Kura Oncology's Menin-Mll Inhibitor Program Shows Promise In Study Published In Cancer Cell; Program Targeting Acute Leukemias Licensed From University Of Michigan

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LA JOLLA, March 30, 2015 – Kura Oncology, Inc. ("Kura Oncology" or the "Company"), a clinical stage biopharmaceutical company advancing a pipeline of precision medicines for the treatment of solid tumors and blood cancers, announced a study published by University of Michigan researchers in the scientific journal Cancer Cell showing that preclinical compounds from its menin-MLL inhibitor program demonstrated promising activity in blocking the progression of leukemia. In December 2014, Kura Oncology entered into an exclusive license agreement with the University of Michigan to access intellectual property and technology related to a class of small molecule inhibitors targeting menin-MLL that have potential utility as a treatment of acute leukemias and other cancers.

PUBLICATION DEMONSTRATES POTENTIAL UTILITY OF MENIN-MLL INHIBITORS TO TREAT ACUTE LEUKEMIAS

In a study just published in the scientific journal Cancer Cell, the University of Michigan researchers tested two compounds they developed, MI-463 and MI-503, in cell lines as well as in mice with mixed lineage leukemias. The Michigan researchers reported that the compounds blocked the menin-MLL interaction and effectively blocked the progression of the leukemia. The paper, titled "Pharmacologic inhibition of the menin-MLL interaction blocks progression of MLL leukemia in vivo" was made available on March 26, 2015 in the advanced online publication of Cancer Cell.

EXCLUSIVE LICENSE AGREEMENT

The compounds and technology exclusively licensed to Kura Oncology were developed in the laboratories of Professors Jolanta Grembecka, Ph.D., and Tomasz Cierpicki, Ph.D., whose research is focused on developing new treatments for patients with leukemia associated with abnormalities in the mixed lineage leukemia (MLL) gene. When the protein menin interacts with MLL fusion proteins, the result is MLL leukemias, which occur both in children and adults, and constitute approximately 5-10% of acute leukemias in adults and approximately 70% of acute leukemias in infants. The team of Michigan researchers has been working on potential first-in-class small molecule compounds that inhibit the menin-MLL interaction.

Mixed lineage leukemias are an aggressive subtype of two of the most common forms of acute leukemia, ALL and AML. Patients with the MLL leukemias have a very poor prognosis with current therapies, with only about one-third of patients surviving five years after their diagnosis. The total annual incidence of MLL leukemias among patients in the U.S. and Europe has been estimated at approximately 5,000 patients, and those patients currently have limited options other than chemotherapy.

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) has provided funding to the Grembecka and Cierpicki laboratories at Michigan, initially through an award of a translational research grant and later through its Therapy Acceleration Program. In addition to executing the exclusive license agreement, Kura Oncology has also agreed to sponsor research in the Grembecka and Cierpicki labs, directed at further studies on menin-MLL inhibitors for the treatment of leukemia and other cancers.

"Jolanta Grembecka and Tomasz Cierpicki are scientific leaders in targeting the menin-MLL interaction, and it's a privilege to work with them to advance this promising class of compounds," said Troy Wilson, Ph.D., J.D., President and CEO of Kura Oncology. "We share with them the goal of translating this cutting-edge science as quickly as possible into breakthrough medicines for patients with acute leukemias and other cancers."

“In many types of cancer, you see multiple interactions and mutations that drive the tumor,” said Professor Jolanta Grembecka, assistant professor of pathology at the University of Michigan Medical School. “Our work validates the menin-MLL interaction as an important therapeutic target, and it provides an important starting point to the development of new drugs to treat leukemias as well as potentially other tumors in which the menin protein has been implicated.”

“The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society is proud to have supported the outstanding work of Dr. Grembecka and her colleagues,” said Louis J. DeGennaro, Ph.D., LLS’s president and chief executive officer. “We are excited to have the team at Kura Oncology apply their resources and expertise in drug discovery and development to accelerate this ground-breaking research to patients. These types of agreements are further evidence of LLS’s successful track record in venture philanthropy, as we anticipate these investments will enable more of our partners to surmount the investment risk threshold.”

ABOUT KURA ONCOLOGY

Kura Oncology is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery and development of precision medicines for the treatment of solid tumors and blood cancers. Kura Oncology’s diverse pipeline consists of small molecules that target cancer signaling pathways where there is a strong scientific and clinical rationale to improve outcomes by identifying those patients most likely to benefit from treatment. Kura Oncology’s approach to drug development is focused on rapidly translating novel science into life-saving medicines. More information is available at www.kuraoncology.com.

FORWARD LOOKING STATEMENTS

This news release contains certain forward-looking statements that involve risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to be materially different from historical results or from any future results expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Such forward-looking statements include statements regarding, among other things, the potential utility of Kura Oncology’s compounds and product candidates, and plans regarding future research and development. Factors that may cause actual results to differ materially include the risk that compounds that appeared promising in early research do not demonstrate safety and/or efficacy in later pre-clinical studies or clinical trials, the risk that Kura Oncology may not obtain approval to market its product candidates, uncertainties associated with regulatory filings and applications, the risks associated with reliance on outside financing to meet capital requirements, and the risks associated with reliance on collaborative partners for further research, clinical trials, development and commercialization of product candidates. You are urged to consider statements that include the words “may,” “will,” “would,” “could,” “should,” “believes,” “estimates,” “projects,” “potential,” “expects,” “plans,” “anticipates,” “intends,” “continues,” ” “designed,” “goal,” or the negative of those words or other comparable words to be uncertain and forward-looking. For a further list and description of the risks and uncertainties the Company faces, please refer to the Company’s periodic and other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which are available at www.sec.gov. Such forward-looking statements are current only as of the date they are made, and Kura Oncology assumes no obligation to update any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

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