

Basel, 1 June 2001

### **New hope for thousands of breast cancer patients in Japan: Herceptin launched today**

After its approval in 60 countries, breakthrough breast cancer drug Herceptin was launched today in Japan, where each year more than 34'000 women are diagnosed with the disease.

As well as increasing survival, Herceptin improves quality of life, has proven tolerability and almost none of the commonly observed side effects associated with chemotherapy. Herceptin has been shown to extend survival substantially in HER2-positive women with advanced breast cancer - compared to traditional chemotherapy alone.

The availability in Japan will add significantly to the already strong and dynamic sales of Herceptin world-wide (540 million Swiss Francs in 2000), since Japan, the world's second largest pharma market, offers one of the biggest potentials for this innovative drug.

Herceptin was approved in Japan on April 4, 2001. The cost of Herceptin will be covered by the Japanese health insurance organisation.

Herceptin is a milestone in the development of Roche's unique concept of Integrated Healthcare Solutions: The key determinant to receiving treatment with Herceptin is to be tested for HER2 status - if found HER2-positive, women are then eligible for the drug. Herceptin works by targeting the overactivity of HER2, a gene associated with aggressive cancer cell growth. Approximately 1 in 5 women with advanced breast cancer will be HER2 positive.

#### **About Herceptin**

Clinical trials have shown that careful selection of HER2-positive patients results in improvement in survival, quality of life and a better utilisation of clinical resources. The availability of Herceptin means HER2 testing is an essential part of breast cancer management today. This is a strong example of Roche's Integrated Health Care Solution's concept, as a focused diagnostic helps doctors select the right patients to treat with Herceptin.

Herceptin was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as a treatment for metastatic breast cancer in September 1998. Since then, marketing authorisation has been granted in a number of other countries including the European Union, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Israel, and Switzerland. Regulatory filings have been made by Roche for the drug in other countries worldwide. Herceptin was discovered and developed by Genentech, a leading US biotechnology company in which Roche holds a majority stake. In July 1998, Genentech granted Roche exclusive marketing rights for Herceptin outside the USA.

#### **Roche in oncology**

Roche is a world leader in oncology. Its franchise comprises products such as Xeloda (breast cancer and colorectal cancer), Herceptin (breast cancer), MabThera (non-Hodgkin's lymphoma), NeoRecormon (anemia in cancer patients), Roferon-A (leukemia, Kaposi's sarcoma, malignant melanoma), Bondronat (tumour-induced hypercalcemia), Furtulon (malignant tumours, only available in Japan) and the anti-emetic drug Kytril (used in chemotherapy induced emesis). These medicines along with a number of diagnostics tests have made Roche one of the industry's most innovative and comprehensive companies in the field of oncology.

#### **About Roche**

Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Roche is one of the world's leading research-oriented healthcare groups in the fields of pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, and vitamins. Roche's innovative products and services address prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases, thus enhancing people's well-being and quality of life.

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