[11] An *in vitro* method of screening for a substance inhibiting an autoimmune response to a peptide selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6, in a mammal having a periodontal bacterium in the oral cavity, which method comprises

- (1) a step of contacting an autoantibody to said peptide with a test substance,
- (2) a step of measuring their binding level, and
- (3) a step of selecting a test substance bound to said autoantibody as a candidate inhibitory substance of said autoimmune response.

[12] An antibody to a peptide selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6, for use in the prophylaxis and/or treatment of a periodontal disease and/or a complication thereof.

[13] An *in vitro* method of screening for an inhibitory substance of RANKL expression in a mammal having a periodontal bacterium in the oral cavity, comprising the following steps:

- (1) a step of contacting a peptide selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6 with a test substance,
- (2) a step of measuring their binding level, and
- (3) a step of selecting a test substance bound to said peptide.

[14] An *in vitro* method of screening for an inhibitory substance of RANKL expression in a mammal having a periodontal bacterium in the oral cavity, comprising the following steps:

- (1) a step of contacting, in the presence and absence of a test substance, a peptide selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6 with a non-human mammal-derived T cell immunized with the peptide;
- (2) a step of measuring one or more selected from the group consisting of

- a) a binding level of said peptide,

- b) a level of T cell proliferation, and
 c) an expression level of RANKL in the T cell, each of which in the presence and absence of the test substance, and (3) a step of selecting a test substance that decreased any of the above-mentioned a) - c) as a candidate inhibitory substance of RANKL expression.

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[15] A method of producing a periodontal disease animal model, comprising immunizing a non-human mammal with a peptide selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs:1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6.

10 Effect of the Invention

[0026] By removing keratin or a degradation product by periodontal bacterial enzyme, which becomes an autoantigen, from the oral cavity, transfer of the keratin or a degradation product thereof into the blood is suppressed, and the production of autoantibody can be suppressed. In addition, the attack of the autoantibody on gingival epithelium can be prevented by removing the produced autoantibody from the oral cavity, whereby periodontal diseases can be treated and the onset of systemic complications associated with the periodontal disease can be prevented. Moreover, by inhibiting the activation of T cells (proliferation and increased expression of RANKL) by the keratin or a degradation product thereof, alveolar bone destruction by differentiation of osteoclast, and initiation and aggravation of periodontitis by induction of inflammatory cytokine can be suppressed and periodontal diseases can be prevented or treated.

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[0027] In addition, since a periodontal disease can be judged rapidly, conveniently and accurately by detecting a keratin degradation product by periodontal bacterial enzyme, early detection and rapid cure of the disease can be enabled.

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[0028] Moreover, a periodontal bacterial enzyme can be used, due to its keratin degradation action, for removal of stratum corneum, prevention of wavy hair, removal of unwanted hair, enhancement of skin permeability of medicaments, deformation or discoloration of nail such as ingrown toenail and the like, treatment of Trichophyton infections such as tinea unguium, and the like.

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[0029] Furthermore, using keratin degradation as an index, identification of novel periodontal bacterium and screening for a therapeutic drug for a periodontal disease are enabled.

Brief Description of the Drawings

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[0030]

Fig. 1 shows the results of mass spectrometry of degradation products obtained when rat gingival epithelial cells are treated with 3 kinds of periodontal bacterial enzymes, wherein the vertical axis shows relative peak intensity and the horizontal axis shows m/z values. (K) Kgp treatment; (H) HRgpA treatment; (R) RgpB treatment; (C) control (non-treatment)

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Fig. 2 shows the results of on spot profiling of human Keratin 6(T1) and its Kgp reaction product (S1) (upper panel), and human Keratin 17(T2) and its RgpB reaction product (S2) (lower panel), wherein the vertical axis shows relative peak intensity and the horizontal axis shows m/z values.

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Fig. 3 shows the identification results of (a) a Kgp degradation product of human Keratin 6 and (b) an RgpB degradation product of human Keratin 17.

Fig. 4 shows the presence of peptides 1, 3 and 5 in dental plaque of periodontitis patients, wherein the vertical axis shows relative peak intensity and the horizontal axis shows m/z values. (P) periodontitis patients; (c) control (healthy subjects)

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Fig. 5 shows the peptide 3 levels in the blood from periodontal disease patients with different severity, wherein the vertical axis shows relative peak intensity.

Fig. 6 shows the results of quantification, by the ELISA method, of peptide 1 in the plasma of periodontal disease patients (left) and healthy subjects.

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Fig. 7 shows the measurement results of peptide 1 and anti-human Keratin 6 autoantibody in the sera of gingivitis patients (Gingivitis), periodontitis patients (Periodontitis) and healthy subjects (Healthy), wherein the graph vertical axis shows peptide 1 concentration and the upper panel of the bar graph is a photograph of the band of anti-human Keratin 6 autoantibody by Western blotting.

Fig. 8A shows expression of RANKL protein in lymphocytes derived from periodontitis patients who are untreated (PD), during treatment (During Tx) and after treatment (Maintenance Phase), and healthy subjects (Non-PD), when stimulated with FLK6 or K6F. B shows expression of RANKL mRNA in lymphocytes derived from periodontitis patients, wherein NT means untreated. C shows lymphoblast formation in lymphocytes derived from periodontitis patients. D shows immunostaining of peripheral blood mononuclear cells derived from periodontitis patients with RANKL and CD3.

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Fig. 9A shows differentiation induction into polynuclear giant cells by stimulation of T cells obtained from periodontal disease patients and healthy subjects with FL or K6F, and suppression of the differentiation induction by the addition of RANKL inhibitor OPG-Fc. B shows the results of pit formation assay after stimulating T cells obtained from periodontal disease patients (upper panel) and healthy subjects (lower panel) with FL or K6F.

Fig. 10 shows tumescence of the lower jaw lymph node on the left side and the right side of the rats intragingivally injected with PBS, K6F or FLK6 into the left lower jaw.

Fig. 11 shows lymphoblast formation in the lymphocytes of the rats injected with PBS (top), K6F (middle) or FLK6 (lower). Untreated, K6F-stimulated and FLK6-stimulated lymphocytes are shown from the left.

Fig. 12 shows expression of RANKL and CD3 in peripheral blood mononuclear leukocytes derived from the rats injected with PBS, K6F or FLK6, wherein NT means untreated, and Sc means scramble peptide-stimulated peripheral blood mononuclear leukocytes.

Fig. 13 shows the form of the teeth on the left side and the right side of the rats injected with PBS, K6F or FLK6.

Fig. 14 shows the binding level of K6F(P-1) to various cells. The results show percentage of binding that exceeds the binding to the control cell.

Fig. 15 shows time-course changes of the expression of MMP-2 and MMP-3(A), MCP-1(B), IL-8(C) and IL-6(D) in gingival fibroblasts stimulated with K6F or scramble peptide (Sc). RK6 or Rec-K6 shows recombinant Keratin 6.

Fig. 16 shows (A) time-course changes of the levels of phosphorylated p38 MAPK (top), I κ B- α (middle) and phosphorylated p65 NF κ B (lower) in the gingival fibroblasts stimulated with K6F or scramble peptide (Sc), and (B) time-course changes of the activation of various serine/threonine kinases in the gingival epithelial cells stimulated with K6F or scramble peptide (Sc).

Description of Embodiments

(I) Keratin degradation products by periodontal bacterial enzyme present in gingival epithelium

[0031] The present invention provides a group of peptides that are novel biomarkers and therapeutic targets of periodontal diseases. All of such peptides (hereinafter sometimes to be referred to as "the peptide of the present invention") have keratin, which is present in gingival epithelial tissues, as a parental protein, and are produced by the degradation of said protein by periodontal bacterial enzymes. The invention also provides novel peptides that are produced by the degradation of keratin periodontal bacterial enzymes.

[0032] Keratin (cytokeratin) is a generic term of proteins having a molecular weight about 40 - 68 kDa and constituting intermediate (diameter about 8 - 11 nm) filaments that form the cytoskeleton of epithelial cells. It is divided into approximately 20 to 30 kinds depending on the molecular weight and biochemical characteristics, and largely divided into type I having a small molecular weight (acidic keratin; Keratin 10-20) and type II having a high molecular weight (neutral/basic keratin; Keratin 1-9), and a heterodimer made of these two types in combination constitutes a reticular filament.

[0033] Keratin which is the parental protein of the peptide of the present invention is not particularly limited as long as it is a protein classified as keratin present in a gingival epithelial tissue and, for example, Keratin 1 - 20 etc., preferably Keratin 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 etc., more preferably Keratin 5, 6, 14 and 17, can be mentioned. These keratin proteins are known to have many subtypes, and any subtype is encompassed therein as long as it is present in a gingival epithelial tissue.

[0034] As the periodontal bacterial enzyme, gingipain produced by *P. gingivalis*, for example, Kgp, RgpB and HRgpA, can be preferably mentioned.

[0035] The peptide of the present invention is a peptide fragment formed by partial digestion of any of the above-mentioned keratins by, for example, a periodontal bacterial enzyme such as gingipain (e.g., Kgp, RgpB, HRgpA) and the like, and to which an autoantibody is produced when it is transferred into the blood of a mammal infected with a periodontal bacterium. In consideration of the blood transferability, for example, it is a peptide having a molecular weight of not more than about 10,000, preferably not more than about 5000 and, in consideration of immunogenicity, for example, it is a peptide having a molecular weight of not less than about 500, preferably not less than about 1000. Such peptide can be easily identified by, for example, treating a purified keratin protein with one or more kinds of periodontal bacterial enzymes, preferably gingipain, and analyzing a keratin degradation product contained in the obtained enzyme reaction mixture by a method known per se, for example, blotchip (registered trade mark) technique of Protosera, a method using general two-dimensional gel electrophoresis and mass spectrometry in combination, LC-MS, LC-MS/MS and the like.

[0036] Preferable specific examples of the peptide of the present invention include, as Kgp degradation products of Keratin 6, a peptide consisting of the 360-378-position partial amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 1) of human keratin 6B (registered in UniprotKB database under accession No. P04259; SEQ ID NO: 11) (peptide 1), a peptide consisting of the 260-271-position partial amino acid sequence thereof (SEQ ID NO: 4) (peptide 6), a peptide consisting of the 339-359-position partial amino acid sequence thereof (SEQ ID NO: 5) (peptide 7) and the like. Peptides 1, 6 and 7 also include, in human Keratin 6B paralogs (e.g., human Keratin 6A (UniprotKB/Swissprot P02538), human Keratin 6C

(UniprotKB/Swiss-prot P48668), human Keratin 5 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot P13647) etc.) and orthologs thereof (e.g., rat Keratin 6A (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q4FZU2), mouse Keratin 6A (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot P50446), mouse Keratin 6B (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q9Z331), rat Keratin 5 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q6P6Q2), mouse Keratin 5 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q922U2), chimpanzee Keratin 5 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot A5A6M8), bovine Keratin 5 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q5XQN5) etc.), peptides consisting of partial amino acid sequences each corresponding thereto (see Tables 3-1 - 3-3 and Table 4), naturally-occurring variants or polymorphisms thereof (substitution, deletion, insertion of 1 - 2 amino acids; e.g., polymorphism wherein, in peptide 1, the 365-position Ile is substituted by Val (registered in NCBI SNP database as rs437014)).

[0037] Since the cleavage site by periodontal bacterial enzymes may not always be strict, peptides 1, 6 and 7 also encompass those wherein the N-terminal and/or the C-terminal of peptides 1, 6 and 7 is/are displaced by about 1 - 3 residues from the above-mentioned partial amino acid sequences toward the N-terminal side or C-terminal side of the parental protein.

[0038] Peptides 1 and 7 (SEQ ID NOs: 1 and 5) are novel peptides of the present invention.

[0039] Other preferable specific examples of the peptide of the present invention include, as Kgp degradation products of Keratin 5, a peptide consisting of the 365-383-position partial amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 15) of human keratin 5 (registered in UniprotKB database under accession No. P13647; SEQ ID NO: 12) (peptide 2), a peptide consisting of the 265-276-position partial amino acid sequence thereof, a peptide consisting of the 344-364-position partial amino acid sequence thereof and the like. These peptides also include, in human Keratin 5 paralogs (e.g., human Keratin 6A (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot P02538), human keratin 6B (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot P04259), human Keratin 6C (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot P48668) etc.) and orthologs thereof (e.g., rat Keratin 5 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q6P6Q2), mouse Keratin 5 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q922U2), chimpanzee Keratin 5 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot A5A6M8), bovine Keratin 5 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q5XQN5), rat Keratin 6A (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q4FZU2), mouse Keratin 6A (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot P50446), mouse Keratin 6B (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q9Z331) etc.), peptides consisting of partial amino acid sequences each corresponding thereto (see Tables 3-1 - 3-3 and Table 4), naturally-occurring variants or polymorphisms thereof (substitution, deletion, insertion of 1 - 2 amino acids; e.g., polymorphism wherein, in human Keratin 5, the 352-position Arg is substituted by Ser (Br. J. Dermatol. 155:313-317(2006)). Since Keratin 5 is a paralog of Keratin 6, peptide 2 is encompassed in "peptide 1" in a wide sense in the present invention. Similarly, a peptide consisting of the 265-276-position partial amino acid sequence of Keratin 5, and a peptide consisting of the 344-364-position partial amino acid sequence are encompassed in peptides 6 and 7 in a wide sense.

[0040] Since the cleavage site by periodontal bacterial enzymes may not always be strict, the peptides also encompass those wherein the N-terminal and/or the C-terminal of peptide is/are displaced by about 1 - 3 residues from the above-mentioned partial amino acid sequences toward the N-terminal side or C-terminal side of the parental protein. Furthermore, those with possible amino acid modification such as acetylation of N-terminal, amidation of C-terminal, pyroglutamylation of N-terminal glutamic acid, phosphorylation of Ser, Thr, Tyr, Asp or His, hydroxylation of Asn, Asp, Pro or Lys, methylation of Lys or Arg, sulfation of Tyr, oxidization of Met and the like are also encompassed.

[0041] Other preferable specific examples of the peptide of the present invention include, as the Rgp degradation product of Keratin 14, peptides consisting of the 450-469-position partial amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 2) of human keratin 14 (registered in UniprotKB database under accession No. P02533; SEQ ID NO: 13) (peptides 3 and 4), a peptide consisting of the 7-30-position partial amino acid sequence thereof, a peptide consisting of the 202-211-position partial amino acid sequence thereof, a peptide consisting of the 289-299-position partial amino acid sequence thereof, a peptide consisting of the 316-335-position partial amino acid sequence thereof and the like. These peptides also include, in human Keratin 14 paralogs (e.g., human Keratin 17 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q04695), human Keratin 16 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot P08779) etc.) and orthologs thereof (e.g., rat Keratin 14 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q6IFV1), mouse Keratin 14 (Q61781), rat Keratin 17 (Q61FU8), mouse Keratin 17 (Q9QWL7), chimpanzee Keratin 17 (A5A6M0), bovine Keratin 17 (A1L595) etc.), peptides consisting of partial amino acid sequences each corresponding thereto (see Table 5 and Table 6), naturally-occurring variants or polymorphisms thereof (substitution, deletion, insertion of 1 - 2 amino acids; e.g., polymorphism wherein, in human Keratin 14, the 211-position Arg is substituted by Pro (Hum. Mutat. 27:719-720(2006))). Since Keratin 14 is a paralog of Keratin 17, a peptide consisting of the 7-30-position partial amino acid sequence of Keratin 14, a peptide consisting of the 202-211-position partial amino acid sequence of Keratin 14, a peptide consisting of 289-299-position partial amino acid sequence of Keratin 14 and a peptide consisting of the 316-335-position partial amino acid sequence of Keratin 14 are encompassed in peptides 8, 9, 11 and 12 in a wide sense.

[0042] Since the cleavage site by periodontal bacterial enzymes may not always be strict, the peptides also encompass those wherein the N-terminal and/or the C-terminal of peptide is/are displaced by about 1 - 3 residues from the above-mentioned partial amino acid sequences toward the N-terminal side or C-terminal side of the parental protein. Furthermore, those with possible amino acid modification such as acetylation of N-terminal, amidation of C-terminal, pyroglutamylation of N-terminal glutamic acid, phosphorylation of Ser, Thr, Tyr, Asp or His, hydroxylation of Asn, Asp, Pro or Lys, methylation of Lys or Arg, sulfation of Tyr, oxidization of Met and the like are also encompassed.

[0043] Peptides 3 and 4 (SEQ ID NO: 2) are novel peptides of the present invention.

[0044] Other preferable specific examples of the peptide of the present invention include, as the Rgp degradation product of Keratin 17, a peptide consisting of the 410-432-position partial amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 3) of human keratin 17 (registered in UniprotKB database under accession No. Q04695; SEQ ID NO: 14) (peptide 5), a peptide consisting of the 171-180-position partial amino acid sequence thereof (SEQ ID NO: 6) (peptide 8), a peptide consisting of the 258-268-position partial amino acid sequence thereof (SEQ ID NO: 7) (peptide 9), a peptide consisting of the 410-424-position partial amino acid sequence thereof (SEQ ID NO: 8) (peptide 10), a peptide consisting of the 7-26-position partial amino acid sequence thereof (SEQ ID NO: 9) (peptide 11), a peptide consisting of the 285-304-position partial amino acid sequence thereof (SEQ ID NO: 10) (peptide 12) and the like. Peptides 5 and 8 - 12 also include, in human Keratin 17 paralogs (e.g., human Keratin 14 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q04695), human Keratin 16 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot P08779) etc.) and orthologs thereof (e.g., rat Keratin 17 (Q6IFU8), mouse Keratin 17 (Q9QWL7), chimpanzee Keratin 17 (A5A6M0), bovine Keratin 17 (A1L595), rat Keratin 14 (UniprotKB/Swiss-prot Q6IFV1), mouse Keratin 14 (Q61781) etc.), peptides consisting of partial amino acid sequences each corresponding thereto (see Table 5 and Table 6), naturally-occurring variants or polymorphisms thereof (substitution, deletion, insertion of 1 - 2 amino acids).

[0045] Since the cleavage site by periodontal bacterial enzymes may not always be strict, the peptides 5 and 8 - 12 also encompass those wherein the N-terminal and/or the C-terminal of peptide is/are displaced by about 1 - 3 residues from the above-mentioned partial amino acid sequences toward the N-terminal side or C-terminal side of the parental protein. Furthermore, those with possible amino acid modification such as acetylation of N-terminal, amidation of C-terminal, pyroglutamylation of N-terminal glutamic acid, phosphorylation of Ser, Thr, Tyr, Asp or His, hydroxylation of Asn, Asp, Pro or Lys, methylation of Lys or Arg, sulfation of Tyr, oxidization of Met and the like are also encompassed.

[0046] Peptides 5, 9, 10 and 11 (SEQ ID NOs: 3, 7, 8 and 9) are novel peptides of the invention.

(II) Substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention/substance having affinity to autoantibody to keratin or the peptide

[0047] As mentioned above, a periodontal bacterial enzyme digests keratin in a gingival epithelial tissue, and the produced peptide of the present invention or keratin itself enters into the blood to stimulate T cell proliferation and RANKL expression and induce an autoimmune response to the peptide and differentiation of osteoclast, which is deeply involved in the onset and progression of periodontal diseases, as well as the onset of systemic complications. Therefore, using a substance having affinity to the peptide of the present invention, or a substance having affinity to an autoantibody to the peptide (hereinafter to be also referred to as "the autoantibody of the present invention"), keratin or the peptide and/or the autoantibody are/is trapped and removed from the mouth cavity to suppress an autoimmune response wherein keratin or the peptide is an antigen, whereby the onset of periodontal diseases and systemic complications can be prevented or their progression can be suppressed.

[0048] Examples of the substance having affinity to the peptide of the present invention include an antibody to the peptide (hereinafter to be also referred to as "therapeutic antibody"). Examples of the substance having affinity to the autoantibody of the present invention include a peptide containing the amino acid sequence of the epitope recognized by the autoantibody (hereinafter to be also referred to as "therapeutic peptide"), namely, a peptide containing all or a part of the amino acid sequence of the peptide of the present invention.

(II-1) Therapeutic peptide

[0049] The therapeutic peptide of the present invention may have any of a carboxyl group, carboxylate, amide or ester at the C-terminal. When the peptide has a carboxyl group (or carboxylate) at a position other than the C-terminal, the carboxyl group may be amidated or esterified. Furthermore, in the peptide, an amino group of the amino acid residue at the N terminal may be substituted by, for example, a formyl group, an acetyl group and the like, the glutamine residue at the N terminal may be pyroglutamylated, or a substituent on the side chain of an amino acid in a molecule (for example, -OH, -SH, an amino group, an imidazole group, an indole group, a guanidino group and the like) may be substituted by other substituent (e.g., a formyl group, an acetyl group and the like).

[0050] In addition, the therapeutic peptide of the present invention may be a salt with an acid or base, and an acid addition salt is particularly preferable. As such salt, for example, salts with inorganic acids (e.g., hydrochloric acid, phosphoric acid, hydrobromic acid, sulfuric acid), salts with organic acids (e.g., acetic acid, formic acid, propionic acid, fumaric acid, maleic acid, succinic acid, tartaric acid, citric acid, malic acid, oxalic acid, benzoic acid, methanesulfonic acid, benzenesulfonic acid) and the like can be used.

[0051] As the peptide containing the amino acid sequence of the peptide of the present invention, the peptide itself or a peptide having an amino acid sequence wherein one or more amino acids are added to the N-terminal and/or the C-terminal of the amino acid sequence, which retains a binding ability to the autoantibody of the present invention, can be mentioned. Preferable examples of the latter include, but are not limited to, the full-length of keratin, which is the parental protein of the peptide of the present invention, and a fragment thereof, which contains the amino acid sequence

of the peptide.

[0052] The peptide having the amino acid sequence of the peptide of the present invention can be chemically synthesized based on the above-mentioned information of the amino acid sequence of the peptide of the present invention, or can also be obtained by digesting keratin, which is the parental protein of the peptide of the present invention, with a suitable protease (e.g., periodontal bacterial enzyme such as gingipain and the like, and the like) as necessary, and isolating the object peptide fragment from the obtained enzymatic degradation product by a method known per se. A keratin protein can be isolated from a cell or tissue producing same (e.g., gingival epithelium) by a protein separation technique known per se, or recombinantly produced by isolating cDNA based on the gene sequence information registered in a known database.

[0053] On the other hand, the peptide containing a part of the amino acid sequence of the peptide of the present invention is not particularly limited as long as it is recognized by the autoantibody of the present invention and, for example, a peptide containing not less than 3, preferably not less than 4, more preferably not less than 5, further preferably not less than 6, continuous amino acid residues in the amino acid sequence of the peptide of the present invention can be mentioned. Examples of the peptide containing a part of the amino acid sequence of the peptide of the present invention include a peptide containing not more than 20, preferably not more than 18, more preferably not more than 15, further preferably not more than 12, continuous amino acid residues in the amino acid sequence of the peptide of the present invention.

[0054] A peptide containing a part of the amino acid sequence of the peptide of the present invention is preferably chemically synthesized based on the above-mentioned information of the amino acid sequence of the peptide of the present invention. The synthesis method of the peptide may be any of the solid phase synthesis process and the liquid phase synthesis process. That is, the object peptide can be produced by condensing a partial peptide or amino acid capable of constituting the peptide and the remaining portion, and eliminating the protecting group when the resultant product has a protecting group. As the known condensation method and elimination of the protecting group, the methods described in the following 1) or 2) and the like can be mentioned.

