

Case Study: Healthier Nottingham Scancell

All research scientists hope their discoveries will make a difference – and Scancell's work in vaccine technology will potentially revolutionise the way we treat cancer.

Founded in 1997 by Professor Lindy Durrant as a spinout from The University of Nottingham, since its inception, the company has focused on the discovery and development of products that use the immune system to treat or prevent cancer.

Scancell's pioneering, patent-protected vaccine is called ImmunoBody® and uses a human monoclonal antibody (clones of a single parent immune cell) as a vector – a method to deliver genetic material into cells – targeting the ones that are essential in stimulating immune responses. Although Scancell operates in a highly competitive market, it's ImmunoBody® technology sets it apart from other oncology companies in how it utilises the body's natural defences.

ImmunoBody® can inhibit the growth of solid tumours and prevent the metastatic spread (from one organ or part to another) of the disease. It's hoped it will also help with the general development of therapeutic vaccines – which boost the body's immune system - to fight infectious diseases.

Starting my science based business

The company was started to generate sufficient funds to get the novel immunotherapy products to reach the clinic. The company has secured £4.7million of private equity and commercial funding to date. The company's shareholders include three biotechnology companies - Genmab A/S, ISU Chemical and Biovation (E. Merck), various VCT funds, the Company's directors, The University of Nottingham and business angels.

Benefits of being based in Nottingham

Scancell is located within Nottingham City hospital. Nottingham is fast becoming a scientific centre of research, which is backed by two excellent teaching hospitals and universities. It is a thriving community of bioscience and healthcare sector businesses. Being located in the Midlands puts Scancell within easy commuting distance to most major cities.



Achievements so far

In December 2006, Scancell sold two of its major antibody assets to Peptech Ltd in a deal worth up to £4.85 million. The deal enhanced the prospects of Scancell's lead antibodies reaching the clinic and allowed Scancell to concentrate on the further development of its proprietary ImmunoBody® vaccine technology.

Plans for the future

Scancell's first clinical candidate drug, SCIB1, is being developed for the treatment of melanoma. Its anti-tumour activity has already been shown to have a dramatic effect in the lab. Clinical trials in advanced melanoma patients are expected to commence in 2009.

Professor Durrant said: "Scancell's first ImmunoBody, SCIB1, is being developed for the treatment of melanoma. SCIB1 has shown a dramatic anti-tumour effect in animals. Clinical trials in advanced melanoma patients are expected to commence in 2009. The company has already identified three centers in the UK with whom to conduct the study, which will be lead by Professor Poulam Patel in Nottingham. Professor Patel is an internationally recognized melanoma expert and is currently chairman of the EORTC melanoma group. He has extensive experience in the clinical evaluation of new treatments for melanoma. Nottingham is therefore the ideal place to do these trials and will ensure that the people of Nottingham will be the first to receive this innovative therapy. This is an excellent collaboration between Scancell, The University of Nottingham and the community of Nottingham."