

Alliance to Fight SCA3

The 2016 Ataxia Investigator Meeting (AIM) in Orlando again provided a forum for exchange of results and ideas during the scheduled scientific sessions as well as valuable opportunities for scientists to meet informally and to network.

As a result of this meeting five scientists from Germany, Portugal and the U.S. agreed to form an “Alliance to Fight SCA3.”



“Alliance to Fight SCA3” members (back row, left to right) Dr. Olaf Riess, Dr. Thorsten Schmidt, Dr. Henry Paulson, (front row) Dr. Patricia Maciel and Dr. Luis Pereira de Almeida

“For a rare disease like Spinocerebellar Ataxia type 3 (SCA3) also known as Machado-Joseph disease (MJD), we see the need for international

collaborations, especially between Europe and the United States,” said Olaf Riess, head of the Institute of Medical Genetics and Applied Genomics at the University of Tuebingen (Germany).

Patrícia Maciel, Professor at the Life and Health Sciences Research Institute (ICVS) of the University of Minho, Braga (Portugal) added “Even two decades after the identification of the genetic mutation causing MJD/SCA3, we still cannot offer a causative treatment to patients. However, recent progress of all of us five brings us closer to first clinical trials.”

The five scientists agreed to unite their forces in this process and to meet and exchange on a regular basis.

“We all collaborated before on certain research questions but the alliance will give us the opportunity to intensify our exchange,” explained Thorsten Schmidt, group leader of the SCA3 research group at the University of Tuebingen (Germany).

Henry L. Paulson, Lucile Groff Professor of Neurology in the Department of Neurology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor said “We all will profit from each other. The Europeans, for example, already several years ago established networking structures, like the EUROSCA consortium, which we are also currently in the process of setting up in the U.S.”

Finally, Luís Pereira de Almeida, vice-president of the Center for Neuroscience and Cell Biology (CNC) at the University of Coimbra (Portugal) stressed “The Alliance is not intended to be a closed club. Other researchers working on MJD/SCA3 are very welcome to join us.”

The researchers of “Alliance to Fight SCA3” plan to exchange their ideas and concepts as well as samples and reagents in order to speed up reaching their ultimate goal to develop a treatment for Spinocerebellar Ataxia Type 3 (SCA3) /Machado-Joseph disease (MJD). ❖

CFC Number

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The National Ataxia Foundation’s CFC number is 10752. This program provides a convenient way to donate to NAF, and provides great benefit to those with Ataxia. Please give as generously as you can and please ask your co-workers to also give.