



Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative*

Sponsored symposium: Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi)

Addressing equity challenges in health for neglected populations

Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative is currently involved in seven EDCTP-funded projects in the disease areas of human African trypanosomiasis (HAT), leishmaniasis and cryptococcal meningitis. Each of these diseases present with various challenges in prevention, diagnosis, treatment and access primarily affecting vulnerable and hard to reach populations. The aim of the symposium is to bring the patients stories forward to demonstrate the work DNDi and its partners are accomplishing to attain the SDGs and towards the goals of the WHO Road Map for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) by 2030.

Activities in the HAT, or sleeping sickness, projects aim at delivering improved treatments, compared to the previous therapies based on toxic arsenic derivative, melarsoprol, or cumbersome nifurtimox-eflornithine combination therapy. The projects do this with new all oral chemical entities fexinidazole and acoziborole, allowing for outpatient care and targeting the pediatric population. The HAT-r-ACC project intends to facilitate the extension of indication for fexinidazole to the Tb rhodesiense form of the disease; FEX-g-HAT proposes to facilitate pharmacovigilance activities after fexinidazole registration for treatment of Tb gambiense HAT; ACOZIKIDS intends to prepare the extension of indication of acoziborole for children with Tb gambiense.

Similarly for cryptococcal meningitis, the 5FC HIV-Crypto project addresses the difficulties of treatment access in low resource settings, with improved formulation allowing for better treatment adherence and access to this leading cause of death for people living with HIV.

The EDCTP-supported leishmaniasis projects (AfriKADIA, LeishAccess and VL-INNO) are proof in action that R&D efforts can bring new adapted treatments, responding to the needs of specific populations such as children with visceral leishmaniasis (VL) and HIV-VL co-infected patients. DNDi is aiming to address inequities in R&D with providing easy-to-administer, safe and efficacious treatments whilst empowering endemic health care workers with skills and enhanced capacities to test and treat patients in need.

Chair: Nathalie Strub-Wourgaft, Director of Neglected Tropical Diseases & COVID-19, Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi), Switzerland

Speakers:

Anthony Solomon, Chief Scientist, Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases, WHO – replacing Dr Mwele Malacele, Director, Control of NTDs

Progress and challenges in meeting the NTD Roadmap goals

Antoine Tarral, Head of the human African trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) Disease, DNDi, Switzerland

Human African trypanosomiasis: New treatments for the population at risk

Isabela Ribeiro, Head of Dynamic Portfolio Unit, DNDi, Switzerland

Improving cryptococcal meningitis treatment therapies for people living with HIV

Fabiana Alves, Head of Leishmaniasis Disease, DNDi, Switzerland

New treatments to respond to the needs of neglected patients affected with leishmaniasis