

Prima BioMed cancer technology supported by US trial results:

Phase IIb Biomira Inc and Merck KGaA trial in non-small cell lung cancer shows overall improvement in survival

Melbourne, Australia — April 15, 2004: Prima BioMed ('Prima' ASX:PRR) has welcomed the announcement by Biomira Inc and Merck KGaA of preliminary Phase IIb trial results of a synthetic cancer therapy which uses the same protein as a product under development by CancerVac Pty Limited, Prima's 85%-owned subsidiary.

The trial was designed to demonstrate both the safety profile and efficacy of the treatment using a cancer protein called mucin 1.

"The results of this Phase IIb trial are certainly good news for us as they further demonstrate that mucin 1 is a suitable target for a cancer treatment," said Mr Marcus Clark, CEO of Prima.

"CancerVac's product under development for immune therapy against cancer also uses mucin 1, but in a very different way in terms of how we stimulate the immune system and deliver the treatment," he said.

Last month, Prima BioMed announced a significant commercial agreement with Biomira Inc for the development and commercialization of CancerVac's mucin1-based immunotherapy product which granted CancerVac a worldwide licence for the ex vivo use of mucin1.

CancerVac's technology differs in two key ways from that used in the Phase IIb trial. The Biomira trial used a small portion of the mucin 1 protein enclosed in spheres of lipid called liposomes to stimulate the immune system whereas CancerVac uses a portion of mucin 1 attached to a long string of sugar units called mannan to stimulate the immune system.

Biomira injected the liposomes containing mucin 1 directly into the patient whereas CancerVac performs dendritic cell therapy, delivering the treatment by treating the patients' own dendritic cells in the laboratory and returning them to the body as a form of pre-activated immune response.

The Biomira/Merck trial of L-BLP25 was a randomized trial of 171 men and women enrolled at 14 sites in Canada and three sites in the USA with Stage IIIb and IV non-small cell lung cancer who were randomized to receive either the L-BLP25 treatment plus best standard of care, or best standard of care alone.

The preliminary results showed that treatment increased the median survival of patients in the trial from 13 to 17.4 months. The results approached statistical significance, although this is not an expected outcome from a Phase IIb trial enrolling only 171 patients. A similar trend was shown with the two-year survival results which were 43.2% for patients receiving the vaccine compared with 28.9% for those in the control group. The apparent safety of the treatment will be confirmed by further analysis of the data and survival follow up.

Additional information

Mucin 1

Mucin 1, also called MUC1, is a protein found at particularly high levels on the surface of certain cancer cells. It is of interest as a target for cancer therapies based on inducing an immune response against cancer cells.

Immunotherapy versus a vaccine for cancer

Immunotherapy refers to a treatment for cancer, or other disease, which is based on activation of the body's immune system to attack cells or proteins associated with the disease. Immunotherapy is designed to slow or stop progression of a disease once it is established.

Vaccines, used in the process of vaccination, also stimulate the immune system, but their purpose is to prevent a disease from every taking hold.

To view the announcement on Biomira's website please go to
<http://www.biomira.com/news/detailNewsRelease/183/>

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The Companies

About Prima Biomed Ltd

Based in Melbourne, Prima BioMed (ASX: PRR) is a biotechnology organization with first and last rights over technologies from the Austin Research Institute. Prima Biomed specializes in immunology and cancer immunotherapy and adopts technology development that shows potential for commercial returns within three years.

CancerVac Pty Ltd. CancerVac is a subsidiary of Prima BioMed. The company was formed to develop and commercialize technology licensed from the Austin Research Institute, a medical research institute located in Melbourne Australia. The technology being developed is described as immunotherapy. It combines recombinant proteins expressed on tumor cells and a vaccine adjuvant to trigger recognition of tumor cells by the immune system as foreign. Such recognition in turn leading to attack by immune killer and tumor cell destruction.

Biomira Inc is a biotechnology company specializing in the development of innovative therapeutic approaches to cancer management. Biomira's commitment to the treatment of cancer currently focuses on the development of synthetic vaccines and novel strategies for cancer immunotherapy.

This release may contain forward-looking statements. Various factors could cause actual results to differ materially from those projected in forward-looking statements, including those predicting the timing and results of clinical trials, interpretation and implications of such results, availability or adequacy of financing, the sales and marketing of commercial products or the efficacy of products. Although the Company believes that the forward-looking statements contained herein are reasonable, it can give no assurance that the Company's expectations are correct. All forward-looking statements are expressly qualified in their entirety by this cautionary statement.