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## Wyeth Gets Exclusive License For Mochida's Painkiller Drug

Wyeth has acquired global rights to Mochida Pharmaceutical's preclinical transient receptor potential vanilloid sub-family 1 (TRPV-1) antagonist molecule for treating pain, the companies announced Jan 9. In return, Tokyo-based Mochida will be paid developmental milestones, an up-front fee and royalties on future sales. Full terms of the deal were not disclosed, but Mochida will retain co-development and co-marketing rights in Japan, according to the companies.

Many companies, including pharmaceutical majors like Merck and Eli Lilly are studying TRPV-1 molecules. In October, Lilly acquired a portfolio of TRPV-1 molecules from India's Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, including a compound in Phase II ([PharmAsia News, Oct. 31, 2007](#)). "We expect TRPV-1 to be free of side effects like gastrointestinal disorders and kidney damage, which have been concerns for pain drugs for a long time," Nasu Miho, a spokeswoman with Mochida, told *PharmAsia News*. However, she declined to disclose further details about the agreement, as did Wyeth.

"The agreement clearly fits Wyeth's discovery research program targeting pain, as well as reinforces its competitiveness in the field," according to John Gotto, an analyst at New York-based Somma Tech Consulting. Mochida is a comprehensive health care company, with pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and healthcare products businesses. Its products include hyperlipidemia and arteriosclerosis obliterans treatment **Epadel** (ethyl icosapentate), mycosis therapy **Florid** (miconazole) and diagnostic reagent **Mammotec**.

Mochida has partnerships with Copenhagen-based Lundbeck, Australian drugmaker iNOVA Pharmaceuticals and the Siemens Group. It also co-promotes Novartis' angiotensin receptor blocker **Diovan** (valsartan) in Japan.

"Mochida is pursuing a strategy of active partnership and out licensing in order to speed the development of leads from its discovery programs," Gotto told *PharmAsia News*. "There are a bevy of business opportunities lying in the pain drugs market."

"Differing from nociceptive pain, which can be characterized typically acute and thus generally well served by currently available pain drugs, neuropathic pain is refractory to current treatments because of the complicated underlying mechanisms," added Gotto. A significant amount of patients are suffering from various neuropathic pains caused by different diseases, such as diabetes, cancer and HIV, he said. That pain level can only be reduced by 30 percent to 50 percent, with even the best drug treatment, according to Gotto.

Gotto also said that the current neuropathic pain market has a value of \$4 billion, with an annual growth of 13 percent.

"Considering this poor efficacy, and a conservative estimate of over 26 million patients worldwide with neuropathic pain, a sizeable unmet medical need is clearly evident," added Gotto.

- Wang Fangqing ([pharmasia@elsevier.com](mailto:pharmasia@elsevier.com))

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