

PRESS RELEASE

Paris-Saclay, 17 September 2024

Launch of the Prometheus University Hospital Institute, the first global centre for sepsis research, education and healthcare

On 17 September 2024, Universit  Paris-Saclay, the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA), Assistance Publique - Hôpitaux de Paris (AP-HP), the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm) and their academic, non-profit and industrial partners, organised a morning event to launch the Prometheus University Hospital Institute (IHU - *Institut hospitalo-universitaire*). Prometheus was one of the 2023 laureates of the national IHU call for proposals, coordinated on behalf of the French government by the French National Research Agency (ANR). Awarded €40M as part of the France 2030 investment plan, Prometheus aims to reduce the number of deaths and sequelae caused by sepsis by half within the next ten years.

Camille Galap, President of Universit  Paris-Saclay, Nicolas Revel, Director General of AP-HP, Anne-Isabelle  tievre, Head of Fundamental Research at the CEA and Didier Samuel, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer at Inserm, opened the morning launch event on Tuesday 17 September. The launch was also attended by Sylvie Retailleau, Minister of Higher Education and Research. The Prometheus IHU is the world's first centre dedicated to the fight against sepsis, involving researchers, healthcare professionals, patients, institutions and private partners, within an ecosystem dedicated to preventive action, healthcare, research, education and technology transfer.

The stakes are high; while sepsis remains relatively unknown to the general public, it is the most serious complication of an infection. It is characterised by an uncontrolled inflammatory response resulting in the impairment of vital functions. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), sepsis affects 50 million people each year, 45% of whom are children under the age of five. It is responsible for one in four deaths worldwide and for mental and motor disabilities in one in two survivors. Despite decades of extensive research, the mechanisms by which the host response to pathogens is disrupted remain poorly understood, and no treatment has been found.

The creation of this IHU aims to improve the development of new diagnostic tests and drugs, to halve the health-related, social and economic burden of sepsis within the next ten years.

Mervyn Singer, Chairman of the IHU's independent international Scientific Advisory Board, alongside Jamila Hedjal, Chairwoman of France Sepsis Association and Marisol Touraine, Chairwoman of the IHU's Supervisory Board, all spoke of the IHU's mission during the event's introduction. *"This IHU will be a major force for scientific and medical innovation, serving the interests of public health and patients in France but also in the countries of the Global South. As president of the Supervisory Board, I will ensure that the IHU has the resources it needs to match its ambitions and guarantee its supervised autonomy,"* said Marisol Touraine.

Sylvie Retailleau, French Minister of Higher Education and Research, stated: *"With its 2030 health innovation investment plan worth €7.5 billion, France is providing itself with the necessary resources to remain one of the leading countries for health innovation. The twelve new IHU and four bioclusters*

funded by the plan encourage innovative public/private partnerships, which stimulate the exchange of ideas and the launch of collaborative projects with society and patients. Excellence in research is combined with excellence in care. The Prometheus IHU demonstrates the capacity of our institutions to produce the very best when we work together.”

During the launch event at the Raymond-Poincaré AP-HP Hospital in Garches, Djillali Annane, Professor at Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Head of the intensive care medicine department at the Raymond-Poincaré Hospital Université Paris-Saclay AP-HP group, and Head of the LARENES team at the Inflammation and Infection Laboratory (UVSQ/Univ. Paris-Saclay/Inserm), presented the institute’s scientific programme and its governance¹.

“I am proud of this university hospital institute for sepsis, which remains a major public health challenge around the world. For the past two years, the motivation of our healthcare professionals, researchers, academics and patients has continued to grow every day. The Prometheus IHU is singular for its multidisciplinary nature, it is a source of hope for patients and their families, and it is a major socio-economic partner. Its supervised autonomy will ensure that it is efficient both medically and socio-economically,” said Prof Djillali Annane.

The institute’s two deputy directors, Olivier Lambotte, Professor of Clinical Immunology at Université Paris-Saclay, and Roger Le Grand, Director of the Infectious diseases models for innovative therapies department (Idmit) at the CEA, respectively presented two programmes which will be critical in ensuring the institute’s success. Firstly, the education programme, which will play a vital role in training the medical and research experts of tomorrow, and secondly, the development programme, which will act as a vector for the creation of new businesses and jobs thanks to the IHU’s scientific and technological discoveries.

This global Comprehensive Sepsis Centre has already brought together members from more than 60 research teams in chemistry, physics, mathematics, engineering science, biology, medicine, humanities, social sciences and economics. The institute’s 275 researchers and 94 clinical doctors can count on leading industrial partners: Arkhn, Baxter, Biomérieux, Biothelis, Pfizer, Primadiag, Sphingoteck and Volition. The ambitious project also involves patients through the participation of patient associations in France (France Sepsis Association) and from around the world (European Sepsis Alliance, Global Sepsis Alliance and Sepsis Canada).

“The Prometheus IHU is aligned with World Sepsis Day and the launch of the Global Sepsis Agenda presented at the first European Summit for sepsis patients and their families held on 9 September at the Economic, Social and Environmental Council in Paris, and on 10 September at Bundestag in Berlin, under the patronage of WHO,” said Mariam Jashi, CEO of the Global Sepsis Alliance.

The launch event ended with presentations from representatives of the French National Research Agency on the administrative, financial and scientific aspects of the Prometheus IHU, referenced as ANR-23-IAHU-0004.

¹ Alongside its four founding members, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (UVSQ), the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), the National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE), Université Paris-Est Créteil Val-de-Marne (UPEC), Université Paris Sciences & Lettres (PSL), Université d’Evry, ENS Paris-Saclay, Université Sorbonne Paris Nord and Université Paris Cité are also strongly committed to ensuring that the Prometheus IHU is a success.

A threefold scientific ambition for precision medicine:

- A better understanding of the host-pathogen molecular and cellular interactions that lead to the development of an uncomplicated infection to sepsis, with the launch of a longitudinal cohort study of 10,000 patients over a ten-year period, unique worldwide, which will provide greater insights into long sepsis and its social and economic consequences.
- The validation and marketing of a rapid testing platform to individually identify the host's response to infection and therapeutic targets, and the creation of a sepsis-specific digital twin to accurately anticipate each individual's response to the various treatments.
- The development of new treatments, such as small innovative molecules, nanomedicines, biotherapies, vaccines and strategies modulating microbiota.



Launch event for the Prometheus IHU. From left to right: Roger le Grand, Deputy Director of the IHU; Olivier Lambotte, Deputy Director of the IHU; Marc Humbert, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Université Paris-Saclay; Djillali Annane, Director of the IHU; Anne-Isabelle Étienne, Head of Fundamental Research at the CEA; Marc Pallardy, Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy at Université Paris-Saclay; Marisol Touraine, Chairwoman of the IHU's Supervisory Board; Loïc Jossier, Dean of the Simone Veil – Health Faculty at UVSQ; Sylvie Retailleau, Minister of Higher Education and Research; Camille Galap, President of Université Paris-Saclay; Jamila Hedjal, Chairwoman of France Sepsis Association; Mervyn Singer, Chairman of the IHU's independent international Scientific Advisory Board; Laurence Parmentier, Regional Inserm Representative for southern Paris Île-de-France; Nicolas Revel, Director General of AP-HP; Pierre-Christophe Baguet, Mayor of Boulogne Billancourt; Jean Luc Dubois-Randé, President of Université Paris-Est Créteil; Yazdan Yazdanpanah, Director of ANRS MIE Emerging Infectious Diseases. - © Univ. Paris-Saclay / Christophe Peus

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