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**DISSECTING THE GENETICS OF AUTOIMMUNE
DISEASES**

**Thesis submitted by
Margaret Agnes JORDAN**

**for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the School of Pharmacy and Molecular Sciences**

James Cook University

April, 2011

Volume I

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME I

STATEMENT-----	xi
ABSTRACT -----	xii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS-----	xiv
PUBLICATIONS -----	xvii
ABBREVIATIONS -----	xix
LIST OF TABLES -----	xxvii
LIST OF FIGURES -----	xxix

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble -----	1
1.2 What is autoimmunity? -----	1
1.2.1 Systemic lupus erythematosis-----	6
1.2.2 Type 1 Diabetes-----	7
1.2.3 Autoimmune gastritis-----	9
1.3 Genetics of Autoimmune disease -----	10
1.4 Development of congenic mouse lines -----	12
1.5 Transgenic and knockout mice -----	14
1.6 The use of mouse strains in studying disease -----	17
1.7 Subcongenics and their importance -----	18
1.8 Genetic linkage maps -----	20

1.9 Genetics of immunoregulatory T cells -----	25
1.9.1 Immunoregulatory T cells -----	25
1.9.2 Genetic control of immunoregulatory T cells -----	36
1.9.2.1 Genetic control of Treg -----	36
1.9.2.2 Genetic control of NKT Cells -----	39
1.10 A genetically simple autoimmune trait: Gastritis-----	68
1.10.1 Experimental Autoimmune Gastritis-----	69
1.10.2 Genes associated with gastritis susceptibility-----	75
1.11 Focus of the research -----	77

CHAPTER 2: MICE, MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Mice -----	79
2.2 DNA Preparation -----	85
2.3 Genotyping -----	86
2.4 Microarray analysis -----	87
2.5 First strand cDNA synthesis-----	92
2.6 Real time quantitative PCR-----	93
2.7 Primer design and sequencing-----	93
2.8 Restriction digestion-----	94
2.9 Ligation reactions-----	94
2.10 Transformation of DNA into <i>E.coli</i> -----	95
2.11 Production of transgenic construct-----	96
2.12 Cell suspension preparation-----	109
2.13 Flow cytometric analysis-----	109

2.14 Proliferation assays-----	110
2.15 Cytokine measurement-----	111

SECTION A: ANALYSIS OF NKT CONTROL GENES

CHAPTER 3: *NKT1* CONGENICS

3.1 Microarray Analysis of *Nkt1*

3.1.1 Introduction -----	112
3.1.2 Results -----	113
3.1.2.1 Establishment NOD. <i>Nkrp1^b.Nkt1^b</i> Congenic Mice and confirmation of increased NKT cell numbers. -----	113
3.1.2.2 Microarray Gene Expression Analysis. -----	116
3.1.3 Summary of major findings -----	130

3.2 Subcongenic Analysis of NOD.*Nkrp1^b.Nkt1^b*

3.2.1 Introduction -----	132
3.2.2. Results -----	134
3.2.2.1 Real-Time Quantitative PCR to validate microarray profiling of <i>CD247, Slamf1</i> and <i>Slamf6</i> -----	134
3.2.2.2 Establishment of NOD. <i>Nkrp1^b.Nkt1^b</i> subcongenic lines -----	135
3.2.2.3 Characterisation of the NOD. <i>Nkrp1^b.Nkt1^b</i> subcongenic mouse lines-----	139
3.2.3 Summary of major findings -----	143

3.3 *Slamf1* as candidate gene for *Nkt1*

3.3.1 Introduction -----	145
3.3.2 Results -----	149
3.3.2.1 Real-Time Quantitative PCR to validate <i>Slamf1</i> isoforms-----	149
3.3.2.2 Characterisation of SLAM expression -----	149
3.3.2.3. Functional consequences of differential SLAM expression -----	151
3.3.2.4 Sequencing -----	155
3.3.2.4.1 mRNA sequence comparison -----	155
3.3.2.4.2 Donor/Acceptor site comparison -----	162
3.3.2.4.3 Promoter sequence comparison -----	163
3.3.2.4.4 Transcriptional binding site comparisons -----	167
3.3.3 Summary of major findings -----	169

3.4 *Slamf6* as candidate gene for *Nkt1*

3.4.1 Introduction-----	171
3.4.2 Results -----	172
3.4.2.1 Testing the validity of <i>Slamf6</i> as a candidate gene for <i>Nkt1</i> -----	172
3.4.2.2 Sequencing -----	173
3.4.2.2.1 mRNA sequence comparison -----	173
3.4.2.2.2. Donor/Acceptor site comparison -----	180
3.4.2.2.3 Promoter sequence comparison -----	181
3.4.2.2.4 Transcriptional binding site comparison -----	185
3.4.3 Summary of major findings -----	188

