



NEWS RELEASE

LATEST INNOVATION ENABLES EARLY DIAGNOSIS OF DENGUE

New development will result in improved care for infected patients

SINGAPORE, 3 August 2006 – After the dengue fever outbreak in Singapore last year, doctors would certainly look forward to the diagnostic kit launched today by Bio-Rad Laboratories, one of the world's leading manufacturers and distributors of life science research products and clinical diagnostics. Called the Platelia™ Dengue NS1 Ag assay, this is the first dengue screening test based on the detection of the NS1 antigen.

Jointly developed with the Institut Pasteur of France, the Platelia™ Dengue NS1 Ag assay is an ELISA test which enables the detection of the NS1 dengue virus antigen as soon as the first clinical signs appear. The ability to detect the presence of the NS1 antigen provides an earlier diagnosis of the infection compared to conventional tests. The time saved is about six days for a primary infection.

Dr Patrice Sarfati, Division R&D Manager for Clinical Microbiology, Bio-Rad Laboratories, who was involved in the development of the test kit, said: "Dengue is a viral disease with no specific treatment or vaccines. Early detection of dengue is critical as it allows doctors to provide the appropriate treatment as soon as possible. This is especially important for children and the elderly who have lower immunity and are more susceptible to fatal infections."

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The fast, easy-to-use and reliable Platelia™ Dengue NS1 Ag assay provides early diagnosis of primary and secondary dengue acute infections. This means that when a patient has symptoms like fever and aches, often attributed to the common influenza virus, his doctor can confirm if his patient has dengue, simply by subjecting the patient to a blood test and sending the blood sample to a laboratory for analysis. Within the same day, the doctor can confirm if his patient is indeed dengue-infected. If the patient has dengue, he can be isolated so that the disease will not be transmitted through an Aedes mosquito to other members of his family or to those close to him.

Mr Francois Capit who, as General Manager for Asia Pacific, Bio-Rad Laboratories, is based in Singapore, said: "With a densely populated country like Singapore where the majority of the population lives in apartment blocks and where dengue is an endemic disease, the Platelia™ test kit is a tool which doctors would welcome with open arms. Early diagnosis enables doctors to provide improved care for their patients and the National Environment Agency can also zoom in on a possible dengue breeding ground by visiting the patient's home and eradicating the spread of the disease at the very source. This way, dengue cases can be minimised in clean and green Singapore."

The test performance of Platelia™ Dengue NS1 Ag assay has been validated by Bio-Rad research teams and confirmed through evaluations conducted by reference laboratories in countries affected by the disease including Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, India, Brazil and the French Guiana.

The sensitivity of the Platelia™ Dengue NS1 Ag test has been shown to be at 91 per cent and specificity at 100 per cent. In addition, the test detects all four strains of the dengue virus with the same efficiency and can be used for both primary and secondary infections.

The Platelia™ Dengue NS1 Ag diagnostic kit has received the CE Marking which certifies its compliance with the essential requirements of the relevant European health, safety and environmental protection legislation.

Global prevalence of dengue has increased dramatically in recent decades. The World Health Organisation estimates that 40 per cent of the world's population or about 2.5 billion people, are currently at risk from the disease.

In Singapore, the number of dengue case escalated to a record high in 2005, with 14,209 reported infections and 22 deaths. At end-June 2006, there have been 1,572 dengue cases, with three deaths.

Currently, routine dengue screening tests uses the serological method based on the detection of specific dengue virus antibodies. However, these particular antibodies are only produced four to six days after the first clinical signs appear, by which time the dengue patient would have suffered the acute symptoms of the disease. Furthermore, these tests usually lack specificity regarding dengue infection, leading to cross-reactivities with other co-circulating flaviviruses. The inability of doctors to confirm early that their patients have contracted dengue may also lead to complications later on.

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About Bio-Rad

Bio-Rad Laboratories, Inc. (www.bio-rad.com), is a multinational manufacturer and distributor of life science research products and clinical diagnostics. Based in Hercules, California, Bio-Rad serves more than 70,000 research and industry customers worldwide through a network of more than 30 wholly owned subsidiary offices.

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