Mouse V_k gene classification by nucleic acid sequence similarity

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Abstract. Analyses of immunoglobulin (*Ig*) variable (*V*) region gene usage in the immune response, estimates of *V* gene germline complexity, and other nucleic acid hybridization-based studies depend on the extent to which such genes are related (i. e., sequence similarity) and their organization in gene families. While mouse *Igh* heavy chain *V* region (V_H) gene families are relatively well-established, a corresponding systematic classification of *Igk* light chain *V* region (V_k) genes has not been reported. The present analysis, in the course of which we reviewed the known extent of the V_k germline gene repertoire and V_k gene usage in a variety of responses to foreign and self antigens, provides a classification of mouse V_k genes in gene families composed of members with >80% overall nucleic acid sequence similarity. This classification differed in several aspects from that of V_H genes: only some V_k gene families were as clearly separated (by >25% sequence dissimilarity) as typical V_H gene families; most V_k gene families were closely related and, in several instances, members from different families were very similar (>80%) over large sequence portions; frequently, classification by nucleic acid sequence similarity diverged from existing classifications based on amino-terminal protein sequence similarity. Our data have implications for V_k gene analyses by nucleic acid hybridization and describe potentially important differences in sequence organization between V_H and V_k genes.

Introduction

The ability of the immune system to recognize virtually any antigen is mediated by the enormous sequence variability in the amino-terminal region of immunoglobulin (Ig) heavy and light chains. Among other

mechanisms, this diversity is generated by somatic juxtaposition of gene segments that are separated in the germline, termed variable (*V*), diversity (heavy chain only), and joining (*J*) gene segments (reviewed by Tonegawa 1983, Alt et al. 1986). *V* genes contribute all residues of the first and second complementarity determining region (CDR) of both heavy and light chains, as well as part of the light chain CDR-3, and hence contribute the majority of antigen contact residues (Kabat et al. 1987). In mice, several hundred V_H and V_k (over 90% of all serum Ig is of the Igk isotype) gene segments exist in the germ line (Brodeur and Riblet 1984, Livant et al. 1986, Cory et al. 1981, Kofler et al. 1989). These genes can be very similar or may differ by over 40% nucleotides, and *V* region classifications based on nucleic and/or amino acid sequence similarity have been proposed (Brodeur and Riblet 1984, Dildrop 1984, Potter et al. 1982). Thus, mouse V_H genes have been grouped in 11 V_H gene families in which members generally share >80% of their nucleic acid sequence within, and <70–75% between, families (Brodeur and Riblet 1984, Winter et al. 1985, Kofler 1988, Reininger et al. 1988). Individual members of a given family cross-hybridize in nucleic acid hybridization assays only with members of their own family. These V_H gene families correspond well with a V_H region classification based on similarities at the protein level (Dildrop 1984). Understanding V_H gene relatedness on the nucleic acid sequence level has greatly facilitated studies regarding the expression of different V_H gene families during ontogeny (Yancopoulos et al. 1984, Perlmutter et al. 1985) and in response to foreign and self antigens (Manser et al. 1987b, Kofler et al. 1987a). These studies have thus provided an important insight into B-cell repertoire generation.

V_k classifications reported to date are confined to the protein level. One attempt to systematically classify V_k proteins was based on the partial amino acid sequence up to the invariant cysteine in position 23 (Cys23), leading to 26 V_k subgroups, designated V_kCys (Potter 1977). A

modified classification, based on the length and similarity of the amino termini up to the invariant tryptophan 35 (Trp35) of 79 V_k proteins, was introduced in 1982 (V_kTrp subgroups; Potter et al. 1982). Four of the V_kCys subgroups were condensed and two new groups were added, resulting in a total of 24 V_k subgroups, six of which are still defined only by sequences up to Cys23. This classification has now been generally accepted and, although an extended comparison at the nucleic acid level has never been reported, the corresponding V_k protein subgroups have been widely used synonymously with V_k gene families. More recently, we have performed a detailed restriction fragment length polymorphism (RFLP) analysis with DNA probes corresponding to 16 V_k protein subgroups, and obtained evidence that such protein groups may not necessarily correspond to gene families analogous to those described for V_H genes (Kofler et al. 1989). Since a large number of full-length V_k nucleic acid sequences has been reported, it is now possible to address, by direct sequence comparison, the matter of whether V_k genes can be organized into gene families, as has been accomplished with V_H genes, and how such V_k gene families relate to the existing V_k protein groups. This issue is of considerable interest for V_k gene usage determinations, repertoire estimates, genomic mapping, and similar studies using nucleic acid hybridization, since such procedures depend on relatedness between V_k groups, gene families, and corresponding DNA probes.

We compiled 248 full-length V_k nucleic acid sequences from the literature and several databases, and assigned them to existing V_k protein classifications with subsequent grouping into gene families comprised of members with >80% overall nucleic acid sequence similarity. Our analysis revealed that the current classification in V_k protein groups or subgroups frequently did not reflect relatedness on the nucleic acid sequence level. Furthermore, V_k gene family organization differed in important aspects from that of V_H gene families; only some of the V_k gene families were clearly separated by sequence dissimilarity of >25%, as is usually observed in V_H gene families. The remaining families were more similar to each other and, in several instances, large portions of genes from different families shared >80% of their sequences, leading to cross-hybridization between those families in hybridization analyses. In addition, although ancillary to the primary aim of this study, we reviewed the specificities encoded by the various V_k gene families and estimated their germline gene complexity.

Methods and nomenclature

V_k nucleic acid sequence bank. A database was constructed consisting of V_k nucleic acid sequences from the Genetic Sequence Data Bank (GenBank, Los Alamos, New Mexico), E. A. Kabat's collection (Kabat et al. 1987), and other publications. Only sequences encoding the entire mature V_k protein were included in the database. If applicable, sequence portions encoding untranslated region, leader sequence, introns, or *J* segments were removed prior to comparisons. This primary database of 248 full-length V_k sequences was then condensed to a final database of 109 (Fig. 1) by deleting duplicate sequences and those differing by only 1 to 4 base pairs (bp).

V_k protein groups and subgroups. All nucleic acid sequences were translated into amino acids and organized into V_k protein groups and subgroups. Assignment to V_k protein groups (labeled I to VII) was based on the length of the amino-terminal sequence up to the invariant Trp35 (41, 40, 39, 36, 35, 34, and 33 residues, respectively; Kabat et al. 1987). Organization into V_k protein subgroups was based on <13 substitutions up to Trp35 (V_kTrp subgroups; Potter et al. 1982). Sequences meeting assignment criteria for more than one subgroup were assigned to the subgroup with the best match.

V_k gene families. Analogous to V_H gene families, we defined a "V_k gene family" as a group of nucleic acid sequences that exhibit >80% overall sequence similarity with every member of this family, and <80% with V_k genes from other families. In nucleic acid hybridization analyses under defined stringency conditions (Brodeur and Riblet 1984), all members of a gene family can be expected to cross-hybridize with each other. The V_k gene family nomenclature proposed in this study was adjusted as far as possible to that used for V_k protein subgroups, in order to minimize confusion in the literature; when V_k protein subgroups and V_k gene familes corresponded to each other (e. g., V_k21), the V_k subgroup designation was used for the V_k gene family as well. V_k gene families comprising two or more V_k protein subgroups were given the designation of the respective subgroups (e. g., the $V_k4/5$ gene family comprised V_k4 and V_k5 protein subgroups). Addition of capital letters to the designation indicates that a V_k protein subgroup included members from two distinct V_k gene families (e. g., the V_k9 protein subgroup comprised members from two distinct V_k gene families, termed V_k9A and V_k9B, respectively). V_kRF and (tentatively) V_k38C were two new gene families that could not be related unambiguously to any V_k protein subgroup and, hence, were named after a prototypic sequence.

Organization of mouse V_k sequences on the protein and nucleic acid level

The major goal of this study was to investigate the organization of mouse V_k genes in terms of nucleic acid sequence similarity, and to determine the relationship of such organization to existing V_k protein classifications. To this end, we first compiled 109 distinct (i. e., >4 bp different), full-length V_k nucleic acid sequences that were used as a database for subsequent analyses (Fig. 1). The sequences were translated into amino acids (Fig. 2) and assigned to protein groups and subgroups (Table 1).

Classification into protein groups was based on the number of residues up to the invariant Trp35 and, hence, was unambiguous in all instances. However, this classification was of limited practical value, since it frequently did not reflect structural relatedness (i. e., sequence similarity) between V_k sequences. For example, group V included members of several, sometimes quite dissimilar, V_k gene families (V_k23, $V_k12/13$, V_kRF, V_k11, V_k9A, V_k9B, V_k10, V_k38C, $V_k19/28$). On the other hand,

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                          ┌────────────────────── FR1 ──────────────────────┐ ┌──────────── CDR1 ────────────┐
          10        20        30        40        50        60      70        80        90       100
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002 GACATTGTGCTGACCCAATCTCCAGCTTCTTTGGCTGTGTCTCTAGGGCAGAGGGCCACCATATCCTGC AGAGCCAGTGAAAGTGTTGATAGT......TAT
003 GACATTGTGCTGACACAGTCTCCTGCTTCCTTAGCTGTATCTCTGGGGCAGAGGGCCACCATCTCATGC AGGGCCAGCCAAAGTGTCAGTACA......TCT
004 GACATTGTGCTAACACAGTCTCCTGCTTCCTTAGCTGTATCTCTGGGGCAGAGGGCCACCATCTCATGC AGGGCCAGCCAAAGTGTCAGTACA......TCT
005 GACATTGTGCTGACCCAATCTCCAGCTTCTTTGGCTGTGTCTCTAGGACAGAGAGCCACTATCTTCTGC AGAGCCAGCCAGAGTGTCGATTAT......AAT
006 GACATTGTGCTGACCCAATCTCCAGGATCTTTGGCTGTGTCTCTAGGGCAGAGGGCCACCATATCCTGC AGAGCCAGTGAAAGTGTTGAAAGT......TCT
007 AAAATTGTGCTGACCCAATTTCCAGCTTCTTTGGCTGTGTCTCTAAGGCAGAGGGCCACCATATCCTGC AGAGCCAGTGAAAGTGTTGATAGT......TAT
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011 GACATCTTGCTGACTCAGTCTCCAGCCATCCTGTCTGTGAGTCCAGGAGAAAGAGTCAGTTTCTCCTGC AGGGCCAGTCAG.................AGC
012 GACATCTTGCTGACTCAGTCTCCAGCCATCCTGTCTGTGAGTCCAGGAGAAAGAGTCAGTTTCTCCTGC AGGGCCAGTCAG.................AGC
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	├──CDR1──┤	├──────────FR2──────────┤	├──CDR2──┤	├──FR3──
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012	ATTGGCACAAGTCTTCAC	TGGTATCAACAAAGAACAAATGGTTCTCCAAGGCTTCTCATAAAG	TATGCTTCTGAGTCTATCTCT	GGGATCCCTTCCAGG
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C

							FR3		CDR3

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011 TTTAGTGGCAGTGGATCAGGGACAGATTTTACTCCTAGCATCAACAGTGTGGAGTCTGAAGATATTGCAGAATATTACTGT CAACAAAGTTATAGGTGGCCA
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013 TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCAGGGACAGATTTCACTCTCAGTATCAACAGTGTGGAGACTGAAGATTTTGGAATGTATTTCTGT CAACAGAGTAACAGCTGGCCT
014 TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCAGGGACAGATTTCACTCTCAGTATCAACAGTGTGGAGACTGAAGATTTTGGAATGTATTTCTGT CAACAGAGTAACAACTGGCCT
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016 TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCAGGGACAGATTTCACTCTCAGTATCAACAGTGTGGAGACTGAAGATTTTGGAATGTATTTCTGT CAACAGAGTAACAGCTGGCCT
017 TTCAGTGGCAGTGGGTCTGGGACCTCTTATTCTCTCACAATCAGCAGCATGGAGGCTGAAGATGCTGCCACTTTTTACTGC CAGCAGTACAGTGGTTACCCA
018 TTCAGTGGCAGTGGGTCTGGGACCTCTTACTCTCTTACAATCAGCAGCGTGGAGGCCGAAGATGCTGCCACTTATTACTGC CAGCAGTGGAGTGGTTACCCA
019 TTCAGTGGCAGTGGGTCTGGGACCTCTTACTCTCTCACAATCAGCAGCGTGGAGGCTGAAGATGATGCAACTTATTACTGC CAGCAGTGGAGTGGTTACCCA
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024 TTCAGTGGCAGTGGGTCTGGGACCTCTTACTCTCTCACAATCAGCAGTGTGGAGGCTGAAGATGCTGCCACTTATTACTGC CAGCAGTACAGTGGTTACCCA
025 TTCAGTGGNAGTGGGTCTGGNACCTCTTACTCTCTCACAATTGGCACCATGGAGGCTGAAGATGTTGCCACTTACTACTGC CAGCAGGGTAGTAGTATACCG
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054 TTCAGTGGCAGTGGGTCTGGGACCTCTTACTCTCTCACAATCAGCAGAGTGGAGGCTGAAGATGCTGCCACTTATTACTGC CAGCAGTGGAGTAGTAACCCA
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D

