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Saturday 3 May 2008

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Society - Canada - Uganda - Health - Drugs

Researchers from Canada and Uganda breakthrough on new malaria drug

Canadian and Ugandan researchers at Makerere University said they had recorded a breakthrough in their search for new drugs to treat malaria, noting that initial toxicity tests in animals demonstrated the safety of the drugs.

Friday 2 May 2008



"Upstream's anti-malarial candidates were well tolerated, with no signs of serious toxicity at likely healing dosages," according to a statement by the Canada-based Upstream Biosciences Inc., founded in 2004 in the Canadian province of British Columbia.

"These first positive toxicity results in animals for our anti-malarial candidates mark an important step in our programme to develop safe and effective drugs to fight this pervasive condition," the statement quoted Joel Bellenson, CEO Upstream, as saying.

"New data represents the third set of positive toxicity results in animals obtained by researchers at Makerere University for Upstream's drug candidates for malaria, trypanosomiasis and leishmaniasis, all diseases caused by related parasites," he added.

Bellenson explained that the current malaria drugs had a similar mode of action and the parasites become resistant to chemicals related to these older drugs quite easily.

"Our compounds are a completely different chemical structure and are therefore likely to work by blocking different proteins activities. In addition, our compounds may have another advantage to work against sleeping sickness, Nagana and kala azar as well as malaria. "This would simplify drug stocking logistics and administration to sick patients," he explained.

Malaria is the leading cause of illness and death in Uganda, accounting for 25-40 per cent of all outpatient visits at health care facilities, while up to 20 per cent of all hospital admissions and 15 per cent of in-patient deaths are due to malaria. **Panapress** .

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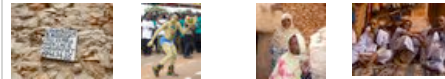
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