

# CURRENT PATENTS GAZETTE



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## DRUG PATENTING IN CONTEXT

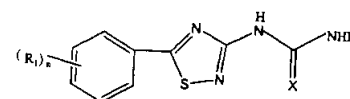
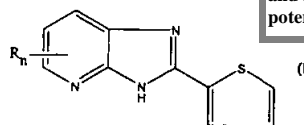
Current Patents *Gazette* is the most rapid competitive intelligence service covering innovation in the pharmaceutical industry. Patent applications published during the past week have been classified and analysed, in order to place the inventions in context. Applications filed jointly, representing collaborative research, are highlighted, as are sequences of inter-related documents.

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### NEW THIS WEEK

Antiviral agents, particularly active against retrovirus such as HIV, are the target as P&G screen their compound library of fungicides and herbicides for therapeutic potential ([Page 22](#) and [Highlights](#))



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### 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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## HIGHLIGHTS THIS WEEK

The University of Hertfordshire was linked by our analysts to an application on nuclease activity determination which appeared six weeks ago, WO0049172. The correctness of that inference is now confirmed by the appearance of a specification relating to an improved method for detecting microorganisms, on which the same inventor is named as part of a larger team based at the University's Department of Biosciences, using the name Zetatronics Ltd. This is the fifth *Gazette* entry to mention Zetatronics, although in only three instances is the company actually named as applicant; a link has also been noted with earlier patenting in the name of London Biotech Ltd, through WO9819168.

Brevity, or perhaps obscurity, characterizes an application from King's College London entitled simply "Factor". The inventors are in the college's Biomedical Sciences Division, in The Randall Institute, and are working on the use of RAR(2 for promoting neurite development, having published on this subject earlier in the year in the *Journal Of Cell Science*. Work on the role of vitamin A on CNS development at KCL may be traced back to the mid-1980s.

Following on from last week's Aventis Cropsience case claiming herbicidal compounds with potential human therapeutic activities, four PCT applications from P&G appear to be following a similar theme. Relating to the use of known compounds in the treatment of viral infections, the inventor appears to have been working for some time on investigating the use of known herbicides and fungicides for treating cancer and viral disease. The earliest applications relate to cancer treatment eg. WO9640199, but the key generic case appears to be WO9851303, in which fungicides and herbicides are claimed to treat HIV. P&G now appear to be screening their existing compound collections for similar antiviral activities, with the compounds disclosed in the current applications including a variety of 5-aryl-1,2,4-thiadiazolyl urea or thiourea derivatives, carbamic acid derivatives or 2-thienyl-imidazo[4,5]pyridines.

Eleven applications last week from Human Genome Sciences, and ten the week before, are now followed by eighteen all entitled "Human secreted proteins". HGS has been patenting genetic material in this way now for more than three years, using precisely the same title apart from number of proteins specified, and 75 cases conform to this title. In the early stages of this filing programme the number of proteins covered by each application varied considerably, between a dozen or so up to 207, but now all of the specifications relate to 45-50 proteins. This is genuinely systematic patenting, and of course it helps to project Craig (twice "Graig") Rosen towards the forefront of individual inventors in any field over the past four years, with 124 published PCT applications. However Incyte's Olga Bandman with 130 cases in a closely related biotech field is just ahead, and her colleague Jennifer Hillman hits the jackpot with 199 applications published since December 1997.

New companies seem to have appeared as innovators in the process chemistry field in both Hungary and Italy. Alex-Gyogyszer Kutatasi is becoming involved in the production of penicillins, but is utilizing expertise emanating from Spain. Bioindustria Laboratorio Italiano Medicinali SpA of Novi Ligure is focusing on synthesis of gabapentin, and drawing on inventors previously associate with Bioindustria Farm and the Centro CNR in Milan. In both of these cases there is the possibility that an existing institution with a proven drug development track record has simply begun to file patent applications in a new name. Optigon of California may be new too, or may be linked with a pre-existing photographic and optical innovator, now turning to combinatorial technology. Everlight USA falls into a rather different category, since the beta-blocker synthesis technology it is developing, from a base in Taiwan, represents diversification for a fine chemicals company previously operating entirely within the dyestuffs sector.