

Newton Biocapital I Invests in J-Pharma Co.,Ltd. for Drug Development Targeting LAT1 for Cancer and Autoimmune Diseases

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, August 27, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Newton Biocapital I ("Newton"), an investment company in life sciences, focusing on the treatment and prevention of chronic diseases, with activities in Europe and Japan, has announced its second investment in Japan. Newton invested JPY 480 million (EUR 4 million) – split in two tranches - in J-Pharma Co., Ltd. ("J-Pharma") as part of a total Series D round of JPY 1.746 billion (EUR 14.55 million) as of July 30, 2020. Newton's investment in J-Pharma was also its first new investment after it has closed its fund raising at EUR 114 million.

From its establishment in 2005, J-Pharma, a clinical stage bio-venture company with a special focus on membrane transporters, has been conducting an array of unique drug developments under the leadership of Hitoshi Endou, MD., Ph.D., formerly a professor of Kyorin University Faculty of Medicine. Recently J-Pharma has been placing the highest priority on the clinical development of its original inhibitors of L-type amino acid transporter 1 ("LAT1") for the treatment of advanced cancer patients who failed to benefit from standard chemotherapy, and for initiating development opportunities in autoimmune diseases.

J-Pharma is endeavoring to develop JPH203 for the treatment of refractory advanced biliary tract cancer, OKY-034 for the treatment of refractory advanced pancreatic cancer and LAT1 inhibitors for the treatment of autoimmune diseases. J-Pharma will continue to focus on the research and development of its own proprietary, innovative medicines in areas with high unmet medical needs in collaboration with leading research institutions around the world and to prove the clinical usefulness of these medicines through strictly controlled clinical studies.

Masuhiko (Max) Yoshitake, President & CEO of J-Pharma commented: "In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, investments by domestic venture capital firms and oversea venture capital firm Newton Biocapital I, as well as by pharmaceutical companies with deep expertise, clearly show that our company's fundamental drug development strategy with a special focus on membrane transporters, particularly LAT1, is highly regarded as an unique and valuable approach. By utilizing this fund, we must strive to the utmost to carry out well-controlled clinical studies of our original compounds inhibiting LAT1, a molecular target discovered by Dr. Endou, to prove the clinical usefulness of these compounds. Our ultimate goal is to deliver these medicines to patients with diseases for which there is no cure as soon as possible."

Dr. Toshiyuki Mori, Investment Partner of Newton, commented: "As Newton's second investment project in Japan, we are extremely pleased to have invested in J-Pharma. LAT1 is a unique, distinguished, and attractive molecular target not only for oncology but also for autoimmune diseases. By involving Newton Biocapital's experienced members in drug R&D and our global business development experts, we are assisting J-Pharma in delivering novel medicines to patients with diseases for which there is no cure. We look forward to contributing to the further expansion of J-Pharma's business."

Dr. Guy Heynen, MD, Investment Partner and CMO of Newton, commented: "There is a large body of pre-clinical evidence, in the scientific literature, associating LAT1 expression on cancer cells and cancer progression, suggesting a potential role for LAT1 inhibition in improving clinical outcomes in a great variety of human cancer types. LAT1 is an interesting emerging target in clinical oncology. (*)"

(*) https://res.mdpi.com/d_attachment/ijms/ijms-20-02428/article_deploy/ijms-20-02428.pdf

About J-Pharma

Name: J-Pharma Co., Ltd.

Location; 75-1 Onocho, Tsurumi-ku, Yokohama, Kanagawa

Representative Director: Masuhiro Yoshitake, President & CEO

Business Activities: Pharmaceutical Research & Development

Capital: JPY 50 million (as of May 31, 2020)

Establishment: 26 December 2005

Company Homepage: http://www.j-pharma.com/index_e.php

About JPH203 and OKY-034

JPH203 is J-Pharma's original small molecule competitively inhibiting amino acid binding pocket of LAT1 which expresses on the cell membrane when a cell needs huge amounts of energy due to rapid proliferation and/or activation. JPH203 is the first LAT1-targeted compound undergoing clinical studies and will become the first-in-class medicine if approved by competent authorities. J-Pharma confirmed its tolerability and preliminary efficacy in advanced solid cancer patients through a Phase 1 study, also discovered a biomarker capable of distinguishing a patient sub-population which would have less adverse events and to be more susceptible to JPH203. Using this biomarker as a companion diagnostic, JPH203 is now undergoing a Phase 2 clinical study for the treatment of advanced biliary tract cancer patients who failed to benefit from standard chemotherapy.

OKY-034 is a novel small molecule allosterically binding the LAT1 and holding the amino acid up-taking movements. J-Pharma executed a world-wide, exclusive license (with sub-license) agreement with Osaka University and KNC Laboratories Co., Ltd., both of which possess the composition patent for OKY-034. At Osaka University, a physician-sponsored Phase 1/2a clinical study of OKY-034 is underway for the treatment of advanced, unresectable pancreatic cancer patients who failed to benefit from standard chemotherapy.

About Newton Biocapital I

Brussels, Belgium; Alain Parthoens, Managing Partner

Newton Biocapital I is a Venture Capital Firm incorporated in Belgium, focused on financing biotech and life science projects in Europe and Japan for the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases. The fund's approach as lead investor is to support promising start-up projects as well as neglected or undervalued late-stage projects, in order to mitigate the risks and to create investor value. The leadership team consists of specialists with long-standing management and investor experience who coach bio-entrepreneurs through the development stages of their projects. Newton Biocapital's mission is to generate substantial financial and societal value by providing innovative, breakthrough, and affordable solutions to patients.

Media Contact

Toshiyuki Mori (Investment Partner)

Newton Biocapital I - Japan

toshiyuki.mori@newtonbiocapital.com

+32 476 66 08 85

Alain Parthoens

Newton Biocapital I - Belgium

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/524864286>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2020 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.