Epitopes for Multivalent Vaccines Against *Listeria*, *Mycobacterium* and *Streptococcus* spp: A Novel Role for Glyceraldehyde-3-Phosphate Dehydrogenase

Carmen Alvarez-Dominguez1,2*, David Salcines-Cuevas1, Héctor Teran-Navarro1, Ricardo Calderon-Gonzalez1†, Raquel Tobes3, Isabel García4,6, Santiago Grijalvo4,6, Alberto Paradela7, Asunción Seoane8,9, Felix J. Sangari8,9, Manuel Fresno10,11, Jorge Calvo-Montes12, I. Concepción Pérez Del Molino Bernal12 and Sonsoles Yañez-Diaz1,13,14

The glycolytic enzyme and bacterial virulence factor of *Listeria monocytogenes*, the glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase (GAPDH, Lmo2459), ADP-ribosylated the small GTPase, Rab5a, and blocked phagosome maturation. This inhibitory activity localized within the NAD binding domain of GAPDH at the N-terminal 1–22 peptides, also conferred listeriosis protection when used in dendritic cell-based vaccines. In this study, we explore GAPDH of *Listeria, Mycobacterium*, and *Streptococcus* spp. taxonomic groups to search for epitopes that confer broad protection against pathogenic strains of these bacteria. GAPDH multivalent epitopes are selected if they induce inhibitory actions and wide-ranging immune responses. Proteomic isolation of GAPDH from dendritic cells infected with hypervirulent pathogenic strains of these bacteria. GAPDH multivalent epitopes are selected if they induced similar enzymatic, Rab5a inhibitory and immune stimulation abilities. We identified by bioinformatics and functional analyses GAPDH N-terminal 1–22 peptides from *Listeria*, *Mycobacterium*, and *Streptococcus* that shared 95% sequence homology, enzymatic activity, and B and T cell immune domains. Sera obtained from patients or mice infected with hypervirulent pathogenic *Listeria, Mycobacterium*, or *Streptococcus* presented high levels of anti-GAPDH 1–22 antibodies and Th2 cytokines. Monocyte derived dendritic cells from healthy donors loaded with GAPDH 1–22 peptides from

1 Grupo de Oncología y Nanovacunas, Instituto de Investigación Marqués de Valdecilla, Santander, Spain, 2 Facultad de Educación, Universidad Internacional de La Rioja, Logroño, Spain, 3 Independent Researcher, Granada, Spain, 4 Biomedical Research Networking Center in Bioengineering, Biomaterials and Nanomedicine (CIBER-BBN), Barcelona, Spain, 5 CIC biomaGUNE, Basque Research and Technology Alliance (BRTA), Donostia-San Sebastian, Spain, 6 Department of Surfactants and Nanobiotechnology, Institute for Advanced Chemistry of Catalonia (ICAC-CSIC), Barcelona, Spain, 7 Centro Nacional de Biotecnología, CSIC, Madrid, Spain, 8 Department of Molecular Biology, Instituto de Biomedicina y Biotecnología de Cantabria (IBBTEC, CSIC-Universidad de Cantabria-SODERCAN), Santander, Spain, 9 Faculty of Medicine, Universidad de Cantabria, Santander, Spain, 10 Department of Molecular Biology, DIOMUNE S.L., Madrid, Spain, 11 Centro de Biología Molecular Severo Ochoa, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain, 12 Servicio de Microbiología, Hospital Universitario Marqués de Valdecilla, Santander, Spain, 13 Servicio de Dermatología, Hospital Universitario Marqués de Valdecilla, Santander, Spain, 14 Departamento de Medicina y Cirugía, Facultad de Medicina, Universidad de Cantabria, Santander, Spain

*Correspondence: Carmen Alvarez-Dominguez camren.alvarezd@scsalud.es

†Present address: Ricardo Calderon-Gonzalez, Welcome-Wolfson Institute for Experimental Medicine, Queen’s University Belfast, Belfast, United Kingdom

Specialty section: This article was submitted to Microbes and Innate Immunity, a section of the journal Frontiers in Cellular and Infection Microbiology

