



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**HUMAN HEPATITIS B VIRAL PROTEINS HBX AND HBE: ROLES IN
HepG2 CELL LINE SURVIVAL AND CELL DEATH**

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**HUMAN HEPATITIS B VIRAL PROTEINS HBX AND HBE:
ROLES IN HepG2 CELL LINE SURVIVAL AND CELL DEATH**

By

ANDREA LISA HOLME

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy**

January 2004



DEDICATION

In Loving Memory

Of

Elizabeth Christie Holme



Abstract of this thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

HUMAN HEPATITIS B VIRAL PROTEINS HBX AND HBE: ROLES IN CELL SURVIVAL AND CELL DEATH

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January 2004

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Faculty: Medicine and Health Sciences

Existing reports of viral hepatitis, resulting in liver cell death have not been fully explained with regards to the mechanism of the viral proteins involved. The objective of the study is to determine if any of the Hepatitis B viral proteins cause changes in the survival of human hepatocytes and if so by what means. The two main candidates for inducing survival changes were the precore proteins (HBE) and HBX, both of which have been reported to accumulate in the liver of patients and to trigger an immune response. The human liver HepG2 cell line was chosen to study the effect of these proteins during transient expression. The results from this study show that both viral proteins can induce cell death by an apoptotic mechanism via caspases. HBX appears to trigger more cell death than HBE, while HBE-induced an initial proliferation of the cell culture followed by cell death. HBX-induced apoptosis appears to involve both extrinsic and intrinsic cell death systems through the Fas



system and the mitochondria, respectively. There is also a total loss of the PI3K/Akt pathway survival signals. The HBE-induced apoptosis appears to be through DNA damage triggering an intrinsic cell death program, coupled with a partial loss of the PI3K/Akt pathway that allows GSK3 β to be activated, while keeping FKHR inactive. In both cases, the viral cell death can be prevented using the correct dosage of IL-6 stimulation, while loss of serum or the addition of ethanol can have an overall positive effect on the viability of HBX and HBE transfected cells. The deaths can also be prevented in varying degrees by the inhibition of MEK1 and PP1A/2A suggesting these pathways are involved probably by cross talking.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai syarat memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PROTIN HBX DAN HBE VIRUS HEPATITIS B MANUSIA: PERANAN
DALAM KEHIDUPAN SEL DAN KEMATIAN SEL**

Oleh

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Januari 2004

Pengerusi: Profesor Datin Faridah Jamal, M.B.B.S., M.Sc., M.R.C. Path.

Fakulti: Perubatan Dan Sains Kesihatan

Laporan tentang virus hepatitis yang mengakibatkan kerosakan hati belum lagi dijelaskan dengan sepenuhnya dalam aspek mekanisma dan peranan protin virus yang terlibat. Projek ini bertujuan menyiasat sebarang protin virus hepatitis B yang mempengaruhi kehidupan sel hati manusia dan, jika ada bagaimana protin tersebut berfungsi. Dua protin yang memainkan peranan penting adalah protin precore (HBE) dan HBX. Kedua-dua protin tersebut telah dilaporkan terkumpul di dalam hati pesakit dan akan merangsangkan respon keimunan. Sel kanser hepatoblastoma, HepG2, telah dipilih untuk menyiasat kesan protin tersebut semasa transient ekspresi. Keputusan menunjukkan kedua-dua protin virus itu dapat merangsangkan kematian sel melalui mekanisma yang bergantung kepada caspase. HBX didapati merangsangkan kematian sel yang banyak berbanding dengan HBE. Manakala, HBE merangsangkan fasa awal pembahagian sel diikuti dengan kematian sel. Perangsangan apoptosis oleh HBX melibatkan sistem

