



Press Release

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MIND INSTITUTE AND NATIONAL CENTER FOR GENOME RESOURCES TO DECODE MYSTERY OF SCHIZOPHRENIA GENETICS

ALBUQUERQUE, NM, March 29, 2006 - The MIND (Mental Illness and Neuroscience Discovery) Institute and the National Center for Genome Resources (NCGR) announced today the establishment of a pioneering research partnership to identify the genetic basis of schizophrenia.

The Schizophrenia Genome Project (SGP) partnership will combine resources and expertise from these two leading research centers to identify schizophrenia predisposition and protection genes. The risk of developing schizophrenia is widely considered to be directly related to those genes.

Investigators at the MIND and NCGR will identify common schizophrenia genes by sequencing and analyzing the entire genetic code (3 billion base pairs of DNA) of affected individuals to identify all mutation candidates. Schizophrenia genes will be confirmed by comparing these candidate mutations in both affected and normal individuals.

“This groundbreaking project builds on years of work by MIND investigators who have carefully collected the important clinical and brain imaging data that allows for correlation with exciting new genetic capabilities,” said Dr. S. Charles Schulz, chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Minnesota and principal investigator of the MIND Clinical Imaging Consortium.

Never before has the entire human genome been sequenced in a disease, nor has such a comprehensive clinical and brain-imaging database been compiled of individuals with schizophrenia. The SGP brings together the multidisciplinary expertise of NCGR, with 12 years of experience in genome sequencing analysis, and MIND, with its advanced and precise brain imaging technologies. Understanding the genetics of schizophrenia will be a starting point for improved diagnosis and patient management, as well as novel therapeutics that target affected genes and pathways.

“The Schizophrenia Genome Project will use next generation genome sequencing and analysis technologies to greatly accelerate understanding of schizophrenia,” said Dr. Stephen Kingsmore, NCGR President. “We’re confident this potent partnership will yield critical information on the diagnosis and treatment of schizophrenia, and – possibly – the prevention of schizophrenia altogether.”

The MIND Institute is a non-profit collaborative partnership, headquartered in Albuquerque, NM, with six partner sites nationwide, that conducts basic neuroscience research, leading to a new understanding of the human brain, treatments and cures. www.themindinstitute.org

The National Center for Genome Resources, Santa Fe, NM, is a non-profit research institute dedicated to improving human health and nutrition through collaborative research at the intersection of bioscience, computing and mathematics. www.ncgr.org