



## Hepatitis C Caring Ambassadors Program Newsletter

October 2006

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### IN THE NEWS

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#### **New Data from Largest U.S. Hepatitis C Trial Provide Insights Into Optimizing Treatment for Patient Populations Traditionally Considered Difficult to Treat**

[http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/news\\_press\\_release,12363.shtml](http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/news_press_release,12363.shtml)

BOSTON, Oct. 30 – “New data from the WIN-R trial, the largest hepatitis C study ever conducted in U.S. patients, provide important insights into optimizing treatment with peginterferon alfa-2b (PEG-INTRON(R), Schering-Plough) and ribavirin (REBETOL(R), Schering-Plough) combination therapy in patient populations traditionally considered difficult to treat.”

#### **New Drug May Expand Treatment for Hepatitis C**

<http://www.forbes.com/forbeslife/health/feeds/hscout/2006/10/31/hscout535793.html>

TUESDAY, Oct. 31 -- “A new drug called eltrombopag may enable certain hepatitis C patients to take antiviral medications they previously could not use to fight the disease, researchers say. Hepatitis C patients with cirrhosis and abnormally low platelet levels -- a disorder called thrombocytopenia -- can't take two standard medications, ribavirin and pegylated interferon. These drugs, which are commonly used to fight hepatitis C infection, cause platelet levels to decrease even further. However, eltrombopag works by stimulating cells in the bone marrow to produce more platelets, said the study's principal investigator Dr. John McHutchison, a liver specialist and professor of medicine at Duke University.”

#### **Human Genome says hepatitis C drug shows promise**

[http://today.reuters.com/news/articleinvesting.aspx?type=governmentFilingsNews&storyID=2006-10-31T143738Z\\_01\\_N31134559\\_RTRIDST\\_0\\_HEALTH-HUMANGENOME-UPDATE-1.XML](http://today.reuters.com/news/articleinvesting.aspx?type=governmentFilingsNews&storyID=2006-10-31T143738Z_01_N31134559_RTRIDST_0_HEALTH-HUMANGENOME-UPDATE-1.XML)

CHICAGO, Oct 31 – “Human Genome Sciences Inc. said on Tuesday Albuferon, its long-acting drug for chronic hepatitis C, may be as safe and effective as the current standard of care, based on interim results from midstage clinical trials. The biotechnology company said it plans to start late-stage clinical trials of its treatment in patients who have received no prior therapy by the end of 2006.”

#### **New Data for Investigational Hepatitis C Drug Telaprevir (VX-950) to be Presented at AASLD Meeting**

<http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/061027/nef001.html?.v=70>

BOSTON, Oct. 27 – “Researchers will present new data this week suggesting that both wild-type hepatitis C virus and resistant variants were suppressed in patients when pegylated interferon (peginterferon alfa-2a; peg-IFN) was added to telaprevir (VX-950), Vertex's investigational hepatitis C virus (HCV) protease inhibitor, in a Phase 1b clinical study. In addition, clinical investigators will report that 24 of 26 patients who received telaprevir (VX-950) in two early-stage clinical trials had undetectable HCV RNA after receiving follow-on combination therapy with peg-IFN and ribavirin (RBV) through 24 weeks of treatment, a therapeutic regimen following the conclusion of the clinical trials.”

#### **Haemophilia sufferers infected with Hepatitis C by contaminated blood will receive up to \$63,000 each in a move expected to cost the Government \$11 million, it was reported today.**

[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/story.cfm?c\\_id=1&ObjectID=10408057](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/story.cfm?c_id=1&ObjectID=10408057)

“Health Minister Pete Hodgson [New Zealand] has not yet announced the payments but The Press newspaper today reported 180 people infected with contaminated blood products in the 1980s and 1990s would be paid out as well as receiving improved treatment. Prime Minister Helen Clark, health minister during part of the period in question, would also give them an apology.”

#### **China to Prevent Hepatitis C**

<http://www.plenglish.com/article.asp?ID=%7B545ACE1E-DFAD-48C9-86DD-F9A202A743F1%7D&language=EN>

“China declared near 40 million nationals carriers of hepatitis C a significant threat to national public health. Zhuang Hui, director of the Society of Hepatic Diseases, called to raise public awareness to prevent further contagion.”

