Press Release

EU Framework 7 grant awarded to Psynova Neurotech-led consortium to develop blood tests to aid the diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric disorders

Cambridge, UK (July 2009) Psynova Neurotech, a UK based CNS diagnostics company announced today that it is part of an 8 member consortium that has been awarded a €2.75million European Commission Framework 7 grant to develop minimally invasive, high throughput, low cost molecular assays for the early diagnosis of schizophrenia and other psychiatric disorders. The consortium includes the laboratories of Dr. Sabine Bahn (University of Cambridge), Dr. Pauline Rudd (National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training, Dublin), Dr. Markus Leweke (Central Institute of Mental Health, Mannheim), and Dr. Matthias Rothermundt (University of Muenster) as well as 3 SMEs - EDI GmbH (Germany), Storkbio Ltd. (Estonia) and Psynova Neurotech Ltd. (UK). Pera International (UK) will help manage the 3 year project and Psynova Neurotech will be the project co-ordinator.

The current diagnosis of schizophrenia is highly subjective and time-consuming, due to the lack of objective biological tests specific for the disease. The resulting delay and uncertainty in diagnosis leads to delayed treatment, and, in turn, extended suffering and hardship for patients and their families. In the few studies where early treatment has been implemented in high risk patient groups, poor outcomes were substantially reduced, as were the duration of untreated illness, inpatient days, and the time to remission. Therefore, a test that enables earlier and more accurate diagnosis of the disease would not only deliver improved patient outcomes but also greatly reduce the overall costs of schizophrenia to health services and society.[1]

The objective of the project is to identify serum biomarkers of disease and develop a biomarker assay panel for the high throughput screening of biological samples for clinical research. The consortium's efforts will focus on the unmet clinical need for objective and reliable diagnostic aids to accelerate and optimise the treatment of schizophrenia and other psychiatric disorders, such as depression. The identification of specific biomarkers for mental

[1] [1]*Norman, R.M.G., Malla, A.K.*, (2001). Duration of untreated psychosis: a critical examination of the concept and its importance. **Psychol. Med**.31, 381– 400; *McGorry, P.D.*, (2002). The recognition and optimal management of early psychosis: An evidence-based reforum. **World Psychiatry** 1 (2), 76– 83; *Harrigan, S.M., McGorry, P.D., Krstev, H.*, (2003). Does treatment delay in first-episode psychosis really matter? **Psychol. Med**. 33 (1), 97– 110; *Riecher-Rossler, A., Aston, J., Borgwardt, S., Gschwandtner, U., Pfluger M.*, (2006). Early detection and treatment of schizophrenia—how early? **Acta Psychiatr. Scand Suppl**. 429, 73-80.

disorders has the potential to revolutionise the clinical management of affected individuals. Biomarkers can help in the identification of disease sub-types and novel drug targets, and also in predicting and monitoring treatment response and compliance. Preliminary data from Psynova's ongoing collaboration with the Bahn lab suggests that disease specific serum biomarker signatures can be reliably detected and measured, making the aforementioned goal highly achievable. Moreover, once successful, the biomarker assay platform will be available to SMEs and pharmaceutical companies to facilitate drug discovery and development, research into new pre-clinical models and the identification of biomarkers for other mental disorders.

"We are very pleased to be collaborating with such an eminent group of partners to develop new biomarker panels" said Dr Paul Rodgers, Chairman of Psynova Neurotech. Dr. Sabine Bahn, director and co-founder of Psynova Neurotech, added "The biomarker panels represent tools to help general practitioners and psychiatrists in the difficult task of diagnosing and treating patients much sooner, ideally when symptoms are still mild, resulting in improved outcomes".

More about Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a complex, seriously debilitating psychiatric disorder affecting approximately 1% of the population but accounting for a quarter of all mental health costs and taking up to one third of psychiatric hospital bed occupancy.[2] The overall cost of schizophrenia to society is huge; direct costs alone, such as general practitioner and specialist consultation, community psychiatric nursing visits, hospital admissions and drug treatment, are estimated to total €33billion p.a. in Europe.[3] Indirect costs, which are dominated by lost productivity through incapacity, unemployment and premature mortality are harder to quantify but are thought to make up at least 50% of the total cost of the disease.

About Psynova Neurotech Ltd.

Psynova Neurotech was established in 2005 by Dr Sabine Bahn, MD, PhD, MRCPsych, and Prof Chris Lowe, PhD of the University of Cambridge to build on 12 years of ground-breaking research by Dr Bahn in identifying novel biomarkers for neuropsychiatric illnesses, Psynova Neurotech continues to work closely with the Bahn lab to great effect, resulting in the recent agreement with Rules Based Medicine (RBM) Inc. to co-develop a candidate biomarker panel into a clinical test to aid in the early diagnosis and treatment of schizophrenia. Psynova Neurotech and RBM expect this will be the first of several products in related therapeutic areas, such as bipolar affective disorder (also referred to as manic depression) and major depression to address this unmet clinical need for objective molecular tests in psychiatric disorders. Psynova is also actively exploring the potential of these biomarker panels as companion diagnostics and therapy monitoring tools. More information about Psynova Neurotech can be found at www.psynova.com

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[2] *Wyatt RJ, Henter I, Leary MC, Taylor E*.(1995)An economic evaluation of schizophrenia--1991. **Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol.** 30, 196-205.

[3] Knapp *M, Chisholm D, Leese M, Amaddeo F, Tansella M, et al.* (2002) Comparing patterns and costs of schizophrenia care in five European countries: the EPSILON study. European Psychiatric Services: Inputs Linked to Outcome Domains and Needs. **Acta Psychiatr Scand** 105, 42-54 and *Andlin-Sobocki P, Rossler W* (2005) Cost of psychotic disorders in Europe. **Eur J Neurol** 12, Suppl 1: 74-77.

Psynova Neurotech Company Contact:
Paul Rodgers

+44 (0) 1223 703146

paul.rodgers@psynova.com