

News Release

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MilliporeSigma Announces VAR2 Pharmaceuticals as Winner of its Advance Biotech Grant

- **VAR2 Pharmaceuticals selected for its development of a drug-conjugated malaria protein**
- **Special protein may selectively bind to most human tumor types**
- **Company to receive in-kind products and consultation support to advance production**

Burlington, Massachusetts, July 6, 2020 – [MilliporeSigma](#) today announced that VAR2 Pharmaceuticals has been selected as the European winner of its 2020 [Advance Biotech Grant Program](#). Copenhagen, Denmark-based biotechnology company VAR2 Pharmaceuticals was chosen for its development of a promising novel cancer treatment that has the potential to treat multiple types of human solid tumors.

“Emerging biotech companies play a significant role in the pharma value chain, typically developing therapies for rare and orphan diseases and often need support in bringing these important drugs to market,” said Udit Batra, CEO, MilliporeSigma. “VAR2 Pharmaceuticals’ use of a malaria protein to treat cancer is promising, and we are proud to support them.”

VAR2 Pharmaceuticals is in pre-clinical development of a drug conjugate that uses a recombinant malaria protein, rVAR2, to target and combat cancer cells. The rVAR2 protein has been tested on different cancer cell lines and has, in such tests, bound to the vast majority, including melanoma, lymphoma, breast, prostate and ovarian cancer, and Hodgkin's lymphoma. Although today's focus on Covid-19 vaccines, treatments and diagnostics development is critical, patients around the world need



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drugs to treat diseases like cancer. With its potential ability to rapidly shrink tumors and target a broad range of cancer cell lines without knowingly disrupting healthy cells, rVAR2 shows promise to be a safe and effective therapy against a broad range of cancers that have virtually no treatment options available.

As part of the grant award, VAR2 Pharmaceuticals will receive in-kind MilliporeSigma products and consultation support to advance its harvest, downstream and formulations process development challenges in the production of its drug-conjugated malaria protein.

“We are honored to have been selected as the winner of MilliporeSigma’s Advance Biotech Grant,” said Ali Salanti, founder and CEO of VAR2 Pharmaceuticals. “The products, process development support and expertise in developing biopharmaceutical manufacturing processes from MilliporeSigma will be instrumental in moving this project forward to GMP to enable clinical trials, and we look forward to the collaboration.”

Since 2014, MilliporeSigma’s Advance Biotech Grant Program has awarded technologies and consultation to 28 biotechnology companies. These grants have been used to support biotech companies whose missions are to help patients suffering from cancer, brain tumors, osteoarthritis and cardiovascular disorders.

To learn more about the program, visit: www.emdmillipore.com/emergingbiotech.

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About VAR2 Pharmaceuticals

VAR2 Pharmaceuticals is a privately held biotechnology company engaged in the design and development of proprietary therapeutic proteins targeting cancer-specific carbohydrate structures for multiple cancer indications. We have a portfolio of proteins with unique affinity and specificity for these cancer-associated carbohydrates for the development of treatments for cancers where there is no effective therapy, such as sarcoma, triple negative breast cancers and prostate cancer. The technology is based on groundbreaking discoveries made by researchers at University of Copenhagen, Denmark, in collaboration with partners at University of British Columbia, Canada.

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About the Life Science business of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany

The Life Science business of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, which operates as MilliporeSigma in the U.S. and Canada, has some 22,000 employees and 59 manufacturing sites worldwide, with a portfolio of more than 300,000 products focused on scientific discovery, biomanufacturing and testing services. Udit Batra is the global chief executive officer of MilliporeSigma.

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany completed its \$17 billion acquisition of [Sigma-Aldrich](#) in November 2015, creating a leader in the \$125 billion global life science industry.

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, operates across healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 57,000 employees work to make a positive difference to millions of people's lives every day by creating more joyful and sustainable ways to live. From advancing gene-editing technologies and discovering unique ways to treat the most challenging diseases to enabling the intelligence of devices – the company is everywhere. In 2019, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany generated sales of €16.2 billion in 66 countries.

The company holds the global rights to the name and trademark "Merck" internationally. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the business sectors of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany operate as EMD Serono in healthcare, MilliporeSigma in life science, and EMD Performance Materials. Since its founding 1668, scientific exploration and responsible entrepreneurship have been key to the company's technological and scientific advances. To this day, the founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed company. For more information about Merck, KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, visit www.emdgroup.com.