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Press release

Aqilion announces identity of drug target and presents novel data from the drug discovery program Alnitak

AQILION AB announces TAK1 as the target of the internal drug discovery program Alnitak and will present data from the discovery phase at the international partnering event BIO-Europe® 2020 Digital in October. Alnitak was initiated as an internal program last year with focus on chronic inflammation and autoimmune diseases in addition to genetically driven cancers.

The internally generated Alnitak program is aimed at discovering and developing small molecule inhibitors of TAK1. The target TAK1 has been shown to act as a master regulator of inflammatory signaling. The Aqilion team, consisting of experienced former AstraZeneca R&D management team members and scientists, has identified TAK1 as a highly promising drug target. A TAK1 inhibiting drug has the potential to treat inflammatory and autoimmune diseases in addition to certain genetically driven cancers.

Among the key inflammatory processes is the formation of a multi-protein complex called inflammasome. The inflammasomes are part of the innate immune system and they play a vital role that help to recruit immune cells to sites of infection and inflammation. Dysfunctional inflammasomes are involved in harmful inflammations, which can become chronic in many diseases. NLRP3 is the most studied inflammasome in the scientific literature to date. Recent publications have shown that TAK1 functions as a central mediator of NLRP3 activation in human cells.

Aqilion believes that new research and knowledge regarding human immunology and availability of novel research models, re-evaluates and positions TAK1 as an ideal drug target.

“Using structure-based drug discovery methods in collaboration with leading research laboratories, the project has already developed proprietary best in class inhibitors with excellent druglike properties. This is Aqilion’s first internal project to deliver results since we initiated the implementation of our new strategy with a focus on chronic inflammatory and immunological driven diseases. I am proud of our team and collaborators and very pleased to acknowledge that we have reached an important milestone in the development of Aqilion as a biotech company,” says Sarah Fredriksson, CEO of AQILION AB.

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About Aqilion

Aqilion is a biotechnology company focused on developing new innovative treatments for diseases caused by chronic inflammation and dysfunctional immunological reactions such as autoimmunity. The company is primarily active in the early phases of drug development, from the idea stage to early clinical development.

Aqilion combines big pharma experience with an entrepreneurial mindset and drive. The company's experienced team and board have previously brought medicinal products to market and have solid business development skills from innovative biotech and pharma companies.

AQILION AB is a Swedish privately held company headquartered in Helsingborg.
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