

Company Epistem Plc
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Headline EPISTEM RECEIVES A PRESTIGIOUS FP7 GRANT AWARD FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POINT OF CARE HEPATITIS C ASSAYS
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("Epistem" or "the Company")

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MANCHESTER, UNITED KINGDOM - Epistem plc (LSE:EHP), the UK biotechnology and personalised medicine company, is pleased to announce that it has been awarded funding of €1.5 million over a three year period by the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme as part of a €6.0 million consortium project (Grant n° 601851) for the development of Point of Care Hepatitis C assays. The PoC-HCV consortium additionally consists of the coordinator Inserm (Institut Pasteur) (France), Inserm Transfert (France), Qlucore (Sweden) and Biosurfit (Portugal).

The primary objective of the PoC-HCV consortium is to provide PoC diagnostic and predictive tests that enable tangible improvements in the health and quality of life of chronic Hepatitis C patients, while simultaneously helping to manage the rising cost of medical treatment. It is an approach that capitalises on the consortiums combined expertise spanning leading edge miniaturised molecular testing, lab-on-a-chip systems and treatment algorithm design. These enabling technologies will permit the development and delivery of the first integrated genetic and protein biomarker tests, applied here to Hepatitis C disease for: (i) making the decision to treat; (ii) selection of therapy; (iii) response-guided monitoring; and (iv) clinical research practices.

Epistem will develop a number of tests on Genedrive[®] our hand-held CE-IVD marked PCR platform that provides rapid genotype tests results. The assays which Epistem will develop include tests to detect and genotype the HCV virus, ascertain the IL-28b genotype of HepC infected patients to aid in the selection of patients who will respond to treatment with pegylated-interferon / ribavirin therapy and develop HepC viral load tests to monitor patient treatments.

Commenting on the successful Grant Application, Matthew Walls, CEO said "This support from the European Union will enable us to accelerate the development of a new range of affordable diagnostic and predictive tests that that will assist in the rapid and appropriate treatment of patients suffering with Hepatitis C in developed and under-developed countries. It also enables us to work together with internationally recognised leaders in HepC research and other leading SME's to develop tests that are highly sensitive and can be used in Point of Care settings."

