

National CFIDS Foundation

Press Release

5/31/06

Potential Animal (Zoonotic) Virus Identified in Patients with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Multiple Sclerosis and Epilepsy

Recent independent scientific research funded by the National CFIDS Foundation, Inc. (NCF) of Needham, MA provided preliminary confirmation of a new virus identified in patients with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. The Foundation's medical research dovetails with that completed to date by Cryptic Afflictions, LLC *, a private company.

Dr. Steven J. Robbins, virologist and Chief Executive Officer of Cryptic Afflictions, LLC has discovered a major neuropathogen identified as an RNA virus designated as Cryptovirus. Substantial clinical and molecular evidence indicates that this virus is involved in the development of neurological disorders that include Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), also known as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.) by the World Health Organization, Multiple Sclerosis (M.S.) and Idiopathic Epilepsy of unknown cause.

According to the company, "This previously undetected virus appears to be of significant importance to researchers looking for a cure to Multiple Sclerosis and many other neurological illnesses. Antibodies to the newly discovered virus were found in the cerebrospinal fluid and blood of over 90% of the patients tested with Multiple Sclerosis. It is believed that this newly discovered virus may prove to be responsible for a host of neurological disorders. Tests are currently being prepared for tissue samples of lesions within the brains of patients with Multiple Sclerosis. This will be the final round of tests before approaching the FDA for approval of the diagnostic tests."

Dr. Robbins' evidence includes the presence of virus-specific antibodies in the serum and cerebrospinal fluid of patients suffering from these disorders, the ability of the virus to cause virtually identical disease in experimentally-infected animals, and nucleotide sequence data that indicates that the virus is pandemic and represents a single virus species much like measles.

A recently published medical journal article suggests that Cryptovirus is most similar to Parainfluenza Virus-5, a rubulavirus in the paramyxovirus family. Another rubulavirus related to Cryptovirus and Parainfluenza Virus-5, that has gained national attention for its large outbreak, is the mumps virus. Rubulavirus infections have been associated with encephalitis, meningitis, orchitis, inflammation of the testicles or ovaries, spontaneous abortion, and deafness.

The NCF has conducted its own preliminary research into the potential role of Cryptovirus and Parainfluenza Virus-5 in Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Professor Alan Cocchetto, Medical Director for the Foundation stated, "Our own funded research first confirmed the lack of a vital protein, known as Stat-1, in the blood of patients with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Stat-1 plays an indispensable role in immunity. Without this protein, patients are unable to effectively fight viral and bacterial infections. Thus, the next logical question to be answered was 'Could a virus be causing this Stat-1 depletion?' " Cocchetto continued, "Parainfluenza Virus-5 is a virus that had to be seriously considered as a possible piece of this medical puzzle because it directly targets and destroys the Stat-1 protein." Gail Kansky, President of the NCF stated, "Once we

determined the status of Stat-1 in patient blood samples, we knew that we had to look for possible evidence of Parainfluenza Virus-5 infection. It was during this phase of our own research that we actually learned of Dr. Steven Robbins' discovery of Cryptovirus specific antibody reactivity in patients with CFS." Dr. Robbins had tested fifty-six serum specimens from patients who had been diagnosed with CFS along with eleven matching cerebrospinal fluid samples obtained from physicians in Brisbane and Southeast Queensland. Dr. Robbins had determined that 96% of the blood samples and 91% of the spinal fluid samples tested positively for Cryptovirus specific antibodies in these CFS patients.

The National CFIDS Foundation's own research began to dovetail with that of Dr. Robbins. Scientists funded by the Foundation performed numerous tests for Parainfluenza Virus-5 that included antibody as well as PCR specific probes. Antibody testing provided some initial hints, however a PCR specific probe picked up the infection in a former patient of David S. Bell, M.D. and Paul R. Cheney, Ph.D., M.D., both considered well known specialists in the field of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Kansky commented, "Though our funded research continues in diagnostic testing, our findings have served to highlight the important work of Dr. Robbins and the role of Cryptovirus and Parainfluenza Virus-5 infection in CFS."

NCF scientists utilized the NIH Genbank database to find the nucleotide sequence for a specific viral protein of Cryptovirus that matched 100% to the porcine (swine) strain of Parainfluenza Virus-5 known as the SER strain. In 1994, scientists at Bayer AG in Germany first isolated the SER strain from swine with Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome. "This may represent a zoonotic process since zoonotic viruses are those that can be transmitted between animals and people" stated Cocchetto. Kansky commented, "Here we have what appears to be the same viral strain of Parainfluenza Virus-5 on two continents and in two different populations, swine and humans. Given that the NCF found Parainfluenza Virus-5 in one CFS patient in the United States certainly raises the bar." The Foundation is currently funding further research.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has several ongoing grants in the Parainfluenza Virus-5 field. Currently, however, there is only one U.S. scientist specifically funded for research on the SER strain of Parainfluenza Virus-5 by the NIH.

Founded in 1997, the National CFIDS Foundation has grown to become the largest, all-volunteer patient organization of its type in the United States. The Foundation has no paid employees and is funded solely by individual donations for the primary purpose to fund medical research into the cause and treatment and/or cure of Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (CFIDS/CFS).

** "Limina Biotechnologies, Inc. is a recently formed subsidiary of Global Medical Technologies, Inc. that was established for the purpose of merging Cryptic Afflictions LLC and Global Medical Technologies, Inc. It is the intent of management to spin off this newly formed corporation once the merger is completed so Limina can raise capital through its own IPO," according to the company's website, www.globalmedicaltech.com.*