



## **Astex Receives Milestone from Wellcome Trust for Pioneering HCV Research**

**Cambridge, UK, 1st February 2011**

Astex Therapeutics, the UK-based biotechnology company developing targeted therapies for oncology and virology, announced that it has received a milestone payment of £1 million from the Wellcome Trust to support the Company's pioneering work in the area of infectious disease caused by Hepatitis C Virus (HCV). The payment is the second installment of an award of £2 million made by Wellcome to Astex in 2009 under its "Seeding Drug Discovery" initiative.

The milestone payment was triggered by the identification of potent, small molecule inhibitors of HCV NS3 - a key protein involved in viral replication. The compounds act as allosteric modulators of the NS3 protein resulting in inhibition of the enzyme activities of both protease and helicase in wild type and in drug resistant variants of HCV that have arisen in the clinic during treatment with active site inhibitors. As such the Astex compounds offer the potential to be differentiated from existing HCV protease inhibitors. Astex retains all commercial rights to the resulting drug candidates from this programme.

Harren Jhoti, Chief Executive Officer of Astex said, "We anticipate that targeted agents like these will provide new therapeutic options for patients with HCV infections where current treatments are not optimal and where resistance to current treatments is a recurring problem."

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### **About Astex Therapeutics**

Astex is a UK-based biotechnology company that discovers and develops novel small molecule therapeutics. Using its pioneering fragment-based drug discovery platform Pyramid™, Astex has built a pipeline of molecularly targeted oncology drugs, of which three are currently being tested in clinical trials with others in discovery and pre-clinical development.

In addition to its proprietary research programmes, Astex's productivity in lead discovery has been endorsed through numerous partnerships with major pharmaceutical companies, including AstraZeneca, GlaxoSmithKline, Johnson & Johnson and Novartis.

For further information on Astex please visit the Company's website at [www.astex-therapeutics.com](http://www.astex-therapeutics.com)

### **About the Wellcome Trust**

The Wellcome Trust is a global charitable foundation dedicated to achieving extraordinary improvements in human and animal health. It supports the brightest minds in biomedical research and the medical humanities. The Trust's breadth of support includes public engagement, education and the application of research to improve health. It is independent of both political and commercial interests. [www.wellcome.ac.uk](http://www.wellcome.ac.uk)