

Are incubators innovation boosters for start-up?

California, the “El Dorado of innovation,” is known as the country’s leading economic powerhouse. Start-ups in all fields flourish there, attracted by the proximity of Silicon Valley’s big names, such as Google and Meta. This hub of innovation, home to some 15,000 companiesⁱ, is a breeding ground for a multitude of collaborations, particularly with two of the country’s most prestigious universities – Berkeley and Stanford. This is a tremendous boon for the young life sciences start-up Palm Therapeutics, which has just joined [California Life Science’s FAST Fall cohort](#) (FAST CLS).

Palm Therapeutics, the start of a promising adventure in targeted therapies for fighting cancer

The mission of Palm Therapeutics is to develop targeted cancer therapies in areas with unmet patient needs.

The company is focusing on a hitherto little-explored area of biology called protein palmitoylationⁱⁱ. This is a natural biological process by which certain proteins are modified so that they can bind to the cell membranes where they fulfill their biological function.

Certain DNA alterations can affect such membrane proteins, however, transforming healthy cells into cancerous ones. Blocking palmitoylation, and thus inhibiting defective proteins from anchoring to cell membranes, would make it possible to effectively suppress their deleterious effects and limit (or even neutralize) their pathogenic potential.

By combining their extensive knowledge of the mechanisms of palmitoylation with an innovative technological platform, the Palm Therapeutics team has succeeded in developing the first platform capable of directly targeting palmitoylation.

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de Palm Therapeutics.



Did you know?

Ras proteinsⁱⁱⁱ family play a regulatory role in cell proliferation, division and growth. One out of four tumors has a mutation in this gene.

ⁱ CNRS : [lejournal.cnrs. fr/articles/silicon-valley-un-sociologue-au-royaume-de-la-tech](https://www.lejournal.cnrs.fr/articles/silicon-valley-un-sociologue-au-royaume-de-la-tech)

ⁱⁱ Abstract : The mechanism and functional roles of protein palmitoylation in the nervous system: [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih. gov/9151315](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9151315)

ⁱⁱⁱ Abstract : Involvement of Autophagy in Oncogenic K-Ras-induced Malignant Cell Transformation: [www.jbc. org/article/S0021-9258\(20\)51673-6/fulltext](https://www.jbc.org/article/S0021-9258(20)51673-6/fulltext)

The FAST program: A fast-track for disruptive innovations

● Helping Californian biotech companies raise capital successfully

The FAST program, offered by California Life Sciences, provides innovative biotech entrepreneurs with customized support. The goal? Coaching select start-ups on how to perfect their business models, strategies, and medium- and long-term business plans for successful entry onto the market.

The mission of the [California Life Sciences Institute](#) is to support innovation in California by offering programs in the fields of education, employee development, and entrepreneurship.

The fortunate hand-picked candidates benefit from twelve intensive weeks of coaching, during which they prepare to pitch to an audience of investors in view of future fundraising, a step that is essential to their success and survival.

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“Since joining the program, we have successfully launched our pre-seed round, made exceptional progress on our core project, and refined our business strategy,” said Rudd.

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● For start-ups: an opportunity to enhance their professional standing

In addition to coaching, start-ups also receive guidance in the administrative aspects of their project, particularly in securing the intellectual property of their technology.

What's more, daily contact with other players in the sector affords them an additional opportunity to generate valuable synergies and pool their strengths in a collaborative effort.

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“This program is a fantastic opportunity to rub shoulders with industry experts. We benefited from a comprehensive assessment of our scientific strategy, as well as advice on how to strengthen all facets of our business. This hands-on support was crucial in preparing us for our current fundraiser,” said Rudd.

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Did you know?

Servier has been sponsoring start-ups to support their integration to the FAST program since 2022. Firmly committed to open and collaborative innovation in R&D to meet patient needs, Servier is committed to fostering scientific innovation in oncology, neuroscience, and immuno-inflammation by pursuing innovative approaches to research and early clinical development.



“We are a Group committed to therapeutic progress to meet patient needs. As such, we take an open and collaborative approach to R&D at every stage of the product life cycle, including the early stages. We are proud to team up with CLS FAST on this initiative. Together, we want to support the new generation of start-ups in life sciences and biotechnology that will drive scientific innovation.”

Christophe Thurieau,
Executive Director of Research, Servier.

