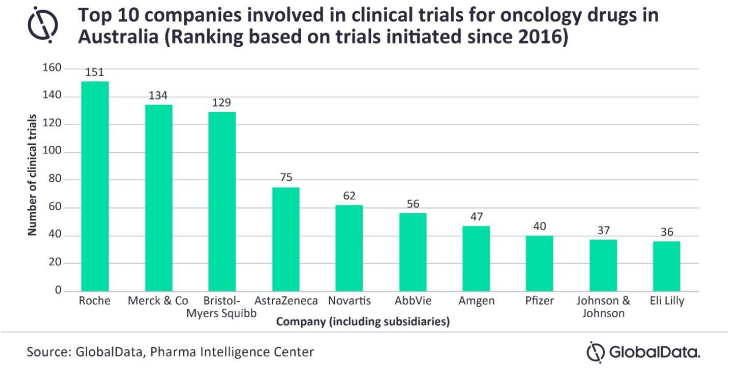
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Roche leads industry sponsored oncology trials in Australia

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Merck and Co and Bristol-Myers Squibb in terms of the number of trials in oncology in Australia, says GlobalData



Australia has the highest age-standardized incidence rate for all cancers in the world and one of the countries with substantial cancer screening programs. Against this backdrop, several pharma companies are conducting clinical trials related to cancer drugs in the country. Among these, Roche continues to be a key player with the highest number of clinical trials in oncology indications, says GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company.

Ms. Sasmitha Sahu, Pharma Analyst at GlobalData, comments: “Despite high incidence rates, mortality rate is low in Australia due to early and extensive screening. Owing to the government’s greater focus on managing cancer, patients can gain access to good diagnostic facilities, healthcare and novel cancer therapies. Participation in clinical trials ensures early access to unapproved novel therapies.”

According to GlobalData’s Pharma Intelligence Center, Roche is followed by Merck and Co and Bristol-Myers Squibb in terms of the number of trials in oncology in Australia as of 21 April 2020.

Roche Australia is claimed to invest around A$44m (US$34m) every year in research and development activities. The company has the highest number of trials in hematologic cancer followed by breast cancer, lung cancer, gastrointestinal cancer, and solid tumors.

In 2019-20, Australia announced a 10-year investment plan of A$5bn (US$3.9bn) for the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF), which includes A$614m (US$474m) for rare cancers and diseases for supporting research, more clinical trials, improved access to clinical trials and the development of health innovations for cancer. Moreover, to accelerate cancer research in Australia, Cancer Australia’s Priority-driven Collaborative Cancer Research Scheme (PdCCRS) has so far awarded A$153m (US$117.8m) for research on a broad range of cancers including breast, colorectal and multiple myeloma.

In addition, A$6.6bn (US$5.1bn) has been earmarked for cancer research over four years from 2020-21 to 2023-24. The government announced new medicines funding guarantee in the 2020 budget and a 10-year Australian Cancer Plan in 2021 to improve outcomes for Australians affected by cancer.

Ms. Sahu adds: “Research focus on cancer is very high in Australia with the government establishing the MRFF and the PdCCRS to fund and drive cancer research. Roche continues to leverage the favorable cancer research landscape and

government support in Australia.”

Moreover, the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is now part of the US FDA’s Project Orbis (collaborative review effort for oncology products) along with Health Canada, which will further expedite the approval of novel cancer therapies, thereby allowing the simultaneous launch in Australia.