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Genentech-partnered Genesis Therapeutics inks newest AI discovery deal with Eli Lilly

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A Stanford biotech rubbed elbows with Genentech in 2020, reaching a deal with the big-name biotech just over 18 months ago. And now, the AI outfit is in its second partnership with Big Pharma.

Genesis Therapeutics secured a deal with big pharma Eli Lilly, the company announced on Tuesday — to discover therapies “across a range of therapeutic areas,” according to a statement put out by the biotech.

Founded in 2019 as a spinout out of Vijay Pande’s lab at Stanford, Genesis Therapeutics looked to join the industry-wide push at the time to incorporate AI into drug R&D. The biotech initially bagged \$4.1 million in seed funding, led by Andreessen Horowitz. And in the meantime, it’s got a big name behind it as director of the board: former Alexion CEO and founder Leonard Bell.

It further spread its wings after the biotech inked a deal with Genentech in 2020 — Roche’s global head of pharma partnering James Sabry said at the time that “AI can help unlock the next generation of innovative therapies for patients in need of additional options. We are excited to work with Genesis’ team to discover medicines currently out of reach using conventional methods.” Two months later, it scored \$52 million via a Series A round.

Now onto the details: the biotech will be using their AI-based drug discovery platform, which includes artificial neural networks and machine learning models to isolate and pinpoint drug candidates for a variety of severe diseases — which so far remain unnamed. Genesis is able to make “ultra-fast and accurate predictions” of a compound’s potency, selectivity, toxicity and more, CEO Evan Feinberg told Endpoints News two years ago on the heels of the Genentech deal being announced. As far as financials go, Genesis will get \$20 million upfront for work on three initial targets. Lilly will retain the option to add two more targets to Genesis’s plate, and Genesis is eligible to receive up to \$670 million overall in combined upfront + milestone payments, plus potential royalties.

“We are excited to join forces with Lilly and their world-class research and development teams to discover novel drugs for patients suffering with severe diseases,” Feinberg said in a statement.