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News

(http://www.biocat.cat/sites/default/files/Lluis_Ribas_Omnia_Molecular.JPG.crop_display.jpg)

Lluís Ribas de Pouplana, founder of Omnia and ICREA researcher - Photo: © Omnia Molecular.

Omnia Molecular plays key role in new European alliance against antibiotic resistance

The Nabarsi consortium will receive €4.1 millions from the European Commission and is made up of public research centers and companies from Catalonia, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

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By Biocat

The European Commission has earmarked €4.1 millions, through the 7th Framework Program, for the Nabarsi (http://cordis.europa.eu/search/index.cfm?fuseaction=proj.document&PJ_RCN=13902143) consortium (New AntiBacterials with Inhibitory activity on Aminoacyl-tRNA Synthetases) that will work to bring new molecules **to combat bacterial resistance to market**. In addition to the project's significance for European research, Catalonia will also benefit as participants include the Institute for Biomedical Research (IRB Barcelona) and biotechnology company Omnia Molecular (http://biocat.biotechgate.com/app/db/detail.php?c=2720851k$Sn34qkUNvoQbY) , which will receive €1.2 millions of this budget.

The consortium is coordinated by Erasmus MC (Netherlands) and also includes the University of Leeds (United Kingdom), the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis and British company InhibOx Ltd.

The research, which began this summer and will continue **over three years**, focuses on technology from Omnia Molecular —specializing in the design and development of antibiotics for difficult-to-treat infections in hospitals— and aims to find and evaluate inhibitors of Aminoacyl-tRNA Synthetases, proteins involved in the synthesis of microbial proteins that are vital for bacteria.

Omnia Molecular's function will be to biologically test the molecules selected through **bioinformatics procedures**. It will do so using the **company's patented *In-Omnia* technology platform** that allows for the study of antimicrobial activity in human cells. The advantage of this methodology is that is makes it possible to discard compounds unable to cross cell membranes that would therefore not be effective or that, although showing antibacterial activity, would be harmful to human cells.

Omnia Molecular was founded in 2005 as a spin-off of the University of Barcelona by **ICREA researcher Lluís Ribas de Pouplana**, who is also head of the IRB Barcelona Gene Translation Laboratory (http://www.irbbarcelona.org/index.php/en/research/programmes/molecular-medicine/gene-translation-laboratory) .

In a later stage, the Nabarsi consortium will seek out agreements with pharmaceutical companies with the capacity to develop and market the antibiotics from this project.

Recently researchers at the IRB Barcelona have also published research on a marine substance (http://www.biocat.cat/en/news/marine-substance-found-curb-growth-antibioticresistant-bacteria) that curbs the growth of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

If you would like more information on this topic, we recommend the article *Las superbacterias amenazan a España* (http://esmateria.com/2013/07/16/las-superbacterias-amenazan-a-espana/) (Superbacteria threaten Spain) published on the scientific website Materia.

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