Project Title: Engineered bacteria for the conversion of amyloid plaques to dark chocolate.

Principal Investigators: Shannon K. Hughes and Butterstick C. Puppydog

Summary: Amyloid plaques that form in the brain of Alzheimer's patients contribute to degeneration of nerve communication leading to the physical manifestations of the disease. The symptoms of Alzheimer's disease might be alleviated through elimination of the beta-amyloid protein accumulation in the brain. We propose to address this devastating disease by engineering e.coli to convert beta-amyloid protein to dark chocolate, which is then easily consumed by microglia. Our approach involves expression of a novel protein, ADC…[Two more succinct sentences that describe the experimental approach and one sentence stating the novelty of the research]

Introduction: Alzheimer's disease affects 5.4 million Americans [1]……[1-2 sentences about the disease]. The aberrant deposit of beta-amyloid plaques in the brain of Alzheimer's patients significantly affects neurological function by blocking cell-cell communication, inducing apoptosis, and leading to a general degeneration of the brain tissue [2]. [1-2 more sentences about the structure of plaques and where they originate]

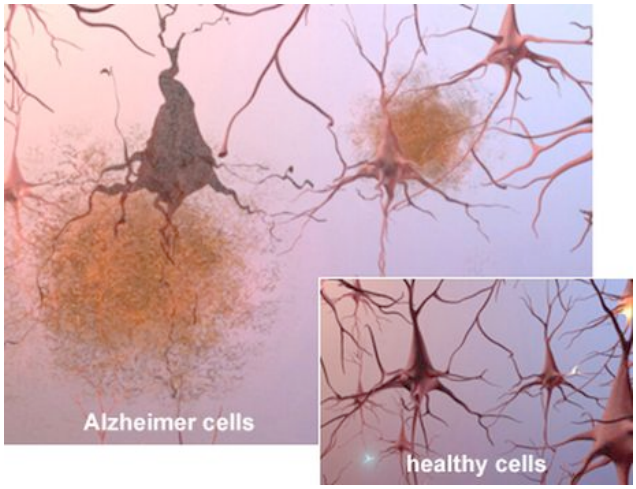

Figure 1: Some important background on amlyoid plaques in Alzheimer's Disease.

Removal of amyloid plaques might significantly improve the quality of life for Alzheimer's patients. Several research groups have attempted to eliminate amyloid plaque formation by….[an entire paragraph about what other people have done].

Although some progress has been made to reduce amyloid plaques, there have been no attempts to convert plaques to the alternative, degradable form of dark chocolate [statement of where the gap in knowledge is]. To

address this shortcoming, we propose to engineer a non-toxic strain of e.coli to produce a new protein recently discovered in our laboratory through a yeast two-hybrid screen, amyloid-to-dark-chocolate (ADC). As the initial steps to accomplish our long-term goal of conversion of amyloid plaque to dark chocolate in the human brain, we will:

1. **Optimize the production of genetically engineered ADC using the non-toxic e.coli strain BL21(DE3).**
2. **Determine the enzymatic efficiency of engineered ADC *in vitro* utilizing amyloid plaques harvested from murine models of Alzheimer's disease available from Jackson Laboratory.**
3. **Measure the efficacy of engineered ADC *in vivo* by quantifying the conversion of amyloid plaque to dark chocolate via MRI in a murine model of Alzheimer's disease.**

Research Plan: Our research proposal encompasses three major milestones; optimization of expression and secretion of the ADC protein, *in vitro* evaluation of ADC enzymatic efficiency, and proof-of-concept *in vivo* testing in mice. The experiments required to accomplish the stated research goals are outlined below for each milestone and a workflow diagram is shown in Figure 2.

1. **Optimize the production of genetically engineered ADC using the non-toxic e.coli strain BL21(DE3).**

The ADC protein was originally cloned from a 35-year woman with an intense craving for dark chocolate. Normally secreted in the brain, ADC contains a sequence recognition motif for extracellular export, but it is unknown if the e.coli strain BL21(DE3) is able to efficiently produce and secret ADC. Therefore, we will….[outline the experiments and supplies necessary to test this].

Anticipated Results and Alternative Paths: The literature-derived data on ADC suggests that it will be efficiently produced and secreted by e. coli [citation]. However, it is possible that the protein will be contained within inclusion bodies, thereby lowering the efficiency of production. If this issue arises, we will examine other possible non-toxic organisms that can be engineered to secrete ADC, such as small kittens or fireflies.

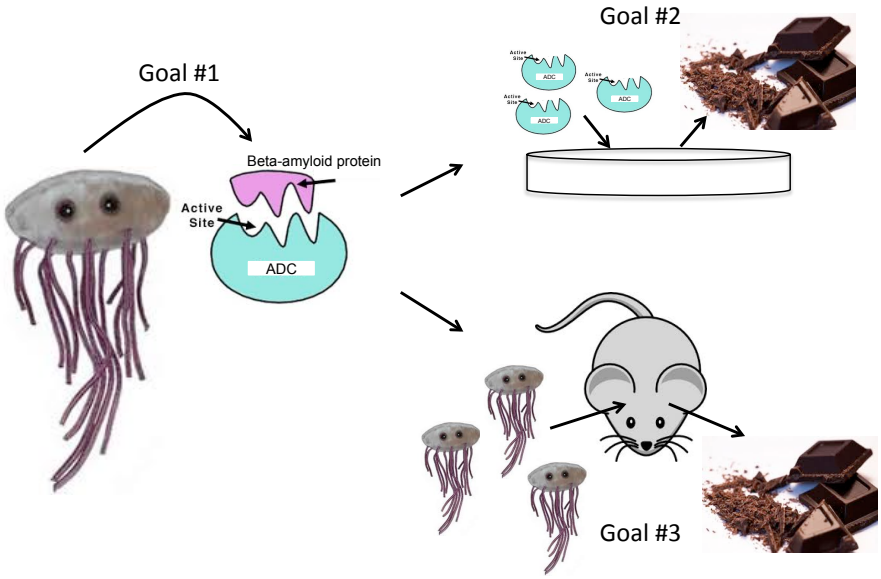

Figure 2: A thoughtful, informative, well-drawn schematic of our research plan. The figure legend should explain the diagram such that a reviewer might not even need to read the text of the proposal.

[The rest of this section should look similar to the first research goal. Outline the experiments that you will complete to test your hypothesis / reach your research goals. Follow each with an alternative approach and an honest evaluation of your chance of success].

Resources: This section should contain some explanation of where you've obtained unusual equipment or reagents, plus some idea of what personnel you need to complete the project. For example, Jackson labs was listed here as a source of mouse models – even more specific information on the desired strain would be beneficial.

[Bibliography: Your references should be numbered in [brackets] within the text and be listed in the bibliography in the order that they appear within the text. Here is an example of a well-referenced journal article:

1. Meyer AS, Hughes-Alford SK, Kay JE, Castillo A, Wells A, Gertler FB, Lauffenburger DA. 2D protrusion but not motility predicts growth factor-induced cancer cell migration in 3D collagen. J Cell Biol. 2012 Jun 11; 197(6): 721–9. PMCID: PMC3373410]

*Note: a formal bibliography is not required for oral presentations, but citing previous work during your presentation will show the depth of your knowledge!

Max length = 5 pages.