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Acucela founder to present at BIO Business Forum

Dr. Kubota to discuss innovative oral treatment for leading cause of age-related blindness

BOTHELL, Wash. – Acucela founder and CEO Dr. Ryo Kubota will discuss the company's work toward developing a treatment for age-related blindness at the BIO Business Forum May 18-21 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, the company announced today.

Data will be presented on the safety, tolerability and effectiveness of ACU-4429, a single-dose daily oral treatment for dry AMD, the most common form of the disease. All forms (wet and dry) of age-related macular degeneration affect more than 1.75 million people in the United States and are expected to increase to almost 3 million by 2020¹. Currently, there is no approved medicinal therapeutic treatment for dry AMD. ACU-4429 is currently in Phase I trials, and a Phase II trial is expected to begin later this year

"Acucela is developing a therapy to treat the most common cause of blindness in the aging population," Dr. Kubota said. "It can be administered to patients in an oral pill form, a less invasive form of treatment."

Dr. Kubota will be one of the featured presenters at Bio Business Forum, a conference that attracts thousands of major industry players from biotechnology companies and finance investment firms to pharmaceutical companies.

Preclinical data indicated that ACU-4429 slows the rod visual cycle, resulting in decreased accumulation of a toxic byproduct that is the precursor of lipofuscin. The chronic accumulation of lipofuscin has been implicated in pathological mechanisms that lead to degenerative retinal diseases, ACU-4429's mechanism of action is an indication of its potential therapeutic effect on these disorders, which include dry AMD and Stargardt's Disease.

"We were able to demonstrate a dose dependent modulation of the visual cycle using electro retinography (ERG)," Dr. Nancy Boman, vice president of clinical development and regulatory affairs, said. "This is the first demonstration of an orally available non-retinoid small molecule targeting the visual cycle in the eye and showed a pharmacological effect in a dose dependent manner. This information will be used in selecting the doses for the next phase 2 trial."

¹ Archives of Ophthalmology 2004; 122:564-572



The BIO Business Forum offers an unparalleled opportunity for biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies, academic research institutions and investors from around the world to gather in one place at one time to learn about each other, meet one-on-one, and discuss business opportunities of mutual interest. In addition to company presentations, investors and executives will participate in one-on-one meetings using the BIOPro Partnering System. This conference will also include five panels featuring clinical and therapeutic area leaders.

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.