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Acucela founder to speak at ophthalmology conference

Dr. Kubota among featured speakers at Angiogenesis, Exudation and Degeneration symposium

BOTHELL, WA – February 19, 2009 Acucela founder and CEO Dr. Ryo Kubota will be a featured speaker at a symposium highlighting revolutionary pharmacotherapies in development and clinical practice to treat debilitating eye diseases, the company announced today.

Dr. Kubota has been invited to speak about clinical research associated with Acucela's development of ACU-4429, an oral treatment for a condition known as age-related macular degeneration (AMD) that causes blindness in 30 million people worldwide. Acucela's research focuses on halting the progress of dry AMD, the leading cause of blindness in people over 50.

"Acucela is developing an innovative oral therapy to cure diseases that most commonly cause age-related blindness," Dr. Kubota said. "We believe this treatment will potentially prevent tens of millions of people globally from losing their eyesight. We are excited for the opportunity to showcase our work to colleagues."

Acucela, based in Bothell, Wash., is developing ACU-4429 in partnership with Otsuka Pharmaceutical, Co., Ltd., a large Japanese company. The drug is in Phase I clinical trials.

Dr. Kubota will make his presentation at Angiogenesis, Exudation and Degeneration 2009, hosted by the University of Miami's Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, at 11:20 a.m. on Feb. 21 at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Key Biscayne, Fla. The one-day symposium attracts retinal specialists, general ophthalmologists and basic scientists from all over the country.

Speakers will focus on understanding and treating neovascular and exudative diseases, specifically those that manage dry AMD, neovascular AMD, macular edema, diabetic retinopathy and retinopathy of prematurity. Presentations will review the latest in clinical research investigating imaging techniques and emerging therapies for blinding retinal diseases.

About Acucela

Acucela Inc. is a clinical-stage biotechnology company focused on developing new drug therapies for blinding eye diseases such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD), Stargardt disease, diabetic retinopathy and retinopathy of prematurity, as well as dry eye. Founded in 2002, Acucela works with proprietary disease-specific assays and technologies to identify and develop compounds that may safely and effectively treat retinal diseases. For more information, please visit www.acucela.com.

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