



Information

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NEWS

(source *CHEManager International*)

Roche's cancer drug *Avastin* as a cheaper treatment for wet age-related macular degeneration (wAMD), a leading cause of blindness in the elderly, does not appear to increase deaths or serious side effects, an independent study has concluded. An analysis of nine clinical trials, three of them unpublished, concluded that health insurance policies favoring the much more expensive *Lucentis* over *Avastin* were not supported by current evidence, the news agency Reuters said, reporting on the study published Sept. 15 by the nonprofit Cochrane Collaboration. *Avastin* is not licensed for wAMD but it works in a similar way to authorized treatments for the condition, including *Lucentis*, which is marketed by Novartis and Roche, and Eylea, from Bayer and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals. A number of doctors in the US and Europe already use *Avastin* in wAMD on an unapproved basis and some pharmacies provide a service of splitting the cancer medicine into smaller doses for eye injections. French lawmakers voted in July to allow *Avastin's* use, while Roche and Novartis have faced recent regulatory scrutiny in France and Italy on suspicion of anti-competitive practices. The companies have denied any wrongdoing. In France, *Avastin* costs about €30 euros (\$38.84) per dose, against the €900 charged for an injection of *Lucentis*. A closely watched US government-sponsored study in 2011 concluded that *Avastin* worked as well as *Lucentis* in treating vision loss from wAMD but had more adverse side effects. The Cochrane paper, however, found that the safety of *Avastin* when used in wAMD appeared to be comparable with that of *Lucentis*, except for a higher rate of gastrointestinal disorders.

Specialty chemicals producer **Clariant** has doubled capacity for pigments and pigment preparations at its production site in Roha, India. The company said the capacity increase, which comes at a cost of CHF 3.2 million, will enable it to improve market coverage in the markets of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh as well as India. Clariant added that the investment is part of a strategic program to support customers in emerging markets with high quality pigments and preparations that comply with local and international eco-labeling schemes. Output at the Indian facility caters to a wide range of applications including interior and exterior coatings, packaging, personal, home and fabric care products along with seed coatings and dispersions. CEO Hariolf Kottmann said the enhanced capacity complements improvements the Swiss company has made and continues to make at its operations across Asia. In 2013, Clariant's pigments business unit doubled its marketing and sales organization in Asia, strengthening its team of regional managers.

The decision by **Roche** in August to buy US biotech company InterMune for \$8.3 billion was "exceptional" and not a sign of more ambitious plans for major acquisitions, the Swiss drugmaker's chief executive, Severin Schwan, said in an interview with the news agency Reuters. Damping down expectations that Roche could embark on a series of such multibillion-dollar deals to bolster its presence in the treatment of rare diseases, Schwan said there was no change in the company's M&A strategy or

its likely pace of deal-making. Buying InterMune brings Roche a promising new drug, pifrenidone, for treating progressive idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and also helps diversify the world's leading maker of cancer drugs beyond oncology by expanding its interests in respiratory medicine, as well as taking it into the high-priced arena of rare diseases.

A new experimental heart failure medication developed by **Novartis** with the working name of *LCZ696* is being widely regarded as having potential to significantly reduce the number of deaths and hospitalizations caused by cardiovascular disease. For the company it could provide more than a shot in the arm, as analysts are now forecasting peak sales of \$5 billion or more. Novartis plans to file for approval of the drug in the US by the end of 2014 and in Europe in the first quarter of 2015. The company had Novartis announced in March that trials were being ended early because the drug had been better than the comparator drug. The new cardiovascular treatment was tested on 8,442 heart failure patients as part of the Novartis-sponsored Paradigm-HF study. Patients received either *LCZ696* or the ACE inhibitor *enalapril*, along with current treatment options. Patients who received *LCZ696*, the study showed, were able to reduce their risk of cardiovascular death by 21% and hospitalization due to heart failure by 16% compared with those who received *enalapril*. The research was published Aug. 30 in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and presented at the European Society of Cardiology's annual meeting in Barcelona on Aug. 31. By demonstrating a very significant reduction in cardiovascular deaths while improving quality of life, the new heart medicine represents one of the most important cardiology advances of the last decade, David Epstein, division head of Novartis Pharmaceuticals told at the conference. *LCZ696* combines the angiotensin receptor blocker *valsartan*, the blockbuster heart drug that Novartis sells as *Diovan* – now off-patent – with a drug called *sacubitril*. The first in a new class of therapies blocks *neprilysin*, an enzyme that breaks down a hormone needed for decreasing blood pressure. This takes the load off the heart and allows the kidneys to function more normally, Epstein explained. Analyst forecasts for *LCZ696* have been climbing in recent months and the most recent consensus for sales in 2019 – four years after its expected launch – stood at \$1.9 billion shortly before the announcement in Barcelona, according to Thomson Reuters.

