

Strategic Research Collaborations for Market Acceptance: Fate Therapeutics' Growth Strategies

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Fate Therapeutics develops programmed cellular immunotherapies for cancer and immune disorders globally. The clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company was founded in 2007 and quickly generated buzz in the biotech industry due to their unique stem cell approach at the time.

Rather than using the controversial method of tapping embryonic stem cells for therapy, Fate's advancements harnessed adult stem cells. The approach was needed in the market in order to generate trust in the emerging stem cell therapeutics sphere. Stem cell specialists across the U.S., including Dr. Leonard Zon of Harvard Medical School, joined the executive team to participate in the early-stage scientific movement.

In 2023, Fate has multiple NK (natural killer)- and T-cell immuno-oncology programs under development. Indications include treatment for lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukemia, B-cell lymphoma, solid tumors, myeloma, hematologic malignancies, AML and multiple myeloma, acute myeloid leukemia, and advanced solid tumors.

New demands for the treatment of infectious diseases have resulted in an influx of research and development in the NK therapeutics sphere. The market is rapidly growing with a projected CAGR of 40.9% by 2029.

In order to successfully launch, however, developers will need to overcome two key barriers to entry: adverse side effects and inadequate reimbursement scenarios. To generate a more favorable market position, innovators like Fate are launching strategic initiatives, including forming key collaborations to increase product portfolios and maximize revenue potential.

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Exploring Fate's Strong Research Collaborations

The Masonic Cancer Center is designated by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the U.S. government's principal agency for cancer research. There are 71 NCI-Designated Cancer Centers across the country, the majority of which are affiliated with university medical centers. All NCI facilities can be located here.

Developers seeking U.S. research collaborations for cancer-based initiatives should consider targeting these centers as the first stop for local studies. There are three types of locations for innovators to consider based on their individual needs: cancer centers, comprehensive cancer centers, and basic laboratories.

In Fate's case, they opted to target comprehensive cancer centers for collaboration deals. The partnership continues today with the research and development of off-the-shelf, iPSC-derived CAR NK cell cancer immunotherapies.

The Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center is also an NCI-accredited entity. Fate entered into a research collaboration with the player in 2016. The developer sought to unite Memorial Sloan-Kettering's current approach to T-cell immunotherapy with their own internal research, preclinical and manufacturing activities.

Memorial Sloan-Kettering has 26 total segments, including the Brain Tumor Center, Center for Tumor-Immune Systems Biology, Center for Cell Engineering, Center of Comparative Medicine & Pathology, and the Center for Epigenetics Research. A searchable database can be leveraged by innovators to locate current programs, studies, and initiatives of each individual entity. To generate similar results to Fate, developers can create targeted outreach initiatives that focus on their ability to enhance or solve gaps within current studies and methodologies.

Fate's research alliances created a domino effect, with the developer announcing a subsequent partnership in January 2017. Oslo University Hospital, led by NK cell biology expert Dr. Karl-Johan Malmberg, was the next player to join Fate's portfolio of partners.

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These strong collaborations set the foundation for Fate to secure an upfront deal of \$100M with Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) in 2020 for stem cell-derived cancer therapies.

To maximize results in the U.S. market, innovative startups should secure research collaborations rooted in strategy. Forming strong relationships with entities within a key subsegment, such as NCI-accredited centers, helps create strategic inroads with other similar players.

At the end of the day, innovative approaches must be backed by market credibility and support. Securing multiple research collaborations is one core component. Developers should explore the long-term opportunities of working with particular entities, short-listing, and prioritizing specific players to target.

- Content by the BDMT Global Team

If you are interested in potential partnerships and long-term relationships with the companies mentioned in this article or others in the U.S. and/or S. Korea, contact Suzy at sim@bdmtglobal.com.

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As the head of BDMT Global in Boston, Im focuses on accelerating the innovative transformation of global companies. She is a Professor of Marketing and a member of the Advisory Board at Emerson College. Im is also co-founder of Sponsors of the Future, a non-profit organization that leads corporate social responsibility, promoting neurodiversity and inclusion. As a well-known business developer and marketing strategist in the global field for over 20 years, Im merged the two critical global business functions of Business Development (BD) and Marketing Transformation (MT) for the first time. She was recognized for her innovative business model and contribution and received five consecutive awards in the U.S. including the North American Business Awards and TITAN Business Award 2022 in Biotechnology.

