European Sepsis Academy initiated to improve the treatment of sepsis

Brussels, Belgium, 24th March 2016: The European Sepsis Academy, an international project founded at the initiative of organizations including the International Sepsis Forum (ISF), the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) and the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM) is now underway.

During a first meeting of stakeholders, participants laid the foundations for upcoming projects initiated by the Innovative Training Network (ITN) that is funded within the European Commission’s Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. ESA-ITN offers PhD students an extensive sepsis-oriented joint training programme at leading institutes and companies in the field.

The main goals of the European Sepsis Academy (ESA-ITN) are to develop and validate the pathological findings, biomarker diagnostics and clinical trial models required to improve sepsis therapy. The sepsis specialists in particular target the crucial immunosuppressive phase of the life-threatening infection, which is characterized by a complex interplay of host pro- and anti-inflammatory processes often leading to organ dysfunction. Sepsis affects about 18 million individuals worldwide and has a very high mortality rate.

“Sepsis can be considered a race to the death between the pathogens and the host immune system,” explained ESA-ITN coordinator Dr. W. Joost Wiersinga, a sepsis expert at the Center for Experimental Molecular Medicine within the University of Amsterdam, who is also member of the executive committee of ESCMID’s study group on bloodstream infection and sepsis. “Our key priorities are that trainees can recognize the condition as such and identify the stage of disease as well as the source and type of infection in order to initiate a targeted treatment as early as possible.”

To this end ESA offers a spectrum of courses and training opportunities at different levels. In addition to sepsis-specific training on pathogenesis, discovery and development students are taught to master advanced research methodologies and technologies that are crucial for sepsis research, to make use of state-of-the-art infrastructure and to work directly with leading experts in one of the focal fields.

All projects have an interdisciplinary component (intersection of sepsis research, product development, economics or medical practice). Interactions within the network are strengthened by (industry) internships abroad that allow the trainees to understand operations in various sectors and learn to think both as scientists as well as business professionals.

ESA-ITN primarily focuses on Pathogenesis: To describe the pathogenesis of sepsis-induced immune suppression at the level of immune regulatory molecules and DNA methylation; Discovery: To identify and validate biomarkers that can be used for clinical diagnosis and monitoring of sepsis-induced immune suppression; and Development: To prepare and optimize high-potential diagnostic technology.
platforms for use in diagnostic procedures in sepsis and test innovative clinical trial designs.

The ESA was part of a task force of leading sepsis experts who developed new recommendations aiming to redefine the definition and enhance the diagnosis of sepsis and septic shock, which were published in the February 2016 issue of JAMA, and endorsed by ESCMID. More information can be found at http://www.sccm.org/Research/Quality/Pages/Sepsis-Definitions.aspx.

Project partners:
In addition to ISF, ESCMID and ESICM, the project is supported by Biocartis, Luminex Corp., ttopstart and Genomatix Software. Find out more about the European Sepsis Academy.

Beneficiaries:
Academic Medical Center, University of Amsterdam – Infectious Diseases and Center for Experimental Molecular Medicine (CEMM); Infectious Diseases and Center for Experimental Molecular Medicine (CEMM); Humanitas Mirasole s.p.a. – Istituto Clinico Humanitas; bioMérieux – Critical Care Biomarker Development; University of Athens – 4th Department of Internal Medicine, Medical School; University College London – Intensive Care Unit and Research Department of Clinical Physiology; Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Vaudois, Lausanne – Department of Medicine, Infectious Diseases Service; and INSEAD, Fontainebleau – INSEAD Healthcare Management Initiative.

For more information, please contact the coordinator:
W. Joost Wiersinga, MD, PhD
Division of Infectious Diseases, Dept. of Internal Medicine
Center for Experimental Molecular Medicine
Academic Medical Center, University of Amsterdam
Meibergdreef 9, room G2-132, 1105 AZ Amsterdam, the Netherlands
+31 20 5669111
w.j.wiersinga@amc.uva.nl

-ENDS-

ESCMID press contact: Alex Heeley, a.heeley@defacto.com +44 203 207 6745 or Nadine Caillaux, n.caillaux@defacto.com +44 203 207 6740

ESCMID is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of infectious diseases in Europe and beyond. The society promotes and supports research, education and training and shares good medical practice in the infection disciplines to build capacity throughout the world. www.escmid.org