

Merck and Pfizer collaborate for diabetes research

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Merck known as MSD outside the United States and Canada and Pfizer recently announced that they have entered into a worldwide (except Japan) collaboration agreement for the Pfizer for the clinical development and commercialization of ertugliflozin and ertugliflozin-containing fixed-dose combinations with metformin and Januvia (sitagliptin) tablets. Under the terms of the agreement, Merck, through a subsidiary, Pfizer will collaborate on development and commercialization of Pfizer's ertugliflozin (PF-04971729), an investigational oral sodium glucose cotransporter (SGLT2) inhibitor being evaluated for the treatment of type 2 diabetes. Ertugliflozin is Phase III ready, with trials expected to begin later in 2013.

Merck will continue to retain the rights to its existing portfolio of sitagliptin-containing products. Pfizer has received an upfront payment and milestones of \$60 million and will be eligible for additional payments associated with the achievement of pre-specified future clinical, regulatory and commercial milestones. Merck and Pfizer will share potential revenues and certain costs on a 60/40 percent basis.

Januvia is marketed by Sun Pharma in India, as per an agreement with MSD in 2011. Recently it was in the news, for a patent infringement suit filed by MSD against Glenmark, for alleged violation of the patent on Januvia.

Januvia is indicated as an adjunct to diet and exercise to improve glycemic control in adults with type 2 diabetes mellitus.

John Young, president and general manager, Pfizer Primary Care, "We are pleased to join forces with Merck in the battle against type 2 diabetes and the burden that it poses on global health. Through this collaboration, we believe we can build on Merck's leadership position in diabetes care with the introduction of ertugliflozin, an innovative SGLT2 inhibitor discovered by Pfizer scientists."

"Merck continues to build upon our leadership position in the oral treatment of type 2 diabetes through our own research and business development," said Nancy Thornberry, senior vice president and Diabetes and Endocrinology franchise head, Merck Research Laboratories.