

RNATICS receives prestigious Pharma Trend Image & Innovation Award 2022 for novel therapeutic against COVID-19

Munich – RNATICS GmbH receives this year's Pharma Trend Image & Innovation Award Top 2 „Das Innovativste Produkt®“ in the category breakthrough innovation for their novel drug candidate RCS-21 for the treatment of inflammatory respiratory diseases and COVID-19.

The prestigious prizes, also known as Pharma-Oscars in the industry, were awarded in several categories for the 23rd time at a celebratory awards ceremony under the patronage of the Bavarian Minister of Health Klaus Holetschek, MdL. The Pharma Trend benchmarking study of innovation and sustainability interviews more than 1,000 doctors, pharmacists, and patients on behalf of the journal PharmaBarometer since 2000 and serves as the basis of the awards. In collaboration with Bio^M, the central network organisation for the biotechnology sector in Munich and Bavaria, commissioned by the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, the winner of „Das Innovativste Produkt®“ in the category breakthrough innovation were selected.

RCS-21 is a novel RNA-therapeutic acting targeted in macrophages of the lung, specialised immune cells, and is applied via inhalation. In severe cases of COVID-19, excessive activation of the immune system in the lung is observed most of the time. This overactivation leads to lung damage and for COVID-19 typical scarring, so called fibrosis. RCS-21 is not directed against the SARS-CoV-2 virus itself but prevents the overactivation of macrophages and the accompanying lung damage as a consequence of the virus infection. Therefore, the drug is anticipated to be efficacious irrespective of virus variants and could also be used with long-COVID patients.

„The RNA-based compound is coupled to a specific sugar molecule for the selective import into macrophages. The drug is the first in its class with such a targeted delivery mechanism and enables higher therapeutic concentrations in macrophages and thus a bigger therapeutic effect. Furthermore, the unspecific uptake of the drug in other cell types and organs can be effectively prevented and potential side effects avoided“, explains Prof. Stefan Engelhardt, co-founder of RNATICS GmbH, whose scientific group at the Institute for Pharmacology and Toxicology at the Technical University Munich has developed the therapy principle.



RCS-21 has already shown its efficacy in pre-clinical experiments against induced lung damage. The further development in clinical trials is supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) with more than 7 Mio. €.

„We’re very honoured to receive the prestigious Pharma Trend Image & Innovation Award Top 2 „Das Innovativste Produkt®“ – breakthrough innovation. This recognition confirms the importance of this drug development project. We thank the jury for this positive vote“, comments Dr. Thomas Frischmuth, CEO of RNATICS GmbH.

„We will have to deal with this COVID-19 pandemic into the unforeseeable future, and we’d like to contribute with RCS-21 to contain the severe consequences. We’re extremely grateful for the support from BMBF to assess the efficacy of the drug in a first clinical trial“, adds Prof. Klaus Rabe, Chief Medical Officer of RNATICS GmbH and renowned lung specialist at LungenClinic Großhansdorf.

About RNATICS:

RNATICS GmbH is a young, innovative biotech company developing novel, sugar-coupled RNA therapeutics to inhibit disease-causing RNAs in macrophages, specialised cells of the immune system. This novel mode of targeted delivery enables access to organs previously not accessible to RNA therapies offering tremendous therapeutic opportunities in multiple diseases.

The most advanced drug candidate, RCS-21, is in development as treatment for severe COVID-19. It is delivered by inhalation and designed to prevent scarring of lung tissue. RCS-21 selectively targets hyperinflammation triggered by virus mediated cell death which has been identified as main driver of severe COVID-19. First-in-human clinical trials will start in 2023.

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