

ENTRY AND ASSEMBLY OF PATHOGENIC VIRUSES

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**KUSUMA SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
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ENTRY AND ASSEMBLY OF PATHOGENIC VIRUSES

by

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Submitted

*in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**
to the*



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Dedicated to the Almighty Lord Ram...

***My beloved parents, family members, my lovely wife and wonderful daughter
for their unconditional love, care and endless support***

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Entry and assembly of pathogenic viruses**”, being submitted by **Mr. Chandra Shekhar Kumar** to the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi for the award of the degree of “**Doctor of Philosophy**” is a record of the *bonafide* research carried out by him, which has been prepared under my supervision and guidance in conformity with rules and regulation of the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, India. The results described in it have not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for the award of any Degree/Diploma.

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ABSTRACT

Viral structural proteins are important therapeutic targets and are being used extensively for designing antivirals and vaccines against pathogenic viruses. Engineering of virus-like particles (VLPs), from one or more structural proteins from pathogenic viruses is a viable strategy for development of vaccines and for studies of the viral life cycle without using live virus. The present work is primarily focused on the generation and characterization of quadruple-antigen SARS-CoV-2 VLPs, which can serve as virus surrogates for multiple biomedical purposes. VLPs were generated by transient transfection of two expression cassettes in adherent HEK293T cells – one cassette containing M^{pro} for processing of three structural proteins (M, E and N), and the second cassette expressing the Spike protein. Further characterization revealed that the VLPs retain close morphological and antigenic similarity with the native virus, and also bind strongly to the SARS-CoV-2 receptor hACE-2 in an *in vitro* binding assay. Interestingly, the VLPs were found to internalize into U87-MG cells through cholesterol rich domains in a dynamin dependent process. Finally, our results showed that mice immunized with VLPs induce robust humoral and cellular immune response mediated by enhanced levels of IL-4, IL-17 and IFN γ . Taken together, our results demonstrate that VLPs mimic the native virus and induce strong immune response indicating possible use of these particles as an alternative vaccine candidate against SARS-CoV-2. VLPs can also be effective in mapping the initial stages of virus entry and screening of inhibitors. In the second part of this work, we have made an effort to structurally analyze the ion-channel forming 6K peptide from Chikungunya Virus, which is known to play a major role in viral egress. We found that recombinant CHIKV 6K peptide, expressed with a MBP fusion tag, exists primarily as an octamer and exhibits membrane interaction activity. The preliminary structural analysis of the *in silico* generated 3D octamer shows similarities with reference free 2D classes of MBP-6K generated from cryoEM studies. This presents an opportunity to solve a high-resolution structure that can be utilized to design inhibitors specific to Chikungunya Virus 6K, which will inhibit virus assembly and propagation

