



AntiMal News



August 2006

Issue 1

AntiMal Project Launched

The AntiMal project is devoted to the development of new drugs for the treatment of malaria. Funded by the European Commission as part of its 6th Framework Programme the project is coordinated by Professor Steve Ward at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

The project comprises leading groups of malaria researchers from a consortium of 31 institutions from 10 European and 2 African countries. Partner information is detailed on page 3.

The goal is to establish a portfolio of new antimalarial drugs from within the European scientific community and to manage this portfolio through an industry standard pre-clinical evaluation. Lead candidates from within the portfolio will be selected for progression to Phase I clinical trials.

Ultimately this initiative will produce antimalarial drugs, registered to internationally recognised standards of excellence, which have potential utility in the affordable treat-

ment of malaria within malaria-endemic countries and Europe.

The function of the consortium is to establish a virtual drug discovery and development capacity within the European community and with southern partners, in the area of infectious disease, with a focus on malaria. This capacity, and the expertise that will emerge from consortium activity, will have applications across a number of infectious diseases. The specific application of the outputs of this initiative will be through the development and registration of an antimalarial drug, followed by safe, affordable and effective treatment of uncomplicated malaria. There may also be potential applications for these products in malaria prophylaxis and in severe malaria.

The AntiMal project was initiated on 1st December 2005 and is funded for 5 years with an EC contribution of €17,500,000.

Consortium members met in Liverpool on 30th-31st May 2006 for the first AntiMal meeting. The goals of the pro-



Participants of the first AntiMal meeting 30-31st May 2006

ject were discussed and a presentation was given by the EC Scientific Officer, Andreas Holtel. Scientific progress was presented for each of the workpackages and there was an opportunity to discuss results and exchange ideas. The meeting was viewed as very enjoyable and productive.

The next AntiMal annual meeting will coincide with the BioMalPar meeting at EMBL in Heidelberg. These meetings are scheduled for April 2007. This will give delegates from both projects the opportunity to attend both meetings.

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PhD Students Selected

The AntiMal international PhD programme is organised and operated in collaboration with the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL). Each PhD project is a joint collaboration between at least two labs.

An advertisement was placed in the journal Science in

March 2006 for 9 PhD students for AntiMal project. A rigorous recruitment and selection process has been completed, culminating in interviews on the 13th and 14th June 2006 in Heidelberg.

The standard of candidates was so high that it was decided to select an additional

two students for the AntiMal PhD programme. A further two projects have now been selected for these students.

Work will start at the respective institutes by October 2006. The PhD programme contains an element of training which is modelled on the successful EMBL international

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PhD Students (Continued)

PhD programme. Students will initiate training by attending a core PhD course in Montpellier in October 2006. Subsequent workshops and practical courses in London, Paris and Heidelberg will provide additional training opportunities.

The successful students reflect the international nature of the programme, with representatives from 10 different countries:-

1. Sara Finaurini from Italy will work on a project to investigate the cellular basis for quinoline/peroxide antimalarial interactions and their implications for drug efficacy and toxicity. This project will be based at the University of Milan and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.
2. Victoria Jeffers from Ireland will investigate the molecular and biochemical basis of Quinoline resistance in *P. falciparum* and *P. vivax* at the BPRC in the Netherlands, the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, the University of Heidelberg and 4SC in Germany.
3. Fatima Bousejra-El Garah from France will work on the role of iron in the antimalarial activity of trioxanes at the CNRS in Toulouse, the University of Liverpool and Palumed in France.
4. Francesco Marti Gimero from Spain will research new antimalarial endoperoxide lead compounds from both natural and synthetic origin at the University of Liverpool, CNRS in Toulouse and the University of Siena.
5. Oliver Berger from France will work on antimalarial chemotherapy inhibiting phospholipidic metabolism effectors, valorisation of N-hydroxylated pro-drug structures, at CNRS in Montpellier and the University of Liverpool.
6. Archana Kaniti from India will investigate drug-heme interactions in lipid and aqueous environments and their implications, at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and the CNRS in Montpellier.
7. Ksenija Slavic from Serbia Montenegro will research the functional analysis of metabolite and drug carrier systems in *P. falciparum* at St George's Hospital Medical School in London and the University of Heidelberg.
8. Huaqing Cui from China will work on nucleoside drug targets in *P. falciparum* at the University of Dundee, the CSIC in Madrid and the University of Nairobi.
9. Ayenew Alemu from Ethiopia will undertake pharmacokinetic studies on FR-900098, an improved inhibitor of the mevalonate-independent isoprenoid bio-synthesis pathway of *P. falciparum* at the University of Strasbourg, the University of Giessen and the University of Ghent.
10. Patrice Mimche from Cameroon will work on the modulation of monocyte CD36 expression, PPAR γ activation and RBC phagocytosis by different families of anti-malarial drugs. This project is a collaboration between the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the University of Milan.
11. Abdirahman Abdi from Kenya will investigate the structural and biochemical characterisation of selected *P. falciparum* protein kinases at the University of Glasgow, the University of York and the CNRS in Roscoff, France.