- 1) M. Bodanszky and M.A. Ondetti, Peptide Synthesis, Interscience Publishers, New York (1966)
- 2) Schroeder and Luebke, The Peptide, Academic Press, New York (1965)

[0055] After the reaction, the peptide can be purified and isolated by a general purification method, such as solvent extraction, distillation, column chromatography, liquid chromatography, recrystallization and the like in combination. When the peptide obtained by the above-mentioned method is in a free form, it can be converted to a suitable salt by a known method. Conversely, when it is obtained as a salt, it can be converted to a free form or other salt by a known method.

[0056] As mentioned above, in the present invention, a degradation product of keratin, which is present in the gingival epithelium, by periodontal bacterial enzyme is a degradation product of Keratin 5, Keratin 6, Keratin 14 or Keratin 17 or an analog thereof (for example, paralog) by the enzyme (e.g., gingipain), which is a peptide selected from peptides consisting of amino acid sequences which are the same or substantially the same as the respective amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1 - 10. As used herein, the "substantially the same amino acid sequence" includes an ortholog of a parental protein of the peptide shown by each Sequence No. in other mammal, a protein which is a paralog in human or other mammal, or an amino acid sequence of the part corresponding to the amino acid sequence shown by the Sequence No. in a naturally-occurring allele variant or polymorphism thereof, the amino acid sequence wherein the N-terminal and/or the C-terminal are/is displaced by about 1 - 3 amino acids toward the N-terminal side or C-terminal side of the parental protein (e.g., amino acid sequence of Kgp degradation product of human Keratin 5, which is shown by SEQ ID NO: 15, is substantially the same as the amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 1) of Kgp degradation product of human Keratin 6B (paralog)). The orthologs and paralogs of SEQ ID NOs 1-10 are shown in Tables 3-6. Therefore, the therapeutic peptide of the present invention is a peptide recognized and bound by an autoantibody to a degradation product of Keratin 5, Keratin 6, Keratin 14 or Keratin 17 or an analog thereof (for example, paralog) by the enzyme (e.g., gingipain), which peptide is recognized and bound by an autoantibody to a peptide consisting of an amino acid sequence which is the same or substantially the same as each amino acid sequence shown by SEQ ID NO: 1 - 10. That is, the therapeutic peptide of the present invention is a peptide containing all or a part of the amino acid sequence of a degradation product of Keratin 5, Keratin 6, Keratin 14 or Keratin 17 or an analog thereof (for example, paralog) by the enzyme (e.g., gingipain), which is a peptide containing an amino acid sequence which is the same or substantially the same as each amino acid sequence shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1 - 10.

(II-2) Therapeutic antibody

[0057] The therapeutic antibody of the present invention is not particularly limited as long as it specifically recognizes keratin or the peptide of the present invention of the above-mentioned (I), and may be a complete antibody molecule or, for example, a fragment such as Fab, Fab', F(ab')₂ and the like, a conjugate molecule produced by genetic engineering

such as scFv, scFv-Fc, minibody, diabody and the like, or a derivative thereof which is modified by a molecule having a protein stabilizing action such as polyethylene glycol (PEG) and the like.

[0058] When the antibody of the present invention is a monoclonal antibody, it can be prepared, for example, by the following method.

[0059] Keratin or the peptide of the present invention or a fragment thereof is prepared by any method described in the above-mentioned (II-1). Insolubilized peptide may be directly immunized as long as it has immunogenicity. When a low-molecular-weight antigen is used, such antigen peptide can be generally immunized as a complex conjugated or adsorbed to a suitable carrier, since it is a hapten molecule with low immunogenicity. As a carrier, a natural or synthetic polymer can be used. As the natural polymer, serum albumin of a mammal such as bovine, rabbit, human and the like, silo globulin of a mammal such as bovine, rabbit and the like, ovalbumin of, for example, chicken, hemoglobin of a mammal such as bovine, rabbit, human, sheep and the like, keyhole limpet hemocyanin (KLH) and the like are used. Examples of the synthetic polymer include various latexes and the like of polymer substance or copolymer and the like of polyamino acids, polystyrenes, polyacryls, polyvinyls, polypropylenes and the like can be mentioned. The mixing ratio of the carrier and hapten may be any as long as an antibody to an antigen conjugated or adsorbed to a carrier is efficiently produced, and any of the carriers and haptens may be conjugated or adsorbed. Generally, the above-mentioned natural or synthetic polymer carriers normally used for the production of an antibody to hapten can be conjugated or adsorbed at a weight ratio of 0.1 - 100 to hapten as 1.

[0060] For coupling of hapten and a carrier protein, various condensing agents can be used. For example, diazonium compounds such as bisdiazotized benzidine that crosslinks tyrosine, histidine or tryptophan and the like, dialdehyde compounds such as glutaraldehyde that crosslinks amino groups to each other and the like, diisocyanate compounds such as toluene-2,4-diisocyanate and the like, dimaleimide compounds such as N,N'-o-phenylenedimaleimide that crosslinks thiol groups to each other and the like, a maleimide active ester compound that crosslinks amino group and thiol group, a carbodiimide compound that crosslinks amino group and carboxyl group and the like are conveniently used. In addition, when amino groups are crosslinked to each other, it is possible to react one of the amino groups with an active ester reagent (e.g., SPDP and the like) having a dithiopyridyl group and reduce same to introduce a thiol group, introduce a maleimide group into the other amino group by a maleimide active ester reagent, and react them. It is also possible to add a cysteine residue to the N-terminal or C-terminal of hapten (peptide), introduce a maleimide group into an amino group of a carrier protein by a maleimide active ester reagent and react them.

[0061] An antigen peptide is administered to a warm-blooded animal by, for example, an administration method such as intraperitoneal injection, intravenous injection, subcutaneous injection, intradermal injection and the like, to a site capable of producing an antibody, by itself or together with a carrier or a diluent. To enhance antibody producibility during administration, complete Freund's adjuvant or incomplete Freund's adjuvant may be administered. Administration is generally performed 2 to 10 times in total once every 1 to 6 weeks. Examples of the warm-blooded animal include rabbit, goat, bovine, chicken, mouse, rat, hamster, sheep, swine, horse, camel, cat, dog, monkey, chimpanzee and the like, and mouse, rat, rabbit and the like are generally used preferably for producing a monoclonal antibody.

[0062] For production of a monoclonal antibody producing cell, an animal confirmed to have a serum antibody titer is selected from warm-blooded animals, for example, mouse, immunized with an antigen, spleen or lymph node is isolated 2 - 5 days after the final immunization, and an antibody producing cell contained therein is fused with myeloma cells, whereby a monoclonal antibody producing hybridoma can be prepared. The antibody titer in the antiserum is measured by, for example, reacting a solid-phase-immobilized antigen peptide with antiserum, and detecting an antigen peptide specific antibody bound to the solid phase using an antibody to an antibody of an immunized animal species labeled with a radioactive substance or enzyme. Fusion operation can be performed by a known method, for example, the method of Köhler and Milstein [Nature, vol. 256, page 495 (1975)]. Examples of the fusion promoter include polyethylene glycol (PEG), Sendai virus and the like, and PEG is preferably used.

[0063] Examples of the myeloma cell include NS-1, P3U1, SP2/0 and the like, with preference given to P3U1. A preferable ratio of the number of antibody producing cells (spleen cell) and the number of myeloma cells is about 1:1 - 20:1, and cell fusion is efficiently performed by adding PEG (preferably, PEG1000 - PEG6000) at a concentration of about 10 - 80%, and incubating the mixture at about 20 - 40°C, preferably about 30 - 37°C for about 1 - 10 min.

[0064] Fused cell (hybridoma) can be selected by a method known per se or a method analogous thereto. Generally, it can be selected in an animal cell medium added with HAT (hypoxanthine, aminopterin, thymidine) and the like. As a medium for selection and breeding, any medium can be used as long as hybridoma can grow. For example, RPMI1640 medium containing 1 - 20%, preferably 10 - 20%, of fetal bovine serum, GIT medium containing 1 - 10% of fetal bovine serum (Wako Pure Chemical Industries, Ltd.) or serum-free medium for hybridoma culture (SFM-101, Nissui Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.) and the like can be used. The culture temperature is generally 20 - 40°C, preferably about 37°C. The culture time is generally 5 days - 3 weeks, preferably 1 week - 2 weeks. The culture can be generally performed in 5% carbonic acid gas.

[0065] Various methods can be used for screening for a monoclonal antibody producing hybridoma. For example, a method including adding a hybridoma culture supernatant to a solid phase (e.g., microplate) to which antigen peptide

is directly adsorbed or adsorbed together with a carrier, then adding an anti-immunoglobulin antibody (when antibody producing cell used for cell fusion is mouse, anti-mouse immunoglobulin antibody is used) labeled with a radioactive substance, an enzyme and the like or protein A, and detecting a monoclonal antibody bound to the solid phase, a method including adding a hybridoma culture supernatant to a solid phase to which anti-immunoglobulin antibody or protein A is adsorbed, adding an antigen peptide labeled with a radioactive substance, an enzyme and the like, and the like, and detecting a monoclonal antibody bound to the solid phase and the like can be mentioned.

[0066] The monoclonal antibody can be separated and purified by, like general separation and purification of polyclonal antibody, a separation and purification method of immunoglobulin [e.g., salting out method, alcohol precipitation method, isoelectric point precipitation method, electrophoresis, adsorption and desorption method using an ion exchanger (e.g., DEAE), ultracentrifugation method, gel filtration method, or a specific purification method including obtaining an antibody alone by an active adsorbent such as antigen conjugated solid phase, protein A, protein G and the like, and dissociating the binding to give an antibody].

[0067] When an antibody medicament is administered to human as a subject, the antibody is generally desirably an antibody with a reduced risk of antigenicity when administered to human, specifically, complete human antibody, humanized antibody, non-human-human chimera antibody and the like. When desired, such humanized antibody can also be used in the present invention. A humanized antibody and a chimera antibody can be produced by genetic engineering by a method known per se. A complete human antibody can also be produced from human-human (or human-mouse) hybridoma; however, it is desirably produced using a human antibody producing animal (e.g., mouse, bovine) or phage display method.

[0068] In the autoimmune response inhibitor of the present invention, however, since the therapeutic antibody is bound to the orally-present peptide of the present invention, and immediately removed extracorporeally after trapping same, the probability of an adverse influence due to the production of a human antibody to the antibody is low even with an antibody derived from a non-human animal. Therefore, a polyclonal antibody that can be produced in a large amount from a non-human warm-blooded animal can be used even without using a humanized monoclonal antibody with a high production cost.

[0069] The polyclonal antibody of the present invention can be produced by a method known per se or a method analogous thereto. For example, a warm-blooded animal is immunized with a complex of keratin, the peptide of the present invention of the above-mentioned (I) or a fragment thereof and a carrier protein in the same manner as in the above-mentioned production method of a monoclonal antibody, obtaining a material containing an antibody to the antigen from the immunized animal, and separating and purifying the antibody.

[0070] As for a complex of hapten and a carrier protein used for immunizing a warm-blooded animal, the kind of the carrier protein and the mixing ratio of a carrier and hapten may be any as long as the antibody to hapten used for immunization by crosslinking with a carrier is efficiently produced, and any of the carriers and haptens may be crosslinked at any ratio. For example, a method including conjugating bovine serum albumin, bovine thyroglobulin, KLH and the like at a weight ratio of about 0.1 - 20, preferably about 1 - 5, to hapten as 1 is used.

[0071] For coupling of hapten and a carrier protein, various condensing agents can be used, and active ester reagents containing glutaraldehyde, carbodiimide, maleimide active ester, thiol group or dithiopyridyl group, and the like are used.

[0072] A condensation product is administered to a warm-blooded animal at a site capable of producing an antibody by itself or together with a carrier and a diluent. To enhance antibody productivity for administration, complete Freund's adjuvant or incomplete Freund's adjuvant may be administered. The administration is generally performed once every about 2 - 6 weeks and about 3 - 10 times in total.

[0073] A polyclonal antibody can be collected from the blood, ascites, breast milk, egg and the like of a warm-blooded animal immunized by the above-mentioned method.

[0074] The polyclonal antibody titer in an antiserum can be measured in the same manner as in the above-mentioned measurement of the antibody titer in a serum. The polyclonal antibody can be separated and purified according to a separation and purification method of immunoglobulin in the same manner as in the above-mentioned separation and purification of monoclonal antibody.

[0075] As mentioned above, in the present invention, the degradation product of keratin, which is present in the gingival epithelium, by periodontal bacterial enzyme is a degradation product of Keratin 5, Keratin 6, Keratin 14 or Keratin 17 or an analog thereof (for example, paralog) by the enzyme (e.g., gingipain), which is a peptide consisting of an amino acid sequence which is the same or substantially the same as each amino acid sequence shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1 - 10. The "substantially the same amino acid sequence" is as defined for the above-mentioned (II-1). Therefore, the therapeutic antibody of the present invention is an antibody that specifically recognizes and binds to a degradation product of Keratin 5, Keratin 6, Keratin 14 or Keratin 17 or an analog thereof (for example, paralog) by the enzyme (e.g., gingipain), which is an antibody that specifically recognizes and binds to a peptide consisting of an amino acid sequence which is the same or substantially the same as each amino acid sequence shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1 - 10.

(II-3) Other substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention/other substance having affinity to autoantibody to keratin or the peptide

[0076] Examples of other substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention include aptamer to keratin or the peptide and the like, and examples of other substance having affinity to the autoantibody of the present invention include a secondary antibody and an aptamer to the antibody, and the like. Aptamer to keratin or the peptide of the present invention/aptamer to the autoantibody of the present invention can be obtained by a SELEX technique known per se. A secondary antibody to the autoantibody of the present invention can be obtained according to the method described in the above-mentioned (II-2) and using the autoantibody or a fragment thereof (e.g., F(ab')₂, Fab) as an immunogen. The autoantibody of the present invention to be subjected to SELEX method and immunization of animal can be isolated from interdental liquid, serum, plasma and the like of periodontal disease patients by utilizing the affinity to the peptide of the present invention. The desired fragment can be obtained by digesting the obtained autoantibody with pepsin or papain.

(III) Preparation of autoimmune response inhibitor

[0077] Substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention and/or substance having affinity to autoantibody of the present invention obtained as mentioned above can be formulated into an autoimmune response inhibitor by itself alone or as a suitable composition. As the composition, one containing a substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention and/or a substance having affinity to the autoantibody of the present invention, and a pharmacologically acceptable additive can be mentioned. Preferably, the composition is a composition suitable for intraoral administration (composition for mouth cavity). The composition for mouth cavity is combined with various additives according to the form thereof, and can be provided as toothpaste, liquid dentifrice, mouthwash, mouth cavity gel and the like.

[0078] The amount of the substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention and a substance having affinity to the autoantibody of the present invention to be blended in an autoimmune response inhibitor of the present invention is not particularly limited as long as it is sufficient for adsorbing and removing orally present keratin, the peptide of the present invention and the autoantibody of the present invention. For example, it can be appropriately selected from the range of 50 - 0.01 wt%, preferably 5 - 0.1 wt%, of the whole composition. One kind of a substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention or a substance having affinity to the autoantibody of the present invention may be used or two or more kinds thereof may be used in combination. For example, the presence or absence of keratin or the peptide of the present invention and/or the autoantibody of the present invention in interdental liquid is preferably tested by the below-mentioned test method for the diagnosis of periodontal disease, and one or more kinds of substances selected from the substances having affinity to keratin or peptide and/or autoantibody confirmed to be present are combined.

[0079] Examples of the additive to be used for the composition for mouth cavity include antimicrobial agent, surfactant, abrasive, wetting agent, monovalent alcohol, binder, flavor, sweetening agent, pH adjuster, preservative, dye and the like. Each of them can be appropriately combined as long as the effect of the present invention is not impaired.

[0080] Examples of the antimicrobial agent include quaternary ammonium salt, bisbiguanide, phenol, and non-cationic antimicrobial agent. Examples of the quaternary ammonium salt include cetylpyridinium chloride, benzethonium chloride, distearyldimethylammonium chloride, stearyldimethylbenzylammonium chloride, stearyltrimethylammonium chloride, cetyltrimethylammonium chloride, lauryltrimethylammonium chloride, laurylpyridinium chloride and the like. Examples of the bisbiguanide antimicrobial agent include bisbiguanide hexanes, bisbiguanide propylethers, bisbiguanide xylenes, bisbiguanide decanes, bisbiguanide dodecanes, and a chemically acceptable salt thereof and the like. Examples of the bisbiguanide hexanes include chlorhexidine salts such as chlorhexidine gluconate, chlorhexidine hydrochloride and the like. Examples of the phenol antimicrobial agent include isopropylmethylphenol and hinokitiol. Examples of the non-cationic antimicrobial agent include triclosan.

[0081] As the surfactant, nonionic, cationic or amphoteric surfactants can be used alone or two or more kinds thereof may be combined. Examples of the nonionic surfactant include sugar fatty acid esters such as sucrose fatty acid ester, maltose fatty acid ester and the like, sugar alcohol fatty acid esters such as multitol fatty acid ester and the like, sorbitan fatty acid esters such as monolauric acid sorbitan and the like, polyoxyethylene sorbitan fatty acid esters such as polyoxyethylene sorbitan monolaurate, polyoxyethylene sorbitan monostearate and the like, fatty acid alkanolamides such as lauric acid diethanolamide, polyoxyethylene alkyl ethers such as polyoxyethylene stearyl ether, polyoxyethylene oleyl ether and the like, polyethylene glycol fatty acid esters such as monooleic acid polyethylene glycol, monolauric acid polyethylene glycol and the like, polyglycerol fatty acid ester, polyoxyethylene glycerol fatty acid ester, polyoxyethylene fatty acid ester, alkylglucosides, polyoxyethylene hydrogenated castor oil, glycerol fatty acid ester, polyoxyethylene propylene block copolymer and the like. Examples of the amphoteric surfactant include amino acid type, alkylbetaine type, alkylamidebetaine type, sulfobetaine type, imidazoline type and the like, preferably 2-alkyl-N-carboxymethyl-N-

hydroxyethylimidazolium betaine, palm oil fatty acid amidepropylbetaine and the like.

[0082] As the abrasive, calcium carbonate, calcium phosphate, dibasic calcium phosphate, pyrrocalcium phosphate, insoluble sodium metaphosphate, titanium oxide, amorphous silica, crystalline silica, aluminosilicate, aluminum oxide, aluminum hydroxide, resin and the like may be used alone or two or more kinds thereof may be used in combination.

[0083] Examples of the wetting agent include polyvalent alcohols such as glycerol, sorbitol, polyethylene glycol, propylene glycol, ethylene glycol, hexylene glycol, 1,3-butylene glycol, polypropylene glycol, xylitol, maltitol, lactitol and the like. These may be used alone or two or more kinds thereof may be used in combination.

[0084] Examples of the monovalent alcohol include ethanol, propyl alcohol, isopropyl alcohol and the like, and ethanol is particularly preferable. These monovalent alcohols may be used alone or two or more kinds thereof may be used in combination.

[0085] Examples of the binder include cellulose derivatives such as carageenan, carboxymethylcellulose and the like, alkali metal alginates such as sodium alginate and the like, gums such as xanthan gum, gum tragacanth, gum arabic and the like, synthetic binders such as polyvinyl alcohol, sodium polyacrylate and the like, inorganic binders such as silica gel, aluminum silica gel, veegum and the like, and the like.

[0086] As the flavor, anethole, menthol, peppermint oil, spearmint oil, lemon oil, orange oil, sage oil, rosemary oil, cinnamon oil, perilla oil, wintergreen oil, clove oil, eucalyptus oil, pimento oil, carvon, cinnamic aldehyde, cineole, menton, limonene, methyl salicylate and the like can be used alone or two or more kinds thereof may be used in combination as long as the effect of the present invention is not impaired.

[0087] Examples of the sweetening agent include palatinit, saccharin sodium, acesulfame potassium, stevioside, neohesperidyl dihydrochalcone, glycyrrhizin, perillartine, thaumatococin, aspartylphenylalanyl methyl ester, p-methoxy cinnamic aldehyde and the like. These may be used alone or two or more kinds thereof may be used in combination.

[0088] Examples of the pH adjuster include citric acid, phosphoric acid, malic acid, pyrophosphoric acid, lactic acid, tartaric acid, glycerophosphoric acid, acetic acid, nitric acid, a chemically acceptable salt or sodium hydroxide thereof, and the like. These may be used alone or two or more kinds thereof may be used in combination such that the composition has a pH of 5 - 9.

[0089] Moreover, the composition for mouth cavity of the present invention can contain vitamin Es such as d1- α -tocopherol acetate, tocopherol succinate, tocopherol nicotinate and the like, enzymes such as dextranase, amylase, protease, mutanase, lysozyme, lytic enzyme and the like, anti-plasmin agents such as tranexamic acid, epsilon aminocaproic acid, aluminum chlorhydroxylallantoin, dihydrocholesterol, glycyrrhizin salts, glycyrrhetic acid, glycerolphosphate, chlorophyll, sodium chloride, callopeptide, water-soluble inorganic phosphate compound, fluorides such as sodium fluoride, potassium fluoride, ammonium fluoride, calcium fluoride, copper fluoride, zinc fluoride, lithium fluoride, cesium fluoride, zirconium fluoride, tin fluoride, hydrofluoric acid, sodium monofluorophosphate, potassium monofluorophosphate, sodium titanium fluoride, potassium titanium fluoride, hexylamine hydrofluoride, laurylamine hydrofluoride, glycine hydrofluoride, alanine hydrofluoride, fluorosilane, diammine silver fluoride and the like. These may be used alone or two or more kinds thereof may be used in combination. The composition for mouth cavity of the present invention can be produced by mixing these components and according to a generally method.

[0090] Therefore, to enhance oral mucosa retentivity, natural polymers such as gelatin, collagen, konjak mannan, pullulan, chitosan, starch and the like, synthetic polymers such as polyethylene glycol, carboxyvinyl polymer and the like, polysaccharides such as dextran, polyacryldextran and the like, lecithins such as soybean lecithin, egg-yolk lecithin and the like, polylactic acid, polyglycolic acid, albumin, cyclodextrin and the like. These may be used alone or two or more kinds thereof may be used in combination.

[0091] The substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention, and the substance having affinity to the autoantibody of the present invention may be combined in a free state in the composition for mouth cavity. In another preferable embodiment, for example, it can also be combined by solid-phase-immobilization on an insoluble carrier such as microbeads.

[0092] The composition for mouth cavity containing a substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention and/or a substance having affinity to the autoantibody of the present invention can be applied, for example, in a single dose of about 1 - 30 g, about one to 5 times per one day.

[0093] An autoimmune response in a periodontal disease is initiated by the production of an autoantibody to keratin, which is present in the gingival epithelium, or its degradation product by periodontal bacterial enzyme. Therefore, an autoimmune response inhibitory effect can be further improved by using a periodontal bacterial enzyme inhibitor in combination with the autoimmune response inhibitor of the present invention, which is effective for the prophylaxis or treatment and the like of periodontal diseases and complications thereof. Examples of the periodontal bacterial enzyme inhibitor include those described in the above-mentioned patent documents 1 - 4 and non-patent documents 4 - 7, and a novel periodontal bacterial enzyme inhibitor selected by the below-mentioned screening method. The inhibitor may be combined with the autoimmune response inhibitor of the present invention or separately formulated. When the autoimmune response inhibitor and the periodontal bacterial enzyme inhibitor of the present invention are separately applied, they may be intraorally administered simultaneously or in a staggered manner.

