



UK biotech company announces discovery of novel potential Covid-19 treatments

Glasgow, Scotland, 30th April 2020: A UK-based biotechnology firm has announced the discovery of two separate novel treatments for Covid-19 patients before they are put on ventilators. They are now urgently seeking funding of £4m to accelerate safety studies and clinical trials.

ILC Therapeutics has patented a new Interferon-Alpha subtype, called Interferon Alpha 14, which can be administered to patients through injection or inhalation. This natural human molecule treatment could prevent Covid-19 induced Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS), which would mean that a considerable number of patients may no longer need to be on a ventilator.

Interferon Alpha 14 is the most potent antiviral interferon that exists and requires very small doses for treatment. It could also treat Covid-19 by boosting the body's Natural Killer cells (NK cells) which fight the virus and prevent an immune overreaction that can cause fatal damage to the lungs, known as a Cytokine Storm.

This would prevent the onset of ARDS which remains the leading cause of Covid-19 fatalities, and also drastically reduce the need for ventilators.

In addition to its interferon project, the company is working with Professor Shoumo Bhattacharya at the University of Oxford to develop therapeutic Evasins, which are molecules derived from ticks that can extinguish a Cytokine Storm in the body once it has already advanced – much like using a fire extinguisher on a flash flame. This would give Covid-19 patients who have already developed ARDS a much higher chance of survival and recovery.

Professor Bhattacharya, who is the Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine and BHF Chair at the University of Oxford, added: “Evasins have proven pre-clinical efficacy against chemokines, which are important components of cytokine storms, and I am excited that their potential for managing Covid-10 cytokine storms will be studied.”

The two treatments could constitute an early stage and late stage treatment option for all Covid-19 patients and offers the prospect of many severe cases of Covid-19 making a good recovery.

The company has confirmed that Dr Alan Walker has agreed to become CEO to lead and streamline the development of the new treatments. Dr Walker has over 50 years' experience in the life science sector. He is the former CEO of Internis and Ryboquin and spent 28 years at Warner Lambert.

Dr Walker stated: “I am delighted at the prospect of joining this ambitious company at a crucial time in the fight against Covid-19. It is remarkable that a small, biotech start-up of this size would have discovered not one but two novel treatment methods, and I want to help charter the course as we hopefully bring these treatments to clinical trials fast and work to save lives.

“There has been much talk within the scientific community of Interferon Alpha 2, but this is not an effective treatment method and frankly has stalled further interferon research by decades. ILCT's Interferon Alpha 14 could prevent the need for patients to be put on ventilators by boosting their innate

immune systems as the virus progresses. We have seen that few patients survive once they are put on ventilators, so the quicker we can develop this treatment in a safe and scalable way, the better.”

There is currently just one alpha interferon that is used globally, Interferon Alpha 2, which has been used in Covid-19 patients in China with limited success. ILC Therapeutics maintains that Interferon Alpha 14 is far more effective thanks to its stronger antiviral properties and will be better suited to most Covid-19 patients, especially as it can be given at much lower dosages, limiting long-term side effects.

Dr Alan Walker will be leading funding alongside Chief Scientific Officer Professor Bill Stimson. The funding will allow for safety studies and the first clinical trials, in early 2021. If these are successful, then the Alpha 14 could be accelerated quickly through the drug approval process.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

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About ILC Therapeutics

ILC Therapeutics Ltd is an early stage biotechnology company focused on modulating the Innate Immune System through the development of novel peptide therapeutics for the treatment of Cancer, Atopic Dermatitis, Psoriasis and Allergic Asthma amongst other conditions. More recently however, ILC Therapeutics has discovered that its ongoing research has potential to treat Covid-19.

Interest in NK cell therapy is exploding and NK cells are a type of Innate Lymphoid Cell 1 (ILC-1) modulated by alpha interferons. ILC Therapeutics Ltd's hybrid, patented interferon alpha has been shown to have a powerful stimulatory effect on NK cells and this is critical to maintaining NK cell activity inside tumours where the cancer is trying to switch them off and escape destruction. ILC Therapeutics' Hybrid 1 has shown modulatory effects on tissue based ILC-2 networks (Atopic Dermatitis) and ILC-3 networks associated with Psoriasis. This work has now been re-focused to study the effects of interferon alpha on Covid-19.

The company was founded by Prof. W. H. Stimson FRSE, who was the founder of the Department of Immunology at The University of Strathclyde. Bill has been involved in eight start-up/spin-out biotech companies. He has been a long-term consultant to five multinational companies including Akzo Nobel, Rhone-Poulenc and Johnson & Johnson. Bill has published 215 scientific papers and 25 patents and was involved in the use of the first human monoclonal antibodies for cancer therapy.

For more information on ILC Therapeutics, please visit: www.ilctherapeutics.com

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