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Edinburgh univ, NCBS, inStem setup brain center

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Bangalore: Scientists from the University of Edinburgh, UK, and the Institute of Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine (inStem) in Bangalore, India, will form a new research center called the Center for Brain Development and Repair in order to study disabilities that arise from alterations in brain development. The launch of the center comes after two years of collaborative work between inStem, the National center for Biological Sciences (NCBS) and the University of Edinburgh.

The center will initially focus on autism spectrum disorders and other intellectual disabilities and help to better understand brain disorders such as autism and dementia with the help of international partnerships. In the longer term, the center will train scientists to tackle major neurological disorders such as dementia, which can critically undermine the quality of life and represents a growing and major public health threat in India.

The collaboration will be supported by the Department of Biotechnology, India, and will involve visiting professors from Edinburgh and Indian scientists working on joint projects in Bangalore and Edinburgh.

Dr Shona Chattarji, professor of neurobiology, National Center for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bangalore, and the director of the new center, said that, "This center is a milestone in UK-India bioscience partnering. It represents a transformative collaborative programme that brings together world-class expertise in several scientific disciplines. This is crucial if we are to understand autism spectrum disorders and intellectual disabilities better."

Dr Siddarthan Chandran, professor of neurology and director, University of Edinburgh's Center for Clinical Brain Sciences, said that, "Not only will this center focus on the common psychiatric and neurological diseases that cause a major burden for patients in both India and the UK, but it will also train the next generation of scientists who will take forward laboratory

discoveries to the clinic."