Specialty chemicals producer **Clariant**, one of the world's leading suppliers of specialty ether amines to the mining industry, is increasing the output at its Suzano, Brazil, facility to meet the growing demand locally and globally. In operation for more than 30 years, the Suzano plant is Clariant's largest production complex in Latin America. The first expansion phase is due to be completed in this year's fourth quarter of 2014. The second phase, which will double the capacity, is expected to be operational by the fourth quarter of 2015. "Clariant is aiming to expand its global footprint in the mining industry, especially in Latin America, where we can build on our long-term experience in Brazil. This investment is in line with our strategy to focus on fast growing markets where we have a leading position," said executive committee member Christian Kohlpaintner. "Our wide range of specialty ether amines allow our customers to upgrade

lower quality ores by removing silica and other contaminants, which is crucial due to availability of high quality ore deposits being depleted globally," said Finlay Morrison, vice president of Clariant Mining Solutions.

CONFERENCES IN SWITZERLAND

01.11.2014 – 30.04.2015

'Natural' versus 'Artificial' in Life Sciences Law

14.11.2014–14.11.2014

Faculty of Law, University of Basel, Pro Iure Auditorium, Basel
Interdisciplinary Conference 'Natural' versus 'Artificial' in Life Sciences Law.

The conference will open a debate between law, humanities and natural sciences with respect to one of the most fundamental dichotomies in our culture and society – the divide between nature and technology.

13th Snow Symposium by SYCA

23.01.2015–25.01.2015

Panorama Hotel Alphubel***, Saas-Fee

Science meets Snow! Symposium for young chemists up to 36 years with a interesting combination of science, networking, fun sports.

www.scg.ch/snowsymposium

CHanalysis 2015

10.04.2015–11.04.2015

Dorint Hotel, Beatenberg

The goal is to stimulate a stronger cooperation among persons working in the different areas of analytical sciences. In addition to lectures and discussions, an informal evening session is scheduled for networking and building new contacts across scientific borders.

www.scg.ch/chanalysis

Freiburger Symposium by DIAC

23.04.2015–24.04.2015

Hochschule für Technik und Architektur Freiburg, Gebäude A, Auditorium Edouard Gremaud, Freiburg

'Smart Solutions in Chemical Process & Product Development', 'Case Studies from the Chemical Industry'

www.scg.ch/freiburgersymposium

SCS Spring Meeting 2015

24.04.2015

University of Basel, Department of Chemistry, Basel

'The Chemistry of Complex Systems': A symposium in collaboration with the National Centers of Competence in Research (NCCR)

<http://scg.ch/springmeeting>

LECTURES

01.11–30.11.2014

Universität Basel, Pharmazeutische Wissenschaften

Lecture Hall 1, Pharmazentrum

12.11.2014 17.00 h *Dr. Adrian Roth, Head Mechanistic Safety, Pharmaceutical Sciences (PS) Roche Pharmaceutical Research and Early Development, Basel*

'Establishment of novel *in vitro* approaches for improved safety assessment of drug candidates early in development'. Antrittsvorlesung zur Habilitation

19.11.2014 17.00 h *Prof. Daniela Schuster, Faculty of Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Chemistry/CAMD, University of Innsbruck, A*
'*In silico* bioactivity profiling: successes and challenges'

