

NERVOUS DISPOSITION

Giving new legs to medical research

Why spider man is joining forces with ion man

A spine-chilling technology company with the largest library of venom in the UK has partnered with a drug discovery company to launch pioneering research.

Venomtech - which has labs packed with snakes, spiders and scorpions - has teamed up with Metrion Biosciences to share resources and expertise.

The Sandwich-based company and its new partner aim to identify ways to create pain relief drugs by testing how nerve receptors 'talk' to one another, through what is known as ion channel drug discovery research.

Ion channels are key components in a wide variety of biological processes that involve rapid changes in cells.

In the search for new drugs ion channels are a frequent target. They are prominent components of the nervous system.

Stephen Trim, founder and managing director of Venomtech, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to combine our knowledge and expertise in venom-based drug discovery



A king baboon tarantula from Africa at Venomtech

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with the great team at Metrion and their electrophysiology excellence.

"This combination of skills is set to solve many of the challenges of getting good drugs for ion channel targets."

Dr Andrew Southan, head of commercial operations at Cambridge-based Metrion, said: "Via this partnership we can rapidly explore the UK's largest venom collection for novel pharmacological tools for use in ion

channel assay development, validation and drug discovery research."

► The Future List - see pages 30-31



Founder and managing director Stephen Trim with boxes of spiders, including a Mexican beauty tarantula, top

Picture: Tony Fishman FM3018830/FM3018859 Bay pictures from kentonline.co.uk