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**FIRST INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION ON THE GENETICS OF
ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE IS LAUNCHED**

A Global Consortium Aims to Discover and Map all the Alzheimer's Genes

February 1, 2011, Chicago - The launch of the International Genomics of Alzheimer's Project (IGAP) – a collaboration formed to discover and map the genes that contribute to Alzheimer's disease – was announced today by a multi-national group of researchers. The collaborative effort, spanning universities from both Europe and the United States, will combine the knowledge, staff and resources of four consortia that conduct research on Alzheimer's disease genetics.

The four groups are:

- The European Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (EADI) in France led by **Philippe Amouyel, M.D., Ph.D.**, at the **Institute Pasteur de Lille and Lille University**.
- The Alzheimer's Disease Genetics Consortium (ADGC) from the United States led by **Gerard Schellenberg, Ph.D.**, at the **University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine**.
- The Genetic and Environmental Risk in Alzheimer's Disease (GERAD) from the United Kingdom led by **Julie Williams, Ph.D.**, at **Cardiff University**.
- The neurology subgroup of the Cohorts for Heart and Aging in Genomic Epidemiology (CHARGE) led by **Sudha Seshadri, M.D.**, at **Boston University**.

“Identification of genes that contribute to Alzheimer's risk and that influence the progression of disease will help lead us to the cause of the disease, identify proteins and other new targets for drug development, and provide genetic methods for determining which people are at greatest risk for Alzheimer's disease when preventative measures become available,” said Dr. Schellenberg. “This is extremely important work in taking our ability to detect and treat Alzheimer's disease to the next level,” said Dr. Amouyel.

While each consortium alone is currently working with thousands of participants – including people with Alzheimer's and those free of dementia – scientists in the four groups recognize that only by working together can they amass a large enough collection of participants to accelerate gene discovery. Formation of IGAP creates a shared resource database that includes genetic data for the more than 40,000 individuals.

Drs. Amouyel, Schellenberg, Seshadri and Williams are enthused about the collaboration that brings together, for the first time, all of the large genetics groups in the world working on Alzheimer's disease. They share high expectations that the cooperative effort will greatly advance knowledge about Alzheimer's disease.

“Working together on this scale will bring us years closer to understanding this cruel disease, and to the development of new Alzheimer's treatments,” said Dr. Williams.

The formation of IGAP is supported by the Alzheimer's Association (www.alz.org) and the Fondation Plan Alzheimer (www.fondation-alzheimer.org). Alzheimer's Association support for IGAP is funded by Jim Prugh and Diane Fatheree and the Makray Family Foundation.

“We're pleased to fund this project that will bring together well-established and highly regarded research groups throughout the world to enable an unprecedented sharing and analysis of Alzheimer genetic data,” said William Thies, Ph.D., Alzheimer's Association Chief Medical and Scientific Officer, and Philippe Lagayette, President of the Fondation Plan Alzheimer in France.

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive, neurodegenerative disorder that is fatal, and has no prevention methods and no cure. Available drugs only marginally affect disease severity, making Alzheimer's disease effectively untreatable. Alzheimer's disease invariably progresses to complete incapacitation and death over a period of several years.

In the *World Alzheimer Report 2010*, Alzheimer's Disease International estimates that there are now 35.6 million people living with dementia worldwide, increasing to 65.7 million by 2030 and 115.4 million by 2050. According to the *Report*, the total estimated worldwide costs of dementia are US\$604 billion in 2010.

“The skyrocketing prevalence and cost of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias will soon undermine the delivery of healthcare worldwide,” said Dr. Schellenberg. “That gives innovative collaborations like this new international genomics project added incentive to act quickly and boldly to make new discoveries.”

“Our first efforts will be to bring together all the data from the different groups so that they can be analyzed,” said Dr. Amouyel. “The next step will be to perform new analysis on subjects not yet in any genetics studies to further increase the number of people in our studies and to increase the ability to detect new genes.”

The International Genomics of Alzheimer's Project (IGAP)

The primary goal of IGAP is to completely understand the role inheritance plays in Alzheimer's disease. To achieve this goal, IGAP will work to identify all the genes that contribute to the risk of developing this disease. IGAP investigators will have access to combined genetic data from a large number of Alzheimer's disease subjects and compare it to genetic data from an equally large number of elderly people who do not have Alzheimer's. In the initial phase of the work, more than 20,000 people with Alzheimer's and about 20,000 healthy elderly subjects will be compared. As the study progresses, 10,000 additional people with Alzheimer's and the same

number of healthy elderly subjects will be added to the study. The subjects for these studies come from different Alzheimer research project locations across Europe, the UK, the US, and Canada. Results from IGAP studies will be presented at scientific meetings and publications as the information is developed. IGAP expects to present its first findings at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease (AAICAD) in Paris, July 16-21, 2011.

The ADGC is supported by the National Institute on Aging/National Institutes of Health (NIH). The EADI is supported by the Fondation Plan Alzheimer, the Institut Pasteur de Lille and Inserm. GERAD is supported by the Medical Research Council (UK). CHARGE is supported by the NIH, Erasmus University and others.

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