GSK Gives $20 Million to UNC Chapel Hill to Seek Cure for HIV

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GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) has joined with University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to pursue HIV cure strategies, The New York Times reports. The HIV Cure center will be established at the university and partner with a venture called Qura Therapeutics, jointly owned by GSK and UNC Chapel Hill. Qura will handle intellectual property, commercialization, manufacturing and governance of the center's pursuits.

GSK will initially invest $20 million in the partnership over five years. A small team of researchers from the company will move to Chapel Hill to work at the center.

The venture will be separate from ViiV Healthcare, which is owned in partnership by GSK, Pfizer and Shionogi and which develops and commercializes antiretroviral treatment for HIV.

Researchers at the center will focus on the "shock and kill" approach to curing HIV. In this method, HIV is brought out of its latent state in certain infected cells while the immune system is primed to better fight the virus.

"After 30 years of developing treatments that successfully manage HIV/AIDS without finding a cure, we need both new research approaches to this difficult medical problem and durable alliances of many partners to sustain the effort that will be needed to reach this goal," David Margolis, MD, a professor of medicine and leader of the Collaboratory of AIDS Researchers for Eradication (CARE) center at UNC Chapel Hill, said in a press release. "The 'shock and kill' approach has shown significant promise in early translational research on humans and has been the focus of research for the last several years."

To read the New York Times article, click here. (Note: The Times states that the venture seeks a "cure for AIDS." This is incorrect. One does not cure AIDS; one treats the syndrome. The new center seeks a cure for HIV.)

To read a press release about the partnership, click here.

Editor's note: The original headline for this article incorrectly stated GSK's contribution as $40 million rather than $20 million.

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