

Business

Collaborations

Epigenomics collaborates with Biogen Idec in oncology

Epigenomics AG, a diagnostic company that develops tests based on DNA methylation, has announced a collaboration to develop biomarkers for use in an oncology programme in conjunction with Biogen Idec. Drug efficacy will be determined by examination of candidate biomarkers using the Epigenomics' DNA methylation technology. Epigenomics will receive R&D funding and the opportunity to participate in developing a potential pharmacodiagnostic product as part of the collaborative deal.

Christian Piepenbronk, CIO of Epigenomics said: 'A growing number of companies appreciate that some of the new biological drugs in development may benefit from an accompanying test to help identify those patients that will likely respond best to treatment. In recent months, Epigenomics has signed collaborations with several large pharmaceutical/biotech companies such as Biogen Idec to evaluate our DNA methylation tests for oncology applications.'

Epigenomics is a company focusing on the development of novel compounds for cancer. Their products can potentially identify cancer at very early stages and help guide therapeutic approach. It collaborates with Roche Diagnostics on the development of diagnostic and pharmacodiagnostic products in cancer. The company headquarters are in Berlin and they have a wholly owned subsidiary in Seattle, USA.

Cellzome signs deal with Novartis

Cellzome has announced the details of a collaboration of a deal with Novartis. As a result of the agreement, Novartis will make a substantial equity investment in Cellzome and will provide funding for research for two years with an option of extending the collaboration for a further two years. In addition, there will be lead compound development options for both companies in exchange for licenses, milestone payments and royalties.

Jeff Porter, Global Head of Novartis' Developmental and Molecular Pathways

group commented: 'Cellzome's drug proteomics platform is a perfect complement to our pathway-focused discovery efforts at Novartis. We're very enthusiastic about initiating this alliance.' In response, the CEO of Cellzome, Tim Edwards, said: 'We are delighted to be working with Novartis. This partnership represents a significant collaboration for us and is a solid endorsement of Cellzome's approach to drug discovery. By working with Novartis, we are able to demonstrate our ability to leverage our technology platform to accelerate drug discovery.'

Cellzome was founded in May 2000 at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL). It has about 90 employees, in offices in Heidelberg and Cambridge, UK. They have a number of research collaborations with companies such as Bayer and Johnson & Johnson.

Global Genomics to collaborate with Rheosience A/S

Global Genomics has announced the details of a collaboration with Rheosience A/S based upon the use of tangerine® gene

expression profiling. The collaboration will be focused upon targets in metabolic diseases.

The CEO of Global Genomics, Ulf Boberg, commenting on the collaboration, said: 'This agreement is yet another confirmation of that researchers are demanding gene expression technologies that provide higher quality information. We are very excited about expanding our customer base and broadening customer awareness.'

Rheosience is based in Denmark and is an independent biotech company. It has unique animal models of the metabolic syndrome. Its staff include internationally recognised experts in the field of obesity and diabetes. Global Genomics, based in Stockholm, is involved with the development and out-licensing of tools based upon its extensive functional genomics expertise. This strength has resulted in the recent launch of tangerine® gene expression profiling, which shows the whole genome expression profile in a single experiment.

Business was written by
Steve Carney

People

Appointments

Glen A. Fine to join NCCLS as Executive Vice President

Glen Fine, currently Vice President of Ethics, Regulatory Compliance and Privacy for MDS laboratories is to join NCCLS as Executive Vice President with responsibility for the strategic, administrative, marketing and financial management of the organisation. Fine moves from MDS laboratories, where he was Vice President of operations.

Fine's appointment marks the successful completion of a year-long search, and he was keen to comment that 'I am excited to join NCCLS, an organisation which enjoys an outstanding reputation for quality in all of its products and services'. He joins at an exciting time in the history of NCCLS in

that, from 1st January 2005 the organisation will be changing its name to become the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute. Fine continued, stating: 'With the upcoming name change to CLSI, to reflect an ambitious growth agenda beyond its traditional boundaries, I am delighted to be part of the organisation at such an exciting time in its history'.

Thomas L. Hearn, NCCLS President, was enthusiastic about the new appointment, stating: 'Mr Fine and NCCLS is a very good match. Mr Fine's experience in management, marketing and finance, and his results-oriented approach and style bode well for NCCLS. I am confident that, with his leadership, NCCLS will become even more prominent as the world's finest clinical and laboratory standards-development organisation.'

Paul Hamelin appointed AlgoRx Chief Operating Officer

It was recently announced that Paul Hamelin is to be appointed to the new position of President and Chief Operating Officer of AlgoRx. He will have responsibility for the commercialisation efforts for the company's two clinical stage products, ALGRX 4975 and Powderject Dermal Lidocaine. In addition, he will be in charge of future in-licensing and global partnering initiatives to bolster existing pipeline products. He will also be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the company. Most recently, Hamelin was President and Chief Executive Officer of Elitra Pharmaceuticals. He has also held executive management positions at Abbott, Pharmacia and Millennium Pharmaceuticals.

Ronald Burch, Chief Executive Officer of AlgoRx commented that: 'Paul knows the pain market well as a result of his experience at Searle/Pharmacia and his involvement in the development of the COX-2 inhibitors for pain therapy. He has had an extremely successful career in launching and commercialising many major pharmaceutical products several of which have become today's blockbuster products.'

AlgoRx Pharmaceuticals is a private company dealing with development of compounds for pain. They are committed

to developing a diverse portfolio of products directed at the large, unsatisfied pain market. It was founded in 2001 and is headquartered in Secaucus, New Jersey, USA.

Peninsula Pharmaceuticals appoints Dennis Podlesak as CEO and President

Dennis Podlesak moves to Peninsula Pharmaceuticals as Chief Executive Officer and President from his current position of Senior Vice President at Novartis. Peninsula's former CEO, Paul Truex, will continue at the company in the role of Executive Vice President, Business Development.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors, Eckard Weber, commented that: 'We are very pleased to have a person on Dennis' calibre joining Peninsula in this leadership role.' He went on to say that: 'Dennis is a highly accomplished pharmaceutical executive with precisely the industry experience and leadership skills that we believe will transform Peninsula into a commercially successful pharmaceutical company.'

In response, Podlesak stated: 'Peninsula represents a tremendous opportunity for me to leverage my experience and build a leading biopharmaceutical company around a core team of exceptional people and a portfolio of promising products.' He went on to add: 'I am confident this company will have a dramatic impact on

the quality of life for a significantly large patient population whose medical needs are currently not being met.'

Awards

Alan Heaton to be awarded the Lampitt medal

The Society of Chemical Industry are to award Alan Heaton, Professor of Chemical Education at the Liverpool John Moores University, with the prestigious Lampitt medal. The award was named after the brewer, Leslie Herbert Lampitt, who was one of the first people to establish a specialist food laboratory. He held the position of SCI world president in the immediate post war years (1946–1948).

Heaton has been active in the SCI, on the awards and section support committees. In addition he has chaired the Liverpool section and directed the SCI Liverpool schools/industry project intended to reverse the decline in young people taking science, engineering and technology at University. His teaching areas are in Organic and Industrial Chemistry and his main areas of research is in the preparation and reactivity of compounds used in drugs and pesticides.

People was written by
Steve Carney