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# Roche inks $1.06 B deal with China's Rona Therapeutics for RNA-based metabolic therapies

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**Targeting ALK7, a member of the transforming growth factor-beta receptor superfamily and is primarily expressed in adipocyte**



Chinese startup Rona Therapeutics has granted Roche an exclusive worldwide license for Rona's investigational RNAi candidate targeting activin receptor-like kinase 7 (ALK7) utilising the company's proprietary extrahepatic delivery platform.

ALK7, encoded by the ACVR1C gene, is predominantly expressed in adipose tissue and is a genetically validated target for obesity and metabolic diseases. Inhibition of ALK7 by directly targeting adipocytes has the potential to selectively reduce visceral and other ectopic fat depots while preserving lean mass, offering a differentiated approach that may be complementary to incretin-based therapies.

Under the terms of the agreement, Rona will receive upfront and near-term milestone payments of up to $100 million and is eligible to receive up to $1.06 billion in potential development, regulatory and commercial milestone payments, as well as tiered royalties on global net sales.

ALK7 is a member of the transforming growth factor-beta receptor superfamily and is primarily expressed in adipocytes. The ALK7 signaling pathway regulates adipocyte lipid storage, lipolysis and energy homeostasis.

Human genetic studies have associated reduced ALK7 activity with favorable fat distribution and metabolic phenotypes. Therapeutic silencing of ALK7 therefore has the potential to promote reduction of visceral adipose tissue while preserving lean mass and improving metabolic health.