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In Vivo's Deals Of The Month, August 2017

by Nancy Dvorin

In Vivo's editors pick August's most significant deals, including Gilead's acquisition of Kite and AstraZeneca's Parkinson's deals. (Free article.)

Top Alliance: AZ's Back-To-Back Parkinson's Deals

[*AstraZeneca PLC*](#) signed two Parkinson's disease deals in the final week of August. It is teaming with [*Takeda Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd.*](#) to develop and sell AZ's alpha-synuclein antibody MEDI1341, scheduled to enter Phase I trials later this year. Takeda will take over development after Phase I. The potential \$400 million deal includes initial revenue, plus development and sales milestones. The companies will equally share development and commercialization costs, as well as revenues. [\[See Deal\]](#) AZ became the latest big pharma to join in this summer's spree of tie-ups with artificial intelligence companies. It is partnering with BERG to discover novel targets and therapeutics for neurological disorders such as Parkinson's. AZ will provide BERG with its curated library of CNS-optimized fragments and BERG will use its *Interrogative Biology* platform to apply algorithm- and probability-based AI to analyze the data and identify potential therapies.

Top Financing: Homology's Series B

[*Homology Medicines Inc.*](#), which uses homologous recombination to circumvent the challenges of other gene editing technologies, raised \$83.5 million in a Series B financing round led by Deerfield Management. Proceeds will go toward advancing its lead candidate (currently in preclinical IND-enabling studies for an inborn error of metabolism disease) and to support continued work on its *AMEnDR* platform. [\[See Deal\]](#) New investors Fidelity Management and Research Company, HBM Healthcare Investments, Maverick Ventures, Novartis, Rock Springs Capital, Vida Ventures, Vivo Capital and Alexandria Venture Investments participated in the round along with prior backers 5AM Ventures, ARCH Venture Partners and Temasek.

Top M&A: Gilead Diversifies With Kite Buy

[*Gilead Sciences Inc.*](#)'s \$11.9 billion acquisition (\$180 per share in cash; a 36% premium) of CAR-T therapy developer [*Kite Pharma Inc.*](#) will make cell therapy the foundation of the company's

oncology platform as it moves beyond small-molecule antivirals and attempts to make up for declining hepatitis C drug revenues. Kite's lead CAR-T candidate axi-cel is poised for FDA approval for refractory aggressive non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. If approved, many think it will reach almost \$2 billion in sales by 2022. The Kite buy also provides Gilead with a pipeline of additional cell therapies, including both CAR-T and TCR candidates for a variety of solid and blood cancers. [*\[See Deal\]*](#)