

Melanoma

Research Alliance

MELANOMA RESEARCH ALLIANCE APPLAUDS LATEST DRUG APPROVAL ABROAD

Washington, DC, August 27, 2015 – The Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA) applauds the Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products (Swissmedic) for its approval of the newest therapy to address melanoma – the combination of Roche's Zelboraf® (vemurafenib) and Cotellic® (cobimetinib) for the treatment of patients with advanced metastatic melanoma.

[Vemurafenib](#) was approved as a single agent in 2011, the year in which some of the latest melanoma therapies first came to market after decades of stagnation. About half of all melanomas have a BRAF mutation. Vemurafenib specifically targets the V600E-mutated BRAF protein.

Cobimetinib is a MEK inhibitor. MEK, which helps regulate cell growth, is part of a signaling pathway that includes BRAF. A BRAF mutation and other molecules, signal cells via MEK, to develop abnormally and divide out of control. These cells can grow into a melanoma tumor.

Research indicates that combined BRAF and MEK inhibition offers a more complete blockade of those critical signals leading to better melanoma control. The Swissmedic approval of combination vemurafenib and cobimetinib is based on data from an international study of nearly 500 patients whose melanoma had either a BRAF V600E or V600K mutation which showed that patients receiving the combination achieved better outcomes than those on vemurafenib alone.

"Melanoma is a global problem with nearly 200,000 patients diagnosed annually. Despite the improvements in therapies in recent years, there is a marked unmet need for new options. The Swissmedic approval of combination therapy with vemurafenib and cobimetinib is a welcome addition to the melanoma treatment arsenal," said **Louise M. Perkins**, Ph.D., MRA's Chief Science Officer.

The same combination of therapies is currently under evaluation by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States. The FDA is expected to make its decision by November 2015.

About The Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA)

MRA is a public charity formed in 2007 under the auspices of the Milken Institute, with the generous founding support of Debra and Leon Black. MRA is the largest private funder of melanoma research and has provided nearly \$68 million to research seeking to better prevent, diagnose, and treat melanoma, the deadliest type of skin cancer. Due to the ongoing support of its founders, 100 percent of every dollar MRA raises goes to support its melanoma research program. MRA's ability to fund wide-ranging research in melanoma is amplified by unique collaborations and partnerships with individuals, private foundations, and corporations. Visit www.CureMelanoma.org for more information, or follow us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

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