
Press release - Symposium “FP7 Projects on BBB” €13M to Break Down Barriers

EURIPIDES, JUSTBRAIN and NEUROBID are three projects funded by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme. All three focus their research on the same topic: the Brain Blood Barrier (BBB). A symposium including all three EU FP7 projects entitled “FP7 Projects on BBB” was organised by EURIPIDES coordinator Prof Matthias Koepp of University College London (UK) on 7th February 2011 at Latimer Place, Chalfont. The meeting was attended by 81 scientists from 31 centres and research teams across Europe. The cumulative total of FP7 grants awarded by the EC to these three consortia is €13 M.

The BBB is the major obstacle to the treatment of many mental and neurological diseases like epilepsy, Alzheimer’s disease, multiple sclerosis, schizophrenia and many others, as it hampers the delivery of substances to the central nervous system (CNS) which may be important for diagnosis and therapy. As neurological diseases contribute to about 6% of the global burden of disease (WHO data), there is a pressing need to better understand the BBB and to develop new and more effective strategies for diagnosis and treatment.

EURIPIDES, led by Prof Matthias Koepp of UCL, focuses on resistance to drug treatment. The challenge in treating most diseases of the CNS is overcoming drug resistance due to poor delivery and/or retention of pharmaceuticals. The aim is to develop a molecular imaging tool to select drug resistant patients in whom BBB transporters may prevent drugs from reaching their pharmacological targets to exert a desirable effect.

The major goals of the NEUROBID consortium, led by Prof Olaf Dammann of Hannover Medical School (Germany) are to explore the BBB in the developing brain in order to improve understanding of neurological disorders of infancy and of adult disorders with developmental antecedents and to develop novel drug delivery strategies to the brain for large molecules.

The consortium of JUSTBRAIN, led by Prof Britta Engelhardt at the University of Bern (Switzerland), has accumulated knowledge on the structure and function of the BBB cell-cell junctions, identified endothelial signals controlling the expression of individual junction proteins and started to develop approaches, which may transiently open these junctions.

EURIPIDES coordinator, Prof Matthias Koepp says: “This symposium is an excellent example of how EU funding can result in joining forces, avoiding duplication and speeding up developments in large scale initiatives”.

This symposium gave BBB-experts from across Europe the opportunity to come together, share ideas, achievements, strengths of each consortium, and identify the potential for synergistic working. Utilising a wide range of skills and knowledge present within the three consortia, joint research proposals and projects with improved methodology and based on vigorous models will aim to better understand this important barrier system.

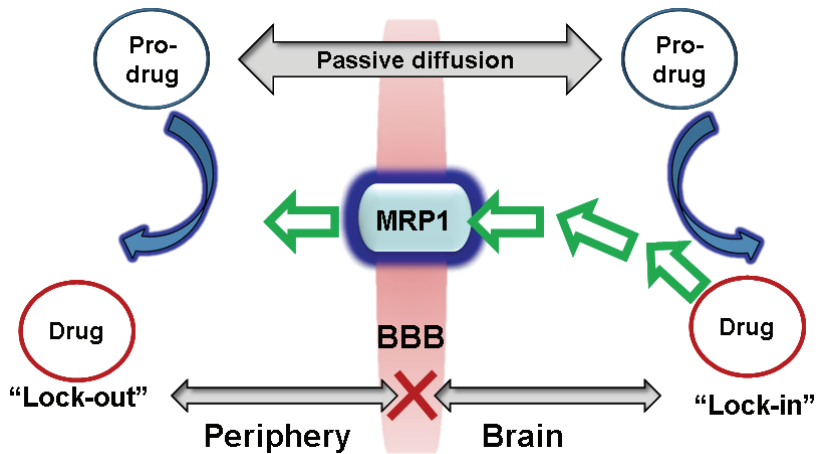
Links:

EURIPIDES: www.euripides-europe.com

JUSTBRAIN: www.justbrain-fp7.eu

NEUROBID: www.neurobid.eu

Visualisation of the Blood Brain Barrier:



Picture of the participants of the symposium:

