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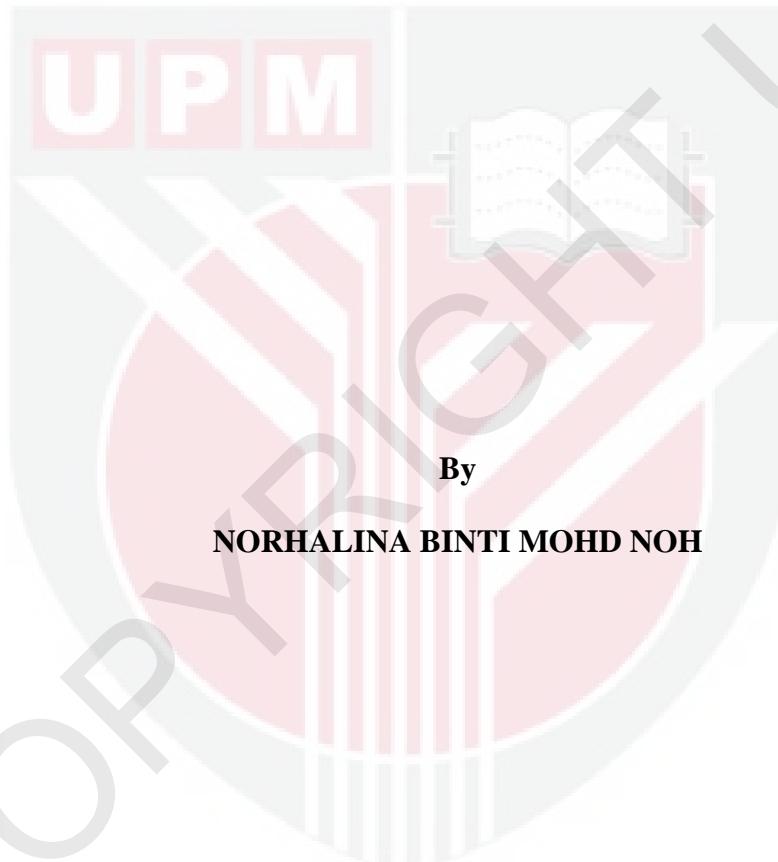
***REPLICATION OF SPODOPTERA LITURA NUCLEOPOLYHEDROVIRUS
IN INSECT-DERIVED CELL LINES***

NORHALINA BINTI MOHD NOH

FP 2014 74



**REPLICATION OF *SPODOPTERA LITURA* NUCLEOPOLYHEDROVIRUS
IN INSECT-DERIVED CELL LINES**



**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilments of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

December 2014

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in the fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

**REPLICATION OF SPODOPTERA LITURA NUCLEOPOLYHEDROVIRUS
IN AN INSECT-DERIVED CELL LINES**

By

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December 2014

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Spodoptera litura nucleopolyhedrovirus (SpltNPV) showed promising ability in controlling *Spodoptera litura* outbreak and may play a unique role in the IPM system to control other permissive insect pests. The insect cell culture (*in vitro*) technique is the most suitable approach to be applied as it provides clean ease manipulation condition for viral gene improvement and large scale production of SpltNPV. Difficulties in the previous trials of *in vitro* propagation of SpltNPV were overcome by improvement in BV inoculums production and titration. Utilization of more cell lines from different host species and geographical isolates had provided more information concerning the SpltNPV host range. A successful *in vitro* propagation of *Spodoptera litura* nucleopolyhedrovirus (SpltNPV) was established in this study. This process was greatly influenced by the quality of the budded virus (BV) inoculum produced by *in vivo* propagation in its primary natural host, *Spodoptera litura* larvae. BV can be harvested either from infected larval haemolymph or homogenized larval tissue. Unfortunately, inocula prepared by both techniques were melanised due to oxidation of exposed larval haemolymph or tissues. This melanisation affected the *in vitro* virus-host interaction. However, the use of severe NPV-infected larvae and Grace's Insect Medium during the virus inoculum preparation and storage successfully reduced the melanisation in the virus inoculum and allowed productive SpltNPV infection in susceptible insect cells. Meanwhile, the end point dilution titration technique proved to be the most rapid, accurate and economic method to measure the BV titre in this study. Seven cell lines (Sf9, SpIm, LD, MaBr, SD, *T.ni* and SpLi) were tested for their permissibility to the infection of SpltNPV. This permissibility screening was conducted through light and electron microscopic examination for cytopathological changes caused by SpltNPV infection. Productive infection was detected in the infected permissive Sf9 cells with the production of occlusion bodies (OBs). However, the other six cell lines showed an abortive infection and no OB was detected. These six cell lines were known as semipermissive to the infection of SpltNPV as the PCR of virus essential genes (*ie-1*, *lef-2* and *polh*) detected the replication of SpltNPV until the tenth BV passage. An ultrastructural study further confirmed the infection in these cells. This indicated the formation of virogenic stroma and virus particles in the infected Sf9 nuclei while the other six cell lines shared some minor changes, such as vesicle formation and

