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ASIA EDITION

Harbour BioMed licenses SARS-CoV-2 neutralizing Ab to AbbVie for COVID-19 treatment

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China based Harbour BioMed and Utrecht University in the Netherlands have announced that they licensed to American firm AbbVie, their fully human, SARS-CoV-2 neutralising antibody (Ab), 47D11 programme, for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19 and related coronaviruses, and that AbbVie has initiated a Phase 1 clinical trial of the antibody. AbbVie will initially conduct the initial clinical programme in the US and expand it into Europe.

The fully human H2L2 transgenic Harbour Mice® platform enabled the quick discovery and development of several potent candidates of which ABBV-47D11's cross-reactive neutralising nature made it a compelling candidate to take it into development. The antibody targets a conserved region of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein. Preclinical work to date through the collaboration strongly suggests this antibody against the target can potentially address the ongoing pandemic, including a wide range of potential escape mutants.

The license agreement will help advance the development of ABBV-47D11, which in pre-clinical research, demonstrated potential against SARS-CoV-2, as well as a related virus, SARS-CoV-1. Under the license agreement, AbbVie has worldwide rights for development, manufacture, and commercialisation of ABBV-47D11. AbbVie will pay HBM and UU a one-time license fee; payments upon achievement of certain development, regulatory and sales-based milestone; and tiered royalties on commercial net sales of the antibody. Erasmus MC was involved in the fundamental science but is not involved in the license agreement. Additional terms were not disclosed.

The Phase 1 trial is a randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled study to evaluate the safety, pharmacokinetics, and pharmacodynamics of single ascending doses of ABBV-47D11 in adults hospitalised with COVID-19. The antibody will be tested in three different doses on 24 patients across global study sites to evaluate study-drug related adverse events as primary endpoints, and several other secondary outcomes. Additional details for the trial can be found here.

Dr Jingsong Wang, Principal Founder, Executive Director, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, HBM said, “With the clinical programme at AbbVie now underway, we are in a position to contribute a new therapeutic option to address this pandemic.”