Galantos Pharma receives government grant for the development of novel drugs against Alzheimer's Disease

Public funding by BMBF speeds up Company's ambitious preclinical program

Mainz, June 30, 2009 – Galantos Pharma GmbH, a biopharmaceutical company developing novel drugs to treat Alzheimer's Disease (AD), today announced that it has been granted funding by the German Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) under the BMBF's "KMU-Innovativ-2" program. The funding for the project "Novel (neuroprotective) drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's Disease" will enable Galantos Pharma to develop and to optimize so-called nicotinic APL lead structures in cooperation with various partners from academia and industry. The total funding volume over several years may reach € 2.3 million.

"The funding provides us with the opportunity for a head-start into the development of innovative drugs to halt or cure Alzheimer's Disease," said Dr Andreas Köpke, managing director and CBO of Galantos Pharma. "Contrary to removing plaques and tangles as a treatment strategy of AD, we are working on mechanisms that directly control life and death of nerve cells in the brain."

"Presently available drugs only improve the cognitive symptoms of Alzheimer's disease but do not significantly slow or stop the course of neurodegeneration, the underlying cause of AD," added Prof. Alfred Maelicke, co-founder and CSO of Galantos Pharma. "To directly address neurodegeneration in AD, we at Galantos develop drugs acting directly on targets that are involved in the control of neuronal cell death. Our main target is a nicotinic receptor subtype known to be increasingly lost in the course of the disease. By enhancing the activity of remaining nicotinic receptors, we aim to reduce or even completely halt cell death in AD."

Galantos is exploring so-called "allosteric potentiating ligands (APLs)", molecules interacting with the receptor through binding sites that are distinct from those for the natural agonist acetylcholine so that they influence receptor activation only indirectly. This interaction leads to enhanced Ca^{2+} influx into the cell which fosters survival of these cells. The novel APL mechanism was discovered in the 90ies in Prof. Maelicke's laboratory and was soon shown to be the major mode of action of galantamine (Reminyl, Razadyne), which is marketed for the treatment of mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease (AD) since 2000. Originally established as a reversible inhibitor of the enzyme acetylcholinesterase (AChE), galantamine was found to mainly act as an allosteric modulator of nicotinic receptors.

Galantos has long-standing experience in nicotinic APLs and has already brought Memogain®, a prodrug of galantamine towards clinical development. Compared to galantamine, Memogain® is expected to have much lower levels of gastrointestinal side effects and higher potency of cognition-enhancing activity. In addition, Memogain may be the first drug to unveil the neuroprotective potential of nicotinic APL action, inhibiting the progression of Alzheimer's disease in a statistically significant fashion.

The new compounds under development will act solely as APLs on nicotinic acetylcholine receptors (nAChRs), in particular the α7 nAChR subtype that has the highest Ca^{2+} permeability of all nicotinic receptors and seems to be associated with many modulatory activities in the CNS. These compounds may therefore also have potential in other CNS indications such as schizophrenia, Parkinson's disease, attention deficit disorders, and depression.

Fur further details, please visit our website www.galantos.com.

About Galantos Pharma GmbH

Galantos Pharma GmbH, which was founded in 2005, is developing innovative drugs for the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases and is focused on the improvement of marketed drugs and natural substances for the treatment of Alzheimer's Disease. The company has raised a total of EUR 3.5 million in two financing rounds.

Contact:
Dr. Andreas Köpke, CBO
Prof. Dr. Alfred Maelicke, CSO
Galantos Pharma GmbH
Freiligrathstr. 12
D-55131 Mainz
Germany
Tel.: +49 6131 1440-311
E-mail: info@galantos.com