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J&J, Locus Bioscience collaborate to develop CRISPR-Cas3 bacteriophage therapeutics

04 January 2019 | News

Collaboration to develop precision therapies targeting two bacterial pathogens in the microbiome of the lungs and other organ systems in the context of diagnosed microbiome dysbiosis



Locus Biosciences Inc., a biotechnology company developing precision antibacterial therapies, announced today that it has entered into an exclusive collaboration and license agreement with Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Janssen), one of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson, to develop, manufacture and commercialize CRISPR-Cas3-enhanced bacteriophage ("crPhage™") products targeting two key bacterial pathogens for the potential treatment of infections of the respiratory tract and other organ systems. Johnson & Johnson Innovation LLC facilitated the transaction.

Under the terms of the agreement, Locus will receive $20 million in initial payments, and is eligible to receive up to a total of $798 million in potential future development and commercial milestone payments, and royalties on any product sales.

Locus is the world leader in CRISPR-engineered phage therapeutics, uniquely leveraging the powerful Type I CRISPR-Cas3 system to specifically degrade the DNA of target bacteria cells, quickly destroying them. This patented DNA-shredding technology precisely and selectively removes unwanted bacteria from the human body while leaving the many other species of good bacteria unaffected (see video description at youtu.be/q88b6bgCZ6c). If proven safe and effective in clinical trials, these products could provide a turning point in the global battle against antibiotic resistant infections and other microbiome dysbiosis-related conditions.

"Our collaboration with Janssen on the development of products to treat deadly infections and potentially other microbiome dysbiosis associated conditions reflects the importance of the crPhage platform and its potential to revolutionize the treatment of disease and extend human life," said Paul Garofolo, CEO of Locus Biosciences. "Our platform is uniquely positioned to selectively eradicate pathogenic bacteria of choice while preserving an otherwise healthy microbiome in patients, and this collaboration with Janssen will enable us to further develop products on the platform to help patients in need around the world."