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Leading Microbicide Developers Announce Research and Development Partnership to Create New HIV-Prevention Technology for Women

IPM and NIAID will collaborate and share information to develop promising microbicides

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Silver Spring, MD – The International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM) and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, today announced an agreement to share information and collaborate in their efforts to develop microbicides to protect women from HIV.

Microbicides are products such as gels, creams or intravaginal rings that could be applied topically to the vagina, reducing transmission of HIV during sexual intercourse. This agreement opens the door for a wide range of scientific collaboration and jointly-monitored research and development (R&D) projects that may produce an effective microbicide within five to seven years.

“This collaboration will accelerate the development of this vitally needed new prevention technology for women,” said Dr. Zeda Rosenberg, Chief Executive Officer of IPM. “Coordinating our resources and scientific programs will allow us to avoid duplication and to leverage each other’s expertise and efforts. NIAID has extraordinary resources and expertise in HIV-related research and we are very excited about working with the Institute on developing microbicides.”

The partnership will facilitate collaboration between the scientific leadership at IPM and NIAID, including the creation of a scientific working group that will regularly share information. The partnership will also lead to joint meetings with microbicide developers who are supported by both organizations.

Five microbicides are currently in large-scale efficacy trials. Studies of various formulations are underway and include a vaginal ring designed to release a microbicide slowly over time. A safe and effective microbicide could kill or otherwise immobilize HIV; form a barrier between the virus and vaginal tissue; boost the vagina’s natural defenses against HIV; or prevent the virus from replicating after it enters the cells in the vagina.

IPM is applying new discoveries in HIV science to the identification and screening of promising drugs and concentrating resources on the highest priority second- and third-generation microbicide candidates—highly-active antiretroviral single agents as well as combinations. In collaboration with pharmaceutical companies, biotechnology companies, non-profit organizations and academia, IPM is funding, in whole or in part, the development of several microbicide products and enabling technologies.

For example, in March 2004, IPM and Tibotec Pharmaceuticals Ltd., a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson, signed a groundbreaking agreement empowering IPM to develop the promising compound TMC120 as a microbicide. This agreement marked the first collaboration in the microbicide field between a major pharmaceutical company and a public-private partnership such as IPM.

About IPM

The International Partnership for Microbicides was established to accelerate the development and accessibility of microbicides to prevent the transmission of HIV. Through, among other things, the screening of compounds, designing optimal formulations, establishing manufacturing capacity, developing trial sites, and conducting access studies and clinical trials, the organization works to improve the efficiency of all efforts to develop and deliver safe and effective microbicides as soon as possible.

About NIAID

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases is a component of the National Institutes of Health, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIAID supports basic and applied research to prevent, diagnose and treat infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, influenza, tuberculosis, malaria and illness from potential agents of bioterrorism. NIAID also supports research on transplantation and immune-related illnesses, including autoimmune disorders, asthma and allergies.