To whom it may concern,

The European Society for Paediatric Endocrinology (ESPE) expresses its profound concern regarding the lack of availability of insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1) for clinical research, resulting in the arrest of its development as a therapeutic agent. IGF-1, a peptide growth factor, has proven beneficial in the treatment of short stature patients with growth hormone insensitivity syndrome due to growth hormone receptor dysfunction. This indication has been approved in several European countries. IGF-1 has shown interesting therapeutic effects in adolescents with type 1 diabetes, resulting in an improvement of their metabolic control. Experimental stimulation of subnormal fetal growth with IGF-1 has also been documented. Furthermore, experimental studies have shown beneficial and protective effects of IGF-1 treatment in experimental brain damage and motor neuronal disorders. Clinical trials of IGF-1 treatment in patients with neurodegenerative disorders such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis are running at present.

Lack of availability of IGF-1 for clinical research is damaging to both scientific progress and therapeutic development in domains of great public health interest.

In view of the therapeutic potential of this growth factor, ESPE urges Health authorities in Europe and throughout the world to use their influence to convince the pharmaceutical industry to again make recombinant human IGF-1 and/or its analogues available for clinical research and therapeutic development.

The ESPE Drugs and Therapeutics Committee:

Prof. Niels E. Skakkebaek, Copenhagen, Denmark, Chairman;
Prof. Pierre G. Chatelain, Lyon, France;
Prof. Sergio Bernasconi, Modena, Italy.

On behalf of the European Society for Paediatric Endocrinology

Dr. Wolfgang G. Sippell Professor of Paediatrics
Secretary, ESPE