[0094] In another embodiment, the autoimmune response inhibitor of the present invention can be applied to an autoantibody removal method known as an immunoadsorption therapy. This method can be applied to, for example, patients with a high risk of fatal complication such as a patient having an underlying disease such as diabetes, arteriosclerosis and Alzheimer's disease, and a pregnant woman with a risk of preterm delivery with a low birth weight baby, and severe autoimmune response in a periodontal disease. For example, an adsorption column wherein a substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention and/or a substance having affinity to the autoantibody of the present invention are/is conjugated with a suitable insoluble carrier is produced and inserted into the flow path of plasma components in a plasma separator known per se, which is used for artificial dialysis and the like, whereby keratin or the peptide of the present invention and/or the autoantibody of the present invention, which are present in the plasma, can be adsorbed and removed. In addition, by contacting a blood cell component with the adsorption column, an antigen-presenting cell for a keratin fragment or the peptide of the present invention or a fragment thereof, and an autoantibody producing cell can also be adsorbed and removed.

(IV) Screening for substance inhibiting autoimmune response to keratin or a degradation product thereof

[0095] A peptidic substance such as a secondary antibody to the aforementioned keratin or the peptide of the present invention or the autoantibody of the present invention, and the like, or a substance other than a nucleic acid substance such as an aptamer of the autoantibody of the present invention and the like can be utilized as an active ingredient of the autoimmune response inhibitor of the present invention as long as it has affinity to the autoantibody of the present invention. Therefore, the present invention also provides an *in vitro* screening method of a substance inhibiting an autoimmune response to keratin or the peptide of the present invention, which comprises selecting a substance having affinity to the autoantibody of the present invention. Said method includes the following steps:

- (1) a step of contacting the autoantibody of the present invention with a test substance,
- (2) a step of measuring their binding level, and
- (3) a step of selecting a test substance bound to said autoantibody as a candidate inhibitory substance of said autoimmune response.

[0096] The autoantibody of the present invention can be obtained from interdental liquid, serum, plasma and the like of periodontal disease patients by the aforementioned method.

[0097] Examples of the test substance include protein, peptide, nonpeptidic compound, synthetic compound, fermentation product, cell extract, plant extract, animal tissue extract and the like, and these substances may be novel or known.

[0098] The binding level of the autoantibody of the present invention and a test substance can be measured by an appropriate combination of various methods known per se. For example, it can be measured by immobilizing a test substance on a solid phase, contacting the solid phase with the autoantibody of the present invention (e.g., addition of an autoantibody solution to solid phase etc.), removing unreacted antibody, contacting a labeled secondary antibody to the antibody with the solid phase, and measuring the amount of label that was bound to the solid phase. Alternatively, it can also be measured by immobilizing the autoantibody of the present invention on a solid phase, reacting labeled keratin or a degradation product by periodontal bacterial enzyme, which is an antigen to the antibody, with the solid phase in the presence or absence of a test substance, and measuring and comparing the amount of label bound to the solid phase. Furthermore, their binding level can also be measured by immobilizing one of the autoantibody of the present invention and a test substance on a sensorchip, contacting the other with a sensorchip, and using a surface plasmon resonance (SPR) method.

(V) RANKL expression inhibitor

[0099] Keratin or the peptide of the present invention that transferred from a gingival tissue into the blood not only stimulate the proliferation of T cells and induce an autoimmune response thereto, but also induces expression of RANKL in T cells. The activated T cell stimulates macrophage to induce inflammatory cytokines such as TNF- α , IL-1, IL-6 and the like, initiate and aggravate periodontitis, as well as induce expression of RANKL in osteoblast and bone marrow stromal cells. It is considered that these RANKL expressing cells induce differentiation of osteoclast progenitor cell into osteoclast and promote bone resorption, whereby alveolar bone is destroyed. Since a substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention can shut off an action of keratin or the peptide on T cells and the like, expression of RANKL in T cells and the like can be inhibited and alveolar bone destruction and initiation or aggravation of periodontitis can be suppressed. Accordingly, the present invention also provides a RANKL expression inhibitor and an agent for the prophylaxis or treatment of periodontal diseases and complications thereof, which contain a substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention.

[0100] Examples of the substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention include, but are not

limited to, the aforementioned antibody to keratin or the peptide of the present invention, an aptamer to keratin or the peptide of the present invention and the like.

5 [0101] A substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention can be directly administered or administered as a suitable pharmaceutical composition. The pharmaceutical composition used for the administration may contain a substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention, and a pharmacologically acceptable carrier, diluent or excipient. Such pharmaceutical composition is provided in a dosage form suitable for oral or parenteral administration.

10 [0102] As a composition for parenteral administration, injection, suppository, intranasal agent and the like are used. Injection may include dosage forms of intravenous injection, subcutaneous injection, intradermal injection, muscular injection, drip injection and the like. Such injection can be prepared according to a known method. A preparation method of injection include dissolving, suspending or emulsifying with a substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention in an aseptic aqueous liquid or an oily liquid generally used for injection. As aqueous liquid for injection, saline, isotonic solution containing glucose or other auxiliary agent and the like are used, and may be used in combination with a suitable solubilizing agent, such as alcohol (e.g., ethanol), polyalcohol (e.g., propylene glycol, polyethylene glycol), nonionic surfactant [e.g., polysorbate 80, HCO-50 (polyoxyethylene (50 mol) adduct of hydrogenated castor oil)] and the like. As an oily liquid, sesame oil, soybean oil and the like are used, and as a solubilizing agent, benzyl benzoate, benzyl alcohol and the like may be used in combination. The prepared injection is preferably filled in a suitable ampoule. A suppository to be used for rectal administration may be prepared by mixing a substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention with a general base for suppository.

20 [0103] Examples of the composition for oral administration include solid or liquid dosage form, specifically tablet (including sugar-coated tablet, film-coated tablet), pill, granule, powder, capsule (including soft capsule), syrup, emulsion, suspension and the like. Such composition is produced by a known method, and optionally contains a carrier, a diluent or an excipient generally used in the pharmaceutical field. As carriers and excipients for tablets, lactose, starch, saccharose and magnesium stearate are used.

25 [0104] The above-mentioned parenteral or oral pharmaceutical composition is conveniently prepared in a dosage form with a dosage unit compatible with the dose of the active ingredient. Examples of the dosage form with a dosage unit include tablet, pill, capsule, injection (ampoule) and suppository. A substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention is preferably contained in generally 0.1 - 500 mg per dosage form with a dosage unit, 5 - 100 mg for injection and 10 - 250 mg for other dosage form.

30 [0105] While the dose of the above-mentioned medicament containing a substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention varies depending on the subject of administration, symptom, administration route and the like, for example, a single dose of a substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention is generally about 0.0001 - 20 mg/kg body weight, which is orally or parenterally administered about 1 - 5 times per day when it is a low-molecular-weight compound, and when it is antibody, nucleic acid and the like, it is conveniently administered once a day - once in several months by intravenous injection. In the case of other parenteral administration and oral administration, an amount analogous thereto can be administered. When the symptom is particularly severe, the dose may be increased according to the symptom.

40 (VI) Screening for substance inhibiting RANKL expression (1)

45 [0106] A substance other than peptidic or nucleic acid substance such as an antibody or an aptamer to the aforementioned keratin or the peptide of the present invention can be utilized as an active ingredient of the RANKL expression inhibitor of the present invention as long as it has affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention. Therefore, the present invention also provides an *in vitro* screening method of a substance inhibiting RANKL expression, which comprises selecting a substance having affinity to the peptide of the present invention. Said method includes the following steps:

- (1) a step of contacting keratin or the peptide of the present invention with a test substance,
- (2) a step of measuring their binding level, and
- 50 (3) a step of selecting a test substance bound to keratin or the peptide as a candidate inhibitory substance of RANKL expression.

[0107] Keratin or the peptide of the present invention can be obtained by the aforementioned method.

55 [0108] Examples of the test substance include protein, peptide, nonpeptidic compound, synthetic compound, fermentation product, cell extract, plant extract, animal tissue extract and the like. These substances may be novel or known.

[0109] The binding level of keratin or the peptide of the present invention and a test substance can be measured by an appropriate combination of various methods known per se. For example, it can be measured by immobilizing a test substance on a solid phase, contacting the solid phase with keratin or the peptide of the present invention, removing

unreacted keratin or peptide, contacting a labeled antibody to keratin or the peptide with the solid phase, and measuring the amount of the label that was bound to the solid phase. Alternatively, it can also be measured by immobilizing keratin or the peptide of the present invention on a solid phase, reacting a labeled antibody to keratin or the peptide with the solid phase in the presence or absence of a test substance, and measuring and comparing the amount of label bound to the solid phase. Furthermore, their binding level can also be measured by immobilizing one of keratin or the peptide of the present invention and a test substance on a sensorchip, contacting the other with a sensorchip, and using a surface plasmon resonance (SPR) method.

(VII) Screening for substance inhibiting RANKL expression (2)

[0110] Keratin or the peptide of the present invention that transferred from a gingival tissue into the blood is considered to induce expression of RANKL in T cells via a receptor on the cell surface. Therefore, a substance showing an antagonistic activity on the receptor (that is, an action to shut off induction of RANKL expression by keratin or the peptide of the present invention, which is a ligand, by competitively binding to the receptor) is useful as a substance inhibiting the RANKL expression, like a substance having affinity to keratin or the peptide of the present invention. That is, the present invention also provides an *in vitro* method of screening for a substance inhibiting RANKL expression, comprising selecting a substance showing an antagonistic activity on a receptor of keratin or the peptide of the present invention. Said method includes the following steps:

- (1) a step of contacting, in the presence and absence of a test substance, non-human mammal-derived T cell immunized with the peptide of the present invention with said peptide,
- (2) a step of measuring one or more selected from the group consisting of
 - a) a binding level of said keratin or peptide to the T cell,
 - b) a level of T cell proliferation, and
 - c) an expression level of RANKL in the T cell, each of which in the presence and absence of the test substance, and
- (3) a step of selecting a test substance that decreased any of the above-mentioned a) - c) as a candidate inhibitory substance of RANKL expression.

[0111] As a method of immunizing a non-human mammal (e.g., mouse, rat, rabbit and the like) with keratin or the peptide of the present invention, a method similar to immunization of animal when preparing an antibody to keratin or the peptide of the present invention can be used. The T cell derived from an animal can be obtained by, for example, collecting a blood sample from the animal, and separating and collecting, for example, CD3 positive cells by using FACS, though not limited thereto. Keratin or the peptide of the present invention can be obtained by the aforementioned method.

[0112] Examples of the test substance include protein, peptide, nonpeptidic compound, synthetic compound, fermentation product, cell extract, plant extract, animal tissue extract and the like, and these substances may be novel or known.

[0113] The binding level of keratin or the peptide of the present invention to T cell can be obtained by, for example, immobilizing T cell on a plate, contacting keratin or the peptide of the present invention therewith, removing unreacted keratin or peptide, contact a labeled antibody to keratin or peptide with the cell, and measuring the amount of the label bound to the cell. The level of T cell proliferation can be examined by, for example, using a drug induced lymphocyte stimulation test (DLST). The expression of RANKL in T cell can be measured at an RNA level by quantitative RT-PCR, real-time RT-PCR, Northern blotting and the like, or at a protein level by ELISA, RIA, immunohistostaining, Western blotting and the like using an anti-RANKL antibody.

[0114] As a result of the above-mentioned measurement, a test substance that decreased the binding level of keratin or the peptide of the present invention to T cell, the level of T cell proliferation, or the expression level of RANKL in T cell by not less than 20%, preferably not less than 30%, more preferably not less than 40%, particularly preferably not less than 50%, as compared to the absence of the test substance, can be selected as a candidate RANKL expression inhibitory substance.

(VIII) Screening for receptor of keratin or the peptide of the present invention

[0115] Once a receptor of keratin or the peptide of the present invention, which is present on the T cell surface, is isolated, an RANKL expression inhibitory substance can be more efficiently screened for, by using the binding level of the receptor and a test substance, growth of T cell with forced expression of the receptor, or the expression level of RANKL in the cell as an index. A receptor of keratin or the peptide of the present invention can be isolated using affinity to keratin or the peptide as an index and by, for example, SPR method, dual polarization interferometry (DPI), two-hybrid method, the method described in WO 02/056026 which is a combination of membrane protein library (MPL) and mass

spectrometry, and the like. Using the two-hybrid method, a DNA encoding a receptor of keratin or the peptide of the present invention can be directly obtained, and therefore, T cell with forced expression of the receptor can be produced rapidly.

5 (IX) Periodontal disease diagnosis

[0116] Since the peptide of the present invention and the autoantibody of the present invention are specifically detected in periodontal bacterium patients, it can be utilized as a diagnostic marker of a periodontal disease. That is, the present invention provides a test method for the diagnosis of a periodontal disease of a test animal, comprising measuring an amount of one or more peptides selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences which are the same or substantially the same as respective amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1 - 10, and/or one or more autoantibodies selected from the group consisting of autoantibodies to respective peptides of said group of peptides, in a biological sample obtained from the test animal. The "substantially the same amino acid sequence" here is as defined for the above-mentioned (II-1). The "examination for diagnosis" means measurement of the amount of the peptide and/or the autoantibody, and comparison with the measured value of the control sample where necessary. As the subject animal, a mammal (e.g., human, dog, cat, bovine, swine, sheep, goat, monkey, mouse, rat etc.) suspected of being affected with a periodontal disease can be mentioned.

[0117] While a biological sample derived from a test animal to be the test sample is not particularly limited, it is preferably less invasive to the animal. Examples thereof include those easily obtained from the body such as blood, plasma, serum, interdental liquid, urine, saliva and the like. When serum and plasma are used, blood samples can be prepared by collecting blood from a test animal according to a conventional method, and a separating a liquid component. When an interdental liquid is used, for example, a sample can be prepared according to the method described in the below-mentioned Examples and the like.

[0118] When the detection target is the peptide of the present invention, a high-molecular-weight protein fraction and the like can also be separated and removed in advance where necessary by using a spin column and the like. When the detection target is the autoantibody of the present invention, a low-molecular-weight peptide fraction and the like can also be separated and removed in advance.

30 (IX-1) Detection of peptide of the present invention (1)

[0119] The peptide of the present invention in a biological sample can be detected by, though not limited to, applying a biological sample to a method based on a combination of various molecular weight determination methods, such as gel electrophoresis, various separation and purification methods (e.g., ion exchange chromatography, hydrophobic chromatography, affinity chromatography, reversed-phase chromatography and the like), ionization method (e.g., electron impact ionization method, field desorption method, secondary ionization method, fast atom bombardment method, matrix-assisted laser desorption ionization (MALDI), electrospray ionization method and the like), mass spectrometer (e.g., double-focusing mass spectrometer, quadrupole analyzer, time-of-flight mass spectrometer, Fourier-transform mass spectrometer, ion cyclotron mass spectrometer and the like) and the like, and detecting a band, spot or peak corresponding to the molecular weight of the peptide. Since the peptide of the present invention has a known amino acid sequence, a method including producing an antibody recognizing the amino acid sequence, and detecting the peptide according to Western blotting and various immunoassays is more preferably used. Furthermore, the hybrid detection method in the above-mentioned method is also effective.

[0120] While the peptides consisting of the respective amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1 - 10 have molecular weights (calculated) of 2215.10, 2277.18 (2293.18 when Met is oxidized), 2638.37, 1377.73, 2543.20, 1221.64, 1410.66, 1658.88, 1885.91 and 2175.10, respectively, it is needless to say that the measured values may slightly vary depending on the measurement methods and measurement devices to be used. For example, when the method uses a mass spectrometer, the peak intensity appearing at the position of calculated value $\pm 0.5\%$ (preferably $\pm 0.3\%$, more preferably $\pm 0.1\%$) is preferable measured.

[0121] One of the particularly preferable measurement methods in the test methods of the present invention is, for example, a method including contacting a test sample with a surface of a plate to be used for time-of-flight mass spectrometry, and measuring the mass of a component trapped on the surface of said plate by a time-of-flight mass spectrometer. A plate applicable to a time-of-flight mass spectrometer may be any as long as it has a surface structure capable of efficiently adsorbing the peptide of the present invention, which is the detection target. Examples of such surface structure include coating with a functional group-added glass, Si, Ge, GaAs, GaP, SiO₂, SiN₄, modified silicon, wide range of gels and polymers (e.g., (poly)tetrafluoroethylene, (poly)vinylidene difluoride, polystyrene, polycarbonate, or a combination thereof and the like). Examples of the surface structure having plural monomers or polymer sequences include coating with linear and cyclic polymers of nucleic acid, polysaccharide, lipid, peptide having α -, β - or ω -amino acid, carrier on gel surface used for chromatography (carriers crosslinked with anionic/cationic compound, C₁₋₁₈ hydro-

phobic compound, hydrophilic compound (e.g., silica, nitrocellulose, celluloseacetate, agarose etc.) and the like), artificial homopolymer (e.g., polyurethane, polyester, polycarbonate, polyurea, polyamide, polyethyleneimine, polyarylenesulfide, polysiloxane, polyimide, polyacetate etc.), heteropolymer wherein any of the above-mentioned compounds bound (covalent and noncovalent bond) with known medicaments or natural compounds and the like.

5 **[0122]** In a preferable embodiment, a support to be used as a mass spectrometry plate is a base thin layer-coated with polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF), nitrocellulose or silica gel, particularly preferably PVDF [generally, it is not particularly limited as long as it is used for mass spectrometry plates and, for example, insulator (glass, ceramics, plastic-resin etc.), metal (aluminum, stainless steel etc.), a conductive polymer, a complex thereof and the like can be mentioned, with preference given to an aluminum plate] (see WO 2004/031759). The shape of the support can be appropriately
10 designed to particularly match a sample inlet port of a mass spectrometer to be used, though not limited thereto. Examples of such plate for mass spectrometry, which is thin layer-coated with PVDF, preferably include blotchip (registered trade mark, Protosera) and the like.

[0123] Preferably, the coating means a thin layer formed by depositing a coating molecule in a dispersed state on the support, rather than overlaying a structure formed in advance such as a membrane on a support. While the mode of
15 depositing coating molecules is not particularly limited, the method exemplified as the preparation method of a plate for mass spectrometry mentioned below is preferably used.

[0124] While the thickness of the thin layer can be appropriately selected from the range that does not exert an unpreferable influence on the transcription efficiency, mass spectrometry measurement sensitivity and the like of molecules contained in the tissue or cell, it is, for example, about 0.001 - about 100 μm , preferably about 0.01 - about 30 μm .

20 **[0125]** A plate (support) for mass spectrometry can be prepared according to a method known per se. For example, the above-mentioned preferable plate for mass spectrometry is prepared by thin layer-coating the surface of the support with a coating molecule such as PVDF and the like. Preferable examples of the coating method include spreading, spraying, vapor deposition, immersion, printing, sputtering and the like.

25 **[0126]** For "spreading", a solution of a coating molecule dissolved in a suitable solvent, for example, an organic solvent such as dimethyl formamide (DMF) and the like at a suitable concentration (e.g., about 1 - about 100 mg/mL) (coating molecule-containing solution) can be applied to a substrate with a suitable instrument such as brush and the like.

[0127] For "spraying", a coating molecule-containing solution prepared in the same manner as above is charged in an atomizer, and sprayed such that PVDF is uniformly deposited on the substrate.

30 **[0128]** For "vapor deposition", a thin layer of coating molecule (may be solid or solution) can be formed on the surface of a substrate by using a conventional vacuum vapor deposition equipment for production of organic thin film, and heating and vaporizing said molecule in a vacuum chamber containing the substrate.

[0129] For "immersion", a substrate only needs to be immersed in a coating molecule-containing solution prepared in the same manner as above.

35 **[0130]** For "printing", various printing techniques that can be generally used according to the material of a substrate can be appropriately selected and utilized; for example, screen printing and the like are preferably used.

[0131] For "sputtering", a thin layer can be formed by, for example, applying a high voltage DC between a substrate and coating molecule while introducing an inert gas (e.g., Ar gas etc.) under vacuum, colliding the ionized gas against said molecule, and depositing the flicked coating molecule on the substrate.

40 **[0132]** The coating may be applied on the whole surface of a substrate or only a surface subjected to mass spectrometry (fraction).

[0133] A coating molecule can be used in an appropriate, preferable form according to the coating means. For example, a form of a coating molecule-containing solution, a coating molecule-containing vapor, a solid coating molecule and the like can be applied to a substrate, and a form of coating molecule-containing solution is preferably applied. "Apply" means contacting the coating molecule to a support such that the coating molecules remain or are deposited on the
45 support after contact. While the amount of application is not particularly limited, the amount of the coating molecule is, for example, about 10 - about 100,000 $\mu\text{g}/\text{cm}^2$, preferably about 50 - about 5,000 $\mu\text{g}/\text{cm}^2$. The solvent is removed by air drying, vacuum drying and the like after application.

50 **[0134]** The surface of a substrate for mass spectrometry plate may be modified (processed) in advance by a suitable physical or chemical method before coating with coating molecules. Specifically, methods such as polishing, damaging, acid treatment, alkali treatment, glass treatment (tetramethoxysilane and the like) of the surface of the plate and the like can be recited as examples.

55 **[0135]** A test sample is transferred to a plate (support) for mass spectrometry by directly applying an untreated biological sample from a patient, which becomes a test sample, or after removing high-molecular-weight proteins and concentrating the sample by using an antibody column or other method, to SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis or isoelectric focusing, and contacting the gel with the plate after electrophoresis to allow transcription thereof (blotting). As a transcription apparatus, a known one can be used. The method for transcription per se is known. Preferably, electric transcription is used. A sample developed on the gel after electrophoresis is transferred to a plate for mass spectrometry by various methods (diffusion, electric force, etc.). As a buffer to be used for electric transcription, a buffer having pH 7

- 9 and a low salt concentration is preferably used. Specific examples include Tris buffer, phosphate buffer, borate buffer, acetate buffer and the like. Examples of the Tris buffer include Tris/glycine/methanol buffer, SDS-Tris-tricine buffer and the like, examples of the phosphate buffer include ACN/NaCl/isotonic phosphate buffer, sodium phosphate/ACN and the like, examples of the borate buffer include sodium borate-hydrochloric acid buffer, Tris-borate/EDTA, borate/ACN and the like, and examples of the acetate buffer include Tris-acetate/EDTA and the like. Preferred is Tris/glycine/methanol buffer or sodium borate-hydrochloric acid buffer. As the composition of the Tris/glycine/methanol buffer, for example, Tris about 10 - 15 mM, glycine 70 - 120 mM, and methanol 7 - 13% can be mentioned. As the composition of the sodium borate-hydrochloric acid buffer, for example, sodium borate about 5 - 20 mM can be mentioned.

