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Algeron Scales up Manufacturing of NP-120 (Ifenprodil) to Prepare for Coronavirus and Acute Lung Injury US Clinical Trials

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, March 09, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Algeron Pharmaceuticals Inc. (CSE: AGN) (FRANKFURT: AGW) (OTCQB: AGNPF) (the “**Company**” or “**Algeron**”) a clinical stage pharmaceutical development company is pleased to announce that it has made the decision to begin production of NP-120 (Ifenprodil) with a new injectable and long acting oral release formulation, in order to be prepared for new US clinical trials for COVID-19 (coronavirus) and acute lung injury (ALI).

The decision was made after a recent independent study found that Ifenprodil significantly reduced ALI and improved survivability in an animal study with Asian H5N1 infected mice by 40%. Asian H5N1 is the most lethal form of influenza known to date with an over 50% mortality rate. This compelling data, generated via a genome wide RNAi interference approach, that lead the investigators to the identification of Ifenprodil, an NMDA receptor antagonist, has been a major contributing factor in the Company’s decision.

The Company is in negotiations with a number of manufacturers and will be announcing more details on its decision shortly.

“The Company believes strongly in the potential of Ifenprodil to treat patients who have a severe acute lung injury, including people who have various forms of respiratory infections including COVID-19 (coronavirus) and influenza,” said Christopher J. Moreau CEO of Algeron Pharmaceuticals.

Algeron has filed new intellectual property rights for NP-120 (Ifenprodil) for the treatment of respiratory diseases.

About NP-120 (Ifenprodil)

NP-120 (Ifenprodil) is an N-methyl-d-aspartate (NMDA) receptor glutamate receptor antagonist specifically targeting the NMDA-type subunit 2B (Glu2NB). Ifenprodil also exhibits agonist activity for the Sigma-1 receptor, a chaperone protein up-regulated during endoplasmic reticulum stress. Although the anti-fibrotic activity of Ifenprodil in IPF is not known, recent studies have suggested a link between both receptors and pathways associated with fibrosis.

Glutamate (Glu) is the main excitatory neurotransmitter which acts on glutamate receptors in the central nervous system (CNS) but overactivation of these receptors can cause several damages to neural cells including death. Recent studies show that the glutamate agonist N-methyl-d-aspartate (NMDA) can trigger acute lung injury (ALI). ALI is a direct and indirect injury to alveolar epithelial cells and capillary endothelial cell, causing diffuse pulmonary interstitial and alveolar edema and acute hypoxic respiration failure. ALI is characterized by

reduced lung volume and compliance, and imbalance of the ventilation/perfusion ratio, inducing hypoxemia and respiratory distress and its severe stage (oxygen index <200) known as acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). (1) Furthermore, pathological findings show that 64% of ARDS patients may have pulmonary fibrosis during convalescence (2).

NP-120 (Ifenprodil - brand name Cerocal) was initially developed by Sanofi in the 1990s in the French and Japanese markets for the treatment of circulatory disorders. The drug is genericized and sold in Japan.

About Algernon Pharmaceuticals Inc.

Algernon Pharmaceuticals is a clinical stage pharmaceutical development company focused on advancing its lead compounds for non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), chronic kidney disease (CKD) inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), and chronic cough.

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1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5938426/>
2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19909524>



Source: Algeron Pharmaceuticals