REPO-TRIAL PREPARES FOR ITS CLINICAL STUDY IN STROKE PATIENTS

Maastricht and Essen, November 22, 2021 – REPO-TRIAL, a 5-year Horizon 2020 project funded by a EUR 5.6 million research grant (No. 777111) from the European Commission, is getting ready to initiate REPO-STROKE, the first of its two Phase Ib/IIa investigator-initiated clinical trials investigating synergistic combinations of repurposed drugs. These agents are: riociguat, approved for the treatment of pulmonary arterial hypertension; perphenazine, used as an antipsychotic; and the thyroid drug, propylthiouracil.

"The drugs in this triple therapy have been selected to address crucial pathways that are dysregulated in ischemic stroke," said REPO-TRIAL coordinator Prof. Harald H. Schmidt, Department Head of Pharmacology and Personalized Medicine at Maastricht University. "Certain enzymes that synthesize nitric oxide or oxidize the energy donor NADPH become over-activated in stroke and generate free radicals that damage the blood brain barrier and also inactivate soluble guanylate cyclase, another critical enzyme which then can no longer generate the important messenger molecule, cyclic GMP. By carefully choosing the specific inhibitors and reactivators we want to establish a pathway-driven therapy that is tailored to the conditions defining ischemic stroke and subsequent reperfusion injury."

"These three drugs had never been administered together before," said Dr. Benedikt Frank, REPO-TRIAL clinical work package co-leader and senior physician at the Department of Neurology, University of Essen. "So, we have started cautiously, testing the triple combination in a Phase Ia pre-trial on a very limited number of healthy volunteers. With this successfully completed, we are now getting ready to proceed to the actual REPO-STROKE trial which will enroll 25-30 patients with acute ischemic stroke."

REPO-TRIAL consortium members include the pharmacology department at Maastricht University (The Netherlands), the university clinics at Essen and Hannover (Germany), and the bioinformatics departments at Newcastle University (United Kingdom) and Hamburg University (Germany); while Austrian industry participants Biocrates Life Sciences and H.M. Pharma Consultancy provide invaluable expertise in the fields of biomarkers, patenting, regulatory affairs, and public dissemination of results.

Interviews with the project coordinator, Prof. Harald Schmidt, can be arranged through the project management office (see below).

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