Korea Innovation QuickFire Challenge: Targeting Neuroscience

Overview

Despite significant advances in understanding and treating nervous system disorders, millions of people worldwide continue to live with neurodegenerative and neuropsychiatric conditions that impact their quality of life. It is estimated that more than one in three people are affected by neurological conditions, which are the leading cause of illness and disability globally.[1,2,3] These conditions range from Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and geographic atrophy, as well as neuropsychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia, major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder. The current treatment landscape for these conditions is limited, highlighting the urgent need for innovative and more effective treatment strategies.

To address these challenging diseases and disorders, Johnson & Johnson is proud to announce the launch of the **Korea Innovation QuickFire Challenge: Targeting Neuroscience**. Innovators from Korea or across the globe, with a demonstrated interest in leveraging the Korea ecosystem, are invited to submit their transformative potential solutions that aim to address challenging, hard-to-drug targets relevant to **neurodegeneration of the brain and eye** and/or **neuropsychiatry**. The innovators with the best potential solutions will have the opportunity to receive grant funding from a total pool of up to $100,000, JLABS Korea membership for one year, and mentorship from experts across Johnson & Johnson.

[1] World Health Organization (WHO). 14 March 2024 News Release. Available at: https://www.who.int/news/item/14-03-2024-over-1-in-3-people-affected-by-neurological-conditions--the-leading-cause-of-illness-and-disability-worldwide

[2] Bakri SJ, Bektas M, Sharp D, Luo R, Sarda SP, Khan S. Geographic atrophy: Mechanism of disease, pathophysiology, and role of the complement system. J Manag Care Spec Pharm. 2023 May;29(5-a Suppl):S2-S11. doi: 10.18553/jmcp.2023.29.5-a.s2.

[3] Mandal PK, Gaur S, Roy RG, Samkaria A, Ingole R, Goel A. Schizophrenia, Bipolar and Major Depressive Disorders: Overview of Clinical Features, Neurotransmitter Alterations, Pharmacological Interventions, and Impact of Oxidative Stress in the Disease Process. ACS Chem Neurosci. 2022 Oct 5;13(19):2784-2802. doi: 10.1021/acschemneuro.2c00420.

Why this challenge matters to us

At Johnson & Johnson, our mission is to help reduce the burden, disability and devastation caused by serious neuropsychiatric and neurodegenerative diseases. This opportunity supports our commitment to advancing our understanding of these conditions and developing breakthrough treatments and solutions for people living with them.

What we're looking for

Innovators from Korea or across the globe, with a demonstrated interest in leveraging the Korea ecosystem, are invited to submit their transformative potential solutions that aim to address challenging, hard-to-drug targets relevant to **neurodegeneration of the brain and eye** and/or **neuropsychiatry**.

Specific areas of interest include the design of novel chemical entities representing small molecules, peptides, RNA-targeting molecules, molecular glues, or degraders.
To be considered, potential solutions must demonstrate clear feasibility and proof of concept for the technology, with the potential for drug development and therapeutic benefits for individuals living with Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, geographic atrophy, schizophrenia, major depressive disorder and/or bipolar disorder.

Criteria

Potential solutions will be evaluated by a panel of reviewers on their ability to meet the following criteria:

- Strategic alignment with QuickFire Challenge areas of focus
- Potential impact for transforming health outcomes for people living with Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, geographic atrophy, schizophrenia, major depressive disorder and/or bipolar disorder
- Feasibility of the idea and supporting data
- Thoroughness of approach
- Identification of key resources and a plan to further the idea
- Demonstrated interest in the Korea innovation ecosystem

Awards

The innovators with the best potential solutions will have the opportunity to receive grant funding from a total pool of up to $100,000, JLABS Korea membership for one year, and mentorship from experts across Johnson & Johnson.

Please contact the University of South Florida Technology Transfer office representative for submission – Karla Schramm at kschramm@usf.edu