

Sanofi inks autoimmune pact with Lead pharma

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Sanofi has announced that it has entered into a research collaboration and license agreement with Dutch biotech Lead Pharma. The deal is to discover, develop and commercialise small-molecule therapies directed against the nuclear hormone receptors called ROR gamma t to treat a broad range of autoimmune disorders, including rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis and inflammatory bowel disease, which are among the most common.

"Anti-ROR gamma t therapies represent a ground-breaking opportunity that we are eager and motivated to pursue through our collaboration with Lead Pharma," said Mr Christian Antonio vice-president and head of the Immunology and Inflammation franchise, R&D, Sanofi. He added, "At Sanofi, we believe networked innovations, working collaboratively across science sectors, is the most effective way to bring meaningful new therapies to patients. To this end, Lead Pharma's innovative capabilities and productivity, exemplified by the ROR gamma t program, make them ideal partners for Sanofi in this area of drug discovery."

Under the terms of the agreement, Sanofi and Lead Pharma will collaborate during the early phase of research and development with a goal of identifying drug candidates and beginning human trials within 3-4 years. Lead Pharma will receive an upfront payment and is eligible to receive research, development, regulatory and commercial milestone payments.

Sanofi will be responsible for clinical development and have worldwide marketing and commercialisation rights to any products that may be developed as a result of the collaboration. Lead Pharma is entitled to receive royalty payments on global sales from any such products.

Financial details of the deal have not been disclosed.