



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***ROLES OF MITOCHONDRIA IN MODULATING CHICKEN INNATE
IMMUNITY FOLLOWING NEWCASTLE DISEASE VIRUS INFECTION***

HARYATI SHILA MOHAMAD WALI

IB 2021 4



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By

HARYATI SHILA MOHAMAD WALI

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

April 2019

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the pillars of my life;

*My parents,
My husband, and
My beloved kids*

*With love, respect and a bunch of memories
Indeed, we belong to Allah and indeed to Him we will return.*



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

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HARYATI SHILA MOHAMAD WALI

April 2019

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Mitochondria have been established as having a vital role in innate immunity. Mitochondrial antiviral signalling (MAVS) protein is a mitochondrial protein proven to modulate the production of interferons and pro-inflammatory cytokines as well as initiating apoptosis in viral infection. Newcastle disease (ND) is a common threat to the poultry industry globally with genotype VII Newcastle disease virus (NDV) strains becoming one of the prominent virulent NDV strains. Antiviral innate immune response involve various pattern recognition receptors (PRR) such as Toll-like receptors (TLR), retinoic acid-inducible gene I (RIG-I) and melanoma differentiation-associated protein 5 (MDA5) to identify invading microorganism via their pathogen-associated molecular patterns (PAMP) like double-stranded RNA (dsRNA), bacterial lipopolysaccharide (LPS) and viral proteins. This leads to further downstream processes in the signalling cascade of the innate immune system. In this study, CARD adaptor inducing IFN- β (CARDIF), a prominent mitochondrial adaptor molecule linking RIG-I and MDA5 is amplified and exogenously expressed in two chicken cell lines prior to IBS002/11 strain (genotype VII NDV) infection. The gene expression experiment was conducted to assess whether the presence of CARDIF affected the production of type I interferons and pro-inflammatory cytokines in both cell lines following NDV strain IBS002/11 infection, besides its role in the induction of apoptosis. The contribution of mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) in chicken innate immunity was also assessed following NDV infection. The assessments of cytokines expressions and mtDNA level were conducted via qPCR assay, while the determination of cell proliferation and apoptosis were conducted via MTS and JC-1 assays. Morphological evaluation was conducted by transmission electron micrography (TEM). All experiments were carried out on two cells lines; DF-1 and HD-11. The DF-1 cell line is a spontaneously transformed chicken embryo fibroblast while HD-11 is a chicken macrophage-like cell line. The CARDIF gene was successfully amplified via PCR and cloned into the pcDNA6V5-His B plasmid, a mammalian expression vector to produce the plasmid pcDNA6/CARDIF. Meanwhile, two truncated genes of the original CARDIF gene were also amplified and cloned into the expression

vector yielding pcDNA6/ Δ CARD (putative CARDIF lacking the CARD domain) and pcDNA6/ Δ TM (putative CARDIF lacking the TM domain). The effects of exogenous expression of CARDIF on the production of type I and II IFNs and pro-inflammatory cytokines in both cell lines following NDV infection were conducted via quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR). Despite upregulated levels of type I IFN (IFN- α and IFN- β) following NDV infection observed in both cell lines as the effect of exogenous expression of CARDIF, the expression of IFN- α occurred at a much later time point (72 h) in both cell lines, showing that the production of IFN- α was less affected by the presence of the CARDIF gene in comparison to IFN- β . HD-11 cells exhibited a greater magnitude of IFN- β upregulation compared to DF-1 cells. The transfected CARDIF gene also upregulated the expression of IFN- γ (type II IFN) as well as IL-18 in HD-11 cells while the same molecules were downregulated in DF-1 cells. CXCL12, a chemokine was upregulated in both cell lines while IL-1 β was found to be upregulated in DF-1 cells. The presence of CARDIF resulted in the decreased number of viral copies over the treatment period in contrast to both truncated CARDIF genes. Both truncated genes caused an increase in the viral copy number over the treatment period. Subsequently, the mtDNA levels were detected to be higher ($P < 0.05$) in infected cells compared to the control. Two mtDNA genes were used in the qPCR assay i.e. Cyt b and COIII whereby the higher level of mtDNA expression in infected cells means leakage of the mtDNA into the cytosol. In this study, the leakage of mtDNA to the surroundings assisted in triggering the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines as well as type I IFN. The proliferation percentage of the cells was assessed via the MTS assay in two conducts, the conventional and co-treatment method. A continuous decline of HD-11 cells in contrast to the DF-1 cells in the existence of the CARDIF gene was observed with the co-treatment method considered as a better approach in determining the percentage of cell proliferation following virulent NDV infection. The occurrence of CARDIF gene also initiated the onset of apoptosis as a measure to curb viral infection. The assessment was conducted via the mitochondrial membrane potential ($\Delta\psi$) assay (JC-1 assay). The results of JC-1 assay supported those of the MTS assay whereby the decline of cell proliferation percentage in the MTS assay is in agreement with the increased percentage of apoptotic cells in the JC-1 assay. The results of the cell proliferation and mitochondrial membrane potential assays were further confirmed by visual assessment of the cell morphology in TEM. Noticeable hallmarks of apoptosis such as convolution of nuclear membrane, condensed chromatin and the presence of lipid droplets were identified in both cell lines. Therefore, this study concluded that the presence of CARDIF, a mitochondrial adaptor molecule managed to prompt the production of type I and type II IFNs, as well other pro-inflammatory cytokines during infection with virulent NDV strain. The presence of the exogenous gene also showed better impact on the cell component of the immune system (HD-11 cells) compared to the stromal cell line (DF-1 cells). The exogenous gene managed to induce apoptosis in both cell lines, with HD-11 cells being more susceptible following NDV infection.

