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News Release

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LDC Enters First Collaboration with the Helmholtz Association

- **New cancer therapy approach from the German Cancer Consortium (DKTK)**

Dortmund, September 30, 2014 – The Lead Discovery Center GmbH (LDC), a renowned translational research organization, and the Helmholtz Association, Germany's biggest scientific organization, will be collaborating more closely in future. An initial pilot project in cooperation with Prof. Schulte's research group at the DKTK partner site Essen/Dusseldorf has just been launched. Together with the LDC, they will be developing a novel cancer therapy approach with the aim of identifying new drug candidates for the treatment of neuroblastoma and other cancer types.

Neuroblastomas are one of the most frequently occurring tumours in childhood and adolescence. The DKTK's new approach is the first to tackle the root cause of the disease. It's based on a target structure that, by interacting with microRNAs, interferes with the regulation of genes playing an important role in neuroblastoma development.

'If we are successful in bringing this approach to the clinic, it will make a big difference to affected children and their parents,' says Prof. Schulte. 'The LDC is a great Partner. It gives us the chance to move the project from our laboratories into pharmaceutical development.'

As part of the cooperation, the partners intend to identify and validate initial drug candidates from LDC's compound library. In parallel, the LDC will use its industry contacts to win potential pharmaceutical partners in good time for subsequent clinical development.

The LDC and the Helmholtz Association already have their sights set on further collaborations. In order to translate innovative approaches into application, the Helmholtz Association is supporting selected projects via the Helmholtz Validation Fund (HVF).

‘Alongside the support given by our internal start-up and validation instruments, we want to enable the use of established transfer models such as the LDC, which was initiated by Max Planck Innovation GmbH,’ says Dr Rolf Zettl, Managing Director of the Helmholtz Association. ‘Wherever it is possible to bring critical mass together and exploit synergies in the German science system, we should be using cross-organization technology transfer initiatives like this one. And in the case of the highly specialized LDC, it’s clear that we don’t have to reinvent the wheel.’

The Helmholtz Association is Germany’s biggest scientific organization, comprising several centres internationally recognized for their top-level health research, including the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ), the DKTK’s core centre.

‘We are delighted to count the Helmholtz Association among our research partners, alongside the Max Planck Society. Thanks to their particular strength in the biomedical area, they provide numerous project ideas offering very promising approaches for application-oriented drug discovery,’ comments Dr Bert Klebl, Managing Director and CSO of the LDC.

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About LDC

The Lead Discovery Center (LDC) was established in 2008 by the technology transfer organization Max Planck Innovation, as a novel approach to capitalize on the potential of excellent basic research for the discovery of new therapies for diseases with high medical need.

LDC takes on promising early-stage projects from academia and transforms them into innovative pharmaceutical leads that reach initial proof-of-concept in animals. In close collaboration with high profile partners from academia and industry, LDC is building a strong and growing portfolio of small molecule leads with exceptional medical and commercial potential. LDC sustains a preferred partnership with the Max Planck Society and has formed alliances with AstraZeneca, Bayer, Daiichi Sankyo and Merck Serono as well as leading academic drug discovery centers around the globe.

Further information at: www.lead-discovery.de

About the Helmholtz Association

The Helmholtz Association contributes to solving major and urgent issues in society, science and industry through scientific excellence in six research areas: Energy, earth and environment, health, key technologies, structure of matter as well as aviation, aerospace and transportation. The Helmholtz Association is the largest scientific organization in Germany, with 35,000 employees in 18 research centres and an annual budget of around €3.8 billion. Its work is carried out in the tradition of the great natural scientist Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–1894).

Further information at: www.helmholtz.de

About the DKTK

In the German Cancer Consortium (DKTK), the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) joins up with university hospitals all over Germany. Assembled around a core at the DKFZ in Heidelberg, the consortium unites twenty high-ranked institutes from seven partner sites: Berlin, Dresden, Essen/Dusseldorf, Frankfurt/Mainz, Freiburg, Munich and Tübingen, all specialized in research and treatment focused on oncological diseases. The DKTK was founded to promote translational research, bringing together scientists, physicians and associates to work jointly toward the main goal of enhancing the translation of research from bench to bedside. New approaches in prevention, diagnostics and treatment will be applied to cancer in common translational centers at all partner sites. Patients will be recruited at all partner sites for innovative studies to be carried out by the consortium as a whole. All the data from this work will be collected in a universal system. The harmonization of techniques and methods used in laboratories will ensure identical standards for all researchers and physicians in the consortium. A joint infrastructure will make them available for communal research. With the school of oncology, the consortium is additionally dedicating itself to the education of new physicians and scientists. Talented young people will be trained in cancer medicine and translational cancer research in a common effort involving all members. The German Cancer Consortium is a joint initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the participating German states, German Cancer Aid and the German Cancer Research Center. It is one of the six German Centers for Health Research (DZG).

Further information at: www.dkfz.de/de/dktk