

## **Merrion Pharmaceuticals is issued a key United States patent**

DUBLIN, IRELAND, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010 - Merrion Pharmaceuticals plc (IEX:MERR), an international specialty pharmaceutical company, today announced the issuance of United States Patent No. 7,658,938, "Solid Oral Dosage Form Containing an Enhancer." This patent covers the Company's GIPET® enhancer system used with the bisphosphonate class of drugs. A patent covering the GIPET technology including its use with bisphosphonates has been previously granted in Europe.

Mr John Lynch, Merrion's Chief Executive Officer commented "This is a significant development for Merrion's GIPET technology. The continued growth of our patent estate, further establishes us as one of the leading companies in this space."

"Merrion's GIPET technology has been validated in several products, demonstrating that we deliver real value to patients and healthcare providers. For example, Orazol™, our lead pipeline product, showed excellent results in a Phase IIb study published at last year's meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). This US patent is another step towards achieving our overall vision."

The enhancers covered by the patent have the ability to enhance oral absorption many fold compared to standard formulations. This technology can therefore be used to enable oral (tablet) administration of compounds that are normally administered only as injectables, usually in hospital or clinic settings. Efficacy, safety and side effect profiles of drugs can be improved substantially using this delivery technology. In addition the new products developed have potential for very significant Quality of Life improvements for patients and substantial economic improvements for hard pressed healthcare systems.

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## **About Merrion:**

Merrion Pharmaceuticals ([www.merrionpharma.com](http://www.merrionpharma.com)) is engaged in the development of oral forms (tablets/capsules) of drugs that have poor absorption and are generally given by injection. Merrion was established in 2003 to commercialize various technologies acquired from Elan Corporation, plc. Merrion Pharmaceutical's patented drug delivery technologies increase bioavailability, by improving absorption in the gastrointestinal tract, of drugs that are otherwise poorly absorbed. This can provide substantial benefit in patient convenience and safety, and might also provide enhanced drug efficacy. Merrion utilizes its technology to develop new oral drugs in two ways; it develops its own proprietary drugs using GIPET and partners with other pharmaceutical companies in developing oral GIPET formulations of their products. Merrion is listed at the Dublin Stock Exchange under the symbol MERR.

- Orazol™ (MER-101) is an oral bisphosphonate for oncology indications currently in Phase 2 development. This product aims to allow cancer patients with bone metastases to take a weekly tablet to get the gold standard treatment in this area, rather than an IV infusion.

## **About GIPET®: Gastrointestinal Permeation Enhancement Technology**

GIPET's unique approach allows drugs that currently can only be given parenterally (injectable) to be converted into oral (tablet/capsule) forms, as well as improving the absorption of current oral drugs. GIPET uses specifically designed oral formulations of patented absorption enhancers which activate micelle formation facilitating transport of drug and substantially increasing absorption with good reproducibility and a strong safety profile.

In a database comprising more than 30 compounds having poor permeability, GIPET has shown the ability to improve their absorption by as much as 200 times, achieving excellent intersubject reproducibility with a positive safety database. Moreover, this database covers a wide range of compounds with varying physiochemical properties and molecular weights. This includes traditional small molecules as well as biopharmaceutical peptides and proteins, making GIPET a platform technology with very broad applicability.