



Press release
Paris, 31/03/2020

Engagement of the Vaccine Research Institute (VRI) against COVID-19

As the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic continues to spread all around the world, the VRI is joining the global health emergency to accelerate research on the virus and development of a vaccine. With its expertise against HIV and emerging infectious diseases, including Ebola recently, the VRI engages all its teams on scientific research against COVID-19.

The VRI engages its researchers, its partners, recognized worldwide in the fields of infectious diseases, vaccinology, immunology, data sciences, its advanced technologies and its network in France, Europe and the USA, to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The VRI is involved in **French COVID-19**, the national cohort of SARS-CoV-2 infected patients, coordinated by the Reacting network of Inserm, in connection with 56 hospitals in France, including Henri Mondor hospital in Creteil. The objective of the VRI is to characterize **the immune response from COVID-19+ patients. These data are key to better understand the infection as well as for the development of treatments or a vaccine.**

The VRI is engaged for the accelerated development of a vaccine against the SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus based on its expertise and the technology developed in other infectious pathologies such as HIV infection, for which clinical trials will begin in 2020. Its original approach is based on targeting dendritic cells, which are the key cells for the immune response. This vaccine will be used alone or in combination with the one developed by the Karolinska Institute and the CHUV of Lausanne, according to a strategy similar to the one developed against HIV within the European H2020 EHVA consortium initiated in 2015.

The VRI is coordinator of the **European CARE consortium** to respond to the **IMI2** (Innovative Medicines Initiative) call bringing together academic research teams, French and European, and private sector, **for the clinical development of new therapeutic molecules** for COVID-19.

The VRI is also participating in the development of a diagnostic test on antibodies detection in serum in collaboration with the Lausanne University Hospital (Pr G. Pantaleo).

“Since the creation of the VRI, we are involved in the fight against infectious diseases. Our expertise, our infrastructures, our collaborations, allow us today to mobilize the VRI and react

very quickly in the fight against COVID-19 and contribute to the national research effort” specifies Yves Lévy, VRI Director.

“Thanks to our acquired experience in recent years in the context of HIV research, our European partnership, we will be able to respond on several fronts. We are confident to be able to move forward very quickly, with the VRI, to meet the new coronavirus challenges by joining our strengths and our expertise.” mentioned Pr G. Pantaleo, CHUV Lausanne

About VRI

The Vaccine Research Institute (VRI), Laboratory of excellence, was established by the French National Agency for Research on AIDS and viral hepatitis (ANRS - France REcherche Nord&sud Sida-HIV Hépatites) and the University of Paris-Est Créteil (UPEC) to conduct research to accelerate the development of effective vaccines against HIV/AIDS and emerging infectious diseases. The VRI's structure strengthens the links between basic research and translational research, patients associations and the socio-economic world. The VRI extends a network of internationally renowned scientists and research teams with multidisciplinary expertise, a network of clinical centres, shared platforms and industrial and charitable partners. It is based at the Henri Mondor Hospital (Créteil-France).

<http://vaccine-research-institute.fr>

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About ANRS

The ANRS is the French agency responsible for combating HIV/AIDS and hepatitis. Since 2012 it has been an autonomous agency within Inserm. Its aim is to acquire new knowledge in order to help, in the North and South, to improve the prevention of these infections and the care of people affected. The ANRS brings together, around major scientific priorities, researchers from all disciplines and doctors belonging to research organizations (Inserm, CNRS, Institut Pasteur, Ird), universities and hospitals. The Agency's vaccine research programme is conducted by the VRI (Vaccine Research Institute).

<http://anrs.fr>

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