



Breaking News on Food & Beverage Development - North America

New ingredient targets satiety at lining of gut

By Hank Schultz, 27-Sep-2012

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A new line of financing will help Elcelyx Therapeutics further develop its satiety ingredient Lovidia, the company announced recently. Lovidia, a proprietary blend of GRAS ingredients, is aimed at the dietary supplement and functional foods markets.

Elcelyx's technology, dubbed Gut Sensory Modulators, works in a unique way. Unlike the makers of many other dietary ingredients that seek ways to get their ingredients into the blood as quickly and efficiently as possible, the company's goal for Lovidia is not to get into the blood at all. Rather, Lovidia's mix of ingredients (their identity is proprietary) aims to stimulate reactions at the gut-blood barrier, without crossing it.

"We're targeting chemoreceptors at the level of the gut endothelium. And those chemoreceptors are located on special cells that produce hormones that signal fullness and satiety but also aid in the metabolism of fuels," Alain Baron, MD, president and CEO of [Elcelyx Therapeutics](#) told NutraIngredients-USA.

"What we aim to do is to target these receptors in the categories of sweet, bitter and umami with dietary ingredients that were developed by the food industry. If you were to eat a meal you would have a 1X release of these hormones. By taking Lovidia and eating the same meal, you would have a 2X release. The only other way to get a 2X release is to eat twice as much," he said.

"Really what it does is to enhance the effect of food. We are leveraging a natural phenomenon."

Testing strategy

Dr. Baron and other members of the Elcelyx team came out of the biotech world, and also have a type-2 diabetes drug candidate under development. That pharmaceutical ethos has carried over in terms of the testing strategy. A prototype version of Lovidia (the final formulation is still being tweaked) showed excellent results in a 4-month proof-of-concept, double blind placebo controlled study that included 300 subjects.

"The proportion of subjects losing three to five percent of their body weight was three times higher for Lovidia than for placebo," Dr. Baron said.

"We are planning to have an optimized version of Lovidia product by the end of the year and enter a four month clinical trial and expect final results in Q3 of 2013. We plan to bring a product to market by the end of 2013 or early 2014."

The financing announced recently will go a long way toward helping Elcelyx bridge that gap. The company said it had secured \$4 million of a \$7 million extension of its Series B private equity financing. Existing investors Morgenthaler Ventures, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers and Technology Partners all participated in the extension. Founded in 2010, Elcelyx has to date raised a total of \$20 million.

"The global epidemics of diabetes and obesity compel us to identify novel approaches to these diseases. Our premier investors will help us execute our strategy to develop ultra-safe solutions to obesity-related metabolic disorders for both the consumer and pharmaceutical markets," Baron said.

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