



Epigenomics spins off start-up Epiontis

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Press release

Epigenomics AG, a transatlantic biotech company, is founding the Berlin-based company Epiontis GmbH (Epigenetics on Tissues) together with a management team. Epiontis will use Epigenomics' proprietary and validated technology to improve tissue engineering and cell therapy on a world-wide exclusive basis. Epiontis is being financed by silent partnering of TBG (Technologie Beteiligungsgesellschaft) and funding from the program „FUTOUR 2000" of the German Federal Ministry for Economics and Employment in order to achieve Proof of Concept and thus has approx. 800 000 € seed capital.

DNA-methylation, a natural signal on DNA used by Epigenomics to diagnose disease, forms a specific pattern for each cell and tissue type with which cells and complex tissue can be clearly identified. So far, no routinely applicable and reliable methods for analysis, confirmation and manipulation of the desired cells exist for the development of endogenous tissue (such as cartilage) and for the sensible application of cell therapy. Therefore directed development of cells that are functionally equal to the natural cells is problematic and thus far the results are questionable. The development of these cell types is urgently needed in serious diseases like Parkinson's and diabetes.

„The potential of DNA-methylation beyond oncology is tremendous. While Epigenomics will be concentrating on its core business, the application of DNA-methylation for diagnostic and pharmacodiagnostic purposes, Epiontis can propel the commercial use of DNA-methylation in cell therapy and tissue engineering as an independent company with a clear focus ", stated Alexander Olek, CEO of Epigenomics AG. „For many patients, this could mean a significant improvement of their quality of life in the future."

The startup capital will help Epiontis prove the applicability of this technology in tissue engineering and cell therapy based on cartilage cells. Epiontis aims to demonstrate that cultured cells can be categorised and identified by means of methylation fingerprints. In particular, for diabetes patients the development of procedures towards cell therapies with engineered, insulin-producing beta cells could eventually promise a new and improved therapy approach. Such approaches are followed by a number of pharma companies.

The three managers of Epiontis, Sven Olek, PhD, Paul Gardina, PhD, and Dr. Ulrich Hoffmüller, are experienced in molecular biology, bioinformatics and business development, respectively. Sven Olek, a graduate of Imperial College, University of London, most recently was a scientist at the R. W. Johnson Pharmaceutical Research Institute in San Diego, CA, USA, a research branch of Johnson&Johnson. Paul Gardina graduated from Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, USA, and worked until recently at LION Bioscience in Heidelberg, Germany and Boston, MA, USA as a bioinformatic scientist. Dr. Ulrich Hoffmüller graduated from Berlin Humboldt University, Germany and worked as a business developer for Jerini AG, Berlin, as Director of Business Development.

About Epigenomics

Epigenomics is committed to significantly improving the treatment of cancer and other complex diseases by developing novel diagnostic and pharmacodiagnostic products based on DNA methylation. By detecting and interpreting DNA methylation patterns, the "on" and "off" signs for genes, Epigenomics can create a digitized readout (Digital Phenotype®) for each cell. The comparison of a patient's cells against healthy and abnormal reference samples enables an exact diagnosis of disease at a very early stage and provides physicians with essential information to help guide an appropriate therapy. The combination of diagnosis and therapy, based on this information and robust proprietary technology, is "personalizing" medicine. Epigenomics is supported by a network of renowned academic researchers and clinicians, with expertise in the fields of cancer and DNA methylation. The company has its headquarters in Berlin, Germany, and a wholly owned subsidiary in Seattle, USA. For more information, please visit our website at www.epigenomics.com.