

Ten pharmaceutical giants join US research initiative

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Government researchers will collaborate with 10 large pharmaceutical companies on a \$230 million initiative to speed development of new medications for major diseases, the US National Institutes of Health announced Tuesday.

The five-year initiative targets Alzheimer's Disease, [type 2 diabetes](#), [rheumatoid arthritis](#) and lupus, and may be expanded to other ailments, the NIH said.

The goal is to pool resources among NIH and the companies, normally vigorous competitors, to enable analysis of large data sets to track disease progression and the effect of therapies.

Data and early-stage research will be shared and made publicly available, and companies are expected to compete on developing commercial drugs once research passes the preliminary phase.

"Currently, we are investing a great deal of money and time in avenues with high failure rates, while patients and their families wait," said NIH Director Francis Collins.

The challenge "is beyond the scope of any one of us and it's time to work together in new ways to increase our collective odds of success," Collins said.

Taking a drug from early discovery through government approval takes

over a decade and 95 percent fail the test. That takes the cost of one success to more than \$1 billion, NIH said.

The initiative will be overseen by steering committees led by representatives of NIG and the Food and Drug Administration, the private sector companies and patient advocacy groups.

"Our most critical health challenges require new, innovative ways to develop medicines and vaccines," said Rupert Vessey, a [senior vice president](#) at Merck, which is joining the initiative.

"Collaborations such as this, that exchange data, share insights and generate knowledge will be important to unravelling the mysteries of the diseases that cause suffering for individuals and a burden to our society."

The other participating companies are: AbbVie, Biogen, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Eli Lilly, GSK, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, Sanofi and Takeda.

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