

TETRA-HD Press Release

Huntington Study Group to Investigate Treatment for Chorea in Huntington's Disease

August 28, 2003...The Huntington Study Group (HSG), in collaboration with Prestwick Pharmaceuticals, announced plans to launch a multi-center, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial of the drug tetrabenazine in people with manifest Huntington's disease who have prominent involuntary (chorea) movements. The study will enroll at least 72 participants throughout the United States. The main objective of the trial is to determine whether tetrabenazine and at what dosage is beneficial for improving chorea and other excessive, involuntary movements.

Chorea is a condition in which involuntary, uncontrolled movements disrupt normal movement or posture. Initially attributed to restlessness, chorea affects the majority of people with Huntington's disease.

Tetrabenazine is not currently available by prescription in the United States. The medication has been approved in Europe and other countries and has been used in select United States centers as an investigational drug for the treatment of Huntington's chorea and other movement disorders.

Huntington's disease is an inherited neurodegenerative disease characterized by motor, cognitive and psychiatric symptoms. While there are some medications to help alleviate some of the disease symptoms, there is no known cure or medication to help slow the progression. Approximately 30,000 Americans suffer from Huntington's, and 150,000 are potentially at risk for developing the disease.

The study, called "TETRA-HD", is being organized and conducted by the Huntington Study Group (HSG), a non-profit, cooperative group of Huntington's disease experts from medical centers in North America, Europe and Australia who are dedicated to improving treatment for persons affected by Huntington's disease. Frederick Marshall, Assistant Professor of Neurology, and Principal Investigator for the TETRA-HD trial says, "I am very enthusiastic about this opportunity to evaluate tetrabenazine's effect in Huntington's disease. The drug may prove a valuable addition to our current limited options for symptomatic treatment of chorea." Ira Shoulson, MD, Professor of Neurology, Pharmacology and Medicine, and Chair of the Huntington Study Group has been instrumental in carrying out clinical research trials in Huntington's disease. He points out "We are hopeful that tetrabenazine is a useful and practical alternative for reducing an unpleasant symptom for those affected by HD. The TETRA-HD study is critical for generating the data to support tetrabenazine as treatment for an unpleasant and often disabling feature of HD." People who have been diagnosed with manifest Huntington's disease may be eligible to participate in the study. For more information, call the Huntington Study Group at 800-487-7671, or visit the HSG website at www.Huntington-Study-Group.org.

Contact: Leslie Briner
800-487-7671
Leslie.Briner@CTCC.Rochester.Edu