Received: 16 June 2020
Accepted: 30 September 2020
Published: 28 October 2020

Citation: Alvarez-Dominguez C, Salcines-Cuevas D, Teran-Navarro H, Calderon-Gonzalez R, Tobes R, Garcia I, Grijalvo S, Paradela A, Seoane A, Sangari FJ, Fresno M, Calvo-Montes J, Pe’ rez Del Molino Bernal IC and Yañez-Diaz S (2020) Epitopes for Multivalent Vaccines Against Listeria, Mycobacterium and Streptococcus spp: A Novel Role for Glyceraldehyde-3-Phosphate Dehydrogenase. Front. Cell. Infect. Microbiol. 10:573348. doi: 10.3389/fcimb.2020.573348
**INTRODUCTION**

Re-emerging pathogens causing severe meningitis in adults belong to the bacterial genus *Listeria*, *Mycobacterium*, and *Streptococcus*. None of them are preventable bacterial pathogens at present since available bovine Calmette–Guerin (BCG) or pneumococcal vaccines are not effective for meningitis in adults. Moreover, they might cause outbreaks or recurrent infections to which the elderly is the population at the highest risk, and the involvement of the central nervous system (CNS) is a factor usually associated with a higher mortality (Pagliano et al., 2017; Marais et al., 2017). Regardless of outbreaks, as the one reported in Spain last summer, caused by *Listeria monocytogenes* (Herrador et al., 2019), listeriosis, tuberculosis, and pneumonia caused by *Streptococcus* are also opportunistic infections in adults with immunocompromised conditions as cancer patients. While research in new vaccines against bacterial pneumonia is a hot topic in European or WHO institutions and tuberculosis vaccines also receive significant efforts worldwide, this is not the case for listeriosis vaccines. In fact, listeriosis arose recently as a re-emerging infectious disease, and only experimental dendritic-based vaccines have been reported, with no development at the clinical practice (Kono et al., 2012; Calderon-Gonzalez et al., 2014; Calderon-Gonzalez et al., 2015; Torres et al., 2016). For this reason, developing vaccines that protect the adults against re-emerging bacterial infections would avoid the high mortality and morbidity they cause, as well as diminish the cost of antibiotics use in our health care systems. In this regard, vaccines for adults should consider several features related with immunosenescence that affect the vaccine responses, like the dysregulation of the innate immune system, T and B cells. The imbalance of the innate immunity implies a decrease in the functionality of antigen presenting cells, phagocytic function, and cell migration capacity of macrophages and dendritic cells (DCs) (Solana et al., 2006). T follicular helper cells required for optimal titers in T dependent vaccines appeared reduced in function and number with aging, and B cells accumulated many defects in the elderly that reduce B cell diversity, while reducing specific antibody levels and increasing the amounts of non-specific antibodies produced with aging (Weinberger, 2018).

Although in recent years, a new concept in vaccinology arose that can be applied in the development of vaccines for adults, cross-immunity that might support the hypothesis that multivalent vaccines protect against a broad-spectrum of bacterial pathogens. Cross-immunity implies that vaccines designed against a pathogen can confer protective immunity against different microorganisms involving innate as well as specific immunity. A putative explanation for cross-immunity regards the innate immune cells such as dendritic cells (DCs) or macrophages that act in a non-specific pattern, drive also specific immunity and serve as multivalent vaccines (Miyasaka, 2020). The search for bacterial epitopes to be included in these multivalent vaccines is currently very active. In this regard, looking for common virulence factors and shared by structural immune domains of several bacterial pathogens might help to discover vaccine candidates.

**Mycobacterium, Listeria, or Streptococcus spp.** belongs to unrelated taxonomic groups but shares virulence factors as well as groups of populations at high risk of infection as mentioned before. Therefore, it will be worthy to prepare multivalent vaccine designs that might confer broad protection against these three bacterial genera. In this regard, the toxins involved in host membrane disruption such as listeriolysin O (LLO) of *Listeria monocytogenes* (LM) (Nguyen et al., 2019), pneumolysin (PLY) of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (SP) (Los et al., 2013) or mycobacteria factors of the ESX-1 secretion system such as ESAT-6, and CFP-10 of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (MTB) (Smith et al., 2008) have similar virulence factors. However, these pore-forming toxins do not share any sequence homology between them, and therefore, they hardly share immunogenic epitopes. However, the glycolytic enzyme, glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase (GAPDH) of the above-mentioned bacterial pathogens can attach to cell surface immune-related proteins (i.e., lactoferrin, fibrinogen, plasmin, or C1q) or intracellular GTPases involved in trafficking (Alvarez-Dominguez et al., 2008; Terrasse et al., 2012; Boradía et al., 2014; Iretón et al., 2014; Malhotra et al., 2017; Moreau et al., 2017; Myllymäki et al., 2017), contributing not only to their virulence but also to the identification of pathogen broad immunogenic epitopes to design multivalent vaccines.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The abilities of bacterial GAPDH from LM, MTB, or SP to bind to cell surface or intracellular proteins predicted they might share binding domains that contribute to virulence and immune responses. We initiated this study with the hypothesis that GAPDH domains that contained inhibitory actions and induced the activation of innate immune cells might contain the epitopes for multivalent vaccines.

