

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Influenza Disease</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1.1 Origin and Evolution of Influenza	2
1.1.2 Seasonal Influenza Epidemics	3
1.1.3 Economic Burden of Influenza Disease	4
1.1.4 Diagnosis, Symptoms, Transmission, and Risk Groups	5
<b>1.2 Influenza Virus</b>	<b>9</b>
1.2.1 Influenza A Virus: Genome and Virion Structure	11
1.2.2 Cycle of Infection	15
1.2.3 Influenza A Virus Classification	17
1.2.4 Antigenic Change	19
<b>1.3 Prophylactic and Therapeutic Approaches against Influenza Disease</b>	<b>22</b>
1.3.1 Prevention: Vaccines	22
1.3.2 Antiviral Treatments	24
1.3.3 Novel Anti-Influenza Compounds	27
<b>1.4 Immunity Response to Influenza Virus Infections</b>	<b>30</b>
1.4.1 Innate Immune Response to IAV Infections	30
1.4.2 Adaptative Immune Response to IAV Infections	32
<b>1.5 Asymptomatic Individuals</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>1.6 Antimicrobial Peptides</b>	<b>37</b>
1.6.1 Human Antimicrobial Peptides Against Influenza Viruses	39
1.6.2 Other AVPs Against Influenza Viruses	42
<b>1.7 Search for AVPs in Individuals Asymptomatic to Influenza Infections</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>1.8 Dermcidin</b>	<b>49</b>
1.8.1 Dermcidin Coding Gene and Processing	49
1.8.2 Localization, Expression, and Functions	52
<b>2. RATIONALE OF THIS THESIS</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>3. HYPOTHESIS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>4. MATERIALS AND METHODS</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>4.1 Materials</b>	<b>57</b>
4.1.1 Reagents and Kits	57
4.1.2 Solutions and Buffers	58
4.1.3 Peptides	59
4.1.4 Cell Lines and Culture Conditions	60
4.1.5 Viral Antigens, Lysates, and Infectious Virus Strains	61
4.1.6 Human Samples: Donor Selection and Sampling	62
4.1.7 Animal Model	63
<b>4.2 Methods</b>	<b>64</b>
4.2.1 Influenza A Virus Adaptation to Cell Culture and Propagation	64
4.2.2 Hemagglutination Inhibition Assay (HAI)	64
4.2.3 Plaque Inhibition Assay	66
4.2.4 Dermcidin-Virus Affinity Studies	67
4.2.5 Protein-Protein Interaction and Molecular Dynamics Simulations	70

4.2.6	Analysis of Viral Hemagglutinin Mutations _____	71
4.2.7	Cytotoxicity _____	71
4.2.8	ELISA for Dermcidin Quantification _____	72
4.2.9	DNA Library Preparation and Sequencing _____	72
4.2.10	Bioinformatic Analysis of the Genetic Variants _____	73
4.2.11	<i>In vivo</i> Tolerability Study _____	73
4.2.12	<i>In vivo</i> Persistence Study _____	73
4.2.13	<i>In vivo</i> Efficacy Study _____	74
4.2.14	Microneutralization Assay _____	74
4.2.15	Statistical Analysis _____	75
<b>5.</b>	<b>RESULTS _____</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Study of the Antiviral Activity of Dermcidin against Influenza Virus _____</b>	<b>76</b>
5.1.1	Antiviral Activity of Dermcidin and its Derived Peptides against the Influenza A Virus _____	76
5.1.2	Antiviral Activity of Dermcidin against the Influenza A Virus in Cell Culture _____	82
5.1.3	Conclusions of This Section _____	84
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Characterization of the Antiviral Mechanism of Action of Dermcidin _____</b>	<b>85</b>
5.2.1	Dermcidin Binding Site Identification _____	85
5.2.2	Comparative Study of the HA Sequences from the Influenza Strains _____	87
5.2.3	Characterization of the Interaction between Dermcidin and Viral HA _____	92
5.2.4	Antiviral Activity of Dermcidin and its Derived Peptide DCD against Other Respiratory Viruses _____	96
5.2.5	Conclusions of This Section _____	97
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Dermcidin Production in Human Samples _____</b>	<b>99</b>
5.3.1	Comparative Study of the <i>DCD</i> Gene between Susceptible and Asymptomatic Individuals _____	99
5.3.2	Dermcidin Production in the Main Entry Routes of Respiratory Viruses _____	101
5.3.3	Differential Levels of Dermcidin between Susceptible and Asymptomatic Individuals in Healthy Status _____	103
5.3.4	Dermcidin Production during Viral Respiratory Infections _____	104
5.3.5	Conclusions of This Section _____	107
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Dermcidin as an Antiviral Drug in an Animal Model _____</b>	<b>108</b>
5.4.1	Cytotoxicity Study of DCD-1L _____	108
5.4.2	Tolerability Study of DCD-1L in a Mouse Model _____	110
5.4.3	Biodistribution Study of DCD-1L in Mouse _____	112
5.4.4	Efficacy Study of DCD-1L Treatment for Influenza Infections in Mice _____	114
5.4.5	Conclusions of This Section _____	120
<b>6.</b>	<b>GENERAL DISCUSSION _____</b>	<b>121</b>
6.1	Future Prospects _____	130
<b>7.</b>	<b>FINAL CONCLUSIONS _____</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>CONFLICT OF INTEREST _____</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>REFERENCES _____</b>	<b>136</b>