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Biotron identifies compounds that demonstrate activity against Zika Virus

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The Directors of Australia's Biotron Limited have announced that the company's two compounds from its library have shown positive activity against Zika virus. Elaborating further the directors said that several compounds were sent to an independent USA facility for screening against the virus. One compound showed activity in the first round of screening and this result has been confirmed in repeat assays. In a subsequent round of screening, a second compound has also shown to inhibit replication of Zika virus.

Zika virus is spread primarily through the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). These are generally mild in nature. However, Zika virus infection during pregnancy has been associated with a serious birth defect called microencephaly as well as other severe fetal brain defects.

Earlier this year, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Zika virus a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). Outbreaks in Brazil are of particular concern in the lead up to the 2016 Olympic Games. There is no approved vaccine or treatment for the disease.

Biotron's Managing Director, Dr Michelle Miller, said, "These early results are encouraging. They demonstrate the robustness of Biotron's library of compounds and approach to developing drugs that target serious viral diseases. Identification of these active compounds in our library is a starting point for designing potent drugs against Zika. Additional testing is in progress."