Merits

September 9, 2008 By Paul Dalton

Here is a comment from my last post:

I do believe that profit is the Pharma companies motive. Take for instance T-20 was developed by a small pharma company called Trimeris and it's discovery was taken over by one of the "big players" Roche.And I noticed TNX-355 (a co-receptor independent inhibitor) being studied by Tanox has been taken over by Genetech which has subcontracted the work out to a Taiwan company TaiMed. All this juggling is can not benefit HIV development.

And here is my response:

I don't think that anyone would dispute that the pharmaceutical industry is motivated primarily by profit. I think that the Tanox and Trimeris situations are not the same however. In the case of Trimeris- Roche came in late in the game, mostly to assist with manufacturing and marketing. That is a model that I think makes a fair bit of sense- Trimeris didn't have the resources to really bring the product to market and Roche certainly did.

Tanox was bought out by Genentech- a company that has publically stated a total lack of interest in the HIV market. They bought Tanox not for TNX-355. but for other mAbs they have or are developing. Due to

their lack of interest in HIV, Genentech has farmed out work on TNX-355 to the Taiwanese company you mentioned, which I agree will slow down the already uncertain development of the drug.

To me this points out the importance of judging each of these situations on their own merits. As a rule, pharma consolidation is very bad news for HIV, but not always. Trimeris maintained their independence from Roche, and have been able to move ahead with their second generation fusion inhibitor without Roche. Tanox is not independent from Genentech leaving the future for their product murky at best.

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