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Singapore: The LUX-Lung 3 Phase III results showed that lung cancer patients taking the novel compound afatinib, an irreversible ErbB Family Blocker, as a first-line treatment lived for almost one year before their tumour started to grow again (progression-free survival of 11.1 months). This was against the standard of just over half a year (6.9 months) of progression-free survival for those on standard chemotherapy (pemetrexed/cisplatin).

Boehringer Ingelheim's registration trial LUX-Lung 3 is investigating the company's front runner molecule afatinib, and is the

largest and most robust trial to date in EGFR (ErbB1) mutation positive advanced lung cancer patients.

"Not only did LUX-Lung 3 meet its primary endpoint, but it also showed that afatinib, especially in patients with the most common EGFR mutations, almost doubled the progression-free survival time compared to chemotherapy," commented Prof James Chih-Hsin Yang, director of the Cancer Research Center, College of Medicine, National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan, who is the principal investigator of the LUX-Lung 3 trial. "Based on this proven efficacy in the largest and most robust registration trial, coupled with its novel mode of action, afatinib may become one of the most valuable treatment options for this distinct patient population."

Prof. Klaus Dugi, Corporate Senior Vice President Medicine, Boehringer Ingelheim, said, "We are pleased to see that the first compound from our large oncology portfolio has clearly demonstrated its clinical benefit and the potential to effectively help those lung cancer patients harboring EGFR mutations."

The most common adverse events associated with afatinib treatment were diarrhea and skin-related side effects. These adverse events were as expected with EGFR inhibition, consistent with previous studies, and were predictable, manageable and reversible. These rarely led to discontinuation of the treatment.