

Exxel Pharma: Small Molecule Therapy, Big Impact



Soren Mogelsvang, Ph.D., President and CEO of Exxel (left)
Daniele Piomelli, Ph.D., M.D. (h.c.), Chief Scientific Officer of Exxel (right)

Exxel Pharma is a development stage company that combines world-class leadership, expert technological know-how and experience from the pharmaceutical industry to develop medicines for significant unmet medical needs. Exxel is focused on the development of small-molecule therapeutics for safe, non-addictive treatment of pain, PTSD, and substance (e.g. opioid) use disorders.

CBSA President and CEO Jennifer Jones Paton asked Soren Mogelsvang, Ph.D., President and CEO of Exxel Pharma, CBSA's Key Questions for Life Sciences Innovators.

Q: Tell us about your company or organization.

A: Exxel Pharma is a private pharmaceutical company focused on development of small molecule therapeutics for treatment of chronic pain, cough, and PTSD. Our therapeutics were licensed from University of California, Irvine in May of 2018 and result from years of research in Professor Daniele Piomelli's lab. Our pain drug, which is currently being developed as a treatment for peripheral neuropathic pain, is non-addictive unlike current treatment options, including opiate painkillers. We are specifically targeting disease areas with significant unmet medical needs and aim to become the leader in therapeutics that enhance endocannabinoid signaling by FAAH inhibition.

"We are specifically targeting disease areas with significant unmet medical needs."

Q: Describe your team culture. How does your culture shape what your company or organization produces or offers?

A: Our team is spread out, virtually, across the United States and Canada. We have a close-knit group and most of us have worked together across multiple companies and over many years. Our collective passion for advancing early-stage pharmaceuticals unites us. Each person's individual network provides access to world-class resources to support cost effective development of Exxel's therapeutics.

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Q: What are you working on right now?

A: In November 2020, following a lengthy due diligence process and negotiations, we signed a sponsored research agreement with a large pharma company for our peripheral neuropathic pain therapeutic. In March 2021, we finalized the terms for out-licensing of our ARN program and since then, we have been focused on completion of the definitive agreement for this transaction.

Q: How will your work save or change lives?

A: Neuropathic Pain is a chronic pain state caused by a lesion or dysfunction in the nervous system. It is often associated with trauma, diabetes, infection, chemotherapy, and immune or ischemic disorders. The disease affects almost 10% of the population and no cure or disease modifying treatment is available. Although several FDA-approved drugs exist for treatment of neuropathic pain, all are marginally effective and associated with side-effects, including drowsiness and dizziness.

As little as an estimated one in four patients with neuropathic pain experiences over 50% pain relief, while the majority experiences treatment side-effects, underscoring the significant unmet medical need. Exxel Pharma aims for our current drug in development, URB937, to dramatically improve the

quality of life for patients suffering from neuropathic pain.

Q: How has COVID-19 impacted your company or organization?

A: Aside from our CROs temporarily halting operations during the first half of 2020, the impact of COVID-19 has been surprisingly small. In part this is due to Exxel operating virtually and the fact that activities such as IND assembly and business development could continue with minimal impact from the pandemic.

Q: CBSA champions a collaborative life sciences ecosystem because we are #stongertogether. How has being an active participant in our life sciences community supported your success?

A: We have been able to tap into the Colorado's life science community through CBSA to network, identify and access resources. Exxel enjoys being part of this supportive ecosystem and we are always happy, to share our own network and experience.

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