Background Retifanlimab (INCMGA00012) is a humanized, hinge-stabilized immunoglobulin G4 kappa (IgG4κ), anti-programmed cell death protein (PD)-1 monoclonal antibody with safety and clinical pharmacology that are characteristic for the class. Evaluation of retifanlimab in solid tumors is under investigation in phase 2 and 3 studies. POD1UM-201 is an open-label, single-arm, multicenter, phase 2 study evaluating the efficacy and safety of retifanlimab in patients with chemotherapy-naïve or chemotherapy-refractory advanced/metastatic Merkel cell carcinoma (MCC). Updated results from the chemotherapy-naïve cohort are reported here.

Methods Eligible patients were ≥18 years of age, had metastatic or recurrent unresectable loco-regional MCC, Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group performance status ≤1, measurable disease per Response Evaluation Criteria in Solid Tumors (RECIST) v1.1, and had not received prior systemic treatment for MCC. Retifanlimab 500 mg IV every 4 weeks (Q4W) was administered for up to 2 years. The primary endpoint was overall response rate (ORR) assessed by independent central review per RECIST v1.1. Secondary endpoints included duration of response, disease control rate (DCR; defined as proportion of patients with either an objective response or stable disease lasting at least 6 months), progression-free survival, overall survival, safety, and pharmacokinetics.

Results As of April 16, 2021, 87 patients with chemotherapy-naïve advanced/metastatic MCC had received retifanlimab. Per protocol, the primary efficacy analyses are based on the first 65 patients assessed. At the data cutoff, 34 of these 65 patients (52.3%) were on treatment; 4 (6.2%) had completed treatment; and 27 (41.5%) had discontinued treatment for reasons including disease progression (18 [27.7%]), adverse event (AE; 7 [10.8%]), death (1 [1.5%]), and physician decision (1 [1.5%]). The ORR in these patients was 46.2% (n=30; complete response, 8 [12.3%]; partial response, 22 [33.8%]). The DCR was 53.8% (n=35). Other secondary efficacy results are not yet mature. Among all treated patients (n=87), 66 (75.9%) had a treatment-emergent AE (TEAE), 25 (28.7%) had a grade ≥3 TEAE, and 12 (13.8%) had a grade ≥3 treatment-related AE. Twenty-three patients (26.4%) had an immune-related AE (irAE), and 8 (9.2%) had a grade ≥3 irAE. Four patients (4.6%) discontinued treatment due to irAEs (peripheral sensorimotor neuropathy, pancreatitis, eosinophilic fasciitis, and polyarthrits [each n=1]). One patient (1.1%) had a grade 3 infusion reaction.

Conclusions These data from the POD1UM-201 trial show that retifanlimab monotherapy at 500 mg Q4W continues to demonstrate promising clinical activity and safety in patients with advanced/metastatic chemotherapy-naïve MCC. Updated results will be presented at the meeting.

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