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┌──────────────────────────── FR1 ────────────────────────────┐ ┌──────────── CDR1 ────────────┐
     10        20        30        40        50        60        70        80        90       100
055 GAAAATGTTCTCACCCAGTCTCCAGNAATCATGTCTGNATCTCCNGGGGNAAAGGTCACCATGACCTGC AGTGCCAGGTCA....................
056 CAAATTGTTCTCTCCCAGTCTCCGGCAATCCTGTCTGCATCTCCAGGGGAGAAGGTCACAATGACTTGC AGGGCCAGCTCA.........  ..........
057 CAAATTGTTCTCTCCCAGTCTCCAGCAATCCTGTCTGCATCTCCAGGGGAGAAGGTCACAATGACTTGC AGGGCCAGCTCA....................
058 GACATCCAGATGACTCAGTCTCCAGCCTCCCTATCTGCATCTGTGGGTGAAACTGTCACCATCACATGT CGAGCAAGTGGG.................AAT
059 GACATCCAGATGACTCAGTCTCCAGCCTCCCTATCTGTATCCGTGGGAGAAACTGTCACCATCACATGT CGAGCAAGTGAG.................AAT
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062 GATGTCCAGATAACCCAGTCTCCATCTTATCTTGCTGCATCTCCTGGAGAAACCATTACTATTAATTGC AGGGCAAGTAAG.................AGC
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065 GACATCCAGATGACCCAGTCTCCATCCTCCTTATCTGCCTCTCTGGGAGAAAGAGTCAGTCTCACTTGC CGGGCAAGTCAG................GAC
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067 GACATCCAGATGATTCAGTCTCCATCGTCCATGTTTGGCTCTCTGGGAGACAGAGTCAGTCTCTCTTGC CGGGCTAGTCAG................GGC
068 GACATCAAGATGACCCAGTCTCCATCTTCCATGTATGCATCTCTAGGAGAGAGAGTCACTATCACTTGC AAGGCGAGTCAG................GAC
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076 GATATTGTGATGACGCAGGCTGCATTCTCCAATCCAGTCACTCTTGGAACATCAGCTTCCATCTCCTGC AGGTCTAGTAAGAGTCTCCTGCACAGT...AGT
077 GATATTGTGATGACGCAGGCTGCATTCTCCAATCCAGTCACTCTTGGAACATCAGCTTCCATCTCCTGC AGGTCTAGTAAGAGTCTCCTACATAGT...AAT
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086 GATGTTGTGATGACCCAAACTCCACTCTCCCTGCCTGTCAGCCTGGGAGATCAAGCCTCCATCTCTTGC AGATCTAGTCAGAGCATTGTACACAGT...AAT
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097 GACATTGTGATGACTCAGTCTCCAACTTTCCTTGCTGTGACAGCAAGTAAGAAGGTCACCATTAGTTGC ACTGCNTCTGAGAGCCTTTATTCAAGCAAACAC
098 AGTATTGTGATGACCCAGACTCCCAAATTCCTGCTTGTATCAGCAGGAGAGAGGGTTACCATAACCTGC AAGGCCAGTCAG.................AGT
099 AGTATTGTGATGACCCAGACTCCCAAATTCCTGCCTGTATCAGCAGGAGACAGGGTTACCATGACCTGC AAGGCCAGTCAG.................AGT
100 GACATTGTGATGACCCAGTCTCACAAATTCATGTCCACATCAGTAGGAGACAGGGTCAGCATCACCTGC AAGGCCAGTCAG.................GAT
101 GACATTGTGATGACCCAGTCTCAAAAATTCATGTCCACATCAGTAGGAGACAGGGTCAGCATCACCTGC AAGGCCAGTCAG.................AAT
102 GACATTGTGATGACCCAGTCTCAAAAATTCATGTCCACATCAGTGGGAGACAGGGTCAGCGTCACCTGC AAGGCCAGTCAG.................AAT
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107 GACATTGTGATGACCCAGTCTCACAAATTCATGTCCACATCAGTAGGAGACAGGGTCAGCATCACCTGC AAGGCCAGTCAG.................GAT
108 AACATTGTAATGACCCAATCTCCCAAATCCATGTCCGTGTCAGTAGGAGAGAGGGTCACCTTGACCTGC AAGGCCAGTGAG.................AAT
109 AACATTGTAATGACCCAATCACCCAAATCCATGTCCATGTCAGTAGGAGAGAGGGTCACCTTGAGCTGC AAGGCCAGTGAG.................AAT
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E ├─────CDR1─────┤ ├────────────────FR2────────────────┤ ├─────CDR2─────┤ ├──FR3──┤

	110 120	130 140 150 160	170 180	190 200
055	AGTATAAGTTACATGCAC	TGGTACCAGCAGNAGTCAAGCACCTCCCCNAAACTCTGGATTTAT	GACACATCCAAANTGGCTTCT	GGNGTCCCTGCNCGN
056	AGTGTAAGTTACATACAG	TGGTTCCAGCAGAAGCCAGGATCCTCCCCAAACCCTGGATTTCT	GTCACATCCAACCTGGCTTCT	GGAGTCCCTGCTCGC
057	AGTGTAAGTTACATACAC	TGGTACCAGCAGAAGCCAGGATCCTCCCCAAACCCTGGATTTAT	GCCACATCCAACCTGGCTTCT	GGAGTCCCTGTTCGC
058	ATTCACAATTATTTAGCA	TGGTATCAGCAGAAACAGGGAAAATCTCCTCAGCTCCTGGTCTAT	AATGCAAAAACCTTAGCAGAT	GGTGTGCCATCAAGG
059	ATTTACAGTAATTTGGCA	TGGTTATTCAGCAGAAACAGGGAAAACCCCCCCAGCTTGGTCTAT	GCTGCAACAAACTTAGCAGAT	GGTGTGCCATCAAGG
060	ATTTACAGTTATTTAGCA	TGGTATCAGCAGAAACAGGGAAAATCTCCTCAGCTCCTGGTCTAT	AATGCAAAAACCTTAGCAGAA	GGTGTGCCATCAAGG
061	ATTTACAGTTATTTAGCA	TGGTATCAGCAGAAACAGGGAAAATCTCCTCAGCTCCTGGTCTAT	AATGCAAAAACCTTACCAGAA	GGTGTGCCATCAAGG
062	ATTAGCAAATATTTAGCC	TGGTATCAAGAGAAACCTGGGAAAACTAATAAGCTTCTTATCTAC	TCTGGATCCACTTTGCAATCT	GGAATTCCATCAAGG
063	ATTAACAATTTTTTAAAA	TGGTTTCAGCAAACACTGGGGAAAACTGCTAGGCTCTTGATCTAT	GGTGCAAACAAATTGGAAGAT	GGGGTCCCTTCAAGG
064	ATTGGTAGTAGCTTAAAC	TGGCTTCAGCAGGAACCAGATGGAACTATTAAACGCCTGATCTAC	GCCACATCCAGTTTAGATTCT	GGTGTGCCCAAAAGG
065	ATTCATGGTTATTTAAAC	TTGTTTCAGCAGAAACCAGGTGAAACTATTAAACACCTGATCTAC	GAAACATCCAATTTAGATTCT	GGTGTCCCAAAAAGG
066	ATTAGTGGTTACTTAAGC	TGGCTTCAGCAGAAACCAGATGGAACTATTAAACGCCTGATCTAC	GCCGCATCCACTTTAGATTCT	GGTGTCCCAAAAAGG
067	ATTAGAGGTAATTTAGAC	TGGTATCAGCAGAAACCAGGTGGAACTATTAAACTCCTGATCTAC	TCCACATCCAATTTAAATTCT	GGTGTCCCATCAAGG
068	ATTAATAGCTATTTAAGC	TGGTTCCAGCAGAAACCAGGGAAATCTCCTAAGACCCTGATCTAT	CGTGCAAACAGATTGGTAGAT	GGGGTCCCATCAAGG
069	ATTAATAGCTATTTAACC	TGGTTCCAGCAGAAACCAGGGAAGTCTCCTAAGACCCTGCTCTAT	CGTACAAAGAGATTGGTAGAT	GGGGTCCCATCAAGG
070	ATTAAAAGCTATTTAAGC	TGGTACCAGCAGAAACCATGGNAATCTCCTAAGACCCTGATCTAT	TATGCAACAAGCTTGGCAGAT	GGGGTCCCATCAAGA
071	ATTAGCAATTATTTAAAC	TGGTATCAGCAGAAACCAGATGGAACTGTTAAACTCCTGATCTAC	TACACATCAAGATTACACTCA	GGAGTCCCATCAAGG
072	ATTAGCAATTTTTTATAC	TGGTTTCAGCAGAAATCAGATGGAACTGTTAAACTCCTGATCTAC	TACACCTCAAGATAACACTCA	GGAGTCCCATCAAGG
073	ATTAACAAGTATATAGCT	TGGGACCAACACAAGCCTGGAAAAGGTCCTAGGCTGCTCATACAT	TACACATCTACAATAGAGCCA	GGCATCCCATCAAGG
074	ATTAACAAGTATTTAGCT	TGGTACCAACACAAGCCTGGAAAAGGTCCTAGGCTGCTCATACAT	TACACATCTACATTACAGCCA	GGCATCCCATCAAGG
075	GGGAAGACATACTTGAAT	TGGTTTCTGCAGAGACCAGGACAATCTCCTCAGCTCCTGATCTAT	TTGATGTCCACCCGTGCATCA	GGAGTCTCAGACCGG
076	GGCAACACTTACTTGTAT	TGGTTCCTGCAGAAGCCAGGCCAGTCTCCTCAGCTCCTGATATAT	TATATCTCCAACCTTGCCTCA	GGAGTCCCAGACAGG
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078	GGCAACACTTACTTGTAT	TGGTACCTACAGAGGCCAGGCCAGTCTCCTCAGCTCCTGATATAT	CGGATGTCCAACCTTGCCTCA	GGAGTCCCAGACAGG
079	GGCAACACTTACTTGTAT	TGGTACCTACAGAGGCCAGGCCAGTCTCCTCAACTCCTGATATAT	CGGATGTCCTACCTTGCCTCA	GGAGTCCCAGACAGG
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084	GGAAACACCTATTTGAAG	TGGTACCTCCAGAAACCAGGCCAGTCTCCACAGCTCCTGATCTAC	AGGGTTTCCAACCGATTTTCT	GGGGTCCTAGACAGG
085	GGGATCACCTATTTGTCT	TGGTACCTGCACAAGCCTGGCCAGTCTCCACAGCTCCTCATCTAT	GGGATTTCCAACAGATTTTCT	GGGGTGCCAGACAGG
086	GGAAACACCTATTTATAT	TGGTACCTGCAGAAACCAGGCCAGTCTCCAAAGCTCCTGATCTAC	AGGGTTTCCAACCGATTTTCT	GGGGTCCCAGACAGG
087	GGAAACACCTATTTGAAC	TGGTACCTCCAGAAACCAGGCCAGTCTCCCAGGCTCCTGATCTAC	AGGGTTTCCAACCGATTTTCT	GGGGTCCTAGACAGG
088	GGGTTCACCTATTTAGAA	TGGTACCTGCAGAAACCAGGNNNNNNNNNAAAGCTCCTGATATAT	GGGATTTCCAACCGATTTTCT	GGGGTCCCAGACAGG
089	GGAAAGACATATTTGAAT	TGGTTGTTACAGAGGCCAGGCCAGTCTCCAAAGCGCCTAATCTAT	CTGGTGTCTAAACTGGACTCT	GGAGTCCCTGACAGG
090	CAAAAGAACTATTTGGCC	TGGTACCAGCAGAAACCAGGACAGTCTCCTAAACTTCTGGTATAC	TTTGCATCCACTAGGGAATCT	GGGGTCCCTGATCGC
091	CAAAAGAACTCTTTGGCC	TGGTACCAGCAGAGACCAGGGCAGTCTCCTAAACTGCTGATTTAC	TGGGCATCCACTAGGGAATCT	GGGGTCCCTGATCGC
092	CCGAAGAACTACTTGACC	TGGTACCAGCAGAAACCAGGGCAGCCTCCTAAACTGTTGATCTAC	TGGGCATCCACTAGGGAATCT	GGGGTCCCTGATCGC
093	CAAAAGAACTACTTGGCC	TGGTACCAGCAGAAACCAGGGCAGCCTCCTAAACTGTTGATCTAC	GGGGCATCCACTAGGGAATCT	GGGGTCCCTGATCGC
094	CAGAAGAACTACTTGGCC	TGGTACCAGCAGAAACCAGGGCAGTCTCCTAAACTGCTGATCTAC	TGGGCATCCACTAGGGAATCT	GGAGTCCCTGATCGC
095	GAAAGAAGCTACTTGGCT	TGGTACCAGCAGAAACCAGGGCAGTCTCCTAAACTGCTGATCTAC	TGGGCATCCACTAGGGAATCT	GGGGTCCCTGATCGC
096	AAAAGAACTAACTTGGCC	TGGTACCANAAGAAACCAGGGCAGCCTCCNAAACTGTTGATCTCC	GTGGATGCGCGACCCNCACAC	GGAGTCCCTGATCGC
097	AAGGTGCACTACTTGGCT	TGGTACCAGAAGAAACCAGAGCAATCTCCTAAACTGCTGATATAC	GGGGCATCCAACCGATACATT	GGGGTCCCTGATCGC
098	GTGAGTAATGATGTAGCT	TGGTACCAACAGAAGCCAGGGCAGTCTCCTAAACTGCTGATATAC	TATGCATCCAATCGCTACACT	GGAGTCCCTGATCGC
099	GTGGGTAATAATGTAGCC	TGGTACCAACAGAAGCCAGGACAGTCTCCTAAACTGCTGATATAC	TATGCATCCAATCGCTACACT	GGAGTCCCTGATCGC
100	GTGGGTGCTGCTATAGCC	TGGTATCAACAGAAACCAGGACAATCTCCTAAACTACTGATTTAC	TGGGCATCCACCCGGCACACT	GGAGTCCCTGATCGC
101	GTGGGTACTGCTGTAGCC	TGGTATCAACAGAAACCAGGACAATCTCCTAAACTACTGATTTAC	TCGGCATCCAATCGGTACACT	GGAGTCCCTGATCGC
102	GTGGTCACTAATGTAGCC	TGGTATCAACAGACACCAGGACAATCTCCTAAAGCACTGATTTAC	TCGGCATCCTACCGGTACAGT	GGAGTCCCTGATCGC
103	GTTCGTACTGCTGTTGCC	TGGTATCAACAGAAACCAGGGCAGTCTCCTAAAGCACTGATTTAC	TTGGCATCCAACCGGTACACT	GGAGTCCCTGATCGC
104	GTGGGTACTAATGTAGCC	TGGTATCAACAGAAACCAGGGCAATCTCCTAAAGCACTGATTTAC	TCGGCATCCTACCGGTACAGT	GGAGTCCCTGATCGC
105	GTGGGTACTAATGTAGCC	TGGTATCAGCAGAAACCAGGGCAATCTCCTAAAGCACTGATTTAC	TCGGCATCCTACCGGTACAGT	GGAGTCCCTGATCGC
106	GTGAGTACTACTGTGGCC	TGGTATCAGCAGAAACCAGGGCAATCTCCTAAACTACTGATTTAT	TCGGCATCCTACCGGTACACT	GGAGTCCCTGATCGC
107	GTGAGTACTGCTGTAGCC	TGGTATCAACAGAAACCAGGACAATCTCCTAAACTACTGATTTAC	TCGGCATCCTACCGGTACACT	GGAGTCCCTGATCGC
108	GTGGTTACTTATGTTTCC	TGGTATCAACAGAAACCAGAGCAGTCTCCTAAACTGCTGATATAC	GGGGCATCCAACCGGTACACT	GGGGTCCCCGATCGC
109	GTGGGTACTTATGTATCC	TGGTATCAACAGAAACCAGAGCAGTCTCCTAAACTGCTGATATAC	GGGGCATCCAACCGGTACACT	GGGGTCCCCGATCGC

