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ASIA EDITION

Alzheimer's research gets a push from Servier

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Alzheimer's research in Australia gets a push from Servier



Singapore: Research on treatment of Alzheimer's disease received a fillip with Australian scientists working on it receiving collaborative support from a French pharmaceutical company. Servier, established in diabetes, CNS disorders, oncology, and cardiovascular and rheumatological diseases, has entered into collaboration with the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research and Monash University in Australia to further push the work on the role of insulin-regulated AminoPeptidase (IRAP) in neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's disease.

A tie-up with Servier will help the researchers to gain access to Servier's expertise in drug discovery and development of CNS therapeutic agents. The agreement, facilitated by life sciences commercialization company Bio-Link Australia, will help take the IRAP model to the clinical stage.

IRAP is a novel target for the therapeutic treatment of neurodegenerative disorders. The role of IRAP in memory was originally identified at the Florey Institute by Dr Siew Yeen Chai, now at Monash University, while subsequent work in collaboration with Professor Michael Parker of St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research has shown that inhibitors of IRAP may potentially have disease modifying effects in Alzheimer's disease.

The Australian research teams have committed significant resources to obtain in vivo proof-of-concept for IRAP in models of Alzheimer's disease, and have generated valuable know-how and intellectual property. The collaboration will initially focus on further understanding the therapeutic potential of IRAP in models of neurodegenerative disorders, and for the development of a high-throughput assay for the identification of novel drug candidates that inhibit IRAP activity. The program of research will involve laboratories at Monash University and St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research as well as Servier's Neuroscience Research Unit located within the Institut de Recherche Servier.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Florey and its partners will receive from Servier annual support for research activities undertaken as part of the collaboration and support for researchers to work on the IRAP project. Servier will receive an

exclusive option to license the IRAP program once agreed research milestones have been met.

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Professor Geoff Donnan, director of the Florey, said, "The Florey is delighted that a groundbreaking piece of work from our scientists and collaborators has the opportunity to be partnered with Servier with the promise of new medicines being developed to treat Alzheimer's disease."
Dr Emmanuel Canet, president of Servier R&D, commented that Servier is dedicated to the research and development of novel therapeutic for the treatment of neurodegenerative and psychiatric diseases. "This collaboration between Servier and the Florey, Monash University and St Vincent's Institute brings together unique expertise in neurological and psychiatric disorders and drug discovery. This partnership reinforces our quest to find innovative drugs for Neurodegenerative Diseases such as Alzheimer's disease," he said.

Dr Bernard Marchand, general manager of the Institut de Recherche Servier, commented, "The Florey and its partners have made tremendous efforts in understanding the role of IRAP in the pathology of Alzheimer's disease. We consider that IRAP may have potential as a target of therapeutic importance in the development of neurodegenerative diseases and it is the task of this collaboration to validate this belief and provide a platform for the identification of novel therapeutic agents acting on IRAP."