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Eisai collaborates with University of Dundee for cancer drug discovery

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Targeted protein degradation towards cancer drug discovery

Japanese pharmaceutical firm Eisai Co.,Ltd. has announced that it has entered into a collaboration research agreement with the University of Dundee in Scotland, UK, regarding Proteolysis Targeting Chimeras (PROTACs) toward drug discovery in oncology area.

PROTACs consist of two covalently linked protein-binding molecules: one capable of engaging an ubiquitin ligase (E3 ligase) and another that binds to a target protein meant for degradation. PROTACs work by recruiting an E3 ligase to tag the target protein for ubiquitination for degradation through the intracellular degradation system. It is hoped that research into PROTACs will lead to new drug discoveries for proteins present in cancer, which are difficult to treat with conventional small molecule inhibitors.

In this collaboration research, Professor Alessio Ciulli, one of the global pioneers in the field of PROTACs research, at the School of Life Sciences, University of Dundee is responsible for directing the research. The collaboration combines the world-leading expertise and technology of the Professor Alessio Ciulli laboratory in PROTACs research with Eisai's discovery researches and clinical development experiences in oncology area as well as findings of target protein degradation based on our basic researches to aim to create innovative new drugs.

Under this agreement, Eisai has the option rights to develop and commercialize the compounds resulted from this collaboration research. If Eisai exercises the options, an upfront, milestone payments, and royalties on sales will be paid.