

## **Complement Genomics gains first-ever accreditation for key anti-malarial drug test**

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The innovative North East based biotechnology company Complement Genomics Ltd, has developed a new technique to measure the purity/quality of the key anti-malarial drug artemisinin, and has gained international IEC ISO 17025 accreditation for the assay. This paves the way to help stabilise the price of this key compound, which is used to make the medicines necessary to treat over 220m sufferers of malaria every year.

The work has been conducted in collaboration with the Geneva-based Medicine for Malaria Venture (MMV), whose mission is to reduce the burden of malaria in disease-endemic countries by discovering, developing and facilitating delivery of new, effective and affordable anti-malaria drugs.

Complement Genomics CEO Louise Allcroft said, “This is a milestone for the industry. It is the first time any assay for this drug has been accredited to this high standard”.

Artemisinin is extracted from the herb Sweet Wormwood or *Artemisia annua* and which is grown around the world, with major producers in China, India and Africa. This medicine is further developed into a class of highly effective, well-tolerated anti-malarial treatments which have transformed the prospects for malaria sufferers. Each producer and buyer currently uses different in-house assay methods, which can give variable results; this leads to inefficiencies within the system and insecurity with respect to pricing. This can negatively affect the decision to plant *A.annua*, as other crops often have a more stable market. The consequence of this is uncertainty over the future supply of this key medicine.

Louise continued, “It is essential that everyone in the supply chain has a firm understanding of the amount and quality of the medicine in each batch of the material. The availability of an independent laboratory operating at this standard should allow this to happen”.

The company will be marketing to producers and buyers across the world who it hopes will submit samples for analysis. In this way the assay of this material can be unified, leading to more secure supply. Eventually the company hopes

to establish an international network of laboratories across the world to conduct these accredited assays.

Dr Ian Bathurst, Director of Drug Discovery at MMV in Geneva said, “We are pleased to have been able to help support this work, which will certainly make a valuable contribution to the supply chain of artemisinin. It is vital that high quality supplies of this medicine continue to flow smoothly to drug manufacturers. Millions of lives depend on it. We encourage all relevant growers, extractors, API producers and pharmaceutical partners to join with Complement Genomics in developing a unified benchmark for artemisinin and API analysis”.

Complement Genomics Ltd is the sister company of SensaPharm Ltd, who will be taking the lead role in marketing the new assay.

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## **MEDICINES FOR MALARIA VENTURE (MMV)**

MMV is recognized as the leading product development partnership (PDP) in the field of anti-malaria drug research and development. It was established as a foundation in 1999, and registered in Switzerland.

MMV's **mission** is to reduce the burden of malaria in disease-endemic countries by discovering, developing and facilitating delivery of new, effective and affordable anti-malaria drugs.

MMV's **vision** is a world in which these 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's strength comes from its product development partnership (PDP) model reflected in its network of more than 140 pharmaceutical, academic and endemic-country partners in 37 countries. MMV also works in close partnership with a number of WHO programmes that include TDR, the Global Malaria Programme (GMP) and Roll Back Malaria (RBM).

The key to MMV's success lies in the focus of its mission, and the diversity of its team of almost 50 personnel from more than 20 countries, handpicked for their expertise and commitment to global health. Governed by the values of respect, integrity, trust and excellence, MMV is recognized for its industry-style portfolio management and wise administration of funds. It manages over USD 515 million received and committed from long-term donors such as government agencies, private foundations, international organizations, and corporate foundations. In addition, it receives in-kind donations in the form of staff, facilities, and technology from its industry partners, estimated to be equal in dollar value to the funds from donors.

MMV is currently managing the largest portfolio of antimalarial R&D projects ever assembled. Of over 50 promising projects, two MMV-supported artemisinin combination therapies (ACTs), dihydroartemisinin-piperaquine and pyronaridine-artesunate, are awaiting regulatory approval by the European Medicines Agency in 2011. In November 2010, Guilin's artesunate injection for the treatment of severe malaria was approved by the WHO's Prequalification programme with assistance from MMV. In addition, a child-friendly version of the ACT Coartem, Coartem® Dispersible, was developed by Novartis in partnership with MMV and launched in 2009. Since then, more than 65 million courses of treatment have been supplied to 35 malaria-endemic countries.

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