

Gene name: **MAPK14**    **Previous HGNC Symbols for MAPK14 Gene:** CSPB1, CSBP1, CSBP2  
**External Ids for MAPK14 Gene:** HGNC: [6876](#)    NCBI Gene: [1432](#)    Ensembl: [ENSG00000112062](#)  
OMIM®: [600289](#)    UniProtKB/Swiss-Prot: [Q16539](#)

**NCBI Gene Summary:** The protein encoded by this gene is a member of the MAP kinase family. MAP kinases act as an integration point for multiple biochemical signals, and are involved in a wide variety of cellular processes such as proliferation, differentiation, transcription regulation and development. This kinase is activated by various environmental stresses and proinflammatory cytokines. The activation requires its phosphorylation by MAP kinase kinases (MKKs), or its autophosphorylation triggered by the interaction of MAP3K7IP1/TAB1 protein with this kinase. The substrates of this kinase include transcription regulator ATF2, MEF2C, and MAX, cell cycle regulator CDC25B, and tumor suppressor p53, which suggest the roles of this kinase in stress related transcription and cell cycle regulation, as well as in genotoxic stress response. Four alternatively spliced transcript variants of this gene encoding distinct isoforms have been reported.

**GeneCards Summary:** MAPK14 (Mitogen-Activated Protein Kinase 14) is a Protein Coding gene. Diseases associated with MAPK14 include [Chlamydia](#) and [Coffin-Lowry Syndrome](#). Among its related pathways are [Toll Like Receptor 7/8 \(TLR7/8\) Cascade](#) and [Prolactin Signaling](#). Gene Ontology (GO) annotations related to this gene include *transferase activity*, *transferring phosphorus-containing groups* and *protein tyrosine kinase activity*. An important paralog of this gene is [MAPK11](#).

**UniProtKB/Swiss-Prot Summary:** Serine/threonine kinase which acts as an essential component of the MAP kinase signal transduction pathway. **MAPK14 is one of the four p38 MAPKs which play an important role in the cascades of cellular responses evoked by extracellular stimuli such as pro-inflammatory cytokines or physical stress leading to direct activation of transcription factors.** Accordingly, p38 MAPKs phosphorylate a broad range of proteins and it has been estimated that they may have approximately 200 to 300 substrates each. Some of the targets are downstream kinases which are activated through phosphorylation and further phosphorylate additional targets. RPS6KA5/MSK1 and RPS6KA4/MSK2 can directly phosphorylate and activate transcription factors such as CREB1, ATF1, the NF-kappa-B isoform RELA/NFKB3, STAT1 and STAT3, but can also phosphorylate histone H3 and the nucleosomal protein HMGN1 (PubMed:[9687510](#), [9792677](#)). RPS6KA5/MSK1 and RPS6KA4/MSK2 play important roles in the rapid induction of immediate-early genes in response to stress or mitogenic stimuli, either by inducing chromatin remodeling or by recruiting the transcription machinery (PubMed:[9687510](#), [9792677](#)). On the other hand, two other kinase targets, MAPKAPK2/MK2 and MAPKAPK3/MK3, participate in the control of gene expression mostly at the post-transcriptional level, by phosphorylating ZFP36 (tristetraprolin) and ELAVL1, and by regulating EEF2K, which is important for the elongation of mRNA during translation. MKNK1/MNK1 and MKNK2/MNK2, two other kinases activated by p38 MAPKs, regulate protein synthesis by phosphorylating the initiation factor EIF4E2 (PubMed:[11154262](#)). MAPK14 interacts also with casein kinase II, leading to its activation through autophosphorylation and further phosphorylation of TP53/p53 (PubMed:[10747897](#)). In the cytoplasm, the p38 MAPK pathway is an important regulator of protein turnover. For example, CFLAR is an inhibitor of TNF-induced apoptosis whose proteasome-mediated degradation is regulated by p38 MAPK phosphorylation. In a similar way, MAPK14 phosphorylates the ubiquitin ligase SIAH2, regulating its activity towards EGLN3 (PubMed:[17003045](#)). MAPK14 may also inhibit the lysosomal degradation pathway of autophagy by interfering with the intracellular trafficking of the transmembrane protein ATG9 (PubMed:[19893488](#)). Another function of MAPK14 is to regulate the endocytosis of membrane receptors by different mechanisms that impinge on the small GTPase RAB5A. In addition, clathrin-mediated EGFR

