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Roche Deal Gives Synosis A Leg Up In Central Nervous System Space

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Synosis Therapeutics is partnering with Roche to develop five central nervous system drug candidates that the Swiss pharmaceutical giant left on the shelf, the newly launched company announced Jan. 4.

Under the agreement, Synosis will acquire four Phase I molecules: SYN-114 for cognitive disorders, SYN-115 for Parkinson's disease, SYN-116 for acute pain, and SYN-117 for drug dependency, as well as another potential drug dependency therapy (SYN-119) in preclinical development.

"Pharmaceutical companies ... have to make choices and selections about what to develop and invest in. As a result, we believe that there are many 'diamonds in the rough' sitting on the shelves of these companies," Synosis CEO Ian Massey told *"The Pink Sheet" DAILY*. "Our strategy is to exploit these assets to create value for both Synosis and our partners."

As part of its first deal, San Francisco-based Synosis will be responsible for clinical development and in some cases commercialization of the drug candidates in multiple indications, while Roche will retain the right to opt in to two of the programs at agreed-upon milestones, the companies said. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

The candidates are to be developed using what Synosis characterizes as "small, smart clinical trials."

The company explained, for example, that it will employ tools typically used in diagnostic settings (PET scans, MRIs, EEGs) for pharmacologic purposes to obtain more quantitative data than usually acquired in CNS studies.

Those tools will be used "to look at what amount of compound is getting into the brain, where it is going and how quickly," allowing investigators to "quickly shift direction if needed or quickly progress a drug," the company said.

- Shirley Haley (s.haley@elsevier.com)

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