kematian sel ekstrinsik dan intrinsik melalui sistem Fas dan mitokondria masing-masing. Terdapat juga kehilangan isyarat kehidupan bagi perjalanan PI3K/Akt. Kematian sel akibat daripada HBE adalah disebabkan oleh kerosakan DNA yang seterusnya merangsangkan program kematian sel intrinsik. Bersamaan kejadian tersebut, terdapat kehilangan separa dalam perjalanan PI3K/Akt yang membolehkan keaktifan GSK3 β tanpa mengaktifkan FKHR. Kesan kematian sel akibat daripada kedua-dua protin virus ini dapat diterbalikkan dengan sukatan IL-6 tertentu. Manakala, kehilangan serum atau penambahan etanol boleh membawa kesan positif ke atas viabiliti sel yang dijangkiti HBX dan HBE. Darjah penyongsangan kematian sel dipengaruhi oleh penyahaktifan MEK 1 dan PP1A/2A. Kesimpulannya, kedua-dua protin virus tersebut berkerjasama merangsangkan kematian sel yang dapat dipengaruhi oleh factor-faktor luaran.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	3
ABSTRAK	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	7
APPROVALS	8
DECLARATION	10
LIST OF TABLES	15
LIST OF FIGURES	16
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	22
CHAPTER	
1 LITERATURE REVIEW	26
1.1 Introduction	26
1.2 Hepatitis B Virus Structure	28
1.3 Immune Response to Hepatitis B Virus	30
1.4 Overview of Signal Transduction Pathways Related to Hepatocytes	35
1.4.1 Mitogen Activated Protein Kinases	35
1.4.2 Stress Activated Kinases	38
1.4.3 Phosphatases Pathway	39
1.4.4 Phosphatidylinositol 3 kinase-PI3K Pathway	40
1.4.5 Janus Kinase (Jak)/Signal Transducers and Activators of Transcription (STAT) Kinase Pathway	42
1.4.6 NFkappabeta	44
1.5 Apoptosis	45
1.5.1 Morphology of Apoptosis	46
1.6 Caspases	48
1.7 Extrinsically Triggered Apoptosis	49
1.8 Intrinsically Triggered Apoptosis	53
1.9 Regulation of Mitochondria Induced Cell Death by Bcl Family	55
1.10 Inhibitors of Apoptosis	59
1.11 Signalling Pathways Involved in Apoptosis	61
1.11.1 Protein Kinase C and Protein Kinase A	62
1.11.2 Cermide	63
1.11.3 NF Kappa Beta	65
1.11.4 p53	66
1.11.5 Nitric Oxide	68
1.12 Cytokines	69
1.12.1 Loss of Cytokine-Dependent Suppression of Apoptosis	70
1.13 Mechanisms of Hepatitis B Virus Related Hepatocellular Carcinoma	72
1.13.1 HBX as a Factor in the Development of Hepatocellular Carcinoma	74
1.13.2 HBeAg as a Factor in the Development of Hepatocellular Carcinoma	77



1.14	Conclusion	79
1.15	Aims of the Project	80
2	GENERAL MATERIALS AND METHODS	81
2.1	Generating Mammalian Expression Vectors	81
2.1.1	Materials and Instruments	81
2.1.2	Polymerase Chain Reaction to Generate DNA Fragment for Cloning	82
2.1.3	Gel Purification of the PCR Products	83
2.1.4	Ligation of Gel Purified PCR Products into pTARGET™ Vector	84
2.1.5	Transformation of Recombinant pTARGET™ Vector into JM109	84
2.1.6	Spreading Transformed Cells on Agar Plates	85
2.1.7	Colony PCR to Determine the Insert Orientation in pTARGET™ Vector	85
2.1.8	Preparation of Competent JM109 Using the Calcium Chloride Method	85
2.1.9	Long Term Storage of Bacteria Stocks as Glycerol Stocks	86
2.1.10	Plasmid Extraction using the Alkaline SDS-Lysis Method	86
2.2.1	QIAGEN Endotoxin Midi Plasmid Preparation	87
2.2	Protein Work	88
2.2.1	Materials and Instruments	88
2.2.1	Lysis of Mammalian Cells for Western Blotting	89
2.2.3	Electrophoresis of Proteins on SDS-PAGE Gels	89
2.2.4	Coomassie Blue Staining and Destaining	91
2.2.5	Determination of Protein Concentration using the Bradford Method	91
2.2.6	Semi Dry Western Blotting	92
2.3	Cell Culture	93
2.3.1	Materials and Instruments	93
2.3.2	Maintenance and Subculturing of the HepG2 Cell Line	94
2.3.3	Cryopreservation	95
2.3.4	Trypan Blue Exclusion Test	95
2.3.5	Transient Transfection of the HepG2 Cell Line	96
2.3.6	Light Microscopy Morphology Scoring	97
2.3.7	MTT Assay	98
2.3.8	Treatments of the HepG2 Cell Line with: Inhibitors, Serum Withdrawl, Ethanol, IL-6 and Condition Medium	98
2.4	Light and Fluorescent Microscope	99
2.4.1	Materials and Instruments	99
2.4.2	Light Microscope	100
2.4.3	Epi-Fluorescent Microscope	100
2.5	Statistics	102
3	OPTIMISING TRANSFECTION OF THE HEPG2 CELL LINE	103



