

## MEDIA RELEASE – 14 December 2009

### Researcher focusing on methylation patterns in plasma DNA from cancer patients wins the BioAssayLINK award for commercialisation potential

#### About the BioAssayLINK award

This cash award is directed towards early career biomedical researchers doing research that shows potential for commercial application. The primary goal of this award is to get researchers to think about the potential commercial significance of their research. The secondary goal is for researchers to forge closer links with industry. The inaugural award was presented in 2008 to Cassandra Sparkes at the Australian Atherosclerosis Society meeting. The award has expanded this year to the growing field of epigenetics.

#### Winner of the inaugural BioAssayLINK award in the field of epigenetics

The BioAssayLINK award winner for this year was post-doctoral research fellow Dr Kristina Warton from the Garvan Institute of Medical Research (Sydney) for her work on optimising the detection of methylation patterns in plasma DNA from patients with ovarian cancer. This research highlights one approach being explored to ultimately produce a blood-based early detection test for cancer. DNA methylation is an important mechanism by which cells regulate their overall status. In cancer patients, DNA methylation patterns are known to be significantly different and thus represent an opportunity to potentially identify individuals predisposed to cancer or for early diagnosis. View the winning abstract and award presentation.

Dr Jeffery Smith, the CEO of BioAssayLINK commented, 'This is the inaugural BioAssayLINK award in the field of epigenetics and it's a pleasure to be involved. It is hoped that this award will become highly sought after in future research meetings'. Dr Jeff Craig, Chair of the local organising committee responded by adding, 'It is of vital importance that researchers consider not only diagnostic applications of their research but other commercial applications also. This award will help focus researchers on this goal'.

#### About BioAssayLINK

BioAssayLINK is a convenient global online marketplace where industry seekers who are involved in the development of new therapeutics can quickly identify biomedical researchers, service providers and specialised consultants who have the know-how and expertise. BioAssayLINK's online matching tool is cost-effective for seekers and for providers/researchers/consultants who want global exposure. The lab and consultant options provided to seekers allow them to arrive at better decisions more quickly to advance their R&D programs and ultimately increase their speed to market delivery.

#### About epigenetics

Epigenetics is defined as changes to gene expression that do not result from changes to DNA sequence. Such changes are heritable through cell division, can be influenced by environment and can even be reversed. Cataloguing and understanding epigenetic changes associated with cancer and other complex diseases will lead to an increased number of tools with which to diagnose and treat such diseases in the future. The Epigenetics 2009 annual scientific conference was the third in a series of conferences based in Australia with an international focus. The conference, held in Melbourne from Dec 1-4, had 14 international and 12 national speakers which attracted 260 delegates and covered a diverse range of topics. Delegates had an opportunity to interact with many of the most pre-eminent investigators in the epigenetics field.

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