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NEW TREATMENT FOR PROSTATE CANCER UNDER DEVELOPMENT

Boehringer Ingelheim (BI) and British Technology Group (BTG) have signed an agreement granting BI an option to an exclusive licence to develop and market the new compound, CB7630, for treating androgen-dependent disease.

CB7630 is mainly aimed at treating hormone-dependent prostate cancer. Prostate cancer is a common disease in the western countries with approximately 180,000 new cases each year. Because the incidence of prostate cancer increases with old age, effective treatment becomes a greater priority as the proportion of elderly in the population grows.

In 75 - 80 % of cases, tumours of the prostate respond to hormonal therapy. Current clinical interest has focused on the concept of total blockade of the effects of both testicular and adrenal androgen production using an anti-androgen and LHRH agonist in combination. Early research suggests that CB7630 will cause rapid and profound suppression of serum testosterone levels and it is hoped that it will provide a convenient, single orally active drug for use as an alternative to combination therapy.

CB7630 was discovered at the CRC Centre for Cancer Therapeutics at the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR), Sutton, UK. BTG funded much of the early development work and has filed patent applications in major territories worldwide. The Cancer Research Campaign plans to conduct a Phase I clinical trial of CB7630 at the Royal Marsden Hospital in London. If BI exercises its option, BI will take full responsibility for subsequent development.

BTG will receive payments from BI linked to development milestones and a royalty based on sales. These revenues will be shared with the ICR and CRC under BTG's normal terms of business.

Dr Peter Bailey, Head of Biosciences at BTG said "CB7630 is an important addition to BTG's portfolio of cancer drugs in development by major pharmaceutical companies worldwide. There is a clear need for improved treatment of prostate cancer. We are delighted to have reached agreement with Boehringer Ingelheim to take CB7630 forward."

Prof. Rolf Krebs, Member of the Board of Managing Directors of Boehringer Ingelheim pointed out that Boehringer Ingelheim's interest in CB7630 was clearly in line with its strategic R&D focus of getting involved with innovative concepts in therapeutic areas with a high unmet medical need.

Professor Gordon McVie, Director CRC Scientific Department said: "The Cancer Research Campaign has a major programme on the development of new anti-cancer drugs and has established, at the Institute of Cancer Research, the CRC centre for cancer therapeutics, which is the largest multi-disciplinary unit for anti-cancer drug development in the UK. ICR, in conjunction with the Royal Marsden NHS Trust constitutes a world-class centre of excellence for cancer research."

BTG's business is the profitable commercialisation of technology. With nearly 50 years' experience of patenting and licensing technology to industry worldwide, BTG has considerable expertise in the protection, development and marketing of intellectual property. BTG holds around 10,000 patents and patent applications covering some 1400 inventions with approximately 500 licence agreements. It operates on an international basis with offices in the UK, USA, Japan and India.

Boehringer Ingelheim is an international corporation with headquarters in Ingelheim, Germany, operating in the fields of pharmaceutical, biological, and chemical products. With about 160 companies, the Boehringer Ingelheim corporation is represented on every continent. With its own research, production and distribution facilities it ranks among the 20 major pharmaceutical companies worldwide.

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