



Acucela Inc.
21720 23rd Dr. SE
Suite 120
Bothell, WA 98021
Tel: 425.527.3260
Fax: 425.527.3156

Acucela Paper Published in Investigative Ophthalmology and Visual Science

SEATTLE – July 14, 2006 — Acucela Inc., a biotechnology company focusing on discovering and developing new treatments for blinding eye diseases, published a paper in *Investigative Ophthalmology and Visual Science (IOVS)*, a leading journal for eye research.

The paper, authored by a number of Acucela scientists, is entitled “Protective Effect of Crocin against Blue Light– and White Light–Mediated Photoreceptor Cell Death in Bovine and Primate Retinal Primary Cell Culture.” The paper describes how Acucela’s proprietary OcuScreen™ assays established efficacy of crocin in protecting retinal cells from light damage. Crocin is a compound that is known to be able to protect hippocampal neurons from ethanol-induced impairment and also to increase blood flow in the retina.

Dr. Aicha Laabich, a senior scientist at Acucela and first author of the paper, noted, “This set of experiments helps to demonstrate the capabilities and usefulness of our OcuScreen assays in screening and selecting protective agents. Crocin is a component of saffron stigmas; saffron is a spice used in traditional medicine in Asia for the treatment of numerous illnesses. I hypothesized that crocin could have protective effects in various models of eye disease, and we indeed found that it has strong neuroprotective effects in our ocular models.”

About Acucela

Acucela Inc. is a biotech company discovering new drug therapies for eye diseases. Neurodegenerative retinal diseases such as macular degeneration, Stargardt’s disease, retinitis pigmentosa and glaucoma, significantly affect quality of life for over 50 million people worldwide, and there is a drastic lack of therapies available. Until now, ophthalmic drug discovery technologies have been very limited. Acucela uses proprietary OcuScreen™ disease-specific assays and technologies to identify and develop compounds that have safety and efficacy in treating these diseases. These technologies represent a tremendous breakthrough in ophthalmic drug discovery, and Acucela has used them to discover and develop pipeline compounds.

Acucela Forward-Looking Statement



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This press release contains "forward-looking statements" as that term is defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements involve risks and uncertainties, which may cause results to differ materially from those set forth in the statements. The forward-looking statements include statements regarding product development. No forward-looking statement can be guaranteed, and actual results may differ materially from those projected. Acucela undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise.

Press Contact

Acucela Inc.

Jeff Chen (U.S.): jeffchen@acucela.com

Kenzo Ogiwara (Japan): 050-5534-8201, kogiwara@acucela.com