3.5 Transgenic Manipulation of SLAM Expression

3.5.1 Introduction -----	192
3.5.2 Results -----	195
3.5.2.1 Production of transgenic construct -----	195
3.5.2.1.1 hCD2 Construct Preparation -----	195
3.5.2.1.2 <i>Slamf1</i> full length cDNA cloning -----	196
3.5.2.1.3 Cloning of <i>Slamf1</i> into hCD2/LCR cassette -----	196
3.5.2.2 Genotyping of transgenic mice and establishment of the lines ----	200
3.5.2.3 SLAM expression and NKT cell numbers in NOD. <i>Nkrp1^b</i> .Tg(hCD2- <i>Slamf1</i>) transgenic mice -----	202
3.5.2.4 Functional analysis of NKT cells in <i>Slamf1</i> transgenic mice -----	207
3.5.3 Summary of major findings-----	212

3.6 Concluding remarks about *Nkt1*

3.6 Discussion on <i>Nkt1</i> -----	214
-------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER 4: *NKT2* CONGENICS

4.1 Microarray Analysis of *Nkt2b*

4.1.1 Introduction-----	228
4.1.2 Results -----	229
4.1.2.1 Establishment NOD. <i>Nkrp1^b</i> . <i>Nkt2^b</i> Congenic Mice and confirmation of increased NKT cell numbers -----	229
4.1.2.2 Microarray Gene Expression Analysis of NOD. <i>Nkrp1^b</i> . <i>Nkt2^b</i> ----	235
4.1.2.3 Real-Time Quantitative PCR to validate candidate genes within the	

<i>Nkt2</i> region. -----	238
4.1.2.4 <i>Pxmp4</i> as a candidate gene for <i>Nkt2b</i> .-----	250
4.1.2.4.1 Sequencing -----	250
4.1.2.4.1.1 mRNA Sequence analysis of <i>Pxmp4</i> -----	250
4.1.2.4.1.2 Donor/Acceptor site comparison -----	250
4.1.2.4.1.3 Promoter sequence comparison -----	252
4.1.2.5 Sequence analysis of <i>Pex19</i> . -----	258
4.1.2.5.1 mRNA Sequence analysis of <i>Pex19</i> -----	258
4.1.2.5.2 Donor/Acceptor site comparison-----	263
4.1.2.5.3 Promoter sequence comparison -----	264
4.1.2.6 Establishment of C57BL/6.Pex13 knock-out strain -----	264
4.1.2.6.1 Comparative characterisation of the C57BL/6.Pex13 knock-out and Wild-Type mouse strains -----	271
4.1.2.6.2 Background screen to determine genetic homogeneity of C57BL/6.Pex13-LoxP and C57BL/6.Lck-Cre mice -----	271
4.1.2.6.3 Re-characterisation of the C57BL/6.Pex13 knock-out and Wild- Type mouse strains-----	273
4.1.3 Summary of major findings -----	278
4.2 <i>Nkt2b</i> concluding remarks	
4.2.1 Discussion of <i>Nkt2b</i> -----	280
4.3 <i>Nkt2a</i> and <i>Nkt2e</i> Microarray Analyses	
4.3.1 Introduction -----	288
4.3.2 Results -----	289

4.3.2.1 Microarray Gene Expression Analyses of NOD. <i>Nkrp1^bNkt2e^b</i> and NOD. <i>Nkrp1^bNkt2a^b</i> -----	289
4.3.2.2 NOD. <i>Nkrp1^bNkt2e^b</i> verses NOD. <i>Nkrp1^b</i> -----	290
4.3.2.3 NOD. <i>Nkrp1^bNkt2e^b</i> verses NOD. <i>Nkrp1^b.Nkt2a^b</i> -----	302
4.3.2.4 Real-Time Quantitative PCR to validate candidate genes within the <i>Nkt2e</i> (outside of <i>Nkt2a</i>) region -----	306
4.3.2.5 Gene expression exon array to determine differentially expressed <i>CD44</i> and <i>Caprin1</i> splice products -----	309
4.3.3. Summary of major finding -----	314
4.4 Concluding remarks on <i>Nkt2a</i> and <i>Nkt2e</i>	
4.4.1 Discussion of <i>Nkt2a</i> and <i>Nkt2e</i> -----	316

SECTION B: ANALYSIS OF GASTRITIS GENES

CHAPTER 5: GASA CONGENICS

5.1 Congenic analysis

5.1.1. Introduction -----	325
5.1.2 Results -----	326
5.1.2.1 Establishment of facilitated methods for the prompt genotyping of mice -----	327
5.1.2.2 Establishment BALB.B6- <i>Gasa</i> Sub- Congenic Mouse Lines and narrowing of <i>Gasa1</i> and <i>Gasa2</i> congenic regions -----	327

