

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dogs needed for promising anti-cancer drug clinical trial

Biotech company PharmAust is calling out for dogs with B cell lymphoma to help evaluate a newly formulated anti-cancer drug shown to be safe, effective and tasty for dogs. This comes following a successful compassionate use trial of the same drug, Monepantel (MPL).

Lymphoma is a common cancer diagnosed in dogs. Symptoms can include swellings (enlarged lymph nodes), lethargy, weight loss and loss of appetite.

“Currently, there is no cure for B cell lymphoma,” said Dr Richard Mollard, Chief Scientific Officer of PharmAust. “Usually, only 50% of dogs with B cell lymphoma will survive without treatment for 30 days and the other half will have progressive disease¹.”

Four veterinary trial centres are set up in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia to evaluate MPL in dogs that have been newly diagnosed with B-cell lymphoma and have not started any other treatment. MPL is already approved for veterinary use for a different indication and species. PharmAust is aiming to repurpose MPL as a safe and effective cancer treatment.

“The initial trial in pet owner's dogs with cancer was very successful,” said Dr Mollard. “We were pleased to see that six of seven dogs achieved stable disease over the prescribed 14-day trial period, with six of seven dogs also showing reductions in their tumour sizes. Furthermore, no safety issues were encountered by the use of Monepantel as an anti-cancer therapeutic agent in these dogs.”

The original formulation used to dissolve the drug, however, had a very poor taste, which made it difficult for pet owners to administer the capsules to their dogs. PharmAust is now conducting a repeat of the same trial with a better formulation, for a longer time period and in more trial centres.

“Currently, the best indicated treatment option is chemotherapy, which is a very aggressive therapy, and relapse can occur within six to 12 months. Monepantel is comparatively very gentle and we would like to see dogs doing well over the first 28-day period, then three and six months, and longer,” said Dr Mollard.

“If this trial is a success, it means that going forward, owners of pet dogs with B cell lymphoma will be given a greater choice of treatment options for their dogs. PharmAust would like to see dogs feeling considerably better, with tumours either disappearing or stabilised.”

Which dogs with lymphoma are eligible?

Leading the Australia-wide trial is University of Melbourne's U-Vet Werribee Animal Hospital where small animal veterinary oncologist Dr Claire Cannon and her team will evaluate MPL in dogs that have been newly diagnosed with B-cell lymphoma and have not started any treatment.

Did you know?

Close to 50% of dogs over the age of 10 will develop cancer and approximately 1 in 4 dogs will at some stage in their life develop cancer, according to the Vet Cancer Society

PharmAust offers a reminder to regularly inspect your pet for any lumps or bumps and pay attention to sudden changes in appearance and behaviour, which can help with early detection.

“Dogs can have any stage of lymphoma but must be feeling generally well,” said Dr Cannon. “Ultimately the patient will only be given the treatment if they have B cell lymphoma but immunophenotyping (analysis of heterogeneous populations of cancer cells) is covered as part of the initial screening.”

Program entry criteria

The dog entry criteria for the new clinical trial program are:

- Any stage of lymphoma (based on physical exam)
- Substage A (feeling well)
- Immunophenotype can be pending but must be submitted, and needs to be B-cell based on clinical characteristics
- No previous treatment, including corticosteroids (prednisolone)
- No other significant concurrent medical problems
- Good quality of life.

The MPL program involves consultations/treatments at the dog’s nearest trial centre:

- U-Vet Werribee Animal Hospital (University of Melbourne) in Werribee VIC
- Sydney University Veterinary Teaching Hospital, in Sydney NSW
- Animal Referral Hospital in Sydney, Homebush NSW
- Western Australian Veterinary Emergency and Specialty, Perth WA
- Queensland - TBA

Owners would have to transport their dogs to the centre and pay the cost for initial consultation for diagnosis. Once your pet is diagnosed with lymphoma, PharmAust will cover all clinical trial costs, including travel expenses to and from the trial centre as well as post trial maintenance treatment if both pet owners and vets consider this might be beneficial.

Pet owners interested in enrolling their dog in the MPL trial need to contact their veterinarian for a referral to their nearest trial centre.

Veterinarians - to refer patients to a trial centre, please contact your nearest centre below.

VICTORIA	NEW SOUTH WALES	WESTERN AUSTRALIA
University of Melbourne U-Vet Werribee, Werribee Dr Claire Cannon vet-sa-medicine@unimelb.edu.au (03) 9731 2054	University of Sydney, Sydney Dr Peter Bennett peter.bennett@sydney.edu.au Dr Katrina Cheng Katrina.cheng@sydney.edu.au (02) 9351 3437 Animal Referral Hospital, Homebush Dr Sonya Yu S.Yu@arhvets.com (02) 9758 8666	Western Australian Veterinary Emergency and Specialty (WAVES), Perth Dr Sue Bennett sue@wavets.com.au (08) 9412 5700
QUEENSLAND Site details being finalised. For information, please contact PharmAust Ltd Dr Richard Mollard rmollard@pharmaust.com 0418 367 855		

¹ [J Am Vet Med Assoc. 1977 Mar 15;170\(6\):607-10.](#)

About PharmAust

PAA is a clinical-stage company developing targeted cancer therapeutics for both humans and animals. The company specialises in repurposing marketed drugs lowering the risks and costs of development. These efforts are supported by PAA's subsidiary, Epicchem, a highly successful contract synthetic drug manufacturer.

PAA's lead drug candidate is monepantel (MPL), a novel, potent and safe inhibitor of the mTOR pathway - a key driver of cancer. MPL has been evaluated in Phase 1 clinical trials in humans and dogs. MPL treatment was well-tolerated and produced a significant reduction in key prognostic biomarkers. PAA is uniquely positioned to commercialise MPL for treatment of human and veterinary cancers as it advances the drug into Phase 2 clinical trial. To discover more, visit www.pharmaust.com