AE 941.

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Abstract

AE 941 [Arthrovas, Neoretna, Psovascar] is shark cartilage extract that inhibits angiogenesis. AE 941 acts by blocking the two main pathways that contribute to the process of angiogenesis, matrix metalloproteases and the vascular endothelial growth factor signalling pathway. When initial development of AE 941 was being conducted, AEterna assigned the various indications different trademarks. Neovastat was used for oncology, Psovascar was used for dermatology, Neoretna was used for ophthalmology and Arthrovas was used for rheumatology. However, it is unclear if these trademarks will be used in the future and AEterna appears to only be using the Neovastat trademark in its current publications regardless of the indication. AEterna Laboratories signed commercialisation agreements with Grupo Ferrer Internacional SA of Spain and Medac GmbH of Germany in February 2001. Under the terms of the agreement, AEterna has granted exclusive commercialisation and distribution rights to AE 941 in oncology to Grupo Ferrer Internacional for the Southern European countries of France, Belgium, Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy. It also has rights in Central and South America. Medac GmbH will have marketing rights in Germany, the UK, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Austria, Ireland, the Netherlands and Eastern Europe. In October 2002, AEterna Laboratories announced that it had signed an agreement with Australian healthcare products and services company Mayne Group for marketing AE 941 (as Neovastat) in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Mexico. In March 2003, AEterna Laboratories announced it has signed an agreement with Korean based LG Life Sciences Ltd for marketing AE 941 (as Neovastat) in South Korea. The agreement provides AEterna with upfront and milestone payments, as well as a return on manufacturing and sales of AE 941. AEterna Laboratories had granted Alcon Laboratories an exclusive worldwide licence for AE 941 for ophthalmic products. However, this licence has been terminated. In 1999, AEterna secured funding for AE 941, part of which is from Technology Partnerships Canada (TPC), a research support programme run by Canada's federal government. Industry Canada will contribute $Can 1 for every $Can3 spent by AEterna on the development of AE 941, up to a total figure of $Can29.4 million. AEterna will reimburse TPC upon commercialisation of AE 941-derived products as a royalty on income generated. In January 2004 AEterna announced that development of AE 941 would be focusing on non-small cell lung cancer and that development for renal cell carcinoma would be discontinued. AEterna had previously announced in January 2003, following its acquisition of Zentaris, that development of AE 941 would be "strictly focused" on renal and non-small cell lung cancer, suggesting that development for all other indications has been discontinued, at least for the foreseeable future.