

Iridex Licenses Rights to Ophthalmic Products and Intellectual Property From Ocunetics, Inc.

Iridex Corp. (Mountain View, CA) announced that it has exclusively licensed the rights to all of the intellectual property of privately held ophthalmic medical device maker Ocunetics, Inc. (Alamo, CA). Terms of the deal have not been disclosed.

Iridex will accelerate the development and commercialization of the transformative product line created by Ocunetics, said Steven Vold, MD, Ocunetics' cofounder.

Ocunetics' other cofounders, Timothy Buckley and Kenneth Peartree, will join Iridex as vice president of marketing, MIGS & laser systems, and vice president of product development, consumables, respectively. Ocunetics' products are currently in development and are expected to begin commercialization under the Iridex brand within 18 months.

Preservative-Free, Topical Ophthalmic Steroid Launched

Bausch + Lomb (Rochester, NY) has introduced a preservative-free topical ophthalmic steroidal formulation to treat postoperative inflammation and pain following ocular surgery. Lotemax ointment (loteprednol etabonate ophthalmic ointment 0.5%) is the first monotherapy steroidal ointment brought to the US market in more than 20 years, according to a company news release.

Two phase 3, 4-week clinical trials compared loteprednol etabonate to a vehicle (mineral oil and white petrolatum) for the treatment of inflammation and pain after cataract surgery (N = 805). Loteprednol etabonate was associated with a statistically significant resolution of anterior chamber cells and flare versus vehicle at postoperative day 8, according to Bausch + Lomb.

The most common ocular adverse event, reported in about 25% of subjects in clinical studies, was anterior chamber inflammation. Other common adverse events included conjunctival hyperemia, corneal edema, and eye pain. Many of these events may have been the consequence of the surgical procedure, according to the news release.

Lotemax ointment is available only in the United States.

Dean McGee Eye Institute Dedicates \$46 Million to Research and Clinical Facility

Officials from the Dean McGee Eye Institute in Oklahoma City announced the dedication of the Institute's new \$46 million, five-story, 78,000-square-foot, research and clinical facility.

The new building, which adjoins the existing original facility built in 1975, doubles the space for research laboratories, expands clinical capacity by 40%, and consolidates all of the clinical care, vision research, teaching, and administrative functions into one location. The Institute's clinical and surgical teams provide more than 150,000 patient visits and 7,000 surgical procedures each year, according to a news release.

Jeffrey L. Goldberg, MD, PhD, Named Walter G. Ross Distinguished Chair in Ophthalmic Research

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute of the University of Miami's Miller School of Medicine announced that Jeffrey L. Goldberg, MD, PhD, has been awarded the Walter G. Ross Distinguished Chair in Ophthalmic Research. Dr. Goldberg was selected based on his innovative research, international recognition in the field, and particular expertise in translational approaches, according to the institute's news release. His current research focuses on discovering why neurons in the retina fail to regenerate in patients afflicted with diseases like glaucoma and macular degeneration.

Dr. Goldberg is exploring two strategies for cellular regeneration. The first involves harvesting a patient's adult retinal stem cells from the peripheral retina, growing them in the laboratory, and implanting them back into the patient as retinal neurons, particularly photoreceptors and retinal ganglion cells that transmit information from the retina to the brain. The second approach uses nanotechnology and magnetic nanoparticles either to deliver stem cells to the back of the eye or to encourage retinal ganglion cells to grow through the optic nerve. □