



Prof. Martin Schaefer

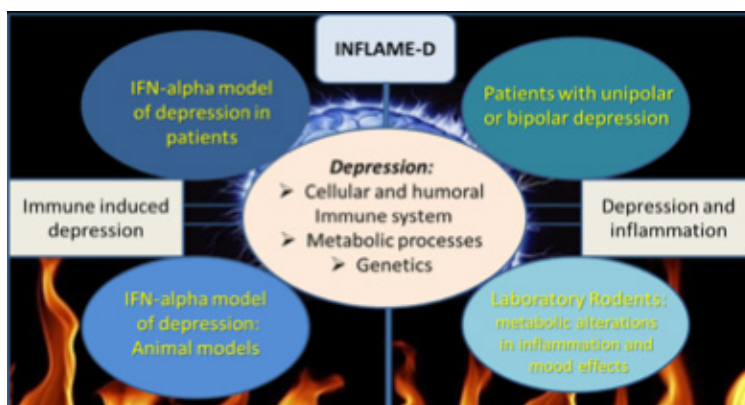


Role of inflammation and related processes in the development, phenomenology and treatment of depression (INFLAME-D)

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Depression is currently the most common psychiatric disease with an overall prevalence in Europe of 6-10%. Current pharmacological treatments elicit a clinical response in 50-60% of patients, while only 30-40% achieves full recovery. There is still limited knowledge on the pathophysiology of mood disorders. The possible impact of the immune system has been discussed in recent years. Depressive symptoms have been found to be associated with chronic autoimmune diseases and cytokine treatment. Thus brain-immune interactions may constitute a new field of interest in which alternative treatment strategies to address mood disorders can be developed. The INFLAME-D project adopts a multi-disciplinary and translational approach to decipher the psycho-immunological mechanisms involved in the pathophysiology of depression and bipolar disorders. Basic and clinical research will endeavour to detect immune changes in patients and animals suffering from primary psychiatric mood disorders or from depression induced by immune therapy. The impact of these changes on the development of depression will be assessed. This project will enable the identification of biomarkers for the diagnosis and prognosis of depression and will facilitate the development of innovative treatment strategies.



The INFLAME-D project combines results from clinical trials and animal models of immune related depression and results from immune changes in patients with primary mood disorders and animal models of depression like behaviour to investigate the role of inflammation in the phenomenology (occurrence, phenotypic expression, treatment responsiveness) of depression in vulnerable populations.