

**The Debiopharm Life Sciences Award goes to Dr Lluís Quintana-Murci
for his novel and original research on the human evolutionary genetics of infection**

Lausanne, Switzerland, September 3, 2009 - Debiopharm Group, SA (Debiopharm), a Swiss-based global biopharmaceutical group of companies with a focus on the development of prescription drugs that target unmet medical needs, today presented the 'Debiopharm Life Sciences Award' to Dr Lluís Quintana-Murci from the Institut Pasteur in France, for his outstanding innovative research in the emerging field of evolutionary genetics of infection. Funded by Debiopharm, the ceremony took place at the EPFL (Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne) during the EPFL School of Life Sciences Inaugural Symposium. Dr Quintana-Murci and his institute received a total of CHF 100'000.

Dr Quintana-Murci leads the research unit of "Human Evolutionary Genetics" within the Department of Genomes and Genetics at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. His work focuses on understanding the mechanisms of host defence and infection in the natural setting, namely how pathogens have exerted selective pressures on human genes involved in immunity or host-pathogen interactions. In the past, scientists have used cellular and molecular biology, immunology or classical genetics to study the biology and immunology of infection. Dr Quintana-Murci has used a novel approach called "evolutionary genetics of infection" that has helped in the understanding of how pathogens have contributed to shape the human genome. A direct consequence of his work is the identification of a number of genes that are the key players of host defence against infection.

"We were impressed by the work of Dr Quintana-Murci and his colleagues," said Dr Rolland-Yves Mauvernay, President and Founder of Debiopharm Group. "He has taken the study of host-pathogen interactions to a higher level, where the pathogen is now recognised as a key driver of genetic selection. His novel and original approach of studying infection biology may have direct implications in the development of future treatments against infectious diseases."

According to Professor Didier Trono, Dean of the Life Sciences Faculty at the EPFL, "Following the momentum created by the sequencing of the human genome and capitalising on new technologies of high throughput DNA analysis, the studies conducted by Dr Lluís Quintana-Murci teach us about the history of humanity and its struggles against pathogens. They suggest new therapeutic avenues for the control of infectious diseases."

"Receiving the Debiopharm Life Sciences Award encourages us to go further in our research on the correlation between genetic variation in human genes and our chances to develop an infectious disease. This information is critical to a more precise development of vaccines and therapeutics concerning these microbial sensors. Most importantly, this prize honours the field of human evolutionary genetics by recognising it as an indispensable complement to the clinical and epidemiological genetics of infection," added Dr Quintana-Murci.

About the Debiopharm Life Sciences Award

The Award was set up in 2006 to mentor and motivate young innovative European researchers in the field of life sciences. Criteria for applications include novelty and originality of the work, as well as its importance and significance in connection with targeted therapeutic fields.

About Debiopharm Group

Debiopharm Group is a Swiss-based global biopharmaceutical group of companies with a focus on the development of prescription drugs that target unmet medical needs. The group in-licenses promising biological and small molecule drug candidates. It develops its products for global registration and maximum commercial potential. Once registered, the products are out-licensed to pharmaceutical partners for sales and marketing.

Debiopharm independently funds the worldwide development of all of its products while providing expertise in pre-clinical and clinical trials, manufacturing, drug delivery and formulation, and regulatory affairs.

Founded in 1979 and headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland, Debiopharm has developed four products with global combined sales of \$2.6 billion in 2008.

For more information on Debiopharm Group, please visit: www.debiopharm.com

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