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Japan's GHIT Fund announces investment of $8.5 M in five R&D projects

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With partners Including MMV, GSK, Tanabe Pharma, Eisai and DNDi



The Global Health Innovative Technology (GHIT) Fund has announced a total investment of approximately JPY 1.37 billion ($8.5 million) in five R&D projects for the development of drugs for malaria and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).

To end the epidemics of malaria, new drugs with novel modes of action which overcome known resistance associated with existing therapeutics are needed. It is crucial to develop compounds that can block transmission and be used for chemoprevention, acute treatment, and treatment of relapsing malaria are especially valuable to drive eradication.

To address this issue, the GHIT Fund is investing approximately $4.4 million in a global partnership aimed at the preclinical development of an antimalarial drug which could be used for treatment, chemoprevention or Single Encounter Radical Cure and Prophylaxis (SERCAP) of malaria. This project is being led by Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), Tanabe Pharma Corporation in Japan, and the University of Georgia in the United States.

The investment builds on a prior GHIT-supported project that received approximately JPY 600 million $3.8 million between 2015 and 2025. Through this project, there is also the prospect of developing a longâ??acting injectable that can provide three or more months of protection against recurrent *Plasmodium vivax* malaria.

On the other hand, Eumycetoma is a severely neglected tropical disease that causes chronic, destructive infections, often leading to disability, amputation, loss of income, and social stigma. Despite its significant impact, current treatments remain limited and are often toxic and poorly tolerated.

The GHIT Fund has been investing in a collaboration between Eisai Co. and Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiatives (DNDi) to develop a treatment for mycetoma since 2017. This support began with a Phase II randomised clinical trial conducted in Sudan and, since 2023, has extended to supporting the registration of fosravuconazole based on the trial results as well as a cohort study providing controlled early access to fosravuconazole for patients with eumycetoma in Sudan.

Building on the results obtained in the study, the GHIT Fund has decided to invest approximately $2 million in a project to conduct multi-country, openâ??label clinical trials in Kenya, Senegal, and India to generate additional evidence for the WHO

recommendation and regulatory registration of fosravuconazole for eumycetoma.

In addition, the GHIT Fund will invest a total of approximately $2.1 million in the following three R&D projects:

1. Prolyl tRNA synthetase inhibitors as a new antimalarial project led by MMV, GSK, and the University of Tokyo
2. Hit-to-Lead project for an antimalarial drug led by MMV and DAIICHI SANKYO
3. Screening project for antimalarial drugs that inhibit Serine Hydroxymethyltransferase (SHMT) led by Eisai Co. and MMV