Département des Partenariats
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Séminaire

"Catalyzing Translational Innovation"

par Christopher P. Austin, M.D.
directeur du National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences – NIH

NIH National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences

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24 boulevard de Montparnasse, 75015 Paris

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Christopher P. Austin, M.D., is director of the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) at the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH). Austin leads the Center's work to improve the translation of observations in the laboratory, clinic and community into interventions that reach and benefit patients – from diagnostics and therapeutics to medical procedures and behavioral changes. Under his direction, NCATS researchers and collaborators are developing new technologies, resources and collaborative research models; demonstrating their usefulness; and disseminating the data, analysis and methodologies for use by the worldwide research community.

Austin's career has spanned the spectrum of translational research, in the public and private sectors. Austin joined NIH in 2002 as the senior advisor to the director for translational research at the National Human Genome Research Institute, where he was responsible for conceptualizing and implementing research programs to derive scientific insights and therapeutic benefit from the newly completed Human Genome Project. While at NHGRI, he founded and directed the NIH Chemical Genomics Center, Therapeutics for Rare and Neglected Diseases program, Toxicology in the 21st Century initiative, and NIH Center for Translational Therapeutics. Upon creation of NCATS in 2011, he became the inaugural director of the NCATS Division of Pre-Clinical Innovation, and was appointed NCATS director in 2012. Prior to joining NIH, Austin worked at the pharmaceutical company Merck, where he directed programs on genome-based discovery of novel targets and drugs, with a particular focus on schizophrenia and Alzheimer's disease.

Austin is trained as a clinician and geneticist. He trained in internal medicine and neurology at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and practiced medicine in academic and community hospital settings as well as in urban primary care and in rural Alaska and Africa. He completed a research fellowship in developmental neurogenetics at Harvard, studying genetic and environmental influences on stem cell fate determination. Austin earned an M.D. from Harvard Medical School and A.B. *summa cum laude* in biology from Princeton University.

Catalyzing Translational Innovation

The process by which observations in the laboratory or the clinic are transformed into demonstrably useful interventions that tangibly improve human health is frequently termed "translation." This multi-stage and multifaceted process is poorly understood scientifically, and the current research ecosystem is operationally not well suited to the distinct needs of translation. As a result, biomedical science is in an era of unprecedented accomplishment without a concomitant improvement in meaningful health outcomes, and this is creating pressures that extend from the scientific to the societal and political. To meet the opportunities and needs in translational science, NCATS was created as NIH's newest component in December 2011, via a concatenation of extant NIH programs previously resident in other components of NIH. NCATS is scientifically and organizationally different from other NIH Institutes and Centers. It focuses on what is common to diseases and the translational process, and acts a catalyst to bring together the collaborative teams necessary to develop new technologies and paradigms to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the translational process, from target validation through intervention development to demonstration of public health impact. This talk will provide an overview of NCATS mission, programs, and deliverables, with a view toward future developments.