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Skyhawk Therapeutics inks $2 B deal with Merck to discover novel RNA-targeting small molecules for neurological disorders

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Collaboration aims to expand the potential of RNA modulation in diseases where traditional approaches have proven challenging



US-based startup Skyhawk Therapeutics, Inc., a leader in the discovery and development of small molecules that modulate RNA expression, has announced a strategic research collaboration with Merck KGaA, Darmstadt,Germany, a leading science and technology company.

The collaboration will focus on the discovery of novel RNA-targeting small molecules in select neurological indications with high unmet medical need.

Under the terms of the agreement, Skyhawk will use its proprietary SkySTAR® (Skyhawk Small molecule Therapeutics for Alternative splicing of RNA) platform to identify small molecule candidates directed at specific RNA targets designated by Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany.

The collaboration aims to expand the potential of RNA modulation in diseases where traditional approaches have proven challenging, leveraging Skyhawk's industry-leading capabilities in RNA splicing modulation and Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany's expertise in drug development and commercialisation.

Skyhawk will lead discovery and preclinical development efforts, after which Merck KGaA, Darmstadt,Germany will assume responsibility for further development and commercialisation upon option exercise. The overall deal is valued at over$2 billion , with Skyhawk being eligible for milestone payments, as well as tiered royalties on commercial sales.