

**Investigating the Role of Interferon-Inducible
Transmembrane 3 (IFITM3) in Infection.**

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Abstract

My thesis focuses on the interaction between interferon-inducible transmembrane 3 (IFITM3) and influenza viruses. IFITM3 confers cells *in vitro* with resistance to multiple pathogenic viruses, including influenza, dengue and West Nile virus amongst others (Brass *et al.* 2009; Huang *et al.* 2011). Although the current mechanism of restriction is unknown, it is thought that aggregation of IFITM3 within the late endosomes prevents the membrane fusion necessary for the release of viral nucleic acids and proteins into the cells' cytoplasm (Feeley *et al.* 2011; John *et al.* 2013).

My thesis aims to further understanding of IFITM3 through the use of a knockout mouse model with an ablation of the *Ifitm3* allele (*Ifitm3*^{-/-}). Challenge of the mouse with sub-lethal doses of influenza A virus showed that the loss of *Ifitm3* resulted in heightened susceptibility to the virus, which resulted in accelerated weight loss, fulminant viral pneumonia, a persistent viral burden and ultimately death. These phenotypic effects are more commonly associated with infections using highly pathogenic 1918 'Spanish' influenza and avian H5N1 influenza viruses.

These findings were taken further by analysing the prevalence of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) in the *IFITM3* locus of humans hospitalised during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic. Through international collaboration, SNP rs12252-C, which is thought to be associated with sub-optimal IFITM functioning, was identified as being over-represented in these patients. Typically, 0.3% of the European Caucasian population are homozygous for the rs12252-C allele; however, the study showed that in patients hospitalised with influenza virus this proportion increased to 5.7%: a significant enrichment.

Furthering this observation, the thesis also investigates the effects and interactions of IFITM3 on medically-relevant treatments. Primarily, studies were employed to test the safety and efficacy of live attenuated influenza virus vaccines in *Ifitm3*^{-/-} mice to assess the potential for vaccine-associated morbidity in individuals possessing sub-optimally functioning IFITM3, and if protection is elicited against subsequent infection. This showed the vaccine was safe in these mice, and induced a normal, robust immune response that protected mice from a lethal challenge with pandemic H1N1 influenza virus. Furthermore, the mouse model was employed to assess the

effects of AmBisome, a commonly used antifungal agent, on Ifitm3 function, as it had been shown to cause a bypass of IFITM3-based restriction *in vitro*. The wild type mice treated with AmBisome prior to, and during, influenza virus infection show weight loss and morbidity similar to *Ifitm3*^{-/-} mice; suggesting that AmBisome may heighten viral susceptibility in patients treated with this drug.

The thesis concludes with a meta-analysis investigating the *in vivo* effects of Ifitm3 in restricting a range of bacterial, viral and protozoan pathogens. This demonstrates the specificity of Ifitm3 for restricting only specific viral pathogens, despite the fact that a variety of pathogens utilise the endosomal pathway for entry into cells.

In conclusion, the thesis furthers our knowledge of IFITM3 by showing for the first time its *in vivo* effects on viral restriction and the criticality of IFITM3 in preventing the morbidity and mortality associated with influenza viruses.

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Here's to the next step and whatever that may bring...

Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

Dr. S. Clare from the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute assisted the author in all live animal work and conducted all inoculations, immunisations and animal procedures during the course of experiments. Dr. A.L. Brass gave guidance and practical help with *in vitro* MEF transductions and infections, immunofluorescence imaging of *in vitro* influenza infections, and in RNA immunohistochemistry of tissue sections whilst I was part of his lab at the Ragon Institute, USA. Dr. D. Goulding performed the GMA-embedded protein immunohistochemistry.

All other protocols relating to influenza challenge, including *in vitro* and *ex vivo* work, were conducted by the author.

