

## ASX Announcement and Media Release

4 September 2003

SciGen Limited

### SciGen Officially Launches New Hepatitis B Vaccine in Hong Kong

SciGen Limited ("SciGen") held a very successful Medical Symposium on 3 September 2003 to officially launch **Sci-B-Vac™** its new 3<sup>rd</sup> generation mammalian cell-derived Hepatitis B vaccine in Hong Kong. This new Hepatitis B vaccine aims to control the spread of the Hepatitis B disease in Hong Kong, and thereby reduce its associated morbidity and mortality. Chronic Hepatitis B infection can cause liver cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Keynote speakers at the Symposium included internationally renowned liver disease specialist Professor Daniel Shouval (Director of Medicine Hadassah Hebrew University Israel and Director of the Liver Unit at the Hadassah University Hospital, Jerusalem and member of SciGen's Scientific Advisory Board) and Professor George Lau Senior Lecturer in Liver Disease University of Hong Kong. The Symposium was held under the auspices and chaired by the respective presidents of the Hong Kong Medical Association of the Hong Kong Association and the Study of Liver Diseases.

Over 300 medical practitioners attended the Symposium- almost 100% of acceptances. The Symposium was followed by a very successful media conference, with in excess of 20 media representatives in attendance.

Mr Mark Compton, Managing Director and CEO of SciGen said that "**Sci-B-Vac™** is the principal product in SciGen's portfolio and that the official launch in Hong Kong is further evidence of SciGen's ability to roll products out across the Asia Pacific region".

The incidence of Hepatitis B in Hong Kong is high, at 8-10%. Prevention through vaccination is the only effective medical measure available to control its spread. Considerable interest has been shown by the medical and general communities in this new vaccine.

SciGen has also now submitted its registration dossier for **Sci-B-Vac™** for approval in Australia, New Zealand and India. Preparation of Submissions in other countries is underway.

SciGen already generates sales from its recombinant human growth hormone (**SciTropin™**) and its third generation Hepatitis B vaccine (**Sci-B-Vac™**) in a number of countries in the Asia Pacific region using its own sales and marketing infrastructure. SciGen has offices and sales teams in Singapore, Australia, Philippines, Hong Kong,

Korea and Vietnam with strategic partners in India, Indonesia, Poland, US and the Netherlands.

## About SciGen

SciGen Ltd is a progressive biotechnology/biopharmaceutical company involved in co-developing and marketing genetically engineered biopharmaceutical products for human healthcare. SciGen focuses in the areas of gastroenterology, endocrinology and immunology. Its product portfolio includes vaccines and therapeutics.

SciGen has acquired the rights to manufacture, distribute and market biopharmaceutical products under exclusive licensing arrangements. SciGen's portfolio currently includes proprietary biotechnology-derived products, and biogeneric products, which allows for faster entry into the market, as the biogeneric products have undergone much of the clinical development and trials required to bring new drugs to market. This minimises the risks associated with early stage product development. SciGen currently undertakes R&D activities in collaboration with strategic partners and institutions.

SciGen's major strength lies in its ability to recognise the potential of new products in their early stages of development. Through joint collaboration with its strategic partners, SciGen uses its extensive expertise in regulatory and clinical environments, in conjunction with marketing and promotional infrastructure, to bring to market products which will have significant long-term benefit.

SciGen's business was established in 1988. SciGen is a Singaporean biotechnology company, publicly listed on the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX code SIE). SciGen's headquarters is in Singapore and it also has offices in Australia, USA, Korea, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Philippines.

**=====ENDS=====**

## Media enquiries

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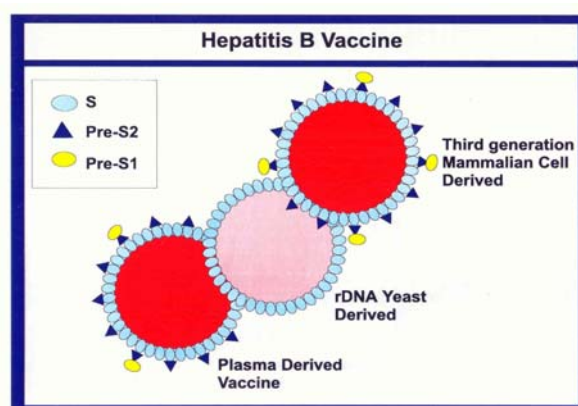
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## How Sci-B-Vac™ works

**Sci-B-Vac™** is a third generation vaccine, derived by genetically modifying the Chinese hamster ovary cells with DNA sequences coding for the three surface proteins of the Hepatitis B virus (HBV). These contain the S, pre-S<sub>1</sub> and pre-S<sub>2</sub> epitopes, which act as markers on the surface of the HBV. Therefore **Sci-B-Vac™** resembles the authentic virus, without containing the infective DNA. When the vaccine is injected into a patient, the patient's immune system recognises the S, pre-S<sub>1</sub> and pre-S<sub>2</sub> epitopes and produces antibodies specific for the HBV. These antibodies remain in the body, and immunise the patient against future infections by the virus.

**Sci-B-Vac™** is superior to other Hepatitis B vaccines. The commonly used yeast-derived vaccine has only the S epitope. In comparison **Sci-B-Vac™** has the S, pre-S<sub>1</sub> and pre-S<sub>2</sub> epitopes. Research shows that the presence of these three epitopes in a vaccine will stimulate a high cellular response and increase the antibody levels. These antibodies promote viral clearance and prevent hepatocyte (liver cell) binding. The overall result is a vaccine that is more immunogenic and efficient.

In addition, as **Sci-B-Vac™** contains all three epitopes, it will overcome cases where patients' immune systems may not respond to the S antigen alone. Another commonly used vaccine is the plasma-derived vaccine. While this



type of vaccine contains the three epitopes, it also contains disease-causing DNA viral material, which may compromise the vaccine's safety. As **Sci-B-Vac™** is not derived from plasma, it does not have this problem.

### Clinical Benefits of Sci-B-Vac™

**Sci-B-Vac™** has a number of clinical advantages over current Hepatitis B vaccines, including:

- Faster onset of action - **Sci-B-Vac™** shows earlier seroconversion (presence of antibodies in the patient) and seroprotection (having sufficient antibodies present to protect the patient from the disease)
- Higher level of Hepatitis B antibodies
- Highly immunogenic and effective at low doses
- Offers protection to neonates (newborns) whose mothers are HBV carriers

With these superior characteristics, **Sci-B-Vac™** is set to make a positive impact upon the prevention of the Hepatitis B in the Asia Pacific region.