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ASIA EDITION

Merck strengthens oncology pipeline through strategic partnership with China's Hengrui Pharma

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Collaboration to develop, manufacture and commercialise next-generation selective PARP1 inhibitor HRS-1167



Merck, a leading science and technology company, has announced a strategic collaboration with China-based Jiangsu Hengrui Pharmaceuticals. The partnership includes an exclusive license worldwide (ex-China) to develop, manufacture and commercialise Hengrui's next-generation potent and selective PARP1 (poly (ADP-ribose) polymerase 1) trapping inhibitor HRS-1167.

The agreement also includes an option to an exclusive license worldwide (ex-China) to develop, manufacture and commercialise Hengrui's Claudin-18.2 antibody-drug conjugate (ADC) SHR-A1904. In addition, Merck has the option to co-promote both assets in China.

Compared with first-generation PARP inhibitors, the selectivity and differentiated safety profile of PARP1-specific inhibitors could offer the opportunity to expand their therapeutic impact in established and new indications. HRS-1167 has shown encouraging signs of clinical activity and patient benefit in Phase I trials as a monotherapy and has higher potential to combine with chemotherapy as well as novel agents, compared with previous attempts with first-generation PARP inhibitors.

Under the terms of the agreement, Merck will provide Hengrui with an upfront payment of €160 million. Hengrui will receive payments for the achievement of certain development, regulatory and commercial milestones and tiered royalties on net sales by Merck. Potential payments may total up to €1.4 billion.