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ASIA EDITION

Locus Biosciences raises $19 million series A for CRISPR-Cas3 Antimicrobials

15 November 2017 | News

Funding will support the company's product development through first-in-human trials

Locus Biosciences has closed $19 million in Series A funding led by venture capital firm ARTIS Ventures with additional financing from notable institutional investors Tencent Holdings Limited, Abstract Ventures, and the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, among others. The Series A financing will fund the company through filing its first IND, as well as the subsequent first-in-human trial.

Locus Biosciences is an emerging biotechnology company focused on the discovery and development of a next generation CRISPR-Cas platform for precision antimicrobials. Locus designs and creates novel CRISPR RNAs (guide RNAs) that direct the powerful Cas3 nuclease to target and kill bacteria cells by irreversibly destroying DNA. This irreversible destruction of DNA is the primary differentiator between Cas3 and the more widely known Cas9 enzyme used for gene editing and repair.

San Francisco-based venture capital firm ARTIS Ventures supports and partners with entrepreneurs who are driven to positively impact their world through disruptive technological innovation. ARTIS was the first institutional investor in cancer-curing Stemcentrx, which was acquired for as much as $10.2 billion in 2016, making it the largest venture-backed acquisition in the history of life sciences.

Scientists around the world are raising the alarm that we are entering a post-antibiotic era, in which all currently-available antibiotics are ineffective. Since its founding in 2015, Locus Biosciences has been tackling this problem by developing powerful CRISPR-based "smart bombs" that kill antibiotic-resistant superbugs by irreversibly destroying the bacterial DNA.

Locus is the only company in the world utilizing CRISPR-Cas3 to kill targeted pathogens, such as Clostridium difficile, Pseudomonas aeruginosa and Enterobacteriaceae.

Stuart Peterson, President of ARTIS Ventures said, "The possibilities with the CRISPR revolution inside biotech are limitless, and not just tied to the human genome. The potential behind what Locus is working on is exactly the type of innovation that we have built our investment portfolio around and we are confident that Locus is making great progress on removing deadly pathogens from the human body."

Paul Garofolo, Founder and CEO of Locus Biosciences said, "Other companies are developing CRISPR applications to modify the human genome, but we are concentrating our efforts on removing deadly pathogens from the body. As our

technology targets antibiotic resistant infections without risk to human cells, we can rapidly develop new infectious disease and microbiome therapies that avoid the risks posed by broad-spectrum antibiotics and their selection for antibiotic resistance.”