

cedar pollinosis. In the 1950s, Japan embarked upon a program of widespread reforestation efforts. Cedar trees were chosen due to their rapid rate of growth. Today, cedar trees cover over 12% of the landmass in Japan and produce vast amounts of pollen, which can be seen wafting over the forests in great clouds during the allergy season. Japan today is the world's second largest market for prescription and over-the-counter drugs for treatment of allergy, with over \$2 billion in sales of these drugs annually representing approximately 20% of global sales.

Xantos Biomedicine signs service agreement with Serono

Xantos Biomedicine AG (<http://www.xantos.de>), a leading functional biology and drug discovery company announced that it has signed an agreement with Serono (<http://www.serono.com/index.jsp>), Europe's leading biotechnology company, to discover new secreted proteins for diagnostics and drug candidates. The terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Xantos will analyse proteins encoded by Serono's proprietary cDNA libraries and apply a cellular assay allowing the identification of only secreted factors. This program will be employed in XantoScreen™, a high-throughput, fully automated gene isolation, transfection and assay system. Xantos will deliver to Serono a cDNA collection with single clones encoding these extracellular molecules with therapeutic and diagnostic relevance.

Michael Kazinski, Xantos' CTO commented: 'we are delighted that a company of Serono's calibre has recognized the value of Xantos technology. Most approaches towards identifying secreted proteins are dependent on bioinformatic annotation, which predicts these molecules based on their leader sequence. However it is known that many of these proteins do not have defined signature sequence and therefore cannot be identified by a bioinformatics approach. Our unbiased, functional approach enables identification of all types of secreted proteins.'

Serge Halazy, Head of the Serono Pharmaceutical Research Institute (SPRI) commented: 'we are impressed with Xantos' high-throughput library screening capabilities and extensive experience in assay development, which allows functional analysis of around 100,000 genes in just one month. The identification of therapeutically relevant secreted proteins is key to the success of this project. The collaboration with Xantos enables the realisation of our idea in a time and cost effective manner.'

Roche and Pharmasset join forces to develop new generation hepatitis C therapies

Roche and Pharmasset today announced a partnership to develop nucleoside polymerase inhibitors for the treatment of chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infections. Pharmasset will receive an upfront fee, research and development support, and milestone payments that could total \$168 million for PSI-6130, the lead nucleoside

compound of the partnership. In addition, Pharmasset will receive royalties on product sales and retain certain co-promotion rights in the USA.

PSI-6130 has the potential to offer greater efficacy and activity against the hepatitis C virus, especially when used in combination with Roche's Pegasys and Copegus. For patients not responding to today's standard of care therapy, the addition of nucleoside polymerase inhibitors to their treatment regimen may offer benefit.

'Pharmasset's expertise in nucleoside drug discovery and early stage clinical development combined with Roche's proven track record in bringing new and improved hepatitis C therapies to market is a formula for success,' stated Schaefer Price, Pharmasset's President and CEO. 'The economics of this deal are significant. In addition, this partnership will support Pharmasset's activities toward establishing a commercial infrastructure for our HIV and HCV clinical candidates.'

'We believe that nucleosides are likely to be an important class of drugs in HCV treatment,' said Jonathan K.C. Knowles, President of Global Research. 'PSI-6130 fits perfectly within our virology portfolio. When used in combination with Pegasys and Copegus, this therapy may offer significant benefit to patients who have previously been resistant to treatment, especially those with a difficult to treat virus.'

Business was written by
Matthew Thorne

People

Appointments

MedImmune Promotes Edward Connor to Executive VP and Chief Medical Officer and Appoints New Senior Executives

MedImmune (<http://www.medimmune.com>) has announced the promotion of Edward Connor, formerly senior Vice President of clinical development and Chief

Medical Officer, to Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer. In addition, the company has appointed George Kemble to Vice President, viral vaccines research and development, and general manager of MedImmune's California facilities, and Dirk Reitsma to Vice President, clinical development, oncology. MedImmune has also recently expanded its management team with the additions of Mark Spring, Vice President, finance and controller,

and Sam Yonren Vice President, product safety.

'Ed's promotion reflects his many contributions to MedImmune's success over the past 10 years,' said David M. Mott, president and Chief Executive Officer at MedImmune. 'His dedication as a physician to our corporate mission of advancing science for better health has helped to solidify MedImmune's position as a leader in the biotech industry and in bringing innovative and improved products to market.'

'As MedImmune has grown, so has the breadth and depth of our management

team,' Mott added. 'I am pleased to recognize the hard work and accomplishments of several of our leaders who have contributed to the continued success of the company, whose talent and scientific expertise will help fuel future growth.'

