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PROMISING MELANOMA RESEARCH RELEASED AT THE SOCIETY OF MELANOMA RESEARCH 2013 ANNUAL CONGRESS

As new data underscoring progress in the field of melanoma research was presented at the 2013 Society for Melanoma Research (SMR) Congress held November 17-20, 2013, MRA's leadership in funding the most cutting-edge science was highlighted. The meeting, which celebrated its 10th anniversary this year, drew more than 650 of the world's leading melanoma researchers and clinicians to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for four days of presentations, sessions, and networking.

Dozens of Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA)-sponsored investigators were in attendance, with more than 35 MRA-sponsored researchers, members of MRA's Grant Review Committee, Medical Advisory Panel and Scientific Advisory Panel presenting their findings and leading sessions to consider ways to accelerate recent progress against the disease.

The meeting's mood was upbeat, with researchers excited about the near-term potential for several different modalities of therapy. Key results released at the meeting include an update on Merck's MK-3475 trial, showing 81% of metastatic melanoma patients were still alive 12 months after beginning the therapy. MK-3475 is an anti-PD-1 immunotherapy that received the FDA's new 'Breakthrough' designation earlier this year. With several agents in development by multiple companies employing this approach to combatting melanoma and other cancers, immunotherapy was a hot topic at the meeting. Other high-profile sessions included those presenting research on potential combination approaches for treatment, as well as efforts to identify novel targets for fighting melanoma.

These reports solidify 2013 as a banner year for progress in melanoma research. MRA is working to accelerate the pace of discovery in the field, and plans to award at least \$9 million in research awards during its 2014 grants cycle.

For more information about the meeting, visit: <http://www.melanomacongress.com/>