

Pancreatic cancer drug pipeline rich but slow'

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Singapore: While the treatment pipeline for pancreatic cancer shows a high level of innovation, with 52 percent of products categorized as first-in-class, most development is in the early stages, meaning a significant proportion of therapies are unlikely to reach the market in the near future, says business intelligence provider GBI Research.

According to analysis firm, the pancreatic cancer treatment pipeline contains 447 therapeutics in active development across all Phases, compared to 209 currently-marketed products, almost 75 percent of therapies are in Phase I or earlier.

According to Mr Joshua Libberton, analyst for GBI Research, 58 percent of drugs in the pancreatic cancer treatment pipeline are in the discovery or preclinical stages, 17 percent are in Phase I and 21 percent are in Phase II, leaving just 4 percent of products in Phase III of development.

Mr Libberton commented, "While the Phase III portion of the pipeline is comparatively small, it is followed by a relatively large Phase II, indicating that there will be a sustained stream of products moving through the later development stages."

"This considerable difference is in line with the industry trend of increasing biologic development, following the escalating success of biologics in other therapy areas, such as Herceptin (trastuzumab) and Avastin (bevacizumab).

"Despite this growth in the biologics sector, small molecules remain dominant in the pancreatic cancer pipeline thanks to their versatility and ease of manufacture, as well as a more established understanding of their clinical properties. However, it is clear that drug developers are seeking novel approaches to pancreatic cancer treatment that differ from the present market," the analyst concluded.