GSK and Pfizer Launch HIV-Specific Drug Company

November 3, 2009

GlaxoSmithKline and Pfizer announced November 3 the launch of ViiV Healthcare, a collaboration between both pharmaceutical companies' HIV drug divisions. The new company, based in London and the United States, aims to address needs specific to those living with HIV worldwide through investing in innovative research and by offering improved patient access to treatment.

Dominique Limet, MD, chief executive officer of ViiV Healthcare, said that while antiretroviral treatment advances have transformed HIV from a life-threatening disease to a chronic illness, further research is needed to improve the life expectancy—and quality of life—for those living with the virus.

Presently, on average, HIV-positive people live 10 fewer years than their HIV-negative peers. "This is unacceptable, and we must stay relentless in the pursuit of new medicines," Limet said.

ViiV Healthcare currently has 10 HIV therapies and seven medicines in the pipeline, including five compounds in Phase II development. A total of 17 molecules in the company's portfolio could be developed into new HIV drug treatments.

"ViiV Healthcare's [research and development] will not solely focus on creating 'new' medicines," Limet said. "We will explore the potential of all our molecules for broader utility—for example to create new formulations and combinations that can help improve adherence or overcome resistance to the virus."

Limet also stated that ViiV intends to have several members of the HIV community on its board. The methods by which ViiV will solicit nominations will be revealed at a later date.

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