

ITCC-P4: a new platform to accelerate drug development for children and adolescents dying of cancer

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A new Innovative Medicines Initiative 2 project, **Innovative Therapies for Children with Cancer Paediatric Preclinical Proof-of-concept Platform (ITCC-P4)** is launched to speed up therapeutic innovation in paediatric oncology.

Cancer remains the leading cause of disease-related death in children and adolescents: 6,000 young people still die of cancer in Europe each year despite major progress made over the last 50 years. Within the 2007 EU Paediatric Medicine Regulation, there is an urgent need to reduce delays in starting paediatric oncology drug development and to better identify which drugs are more likely to be active among the many oncology drugs currently in development in adults. High quality biological and preclinical information is a cornerstone for a science-driven development of new and effective medicines to treat paediatric malignancies.

With over €16 million in cash and in-kind contributions, the goal of ITCC-P4 over the next five years is to establish 400 new patient-derived preclinical models of high-risk pediatric solid tumors which will be fully characterized (molecularly, immunologically, pharmacologically and clinically well-annotated) and to build a sustainable comprehensive platform to use these models for drug testing. In addition, these models will be used to further explore the biology of paediatric cancers and to identify powerful predictive biomarkers to improve patient stratification for novel treatment options. The overarching goal is to significantly improve and accelerate science-driven new oncology drug development for children by providing high-quality biological and preclinical rationale. The ultimate goal is to improve patient outcomes by introducing new and effective medicines in standard of care of young people still dying of these rare cancers.

In order to achieve the objectives of this project, this Innovative Medicines Initiative - sponsored public-private partnership has assembled a highly inter-disciplinary and a multi-national team ideally suited to successfully tackle the ITCC-P4 challenges and focused on translating patient-oriented research for high-risk paediatric cancer patients into clinical application. The consortium is co-led by Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum (DKFZ) and Eli Lilly and Company:

“My expectation from the perspective of a paediatric oncologist is that this unique public-private partnership will serve as a centrally important catalyst for our patients to get earlier and more scientifically guided access to new drugs across Europe.”, Prof. Dr. Stefan Pfister says (DKFZ).

“As there is great interest in assessing molecules in clinical development to potentially save the lives of children with cancer, the output from this first public-private partnership focused on paediatric cancer can’t come soon enough, and is an acknowledgement that we must bring our respective expertise together in order to realize success. In the near future we will have a first of its kind testing platform that rivals those available for adult tumours and should pave the way for identifying promising clinical trial candidates in paediatric cancer.” Dr. Lou Stancato says (Lilly).

This world-class partnership includes:

- many of Europe’s most distinguished academic institutions: Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, Institute for Cancer Research, European consortium for Innovative Therapies for Children with Cancer, Institute Gustave Roussy, Alleanza Contro il Cancro, Zürich University, Medizinische Universität Wien (MUW), Fundació Sant Joan de Déu Barcelona, Academic Medical Center (AMC), Children’s Cancer Research Institute Vienna, Institut Curie, Charité Berlin, Princess Máxima Center Utrecht
- well-established small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs): EPO-Berlin-Buch GmbH, XenTech
- a member of the European Biopharmaceutical Enterprises (EBE): PharmaMar
- And members of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA): Lilly, Roche, Pfizer, Bayer, Charles River.

Website: www.itccp4.com (to be launched in June 2017)

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About IMI

The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) is working to improve health by speeding up the development of, and patient access to, innovative medicines, particularly in areas where there is an unmet medical or social need. It does this by facilitating collaboration between the key players involved in healthcare research, including universities, the pharmaceutical and other industries, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs),

patient organizations, and medicines regulators. IMI is a partnership between the European Union (represented by the [European Commission](#)) and the European

Pharmaceutical industry (represented by [EFPIA](#), the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations).

IMI is the world's biggest public-private partnership (PPP) in the life sciences. Through the IMI 2 program, it has a €3.3 billion budget for the period 2014-2024: €1.638 billion (half the budget) comes from [Horizon 2020](#), the EU's framework program for research and innovation; €1.425 billion is committed to the program by EFPIA companies; and up to €213 million can be committed by other life science industries or organizations that decide to contribute to IMI 2 as members or Associated Partners in individual projects.

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