Precision Mind 2026 Award by
Wakam & Fondation FondaMental
Un prix franco-britannique sur les biomarqueurs en psychiatrie

Press Release

London, April 14, 2026

Wakam, the NIHR Mental Health Translational Research Collaboration, and the FondaMental Foundation announce the winners of the « Precision Mind Prize » on biomarkers in psychiatry

London, April 13, 2026. Wakam, the NIHR Mental Health Translational Research Collaboration, and the FondaMental Foundation announce the winners of the "Precision Mind Prize" for biomarkers in psychiatry. Launched in November 2025 as part of the France-UK mental health biomarker consortium, this prize supports collaborative research projects between the two countries aimed at identifying and validating biomarkers for the stratification of mental disorders. The winners were selected by an independent scientific panel.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than one billion people are affected by mental illness. Conditions such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia… are among the leading causes of disability worldwide and are associated with reduction in life expectancy by 10 to 20 years. Despite their prevalence, diagnosis is often delayed and treatments remain insufficiently personalized, largely due to the lack of objective and quantifiable biomarkers, such as blood, digital, or brain imaging markers, that would allow precise patient stratification.

To help address this challenge, Wakam and the FondaMental Foundation, in partnership with the NIHR Mental Health Translational Research Collaboration, created the Precision Mind Prize within this Franco-British consortium. This initiative builds on the success of similar collaborative efforts dedicated to biomarker research in neurodegenerative diseases, such as the Dementia Discovery Fund, which has contributed to the identification of blood biomarkers for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. Psychiatry now has the opportunity to achieve comparable breakthroughs.

Winner 1 – Wakam Grant: AUTOSCREEN - When the immune system attacks the brain: detecting autoimmune psychosis

Project leads: Dr Adam Al-Diwani (University of Oxford, UK) & Dr Laurent Groc (CNRS / University of Bordeaux, France)

Some forms of psychosis appear abruptly, present atypical symptoms, and respond poorly to conventional treatments. The AUTOSCREEN project explores a promising hypothesis: what if these psychoses are caused by immune system dysfunction? In these cases, the body may produce autoantibodies that mistakenly target brain cells, disrupting their function and leading to autoimmune psychosis.

How?

- In the UK: human neurons grown in the lab from stem cells to directly observe whether antibodies present in patients' blood attack brain cells.
- In Bordeaux: super-resolution microscopy to detect and study the effects of these autoantibodies at the nanoscopic level, offering unprecedented insight into the biological mechanisms involved.

Objective: To identify biological signatures of patients whose psychosis has an immune origin, enabling the development of targeted immunological therapies alongside standard psychiatric treatments.

Winner 2 – The NIHR Mental Health Translational Research Collaboration Grant: Immuno-metabolic profile of anhedonia - Why do some patients lose all motivation and pleasure?

Project leads: Dr Mireille Laforge (NeuroDiderot – INSERM, IHU- ICE Robert Debré- Paris, France)& Dr Fabiana Corsi-Zuelli (University of Oxford / UKRI-MRC, UK)

Anhedonia, the loss of the ability to experience pleasure or motivation is a particularly disabling symptom shared across major mood and psychotic disorders. This symptom is often the most resistant to treatment and the most detrimental to patients' quality of life. Recent research suggests it may be linked to chronic low-grade inflammation which disrupts immune cell metabolism.

How?

- In the UK: in-depth biological analyses of blood samples will be conducted to identify molecular signatures associated with the severity of anhedonia.
- In Paris: cutting-edge techniques to closely observe immune cells and measure their bioenergetic signature, to understand how they function differently in affected patients.

Innovation: This project adopts a transdiagnostic approach by focusing on anhedonia as a symptom rather than on specific psychiatric diagnoses. In the long term, treatments targeting inflammation or metabolic dysfunction in patients with anhedonia could complement conventional therapeutic strategies. Together with UK collaborator Dr Livia Carvalho (Queen Mary, London), this project leverages the UK Mental Health Platform (MHP), a UKRI/MRC-funded national infrastructure designed to enable harmonised biological and clinical research in mental health (https://www.mentalhealthplatform.ac.uk/).

