

Health News And Notes

A New Approach To Treating Melanoma

(NAPSA)—A stain now commonly used in eyedrops to identify damage to the eye may present an unexpected source of hope for those struggling with malignant melanoma. The stain is called “rose bengal.”

Melanoma is widely recognized as the most serious form of skin cancer, and, while not the most common of the skin cancers, causes the most deaths. If treated in the early stages, this type of cancer will often respond well to treatment and is highly curable. However, if it is not treated, the melanoma can spread to other parts of the body, where it becomes difficult to treat and can quickly become life threatening.

The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2007 there will be 59,940 new cases of melanoma in the United States. Experts say everyone is at some risk for melanoma. An individual's level of risk generally depends on one or more of these factors: sun exposure, number of moles on the skin, skin type and family history (genetics).

The most common cancer treatments, chemotherapy and radiation, typically also destroy healthy cells. Further, they do little to stop metastasis, the often-fatal spread of the disease throughout the body. Provectus Pharmaceuticals, a public pharmaceutical company, is developing a novel drug based on rose bengal, the active ingredient in Provecta, its new anti-cancer agent. When the agent is injected into a malignant melanoma, it causes a cascade effect in which the cancer cells self-destruct while leaving healthy cells intact, making this



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treatment safer and potentially more effective than conventional therapies. In clinical trials, after treatment of melanoma tumors elsewhere in the body, Provecta has also successfully induced destruction of multiple untreated melanomas, in what is known as a so-called bystander effect.

“One of the greatest challenges we face in treating melanoma is the tendency for the cancer to metastasize to other parts of the body. Thus, the bystander effect gives hope that patients treated with Provecta will experience an overall immune response,” says Dr. Craig Dees, CEO of Provectus.

This new approach to treating cancers has been the subject of extensive preclinical studies, and Provecta is rapidly progressing through early-stage clinical testing, Dr. Dees reports. To learn more about the company and the drug, visit the Web site at www.pvct.com.