

Zydus Cadila and Karo Bio's research collaboration has generated promising lead compounds

July 13, 2009

In just over a year of announcing a joint drug discovery programme, Zydus Cadila and Karo Bio announced that they have achieved a key milestone. The collaborative effort has generated a series of novel dissociated non-steroidal glucocorticoid agonist lead compounds. These compounds are as potent as conventional steroids but with a significantly reduced potential to cause side effects.

In February 2008, Zydus Cadila, India's 5th largest company and Karo Bio of Sweden, a drug discovery and development company, specialising in nuclear receptors, initiated a drug discovery collaboration with an objective to develop new compounds that targets the glucocorticoid receptor for treatment of inflammatory disorders. While conventional steroids are powerful anti-inflammatory agents they are also associated with a number of side effects which limit their use. The collaborative research programme therefore, aims to design novel compounds which maintain the anti-inflammatory effects of conventional steroids but with significantly reduced side effects. Access to unique drug discovery technologies provides the basis for this approach.

The success of the collaborative efforts so far, has been in developing a series of compounds with high affinity to the glucocorticoid receptor. The promising in vitro profile of these new chemical entities suggests that they may provide an efficient treatment for several inflammatory conditions, without the detrimental effects on bone and metabolism that impede the use of the classical steroid therapy. The leads are currently undergoing various preclinical evaluations for identification of the IND candidate.

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