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

**PERANAN MITOKONDRIA DALAM PENGUBAHSUAIAN KEIMUNAN
SEMULA JADI AYAM BERIKUTAN JANGKITAN VIRUS PENYAKIT
NEWCASTLE**

Oleh

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Mitokondria telah diperakui sebagai mempunyai peranan penting dalam sistem keimunan semula jadi. Protein pengisyaratan antivirus mitokondria (MAVS) adalah suatu protein mitokondria yang telah dibuktikan untuk mengubahsuai penghasilan interferon (IFN) dan sitokin pro-inflamasi di samping mencetuskan apoptosis pada jangkitan virus. Penyakit Newcastle (ND) merupakan ancaman biasa terhadap industri ayam secara global dengan virus penyakit Newcastle (NDV) genotip VII menjadi salah satu daripada strain virulen NDV yang penting. Tindak balas keimunan semula jadi antivirus melibatkan pelbagai penerima pengecaman pola (PRR) seperti penerima seumpama-tol (TLR), gen I asid retinoik-teraruhkan (RIG-1) dan protein 5 berkaitan-pembezaan melanoma (MDA5) bagi mengenalpasti mikroorganisma penyerang melalui pola molekular berkaitan-patogen (PAMP) seperti RNA bebenang ganda dua (dsRNA), lipopolisakarida bakteria (LPS) dan protein virus. Ini membawa kepada proses hiliran dalam lata pengisyaratan sistem keimunan semula jadi. Penglibatan suatu molekul penyesuai adalah penting di dalam laluan pengisyaratan antivirus. Di dalam kajian ini, penyesuai CARD mengaruh IFN- β (CARDIF), suatu molekul penyesuai mitokondria yang utama menghubungkan RIG-I dan MDA5 telah diperbanyakkan dan dizahirkan secara eksogenus dalam dua turunan sel ayam sebelum jangkitan strain IBS002/11 (NDV genotip VII). Eksperimen penzahiran gen telah dijalankan bagi menaksir sama ada kehadiran CARDIF memberikan kesan terhadap pengeluaran interferon (IFN) jenis I dan sitokin pro-inflamasi di dalam kedua-dua turunan sel selepas jangkitan NDV strain IBS002/11, di samping peranannya dalam mencetuskan apoptosis. Penyumbangan DNA mitokondria (mtDNA) dalam keimunan semula jadi ayam juga turut dinilai berikutan jangkitan NDV. Penilaian penzahiran sitokin dan tahap mtDNA telah dijalankan melalui asai MTS dan JC-1. Penilaian morfologi dijalankan dengan mikrofografi transmisi elektron (TEM). Kesemua eksperimen dijalankan ke atas kedua-dua turunan sel; DF-1 dan HD-11. Turunan sel DF-1 ialah fibroblas embrio ayam terbitan spontan manakala HD-11 ialah turunan sel ayam seumpama-makrofaj. Gen CARDIF telah diperbanyakkan dengan

