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ETC, AstraZeneca form drug R&D partnership

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Singapore: Experimental Therapeutics Center (ETC) and Exploit Technologies of Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*Star), have signed a joint research collaboration agreement with global biopharmaceutical company AstraZeneca (AZ), to develop new drugs to treat Gram-negative bacterial infections.

Infections are believed to cause two thirds of all hospital acquired infection deaths. Under the agreement, AstraZeneca and the ETC will collaborate on joint research projects, with ETC contributing expertise in the discovery and optimization of lead compounds, and AstraZeneca providing expertise in antimicrobial drug discovery. The three-and-a-half-year collaboration focuses on generating high quality preclinical development candidates for entry into clinical studies. The agreement also covers commercialization and licensing of any arising intellectual property.

"The Experimental Therapeutics Center is excited to embark in this endeavour with AstraZeneca. The synergy between our novel approaches in lead generation and optimization and AstraZeneca's established track record in anti-infectives would give us both a fighting chance in tackling the challenge of penetrating the Gram-negative bacterial armour. By combining our efforts, expertise and experience, I believe we can address this unmet medical need of treating hospital acquired infections caused by Gram negative organisms," said Professor Alex Matter, chief executive officer, ETC.

"Antimicrobial resistance is one of the world's most serious health threats. There is an urgent need to develop new medicines to treat infectious diseases that have become resistant to antibiotics," said Mr Manos Perros, VP, Infection Innovative Medicines and Early Development, AstraZeneca.

"By bringing together our expertise in drug discovery and development with that of other leading experts in the field, it is our hope that we will improve the chances of fighting antimicrobial resistance and delivering meaningful new medicines to patients."

"This collaboration with AstraZeneca to develop new drugs is a clear endorsement from one of the leading global pharmaceutical companies that our biomedical research capabilities have come of age. It provides an example of how A*STAR partners with industry to bring value to the company and to Singapore," said Dr Benjamin Seet, executive director,

Biomedical Research Council, Agency for Science Technology and Research (A*Star).

Pathogenic cause infections including pneumonia, bloodstream infections, wound or surgical site infections, and meningitis in healthcare settings. They are resistant to multiple drugs and are increasingly resistant to available antibiotics.