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Helex raises $3.5 M to advance targeted gene therapies for kidney diseases

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Biotech startup is developing first-in-class genomic medicines for high-burden kidney diseases



Helex, a US and India based therapeutics startup developing a new class of targeted medicines for genetic kidney diseases, has announced its oversubscribed $3.5 million Seed round, led by pi Ventures. Others participating in this round include Bluehill Capital, SOSV, and a global syndicate of investors. With this round, Helex has raised over $6 million in total funding to date.

With its recent funding, the company will accelerate preclinical development of its lead programme, advance its proprietary kidney-tropic LNP delivery system and Epic-Cure™ 3D genome-based drug design platform, and expand into additional kidney indications to build a robust pipeline to deliver transformative impact for patients.

Incubated at ASPIRE-BioNEST, University of Hyderabad, Helex is pioneering a paradigm shift in the treatment of chronic and rare kidney disorders by developing programmable, non-viral LNP therapeutics that deliver genetic payloads directly to kidney cells - a feat long regarded one of the greatest challenges in drug delivery.

The company's platform is powered by data-driven deep-learning modeling using its own genomics data, bioinformatics and high throughput sequencing data from gene-edited target cells, to create, verify, and deliver disease-specific gRNA. By solving for kidney-targeted delivery, Helex opens the door to a new class of targeted, curative medicines for millions of patients who currently have no effective treatment options.

The company's lead programme targets Autosomal Dominant Polycystic Kidney Disease (ADPKD), a progressive inherited disorder affecting more than 12 million people globally and nearly 5%1 of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) patients in India. Today, patients with ADPKD face a devastating trajectory, often culminating in dialysis or kidney transplant. Helex aims to change that with a single dose non-viral gene editing based therapy that could halt or significantly slow disease progression.