

# Pharma in Focus: 20 January, 2023

## PHARMA IN FOCUS

By Tiffany Walker 20 January 2023

### ST Notches Another Win

**Specialised Therapeutics (ST) has scored approval for Qinlock in New Zealand, marking the second of five regions that the company has rights to commercialise the advanced gastrointestinal stromal tumour (GIST) treatment.**

The Singapore headquartered company was established to commercialise new therapies and technologies to patients in Australia, New Zealand and across South-East Asia.

It secured exclusive distribution rights for Qinlock in five regions - Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei - in a deal with US-based Deciphera back in November 2020.

Locally, the oral treatment was approved in July 2020 under Project Orbis and has been available on the PBS for over a year.

Qinlock is currently being made available to eligible patients in New Zealand via a co-pay Access Program while it is considered by PHARMAC for reimbursement.

ST Co-founder and CEO, Carlo Montagner said: "We are hopeful for a positive outcome by PHARMAC so that patients with advanced GIST in New Zealand have ready access to this important new treatment option."

Qinlock belongs to a class of drugs known as tyrosine kinase inhibitors and is designed to inhibit key enzymes linked to tumour growth.

A pivotal Phase 3 clinical trial in patients with advanced GIST showed that Qinlock was able to reduce the risk of disease progression by 85 per cent with a

median progression-free survival of 6.3, compared to one month in the placebo arm.

Last year, the drug was one of 33 nominees for the prestigious Prix Galien USA Awards in the 'Best Pharmaceutical Agent' category.

Singapore's Health Sciences Authority has been evaluating Qinlock since mid-2022, meaning it's the next likely regulator to make a decision on registration.

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## **National Medicines Policy Review 2022**

ST has made several key recommendations to the Federal Government's National Medicines Policy Review, to improve timely and affordable access to specialist medicines. [Click to read full submission.](#)

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## **New Treatment for Rare Cancer Cholangiocarcinoma Approved in Australia**

Melbourne, Australia 15 September 2022: A NEW targeted therapy to treat a rare bile duct cancer called cholangiocarcinoma has been approved for use in Australia.

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# **Meet the Specialist: Dr Toh Chee Keong**

Low-dose thoracic CT screening of chronic and former smokers aged over 50 would help to detect early lung cancers and save lives, according to Singapore lung cancer expert Dr Toh Chee Keong. The leading oncologist says he would like to see a subsidised program for early detection - much like the mammogram screening program for breast cancer.

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# **When 'one in a million' is not uncommon: Dr Jason Chan discusses rare cancers in Singapore**

Rare cancers in Singapore are not so rare, according to medical oncologist Dr Jason Chan, who specialises in treating patients with less common oncologic variations. He says up to 7000 Singapore cancer patients are diagnosed every year with one of about 200 rare cancer variations - which means there are fewer treatment options and scarce information.

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# **Meet the Singapore Specialist: Medical Oncologist Dr Lynette Ngo**

While 1 in 13 women Singaporean women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime - the highest incidence in South-East Asia - senior oncologist Dr Lynette Ngo wants her patients to know that five-year survival rates “are better than they have ever been”, even for those with advanced cancers.

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## **New Therapy for Rare Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumours Accepted in Singapore for Regulatory Evaluation**

Singapore, 12 July 2022: A novel therapy to treat rare gastrointestinal stromal tumours (GIST) has been accepted for evaluation by Singapore’s Health Sciences Authority.

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## **New Early Breast Cancer Drug to Reduce Risk of Recurrence or Death Now Available in the**

# Philippines

Singapore, 8 July 2022: A NEW drug shown to significantly reduce the risk of cancer recurrence or death in an aggressive form of breast cancer is now approved by the Food and Drug Administration of the Philippines. The drug, NERLYNX (neratinib) is an oral medication taken daily for 12 months by women who have been diagnosed with early-stage HER2-positive (HER2+) breast cancer and who have received prior trastuzumab-based therapy.

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## Specialised Therapeutics Appoints New Logistics Partner

Singapore, 4 July 2022: International biopharmaceutical company Specialised Therapeutics (ST) has struck an important agreement with highly recognised logistics partner Healthcare Logistics (HCL) to store and distribute its growing portfolio of specialist healthcare products in Australia.

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## New Early Breast Cancer Drug to Reduce Risk of Recurrence or Death Now Available in Malaysia

Singapore, 29 March 2022: A NEW drug shown to significantly reduce the risk of cancer recurrence or death in an aggressive form of breast cancer is now available in Malaysia. The drug, NERLYNX® (neratinib) is an oral medication taken for 12 months by women who have been diagnosed with early stage HER2-

positive (HER2+) breast cancer and who have received prior trastuzumab-based therapy.