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Table of contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	4
Declaration	5
Table of contents	6
List of tables	14
List of figures	15
Abbreviations	21
1 Introduction	23
1.1 Influenza virus	23
1.1.1 General features	23
1.1.2 The influenza replication cycle	25
1.1.3 Influenza mutation & variation	27
1.1.3.1 Antigenic drift	28
1.1.3.2 Antigenic shift	29
1.1.3.3 Virus adaptation mutations	31
1.2 Twentieth century influenza pandemics	32
1.2.1 1918 ‘Spanish’ influenza	33
1.2.2 Influenza pandemics 1957-1977	34
1.2.2.1 1957: the ‘Asian Influenza’ pandemic	35
1.2.2.2 1968: the ‘Hong Kong Influenza’ pandemic	35
1.2.2.3 1976/77: The ‘Fort Dix’ virus and ‘Russian’ influenza pseudo-pandemics	36
1.2.3 The threat of an avian influenza pandemic	36
1.3 The 2009 H1N1 pandemic	38

1.3.1	Origins.....	38
1.3.2	Epidemiology.....	39
1.3.3	Morbidity & mortality profile.....	40
1.4	Host-Virus Interactions	43
1.4.1	The innate response to influenza virus.....	45
1.4.1.1	Intrinsic antiviral responses.....	46
1.4.1.1.1	The IFITM family.....	48
1.4.1.1.2	MxA / Mx1	52
1.4.1.1.3	The IFIT family	53
1.4.1.2	Cell-autonomous responses.....	54
1.4.1.2.1	ISGs against influenza: pre-translation.....	58
1.4.1.2.2	ISGs against influenza: post-translation.....	60
1.4.1.3	Leukocyte responses to influenza.....	61
1.4.1.3.1	Mast cells.....	62
1.4.1.3.2	Macrophages.....	63
1.4.1.3.3	Neutrophils	64
1.4.1.3.4	Natural killer cells	66
1.4.1.3.5	Dendritic cells.....	67
1.4.2	The adaptive response to influenza virus.....	69
1.4.2.1	MHC and antigen presentation	70
1.4.2.2	B-cell response (humoral immunity).....	72
1.4.2.3	Cytotoxic T-cell response (cell-mediated immunity).....	73
1.4.3	Viral antagonism of the immune response.....	74
1.4.4	Pathogenesis of influenza	76
1.4.4.1	Mild clinical symptoms of influenza virus infection in humans	78

1.4.4.2	Severe clinical symptoms of influenza virus infection in humans	79
1.4.5	Influenza vaccinology	80
1.4.5.1	Intramuscular, inactivated vaccine	80
1.4.5.2	Live attenuated vaccines	81
1.5	Mouse models of influenza virus infection	82
1.5.1	The influence of mouse background	83
1.5.2	A “typical” phenotypic response	85
1.5.3	The influence of influenza strain on murine pathology	86
1.5.4	The use of knockout mouse models for studying the host immune response	87
1.6	Hypothesis	90
1.7	Thesis aims	90
2	Materials and Methods	92
2.1	Materials	92
2.1.1	Media	92
2.1.2	Cell lines	92
2.1.3	Viruses	93
2.1.4	Oligonucleotide primers	93
2.1.5	Antibodies for flow cytometry	94
2.1.6	Silencing RNAs (siRNA)	94
2.1.7	Mice	94
2.2	Methods	95
2.2.1	Animal methods	95
2.2.1.1	Mouse infection	95
2.2.1.2	Titration of virus in mice	95
2.2.1.3	Mouse vaccination	96

2.2.1.3	Anti-fungal treatment	96
2.2.1.4	Bone marrow transfer	96
2.2.2	Tissue processing	97
2.2.2.1	Division of the respiratory system	97
2.2.2.2	Flow cytometry preparation	97
2.2.2.3	Viral load preparation	98
2.2.2.4	RNA extraction preparation	98
2.2.2.5	Protein extraction preparation	98
2.2.3	Replicating virus quantification	98
2.2.3.1	Plaque assay	98
2.2.3.2	Tissue culture infective dose (TCID ₅₀)	99
2.2.4	Molecular methods	100
2.2.4.1	Nucleic acid extraction	100
2.2.4.1.1	DNA extraction	100
2.2.4.1.2	RNA extraction	100
2.2.4.2	Polymerase chain reaction (PCR)	100
2.2.4.3	Real time quantitative polymerase chain reaction (RT-qPCR)	100
2.2.4.4	Agarose gel electrophoresis	101
2.2.5	Cellular methods	102
2.2.5.1	Flow cytometry	102
2.2.5.2	Murine embryonic fibroblasts (MEFs)	102
2.2.5.2.1	Generation	102
2.2.5.2.2	Transfection and transduction	103
2.2.5.3	RNA interference (RNAi)	103
2.2.5.4	In vitro infection assays	103