सारांश

वायरल संरचनात्मक प्रोटीन महत्वपूर्ण चिकित्सीय लक्ष्य हैं और रोगजनक वायरस के खिलाफ एंटीवायरल और टीके डिजाइन करने के लिए व्यापक रूप से उपयोग किए जा रहे हैं। रोगजनक वायरस से एक या एक से अधिक संरचनात्मक प्रोटीन से वायरस जैसे कणों (वीएलपी) की इंजीनियरिंग टीकों के विकास और जीवित वायरस का उपयोग किए बिना वायरल जीवन चक्र के अध्ययन के लिए एक व्यवहार्य रणनीति है। वर्तमान कार्य मुख्य रूप से चोंगुनी-एंटीजन सार्स-कोरोना-वायरस-2 वीएलपी के निर्माण और निरूपण पर केंद्रित है, जो कई बायोमेडिकल उद्देश्यों के लिए वायरस सरोगेट के रूप में काम कर सकता है। VLPs अनुयाई HEK293T कोशिकाओं में दो अभिव्यक्ति कैसेट के क्षणिक अभिकर्मक द्वारा उत्पन्न किए गए थे - एक कैसेट जिसमें तीन संरचनात्मक प्रोटीन (M, E और N) के प्रसंस्करण के लिए Mpro होता है, और दूसरा कैसेट स्पाइक प्रोटीन को व्यक्त करता है। आगे के लक्षण वर्णन से पता चला कि वीएलपी देशी वायरस के साथ निकट रूपात्मक और एंटीजेनिक समानता बनाए रखते हैं, और इन विट्रो बाइंडिंग परख में SARS-CoV-2 रिसेप्टर hACE-2 से मजबूती से जुड़ते हैं। दिलचस्प बात यह है कि वीएलपी को डायनामिन पर निर्भर प्रक्रिया में कोलेस्ट्रॉल समृद्ध डोमेन के माध्यम से यू87-एमजी कोशिकाओं में आंतरिक रूप से पाया गया था। अंत में, हमारे परिणामों से पता चला कि वीएलपी के साथ प्रतिरक्षित चूहों ने आईएल -4, आईएल -17 और आईएफएन γ के बढ़े हुए स्तरों द्वारा मध्यस्थता से मजबूत त्रिदोषण और सेलुलर प्रतिरक्षा प्रतिक्रिया को प्रेरित किया। एक साथ लिया गया, हमारे परिणाम प्रदर्शित करते हैं कि वीएलपी देशी वायरस की नकल करते हैं और मजबूत प्रतिरक्षा प्रतिक्रिया को प्रेरित करते हैं जो इन कणों के संभावित उपयोग को SARS-CoV-2 के खिलाफ वैकल्पिक वैक्सीन उम्मीदवार के रूप में दर्शाता है। वीएलपी वायरस के प्रवेश के प्रारंभिक चरणों और अवरोधकों की जांच के मानचित्रण में भी प्रभावी हो सकते हैं। इस काम के दूसरे भाग में, हमने चिकनगुनिया वायरस से 6K पेप्टाइड बनाने वाले आयन-चैनल का संरचनात्मक रूप से विश्लेषण करने का प्रयास किया है, जिसे वायरल निकास में एक प्रमुख भूमिका निभाने के लिए जाना जाता है। हमने पाया कि पुनः संयोजक CHIKV 6K पेप्टाइड, जिसे MBP फ्यूजन टैग के साथ व्यक्त किया गया है, मुख्य रूप से एक ऑक्टेमर के रूप में मौजूद है और झिल्ली संपर्क गतिविधि प्रदर्शित करता है। इन सिलिको जनित 3डी ऑक्टेमर का प्रारंभिक संरचनात्मक विश्लेषण क्रायोईएम अध्ययनों से उत्पन्न एमबीपी-6के के संदर्भ मुक्त 2डी वर्गों के साथ समानताएं दर्शाता है। यह एक उच्च-रिज़ॉल्यूशन संरचना को हल करने का अवसर प्रस्तुत करता है जिसका उपयोग चिकनगुनिया वायरस 6K के लिए विशिष्ट अवरोधकों को डिजाइन करने के लिए किया जा सकता है, जो वायरस असेंबली और प्रसार को रोक देगा।

Table of Contents

CERTIFICATE.....	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract.....	iii-iv
Table of Contents	v-viii
List of Figures.....	ix-x
List of Tables	xi
List of Abbreviations	xi-xii
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1-10
1.1. Introduction	2
1.2. Viral entry	2
1.2.1. Virus interaction with cell surface	5
1.3. Viral assembly and egress	6
1.4. Virus-like particles as virus surrogates in studying virus-host interactions	7
1.5. Immunogenicity of Virus-like particles and VLP based vaccines	8
Chapter II: SARS-CoV-2 VLP production and characterization.....	11-31
2.1. Introduction	12
2.1.1. Background.....	12
2.1.2. Hypothesis	13
2.2. Materials and Methods.....	13
2.2.1. Construct design	13
2.2.2. Expression of SARS-CoV-2 VLP in HEK293T cells	14
2.2.3. VLP purification	14
2.2.4. Protein quantification.....	15
2.2.5. Purification of SARS-CoV-2 Spike and Nucleocapsid proteins	15
2.2.6. SDS-PAGE	16

