

BI takes crowdfunding approach to boost research

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Singapore: Boehringer Ingelheim and BioMed X have applied a crowdsourcing approach to establish a research team of outstanding scientists from around the world with bright ideas, who will endeavor to identify new approaches for the treatment of patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

The interdisciplinary team will focus on the characterization of epigenetic regulators driving hallmarks of the COPD pathophysiology, as recent evidence indicates that epigenetic mechanisms could be major drivers of this devastating disease. Epigenetics is defined as heritable changes in gene expression or phenotype that do not involve a change in the underlying DNA sequence, Renata Jurkowska will head the research team that will be established in the BioMed X Innovation Center located on the campus of the University of Heidelberg, Germany.

Mr Christian Tidona, founder and managing director, BioMed X explained, "The newly formed research team will build on our strong scientific networks in Heidelberg and the Biotech Cluster Rhine-Neckar. The team will be guided by experienced mentors from academia and Boehringer Ingelheim and will receive an intensive entrepreneurship and leadership training".

Mr Michel Pairet, senior corporate vice president of research and non-clinical development, Boehringer Ingelheim said, "we are very enthusiastic about working with this highly motivated team of talented scientists at the BioMed X Innovation Center". He continued, "we firmly believe that crowd sourcing is an exciting and refreshing way to find unconventional solutions based on the diversity of talents and ideas. This project is ideally suited to integrate breakthrough science in epigenetics research and emerging insights into the pathophysiology of COPD. Understanding epigenetic mechanisms will allow us to discover unknown drivers of the disease and accelerate the discovery of new medicines for treating patients with COPD".

The research team will be sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim for two years with the option to extend the funding period up to a total of four years.

BioMed X Innovation Center is a new collaboration model at the interface between academia and industry. At the center, distinguished early career scientists recruited from all over the world are working jointly on novel pre-clinical research projects

in the fields of biomedicine, molecular biology, cell biology, diagnostics and bioinformatics.