

Award for phage therapy

PhagoMed wins Austrian Entrepreneurship Award Phönix

Vienna, 4 December 2018: Vienna-based Biotech company PhagoMed Biopharma GmbH was yesterday awarded the Austrian Entrepreneurship Award Phönix 2018 in the category "Start-Up International". The Phoenix award honours the development of antibiotics alternatives based on phages, a class of natural viruses that only infect bacteria, at the Vienna Biocenter. A distinguished jury selected PhagoMed as a Phoenix laureate and the award was presented jointly by the Austrian Minister of Digital and Economic Affairs and the Austrian Minister of Education, Science and Research during a prize ceremony in Vienna.

PhagoMed Biopharma GmbH (PhagoMed) works on solutions for the global antibiotics crisis – the accelerating rate of multi-drug resistances against the historically so effective antibiotics. The company develops pharmaceuticals based on natural viruses, so-called phages, that can infect and destroy bacteria. Phages therefore have the potential to become a highly effective alternative to antibiotics for the treatment of multi-drug resistant infections. Indeed, PhagoMed's clinical co-founders have successfully treated individual patients with phages in Germany – as a last resort when antibiotics had failed.

The high potential of PhagoMed's technology as well as the high socio-political relevance of its development programs were recognized by the distinguished jury of the Austrian Entrepreneurship Award Phönix, which was awarded for the fifth time this year. The award is presented jointly by the Austrian Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs and the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Research and honours young and successful companies that serve as role models for high-class research and successful high-tech entrepreneurship in Austria. In a competitive contest, PhagoMed emerged as the winner in the category "Start-Up International" and received the award yesterday evening during a prize ceremony in Vienna. The award in the category "Start-Up International" is given to most successful young company, whose business idea was created outside of Austria and which was subsequently successfully established in Austria.

"We're very excited to have received the Phönix Entrepreneurship Award. The award is a wonderful confirmation of our vision to re-establish phage therapy in Western medicine," says Dr. Lorenzo Corsini, Co-Founder and Co-CEO of PhagoMed. "The category "Start-Up International" perfectly reflects our multi-national set-up. Our clinical co-founders are still based in Germany and our products are being developed together with prestigious research institutions in Belgium and Germany."

One specific field of focus for the company is the treatment of infected artificial joints, such as hip prostheses. These infections are difficult to treat since they are often caused by multi-drug resistant bacteria. In addition, the bacteria typically form a so-called biofilm on the surface of the prosthesis, which further inhibits the effectiveness of antibiotics. In these types of complex infections phages are especially promising as a treatment alternative since they can degrade the bacterial biofilms as well as kill the multi-drug resistant bacteria. Since 2018, PhagoMed's development programs are co-financed through public grants by the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft mbH, FFG) and the

Austria Wirtschaftsservice Gesellschaft mbH (aws). Both institutions recognized the necessity of developing solutions for the antibiotics crisis – and the potential of phage therapy as an alternative to antibiotics.

TED.com publishes TED Talk on phages

The potential of phage therapy is also being recognized in the US. Recently, the American platform TED selected PhagoMed's Co-Founder and Co-CEO Alexander Belcredi as speaker on the topic of phages and phage therapy. His TED Talk was recorded at the beginning of October in Toronto, Canada and published on TED.com in mid-November (go.ted.com/alexanderbelcredi). The Talk focuses on Alexander Belcredi's personal journey into the world of phages and the potential of phage therapy as a solution to the global antibiotics crisis. Within two weeks of its publication, the TED Talk has already been viewed more than 600.000 times.

About PhagoMed Biopharma GmbH

PhagoMed Biopharma GmbH is a biotech company focused on the development of human therapeutic applications of phage therapy. Its development programs are based on the last-resort treatment experiences of its clinical co-founders with phages as well as research collaborations with highly prestigious scientists and research institutions in Germany (Leibniz-Institute DSMZ-German collection of microorganisms and cell cultures GmbH, Braunschweig as well as Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen) and Belgium (Ghent University). Since its incorporation in November 2017, the company has raised more than €4 million in public grants and private investments. Amongst others, the company is supported by grants from the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft mbH, FFG) and the Austria Wirtschaftsservice Gesellschaft mbH (aws). Currently, PhagoMed has a team of ten highly skilled scientist working on its programs, six of which at the Campus Vienna Biocenter in Vienna, Austria.

About Phages

Phages are viruses that only infect bacteria. Phages multiply by injecting their DNA into the bacteria and reprogramming the bacteria cells to produce new phages. As soon as sufficient phages have been produced by the bacteria, the phages express special enzymes that degrade the bacterial cell wall and lead to the death of the bacterial cell. Individual phages are only active against a limited spectrum of bacteria (typically even only within one species). The combination of high selectivity as well as high effectiveness in killing bacteria makes phages highly attractive as an alternative to antibiotics for the treatment of serious bacterial infections.

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