

Press release

A biotech startup from Lausanne at the forefront of the fight against allergies.

Prof. François Spertini and Dr. Christophe Reymond communicate the positive result of a first clinical trial on volunteers allergic to birch pollen. In connection with these results, company ANERGIS SA announces a clinical trial phase I/IIa with its product “AllerT” against birch pollen allergy. This project is strongly supported by the OFFT (Office Fédéral de la Formation professionnelle et de la Technologie). In the long term, the biotech company from Lausanne hopes to develop a remedy against food allergies and thus offers a hope of cure to some 300 million people suffering from allergy in the world.

Press release:

Lausanne, June 18, 2008: ANERGIS SA (Epalinges, Switzerland) announces the completion of a clinical trial on volunteers allergic to birch pollen. A series of products candidates for a fast desensitization was tested on allergic volunteers. The most promising products did not show any skin reactivity whereas birch pollen and the principal birch allergen, the protein Bet v 1, induced an allergic reaction in all the volunteers (20 subjects). This result confirms the approach conceived by Prof. F. Spertini and initiated by a project CHUV-UNIL-EPFL within the framework of allergy to bee venom. The application to a second type of allergy, namely birch pollen, shows also that the technology of ANERGIS can be generalized to different types of allergies.

This clinical study follows a series of preclinical developments which showed the good tolerance and the absence of toxicity of the products candidates in the animal. ANERGIS has thus retained an end product baptized AllerT for the continuation of its clinical program. As of August 2008, AllerT will be tested on 40 allergic volunteers who will be subjected to a series of subcutaneous or intradermal injections over a two months period. The principal objective in the first phase of this clinical study will be to test the safety of the product (phase I). At the end of the treatment, the level of induced protection will be evaluated by a nasal challenge with birch pollen (IIa phase). The proposed study will be controlled (placebo group)

and double blind, thus ensuring the impartiality of the results. Results are awaited for the beginning of the year 2009. The clinical trial phase I/IIa received all necessary authorizations, namely from the ethics committee of the Faculty of Biology and Medicine of the University of Lausanne and Swissmedic.

The project is strongly supported by the Federal Office of the Vocational training and Technology (OFFT/BBT) via a grant from the CTI. Agreements treating of the relations between Anergis, the CHUV and the CTI were concluded, ensuring a flawless development of the project.

Contact:

Anergis SA
Ch. du Polny 34b
CH – 1066 Lausanne
SUISSE

Dr. Christophe Reymond, CEO
Tél. : +41 79 261 73 41
Christophe.reymond@anergis.ch
www.anergis.ch

About ANERGIS SA:

Founded in 2001 by Prof. François Spertini, company ANERGIS SA is a startup company devoted to develop new products to treat allergies. Its business model is to create value by developing its proprietary technological platform (COP) and apply it in the field of the immunotherapy. Partnerships, licensing agreements and/or the Co-marketing of some of its products after clinical trials, will enable ANERGIS to generate incomes and to ensure growth.

ANERGIS is active in the field of birch pollen allergy, essentially in order to “prove its concept” thanks to an easily verifiable model of nasal provocation. The COP technology is potentially applicable to a great number of allergies. Because of the safety potential of its products, ANERGIS plans to explore in the next future the field of food allergies, for which there is currently no cure.

ANERGIS’ projects:

ANERGIS has as the ambition to position itself as a key company in the development of new products against respiratory and food allergies, fields in which its experience grows everyday. To support continuation of its clinical program, ANERGIS projects a financing round at the beginning of 2009, immediately after completion of the clinical study described above. Such financing will allow a new seasonal study with birch pollen allergic volunteers (phase II) based on the product AllerT, as well as the simultaneous launching of preclinical and clinical studies on food allergy (peanut). In addition, ANERGIS will establish contacts with several pharmaceutical companies active in the field of allergy and immunotherapy for the marketing of AllerT.

ANERGIS proprietary technology: “COP”

ANERGIS developed and patented a new approach to immunotherapy based on the use of fragments of allergens called Contiguous Overlapping Peptides (COPs). These fragments are able to reprogram the immune response towards tolerance to the allergen, thus preventing the activation of the immune system during pollen exposure, as well as the production of IgE antibodies responsible for the allergic reaction. COPs as therapeutic agents have the advantage of a great safety whereas pollen extracts and natural allergens used currently in specific immunotherapy (SIT), commonly called “desensitization” frequently generate severe allergic reactions even leading to anaphylactic shock.

General information on allergy:

The proportion of allergic people strongly increased recently among the population of industrialized countries, reaching nearly a quarter of the population. Approximately 300 million people suffer from, sometimes dangerous (anaphylactic shock), often unpleasant allergies, which decrease their quality of life and often lead to working disability. Current treatments are unsatisfactory. The most used pharmaceutical products (antihistamines, anti-leukotriènes) do nothing but reduce the symptoms on short term. An alternative to symptomatic drugs is specific desensitization or immunotherapy (SIT). Several studies in man show the benefit of such therapy on the allergic response, in particular in the long run. However, immunotherapy extends over several years of treatment (3-5 years), during which many side effects are observed. In particular during ultra rush therapies up to nearly 30% of the patients must be treated for allergic symptoms in the course of the therapy. It is thus necessary to find new products combining the proven efficacy of desensitization with increased safety.

Approximately 25% of all allergic patients are allergic to tree pollen. Among those, 90% show reactivity with birch pollen on skin prick tests (SPT). Allergy to birch is very often related to allergies to other trees of the same family and even with certain food allergies, like those to hazel nut, apple, and fishes among others. The allergy to birch pollen is characterized by a rhinitis often evolving towards asthma. Symptom treatment, mostly used today, is based on the antihistamines and anti-leukotrienes. Seasonal symptoms are decreased without modifying the course of the affection. Only a small proportion of patients allergic to birch pollen undergo immunotherapy because of the risks and long duration of the treatment.

A growing number of people suffer from food allergies. In many cases, patients can only be saved by treatment immediately after the onset of allergy. Such allergy confines the patient in a restricted way of life, forcing him to control every food origin. Immunotherapy is not used against food allergies, due to the fact, again, of the risks of incurred lethal side effects. Allergy sufferers currently remain at the mercy of a nearby hospital.

Improved immunotherapy, as proposed by ANERGIS, will provide food allergy, but also respiratory tracts allergy sufferers with a more secure and rapid treatment thus largely increasing the number of treated patients.