Synta Pharmaceuticals strengthens management team with new scientific and business appointments

Synta Pharmaceuticals (<http://www.syntapharma.com>) an emerging pharmaceutical company, has announced the appointment of Ninad Deshpanday as Vice President, Drug Product Development. He comes to Synta from Cardinal Health where he was the Technical Business Director responsible for business development and strategic technical functions within the Pharmaceuticals division. Deshpanday has over 14 years' experience in product development and drug delivery technology and has led the product development efforts behind numerous successful filings with regulatory agencies in the USA, Europe, and Japan, across multiple therapeutic areas including dermatology, cardiology, and cancer.

'We have made significant progress over the past year advancing our clinical pipeline,' said Keizo Koya Senior Vice President, Drug Development at Synta. 'Ninad's expertise in manufacturing, formulation, and product development, and his experience with multiple investigational new drug submissions and new drug applications will be invaluable to Synta as we continue to advance our pipeline to commercial readiness.'

Theratechnologies appoint new President and Chief Executive Officer

Theratechnologies (<http://www.theratech.com>) recently announced the appointment of Yves Rosconi as President and Chief Executive Officer. Rosconi fills the position currently held by Luc Tanguay who becomes Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer.

Rosconi brings more than 25 years of global pharmaceutical experience to Theratechnologies. He began his career with Abbott Laboratories in Montreal working primarily in GMP production management and technical services. From there he went on to spend 21 years with Rhone-Poulenc Rorer in Canada and

Australia with increasing responsibilities in sales, marketing and general management.

Theratechnologies Company Chairman, A. J. de Grandpre, noted: 'Mr. Rosconi is a highly accomplished leader, with a profile that will complement the talents of Theratechnologies' existing management team extremely well. His experience runs the gamut – drug development, product in-and-out licensing, market access management and government relations, sales and marketing – as well as executive management and strategic planning.'

Advancis Pharmaceutical names Donald C. Anderson Vice President of discovery

Advancis Pharmaceutical Corporation (<http://www.advancispharm.com>), a pharmaceutical company focused on developing and commercializing novel anti-infective products, has recently named Donald C. Anderson Vice President of discovery. Anderson will plan and direct all discovery and basic research programs for Advancis, as well as provide strategic and operational input regarding development activities, clinical programs and registration strategies for Advancis' clinical trial programs.

'Don's experience in driving the discovery of new compounds and products combined with his proven research abilities make him an excellent addition to the Advancis executive team', said Edward M. Rudnic, Chairman, President and CEO of Advancis.

Anderson was formerly global head of pharmacogenomics and clinical affairs and senior distinguished scientist within the clinical discovery and human pharmacology division at Aventis Pharmaceuticals Corporation. From 1992 until 2003, Anderson worked within Pharmacia and its heritage companies, ultimately serving as executive director of human genetics and pharmacogenomics at Pharmacia.

Awards

Medical geneticists elected to Institute of Medicine

Two medical geneticists from the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI; <http://www.genome.gov>), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), have been elected to the Institute of Medicine (IOM; <http://www.iom.edu>) of the National Academies, one of the highest

honours in the fields of medicine and health, it was announced today.

NHGRI Deputy Director Alan E. Guttmacher and Robert L. Nussbaum, chief of the Genetic Disease Research Branch and acting chief of the Inherited Disease Research Branch in NHGRI's Division of Intramural Research, are among the 65 new members of IOM, which is a national resource for independently informed analysis and recommendations on issues related to human health. With their election, members make a commitment to devote a significant amount of time as volunteers for IOM committees, which conduct a broad range of studies on health policy issues.

'We are thrilled that the Institute of Medicine has recognized Drs Guttmacher and Nussbaum for their outstanding professional achievements and commitment to service. Along with many others at NHGRI, these two physicians have been at the forefront of efforts to translate the findings of the Human Genome Project into new strategies for improving human health. The IOM surely will benefit from their membership,' said NHGRI Director Francis S. Collins, who was himself elected to the IOM in 1991.

As deputy director of NHGRI, Guttmacher guides strategic planning for the institute and plays a lead role in integrating genomics into medical practice. In addition, as director of NHGRI's Office of Policy, Communications and Education, Guttmacher oversees the institute's health affairs, public policy, communications, community outreach and public education functions.

Nussbaum, who is currently the president of the American Society of Human Genetics, came to NHGRI in 1993. His research has made significant contributions to identifying the genetic abnormalities and disease mechanisms in Lowe Syndrome and Parkinson disease. In addition to his branch chief roles at NHGRI, Nussbaum is an executive faculty member of the Joint NIH-Johns Hopkins University Genetic Counseling Training Program. He also administers the Center for Inherited Disease Research, a high-throughput genotyping facility funded by a consortium of 12 NIH institutes that supports genetic research worldwide.

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