

The EPAD project reports on significant progress in 2018

Global efforts and cooperation between participating researchers are at a point of coming to fruition with new knowledge generated and innovative compounds about to be tested with the cumulative goal of advancing research in Alzheimer's disease and preventing dementia.

The European Prevention of Alzheimer's Dementia (EPAD) project officially started on January 2015 for a duration of five years. The EPAD project is an interdisciplinary research initiative across Europe to better understand early aspects of Alzheimer's disease and to prevent dementia before symptoms occur. It combines knowledge and expertise from 38 European organisations from academia and industry, bringing together a wealth of experience to its activities and making it the largest ever public-private partnership in Alzheimer's disease research.

EPAD research participants at the heart of the EPAD project

EPAD has created the first single, pan-European register of over half a million people across the risk spectrum for dementia. From this register, research participants are invited to join an EPAD cohort of potentially at-risk subjects: the EPAD Longitudinal Cohort Study (LCS). At the end of August 2018, the EPAD project had a total of 907 enrolled research participants in the LCS across 20 European active centres. Besides seeing that each site

is improving recruitment and more than doubling the monthly recruitment rate, the EPAD family of trial delivery centres grew in 2018 with 10 new sites joining. Additional sites are expected to become operational, with the aim of having 30 sites open and recruiting before the beginning of 2019, with more planned to come on board in the following months.

In addition, two EPAD research participant panels have been established in Barcelona and Edinburgh which involve research participants in the study, giving them an active voice in the project and helping the collaborators to learn from their experiences.

Launch of the proof-of-concept platform

EPAD has developed a proof-of-concept (PoC) platform in which new compounds can be tested in a streamlined way, delivering more effective, targeted interventions that can slow or stop dementia. The EPAD PoC platform is now ready to receive interventions for testing in a secondary prevention population.

It has been designed to accommodate pharmacological and biological interventions that

General Assembly Meeting in Amsterdam (May 2018)



are Phase 2 ready, offering pharmaceutical and biotechnology organisations as well as academic institutions and partnerships an adaptive PoC trial designed to deliver early and accurate results in the most efficient way. The inclusion of the first candidate to take part in the PoC will likely happen in the first quarter of 2019.

EPAD researchers present at international conferences

The EPAD project has been very well represented at scientific and general conferences in the past several months. The most recent public facing activity of the project came at the Alzheimer’s Association International Conference (AAIC) which took place in Chicago in July this year. EPAD had a large booth in the exhibition area and a satellite symposium was organised to showcase the EPAD PoC trial which attracted companies and investors keen to understand more about EPAD and the benefits of using the platform for drug development. The organisation of this event came at a time where there was strong interest from a handful of companies. The interest in EPAD has noticeably increased in recent months and the launch of the PoC platform in Chicago will further accelerate these efforts.

EPAD will also have a presence at both the Alzheimer Europe and Clinical Trials on Alzheimer’s Disease (CTAD) conferences which will be held this year in October in Barcelona. The EPAD co-coordinator Professor Craig Ritchie (UEDIN) will deliver the closing session at the CTAD conference, where he will release the first data set (EPAD V500.0) from the EPAD cohort study and the predictors of amyloid status.

Development of new communication and branding tools

Alzheimer Europe is a full partner in this consortium and a co-leader of the “Dissemination” work package, which has developed communication and branding tools to increase the visibility of the project and to more efficiently reach a wider audience.

High quality content, in the form of a brochure explaining the PoC platform has been developed with the aim of generating interest from biotechnology companies by highlighting the



EPAD Academy members at Amsterdam meeting (May 2018)

EPAD adaptive strategy in this project compared to the usual trial practice. Furthermore, a new updated EPAD website has recently been launched. The website is devoted to informing different audiences about the project’s existence, its progress and achievements, including the scientific community, companies, people with dementia, their families and carers, as well as the general public.

The purpose of the update of the website is not only to improve its readability and user navigation but also to include two new landing pages for research participants and pharmaceutical investigators who may be interested in using the EPAD platform to test their compounds.

A successful General Assembly meeting in Amsterdam

This year, the EPAD project enjoyed a successful General Assembly from 23 to 25 May in Amsterdam under the banner “How to assure sustainability”. The meeting provided a chance to gather over 180 people from across many different countries who work on the EPAD project to discuss progress and future activities.

One of the highlights of this year’s General Assembly was the “Early Career Researchers” session. More than 50 young investigators involved in EPAD became fellows of the EPAD Academy over the last year. These young researchers showcased the work they are involved in and discussed ways of collaborating between meetings.

The EPAD Academy originated from a realisation that EPAD was an ideal framework for young researchers (“EPAD Fellows”) to grow professionally, expand their views, enhance multidisciplinary perspectives and multiply the impact on their future careers – effectively helping to build the next generation of thought leaders in Alzheimer’s research.



About EPAD

EPAD is an Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) project aiming to improve the understanding of the early stages of Alzheimer’s disease and deliver new preventative treatments.

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