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MEDICAL NEWS

October 5, 2004**ZymoGenetics Licenses Recombinant FactorXIII to Novo Nordisk**

ZymoGenetics has announced an agreement to give exclusive worldwide rights of its factor XIII (FVIII) portfolio and related intellectual property to Novo Nordisk. In addition to the payment for the rights, Novo Nordisk will pay a royalty to ZymoGenetics on any products containing recombinant FVIII, including combinations with FVIIa, marketed as NovoSeven. ZymoGenetics will now focus its resources on developing recombinant human Thrombin and TACI-Ig products.

Source: Business Week.

October 4, 2004**Baxter Announces Product Phase-Out in UK**

Baxter Healthcare has announced that it will phase out supplies of earlier-generation recombinant factor VIII product, known as Recombinate, in the United Kingdom following the "rapid uptake" of their newer plasma and albumin-free product known as Advate. The announcement came to light in the United States via a letter that Baxter Vice President and General Manager Peter O'Malley sent to NHF and its chapters, other hemophilia associations and hemophilia treatment center directors across the country. In addition to stating in the letter that the phase-out comes at a time when "a significant proportion" of patients have already switched to the newer product, O'Malley also said that the decision was made "in consultation with leading UK hemophilia experts and is in line with the treatment guidelines in the UK." Finally, the letter states that "Baxter will currently continue to make Recombinate available in other countries, including the United States," and that this will have "no impact on the current availability of Recombinate" in the US. Similar reassurances were provided by a Baxter spokesperson in subsequent exchanges with NHF.

Reacting to the announcement, NHF President Richard Metz, MD, said that "NHF has long held that having access to a range of safe, effective treatment options is in the best interest of both patients and their healthcare providers. We appreciate Baxter's reassurance that this decision will not affect current product availability in the US. However, the elimination of one product option in any part of the worldwide market is potentially a cause for concern."

September 20, 2004**Interleukin-4 Gene Transfer Delays Acute Splenic Allograft Rejection in Rats**

Chinese researchers recently reported that the risk and intensity of rejection after spleen transplantation is greater and more difficult to control than other types of transplants in some diseases, such as hemophilia A. Interleukin-4 (IL-4) expression plasmids into donor spleens pretransplantation led to overexpression of IL-4 and downregulation of IFN-gamma in situ, associated with delayed acute rejection of the allograft. According to the researchers, gene transfer of IL-4 may represent a potential therapeutic approach to induce tolerance to splenic allograft. The study can be found in *Transplant Proceedings*, 2004;36(5):1600-1603.

Source: *Health and Medicine Week*.

September 19, 2004**Three HCV Studies Reported**

According to a new study in *AIDS*, patients coinfecting with the hepatitis C virus (HCV) and HIV that are treated with PegIntron (peginterferon alfa-2b) and Rebetol (ribavirin) combination therapy achieved significantly higher rates of sustained viral response compared to those treated with the combination of Intron A (interferon alfa-2b) plus Rebetol. The study is published in the September 3, 2004, issue.

Researchers in Spain recently reported that HCV has been implicated in the increased risk of malignant lymphomas. In the study at four centers in Spain, HCV infection was associated with an increased risk of broad spectrum of lymphoid neoplasms among non-severely immunocompromised subjects. The study can be found in *The International Journal of Cancer*, 2004;111(1):81-85.

A recent US study found that HCV/HIV coinfection is associated with a higher risk of diabetes in highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) patients. In the study, which looked at male war veterans, factors associated with a diagnosis of diabetes included increased age, minority race and care in the HAART era. The authors recommended that HCV/HIV coinfecting patients should be aggressively screen for diabetes. The study can be found in *Hepatology*, 2004;40(1):115-119.

Sources: *Lab Business Week*, *Hepatitis Weekly* and *Hematology Week*.

September 18, 2004**Mother-to-Infant Transmission of HCV Is Low in Brazil**

According to a recent study at the Hospital of the Catholic University of Campinas, Brazil, rates of mother-to-infant transmission of the hepatitis C virus (HCV) are low in Brazil. Sixty-one women with anti-HCV antibodies were recruited for a study of vertical HCV transmission during childbirth. One of the 42 children born to HCV viremic mothers was both anti-HCV and HCV RNA-positive, with altered ALT levels. Passively transferred maternal anti-HCV antibodies became undetectable within 9 to 12 months. None of the nine children born to HIV-1-infected mothers were infected either by HIV or HCV. The study can be found in *The Journal of Tropical Pediatrics*, 2004;50(4):236-238.

Source: *Obesity, Fitness and Wellness Week*.

