Company communication

Medipol receives €2.5 million EU research grant to develop novel influenza vaccine

Lausanne, 10 May 2010

Medipol, a biotech company based at the EPFL Science Park in Lausanne, Switzerland, will be heading a consortium of four European partners to develop a next generation vaccine against the influenza virus. The four-year development program is funded by a € 2.5 million grant from the European Union[1]. Medipol's partners in the project are the Institute of Virology and Immunoprophylaxis (IVI) in Mittelhäusern, Switzerland; the University of Manchester, UK and the German SME EMC microcollections GmbH. The company's Hynosphere™ technology platform will be the cornerstone of the novel approach. Influenza spreads around the world in seasonal epidemics, killing between a quarter and half a million people every year, and more during pandemics.

The consortium led by Medipol uses innovative RNA-based materials developed at the Swiss-based IVI. RNA based approaches provide a much higher safety profile compared DNA technology whilst maintaining the advantage of a prolonged immune response. Additionally, compared to proteins currently used in vaccines their main advantage is that they can be produced synthetically. The RNA-platform has already shown to provide protection to pigs in virus challenge studies.

"All participants in the project are experts in their specific field and together we constitute a unique team that has access to significant resources," says Medipol's CEO Carsten Laue. "With its proprietary Hynosphere™ technology, Medipol brings in an innovative nanodelivery vehicle into the development of next generation vaccines based on IVI's RNA-platform."

Seasonal and pandemic influenza viruses are challenging public health care systems: the virus is able to change frequently, thus, vaccine doses need to be adapted at short notice. Producing traditional vaccine doses use eggs or cell culture. Both methods are costly and time-consuming. Thanks to the synthetic character of the novel vaccine, the consortium anticipates to develop a formulation requiring only a fraction of the usual three-month production time.

"I consider this research grant to be a sign of confidence in Medipol's technology" says Medipol Board Member Daniel Fustier. "This technology can bring substantial benefits to protect people against infectious diseases. The leverage potential of the technology lies in the therapeutic field to prevent cancer or treat genetic disorders."

About Medipol

Medipol works to develop next generation immunotherapeutic treatments with broad applications against infectious disease (influenza or flu), cancer, genetic disorders and biodefense threats. It addresses significant unmet medical needs or substantially improves standards of care. Medipol's proprietary technology platform Hynosphere™ allows a targeted delivery of drugs into cells. The company, founded in 2003, currently employs 6 people.

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[1] European Union Framework Program 7 Marie Curie Action grant