5.1.2.3 Phenotypic Analysis of the <i>Gasa</i> sub-congenic lines	331
5.1.3 Summary of major findings	335
5.2 <i>Gasa</i> Microarray Analyses	
5.2.1 Introduction	336
5.2.2 Results	337
5.2.2.1 <i>Gasal</i> and 2 microarray gene expression analysis: Gene expression profiling of 3 day old BALB/c. <i>CrSlc</i> and BALB.B6- <i>GasaA</i> mice	337
5.2.2.2 <i>Gasal</i> microarray gene expression analysis: Gene expression profiling of 4 week old BALB.B6- <i>GasaA</i> and BALB.B6(rs27528755-rs32503855) mouse thymi	344
5.2.2.2.1 Real-Time Quantitative PCR to validate candidate genes within the <i>Gasal</i> region.	346
5.2.2.2.2 <i>Cap1</i> as a candidate gene for <i>Gasal</i>	359
5.2.2.2.2.1 mRNA Sequence analysis of <i>Cap1</i>	359
5.2.2.3 <i>Gasa2</i> microarray gene expression analysis: Gene expression profiling of 4 week old BALB. <i>GasaA</i> and BALB.B6(rs13477931-D4Mit343) mice	364
5.2.2.3.1 Real-Time Quantitative PCR to validate <i>Aire</i> as a candidate gene contributing to the gastritis phenotype	373
5.2.2.3.2 AIRE expression of BALB.B6- <i>GasaA</i> and BALB.B6(rs13477931- D4Mit343) <i>TECs</i> .	375
5.2.2.3.3 Real-Time Quantitative PCR to validate candidate genes within the <i>Gasa2</i> region.	375

5.2.3 Summary of major finding-----	378
-------------------------------------	-----

5.3 Discussion of *Gasa* genes

5.3.1 Discussion of <i>Gasa</i> genes-----	380
--	-----

CHAPTER 6: GENERAL DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction -----	388
------------------------	-----

6.2 Identifying genes contributing to NKT cell number (Section A) -----	389
---	-----

6.3 Analysis of Gastritis genes (Section B)-----	394
--	-----

6.4 Implications and applications-----	397
--	-----

VOLUME II

BIBLIOGRAPHY -----	399
---------------------------	-----

APPENDICES :

APPENDIX A: PRIMER TABLES -----	I
--	---

APPENDIX B: DIFFERENTIALLY REGULATED GENE

TABLES -----	XXVI
---------------------	------

APPENDIX C: CD2/SLAM CONSTRUCT INFORMATION ----	CXCIV
--	-------

APPENDIX D: BUFFERS -----	XCIII
----------------------------------	-------

STATEMENT

The research contained within this study was performed in the Medical Genomics Laboratory in the Comparative Genomics Centre at James Cook University, Townsville, under the supervision of Professor Alan Baxter. All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of James Cook's Animal Ethics Committee. The data presented is my own work, with all contributions from others clearly stated in the acknowledgements, methods and the body of the thesis.

Margaret A Jordan

BSc (Hons)

ABSTRACT

Autoimmune diseases occur when the immune system mistakenly attacks its own healthy tissue. There are more than 80 different types of autoimmune diseases and they are classified as either systemic or tissue specific depending on the antigen/s targeted and the effector mechanism involved. Although not necessarily pathological, autoimmunity may lead to clinically relevant tissue damage in some individuals. Three-point-five percent of Western populations are afflicted, causing a huge burden on the country's resources. Many of the diseases are related with members of a cluster commonly occurring in an individual or a family suggesting some commonality in inheritance. Uncovering genes involved in one autoimmune disease may therefore also be relevant in other autoimmune diseases as well as in their underlying mechanisms. The "candidate gene" approach was for many years the only option for tackling the genetics of complex diseases but although biologically sound it led to initial elation at discovering a gene being turned to disappointment when it didn't stand up to scrutiny and/or could not be replicated by independent researchers. As the effects of a single gene may be small and the disease or animal model often pleiotropic with overlapping phenotypes, family based linkage studies too have achieved only limited success, mainly due to limitations in identifying common variants with modest effects. In the course of this thesis, I have used mouse models of disease with previously identified linkage regions and the powerful tools of a positional cloning approach coupled with microarray gene expression analyses to identify genes contributing to an important immuno-regulatory cell type, NKT cell number, as well as genes contributing to experimental autoimmune gastritis. Candidate genes identified were subsequently validated by real time PCR and FACS analyses on new sample sets

and polymorphic differences in gene structure were identified between strains positive for the phenotype compared to those phenotypically negative for it as a possible explanation for the observed differential expression patterns. To this end, thirty-nine sub-congenic mouse lines of the gastritis linkage region on chromosome 4 were produced and microarray gene expression analyses were carried out on the most informative of these to reveal at least four chromosomal regions contributing to the gastritis phenotype. Two of these regions contain a single candidate gene: *Cap1* and *Apitd1* that are both involved in apoptosis. A subcongenic approach to identifying NKT cell genes revealed a minimum of four candidates, with at least one on chromosome 1 and three or more on chromosome 2. One of the candidate genes, *Slamf1*, was subsequently confirmed through transgenic complementation, while a previously unknown role for peroxisomes in NKT cell biology identified by microarray analyses and confirmed using a knock-out mouse system.

