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HRA Pharma announce adrenocortical carcinoma award winners at ENS@T 2012 meeting

Paris, France – 23rd November, 2012 – Proud sponsors of the Adrenocortical Cancer Award, HRA Pharma, who engineer products, devices and supporting services for rare diseases in endocrinology and oncology, have today announced their winners at the 11th Scientific Meeting of the European Network for the Study of Adrenal Tumours (ENS@T) in Madrid, Spain.

The two awards, one for a clinical and one for a basic science project, aim to reward innovative work accomplished in the field of adrenocortical cancer. Proposals were submitted for projects relating to applicable research topics including scientific work on adrenocortical cancer relevant to the pathophysiology, genetics, epidemiology, diagnosis or therapy of the disease.

An eight member jury scored all applications and the top rated submissions were as follows, in the clinical category; ‘Combination chemotherapy in advanced adrenocortical carcinoma’, by Martin Fassnacht¹ and in the basic science category; ‘Analysis of the role of Igf2 in adrenal tumor development in transgenic mouse models’, by Pierre Val². The winning projects each receive a €2,500 prize.

Dr Rita Chadarevian, Medical Affairs Manager for Rare Diseases Endocrinology-Oncology from HRA Pharma who sat on the awards committee commented, “HRA Pharma is delighted to sponsor such a fantastic initiative in the field of adrenocortical cancer. All of the proposals submitted for this award were original and well designed so identifying just two was challenging, however congratulations go to Martin, Pierre and their talented teams”.

ENS@T is made up of European clinical and scientific experts on the subject of adrenals tumors. The organisation’s aim is to improve the understanding of the genetics, tumorigenesis and hypersecretion in patients with adrenal tumours and associated familial syndromes.

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About HRA Pharma

HRA Pharma is a privately-held European pharmaceutical company that designs products, devices and supporting services in niche areas of health and makes them available to doctors and patients worldwide. The company targets therapeutic gaps in the areas of reproductive health and endocrinology, and uses innovative marketing solutions and socially-conscious programs, such as contraception education in developing countries, to promote healthy management of drugs and diseases. Headquartered in Paris, France and with offices throughout Europe, HRA Pharma has built a strong network of R&D, manufacturing, distribution and NGO partners which enables it to satisfy critical patient needs and improve patient health in over 50 countries across the globe. Visit www.hra-pharma.com for more information.

About ENS@T

ENS@T is the European Network for the Study of Adrenal Tumours. Founded in 2002, it is composed of European clinical and scientific experts of adrenals tumors. This membership-based society's aim is to improve the understanding of the genetics, tumourigenesis and hypersecretion in patients with adrenal tumours and associated familial syndromes. Visit <http://www.ensat.org/> for more information.

About the winning projects

1. "Combination chemotherapy in advanced adrenocortical carcinoma" by Martin Fassnacht

This project was about the FIRM-ACT trial, the largest prospective clinical study ever done in ACC. The main results of this study were published in the New England Journal of Medicine (N Engl J Med 2012;366:2189-97). Several investigators around the world participated to patients' recruitment, but the majority were recruited by European centers and the principal investigator and study coordinator was Dr Martin Fassnacht.

In summary, 304 patients with advanced adrenocortical carcinoma were randomized to receive mitotane plus either a combination of etoposide, doxorubicin and cisplatin (EDP) every 4 weeks or streptozocin (streptozotocin) every 3 weeks. For first-line therapy, patients in the EDP-mitotane group had a significantly higher response rate than those in the streptozocin-mitotane group (23.2% vs. 9.2%, $P < 0.001$) and longer median progression-free survival (5.0 months vs. 2.1 months; hazard ratio, 0.55; 95% confidence interval [CI], 0.43 to 0.69; $P < 0.001$); there was no significant between-group difference in overall survival (14.8 months and 12.0 months, respectively; hazard ratio, 0.79; 95% CI, 0.61 to 1.02; $P = 0.07$). Rates of serious adverse events did not differ significantly between treatments. Therefore, rates of response and progression-free survival were significantly better with EDP plus mitotane than with streptozocin plus mitotane as first-line therapy, with similar rates of toxic events, although there was no significant difference in overall survival

2. "Analysis of the role of Igf2 in adrenal tumor development in transgenic mouse models" by Pierre Val

The most frequent alteration in patients with ACC is overexpression of the growth factor IgF2 and constitutive activation of Wnt/b-catenin signaling. In this project, Pierre Val et al. described the development of two distinct transgenic mouse lines using different promoter drivers to allow specific overexpression of IgF2 throughout the adrenal cortex. They showed for the first time that overexpression of IgF2 alone has no oncogenic potential per se in the adrenal cortex, although it is associated with the aberrant recruitment of adrenal progenitor cells.

They have also tested the hypothesis that Igf2 may cooperate with Wnt signalling by mating Igf2 overexpressing lines with mice that express constitutive active β -catenin in the adrenal cortex. They showed that there is a mild effect on tumour progression at advanced ACC stages, but these two alterations are not sufficient to trigger malignant adrenocortical tumourigenesis. Altogether these novel findings suggested that the growth factor IGF2 is a mild contributor to malignant adrenocortical tumourigenesis. The article summarizing these new findings was published in PLOS/one in August 2012.