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## Vaxin Inc. sells rights to market flu vaccine

**Treatment can be administered nasally**

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Birmingham biotechnology company Vaxin Inc. has reached a milestone with the first sale of rights to market one of its flu vaccines to a Korean company for \$2 million.

The licensing and investment agreement gives Kolmar Korea Co. Ltd. exclusive rights to market in Korea a non-invasive human vaccine to combat regular flu strains that come each year, the biotech said. The vaccine - which must still be approved by regulators - can be administered nasally.

"Some of the funding they are providing is earmarked for supporting clinical trials to get the flu program to the point where we can start the two-step approval process," said Vaxin spokesman Doug Grove. In early 2007, Vaxin plans to begin clinical studies on the vaccine.

The company also will use proceeds from a round of investments it is seeking now to help fund the key clinical studies required for the approval of its vaccines.

Other terms of the Kolmar agreement were not announced.

Vaxin scientists are in the process of producing a high-grade batch of the vaccine for testing. "As soon as that is done, we'll be at a point where we can start the clinicals," Grove said. "We're still working on some paperwork and finalizing business details with clinical sites."

Kolmar prefers that Vaxin conduct the trials in the United States, Grove said. When Vaxin gets U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval of its test results, the partnership will submit the data to Korea's drug regulating agency to determine if more testing is needed before Kolmar can begin sales.

Vaxin's flu vaccines are genetically engineered. The process, using human cell cultures, makes doses faster and with less contamination than the common method using chicken eggs. Relying on technology developed in a UAB laboratory, Vaxin has developed a way to deliver doses painlessly, without a needle, through patients' noses.

Grove said Vaxin's vaccine differs from a normal vaccine that is a live flu virus capable of reproducing in the body. Researchers take an adenovirus vector - one of the cold viruses - and alter it so it cannot reproduce in the body. He said Vaxin puts in a genetic insert, or sequence of genes that produces the protein or antigen that causes the disease symptoms. When patients are exposed to the non-reproducing vaccine, the body naturally takes steps to become immune to the disease.

Vaxin was founded in late 1997 on technology discovered by founder De-chu Tang and associates at UAB. The biotech received its first U.S. patent in March 2002.

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