**New Open Source Drug Discovery Project Aims to Develop Mycetoma Treatment**

*A transparent, open, and cost-effective approach to developing drugs for a deeply neglected disease*

*Geneva, Rotterdam, Sydney – 6 February 2018 –* The **MycetOS** (Mycetoma Open Source) project was launched today by the University of Sydney, Erasmus MC, and the Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative* (DND*i*) to use an [Open Pharma](http://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1002276) approach to discover compounds that could lead to new treatments for patients suffering from fungal mycetoma (eumycetoma), a devastating disease for which current treatments are ineffective, expensive, and toxic.

As a first step in the project, the global scientific community is invited to review the manuscript, “Analogues of fenarimols as novel drug candidates for mycetoma”, which has been recently submitted with full dataset to [bioRxiv,](https://www.biorxiv.org/content/early/2018/02/02/258905) an open access biology preprint server, for review and comment by interested scientists. The manuscript shares the results of early work to screen 800 diverse, drug-like molecules for active compounds against the causative pathogen of eumycetoma, which yielded several promising new hits. These results and the associated data form the starting point for the MycetOS community, which will communicate on Twitter ([@MycetOS](https://twitter.com/MycetOS)).

MycetOS will progress drug discovery efforts through community-driven, in-kind scientific contributions and a robust, fully transparent online presence. All ideas and results will be published immediately in real time to an open-access database. In addition to communicating via Twitter, the MycetOS community will use a dedicated [subreddit forum](ttps://www.reddit.com/r/OpenSourceMycetoma/) for transparent interactive discussion, and use [github](https://github.com/OpenSourceMycetoma) for sharing data and key project files.

*“We invite anyone interested to review not only the manuscript but also the dataset, and to join this Open Pharma drug discovery project for mycetoma,” said Dr Mat Todd, Associate Professor at the University of Sydney. “Forward movement of the work looks to the participation of interested researchers and others. This is already happening successfully with a previous Open Pharma project, Open Source Malaria (*[@O\_S\_M](https://twitter.com/O_S_M)*).”*

The manuscript on the findings of the screening effort was co-authored by early MycetOS participants from the University of Sydney, Erasmus MC, and DND*i*, and by partners at the Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), which provided the molecules for screening from their Stasis and open access Pathogen Boxes.

*“While MycetOS was developed by participants from the University of Sydney, Erasmus MC and DNDi, it is not ‘owned’ by any of us”, said Wendy van de Sande, Associate Professor, Erasmus MC. “This early work merely starts a process of discovering potential new chemical entities for eumycetoma, and we invite anyone interested to identify how they might contribute and participate as an equal partner in this search for a new treatment for this most neglected of tropical diseases.”*

***About eumycetoma***

Eumycetoma is a neglected tropical infectious disease, primarily endemic in Africa, that attacks the skin, deep muscle and bone, causing devastating deformities that frequently result in amputation and permanent disability. The current antifungal treatment is neither safe, nor effective (having only a 25-35% cure rate), nor affordable. The median treatment duration is 12 months, and the treatment costs more than many local people can afford. An effective, safe, affordable and shorter-term curative treatment that is appropriate for rural settings is urgently needed.

**Contact information**

To connect with the MycetOS community, follow [@MycetOS](https://twitter.com/MycetOS) on Twitter.

You can read more about MycetOS on DND*i*’s website at: <https://www.dndi.org/diseases-projects/open-innovation/>

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