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Singapore: Celgene International has received European Commission (EC) approval for VIDAZA (azacitidine for injection) for the treatment of adult patients aged 65 years or older with acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) who are not eligible for haematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT).

Myeloblasts are white cells in the bone marrow; in AML, their functioning is disrupted and results in numerous non-functioning white cells, which can potentially interfere with the body's ability to control infections and can lead to anaemia and haemorrhages.

"Today's announcement brings hope to patients with AML, particularly the elderly and more frail patients who cannot undergo intensive therapies such as stem cell transplantation," said Dr HervÃ© Dombret, chief, Blood Disease Department (Leukaemia Unit), University Hospital Saint-Louis, AP-HP, Paris, France. "Azacitidine has demonstrated a median overall survival of 10.4 months in these patients, which is a clinically relevant benefit and gives us a new treatment option in a previously underserved group of patients."

Tuomo PÃ¤tsi, president, Celgene in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), added, "Celgene is committed to bringing innovative medicines to patients with haematological diseases including AML. The approval of VIDAZA in this segment of AML patients now gives us a new opportunity to help these patients and underscores our commitment to delivering medicines that can have a significant impact on patients with severe and debilitating diseases. Our next step will be to work with each of

the member countries to provide access to VIDAZA in this indication, ensuring that patients who can benefit from its use have the opportunity to do so."