

Zurich, August 24, 2001

Press Release

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Swiss biotech companies The Genetics Company (Zurich) and Discovery Technologies (Basel), a division of Discovery Partners International (NASDAQ: DPPI) based in San Diego (CA, USA) are collaborating to identify precursors for medicines (drug leads) to treat colon cancer.

Please find enclosed our press release. Thank you for your kind consideration.

For further information please contact:

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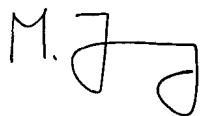
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Sincerely,



Mario Jenni
Co-Founder, Chief Operating Officer

The Genetics Company, Inc. and Discovery Partners International's Discovery Technologies Ltd. enter research collaboration

The Swiss biotech companies The Genetics Company (Zurich) and Discovery Technologies (Basel), a division of Discovery Partners International (NASDAQ: DPII) based in San Diego (CA, USA) are collaborating to identify precursors for medicines (drug leads) to treat colon cancer.

Researchers from The Genetics Company, together with the University of Zurich have succeeded in identifying what could prove to be a key factor in treating human colon cancer. This key factor is a cellular protein which plays an important role in the transmission of signals from the cell membrane to the nucleus, thus triggering the process of cell division. In almost all cases of colon cancer, this intracellular signal transmission is modified in such a way that the cells are instructed to constantly divide.

The aim of the research agreement between The Genetics Company and Discovery Technologies is to test thousands of chemical substances in a High Throughput Screen (HTS) for their ability to block the activity of said protein and to thus inhibit uncontrolled cell division. It is expected that a suitable substance will be found which subsequently can be developed into an effective medicine for treating colon cancer. Possible patent rights to the molecules found will belong to The Genetics Company. Discovery Technologies will receive payments for the experiments carried out and for access to the substance libraries. Financial terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

Colon cancer is one of the most frequent types of cancer in industrialized countries. About 50% of the population in the western world suffer from this form of cancer at some time in their lives. The disease often runs a fatal course. In most cases, colon cancer occurs after the age of 50. The risk for developing colon cancer increases steadily with age. The causal factors leading to the development of the disease are largely unknown. An unbalanced diet and genetic predisposition are possible factors which are currently under debate among specialists.

Early detection of colon cancer is often very difficult. In most cases, pain is only felt – if at all – once the tumor has invaded the wall of the intestine. At this stage, metastases are often already present in other organs. Years, if not decades, may pass before this cancer manifests itself with clear signs of disease. With a lack of specific and effective treatments at present, however, early diagnosis offers the most effective means of combating this aggressive form of cancer.

The Genetics Company, Inc. has established a world-leading position in high throughput in vivo functional genomics using the fruit fly and mouse as model systems. The company has compiled powerful technologies to identify and validate novel drug screening targets as well as pharmacologically active small compounds and therapeutic proteins for the treatment of a wide range of diseases. A research alliance has been established with Intervet GmbH (Wiesbaden, Germany), a top 3 company in animal healthcare and a subsidiary of Akzo Nobel, to identify novel targets that may lead to the development of novel anti-parasites. The Genetics Company was founded in 1998 and has corporate headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland, and research facilities in both Zurich and Lausanne (Switzerland). For more information on The Genetics Company, please visit the company's website at <http://www.the-genetics.com>.

Discovery Technologies Ltd. (Basel), Discovery Partners' Discovery Technologies division currently offers assay development and assay optimization, ultra high throughput screening, as well as cost effective access to large and highly diverse discovery libraries. Discovery Technologies can also offer lead optimization services through the integrated drug discovery efforts of Discovery Partners International.

Discovery Partners International, Inc. is focused on providing the best platforms, services and information available to complement the internal drug discovery efforts of pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical companies in the post-genomic era. Discovery Partners' integrated offerings span the entire drug discovery continuum including computational chemistry services for target characterization, lead generation and lead optimization, advanced chemistry services for the design and synthesis of combinatorial libraries and customized compound synthesis, high throughput synthesis equipment, high throughput screening services for assay development, rapid identification and characterization of active compounds against a broad range of targets, and gene expression analysis. DPIL is headquartered in San Diego, California and has operations in San Diego, South San Francisco, Boulder, CO, Fort Lee, NJ, Tucson, AZ and Basel, Switzerland. For more information on Discovery Partners International, Inc., please visit the company's website at <http://www.discoverypartners.com>.

Statements in this press release that are not strictly historical are "forward-looking" statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 and involve a high degree of risk and uncertainty. The Company's actual results may differ materially from those projected in the forward looking statements due to risks and uncertainties that exist in the Company's operations, development efforts and business environment, including integration of acquired businesses, the trend toward consolidation of the pharmaceutical industry, quarterly sales variability, technological advances by competitors, and other risks and uncertainties more fully described in the Company's annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2000 filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and its other SEC filings.

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