



New VIB spinoff Tanai Therapeutics develops first-in-class therapeutics for obesity

Ghent, 6 December 2023 – **VIB, Flanders' leading life sciences institute, together with lead investor V-Bio Ventures has launched a new spin-off company based on research at the VIB-UGent Center for Inflammation Research. With an initial seed financing round supported by V-Bio Ventures, Qbic and VIB, the spin-off company is entering the obesity space with an entirely novel therapeutic approach.**

Current obesity drugs, with Novo Nordisk's Wegovy® (Semaglutide) being the front runner, all belong to a compelling class of drugs mimicking the actions of the endogenous incretin hormone GLP-1 that lower appetite and decrease food intake. Their effect on weight loss is significant and combinations of such treatments are driving weight loss up to 20% while reducing cardiovascular events. Notably, their commercial success has made incretin mimetics the largest drug class in history.

New VIB spinoff Tanai Therapeutics is pursuing an entirely different mode of action and enters the obesity space with an exciting and genetically validated drug target, amenable to developing an orally administered therapeutic. The company is set to develop a novel treatment that is more selective for fat loss while preserving muscle mass, with the promise of better outcomes for people living with obesity and obesity-related complications. Tanai is based on proprietary discoveries by researchers from the VIB-UGent Center for Inflammation Research and has been derisked by VIB's early drug discovery team.

To further pursue this new therapeutic avenue, the company secured Seed funding from V-Bio Ventures, Qbic III and VIB. The company will continue raising additional funds to expand its team and accelerate the development of first-in-class drug candidates for the treatment of obesity.

Increasing prevalence of obesity

The obesity space defines a significant unmet medical need and offers a huge market opportunity. It not only affects hundreds of millions of people worldwide, but also substantially increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and other health complications with major morbidity and high mortality. An estimated 4 million people die each year because of being overweight or obese.

Alarmingly, the global obesity prevalence has nearly tripled since 1975, including childhood obesity rates. According to a recent report from the World Obesity Federation, over half the world's population will be either overweight or have obesity by 2035, while the economic impact of a high BMI could reach over \$4 trillion annually. The biggest cost increases are projected for low- and middle-income countries, where obesity rates are growing fastest. In a climate where healthcare budgets are increasingly coming under pressure, addressing obesity as the root of the problem presents an unprecedented opportunity with societal impact.



Questions from patients

A breakthrough in research is not the same as a breakthrough in medicine. The realizations of VIB researchers can form the basis of new therapies, but the development path still takes years. This can raise a lot of questions. That is why we ask you to please refer questions in your report or article to the email address that VIB makes available for this purpose: patienteninfo@vib.be. Everyone can submit questions concerning this and other medically-oriented research directly to VIB via this address.

About VIB

VIB's core mission is to generate disruptive insights in the molecular underpinning of life and to translate these actively into impactful innovations for patients and society. VIB is an independent research institute where some 1,800 top scientists from Belgium and abroad conduct pioneering basic research. As such, they are pushing the boundaries of what we know about molecular mechanisms and how they rule living organisms such as human beings, animals, plants, and microorganisms. Based on a close partnership with five Flemish universities – Ghent University, KU Leuven, University of Antwerp, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and Hasselt University – and supported by a solid funding program, VIB unites the expertise of all its collaborators and research groups in a single institute. VIB's technology transfer activities translate research results into concrete benefits for society such as new diagnostics and therapies and agricultural innovations. These applications are often developed by young start-ups from VIB or through collaborations with other companies. This also leads to additional employment and bridges the gap between scientific research and entrepreneurship. VIB also engages actively in the public debate on biotechnology by developing and disseminating a wide range of science-based information. www.vib.be

About V-Bio Ventures

V-Bio Ventures is an independent venture capital firm specialized in building and financing young, innovative life sciences companies. V-Bio Ventures was established in 2015 and works closely with Belgium-based VIB, one of the world's premier life science institutes. The fund invests throughout Europe in start-up and early-stage companies with high growth potential focusing on technologies that provide transformational improvements in the biopharmaceutical, pharmaceutical, diagnostics and agricultural sectors. <https://v-bio.ventures>

About Qbic

Qbic is a sector-agnostic seed and early-stage venture capital fund, focusing on creating impact through the transformation of technological breakthroughs into sustainable business. The fund's goal is to support young innovative companies that valorize research from Qbic's knowledge partners. Qbic typically



participates in the first external investment round of a company and continues to support and invest in these companies throughout their growth. www.qbic.be

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