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Telix, UniQuest to collaborate on radiolabelled immune targeting peptide

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Telix and UniQuest will work together to adapt and refine an undisclosed targeting peptide



Australia-based Telix Pharmaceuticals has announced a collaboration with UniQuest, the commercialisation company of The University of Queensland(UQ), to develop a radiolabelled molecule targeting an immune checkpoint protein.

Under the agreement, Telix and UniQuest will work together to adapt and refine an undisclosed targeting peptide – developed in the laboratory of Professor David Craik in the Institute for Molecular Bioscience.

The goal is that an immune targeting peptide would be used as an imaging agent to determine the presence of certain immune checkpoint proteins in metastatic tumours, in order to guide patient selection for immunotherapy.

Immune checkpoints are a normal part of the immune system, which modulate the body's defensive responses to protect normal healthy cells from being destroyed when the immune system is activated.

They do this by engaging with partner molecules on the surface of immune cells – known as immune checkpoint proteins – signaling to leave healthy cells alone. Some tumours have co-opted this mechanism, which can help cancer to hide from an immune attack. Drugs called immune checkpoint inhibitors disrupt this suppression of the immune system by blocking immune checkpoints from binding with their partner molecules. However, responses are highly variable.