

## **Vaxon Biotech publishes encouraging results in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* for the treatment of non-small cell lung cancer with Vx-001.**

*"Vaccination of patients with advanced non-small-cell lung cancer with an optimized cryptic human telomerase reverse transcriptase peptide"<sup>1</sup>*

**Evry-Genopole®**, July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007 - Vaxon Biotech, a biopharma company specializing in the discovery and development of innovative anticancer immunotherapies, today announced the publication of an article in the July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 issue of the prestigious *Journal of Clinical Oncology* (JCO). The authors present promising results for the treatment of late-stage non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) patients. They demonstrate that Vaxon Biotech's Vx-001 product is perfectly safe and that it stimulates an antitumor response. Furthermore, Vx-001 increases the survival time for certain patients displaying an early immune response. Vaxon Biotech's products (based on proprietary technologies) represent a totally new therapeutic approach to cancer treatment.

Since cancer cells are recognized as "self" by the immune system, the tumor is not rejected by the body. Antitumor immunotherapy based on the activation of cytotoxic T lymphocytes (CTLs) seeks to prompt recognition of cancer cells as "non-self" and thus trigger their destruction. Even though effective antitumor immunotherapy is usually based on an optimal combination of an antigen with an adjuvant, most of the products developed to date have prioritized improved adjuvants and/or immunostimulants, to the detriment of work on antigens. However, for a variety of reasons, investigative approaches based solely on adjuvant optimization are not generating the best possible therapeutic results.

In view of these limitations, Vaxon Biotech is adopting a novel therapeutic approach to cancer treatment by using a new family of antigens (optimized cryptic peptides) combined with an adjuvant. This technological breakthrough displays many advantages when compared with standard approaches: strong immunogenicity, high specificity for tumor cells and simplicity of use.

The antigens selected by Vaxon Biotech are derived from proteins frequently expressed by tumor cells. Vx-001 is composed of TERT<sub>572Y</sub>, peptide, which has just nine amino acids and thus is easy to synthesize. It is derived from native telomerase, a protein which is overexpressed in 85% of cases of NSCLC. Hence, when presented by HLA-A2 cells, TERT<sub>572Y</sub> activates the patient's immune system, which will then specifically destroy the tumor cells. Vx-001 is injected subcutaneously and is thus easy to administer.

The JCO paper presents the immunological and clinical responses to the Vx-001 treatment in twenty-two patients suffering from stage III or IV NSCLC. The therapeutic protocol consisted of a series of six subcutaneous injections at three-week intervals. More than 75% of the treated patients presented an early immune response after the second administration. These patients showed a significant increase in survival time (30 months vs. 4 months). Vx-001 was also very well tolerated – no moderate or severe toxic effects were observed. These results will be confirmed in a randomized, multicenter study.

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<sup>1</sup> Bolonaki et al, *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, Vol. 25 n° 19, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007. Prof. Vassilis Georgoulas, Principal Investigator for Vx-001

These very encouraging results for Vx001 in NSCLC patients enable Vaxon Biotech to continue its development of therapeutic solutions in the field of cancer treatment. In the very short term, the company's goal is to consolidate its preliminary results for Vx-001 in lung cancer and hepatocarcinoma and then in new oncological indications. Vx-006, Vaxon Biotech's second product, will be initially developed for the treatment of prostate cancer. In parallel, the proprietary optimized cryptic peptide technology will be evaluated in other applications, such as infectious diseases (HIV, hepatitis). In the mid term, Vaxon Biotech is seeking to acquire synergistic technologies (such as adjuvants or immunostimulants) in order to prepare new generations of Vx001- and Vx-006-based products with even greater efficacy.

Since its incorporation, Vaxon Biotech has been pursuing its strategy of discovering, developing and commercializing innovative, efficacious immunotherapy products, with the goal of improving patients' quality of life and life expectancy. Strongly-held values such as ethics and the exploitation of research results are guiding the Vaxon Biotech management team in its mission to provide patients with rapid access to its innovative products. By confirming its pioneering position through strategic alliances and/or equity stakes, Vaxon Biotech intends to become a leading European player in anticancer immunotherapy.

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### **About Vaxon Biotech**

Vaxon Biotech is a pioneering player in the development of novel anticancer products. Located on the Evry Genopole® campus since 2004, Vaxon Biotech is developing innovative products - optimized cryptic peptides - based on original research findings by Dr Kostas Kosmatopoulos. The company holds a international patent portfolio covering not only processes for identifying, processing and producing optimized cryptic peptides but also Vaxon Biotech's products. Currently, two product candidates are in clinical development: Vx-001 is pursuing phase II studies in hepatocellular cancer and non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), with Vx-006 entering phase I/II for prostate cancer. In order to attain its corporate objectives, Vaxon Biotech is evaluating a range of potential strategic alliances.

*Disclaimer: the future therapeutic success of the Vx-001 vaccine depends on a multiplicity of factors. The results presented above - whilst implying a high probability of antitumor efficacy - must be confirmed by the randomized, multicenter studies that Vaxon Biotech is set to perform.*

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