3.1	Introduction	103
3.2	The Choice of the Mammalian Cell Line	104
3.3	Optimisation of Transfection of the HepG2 Cell Line	105
3.4	Localisation and Expression of the Viral Proteins HBX and HBE	109
3.5	Conclusion of the Transfection	111
4	SURVIVAL OF HEPG2 CELLS EXPRESSING VIRAL PROTEINS	113
4.1	Introduction	113
4.2	Results for the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBX	114
4.2.1	Assessment of Survival Using MTT Assay and Light Morphology Scoring of the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBX	114
4.2.2	Assessment of Apoptosis by Nuclear DAPI Staining in the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBX	116
4.2.3	Assessment of the Role of Caspases in HBX-induced Cell Death in the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBX	118
4.2.4	Immunofluorescent Assessment of the Apoptotic Proteins: Caspase 3, Fas Receptor, Fas Ligand and Apaf-1 in the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBX	120
4.3	Conclusion for the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBX	126
4.4	Results for the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE	130
4.4.1	Assessment of Survival Using MTT Assay and Light Morphology Scoring of the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE	130
4.4.2	Assessment of Apoptosis by Nuclear DAPI Staining in the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE	132
4.4.3	Assessment of the Role of Caspases in HBX-induced Cell Death in the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE	133
4.4.4	Immunofluorescent Assessment of the Apoptotic Proteins: Caspase 3, Fas Receptor, Fas Ligand and Apaf-1 in the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE	135
4.5	Conclusion for the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE	140
5	CELL SIGNALLING PATHWAYS INVOLVED IN VIRAL PROTEIN INDUCED CELL DEATH	142
5.1	Introduction	142
5.1.1	Extracellular Response Kinase-ERKs	144
5.1.2	Phosphatidylinositol 3 kinase-PI3K Pathway	145
5.1.3	Phosphatase Pathway	149
5.2	Results for the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBX	150
5.2.1	Dose Response Curve for the HepG2 Cell Line Exposed to the Inhibitors; PD098059, Wortmannin, and Okadaic Acid	150
5.2.2	Assessment of Survival Using MTT Assay of the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBX in the Presence of Inhibitors; PD098059, Wortmannin, and Okadaic Acid	154



5.2.3	Immunofluorescent Assessment of the Apoptotic Proteins: Caspase 3, Fas Receptor, Fas Ligand, and Apaf-2 in the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBX and Treated with PD098059	156
5.2.4	Assessment of PI3K Activity in the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBX	160
5.3	Conclusion for the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBX	163
5.4	Results for the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE	167
5.4.1	Assessment of Survival Using MTT Assay of the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE in the Presence of Inhibitors; PD098059, Wortmannin, and Okadaic Acid	169
5.4.2	Immunofluorescent Assessment of the Apoptotic Proteins: Caspase 3, Fas Receptor, Fas Lignad, and Apaf-2 in the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE and Treated with PD098059	172
5.4.3	Assessment of PI3K Activity in the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE	172
5.5	Conclusion for the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE	172
6	ASSESSMENT OF PARACRINE FACTORS ON CELL SURIVAL AND DEATH	174
6.1	Introduction	174
6.2	Results for the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBX	176
6.2.1	MTT Assay of the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE in the Presence and Absence of Serum	177
6.2.2	MTT Assay of the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE and Exposed to Ethanol in the Presence and Absence of Serum	177
6.2.3	MTT Assay of the HepG2 Cell Line Cultured in the Presence of Condition Medium from HepG2 Transfected with HBX	178
6.2.4	MTT Assay of the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBX and Exposed to Interleukin 6	179
6.3	Conclusion for the HepG2 Cell Line Trransfected with HBX	180
6.4	Results for the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE	181
6.4.1	MTT Assay of the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE in the Presence and Absence of Serum	181
6.4.2	MTT Assay of the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE and Exposed to Ethanol in the Presence and Absence of Serum	182
6.4.3	MTT Assay of the HepG2 Cell Line Cultured in the Presence of Condition Medium from HepG2 Transfected with HBE	183
6.4.4	MTT Assay of the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE and Exposed to Interleukin 6	184
6.5	Conclusion for the HepG2 Cell Line Transfected with HBE	185
7	GENERAL DISCUSSION	186
7.1	Recommendations for Future Work	198
	REFERENCES	200
	BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR	238