**GAPDH of Listeria, Mycobacterium and Streptococcus Are Detected in DCs and Share Binding and Immunogenic Domains**

Since bioinformatic and biochemical approaches revealed that GAPDH from LM and SP contained a nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD)-binding domain with a predicted ADP

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*Listeria, Mycobacterium,* or *Streptococcus* showed activation patterns that correspond to cross-immunity abilities. In summary, GAPDH 1–22 peptides appeared as putative candidates to include in multivalent dendritic based vaccine platforms for *Listeria, Mycobacterium,* or *Streptococcus*.

**Keywords:** adjuvants, glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate-dehydrogenase, listeriosis, pneumonia, tuberculosis, vaccines
riboseylation ability onto Rab5a (Alvarez-Dominguez et al., 2008), here we have extended these analyses to Mycobacterium ssp.

We loaded relevant immune cells to induce cross-immunity as DC with LM, MTB, or SP extracts (300 µg) and explored whether we could isolate bacterial GAPDH from the cells using different procedures to detect proteins sharing the same domains (Table 1 and Figure 1A). In the first approach, we detected NAD-binding proteins by using Blue-sepharose NAD-affinity columns (Table 1, column b) (Alvarez-Dominguez et al., 2008). In the second approach, we isolated Rab5a-binding proteins using GST-Rab5a affinity columns (Table 1, column c). After elution from the two types of affinity columns, elutes were run on 10% SDS-PAGE gels, bands stained with Coomasie dye and cut out with sterile razors. Bands were digested with trypsin, and mass spectrometry was applied to identify the eluted proteins. As it is shown in Figure 1A, LM, MTB, or SP proteins eluted from Rab5a columns matched the molecular weight expected for GAPDH and were shown to correspond exclusively to GAPDH by mass spectrometry (Table 1, column b). However, proteins eluted from Blue-sepharose columns matched with GAPDH and enolase for LM, MTB, and SP, and two additional proteins were also eluted in the case of MTB, the heat-shock protein 70 (Hsp70), and the elongator factor 60 (EF-60) (Table 1, column c).

We next verified that LM, MTB, and SP extracts could ADP-ribosylate Rab5a with a procedure that uses NAD-biotin (Barbieri et al., 2001; Alvarez-Dominguez et al., 2008). As it is shown in Figure 1B, LM, MTB, and SP extracts ADP-ribosylated Rab5a, while an E. coli extract did not. Therefore, GAPDH from MTB and SP shared NAD and Rab5a-binding domains and presented analogous ADP-ribosylating activities, emerging as virulence factors comparable to Lmo2459 from LM.

To validate analogous virulence and immunogenicity of GAPDH, our approach involved infection of DC with pathogenic strains of Listeria, Mycobacterium, and Streptococcus taxonomic groups (100:1 MOI) for 16 h, to apply DC lysates to Rab5a affinity columns. Since Mycobacterium marinum (MM) is a human pathogen used in experimental

**Table 1** | Identification of eluted proteins from affinity columns of Rab5 or Blue-sepharose loaded with bacterial extracts of Listeria, Mycobacterium, and Streptococcus.

| *Bacteria strain* | *Proteins eluted from Rab5a column* | *Proteins eluted from Blue-sepharose column* |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Listeria monocytogenes | GAPDH                              | GAPDH/enolase                             |
| Mycobacterium tuberculosis | GAPDH                            | GAPDH/Hsp70EF-60enolase                   |
| Streptococcus pneumonia | GAPDH                            | GAPDH/enolase                             |

Three hundred µg of DC loaded with bacterial extracts of Listeria, Mycobacterium, or Streptococcus was used to elute and identify GAPDH by different affinity columns. Proteins eluted from a Rab5a-affinity column using GST-Rab5a incubated with lysates of DC loaded with each bacterial extract. *Proteins eluted from Blue-sepharose affinity columns incubated with another set of lysates of DC loaded with each bacterial extract. Elutes of a and b affinity columns were run in 10% SDS-PAGE gels and bands cut off with sterile razors, trypsin digested, and applied to mass spectrometry to identify the proteins.