Universität Basel, Physikalische Chemie

Physikalische Chemie, Departement Chemie, Universität Basel, Kleiner Hörsaal, Raum 4.04., 2. Stock

12.11.2014 16.30 h *Prof. Stephan Schiller, Institut für Experimentalphysik, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, Deutschland*
'Precision Spectroscopy of the Simplest Molecules'

26.11.2014 16.30 h *Prof. Paul Geerlings, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium*
'Chemical Concepts from Density Functional Theory'

University of Fribourg

Main auditorium, Chemistry department

18.11.2014 17.15 h *Prof. Richard Dronskowski, Chair of Solid-State and Quantum Chemistry, RWTH Aachen University, Deutschland*
'Chemical-bonding analysis of solids from local orbitals and plane waves'

Société Chimique de Genève

Université de Genève – Bâtiment Sciences II

03.11.2014 17.30 h *Prof. Hans Hagemann, Département de chimie physique, Université de Genève*
'L'hydrogène comme vecteur d'énergie renouvelable: à la recherche de nouveaux matériaux pour son stockage'

Université Genève, Chimie organique

Auditoire A-100

06.11.2014 16.30 h *Prof. Valentin Wittmann, Konstanz Universität, Deutschland*
Title to be announced

13.11.2014 16.30 h *Dr. Michelangelo Scalone, F. Hoffmann-La Roche AG, Basel*
'The Importance of the Catalysis in the Synthesis of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients'

20.11.2014 16.30 h *Dr. Emmanuel Magnier, Institut Lavoisier Versailles, Université de Versailles, F*
'New Tools for Electrophilic and Nucleophilic Perfluoroalkylation Processes'

EPFL, Institut des Sciences et Ingénierie Chimiques

EPFL, BCH 2218

04.11.2014 17.15 h *Prof. Jörn Piel, ETH Zurich*
'Mining microbial dark matter for drug development'

12.11.2014 17.15 h *Prof. Magnus Rueping, RWTH Aachen, D*
Title to be announced

26.11.2014 17.15 h *Prof. Luisa De Cola, University of Strasbourg, France*

EPFL, CE 6 'Hybrid porous (nano)materials. Confinement and applications'
Aldrich-ISIC Chemistry Lecture 2014

ETH Zurich, Laboratorium für Organische Chemie
HCI J 3, ETH Zürich (Hönggerberg)

03.11.2014 16.00 h *Prof. Bert Meijer, University of Technology, Eindhoven, NL*
'Non-covalent synthesis of functional supramolecular systems'
Prelog Lecture

10.11.2014 16.00 h *Prof. Frank Neese, Max-Planck-Institut für Chemische Energiekonversion, Mülheim an der Ruhr, Deutschland*
'Accurate *ab initio* quantum chemistry for large molecules. New developments and future opportunities'

17.11.2014 16.00 h *Prof. Sarah Reisman, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA*
'Natural Product Total Synthesis: A Platform for Discovery in Chemistry and Biology'

24.11.2014 16.00 h *Prof. A. Stephen K. Hashmi, Organisch-Chemisches Institut, Universität Heidelberg, D*
'New Horizons of Gold Catalysis'

ETH Zurich, Laboratorium für Physikalische Chemie
HCI J 3, ETH Zürich (Hönggerberg)

04.11.2014 16.45 h *Prof. Christina Thiele, Technische Universität Darmstadt, Deutschland*
'Structure Determination of Organic and Organometallic Compounds Using Anisotropic NMR Parameters'

11.11.2014 16.45 h *Prof. Hartmut Hotop, Fachbereich Physik, Technische Universität Kaiserslautern, Deutschland*
'Centenary of the Franck-Hertz experiment'

18.11.2014 16.45 h *Prof. Gereon Niedner-Schatteburg, Clusterchemie, Technische Universität Kaiserslautern, Deutschland*
'Infrared meets Magnetism – Concerted characterization of isolated magnetic complexes by IR and XMCD techniques'

The complete and updated lecture calendar is available on www.scg.ch/lectures

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