



Roche Abandoning In-House HIV Research

July 10, 2008

Roche pharmaceuticals has alerted the community that it is terminating its in-house research for new HIV drugs, according to a letter released to HIV treatment activists.

The company—which in the United States makes the protease inhibitor [Invirase](#) (saquinavir) and, in partnership with Trimeris, the fusion inhibitor [Fuzeon](#) (enfuvirtide)—has been studying two other types of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs. Those drugs, CCR5-based entry inhibitors and reverse transcriptase inhibitors, were all in the earliest stages of development. Roche, however, says, “We now have concluded that none would provide a true incremental benefit for patients compared to medicines currently on the market.”

In light of this setback, Roche has “decided to refocus [its] resources within virology on diseases in which [the company] can deliver substantial improvements over existing medicines,” including hepatitis C.

While Roche will continue manufacturing and selling Invirase and Fuzeon—and [Viracept](#) (nelfinavir) outside the U.S. and Canada—the company says that it will be keeping its eyes open for co-development or purchase of possible HIV drug candidates being explored by other companies.

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