

Company News

May 14, 1998

Interim Report on Collaboration with Genetics Institute, Inc., of the United States

Genetics Institute, Inc. (a wholly-owned subsidiary of American Home Products Corporation) and Ono Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. have for the past several years been collaborating in the area of genomics with the aim of developing new pharmaceutical products. This collaboration has yielded the discovery of many new genes, and work has now entered a new stage of elucidating the physiological action of individual proteins. Because several of these new genes have been found to be involved in human disease and physiological activities, the collaboration will most likely evolve into research on application of these genes to health care in the near future.

One of the proteins encoded in a new gene is a biological substance referred to as SDF-1. This substance is known to be involved in infection by HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

AIDS is an immunodeficiency syndrome brought about by destruction of immunocompetent cells caused by proliferation of HIV. Infection occurs when HIV binds with molecules known as receptors located on the surface of cells, after which it infiltrates the cells. Fusin has been determined to be one of the receptors involved in the first stage of infection. SDF-1 strongly binds with fusin. According to the results of in vitro experiments, SDF-1 has been confirmed as inhibiting HIV proliferation, suggesting that SDF-1 may offer a new therapeutic regimen for preventing HIV infection.

Because the action of SDF-1 is completely different from that of reverse transcriptase inhibitors, HIV protease inhibitors, and other currently dispensed AIDS drugs, the possibility now exists of finding a completely new means of blocking HIV either by using SDF-1 alone or in combination with existing treatments.

The two companies are now examining the most effective strategy to develop SDF-1.