

# WRAPUP 1-Novartis, Roche unveil promising cancer drugs data

Reuters - By Sam Cage  
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- \* Novartis' Sandostatin LAR helps fight mid-gut tumours
- \* Other Novartis drugs help advanced melanoma
- \* Roche says new drug helps shrink breast tumours

(Wraps in Roche data, more details)

ZURICH - Swiss drugmaker Novartis AG (NOVN.VX) said late stage data showed its Sandostatin LAR drug helped fight tumours of the mid-gut, while other drugs showed benefits for treating advanced melanoma.

Novartis' rival Roche Holding AG (ROG.VX) also said on Thursday a new drug helped shrink the tumours of 25 percent of women with HER2-positive breast cancer, according to data from a mid-stage clinical trial.

Cancer drugs are seen as a key growth area for pharmaceutical makers like the two Swiss companies, which along with many others are presenting data on cancer drugs at an American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) meeting.

Novartis said a Phase III study showed Sandostatin LAR more than doubled time without tumour growth and reduced the risk of disease progression by 67 percent.

It also said mid stage data on two of its drugs showed potential as treatments for advanced melanoma. Favourable results from a study into the drug Glivec mean the study will continue to a second expanded stage of enrolment.

The Swiss company also presented preliminary results which showed that 72 percent of melanoma patients treated with Afinitor combined with Roche's Avastin experienced a clinical benefit.

Afinitor, one of Novartis' most important new drugs, also helped patients with advanced liver cancer in an early stage trial.

Data from a mid stage trial of the new treatment from Roche, a combination of its Herceptin and chemotherapy known as trastuzumab-DM1, showed about 35 percent of a total 112 patients had their tumours shrink, or their disease stabilise for at least six months. (Editing by Hans Peters)