



Astellas and MSD Enter Co-Promotion Agreement in Japan for Ipragliflozin, SGLT2 Inhibitor for Treatment of Type 2 Diabetes

TOKYO, September 2, 2013 -- Astellas Pharma Inc. (“Astellas”; Tokyo:4503; President and CEO: Yoshihiko Hatanaka) and MSD K.K. (“MSD” ; President and Representative Director: Tony Alvarez) announced today that they have entered into a co-promotion agreement in Japan for ipragliflozin L-proline (generic name; development code: ASP1941), a SGLT2 inhibitor for which Astellas has filed an application for approval in Japan.

Astellas will manufacture and sell ipragliflozin. Under the agreement, MSD will co-promote ipragliflozin with Astellas and Kotobuki Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.

Ipragliflozin is a selective SGLT2 (sodium-glucose co-transporter 2) inhibitor discovered through research collaboration between Astellas and Kotobuki Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. SGLTs are membrane proteins that exist on the cell surface and transfer glucose into cells. SGLT2 is one of the subtypes of the sodium-glucose co-transporters and plays a key role in the reuptake of glucose in the proximal tubule of the kidneys. Ipragliflozin reduces blood glucose levels by inhibiting the reuptake of glucose by selectively inhibiting SGLT2. In Japan, Astellas is currently seeking approval of ipragliflozin for the treatment of type 2 diabetes.

Both MSD, through its DPP-4 inhibitor Januvia[®] tablet (generic name: sitagliptin phosphate hydrate), and Astellas, through its fast-acting hypoglycemic agent Starsis[®] tablet (generic name: nateglinide), have significant experience in the diabetes market. Astellas and MSD are committed to make further contributions through co-promotion of ipragliflozin which is expected to be a new option for the treatment of type 2 diabetes.

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About Type 2 Diabetes

Diabetes (medically known as diabetes mellitus) is a disorder in which the body has difficulty regulating its blood glucose (sugar) level. There are two major types of diabetes: type 1 and type 2. Type 2 diabetes (formerly called non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus or adult-onset diabetes) is a disorder that is characterized by high blood glucose in the context of insulin resistance and relative insulin deficiency. Patients are instructed to increase exercise and diet restrictions, but most require treatment with an anti-diabetic agent to control blood glucose.

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