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A Lausanne alliance for oncology research

The University of Lausanne (UNIL), the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Vaudois (CHUV) and Roche have created an alliance for the research and development of cancer treatments.

UNIL, EPFL and the CHUV will work jointly with Roche to establish research projects at the pre-clinical, clinical and translational levels in specific spheres of oncology.

Those which have been earmarked are: oncology and immunotherapy, imagery and molecular therapy with emphasis on the tumoral microenvironment. As of October 2016, the alliance has been financing six trans-institutional pre-clinical research projects, selected amongst numerous proposals put forward by researchers from the three institutions. Another project seeks to reprogram the signaling and the metabolism of the immune and anti-tumoral T-cells.

The researchers involved are professors Jean Bourhis, Douglas Hanahan, Ping-Chih Ho, Johanna Joyce, Michele de Palma, Tatiana Petrova, Pedro Romero, Christian Simon, Daniel Speiser and Dr Laurent Derré, whilst co-investigators include Dr Grégory Verdeil, professors Denise Nardelli-Haeffliger, Patrice Jichlinski, and Drs Jean Yannis Perentes and Michel Gonzalez.

The financial commitment of Roche, over three years, represents CHF 6 million. This strategic alliance allows to combine and to complement the respective strengths of the parties. The three Lausanne institutions bring extensive expertise – as much in fundamental, translational and clinical research as in bio-engineering, immuno-engineering and innovative technologies. For its part, Roche offers its know-how in the research and development of molecules and a strong panel of rational drugs which target cancer from different angles, for example by halting the progression of tumors, or their resistance to treatment.

The synergy between the talents and resources of Roche and our academic institutions will contribute to stimulating research in the field of oncology. This alliance, based on deep collaboration and with due regard to inviolable academic freedom, aims to accelerate the development of innovative therapies for the benefit of all patients stricken by cancer.

Professor George Coukos, head of the Department of oncology UNIL CHUV announced: “We are thrilled by this opportunity to partner with Roche for the development of therapies in the sphere of immuno-oncology and targeted treatment of the tumor micro-environment. These are a key focus in the current development of oncology treatments and one of the strengths of Lausanne with its diverse institutions of which UNIL, EPFL and CHUV are a part”.



“Roche’s visionary commitment to this strategic clinical and pre-clinical alliance is a milestone in the development of Lausanne and the Lake Geneva region as a hub committed to excellence in oncology. It is a testament to what we have already accomplished through building on the synergies between the academic and scientific institutions of our region, and to what will be our potential contribution to next generation cancer treatments” commented Professor Douglas Hanahan, Director of the *Institut Suisse de la Recherche Expérimentale sur le Cancer* (ISREC) within the EPFL:

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