Phase II study demonstrates prognostic value of uPAR-PET in head and neck cancer patients

Results from an investigator-initiated phase II study performed by researchers at Rigshospitalet and using the uTRACE® technology have now been published online ahead of print in the prestigious Journal of Nuclear Medicine. The abstract of the article is freely available here.

The phase II study
The phase II trial (NCT02965001) aimed to evaluate the prognostic value of uPAR-PET with ⁶⁸Ga-NOTA-AE105 (uTRACE®) in head and neck cancer and compare it to FDG-PET. A total of 57 patients referred to radiotherapy were included and followed for a median of 34 months. The main finding was that patients with high uptake on uPAR-PET compared to those with a low uptake had an 8.5-fold poorer prognosis regarding relapse-free survival. Also, when compared with commonly used prognostic markers (FDG-PET, TNM stage and p16 status) in a multivariate analysis, only uPAR-PET remained significant. The conclusion of the authors is that uPAR-PET could potentially become valuable regarding planning of therapy and follow-up in head and neck cancer patients.

About head and neck cancer
Head and neck squamous cell carcinoma is the 6th most common cancer worldwide with 890,000 new cases and 450,000 deaths in 2018. The incidence is anticipated to increase over the coming years.

About the Journal of Nuclear Medicine
The Journal of Nuclear Medicine is the official publication of the Society for Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging and the highest-ranked journal within nuclear medicine based on the number of citations (impact factor).

“We are excited about the positive data from the phase II study in head and neck cancer using the uTRACE® technology that has been published by researcher from Rigshospitalet. First and foremost, the results underscore that uPAR-PET is a platform technology that can be used across several cancer types. Furthermore, we do not only expect uTRACE® to be valuable for planning of therapy and follow-up, but it may also become a companion diagnostic for use of uTREAT® in head and neck cancer. Curasight will now take the published information into consideration when updating our strategy over the next months. However, with head and neck cancer being a common cancer type, the market potential of moving into this indication is obviously very large.” says CEO Ulrich Krasilnikoff.

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Curasight is a clinical development company based in Copenhagen, Denmark. The company is a pioneer in the field of exploiting a novel Positron Emissions Tomography (PET) imaging platform targeting the urokinase-type plasminogen activator receptor (“uPAR”). The technology is expected to improve diagnosis and risk stratification in multiple cancer types.