

RITAM Newsletter No 44 – July 2006

1. RITAM – Europe workshop

We are organising an informal workshop on Thursday 26th October in Green College, University of Oxford, to discuss strategies to obtain funding for the important work that needs to be done on herbal antimalarials. In particular we will be discussing collaborative applications to European funding bodies such as the EU, DfID, and other government agencies. We have a list of at least ten projects from our members in Africa, Asia and South America which are just waiting to find funding before they can start. There are probably many more potential projects which we do not even know about.

The purpose of this meeting is to promote networking between members of RITAM, and to initiate the preparation of collaborative grant applications. Of course all members of RITAM are invited and are very welcome to attend. However this meeting is not funded, so everyone will have to fund their own travel and accommodation. No financial support can be given to those wishing to attend.

We would particularly appreciate the advice and input of any RITAM member who has experience of EU funding applications, and possible approaches.

If you are able to attend, please inform Merlin Willcox as soon as possible (merlinwillcox@doctors.org.uk). In order to help us plan this meeting, and to make it work for you, please let us know if you wish to make a presentation or to propose a collaboration or project in any particular area. We will then plan the agenda and try to identify partners before the meeting. Please note that if there is sufficient interest, the meeting will be extended to include Friday 27th October.

2. Antenna-RITAM project in Mali

The collaboration between the Malian Department for Traditional Medicine, Antenna Technologies (Geneva), and RITAM continues this summer with a series of three clinical trials. Firstly, we will be running a randomised controlled trial in a remote village of different strategies for the home management of malaria. For the treatment of presumptive malaria, at the village level, we are comparing the following two strategies:

- a) ACT as first line for all cases of presumptive malaria (as proposed by WHO)
- b) Herbal medicine as first line, with ACT as second line for those who do not improve.

Secondly, we are seeking to improve the quality of care for severe malaria at the local hospital, with a view to improving referral from traditional healers. We will also be investigating the treatment of severe malaria by traditional healers, and conducting a trial of sublingual sugar for the first-aid management of hypoglycaemia (a common complication of severe malaria) when no other treatment is available.

Please note that Merlin Willcox will be away working on this project in the field from 16th July to 16th October, so may not be able to answer your e-mails very rapidly!

3. Members' noticeboard

If you have any questions or are seeking collaborations with other RITAM members, please send them in and they can be put on this "noticeboard" section of the newsletter.

4. Website of interest

1st International Symposium about Pharmacology of Natural Products (FAPRONATURA 2006) and 1st International Symposium of the Latin-American and Caribbean Bulletin of Aromatic and Medicinal Plants (BLACPMA). Being held at Club Amigo Plus Varadero, Cuba, November 20-24, 2006. For more information, see: <http://www.scf.sld.cu/natprod/en/portada-en.htm>

5. Recent Publications of Interest

The following are recent publications by RITAM members:

Bodeker G, Burford G, Dvorak, Carter (2006). HIV/AIDS: traditional systems of health care in the management of a global epidemic. *J Alt Complem Med* 12(6).

V. Jullian, G. Bourdy, S. Georges, S. Maurel, M. Sauvain (2006). Validation of use of a traditional antimalarial remedy from French Guiana, *Zanthoxylum rhoifolium* Lam. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 106: 348–352.

P.G. Kirira, G.M. Rukunga, A.W. Wanyonyi, F.M. Muregi, J.W. Gathirwa, C.N. Muthaura, S.A. Omar, F. Tolo, G.M. Mungai, I.O. Ndiege (2006). Anti-plasmodial activity and toxicity of extracts of plants used in traditional malaria therapy in Meru and Kilifi Districts of Kenya. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 106: 403–407.

L.P. Kvist, S.B. Christensen, H.B. Rasmussen, K. Mejia, A. Gonzalez (2006). Identification and evaluation of Peruvian plants used to treat malaria and leishmaniasis. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 106: 390–402.

Milijaona Randrianarivelosia, David A. Fidock, Olivier Belmonte, Stephanie G. Valderramos, Odile Mercereau-Puijalon and Frédéric Ariey (2006). First evidence of pfcrt mutant *Plasmodium falciparum* in Madagascar. *Trans Roy Soc Trop Med Hyg* 100(9): 826-830

These are other publications of interest:

Heide L (2006). Artemisinin in traditional tea preparations of *Artemisia annua*. *Trans Roy Soc Trop Med Hyg* 100(8): 802.

C. Ichino, N. Soonthornchareonnon, W. Chuakul et al (2006). Screening of Thai Medicinal Plant Extracts and Their Active Constituents for In Vitro Antimalarial Activity. *Phytother. Res.* 20, 307–309.

Taylor S, Berridge V (2006). Medicinal plants and malaria: an historical case study of research at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the twentieth century. *Trans Roy Soc Trop Med Hyg* 100(8): 707-714.

6. New Members:

We welcome the following new members who have joined since the last newsletter:

Dr A.Erhart, Research assistant, Epidemiology Unit- Parasitology Dept, Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp, Belgium.

Mr. Nitin B Ghiware, Head, Department of Pharmacology, Nanded Pharmacy College, Shyam Nagar, Nanded, Maharashtra, India. Has done research on Piper nigrum and Nyctanthes arbortristis for their antimalarial activity.

Dr Jean-Robert Ioset, Research assistant, Laboratoire de Pharmacognosie et Phytochimie, Ecole de Pharmacie Genève-Lausanne, Université de Genève, Switzerland. Working on anti-parasitic plants and database of antimalarial plants.

Esther Katuura, PhD Student, Makerere University, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Pharmacology, Kampala, Uganda. Working on ethnopharmacological survey of antimalarial plants in western Uganda.

Chief Peter Kombo, Kisii, Kenya. Working on sustainable malaria control for his community.

Barbara Lynne, Director, Abha Light Foundation, Nairobi, Kenya. Working on neem and homeopathy for the prevention and treatment of malaria.

Dr Tadele Worku, Senior Expert on Medicinal Plants, Ethio Agri-CEFT Plc, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Prof Arnold Vlietinck, Professor, University of Antwerp Department of Pharmacy, Antwerpen, Belgium. Has done extensive Screening and antimalarial-guided isolation of active plant compounds from medicinal plants used in traditional medicine, and now working on clinical trials of standardised phytomedicines.