Press release

Aqemia receives support and funding from Sanofi to apply its disruptive technology against COVID-19

Paris (France), December 10th, 2020 - Aqemia, a deeptech startup that leverages artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum-inspired physics for drug discovery, announced today an agreement with the pharmaceutical company Sanofi to contribute to the discovery of effective treatments for COVID-19.

Aqemia will operate with Sanofi's support to advance the research it has been conducting since the beginning of the health crisis, in particular to design and evaluate new innovative molecules against coronavirus.

As part of this agreement, Aqemia will apply its generative AI combined with its disruptive proprietary algorithms for affinity calculation between therapeutic targets and drug candidates. Aqemia will thus rely on the performance of its quantum-inspired algorithms - as accurate as experiments and 10,000x faster than others on the market - to identify active molecules on SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus main protease, a key protein of COVID-19.

Aqemia is a spin-off startup from the École normale supérieure – PSL, specialized in drug discovery. Aqemia invents innovative molecules and maximizes their chance at success in pharmaceutical research, using machine learning and unique algorithms inspired by quantum mechanics.

"We are pleased by this agreement with Sanofi, a global leader in pharmaceutical R&D invested in the race for the vaccine against COVID-19, and in parallel supporting innovative initiatives for the research of active molecules that target coronavirus. Early on the health crisis, Aqemia has contributed to the research against COVID-19 with its unique algorithms, and Sanofi gives us the opportunity to pursue leads of potential treatments." declared Maximilien Levesque, CEO and co-founder at Aqemia.

Olivier Bogillot, President of Sanofi France, mentions: *"This agreement is part of Sanofi's ongoing efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic on multiple fronts, which remains an urgent public health need around the world. In particular, it demonstrates our willingness to support innovative and promising French startups that contribute to the national research effort to tackle SARS-CoV-2".*

About Aqemia
Aqemia is a spin-off startup from the École normale supérieure – PSL, specialized in drug discovery. By use of machine learning and unique algorithms derived from quantum mechanics, Aqemia invents innovative molecules and maximizes their chance at success in pharmaceutical research.

Aqemia's generative AI learns to invent relevant molecules as a result of its algorithms based on theoretical physics which predict the affinity between generated molecules and the therapeutic target responsible for a particular pathology. Aqemia's strength lies in these affinity calculations which combine both speed - 10,000 times faster than competitors - as well as an accuracy comparable to that of wet lab experiments. This method has been developed over the course of eight years at the École normale supérieure – PSL, and has been the subject of more than 40 scientific publications. Aqemia's team is composed of passionate individuals at the crossroads of theoretical physics, medical chemistry and artificial intelligence.

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About Sanofi
Sanofi is dedicated to supporting people through their health challenges. We are a global biopharmaceutical company focused on human health. We prevent illness with vaccines, provide innovative treatments to fight pain and ease suffering. We stand by the few who suffer from rare diseases and the millions with long-term chronic conditions.

With more than 100,000 people in 100 countries, Sanofi is transforming scientific innovation into healthcare solutions around the globe.

Sanofi, Empowering Life

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