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Professor Claude Wischik, Chairman of TauRx, highlights future consequences of Alzheimer's Disease at annual psychogeriatric conference in Korea

Demographic and societal impact of Alzheimer's will grow exponentially if its current course is not averted, says pioneer in tau pathology, as Phase 3 clinical studies targeting tau aggregation get underway in Korea

SEOUL, Korea, 3rd October 2013 – Professor Claude Wischik, Chairman of TauRx Therapeutics Ltd and pioneering researcher in tau pathology and Alzheimer's Disease, today highlighted the urgent need for conducting tau-based therapeutic clinical research in Asia for Alzheimer's Disease, and underscored the economic and societal consequences of failing to do so.

Speaking at the 16th International Congress of the International Psychogeriatric Association, Professor Wischik warned that Alzheimer's Disease could soon escalate to even higher proportions than previously thought in Asia if its current course is not averted. Using demographic data from the World Health Organization, together with a proven pathological staging system used to assess the severity of Alzheimer's based on the presence of tau tangles [tau pathology] in the brain, Professor Wischik estimated that almost half of the population over the age of 45 (nearly 9 million people) in Korea alone currently have some degree of tau pathology in the brain, with 25% of this affected group in the advanced stages. Of particular concern is that nearly 5 million, who currently display no clinical symptoms of this condition, may be at risk of progressing to the earlier stages of Alzheimer's Disease.

The statistics underscore the need for a medicine that can halt the progression of Alzheimer's Disease, by targeting the tau tangles in the brain. Current treatments only address the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. Tau tangles [tau pathology] are one of the hallmarks of dementia. They were first described a century ago by Dr Alois Alzheimer. In Alzheimer's disease, tau protein begins to self-aggregate in a process which leads to formation of abnormal fibres inside nerve cells that eventually kill them. The

formation of tangles spreads throughout the brain, as affected nerve cells infect nearby normal nerve cells, accelerating the process further. TauRx Therapeutics recently launched two large, global Phase 3 clinical trials of its tau aggregation inhibitor, LMTX™, a compound which targets the formation of these ‘tangles’ in the brain, and which aims to slow or halt the progression of Alzheimer’s Disease in those with mild to moderate stages of the disease. It is planned that up to 11 study sites will soon start screening patients in Korea, including 7 medical centres in Seoul.

In demonstrating the statistics regarding the growth of Alzheimer’s, Professor Wischik used Braak Staging, the method used to classify disease progression and the patient’s cognitive clinical decline. The six stages correlate to the aggregation of tau-tangles in the brain: the greater the tangles, the greater the decline – and the higher the Braak Stage number. “Using data from the World Health Organization and the Braak staging methodology, I’ve calculated that the percentage of people with advanced levels of cognitive impairment will increase substantially over the coming years as the population ages,” Professor Wischik said to conference delegates. As a result, Wischik suggests that the impact on the Asian family-oriented care structure will be affected, since there will be fewer people to care for those with significant stages of impairment. “Given this, there is an urgent need to test and deploy tau-aggregation targeted treatment in Asian populations,” he said.

TauRx’s Phase 3 studies culminate over 30 years of research, and in the wake of many failed beta amyloid agents targeting plaques in the brain, these studies are of significant importance to the Alzheimer’s community. Patients and carers can find further information at <http://www.alzheimersglobalstudies.net> and <http://www.taurx.com>.

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About TauRx Therapeutics:

TauRx Therapeutics Ltd was established in Singapore in 2002 with the aim of developing new treatments and diagnostics for a range of neurodegenerative diseases. The company’s tau aggregation inhibitor, LMTX™, is currently in global Phase 3 clinical trials for Alzheimer’s and Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD). LMTX™ targets aggregates of abnormal fibres of tau protein that form inside nerve cells in the brain, giving rise to tangles. TauRx’s primary research facilities are in Aberdeen, Scotland.

For press enquiries please contact:

Sylvie Berrebi +44 (0)7795 197271

Elizabeth Puller +44 (0)208 834 1447