[0136] In this way, molecules present in a test sample including target molecule are efficiently trapped on the surface of a support. After drying the plate, a reagent called matrix may be added to absorb laser light and promote ionization of the analysis target molecule by energy transfer, which is advantageous for the subsequent mass spectrometry (by MALDI method). As said matrix, those known in mass spectrometry can be used. Examples thereof include, but are not limited to, sinapinic acid (SPA (=3,5-dimethoxy-4-hydroxycinnamic acid)), indoleacrylic acid (IAA), 2,5-dihydroxybenzoic acid (DHB), α -cyano-4-hydroxycinnamic acid (CHCA) and the like. Preferred is DHB or CHCA.

[0137] The presence and amount of the peptide of the present invention, which is the target molecule, can be identified from the information relating to the molecular weight, which is obtained by mass spectrometry of the molecules in a test sample trapped on the surface of the support by the above-mentioned method.

[0138] Mass spectrometer is an apparatus for measuring and detecting the molecular weight of a substance by ionizing a gaseous sample, injecting the molecules and molecule fragments thereof into the electromagnetic field, separating the molecules and molecule fragments based on the mass number/charge number from the movement thereof and determining the spectrum of the substance. Mass spectrometers based on the principles of MALDI-TOFMS method using, in combination, matrix assisted laser desorption ionization (MALDI) including mixing a sample and matrices absorbing a laser light, drying same to allow crystallization, and directing, into the vacuum, an ionized analysis target obtained by ionization by energy transfer from the matrix and instant heating by laser irradiation, and time-of-flight mass spectrometry (TOFMS) including analyzing mass number from the difference in the flying time of sample molecule ions by initial acceleration, a method of direct, electric ionization from liquid by placing one analysis target on one droplet, a nanoelectrospray mass spectrometry (nano-ESMS) method including electrically spraying a sample solution in the air and leading individual analysis target polyvalent ions in an unfolded state to the gaseous phase and the like can be used.

[0139] The method per se of mass spectrometry of the molecules on a mass spectrometry plate is known. For example, the method described in WO 2004/031759 can be used after appropriate alteration as necessary.

[0140] The presence or absence of the target molecule in the test sample and the amount thereof can be identified based on the molecular weight information of the target molecule from the results of mass spectrometry. In this step, the information from the mass spectrometer can also be compared to the mass spectrometry data of a biological sample from a healthy subject by using any program, and output as differential information. Such program is well known, and it will be appreciated that those of ordinary skill in the art can construct or alter such program with ease by using a known information processing technique.

[0141] In a particularly preferable embodiment, each of the above-mentioned steps are performed using a blotchip by Protosera as a plate for mass spectrometry, the peptide of the present invention is subjected to quantification and comparison (differential analysis) by an MALDI type mass spectrometer. Moreover, where necessary, the peptide remaining in the same chip can also be identified. Alternatively, it is possible to perform the steps up to quantification and comparison (differential analysis) of a test sample by the blotchip system of Protosera, identify the peptide by a combination equipment of high performance liquid chromatography and ion spray type mass spectrometer (LC-MS/MS).

(IX-2) Detection of peptide of the present invention (2)

[0142] In the test method of the present invention, the peptide of the present invention can also be measured by using an antibody thereto. Such method is particularly useful since the peptide can be detected with high sensitivity and high precision without using a special apparatus such as the above-mentioned mass spectrometer, by constructing an optimized immunoassay system and producing a kit containing same.

[0143] As an antibody against the peptide of the present invention, the same antibody as the therapeutic antibody of the above-mentioned (II-2) can be utilized. The test method of the present invention using the antibody is not particularly limited, and any measurement method may be used as long as the amount of an antibody, antigen or antibody-antigen complex corresponding to the amount of antigen in a test sample is detected by a chemical or physical means, and its amount is calculated from a standard curve produced using a standard solution containing a known amount of antigen. For example, nephelometry, competitive method, immunometric method, sandwich method, Western blotting, SPR, turbidimetry and the like are preferably used.

[0144] As a label to be used for a measurement method using a labeling substance, radioisotope, enzyme, fluorescent substance, luminescent substance and the like are used. As the radioisotope, $[^{125}\text{I}]$, $[^{131}\text{I}]$, $[^3\text{H}]$, $[^{14}\text{C}]$ and the like are

used. As the above-mentioned enzyme, a stable enzyme having a large specific activity is preferable and, for example, β -galactosidase, β -glucosidase, alkaline phosphatase, peroxidase, malate dehydrogenase and the like are used. As the fluorescent substance, fluorescamine, fluorescein isothiocyanate and the like are used. As the luminescent substance, luminol, luminol derivative, luciferin, lucigenin and the like are used. Furthermore, biotin-avidin system can be used for the conjugation of an antibody or antigen and a labeling agent.

[0145] For insolubilization of an antigen or antibody, physical adsorption can be used, or a method using chemical binding generally used for insolubilizing or immobilizing a protein, an enzyme and the like may also be used. Examples of the carrier include insoluble polysaccharides such as agarose, dextran, cellulose and the like, synthetic resins such as polystyrene, polyacrylamide, silicon and the like, and glass and the like.

[0146] In the sandwich method, the amount of the peptide of the present invention in a test sample can be quantified by reacting a test sample with an insolubilized antibody (first reaction), further reacting with other labeled antibody (second reaction), and measuring the amount (activity) of the labeling agent on an insolubilized carrier. The first reaction and the second reaction may be performed in a reverse order, or simultaneously or in a staggered manner.

[0147] A monoclonal antibody against the peptide of the present invention can also be used for a measurement system other than the sandwich method, such as competitive method, immunometric method, nephelometry and the like.

[0148] In the competitive method, an antigen and a labeled antigen in a test sample are competitively reacted with an antibody, unreacted labeled antigen (F) and labeled antigen (B) bound to the antibody are separated (B/F separation), the amount of the label of B or F is measured, and the amount of antigen in the test sample is quantified. As this reaction method, a liquid phase method using a soluble antibody as an antibody, B/F separation with polyethylene glycol, a secondary antibody to the aforementioned antibody and the like, or a solid phase immobilization method using a solid-phase-immobilized antibody as a primary antibody, or a soluble primary antibody and a solid-phase-immobilized antibody as a secondary antibody is used.

[0149] In the immunometric method, an antigen and a solid-phase-immobilized antigen in a test sample are competitively reacted with a given amount of labeled antibody and the solid phase and the liquid phase are separated, or an antigen and an excess amount of a labeled antibody in a test sample are reacted, a solid-phase-immobilized antigen is added to bind unreacted labeled antibody to the solid phase, and the solid phase and the liquid phase are separated. Then, the amount of the label in one phase is measured and the amount of the antigen in the test sample is quantified.

[0150] In nephelometry, the amount of an insoluble precipitate resulting from an antigen antibody reaction in a gel or solution is measured. Even when the amount of antigen in the test sample is a trace amount, and only a small amount of precipitate can be obtained, and laser nephelometry utilizing scattering of laser and the like are preferably used.

[0151] When such individual immunological measurement methods are applied to the quantification method of the present invention, special conditions, operation and the like are not necessary. The measurement system of the peptide of the present invention can be constructed by adding general technical consideration by those of ordinary skill in the art to the general conditions and operation for each method. The detail of such general technical means can be found by reference to reviews, books and the like.

[0152] For example, "Radioimmunoassay" edited by Hiroshi IRIE (Kodansha, published in 1974), "Supplementary Radioimmunoassay" edited by Hiroshi IRIE (Kodansha, published in 1979), "Enzyme Immunoassay" edited by Eiji ISHIKAWA et al. (Igaku-Shoin, published in 1978), "Enzyme Immunoassay" edited by Eiji ISHIKAWA et al. (2nd edition, Igaku-Shoin, published in 1982), "Enzyme Immunoassay" edited by Eiji ISHIKAWA et al. (3rd edition, Igaku-Shoin, published in 1987), "Methods in ENZYMOLOGY" Vol. 70 (Immunochemical Techniques (Part A)), ibidem Vol. 73 (Immunochemical Techniques (Part B)), ibidem Vol. 74 (Immunochemical Techniques (Part C)), ibidem Vol. 84 (Immunochemical Techniques (Part D: Selected Immunoassays)), ibidem Vol. 92 (Immunochemical Techniques (Part E: Monoclonal Antibodies and General Immunoassay Methods)), ibidem Vol. 121 (Immunochemical Techniques (Part I: Hybridoma Technology and Monoclonal Antibodies)) (all above published by Academic Press) and the like can be referred to.

[0153] Since the peptide of the present invention is comprised of a protein degradation product, various molecules such as undegraded protein, analogous peptides having a common cleavage site and the like may influence the measurement values in the general "sandwich ELISA system". In the first step, a so-called immuno-mass spectrometry method can be utilized, wherein a biological sample is immunoaffinity-purified by an antibody, and a fraction bound to the antibody is subjected to mass spectrometry in the second step, and identified and quantified based on the precise molecular weight as the standard (e.g., see Rapid Commun. Mass Spectrom. 2007, 21: 352-358). For example, in the case of using a blood sample as a biological sample, even when said sample is directly measured with a MALDI type mass spectrometer, a peak of biomarker is not observed. However, according to an immuno-mass spectrometry method, undegraded protein and analogous peptide are completely separated with a mass spectrometer, and can be quantified using a precise molecular weight of the biomarker as standard at high specificity and sensitivity.

[0154] Alternatively, as other test method of the present invention using the antibody of the present invention, a method including immobilizing the antibody on the surface of a probe applicable to a mass spectrometer as mentioned above, contacting a test sample with the antibody on the probe, analyzing a biological sample component trapped by the antibody by mass spectrometry, and detecting a peak corresponding to the molecular weight of a marker peptide recognized by

the antibody can be mentioned.

(IX-3) Detection of autoantibody of the present invention

5 **[0155]** In the test method of the present invention, the autoantibody of the present invention can be measured by using a peptide recognized by the autoantibody, secondary antibody to the autoantibody, an antibody that recognizes a peptide recognized by the autoantibody and the like. As the peptide recognized by the autoantibody of the present invention, the same therapeutic peptide as in the above-mentioned (II-1) can be utilized. As a secondary antibody to the autoantibody of the present invention, the same therapeutic secondary antibody as in the above-mentioned (II-3) can be utilized. As an antibody that recognizes a peptide recognized by the autoantibody of the present invention, the same antibody as the therapeutic antibody of the above-mentioned (II-2) can be utilized. The test method of the present invention is not particularly limited, and any measurement method may be used as long as the amount of an antigen, antibody, or antigen-antibody complex corresponding to the amount of autoantibody in a test sample is detected by a chemical or physical means, and its amount is calculated from a standard curve produced using a standard solution containing a known amount of antibody. For example, nephelometry, competitive method, immunometric method, sandwich method, Western blotting and the like are preferably used.

[0156] As a label used for a measurement method using a labeling substance, a method for insolubilizing an antigen or antibody and the like, those exemplified in the above-mentioned (IX-2) can be used in the same manner.

20 **[0157]** In one preferable embodiment, the amount of the autoantibody of the present invention in a test sample can be quantified by reacting a test sample with an insolubilized peptide recognized by an autoantibody (first reaction), further reacting with a labeled secondary antibody or labeled antigen to the autoantibody (second reaction), and measuring the amount (activity) of the labeling agent on an insolubilized carrier. The first reaction and the second reaction may be performed in a reverse order, simultaneously or in a staggered manner.

25 **[0158]** In the competitive method, an autoantibody in a test sample and a labeled antibody that recognizes the same antigen are competitively reacted with an antigen peptide, unreacted labeled antibody (F) and labeled antibody (B) bound to the antigen are separated (B/F separation), the amount of the label of B or F is measured, and the amount of autoantibody in the test sample is quantified.

30 **[0159]** In the immunometric method, an autoantibody in a test sample, and a solid-phase-immobilized antibody that recognizes the same antigen are competitively reacted with a given amount of labeled antigen and the solid phase and the liquid phase are separated, or an autoantibody in a test sample and an excess amount of a labeled antigen are reacted, a solid-phase-immobilized antibody is added to bind unreacted labeled antigen to the solid phase, and the solid phase and the liquid phase are separated. Then, the amount of the label in one phase is measured and the amount of the autoantibody in the test sample is quantified.

35 **[0160]** In nephelometry, the amount of an insoluble precipitate resulting from an antigen antibody reaction in a gel or solution is measured. Even when the amount of autoantibody in the test sample is a trace amount, and only a small amount of precipitate can be obtained, and laser nephelometry utilizing scattering of laser and the like are preferably used.

40 **[0161]** Alternatively, using a surface plasmon resonance (SPR) method, a peptide recognized by an autoantibody is immobilized on the surface of a commercially available sensorchip (e.g., manufactured by Biacore) by a conventional method, contacting the peptide with a test sample, a light having a particular wavelength is irradiated on the sensorchip from a particular angle, and the presence or absence of the binding of the autoantibody to the immobilized peptide can be determined using the change of resonance angle as an index. Also, the autoantibody of the present invention can also be measured by a method including immobilizing a peptide recognized by an autoantibody on the surface of a probe applicable to a mass spectrometer as mentioned above, contacting a test sample with the peptide on the probe, analyzing a biological sample component trapped by the peptide by mass spectrometry, and detecting a peak corresponding to the molecular weight of an autoantibody recognizing the peptide, and the like.

45 **[0162]** When the level of the peptide of the present invention and/or the autoantibody of the present invention in a sample derived from a test animal as measured by any of the above-mentioned methods significantly increases as compared to the level of the marker in a control sample of a normal animal, the subject animal can be diagnosed to have a high possibility of being affected with a periodontal disease.

50 **[0163]** The test method of the present invention preferably includes collecting biological samples from patients (animal patients) in a chronological order, and examining time course changes of expression of the peptide of the present invention and/or the autoantibody of the present invention in each sample. While the interval of collection of biological sample is not particularly limited, it is desirable to collect samples as often as possible unless the QOL of the patients (animal patients) is impaired. When the level of the marker decreases over time, the pathology of periodontal disease in the patients (animal patients) is judged to have high likelihood of improvement.

55 **[0164]** The test method of periodontal diseases by the above-mentioned sampling in a chronological order can be used to evaluate the treatment effect of a treatment measure applied between the previous sampling and the most recent sampling in test subjects (patients (animal patients)). That is, in samples before and after the treatment, when the

condition after the treatment provides improvement of the pathology as compared to the condition before the treatment, the treatment can be evaluated to provide effects. On the other hand, when the condition after the treatment does not show improvement of pathology as compared to the condition before the treatment, or judged to have been aggravated, the treatment can be evaluated to provide no effect.

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(X) Production method of periodontal disease animal model

[0165] As shown in the below-mentioned Examples, when a non-human mammal is immunized with keratin or the peptide of the present invention, alveolar bone destruction occurs in the animal. Therefore, the present invention also provides a production method of a periodontal disease animal model by immunizing a non-human mammal with keratin or the peptide of the present invention. As a method for immunizing an animal with keratin or the peptide of the present invention, the above-mentioned method can also be utilized. The keratin or the peptide is intragingly administered for stimulation, whereby the symptom of the periodontal disease can be remarkably reproduced.

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(XI) Keratin degradation promoter

[0166] The present invention has clarified for the first time that periodontal bacterial enzymes such as gingipain and the like have a keratin degrading activity. Therefore, the present invention also provides a keratin degradation promoter containing a periodontal bacterial enzyme. A keratin degradation promoter can be utilized for, for example, improvement of skin cornification of finger, heel, knee, elbow, ankle and the like, improvement of wavy hair, treatment of deformation or discoloration of nail such as ingrown toenail and the like, treatment of nail infections such as tinea unguium and the like, facilitation of skin permeability of medicaments such as ointment, cream and the like, and the like.

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[0167] As the periodontal bacterial enzyme, preferred is gingipain produced by *P. gingivalis*, for example, Kgp, RgpB and HRgpA. These enzymes can be isolated and purified from the periodontal bacterium according to, for example, the method described in Curr Protoc Protein Sci. 2007 Aug; Chapter 21: Unit 21.20. In addition, the enzymes can also be obtained by, based on the sequence information shown by GeneIDs: 6330196 (kgp), 6330928 (rgpB) and 6330747 (rgpA), from among the total genome sequences of *P. gingivalis* ATCC33277 strain registered in the NCBI database as Refseq No. NC_010729.1, cloning these enzyme genes according to a conventional method, introducing the clone into a suitable host cell, culturing the resulting transformant, and recovering a recombinant enzyme protein from the culture medium.

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[0168] The periodontal bacterial enzyme obtained as mentioned above can be directly, or as a suitable composition, formulated into cosmetic agents, pharmaceutical products and the like including quasi-drugs. Examples of the composition include those containing a periodontal bacterial enzyme and a pharmacologically acceptable additive. Preferably, the composition is an external composition for the skin, hair, nail and the like, such as aqueous liquid, ointment, cream, powder, gel, oil, spray, wax, facial mask, adhesive preparation and the like.

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[0169] The amount of the periodontal bacterial enzyme to be contained in the external composition is not particularly limited, and can be appropriately selected from the range of, for example, 0.1 - 99.9 wt%, preferably 1 - 99 wt%, relative to the whole composition. Only one kind of the periodontal bacterial enzyme may be used or two or more kinds thereof may be used in combination.

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[0170] Examples of the additive to be used for the external composition include oil, surfactant, powder, coloring material, water, alcohols, thickener, chelating agent, silicones, antioxidant, active oxygen elimination agent, UV absorber, moisturizer, flavor, various medicinal components, preservative, pH adjuster, neutralizer and the like. They can be combined as appropriate as long as the effect of the present invention is not impaired.

[0171] An external composition containing a periodontal bacterial enzyme can be topically applied, for example, to the skin, hair, nail and the like at a single dose of about 1 - 10 g, 1 to 5 times per day.

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(XII) Evaluation of periodontal bacterium activity

[0172] The present disclosure also provides a method of evaluating the periodontal bacterium activity of a microorganism (whether or not it can be a causative bacterium of periodontal disease, or pathogenicity level thereof), using a keratin degradation action of the microorganism as an index. To be specific, a test bacterium, a secretion product thereof (e.g., culture supernatant) or a processed product thereof (e.g., concentrated liquid, purified fraction) is contacted with keratin, incubated for a given time, and the presence or absence of keratin degradation, and the level thereof are evaluated. As the keratin to be a substrate, keratin present in the gingival epithelium in the above-mentioned (I) (cytok-eratin), a hard keratin having high sequence similarity to the keratin and the like can also be used. The incubation can be performed, for example, at 20 - 40°C, preferably 30 - 40°C, for 0.5 - 24 hr, preferably 1 - 12 hr. Keratin can be degraded by detecting a decrease of keratin protein amount, and production of a low-molecular-weight degradation product by, for example, gel electrophoresis, Western blotting, mass spectrometry and the like.

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[0173] When the degradation of keratin is found in the presence of a subject bacterium, a secretion product thereof or a processed product thereof by the above-mentioned method, the microorganism is judged to have a periodontal bacterium activity, that is, it may cause a periodontal disease when a mammal is infected therewith in the oral cavity.

5 (XIII) Screening for periodontal disease control substance

[0174] Using an inhibitory or promoting action on keratin degradation by a periodontal bacterium as an index, a substance that suppresses or promotes a periodontal disease can be screened for. Such screening can be performed, for example, by using, in the evaluation method of periodontal bacterium activity in the above-mentioned (XII), a known periodontal bacterium (e.g., *P. gingivalis*) or a secretion product thereof or a processed product thereof (e.g., purified gingipain) instead of the subject bacterium and in the presence of a test substance during contact with keratin.

[0175] As the test substance, any known compound or novel compound can be used and, for example, nucleic acid, carbohydrates, lipid, protein, peptide, organic low-molecular-weight compound, a compound library and a random peptide library prepared by a combinatorial chemistry technique, or a natural component derived from microorganism, animals and plants, marine organism and the like, and the like can be mentioned. Particularly, for screening for a periodontal disease promoting substance, various food components, food additives and the like can be mentioned.

[0176] After the completion of incubation, the keratin degradation is measured in the same manner, and when keratin degradation decreased significantly by incubation in the presence of a test substance as compared to incubation in the absence of the test substance, the test substance can be selected as a candidate periodontal disease inhibitory substance. On the other hand, when keratin degradation increased significantly by incubation in the presence of a test substance as compared to incubation in the absence of the test substance, the test substance can be selected as a candidate periodontal disease promoting substance.

[0177] The thus-selected periodontal disease inhibitory substance can be subjected to further research and development as a candidate substance of a novel therapeutic drug for a periodontal disease. On the other hand, for example, a certain food additive is judged to be a periodontal disease promoting substance, information useful for the development of food suitable for the prophylaxis of a periodontal disease, which uses an additive free of a keratin degradation promoting action and which can replace said substance, can be provided.

[0178] The present invention is explained in more detail in the following by referring to Examples, which are not to be construed as limitative.

Examples

Example 1 Analysis of periodontal bacterial enzymatic degradation product derived from rat gingival epithelial cell (GEC)

[0179] Primary gingival epithelial cells (GEC; 6.4×10^6 cells) scraped from a rat were rinsed twice with phosphate buffered saline (PBS). The cells were divided into 4 groups (no treatment, Kgp treatment, RgpB treatment, HRgpA treatment). Three kinds of purified gingipains were respectively added thereto, and the mixtures were incubated at 37°C for 1 hr. After completion of incubation, each treatment solution (1.5 μ L) was mixed with a sample treatment solution for electrophoresis (NuPAGE (registered trade mark) LDS Sample Buffer 4x; Invitrogen, 4.5 μ L), and the mixture was heat-treated at 70°C for 10 min, and applied to 4-12% gradient polyacrylamide gel (Invitrogen) to perform electrophoresis. After completion of electrophoresis, the gel was cut out, laminated on BLOTCHIP (registered trade mark, Protosera, Inc.), and transcribed in a buffer for electric transcription (BLOTBuffer™; Protosera, Inc.) at 90 mA for 120 min. After completion of transcription, the surface of the chip was rinsed with ultrapure water, matrix (α -cyano-4-hydroxy cinnamic acid) was applied to the whole chip, and subjected to mass spectrometry by a matrix-assisted laser desorption ionization time-of-flight (MALDI-TOF) mass spectrometer (manufactured by Bruker Daltnics, Ultra-FlexII). The measurement parameter was Detector voltage 1685 V, Supression 1000, Fuzzy mode, Laser Intensity of 28 - 35, laser irradiation at 415 points per chip, 500 times of laser irradiations per point, 207,500 times in total of laser irradiation. Each peak intensity in the obtained spectrum was integrated for each M/z and converted to one integrated spectrum. The integrated spectrum was subjected to differential profiling analysis between treated solutions using ClinProTools (Bruker Daltonik GmbH). Furthermore, the thus-obtained analysis results were compared to the peak in the actual integrated spectrum.

