



**FOR 9:00 AM (EST) RELEASE**

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**FOCIS 2005 PRESENTATION: XIAP, A NOVEL TARGET IN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS**

**MONTREAL. May 16, 2005** - Aegera Therapeutics Inc. is pleased to announce the presentation of results of a study entitled "Apoptosis Induction as a Therapeutic Intervention to Eliminate Encephalitogenic T cells; Antisense XIAP (AEG35169) in Murine Models of EAE". The study and results were presented at the 5th Annual Meeting of the Federation of Clinical Immunology Societies conference in Boston, by Dr. Simone Zehntner, who works in the laboratory of Dr. Trevor Owens in the Neuroimmunology Unit of the Montreal Neurological Institute.

XIAP, the X-linked Inhibitor of Apoptosis Protein, is one of Aegera's proprietary targets that plays a crucial role in maintaining cellular survival under stress by inhibiting the apoptotic action of the caspases. Recent findings have suggested that high XIAP levels may protect auto-reactive T cells from apoptosis, contributing to autoimmune disorders including multiple sclerosis.

In the reported study using an EAE mouse model of multiple sclerosis, Drs. Owens and Zehntner used a second generation antisense oligonucleotide against mouse XIAP, to reduce elevated XIAP protein levels in peripheral blood leukocytes. When symptomatic mice were treated daily with XIAP antisense, a dramatic reduction in incidence and degree of clinical scores was seen within 5 days. Further disease progression was completely prevented in 84% of animals, compared to control groups, 90% of which showed continued disease with increased severity.

AEG35169 is a mouse analogue of Aegera's current clinical candidate, AEG35156, a second generation antisense oligonucleotide designed to block the cellular synthesis of XIAP. AEG35156 represents a breakthrough approach to combating resistant cancers. Inhibiting XIAP, alone or in combination with certain chemotherapeutic agents, lowers the cancer cell's resistance to intrinsic and extrinsic death pathways so that a substantial therapeutic benefit has been shown in disease models. Phase 1 clinical trials of AEG35156 for the treatment of cancer were initiated last year in the UK, and additional trials are approved to begin in Canada and scheduled in the United States.

**About Aegera**

Aegera Therapeutics Inc. is a private North American biotechnology company focused on exploiting apoptosis control to extend and enhance the lives of cancer patients: killing cancer cells by inducing apoptosis and rescuing neurons from apoptotic cell death. Aegera's lead oncology program is a XIAP antisense therapeutic. Aegera's second product, AEG33783, is being developed to alleviate the disabling chemotherapy side-effect of peripheral neuropathy, and is scheduled to enter clinical trials early in 2006. For more information, please visit Aegera's website at [www.aegera.com](http://www.aegera.com).