

Translational Research in Europe - Assessment and Treatment of Neuromuscular Diseases (TREAT-NMD)

Research networks

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The TREAT-NMD (Translational Research in Europe for the Assessment and Treatment of Neuromuscular Diseases) network of excellence is an FP6-funded project that aims to address the fragmentation across Europe that currently hinders translational research for new cutting-edge therapies in rare inherited neuromuscular disease. The network brings together academics, clinicians, and industry representatives from 11 European countries, in partnership with patient organisations, to deliver new treatments for patients with these devastating disorders. Currently, TREAT-NMD is the only disease-specific EU-funded Network of Excellence in rare disease and commenced in January 2007. Initially, muscular dystrophies and spinal muscular atrophy will be specifically targeted. There are a number of barriers and challenges facing the neuromuscular community and the aims of TREAT-NMD are to bring cutting edge therapies into the clinic by addressing the lack of standardised protocols for preclinical animal studies, molecular diagnoses and patient assessment and management. The TREAT-NMD objectives are to:

- 1) Integrate tools, methods and knowledge for adapted and efficient NMD treatment. This will include creating a Coordination Centre to oversee research, communication and management of the network. The Coordination Centre will be the hub for all the Centres of Excellence and associated technological platforms and will assist in the translation of new drugs into practice.
- 2) Accelerate and optimise research outcomes for NMD treatment. This will include toxicology and safety assessment for production of clinical grade materials for clinical trials. Developing standards of care and diagnosis and defining outcome measures for clinical assessment.
- 3) Ensure the spread of excellence both across Europe and globally, through implementing a dedicated communication platform to address training and education needs, and to promote the participation of Eastern European countries.

All the objectives for TREAT-NMD will be established within the 5-year duration of the network, and will be sustained through the Coordination Centre, which will be a permanent and self-sustaining structure for the European neuromuscular community.

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