

Transatlantic partnership to tackle neurodegenerative disease

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Research into multiple sclerosis and motor neurone disease is to be boosted with an international collaboration to further understanding of these illnesses.

Experts from the University of Edinburgh and the Massachusetts-based biotechnology company Biogen Idec will work together to seek greater insight into the [cell processes](#) behind these debilitating conditions.

This will include identifying [drug compounds](#) that could potentially be used as treatments.

The three-year collaboration will combine the University's expertise in translational medicine – which develops laboratory discoveries into treatments for patients – with Biogen Idec's strength in drug discovery and development.

Siddharthan Chandran, Professor of Neurology at the University of Edinburgh's College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, said: "This landmark partnership is a brilliant example of academic-industrial collaboration in the field of discovery science. Only by better understanding the biological processes behind these devastating diseases can we hope to discover new and effective therapies."

Clinicians and scientists, based at Edinburgh BioQuarter – Scotland's flagship lifesciences project – will be involved in the project, which will draw on the University's strength in neuroscience, [stem cell research](#) and

regeneration.

The initiative is being funded by Biogen Idec, which is known for its strength in developing therapies for neurological disorders, particularly its portfolio of treatments for patients with multiple sclerosis.

"We have embraced academic collaborations as a part of our strategy to maintain a vibrant and innovative research organization and better understand the underlying biology of neurodegenerative disease. Our research partnership with the University of Edinburgh is an excellent example of this strategy," said Ken Rhodes, Vice President of Neurology Research at Biogen Idec. "We are committed to continuing to improve the treatment of people with MS and motor neuron diseases, and this collaboration is expected to provide an in-depth portrait of their pathophysiology, and identify important new targets for potential therapies."

Provided by University of Edinburgh

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