

Embargo – 30th June 2006

Aging cells going wrong – two new patents are announced

Delta G, a Cambridge-based start-up company, has discovered more about the metabolism of cells and what goes wrong as the cells (and us with them) age. The company was founded by William Bains, around the scientific ideas of Dr. Aubrey de Grey at Cambridge University, and received £130,000 funding from Cambridge Challenge Fund and NESTA in 2004.

The first patent, filed on 25th May 2006, describes an exciting new class of molecules with the potential to become a new type of cancer drug. Cancer cells use the energy they gain from metabolism abnormally. This is a difference that many scientists have tried to attack in the past. Delta G has evidence that its new understanding of exactly what is wrong with the metabolism of these cells has allowed its researchers to target them particularly effectively. The patent is the first of what is hoped will be a series on this approach to cancer treatment.

Professor William Bains explained “The approach is likely to be particularly suitable for late-stage lung, colon and breast cancers, which kill over 800,000 people a year in the West. A drug that offers a new approach to treat these patients would be of tremendous value.”

Dr. Geraldine Rodgers, Technology Manager for Cambridge Enterprise Seed Funds, said “Patent protection is vital for the ideas that our companies are turning into products, so this is an important step forward for Delta G”

NESTA Chief Executive, Jonathan Kestenbaum, said: “Delta G is set to make a major impact in the field of cell research and I am delighted that NESTA has been able to support their pioneering work.”

Additionally the company has been working on new a new treatment using a combination of drugs for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome which is suffered by about 1 in 400 people in the West. Currently the only effective treatment is a combination of graded exercise and cognitive behavioural therapy that typically takes months to years. A patent on this was filed in February this year.

Notes to Editors:

1. Delta G is a Cambridge-based start-up company applying new discoveries in the science of how and why we age, called biogerontology. The company intends to take its bright ideas, reduce them to practice in the laboratory, and then sell them on to major pharmaceutical companies for development into medicines in clinical trials.

2. The Cambridge Challenge Fund, is one of the Cambridge Enterprise Seed Funds. Cambridge Enterprise facilitates the commercial development of intellectual property (IP) developed at the University of Cambridge and the provision of consultancy services by academics. Cambridge Enterprise is one of the United Kingdom's leading knowledge transfer offices providing consultancy and licensing patents and other IP to existing companies, both large and small as well as to spinouts formed to exploit University technology. For the academic year ending 2005, 40 licences were entered into and income from licensing exceeded £2.7 million. Additionally consultancy agreements generated £1.5 million.
Working together with angels, venture capital funds, University staff and students, Cambridge Enterprise facilitates the formation of around thirty new companies each year (about five of which are based on University-owned intellectual property).
Further information on Cambridge Enterprise can be found at:
<http://www.enterprise.cam.ac.uk>
3. The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) is working to transform the UK's capacity for innovation. With endowed finance of £250m, it invests at every stage of the innovative process to pioneer ways of supporting and promoting entrepreneurship and creativity across science, technology, and the arts. www.nesta.org.

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