

Avalanche Announces Collaboration with Lions Eye Institute and Merck to Develop AVA-101

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Avalanche Biotechnologies, Inc. announced initiation of a collaboration with Lions Eye Institute, University of Western Australia to develop treatments for ocular diseases. The collaboration will initially focus on the development of AVA-101 for the treatment of wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Following a single injection, AVA-101 creates an Ocular BiofactoryTM that continuously secretes a therapeutic protein over an extended period, avoiding the need for frequent intraocular injections of recombinant anti-VEGF protein. Technology for the Ocular BiofactoryTM has been pioneered under the leadership of Elizabeth P. Rakoczy, Winthrop Professor of Molecular Ophthalmology at the Lions Eye Institute. Plans are underway for an initial clinical trial at Lions Eye under the leadership of Professor Rakoczy and clinical ophthalmologist Professor Ian J. Constable. The therapeutic protein is a potent inhibitor of vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF), a clinically validated target in wet AMD, exclusively licensed by Avalanche from Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp, formerly Merck & Co., Inc.