



## **ImmBio-Led Consortium Releases Promising Data for Meningitis B Vaccine**

**Cambridge, UK; 5<sup>th</sup> September 2008:** Preventing meningitis is a major healthcare goal. Infection is rapid but early detection is difficult, by which time the impact can include disability due to damage to the brain, surrounded by the meninges, through to death. This is particularly a problem in infants, the most vulnerable group, as carers often only recognise external symptoms once an infection is well-advanced.

The bacterial pathogen *Neisseria meningitidis* is a major cause of meningitis and most disease is caused by five serogroups: A, B, C, Y and W-135. Most recently, the successful development of a vaccine for meningitis C has dramatically reduced the overall incidence of meningitis, now only leaving serogroup B (NmB) without a protective vaccine. Difficulties arise because the serogroup B polysaccharide coat structure is also found in humans, unlike other serogroups, so a vaccine cannot target the coating. In addition, most countries have multiple strains of NmB in circulation and hence a vaccine protective against NmB irrespective of strain is required.

ImmunoBiology (“ImmBio”) is developing a new approach to vaccines using Heat shock protein Complexes (“HspCs<sup>TM</sup>”). These appropriately deliver multiple antigens to dendritic cells, hence eliciting a broad and safe protective immune response. ImmBio leads a consortium composed of meningitis researchers in the School of Medical Sciences University of Bristol and ERA Consulting Ltd and working closely with the Health Protection Agency. The consortium is partly supported by a bioprocess development grant from the UK’s Technology Strategy Board.

A poster presentation at the 16<sup>th</sup> International Pathogenic Neisseria Conference in Rotterdam highlights successful progress to date. HspC vaccine derived from *N. meningitidis* strain MC58 induced antibodies that mediate the uptake of a diverse panel of NmB strains by human phagocytic cells in a pre-clinical study. Though with development work still required, this is a very encouraging and significant step in the search for a broadly-protective vaccine.

**Ends**

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**Notes to editors:****ImmunoBiology Ltd (“ImmBio”)**

ImmBio is developing anti-infective vaccines, addressing areas of high unmet need, where the risk and consequence of infection are severe. It is progressing a development portfolio of breakthrough products utilizing its HspC™ platform technology and ImmunoBodies™ technology. TB, supported by the Aeras Global TB Vaccine Foundation, in turn funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is the lead bacterial programme. Influenza, protective against both seasonal and pandemic strains, is the lead viral programme. ImmBio is based at the Babraham Research Campus in Cambridge UK. For further information please visit [www.immbio.com](http://www.immbio.com)

**University of Bristol**

The Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine at the University of Bristol is a leading centre for infection and immunology research, housing multiple groups focused on understanding the pathogenicity and immunology of meningitis causing organisms. This work is led by Professor Neil A. Williams, who is the Head of Department (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cellmolmed/>) and also Director of Science for KWS BioTest Ltd (<http://www.kwsbiotest.co.uk/>), as well as being a member of the scientific panel of the Meningitis Research Foundation.

**ERA Consulting (UK) Ltd.**

The ERA Consulting Group provides regulatory affairs and product/process development consulting services for biotechnology and biological medicinal products. With offices in Germany, UK (London), USA (Washington D.C.) and Australia (Brisbane), ERA has unrivalled expertise, a proven track record and over 21 years of experience, covering more than 350 biological/biotech products. For further information please visit [www.eraconsulting.com](http://www.eraconsulting.com)

**Health Protect Agency (HPA)**

The Health Protection Agency is a national organisation which is dedicated to protecting people's health and reducing the impact of infectious diseases, chemical, poisons and radiation hazards. Formed in 2003 by bringing together expertise in various aspects of public health the Agency also undertakes specialist contract work for industry, which includes research and development of vaccines against infectious diseases.

**Technology Strategy Board**

The Technology Strategy Board is a business-led executive non-departmental public body, established by the government. Its mission is to promote and support research into, and development and exploitation of, technology and innovation for the benefit of UK business, in order to increase economic growth and improve the quality of life. It is sponsored by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). Please visit [www.innovateuk.org](http://www.innovateuk.org) for further information.