

BVGH Partnership Hub Snapshot



November 2020

Dear WIPO Re:Search Members and Friends,

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, collaborative R&D to develop lifesaving vaccines and treatments is more critical than ever. WIPO Re:Search Members across the globe are joining their colleagues to rise to this challenge, and we are pleased to showcase their work in this special issue of the Snapshot.

In the spirit of WIPO Re:Search, many of our company Members are active in collaborative programs including the [COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator](#), [COVID R&D Alliance](#), and Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines ([ACTIV](#)). Read more about WIPO Re:Search Member companies' COVID-19 work [below](#).

WIPO Re:Search academic, non-profit, and government Members are also tackling COVID-19 through joint initiatives. We congratulate Dr. Virginia López and Dr. Marcelo Comini at **Institut Pasteur de Montevideo (IP Montevideo)** and their partners, who recently received funding from the **International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology** and the **Institut Pasteur International Network** to continue their novel COVID-19 drug discovery program.

Research training programs equip scientists in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) with expertise that can be rapidly deployed to combat pandemics. Through the [WIPO Re:Search Fellowship Program](#)—supported by the Government of Australia through WIPO Funds-in-Trust—BVGH and WIPO have organized 100+ months of training for 20 scientists from 11 LMICs. Dr. Tedjo Sasmono of the **Eijkman Institute** is applying learnings from his fellowship at the **Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research** to lead a [study](#) in Indonesia on dengue and COVID-19 clinical similarity and diagnostics cross-reactivity.

Cross-sector R&D collaborations are important for other infectious diseases as well. Our partner, **Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany**, has a longstanding commitment to sharing proprietary assets—through WIPO Re:Search and other global programs—to drive drug R&D for infectious diseases such as malaria and schistosomiasis. Interested? Please visit their new [Open Innovation Initiatives for Global Health webpage](#). Company leaders will discuss how these open innovation initiatives are addressing global health challenges at the [Geneva Health Forum](#) on November 16.

As always, please share this Snapshot with your colleagues and reach out to us with any partnering requests or ideas.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Dent, President & CEO
BIO Ventures for Global Health



WIPO Re:Search Statistics



Click [here](#) for a list of WIPO Re:Search Members.
Click [here](#) for a list of WIPO Re:Search collaborations.
Click [here](#) to view the WIPO Re:Search Collaboration Pipeline.

Cornerstones of Collaboration

MSD* and WEHI Scientists Discover Novel Malaria Drug Leads with Dual Antiparasitic Activity



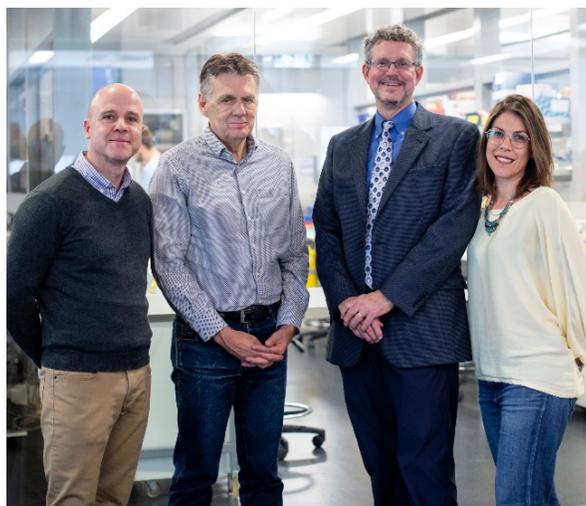
Parasite resistance to antimalarial medicines is a significant and growing threat to malaria control. **MSD*** is [partnering](#) with Prof. Alan Cowman, Dr. Paola Favuzza, and Dr. Justin Boddey at the **Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI)** through a [BVGH-facilitated WIPO Re:Search collaboration](#) to discover new antimalarial drug candidates with novel mechanisms of action.

