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Avexa's apricitabine demonstrates broader range of activity against drug resistant HIV strains

Australian biotechnology company Avexa (ASX: AVX) announced today that apricitabine (ATC) may express a broader range of activity in drug resistant HIV strains beyond the M184V and thymidine analogue mutations (TAMS). ATC is Avexa's nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI) for the treatment of drug-resistant HIV infections and the Company recently announced positive 21 day data in its Phase IIb trials.

In vitro studies conducted at the McGill AIDS Centre/Lady Davis Institute in Montreal, Canada examined ATC's potential to treat mutations commonly associated with several currently marketed HIV drugs. These studies showed ATC *in vitro* is active against resistant HIV selected by currently marketed drugs such as abacavir, didanosine, and non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTI). The results indicate that ATC may be able to maintain activity against a broader range of drug resistant mutations than had been initially anticipated, potentially extending the clinical use of ATC to include patients who fail other HIV drugs as well as those who fail lamivudine or emtricitabine. Abacavir is often used in combination with lamivudine, and NNRTI inhibitors are often used together with lamivudine or emtricitabine in first line therapy.

"The data from these *in vitro* studies are very encouraging and suggest that ATC might have a place in the clinical management of patients infected by a number of different drug-resistant strains" CEO of Avexa Dr Julian Chick said.

Although the M184V mutation, which gives resistance to lamivudine and emtricitabine and is the focus of Avexa's recent successful Phase IIb clinical trial, is one of the most common drug resistant mutations, patients commonly have other drug resistant mutations in addition to M184V as a result of being treated with at least three different anti-HIV drugs.

"We are very encouraged by this data which serves to further strengthen the positioning of ATC as the NRTI of choice for the treatment of patients failing their first or subsequent anti-HIV drug regimens" Dr Chick said.

For more information including details of the technical aspects of the studies:

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Avexa Limited is a Melbourne-based biotechnology company with a focus on research and development of drugs for the treatment of infectious diseases, in particular diseases which have a significant unmet medical need. Avexa has dedicated resources and funding for key projects including antiviral drugs for HIV and an antibiotic alternative for antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections. The Company's lead program is apricitabine (ATC) which has recently successfully completed the 21 day dosing of its Phase IIb trial. The Company continues to progress ATC towards Phase III trials.