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this issue:

Outcome of the Alzheimer systematic review

EQIPD at the 32nd ECNP Congress

EQIPD being promoted to young researchers

EQIPD coordinator on the consequences of Brexit

Outcome of the review of existing guidelines

ECNP Preclinical Data Workshop, Athens, 27 February-1 March

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Outcome of the Alzheimer systematic review

The systematic review and meta-analysis of the in-vivo Alzheimer's disease literature is well underway. The initial search of biomedical databases retrieved over 200,000 results, which has been condensed to a final dataset containing publications which describe primary experiments in transgenic animal models of Alzheimer's disease.

A sample set of 4,000 publications were screened for inclusion in duplicate by members of the consortia. Using this sample set, and data from a previous systematic review in the field, the team were able to train a machine-learning algorithm to screen the rest of the dataset with high sensitivity (96%) and specificity (86%). Using text-mining approaches, they will now identify publications in this dataset which contain the outcome measures EQIPD will investigate (open field test and electroencephalogram outcomes) and will begin data extraction in the coming months.



EQIPD at the 32nd ECNP Congress

A brainstorming session entitled '[Improving preclinical data quality in neuropsychopharmacological research – is the glass half empty or half full?](#)' will take place at this year's ECNP Congress in Copenhagen, 7-10 September.

Malcolm Macleod, University of Edinburgh, UK, will set the scene with a short description of the infrastructure, goals and objectives of EQIPD, and present first research results, including analysis of historical data and prospective studies, and report on research guidelines developed. Thomas Steckler, Janssen Pharmaceutica, Belgium, will focus on the quality management system and the education platform.

It is envisaged that this brainstorming session should (i) increase awareness in the audience about preclinical data quality issues, (ii) promote the activities of the EQIPD consortium and (iii) provide an opportunity for the audience to give feedback as to whether the consortium is on the right track and addressing the needs of the

scientific community.



EQIPD being promoted to young researchers

More awareness of the project was created during the ECNP Workshop for Early Career Scientists that took place 7-10 March 2019 in Nice, France. An informational banner was displayed together with an interactive digital terminal where participants could read more about the project and contact the coordinators of EQIPD.

This three-day workshop is a yearly meeting that brings together 100 junior scientists and experts in the field of applied and translational neuroscience. It aims to stimulate high-quality experimental and clinical research in brain disorders and their treatments by promoting and encouraging the development of early career scientists seeking to pursue research careers in the field.

The project was also promoted during the ECNP New Frontiers Meeting in Digital Health (10-11 March 2019, Nice).



EQIPD coordinator on the consequences of Brexit

“The impact of the UK’s decision to leave the EU is being felt in biomedical research as elsewhere. The UK based participants are grateful to our other European colleagues for their support, sympathy and forbearance at this challenging time. At the time of writing it remains unclear what kind of Brexit – if any – will be achieved, which makes forward planning somewhat challenging”, says Malcolm Macleod.



Outcome of the review of existing guidelines

The Work Package 3 of EQIPD aims to develop guiding principles and criteria to improve preclinical robustness and efficiency of preclinical neuroscience and safety research.

To this end, the EQIPD consortium constructed a five-domain framework, reviewing 62 publications with 58 unique items.

Domain 1 aims to help the EQIPD user to answer this question: is your experiment testing a predefined scientific hypothesis which is statistically testable (confirmatory research) or is it exploring a space of interesting options to generate hypotheses (exploratory research)?

Domain 2 will guide the researcher in prespecify (pre-planning), document and standardise all methods and analyses before the experiment (defining standard operating procedures).

Domain 3 will support in statistics and especially guide the researcher to evaluate which form of aggregate measures are meaningful for the data,

to choose appropriate statistical methods, and to plan the sample size accordingly.
 Domain 4 is about randomisation and blinding in experimental processes to avoid the introduction of confounding and systematic error.
 Domain 5 explains the guiding principles in using full and comprehensive documentation in preclinical research: the take home message is that “not all bias can be avoided, but most can be uncovered”.



ECNP Preclinical Data Workshop, Athens, 27 February-1 March

EQIPD members were instrumental in organising the two-day ECNP educational workshop on preclinical research methods, held in Athens. The workshop, attended by 20 early career scientists, covered issues of robust experimental study design and analysis, with a view to propagating quality management best practices amongst leading up-and-coming preclinical researchers. The plan for future workshops is that they be moved under the umbrella of the EQIPD project.



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