

StarkAge Therapeutics raises €1.2m to accelerate the development of STX-1, a promising targeted therapy against senescent cells induced by anti-cancer treatments.

Lille, May 29th, 2024. StarkAge Therapeutics, a French biotechnology company, announces a €1.2 million fundraising round conducted with biotech focused business angels and BPI. The company, founded in 2018, specializes in the targeting of cellular senescence in the oncontext of age-related pathologies, especially cancer.

Currently, cancers are mainly treated with radiotherapy, chemotherapy and/or targeted therapy. These therapies can lead to the emergence of senescent cells within the tumor and in adjacent normal tissues. Senescent cancer cells are implicated in treatment resistance, metastasis, and numerous side-effects including fibrosis. StarkAge Therapeutics' mission is to identify specific targets expressed at the plasma membrane of senescent cells to develop targeted therapies and thus improve patients' response to conventional therapies.

This funding round will enable the company to finalize *in vivo* testing of its first lead candidate, STX-1, an Antibody-Drug Conjugated (ADC) directed against the transmembrane protein DPP4 (CD26), highly overexpressed by senescent cells. The preliminary *in vitro* and *in vivo* results already obtained, particularly in liver and prostate cancer models, are extremely promising and applicable to a wide variety of other types of cancer expressing DPP4.

*"We would like to thank all our partners for their support and confidence. Our ambition is to develop a highly innovative therapeutic approach based on the elimination of senescent cells in patients with refractory cancers, to increase their chances of recovery while limiting functional side effects. With this fundraising, we will finalize the *in vivo* experiments and initiate our second research program, STX-2. We hope to initiate a new round of financing in September 2024 to complete the preclinical studies for STX-1, prepare our entry into the clinic and continue the preclinical development of our STX-2 program,"* explains **Dr Thierry Mathieu, Founder and CEO of StarkAge Therapeutics.**

The company is also focusing on research program, notably through a partnership with Professor Myriam Gorospe at the National Institute of Health (NIH), a world-renowned specialist in the field of cellular senescence. This collaboration will enable us to better understand the involvement of the DPP4 protein in age-related diseases, and to extend the STX-1 program to other therapeutic indications.

StarkAge Therapeutics' research associated to an increasing number of scientific publications, demonstrate that the accumulation of senescent cells during disease progression is often extremely deleterious for patients. Many age-related diseases, such as pulmonary fibrosis, neurodegenerative and cardiovascular diseases, metabolic dysfunctions, liver fibrosis and cancer, are directly related to senescent cells and their accumulation in the human body. Targeting them opens the way to numerous innovative targeted therapies.

About StarkAge Therapeutics

StarkAge Therapeutics is a pre-clinical-stage biotechnology company based on the Institut Pasteur de Lille Campus, France. It was founded in 2018 by Dr Thierry Mathieu (Co-Founder of Synlab laboratories), with the scientific support of Dr Müge Ogrunc.

Its ambition is to develop innovative targeted therapies related to senescent cells and involved in age-related diseases including cancer.

StarkAge Therapeutics' expertise is based on the discovery and validation of senescence biomarkers, enabling the development of several therapeutics' programs.

In 2021, associated to the DeepTech program operated by BpiFrance, the company received a staggered grant of €2m.

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