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NEW UK TRIAL WITH OXFORD UNIVERSITY TO TEST NEW BOWEL CANCER THERAPY

Oncology treatment company Sirtex Medical Limited (ASX: SRX) today announced the start of a new trial to see if chemotherapy used with SIR-Spheres[®] microspheres targeted radiation therapy is more effective than just chemotherapy in patients with bowel cancer that has spread to the liver.

The trial, called FOXFIRE, will be led by Dr Ricky Sharma from Oxford University's Gray Institute for Radiation Oncology and Biology and Dr Harpreet Wasan from London's Hammersmith Hospital.

Dr Sharma and Dr Wasan say they hope the randomised controlled study involving 490 patients at 24 hospitals across the UK will help show if Sirtex Medical's SIR-Spheres microspheres combined with chemotherapy can give patients better medical outcomes than current treatments.

Dr Sharma said "What is exciting about this new technique is that we know that radiotherapy works well in treating bowel cancer and this new way of administering high-dose radiation therapy directly into the blood supply of the cancer appears to be effective when we combine it with chemotherapy.

"We are hoping that this national trial will tell us whether this new form of radiotherapy, when combined with standard chemotherapy, improves the outcome for individual patients."

Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in the UK with 38,000 people diagnosed each year. About 50 per cent of patients experience spread of the disease to the liver and most patients cannot be cured by surgery.

Chief Executive Officer of Sirtex Medical Mr Gilman Wong, said the new study was another milestone in the rapid evolution of Sirtex's global clinical program to gather data that demonstrate and prove the efficacy of SIR-Spheres microspheres as an effective therapy to treat liver cancer.

"We are delighted to be supporting the University of Oxford in the conduct of leading edge, independent research that has as its goal the improvement of cancer patients' treatment options. We expect the results of the study will establish a new standard of care for patients who currently have limited treatment options available," Mr Wong said.

The study is funded in partnership with Cancer Research UK, the Bobby Moore Fund for Cancer Research and Sirtex Medical Limited.

Director of Clinical Trials at Cancer Research UK, Kate Law, said, "Without clinical trials like FOXFIRE, we wouldn't be able to improve techniques for cancers that are hard to treat. It's a promising trial and we look forward to following its progress and seeing the results."

The FOXFIRE study follows a successful smaller trial by Dr Sharma which showed a combination of SIR-Spheres microspheres and chemotherapy shrank cancer tumours in the liver in 90 per cent of patients compared to approximately 50 per cent of patients treated with just chemotherapy.¹

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Reference: 1. Sharma R, van Hazel G, Morgan B et al. Radioembolization of liver metastases from colorectal cancer using yttrium-90 microspheres with concomitant systemic oxaliplatin, fluorouracil, and leucovorin chemotherapy. Journal of Clinical Oncology 2007; 25: 1099–1106.

“FOXFIRE”, is an acronym for “open-label randomised phase III trial of 5-Fluorouracil, OXaliplatin and Folinic acid +/- Interventional Radio-Embolisation as first line treatment for patients with unresectable liver-only or liver-predominant metastatic colorectal cancer”.