hypertrophied nuclei with no formation of virus particle. Serial passage study also revealed the capability of the BV progeny to effectively infect Sf9 cells with productive infection until the tenth BV passage. Apoptosis occurrence in SpIm, SpLi cells and Sf9 cells is responsible for preventing and limiting SpltNPV propagation in these cell lines. This phenomenon was detected through the cells morphological changes assessment, AO/PI analysis and DNA fragmentation assay. Meanwhile, RT-PCR was used to detect and compare an apoptotic suppressor gene (*p49*) expression in all three cell lines. Findings showed high expression of *p49* was detected in the permissive Sf9 cells at both the first and tenth passage while low expression was detected in the SpIm and SpLi cell lines. This was evidence of *p49* involvement as virus armour to manipulate and conquer the Sf9 cell line system to allow SpltNPV replication and propagation. This research had provided important information of SpltNPV host range and its susceptibility against several Lepidoptera species and geographical isolates. Subsequent research had shown an apoptosis mechanism involvement in limiting viral replication which was defeated by viral apoptotic suppressor gene (*p49*) in permissive Sf9 cell line.

Absrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

REPLIKASI SPODOPTERA LITURA NUKLEOPOLIHEDROVIRUS DI DALAM SEL-SEL SERANGGA

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Spodoptera litura nukleopolihedrovirus (SpltNPV) telah menunjukkan kemampuan dalam mengawal pembiakan serangga perosak *Spodoptera litura* (*S.litura*) dan berkeupayaan memainkan peranan yang unik dalam sistem IPM untuk mengawal serangga perosak permisif yang lain. Teknik sel kultur serangga (*in vitro*) adalah pendekatan yang paling sesuai digunakan kerana ia menyediakan keadaan manipulasi yang mudah dan bersih untuk penambahbaikan gen virus dan penghasilan SpltNPV berskala besar. Kesukaran dalam penghasilan SpltNPV secara *in vitro* sebelum ini telah dapat diatasi dengan penambahbaikan dalam penghasilan inokulum ‘budded virus’ (BV) dan proses pentitratan virus. Penggunaan sel-sel serangga yang berasal dari pelbagai spesies dan kawasan geografi memberi maklumat tambahan mengenai permisibiliti setiap perumah terhadap jangkitan SpltNPV. Kajian ini telah berjaya menghasilkan SpltNPV melalui teknik *in vitro*. Keupayaan ini telah banyak dipengaruhi oleh peningkatan kualiti dalam penghasilan BV inokulum secara *in vivo* dalam sistem perumah utama, *S. litura* larva. BV inokulum boleh diekstrak sama ada dari cecair hemolim atau tisu larva yang dijangkiti. Malangnya, inokula yang dihasilkan dari kedua-dua sumber telah melanise disebabkan oleh pengoksidaan cecair hemolim yang berlaku apabila hemolim atau tisu larva terdedah pada persikitan. Mekanisma ini telah menjelaskan interaksi *in vitro* di antara virus dan perumah. Walau bagaimanapun, pemilihan larva teruk dijangkiti dan penggunaan Grace Insect Medium semasa penyediaan dan penyimpanan inokulum telah berjaya mengurangkan masaalah melanise dalam virus inokulum dan menghasilkan produktif infeksi SpltNPV dalam sel serangga yang dijangkiti. Sementara itu, teknik pentitratan secara ‘end point dilution’ telah terbukti menjadi kaedah yang paling cepat, tepat dan ekonomi untuk menganggar BV titrer dalam kajian ini. Tujuh sel serangga (Sf9, SpIm, LD, MaBr, SD, *T.ni* dan SpLi) telah diuji kebolehan terhadap jangkitan SpltNPV. Jangkitan produktif telah dikesan di dalam sel-sel permisif Sf9 yang dijangkiti dengan penghasilan virus “occlusion bodies” (OBs) di dalam nukleus yang dijangkiti. Enam sel-sel yang lain menunjukkan jangkitan abortif dan tiada penghasilan OB dikesan. Perubahan cytopathological ini telah dipantau melalui pemerhatian dibawah cahaya dan elektron mikroskopik untuk perubahan yang disebabkan oleh jangkitan SpltNPV. Jangkitan produktif telah dikesan dalam sel-sel permisif Sf9 yang dijangkiti dengan penghasilan occlusion bodies (OBs). Walau bagaimanapun, enam sel yang lain menunjukkan jangkitan abortive dan tiada OB

