

FNIH Awards Nearly \$6 Million in Grants for Malaria Control Research

Recipients to seek innovative solutions to manage mosquito-transmitted disease

Bethesda, MD (August 18, 2011) – The Foundation for the National Institutes of Health (FNIH) is pleased to announce four new grant awards through the *New Insecticides for Malaria Control: Discovery Research for the Identification of New Chemical Entities for Vector Control of Malaria* program. The awards, totaling nearly \$6 million, are in support of innovative research projects to find new solutions to limit transmission of malaria by mosquitoes.

Malaria is a widespread disease that afflicts hundreds of millions of people globally and kills approximately one million children each year. Controlling malaria is an ongoing global challenge, as parasites and mosquitoes are continually acquiring genetic changes to overcome and resist drugs and insecticides. No new public health insecticides have been developed for malaria control for decades. There is now an urgent need for new insecticides as the existing anti-malarial approaches are losing efficacy.

“Global eradication of malaria cannot be attained without development of more effective tools,” said Professor Frank Collins, George and Winifred Clark Professor of Biological Sciences and a member of the VCTR external advisory board. “Development of new insecticides with novel modes of action is an urgent need.”

As a part of the Vector-based Control of Transmission Discovery Research (VCTR) program, a component of the Grand Challenges in Global Health (GCGH) initiative, the *New Insecticides for Malaria Control* grant program was established to stimulate and support innovative research projects to address this critical need.

After a very competitive review process, four projects were selected to support the identification of novel active ingredients intended to fuel the development of insecticides to control the mosquito vectors of malaria:

- **Barry Beaty, of the Colorado State University:** Molecular Mosquitocides: Development of an innovative and robust, platform-based approach for sustainable insecticidal control of Anopheline mosquitoes.
- **Jeffrey R. Bloomquist, of the University of Florida:** Voltage-sensitive potassium channel as a new target for mosquitocides.
- **Robert M. Kennedy, of the Vestaron Corporation (Kalamazoo, MI):** Development of synthetic chemical mimics of selectively insecticidal natural peptides.
- **Peter M. Piermarini, of the Ohio State University:** High throughput discovery of chemicals that induce “kidney” failure in the malaria vector *Anopheles gambiae*.

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"The insecticide armamentarium for malaria vector control is limited," said Colorado State's Barry Beaty. "This exciting new research program will help in the development of new insecticides needed to overcome the increasing resistance of malaria transmitting mosquitoes to pyrethroids, the principal insecticides in bednets and other vector control measures."

Since 2003, the FNIH has worked with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other partners on the Grand Challenges in Global Health (GCGH) Initiative. In 2009, FNIH received a 5-year, \$24 million grant to extend certain aspects of research initiated under the original GCGH initiative. The "Vector-based Control of Transmission: Discovery Research (VCTR)" program will continue to support the development of novel strategies to deplete or incapacitate disease-transmitting mosquito populations. For more information about the FNIH Global Health portfolio please visit www.fnih.org

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