

## **New UK R&D company, Vantia Therapeutics, launched with backing from MVM Life Science Partners, SV Life Sciences and Novo A/S**

*Spin-out of Ferring Research Ltd's small molecule R&D raises up to £19m*

**Southampton, UK, 20 March 2008** – Vantia Therapeutics, a new UK-based R&D company focusing on novel first-in-class therapies for unmet medical needs, has been launched with backing from an investor syndicate led by MVM Life Science Partners, along with SV Life Sciences and Novo A/S. The company, a spin-out of small molecule assets from Ferring Pharmaceuticals, has raised up to £19m in investment for the development of its pipeline.

The formation of Vantia Therapeutics was catalysed by Ferring's decision to focus on research in peptides and biologicals. Vantia has two clinical stage small molecule products and two programmes at the preclinical and discovery stages. Its lead product, VT483, is a vasopressin agonist for the treatment of nocturia in benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH) patients and is expected to enter Phase II shortly. With market potential of \$500m pa, this BPH symptom is not treated adequately by existing therapies, and VT483 has further potential in other indications. Next in development is VT913, a vasopressin antagonist for the treatment of dysmenorrhoea (painful menstruation), believed to represent a multibillion dollar market for which there is currently no targeted therapy. The company expects this programme to enter the clinic in late 2008.

Vantia Therapeutics has an experienced management team and Board which brings significant expertise in clinical medicine and drug discovery, as well as experience of the development of small molecule drugs at large pharmaceutical companies. Dr Jim Phillips, who has more than 20 years' experience in healthcare, drug development and commercialisation, is Vantia Therapeutics' CEO. In 2006 he led the trade sale of Talisker Pharma Ltd to EUSA Pharma Inc. Dr Martin Murphy of MVM Life Science Partners is the Chairman of Vantia Therapeutics. Ferring Pharmaceuticals retains equity in Vantia Therapeutics and has a seat on the Board along with Professor Graham Boulnois of SV Life Sciences and Dr Martin Edwards of Novo A/S.

Dr Jim Phillips, CEO of Vantia Therapeutics, said 'With the potential of Vantia Therapeutics recognised by this syndicate of leading life sciences venture capital investors, the management team and employees of the company are focused on the development of its pipeline. Since the staff has significant experience in working on these programmes as part of Ferring Research Ltd, we expect to make rapid progress towards our milestones and therefore anticipate good news flow in the coming months.'

Dr Pascal Danglas, Executive Vice President, Clinical and Product Development at Ferring Pharmaceuticals, said 'We are pleased that a company with both expertise and potential has been formed with the launch of Vantia Therapeutics to bring through development the small molecule discoveries from Ferring Research Ltd. In the current industry environment we believe that it is essential to focus on core strengths and have decided, therefore, to focus our own research efforts on peptides and biologics. It is also very important that as many of our previous colleagues as possible can continue the good work that they started at Ferring.'

Dr Alex Pasteur of MVM Life Science Partners, a Director of Vantia Therapeutics, added 'We have worked with Ferring in great depth for several months to structure Vantia's pipeline, business plan, investor base and leadership team. This is a new company which has relatively mature assets, and we are excited about the potential for Vantia to create value under Jim's leadership.'

-ENDS-

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Photos available on request

**Notes to Editors**

**About Vantia Therapeutics:**

Vantia Therapeutics is a UK-based R&D company focused on novel first-in-class therapies for recognised markets which are underserved by current therapies. Formed in 2008 as a spin-out of Ferring Research Ltd's small molecule R&D, it has two clinical phase products, for the treatment of

nocturia in BPH patients and for the treatment of dysmenorrhoea, as well as preclinical and discovery programmes based on protease inhibition with potential in the areas of oncology and inflammation. The company's investors include MVM Life Science Partners, SV Life Sciences and Novo A/S and it expects to have by the end of the year more than 20 employees, most of whom have moved from Ferring Research Ltd as part of the spin-out. Vantia Therapeutics is situated on Southampton Science Park, UK, where it occupies 10,000 sq ft of chemistry and biology facilities. For further information, please go to [www.vantiatherapeutics.com](http://www.vantiatherapeutics.com)

#### **About MVM Life Science Partners:**

MVM Life Science Partners LLP, founded in 1997, is one of the UK's leading Venture Capital firms and manages three funds totalling over US\$500 million. MVM invests across the Life Sciences market including biopharmaceuticals, diagnostics, drug delivery, gene therapy, medical devices, OTC medicines, research tools and vaccines. MVM invests predominantly in start up and early stage companies based across Europe and in the US. The MVM team has broad experience across the Life Science and Venture Capital markets and maintains offices in London and Boston. For more information: [www.mvmlifescience.com](http://www.mvmlifescience.com)

#### **About SV Life Sciences:**

SVLS is a life sciences-focused venture capital business and SV Life Sciences Managers LLP is the Manager of IBT. SVLS funds invest in companies requiring funding within the human life sciences sector including biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, medical devices and instruments, healthcare IT and services. SVLS advises or manages four venture capital funds and the publicly traded investment trust – International Biotechnology Trust plc with total capital of approximately \$1.6 billion that invest in life sciences companies at all stages of development. SVLS has 29 professionals and has invested in over 175 companies over the course of the last decade making SVLS one of the largest and most active healthcare investors in the world. SVLS was established in 1993 and currently has offices in London, Boston and San Francisco. For more information, please visit the company's website at [www.svlsa.com](http://www.svlsa.com).

SVLSFIV and International Biotechnology Trust (IBT.L) are the SVLS-managed funds which have invested in Vantia Therapeutics.

#### **About Novo A/S:**

Novo A/S is an active and independent company in its support of biotech ventures. The aspiration is to bring together the best of both worlds: industry insight and network from our pharma/biotech inheritance combined with a venture capital mindset that focuses on results and value creation.

Novo A/S' portfolio of investments in life science has grown considerably since the company's start. Today the portfolio comprises close to 50 companies. There is considerable diversity in the portfolio across technologies, products and financial stages. Furthermore, the portfolio is international, currently with more than half the invested capital in North American companies and the rest in Denmark and Europe.

#### **About Ferring Pharmaceuticals:**

Ferring is a Swiss-based, research driven, speciality biopharmaceutical group active in global markets. The company identifies, develops and markets innovative products in the areas of endocrinology, gastroenterology, gynaecology, fertility and urology. In recent years Ferring has

expanded beyond its traditional European base and now has offices in over 40 countries. To learn more about Ferring or our products please visit [www.ferring.com](http://www.ferring.com).