



PRESS RELEASE

Launch of the Vascular Brain Health Institute

Bordeaux, July 11, 2024

Press Contacts:

Elena Milesi
Communication
VBHI
elena.milesi@vbhi-institute.org
T +33 (0)547 304 225
<https://vbhi-institute.org/>

Gaëlle Héron
Communication department
University of Bordeaux
gaelle.heron@u-bordeaux.fr
T +33 (0)540 003 486
M +33 (0)615 054 336

Around a hundred people attended the official launch of the VBHI Institute at 2pm on Thursday 11 July 2024 at the Centre Broca Nouvelle-Aquitaine in Bordeaux.

Professor Stéphanie Debette, Director of the VBHI, and Professor Christine Clerici, Chair of the VBHI Management Board, opened the event in the presence of representatives of the institute's founding institutions.

The representatives of the institute's founding institutions each gave a short speech, expressing their support for the VBHI: Dean Lewis, President of the University of Bordeaux, Michel Dubarry, President of the Bordeaux University Foundation, Raphaël Yven, General Secretary of the University Hospital, Nicolas Roussel, Director of the Inria Centre at the University of Bordeaux, Richard Salives, Inserm Regional Delegate for Nouvelle-Aquitaine, and Alain Rousset, President of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region.

An institute at the service of the population

Prof. S. Debette presented the VBHI, whose mission is to carry out transformative research that will improve the prevention of strokes and dementia and provide better care for the millions of people affected today in France and around the world.

Innovation at the heart of the institute

Two round tables were held:

- Biomedical and technological innovation as seen by VBHI

The round table brought together speakers with a wide range of scientific, medical and technological expertise (neurology, public health, neurosciences, chemistry, physiology, imaging, artificial intelligence, etc.), illustrating the multidisciplinary nature of the Institute. Everyone was able to explain and illustrate, through concrete examples, the contribution that this new institute, entirely dedicated to cerebrovascular health, will make to the development of research geared towards the objective of innovating at the population level and right up to the patient's bedside (translational research). These include the objective of discovering new drugs by repositioning existing therapeutic molecules and generating new innovative therapeutic compounds, approaches to prevention and personalised ("precision") medicine, and the development of new medical imaging technologies that are less costly, less energy-intensive and more mobile

(low-field MRI), enabling early diagnosis of small cerebral vessel disease to be democratised and treatment to be optimised.

- Innovation in prevention and care as seen by VBHI

The round table brought together speakers with complementary expertise (doctors, representatives of patient associations, researchers, etc.), illustrating the Institute's integrated approach to tackling together the challenges of better prevention and management of cerebrovascular disease. Based in particular on the testimony of the association "AVC tous concernés" ("Stroke, all concerned"), the speakers highlighted the need to develop prevention approaches so that they are implemented earlier and more effectively, so that they affect as many people as possible, with the aim of reducing inequalities in access in France and around the world, while at the same time being more personalised, taking into account the diversity of biological profiles of the diseases and the specific characteristics, particularly genetic, of each individual. Involving patients in research was also mentioned as a factor for success, particularly through concrete actions such as 'living labs' in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region. The importance of close partnerships with innovative international institutions, including in developing countries (in basic, clinical and public health research), was also emphasised.

The event closed with a welcome cocktail reception, providing an opportunity for the audience to exchange views with the various speakers.

About the VBHI

The VBHI is a university hospital institute dedicated to cerebrovascular health based in Bordeaux. It is developing a new paradigm integrating population health and therapeutic innovation to combat the most common neurological diseases, strokes and dementia, and to promote good brain ageing. Housed within the Fondation Bordeaux Université, its founders are the University of Bordeaux, Bordeaux University Hospital, Inserm, Inria and the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region.

The VBHI Institute has received government funding under the France 2030 programme, managed by the French National Research Agency (ANR-23-IAHU-0001).

About the University of Bordeaux

The University of Bordeaux is a multi-disciplinary, international research university with a history spanning almost six centuries. With almost 54,000 students and 6,000 staff, including nearly 3,200 lecturers and researchers, it is a major player in the region and one of France's leading universities, recognised for the excellence of its research, the quality of its degrees and its capacity for innovation.

With the "Initiative of Excellence" label, it contributes to major scientific advances with its academic and socio-economic partners, by combining research and training. It ensures that these advances are disseminated to the general public and facilitates their technological and industrial transfer, in line with its humanist values and its commitment to environmental and societal change.

About the Bordeaux University Hospital

As the number one employer in Aquitaine, with 15,000 employees - including 1,600 doctors - and more than 3,000 beds and places, the Bordeaux University Hospital is both the local public health establishment for the entire population of Bordeaux Metropole and the centre of referral and expertise for all the people of the Gironde and, more broadly, the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region. A benchmark institution with a threefold mission: care, teaching and research, the Bordeaux University Hospital has a large number of centres of excellence,

both in terms of care and teaching and research, located within three hospital groups: Pellegrin, Saint-André and the South (Haut-Lévêque - Xavier Arnozan).

About Inserm

Founded in 1964, Inserm is a public scientific and technological institute which operates under the joint authority of the French Ministries of Health and Research. The institute is dedicated to biomedical research and human health, and is involved in the entire range of activities from the laboratory to the patient's bedside. It also partners with the most prestigious research institutions in the world that are committed to scientific challenges and progress in these fields. In addition to its mission as a research operator, Inserm has been entrusted with the role of national programming for the research-health block, and coordinates the agency for health research programmes in conjunction with the various stakeholders.

About Inria

Inria is France's national institute for research in digital science and technology. World-leading research, technological innovation and entrepreneurial risk-taking are in its DNA. Within 215 project teams, the majority of which are joint undertakings with leading research universities, more than 3,900 researchers and engineers explore new avenues, often in conjunction with industrial partners, in response to ambitious challenges. As an institute of technology, Inria supports diversity in innovation, from opensource software publishing to deep tech startups.

About the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region

The largest region in France, the Nouvelle-Aquitaine is a rich, diverse and attractive territory. The Regional Council has major responsibilities in the day-to-day lives of its citizens. It does this through 4 major areas: the economy and employment (support for innovation, agriculture, digital technology, industry, employment, tourism, etc.), youth (policies in favour of apprenticeships, training for young people, secondary schools, school transport, etc.), regional development (territorial policy, responsibility for transport, support for health, sport and culture, etc.) and the energy and ecological transition (preservation of biodiversity, renewable energies, zero waste, etc.). Working on all of these 'determinants' of people's health, including the healthcare system and various policies outside the field of health, the Region is thus a major player in public health, with a single health approach, i.e. the interaction between human health, animal health and ecosystems.

About the Fondation Bordeaux Université

The Fondation Bordeaux Université is the joint patronage operator for the Bordeaux university and hospital campus. It raises funds for two founding institutions (University of Bordeaux and Bordeaux University Hospital) and 4 partner institutions (Bordeaux INP, Bordeaux Sciences Agro, Sciences Po Bordeaux, Bordeaux Montaigne University), in association with major research bodies (CNRS, INRAE, Inserm, etc.) as part of joint projects. An original interface, it brings together companies, associations, institutions and individuals alongside universities and hospitals to serve the general interest, through the development of new forms of collaboration, wholly or partly funded by donations.

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