

Major step towards portable artificial kidney

Debiotech, AWAK and Neokidney Development sign partnership to bring compact home haemodialysis machine to first patients by 2017

Lausanne, May 23 2014 – Today three international innovators join forces to develop and deliver to patients the world's first portable artificial kidney. Debiotech of Switzerland, AWAK of Singapore and Neokidney Development, an initiative of the Dutch Kidney Foundation, have signed a joint venture agreement to complete a functional model in 2015. Clinical trials are planned for 2017. The portable artificial kidney will enable the frequent and longer home haemodialysis that significantly improves and extends patients' lives.

With over 3 million people worldwide suffering from End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) and nowhere near enough organ donors, almost 2.5 million patients have no alternative but haemodialysis (an intrusive and imperfect treatment that requires patients to visit a dialysis center 3-4 times a week for 3-4 hour sessions that approximate just 10-15% of the toxin removal by a healthy kidney). The impact of such an innovative product on patients' health, autonomy, quality of life and life expectancy could be immense.

The joint venture will deliver a compact dialysis machine that patients can use themselves, directly at home. Scientific research has already established that frequent and longer dialysis (e.g. at night) limits the treatment's side effects, including dialysis hangover and cardiovascular stress, and increases both autonomy and life expectancy. Moreover, home (night-time) haemodialysis is considerably cheaper than in-center treatment. The portable artificial kidney developed by the partnership will finally bring these benefits within the reach of patients and society.

Gerard Boekhoff, Neokidney board member and former Vice-President of the European kidney patients federation CEAPIR: "This first truly portable haemodialysis machine represents a major step from therapy compliant patients to patient compliant therapies."

Together, the partners have all the technology, expertise and resources needed. The new system will be based on Debiotech's DialEase™, a highly miniaturized, easy-to-use and cost effective machine for peritoneal home dialysis that is close to be on the market. AWAK contributes its novel sorbent technology, which will enable the system to use much less dialysate (about 4 litres compared to the 40-60 litres required by existing alternatives) and eliminate the need for expensive purification systems. Neokidney Development provides access to the Dutch Kidney Foundation's medical expertise and network of internationally acclaimed nephrologists and patient organizations, and will mobilize funding from public and private sources, including health insurers and social impact investors.

The partners have committed themselves to completing a functional model in 2015. The product will be ready for clinical trials by 2017, with Debiotech being ultimately responsible for securing the best commercial agreement in the interest of patients worldwide.

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About Debiotech

Debiotech has specialized, for over twenty years, in the research and development of innovative medical devices, with a focus on implantable and external drug delivery systems for the treatment of severe diseases such as diabetes, renal failure, cardiovascular diseases and cancer. The company's products are based on micromechanics and nanotechnologies, as well as novel technologies. Debiotech has over 40 exclusive license agreements with leading companies in medical devices and pharmaceuticals and holds over 500 patents worldwide.

Dr. Frédéric Neftel, President and CEO of Debiotech: "This agreement ideally captures the synergy between AWAK's sorbent technology, our existing home dialysis product DialEase™ and Neokidney's clinical expertise. Our aim is to significantly improve on the Quality of Life of many patients suffering from kidney failure worldwide."

Laurent-Dominique Piveteau, COO of Debiotech: "Knowing how difficult dialysis at home can be, our team of scientists and engineers has worked intensively to make DialEase™ the most reliable and least intrusive home peritoneal dialysis system for patients. We look forward to adapting it for home haemodialysis with the same passion, enthusiasm and relentless focus on the patients we serve."

Further information on Debiotech can be found at www.debiotech.com and specific information on DialEase™ at www.dialease.com

About Awak Technologies

AWAK Technologies was incorporated in 2007, with offices in Singapore and Burbank, CA, and is dedicated to the research, development and marketing of sorbent-based kidney dialysis machines for the treatment of patients with end-stage renal disease. The company collaborated with Temasek Polytechnic to engineer and develop its first wearable peritoneal dialysis product: the AWAK PD Regular Cartridge.

Dr. Gordon Ku, chairman of AWAK Technologies: "This tri-partite multi-national research and development partnership is a paradigm change in home haemodialysis technology. Its mission is to benefit patients, help professionals, and reduce public healthcare costs."

Mr Neo Kok-Beng, President and CEO of AWAK Technologies: "AWAK believes that patients should have more choices that fit their lifestyle and improve their quality of life. Developing this home-based portable haemodialysis machine is part of that mission".

Lim Yong Soon, Operations Director of AWAK Technologies: “We are very excited about our partnership with Debiotech. With their miniaturized system and our sorbent cartridge (that can be customized in size, shape and capacity), we can regenerate fresh dialysate without the need for a bulky water purification system – thus creating the first truly portable haemodialysis machine.”

Further information on AWAK Technologies can be found at www.awak.com

About Neokidney and the Dutch Kidney Foundation

Neokidney Development was set up by the Dutch Kidney Foundation in 2012 to fund and drive the development of a truly portable artificial kidney as part of its strategy to create a breakthrough for ESRD patients. Neokidney mobilizes funding from the Dutch Kidney Foundation, health insurers and social impact investors. Its ambition is to bring a first portable artificial kidney to patients by 2017.

Tom Ostrom, Dutch Kidney Foundation director and Neokidney chairman: “The Dutch Kidney Foundation has consistently pioneered new approaches to both advance our understanding of kidney function and failure, and directly improve patients’ lives. This is a huge step forwards, to self-management and better and longer lives. Plus, importantly: the portable cyclor we are developing in the joint venture establishes a platform for future (and continuous) improvement in treatment quality, i.e. removal of ever more and trickier toxins”.

Further information on Neokidney can be found on www.Neokidney.nl and www.nierstichting.nl