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ASIA EDITION

Taiwan's HanchorBio joins forces with Korea's Aston Sci to unlock potential of next-gen immunotherapy through cancer vaccine combinations

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Initial studies focus on gastric and breast cancers; expands to evaluate AST-301 and investigational PD-L1 cancer vaccines across multiple modalities



Taiwan-based HanchorBio, Inc., a global clinical-stage biotechnology company, and Aston Sci, Inc., a South Korea-based clinical-stage biotechnology company advancing next-generation immunotherapies, have announced a strategic research collaboration to evaluate novel combination therapies joining HanchorBio's HCB101 macrophage-directed immunotherapy with Aston Sci's therapeutic cancer vaccine candidates.

Established under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the collaboration will initially evaluate HCB101 alongside Aston Sci's lead candidate, AST-301, a HER2-directed plasmid DNA therapeutic vaccine currently in Phase 2 clinical trials. The companies will also explore combinations involving an investigational PD-L1 therapeutic vaccine, extending the collaboration across distinct vaccine modalities and immune mechanisms.

This strategic partnership advances HanchorBio's strategy to integrate vaccine-directed immune education with macrophage-mediated immune activation, expanding market opportunities, potential clinical indications, and co-development partnerships for both organisations.

Therapeutic cancer vaccines are experiencing renewed momentum across the biopharmaceutical sector, underscored by recent landmark Phase 3 readouts in mRNA neoantigen therapies. However, translating antigen-specific T-cell responses into durable, long-term clinical benefits remains a core challenge because immunosuppressive tumour microenvironments (TMEs) and immune evasion limit their persistence.

HanchorBio and Aston Sci aim to address these challenges by coordinating two arms of the immune system: pairing vaccine-driven adaptive T-cell priming with macrophage-driven innate tumor clearance, followed by antigen presentation that de novo activates additional tumor-reactive T-cell clones.

HCB101 is an engineered SIRP?–IgG4 Fc fusion protein developed through HanchorBio's proprietary FBDB™ platform. Designed to block the CD47–SIRP? "don't eat me" signal, HCB101 reactivates macrophage phagocytosis while minimizing red blood cell toxicity.