

Early Development of Cellular and Gene Therapy in Oncology - Clinical Consideration

Jessica Lee, MD, PhD.

Chief, Oncology Branch 2
Division of Clinical Evaluation Oncology
Office of Clinical Evaluation
Office of Therapeutic Products
Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research | US FDA

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Disclosures



- My comments are an informal communication and represent my own best judgment. These comments do not bind or obligate FDA.
- I have no financial relationships to disclose.



Learning Objective



- Highlight key clinical regulatory issues encountered during early-phase clinical development (especially first-in-human study) of cell and gene therapy



Outline



- Overview
- Clinical trial considerations for FIH studies
 - Trial Design
 - Endpoints
 - Dosing and dose escalation
 - Safety
- Summary



First in Human & Early Phase CGT Trials in Oncology Overview



1. Safety - primary objective
2. FIH dose: extrapolation from animal to human
3. Dose exploration - varies according to different products
 - Maximum tolerated dose
 - Optimal dose
 - Feasible dose
4. Activity assessment and preliminary clinical efficacy
5. Feasibility assessment of manufacturing



First in Human & Early Phase CGT Trial

- Study Design



Study Design



- Single arm studies should generally focus on unmet needs
 - Relapsed/Refractory to available therapies
 - Contribution of effects a challenge for combinatorial studies
- Specific targets may require a companion diagnostic
 - Antigenic target (CDRH)
 - HLA restriction (CBER OBRR)
- Companion Diagnostic Assays may require a Study Risk Evaluation (protocol-specific) assessing
 - Significant risk devices require investigational device exemptions (IDE)



First in Human & Early Phase CGT Trial

- Study Endpoints



Endpoints



- Single-arm trial
 - Safety, dose finding
 - Tumor response rate, duration of responses
 - Time-to-event analyses (e.g., overall survival, progression-free survival) difficult to interpret in this setting
- Potential confounding impact of concurrent treatments
 - In addition to investigational CG products, treatment regimen may include conditioning chemotherapy, IL2, etc.
 - Combination with additional immunotherapy (e.g., checkpoint inhibitors)



First in Human & Early Phase CGT Trial

- Dosing and Dose Escalation



Starting Dose Selection

- Provide justification for the plan and the starting dose based on clinical or preclinical data
- Starting dose for first in human (FIH) study
 - May be based on toxicology data
 - Prior human experience with similar construct
 - For engineered cell therapy: dose should be based on transduced cells per unit weight or BSA



Dose Escalation



- Dose escalation schema
 - Anticipated cell expansion in vivo
 - Anticipated toxicities
 - Half-log increments for biological drugs (log escalation is generally considered aggressive)
 - Either 3+3 design or BOIN (Bayesian adaptive designs) acceptable
 - Intra-patient dose escalation not recommended
 - Staggering of treatment between subjects and dose cohorts



First in Human & Early Phase CGT Trial

- Safety



Safety



- Safety monitor and management plan
 - Duration of safety monitor
 - Management for potential toxicities
 - Monitor for potential AEs/Is
- Dose Limiting Toxicities (DLT) Criteria
- Stopping Rules



Safety Monitoring Plan



- Duration of monitoring for adverse events
 - Sufficient to cover expected duration of effect
 - Depends on information from preclinical studies, and experience with related products
- Long term follow-up may be required for certain cellular and gene therapies
 - Duration of follow-up to be tailored to individual products
 - For example: up to 15 years of follow-up for integrating viral vector-based products



Dose Limiting Toxicity (DLT)



- DLT observation period: sufficient to cover both acute and subacute toxicities (e.g., at least 4 weeks)
- Potentially confounded by concurrent treatment
- Context dependent (e.g., CRS, off-target toxicities, etc.)
- Ensure clear definitions (e.g., CTCAE, ASTCT, etc.)
- Examples of cancer cell therapy study DLTs
 - Grade 3 and greater major organ toxicities, not pre-existing or not due to the underlying malignancy, with pre-specified exclusion



Study Stopping Rules



- Temporary pause in enrollment and treatment of additional participants to limit the number of trial participants being exposed to excess risk
- Not intended to terminate a study
- Specify conditions (e.g., type and number of adverse events) for temporary suspension of enrollment and dosing until a safety assessment can be completed
- Based on the outcome of the safety assessment, protocol revision may be warranted to mitigate the risk:
 - For example: revision of eligibility criteria, dosing, safety monitoring plan, etc.
- Consider including the following as study stopping criteria:
 - Death, other than progressive disease, within 30 days of receiving investigational CGT
 - Death attributed to investigational CGT



Summary



- CGT show promise for cancer therapy
- Products moving rapidly from bench to bedside
 - CGT are complex, diversified products with unique MOA and inherent safety concern
- Each clinical trial will be assessed on a case-by-case basis



Useful FDA Information



- References for the Regulatory Process for the Office of Therapeutic Products
<https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/cellular-gene-therapy-products/establishment-office-therapeutic-products>
- OTP Learn <http://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/NewsEvents/ucm232821.htm>
- Considerations for the Development of Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) T Cell Products <https://www.fda.gov/media/156896/download>
- Expansion Cohorts: Use in First-in-Human Clinical Trials to Expedite Development of Oncology Drugs and Biologics
<https://www.fda.gov/media/115172/download>
- Human Gene Therapy Products Incorporating Human Genome Editing <https://www.fda.gov/media/156894/download>
- Master Protocols: Efficient Clinical Trial Design Strategies to Expedite Development of Oncology Drugs and Biologics
<https://www.fda.gov/media/120721/download>
- Studying Multiple Versions of a Cellular or Gene Therapy Product in an Early-Phase Clinical Trial
<https://www.fda.gov/media/152536/download>
- Cell and Gene Therapy Guidances <https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/biologics-guidances/cellular-gene-therapy-guidances>
- Expedited Programs for Regenerative Medicine Therapies for Serious Conditions Guidance
<https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents/expedited-programs-regenerative-medicine-therapies-serious-conditions>
- [Training and Continuing Education | FDA](#)



Contact Information



- **Jessica Lee, MD PhD:** Ching-Hsien.JessicaLee@fda.hhs.gov
- **Regulatory Questions:**
 - **OTP Main Line – 240 402 8190**
 - **Email:** OTPRPMS@fda.hhs.gov
- **OTP Learn:** <http://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/NewsEvents/ucm232821.htm>
- **CBER website:** www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/default.htm
- **Phone:** 1-800-835-4709 or 240-402-8010
- **Consumer Affairs Branch:** ocod@fda.hhs.gov
- **Manufacturers Assistance and Technical Training Branch:** industry.biologics@fda.hhs.gov
- **Follow us on Twitter:** <https://www.twitter.com/fdacber>



