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April 23, 2015 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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Singappore: US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted orphan drug designation to chemotherapy drug candidate Cantrixil for ovarian cancer developed by CanTx, a subsidiary joint venture of Australia's Novogen and Yale University.

Orphan Drug Designation is an important development for any experimental drug and has been instigated in a number of territories including the US, Europe and Australia to encourage the development of drugs for clinical indications that do not have a high incidence.

Mr Graham Kelly, CEO, Novogen and CanTx, said, "Receiving this designation is one more step in our objective of bringing Cantrixil to market as a drug that we hope will provide meaningful clinical benefit to patients with ovarian cancer and deliver that long-sought breakthrough for patients with a cancer that has shown only slight improvement in 5-year survival rates over the last 30 years.

"CanTx came out of a belief by Yale University and some long-term ovarian cancer researchers in the Yale Medical School that Cantrixil represented a potential breakthrough in the treatment of ovarian cancer," Mr Kelly added.

Cantrixil is on track to enter the clinic in Australia in late-2015/early-2016 in patients with the condition, malignant ascites, a terminal condition associated with cancers such as ovarian cancer and for which no effective long-term therapies exist.