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Like most of the PhD students I know, my years of study have been both rewarding and frustrating. When I first decided to embark on a doing a PhD I was quite prepared for the hard “slog” but could not have predicted the number of extra obstacles I would have to deal with. Not only was I juggling work, study and keeping a home, but I went through one of the most difficult times of my life due to my father’s illness. With him being thousands of kilometers away and there being many times that things were “touch and go” I felt helpless and upset, and when he died, I went through a re-evaluation of my own life. The roller coaster of my life as a PhD student continued in tandem with things at home. There were many “highs” with good results and theories coming to fruition, coupled with “lows” due to mice not breeding as expected, not finding mice with the crucial genotypes and/or sexes to set up the new breeding pairs, or needing to go back to heterozygous mice when the only homozygotes succumbed to diabetes and had to be culled. The genetic contamination of the *Pex* knock-out mice, discovered following a year of establishing experimental strains, was followed by a further year of backcrossing and intercrossing to re-establish the experimental lines. However, it was all worth-while when results reflected differences in NKT cell number between knock-out and wild-type sib-pairs. There were many frustrating moments in making the construct for the Slam transgenics, but again, I was elated when the mouse lines were finally established and phenotyping revealed the good news that all had not been in vain.

There are many people whom I need to acknowledge and thank for their efforts in ensuring that my project ran as smoothly as possible. Firstly, I would like to thank

Professor Alan Baxter for allowing me to undertake this project under his supervision. He was been a great scientific mentor and friend and has always been freely available with guidance and support. Thank you also to Professor David Yellowlees, who together with Professor Alan Baxter, was responsible for organizing that I was able to continue as an employee at the same time, part-time initially and later on, on a full time basis. Although this meant juggling a number of projects and tasks and being involved in the induction and training of several students and members of staff, it also meant that I could be more involved in other projects in the lab than most students would have had the opportunity to be, as well as meaning that I didn't need to look elsewhere to help put food on the table. I was a recipient of an Extra Mural Scholarship and Internal Top-up Scholarship and I thank James Cook University and the School of Pharmacy and Molecular Sciences for awarding them to me. I would also like to thank various organisations that bestowed me with awards for equipment or travel. These include the Australasian Society for Immunology (ASI) for awards to attend their conference in Melbourne as well as the NKT workshop in Italy, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund (JDRF) to allow me to attend the Thymoz International meeting on Heron Island, Federation of Immunological Societies of Asia Oceania (FIMSA) for their funding to attend the FIMSA workshop, Tangalooma, Brisbane, the Logan Foundation for funding to attend the ASI annual meeting, Sydney and Australasian Microarray Associated Technologies Association (AMATA) for the travel grant to attend their workshop in Hobart, Tasmania. Thank you too to Brisbane Immunology Group (BIG) and JCU Festival of Life Sciences for the poster prizes they awarded me and to Science for the communications prize at Thymoz. Thank you too to JCU for the graduate research scheme award that enabled me to buy equipment to help facilitate my work.

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PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM THIS STUDY

Primary papers:

- 1 **Jordan MA**, Fletcher JM, Jose R, Chowdhury S, Gerlach N, Allison J and Baxter AG. Role of SLAM in NKT cell development revealed by transgenic complementation in NOD mice. *J Immunol.* (2011) 186 (7)

2. Fletcher JM*, **Jordan MA***, Snelgrove SL, Slattery RM, Pellicci D, Besra GS, Godfrey DI and Baxter AG. Congenic Analysis of the NKT Cell Control Gene *Nkt2* Implicates the Peroxisomal Protein *Pxmp4*. *J. Immunol.* (2008)181:3400-3412.
(* **similar contribution**).

3. **Jordan MA***, Fletcher JM*, Pellici D and Baxter AG. *Slamf1* the NKT cell control gene *Nkt1*. *J Immunol.* (2007) 178(3):1618-27. (* **similar contribution**).

4. Ang DKY*, Brodnicki TC*, **Jordan MA**, Wilson WE, Gliddon BL, Baxter AG and van Driel IR. Two genetic loci independently confer susceptibility to autoimmune gastritis. *Int Immunol.* (2007)19(9):1135-44. Epub 2007 Aug 13. (* similar contribution).

5. Fletcher JM*, **Jordan MA***, Hawke C, Poulton L and Baxter AG. Genetic control of NK cell phenotype in autoimmune prone NOD mice associated with *Cd247* expression. In preparation. (* **similar contribution**).