**Figure 1** | GAPDH of Listeria, Mycobacterium, and Streptococcus are detected in murine bone-marrow DC and shared binding and immunogenic domains. Listeria monocytogenes (LM), Mycobacterium tuberculosis (MTB), Mycobacterium marinum (MM), Streptococcus pneumoniae (SP) (A) GAPDH isolation and proteomic characterization after DC loading with bacterial extracts of LM, MTB, or SP and immunoprecipitation of DC lysates with GST-Rab5a columns. (B) Recombinant Rab5a purified protein was ADP-ribosylated using NAD-biotin in the presence of different bacterial extracts, LM, MTB, SP, or E. coli. ADP-ribosylation was performed using an ADPRT buffer in the presence of cytosolic proteins (30 µg) of bone-marrow DC. ECL was performed with streptavidin-HRP conjugated (1:10,000 dil). (C) DCs were infected with different bacterial pathogens: LM, M. marinum (MM), or SP for 16 h. A set of lysates of infected DC was immunoprecipitated with Blue-sepharose to isolate NAD-binding proteins and another set immunoprecipitated with GST-Rab5a. Both immunoprecipitations were run on SDS-PAGE gels and western-blot developed with a rabbit anti-GAPDH-L1 antibody that recognized the L1 peptide. (D) The same DC infected as in (C) were fixed with p-formaldehyde, stained with rabbit anti-GAPDH-L1 and a goat anti-rabbit-FITC labeled and examined by Confocal microscopy. Scale bars correspond to 1 µm, except second Listeria image that correspond to 3 µm.
models to screen pre-clinical MTB vaccines (Myllymäki et al., 2017), we selected this pathogenic *Mycobacterium* as it requires a more convenient level 2 of biosecurity to handle in the laboratory and animal facilities than the level 3 required by MTB. Clinical isolates of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (SP) were used in all the experiments of this study. As it is shown in Figure 1C, proteins eluted from Rab5a-affinity or Blue-sepharose affinity columns of DC infected with LM, MM or SP contained a single band of ~43 kDa molecular weight by western-blot recognized using a polyclonal anti-GAPDH-L1 antibody developed against L.M. Finally, using this antibody in confocal microscopy at short times of infection, as is 1 h (Figure 1D), we detected LM, MM, or SP bacterial shapes in DC, indicating bacterial GAPDH was a structural protein.

In summary, GAPDH from bacterial extracts of LM (Lmo 2459), MTB, or SP or isolated from DC infected with pathogenic strains of *Listeria*, *Mycobacterium* or *Streptococcus*, shared NAD and Rab5a-binding domains and presented similar ADP-ribosylation enzymatic activities as well as immunogenic domains, revealing as a putative virulence factor to explore for multivalent domains.

**Sequence Homology and ADP-Ribosylating Abilities of Peptides 1–22 of GAPDH in the Genus *Listeria*, *Mycobacterium*, and *Streptococcus***

