PROPEL: A phase 1/2 trial of bempegaldesleukin (BEMPEG; NKTR-214) plus pembrolizumab in lung cancer and other advanced solid tumours

D.R. Spigel, et al.
Sarah Cannon Research Institute, TN, USA

Bempegaldesleukin, in combination with pembrolizumab, is an investigational combination therapy and is not currently approved by the US FDA or other regulatory authorities.
Full list of authors

D.R. Spigel\textsuperscript{1*}, D. Rodríguez-Abreu\textsuperscript{2}, F. Cappuzzo\textsuperscript{3}, V. Velchetti\textsuperscript{4}, A.K. Ganti\textsuperscript{5}, D. Johnson\textsuperscript{6}, R. Govindan\textsuperscript{7}, S. Antonia\textsuperscript{8}, B. Besse\textsuperscript{9}, M. Altan\textsuperscript{10}, M. Edelman\textsuperscript{11}, S. Ramalingam\textsuperscript{12}, E. Felip\textsuperscript{13}, S.M. Gadgeel\textsuperscript{14}, O. Juan-Vidal\textsuperscript{15}, A. Gupta\textsuperscript{16}, S. Currie\textsuperscript{16}, W. Lin\textsuperscript{16}, M. Tagliaferri\textsuperscript{16}, M. Reck\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{1}Sarah Cannon Research Institute, Nashville/United States of America, \textsuperscript{2}Hospital Universitario Insular de Gran Canaria, Gran Canaria/Spain, \textsuperscript{3}Istituto Nazionale Tumori “Regina Elena”, Rome, Italy, \textsuperscript{4}Perlmutter Cancer Center NYU Langone, New York/United States of America, \textsuperscript{5}University of Nebraska Medical Center, VA Nebraska Western Iowa Health Care System, Omaha/United States of America, \textsuperscript{6}Ochsner Medical Center, New Orleans/United States of America, \textsuperscript{7}Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis/United States of America, \textsuperscript{8}Duke Cancer Institute, Duke University, Durham/United States of America, \textsuperscript{9}Institut Gustave Roussy, Villejuif/France, \textsuperscript{10}The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston/United States of America, \textsuperscript{11}Fox Chase Cancer Center, Philadelphia/United States of America, \textsuperscript{12}Winship Cancer Institute, Emory University, Atlanta/United State of America, \textsuperscript{13}Vall d’Hebron University Hospital, Barcelona/Spain, \textsuperscript{14}Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit/United States of America, \textsuperscript{15}Hospital Universitari i Politècnic La Fe, Valencia/Spain, \textsuperscript{16}Nektar Therapeutics, San Francisco/United States of America, \textsuperscript{17}Lung Clinic Grosshansdorf, Airway Research Center North, German Center for Lung Research, Grosshansdorf/Germany

\*Presenting author
Background: CPIs and Unmet Need in Advanced NSCLC

- CPIs have become a standard treatment for many cancers, including advanced NSCLC\(^1\)
- However, they have shown limited efficacy as a single agent in patients with low or no (negative) PD-L1 expression\(^2\)

There is an unmet need for novel immunotherapy agents for patients who are unlikely to respond to CPI (with low or negative PD-L1 expression) and to provide deeper, prolonged responses in those who do respond.

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Background: Bempegaldesleukin

- Bempegaldesleukin (BEMPEG; NKTR-214) is a first-in-class CD122-preferential IL-2 pathway agonist\(^1\)–\(^4\)
- It directly activates and expands effector T cells and natural killer cells without increases in immunosuppressive regulatory T cells\(^1\),\(^2\),\(^5\)

CD, cluster of differentiation; CPI, checkpoint inhibitor; IL, interleukin; NK, natural killer cell; NSCLC, non-small cell lung cancer; PEG, releasable polyethylene glycol; PD-L1, programmed death-ligand 1; Treg, T-regulatory cell.

Background: Bempegaldesleukin Plus Nivolumab

• BEMPEG has previously been combined with nivolumab, demonstrating promising efficacy\(^1,2\)
• This combination has been shown to convert baseline tumours from PD-L1 non-expressing to PD-L1 expressing\(^1\)

**BEMPEG plus nivolumab-induced conversion of tumours from PD-L1- to PD-L1+ is associated with clinical benefit\(^1\)**

31 patients were available with matched baseline and week 3 results for PD-L1 status. Of these, 17 were PD-L1 negative at baseline. PD-L1 was assessed on tumour cells using a validated 28-8 method. Example image shown for a patient with urothelial carcinoma at baseline and week 3, 20x magnification.

CR, complete response; NEG, negative; PD, progressive disease; PD-L1, programmed cell death-ligand 1; POS, positive; PR, partial response; SD, stable disease.