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1. **Jordan MA** and Baxter AG. The genetics of immunoregulatory T cells. *J Autoimmun.* (2008) 31:237-244. PMID: 18550334
2. **Jordan MA** and Baxter AG. Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches to GOD: The first ten years of the clonal selection theory. *Immunology and Cell Biology* (2008) 86:72-79. E-Pub 2007; doi:10.1038/sj.icb.7100140
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1. Baune BT , Dannlowski U, Domschke K, Janssen DGA, **Jordan MA**, Ohrmann P, Bauer J, Biros E, Arolt V, Kugel H, Baxter AG, Suslow T. The *Interleukin 1 Beta* (*IL1B*) Gene Is Associated with Failure to Achieve Remission and Impaired Emotion Processing in Major Depression. *Biol Psychiatry* (2009) Dec 29. [Epub ahead of print] PMID: 20044070.
2. **Jordan MA**, Poulton LD, Fletcher JM and Baxter AG. Allelic variation of *Ets1* does not contribute to NK and NKT cell deficiencies in type 1 diabetes susceptible NOD mice. *Rev Diabetic Stud* (2009) 6: 104-116.

ABBREVIATIONS

α -GalCer	-	α -Galactosylceramide
β 2M	-	β 2 microglobulin
$[\gamma^{32}\text{P}]\text{ATP}$	-	$[\gamma^{32}\text{P}]$ Adenosine 5' -triphosphate
^3H	-	tritiated thymidine
^{51}Cr	-	$^{51}\text{Chromium}$
Ab	-	Antibody
Abs	-	Antibodies
ACR	-	American College of Rheumatology
ADCC	-	Antibody-dependent cellular cytotoxicity
AHA	-	Autoimmune haemolytic anaemia
AICD	-	Activation induced cell death
AIH	-	Autoimmune Hepatitis
Aire	-	Autoimmune regulator
ALPS	-	Autoimmune lymphoproliferative syndrome
ANA	-	Antinuclear antibodies
AOD	-	Autoimmune Ovarian Dysgenesis
APC	-	Antigen Presenting Cell
APECED	-	Autoimmune polyendocrinopathy-candidiasis ectodermal dystrophy
APS-1	-	Autoimmune Polyendocrinopathy Syndrome type 1
Aq	-	Aqueous solution
Asp	-	Aspartic Acid
ATP	-	Adenosine triphosphate
ATPase	-	Adenosine Triphosphatase

BB	-	Bio-Breeding
BBB	-	Blood-brain barrier
BC1	-	Backcross 1 generation
BCG	-	Bacille Calmette-Guèrin
BMC	-	Bone-marrow chimera
bp	-	Base-pair
BrdU-5	-	Bromo-2'-deoxy-uridine
BSA	-	Bovine Serum Albumin
Ca	-	Calcium
CB4	-	Coxsackievirus B4 strain
Cbl	-	Casitas B-lineage lymphoma protein
CBP	-	CREB-binding protein
CDR	-	Complementary determining region
CEAT	-	Chronic experimental autoimmune thyroiditis
CFA	-	Complete Freund's adjuvant
CFSE	-	carboxyfluorescein succinimydyl
CIA	-	Collagen Induced Arthritis
CLT	-	Chronic lymphocyte thyroiditis
cM	-	CentiMorgan
CNS	-	Central nervous system
CO ₂	-	Carbon dioxide
Con A	-	Concanavalin A
CPM	-	Counts per minute
CTLA-4	-	Cytotoxic T lymphocyte antigen 4
Cyclo.	-	Cyclophosphamide
d3Tx	-	Day 3 Thymectomy
dATP	-	Deoxyadenosine Triphosphate

DC	-	Dendritic cell
dCTP	-	Deoxycytidine Triphosphate
dGTP	-	Deoxyguanosine Triphosphate
DN	-	Double negative (CD4 ⁻ CD8 ⁻) thymocyte
DNA	-	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
dNTP	-	Deoxyribonucleotide triphosphate
DP	-	Double positive (CD4 ⁺ CD8 ⁺) thymocyte
DR	-	Diabetes-resistant
dsDNA	-	Double Stranded Deoxyribonucleic Acid
DTH	-	Delayed type hypersensitivity
dTTP	-	deoxythymidine triphosphate
EAE	-	Experimental Autoimmune Encephalomyelitis
EAG	-	Experimental Autoimmune Gastritis
EAT	-	Experimental Autoimmune Thyroiditis
ELISA	-	Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay
EOA	-	Experimental Allergic Orchitis
Erk	-	Extracellular signal-regulated kinase
FADH ₂	-	Flavin adenine dinucleotide
FasL	-	Fas Ligand
FCS	-	Foetal calf serum
FcγR	-	Fc gamma receptor
FITC	-	Fluorescein isothiocyanate
GAD	-	Glutamic Acid Decarboxylase
GBM	-	Glomerular basement membrane
GD	-	Graves' Disease
GEF	-	Guanine exchange factor
gld	-	Generalized Lymphoproliferative Disorder

