CQDM initiates a unique collaboration with Merck, Pfizer and Biospective on Alzheimer's disease

Montreal, October 10th 2012. CQDM is pleased to announce an investment of $1M in a new research project involving Montreal-based Biospective Inc. and 2 U.S.-based leading pharmaceutical companies, Merck and Pfizer Inc. This initiative will undertake an in-depth characterization of animal models for Alzheimer's disease (AD) with the goal of improving models of disease progression and response to treatment.

In this project, Pfizer Inc. and Merck will provide expertise, resources and critical materials, while Biospective will perform a high-level and comprehensive characterization of the AD animal model and treatment effects using its unique, state-of-the-art magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and quantitative immunohistochemistry (qIHC) image analysis platforms, PIANO™ and PERMITS™. In addition to facilitating this collaboration, CQDM will finance and coordinate the research activities. At the end of the study, the intent is to make all the results available in the public domain in order to advance basic research and further accelerate drug development programs in the challenging AD field.

"We are very proud of this unique collaboration where each partner will contribute to the project in order to advance Alzheimer research," said Diane Gosselin, VP research and business development. "CQDM provides a collaborative space that brings together several resources from 2 leading U.S.-based pharma companies and a contract research organization (CRO) based in Montreal. This new way to work with our Pharma partners maximizes the co-creation of value for everyone's benefits".

According to Dr. Barry Bedell, scientific lead at Biospective, "This exciting collaboration between Merck, Pfizer, Biospective, and CQDM provides a unique opportunity to combine resources and complementary expertise to identify optimal biomarkers which have the potential to accelerate drug discovery and development for Alzheimer's disease".

"We are extremely excited about being part of this inaugural consortium and are very much looking forward to working with our partners in applying unique analysis parameters to animal models of AD. A large gap in our drug discovery process remains the identification of robust translatable endpoints in our preclinical models and a key goal of this collaboration is to apply new tools to existing models in order to close that gap," indicated Kelly Bales, Head, Neurodegeneration & Neurology Diseases Neuroscience Research Unit at Pfizer Inc.

"This unique collaboration is in-line with our external approach to R&D, which is about building collaborative research relationships that provide the ideal environment for innovation to grow," said Steven Xanthoudakis, Director, Business Development, Merck Research Laboratories. "We believe initiatives like this are the best way to improve R&D productivity and a great way to stimulate innovation in Québec".

About CQDM

CQDM is a meeting ground for all stakeholders in biopharmaceutical research. Its principal mission is to fund research projects carried out in partnership between the academic and private sectors. An innovative Canadian initiative, CQDM has a twofold goal: to accelerate the drug discovery process and to develop safer and more effective drugs. CQDM is funded through contributions from Pfizer Canada, AstraZeneca, Merck, Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd., GlaxoSmithKline, Eli Lilly Canada Inc., the Business-Led Networks of Centres of Excellence (BL-NCE) and the Ministère du Développement Économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation (MDEIE). For more information: www.cqdm.org.

About Alzheimer's disease (AD)

Alzheimer's disease is a devastating, neurodegenerative condition which currently afflicts over 35 million people worldwide. If breakthroughs are not discovered, the prevalence could increase to 65 million by 2030 and could exceed 115 million by 2050. Unfortunately, a disease-modifying treatment does not currently exist for Alzheimer's disease. As such, the need for cutting-edge research, including the development and characterization of appropriate predictive models and biomarkers, is critical to advance the development of novel, effective therapeutic agents.

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