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Healion Bio, FUJIFILM Toyama co-explore promising COVID-19 oral antiviral drug

April 29, 2022 | News

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Healion Bio, a closely held biotechnology company, has announced a collaborative agreement to research a combination antiviral against SARS-CoV-2 and other deadly pathogens. The combination will include one of Healion Bio's protease inhibitors and Favipiravir (its trade name, Avigan), an antiviral drug developed by FUJIFILM Toyama Co., Ltd.,Tokyo, Japan.

Dr. Sina Bavari, co-founder of Healion Bio, noted "Highly contagious pathogens can rarely be stopped by testing, vaccines, and hospital therapeutics alone. The DoD developed the concept of a layered defense, and the critical drugs to have on hand are oral antivirals and post exposure prophylaxis that can be administered in the community to halt outbreaks." Dr. Bavari has worked extensively with Favipiravir when he was the chief science officer of the US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID), the DoD's tip of the spear in developing countermeasures to viral threats.

Dr. Furuta Yosuke, the inventor of Favipiravir, was enthusiastic "Our research team sees a great potential to expand antiviral therapeutics through this program." Simon Newman, co-founder, and CEO of Healion Bio added, "As SARS-CoV-2 continues to mutate, we will need more drugs than just Molnupiravir, Paxlovid and MPro inhibitors. We are working with FUJIFILM Toyama to benefit from their decades of experience in oral antivirals." Dr. Bavari observed, "the best antiviral drugs are always synergistic combinations that reduce the risk of viral resistance and are designed to work against multiple indications such as coronaviruses, influenza and filoviruses."