



EPI^{CURE}



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Berlin Brain Works: EPICURE hosts its 3rd annual meeting in Berlin

Janet Mifsud reports

Over 100 participants attended the 3rd Annual Meeting of the EPICURE project, which was held at the Charite in February.

The meeting was opened by Prof Giuliano Avanzini, coordinator of EPICURE, who reported on the current status of the project, now practically half way through its 48 months term.

Carla Finocchiaro from CF Consulting, the professional company administering the project, then presented a review of the management aspects of the project.

Janet Mifsud, a member of the Dissemination Board, reported that during 2008 EPICURE participants had produced several scientific publications and had presented results at several major conferences. Janet also told that a Google search for EPICURE has increased to 10,000 hits. Janet Mifsud emphasized the importance of reaching out and informing other scientists, patient organizations and the lay media about the project.

The meeting continued with an overview of the various EPICURE work packages. During these sessions, both young and professional investigators presented

some of the data from the many scientific publications that have emerged from the project over the last year.

The first day of the meeting was focussed on Acquired Channelopathy and Neuronal Network Reorganisation, and Pharmacogenetics of Refractory Epilepsy, Mechanism of Drug Resistance and New Therapeutic Strategies. Data from the EPICURE Brain Databank was presented showing the importance of a European critical mass in the collection of such samples.

Professor Heinemann underlined the importance of having valid models in epilepsy research that can help by leading to an *epi'cure* for patients with his now famous quote: *'the best model of a cat is a cat'*.

During the second day the emphasis was on progress made in the work packages related to Genetics of Human Epilepsy and Functional Consequences of Mutations in Ion Channel Genes and updates from the work package on Epilepsy and Development.

In his concluding remarks, Prof Avanzini commented on the positive effect of EPICURE in stimulating new co-operation

between scientific researchers and partners in the project.

The official meeting then continued with the organization of a week-long hands-on training session at the Institute of Neurophysiology at the Charite, which was attended by more than 50 participants including young researchers, tutors and lecturers.

The EPICURE annual meeting coincided with the Berlin Film Festival. EPICURE may not have been so glamorous, nor attracted as much media attention as the more famous festival, but the very active interaction, networking and fruitful discussions among the participants certainly made up for this.

Editor's note:

As IBE is the EPICURE partner charged with dissemination of the project, it was good to note that in a Google search on 'epicure' the IBE website is in the first 3 results and tops the list of results related to the project.

IBE has a section dedicated to EPICURE on its website, which is regularly updated as new information is received from the other partners in the project.



Prof Giuliano Avanzini (Project Coordinator) with Mrs Susanne Lund, IBE President (Project Dissemination)

ABOUT EPILEPSY IN EUROPE

As many as 6 million people in Europe have active epilepsy with associated implications not only for their health but for independent living, education and employment, mobility, relationships, and insurance. It is estimated that 1.5 million of these are children under the age of 12 years.

The resulting economic burden is estimated at 18 billion euro annually.

ABOUT EPICURE

EPICURE is one of the most exciting European research projects involving 30 collaborating partners from 13 European countries, undertaking ground-breaking research over a period of 4 years, funded by EU FP6 research funds. **EPICURE** will identify the disease-causing genes and their functional role for both inherited acquired epilepsies, which are being investigated in animal models and human tissue with a focus on drug resistant temporal lobe epilepsy, and epilepsies due to developmental cortical abnormalities.

A main effort of **EPICURE** is devoted to investigating developmental aspects of epileptogenesis that account for the high frequency of epilepsies in children and for their often severe prognosis.

EPICURE Advisory Board Members:

Susanne Lund, International Bureau for Epilepsy; Mary Baker, UK; Hanneke de Boer, Netherlands; Janet Mifsud, Malta

CONTACTS:

Project Coordinator: Prof Giuliano Avanzini - avanzini@istituto-besta.it

Project Management: CF Consulting - carla.finocchiaro@cf-consulting.it

Project Dissemination: Brainwave on behalf of International Bureau for Epilepsy - ibedublin@eircom.net

EPICURE Partners:

- Italy:** Fondazione IRCCS, Istituto Neurologico 'Carlo Besta'
 Università degli Studi di Verona
 Fondazione Istituto Neurologico Casimiro Mondino
 Università degli Studi di Ferrara
 Istituto di Ricerche Farmacologiche Mario Negri
 Istituto Giannina Gaslini
 CF Consulting Finanziamenti Unione Europea srl
 Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria Meyer
- France:** Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Medicale
 OZ Biosciences
 Neurokin SARL
- Germany:** Friedrich Alexander University of Erlangen-Nurnberg
 Universitaetsklinikum Bonn
 Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin
 Universitätsklinikum Ulm
 Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz
 Philipps-Universität Marburg
 Klinikum der Universität zu Köln
- Hungary:** Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Kiserleti Orvostudományi Kutatóintézet
- Sweden:** Lunds Universitet
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- Spain:** Fundación Jiménez Díaz UTE
- Austria:** Medizinische Universität Innsbruck
- UK:** University College London
- Denmark:** Ns gene A/S
- Ireland:** Brainwave on behalf of International Bureau for Epilepsy

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