

Medical Research Agency

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Results of the call for development of Polish adoptive therapy (CAR/CAR-T)

The Medical Research Agency has announced the results of the competition to develop a Polish adoptive therapy (CAR/CAR-T). In the coming days a funding agreement will be signed, which will launch an unprecedented in Polish history program for the development of ultra-modern oncological therapy.

Two scientific consortia, led by the Medical University of Gdańsk and the Medical University of Warsaw, entered the competition. However, the grant of PLN 100 million within the ABM competition was intended only for one consortium. Although the foreign experts evaluating the competition applications evaluated both projects very highly, a clear advantage of points was obtained by the consortium led by the Medical University of Warsaw represented by the principal investigator, Professor Sebastian Giebel.

The winning consortium consists of units located throughout the country, and among the institutions there are: the consortium leader - Warsaw Medical University, the National Cancer Institute of Frederick Chopin in Warsaw, the National Institute of Oncology in Warsaw, and the National Institute of Public Health in Warsaw. Maria Skłodowska Curie Hospital, University Clinical Center of Warsaw Medical University, Institute of Hematology and Transfusiology, Transfiguration Clinical Hospital of Maria Skłodowska Curie Medical University, Warsaw Medical University. The University Hospital No. 1 in Poznan, the University Hospital No. 1 in Poznan, the University Hospital No. 2 in Poznan. Dr. Antoni Jurasz Medical University. The Institute of Medicine of the Polish Academy of Sciences has been established with the participation of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Poznan, the Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin and the Medical University of Lodz. However, the consortium is open and other entities may join.

Introduction of CAR-T cells therapy to Poland is important not only from the point of view of scientific research, but first of all from the point of view of patient opportunities. Indications for therapy include malignant lymphomas and acute leukemias for which no therapeutic option is available.

So far, the recombinant antibody therapy - CAR-T cell has been virtually unavailable in our country, because its single administration costs over 1.5 million PLN. In Poland only a few people had a chance to undergo this treatment. Currently, thanks to the grant from the Medical Research Agency, this therapy has a chance to appear in Poland on a permanent basis.

As the President of the Medical Research Agency, Radosław Sierpiński, MD, PhD, emphasises - Polish scientists are ready to produce this technology and implement it permanently into the Polish health care system. We hope that within a few years, thanks to the actions we have taken, several hundred patients will receive it: all those who will be eligible for treatment.

CAR-T immunotherapy is an example of the most personalized form of therapy because a drug is produced for each patient from their own lymphocytes. This therapy is used in patients who have relapsed, previous treatment has been ineffective, and when transplantation is not possible due to advanced tumor stage.

Remission of the disease to the stage when tumor cells cannot be detected with laboratory methods was achieved in 60-70% of patients with CAR-T technology. In other therapies, the chance of curing such patients is close to zero. The list of indications for the use of CAR-T technology continues to grow. Clinical trials are currently underway worldwide to evaluate the efficacy of CAR-T therapy in other hematologic malignancies as well, as in solid tumors such as lung cancer, breast cancer, glioblastoma multiforme and pancreatic cancer.

The funds obtained under the PLN 100 million grant from Medical Research Agency will allow Polish laboratories to equip themselves so that within a few years they will be able to offer Polish technology many times cheaper and more widely available. As the President of MRA declares - This is a long-term project and even after the grant from MRA is over, we will still be thinking how to develop this technology in Poland. I hope that with time this will translate into reimbursement decisions and CAR-T will become a widely used therapy in Poland.

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