

AiCuris and Max Planck Institute of Molecular Physiology join forces in the field of anti-infectives

Wuppertal and Dortmund, Germany, April 18, 2018 - AiCuris Anti-infective Cures GmbH, a leading company in the discovery and development of innovative drugs targeting infectious diseases and the Max Planck Institute of Molecular Physiology (MPI) in Dortmund, Germany, have entered into a collaborative agreement to identify novel compounds for the treatment of viral and bacterial infections.

Under the terms of the new agreement, AiCuris will gain access to the proprietary collection of natural product inspired substances from the MPI. AiCuris in partnership with the research group of Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Waldmann, Director of the Chemical Biology Department at the MPI, will jointly investigate and optimize compounds that are active against bacteria or viruses and have the potential to be developed into anti-infective drugs.

The natural ability of bacteria and viruses to evolve and protect themselves, coupled with the excessive prescription of many commonly available antibiotics, has rendered some of the most powerful antimicrobial treatments ineffective in many patients. In addition, new resistance mechanisms have emerged and are spreading globally, threatening our ability to treat common infectious diseases, resulting in prolonged illness, disability, and in some cases, death. Without effective antimicrobials for the prevention and treatment of infections, medical procedures such as organ transplantation, cancer chemotherapy, diabetes management and major surgery will become high risk procedures. At the same time, the development of new antibiotics has slowed down significantly in recent years and only a small number of novel antibiotics have been developed and brought to the market.

“We strongly believe the development of new antibacterial drugs is crucial to combat antibiotic resistant bacteria that is killing around 25,000 people every year in Europe”, said Dr. Holger Zimmermann, CEO of AiCuris Anti-infective Cures GmbH. “One way to develop a resistance-breaking drug is to disregard well-trodden paths and explore new opportunities. We are very excited to be working with the MPI and its proprietary library of nature-derived compounds as nature has often proven to be the perfect blueprint for innovative concepts.”

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Waldmann added, “Novel antibiotics are in high demand due to the global rise of resistance to existing drugs. Natural products have been an invaluable source of novel antibiotics, and the concepts developed at MPI Dortmund for the design and synthesis of novel natural product inspired compounds could pave the way to the discovery of new drugs. The expertise of MPI scientists in chemical biology partnered with AiCuris proven experience in drug development could result in the discovery and development of innovative approaches to fight bacterial and viral resistance.”

The announced collaboration is based on a long-lasting scientific partnership and joint research interests between AiCuris and MPI. It aims to further strengthen the already existing relationship to fuel an in-depth collaboration.

About AiCuris Anti-infective Cures GmbH

AiCuris was founded in 2006 as a spin-off from Bayer AG and focuses on the discovery and development of drugs targeting infectious diseases. SANTO Holding is the Company's majority investor. PREVYMIS™ (letermovir), a first-in-class non-nucleoside cytomegalovirus (CMV) inhibitor acting via a novel mechanism of action that was licensed to MSD in 2012, recently received market approval in the U.S. and Europa for prevention of CMV infections in adult recipients of an allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT). The Company develops drugs for the treatment of viruses such as human cytomegalovirus (HCMV), herpes simplex virus (HSV), hepatitis B virus (HBV), and adenoviruses. In the field of antibacterials, AiCuris seeks to develop innovative treatment options for life-threatening, (multidrug)-resistant hospital-treated pathogens.

About Max Planck Institute of Molecular Physiology

The Max Planck Institute (MPI) of Molecular Physiology in Dortmund, Germany, is a research institute operated by the Max Planck Society (Max Planck Gesellschaft). The institute conducts biomedical basic research and pursues an interdisciplinary concept. Four scientific departments work at the interfaces of molecular cell biology, systems biology, structural biochemistry and chemical biology.

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