



Kynexis Launched to Advance Precision Therapeutics for Brain Diseases

- *Lead Candidate KYN-5356, a First-In-Class Small Molecule KAT-II Inhibitor Advancing Toward the Clinic for Cognitive Impairment Associated With Schizophrenia*

- *€57 Million Series A Led by Forbion*

- *Kees Been Joins as Chief Executive Officer and Jens Wendland, M.D., as Chief Medical Officer; Peter Høngaard Andersen, Operating Partner at Forbion, is Executive Chairman*

Naarden, The Netherlands – November 7, 2023 – Kynexis, a biotechnology company focused on precision therapeutics for brain diseases, launched today with €57 million in Series A financing led by Forbion, with participation from Ysios Capital and Sunstone Life Science Ventures. Kynexis will advance its lead therapeutic candidate, KYN-5356, a potential first-in-class KAT-II inhibitor for the treatment of cognitive impairment associated with schizophrenia (CIAS), toward clinical development.

“Cognitive impairment is a highly debilitating, major unmet medical need in schizophrenia, and having a medicine available for this condition would transform the schizophrenia treatment paradigm,” said Kees Been, Chief Executive Officer at Kynexis. “The scientific rationale for modulating the kynurenine pathway and the emerging human genetics in schizophrenia form the basis for our unique precision medicine approach to the development of KYN-5356.”

The KYN-5356 program builds on the seminal scientific discoveries of Professors Robert Schwarcz, Ph.D. at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, and Carol Tamminga, M.D. at the University of Texas UT Southwestern Medical Center. Dr. Schwarcz pioneered the study of the kynurenine pathway in the brain, which established kynurenine’s substantive role in cognition and in the pathophysiology of schizophrenia. Dr. Tamminga is a leading psychiatrist and neuroscientist known for her groundbreaking translational research in the field of psychosis, which has led to major insights into the mechanisms underlying schizophrenia and its associated genetics and biomarkers. Through the convergence of human genetics, biomarkers, and deep phenotyping, Kynexis is well-positioned to pursue a novel, precision psychiatry-based approach to develop KYN-5356 in CIAS. The candidate, KYN-5356, is a potent and highly selective KAT-II inhibitor licensed from Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma Corporation (MTPC). Under the terms of the agreement, Kynexis has an exclusive worldwide license from MTPC to develop and commercialize KYN-5356 worldwide.

The company, co-founded by Forbion and Ysios Capital, has assembled an accomplished leadership team with decades of experience in drug discovery and development for neuropsychiatric indications, including:

- Kees Been, joining as Chief Executive Officer of Kynexis from the Boston, Mass. office. Kees brings over 25 years of experience leading and growing CNS-focused companies and raising significant funds from major life-science investors to successfully advance companies from early-stage research to late-stage drug development.
- Jens Wendland, M.D., joining as Chief Medical Officer of Kynexis. With over 13 years of experience in neuropsychiatric and rare diseases, Jens successfully led global programs at Roche, Pfizer, Nestlé Health Science, and Takeda. He is a leading expert in leveraging human genetics for neuroscience drug discovery and development.
- Peter Høngaard Andersen, Dr.Med., serving as Executive Chair of Kynexis. Peter has a proven track record in advancing biotechnology companies, has held various leadership positions across multiple functions at global pharmaceutical companies (including Lundbeck and Novo Nordisk), and has co-founded several biotechnology companies.

“With our extensive experience and deep expertise in psychiatry, neurology, and drug discovery and development, we are excited to advance this first-in-class compound from MTPC to develop the first potential precision medicine for CIAS,” said Peter Høngaard Andersen, Operating Partner at Forbion and Executive Chair of Kynexis. “KYN-5356 is a potent, selective, and brain-penetrant KAT-II inhibitor that modulates kynurenine metabolism and is supported by a strong scientific rationale to address a significant unmet need for a large population of people with schizophrenia.”

“KYN-5356 was discovered and developed by the diligent, innovative work of our research group, and we believe it has immense potential to treat CIAS. Kynexis has a profound understanding of the kynurenine pathway in CIAS, and MTPC hopes Kynexis advances this asset to clinical development successfully, powered by their insights into genetic drivers of the condition and their well-conceived clinical development plan,” said Masao Nawano, Ph.D., Vice President, Head of Sohyaku, Innovative Research Division of MTPC. “This licensing deal strategically represents MTPC’s mission, ‘Creating hope for all facing illness.’ Access to healthcare is the key value of MTPC, to which we contribute by generating unique compounds to address unmet medical needs and provide clinical benefits.”

About Kynexis

Kynexis is advancing precision therapeutics for brain diseases by taking a biomarker-based approach to advance a potential first-in-class treatment for cognitive impairment associated with schizophrenia (CIAS). By harnessing large data to identify and stratify patients based on the underlying causal human biology of the disease, Kynexis is targeting KAT-II, a key enzyme in the kynurenine pathway. The company’s lead candidate, KYN-5356, is a first-in-class small molecule that is potent and highly selective for KAT-II. The Company also has a subsidiary in the United States, which is based in Cambridge, Mass. (Kynexis Therapeutics Inc.).

Media Contact:

Adam Silverstein

Scient PR

adam@scientpr.com