compensate for the expected loss in 2007 of the US patent for Prilosec (omeprazole) by providing estimated new blockbuster sales of US$6340 million in 2007. Eli Lilly (Indianapolis, IN, USA) are also expecting to lose revenue when their patent for Prozac (fluoxetine) expires in mid-2001. They aim to counter this by launching three blockbuster products in 2007 with estimated combined sales of US$4050 million.

The drugs pipeline is not as promising elsewhere in the field. F-Hoffman-La Roche (Basel, Switzerland) and Bayer (Wuppertal, Germany) have spent US$2019 million and US$2095 million, respectively, in 2000 on R&D but have no new blockbuster products in late-stage development. Similarly, American Home Products (Madison, NJ, USA), Abbott Laboratories (Abbott Park, IL, USA) and Boehringer Ingelheim (Ingelheim, Germany) are predicted to suffer difficulties maintaining growth by 2007 unless they develop a large number of smaller products that can be marketed by then.

Vertex suspends development of kinase inhibitor

Vertex Pharmaceuticals (Cambridge, MA, USA) are to suspend clinical development of their lead orally active p38 MAP-kinase inhibitor VX745 because of a recent observation of adverse side effects in animal models. The side effects, exhibited in the CNS of one of two animal species used, were noted when using a dose ten-fold higher than that used in human clinical trials. Previously significant clinical effects had been shown by a low-dose 12-week randomized, placebo-controlled study for patients with rheumatoid arthritis.

Recruitment for a higher-dose patient trial has now been cancelled, as has a trial for myelodysplastic syndrome. They aim to publish Phase II clinical data in a peer-reviewed forum in 2002.

Vertex will instead concentrate on developing their other second-generation oral p38 MAP-kinase inhibitors, VX702 and VX850. Having done proof-of-principle studies with VX745, the company aims to initiate clinical trials in one or both of these other products in 2002.

Institute for Systems Biology gains US$828,500 grant for new equipment

The Institute for Systems Biology (Seattle, WA, USA) has received a US$828,500 grant from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust to purchase specialized robotics workstations and mass spectrometers for the preparation, processing and analysis of protein samples. The Institute, a private non-profit research organization, will use the money to develop new technology platforms based on the Isotope Coded Affinity Tag (ICAT) reagent method for measuring the levels of proteins in complex solutions. Ruedi Aebersold, developer of the method and leader of the Institute's proteomics research, said high-throughput quantitative proteomics was 'vital to realizing the hope and potential created by the Human Genome Project'.

Funding for cooperative Alzheimer's study doubled

The NIH National Institute of Aging (Bethesda, MD, USA) has doubled its funding of the Alzheimer's Disease Cooperative Study (ADCS), its research agreement with the University of California, San Diego (UCSD; CA, USA). The grant, of US$54 million over a period of five years, will fund the ADCS to continue coordinating clinical trials of new approaches to treating and preventing Alzheimer's disease.

'In the next ten years or less, we should be able to delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease,' said Leon Thal, Chair of the Department of Neurosciences at UCSD School of Medicine. He says that they have established a group of nationally and internationally recognized Alzheimer's researchers that is now large enough to generate significant results in a reasonable period of time.

The ADCS has researchers at 83 sites in the USA and Canada and has conducted 13 research protocols over the past ten years. Five other research protocols are planned for the next five years.

News in Brief was written by *Natalie Baderman, Joanne Clough, Joanna Milburn* and *Ben Ramster*

People

Awards

Three key awards from the Society for Biomolecular Screening

Leroy Hood (Institute for Systems Biology, Seattle, WA, USA) and Michael Hunkapiller (Apperla Corp and Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA, USA) were awarded the SBS Achievement Award at the recent *Society for Biomolecular Screening* meeting in Baltimore (MD, USA) for their significant accomplishments in life science research. Meanwhile, Keith Wood of Promega Corp picked up the PerkinElmer Life Sciences Award for Innovation in Automation and High Throughput Screening for his research into bioluminescent reporter gene technology.

Hood and his past colleagues at the University of Washington played a key role in developing automated microchemical instrumentation for the sequence analysis of proteins and DNA and the synthesis of peptides and gene fragments. More recently, he has been involved in the analysis of the human and mouse T-cell receptor loci. Meanwhile, Hunkapiller and colleagues at Applied Biosystems developed and marketed the first automated sequencing machine in the mid-1980s. Hunkapiller's group has since developed the PR Prism 3700 machine, which was used for all of Celera's efforts to sequence the human genome and much of the public Human Genome Project.

Finally, Wood, together with a team from the University of California, cloned a gene responsible for the light in fireflies and demonstrated its potential for measuring events in living cells. Wood then

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joined Promega in 1990 and developed this method into a high-throughput technique that is claimed to reliably quantitate >100,000 samples per day.

