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ASIA EDITION

Pfizer inks $2.3 B CAR-T deal with China's Starna Therapeutics

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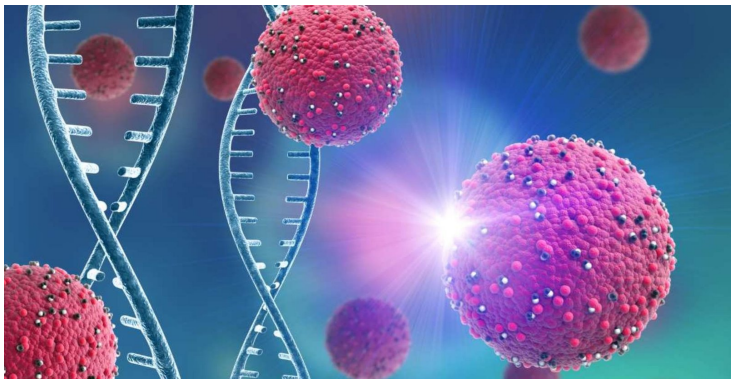
Pfizer to deploy its extensive scientific expertise in RNA delivery and specialisation in immunology research



Pfizer Inc. has entered into an exclusive licensing agreement with China-based Starna Therapeutics, a biotechnology company developing RNA medicines designed to enable in vivo therapeutics. Under the agreement, Pfizer obtains exclusive rights outside Greater China to develop, manufacture and commercialise three pre-IND in vivo chimeric antigen receptor T-cell (CAR-T) programmes that are focused on treating autoimmune diseases.

Pfizer also receives rights to use Starna's proprietary in vivo CAR-T technology in inflammation and immunology, and in oncology, as well as options to exclusively license compounds created under a separate research collaboration and an option to expand the territory to include exclusive rights to develop and commercialise each exclusively licensed compound and product in Greater China.

According to the deal, Starna will receive an upfront payment of $330 million. Starna is eligible to receive up to $2.3 billion in milestone payments associated with certain development and commercial milestones, plus royalties on net sales of approved products.

Pfizer will lead clinical development outside Greater China and plans to manufacture the finished drug product for the initial clinical trials using its facilities in the United States. Pfizer will have sole and exclusive control over commercialisation outside of Greater China for all products.

This agreement broadens Pfizer's Inflammation & Immunology pipeline and enables Pfizer to deploy its extensive scientific expertise in RNA delivery and specialization in immunology research, clinical development and commercialisation to a promising, next-generation approach in cell therapy. Starna's innovative technology provides future opportunities to design potentially transformative autoimmune and cancer treatments.