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Biovitrum terminates preclinical program in obesity
All rights are returned by GlaxoSmithKline

Biovitrum and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) initiated a collaboration to develop therapies for obesity and other diseases in 2002. In 2003, after a positive clinical phase II trial, the project refocused on the development of new compounds showing higher selectivity for the target. GSK has since then been responsible for the preclinical work and has now decided to discontinue the project. As a consequence, all rights are returned to Biovitrum, which has decided not to develop the compounds further for the obesity indication. This has no financial impact for Biovitrum.

Autumn 2002 Biovitrum and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) entered into an agreement to develop new therapies for treating obesity and other diseases connected to the brain's signalling substances. The program has since then been under the management of GSK and has been focused on developing compounds similar to one of the transmitting signals between nerve cells. In scientific language the compounds are described as functionally similar to serotonin, a substance also called 5-HT, which is naturally present in the brain. The project was designed to develop a very selective agonist (activator) of one of the serotonin receptors (recognition molecules) in the brain, i.e. 5-HT_{2c}.

During the early phase of the program Biovitrum completed clinical phase II trials with the 5-HT-agonist BVT.993. It was found that BVT.933 significantly reduced body weight in patients without causing any serious side effects. However, the compound was not considered to be sufficiently selective and in 2003 the project was brought back for further preclinical studies. Since then the work has been focused on finding other compounds even more selective for the 5-HT_{2c} receptor. GSK now returns all rights to the project to Biovitrum, which, subsequently, has decided not to develop the compounds further for the obesity indication. However, the compounds will be evaluated for other indications.

Biovitrum´s CEO Martin Nicklasson comments:
"Terminating projects is part of developing medicines and this has no financial impact for Biovitrum. However, we have currently seven projects in clinical development and an option to acquire another one. Out of these seven programs one is focused on treating obesity by suppressing appetite through another 5-HT receptor. Another anti-obesity project in pre-clinic phase is aiming at developing an oral leptin mimetic, an important hormone regulator in metabolism. In addition to this we have around 15 more projects in early discovery and development phases, primarily in obesity, diabetes and inflammation."

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About Biovitrum

Biovitrum is one of the largest biopharma companies in Europe. With operations in Sweden and in the UK Biovitrum conducts research and develops pharmaceuticals for unmet medical needs both for common diseases and conditions that affect small patient populations. Biovitrum has a broad and balanced R&D portfolio with several projects in clinical and preclinical phases for the treatment of obesity, diabetes, inflammation and eye and blood diseases as well as a number of well defined niche indications. Biovitrum also develops and produces protein-based drugs on a contractual basis and markets a range of specialist pharmaceuticals primarily in the Nordic countries. Biovitrum has revenues of approximately SEK 1.2 billion and 550 employees. Biovitrum´s share is listed on the Stockholm Stock Exchange since September 15, 2006. More information is available at www.biovitrum.com.