September 17, 2004**WHO Calls for Protection from Contaminated Blood**

At the 55th session of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in Shanghai, WHO's director for the Western Pacific warned that HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and C and new pathogens have put blood and blood-products safety on the global public health agenda. The director said that high priority should be given to the elimination of paid blood donor systems that are often associated with higher prevalence of transfusion-transmissible infections than voluntary systems.

Source: *WHO release*.

September 15, 2004**British Trust to Look for Cure**

The Katharine Dormandy Trust in Great Britain has embarked on a nearly \$9 million endeavor to find a cure for bleeding disorders. According to Professor Ted Tuddenham, director of the Medical Research Council Haemostasis and Thrombosis and Research Group at Imperial College and chairman of the Katharine Dormandy Trust, "The KD Trust has reviewed results of key worldwide gene therapy for hemophilia research projects, noting the strengths, weaknesses and wide variety of techniques developed so far." For more information on the trust, visit www.kdtrust.org.uk.

*Source: Company release.***September 13, 2004****Wyeth Receives FDA Approval for New Factor Delivery System**

Wyeth pharmaceuticals announced that it has received approval from the Food and Drug Administration for its ReFacto Antihemophilic Factor R2 Kit (recombinant), a needle-less reconstitution device with a prefilled diluent syringe. The kit includes a syringe prefilled with diluent, a vial adapter and a single use vial of ReFactor containing either 50, 500, 1,000 or 2,000 IUs. The adapter and prefilled syringe allow ReFacto to be reconstituted without risk of needles exposure. The R2 Kit will be available near the end of 2004.

Source: Company release.

BLOOD SAFETY NEWS

September 28, 2004**NHF Issues Medical Advisory on vCJD Risk for UK Plasma Products**

Earlier this month United Kingdom (UK) health authorities informed people with hemophilia and other bleeding disorders that they are considered "at risk" for variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) if they used UK plasma products manufactured between 1980 and 1998. The UK health authorities have said that their actions are "precautionary" and that "the actual risk to individuals is very low." Despite this very low risk, NHF has issued a medical advisory to all NHF members in an effort to keep them informed.

In light of the recent UK announcement, NHF sent a letter to Chris Hadfield,

chief executive of Bio Products Laboratory (BPL). NHF is seeking information from BPL to determine if any products made from UK-sourced plasma were exported to the United States, and if so, what actions are being taken to ensure patient protection. NHF will update this information as it becomes available.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

September 22, 2004**Senate Committee Approves Bill to Help States Create High-Risk Insurance Pools**

A Senate bill that would provide funding for grants to states to create high-risk health insurance pools was introduced by Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH). The bill would also provide grants to states that already operate these pools. Other funding in the bill would be used to reduce premiums, expand benefits, offer subsidies to low-income members and other benefits. The bill has been sent to the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions committee for approval.

NHF NEWS

October 6, 2004**NHF's 56th Annual Meeting Precon in Dallas Is a Must**

There has been so much demand for more of NHF's Annual Meeting quality programming that the Thursday pre-

conference has now grown to a full day of sessions, symposia (affectionately referred to as "precons") and key meetings of volunteer task forces and working groups.

This year's meeting will be held in Dallas from November 4 to 6. On the 4th, there will be a milestone medical symposium focusing on women's bleeding disorders. This precon has set a goal of reaching agreement on the direction of research and diagnosis for women's bleeding disorders. The new Coalition on Women's Bleeding Disorders includes a medley of participating acronyms (ACOG, ASH, NHLBI, ISTH, CDC and NHF representatives).

Social workers will tackle psychosocial issues for women with bleeding disorders, physical therapists will have their first precon in Dallas and a Camps Workshop will be in full swing.

If you haven't made your plans yet...don't hesitate...we want to see you in Dallas. All registrations should be at NHF by October 20, 2004. If you don't make that deadline, you may register onsite.

October 4, 2004

"Jean" Transfer

More than 40 pairs of autographed celebrity jeans have been donated for NHF's Second Annual Jeans for Genes auction, which will take place at www.ebay.com/bluejeansforgenes from November 29 to December 9.

Donations thus far include Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey, Lenny Kravitz, Tobey Maguire, Orlando Bloom, Josh Groban, Adrien Brody, Paris Hilton, Heidi Klum and Omarosa from "The Apprentice."

September 28, 2004

Gil White, Leading Treater and Researcher, Makes a Move

After 25 years at the University of North Carolina where he directs the hemophilia treatment center, Gilbert White, MD, has announced to colleagues that he will be moving to the Blood Center in southeastern Wisconsin in 2005. The new role will allow him to focus more on research than has been possible with his current responsibilities. White has served the NHF and the bleeding disorders community in a variety of capacities, including his current role as the vice-chair of research for NHF's Medical and Scientific Advisory Council (MASAC).