[0180] As a result, in the Kgp-treated GEC, peptides having molecular weights of about 2215 and about 2230, which showed remarkable increase as compared to non-treatment and other gingipain treatment (peak 1 and peak 2); in the RgpB-treated GEC, peptides having molecular weights of about 2277 and about 2293, which showed remarkable increase as compared to non-treatment and other gingipain treatment (peak 3 and peak 4); and in RgpB- or HRgpA-treated GEC, peptide having a molecular weight of about 2638, which showed remarkable increase as compared to non-treatment and Kgp treatment (peak 5), were found (Fig. 1, Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1

Peak intensity ratio (ratio of each peak intensity relative to enzyme-free group)					
No	MW (calc)	Peak intensity ratio relative to control			Note
		Kgp	HRgpA	RgpB	
1	2215.10	11.6			
2	2230.07	14.9			
3	2277.18			1.4	
4	2293.18			23.5	Oxidized product of No. 3
5	2638.37		8.4	18.7	

Table 2

p value (significant difference in each peak intensity relative to enzyme-free group)					
No	MW (calc)	p value in T-test			Note
		Kgp	HRgpA	RgpB	
1	2215.10	0.00105			
2	2230.07	0.00027			
3	2277.18			0.04790	
4	2293.18			0.02112	Oxidized product of No. 3
5	2638.37		0.00066	0.00242	

Example 2 Identification of periodontal bacterial enzymatic degradation product derived from GEC

[0181] For identification, matrix-assisted laser desorption ionization time-of-flight (MALDI-TOF) mass spectrometer (UltraFlexII manufactured by Bruker Daltonics) was used, and mass calibration was performed using Bradykinin, Angiotensin II, Angiotensin I, Substance P, Bombesin, Renin Substrate, ACTH Clip{1-17}, ACTH Clip{18-39}, and Somatostatin. Thereafter, profiling was performed on the reflectron measurement mode, and identification was performed by MS/MS analysis based on the selected peptide peak and fragment ion thereof by matching with NCBI nr and SwissProt database through MASCOT search engine installed in Biotoools (Bruker Daltonik GmbH).

[0182] As a result, peptides of peak Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 5 (to be referred to as peptides 1, 2, 3 and 5, respectively) were identified as peptides consisting of the amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1, 15, 2 and 3, respectively. The peptide of peak No. 4 (to be also referred to as peptide 4) was peptide 3 with oxidized Met residue. As a result of homology search, it was clarified that peptide 1 was a fragment of Keratin 6A, peptide 2 was a fragment of Keratin 5, peptides 3 and 4 were fragments of Keratin 14, and peptide 5 was a fragment of Keratin 17. Furthermore, the results of homology search of ortholog and paralog of other mammals including human are shown in Tables 3 - 6. The amino acid sequences of the regions corresponding to peptides 1 - 5 were well conserved between mammals.

[Table 3-1]

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peptide No.	identified sequence	substrate	enzyme	identity search results		
				human	rat	mouse
1	YEELQITAGRHGDGDLRNTK	rat gingival epithelial cell	Kyp	YEELQITAGRHGDGDLRNTK	YEELQITAGRHGDGDLRNTK	YEELQITAGRHGDGDLRNTK
2	YEELQITAGRHGDGDLRNTK	rat gingival epithelial cell	Kyp			
3	TKYMDVHDGKVVSTHEQVLR	rat gingival epithelial cell	RipB			
4	TKYMDVHDGKVVSTHEQVLR+ (Q)	rat gingival epithelial cell	RipB			
5	TIVEEVQDGKVISSRECVKQITR	rat gingival epithelial cell	RipB/RipA			
6	RTAAENEFTYTK	human Keratin 6	Kyp	RTAAENEFTYTK	RTAAENEFTYTK	RTAAENEFTYTK
7	AGYEELAGRSRAEAESEFTYQTK	human Keratin 6	Kyp	AGYEELAGRSRAEAESEFTYQTK		AGYEELAGRSRAEAESEFTYQTK
8	TKFEIEDALR	human Keratin 17	RipB			
9	DVYEKMAEAMR	human Keratin 17	RipB			
10	TIVEEVQDGKVISSR	human Keratin 17	RipB			
11	QFTSSSIKSSGSLGGSSR	human Keratin 17	RipB			
12	EYATNSELVQSGKSESELR	human Keratin 17	RipB			

[Table 3-2]

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peptide No.	identified sequence	substrate	enzyme	identity search results		
				human	rat	mouse
1	YEELQITAGRHGGDILRNTK	rat gingival epithelial cell	Kyp	YEELQVTAGRHGGDILRNTK	YEELQITAGRHGGDILRNTK	YEELQVTAGRHGGDILRNTK
2	YEELQATAGRHGGDILRNTK	rat gingival epithelial cell	Kyp			
3	IKVMYPRDGRNYSSTHEGVLR	rat gingival epithelial cell	RypB			
4	IKVMYPRDGRNYSSTHEGVLR + (Q)	rat gingival epithelial cell	RypB			
5	ITVEEVQDQKVISSREGVHQITR	rat gingival epithelial cell	RypB/RypA			
6	RTAAENEFYTLK	human Keratin 6	Kyp	RTAAENEFYTLK	RTAAENEFYTLK	RTAAENEFYTLK
7	AOYEEIAGRSRAEAESEHWYQTK	human Keratin 6	Kyp	AOYEEIAGRSRAEAESEHWYQTK	AOYEEIAGRSRAEAESEHWYQTK	AOYEEIAGRSRAEAESEHWYQTK
8	ITAFETQALR	human Keratin 17	RypB			
9	DQYEKMAEENR	human Keratin 17	RypB			
10	ITVEEVQDQKVISSR	human Keratin 17	RypB			
11	QFTSSSIKSSGLGGSSR	human Keratin 17	RypB			
12	EYATNSELVQSQKSEISLR	human Keratin 17	RypB			

[Table 3-3]

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peptide No.	identified sequence	substrate	enzyme	identity search results
1	YEELQITAGRHHGDDLRNTK	rat gingival epithelial cell	Kgp	Keratin 6C human
2	YEELQQTABIRHGGDLRNTK	rat gingival epithelial cell	Kgp	YEELQVTAGRHHGDDLRNTK
3	TKVMDVHDKKVVSTHEQVLR	rat gingival epithelial cell	RypB	
4	TKVMDVHDKKVVSTHEQVLR+ (Q)	rat gingival epithelial cell	RypB	
5	ITVEVQDGRVSSRREQVHQITTR	rat gingival epithelial cell	RypB/RypA	
6	RTAAENEFYTK	human Keratin 6	Kgp	RTAAENEFYTK
7	ACVEEIAGRSRRAEASWYQTK	human Keratin 6	Kgp	ACVEEIAGRSRRAEASWYQTK
8	ITPTEQALR	human Keratin 17	RypB	
9	DQYERMAENR	human Keratin 17	RypB	
10	ITVEVQDGRVSSR	human Keratin 17	RypB	
11	QFTSSSSIKSSGLGGSSR	human Keratin 17	RypB	
12	EVATNSELYQSGKSESLR	human Keratin 17	RypB	

[Table 4]

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peptide no.	identified sequence	substrate	enzyme	Kilobyte search results			
				flatfish	chickadee	bovina	fish
1	YEELOCTAGRHSDGLRNTK	rat gingival epithelial cell	Kpp				
2	YEELOCTAGRHSDGLRNTK	rat gingival epithelial cell	Kpp	YEELOCTAGRHSDGLRNTK	YEELOCTAGRHSDGLRNTK	YEELOCTAGRHSDGLRNTK	YEELOCTAGRHSDGLRNTK
3	IKVADPPHRRVYRTHKQYLN	rat gingival epithelial cell	Kpp				
4	IKVADPPHRRVYRTHKQYLN	rat gingival epithelial cell	Kpp				
5	ITVEEYDQNSYIRMSQYRNTK	rat gingival epithelial cell	Kpp				
6	RTTARNEFYMLK	human keratin 6	Kpp	RTTARNEFYMLK	RTTARNEFYMLK	RTTARNEFYMLK	RTTARNEFYMLK
7	ADVEENNRKTEAEQWYQTK	human keratin 6	Kpp	ADVEENNRKTEAEQWYQTK	ADVEENNRKTEAEQWYQTK	ADVEENNRKTEAEQWYQTK	ADVEENNRKTEAEQWYQTK
8	ITFEIETQALR	human keratin 17	Kpp				
9	IKVADPPHRRVYRTHKQYLN	human keratin 17	Kpp				
10	ITVEEYDQNSYIRMSQYRNTK	human keratin 17	Kpp				
11	QFTRSEVSRSSSLQRELRK	human keratin 17	Kpp				
12	IKVADPPHRRVYRTHKQYLN	human keratin 17	Kpp				

[Table 5]

peptide No.	identified sequence	substrate	enzyme	identity search results		
				human	rat	mouse
1	YEELQITAGRHHGDDLRNTK	rat gingival epithelial cell	Kgp			
2	YEELQITAGRHHGDDLRNTK	rat gingival epithelial cell	Kgp			
3	TKVMDVHDKVYVSTHEQVLR	rat gingival epithelial cell	RppB	TKVMDVHDKVYVSTHEQVLR	TKVMDVHDKVYVSTHEQVLR	TKVMDVHDKVYVSTHEQVLR
4	TKVMDVHDKVYVSTHEQVLR(Q)	rat gingival epithelial cell	RppB			
5	TIVEEYDQKVISSHEQVHQITR	rat gingival epithelial cell	RppB/RppA			
6	RTAAENEFTLK	human Keratin 6	Kgp			
7	ADVEEIAQRBRAEASWYQIK	human Keratin 6	Kgp			
8	TKFETEQLR	human Keratin 17	RppB	TKYETELALR	TKFETEQLR	TKFETEQLR
9	DQYKMAEKNR	human Keratin 17	RppB	DQYKMAEKNR	DQYKMAEKNR	DQYKMAEKNR
10	TIVEEYDQKVISSR	human Keratin 17	RppB			
11	QFTSSSSIKQSSGLQGGSSR	human Keratin 17	RppB	QFTSSSSMKQSCDGGGGSSR	QFTSSSSMKQSCDGGGGSSR	QFTSSSSMKQSCDGGGGSSR
12	EVATNSELVQSGKSEISELR	human Keratin 17	RppB	EVATNSELVQSGKSEISELR	EVATNSELVQSGKSEISELR	EVATNSELVQSGKSEISELR

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[Table 6]

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peptide No.	Identified sequence	substrate	enzyme	Identify each residue			
				number	character	Bayliba	ref
1	VEEKDITAGTHFHEIDLPMTK	2M G13301 S21255102	Kop				
2	YAEKLDITAGTHFHEIDLPMTK	2M G13301 S21255102	Kop				
3	TKVAVYHDKYVSTHESVALR(10)	2M G13301 S21255102	Papir				
4	TKVAVYHDKYVSTHESVALR(10)	2M G13301 S21255102	Papir				
5	ITVEVQDQKVISAEVYVQITL	2M G13301 S21255102	Papir				
6	RTKAEHEVTLK	Human Keratin 6	Kop				
7	ADVEKAGKIMKAZARVYTK	Human Keratin 6	Kop				
8	ITPFEISALR	Human Keratin 17	Papir				
9	QVTEIDAEKIK	Human Keratin 17	Papir				
10	ITVEVQDQKVISAEVYVQITL	Human Keratin 17	Papir				
11	QPTESKIKGKSTLDIGSIAK	Human Keratin 17	Papir				
12	EVATNRELVDGSRERELK	Human Keratin 17	Papir				

Example 3 On spot profiling and identification of periodontal bacterial enzymatic degradation product of keratin

[0183] To identify further periodontal bacterial enzymatic degradation product derived from keratin, on spot profiling was performed. Human Keratin 6 and Keratin 17 were treated with purified gingipain (Kgp for Keratin 6, RgpB for Keratin 17) in the same manner as in Example 1, and profiling of the enzymatic degradation product was performed by mass spectrometry in the same manner as in Example 1. The results are shown in Fig. 2. Besides peptide 1 identified in Example 2 (Kgp degradation product of Keratin 6) and peptide 5 (RgpB/HRgpA degradation product of Keratin 17), plural peaks of degradation products were detected.

[0184] In the same manner as in Example 2, the detected peaks were identified. As a result, peptides consisting of the amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 4 and 5 (peptides 6 and 7) were newly identified as Kgp degradation products of human Keratin 6, and peptides consisting of the amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 6 - 10 (peptides 8 - 12) were newly identified as RgpB degradation products of human Keratin 17 (Fig. 3). Furthermore, the results of homology search of ortholog and paralog of other mammals are shown in Tables 3 - 6. The amino acid sequences of the regions corresponding to peptides 6 - 12 were well conserved between mammals.

Example 4 Confirmation of presence of biomarker in interdental liquid of periodontal disease patients

[0185] Sterile paper points were inserted into the gingival sulcus of periodontitis patients and healthy subjects for 5 min, and this procedure was repeated three times to collect interdental liquid. These paper points were immersed in saline to prepare interdental liquid samples. These interdental liquid samples were subjected to differential profiling in the same manner as in Example 1. The results are shown in Fig. 4. Clear peaks corresponding to peptides 1, 3 and 5 were detected in periodontitis patients, but otherwise in healthy subjects. The present Example has revealed that keratin degradation due to periodontal bacterial enzyme actually occurs in periodontal disease patients, and therefore, the keratin degradation products are useful as biomarkers of periodontal disease.

Example 5 Confirmation of presence of biomarker in serum of periodontal disease patients

[0186] Serum samples obtained from periodontal disease patients with different symptoms (mild, moderate and severe, 3 patients each) and healthy subjects (10 people) were subjected to differential profiling in the same manner as in Example 1, and the presence of keratin degradation products in blood was verified. As a result, peptide 3 was detected at significantly high levels in the sera of the periodontal disease patients regardless of symptom levels as compared to healthy subjects (Fig. 5). In addition, the patients with severe symptoms tended to show somewhat higher blood levels. The above-mentioned results have revealed that keratin degradation products are useful not only as biomarkers in an interdental liquid (dental plaque) but also in blood of periodontal disease.

Example 6 Confirmation of presence of biomarker in plasma of periodontal disease patients by ELISA

[0187] A monoclonal antibody to peptide 1 (Kgp degradation product of Keratin 6) was produced according to a conventional method, and the presence of the peptide in the plasma of periodontal disease patients and healthy subjects by ELISA method. The results are shown in Fig. 6. In the plasma derived from healthy subjects, peptide 1 was undetectable, whereas the peptide was detected in the plasma derived from the periodontitis patients. That is, it was shown that keratin is decomposed by periodontal bacterial enzymes to injure the gingival epithelial tissues of the patients, and the generated keratin degradation product penetrates into the blood from the gingival sulcus.

Example 7 T cell stimulation by full-length keratin and fragment thereof

[0188] Lymphocytes obtained from periodontitis patients and healthy subjects were subjected to a drug-induced lymphocyte stimulation test (DLST) using full-length human Keratin 6 and peptide 1 (fragment thereof) (periodontitis patients: N=22, healthy subjects: N=5). As a result, full-length human Keratin 6 and peptide 1 showed remarkable T cell proliferation induction potency in periodontitis patients as compared to healthy subjects (Table 7). This suggests involvement of autoimmune response to the degraded product of Keratin, which intravasated into the circulation, in the periodontal diseases.

[Table 7]

	Full-length human Keratin 6	Peptide 1	Scramble peptide
Periodontitis patients	13/22	3/22	0/22

(continued)

	Full-length human Keratin 6	Peptide 1	Scramble peptide
Healthy subject	2/5	0/5	0/5

Example 8 Confirmation of presence of Keratin 6 degradation product and anti-human Keratin 6 autoantibody in sera of periodontal disease patients

[0189] To verify the involvement of autoimmune responses to keratin degradation products in periodontal diseases, the presence of peptide 1 (fragment of Keratin 6) and autoantibody thereto in the sera of gingivitis and periodontitis patients was examined. Peptide 1 was detected by ELISA method using an anti-human peptide 1 monoclonal antibody, and anti-human Keratin 6 autoantibody was detected by Western blotting using full-length human Keratin 6 protein. The results are shown in Fig. 7. Peptide 1 and anti-human Keratin 6 autoantibody were not detected in any healthy subject sera, whereas peptide 1 and anti-human Keratin 6 autoantibody were detected in all sera derived from gingivitis and periodontitis patients. In addition, blood peptide level and blood autoantibody level tended to be higher in periodontitis patients with high severity.

Example 9 Increased expression of RANKL in lymphocytes of periodontal disease patients

[0190] Blood samples were collected from progressive (untreated) periodontitis patients, periodontitis patients during treatment and periodontitis patients after treatment to obtain lymphocytes, stimulated with full-length human Keratin 6 (K6; 2 or 4 μ g/ml) or peptide 1 (K6F; 60 or 30 μ g/ml), expression of RANKL in lymphocytes was examined by Western blot analysis using anti RANKL antibody. As a result, RANKL was not expressed in lymphocytes of healthy subject (Non-PD) and periodontitis patients after treatment (Maintenance Phase), and increased expression of RANKL was observed in the lymphocytes of untreated periodontitis patients and periodontitis patients during treatment (Fig. 8A). In addition, RT-PCR of RNA derived from the lymphocytes of periodontitis patients showed that expression of RANKL mRNA tended to increase by the stimulation with full-length human Keratin 6 (FLK6) or peptide 1 (K6F) and, in the co-presence of anti-peptide 1 antibody (K6F+K6F Ab), expression of RANKL mRNA was remarkably suppressed (Fig. 8B). Fluorescent staining was performed to examine induction of lymphoblast formation by the stimulation with full-length human Keratin 6 or peptide 1. As a result, it was correlated well with the expression of RANKL mRNA (Fig. 8C).

[0191] Peripheral blood monocytes derived from severe periodontitis patients were stimulated with full-length human Keratin 6 (FL) or peptide 1 (K6F), and immunostained with anti-RANKL antibody and anti-CD3 antibody. As a result, due to the stimulation with FL or K6F, CD positive cells (T cells) that express RANKL remarkably increased (Fig. 8D). Stimulation with scramble peptide did not increase RANKL expressing T cells.

Example 10 Differentiative induction to osteoclast in sera of periodontal disease patients by stimulation with keratin or periodontal bacterial enzymatic degradation product thereof

[0192] T cells obtained from peripheral blood of the periodontal disease patients and healthy subject were stimulated with full-length human Keratin 6 (FL) or peptide 1 (K6F), and differentiation into polynuclear giant cells was observed by tissue staining. As a result, remarkable differentiation into polynuclear giant cells was observed in periodontal disease patients by the stimulation with FL or K6F. Addition of OPG-Fc (RANKL inhibitor) remarkably suppressed the differentiation into polynuclear giant cells (Fig. 9A). In addition, as a result of a pit formation assay, formation of a marked bone resorption pit due to the stimulation with FL or K6F was observed in dentin section (Fig. 9B). The above results strongly suggest that induced expression of RANKL due to the stimulation with FL or K6F induces differentiation into osteoclast-like polynuclear giant cells via RANKL/RANK signal, and enhances bone resorption.

Example 11 Effect of immunization of rat with keratin or periodontal bacterial enzymatic degradation product thereof

[0193] PBS, full-length human Keratin 6 (FLK6) or peptide 1 (K6F) was administered by intragingival injection to the lower left jaw of rats. The rats injected with FLK6 or K6F showed tumescence of lower jaw lymph node (Lt), whereas the rats injected with PBS showed no change. No rat showed tumescence of lower jaw lymph node on the right side (Rt) which was free of injection (Fig. 10). The lymphocytes obtained from these rats were stimulated with FLK6 or K6F and cultured. Lymphoblast formation was observed in the lymphocytes of rats injected with FLK6 or K6F, and stimulation with FLK6 or K6F further enhanced lymphoblast formation (Fig. 11). In addition, peripheral blood mononuclear leukocytes were obtained from these rats, stimulated with K6F or scramble peptide (Sc), and expression of RANKL and CD3 were examined by FACS analysis. As a result, the rats injected with FLK6 or K6F showed enhanced expression of RANKL and

CD3 by stimulation with K6F. However, stimulation with Sc did not induce expression thereof (Fig. 12). Moreover, alveolar bone destruction in these rats was examined. As a result, alveolar bone destruction was observed in the lower jaw of the rats injected with FLK6 or K6F (Fig. 13).

5 Example 12 Binding of periodontal bacterial enzymatic degradation product of keratin to gingiva fibroblast

[0194] Various cells were stimulated with FITC-labeled peptide 1 (K6F, P-1), observed under a confocal microscope, and the binding level to K6F was shown by percentage higher than that of the control cell (Fig. 14). As a result, gingiva fibroblast (GF) showed far higher binding level to K6F as compared to other cells.

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Example 13 Induced expression of various cytokines and activation of MAPK pathway in gingiva fibroblast due to stimulation with keratin periodontal bacterial enzymatic degradation product

[0195] Gingiva fibroblasts were stimulated with peptide 1 (K6F), recombinant Keratin 6 (RK6, Rec-K6) or scramble peptide (Sc) for 2 - 24 hr, and the expression levels of MMP-2, MMP-3, MCP-1, IL-6, IL-8 were measured by Western blot analysis. As a result, these cytokines and chemokines showed remarkably increased expression by the stimulation with K6F and were activated (Fig. 15A - D). Then, gingiva fibroblast (GF) and gingival epithelial cell (GEC) were stimulated with peptide 1 (K6F) or scramble peptide (Sc), respectively, for 15 min - 2 hr, and phosphorylation of p38 in GF, as well as expression of $\text{I}\kappa\text{B-}\alpha$ and phosphorylation of p65 $\text{NF}\kappa\text{B}$ and activation of representative serine/threonine kinase in GEC were examined. As a result, K6F induced activation of p38 MAPK in GF, but did not induce degradation of $\text{I}\kappa\text{B}$ and activation of p65 $\text{NF}\kappa\text{B}$ (Fig. 16A). In addition, K6F induced activation of ERK and Akt in GEC (Fig. 16B).

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[0196] The above results strongly suggest that keratin or a periodontal bacterial enzymatic degradation product thereof induces expression of various cytokines and chemokines in topical gingival tissues and develop inflammation and induce expression of RANKL in osteoblasts and the like, said keratin or a degradation product thereof that transferred into the blood stimulates growth of T cells and induces expression of RANKL on the cell surface, and these RANKL expressing cells act on RANK in osteoclast progenitor cells to induce differentiation into osteoclasts and enhance bone resorption, which causes destruction of alveolar bone, develops and aggravates periodontal diseases, and causes systemic complications.

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30 Industrial Applicability

[0197] Since a substance having affinity to keratin in gingival epithelium or a degradation product thereof and a substance having affinity to an autoantibody to said degradation product can suppress an autoimmune response caused by the degradation product, they are useful as agents for the prophylaxis or treatment of a periodontal disease and a systemic complication thereof. In addition, these substances are also useful as diagnostic reagents for periodontal diseases. Since a substance having affinity to keratin in gingival epithelium or a periodontal bacterial enzymatic degradation product thereof can also inhibit T cell proliferation and increased expression of RANKL in the cell due to the keratin or a degradation product thereof, it suppresses differentiation of osteoclast progenitor cell into osteoclast via RANKL/RANK signal and inhibits bone resorption. Therefore, it is useful as an agent for the prophylaxis or treatment of a periodontal disease and a systemic complication thereof.

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[0198] Moreover, since a periodontal bacterial enzyme has a keratin degrading activity, it is useful for removal of stratum corneum, prevention of wavy hair, removal of unwanted hair, enhancement of skin permeability of medicaments, deformation or discoloration of nail such as ingrown toenail and the like, treatment of Trichophyton infections such as tinea unguium, and the like.

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[0199] Furthermore, a screening method using degradation of keratin as an index is useful for identification of a novel periodontal bacterium and search for a candidate substance of a therapeutic drug for a periodontal disease.

