Fujisawa Licenses Rights to Tacrolimus-eluting Stents to Sorin Biomedica

Japan, September 19, 2002 - Fujisawa Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., today announced that it has executed a licensing agreement with Sorin Biomedica Cardio S.p.A. of Italy whereby Sorin has acquired non exclusive rights to tacrolimus-eluting stents on a worldwide basis.

In order to prevent restenosis, medical device companies are developing stents coated with an immunosuppressive drug or an anticancer drug in the US and Europe. Restenosis is a major obstacle in the minimally invasive therapy of coronary heart disease with balloon dilatation and stent implantation since 20–40% of these patients have to be re-treated 3-6 months after dilatation or implantation. It is estimated that the world market for drug-coated stents would be about 400 billion yen around 2005.

Tacrolimus is active ingredient of both the immunosuppressant Prograf® and Protopic® for the treatment of atopic dermatitis. When coated on stents, tacrolimus is expected to have effects reducing the risk of restenosis.

Sorin Biomedica Cardio S.p.A., is a business unit of the Italy-based SNIA S.p.A. and a developer, manufacturer and marketer of cardiovascular implantable devices such as heart valves and stent-catheters. Under the licensing agreement, Sorin, using its own proprietary CarboStent technology, will develop tacrolimus-eluting stents in Europe with the launch expected around 2003. Fujisawa will receive milestone payments and royalty on future sales of tacrolimus-eluting stents. Further, Fujisawa will supply tacrolimus to Sorin.

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