

Industry and academia collaborating to innovate for patients ^[1]

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- The Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research (NIBR) and the Friedrich Miescher Institute for Biomedical Research (FMI) have formed a valuable partnership.
- The FMI and NIBR are currently engaged in more than 50 collaborative research projects that aim to translate research findings into biomedical applications.
- Through this collaboration, we are exchanging different but complementary perspectives and skillsets that are helping drive success.

We don't just develop medicines at Novartis – we also form partnerships with individuals and organizations that enhance our ability to help people live longer and healthier lives. Our collaboration with the [Friedrich Miescher Institute for Biomedical Research \(FMI\)](#) ^[2], a leader in researching the mechanisms of cancer, neurobiology and epigenetics, is a great example of one such partnership.

The FMI and the [Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research \(NIBR\)](#) ^[3] are currently engaged in more than 50 collaborative research projects, with an aim to translate research findings into biomedical applications. Other ongoing joint activities include lecture series and postdoctoral research positions.

Pushing the boundaries of biomedical science

Researchers at both the FMI and NIBR are committed to working together to share their knowledge and push the boundaries of biomedical science. FMI senior staff scientist Mohamed (“Momo”) Bentires-Alj and NIBR Oncology senior investigator Thomas Radimerski have collaborated on several projects over the years.

“It was through shared curiosity and dialogue that things started taking shape,” says Radimerski.

In a recent collaboration, they examined how to tackle different aspects of aggressive metastatic breast cancer by combining different drugs. Their goal: to learn how and why cancers become resistant to certain commonly used drugs that inhibit an important signaling pathway, which is strongly activated in about 70% of breast cancers.

“This was a synergistic collaboration in which the whole was greater than the sum of its parts,” says Bentires-Alj. “Thomas has a great expertise in drug discovery. And moreover, he has a very good feeling for important questions in cancer biology.”

Bentires-Alj and Radimerski discovered a drug combination that not only circumvented therapy resistance, but also decreased the spread of cancer to new areas of the body and improved overall survival in preclinical models. Findings such as these are essential to Novartis because they contribute to our understanding of medications already approved or being tested in clinical trials.

How collaboration led to unexpected success

When Bentires-Alj and Radimerski initially discussed the science they wanted to explore together, they had no idea what impact the project would eventually have.

“I strongly believe that collaboration between academia and industry is critical to advance the science,” says Radimerski. “No matter how clever you are, you can never have all the good ideas yourself.”

Both agree they would not have been able to make these scientific discoveries working alone. This collaboration gave them the different but complementary perspectives and skillsets necessary to successfully push forward a project of this scale and deliver results.

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