



LifeArc and UK government's Future Fund provide £3.0m in funding to Avvinity Therapeutics to drive development of new cancer therapies

17th September 2020 – LifeArc, an independent medical research charity, announces a £3.0m co-investment in British biotech Avvinity Therapeutics alongside the UK government's Future Fund. Lead investor LifeArc leveraged £1.5m of seed funding provided to Avvinity to secure matched funding of £1.5m from the Future Fund. The investment will help progress studies to validate first-in-class novel therapeutics as potential drug candidates for the treatment of solid tumours including gastric cancer, which is a historically intractable disease with limited treatment options.

Dr David Holbrook, LifeArc's Head of Seed Funds, said: "We are delighted to be backing Avvinity Therapeutics and its great science with the added endorsement of Future Fund. Alphamers are an entirely novel way to target disease that represent an exciting new approach to amplifying host immunity, and we look forward to translating this exciting and novel innovation towards benefits for patients with difficult to treat cancers."

Avvinity Therapeutics will focus on the development of novel immunotherapeutic molecules known as Alphamers, which harness a strong immune response to target and kill tumour cells. The proprietary Alphamer™ technology is a "plug-and-play" approach to enhance the performance of antibodies, or any other targeting moiety, so that multiple arms of the immune system are engaged specifically against cancer cells overexpressing the cell-surface targets of the antibodies. Avvinity's most advanced project targets Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor (EGFR), which is overexpressed in a significant number of solid tumours including gastric tumours, head and neck, colon and lung cancers. Avvinity anticipates that by engaging the immune system Alphamers will have a far greater impact on treating these diseases than existing EGFR targeting agents. Alphamers also show potential in treating haematological cancers.

Avvinity's patent portfolio exemplifies the use of antibodies, antibody fragments, RNA/DNA Aptamers and small molecules as targeting domains. When conjugated to these targeting agents, Avvinity's Linker technology drives immune destruction of tumours or diseased tissue with minimal impact on healthy tissue.





Dr Jon Moore, co-founder and Interim CEO of Avvinity Therapeutics said: “LifeArc has an excellent reputation in backing first-in-class therapeutics, and we look forward to working with its team of scientists to help progress Alphas as important new immuno-oncology medicines.”

– Ends –

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Notes to editors

About Alphas

Alphamer molecules are composed of three parts. A targeting domain such as an antibody or antibody fragment which binds a cancer cell surface target, connected by a linker domain to a sugar molecule that binds to pre-existing antibodies in the bloodstream. This technology redirects these antibodies to the selected target and triggers an immune response to kill the tumour cells by means of various immune mechanisms, including complement dependent cell death, Antibody Dependent Cellular Cytotoxicity (ADCC), phagocytosis and an effector T-cell response.

About LifeArc

LifeArc is a self-funded medical research charity. Our mission is to advance translation of early science into healthcare treatments or diagnostics that can be taken through to full development and made available to patients. We have been doing this for more than 25 years and our work has resulted in a diagnostic for antibiotic resistance and four licensed medicines. Our success allows us to explore new approaches to stimulate and fund translation. We have our own drug discovery and diagnostics development facilities, supported by experts in technology transfer and intellectual property who also provide services to other organisations. Our model is built on collaboration, and we partner with a broad range of groups including medical research charities, research organisations, industry and academic scientists. We are motivated by patient need and scientific opportunity. Two funds help us to invest in external projects for the benefit of patients: our Philanthropic Fund provides grants to support medical research projects focused on the translation of rare diseases research and our Seed Fund is aimed at start-up companies focussed on developing new therapeutics and biological modalities.

Find out more about our work on www.lifearc.org or follow us on [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#).

About translational research



Translational research in medicine is to go from "bench-to-bedside". It covers the activities, expertise and processes required to turn lab-based research into new approaches that benefit human health and ideally provide economic returns. The aim is to develop new therapies, medical procedures, devices or diagnostics that can be used in humans. The ability to translate UK R&D innovation into public and economic benefit for the UK was identified as a priority for the UK in the 2017 Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the Future.¹ There are a number of barriers to effective translation including a need for more access to skills and knowledge, funding needs, capacity of organisations to innovate and regulatory challenges.

About Avvinity Therapeutics

Avvinity Therapeutics is an immunotherapy company focused on oncology that benefits from its proprietary Alphamer™ platform, which is protected by a portfolio of patents and enables the discovery and development of multiple candidate molecules. All projects harness a powerful and clinically validated immune mechanism that redirects natural pre-existing antibodies to treat life-threatening diseases. Avvinity was founded in 2016 as a joint venture between Centauri Therapeutics, which is developing Alphamers for infectious diseases, and gene editing tools and services company, Horizon Discovery.

¹ Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy: [Industrial Strategy: building a Britain fit for the Future](#), (2017) pp61-62.