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                  ┌─────────────────────────── FR3 ───────────────────────────┐ ┌──── CDR3 ────
      210      220      230      240      250      260      270      280       290      300
055  TTCAGTGGNAGTGGGNCTGGNAACTCTTACTCTCTCACGATCAGCAGCATGGAGGCNGAAGATGTTGCCACTTATTACTGT  TTTCNGGGGAGTGGGTACCCA
056  TTCAGTGGNAGTGGGTCTGGGACCTCTTACTCTCTCACAATCAGCAGAGTGGAGGCTGAAGATGCTGCCACTTATTACTGC  CAGCAGTGGAGGAGTAACCCA
057  TTCAGTGGAAGTGGGTCTGGGACCTCTTACTCTCTCACAATCAACAGAGTGGAGGCTGAAGATGCTGCCACTTATTACTGC  CAGCAGTGGAGTAGTAACCCA
058  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCAGGAACACAATATTCTCTCAAGATCAACAGCCTGCAGCCTGAAGATTTTGGGAGTTATTACTGT  CAACATTTTTGGAGTACTCCT
059  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCAGGAACACAATATTCTCTCAAGATCAACAGCCAGCAGCCGGAGGATTTTGGGAGTTATTACTGT  CAACATTTTTGGAGTGCTCCT
060  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCAGGCACACAGTTTTCTCTGAAGATCAACAGCCTGCAGCCTGAAGATTTTGGGAGTTATTACTGT  CAACATCATTATGTTACTCCG
061  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCAGGCACACAGTTTTCTCTGAAGATCAACAGCCTGCAGCCTGAAGATTTTGGGAGTTATTACTGT  CAGCATCATTATGGTCCTCCG
062  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCTGGTACAGATTTCACTCTCACCATCAGTAGCCTGGAGCCTGAAGATTTTGCAATGTATTACTGT  CAACAGCATAATGAATACCCG
063  TTCAGTGGAACTGGATATGGGACAGATTTCACTTTCACCATCAGCAGCCAGGAGGAAGAAGATGTGTCAACTTATTTCTGT  CTACAGCATAGGTATCTCCCT
064  TTCAGTGGCAGTAGGTCTGGGTCAGATTATTCTCTCACCATCAGCAGCCTTGAGTCTGAAGATTTTGTAGACTATTACTGT  CTACAATATGCTAGTTCTCCT
065  TTCAGTGGCAGTAGGTCTGGGTCAGATTATTCTCTCATTATCGGCAGCCTTGAGTCTGAAGATTTTGCAGACTATTACTGT  CTACAATATGCTAGTTCTCCT
066  TTCAGTGGCAGTAGGTCTGGGTCAGATTATTCTCTCACCATCAGCAGCCTTGAGTCTGAAGATTTTGCAGACTATTACTGT  CTACAATATCTTAGTTATCCG
067  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGGTCTGGGTCAGATTATTCTCTCACCATCAGCAGCCTAGAGTCTGAAGATTTTGCAGACTATTACTGT  CTACAGCGTAATGCGTATCCG
068  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCTGGGCAAGATTATTCTCTCACCATCAGCAGCCTGGAGTATGAAGATATGGGAATTTATTATTGT  CTACAGTATGATGAGTTTCCT
069  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCTGGGCAAGAATATTCTCTCACCATCAGCAGCCTGGAGTATGAAGATATGGGAATTTATTTTTGT  CTTCAGTATGATGAATTTCTT
070  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCTGGGNAAGATTATTCTCTAACCATCAGCAGCCTGGAGTCTGACGATACAGCAACTTATTACTGT  CTACAGCATGGTGAGAGCCCT
071  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGGTCTGGAACAGATTATTCTCTCACCATTAGCAACCTGGAGCAAGAAGATATTGCCACTTACTTTTGC  CAACAGGGTAATACGCTTCCT
072  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGGTCTGGAACAGATTATTCTTTCACCATTAACAACCTGGAGTAAGAAGATGTCGCCACTTATTCTTGA  CAACAGGGTATATT
073  TTCAGTGGAAGTGGGTCTGGGAGAGATTATTCCTTCAGCATCAGCAACCTGGAGCCTGAAGATATTGCAACTTATTATTGT  CTACAGTATGATAATCTGTAC
074  TTCAGTGGAAGTGGGTCTGGGAGAGATTATTCCTTCAGCATCAGCAACCTGGACGCGGAAGAGATTGCAACTTATTATTGT  CTACAGTATGATAGTCTGTAC
075  TTTAGTGGCAGTGGGTCAGGAACAGATTTCACCCTGGAAATCAGTAGAGTGAAGGCTGAGGATGTGGGTGTGTATTACTGT  CAACAACTTGTAGAGTATCCT
076  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGGTCAGGAACTGATTTCACACTGAGAATCAGTAGAGTGGAGGCTGAGGATGTGGGTGTTTATTACTGT  ATGCAAGGTCTAGAATATCCT
077  TTCAGTAGCAGTGGGTCAGGAACCGACTTCACACTGAGAATCAGCAGAGTGGAGGCTGAGGATGTGGGTGTTTATTACTGT  GCTCAAAATCTAGAACTTCCT
078  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGGTCAGGAACTGCTTTCACACTGAGAATCAGTAGAGTGGAGGCTGAGGATGTGGGTATTTATTATTGT  ATGCAACATCTAGAATATCCT
079  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGGTCAGGAACTGCTTTCACACTGAGAATCAGTAGAGTGGAGGCTGAGGATGTGGGTATTTATTATTGT  ATGCAACATCTAGAATATCCT
080  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGGTCAGGAACTGCTTTCACACTGAGAATCAGTAGAGTGGAGGCTGAGGATGTGGGTGTTTATTACTGT  ATGCAACATCTAGAATATCCG
081  TTCAGTGGCAGTGAGTCAGGAACTGATTTCACACTGAGAATCAGCAGAGTGGAGGCTGAGGATGTGGGTGTTTATTACTGT  GCTCAACTGCTAGAACTCCC
082  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCAGGGACAGATTTCACACTCAAGATCAGCAGAGTGGAGGCTGAGGATCTGGGAGTTTATTTCTGC  TCTCAAAGTACACATGTTCCT
083  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCAGGGACAGATTTCACACTCAAGATCAGCAGAGTGGAGGCTGAGGATCTGGGAGTTTATTACTGC  TTTCAAGGTTCACATGTTCCT
084  TTCAGTGGTAGTGGATCAGGGACAGATTTCACACTGAAAATCAGCAGAGTGGAGGCTGAGGATTTGGGAGTTTATTTCTGC  CTCCAAGTTACACATGCTCCT
085  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGTTCAGGGACAGATTTCACACTCAAGATCAACACAATAAAGCCTGAGGACTTGGGAATGTATTACTGC  TTACAAGGTTCACATCAGCCG
086  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCAGGGACAGATTTCACACTCAATATCAGCAGAGTGGAGGCTGAGGATATGGGAGTTTATTACTGC  TTTCAAGGTACACATGTTCCT
087  TTCAGTGGTAGTGGATCAGGGACAGATTTCACACTGAAAATCAGCAGAGTGGAGGCTGAGGATTTGGGAGTTTATTTCTGC  CTCCAAGTTACACATGTCCCG
088  TTCAGTGGCAGTGGATCAGGGACAGATTTCACACTCAAGATCAGCAGAGTGGAGGCTGAGGATGTAGGAATTTATTACTGT  TTTCAAGGTATACATGTTCCG
089  TTCACTGGCAGTGGATCAGGGACAGATTTCACACTGAAAATCAGCAGAGTGGAGGCTGAGGATTTGGGAGTTTATTATTGC  TGGCAAGGTACACATTTTCCT
090  TTCATAGGCAGTGGATCTGGGACAGATTTCACTCTTACCATCAGCAGTGTGCAGGCTGAAGACCTGGCAGATTACTTCTGT  CAGCAACATTATAGCACTCCG
091  TTCACAGGCAGTGGATCTGGGACAGATTTCACTCTCACCATCAGCAGTGTGAAGGCTGAAGACCTGGCAGTTTATTACTGT  CAGCAATATTATAGCTATCCG
092  TTCACAGGCAGTGGATCTGGAACAGATTTCACTCTCACCATCAGCAGTGTGCAGGCTGAAGACCTGGCAGTTTATTACTGT  CAGAATGATTATAGTTATCCG
093  TTCACAGGCAGTGGATCTGGAACCGATTTCACTCTTACCATCAGCAGTGTGCAGGCTGAAGACCTGGCACTTTATTACTGT  CAGAATGATCATACTTATCCG
094  TTCACAGGCAGTGGATCTGGGACAGATTTTACTCTTACCATCAGCAGTGTACAAGCTGAAGACCTGGCAGTTTATTACTGT  CATCAATACCTCTCCTCG
095  TTCACGGGCAGTGGATCTGGGACAGATTTCACTCTCACCATCAGCAGTGTGCGGGCTGAAGACCTGGCAGTTTATTACTGC  AAGAATCTTATGGATCTTCCC
096  TTCACAGGAAGTGGTTCTGGGAGNGATTATACTCTCACAGTCAGCAGTGTGAAGGCTGAAGACCTGGCACTTTACTACTGT  CAACAACATTATAGNTATCCG
097  TTCACAGGCAGTGGATCTGGGACAGATTTCACTCTGACCATCAGCAGTGTACAGGTTGAAGACCTCACACATTATTACTGT  GCACAGTTTTACAGCTATCCT
098  TTCACTGGCAGTGGATATGGGACGGATTTCACTTTCACCATCAGCACTGTGCAGGCTGAAGACCTGGCAGTTTATTTCTGT  CAGCAGGATTATAGCTCTCCT
099  TTCACTGGCAGTGGATCTGGGACAGATTTCACTTTCACCATCAGCAGTGTGCAGGTTGAAGACCTGGCAGTTTATTTCTGT  CAGCAGCATTATAGCTCTCCG
100  TTCACAGGCAGTGGATCTGGGACAGATTTCACTCTCACCATTAGCAATGTGCAGTCTGATGACTTGGCAGATTATTTCTGT  CAACAATATAGCGGGTATCCT
101  TTCACAGGCAGTGGATCTGGGACAGATTTCACTCTCACCATCAGCAATATGCAGTCTGAAGACCTGGCAGATTATTTCTGC  CAGCAATATAGCAGCTATCCT
102  TTCTCAGGCAGTGGATCTGGGACAGATTTCACTCTCACCATCAGCAATGTGCAGTCTGGAGACTTGGCAGAGTATTTCTGT  CAGCAATATAACAGCTATCCT
103  TTCACAGGCAGTGGATCTGGGACAGATTTCACTCTCACCATTACCAATGTGCAATCTGAAGACCTGGCAGATTATTTCTGT  CTGCAACATTGGAATTATCCG
104  TTCACAGGCAGTGGATCTGGGACAGATTTCACTCTCACCATCAGCAATGTGCAGTCTGAAGACTTGGCAGAGTATTTCTGT  CAGCAATATAACAGCTGTCCA
105  TTCACAGGCAGTGGATCTGGGACGGATTTCACTCTCACCATCAGCAATGTGCAGTCTGAAGACTTGGCAGTGTATTTCTGT  CAGCAATATAACAGCTATCCG
106  TTCACTGGCAGTGGATCTGGGACGGATTTCACTTTCACCATCAGCAGTGTGCAGGCTGAAGACCTGGCAGTTTATTACTGT  CAGCAACATTATAGTACTCCT
107  TTCACTGGCAGCGGATCTGGGACGGATTTCACTTTCACCATCAGCAGTGTGCAGGCTGAAGACCTGGCAGTTTATTACTGT  CAGCAACATTATAGTACTCCG
108  TTCACAGGCAGTGGATCTGCAACAGATTTCACTCTGACCATCAGCAGTGTGCAGGCTGAAGACCTTGCAGATTATCACTGT  GGACAGGGTTACAGCTATCCG
109  TTCACAGGCAGTGGATCTGCAACAGATTTCACTCTGACCATCAGCAGTGTGCAGTCTGAAGACCTTGCAGATTATTTCTGT  GGACAGAGTTACAGCTATCCC
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similar members from a single V_k gene family ($V_k4/5$) were present in different groups (IV and VI).

