



Joint press release of
German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ), Roche,
Heidelberg University Hospital (Universitätsklinikum Heidelberg) and National Center for
Tumor Diseases (Nationales Centrum für Tumorerkrankungen, NCT)

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Science and industry join forces to optimize cancer treatment

Roche has concluded its first collaborative agreement on personalized healthcare with the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT), represented by its supporting institutions, the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) and Heidelberg University Hospital. The aim is to strengthen cooperation between all participating partners in the early stages of oncology research and development projects so that patients reap benefit from innovations sooner. Two projects are already underway.

Roche, the world's leading supplier of innovative cancer medicines, will be collaborating even more closely in future with Heidelberg's NCT, DKFZ and University Hospital and Medical Faculty. In particular, the partners will be stepping collaboration in the area of personalized cancer care, starting with two projects already underway. The declared aim is to get new research and early development projects off the ground rapidly and with a minimum of red tape, thus helping steadily improve cancer diagnosis and treatment. It is important that research insights find their way to patients as fast as possible.

The necessary clinical trials will be conducted at the NCT and by the relevant departments at Heidelberg University Hospital. The NCT employs over 200 physicians, bioscientists and other research staff. In 2011 it saw approximately 12,500 newly diagnosed patients and delivered some 17,000 cancer treatments. Over 300 diagnostic, therapeutic and preventive clinical studies are currently being developed and conducted under the NCT umbrella. In addition, extensive clinical expertise is available in the University Hospital's oncology departments.

Working together to create a strong science and industry cluster in Germany

"The health industry needs robust networks and strategic partnerships with science so that we can continue to hold our own here in the competitive world of smart research", says Dr Hagen Pfundner, CEO Roche Germany, commenting on the importance of collaborating with academic institutions. "More to the point: it will enable us continue playing a leading role inside and outside Germany with our achievements in medical research. Heidelberg is proof of the region's strength and excellence. This collaboration should also be seen as a clear commitment by Roche to intensifying early development work at centers of scientific excellence in Germany."

"Ultimately we would like to be able to offer every patient a treatment tailored to their individual cancer", adds Prof Otmar D. Wiestler, head of the German Cancer Research Center. "Getting there will require strategic alliances between science and industry. Our collaborative agreement teams up some of the strongest actors in cancer research, cancer medicine and the drug industry. Roche is an ideal partner for us in personalized cancer care." Prof Guido Adler, Chief Medical Director of Heidelberg University Hospital, says: "As the clinical partners, we have a strong interest in our patients benefiting from innovations in drug therapy. This framework agreement continues the intensive collaboration we've had with Roche in recent years on the clinical and research fronts and ensures that new drugs can be promptly tested under uniform conditions."

“The mission we all share is the development of better and above all more targeted cancer treatments”, says Prof Christof von Kalle, speaking on behalf of the executive board of the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) in Heidelberg. “The partnership with Roche is an enormous help to us in more rapidly translating what can be the game-changing achievements of molecular cancer research into relevant projects and insights that benefit patients. The NCT offers researchers from industry, Heidelberg University Hospital and the DKFZ a future-proof platform for this collaborative enterprise.”

Personalized healthcare as a focus for research: how tumors change their fingerprints

In the first of the two projects now underway the partners are focusing on the molecular properties of tumors. Led by Prof Peter Schirmacher, Medical Director of Heidelberg University’s Institute of Pathology, Prof Wilko Weichert, Senior Physician at the Institute, and Dr Marlene Thomas, a Roche biomarker expert, are studying how some molecular biomarkers in tumors change during the course of the disease. The scientists anticipate that the results obtained in this project will one day help tailor cancer treatments more effectively to a patient’s disease stage.

What is personalized healthcare and what can it achieve?

Personalized or stratified healthcare sprang from the observation that patients with the same diagnoses may respond differently to treatment with the same drugs. Individual characteristics – some disease-related, others not – influence the ways in which drugs work. Depending on the drug and disease, current treatment response rates range from 20 to 75 percent. The aim of personalized healthcare is to offer patients better treatment by increasing these response rates using diagnostic tests and targeted therapies. The world is clearly moving away from “one size fits all” medicines to treatments pinpointing specific disease properties in particular patient populations. The trend is harnessing the latest insights from molecular biology into how diseases develop. At the same time, this “scientific complexity” is the biggest challenge to the search for personalized solutions. Predicting which patient groups will derive optimal benefit from a treatment will help to avoid ineffective therapies, thereby saving unnecessary treatment costs, decreasing the potential for side effects and treating patients more safely and effectively.

