Abbott And New Global Consortium Partnership Address Viral Outbreaks Caused By Climate Change

- Abbott is joining the Climate Amplified Disease and Epidemics (CLIMADE) consortium, which will use data science to predict, track and control diseases that may be amplified by climate change
- A changing climate may increase the spread of both known and unknown viruses, particularly those transmitted by water or animals carrying diseases
- CLIMADE's initial work will start with disease surveillance inAfrica and expand to countries often impacted by infectious disease outbreaks caused by climate change

ABBOTT PARK, Ill., April 20, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Abbott (NYSE: ABT) announced today that it is partnering with the Climate Amplified Disease and Epidemics (CLIMADE) consortium, a group of more than 100 global scientists in public health agencies, academia and industry focused on using data science technology and diagnostic testing to assess and potentially mitigate the impact climate change has on disease outbreaks.

A changing climate, such as warmer temperatures and a rise in extreme weather events like droughts and floods, has the potential to accelerate the spread of disease, which could fuel a new era of pandemics. Research has found that climate change could impact more than half of known infectious diseases, which commonly spread via water or animals carrying diseases, such as West Nile virus and malaria.[1]

As part of the consortium, scientists trained in infectious diseases, bioinformatics and data science will develop technologies that can aggregate environmental, weather and viral sequencing data sets to predict if conditions could cause a disease outbreak. If a potential outbreak is identified, resources and rapid surveillance testing can be sent to that location to prevent further spread.

"Imagine being able to track weather patterns to determine if rising floods may lead to a water-borne disease outbreak," said Gavin Cloherty, Ph.D., head of infectious disease research and the Pandemic Defense Coalition in Abbott's diagnostics business. "Abbott's work with CLIMADE is focused on tracking and predicting events so testing and medical resources can be deployed to prevent the spread of disease – making a real impact in communities and people's lives."

The CLIMADE consortium will be focused on improving surveillance tools and expanding access to resources to decrease the impact of climate amplified diseases and epidemics. The global group of scientists is led by Tulio de Oliveira, Ph.D., a professor at Stellenbosch University and Director of the Centre for Epidemic Response and Innovation (CERI) in South Africa as well as Luiz Carlos Alcantara, Ph.D., a professor at the FundaçãoOsvaldo Cruz (FIOCRUZ) in Brazil and Edward Holmes, Ph.D., an evolutionary biologist and virologist and professor at the University of Sydney. CLIMADE members include public health agencies, like the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), that bring decades of experience in genomics surveillance and epidemic response, as well as academic organizations such as the Broad Institute, University of Washington and University of Oxford.

Abbott and its partners in the Abbott Pandemic Defense Coalition will provide viral sequencing and testing data as part of the technology being developed and can provide diagnostic testing for potential outbreaks.

"We are bringing together the best minds in the medical, scientific and public health communities to help the world create a robust surveillance system that quickly identifies pathogens and tracks their evolution and spread," said Oliveira. "This collaboration across the private and public sectors is critical to pandemic preparedness and to our ability to go from responding to outbreaks to predicting them before they occur."

CLIMADE's initial work will start with disease surveillance inAfrica and expand to countries around the world that are often impacted by infectious disease outbreaks.

Protecting Health in an Evolving Climate
Safeguarding a healthy environment is a longstanding part of Abbott's purpose to help people live fuller lives through better health. Building on our longstanding commitment to minimize our environmental footprint and protect precious resources, we're also focused on taking action to protect people's health in the face of climate change. At Abbott, our work focuses in two areas: tracking and finding solutions for emerging health threats and preparing frontline systems and communities. Across our business and in collaboration with others, we'll work to identify and address emerging health issues, strengthen underlying health systems and help build more resilient communities in a warming world. For more information, visit abbott.com/sustainability.

About Abbott
Abbott is a global healthcare leader that helps people live more fully at all stages of life. Our portfolio of life-changing technologies spans the spectrum of healthcare, with leading businesses and products in diagnostics, medical devices, nutritionals and branded generic medicines. Our 115,000 colleagues serve people in more than 160 countries.

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About CERI
The Centre for Epidemic Response and Innovation (CERI) is an academic and research entity located within the School for Data Science and Computational Thinking in the Faculty of Science at Stellenbosch University and the laboratories are situated at the state-of-the art facilities at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences based at the Tygerberg Medical Campus. CERI's goal is

to strengthen Africa's capacity to quickly identify and control its own epidemics and pandemics before they become a global problem.

Connect with us at www.ceri.org.za and on Twitter @ceri_news

References:

1. Mora, Camiloet al. Nature Climate Change 8 Aug 2022. https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-022-01426-1

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