Next, we searched for GAPDH epitopes that served as multivalent domains in LM, MTB, and SP. As a first approach, we performed a bioinformatics analysis to search for homologies higher than 95% in the three bacterial genus, *Listeria*, *Mycobacterium*, and *Streptococcus* (Figure 2A). Other bacteria genera as *Pseudomonas* or *Staphylococcus* spp. with reported ADP-ribosylating enzymes (Barbieri et al., 2001; Myllymäki et al., 2017) presented lower GAPDH sequence homologies, varying from 60 to 85%, respectively (Figure 2A). In fact, sequence homology in the genera of *Listeria*, *Mycobacterium*, and *Streptococcus* increased to 99% in the first 15 amino acids of N-terminus. The difference between GAPDH of *Listeria* and *Streptococcus* consisted in a T residue (threonine) in position 2 of *Listeria*, aligned with a V residue (valine) in *Streptococcus*. Meanwhile, the difference between *Listeria* and *Mycobacterium* pathogenic strains was a K (lysine) residue in position 4 of *Listeria*, aligned with an R (arginine) residue in *Mycobacterium*, being K and R residues with similar cationic properties. These sequence homologies anticipated the common enzymatic activities as well as structural domains described with their bacterial extracts (Figures 1B–D). SWISS-MODEL server and the available crystal structures allowed comparison of the three dimensional predictions of GAPDH-LM (A0A121XBE7_LISMN, https://swissmodel.expasy.org/repository/uniprot/A0A121XBE7), GAPDH-MTB (A0A045ITJ4_MYCTX, https://swissmodel.expasy.org/repository/uniprot/A0A045ITJ4) and GAPDH-Streptococcus pyogenes (GAPDH-SPY) (P0C0G6, G3P_STRPY, https://swissmodel.expasy.org/repository/uniprot/P0C0G6) (Figure 2B images), predicted that the NAD-interacting residues of the Rossman-fold domains, localized in the first 22 amino acids (underlined amino acids in Figure 2B, containing a β-strand (residues 3–9) and a α-helix with amphipathic structures (residues 11–22) (blue structures in images of Figure 2B). InterPro alignments of GAPDH-LM, GAPDH-MTB, and GAPDH-SP confirmed they all presented NAD-binding domains at the N-terminus, necessary for ADP-ribosylation, and G3P-dehydrogenase catalytic domains at the C-terminus (Supplemental Figure S1A). In fact, we verified with highly purified 1–22 peptides of GAPDH-LM (L1), GAPDH-MTB (M1), or GAPDH-SP (S1), the ADP ribosylated Rab5a, as previously reported for L1 peptide (Alvarez-Dominguez et al., 2008) and comparable to ADP-ribosylating levels of recombinant Lmo2459 (Figure 2C). We limited the minimal enzymatic activity of peptide 1–22 of GAPDH-LM, GAPDH-MTB, and GAPDH-SP to a shorter peptide 1–15 with higher 99% sequence homology (Figure 2A), that ADP-ribosylated Rab5a similarly to longer 1–22 peptides L1, M1, and S1 peptides (L1, M1, S1 bands in Figure 2C).

**Immune Responses Elicited by Peptides of GAPDH-LM, GAPDH-MTB, and GAPDH-SP**

To predict the minimal epitope requirements to prepare a DC vaccine that elicited T cell responses, we restricted our analysis to the 1–15 peptide of GAPDH sequences from LM, MTB, and SP as they shared 99% sequence homology (Figure 3A). Next, we used the IDEB Consensus tool bioinformatics approach to predict GAPDH binding to MHC molecules. IEDB analysis envisaged that percentile ranks <10 corresponded to good MHC class I binders, while percentile ranks <100 are weak binders. In this regard, percentile thresholds <50 correspond to good MHC class II binders, while thresholds <500 are intermediate binders (Nielsen et al., 2003; Peters and Sette, 2005; Sidney et al., 2008; Lundegaard et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2012; Calderon-Gonzalez et al., 2015; Rack et al., 2015; Stephenson et al., 2015; Andreatta and Nielsen, 2016). In this regard, GAPDH 1–15 sequences contained two epitopes predicted as good binders for Kb and Db MHC class I molecules, 5–13 and 4–13 amino acids, respectively, and one epitope predicted as intermediate binder for IAb MHC class II molecules, 4–15 amino acids (table with peptide MHC binding sequences in Figure 3A). Moreover, these GAPDH 4–15 epitopes and predicted binders for MHC molecules are similar in LM, MTB, and SP sequences. The theoretical 3D model revealed that GAPDH 4–15 epitopes included one tight loop and one α-helix, 3D structures characteristic of MHC class I and II epitopes, respectively (image on the right showing 4–15 amino acids in blue, Figure 3A). We verified these binding predictions in DC infected with either LM, MM, or SP after immunoprecipitation of MHC class II molecules with a monoclonal anti-MHC class II antibody (clone Y3P that recognized IAb in C57BL/6 mice) and western-blot analysis with anti-GAPDH-L1 antibody (Figure 3B). GAPDH 1–22 peptides from LM, MM, and SP were detected on stable and unstable forms of immunoprecipitated MHC class II molecules, indicating that *in vivo* generated GAPDH immunogenic
epitopes are capable to bind to MHC molecules and predict GAPDH antigen presentation and induction of immune responses.