GN	-	Glomerulonephritis
GRR	-	Genotype Risk Ratio
H2	-	Histocompatibility 2
HA	-	Haemolytic Anaemia
HEL	-	Hen egg lysozyme
HgCl ₂	-	Mercuric chloride
HLA	-	Human Leukocyte Antigen
i.p.	-	Intraperitoneal
i.v.	-	Intravascular
IC	-	Immune complex
IC1	-	Intercross 1
ICA	-	Islet cell antibodies
Idd	-	Murine insulin-dependent diabetes
IDDM	-	Human insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus
IFA	-	Incomplete Freund's adjuvant
IFN	-	Interferon
Ig	-	Immunoglobulin
IL	-	Interleukin
Ins	-	Insulin
IPEX	-	Immune dysregulation, polyendocrinopathy, enteropathy, X-linked syndrome
IRPB	-	Interphotoreceptor retinoid-binding protein
ITAM	-	Immuno-receptor tyrosine-based activation motifs
ITIM	-	Immuno-receptor tyrosine-based inhibitory motifs
IVT	-	In vitro transcription
Kb	-	Kilobasepairs
kD	-	Kilo Dalton

KI	-	Knock-in
KIR	-	Killer immunoglobulin-like receptor
KLH	-	Keyhole limpet hemocyanin
KO	-	Knock-out
Lck	-	Lymphocyte-specific protein tyrosine kinase
LCMV	-	Lymphocytic choriomeningitis virus
LD	-	Linkage Disequilibrium
LN	-	Lupus nephritis
LOD	-	Logarithm of odds
lpr	-	Lymphoproliferation
LPS	-	Lipopolysaccharide
LRC	-	Leukocyte receptor complex
LRS	-	Likelihood Ratio Statistic
LT	-	Lymphotoxin
MAb	-	Monoclonal antibody
MASPs	-	Marker assisted selection protocols
Mb	-	Mega-basepairs
MBP	-	Myelin Basic Protein
MCMV	-	Murine cytomegalovirus
MgCl ₂	-	Magnesium chloride
MGD	-	Mouse Genome Database
MHC	-	Major histocompatibility complex
MIT	-	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MOG	-	Myelin oligodendrocyte glycoprotein
mOVA	-	Membrane ovalbumin
mRNA	-	Messenger RNA
MS	-	Multiple Sclerosis

NAD	-	Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide
NADPH	-	Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate-oxidase
Neo	-	Neomycin resistance cassette
NK	-	Natural Killer
NKC	-	Natural killer complex
NKT cell	-	Natural Killer T cell
NLS	-	Nuclear localisation signal
NOD	-	Nonobese diabetic
NON	-	Non-Obese non-diabetic
NPC	-	Niemann-Pick type C disease
NS	-	Not Significant
NZB	-	New Zealand Black
NZBW	-	(NZB x NZW) F1
NZW	-	New Zealand White
OVA	-	Ovalbumin
OxLDL	-	Oxidized low-density lipoproteins
PAGE	-	Polyacrylamide Gel Electrophoresis
PBL	-	Peripheral blood lymphocyte
PBMC	-	Peripheral blood mononuclear cell
PBS	-	Phosphate Buffered Saline
PCR	-	Polymerase Chain Reaction
PE	-	Phycoerythrin
PI	-	Propidium iodide
PLP	-	Proteolipid protein
PMP	-	Peroxisomal membrane protein
PNK	-	Polynucleotide kinase
poly I:C	-	Polyinosine-polycytidylic acid

PPAR		Peroxisome proliferator-activated receptors
Pro	-	Proline
PTEN	-	Phosphatase and tensin homolog
QRTPCR	-	Quantitative real-time PCR
QTL	-	Quantitative Trait Locus
RA	-	Rheumatoid Arthritis
RAR α	-	Retinoic acid receptor alpha
RAG	-	Recombination-activity gene
RBC	-	Red Blood Cell
RPM	-	Revolutions per minute
RT	-	Room temperature
SD	-	Standard Deviation
SDS	-	Sodium dodecyl sulphate
SEB	-	Staphylococcal enterotoxin β superantigen
SEM	-	Standard error of mean
Ser	-	Serine
SHP-1	-	Haemopoietic cell phosphatase
SLE	-	Systemic Lupus Erythematosus
SNP	-	Single Nucleotide Polymorphism
SP	-	Single positive (CD4 ⁺ CD8 ⁻ / CD4 ⁻ CD8 ⁺) thymocyte
ssDNA	-	Single Stranded Deoxyribonucleic Acid
SSLP	-	Simple sequence length polymorphism
ssRNA	-	Single Stranded Ribonucleic Acid
SV40	-	Simian virus 40
T1D	-	Type 1 diabetes
TCR	-	T cell receptor
TEC	-	Thymic epithelial cell