Organization of V_k proteins into subgroups using <13 mismatches up to Trp35 as a criterium (Potter et al. 1982) better reflected primary structure similarities, although such organization frequently led to multiple assignments, in which cases only a single assignment for the sequence representing the best match was included (Table 1). Moreover, as will be shown below, this classification repeatedly failed to adequately reflect overall similarity at the nucleic acid sequence level. Finally, some sequences (discussed below) could not be assigned unambiguously to any existing V_kTrp subgroup.

We then determined whether V_k nucleic acid sequences could be organized into gene families (analogous to V_H genes), and how such families related to V_k protein groups and subgroups. For this purpose, all V_k genes in the data bank were arranged in groups of >80% sequence similarity, which were termed V_k gene families. The characteristics of these families and their relationship to V_k protein groups and subgroups are detailed below. A quick summary outlining how the different classifications correspond to each other is presented in Table 2.

V_k21 gene family. All V_k21 genes fulfilled the criteria for a typical V gene family, i.e., all members were >80% similar (mostly >90%) and differed from all other V_k sequences by at least 25%. This gene family corresponded completely to protein subgroup V_k21 which, in turn, coincided with V_k protein group III. Five germline genes have been cloned (Heinrich et al. 1984) and approximately ten expressed sequences have been published. V_k21 genes were used in response to influenza hemagglutinin (Clarke et al. 1985, Meek et al. 1989) and major histocompatibility complex class II antigens (Devaux et al. 1985), and encoded some lupus-associated autoantibodies (Shlomchik et al. 1987c). The P3-X63-Ag8.653 myeloma line, a derivative of the MOPC21 myeloma that has lost the ability to express Ig heavy and light chain proteins and is frequently used in hybridoma technology (Kearney et al. 1979), also expressed a non-functional V_k21 mRNA

(Strohal et al. 1987). With the exception of an MRL-*lpr/lpr* rheumatoid factor (RF, anti-Ig) V_k sequence (AM12; Shlomchik et al. 1987c), which differed from all known V_k21 germline genes by >30 bp and may have derived from an unknown germline gene, all other expressed sequences were very similar to, and hence probably derived from, known V_k21 germline genes. RFLP (Kofler et al. 1989) and gene cloning analyses (Heinrich et al. 1984) suggested an estimated 6 to 13 V_k21 germline genes in the genome of most inbred strains of mice.

Finally, an incomplete V_k21 sequence (VM201, Meek et al. 1989), which was therefore not included in our data bank, should be mentioned as it lacked two codons in CDR-1 in comparison to other V_k21 sequences. Unless caused by somatic events, this would make the corresponding germline gene the only V_k gene with 37 codons up to Trp35.

V_k23 gene family. Similar to V_k21, V_k23 sequences were well separated from all other V_k sequences, and formed a gene family that corresponded entirely to its protein counterpart, the V_k23 subgroup (protein group V). One germline gene has been reported (Pech et al. 1981) that was subsequently observed in RFs from BALB/c mice (Shlomchik et al. 1987a), and that probably encoded an (NZB × NZW)F_1 RNA-specific autoantibody (Eilat et al. 1988).

Additional V_k23 genes, more distant from the above germline gene but closely related to each other, possibly derived from a second V_k23 germline gene and encoded nitrophenyl-specific anti-idiotypes (Sablitzky and Rajewsky 1984) and a creatine-kinase-specific antibody (Buckel et al. 1987). A nonfunctional V_k23 member was cloned from an MRL/n RF-producing hybridoma and might correspond to another V_k23 (pseudo) gene (Kofler et al. 1989). Our previous RFLP analyses suggested the presence of four to eight V_k23 germline genes in the genome of most inbred strains of mice. However, this may represent an over-estimate due to cross-hybridization of the more conserved 3′ portion of the V_k23 probe with V_k1 sequences (Kofler et al. 1989, and below).

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Fig. 1. Nucleic acid sequences of 109 V_k genes contained in the V_k database. *Dots* have been introduced to maximize homology; N, undetermined nucleotides; CDR, complementarity determining region; FR, frame work region (according to Kabat et al. 1987). Codes of V_k genes: 1=V_k21B, 2=V_k21C, 3=V_k21E, 4=$V_k1.6kb$, 5=V_k18kb, 6=$H37-85$, 7=$AM10$, 8=$AM12$, 9=$Ag8.653k$-, 10=$L7$, 11=$T2$, 12=$D444$, 13=$MRL/n-RF33B$, 14=$A8/4$, 15=$A20/44$, 16=$MAK33$, 17=$H1$, 18=$R11$, 19=$R1$, 20=$L8$, 21=$MRL-Histone7$, 22=$MRL-DNA22$, 23=$NQ10-4.6.1$, 24=$NQ11-1.18$, 25=$NQ22-87.1$, 26=$A9$, 27=$37A4$, 28=$R2$, 29=$R9$, 30=$R13$, 31=$H2$, 32=$H3$, 33=$H4$, 34=$H6$, 35=$H8$, 36=$H9$, 37=$H13$, 38=$L6$, 39=$70Z/3$, 40=$AM1$, 41=$2H7$, 42=$NQ2-6.1$, 43=$NQ2-48.2.2$, 44=$NQ10-12.4.6$, 45=$NQ10-12.5$, 46=$NQ10-15.3$, 47=$NQ11-7.12$, 48=$NQ11-8.1$, 49=$NQ22-15.18$, 50=$NQ22-18.7$, 51=$NQ22-61.1$, 52=$NQ22-17.18$, 53=$NQ19-2.4$, 54=$NQ18-36.44$, 55=$NQ16-38.18$, 56=$NQ10-11.1$, 57=$NQ10-2.12.8$, 58=$K2$, 59=$K3$, 60=$A25.9.7$, 61=$A31.90$, 62=$MRL-RF24$, 63=$PC6684K$-, 64=$MOPC41$, 65=$M173B$, 66=$GLOOP1$, 67=$BXW-DNA16$, 68=$L6$, 69=$40-140$, 70=$CP5 B5-3$, 71=V_kARS, 72=$PC3386$, 73=$38C13$, 74=$VM113$, 75=V_k167, 76=V_k24A, 77=V_k24B, 78=$AM28$, 79=$AM29$, 80=$A15$, 81=$25-39$, 82=$K5.1$, 83=$K1A5$, 84=$K18.1$, 85=$W3129$, 86=$L XIX 27$, 87=$JV3$, 88=$HP9$, 89=$BXW-DNA14$, 90=V_k139, 91=$GLOOP5$, 92=$AM13$, 93=$VS3$, 94=$A17$, 95=$JV10$, 96=$PY102$, 97=$S107A$, 98=V_kSer, 99=$MRL-RF28$, 100=$CEA66-E3$, 101=$V-TNP$, 102=$B6.2$, 103=$CEM231.6.7$, 104=$A23$, 105=$A34$, 106=$RF49$, 107=$RF49B$, 108=$RF34$, 109=$AM16$.

