

# News Release

## **Santen and Merck & Co., Inc Sign Licensing Agreement for Tafluprost, Treatment for Glaucoma and Ocular Hypertension**

April 15, 2009, Osaka Japan-- Santen Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. announced that Santen and Merck & Co., Inc (Whitehouse Station, New Jersey, U.S) signed a worldwide licensing agreement for tafluprost (sold as TAPROS<sup>®</sup> in Japan, TAFLOTAN<sup>®</sup> in approved European countries marketed by Santen), a treatment for glaucoma and ocular hypertension. Under the terms of this agreement, Merck will pay an undisclosed fee as well as milestones and royalties based on future sales of tafluprost. Santen grants Merck exclusive commercial rights to tafluprost in Western Europe, (excluding Germany), North America, South America and Africa. Santen retains commercial rights to tafluprost in Germany, Eastern Europe, Northern Europe and Asia Pacific, including Japan. Merck will provide promotional support to Santen in Germany and Poland. If tafluprost is approved in the U.S, Santen will have the option to co-promote the product in the U.S.

Tafluprost is a prostaglandin analogue co-developed with Asahi Glass Co., Ltd. (Headquarters: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo) for reduction of intraocular pressure (IOP) in primary open angle glaucoma and ocular hypertension. It has been approved in eleven countries and is currently being marketed in Japan, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway. This agreement will expand the distribution of tafluprost in Europe, North America (tafluprost is an investigational compound in the U.S.) and South America.

"The licensing of tafluprost from Santen, a company with extensive experience in ophthalmics, further expands Merck's strong portfolio of topical treatments for patients with glaucoma," said Vlad Hogenhuis, MD, senior vice president and general manager, neuroscience and ophthalmology, Merck & Co., Inc. "After 50 years, Merck continues its commitment to advancing ophthalmic research and expanding global outreach to improve therapeutic options for patients."

"Today's announcement is an important milestone in the development and commercialization of tafluprost," said Akira Kurokawa, president and CEO of Santen Ltd. "This agreement will ensure that more patients have access to tafluprost and will lead to an improved quality of life for those patients."

### **About tafluprost**

- A type of prostaglandin  $F_{2\alpha}$  analogue, which is a treatment for glaucoma and ocular hypertension.
- Increases uveoscleral outflow of the aqueous humor, and shows a potent and stable IOP-lowering effect.
- Has been confirmed to have a reliable IOP-lowering effect in normal tension glaucoma in a study conducted in Japan.
- Has been shown to increase retinal arterial blood flow around the optic disk, as well as an increase in the blood flow in retinal tissue in human study
- No serious ocular or systemic adverse events have been found.

### **About Glaucoma**

Glaucoma causes damage to the optic nerve, resulting in major visual defects, such as blindness or visual loss. Speculating that there are many untreated patients, early detection and early treatment of glaucoma is an important issue. The basic treatment for glaucoma is to lower and control IOP.

### **About Santen**

Founded in 1890, Santen is a \$1 billion global company headquartered in Osaka, Japan. Santen researches, develops and markets ophthalmic products for physicians worldwide. Among prescription ophthalmic pharmaceuticals, Santen holds the top share within the Japanese market and is one of the leading ophthalmic companies worldwide. Santen has subsidiaries in the U.S., Europe, and Asia, including its Napa, California based Santen Inc. and its Tampere, Finland based Santen OY. For more information, visit [www.santen.com](http://www.santen.com).

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