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**Angiotensin
 Therapeutics Inc.**

Angiotensin Therapeutics Inc. is using a Novel Variant of the ACE2 Enzyme to develop a Treatment for Kidney Disease and COVID-19



Dr. Daniel Batlle
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Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Dr. Batlle, what is the goal behind Angiotensin Therapeutics?

Dr. Batlle: The main purpose is to commercialize a protein, or a series of proteins, that my laboratory at Northwestern University in Chicago was able to bioengineer for therapeutic purposes. The main purpose was to develop this protein to treat kidney disease, but we also found out when the pandemic started, that variants of our soluble ACE2 protein could be useful for COVID 19, and accordingly we focused on testing it for COVID using preclinical models. We have a recent publication that shows how effective the protein can be.

CEOCFO: Why or how is the protein good for COVID as well as kidney? What is the relationship there?

Dr. Batlle: There are 2 independent actions. The protein is a variant of a natural enzyme called Angiotensin Converting Enzyme 2 (ACE2), that just by virtue of this enzyme activity it helps to metabolize peptides like Angiotensin 2 that are not desirable when they accumulate in kidney disease. That was the original idea, give more of this variant of ACE2 to help metabolize Angiotensin 2 by the kidneys as a way to provide kidney protection.

For the second indication, it turns out that this natural protein is the main receptor for SARS-COV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The idea is to give enough of this protein, that will act as a decoy, and will intercept the virus from entering the cells by binding to the natural ACE2, the protein that is present in the cell membrane of the majority of

cells in the lungs and the kidneys and other cells. These findings were recently published in the [Journal of Nephrology - "A Novel Soluble ACE2 Protein Provides Lung and Kidney Protection in Mice Susceptible to Lethal SARS-CoV-2 Infection"](#).

CEO CFO: *Why does it work? Do we know why?*

Dr. Battle: It is a decoy type of mechanism, which means that the virus has to make a choice between going to the natural ACE2 receptor in the cell membrane, or interact and thus being intercepted, by the soluble ACE2 that we give therapeutically.

CEO CFO: *Where are you in the process of reviewing or moving forward with what you have found?*

Dr. Battle: I think that our pre-clinical data are very strong. Therefore, our startup company is looking for partners in the industry, pharma, and venture capital that can help us to expedite the process of going in front of the FDA, getting an IND, and starting clinical trials. This is a slow process, I have to say, and we are in the midst of it.

CEO CFO: *How do you get attention from potential investors? What do you know, perhaps from other things you have worked on, or what have you learned so far about getting them to take a look?*

Dr. Battle: It is a big effort and a lot of work, honestly. Several people are involved in the company, often talking to pharma and talking to venture capital and it has been a busy year. My team is doing a lot of this hard work, and hopefully it is going to work.

CEO CFO: *How does what you are presenting differ from some of the other COVID remedies that people are looking at? What is different about it? How does it stand out?*

Dr. Battle: We are impressed by the simplicity of the mechanism and by the fact that it should be effective against any new variants of the Coronavirus causing COVID.

I mean this is a general mechanism that works on any type of Coronavirus. It is very effective in the effective in the mouse models that we and other people are using, a model that would be lethal, since mice would all die after infection but when we give the protein, they survive and they have much less lung disease, which is the main manifestation of the infection.

CEO CFO: *Are people, both in the investment and the medical community, now that COVID seems to be somewhat over, looking to move on, or are they still eager for a cure?*

Dr. Battle: We are eager for the pandemic to go away, but it is not happening. There will always be people that, either because they are not, or choose not to be vaccinated, or elderly people that are debilitated and are very vulnerable to the infection. Even if the pandemic goes away there will always be cases for the next few years.

Therefore, we need to have more approaches that can be used to treat this disease. Obviously, the vaccinations are key, and we are all 100% in support of the vaccinations.

CEOCFO: *On the kidney side of things, how would this potentially replace what people are doing today, or how would it add to what is available?*

Dr. Battle: Kidney care is mainly supportive. There is no good treatment for that. Our protein should help by preventing COVID 19 from becoming so severe and should protect the kidneys as well.

CEOCFO: *How do you deal, on a personal level, with having something that is so promising, and yet it takes so long and so much money and so much extraneous stuff to the science, to get anywhere?*

Dr. Battle: Perhaps, had we been ready when the pandemic started, back in March of 2020, everyone was going to invest in this treatment. However, the drug companies were so efficient in creating the vaccines and the antibodies, and a small company like us had not been able to move as fast as we should have.

The priority of pharma became the vaccines, understandably, and creating these cocktails of antibodies. They also tried to use medications that were already approved for another use. Even though they were not very effective, they were there, and our novel treatment fell behind, I should say.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us a little bit more about the relation with Northwestern? Where does that come into play?*

Dr. Battle: We are a spinoff of Northwestern, and the university fully supports our development. The patents that Northwestern had were licensed to Angiotensin Therapeutics, and we continue to work closely in collaboration with Northwestern.

CEOCFO: *What has been the response to the paper that you recently put out, or does it take a while to get attention when you do a present a paper?*

Dr. Battle: The recent paper was published as preprint back in early 2021, and already got a lot of attention. Then as we added more data and we went through the review process, with more than one journal I have to say, it took a long time to get it published in its final form, and now we have a final publication online that just came out early in the month of March 2022. Our work was actually known for a while and many people are already familiar with our work.

CEOCFO: *What do the next 6 months look like for you? What will you be doing?*

Dr. Battle: We will continue to do what we do, additional science, promoting our company, finding investors, talking to pharma, and hopefully we are going to make progress faster than we have had so far.

CEOCFO: *There are so many ideas to look at in all fields, but particularly in medical. Why pay attention to Angiotensin Therapeutics Inc? Why is the company so important?*

Dr. Battle: That is because we have a product that is based on a natural enzyme that is generally safe, and that makes a lot of sense to use it for a number of indications. kidney disease is my favorite. I am a kidney specialist. Then with the COVID crisis, we spent a lot of time on the

COVID indication. However, at the end of the day, there is a main role for our soluble ACE2 protein to treat kidney disease.



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