2.2.5.4.1	RNAi studies.....	103
2.2.5.4.2	LCL infections.....	104
2.2.5.4.3	MEF infections.....	104
2.2.6	Tissue analysis.....	104
2.2.6.1	Peripheral leukocytes.....	104
2.2.6.2	Histology.....	105
2.2.6.2.1	Pathology scoring.....	105
2.2.6.2.2	Protein immunohistochemistry.....	105
2.2.6.2.3	RNA immunohistochemistry.....	106
2.2.7	Protein analysis.....	106
2.2.7.1	ELISA.....	106
2.2.7.1.1	Cytokine ELISA.....	106
2.2.7.1.2	Anti-influenza antibody ELISA.....	106
2.2.7.2	Luminex.....	106
2.2.7.3	Western blot.....	107
2.2.7.4	Microneutralisation assay.....	107
2.3	Statistical analyses.....	108
3	Screening for host factors involved in the restriction of influenza virus, using <i>in vitro</i> assays and knockout mouse models.	109
3.1	Introduction.....	109
3.1.2	Targets for validation of antiviral function.....	110
3.1.2.1	ARCNI.....	110
3.1.2.2	CALCOCO2.....	111
3.1.2.3	COPG.....	111
3.1.2.4	IDO1.....	111

3.1.2.5	SMS	112
3.1.2.6	TM9SF4.....	112
3.2	Results.....	113
3.2.1	The impact of gene knockdown on susceptibility to influenza virus infection in human cell lines.....	113
3.2.2	The impact of gene knockout on susceptibility to influenza virus infection in mouse knockout lines.....	115
3.3	Discussion	117
4	IFITM3 restricts the morbidity and mortality associated with influenza.....	121
4.1	Introduction	121
4.2	Results.....	124
4.2.1	The impact of the loss of <i>Ifitm3</i> on susceptibility to influenza virus infection in cell lines	124
4.2.2	Confirmation of mouse genotype.....	127
4.2.3	Influenza challenge of <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice.....	127
4.2.3.1	Weight loss and survival.....	128
4.2.3.2	Viral burden and distribution.....	130
4.2.3.3	Pathology	132
4.2.3.3	<i>Ifitm3</i> and osteopontin expression during infection.....	135
4.2.3.3	Immunology.....	139
4.2.3.3.1	Cellular response: respiratory system.....	139
4.2.3.3.2	Cellular response: systemic	140
4.2.3.3.3	Cytokine response.....	142
4.2.3.3.4	Adoptive bone marrow transfer.....	143
4.2.4	Collaborative work on human IFITM3 genetics.....	145
4.2.5	Restrictive capacity of truncated and rs12252-C containing IFITM3	147

4.3	Discussion	149
5	Investigating the impact of loss of IFITM3 on vaccination and medical therapies.....	154
5.1	Introduction	154
5.1.1	Influenza vaccine	155
5.1.2	AmBisome	156
5.2	Results	156
5.2.1	The role of Ifitm3 in intranasal vaccination against influenza virus	156
5.2.1.1	Vaccine tolerance	157
5.2.1.2	Vaccine efficacy: weight loss	157
5.2.1.3	Vaccine efficacy: viral kinetics	158
5.2.1.4	Antibody response to vaccination.....	159
5.2.1.5	Pathology	161
5.2.1.6	Cellular response	163
5.2.1.7	Cytokine response.....	164
5.2.2	The role of Ifitm3 in intra-muscular vaccination against influenza virus.....	165
5.2.2.1	Vaccine efficacy: weight loss	166
5.2.2.2	Vaccine efficacy: viral kinetics	167
5.2.2.3	Antibody response to vaccination.....	168
5.2.2.3	Pathology	168
5.2.2.4	Cellular response	169
5.2.3	The effects of AmBisome on Ifitm3 functionality.....	170
5.2.3.1	<i>In vitro</i> effects.....	170
5.2.3.2	<i>In vivo</i> effects.....	172
5.3	Discussion	174
5.3.1	Discussion: effect of vaccination in <i>Ifitm3^{-/-}</i> mice	175

