

### **LUNG CANCER: GERON INITIATES TRIAL OF TELOMERASE INHIBITOR**

Geron said it initiated a clinical trial of its telomerase inhibitor drug, GRN163L, in patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer. The primary objective of the early-stage study is to determine the safety and maximum tolerated dose of GRN163L when administered intravenously in combination with a standard chemotherapy regimen. This is the first time GRN163L is being clinically tested in combination with standard chemotherapy. Telomerase is a broadly applicable and critical tumor target. It is expressed in a broad array of malignant tumors, essential for malignant cell growth and absent or expressed transiently at low levels in most normal adult tissues.

### **BONES: AMGEN TO COLLABORATE WITH DAIICHI SANKYO ON ANTIBODY**

Amgen and Daiichi Sankyo said they entered a collaboration and license agreement for the development and commercialization of denosumab in Japan. Denosumab is a fully human monoclonal antibody that targets RANK Ligand, an essential mediator of cells that break down bone. It is being investigated for its potential to treat and prevent a broad range of bone loss conditions, including osteoporosis and bone metastases. Under the terms of the agreement, Thousand Oaks, California-based Amgen has granted The Japan-based Daiichi Sankyo exclusive rights to develop and commercialize denosumab in Japan in post-menopausal osteoporosis and oncology, with the potential for additional indications.

### **GROWTH DEFICIENCY: GENENTECH IN DEAL WITH TERCICA**

Tercica said it entered into an agreement with Genentech for the development, manufacture and worldwide commercialization of two products containing Nutropin AQ, Genentech's recombinant human growth hormone, and Increlex, Tercica's recombinant insulin-like growth factor-1. Increlex is used for the treatment of short stature, adult growth hormone deficiency, and potentially other metabolic disorders. South San Francisco, California-based Tercica plans to initiate mid-stage clinical trials in 2008 of one combination product for patients with low insulin-like growth factor-1 levels and short stature not associated with growth hormone deficiency; and a second combination product for patients with adult growth hormone deficiency.

### **PARKINSON'S: SMOKING FOUND TO LOWER RISK OF DEVELOPING PD**

An analysis of data from previous studies suggests that cigarette smoking may be associated with a reduced risk for developing Parkinson's disease, with long-term and current smokers at the lowest risk, according to researchers at the UCLA School of Public Health, Los Angeles. The study, published in the *Archives of Neurology*, confirmed prior reports of an inverse association between cigarette smoking and Parkinson's disease. Although the researchers found that current smokers and those who had continued to smoke to within five years of Parkinson's disease diagnosis exhibited the lowest risk, a decrease in risk of 13 percent to 32 percent was also observed in those who had quit smoking up to 25 years prior to Parkinson's disease diagnosis.

### **HIV: SCALING UP PREVENTION PROGRAMS IS COST EFFECTIVE**

Scaling up HIV prevention programs can increase efficiency and prevent more HIV infections, according to researchers at the University of California at San Francisco. In a study published in the online journal *BMC Health Services Research*, they report that each doubling of a program's scale can reduce costs by around a third, and some large programs are ten times more efficient than smaller ones—meaning that many more infections are averted for the same amount of resources. The study, based on data from 206 HIV prevention programs in India, Mexico, Russia, South Africa and Uganda, found the scale-up/cost-down effect was seen across many countries and prevention approaches; some large programs were up to 100 times more cost effective than their small counterparts.

**CANCER: PEREGRINE ACQUIRES TECHNOLOGY FROM MD ANDERSON**

Peregrine Pharmaceuticals said it licensed worldwide exclusive rights to a novel anti-angiogenesis technology from The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. The agreement covers the development and commercialization rights to all forms of “clipped” Beta 2 Glycoprotein 1 or B2GP1 protein. Tustin, California-based Peregrine will collaborate with M. D. Anderson under a sponsored research agreement to conduct preclinical studies that are designed to advance B2GP1 toward human clinical trials. A growing body of studies suggests that clipped Beta 2 Glycoprotein 1 is a promising anti-angiogenic agent. It inhibits the growth of tumors by choking off their blood supply.

**ELECTRONIC RECORDS: RESEARCH SHOWS NO LINK TO BETTER CARE**

Electronic health records have been hailed as a key element in making U.S. medical care more effective and efficient, but a new study led by a researcher at the Stanford University School of Medicine shows that electronic records were not associated with improved quality of outpatient health care in 2003 and 2004. Of 17 quality indicators assessed by the study, electronic health records made no difference in 14 measures. The study, published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, doesn't discount the value of electronic health records, but points out that the entire healthcare system needs to embrace the concept of improving the quality of care delivered in clinic and office visits.

**GENETICS: COMMON RISK FOUND FOR PROSTATE, COLORECTAL CANCER**

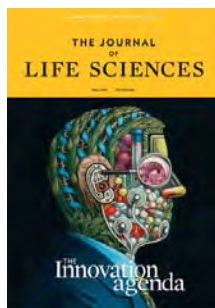
A study led by researchers at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California has found that one of seven genetic risk factors previously identified as increasing the probability of developing prostate cancer also increases the probability of developing colorectal cancer. As in the previous prostate cancer study, which was also conducted by USC researchers and published in April in the journal *Nature Genetics*, the colorectal cancer risk factor is located in a region of the human genome devoid of known genes on chromosome 8. It is the first time a common genetic risk factor for multiple cancers has been identified, the researchers said, and it could influence not just colorectal and prostate cancer, but cancers in general.

**HEPATITIS B: NEW TOOL DEVELOPED TO GAUGE QUALITY OF LIFE**

Researchers at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and the Veterans Affairs Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System said they have created a questionnaire to better assess hepatitis B patients' overall well-being beyond physical symptoms of the disease to help clinicians guide treatment. In an article that appears in the July issue of the journal *Hepatology*, the researchers said that to effectively treat hepatitis B patients, clinicians need to consider the social and psychological impact of the disease, as well as its biological functioning. The researchers said they were shocked to find that for many hepatitis B patients without advanced liver disease, the psychosocial impact of the disease affected their lives more than the physical symptoms.

**MEDICARE: UNINSURED BEFORE GETTING BENEFITS NEED COSTLIER CARE**

People who were uninsured before receiving Medicare benefits at age 65 required more intensive and costlier care than those who had been privately insured prior to receiving Medicare, according to researchers at Harvard Medical School. In a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the researchers argue that expanding coverage to uninsured near-elderly adults may not cost as much as previously thought, particularly for people with heart disease, hypertension, or diabetes because earlier access to effective treatments can prevent costly complications and reduce health care needs after age 65. Medicare covers nearly 43 million elderly and disabled Americans.

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One Embarcadero #2700  
San Francisco, CA 94111

[www.tjols.com](http://www.tjols.com)

web editor: Daniel Levine  
[daniel.levine@blsmg.com](mailto:daniel.levine@blsmg.com)  
(415) 591-5449