

Psychiatry Consortium: Accelerating Medicines Discovery for Mental Health

There is an urgent need for improved mental health therapeutics, underscored by the staggering economic impact, estimated at £117.9 billion annually in the UK. In spite of the recognised unmet need, there are a lack of clinical assets in late-stage pipelines for mental health conditions. This is because there are significant barriers to innovation, (e.g., accurate models of the blood-brain-barrier, lack of understanding of distinct patient populations) leading to high failure rates once therapeutic assets reach the clinic. Our national R&D platform, called the 'Psychiatry Consortium' will provide a collaborative platform, bringing together partners from pharma, SMEs, charities, and academia to co-develop drug discovery technologies that will address 'innovation barriers' within mental health drug discovery - dismantling bottlenecks and enabling the development of new therapeutics. These innovation barriers will be identified during the seed corn funding stage and transformed into what we call 'Grand Challenges' – which will be a collection of innovation streams bringing together diverse partners to co-develop enabling drug discovery technologies.

The outcome of the Grand Challenges will be a collection of drug discovery assets which address the major barriers to innovation within the Mental Health conditions. Assets could include, novel drug discovery platforms, multi-omics models (including spatial assays), predictive in vitro and in vivo assays. While collaborative in nature, we are building IP frameworks to ensure that the Psychiatry consortium retains access to the assets for its continued financial growth and sustainability. Longer-term we expect the utilisation of these assets to lead to future partnerships for the development of novel therapeutic interventions, which the Psychiatry Consortium will be a central part of, bringing additional revenue streams. The Psychiatry Consortium will work on a subscription-based model, which pays for the operational and management aspects of the platform and allows members to take part in the R&D activities of the consortium.

The Medicines Discovery Catapult (MDC) is uniquely positioned to lead this initiative, thanks to its extensive network across academia, patient-focused charities, global pharma, and the UK's SME community. In addition, MDC has a range of cutting-edge technologies, capabilities and existing infrastructure that will support the Grand Challenges. We are committed to moving beyond traditional R&D silos, advocating for an integrated and innovative approach to mental health medicine discovery.

The Psychiatry Consortium is championing a collective effort to transform mental health therapeutics, through the development of transformative drug discovery assets using an ecosystem-wide collaborative model. We strive for a future with accessible, effective mental health therapies, advancing the UK as a leader in life sciences.

If interested, please contact Sara Imarisio at sara.imarisio@md.catapult.org.uk

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