

Media Release

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Curtin partners with Selvax to develop cancer treatments

Curtin University and Selvax Pty Ltd recently signed a two year research contract to focus on developing effective immunotherapy based cancer treatments for both human and veterinary applications.

Dr Delia Nelson, immunologist in Curtin's School of Biomedical Sciences, is leading the research and said the team was already making progress in treating cancer by harnessing the power of the body's immune system.

"Initial trials in small animals involving lung cancer, pancreatic cancer and mesothelioma have shown encouraging results," Dr Nelson said.

"The technology has achieved cancer clearance rates from 60 – 80 per cent in repeated small animal studies for a range of solid tumours and has shown the capacity to protect against recurrence of the cancer.

It's important to note that there have been no adverse side effects in our initial findings. This could have significant implications for future research."

In addition to its potentially broad application in humans, the technology is believed to have commercial applications in veterinary oncology for companion animals, high value equine stock as well as in zoos.

The Selvax Project also involves two other Australian universities, a major UK cancer research group and a European oncology institute. Initial phase one clinical trials are targeted for 2016.

In recognition of its significant contribution to the project and ongoing research support, Curtin has recently been issued a 20 per cent shareholding in Selvax.

Selvax Chairman, Dr Ron Wise, welcomed Curtin's participation as a major stakeholder in the company.

"Curtin has an enviable track record in fostering innovative life sciences research in Western Australia and its support of the Selvax cancer immunology project will significantly benefit the progress of our work," Dr Wise said.

"Approximately 12,000 West Australians will be diagnosed with cancer this year and the development of safe and effective new immunotherapy treatments for solid tumours could provide valuable new treatment options for a number of cancer sufferers both in Australia and elsewhere.

"It's an exciting project to be part of and we are elated about partnering with Curtin University," Dr Wise said.

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