A

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             ┌─────── FR1 ───────┐ ┌──── CDR1 ────┐ ┌──── FR2 ────┐ ┌CDR2┐ ┌────────── FR3 ──────────┐ ┌CDR3─
                 10        20           30            40        50           60        70        80        90
001   NIVLTQSPASLAVSLGQRATISC RASESVDS..YGNSFMH WYQQKPGQPPKLLIY LASNLES GVPARFSGSGSRTDFTLTIDPVEADDAATYYC QQNNEDP
002   DIVLTQSPASLAVSLGQRATISC RASESVDS..YGNSFMH WYQQKPGQPPKLLIY RASNLES GIPARFSGSGSRTDFTLTINPVEADDVATYYC QQSNEDP
003   DIVLTQSPASLAVSLGQRATISC RASKSVST..SGYSYMH WYQQKPGQPPKLLIY LASNLES GVPARFSGSGSGTDFTLNIHPVEEEDAATYYC QHSRELP
004   DIVLTQSPASLAVSLGQRATISC RASQSVST..SSYSYMH WYQQKPGQPPKLLIK YASNLES GVPARFSGSGSGTDFTLNIHPVEEEDTATYYC QHSWEIP
005   DIVLTQSPASLAVSLGQRATIFC RASQSVDY..NGISYMH WFQQKPGQPPKLLIY AASNLES GIPARFSGSGSGTDFTLNIHPVEEEDAATYYC QQSIEDP
006   DIVLTQSPGSLAVSLGQRATISC RASESVES..SGNNFIH WHQQKPGQPPKLLIY RASNLAS GIPARFSGSGSMTDFTLTINPVEADDVATYYC QQSNEDP
007   KIVLTQFPASLAVSLRQRATISC RASESVDS..YGNSFMY WYQQKPGQPPKLLIY RASNLES GVPARFSGSGSRTDFTLTIDPVEADDGATYYC QQNNEDP
008   DIVLTQSPASLAVSLGQSVTISC RASESVEY..YGSSLMQ WYQQKPGQPPKLLIY GASNVES GVPARFSGSGSGTDFSLNIHPVEEDDIAVYFC QQSRKVP
009   DIVLTQFPASLAVSLGQRATISY RASKSVST..SGYSYMH WNQQKPGQPPRLLIY LVSNLES GVPARFSGSGSGTDFTLNIHPVEEEDAATYYC QHIREXX
010   DILLTQSPAILSVSPGERVSFSC RASQ......SIGTSIH WYQQRTNGSPRLLIK YASESIS GIPSRFSGSGSGTDFTLSINSVESEDIADYYC QQSNSWP
011   DILLTQSPAILSVSPGERVSFSC RASQ......SIGTSIH WYQQRTNGSPRLLIK NASESIS GIPSRFSGSGSGTDFTPSINSVESEDIAEYYC QQSYRWP
012   DILLTQSPAILSVSPGERVSFSC RASQ......SIGTSLH WYQQRTNGSPRLLIK YASESIS GIPSRFSGSGSGTDFTLSINSVESEDVADYYC QQTNSWP
013   DIVLTQSPATLSVTPGDSVSLSC RASQ......SIINNLH LYRUKSHESPRLLIK YASQSIS GIPSRFSGSGSGTDFTLSINSVETEDFGMYFC QQSNSWP
014   DIVLTQSPATLSVTPGDSVSLSC RASQ......SISNNLH WYQQKSHESPRLLIN YASQSMS GIPSRFSGSGSGTDFTLSINSVETEDFGMYFC QQSNNWP
015   DIVLTQSPATLSVTPGDSVSLSC RASQ......SISNNLH WYQQKSHESPRLLIK YASQSIS GIPSRFSGSGSGTDFXLIINNVETEDFGMYFC QQSNSWP
016   DIVLTQSPATLSVTPRDSVSLSC RASQ......SISNNLH WYQQKSHESPRLLIK YASQSIS GIPSRFSGSGSGTDFTLSINSVETEDFGMYFC QQSNSWP
017   QIVLTQSPAIMSASPGEKVTMTC SARSS.....VSSSYLY WYQQKPGSSPKLWIY STSNLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAATFYC QQYSGYP
018   ENVLTQSPAIMAASPGEKVTMTC SASSS.....VSSSNLH WYQQKSGTSTKFWIY RTSNLAS EVPAPFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSVEAEDAATYYC QQWSGYP
019   ENVLTQSPAIMAASLGQKVTMTC SASSS.....VSSSYLH WYQQKSGASPKPLIH RTSNLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSVEADDATYYC QQWSGYP
020   ENVLTQSPAIMAASLGEKVTMTC SASSS.....VSSSYLH WYQQKSGTSPKLWIY GTSNLAS GVPARFSGSGAGISYSLTISSMEAENDATYYC QQWSGYP
021   QIVLTQSPAIMSASPGEKVTMTC SASSS.....VSSKYLN WYQQRSGASPKLWIY GTSNLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSVEAEDAATYYC QQYHSDP
022   QIVLTQSPAIMSASPGERVTMTC SASSS.....VSSSYLY WYQQKPGSSPKLWIY STSNLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSMEAED.ATYYC QQYSGYP
023   EIVLTQSPTTMAXSPGEKITITC SANSS.....ISSNYLH WYQQKPGFSPKLLIY RTSNLAS GVQARFSGSGXVTSYSLTIGTMEAXDXATYYC QQGSSIP
024   ENVLTQSPAIMSASPGXKVTMTC RASSS.....VSSSYLH WYQQKSGASPKLWIY STSNLAS XVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSVEAEDAATYYC QQYSGYP
025   EIVLTQSPTTMAASPGEKITITC SASSS.....ISSNYLN WFQQKPGFSPKLLIY RTSNLAS GVPDRFSXSGSXTSYSLTIGTMEAEDVATYYC QQGSSIP
026   EIVLTQSPALMAASPGEKVTITC SVSSS.....ISSSNLH WYQQKSETSPKSWIY GTSNLAS GVPVRFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAATYYC QQWSSYP
027   QIVLTQSPAFMSASLGERVTMTC TARSS.....VSSSYFH WYQQKPGSSPKLWIY STSNLAS GVPTRFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAATYYC HQYHRSP
028   EILLTQSPAIIAASPGEKVTITC SASS.......SVSYMN WYQQKPGSSPKIWIY GISNLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSFSFTINSMEAEDVATYYC QQRSSYP
029   QIVLTQSPAIMSASPGEKVTMTC SASS.......SISYMH WYQQKPGTSPKRWIY DTSKLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAATYYC HQRSSYP
030   ENVLTQSPAIMSASLGEKVTMSC RASS.......SVNYMY WYQQKSDASPKLWIY YTSNLAP GVPARFSGSGSGNSYSLTISSMEGEDAATYYC QQFTSSP
031   GIVLTQSPTTMTAFPGENVTITC SASS.......SINYIH WYQQKSGNTPKQUIY KTSDLPS GVPTLFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSVEAEDAATYYC QQWSGYP
032   QIVLTQSPAIMSASPGEKVTMTC SASS.......SVSYMH WYQQKSGTSPKRWIY DTSKLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAATYYC QQWSSNP
033   QIVLTQSPAIMSASPGEKVTISC SASS.......SVSYMY WYQQKPGSSPKPWIY RTSNLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAATYYC QQYHSYP
034   EIVLTQSPAITAASLGQKVTITC SASS.......SVSYMH WYQQKSGTSPKPWIY EISKLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAAIYYC QQWNYPP
035   QIVLTQSPAILSASPGEKVTMTC SASS.......SVSYMU WFQQKPGSSPKLWIY SISNLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSVKAEDAATYYC QQWSSSP
036   QILLTQSPAIMSASPGEKVTMTC SASS.......SVSYMH WYQQKPGSSPKPWIY DTSNLAS GFPARFSGSGSGTSYSLIISSMEAEDAATYYC HQRSSYP
037   QIVLTQSPALMSASPGEKVTMTC SASS.......SVSYMY WYQQKPRSSPKPWIY LTSNLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAATYYC QQWSSNP
038   QIVLSQSPAILSASPGEKVTLTC RASS.......SVSFMN WYQQKPGSSPKPWIY ATSNLAS EFPGRFSGEWSGTSYSLAISRVEAEDAATYYC QQWNSNP
039   QIVLSQSPAILSASPGEKVTMTC RASS.......SVSYMH WYQQKLGSSPKPWIY ATSNLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISRVEAEDAATYYC QQWSSNP
040   QIVLTQSPAIMSASPGQKVTITC SASS.......SVNYMH WYQQKLGSSPKLWIY DTSKLAP GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAASYFC HQWSSYP
041   QIVLSQSPAILSASPGEKVTMIC RASS.......SVSYMH WYQQKPGSSPKPWIY APSNLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISRVEAEDAATYYC QQWSFNP
042   QILLTQSPAIMSASPGQKVTMTC SASS.......SVSYMY WYQQKPGSSPRLLIY DTSNLAS GVPVRFSGSGSATSYSLTITRMQAEDAATYYC QQWSSYP
043   QILLTQSPAIMSASPGQKVTMTC SASS.......SVSYMH WYQQKSGTSPKRWIY DTSKLAS GVPARFSGSGSATSYSLTITSMQAEDAATYYC QQWSSNP
044   QNVLNQSPXIMSXSPGEKVTMTC SASS.......SVSYMQ WFQQXSGTSPKRWIY DTSKLXS XVPTRFSXSGSGTXYSLTISSMEAEDAATYYC QQWSSNP
045   QIVLTQSPXIMSXSPGEKVTMTC SASS.......SVRYMN WFQQKSGTSPKRWIY DTSKLSS GVPARXSGSGSGTSXSLTISSMEXEDXATYYC QQWSSNP
046   QIVLTQSPAIMSASPGEKVTMTC SASS.......SVSYMN WFQQKSGTSPKRWIY DTSKLSS GVPPRFSGSXXGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAATYYC QQWNSNP
047   QIVLTQSPAIMSASPGEKVTMTC SASS.......IVSYVQ WFQQKSGTSPKRWIS DTSKLPS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAATYYC QQWTSNP
048   QIVLIQSPXIMSASPGXKXTMTC SASS.......SVSYMN WYQQKSGTSPKRWIY DTSKLAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAATYYC QQWNSNP
049   QIVLTQSPPIMSASPGEKVTMTC SASS.......SVSYLQ WFQQKSGTSPKRWIY DTSKLDS XVPARFSXSGSGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAATYYC QQWTSNP
050   QIVLTQSPAIMSASPGEKV' MTC SASS.......SVSYMN WFQQKSGTSPKRWVF ATSKLXS GVPARFSGSGXGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAATYYC QQWSSNP
051   QVVLTQSPXIMSASPGXKVTMTC SASS.......SVSYMQ WFQQKSGTSPKRLIF YTSKLTS GVPARFSXSGXGTSYSLTISSMEAEDAATYYC QQWSSNP
052   QIVLSQSPAILSASPGERVTLTC RASS.......SVSYIQ WFQQKPGSSPKPWIH ATSKXAS GVPARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISRVEAEDAATFYC QQWSSNP
053   QIVLTQSPXIMSASPGEKVTMTC SASS.......SVSFMQ WYQQKSGTSPKRWIY HTSKLAS GVPARFSXSGXGTSYSLTITSMEAEDAATYYC QQXSXNP
054   QIVLSQSPAILSASPGEQVTMTC RASS.......SVSYMH WYQQKPGSSPKPWIY ATSNXAS GVXARFSGSGSGTSYSLTISRVEAEDAATYYC QQWSSNP
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B

