



PRESS RELEASE

bioMérieux licenses technology from NorChip to launch a HPV test for cervical cancer risk detection

Marcy l'Etoile (France) / Klokkarstua (Norway) 17 January 2007. bioMérieux and NorChip announced today that bioMérieux has entered into a worldwide exclusive license agreement for rights developed by NorChip to an innovative, m-RNA based Human Papillomavirus (HPV)diagnostic, for early detection of cervical carcinogenesis. The test will use the NucliSENS EasyQ®platform and be available during the second quarter of 2007.

" We are very pleased to enter this agreement as it increases the opportunity to prevent cervical cancer, and provide all women, irrespectively of age, with a better life through improved health ", said Dr. Geir Morland, CEO of NorChip. " An agreement with one of the world leaders in the field of in vitro diagnostics enables accurate and cost-effective prevention of cervical cancer worldwide ", he added.

" The m-RNA based HPV assay developed by NorChip is an important addition to our diagnostic portfolio, as it increases significantly our commercial molecular diagnostic offer, stated Stéphane Bancel, Chief Executive Officer of bioMérieux. This agreement fits exactly with our strategy to focus on bringing to clinicians diagnostic tests with high-medical value ".

The test will use the mRNA based HPV detection technology developed and patented by NorChip and the NASBA® RealTime technology from bioMérieux. Under the agreement, NorChip will license the patents and related technology to bioMérieux, who will manufacture and distribute kits for use with its proprietary NucliSENS EasyQ® system. The licensed technology utilizes the fact that cells integrated with DNA from oncogenic HPV virus strains express oncogenic proteins based on continuous expression of abnormal mRNA. These findings have been published in nine international peer-reviewed publications and clinical utility of this approach has been documented in more than 20 studies covering over 60.000 women. The assay will be distributed exclusively by bioMérieux with its proprietary NucliSENS EasyQ® system worldwide, except for the Nordic countries, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. bioMérieux will pay NorChip upfront fees, milestone payments, as well as royalties on sales.

About Human Papillomavirus and cervical cancer

Human Papillomavirus is a group of sexually transmitted viruses that may be related to the development of cervical cancer. More than 80% of all adults will have at least one infection with HPV during their lifetime. However, nearly all these infections may be considered as the "cervical flu", and have nothing to do with cervical cancer risk. The development of cervical cancer is related to oncogenic proteins produced by transformed cells in the women's cervix. These cells are influenced by certain genetic sequences from a limited group of HPV-viruses and may develop into cervical cancer over a period of 10-25 years. Oncogenic proteins related to the five HPV-types 16, 18, 31, 33, and 45 are related to more than 97% of all cases of HPV-induced cervical cancer in Europe. The NorChip technology detects the oncogenic expression, and is therefore an accurate and cost-effective test for cervical cancer prevention.

About NorChip

NorChip is a research-based company developing and marketing medical products for clinical diagnosis. NorChip aims to provide people in all parts of the world with essential health-related information and thereby increase people's quality of life. NorChip has developed and sells the PreTect® HPV-Proofer assay, the world's first diagnostic test to reveal early oncogenic activity in cervical cells. This technology provides over 90% sensitivity against cervical cancer and pre-stages of cervical cancer and is the world's most accurate and cost-effective test for preventing cervical cancer.

NorChip – Providing people a better life

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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) used in:

- Clinical applications: the diagnosis of infectious diseases such as hepatitis, HIV, tuberculosis and respiratory illnesses, as well as pathologies such as cardiovascular diseases and cancer, based on the analysis of biological samples (such as blood, saliva or urine); and

- Industrial applications: the microbiological analysis of food, environments (such as water and air), surfaces and pharmaceutical and cosmetic products, based on the analysis of product or environmental samples.

In 2006, bioMérieux sales reached 1037 million euros. The company is present in more than 150 countries through 35 subsidiaries and a large network of distributors, which positions the company well to benefit from the growth potential of the *in vitro* diagnostics market.

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

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