AbelZeta announces publication in Nature journal highlighting clinical findings for an armored autologous GPC3 CAR-T therapy in patients with advanced hepatocellular carcinoma

ROCKVILLE, MD and SHANGHAI, July 23, 2026 – AbelZeta Pharma, Inc. ("AbelZeta" or "the Company"), a global clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery and development of innovative and proprietary cell-based therapeutic products, today announced a publication in *Nature* sharing the results of the first-in-human clinical study evaluating the safety and efficacy of C-CAR031, a novel glypican-3 (GPC3)-targeted CAR-T that AbelZeta and AstraZeneca previously partnered to develop in China, and which is now being developed solely by AstraZeneca as AZD7003. The publication provides an update to the preliminary safety and efficacy data presented at the 2024 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting. The investigator-initiated trial (IIT) reported in the Nature publication was led by The First Affiliated Hospital, Zhejiang University School of Medicine's Dr. Tingbo Liang and Dr. Qi Zhang with the support of AbelZeta.

C-CAR031/AZD7003 is an autologous glypican 3 (GPC3)-targeting CAR-T therapy, designed by AstraZeneca using their dominant-negative transforming growth factor-beta receptor II (dnTGFβRII) armoring. The dnTGFβRII armoring platform is designed to overcome the immunosuppressive tumor microenvironment.

The publication reports clinical findings that indicate a manageable safety profile and encouraging antitumor activity for C-CAR031/AZD7003 in 36 patients with heavily pretreated advanced hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) [median four lines of prior treatment].

Efficacy

- Tumor regression was observed in 32 / 36 patients, with a median best tumour reduction from baseline of 41.6% (range: 3.4–94.4%) in target lesions.
- Objective response rate (ORR) was 44.4%, and the median duration of response (DOR) was 4.4 months (95% confidence interval: 2.9–7.4).
- Median progression-free survival (PFS) was 4.2 months (95% confidence interval: 2.9–4.8).
- Median overall survival (OS) was 14.2 months (95% confidence interval: 10.1 to not evaluable).

Safety

- 2 patients had cytokine release syndrome of grade 3.
- 9 patients had non-hematological adverse events of grade 3 or higher.

"We would like to express our deepest appreciation to The First Affiliated Hospital, Zhejiang University School of Medicine's Dr. Liang and Dr. Zhang, as well as the outstanding clinical team for conducting this landmark study with exceptional scientific rigor," said Tony (Bizuo) Liu, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of AbelZeta, "We are especially grateful to the patients and their families who participated in this trial, whose courage and trust made this important research possible."

"We are delighted to have collaborated with AstraZeneca on C-CAR031/AZD7003 and are honored to see the clinical data in hepatocellular carcinoma published in Nature. Reaching this milestone is testament to our complementary cell therapy capabilities."

In December 2023, AbelZeta announced an agreement with AstraZeneca to co-develop C-CAR031 in China. In January 2026, AbelZeta announced entering into an agreement where AstraZeneca would acquire AbelZeta's remaining China development and commercialization rights to C-CAR031, such that AstraZeneca now solely leads the global development and commercialization of the investigational product, now known as AZD7003.

References

The *Nature* publication, titled, **"GPC3-specific dnTGFβRII–armoured CAR-T cells for hepatocellular carcinoma"** can be accessed at *https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-026-10786-z* .

About AbelZeta Pharma, Inc.

AbelZeta is a global clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company with centers of excellence in Rockville, Maryland and Shanghai, China. AbelZeta is focusing on developing innovative and proprietary cell-based therapeutic products and is committed to ushering in bespoke treatments that harness the body's own immune system to fight against hematological malignancies, inflammatory and immunological diseases and solid tumors. AbelZeta advances research and development in its own GMP facilities at its centers of excellence, with a pipeline comprised of multiple CAR-T therapies.

Forward-Looking Statements

Statements in this communication relating to plans, strategies, specific activities, and other statements that are not descriptions of historical facts are forward-looking statements. Forward-looking information is inherently subject to risks and uncertainties, and actual results could differ materially from those currently anticipated due to numerous factors. Forward looking statements are based on the current beliefs and management's expectations and are subject to significant risks and uncertainties outside of AbelZeta Pharma, Inc.'s ("AbelZeta" or the "Company") control. Given these uncertainties, you should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date hereof. Except as otherwise required by law, AbelZeta does not undertake any obligation, and expressly disclaims any obligation, to update, alter or otherwise revise any forward-looking statements, whether written or oral, that may be made from time to time, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

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