

October 24, 2007

The U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases Wins the FLC Mid-Atlantic Region Technology Transfer Award for Identification of Small Molecule Inhibitors of Anthrax Lethal Factor

The Mid-Atlantic Region of the Federal Laboratory Consortium this year presented the Regional Excellence in Technology Transfer Honorable Mention Award to Dr. Sina Bavari of the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases for work on "Identification of Small Molecule Inhibitors of Anthrax Lethal Factor."

Anthrax has been the subject of intense interest because of its use as a biological weapon. The inhalation of anthrax spores is usually fatal if it is not properly diagnosed and treated with the antibiotics during the very early stages of infection.

Unfortunately, the antibiotics that we have today are not always effective, and therefore it has become necessary to formulate a new and more successful treatment for anthrax. To help in this cause and global concern, Microbiotix Inc. has teamed up with the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) and the National Institute of Health (NIH).

Under the direction of Dr. Sina Bavari, the technology's lead inventor and head of a combined virology and bacteriology lab within USAMRIID, a team of researchers began screening various compounds stored at the repository of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to test them against anthrax. Compounds showing some potency against anthrax were then optimized, resulting in the new compound licensed by Microbiotix.

Microbiotix was awarded an exclusive license to develop and commercialize a small molecule that has inhibition activity, to prevent and treat anthrax poisoning. In 2001, five Americans died from anthrax inhaled from contaminated mail. This patent license agreement allows Microbiotix to take the early stage technology developed by Army and NIH scientists and contractors and to further fund and develop it. These additional developments can lead to various potential discoveries in helping to overcome not only anthrax poisoning, but also bacterial resistance overall. Due to the fact that the bacteria can build up resistance to antibiotics, it's a global concern to develop new treatments for bacteria infections as well.

One of the most coveted awards in the field of technology transfer, FLC awards for Excellence in Technology Transfer recognize laboratory employees who have accomplished outstanding work in the process of transferring Federally-developed technology to the marketplace. The award was made on September 21 at the region's annual meeting.

The Federal Laboratory Consortium is comprised of the technology transfer offices of all of the Federal laboratories throughout the country while its Mid-Atlantic Region focuses on the 70 Federal laboratories in DC, DE, MD, PA, VA and WV.

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