

Miraculins announces final results of prostate cancer biomarker study

Miraculins Inc., a Canadian biotechnology company dealing with the discovery and validation of cancer biomarkers, announces final results from its PCSC04 study.

The study initiated in November 2006, set out to determine if Miraculins prostate cancer biomarker diagnostic would be able to reduce the number of negative biopsies for patients that had already been screened by the prostate specific antigen (PSA) test and had been referred to a urologist for additional assessment.

The data analyzed showed that the

Miraculins urine based test performed with specificity would eliminate approximately 23% of the biopsies for patients who did not have prostate cancer. The test also performed with a sensitivity that correctly identified 93% of patients who were true positives for prostate cancer and needed to be scheduled for a biopsy.

These results were consistent with preliminary results announced by Miraculins on March 19, 2007. Both the test's sensitivity and specificity are expected to improve when an ELISA based test format is fully developed.

UBC gains \$46.4 million in science and engineering funding

The University of British Columbia is the beneficiary of \$46.4 million in federal research support for 631 science and engineering projects after finishing in second place among Canadian universities in the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's (NSERC) 2007 grants and scholarships competition.

Seven scholars at UBC also received \$120,000 Discovery Accelerator Supple-

ments, a new NSERC initiative that supports researchers at a critical juncture in their careers. UBC ranked second in Canada with seven supplements.

"These new grants target 50 outstanding researchers," said NSERC President Suzanne Fortier. "Based on their success and accomplishments so far, we believe they are poised to make real breakthroughs in their fields."

Canadian Government backs Biofuel Initiative

The Canadian Government has given the green light for the ecoAgriculture Biofuels Capital (ecoABC) initiative, a four-year plan to boost farmer participation in the production of biofuels.

According to Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for Canadian Wheat Chuck Strahl, the aim of the initiative is to reduce greenhouse gases and emissions in Canada.

Approximately \$200 million in funding will go to farmers and the construction

and expansion of biofuel facilities. Money will also go to increasing renewable fuel capacity and content in all gasoline, diesel fuel and oil in Canada. Other project plans include increasing the average amount of renewable fuel content in gasoline to 5% by 2010, and in diesel fuel and heating oil to 2% by 2012.

"This is the first program to give farmers capital assistance to construct or expand biofuels facilities," said Strahl. "With this initiative, we expect a potential increase in renewable fuel capacity of 1.5 billion litres."

Speaking concurrently at an ethanol-blend gas station in Quebec, the Honourable Christian Paradis, Secretary of State (Agriculture) stated the initiative was another important step in creating new economic opportunities for farmers and the agricultural sector in Canada.

On top of the \$200 million, Budget 2007 will allocate another \$2 billion over seven years to support the project.



Clinical Trials & Patents

■ **Liponex Inc.** (Ottawa, ON) reports further analysis of its CRD5 Phase I/II clinical trial has shown its lead product to be safe in dyslipidemic patients. CRD5 was well tolerated in the patient group, with the exception of the reported GI adverse events that led to the cessation of the 5-gram dosing phase. The overall mean HDL increase was 5% at both the 1g (n=50) and 3g (n=40) dosing levels but the patient-to-patient variation was high. While some patients had a negative response, over 20% of patients achieved more than a 10% rise in HDL at the lower dose levels.

■ **Neurochem Inc.** (Laval, QC) announces that the database for the North American Phase III clinical trial for tramiprosate (ALZHEMED™) for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease has been locked. The analysis is ongoing and entails employing an accurate statistical model that appropriately describes the data providing accurate results. Neurochem was advised by an external team of statisticians that adjustment to the initial statistical model, as set out in the statistical plan was necessary. The procedure to arrive at a reliable model involves a detailed analysis of potential confounding factors such as the effect of concomitant medications, baseline characteristics of the study population or differences in clinical sites.

■ **MethylGene Inc.** (Montreal, QC) announces the selection of MGCD290 as a clinical candidate emanating from its histone deacetylase (HDAC) antifungal program. Previously disclosed MGCD290 pre-clinical data demonstrated that the molecule synergizes and potentiates azole activity both in vitro and in vivo against key fungal pathogens such as *Aspergillus* and various *Candida* species. MethylGene will commence manufacturing of the molecule in order to support investigational new drug (IND)-enabling studies. The company expects to file an IND application for MGCD290 in mid-2008, with Phase I clinical trials to commence thereafter.

■ **Allon Therapeutics Inc.** (Vancouver, BC) releases new data confirming its product AL-309 has robust oral bioavailability in pre-clinical studies. This new data also shows that AL-309 enters the brain and that effective concentrations can be detected for extended periods of time confirming its potential as a highly novel central nervous system drug. AL-309 will now be the first product to move into clinical development from the company's second platform of neuroprotective compounds.