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MEDIA RELEASE

CTM CRC Receives CRCA Excellence in Innovation Award for its Spin-out Company Carina Biotech

The CRC for Cell Therapy Manufacturing (CTM CRC) is the proud recipient of a Cooperative Research Centres Association (CRCA) Excellence in Innovation Award for its spin-out company, Carina Biotech. The award was presented by the CRCA to CTM CRC and Carina at tonight's Excellence in Innovation Awards Dinner, held at the Hilton Hotel during the CRCA Collaborate Innovate 2019 conference.

Managing Director of CTM CRC, Dr Leanna Read, said, "As we approach the end of our term of CRC funding, we are honoured to receive the award and showcase our exciting cancer therapy research as an outstanding example of the types of legacies the CRC program offers."

Carina Biotech Pty Ltd is focused on developing CTM CRC's T cell immunotherapy research, specifically a broad-spectrum chimeric antigen receptor T cell (CAR-T) therapy to treat solid cancers.

Most recently, Carina's researchers have adapted intravital imaging technology to track in real-time the movement of Carina's CAR-T cells migrating to, attacking and destroying cancer cells within tumours. This information will be used to further optimise the CAR-T cells and their cancer-killing capabilities.

CAR-T therapy is a rapidly emerging cancer treatment option that harnesses a patient's own immune system to fight their cancer, without the use of traditional treatments such as chemotherapy. It involves the genetic engineering of a patient's immune cells, specifically T cells, which are then returned to the patient to attack and destroy their tumour. In recent years, a number of US-based clinical trials of CAR-T therapies for blood cancers have returned impressive results, with over 90% of patients across several trials experiencing remission in response to treatment. Two CAR-T therapies for blood cancer are now on the market (including one recently approved for use in Australia).

Carina is committed to translating this success into treating a broad range of solid cancers, which constitute the majority of cancers diagnosed. Carina's lead CAR-T cell has already shown anti-cancer activity *in vitro* against at least 15 cancer cell lines across 9 different cancers. Initial studies have provided promising results, and researchers are now testing Carina's CAR-T cell against more cancer cell lines in preclinical models of human cancer.



As well as continuing its work optimising and testing its lead CAR-T cell, Carina is developing complementary technologies to overcome some of the inherent difficulties in producing effective CAR-T therapies for solid tumours – including CAR-T cells gaining access to tumours and the immunosuppressive nature of the tumour microenvironment.

Managing Director of Carina Biotech, Dr Justin Coombs:

“What we’ve seen so far in our preclinical studies gives us reason to be optimistic that our lead CAR-T cell will continue to demonstrate cancer-killing activity against numerous solid cancers including high-incidence cancers and rare/paediatric cancers. This award for CTM CRC comes at a great time in Carina’s development pipeline, helping to get the message out about the important work we’re doing and the reality that a broad-treatment option for cancer sufferers may not be as far away as previously thought...”

Carina looks forward to continuing its work after CTM CRC winds up at the end of its term in June this year, and is grateful for the support it has received so far from both public and private investment, including more than \$3M in grant funding and a further \$3M in equity investment.

Leanna Read commented, “I consider the CRC Program to be the cream of government research funding programs. By providing long-term support for outcome-focused research, the Program has allowed our CRC to develop world-leading cell therapies that take many years to test and depend on collaboration between a diverse group of researchers, government and industry experts. We are also grateful to the CRCA, which provides very effective networking opportunities and helps us showcase our technologies and talent.”

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About the CRC for Cell Therapy Manufacturing

Cell therapy, the use of living cells to repair, replace or regenerate diseased or damaged tissue is transforming healthcare paradigms globally. Through intervention with novel coatings and smart materials technologies, the CRC for Cell Therapy Manufacturing will introduce efficiencies in cell therapy manufacturing processes, such as cell isolation, expansion and delivery. This, in turn, will decrease costs associated with manufacturing and facilitate the rapid translation of cell therapies into clinical practice.

The CRC has a vision to increase the accessibility, affordability and efficacy of cell therapies for previously incurable, or difficult to treat conditions such as type 1 diabetes, chronic wounds and immune-mediated diseases.



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