

Announcement

Antiviral Research Branch, NIAID IN VITRO ANTIVIRAL SCREEN and ANTIVIRAL EVALUATION IN ANIMAL MODELS

The goal of NIAID's Antiviral Research Program is to identify promising agents for therapy of human viral infections (other than AIDS) and facilitate their development. The Program interacts with commercial and academic scientists in both the preclinical and clinical evaluation of their compounds. All rights to the compounds evaluated remain entirely with the compounds sponsor. The sole interest of the government is to ensure that effective therapies for viral diseases are identified, developed, and licensed as expeditiously as possible. Two of the Program's preclinical services are described below.

I. The Antiviral Research Branch has recently established *in vitro* antiviral screening facilities to expedite the identification of compounds with inhibitory activity for herpes and respiratory viruses. In these facilities: (1) Therapeutic indices of potential antiviral compounds are determined; (2) Active compounds are further evaluated in additional cell lines using several virus strains including clinical isolates; and (3) More extensive studies on mechanism of action and activity in drug combinations are conducted with the consent of the sponsor, Confidentiality is strictly maintained. Screening of compounds for antiviral activity is available for:

Herpesviruses: HSV-1, HSV-2, HCMV, VZV, EBV

Principal investigator: Earl Kern, University of Alabama

Respiratory viruses: Flu A, Flu B, RSV-A2, Parainfluenza-3, Ad-5

Principal investigators: Phil Wyde and Brian Gilbert, Baylor College of Medicine

II. A major aspect of the Antiviral Substances Program's preclinical antiviral evaluation occurs in animal model systems that mimic a viral disease process in man. A list of the models currently supported by the Program follows: Simian varicella in African green monkeys; Guinea pig cytomegalovirus; Murine cytomegalovirus; HSV-1 encephalitis in mice; Neonatal herpes in mice; Genital herpes in guinea pigs; Respiratory syncytial virus infection of cotton rats; Influenza infection of mice; Parainfluenza in African green monkeys; Shope papillomavirus infection of domestic rabbits; Xenograft system for growth of HPV-11 papillomas in nude mice.

For more information, contact: Catherine Laughlin (animal models); Christopher Tseng (in vitro screen); Antiviral Research Branch, DMID, NIAID, NIH, Room 753, Westwood, Bethesda, MD 20892, U.S.A., (301) 496-8285.