Pfizer Logo

Encycle Therapeutics announces discovery collaboration with Pfizer Inc.

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TORONTO, November 1, 2017 – Encycle Therapeutics (“Encycle”), a Toronto-based drug discovery company built on a unique chemistry that enables the synthesis of a new type of constrained peptide called “nacellins,” today announced a research collaboration with Pfizer Inc. (“Pfizer”) (NYSE: PFE).

Encycle and Pfizer will partner to optimize certain nacellins, which were previously identified by Pfizer during a screening of Encycle’s proprietary nacellin library, that act on an undisclosed therapeutic target.

Nacellins are a type of peptide macrocycle that can often exhibit higher permeability, solubility, and stability compared to conventional constrained peptides. The synthetic method for preparing nacellins, invented by Professor Andrei Yudin at the University of Toronto, who is a founder of Encycle, has the ability to cyclize very small peptides that are not normally amenable to constraint. It can also offer a lower cost, higher yielding alternative to traditional methods.

“We’re very pleased to continue to build our relationship with Pfizer,” says Encycle Therapeutics President and CEO Dr. Jeffrey Coull. “Unlike small molecules, nacellins can disrupt protein-protein interactions with high affinity, but unlike biologics, they can render this modulation while maintaining drug-like properties, including oral bioavailability. Considering that it is estimated that only a small proportion of the proteome is druggable using conventional therapeutics, we believe that our technology has enormous potential to underpin new therapeutic strategies.”

Spiros Liras, Vice President of Medicinal Chemistry at Pfizer, says, "Encycle has made progress in demonstrating the potential of nacellins to underpin novel leads for difficult targets, and we look forward to continuing our work together."

Dr. Raphael Hofstein, Chair of Encycle Therapeutics’ Board of Directors, believes the research collaboration could be potentially advantageous for both Pfizer and Encycle. “We are pleased with the promising pace of growth and success that Encycle has demonstrated,” he says.

About Encycle Therapeutics
Encycle Therapeutics is a drug discovery company that is exploiting a novel synthetic method to generate “nacellins,” more drug-like peptide macrocycles. The company has generated several scaffolds that are membrane permeable and orally bioavailable, such nacellins being ideal for targeting protein-protein interactions. Encycle’s lead program focuses on the development of a non-immunogenic, orally bioavailable inhibitor of integrin alpha-4-beta-7 for the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease. The company has also entered into several research collaborations with major pharmaceutical companies, including Pfizer Inc., AstraZeneca, GSK, Merck and Takeda.