

PROMISING TB DIAGNOSTIC ACTIPHAGE SELECTED FOR EVALUATION BY R2D2 TB NETWORK

Ease of use at the point of need is vital for the roll out of a diagnostic, so PBD Biotech, developers of Actiphage - a rapid blood test for early-stage tuberculosis - is partnering with the Rapid Research in Diagnostics Development for TB Network (R2D2 TB Network) funded by the US National Institutes of Health to gain a lab side evaluation of its diagnostic at a clinical site in the Philippines.

TB is treatable, but every year 3 million people remain undiagnosed and 1 million die. So, a rapid way to screen vulnerable populations to detect those at most risk of developing the disease would have a massive impact on the quality of life and economic prospects of these communities.

PBD Biotech's Actiphage® blood test is sensitive and specific, and clinical trials by Leicester Tuberculosis Research Group (LTBRG) have shown that it is able to diagnose human TB at a very early stage, before the patient shows clinical symptoms.

Further clinical trials are underway to test its effectiveness in the field, but in parallel with this, the analytical process needs to be robust and easy to replicate in a clinical laboratory.

To accelerate the development of effective screening tests, the R2D2 TB Network provides a transparent process for identification and advancement of the most promising TB diagnostics. It brings together leading international experts in TB diagnostics research, registration pathways and policy development and has clinical study sites in six countries. It is funded by the US National Institute of Health and National Institute of Allergy and Infectious diseases.

R2D2 will be assessing how easy it is for lab technicians to perform the analysis and the type and level of support that might be required.

Jane Theaker, CEO of PBD Biotech says: "The R2D2 TB Network is very highly regarded, and we greatly value its support in evaluating the analytical process at its clinical facilities in the Philippines. This end-user feedback will be invaluable in further developing Actiphage, so it is easy to use with minimal training."

Adithya Cattamanchi, one of the principal investigators involved with R2D2 TB Network comments: "Connecting developers to the communities in which the diagnostics are to be used is a vital part of our work and we are delighted to working with PBD Biotech on this promising diagnostic."

The R2D2 TB Network has an extensive network of clinical trial sites, which includes: Asia (India, Vietnam, the Philippines), Africa (Uganda, South Africa), and Eastern Europe (Georgia) with extensive TB and respiratory disease expertise.

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About PBD Biotech (www.pbdbio.com)

PBD Biotech Limited specialises in the use of novel bacteriophage-based technology. The company has developed proprietary, patented technology that can be used to detect the presence of mycobacteria that cause tuberculosis in humans and animals.

This includes human TB – *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (Mtb) – where the technology has application as a screening tool, as well as Bovine TB – *Mycobacterium bovis* (m.bovis) – and *Mycobacterium avium* subsp.*paratuberculosis* (MAP; Johne's Disease), which are significant causes of morbidity and loss of productivity in the agricultural industry.