Congratulations and a warm welcome are issued to all the new PhD students.

AntiMal Website Launched



Home page of the AntiMal website

The first phase of the AntiMal website was launched in July 2006 as a primary means of knowledge dissemination for the AntiMal project. The site (<http://www.antimal.eu>) includes an overview of malaria and drug resistance, details of the AntiMal project, incorporating aims and expected results, together with information on the consortium partners (including contact details). The research activities of the integrated project are described together with details of the AntiMal PhD programme.

The website was constructed

at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and is managed by the AntiMal Project Management Office.

The website will be updated on a regular basis to include details of forthcoming meetings, news items and calls for new participants, including the expansion of African capacity.

The second phase of the website will incorporate a secure area which is accessible only to authorised members. This will allow consortium members to post confidential information in a secure envi-

ronment and facilitate the distribution and communication of routine sensitive project related information.

A number of commercially available products are currently being evaluated for this application. It is expected that phase 2 of the website will be available over the coming months.

Any contributions to the website should be directed to the Management Office at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (contact details on page 4).



Partner Information

The AntiMal consortium comprises leading groups of malaria researchers from 31 institutions in Europe and Africa. The drug development research activities are grouped into five clusters, (i) Novel aminoquinolines; (ii) Novel peroxides; (iii) Lipid targets; (iv) Other targets; (v) Post candidate development. Partner details are shown below:-

Partner No.	Principal Scientific Participants	Institution
1	S Ward (Scientific Director) P Bray (Deputy of cluster 3)	Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
2	P O'Neill (Coordinator of cluster 2)	University of Liverpool
3	H Vial (Coordinator of cluster 3)	CNRS Montpellier II
4	S Krishna (Coordinator of cluster 4)	St George's Hospital Medical School
5	C Doerig (Deputy of cluster 4)	The Research Programme of INSERM U609
6	D Taramelli (Coordinator of cluster 1)	University of Milan
7	M Lanzer	University of Heidelberg
8	B Meunier (Deputy of cluster 2)	CNRS Toulouse
9	D Monti (Deputy of cluster 1)	Institute of Molecular Science & Technology Milan
10	A Thomas	Foundation Biomedical Primate Research Centre, Rijswijk
11	I Gilbert	University of Dundee
12	D Gonzalez-Pacanowska	Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas
13	R Brun	Swiss Tropical Institute
14	KS Wilson	University of York
15	L Vivas (Deputy of cluster 5)	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
16	G Campiani	University of Siena
17	S Issifou	Medical Research Unit Albert Schweitzer Hospital, Gabon
18	F J Mula (African Representative)	University of Nairobi
19	L Meijer	CNER Roscoff
20	R Aman	African Centre for Clinical Trials, Kenya
21	A Kharazmi	LICA Pharmaceuticals A/S
23	Dr D Vitt	4SC AG
24	P Patel	COSMOS Limited
25	F Cosledan	PALUMED S A
26	D Leroy	Serono Pharmaceutical Research Institute
27	D Jabes	NeED Pharmaceuticals,
28	H Jomaa (Coordinator of cluster 5)	Justus-Liebig University Giessen
29	S Van Calenbergh	Gent University
30	A Schlitzer	Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich
31	A Fokin	National Technical University of Ukraine
33	F Jehl	Institute Pasteur, Strasbourg



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Expanding African Drug Discovery and Development Capacity

The AntiMal project aims to expand and strengthen African capacity in the elements of malaria drug discovery and development.

This initiative is targeted at scientists who will work in Africa and strengthen the research infrastructure of the host African institution. This will be achieved by developing an original and innovative line of research and development as well as developing strong collaborative links with a European partner.

Priorities for funding will be in the areas of medicinal chemistry, molecular target validation and pre-clinical pharmacology.

A competitive call will be issued for additional African participants within the coming months. This call will be advertised in accordance with EU guidelines, and will be included on the AntiMal website.

Evaluation and selection will also be conducted in accordance with current EU procedures to ensure a fair and transparent process.

The ultimate aim of this funding is to initiate long-term projects in Africa that will increase the capacity of African scientists and institutions to develop drugs for the treatment of diseases that affect the lives of African people.



Dispensing anti-malarial tablets in an African clinic