

Benitec, uniQure sign cross-licensing deal

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Singapore: Benitec Biopharma and uniQure, a leader in the field of human gene therapy, announced a non-exclusive cross-licensing agreement giving uniQure access to Benitec's proprietary DNA-directed RNA interference (ddRNAi) technology in Huntington's disease. In return, uniQure granted Benitec non-exclusive access to the company's AAV5 delivery technology for the development of a ddRNAi therapy for hepatitis B.

"The cross-licensing agreement with Benitec fully capitalizes on the strength of our advanced AAV platform and our proven ability to deliver therapeutic genes to target cells with high accuracy and efficacy," says Mr JÃ¶rn Aldag, CEO, uniQure.

"The agreement with Benitec opens up promising new avenues to develop therapies for high unmet medical needs such as Huntington's disease. While our current programs focus on delivering fully functioning therapeutic genes to remedy faulty or malfunctioning genes, Benitec's ddRNAi technology will allow us to do the opposite, to 'silence' the gene responsible for producing the mutant protein that lies at the basis of Huntington's disease, and to develop a therapy for this devastating disease," added Mr Aldag.

Dr Peter French, CEO, Benitec Biopharma, commented, "Benitec Biopharma is very pleased to have executed this licensing agreement with uniQure, the first company to achieve market approval for a gene therapy product, Glybera, in the west. uniQure has demonstrated their unique ability to take gene therapy-based programs from pre-clinical stages to commercialization, and we are confident that they will be able to achieve a similar outcome in this program. Importantly this agreement also provides Benitec access to uniQure's AAV delivery technology enabling further development of our ddRNAi treatment for hepatitis B."