### **Idenix Pharma Teams With Metabasis To Enhance Hepatitis C Pipeline - Quick Facts**

<http://www.tradingmarkets.com/.site/news/BREAKING%20NEWS/475072/>

“Idenix Pharmaceuticals, Inc. announced a two-year research collaboration agreement with Metabasis Therapeutics, Inc. Under the terms of the agreement, Metabasis' HepDirect liver-targeted technology will be applied to proprietary Idenix compounds to develop second-generation nucleoside analog drug candidates for the treatment of hepatitis C.”

### **Hearts Transplanted From Hepatitis C Donors Associated With Lower Survival Rates In Recipients, Penn Study Finds**

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=55061>

“Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Medicine have found that heart transplant patients who receive a donor heart from a person with hepatitis C (HCV) have a lower rate of survival.”

### **College Students Unaware of Hepatitis C Risks**

<http://www.lex18.com/Global/story.asp?S=5586968&nav=EQIs>

“About 75 percent of U.S. college students have behaviors such as sharing body jewelry and getting tattoos that put them at risk for hepatitis C, according to a survey of 610 undergraduates at a large Midwestern university.”

### **One Drug Vial Infects 16 Heart Patients With Hepatitis C**

<http://www.medpagetoday.com/InfectiousDisease/PublicHealth/tb/4360>

ATLANTA, Oct. 24 – “Sixteen patients in three unrelated clinics were infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV) when they were injected with a radiotracer prepared at a single nuclear pharmacy in Maryland, reported CDC researchers here.”

### **Peregrine Finalizes Patient Enrollment In Phase Ib Baviximab Hepatitis C Trial - Quick Facts**

<http://www.tradingmarkets.com/.site/news/BREAKING%20NEWS/470757/>

“Peregrine Pharmaceuticals Inc. revealed the completion of patient enrollment for its Phase Ib repeat dose, dose escalation study of baviximab in patients with chronic HCV infection. According to the company, the main aim of the study is to determine the safety, distribution and pharmacokinetic properties of baviximab as a multiple dose monotherapy in HCV patients. The company expects initial data from the trial to be available during the first quarter of 2007.”

### **Culturing Hepatitis C**

<http://www.the-scientist.com/article/home/24827/>

“Hepatitis C virus (HCV) has been difficult to study since its discovery in 1989; its unculturable status left researchers with a narrow view of the viral life cycle. But the discovery a few years ago of a highly infectious HCV strain (JFH-1) by Takaji Wakita's lab, then at Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Neuroscience, raised the possibility of developing a robust cell culture system. JFH-1 was a huge find, says Frank Chisari, from Scripps Research Institute, and Wakita gladly shared it.”

### **Positive Interim Quality-of-Life Data From Phase 2B Trial of Albuferon(TM) With Ribavirin in Treatment-Naive Hepatitis C Patients**

<http://www.docguide.com/news/content.nsf/news/852571020057CCF68525720900511BC1>

October 16, 2006 – “Human Genome Sciences, Inc. today reported 12-week interim quality-of-life results from a phase 2b clinical trial to evaluate the efficacy, safety and impact on health-related quality of life of Albuferon(TM) in combination with ribavirin in patients with genotype 1 chronic hepatitis C (HCV) who are naive to interferon alpha-based treatment regimens.”

**AVI BioPharma has reported results from the second phase of its study in patients with hepatitis C virus, that suggest the drug is ineffective at the dosage levels used in the trial.**

[http://www.pharmaceutical-business-review.com/article\\_news.asp?guid=84DFEE41-91F5-444C-97EA-5D01941F1DAD](http://www.pharmaceutical-business-review.com/article_news.asp?guid=84DFEE41-91F5-444C-97EA-5D01941F1DAD)

“The second phase of this exploratory trial was designed to assess the safety, tolerability, pharmacokinetics, and response to treatment with AVI's proprietary compound, AVI-4065, developed from the company's NeuGene technology. AVI said that the therapeutic threshold required for efficacy of the drug was not achieved at the treatment dose used, which was consistent with preliminary results.”

### **Tacere Therapeutics Secures Financing and Resumes Development Of RNAi Hepatitis C Drug**

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=54027>

“Tacere Therapeutics, Inc., an innovative biotechnology company specializing in the development of both traditional and novel therapeutics to treat serious infectious diseases, announced today that the company has secured an undisclosed amount of seed financing from Hokkaido Venture Capital, and has thus established operations and resumed preclinical development of TT-033i, its lead candidate for the treatment of Hepatitis C (HCV).”

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## **CLINICAL TRIALS, COHORT STUDIES, AND PILOT STUDIES**

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### **Epidemiology of hepatitis C virus among long-term dialysis patients: a 9-year study in an Italian region.**

Di Napoli A, et al. Am J Kidney Dis. 2006 Oct;48(4):629-37.