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 260 265 270

15
 Asp Ala Ala Pro Gly Val Asp Leu Ser Arg Ile Leu Asn Glu Met Arg
 275 280 285

20
 Asp Gln Tyr Glu Lys Met Ala Glu Lys Asn Arg Lys Asp Ala Glu Glu
 290 295 300

25
 Trp Phe Phe Thr Lys Thr Glu Glu Leu Asn Arg Glu Val Ala Thr Asn
 305 310 315 320

30
 Ser Glu Leu Val Gln Ser Gly Lys Ser Glu Ile Ser Glu Leu Arg Arg
 325 330 335

35
 Thr Met Gln Asn Leu Glu Ile Glu Leu Gln Ser Gln Leu Ser Met Lys
 340 345 350

40
 Ala Ser Leu Glu Asn Ser Leu Glu Glu Thr Lys Gly Arg Tyr Cys Met
 355 360 365

45
 Gln Leu Ala Gln Ile Gln Glu Met Ile Gly Ser Val Glu Glu Gln Leu
 370 375 380

50
 Ala Gln Leu Arg Cys Glu Met Glu Gln Gln Asn Gln Glu Tyr Lys Ile
 385 390 395 400

55
 Leu Leu Asp Val Lys Thr Arg Leu Glu Gln Glu Ile Ala Thr Tyr Arg
 405 410 415

60
 Arg Leu Leu Glu Gly Glu Asp Ala His Leu Ser Ser Ser Gln Phe Ser
 420 425 430

65
 Ser Gly Ser Gln Ser Ser Arg Asp Val Thr Ser Ser Ser Arg Gln Ile
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70
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75
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 465 470

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<210> 14
<211> 432
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Met Thr Thr Ser Ile Arg Gln Phe Thr Ser Ser Ser Ser Ile Lys Gly
 1 5 10 15
 5 Ser Ser Gly Leu Gly Gly Gly Ser Ser Arg Thr Ser Cys Arg Leu Ser
 20 25 30
 10 Gly Gly Leu Gly Ala Gly Ser Cys Arg Leu Gly Ser Ala Gly Gly Leu
 35 40 45
 15 Gly Ser Thr Leu Gly Gly Ser Ser Tyr Ser Ser Cys Tyr Ser Phe Gly
 50 55 60
 20 Ser Gly Gly Gly Tyr Gly Ser Ser Phe Gly Gly Val Asp Gly Leu Leu
 65 70 75 80
 25 Ala Gly Gly Glu Lys Ala Thr Met Gln Asn Leu Asn Asp Arg Leu Ala
 85 90 95
 30 Ser Tyr Leu Asp Lys Val Arg Ala Leu Glu Glu Ala Asn Thr Glu Leu
 100 105 110
 35 Glu Val Lys Ile Arg Asp Trp Tyr Gln Arg Gln Ala Pro Gly Pro Ala
 115 120 125
 40 Arg Asp Tyr Ser Gln Tyr Tyr Arg Thr Ile Glu Glu Leu Gln Asn Lys
 130 135 140
 45 Ile Leu Thr Ala Thr Val Asp Asn Ala Asn Ile Leu Leu Gln Ile Asp
 145 150 155 160
 50 Asn Ala Arg Leu Ala Ala Asp Asp Phe Arg Thr Lys Phe Glu Thr Glu
 165 170 175
 55 Gln Ala Leu Arg Leu Ser Val Glu Ala Asp Ile Asn Gly Leu Arg Arg
 180 185 190
 Val Leu Asp Glu Leu Thr Leu Ala Arg Ala Asp Leu Glu Met Gln Ile
 195 200 205
 50 Glu Asn Leu Lys Glu Glu Leu Ala Tyr Leu Lys Lys Asn His Glu Glu
 210 215 220
 55 Glu Met Asn Ala Leu Arg Gly Gln Val Gly Gly Glu Ile Asn Val Glu
 225 230 235 240

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Met Asp Ala Ala Pro Gly Val Asp Leu Ser Arg Ile Leu Asn Glu Met
245 250 255

5 Arg Asp Gln Tyr Glu Lys Met Ala Glu Lys Asn Arg Lys Asp Ala Glu
260 265 270

10 Asp Trp Phe Phe Ser Lys Thr Glu Glu Leu Asn Arg Glu Val Ala Thr
275 280 285

15 Asn Ser Glu Leu Val Gln Ser Gly Lys Ser Glu Ile Ser Glu Leu Arg
290 295 300

Arg Thr Met Gln Ala Leu Glu Ile Glu Leu Gln Ser Gln Leu Ser Met
305 310 315 320

20 Lys Ala Ser Leu Glu Gly Asn Leu Ala Glu Thr Glu Asn Arg Tyr Cys
325 330 335

25 Val Gln Leu Ser Gln Ile Gln Gly Leu Ile Gly Ser Val Glu Glu Gln
340 345 350

Leu Ala Gln Leu Arg Cys Glu Met Glu Gln Gln Asn Gln Glu Tyr Lys
355 360 365

30 Ile Leu Leu Asp Val Lys Thr Arg Leu Glu Gln Glu Ile Ala Thr Tyr
370 375 380

35 Arg Arg Leu Leu Glu Gly Glu Asp Ala His Leu Thr Gln Tyr Lys Lys
385 390 395 400

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45 <210> 15
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1 5 10 15

55 Asn Thr Lys

Claims

1. A peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence shown by any of SEQ ID NOs:1-3, 5 and 7-9.
- 5 2. An antibody specifically recognizing the peptide according to claim 1.
3. A diagnostic reagent for a periodontal disease, comprising an antibody specifically recognizing a peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence shown by any of SEQ ID NOs: 1-10.
- 10 4. A test method for the diagnosis of a periodontal disease of a test animal, comprising measuring an amount of one or more peptides selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6 and/or one or more autoantibodies selected from the group consisting of autoantibodies to respective peptides of said group of peptides, in a biological sample, selected from blood, plasma, serum, interdental liquid, urine or saliva, obtained from the test animal, wherein the amount of the peptides and/or autoantibodies are measured by applying the biological sample to mass spectrometry, or by a method selected from ELISA method, RIA method, nephelometry and SPR method.
- 15 5. The method according to claim 4, comprising using one or more antibodies selected from the group consisting of antibodies to respective peptides consisting of amino acid sequences by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6, and/or one or more peptides selected from the group of peptides consisting of the amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6.
- 20 6. The method according to claim 5, comprising measuring the peptides and/or the autoantibodies according to a method selected from ELISA method, RIA method, nephelometry and SPR method.
- 25 7. The method according to any one of claims 4 to 6, comprising providing biological samples collected from the test animal in a chronological order, and measuring time course changes of an amount of one or more peptides selected from the group of peptides consisting of the amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6, and/or one or more autoantibodies selected from the group consisting of autoantibodies to respective peptides of said group of peptides in the samples.
- 30 8. A method of evaluating a treatment effect in a patient with a periodontal disease, comprising measuring changes of an amount of one or more peptides selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6, and/or one or more autoantibodies selected from the group consisting of autoantibodies to respective peptides of said group of peptides, in biological samples obtained from said patient before and after the treatment.
- 35 9. A peptide selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralog thereof as shown in Tables 3-6, or an antibody to the peptide, for use in the inhibition of an autoimmune response to the peptide in a mammal having a periodontal bacterium in the oral cavity.
- 40 10. The peptide or antibody according to claim 9, for use in the prophylaxis and/or treatment of a periodontal disease and/or a complication thereof.
- 45 11. An *in vitro* method of screening for a substance inhibiting an autoimmune response to a peptide selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6, in a mammal having a periodontal bacterium in the oral cavity, which method comprises
 - (1) a step of contacting an autoantibody to said peptide with a test substance,
 - 50 (2) a step of measuring their binding level, and
 - (3) a step of selecting a test substance bound to said autoantibody as a candidate inhibitory substance of said autoimmune response.
- 55 12. An antibody to a peptide selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6, for use in the prophylaxis and/or treatment of a periodontal disease and/or a complication thereof.
13. An *in vitro* method of screening for an inhibitory substance of RANKL expression in a mammal having a periodontal

bacterium in the oral cavity, comprising the following steps:

- (1) a step of contacting a peptide selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6 with a test substance,
- (2) a step of measuring their binding level, and
- (3) a step of selecting a test substance bound to said peptide.

14. An *in vitro* method of screening for an inhibitory substance of RANKL expression in a mammal having a periodontal bacterium in the oral cavity, comprising the following steps:

- (1) a step of contacting, in the presence and absence of a test substance, a peptide selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs: 1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6 with a non-human mammal-derived T cell immunized with the peptide,
- (2) a step of measuring one or more selected from the group consisting of

- a) a binding level of said peptide,
- b) a level of T cell proliferation, and
- c) an expression level of RANKL in the T cell, each of which in the presence and absence of the test substance, and

- (3) a step of selecting a test substance that decreased any of the above-mentioned a) - c) as a candidate inhibitory substance of RANKL expression.

15. A method of producing a periodontal disease animal model, comprising immunizing a non-human mammal with a peptide selected from the group of peptides consisting of amino acid sequences shown by SEQ ID NOs:1-10 or orthologs and paralogs thereof as shown in Tables 3-6.

Patentansprüche

1. Peptid, das aus der Aminosäuresequenz besteht, die in einem von SEQ ID Nr. 1-3, 5 und 7-9 gezeigt ist.
2. Antikörper, der das Peptid gemäß Anspruch 1 spezifisch erkennt.
3. Diagnostisches Reagens für eine Zahnfleischerkrankung, umfassend einen Antikörper, der ein Peptid, das aus der Aminosäuresequenz besteht, die in einem von SEQ ID Nr. 1-10 gezeigt ist, spezifisch erkennt.
4. Testverfahren für die Diagnose einer Zahnfleischerkrankung bei einem Versuchstier, umfassend das Messen einer Menge von einem oder mehreren Peptiden, die aus der Gruppe von Peptiden, die aus Aminosäuresequenzen bestehen, die in SEQ ID Nr. 1-10 gezeigt sind, oder Orthologen und Paralogen davon, wie sie in den Tabellen 3-6 gezeigt sind, ausgewählt sind, und/oder von einem oder mehreren Autoantikörpern, die aus der Gruppe ausgewählt sind, die aus Autoantikörpern gegen jeweilige Peptide aus der Gruppe von Peptiden besteht, in einer biologischen Probe, die aus Blut, Plasma, Serum, Interdentalflüssigkeit, Urin oder Speichel ausgewählt ist und von dem Versuchstier erhalten wurde, wobei die Menge der Peptide und/oder Autoantikörper dadurch, dass man Massenspektrometrie auf die biologische Probe anwendet, oder durch ein Verfahren, das aus dem ELISA-Verfahren, dem RIA-Verfahren, Nephelometrie und dem SPR-Verfahren ausgewählt ist, gemessen wird.
5. Verfahren gemäß Anspruch 4, umfassend das Verwenden eines oder mehrerer Antikörper, die aus der Gruppe, die aus Antikörpern gegen jeweilige Peptide, die aus Aminosäuresequenzen gemäß SEQ ID Nr. 1-10 bestehen, oder Orthologen und Paralogen davon, wie sie in den Tabellen 3-6 gezeigt sind, besteht, ausgewählt sind, und/oder eines oder mehrerer Peptide, die aus der Gruppe von Peptiden, die aus Aminosäuresequenzen bestehen, die in SEQ ID Nr. 1-10 gezeigt sind, oder Orthologen und Paralogen davon, wie sie in den Tabellen 3-6 gezeigt sind, ausgewählt sind.
6. Verfahren gemäß Anspruch 5, umfassend das Messen der Peptide und/oder der Autoantikörper nach einem Verfahren, das aus dem ELISA-Verfahren, dem RIA-Verfahren, Nephelometrie und dem SPR-Verfahren ausgewählt ist.
7. Verfahren gemäß einem der Ansprüche 4 bis 6, umfassend das Bereitstellen von biologischen Proben, die in

chronologischer Reihenfolge aus dem Versuchstier entnommen wurden, und das Messen zeitlicher Veränderungen der Menge von einem oder mehreren Peptiden, die aus der Gruppe von Peptiden, die aus Aminosäuresequenzen bestehen, die in SEQ ID Nr. 1-10 gezeigt sind, oder Orthologen und Paralogen davon, wie sie in den Tabellen 3-6 gezeigt sind, ausgewählt sind, und/oder von einem oder mehreren Autoantikörpern, die aus der Gruppe ausgewählt sind, die aus Autoantikörpern gegen jeweilige Peptide aus der Gruppe von Peptiden besteht, in den Proben.

8. Verfahren zur Bewertung einer Behandlungswirkung bei einem Patienten mit einer Zahnfleischerkrankung, umfassend das Messen von Veränderungen einer Menge von einem oder mehreren Peptiden, die aus der Gruppe von Peptiden, die aus Aminosäuresequenzen bestehen, die in SEQ ID Nr. 1-10 gezeigt sind, oder Orthologen und Paralogen davon, wie sie in den Tabellen 3-6 gezeigt sind, ausgewählt sind, und/oder von einem oder mehreren Autoantikörpern, die aus der Gruppe ausgewählt sind, die aus Autoantikörpern gegen jeweilige Peptide aus der Gruppe von Peptiden besteht, in biologischen Proben, die von dem Patienten vor und nach der Behandlung erhalten wurden.

9. Peptid, ausgewählt aus der Gruppe von Peptiden, die aus Aminosäuresequenzen bestehen, die in SEQ ID Nr. 1-10 gezeigt sind, oder Orthologen und Paralogen davon, wie sie in den Tabellen 3-6 gezeigt sind, oder Antikörper gegen das Peptid zur Verwendung bei der Hemmung einer Autoimmunreaktion auf das Peptid bei einem Säuger, der in der Mundhöhle ein Zahnfleischbakterium aufweist.

10. Peptid oder Antikörper gemäß Anspruch 9 zur Verwendung bei der Prophylaxe und/oder Behandlung einer Zahnfleischerkrankung und/oder einer Komplikation davon.

11. In-vitro-Verfahren zum Screening nach einer Substanz, die eine Autoimmunreaktion auf ein Peptid, das aus der Gruppe von Peptiden, die aus Aminosäuresequenzen bestehen, die in SEQ ID Nr. 1-10 gezeigt sind, oder Orthologen und Paralogen davon, wie sie in den Tabellen 3-6 gezeigt sind, ausgewählt ist, bei einem Säuger, der in der Mundhöhle ein Zahnfleischbakterium aufweist, hemmt, wobei das Verfahren umfasst:

- (1) einen Schritt des In-Kontakt-Bringens eines Autoantikörpers gegen das Peptid mit einer Testsubstanz;
- (2) einen Schritt des Messens ihres Bindungsgrads; und
- (3) einen Schritt des Auswählens einer Testsubstanz, die an den Autoantikörper gebunden ist, als Substanz, die für die Hemmung der Autoimmunreaktion in Frage kommt.

12. Antikörper gegen ein Peptid, das aus der Gruppe von Peptiden, die aus Aminosäuresequenzen bestehen, die in SEQ ID Nr. 1-10 gezeigt sind, oder Orthologen und Paralogen davon, wie sie in den Tabellen 3-6 gezeigt sind, ausgewählt ist, zur Verwendung bei der Prophylaxe und/oder Behandlung einer Zahnfleischerkrankung und/oder einer Komplikation davon.

13. In-vitro-Verfahren zum Screening nach einer Substanz, die die RANKL-Expression bei einem Säuger, der in der Mundhöhle ein Zahnfleischbakterium aufweist, hemmt, umfassend die folgenden Schritte:

- (1) einen Schritt des In-Kontakt-Bringens eines Peptids, das aus der Gruppe von Peptiden, die aus Aminosäuresequenzen bestehen, die in SEQ ID Nr. 1-10 gezeigt sind, oder Orthologen und Paralogen davon, wie sie in den Tabellen 3-6 gezeigt sind, ausgewählt ist, mit einer Testsubstanz;
- (2) einen Schritt des Messens ihres Bindungsgrads; und
- (3) einen Schritt des Auswählens einer Testsubstanz, die an das Peptid gebunden ist.

14. In-vitro-Verfahren zum Screening nach einer Substanz, die die RANKL-Expression bei einem Säuger, der in der Mundhöhle ein Zahnfleischbakterium aufweist, hemmt, umfassend die folgenden Schritte:

- (1) einen Schritt des In-Kontakt-Bringens eines Peptids, das aus der Gruppe von Peptiden, die aus Aminosäuresequenzen bestehen, die in SEQ ID Nr. 1-10 gezeigt sind, oder Orthologen und Paralogen davon, wie sie in den Tabellen 3-6 gezeigt sind, ausgewählt ist, in An- und Abwesenheit einer Testsubstanz mit einer von einem nichthumanen Säuger abgeleiteten, mit dem Peptid immunisierten T-Zelle;
- (2) einen Schritt des Messens einer oder mehrerer Größen, die aus der Gruppe ausgewählt sind, die aus folgenden besteht:

- a) einem Bindungsgrad des Peptids;
- b) einem Grad der T-Zell-Vermehrung; und

c) einer Expressionsgrad von RANKL in der T-Zelle, jeweils in An- und Abwesenheit der Testsubstanz; und

(3) einen Schritt des Auswählens einer Testsubstanz, die eine der oben genannten Größen a) bis c) senkte, als Substanz, die für die Hemmung der RANKL-Expression in Frage kommt.

5

15. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines Tiermodells für eine Zahnfleischerkrankung, umfassend das Immunisieren eines nichthumanen Säugers mit einem Peptid, das aus der Gruppe von Peptiden, die aus Aminosäuresequenzen bestehen, die in SEQ ID Nr. 1-10 gezeigt sind, oder Orthologen und Paralogen davon, wie sie in den Tabellen 3-6 gezeigt sind, ausgewählt ist.

10

Revendications

1. Peptide se composant de la séquence d'acides aminés indiquée par l'une quelconque des SEQ ID N°1 à 3, 5 et 7 à 9.

15

2. Anticorps identifiant spécifiquement le peptide selon la revendication 1.

3. Réactif de diagnostic pour une affection parodontale, comprenant un anticorps identifiant spécifiquement un peptide se composant de la séquence d'acides aminés indiquée par l'une quelconque des SEQ ID N°1 à 10.

20

4. Méthode de test pour le diagnostic d'une affection parodontale d'un animal de test, comprenant la mesure d'une quantité d'un ou de plusieurs peptides choisis dans le groupe des peptides se composant des séquences d'acides aminés indiquées par les SEQ ID N°1 à 10 ou orthologues et paralogues de celles-ci comme le montrent les tableaux 3 à 6 et/ou d'un ou de plusieurs auto-anticorps choisis dans le groupe se composant des auto-anticorps dirigés contre des peptides respectifs dudit groupe de peptides, dans un échantillon biologique, choisi parmi le sang, le plasma, le sérum, le liquide interdentaire, l'urine ou la salive, prélevé sur l'animal de test, dans laquelle la quantité de peptides et/ou d'auto-anticorps est mesurée en soumettant l'échantillon biologique à la spectrométrie de masse, ou par une méthode choisie parmi la méthode ELISA, la méthode RIA, la néphélométrie et la méthode SPR.

25

5. Méthode selon la revendication 4, comprenant l'utilisation d'un ou de plusieurs anticorps choisis dans le groupe se composant des anticorps dirigés contre des peptides respectifs se composant des séquences d'acides aminés indiquées par les SEQ ID N°1 à 10 ou orthologues et paralogues de celles-ci comme le montrent les tableaux 3 à 6 et/ou d'un ou de plusieurs peptides choisis dans le groupe des peptides se composant des séquences d'acides aminés indiquées par les SEQ ID N°1 à 10 ou orthologues et paralogues de celles-ci comme le montrent les tableaux 3 à 6.

30

35

6. Méthode selon la revendication 5, comprenant la mesure des peptides et/ou des auto-anticorps selon une méthode choisie parmi la méthode ELISA, la méthode RIA, la néphélométrie et la méthode SPR.

7. Méthode selon l'une quelconque des revendications 4 à 6, comprenant la fourniture d'échantillons biologiques prélevés sur l'animal de test dans un ordre chronologique, et la mesure des variations au cours du temps d'une quantité d'un ou de plusieurs peptides choisis dans le groupe des peptides se composant des séquences d'acides aminés indiquées par les SEQ ID N°1 à 10 ou orthologues et paralogues de celles-ci comme le montrent les tableaux 3 à 6 et/ou d'un ou de plusieurs auto-anticorps choisis dans le groupe se composant des auto-anticorps dirigés contre des peptides respectifs dudit groupe de peptides dans les échantillons.

40

45

8. Méthode d'évaluation d'un effet de traitement chez un patient atteint d'une affection parodontale, comprenant la mesure des variations d'une quantité d'un ou de plusieurs peptides choisis dans le groupe des peptides se composant des séquences d'acides aminés indiquées par les SEQ ID N°1 à 10 ou orthologues et paralogues de celles-ci comme le montrent les tableaux 3 à 6 et/ou d'un ou de plusieurs auto-anticorps choisis dans le groupe se composant des auto-anticorps dirigés contre des peptides respectifs dudit groupe de peptides, dans des échantillons biologiques prélevés sur ledit patient avant et après le traitement.

50

9. Peptide choisi dans le groupe des peptides se composant des séquences d'acides aminés indiquées par les SEQ ID N°1 à 10 ou orthologues et paralogues de celles-ci comme le montrent les tableaux 3 à 6, ou anticorps dirigé contre le peptide, pour l'utilisation dans l'inhibition d'une réponse auto-immune envers le peptide chez un mammifère ayant une bactérie parodontale dans la cavité buccale.

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10. Peptide ou anticorps selon la revendication 9, pour l'utilisation dans la prophylaxie et/ou le traitement d'une affection parodontale et/ou d'une complication de celle-ci.

5 11. Méthode *in vitro* de criblage pour une substance inhibant une réponse auto-immune envers un peptide choisi dans le groupe des peptides se composant des séquences d'acides aminés indiquées par les SEQ ID N°1 à 10 ou orthologues et paralogues de celles-ci comme le montrent les tableaux 3 à 6, chez un mammifère ayant une bactérie parodontale dans la cavité buccale, ladite méthode comprenant :

- 10 (1) une étape de mise en contact d'un auto-anticorps dirigé contre ledit peptide avec une substance de test,
(2) une étape de mesure de leur taux de liaison, et
(3) une étape de sélection d'une substance de test liée audit auto-anticorps comme substance inhibitrice candidate de ladite réponse auto-immune.

15 12. Anticorps contre un peptide choisi dans le groupe des peptides se composant des séquences d'acides aminés indiquées par les SEQ ID N°1 à 10 ou orthologues et paralogues de celles-ci comme le montrent les tableaux 3 à 6, pour l'utilisation dans la prophylaxie et/ou le traitement d'une affection parodontale et/ou d'une complication de celle-ci.

20 13. Méthode *in vitro* de criblage pour une substance inhibitrice de l'expression RANKL chez un mammifère ayant une bactérie parodontale dans la cavité buccale, comprenant les étapes suivantes :

- 25 (1) une étape de mise en contact d'un peptide choisi dans le groupe des peptides se composant des séquences d'acides aminés indiquées par les SEQ ID N°1 à 10 ou orthologues et paralogues de celles-ci, comme le montrent les tableaux 3 à 6 avec une substance de test,
(2) une étape de mesure de leur taux de liaison, et
(3) une étape de sélection d'une substance de test liée audit peptide.

