Next Up?

The lowdown of what's in the pipeline

June 1, 2000 By Tim Horn

Generic Name: Tenofovir
Brand Name: To be announced
Company: Gilead Sciences
For: HIV
Class: Nucleotide analogue
Status: Phase III trials under way
Standard Treatment: Other HAART meds
Notes: Test-tube studies suggest it may be potent against 3TC-resistant strains of HIV and several other viruses. This once-daily drug looks less likely than adefovir (Gilead's first nucleotide) to damage the kidneys, but it can induce headaches,
nausea and diarrhea.
From the gut of PWA Stephen Gendin: "After the debacle with adefovir (rejected by the FDA due to toxicity), Gilead has a lot riding on this one. Its early expanded access program is welcome news."

Generic Name: Calanolide-A
Brand Name: To be announced
Company: Sarawak MediChem
For: HIV
Class: NNTRI
Status: Phase II trials underway
Standard Treatment: Other HAART meds
Notes: An NNRTI—derived from a rain-forest tree—that has researchers confused: Small human studies show that it dramatically reduces viral load after a month, but has no effect for the first two weeks. No HIVers developed resistance to the drug, even as monotherapy.
From the gut of PWA Stephen Gendin: "With data this weird, I wouldn't pin hope on this drug until more trials are done. And there's no such thing as a drug that HIV can't become resistant to."

Generic Name: Valganciclovir
Brand Name: To be announced
Company: Roche Laboratories
For: CMV retinitis

Class: Antiviral
Status: Phase II trials under way
Standard Treatment: IV ganciclovir, foscarnet and cidofovir
Notes: Finally, an oral drug being developed to treat this sight-stealing virus. A 160-person trial found a longer time to retinitis relapse with valganciclovir (198 days) than with IV ganciclovir (120 days); both drugs can cause severe neutropenia (a white blood cell deficiency).
From the gut of PWA Stephen Gendin: “With CMV rates much lower since protease inhibitors came along, it’s nice to see this company is still working on improving CMV treatments.”

Generic Name: N/A
Brand Name: SB Normal Stool Formula
Company: Shaman Botanicals
For: Diarrhea
Class: Antidiarrheal
Status: On market as supplement, www.shamanbotanicals.com
Standard Treatment: Imodium-AD, Lomotil, Kaopectate, other meds
Notes: Contains a rain-forest tree-sap extract used for centuries to fight diarrhea. In trials of 500 PWAs, it improved diarrhea by reducing water flow into intestines. Many anecdotes of effectiveness against HIV med–induced runs. So far, no reported side effects.
From the gut of PWA Stephen Gendin: “It’s expensive, but does seem to work very well and is sometimes reimbursable. Definitely worth trying for a couple of weeks if you’ve got unresponsive diarrhea.”

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