

Roche inks cancer pact with SQZ Biotech

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SQZ Biotech (SQZ) has announced a partnership with Roche to develop a cell therapy platform that would empower a patient's own immune cells to fight a broad range of cancers.

The deal leverages SQZ's pioneering technology to engineer B cells as a therapeutic platform for oncology - a novel approach with the potential to overcome many of the shortcomings of current cell-based therapies. The agreement provides for over \$500M in upfront and potential clinical, regulatory and sales milestone-based payments for advancement of all products across all planned indications, in addition to royalties on potential future products.

"The therapeutic potential of SQZ technology builds on our ground breaking ability to engineer cell function through intracellular delivery - a long standing challenge in immunology," said Dr Armon Sharei, founder and chief executive officer of SQZ. "In collaboration with the renowned team at Roche, we seek to engineer a patient's own immune system to target tumors more effectively and bring hope to people suffering from cancer."

The proposed therapy involves using SQZ technology to introduce proteins into a patient's B-cells which will then help activate killer T-cells to attack the cancer. The ability to engineer such a response is fundamentally dependent on effective delivery of tumor-associated proteins, or antigens, into the patient's B cells. This delivery process is uniquely enabled by SQZ's technology and harnesses the power of the patient's own immune system to fight tumors more effectively across a broad range of cancer types.

Executive Chair of the SQZ Board Ms Amy Schulman said, "We are excited about this partnership because it capitalizes on the unique scientific platform that SQZ provides to engineer immune cell function. This is an important first step towards a new generation of cell based therapies."

