

Santaris Pharma's HIF-1 alpha antagonist begins second phase 1 study against solid tumours and lymphoma

Enzon Pharmaceuticals, Inc. has initiated a second clinical study of EZN-2968 to evaluate additional dosing schedule

06.11.2007 - Santaris Pharma A/S announced the initiation of an open-label, non-randomized Phase 1 study with its HIF-1 alpha antagonist (EZN-2968) licensed outside Europe in 2006 to Enzon Pharmaceuticals, Inc. USA. The study is designed to evaluate the safety, tolerability, and pharmacokinetics of the HIF-1 alpha antagonist in a daily for 5 days schedule in approximately 30 patients with advanced solid tumors or lymphoma.

The investigational drug blocks the production of Hypoxia-inducible factor-1 alpha (HIF-1 alpha), a key regulator of a large number of genes important in cancer biology, including many involved in angiogenesis, cell proliferation, apoptosis and cell invasion. HIF-1 alpha is low in normal cells, but elevated in a variety of cancers. High expression of HIF-1 alpha is strongly correlated with poor prognosis and resistance to therapy. Therefore, drugs that inhibit HIF-1 alpha are expected to block multiple mechanisms that control cancer progression.

Enzon Pharmaceuticals took over the development EZN-2968 from Santaris Pharma in July 2006 along with a Survivin RNA antagonist but is developing both drugs for the commercial benefit of both companies. If successful, Enzon will market the drugs outside Europe and Santaris Pharma will commercialize them within Europe. The companies are also collaborating in drug discovery to create up to six additional proprietary product candidates from Santaris Pharma's LNA technology platform. The novel RNA antagonists are all directed against novel cancer targets selected by Enzon.

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