

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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DENVER BIOTECH COMPANY LICENSES UT SOUTHWESTERN DISCOVERIES AIMED AT HEART-DISEASE DRUG DEVELOPMENT

DALLAS – February 29, 2000 – Denver-based biotechnology company Myogen and UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas have announced a new patent and technology-licensing agreement and the establishment of collaborative research programs targeted at developing drugs to treat heart failure.

“Our discoveries that have been licensed are an important advancement in our understanding of the molecular pathways involved in both heart enlargement and heart failure,” said Dr. Eric Olson, chairman of molecular biology at UT Southwestern and a world-renowned cardiac-disease researcher. “We have found methods to inhibit genes involved in these conditions and also how to control skeletal and heart-muscle development.”

In addition to four heart-related discoveries by Olson and his research team, licensing of another discovery made by Olson and Dr. Stephen Grant of the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth is being transferred to Myogen.

That work involves a calcium-signaling system that controls cardiac enlargement and the development of genetically engineered mice that mimic human heart disease. The investigation of this showed that two existing immunosuppressive drugs, cyclosporine A and FK506, could prevent hypertrophy, or enlarged heart, in mice by targeting the enzyme calcineurin.

Cardiac hypertrophy is the heart’s natural response to stress, including that caused by hypertension or heart attacks. Eventually the enlargement weakens the heart, causing it to behave like spent elastic and unable to pump a sufficient amount of blood. This results in heart failure, or cardiomyopathy.

More than 5 million Americans suffer from congestive heart failure, which causes about

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260,000 deaths annually.

Dr. William Freytag, president and chief executive officer of Myogen, said Olson's and Grant's work meshes well with the company's goal to apply new genomic and proteomic technologies to develop new drugs to prevent and treat heart failure.

"We are delighted to have established such a strong collaborative arrangement with these two premier laboratories in the area of heart-failure research," Freytag said. "We have succeeded in assembling a world-class drug-discovery and clinical-development team with considerable expertise in state-of-the-art genomic, transgenic and proteomic technologies pertaining to heart-disease research."

Myogen is a privately held biopharmaceutical company engaged in the research and development of drugs for treatment of heart failure. Myogen's lead development therapeutic, an oral formulation of enoximone, will enter Phase III clinical trials in mid 2000 for the treatment of advanced heart failure. The company's intravenous formulation of enoximone, Perfan I.V., is currently being sold in European countries for the acute treatment of severe heart failure.

Olson, a founding scientist of Myogen, also is director of the UT Southwestern Nancy B. and Jake L. Hamon Center for Basic Research in Cancer, a principal investigator for UT Southwestern's Donald W. Reynolds Cardiovascular Clinical Research Center.

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