Immunocore to present at American Association for Cancer Research meeting on new immunotherapy approach and melanoma trial

(Oxford, UK, 8 April 2014) Immunocore Limited, the Oxford-based biotechnology company developing novel biological drugs to treat cancer and viral disease, today announced that it will present at the annual American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) meeting and participate in a press conference on Tuesday 8 April 2014 at 07:30 am (Pacific Time) in room 15B of the San Diego Conference Center.

Immunocore is one of three organisations to be showcased at the press conference and will present its novel immunotherapy approach, which exploits the power of the body’s immune system to find and kill cancerous cells, and provide an update from its clinical trial for advanced melanoma.

The AACR meeting is scheduled to attract 18,000 delegates and is widely regarded as the premier cancer research event. This year’s theme is ‘Harnessing Breakthroughs - Targeting Cures’ and the event will highlight pioneering clinical trials and approaches for personalizing cancer care.

Mark Middleton MD, Professor of Experimental Cancer Medicine at the University of Oxford, is Principal Investigator for the trial of Immunocore’s most advanced drug, IMCgp100 for the treatment of late stage melanoma. Phase I testing was completed in late 2013, with promising early signs of efficacy indicated, and the company is progressing its Phase IIa trial in the UK and USA designed to optimize the dosing regimen and maximise the efficacy of IMCgp100.

Professor Middleton commented: “I look forward to providing an update on the excellent progress made in the IMCgp100 clinical trial. The drug is well tolerated in advanced melanoma patients, and we have seen clinical responses in some of them.

“The ability of IMCgp100 to target one of a largely unexplored class of molecular targets, HLA-peptides, opens the door to the treatment of many forms of cancer for which no antibody-applicable target has yet been identified,” he added.

Immunocore’s novel bi-specific biologics platform exploits the power of the body’s own immune system to find and kill diseased cells. ImmTACs direct a patient’s T cells to specifically destroy only the cancerous cells, avoiding damage to healthy cells.

In addition to an oral presentation, Immunocore will present two posters at the AACR meeting. For details of the IMCgp100 trial results and comments from Professor Middleton, refer to the AACR embargoed release (attached).

Further details of the clinical trial for late stage melanoma are available at www.clinicaltrials.gov, under trial identifier number NCT01211262.
During the second half of last year, Immunocore entered into major discovery collaborations with leading pharmaceutical companies Genentech, GlaxoSmithKline and MedImmune, the global biologics research and development arm of AstraZeneca, to research and develop novel cancer therapies using Immunocore’s ImmTAC technology.

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Images
1. Immunocore laboratory – a scientist examines cells
2. T cell (grey) killing a tumour cell (yellow)

Killing cancer - video available on request
A video is available which shows melanoma cancer cells (red) being killed by T cells (blue) when activated by the drug, IMCgp100 (a melanoma specific ImmTAC). Healthy cells (green) are left untouched. View the video at: http://www.immunocore.com/technology/cancer-killing/

Notes for editors
About Immunocore
Founded in 2008, Immunocore Ltd is a privately owned, clinical-stage biotechnology company developing a highly innovative platform technology that generates novel drugs called ImmTACs for the treatment of cancer and viral infection. Immunocore traces its roots to Avidex Ltd, founded in 1999 as a spin-out from the University of Oxford to develop novel T Cell Receptor technology invented by the founder and chief scientist, Dr Bent Jakobsen.

Immunocore has major discovery collaborations ongoing with leading pharmaceutical companies Genentech, GlaxoSmithKline and MedImmune, part of AstraZeneca. The company was listed in the top 15 private biotech firms globally for 2013 by Fierce Biotech and named Best Biotech Dealmaker of 2013 at the OBN Awards. Immunocore has approximately 100 staff and is located in Abingdon, Oxfordshire. For more information, please visit www.immunocore.com
About ImmTACs
Immunocore’s ImmTAC (Immune mobilising mTCR Against Cancer) technology enables the immune system to recognise and kill cancer or viral cells. T Cell Receptors naturally recognise diseased cells and Immunocore’s competitive advantage is its ability to engineer high affinity T Cell Receptors and link them to an antibody fragment which can activate the immune system to kill the targeted cancer or viral cells. These bi-specific proteins, called ImmTACS, have the potential to be extremely potent anti-cancer or anti-viral agents.

About IMCgp100
IMCgp100 is a novel bi-specific immunotherapeutic for the treatment of malignant melanoma and is currently in Phase IIa clinical trials in the US and UK. The product comprises an affinity-enhanced soluble T cell receptor (TCR) specific for the HLA-A2 restricted melanoma-associated antigen gp100, fused to an anti-CD3 single chain antibody fragment (scFv). A scalable and cost effective manufacturing process has been established.

About melanoma
Melanoma is a form of skin cancer that accounts for less than five per cent of cases but causes the vast majority of skin cancer deaths. Incidence rates are increasing more rapidly than for any other cancer and by 2019 there are forecast to be around 227,000 cases diagnosed worldwide each year\(^1\). Unlike other common cancers, melanoma has a wide age distribution.

Patients who are diagnosed early are treatable with surgical resection, but for many the disease will recur. Once melanoma progresses to late stage disease and becomes metastatic the prognosis is poor, with a median survival period of around eight months for patients with advanced melanoma. Chemotherapy is the most common treatment, but the response rate is very low so there is a high level of unmet need for more effective therapies.

\(^1\) Datamonitor report DMHC2628