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ASIA EDITION

Taxis Pharma receives $2.9 M NIH grant to develop therapeutic against antibiotic-resistant Gonorrhea

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To further advance R&D efforts for its dihydrofolate reductase inhibitors



Taxis Pharmaceuticals, a US-based clinical stage company at the forefront of developing therapies to treat multidrug-resistant bacterial infections and combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR), has received a $2.9 million grant, to be awarded over three years, from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID), one of the institutes of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The grant will allow Taxis to further advance R&D efforts for its dihydrofolate reductase inhibitors (DHFRIs) as a novel approach to combat multi-drug resistant gonorrhea (MDRSG, commonly referred to as Super Gonorrhea), a rapidly spreading deadly and highly resistant strain of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*.

DHFRIs target and inhibit the essential bacterial enzyme dihydrofolate reductase (DHFR), thereby blocking DNA, RNA, and protein synthesis, resulting in cell death. Taxis' oral, first-in-class investigational DHFRIs targeting MDRSG successfully eradicated MDRSG in animal efficacy models.

Super gonorrhea poses a critical public health challenge due to its resistance to the last line of effective antibiotic treatment, ceftriaxone. Known for its severe symptoms and high transmission rates, super gonorrhea is escalating worldwide. Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there are approximately 82 million new cases of gonorrhea each year, and in 2020, about half of all gonorrhea infections in the US were estimated to be resistant to at least one antibiotic.

This news marks the second multi-year, multi-million dollar NIH grant awarded to Taxis Pharmaceuticals within a 12-month period, following a $2.67 million NIH grant in May 2024 to further R&D of its investigational efflux pump inhibitor (EPI) candidate, a combination therapy intended to combat antibiotic-resistant pneumonia.