5.3.2	Discussion: effect of amphotericin B on IFITM3 function	178
6	Meta-analysis of the restrictive impact of IFITM3 on a spectrum of pathogens.	181
6.1	Introduction	181
6.1.1	Pathogens	182
6.1.1.1	<i>Salmonella</i> Typhimurium	182
6.1.1.2	<i>Citrobacter rodentium</i>	183
6.1.1.3	<i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i>	183
6.1.1.4	<i>Plasmodium</i>	184
6.1.1.5	Respiratory Syncytial Virus	185
6.2	Results	186
6.2.1	Ifitm3 expression pattern	186
6.2.2	<i>Salmonella</i> challenge	188
6.2.3	<i>Citrobacter</i> challenge	189
6.2.4	<i>Mycobacterium</i> challenge	190
6.2.5	<i>Plasmodium</i> challenge	191
6.2.6	Respiratory syncytial virus challenge	192
6.3	Discussion	195
7	General Discussion	198
	References	204

List of tables

Table 1.1: Influenza A gene products and their functions.	24
Table 1.2: The six phases of pandemic alert.	33
Table 1.3: Intrinsic antiviral factors.	47
Table 1.4: Susceptibility of BALB/c mice to different strains of influenza virus.	86
Table 2.1: Media compositions used in the study.	92
Table 2.2: Cell lines used during the study.	92
Table 2.3: Viruses used during the study.	93
Table 2.4: Custom-designed primers used during the study.	93
Table 2.5: Antibodies used for flow cytometry during the study.	94
Table 2.6: List of Ambion-validated siRNAs used in the study.	94
Table 3.1: Percentage expression of targeted genes in A549 cells following siRNA knockdown.	114
Table 4.1: Allele and genotype distribution derived from multiple global populations of the 1000 Genomes Project and patients hospitalised with influenza for SNP rs12252 of IFITM3.	147

List of figures

Figure 1.1: Schematic of an influenza A virus.	24
Figure 1.2: Host range of influenza viruses.	25
Figure 1.3: Schematic to illustrate the influenza replication cycle.	26
Figure 1.4: Models of evolutionary change and the evolution of H3N2 influenza.	29
Figure 1.5: The anatomical distribution of α 2,3-galactose (α -2,3-SA) and α 2,6-galactose (α -2,6-SA) linked sialic acid receptors in three key species infected by influenza and the direction of inter-species viral transmission.	30
Figure 1.6: The role of the 1918 ‘Spanish’ influenza virus in the pandemics of the 20 th Century.....	34
Figure 1.7: Schematic to show the genetic reassortments that led to the development of the 2009 H1N1 strain of influenza.	39
Figure 1.8: Geographical spread of the A(H1N1)pdm09 virus over the course of the first two months of its global transmission.	40
Figure 1.9: Age and pre-illness health of patients that died of pandemic influenza infection in 2009 in England.	42
Figure 1.10: Host factors involved in influenza A virus replication as deduced from human and fly RNAi screens.	43
Figure 1.11: Broad mechanisms of viral antagonism of the host’s innate immune response.	45
Figure 1.12: The stages of the innate immune response to viral infection.	46
Figure 1.13: Intrinsic antiviral restriction factors that inhibit influenza virus.	48
Figure 1.14: Topologies suggested for the IFITM family of proteins.	49
Figure 1.15: The Ifitm proteins are necessary for restricting influenza virus in the late endosomes and preventing vRNP entry into the nucleus.	50
Figure 1.16: Currently suggested models of IFITM restriction.	51
Figure 1.17: Modes of detection of incoming virus and their subsequent signalling pathways. .	55

