

METABOLIC RESEARCH ALLIANCE

An Opportunity to Support

THE METABOLIC RESEARCH ALLIANCE (MRA) is a consortium consisting of the University of Connecticut, Jackson Laboratory, Yale University, and The Weizmann Institute of Science. The primary goal of the Alliance is to take advantage of the inter-disciplinary strengths of the partner institutions for transformative research into metabolic diseases, especially pertaining to diabetes (T1D and T2D) and obesity. Our consortium is distinctly positioned to provide synergistic research expertise which could lead to prevention, treatment, and curative approaches to these devastating diseases. The UConn Foundation is leading efforts to raise \$ 1 million in seed funding to launch this research.

The World Health Organization indicates that metabolic diseases such as diabetes and obesity are reaching epidemic proportions, with billions being afflicted worldwide. In addition, the incidence is continuing to grow exponentially, with crippling individual consequences that include disabilities and premature death, as well as catastrophic societal effects and costs. It is estimated that, in the United States alone, we are on track to exceed the trillion-dollar mark annually for diabetes and obesity-related costs in the near future. Similar progressions are being observed globally. Despite this crisis, we are still faced with relatively few new and viable therapeutic options.

Creation of the Metabolic Research Alliance is therefore very opportune, timely, and crucially important. This world-class collaborative partnership has the unique capacity to foster scientific breakthroughs due to the comprehensive and complementary skill sets of affiliated researchers. MRA scientists will be utilizing a novel approach by coordinating both existing and new expertise across four major research areas including cell biology, immunobiology, genetics and genomics, and the microbiome; together with expertise in metabolism, computational biology, bioinformatics, and even bioengineering. The substantial degree of what each institution could contribute individually, coupled with the multiplier effect of this collective approach, is what led them each to recently sign a Memorandum of Understanding signifying their agreement to work collaboratively in order to create scientific breakthroughs. The press release and related website announcing this partnership can be accessed at metabolicalliance.com (or simply google “Metabolic Research Alliance.”)

The Time Is Now

As the alliance initiates its exciting work, now is the time to ensure financial support for this extraordinary undertaking. Already, teams from UConn, Jackson Laboratory, Yale, and Weizmann have announced projects which they would like to pursue (*see website link above*). Other investigators are waiting to proceed with contemplated collaborations until financial support is secured. Those who want to see the elimination of these chronic diseases now have the opportunity to provide resources in order to guarantee scientific advances which will lead to clinical applications and new entrepreneurial activities that will allow for pharmaceutical involvement in the generation of new preventive, therapeutic and curative approaches.

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