PROPEL: Phase 1/2 Study Design

Stage 1: Dose Optimisation (US only)
Patients with advanced solid tumours

- BEMPEG + pembrolizumab
- Confirm the optimal dose
- Assess safety

N≈40

Stage 2: Dose Expansion (Global)\(^a\)
Patients with previously untreated stage IV NSCLC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD-L1</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–49%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥50%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Patients will be treated until disease progression, death, unacceptable toxicity, symptomatic deterioration, lost to follow up, investigator or patient decision to discontinue treatment, withdrawal of consent or termination of the study by the sponsor. \(^b\)In France, patients in subgroup PD-L1 < 1-49% will be excluded.

PD-L1, programmed death-ligand 1; Q3W, every 3 weeks.

Study Assessments

Safety assessments include adverse events, clinical laboratory tests, vital signs and physical exams.

Systemic and tumour tissue-based pharmacodynamic effects of BEMPEG plus pembrolizumab.

Blood samples for pharmacokinetic analyses from all patients.

Blood samples (plasma and serum) for exploratory biomarker analyses for CVA characterisation at baseline and at the time of a new CVA event.

Tumour assessments every 9 weeks ± 7 days from Cycle 1, Day 1.

CVA, cerebrovascular accident.
Endpoints

Stage 1: Dose Optimisation (US only)\textsuperscript{a}
Patients with advanced solid tumours

- Safety and tolerability
- RP2D/MTD
- Optimal dosing schedule

Stage 2: Dose Expansion (Global)\textsuperscript{a}
Patients with previously untreated stage IV NSCLC

- ORR

Primary endpoints

Secondary endpoints

- ORR, CBR, DOR, TTR, PFS, OS
- Assess the association between efficacy measures and PD-L1 expression in tumours

\textsuperscript{a}All efficacy parameters assessed by RECIST v1.1 expect OS.

CBR, clinical benefit rate; DOR, duration of response; MTD, maximum tolerated dose; NSCLC, non-small cell lung cancer; ORR, objective response rate; OS, overall survival; PFS, progression-free survival; RECIST, Response Evaluation Criteria in Solid tumours; TTR, time to response. RP2D, recommended Phase 2 dose.
Key Eligibility Criteria

- Age ≥18 years
- Measurable disease per RECIST 1.1
- Advanced solid tumours
- ECOG PS of 0 or 1
- Life expectancy >12 weeks
- Patients must not have progressed within 6 months of receiving radiation, surgery, adjuvant, neoadjuvant, or systemic therapy for cancer treatment
- Oxygen saturation ≥ 92% on room air for all indications
- Tumour tissue sample: fresh or archival
- Patients with brain metastases are eligible if certain criteria are met

Dose-expansion cohort (NSCLC)

- Histologically or cytologically confirmed diagnosis of stage IV NSCLC
- No known EGFR, ROS1, BRAF v600E or ALK genomic tumour aberrations
- Must not have received prior treatment for metastatic NSCLC or immunotherapy, including IL-2 therapy
- Must undergo a brain MRI at screening

ALK, anaplastic lymphoma kinase; ECOG PS, Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group performance status; EGFR, epidermal growth factor receptor; IL, interleukin; MRI, magnetic resonance imaging; NSCLC, non-small cell lung cancer; RECIST, Response Evaluation Criteria in Solid tumours; ROS1, c-ros oncogene 1.
## Eligible Tumour Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tumour type</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Line of treatment (metastatic setting)</th>
<th>PD-L1 status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOSE OPTIMISATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanoma</td>
<td>Stage III (unresectable) or Stage IV (metastatic)</td>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd}</td>
<td>Any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urothelial carcinoma</td>
<td>Locally advanced or metastatic</td>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd}</td>
<td>Any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head and neck squamous cell carcinoma</td>
<td>Recurrent and unresectable or metastatic</td>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd}</td>
<td>Any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatocellular carcinoma</td>
<td>Locally advanced or metastatic</td>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd}</td>
<td>Any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-small cell lung cancer</td>
<td>Stage IV (metastatic)</td>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd}</td>
<td>Any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOSE EXPANSION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-small cell lung cancer</td>
<td>Stage IV (metastatic)</td>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st}</td>
<td>Any</td>
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</table>

PD-L1, programmed death-ligand 1.
Conclusions: Study Status

• The Phase 1/2 PROPEL study (NCT03138889) evaluates safety and tolerability and assesses the preliminary clinical benefit of the investigational CD122-preferential IL-2 pathway agonist, BEMPEG plus pembrolizumab\(^1,2\)

• As of December 17, 2020, the PROPEL study has completed its enrollment in the NSCLC Dose Expansion part of the study
  • Expansion of this study and new study arms are planned and will be open to enrollment soon

• The trial is registered with ClinicalTrials.gov, NCT03138889, and the European Clinical Trials Register, 2019-003474-35

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NSCLC, non-small cell lung cancer.

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