

PRESS RELEASE

**ELEXOPHARM ENTERS INTO CARDIOVASCULAR COLLABORATION WITH
MERCK & CO., INC**

Saarbruecken, Germany May 17, 2010. ElexoPharm GmbH announced today a collaboration and exclusive worldwide license agreement with Merck & Co., Inc. Whitehouse Station, New Jersey USA (also known as MSD outside of the US and Canada) through an affiliate to develop and commercialize novel candidates targeting aldosterone synthase for the potential treatment of cardiovascular disease.

Under the terms of the agreement, Merck will pay ElexoPharm an upfront payment of €1.5 million. In addition ElexoPharm is eligible to receive up to an additional €32.3 million if specific development, regulatory and commercial milestones are achieved for a candidate and royalties on net sales of any products resulting from the collaboration. Merck is responsible for development, regulatory filings, manufacturing and commercialization activities.

"This agreement marks a major milestone in ElexoPharm's relatively recent company history," said Axel Koch, Managing Director of ElexoPharm GmbH, "We are delighted to have a partner such as Merck."

"This agreement with ElexoPharm underscores Merck's ongoing commitment to developing breakthrough cardiovascular medicines," said Andrew Plump, M.D., vice president, cardiovascular disease discovery research, Merck Research Laboratories.

ElexoPharm is a German biotech company located in Saarbruecken founded as a spin-off from the Department of Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Chemistry of Saarland University headed by Professor Rolf Hartmann. ElexoPharm is focused on preclinical medicinal chemistry research concerning the design and development of new drugs, using novel therapeutic approaches for human diseases, which are currently not or insufficiently treatable with existing drugs.

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