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ASIA EDITION

Biogen acquires Schizophrenia investigational drug candidate form Pfizer

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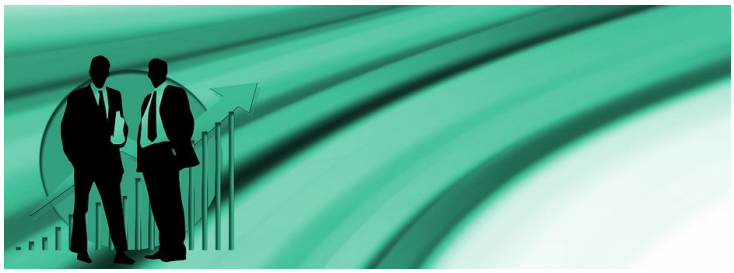

Biogen recently announced that it has inked an agreement to acquire investigational candidate for schizophrenia from Pfizer. The drug candidate is a first-in-class, Phase 2b ready AMPA receptor potentiator for cognitive impairment associated with schizophrenia (CIAS).

The purchase will include an upfront payment of $75 million with up to $515 million in additional development and commercialization milestone payments, as well as tiered royalties in the low to mid-teen percentages.

AMPA receptors mediate fast excitatory synaptic transmission in the central nervous system, a process which can be disrupted in a number of neurological and psychiatric diseases, including schizophrenia. Biogen aims to initiate a Phase 2b trial in the second half of 2018.

“As pioneers in neuroscience, Biogen continues to explore new ways to treat serious diseases where there are few or no options, such as CIAS,” stated Michel Vounatsos, Biogen chief executive officer. “Given the significant unmet patient need and Biogen’s ability to apply its scientific expertise in this area, we are enthusiastic to advance development of this asset as we continue to expand our neuroscience pipeline, including in our emerging growth areas such as neuropsychiatry.”

Worldwide there are greater than 20 million people living with schizophrenia and it is estimated that the majority of them live with some degree of cognitive impairment attributable to the disease. Cognitive impairment is increasingly recognized as one of the greatest unmet needs in the effective treatment of schizophrenia.

“When cognition is impaired, you lose the ability to make sense of the world. Things we often take for granted in our daily lives, including processing information, planning and remembering, all become difficult or impossible,” said Michael Ehlers, executive vice president, Research & Development at Biogen. “Cognition can be impaired in multiple neurological and neuropsychiatric diseases, including schizophrenia. And we know that the extent of cognitive deficits in patients with schizophrenia is a strong predictor of daily functioning. We look forward to quickly pursuing development of this potential innovative therapy to treat such a devastating disease.”

Biogen expects the deal to close in the second quarter of 2018.