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For immediate release

MEDIA RELEASE

NCIS to be regional testing centre for major multiple myeloma drug trial

Onyx Pharmaceuticals appoints NCIS as central laboratory for Asian trial of new drug carfilzomib

SINGAPORE – The National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) has been appointed the regional testing centre for Onyx Pharmaceuticals' Asian trial of carfilzomib, a new intravenous drug for the potential treatment of patients with multiple myeloma. Carfilzomib is not currently approved for use in any country.

Multiple myeloma is a blood cancer in which the plasma cells in bone marrow grow abnormally and form tumours in solid bone. These tumours make it difficult for the bone marrow to make healthy blood cells and platelets. Multiple myeloma is incurable but highly treatable. It is more common among men than women and typically affects those aged 50 years and older, although younger people are increasingly being diagnosed with the disease. According to data from the National Registry of Diseases Office, 50 to 60 Singaporeans are diagnosed with multiple myeloma every year.

The FOCUS (CarFilzOmib for AdvanCed Refractory MUltiple Myeloma Study) study is a Phase 3 randomised clinical trial to facilitate regulatory approvals worldwide for carfilzomib. This FOCUS study is already being conducted in Europe involving patients with relapsed and refractory (unresponsive) myeloma who have received three or more prior therapies.

Carfilzomib is a next-generation proteasome inhibitor. The proteasome contains proteins that cancer cells need to survive. Inhibition of the proteasome blocks its ability to break down proteins in the cell, including cancer cells. This leads up to an accumulation of proteins that causes the cancer cells to die, potentially slowing cancer progression. Proteasome inhibition has been proven as an effective cancer treatment strategy.



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The National University Cancer Institute, Singapore is the only site here to have been selected to join the FOCUS trial.

Samples from all of Onyx's participating study sites in the Asia-Pacific region will be analysed at the cytogenetics laboratory under the National University Hospital's Department of Laboratory Medicine. The participating study sites include venues such as Japan, Australia and Korea, in addition to Singapore. The samples will undergo fluorescent in situ hybridization (FISH) testing, which uses special fluorescent dyes that attach to specific parts of certain chromosomes. This allows scientists to look for changes to the chromosomes of cancer cells as an indicator of their response to the drug. NCIS expects to analyse about 30 samples per year with up to 5 samples coming from patients at the National University Hospital. The trial will be conducted from this month until the first quarter of 2013.

"Carfilzomib is a promising drug for multiple myeloma patients who have run out of other treatment options. We hope that carfilzomib will eventually be approved for Singapore so that our patients can have early access to an effective myeloma treatment and improved outcomes," said Associate Professor Chng Wee Joo, senior consultant haematologist, Department of Haematology-Oncology, NCIS and principal investigator of the trial in Singapore.

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About the National University Health System (NUHS)

The National University Health System (NUHS) groups the National University Hospital (NUH), the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, the NUS Faculty of Dentistry and the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health under a common governance structure to create synergies to advance health by integrating 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 the NUHS, please visit www.nuhs.edu.sg

About the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore



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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.



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