German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ)

The German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) with its more than 2,500 employees is the largest biomedical research institute in Germany. At DKFZ, more than 1,000 scientists investigate how cancer develops, identify cancer risk factors and endeavor to find new strategies to prevent people from getting cancer. They develop novel approaches to make tumor diagnosis more precise and treatment of cancer patients more successful. Jointly with Heidelberg University Hospital, DKFZ has established the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Heidelberg where promising approaches from cancer research are translated into the clinic. The staff of the Cancer Information Service (KID) offers information about the widespread disease of cancer for patients, their families, and the general public. The center is a member of the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centers. Ninety percent of its funding comes from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the remaining ten percent from the State of Baden-Württemberg.

National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Heidelberg

The National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Heidelberg is a joint project of the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ), Heidelberg University Hospital, Thoraxklinik Heidelberg and Deutsche Krebshilfe (German Cancer Aid). The latter supports NCT as a Center of Excellence in Oncology. The aim of NCT is to link promising approaches from cancer research with patient care, from diagnosis over treatment to follow-up care and prevention. At the heart of NCT is the interdisciplinary Tumor Outpatient Clinic where patients benefit from an individual treatment plan provided in a timely manner by interdisciplinary expert boards called Tumor Boards. Participation in clinical trials provides access to innovative therapies. Thus, NCT is a pioneering platform for the transfer of new research results from the laboratory to clinical practice.

Heidelberg University Hospital and Medical Faculty:

Internationally recognized patient care, research, and teaching
Heidelberg University Hospital is one of the largest and most prestigious medical centers in Germany. The Medical Faculty of Heidelberg University belongs to the internationally most renowned biomedical research institutions in Europe. Both institutions have the common goal of developing new therapies and implementing

them rapidly for patients. With about 11,000 employees, training and qualification is an important issue. Every year, around 510,000 patients are treated on an inpatient or outpatient basis in more than 50 clinics and departments with 1,900 beds. Currently, about 3,500 future physicians are studying in Heidelberg; the reform Heidelberg Curriculum Medicinale (HeiCuMed) is one of the top medical training programs in Germany.

Roche

Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Roche is one of the world's leading research-focused healthcare groups in the fields of pharmaceuticals and diagnostics. As the world's biggest biotech company Roche develops clinically differentiated medicines in oncology, virology, inflammation, metabolism and CNS. Roche is also the world leader in in-vitro diagnostics, tissue-based cancer diagnostics and a pioneer in diabetes management. Roche's personalised healthcare strategy aims at providing medicines and diagnostic tools that enable tangible improvements in the health, quality of life and survival of patients. In 2011, Roche had over 80,000 employees worldwide and invested over 8 billion Swiss francs in R&D. The Group posted sales of 42.5 billion Swiss francs. Genentech, United States, is a wholly owned member of the Roche Group. Roche has a majority stake in Chugai Pharmaceutical, Japan. In Mannheim, Grenzach and Penzberg, its three largest sites in Germany, the company employs almost 14,000 staff. For more information visit www.roche.com and www.roche.de.

Contacts:

German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ):

Dr Stefanie Seltmann
Director of Public Relations
Im Neuenheimer Feld 280
69120 Heidelberg
T: +49 (0)6221 42 2854
F: +49 (0)6221 42 2968
E-Mail: S.Seltmann@dkfz.de

National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT):

Doris Rübsam-Brodkorb
Public Relations
Im Neuenheimer Feld 460
69120 Heidelberg
Tel.: +49 (0)6221 56 5930
Fax: +49 (0)6221 56 350
E-Mail: doris.ruebsam-brodkorb@nct-heidelberg.de

Heidelberg University Hospital and Medical Faculty:

Dr Annette Tuffs
Director, Corporate Communication/Public Relations
University Hospital and
Medical Faculty of Heidelberg
Im Neuenheimer Feld 672
69120 Heidelberg
Germany
phone: +49 6221 / 56 45 36
fax: +49 6221 / 56 45 44
e-mail: annette.tuffs@med.uni-heidelberg.de

Roche Germany:

Dr Monika Mölders
Director of Communication, Mannheim
Tel: +49 (0)621 759 4746
Fax: +49 (0)621 759 6074
E-Mail: monika.moelders@roche.com