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Pharma Partnering Asia celebrates first product deal:

Collaboration with Korea-based DigitalBiotech to develop compound targeting Alzheimer's disease



Korean government officials and academics joined the Roche Korea General Manager and staff from Pharma Partnering Asia this week to formally announce a new deal with Korea-based company DigitalBiotech.

This is the first product in-licensing agreement outside Japan for the Shanghai-based Pharma Partnering Asia office, which was established in 2008. The research collaboration and option license agreement is to develop DigitalBiotech's proprietary small molecule RAGE (Receptor for Advanced Glycation End-products) antagonist programme targeting Alzheimer's disease.

"There's some very exciting science being done throughout this region", said Frank Grams, Executive Director, Pharma Partnering Asia. "This deal shows that by being on the ground and forming close relationships with researchers in Korea and the other pockets of innovation across Asia, Roche can bolster its R&D portfolio through external alliances in this increasingly important region."



"This collaboration will leverage DigitalBiotech's experience and expertise with Alzheimer's disease and Roche's worldwide development and commercial expertise," said H. Samuel Muk, President and CEO of DigitalBiotech. "We recognise the enormous potential of this collaboration to advance more options in Alzheimer's disease treatment more quickly than either company could do alone."

RAGE acts as a cell surface receptor for amyloid-beta peptide, the main constituent of amyloid plaques in the brains of patients with Alzheimer's disease. Inhibiting the interaction between RAGE and amyloid beta is believed to reduce the inflow of Amyloid beta from plasma to the brain. Under the terms of the agreement, Roche will contribute its expertise to DigitalBiotech's development of small molecule inhibitors of RAGE and amyloid beta interaction.

Joe McCracken, Head of Pharma Partnering Asia said: "This is a great deal and hopefully the start of a promising collaboration that will ultimately help Alzheimer's patients. My hearty congratulations go to Frank Grams, Justine Lalonde, Christophe Carissimo, Ruben Perren and Sarah Holland on completing this important milestone for PP Asia."