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Cadila, Swedish firm develop arthritis drug

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Singapore: NovaSAID, part of Sweden-based Karolinska Development, and India- based Cadila Pharmaceuticals have entered into a strategic partnership to develop new treatments for inflammation and pain in conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis.

The companies will collaborate around preclinical and clinical development of drug candidates that have been developed by NovaSAID and the development will be conducted at Cadila Pharmaceuticals' facility in Ahmedabad, India. According to the agreement, all revenue generated from the sale and marketing in India, Middle East and Africa of products covered by the agreement will be retained by Cadila and net sales in all other countries will be shared by the two companies. Cadila will bear all costs associated with the program through to phase II.

"This partnership gives the shareholders of NovaSAID the opportunity to take the company forward with great resources and no further costs. Cadila's drug development expertise matched with NovaSAID's scientific excellence provides a solid platform for the further development of these novel drug candidates. If successfully developed, valuable deals could be signed in major territories such as the US and Europe to the benefit for Karolinska Development's shareholders," said Dr TorbjÃ?Æ?Ã?Â¶rn Bjerke, CEO, Karolinska Development.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Rajiv I Modi, chairman and MD, Cadila Pharmaceuticals, said, "We have entered this partnership combining scientific expertise of NovaSAID and our drug development capabilities to work towards novel solutions in treatment of pain and inflammation, which is one of the largest therapy areas. This is in line with the vision of our founder chairman, Mr I A Modi, who believed in nurturing innovations and bringing them to Indian patients at an affordable cost. Cadila Pharmaceuticals has a track record of making available, many first-in-the-world innovative products like Polycap (five-in-one pill for prevention and treatment of cardiovascular diseases), Risorine (Innovative solution for treatment of Tuberculosis) and most recently introduced Mycidac-C, which is the world's first active immunotherapy in lung cancer."

Most of medical treatments for inflammation and pain are associated with unwanted side effects such as an increased risk for myocardial infarction and gastric ulcers. NovaSAID's drug candidates targets an enzyme called microsomal prostaglandin E synthase -1 (mPGES-1), a critically important mediator of inflammation and pain, which theoretically should reduce the risk for

side effects. The collaboration with Cadila will provide the resources to take this program into clinical development and further towards the market.

"mPGES-1 constitutes an important target for drug discovery and development of analgetic and anti-inflammatory drugs. In addition for use in chronic inflammatory diseases, effective enzyme inhibitors may also address a broad range of other diseases with concomitant inflammation such as atherosclerosis, stroke and cancer", said Mr Per-Johan Jakobsson, co-founder and director, NovaSAID, and associate professor, Karolinska Institutet.