The collaborators recently [announced](#) the discovery of a novel class of lead antimalarial agents that block multiple stages of the lifecycle of *Plasmodium falciparum*, the parasite responsible for most cases of severe malaria. Using MSD's aspartyl protease inhibitor libraries—assembled for other biochemical targets and medical indications—as a starting point for their drug discovery program, the researchers identified drug-like dual inhibitors of two essential *P. falciparum* proteases, plasmepsins IX and X (PMIX and PMX). The research was [published](#) in the April 8, 2020 issue of the peer-reviewed journal *Cell Host & Microbe*.

One dual inhibitor, WM382, blocked growth of both *P. falciparum* and *P. knowlesi* (which causes malaria in humans and other primates). When administered orally, WM382 cured mice of *P. berghei* (which causes malaria in certain rodents) and prevented parasites in the liver from infecting the blood. WM382 also prevented transmission of

“It is an exciting opportunity to combine the incredible subject matter expertise of Alan Cowman and his team with the ‘drug-hunting’ experience of MSD scientists. The team is focused on discovering a novel therapeutic for the patients that need new drugs in the face of increased resistance to standard of care antimalarial drugs.” – Dr. David Olsen, Distinguished Scientist and Neglected Tropical Diseases Discovery Lead, MSD

Plasmodium parasite from infected blood to mosquitoes—which could potentially reduce both the incidence and spread of malaria.



The collaborators will continue to optimize the potency, selectivity, and pharmacokinetic properties of their compounds with the aim of advancing lead candidates through preclinical development and into human trials.

This research was funded by Wellcome Trust (UK), MSD, National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia), and the Victorian Government (Australia).

From left: Dr. Manuel de Lera Ruiz (MSD), Prof. Alan Cowman (WEHI), Dr. David Olsen (MSD), and Dr. Paola Favuzza (WEHI)

* MSD is a trademark of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, NJ, USA

BVGH FundFinder Featured Awards

Dioraphte Foundation Calls for Research Proposals on Skin-Related NTDs

The Netherlands-based Dioraphte Foundation supports medical research in NTDs, rare diseases, and food security. In the area of NTDs, the Foundation supports translational and clinical experimental research that underpins the understanding of the pathophysiology and pathogenesis of skin-related NTDs. Proposals linking groups that have expertise in NTDs to those with expertise in skin research are encouraged. For more information, click [here](#).
Deadline: December 1, 2020.

Additional Funding Opportunities

- [NAM-HKU Fellowship in Global Health Leadership](#) – Deadline: November 30, 2020 (Hong Kong time).
- [NIH Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award \(NRSA\) Individual Senior Fellowship](#) – Deadline: December 8, 2020.
- [Atomwise Artificial Intelligence Molecular Screen \(AIMS\) Award Program](#) – Deadline: December 14, 2020.
- [African Academy of Sciences \(AAS\) Olusegun Obasanjo Prize for Scientific Discovery and/or Technological Innovation](#) – Deadline: December 22, 2020.
- [NIH Multidisciplinary Approach to Study Vaccine-Elicited Immunity and Efficacy against Malaria](#) – Letter of Intent Deadline: January 9, 2021.

For more information about BVGH FundFinder, please email [Cathy Manner](#).



Member Spotlight

WIPO Re:Search Company Members Join the Global Fight Against COVID-19

WIPO Re:Search company Members share in their own words how they are answering the call to action for COVID-19:



In the [fight against COVID-19](#), **Eisai** is contributing to the development of remedies through joining in industry-academia-government collaborations by providing its drug candidates, and participating in a consortium of life science companies entitled [COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator](#).

Eisai is taking all possible actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in operations at all of its facilities to ensure the safety of its employees and the stable supply of medicines. Furthermore, Eisai has provided supplies such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and made financial donations to Japan, the United States, and various countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa to support healthcare providers and local communities.



