



Conventional (left) vs. Silence's "AtuRNAi" technology. AtuRNAi molecules are allegedly more stable and can be produced at a lower price.

protein kinase C-related molecule involved in cancer growth and metastasis formation. Silence's siRNA molecules ("AtuRNAi") are chemically modified to result in blunt-ended, stabilized molecules (see picture), achieving a higher stability against nuclease degradation, a longer half-life and lower manufacturing costs.

According to Chief Executive Officer Iain Ross, the big challenge, however, is "to deliver the drug". As a form of "medical premiere", Silence Therapeutics intends to give Atu027 as an infusion rather than place it directly onto the treatment area, Ross told *Reuters*. "Infusion is a major step forward", he added. -wk-

Big Pharma shines in an unnecessary ranking

Punchy House Numbers

Absurd rankings are a surefire way to hit the headlines. The Climate Counts (CC) organisation from Manchester, New Hampshire, a "nonprofit effort to bring consumers and companies together in the fight against global climate change", recently reached an interim victory in the "do-gooders fight for a better climate" category. CC used a 0-to-100 point scale and 22 criteria to determine "if companies have measured their climate footprint, supported progressive climate legislation, publicly disclosed their climate actions", and worked within similar meaningless parameters.

And the winner was... Big Pharma! The whole sector outpaced every other industry (such as airlines, the media and hotels) in sustainability, according to CC's environmental "score-card" (see below), demonstrating that – please forgive the sarcasm – the pharmaceutical industry has at least the best marketing staff and the best spin-doctors. If the CC's result is to be believed, AstraZeneca (score 76) behaves four times better when it comes to the Earth's climate than Amgen (score 20). Sounds conclusive, doesn't it?

CC's concluding statement was the ultimate in ass kicking: "next, drugmakers need to focus on cutting their emissions." Hugh, the climate experts from New Hampshire have spoken! -wk-

Pharmaceuticals			
Sector			
AstraZeneca	76	Johnson & Johnson	75
Baxter International	66	GlaxoSmithKline	60
Pfizer	60	Schering-Plough	60
Genentech	58	Roche	58
Bristol-Myers Squibb	57	Abbott Laboratories	56
Novartis	55	Eli Lilly	52
Merck & Co.	51	Sanofi-Aventis	50
Wyeth	36	Amgen	20