2.2.7. Western blot analysis	16
2.2.8. Dynamic Light Scattering	17
2.2.9. Electron Microscopy	17
2.2.10. hACE2 binding analysis	17
2.2.11. ELISA assays	18
2.3. Results	18
2.3.1. SARS-CoV-2 VLP generation and morphological characterization	18
2.3.2. Antigenic characterization of VLPs	25
2.4. Discussion	28
2.5. Conclusion	31
Chapter III: Immune response against SARS-CoV-2 VLPs.....	32-47
3.1. Introduction	33
3.1.1. Background	33
3.1.2. Hypothesis	35
3.2. Materials and Methods	35
3.2.1. Animal Immunization	35
3.2.2. Ethics statement	36
3.2.3. ELISA assays	37
3.2.4. IgG subtyping	37
3.2.5. <i>In vitro</i> stimulation of Splenocytes and intracellular cytokine staining	37
3.3. Results	38
3.3.1. Humoral immune response against SARS-CoV-2 VLPs in mice	38
3.3.2. Cellular immune response against SARS-CoV-2 VLPs	41
3.4. Discussion	45
3.5. Conclusion	46
Chapter IV: SARS-CoV-2 VLP entry into neuronal cells	48-65
4.1. Introduction	49
4.1.1. Background	49
4.1.2. Hypothesis	51
4.2. Materials and Methods	52

4.2.1. U87-MG cell culture and maintenance.....	52
4.2.2. Confocal Laser Scanning Microscopy (CLSM)	52
4.3. Results	53
4.3.1. Entry of SARS-CoV-2 VLPs in U87-MG cells	53
4.3.2. SARS-CoV-2 VLP entry into U87-MG cells is cholesterol and dynamin dependent	58
4.4. Discussion	63
4.5. Conclusion.....	65

Chapter V: Structural characterization of an ion-channel protein required for alphavirus assembly66-89

5.1. Introduction	67
5.1.1. Chikungunya virus.....	67
5.1.2. CHIKV genome organization and replication cycle	67
5.1.3. CHIKV structure	69
5.1.4. Role of 6K in virus biology	69
5.1.5. CHIKV 6K cloning and expression strategy	70
5.1.6. CHIKV 6K structure.....	70
5.1.7. Hypothesis	71
5.2. Materials and Methods	71
5.2.1. CHIKV-6K cloning, recombinant expression, and purification in <i>E.coli</i>	71
5.2.1.1. Cloning of CHIKV-6K in expression vector pMAL-c6T.....	71
5.2.1.2. Optimization of recombinant expression of CHIKV-6K.....	74
5.2.1.3. SDS-PAGE analysis	74
5.2.1.4. Optimization of solubility of MBP-6K fusion protein	74
5.2.1.5. Purification of MBP-6K fusion protein	75
5.2.1.6. Western blot analysis.....	75
5.2.1.7. Liposome preparation	76
5.2.1.8. Liposome disruption assay.....	77
5.2.2. Structural analysis of MBP-6K fusion protein	77
5.2.2.1. Structure prediction using Alfafold	77
5.2.2.2. Negative staining	77

5.2.2.3. Cryo-EM	77
5.2.2.4. 2D classification	78
5.3. Results	78
5.4. Discussion	88
5.5. Conclusion.....	89
 Discussion.....	 90-96
References.....	97-139
Author's Resume.....	140-144

