

# Vall d'Hebron Research Institute (VHRI) collaborates with Grifols to create a center of excellence for research into alpha 1-antitrypsin deficiency

- **The aim of the project is to improve our understanding of patients with alpha-1-antitrypsin deficiency**

**Barcelona, December 23, 2013:** The Vall d'Hebron Research Institute (VHRI) has signed an agreement with Grifols with the aim of promoting a center of excellence for research and education for alpha-1-antitrypsin deficiency (AATD). Grifols is supporting this initiative as part of its commitment to working in partnership with public bodies to help improve people's health and to support those suffering from rare and often under-diagnosed diseases.

AATD is a rare, hereditary, genetic disorder that can lead to the development of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. It is the most common potentially fatal congenital disease in adults, but because it is a rare condition it is not well understood and is generally only detected when at an advanced stage.

The VHRI is a reference center for AATD research. However, because this is a rare disease, health professionals need to be able to pool all the cases identified in order to promote understanding of this condition and open up new opportunities for research into the disease's mechanisms and treatment pathways.

This agreement is the first step towards the creation of a new center of excellence for research into AATD, which will initially draw on the work of five researchers. Dr. Marc Miravittles, a researcher with the pulmonology group at the VHRI, who will lead this new team of professionals, explains that the program will, **"investigate the description of possible variants of AAT in each case, including the use of patient data to identify previously undescribed variants"**.

For Enric Thomas, Managing Director of Grifols Movaco, the agreement, **"is an important example of public-private cooperation to benefit patients, and represents Grifols' commitment to understanding this disease and improving its diagnosis"**.

The new center will also coordinate a patient database designed to improve understanding of the natural history of the disease, to support the development of rapid diagnostic techniques, and to make laboratory diagnosis available to patients throughout Catalonia.

## **VHRI**

Vall d'Hebron Research Institute (VHRI) is a public sector institution that promotes and develops research and innovation in the health sciences as part of the Vall d'Hebron University Hospital. Its twin aims are to identify solutions to health problems, and to contribute to scientific, educational, social and economic development within its field. With 63 research groups in the main areas of medicine, the VHRI aims to make a major contribution to shaping and consolidating biomedical research activity in southern Europe, encompassing both basic and translational or applied research, including clinical research. [www.vhir.org](http://www.vhir.org)

## **Grifols**

Grifols is a global company with over 70 years of experience of contributing to improving people's health and well-being by promoting plasma protein therapies, clinical diagnosis technology and pharmaceutical preparations for hospital use.

It is currently one of the leading producers of plasma-based biological medicines, with a presence in over 100 countries, and is the world's leading supplier of plasma, with 150 donor centers in the United States. Grifols is committed to improving access to plasma protein therapies, and an essential part of this is the continuous improvement and expansion of its manufacturing facilities and the exploration of new therapeutic opportunities for plasma proteins. The company, which has its head office in Barcelona, Spain, employs over 11,000 members of staff.

For more information, visit [www.grifols.com](http://www.grifols.com)