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University of Dundee signs agreement with Pfizer Inc. to research potential new therapies for the treatment of Cystic Fibrosis.

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The University of Dundee has entered into a Research Program Agreement with Pfizer Inc. to jointly conduct research that may lead to potential novel treatments for Cystic Fibrosis.

The project will be carried out as part of Pfizer's Rare Disease Consortium and builds on a program of research within the laboratory of Professor Irwin McLean, Head of Molecular Medicine at Dundee, and the University's Drug Discovery Unit.

The University has developed a number of chemical compounds - known as 'read-through agents' - which have shown potential to offer new possible treatments with advantages over existing therapies. The University and Pfizer will create a joint drug discovery program bringing together academic and industrial expertise with the aim of accelerating the translation of academic science into possible new therapies for cystic fibrosis.

Professor McLean is an internationally renowned authority on genetics and dermatology research and has spent more than 20 years uncovering the genes that affect many skin conditions, including rare and very severe skin blistering diseases such as epidermolysis bullosa (EB) and more common conditions such as eczema.

"Working with colleagues in the Drug Discovery Unit at Dundee, we have developed a new series of chemicals that may be able to re-activate faulty genes affecting many genetic disorders," said Professor McLean. "The collaboration with Pfizer will help accelerate our work with the aim to produce clinical candidates for possible drug treatments."

Paul Wyatt, Professor of Drug Discovery and Head of the Drug Discovery Unit at Dundee, said, "It is very exciting to have the Drug Discovery Unit working with Professor McLean's group to translate his excellent research; we see this agreement with Pfizer as validation of the model of our many ongoing interactions with research groups in Dundee and beyond."

"Pfizer's goal for our Rare Disease Consortium is to help drive the development of a new generation of medicines to improve the lives of patients with rare diseases," said Kevin Lee, Ph.D., Senior Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer, Rare Disease Research Unit, Pfizer. "We look forward to working with the University of Dundee to conduct research for potential new treatments for cystic fibrosis."

The University of Dundee was the top ranked University in the UK for Biological Sciences in the Research Excellence Framework 2014, which assessed the quality and impact of research of all higher education institutions.

NOTES TO EDITORS

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