



Press Release:

Zen-Bio and Vala Sciences announce SBIR funded collaboration

Date: July 26, 2006

[Zen-Bio, Inc](#) and [Vala Sciences Inc](#) announced a collaboration to develop and market kits for measuring the effects of test compounds on lipid droplets in human fat cells. These kits will allow researchers to monitor the effects of drugs on the number and size of lipid droplets within the cells, and the association of certain proteins (e.g., perilipin), with the droplets, which are key regulators of fat utilization. Ben Buehrer, Zen-Bio's Director of Research and Development stated that, "The software and reagents in these kits will allow our customers to quantify microscopic effects of drug treatments," and further noted that, "this technology has practical application for the discovery and development of drugs to treat obesity and type II diabetes."

Kit development has occurred mostly in cultured human adipocytes but scientists at both companies emphasize that these kits are suitable for use with any lipid containing cell including hepatocytes and skeletal muscle. Vala Sciences President and CEO, Jeff Price emphasized that, "Vala scientists and engineers have been listening to screening customers who are demanding ever more sophisticated and easy-to-use image-based assays. By automatically quantifying even the smallest lipid droplets in cells, and their association with important intracellular lipid-modulating signaling pathways, our jointly developed tools will enable screens for a broad range of new drug targets."

The collaboration is funded in part by a Phase I Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) grant awarded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) earlier this year.

About the companies:

Zen-Bio, Inc. is a leading provider of research tools for the study of human metabolic disease. The company, founded in 1995 has an established customer base of over 1000 and performs contract research for major pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies around the world. The company pioneered tissue engineering with adult adipose-derived stem cells and is currently researching the role obesity plays in the development and onset of metabolic disease. Its mission is to provide the highest quality cells, reagents and contract services to the biomedical research community; to develop and commercialize research tools; and to leverage our expertise in this field into successful treatments for metabolic diseases through research and development and strategic alliances. For more information visit the company website at www.zen-bio.com or call (919)-321-4556 or e-mail Richard Giersch at richard@zen-bio.com

Vala Sciences Inc. is a San Diego-based software and reagent kit company that develops and sells quantitative biology solutions for fluorescence microscopy imaging. Vala's combined cell-based image analysis software and reagents enable rapid acquisition and reporting of quantitative data by scientists in academic, pharmaceutical and biotechnology research and screening labs. For more information visit the website at www.valasciences.com

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