

HIGHLIGHTS FROM INDUSTRY-ACADEMIA COLLABORATIONS ANNOUNCED THIS YEAR

Company	Academic institutions	Therapeutic area
Pfizer	Seven New York medical institutes	Biological drugs
Sanofi	University of California, San Francisco	Ageing, diabetes and inflammation
Gilead	Yale University, Connecticut	Cancer
GlaxoSmithKline and AstraZeneca	University of Manchester, UK	Inflammation
AstraZeneca	National Institute of Health and Medical Research, France	Cancer, inflammation and respiratory and autoimmune diseases
Takeda	Kyoto University, Japan	Obesity and schizophrenia

► their pursuit of active collaboration: earlier this year, Sanofi announced similar agreements. Pepys, meanwhile, is working directly with GSK scientists to develop a drug against amyloidosis, a disease caused by a build-up of amyloid protein.

The various deals also aim to smooth over tensions between industry and academia. Duncan Holmes, who heads GSK's Discovery Partnerships with Academia initiative, says that the company will give research partners a year's notice if it chooses to end a collaboration and that, if it that happens, academics would be free to continue with the project. To ease worries about publication restrictions, many agreements stipulate the terms for publication ahead of time. Yet some academics wonder whether the trend towards industry

collaboration will harm academic credibility. Some hospitals and universities, including Harvard University, have cracked down on industry relationships after it emerged over the past few years that researchers had received consulting and speaking fees from companies with a vested interest in their research.

Research agreements do not generally raise the same conflict-of-interest alarms as speaking fees, for example, which can be seen as marketing a product for a company, says Eric Campbell, a sociologist at Harvard Medical School in Boston. Also, many institutions vet the language in the contracts, he notes, and industry money is deposited into institutional accounts rather than given directly to investigators.

But Campbell also notes that industry collaborations can restrict or delay publication

and lead to a publication bias in favour of a company's product. "You should not in any way accept the notion that these giant institutional agreements are without tremendous danger," he says.

Furthermore, academia's growing appetite for industry funds could tip the balance of power at the negotiating table. "The pressures on a university president are intense," says Howard Brody, a bioethicist at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. He advocates the creation of an external organization to oversee large-scale collaborations with the drug industry. "We have to remember that institutions have conflicts of interest, just like individuals do," he cautions.

Kaitin, however, says that industry is just as desperate to collaborate, if not more so. "Earnings at these companies are falling through the floor and investors are losing confidence," he says. ■

CORRECTION

The News story 'Egypt invests in science' (*Nature* **474**, 266; 2011) wrongly identified Susan Hockfield as a member of the board of trustees appointed to run a proposed non-profit science city near Cairo. She is not a member of this board.