

Bayer licenses sexual dysfunction product

Bayer and EndoCeutics of Canada have signed an exclusive global collaboration agreement for the Phase III development and commercialisation of dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA), a new treatment for vaginal atrophy and female sexual dysfunction.

The deal is worth around Can\$330 million (\$327 million) in milestone payments and research costs to EndoCeutics, plus royalties on any sales.

EndoCeutics will head up the Phase III studies of DHEA in the treatment of vaginal atrophy and sexual dysfunction. Bayer will follow up by pursuing marketing approval and then commercialising the product. Under the agreement, EndoCeutics has granted Bayer the exclusive worldwide licence for developing, manufacturing and marketing DHEA. However, EndoCeutics has reserved an option to commercialise the product in Canada.

The agreement includes financing for clinical trials in Canada and the US that will be paid to EndoCeutics.

“Our partnership with EndoCeutics provides us with an important late stage addition to our gynaecological therapy R&D pipeline in an important, underdeveloped treatment area relating to female sexual dysfunction,” said Dr Shurjeel Choudhri, senior vice-president and head of medical and scientific affairs at Bayer.

EndoCeutics believes DHEA is a major factor in the hormonal deficit underlying menopausal problems. Decreased levels of DHEA cause menopausal symptoms, which in the majority of women include vaginal atrophy and sexual dysfunction, according to EndoCeutics. “Up to 75% of post-menopausal women suffer from vaginal atrophy,” claims Dr Fernand Labrie, CEO of EndoCeutics.

DHEA is expected to be trademarked as Vaginorm.

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