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Virco Lab, Inc. enters into Collaboration with SmartGene, Inc. enhancing HIV resistance test services for laboratories and physicians

April 20, 2009 Virco Lab, Inc. a leader in HIV resistance testing services, is pleased to announce a US collaboration with SmartGene, Inc. a provider of novel services for the management and analysis of genetic data to provide laboratories and physicians with greater insight into HIV drug resistance and to transfer the ordering, viewing and storage of HIV resistance reports to an innovative secure Web-based system.

The agreement allows laboratories and physicians to order, view and store Virco HIV resistance reports through the SmartGene[®] HIV Web-service module. As a result, data from resistance tests can be stored indefinitely and accessed easily through the Internet. Using the integrated system, laboratories can interpret HIV sequences using multiple algorithms, reinterpret sequences to build cumulative resistance reports for patients and create fully searchable databases for clinical, research and epidemiological purposes. Currently when a clinician orders a resistance test to help guide the selection of a new treatment regimen, previously conducted resistance tests are often unavailable or are difficult to retrieve.

“We believe that our collaboration with SmartGene, Inc. will enable laboratories which use both of our services to provide additional value to HIV clinicians by offering richer information from HIV genetic sequencing,” said Werner Verbiest, General Manager Worldwide of Virco BVBA. “The sequence management services provided by SmartGene along with our own virco[®]TYPE HIV-1 resistance reports allow the laboratory to exquisitely manage genetic information and to electronically order and deliver customized reports to the end user via this synergy in our services.”

Key end user benefits of this collaboration are:

- Genetic sequences obtained from patient viruses can be stored indefinitely on the SmartGene[®] HIV module
- Sequences can be directly submitted through the secure module to Virco for interpretation and creation of a virco[®]TYPE HIV-1 report
- Additional genetic targets, such as Integrase and gp41, are also supported by the SmartGene, Inc. service
- Results are automatically delivered into the module and can be stored and viewed electronically by clinicians at any time
- Viral sequences can be interpreted by multiple algorithms and interpretation systems and can be re-analyzed when new drugs are introduced or interpretation systems are updated
- Customized reporting features allow all past HIV sequences for the same patient to be reinterpreted and presented on one cumulative report to enhance clinical practice
- Each institution creates its own fully searchable database of sequences, mutations and associated data for use in the clinic, research and epidemiology studies



More about HIV Resistance Testing

Current Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) guidelines recommend the use of resistance testing when a patient is first diagnosed, whether or not antiretroviral (ARV) treatment is initiated immediately. If treatment is delayed, repeat testing at the time of treatment initiation should be considered. HIV resistance testing (RT) should also be used when changing a patient's regimen due to virologic failure or when treatment response is incomplete. RT is also recommended for all pregnant women before starting ARV treatment or when viral load is detectable while on therapy.¹

In cases of virologic failure, DHHS guidelines recommend consideration of not only the current resistance test and treatment history but also any resistance tests that have been performed in the past.²

About Virco

Virco BVBA is a world leader in the field of HIV resistance testing services for clinical practice and clinical studies, advancing research that correlates laboratory testing with clinical management, while offering a wide range of HIV resistance diagnostics. (Virco Lab, Inc. is the US operating division of Virco.) The company applies the latest technologies in molecular biology, medical virology, and bioinformatics to develop advanced diagnostic tools that are based on pharmacogenomic principles of individualized patient care. A pioneer in HIV resistance testing, Virco has one of the world's largest repositories of HIV clinical isolates, a clinical response database with records of more than 21,000 patients, a database of more than 93,000 phenotypes and 373,000 genotypes, and cutting-edge bioinformatics capabilities.

References

1. Panel on Antiretroviral Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents. Guidelines for the use of antiretroviral agents in HIV-1-infected adults and adolescents. Department of Health and Human Services. November 3, 2008; 1-139. Available at <http://www.aidsinfo.nih.gov/ContentFiles/AdultandAdolescentGL.pdf>. Accessed 04/14/2009 (page 9, Panel's Recommendations).

It is emphasized that concepts relevant to HIV management evolve rapidly. The Panel has a mechanism to update recommendations on a regular basis, and the most recent information is available on the **AIDSinfo Web site** (<http://AIDSinfo.nih.gov>).

2. Panel on Antiretroviral Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents. Guidelines for the use of antiretroviral agents in HIV-1-infected adults and adolescents. Department of Health and Human Services. November 3, 2008; 1-139. Available at <http://www.aidsinfo.nih.gov/ContentFiles/AdultandAdolescentGL.pdf>. Accessed 04/14/2009 (page 53, Assessment of Virologic Failure, 2nd paragraph).

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