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Pfizer Just Bought a Cancer Treatment Company for $43 Billion. Create the Problem, Offer a Solution.

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CNBC just announced: "Pfizer CEO says it will be able to deliver Seagen's cancer therapy at a scale not seen before with $43 billion deal" (click here)

Seagen is a "leading developer" of medicine called antibody-drug conjugates, or ADCs, which are designed to kill cancer cells and spare healthy ones. ADCs use antibodies to deliver small molecule drugs directly to a tumor site, which may reduce side effects and offer greater efficacy, according to Seagen's website.

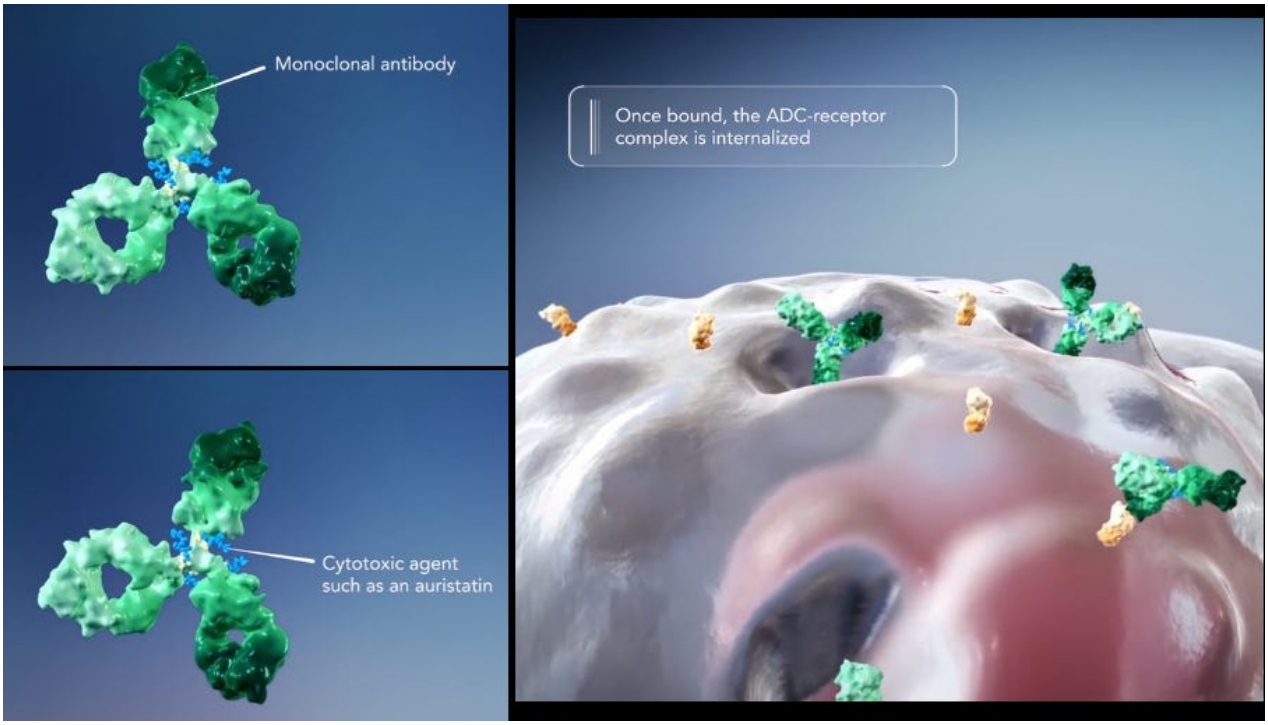
What is Seagen's Cancer treatment?

The safety and efficacy of investigational compounds developed using this antibody-drug conjugate technology, or investigational uses of marketed products developed using this antibody-drug conjugate technology, have not been established.

Sounds about right for Pfizer. But this warning is straight from Seagen's website.

First, this is nothing like mRNA. These are monoclonal antibodies carrying cytotoxic drug molecules to tumor receptors; once they bind they get internalized into the tumor cell, release the cytotoxic compound which halts cell replication and instructs the cell to die (apoptosis). It sounds good in theory and it has been tried (unsuccessfully) many times before.

It's important to stress that this is not a new technology, it has been around for at least a decade.



Problems with Antibody-Drug Conjugates (ADCs)

Early attempts at developing antibody-drug conjugates had disappointing results, largely because the linkers (between the antibody and the drugs) were not stable enough to get the cytotoxic agents to the cancer cells. If the toxins release early, they can kill off healthy cells instead of cancerous ones.

