

VGX Pharmaceuticals Receives Key Patent For Cellular Receptor For HIV-1 Vpr Essential For G2/M Phase.

Philadelphia, PA , September 10, 2002 - - Viral Genomix, Inc. (VGX Pharmaceuticals), a Pennsylvania-based biotechnology company, today announced the receipt of a United States patent covering Cellular receptor for HIV-1 Vpr essential for G2/M phase.

Patent number 6,448,078 was issued to the University of Pennsylvania, naming Penn's scientists David B. Weiner, Velpandi Ayyavoo, Sundarasamy Mahalingam, and Mamata Patel as inventors. The technology is licensed exclusively to VGX Pharmaceuticals. It includes 11 claims covering the invention relating to the identification and cloning of human Vpr Interacting Protein (hVIP), to methods of making and using the same, and to compositions and methods of inhibiting their activity in the cell cycle. This discovery represents a significant step forward in the development of VGX products.

The present invention is directed to substantially pure human Vpr Interacting Protein (hVIP), and fragments thereof. Also disclosed are isolated nucleic acid molecules that encode hVIP, or a fragment thereof; nucleic acid probes and primers directed to nucleic acid molecules that encode hVIP, or a fragment thereof; oligonucleotide molecules that consist of a nucleotide sequence complementary to a portion of the nucleotide sequence that encodes hVIP; vectors comprising nucleic acid molecules encoding hVIP; recombinant expression vectors that comprise nucleic acid sequences that encode hVIP; host cells that comprise recombinant expression vectors which include nucleic acid sequences that encode hVIP; genetic therapy vectors comprising nucleic acid molecules encoding hVIP; isolated antibody which binds to an epitope on hVIP; pharmaceutical compositions comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier and nucleic acid molecules complementary to a portion of hVIP; methods of making hVIP; and methods of inhibiting expression of hVIP oligonucleotides complementary to a portion of the nucleotide sequence that encodes hVIP.

VGX Pharmaceuticals has now licensed 21 U.S. and approximately 160 foreign patents and is emerging as a leader in the development of a novel class of drugs for the treatment of HIV, cancer, and inflammatory diseases.