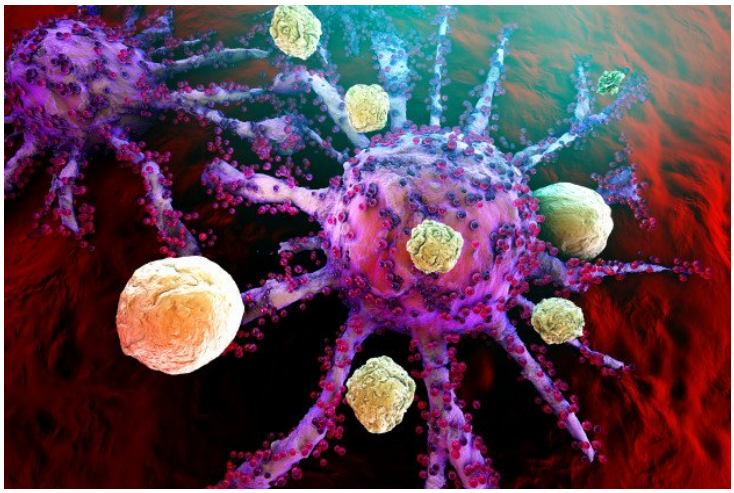
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AbbVie, Genmab enter $4B cancer immunotherapy partnership

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The collaborationÃ?Â injects $750 million upfront payment to Genmab to focus on bispecific antibodies and drug discovery research with commercial responsibilities at Japan and US



US-based AbbVie and Genmab announced on 10 June 2020 that they had formed the partnership that will focus on bispecific antibodies, a kind of immunotherapy, across haematological and solid tumour cancers. They will additionally partner in discovery research.

Under the terms of the deal, AbbVie will pay Genmab $750 million upfront, along with up to $3.15 billion in milestone payments.

The partnership focuses on three bispecific antibody development programs:

- epcoritamab, which targets the cell-surface antigen CD20 as well as CD3 on T cells
- DuoHexaBody-CD37
- DuoBody-CD3x5T4

The companies will split commercial responsibilities in the U.S. and Japan for epcoritamab, while AbbVie will be responsible for further globalization, with Genmab booking net U.S. and Japanese sales and receiving tiered royalties for other territories. The companies will then share global development and commercialization for the other two antibodies while sharing commercialization responsibilities for the U.S. and Japan. For the discovery research partnership, Genmab will conduct Phase I studies, while AbbVie will have opt-in rights.

Epcoritamab and DuoHexaBody-CD37 are in Phase I development for hematological malignancies. Two drugs whose development Genmab had a hand in are currently approved: Johnson & Johnson's CD38-targeting Darzalex (daratumumab), for multiple myeloma, and Novartis' CD20-targeting Arzerra (ofatumumab), for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Bispecific antibodies work by targeting antigens on the surfaces of cancer cells, e.g. CD20 in non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and then targeting T-cell antigens, especially CD3, in order to direct the T cells to the cancer cells and induce the former to kill the

latter. Amgen’s Blincyto (blinatumomab) is an example of an approved bispecific antibody, targeting CD19 in patients with acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

The larger-than-expected upfront payment to Genmab is considered a significant win with favourable sales terms, particularly for epcoritamab. AbbVie’s strength as a well-funded hematology-oncology partner.