

# Recent Advances in HIV-1 CTL Epitope Characterization

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**Updated November 1999**

Since the last update of the Los Alamos HIV Immunology Database in 1998, the role of CTL in HIV and SIV infection has been further recognized as a beneficial and essential part of the host immune response against these viruses [Schmitz (1999), Brander & Walker(1999)]. As the full picture of the precise role of HIV specific CTL is still emerging, it becomes clear that under certain circumstances these cells are able to contribute significantly to the control of viral replication in infected individuals [Ogg (1998)]. Along with more sophisticated techniques to detect and quantify CTL responses, including ELISPOT and Tetramer methodologies [McMichael & O'Callaghan(1998), Goulder (2000b)], more detailed analyses of the genetic background of infected individuals may provide new insights into HIV pathogenesis [Tang (1999), Carrington (1999)].

The identification of HLA alleles which are associated with more rapid or slower disease progression, may now be linked to the importance and dominance of certain CTL epitopes. It is intriguing that thus far, only HLA-B alleles have been consistently associated with HIV-1 disease progression, which may be due to the relative distance of HLA-A genes to the central part of the MHC region containing HLA class III genes involved in the antigen processing. It is interesting that for some alleles (e.g. HLA-A1) no optimal epitopes have been defined, despite relative high frequencies in diverse populations. The mechanisms for HLA association and disease progression and the pattern of class I alleles that present HIV-derived CTL epitopes, including HLA alleles that are frequent in non-Caucasoid populations, require further investigation and these results will also need to be considered for the design of (epitope based) vaccines.

The current update of the list of optimal CTL epitope has undergone a few improvements:

There are an increased number of epitopes listed and the nomenclature for the HLA alleles has been updated. Accordingly, the order of the epitopes may have changed slightly: e.g. the 'HLA-B62' allele is now listed as HLA-B\*1501. The data for the HLA class I binding motifs have been added for as many HLA alleles as possible and are mainly based on the database by Rammensee and co-workers [Rammensee (1999)].

This year's update has also been modified as more attention was given to epitopes that were contributed by personal communication. The individuals who kindly submitted their unpublished epitopes over the last few years were asked for more detailed titration/truncation data. We have now highlighted with an asterisk (\*) those epitopes contributed as personal communications for which we had a chance to review the titration data. As a consequence of this enhanced scrutiny, a number of epitopes (mainly from our own laboratories) had to be removed from the list of optimal epitopes since the characterization did not fulfill all the stricter inclusion criteria. We would like to define these inclusion criteria still further as: a) detailed HLA restriction, possibly including subtype analysis; and b) titration curves with single amino acid truncated, longer and shorter versions of the epitope. In this regard, we found that titration curves with truncated peptides can easily be performed by ELISPOT, even at low numbers of CTL clones added per well (M. Altfeld, unpublished). In addition, an HLA-B35 restricted epitope in gp120 reported by Shiga *et al.*, [Shiga (1996)], was included without peptide titrations being performed, since it has been used successfully in tetramer staining procedure in later studies [Ogg (1999)].

Some of the newly added epitopes deserve special attention as these are the first ones of a series of epitopes that have been identified in individuals with acute HIV-1 infection (M. Altfeld, unpublished data). These preliminary studies suggest that responses which are immunodominant in acute infection may differ from those seen in chronic infection. These findings will need more confirmation, but may also help to explain the immunodominance of certain epitopes in chronic infection. One possible explanation for these different responses could be that the responses elicited during acute infection are diminished over time (for various reasons, [Brander & Walker(1999)]) and that a new generation of epitopes that may be more resistant to CTL escape remain detectable in chronic infection. In this regard, the clustering of CTL epitopes to certain regions of the HIV genome may need to be revisited and more studies in acute infected individuals may help to complete the picture of the role CTL play in HIV infection.

