BLOOD SAMPLES TRAVELLING NORTH: REPO-HFPEF II, THE THREE-COMPONENT DRUG REPURPOSING STUDY, HAS FINALISED INCLUSION OF PATIENTS

Maastricht and Valencia, August 8, 2023 – REPO-HFPEF II, a Phase IIa clinical study in patients with heart failure with preserved ejection fraction, has finalized enrolling its last patient. The trial, which investigates a triple combination of three drugs approved for other therapeutic uses (the pulmonary hypertension drug, vericiguat; the amino acid, L-citrulline; and the vitamin, folic acid) on top of standard therapy, includes now 21 patients. REPO-HFPEF II is part of REPO-TRIAL, a 5.5-year project funded by a Horizon 2020 research grant (No. 777111) from the European Commission.

"Heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF) is a prevalent and relevant unmet medical need due to its rising incidence, lack of specific treatments, complex and heterogeneous pathophysiology, different patient population and poor prognosis comparable to heart failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF). HFpEF poses significant challenges in diagnosis and management due to the absence of reliable biomarkers and limited research and treatment alternatives. The pressing need for better understanding, targeted therapies, and improved outcomes highlights the importance of increased research and clinical focus on HFpEF to address this significant healthcare issue effectively," explains Prof. Julio Nuñez, the senior physician heading the study at the Department of Cardiology, Hospital Clínico de Valencia, University of Valencia-Spain. "Our aim is to redefine HFpEF by identifying molecular subtypes and for each subtype a specific, curative therapy. The current subtype and approach have been validated in a pre-clinical mouse model and its safety established in a phase I clinical trial with our triple combination in healthy volunteers without incidents. We thus felt confident to proceed with the target patient population."

Valencia, 27/03/2023:

Researchers from Maastricht University meeting the Spanish collaborators. From left to right: Prof. Harald Schmidt, Prof. Ana Casas, Adora Perez, Dr. Julio Núñez, Dr. Rafael de la Espriella, Dr. Alexandra Petraina, Dr. Cristian Nogales, Dr. Anna Mollar

“REPO-TRIAL is about demonstrating that network medicine, supported by advanced bioinformatics, mechanism-based diagnostics and drug repurposing can be a perfect match when it comes to bringing first-in-class curative treatments for medical conditions with high unmet medical need as fast as possible to patients,” said REPO-TRIAL coordinator Prof. Harald H.H.W. Schmidt, Department Head of Pharmacology and Personalized Medicine at Maastricht University. “We have only started to explore the potential of marketed drugs beyond their approved field of use, especially in carefully selected synergistic combinations and patients where we know that a specific signaling pathway is affected and the likelihood is much higher than in current one disease-one target-one drug approach.”

REPO-TRIAL consortium members are international and multidisciplinary: the pharmacology & personalized medicine department at Maastricht University (The Netherlands), university clinics at Essen, Hannover and Halle (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. Program management services are provided by another consortium member, concentris research management (Germany).

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

Contact: Ameli Schwalber, concentris research management GmbH +49 (0)8141 625 285 70
Email: ameli.schwalber@concentris.de

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