

AZ, Sanofi swap over 200,000 chemical compounds

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The swap represents a novel open innovation model between pharmaceutical companies. It enhances the chemical diversity of the compound collections of both companies and allows each to screen a broader, more diverse chemical space as the starting point in the search for new small-molecule medicines.

AstraZeneca and Sanofi have each selected the compounds to exchange based on differences from those in their own libraries. Chemical structures and synthetic procedures will be shared to facilitate the use of these compounds. The compounds will be exchanged in sufficient quantity to enable the receiving company to carry out high throughput screening for several years to determine whether they are active against specific biological targets. If a compound matches a target, it will go through several modifications to optimise its structure before being classified as a 'lead compound' to be taken forward to development.

Dr Mene Pangalos, executive vice-president, Innovative Medicines and Early Development at AstraZeneca, said, "This is a highly innovative agreement which speaks to our open innovation approach. We've worked hard to enrich our compound library in recent years and this exchange, which is by far the largest we have achieved, enables us to significantly increase its diversity. Most importantly, it will accelerate our ability to identify unique starting points that could become new medicines for patients."

Dr Elias Zerhouni, president, Global R&D at Sanofi, said, "Sanofi is committed to open innovation in our R&D platforms because we recognise that collaboration is the foundation of every medical breakthrough. We are happy to partner with other companies if it will speed the discovery of new life-saving or life-enhancing therapies for patients. We believe that this collaboration will increase our capacity to deliver innovative solutions that have the potential to add significant medical value and transform lives."

There are no payments associated with the compound exchange. Each company can investigate the compounds it receives

without restrictions on disease areas.