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BIOPHARMICA

Biopharmica says Diagnostic Array Systems has developed Bactrak, a diagnostic genetic microarray for the identification of microbial pathogens causing a range of lung diseases. Biopharmica is the majority owner of the Melbourne-based Diagnostic Array Systems, a joint venture with RMIT University.

The company said the Bactrak project was given clinical funding in 2007 with the award of an Ausindustry Commercial Ready Grant. The term of the grant had been completed and the project met its objectives.

Biopharmica said Bactrak had key features underpinning its commercial potential including: rapid simultaneous detection of 16 respiratory pathogens including tuberculosis (TB), Legionella and methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA).

The company said the diagnostic tool produced results within hours rather than days using the current culture gold standard and achieved sensitivity and positive confirmation for the 16 pathogens from easily obtained clinical sputum samples.

Biopharmica said that benefits from the project included: earlier, appropriate treatment; shorter hospital stay; earlier potential isolation of hospital patients; and a reduction in the over-prescription of broad-spectrum antibiotics.

The company said the ability of Bactrak to detect respiratory pathogens, including TB, Legionella and MRSA from a single sputum sample was "of immense importance and potential value".

"Given the global significance and threat of TB in particular it is hoped large volume manufacturing ... should deliver a low cost diagnostic kit suitable for deployment in both developing and third world countries," the company said.

Biopharmica is actively marketing Bactrak to identify a strategic partner to deliver a commercial version of this unique diagnostic tool.

Diagnostic Array Systems holds intellectual property for the Bactrak technology in Australia, with international patent filing by Biopharmica for Diagnostic Array Systems progressing through national phase in Canada, China, Europe, Japan and the US.