

Pictura Bio Receives Funding from DASA to Develop AI Disease Testing Platform for Military Use

Drive to improve the UK's capability to manage and treat personnel affected by virulent infectious agents

OXFORD, UNITED KINGDOM, May 24, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Health technology company [Pictura Bio](#) today announces that it has been awarded Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) funding through the Point of Care Diagnostics at the Front Line competition. The funding will support Pictura Bio in developing a portable prototype of their AI-powered disease testing platform for use in military settings, where infectious diseases are a substantial threat. This new device has the potential to drastically improve diagnostic testing capabilities, helping to limit the impact of infectious diseases on military operations by identifying diseases from a sample within minutes.

DASA, part of the Government's Ministry of Defence, ran this competition on behalf of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) to find technologies that can help diagnose and treat military personnel deployed in the field, while addressing the limitations of current in-field diagnostics. Pictura Bio was one of two applicants that received funding for the development and optimisation of IDRIS (In-Field Diagnostic for Rapid Infection Sensing), a robust and portable device designed specifically for frontline point-of-care use.

Military personnel can be highly susceptible to infectious diseases like influenza, MERS, Ebola, and respiratory infections, due to the physical and mental strains of deployment, close living quarters, frequent contact with novel pathogens and lack of good sanitation. These diseases have a significant impact on the health of military troops, potentially leading to the cancellation of military operations.

To address this need, Pictura Bio is developing IDRIS, a point-of-care diagnostic test that uses artificial intelligence (AI) specifically trained to recognise pathogens in throat and nose swab samples, including all those affecting military personnel. The device surpasses current diagnostic methods in terms of speed, cost-effectiveness, and accuracy, providing results within five minutes with 99% accuracy.

An IDRIS prototype is currently in development and is expected to be completed by February 2024. Pictura Bio ultimately aims to deploy IDRIS in multiple medical settings across the UK to

help contain infectious disease outbreaks through early testing, treatment and isolation of patients.

Unlike current point-of-care tests, the machine learning software embedded in IDRIS, which works like facial recognition but for pathogens, can be trained to identify an unlimited number of pathogens. Plus, IDRIS collects and stores valuable data regarding the progression and spread of infections, significantly enhancing scientific understanding of diseases and guiding decisions pertaining to containment measures.

Dr Dominic Jenner, Senior Scientist, at Dstl, said: “Technologies currently available to enable the diagnosis of individuals exposed to infectious diseases are often time-consuming and resource intensive, this presents a particular challenge for deployed personnel. The DASA Point of Care Diagnostics competition for the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory aimed to find innovations that could provide quick and easy diagnoses on the frontline. Innovations funded through this competition could ultimately help improve the UK’s capability to manage and treat personnel affected by virulent infectious agents. Pictura Bio put forward a compelling proposal offering a potentially innovative approach to diagnostics and we are very interested in helping this technology progress.”

Alex Batchelor, CEO of Pictura Bio, comments: “It is clear there is a significant gap in the market for instant, accurate and affordable point-of-care diagnostics for use in-field. By moving away from centralised lab testing, we can take necessary action much quicker to better control the spread of diseases and improve the health of military personnel.

“Our disease testing platform is ideally suited for in-field testing on the front line because it is small, portable, requires little expertise to operate and provides a solution for all of the challenges posed by current diagnostics.”

About Pictura Bio

Pictura Bio is a health-tech company that has developed the world’s first one-minute pathogen recognition platform. The software, like facial recognition for pathogens, is a universal testing platform, powered by AI, to provide accurate, digital imaging-based identification of infectious disease. The innovation encompasses two patented innovations - PIC-ID and IDRIS. PIC-ID coats the lipid membrane whilst IDRIS, a deep learning neural network, simultaneously analyses and classifies pathogens. It is a fundamentally different way of identifying ALL infectious agents and the company’s vision is to have a Lab in a Box for one minute testing on desktops in hospitals, GP surgeries and pharmacies around the world.

Pictura Bio’s solutions drive faster, simpler and more cost-effective testing than resource-consuming molecular diagnostics, changing how we treat disease. The technology will enable healthcare decision makers to revolutionise health care as we know it - bolstering the fight against antimicrobial resistance, reducing medical waste and limiting virus exposure.

For further information visit <https://pictura.bio/>

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