Avacta Group plc

Highly encouraging results for Avacta's TMAC programme. The Group's first TMAC™ drug conjugate molecule has demonstrated ability to out-perform Bavencio (avelumab) in an animal model. *In vivo* and pharmacokinetic data collected indicate superior efficacy which, together with ability to successfully target the warhead, provides initial proof-of-concept. As such, today's news represents the passing of a key milestone with the very first TMAC tested. Given a peak sales projection of US$4bn/year for Bavencio, significant commercial interest that Avacta's development programme has already attracted might now multiply still further.

Avacta, the developer of Affimer® technology and pre|CISION chemotherapies, has confirmed it has successfully demonstrated initial proof-of-concept for its proprietary, new class of drug conjugate, 'TMAC™', in a preclinical animal model of cancer. TMAC™ drug conjugates combine the Group's two proprietary platforms in a single drug molecule, with the aim of creating effective treatments for all cancer patients including those who do not respond to existing immunotherapies.

The first TMAC™ drug conjugate (AVA04-VbP) combines an Affimer PD-L1 checkpoint inhibitor with an I-DASH drug warhead. The TMAC molecule is designed to target the release of its drug warhead in the tumour microenvironment, inflaming the tumour locally in such a way that it attracts the immune system to further attack the cancer, whilst the Affimer immunotherapy part of the TMAC molecule also supports this secondary immune system attack.

In a mouse syngeneic tumour model, the Group has shown AVA04-VbP outperforms Bavencio (Avelumab) which was developed by Merck and Pfizer an FDA-approved PD-L1 antibody inhibitor. Animals treated with AVA04-VbP have demonstrated a significant reduction in the rate of tumour growth with respect to those treated with Bavencio.

A considerably higher level of the released I-DASH warhead was measured in the tumours compared with very low levels in the blood. This indicates that the healthy tissues in the body are being spared exposure to the highly toxic warhead, which is central to the TMAC mechanism of action, permitting the use of highly potent cancer-killing warheads.

The Affimer platform is an alternative to antibodies derived from a small human protein. Despite their obvious shortcomings, antibodies currently dominate global markets worth in excess of US$100bn. Success in signing research and development accords with three major international companies, in the form of a partnership, collaboration and a joint venture, represents not only a major endorsement of Avacta's technology, but also highlights Big Pharma's determination to invest in such giant, albeit early-stage, opportunities. Meanwhile, through combination of its two proprietary platforms (Affimer® biotherapeutics and pre|CISION™), Avacta is building a wholly owned pipeline of novel cancer therapies with the aim of creating effective treatments for all cancer patients including those who do not respond to existing immunotherapies. Today's news potentially kicks-off a ground-breaking year, with the Group proposing to take its first drug, AVA6000, a pre|CISION targeted form of the standard-of-care Doxorubicin, into the clinic during the second half of 2020. Designed to reduce side effects without affecting efficacy, the molecule's initial readouts are expected before the end of this year and potentially represent a major inflection point along with an opportunity for creation of significant commercial value, while the Group also forwards its partnered programmes and licensing relationships for its diagnostics reagents.

Stock Data

Share Price:	20.25p
Market Cap:	£35.6m
Shares in issue:	175.9m

Company Profile

Sector:	Healthcare
Ticker:	AVCT
Exchange:	AIM

Activities

Avacta ('the Group') is a biotechnology company which has developed the proprietary Affimer® technology platform, a unique engineered alterative to antibodies. Affimer proteins can be developed quickly for drug development and a wide range of life sciences applications in the diagnostics and research sectors.

Share price performance

Source: LSE

Past performance is not an indication of future performance.

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