



VentureBeat

Arca Discovery raises \$18M for cardiovascular drug

By David Hamilton 06.12.07

Arca Discovery, a Denver developer of a next-generation beta blocker for heart failure, raised \$18 million in a second funding round. (The release is out, but not yet available on the Web.) The round was led by Skyline Ventures and joined by Interwest Partners, Atlas Ventures, Boulder Ventures and the Peierls Foundation.

Later this year, Arca plans to file for FDA approval of bucindolol, a failed beta-blocker designed to lower heart rate and blood pressure in patients with congestive heart failure. In 1999, bucindolol — then under development by Incara Pharmaceuticals — failed a major clinical trial conducted by the VA and the NIH.

Arca, which acquired the drug in 2003 from a joint venture of Incara and Indevus Pharmaceuticals, has worked to salvage the drug by identifying two genetic variants that appear to identify people most likely to respond to it. It has partnered with LabCorp to develop a genetic-diagnostic test that will identify patients with those genetic variants.

Few drugs are currently marketed with such tests, although experts predict that such “personalized medicine” will be much more common in the future. One of the major exceptions at the moment is Genentech’s breast-cancer drug Herceptin, which was approved a decade ago with a test that can identify the 25 percent to 30 percent of women whose tumors are most likely to respond to the drug.

Tagged inv: Boulder Ventures, inv:Atlas Ventures, inv:Interwest Partners, inv:Peierls Foundation, inv:Skyline Ventures