



## **ASX Release**

### **Avexa Collaborates with TargetDrug on HCV Program**

#### **The Company also provides an update on ATC Phase III trials**

**4 June 2008**

Australian biotechnology company Avexa Ltd (ASX:AVX) announced today that it will collaborate with TargetDrug on its Hepatitis C virus (HCV) program. The focus will be on the development of novel lead inhibitors of HCV replication. The Company also provided an update on the progress of its Apricitabine (ATC) Phase III trials.

#### **HCV Program**

The introduction of this discovery programme into Avexa's portfolio is the result of the successful nomination of lead compounds from both the HIV-integrase and the antibiotic programmes for progression into IND-enabling studies.

"Hepatitis C affects 180 million people globally," stated Dr Julian Chick, CEO of Avexa. "With only half of all HCV patients benefiting from current therapy, unmet medical needs are clearly very high. We see the development of new HCV treatments as an opportunity to put Avexa's proven experience in pure drug discovery into play."

Datamonitor estimates the HCV market will grow to \$4.4 billion in 2010 and \$8.8 billion in 2015. Hepatitis C is an infectious disease that is a leading cause of chronic liver disease resulting in liver inflammation, cirrhosis and liver cancer. The disease is blood-borne; the virus spreads within its host by replicating its RNA and using this to make the components that form new viruses. Avexa intends to target this replication process to identify inhibitors.

Of the 180 million people globally that the World Health Organization estimates are infected with HCV, 100 million have a chronic infection. According to the Center for Disease Control approximately 2.7 million people in the United States are chronically infected. It is those individuals who are at particular risk of developing liver cirrhosis or liver cancer. Studies on progression of disease in chronically infected people indicate that 70% of these chronically infected patients develop some form of chronic liver disease, including, in some cases, cirrhosis or liver cancer.

Avexa will focus resources previously assigned to the CCR5 program to the HCV program.

#### **Apricitabine - Phase III clinical trial update**

Avexa today stated that the first of the Phase III studies is progressing well, with the first component of recruitment due to be completed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of this year. The company has initiated 45 sites in North America, Europe, Israel, Australia and South America, with another 20 sites in these locations due to be initiated in the coming weeks. The company also continues to progress preparation for additional countries and sites to be initiated when required for the second of the Phase III trials.



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**Avexa Limited is a Melbourne-based biotechnology company with a focus on research and development of drugs for the treatment of infectious diseases. Avexa has dedicated resources and funding for key projects including its HIV integrase program and an antibiotic program for antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections which have both entered IND-enabling study stage. The Company's lead program is apricitabine (ATC), an anti-HIV drug which has successfully completed the 48 week dosing of its Phase 2b trial and has recently initiated Phase 3 trials.**