

Sensorion and hearing care leader Sonova sign strategic research collaboration

- *Collaboration covers jointly funded Natural History Study in age-related hearing loss (presbycusis)*
- *It is intended, that large-scale genetic screening and clinical follow-up will be performed in collaboration with Sonova Audiological Care stores*

Montpellier, France, September 15, 2021 – Sensorion (FR0012596468 – ALSEN), a pioneering clinical-stage biotech company specializing in the development of novel therapies to restore, treat, and prevent hearing related disorders, and hearing-care industry leader Sonova (SWX:SOON), have signed a multi-year strategic collaboration with the aim of introducing genetic analysis to the routine diagnosis of progressive hearing loss in adults, thereby opening the way for improved care through a combination of advanced therapeutic interventions and traditional hearing aids.

The deal brings to fruition a process started in December 2020, when Sonova acquired a 3.7% stake in Sensorion for €5 million, and the two companies signed a letter of intent to engage in exclusive negotiations to create new diagnostic and therapeutic solutions for hearing loss.

The key element of the collaboration between Sensorion and Sonova is a natural history study including genotyping thousands of patients suffering from early onset of severe presbycusis (age-related hearing loss) with the aim of confirming hundreds of patients for specific mutations. Sonova Audiological Care stores will participate in the recruitment and follow-up of patients to assess the prevalence of such variants in genes, including *GJB2*, and the association of particular mutations with disease severity and progression. Sonova and Sensorion will jointly fund the study with €7.0 million, split 70/30 between the two companies.

“We are very pleased to be working closely with Sonova in a collaboration to investigate inherited components of hearing loss,” said **Nawal Ouzren, CEO of Sensorion**. “Inherited factors contribute to the incidence, severity and rate of progression of hearing loss in the general adult population. We believe that together with Sonova, we are driving future standards of hearing loss diagnosis and of therapy. Our collaboration keeps Sensorion at the cutting edge of hearing loss development by adding to our growing understanding of the ways gene therapy can help fill unmet medical needs beyond childhood and congenital deafness.”

“We are excited to leverage our Audiological Care stores to help identify and manage patients with relevant mutations that could be clinically followed up in the proposed Natural History Study,” said **Arnd Kaldowski, CEO of Sonova**. “The aim of this joint project is to explore synergies between two approaches of hearing health care, traditional hearing care and emerging bio-pharmaceutical approaches which we believe will be largely complementary. By actively participating in this study on screening of genetic predispositions leading to hearing loss, we will learn about potential new diagnostic procedures as well as how we as Sonova can contribute and benefit from these new emerging technologies in hearing care and ultimately better support the consumer on their journey to better hearing.”

The agreement with Sonova reflects Sensorion’s broader intent to leverage its technology base in the genetics of hearing loss to build an integrated picture of diagnosis and therapy through collaborations with commercial and academic organizations.

About Natural History Study (NHS)

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A NHS is a clinical study that follows a group of people over time who have, or are at risk of developing, a specific medical condition or disease. It helps to identify patients and to gain a better understanding of a disease's progression, the unmet medical need, and how to treat it. This is especially important for rare and orphan diseases where there are limited published data or limited available information or limited knowledge of the disease, limited number of patients and treatment options. People with known risk factors can be followed up to establish prevalence of a disease, centers of excellence can be identified, disease management established and the ideal time for treatment can be determined. A NHS ideally starts in parallel with the preclinical development and can be used to design and test clinical endpoints for future clinical trials.

About Sensorion

Sensorion is a pioneering clinical-stage biotech company specializing in the development of novel therapies to restore, treat, and prevent hearing related disorders. Its clinical-stage portfolio includes one Phase 2 product: SENS-401 (Arazasetron) for sudden sensorineural hearing loss (SSNHL). Sensorion has built a unique R&D technology platform to expand its understanding of the pathophysiology and etiology of inner ear related diseases enabling it to select the best targets and modalities for drug candidates. The Company is also working on the identification of biomarkers to improve diagnosis of these underserved illnesses. Sensorion has launched three gene therapy programs, currently at preclinical stage, aimed at correcting hereditary monogenic forms of deafness including deafness caused by a mutation of the gene encoding for Otoferlin, hearing loss related to gene target GJB2 as well as Usher Syndrome Type 1 to potentially address important hearing loss segments in adults and children. The Company is potentially uniquely placed, through its platforms and pipeline of potential therapeutics, to make a lasting positive impact on hundreds of thousands of people with inner ear related disorders, a significant global unmet medical need.

www.sensorion.com

About Sonova

Sonova, headquartered in Stäfa, Switzerland, is a leading provider of innovative hearing care solutions. The Group operates through its core business brands Phonak, Unitron, Hansaton, Advanced Bionics and the brands of the Audiological Care business, e.g. AudioNova, Geers, Boots Hearing Care, Connect Hearing and Lapperre. Sonova offers its customers one of the most comprehensive product portfolios in the industry – from hearing instruments to cochlear implants to wireless communication solutions.

Pursuing a unique vertically integrated business strategy, the Group operates through three core businesses – Hearing Instruments, Audiological Care and Cochlear Implants – along the entire value chain of the hearing care market. The Group's sales and distribution network, the widest in the industry, comprises over 50 own wholesale companies and more than 100 independent distributors. This is complemented by Sonova's Audiological Care business, which offers professional audiological services through a network of around 3,200 locations in 20 key markets.

Founded in 1947, the Group has a workforce of over 14,000 dedicated employees and generated sales of CHF 2.6 billion in the financial year 2020/21 as well as a net profit of CHF 585 million. Across all businesses, and by supporting the Hear the World Foundation, Sonova pursues its vision of a world where everyone enjoys the delight of hearing and therefore lives a life without limitations.

For more information please visit www.sonova.com and www.hear-the-world.com.

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Disclaimer

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