

CEBINA publishes data demonstrating the anti-histamine azelastine inhibits infection by major variants of SARS-CoV-2

Vienna, 04 July 2022

CEBINA GmbH, Central European Biotech Incubator and Accelerator, today announces the publication of research results demonstrating that the commonly used anti-histamine, azelastine, is a potent inhibitor of major variants of SARS-CoV-2 in the peer-reviewed journal *Frontiers in Pharmacology* ⁽¹⁾.

Despite many countries relaxing COVID precautionary measures, experts have warned of a resurgence of SARS-CoV-2 infections already beginning this summer and a return to pandemic restrictions. Since emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants exhibit increased infectivity and existing vaccines have reduced efficacy against emerging mutants it is vitally important to limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2 with additional anti-COVID approaches. The data presented in the newly published research paper describes the application of a novel computational prediction approach for the identification of the anti-histamine drug, azelastine as anti-COVID-19 approach. The data demonstrates the comparable potency and efficacy of Azelastine against the original, alpha and delta variants SARS-CoV-2 virus in cell culture and reconstituted human nasal tissue.

“We are very pleased to see our work recognised through publishing in a peer-reviewed journal. Azelastine is already widely available as nasal spray and acts directly at the initial site of viral infection, therefore we believe it to have great potential as long-term solution to combat viral infections, in the early phase when the virus is mainly in the nose” commented Professor Dr Robert Konrat, CEBINA’s collaborator from the University of Vienna.

“The publication of our data on azelastine potency against the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its major variants provides the basis for our goal to develop a commercially already available azelastine nasal spray as an anti-COVID approach”. commented Eszter Nagy, MD PhD, CEO, CSO and founder of CEBINA. “Azelastine has already been successfully tested in a Phase 2 clinical trial through our partnership with URSAPHARM Arzneimittel, where it was proven to significantly reduce the viral load in the nasal cavity of SARS-CoV-2 positive patients, without adverse health events.”

CEBINA has previously partnered with the pharmaceutical company URSAPHARM Arzneimittel who have completed a Phase 2 clinical trial and are currently entering in a multi-national Phase 3 clinical study testing the efficacy of their marketed azelastine containing nasal spray, Pollival®, in SARS-CoV-2 positive patients.

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ABOUT CEBINA:

CEBINA GmbH – Central European Biotech Incubator and Accelerator (www.cebina.eu) is an Austria-based company committed to advancing entrepreneurship through creating and nurturing early-stage life science projects and companies to develop new medicines and cutting-edge technologies. CEBINA actively identifies academic projects with product development potential to create new companies. CEBINA is also pursuing its own research & development projects, in particular in the infectious diseases area and has initiated multiple R&D projects to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. CEBINA also offers office and laboratory facilities, in-house research, development, financing and management capabilities to early and medium stage biotech companies.

1. Konrat, R., et al., The Anti-histamine Azelastine, Identified by Computational Drug Repurposing, Inhibits Infection by Major Variants of SARS-CoV-2 in Cell Cultures and Reconstituted Human Tissue ([doi: 10.3389/fphar.2022.861295](https://doi.org/10.3389/fphar.2022.861295))

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