

Shasun Pharma to buy out partner's stake in joint venture

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Chennai-based Shasun Pharmaceuticals is set to acquire the remaining stake in the joint venture it had formed with US-based Nanoparticle Biochem Inc (NBI), which is developing methods to apply nanotechnology in cancer treatment.

The research unit has come up with an alternative to chemotherapy that has reached the stage of human clinical trials.

An industry source aware of the matter said the acquisition of the 50 per cent stake of the partner in Shasun NBI will be completed by the first week of February.

The source declined to disclose the valuation of the buyout.

Shasun had announced in August 2010 that it is entering

cancer therapy through the joint venture, which is its first international therapy-related tie-up. It had also announced a \$2-3 million investment over 18 months towards the research.

The joint venture was set up in partnership with the founders of NBI, Raghuraman Kannan and Kattesh Katti, who are researchers at the University of Missouri, which has a stake in NBI.

Shasun had said in a press statement earlier that Katti and Kannan have created a radioactive gold nanoparticle, which when injected into the body, can achieve 85 per cent reduction in tumour volume in patients suffering advanced prostate cancer.

Compared to chemotherapy, which drastically affects body functions in killing tumours, gold nanoparticles reportedly have fewer side-effects. NBI has

taken this research forward by adding a compound found in tea leaves to direct nanoparticles toward the tumour area in the body effectively.

Shasun's earlier investment in the company had gone towards conducting human trials for NBI-29, the lead molecule taking on cancerous growth.

The nanoparticle technologies in the making at University of Missouri can open up a \$1-billion market.

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