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PRESS RELEASE

Second Biomarker Expert Meeting in Heidelberg

Novel biomarkers enable innovative approaches in diagnostics and therapy for cancer and cardiovascular diseases

LEXINGTON, Mass. (USA), and HEIDELBERG, Germany, April 27, 2010 – Numerous experts in molecular diagnostics convened at the Second Workshop of the Biomarker Discovery Center (BDC, www.bdc-heidelberg.de) in Heidelberg. More than 40 researchers from universities, hospitals and industry from various regions of Germany made their way to the city despite adverse travel conditions caused by the volcanic ash cloud.

The BDC collaborates with clinical and scientific institutions to identify candidate molecular biomarkers using the latest technologies and investigates their potential role in various diseases including cancers and cardiovascular conditions as well as veterinary indications.

Peer Stähler, CSO of febit, the provider of the technology used for the analysis of novel biomarkers at the BDC, inaugurated the Second BDC Workshop.

“More than 200 candidate biomarkers for 14 different diseases were identified in pilot studies at the BDC during its first year,” said Peer Staehler in his introductory presentation. “This demonstrates the tremendous progress made by the research conducted there. Some studies have been published, and others have been submitted for publication in high-ranking journals.”

In his keynote lecture, Prof. Dr. med. Hugo A. Katus, medical director at the Heidelberg University Hospital, gave an overview of the two-decade history of troponin diagnostics in myocardial infarction.

“It is an arduous path to the establishment of a novel biomarker for routine diagnostics,” said Dr. Katus. “But with tenacity and cutting-edge scientific research, medicine may benefit from considerably improved diagnostics and thus provide the patients with more targeted therapies.”

Dr. Armin Pscherer from the Biotech Cluster Rhine-Neckar explained, “The BioRN Cluster Management appreciates the joint development of febit and the BDC. febit is a pioneer for biomarker discovery and the BDC is an essential component of the BioRN excellence cluster focussing on personalized medicine.”

Subsequently, the latest research results obtained in BMBF-supported projects at the BDC were presented and discussed. The first session dealt with DNA-based markers that were identified using latest-generation sequencing technologies and febit´s dedicated HybSelect technology for selective enrichment of target DNA fragments. RNA-based markers were presented in the second session, focussing on microRNAs with regulatory functions that may be impaired in various diseases. MicroRNAs were identified as highly specific markers in the recent past – using febit´s microRNA profiling technology, specific microRNA signatures were found to be clearly associated with a number of different malignancies.

Publication free of charge. Please provide specimen copy.

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PRESS RELEASE

Biomarker Discovery Center Heidelberg

The Biomarker Discovery Center Heidelberg is part of the Biotech Excellence Cluster Rhine Neckar (BioRN), one of the leading life science clusters in Europe.

As one of the top 5 high tech clusters in Germany, in 2009 the BioRN was granted 40 million Euros of funds by the BMBF.

The BioRN cluster aims at the development of novel drugs, diagnostic technologies and innovative services in cell-based and molecular medicine.

In one of the projects chosen for funding by the BMBF, the BDC Heidelberg develops novel approaches to the identification and validation of biomarkers. To this end, the BDC uses innovative technologies combining high-throughput sequencing and microarray systems. In another project, the BDC develops and validates novel miRNA-based signature arrays for malignant tumors.

For more information please visit www.bdc-heidelberg.de

About febit

febit develops, produces and markets automated solutions for researchers in the life sciences to explore the genome. The high degree of automation offers the customers of febit's Geniom® RT Analyzer ease of use as well as results of highest quality in miRNA profiling.

febit's service customers can benefit from the simplified, automated solutions by ordering hybselected parts of the genome for targeted resequencing conducting statistically relevant large scale studies with hundreds of samples or whole genome resequencing for a reasonable price. febit's miRNA profiling service, e.g. for biomarker discovery, lead to publication ready results by offering a sophisticated bioinformatics report.

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