“One challenge is that cells often have proteases—enzymes that degrade proteins—and can split from the back end of the antibody, where the chemotherapy is bound to the antibody”

Monoclonal antibodies come with a whole list of side effects, which I won’t cover in this article, but they are covered well in this Uptodate article (click here).

FDA has been quietly approving these cancer treatments during 2019-2021

To date, the FDA has approved a dozen ADCs to treat cancer, with more than 100 in development in different clinical trials. The antibody-drug conjugates now available are being used to treat forms of leukemia, lymphoma, breast cancer, cervical cancer, bladder cancer and multiple myeloma. Seven received their approvals from 2019 to 2021, including: (click here)(click here)

Drug	Trade name	Maker	Condition	Target	Approval Year
Gemtuzumab ozogamicin	Mylotarg	Pfizer/Wyeth	relapsed acute myelogenous leukemia (AML)	CD33	2017;2000
Brentuximab vedotin	Adcetris	Seagen Genetics, Millennium/Takeda	relapsed HL and relapsed sALCL	CD30	2011
Trastuzumab emtansine	Kadcyla	Genentech, Roche	HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer (mBC) following treatment with trastuzumab and a maytansinoid	HER2	2013
Inotuzumab ozogamicin	Besponsa	Pfizer/Wyeth	relapsed or refractory CD22-positive B-cell precursor acute lymphoblastic leukemia	CD22	2017
Moxetumomab pasudotox	Lumoxiti	Astrazeneca	adults with relapsed or refractory hairy cell leukemia (HCL)	CD22	2018
Polatuzumab vedotin-piiq	Polivy	Genentech, Roche	relapsed or refractory (R/R) diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL)	CD79	2019
Enfortumab vedotin	Padcev	Astellas/Seagen Genetics	adult patients with locally advanced or metastatic urothelial cancer who have received a PD-1 or PD-L1 inhibitor, and a Pt-containing therapy	Nectin-4	2019
Trastuzumab deruxtecan	Enhertu	AstraZeneca/Daiichi Sankyo	adult patients with unresectable or metastatic HER2-positive breast cancer who have received two or more prior anti-HER2 based regimens	HER2	2019
Sacituzumab govitecan	Trodelvy	Immunomedics	adult patients with metastatic triple-negative breast cancer (mTNBC) who have received at least two prior therapies for patients with relapsed or refractory metastatic disease	Trop-2	2020
Belantamab mafodotin-blmf	Blenrep	GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)	adult patients with relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma	BCMA	2020, withdrawn on 22 Nov. 2022
Loncastuximab tesirine-lpyl	Zynlonta	ADC Therapeutics	Large B-cell lymphoma	CD19	2021
Tisotumab vedotin-tftv	Tivdak	Seagen Inc	Recurrent or metastatic cervical cancer	Tissue factor	2021
Mirvetuximab soravtansine	ELAHERE	ImmunoGen	Platinum-Resistant Ovarian Cancer	FRα	2022

FDA Approved ADCs

Profit potential

Seagen will bulk up Pfizer's cancer treatment portfolio, bringing four approved cancer therapies with combined sales of nearly $2 billion in 2022. Seagen's top seller Adcetris, which treats lymph system cancers, brought in $839 million alone in sales last year.

Pfizer added that Seagen could contribute more than $10 billion in risk-adjusted sales by 2030, "with potential for significant growth" beyond that year.

The deal comes as Pfizer prepares for a decline in Covid-related sales this year.

It will help Pfizer sharpen its focus on oncology, a field the company believes will be the industry's biggest growth market.

Pfizer's oncology division raked in $12.1 billion in revenue last year. The company has 24

approved treatments in the division.

Pfizer CEO Bourla emphasized during the interview that cancer's impact reaches far beyond the patients themselves: "If not patients, they will be affected as husband or wife, they will be affected as daughter or son."

My Take…

This looks like an attempt by Pfizer to eventually monopolize or corner the market on what it perceives to be the most profitable novel cancer treatments in the future.

With this acquisition, Pfizer will own 5 of the 13 FDA approved ADCs with many more in the pipeline.

Pfizer's focus seems to be on leukemias and lymphomas, which are "coincidentally" skyrocketing in COVID-19 mRNA vaccinated individuals, as well as breast cancers and cervical cancers, which have also spiked since the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines.

As I have grown more cynical over the last three years, it would not surprise me in the least, to learn that Pfizer has perfectly positioned itself to profit off the cancers that its first mRNA vaccine, the COVID-19 vaccine, caused in the first place.

Interestingly, Pfizer CEO Bourla expects virtually everyone to be impacted by cancer going forward, and if you're not one of every three people directly diagnosed with cancer, you will be a family member to a cancer patient.

And Pfizer will be right there to profit from everyone's misery.

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