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        ┌─────────── FR1 ───────────┐ ┌──── CDR1 ────┐ ┌──── FR2 ───┐ ┌CDR2┐ ┌──────────── FR3 ─────────────┐ ┌CDR3─
               10        20                    30           40        50         60        70        80            90
055  ENVLTQSPXIMSXSXGXKVTMTC SARS.......SISYMH WYQQXSSTSXKLWIY DTSKXAS XVPXXFSXSGXXNSYSLTISSMEXEDVATYYC FXGSGYP
056  QIVLSQSPAILSASPGEKVTMTC RASS.......SVSYIQ WFQQKPGSSPKPWIS VTSNLAS GVPARFSXSGSGTSYSLTISRVEAEDAATYYC QQWRSNP
057  QIVLSQSPAILSASPGEKVTMTC RASS.......SVSYIH WYQQKPGSSPKPWIY ATSNLAS GVPVRFSGSGSGTSYSLTINRVEAEDAATYYC QQWSSNP
058  DIQMTQSPASLSASVGETVTITC RASG......NIHNYLA WYQQKQGKSPQLLVY NAKTLAD GVPSRFSGSGSGTQYSLKINSLQPEDFGSYYC QHFWSTP
059  DIQMTQSPASLSVSVGETVTITC RASE......NIYSNLA WLFSRNRENPPSLVY AATNLAD GVPSRFSGSGSGTQYSLKINSQQPEDFGSYYC QHFWSAP
060  DIQMTQSPASLSASVGXTVTITC RASE......NIYSYLA WYQQKQGKSPQLLVY NAKTLAE GVPSRFSGSGSGTQFSLKINSLQPEDFGSYYC QHHYVTP
061  DIQMTQSPASLSASVGXTVTITC RASE......NIYSYLA WYQQKQGKSPQLLVY NAKTLPE GVPSRFSGSGSGTQFSLKINSLQPEDFGSYYC QHHYGPP
062  DVQITQSPSYLAASPGETITINC RASK......SISKYLA WYQEKPGKTNKLLIY SGSTLQS GIPSRFSGSGSGTDFTLTISSLEPEDFAMYYC QQHNEYP
063  DVQMTQSPSSLSASLGERVSLTC QASQ......SINNFLK WFQQTLGKTARLLIY GANKLED GVPSRFSGTGYGTDFTFTISSQEEEDVSTYFC LQHRYLP
064  DIQMTQSPSSLSASLGERVSLTC RASQ......DIGSSLN WLQQEPDGTIKRLIY ATSSLDS GVPKRFSGSRSGSDYSLTISSLESEDFVDYYC LQYASSP
065  DIQMTQSPSSLSASLGERVSLTC RASQ......DIHGYLN LFQQKPGETIKHLIY ETSNLDS GVPKRFSGSRSGSDYSLIIGSLESEDFADYYC LQYASSP
066  DIQMTQSPSSLSASLGERVSLTC RASQ......EISGYLS WLQQKPDGTIKRLIY AASTLDS GVPKRFSGSRSGSDYSLTISSLESEDFADYYC LQYLSYP
067  DIQMIQSPSSMFGSLGDRVSLSC RASQ......GIRGNLD WYQQKPGGTIKLLIY STSNLNS GVPSRFSGSGSGSDYSLTISSLESEDFADYYC LQRNAYP
068  DIKMTQSPSSMYASLGERVTITC KASQ......DINSYLS WFQQKPGKSPKTLIY RANRLVD GVPSRFSGSGSGQDYSLTISSLEYEDMGIYYC LQYDEFP
069  DIKMTQSPSSMYASLGERVTISC KASQ......DINSYLT WFQQKPGKSPKTLLY RTKRLVD GVPSRFSGSGSGQEYSLTISSLEYEDMGIYFC LQYDEFL
070  DIKMTQSPSSMYASLGERVTITC KASQ......DIKSYLS WYQQKPWXSPKTLIY YATSLAD GVPSRFSGSGSGXDYSLTISSLESDDTATYYC LQHGESP
071  DIQMTQTTSSLSASLGDRVTISC RASQ......DISNYLN WYQQKPDGTVKLLIY YTSRLHS GVPSRFSGSGSGTDYSLTISNLEQEDIATYFC QQGNTLP
072  DIQMTQTTSSLSASPGDRVTISC RTSQ......DISNFLY WFQQKSDGTVKLLIY YTSRUHS GVPSRFSGSGSGTDYSFTINNLEUEDVATYSU QQGI
073  DIQMTQSPSSLSASLGGKVTITC KASQ......DINKYIA WDQHKPGKGPRLLIH YTSTIEP GIPSRFSGSGSGRDYSFSISNLEPEDIATYYC LQYDNLP
074  DIQMTQSPSSLSASLGGKVTITC KASQ......DINKYLA WYQHKPGKGPRLLIH YTSTLQP GIPSRFSGSGSGRDYSFSISNLDAEEIATYYC LQYDSLY
075  DIVITQDELSNPVTSGESVSISC RSSKSLLYK.DGKTYLN WFLQRPGQSPQLLIY LMSTRAS GVSDRFSGSGSGTDFTLEISRVKAEDVGVYYC QQLVEYP
076  DIVMTQAAFSNPVTLGTSASISC RSSKSLLHS.SGNTYLY WFLQKPGQSPQLLIY YISNLAS GVPDRFSGSGSGTDFTLRISRVEAEDVGVYYC MQGLEYP
077  DIVMTQAAFSNPVTLGTSASISC RSSKSLLHS.NGITYLY WYLQKPGQSPQLLIY QMSNLAS GVPDRFSSSGSGTDFTLRISRVEAEDVGVYYC AQNLELP
078  DIVMTQAAPSVSVTPGESVFISC RSSKSLLHS.NGNTYLY WYLQRPGQSPQLLIY RMSNLAS GVPDRFSGSGSGTAFTLRISRVEAEDVGIYYC MQHIEYP
079  DIVMTQATPSVSVTPGESVFISC RSSKSLLYI.NGNTYLY WYLQRPGQSPQLLIY RMSYLAS GVPDRFSGSGSGTAFTLRISRVEAEDVGIYYC MQHLEYP
080  DIVMTQAAPSVPVTPGESVSVSC RSSKSLLHS.NGNTYLY WFLQRPGQSPQLLIY RMSNLAS GVPDRFSGSGSGTAFTLRISRVEAEDVGVYYC MQHLEYP
081  DIVMTQAAFSNPVTLGTSASISC RSSKNLLHS.NGITFLY WYLQRPGQSPQLLIY RVSNLAS GVPNRFSGSESGTDFTLRISRVEAEDVGVYYC AQLLEL
082  DVVMTQTPLSLPVSLGDQASISC RSSQSLVHS.NGNTYLH WYLQKPGQSPKLLIY KVSNRFS GVPDRFSGSGSGTDFTLKISRVEAEDLGVYFC SQSTHVP
083  DVLMTQTPLSLPVSLGDQASISC RSSQSIVHS.NGNTYLE WYLQKPGQSPKLLIY KVSNRFS GVPDRFSGSGSGTDFTLKISRVEAEDLGVYYC FQGSHVP
084  DAVMTQTPLSLPVSLGDQASISC RSSQSLENS.NGNTYLK WYLQKPGQSPQLLIY RVSNRFS GVLDRFSGSGSGTDFTLKISRVEAEDLGVYFC LQVTHAP
085  DVVVTQTPLSLPVSFGDQVSISC RSSQSLATS.HGITYLS WYLHKPGQSPQLLIY GISNRFS GVPDRFSGSGSGTDFTLKINTIKPEDLGMYYC LQGSHQP
086  DVVMTQTPLSLPVSLGDQASISC RSSQSIVHS.NGNTYLY WYLQKPGQSPKLLIY RVSNRFS GVPDRFSGSGSGTDFTLNISRVEAEDMGVYYC FQGTHVP
087  DAVMTQTPLSLPVSLGDQASISC RSSQSIENS.NGNTYLN WYLQKPGQSPRLLIY RVSNRFS GVLDRFSGSGSGTDFTLKISRVEAEDLGVYFC LQVTHVP
088  DIVMTQTPLSLPVSLGDQASISC RSSQSIVIS.NGFTYLE WYLQKPXXXXKLLIY GISNRFS GVPDRFSGSGSGTDFTLKISRVEAEDVGIYYC FQGIHVP
089  DVVMTQTPLTLSVTIGQPASISC KSSQSLLDS.DGKTYLN WLLQRPGQSPKRLIY LVSKLDS GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTLKISRVEAEDLGVYYC WQGTHFP
090  DIVMTQSPSSLAMSVGQKVTMSC KSSQSLLNSSNQKNYLA WYQQKPGQSPKLLVY FASTRES GVPDRFIGSGSGTDFTLTISSVQAEDLADYFC QQHYSTP
091  GIVMSQSPSSLAVSVGEKVTMSC KSSQSLFYSSNQKNSLA WYQQRPGQSPKLLIY WASTRES GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTLTISSVKAEDLAVYYC QQYYSYP
092  DIVMTQSPSSLTVTAGEKVTMSC KSSQSLLNSGNPKNYLT WYQQKPGQPPKLLIY WASTRES GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTLTISSVQAEDLAVYYC QNDYSYP
093  DIVMTQSPSSLSVSAGEKVTMSC KSSQSLLNSGNQKNYLA WYQQKPGQPPKLLIY GASTRES GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTLTISSVQAEDLALYYC QNDHTYP
094  NIMMTQSPSSLAVSAGEKVTMSC KSSQSVLYSSNQKNYLA WYQQKPGQSPKLLIY WASTRES GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTLTISSVQAEDLAVYYC HQYLSS
095  DVVMSQSPSSLAVSAGEKVAVSC KSSQSLSTVEPERSYLA WYQQKPGQSPKLLIY WASTRES GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTLTISSVRAEDLAVYYC KNLMDLP
096  XIVMTQSXXSLSVSAGXKVTMSC KSSQXLXNSXVKRTNLA WYXKKPGQPXKLLIS VDARPXH GVPDRFTGSGSGXDYTLTVSSVKAEDLALYYC QQHYXYP
097  DIVMTQSPTFLAVTASKKVTISC TXSESLYSSKHKVHYLA WYQKKPEQSPKLLIY GASNRYI GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTLTISSVQVEDLTHYYC AQFYSYP
098  SIVMTQTPKFLLVSAGERVTITC KASQ......SVSNDVA WYQQKPGQSPKLLIY YASNRYT GVPDRFTGSGYGTDFTFTISTVQAEDLAVYFC QQDYSSP
099  SIVMTQTPKFLPVSAGDRVTMTC KASQ......SVGNNVA WYQQKPGQSPKLLIY YASNRYT GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTFTISSVQVEDLAVYFC QQHYSSP
100  DIVMTQSHKFMSTSVGDRVSITC KASQ......DVGAAIA WYQQKPGQSPKLLIY WASTRHT GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTLTISNVQSDDLADYFC QQYSGYP
101  DIVMTQSQKFMSTSVGDRVSITC KASQ......NVGTAVA WYQQKPGQSPKLLIY SASNRYT GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTLTISNMQSEDLADYFC QQYSSYP
102  DIVMTQSQKFMSTSVGDRVSVTC KASQ......NVVTNVA WYQQTPGQSPKALIY SASYRYS GVPDRFSGSGSGTDFTLTISNVQSGDLAEYFC QQYNSYP
103  DIVMTQSQKFMSTSVGDRVSITC KASQ.......NVRTAV WYQQKPGQSPKALIY LASNRYT GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTLTITNVQSEDLADYFC LQHWNYP
104  DIVMTQSHKFMSTSVGDRVSVTC KASQ......NVGTNVA WYQQKPGQSPKALIY SASYRYS GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTLTISNVQSEDLAEYFC QQYNSCP
105  DIVMTQSQKFMSTSVGDRVSVTC KASQ......NVGTNVA WYQQKPGQSPKALIY SASYRYS GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTLTISNVQSEDLAVYFC QQYNSYP
106  DIVMTQSHKFMSTSVGDRVSITC KASQ......DVSTTVA WYQQKPGQSPKLLIY SASYRYT GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTFTISSVQAEDLAVYYC QQHYSTP
107  DIVMTQSHKFMSTSVGDRVSITC KASQ......DVSTAVA WYQQKPGQSPKLLIY SASYRYT GVPDRFTGSGSGTDFTFTISSVQAEDLAVYYC QQHYSTP
108  NIVMTQSPKSMSVSVGERVTLTC KASE......NVVTYVS WYQQKPEQSPKLLIY GASNRYT GVPDRFTGSGSATDFTLTISSVQAEDLADYHC GQGYSYP
109  NIVMTQSPKSMSMSVGERVTLSC KASE......NVGTYVS WYQQKPEQSPKLLIY GASNRYT GVPDRFTGSGSATDFTLTISSVQSEDLADYFC GQSYSYP
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Fig. 2. Amino acid sequences deduced from 109 V_k nucleic acid sequences contained in the V_k database. *Dots* have been introduced to maximize homology; X, undetermined amino acids. Remainder of legend as for Figure 1.

Table 1. V_k nucleic acid sequence database*

Code[†]	V_k*	Group+	Subgroup+	Spec‖	Strain§	Class	Ref#
001-005	21	III	21	G	BALB/c	N/A	(1)
006				HA	BALB/c	IgG	(2)
007,008				RF	MRL/lpr	IgG	(3)
009				nf	BALB/c	N/A	(4)
010	23	V	23	G	BALB/c	N/A	(5)
011				nf	N/R	N/A	(6)
012				RNA	$(NZB \times W)F_1$	IgG	(7)
013				nf	MRL/n	N/A	(8)
014,015				Anti-ID	C57BL/6	IgG	(9)
016				CK	BALB/c	IgG	(10)
017-019	4/5	IV	4,5	G	BALB/c	N/A	(11)
020				G	BALB/c	N/A	(12)
021				histone	MRL/lpr	IgG	(13)
022				DNA	MRL/lpr	IgM	(14)
023,024				OX	BALB/c	IgG	(15)
025				OX	BALB/c	IgG	(16)
026				RF	BALB/c	IgM	(17)
027				ALP	BALB/c	IgG	(18)
028-032		VI	4	G	BALB/c	N/A	(11)
033-038				CaAg	BALB/c	IgG	(19)
039				unknown	BALB/c	IgM	(20)
040				RF	MRL/lpr	IgM	(3)
041				CD20	BALB/c	IgG	(21)
042,043	4/5	VI	4	OX	BALB/c	IgG	(22)
044-048				OX	BALB/c	IgG	(23)
049-054				OX	BALB/c	IgG	(16)
055				OX	BALB/c	IgM	(16)
056				OX	BALB/c	IgG	(15)
057				OX	BALB/c	IgM	(15)
058,059	12/13	V	12-13	G	BALB/c	N/A	(24)
060,061				Anti-ID	C57BL/6	IgG	(9)
062	RF	V	ambiguous	RF	MRL/lpr	IgM	(13)
063	11	V	11	nf	NZB	N/A	(25)
064	9A	V	9	G	BALB/c	N/A	(26)
065				G	BALB/c	N/A	(27)
066				lysozyme	BALB/c	IgG	(28)
067				DNA	$(NZB \times W)F_1$	IgM	(14)
068	9B	V	9	G	BALB/c	N/A	(5)
069				digoxin	A/J	IgG	(29)
070				BrRBC	CBA/J	IgM	(30)
071	10	V	10	G	A/J	N/A	(31)
072				nf	NZB	N/A	(25)
073	38C	V	ambiguous	unknown	C3H/HeN	IgM	(32)
074				HA	BALB/c	IgG	(33)
075	24/25	II	24	G	BALB/c	N/A	(34)
076,077				G	BALB/c	N/A	(35)
078,079				RF	C3H/lpr	IgA	(3)
080				RF	BALB/c	IgM	(17)
081				GAC	A/J	IgG	(36)
082-084	1	II	1	G	BALB/c	N/A	(37)
085				dextran	BALB/c	IgA	(38)
086				GAT	BALB/c	IgG	(39)
087				RF	BALB/c	IgM	(17)
088				Anti-ID	BALB/c	IgG	(40)
089	2	II	2	DNA	$(NZB \times W)F_1$	IgM	(14)
090	8	I	8	DNP	BALB/c	IgA	(41)
091				HEL	BALB/c	IgG	(28)
092				RF	MRL/lpr	IgA	(3)
093,094				RF	BALB/c	IgM	(17)
095				RF	129/Sv	IgM	(17)
096				HA	BALB/c	IgG	(33)
097	22	I	22	PC	BALB/c	IgA	(42)
098	19/28	V	28	G	BALB/c	N/A	(43)
099				RF	MRL/lpr	IgM	(8)
100			14-15-19	CEA	BALB/c	IgG	(44)
101				TNP	BALB/c	IgM	(45)
102				CASA	N/R	IgG	(46)
103				CEA	N/R	IgG	(47)
104-108				RF	BALB/c	IgM	(17)
109				RF	MRL/lpr	IgG	(3)

