Follicum strengthens its clinical expertise in diabetes as novel peptide candidate approaches clinic - establishes Scientific Advisory Board

Follicum AB today announces the establishment of a Scientific Advisory Board in the diabetes field. The purpose is to strengthen knowledge transfer from academic research to clinical application and commercialization. The Board consists of 5 internationally reputable experts with extensive experience in research into diabetes and its complications.

- By setting up a Scientific Advisory Board, we strengthen the company's competence and clinical expertise, which is important both for quality assurance of our drug development within the diabetes complications area and for attracting large pharma companies specializing in diabetes,” says Follicum's CEO Jan Alenfall.

- The combined experience of the members of Follicum's Scientific Advisory Board will provide us with excellent scientific advice as well as expert guidance on developing the project and ensuring commercial value. Follicum is conducting exciting research where the latest results, especially regarding diabetic complications, are particularly promising”, says the chairman of the Scientific Advisory Board Anna Hultgårdh.

The members of the Scientific Advisory Board are;
Professor, Anna Hultgårdh, Vessel Wall Biology, Lund University. Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Board, board member and one of the founders of Follicum AB.

Professor Dame Frances Mary Ashcroft FRS FMedSci, Department of Physiology Anatomy and Genetics, University of Oxford. Ashcroft is a Fellow of the Royal Society of London. Her research is focused on small channels in the cell membrane that are important for insulin release. Her findings has enabled patients born with a rare monogenic form of diabetes to be treated with a pill (that stimulates insulin release), rather than with insulin injections. Ashcroft has received a number of international awards for her research results.

Dr. Gunnar Olsson is an MD, Ph.D and previous adjunct professor at the Karolinska Institutet, with extensive experience from leading Research and Development positions in the pharmaceutical industry. He has held Global R&D management level positions at Astra/AstraZeneca for more than 10 years and he has extensive experience in product development and life cycle management. He has also contributed to more than a dozen successful global product registrations for medicines for both cardiovascular and vascular diseases and gastrointestinal diseases, of which seven have achieved so-called "Block Buster status" - with an annual sales volume exceeding USD 1 billion.

Professor Göran K. Hansson, Experimental Cardiovascular Research, Karolinska Institutet, Vice Chairman of the Nobel Foundation and Secretary General of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. Hansson studies the connection between cardiovascular diseases and the immune system. He examines what activates an unwanted immune response to “self” molecules, which is often the case in chronic diseases. New findings shed lights on links between immune responses and metabolism, an area often called immunometabolism, and the role of metabolites as regulators of inflammation.

Professor Jan Nilsson, Cardiovascular Research - Immunity and Atherosclerosis, Faculty of Medicine / Department of Clinical Sciences, Lund University. Jan Nilsson is a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, a board member of the Swedish Research Council and former Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Lund University. His research focuses on the mechanisms behind the emergence of cardiovascular complications in diabetes. He has also worked on the development of new antibody-based drugs for cardiovascular diseases.

Professor (Sr.) Åke Lernmark, EXODIAB: Excellence in Diabetes Research in Sweden, Diabetes and Celiac Disease, Lund University. Lernmark's research area encompasses Type I diabetes and genetic factors that lead to autoimmunity against the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. The goal is to understand the etiology of the disease by finding out if specific environments can trigger the autoimmune reaction. On the basis of scientific publications in international journals (December 2018), Lernmark is ranked among the top 10 experts in the world when it comes to Type I diabetes.
About diabetes
Diabetes is rapidly increasing globally. The disease is characterized by poor blood sugar control due to defective insulin signaling, which causes serious complications such as cardiovascular disease, kidney failure, obesity, blindness and diabetic foot ulcers. Both diabetes and its complications are accompanied by a great burden, partly for the individual patient but also for the entire healthcare system. Thus, there is an already large and growing global need for new therapies that address effective control of glucose levels in combination with preventive effects on the various diabetic complications. Follicum’s strategy is to progress a well-developed project in diabetes that is attractive to global partners.

About Follicum’s Peptides
Follicum’s proprietary peptides consist of altered or unchanged fragments of human proteins. The selection of peptide sequences is based on over 20 year years of academic research and the precursors of the peptides have shown positive effects on the repair of tissue damage, especially in blood vessels.

Follicum’s peptides have shown good effects on insulin release, an effect that is more pronounced at higher blood sugar levels. The peptides could thus contribute to stabilizing blood sugar levels, i.e. exactly what is sought after in diabetes treatment. In addition to high sugar levels, inflammatory factors are normally present in diabetic patients, which among other things leads to a deterioration of the function of insulin-producing beta cells. In addition to exerting insulin release, Follicum’s peptides have been shown to protect the beta cells when exposed to high sugar levels or inflammatory factors.

If the function of the ordinary beta cells can be maintained, the ability of the diabetic patient to control blood sugar levels increases, and the risk of complications decreases. The company currently conducts functional animal studies to study direct effects of the peptides on various diabetes complications such as cardiovascular diseases, liver steatosis and inflammation. The company has chosen a drug candidate for treatment of diabetes and protection of beta cells. The drug candidate has shown unique effects in in vitro and in vivo models, including effects on diabetes complications. In the future, the drug will undergo tests in preclinical program in preparation for clinical studies.

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About Follicum AB
Follicum is a biotech company focusing on the discovery and development of peptide-based drugs. The primary focus is in hair growth stimulation, where Follicum has obtained very promising results with FOL-005 in a recently completed clinical trial. In diabetes, Follicum’s research has resulted in a new peptide class which significantly increases the release of insulin in pre-clinical models. The company was founded in 2011, and is based in Lund, Sweden. Follicum is listed on the Swedish small cap exchange Spotlight since 2014. www.follicum.com www.follicum.com.