LIST OF TABLE

Table		Page
Table 1	PCR Primers for Cloning	p81
Table 2	Components to Prepare SDS-PAGE Gel	p90
Table 3	Dilutions of New England BioLabs Antibodies	p93
Table 4	DNA Concentrations and Transfection Reagent Volumes Used	p97
Table 5	Antibodies Dilutions Used	p101
Table 6	Summary of Caspase 3, FasR, FasL and Apaf-1 Immunofluorescent Staining in HepG2 and HepG2-HBX Cells	p120
Table 7	Summary of Caspase 3, FasR, FasL and Apaf-1 Immunofluorescent Staining in HepG2 and HepG2-HBE Cells	p140
Table 8	Summary of the Western Blots	p162
Table 9	Summary of Caspase 3, FasR, FasL and Apaf-1 In Immunofluorescent Staining in HepG2 and HepG2-HBE Cells Treated with 10 μ M PD098059	p171
Table 10	Summary Of Novel Findings From The Work Undertaken In This Thesis.	p197



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
Figure 1.1	Geographic distribution of human chronic Hepatitis B virus infection	p26
Figure 1.2A	Shows an electron Microscope photograph of serum derived from human infected with Hepatis B virus	p28
Figure 1.2B	A diagram of the Dane particle structure	p28
Figure 1.3	The genome of HBV is a double-stranded circular DNA	p29
Figure 1.4A	Overview of the MAPK family	p37
Figure 1.4B	MAPK cascade consists of 3 protein kinases; MAPKKK, MAPKK, MAPK	p37
Figure 1.5	Overview of p38 MAPK pwway	p39
Figure 1.6	Overview of PI3K/Akt pathway	p41
Figure 1.7	Overview of IL-6 signalling pathway	p44
Figure 1.8	Overview of the cell death pathways from cell Membrane converging on caspases to result in protease activation	p50
Figure 1.9A	Overview of Fas death receptor	p52
Figure 1.9B	Overview of TNF death receptor	p53
Figure 1.10	Overview of the intrinsic cell death	p54
Figure 1.11	Overview of regulation of apoptosis	p56
Figure 1.12	Overview of the balance regulating p53 activity	p67
Figure 1.13A	Overview of the loss of cytokine dependent suppression of apoptosis	p72
Figure 1.13B	Overview of the signalling pathways involved in cytokine suppression	p72
Figure 1.14	Development and progression of cancer	p73

Figure 2.1	Counting cells with a hemocytometer	p96
Figure 3.1	Diagram of the pTARGET™ vector	p103
Figure 3.2	Morphology of the HepG2 cell line in cell culture as seen under an inverted phase contrast microscope	p105
Figure 3.3	The HepG2 cell line transfected with recombinant HBXpTARGET vector using various ratios of DNA: PLUS-LIPOFECTAMINE Reagent.	p107
Figure 3.4	The HepG2 cell line transfected with recombinant HBEpTARGET vector using various ratios of DNA: PLUS-LIPOFECTAMINE Reagent.	p108
Figure 3.5	The HepG2 cell line transfected with pTARGET Vector using various ratios of DNA: PLUS-LIPOFECTAMINE Reagent.	p108
Figure 3.6	The HepG2-HBX and HepG2 cell line were fixed and permeabilised on day 2 and immunofluorescent double staining for the HBX viral protein and nucleus with DAPI was performed	p109
Figure 3.7	The HepG2-HBE and HepG2 cell line were fixed and permeabilised on day 2 and immunofluorescent double staining for the HBE viral protein and nucleus with DAPI was performed	p110
Figure 4.1A	Daily sampling by MTT assay and light morphology scoring of HepG2-HBX over a 4-day period and plotted as % of control cells	p115
Figure 4.1B	The HepG2-HBX population morphology under inverted phase contrast microscopy	p115
Figure 4.2A	The HepG2 cell line was grown on a coverslip, and stained with DAPI and viewed under light microscope with UV light	p116
Figure 4.2B	The HepG2 cell line was grown on a coverslip, and stained with DAPI and viewed with UV light	p116
Figure 4.3	The nuclear staining pattern of HepG2 cells and HepG2-HBX was assessed by DAPI staining of cells over 4 days	p117

