

EsoCap swallows up VC cash to fuel study of topical delivery to the esophagus

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Investors have bet on EsoCap's vision for the topical delivery of drugs to the esophagus. EsoCap, which recently entered phase 2, will use the money to scale up and explore the use of its platform in additional indications.

The need for topical delivery to the esophagus is illustrated by eosinophilic esophagitis, the target of EsoCap's phase 2 trial. Patients with the chronic, allergic disease can struggle to swallow because of inflammation in the esophagus. Anti-inflammatory drugs may be able to help, but when given orally the medicines pass the esophagus too quickly to have significant topical effects.

EsoCap has developed a delivery platform to address the problem. Patients swallow a capsule, which contains a thin, drug-loaded film, by drinking it from a specially designed cup. The film unrolls, sticks to the esophagus and releases the drug substance over time to provide a topical treatment.

Work is underway to validate the approach in the clinic, with EsoCap recently dosing the first patient in a phase 2 clinical trial. The study is testing the use of the platform to deliver the anti-inflammatory corticosteroid mometasone furoate to patients with eosinophilic esophagitis. EsoCap will use some of the fresh funding to advance the phase 2 trial.

"We plan to use the proceeds to progress the ACESO phase 2 clinical study in eosinophilic esophagitis, to pursue the feasibility of its technology platform for other esophageal diseases with a high level of unmet medical need, including Barrett's Disease and reflux disease, and to ramp up industrial scale-up," EsoCap CEO Isabelle Racamier said in a statement.

EsoCap secured the funding from "existing and new investors with a strong entrepreneurial background." The private placement was facilitated by a Swiss loan guarantee program that is giving support to technology startups during the pandemic.