

## Novogen progresses on drug for paediatric brain cancer

08 May 2015 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

### Novogen identifies drug for paediatric brain cancer



**Singapore:** US-Australian drug discovery company, Novogen, in conjunction with Australian paediatric cancer researchers, have progressed on experimental cancer drug-candidate, TRXE-009, to become an important new therapy against an incurable paediatric brain cancer called DIPG (diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma).

DIPG has a very poor prognosis with a median survival of less than one year, a statistic that has not changed in over 50 years. DIPG is amongst the most challenging cancers to treat; the diffuse nature of the cancer means that surgery is not an option, radiation provides only temporary relief, and chemotherapy has yet to provide any clinical benefit.

Dr David Ziegler, lead investigator said, "These are preliminary studies but we are very excited about the striking activity we are seeing in these highly resistant tumorspheres. TRXE-009 is one of the most potent compounds we have studied to date in this setting."

Dr Eleanor Ager, Trilexium program manager, Novogen, "These findings add to our other pre-clinical studies suggesting that TRXE-009 has particular activity against brain cancers, including being highly cytotoxic against the main adult brain cancer, glioblastoma multiforme (GBM). The next step in this drug's development is to confirm its ability to cross the blood-brain barrier, a key filtering system that blocks the majority of chemotherapeutic drugs from reaching brain tissue".

TRXE-009 has been designed to cross the blood-brain barrier, but Novogen has further enlisted the combined efforts of

several international research groups to identify the optimal means of delivering TRXE-009 to adults and children so that it crosses the blood-brain barrier.

Dr Graham Kelly, CEO, Novogen, said, "DIPG is a devastating disease for affected children and their parents alike. I don't want parents to think that this battle is won, because we have yet to make sure we can deliver this drug candidate at levels that that will make a difference. But what is important is to give parents of children with DIPG hope, and that is what this news hopefully does."

"TRXE-009 is an exciting prospect. It is broadly active against a wide range of cancers in the laboratory, including cancer stem cells, and on the basis of it delivering a potent anti-cancer effect in animals bearing human melanoma, we are bringing into the clinic in 2016 for the treatment of solid cancers. But in addition to a general anti-cancer use, the ultimate objective is to see it tested in adults and children with brain cancers, and people with secondary brain cancer associated with cancers such as melanoma."