

## **£6 million grant to address ‘key knowledge gap’ in Parkinson’s research**

A new study that aims to increase understanding of cell death in Parkinson’s has benefitted from a £6 million<sup>1</sup> (7 million euro) boost from the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI - [www.imi.europa.eu](http://www.imi.europa.eu)).

The PD-MitoQUANT ([www.pdmitoquant.eu](http://www.pdmitoquant.eu)) research project aims to improve understanding of Parkinson’s so that better treatments can be developed for the one million people living with Parkinson’s in Europe today, including the 145,000 people in the UK.

Researchers will focus on what consortium member Parkinson’s UK calls a ‘key knowledge gap in Parkinson’s’ – the role of mitochondria. The project will look at how mitochondria, the ‘powerhouses’ of the cell, contribute to cell death and neurodegeneration when they malfunction in people with Parkinson’s.

The IMI hopes that this developed understanding will lead to improved tools for the early stages of drug development, so pharmaceutical companies can develop better treatments in the future.

The EU public-private partnership funding health research and innovation chose the project as it recognises that new, more effective treatments are urgently needed. The most common drug to treat Parkinson’s used in the UK is more than 50 years old, and no current treatment can stop, slow or reverse the condition.

PD-MitoQUANT Coordinator, Prof. Jochen Prehn of RCSI (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland) said: “This project will join forces with top scientists in academia and industry across Europe to bring a fresh look on how we identify and test novel drugs for the treatment of this devastating movement disorder.”

Professor David Dexter, Deputy Director of Research at Parkinson’s UK, said: “This unique collaboration will provide a greater insight in the role of mitochondria in Parkinson’s and will hopefully play a key role in the development of new drugs to support mitochondrial function. Hopefully, Brexit doesn’t prevent the UK from participating in the vital research collaborations in the future.”

The project will run for three years from February 2019.

### **ENDS**

#### **Notes to editors:**

1. The breakdown of the funding is as follows: £4 million (4.5 million euro) in funding from the EU’s Horizon 2020 programme and £2 million (2.46 million euro) in-kind from European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) members and Parkinson’s UK.

The project involves 14 partners from 9 countries, including academic experts from RCSI (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland) ([www.rcsi.com](http://www.rcsi.com)), Institut du Cerveau et de la Moelle Epinière (<https://icm-institute.org/>), German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (<https://www.dzne.de/>), Neuroscience Institute of the National Research Council (<https://www.cnr.it/>), University College London (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/>), Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Centre ([www.radboudumc.nl](http://www.radboudumc.nl)), the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS, <http://www.cnrs.fr/>), SMEs (GeneXplain GmbH (<http://genexplain.com/>), Mimetas B.V. (<https://mimetas.com/>), Pintail Limited ([www.pintail.eu](http://www.pintail.eu)), pharmaceutical companies from the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA - <https://www.efpia.eu/>) Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd. (<https://www.tevapharm.com/>), H. Lundbeck A/S (Lundbeck, <https://www.lundbeck.com/>) and UCB S.A. (UCB, <https://www.ucb.com/>), and a patient advocacy organisation (Parkinson’s UK - <https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/>).



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