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ASIA EDITION

Astrazeneca, China university in research deal

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Astrazeneca, Fudan University initiate research collaboration in China

Singapore: AstraZeneca has signed a research collaboration with Fudan University, one of China's leading academic institutions in the area of cardiovascular diseases (CVDs). CVDs are a leading cause of death in China and worldwide.

The research agreement focuses on pre-clinical studies to understand the mechanism of action of leonurine, a compound derived from Herba Leonuri, a herb used as a traditional Chinese medicine. Understanding the role of leonurine in CVDs such as chronic heart failure, ischemic stroke as well as atherosclerosis, may ultimately help in the development of novel medicines. China has over 100 million people with heart disease and is the 'diabetes capital of the world' with over 92 million adults suffers. CVDs are a major complication of diabetes - about 65 percent of people with diabetes die from heart disease and stroke.

Principal Investigator for the research at Fudan University and Professor of Pharmacology and Dean of the School of Pharmacy Dr Yi-Zhun Zhu said, "We're delighted to be collaborating with AstraZeneca, a world-leader in biopharmaceutical innovation. Understanding the structure and properties of natural substances may open doors to potential drug targets and provide innovative pathways to explore in the fight against major health burdens including CVD."

Under the terms of the agreement, Fudan University scientists will work in collaboration with teams from AstraZeneca's Cardiovascular and Gastrointestinal Innovative Medicines group over the next two years. Financial details of the agreement were not disclosed.

Dr Steve Yang, AstraZeneca's head of R&D for Asia and Emerging Markets, commented, "Partnering and collaborating with scientists, biotech companies and best-in-class academic institutions like Fudan University brings our Asia R&D strategy to life by helping us harness the increasing levels of innovation we see coming out of China and other emerging markets."

Dr Gunnar Olsson, head of AstraZeneca's Cardiovascular and Gastrointestinal Innovative Medicines, commented, "Our collaboration with Fudan University aims to shed new light on some very promising cardiovascular effects seen with leonurine. Better molecular understanding of its mode of action may open up new opportunities for drug discovery."