

Verseau to Translate Novel Macrophage-targeted Immunotherapies from Bench to Bedside



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Verseau Therapeutics, Inc., which has newly been established with \$50 million in financing from different companies, is aimed at developing novel immunotherapies that target the modulation of macrophages and translating its macrophage checkpoint modulator (MCM) programs to the clinic.

[Verseau Therapeutics, Inc.](#) (“Verseau”) launched today with \$50 million in financing from 20/20 HealthCare Partners, 3SBio, Alexandria Venture Investments, Highlight Capital, InHarv Partners Ltd., The Mark Foundation for Cancer Research and Yonghua Capital. In addition, George Golumbeski, Ph.D., a champion of innovation and former Executive Vice President of Celgene, has been appointed Chairman of the Verseau Board of Directors. Verseau is developing novel, first-in-class immunotherapies that target modulation of macrophages, the master orchestrators of the immune system. The proceeds from the financing will support advancement of Verseau’s macrophage checkpoint modulator (MCM) programs to the clinic.

Macrophages can adopt different functional roles in response to signals from their environment, including the ability to direct pro-inflammatory and anti-inflammatory immune responses. Verseau has licensed an siRNA delivery technology, a lipid nanoparticle, from the MIT laboratories of Verseau’s co-founders Dan Anderson, Ph.D. and Bob Langer, Ph.D. Verseau is using such delivery technologies as part of its all human translational system to discover and validate novel macrophage targets, creating an expansive pipeline of macrophage checkpoint modulators.

The lead program targeting PSGL-1 reprograms macrophages to a pro-inflammatory state, activates T-cells and attracts other immune cells to generate a coordinated and powerful antitumor response.

“Current immunotherapies can only provide clinical benefit in the ~25% of cancers that involve T-cell infiltration. By targeting macrophages, present in 75% of human tumors, we

believe we can offer potential clinical benefits of immunotherapy to a large, underserved patient population. Macrophage modulation as monotherapy and in combination with other therapies could provide enhanced clinical benefit for patients,” said Dr. Christine Bunt, Chief Executive Officer of Verseau.

“Using our proprietary discovery and validation platform, we identified PSGL-1, an adhesion molecule that is highly expressed on tumor-associated macrophages across most tumor types, as the target of our first-in-class MCM program,” said Dr. Tatiana Novobrantseva, Co-Founder and Chief Scientific Officer of Verseau. “Our PSGL-1 MCM antibody is designed to reprogram inhibitory tumor-associated macrophages into anti-cancer immune response stimulators. Verseau has validated more than two dozen targets amenable to different therapeutic modalities, including monoclonal antibodies.”

“The focus on myeloid cells as an avenue to broaden the therapeutic potential of immunotherapy is emerging quickly, and Verseau is positioned to make a significant impact on this field. The company has a strong understanding of myeloid biology, has done some elegant screening for novel myeloid targets, and now is advancing a broad portfolio of antibody drug candidates,” said Dr. George Golumbeski, Chairman of the Board of Verseau. “The early data are impressive and suggest that macrophage-targeted therapeutics may become a significant advance in immunotherapy. I look forward to working with the Verseau team to build the company and to advance the pipeline of drug candidates.”

Verseau has a strategic collaboration with 3SBio, a fully-integrated biotechnology company in [China](#) with market-leading biopharmaceutical franchises. Under the agreement, 3SBio will receive an exclusive license to develop and commercialize a select number of MCM antibodies for all human oncology indications in Greater [China](#), including mainland [China](#), [Taiwan](#), Hong Kong and Macau (“Territory”). Verseau retains all global rights.

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