jayanya melalui PCR dan diklon ke dalam plasmid pcDNA6V5-His B, suatu vektor penzahiran mamalia bagi menghasilkan plasmid pcDNA6/CARDIF. Sementara itu, dua gen terpankang daripada gen CARDIF asal juga telah diperbanyakkan dan diklon ke dalam vektor penzahiran menghasilkan pcDNA6/ Δ CARD (CARDIF jangkakan tanpa domain CARD) dan pcDNA6/ Δ TM (CARDIF jangkakan tanpa domain TM). Kesan penzahiran eksogenus CARDIF ke atas penghasilan interferon (IFN) jenis I dan II dan sitokin pro-inflamasi di dalam kedua-dua turunan sel berikutan jangkitan NDV telah dijalankan melalui tindak balas berantai polimerase kuantitatif (qPCR). Meskipun tahap pengawalaturan menaik IFN jenis I (IFN- α dan IFN- β) berikutan jangkitan NDV telah diperhatikan dalam kedua-dua turunan sel akibat kesan penzahiran eksogenus CARDIF, penzahiran IFN- α berlaku pada titik masa yang lebih lewat (72 j) pada kedua-dua turunan sel, menunjukkan bahawa penghasilan IFN- α kurang dipengaruhi oleh kehadiran gen CARDIF berbanding IFN- β . HD-11 mempamerkan magnitud yang lebih ketara dalam pengawalaturan menaik IFN- β berbanding sel DF-1. Pentransfeksian gen CARDIF juga meningkatkan pengawalaturan penzahiran IFN- γ (IFN jenis II) di samping IL-18 dalam sel HD-11 manakala molekul yang sama mengalami penurunan pengawalaturan dalam sel DF-1. CXCLi2, sejenis kemokin mengalami kenaikan pengawalaturan dalam kedua-dua turunan sel manakala IL-1 β didapati mengalami kenaikan pengawalaturan dalam dalam sel DF-1. Kehadiran CARDIF menyebabkan penurunan bilangan salinan virus di sepanjang masa pengolahan berbeza dengan kedua-dua gen CARDIF terpankang. Kedua-dua gen terpankang menyebabkan kenaikan bilangan salinan virus di sepanjang masa pengolahan. Kemudian, tahap mtDNA dikesan lebih tinggi ($P < 0.05$) dalam sel dijangkiti berbanding kawalan. Dua gen mtDNA telah digunakan dalam asai qPCR iaitu Cyt b dan COIII di mana tahap penzahiran mtDNA yang lebih tinggi di dalam sel dijangkiti bermaksud kebocoran mtDNA ke dalam sitosol. Di dalam kajian ini, kebocoran mtDNA ke persekitaran membantu mencetuskan penghasilan sitokin pro-inflamasi termasuk IFN jenis I. Peratus pembiakan sel telah ditaksirkan melalui asai MTS dalam dua kaedah, kaedah konvensional dan pengolahan bersama. Kemosotakan berterusan sel HD-11 berbanding sel DF-1 di dalam kewujudan gen CARDIF telah diperhatikan dengan kaedah pengolahan bersama dianggap sebagai pendekatan yang lebih baik di dalam penentuan peratus pembiakan sel berikutan jangkitan NDV virulen. Kehadiran gen CARDIF juga mencetuskan permulaan apoptosis sebagai suatu langkah untuk mengawal jangkitan virus. Pentaksiran telah dijalankan melalui asai potensi membran mitokondria ($\Delta\psi$, asai JC-1). Keputusan asai JC-1 menyokong keputusan asai MTS di mana kemosotakan peratus pembiakan sel di dalam asai MTS adalah bersesuaian dengan peningkatan peratus sel apoptotik dalam asai JC-1. Keputusan asai pembiakan sel dan potensi membran mitokondria telah dipastikan lebih lanjut melalui penilaian visual morfologi sel dalam TEM. Tanda-tanda apoptosis yang ketara seperti perlingkaran membran nukleus, penggumpalan kromatin dan kehadiran titisan lipid telah dikenal pasti pada kedua-dua turunan sel. Oleh itu, kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa kehadiran CARDIF, suatu molekul penyesuai mitokondria berupaya mencetuskan penghasilan IFN jenis I dan II, di samping pelbagai sitokin pro-inflamasi semasa jangkitan dengan strain NDV virulen. Kehadiran gen eksogenus tersebut juga menunjukkan kesan yang lebih baik ke atas komponen sel keimunan (sel HD-11) berbanding turunan sel stroma (sel DF-1). Gen eksogenus tersebut mampu merangsang apoptosis di dalam kedua-dua turunan sel, dengan sel HD-11 sebagai lebih mudah dipengaruhi berikutan jangkitan NDV.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful

All praises and thanks to Almighty Allah, for His blessings and mercy, to allow me to complete this manuscript.

