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Singapore: Swiss giant Roche recently announced that its member company, Ventana Medical Systems has inked a pact with Japan-based Astellas pharma to develop novel automated tissue diagnostics solutions that support therapeutic compounds in development.

As per the terms, both companies will support early-stage clinical trials for Astellas therapeutic compound ASP5878, a novel small-molecule fibroblast growth factor receptor that treats cancer. The inhibitor ASP5878 is designed to fight cancer by blocking kinase activities of FGFR1, FGFR2, FGFR3 and FGFR4.

In addition, Ventana diagnostics will develop an immunohistochemistry test that identifies a particular inhibitor in certain solid tumors. Roche said that the deal with Astellas will allow its collaborative projects to smoothly move from early-stage biomarker hypothesis testing to late-stage companion diagnostic development with the latter's targeted therapies in oncology.

Roche specializes in drugs for oncology, immunology and infectious diseases. In a bid to strengthen its oncology product portfolio, Roche had recently acquired privately-held genomics research company, CAPP Medical.

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