## Optimal HIV-1 CTL Epitopes

We would like to express our gratitude to the large number of researchers in the field who continuously contribute to this database. We very much welcome any criticism, comments and additions to this list since we are sure that some epitopes will unintentionally escape our attention, despite close monitoring of the literature. Please write or call us with any comments at:

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**Table 1 Best Defined HIV CTL Epitopes**

HLA	Protein	AA	Isolate	Sequence	Reference
A*0201 (A2)				2 6 C	[Falk (1991), Barouch (1995)]
			1° anchor	<b>L</b> <b>L</b>	
				<b>M</b> <b>V</b>	
			2° anchor	V	
	p17	77–85	LAI	SLYNTVATL	[Johnson (1991), Parker (1992), Parker (1994)]
	RT	33–41	LAI	ALVEICTEM	[Haas (1998)], and G. Haas pers. comm.
	RT	346–354	LAI	VIYQYMDDL	[Harrer (1996a)]
	RT	476–484	LAI	ILKEPVHGV	[Walker (1989), Tsomides (1991)]
	gp41	818–827	LAI	SLLNATDIAV	[Dupuis (1995)]
	gp120	311–320	IIIB	RGPGRAFVTI	[Alexander-Miller (1996)]
nef	136–145	LAI	PLTFGWCYKL	[Haas (1996)], and B. Maier, B. Autran pers. comm.	
	180–189	LAI	VLEWRFDSRL	[Haas (1996)], and B. Maier, B. Autran pers. comm.	
A*0202 (A2)				2 C	[Barouch (1995)]
				<b>L</b> <b>L</b>	
				<b>V</b>	
p17	77–85	LAI	SLYNTVATL	P. Goulder, submitted	
A*0301 (A3)				2 C	[DiBrino (1993), Rammensee (1995)]
				<b>L</b> <b>K</b>	
				<b>V</b> <b>Y</b>	
				<b>M</b> <b>F</b>	
	p17	18–26	LAI	KIRLRPGGK	[Harrer (1996b)]
	p17	20–28	LAI	RLRPGGKKK	B. Culmann, D.Lewinsohn, S. Riddell pers. comm., B. Wilkes, D. Ruhl pers. comm. and [Goulder (1997a)]
	p17	20–29	LAI	RLRPGGKKKY	[Goulder (2000c)]
	RT	33–43	LAI	ALVEICTEMEK	[Haas (1998)], and G. Haas pers. comm.
	RT	325–333	LAI	AIFQSSMTK	[Threlkeld (1997)]
	gp120	37–46	LAI	TVYYGVPVWK	[Johnson (1994)]
gp41	775–785	LAI	RLRDLLIVTR	[Takahashi (1991)]	
nef	73–82	LAI	QVPLRPMTYK	[Koenig (1990), Culmann (1991)]	

## Optimal HIV-1 CTL Epitopes

**Table 1 (cont.) Best Defined HIV CTL Epitopes**

HLA	Protein	AA	Isolate	Sequence	Reference
A*1101 (A11)				2 C K	[Zhang (1993), Rammensee (1995)]
				V	
				I	
				F	
				Y	
	p17	84–92	LAI	TLYCVHQRI	[Harrer (1998)]
	p24	349–359	III B	ACQGVGGPGHK	[Sipsas (1997)]
	RT	325–333	LAI	AIFQSSMTK	[Johnson & Walker(1994), Zhang (1993), Threlkeld (1997)]
RT	508–517	LAI	IYQEPFKNLK	B. Culmann pers. comm.	
nef	75–82	LAI	PLRPMTYK	[Culmann (1991)]	
nef	84–92	LAI	AVDLSHFLK	[Culmann (1991)]	
A*2402 (A24)				2 C Y I L F	[Maier (1994)]
	p17	28–36	LAI	KYKCLKHIVW	[Ikeda-Moore (1998)] and D. Lewinsohn pers. comm.
	p24	296–306	HIV-1 clade A	RDYVDRFFKTL	[Dorrell (1999)] and S. Rowland-Jones pers. comm.
	gp120	53–62	LAI	LFCASDAKAY	[Lieberman (1992), Shankar (1996)]
	gp41	591–598	LAI	RYLKDQQLL	[Dai (1992)]
	Nef	138–147	LAI	RYPLTFGW	[Goulder (1997b), Ikeda-Moore (1998)]
A*2501 (A25)	p24	145–155	LAI	QAISPRTLNAW	I. Kurane, K. West, pers. comm.
	p24	203–212	LAI	ETINEEAAEW	[Klenerman (1996), van Baalen (1996)]