Funding for contribution to the Precision Mind Prize is provided by the NIHR (National Institute for Health and Care Research), through the NIHR Mental Health Translational Research Collaboration (MH-TRC). The MH-TRC is hosted by the NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre.

About the precision Mind prize

"The Precision Mind Prize aims to accelerate the development of precision psychiatry by fostering international collaboration and supporting innovative research on biomarkers. By contributing to the identification of biological signatures associated with mental disorders, these two projects perfectly embody the ambition of the prize which is to bring together the best French and British teams to transform our understanding of mental illness, enable earlier diagnosis, more accurate diagnosis and and pave the way for truly personalized treatments."

Catherine Charrier-Leflaive, CEO of Wakam Group and President of Wakam for Good

"Mental illnesses are not inevitable; they are biological diseases like any other. By funding biomarker research, we help demonstrate this—and change how society views those who suffer from them. As a mission-driven company pioneering in insurance, this is our responsibility: to protect property and people—all people."

Olivier Jaillon, Chairman of the Board of Wakam

"The NIHR Mental Health Translational Research Collaboration is proud to partner with the Precision Mind Prize. Research on biomarkers in mental illness represents one of the most promising opportunities in modern medicine, but it is important that we use this kind of international partnership to ensure scientific rigor and progress at scale, for the major breakthroughs to become possible."

Rachel Upthegrove, Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Oxford and NIHR Mental Health Translational Research Collaboration Chair

"The UK and France are both world leaders in mental health research. By collaborating, we believe we can achieve more than by working in isolation. Combining resources, expertise, and perspectives will allow us to drive innovation in research and treatment that no single institution could accomplish alone."

Husseini Manji, Professor at the University of Oxford

"We are proud to support these two outstanding projects, which illustrate the strength of the Franco-British consortium. By pooling expertise and cohorts, these teams are concretely accelerating the transition from fundamental research to precision psychiatry."

Marion Leboyer, Professor at Paris-Est Créteil University, CEO of the FondaMental Foundation

Supporting the consortium

Building on the success of this first edition, we invite individuals, companies, foundations, and institutions to financially support this consortium to contribute to the discovery of objective biomarkers for mental illness, by backing a network of excellence bringing together leading French and British research teams.

Philanthropy contact: mecenat@fondation-fondamental.org

About Wakam

Wakam is a B2B2C insurer specializing in designing tailor-made insurance solutions for its distribution partners.

Wakam designs and operates white-label insurance products integrated directly into its partners' customer journeys. Thanks to open APIs and an advanced Plug & Play® technology platform, Wakam can co-build insurance solutions and deploy them across Europe in a short timeframe.

A European leader in embedded insurance markets, Wakam operates across continental Europe, with a subsidiary in the UK, and generated nearly €1 billion in revenue in 2023, 70% of which internationally.

About the NIHR Mental Health Translational Research Collaboration

The UK-based NIHR Mental Health Translational Research Collaboration (MH-TRC) was established in 2017. It brings together leading investigators in experimental medicine and early-stage translational mental health research to accelerate discoveries into clinical practice.

Mental Health TRC | NIHR

FondaMental Foundation: innovating to defeat mental illness

Founded in 2007 at the initiative of the French Ministry of Research and dedicated to scientific cooperation in severe mental illness, the FondaMental Foundation's missions are to: advance cutting-edge research, innovate in diagnosis and patient follow-up, train professionals, inform the public, and bring together stakeholders in the field of psychiatry.

It focuses on schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, treatment-resistant depression, and autism spectrum disorders to provide hope to the scientific and medical communities, patients, and their families.

The FondaMental Foundation relies on both public and private funding to promote and share French expertise internationally, achieve meaningful results quickly, and ultimately defeat these diseases.

Find our results at: www.fondation-fondamental.org

To continue advancing psychiatric research, donate to the FondaMental Foundation.

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