



bioMérieux and ExonHit Therapeutics initiate their third diagnostic program

Screening of prostate cancer from blood

Marcy l'Etoile and Paris, France – January 4, 2007 – bioMérieux and ExonHit Therapeutics announce, today, the initiation of their third programme for the screening of cancer from blood. One of the goals is to assist physicians in deciding whether to proceed with surgery for prostate cancer.

Such diagnostic tests constitute a real innovation in the field of cancer, since they should allow the detection of cancers from a blood sample. Very early treatment is critical to increase the successful outcome of any anti-cancer treatment.

This collaboration is based on the expertise and intellectual property of ExonHit in the analysis of genome expression, and on the know-how of bioMérieux in the field of *in vitro* diagnostics. Its purpose is to create DNA biochips which will allow screening for the presence of cancer markers from blood samples. Indeed, DNA biochips are perfectly adapted tools to detect several dozens of nucleic acid markers, which in turn enable the characterisation of multigenic pathologies such as cancers.

bioMérieux and ExonHit first launched a programme for breast cancer screening from blood, for which a prospective study is ongoing, then a programme for the detection of colorectal cancers, which are considered to be the most common, regardless of sex, and they are now going to tackle prostate cancer, which is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in men today.

In France each year, prostate cancer affects 40 000 men and is the second most common cause of death by cancer. It occurs in men that are over 45 years old, and its frequency increases with age. Prostate cancer often develops slowly, even without treatment, and those tumours can remain silent. Generally, prostate cancer develops without any symptoms, but it can, at a certain stage, spread to the bones thereby causing pain. Today, the only way to detect the presence of prostate cancer with certainty and to determine its characteristics is through biopsies. A reliable blood test would constitute a major improvement for the screening of prostate cancer, by assisting physicians in deciding which treatment to apply to improve patient management.

“We are very happy to tackle such public health challenges with bioMérieux” said Bruno Tocqué, Chairman of ExonHit. *“We are confident we will rapidly provide bioMérieux with a new diagnostic panel in the market of molecular detection of cancers.”*

“A wide scale use of a test of blood detection could reduce by 15 to 20% the mortality due to cancer of populations which are subject to detection, thereby giving them quicker access to a therapeutic treatment.” said Stéphane Bancel, *Directeur Général Délégué* of bioMérieux.

About ExonHit Therapeutics

www.exonhit.com

ExonHit Therapeutic is the world's leader in the analysis of alternative RNA splicing, a process which when deregulated plays a key role in the onset of various diseases.

ExonHit has a multi-component commercial strategy to capture the maximum value from its leadership in alternative splicing. The Company is already generating revenues from a new generation of microarrays, "SpliceArrays" that enable life science researchers to detect crucial disease-associated information. These products are marketed worldwide in conjunction with Agilent and Affymetrix. In the field of diagnostics, ExonHit has a major collaboration with bioMérieux to develop completely novel predictive blood-based cancer diagnostics, which could play a key role in improving the treatment of breast and other major cancers.

In parallel, ExonHit is developing its own therapeutic pipeline in the field of neurodegenerative diseases and cancer. The Company has advanced drug candidates into clinical trials and is evaluating several promising pre-clinical compounds. ExonHit also has a strategic partnership with Allergan, to discover and develop new therapeutics in the areas of pain, neurological diseases and ophthalmology. This collaboration provides on-going research funding to ExonHit.

Founded in 1997, ExonHit is headquartered in Paris, France and has a US facility in Gaithersburg, Maryland. The Company is listed on Alternext of Euronext Paris (ticker: ALEHT).

This press release includes only summary information and does not purport to be comprehensive. The projections, forecast and estimates of ExonHit Therapeutics which may be contained herein are for illustrative purposes only and are based on management's current views and assumptions. Such projections, forecast and estimates involve known and unknown risks and uncertainties, as described at Section 4.2 "Facteurs de risque" (Risk Factors) of the Document de Base available on ExonHit Therapeutics' website (www.exonhit.com), that may cause actual results, performance or events to differ materially from those anticipated in the summary information.

In addition, ExonHit Therapeutics, its shareholders, and its affiliates, directors, officers, advisors and employees have not verified the accuracy of, and make no representations or warranties in relation to, statistical data or predictions contained in this press release that were taken or derived.

Finally, this press release may be drafted in the French and English languages. In an event of differences between the texts, the French language version shall prevail.

About bioMérieux

bioMérieux is a leading international diagnostics group that specialises in the field of *in vitro* diagnostics for clinical and industrial applications. bioMérieux designs, develops, manufactures and markets systems (i.e. reagents, instruments and software). In 2005, bioMérieux sales reached 994 million euros. The company is present in more than 150 countries through 35 subsidiaries and a large network of distributors.

bioMérieux is listed on the Eurolist of Euronext, Paris (FR0010096479 – BIM). Other information can be found at www.biomerieux.com.

Contacts

ExonHit Therapeutics

Bruno Tocqué,
Tel: +33 1 58 05 47 00
Philippe Rousseau,
infofi@exonhit.com

Investor Relations

bioMérieux
Hervé Laurent
Tel : + 33 4 78 87 22 37
investor.relations@eu.biomerieux.com

LT Value
Nancy Levain
Tel : + 33 1 55 27 15 88
nancy.levain@ltvalue.com

Media

bioMérieux
Christelle Chabert-Toujas
Tel : + 33 4 78 87 52 01
christelle.chabert-toujas@eu.biomerieux.com

Image Sept
Laurence Heilbronn
Tel : + 33 1 53 70 74 64
lheilbronn@image7.fr
Tiphaine Hecketsweiler -
Tel : + 33 1 53 70 74 59
thecketsweiler@image7.fr