



September 28, 2010

ZenBio, Inc Awarded Phase II SBIR Grant for Human Breast Cancer Program

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC - ZenBio, Inc. announced that it has been awarded a Phase II SBIR grant to continue its breast cancer research program. The \$1.2 million award from the National Institutes of Health will fund studies to isolate and characterize primary basal and luminal mammary ductal cells from cancerous and non-cancerous human breast tissue.

The majority of breast cancers are classified by their similarity to two mammary ductal cell populations, secretory luminal cells or basal myoepithelial cells. However, recent studies have shown that some types of “basal-like” cancers may arise from luminal progenitor cells further complicating our understanding of this disease. These and other investigations point to a critical role for luminal cells in cancer progression and as therapeutic targets. The scarcity of primary human luminal cells from normal and cancer tissues has made it difficult for researchers to perform comparative studies to investigate the etiology, progression, and potential cures of breast cancer. To address this need, ZenBio is developing methods to isolate and propagate donor matched luminal and basal cells as a human cell-based model system. “Our Phase I studies established basic methods to isolate both basal and luminal cells from the same donor tissue” said Ben Buehrer, Ph.D., ZenBio’s Vice President and Principal Investigator of the program. “The Phase II program extends these studies to include breast cancer cells and comparative analyses to non-diseased cells. Our overall goal is to provide a well characterized model system of matched normal and malignant cells for basic and discovery research that may lead to novel discoveries and effective therapeutics.”

ZenBio, Inc., a privately held biotechnology company, is a leading provider of research tools for the study of human metabolic disease. Founded in 1995, the company performs contract research for major pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies around the world. ZenBio pioneered tissue engineering with adult adipose-derived stem cells and is currently investigating 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 its expertise in this field as a contract research organization.

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