

Bionomics, Merck collaborate on drug development

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Singapore: Australian biotech firm, Bionomics, has partnered with Merck for research and license agreement for its BNC375 research program targeting at cognitive dysfunction associated with Alzheimer's disease and other central nervous system conditions.

Under the agreement, Merck will fund all research and development, including clinical development, and will be responsible for worldwide commercialisation of any products from the collaboration. Bionomics will receive upfront payments totalling \$20 million and is eligible to receive up to \$506 million for achievement of certain research and clinical development milestones and undisclosed royalties on any product sales.

"We are very excited to work with Merck to progress new therapies for cognitive impairment in conditions such as Alzheimer's disease," said Dr Deborah Rathjen, CEO and Managing Director of Bionomics. "We believe that the combination of Bionomics' innovative approach and technologies, within its ionX platform, has the potential to rapidly advance new treatments."

"Bionomics continues to deliver on its business model that focuses on strategic partnering for the development and commercialisation of selected programs within its pipeline," Dr Rathjen added. "This significant agreement, our second with Merck, further validates our drug discovery platforms."

"Merck is pleased to add a new scientific collaboration with Bionomics," said Dr Rupert Vessey, head of early development and discovery sciences at Merck Research Laboratories. "Bionomics' capabilities and overall expertise in discovery and

characterisation of small molecules for this neuroscience target class is impressive."

In July 2013, Bionomics announced an option and license agreement with Merck to discover and develop novel small molecule candidates for the treatment of chronic pain, including neuropathic pain. Under the terms of that agreement, Merck has the option to exclusively license a compound from Bionomics for development and commercialisation.