

Novel COVID-19 Antibody Therapy Candidates Identified by Leading UK Biotech Consortium

- *Potent antibody drug combinations identified*
- *Candidate antibodies could be used to treat and protect against SARS-CoV-2 infections*
- *Antibody combinations differentiated from others currently being investigated*

London, UK, 29 October 2020 – The [UK BIA Antibody Taskforce](#), a leading UK consortium developing antibodies for treating COVID-19 has reached a major milestone - the identification of differentiated antibody combinations that will be taken forward for further development as an antibody “cocktail”. The Taskforce developed an accelerated and rigorous multifaceted approach to create a pool of over 600 novel candidates and identified a set of antibodies with the greatest potential.

Dr Jane Osbourn OBE, CSO at Alchemab and leader of the Taskforce, said: “We have accelerated the standard timelines for antibody discovery, taking 7 months rather than the industry standard 18 months, establishing a pathway that can be applied to future pandemics. We believe that the most effective tool against COVID-19 will most likely be a defined mixture of two to three antibodies - so the effectiveness of different combinations must also be assessed.”

These candidate antibodies are the first to be selected for the next stage of development, following assessment by collaborators for potency. Assessment of their efficacy as a cocktail is ongoing, however, early indications are showing a potential competitively potent cocktail that is differentiated from other products currently being investigated in clinic. The candidates are poised to move into the next phase of development where further screening and safety testing will need to be performed.

Steve Bates OBE, CEO of the BIA, said: “This ground-breaking Taskforce has brought together UK-based industry experts who share a joint commitment to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Contributing their expertise and specialist resources, the team has worked tirelessly to identify the most promising antibodies with the potential to positively impact treatment of those affected by this devastating virus. The next stage will involve securing external funding to facilitate the further development and manufacture of the candidates.”

The next phase of the project will involve manufacturing of the selected antibody cocktails to support initial clinical trials in 2021, to provide essential safety and efficacy data.

-- ENDS --

NOTES TO EDITORS

UK BIA Antibody Taskforce

The Taskforce is a world-leading consortium of biotech companies, charities and academia based across the UK who share a joint commitment to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Contributing their expertise and resources, the team is working together to rapidly identify the most promising antibodies with the potential to positively impact treatment of those affected by this devastating virus. The goal of the Taskforce is to develop an antibody-based treatment for patients with COVID-19, which could also potentially work as a preventative therapy for high-risk individuals and complement the current vaccination strategy. As part of a global hub for the life sciences, the UK BIA Antibody Taskforce wants to truly make a difference to people's lives.

For more information, see <https://www.biacovid19.org/antibodies.html>

UK BIA Antibody Taskforce Members

Antibody discovery: Alchemab, Imperial College London, IONTAS, Kymab, LifeArc, University of Kent and University of Oxford

Antibody screening and assessment: Abcam, Imperial College London, LifeArc, National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC) and University of Oxford

Antibody manufacturing: Absolute Antibody, CPI, Kymab

Secretariat: BIA

Legal advice: Osborne Clarke

Contact

Jack Fellows

Media Relations and Communications Manager

BioIndustry Association (BIA)

T: +44 (0)207 630 2196 / +44 (0)7825 942 934

E: jfellows@bioindustry.org