

ASLAN Pharma reveals strategies of clinical development programs

30 January 2019 | News | By Sonali Wankhade

ASLAN will reduce its cost base, including a reduction in headcount by 30%.



ASLAN Pharmaceuticals announced a strategic corporate restructuring to focus its resources on its lead clinical programs: *varlitinib* in biliary tract cancer (BTC), ASLAN003 in acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) and ASLAN004 in atopic dermatitis.

ASLAN will focus its resources on the late-stage development of *varlitinib* as a potential novel treatment for first- and second-line BTC. Enrolment in a global pivotal study of *varlitinib* in second-line BTC, the TreeTopp (TREATmEnT OPPortunity) study, was completed ahead of schedule in December 2018 and topline data is expected in the second half of 2019. ASLAN will be closing the ongoing single-arm second-line BTC study in China as it is now expected to read out after the TreeTopp study. If positive, data from the TreeTopp study will be used to submit a New Drug Application (NDA) in China, the US and other major geographies.

ASLAN recently reported positive phase 1b results from an ongoing study of *varlitinib* as a first-line treatment for BTC which demonstrated that *varlitinib* increased objective response rate compared to standard of care and this study will continue to recruit patients to strengthen this dataset.

The clinical development of ASLAN003 in AML and ASLAN004 in atopic dermatitis remains on track. ASLAN expects to complete the first part of the phase 2 study of ASLAN003 in AML and the phase 1 SAD study of ASLAN004 in the first half of 2019.

Following this strategic review, ASLAN will reduce its cost base, including a reduction in headcount by 30%. In total, the planned changes will lower operational costs by 50%. ASLAN does not expect to incur any material restructuring charges.

In addition to the reduction in headcount, Dr Bertil Lindmark, currently Chief Medical Officer, has announced he will retire and return to Europe. Dr Chih-Yi Hsieh, currently VP Medical and GM Taiwan, will assume the role of acting Chief Medical Officer. Dr Mark McHale, Chief Operating Officer, will transition to the role of Chief Development Officer and Head of R&D with immediate effect.