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PharmaEngine signs deal with Guangzhou BeBetter

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PharmaEngine signs research and collaboration deal with Guangzhou BeBetter Medicine Technology



Singapore: Taipei-based biopharmaceutical company PharmaEngine has signed a collaboration and research agreement with Guangzhou BeBetter Medicine Technology. The two companies will collaborate to design, synthesize and develop new chemical entities (drug candidates) against predefined targets in oncology. This collaboration opens a new chapter for partnership between Taiwan and China in searching for novel anti-cancer drugs.

Guangzhou BeBetter Medicine is a new drug discovery and development company incorporated in the Science Park, Guangzhou, China, in January 2012. Under the terms of the agreement, PharmaEngine will hold the exclusive worldwide rights of manufacturing, development and commercialization of new drug candidates with the exception of China, while BeBetter will keep the respective rights in China (including Hong Kong and Macau).

BeBetter is responsible for discovering optimized compounds for IND-enabling studies. PharmaEngine will be responsible for development and commercialization. Dr Changgeng Qian, founder of BeBetter, served as senior vice president, discovery research and preclinical development at Curis, based in the US.

Dr Qian has an excellent track record of discovering novel compounds against cancer. For example, Dr Qian played a key role in the collaboration between Curis and Genentech to successfully develop Erivedge (vismodegib), which is the first approved cancer drug target the hedgehog protein in the world. Erivedge has received the regulatory approval from the US FDA in January 2012 for the treatment of basal cell carcinoma.

Another example is a novel Hsp90 inhibitor, CUDC-305 (Debio 0932) which was licensed to the Debiopharm Group, currently in phase I/II clinical trials. Other drug development candidates are in various stages of development.

"Dr Qian and I were colleagues in several biopharmaceutical companies in the US, including Millennium Pharmaceuticals, Inc. We have established mutual respect and trust throughout many years." said Dr C Grace Yeh, president and chief executive officer, PharmaEngine. "I am very pleased to have the opportunity to collaborate with Dr. Qian again. I believe that our

collaboration can create a win-win combination of BeBetter's drug discovery know-how and PharmaEngine's drug development expertise."