Leveraging Asian research

HUYA Bioscience International (HUYA) President, CEO, Executive Chairman & Founder Dr. Mireille Gillings recently announced that Eisai Co., Ltd. has acquired from HUYA an exclusive license agreement for HBI-8000 in Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and Singapore. HBI-8000 is the first approved oral class I-selective histone deacetylase (HDAC) inhibitor, which is now in various stage of development globally for Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma (NHL) in Japan and solid tumours including Immuno-Oncology in the United States. The product was recently granted orphan drug designation in Japan.

With more than two decades of senior level experience in the biotech sector, Dr. Gillings founded HUYA in 2004 against the backdrop of the Chinese government's heavy investment to spur local innovation. She has since pioneered an innovative approach for partnering with Chinese research institutions and pharmaceutical companies. This involves identifying and licensing the most promising pre-clinical and clinical stage compounds in China, leveraging and extending the research efforts of Chinese partners, and providing a bridge to the international development process and global Biopharma market. The company currently has more than 110 agreements in place with Chinese universities, research institutes and high-tech parks. Everybody wins with these agreements, says Dr. Gillings: "They give us early access to potential new candidates, while the Chinese partner gains access to HUYA's global regulatory and commercial expertise, and input on the options for development outside of China."

The recent deal, giving Eisai a license to HBI-8000 in specific markets in Asia, underscores the validity of the HUYA model. Interesting in that regard is that Japan's Pharmaceutical and Medical Devices Agency has accepted HUYA's accelerated development strategy for HBI-8000, making unprecedented use of the China-Japan-South Korea Tripartite Cooperation to advance product development based on Chinese data. "{We cannot predict the exact date when HBI-8000 may come to market in Japan, but the fact that the product is already approved in China, where it is marketed as Epidaza for the treatment of PTCL, gives us confidence in the product's future potential," says Dr. Gillings.

In addition to HBI-8000, HUYA currently has two cardiovascular product candidates in development, including HBI-3000, also known as sulcardine, a multi-ion channel blocker for treatment of cardiac arrhythmia, which is in phase 2 trials in China. Dr. Gillings aims to further build on their Chinese agreements to diversify HUYA's approach to gaining access to new products, including in-licensing, alliances, co-development, research funding and creative financial partnerships. The company's database currently includes 14,000 China-sourced compounds in all therapeutic areas – the largest Chinese compound library of its kind, according to Dr. Gillings.

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