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BioMed X and Boehringer Ingelheim Expand XSeed Labs to Advance Next-Generation Eye Therapies

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The new research team will develop human retina models to support more predictive biologics discovery for intraocular therapies.



BioMed X, a leading innovation engine for pharma, and Boehringer Ingelheim have announced the launch of a new research team at XSeed Labs, the established innovation incubator embedded within Boehringer's U.S. R&D headquarters in Ridgefield, Connecticut.

The newly established research team, Team NIB (New Platform for Next-Generation Intraocular Biologics), led by BioMed X boot camp winner Dr. Deniz Ugurlu Cimen, aims to develop an innovative human organotypic in vitro platform technology for the development and validation of next-generation intraocular biologics.

This initiative builds on Boehringer's growing focus in eye health, where the company is pursuing innovative approaches to address vision-threatening diseases and exploring next-generation biologics to help preserve and improve sight. Retinal

conditions are a leading cause of irreversible vision loss globally, with many patients still lacking treatment options.

“By building more predictive human-based models, the collaboration aims to enhance translational success and help bring innovative therapies to patients faster,” said Remko Bakker, Global Head of Eye Health and Research Beyond Borders at Boehringer Ingelheim.

Dr. Ugurlu Cimen is a molecular and cell biologist specialising in stem cell-based disease modelling. Her work integrates stem cell engineering, functional genomics, and advanced 3D human model systems, with a focus on translating biological insights into scalable platforms for therapeutic development. As Group Leader, she will guide an interdisciplinary team spanning stem cell biology, biomaterials, and micro-physiological systems.

“Progress in intraocular therapeutics depends on models that can meaningfully test and challenge new drug designs,” said Dr. Deniz Ugurlu Cimen. “We are building a human in vitro eye model that captures essential physiological features to improve the predictive power of therapeutic discovery, supported by an interdisciplinary approach across biology and engineering.”

“At Boehringer Ingelheim, we connect people and science to research some of today’s most pressing health challenges,” said Nazzareno Dimasi, Global Head of Biotherapeutics Discovery at Boehringer Ingelheim. “By combining our deep expertise in biologics with BioMed X’s innovation model, we are helping advance new approaches that may expand what’s possible in drug discovery and help accelerate delivery of new therapies to patients.”

“Two years after unveiling our first research team at Boehringer Ingelheim’s Ridgefield R&D site, we are thrilled to expand our joint XSeed Labs incubator on the company’s campus and into a new area,” said Mark Johnston, CEO of BioMed X USA. “This extended collaboration is proof that installing our BioMed X model within the campus of a major pharmaceutical company can indeed add value to their internal R&D.”

BioMed X’s innovation model is designed to enable high-risk, high-reward science. By embedding research teams directly into pharmaceutical R&D environments, BioMed X creates a collaborative ecosystem where scientists from academia and industry work side by side to accelerate breakthrough innovation.