A novel solution to antimicrobial resistance
HKU medical chemists discover a metallodrug treating peptic ulcers effective in “taming” superbugs

February 7, 2018

Antimicrobial resistance has been a major public health issue of global concern. "Superbugs” pose an enormous threat to human health. Drug-resistant infections kill around 700,000 people worldwide each year, and the figure could increase to ten million by 2050, exceeding the number of deaths caused by cancers, according to figures of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Given the increasing overuse of antibiotics resulting in the development of antimicrobial resistance and the slow development of new antibiotics, scientists and clinicians are in desperate need to discover an economic, effective and safe alternative to new antibiotics as a solution to antimicrobial resistance.

A research led by Professor Sun Hongzhe of the Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science and Dr Richard Kao Yi-Tsun of the Department of Microbiology, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, the University of Hong Kong (HKU) revealed that a metal-based antibacterial drug for treating peptic ulcers can effectively “tame” multi-resistant superbugs by suppressing their activities and the development of antibiotic resistance.

The findings have been published in renowned international academic journal Nature Communications and a patent has been filed for the discovery.

Professor Sun, Dr Richard Kao and paper co-author Dr Ho Pak-leung, Director of HKU Centre for Infection, will in a press conference on February 8 (Thursday) explain the research findings and potential application of the metallo-antibacterial drug on superbugs.

Details are as follows:
Date: February 8, 2018 (Thursday)
Time: 10:30am
Venue: Faculty of Science Conference Room, G/F, Chong Yuet Ming Physics Building, HKU Main Campus (map)

For media enquiries, please contact Ms Cindy Chan, Senior Communication Manager, Faculty of Science, HKU (tel: 3917 5286/ 6703 0212; email: cindycst@hku.hk), or Ms Melanie Wan, Senior Manager (Media), Communications and Public Affairs Office, HKU ( tel: 2859 2600/ email: melwkwan@hku.hk).

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