



Astex and AstraZeneca announce structural biology research agreement on cytochrome P450

Cambridge, UK, and Molndal, Sweden, 3 May 2001 - Astex Technology Ltd, a private structure-based drug discovery company, and AstraZeneca AB (NYSE: AZN) today announced a major structural biology research agreement focused on solving novel cytochrome P450 crystal structures. These structures will be used to optimise AstraZeneca's compounds and so improve the success rate of drug development.

Under the terms of the agreement, Astex will apply its proprietary High Throughput X-ray crystallography (HTX?) technology to obtain crystal structures of cytochrome P450s complexed to AstraZeneca's compounds. Financial details were not disclosed.

Cytochrome P450 enzymes are the most prominent group of drug-metabolising enzymes in humans, and consequently are of great importance to the pharmaceutical industry. Since cytochrome P450s were first linked to drug metabolism in the 1970s, many drugs have had to be withdrawn from the market due to adverse side effects from their interactions with these enzymes. In addition, it is known that certain individuals and populations in the world have different forms of these enzymes and hence react differently to the same drugs. Application of Astex's technology to determine the three dimensional structures of human cytochrome P450 enzymes complexed with AstraZeneca's compounds will facilitate rapid design of drug candidates with greater potential for clinical success.

"We are delighted to be working with AstraZeneca, one of the world's top pharmaceutical companies, on such a valuable and exciting area of research," commented Timothy Haines, CEO of Astex. "AstraZeneca is the first corporate partner to join our P450 structural biology program. This further validates our world-class technology for rapid protein structure determination and confirms Astex's position as a leading structure-based drug discovery company."

AstraZeneca is a major international healthcare business engaged in the research, development, manufacture and marketing of ethical (prescription) pharmaceuticals and the supply of healthcare services. It is one of the top five pharmaceutical companies in the world with 2000 healthcare sales of \$15.8 billion and leading positions in sales of gastrointestinal, oncology, anaesthesia including pain management, cardiovascular, central nervous system (CNS) and respiratory products. The company's Internet site is www.astrazeneca.com.

Astex Technology is a structure-based drug discovery company pioneering the use of High Throughput X-ray crystallography (HTX?) for the rapid identification of novel drug candidates. HTX? is part of an integrated drug discovery platform that includes

cutting-edge technologies covering all aspects of structure-based research, including protein production, crystallization, structure determination, bioinformatics and computational and medicinal chemistry. Astex is using this drug discovery platform to identify novel lead compounds for proprietary and public domain targets and has established strategic collaborations with major pharma. Astex was formed by leading industrial and academic scientists and is based at the Cambridge Science Park, UK.

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