dihasilkan. Enam sel ini kemudiannya didapati semipermissive kepada jangkitan SpltNPV apabila PCR gen-gen penting virus (*ie-1*, *Lef-2* dan *polh*) mengesan replikasi SpltNPV sehingga siri laluan kesepuluh BV. Kajian ultrastructural pula mengesahkan lagi jangkitan virus di dalam sel-sel ini. Kajian menunjukkan pembentukan virogenic stroma dan partikel virus dalam nukleus Sf9 dijangkiti manakala enam sel yang lain berkongsi beberapa perubahan kecil, seperti pembentukan vesikel dan pembesaran nukleus tanpa pembentukan partikel virus. Kajian siri laluan juga menunjukkan lagi keupayaan keturunan BV untuk berkesan menjangkiti sel-sel Sf9 dengan infeksi produktif sehingga siri yang kesepuluh BV. Kejadian apoptosis dalam sel-sel SpIm, SpLi dan Sf9 bertanggungjawab untuk menghalang dan menghadkan penyebaran SpltNPV dalam sistem mereka. Fenomena ini telah dikesan melalui perubahan morfologi sel-sel, analisis AO/PI dan saringan pemotongan DNA. Sementara itu, RT-PCR pula digunakan untuk mengesan dan membandingkan penghasilan gen penindas apoptosis (*p49*) dalam ketiga-tiga sel. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan ekspresi gen *p49* yang tinggi telah dikesan dalam sel-sel permisif Sf9 oleh kedua-dua siri laluan pertama dan kesepuluh manakala ekspresi yang rendah telah dikesan dalam sel-sel SpIm dan SpLi. Ini membuktikan penglibatan *p49* sebagai perisai virus untuk memanipulasi dan menakluk Sf9 sistem seterusnya telah membenarkan SpltNPV bereplikasi dan membiak. Kajian ini telah menghasilkan maklumat yang penting menganai perumah SpltNPV dari pelbagai spesies Lepidoptera dan kawasan geografi. Penyelidikan seterusnya telah menunjukkan penglibatan apoptosis dalam menghadkan replikasi virus yang mana dapat diatasi oleh virus gen penindas apoptosis (*p49*) dalam sel-sel permisif Sf9.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

μm	Micro molar
A260	Absorption at 260 nm
A280	Absorption at 280 nm
AcMNPV	<i>Autographa californica</i> MNPV
AgMNPV	<i>Anticarsia gemmatalis</i> MNPV
AO	Acridine orange
BmMNPV	<i>Bombyx mori</i> MNPV
bp	base pair
BV	Budded virus
CABI	Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International
CD ₅₀	Cytotoxic dosage
cDNA	complementary DNA
CPE	cytopathic effect
CpGV	<i>Cydia pomonella</i> GV
DIP	Defective interfering virus particle
DMSO	Dimethyl sulfoxide
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
dNTP	deoxyribonucleic acid
DTT	Dithiothreitol
EDTA	Ethylenediamine tetraacetic acid
EPPO	European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization
FBS	Fetal bovine serum
FHS	fetal horse serum
FP	Few polyhedra
<i>g</i>	gravity
Gp64	glycoprotein 64
GV	Granulovirus
h	hour
H ₂ O ₂	Hydrogen peroxide
<i>hcf-1</i>	host cell-specific factor 1 gene
HearNPV	<i>Helicoperva armisgera</i> NPV
<i>hrf-1</i>	host range factor 1 gene
HycuNPV	<i>Hyphantria cunea</i> GV
<i>iap</i>	inhibitor of apoptosis gene
<i>ie-1</i>	immediate-early 1 gene
IPM	Integrated pest management
Kb	Kilobase pair
KCl	Kalium Cloride
LD	<i>Lymantria dispar</i> cell line
LdMNPV	<i>Lymantria dispar</i> MNPV
LdNPV	<i>Lymantria dispar</i> NPV
<i>lef-2</i>	late expression factor 2 gene
MaBr	<i>Mamestraa brassicae</i>
MARDI	Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute
MgCl ₂	Magnesium Chloride
min	minute
mM	milli molar

