

S'pore firm enters final stage of clinical trial of Covid-19 antibody

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The final phase of the clinical trial for a Covid-19 antibody developed by Singapore biotechnology company Tychan began yesterday.

The antibody can potentially help patients with the coronavirus

to recover faster, while slowing the progression of the infection.

Some 1,305 patients who have tested positive for Covid-19 will take part voluntarily in the clinical trials.

If the clinical trials are successful, the antibody will be submitted for review by the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) and other regulatory agencies as a new drug.

In October, HSA gave Tychan the green light to start final-stage trials.

The Singapore General Hospital and National University Hospital have partnered Tychan for the trials, while Changi General Hospital and Sengkang General Hospital may refer suitable patients for participation.

A six-week phase one trial in

June with 23 healthy volunteers yielded good outcomes in terms of safety, said Tychan co-founder Ooi Eng Eong.

Clinical trials are commonly conducted in three phases, beginning with a small group to test the drug's safety and side effects, then moving on to larger groups to determine its efficacy.

Usually, in phase three, what is being tested is whether the drug works as intended in preventing disease or accelerating recovery.

Unlike the previous trials, phase three will also involve patients from partner hospitals overseas such as the Sheba Medical Centre in Israel.

"Because Singapore has been

successful in containing Covid-19, there has been very low incidence of the disease," said Professor Ooi, who is with the Duke-NUS Medical School.

He added that Tychan is exploring collaborations with other medical facilities in countries where Covid-19 incidence remains high.

The Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Health and the Economic Development Board are among various partners Tychan is working with to develop the antibody.

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