Figure 4.4A	The Dose Response Curve of the HepG2 cell line exposure to Z-VAD-fmk	p119
Figure 4.4B	The morphology of the HepG2 cell population treated with 100 μ M Z-VAD-fmk	p119
Figure 4.5A	20 μ M of Z-VAD-fmk was added to HepG2 and HepG2-HBX which was assessed after 4 days by MTT assay and plotted as % of control cells	p120
Figure 4.5B	The morphology of the HepG2 and HepG2-HBX with 20 μ M Z-VAD-fmk	p120
Figure 4.6	Indirect immunofluorescent staining of caspase 3 in HepG2 and HepG2-HBX on day 2	p122
Figure 4.7	Indirect immunofluorescent staining for Fas Receptor in HepG2 and HepG2-HBX on day 2	p123
Figure 4.8	Indirect immunofluorescent staining for Fas Ligand in HepG2 and HepG2-HBX on day 2	p124
Figure 4.9	Indirect immunofluorescent staining of Apaf-1 in HepG2 and HepG2-HBX on day 2	p125
Figure 4.10A	Daily sampling by MTT assay and light morphology scoring of HepG2-HBE over a 4-day period and plotted as % of control cells	p131
Figure 4.10B	The HepG2-HBE population morphology under inverted phase Contrast microscopy	p131
Figure 4.11	The nuclear staining pattern of HepG2 cells and HepG2-HBE was assessed by DAPI staining of cells over 4 days	p132
Figure 4.12A	20 μ M of Z-VAD-fmk was added to HepG2 and HepG2-HBE which was assessed after 4 days by MTT assay and plotted as % of control cells	p134
Figure 4.12B	The morphology of the HepG2 and HepG2-HBE with 20 μ M Z-VAD-fmk	p134
Figure 4.13	Indirect immunofluorescent staining of caspase 3 in HepG2 and HepG2-HBE on day 2	p136
Figure 4.14	Indirect immunofluorescent staining for Fas Receptor in HepG2 and HepG2-HBE on day 2	p137

Figure 4.15	Indirect immunofluorescent staining for Fas Ligand in HepG2 and HepG2-HBE on day 2	p138
Figure 4.16	Indirect immunofluorescent staining of Apaf-1 in HepG2 and HepG2-HBe on day 2	p139
Figure 5.1	Cooperative effect versus Non Cooperative effect on signalling	p143
Figure 5.2A	The Dose Response Curve of the HepG2 cell line exposed to PD098059	p151
Figure 5.2B	The cell population morphology exposed to 100 μ M PD098059	p151
Figure 5.3A	The Dose Response Curve of the HepG2 cell line exposed to Wortmannin	p152
Figure 5.3B	The cell population morphology exposed to 0.167 μ M Wortmannin	p152
Figure 5.4A	The Dose Response Curve of the HepG2 cell line exposed to Okadaic acid	p153
Figure 5.4B	The cell population morphology exposed to 1nM and 10nM Okadaic acid	p153
Figure 5.5A	MTT assay of the HepG2-HBX exposed to inhibitors: PD098059, Wortmannin, Okadaic acid	p155
Figure 5.5B	The HepG2-HBX cell population morphology with PD098059, Wortmannin, Okadaic acid	p155
Figure5.6	Indirect immunofluorescent staining of HepG2-HBX and exposed to 10 μ M of PD 098059 on day 2	p156
Figure 5.7	Indirect immunofluorescent staining for activated caspase 3 in HepG2-HBX exposed to 10 μ M of PD 098059 on day 2	p157
Figure 5.8	Indirect immunofluorescent staining for FasR in HepG2-HBX exposed to 10 μ M of PD 098059 on day 2	p158
Figure 5.9	Indirect immunofluorescent staining for FasL in HepG2-HBX exposed to 10 μ M of PD 098059 on day 2	p159

Figure 5.10	Indirect immunofluorescent staining for Apaf-1 in HepG2-HBX exposed to 10 μ M of PD 098059 on day 2	p160
Figure 5.11	Indirect immunofluorescent staining for PI3K in HepG2 and HepG2-HBX	p161
Figure 5.12	Representative Western blotting of PKB/Akt and its down-stream substrates in HepG2, HepG2-HBX and HepG2-HBE	p162
Figure 5.13A	MTT assay of the HepG2-HBE exposed to inhibitors: PD098059, Wortmannin, Okadaic acid	p168
Figure 5.13B	The HepG2-HBE cell population morphology with PD098059, Wortmannin, Okadaic acid	p168
Figure 5.14	Indirect immunofluorescent staining of HepG2-HBE and exposed to 10 μ M of PD 098059 on day 2	p170
Figure 5.15	Indirect immunofluorescent staining for activated caspase 3 in HepG2-HBE exposed to 10 μ M of PD 098059 on day 2	p170
Figure 5.16	Indirect immunofluorescent staining for Apaf-1 in HepG2-HBE exposed to 10 μ M of PD 098059 on day 2	p171
Figure 6.1	HepG2 cell line and HepG2-HBX cultured in the presence and absence of serum for 4 days with daily MTT assay being performed	p176
Figure 6.2	HepG2 cell line and HepG2-HBX were cultured in the presence and absence of serum and 1mM of ethanol for 4 days with daily MTT assay being performed	p177
Figure 6.3	MTT assay of conditioning medium added to HepG2 cell line	p178
Figure 6.4	HepG2 cell line and HepG2-HBX were exposed to a Concentration range of IL-6 over for 4 days with MTT assay performed on day 4	p179
Figure 6.5	HepG2 cell line and HepG2-HBE cultured in the presence and absence of serum for 4 days with daily MTT assay being performed	p182

