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TSRI, Takeda expand research collaboration

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Singapore:Ã?Â The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) and Takeda Pharmaceutical plan to expand their recent research collaboration to search for new drug targets for a variety of diseases.

The new agreement extends an initial collaboration launched in 2010 between scientists on the Florida campus of TSRI and Envoy Therapeutics that led to several breakthroughs in identifying potential new compounds for neurological and psychiatric diseases. Envoy was acquired by Takeda Pharmaceuticals last November.

"We're pleased to expand our partnership with Takeda-Envoy and to push promising drug discovery efforts forward," said Mr Scott Forrest , TSRI's vice president for business development. "The high-throughput screening capability at Scripps Florida campus is in increasing demand-both from other research institutes and from industry."

Scripps Florida's state-of-the art high-throughput screening facility is part of its larger translational research infrastructure. The facility has expertise in transforming slow, labor-intensive biological and biochemical bench-top experiments into high-throughput screening experiments (screens). Fully automated robotic screening platforms then rapidly test more than 650,000 drug-like compounds for pharmacologic activity. After completion of the screens, the facility uses other cutting-edge technologies to support the development of clinically relevant compounds.

Mr Stephen Hitchcock, senior vice president of drug discovery at Envoy, said, "We originally came to Jupiter because of Scripps Florida and are thrilled that the potential of our original collaboration has been realized. Now we're moving into new therapeutic areas with different biological targets. The first step is to find small molecules that can validate those targets-and Scripps Florida is amongst the very best places to do that."
Mr Hitchcock said one intangible factor in the expanded research collaboration was the quality of the people at Scripps Florida. "They have been great collaborators and great friends," he said. "The interaction between our scientists and theirs was a huge factor in expanding our research."

Mr Peter Hodder, who directs the high-throughput screening facility at Scripps Florida, has been collaborating with Hitchcock and Envoy scientists since the company's founding in 2010. "This new effort deepens our commitment to validating novel drug discovery targets via screening-based approaches and also underlines Scripps' intrinsic worth to our partners in early-stage drug discovery research."