First of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Datin Paduka Dato' Dr. Aini Ideris for her unconventional support and help to get me through this arduous journey of becoming a PhD scholar. Notably, a massive thank to my co-supervisor-cum-mentor, Prof. Dr. Abdul Rahman Omar for his invaluable contributions and guidance in every technical aspect of this journey. I would also like to convey my sincere gratitude to Prof. Mohd. Hair Bejo as my co-supervisor for his contributions and support in this journey of mine. I am very honoured and blessed for the opportunity to be acquainted and to work with them.

I am very much obliged to the staff of the Laboratory of Vaccines and Immunotherapeutics (LIVES), Institute of Bioscience for the conducive yet professional ambience of the lab. Special thanks to Dr. Tan Sheau Wei and Dr. Yeap Swee Keong for their professional guidance during my study. Professionalism aside, the friendship nurtured is worth mentioning. Deepest gratitude goes out to the staff-cum-friends from LIVES; Mrs. Norhafiza Azwa, Mrs. Nancy Liew, Mrs. Noor Nadia, Mrs. Norhaszalina and Mrs. Nur Azah Nazihah. I am also grateful for the assistance and co-operation of staff from the other departments of IBS.

Words are not enough to express my highest gratitude and appreciation to the sisters I came to know since I started this formidable odyssey. These beautiful souls helped me through with their kindness, sincerity, prayers and words of encouragement; Shafinaz, Amy, Parvaneh, Nor Yasmin, Farah, Suwaibah, Shafika and many more. May Allah bless all of you.

I shall always be indebted to my parents, my paradise. Thank you for always trusting me, showering me with their unconditional love and for the continuous prayers. What more can I say except Alhamdulillah.

Last but not least, my little family deserves my utmost appreciation. To my loving husband, thank you for all the sacrifices, the support and prayers. To my precious prince and princess, thank you for the constant support and co-operation. Thank you for understanding me, for allowing me the time I needed and for the constant prayers. This is our journey together.

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIV	Avian influenza virus
BCR	B cell receptors
CARD	Caspase activation and recruitment domains
CARDIF	CARD adaptor inducing IFN- β
CLR	C-type lectin receptors
CPE	Cytopathic effects
DAMP	Danger-associated molecular pattern
DC	Dendritic cells
DF-1	Chicken embryo fibroblast
DMEM	Dulbecco's Modified Eagle's Medium
HA	Hemagglutination assay
HD-11	Chicken macrophage-like cell
IFN	Interferon
ISG	Interferon-stimulated gene
JC-1	5,5',6,6'-tetrachloro-1,1',3,3'-tetraethylbenzimidazolcarbocyanine iodide
LB	Luria-Bertani
LD	Lipid droplets
LGP2	Laboratory of genetics and physiology 2
MAVS	Mitochondrial antiviral signaling
MDA5	Melanoma differentiation-associated protein 5
MTS	3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-5-(3-carboxymethoxyphenyl)-2-(4-sulfophenyl)-2H-tetrazolium
MTT	(3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide)
NDV	Newcastle disease virus

NK cells	Natural killer cells
NLR	Nucleotide oligomerization domain (NOD)-like receptors (NLRs)
NOD	Nucleotide oligomerisation domain (NOD)
PAMP	Pathogen-associated molecular pattern
PBS	Phosphate-buffered saline
PRR	Pattern recognition receptors
RE	Restriction enzyme
RIG-I	Retinoic acid-inducible gene I
RLR	Retinoic acid-inducible gene I (RIG-I)-like receptors
ROS	Reactive oxygen species
TCID ₅₀	Tissue culture infective dose
TCR	T cell receptors
TEM	Transmission electron microscopy
TLR	Toll-like receptors
TM	Transmembrane
VDAC	Voltage dependent anion channel
cRBC	Chicken red blood cells
dsRNA	Double-stranded RNA
mDAMP	Mitochondrial danger-associated molecular pattern
mtDNA	Mitochondrial DNA
qPCR	Quantitative PCR
ssRNA	Single-stranded RNA
$\Delta\psi$	Mitochondrial membrane potential

