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China's startup Metis TechBio strikes drug-delivery deal worth $1.1 B with Eli Lilly

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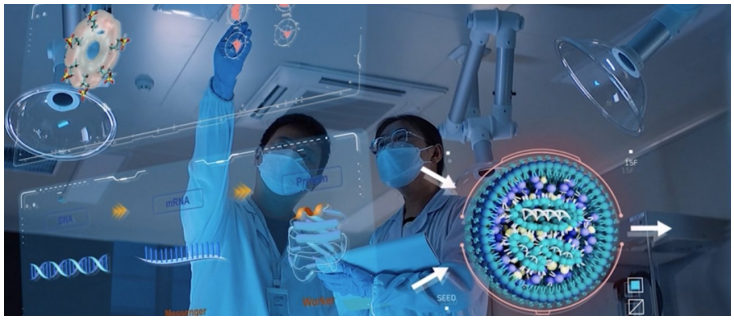

METiS TechBio, the innovator in AI-powered drug delivery, has announced a strategic collaboration with US-based Eli Lilly and Company focused on the research and discovery of novel lipid nanoparticle (LNP)-based delivery solutions designed to enable tissue-specific delivery of therapeutic modalities.

Under the agreement, China-based startup METiS will leverage its proprietary, AI-driven ionisable lipid discovery and optimisation platform, AiLNP, to develop next-generation delivery technologies with the potential to improve targeting and biodistribution of LNP-based delivery.

Lilly will contribute its expertise in drug discovery, development, and commercialisation to support the advancement of the collaboration.

Under the terms of the agreement, METiS TechBio will be eligible to receive an upfront payment in the low double-digit millions of US dollars, and up to approximately $1.1 billion in development, regulatory, and commercial milestone payments. In addition, METiS TechBio will be eligible to receive single-digit tiered royalties based on annual net sales of products resulting from the collaboration.

Lipid nanoparticles have emerged as a powerful modality for enabling the delivery of therapeutic payloads to target tissues and cells. By combining METiS' capabilities in generative and predictive AI for rational LNP design and optimization with Lilly's scientific and development expertise, the companies aim to discover and optimise novel LNP architectures that may enable improved tissue specificity, enhanced therapeutic performance, and broader applicability across multiple disease areas.