

Denmark's Novo Nordisk buys UK insulin technology pioneer

August 17 2018



Novo Nordisk, the world's top insulin maker, has acquired Bristol-based Ziylo for \$800 million

Denmark's Novo Nordisk, the world's top insulin maker, said Friday it has acquired a British firm that is pioneering a new technology which

could help people with diabetes inject themselves more safely with insulin.

Novo Nordisk said in a statement it has acquired Bristol-based Ziylo in a deal that could potentially exceed \$800 million.

Ziylo describes itself as a scientific incubator that is developing glucose responsive insulins or GRIs.

A GRI would "help eliminate the risk of hypoglycaemia, the main risk associated with [insulin](#) therapy and one of the main barriers to achieving optimal glucose control," Novo Nordisk said in a statement.

Hyperglycemia or [high blood sugar](#) is when there is an excessive amount of glucose in a person's blood. And insulins are used to lower those levels.

However, the level of [glucose](#) that is deemed to be too hyperglycemic varies from person to person, making it tricky to monitor those and inject the correct amount of insulin.

Novo Nordisk said that a GRI "could also lead to better metabolic control and therefore reduce the overall burden of [diabetes](#) for people living with the disease."

The acquisition gives Novo Nordisk full rights to Ziylo's technology, which the Danish healthcare giant sees as "a key strategic area... in its effort to develop this next generation of insulin, which would lead to a safer and more effective [insulin therapy](#)."

Novo Nordisk said it acquired all shares in Ziylo for an upfront payment and earn-outs.

Total payments could ultimately exceed \$800 million depending on Novo Nordisk's achievements, developments and sales.

The Danish company controls nearly half of the global market for insulin, while its haemophilia and hormonal treatments account for about 20 percent of overall sales.

Last year, there were 425 million people with diabetes in the world, according to the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), and the figure is expected to rise to 629 million in 2045.

Only half of the world's diabetics are currently diagnosed with the illness. And only 50 percent of those who are diagnosed have access to treatment.

Complications caused by diabetes, including cardiovascular and renal diseases and lower limb amputations, kill four million people a year, according to the IDF.

Just over a week ago, Novo Nordisk's share price took a battering due to a change in legislation in the US that reduces prices on prescription drugs such as its diabetes treatments, Tresiba and Victoza.

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Citation: Denmark's Novo Nordisk buys UK insulin technology pioneer (2018, August 17) retrieved 9 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-08-denmark-novo-nordisk-uk-insulin.html>

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