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MPP collaborates with University of Liverpool to accelerate development of HIV nanomedicines

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Partnership includes an MPP licence for the university's Solid Drug Nanoparticle (SDN) Technology; Aims to support treatment scale-up through cost cuts of priority antiretrovirals (ARVs)

The Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) today announced a collaboration with the University of Liverpool and a licence for the university's Solid Drug Nanoparticle (SDN) technology to accelerate the development of WHO-recommended antiretrovirals as nanomedicines. The agreement covers a territory of all 135 low- and middle-income countries and two high-income countries in Africa, where licensees based anywhere in the world will have the right to make, use and distribute lower cost ARVs based on SDN technology.

"With the World Health Organization's "treat-all" recommendations, more than 20 million people are still in need of viable, sustainable treatment options," said Greg Perry, Executive Director of the MPP. "This partnership seeks to help meet new international HIV scale-up targets through the delivery of better-adapted low-dose medicines at a significant price reduction."

"We are thrilled the MPP has joined us to develop medicines based on SDN technology and to ensure that once developed, they will reach people who need them the most in developing countries," said the University of Liverpool's Vice Chancellor Janet Beer.

The University of Liverpool is one of the UK's leading research institutions with global leadership in the field of HIV and nanotechnology. Their nanotechnology programme aims to overcome some of the challenges of antiretroviral treatment today, including poor solubility and the need to administer large doses to ensure that enough of the drug is absorbed into the body to be effective. With an initial grant from the Research Council UK, University of Liverpool researchers have reformulated two HIV medicines to date and expect to conduct human trials of some of the first oral HIV nanomedicines this month. Currently, there are no HIV nanomedicines on the market.

Professor Andrew Owen from the University's Department of Pharmacology said, "dose reduction can lead to easier administration and potentially fewer side effects for people living with HIV. Smaller oral pills also facilitate lower production costs of active pharmaceutical ingredients which could slash treatment bills and allow health ministries to provide treatment to more people." Professor Steve Rannard from the University's Department of Chemistry added, "the university is proud of its interdisciplinary work in this area, which is a triumph of cross-faculty collaborative research."

Under the terms of the agreement, the University of Liverpool will develop nanoparticles of ARVs licensed to the MPP such as atazanavir, darunavir and lopinavir to improve their solubility and thus reduce dosage. The MPP and the University of Liverpool will engage with pharmaceutical partners for product development and industrial scale-up. The MPP will then sub-license the nano-formulated ARVs and facilitate competitive manufacturing to spur wide distribution of the new medicines in low- and middle-income countries.

"This collaboration marries the best of two leaders in the HIV medicines space - MPP with its tremendous record in licensing priority ARVs for adults and children of all ages and the University of Liverpool with the technology to revolutionise the way these ARVs are delivered," said Philippe Douste-Blazy, Chair of the Executive Board at UNITAID. "We are proud to back the MPP-University of Liverpool initiative."

Source:
Medicines Patent Pool
