

# Avacta Group PLC

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## Avacta plans for exciting cancer immunotherapy

Avacta Group PLC (LON:AVCT) has said it will go to clinic "well ahead of original plans" with a drug candidate that combines its binding protein technology with chemotherapy.

The group's tumour microenvironment activated drug conjugates (TMAC) are a ground-breaking new form of cancer immunotherapy.

Co-invented with Tufts University Medical School of the US, TMAC brings together Avacta's Affimers with chemotherapies in a single drug using a linker that is designed to only release the chemo in the tumour.

The plan is to gain permission for phase I trial in early 2020 to test the potential new treatment in people with certain types of solid tumours.

### Major milestone

The company called the first-in-man study "a major de-risking milestone for the programme".

"What is so attractive about Avacta's Affimer TMAC programme is that it offers a way to combine chemotherapy with immune checkpoint inhibitors without exposing the whole body to the same level of the chemo-toxin," said chief executive Alastair Smith.

"Whilst immunotherapies offer great promise for cancer patients, it is well established that only a relatively small sub-group of patients see durable responses to single immune checkpoint therapies. Avacta is directly addressing this urgent clinical need with its novel Affimer TMAC and bispecific programmes," he added.

### Targeted approach

In order to test the TMAC linker in humans for the first time, a chemo treatment called doxorubicin will be modified with the Avacta linker, rendering it inactive and harmless until the linker is split in the tumour, releasing an active cancer-killing agent.

Doxorubicin has well-documented safety issues limiting its dosing, and also putting a cap on the number patients that can be treated with it.

The shares rose 8% on the news, to change hands for 32.12p. Broker finnCap's target price is 125p.

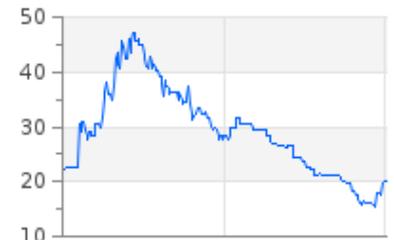
Analyst Mark Brewer told investors: "Not only is this testing of the TMAC linker well ahead of original plans, but it potentially creates additional sources of non-dilutive funding from licensing the linker to create effective chemotherapeutic pro-drugs that are currently limited by dose-limiting systemic toxicities.

"Proving the enzyme-sensitive linker works in humans also increases the prospect of licensing the Affimer TMAC platform before clinical data are generated from its first Affimer TMAC."

**Price:** 19.75

**Market Cap:** £34.75 m

### 1 Year Share Price Graph



November 2018 May 2019 November 20

### Share Information

**Code:** AVCT

**Listing:** AIM

**52 week High Low**  
49.8 15

**Sector:** Pharma & Biotech

**Website:** [www.avacta.com](http://www.avacta.com)

### Company Synopsis:

*At Avacta we have developed Affimer technology, an engineered alternative to antibodies. Based on a small protein, Affimer technology can be quickly developed to bind with high specificity and affinity to a wide range of targets. Affimer proteins can be developed as therapeutic molecules and can be used in a wide range of other life sciences applications in research and diagnostics.*

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Avacta's TMAC linker has been shown to increase the maximum tolerated dose by a factor of six in a pre-clinical study in mice.

**---adds share price and broker comment---**

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