slow the metast of a non-operable tumour,' says Bode.

4 Bode, A. and Dong, Z. (2003) Research presented at the *American Association for Cancer Research* meeting, 28 Oct 2003, Phoenix, AZ, USA, (http://www.aacr.org/)

Neuroscience

Atlas of light guides neuroscientists

Scientists have taken a major step towards understanding the remarkable complexity of the mammalian CNS. The Gene Expression Nervous System Atlas (GENSAT) project has published details of a new technique for studying where and when genes are active in the mouse CNS, and has established libraries of research tools that should greatly benefit those looking at how the CNS develops, functions and responds in disease [5].

The GENSAT team modified bacterial chromosomes (BACs) to include regulatory sequences of a gene of interest along with a reporter gene. Mouse eggs containing the BACs were allowed to develop, and fluorescence from the reporter protein revealed which cells expressed the gene of interest in mice of different ages. By repeating this experiment with different genes and different cells, researchers can build up an 'atlas' of the locations and timings of CNS gene expression, and infer functional information.

Gong *et al.* confirmed that their BACs could report true expression patterns by comparison with patterns from the conventional methods of immunohistochemistry and *in situ* hybridization, which require greater disruption to tissue and are often less sensitive. The researchers went on to demonstrated how their approach can generate new information on CNS gene function, cell migration and anatomy. They predict that use of their BACs to identify cells will also facilitate studies of CNS physiology, pathophysiology and responses to drugs.

Various institutions are involved in the initiative, which is spearheaded by Nathaniel Heintz of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (http://www.hhmi.org/) and Mary Hatten of Rockefeller University (http://www.rockefeller.edu/). As a bonus, the technique provides experimental materials for other neuroscientists. The library of BAC vectors and the transgenic mice could prove very useful to the field, as Heintz explained. 'This access to mice with precisely labelled cell populations will stimulate the whole area of neurobiology that studies cell physiology and connections,' he said.

The atlas will help neurobiologists who are studying the cellular and molecular mechanisms of neurological disorders. For example, although many mice models of diseases are available, in most cases the cells responsible for the primary effects of the disease have not been located.

Data from the project, including high-resolution images of gene expression, are available at the GENSAT website (http://www.gensat.org) and will be updated as the project continues. In addition, scientists will have access to the BACs and transgenic mice generated, guaranteeing that the project will stimulate and accelerate research throughout the neuroscience community.

5 Gong, S. *et al.* (2003) A gene expression atlas of the central nervous system based on bacterial artificial chromosomes. *Nature* 425, 917–925

News in brief was written by *Matt Brown, Michelle Doherty, Morag Robertson, Sadaf Shadan and Heather Yeomans*

People

Appointments

SWITCH Biotech appoints Stefan Schulze as CEO

Stefan Schulze has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer of SWITCH Biotech (http://www.switch-biotech.com), a company involved in dermatological research and development. Previous to his appointment as CEO, Schulze was Chief Financial Officer and Speaker of the Management Board at the company. Schulze is a trained economist and prior to joining SWITCH Biotech worked for McKinsey & Company as a management consultant.

On his appointment, Schulze commented: 'It is an honour for me to serve SWITCH Biotech as CEO. We have the tremendous opportunity to emerge as the market leader for innovative research and drug development in dermatology.' Marc Guyader, Chairman of the Board of Directors, added: 'The appointment of Stefan Schulze as new CEO will consolidate the company's development. His background in economics, his expertise in financial matters, his experience in the medical-scientific environment, as well as his pro-active and positive attitudes to significant managerial and environmental moves will be of great benefit to SWITCH.'

BioTrove announces new President and CEO

BioTrove (http://www.biotrove.com) has announced the appointment of Robert Ellis, formerly the company's Chief Operating Officer, as President and Chief Executive Officer. Colin Brenan, founding CEO of BioTrove, becomes Chief Technology Officer and Senior Vice President, Research and Engineering Development.