In fact, we confirmed that GAPDH 1–15 and 1–22 peptides from LM, MM, and SP elicited efficient T cell responses after immunizing mice with LM, MM, or SP (model in Supplemental Figure S1B, approach 1). Next, we loaded DC with the following peptides from LM, MM or SP sequences of GAPDH: L1, L1–15, M1, L1–15, M1–15, S1 or S1–15. Peptide loaded DCs were inoculated into the hind foot pads of C57BL/6 mice (10⁶ cells/foot pad) together with adjuvant DIO-1 (2 µg/ml) to collect popliteal lymph nodes. DIO-1 is an adjuvant that binds to TLR2/4 molecules (Guisasola and Escudero, 2016). We re-stimulated homogenates of popliteal lymph nodes in vitro with different concentrations of peptides, from 0.05 to 50 µM (L1, L1–15, M1, M1–15, S1 or S1–15), a negative control of GAPDH-LM 23–42 peptides. L1–15 and L1 showed the highest levels of ADP-ribosylation, while M1–15 and S1–15 show significant ADP-ribosylation abilities but slightly lower.

FIGURE 2 | Sequence homology and ADP-ribosylating abilities of peptides 1–22 of GAPDH in the genus Listeria, Mycobacterium, and Streptococcus. (A) Alignments of bacterial GAPDH protein sequences of NAD-binding domains with sequence homologies higher that 90% and compared to GAPDH-Listeria. Alignments are performed using MPsrch, a comparison tool implementing the true Smith and Waterman algorithm. The protein sequences of pathogenic strains of Mycobacterium genus are shown in red, in pink of Streptococcus genus and in blue of Staphylococcus genus. The NAD-interacting residues are underlined in all bacteria sequences. (B) 3D predictions of GAPDH-Listeria, GAPDH-Mycobacterium, and GAPDH-Streptococcus using the SWISS-MODEL server and the available crystal structures of GAPDH-LM (A0A121XBE7_LISMN), GAPDH-MTB (A0A045ITJ4_MYCTX), and GAPDH-SP (PO006, G3P_STRPY); region in blue of lower images corresponds to the first 22 amino acids of the protein and contained a β-strand and an α-helix structure. (C) ADP-ribosylation of recombinant Rab5a using peptides with different lengths such as peptides L1–15, M1–15, S1–15, L1, M1, S1 or L2, a negative control of GAPDH-LM 23–42 peptides. L1–15 and L1 showed the highest levels of ADP-ribosylation, while M1–15 and S1–15 show significant ADP-ribosylation abilities but slightly lower.
responses similar to LLO, but lower than T cell responses of 1–22 peptides (L1, M1 or S1). We concluded that both 1–22 and 1–15 peptides elicited T cell immune responses in the same range or higher than the highly immunogenic bacterial protein, LLO.

**Significance of Two Biomarkers as Tools to Design Clinical Multivalent Vaccines Against Listeriosis, Tuberculosis, and Pneumonia Caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae***

To verify the significance of our hypothesis that GAPDH was a virulence factor common to LM, MTB, and SP infections that presented multivalent epitopes, we collected sera and clinical isolates of patients with listeriosis, tuberculosis, or pneumonia caused by SP, selected from a 2014–2018 study in our institution (Department of Microbiology, HUMV) (patients with asterisks in Supplemental Table S1). Sera of patients infected with hypervirulent strains of listeriosis, tuberculosis or *Streptococcus pneumoniae* presented high levels of anti-GAPDH-L1 antibodies, OD ≥ 2.0 (Table 2, column c). We also checked for cytokines in sera of patients and detected threefold higher levels of IL-6 and IL-10, classical Th2 cytokines compared to controls (Table 2, column d).

Next, we confirmed the hypervirulence of selected clinical isolates of LM, MM, or SP after inoculation of C57BL/6 mice intravenously (*i.v.*) with 10⁴ CFU (Table 3). Fourteen days later, we recovered sera and spleens and examined the levels of anti-GAPDH-L1 antibodies using the ELISA-peptide previously described (Calderon-Gonzalez et al., 2016a; Calderon-Gonzalez et al., 2016b) (*model shown in Supplemental Figure S1B, approach 1*). Several non-pathogenic strains of each pathogen were also included as controls, a listeriolysin deficient mutant of LM (LM-ALLO), a non-pathogenic strain of mycobacteria (*M. smegmatis*), and a vaccine strain of SP (ATCC 49619-19F). All non-pathogenic strains presented low levels of anti-GAPDH-L1 antibodies (OD ≤ 0.5) (Table 3, column d). Also, non-pathogenic bacteria did not induce higher levels of Th1 or Th2 cytokines (Table 3, column e), while sera of mice infected with hypervirulent strains presented high levels of Th2 cytokines, IL-6 and IL-10. Hypervirulent clinical isolates of LM, MTB, or SP

