



Media Release

Second US Clinical Study in HIV/AIDS Lymphoma Patients Using Benitec's ddRNAi Technology Announced

21 March 2011, Melbourne, Australia: Benitec Limited (ASX:BLT), a world leader in RNA-based gene silencing for human therapeutics, is pleased to acknowledge that the City of Hope research hospital in Duarte, California is planning to initiate a second small Phase I/II study using Benitec's DNA-directed RNA interference (ddRNAi) technology in lymphoma patients carrying the HIV virus. The aim of the study is to optimize the treatment by modifying a range of clinical parameters.

From 2007 to 2010, Benitec funded the initial clinical development by the City of Hope of an RNA-based HIV/AIDS therapeutic molecule, one component of which is based on its ddRNAi technology - namely a short hairpin (sh)RNA construct targeted at a specific HIV gene. The novel ddRNAi-based product candidate was taken into a Phase I/II pilot human clinical trial and produced promising interim results in terms of safety and proof of feasibility. The data was published in *Science Translational Medicine* in June 2010.

Whilst this new study is not being funded by Benitec, it utilizes the same therapeutic molecule, and a successful outcome will be of significant benefit to Benitec as it will provide further clinical evidence of the potential of Benitec's proprietary technology for human therapeutics in general, and HIV/AIDS specifically.

Commenting on the news, Dr Peter French, CEO of Benitec, said: "We welcome the news of this second clinical study to explore ways to improve the performance of the RNA construct in the HIV/AIDS setting. Like the City of Hope, we believe that results of our work to date justified the further development of a ddRNAi-based cell therapy platform for HIV. Benitec is seeking to partner an HIV program based on ddRNAi to build on the initial promise of that work. This further study being undertaken by the City of Hope should assist in that aim."

Details of the new clinical study were reported in genomeweb at <http://www.genomeweb.com/rnai/city-hope-preps-second-study-expressed-rnai-aids-treatment>

For Further Information

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About Benitec (www.benitec.com)

Benitec Limited is developing new novel treatments for chronic and life-threatening conditions based on a transformational technology, DNA-directed RNA interference (ddRNAi) - sometimes called expressed RNAi. The technology's potential to address unmet medical needs and, potentially, to cure disease results from the demonstrated ability to permanently silence genes which cause the condition.

Benitec now either owns or exclusively licences from CSIRO more than 40 granted or allowed patents in the field of RNA interference for human therapeutic applications. Patents have been granted in key territories such as the USA, the UK, Japan, Europe, Canada and Australia. In addition, Benitec has almost 50 patent applications pending for which it is the owner or exclusive licensee from CSIRO, and has further intellectual property under development as a result of its pipeline development program.

The Company aims to deliver a range of novel ddRNAi-based therapeutics to the clinic in partnership with the pharmaceutical industry. In-house it is pursuing a focused R&D strategy in infectious diseases, cancer and chronic cancer-associated pain, and has three active in-house programs as well as programs with licensees that have advanced to pre-clinical and/or clinical trials.