

Novo Nordisk starts Phase I trial with oral GLP1 analogue using Merrion Pharmaceutical's GIPET® technology

DUBLIN, IRELAND, 29 April 2010 - Merrion Pharmaceuticals plc (IEX:MERR), a pharmaceutical development company, today announced that its partner, Novo Nordisk initiated, in March 2010, its first Phase I clinical trial with an oral GLP1 analogue (NN9925). Merrion Pharmaceuticals plc, GIPET® technology is used in the formulation of NN9925.

Mads Krogsgaard Thomsen, Executive Vice President and CSO, Novo Nordisk, speaking at Novo Nordisk's Q1 2010 conference call, said " Novo Nordisk initiated a Phase I trial for an orally administered GLP-1 analogue formulated using Merrion Pharmaceuticals GIPET technology. In brief, the Novo Nordisk R&D strategy seeks to maximise the likelihood of success for its oral diabetes protein portfolio by adopting an approach of clinically investigating several different tailor made degradation resistant analogues of insulin and GLP-1 formulated through the use of various state of the art oral protein delivery technologies"

'This is another significant step forward for Merrion and our GIPET technology' said John Lynch, CEO, Merrion Pharmaceuticals plc. 'Oral GLP-1 analogues are one of a number of products which GIPET could bring to market. Merrion continues to make progress in building a substantial business'.

In January 2009, Merrion entered into a development and licence agreement to develop and commercialise oral formulations of Novo Nordisk's proprietary GLP-1 analogues, using Merrion's proprietary GIPET® technology. Commencing clinical trials is a significant milestone in the development of an oral GLP1. In December 2009 Merrion announced that an oral insulin compound had entered clinical trials under a separate agreement with Novo Nordisk.

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Merrion Pharmaceuticals (www.merrionpharma.com) is engaged in the development of oral forms (tablets/capsules) of drugs that have poor absorption and are generally given by injection. Merrion was established in 2003 to commercialize various technologies acquired from Elan Corporation, plc. Merrion Pharmaceutical's patented drug delivery technologies increase bioavailability, by improving absorption in the gastrointestinal tract, of drugs that are otherwise poorly absorbed. Merrion utilizes its technology to develop new oral drugs in two ways; it develops its own proprietary drugs using GIPET and partners with other pharmaceutical companies in developing oral GIPET formulations of their products. Merrion is listed at the Dublin Stock Exchange under the symbol MERR.

Novo Nordisk is a healthcare company and a world leader in diabetes care. In addition, Novo Nordisk has a leading position within areas such as haemostasis management, growth hormone therapy and hormone replacement therapy. Novo Nordisk manufactures and markets pharmaceutical products and services that make a significant difference to patients, the medical profession and society. With headquarters in Denmark, Novo Nordisk employs more than 29,000 employees in 81 countries, and markets its products in 179 countries. Novo Nordisk's B shares are listed on the stock exchanges in Copenhagen and London. Its ADRs are listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol 'NVO'. For more information, visit novonordisk.com.