

Arrowhead finds its target with Glaxo Nash deal



[Lisa Urquhart](#)

The RNAi specialist Arrowhead Pharmaceuticals is on a run in fatty liver disease, yesterday striking [a \\$120m up-front licensing deal with Glaxosmithkline](#) for the Nash candidate ARO-HSD. Interest in the molecule, which targets HSD17B13, has been growing since Arrowhead's presentation at this year's AASLD meeting, where ARO-HSD showed reductions in several biomarkers for Nash, including HSD17B13, ALT and AST proteins. The deal, however, highlights the wider interest in RNA therapies. Only last week [Arrowhead revealed that an October 2018 deal with Johnson & Johnson had yielded JNJ-75220795](#), an siRNA in a phase 1 Nash study, and earlier this month [Novo Nordisk shelled out \\$3.3bn for Dicerna](#), to get its hands on the group's RNAi technology for diseases including Nash. For its money Glaxo will get the exclusive right to develop ARO-HSD globally, except in China. This is Glaxo's first foray into Nash, marking a high-risk gamble for the company given the numerous failures in this space. And, while ARO-HD might be a relatively low-value investment, [with activist investors circling](#) any more failures in Glaxo's lacklustre pipeline will only increase the pressure on management.

Recent Arrowhead RNA deals

Deal date	Product	Company	Upfront payment (\$m)	Therapeutic focus	Phase
Nov 2021	ARO-HSD	Glaxosmithkline	120	RNAi therapy for non-alcoholic steatohepatitis	1/2
Jun 2021	ARO-XDH	Horizon Therapeutics	40	RNAi therapy for uncontrolled gout	Pre-clinical
Oct 2020	TAK-999	Takeda	300	RNAi therapy to treat alpha-1 antitrypsin-associated liver disease	2
Apr 2018	JNJ-75220795	Johnson & Johnson	175	siRNA therapy for non-alcoholic steatohepatitis	1

Source: company releases, Evaluate Pharma.

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