

Google sister company, drug maker to develop nerve implants (Update)

August 1 2016, by Danica Kirka

One of Google's sister companies will team up with pharmaceuticals firm GlaxoSmithKline to develop tiny implants that can tap nerves and change their electronic signals as a way of treating chronic illnesses.

GSK and Verily Life Sciences, a subsidiary of Google parent company Alphabet, have agreed to create a new company known as Galvani Bioelectronics, which will be based in Britain, with a second research hub in South San Francisco, California.

They said Monday that they will invest 540 million pounds (\$714 million), with GSK owning 55 percent of the venture and Verily the rest.

In the growing field of bioelectronic medicine, the implants that are used to cuff a nerve are currently the size of a jelly bean. The aim is to make them as small as a grain of rice.

GSK brings medical knowledge to the table. Verily brings expertise in miniaturization.

"Many of the processes of the human body are controlled by electrical signals firing between the nervous system and the body's organs, which may become distorted in many chronic diseases," said Moncef Slaoui, GSK's chairman of global vaccines. "Bioelectronic medicine's vision is to employ the latest advances in biology and technology to interpret this electrical conversation and to correct the irregular patterns found in disease states, using miniaturized devices attached to individual nerves."

The announcement comes less than a week after GSK pledged to invest 275 million pounds in three plants in Britain, sweeping aside concerns about growth following the country's decision to leave the European Union.

Galvani Bioelectronics will employ around 30 scientists, engineers and clinicians.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Google sister company, drug maker to develop nerve implants (Update) (2016, August 1) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2016-08-gsk-google-parent-company-bioelectronic.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.