

PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed until 0.01h 19 August 2015

CHARITY ANNOUNCES FIRST PROGRAMME TO TACKLE SUPERBUGS

York

19 August 2015

Antibiotic Research UK will announce at its Annual General meeting today its first research programme to tackle antibiotic resistant bacteria (superbugs). Superbugs are becoming an increasing problem in hospitals as bacteria become more and more resistant to our existing antibiotics. The Chief Medical Officer, Dame Sally Davies recently said that if we don't tackle the problem now our grandchildren will not thank us. All the medical procedures we currently take for granted such as cancer treatment, open heart surgery, hip and knee replacement and organ transplantation will become much more risky. Ashley Burgess, the chairman of the charity said 'we should be afraid since so many of us rely on antibiotics working'.

The research programme, which requires the charity to raise £250,000, will focus on an under-researched area of finding drugs that can break antibiotic resistance allowing the life of our current antibiotics to be extended. Some 2000 existing drugs used to treat any disease will be tested as Antibiotic Resistance Breakers to see if any of them can work alongside the antibiotic to break resistance.

Professor Garner, the charity's Chief Executive, said 'this is an exciting opportunity to look at drugs such as those used for heart disease, arthritis, psychiatric disorders etc to see if they when put together with an antibiotic can kill superbugs. The advantage of the approach is that it is faster and cheaper than trying to find a new antibiotic from scratch. We need the public to help us fund this programme which we anticipate will start in early 2016'.

The charity, with some of the UK's top antibiotic resistance researchers behind it, aims to develop its first new antibiotic therapy by the early 2020's. The charity hopes to help in filling the hole left by many of the big pharmaceutical companies who have withdrawn from antibiotic drug development. The charity needs to raise up to £30 million on the next 5-7 years, through a combination of traditional fundraising, corporate sponsorship, giving by trusts and foundations as well as newer fundraising methods such as crowd funding over the next five years.

ENDS

CONTACT DETAILS

[Antibiotic Research UK – developing new antibiotics](#)

A charity registered in England and Wales; Number 1157884

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About Antibiotic Research UK

Antibiotic Research UK is the world's first charity to tackle the problem of antibiotic resistant infection. We aim to develop one new antibiotic therapy by 2020 with further antibiotics being introduced over the next decade.

To reach our goals we need to raise £30 million over the next 5-7 years. Antibiotic Research UK has the support of some of the United Kingdom's leading scientific and clinical experts in antibiotic resistance, drawn from 14 of the country's top universities and 12 specialty pharmaceutical or support companies.

The problem of antibiotic resistance (superbugs) has been highlighted by the World Health Organisation, the UK Prime Minister, the President of the USA, the UK Chief Medical Officer and Lord Jim O'Neill, chair of the Government's Review of Antimicrobial Resistance. David Cameron talked about medicine going back to the 'dark ages' if we didn't tackle this impending health disaster. Antibiotic Research UK is a registered charity and is uniquely placed to develop new therapies which would be made available to all affected by antibiotic resistant infections throughout the world. It's first scientific programme has been developed by the charity's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee whose members are;

Dr DAVID BROWN – (Chairman) – (Principal, Alchemy Biomedical Consulting Limited, Cambridge)

Chairman of charity for destitute children in India – heavy involvement with One World Health, San Francisco dedicated to supply medicines to the poorest of the poor funded by Gates Foundation. Senior positions with Zeneca, GSK, Pfizer, Roche (as a director responsible for 2000 researchers and co-inventor of Viagra) – chief executive Cellzome AG.

Professor Sir ANTHONY MILNES-COATES – (Professor of Medical Microbiology St George's University of London) Acknowledged as a world expert in antibiotic resistance. His research leading to discovering antibiotics active against dormant bacteria. Founder of Helperby Therapeutics – 2012 founded Antibiotic Discovery UK, a network to research drugs against antibiotic resistant bacteria.

Dr LLOYD CZAPLEWSKI – (Principal, Chemical Biology Ventures Ltd, Oxford) Over 23 years R & D experience in biological therapies focusing on anti-bacterial R & D. A prolific inventor with 26 patents and 34 publications – Chief Scientific Officer of Persica Pharmaceuticals.

Professor CHRIS DOWSON – (Professor of Microbiology, University of Warwick) Researching antibiotic resistant bacteria, focusing how penicillin targets bacteria. Chair at Warwick University – member Medical Research Council Infections and Immunity Board – research funding with Medical and Life Sciences Research Fund – awarded £3.2m grant by Medical Research Council to study penicillin and related compounds.

Professor COLIN GARNER – (Chief Executive Antibiotic Research UK – Honorary Professor, Hull York Medical School, University of York) Headed Cancer Research at University of York publishing over 200 scientific papers and 30 book chapters on cancer causation – created with 2 surgeons York Against Cancer charity, founder Antibiotic Research UK – Honorary Professor of Pharmacology Hull York Medical School.

Professor MARK MOLONEY – (Professor of Chemistry, University of Oxford) Atomic Energy Facility (Lucas Heights) and ICI (Botany). Research on penicillin at Oxford since 1985 with emphasis on anti-bacterials, anti-cancer agents. Work formed the basis of Oxford Advanced Surfaces Group plc. Author of 3 teaching texts and an internationally recognised lecturer.

Professor LAURA PIDDOCK – (Professor of Microbiology and Deputy Director Institute of Microbiology, University of Birmingham) Advised World Health Organisation on licenses for veterinary antibiotics. Fellow Society of Biology, American Society of Microbiology and member of the Wellcome Trust Peer Review College. Director of Antibiotic Action, network for treatment of bacterial infections. Chair Public Engagement British Society Antimicrobial Chemotherapy.

Dr DAVID ROPER – (Reader in Microbiology, University of Warwick)

Formerly Medical Research Council Fellow at University of York, reader Structural Biology University of Warwick. Researching antibiotic resistance in Gram-positive and negative pathogens allowing insights to bacterial exploration.

Dr TIM TASKER – (Chief Medical Officer, Heptares Therapeutics, Welwyn)

Held global roles with SmithKline Beecham, Evotec and Heptares. An R & D specialist across all phases of drug development and regulation in the UK, Europe, USA, Australia.

Dr JARED SILVERMAN – (Vice President Research, VL32, Boston, USA)

Previously Vice President Cubist Pharmaceuticals. (Recently purchased by Merck USA) contributing to antibiotics in phase 3 trials. Focus on antibiotic therapies for drug resistant infections. Harvard Medical School – postdoctoral Yale University.

Professor NEIL WOODFORD – (Head Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infections Reference Unit, Public Health England) Honorary Professor University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa – scientific advisor to Commission set up by Prime Minister to review antimicrobial resistance