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For immediate release

MEDIA RELEASE

Novel gastric cancer vaccine to be tested in Singapore

National University Cancer Institute, Singapore to test vaccine in advanced gastric cancer patients.

Singapore – A new gastric cancer vaccine currently being evaluated in an early phase clinical trial at the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) may provide advanced gastric cancer patients with a less toxic alternative therapy to conventional cancer treatment.

The Phase I/IIa study is conducted by clinicians from the Haematology-Oncology Research Group (HORG) at NCIS, in partnership with Japanese biomedical company OncoTherapy Science, Inc (OTS). The first patient was recruited earlier this month and the institute is looking to recruit 30 more patients over two years.

OTSGC-A24 is a protein-based compound comprising five unique vaccines. The results from preliminary studies of each vaccine have been encouraging, with dramatic responses seen in patients with advanced disease resistant to standard therapy. The drug works by activating the patient's immune response against cancer cells, and kills cancer cells without damaging the surrounding healthy tissues. This means potentially fewer serious side effects compared to conventional chemotherapy.

Dr Yong Wei Peng, a consultant with NCIS and lead investigator for the project, said immune-based therapy represents a breakthrough in cancer treatment. "Most cancers detected have developed ways to escape the surveillance of the host immune system. Cancer vaccines work by re-awakening the body's immune system to fight the cancer."

"In patients with advanced gastric cancer, the options of chemotherapy are often limited by the patient's fitness and treatment side effects. Hence there is a need to develop a less toxic alternative for this group of patients."

Currently, chemotherapy is the mainstay of treatment for advanced gastric cancer and has been shown to improve the survival and quality of life of patients. However, it is often linked to many side effects such as fatigue, nausea and vomiting, fever and hair loss. Gastric cancer is often a silent killer because most patients are diagnosed with it at an advanced stage, with either no symptoms or symptoms indistinguishable from ailments like gastritis or indigestion. The median survival for patients with inoperable gastric cancer is less than one year.



Each year in Singapore, more than 600 people are diagnosed with gastric cancer, with about 400 succumbing to it, making it the No.6 killer cancer among men and No.9 among women.

Studies on early and previously untreated gastric cancers are currently ongoing at NCIS.

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The National University Health System (NUHS)

The National University Health System (NUHS) groups the National University Hospital (NUH), NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and NUS Faculty of Dentistry under a common governance structure to create synergies to advance health by integrating excellent clinical care, research and education.

The enhanced capabilities and capacity will enable the NUHS to deliver better patient care, train future generations of doctors more effectively and bring innovative treatments to patients through groundbreaking research.

For more information about NUHS, please visit www.nuhs.edu.sg

The National University Cancer Institute, Singapore

The National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) offers a broad spectrum of cancer care and management covering both paediatric and adult cancers, with expertise in prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care. The Institute's strength lies in the multi-disciplinary approach taken to develop a comprehensive and personalised plan for each cancer patient and his or her family.

NCIS draws on the expertise of its specialists in the fields of haematology-oncology, radiation oncology, gynaecologic oncology, paediatric oncology, surgical oncology, oncology nursing, oncology pharmacy, palliative care, pathology, radiology, medical specialities including gastroenterology and hepatology, infectious diseases, pulmonary and critical care, psychiatry, epidemiology and public health as well as other allied health sciences.

With several award-winning clinician-scientists and clinician-investigators, NCIS has an international reputation in translational research and clinical trials, providing patients with access to promising breakthroughs in cancer diagnostics, technology and therapies. NCIS is also closely affiliated with the Cancer Science Institute of Singapore, National University of Singapore.



The Institute's outreach efforts include prevention and screening programmes to reduce cancer mortality and to diagnose the disease at its most treatable stage.

For more information about NCIS, please visit www.ncis.com.sg

OncoTherapy Science, Inc. (OTS)

OncoTherapy Science, Inc. (OTS) is a biomedical venture founded in April 2001. Its primary aim is to develop innovative anti-cancer medicines or cancer therapies on the basis of the outcomes from the world-class cancer genomics research by Prof. Yusuke Nakamura of Human Genome Center, Institute of Medical Science, The University of Tokyo. OTS strives to develop innovative cancer drugs with high efficacy and a minimum risk of adverse events, based on the discovery of new molecular targets through genomic and biomedical research. Novel target molecules are determined by genome wide approach using original cDNA microarray containing 32,000 genes. OTS focuses on the development for therapeutic cancer vaccine, monoclonal antibodies, small molecule drugs and siRNA.

The Haematology-Oncology Research Group (HORG)

The Haematology-Oncology Research Group (HORG) is the research arm of the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS). HORG consists of haematologists and oncologists committed to the research of cancers endemic to Asia, with a special interest in the development of novel drugs for cancer treatment as well as improving existing treatments.

HORG strives to provide the best treatment options and care for patients through continuous research. In the area of pharmacogenetics, the research group is established as one of the global teams studying inter-ethnic variability in anti-cancer drugs. With a strong grounding in clinical pharmacology and molecular biology, combined with technology and clinical expertise, HORG is also involved in novel clinical trials especially in early-phase drug development.

For more information about HORG, please visit www.horg.com.sg