



# King's College London signs licence and research agreement with Pfizer Inc. in the field of gene therapy

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King's College London has announced that it has recently entered into an exclusive license agreement with Pfizer Inc. for the development of a series of adeno-associated virus (AAV) gene therapy vectors.

There is growing commercial interest and activity within the field of gene therapy in recent years with numerous licensing deals and funding rounds reported. Of the various technical approaches to deliver a therapeutic gene, the use of viral vectors is by far the most common approach in commercial development and of the different viral vectors available, the most commonly used vector is AAV.

This programme emerges from technology developed by Professor Michael Linden and Dr. Els Henckaerts from the Department of Infectious Diseases. Sponsored by internal funding from the King's Commercialisation Institute, they have developed an AAV vector platform, based on the discovery that a series of targeted capsid mutations in AAV vectors yields a new generation of vectors with superior transduction abilities in the brain. The agreement gives Pfizer the exclusive right to use this platform.

Under the terms of this agreement, King's College London will receive an upfront payment, and will be eligible for additional clinical development and commercialization milestone payments.

In addition, as part of the Pfizer Rare Disease Consortium (RDC), Pfizer will fund additional research with Dr. Els Henckaerts for further development of the AAV vector platform and

its application in gene therapy. This research is designed to apply insights into the basic understanding of the virus to help overcome the challenges of production for clinical use.

Dr Els Henckaerts from the Division of Immunology, Infection & Inflammatory Disease at King's College London, said: "This is a very exciting moment, emerging from over a decade of basic science discovery and translational research in my laboratory. The collaboration with Pfizer provides a very strong platform for us to work toward progressing this potential new therapy into full clinical development for the benefit of patients with rare diseases."

**Notes to editors** For further information about King's College London, please contact Jenny Gimpel, PR Manager (Health), King's College London on +44 207 848 4334, [jenny.gimpel@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:jenny.gimpel@kcl.ac.uk)

**About King's College of London** ([www.kcl.ac.uk](http://www.kcl.ac.uk)) King's College London is one of the top 20 universities in the world (2014/15 QS World University Rankings) and the fourth oldest in England. It is The Sunday Times 'Best University for Graduate Employment 2012/13'. King's has nearly 26,000 students (of whom more than 10,600 are graduate students) from some 140 countries worldwide, and more than 7,000 staff. The College is in the second phase of a £1 billion redevelopment programme which is transforming its estate.

King's Commercialisation Institute aims to be a catalyst for creating a growing entrepreneurial community within King's College London and the NHS Foundation Trusts which comprise King's Health Partners. The goals are to accelerate and grow the commercial and public benefits arising from the College's education and research activities and to foster an environment where aspiring entrepreneurs can thrive.