



PRESS RELEASE

ORCA Therapeutics receives Horizon 2020 grant for developing innovative virotherapy for treatment of melanoma

NIJMEGEN, 04-05-2016

ORCA Therapeutics, a Dutch pioneer in the development of innovative virotherapies for treatment of cancer, receives a grant from the European Horizon 2020 program to support development of effective combinations of its lead compound ORCA-010 with immune stimulating compounds. ORCA Therapeutics is committed to develop an innovative oncolytic virotherapy for the treatment of prostate cancer and other cancer indications. The Horizon 2020 project from the European Commission is a program that supports innovative research in the European Union. Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU Research and Innovation program ever with nearly €80 billion of funding available over seven years (2014-2020).

For the Horizon 2020 project ORCA Therapeutics participates in a consortium with the VUmc (Amsterdam) and TILT Biotherapeutics (Helsinki). The consortium, called VIRION (Viruses, Immune stimulation and RNA Interference in Oncology Network), aims to develop a novel therapeutic regime for cancer by combining immune therapy with oncolytic virotherapy and RNA interference techniques. Recent clinical successes have shown the immune system to be a powerful ally in the fight against cancer. However, immune suppression in the tumor microenvironment limits the efficacy of immunotherapy and remains a major hurdle. 'ORCA Therapeutics will contribute to the project goals by providing its expertise in oncolytic virotherapy technology and product development' according to the company's CSO Victor van Beusechem. In pre-clinical models, oncolytic adenoviruses have proven a powerful tool in the elimination of tumors. In this process, selective lysis of cancer cells releasing tumor antigens and induction of immune responses are important. The innovative research of ORCA Therapeutics will address how these immune responses can be further enhanced by counteracting immune suppressive factors in the tumor micro environment.

The European Commission aims to improve the development of groundbreaking methods for targeted and controlled cancer therapy through Horizon 2020. In addition to a private investment that ORCA Therapeutics recently retrieved, the European Horizon 2020 grant contributes to bringing great ideas and breakthroughs from the lab to the market, aiming to make innovative treatment available to the patient.