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list\\_uids=16997059&query hl=6&itool=pubmed DocSum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list_uids=16997059&query hl=6&itool=pubmed DocSum)

### **Interleukin-10 -1082 GG polymorphism influences the occurrence and the clinical characteristics of hepatitis C virus infection.**

Persico M, et al. J Hepatol. 2006 Sep 22; [Epub ahead of print]

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list\\_uids=17049666&dopt=Abstract](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list_uids=17049666&dopt=Abstract)

### **Treatment rates in patients with chronic hepatitis C after liver biopsy.**

Narasimhan G, et al. J Viral Hepat. 2006 Nov;13(11):783-6.

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list\\_uids=17052279&dopt=Abstract](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list_uids=17052279&dopt=Abstract)

### **A case-control study of risk factors for hepatitis C infection in patients with unexplained routes of infection\*.**

Karmochkine M, et al. J Viral Hepat. 2006 Nov;13(11):775-82.

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list\\_uids=17052278&dopt=Abstract](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list_uids=17052278&dopt=Abstract)

### **HCV-related advanced fibrosis/cirrhosis: randomized controlled trial of pegylated interferon alpha-2a and ribavirin.**

Helbling B, et al. J Viral Hepat. 2006 Nov;13(11):762-9.

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### **Increased risks of lymphoma and death among patients with non-hepatitis C virus-related mixed cryoglobulinemia.**

Saadoun D, et al. Arch Intern Med. 2006 Oct 23;166(19):2101-8.

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### **A randomized trial of pegylated-interferon-alpha2a plus ribavirin with or without amantadine in the re-treatment of patients with chronic hepatitis C not responding to standard interferon and ribavirin.**

Ciancio A, et al. Aliment Pharmacol Ther. 2006 Oct 1;24(7):1079-86.

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list\\_uids=16984502&query hl=6&itool=pubmed DocSum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list_uids=16984502&query hl=6&itool=pubmed DocSum)

### **Validation and comparison of indexes for fibrosis and cirrhosis prediction in chronic hepatitis C patients: proposal for a pragmatic approach classification without liver biopsies.**

Bourliere M, et al. J Viral Hepat. 2006 Oct;13(10):659-70.

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**Interferon (IFN)-gamma-inducible protein-10: association with histological results, viral kinetics, and outcome during treatment with pegylated IFN-alpha 2a and ribavirin for chronic hepatitis C virus infection.** Romero AI, et al. J Viral Hepat. 2006 Oct;13(10):659-70. .  
[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list\\_uids=16960776&query\\_hl=6&itool=pubmed\\_DocSum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list_uids=16960776&query_hl=6&itool=pubmed_DocSum)

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[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list\\_uids=16957511&query\\_hl=6&itool=pubmed\\_DocSum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list_uids=16957511&query_hl=6&itool=pubmed_DocSum)

**A prospective analysis of the prognostic value of biomarkers (FibroTest) in patients with chronic hepatitis C.** Ngo Y, et al. Clin Chem. 2006 Oct;52(10):1887-96. Epub 2006 Aug 24.  
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**Hepatitis C virus reinfection in injection drug users.** Grebely J, Conway B, Raffa JD, Lai C, Kraiden M, Tyndall MW. Hepatology. 2006 Nov;44(5):1139-45.  
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**Epidemiology of hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and human immunodeficiency virus infections in patients with beta-thalassemia in Iran: a multicenter study.** Mirmomen S, et al. Arch Iran Med. 2006 Oct;9(4):319-23  
[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list\\_uids=17061602&query\\_hl=7&itool=pubmed\\_DocSum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list_uids=17061602&query_hl=7&itool=pubmed_DocSum)

**HCV kinetics, quasispecies, and clearance in treated HCV-infected and HCV/HIV-1-coinfected patients with hemophilia.** Shire NJ, et al. Hepatology. 2006 Nov;44(5):1146-57.

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## **BASIC AND APPLIED SCIENCE, PRE-CLINICAL STUDIES**

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## HIV/HCV COINFECTION

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#### COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

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**Cap-dependent and hepatitis C virus internal ribosome entry site-mediated translation are modulated by phosphorylation of eIF2alpha under oxidative stress.** MacCallum PR, et al.  
[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list\\_uids=17030858&query\\_hl=15&itool=pubmed\\_docsum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list_uids=17030858&query_hl=15&itool=pubmed_docsum)

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#### MISCELLANEOUS

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