

Brazilian antibody will be used to create new cancer drug

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Recepta Biopharma, a Brazilian company, has signed a licensing agreement with Mersana Therapeutics, under which the US-based company's technology will be used to produce a monoclonal antibody (mAb) that can be deployed for the purposes of cancer treatment.

mAbs are proteins produced in the laboratory by single clones of B lymphocytes - a type of defense cell - taken from mice whose immune systems have been stimulated with antigens of interest.

The antibodies developed and clinically tested by Recepta, with support from FAPESP, are capable of binding to targeted [tumor cells](#) in a highly specific manner, without any effect on healthy tissue.

"Mersana owns the technology to create the required antibody-drug conjugate (ADC). In other words, it uses a type of binder to link the antibody to a toxin. This immunoconjugate delivers the toxin to tumor cells in a highly specific way," explained Jose Fernando Perez, President of Recepta and former Scientific Director of FAPESP.

Under the terms of the agreement, Recepta will provide Mersana with exclusive international rights to its novel mAb, and Mersana will use its proprietary Fleximer technology to develop an immunoconjugate against target tumor cells.

The financial terms of the agreement include an upfront payment and subsequent payments to Recepta, which together could total US\$86

million, plus royalties if certain development, regulatory and commercial milestones are achieved.

In addition, Recepta will receive royalties from Mersana on sales of the drug outside Brazil and will hold exclusive rights to commercialization of the drug in Brazil, paying royalties to Mersana on sales in Brazil. Mersana will be responsible for the clinical trials and regulatory activities required for the drug to be commercialized.

"This is a unique event," Perez said. "Never in the history of pharmaceutical biotechnology research in Brazil has there been an international agreement to license intellectual property developed by a Brazilian company. This shows that Recepta's research and development model works."

Provided by Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo

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