

CPGR hits major milestone in drug toxicology study with SimuGen

Centre for Proteomic and Genomic Research (CPGR) and SimuGen move one step closer to advance toxicity testing of novel drug applications

For immediate release

Cape Town, South Africa, 22 April 2010 – CPGR (CT, South Africa) today announced that it has achieved a major milestone as part of a research project contracted by SimuGen Asia Sdn. Bhd. (KL, Malaysia), successfully completing a series of drug toxicity screens in cultured human liver cells (HepaRG) and on Affymetrix Gene ST Arrays, as part of the development of an *in vitro* dose-response model of human toxicity. The South African based Centre is now pressing ahead with a large-scale qPCR study to achieve far greater sensitivity and scalability than can currently be generated in similar RNA signature biomarker development projects.

The CPGR was founded in 2006 as part of a government initiative to provide scientists in South Africa with state-of-the-art analytical services, technical expertise, project support and collaborative research capabilities in the fields of genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics and bioinformatics. The Centre has a particular interest in translational research and advancing scientific findings from the bench to the market, and ultimately to boost the development of a thriving biotech economy in South Africa. As part of these efforts one of the organization's aims is to create a track record of delivery in integrated R&D projects in areas such as drug development, biomarkers and agribiotech.

“At this stage of the project we are quite pleased to see that we have successfully managed to integrate the culturing of complex cell lines with a whole range of state-of-the art biological assays and our existing genomic workflows”, said Reinhard Hiller, Managing Director of the CPGR. “In doing so we have come one step closer to creating a portfolio of biological and “omics” workflows that can be used to boost drug development in a novel integrated manner. This will help position us as a destination for outsourcing R&D projects in the international drug development space, and it will enhance the capacity to drive innovation in this field in South Africa.”

Said Dr Quin Wills, CSO of SimuGen, “We believe that the greatest pharmacogenomics gains over the next few years are to be had within early stage drug discovery. This means the coming together of the best genomic modeling, genomic technologies and high throughput biological models. We are pleased that the work with CPGR will now enable SimuGen to begin releasing its HT-Stream software over the coming months to select Beta users who would like to try it for free before full market release.”

About SimuGen

SimuGen is a venture-backed pharmacogenomics company focused on predicting human toxicity early on in drug development. The company combines groundbreaking human cell culture and genomic modeling to produce high throughput screens for use alongside other early ADME testing. SimuGen's HT-Stream software helps answer three important questions that guide decisions around a lead compound:

1. What toxicities does it produce?
2. How toxic is it?
3. What could be done to make it less toxic?

SimuGen is funded through Venture Capital and a grant from the Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation. Visit www.simugen-global.com for more information.

About CPGR

The Centre for Proteomic & Genomic Research (CPGR) is an integrated core technology facility, founded in South Africa in 2006 as a not-for-profit organization through a grant provided by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) by way of its investment vehicles the Cape Biotech Trust (CBT) and PlantBio (PB). Visit www.cpgr.org.za for more information or contact info@cpgr.org.za with specific requests.