**IMPROvED outlook for pre-eclampsia due to €6M EU award**

A consortium led by University College Cork (UCC) has secured €6 million euro in FP7-health framework research funding to combat pre-eclampsia, a life-threatening pregnancy complication.

The condition, whereby high blood pressure arises in the second half of pregnancy, accounts for as much as 24% of maternal deaths in Europe each year and over 500,000 infant deaths annually across the globe. This award by the European Union will bring the likelihood of a readily-available predictive test for pre-eclampsia closer to fruition, a development that would revolutionise prenatal care. The IMPROvED (IMproved PRegnancy Outcomes by Early Detection) project is coordinated by Professor Louise Kenny of UCC, who is also a principle investigator, and driven by two companies, Metabolomic Diagnostics Ltd of Ireland, and Pronota NV of Belgium. Both companies are industry leaders in the discovery and development of novel blood-borne biomarkers for disease prediction.

The four-year IMPROvED project will establish a multicentre clinical study to assess and refine two innovative prototype screening tests for this common late pregnancy complication. One of the two tests was developed at UCC and funded by the Health Research Board and Science Foundation Ireland.

Professor Kenny comments: “Pre-eclampsia affects almost one in 20 first time mothers and globally causes approximately 70,000 maternal deaths each year. We were therefore extremely pleased to see that researchers from different fields, centres and countries were enthusiastic about the IMPROvED project. Our ultimate goal is to develop a robust predictive test for pre-eclampsia and to improve the outcome of pregnancy for both mothers and their babies.”

Katleen Verleysen, CEO of Pronota says: “Currently no clinically useful screening test exists for pre-eclampsia; consequently clinicians are unable to offer targeted surveillance or emerging preventative strategies. We are excited to be part of the consortium. The IMPROvED clinical trial will allow Pronota to progress its proteomics based risk stratification test.”

The IMPROvED project will establish a high quality pregnancy biobank with blood samples collected from 5,000 first-time pregnant women recruited from at least five countries including Ireland, the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands. All recruitment centres involved (UCC, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Klinikum der Universitaet zu Koeln, The University of Liverpool, Karolinska Institute, University of Keele) are major obstetric centres with a proven track record in the research and management of pre-eclampsia. The scientific value of the biobank will be enhanced by the collection and storage of comprehensive clinical data along with the samples (Medscinet AB, Sweden).

Charles Garvey, CEO of Metabolomics Diagnostics added “Metabolomic Diagnostics, is delighted to be involved in this innovative consortium: “We believe that an early pregnancy-screening test can make a major contribution to maternal safety and this project, once completed, will help accelerate its adoption.”

Prof Phil Baker (Keele University), co-principal investigator, added: “An effective screening test will allow antenatal care to be tailored to an individual woman’s risk, such that at risk women receive the best possible care. The approval of IMPROvED is a strong endorsement of European researchers and recognises the importance of enhancing maternal and fetal health.”

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## Notes to Editors

### About pre-eclampsia

Pre-eclampsia is a complex pregnancy complication whereby high blood pressure arises in the second half of pregnancy. The condition is associated globally with 70,000-80,000 maternal and over 500,000 infant deaths annually. For the mother it can lead to acute problems in the liver, kidneys, brain and the clotting system, and pre-eclampsia is the most important cause of maternal death in Europe - accounting for 17-24% of all maternal deaths. Every year, an estimated €31 billion is spent in the developed world on direct healthcare costs to provide antenatal care for nulliparous women and treatment for pre-eclampsia; of this, an estimated €9 billion is spent in Europe. An effective screening test would facilitate stratification and targeting of limited resources and there is therefore a compelling health economic argument for an effective, early, pre-eclampsia prediction test.

### About the consortium

The consortium is made up of specialists from University of Cork, Ireland; Accelopment AG, Switzerland; Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands; Karolinska Institute, Sweden; University of Keele, UK; Medscinet AB, Sweden; Metabolomic Diagnotics Ltd, Ireland; Pronota, Belgium; Region Hovedstaden, Denmark; University of Groningen, The Netherlands; Klinikum der Universitaet zu Koeln, Germany and the University of Liverpool, UK.

### About Pronota

www.pronota.com

Pronota NV is developing and commercialising first-in-class diagnostics for early detection of life-threatening conditions and unmet medical needs including pre-eclampsia, ovarian cancer and sepsis. Our non-invasive, validated, diagnostics are proprietary and focused on improving quality of care for patients. Backed by a solid base of investors including GIMV, LSP, KBC Private Equity and JJDC, and a wide network of renowned key opinion leaders, Pronota is committed to making a difference in diagnosis and personalized healthcare.

### About Metabolomic Diagnostics

www.metabolomicdiagnostics.com

Metabolomic Diagnostics Ltd. is an innovative medical diagnostics company involved in the development of a breakthrough technology to provide an early pregnancy screening test for pre-eclampsia. This technology has the potential to revolutionise prenatal care globally, significantly improving outcomes and dramatically reducing overall healthcare costs.