The world is facing an unprecedented pandemic with extensive consequences for all of us. *How are we, at **Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany**, helping to fight COVID-19?*

As a [science & technology company](#), we have continued serving patients, scientists, and customers with our expertise, products, and services. We have been producing liters of disinfectants and donating, with these, two million FFP2 masks to over 30,000 healthcare professionals fighting COVID-19 on the front lines. We have been providing solutions for scientists to detect and characterize viruses, and to develop vaccines and therapies; supplying [medicines](#) to patients in need; and producing [electronic materials](#) to stay connected. Read more about our response to COVID-19 [here](#), and our global health position [here](#).



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MSD has been committed to developing an effective response to COVID-19 since the early stage of the pandemic and is exploring multiple paths to advance the understanding of SARS-CoV-2, and develop vaccines and treatments.

In collaboration with Ridgeback Biotherapeutics, MSD is evaluating molnupiravir (MK-4482), an investigational orally available anti-viral candidate, in two Phase 2/3 trials, for the treatment of patients with COVID-19 in both the outpatient and in-patient settings.

The company is also evaluating two COVID-19 vaccine candidates: V590, that utilizes a recombinant vesicular stomatitis vector, is being developed through a collaboration with IAVI; and V591 that uses an innovative measles virus vector-based platform.



In March 2020, **Pfizer** issued a bold [five-point plan](#), calling for unprecedented collaboration to end the COVID-19 pandemic. In the months following, Pfizer and its partner BioNTech mobilized an enormous level of resources to develop promising vaccine candidates, while simultaneously marshalling a global supply and manufacturing network to quickly and significantly scale up their capacity. Along with vaccines research, Pfizer is advancing a novel antiviral therapy targeting the enzyme coronaviruses use to assemble themselves

and multiply. The company also is sharing its manufacturing facilities with companies like Gilead to help ramp up supply of other investigational antivirals. Pfizer recently reaffirmed its commitment to the scientific process by signing a [historic pledge](#) with eight other companies working toward a COVID-19 vaccine.



Within **Takeda** R&D, we are taking a comprehensive approach to support the development of vaccines and treatments for COVID-19, and we have aligned our efforts around the following focus areas:

- Research
- Plasma-Derived Hyperimmune Therapy
- Repurposed Products and Assets in Development
- Data and Information Sharing
- R&D Alliances and Partnerships

Takeda is dedicated to helping those currently impacted by COVID-19, as demonstrated through our support of essential efforts at the front lines, launch of a national campaign to [drive plasma blood donation](#), and global distribution of PPE to healthcare workers in need. Please find more information at [Takeda's COVID-19 Information Center](#).

* The healthcare business of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt Germany

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Highlighted Contribution

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany Open Global Health Library

As part of its commitment to Open Innovation, **Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany** is making its [Open Global Health Library](#) available free of charge to investigators worldwide to catalyze drug discovery research for a broad array of infectious diseases. **Researchers working in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are particularly encouraged to utilize this resource.** The library is comprised of 250 small molecules covering over 30 human targets. Investigators are free to generate IP on their discoveries and publish their results. Researchers interested in accessing the Open Global Health Library—especially investigators in LMICs—can either request it directly on the [website](#), or contact [Cathy Manner](#) to discuss opportunities to collaborate with Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany on library screening projects through WIPO Re:Search.

Special Announcement

Free Access to ASTMH GOTropMED through December 31, 2020

[GOTropMED](#), ASTMH's new Global Online Tropical Medical Education website, offers online talks and presentations by world experts in tropical medicine, hygiene, and global health, including rarely seen interviews with TropMed luminaries. This digital education resource is free for all through the end of 2020.

Upcoming Virtual Global Health Events

Dates	Event Name
November 18, 2020	<u>WHO Webinar: Optimizing One Health and Global Vector Control Response to Reach the 2030 NTD Roadmap Goals</u>
December 2, 2020	<u>WHO Webinar: What Role do Partnerships Play in NTDs and the Roll Out of the New Roadmap?</u>
December 2-4, 2020	<u>Tuberculosis: Science Aimed at Ending the Epidemic</u>
December 3, 2020	<u>RSTMH Research in Progress 2020</u>



Johnson & Johnson



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