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Singapore firm tests traditional Chinese stroke drug

Singapore-based drug firm Moleac, which has turned a traditional Chinese medicine into a treatment for stroke patients, said it would launch a clinical trial for the product in October.

NeuroAid, which is made up of a mixture of 14 extracts and includes plants such as red sage and milkvetch roots, is currently sold in China, and in Singapore as an alternative medicine for stroke patients, a spokeswoman for the firm said.

If the clinical trial is successful, NeuroAid would be recognised as a drug and sold in major markets including Europe and the United States, the spokeswoman said.

Traditional Chinese medicine is regarded as an alternative medicine in the West, although in China it is a key mode of modern health care.

Today, the only treatment available for Ischemic stroke -- the most common kind of stroke caused by a clot or other blockage disrupting the flow of blood to the brain -- is the clot-buster t-PA, but it has to be given within 3 hours and less than 5 percent of stroke victims get it.

Other stroke drugs have failed trials. German biotech firm Paion AG and its U.S. partner Forest Laboratories 's experimental stroke treatment failed in May while AstraZeneca's stroke drug NXY-059 flopped last year.

Moleac, set up in 2002 and part of Singapore's drive for a biomedical industry, told Reuters in an interview last year that it expected to sell NeuroAid in Europe and the U.S. this year.