

Novartis acquires cancer firm CoStim

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Singapore: Global pharmaceutical firm, Novartis, has acquired CoStim Pharmaceuticals, a privately held biotechnology company, broadening its cancer immunotherapy research program.

Increasing evidence points to the role of the immune system in controlling cancer and to opportunities for creating effective oncology therapies for cancer patients by stimulating a targeted immune response.

Already leading in cancer immunotherapy, with investigative chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) technology being developed in collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania, with this acquisition Novartis is adding late discovery stage immunotherapy programs directed to several targets. These medicines could benefit patients by circumventing cancer's ability to develop resistance against current single drugs.

"Therapy for many types of cancers are expected to increasingly rely upon rational combinations of agents," said Dr Mark Fishman, president, Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research.

Dr Fishman also added, "Immunotherapy agents provide additional arrows in our quiver for such combinations. They complement our extensive portfolio of drugs that hit genetically-defined cancer-causing pathways, and also may be relevant to expansion of CAR therapies."