$V_k4/5$ *gene family.* V_kTrp subgroups V_k4 (groups IV and VI) and V_k5 (group IV) were encoded by highly similar (around 90%) genes forming a gene family, termed $V_k4/5$, that was separated from all other V_k sequences by >25% of their nucleotides. This was the largest V_k gene family, composed of approximately 25-50 members, as deduced from RFLP (Kofler et al. 1989) and gene cloning (Even et al. 1985) studies. Fourteen germline genes (ten V_k4 and four V_k5 genes) have been isolated thus far (Even et al. 1985, Höchtl et al. 1982). $V_k4/5$ genes were found in antibodies specific for galactan (Heller et al. 1987), oxazolone (Kaartinen and Maekelae 1987, Berek and Milstein 1987), dextran (Sikder et al. 1985, Akolkar et al. 1987), the lymphocyte surface marker CD20 (Liu 1987b), alprenolol (Nahmias et al. 1988), red blood cells (Pennell et al. 1988), and DNA, histone, and Ig self antigens (Shlomchik et al. 1987c, Kofler et al. 1987b, Kofler et al. 1988a, Shlomchik et al. 1987b).

$V_k12/13$ *gene family.* The sequences encoding V_k12-13 proteins (group V) formed another well-defined family that corresponded to all V_k12-13 subgroup proteins (Kabat et al. 1987, Potter et al. 1982). Two germline genes have been published (Nishioka and Leder 1980, Seidman et al. 1978), one of which (*K2*) may be involved in the nitrophenyl-specific anti-idiotypic response (Sablitzky and Rajewsky 1984). A more distant $V_k12/13$ gene encoded anti-idiotypic light chains in the GAT

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* Only sequences encoding the entire mature V_k region and differing by >4 bp are contained in this database (see Methods).
† Codes of V_k genes are given in legend to Figure 1.
‡ V_k, V_k gene family (this report); Group, V_k protein groups (Kabat et al. 1987); Subgroup, V_kTrp35 subgroups (Potter et al. 1982).
‖ Abbreviations: Spec, specificity; Ref, references; G, germline sequence; N/A, not applicable; HA, influenza hemagglutinin; RF, rheumatoid factor; nf, non-functional; N/R, not reported, Anti-ID, idiotype-specific antibody; CK, creatine kinase; OX, 2-phenyloxazolone; ALP, alprenolol; CaAg, carbohydrate antigen on human carcinoma cells; CD20, lymphocyte surface marker; BrRBC, bromelain-treated red blood cells; GAC, group A carbohydrate; GAT, $Glu^{60} Ala^{30} Tyr^{10}$ polypeptide; DNP, dinitrophenyl; HEL, hen egg lysozyme; CEA, carcino-embryonal antigen; TNP, trinitrophenyl; CASA, cancer-associated surface antigen.
§ Strains and their *Igk* haplotypes (Kofler et al. 1989): Igk^a: MRL/lpr, MRL/n; Igk^b: NZB; Igk^c: BALB/c, C57BL/6, A/J, C3H, CBA/J, 129/Sv, NZW.
* References: 1, (Heinrich et al. 1984); 2, (Clarke et al. 1985); 3, (Shlomchik et al. 1987c); 4, (Strohal et al. 1987); 5, (Pech et al. 1981); 6, (Altenburger et al. 1980); 7, (Eilat et al. 1988); 8, (Kofler et al. 1989); 9, (Sablitzky and Rajewsky 1984); 10, (Buckel et al. 1987); 11, (Even et al. 1985); 12, (Höchtl et al. 1982); 13, (Kofler et al. 1987b); 14, (Kofler et al. 1988); 15, (Berek et al. 1985); 16, (Berek et al. 1987); 17, (Shlomchik et al. 1987a); 18, (Nahmias et al. 1988); 19, (Liu et al. 1987); 20, (Parslow et al. 1984); 21, (Liu 1987); 22, (Kaartinen et al. 1983); 23, (Griffiths et al. 1984); 24, (Seidman et al. 1978); 25, (Kelley et al. 1985); 26, (Seidman et al. 1979); 27, (Max et al. 1980); 28, (Darsley and Rees 1985); 29, (Near and Haber 1989); 30, (Reininger et al. 1987); 31, (Sanz and Capra 1987); 32, (Campbell 1987); 33, (Meek et al. 1989); 34, (Selsing and Storb 1981); 35, (Joho et al. 1984); 36, (Lutz and Davie 1988); 37, (Corbet et al. 1987); 38, (Borden and Kabat 1987); 39, (Schiff et al. 1983); 40, (Ollier et al. 1985); 41, (Riley et al. 1986); 42, (Kwan et al. 1981); 43, (Boyd et al. 1986); 44, (Cabilly et al. 1984); 45, (Hawley et al. 1982); 46, (Sahagan 1986); 47, (Beidler et al. 1988).

Table 2. Correlation between V_k gene families and V_k protein groups and subgroups*.

V_k gene family	V_kCys subgroup	V_kTrp subgroup	V_k protein group
21	21	21	III
23	23	23	V
4/5	4	4	IV, VI
	5	5	IV
12/13	12, 13	12-13	V
RF	ambiguous assignment		V
11	11	11	V
9A	9	9	V
9B	9	9	V
10	10	10	V
38C	ambiguous assignment		V
24/25	24	24	II
	25	25	II, I
1	1, 3, 26	1	II
2	2	2	II
8	8	8	I
22	22	22	I
19/28	–	28	V
	14, 15, 19	19	V

* Relatedness between V_k gene families and V_kTrp subgroups 20 and 27, and V_kCys subgroups 6, 7, 16, 17, and 18 (for which only partial protein sequences are known), could not be determined.

(Glu^{60} Ala^{30} Tyr^{10}) system (Ollier et al. 1985). In RFLP analyses, two strongly and several weakly hybridizing restriction fragments were observed (Kofler et al. 1989). Whether the latter corresponded to additional, more distant, $V_k12/13$ germline genes or are due to high similarity (>80%) in portions of the probe with other V_k genes (particularly those of V_k gene families *9A, 9B, 10,* and *11*) remains to be determined.

V_kRF gene family. The MRL-RF24 V_k protein (Kofler et al. 1987b), a member of the large protein group V, had 12 mismatches up to Trp35 from two V_k12-13 proteins (K2 and MOPC129), but differed from the remaining V_k12-13 proteins (and all other V_k proteins) by >12 residues. Thus, this protein could not be unambiguously assigned to known V_k subgroups. Its nucleic acid sequence differed from all V_k sequences by >25%, thus forming a distinct V_k gene family, termed V_kRF. Used as a probe, this gene identified a single restriction fragment that was absent in haplotype Igk^f (Kofler et al. 1989). The corresponding (as yet uncloned) germline gene probably also encoded a BALB/c (Bruck et al. 1986) and a C57BL/6 (Sablitzky and Rajewsky 1984) idiotype-specific antibody, as well as an (NZB × NZW)F$_1$ DNA-specific autoantibody (Eilat et al. 1988).

$V_k11, 9A, 9B, 10, and *38C* gene families.* The V_k gene families discussed thus far were clearly separated from all other V_k genes by >25% overall sequence

dissimilarity and in this respect resembled V_H gene families. The following five gene families, distantly related to $V_k12/13$ and V_kRF, were less well separated from one another.

V_k11 gene family. For this gene family with four to six germline genes by RFLP analysis (Kofler et al. 1989), a single nucleic acid sequence corresponding to a nonfunctional rearrangement from an NZB myeloma (Kelley et al. 1985) was present in the data bank. This sequence fulfilled protein assignment criteria for V_k protein subgroups 9, 10, and 11; however, it best matched V_k11 proteins. Comparisons with the entire data bank (including some V_k9 and V_k10 sequences) revealed matches of only 76% or less at the nucleic acid level, making this sequence the prototype for the V_k11 gene family. V_k11 proteins were observed in the beta 2, 1 fructosan response (Kabat et al. 1987).

V_k9A gene family. The V_k9 protein subgroup, another member of the large protein group V (Potter et al. 1982), comprised sequences that, at the nucleic acid level, fell into two distinct gene families, termed V_k9A and V_k9B. The V_k9A gene family included two germline genes (Seidman et al. 1979, Max et al. 1980), one of which may be expressed in hen egg lysozyme antibodies (Darsley and Rees 1985). Another expressed V_k9A gene from an NZB × NZW F$_1$ anti-DNA IgM (Kofler et al. 1988) was only 88% similar to the other germline gene and probably derived from an unknown V_k9A germline gene. In addition, V_k9A genes have been observed in GAT- idiotype-specific antibodies (Ollier et al. 1985).

V_k9B gene family. The T1 sequence and its germline counterpart, V-L6 (Pech et al. 1981), both assigned to the V_k9 protein subgroup (Potter et al. 1982), differed from V_k9A (and all other V_k) nucleic acid sequences by >20% and, hence, formed a separate family, termed V_k9B. Genes from this family encoded antibodies specific for digoxin (Panka and Margolies 1987, Near and Haber 1989) and *Escherichia coli* (Pennell et al. 1988), and bromelain-treated red blood cell autoantibodies from lupus and normal mice (Reininger et al. 1987).

V_k10 gene family. This family corresponded to the V_k10 subgroup (protein group V). RFLP data suggested two to three V_k10 germline genes (Kofler et al. 1989), one of which has been cloned (Sanz and Capra 1987, Wysocki et al. 1987) and probably encoded arsonate (Manser et al. 1987a, Meek et al. 1987), oxazolone (Berek et al. 1985), oligosaccharide (Matsuda and Kabat 1989), bromelain-treated red blood cell (Pennell et al. 1988) and RF-like (Shlomchik et al. 1987c) antibody responses. A more distant V_k10 sequence, with multiple in-frame stop codons, has been observed as a nonfunctional allele of an

NZB myeloma (Kelley et al. 1985), and might correspond to one of the uncloned V_k10 germline genes.

V_k38C *gene family (tentative).* The very similar (97%) sequences encoding the 38C13 lymphoma (Campbell 1987) and the VM113 anti-hemagglutinin hybridoma (Meek et al. 1989) light chains, respectively, were >20% different from all other V_k nucleic acid sequences in the database and, hence, could not be assigned to any V_k gene family; the closest matches (77–78%) were observed with a V_k10 germline gene (Sanz and Capra 1987, Wysocki et al. 1987). At the amino acid level, members of four V_kTrp subgroups (V_k9, V_k10, V_k11, and $V_k12/13$) exhibited equally distant relatedness (nine and more residues difference in the N-terminal 35 amino acids), making unambiguous assignment at the protein level impossible. Whether these sequences were the representatives of a new V_k gene family or corresponded to highly mutated (V_k10) genes remains to be determined.

