

The SOLNATIDE Project

PRESS RELEASE

New therapeutic peptide *solnatide* to reduce and alleviate intensive care time for COVID-19 patients

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Finding effective treatment measures for COVID-19 patients is as important as developing vaccines to prevent the spread of the virus which has already claimed the lives of over 2 million people globally. Austrian biotech company APEPTICO, together with four partners, received EU H2020 funding to develop and test an innovative peptide-based drug called *solnatide* to treat lung conditions resulting from COVID-19. Three clinical studies have proven the beneficial effects and safety of *solnatide* in treating respiratory conditions previous to COVID-19 and the H2020 SOLNATIDE project finances trials with COVID-19 patients.

Patients treated with *solnatide* demonstrated earlier clearance of liquids in the lungs, leading to better oxygenation, reducing the need for mechanical ventilation, allowing earlier extubating (removal of the tube after artificial ventilation) and, consequently, reduced time in intensive care. *Solnatide* is in use in Austria and Italy within Compassionate Use Programs for the acute treatment of severe COVID-19 patients based on Approval by National Authorities.

Targeted COVID-19 treatments will save lives

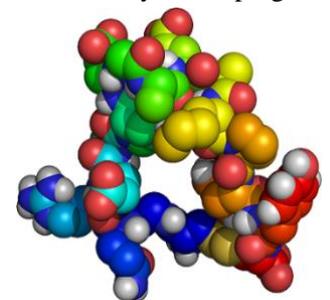
In many countries, the deciding factor in implementing lockdown measures has revolved around prioritising patients in need of emergency intensive care treatment. The capacities of national intensive care units (ICU) risk being depleted quickly as infections rise, leaving thousands without intensive care, or treatment.

Many severely affected COVID-19 patients are in need of mechanical ventilation when they start to suffer from acute respiratory failure and pulmonary permeability oedema (PPO) and thus, require immediate intensive care. About one third of these patients further develop the life-threatening Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS) which results in a very high mortality rate if treated inadequately.

To date, no medicine worldwide has been approved for the therapeutic treatment of PPO or ARDS. As part of the EU H2020 programme to develop treatments, APEPTICO and the EU-funded SOLNATIDE project consortium are currently developing and clinically testing the innovative *solnatide* peptide-based therapy.

Attacking the attacker

One viable pathway for the response to the COVID-19 pandemic is a treatment approach using beneficial therapeutic peptides such as *solnatide*, a well-tolerated, chemically manufactured structure of a human protein (see graphic). Since it can be inhaled as an aerosol into the patients' lungs, it treats the damaged pulmonary tissue directly so that patients can breathe easier. This extremely specialised mechanism is highly effective for treating lung diseases such as ARDS, pneumonia and sepsis, as well as other lung dysfunctions as shown in one Phase I- and two Phase II clinical studies.



3D peptide structure ((c) APEPTICO)

European innovation power

The main goal of the H2020 SOLNATIDE project is to demonstrate safety, tolerability and clinical efficacy of *solnatide* in treatment of COVID-19 patients. SOLNATIDE scientific coordinator, Professor Dr. Bernhard Fischer said “APEPTICO is delighted to see that many positive effects of *solnatide* emerge. Although we only just finished the part of the H2020 SOLNATIDE project, this is a fantastic outlook for what is to come. Based on preliminary results, we are convinced that *solnatide* can make a massive impact in the future. Of course, COVID-19 patients are our main focus at the moment but *solnatide* has the potential to also help patients with other related lung diseases such as ARDS.”



Scientific coordinator Bernhard Fischer with APEPTICO researcher ((c) APEPTICO)

The project coordinator, Dr. Stephen Webb (RTDS Group) added: “The H2020 SOLNATIDE project is a great example of European innovation power. The *solnatide* product development is progressing exceptionally well and the next clinical study stages are already underway. Of course, one of our most prominent highlights was treating an Austrian patient earlier this year with *solnatide* via the Compassionate Use Program before a lung transplant was performed. We are looking forward to the second publication and an upcoming public deliverable to sharing our latest project findings.”



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Find out more about *solnatide* and the SOLNATIDE project

SOLNATIDE project website (<https://www.solnatide.eu/>)
SOLNATIDE communication materials (<https://www.solnatide.eu/communication-materials/>)

Article on lung transplant patient treatment with *solnatide* in “The Lancet”
([https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(20\)30361-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(20)30361-1/fulltext))
Information on Compassionate Use Program for *solnatide* (http://apeptico.com/index-solnatide_compassionate_use_program)

First project publication by APEPTICO on incidence of ARDS and outcomes in hospitalized patients with COVID-19 published in “Critical Care” journal (<https://ccforum.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13054-020-03240-7>)

SOLNATIDE project consortium partners

Five organisations from four countries make up the project consortium:

- RTDS Association (www.rtds-group.com), Austria – Project coordinator, Project & Communication Management
- APEPTICO Forschung und Entwicklung GmbH (<http://apeptico.com/>), Austria – Scientific Coordinator
- BCN Peptides SA (<http://www.bcnpeptides.com/>), Spain
- Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich (LMU) University Hospital (<https://www.lmu-klinikum.de/>), Department of Anesthesiology, Germany
- OPIS SRL (<https://opis-europe.com/en>), Italy

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Overview of EU research approaches against the COVID-19 pandemic

EU responses to the pandemic – January to September 2020

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/research_and_innovation/research_by_area/documents/ec_rtd_coronavirus-research-projects-overview.pdf

EU innovations in COVID-19 treatment - Overview of EU research projects focussing on COVID-19 treatments

https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/health-research-and-innovation/coronavirus-research-and-innovation/treatments_en

The EU COVID-19 research manifesto - SOLNATIDE partners have signed the EU COVID-19 manifesto

https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/health-research-and-innovation/coronavirus-research-and-innovation/covid-research-manifesto_en