

Australia lists pancreatic cancer drug in reimbursement scheme

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Singapore: Australian biopharmaceutical company, Specialised Therapeutics Australia (STA)'s Abraxane (nanoparticle albumin-bound paclitaxel) in combination with gemcitabine, has got listed in Australia's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for patients with metastatic pancreatic cancer from 1 November.

In Australia, pancreatic cancer is the fifth most common cause of cancer mortality. Pancreatic cancer accounts for 6 percent of all cancer deaths, with the lowest 5-year survival of all common cancers at 5.2 percent.

Abraxane, in combination with gemcitabine, is indicated for the first-line treatment of patients with metastatic adenocarcinoma of the pancreas.

Australian oncologist Associate Professor Nick Pavlakis from Sydney's North Shore Hospital described Abraxane as the most significant breakthrough in pancreatic cancer in 15 years.

"I believe it is the most effective therapy (for pancreatic cancer) available on the PBS," Associate Professor Pavlakis commented. "This PBS listing is a major step and it is a new platform upon which we can move forward."

Mr Carlo Montagner, CEO, STA said, "The inclusion of Abraxane on the PBS for patients with metastatic pancreatic cancer is a landmark achievement and provides an important new treatment option for patients with this aggressive disease."

"Until now, Abraxane has been widely available and PBS reimbursed for patients with metastatic breast cancer, but not for those with metastatic pancreatic cancer, who have been shown to also gain substantial clinical benefit," he added.

"Abraxane will now be reimbursed and broadly accessible for Australian patients with metastatic pancreatic cancer and offers

a new standard of care for treatment of this disease."