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## Case Western Reserve enters licensing agreement with Canadian company

By CRAIN'S CLEVELAND BUSINESS



Photo by Case Western Reserve University

Case Western Reserve University has entered into a licensing agreement with a Vancouver company with the goal of developing therapies for spinal-cord injuries and other nerve-damage conditions.

The university said on its The Daily site that it will work with NervGen Pharma Corp. "to research, develop and commercialize a patented technology with potential to bring new therapies for spinal-cord injury and

other conditions associated with nerve damage."

Specific terms of the licensing agreement were not disclosed. Case Western Reserve said the technology was developed in the laboratory of Jerry Silver, a spinal-cord injury and regenerative medicine researcher at the university.

Silver's research "has implicated protein tyrosine phosphatase sigma (PTPs) as a key neural receptor which inhibits nerve regeneration through regions of scarring in spinal-cord injury and other medical conditions," The Daily post stated. "Targeted treatment against PTPs with an agent known as ISP promoted regeneration of damaged nerves and functional improvement in animal models for various medical conditions. A series of receptor antagonists that can be delivered systemically have been identified, including an analogue of ISP that is ready for clinical development."

NervGen CEO Ernest Wong said in a statement, "We are extremely excited to be advancing this important nerve regeneration technology, as there is currently no approved therapy known to enhance nerve regrowth in patients suffering from nerve damage. The functional recovery observed in animal models is unprecedented and consistent across multiple preclinical models in several independent university laboratories."

The Vancouver company will work with Silver and his co-inventor, Brad Lang, an executive-in-residence at BioEnterprise in Cleveland, to advance the technology.

Case Western Reserve said translational research support for the project came from the university's Council to Advance Human Health; the Ohio Third Frontier Technology Validation and Start-up Fund; and the Case-Coulter Translational Research Partnership. The National Institutes of Health's Center for Accelerated Innovations at Cleveland Clinic provided support for related work for cardiac applications.

The Daily post stated that the license agreement also includes technologies co-developed with Oregon Health & Science University, Ohio State University and Hong Kong University.

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