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PRISM protocol is finalised

After a rigorous process of scientific review and refinement, the PRISM protocol was finalised in early January of 2017. Protocol development was led by P1vital Ltd and involved contributions from across the entire PRISM consortium.



To develop the protocol a wide round of reviews from consortium members and more fine-grained, feasibility-focused discussions with representatives from each of the four recruiting sites (Utrecht, Amsterdam, Leiden, and Madrid) were held. Central to early drafts of the protocol was the output of four Working Groups, which provided systematically and expertly reviewed information on which biomarkers were of the greatest scientific value to the project's aims.

The result of this process is a protocol that captures the aims of the PRISM clinical study: to establish whether a set of quantifiable biological parameters can cluster and differentiate schizophrenia (SZ) and Alzheimer's disease (AD) patients characterised by low versus high levels of social withdrawal. It is anticipated that the output of the study may be valuable in the development of novel treatments for those symptoms that are shared between patients with SZ and AD.

How can SMEs contribute to IMI projects?



The IMI attaches significant importance to the development of SMEs, defined as small and medium-sized enterprises of less than 250 employees and €50 million in turnover, allocating 15.8% of the IMI's budget for research and innovation projects that involve them.

The reason small businesses are seen as critical drivers of economic growth, stimulating innovation and acting as competitive spurs to existing businesses. They are also a large source of jobs, accounting in the UK, for example, for 59.3 percent of private-sector employment. But it is through developing innovation products and services that SMEs have their real impact. For IMI the hope is that SMEs can build sustainable 'bridges' between big pharma and academia, translating cutting-edge academic research into the economy for the benefit of all. The role they play in IMI projects is especially important.

The PRISM project has four SMEs participating: P1vital Ltd from Wallingford, UK; SBGneuro Ltd from Thame, UK; Biotrial SAS from Rennes, France; and Drug Target ID BV from Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

"The partnership between academia, SMEs and industry that IMI fosters is a particularly valuable one" says Gerry Dawson, Chief Scientific officer of SME P1vital. "SMEs provide the sustainability that ensures that the outcomes IMI projects translate into real benefits for current and future patients with CNS disorders".

"EU-funded projects such as PRISM are a fantastic opportunity for SMEs like Biotrial to improve their processes and deliverables in terms of scientific added value," says Philippe L'Hostis, Core Lab Director at Biotrial. "Regarding the achievement of the objectives of such projects, SMEs like Biotrial can bring a significant improvement. Combined with the academic expertise embedded in the project team, the operational efficiency and the flexibility of our processes are key drivers for successful implementation of practical operations. Data generated are most likely to support significant scientific progresses."

Families' perspectives on social withdrawal



Last November PRISM project partner EUFAMI organised a focus group with family members of patients to gather their observations on social withdrawal to feed into the PRISM project.

"I wish my son could dress himself correctly with clean pieces of clothing and after a shower that he could follow an activity, like a drawing course he paid for but did not attend, that he could stand a real conversation with other persons or with family."

Amongst various signals, participants listed lack of self-care (clothing, hair), lack of communication, immobility, such as getting out of bed, and lack of activities particularly outside of the house, resulting in a limited number of friends and often no partner.

A striking result indicated by family members was their own struggle with social isolation. Comments included, "I was afraid that we bothered the neighbours," "We stopped going to family gatherings," "During the crisis, we didn't speak to anyone about the topic other than the doctor."

Social withdrawal feeds stigma, which impacts not just patients but entire families. Tackling social withdrawal therefore has enormous potential for positive impact. Committed to supporting families affected by mental illness, the PRISM project is helping EUFAMI to ensure that their views are represented in policy, practice and research.

'ECNP New approaches to psychiatric drug development' meeting



ECNP would like to thank all PRISM members that have applied for the upcoming innovation meeting on 'New approaches to psychiatric drug development', to be held on 12-13 March 2017, in Nice, France.

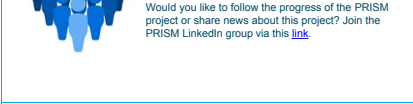
This one-off meeting, co-organised by the PRISM project co-ordinator Martien Kas, will bring neuroscientists, clinicians, industry and regulators together to bridge the translational gaps between novel targets, CNS functions and clinical phenomena.

The programme of the meeting can be found [here](#).

Join the PRISM LinkedIn group



The PRISM LinkedIn group is an open access tool that has been created to disseminate news about the project. The group is open for members of the consortium as for the general public.



Would you like to follow the progress of the PRISM project or share news about this project? Join the PRISM LinkedIn group via this [link](#).

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The project leading to this application has received funding from the Innovative Medicines Initiative 2 Joint Undertaking under grant agreement No 115916. This Joint Undertaking receives support from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme and EFPIA.

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