![Image](80x285 to 257x580)

**TABLE 2 | Clinical data of patients infected with hypervirulent LM, MTB, and SP.**

| Strain code(PATIENTS) | Anti-GAPDH-L1 antibodies | CYTOKINES |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
|                        |                           | IFN | IL-6 | IL-10 |
| *HUMV-LM01*            | 2.4 ± 0.1                 | 5 ± 0.2 | 10 ± 0.1 | 6 ± 0.1 |
| *HUMV-MTB01*           | 2.2 ± 0.2                 | 4 ± 0.1 | 7 ± 0.1 | 5 ± 0.1 |
| *HUMV-SP01*            | 1.9 ± 0.1                 | 4 ± 0.2 | 9 ± 0.1 | 5 ± 0.1 |
| *NI-control*           | 0.13 ± 0.1                | 2 ± 0.1 | 3 ± 0.1 | 2 ± 0.1 |

*Clinical isolates from patients at HUMV (Microbiology Dpt.) selected from a 2014 to 2019 study as hypervirulent strains (complete study in Supplemental File). Control data correspond to adult healthy donors at HUMV and non-infected. Sera from patients selected (HUMV-LM01, HUMV-MTB01, and HUMV-SP01) were examined for anti-GAPDH-L1 antibodies by a peptide ELISA. Results are presented as the mean ± SD of OD units in triplicate measurements (P < 0.05). Cytokine concentrations were analyzed in sera of patients by flow cytometry (pg/ml). Results are expressed as the mean ± SD concentrations (pg/ml) of three different experiments. ANOVA was applied to flow cytometry results and a Student’s t test to ELISA analysis.
showed at least 100-fold higher CFU numbers than non-pathogenic bacterial strains (Table 3, column f) and high levels of anti-GAPDH-L1 antibodies (OD ≥ 0.65) (Table 3, column d). These results validated the correlation between the levels of anti-GAPDH-L1 antibodies and bacterial virulence. We repeated all these ELISA-peptide experiments for detection of antibodies to peptides M1 and S1 and confirmed all hypervirulent strains produced high levels of anti-GAPDH antibodies (data not shown). We also confirmed specific T cell responses to L1 peptide in spleen homogenates of mice, evaluating the percentages of CD4+ and CD8+ cells stimulated with L1 peptide. As it is shown in Table 3 (column g), spleen homogenates of mice inoculated with pathogenic bacteria and next stimulated in vitro with L1 peptide showed percentages of T cells in ranges of 14% for CD4+ and 17% for CD8+ positive cells that were much larger than percentages detected in controls with less virulent or non-pathogenic strains, 8% for CD4+ T cells or 3% for CD8+ T cells. These results revealed that titters of anti-L1 (anti-M1 and anti-S1) antibodies were valid biomarkers to detect high immune responders among patients with listeriosis (Calderon-Gonzalez et al., 2017), tuberculosis, or pneumonia caused by SP and therefore, valid epitopes to incorporate into multivalent vaccines.

The other parameters of interest to design multivalent vaccines correspond with the ability of epitopes to induced cross-immunity (Miyasaka, 2020). To search for cross-immune epitopes in GAPDH from LM, MTB, and SP, we selected monocore derived DC (MoDC) of healthy donors as DCs are relevant antigen presenting cells to drive cross-immunity. Next, we performed a classical DC activation analysis that checked the activation markers and cytokine production of MoDC as described (Calderon-Gonzalez et al., 2016a; Calderon-Gonzalez et al., 2017) (model described in Supplemental Figure S1B, approach 2). Cross immune epitopes might activate DC to produce Th1 cytokine patterns (Miyasaka, 2020). We used LPS (10 ng/ml) as a positive control of general activation of DC, inducing Th1 and Th2 cytokines. After 16 h of MoDC incubation with peptides, L1, M1, or S1, we explored the cell surface markers and cytokine production in supernatants. Cell surface markers confirmed that MoDC treated with L1, M1, or S1 peptides presented the following phenotype: 90% of CD45+HLA-DR+CD80+CD86+CD14+ positive cells, while LPS treated MoDC presented 90% of CD45+HLA-DR+CD80+CD86+CD14+ positive cells. These results indicated that these GAPDH peptides induced a MoDC activated phenotype. Cytokine analysis in MoDC supernatants detected high levels of MCP-1, TNF-α, IFN-α, and IL-12 after incubation with L1, M1, or S1 peptides, a classical Th1 cytokine pattern (Figure 3D). Incubation with LPS also induced Th2 cytokines, IL-6, and IL-10. These results revealed that induction of Th1 cytokines by MoDC was a valid biomarker to detect bacterial epitopes that induced TI.

