

# Inserm Transfert

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## Inserm Transfert and Inserm: a unique knowledge transfer model

The French Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm) has developed a unique model for technology transfer through Inserm Transfert, its subsidiary in charge of de-risking innovative preclinical projects and bridging discovery and clinical research.

Inserm's generation of new potential target and biomarker discoveries for drugs and diagnostics is among the highest in Europe for all disease classes, both common and rare. A crowning example is the discovery of cytotoxic T lymphocyte-associated protein 4 (CTLA4), the target of Bristol-Myers Squibb's Yervoy (ipilimumab), a monoclonal antibody used to treat cancer. Inserm is also among the most prolific institutions in Europe when it comes to filing biopharma patents and publishing scientific papers.

Over the past 50 years, the institute has grown into a 15,000-person organization that spans all French territories and is largely built around university hospitals. By pairing this geographic reach with a translational approach to R&D that combines clinical and basic biological research with a keen vision of knowledge transfer, Inserm has created a unique ecosystem for innovation with its technology transfer subsidiary, Inserm Transfert, at the epicenter.

These characteristics support Inserm's drive to streamline the discovery of new molecular and cellular targets for therapeutics and diagnostics. Their effectiveness was demonstrated during the 2014 Ebola outbreak, when Inserm sampled, sequenced and analyzed the virus in 30 days. This work determined that the Guinean virus was a variant not found in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon. Furthermore, thanks to their clinical network and expertise, Inserm and Toyoma Chemical (Fujifilm Group) were able to present initial findings on an Ebola treatment at this year's Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Seattle, Washington, USA.

When applied to other therapeutic areas such as oncology, the central nervous system (CNS), immunology and metabolic diseases, the Inserm approach is equally effective.

### Commercializing research

The true value of the work done at Inserm is demonstrated by the frequency with which it moves beyond the realm of research and into commercial development. To facilitate this process, Inserm established its own technology transfer subsidiary, Inserm Transfert, to provide the institute with a comprehensive range of services—from classical value-chain tasks to unique and customized solutions—for the commercialization of its research.

Since 2006, Inserm Transfert's mission has been to identify, protect, de-risk and partner inventions. Its 90-person team has expertise in



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scouting, intellectual property (IP), technology development, project design, business development and alliance management, as well as a translational focus that mirrors that of its parent organization, to ensure a smooth transition between discovery and clinical trials. Projects are backed up with the IP and proof-of-concept data that underpin long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships.

The inventiveness of Inserm's researchers means the technology transfer business is kept busy. Inserm has a portfolio of 1,279 patent families and has about 450 licensing opportunities available. Inserm Transfert typically strikes around 60 licensing agreements a year, in addition to numerous customized agreements covering multiyear research partnerships.

In recent years, Inserm and Inserm Transfert have entered into wide-reaching alliances with pharmaceutical companies such as GlaxoSmithKline, Novo Nordisk, Sanofi and MedImmune and other players such as ILiAD Biotechnologies, Ultragenyx and BluebirdBio. The breadth of Inserm's capabilities is illustrated by its alliance with MedImmune, in which the partners have collaborated on ten different research programs spanning oncology, respiratory diseases, inflammation, autoimmune diseases and more. MedImmune entered into the partnership in 2011 and renewed the relationship in 2015.

Other projects are also making a real difference to patients. Discovery of the cancer target CTLA4 at Inserm launched the development and eventual commercialization of Yervoy. Clinical trials with the antibody now suggest that this product may be on the cusp of becoming the biggest breakthrough in melanoma treatment in years.

In the field of diagnostics, Immunoscope, a tool for translating the functional profile of a patient's immune system into a predictive tool for therapeutic approaches or prognosis, could become the factor that supports the rise of immuno-oncology drugs by changing the way cancer is classified. Inserm is also working with Quest Diagnostics and LabCorp on BRCAShare, a unique initiative to collate and share *BRCA1/2* gene mutation data.

### Into the future

Inserm is positioned to continue to be based on its end-to-end R&D model, which takes physicians' and scientists' findings towards technology for patients. Inserm is supplementing this core workflow with new technologies and collaborative initiatives to encourage transversal and translational work.

One initiative in population genomics is already encouraging researchers from a range of backgrounds to come together to advance Inserm's activities in a field that could reshape the treatment of cancer, CNS diseases and other illnesses. Two other initiatives in the areas of microbiota and aging have a strong focus on underlying mechanisms of disease-related senescence.

Such pairings of Inserm's innovative technologies with Inserm Transfert's unique and well-established strengths are central to the institute's vision of the future. This combination will keep Inserm and Inserm Transfert at the forefront of global translational research and technology transfer.

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