

AZ, Immunocore partner for immunotherapy combo

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AZ, Immunocore collaborate for immunotherapy combo



AstraZeneca has announced that MedImmune, its global biologics research and development arm, has entered into a collaboration to conduct clinical trials in immuno-oncology with Immunocore, a privately-held UK-based biotechnology company.

Under the terms of the agreement, Immunocore will conduct a Phase Ib/II clinical trial combining MedImmune's investigational checkpoint inhibitors MEDI4736 (anti-PD-L1) and/or tremelimumab (anti-CTLA-4) with IMCgp100, Immunocore's lead T-cell receptor-based investigational therapeutic, for the potential treatment of patients with metastatic melanoma. MedImmune has an exclusive relationship with Immunocore for the development of IMCgp100 in combination with MEDI4736 and/or tremelimumab, and will have first right of negotiation for future commercial development of these combinations for tumours expressing glycoprotein 100 (gp100), a tumour-associated antigen.

Immunocore and MedImmune will establish a dosing regimen for IMCgp100 combined with MEDI4736 and/or tremelimumab within the Phase Ib study. The Phase II study will assess the safety and efficacy of the different combinations.

The companies have a pre-existing research collaboration and licensing agreement, announced in January 2014, to develop novel cancer therapies using Immunocore's Immune Mobilising Monoclonal T-Cell Receptor Against Cancer (ImmTAC) technology.

"We are pleased to expand our partnership with Immunocore, a leader in the discovery and development of novel T-cell receptor-based drugs, to include this combination clinical trial in melanoma. Immuno-oncology is a priority area for us and by employing combinations with biological synergies, we believe we have the potential to enhance treatment effectiveness and ultimately to see improved overall survival rates. Our partnership with Immunocore is further evidence of our belief that combination therapies have the potential to be one of the most effective ways of treating cancer," said Dr Ed Bradley, senior vice-president and head of the oncology innovative medicines unit at MedImmune.

"We are excited to deepen our relationship with MedImmune through this combination study agreement. We look forward to a successful partnership in the development of novel combination treatments in metastatic melanoma, which we believe have the potential to be best-in-class treatments," said Mr Eliot Forster, CEO, Immunocore.

MEDI4736, tremelimumab and IMCgp100 are members of a new class of cancer treatments known as immunotherapies, which are designed to enhance the body's own immune system in fighting cancer.