Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer

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Data Presented at the ASCO Annual Meeting Expands the Field of Cancer Immunotherapy to Treat New Cancer Types

CHICAGO, IL - The 2014 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting picked up where it left off last year with even more exciting and promising new data coming out involving immune checkpoint inhibitors including anti-PD-L1 and anti-PD-1. What is the most exciting for the field of cancer immunotherapy as a whole is that these therapies are now displaying positive results in several additional tumor types than ever before.

Data presented on Saturday involving the anti-PDL1 therapy, MPDL3280A, showed that the drug shrank tumors in 43 percent, or 13 out of 30, patients with bladder cancer involved in a stage I clinical trial. These patients had also already been previously treated for metastatic urothelial bladder cancer and were identified by the developing company, Roche, as PDL1 positive. US health regulators have granted this drug breakthrough therapy designation to fast-track the development and review times in an effort to use the drug to save lives of patients with life-threatening conditions. Currently, bladder cancer is one of the top 10 most common cancers in the world resulting in approximately 145,000 deaths each year.

Data presented involving anti-PD1 treatment for patients with head and neck cancer followed suit on Sunday with the early findings being presented on the anti-PD-1, Pembrolizumab (MK-3475), as a single agent in patients with PD-L1 positive advanced head and neck cancer. Data presented showed a best overall response rate of 20 percent, (n=11/56) (95% CI, 10.2-32.4) with 29 percent of patients involved having stable disease as measured by RECIST criteria (n=16/56) (95% CI, 17.3-42.2). A phase III study involving Pembrolizumab verses standard of cancer is planned for later in 2014. As a very difficult to treat cancer type, head and neck cancer typically includes a poor quality of life for patients and these finding are offering a potentially new form of treatment for the disease –something that has not occurred in a decade.

This same immunotherapy is currently being tested in two dozen different clinical trials in 30 different tumor types. Seven of there trials are in phase three, for tumor types including advanced melanoma, advanced non-small cell lung cancer, and advanced bladder cancer. More data on MK-3475 will be presented later at the ASCO Annual Meeting including data on its use in combination therapy as well.

"This is a very exciting time in the field of immuno-oncology as results from clinical trials are showing the applicability of immunotherapy expanding to treat new cancer types," Thomas Gajewski, MD, PhD, immediate past president of SITC, said. "PD-L1 expression by tumors is showing an association with the presence of CD8+ T cells after treatment with PD-L1 blockade along with PD-L1 expression. While more data is still needed, we

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are seeing the promise of cancer immunotherapy continually expanding."

About SITC
Founded in 1984, Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer (SITC) is a non-profit medical society dedicated to improving cancer patient outcomes by advancing the development, science and application of cancer immunotherapy through the core values of interaction, innovation and leadership. For more information on SITC, visit the Society website at: www.sitcancer.org.