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ASIA EDITION

Australian startup ENA Respiratory secures funding for antiviral nasal spray trial

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ENA Respiratory, a clinical-stage pharmaceutical startup developing host defence enhancers for the prevention of complications associated with respiratory viral infections in at-risk populations, has been awarded AUD $2,980,000 in funding from Australia's Biointelect Venturer as part of its inaugural funding round.

The funding will support a first-in-patients study in Australia of INNA-051, in patients with asthma. The Phase Ib study (ENA-A-04) will be a randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled study evaluating the safety, tolerability, pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of intranasal INNA-051 in adults with asthma. The trial is expected to start in Q1 2027.

Currently in a Phase IIa community study in the USA, INNA-051 is a virus-agnostic, once- weekly, dry powder nasal spray that primes the natural antiviral host defences in the nose where common respiratory viruses like colds, flu, RSV and coronaviruses primarily enter, enabling the body to respond more quickly when challenged. INNA-051 therapy aims to reduce the incidence of complications in patients at higher risk of severe illness.

Biointelect Venturer is Australia's new national incubator for vaccine and infectious disease innovation, funded by the Australian Government's Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) through the 2024 BioMedTech Incubator Grant Opportunity.

ENA Respiratory is currently conducting the Phase II 'POSITS' study evaluating the safety, tolerability and efficacy of a once-weekly treatment with INNA-051 for up to three months and assessing its impact on the incidence, duration and severity of symptomatic infections caused by common respiratory viruses, including influenza, RSV, rhinovirus, and coronaviruses in young adult participants at risk of illness due to living or working in crowded environments. The first stage of the study was successfully completed in May 2026 and Part B is expected to start dosing in the next North American respiratory virus season.