30 14. Méthode *in vitro* de criblage pour une substance inhibitrice de l'expression RANKL chez un mammifère ayant une bactérie parodontale dans la cavité buccale, comprenant les étapes suivantes :

- 35 (1) une étape de mise en contact, en présence et en l'absence d'une substance de test, d'un peptide choisi dans le groupe des peptides se composant des séquences d'acides aminés indiquées par les SEQ ID N°1 à 10 ou orthologues et paralogues de celles-ci comme le montrent les tableaux 3 à 6 avec un lymphocyte T dérivé d'un mammifère non humain, immunisé avec le peptide,

(2) une étape de mesure d'un ou de plusieurs éléments choisis dans le groupe se composant de

- 40 a) un taux de liaison dudit peptide,
b) un taux de prolifération des lymphocytes T, et
c) un taux d'expression de RANKL dans le lymphocyte T, chacun d'eux en présence et en l'absence de la substance de test, et

(3) une étape de sélection d'une substance de test qui a diminué l'un quelconque des éléments susmentionnés a) à c) comme substance inhibitrice candidate de l'expression RANKL.

45 15. Méthode de production d'un modèle animal d'affection parodontale, comprenant l'immunisation d'un mammifère non humain avec un peptide choisi dans le groupe des peptides se composant des séquences d'acides aminés indiquées par les SEQ ID N°1 à 10 ou orthologues et paralogues de celles-ci comme le montrent les tableaux 3 à 6.

Fig.1

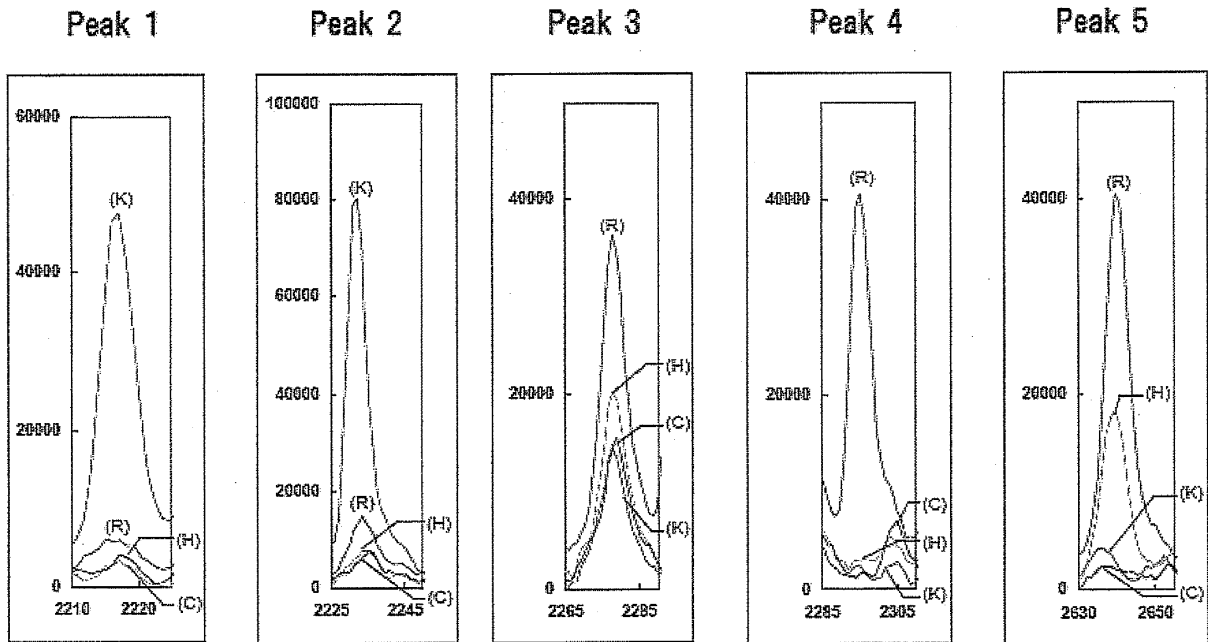


Fig.2

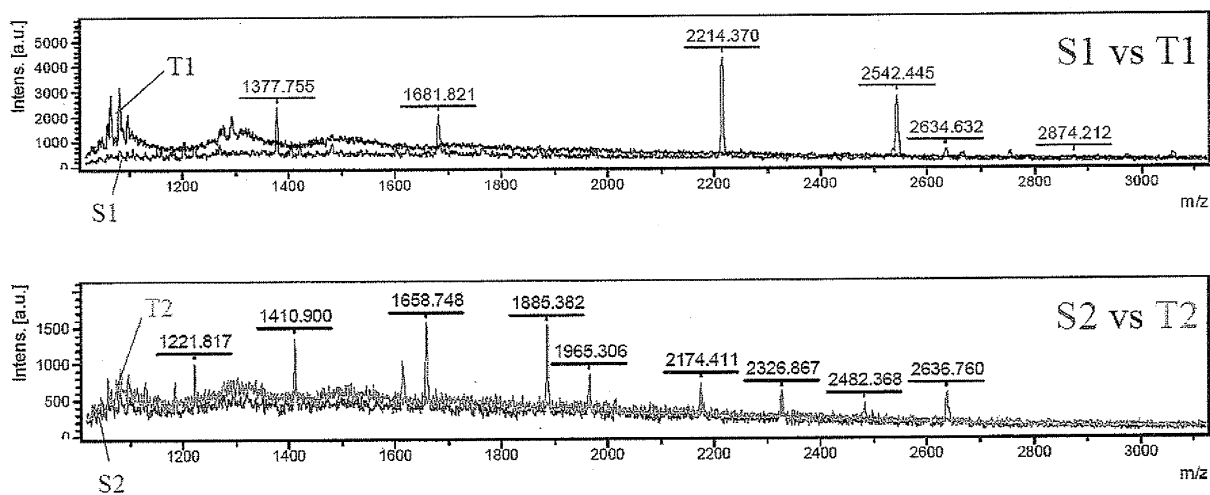
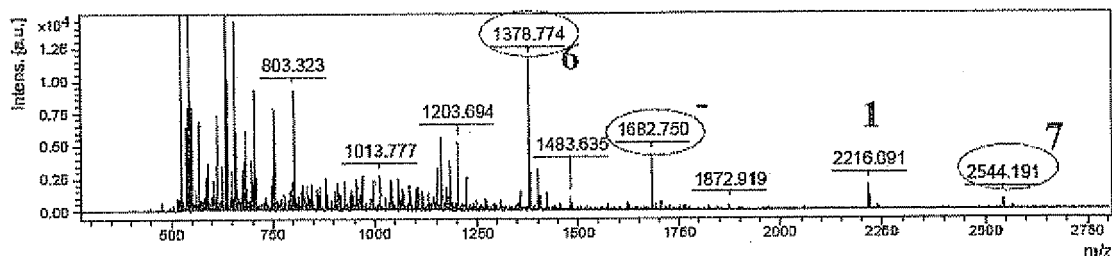


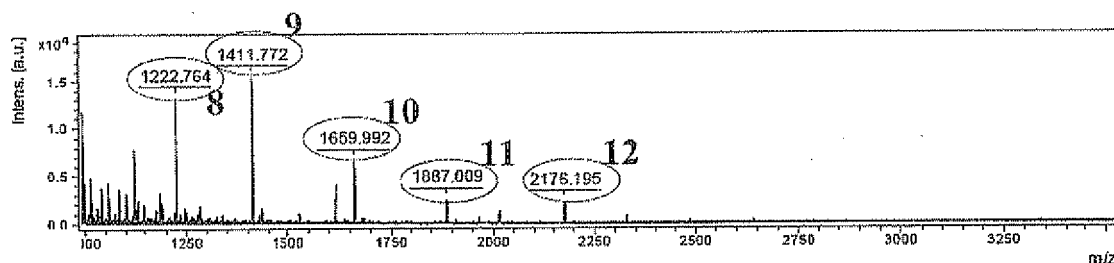
Fig.3

(a)



No.	m/z	result	score	sequence
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-	1682	Glutathione S-Transferase	29(yellow)	YEEHLYERDEGDK
1	2216	KERATIN, TYPE II CYTOSKELETAL 6B	25(yellow)	YEELQITAGRHGDDL RNTK
7	2544	KERATIN, TYPE II CYTOSKELETAL 6B	7(green)	AQYEEIAQRSRAEAE S WYQTK

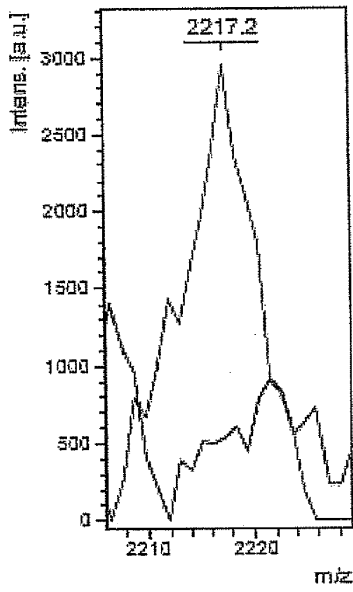
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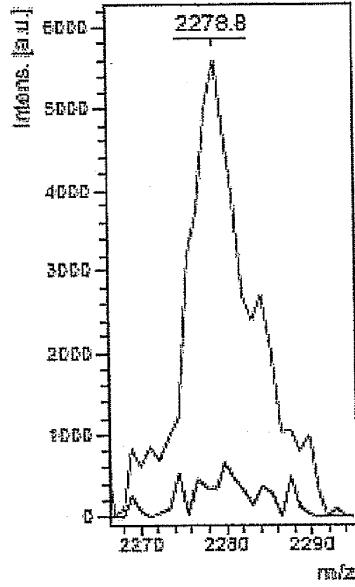
No.	m/z	result	score	sequence
8	1222	KERATIN, TYPE I CYTOSKELETAL 17	34(yellow)	TKFETE QALR
9	1411	KERATIN, TYPE I CYTOSKELETAL 17	61(red)	DQYEKMAEKNR
10	1659	KERATIN, TYPE I CYTOSKELETAL 17	35(yellow)	TIVEEVQDGKVISSR
11	1887	KERATIN, TYPE I CYTOSKELETAL 17	23(green)	QFTSSSSIKGSSGLGGSSR
12	2176	KERATIN, TYPE I CYTOSKELETAL 14 (Same to KERATIN, TYPE I CYTOSKELETAL 17)	27(yellow)	EVATNSELVQSGKSEISLR

Fig.4

peptide 1



peptide 3



peptide 5

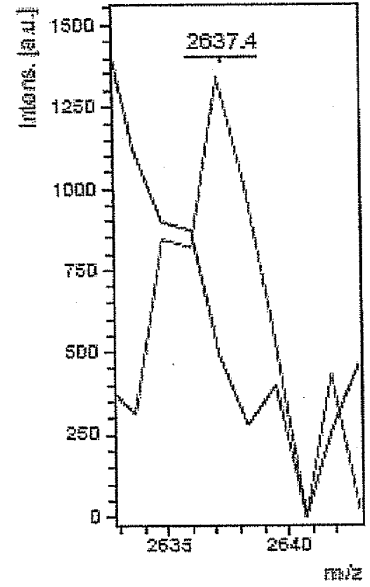


Fig.5

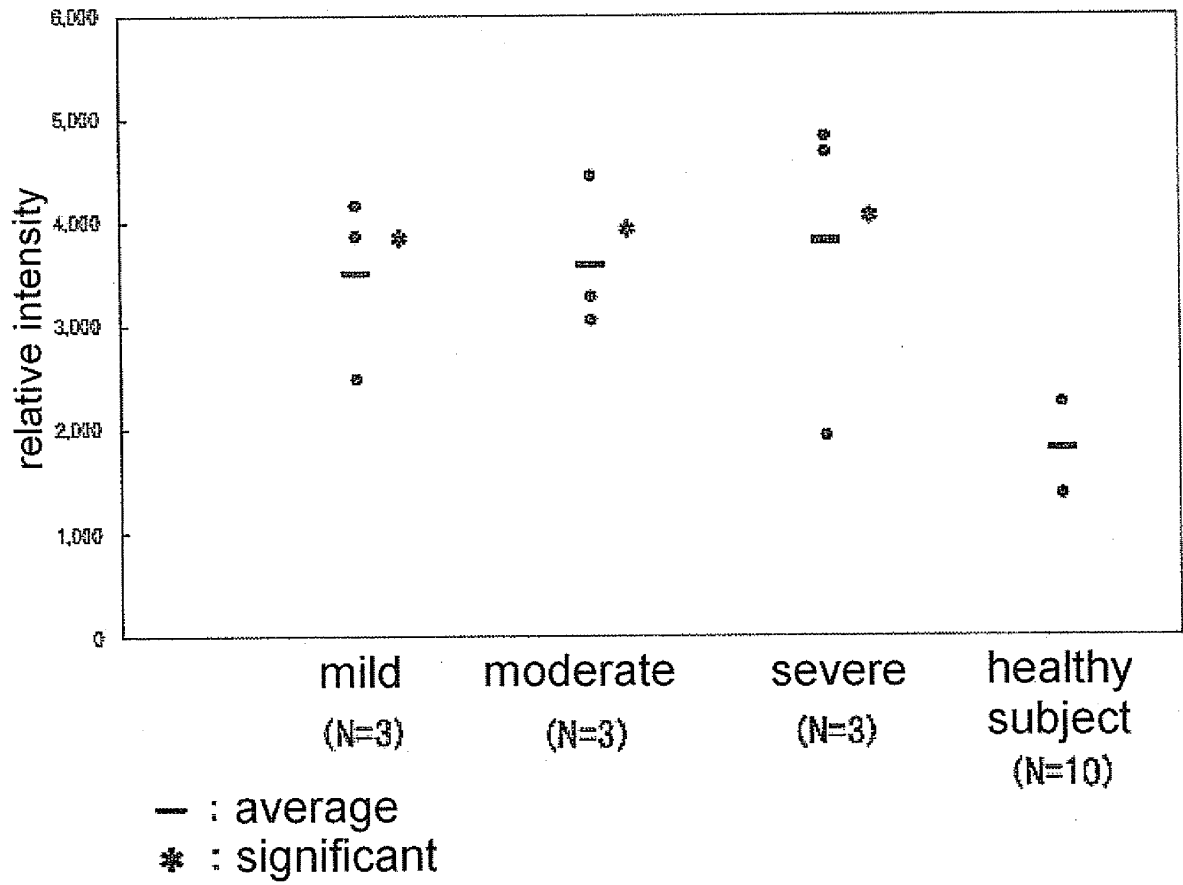


Fig.6

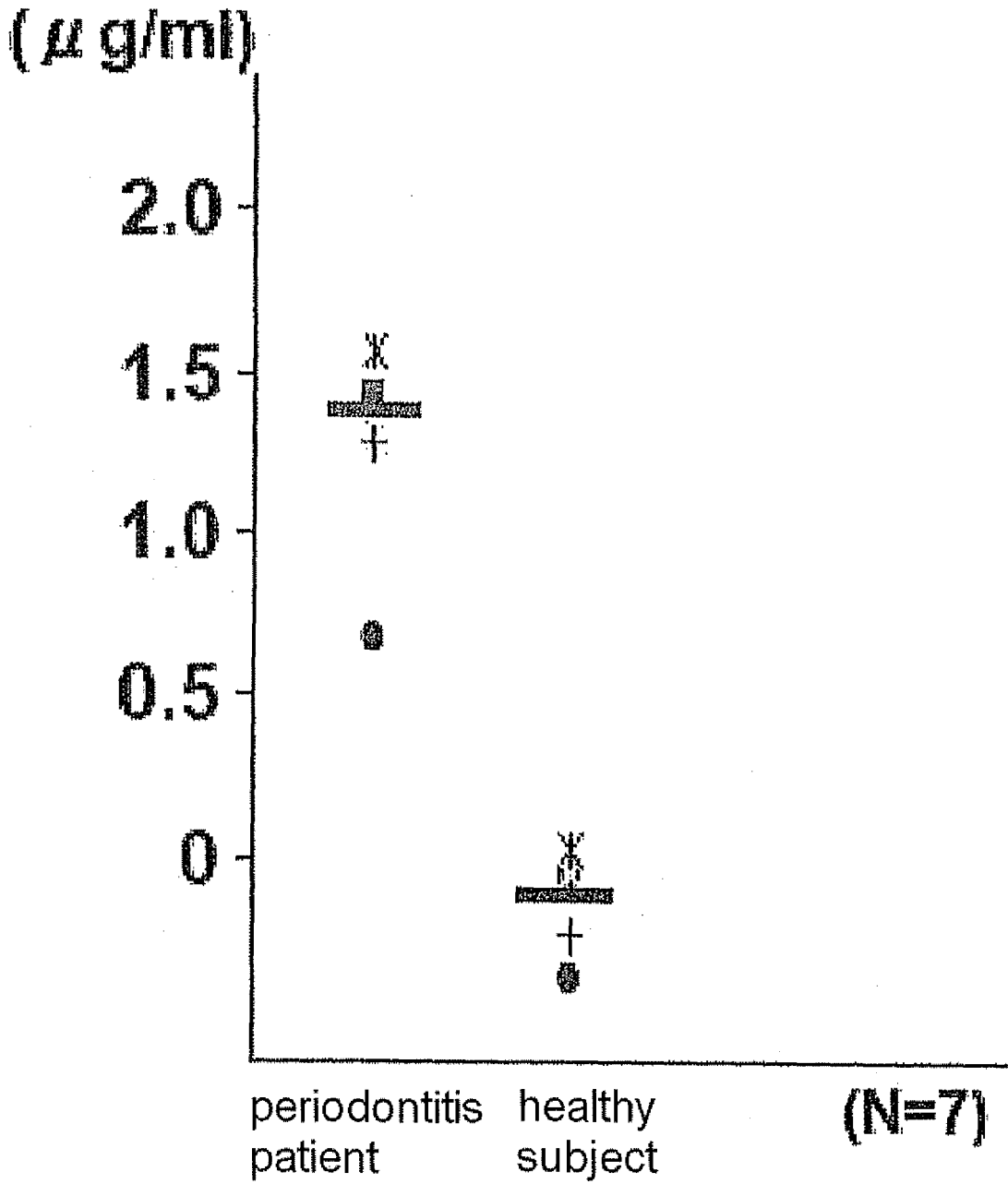


Fig.7

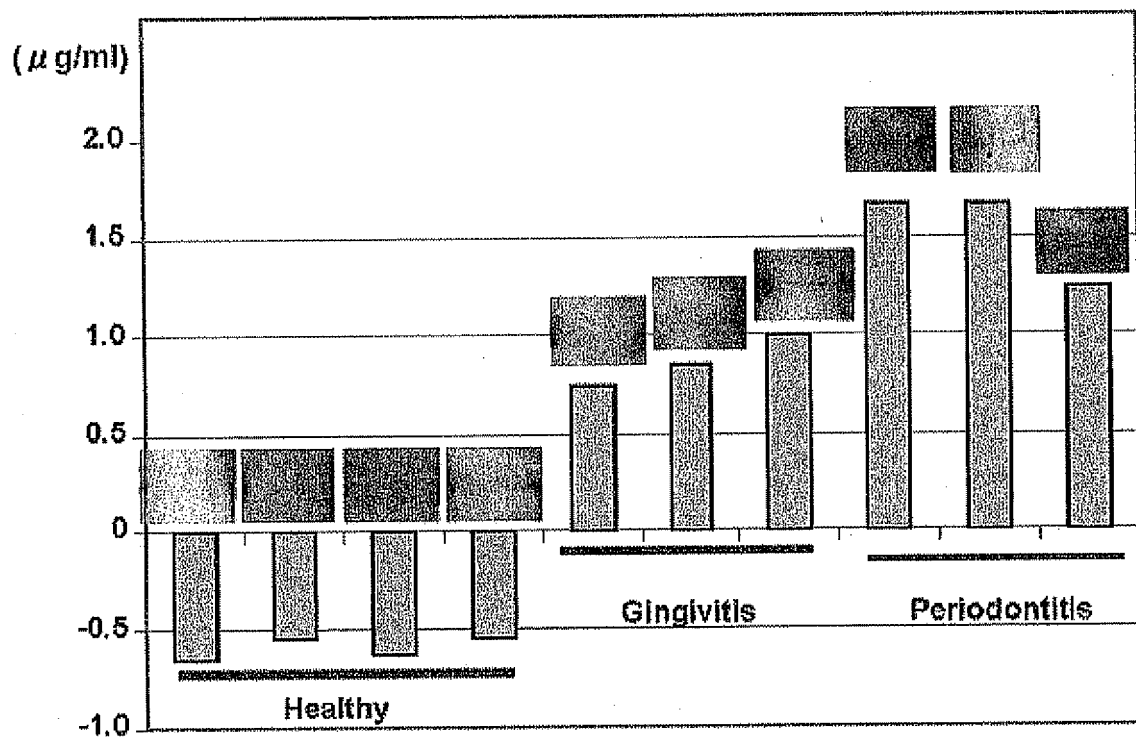


Fig.8

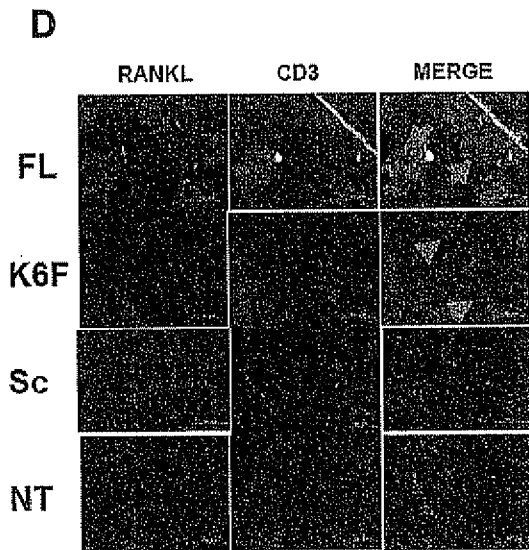
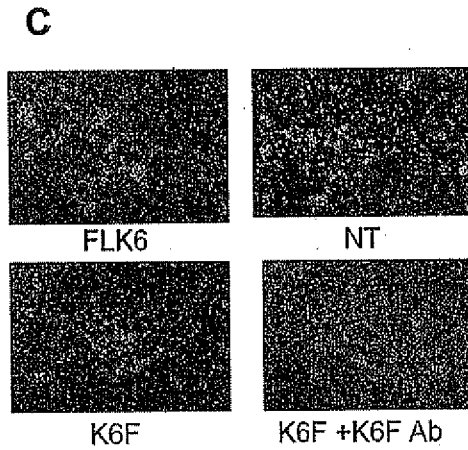
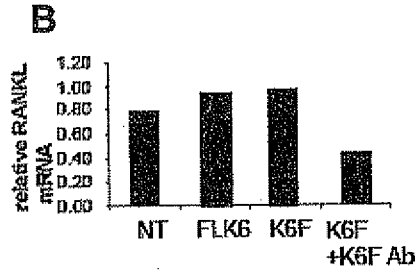
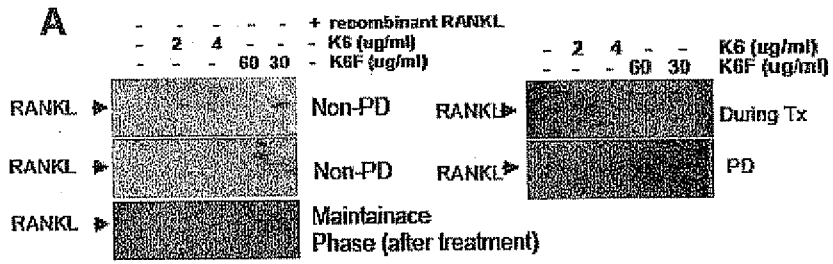