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Schematic representation of enveloped virus entry and exit pathway.	3
Figure 2.1: The schematic of expression vectors used to generate SARS-CoV-2 virus-like particles.	20
Figure 2.2: The schematic of purification profile in anion-exchange chromatography.	21
Figure 2.3: Dynamic Light Scattering (DLS) profile of SARS-CoV-2 VLP.	22
Figure 2.4: Electron microscopy of SARS-CoV-2 VLP.	24
Figure 2.5: SDS-PAGE and western blot of SARS-CoV-2 VLP.	26
Figure 2.6: Antigenic characterization of SARS-CoV-2 VLPs.	28
Figure 3.1: Schematic representation of the host adaptive immune response against SARS-CoV-2.	34
Figure 3.2: Schematic representation of animal experiment.	36
Figure 3.3: Immunogenicity of SARS-CoV-2 VLPs.	39
Figure 3.4: IgG subclass response against SARS-CoV-2 VLPs.	40
Figure 3.5: Mean percentile of serum IgG subtypes of different VLP immunized group.	41
Figure 3.6: IgM immune response against SARS-CoV-2 VLPs.	41
Figure 3.7: Cellular immune response against SARS-CoV-2 VLPs.	43
Figure 3.8: CD4 ⁺ T cell mediated response against SARS-CoV-2 VLPs.	44
Figure 4.1: CNS invasion by SARS-CoV-2.	51
Figure 4.2: Binding of SARS-CoV-2 VLP to U87-MG cells.	54
Figure 4.3: Presence of SARS-CoV-2 binding receptor on U87-MG cells.	54
Figure 4.4: Blocking of SARS-CoV-2 neuropilin receptor on U87-MG cells prevents VLP binding.	55

Figure 4.5: Entry of SARS-CoV-2 VLPs in U87-MG cells and accumulation in early endosomes.	56
Figure 4.6: Timeline of SARS-CoV-2 VLP entry.	57
Figure 4.7: Effect of inhibitors on the early endosomal accumulation of SARS-CoV-2 VLPs in neuronal cells.	61
Figure 4.8: Relative internalization of VLPs in U87-MG neuronal cells at 37 ⁰ C in presence of different inhibitors.	62
Figure 5.1: Schematic representation of Chikungunya virus genome and protein products.	67
Figure 5.2: Schematic representation of chikungunya virus replication cycle.	68
Figure 5.3: Schematic representation of chikungunya virus structural morphology.	69
Figure 5.4: Vector map of pMAL-c6T.	72
Figure 5.5: Vector map of pMAL-6K.	72
Figure 5.6: Clone confirmation of pMAL-6K.	73
Figure 5.7: Expression optimization of bacterially expressed MBP-6K fusion protein.	79
Figure 5.8: Solubility optimization of bacterially expressed MBP-6K.	80
Figure 5.9: Size exclusion chromatography profiles of bacterially expressed MBP protein and MBP-6K fusion protein.	81
Figure 5.10: Size exclusion chromatography peak fraction analysis.	83
Figure 5.11: Membrane lipid disruption assay.	84
Figure 5.12: Predicted structure of CHIKV 6K peptide and MBP-6K fusion protein.	85
Figure 5.13: Analysis of predicted MBP-6K octameric ion channel complex.	86
Figure 5.14: Electron microscopy and reference free 2D classification of MBP-6K fusion protein.	87

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Receptors, pH dependence and entry pathway for viruses.	5
Table 1.2: Virus replication and egress.	7
Table 1.3: VLP-based vaccines in clinical trial.	10
Table 2.1: Dynamic Light Scattering peak size and area.	22
Table 4.1: Statistical analysis of timeline of SARS-CoV-2 VLP entry.	58
Table 4.2: Inhibitors and their mode of action.	58
Table 4.3: Statistical analysis of relative internalization of VLPs in presence of inhibitors.	63
Table 5.1: Molar ratio of lipid constituents required for preparation of liposomes resembling mammalian intracellular organelle membrane.	76

List of Abbreviations

The following list includes all abbreviations and acronyms used throughout the thesis

ACE2	Angiotensin-converting enzyme 2
ALIX	ALG-2 interacting protein-X
ANOVA	Analysis of variance
ARF6	ADP-ribosylation factor 6
BALB	Bagg and Albino
BAPTA	1,2-bis(o-aminophenoxy)ethane- <i>N,N,N',N'</i> -tetraacetic acid
BBB	Blood brain barrier
Bgp1	beta globin protein 1
BSA	Bovine serum albumin
BSL	Biosafety level
CAR	Chimeric antigen receptor
CCD	Charge-coupled devices
CCR5	Chemokine receptor-5
CD	Cluster of differentiation
cDNA	complementary Deoxyribonucleic acid
CHIKV	Chikungunya virus
CMV/R	Cytomegalovirus/ enhancer/promoter with the HTLV-1 R region
CNS	Central nervous system
CR2	Complement receptor type-2
Cryo-EM	Cryo-Electron microscopy
CTF	Contrast transfer function
CXCR4	CXC chemokine receptor-4
DAF	Decay accelerating factor
DAPI	4',6-diamidino-2-phenylindole

