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## Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Achieves Breakthrough in the Fight against Neurodegenerative Diseases

### Funding Secured from Baltimore Biotech Fund to Develop Patented Treatment

A patented breakthrough treatment for neurodegenerative diseases developed by Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) researchers has secured more than \$1 million from Toucan Capital, a private U.S. biotech fund based in Baltimore, Maryland.

BGN Technologies, the University's tech transfer company, signed the research and licensing agreement with Toucan Capital, managed by Linda Powers, which holds a significant portfolio of stem-cell and regenerative medicine companies.

Professor Esther Priel, director of the School for Medical Laboratory Sciences at BGU, has developed chemical compounds that boost an enzyme, telomerase, which slows the progression of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, in laboratory mice. Priel, also of BGU's Shraga Segal Department of Microbiology and Immunology, showed that the compounds raise the levels of telomerase in human cells, stem cells and lab mice.

In Priel's new research study, which was published in the *EMBO Molecular Medicine Journal*, the research group shows that the compound can reach the brain and the spinal cord and increase the production of the protein enzyme telomerase.

"By injecting the compound into mice which are developing ALS, we can successfully delay the development of the disease and increase the lifespan of the mice," Priel explains. "This is a scientific breakthrough since these compounds have great potential fighting neurodegenerative and other aging-related diseases."

Other researchers involved in the studies are Prof. Aviv Gazit and Prof. Shimon Slavin, director of the International Center for Cell Therapy and Cancer Immunotherapy (CTCI) in Tel Aviv.

## About BGN Technologies Ltd.

BGN Technologies is the technology transfer company of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, responsible for the commercialization of know-how and inventions of the University's researchers. Through the development of novel technologies and creative partnering with industry and investors, BGN files worldwide patent applications and manages BGU's large patent portfolio.

## About Toucan Capital

Toucan Capital Fund II, L.P. specializes in seed, early stage, and growth capital investments. It also participates in select late stage investments. The fund prefers to invest in life science and advanced technology in fuel cells, advanced batteries for mobile applications, electronic components, network security, biological products, drug delivery technologies, microbiology, and protein and genome sequence products.



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### BG Negev raises \$1m for neurodegenerative therapies

**Ben Gurion University's technology transfer company has raised \$1 million to develop therapies for neurodegenerative diseases from a US private equity fund.**

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[BG Negev Technologies and Applications Ltd.](#), the technology transfer company of Ben Gurion University of the Negev has raised \$1 million to develop therapies for neurodegenerative diseases from a US private equity fund. The funding will support research by Prof. Esther Priel of the university's Department of Immunology and Microbiology.