VHFMoDRAD 3rd newsletter

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VHFMoDRAD: what's new?

- **The Consortium welcomed two new partners in the project**

Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi (SCU), established in Sivas (Turkey), joined VHFMoDRAD as a new partner in September 2020.

Turkey has the largest annual numbers (approx. 1000) for Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) disease in the world and Sivas is the region the most affected by the infection in Turkey. SCU has medical expertise with access to a unique CCHF patient sample collection and is already involved as a key partner in a H2020 project (CCHFVaccine) which focuses on developing vaccines for CCHFV. Professor Elaldi has access to BSL2 laboratory in a Biotech Centre, Advanced Technology Research and Application Center (CUTAM) on the university campus and has developed a strong network of international and national collaborations with partners in the world.

The main roles of SCU for this project are the set-up of a unique biobank including plasma, peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs), saliva, and urine samples of human CCHF patients with corresponding patient database and validation of developed multiplex molecular diagnostics in WP2 and serological field diagnostics such as lateral flow and ELISA assays in WP3 against CCHF virus. In addition, the developed assays and diagnostic test kits can be validated at this hospital during an epidemic period, which make them unique.

SCU team is glad to be a member of this great consortium since the main aim of the project which will be developed to diagnostics for CCHF point of care (POC) tests, in particular. Despite of the availability of commercialized molecular tests, we believe that there is a strong need for the rapid diagnostics which will be used for patient management, especially in highly CCHF epidemic rural areas in Turkey. Such tests can be useful for early diagnosis of CCHF cases at the primary and secondary healthcare centers (HCCs) and transferring them to the tertiary HCCs for early initiation of the treatment, and for preventing disease transmission both in the community and in hospitals.

Professor Nazif Elaldi (MD, Dept. of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology) and his team (from left to right: Ayse Nur Pektas, Tuba Nur Tasseten, Nazif Elaldi and Binnur Bagci) in front of the Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Research Center

Medizinische Hochschule Brandenburg (MHB), Germany, joined the project to handle the activities conducted so far by University of Stirling (UoS) leaving the project.

The rapid detection of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, the understanding of molecular pathomechanism and the host/pathogene interaction are the main focus of research activities at the Institute of Microbiology & Virology of the Brandenburg Medical School. The Virology group is specialized in rapid field diagnostics. Current projects include the development of RPA assays for SARS CoV2. In collaboration with microsystem technology partners, RPA assays are being implemented into microfluidic platforms. Experiences of field trials in West-Africa are currently being transferred to develop POC assays. EBOV qPCR and RPA assays developed with IPD (partner of VHFMoDRAD) were successfully deployed in Conakry, Guinea in 2015.

Pr Manfred Weidmann and Dr Rea Kobialka, new post-doc recruited on the project, are working on development of RPA lateral flow assay as part of the effort to cover main arboviral epidemic differentials of a haemorrhagic fever outbreaks such as Dengue virus, Chikungunya virus and Zika virus.

- **VHFMoDRAD has been extended for one year**

Due to some delays during the COVID-19 pandemic (see our Newsletter 2 (https://vhfmodrad.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/VHFMoDRAD-Newsletter-2_VF-1.pdf) the VHFMoDRAD has requested to IHI a one-year no-cost extension to allow the project to reach its objectives. This extension has been accepted in November 2022 and the new end date of the Project is on December 31st, 2023.

- **VHFMoDRAD 3rd Annual meeting on 7th-8th June 2022 in Rome**

The VHFMoDRAD Partners have been hosted by Italian Partner INMI (National Institute of Infectious Diseases L. Spallanzani) in Rome for its 3rd Annual meeting on June 7th-8th, 2022. 10 partners were represented in person in Rome and 2 partners and the IHI Project Officer were present online. Project progress, objectives and next steps have been discussed during this General Annual Meeting.

Useful Links
VHFMoDRAD
https://vhfmodrad.eu/
https://www.imi.europa.eu/projects-results/project-factsheets/vhfmodrad

IMI Ebola+ programme
https://www.imi.europa.eu/projects-results/project-factsheets/ebola

VHFMoDRAD Partners

- Folkhälsomyndigheten (FoHM), Sweden
- Inserm Transfert (IT), France
- University of Stirling (UoS), United Kingdom
- Department of Health, Public Health England (DH-PHE), United Kingdom
- Coris BioConcept SPRL (CORIS), Belgium
- Institut national de la Santé et de la recherche médicale (INSERM), France
- University of Copenhagen (UCPH), Denmark
- Istituto Nazionale per le Malattie Infettive "L. Spallanzani" I.R.C.C.S (INMI), Italy
- Institut Pasteur de Dakar (IPD), Senegal
- RD-Biotech (RD-B), France
- CEPHEID, France
- Aix-Marseille University (AMU), France
- Emergency (EMR), Italy
- Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi (SCU), Turkey
- Medizinische Hochschule Brandenburg (MHB), Germany