

AstraZeneca partners with Isis Pharmaceuticals

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AstraZeneca and Isis Pharmaceuticals has announced a strategic collaboration to discover and develop antisense therapies for cardiovascular, metabolic and renal diseases. The new collaboration builds on a broad existing relationship between the two companies and supports AstraZeneca's strategic approach in these therapeutic areas using novel RNA-targeted treatments. It also enables Isis Pharmaceuticals to extend use of its antisense technology to diseases of the kidney.

Antisense drugs are short, chemically-modified, single-stranded nucleic acids (antisense oligonucleotides) that have the ability to target any gene product of interest.

AstraZeneca will pay an upfront fee of \$65 million to Isis Pharmaceuticals plus development and regulatory milestones for each programme that AstraZeneca advances to clinical development. Isis Pharmaceuticals is also eligible to earn tiered double-digit royalties on annual net sales for each programme.

Dr Mene Pangalos, executive vice-president, Innovative Medicines and Early Development at AstraZeneca, said, "Antisense-based therapies are rapidly gaining momentum in the clinic and becoming an important component of our early stage pipeline. This collaboration combines the world-class antisense drug research capabilities of Isis with our expertise in cardiovascular, metabolic and renal disease drug discovery and development. By working together we aim to uncover targets and pathways that can be manipulated using antisense drug therapy."

Dr B Lynne Parshall, COO at Isis Pharmaceuticals, said, "This expansion of our collaboration with AstraZeneca establishes our second strategic relationship. This new collaboration will help broaden the application of our antisense technology to

targets in the kidney. AstraZeneca is committed to finding novel best-in-class therapies for some of the largest, most complex and fastest growing disease segments in the developed world. Combining our antisense technology with AstraZeneca's strong knowledge, leadership and commitment in these areas should be very valuable in fully exploiting these opportunities and moving new therapies effectively and efficiently toward the market."

This transaction is subject to clearances under the Hart-Scott Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act.