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Singapore: With a view to curb the menace of malaria and tuberculosis(TB), Japan's investment firm, Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (GHIT Fund) has issued funding totaling $11.4 million for six research projects that aim to fight malaria and tuberculosis.

As per the company announcements, nearly $1.8 million will be spent of developing anti-malaria drugs. The research is an on-going project carried out by a partnership between Swiss-based Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), a product development partnership in the field of antimalarial drug research, and major Japanese pharmaceutical company Daiichi Sankyo. GHIT Fund has been financing this project since the fund's establishment three years ago, the company said.

Daiichi sankyo said that the research aims to identify and develop new drugs that could cure malaria-infected patients of both Plasmodium falciparum and Plasmodium vivax with a single dose.

Apart from this, GHIT Fund has made two new investments into tuberculosis research. The first was to a research group comprising scientists from Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, and Chile, for the development of an early-stage TB vaccine that would be given intranasally, making it easier to administer and less costly than the standard injectable vaccine.

GHIT Fund has also provided $200,000 in funding for researchers at the Japan-based RIKEN Center for Life Science Technologies and the United Nations' International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, who are studying how tuberculosis survives and replicates in humans-particularly in those who, while infected with latent tuberculosis, stay immune their entire lives.

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GHIT also said that nearly $7.5 million of the funds will be allocated for malaria research conducted by Japan's largest pharmaceutical company Takeda Pharmaceuticals. The company is working on a candidate for malaria- DSM421 which is currently under clinical trials.

Around $600,000 was allocated to Japan's Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma Corporation and MMV as part of GHIT Fund's Hit-to-Lead platform, which optimizes the hit chemical compounds that were identified in the screening platform, the company said.