**Table 1 (cont.) Best Defined HIV CTL Epitopes**

HLA	Protein	AA	Isolate	Sequence	Reference
A*2601 (A26)				12 6 C V Y T F I L F D I E L V	[Dumrese (1998)]
	p24	167-175	LAI	EVIPMFSAL	[Goulder (1996a)]
A*3002 (A30)				12 C Y Y F L V R	[Rammensee (1999)]
	p17	74-86	LAI	RSLYNTVATLY	P. Goulder et al, submitted
A*3101 (A31)				2 C R L V Y F	[Falk (1994), Rammensee (1999)]
	gp41	775-785	LAI	RLRDLIVTR	[Safrit (1994a), Safrit (1994b)]
A*3201 (A32)	RT	559-568	LAI	PIQKETWETW	[Harrer (1996b)]
	gp120	419-427	HXB2	RIKQIINMW	[Harrer (1996b)]

Optimal HIV-1 CTL Epitopes

**Table 1 (cont.) Best Defined HIV CTL Epitopes**

HLA	Protein	AA	Isolate	Sequence	Reference	
A*6802 (A68)	gp41	782-790	LAI	IVTRIVELL	B. Wilkes pers. comm.*	
	RT	71-79	A/B/D	ITLWQRPLV	S. Rowland-Jones, pers. comm.	
	RT	85-93	Clade D	DTVLEEMNL	S. Rowland-Jones, pers. comm.	
A*7401(A19)	RT	71-79	A/B/D	ITLWQRPLV	S. Rowland-Jones, pers. comm.	
B*0702 (B7)				123 C <b>P L</b> A R R K	[Englehard (1993), Rammensee (1999)]	
	p24	148-156	LAI	SPRTLNAWV	D. Lewinsohn pers. comm.	
	p24	179-187	LAI	TPQDLNTML	[Wilson (1999)], B. Wilkes, D. Ruhl, P. Goulder pers. comm.*	
	gp120	303-312	LAI	RPNNNTRKSI	[Safrit (1994b)]	
	gp41	843-851	LAI	IPRRIRQGL	B. Wilkes, D. Ruhl pers. comm.*	
	nef	68-77	LAI	FPVTPQVPLR	[Haas (1996)], and B. Maier, B. Autran pers. comm.	
	nef	71-79	LAI	TPQVPLRPM	P. Goulder, pers. comm.*	
	nef	77-85	LAI	RPMTYKAAL	[Bauer (1997)]	
	nef	128-137	LAI	TPGPGVRYPL	[Culmann-Penciolelli (1994), Haas (1996)]	
	B*0801 (B8)				23 5 C <b>K K L</b> <b>R</b> PR L	[Hill (1992), Sutton (1993), DiBrino (1994a)]
		p17	24-31	LAI	GGKKKYKL	[Rowland-Jones (1993), Goulder (1997d)]
p17		74-82	LAI	ELRSLYNTV	[Goulder (1997d)]	
p24		260-267	LAI	EIYKRWII	[Sutton (1993), Goulder (1997d)]	
p24		329-337	LAI	DCKTILKAL	[Sutton (1993)]	
gp120		2-10	III B	RVKEKYQHL	[Sipsas (1997)]	
gp41		591-598	LAI	YLKDQQLL	[Johnson (1992), Shankar (1996)]	
RT		185-193	LAI	GPKVKQWPL	[Walker (1989), Sutton (1993)]	
nef		13-20	LAI	WPTVRERM	[Goulder (1997d)]	
nef		90-97	LAI	FLKEKGGL	[Culmann-Penciolelli (1994), Price (1997)]	

**Table 1 (cont.) Best Defined HIV CTL Epitopes**

HLA	Protein	AA	Isolate	Sequence	Reference
B*1402 (B14)				23 5 C R R L K H L Y F	[DiBrino (1994b)]
	p24	298–306	LAI	DRFYKTLRA	[Harrer (1996b)]
	gp41	589–597	LAI	ERYLKDQQL	[Johnson (1992)]
B*1501 (B62)				2 C Q Y L F M	[Barber (1997)] [Barber (1997)] [Barber (1997)]
	p24	267–277	LAI	GLNKIVRMV	[Johnson (1991)], P. Goulder pers. comm.*
	RT	415–426	III B	LVGKLNWASQIY	P. Johnson pers. comm.
	RT	476–485	LAI	ILKEPVHGVY	[Johnson (1991)], and P. Johnson pers. comm.
	nef	117–127	LAI	TQGYFPDWQNY	B. Culmann pers. comm.
B*1516 (B63)				2 9 T Y S I V F	[Barber (1997), Seeger (1998)]
	gp120	379–387	LAI	SFNCGGEFF	[Wilson (1997)], and C. Wilson pers. comm.
B*1801 (B18)	p24	293–302	HIV-1 clade B/D	FRDYVDRFYK	[Ogg (1998)]
	nef	135–143	LAI	YPLTFGWCY	[Culmann (1991), Culmann-Penciolelli (1994)]
B*2703 (B27)	p24	260–269	HIV-2	RRWIQLGLQK	[Rowland-Jones (1998)], and S. Rowland-Jones, pers. comm.

