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Boehringer, Swiss institute collaborate on diabetes and obesity research

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Singapore: Boehringer Ingelheim and the Institute of Molecular Health Science and the Institute of Food, Nutrition and Health of ETH Zurich entered into a four-year, industry-academia collaboration to achieve new insights into the development of diabetes and obesity. The joint effort will focus on investigating three cell types that may contribute to the onset of diseases such as obesity and diabetes because of their dominant role in metabolic homoeostasis.

The partners have defined four initial research projects which are expected to shed light on the link between preclinical findings from the laboratory or from investigational treatments and the progression of the disease in patients. The projects range from the exploration of the function of surface proteins and signaling pathways of neuroendocrine cells in the pancreatic islets and the intestine to the exploration of brown fat tissue development.

Results from these studies may either facilitate the design of new drug candidates for clinical testing, enable researchers to design better clinical trials for potential new drugs, or optimize the application of medical treatments in order to maximize clinical benefit in specific patient populations.

The research collaboration takes advantage of the pioneering work previously performed by the groups of Professor Markus Stoffel and Professor Christian Wolfrum, and will further advance the selected projects in a true partnership.

Professor Roland Siegwart, VP, research and corporate relations, ETH Zurich said, "We are excited to engage in this research collaboration to investigate basic mechanism of metabolic disease and possible treatments, which also reflects the strategic initiatives of ETH Zurich in the area of heath science."

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