Questions & Answers on licence application DIR 232 – Clinical trial of a GM vaccinia virus (CLD-401) for the treatment of advanced solid tumours

What is this application for?

Avance Clinical Pty Ltd is seeking approval for a clinical trial of an IV administered GM vaccinia virus for the treatment of advanced solid tumours. In many patients with solid cancers, traditional therapies such as chemotherapy do not eliminate all tumours. Thus, there is a need for novel treatments.

The proposed clinical trial uses a GM virus, which has been designed to preferentially multiply in, and kill cancer cells. It is intended to assess the efficacy and safety of the GMO in patients that have been unresponsive to other treatments. The GM virus would be manufactured overseas and imported into Australia. It would be administered in clinical trial sites and hospitals in Australia.

What other regulatory processes apply to this trial?

Clinical trials must be conducted in accordance with requirements of the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), which address the safety of trial participants. Before commencing, the trials would require ethics approval, and must be conducted in accordance with the *Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice*. Import of the GM virus will also require approval from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

How has the GM treatment been created?

The GM treatment is based on *Vaccinia virus* (VACV), which was used as a vaccine during the global smallpox eradication campaign. The parent virus has been modified by deleting of several genes so that it multiplies in and then kills cancerous tumour cells with minimal effects on healthy cells. A gene has also been introduced into the GM VACV that stimulates the body's immune system to recognise and kill infected tumour cells. Another gene has been introduced into the GM VACV to improve its ability to spread and reach tumour cells.

What controls are proposed for this release?

The consultation Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) prepared for this clinical trial concluded that it poses negligible to moderate risks to people or the environment. Risk treatment measures have been drafted to mitigate these risks. Additionally, as this is a clinical trial under limited and controlled conditions, several licence conditions have been drafted to restrict when and where the trial can take place, limit the size of the trial, and restrict the spread and persistence of the GMO. For example, there are conditions relating to preparation and administration of the GMO, secure transport and storage of the GMO and appropriate waste disposal. Full details of the draft licence conditions are available in the consultation RARMP.

How can I comment on this application?

The full consultation RARMP and a summary of the RARMP for application DIR 232 are available on the OGTR website search DIR 232, the consultation hub or via the contacts listed below. You are invited to submit your written comments (via the consultation hub or by email) on the consultation version of the RARMP, related to any risks to the health and safety of people or to the environment from the proposed clinical trial. Please note that issues such as **patient safety, quality and efficacy of a therapeutic products, and marketability and trade implications** do **NOT** fall within the scope of the evaluations conducted under the *Gene Technology Act 2000* as these are the responsibility of other agencies and authorities. Comments must be received by the close of the consultation period on **8 January 2027.**

What are the next steps in the evaluation process?

The RARMP will be finalised, taking into account submissions related to the protection of people or the environment. A de-identified summary of all comments received and consideration of those comments is included in the Appendices to the final RARMP. The finalised RARMP will inform the Regulator's decision on whether or not to issue a licence.

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