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Novartis positive with anti-malaria drug

July 31, 2014 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau



Singapore: Novartis' novel antimalarial drug, KAE609 (cipargamin) has shown efficacy in Phase 2 trial by demonstrating the ability to clear parasite rapidly in Plasmodium falciparum (P. falciparum) and Plasmodium vivax (P. vivax) uncomplicated malaria patient.

Novartis currently has two drug candidates in development. Both KAE609 and KAF156 are new classes of anti-malarial compounds that treat malaria in different ways from current therapies, important to combat emerging drug resistance. Novartis has also identified PI4K as a new drug target with potential to prevent, block and treat malaria.

"Novartis is in the fight against malaria for the long term and we are committed to the continued research and development of new therapies to eventually eliminate the disease," said Mr Joseph Jimenez, CEO, Novartis.

Malaria is a life-threatening disease primarily caused by parasites (P. falciparum and P. vivax) transmitted to people through the bites of infected Anopheles mosquitoes. Each year it kills more than 600,000 people, most of them African children.

"KAE609 is a potential game-changing therapy in the fight against malaria," said Thierry Diagana, head of Novartis Institute for Tropical Diseases (NITD), which aims to discover novel treatments and prevention methods for major tropical diseases. "Novartis has given KAE609 priority project status because of its unique potential of administering it as a single-dose combination therapy."