

Biotech company's research could help people affected by obesity

August 12 2015

A Purdue University alumni scientist and entrepreneur, along with researchers at the University of Pennsylvania and Skidmore College, are raising funds to further test and develop compounds that could hold promise in treating people who are extremely overweight.

Purdue alumnus Milad Alucozai is co-founder and [chief operating officer](#) of Symmetry Therapeutics Inc., which is commercializing patented research developed by co-founders Jon Brestoff Parker and Thomas H. Reynolds. Parker is a Skidmore alumnus who earned his Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, where he will complete his M.D. in May 2016. Reynolds is associate professor of health and exercise sciences at Skidmore and has received grants from the National Institutes of Health in the area of insulin action and metabolism.

Parker said obesity affects one in three American adults and one in six American children. It costs the country more than \$200 billion in [health care costs](#) annually and increases the risk of developing, and could make people susceptible, to other diseases including various cancers, diabetes and heart disease.

"Lifestyle changes alone may not be enough for some people, and biological factors need to be addressed to maximize the likelihood of a successful [weight loss program](#)," he said. "Symmetry's belief is that the best way to tackle obesity is a combination of lifestyle changes plus effective medical therapy."

Symmetry Therapeutics has developed SYM401, the company's lead compound, to determine whether it could affect Type 2 diabetes in mice.

"In the span of a month, mice with pre-existing obesity lost 20 percent of their body weight and about 50 percent of their fat mass," said Reynolds, the company's chief scientific officer.

The company has been issued three U.S. patents and has established proof-of-principle. Alucozai said the company now faces several development steps.

"Our short-term goals are to expand our pre-clinical testing and advance to [clinical trials](#) with our lead compound within a few years," he said. "If we receive approvals from the FDA, it positions us to complete Phase I and II clinical trials shortly after that."

Symmetry Therapeutics, which has been self-funded by the co-founders, has launched a campaign on Indiegogo to complete development steps. The campaign can be found at igg.me/at/symmetry. Alucozai said the campaign will play an important role in the company's growth.

"The more money that supporters can donate to the campaign, the faster Symmetry Therapeutics can look to go into clinical trials," he said. "To encourage supporters, we are partnering with Dr. Paul Arciero, DPE, a Purdue alumnus and tenured professor at Skidmore College who is known as Dr. Paul on multiple blogs and television programs. He and Indiana-based Actahealth LLC will provide supporters with research-based tools and resources to empower healthy living."

Provided by Purdue University

Citation: Biotech company's research could help people affected by obesity (2015, August 12)

retrieved 4 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-08-biotech-company-people-affected-obesity.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.