

New project to explore overlooked area of Alzheimer's Disease research

Alzheimer's disease (AD) affects over 35 million people world-wide at present, these numbers are expected to grow substantially over the next few decades and there are currently no medicines which slow the progress of the disease.

To boost the development of new medicines for AD, a major new European-wide project has now been launched to investigate an area of AD research which has previously received little attention. The ADAPTED (Alzheimer's Disease Apolipoprotein Pathology for Treatment Elucidation and Development) project focusses on the APOE gene which is well known as a risk factor for developing the disease, but precisely how this gene contributes to the risk of developing AD is not known.

ADAPTED, which brings together the expertise of researchers in universities, research institutes and biotech and pharmaceutical companies from across Europe and the USA is led by Dr Agustin Ruiz from Fundació ACE in Barcelona, Spain and Dr Margaretha Bakker from AbbVie Germany in Ludwigshafen.

The project is a public private partnership and is funded by the Innovative Medicines Initiative (<http://www.imi.europa.eu/>, IMI). The IMI is Europe's largest public-private initiative aiming to speed up the development of better and safer medicines for patients. 'ADAPTED draws on the combined expertise of scientists from universities, institutes and companies worldwide,' said Pierre Meulien, IMI Executive Director. 'I am confident that this approach will significantly enhance our understanding of the genetics of Alzheimer's disease and so contribute to IMI's wider efforts to deliver safe, effective treatments for Alzheimer's.'

All the researchers involved in the ADAPTED project met at Fundació ACE in Barcelona recently to discuss this innovative programme of research.

"ADAPTED will tackle a major scientific challenge – to understand the function of the APOE gene. The ADAPTED research team plan to generate enough knowledge to really unravel the complexities of this gene and the part that it plays in AD. If the ADAPTED project is successful, the field of AD treatment and prevention will enter into a completely new era identifying new medicines with promise of treating this devastating disease" said Dr Ruiz.

"People who carry a particular version of the APOE gene, known as APOE4, have a considerably higher risk of developing AD. They also tend to develop the disease much earlier in life which severely impacts on their quality of life. It is not well understood why this is and therefore APOE has largely been ignored in the quest to find treatments for AD. By bringing together leading experts in a range of state-of-the-art technologies to tackle this question we will gain better insights into the causes of AD which will lead to better treatments for patients" added Dr Bakker.

ADAPTED aims to develop new tools for the use of AD researchers across the world. Using the expertise of the ADAPTED partners in a range of cutting-edge biological analysis methods the project will provide the research community with a new generation of human cell –based tools to mimic and investigate the causes and progression of the disease.

As well as Fundació ACE and AbbVie, the ADAPTED partners are: Biogen, CAEBI Bioinformatica SL, Spanish National Research Council, Dundee Cell Products, Erasmus Medical Centre, Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, Kite Innovation Europe, Leiden University, Mimetas BV, Universitaetsklinikum Bonn and University Hospital of Cologne.

Notes to Editors:**About Innovative Medicines Initiative**

The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) is working to improve health by speeding up the development of, and patient access to, the next generation of medicines, particularly in areas where there is an unmet medical or social need. It does this by facilitating collaboration between the key players involved in healthcare research, including universities, pharmaceutical companies, other companies active in healthcare research, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), patient organisations, and medicines regulators. This approach has proven highly successful, and IMI projects are delivering exciting results that are helping to advance the development of urgently-needed new treatments in diverse areas.

IMI is a partnership between the European Union and the European pharmaceutical industry, represented by the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA). Through the IMI 2 programme, IMI has a budget of €3.3 billion for the period 2014-2024. Half of this comes from the EU's research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020. The other half comes from large companies, mostly from the pharmaceutical sector; these do not receive any EU funding, but contribute to the projects 'in kind', for example by donating their researchers' time or providing access to research facilities or resources.

More info on IMI: www.imi.europa.eu | Follow us on Twitter: @IMI_JU

About Fundació ACE

Fundació ACE – Barcelona Alzheimer Treatment and Research Center is an innovative leader in Spain, born in 1995 to meet the growing demand in the diagnosis and treatment of people with cognitive impairment and dementia, particularly Alzheimer's Disease. It offers personalized attention and comprehensive support to patients and their families. Fundació ACE is considered an international reference in research, especially clinical, neuropsychological, social and basic. Follow us on Twitter (@fundacioace) or Facebook.

About AbbVie

AbbVie is a global, research-based biopharmaceutical company formed in 2013 following separation from Abbott Laboratories. The company's mission is to use its expertise, dedicated people and unique approach to innovation to develop and market advanced therapies that address some of the world's most complex and serious diseases. Together with its wholly-owned subsidiary, Pharmacyclics, AbbVie employs more than 28,000 people worldwide and markets medicines in more than 170 countries. In Germany AbbVie is based in Wiesbaden with its country headquarter and in Ludwigshafen with a R&D and manufacturing site. In total AbbVie Germany employs about 2.600 people.

For further information on the company please visit www.abbvie.de | www.abbvie.com or follow @abbvie_de on Twitter.

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