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Singapore: Forging its relationship with Takeda further, Mersana Therapeutics has inked a pact to develop targeted cancer drugs. The collaboration aims at developing novel Fleximer antibody-drug conjugate (ADC) drug candidates to identify additional oncology-relevant targets.

As per the agreement the pair will work together, trying out new targets in a partnership that could pay Mersana up to \$300 million in up-front and milestone payments. The two companies have begun preclinical proof-of-concept studies on a handful of ADCs, and Takeda has in-licensed the program's first drug candidate.

The deal will help Takeda in strengthening its oncology portfolio. "The expansion of our collaboration with Mersana is a testament to the importance of partnership in innovating new treatments for cancer," Takeda's oncology drug discovery chief Mr Christopher Claiborne said in a statement.

"Now encompassing multiple therapeutic targets and potential drug candidates, we look forward to further advancing the next-generation of ADCs under our expanded collaboration with Mersana with the goal of bringing new therapies to patients around the world," he added.

Takeda signed an agreement with Mersana through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Millennium Pharmaceuticals, under which Takeda provided an upfront payment to Mersana for the right to utilize Fleximer technology to develop novel ADC candidates for indications in oncology.