

Ganymed's IMAB362 to bring hope to Gastric Cancer patients

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New data regarding Ganymed Pharmaceuticals' drug IMAB362, presented at the 2016 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting, provides hope for a subset of gastric and gastroesophageal junction adenocarcinoma (gastric cancer) patients with an advanced form of the disease, according to an analyst with research and consulting firm GlobalData.

As explored in GlobalData's gastric cancer report, incidences of the disease are set to increase to over 410,000 by 2024 across the eight major markets of the US, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK, Japan, and China, which is indicative of the growing need for effective gastric cancer drugs, and the potential market open to IMAB362.

A randomized, open-label Phase II trial named FAST (NCT01630083) demonstrated that IMAB362, in combination with EOX (epirubicin, oxaliplatin, and capecitabine) chemotherapy, significantly improved patients' progression-free survival and overall survival of previously untreated, claudin18.2-positive advanced gastric cancer patients compared with EOX alone.

Progression free survival was 7.9 months with IMAB362, versus 4.8 months with EOX alone, while overall survival was 13.2 months versus 8.4 months.

Indeed, IMAB362 is the first drug to have shown a survival benefit for gastric cancer patients in the first-line setting since the approval of Roche's Herceptin (trastuzumab) in 2010.

Dr Fenix Leung, GlobalData's Senior Analyst covering Oncology and Hematology, explains: "The commercial potential of IMAB362 is huge, as the drug targets the first-line setting of advanced gastric cancer - the largest patient segment within the indication.

"Although only patients with claudine18.2-positive gastric cancer would be eligible for the drug, GlobalData anticipates that

the eligible pool of IMAB362 will be greater than that of Herceptin, meaning it could have peak sales in excess of \$1 billion, compared with Herceptin's estimated peak sales of \$402 million for the gastric cancer indication."

Despite its potential success, certain risks will exist for IMAB362, as Ganymed is a small biopharma company that was spun off from the Universities of Mainz and Zurich.

Dr Leung continues: "The company's size means it may not be able to finance a Phase III study for IMAB362 before receiving further investment, possibly allowing a number of competitors, including Eli Lilly's Cyramza and Merck and Co.'s Keytruda, to enter the market first. However, with its robust randomized Phase II data, IMAB362 thus far appears to be the most promising gastric cancer candidate."