

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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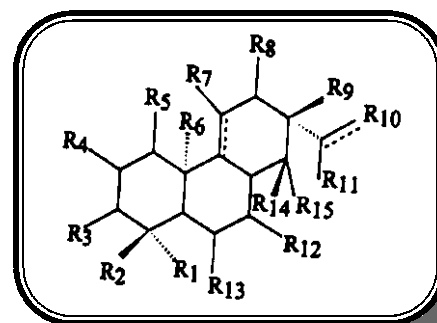
DRUG PATENTING IN CONTEXT

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.

Additional Information

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Current Patents <i>Gazette</i> Team | 20 |
| Where to Meet Us | 32 |
| Current Patents "Safety Net" | 35 |
| DOLPHIN Advert | 36 |
| Country Coverage | 52 |

Nereus Pharmaceuticals of San Diego, working in collaboration with the Univ California, makes its debut in the field of international patenting with claims to a range of terpenoid type interleukin-1 and TNF- α modulators (Page 12)



HIGHLIGHTS THIS WEEK

Nereus Pharmaceuticals Inc of San Diego is new to patenting, having been established through venture capital funding raised during the past year. The company has collaborated with the University of California in the synthesis of terpenoid type **interleukin-1** and **TNF- α modulators**, and there is an inventor link with work in the interleukin modulator field carried out previously at **Genentech** (EP149551). Compounds with this action already under investigation by Nereus include **NPI-1302a**, extracted from the root bark of a plant used for **herbal tea**.

Celltek Biotechnologies Inc of Québec with claims to hexapeptide based chemokine receptor CCR3 antagonists is also new to patenting - assuming, that is, that there is no connection with **Celltek GmbH**, originator of a sphincter trainer patented in the 1980s. Again however there is an inventor link to earlier work, since the inventor made a presentation on chemokine receptor binding assays at a conference on the subject in 1997, at which stage he had just left **McGill University** for **Pharmacoepia**. There is also evidence of input into this work from the **University of Oslo**.

By chance there is also an application from the homophonic UK-based company **Celltech**, more collectly **Celltech Chiroscience Ltd**, concerned with **squaric acid derivatives** acting as **cell adhesion modulators**. This seems to be Celltech's first venture into this series of compounds, also more systematically named as cyclobutenedione derivatives.

Another possible use for squaric acid derivatives, specifically the **dibutyl ester SADBE**, is in treating **alopecia**, and that happens to be the field in which there is a series of seven linked cases from **Procter & Gamble** and the **University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center**. The two P&G applications claim diphenylether derivatives for treating hair loss, and the same two inventors are named on two parallel documents which name the University of Texas as applicant, relating to analogous sulfones, described as **thyromimetics**. Finally there are three further application from the University, naming one of the original inventors in a new pairing, and referring to further analogues as preferably **cardiac-sparing**. This apparent collaboration seems to have no direct precedent, and the innovations may be relatively minor, judged by the narrow lists of designated states throughout.

Subscribers to the Gazette will be pleased to learn that plans are in hand to extend the subject scope somewhat from the beginning of 2001. Already our selection goes considerably beyond the boundaries of **conventional therapy** based purely on pharmacological agents, but the intention is to extend coverage to **non-chemical treatments**, especially those which are alternatives to drug-based therapy. These will often be **electrical or electronic** in nature, classified primarily in **A61n**, and such treatments are known to be particularly effective in such fields as **arrhythmia** and **intractable pain**. We shall of course be supplementing classification-based retrieval with natural language, along the lines of the so-called "**safety net**" already employed to good effect elsewhere in the *Gazette*. We have already received helpful comments from several patent documentation experts active in this field, but would be pleased to receive more suggestions from subscribers on which aspects of the subject are of greatest interest.