MNPV	Multiple nucleocapsid polyhedrosis virus
MOI	Multiplicity of infection
MP	Multiple polyhedral
MTT	3-(4,5-Dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide
Na ₂ CO ₃	sodium carbonate
nm	nano meter
NPV	Nucleopolyhedrovirus
OB	Occlusion body
OD	Optical density
ODV	Occlusion derived virus
OpMNPV	<i>Orgyia pseudotsugata</i> MNPV
p. i.	post inoculation
<i>p35</i>	anti-apoptotic gene
PBS	Phosphate-Buffered saline
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
PD	Propotionaldistance
Pfu	Plaque forming unit
PI	Propidium iodide
<i>polh</i>	polyhedrin
PTU	1-phenyl-3-(2-thiazolyl)-2-thiourea (phenylthiourea)
Q-PCR	Quantitative PCR
RNA	Ribonucleic acid
RT-PCR	reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction
SD	<i>Spodoptera frugiperda</i> clone cell line (Taiwan)
SDS	Sodium dedocyl sulfate
Sec	Second/s
SEM	Standard error mean
SeMNPV	<i>Spodoptera exigua</i> MNPV
Sf9	<i>Spodoptera frugiperda</i> cell line
SINPV	<i>Spodoptera litura</i> NPV
SLNPV	<i>Spodoptera litura</i> NPV
SNPV	Single nucleocapsid polyhedrosis virus
SpIm	<i>Spilosoma imparilis</i> cell line
SpLi	<i>Spodoptera litura</i> cell line
SpI MNPV	<i>Sposoptera littoralis</i> MNPV
SpI NPV	<i>Spodoptera litura</i> NPV
<i>T.ni</i>	<i>Trichoplusia ni</i>
TAE	Tris-acetate-EDTA buffer
Taq	Thermos aquaticus
TBST	Tris-Buffered Saline-Tween 20
TCID	Tissue culture infection dosage
TE	Tris-EDTA buffer
TEM	Transmission electron microscopy
TrisHCl	Tris(hydroxymethyl)aminomethane hydrochloride.
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
V	volt
v/v	volume per volume
w/v	weight per volume

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Biological control is an approach for controlling insect pests in the agricultural field that utilize natural enemies, such as natural predators, parasitoids, pathogens and natural plant biochemical compounds. Its main application is to reduce the use of agrochemicals that raise problems, such as the emergence of resistant pests and other harmful effects on the environment and non-target organisms. This application promises a healthy and environmentally friendly agriculture practice to meet the current demand of healthy living and green technology. Most of the natural enemies used in biological control have specific and narrow host species, are safe to the environment, and help conserve the natural ecology.

