Allen Institute for Brain Science Announces First Comprehensive Gene Map of the Human Brain

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SEATTLE, April 12, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- The Allen Institute for Brain Science has released the world's first anatomically and genomically comprehensive human brain map, a previously unthinkable feat made possible through leading-edge technology and more than four years of rigorous studies and documentation. The unprecedented mappings are the foundation for the Allen Human Brain Atlas, an online public resource developed to advance the Institute's goal to accelerate understanding of how the human brain works and fuel new discovery among the global research community.

In developing the Allen Human Brain Atlas, the Allen Institute has now thoroughly characterized and mapped the biochemistry of two normal adult human brains, providing opportunities for scientists to study the brain with new detail and accuracy. The data reveal a striking 94 percent similarity between human brains, establishing strong patterns as a critical foundation for translational and clinical research. In addition, data analysis from the two human brains indicate that at least 82 percent of all human genes are expressed in the brain, highlighting its tremendous complexity while also providing an essential genetic blueprint to understand brain functionality better and propel research in neurologic disease and other brain disorders.

"Until now, a definitive map of the human brain, at this level of detail, simply hasn't existed," said Allan Jones, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer of the Allen Institute for Brain Science. "The Allen Human Brain Atlas provides never-before-seen views into our most complex and most important organ. Understanding how our genes are used in our brains will help scientists and the medical community better understand and discover new treatments for the full spectrum of brain diseases and disorders, from mental illness and drug addiction, to Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, multiple sclerosis, autism and more."

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