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Janssen to develop therapy for immunological diseases

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Singapore: Janssen Biotech has entered into a license agreement with Astellas Pharma for the worldwide development and commercialization, except in Japan, of ASP015K, an oral, small molecule Janus Kinase (JAK) inhibitor. ASP015K is currently in Phase 2b development as a once-daily oral treatment for moderate-to-severe rheumatoid arthritis (RA), following a successful Phase 2a study demonstrating its potential in the treatment of moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis. Rheumatoid arthritis affects between one and two percent of the world's population and results in pain and inflammation, and in some cases, joint destruction and disability. Psoriasis, a chronic inflammatory disease that results from the overproduction of skin cells, affects 125 million people worldwide and can range from mild to severe and disabling.

"Janssen has a heritage of innovation and delivering transformative medicines to address unmet needs in immunologic diseases," said Susan Dillon, Ph.D., Global Therapeutic Area Head, Immunology, Janssen Research & Development, LLC. "We are committed to expanding the portfolio of new treatments for patients with serious immune-mediated diseases and are excited to add Astellas' ASP015K to our pipeline."

Under the terms of the agreement, Janssen gains exclusive worldwide rights to develop and commercialize ASP015K, except in Japan, as an oral treatment for immune-mediated inflammatory diseases. In addition to an upfront payment, Janssen and Astellas have agreed to future milestone and royalty payments if certain development and commercialization milestones are achieved. Astellas will be responsible for completing the ongoing Phase 2b studies. Janssen will be responsible for all other development, clinical and regulatory filing activities in its territories. Astellas will continue development and commercialization of ASP015K in Japan.