

MMV and DNDi make 400 compounds available to stimulate research into new drugs for pandemic diseases

Pandemic Response Box harnesses open and collaborative approaches to medical innovation

Geneva – 29 January 2019 – Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) and the Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative* (DNDi) have launched the [Pandemic Response Box](#) to provide researchers with free access to 400 diverse compounds to accelerate the discovery of new treatments for life-threatening pandemic diseases.

The Pandemic Response Box is a collection of structurally diverse antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal compounds – selected by disease experts – for screening against infective and neglected diseases. The compounds are in various phases of drug discovery or development. In return for receiving the drug-like molecules free of charge, researchers from around the world agree to make their screening results publicly available and to publish their findings in an open access journal two years following data generation.

Since the beginning of 21st century, the world has battled multiple epidemics, old and new, caused by viruses and bacteria. Some of these epidemics have reached pandemic proportions. For example, the Zika virus outbreak in 2015-2016 in the Americas demonstrated how a relatively obscure mosquito-borne disease can become a global health emergency.

“The Pandemic Response Box came about in response to the need to be prepared for a future global health emergency,” said Dr Timothy Wells, Chief Scientific Officer, MMV. “Open innovation is one of the keys to unlocking new potential for drug discovery and tapping into existing expertise to kickstart new research efforts. The hope is that these efforts will contribute to the discovery and development of next generation therapies to manage a future pandemic as well as existing threats such as the Zika virus and Ebola.”

The emergence and spread of drug-resistant pathogens has further increased the frequency and gravity of these epidemics, posing a major threat to the world’s population. For instance, experts estimate the number of deaths associated with antimicrobial drug resistance will increase to 10 million a year by 2050.¹

“A deeper understanding of disease pathogenesis as well as research into new, effective therapies could prevent the scenario of drug-resistant pathogens emerging and spreading,” said Dr Graeme Bilbe, Research & Development Director at DNDi. “The goal is to help shorten the time between the emergence of a new pandemic and the availability of new drugs to treat it. History has repeatedly shown that saving time, saves lives.”

The Pandemic Response Box is one of several MMV and DNDi open science projects, which encourage collaboration and transparency in drug development research. MMV and DNDi can

¹ https://amr-review.org/sites/default/files/AMR%20Review%20Paper%20-%20Tackling%20a%20crisis%20for%20the%20health%20and%20wealth%20of%20nations_1.pdf

provide advice, support and additional compound quantities to help researchers follow up on interesting findings.

More details on the box and how to order it can be found on the [Pandemic Response Box](#) webpage.

About MMV

Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) is a leading product development partnership (PDP) in the field of antimalarial drug research and development. Its mission is to reduce the burden of malaria in disease-endemic countries by discovering, developing and facilitating delivery of new, effective and affordable antimalarial drugs.

Since its foundation in 1999, MMV and partners have built the largest portfolio of antimalarial R&D and access projects ever assembled, have brought forward nine new medicines and have assumed the access stewardship of a further two. An estimated 1.9 million lives have been saved by these MMV co-developed medicines. MMV's success is based on its extensive partnership network of around 150 active partners including from the pharmaceutical industry, academia and endemic countries.

MMV's vision is a world in which innovative medicines will cure and protect the vulnerable and under-served populations at risk of malaria, and help to ultimately eradicate this terrible disease.

MMV Open: Open innovation is taking drug discovery to the next level. MMV is proud to lead several open initiatives in drug discovery for malaria and neglected diseases. The data, findings and results emanating from these initiatives are as rich as the connections and collaborations they have inspired.

- [The Pathogen Box](#) contains 400 diverse, drug-like molecules active against neglected diseases.
- [The Malaria Box](#) was a treasure trove of 400 diverse compounds with antimalarial activity made available free of charge until December 2015.
- [Open Source Drug Discovery programme](#) aims to share all information, data and ideas in real time and openly with fellow researchers.

About DNDi

A not-for-profit research and development organization, DNDi is dedicated to fostering innovation and advancement in global health by supporting the neglected diseases research community to develop safe, effective, and affordable new treatments for neglected patients. Since its inception in 2003, DNDi has delivered eight new treatments, including its first successfully developed new chemical entity, fexinidazole, approved in 2018 for the treatment of both stages of sleeping sickness.

DNDi's open innovation work includes:

- The [NTD Drug Discovery Booster](#), which brings together eight pharmaceutical companies, and aims to speed up the process and cut the cost of finding new treatments for leishmaniasis and Chagas disease;
- The [Open Synthesis Network](#) - a collaborative project that aims to engage master's and undergraduate students in research for neglected diseases;
- The [Mycetoma Open Source](#) project, which aims to discover new treatments for fungal mycetoma;
- [Guides to free computational chemistry tools for drug discovery.](#)

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We ask you not to rely unduly on these statements. Such forward-looking statements reflect the current views of Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) and its partner(s) regarding future events, and involve known and unknown risks and uncertainties.

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