TGF β	-	Transforming growth factor β
Th	-	T helper
Th1	-	T helper type 1
Th2	-	T helper type 2
Thr	-	Threonine
TNF	-	Tumour Necrosis Factor
TP	-	Total protein
Treg	-	CD4 ⁺ CD25 ⁺ FoxP3 ⁺ regulatory T cell
Ts	-	'Suppressor' T cell
TUNEL	-	TdT-mediated dUTP-biotin nick end labelling
UK	-	United Kingdom
UV	-	Ultraviolet
WT	-	Wild-type

LIST OF TABLES

- 1.1 Tolerance
- 1.2 Diabetes/SLE genes
- 1.3 NKT cell responses
- 1.4 Targeted gene mutations affecting NKT cells

- 3.1 *Nkt1* background screen
- 3.2 Quality assessment of arrays
- 3.3 *Nkt1* genechip correlation analysis
- 3.4 *Nkt1* differentially regulated genes (U-stat=0)
- 3.5 *Slamf1* donor/acceptor site sequence comparisons
- 3.6 *Slamf1* TESS results
- 3.7 *Slamf1* TFSEARCH results
- 3.8 *Slamf6* donor/acceptor site sequence comparisons
- 3.9 *Slamf6* TFSEARCH results
- 3.10 *Slamf6* TESS results
- 3.11 Transgenic pups

- 4.1 *Nkt2b* background screen
- 4.2 *Nkt2b* genechip comparison of internal controls
- 4.3 *Nkt2b* differentially regulated genes (U-Stat=0)
- 4.4 *Pxmp4* donor/acceptor site sequence comparisons
- 4.5 *Pex19* donor/acceptor site sequence comparisons
- 4.6 C57BL/6-*Pex13* background screen
- 4.7 NOD.*Nkrp1^b*.*Nkt2a^b* and NOD.*Nkrp1^b* genechip comparison

- 4.8 NOD.*Nkrp1^b.Nkt2e^b* and NOD.*Nkrp1^b* genechip comparison
- 4.9 NOD.*Nkrp1^b.Nkt2e^b* and NOD.*Nkrp1^b.Nkt2a^b* genechip comparison
- 4.10 NOD.*Nkrp1^b.Nkt2e^b* vs NOD.*Nkrp1^b* differentially regulated genes (U-Stat=0)
- 4.11 List of highly differentially regulated genes on Chromosome 2 with *Nkt2e*
- 4.12 NOD.*Nkrp1^b.Nkt2e^b* verses NOD.*Nkrp1^b.Nkt2a^b* differentially regulated genes
- 4.13 *Nkt2e* Chr2 differentially regulated genes within congenic segments
- 4.14 CD44 exons
- 4.15 Caprin1 exons

- 5.1 BALB/cCrSlc-*GasaA* background screen
- 5.2 *Gasa A* chip quality comparison: overall statistics (3 day old)
- 5.3A *Gasa1* differentially regulated genes (3 day old) (U-Stat=0)
- 5.3B *Gasa2* differentially regulated genes (3 day old) (U-Stat=0)
- 5.3C Highly differentially regulated genes in region 4
- 5.4a *Gasal* genechip summary statistics (4 week old)
 - b *Gasal* genechip comparison of spiked controls (4 week old)
 - c *Gasal* genechip correlation analysis (4 week old)
- 5.5 *Gasal* differentially regulated genes (4 week old) (U-Stat=0)
- 5.6 Function and potential role in Type 1 Gastritis (TAG) of significantly differentially regulated genes within *Gasal*
- 5.7 *Gasa2* differentially regulated genes (4 week old) (U-Stat=0)

- 6.1 Overall microarray analyses of *gasa* congenics

LIST OF FIGURES

- 2.1 Production of NOD.*Nkrp1^b*.*Nkt1^b* subcongenics
- 2.2 Production of BALB/c.B6-*Gasa* subcongenics
- 2.3 Production of C57BL/6 *Pex13* knockout strain
- 2.4 Diagrammatic representation of Slamf1/hCD2 construct production
- 2.5 hCD2 construct
- 2.6 Diagrammatic representation of sequencing of hCD2 pDNA
- 2.7 Diagrammatic representation of sequencing of *Slamf1* pDNA
- 2.8 Diagrammatic representation of sequencing of *Slamf1*/hCD2 pDNA
- 2.9 Production of NOD SLAM transgenic strains

- 3.1 *Nkt1* linkage peak to congenic
- 3.2 *Nkt1* characterisation
- 3.3 *Nkt1* Scatter plot comparison
- 3.4 *Nkt1* genechip Principle Eigen values
- 3.5 *Nkt1* scatterplot to gene location
- 3.6 Highly differentially regulated genes in *Nkt1* linkage region
- 3.7 *CD247* validation by QRTPCR
- 3.8 *Slamf1* validation by QRTPCR
- 3.9 *Slamf6* validation by QRTPCR
- 3.10 NOD.*Nkrp1^b*.*Nkt1^b* sub-congenics schematic
- 3.11 NOD.*Nkrp1^b*.*Nkt1^b* subcongenic characterisation
- 3.12 Microarray profiling of SLAM family members

