BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

AgeX accelerates hypoimmunogenic cells development in Japan

January 31, 2020 | News

First research collaboration with Japanese biopharma company for immunotolerance UniverCyte technology platform, marking launch of new business development and collaboration strategy



US based AgeX Therapeutics, a biotechnology company developing therapeutics for human aging and regeneration, announced research collaboration with a Japanese biopharma company utilizing AgeX's HLA-G-based immunotolerance UniverCyte™ technology platform for the engineering of hypoimmunogenic (universal) cells. The research program will evaluate the expression of UniverCyte on induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS cells) and the ability of those UniverCyte-modified iPS cells to evade immune responses and to differentiate into somatic cells. AgeX will have rights to use any improvements to its UniverCyte technology developed through the research and may negotiate commercial licensing arrangements granting its collaborator rights to use UniverCyte to produce cellular products for therapeutic and commercial purposes.

"Given its near- and long-term clinical and commercial potential, we are deeply focused on deriving value and generating revenue from our UniverCyte technology platform," said Greg Bailey, MD, Chairman of the Board of Directors of AgeX. "This exciting collaboration marks a milestone moment for us on many levels, including our first collaboration utilizing UniverCyte; our first announcement related to our newly-unveiled business development and licensing model; and our first foray into Japan. With its favourable business and regulatory climate for regenerative medicine, Japan may prove to be a very important market for us."

This is AgeX's first collaboration under its new technology licensing and collaboration business strategy. AgeX hopes to announce further collaborations for research and product development utilizing its technology platforms in the coming months.

"Our work to engineer our own universal pluripotent stem cell line is proceeding as planned," said Dr. Nafees Malik, Chief Operating Officer of AgeX. "This exciting collaboration nicely complements our own in-house research. Our aim is to be a world leader in the engineering of universal cells."

AgeX's UniverCyte uses a proprietary, novel, modified form of HLA-G and is intended to permit donor cells to be transplanted into patients without donor-patient tissue matching and without administering immunosuppressant medication. Immunosuppressive drugs can reduce patient resistance to infectious diseases and cancers as well as cause organ and other toxicities. Reducing or eliminating the need for immunosuppressants after cell transplantation by use of hypoimmunogenic cells may make therapies universally available.