

Sangamo says early data from ALS study is positive

(Associated Press) RICHMOND, Calif. — Sangamo Biosciences Inc. said Wednesday that early data from a clinical trial shows its Lou Gehrig's disease drug candidate improved patients' muscle function.

Patients who were injected with the drug SB-509 were about twice as likely to have improved muscular function, Sangamo said. It reported that 32 percent of patients who received SB-509 had improved muscle function, compared to 17 percent of patients who took standard treatments.

A total of 19 patients received two injections of SB-509, and six had better results at the end of the four-month study. Sangamo said 153 patients took control drugs, and 26 had significant improvement. Muscle function was evaluated by manual testing of 34 muscles.

Lou Gehrig's disease, formally called amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, is a disease that attacks and kills motor nerve cells, which leads to weakness and leaves patients unable to use their voluntary muscles.

Sangamo is also testing SB-509 as a treatment for diabetic neuropathy. It was developed with the company's zinc finger protein technology, which is aimed at turning off parts of genes.

In morning trading, Sangamo shares fell 4 cents to \$5.

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