

The proposed channel is closed by a plug formed by a short helix (TM2a), which extends to the middle of the channel. This plug might move away during the translocation across the membrane. However, even when the plug is moved out, the channel would still be sealed by a pore ring formed by six conserved hydrophobic residues. Therefore, the membrane barrier is maintained during translocation.

- 7 van den Berg, B. *et al.* (2004) X-ray structure of a protein-conducting channel. *Nature* 427, 36–44

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Grant me a wish...

Science Info (<http://www.escienceinfo.com>) have announced the publication of an eNewsletter, the goal of which is to keep scientists informed of the latest information regarding grant and award opportunities in Life Sciences.

Contents of the first eNewsletter included: The Ellison Medical Foundation grant; The Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative Organisation; Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation grant; Pfizer Viagra Research Grants; American Cancer Society Grants; American Parkinson Disease Association, as well as useful websites.

To Subscribe for future issues, please visit <http://www.escienceinfo.com/grant.htm>.

People

Appointments

Immtech names new CSO

Lawrence A. Potempa has been appointed as Chief Scientific Officer for Immtech International (<http://www.immtech.biz>), a pharmaceutical company dedicated to the commercialization of oral treatments for infectious diseases, fungal infections, tropical diseases and pneumonia.

Potempa has more than 25 years' experience in medical research and drug development in the areas of microbiology, biochemistry and immunology. His research focused on the development of substances that boost the human immune system and strengthen body defences against infection and cancer. This new role will involve working with Immtech's Scientific Consortium, which consists of 12 university research groups, working to accelerate drug discoveries into human clinical trials.

Potempa commented that: 'I am very happy to see increased foundation support toward solving global health problems. Increases in international travel and population migration cause new and challenging health threats that our drug candidates are in studies to address.' The company's drug development pipeline currently contains compounds that are claimed to be effective against a diverse range of such infections.

New appointments at CLOSURE Medical

CLOSURE Medical Corporation (<http://www.closuremed.com>), a leader in biomaterial-based medical devices, has announced the appointment of three new Vice Presidents. J. Michael Hoban, Bruce J. Krattenmaker and Gabe N. Szabo have taken the positions of Vice Presidents of Human Resources, Regulatory, Clinical and Quality Assurance and New Product Development, respectively.

CLOSURE President and CEO, Daniel A. Pelak remarked: 'During 2003, we have been executing a strategic plan that requires the continued development of multiple products and expansion into new markets. As a part of this plan, we have expanded our management team and realigned our organization with a view towards achieving our strategic objectives.'

Business

Collaborations

Bayer and Galapagos in target discovery collaboration

Galapagos Genomics (<http://www.galapagosgenomics.com>) have announced a target discovery collaboration with Bayer Healthcare (<http://www.bayer.com>) to discovery and validate novel drug targets. Galapagos will use its target discovery collections SilenceSelect™ and FlexSelect™.

Onno van de Stolpe, Chief Executive Officer of Galapagos, said: 'This partnership again underlines the competitive edge of our company in combining our SilenceSelect and FlexSelect libraries with high throughput disease biology.'

SilenceSelect is a collection of adenoviruses with siRNA based knockdown sequences targeting >4000 human druggable genes; FlexSelect is the mirror collection of adenoviruses with full-length genes from the druggable gene classes.

Galapagos is a drug discovery company focussed on the identification and validation of disease modifying drug targets by functional screening in human disease models, whose research activities encompass programs in osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis and Alzheimer's disease.

Epigenomics and Wyeth collaborate to identify drug response markers

Epigenomics (<http://www.epigenomics.com>) have announced an initial collaboration with Wyeth Pharmaceuticals (<http://www.wyeth.com>). This will involve the analysis, by Epigenomics, of DNA methylation biomarkers – in a murine xenograft model – that change after administration of an anti-cancer compound from Wyeth.

DNA methylation is a natural switch that controls gene expression giving rise to distinct patterns in cells. Such biomarkers could be further developed into drug response markers, predicting those patients who will benefit from drugs and those who will not.

Christina Dahlstroem, Vice President Product Development for Epigenomics' Pharma Technology business unit, said: 'DNA methylation analysis could be the detection method of choice for markers distinguishing between responders and non-responders to oncology drugs.'

Epigenomics is committed to personalizing medicine in cancer and other complex diseases by developing novel diagnostic and pharmacodiagnostic products.

Business was written by *Joanne Clough*