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PRESS RELEASE

Identified the new gene likely to be responsible for ALS.

In 2006, the Vialli e Mauro Onlus Foundation funded the research study to identify the genetic and environmental risk factors responsible for the development of ALS in Italian professional football players, as well as to identify possible molecular targets for new therapies. The funding totalled € 247,000.00.

Today the new gene responsible for ALS (Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) **was identified:** it is the **VCP (*Valosin Containing Protein*)** that can be found in Chromosome 9. The discovery was published in the prestigious international magazine "Neuron" and will be presented for the first time during the World Conference on ALS that will take place in Orlando (USA). **The authors of this exceptional discovery, funded by the Vialli e Mauro Foundation as well as by the Ministry of Health and the FIGC (Italian Football Federation) are four centres: the Laboratory of Neurogenetics of NIH in Bethesda, USA** (coordinated by professor Bryan Traynor), **the ALS Centre of the Department of Neuroscience of the Turin University and the Molinette Hospital of Turin** (coordinated by professor Adriano Chiò), the **laboratory of molecular genetics of the Sant'Anna OIRM Hospital** (headed by Dr. Gabriella Restagno) **and the ALS Centre of the University Hospital of Modena** (coordinated by Dr. Jessica Mandrioli). The **ITALSGEN** consortium, made up of 14 Italian universities and hospitals that joined forces to fight against ALS, also contributed to the research.

This discovery was favoured by the use of the new and revolutionary *Esomi* technique, that allows the sequencing of the DNA that encodes proteins. This technique was used for the first time in ALS studies.
The new gene was already known as the cause of another neurological disease, (IBM-FTD and Paget's disease), but it is also the first gene interfering with the process of accumulating abnormal proteins in nerve cells. Motor neurons in the ALS die due to the accumulation of aberrant proteins. **The discovery of this new gene represents an important turning point in the knowledge of this terrible disease, and offers a new point of view for the identification of treatment therapies.**

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