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Dutch government grants €2.7M for development skin cancer test

ROTTERDAM (the Netherlands) and SAN DIEGO (US), September 27, 2018: Netherlands Enterprise Agency ("Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland"), a part of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, grants through a financial loan ("Innovatiekrediet") €2.7 million for the development of a diagnostic skin cancer test. Based on genetic information from cancer cells, this skin cancer test predicts if a patient is at risk of having metastases in the lymph nodes. Melanoma is a malignant skin cancer and responsible for 75%[1] of all skin cancer related deaths. The number of melanoma patients increases at a rate of 3 – 7%[2] annually and amongst children and young adults the number of patients increased by more than 250% between 1973 and 2015[3]. Because incidence levels are rising, there is a high need to select patients for surgery to determine the presence of metastases, and to avoid patients having surgery that have a proven low risk at metastases by a diagnostic test. The development of this reliable diagnostic test will therefore make an important and much needed contribution to the improvement of skin cancer care.

"It is great recognition that the Dutch government, as an independent party, expresses its confidence in our capacity to successfully develop this test and bring value to the doctor and their patients globally," says Dharminder Chahal, CEO SkylineDx. SkylineDx, a high-tech company in (cancer) diagnostics, is developing the test in collaboration with the research group of Alexander Meves[4], M.D., of the renowned Mayo Clinic, which this year has again been named the best hospital in the United States by the U.S. News and World Report. "Mayo Clinic is a great collaborator. They diagnose and treat skin cancer patients on a daily basis and translate the needs for improvement to help patients. Together we can develop a test that has a significant impact on the entire treatment process," continues Dharminder Chahal. "We are close to initiating our first clinical validation trials."

Melanoma is formed in the pigment cells of the skin. Long-term exposure to UV radiation from sunlight and tanning beds increases the risk of melanoma[5]. If a doctor wants to detect melanoma metastases, the nearest lymph nodes are surgically removed to check if they are clean. "A striking 85%[6-7] of these surgeries are unnecessary and 5%[6-7] of patients that do not receive this surgery do have metastases. Our skin cancer test will save society a great deal of healthcare costs by enabling personalized treatment plans and – more importantly – no longer exposes the patient to unnecessary risk of complications from surgical interventions," concludes Dharminder Chahal.

Footnotes

1. Wouters et al. Crit Rev Oncol Hematol. 2018
2. Cancer Research UK
3. ASCO Abstract 112435
4. Meves et al. Journal of Clinical Oncology. 2015
5. Karimkhari et al. B J Dermatol. 2015
6. Society AC. Cancer Facts & Figures. 2018
7. Gerschenwald et al. CA Cancer J Clin. 2017

About SkylineDx

SkylineDx is a high-tech commercial stage biotech company headquartered in Rotterdam, the Netherlands and a commercial office and laboratory in San Diego, California, USA. The company uses its expertise to bridge the gap between academically discovered gene expression signatures and commercially available diagnostic products with high clinical utility. With the focus on diagnostics, SkylineDx assists healthcare professionals in accurately determining the type or status of the disease or to predict a patient's response to a specific treatment. Based on the test results, healthcare professionals can tailor the treatment to the individual patient. To learn more, please visit www.skylinedx.com.