Figure 1.18: Signalling pathways of type I, II and III interferons.	57
Figure 1.19: Some of the interferon-induced proteins thought to be capable of restricting influenza virus.	58
Figure 1.20: The role of mast cells in host defence.	62
Figure 1.21: Cytokines produced by influenza-infected macrophages and their downstream effects.	63
Figure 1.22: Killing mechanisms and signalling molecules generated by neutrophils during the innate immune response.	65
Figure 1.23: Natural killer cell control of activation state.	66
Figure 1.24: The innate immune response of DC populations at the respiratory surface.	68
Figure 1.25: The functions of the adaptive immune response to influenza infection.	69
Figure 1.26: Generation of the adaptive immune response to influenza.	70
Figure 1.27: Mechanisms underpinning antigen presentation via MHC-I and MHC-II.	71
Figure 1.28: Killing mechanism of cytotoxic T-lymphocytes.	74
Figure 1.29: The multi-functional role of influenza's NS1 protein in antagonising the cell-autonomous innate immune response.	75
Figure 1.30: Differences in the host response elicited by low and high pathogenicity viruses.	76
Figure 1.31: Clinical symptoms and disease progression associated with uncomplicated influenza virus infection.	78
Figure 1.32: Susceptibility of 21 inbred mouse strains to highly pathogenic H5N1 influenza A virus.	83
Figure 1.33: Weight loss induced by influenza A virus infection in an array of inbred strains of mice.	85
Figure 1.34: Schematic of the generation of knockout mice.	87
Figure 2.1: Uses of murine lung tissue in the study.	97

Figure 3.1: The impact of gene knockdown on influenza infection in A549 and U2-OS cell lines.	114
Figure 3.2: Weight loss profiles of knockout mice screened for susceptibility to influenza virus infection.	116
Figure 4.1: Analysis of each IFITM3 amino acid's influence on antiviral restriction of influenza and dengue viruses.	122
Figure 4.2: Schematic of the targeted ablation of the <i>Ifitm3</i> locus in <i>Ifitm3^{-/-}</i> mice.	123
Figure 4.3: Single nucleotide polymorphisms of the <i>IFITM3</i> exons.	123
Figure 4.4: The impact of <i>Ifitm3</i> knockdown in murine LA-4 cells.	124
Figure 4.5: Infection levels of murine embryonic fibroblasts (MEFs) with and without the presence of <i>Ifitm3</i> after influenza A challenge.	126
Figure 4.6: Confirmation of the loss of <i>Ifitm3</i> expression in <i>Ifitm3^{-/-}</i> mice.	127
Figure 4.7: Weight loss and survival profiles of wild type and <i>Ifitm3^{-/-}</i> mice infected with various influenza A subtypes.	129
Figure 4.8: Lung viral burden over the course of influenza A virus infection.	130
Figure 4.9: Viral antigen distribution through the lungs over the course of infection.	131
Figure 4.10: Gross lung pathology of mice following influenza A virus challenge.	132
Figure 4.11: Lung sections of mice following influenza A virus challenge.	133
Figure 4.12: Total weight and water content of mouse lungs excised at day six post-influenza infection.	134
Figure 4.13: TUNEL assay for cell death in influenza-infected lungs.	135
Figure 4.14: Expression levels of <i>Ifitm3</i> and osteopontin over the course of infection.	137
Figure 4.15: Expression of <i>Ifitm1</i> and <i>Ifitm3</i> in mouse lungs with or without influenza infection.	138
Figure 4.16: Respiratory system cell counts during influenza infection.	139
Figure 4.17: Immune cell populations over the course of influenza virus infection.	140

Figure 4.18: Systemic leukocyte responses to influenza virus infection.	141
Figure 4.19a: Cytokine responses in the lungs of mice infected with influenza virus.	142
Figure 4.19b: Cytokine responses in the lungs of mice infected with influenza virus.	143
Figure 4.20: Influenza challenge of chimeric mice.	144
Figure 4.21: Single nucleotide polymorphisms of the human <i>IFITM3</i> gene and the prevalence of SNP rs12252.	146
Figure 4.22: Impact of IFITM3 N□21 truncation on restriction of influenza A and B viruses.	148
Figure 4.23: Viral replication and IFITM3 expression in rs12252-TT and rs12252-CC containing human cells.	149
Figure 5.1: Tolerance of the live attenuated influenza vaccine, FluMist, in wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice.	157
Figure 5.2: Efficacy of live attenuated influenza vaccines in terms of weight loss and survival of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice.	158
Figure 5.3: Effect of FluMist vaccination on influenza A viral kinetics in wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice.	159
Figure 5.4: Immunoglobulin profile of the blood and lungs of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice following immunisation with FluMist vaccine.	160
Figure 5.5: Influenza-neutralising capacity of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} antibodies following FluMist immunisation.	161
Figure 5.6: Effect of vaccination on pathological damage to the respiratory system following a lethal influenza A challenge.	162
Figure 5.7: Histological impact of vaccination in wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice lungs following a lethal influenza A infection.	163
Figure 5.8: Impact of vaccination on immune cell populations within the lungs of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice following influenza A infection.	164