CONCLUSIONS

GAPDH from LM, MTB, and SP emerged as a common virulence factor that contained 1–15 and 1–22 amino acid epitopes able to act with analogous enzymatic activities, MHC binding properties and induced B and T cell immune responses, with broad and specific capacities. These GAPDH 1–22 epitopes (L1, M1, or S1 peptides) induced Th1 activation of DC, a relevant biomarker of bacterial TI-epitopes. Moreover, antibody titers against GAPDH 1–22 epitopes in patients with listeriosis, tuberculosis, or pneumonia are good biomarkers to select patients infected with hypervirulent strains but high T cell responders, putative candidates to explore the efficiency of DC or multivalent vaccines.

Vaccination is the best tool to prevent infections with re-emerging pathogens as Listeria monocytogenes, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, or Streptococcus pneumoniae, that together with respiratory virus as Influenza or SARS or SARS-COV-2 coronavirus, cause severe infections in the elderly and adults with immunosuppressive conditions. Therefore, deciphering epitopes with broad but specific action as well as broad
virulence activity appears as the first approach for DC and multivalent vaccine designs.

**DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

**ETHICS STATEMENT**

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by Ethical Committee of Clinical Research of Cantabria at Instituto de Investigación Marqués de Valdecilla (Santander, Spain), with the reference number 2014.228. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study. The animal study was reviewed and approved by Ethical Committee of Animal Experiments of the University of Cantabria ( Permit Number: PI-01-17).

**AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

CA-D, DS-C, HT-N, and RC-G performed the experiments. RT performed the bioinformatic binding predictions. IG and SG helped with the chemical ADP-ribosylating assays and bioinformatic analyses. AP performed the proteomics assays of gel bands and the identification using mass spectrometry. AS provided M. smegmatis. FJS and AS helped with the mycobacteria assays as they are experts on mycobacteria handling in mice. MF synthesized the DOI-1 adjuvant, helped with the immune assays, provide funding for several and experiments, and help to design the hypothesis of the study. JC-M and CP provided with the bacterial clinical isolates from patients with listeriosis, tuberculosis and SP pneumonia and helped with the bacterial analyses. SY-D provided with M. marinum clinical isolate from patients. CA-D directed the study and designed the experiments. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

**FUNDING**

This research was funded by the CICYT program of the Ministry of Science and Innovation, grant number SAF2012-34203, the Instituto de Salud Carlos III (ISICH) grant numbers, DTS18-00022 and PI19-01580 to CA-D, the intramural CIBER-BNN grant number, CIB16-NM009 to IG and CA-D, to the Bio-health Research Program of Cantabria Government, grant number INNVAL19/26 to SY-D, CM, and CA-D; SAF2016-75988-R “Comunidad de Madrid (S2017/BMD-3671. INFLAMUNE-CM) and Fondo de Investigaciones Sanitarias” (BIOIMID) to MF and a Predoctoral contract to DS-C by Bio-health research program of Cantabria government. This study was co-funded in part with European FEDER funds, “A new way of making Europe” as well as funds from the COST European action ENOVA.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

We acknowledge Carmen Punzon (Diomune, S.L, Centro de Biología Molecular Severo Ochoa, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain) that kindly synthesize DIO-1 adjuvant, the facilities of the Centro de Biología Molecular Severo Ochoa to perform most of the experiments, and the Health Processes area of the Faculty of Education (Universidad Internacional de La Rioja, Logroño, Spain) for support.

**SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL**

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcimb.2020.573348/full#supplementary-material

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