Optimal HIV-1 CTL Epitopes

**Table 1 (cont.) Best Defined HIV CTL Epitopes**

HLA	Protein	AA	Isolate	Sequence	Reference
B*2705 (B27)				12 C R L K K R R G I A	[Jardetzky (1991), Rammensee (1995)]
	p17	19–27	LAI	IRLRPGGKK	[McKinney (1999)], and D. Lewinsohn pers. comm.
	p24	265–274	LAI	KRWIILGLNK	[Nixon (1988), Buseyne (1993), Goulder (1997c)]
	gp41	791–799	LAI	GRRGWEALKY	[Lieberman (1992)], and J. Lieberman pers. comm.
	nef	105–114	LAI	RRQDILDWI	[Goulder (1997a)]
B*3501 (B35)				2 C P Y A F V M S L I	[Hill (1992), Rammensee (1999)]
	p17	36–44	LAI	WASRELERF	[Goulder (1997b)]
	p17	124–132	JH31	NSSKVSQNY	[Rowland-Jones (1995)]
	p24	245–253	HIV-2	NPVPVGNIIY	[Rowland-Jones (1995)]
	p24	254–262	U455	PPIPVGDIY	[Rowland-Jones (1995)]
	RT	262–270	LAI	TVLDVGDAY	B. Wilkes, D. Ruhl pers. comm.*
	RT	273–282	III B	VPLDEDFRKY	[Sipsas (1997), Shiga (1996)]
	RT	328–336	III B	NPDIVIIYQY	[Sipsas (1997), Shiga (1996)]
	RT	342–350	LAI	HPDIVIIYQY	[Rowland-Jones (1995)]
	gp120	42–52	LAI	VPVWKEATTTTL	B. Wilkes, D. Ruhl pers. comm.*
	gp120	77–85	LAI	DPNPQEVVL	[Shiga (1996)]
	gp41	611–619	LAI	TAVPWNASW	[Johnson (1994)]
	nef	74–81	LAI	VPLRPMTY	[Culmann (1991), Culmann-Penciolelli (1994)]



**Table 1 (cont.) Best Defined HIV CTL Epitopes**

HLA	Protein	AA	Isolate	Sequence	Reference
B*3701 (B37)				2 C D F E M L I	[Falk (1993)]
	nef	120–128	LAI	YFPDWQNYT	[Culmann (1991)], and B. Culmann, pers. comm.
B*3901 (B39)				2 C R L H	[Falk (1995a)]
	p24	193–201	LAI	GHQAAMQML	I. Kurane, K. West, pers. comm.
B*4001 (B60)				2 C E L	[Falk (1995b)]
	p17	92–101	LAI	IEIKDTKEAL	A. Trocha and S. Kalams pers. comm.*
	p24	176–184	LAI	SEGATPQDL	A. Trocha and S. Kalams pers. comm.*
	RT	369–377	LAI	IEELRQHLL	P. Goulder, M. Altfeld, pers. comm.*
	gp41	810–819	LAI	QELKNSAVSL	P. Goulder, M. Altfeld, pers. comm.*
	nef	92–101	LAI	KEKGGLEGL	P. Goulder, M. Altfeld, pers. comm.*
B*4201 (B42)	p24	179–187	LAI	TPQDLNTML	P. Goulder et al, submitted
	RT	438–446	LAI	YPGIKVRQL	B. Wilkes, D. Ruhl, pers. comm.*
	nef	128–137	LAI	TPGPGVRYPL	P. Goulder, pers. comm.*
B*4402 (B44)				2 C E F Y	[Rammensee (1999)]
	p24	294–304	HIV-1 clade B	RDYVDRFYKTL	[Ogg (1998)]
	p24	306–316	SF2	AEQASQDVKNW	D. Lewinsohn pers. comm.
	gp120	30–38	SF33	AENLWVTVY	[Borrow (1997)]