Figure 5.9: Effect of vaccination on inflammatory cytokine production in wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice following influenza A infection.	165
Figure 5.10: Effect of intra-muscular influenza vaccination on the weight loss and survival of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice following influenza A infection.	167
Figure 5.11: Effect of intra-muscular vaccination on viral load in the lungs of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice following influenza A infection.	167
Figure 5.12: Immunoglobulin profile of the blood and lungs of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice following immunisation with Fluvirin intra-muscular vaccine.	168
Figure 5.13: Impact of intra-muscular vaccination on pathological damage caused by a lethal challenge with influenza A virus.	169
Figure 5.14: Effect of intra-muscular vaccination on leukocyte populations in the lungs of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice following influenza A infection.	170
Figure 5.15: <i>In vitro</i> effects of amphotericin B on IFITM3-mediated restriction of influenza virus.	171
Figure 5.16: Effects of AmBisome on wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice during influenza A infection.	173
Figure 5.17: Effect of AmBisome on lung histology during influenza virus infection.	174
Figure 6.1: Expression of <i>Ifitm3</i> at the predominant sites of pathogen infection.	187
Figure 6.2: <i>S. Typhimurium</i> challenge of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice.	188
Figure 6.3: Weight loss and bacterial shedding of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice infected with <i>C. rodentium</i>	189
Figure 6.4: Bacterial counts of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice infected with <i>C. rodentium</i> over the course of infection.	190
Figure 6.5: Bacterial growth kinetics of <i>M. tuberculosis</i> in the lungs of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice.	191
Figure 6.6: Malarial challenge of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice with <i>P. berghei</i> ANKA.	192
Figure 6.7: Weight loss and viral load associated with RSV infection of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice.	193

Figure 6.8: Cellular response of wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice to RSV infection.	194
Figure 6.9: Inflammatory cytokines in the lungs and BAL on day seven post-infection in RSV-infected wild type and <i>Ifitm3</i> ^{-/-} mice.	194

Abbreviations

aDC	Alveolar dendritic cell
APC	Antigen presenting cell
BAL	Bronchoalveolar lavage
CFU	Colony forming unit
CTL	Cytotoxic T-lymphocyte
DC	Dendritic cell
ELISA	Enzyme-linked immunosorbant assay
g	Force of gravity
GenISIS	Genetics of <i>Influenza</i> Susceptibility in Scotland
GMA	Glycol methacrylate
HA	Hemagglutinin
HCV	Hepatitis C virus
HP	High pathogenicity
HTS	High throughput screening
IFN	Interferon
Ig	Immunoglobulin
i.v.	Intravenous
IL	Interleukin
i.m.	Intramuscular
i.n.	Intranasal
i.p.	Intraperitoneal
ISG	Interferon-stimulated gene
i.v.	Intravenous
kDa	Kilo Dalton
LAIV	Live attenuated influenza vaccine
LCL	Lymphoblastoid cell line
LD	Lethal dose
LP	Low pathogenicity
MEF	Murine embryonic fibroblast

MHC	Major histocompatibility complex
MOSAIC	Mechanisms of Severe Acute Influenza Consortium
NA	Neuraminidase
NK	Natural killer
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
PFU	Plaque forming unit
PRR	Pathogen recognition receptor
QIV	Quadrivalent influenza vaccine
QTL	Quantitative trait loci
RNAi	RNA interference
RSV	Respiratory syncytial virus
SA	Sialic acid
siRNA	Small interfering RNA
SNP	Single nucleotide polymorphism
TCID	Tissue culture infective dose
TIV	Trivalent influenza vaccine
TLR	Toll-like receptor
pDC	Plasmacytoid dendritic cell
VRDF	Viral replication dependence factor
VRF	Viral restriction factor
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTSI	Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute