

Basel, 15 July 1998

Roche sets up a Transplantation Research Foundation

Roche announced today, at 17th World Congress of The Transplantation Society in Montreal (Canada), the establishment of the „Roche Organ Transplant Research Foundation (ROTRF)", dedicated to improving outcomes for organ transplant patients. Roche has pledged 25 million Swiss Francs to the new, non-profit Foundation over the next 5 years, to be disbursed as grants to researchers around the world.

Roche chief executive officer, Franz B. Humer said: "There are some areas of this difficult and innovative field of medicine that cannot be readily addressed by the pharmaceutical industry alone, but need the collaboration of academia, practising physicians and industry. Such research is vital to achieve our ultimate aim of improving patients' care, treatment and quality of life."

The Chairman of the Foundation, Professor Phil Halloran said that one of the priority areas for funding was research aimed at improving the long-term survival of transplanted organs. Increased long-term graft survival would reduce the need for re-transplantation and cut the waiting period for first-time transplants.

Other areas of research which will attract funding from the Foundation include: ways of improving the tissue matching of organ donor and recipient; better techniques for preserving organs awaiting transplantation; and the induction of tolerance-conditioning of the immune system to accept a transplanted organ. Human cloning research will not be considered. All grant applications will be examined by the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Committee who will score them on scientific excellence, relevance to human solid organ transplantation and originality.

Roche markets two of the recent major advances in transplant immunosuppression. CellCept® which is integral to patient care following transplantation and Zenapax® the first humanised monoclonal antibody in this field of therapy. Both are non-nephrotoxic immunosuppressants which prevent transplant organ rejection and improve patient outcomes.

Roche, headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, is a world leader in research-based healthcare with business in pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, vitamins, and fragrances and flavours and orthopaedics. Roche discovers, develops and markets prescription drugs in key therapeutic areas such as diseases of the nervous system, virology, infectious diseases, oncology, cardiovascular diseases, inflammatory and autoimmune diseases, dermatology, metabolic disorders and respiratory diseases.

Further information is available at the Roche Organ Transplantation Research Foundations web page, WWW.ROTRF.ORG