

Asterand Isolates New Approach to Arthritis Research

Business Editors/Biotech Writers

DETROIT--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Oct. 24, 2006--Asterand (LSE:ATD), the human tissue research company, announced today that it is making available new research materials to be used in the investigation of rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, cancer and other diseases.

The company is offering researchers cells that have been isolated from various parts of the body, including synovium from the joints of patients suffering from rheumatoid arthritis and cartilage from patients with osteoarthritis. "Cells are available from cultures preserved after minimal time in the laboratory," says Dr. Vici Blanc, Director of Product Development. "This approach is important because cells can change over time under laboratory conditions and scientists need them to remain closely resembling those which are in the body."

"Minimal and zero passage cells provide researchers with excellent systems for analyzing drug action in living human cells and for understanding the molecular progression of diseases."

Asterand produces these cells in its laboratories by propagating them for limited periods of time and then cryo-preserving them after a minimal number of passages. The full range of cells available includes chondrocytes, synovial fibroblasts, epithelial cells and carcinoma associated fibroblasts.

"Much of this material is very hard to obtain. We may be the only company in the world that is able to offer this research approach," adds Dr. Blanc. "We are uniquely positioned to obtain these samples because we operate a worldwide network of collection sites where patients have the opportunity to donate fully de-identified samples for research."

Researchers anywhere in the world will be able to order synovial cells for arthritis research through Asterand's online catalogue at <http://solutions.asterand.com/> or via Asterand's laboratories in Detroit Michigan and Royston, UK.

"We are able to collect samples for cell culture and cryopreservation on a custom basis," says Dr. Blanc, "So if researchers have special needs for isolated cells which are not immediately available, Asterand may be able to help them."

Asterand plc is a UK public company that supports human drug discovery and translational medicine through the provision of high quality, well characterized human biomaterials and preclinical research services. The company maintains banks of samples including breast, lung, prostate, colon and other cancers, diabetes, cardiovascular and central nervous system diseases. Asterand also performs contract research services on behalf of its clients. The company's mission is to provide the highest quality human biological material and services to researchers developing better diagnostics and therapeutics.

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