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Commonly known as the powerhouse of the cell, mitochondrial function is no longer restricted to energy production. Recent research have shown that mitochondria possess a distinct role in innate immunity with functions in apoptosis, danger signalling, induction of type I interferons (IFN) and pro-inflammatory cytokines and viral clearance (Pichlmair & Reis e Sousa, 2007; Galluzzi et al., 2012; Wang & Fish, 2012; West & Shadel, 2017). Being a multifunctional organelle, it became the target of invading viruses for the ease of controlling the whole cell while in the same time promoting/blocking apoptosis in accordance to the need (Reshi & Hong, 2017; Zemirli et al., 2018). Mitochondrial proteins have been established as having an important role in innate immunity. Mitochondrial antiviral signalling protein (MAVS), which is the first mitochondrial protein identified in the innate immune system play key roles in modulating interferon and pro-inflammatory cytokines following virus infection (Castanier et al., 2010; Scott, 2010). Sun et al. (2006) demonstrated the evidence of MAVS signalling in various kinds of cells including fibroblasts, macrophages and dendritic cells (DC). Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), the mitochondria's own genetic material, is similar to its bacterial antecedent. The leakage of mtDNA to the cytosol and its surroundings initiates damage-associated molecular patterns (DAMP), which leads to inflammation (Chen & Nunez, 2010; Tang et al., 2012; Fang et al., 2016). Meanwhile, the incidence of mtDNA stress stimulates antiviral priming response. Therefore, altered mtDNA homeostasis is not only an indicator of viral infection, it also serves as the platform for further antiviral reactions (Kugelberg, 2015).

It has been well established that viral infections are normally resolved by the organisms' innate and adaptive immunity. Previous studies showed that the mammalian innate immunity is activated via pathogen-associated molecular pattern (PAMP) proteins such as Toll-like receptors (TLR) and retinoic acid-inducible gene I (RIG-I)-like receptors (RLRs) that interact with mitochondrial antiviral signalling (MAVS) proteins (Yoneyama et al., 2004; Seth et al., 2005; Liu, 2001; Koshiha et al., 2011; Santhakumar et al., 2017). The role of TLR in animals including chickens has been well studied. However, little is known on the role of chicken RLR and MAVS in immunity against virus infection. MAVS is also known by other names such as IPSI, VISA, and CARDIF (Kawai et al., 2005; Meylan et al., 2005; Seth et al., 2005; Xu et al., 2005).

Newcastle disease (ND) is an important disease in poultry and exerted substantial economic impact on the poultry industry (Yusoff & Tan, 2001). Studies have shown that NDV-infected cells undergo cell death via apoptosis and necrosis (Khan et al., 2015; Abdolmaleki et al., 2018). Current measures to curb NDV outbreaks are by vaccination using live and attenuated ND vaccines. However, despite the vast application of vaccines, ND is still endemic in majority of the countries in the world. Newcastle disease

virus (NDV) is a nonsegmented RNA virus classified under the family Paramyxoviridae (Yusoff & Tan, 2001). The virus causes a systemic infection in chickens that are associated with high morbidity and mortality. The current control measure is by vaccination using genotype II lentogenic vaccine, meanwhile majority of outbreaks in various countries are due to genotype VII virulent NDV (Miller et al., 2009, 2010). Despite vaccination with existing commercial vaccines, infection of genotype VII shed more viruses compared to other virulent genotypes (Samuel et al., 2013; Susta et al., 2014; Roohani et al., 2015; Satharasinghe et al., 2016). The mechanisms associated with genotype II NDV vaccine failure is not clear but probably associated with the ability of virulent genotype VII to modulate acquired immune responses especially antibody responses (Miller et al., 2007). Several groups reported that velogenic NDV strains are able to initiate strong innate immune response by the upregulation of various genes related to the innate antiviral and inflammatory responses (Mase et al., 2002; Ebrahimi et al., 2012; Rasoli et al., 2014; Satharasinghe et al., 2016). These intense innate responses are postulated to contribute to the severe pathological damage and high mortality of infected chickens (Rue et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2012).