Fig.9

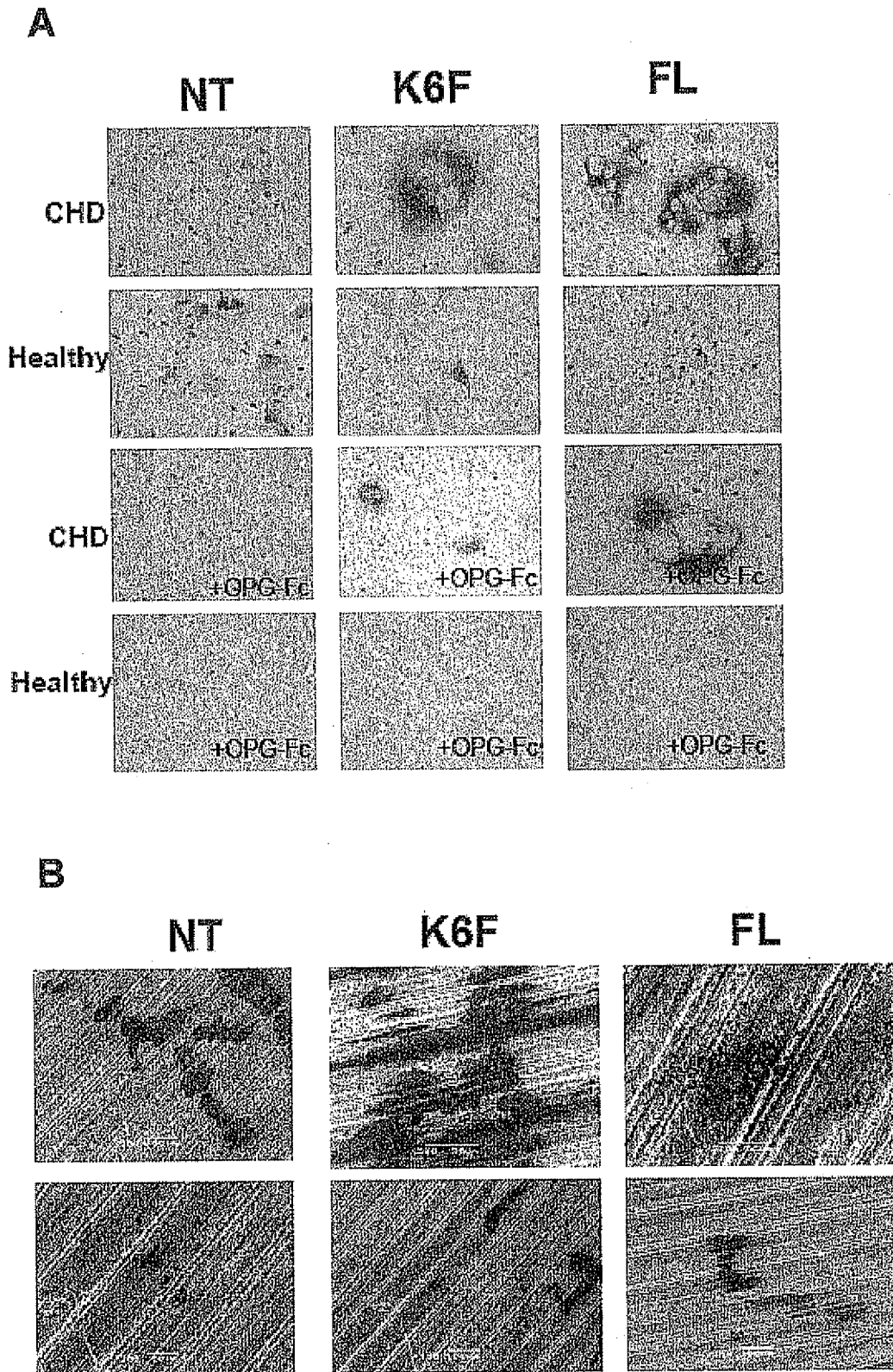


Fig.10

Rt

Lt

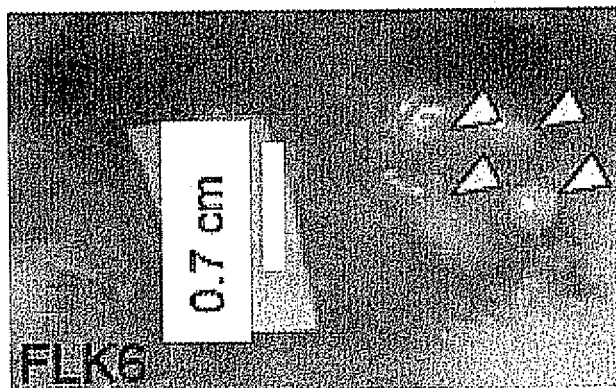
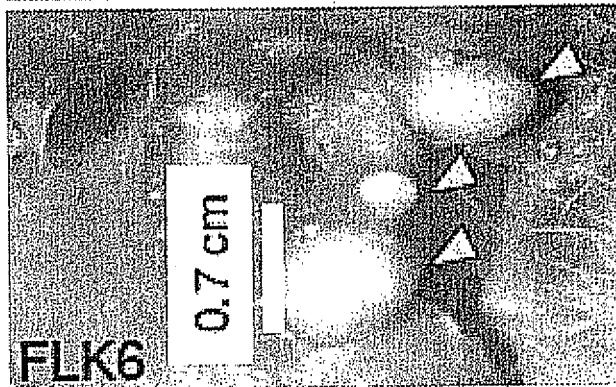
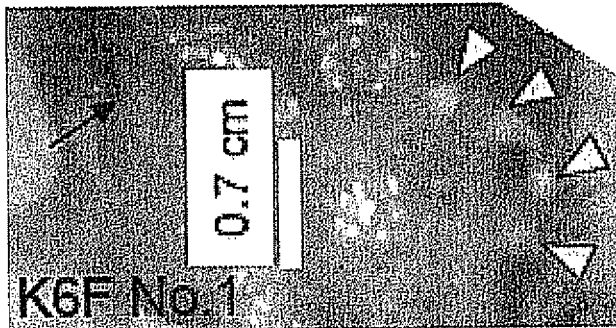
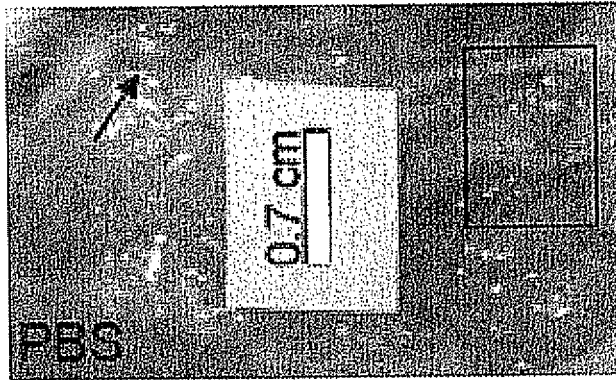


Fig.11

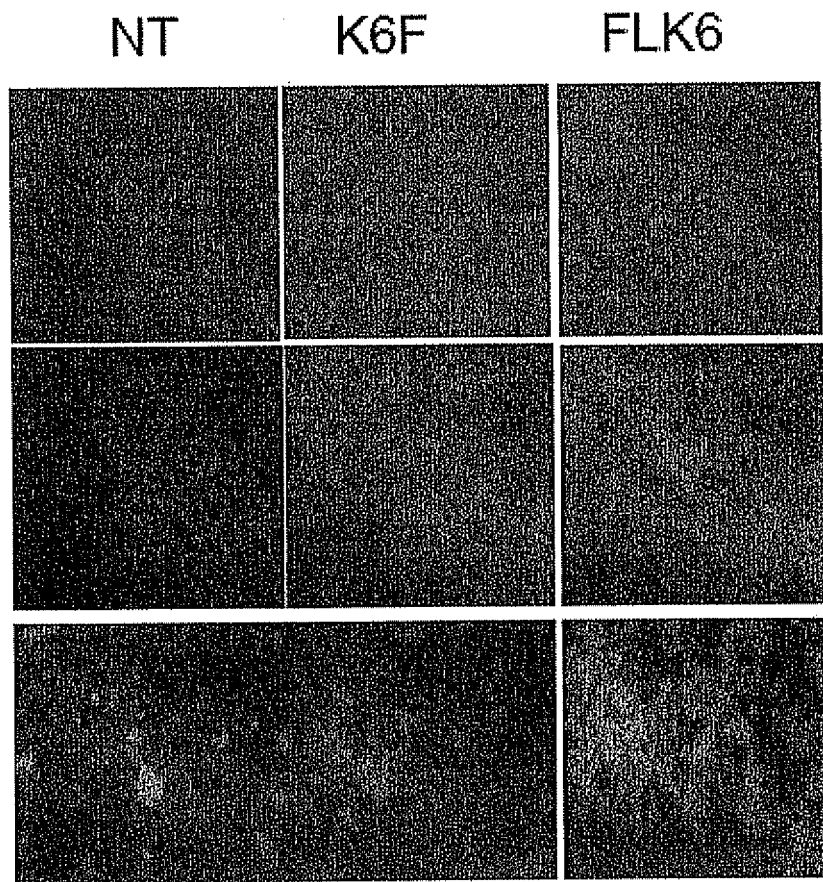


Fig.12

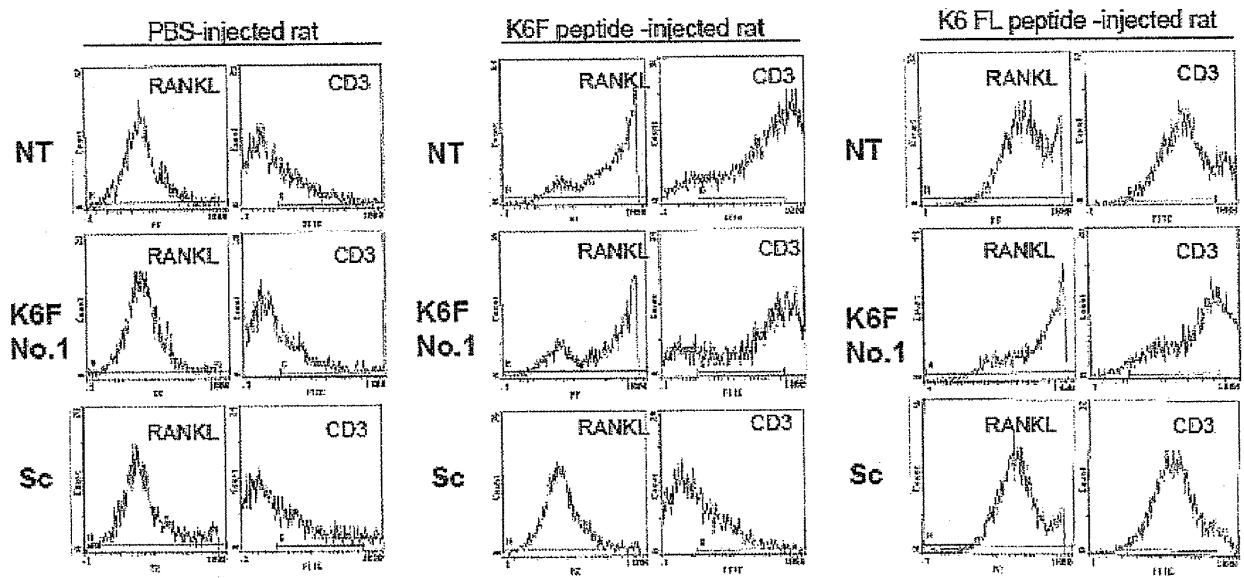


Fig.13

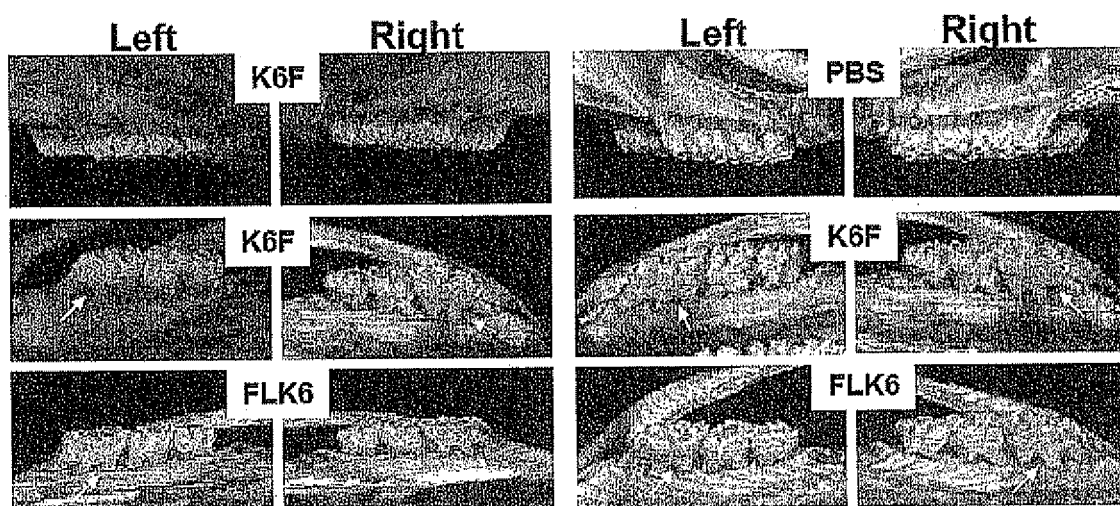


Fig.14

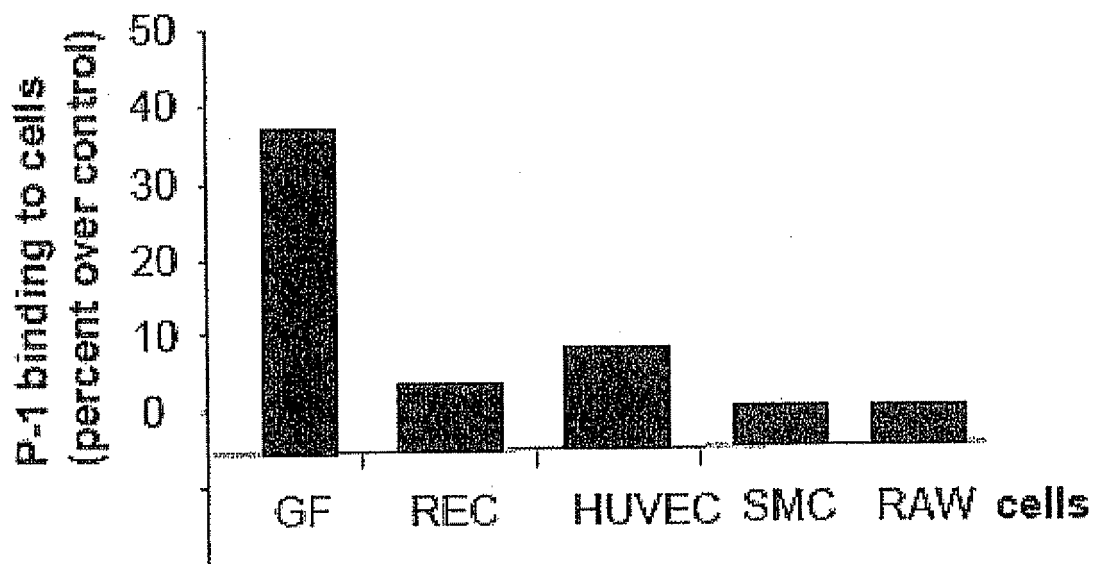


Fig.15

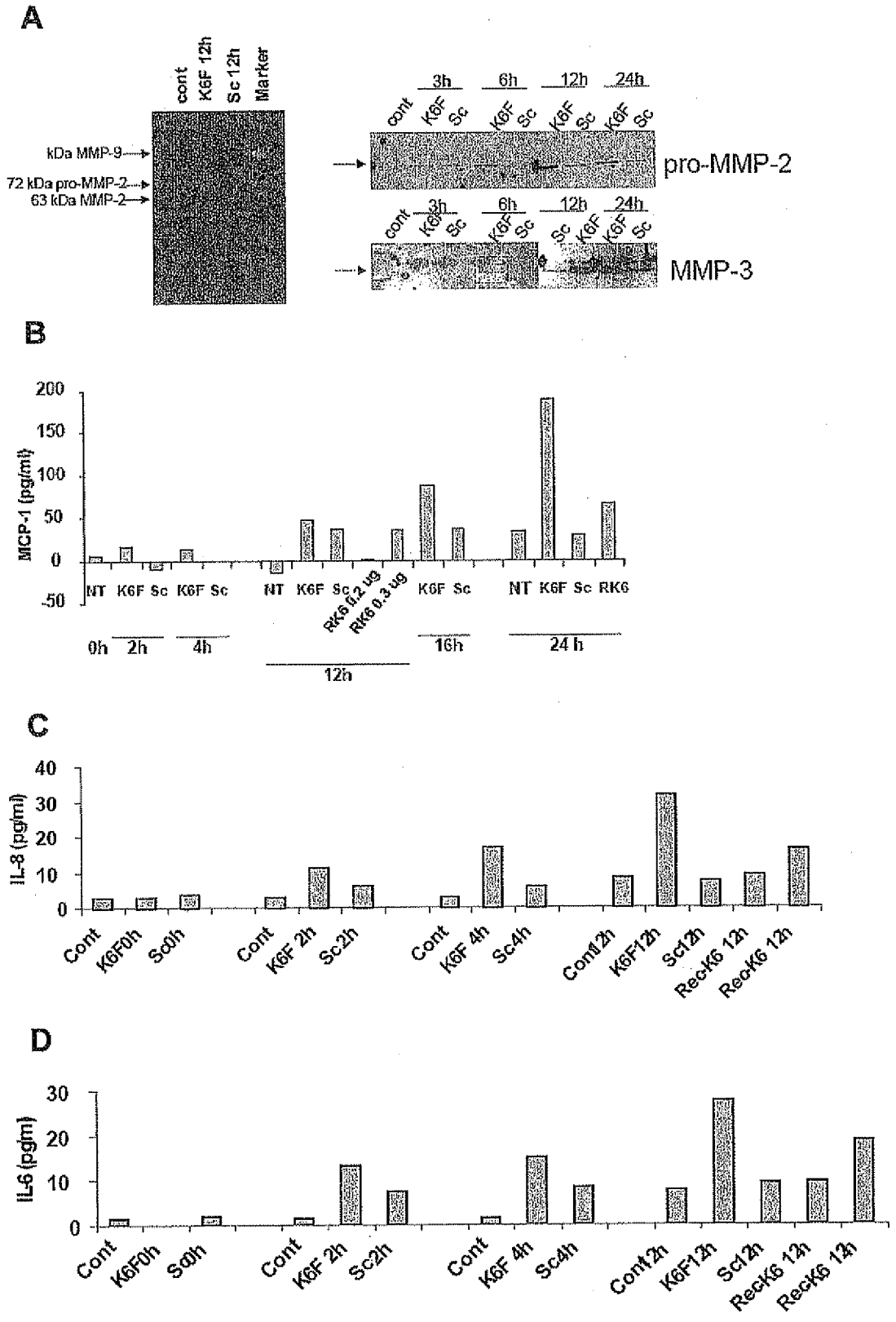
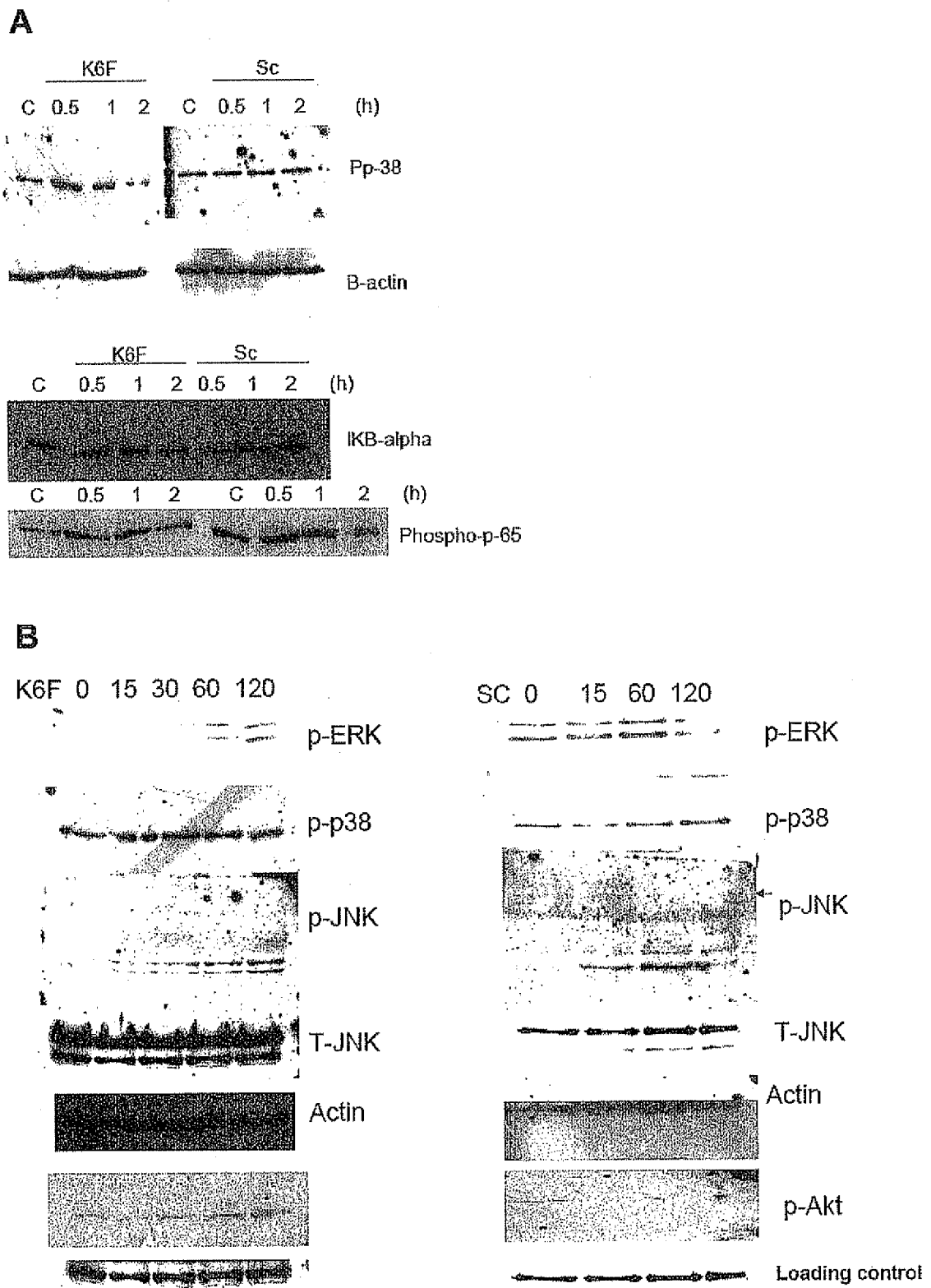


Fig.16



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