Optimal HIV-1 CTL Epitopes

**Table 1 (cont.) Best Defined HIV CTL Epitopes**

HLA	Protein	AA	Isolate	Sequence	Reference
B*5101 (B51)					
				2 C <b>A F</b> <b>P I</b> <b>G</b>	[Falk (1995a)]
	RT	42–50	LAI	EKEGKISKI	[Haas (1998)], and G. Haas pers. comm.
	RT	295–302	III B	TAFTIPSI	[Sipsas (1997)]
	gp41	557–565	III B	RAIEAQQHL	[Sipsas (1997)]
B*5201 (B52)					
				2 C <b>I</b> <b>V</b>	[Rammensee (1999)]
	p24	275–282	LAI	Q RMYSPTSI	B. Wilkes, D. Ruhl, pers. comm.*
B*5301 (B53)					
				2 C <b>P L</b>	[Hill (1992)]
	HIV-2 gag	173–181	HIV-2	TPYDINQML	[Gotch (1993)]
	p24	308–316	LAI	QASQEVKNW	[Buseyne (1997)], and F. Buseyne pers. comm.
B*5501 (B55)					
				2 C <b>P</b> <b>A</b>	[Barber (1995)]
	gp120	42–51	LAI	VPVWKEATTT	[Shankar (1996)], and J. Lieberman pers. comm.

**Table 1 (cont.) Best Defined HIV CTL Epitopes**

HLA	Protein	AA	Isolate	Sequence	Reference
B*5701 (B57)				12 C A F T W S K Y	[Barber (1997)]
	p24	147–155	III B	ISPRTLNAW	[Johnson (1991), Goulder (1996b)]
	p24	162–172	LAI	KAFSPEVIPMF	[Goulder (1996b)]
	p24	240–249	LAI	TSTLQEQIGW	[Goulder (1996b)]
	p24	311–319	LAI	QASQEVKNW	[Goulder (1996b)]
	Pol	888–896	LAI	KTAVQMAVF <sup>†</sup>	C. Hay pers. comm.
	RT	399–407	LAI	IVLPEKDSW <sup>†</sup>	[van der Burg (1997)],C. Hay pers. comm.
	nef	116–125	LAI	HTQGYFPDWQ <sup>†</sup>	[Culmann (1991)]
	nef	120–128	LAI	YFPDWQNYT <sup>†</sup>	[Culmann (1991)]
	B*5703 (B57)	p24	162–172	LAI	KAFSPEVIPMF
p24		162–169	LAI	KAFSPEVI	Goulder et al, submitted
B*5801 (B58)				12 C A F T W S K V I	[Barber (1997), Falk (1995b)]
	p24	240–249	LAI	TSTLQEQIGW	[Goulder (1996b)]
	p24	241–250	LAI	TSTVEEQIQW	[Bertoletti (1998)]
B*8101 (B81)	p24	179–187	LAI	TPQDLNTML	P. Goulder et al, submitted

## Optimal HIV-1 CTL Epitopes

**Table 1 (cont.) Best Defined HIV CTL Epitopes**

HLA	Protein	AA	Isolate	Sequence	Reference
C*0102 (Cw1)				23 C <b>A</b> L L P	[Barber (1997)]
	p24	168–175	LAI	VIPMF <b>S</b> AL	[Goulder (1997b)]
C*0401 (Cw4)				2 6 C <b>Y</b> L <b>P</b> F <b>F</b> M V I L	[Falk (1994)]
	gp120	379–387	LAI	SF <b>N</b> CGGEFF	[Johnson (1993)], Wilson 97
C*0802 (Cw8)	p24	180–188	LAI	TPQDL <b>N</b> TML	[Goulder (2000a)]
	p24	183–191	LAI	DL <b>N</b> TMLNTV	P. Goulder pers. comm.*
	nef	82–91	LAI	KAAVDLS <b>H</b> FL	[Nixon (1999)]

\* indicates personal communications in which truncation/titration data was provided

† subtype of B57 not determined

Primary anchors are bold faced, secondary anchors are not.

The amino acid position numbers were assigned by the authors, and are not always compatible with the HXB2R numbering system used in other parts of this database.

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