

>> **PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH**

New Idea to Prevent Alzheimer's Disease

Finnish company starts clinical trials in Kazakhstan

KUOPIO

Anna Laukkanen

Finnish company Buddha Bio-pharma Oy believes that they have found a drug for Alzheimer's Disease, which causes dementia. The compound, developed by Russian biochemist Igor Pomytkin has been tested on animals in the Cerebricon laboratory in Kuopio. Finnish-American Martti Vallila, who owns 10 % of the company, is beginning a cooperative project with Medfiles in Kuopio Technopolis.

Clinical trials with human subjects will be started in May in Kazakhstan. According to Vallila, the authorities in Kazakhstan have approved the laboratory and animal tests made in Russian and Finland by Pomytkin.

Buddha Biopharma is currently searching for a company to manufacture the product for the trials. Vallila's vision is that Finnish professionals would supervise the trials in Kazakhstan. "This is tremendous opportunity for Finland" stated Vallila "because people worldwide trust Finnish quality and Russians like to work with them."

High standard in Finland

Trustworthiness in Finnish research is why Vallila allured Pomytkin and his Russian investor here. Pomytkin and the investor are the two other owners of the Company.

Vallila says that western companies traditionally haven't trusted Russian partnerships. Likewise, scientists hesitate to trust each other, governments or innovation organizations in Russia.

The original focus of the company was to develop the drug in Finland and sell it to West. Russian investment totals 750 000 Euros for the project already.

Teikes Support in Question

The company is petitioning Teikes (The Finnish Funding agency for Technology and Innovation) for 500 000 euros for drug research - their third such attempt. No funding has been offered to date.

The financial director of Teikes, Ari Grönroos, says that their evaluation will consider how much public money will create new business in Finland. The application will be denied if the content, markets and resources of the project don't assure a proper return.

The company, which does its research and development in Finland, with other business operations outside the nation could be worth of funding if it brings the knowledge to Finland with applicable benefits found internationally.

Vallila doesn't understand Teikes' reticence to support his endeavor. Cooperation with Finnish experts, he believes, can increase medical knowledge and research in Kuopio.

The compound developed by Pomytkin purportedly activates energy metabolism in the brain cells to prevent memory disorders. There is a clear need and a considerable market for such a drug.

Clinical trials, hot topic

According to Professor of neurology Hilikka Soininen in Kuopio University there are four different drugs in the market for Alzheimer's Disease. Drugs slow the progress of the disease if diagnosed early enough. "We need drugs which will effect the mechanism of the disease to prevent its aggravation," Soininen stated.

Soininen has researched the reasons and treatments for Alzheimer's Disease for 30 years.



KIMMO BRAN

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Martti Vallila wants to bring Russian technologies to the West v Finland. The son of a Finnish diplomatic father and a Czech mc has followed the development in Russia for nearly twenty year

According to her there are at least 50 clinical studies ongoing at the moment, 10 of which involve significant patient groups.

"New drugs," she said "that effect the progression of the disease, are required. New marketing approvals are not in evaluation at the moment. There have been frequent disappointments."

Soininen has met biochemist Igor Pomytkin only once. They have never worked together but Soininen knows the Russian's work.

"Research targeting metabolic energy interesting. Another important target is infiltration."

According to Soininen, Russian 1 standards are excellent. More and more studies are ongoing there.

"I see the potential in Russia. There st active cooperation between the Unive East-Finland and Russia," says Soininen.