Figure 6.6	HepG2 cell line and HepG2-HBE were cultured in the presence and absence of serum and 1mM of ethanol for 4 days with daily MTT assay being performed	p183
Figure 6.7	HepG2 cell line and HepG2-HBE were exposed to a Concentration range of IL-6 over for 4 days with MTT assay performed on day 4	p184
Figure 7.1	Illustration of the initial infection stage of HBV	p193

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

4E-BP	eIF-4E binding protein
Abl	Ableson protein tyrosine kinase
AKT	Cellular homolog of the v-akt oncogene, an S/T protein kinase
Apaf-1	Apoptotic protease activating factor-1
ASK	Apoptosis signal-regulating kinase
Bcl	B cell leukemia oncogene
Caspase	Cysteine proteases with aspartate specificity
CBP	CREB binding protein
CDK	Cyclin-dependent kinase
c-Raf	Raf proto-oncogene S/T protein kinase
CREB	cAMP response element-binding protein, CREB1
DAG	Diacylglycerol
DAPI	4', 6-Diamidino-2-phenylindole
DED	Death Effector Domain
DR	Death receptor
E2F	Transcription factor family including E2F- and DP-like subunits
eEF	Eukaryotic elongation factor
eIF	Eukaryotic initiation factor
ELK1	Ets domain protein
ERK	Extracellular signal-regulated kinase, MAPK
FADD	Fas-associated protein with death domain
FAK	Focal adhesion kinase



FasL	Fas Ligand
FasR	Fas Receptor
FKHR	Forkhead in rhabdomyosarcoma
FLIPs	FLICE (Caspase 8) inhibitory protein
GSK-3β	Glycogen synthase kinase-3 β
HBE	all precursor protein forms of Hepatitis B virus
HBeAG	secreted precursor protein
HepG2-HBE	HepG2 transfected cells with HBEpTARGET™ vector
HepG2-HBX	HepG2 transfected cells with HBXpTARGET™ vector
IAP	Inhibitor of apoptosis
ICAD	Inhibitor of caspase-activated deoxyribonuclease
IκB	Inhibitor of NF- κ B
IKK	I κ B kinase
INK4	Inhibitor of CDK 4
IRS	Insulin receptor substrate
ISRE	Interferon-stimulating response element
Jak	Janus-family tyrosine kinase
JNK	Jun N-terminal kinase
MAPK	Mitogen-activated protein kinase
MEK	MAPK/ERK kinase, MAPKK
MEKK	MEK kinase
MLK	Mixed lineage kinase
MTT	Methylthiazoletetrazolium
NF-κB	Nuclear factor kappa B

NIK	NF-kB Induced kinase
NOS	Nitric oxide Synthase
p53	Tumour suppressor protein that protects from DNA damage
PKD	3-phosphoinositide-dependent protein kinase
PH	Pleckstin homology domain
PI3K	Phosphoinositide-3 kinase
PIAS	Protein inhibitors of activated STATs
PKA	Protein kinase A
PKC	Protein kinase C
PKR	dsRNA-dependent serine/threonine protein kinase
PP1	Phosphoprotein phosphatase 1
PP2A	Phosphoprotein phosphatase 2A
PP2B	Phosphoprotein phosphatase 2B
PYK2	Proline-rich tyrosine kinase-2
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
RAIDD	RIP-associated ICH/CED-3-homologous protein with a death domain
RIP	Receptor-interacting protein
SAPK	Stress-activated protein kinase
Shc	SH2-containing collagen-related proteins
Smad	Contraction of Sma and Mad (Mothers against decapentaplegic)
TEN	Phosphatase and tensin homolog deleted on chromosome ten
TNF	Tumor necrosis factor
TRADD	TNF receptor-1-associated death domain protein