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Sanofi and UCB have entered into a scientific and strategic collaboration for the discovery and development of innovative anti-inflammatory small molecules, which have the potential to treat a wide range of immune-mediated diseases in areas such as gastroenterology and arthritis.

According to Dr Elias Zerhouni, president, global R&D, Sanofi, immune-mediated diseases affect individuals, families, and communities and impact the economies of countries and nations, making this poorly understood category of diseases a significant public health burden. "Joining efforts with UCB, will address a scientific challenge in immunology, and increase the chances of accelerating the discovery and development of future therapies", adds Zerhouni.

UCB New Medicines, the research arm of UCB, has used an innovative approach to identify small molecules modulators of a biological pathway, for which parentally administered biologic therapies have proven highly efficacious in patients. A dedicated team of scientists will be formed under the leadership of Sanofi and UCB, and will join forces in a discovery and development based collaboration to characterize and identify new potential therapies.

"We partner Sanofi's significant expertise, strong capabilities and resources with UCB's cutting-edge research skills and breakthrough innovations. Together we can maximize the opportunity to treat diseases currently treated by biologic agents with small molecules and thus benefit millions of people suffering from severe diseases," says Mr Ismail Kola, president, UCB New Medicines.

UCB will be entitled to initial upfront, preclinical and clinical development milestone payments from Sanofi, potentially exceeding â‚¬100 million.
A wide range of human diseases are driven by dysregulated immune function. There are hundreds of immune-mediated disorders that include joint diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel diseases such as ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

Often these diseases are characterized by inappropriate activation of molecules termed cytokines, which are important

mediators of normal immune function.