

Benitec commences HIV Study in Humans in Los Angeles

13 June 2007, Melbourne, Australia: The Directors of Benitec (ASX: BLT) are delighted to announce the commencement of Benitec's first HIV human clinical trial in collaboration with City of Hope, a biomedical research and treatment center located just outside Los Angeles.

This is Benitec's first human trial and will involve five HIV-1 infected adults 18-60 years old who suffer AIDS -related lymphoma. A primary objective of this study is to determine the safety and feasibility of Benitec's RNAi technology in treating these patients. The study has commenced with patients being recruited and screened at City of Hope and should be completed in approximately 12 months.

"We are delighted that the new drug candidate has completed FDA review and has approval to proceed from the Institutional Research Board (IRB). Patients are already being recruited and we are hopeful we will commence treatment of our first patient this week. This is the first human trial that uses Benitec technology and we are very fortunate to be working with City of Hope's world class investigators," said Sue MacLeman, CEO of Benitec Limited.

The Study

This study with City of Hope is entitled, "A pilot study of the safety and feasibility of stem cell therapy for AIDS lymphoma using stem cells treated with a lentiviral vector-encoding multiple anti-HIV RNA's."

This pilot study is designed to determine the safety and feasibility of RNA-based anti-HIV therapy with lentivirus-transduced hematopoietic progenitor cells (HPC) in patients undergoing autologous hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HCT) for intermediate and high grade AIDS lymphoma.

The lentivirus vector encodes 3 forms of anti-HIV RNA: RNAi in the form of a short hairpin RNA (shRNA) targeted to an exon in HIV-1 tat/rev (shI), a decoy for the HIV TAT-reactive element (TAR), and a ribozyme that targets the host cell CCR5 chemokine receptor (CCR5RZ). The vector, used to transduce autologous CD34-selected HPC, is called rHIV7-shI-TAR-CCR5RZ and was manufactured by the Center for Biomedicine and Genetics at City of Hope.

Following standard mobilization of HPC and collection by apheresis (HPC-A), a portion of the cells will be cryo-preserved and left unmanipulated for later use as treatment. The remaining portion of the cells will be enriched for CD34+ cells using a Miltenyi CliniMACS™ system, cryo-preserved, and later genetically modified by infection with rHIV7-shI-TAR-CCR5RZ.

The subjects will undergo conditioning therapy and at the time of autologous HCT, the rHIV7-shI-TAR-CCR5RZ transduced cells will be infused, followed 24-hrs later by the infusion of untransduced autologous HPC-A.

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About Benitec

Benitec is an Australian biotechnology company focused on licensing its extensive intellectual property portfolio and developing therapeutics to treat serious diseases using its proprietary ddRNAi technology. Its current therapeutic program is focused on infectious diseases and cancer. For additional information, please visit www.benitec.com.

About City of Hope

City of Hope is a leading research and treatment center for cancer, diabetes and other life-threatening diseases. Designated as a Comprehensive Cancer Center, the highest honor bestowed by the National Cancer Institute, and a founding member of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, City of Hope's research and treatment protocols impact care throughout the nation. Founded in 1913, City of Hope is a pioneer in the fields of bone marrow transplantation and genetics and shares its scientific knowledge with medical centers locally and globally, helping patients battling serious diseases. For more information, visit www.cityofhope.org.

Forward-looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements that reflect the Company's current expectations regarding future events. Forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties. Actual events could differ materially from those projected herein and depend on a number of factors including the success of the Company's research strategy, the applicability of the discoveries made therein, the successful and timely completion of clinical studies and the uncertainties related to the regulatory process.