



New startup Aglaia Therapeutics raises €4M in seed funding to overcome resistance in oncology targeted therapies

Venture capital firm Advent France Biotechnology led fundraising, alongside Crédit Mutuel Innovation and Pierre Fabre

Co-founded by AFB and leading cancer institutes Gustave Roussy and Institut Curie, startup will use funding to prepare essential preclinical work to identify first oncology program to develop

Villejuif, France, September 27, 2021 – Aglaia Therapeutics, a biotechnology startup developing promising new therapies that can overcome resistance to current targeted therapies in cancer patients, today announces the successful completion of a €4M (\$4.7M) seed funding round. Advent France Biotechnology (AFB) led the round, with the participation of Crédit Mutuel Innovation and Pierre Fabre. AFB also acted as co-founder, with Alejo Chorny, current operating partner at AFB, now appointed chief operating officer (COO) of Aglaia Tx. Leading European cancer centers Institut Curie and Gustave Roussy participated in the creation of the company.

The proceeds of the funding will be used to prepare the preclinical development program required to identify the first candidate. Aglaia Tx aims to develop promising new oncology therapies with the goal of delivering best- and first- in class drugs that can restore sensitivity to current targeted therapies in cancer patients that became resistant to these treatments. The company established a pipeline of small molecules in oncology targeting the initiation of mRNA translation.

While targeted therapies have clearly improved cancer patient outcomes, global efficacy of these treatments decreases over time, with patients rapidly developing resistance to therapies. Moreover, even with therapies that lead to a complete response, small populations of cancer cells often survive treatments, driving cancer relapse, which remains one of the most challenging obstacles to effective treatments.

“Our goal is to dramatically improve the standard of care in cancer patients; by restoring sensitivity and avoiding resistance to current targeted therapies. We have assembled a strong team of drug developers, scientists and investors,” said Alejo Chorny, COO of Aglaia Therapeutics. “With this seed investment, Aglaia Therapeutics is extremely well positioned to advance its preclinical programs in the coming years and select its first innovative program.”

“Aglaia Tx is a good example of our entrepreneur-investor approach and we firmly believe that its work opens up the possibility of tackling relapses, one of the main unmet medical needs in cancer treatment today,” said Matthieu Coutet, managing partner at AFB. “We are thrilled to bring together two leading European cancer institutes, Gustave Roussy and Institut Curie; to collaborate on this unique startup creation aimed at overcoming resistance in oncology targeted therapies.”

A collaboration between Aglaia Therapeutics, Gustave Roussy, Institut Curie and the University of Strasbourg, for the validation of targets involved in certain types of cancer, will allow the startup to keep working with the research and clinical teams of Pr Caroline Robert, Dr Stéphan Vagner and Dr Laurent Desaubry.

Aglaia Tx is founded on the basis of years of collaborative scientific work performed by Pr Caroline Robert, head of the dermatology department at Gustave Roussy Cancer Campus (France), Dr Stéphan Vagner, head of the CNRS UMR3348 / Inserm U1278 Unit at Institut Curie (France) and Dr Laurent Desaubry, CNRS research director at the University of Strasbourg (France) who are co-founders of the startup.

While Dr Vagner had been studying mRNA translation for many years, Pr Robert quickly identified the potential medical applications of such a theme. This initial work has shown that many pathways of resistance to current targeted therapies in cancer patients converge on the activation of mRNA translation by the eIF4F complex. EIF4FA, an RNA helicase, is one of the three proteins that compose the eIF4F complex, essential for the cap-dependent translation initiation of many oncogenic proteins. The abnormal activity of this complex, observed in many cancers, leads to the synthesis of proteins involved in tumor growth and metastasis. In addition, the selective translation of cellular mRNAs, controlled by the eIF4F complex, also contributes to the resistance to cancer treatments such as targeted therapies and checkpoint inhibitors.

It is the identification of the importance of the mRNA translation regulation process in cancer progression and resistance to treatments that has led to the development of new therapies targeting this process in a cancer context.