internalization induced by inflammatory cytokines and UV irradiation depends on MAPK14-mediated phosphorylation of EGFR itself as well as of RAB5A effectors (PubMed:[16932740](#)). Ectodomain shedding of transmembrane proteins is regulated by p38 MAPKs as well. In response to inflammatory stimuli, p38 MAPKs phosphorylate the membrane-associated metalloprotease ADAM17 (PubMed:[20188673](#)). Such phosphorylation is required for ADAM17-mediated ectodomain shedding of TGF- $\alpha$  family ligands, which results in the activation of EGFR signaling and cell proliferation. Another p38 MAPK substrate is FGFR1. FGFR1 can be translocated from the extracellular space into the cytosol and nucleus of target cells, and regulates processes such as rRNA synthesis and cell growth. FGFR1 translocation requires p38 MAPK activation. In the nucleus, many transcription factors are phosphorylated and activated by p38 MAPKs in response to different stimuli. Classical examples include ATF1, ATF2, ATF6, ELK1, PTPRH, DDIT3, TP53/p53 and MEF2C and MEF2A (PubMed:[10330143](#), [9430721](#), [9858528](#)). The p38 MAPKs are emerging as important modulators of gene expression by regulating chromatin modifiers and remodelers. The promoters of several genes involved in the inflammatory response, such as IL6, IL8 and IL12B, display a p38 MAPK-dependent enrichment of histone H3 phosphorylation on 'Ser-10' (H3S10ph) in LPS-stimulated myeloid cells. This phosphorylation enhances the accessibility of the cryptic NF-kappa-B-binding sites marking promoters for increased NF-kappa-B recruitment. Phosphorylates CDC25B and CDC25C which is required for binding to 14-3-3 proteins and leads to initiation of a G2 delay after ultraviolet radiation (PubMed:[11333986](#)). Phosphorylates TIAR following DNA damage, releasing TIAR from GADD45A mRNA and preventing mRNA degradation (PubMed:[20932473](#)). The p38 MAPKs may also have kinase-independent roles, which are thought to be due to the binding to targets in the absence of phosphorylation. Protein O-Glc-N-acylation catalyzed by the OGT is regulated by MAPK14, and, although OGT does not seem to be phosphorylated by MAPK14, their interaction increases upon MAPK14 activation induced by glucose deprivation. This interaction may regulate OGT activity by recruiting it to specific targets such as neurofilament H, stimulating its O-Glc-N-acylation. Required in mid-fetal development for the growth of embryo-derived blood vessels in the labyrinth layer of the placenta. Also plays an essential role in developmental and stress-induced erythropoiesis, through regulation of EPO gene expression (PubMed:[10943842](#)). Isoform MXI2 activation is stimulated by mitogens and oxidative stress and only poorly phosphorylates ELK1 and ATF2. Isoform EXIP may play a role in the early onset of apoptosis. Phosphorylates S100A9 at 'Thr-113' (PubMed:[15905572](#)). Phosphorylates NLRP1 downstream of MAP3K20/ZAK in response to UV-B irradiation and ribosome collisions, promoting activation of the NLRP1 inflammasome and pyroptosis (PubMed:[35857590](#)). ( [MK14\\_HUMAN,Q16539](#) )

**Cellular localization:** mainly in cytosol, nucleus and extracellular.

**Full Name:** *Mitogen-Activated Protein Kinase 14*

**Common Protein Name:** p38 $\alpha$  MAP kinase (p38 $\alpha$  MAPK)

**Protein Type:** Serine/threonine protein kinase

**MAPK Family:** One of four p38 MAPK isoforms ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ ,  $\delta$ ) – p38 $\alpha$  (MAPK14) is the best studied.



### Biological Function of MAPK14 (p38 $\alpha$ )

MAPK14 encodes p38 $\alpha$ , a stress-activated kinase involved in:

- Inflammation
- Cell cycle regulation
- Apoptosis
- Cytokine production

## Main Functions:

1. Stress and danger sensing:
  - Activated by pro-inflammatory cytokines, endotoxins (e.g., LPS), UV radiation, oxidative stress, and hypoxia.
2. Regulates inflammatory cytokine expression:
  - Enhances transcription and translation of:
    - TNF- $\alpha$
    - IL-1 $\beta$
    - IL-6
    - COX-2
  - Modulates the NF- $\kappa$ B and AP-1 transcriptional response.
3. Controls immune cell activation:
  - In monocytes, macrophages, dendritic cells, and T cells
  - Affects cytokine release, maturation, and migration
4. Influences apoptosis and autophagy:
  - Can promote cell survival or death, depending on context

## Role of MAPK14 in Sepsis

MAPK14 is one of the central signaling nodes in sepsis pathophysiology.

