

Noxopharm (ASX:NOX) looking to trial its anti-prostate cancer drug on COVID-19 - The Market Herald



Executive Chairman & CEO, Graham Kelly
Sourced: Finance News Network

- Noxopharm (NOX) wants to test its anti-prostate cancer drug, Veyonda, against COVID-19
- The company is waiting for approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to start its trials
- Noxopharm will be looking at the Stimulator of Interferon Genes pathway within COVID-19 patients and try and prevent tissue damage within the pathway
- Noxopharm is up 23.5 per cent on the market today, selling shares for 21 cents each

Noxopharm (NOX) wants to test its anti-prostate cancer drug Veyonda against COVID-19.

The company is waiting for approval from the U.S. FDA (Food and Drug Administration) to give the clinical study a green tick to begin.

How would an anti-prostate drug fight COVID-19?

Well, the company says it's all about one signalling pathway, Stimulator of Interferon Genes (STING). STING detects the presence of pathogenic organisms - such as viruses and bacteria.

Additionally, the pathway provides an important role in clearing damaged cells and tissues. It produces proteins called cytokines, which coordinate the immune and tissue repair (inflammatory) responses.

However, STING can use self-destructive forces and damage tissues in a phenomenon known as a cytokine storm. This happens in cancer and COVID-19.

The Hudson Institute, led by Dr Michael Gantier, has discovered that the active ingredient in Veyonda - idronoxil - blocks the STING pathway associated with cellular damage caused by hypoxia (absence of oxygen).

"We have shown that idronoxil is a very potent inhibitor of STING signalling in cell-based assays using STING agonists, and also in the context of cellular damage caused by a chemotherapy agent," Michael said.

"The inhibitory activities measured were measured in the sub-micromolar range, on par with other inhibitors recently reported," he added.

Where would Noxopharma start?

CEO Graham Kelly says the company will first look at the STING pathway and see if it is a major factor in COVID-19 deaths and then will investigate the potential of Veyonda to prevent cytokine storms.

"The need to prevent the phenomena of cytokine storm and septic shock in COVID-19 patients looks likely to remain for some considerable time, and may even remain a long-term need should development of an effective vaccine prove challenging," Graham said.

About COVID-19 deaths

The danger with COVID-19 is that it progresses from a mild disease into an overwhelming and sudden condition, with heart and kidney failure, clotting problems and septic shock.

Currently, there has been no approved treatment for the virus.

Noxopharm is up 23.5 per cent on the market today, selling shares for 21 cents each at 2:08 pm AEST.

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