August 8, 2024

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Development Plan for Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS)
Consultation with the FDA to Initiate a Global Phase 3 Study
Corporate Policy for Application for Conditional and Time-limited Approval in Japan

HEALIOS K.K. ("Healios") today announces that we will hold a consultation with the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) in September 2024 regarding the launch of a global Phase 3 study to test the efficacy and safety of MultiStem®*[1] for acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS)*[2] caused by pneumonia. In Japan, as announced in our press release "Start of ARDS Clinical Trial in Japan" on February 2, 2024, we have already started a Phase 3 study in January 2024, and we are now considering global development, including in the U.S. In the U.S., MultiStem for the treatment of ARDS has received Fast Track and RMAT designation from the FDA, which allows for expedited approval of drugs that meet certain criteria for serious or life-threatening diseases or those for which no treatment is available.

In Japan, we are in the process of consulting with the regulatory authorities regarding the application for approval in Japan, including conditional and time-limited approval, based on the positive results of the already completed Phase 2 study (ONE-BRIDGE study)*[3] and the initiation of a global Phase 3 study as a confirmatory study.

As announced on October 11, 2023 in "Obtaining a Global License for ARDS and Provision of Clinical Trial Product from Athersys, Inc.", we acquired the worldwide rights to develop, market, and manufacture Multistem for ARDS and the investigational product necessary to a conduct a clinical trial. As further announced on April 4, 2024 in "Healios Acquires Substantially All of the Assets of Athersys, Inc. Free and Clear of Liabilities, Becomes Sole Owner of MultiStem", we acquired Athersys' assets including the rights to Multistem for all indications, worldwide, as well as substantial new product inventory for use in clinical trials. In light of these changes in our rights and the opportunities available to the company as a result, we will discuss the proposed trial protocol and other matters with the FDA in order to conduct a global Phase 3 study in the U.S. and other countries by amending the IND (Investigational New Drug Application) for the ARDS clinical trial that had previously been initiated in the U.S. by Athersys.

Specific details of the clinical trial plan in the U.S. and the possibility of approval in Japan will be announced as soon as the conditions are met.

Future Outlook

This matter has no impact on our consolidated financial results of the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024 at this time. We will promptly announce any matters that should be disclosed in the future.

*1 MultiStem®

MultiStem (HLCM051) is a somatic stem cell regenerative medicine product comprised of multipotent adult progenitor cells ("MAPCs") derived from the bone marrow of healthy adult donors. MultiStem has been shown to exhibit powerful anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory properties with applicability in a range of disease states, has been tested in hundreds of patients in late stage clinical trials, is manufactured consistently at scale in 3D bioreactors, and has demonstrated both safety and suggested efficacy in hundreds of patients across multiple indications. MultiStem is a proprietary technology wholly owned by Healios. Healios has a long history developing MultiStem. It originally added MultiStem to its pipeline in 2016 through an exclusive license to develop and distribute the product to treat ischemic stroke in Japan. Further, in 2018 Healios expanded its license to include development and distribution to treat ARDS in Japan, and in 2023 it expanded its ARDS license to include global territories. Having acquired the full technology platform in April 2024, Healios is seeking to advance MultiStem on a global basis for ischemic stroke, ARDS, and trauma.

*2 Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS)

ARDS is a general term for respiratory failure that occurs suddenly in a variety of critically ill patients. Although there are many causes of ARDS, approximately one-third of ARDS cases are caused by pneumonia, and it has been confirmed that ARDS also occurs in critically ill patients with COVID-19. There is currently no approved drug therapy that can directly improve the prognosis of patients with ARDS, and respiratory failure is treated with mechanical ventilation. The mortality rate after the onset of ARDS is 30~58%[*a], and there is a need for new therapies that can improve the prognosis of patients with ARDS. Currently, the number of patients in Japan is estimated to be approximately 28,000[*b] per year, and ARDS is designated as a rare disease. However, it is estimated that 262,000[*c] patients in the United States, 133,000[*d] in Europe, 670,000 in China, and more than 1.1 million people worldwide are affected annually[*e].

(Source)

*a ARDS Diagnostic Guidelines 2016

*b Healios Estimates Based on the Incidence Rate of Epidemiological Data and the Total Population of Japan by Demography

*c Diamond M et al. 2023 Feb 6. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2023 Jan–. PMID: Estimates for our company based on 28613773 Data and US Population Based on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Basic Data

*d Community Research and Development Information Service (CORDIS) 2020 7-9.

*e song-et-al-2014-acute-respiratory-distress-syndrome-emergingresearch-in-china

*3 ONE-BRIDGE Study

A clinical trial of cell therapy with MultiStem for patients with pneumonia-induced ARDS in Japan. In August and November 2021, Healios presented data on the endpoints at 90 and 180 days after treatment with the product, which showed positive results.