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Roche launches Institute of Human Biology to accelerate breakthroughs in R&D

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Unlocking the potential of human model systems



Swiss pharmaceutical firm Roche has announced the launch of the Institute of Human Biology (IHB) focusing on advancing research in the field of human model systems such as organoids.

Leveraging human model systems, the institute aims to accelerate drug discovery and development by improving the understanding of how organs function and how diseases develop. Ultimately, this will help to bring medicines to patients faster. These efforts will also enable early testing of which drug candidates are safe and which molecules would work best for each patient.

Human model systems are miniature 2D or 3D living 'replicas' of human tissues and organs that scientists create from human stem cells. By mirroring human and disease biology more accurately than animal models, they can also help reduce the reliance on animal testing. In addition, human model systems may enable the discovery of new human biology (in health and disease) and identification of drug targets that are impossible to find with classical discovery approaches.

Scientists and bioengineers from academia and the pharmaceutical industry will work together at the newly launched institute based in Basel, Switzerland. The IHB is expected to grow to around 250 scientists and bioengineers over the next four years.