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Roche licenses in promising new compound for the treatment of Parkinson's Disease

F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd has concluded a license agreement with Kyowa Hakko Kogy Co. Ltd. to jointly develop an Adenosine A2 Receptor Antagonist, a compound that promises a novel approach to the treatment of Parkinson's Disease. The two companies will jointly develop this new compound that is about to enter Phase II of clinical development, with Roche taking the lead outside of Japan. The two companies will also explore the potential use of this compound discovered by Kyowa in other indications, such as the treatment of depression.

With the exception of Japan, Roche is receiving worldwide marketing and distribution rights for the compound in all potential indications. Kyowa also has the option to co-promote Roche's brand in the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. After an initial license payment, Roche will make milestone payments to Kyowa and pay royalties on any future sales. The financial terms of the agreement are not disclosed.

In preclinical studies, the compound showed a significant reduction in Parkinson's symptoms by blocking the Adenosine A2 Receptor on a protein associated with the brain mechanism that controls motor function. Parkinson's Disease is a progressive neurological disorder that affects approximately 1 in 100 people over the age of 65 years. Parkinson's Disease arises from a progressive degeneration of cells in the brain responsible for the production of the neurotransmitter dopamine. This causes various symptoms including uncontrollable tremor or shaking, slowness of movements (bradykinesia), poor balance, stiffness and a shuffling walk.

Roche has been a leader in the field of Parkinson's Disease for the last thirty years, by first introducing levodopa as Larodopa in 1970 and Madopar®, a combination of levodopa and benserazide, in 1973. This year, Roche has started to introduce Tasmar®, the first COMT-inhibitor. Tasmar® enhances and prolongs the therapeutic activity of levodopa, the current gold standard in Parkinson's disease treatment, resulting in better symptom control.

Roche, headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, is a world leader in research-based healthcare with principal business in pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, vitamins, and fragrances and flavours. Roche discovers, develops and markets prescription drugs in key therapeutic areas such as diseases of the nervous system, virology, infectious diseases, oncology, cardiovascular diseases, inflammatory and autoimmune diseases, dermatology, metabolic disorders and respiratory diseases.