(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
8 May 2003 (08.05.2003)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2003/038112 A3

(51) International Patent Classification[7]: A01N 37/18, 43/04, 63/00, A61K 31/70, 38/00, 38/31, 48/00, C07K 16/00, 17/00, 5/00, 7/00

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/US2002/034275

(22) International Filing Date: 25 October 2002 (25.10.2002)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/357,808 26 October 2001 (26.10.2001) US

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(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:
— *with international search report*
— *with amended claims and statement*

(88) Date of publication of the international search report:
6 November 2003

Date of publication of the amended claims and statement:
8 April 2004

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

WO 2003/038112 A3

(54) Title: A COMPOSITION AND METHOD TO ALTER LEAN BODY MASS AND BONE PROPERTIES IN A SUBJECT

(57) Abstract: The present invention pertains to a method for decreasing the body fat proportion, increasing lean body mass ("LBM"), increasing bone density, or improving the rate of bone healing, or all, of a subject. Overall, the embodiments of the invention can be accomplished by delivering a heterologous nucleic acid sequence encoding GHRH or functional biological equivalent thereof into the cells of the subject and allowing expression of the encoded gene to occur while the modified cells are within the subject. For instance, when such a nucleic acid sequence is delivered into the specific cells of the subject tissue specific constitutive expression is achieved. Furthermore, external regulation of the GHRH or functional biological equivalent thereof gene can be accomplished by utilizing inducible promoters that are regulated by molecular switch molecules, which are given to the subject. The preferred method to deliver the constitutive or inducible nucleic acid encoding sequences of GHRH or the functional biological equivalents thereof is directly into the cells of the subject by the process of *in vivo* electroporation. A decrease the body fat proportion and an increase in lean body mass ("LBM"), or both of a subject is achieved by the delivery of GHRH or functional biological equivalent thereof as described herein by into the subject as recombinant proteins. In addition, an increase in bone density and improvement in the rate of bone healing is also achieved.