



CASE WESTERN RESERVE  
UNIVERSITY EST. 1826

think beyond the possible<sup>SM</sup>

July 30, 2019

Contact: Bill Lubinger  
216.368.4443  
william.lubinger@case.edu

*Note: Interviews can be arranged at an on-campus television studio (transmission via VYVX HD loop), by digital tape sync for audio, in-person or by phone.*

## Case Western Reserve ‘spinout’ company, Convelo Therapeutics, partners with Genentech to develop medicines for neurological disorders

CLEVELAND (July 30, 2019)—[Convelo Therapeutics Inc.](#), a Cleveland company based on the research findings of Paul Tesar and Drew Adams at the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, has entered into a strategic partnership with [Genentech](#) to develop new therapeutic drugs to repair damaged myelin insulation on nerve cells for patients suffering from neurological disorders such as multiple sclerosis.

Myelin is the protective covering that insulates nerve cells to increase the transmission of electrical signals traveling from one nerve cell to another. Loss of the myelin sheath disrupts signals between the brain and other parts of the body, resulting in uncoordinated movement, loss of reflexes and disability.

Tesar and Adams founded Convelo Therapeutics in 2016, based on a new approach to unlock the capacity of the nervous system to regenerate new myelinating cells from stem cells.

“Our approach can identify drug-like molecules with the highest potential to stimulate the replacement of myelin in disorders such as multiple sclerosis,” said [Tesar](#), professor of the Department of Genetics and Genome Sciences and the Dr. Donald and Ruth Weber Goodman

Professor of Innovative Therapeutics. “The ultimate goal is to create a new class of medicines that leverage the regenerative capacity of the central nervous system.”

The exclusive worldwide collaboration with San Francisco-based Genentech, a member of the Roche Group, aims to help speed the discovery and development of drugs that repair demyelinated nerve cells.

Convelo will receive an undisclosed upfront payment and research support from Genentech, which will allow Convelo to expand operations in Cleveland. Genentech retains an exclusive option to acquire all outstanding stock of Convelo for an additional undisclosed payment and downstream milestones.

“Our discovery of a new mechanism to promote the regeneration of myelin in the lab also was shown to be effective to reverse paralysis in animal models of multiple sclerosis,” said [Adams](#), assistant professor of the Department of Genetics and Genome Sciences, the Thomas F. Peterson Jr. Professor of Novel Therapeutics and director of the Small Molecule Drug Development Core at the School of Medicine. “Convelo has leveraged these findings to identify new drug candidates and biomarkers to accelerate the development of the first remyelinating therapeutics.”

“The strategic partnership between Convelo Therapeutics—a CWRU spin-out company—and Genentech is another example of the scientific prowess to be found here in Cleveland,” said Pamela B. Davis, dean and vice president for medical affairs of the School of Medicine. “The innovative approaches to curing disease now being developed by our researchers promise to help transform this city into a biotech hub for the region.”

The original technology developed in the Tesar and Adams laboratories was nurtured through a partnership between the School of Medicine and the university’s [Technology Transfer Office](#). The School of Medicine’s Council to Advance Human Health, which provides industry advice from CWRU alumni and funding to accelerate promising technologies, also was instrumental.

Convelo is located within Cleveland’s [BioEnterprise](#) incubator space, and led by a management team based in Boston and San Francisco directed by President and Chief Executive Officer Derrick Rossi.

Convelo’s founding was supported by Cleveland Convelo Holdings LLC, a group of predominantly Cleveland-based investors managed by Bill Sanford, executive founder and retired chairman and CEO of STERIS Corp. and trustee emeritus of CWRU.

###

***Case Western Reserve University is one of the country's leading private research institutions. Located in Cleveland, we offer a unique combination of forward-thinking educational opportunities in an***

*inspiring cultural setting. Our leading-edge faculty engage in teaching and research in a collaborative, hands-on environment. Our nationally recognized programs include arts and sciences, dental medicine, engineering, law, management, medicine, nursing and social work. About 5,100 undergraduate and 6,700 graduate students comprise our student body. Visit [case.edu](https://case.edu) to see how Case Western Reserve thinks beyond the possible.*