### Early Sepsis:

- Activated in immune cells by:
  - TLR ligands (such as LPS, bacterial products)
  - Cytokines (TNF, IL-1)
- Leads to:
  - Massive cytokine production ("cytokine storm")
  - Immune cell recruitment
  - Neutrophil activation

### Severe/Prolonged Sepsis:

- Sustained MAPK14 activation contributes to:
  - Endothelial dysfunction
  - Oxidative stress
  - Immune exhaustion
  - Tissue and organ injury
- Also linked to macrophage tolerance, where prolonged p38 $\alpha$  activity leads to a shutdown of immune responses in the late/immunosuppressive phase.



## Clinical Relevance of MAPK14 in Sepsis

### Diagnostic Role:

- MAPK14 is consistently upregulated in immune cells of septic patients.
- Expression levels correlate with:
  - Severity of inflammation
  - Systemic inflammatory response

### Prognostic Role:

- Persistent MAPK14 activation is associated with:
  - Worse outcomes
  - Higher SOFA scores
  - Increased mortality

### Therapeutic Potential:

- p38 MAPK inhibitors have been studied to:
  - Reduce cytokine storm
  - Limit endothelial damage
  - Improve survival in animal models

Some inhibitors (e.g., Losmapimod) have reached clinical trials for inflammatory diseases, but safety and efficacy in sepsis are still under investigation.



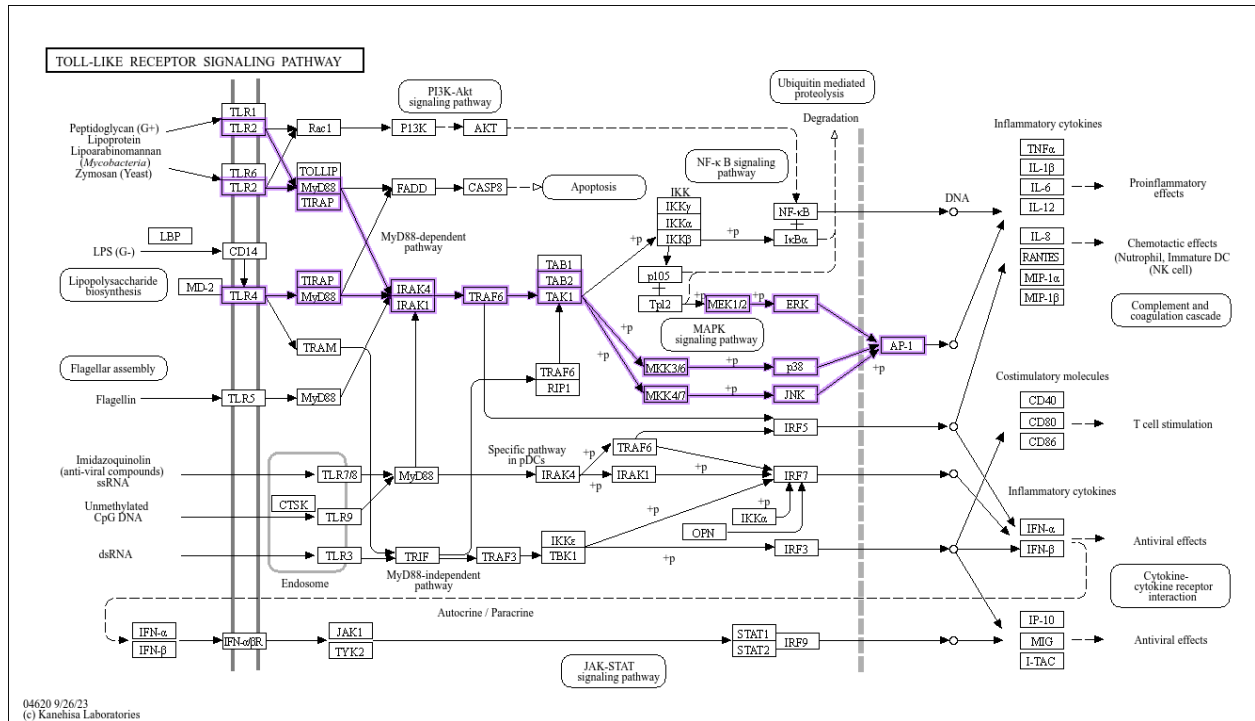
## Key Supporting Studies

Doi: 10.1007/s11655-023-3601-8

Doi: 10.3760/cma.j.cn121430-20210908-01350

Doi: 10.1007/s10142-022-00843-x

## KEGG:



## Enrichr-KG

