

## ***NeuTec Pharma commences phase III trials for MRSA drug, Aurograb<sup>®</sup>***

**5 May 2004 – Manchester, UK:** *NeuTec Pharma plc* (“*NeuTec*”), the biopharmaceutical company targeting drug-resistant, life-threatening infections, announces that Aurograb<sup>®</sup>, which targets MRSA, the hospital “superbug”, has commenced a double-blind placebo-controlled phase III clinical trial. Eight centres are active in 3 countries and the first patients have now been recruited. The study will be carried out in a total of 35 centres in 6 European countries and will involve the recruitment of approximately 250 adult hospitalised patients with deep-seated staphylococcal infections. The trial will compare the effects of Aurograb<sup>®</sup> in combination with vancomycin versus vancomycin alone in the treatment of MRSA infection.

This latest trial follows an earlier phase IIb study which was completed in June 2003 and found the drug to be well tolerated and demonstrated a profile that supports likely activity against MRSA in man. Aurograb<sup>®</sup> has activity on its own against strains of MRSA, but when combined with vancomycin, the current “gold standard” treatment, is more effective than either drug used on its own. This activity is also evident in strains with partial resistance to vancomycin or linezolid. A recent American publication reports that fully resistant strains to vancomycin have been identified in the US.

Professor James Burnie, Chief Executive of *NeuTec*, said, “MRSA is an increasingly prevalent life-threatening disease which is currently poorly understood by the medical community. We are keen to advance our clinical trials in this area and are pleased to have commenced our Aurograb<sup>®</sup> phase III trials.”

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### **Notes to editors:**

***NeuTec Pharma plc*** is a biopharmaceutical company formed in 1997 specialising in the development of genetically recombinant antibodies, or “grabs”, for the treatment of life-threatening infections. In February 2002 the Company’s equity was admitted on the Alternative Investment Market (“AIM”) of the London Stock Exchange.

The development of *NeuTec*'s products differs from the traditional approach used by conventional pharmaceutical companies which screen numerous chemical compounds for activity against bacteria and fungi. Many of these compounds will be too toxic for human use. In contrast, *NeuTec* identifies naturally occurring potentially protective antibodies from patients who have recovered from bacterial and fungal infections and then uses these to generate “grabs” to treat these infections. As a result, these “grabs” are likely to be intrinsically safer than antibiotics.

*NeuTec's* two leading drug candidates are Mycograb®, which targets systemic candidiasis, and Aurograb®, which targets *Staphylococcus aureus* including methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (“MRSA”).

*NeuTec* uses its platform technology Fabtec® for the identification of new therapeutic antibody fragments. This technology is available for licensing.

**MRSA**, *Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus* is regarded as the hospital ‘superbug’ by virtue of its ability to spread and cause outbreaks with a high mortality rate of up to 60%. Fatal and non-fatal cases have risen 15-fold in the last decade. The number of cases in the UK has increased from 210 in 1993 to 5,309 in 2003. In America, the cost of sepsis, the infection of blood or other tissues by bacteria, causes an economic burden of nearly \$17 billion per year, where it is the 8<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death. In the UK it is estimated that the NHS spends around £1 billion per annum on hospital-acquired infections including MRSA.