

## Dutch firm acquires drug for cancer treatment

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KOCHI: A Dutch firm has acquired exclusive rights for manufacturing and marketing Nanophotomed, a wonder drug that could revolutionise the radiotherapy in cancer patients.

Developed by a team of researchers at the Amrita Centre for Nano Sciences led by Dr Manzoor Koyakkutty, the low-dose drug costs remarkably less and selectively destroys diseased tissues.

Koyakkutty symbolically handed over a bottle of the drug to Dr Ivo Timmermans, chief executive officer of the Dutch drug manufacturer Nano4Therapy, at the opening of the four-day international conference on nano-biotechnology organised by the Amrita Centre for Nanosciences on Tuesday.

The nanomedicine for neuro-endocrine tumours can eliminate the tumour cells much more efficiently than the existing practices of radio therapy based on X-rays and Gama rays.

The medicine, once injected into the body, specifically accumulates in tumour tissues because of the rational design of the nanoparticles.

"After accumulating in tumour, a low power laser light or LED, is used to sensitise the nano particles that illuminate the tumor which is selectively destroyed," said Koyakkutty who made a presentation before an international audience at the conference.

"It efficiently removes the tumor, much effectively than the currently available therapies and the toxicity is minimal."

The preclinical evaluation was undertaken at the Erasmus Medical Centre, the Netherlands, successfully.

The first phase of the clinical trial will begin within a year and the drug would be available in the market in the next four years.

"The product development will be done in the Netherlands and the human trials will be conducted in Europe and in India. The manufacturing facility will be set up here and we are excited about its prospects worldwide," said Timmermans.

While the conventional radiotherapy targets the part of the body where the cancer is found, the nano therapy targets the cancerous tissues alone, eliminating the chances of damaging the healthy tissues.

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