

UQ and Axiom Molecular accelerate radiopharmaceutical research

29 April 2012

A strategic alliance between The Centre for Advanced Imaging (CAI) at The University of Queensland (UQ) and Axiom Molecular Pty Ltd is set to boost radiopharmaceutical research, development and commercialisation.

Axiom Molecular will use CAI facilities to produce Positron Emission Tomography (PET) radiopharmaceuticals for the diagnosis of cancer and brain disorders under the agreement facilitated by UniQuest, UQ's main commercialisation company.

Director of the CAI Professor David Reutens said his team was delighted to have Axiom Molecular as a long-term collaborative industry partner.

"Axiom Molecular will establish a specialised Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) laboratory in the CAI," Professor Reutens said.

"It will be a valuable addition to the capabilities in the state-of-the-art CAI building that is currently under construction.

"I am also excited by the alliance because UQ is the lead institution of the National Imaging Facility, and this agreement will provide researchers around the country with access to a radiopharmaceutical GMP capability to test new radiopharmaceuticals.

"This new collaboration adds considerable value to the CAI, which has received funding not only from UQ but also from the Federal and Queensland Governments.

"Strong industry collaborations mean that world-class CAI research has a better chance of being commercialised, contributing to personalised medicine around the world."

Axiom Molecular's Managing Director Mathew Farag said the strategic alliance with the CAI, valued at million, was a key ingredient of Axiom Molecular's larger strategy to supply radiopharmaceuticals to public and private hospitals throughout Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

"We quickly recognised the strengths in the capabilities and people within the CAI, and through business discussions with UniQuest, we came to see how we could realise additional value in our relationship with UQ," Mr Farag said.

"The outcome is this innovative alliance with UniQuest, including our corporate venture investment in MoleQular, which has the potential to deliver a number of new technologies and products to the global radiopharmaceutical market."

Axiom Molecular has also made an equity investment in MoleQular Pty Ltd, a start-up company formed with UniQuest, to research, develop and commercialise novel radiopharmaceuticals for the diagnosis of cancer and brain disorders.

UniQuest will license a radiopharmaceutical technology, which was discovered by CAI researchers, to MoleQular Pty Ltd.

Axiom Molecular will also fund a number of scholarships for UQ Research Higher Degree students.

UniQuest Managing Director David Henderson said the agreement was the first of its kind for both UQ and Axiom Molecular, a subsidiary of one of Asia-Pacific's largest healthcare enterprises.

"Radiopharmaceuticals are becoming increasingly important for early detection of diseases like cancer and for developing new treatments," Mr Henderson said.

"The formation of MoleQular and the strategic alliance with Axiom Molecular reflects the commitment of UQ and the CAI to work closely with private industry to make world-class university research and infrastructure available for the benefit of society."

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About the Centre for Advanced Imaging (www.cai.uq.edu.au/)

The CAI represents a major enhancement of the imaging capabilities at The University of Queensland. It brings together the skills of a critical mass of researchers in a new five-story facility (due for completion in 2012) which will house a cyclotron (an IBA Radiopharma Solutions Cyclone ® 18/9), radiochemistry, ultra-high field human MRI instrumentation and other 'state-of-the-art' research imaging instruments. Radiotracer development and production in-house will support leading edge molecular imaging programs utilising the PET-CT and MR-PET facilities. It is the only facility of its type in Australia, one of only a handful in the world.

The University of Queensland is the lead institution in the National Imaging Facility (NIF; <http://www.anif.org.au/>). Across NIF's grid of imaging facilities with nodes in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, it provides a range of leading-edge imaging instrumentation and advice and assistance in the optimal use of imaging to the Australian research community. The CAI has been funded by the Commonwealth Government through the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) and the Education Investment Fund (EIF) and by the Queensland Government.

About Axiom Molecular

Axiom Molecular was recently established to provide radiopharmaceutical products, equipment and world class services to the nuclear medicine community in the Asia Pacific region. Axiom Molecular is led by Jay Simon, CEO, and Mathew Farag, Managing Director, who together have over 40 years of combined expertise in radiopharmaceuticals and nuclear medicine.

About UniQuest Pty Limited www.uniquest.com.au

Established by The University of Queensland in 1984, UniQuest is widely recognised as one of Australia's largest and most successful university commercialisation groups, benchmarking in the top tier of technology transfer worldwide. From an intellectual property portfolio of 1,500+ patents it has created over 70 companies, and since 2000 UniQuest and its start-ups have raised more than A million to take university technologies to market. Annual sales of products using UQ technology and licensed by UniQuest are running at A billion.

UniQuest now commercialises innovations developed at The University of Queensland including the Institute for Molecular Bioscience and its commercialisation partner institutions: the University of Wollongong, University of Technology Sydney, James Cook University, University of Tasmania, Mater Medical Research Institute, and Queensland Health. UniQuest also provides access to an expansive and exclusive network of independent academics to tailor a consulting or project R&D solution to meet the diverse needs of industry and government, facilitating some 500 consulting, expert opinion, testing, and contract research services each year.

UniQuest is also a leading Australasian provider of international development assistance recognised for excellence in technical leadership, management and research. Working with agencies such as AusAID, NZAID, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, UniQuest has developed and implemented more than 400 projects in 60+ countries throughout the Pacific, South-East Asia, the Indian sub-continent and Africa.

About Positron Emission Tomography (PET) and radiopharmaceuticals

Radiopharmaceuticals are important in the diagnosis and management of cancer, brain disorders and cardiac disease. 18-Fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG) is the most common radiopharmaceutical in clinical use. It targets increased metabolic activity, a signature of tumours. After a patient has received an injection of FDG, images are acquired with a positron emission tomography (PET) scanner. While computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging primarily provide information about anatomical structure, PET can image and quantify biochemical and/or physiological function. This is important because functional changes caused by disease are often detectable before any structural abnormalities become evident.

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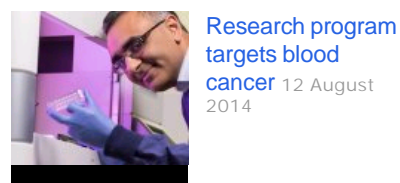
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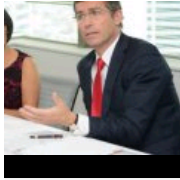
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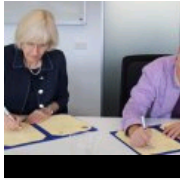
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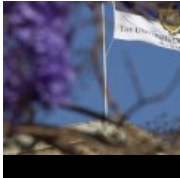
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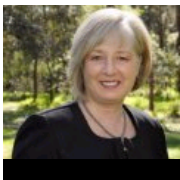
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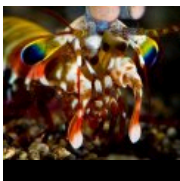
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