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ABBOTT LICENSES NEW ANESTHESIA DRUG FROM ORION CORP.

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ABBOTT PARK, Ill., Oct. 26 /PRNewswire/ -- Abbott Laboratories (NYSE: ABT) has signed a licensing agreement with Orion Corp. (Espoo, Finland) for the rights to develop and market dexmedetomidine, an alpha-2 agonist discovered by Orion. Alpha-2 agonists are a new class of drugs under investigation for the purpose of relieving physiological stress during and after surgery.

Abbott has been granted exclusive worldwide rights for dexmedetomidine, with the exception of Scandinavia, where Orion retains exclusive rights. Both companies will manufacture finished product.

Dexmedetomidine has been investigated by Orion Pharma, the pharmaceutical division of Orion Corp., as an anesthetic adjunct in clinical trials. Results of these studies indicate that dexmedetomidine may have unique characteristics which may benefit patients during and after surgery. It has been shown to stabilize hemodynamic responses to stressful stimuli during anesthesia and surgery. Dexmedetomidine also has been shown to decrease the amount of anesthetic and analgesic drugs needed during and after surgery. Preliminary studies also indicate that dexmedetomidine may reduce the incidence and severity of perioperative myocardial ischemia caused by surgical stress.

"Dexmedetomidine will broaden Abbott's market-leading anesthesia product offering," said Irene Hrusovsky, M.D., worldwide venture head, Abbott Laboratories. "The drug's potential for control of the stress responses during and after surgery may reduce post-operative side effects and complications. We believe these attributes may ultimately reduce costs and improve patient outcomes."

Abbott plans to conduct worldwide clinical trials which, if successful, would lead to regulatory filings beginning in late 1997.

Orion Pharma is Finland's leading health care company. The company develops, manufactures and markets finished pharmaceutical products and bulk drugs. It has devoted research to anesthesia, neurology, cancer, cardiac insufficiency, asthma and treatment of post-menopausal symptoms.

Abbott Laboratories is a world leader in anesthesia products. The company manufactures and markets a broad line of anesthesia drugs, drug delivery systems, pain management technologies and value-added disposables.

Abbott Laboratories is a worldwide manufacturer of health care products, employing 50,000 people. In 1993, the company's sales and net earnings were \$8.4 billion and \$1.4 billion, respectively, with earnings per share of \$1.69.

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