

CURRENT PATENTS GAZETTE



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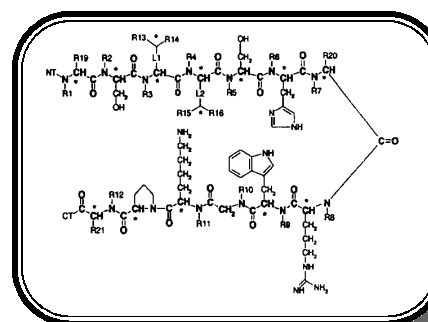
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DRUG PATENTING IN CONTEXT

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. For the most crucial innovations, those involving new chemical compounds, additional information is given in the form of front page images. These can be enlarged to show details of chemical structures and inventor teams, for example. Applications filed jointly, representing collaborative research, are highlighted, as are sequences of inter-related documents.

Peptidic MC-1 receptor ligands

are the target of a new application from a multinational team at WA Pharm in Sweden, with roots that can be traced back to work on human melanocyte stimulating hormone receptor claimed in the mid 90's



HIGHLIGHTS THIS WEEK

The antidepressant sertraline, recently the subject of a tetralone resolution case from the French company **Catalys** (EP947499), is now the subject of a rather similar application from the product's originator, **Pfizer**. Filed exactly a month later, Pfizer's application also describes tetralone derivatives, and by coincidence also names two French residents, from the Strasbourg region, as contributors in an otherwise US-based team. At the same time, two applications from the Hungarian company **Egis** are published, seeking protection for a method of synthesis of the **1R enantiomer** of sertraline, and a **key naphthalenyldene intermediate**.

Last month, the European Patent Office held its annual EPIDOS patent information conference in Greece, one of the less developed countries in Europe in terms of research-based pharmaceutical industry. However, in this week's biotech section is a newly published application from a highly relevant institution based in Heraklion, on the island of Crete. The **Institute for Molecular Biology and Biotechnology/FORTH** is seeking protection for a **eukaryotic transposable element**, and for the resulting transgenic plants and animals. A case published as long ago as June 1994 (WO9413815), concerned with DNA encoding chitin deacetylase, is evidence of long-term biotech research on this site. Like that case, the present application was filed initially in the US, and there is a further international flavour in the form of two contributing inventors based further north, in Austria and Germany. A classical Greek allusion is the use of a hybridization assay based on a DNA sequence named **Minos-1**.

Another rather complex example of international cooperation is seen in an application from **WA Pharm** (sometimes Wapharm) in Sweden. Three Latvian inventors collaborated with a German and a Swede in this exploration of **melanocortin 1 (MC1) selective compounds**. This follows a similar disclosure in WO9837097, but the work can be traced back to WO9404674, in which two individuals claimed the human melanocyte stimulating hormone receptor; later in its life, this invention too was assigned to WA.

Corixa's acquisition of Anergen in January 1999 extended the company's immunotherapeutic expertise into autoimmune disease fields. This is evident from an application published this week where the named inventors were previously patenting under the name of Anergen. The invention concerns **myelin basic protein (MBP) peptides** and relates to the treatment of autoimmune diseases of the central nervous system such as multiple sclerosis.