

Health Bulletin



Targeted Therapeutics Take Aim At Cancer

(NAPSA)—A clinical stage drug that has been safely used for more than 50 years as a treatment for an infectious skin disease spread by sand flies may prove to be a giant step closer to the development of a targeted anti-tumor therapy for cancer.

The agent VQD-001 also known as Sodium Stibogluconate (SSG), is used to treat Leishmaniasis, a skin disorder found mostly in tropic and sub-tropic climates. Although the drug had been used for decades to treat this condition, researchers have presented evidence that it appears to have other therapeutic potential: reducing the size of cancerous tumors and possibly also eliminating them completely in patients with specific types of cancer when used in combination with interferon.

According to researchers at VioQuest Pharmaceuticals, SSG has been proven effective in animal models of certain cancers. VioQuest has partnered with investigators at the Cleveland Clinic Taussig Cancer Center who have found that SSG inhibits specific proteins called protein tyrosine phosphatases (PTPases). Abnormal levels of PTPases may allow for tumor growth in certain cancers.

Extensive pre-clinical cancer studies have shown significant anti-tumor activity with SSG at lower doses of the drug than for leishmaniasis. Other pre-clinical studies showed SSG used alone (called monotherapy) led to an 85 percent suppression of human melanoma xenografts and, more impressively, the combination of



Researchers are finding targeted cancer therapeutics may offer significant benefits to patients.

SSG and interferon even caused complete regression of cancer in many instances.

A Phase I/II study in patients with refractory cancers is currently underway at the Cleveland Clinic. Dosing in this study recently began in patients who have failed to see improvement with previous cancer treatments.

“Our cancer clinical trials using this therapy are in step with the emerging trend of targeted or personalized medicine. That is really where science is leading us; to less toxic, more precise cancer therapies, instead of trying to find one cancer drug that may be potentially ineffective or toxic to fit all types of cancers,” says Dan Greenleaf, CEO of VioQuest Pharmaceuticals.

According to the American Cancer Society, cancer is the second leading cause of death in the U.S.

For more information on targeted cancer therapeutics, log onto www.vioquestpharm.com.