

Hummingbird Diagnostics GmbH and Saarland University Collaborate in Early Disease Detection Based on Molecular Markers miRNA Experts Sign Framework Agreement

HEIDELBERG and SAARBRÜCKEN, November 14, 2017 – Hummingbird Diagnostics GmbH, specialized in early disease detection using molecular markers derived from blood, and Saarland University agreed on a comprehensive framework agreement regarding an expanded collaboration in the field of molecular diagnostics. The work aims at the validation of miRNA biomarkers in blood samples, allowing for an early detection of common serious diseases including lung cancer, chronic obstructive lung disease (COPD), Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

The project partners at Saarland University are the Department of Human Genetics and the Chair of Clinical Bioinformatics. Hummingbird Diagnostics has been maintaining long-standing research collaborations with both their renowned directors, Prof. Dr. Andreas Keller (Clinical Bioinformatics) and Prof. Dr. Eckart Meese (Human Genetics).

Since 2009, the two miRNA experts have been working together successfully in projects involving several disease areas. This partnership resulted in more than 60 scientific publications – e.g. in the reputable *Journal Nature Methods* – as well as a multitude of patents.

The Vice President of Saarland University, Prof. Dr. Martina Sester, appreciates the collaboration: "With Hummingbird Diagnostics, we acquired an excellent partner, enabling us to translate the outstanding research of Profs. Keller and Meese into clinical applications, thus generating significant future benefit for many patients."

Prof. Dr. Andreas Keller, Director of the Chair of Clinical Bioinformatics comments: „We know Hummingbird Diagnostics as an innovative and reliable partner with unique expertise in miRNA biomarkers from body fluids. Therefore, we are pleased to further expand the collaboration, allowing us to validate our research results and translate them into clinical practice.“ His colleague Prof. Dr. Meese adds: „Moreover, this collaboration enables a better understanding of the functional mechanisms of biomarkers, an aspect of increasing importance in diagnostics.“

„Together with the teams of Prof. Dr. Keller and Prof. Dr. Meese, we successfully identified many miRNAs from blood that may contribute to patient-friendly methods for early disease detection,“

says Jochen Kohlhaas, CEO of Hummingbird Diagnostics. „The new agreement enables us to collaboratively address further disease areas, such as neurodegenerative diseases.“

The partners envisage to examine at least 5.000 samples from patients with pulmonary diseases (COPD, lung cancer) and neurodegenerative conditions (Parkinson's and Alzheimer's). The framework agreement regulates the procedures of collaborative projects as well as the utilization of results, publications, software, and intellectual property rights. Within the agreement, Hummingbird Diagnostics acquired the rights in eight further patents.

miRNAs (microRNAs)

miRNAs are short non-coding RNAs playing important roles in the regulation of molecular biological processes. These nucleic acids may be used as biomarkers in the detection of disease.

Hummingbird Diagnostics GmbH

Hummingbird Diagnostics GmbH develops patient-friendly diagnostics for early disease detection based on miRNA biomarkers from blood, in particular for malignant tumors. In addition, the company is working on life-accompanying tests for healthy aging.

Saarland University, Chair for Clinical Bioinformatics, Prof. Dr. Andreas Keller

The Chair for Clinical Bioinformatics integrates research areas of medicine and bioinformatics. Its research group collaborates with universities as well as private companies in the fields of pharmaceuticals and diagnostics, thus supporting translational research. The research focus is on non-invasive biomarkers for early detection of diseases, improved genetic testing methods, mechanisms of genetically determined bacterial resistance for improved treatment selection, and topics in integrative systems biology.

For further information please contact:

Hummingbird Diagnostics GmbH
Im Neuenheimer Feld 583
D-69120 Heidelberg
phone +49 (0)6221 91433-10
fax +49 (0)6221 91433-12
info@hb-dx.com
www.humminbird-diagnostics.com