

## OncoMethylome's Biomarkers Demonstrate Good Performance in Detecting Colorectal Cancer in Blood

**Liege (Belgium)** – November 19, 2007, 8:00am CET – OncoMethylome Sciences (Euronext Brussels: ONCOB, Euronext Amsterdam: ONCOA) announced positive clinical results from its colorectal cancer screening program. Interim data from clinical trials demonstrated promising performance characteristics for OncoMethylome's blood-based colorectal cancer screening test.

The new clinical trial data, which were co-authored with OncoMethylome's collaborators from Maastricht University and presented at the *AACR Advances in Colon Cancer Research* conference, showed that a panel of methylation markers detected colorectal cancer in blood samples collected from trial participants with 74% sensitivity and 92% specificity. In other words, the blood test correctly detected 74% of colon cancers, and it correctly identified, as non-cancerous, 92% of controls collected from age-appropriate people. The test's performance remained high, above 70% sensitivity, even when detecting early stage cancer.

"We are very proud of the progress we have made with our colorectal cancer program this year. Both our stool and blood screening tests showed very promising performance in recently published clinical trials. While our stool test remains the more accurate of the two, our blood test has the advantage of being easier to administer. We are pleased with the initial performance of our markers in blood samples and will now proceed with optimizing the blood test. Our intention is to provide both of these valuable tests to the medical community", commented Herman Spolders, Chief Executive Officer of OncoMethylome. "Currently fewer than 50% of age-appropriate people get screened for colorectal cancer, largely due to a lack of non-invasive screening tests that are convenient and accurate. Our simple, yet accurate, stool and blood tests have the potential to fill this missing void."

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death in the US and Europe with over 250,000 deaths annually. Colorectal cancer develops slowly over years but often without symptoms during its early stages. Detected early, however, colorectal cancer is highly treatable. These characteristics highlight the need for screening age-appropriate, asymptomatic individuals for colorectal cancer. Therefore, the goal of OncoMethylome's colorectal cancer program is to develop accurate, non-invasive, and user-friendly tests that are appropriate for population screening.

The published data is based on blood collected from the first 317 participants in ongoing clinical trials that are designed to validate OncoMethylome's stool and blood tests for colorectal cancer.

To download this press release as a PDF, click here: [Press Release PDF](#)

To download clinical data presented at the *AACR Advances in Colon Cancer Research* conference, click here: [Clinical Data PDF](#)

### About Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer is a very common illness with more than 900,000 new cases and 500,000 deaths recorded worldwide each year. Colorectal cancer is best treatable if diagnosed early; however, today, fewer than 40% of colorectal cancers are detected early. US Department of

Health estimates that 50 to 60 percent of deaths from colorectal cancer could be prevented if everyone above the age of 50 were screened regularly. In Europe and US, there are over 200 million people over the age of 50 who would benefit from regular screening for colorectal cancer. OncoMethylome is developing sensitive and non-invasive stool and blood screening tests for this disease.

#### **About Methylation and Methylation Markers**

Methylation is a natural control mechanism that regulates gene expression in DNA. Abnormal methylation of certain genes, such as tumor suppressor genes, can silence gene expression and is associated with cancer development. Genes, whose methylation is linked to cancer, are called methylation markers. OncoMethylome owns proprietary technology that is highly sensitive and capable of detecting methylation markers, and thereby cancer, even in early stages of cancer development. In the case of colorectal cancer, this technology identifies methylation markers that have been shown to be associated with colorectal cancer.

#### **About OncoMethylome Sciences**

OncoMethylome Sciences (Euronext Brussels: ONCOB; Euronext Amsterdam: ONCOA) is a molecular diagnostics company developing gene methylation tests to assist physicians in effectively detecting and treating cancer. Specifically, the company's tests are designed to help the physician (i) accurately detect cancer in early stages of cancer development, (ii) predict a patient's response to drug therapy, and (iii) predict the likelihood of cancer recurrence.

OncoMethylome boasts a broad product development pipeline consisting of ten products and a solid partnering record. The company collaborates with leading international molecular oncology research centers, such as The Johns Hopkins University, and has a number of commercial and collaborative partnerships with Veridex LLC, a Johnson & Johnson company, Schering-Plough Corp., Millipore Corporation's BioScience Division, and EXACT Sciences Corp. OncoMethylome's products are based on methylation technology invented by Johns Hopkins University (USA).

Established in January 2003, OncoMethylome has offices in Liege and Leuven (Belgium), in Durham, NC (USA), and in Amsterdam (the Netherlands).

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