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(54) **CASPASE HOMOLOGUE**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Caspases are cysteinyl aspartate-specific proteinases, many of which play a central role in apoptosis. This invention relates to the identification of a new murine caspase and its human homologue. The new molecules are most related to human/murine caspase-2 and human caspase-9 and possesses all the typical amino acid residues of the caspases involved in catalysis, including the QACRG box, and contains no or only a very short prodomain. Northern blot analysis revealed that mRNA expression of the new caspase is predominant in skin.

2 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets