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BiPar Sciences developing cancer-killer

Emerging Tech winner: Biotechnology

Silicon Valley / San Jose Business Journal - by [Lisa Sibley](#)

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BiPar Sciences Inc. President and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Hoyoung Huh said his company has developed a cancer therapy drug that is showing promise against an aggressive strain of the disease. This is why the company earned the winner spot for biotechnology.

The drug, which is in Phase 2 testing, has the potential to be a first-in-class treatment for multiple tumors, including a quickly progressing form of the disease — triple-negative breast cancer — as well as ovarian cancer and other malignancies.

“We are lean, we are young, and we are passionate about our products,” said Huh, a speaker at the **2008 BayBio Pantheon awards ceremony** on Nov. 13.

The drug identified as BSI-201 provides a targeted approach to treating solid tumors by preventing cancer cells from repairing damaged DNA. This ultimately causes the cancer cells to die. Tumors often have damaged DNA, which is how the tumor can grow, Huh said. In the case of triple-negative breast cancer, the disease can progress very rapidly. He added that the drug also has no side effects and stays in the body longer than its competitors — days versus hours.

About 10 percent to 20 percent of all breast cancers are triple negative, he said. The disease is most common in poor, black or Hispanic women younger than age 40.

“This is a patient setting where there isn’t any standard of care that can treat the disease,” Huh said.

If the drug development is successful, Huh said it has a potential market impact comparable to that of Herceptin, one of **Genentech Inc.**’s top-selling drugs. Herceptin treats a type of breast cancer with tumors that have too much of a certain protein.

Herceptin sales in the third quarter of 2008 were \$368 million, a 15 percent increase over the same three months in 2007. Huh said the drug brings in about \$2 billion a year globally.



BiPar Sciences Inc. executive vice president of development Barry M. Sherman, left, and CEO Hoyoung Huh are working on a drug that prevents cancer cells from repairing damaged DNA.

BiPar is keeping its cash burn-rate down, Huh said, spending about \$15 million mostly on clinical trials. The company also outsources its manufacturing and IT needs and collaborates with academic institutions like **Stanford University** for access to the best thinking.

Investors include Domain Associates LLC, Canaan Partners, Vulcan Capital, PolyTechnos Venture-Partners, Quantum Technology Partners and Asset Management Co.

BiPar, with a veteran team of former Genentech and Amgen Inc. employees, has raised \$53 million to date through two rounds of funding. Huh is hoping that the initial public offering market opens up, or a merger and acquisition could be considered. The preferred path would be an IPO.

“We’d love to be involved in creating the next Genentech,” he said.