

Aus vaccine firm helps US army fight bio-terrorism

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Singapore: Australian infectious disease therapy and vaccine development company BioDiem's novel antimicrobial (BDM-I) will enter a new phase of US Army-backed research to assess its potential as a biological weapons counter-measure. BioDiem has renewed its Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) with the US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID).

The USAMRIID has undertaken in vitro studies assessing BDM-I's activity against a range of disease-causing agents that pose a biological weapons threat, including *Bacillus anthracis* (anthrax) and *Yersinia pestis* (plague).

BioDiem CEO, Ms Julie Phillips, said that the outcome of this early-stage research was positive and the research could now move to animal-based studies.

"This is important work that is broad in scope, but is focused on finding new ways to combat these highly infectious pathogens which pose a biological weapons risk," Ms Phillips said. "BioDiem is grateful to USAMRIID and staff for the service and on-going support provided."

The next phase of research will include studies in an animal model to confirm the available drug concentration provided by different routes of administration of BDM-I, and efficacy evaluation in an animal model for a number of highly infectious pathogens.