DC-SIGN	Dendritic cell-specific ICAM 3-grabbing nonintegrin
DDM	n-Dodecyl-B-D-Maltoside
DLS	Dynamic light scattering
DMEM	Dulbecco's Modified Eagle's Medium
DTT	Dithiothreitol
E.coli	Escherichia coli
EDTA	Ethylenediaminetetraacetic Acid
ELISA	Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay
ER	Endoplasmic reticulum
ESCRT	Endosomal Sorting Complex Required for Transport
FACS	Fluorescence-Activated Cell Sorting
FBS	Fetal Bovine Serum
FEG	Field Emission Gun
FITC	Fluorescein Isothiocyanate
FMDV	Foot-and-Mouth Disease Virus
GAGs	Glycosaminoglycans
GFP	Green fluorescent protein
H1N1	Hemagglutinin type 1 and Neuraminidase type 1
HBc	Hepatitis B virus Core
HBs	Hepatitis B virus Surface
HBV	Hepatitis B virus
HCV	Hepatitis C virus
HEK	Human Embryonic Kidney
HEPES	4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1-piperazineethanesulfonic acid
HEV	Hepatitis E virus
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HPV	Human papilloma virus

HRP	Horse radish peroxidase
HveA	Herpesvirus entry mediator A
ICAM-1	Intercellular adhesion molecule-1
IFN	Interferon
Ig	Immunoglobulin
IL	Interleukin
ILC	Innate lymphoid cells
IP	Intraperitoneal
IPTG	Isopropyl beta-D-1 thiogalactopyranoside
JEV	Japanese encephalitis virus
KRM1	Kringle Containing Transmembrane Protein 1
LDLR	Low-density lipoprotein receptor
L-SIGN	Lymph node-specific ICAM-3-grabbing Nonintegrin
MBP	Maltose binding protein
MCAT-1	Murine Cationic Amino Acid Transporter-1
MERS-CoV	Middle East respiratory syndrome-related coronavirus
MHV	Mouse hepatitis virus
mRNA	messenger Ribonucleic acid
MXRA8	Matrix remodeling associated protein 8
NaCl	Sodium chloride
NEDD	Neural precursor cell expressed developmentally down-regulated
Nsp	Non-structural protein
NLRP3	Nucleotide-binding Oligomerization Domain-like Receptor Protein 3
OD	Optical density
ORF	Open reading frame
PBS	Phosphate buffered saline
PBST	Phosphate buffered saline with Tween

PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
PerCp	Peridinin Chlorophyll Protein
PMSF	Phenylmethanesulfonyl fluoride
PiT-2	Inorganic phosphate transporter protein-2
POPC	Phosphatidyl choline
POPE	Phosphatidyl ethanolamine
PS	Phosphatidyl serine
RBD	Receptor-Binding Domain
RdRp	RNA dependent RNA polymerase
RELION	REGularised LIkelihood Optimisation
SARS-CoV	Severe acute respiratory syndrome-associated coronavirus
SCARB1	Scavenger Receptor Class B Type 1
SDS-PAGE	Sodium dodecyl sulfate Polyacrylamide Gel Electrophoresis
SLAM	Signaling lymphocytic activation molecule
SM	Sphingomyelin
SulfoB	SulforhodamineB
SV40	Simian virus 40
SYG1	Synaptogenesis protein-1
TEM	Transmission Electron Microscopy
TIM-1	T cell immunoglobulin and mucin domain-1
TMB	Tetramethylbenzidine
TMPRSS	Transmembrane Protease, Serine
TNF	Tumor necrosis factor
TSG	Tumor susceptibility gene
U87-MG	Uppsala 87 Malignant Glioma
VLP	Virus like particle
Vpu	Viral Protein U