Germany's Entrepreneur of the Year 2001

Alexander Olek, founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Epigenomics (Berlin, Germany) has recently been awarded Germany's Entrepreneur of the Year 2001. Epigenomics was started in 1998 and grew from five members to over 100 staff in three locations in Berlin and Seattle (WA, USA) within 2.5 years. The company has developed a technology that enables the detection and improved classification of complex diseases.

The award, which has now been given for the past five years, is awarded by Ernst & Young to rapidly growing medium-sized enterprises that have achieved above-average increases in turnover and staff numbers. Past winners of the award include Metin Colpan from Quiagen and Fredrich von Bohlen from Lion Bioscience.

Appointments

Two key appointments at BMS

Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) has announced that Peter R. Dolan, President and CEO, has been named the Chairman of the Board of Directors. Dolan takes over from Charles A. Heimbold Jr who resigned to take up the role of Ambassador to Sweden. Dolan was previously appointed President of the company and elected to the Board of Directors in January 2000. Dolan was then appointed as the company's CEO in May 2001.

Meanwhile, the company has also announced the appointment of Susan Arbuck as Vice-President, Oncology Clinical Research. Arbuck joins BMS from the US National Cancer Institute where she was Head of the Developmental Chemotherapy Section in the Investigational Drug Branch. During this time, she developed more than 80 anticancer drugs and made many significant contributions to improving the efficiency of early- and late-stage clinical trials. Beth C. Seidenberg, Senior Vice-President, Clinical Development and Life Cycle Management, Pharmaceutical Research Institute said: 'With today's experimental cancer therapies requiring radically new approaches to clinical trial design and development programs, Susan's extraordinary experience in this area will be invaluable to us.'

William Koster moves to Neurogen as CEO

William H. Koster has recently accepted the position of CEO of Neurogen (Branford, CT, USA), after the retirement of Harry Penner. Koster brings more than 30 years of experience at Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) and E.R. Squibb & Sons (prior to its merger with Bristol-Myers). Most recently, Koster was Senior Vice-President for Science and Technology Strategy and Acquisition at BMS. Prior to this, he was Senior Vice-President for Drug Discovery at the company where he more than doubled the output of drug discovery while incorporating advances from emerging technologies such as genomics, informatics, HTS and automated chemistry.

At the same time, Stephen R. Davis has been promoted to the position of Executive Vice-President and Chief Business Officer at Neurogen from the position of Senior Vice-President.

New CFO for Evotec OAI

Evotec OAI (Hamburg, Germany) has appointed Dirk Ehlers to the position of Chief Financial Officer and will succeed Joern Aldag who has recently been appointed CEO of the company. Prior to joining Evotec, Ehlers was a member of the Management Board at Fresenius Kabi where he had global responsibility for one of its divisions including Finance and Administration, R&D, Marketing and Sales, and Manufacturing and Procurement.

Randall Mrsny leaves Genentech for academia

Randall Mrsny, Head of the Drug Delivery/Biology group at Genentech, is leaving the company to take up a Professor's Chair in drug delivery at the University of Cardiff School of Pharmacy (Cardiff, UK), a position that will start at the beginning of 2002. In the meantime, he is helping to set up a spin-out company from Genentech which will be called Trinity BioSystems and will be based in the San Francisco Bay area (CA, USA). The new company will focus on drug delivery technologies for use in mucosal vaccines and needle-less delivery of biotherapeutics. Prior to joining Genentech 11 years ago, Mrsny worked as Head of the Peptide Biology Group at Alza Corp.

Dale Johnson joins Eos Biotechnology

Dale Johnson has recently joined Eos Biotechnology (South San Francisco, CA, USA) as Vice-President, Preclinical and Predictive Development. Johnson joins the company from Chiron Corporation where he was Vice-President of Preclinical Development. Johnson also recently co-foundered the *in silico* toxicology company, ddplatform LLC. Prior to his time at Chiron, Johnson has been Senior Director of Toxicology Research and Preclinical Safety at Lederle Laboratories and a senior scientist at Hoechst-Roussel Pharmaceuticals.

New appointments at Genome Therapeutics

Genome Therapeutics (Waltham, MA, USA) has announced the appointment of Martin D. Williams to the position of Senior Vice-President, Business Development and Marketing, Infectious Disease. Williams was previously Vice-President of Pentose Pharmaceuticals and has also directed the development and commercialization of many key brands from GlaxoWellcome (such as Zantac) and Lederle (such as Zosyn and Tazocin).

Genome Therapeutics has also appointed Terrie H. Rogers to the position of Senior Director, Business Development, Genomics Services and Yujiro S. Hata to Senior Director, Corporate Development. Rogers was previously Senior Vice-President, Therapeutic Ventures and Study Acquisition at Innovative Clinical Solutions. Meanwhile, Hata was founder and interim CEO of an e-health company focusing on genomics and proteomics.

People was written by
Rebecca N. Lawrence

Correction: In the *People* section of the 15th October 2001 issue of *Drug Discovery Today* on page 982, we stated that Argenta Discovery was based in Dagenham, UK. However, they have moved from this address and are now based in Harlow, UK. We would like to apologise for this inaccuracy.