

New allergy testing system capable of handling thousands of blood samples

Development agreement covering Europe and the USA signed by Pharmacia Diagnostics and Japanese medical technology company Aloka

A new allergy testing system capable of handling up to 2,000 blood sample analyses per day is now to be developed by Pharmacia Diagnostics in partnership with the Japanese medical technology company Aloka.

Being able to run large volumes of automated allergy tests is becoming more and more important, in view of the growing incidence of allergies throughout the world. At the same time, ever-increasing pressure is bearing down on costs in health care.

The new system is based on Pharmacia's method of measuring, in blood samples, the content of antibodies (IgE) to various allergens that are found in the blood. The advantage of the blood sample method is that it is standardized, quantitative and produces an objective test result. The system is called UniCAP 1000 VLS (Very Large Systems). The instruments are to be developed in Japan, while the software and process technology will be produced at Pharmacia Diagnostic's facility in Uppsala, Sweden

"What makes UniCAP 1000 VLS special is that it enables large volumes of blood samples to be tested both faster and more efficiently. The collaboration with Aloka also means we will be able to draw on the company's extensive know-how in medical automation technology", says Magnus Lundberg, President, Pharmacia Diagnostics.

This year, Pharmacia Diagnostics and Aloka have already launched a similar system in Japan, Pharmacia Diagnostics' most important market with around 30 percent of the company's sales. Japan is also a special market in another way: blood tests using the method developed by Pharmacia is the clearly dominant method in that country.

"The new automated testing technology will allow us to further advance our market positions, especially in the USA and Europe. UniCAP 1000 VLS will also be launched at an early stage in both South Africa and Taiwan, as well as in Brazil", says Sture Segetorp, Head of Marketing at Pharmacia Diagnostics.

For more information, please contact:

Magnus Lundberg, President, Pharmacia Diagnostics, Mobile: (+46)-70-536 35 42, e-mail: magnus.lundberg@pharmacia.com

Sture Segetorp, Head of Marketing, Pharmacia Diagnostics, Mobile: (+46)-70-589 28 33, e-mail: sture.segetorp@pharmacia.com

Pharmacia Diagnostics AB is a subsidiary of the Pharmacia Group. The company holds a world leading position in allergy diagnostics *in vitro* (via blood samples) and also offers a number of diagnostic tests in the field of autoimmune disorders. Pharmacia Diagnostics has a total of around 1,000 employees, including 500 in Uppsala, Sweden. In 2000, the company had sales of approximately SEK 2 billion.