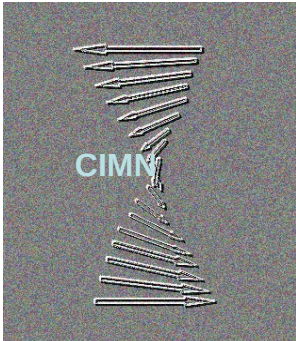




INTER-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTRE ON THE MOLECULAR BASIS OF NEURODEGENERATIVE DISEASES (CIMN)



Arranged Universities

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI FIRENZE
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO STATALE,
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI ROMA, TOR VERGATA
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI GENOVA,
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI BRESCIA

Administrative seat:

Università degli Studi di Firenze
DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE BIOCHIMICHE
Viale Morgagni 50, 50134 Firenze
Tel. 055.4598307 - web: www.cimn.it

Director: Prof. Massimo Stefani

Secretary: Prof. Niccolò Taddei

Scientific committee:

Angelo Poletti
Carla Jodice
Christopher M. Dobson
Fabrizio Chiti
Kenneth Fischbeck
Maria Grazia Spillantini
Marina Frontali
Massimo Stefani
Niccolò Taddei
P. H. St. George-Hyslop
Patrick Brundin
Sandro Sorbi

The establishment, in 2005, of the INTER-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTRE ON THE MOLECULAR BASIS OF NEURODEGENERATIVE DISEASES has been promoted by researchers from five Departments of three Universities to push the progress of the scientific knowledge in the field of degenerative diseases of the Central and Peripheral Nervous System. The most important aims of the Centre are to promote, to coordinate, to develop and to realize studies and researches concerning the structural and functional alterations, at a molecular level, underlying the pathogenetic mechanisms of neurodegenerative diseases. The Centre proposes itself as a structure of biomedical research with interdisciplinary character connected to important international research laboratories. The research activity of the operative Units of the Centre is strongly addressed to the use of advanced techniques of biochemical, biophysical, biomolecular, cellular and genetic type. In particular, the Centre will focus its activities on the following topics:

- Study of the biochemical and molecular alterations underlying neurodegenerative diseases, in order to find specific targets for therapeutic and diagnostic strategies.
- Research, study and characterization of genetic alterations associated to neurodegenerative diseases.
- Molecular characterization of the mechanisms of folding, misfolding and aggregation of proteins involved in neurodegenerative processes, with a particular attention for the forms characterized by deposition of aggregates of amyloid type.
- Study of the molecular mechanisms of the cytotoxicity of protein aggregates and of the relationships between the structure of the aggregates and their toxic effects on biological models.
- Research of molecules and chemico-physical conditions able to inhibit the aggregation process or to promote the aggregate dissolution, to interfere with the neurodegenerative process.
- Study of the influence of environmental, genetic, and aging factors on the cellular and molecular mechanisms preventing the onset of neurodegenerative processes.

To achieve these aims, the Centre:

- Promotes initiatives of interdisciplinary collaboration either at national and international level on the topics which characterize its scientific aims;
- Organizes initiatives aimed to the scientific comparison and to the improvement of relationships and exchanges between Italian and foreign researchers active in the scientific fields of the Centre
- Supports the exchange of informations and of instrumental resources between the arranged research Units, also in collaborations with other Institutes or University Departments or with other Centres of scientific research.

Besides the activities described above, purely scientific, the Centre intends to carry out an effective activity of divulgation addressed to the sanitary operators in the field and to the associations of patients affected by neurodegenerative diseases. This aim, with a prevalent social character, will be pursued through a series of initiatives such as:

1. the recurrent updating on the international news concerning the most recent progresses of the scientific knowledge of the topics of interest as well as the latest diagnostic and therapeutic findings by the web site;
2. the organization of meeting open to non-specialists for the information about the main news of the area in the scientific, diagnostic, therapeutic, and prevention field.

SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY OF THE GROUPS OF THE CENTRE

Research topics

- Molecular basis of protein folding, misfolding and aggregation
- Molecular and biochemical basis of the toxicity of amyloid aggregates
- Biochemical, genetic and clinical aspects of Alzheimer disease and other dementias
- Molecular basis of the amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
- Study of the relationships between iron metabolism and central nervous system diseases
- Molecular basis of the multiple sclerosis
- Genetic and molecular causes of neurodegenerative diseases by triplet expansion
- Kennedy disease (spinal and bulbar muscular atrophy).
- Spinocerebellar ataxias
- Huntington disease
- Neuronal Differentiation
- Molecules and mechanisms involved in the conversion from stem cell to neuron
- Development of strategies for neural progenitors expansion and differentiation
- Psychiatric diseases, rehabilitation and longevity

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