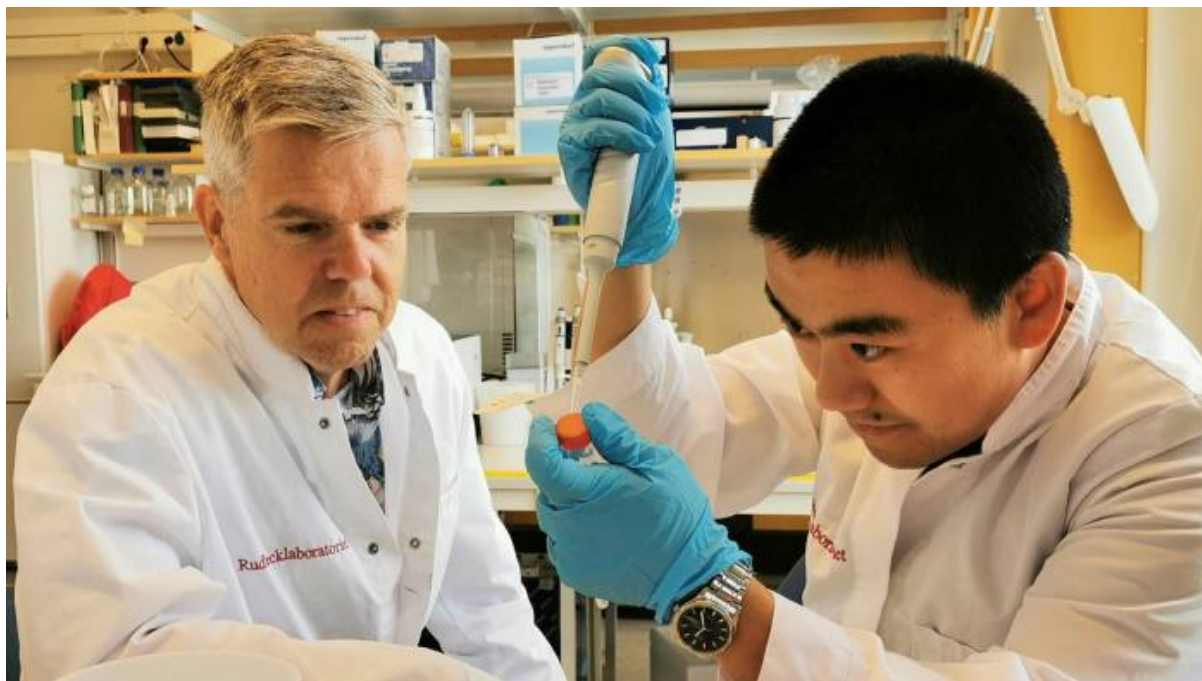


Drugs research**Swedish drug start-up gives shares to donors**

Elicera Therapeutics employs innovative approach to funding experimental cancer treatment



Many drug candidates never make it past the initial development phase, with barriers including funding and regulatory hurdles

Andrew Jack JULY 6 2020

A Swedish biotechnology company has given a share of its equity to the charity that funded early tests of an experimental cancer treatment it now owns, in an innovative approach to financing potential medicines.

[Elicera Therapeutics](#), a privately held start-up that is gearing up to raise \$1m from external investors, has granted 5 per cent of its shares to the [VictoryNET Foundation](#), which was at the centre of a [crowdfunding campaign](#) to develop a potential medicine for neuroendocrine cancer.

This offers the foundation the prospect of revenues from dividends or the sale of the shares, which would be used to fund other potential cancer drugs that struggle to find commercial backers.

Many drug candidates never make it past the initial development phase, with barriers including funding, scientific uncertainty over success and regulatory hurdles.

Elicera's share grant follows \$2m of donations over the past six years to support clinical tests of the medicine, an oncolytic virus that aims to kill cancerous cells and induce an immune response developed by Professor Magnus Essand at Uppsala University in Sweden.

The drug was named AdVince in memory of Vince Hamilton, a businessman who donated \$1m and provided advice to the researchers before himself dying of the disease.

Jamal El-Mosleh, head of Elicera Therapeutics and one of its largest shareholders, said: "AdVince is an important project in our pipeline. We want to recognise our donors and give something back."

He said that progress with AdVince, which started clinical trials in 2016, had been slow, partly because of the difficulty of recruiting patients given the rarity of the disease.

AdVince has so far been tested in six patients in Sweden by Prof Essand, who is one of the two largest shareholders in Elicera. The company has now opened a second clinical site in Tubingen in Germany and is gearing up for a trial of 12 patients.

Elicera has a pipeline of four experimental cancer drugs, with AdVince being furthest along in the clinical trial process.

The initial crowdfunding for AdVince was launched by Alexander Masters, a British author who was looking for new ways of raising funds to back the development of drugs for a condition affecting one of his friends.

He is also looking at other ways to motivate individuals to fund experimental drugs, including giving them the [right to participate](#) themselves or nominate others as patients in clinical trials.

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