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Collaborating for Success

Going it alone when it comes to drug development is a business and R&D model falling out of vogue. The highly competitive and IP-protective pharmaceutical industry is opening its proverbial R&D vaults with the hope that a diverse meeting of the minds and diversity of thought can bring much-needed medicines for complex diseases, such as cancer, to the patient finish line.

One of the most visible knowledge share programs is The Project Data Sphere (PDS) initiative, which provides a platform built to share, integrate, and analyze comparator arms of historical cancer trial data sets that can be examined for key learnings to accelerate research. The Project Data Sphere platform is available to researchers affiliated with life-sciences companies, hospitals, and institutions, as well as independent researchers.

According to PDS, the true power of this platform will come from an ever-increasing volume of data and the continuing engagement of a diverse global community focused on finding solutions for cancer patients. Early collaborators include AstraZeneca, Bayer, Celgene, Janssen Research & Development (an affiliate of Johnson & Johnson), Pfizer, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, and Sanofi.

Using clinical trial datasets collaboratively is a big leap forward in the cancer drug discovery process. PDS estimates 8.2 million people still die from cancer every year, while the attrition rate for clinical testing of promising compounds can be as high as 95%. This could become substantially lower once researchers in both academia and industry share clinical trial data.

In this month's cover story, Dr. Mark Curran, VP, systems pharmacology & biomarkers, immunology therapeutic area, Janssen Research & Development, talks about his company's commitment to data and knowledge sharing, noting that as biological research shifts from analogue to digital, attacking complex problems requires many people to come together and share their skills, new ideas, methods, and datasets.

In a related article — New Models for Academic Partnerships — in this month's issue, experts discuss how the industry's partnerships with universities are changing and becoming broader in scope, with the goal of translating basic science into potential products or addressing target identification and evaluation. Collaborations with universities are beginning to include precompetitive assets as well as risk sharing with partners that have complementary resources, technologies, and skills.

Advocacy groups such as PatientsLikeMe, which has an agreement with Genentech, and the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation's MMRF Researcher Gateway and the MMRF CoMMunity Gateway, are also finding unique ways to collaborate on the premise of accelerating the best and the most novel breakthroughs and therapies for patients and helping drive to a cure. (See September's Last Word featuring Walter Capone, president of the MMRF.)

We will continue to follow the progress of these collaborators in future issues, including our November/December Year in Preview issue.



Their Word...

DENISE MYSHKO
Managing Editor



Nanotechnology has the potential to improve the effectiveness and reduce the side effects of medicines.

ROBIN ROBINSON
Senior Editor



The industry is slowly embracing the need to share data and collaborate in order to bring new medicines to market faster.

KIM RIBBINK
Features Editor



Political and economic stability and favorable safety conditions are making Colombia a more sought after market.

COMING in Nov/Dec 2014 Year in Preview

- > Innovation
- > Payers
- > Power of the Patient
- > Specialty Pharma
- > Personalized/Precision Medicine
- > An Integrated Business Model
- > Digital Disruption
- > Connected Health
- > R&D Crowdsourcing
- > Augmented Reality
- > And more...

Regards,

Taren Grom
Editor

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