Pliant "win" still leaves a lot to prove

Madeleine Armstrong

Pliant Therapeutics claims to have gone some way towards validating its approach in idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, but it still has a lot to prove. The group opened up 17% this morning on four patients’ worth of data from an ongoing PET imaging trial of its oral integrin inhibitor PLN-74809. The results so far exceeded Pliant’s target of at least 50% receptor occupancy, measured by lung PET imaging. But now the group has to show that this translates into a clinical benefit. A phase 2a trial is set to complete enrolment by year end; however, during a conference call today, Pliant’s chief executive officer, Bernard Coulie, played down the chance of the group seeing an improvement in forced vital capacity, given the study’s small size and short duration. Another reason to be cautious is the track record of integrin inhibitors in IPF, with both Biogen and Glaxosmithkline discontinuing projects in recent years, the former on a toxicity signal. Meanwhile, preclinical oral assets from Morphic, partnered with Abbvie, are still in play. Pliant is “looking forward” to full results from the 12-patient PET study, but Mr Coulie declined to say when these might come.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLN-74809</td>
<td>Pliant Therapeutics</td>
<td>Oral αvβ6 &amp; αvβ1 integrin inhibitor</td>
<td>Interim data from ph2 PET trial reported; ph2a Integris-IPF ends Mar 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORF-720</td>
<td>Morphic Therapeutic/ Abbvie</td>
<td>Oral αvβ6 integrin inhibitor</td>
<td>Preclinical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORF-627</td>
<td>Morphic Therapeutic/ Abbvie</td>
<td>Oral αvβ6 integrin inhibitor</td>
<td>Preclinical</td>
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<tr>
<td>BG00011</td>
<td>Biogen</td>
<td>Subcutaneous αvβ6 integrin inhibitor</td>
<td>Ph2 Spirit study stopped due to safety concerns, Sep 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSK3008348</td>
<td>Glaxosmithkline</td>
<td>Inhaled αvβ6 integrin inhibitor</td>
<td>Discontinued in ph1, Feb 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Evaluate Pharma & clinicaltrials.gov.

% target engagement in interim analysis of phase 2 PET imaging trial of PLN-74809
% Target Engagement vs Dose (mg)

- 60 (Pt1) 52%
- 120 (Pt2) 60%
- 240 (Pt3) 71%
- 240 (Pt2) 98%
- 320 (Pt3) 83%
- 320 (Pt4) 94%

Source: Company release

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