NATAP'S
NATIONAL AIDS TREATMENT ADVOCACY PROJECT

POSITIVE + INFORMATION

Edited and Published by
Jules Levin

Production by
Jessie Gibson

580 BROADWAY, SUITE 1010, NEW YORK, NY, 10012 **1-888-26-NATAP** (212) 219-0106 fax (212) 219-8473 info@natap.org **http://www.natap.org**

Summary of the 2002 Retrovirus Conference

IN THIS ISSUE:

The information in this newsletter is for educational purposes only. Please consult your physician before making any treatment decisions.

The information reported in this newsletter is a summary of the comprehensive coverage of the 2002 9th Annual Retrovirus Conference available on the NATAP website, (www.natap.org).

New Drugs: Excitement, Hope and Optimism

The highlight of this meeting was the presentations on new classes of drugs for HIV. For the first time in a number of years the majority of presentations in the new drugs session at the Conference focused on genuinely new drugs for HIV. Although these developments are in early stages, there was a general feeling of hope and optimism surrounding these presentations. As well, several new drugs from currently available classes of drugs are in more advanced stages of development.

The development of HIV entry inhibitors is very exciting. There are several steps involved in the process by which HIV enters the CD4 cell. HIV entry inhibitors act to prevent HIV from entering the CD4 cell, while the current classes of drugs act to prevent HIV from reproducing itself while in the CD4 cell. The process by which HIV enters the CD4 cell includes binding of HIV to the cell and then fusion into the cell. SCH-C is an entry inhibitor that blocks one of the steps for binding. The drug is in the early stages of being tested in HIV-infected individuals. It has favorable characteristics including potency, but there is a potential safety concern that is being examined. SCH-D is a sister drug that Schering Plough has as a backup.

BMS 806 is a model entry inhibitor that represents the promising entry inhibitor development program at Bristol Myer Squibb. Testing is expected to begin in healthy volunteers.

As discussed below, T-20 is a fusion inhibitor in the late stages of development in HIV-infected individuals. The large phase III study is ongoing so results are not yet available, but results from earlier studies suggest that this drug will be important for patients with extensive treatment experience.

Several promising NNRTIs and protease inhibitors for patients with resistance to these classes of drugs are in early stages of development; two intergrase inhibitors are also in early stages of development, both are discussed below.

Perhaps, in several years we will have enough HIV entry inhibitors to compose an entire regimen consisting of just these drugs, or several entry inhibitors to combine with an integrase inhibitor.

Contributing writers to the coverage of the 9th Annual Retrovirus Conference on the NATAP website are:

Judith Aberg, MD, Washington University
Raymond Chung, MD, Massachusetts General Hospital
Jules Levin, NATAP
David Margolis, MD, University of Texas, Southwestern Medical Center
Danielle Milano, MD, Boriken Family Health Services
Graeme Moyle, MD, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital, London, UK
Christopher D. Pilcher, MD, University of North Carolina
Nancy Shulman, MD, Stanford University
David Alain Wohl, MD, University of North Carolina
Mike Youle, MD, Royal Free HIV Clinic, London, UK
Andrew Zolopa, MD, Stanford University