

Development of New Medicines for Memory Impairment

Basel and Lausanne, 17. January 2012 - Using a novel approach, research scientists of the University of Basel will develop drugs for memory impairment together with the Lausanne based biopharmaceutical company AC Immune. This project is supported by the Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI) of the Swiss Federal Department of Economic Affairs.

Memory problems are the main symptom of Alzheimer's Disease, but do also occur in many other neuropsychiatric disorders, such as in schizophrenia or depression. Today no satisfactory treatment options for memory impairment are available. The neuroscientists Dominique de Quervain and Andreas Papassotiropoulos of the University of Basel have been working on the characterization of the neurobiological and molecular basis of human memory for several years. By applying genome-wide studies of large groups of healthy volunteers, they were able to identify important metabolic processes in human memory. The results of those studies provide the researchers with valuable information for the selection of possible targets for potential drugs against memory impairment. Both the molecular genetic studies and clinical trials are being conducted at the Division of Cognitive Neuroscience and the Division of Molecular Neuroscience of the University of Basel.

The Basel researchers use the large-scale information obtained in these studies to develop new medicines for memory impairment. To achieve this goal, the scientists have launched a collaboration with AC Immune. Led by Andrea Pfeifer, the biopharmaceutical company is a leader in Alzheimer's Disease drug development and will bring its extensive knowledge to the collaboration.

The partner project "Human genetics-driven discovery of memory-modulating drugs" will start in March 2012. Three clinical studies are being supported through a grant of the CTI (Commission of Technology and Innovation) for three years.

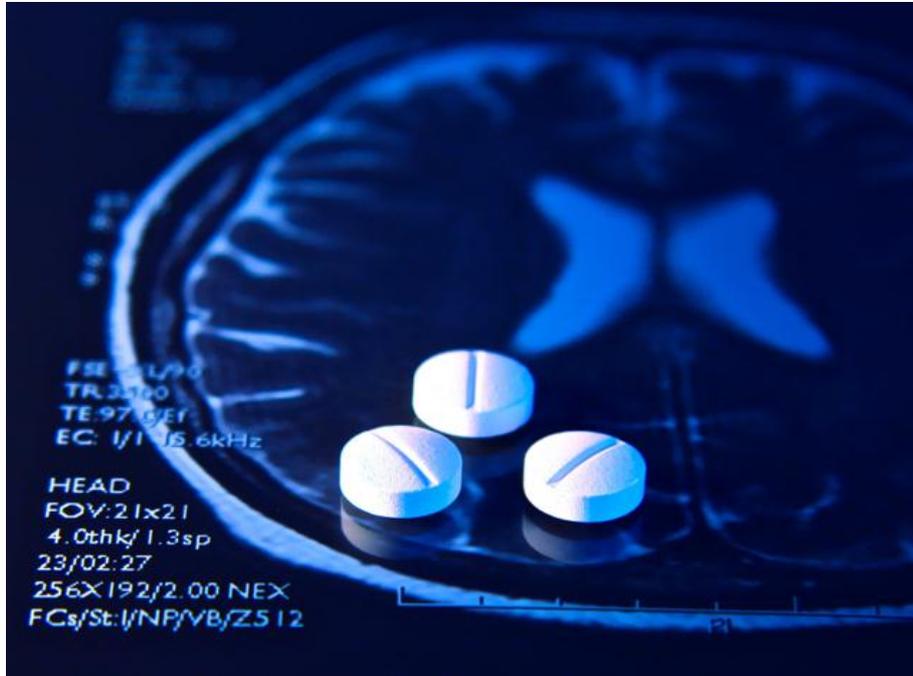
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Picture: Division of Cognitive Neuroscience, University of Basel