

Redx agrees pioneering MRSA deal with NHS

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Drug development company Redx Pharma has today reached a landmark agreement with the Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals Trust to work together on new drugs to combat the growing threat of anti-biotic resistance.

The collaboration is one of the very first commercial agreements to deliver on a stated aim of NHS England to develop more partnerships with industry. Sir David Nicholson, chief executive, set NHS England the challenge of adopting a strategic approach to healthcare in a keynote report Innovation Health and Wealth, highlighting the importance of closer relationships with industry and other partners. The objective is improved patient care that matches the needs of the 21st century.

In a collaboration that runs until September 2016, Redx and the Royal are set to bring this aspiration to life. Under the terms of the agreement, Redx will provide discovery and development expertise across its bases in Liverpool and Alderley Park, Cheshire, while the Royal is to utilise its extensive clinical development capabilities.

Drug candidates from Redx's technology platform are to be tested in humans at the Covance-Royal Liverpool University Hospital Clinical Research Unit. Upon securing clinical proof of concept, Redx will undertake licensing activities aimed at securing a third-party development and commercialisation partner. The Royal and Redx will share the costs and financial benefits.

The program focuses on therapies to tackle drug-resistant bacteria, including clinically relevant strains of methicillin resistant *S. aureus* (MRSA).

The need for fast-tracked new treatments in this area has been highlighted by the World Health Organisation and also prioritised by the Government's Chief Medical Officer. In her first annual report, Dame Sally Davies said the problem of microbes becoming increasingly resistant to the most powerful drugs should be ranked alongside terrorism and climate change on the list of critical risks to the nation. She also highlighted the discovery void, as comparatively few compounds are being developed by global pharma companies to take the place of those rendered useless by drug-resistance.

Dr Neil Murray, chief executive of Redx Pharma, said: Our business is at the cutting edge of early stage drug development and, working with our colleagues at the Royal, we are now delighted to be in the vanguard of NHS England's strategy of fostering closer working ties with industry. As the World Health Organisation has confirmed, growing antibiotic resistance constitutes a fundamental threat to global public health. We share our project partner's determination to unlock the answers to this problem and provide new medicines that will promote a safe and secure environment in the years ahead. At Redx, we believe in collaboration and are confident that this smarter way of working with our NHS colleagues can help deliver significant patient benefits, alongside worthwhile commercial revenues for the project partners. Working together we can achieve more than the sum of our parts.

Professor Robert Sutton, Director of Research, Development and Innovation at the Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals Trust said: This is an exciting development in the fight against MRSA that has the potential to save lives around the world. We have a successful track record in the field of experimental medicine and are unique in the UK in our investment in clinical pharmacology along with our position in the local health and life science industry. We have worked closely with Redx Pharma for many years and this partnership is delivering ground breaking research that benefit local people in Liverpool and patient groups around the world.

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