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Baheal Pharma brings Watson for genomics to China

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Singapore: IBM Watson recently announced its plans to expand its partnership with Baheal Pharmaceutical, bringing Watson for Genomics to clinicians across China. As IBM's primary channel partner for Watson for Genomics in China, Baheal will establish an ecosystem within China to sell the molecular data interpretation technology to clinicians and researchers across the country. The two companies had recently struck a deal to distribute Watson for Oncology in China.

Baheal will sell the genomics product under a multiyear agreement that makes it IBM's primary channel partner in China, the same status the earlier deal bestowed on it for the oncology product. The agreements give IBM a partner with connections to 12,000 hospitals in China as it seeks to establish Watson in the local healthcare market.

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Baheal Group works with more than 12,000 hospitals in China, and the company has already implemented Watson for Oncology at 8 hospitals.

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Mr Gang Fu, Chairman, Baheal Pharmaceutical Group, "Despite the promise of precision medicine, data-driven challenges make it difficult for oncologists to bring genomic advances to their patients. We believe Watson will help accelerate this growing field so that research advances can be accessed for patient benefit more quickly. We are proud to now serve as IBM's primary distribution channel for both Watson for Genomics and Watson for Oncology."

"With the rapid proliferation of clinical, research and genomic data, we are proud to work with Baheal Group to bring the promise of cognitive computing to doctors and researchers all across China," said Rob Merkel, General Manager of Oncology and Genomics, IBM Watson Health. "Watson for Genomics can empower oncologists to deliver genomic insights to their patients faster and easier than it can now be done. We believe this has the power to scale expertise and ultimately help oncologists make more informed decisions."

The Chinese government had recently launched a $9.2 billion precision medicine initiative to invest in the growing field of genomics, which holds particular promise in oncology. Precision oncology could help improve cancer survival rates in China, where one-fifth of all deaths are caused by cancer. Every year in China, more than 4.3 million people are diagnosed with cancer.