
Cooperation between Zedira and Cardiff University - Transglutaminase 6 is the focus of new research into ataxia

Darmstadt and Cardiff, September 22nd 2015

Zedira and Cardiff University have initiated a joint project addressing questions regarding the role of an enzyme called transglutaminase 6 in the pathophysiology of neurodegenerative diseases. This work builds on and extends previous successful collaborations between the two partners in the arena of the autoantibody response in gluten-related disorders.

Cerebellar ataxias are a heterogeneous group of neurodegenerative diseases affecting primarily the hind brain and are characterized by progressive imbalance and limb movement deficits. Both, genetic and immune-mediated deficiencies in transglutaminase 6 have been implicated in specific forms of adult onset cerebellar ataxia. Within this new project the partners aim to elucidate the underlying processes that ultimately cause disease. A molecular understanding of the disease process and identification of mechanistic links to other ataxias will inform the design of strategies for therapeutic intervention.

Ralf Pasternack / Martin Hils, CEO Zedira:

“We are excited about working with Prof. Aeschlimann’s research group with world-leading expertise in this area”.

Daniel Aeschlimann, Cardiff University comments:

“The combination of Zedira’s molecular tools, drug candidates and know-how in the transglutaminase field with our scientific expertise is a solid fundament for addressing this thus far unexplored research area”.

About Zedira:

The Darmstadt-based biotech company has a focus on celiac disease and other transglutaminase-linked conditions in the arena of autoimmunity, fibrotic diseases and coagulation. The company develops, produces and markets specialist reagents and kits for research and development as well as for clinical diagnostics. Zedira is also establishing a pipeline of drug candidates adapted to specific indications based on its patented family of low-molecular transglutaminase blockers. ZED1227 is the first direct acting transglutaminase inhibitor entering clinical development. The company is actively progressing follow-on candidate molecules informed by the know-how gained with development of ZED1227 and aims at new approaches in thrombosis prophylaxis. Zedira is a portfolio company of the German High-Tech Gründerfonds.

About Prof. Daniel Aeschlimann, Cardiff University:

Professor Aeschlimann heads a research group focused on [matrix biology](#) interested in mechanisms of assembly of supramolecular structures, regulation of cell integration with the 3-dimensional extracellular matrix, how matrix signals guide cell behavior and regulate immune responses in tissue repair. He discovered several of the transglutaminase isozymes, pioneered work on transglutaminase crosslinking in skeletal tissues and identified the link between cerebellar ataxia and autoimmune responses targeting transglutaminase 6 in patients with gluten sensitivity. He leads active research programs into neurological aspects of gluten-related disorders and arthritis, and is a founding member of the Arthritis Research UK funded [Centre of Excellence in Cardiff](#).

About Cardiff University:

[Cardiff University](#) is recognised in independent government assessments as one of Britain's leading teaching and research universities and is a member of the Russell Group of the UK's most research intensive universities. The 2014 Research Excellence Framework ranked the University 5th in the UK for research excellence. Among its academic staff are two Nobel Laureates, including the winner of the 2007 Nobel Prize for Medicine, University Chancellor Professor Sir Martin Evans. Founded by Royal Charter in 1883, today the University combines impressive modern facilities and a dynamic approach to teaching and research. The University's breadth of expertise encompasses: the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences; and the College of Physical Sciences and Engineering, along with a longstanding commitment to lifelong learning. Cardiff's flagship Research Institutes are offering radical new approaches to pressing global problems.

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