Abbott And UC San Francisco Discover New Virus Is Linked To Hepatitis C

- Study is first to reveal entire genetic makeup of human pegivirus 2

ABBOTT PARK, Ill., Dec. 11, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Abbott and University of California San Francisco (UCSF) published research identifying a newly discovered human virus, known as human pegivirus 2 (HPgV-2), and proving it is found among some patients with hepatitis C (HCV). This research, published today in *PLOS Pathogens*, identified eight complete strains of HPgV-2, which makes it the first study to reveal the entire genetic makeup of this new virus. Although infection with this bloodborne virus was found to be tightly associated with HCV, it is not yet known whether this new virus can cause disease.

"Based on our findings, our team used the genetic makeup of the virus to develop both a molecular test for detecting it in the bloodstream and an antibody test for determining an immune response to the virus. Our next step is to explore whether this new virus can cause disease, and if so, work with blood banks to continue to help safeguard the world's blood supply against these types of new viruses," said John Hackett Jr., Ph.D., divisional vice president of applied research and technology at Abbott. "Research such as this is ultimately focused on unlocking new technologies that hold the potential for significant improvements to the practice of healthcare."

This study was conducted by the UCSF-Abbott Viral Diagnostics and Discovery Center (VDDC), which was established through a multi-year collaboration between Abbott and UCSF. To identify the new virus, researchers used techniques for sequencing fragments of the genetic makeup of it, including deep sequencing and ultra-rapid pathogen identification technologies. The patient blood sample from which the virus was first discovered was provided by the Center for Liver Diseases at University of Chicago Medical Center.

"By characterizing eight complete genomes and four partial genomes of human pegivirus 2, this study provides new insights into the evolution and diversity of this virus in infected individuals," said Dr. Charles Chiu, M.D., Ph.D., an associate professor of laboratory medicine at UCSF and director of the UCSF-Abbott VDDC. "Discoveries like these are one of the reasons our partnership with Abbott is so important, as they provide us with information that push the boundaries of scientific knowledge and may have significant downstream implications with respect to human health."

About Abbott:

At Abbott (NYSE: ABT), we're committed to helping you live your best possible life through the power of health. For more than 125 years, we've brought new products and technologies to the world -- in nutrition, diagnostics, medical devices and branded generic pharmaceuticals -- that create more possibilities for more people at all stages of life. Today, 73,000 of us are working to help people live not just longer, but better, in the more than 150 countries we serve.

Connect with us at www.abbott.com, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Abbott and on Twitter @AbbottNews and @AbbottGlobal.

Logo - http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20150928/271488LOGO

SOURCE Abbott

For further information: Abbott Media: Darcy Ross, +1 (224) 667-3655, Jessica Masuga, +1 (224) 668-0650; or Abbott Financial: Michael Comilla, +1 (224) 668-1872

Additional assets available online:

Photos (1)

Documents (1)