



Ambrose Announces New Glycomics Research Network to Prevent and Treat Diseases Canada invests heavily in Glycoscience

Glycoscience Lesson #30

by JC Spencer

Rona Ambrose, Canada's Minister of Health, announced in February 2015 their plans for New Glycomics Research Network to Prevent and Treat Diseases. The Edmonton-based network is receiving \$27.3 million over five years to develop new drugs and vaccines to treat influenza, genetic diseases and diabetes.

Glycomics, the study of the structure and function of carbohydrates (sugars) in biological systems, promises to deliver far-reaching solutions to human health problems such as influenza, genetic diseases and diabetes. Collaborating universities include the University of Alberta, Simon Fraser University, University of Toronto. One objective is to develop tools to study N-glycosylation functions in stem cell development.

In 1996 we envisioned that Glycomics advancements would move simultaneously in two directions. One pathway is the natural consumption of Smart Sugars to modulate the immune system to resist health challenges. The other pathway is to synthesize sugars to make pharmaceutical drugs. The urgent becomes evident because the important is neglected. The natural addresses the cause while the syntactic more often focuses on treatment of the symptom.

More than sixty Canadian researchers will analyze the functionality of carbohydrates in diseases. These researchers from across Canada will work within the Glycomics Research Network to continue their present work in chemistry, biochemistry, biology and immunology to develop new drugs. The plan is to develop novel therapeutics for cancer and neurological disease in partnership with the pharmaceutical company Merck to advance its Alzheimer's disease program. Advancements in Parkinson's treatment is expected.

Ambrose is quoted as saying, "*GlycoNet will bring together the top researchers in glycomics to develop treatments for illnesses ranging from diabetes to tuberculosis. On behalf of the federal research funding agencies, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research is delighted to support this promising collaboration between researchers from different disciplines and partners from different sectors. GlycoNet will join the impressive lineup of NCEs [Networks of Centres of Excellence of Canada] that are already helping drive innovation in Canada.*"

Ed Holder, Minister of State (Science and Technology) said, "*Our government is committed to investing in world-class research networks such as GlycoNet, which will develop new drugs and vaccines to fight diseases that affect millions of Canadians. These investments will improve our quality of life and contribute to the creation of a stronger, more innovative economy and a more prosperous Canada.*"

We applaud Canada, GlycoNet and its Scientific Director Dr. Todd Lowary in their efforts to further research and education of Glycoscience, the future of medicine.

Sources and References

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