

CURRENT PATENTS GAZETTE



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CONTENTS

Section A

New Compounds- novel entities, with images of front pages adding valuable additional information

Section B

New Uses, Formulations & Methods of Treatment- developments extending and enhancing the utility of existing products, including diagnostic and analytical applications

Section C

Chemical Processes and Combinatorial Technology- inventions concerned with efficient generation of candidates for screening, and with scale-up of laboratory syntheses in support of development activity

Section D

Biotechnology- molecular biology, nucleic acids, proteins, transgenics and gene therapy

Section E

Devices and Equipment- non-chemical or mechanical based invention with relevance to the industry

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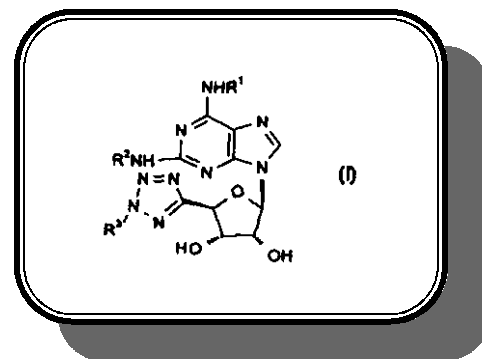
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DRUG PATENTING IN CONTEXT

Current Patents *Gazette* is the most rapid competitive intelligence service covering innovation in the pharmaceutical industry. Patent applications published during the past week have been classified and analysed, in order to place the inventions in context. For the most crucial innovations, those involving new chemical compounds, additional information is given in the form of front page images. These can be enlarged to show details of chemical structures and inventor teams, for example. Applications filed jointly, representing collaborative research, are highlighted, as are sequences of inter-related documents.

2-(Purin-9-yl)-tetrahydrofuran-3,4-diols

acting as adenosine A1 agonists are the focus of five applications from Glaxo with input from inventors at Chiroscience and OSI Pharmaceuticals.



HIGHLIGHTS THIS WEEK

The Christmas and New Year/Century/Millennium holidays have inevitably caused some disruption across most sectors of industry and commerce, and Current Science Group is not immune. WIPO adjusted its week 9952 publication date to Wednesday 29th, and the USPTO adhered to its normal Tuesday schedule, so that Current Patents' staff have been able to process **roughly 90%** of the usual material for this week's *Gazette*. What is missing are the applications published by the European and UK patent offices on December 29th, probably no more than about **30 cases in total**; these will be covered in the first issue of 2000, dated January 7th.

Astra and Glaxo are among the applicants for international patent protection this week whose inventors have associations with other institutions, though in neither case is the collaborative nature of the inventions immediately obvious. In the case of Astra, a five-strong team based in **Canada and the US** has claims to what are somewhat bleakly described in one of the four documents as "novel compounds", useful in the management of pain. In fact this seems to represent a development of work on δ -opioid agonists, in which workers at Astra's own Canadian research site have been joined by a collaborator from another Montreal-based innovator, **MethylGene Inc**, and by two Californians affiliated to **Alanex Corp**. Although the collaboration with Alanex was announced early in 1995, there seems to be nothing so far formally linking Astra with MethylGene.

The Glaxo situation may be rather different, although a careful reading of the inventor lists on the five applications suggests that at least two other entities have participated. One case bears the title "**Adenosine derivatives**" specifically mentioning A1 agonists, but the other four refer to "**2-(Purin-9-yl)-tetrahydrofuran-3,4-diol derivatives**". These potential antiinflammatories have occupied the attentions of at least 20 scientists, most based at the Glaxo Wellcome research site in Stevenage, but five situated elsewhere. Two scientists at the company's North Carolina site have contributed to one invention, others give the address of an inventor at Chiroscience's Cambridge site, and another has a contribution from OSI Pharmaceuticals (Aston Molecules) in Birmingham, also in the UK. The final participant in this multi-faceted discovery program is Dr DE Bays, formerly working on Glaxo's **GABA** and **serotonin modulator** programs, but now operating independently; OSI's chemistry VP, Dr EW Collington, is another former Glaxo chemist, occasionally in the past a co-inventor with Bays. Undoubtedly, judged on the breadth of the inventor team involved, Glaxo's adenosine agonist work now has the appearance of a major discovery program.