

Press release

World Cancer Day:

Start-ups at the IZB develop innovative cancer drugs and diagnostic tools

The Innovation and Start-up Center in Martinsried near Munich is the first address for business start-ups in the life sciences sector

Martinsried, February 3, 2021 – Every year over 500,000 people in Germany develop cancer – and the trend is rising. Over four million people live with the disease. Around 50 start-ups carrying out research in the field of life sciences are located at the Innovation and Start-up Center for Biotechnology on the Martinsried campus. To mark World Cancer Day on February 4, 2021, the IZB is presenting five successful start-ups that develop cancer drugs or therapies, or manufacture diagnostic tools. CatalYM GmbH works on innovative immunotherapy approaches against various types of cancer. Eisbach Bio GmbH detects weak points in the molecular mechanisms of genetically defined tumor cells and develops transformative, targeted drugs. Adivo GmbH has set itself the goal of developing new therapeutic solutions for previously neglected diseases and will generate species-specific therapeutic antibodies for pets. Thermosome GmbH uses its technology platform to increase the efficacy of anti-cancer agents through more targeted delivery. And finally, Exosome Diagnostics is developing a liquid biopsy test for analyzing cancer diseases. We are proud of our top researchers who are developing the drugs of the future," said Dr. Peter Hanns Zobel, Managing Director of IZB.

CatalYm: Immunotherapy approaches against various types of cancer

CatalYm GmbH is an innovative biotech company that develops novel immunotherapy approaches against various types of cancer. CatalYm works on preclinical through to clinical development of therapeutic antibodies and new mechanisms of action for more effective tumor treatments in the future. The focus is particularly on approaches that are intended to work in combination with approved immune checkpoint blockers or those under development in order to increase the proportion of patients who respond to immunotherapies. The aim is to control the cancer much more effectively, or even cure it, thereby significantly extending the life expectancy of the patient. CatalYm is a spin-off from the University Women's Clinic in Würzburg. Dr. Manfred Rüdiger is the managing director of CatalYm GmbH.

Eisbach Bio: Development of targeted cancer drugs

Eisbach Bio was founded in January 2019 as an innovative spin-off from the Biomedical Center of the LMU. Eisbach tracks down weak points in the molecular mechanisms of genetically defined tumor cells and develops transformative, targeted drugs. Driven by the variety of genetic fingerprints in tumor cells and validated targets, we establish personalized drugs that correct epigenetic errors in tumors and enable new therapeutic approaches. Dr. Adrian Schomburg is the managing director of Eisbach Bio GmbH.

adivo: Development of anti-cancer drugs for animals

Pet ownership is continually increasing and nowadays people consider their cat or dog a member of the family. Since pets live longer, they develop similar diseases of old age and modern life-style as humans, but there is a gap in the availability of innovative and specific treatments for severe or chronic diseases in pets. adivo has set itself the goal of developing new therapeutic solutions for previously neglected diseases and will generate species-specific therapeutic antibodies for pets. The selection of the active ingredient molecules is based on a fully synthetic, species-specific antibody library. Adivo's technology platform enables the identification of antibodies with precisely defined properties and excellent development opportunities, as well as a low risk of immunogenicity. The main goal is to meet the medical needs of dogs, but the technology should be adapted to other animal species such as cats or horses at later stages. In addition to our own drug development, we are planning collaborations with pharmaceutical partners from the veterinary field.

Thermosome: Development of a targeting technology for the targeted delivery of anticancer drugs that act only directly on the tumor, thereby minimizing side effects and maximizing efficacy.

Thermosome is a biopharmaceutical company using its proprietary targeting platform for drug discovery and developing products with improved therapeutic windows. Using TSL Technology, drug-loaded nanocarriers can be produced that, after intravenous administration, release their contents locally by exposure to mild heat (40-42°C). This allows up to 15-fold higher local drug concentrations to be achieved. Local heating is achieved by clinically established medical devices using, for example, focused microwaves or ultrasound. Thermosome's technology is particularly suitable for the treatment of localized diseases such as locally advanced solid tumors. Based on the completed preclinical study, Thermosome's lead candidate will be clinically tested in an oncological indication in the future.

Exosome Diagnostics: Development of a liquid biopsy test for analyzing cancer diseases

Exosome Diagnostics GmbH develops and commercializes molecular diagnostic tests based on bio-fluids such as blood, urine and cerebrospinal fluid. The company also offers its proprietary technology as a service to biopharmaceutical companies to help them identify and validate biomarkers in exosomal RNA, cell-free DNA, and proteins – without the need for tissue samples. The ExoDxT Prostate "EPI" test, based on a simple urine sample, has been recommended in the American NCCN Guidelines for initial biopsy since 2019, and will also be available in Europe as an approved CE-IVD from the beginning of this year. Exosome Diagnostics runs two clinical laboratories, in Waltham (USA) and at the IZB/Martinsried (DE), and was acquired by the company Bio-Techne in 2018. Dr. Mikkel Noerholm is Head of European Operations at Exosome Diagnostics.

Background information on the Innovation and Start-up Center for Biotechnology (IZB) in Martinsried near Munich

The Fördergesellschaft IZB mbH, founded in 1995, is the operating company of the Innovation and Start-up Centers for Biotechnology in Planegg-Martinsried and Freising-Weihenstephan, which have developed into a leading biotechnology center. Over 50 biotech companies with over 700 employees are currently located on 26,000 m² in Planegg-Martinsried. Here, work is being carried out on developing drugs against the most serious diseases, such as cancer, Alzheimer's and various autoimmune diseases. An essential criterion for the success of the IZBs is the spatial proximity to top research on the Martinsried / Grosshadern campus. The new infrastructure features such as the Faculty Club G2B (Gateway to Biotech), the IZB Residence CAMPUS AT HOME, the Elhardt Chemistry College, the two kindergartens Bio Kids and Bio Kids², as well as the two restaurants SEVEN AND MORE and Café Freshmaker are location factors that are very much appreciated by company founders. Successful companies that have emerged from the IZB are, for example, Medigene AG, MorphoSys AG, Micromet GmbH (today Amgen AG), Octopharma GmbH, Corimmun (today Janssen-Cilag), Rigontec GmbH (today MSD), ibidi GmbH, Coriolis GmbH and Immunic Therapeutics. More information at www.izb-online.de

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