European funding for University of Edinburgh research

More than €5.3 million will be awarded over four years to four international teams tackling cardiovascular disease. This is a partnership between the British Heart Foundation, the German Centre for Cardiovascular Research and Dutch Heart Foundation and some of the funding includes a project at the University of Edinburgh.

The awards are to support mid-career researchers combining skills and resources to tackle critical questions in cardiovascular medicine. The funding is intended to create a springboard to make significant advances and for the teams to become international leaders.

Professor Metin Avkiran, Associate Medical Director at the British Heart Foundation, said: “The BHF-DZHK-DHF joint funding scheme has been hugely successful so far. We’re delighted to be working with our German and Dutch partners once again to fund innovative research into cardiovascular diseases of unmet need, this time also supporting impactful and hopefully lasting collaborations among emerging leaders.

“International collaboration is critically important for scientific progress. Working in partnership with the DHF and DZHK allows the money that we invest in research to go further so that we can achieve more for people with heart and circulatory conditions than we would be able to alone.”

The Edinburgh project is called MegaCardiocyte – and involves mapping a blood-bone marrow-heart axis to identify new drug targets for heart failure.

The principal investigators are Dr Mairi Brittan, University of Edinburgh, Dr Judith Cosemans, CARIM Maastricht University, and Dr Tobias Petzold, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich.

The project is explained in this way: “Heart failure is a debilitating and progressive disease that has no cure and is often lethal. For a particular type of heart failure which arises from an impaired ability of the heart’s chambers to relax between beats, abnormal function of small blood vessels is likely to be an important triggering factor.

“The MegaCardiocyte consortium will explore the link between small blood vessel function and that type of heart failure. They suspect it might be attributed to malfunctioning blood platelets – normally responsible for clotting – that, together with an overactivation of immune cells in the blood, compromise the ability of small blood vessels in the heart to work normally. The work may lead to the development of platelet-targeted treatments in the prevention and management of heart failure.”


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