



Media Release

Benitec Launches New Pain Therapeutic Program

1 October 2010, Melbourne, Australia: The Board of Benitec Limited (ASX: BLT) is pleased to announce that it has commenced an R&D program to develop an expressed RNAi product for chronic intractable pain associated with diseases such as cancer and HIV. Known as neuropathic pain, this is a major contributor to the adverse quality of life suffered by terminal cancer patients and other sufferers of chronic disease. There is no treatment to prevent the development of neuropathic pain, nor to adequately, predictably and specifically control established neuropathic pain. Thus, there is an unmet clinical need and a challenge to develop a more effective therapy. Benitec's vector-expressed RNA interference technology has the potential to become the next major class of therapeutic drugs in this area, because of its potency and selectivity to knock down molecular targets known to be involved in chronic pain.

Benitec has signed a contract with University of Queensland's TetraQ to test a number of RNAi constructs in their pain models to determine which specific target sequences have the strongest effect on reducing neuropathic pain from a single injection.

Benitec's CEO Dr Peter French believes that this is an ideal program to demonstrate the power and effectiveness of the Company's platform RNAi technology. "This program has the potential to produce a product that can achieve significant reduction of chronic intractable pain from a single injection. It is likely to be viewed favourably by clinicians, patients and regulators and therefore, providing the initial results show successful reduction of pain without adverse effects, Benitec plans to fast-track this program to the clinic," Dr French added.

The cancer pain market is significant, with around 65% of cancer patients experiencing pain, according to Datamonitor. Cancer pain is especially prevalent in patients with metastatic disease, particularly those with bone metastases. Bone metastases are an adverse complication of many advanced cancers, most frequently those of the breast, prostate, lung, thyroid and kidney, as well as hematological malignancies such as multiple myeloma.

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About Benitec

Benitec is an Australian biotechnology company focused on licensing its extensive intellectual property portfolio and developing therapeutics to treat serious diseases using its proprietary ddRNAi technology.

Benitec is seeking to establish partnerships that combine its ddRNAi gene-silencing technology with novel and proprietary gene delivery mechanisms. For additional information, please visit www.benitec.com.

About TetraQ

Formed in 2005 and located at The University of Queensland (UQ) in Brisbane, TetraQ is the commercial arm of the Centre for Integrated Preclinical Drug Development. This Centre is the focal point of research and training excellence in the field of preclinical drug development. TetraQ is also a registered business of UniQuest Pty Ltd, the main technology transfer company of UQ.