Funding Translational Research in Academia

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Over the past decade we have seen significant and fundamental advances in basic science. These advances are accompanied by high public expectations to effectively translate this knowledge into novel therapies for treatment of disease. For most diseases there are still significant unmet medical needs that lead to life-long health and economic burdens. As our understanding of the mechanisms of disease advance and new technologies are developed, opportunities emerge that given the right amount of attention could lead to new therapeutic approaches. However, as suggested by the dearth of novel therapeutics serious roadblocks to progress remain.

While there are many paths from basic scientific discoveries to new therapeutics, the generation of small molecule therapeutics represents one of the most established. In 2005, The Scripps Research Institute established the Translational Research Institute (TRI) to help foster collaborative translational research. The TRI focuses on a wide range of therapeutic areas and integrates medicinal chemistry, pharmacology, assay development, structural biology and high-throughput screening. Collectively the TRI helps facilitate the translation of basic research findings made throughout the Academic Institute. The National Screening Center (MPLCN) at The Scripps Research Institute is part of the TRI and it has developed several approaches to support development of chemical probes that have the potential to bridge some of the gaps towards translation. This presentation will focus on a few examples of translational research programs at TSRI. In addition, the current and ever changing funding model will be presented.