

China-US investors fund Vivace Therapeutics

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Vivace Therapeutics, an oncology-focused portfolio-based drug discovery and development company is has raised \$40 million in Series A and B financings. The company brings together leading scientists, investors and executives from the U.S. and China for a capital-efficient approach to developing novel cancer treatments.

The \$25 million Series B was led by new investor Cenova Capital and included Sequoia Capital China and existing investors Canaan Partners, WuXi Healthcare Ventures and Mission Bay Capital. Canaan Partners and WuXi Healthcare Ventures co-led the company's \$15 million Series A in 2015.

Vivace is initially concentrating on inhibitors of the Hippo-YAP signaling pathway, which plays a crucial role in cell development, and genetic mutations of the pathway give rise to a variety of cancers. Hippo-Yap pathway expert and Vivace scientific co-founder, Dr. Kun-liang Guan of the University of California, San Diego, recently discovered additional potential immuno-oncology applications by activating the pathway. Vivace is exploring both inhibition and activation of the pathway.

The company is also developing novel therapeutic antibodies called BINspecific antibodies (bi-specific irreversible cell-type specific antibodies) that bind in a nearly irreversible and cell-type specific manner to target cells. Discovered in the laboratory of Vivace's scientific co-founder, Bin Liu, Ph.D., of the University of California, San Francisco, these antibodies can achieve super potent inhibition and cellular selectivity of specific targets, creating a superior therapeutic index.