Ellis has more than 29 years of experience in analytical and biotechnology instrumentation and prior to joining BioTrove held senior executive positions at Affymetrix and Applied Biosystems. While at Applied Biosystems, he led the marketing of the first automated DNA sequencer, which has generated over US$1 billion dollars in sales since its introduction. His new role will involve guiding the commercialization of BioTrove's micro- and nano-scale products in molecular biology.

Enrico Petrillo, a member of BioTrove's Board of Directors, commented: 'As BioTrove transitions from an R&D focus to commercializing its core technologies, Bob is an ideal person to lead the process.'

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BioTrove is a privately held biotechnology company that is focused on leveraging micro- and nano-scale engineering solutions to overcome current bottlenecks in drug discovery.

Paul Thorning to head the Institute for Pharmaceutical Innovation

Paul Thorning has been appointed Director of the Institute for Pharmaceutical Innovation (IPI), which has been established by the University of Bradford, UK (http://www.bradford.ac.uk) to provide a world-class research facility for potential new drugs. The £6 million institute houses modern laboratories and incubation facilities for innovative bioscience start-up companies and will focus on the use of advanced artificial intelligence, computational simulation and analytical techniques to accelerate the development of new drugs.

Thorning was formerly the Director of the pharmaceutical consultancy firm Stratalyst and has 14 years' experience in manufacturing, marketing, consultancy and senior executive positions within the pharmaceutical and chemical industries.

Commenting on his appointment, Thorning said: 'I am delighted to have the opportunity to lead the Institute, which, I believe, will become a global centre of excellence for the advancement of pharmaceutical products.'

USP appoints new Director

The United States Pharmacopeia (http://www.usp.org) has announced the promotion of Lokesh Bhattacharyya to Director of the Non-complex Actives and Excipients division in the organization's Information and Standards Development (ISD) department. Bhattacharyya will be responsible for the development of monographs and general chapters for excipients and non-complex drug substances and products.

Prior to this appointment, Bhattacharyya served as the USP Senior Scientist for USP's Blood and Blood Products and Vaccine, Virology and Immunology Expert Committees. Prior to joining USP in 2000, he worked as a research fellow at Merck.

Commenting on the promotion, Eric Sheinin, Vice President of ISD, commented: 'Bhattacharyya's knowledge and experience in the area of monograph development, as well as his industry experience, are invaluable, especially in our on-going efforts in excipient monograph development.'

New President and CEO at TekCel

TekCel (http://www.tekcel.com) has appointed Robert Rosenthal as President and Chief Executive Officer. He will also join the Board of Directors. Rosenthal has previously held senior executive positions at several life science tools companies, including PerkinElmer, Thermo Optek and Nicolet instruments.

Commenting on his appointment, Rosenthal said: 'This is an exciting time to be joining TekCel ... I look forward to working with the company' talented staff as well as it's customers.' Peter Parker, TekCel's Chairman, added: 'Bob brings the perfect set of skills, experiences and capabilities to build TekCel into a premier supplier of laboratory products. We look forward to working closely with him to achieve this goal.'

TekCel is a privately held company, founded in 1998, and is a provider of sample management and liquid handling tools for drug discovery.

Awards

Accelerate Brain Cancer Cure announces Young Investigator awards

Accelerate Brain Cancer Cure (ABC2; http://www.abc2.org), a non-profit foundation founded in 2001, which aims to raise awareness of and accelerate therapies for brain cancer, has named three recipients of its inaugural Young Investigator Award. The three awardees are Duane Mitchell from Duke University Medical Center, Viviane Tabar from Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and Zhiliang Wang of the Burnham Institute. Each award provides US$150 000 over the course of three years and is intended to encourage young physicians and/or scientists to pursue a career and research in the field of neuro-oncology.

John Reher, Executive Director of ABC2, said: 'Our 2003 awardees are all excellent researchers¼and their projects are promising, exciting and fit well within the scope of the ABC2 focus.'

The three awardees are involved in distinct areas of brain tumour research. Wang's research is focused on developing small-molecule therapeutics for glioblastoma, whereas Mitchell is developing a dendritic cell vaccine for high-grade malignant astrocytomas. Tabar is studying a subpopulation of cancer cells within brain tumours that might be responsible for the initiation and maintenance of tumour growth.

People was written by *Chris Watson*