Pfizer Logo

Akili Interactive Labs Announces Partnership with Pfizer to Test Video Game in People at Risk of Alzheimer's Disease

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Akili Interactive Labs Inc. ("Akili") announced today that it has entered into an agreement with Pfizer Inc. to test the ability of Akili's mobile video game platform ("Project EVO") to detect cognitive differences in healthy elderly people at risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. To Akili's knowledge this is the first time that a large pharmaceutical company will test the use of a mobile video game as a clinical tool to determine early signs of neurodegenerative disease pathology.

Under the agreement, Pfizer will conduct a clinical trial that will evaluate healthy elderly subjects with and without the presence of amyloid in their brains, as determined by Positron Emission Tomography (PET) imaging. Approximately 100 individuals are expected to be enrolled with their cognitive abilities assessed both at baseline, and over the course of one month of game play. The goal of the trial is to investigate the Akili game as a biomarker or clinical endpoint for potential use in future Alzheimer's trials.

The Akili video game platform is designed to quantify and improve the ability of individuals to deal with cognitive interference (distractions and interruptions), which impacts their ability to pay attention, plan and make decisions. Such deficits are common symptoms of many degenerative diseases like Alzheimer's, as well as psychiatric conditions such as ADHD, autism and depression. The underlying Akili platform technology originated from the laboratory of Adam Gazzaley, M.D., Ph.D. at the University of California, San Francisco and was the cover story of the journal Nature in September 2013. Dr. Gazzaley is a co-founder and Chief Science Advisor to Akili.

"It's great to have Pfizer as a partner in an area where there is a clear need for novel approaches. Our collaboration with Pfizer is an example of Akili's strategy of applying rigorous science and testing through clinical trials to develop an entirely new class of medical products," said Eric Elenko, Akili's Co-founder and Chief Business Officer.

"This partnership is another example of Pfizer's commitment to embracing innovative technologies that have the potential to further research into neuroscience diseases," said Michael Ehlers, Senior Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer of the Neuroscience Research Unit at Pfizer. "A tool that enables cognitive monitoring for the selection and assessment of clinical trial patients has the potential to be an important advance in Alzheimer's research and beyond."

In the last year, Akili has garnered approximately seven million dollars in cash and non-dilutive funding equivalents, including this Pfizer collaboration and a previously undisclosed investment from and collaboration with Shire Pharmaceuticals (Nasdaq: SHPG). Akili is testing Project: EVO in several other medical conditions where executive function is impaired including ADHD, depression and autism.

About Akili Interactive Labs

Akili is combining cutting edge neuroscience and top-tier gaming to produce first-in class therapeutic and monitoring tools that have the look and feel of a video game. With a product that is both engaging and validated through rigorous science, the company is seeking to produce highly effective healthcare products. The company was founded by PureTech (www.PureTechHealth.com) and Enlight (http://www.enlightbio.com) together with leading neuroscientists and top tier game designers. For more information see www.AkiliInteractive.com.

About Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, a general term for memory loss and other intellectual abilities serious enough to interfere with daily life. Nearly 5 million Americans are currently living with the disease. Alzheimer's is the 6th leading cause of death in the United States, and was estimated to cost the country's medical system $203 billion dollars last year alone. There are currently limited approaches to detect Alzheimer's disease in individuals before major symptoms display.

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