Although extensive studies regarding the role of MAVS signalling involve human cells, the importance of MAVS in chickens is not clear. A few research groups demonstrated that the presence of exogenous MAVS provides protection to cell lines *in vitro* against the infection of RNA and DNA viruses such as coxsackievirus B3, influenza A virus, viral haemorrhagic septicaemia virus 23/75 (VHSV), spring viremia of carp virus Fijan (SVCV) and others (Biacchesi et al., 2009; Liniger et al., 2012c; Zhang et al., 2012).

1.2. Problem statement

Despite intensive research involving the role of MAVS and mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) in innate immunity and inflammation carried out on humans and various types of viruses, its role in avian virus infection especially NDV in chicken is still unclear. Currently, the role of MAVS genes and mtDNA on NDV-induced inflammation, virus clearance and their effect in the induction of apoptosis of NDV-infected cells are not known. The association of MAVS genes with mitochondrial-related damages such as inflammation and apoptosis following NDV infection as well as information on mtDNA level during NDV infection are lacking. Additionally, the question on how MAVS modulate innate immunity during NDV infection was also addressed in this study. Therefore, this study intends to explore the effects of exogenous MAVS gene presence in the regulation of inflammation, cytokine production as well as induction of apoptosis in NDV-infected cells, besides assessing the effects of NDV infection on mtDNA level.

The questions answered will further support the hypothesis that chicken MAVS possess a distinct role in innate immunity against NDV infection by assisting in inflammation, cytokine production and inducing apoptosis. Secondly, the knowledge gained from the analysis of mtDNA level in uninfected and infected cells will contribute to better understanding of its role in NDV infection. Information acquired from this study is hoped to be able to contribute to the possibility of exploiting the knowledge to develop novel

antiviral therapies against RNA viruses particularly Newcastle disease. Therefore, this study embarked on the following objectives:

To amplify MAVS (CARDIF) gene via polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and construct plasmid containing chCARDIF in mammalian expression vector.

To assess the effects of the plasmids pcDNA6/CARDIF, pcDNA6/ Δ CARD, and pcDNA6/ Δ TM on the production of type I interferons and the plasmid pcDNA6/CARDIF on pro-inflammatory cytokines in two types of chicken cell lines (DF-1 and HD-11) following genotype VII NDV infection.

To investigate the involvement of mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) in chicken cell lines by comparing mtDNA level in uninfected and infected chicken cell lines following genotype VII NDV infection.

To assess the role of MAVS genes and mtDNA in the induction of apoptosis in chicken cells following NDV infection and to determine the ultrastructural changes of the affected chicken cell lines following NDV infection.

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BIODATA OF STUDENT

Haryati Shila Mohamad Wali was born on October 24, 1974, in Kuala Lumpur. She enrolled at Universiti Putra Malaysia in 1994 in the Bachelor of Science (Biotechnology) degree program. Upon her graduation in 1998, she secured her first teaching job in a private college in Langkawi, Kedah. Intending to pursue her passion in teaching and research, she enlisted herself in the Master of Science program majoring in Virology at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicines, UPM in the year 2000. Her MSc. research study revolved around the effects of local Newcastle disease virus (NDV) strain on breast cancer cell lines. She completed her Masters study in the year 2003 and was offered a job as a Research Assistant in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, UPM. Later on, she became a part-time lecturer in the Faculty of Biotechnology, Universiti Industri Selangor from the year 2005 until 2007 teaching the subject Animal Cell Culture to diploma and degree level courses. Eventually she was tendered a full-time teaching job in the same faculty in the year 2008. She was the Head of Program for the Bac. of Science in Biotechnology course, and was involved in teaching Animal Cell Culture as well as Immunology subjects to degree students. She persisted as a lecturer in Universiti Selangor until the year 2011. She went on to pursue her higher degree as a PhD candidate in the Institute of Bioscience, UPM since then to date. She assumed her study in the field of Vaccine Technology under the main supervision of Prof. Datin Paduka Dato' Dr. Aini Ideris.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Conferences and Proceedings

- Haryati, S.M.W., Aini, I., Abdul Rahman, O. & Hair Bejo, M. (2013). Construction of a plasmid encoding chicken mitochondrial antiviral signaling (MAVS) gene. *Proceedings of the Scientific Conference 2013 of World's Poultry Science Association (Malaysia) & World Veterinary Poultry Association (Malaysia)*. Serdang, Selangor.
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