Drug to help cancer children down under

22 July 2014 | Regulatory | By BioSpectrum Bureau

Singapore: Two months after Leicestershire company Nova Laboratories received US approval to sell Xaluprine in the country, it has now decided to head down under.

The company received permission to market the drug in Australia by the Therapeutic Goods Administration after working in partnership with LINK Healthcare, based in Australia. The company said in an official statement that the drug will be sold in Australia as ALLMERCAP.

The company will be helping hundreds of children suffering from cancer in Australia as it expects to supply the country with thousands of the 100ml bottles of the liquid drug each year.

Nova had already announced that the US success would help it double production of the drug at its Gloucester Crescent plant and create 60 jobs at the site over the next five years.

Dr Hussain Mulla, head of clinical development for Nova said in a statement, "We're hugely proud that, thanks to this Australian approval, our product will contribute towards improved treatment of childhood cancer across the globe. We feel privileged to be one of only a handful of UK-based companies to secure both US and Australian approval of a new medicine and for this to be achieved with our first ever licensed product is especially pleasing." The drug was developed to treat children with a rare form of cancer, acute lymphoblastic leukaemia.

Xaluprine has been developed by Nova especially for children in a liquid form so it is easier to swallow than a tablet and the dose can be accurately measured. The medicine is also free from artificial colours and flavours, so it is child-friendly. It will be known in the US as Purixan.

John Bacon, chairman of LINK, said in the statement, "Until now, the only approved formulation of this drug available in Australia was a tablet, which can be very hard for young children to take."

The company already supplies the drug in the UK and parts of Europe and hopes to sell it in other countries.