

Media Release

25 May 2020

Results of dog cancer treatment trial raise hopes for human use

The encouraging interim results of a trial of a new cancer immunotherapy treatment in dogs with soft tissue sarcomas have raised hopes for a more effective treatment of this aggressive cancer, which is also common in humans.

The veterinary treatment clinical trial by Curtin University and West Australian cancer immunology company Selvax Pty Ltd, performed in cooperation with Perth Veterinary Specialists, has resulted in significant cure rates in the first group of ten dogs tested at the lowest of three dose levels.

Associate Professor Delia Nelson from Curtin's School of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences said among the trial's encouraging results, 30% of dogs treated in the first group had shown complete remission from their cancers and none of the dogs treated showed any toxic side effects from the Selvax therapy.

"Dogs develop similar sarcomas to humans and current treatment options have been limited, resulting in euthanising of a significant number of pets in the case of more advanced cancers," Professor Nelson said.

"Sarcomas are also common and difficult to treat tumours in humans, with these aggressive cancers accounting for 20% of all cancers in children and 15% of cancers in adolescents and young adults.

"They can be fatal and for many sarcomas, outcomes haven't improved significantly in over 40 years so to develop a more effective treatment of the disease would be a significant medical achievement.

"The interim results of this trial strongly suggest that with continued development this treatment could have potential for treatment of sarcomas in humans."

Selvax Director Tony Fitzgerald said the company's cancer immunotherapy treatment was developed by Associate Professor Delia Nelson and her team at Curtin and had been tested in repeated small animal trials against eight different solid tumours.

"It has demonstrated sustained cure rates ranging from 30% to more than 90% in the case of colorectal cancer without adverse side effects," Mr Fitzgerald said.

"Selvax also achieved a cure rate of 80% in its small animal trials for osteosarcomas, with long term protection against recurrence.

"Our goal is to complete the development of an effective patient-friendly cancer immunology treatment for solid tumours in both dogs and humans and these new interim trial results would suggest we are well on our way."

More information about Curtin's collaboration with Selvax can be found [here](#).

Ends.../

Notes to Editor:

Curtin University academics are available for interview via our in-house Globelynx camera, which can deliver broadcast quality HD pictures direct to your newsroom. Please contact us for more details.

About Curtin University

Curtin University is Western Australia's largest university, with more than 56,000 students. Of these, about 26 per cent are international students, with half of these studying at the University's offshore campuses. The University's main campus is in Perth. Curtin also has a major regional campus in Kalgoorlie in addition to four global campuses in Malaysia, Singapore, Dubai and Mauritius.

Curtin is ranked in the top one per cent of universities worldwide, with the University placed 9th in Australia according to the [Academic Ranking of World Universities \(ARWU\) 2019](#).

The University has built a reputation around innovation and an entrepreneurial spirit, being at the forefront of many high-profile research projects in astronomy, biosciences, economics, mining and information technology. It is also recognised globally for its strong connections with industry, and for its commitment to preparing students for the jobs of the future.

For further information, visit curtin.edu.au.

Media contacts:

Lucien Wilkinson, Media Consultant, Curtin University

Tel: (08) 9266 9185

Mobile: 0401 103 683

Email: lucien.wilkinson@curtin.edu.au

Web: <http://news.curtin.edu.au/media-centre/>

Twitter: [@CurtinMedia](https://twitter.com/CurtinMedia)

Vanessa Beasley, Media Relations Manager, Curtin University

Tel: (08) 9266 1181

Mobile: 0466 853 121

Email: vanessa.beasley@curtin.edu.au

Web: <http://news.curtin.edu.au/media-centre/>

Twitter: [@CurtinMedia](https://twitter.com/CurtinMedia)

Tony Fitzgerald, Director, Selvax

Mobile: 0418 903 647

Email: tfitzgerald@selvaximmun.com