Bacteria, fungi and viruses are candidates of microbial pest control agents. They usually found naturally in the environment as a fatal disease to a particular pest. Baculoviruses are well known as insect viruses through their beneficial and potential bioinsecticide for managing pest outbreaks. *Baculoviridae* is a family of rod-shaped viruses with large circular, covalently closed, double-stranded DNA. The family comprises four genera based on their genome lineage. Viruses that infect Lepidoptera are divided into Alpha- and Betabaculoviruses encompassing the Nucleopolyhedroviruses (NPVs) and Granuloviruses (GVs), respectively, while those infecting Hymenoptera and Diptera are named Gamma- and Deltabaculoviruses, respectively (Jehle et al., 2006). Baculoviruses almost exclusively infect a specific insect, belonging mainly to the order Lepidoptera, Hymenoptera and Diptera (Adams and McClintock, 1991). Their application is safe and possesses no foreseeable hazard to the environment or other organisms except for their host pests due to their virulence specificity to a small number of host insects (Ignoffo, 1975). Many baculoviruses have been discovered and studied globally. The most commonly investigated baculovirus is *Autographa californica* multiple nucleopolyhedrovirus (AcMNPV). Successful baculovirus insecticides include *Anticarsia gemmatalis* multiple nucleopolyhedrovirus (AgMNPV) in Brazil to control the velvet bean caterpillar, *Anticarsia gemmatalis* (Moscardi, 1993), *Cydia pomonella* granulovirus (CpGV) for codling moth, *Cydia pomonella* has been applied in North America and Europe (Rohrmann, 2011) and *Helicoverpa armigera* nucleopolyhedrovirus (HearNPV) has been used for cotton bollworm, and *Helicoverpa armigera* in China (Sun and Peng, 2007).

In Malaysia, *Spodoptera litura* larvae have become a major pest of vegetables, profitable crops, tobacco plants and forest tree seedlings (Yahya, 1985; Sajap, 1995). This armyworm is conventionally controlled through the application of commonly used insecticides, such as methamidophos, acephate and permethrin (Yahya and Karim, 1989). In 2000, Sajap et al. reported the natural occurrence of *Spodoptera litura* nucleopolyhedrovirus (SpltNPV) in diseased larvae of *S. litura* in Malaysia. The pathogenicity test conducted demonstrated the promising ability of SpltNPV to control *S. litura* larvae by application at an appropriate viral dosage. SpltNPV may play a unique role in the IPM system to control *S. litura* and other permissive insect pests with the aim of reducing local agrochemical utilization in the field.

To date, SpltNPV is produced on a small scale through insect larvae (*in vivo*) by UPM and MARDI researchers for basic and applied research activities. The insect cell culture (*in vitro*) technique is considered to be the most suitable approach for large scale production of SpltNPV. In addition, this *in vitro* approach can assist in studies of SpltNPV to widen its host range towards the enhancement of its infectivity as an effective and versatile bioinsecticide. There are several advantages of using the *in vitro* method instead of the *in vivo* method in studying the virus-host cell interaction, such as high productivity of virus yield, reliable production of active protein of interest, simple and inexpensive harvesting of occlusion bodies (OBs), and it facilitates quality control procedures for certification of a virus product free of adventitious agents. Moreover, the culture can be easily maintained and stored in liquid nitrogen (Shuler et al., 1995).

A successful *in vitro* SpltNPV propagation may depend on the permissibility of the host cell line. Since the local *S. litura* cell line has not been established yet, commercial insect cell lines can be used for the screening of SpltNPV productive infection. A previous trial based on *in vitro* propagation of SpltNPV was conducted by Hussein (2004). The researcher managed to produce a productive infection of SpltNPV in *Spodoptera frugiperda* (Sf9) cell line but not in the *S. litura* of Japan isolate, TUAT-Spli-221 cell line. However, this productive infection was unable to be sustained in subsequent infection. Therefore, more research is required to identify and overcome the difficulties that emerged in the previous trials of *in vitro* propagation of SpltNPV. The utilization of cell lines from different host species and geographical isolates will provide information concerning the SpltNPV host range.

Apoptosis is a natural biochemical pathway controlled by an organism that plays an important role by eliminating old and unhealthy cells in maintaining the health of the organism (Kanduc et al., 2002). It is proven that apoptosis is involved in baculovirus host-range infectivity, either in a living insect (Zhang et al., 2002a) or a cell culture system (Clem and Miller, 1993). A successful virus infection may depend on the virus response to this mechanism. Thus, the objectives of this study were:

- To establish *in vitro* propagation of SpltNPV.
- To determine the susceptibility of insect cell lines from different Lepidoptera species and geographical isolates against SpltNPV.
- To identify the host cell defence mechanism that is responsible for preventing and limiting viral replication.
- To identify the possibility of apoptotic suppressor gene involvement during the replication of local SpltNPV in the insect cell lines.

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