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WORKING TOWARDS BETTER TUBERCULOSIS SCREENING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: EPILAB JOINS THE CERBA HEALTHCARE GROUP'S VIRTUAL INCUBATOR

According to the World Health Organisation, tuberculosis has been the world's leading cause of infectious mortality for more than 20 years. Every year, 10 million people contract tuberculosis, and of these, an estimated one third of new cases are undetected. These 3 million cases therefore do not receive the treatment that they need and are extremely contagious. They account for most of the 10 million infections and 1.5 million victims of the disease the following year.

The main reason for this lack of detection is the lack of testing suitable for developing countries, where 80% of cases are found. Current tests require infrastructure and medical personnel, which are scarce in these countries and too expensive.

In order to face this challenge, the development of new Point-of-Care diagnostic methods is essential. Portable, easy to use, fast, cost effective and reliable, these systems extend the screening capacity in remote areas while maintaining the advantage of validation of the result and care for the patient by a clinical pathologist.

Based on a patent held by Université de Bourgogne and INRA, EpiLAB is developing an integrated POCT (point of care terminal) solution that aims to offer this accessible, medically rigorous solution in everyday practice.

According to Clément Dubois and Maurice Lubetzki, co-founders of EpiLAB, *“By joining the Virtual Incubator of the Cerba HealthCare Group, the European leader in medical diagnosis already widely established in Africa, EpiLAB will be able to speed up the development of its test and its large-scale use. The collaboration with Cerba HealthCare will allow us to finalise a product as close as possible to the expectations and needs of the field in order to promote its adoption by healthcare professionals and optimise its integration into new patient treatment pathway”*.

“The partnership with EpiLAB marks a new stage in the success of our virtual incubator, our mechanism to support start-ups in open architecture that we created four years ago. The integration of Point of Care is a major issue in that it can improve healthcare pathways by making them increasingly relevant and effective for our patients. We also have several pilots underway in this field, both in Europe and in Africa”, added Jérôme Sallette, Chief Scientific Officer of Cerba HealthCare.

About Cerba HealthCare

Cerba HealthCare, a leading player in medical diagnosis, aims to support the evolution of health systems towards more prevention. It draws on more than 50 years of expertise in clinical pathology to better assess the risk of diseases development, detect and diagnose diseases earlier, and optimize the effectiveness of personalized medicine.

Every day, on 5 continents, the Group's 12,000 employees sustain the transformation of medicine, driven by one deep conviction : to advance diagnosis is to advance health.
Cerba HealthCare, *enlightening health*.

Additional information is available at www.cerbahealthcare.com

About EpiLAB

EpiLAB is an Ecole Polytechnique incubated company that develops a point-of-care tuberculosis diagnosis test helping health organizations fighting tuberculosis by bridging the diagnosis gap and downscaling contamination. The point-of-care screening kit meets the specifications defined by the World Health Organisation for such a test.

- Portable & easy to use: no infrastructure or medical staff is required
- Reliable: the basic detection threshold of the EpiLAB process is already close to the current standards associated with microscopic testing
- Quick: results are available in less than two hours and are sent to a cloud ensuring case traceability and case management

EpiLAB leverages a patented state of the art pairing microbiology and electrochemistry technology (n° WO/2018/178578, published on 04/10/18) which implies a tuberculosis biomarker electrochemical detection.

EpiLAB has won multiple innovation prizes, the 2020 Price of the Engineer of the Future and the start-up Challenge of Ecole Centrale. Additionally, the start-up partners with Hopital Bichat's National Reference Center of mycobacteria (INSERM & APHP) and has 20 letters of interest from major tuberculosis international players, including FIND.

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