

Qatar Foundation names new Executive Director of Qatar Biomedical Research Institute

5 March 2014 (Doha, Qatar) - Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development announced today that Dr Hilal Lashuel, a prominent scientist in life sciences and associate professor at the Brain Mind Institute of the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) School of Life Sciences, has been appointed Executive Director of Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI). Dr Lashuel will assume his new position on April 1, 2014, and will contribute to the advancement of translational biomedical research and the development of innovative personalised medicine in Qatar.

Mr Faisal Alsuwaidi, President of Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D), welcomed Dr Lashuel and highlighted the wealth of experience that he will bring to Qatar Foundation Research and Development.

“Building on his past experiences and previous activities with Qatar Foundation, we are pleased to have Dr Lashuel in the Executive Director role to guide QBRI in support of our vision of becoming a leading centre for research and development excellence and innovation,” said Mr Alsuwaidi.

Dr Lashuel is internationally recognised for his work in the molecular basis of neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s disease and related disorders. His research has contributed significantly to the identification of novel disease mechanisms and therapeutic targets for the treatment of these conditions. His scientific contributions include more than 100 publications in major peer reviewed journals including Nature journals, Cell, PNAS and Angewandte Chemie, as well as patents on novel strategies for preventing protein aggregation.

He has received several awards and notable acknowledgements, including Human Science Frontiers young investigator award and the European Research Council (ERC) starting independent researcher award. In 2009, he was named by *L'Hebdo* magazine among the '100 outstanding personalities' in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. In March 2012, Dr Lashuel was designated by the World Economic Forum as one of 2012 Young Global Leaders (YGLs).

Commenting on Dr Lashuel's appointment, Dr Thomas Zacharia, Executive Vice President of QF R&D, said, "Dr. Lashuel will be a tremendous addition to the Qatar Biomedical Research Institute. The ability to attract a scientist of such international distinction is the latest evidence that we are building the research capabilities in Qatar to become a global hub for translational medicine."

Dr Lashuel expressed his enthusiasm to take up the exciting and challenging position. "I am truly honoured and humbled by the trust and confidence Qatar Foundation have invested in me, and for giving me this unique opportunity to lead QBRI and contribute to achieving the objectives of the Qatar National Research Strategy and Qatar National Vision 2030," he said. "While there are challenges that lie ahead, I also see great opportunities to make transformative changes that will impact education, research, and healthcare in Qatar and the region."

Dr Lashuel has had several previous engagements in Qatar including coordinator of the biomedical group and active member of Arab Expatriate Scientists - an initiative launched by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser - in 2006, and serving as consultant and advisor to Qatar Foundation and the Sidra Medical & Research Center.

His contribution to promoting higher education and research in the Middle East is exemplified by his roles as co-founder and Secretary General of the Society for the Advancement of Science

and Technology in the Arab World (SASTA), co-founder and co-director of the American Association of Yemeni Scientists and Professionals, and a founding member of the IBRO-MENA (International Brain Research Organization) sub-region chapter, which aims to promote neuroscience research in the MENA region. He serves as research advisor to several organisations and universities in the region.

Dr Lashuel has spent almost nine years at EPFL in France, where he made significant and notable impact. EPFL has a strong reputation in biomedicine and neuroscience and coordinates some of the most important international research programmes in the field, such as the Human Brain Project. The institute promotes innovative ways for studying the brain and its diseases, and Dr Lashuel is among its most prominent scientists.

“We are proud and honored to have such a promising researcher join Qatar Biomedical Research Institute, and we are certain that his extraordinary vision will contribute to making Qatar a central hub in the increasingly important field of biomedical and brain research,” said Patrick Aebischer, President of EPFL.

Dr Lashuel received his BSc degree in Chemistry from the City University of New York in 1994 and completed his doctoral studies in biological chemistry at Texas A&M University and the Scripps Research Institute in 2000. The following year he moved to Harvard Medical School and the Brigham and Women's Hospital as a research fellow and was later promoted to Instructor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School. In 2005, Dr Lashuel moved to Switzerland to join the Brain Mind Institute at EPFL, where his research resulted in the identification of potential therapeutic targets and new hypotheses concerning the mechanisms of pathogenesis in Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and related disorders.

In 2012-2013, Dr. Lashuel was a visiting associate professor at the Department of Neurology and Neurological Sciences at Stanford University School of Medicine. He has chaired and co-organised several international conferences and served as an academic editor for *PLOS ONE*, and is currently an associate editor for 'Frontiers in Molecular Neuroscience', a member of the advisory board of ChemBioChem, and an *ad hoc* reviewer for several international journals and funding agencies. His research is funded by various international agencies and foundations, and is supported by strong collaborations with major pharmaceutical and biotech companies.

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About Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D)

Leading Qatar's vision to become an international center for research and development excellence and innovation, QF R&D is home to Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), a world-class hub for technology innovation and commercialization, as well as the Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), a globally renowned scientific research funding organization, and prominent research institutes operating at the frontiers of science, including Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI), Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) and Qatar Energy and Environment Research Institute (QEERI).