Redx Pharma and Medicines Discovery Catapult awarded grant for biomarker project which aims to accelerate therapeutic development for idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis

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Strategic collaboration will enable preclinical assessment and inform clinical development strategy for Redx's Porcupine (RXC006) and ROCK2 inhibitors for fibrotic diseases with high unmet medical need

Alderley Park, 19 November 2019 Redx Pharma plc (AIM: REDX) announces that Innovate UK has awarded Biomedical Catalyst funding to Redx and Medicines Discovery Catapult (MDC). The grant will fund the development and validation of a panel of translational biomarkers to assess novel therapeutics in idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), a life-threatening fibrotic lung condition.

The collaboration combines Redx's expertise in the development of novel small molecule precision medicines, including the Company's Porcupine (RXC006) and Rho-associated protein kinase 2 (ROCK2) inhibitors, together with MDC's expertise in biomarker strategies. The collaboration is expected to enable the progression of anti-fibrotic therapies in an area of high unmet medical need worldwide.

Development of new therapies for the treatment of fibrotic diseases is hampered by the lack of translation between animal models and human disease. In addition, robust biomarker strategies that can be used to stratify patients, predict treatment efficacy and show a meaningful anti-fibrotic response early in clinical development do not exist at present. Therefore, new biomarkers validated and developed through the project are expected to greatly assist the development of new therapies for IPF and improve the likelihood of clinical success.

The project, funded by Innovate UK, aims to set up and validate a comprehensive group of fibrotic disease-associated genes and proteins with potential to further develop into a sensitive biomarker panel for clinical use. A multimodal approach will be undertaken by MDC to investigate novel biomarker signatures to characterise disease and treatment response. These biomarkers can be used to evaluate Redx's Porcupine (RXC006) and ROCK2 small molecule inhibitors in preclinical fibrosis models and ultimately support future clinical development strategies for these programmes, which aim to enter the clinic by 2021. The total grant awarded to fund this project is £515,595.

Dr Richard Armer, Chief Scientific Officer, Redx Pharma plc commented:

"We are excited to enter into this unique collaboration with Medicines Discovery Catapult and would like to thank Innovate UK for the validation of our teams' scientific capabilities with the Biomedical Catalyst funding award. This will accelerate preclinical assessment and ensure a robust clinical development plan is in place for our Porcupine and ROCK2 inhibitors for fibrosis."

Dr Peter Simpson, Chief Scientific Officer, Medicines Discovery Catapult commented:

"This partnership with Redx will allow the development of a robust portfolio of biomarkers for IPF and the progression of anti-fibrotic therapies in a faster and better-informed way. This exciting collaboration will enable us to better address an important and unmet clinical need."

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About Redx Pharma Plc

Redx is a UK based biotechnology company whose shares are traded on AIM (AIM:REDX). Redx's vision is to become a leading biotech focused on the development of novel precision medicines that have the potential to transform treatment in oncology and fibrotic diseases.

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About Medicines Discovery Catapult

For more information on MDC, please visit: https://md.catapult.org.uk/

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About Redx's RXC006 and ROCK2 (Rho-associated protein kinase 2) inhibitors

RXC006, is a first-in-class oral porcupine inhibitor designed to treat idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF). Porcupine function is required for the secretion of all Wnt family members. Wnt plays a critical role in multiple pathways driving fibrosis progression. Furthermore, upregulation of the Wnt pathway plus aberrant Wnt signalling has been shown in around 50% of IPF patients and is associated with poor prognosis. Following its nomination as a development candidate late last year, RXC006 has successfully progressed into manufacturing and toxicity studies aimed at taking RXC006 into the clinic in 2021.

ROCK2 is an intracellular kinase with multiple cellular functions. ROCK2 signalling plays a key role in both the inflammatory component and the tissue remodelling that drives disease progression in many fibrotic conditions, including IPF. Targeting ROCK2 in fibrosis is a clinically validated approach with KD025, a ROCK2 inhibitor in clinical development for IPF, chronic Graft vs Host Disease (cGvHD) and systemic sclerosis.

Both porcupine and ROCK2 are promising targets for the treatment of fibrosis and Redx have shown efficacy in preclinical models of IPF.