$V_k24/25$, V_k1, *and* V_k2 *gene families.* The next three families were grouped together based on sequence similarity of up to 78% between $V_k24/25$ members and V_k1 and V_k2 genes, respectively, and because the overall similarity between V_k2 and some V_k1 genes exceeded 80%. The latter observation, i. e., similarity of >80% between some, but not all, members of two gene families, obviously constitutes a problem in this type of V_k gene classification (see below).

$V_k24/25$ *gene family.* Originally, only a single V_k24 germline gene (involved in the phosphocholine response; Malipiero et al. 1987, Gearhart and Bogenhagen 1983) had been reported (Selsing and Storb 1981). Other investigators have cloned this, a related pseudogene, and two additional V_k24 germline genes (Joho et al. 1984). The latter were only about 82–83% similar to the V_k24 prototype and may have encoded *Streptococcus* group A carbohydrate antibody light chains previously assigned to the V_k25 subgroup (Lutz and Davie 1988). Hence, these two V_kTrp subgroups (protein group II) were probably encoded by distant members of a single V_k gene family. In addition to the four cloned $V_k24/25$ germline genes, evidence was obtained for the presence of at least two more germline genes in this family: firstly, RFs from autoimmune and normal mice (Shlomchik et al. 1987a, 1987c) expressed V_k24 genes very similar to each other, but >30 bp different from the closest V_k24 germline gene, suggesting an additional germline gene; secondly, since all cloned $V_k24/25$ genes had 40 codons up to Trp35, the germline gene encoding Hy2.5.13 with 41 N-terminal amino acids (Kabat et al. 1987) has yet to be isolated.

V_k1 *and* V_k2 *gene families.* Protein subgroups V_k1 (already previously condensed with Cys23 subgroups

V_k3 and V_k26; Potter et al. 1982) and V_k2 were encoded by sequences that, using a stringent family definition, precluded classification into either a single, or two distinct, gene families; all V_k1 nucleic acid sequences were >80% similar, yet the three almost identical V_k2 nucleic acid sequences reported (Akolkar et al. 1987, Kofler et al. 1988, Panka et al. 1988) shared up to 81.7% similarity with some, but only about 75% with other, V_k1 members. Moreover, sequence similarity in the 3' portion of several V_k1 and V_k2 genes was around 90%. These two "gene families" were, therefore, partially overlapping. However, for reasons of clarity, we have retained them as separate V_k gene families.

Three V_k1 germline genes (Corbet et al. 1987) and approximately 40 expressed V_k1 sequences have been reported. With the exception of an anti-dextran V_k gene ($W3129$; Borden and Kabat 1987) with >15% differences from any known V_k1 gene, all expressed sequences were highly homologous to one of the above germline genes, suggesting that the total V_k1 germline gene number may not exceed four. A more direct complexity estimate in our previous RFLP analysis was hampered by cross-hybridization of the V_k1 probe to non-V_k1 genes due to >80% sequence similarity in the 3' region of V_k1 and other V_k genes (see below and Kofler et al. 1989). V_k1 genes were used in a variety of responses to foreign and self antigens (reviewed by Schiff et al. 1988, Kofler et al. 1987a). V_k2 germline genes have not yet been reported; the three expressed sequences encoded antibodies to dextran (Akolkar et al. 1987), digoxin (Panka et al. 1988), and DNA (Kofler et al. 1988).

V_k8, V_k22, *and* $V_k19/28$ *gene families.* The following three gene families were separated from each other by >20%, and from all other V_k genes by >25%, overall sequence similarity; however, large portions (codons 35 to 94) of their genes had between 80% and 89% common nucleotides, leading to extensive cross-hybridizations (Kofler et al. 1989).

V_k8 *gene family.* All sequences encoding V_kTrp subgroup V_k8 (protein group I) were around 90% similar and shared up to 78% of their nucleotides with $V_k19/28$ and V_k22 genes. Similarity in codons 35–94 was even higher, reaching 87% with V_k28 genes. The complexity of this gene family was difficult to assess by RFLP analyses due to possible cross-hybridization, however, at least half of the 13–20 fragments hybridizing to a V_k8 probe probably belonged to this large family (Kofler et al. 1989). V_k8 genes encoded antibodies to phosphocholine (Malipiero et al. 1987), dinitrophenyl (Riley et al. 1986), and hen egg lysozyme (Darsley and Rees 1985), as well as RF-like (Shlomchik et al. 1987a, 1987c) and DNA-specific (Eilat et al. 1988) autoantibodies.

V_k22 gene family. The only two, almost identical, V_k22 (protein group I) sequences available for comparison, S107A (Kwan et al. 1981) and HPCA97 (Berek 1984), revealed between 80% and 89% similarity with a large portion (codons 35 to 94) of all $V_k19/28$ genes. The remaining nucleotides were, however, only <70% similar, resulting in an overall similarity of 72%–75%, thus refuting assignment of V_k22 and $V_k19/28$ genes to a common gene family. Similarity with V_k8 genes was in the range of 75%–77% and mismatches were distributed evenly over the entire gene. RFLP analyses suggested one to two V_k22 germline genes; additional weak restriction fragments hybridizing to a V_k22 probe on Southern blots probably corresponded to genes from the $V_k19/28$ and V_k8 families (Kofler et al. 1989). V_k22 genes encoded phosphocholine antibodies (Malipiero et al. 1987).

$V_k19/28$ gene family. Sequences encoding V_kTrp subgroups 19 (comprising V_kCys14 and 15 sequences) and 28 were >80% similar among each other and differed from all other V_k genes (except V_k8 and V_k22, see above) by >25%. Thus, they were combined to a single V_k gene family, which was termed $V_k19/28$. However, this V_k gene family (like some other V_k gene families, see below) behaved atypically in nucleic acid hybridization studies as compared to V_H gene families: different DNA probes

from this family, i. e., a V_k19 and a V_k28 probe, did not hybridize to an identical, but to an overlapping, set of restriction fragments (Kofler et al. 1989). This could be explained by cross-hybridization of the V_k28, but not the V_k19, probe with V_k8 genes.

RFLP data suggested four to six $V_k19/28$ germline genes (Kofler et al. 1989), one of which, a V_k28 germline gene, also known as V_kSer, from haplotypes Igk-VSer[a], Igk-VSer[b], Igk-VSer[c], and Igk-VSer[d], has been cloned (Boyd et al. 1986, Ponath et al. 1989). $V_k19/28$ genes encoded antibodies to trinitrophenyl (Hawley et al. 1982), carcinoembryonic antigen (Cabilly et al. 1984, Beidler et al. 1988), human breast/lung/colon cancer cells (Sahagan 1986), influenza hemagglutinin (Meek et al. 1989), and an RNA-specific (Eilat et al. 1988) and some RF-like autoantibodies (Kofler et al. 1989, Shlomchik et al. 1987a, 1987c).

Relatedness between V_k gene families and implications for nucleic acid hybridization assays with V_k probes

Figure 3 shows the relatedness between different V_k gene families as reflected by overall nucleic acid sequence similarity. A significant difference from V_H gene families was apparent, since the latter are generally more distantly

	Vk21	Vk23	Vk4/5	Vk12/13	VkRF	Vk11	Vk9A	Vk9B	Vk10	Vk38c	Vk24/25	Vk1	Vk2	Vk8	Vk22
Vk23	65-67														
Vk4/5	62-71	61-64													
Vk12/13	62-64	60-62	60-64												
VkRF	63-66	65-67	59-63	67-70											
Vk11	61	63	58-62	69-71	71										
Vk9A	61-67	61-70	63-67	70-71	69-73	69-72									
Vk9B	63-67	61-65	62-67	70-73	71-72	74-76	73-76								
Vk10	57-67	63-66	60-68	65-71	71-73	71-72	74-77	71-75							
Vk38c	60-65	64-65	59-64	66-70	71	69	69-72	73	72-77						
Vk24/25	63-67	59-60	57-65	57-61	60-62	57	58-63	59-61	58-60	58-59					
Vk1	62-68	62-67	58-62	59-61	59-62	57-62	57-64	58-65	57-63	58-61	70-78				
Vk2	63-66	61	56-60	56-58	61	60	59-61	60-63	58-59	57	74-76	73-81			
Vk8	64-70	61-65	62-66	60-63	65-66	61-63	63-65	65	60-61	61-62	62-68	63-69	64-67		
Vk22	64-65	61-62	60-66	58-60	61	58	60-61	60-62	57-59	58	60-63	62-64	63	75-77	
Vk19/28	65-67	62-66	63-70	58-62	62-66	63-65	62-67	65-70	60-66	59-64	58-65	60-66	60-65	72-78	72-75

Fig. 3. Sequence similarity between different V_k gene families; comparison of known germline genes and derivatives of putative germline genes (i. e., sequences differing from known germline genes by >10% and primarily of the IgM isotype). Indicated are the highest and lowest percentages of nucleic acid sequence similarity between members from two families; single percentage resulted from comparisons yielding identical percentages. Shading intensities highlight increased overall similarity between the respective families.

related by sequence similarity. Obviously, if members from different families are only a few percent less similar than those from within a family, cross-hybridizations might occur, particularly if these differences are not evenly distributed over the entire sequence. As described above, large sequence portions with high degrees of similarity were indeed observed in genes from families 8, 22, and 19/28, and thus explain the previously observed cross-hybridizations between those families. Closer scrutiny of the similarities between portions of V_k sequences from different families revealed that the 3' region (particularly codons 57–88, corresponding to frame work region 3) were generally more closely related than the remaining sequence, and this portion might precipitate unexpected cross-hybridizations, even between otherwise distant V_k gene families. For example, V_k10 and V_k9A genes had a 135 bp 3' sequence with 83% similarity, and V_kRF and V_k9B genes shared 84% of 103 nucleotides at the 3' end. As a further complication, different genes from a given family may exhibit more or less cross-hybridizations with genes from other families.

Because of the differences in the organization of V_H and V_k genes, nucleic acid sequence hybridization assays with V_k DNA probes require particular care in the selection of probes and in data interpretation. While in general any member of a V_H gene family used as a probe will recognize its entire family, but will not cross-hybridize with other families, our previous RFLP analyses and the current study strongly suggest that V_k probes may often behave differently. As a rule, probes devoid of the more "promiscuous" 3' sequences will be more specific; however, such probes may not always hybridize to all members of their gene families, and therefore require the use of two or more genes to probe the entire family.

V_k germline gene complexity

Another question addressed in this study regards the total number of V_k genes in the genome of inbred mice. We estimated the complexity of known V_k gene families by using RFLP criteria (Kofler et al. 1989) and by taking into account expressed and germline genes identified for each family. Regarding expressed sequences, we assumed that IgM sequences with >6, and IgG sequences with >30 mismatches from known germline genes may have derived from as yet unknown germline genes. Allelic differences were also considered, however this was a minor concern as the majority of sequences in the database (91/109) derived from the same haplotype (Igk^c).

This approach led to a total of about 70–140 genes (Table 3). Obviously, such estimates need to be taken with caution due to the peculiarities of V_k gene probes discussed above, and to inherent limitations of the RFLP technique (discussed by Kofler et al. 1989). Furthermore,

Table 3. V_k germline gene complexity*

V_k gene family	Germline genes	
	Cloned	Estimated
V_k21	5	6–13
V_k23	1	2–4
$V_k4/5$	14	25–50
$V_k12/13$	2	2–8
V_kRF	–	0–1[†]
V_k11	–	4–6
V_k9A	2	4–9
V_k9B	1	2
V_k10	1	2–3
V_k38C	–	?
$V_k24/25$	4	6
V_k1	3	4–6
V_k2	–	1–6
V_k8	–	5–16
V_k22	–	1–2
$V_k19/28$	–	4–6
Total	35	66–136

* References to cloned V_k germline genes are given throughout the text.
[†] The one-member V_kRF family is deleted in haplotype Igk^f mice (Kofler et al. 1989).

possible additional, as yet uncloned, V_k genes and gene families in the mouse genome have not been included. However, although evidence for some additional V_k genes exists, their number might be limited. For two V_kTrp subgroups, V_k27 (group I) and V_k20 (group VII), nucleic acid sequences have not been identified, but the corresponding V_k gene families may be small since only a single sequence for each subgroup has been reported to date. D'Hoostelaere published another novel V_k gene family ($pC9-26$) with approximately six members as suggested by RFLP analyses (D'Hoostelaere et al. 1988), but whether or not this family related to either of the two subgroups above, or to V_k38C, is unknown. Nevertheless, the large number of responses to foreign and self antigens investigated at the nucleic acid sequence level, and repeated isolation of identical sequences, suggest that the majority of the mouse V_k germline repertoire might now be known.

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