Circulating Cells

Research Areas

- Biomarker Research
  - Diagnostic

At a Glance

- Status: Active Consortium
- Year Launched: 2008
- Initiating Organization: Center for Translational Molecular Medicine
- Initiator Type: Government
- Location: Europe

Abstract

The Circulating Cells project aims to investigate circulating cells (e.g., white blood cells and platelets) to determine whether they carry biomarkers suitable for discriminating patients with an increased risk of developing unstable plaques. Novel technologies will be developed and validated to measure these cell-based biomarkers to allow screening in a general practitioner’s office to assess atherosclerotic risk and disease progression.

Consortium History

Oct. 10, 2008: Start date
Sept. 30, 2013: End date

Financing

Total project budget: €20 million
Supporting 75 researchers at end of 2011

**Intellectual Property**

Fundamentally, the three basic principles underlying the CTMM intellectual property (IP) rules and licensing agreements are that (a) IP ownership stays with the inventor, which is simply basic patent law; (b) organizations should pay the market rate for commercial use of inventions coming out of CTMM projects, but should benefit from a discounted rate if they have contributed to the project; (c) and mechanisms must exist to balance academia’s need to publish against industry’s need to protect IP.

Being experts in their particular field, partners entering a CTMM project already possess a lot of existing IP. The important thing is that they can decide for themselves how much or how little of that IP they wish to contribute to the project. The pre-existing IP that partners decide to put into a project is termed “Background IP.” Use of their contributed IP is purely for carrying out the project, and there is no obligation on their part to grant usage rights beyond the project’s end. The can also decide whether they want patent protection for their IP before contributing it, and to obtain the necessary patents. This is of particular importance for small to medium-sized enterprises, because their IP is often their core asset.

IP generated during the project, or “Foreground IP,” can be protected in the same way as any other IP (e.g., by having it patented). Whenever a potentially new invention arises within a CTMM project, details are circulated among all the project members. Members have 45 days to declare whether they want the corresponding IP patented and whether they would like to be commercially licensed to use it. Interested project members are then invited to join a licensee group, and by joining, commit themselves to paying a share of the patent filing costs. Actual ownership of the IP is controlled by normal patent law, that is, it is owned by the organizations that employed the named inventor(s) when the invention was created.


**Impact/Accomplishment**
In this consortium, blood was obtained from at least 500 patients with high risk for clinical manifestations of atherosclerotic disease. In these patients, CTMM will search for cell-based genetic and protein markers that are related to development of clinical manifestations of the disease. In addition, 30 patients will be used to look for similarities in characteristics from cells obtained from a diseased vascular wall and cells obtained from the circulation. For this purpose, research groups from five Dutch academic centers, with a record in the field, and a large number of companies joined efforts to reach this objective in the Circulating Cells program. In this program, the partners will go beyond the discovery of biomarkers for atherosclerotic disease progression.

Links/Social Media Feed

Homepage  http://www.ctmm.nl/en/projecten/hartvaat/circulating-cells

Points of Contact

Gerard Pasterkamp
Principal Investigator, Circulating Cells project
University Medical Center Utrecht (UMCU)

Erna Erdtsieck-Ernste
Program Manager, Cardiovascular Disease
phone: +31 (0)40 800 23 06
email: erna.erdtsieck-ernste@ctmm.nl

Sponsors & Partners

ACS Biomarker
Beckman Coulter
Cavadis BV
Eindhoven University of Technology
Erasmus University
Erasmus University Medical Center