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## Juno and AstraZeneca pair two hot immunotherapies in new cancer study

April 23, 2015 | By Damian Garde

Juno Therapeutics ([\\$JUNO](#)) and AstraZeneca ([\\$AZN](#)) are joining forces to test their respective cancer treatments in tandem, combining newfangled therapies that promise to use the immune system to combat tumors.

Under the deal, the pair will jointly fund a Phase I study combining one of Juno's so-called CAR-T therapies and pair it with promising antibody developed by [MedImmune](#), AstraZeneca's biologics-focused subsidiary. The trial, slated to start this year, will focus on patients with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Juno's treatment is crafted by removing patients' T cells, outfitting them with targeting technology called chimeric antigen receptors (CARs), and then reinfusing them to hone in on tumors. AstraZeneca's MEDI4736, on the other hand, is an antibody designed to block an immune checkpoint called PD-L1, which stops the body's natural defenses from detecting cancerous growths. Each treatment has demonstrated stellar promise in monotherapy studies, and the two companies believe administering them in tandem could create a powerful weapon against cancer.

"The combination of Juno's CAR-T cell candidate with MEDI4736 adds to our broad program of immuno-oncology combination trials, addressing multiple immune pathways and working with industry-leading partners to explore the significant potential of immunotherapies in transforming treatments for cancer," MedImmune oncology chief Ed Bradley said in a statement.

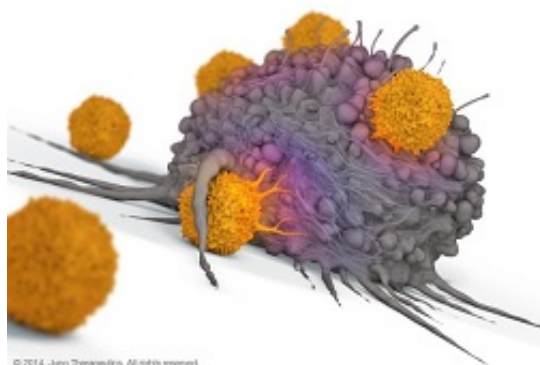
Merck ([\\$MRK](#)), Bristol-Myers Squibb ([\\$BMY](#)) and a host of other contenders in the checkpoint space have launched dozens of studies matching their PD-1- or PD-L1-targeting therapies with other cancer treatments, but AstraZeneca is the first of the group to announce a CAR-T combo trial. And Juno, which went public in a \$265 million IPO last year, has thus far shied away from collaborations.

But the potential of CAR-T in a cancer-fighting cocktail is well understood in immuno-oncology, a discipline increasingly reliant on multiagent combinations. Amgen ([\\$AMGN](#)) partnered up with Juno rival Kite Pharma ([\\$KITE](#)) earlier this year to collaborate in CAR-T, and Novartis ([\\$NVS](#)), the largest player in the field, has talked up the potential of its cell therapy in a combo regimen.

- read the [statement](#)

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*Illustration of CAR-T technology--Courtesy of Juno*

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