



Financings Roundup

By Aaron Lorenzo
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Neotropix Funds Early Operations With \$10M

Cancer company Neotropix Inc. raised \$10 million in its first round of private equity financing. The funding is projected to carry the Malvern, Pa.-based company's lead product through Phase I/II trials in small-cell lung cancer. Labeled SVV-001, the product is Seneca Valley virus, or SVV. It has shown efficacy in murine cancer models, and human studies are slated to begin in 2006.

Neotropix also plans to target additional cancer indications using derivatives of SVV, the basis of its virotherapy approach from which it expects to develop a therapeutic pipeline, as well as in-licensing or discovering other viruses with beneficial oncolytic properties.

But the company's initial focus lies with SVV, which it said overcomes many of the hurdles typically associated with the development of viral therapies. Its natural properties allow for large-scale manufacturing for clinical trials, and its initial safety and toxicity profiles have proved promising. A lack of pre-existing immunity to SVV, as well as its specificity, allow for systemic administration, a characteristic that has eluded many other virotherapies.

The financing was co-led by the Aurora Funds, of Durham, N.C.; Quaker BioVentures, of Wayne, Pa.; and Vimac Milestone Medica Fund, of Boston. BioAdvance Ventures, a fund managed by Quaker's investment professionals, also participated.

Quaker's Matt Rieke, Aurora's Jeff Clark and Vimac's Sena Biswas joined Neotropix's board. The company was founded last year by Paul Hallenbeck, its president, chief scientific officer and a board member, as well.