- [Read their review article published in Nature Reviews Cancer](#)

Advisors to Aglaia Therapeutics:

Financial: McDermott Will & Emery – Anthony Paronneau

Advisors to Crédit Mutuel Innovation:

Legal: Duteil Avocats - Benoît Lespinasse

About Gustave Roussy

Classed as the leading European Cancer Centre and the fifth on the world stage, Gustave Roussy is a centre with comprehensive expertise and is devoted entirely to patients suffering with cancer. The Institute is a founding member of the Paris Saclay Cancer Cluster. It is a source of diagnostic and therapeutic advances. It caters for almost 50,000 patients per year and its approach is one that integrates research, patient care and teaching. It is specialized in the treatment of rare cancers and complex tumors and it treats all cancers in patients of any age. Its care is personalized and combines the most advanced medical methods with an appreciation of the patient's human requirements. In addition to the quality of treatment offered, the physical, psychological and social aspects of the patient's life are respected. 3,200 health professionals work on its two campuses: Villejuif and Chevilly-Larue. Gustave Roussy brings together the skills which are essential for the highest quality research in oncology: a quarter of patients treated are included in clinical trials.

www.gustaveroussy.fr/en

About Institut Curie

Institut Curie, France's leading cancer center, combines an internationally-renowned research center with a cutting-edge hospital group that treats all types of cancer, including the rarest. Founded in 1909 by Marie Curie, Institut Curie employs 3,600 researchers, physicians, and health professionals across three sites (Paris, Saint-Cloud, and Orsay), working on its three missions: treatment, research, and teaching. A private foundation with public utility status, Institut Curie is authorized to receive donations and legacies, and thanks to the support of its

donors, is able to make discoveries more quickly, improving treatments and quality of life for patients.

www.curie.fr



Since 2011, Institut Curie is certified "Institut Carnot Curie Cancer". The Carnot label is a label of excellence granted to academic research structures with proven high quality and involvement in partnership research. Curie Cancer offers industrial partners the opportunity to set up research collaborations, benefiting from the expertise of Institut Curie teams, for the development of innovative therapeutic solutions against cancers from the therapeutic target to clinical validation.

<https://www.instituts-carnot.eu/en/carnot-institute/curie-cancer>

About Crédit Mutuel Innovation

Crédit Mutuel Innovation is the evergreen venture capital entity of Crédit Mutuel Equity (€3.5 billion in capital). They invest €1-20M in life science, digital and deep tech companies from seed to growth stages. They support bold and ambitious entrepreneurs to develop their strong growth potential, with their worldwide enterprise ecosystem (ranging from their 350+ portfolio companies, their abroad subsidiaries, and 150+ largest global corporates and the best-in-class experts). They invest in their own equity and ensure durable partnerships with visionary leaders. Of the 350 companies, which Crédit Mutuel have invested in, they have generated a cumulative annual turnover of €50bn, and created more than 250,000 jobs.

www.creditmutuel-equity.eu/en/

About Pierre Fabre

Pierre Fabre is a French health and beauty care company with 35 years of experience in innovation, development, manufacturing and commercialization in oncology. The company is the second largest dermo-cosmetics laboratory in the world, the second largest private French pharmaceutical group and the market leader in France for products sold over-the-counter in pharmacies. In 2020, Pierre Fabre generated €2.3 billion (\$2.7bn) in revenue - 65% of which came from international sales. Pierre Fabre is 86%-owned by the Pierre Fabre Foundation; a government-recognized public-interest foundation, and secondarily by its employees - through an international employee stock ownership plan. The company has been established in the south-west of France since its creation. The group manufactures over 95% of its products in France and has about 10,000 employees worldwide.

www.pierre-fabre.com

About Advent France Biotechnology

Advent France Biotechnology (AFB) is an AMF-regulated company that invests in a range of sectors within the life sciences - specifically in therapeutics-oriented projects. AFB's unique strategy combines early-stage investments in promising enterprises and strong entrepreneurial support to strengthen the company's growth.

Created in 2016 in Paris, France, AFB has a strong entrepreneurial spirit; from the inception of its first fund in 2017, it now maintains 15 European investments in France, Belgium, Spain and Ireland.

AFB has developed strong relationships within the French innovation ecosystem; as a result, it has attracted international VC syndicates to its portfolio companies.

The operational team is managed by Alain Huriez and Matthieu Coutet and has appointed a number of investment professionals with long-standing track records in entrepreneurial ventures, combined with strong scientific and medical expertise.

www.adventfb.com

About Aglaia Therapeutics

Aglaia Therapeutics is a biotechnology startup developing promising new oncology therapies. The company aims at delivering best- and first- in class drugs that restore sensitivity to current targeted therapies in cancer patients that have become resistant to these treatments. Aglaia Therapeutics has established a pipeline of small molecules, targeting the initiation of mRNA translation, which the company acquired and developed through Pierre Fabre.

Based in Villejuif, near Paris, France, Aglaia Therapeutics was co-founded in 2021 by Advent France Biotechnology (AFB), Institut Curie and Gustave Roussy. The company raised €4M (\$4.7M) in seed funding from AFB, Credit Mutuel Innovation and Pierre Fabre to start its preclinical activities.

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