- 3.13 CD2 family schematic
- 3.14 *Slamf1* isoform validation by QRTPCR
- 3.15 SLAM expression during T-cell development
- 3.16 Co-stimulation effect of SLAM expression
- 3.17a *Slamf1* isoform1 mRNA sequence comparison
 - b *Slamf1* isoform2 mRNA sequence comparison
- 3.18 *Slamf1* promoter sequence comparison
- 3.19 *Slamf1* sequence strain comparison schematic
- 3.20 *Ly108l* cDNA sequence comparison
- 3.21 *Ly108s* cDNA sequence comparison
- 3.22 *Slamf6* promoter sequence comparison
- 3.23 *Slamf6* sequence strain comparison schematic
- 3.24 Gel electrophoresis: *BamHI/SalI* digest of hCD2 in Bluescript
- 3.25 Gel electrophoresis: *EcoRI* digest of plasmids containing either hCD2 or *Slamf1* cDNA inserts
- 3.26 SLAM-hCD2 Construct schematic
- 3.27 Gel electrophoresis: Concentration verification of prepared transgene construct
- 3.28 PCR to determine transgene positive pups
- 3.29 *Slamf1* transgene copy number
- 3.30 SLAM expression and NKT cell number determined by FACS analysis of SLAM transgenic lines
- 3.31 NKT cell subset characterization of SLAM transgenics
- 3.32 Cytokine production by SLAM transgenic NKT cells
- 3.33 Proliferation and cytokine production by SLAM transgenic thymocytes
- 3.34 A schematic representing the selection of NKT cells in the thymus

- 4.1 *Nkt2* linkage peak to congenics
- 4.2 NOD.*Nkrp1^b.Nkt2b^b* characterization
- 4.3 NOD.*Nkrp1^b.Nkt2b* differential gene FC
- 4.4 Highly differentially regulated genes in *Nkt2b* linkage region
- 4.5 *C1q* validation by QRTPCR
- 4.6 *Cdk5rap1* validation by QRTPCR
- 4.7 *Trib3* validation by QRTPCR
- 4.8 *Csnk2a1* validation by QRTPCR
- 4.9 *Pxmp4* validation by QRTPCR
- 4.10 *Pex19* validation by QRTPCR
- 4.11 *Pxmp4* mRNA sequence comparison
- 4.12 *Pxmp4* promoter sequence comparison
- 4.13 *Pxmp4* sequence strain comparison schematic
- 4.14 *Pex19* mRNA sequence comparison
- 4.15 *Pex19* promoter sequence comparison
- 4.16 *Pex19* sequence strain comparison schematic
- 4.17 Gel electrophoresis: Example gels of Floxed and Cre PCRs
- 4.18 NKT characterization of male and female *Pex13* ko mice
- 4.19 NKT re-characterization of male and female *Pex13* ko mice
- 4.20 *Nkt2e* scatterplot to gene location
- 4.21 NOD.*Nkrp1^b.Nkt2e^b* differential gene FC
- 4.22 *Caprin1* validation by QRTPCR
- 4.23 *CD44* validation by QRTPCR

- 5.1 Example genotype using Fragment Profiler

- 5.2 Schematic of *Gasa* subcongenic lines
- 5.3 Subcongenic analysis of *Gasa* genes
- 5.4 Diagrammatic representation of *GasaA* genechip internal controls (3 day old)
- 5.5 *Gasa1* scatterplot to gene location (4 week old)
- 5.6 *Gasa1* differential gene FC (4 week old)
- 5.7 *AI450326* validation by QRTPCR
- 5.8a-b *1700041C02Rik* validation by QRTPCR
- 5.9a-b *Scmh1* validation by QRTPCR
- 5.10 *Cited4* validation by QRTPCR
- 5.11 *Cap1* validation by QRTPCR
- 5.12 *Cap1* mRNA sequence comparison
- 5.13 *Gasa2* scatterplot to gene location (4 week old)
- 5.14 *Gasa2* differential gene FC (4 week old)
- 5.15 *Aire* validation by QRTPCR
- 5.16 *Aire* validation by FACS analysis
- 5.17 *Apitd1* validation by QRTPCR
- 5.18 *1442338_at* validation by QRTPCR
- 5.19 *Tnfrsf14* validation by QRTPCR
- 5.20 *Gnb1* validation by QRTPCR
- 5.21 *B3Galt6* validation by QRTPCR
- 5.22 *Tnfrsf4* validation by QRTPCR
- 5.23 *AW011738* validation by QRTPCR

- 6.1 *Subcongenic analysis of Nkt genes*