

CSIRO aiding Oncaidia's development of a new anti-cancer drug

CSIRO has entered into an agreement with Adelaide-based biotech company, Oncaidia Ltd, to make the company's new anti-cancer drug, Apomab®, suitable for human trials.

Oncaidia's Managing Director, Keith Smith, says Apomab has the potential to aid in the management of a number of human cancers that are currently difficult to treat – including prostate cancer and lung cancer.

“In addition, we think Apomab has the potential to change the way cancer patients are managed because doctors may be able to assess whether chemotherapy is working after just the first dose,” he says.

“This would mean that ineffective treatments could be changed to improve treatment outcomes and patients need not face unnecessary side-effects.”

Mr Smith says successful human trials of the drug could also have important community implications resulting from more effective use of health resources.

CSIRO Molecular and Health Technologies scientist, Dr Tim O'Meara, says Apomab targets dead and dying cancer cells using a monoclonal antibody.

“To date, Oncaidia has used a monoclonal antibody developed from mouse cells but this is not suitable for human use,” he says.

“CSIRO's aim is to alter the monoclonal antibody into a form suitable for human use by replacing the majority of the mouse protein with a similar human protein.”

Once the new form of the antibody is produced, Oncaidia will be responsible for product manufacture and the conduct of clinical trials.