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Mankind Pharma buys majority stake in Armed Cell Therapeutics for â?¬48 M

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Marking strategic entry into next-generation CAR-T Therapies

As a part of its long term strategy to build a global innovation-led pharmaceutical business, Mankind Pharma, through its subsidiary Mankind Pharma (Netherlands) B.V., has entered into a definitive agreement under which Mankind Pharma will acquire a majority stake in Armed Cell Therapeutics B.V., a Belgium-incorporated biotechnology company developing next-generation CAR-T (chimeric antigen receptor T-cell) therapies for cancer.

Mankind will invest EUR 48 million for 70% stake in Armed Cell Therapeutics (ACTx) which has a pipeline of next-generation CAR-T assets, with lead programmes in non-Hodgkin lymphoma and small cell lung cancer. ACTx will pursue innovative means of CAR- T cell therapy including in vivo CAR-T cell generation. ACTx's R&D activities are led by highly experienced teams located in US and EU

CAR-T therapies have transformed the treatment of some blood cancers. Yet many patients relapse from lack of CAR-T cell persistence, CAR-T exhaustion or emergence of resistant cancer cells. Solid cancers are especially hard for CAR-T cells to penetrate and function in hostile tumor microenvironments. Armed CAR-T cells are engineered with additional payloads to strengthen and sustain their anti-tumor activity, with the goal of deeper and more durable responses. Targeting more than one cancer antigen is designed to make it harder for cancer cells to escape. Research and development activities by highly-experienced teams are located in the US and Europe.

Arjun Juneja, Chief Operating Officer, Mankind Pharma, shared, "Innovation will be one of the defining growth engines for Mankind over the coming decades. This investment is the first step in building a global pipeline of breakthrough therapies. As the company scales its presence across complex and chronic therapy areas, Mankind, with this venture, is getting access to cutting-edge & differentiated scientific platforms, experienced leadership team and potential to generate multiple next-generation CAR-T candidates. Our long-term ambition is not only to participate in scientific innovation globally, but ultimately to make these transformative therapies more accessible to patients in India and around the world."