



ELIXIR
PHARMACEUTICALS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Elixir Extends IP Surrounding SirT Deacetylases with Exclusive License to SirT2 and SirT3 Patents from University of California

- Eric Verdin, M.D. of Gladstone Institute of Virology and Immunology at UCSF Joins Elixir's Scientific Advisory Board -

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – December 16, 2004 - Elixir Pharmaceuticals, Inc. announced today that it has secured an exclusive license to intellectual property from the Regents of the University of California (UC) relating to work done by Eric Verdin, M.D. and his research group with SirT2 and SirT3, two members of the sirtuin family of deacetylases, also known as Class III HDACs. In addition, Elixir announced the addition of Dr. Verdin to the Company's Scientific Advisory Board.

Peter DiStefano, Ph.D., Chief Scientific Officer at Elixir commented, "This license agreement with the University of California represents a valuable addition to our existing intellectual property portfolio surrounding the SirT family of deacetylases. In addition to securing an important license, with Dr. Verdin's addition to the Company's Scientific Advisory Board, we gain the ability to work with a key thought leader, Dr. Eric Verdin, to exploit the roles of SirT2 and SirT3 in physiology and disease."

The sirtuins are related to Sir2, a gene identified in yeast that is conserved across species and implicated in the control of lifespan, metabolism and resistance to stress. Elixir holds an exclusive license from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to work surrounding Sir2 and SirT1 conducted in the laboratory of Company co-founder, Leonard Guarente, Ph.D.

Eric M. Verdin, M.D. is Associate Director at the Gladstone Institute of Virology and Immunology and a Professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). One focus area in Dr. Verdin's laboratory is the role of protein acetylation in biological processes, particularly in modulating the immune response. Specifically, his laboratory studies histone deacetylase enzymes (HDACs) that remove acetyl groups from histones and non-histone proteins. Acetylation is a ubiquitous modification affecting a rapidly growing number of cellular proteins and biological processes. Dr. Verdin's group has demonstrated that two members of the human sirtuin family of HDACs, SirT2 and SirT3, deacetylate non-histone substrates, including tubulin and mitochondrial proteins.

"I am pleased that Elixir has taken a strong interest in our expertise and our intellectual property surrounding sirtuin biology," commented Dr. Verdin. "I look forward to continued interactions with Elixir scientists to explore the development and commercialization of our work on the sirtuins."

Dr. DiStefano added, “We have found that the Class III HDACs are a compelling group of new drug targets as they appear to have roles in processes that critically affect cell cycle and metabolism. This license broadens our ability to fully explore the potential of sirtuins in our discovery and development programs seeking new drugs to treat and or prevent metabolic diseases.”

About Elixir

Elixir Pharmaceuticals is focused on discovering and developing new drugs for metabolic disorders based on a unique understanding of the genetics of aging. Elixir scientists have identified many important genes that regulate aging and the proteins encoded by those genes are the targets of the company’s drug discovery efforts. More information about Elixir is available at www.elixirpharm.com.

About the Gladstone Institutes

The primary research efforts of the J. David Gladstone Institutes are focused on three of the most important clinical problems of modern times: cardiovascular disease, AIDS, and neurodegenerative disorders. The three institutes include the Gladstone Institute of Cardiovascular Disease, the Gladstone Institute of Virology and Immunology and the Gladstone Institute of Neurological Disease, and are located at a new research facility adjacent to the Mission Bay campus of the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). While independent, Gladstone is formally affiliated with UCSF, and Gladstone investigators hold university appointments and participate in many university activities, including the teaching and training of graduate students.

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