

Eisai - UCL – a long term strategic partnership

Neurodegenerative diseases present one of the major medical, scientific, societal, and financial challenges of our time. In the UK, the number of people currently affected is close to 1 million and this is expected to double in the next 20 years. Japanese pharmaceutical company Eisai has partnered with University College London (UCL), a world-leader in dementia research, to address this urgent need for effective treatments.

The collaboration encompasses several early stage research projects aiming to identify and validate novel drug targets across key processes involved in neurodegeneration. Eisai benefits from UCL's world-class research into the mechanisms underpinning neurodegenerative diseases and expertise

in clinical translation and in return contributes its drug discovery experience and state-of-the-art resources.

This strategic partnership, agreed in 2012, is a central part of Eisai's 'Open Innovation' strategy to accelerate the development of new therapies by sharing knowledge and resources with academic partners. Eisai received the UCL Enterprise Corporate Partner of the Year award in 2014 in recognition of their commitment to the partnership.

Importantly, the collaboration is generating results. Researchers are publishing their findings and presenting at international conferences. UCL receives milestone payment when projects reach significant objectives, the first of which has already been completed.

“This is a unique and innovative partnership which we have taken care and time to establish such that it will provide a truly enabling platform for joint working. I am sure that this model will be seen as an exemplar and will be highly productive going forward.”

Professor Alan Thompson, Dean of the Faculty of Brain Sciences, UCL

“Eisai is extremely proud of the ‘Open Innovation’ strategy that is exemplified by our **long-standing partnership** with UCL. Through this **collaborative effort**, we bring together leading scientists to help us discover new solutions for people with these life-changing illnesses. In particular, new treatment options are needed for people with dementia where one new case is diagnosed every 3.2 seconds.”

Dr Teiji Kimura, Chief Discovery Officer, Neurology Business Group, Eisai

The university will also receive royalties if a medicine is commercialised as a result of the collaboration.

A unique partnership model ensures both parties are equally represented at every level. Overseeing the entire collaboration is a joint committee co-chaired by Professor Alan Thompson (UCL) and Dr. Teiji Kimura (Eisai). A Therapeutic Innovation Group (TIG) comprised of senior scientists

from both parties is responsible for operational management, and individual projects are co-led by scientists from each organisation. Project teams are supported by a group of TIG scientists (funded by Eisai but employed by UCL) who work across projects and move between UCL laboratories and Eisai's UK-based Neurology Innovation Centre as appropriate.