

Healthcare industry BW

High-Tech Gründerfonds (HTGF) invests in Reutlingen-based SIGNATOPE GmbH – Safe medications thanks to new test procedures

High-Tech Gründerfonds is investing EUR 600,000 in Reutlingen-based SIGNATOPE GmbH. SIGNATOPE will use the funds to advance the development of its unique biomarker assay system, that has been established to support pharmaceutical research. The technology is based on special antibodies and allows the early detection of possible side effects during the drug development process. Thereby, the need for animal testing will be reduced while the drug becomes safer and the process more cost-efficient. SIGNATOPE has already secured a number of renowned companies as clients of the new technique.

Before new drugs get approval they are subjected to comprehensive tests in cell culture and animal models to assess their efficacy and toxicity. The biomarker assays developed by SIGNATOPE are able to detect organ damage and drug side effects. As biomarkers might differ between humans and animal models, to date a multitude of tests have been applied for this analysis. During phase I of the GO-Bio program, which is being funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the team at the NMI Natural and Medical Sciences Institute at the University of Tübingen developed a novel technique, which quantifies relevant biomarkers not only in humans but also across a wide variety of species. "Our technique delivers quantitatively comparable data, regardless of the selected test model. We are able to detect even the tiniest amount of biomarkers in urine and blood samples. This helps to cut down significantly on time and costs with respect to drug development," explains Oliver Pötz, CEO at SIGNATOPE.

As a major German seed stage investor, HTGF sees huge potential in the new approach devised by the Reutlingen researchers. "The team really impressed us with this pioneering technology. In comparison to traditional histopathological techniques involving tissue sections, non-invasive biomarker assays are becoming increasingly relevant in the development of new drugs," explains Dr. Lena Krzyzak, Investment Manager at HTGF.

SIGNATOPE was founded by scientists Hannes Planatscher, Thomas Joos, Octavian Schatz and Oliver Pötz, together with the NMI. "As a business-minded incubator, the NMI is the nucleus behind many successful start-ups," explains Dr. Klaus Eichenberg, Managing Director of BioRegio STERN Management GmbH. "It is a good example of how to fuse innovative research with successful business in the region."

About SIGNATOPE:

SIGNATOPE GmbH was founded in August 2016 in Reutlingen by Thomas Joos, Hannes Planatscher, Oliver Pötz and Octavian Schatz, together with the NMI Natural and Medical Sciences Institute at the University of Tübingen. SIGNATOPE develops innovative protein assays that are capable of detecting and quantifying biomarkers for organ damage and drug interactions in blood, urine and tissue. In addition, SIGNATOPE offers analytical services for clients in the pharmaceutical and chemical industries. The company's CEO is biochemist Dr. Oliver Pötz.

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Further information

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