Bristol-Myers Squibb Company And Exelixis Pharmaceuticals Announce Unique Genetic Model Systems Alliance

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Bristol-Myers Squibb Company (NYSE:BMY) and Exelixis Pharmaceuticals, Inc. today announced they have entered into a three-year research collaboration to identify novel, validated targets for new medicines using model system genetics. Exelixis will utilize its proprietary technology to determine the molecular targets of compounds provided by Bristol-Myers Squibb. As part of the collaboration, Bristol-Myers Squibb and Exelixis will share certain core technologies in genomics and lead optimization.

Under the terms of the agreement, Bristol-Myers Squibb will provide Exelixis with research funding and additional payments subject to the achievement of research and commercialization milestones. Exelixis, a leading model systems genetics, genomics and informatics company, will contribute to the work of Bristol-Myers Squibb's internal Department of Applied Genomics. Both companies have programs in model system genetics, the study of organisms such as yeast, worms (C. elegans) and fruit flies (Drosophila), to better understand disease genetics in humans. Many genes and gene functions present in these model systems are conserved in humans, but are much easier to study in these simpler genetic systems.

"Our collaboration with Exelixis is the first of its kind in human pharmaceuticals. We'll be using model system genetics to identify validated targets by analyzing the mechanism of action of compounds. Target validation has traditionally been a key bottleneck in the search for new therapies, so we're particularly excited about this approach," said Elliott Sigal, M.D., Ph.D., senior vice president, Early Discovery and Applied Technology, Bristol-Myers Squibb. "This is part of our overall strategy to externally align and internally integrate, meaning that we partner with companies, like Exelixis, that offer the most promising technology and approaches in specialized areas. Then, our scientists can apply this knowledge across our pipeline of new compounds so we can bring the most innovative medicines forward."

Commenting on the partnership, Geoffrey Duyk, M.D., Ph.D., chief scientific officer, Exelixis, said, "This collaboration with Bristol-Myers Squibb leverages our ability to use our target-based model genetic systems to rapidly identify pharmaceutical targets. The Mechanism of Action (MOA) Program, the foundation of which is based on employing our core expertise in genetics, was built upon our successful work in agriculture. However, we soon realized that the pharmaceutical industry could also benefit from an efficient, rapid approach to determine the mechanism of action of compounds. We anticipate that this will be the first in a series of collaborations focused on the research derived from our MOA Program."

As part of the collaboration, Bristol-Myers Squibb and Exelixis will exchange certain core technologies in genomics and lead optimization. Bristol-Myers Squibb will acquire Exelixis technology including a sublicense to the patented P-element technology, tools to manipulate genes in Drosophila and C. elegans, and access to the company's Drosophila proprietary EST database, FlyTag™. Exelixis will acquire proprietary BMS lead optimization technology. Exelixis will utilize this technology together with other assets to further develop its own internal discovery efforts.

"The lead optimization technology obtained from BMS is a powerful complement to the technology recently acquired from MetaXen. The acquisition of this technology is an important step towards building a world-class drug discovery capability at Exelixis. The technology exchange with BMS is a very interesting aspect to our relationship that will have significant benefits for both companies." stated George Scangos, Ph.D., president and chief executive officer, Exelixis.

Exelixis Pharmaceuticals, Inc., through its alliance with Artemis Pharmaceuticals, represents the premiere model system genetics organization focused on the identification and validation of novel screening targets and proteins for the pharmaceutical, diagnostic, agricultural, and animal health industries. Its PathFinder™ Technology utilizes a systematic genetics approach in model organisms including Drosophila, C. elegans, zebrafish and mice to identify critical genes in disease and physiological pathways, determine functional relationships and select optimal targets for intervention. Exelixis' research programs include the areas of CNS, inflammation, metabolic disease, oncology, and agricultural biotechnology.

Bristol-Myers Squibb is a diversified worldwide health and personal care company whose principal businesses are pharmaceuticals, consumer medicines, beauty care, nutritionals, and medical devices. It is a leading maker of innovative therapies for cardiovascular, metabolic and infectious diseases, central nervous system and dermatological disorders, and cancer. The company is a leader in consumer medicines, orthopedic devices, ostomy care, wound management, nutritional supplements, infant formulas, and hair and skin care products.

Visit Bristol-Myers Squibb on the World Wide Web at www.bms.com.